

NATURAL MONUMENTS.

BY CHARLES F. HOLDER.

So striking are many of the monuments of nature, those strange effigies of the works of man, chiseled by happy chance, by wind and weather, that one is often impressed by the belief that man originally found his ideas of art and architecture in nature, at least that the suggestion and impulse came in this way, and was developed and fostered by the human mind.

In crossing one of the most arid and forbidding regions in the State of Texas, the writer noticed a singular section of the country, which bore so remarkable an imitation to a gigantic structure built by human hands, that even an examination almost failed to dispel it. The work appeared to be gigantic ramparts formed of titanic blocks piled one upon another, as the pyramids might have been made. In one place they were exposed; in another covered, merged into a hill, reappearing far away; and only the vast nature of the work showed that it was accidental. This singular "work" is near the Pecos River region, which winds down through the State, cutting some striking gorges and abounding in picturesque scenery. Investigation shows that this rock has weathered or broken at regular intervals of six or eight feet, giving the impression of artificial blocks. On a portion of a branch of the Pecos River there is a series of flying buttresses or pillars, which stand out from a lofty cliff, presenting a most remarkable and imposing appearance. The traveler coming upon these stupendous figures in this wilderness, would easily mistake them for the work of man, so perfect are they.

In the Garden of the Gods are found strange monuments, the work of the hands of nature, towering aloft and assuming curious shapes that simulate the work of man; but all these, so remarkable as they are, do not rank with the singular and perfect column, known as the Sheepeater's Monument, which rises in the mountains of Idaho ten miles down Monumental Creek from the town of Rosswilt, in Thunder Mountain. It was discovered a number of years ago by some herders and prospectors, and was reported as a gigantic monolith, made by prehistoric man; and its appearance would justify the assumption. Yet the column is the work of wind and weather. The monument is over seventy feet in height, of commanding proportions, and can be seen against the sky for a long distance. It is nearly eighteen feet in diameter at the base, and rises in almost perfect proportions, being near the summit ten feet in diameter, sixty feet from the ground. The crowning feature of this stupendous column is what appears to be a cube of solid rock poised artistically upon one of its points—a position which would be a masterpiece of engineering to accomplish by the most skilled appliances of man.

This American Pillar of Hercules stands on the edge of a deep cañon filled with pine trees, and is an object lesson to the student of geology as well as to one interested in the fantastic in nature. The story of the pillar is easily told. It stands as a remnant of the mountain, which has been cut away by the constant washing of rains of untold centuries. At first a cloudburst, possibly, formed a channel; this became a cañon, and as the sides of the mountain washed away, a column-shaped mass, which was more resistant and harder than the rest, was left. Accident made the top of the column larger, as chance shaped the lower portion. This monument, due to the disintegrating power of nature, is formed of a rough conglomerate which but adds to its attractiveness, huge blocks and boulders clinging to its sides, standing out in such relief that it is almost possible to use them as stepping stones and climb to the summit; yet so tall is the pillar, they are not seen at a distance, and do not interfere with the regular outline.

In the accompanying photograph this stupendous piece of nature's carving is seen. On the right side, part way up, are projecting boulders which weigh several tons, and the strength and nature of the entire structure can be realized by the size of the surmounting cube, which shows from the point of view two level faces, and which it is estimated weighs one hundred tons or more. Marvelous as is this

pillar, it is known to fame as "Sheepeater's Monument," the real meaning or significance of which is not definitely known.

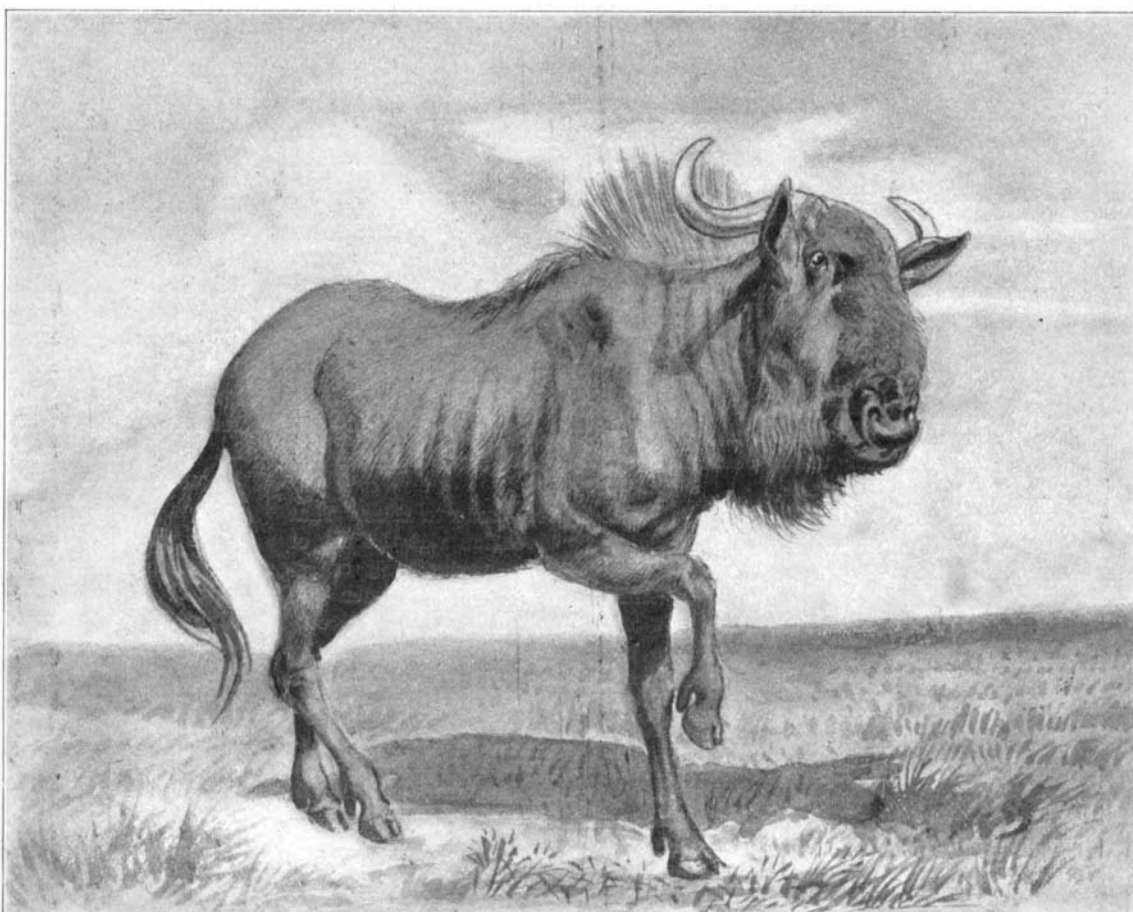
Yachtsmen on the coast of Southern California are familiar with some remarkable monuments. One at the north end of Santa Catalina rises to a height of seventy feet directly from the sea—a needle-like rock,



