

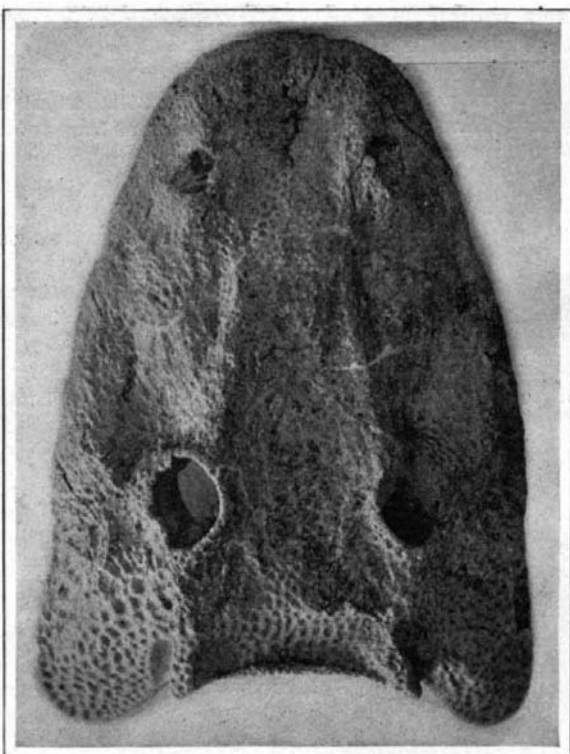
**NAOSAURUS: A FOSSIL WONDER.**

BY WALTER L. BRASLEY.

In completing and presenting to public view the first and only complete mounted skeleton in the world of a remarkable fossil wonder, the carnivorous reptile Naosaurus, from the Permian of Texas, Prof. Henry F. Osborn, one of America's foremost paleontologists, and the curator of the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology in the Museum of Natural History, New York, has scored a decided technical achievement, and has likewise made a noteworthy contribution to science. This new and imposing mount forms a valuable and instructive addition to the unequalled display of extinct animal life of the North American continent now to be seen in the halls of the museum, largely the result of sixteen years of systematic explorations in the West, mainly supported by and entirely carried out under Prof. Osborn's personal direction. This ancient Pelicosaurian, hitherto unpictured in full and practically unknown to the outside world, is considered one of the first and oldest land vertebrates that ever trod western America.

The writer, through the courtesy of Prof. Osborn, made a typical series of photographs of the specimen here shown, and presents a popular description of this unique and little-known animal destined to attract widespread attention both in the United States and abroad. The main parts of the skeleton, except the skull and limbs, were found by Mr. Charles H. Sternberg in 1896 on Hog Creek, Baylor County, northwestern Texas. The discoverer was a collector at that time for the late Prof. E. D. Cope, of Philadelphia. The latter, together with Prof. Marsh, of Yale University, made pioneer researches in the fossil fields of the West from 1870 on, recovering a considerable number of extinct forms. Prof. Cope's famous collection containing thousands of specimens, however, from lack of facilities for their preparation and exhibition, was stored in the basement of Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, away from all scientific inspections and sight of public eyes. Through the generosity of President Morris K. Jesup, it was purchased for \$50,000, and brought to New York, where the specimens are gradually being

mounted for exhibition. One of the rare, choice specimens, and unquestionably about the most curious in appearance and structure of the Cope collection, was the carnivorous reptile Naosaurus, whose marvelous shape was publicly shown for the first time at the recent exhibition of the New York Academy of Sciences, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Assembling the composite skeleton, restoring missing portions, and determining the correct and approximate pose, in the utter absence of almost any comparative

