



CURIOUS ANIMALS

REMARKABLE though the inventive power of the human brain is, there are some oddities which out-Wells H.G. Wells. Many of them are "missing links" between different types of animals, and so of great interest to Science.

The Super-men:— There lived in the South of France, many thousands of years ago, the strange and wonderful race of Cromagnon man. Averaging nearly seven feet in height, they had perfect proportions, and a greater skull capacity than we have. They were artistic, drawing for us pictures in bright colours and of pleasing composition. Until the movie camera was invented they were the only ones who realised that a horse had all four legs off the ground when galloping. History has drawn her veil across them, so all we have left are their bones and their pictures.

The Dawn Horse.—Millions of years before the story of man begins, can be found the first traces of the horse. It lived on the slopes of the Rockies just after the time when the great upheaval formed those mountains. That was 45 million years ago. It was not an animal of noble proportions—just about the size of a terrier with a height of 20 inches at the most. It had no hoofs, but four toes on its front feet and three on the back. It had pads and nails very like those on the feet of a dog.



So this little creature lived, felt the sun's warmth, and died, leaving his successors to carry on. After about 20 million years the race lost their smallest toes and enlarged their middle ones. Another 20 million years and they had lost the other two, the nail of the remaining one forming the hoof. Their size increased and their teeth became complex. There was one branch of the family that took to chewing the cud. It was not until the Ice Age that the modern horse first galloped the plains. Then he met Man and.



The Caterpillar that Isn't.—Beside many a small New Zealand creek, living among the ferns and fallen logs, is a curious little beast, half worm, half insect. You have probably seen him often but have mistaken him for a caterpillar, with olive-green striped coat and stumpy antennae. His name is Perapatus; he lives in New Zealand and South America; and he solved a big scientific problem.

The insects arose from the type of worms that includes the earthworms—and—Perapatus is there to prove it. Perapatus has jaws like many primitive insects, breathes by means of traccæ—fine tubes which branch to every part