

THE FAUNA OF THE DEEP SEA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649187393

The fauna of the deep sea by Sydney J. Hickson

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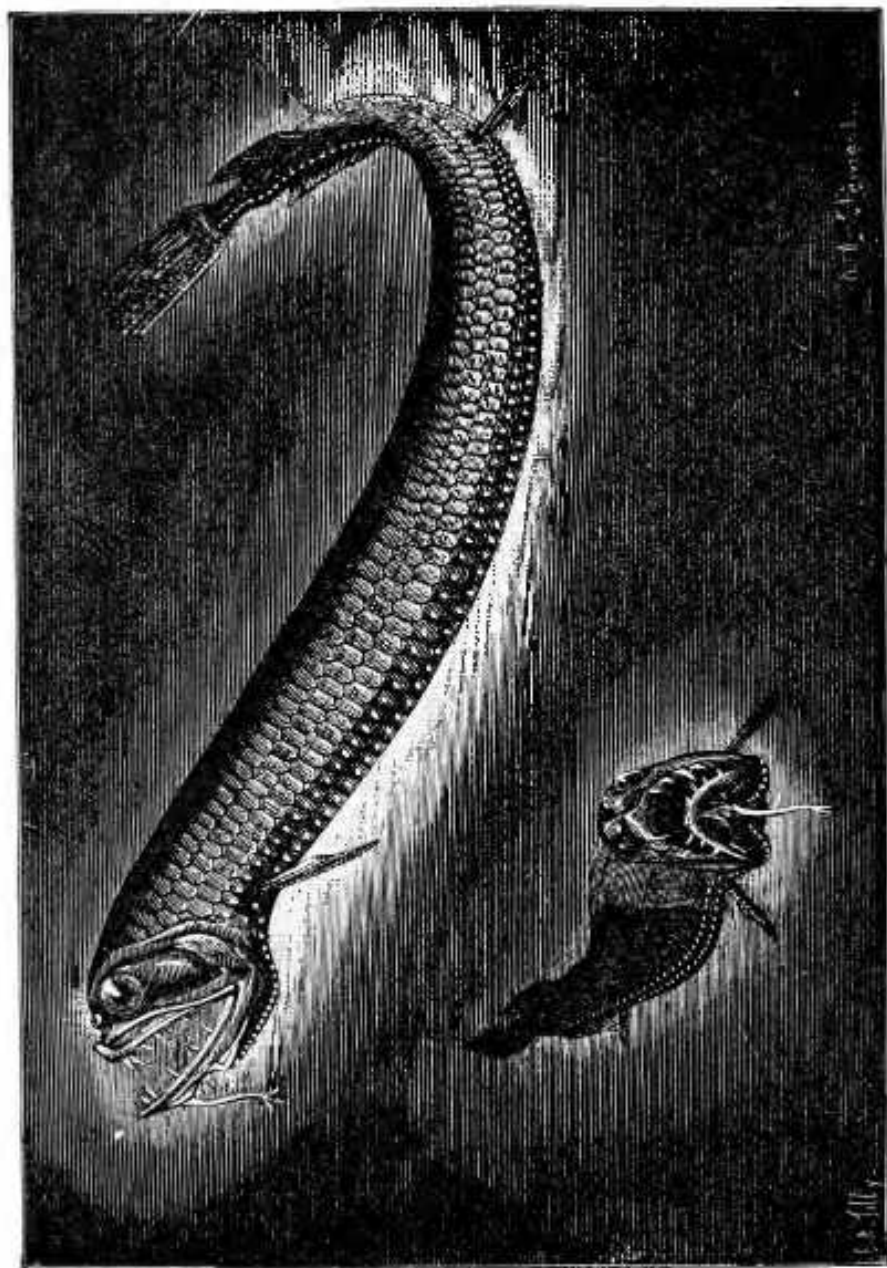
SYDNEY J. HICKSON

**THE FAUNA OF
THE DEEP SEA**

Modern Science Series

EDITED BY SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, BART., M.P.

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DEEP SEA



STENIAS EOA. BALEY NATURAL SIZE. FROM A SPECIMEN OF 1.400 METRES. (AFTER PILLIG.)

THE FAUNA OF THE
DEEP SEA

BY

SYDNEY J. HICKSON, M. A.

(CANTAB. ET OXON.)

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WITH TWENTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1894

173367

Authorized Edition.

P R E F A C E



THE time may come when there will be no portion of the earth's surface that has not been surveyed and explored by man.

The work of enterprising travellers has now been carried on within a measurable distance of the North Pole; the highest mountain ranges are gradually succumbing to the geological surveyor; the heart of Africa is giving up to us its secrets and its treasures, and plans of all the desert places of the earth are being made and tabulated.

The bottom of the deep sea was until quite recently one of these *terra incognita*. It was regarded by most persons, when it entered into their minds to consider it at all, as one of those regions about which we do not know anything, never shall know anything, and do not want to know anything.

But the men of science fifty years ago were not disposed to take this view of the matter. Pushing their inquiries as to the character of the sea-fauna into deeper and deeper water, they at length demanded information as to the existence of forms of animal life in the greatest depths. Unable themselves to bear the heavy expenses involved in such an investigation, they sought for and obtained the assistance of the Government, in the form of national ships, for the work, and then our knowledge of the depths of the great ocean may be said to have commenced.

We know a good deal now, and in the course of time we may know a great deal more, about this interesting region; but it is not one which, in our generation at any rate, any human being will ever visit.

We may be able to plant the Union Jack on the summit of Mount Everest, we may drag our sledges to the South Pole, and we may, some day, be able to travel with ease and safety in the Great Sahara; but we cannot conceive that it will ever be possible for us to invent a diving-bell that will take a party of explorers to a depth of three and a half miles of

water. We may complete our survey of the ocean beds, we may analyse the bottom muds and name and classify the animals that compose their fauna, but there are many things that must remain merely matters of conjecture. We shall never know, for example, with any degree of certainty, how *Bathypterois* uses its long feeler-like pectoral fins, nor the meaning of the fierce armature of *Lithodes ferox*; why the deep-sea Crustacea are so uniformly coloured red, or the intensity of the phosphorescent light emitted by the Alcyonaria and Echinoderms. These and many others are and must remain among the mysteries of the abyss.

Our present-day knowledge of the physical conditions of the bottom of the deep sea and the animals that dwell there is by no means inconsiderable.

It may be found in the reports of the scientific expeditions fitted out by the English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, and American Governments, in numerous volumes devoted to this kind of work, and in memoirs and notes scattered through the English and foreign scientific journals.

It is the object of this little book to bring together