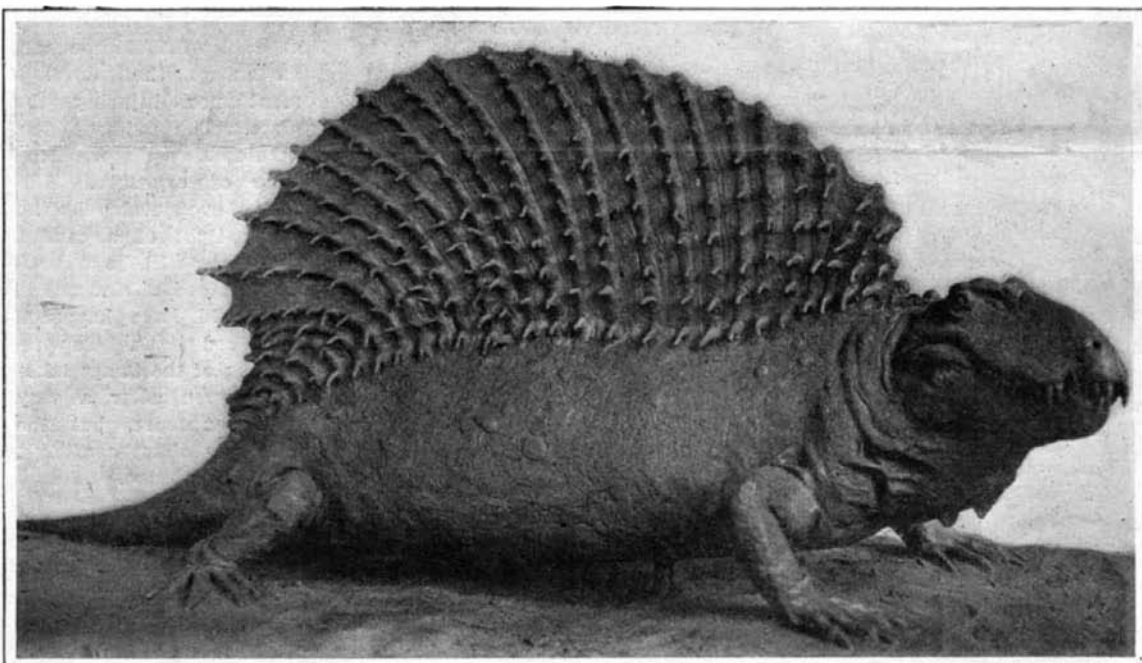


Skull of Eryops, a Giant Salamander-like Animal Which Probably Constituted the Chief Prey of Naosaurus.

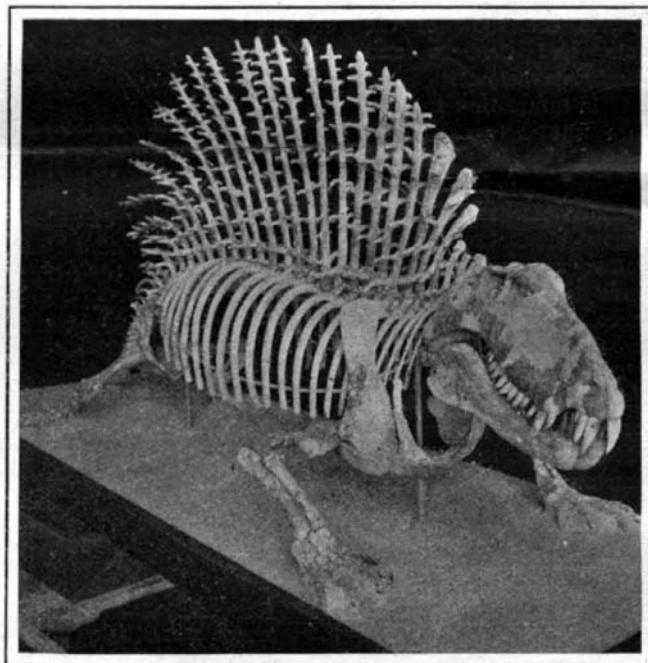
material as a guide, required the expenditure of much time and the employment of an unusual amount of the most skillful paleontological technique. About the only surviving animal structure bearing a slight resemblance to that of Naosaurus, and to which the latter is remotely related, is the very primitive existing Tuatera lizard (*Sphenodon punctatus*) of New Zealand, whose form is of extreme value and interest to the paleontologist, inasmuch as it has preserved with very few changes the common ground plan or skeleton framework from which the modern lizards, crocodiles, dinosaurs, and naosaurs have been derived. The latter was an early and very specialized offshoot of this original stem form. An idea of the painstaking and thorough attention bestowed upon the specimen may be gleaned from the fact that Dr. W. D. Matthew, the associate curator, spent three months of critical study in working out a single problem in connection with the assemblage of the skeleton.

