

GIANT CATS OF LONG AGO.

The Monster Felines Who Lived in This Country 100,000 Years Ago.

Not Only the Bones Are Left to Tell the Story Now.

The Habits, the Diet and the Approximate Age as Told by the Teeth Found.

"There used to be cats in North America 100,000 years ago," said a paleontologist to reporter of the Washington Star. "Great carnivorous feline creatures of the tribe named over this country than in enormous numbers. They are all extinct, and we get only their bones behind to tell the story of how they lived and what they fed upon. We often read of the art by which the naturalist is able to restore the skeleton of an animal from a single bone, and in fact a good many mistakes have been made through overconfidence on the part of learned gentlemen in reconstructing fossil theory from imperfect material. But there is no possibility of mistaking the testimony afforded by the teeth. They tell all about the manner of existence led by their former owner, giving accurately the habits, diet and approximate age of the beast.

"Thus it is very fortunate that teeth last longer than any other object in nature. As this day are found in a perfect state of preservation the molars and incisors which were used to chew with by the mighty reptiles of millions of years ago. It is from the dentition that science declares man to be carnivorous only by habit, and not by nature. I spoke of that the other day to a young man in search of information, who spelled impolitely: 'So is a hen.' When I asked him what he meant by that he said that the dentition of a hen would certainly not indicate that it was carnivorous by nature, and yet it evidently was so, judging from its addition to worms and preference for flesh in general. However, as I was going to remark, the piercing and cutting teeth of these cats of long ago are the most perfectly adapted instruments for cutting up things that ever were seen, being unequalled by any manufactured tools for such uses.

"For example, there was the gomphodus, which was as big as the largest panther and had two teeth in its upper jaw resembling jaggers, each five inches in length. As weapons for penetrating flesh they are unequalled among carnivorous animals, except their extinct. They were rather like the teeth of some huge fish-eating dinosaurs, the terrible reptiles of the mesozoic epoch, which had cutting teeth that nothing could resist. Doubtless the cat was an incredibly bloodthirsty. Quite as fierce, however, and even more formidable by reason of its greater size, was the contemporary pogonion, which was as large as the biggest jaguar. There were two species of this animal which held the field in Oregon during the period I speak of against all rivals. It was undoubtedly a great destroyer of life among the herbivorous beasts.

"Our knowledge of one of these species is due to a very fortunate chance. Some years ago an exploring party was sent into the John Day river valley in Oregon for the purpose of looking for fossils. That is a famous region for such treasures, water having cut big slices out of hills, which were formed originally by detritus deposited during the period I speak of against all rivals. It was undoubtedly a great destroyer of life among the herbivorous beasts.

"During this same epoch there were numerous other species of cats, all of which are extinct, which varied in size all the way from that of a household pussy to that of the huge saber-toothed tiger. Not a few of them were astonishingly fierce and correspondingly destructive. The teeth they have left behind tell the story of the way they lived, describing, as well as words could do it, their extreme ferocity. They attained the climax of their type in the saber-toothed tigers, bigger than either the lion or the tiger of today, which had a canine foot in length and shaped like curved knives with saw-like edges. They roamed the continent in the time of the gigantic sloths, such as the megatherium, and doubtless did much to exterminate the latter helpless and respectable-looking beasts. They were plentiful in Texas, where the remains of a good many have been dug up.

"It is interesting to consider the fact that these saber-toothed tigers—like the cave lions, which were twice as heavy as grizzlies and probably quite as ferocious—were contemporary with human beings on the earth, and the latter were obliged to fight them. Their bones are found in considerable numbers in the caves of southern France, which were the abodes of primitive men and women in the ancient stone age, 100,000 years and more ago.

"During the period when the wonderful cats were plentiful in North America there were numerous dogs and doglike animals, all of which have become extinct. The biggest species was as large as a good sized bear. In that part of the country which is now called Colorado and Dakota there were several kinds of dog-like animals, about the size of foxes, which were abundant in their habits, having very large eyes with which to see in the night. They had great ears, also, and short, sharp noses. All these things can be told from their skulls."

Venus Seen by Day. Many people who have been reading about Mars fell into the very natural error of supposing the star that has been visible over head for several days was the much written about planet. While this mistake is a very natural one, under the circumstances, it is one of which a student of astronomy would never be guilty. Mars is an evening star and not visible during the day. The star at which so many pairs of eyes were directed yesterday is Venus, and its appearance daytime is too frequent to make the occurrence much of a phenomenon, says the Minneapolis Tribune.

The skies were cloudless and the star was plainly discernible almost directly overhead all yesterday morning. It looked like a small steel point stuck way up in the heavens, and if a man had any vegetation on his optics he was likely to look a long time without finding it. There was a crowd all the morning at several of the downtown street corners. The word went around early that the visitor was Mars, and everybody who passed wanted to get a focus on the stranger. Prof. John F. Downey, professor of astronomy at the State university, settles the matter in favor of Venus. In reply to a reporter's interrogatory, he said: "Mars is an evening star, and not visible daytime. The star seen is Venus, which is often visible days when near the maximum brightness. The reason Mars was not seen yesterday is because it is on the opposite side of the sun, and consequently below the horizon."

Good Looks. Good looks are more than skin deep, depending upon a healthy condition of all the vital organs. If the liver be inactive, you have a bilious look; if your stomach be disordered you have a dyspeptic look, and if your kidneys be affected you have a pinched look. Secure good health and you will have good looks. Electric Bitters is the great alterative and tonic; acts directly on these vital organs. Cures pimples, blotches,

bolts and gives a good complexion. Sold at H. E. Hale & Co.'s drug store; 50c per bottle.

Now Is Your Chance to Visit the Yellowstone National Park. The Northern Pacific railroad, in connection with the Yellowstone National Park Transportation company, has arranged a very cheap Yellowstone park excursion. Train will leave Helena Sept. 6. Rate from Helena through the park and return, including rail and stage transportation and hotel accommodations in the park, will be forty-two dollars. (\$42.00). September is the best month in the year to make this trip, and this is the grandest opportunity ever offered. For full particulars call at the Northern Pacific city stock office. A. D. EDGAR, General Agent.

Don't Miss This. The Union Pacific system will make an excursion rate of \$20 for the round trip, between Helena, Salt Lake and return, Saturday Aug. 27, 1902. Tickets will be good for side trip to Gardiner Beach without extra charge. Good for return until Sept. 6. Remember the date. For further particulars call on or address No. 24, North Main street, Helena, Mont. H. O. WILSON, F. and P. A.

Pleasure for the G. A. R. All Along the Line. From Chicago the Pennsylvania lines lead direct to the national capital, affording every desirable facility for rapid transportation of G. A. R. veterans and others to Washington in September. Train service characteristic of the standard railway of America. Delightful scenery all along the line. Side trip to historic Gettysburg if desired. Low rates. Address J. M. GRAYES, Passenger Agent, St. Paul, Minn.

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