

**Joseph Leidy / [W.J. Bishop].**

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**Publication/Creation**

London : BMA, 1954.

**Persistent URL**

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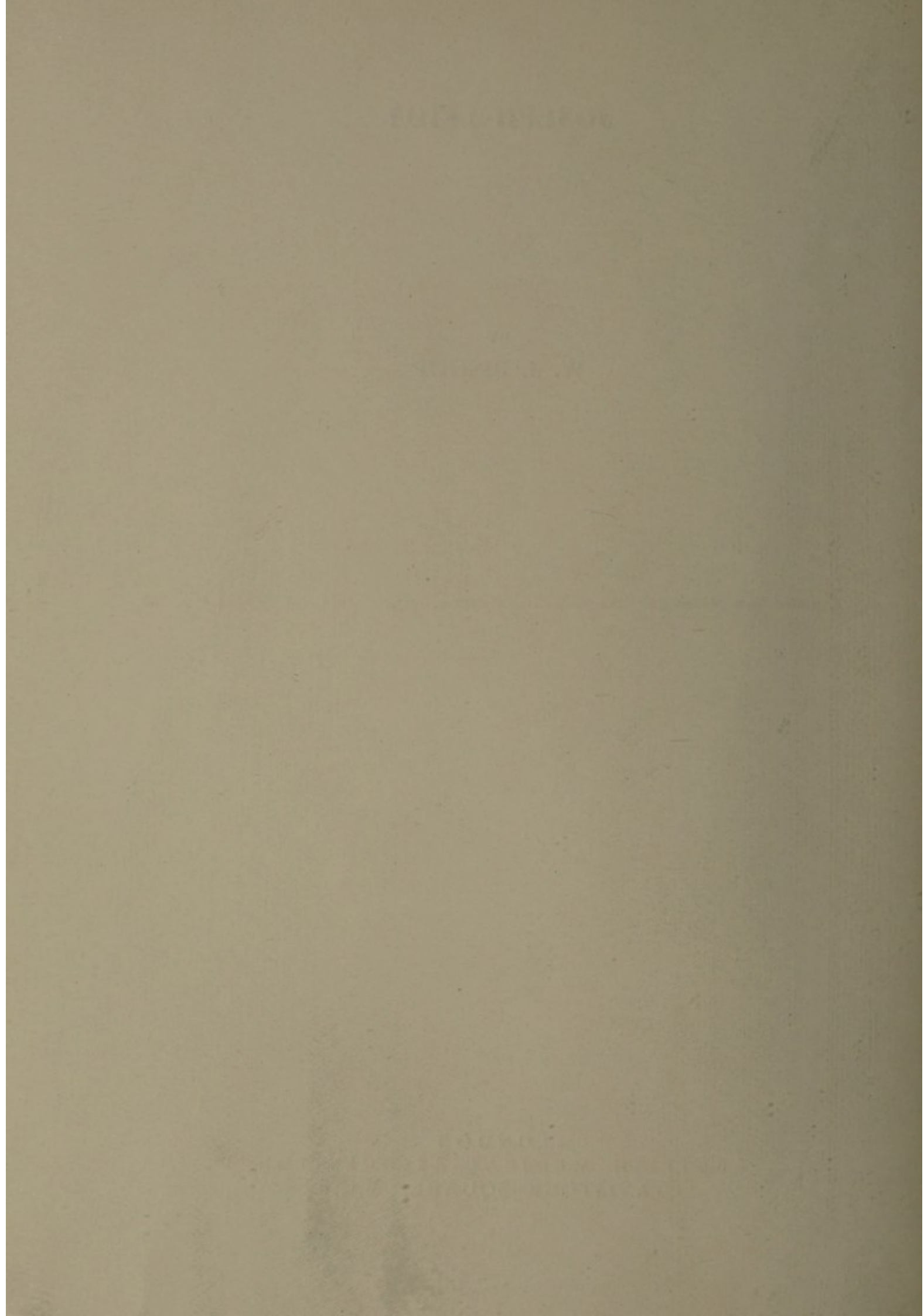
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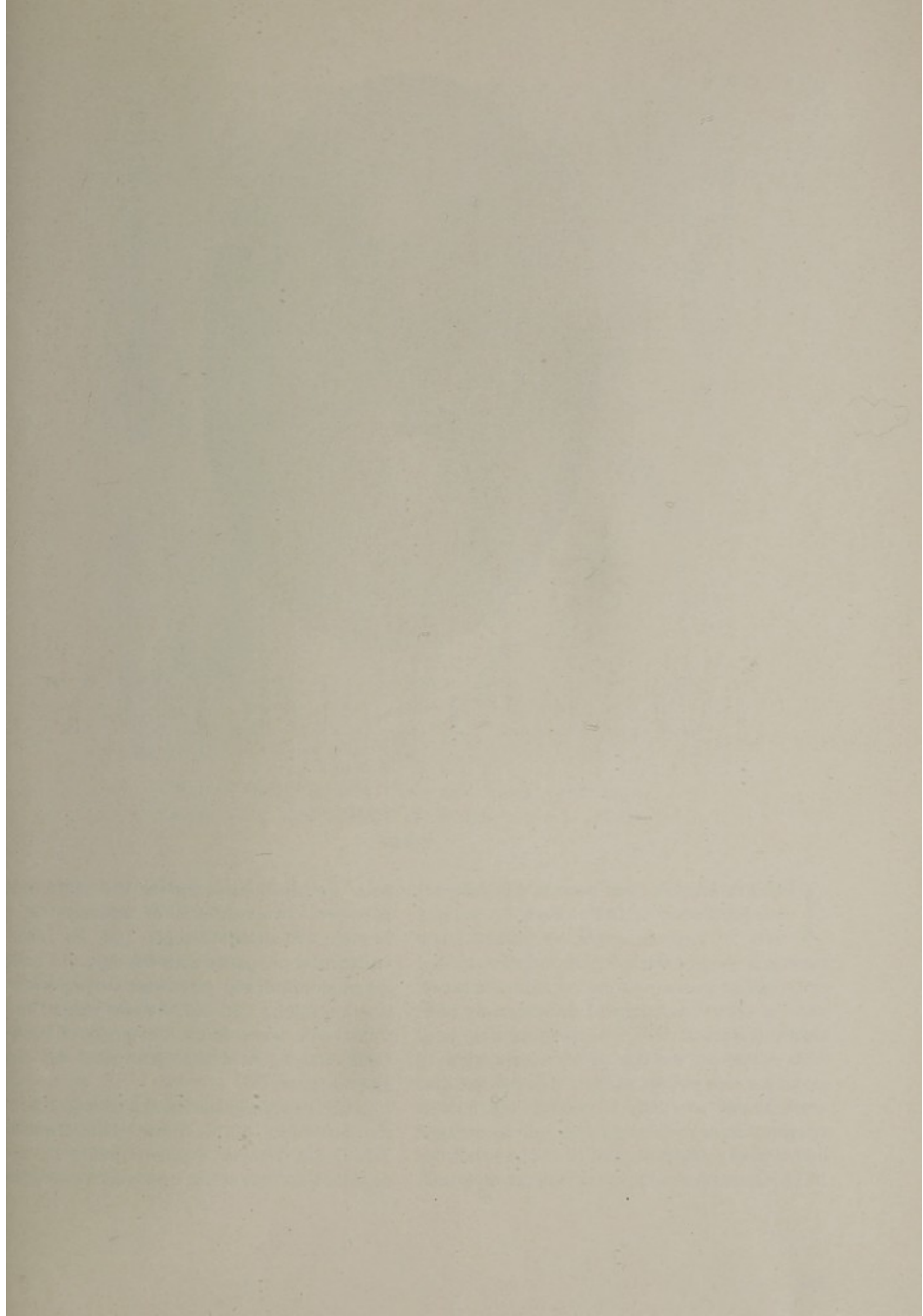
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**JOSEPH LEIDY**