The difficult points embodied in its final mounting, such as adjusting and setting the many fragile, fragmentary parts, was a fine piece of modern fossil engineering accomplished by Chief Preparator Adam Herman under the direction of Prof. Osborn. By the open or free mounting employed, every bone, etc., can be conveniently removed and replaced without interference with adjoining parts. For the bracing of the delicate elongated spines, a hole was bored from the top clear through each, and a steel wire or rod inserted, which was fastened to the supporting framework. The mechanism of the latter is clearly shown in one of the broadside views here reproduced. The most extraordinary and striking feature of this animal is the series of elongated neural spines, the actual continuation of the vertebral columns, ranging from three inches to nearly a yard in height. Protruding out on each side of these are rows of bony spurs or points, like the cross-yards of a mast, the whole forming a curious armored and elevated fin on the back, spread out like a huge fan from head to tail. In trying to account for some practical use of this puzzling and mysterious appendage, Prof. Cope advanced the hypothesis that

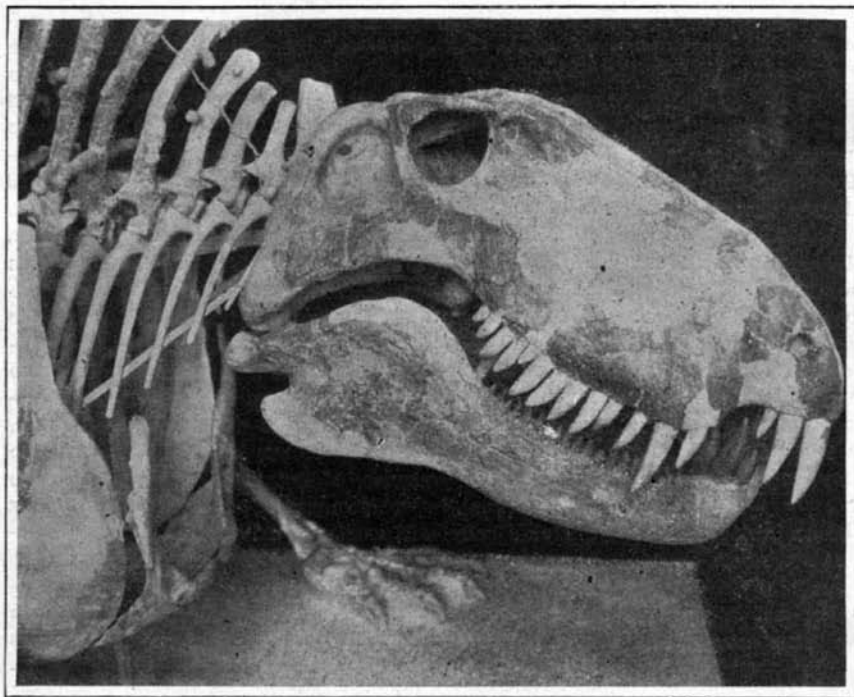
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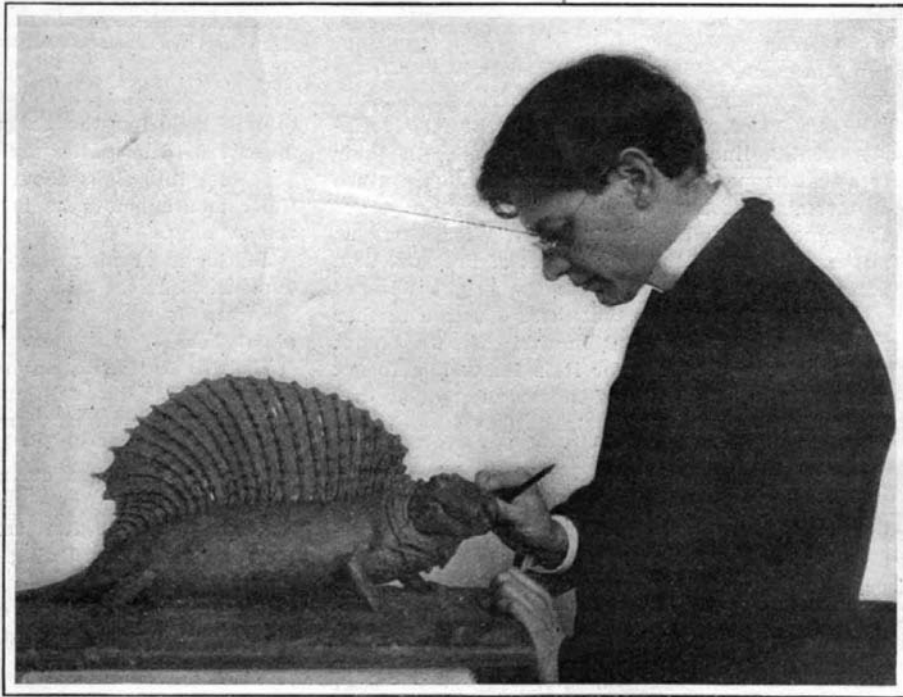
A Clay Model of the Giant Carnivorous Lizard Naosaurus.



