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1891 APRIL 1891

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COLLOSSAL REPTILES.

EXTINCT AMERICAN MONSTERS 100 FEET LONG.

The Most Strange and Gigantic Forms of Life the World Has Ever Seen Were Once the Inhabitants of This Continent—Curious Fossil Relics.

America is a land of big things—big trees, big valleys, mammoth caves, big cities, and big shows; so that we are hardly surprised when we sometimes hear of American gentlemen emulating the fancy of "Chibiabos," the marvellous story teller, the great boaster, in one of Longfellow's most beautiful poems. But we never hear our transatlantic cousins boasting that the animals of their country are larger or more formidable than those inhabiting other regions. As a matter of fact, certain big and powerful creatures, such as lions, tigers, elephants and giraffes, are conspicuous by their absence.

But it was not always so. Time was—ages and ages ago—when what we now call "the New World" was inhabited by the strangest and the most gigantic forms of life that the world has seen. Geologists such as Prof. Marsh and Cope, in searching among the stony records of certain geological periods, have discovered the remains of a host of reptiles of great diversity, often of stupendous size, and in some cases so unlike any of the present inhabitants of the globe, whether living on land or in the sea, that we might almost fancy ourselves in fairyland, as we try to clothe the bones with living flesh and to picture them as they really were, walking or crawling on the ground, paddling in the water, and flying in the air. The creatures of a fertile imagination could scarcely be more strange, and to the student of extinct reptiles, the 'dragons' of old days are hardly so wonderful as these primeval monsters would have appeared to man, had it been permitted to the human race to be their contemporaries.

One difficulty which meets us at the outset is that many fossil creatures, and especially Dinosaurs, were so very different in character from those living now, that even in cases where the remains are complete and well preserved, nature finds it no easy matter to assign to them their proper places in the reptile class and to decide in which tribe they should be included. Thus it has been found necessary to create new orders or tribes for some of the fossil forms. Such is the case with Dinosaurs; they are placed quite by themselves; we cannot class them with any of the four existing orders, of which turtles, snakes, lizards, and crocodiles are examples. For the sake of those who may be familiar with geological terms, we may mention that Dinosaurs flourished during the three successive periods known as the New Red Sandstone, the Jurassic, and the Cretaceous or Chalk period.

They varied very much in size; some were only two feet long and lightly built; others were truly colossal in size and power, thus rivaling the whales and elephants of the present day. In one of these giant reptiles the upper bone of the hindleg was 5½ feet long; in another the same bone was 6 feet 3 inches long—a great deal bigger than the same bone of an elephant—and the reptile itself attained a length of from 80 to 100 feet. The remains of Dinosaurs come chiefly from the Jurassic and Cretaceous rocks. They were doubtless very numerous during the preceding period of the new red sandstone; but as we have to rely mainly on footprints and fragments of skeletons, we do not know very much about those of that period.

Many strange creatures lived at the same time; but these Dinosaurs exhibit a "new departure," for their skeletons show a very marked approach to birds. Without introducing technical details, it will be sufficient for our purpose to mention one of the best known examples—namely, the famous Iguanodon described by the late Dr. Mantell. Some huge bones of this creature were found in Sussex, and may be seen in the Brighton Museum, also at South Kensington (Natural History Museum). Since Dr. Mantell's day complete specimens of this monster have been unearthed, so that it is now possible to restore it, and form a very fair idea of its appearance, since every bone is known. This ponderous Dinosaur was from thirty to fifty feet long, and fed on the leaves of trees in the neighborhood of the Weald.

In Wealden strata are found gigantic impressions, or tracks, which it can hardly be doubted were made by this creature; but they show impressions of only three toes, and so have, in spite of their size, a strangely birdlike character. The fore limbs were quite small, and possessed five fingers; but the hind limbs were enormous, and there is little doubt that it was in the habit of sitting erect on its hind legs, because we do not find impressions of the fore limbs. It had a long neck and small head. Now, these are all bird-like characters. Footprints very similar to those found in Sussex have been discovered in the famous new red sandstone strata of the Connecticut Valley in America.

