

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SAIGA ANTELOPE IN BRITAIN.

SIR,—In the February Number of the *GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE*, p. 94, is a notice of the discovery of the horns of the Saiga Antelope in the Thames Gravels at Twickenham. An earlier discovery was, however, made some years ago of this northern animal by the late Mr. R. W. Mylne. The specimens, which consisted of two horn-cores, were shown by him to me, and I submitted them to Mr. G. Busk, who pronounced them to belong to the Saiga Antelope. Unfortunately Mr. Mylne could not say where they came from. He thought from the neighbourhood of Bedford, and said he would make further inquiries. Those inquiries must have failed to elicit anything further, waiting for which has been the reason of this long delay in making the announcement—a reason now removed by the discovery of this new locality and the certainty of British origin.

JOSEPH PRESTWICH.

OBITUARY.

THE PALÆONTOLOGICAL WORK OF THE LATE WILLIAM DAVIES, F.G.S.

IN Mr. William Davies, whose death we regretted to have to record last month,¹ another link between the present school and the pioneers in British Vertebrate Palæontology has been severed. His official connexion with the British Museum placed him in the midst of a circle which included Mantell, Owen, Falconer, Agassiz, Egerton, Hugh Miller, and others, at a time when they were actively engaged in prosecuting those researches which form the basis of subsequent investigation. His mind, already imbued with the scientific method and deeply interested in the problems of Natural History, was soon permanently influenced by such associations; and the result was a keenness of perception in the determination of fragmentary remains of Vertebrata that has rarely been surpassed. In this manner Mr. Davies not only became a trusted ally and adviser of the old school of investigators, but also proved himself one of the best of helpers to the later generations that have succeeded. There are few workers of the last three decades in Vertebrate Palæontology who have not been indebted to Mr. Davies at some time for advice in difficult problems, and there are many who owe much to his kindly manner and the influence of his enthusiasm.

In his influence upon others, indeed, and in the remarkable skill with which he was able to preserve and mount even the most unpromising fossils, lay Mr. Davies' chief power as a factor in the progress of Palæontology. Wanting the literary training which it was difficult for any but the rich to obtain during his early years, he usually avoided the laborious task of writing an account of his work in a suitable form for publication. His discoveries and conclusions were always at the service of those who could make best use of them; and he was never in a happier mood than when

¹ See *GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE*, March, 1891, p. 144.

showing the latest novelties in the British Museum to those who could appreciate them and publish the new facts in a form that would tend to the advancement of knowledge. From 1865 onwards, however, Mr. Davies was an occasional contributor to the *Geological Magazine*; and in 1886 he added a short description of the Vertebrate fossils to Dr. Henry Hicks' paper on the caves of the Vale of Clwyd in the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*. Apart from incidental observations and letters, these contributions may be enumerated as follows:—

1865. On the Preservation of Fossil Mammalian Remains found in Tertiary Deposits, *Geol. Mag.* Vol. II. pp. 239, 240.
1871. Alphabetical Catalogue of Type Specimens of Fossil Fishes in the British Museum, *ibid.* Vol. VIII. pp. 208–216, 334.
1872. On the Rostral Prolongations of *Squaloraia polyspondyla*, Ag., *ibid.* Vol. IX. pp. 145–150, Pl. IV.
1874. (With H. Woodward.) Notes on the Pleistocene Deposits yielding Mammalian Remains in the Vicinity of Ilford, Essex, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. I. pp. 390–398.
1876. On the Exhumation and Development of a large Reptile (*Omosaurus armatus*, Owen), from the Kimmeridge Clay, Swindon, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. III. pp. 193–197, Pls. VII. VIII.
1878. On a Collection of Pleistocene Mammals Dredged off the Eastern Coast, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. V. pp. 97–100.
1878. On the Nomenclature of *Saurocephalus lanciformis* of the British Cretaceous Deposits; with Description of a New Species (*S. Woodwardii*), *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. V. pp. 254–261, Pl. VIII.
1879. On some Fish Exuviae from the Chalk, generally referred to *Dercetis elongatus*, Ag.; and on a New Species of Fossil Annelide, *Terebella Lewesiensis*, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. VI. pp. 145–148.
1879. On some Recently Discovered Teeth of *Ovibos moschatus* from Crayford, Kent, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. VI. pp. 246–248.
1880. On some Fossil Bird-Remains from the Siwalik Hills in the British Museum, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. VII. pp. 18–27, Pl. II.
1880. On some Bones of the Lynx from Teesdale, obtained by Mr. James Backhouse, of York, *ibid.* Dec. II. Vol. VII. pp. 346–349, Pls. XI. XII.
1884. Note on Remains of the Emu from the Wellington Caves, New South Wales, *ibid.* Dec. III. Vol. I. p. 265.
1884. Note on some New Carnivores from the British Eocene Formations, *ibid.* Dec. III. Vol. I. pp. 433–438, Pl. XIV.
1886. Note on the Animal Remains from some Bone-Caves in North Wales (Ffynnon Beuno and Cae Gwyn), *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.* vol. xlii. pp. 17–19.
1887. On New Species of *Pholidophorus* from the Purbeck Beds of Dorsetshire, *Geol. Mag.* Dec. III. Vol. IV. pp. 337–339, Pl. X.