The Complete Mounted Skeleton of the Permian Lizard Naosaurus.



The Head, Showing the Great Battery of Sharp, Tiger-like Teeth.



Mr. Charles R. Knight at Work on the Clay Restoration of the Naosaurus.

These untoward features led to the design of the sets by the Telefunken Wireless Telegraph Company, of Berlin, in which light, jointed metal masts are used instead of kites and balloons, manually-operated dynamos are employed instead of motor-driven generators, and auto-detectors and telephone receivers are substituted for the old-style coherers and Morse registers.

The new type of portable sets are especially useful for cavalry and infantry scouting service, as well as on the fighting line. The source of energy consists of a small direct-current, shunt-wound dynamo geared to a pedal arrangement and attached to a bicycle frame; it is made up of ten pieces and can be put together in five minutes. One man can easily drive the dynamo at a speed of 1,300 revolutions per minute, when it will develop one ampere at 45 volts. The driving gear and the dynamo complete weigh about 100 pounds.

The transmitter comprises the dynamo with a pilot lamp, the induction coil with its interrupter and condenser, a plug switch, and a Morse key, while the closed oscillation circuit includes the spark-gap, Leyden jar condenser, the secondary of the induction coil, and a tuning inductance coil. Finally, the open oscillation circuit is formed of the aerial wire net, a counterpoise net, or artificial ground, and an extension coil. The weight of the transmitter with its interrupter and condenser is less than 73 pounds.

The receptor includes the aerial wire systems, an oscillation transformer, an adjustable condenser in series, and an electrolytic detector with a fixed condenser in parallel. In the internal circuit there are inserted three choke coils, a head telephone receiver, an adjustable resistance, and three or four dry cells. The conductors leading to the high-frequency circuit are insulated with especial care and are silver plated to reduce the losses by damping to the greatest possible extent. The receptor weighs complete about 22 pounds.

The mast is made of magnalium, is 50 feet in height, and is built up of eight sections each of which is 6.25 feet in length. This carries an aerial wire net formed of six phosphor bronze stranded wires 8.25 feet in length. When set up, the mast is insulated from the earth and serves as a conductor to carry the high-frequency currents to the aerial wire net.

