

PALEONTOLOGY

# "Terrible Crocodile" One Of Largest That Ever Lived

**Fossil Remains Consist Only of Fragments of Skull, Lower Jaw and Backbone; Dead 100,000,000 Years**

ONE of the biggest crocodiles that ever lived (dead now fortunately, these hundred million years or more) is described in a new Smithsonian Institution publication, by Dr. Charles C. Mook of Brooklyn College.

The fossil remains consist only of fragments of skull, lower jaw and backbone, so that it is impossible to give an exact figure for the monster's size. However, the pieces are so much bigger than corresponding skeletal parts of existing crocodiles that it can fairly be estimated as much larger than even the thirty-foot beasts that lurk in the rivers of southeastern Asia that the Japs are now trying to cross.

The name given it by Dr. Mook is *Dinosuchus neivensis*. Despite the fact that it lived in one of the dinosaur ages (the Cretaceous), the similarity of its name does not imply kinship with the dinosaurs.

*Dinosuchus* means "terrible crocodile", just as dinosaur means "terrible lizard". Crocodiles and dinosaurs are related only in that both are classified as reptiles.

The fossils were discovered some years

ago by a Catholic missionary, Brother Ariste, who was called Dr. Maurice Rollot before he took religious vows. They came to light in a crumbling rock formation between the Neiva and Bache rivers in Colombia; whence the "neivensis" in the extinct beast's second or specific name.

Although Brother Ariste's terrible crocodile was one of the biggest of his line that ever swam, he was not by any means the first. The earliest known "croc," says Charles W. Gilmore, curator of fossil reptiles in the U. S. National Museum, appeared in the preceding geologic period, known as the Jurassic, some 170 million years ago.

Crocodylians have changed relatively little since their early days. To this conservatism they may possibly owe their continued existence on the earth, during ages which saw their contemporaries, the dinosaurs, go through all kinds of bizarre evolutionary developments and finally vanish. Crocodiles show only one general change; they are somewhat smaller than they used to be. And maybe just a shade less fierce; though that is uncertain.

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able to manufacture the vitamin from this parent chemical.

One-half cup of cooked spinach, kale, escarole, mustard greens, turnip greens, chard or dandelion greens, for example, furnishes 13,000 units of vitamin A. One small cooked sweet potato furnishes 3,000 units of A. From 15 to 18 dried apricots, you can get 6,000 units. One tablespoon of butter furnishes 600 units, one glass of milk, 460 units, one ounce of American cheese, 900 units, and one egg (medium size), 500 units.

Milk, eggs, butter or margarine with added vitamin A, fruits and fresh leafy green vegetables should be eaten daily because of their other nourishing qualities, and the healthy person who eats these foods regularly in the recommended amounts will be getting his full ration of vitamin A.

Manufacturers are expected to welcome the order limiting the vitamin A content of multi-vitamin preparations. Since the price of this vitamin has risen and nutrition and medical authorities have shown that more than 5,000 units per daily dose of such preparations is wasteful, many manufacturers would doubtless have reduced the amount without the order if they could have been sure all manufacturers would have done so.

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MEDICINE

## Thumb-Tip Test Devised To Detect Nerve Injury

A THUMB-TIP test which detects one of the most common wartime nerve injuries has been devised by Dr. Robert Wartenburg, of the University of California Medical School.

The test is made by having the patient hold his fingers together while stretching the thumb as much as possible, as in the position of Oriental prayer. If the thumb tips touch each other, there is no damage to the median nerve running through the wrist. If the patient cannot make the thumb tips touch, the nerve is affected, the tip of the thumb on the affected side being higher than that of the healthy one.

Median nerve injury is not only a common casualty but frequently occurs in civil life as a result of cuts from broken glass, suicide attempts, falls upon the hand and similar injuries.

Dr. Wartenburg is working out other simple tests for diagnosis of obscure nerve damage which may be of use in treating injured soldiers and civilians.

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MEDICINE

## Limiting Vitamin A Will Cause No Hardship

WIPB order limiting the vitamin A in multi-vitamin preparations to 5,000 International Units per daily dose will cause no hardship to the average healthy child or grown-up.

The only healthy persons in the population needing more than 5,000 units daily, according to the National Research Council's committee on food and nutrition, are boys in their teens and nursing and expectant mothers. The mothers will be able to get adequate vitamin dosage from the special fish liver oil preparations still allowed to contain

more than 5,000 units. Preparations of this type will also be available for the sick people.

The usual hearty appetite of the normal teen-age boy will insure his getting the recommended 6,000 units of vitamin A from his food, if his meals are planned according to the rules of good nutrition.

Beef and other animal livers, milk, butter and eggs are all good sources of vitamin A. The parent chemical of this vitamin, carotene, is furnished abundantly in many common fruits and vegetables and the healthy human body is