

future, for instance, the maids as to marriage and the matrons as to fecundity. On the whole the Cult des Pierres seems to be feminine. The strange customs long inhibited are still secretly practiced in France and M. Sebillot has handled this delicate subject with great detail and frankness. The paper was illustrated by a large series of photographs of the megalithic monuments, lent by Dr. Thomas Wilson.

Dr. J. Walter Fewkes in discussing the paper said that he appreciated this great contribution to knowledge, and further that a number of customs among the Zuni and Moki are similar to those mentioned by M. Sebillot. Mr. W J McGee and Dr. Thomas Wilson also discussed the question of the worship of stones in America.

The Society passed a vote of thanks to M. Sebillot and requested the publication of the paper in the *Anthropologist*.

WALTER HOUGH.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### NOTES ON CUBAN FOSSIL MAMMALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The reported occurrence in Cuba of certain fossil mammals has been used by several geologists, the first of whom was Manuel Fernandez de Castro, as evidence of former land connection between Cuba and the continent of North America in Pleistocene time.

The fossil mammals reported from this island belong to the genera *Hippopotamus*, *Equus*, *Mastodon* and *Megalocnus*, a subgenus of *Megalonix*. Leidy\* examined specimens sent him by Poey, and published the opinion that the remains of the horse appear not to differ from the corresponding parts of the recent animal, and it is even doubtful if they are to be considered indigenous fossils. Concerning the hippopotamus remains, which consisted of isolated canines, he says that 'they probably also belong to the recent animal.' The same opinion was expressed by Pomel.† Vertebrate pa-

leontologists do not consider isolated horse teeth sufficient data for the determination of species. So far as I have been able to glean from the literature, the remains of the so-called fossil horses from Cuba, reputed to be of Pleistocene age, are fragmentary, and therefore cannot be considered as possessing any paleontologic value. It has been shown that the *Mastodon*\* remains were not indigenous to Cuba, but were contained in a box of fossils from Honduras sent by del Monte to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Havana.

These notes seem to show conclusively that the three mammals considered above were not indigenous to the island of Cuba.

The fourth genus, *Megalocnus*, remains to be considered. According to de Castro's first notice,† this specimen was collected at Ciego Montero, a place noted for warm baths, in the jurisdiction of Cienfuegos, by José Figueroa, a young student of the Royal University. This reference is given as a quotation from a note read by Poey to the Havana Academy in 1861. I have not seen this note by Poey in print. The subsequent publications until 1892 are simply quotations of the above given locality. In the *Anales de la Real Academia de la Habana*, Vol. III., page 656, April, 1871, a note is inserted by Poey asking for information concerning the locality of certain large fossils which were sent to de Castro. On page 698 of the same volume it is stated that this box of fossils was sent by Leonardo del Monte to the Havana Academy of Sciences and contained three fossils from Honduras. According to the note of Poey‡ this box contained specimens of *Mastodon humboldti*, but Poey himself does not verify the locality whence the *Megalocnus* came.

As there have been so many extraneous fossils confused in the so-called Cuban fossil mammalian fauna, it has occurred to me that

\* For note by Poey regarding the original locality of the *Mastodon*, *M. humboldti*, see *Anal. Real. Acad. Cien. Habana*, Vol. VIII., pp. 124-126, August, 1871.

† *Anal. Real. Acad. Cien. Habana*, Vol. I., p. 58, Sept., 1864.

‡ *Anal. Real. Acad. Cien. Habana*, Vol. VIII., pp. 124-126.

\* *Proc. of the Acad. of Nat. Sci. Phila.*, Vol. XX., 1868, pp. 179.

† *Comptes Rendus*, Paris, Vol. LXVII., 1868, p. 850.

the specimens of *Megalocnus* might have been contained in this box of fossils from Honduras, or they may have come from some locality not in Cuba.

The only evidence which seems to contradict this expression of doubt is that given by de la Torre\* in his 'Observaciones Geológicas y Paleontológicas en la región central de la Isla (Cuba).' In this article additional localities, the vicinity of Cárdenas and between Santo Domingo and Sagua, are recorded. I am not able to express an opinion as to the correctness of these localities or on Torre's ability to determine fossil vertebrates. I am inclined to doubt because there has been so much error regarding those fossils concerning which we have subsequently been able to procure definite data.

The question which I wish here to bring to the attention of vertebrate paleontologists is: Are vertebrate fossils of the genus *Megalocnus* found in Central America, especially in Honduras?

A note may be added upon the question of the priority of the name *Megalocnus* Leidy, and *Myomorphus* Pomel. The note by Leidy was published in the *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Volume XX., pages 179-180. The date given at the bottom of the page is June-July, 1868. The article by Pomel was published in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences*, Paris, Vol. LXVII., for the second half, July to December, 1868, pp. 665-668. This is the account of the proceedings of the session of Monday, September 28, 1868. Apparently Leidy's name antedates that of Pomel by several months.

The recent mammalian fauna of Cuba consists of only two genera, a rodent, *Capromys*, which possesses species in several other West Indian Islands. It is a peculiar genus, having its nearest relatives in the Octodont rodents of South America. There are no relatives at all on the North American continent. The other genus is a peculiar large insectivore, *Solenodon*. This animal is entirely different from anything found in any other part of America.

\* *Anal. Real. Acad. Habana*, Vol. XXIX., pp. 121-124, August, 1892.

It is most closely related to a genus, which is very different, found in Madagascar. If there had been any Pleistocene connection between North America and Cuba it would have inevitably caused a considerable similarity between the mammalian faunas of the two regions. However, none of the common mammalian types of the continent, such as cats, raccoons, hares, etc., are found in that island.

T. WAYLAND VAUGHAN.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,

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#### THE ENGLISH SPARROW IN NEW MEXICO.

For some time we have known of the presence of this bird at Raton and Las Vegas. I have now for the first time observed it at Albuquerque, the birds being fairly numerous in the immediate vicinity of the railway station.

T. D. A. COCKERELL.

#### SHORTER ARTICLES.

##### NEJED: AN ARABIAN METEORITE.

AMONG a considerable number of important specimens lately added to the Ward-Coonley Collection of Meteorites, now on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, is a mass or single bolide of iron from Western Australia called the Youndegin or Penkaring Rock Meteorite. It is one and one half feet in greatest diameter, and weighs between 300 and 400 pounds. Its companion piece, which is in the Royal Museum of Vienna, weighs 910 kilogrammes (half a ton) and is with Cranbourne, also from Australia, one of the largest two meteorites from the entire Eastern Hemisphere.

But of even more interest is the subject of the present notice: the Nejéd Meteorite from Central Arabia. It is a siderite or iron meteorite, whose form is rudely triangular, flattened in its longest diameter, which is about fourteen inches, while its thickness below is eleven inches, and its breadth, or height, about nine inches. Its surface is completely and very handsomely covered with the pittings so frequent in meteorites, whether of iron or of stone. The sharpness of these depressions and the bright-