

ZOOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

by Frank Thone



Giant Killer

MAN'S CHIEF conquests have always been against creatures bigger than himself.

The first human beings about whose habits we have any definite notions at all were killers of large game. The men of the Old Stone Age, who drew pictures of the animals they hunted on the walls of caves, have left us records of woolly mammoths, rhinoceroses, wild horses, reindeer, bison and other quarry worthy of the bow and the spear of any later Nimrod. Some of these the cave men did kill with spears (apparently they had no bows), and some they got by driving their herds over cliff-edges or enticing single giant specimens over cunningly concealed pitfalls and then pounding them to death with great stones.

The bones left in the refuse-heaps, or worked up into tools and weapons, give further evidence of the predominance of large animals in the game list of early man.

Whether Stone Age man's hunting actually wiped out any of his contemporary animals which became extinct is not certain. Possibly climatic or other factors were more important in their extermination. But there is no doubt that hunting played a large part in the extinction of large animals in later times: the aurochs or wild ox of Europe in the Middle Ages, that big, lubberly bird, the dodo, in early modern times. Hunting pushed chamois and ibex close to extinction in Europe, bison and pronghorn in North America, is now threatening elephants in both Africa and India, and kangaroos in Australia.

But man, mighty hunter though he is when he turns his wits and weapons against the big brutes, has been far less deadly against little animals. Mice

and rats swarm in his very houses, despite traps and poison, terriers and cats. Squirrels and rabbits still survive, sometimes in huge numbers, in timber and brushland areas where the last bears and wolves were killed decades ago. Muskrats survive in places trapped clean of beavers away back when beaver hats were the latest style.

Alligators have been shot out of

Southern waters to an alarming extent, and if man had been on earth in the days of the dinosaurs (which he wasn't, comic-strip artists to the contrary notwithstanding) he would have conquered these great reptiles also. But neither modern hide-hunters nor Alley-Oop could possibly eliminate lizards, frogs and toads.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1934

ARCHAEOLOGY

Indian and Civil War Relics Dug From Shiloh Battlefield

DIGGING at the battlefield of Shiloh, overlooking the Tennessee River, CWA workers have unearthed Civil War cannon balls and a large prehistoric Indian settlement.

Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., of the Bureau of American Ethnology, directed the work.

Reporting discoveries of the expedition, Dr. Roberts said that Confederate lines on the first day of the Battle of Shiloh were right among the old Indian mounds. The ground is richer in battle relics than in prehistoric objects. The excavations, however, have revealed the plan of the large ancient settlement spread there.

The part of the battlefield which contains the Indian settlement was exceptionally situated for protection. High bluffs surrounded the settlement site on three sides and on the fourth the Indians raised a palisade fence. Within this enclosed area, they built mounds of earth on which to set temples and government buildings. Scattered among the mounds they built smaller houses.

Dr. Roberts found post holes marking the palisade and traces of about 30 Indian houses. Exploring the mounds, the excavators found one small mound that was a cemetery containing 30 skeletons. The larger mounds were barren of bones or Indian-made objects, and Dr. Roberts infers that they were used as refuge for floods. Tree roots threading down into the mounds effaced any post holes that would have shown where buildings stood.

Identity of the Indians who built the stockaded mound center is not yet determined, Dr. Roberts said. Nor is it certain when they lived, except that they antedated the coming of white men. It is thought possible that they belonged

to the wide-spread proto-Muskhogeian Indian peoples, who were ancestors of the highly cultured tribes found by the white explorers in the Gulf States.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1934

CHEMISTRY

Washing With Linseed Oil Removes Stains from Skin

HOUSECLEANERS can take spots of lacquer, dye, etc., from their hands with the old familiar paint ingredient, linseed oil. So says *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, quoting a German source.

About a thimbleful of the oil is all that is necessary. Rub it thoroughly over the hands until the offending spots are "out"; then, without removing the oil, wash the hands in warm water with plenty of soap. The soap takes off the stain and the excess oil, but leaves enough of it to keep the skin soft and smooth.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1934

DEAD MEN MADE ALIVE

Scientific sleuths have gathered together the available evidence about Tibetan magic. The most trustworthy authorities have vouched for such facts as: Men made to rise from the coffin by the beckoning eye of the Dalai Lama; a beggar stabbed through the heart and healed almost instantaneously. What's behind all this? You can learn in

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