Indeed, the resemblance to bird tracks in some cases so striking that serious differences of opinion arose as to whether they were made by birds or by reptiles. Even now, it would seem that some of them were produced by birds, although no remains of birds have been discovered there; while further knowledge of the Dinosaurs enables us to understand how the larger tracks were made by Dinosaurs, like Iguanodon, accustomed to walk on their hind legs.

Dinosaurs were a very varied group of animals, partly amphibious in their habits, possessing two pairs of limbs fitted for use on terra firma, and provided with claws at their extremities. As previously remarked, the hindlimbs were generally much larger than the forelimbs. In general structure, they are considered to have been intermediate between reptiles and birds. Some were vegetable feeders; others preferred a more stimulating diet, and were carnivorous. In each case the structure of the creature was adapted to its habits, the carnivorous forms being less huge and clumsy, and generally adapted for making rapid movements in seeking or catching their prey, just as cats, lions or tigers are more lightly built than oxen or elephants.

But the teeth and claws in these cases are the most certain evidence of their habits. Some Dinosaurs walked, or perhaps even hopped, on land; a few others probably haunted the trees, their bodies being very small and lightly built. Some had very solid bones; while others had light bones perforated with air passages—another bird-like feature. Some had long necks and small heads; others, short necks and large heads. There is one form known with a powerful horn on its skull, like a rhinoceros. Some,

like crocodiles, were provided with a defensive armor in the shape of long plates on the back, or even long and prickly spines. Others had no such protection, but were more powerful in attack.

The greatest number of Dinosaurs have been obtained from American strata of a certain geological period known as the Jurassic, to which the well-known Lias and Oolites belong. So numerous are the American Jurassic Dinosaurs, and generally so well preserved, that Prof. Marsh has attempted their classification. He groups them in five divisions, to each of which he gives a Latin name roughly indicating their prevailing character. These divisions are as follows, the Latin names being turned into English: (1) The lizard-footed—vegetable feeders of very great size, with fore and hind limbs of nearly equal length, walking all-fours, and with the limb-bones solid. In this group occur some enormous Dinosaurs, which we will presently describe. (2) The plated lizards, so called because their skin provided with an armor of bony plates. Some were of gigantic frame.

The hind-limbs were very large, and the fore-limbs small. They probably walked on all-fours. (3) The bird-footed—also herbivorous, with hind-limbs so much larger than the fore-limbs that they show an approach to the type of birds. It is almost certain that they habitually sat in an erect position. The limb bones were hollow, another bird-like character. Some, like Iguanodon, were of great size—namely, about thirty feet long. (4) The beast-footed. These were formidable, carnivorous creatures, which generally walked erect, their progression being in many cases assisted by a powerful tail, which they may have used in leaping, as kangaroos do. The fore-limbs were very small, and they had prehensile claws. Their limb-bones were hollow. Evidently their structure was adapted to carnivorous habits, for they would be capable of rapid movements.

One of the members of this division had a horn on its head, which, if we may judge from the rhinoceros, must have been a powerful weapon of offence. (5) The leaping-footed. These creatures, which Prof. Marsh only doubtfully includes among Dinosaurs, had curious hind feet specially adapted for leaping. Probably they had great gifts in this direction. Lastly, there is one form of Dinosaur which presents more bird-like affinities than any other—namely, the little Compsognathus longipes, from the famous lithographic stone of Bavaria. It is so peculiar that the Professor places it in a group by itself. It has toothed jaws, and a head supported on a long and slender neck. Professor Huxley concludes that "it is impossible to look at the conformation of this strong reptile and to doubt that it hopped or walked, in an erect or semi-erect position, after the manner of a bird, to which its long neck, slight head, and anterior limbs must have given it an extraordinary resemblance." It is possible that this little Dinosaur represents how reptiles became birds!

Who shall say? The best known American Dinosaurs belonging to this division were Brontosaurus and Atlantosaurus. The former of these veritable monsters is now thoroughly known. Prof. Marsh has drawn a complete restoration of the skeleton. It attained a length of fifty feet, and is estimated to have had a "live-weight" of twenty tons! It had a small head, very long neck, solid bones, and a long heavy tail. The hindlegs are of enormous size, suggestive of an elephant rather than a reptile.

