

ART. XXIII.—*Notice of the Remains of a Mastodon recently discovered in Michigan*; by Professor ALEXANDER WINCHELL.

SOME remains of a Mastodon have recently been exhumed in Michigan, which possess sufficient interest to deserve a scientific notice. They were found on Sec. 7, in the township of Adrian, Lenawee county, about seven miles northwest of the city of Adrian. The bones thus far discovered consist of the cranium, with the exception of the nasal bones; five molars, four of which lack their roots; the terminal portions of the two tusks, each about 18 inches long, and another fragment of a tusk a foot in length; two caudal vertebræ; two scapulæ; two femora; two tibiæ; one fibula; two calcanea; two humeri; one radius; sundry carpal, tarsal, metacarpal and metatarsal bones; three or four digital bones; three perfect ribs, and numerous fragments. The whole series of vertebræ (except two caudal) has disappeared, as well as the pelvis, the lower jaw, the nasal bones, about half of the bulk of the anterior extremities, and many of the ribs. The epiphyses of the long bones are nearly all detached, but most of them have been recovered. The state of ossification indicated by the separation of the epiphyses, the unworn teeth, and the inferior size of the bones, all tend to demonstrate that we have here the remains of a Mastodon not more than two-thirds grown.

These relics were found buried about two feet only beneath the surface of a small peat bog which was being ditched. Beneath the peat, which is not more than two and a half feet thick, we have marly clay, passing, at the depth of four feet, into loose sand. The skeleton was lying on the side. One fore-leg was extended; the other bent under the body. The hinder parts were a little the deepest in the mire. It is stated that many years ago this spot was known as a "deer lick."

It is generally supposed that the occurrence of elephantine remains in miry bogs indicates the mode of death of these ponderous quadrupeds. It may be doubted, however, whether their occurrence exclusively in peat, or beneath it, is not attributable to the antiseptic properties of that substance.

The bog in which the present remains were found, is perfectly identical with thousands of others in our State, which are known, from observation, to be in process of formation in the sites of ancient lakelets, and at a rate which argues a comparatively short duration for the alluvial period of the State. Indeed, the watery and shaking condition of this bog, with the thinness of the peaty stratum, furnish data for the belief that it was the bed of a lakelet within a comparatively short period. It is much more credible that the Mastodon under consideration was living within 500 or 1000 years, than that an interval of time, greater than the age of the human race, has been occupied in the accumulation of two or three feet of vegetable deposits, under circumstances which suffer the same work to be accomplished, in neighboring localities, within the space of a human life-time. It is more than probable that the American Indian, according to his own traditions, and according to the evidences adduced by Dr. Koch, has listened to the thunder-waking tread of these monsters of the forest and the field.

Other mastodon remains have been found at various points within the lower peninsula of Michigan, some of which are Petersburg, Monroe county; the city of Adrian, Lenawee county; Utica, Macomb county; Green Oak, Livingston county; Fentonville, Oakland county; and Terre Coupée, Berrien county. (See Proc. Bos. Soc. Nat. Hist., v, 133, 146, 158.) The localities of several other discoveries have been lost. The molar teeth of *Elephas Jacksoni* are also of occasional occurrence, in the same situations; as well as the antlers of the deer and American elk. Some years ago, the caudal vertebra of a Cetacean was identified by Dr. Sager from the western portion of the State.

The remains of the Mastodon noticed above will probably be secured for the Museum of the University, when an occasion may be furnished for a fuller account of the fossil mammals of Michigan.

University of Michigan, June 16, 1864.