

Tertiary beds of the Mississippi embayment and the gravels within the Missouri valleys, I shall not attempt to consider, as they should be seen on the ground before being discussed. As far as presented, they do not overcome the various lines of evidence which point to changes in the level of Missouri since its Paleozoic emergence; the last of these changes being the one in consequence of which the present valleys were cut in the denuded surface of the region.

W. M. DAVIS.

Harvard College, Oct. 31, 1893.

COON CATS.

SEEING Mr. J. N. Baskett's note on page 220 of the current volume of *Science*, concerning coon cats, I venture to inform you that I was struck with the extraordinary appearance of one of these cats owned by Mr. Will Carleton, who had it with him in the Catskill Mountains the present summer. I asked him about the cat and he told me the same fable which Mr. Baskett relates, but he went on to say that of course the story was incorrect and that in his opinion this peculiar race of cats from Maine is descended from some Perisian or Angora breed brought down to Maine by early French settlers from Canada. I believe that this was surmise on Mr. Carleton's part, but it seemed reasonable to me and if you receive no more satisfactory explanation in reply to Mr. Baskett's question, you are at liberty to use this.

L. O. HOWARD.

Washington, D. C., November 9.

PUMP WATER.

IN America we often observe that the farmer, in his efforts to economize the steps of the housewife, digs his domestic well in close vicinity of his drains and outbuildings, but I have yet to see at home so pronounced a case of unsanitary surroundings as I observed in Germany a short time ago.

The top of a tall wooden pump, which crowned the family well, just peeped out from a huge manure heap which completely surrounded it. So large was the heap that the pump handle had to be operated by a rope, and the water was carried beyond the heap by a small trough.

W. M. P. MASON.

Rome, Italy, Nov. 2.

COON-CATS.

IN answer to Mr. J. N. Baskett's question regarding "Coon-Cats" in your issue of Oct. 20, 1893, I would say that this cross-breed of animals has been known for many years, more particularly in the State of Maine. The error attributing these mongrels to a cross between our domestic feline, and the raccoon, *Procyon lotor*, is as general as it is ridiculous; for it stands to reason that animals of different families could not interbreed. The notion is about as ridiculous as a prevalent story among the ignorant that (cat) owls bear their young alive.

The subject of "coon-cats," or sometimes called mule-cats, has been repeatedly discussed in many papers, and it is now generally conceded that this hybrid is the result of an alliance of our domestic tabby with some Oriental feline—probably the Angora. This cross would show the long, bushy tail of the Oriental species. But Mr. Baskett is in error in supposing these animals plantigrade, and if he secures a skull, which he can easily do, he will find that the dentition is pronouncedly feline.

These cats are quite common in parts of New England, and may be purchased at a very reasonable figure, and according to the demands and the supply in the cat market. Few persons are able to distinguish between genuine Angoras and these hybrids, and many are the unsuspecting buyers who have paid a high price for a common "coon-cat" worth not more than two dollars.

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Wants.

WANTED.—Tuckerman's Geneva Lichenum and Carpenter on the Microscope, Wiley's Introduction to the Study of Lichens. State price and other particulars. Richard Lees, Brampton, Ont.

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WANTED.—A copy of Mascart & Joubert's Lessons in Electricity and Magnetism, Vol. I. Address R. W. Clawson, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

CHEMIST.—Graduate of a polytechnical school, and studied photographic chemistry in Germany and Austria. Situation teaching or in analytical or experimental laboratory. M. B. Punnett, Rochester, N. Y.

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OUR GREAT WEST.—\$2.50.

THE contents of the volume appeared serially in *Harper's Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly*, in which periodicals they attracted wide attention and favorable comment. Their importance fully justified their republication in a more permanent form. The book affords a more minute insight into the present condition of the West than can be found elsewhere. What it tells is the result of personal experience, fortified by information obtained from the best-informed and most reliable men in the localities under discussion, and set forth with admirable clearness and impartiality. It is a work to be read and pondered by those interested in the growth of the nation westward, and is of permanent standard value.—*Boston Gazette*.

STATESMEN.—\$2.00.

IN the preparation of this work Noah Brooks has aimed to present a series of character sketches of the eminent persons selected for portraiture. The object is to place before the present generation of Americans salient points in the careers of public men whose attainments in statesmanship were the result of their own individual exertions and force of character rather than of fortunate circumstances. Therefore these brief studies are not biographies. Mr. Brooks had the good fortune of personal acquaintance with most of the statesmen of the latter part of the period illustrated by his pen, and he considers it an advantage to his readers that they may thus receive from him some of the impressions which these conspicuous personages made upon the mental vision of those who heard and saw them while they were living examples of nobility of aim and success of achievement in American statesmanship.

MEN OF BUSINESS.—\$2.00.

W. O. STODDARD, who has just written a book published by the Scribners, on "Men of Business," tells

how the late Senator Stanford chopped his way to the law. "He had grown tall and strong," says Mr. Stoddard, "and was a capital hand in a hay-field, behind a plough, or with an axe in the timber; but how could this help him into his chosen profession? Nevertheless, it was a feat of wood-chopping which raised him to the bar. When he was eighteen years of age his father purchased a tract of woodland; wished to clear it, but had not the means to do so. At the same time he was anxious to give his son a lift. He told Leland, therefore, that he could have all he could make from the timber, if he would leave the land clear of trees. Leland took the offer, for a new market had latterly been created for cord-wood. He had saved money enough to hire other choppers to help him, and he chopped for the law and his future career. Over 2,000 cords of wood were cut and sold to the Mohawk and Hudson River Railroad, and the net profit to the young contractor was \$2,600. It had been earned by severe toil, in cold and heat, and it stood for something more than dollars.—*Brooklyn Times*.

ORTHOMETRY.—\$2.00.

IN "Orthometry" Mr. R. F. Brewer has attempted a fuller treatment of the art of versification than is to be found in the popular treatises on that subject. While the preface shows a tendency to encourage verse-making, as unnecessary as it is undesirable, the work may be regarded as useful in so far as it tends to cultivate an intelligent taste for good poetry. The rhyming dictionary at the end is a new feature, which will undoubtedly commend itself to those having a use for such aids. A specially interesting chapter is that on "Poetic Trifles," in which are included the various imitations of foreign verse in English. The discussion of the sonnet, too, though failing to bring out fully the spiritual nature of this difficult verse form, is more accurate than might be expected from the following sentence: "The form of the sonnet is of Italian origin, and came into use in the fifteenth [*sic*] century, towards the end of which its construction was perfected, and its utmost melodious sweetness attained in the verse of Petrarch and Dante." In the chapter on Alliteration there are several misleading statements, such as calling "Piers the Plowman" an "Old English" poem. In the bibliography one is surprised not to find Mr. F. B. Gummere's admirable "Handbook of Poetics," now in its third edition. In spite of these and other shortcomings, which can be readily corrected in a later issue, this work may be recommended as a satisfactory treatment of the mechanics of verse. A careful reading will improve the critical faculties.—*The Dial*.

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