The counterpoise, which is the equivalent of the usual earth connection, is formed of six radiating aerial wires and is attached to a ring surrounding the mast but insulated from it three feet above the ground. The mast weighs 73 pounds and the aerial wire system weighs 110 pounds. The total weight of the equipment is about 440 pounds.

The portable station when set up has a range of over 30 miles across level territory or about 18.5 miles in a mountainous country; the entire apparatus can be packed in a two-wheeled transport cart, if desired, the entire weight of the cart and apparatus being in the neighborhood of 1,900 pounds. This cart is intended to carry the apparatus for both stations to a point where the officers in command have taken up their position and where the first station is to be set up. The apparatus for the second station is then mounted on the pack saddles of horses which advance with the troops. The entire weight carried on each horse does not exceed 110 pounds.

A field staff of seven men is required, an officer, a non-commissioned officer, and five men for erecting the mast and two men to hold the horses. The entire station can be erected in twenty minutes, and then one man is sufficient to operate the transmitter and receptor, while two men are needed alternately to drive the pedal dynamo. Should the infantry use the equipment and the nature of the ground will not permit the apparatus to be moved by horses, bamboo frames are provided from which the heavier parts are suspended, and these are carried by eight men.

#### NAOSAURUS: A FOSSIL WONDER.

(Continued from page 368.)

perhaps the high back crest resembled the branches of some shrubs then growing, and served to conceal the animal in a bushy region, affording a sort of protective covering and hiding place to screen him from sight when pursued by enemies. Then, again, it is thought that the lofty fin may have been employed at times as a sail, whereby the creature navigated the Permian lakes; the latter, however, is not to be taken seriously.

There is absolutely no plausible theory or definite use known for this back elevation; it may have been employed in some manner as a means of defense and protection against the attacks of adversaries, who nearly always pounced upon the back of their victims, or possibly it was an ornament simply. It is believed that Naosaurus was one of the dominant and most formidable monsters of his time. The specimen here pictured was 8½ feet long and nearly 4 feet high. While his habits are not fully known, yet from the structural make-up of the skeleton it is thought he was an awkward, slow-moving creature with a small brain, his actions being chiefly automatic, reflex, with little or no intelligence and cunning. It is probable that the

animal could not raise his body far above the ground, and moved or crawled along after the fashion and gait of a crocodile. The tall spines were most likely covered with muscle or membrane. The feet were supplied with sharp claws, two inches long. The head was enormously large in proportion to the body. The legs and neck were short, the tail exceptionally so, being 2½ feet long. The hind feet were smaller than the fore feet which is just the opposite of the case in modern lizards. The eyes were large and set far back near the top of the head. In foraging for food the rapacious lizard was not a vegetarian, but satisfied his appetite and waged constant warfare upon the numerous animals of his day, which varied in size from that of a salamander to a Florida alligator. His jaws had an extensive battery of sharp tiger-like teeth. Some of the front tusks, nearly 3 inches long, were well adapted for his flesh-eating habits. Some of the contemporary animals, like Eryops, were large, with broad flat heads, 20 inches long and over a foot wide; one of these is here shown. This giant salamander is thought to have formed the chief prey of the lizard. The sharp tooth mechanism indicated that Naosaurus probably tore off and swallowed the flesh of his victims whole without chewing.

