

FREAKS OF NATURE

We Know There Are Giants, but
We Do Not Know Why.

THEY ARE A SORT OF PUZZLE.

Sometimes These Titans Are the Result of a Somewhat Mysterious Disease Called Gigantism—Of Goliath and the Giant Races of Gath.

Giants and dwarfs abound in the region of the Caucasus mountains. Now, why are some people big and some little? In families heredity seems to govern the matter. Where races are concerned it is not so easily explained. We are accustomed, by the way, to think of the Chinese as of inferior height; but that is because our Chinese immigrants nearly all come from the south of China. The people of north China are tall and occasionally approach the gigantic.

Chinese giants are not uncommonly sufferers from a disease called gigantism, which in the long run is inevitably fatal. It appears to be due to

something wrong with a small gland at the base of the brain, which, in a mysterious way, governs growth. A strange thing about this affliction is that the victim may be attacked long after he has become adult and has ceased to grow in a normal way. A man over thirty years of age may suddenly become a giant, the first warning he gets of the fact being the discovery that he needs a larger hat and bigger boots and gloves.

There are, however, occasional giants who are simply people of extraordinary size, in other respects normal. How to account for them nobody knows, unless by calling them freaks of nature. Much more remarkable are the giant families which are found in the Caucasus region, though most individuals of such families are not big enough to be worth while for show purposes. For circus exhibition a giant ought not to be less than seven feet six inches tall. With that stature plus boots with thick soles and a high hat, a man may be safely advertised as touching the eight foot mark.

Such giant families are not unknown in history. Josephus and other profane historians endorse the statements found in many places in the Bible in regard to the giants of Gath, from which locality, it will be remembered, Goliath hailed. The Bible puts the stature of that redoubtable champion at "six cubits and a span"—in other words, about

three inches short of ten feet. This would seem to be the altitude record for a human being, even allowing that the measurement was from the ground to the crest of Goliath's helmet.

The most celebrated of all the giant breed, not excepting Goliath, was Og, king of Bashan. At the time when the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness were brought to a close he was ruler over no fewer than sixty cities "fenced with high walls, gates and bars." His indeed was a powerful monarchy, and the conquest of his realm by Moses is looked upon to this day as one of the greatest events in Jewish history.

Og, by the way, was accustomed to sleep in a remarkable bedstead—not of wood or metal, but of brass.

Whatever the circumstances under which the giant breed existed in Palestine at the time of the first arrival of the Israelites, it is certain that in later years they were scattered about among other peoples. In a political sense some were Hittites and yet others Amorites.

Coming into contact with other races they became, it would seem, either extinct or subordinate. From what little is said of them in history it is to be inferred that they were mentally inferior, though formidable fighters by reason of their great size and strength in an age when mere bodily prowess counted for much.

If Goliath be supposed to have been eight and one-half feet high (allowing for helmet and crest) his stature did not exceed that of the celebrated Winckelmeyer, the tallest man of modern times, who, born in Bavaria, died not so many years ago. The height of many giants has been exaggerated, but Winckelmeyer was carefully measured by the anthropologist Doulos.

A man of less than eight and one-half feet could hardly have worn the enormously heavy armor and accouterments described in the first book of Samuel as composing Goliath's outfit. The staff of his spear, we are told, was "like a weaver's beam," the iron spearhead alone weighing 600 shekels, about twenty pounds.

The giant breed in Palestine apparently died out not very long before the birth of Christ.

There have been lesser giant breeds in modern times, but in some instances they have been the result of artificial selection, as, for example, in the case of the wrestlers of Nippon, who, seen in a crowd, stand head and shoulders above the ordinary Japanese.

In the neighborhood of Potsdam there are today many very tall people owing to the fact that King Frederick William's famous regiment of giants was long stationed there. The regiment numbered 2,400 soldiers, and all Europe was searched by the monarch for

big men to serve in it.—Philadelphia Record.

Still Dear.
"You used to tell me that I had the dearest little foot in the world," said she, pointing.

