

**"Therefore," I wrote, "after examining these different hypotheses one by one, we are forced, every other supposition having been refuted, to accept the existence of an extremely powerful marine animal.**

**"The deepest parts of the ocean are totally unknown to us. No soundings have been able to reach them. What goes on in those distant depths? What creatures inhabit, or could inhabit, those regions twelve or fifteen miles beneath the surface of the water? What is the constitution of these animals? It's almost beyond conjecture.**

**"However, the solution to this problem submitted to me can take the form of a choice between two alternatives.**

**"Either we know every variety of creature populating our planet, or we do not.**

**"If we do not know every one of them, if nature still keeps ichthyological secrets from us, nothing is more admissible than to accept the existence of fish or cetaceans of new species or even new genera, animals with a basically 'cast-iron' constitution that inhabit strata beyond the reach of our soundings, and which some development or other, an urge or a whim if you prefer, can bring to the upper level of the ocean for long intervals.**

**"If, on the other hand, we do know every living species, we must look for the animal in question among those marine creatures already cataloged, and in this event I would be inclined to accept the existence of a giant narwhale.**

**"The common narwhale, or sea unicorn, often reaches a length of sixty feet. Increase its dimensions fivefold or even tenfold, then give this cetacean a strength in proportion to its size while enlarging its offensive weapons, and you have the animal we're looking for. It would have the proportions determined by the officers of the Shannon, the instrument needed to perforate the Scotia, and the power to pierce a steamer's hull.**

**"In essence, the narwhale is arm**