A DECADE OF NORTH AMERICAN PALEOBOTANY. 1890-1900.*

The history of paleobotany constitutes a record of the most persistent and painstaking efforts to unravel a series of great facts which have been left by the wayside of time through an untold period of the earth's history, and to interpret them with reference to their true significance in the life of this planet.

Although attention had been directed to the phenomena of plants preserved in the crust of the earth essentially with the first discovery of coal, their occurrence did not excite very marked interest until the latter part of the seventeenth century—the observations of that time being made from the standpoint of the curious in nature, rather than from an appreciation or even suggestion of their scientific value, and it was not until 1709 that the first meritorious attempt to describe them in a scientific spirit was made. From then on through the remainder of the eighteenth century, a very considerable literature accumulated, and the infant science passed through what Ward has so very aptly called the 'twilight of its development,' while very nearly a full century passed before Schlotheim published the results of those studies which must be taken

* Address of the President of the Society of Plant Morphology and Physiology, given before the Baltimore Meeting, December, 1900.