**The Great Sea-Serpent**

**A New Wonder Story**

**by**

**Hans Christian Andersen**

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**HERE** was a little fish—a salt-water fish—of good family: I don’t recall the name—you will have to get that from the learned people. This little fish had eighteen hundred brothers and sisters all just as old as he; they did not know their father and mother, and were obliged to look out for themselves at the very beginning, and swim round, but that was great sport. They had water enough to drink, the entire ocean; they thought nothing about their food, it came when they wanted it. Each did as it pleased, each was to make out its own story—ay, rather none of them thought at all about that. The sun shone down on the water that was light about them, so clear was it. It was a world with the strangest creatures, and some very horrid and big, with great gaping mouths that could gulp down all the eighteen hundred brothers and sisters, but neither did they think of that, for none of them as yet had been swallowed. The small ones swam side by side close together, as herrings and mackerel swim. But as they were swimming their prettiest in the water and thinking of nothing, there sank with prodigious noise, from above, right down through them, a long heavy thing that looked as if it never would come to an end; it stretched out farther and farther, and every one of the little fishes that scampered off was either crushed or got a crack that it could not stand. All the little fishes, and the great ones with them, from the level of the sea to the bottom, were thrown into a panic. The great horrid thing sank deeper and deeper, and grew longer and longer, miles and miles long. The fishes and snails, everything that swims, or creeps, or is driven by the current, saw this fearful thing, this enormous incomprehensible sea-eel which had come down upon them in this fashion.