Mr. Davies' long association with Sir Antonio Brady in recovering the remains of fossil Mammalia from the brick-fields near Ilford, resulted in 1874 in the publication of "A Catalogue of the Pleistocene Vertebrata in the Collection of Sir Antonio Brady," which is of great value on account of its well-known accuracy. This was the only separate publication he undertook as author, though by no means the only one in the preparation of which he played an important part. In *Fossil Fishes*, Prof. L. G. de Koninck acknowledges Mr. Davies' important aid when preparing the first part of the "Faune Calc. Carbonif. Belgique"; and the author of the first two volumes of the *British Museum Catalogue of Fossil Fishes* expresses his indebtedness to Mr. Davies, not only for much advice, but also for his revision of the whole of the proof-sheets. Notwith-

standing his previous retirement from active service, Mr. Davies also undertook the revision of the proofs of the British Museum Catalogue of Fossil Reptiles. As Sir Richard Owen remarks, the discovery of the cranium of *Dasornis* was due to Mr. Davies, who recognized it among some fish-remains from the London Clay; and to the skilled manipulation of the same observer we are indebted for the well-displayed jaws of *Odontopteryx*. Prof. Leith Adams was in continual communication and consultation with Mr. Davies while preparing his Memoir on British Fossil Elephants, of the dentition of which our lamented friend had unrivalled knowledge; and the British Museum Catalogue of Fossil Mammalia owes much of its value as a record of the history of specimens to its careful revision by the same hand. Only a little more than a year ago, Mr. Davies entered with his usual enthusiasm upon the reading of the proofs of Messrs. Woodward and Sherborn's "Catalogue of British Fossil Vertebrata," to which he made important contributions; and several of his letters, containing information of much historical value in reference to literature and specimens, are now preserved in a bound volume in the Geological Library of the British Museum.

Apart from all literary work, however, Mr. William Davies leaves some enduring monuments in the British Museum. The great head of the Ilford Mammoth was rescued from destruction entirely by his skill in the disinterment of such remains; and the same remark applies to many of the unique gems in the Brady Collection. The bones of the huge *Omosaurus* from the Kimmeridge Clay of Swindon were extricated from a difficult matrix, or built up from apparently worthless fragments, in part by his own hand, in part under his direction. *Hyperodapedon*—one of the latest acquisitions—was worked out by the masons under the same supervision; and Mr. Davies played no unimportant part in superintending the extrication from the matrix of some of the finest examples of Siwalik Mammals and South African Reptiles. Palæontology has, indeed, lost a master-hand.

A. S. W.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, 26TH AUGUST, 1891.

THE negotiations respecting the proposed change in the date and locality of the next meeting of the International Geological Congress were at length brought to a conclusion by the American Organizing Committee. It has now been decided that the Congress shall be held in Washington during the week commencing Wednesday 26th August, 1891. Sub-committees have been formed to arrange for the scientific business, the long excursions, the local arrangements, and for the nomination of officers. A circular has been issued announcing the proposed arrangements, and cordially inviting all Geologists to take part in the labours of the Congress.