

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN 1851 I was engaged, by the Honorable Joint Library Committee of Congress, to superintend the preparation of Plates for the Atlas of Mammalogy and Ornithology of the United States Exploring Expedition; and subsequently to prepare the present volume. In both of these departments of Natural History, large and highly interesting collections were made, and much new and valuable information obtained by the naturalists of the Expedition. My object has been to notice, in this volume, every species of interest, with careful descriptions of such as were previously unknown; and to give all the information to be obtained from the recorded observations and journals of the naturalists, which have been at my disposal; and I have appended a complete Catalogue of the collections in these two classes of animals.

Not having accompanied the Expedition, my sources of information have been exclusively those designated above, and especially I am indebted to the kindness of Charles Pickering, M.D., one of the naturalists of the Expedition, whose volumes have added so much of the highest value to its series of publications. In addition to the branches of Natural History with which this distinguished naturalist was especially charged, he made notes of observations in all other departments; from which has been derived some of the most valuable material of the present volume; and with great liberality and kindness, he copied and collated, for my greater convenience, a large amount of manuscript notes on quadrupeds and birds, made on the voyage, and now