The small head and brain seem to indicate a slow moving reptile. It was entirely without offensive or defensive weapons, or bony plates on the skin. In habit it was more or less amphibious, and probably fed on aquatic and other succulent vegetation. Perhaps the individuals which have been found got "mired," and so died in the mud. The largest of all the Dinosaurs was Atlantosaurus, which attained a length of nearly 100 feet! But since the bones have not all been found, it is impossible at present to give a description of this reptile. The "cup-bones" or vertebrae are larger than those of the largest whales.—Chamber's Journal.

Japan's Parliament.

The Japanese Parliament, or Diet, as it is called, is to be officially called, has sat for nearly five months, and the chief characteristics of the proceedings of the Lower House so far are a marked hostility to the Government and a marvellous facility for raising delicate points of constitutional law and practice, the discussions on which are usually carried on with great heat to a resolution of the House, which the Government either refuses wholly to accept or accepts only after some difficulty. But when the last mail left matters had at length reached what appeared to be a deadlock in regard to two important topics.

By the Constitution delegates of the Government can appear at any time in either House and explain Government measures. They are also liable to be questioned by the members. This practice has led to frequent squabbles, delegates refusing to answer particular questions, the House calling for new delegates, and the Government supporting their delegates. The first serious difference between the House and the Government took place on this question, and now it has been raised again in another shape. A prolonged debate on the Budget having been concluded by the closure, just as the division on the main question was about to be taken, the delegate from the Foreign Office claimed the right to speak, as delegates could speak at any time. There were violent objections to a delegate speaking when he could not be answered, and the House voted against hearing him. The following day the Prime Minister himself appeared in the tribune, and declared that the refusal to hear the delegate was unconstitutional, and that if the House objected to the rights given was to make a representation on the subject, and, if necessary, have that provision of the Constitution amended. The House appeared disinclined to take this view, but the delegate withdrew, observing that, as the Prime Minister had said all he wanted to say, he need not stay.

The second topic is much more serious. The Committee on the Budget had cut down the estimates in the most extraordinary way; offices are abolished (including legations abroad), the staff of departments are reduced to a mere fraction of their number, sub-departments and bureaus are swept away altogether, and the salaries of the officials remaining, beginning with the Prime Minister himself, are reduced sometimes to a third of the present amounts. The sixty-seventh article of the Constitution provides that a large portion of the expenditure, classed as "fixed expenditures," shall not be reduced by the Diet without the concurrence of the Government, and an ordinance was passed defining these fixed expenditures. The Lower House, however, has resolved that this ordinance

is ultra vires, and has interpreted this clause of the Constitution for itself in a sense wholly opposed to that of the Government, and in such a way as largely to reduce the sums of expenditure, with which it has no power to deal without the concurrence of the latter. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance delivered vigorous addresses to the House on the unconstitutional nature of its proceedings, and the Minister of Finance declared that the Government would, if the House persisted in its course, announce its dissent and take other measures provided by the Constitution.

The situation is regarded by the native press as one of great gravity, but there appeared at the time the mail left to be no prospect of the House altering its position. The House of Peers had not yet come to the consideration of the matter.—London Times.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY.

CORRECTIONS OF CURRENT VERSIONS OF GLADSTONE STORIES.

A Good Definition of the Difference Between Man and the Lower Animals—The "Jingo" Verse Which Browning Wrote—How One Word Signifies.

The correction of Sir Lyon Playfair's anecdote about Prof. Bonamy Price is a good illustration of the difficulty of exact accuracy of memory. My version of the story, as related to me by Bonamy Price himself, is as follows: In a paper of examination questions to a class of young ladies, the Professor demanded a short definition of the difference between man and the lower animals. One of the ladies answered, "Progressive desire," a definition which Bonamy Price considered the best he had ever seen or heard in so few words.

Another illustration of the rarity of exact accuracy I extract from the Times's obituary article on Lord Granville. The writer tells the following "authentic story":

"Many years ago the captaincy of Deal Castle fell vacant, and Lord Granville appointed Lord Sydney to the post. But he had his doubts last the Prime Minister—who at that time was Lord Beaconsfield—might think himself entitled to the nomination, and he therefore wrote to him, stating what he had done, and saying that he thought himself bound in courtesy to let the Prime Minister know. Lord Beaconsfield's answer was short, but very much to the point. It was: 'My dear Lord Granville—Happy Sydney, to have you for a neighbor!'"