"That was lover's talk," said he, "but if you don't quit paying \$10 for shoes, bless me if I won't believe I spoke the truth."—Birmingham Age-Herald

Long ailments wear out pain and long hopes joy.—Stanislav

The Forehead and Health.
The forehead is the first feature of the face to show indisposition. The minute one's stomach is out of order there will be yellow spots on the brow. When one feels faint the forehead will instantly show it. When one is sick there will be freckles and pimples upon the brow, which was smooth and clear before. The forehead is as good an indication of one's general health as is the pulse.—London Globe.

Ugly Comparison.
"Dad, what do they mean by perennial?"

"Continuing from year to year," answered pop.

"Like my hat," interposed ma. And then there was a deep, portentous silence.—Providence Tribune

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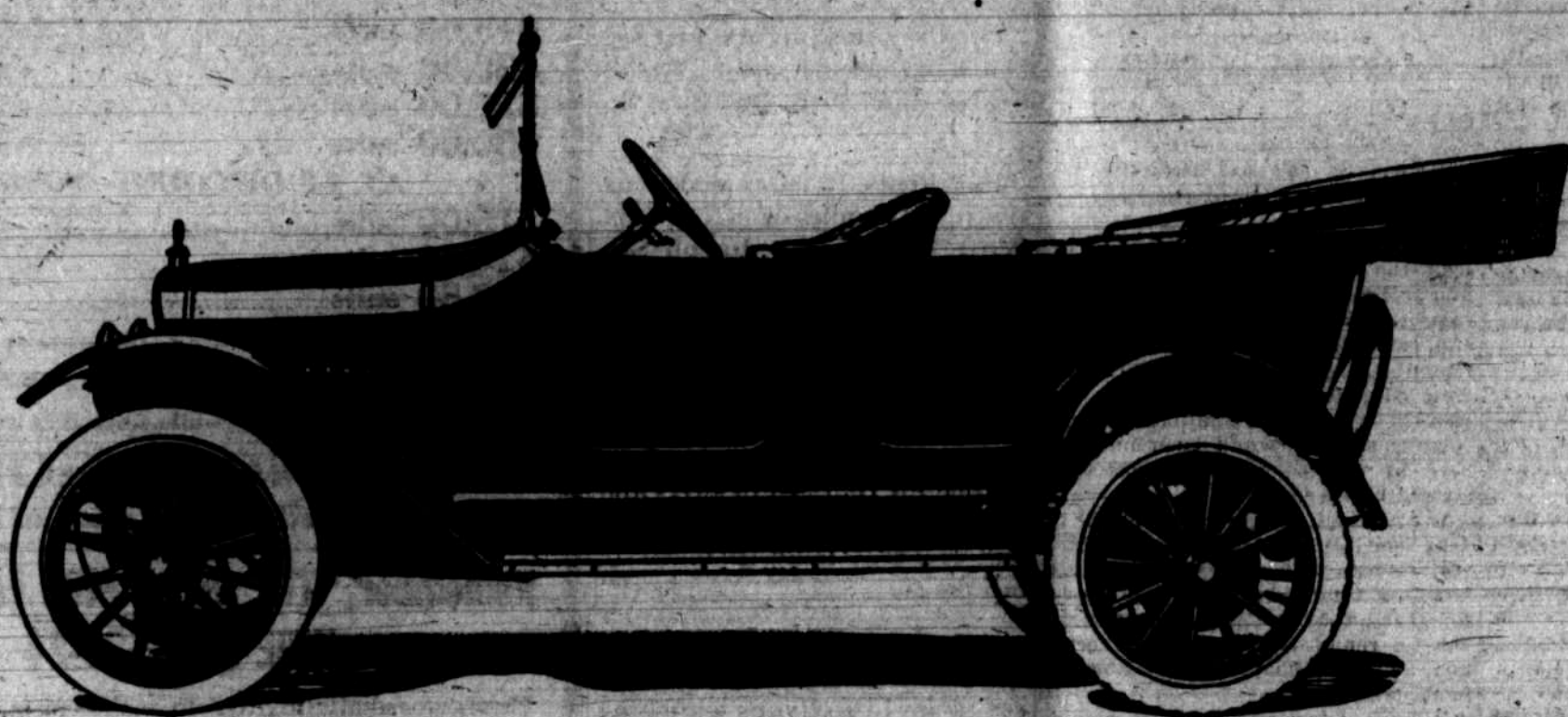
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