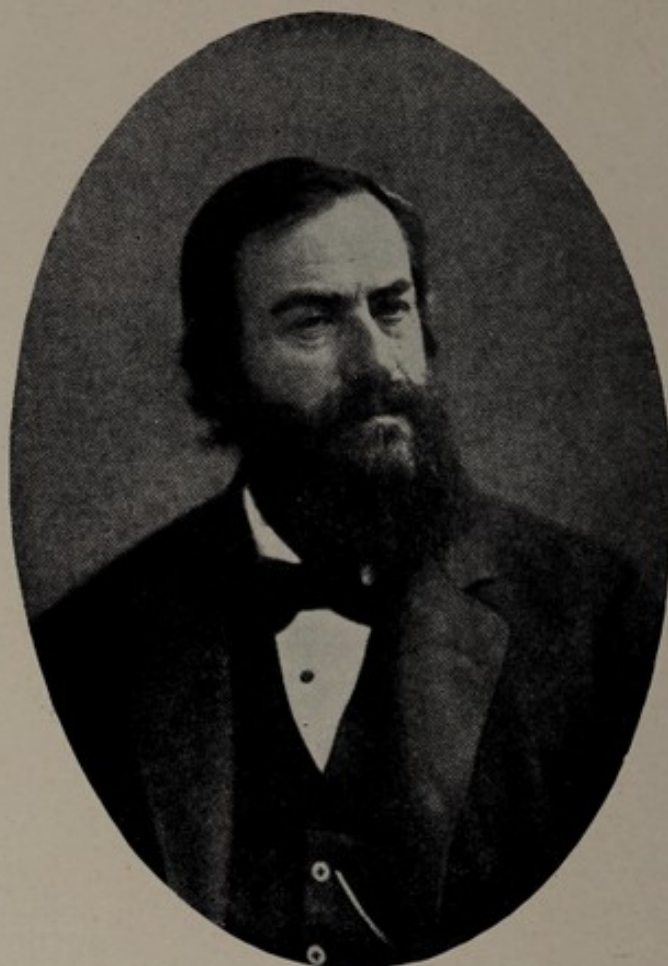
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*Reprinted from MEDICAL & BIOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATION, October, 1954, vol. IV, No. 4, p. 200*