A NATURAL MONOLITH IN IDAHO.

At a point 60 feet from the ground the diameter is 10 feet.

which from the base beneath the surface to the summit is believed to be over one hundred feet. On the upper portion is a large sea eagle's nest, composed of sticks, kelp, and refuse of various kinds, the piling up of years. When a storm is on, this rock receives the full force of the sea, which rises high in air to be swept across the intervening space and envelop the narrow head of the island in flying scud; yet the eagles persist in their home. On the north end of San Clemente Island there is a similar rock, known as



THE BLUE GNU.

the Chimney, which might well serve as a lighthouse on these rocky shores.

High-Speed Trials With Electric and Steam Locomotives.

In the course of the Marienfelde-Zossen high-speed trials, the safety of working of the current collectors was particularly remarkable, even for the highest speeds. Special attention was paid to braking and inertia tests. By increasing the braking pressure, the braking distance was more and more reduced. Moreover, a new device was tested, automatically preventing the wheels from being braked at decreasing speeds by drawing air off from the braking cylinder. Trailing experiments were performed on six-axle sleeping cars, connected to the high-speed cars, it being shown that trailers up to speeds of 160 kilometers will run rather smoothly, material oscillations being observed only at speeds as high as 180 kilometers.

These experiments having shown that existing permanent ways, with careful construction and supervision of the track, are capable of standing much higher speeds than those now in vogue, even without any specially-designed cars, the Prussian railway authorities have decided on undertaking on the same Marienfelde-Zossen military railway some further experiments as to the performance and behavior of several types of locomotives. It is intended to reach speeds as high as about 90 miles an hour; and as the locomotives ordered for this purpose are now complete, it is anticipated that these experiments will be started in a very short time.

The Destruction of the Turin Library by Fire.

The famous library of the University of Turin was destroyed by fire on January 26. It is said that about 3,700 manuscripts, including almost all those of Oriental origin, were destroyed.

The number of volumes lost has not yet been established.

The fire practically lasted twenty-four hours, and it seems certain that three thousand volumes of Greek, Latin, and other codices were consumed, as well as the precious Venetian collection of books from the library of Cardinal Della Rovere. The codices from the celebrated Bobbio Abbey appear to have been saved, as was the incunabula collection.

Among the codices saved is a very ancient codex of the fourth century containing the Gospels, as well as many others of later date. A classic mediæval book of the greatest value, called "Heures de Turin," by the Duc de Berry, which Great Britain once sought to purchase, now appears to have been destroyed, as was an ancient French translation of Dante. Of this latter, however, there fortunately exists another copy in France.

THE BLUE GNU.

An exceedingly interesting animal now on exhibition at the Zoological Park is the new blue gnu. It would be hard to imagine a more fantastic-looking animal. It suggests to one coming unexpectedly upon it, and seeing it for the first time, a sort of impossible dream creature, a cross perhaps between a buffalo and a nightmare. To the buffalo belong the neck and the

horns, but the tail and the hindquarters are those of a horse. The legs are a deer's legs, but the head resembles that of no other living animal. The specimen at the park came from South Africa, where the species ranges from Orange River north to Victoria Nyanza. There seems to be no doubt that the wild grotesqueness of the appearance of the gnu is a provision of nature to protect the animal. When frightened or disturbed, these remarkable antelopes go through a series of strange evolutions and extraordinary postures, in order to enhance as much as possible the oddity and hideousness of their appearance, and to frighten away intruders.

Cotton Exports.

Although the consumption of cotton in this country is greater than that of any other country in the world, yet, in addition to supplying the home market, the South exported last year over 3½ billion pounds of cotton, worth 317 million dollars.