Prof. Osborn, in a forthcoming Museum Bulletin, devoted to a preliminary technical description of the present skeleton, says: "The reader will, therefore, thoroughly understand that the assemblage is largely composite. It serves, nevertheless, to give us for the first time an adequate conception of the unique and imposing characters of these great extinct forms. It is probable that Naosaurus was a somewhat more robust animal, but otherwise much like Dimetrodon. The limbs and feet used in this assemblage may fairly represent Naosaurus, but more probably belong to a large species of Dimetrodon. We are struck by the enormous and powerful head, which was supported by ligaments attached to the stout neural spines of the anterior cervical dorsals; the elongated back, from which radiate like the rays of a fan the greatly elongated neural

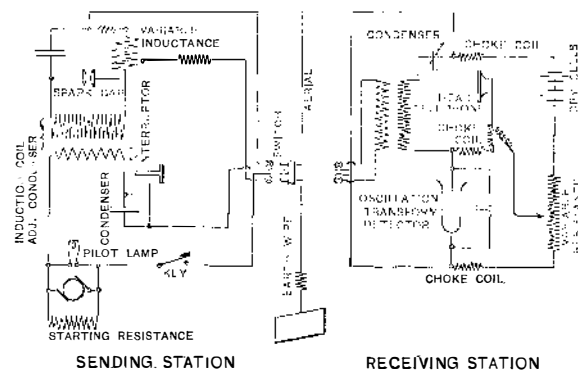


DIAGRAM OF THE WIRELESS APPARATUS.

spines, the transverse bars of which suggested the name Naosaurus or 'ship lizard' to Prof. Cope. Anteriorly the spines almost overhang the back of the head, posteriorly they are sharply retroverted into a horizontal plane. The fore limbs supported by a very powerful shoulder girdle, with relatively large and more powerful hind limbs. The horizontal position of the humerus and femur and the sharp angulation of the ankle joints are conditioned by the peculiar position of the articular facets. The pose is taken from a careful study of some of the existing lizards. The skull is modeled from a comparative study of several Pelicosaur skulls in the American Museum, with the assistance of one loaned by Prof. S. W. Williston from the University of Chicago. It is probably substantially correct. The neural spines of the anterior dorsals are directed upward, and partly expand at the extremities to support the stout ligaments attached to the occiput of the skull. As we pass backward the spines become more slender and assume a vertical, an oblique, and finally a curved retroverted position, horizontally overhanging the sacrum and anterior portion of the tail. The vertebral formula is approximately: Rib-bearing cervicals, 5; rib-bearing dorsals, 19; sacral, 5; caudal, 25."

For want of a better descriptive word the term "fin back" has been employed to designate this animal, though in a somewhat misleading sense, as the only similarity to a fish's fin is one of appearance, and not at all in construction. This high back crest in the lizard was undoubtedly a rigid and bony growth. Both Naosaurus and its allied contemporary, Dimetrodon, stand out absolutely unique as the only representatives of the whole animal world possessing this astonishing and immense growth of the spines.

In estimating the age of this creature according to geological reckoning, figuring the Permian epoch as half of the Age of Amphibians, viz., 2,500,000 years, 7,000,000 for the Age of Reptiles, 3,000,000 for the Age of Mammals (the 50,000 years of the Age of Man being negligible), it is probable that Naosaurus trod the primeval lands and roamed around the shores of the great Permian lakes of Texas about 12,000,000 years ago. This animal therefore flourished millions of years

before the huge dinosaurs like Brontosaurus and others became dominant in the Age of Reptiles, being twice as old as the latter, and five times older than Eohippus, the little catlike four-toed horse of the Lower Eocene Age of Mammals. The Wichita Red beds of northwest Texas, in which the ancient remains of this land vertebrate were found, attain a thickness of 2,000 feet. The Permian beds are said to extend for 600 miles across Kansas, Oklahoma, Indian Territory, New Mexico, and Texas. The reader's special attention is called to the splendid and ideal front page drawing, executed by Mr. Charles R. Knight, who is universally recognized as the leading artist in this country in the painting and modeling of extinct animal life. The probable life appearance of this remarkable animal, with its high, sail-like fin or armored crest, characteristic pose, etc., is strikingly portrayed. The external shape was completed only after very careful and critical examination of the skeleton and its structure, as well as other related forms, under the direction of Prof. Osborn, and consequently is based upon accurate scientific points. Both the painting and clay model of this and other animals, however, represent the present state of paleontological knowledge known in regard to them, and are subject to modifications and changes by future discoveries. The writer acknowledges his indebtedness to Prof. Henry F. Osborn for special courtesies extended in obtaining illustrations and material for this article.

