

BIOLOGY NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE



Dogs

When Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, an old legend says, the dog was the only animal that followed them. The ox and the ass they had to catch and tame later; the cat they caught, but never tamed.

Legends aside, the dog is without question the oldest of domesticated animals. All the ruins of man's houses and cities since the earlier part of the New Stone Age have turned out bones of dogs of various breeds, and dogs are portrayed on the earliest sculptures of Egypt and Babylonia. As yet, no evidence has been produced that the Neanderthals and the Cro-Magnonese of the Old Stone Age had dogs—what lonesome boyhoods these men must have had!

It is pretty well agreed among naturalists that domestic dogs began as wolf-like animals of some kind, probably of some small species of wolf now extinct. The idea was not popular once, but since such novels as "The Call of the Wild" and "White Fang" we are becoming more ready to acknowledge a lupine ancestry for our friends. The noted British naturalist, J. Arthur Thomson, subscribes to this doctrine, and publishes a figure like the illustration here used as an approximate restoration of the earliest dog-skeleton so far discovered.

One argument in favor of an original unity of the human race is the presence of dogs wherever there are men. The Incas, Thomson says, had three distinct types of dog (one of them like a dachshund!) when the white men came; and the only non-marsupial mammal in Australia, aside from man, is the dingo, or wild dog.

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Of the five weeks of life allotted to the average bee, three weeks are devoted to duties within the hive.

Some kinds of spiders construct a web about foul smelling flowers in order to attract flies into the trap.

INVENTION Microphones in Vaults

A new barrier has been placed between the bank robber and his swag as a result of research by the engineers of the Bell Laboratories in New York.

Already learned in the ways of cops, night watchmen and the miles of wire incidental to the usual electric alarm system, the robber may now find himself up against a new signal device invisible from the outside yet capable of calling a squad of armed guards upon him as he works. In fact, the safe blower now works under war-time conditions for the new alarm is founded on the Type H inertia microphone developed in the laboratories during the war for submarine detection.

This alarm consists of a microphone capable of detecting the most minute vibrations of the walls of a safe. It has already been installed in several banks in New York and in Philadelphia. The microphone will not pick up sound waves. The stimulus is received mechanically rather than acoustically. But the slightest jar will be sufficient to set in motion an electric current to the main office where both audible and visible signals will be received.

Such devices have been conceived before. But heretofore they have transmitted vibrations and even sounds from outside. Thus guards have been summoned when merely a heavy truck was rumbling by or when street conversation grew sufficiently loud.

The newly developed microphone, however, is not affected by disturbances outside the vault. At one of the banks in which it is installed subway trains rumble constantly within a few feet of the vault and no false alarm is sent out. But let a careless cleaner so much as knock the handle of his broom against the vault door or walls and armed guards will come to investigate. As for cracksmen, even the acetylene torch is without avail. It causes a sputtering of the molten metal strong enough to shake the wall slightly.

Further, the microphone takes up infinitely less space than the wire signal system. It is small and several microphones effectively placed will be sufficient to protect the largest room. In contrast to this compactness, eighteen miles of wire were recently used in installing the old alarm system in the vault of a prominent New York bank.

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ARCHAEOLOGY Translates Glozel Writing

An attempt to read the story on some of the little clay tablets covered with a mysterious, crude writing, unearthed at Glozel, near Vichy, has been made by M. Camille Jullian, well-known French expert on Roman antiquities.

These inscriptions, which have kept European archaeologists arguing for the past six months, are read by M. Jullian as charms in cursive Latin, such as were used by sorcerers of the Roman Empire. On one tablet he read a magic formula dedicated to Diana and the animal sacred to her, the stag.

While M. Jullian contributes this to indicate that the Glozel writings date back to only about 300 B. C., other scientists continue to insist on an entirely different history for the tablets, lamps, stone axes, and other objects found at Glozel.

Some of the savants who have examined the great collection of articles dug up in the field at the French village consider that they must have belonged to prehistoric people, who lived at 3000 B. C., or perhaps even earlier. This has aroused great interest because of the cryptic alphabetic writing found at the site, since the alphabet is not considered to be older than 2000 B. C. at the oldest.

A new angle on the controversy is raised by Portuguese scientists, who find a resemblance between the Glozel writing and inscriptions which have been unearthed in western Portugal, at Alvao. Like Glozel, these Portuguese finds are the subject of argument, some archaeologists considering them as belonging to about 500 B. C., and some assigning them to a time several thousand years earlier, in the New Stone Age, before men learned to use metals.

Both the Glozel and the Alvao discoveries have been pronounced huge fakes by several European scientists, though the majority of experts who have examined them have not questioned their genuineness while differing as to their date. Capt. O. G. S. Crawford, British archaeologist who visited Glozel and examined the articles dug up there, has announced that French scientists have been duped by an obvious fraud.

Digging at Glozel, which was carried on by Dr. A. Morlet in 1925 and 1926, was resumed this spring, and additional objects of the sort previously found there, have been discovered.

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