I had this story from Lord Granville's own lips six years ago, and the fact is that Lord Beaconsfield, on hearing of the appointment, wrote somewhat testily to Lord Granville to claim the appointment as Prime Minister. Lord Granville replied that the appointment was unquestionably in the gift of the Warden of the Cinque Ports. Lord Beaconsfield was not satisfied and still claimed the right to appoint the Captain of Deal Castle. Thereupon Lord Granville supplied him with an array of facts and precedents, which placed the matter beyond dispute. To that letter Lord Beaconsfield simply replied: "My dear Lord Granville—Happy Sydney, to have you for a neighbor!"

One more illustration of inaccuracy in story telling. During the heat of the controversy on the Eastern question in the summer of 1878, I chanced to be one of a breakfast party at which Browning and Mr. Gladstone were both present. The former, who was in great conversational force, expressed himself vehemently against the pro-Turkish policy of Lord Beaconsfield. On some one referring to the Jingo song, "We don't want to fight," etc., Browning exclaimed laughingly: "Oh! I've made a version of that song which is much better than the original." He repeated his own version, which was very amusing, and probably impromptu; but I can only recall the first verse, which was as follows:

I don't want to fight;
But, by Jingo! if I do,
The man whose head I'd like to punch
Is Beaconsfield the Jew.

And then Browning proceeded to relate the following story: A few years previously he had met Lord Beaconsfield (then Mr. Disraeli) at a Royal Academy dinner. In a picturesque speech, which many of your readers will remember, Mr. Disraeli on that occasion expatiated on the extraordinary display of "the imaginative faculty" which he observed in the pictures of that year. After dinner he went up to Browning and asked him suddenly what he thought of the pictures. "I was so taken aback," said Browning, "for we did not know each other personally, that, like a fool, instead of answering his question, I asked him opinion, forgetting that I had heard him express it only half an hour before."

"Well," replied Lord Beaconsfield, "if I had to make any special criticism, it would be to remark on the extraordinary lack of the imaginative faculty which characterizes this year's pictures." I was struck dumb. Had my ears deceived me? Had I not just heard this man declare that what particularly struck him in the pictures was the extraordinary display of the imaginative faculty?

So far the story of Browning's first meeting with Disraeli has already appeared in print more than once, substantially as I have told it, and then the following purely mythical addition has been substituted for what really followed. Mr. Gladstone is represented as exclaiming, indignantly: "Do you call that amusing? I call it devilish!" As a matter of fact, Browning proceeded as follows: "The following year I met Lord Beaconsfield again at the Academy dinner. After dinner he again came up to me and said: 'How do you do, Mr. Browning? You remember you introduced yourself to me at the Academy dinner last year.' 'I beg your pardon, Lord Beaconsfield,' I replied; 'it was you who introduced yourself to me.' 'Ah! yes,' he answered; 'now I remember. And I also remember your telling me that you were struck by the extraordinary display of the imaginative faculty in last year's pictures.' 'I beg your pardon again,' I said. 'It was you who said that in your speech.' The rascal has doubtless heard that I have been telling the story against him, and now he is determined to father it on me. He is the greatest liar living."

Soon after the formation of the Aberdeen Ministry, Mr. Disraeli got up in a full house and made an elaborate attack on Mr. Gladstone, whom he accused, in a set speech, of jobbery in granting, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Crown lease of Montague House to the Duke of Buccleuch. "I was astonished," said Mr. Gladstone; "I knew that I had

not granted the lease, and I had a strong impression that Disraeli himself had done so just before leaving office. But not being quite sure of the second point, I simply replied that I thought the right honorable gentleman was in error as to his facts, but I would let the House know on the following day how the matter stood. Sure enough, I found that Disraeli himself had made out the lease. I came down to the House to state the facts, but found that Disraeli had preceded me and explained briefly that he had made a mistake. Now what personal object could he have had in telling an untruth that was capable of instant exposure?

This is the true story of what really happened. The usual version leaves out what led up to the story—the casual reference to the Jingo song and Browning's humorous parody (which I wish I could remember in its entirety), and Mr. Gladstone's apology for Lord Beaconsfield's occasional deviations from accuracy, with the illustrative anecdote. The revised version of the story, is inconsistent with its beginning and end. It was Browning who expressed indignation against what he considered Lord Beaconsfield's offences against veracity. It was Mr. Gladstone, enjoying the fun of Browning's story, who put another complexion on Lord Beaconsfield's free handling of facts.—London Spectator.