#### Is There Water on the Moon?

Some striking photographs made by Prof. W. H. Pickering of the volcanoes in the Hawaiian Islands serve to point out certain characteristics which they have in common with the craters on the moon. One photograph of a long crack, extending some miles, in the lava crust at Hawaii serves to emphasize Prof. Pickering's belief that water or water vapor exists on the moon, and by irrigating cracks on the moon's surface gives rise to vegetation in them, just as trees and shrubs have sprung up in the Hawaiian lava crack. In studying Erastothenes in 1904, Prof. Pickering found its interior seamed with numerous fine cracks. Watching some of these cracks soon after the sun arose on them he was able to see them broaden out and change gradually into canals. It is his belief that the cracks gave out water vapor, which fertilized the vegetation along their sides and in their neighborhood, and that it was the growth of this vegetation which produced the appearance of a canal. A further inference is that the canals on Mars, which become more clearly visible at some periods of the year, owing to the melting of the Martian polar ice cap and the flooding of the waterways, are similar cracks on the surface of Mars. Cracks of the kind occur on the moon. The largest of them is that known as Sirsalis, which is 400 miles in length. It is possible also that they exist on the earth, though they are not readily discernible. It has sometimes been supposed that terrestrial volcanoes lie along subterranean cracks.

#### Fritz Gold Medal Presented to Alexander Graham Bell.

In the course of the exercises which marked the formal opening of the building of the United Engineering Society, the John Fritz gold medal was presented to Alexander Graham Bell, for the invention and introduction of the telephone. This is the third medal of the kind awarded. The first was given to Lord Kelvin for his work in cable laying and the second to George Westinghouse for perfecting the air brake. Mr. Bell will depart for England in a few days and will receive the degree of doctor of science from the University of Oxford. Commemorative medals were given to R. W. Pope, secretary of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers; Rossiter W. Raymond, secretary of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, and Mr. Hutton.

#### Prizes for Safety Devices.

The American Institute of Social Service announces that in addition to the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN medal, Francis H. Richards has offered a gold medal to be awarded annually by the Institute for the best invention for safeguarding life, to be exhibited at the museum relating to automobiles and motor boats, also an anonymous gift of \$5,000 from a city outside of New York, for the American Museum of Safety Devices and Industrial Hygiene. It was announced also that Dr. L. L. Seaman has offered an annual prize of \$100 for the best essay on the subject of safeguarding life.

The growing popularity of interlocking rubber tiling is shown by its invasion of new fields, being extensively used in kitchens, vestibules, and bathrooms of the better sort; in fine ocean liners, lake steamers, ferryboats, and yachts, where its non-slippery character and the fact that it remains unaffected by constant wrenching strains render it very valuable, and now it may be seen in one of the finest cathedrals in the country and in one of the largest of our public art galleries.