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# JOSEPH LEIDY

1823-1891

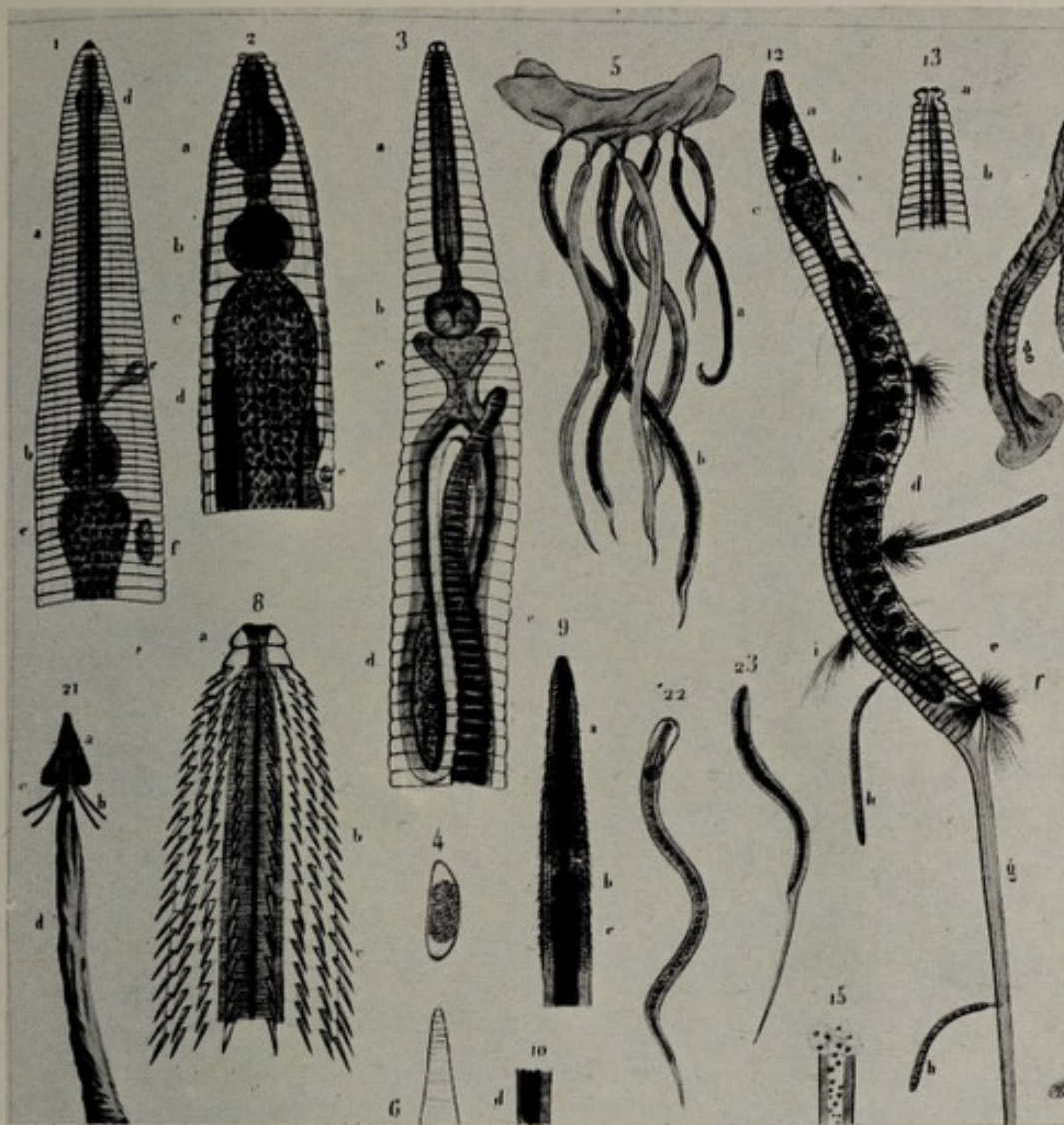
By W. J. BISHOP

*London*

JOSEPH LEIDY was born in Philadelphia on September 9, 1823. Both his parents were of German origin, his father's name having originally been Leydig. From a very early age he had a passion for natural history, and his talent for freehand drawing was sufficiently marked for his father to take him away from school at the age of 16 with a view to making a sign-painter of him. His mother died when Joseph was only 18 months old but his step-mother, who brought him up, encouraged him to study medicine, and in 1844 he took his M.D. degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

After practising medicine for two years he was appointed demonstrator of anatomy at the Franklin Medical College, and in 1848 he visited Europe, partly with the object of collecting anatomical and pathological specimens for use in teaching. In 1853 he was elected to the Chair of Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania and he held this post until his death 38 years later.

Leidy was recognized as the foremost American anatomist of his time. His *Elementary Treatise on Human Anatomy* (1861) has been described as "one of the best works ever offered

