

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1897.

THE GEOLOGY OF GOVERNMENT EXPLORATIONS.*

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I HAVE chosen for the subject of my address this evening the development of our knowledge of the geology of the great West through the agency of explorations and surveys conducted under government auspices.

To the older of our members, especially to those who took part in those early explorations, the matter may appear somewhat trite, but to the younger ones, whose geological memory does not go back beyond the present Survey, I have thought that it might be interesting to listen to a brief account of the origin and methods of work of these earlier organizations by one who was first connected with them very nearly thirty years ago.

The period to be considered commences about with the opening of the century, and is most naturally subdivided by the Civil War. But in this field, as in others, the accumulation of knowledge progresses with ever increasing rapidity, so that, while for the first and much longer sub-period it is possible to trace approximately the actual gains that were made in geological knowledge, in the second period it is only practicable to attempt to characterize and contrast the methods by which geological in-

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* Address of the Retiring President of the Geological Society of Washington, delivered Wednesday, December 16, 1896.