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PALEONTOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS OF THE NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

By Dr. HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN

SENIOR GEOLOGIST, U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

THE forthcoming issue of Monograph 55 by the U. S. Geological Survey renders opportune a review of the continued encouragement by our government of research in vertebrate paleontology since the establishment of the National Geological Surveys. Monographic description of the extinct mammalian and reptilian life is referred to in the preface of the forthcoming volumes as follows:

Joseph Leidy, Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh, who successively served as members of U. S. government surveys of the west, were the founders of American vertebrate paleontology. Leidy's memoir of 1869, entitled "The Extinct Mammalian Fauna of Dakota and Nebraska, Including an Account of Some Allied Forms from Other Locali-

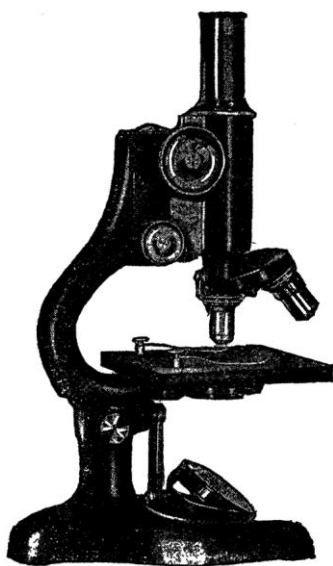
ties, Together with a Synopsis of the Mammalian Remains of North America," marked the end of the first period of exploration. Cope's great memoir of 1885, entitled "The Vertebrata of the Tertiary Formations of the West," marked the end of the second period of exploration.

Meanwhile the subject had become too broad to be comprehended in a single work.

Accordingly, Marsh, as vertebrate paleontologist of King's survey of fortieth parallel, planned a series of exhaustive monographs on special groups of extinct birds, reptiles and mammals which should treat in great detail the anatomical structure and form the basis of a systematic classification. For these monographs he carried out the most intensive field

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