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FOSSIL SLOTH AND GLYPTODON IN UNIQUE NEW GROUP

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A group of fossil edentates just installed in Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38) includes one which has the distinction of being the first skeleton of its kind discovered. This animal, *Pronothrotherium*, has hitherto been known from fragments of skull and jaws only. The specimen now exhibited includes almost an entire skeleton. It was collected, along with the second specimen of this group, by the Marshall Field Paleontological Expedition to Argentina and Bolivia (1926-27).

The skeleton on the left in the accompanying illustration is that of a ground sloth. It is a slender-bodied species about as large as a grizzly bear. The name, *Pronothrotherium*, signifies fore-runner-of-sluggish-animals. It had a small head, long and prehensile forelegs and short, stout hind legs. The skeleton is mounted in upright position with forefoot resting against a tree, and head reaching forward. The position suggests the probable feeding habit of the animal. The forelegs, armed with claw-bearing feet, were quite capable of pulling down the branches of small trees while the animal fed upon the leaves or fruit.

At the right in the illustration is the skeleton of *Sclerocalyptus*, or hard-coated animal. It belongs to the glyptodont family, a line of extinct mammals related to the modern armadillos, but larger. The upper part of the body of this animal was covered with a shell which served to protect it from attack, and which gave a general appearance somewhat like that of a great tortoise. The head was short and rounded, and protected by a bony helmet. The tail was heavy and likewise encased in a bony sheath. The forefoot had four hoofs, the hind foot five. The animal probably fed upon tubers and upon the roots of herbs and pampas grasses.

Both of these animals lived in South America in Pliocene time, about seven million years ago. Their descendants survived until a much later period and then died out entirely. Some nearly related ground sloths reached North America and their remains have been preserved in the tar beds of Los Angeles. Species of glyptodonts are likewise found as fossils in beds of wind-blown sands as far north as Texas and Oklahoma.

The specimens in the group were prepared and mounted by Phil C. Orr, Sven A. Dorf and James H. Quinn of the paleontological staff.

A NEW HYBRID OAK

Natural hybrids between species of plants, or at least forms generally recognized by botanists as such, are not common in the United States. Among those whose hybrid origin is almost unanimously admitted are certain abnormal oak trees that are clearly intermediate in character between well-marked and closely related oak species. The oak hybrids occur usually as isolated individuals, only a single tree being known for some. A few have been propagated artificially, and one of them is planted as a shade tree in Washington, D.C.

O. M. Schantz of Berwyn, Illinois, has presented to Field Museum specimens of a



Fossil Sloth and Glyptodon

The skeleton of the sloth on the left is the only complete one of this genus discovered to date. This group may now be seen in Ernest R. Graham Hall.

new oak hybrid he discovered at Willow Springs. It represents a cross between the bur oak and the white oak. The foliage, although abnormal, resembles that of the former, and the acorns are intermediate between those of the two species. This interesting tree has been named in honor of its discoverer by Dr. William Trelease, of the University of Illinois. —P.C.S.

Coloring Matter Yields Vitamines

In February this year FIELD MUSEUM NEWS contained an account of anatto, or arnatto, illustrated by a photograph of a flowering and fruiting branch of this tropical American shrub or small tree, recently added to the exhibits in Hall 29. In the temperate zone anatto is best known as a source of butter color and is used to improve the appearance of butter substitutes.

According to a news item emanating from the School of Tropical Medicine of Porto Rico, anatto has been found to be rich in vitamine D and hence a potential substitute for cod liver oil. It has also been found to contain a generous supply of vitamine A. Its use for flavoring and coloring food, such as rice and soups, may thus turn out to be of great nutritional importance to the poorer element of a population nourished largely on a rice and bean diet, such as that in Porto Rico and other tropical countries. Attempts are being made to make available the extracted vitamine. —B.E.D.

MARSHALL FIELD EXPEDITION RETURNING FROM CHINA

The Marshall Field Zoological Expedition to China has completed its two years of collecting in the interior of China, and its leader, Floyd T. Smith of New York, was last reported in Shanghai preparing to send the final shipment of some 5,000 specimens to Field Museum, and return home himself.

During the past six months work was carried on in the western provinces of Szechwan, Kweichow, Honan, and Yunnan. While many difficulties arose due to the political turmoil in China, the expedition obtained a remarkable collection of the

fauna of the country. Much was contributed to its success by the cooperation extended by the Chinese Academy of Sciences at Nanking.

Among the collections are several fine specimens of the rare takin, curious goat-antelope of the mountains along the Tibetan border. The specimens will be mounted at the Museum in a habitat group.

The collections include other large mammals, thousands of small mammals and birds, and hundreds of fishes and reptiles.

Previous shipments of several thousand specimens contained many rare animals and some species new to science.

Mr. Smith's party included qualified Chinese zoologists, and other Chinese whom he trained for scientific collecting. Thousands of miles were traversed with pack animals, afoot, and by river in crude hand-propelled boats. The expedition was frequently menaced by outlaws, and once its camp was robbed and burned by bandits. It made probably the most systematic zoological survey ever attempted in China.

Indian Archaeological Types

For the guidance of students, and collectors of North American Indian relics, there is in Mary D. Sturges Hall (Hall 3) an exhibit indicating the distribution of various types of Indian archaeological objects. An example of each principal type of artifact is shown, each accompanied by a map showing in red the locality in which its counterparts are found. Collectors, by comparing their own specimens, may identify the tribes and regions which they represent.

Tapa Cloth from Fiji

A painted tapa cloth from Fiji, twenty by fifteen feet, decorated with geometric designs, is on exhibition in Hall F. It was presented by Cornelius Crane of Chicago.



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