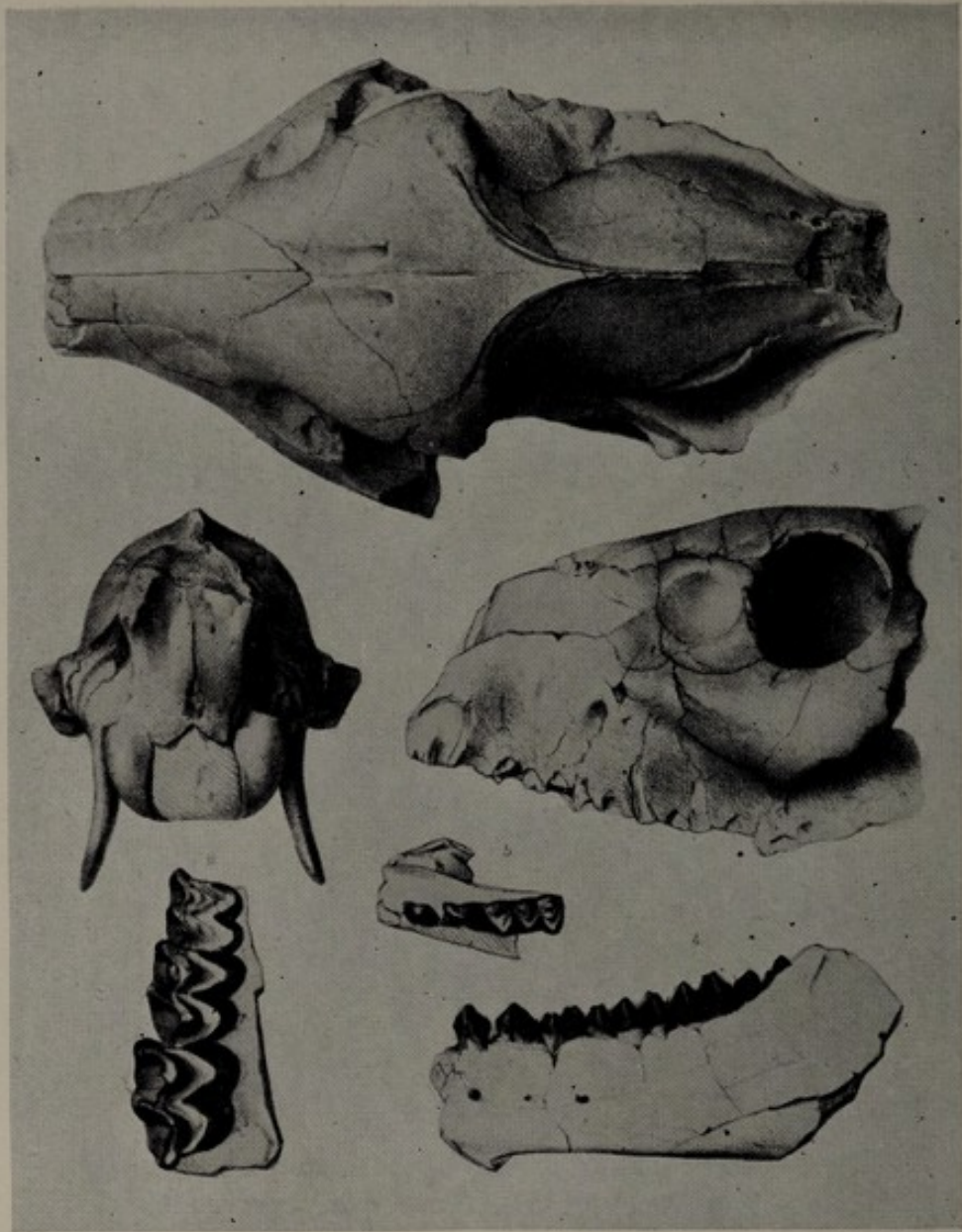


Part of Plate VII from '*Flora and Fauna within Living Animals*' by Leidy, 1851, drawn and engraved by the author.

to the medical profession on the subject." He was scarcely less distinguished as a palaeontologist and as a parasitologist. His famous paper "On the Fossil Horse of America"—a landmark in vertebrate palaeontology—appeared in 1847 when he was only 24 years of age. Another aspect of his far-reaching genius was shown in his monograph on *Fresh Water Rhizopods of North America* (1879), containing 48 quarto plates of delicate and artistic drawings of microscopic forms all from his own hand. His writings on trichiniasis in the pig (1846), on the bacterial flora of the intestines (1848), on

the transplantation of malignant tumours (1851), and on hookworm in the cat (1886) were all epoch-making contributions.

He was a man of simple and noble character and a naturalist in the full meaning of the word. Once when he was dining at Dr. Weir Mitchell's table a fellow guest remarked that life becomes tiresome by monotony. "How can life be tiresome so long as there is still a new rhizopod undescribed?" Leidy asked. An indefatigable observer and recorder, he was not given to theorizing and he never entered into controversy. "I am too busy to theorize or make money", he



*Plate IV from 'The Ancient Fauna of Nebraska,  
Leidy, 1852. Drawn by Leidy, engraved by  
A. Frey.*

is quoted as saying. He published over 600 medical and scientific papers. Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn said of Leidy that "Among zoologists he was the last to treat of the whole animal world from the protozoa to man, rendering in every branch contributions of permanent value".

