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THE MAMMALIAN FAUNA OF THE SANTA CRUZ BEDS OF PATAGONIA.*

The magnificent collections of vertebrate fossils brought back from Patagonia by Messrs. Hatcher and Peterson are still very largely in the rough state. The work of cleaning and preparing the specimens is proceeding steadily and satisfactorily, but is necessarily slow, and the preparation of a single skeleton may require the labor of many weeks. Enough has been already accomplished, however, to exhibit the character of this very remarkable fauna in its main outlines and to permit a general statement of its most salient features. Long and patient study will still be necessary before the full significance of this peculiar assemblage of mammals can be made apparent.

The geological age of the Santa Cruz beds has long been a matter of dispute, because the lack of fossils common to that formation and the standard horizons of the northern hemisphere has prevented any direct comparison. Ameghino, to whose indomitable energy so much of our knowledge of Patagonian fossils is due, has always maintained the lower Eocene age of the Santa Cruz beds. On the other hand, European and American paleontologists have been convinced, from the grade of evolution attained by the Santa Cruz mammals,