



**PRIMITIVE SABRE-TOOTH
TIGER, DINICTIS**

Dinictis is an extinct member of the cat family, of about the size and proportions of a leopard or puma, and was distinguished chiefly by the enlargement of the upper canine teeth into powerful daggerlike tusks, while the lower canines were small. The Dinictis used these tusks to strike and stab its prey, instead of seizing it after the fashion of modern felines. These primitive cats were no less active and powerful than their modern successors, but the brain was smaller and less complex, indicating a somewhat lower grade of intelligence. As this was equally true of the animals on which they preyed, however, it placed them at no disadvantage. So they continued to flourish, and evolved into various kinds of modern cats.

The Dinictis is represented by the artist as chasing a Protoceras, a primitive deerlike animal of the period. Both were contemporaries of the Three-Toed Horse.



*Restorations of
Prehistoric American Animals
in the American Museum of Natural History*

**THE THREE-TOED
HORSE, MESOHIPPIUS**

Among other contemporaries of the Titanotheres on the Great Plains from two to four million years ago were the ancestors of the horse. These were slender-limbed, swift-footed animals about the size of a sheep, with three toes on each foot, the side toes being much smaller than the central toe, but still reaching the ground and aiding in the support of the body. The Mesohippus was sufficiently like the horse to be easily recognized as a member of the same family, but it is only because of the progression of intermediate stages in the consecutive geologic formations up to the present day that we can be reasonably sure that these little animals were actually the ancestors of the large and powerful horse.