

European Bison Herd Extinct

Zoology

The wisent, Europe's representative of the bison family and close cousin to the American bison, appears to be certainly doomed to extinction. The herd of the Caucasus region, which numbered 1,000 head in 1911, has now totally vanished. So states Prof. J. Pujanow of Semferopol, who has just completed a survey of the status of this vanishing species.

In 1924 the Soviet government set aside an area of 1,100 square miles in the Caucasus as a permanent wisent reserve. At that time there were known to be 25 head of the animals still in existence in the region, and it was hoped that under protection they might stage a come-back like that of the American bison in the national parks of the United States and Canada. Parties of naturalists in the field in 1924 and 1925 failed to catch a glimpse of any of the animals, which remained hidden in the more remote fastnesses of the rugged terrain. Last year a larger group of zoologists who had had special experience with the wisent took the field and explored the region thoroughly, combing every valley.

They did not find a single living animal. They came upon plenty of bones, some of them bearing bullet marks, indicative of the inability of the inadequate government patrol to

stop illegal shooting. The bones all seemed to be from animals not long dead—two or three years at most; so that it seems probable that the herd was there when the reserve was created for it, but has been wiped out since. There may still possibly be one or two wisent in remote haunts in the Caucasus, but they can no longer be counted on to help stay the march of the species toward extinction.

The wisent was formerly an important game animal in Europe, and until the seventeenth century was actively hunted. The advance of civilization in eastern Europe, however, drove it toward extinction as the advance of civilization later in western America threatened the New World bison. A large herd in the Baltic region was almost wiped out during the war; only five specimens now survive. There was also a wisent preserve in the Crimea before the war, but this was destroyed during the Russian revolution. There are still a few specimens scattered about in zoological parks in England and northern Continental Europe, and an association has been formed which is endeavoring to prolong the life of the species. But the news of the wiping out of the Caucasus herd comes as a heavy blow to friends of the wisent.

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Studies How Child Sleeps

Psychology

The hush-a-bye-baby song method of getting a youngster to sleep is passing. This is the state of affairs in Canada at least, as shown by an investigation of children's sleep habits, made at the University of Toronto by Dr. W. E. Blatz and Nellie Chant.

A scientific report of the investigation in the *Genetic Psychology Monographs* shows that out of 96 children under ten years of age, only 22 were familiar with the sweet but unsatisfactory practice of going to sleep to the sound of a lullaby. Out of the 56 youngsters under five years old, there were just six that enjoyed the demoralizing luxury of being rocked to sleep.

Considerable irregularity in bedtime hours was noted by the psychologists. Varying the bedtime schedule by ten or twenty minutes may seem unimportant, but it is one factor that can prevent a child from developing regular habits of sleeping.

Sleeping in the daytime has no effect on the night sleep of infants, but too much daytime sleep interferes with the night rest of older children, it was found. Between the third and fourth year of life, the child should not be permitted to sleep longer than about one and a half hours in the daytime, the psychologists conclude. More than this not only interferes with night rest but also deprives the child of fresh air and play activity that he needs.

Many parents do not understand that in children over three years old the habit of daytime sleep is beginning to break up and that this break is on the all-or-none principle, the psychologists point out. When these older children do sleep, the length of their nap is not much shorter than with young children. Insisting on an older child taking a short nap every day apparently is less wise than having him rest on occasional days.

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Fossil Indian Bones

Archæology

Near the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla, Calif., have recently been found, during steam-shovel operations, human remains which are heavy and hard as if completely fossilized. They are fully as solid as any "petrified" bone of an earlier mammal or reptile from the deposits of bygone ages. The bones seem harder and heavier than the "Los Angeles Man" now preserved in the Los Angeles Museum at Exposition Park.

The fossilized human bones were found deeply embedded in a low stratum of secondary fill, from which the limy fossilizing mineral, calcite, was derived. Above this layer were found other human bones, skulls, jaws and limb bones. No careful observations of the relationships of the skeletons to the clay and to each other were possible at the time the steam-shovel was ripping things to pieces, and only by great good fortune were the bones saved.

The upper and lower teeth of the "fossilized man" show distinct evidence of pyorrhea, abscesses and a most curious form of wearing down of the crowns.

It is uncertain to what group of Indians the relics belong, since practically all of the Indian tribes of southern California practiced cremation, and there are no skeletal remains with which to compare the newly discovered skeletons. Studies are now actively under way and reports are hoped for soon.

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Down-Stairs Skyscraper

Architecture

The child's conception of things in the Orient being topsy-turvy is upheld by a Japanese project for a down-stairs skyscraper, 80 stories deep. This building, which would be built down into the earth 1,100 feet, is designed in defiance of earthquakes.

This world's deepest skyscraper is planned for Tokyo, where earthquake proof architecture has been a serious problem ever since the disastrous quake of 1923. Designs for the building are in the form of a huge circular well of steel framework. Elevators, ventilating airshafts, telephones, and electric lights are provided for. The cost is set at about \$11,000,000. The Shin Nippon Construction Company is interested in the project.

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