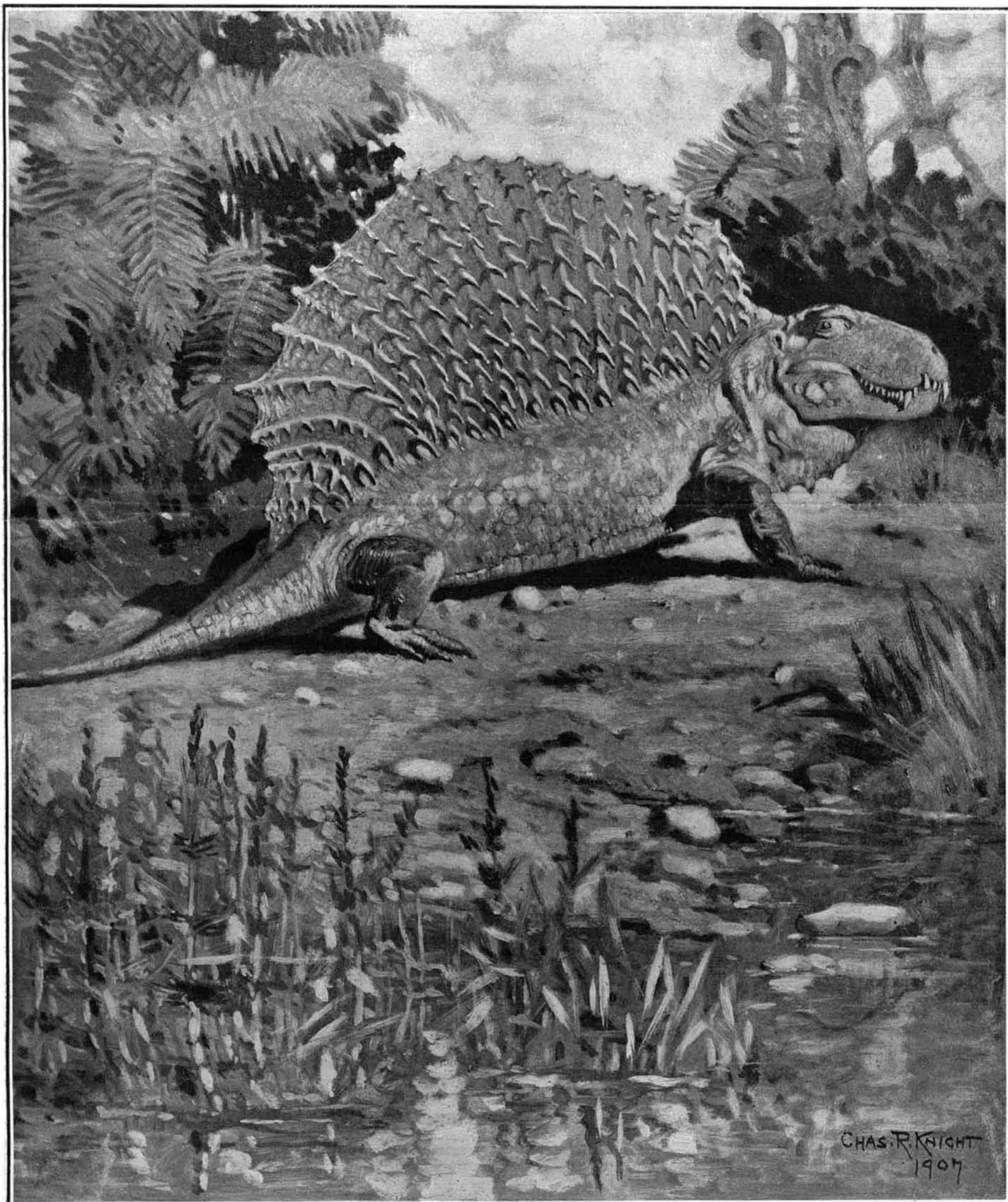
# SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

[Entered at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter. Copyright, 1907, by Munn & Co.]

Vol. XCVI.—No. 18.  
ESTABLISHED 1845.

NEW YORK, MAY 4, 1907.

10 CENTS A COPY  
\$3.00 A YEAR.



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An Extinct, Flesh-Eating, Crawling Monster That Made Life Unpleasant for the Texan Lizards of His Day. Why Nature Gave Him a Spiny Crest No One Knows. Perhaps This Curious Excrescence Was a Means of Impaling Enemies Whose Too Aggressive Impulses Prompted Them to Leap on His Back.

A PREHISTORIC INHABITANT OF TEXAS. HOW NAOSAURUS APPEARED TWELVE MILLION YEARS AGO.—[See page 368.]