Ocean Cables.

The longest ocean cable in the world is that of the Eastern Telegraph Company, whose system extends from England to India and measures 21,000 miles. Africa is now completely encircled by submarine cables, which make up altogether a length of 17,000 miles. There are eleven cables across the North Atlantic, though not all of them are at present in use. Five companies control the lines of telegraphic communication between this country and Europe.

Nothing Very New.

Mrs. De Visite—Good afternoon, Miss Blank! Is your mother at home? Miss Blank—No. She has gone to Mrs. De Mugg's Progressive Conversation Party. By the way, what sort of a party is that, Mrs. De Visite? Mrs. De Visite—It is one at which the conversation begins with art, science, and literature, and progresses very rapidly to fashion, gossip, and servants.

DAKOTA'S ROARING WELL.

Immense Force Exerted at the Outlet of a Subterranean Reservoir.

The artesian well on the Valley stock farm continues to attract great crowds of people. And well it may, for it is really the wonder of the age. Following the tests made of the pressure on Saturday and Sunday the cap was removed, and through a nozzle a two-and-a-half inch stream of water was shot up into the air a distance of 125 to 140 feet. The direct course of the stream was greatly interfered with by the cross-beams and braces of the derrick. With a clear way and no wind a two-and-a-half inch stream would be sent 160 feet into the air. So great is the pressure that pine boards six inches wide and one inch thick, used as stays and braces on the derrick fifty feet above the mouth of the well, were broken by the force of the water. While this nozzle was on, the derrick, which is seventy-five feet high, was almost hidden from view by the spray and jettings of the stream, representing a sight as beautiful as it was wonderful.

Later in the evening Mr. Weston, manager of the well, who has had charge of the drilling, removed the two and a half inch nozzle and placed upon the pipe a four-inch one. Immediately a stream four inches in diameter shot up nearly seventy feet, deluging everything in its descent. This was accompanied by a deep roaring sound, and frequent sharp reports resembling the discharge of a rifle were heard. This stream, as well as the smaller one, struck the walking beam and broke much of its force.

The amount of water that flows from the well is tremendous, being estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000 gallons per minute. Even at the lowest figure enough pours out of the well to furnish every man, woman, and child in the State of South Dakota with at least four gallons of water every twenty-four hours. As to the pressure, that has not been fully ascertained, but from tests already made it is known to be considerably more than 200 pounds to the square inch. With a fair test it is likely to reach 225 pounds. The pressure has steadily increased for the last three days and may exceed the above figures.

The well is now 960 feet deep, and as soon as machinery now ordered arrives the work of reaming the hole to eight inches in diameter, making it an eight-inch well from top to bottom, will be prosecuted. The water is soft, clear, and pleasant to the taste. It is flooding the low places in the vicinity, and, although great ditches have been dug to carry it into the Jim River, acres of water may be seen in every direction. Without doubt this is the greatest artesian well in the world.—South Dakota Huronite.

A Good Man Rewarded.

He was a good man. He threw a sealskin sash over the shoulders of a fainting girl on Niagara suspension bridge. The distraught creature wore it on to Niagara Falls, where this Samaritan relieved her of it and wended his way. And verily he had his reward, being richer by \$50 customs duties, which his benevolence had evaded. To importers of sealskin, the humor of this proceeding may be distorted, viewed through the refractive medium of personal interest. The other 66,000,000 may be permitted to pay tribute of delight to a nimbleness of wit that accredits civilization: For civilization has been defined "the triumph of man over his accidents."—New York Evening Sun.

Coleridge's Classification of Readers.

Coleridge says: "Readers may be divided into four classes: 1. Sponges, who absorb all they read, and return it early in the same state, only a little dirty; 2. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing, and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time; 3. Strain bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read; 4. Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also."

The furniture of the ex-Emperor of Brazil was recently sold by auction. A writing desk belonging to the ex-Emperor fetched £300; a prie-dieu went for £13; the imperial throne was bought for £74; His Majesty's meowling going about to scientific lectures in Paris, and a probably a good deal happier than he was when seated on his imperial throne.