

OBITUARY.

ON the 29th of May France lost one of its ablest and most distinguished geologists. Philippe-Eduard Pouletier de Verneuil was born in Paris on the 13th of February, 1805. He was destined by his parents to become a magistrate, but he preferred to devote all his time, energy, and fortune to the advancement of the sciences of Geology and Palæontology. He began his investigations by an exploration of Wales, at a period when Sedgwick and Murchison were rendering that portion of Great Britain classic soil, and this first journey had great influence in determining the future career of young de Verneuil. On his return from Great Britain he visited Turkey and the Crimea, and the results of his expedition will be found recorded in the "Memoirs of the Geological Society of France." M. de Verneuil next devoted much attention to the study of the Devonian rocks and fossils of the Bas-Boulonnais and Rhenish provinces; these last he described in conjunction with Viscount d'Archiac in the fourth volume, second series, of the Transactions of the Geological Society of London.

The three summers of 1840 to 1842 were occupied by M. de Verneuil, Sir R. Murchison, and Count Keyserling in an elaborate exploration of Russia and the Ural Mountains, an extent of country equalling half the surface of Europe, which resulted in the publication of the magnificent work known as "Russia and the Ural Mountains." This great work was soon followed up by an exploration of the United States, which enabled M. de Verneuil to correlate the Palæozoic rocks of Europe with those of America, a work of great value and importance. The memoir embracing these investigations, and many others by the same author, will be found published in different volumes of the Bulletin of the Geological Society of France, as well as an account of his numerous and important explorations and journeys into Spain, executed during the years 1849 to 1862.

M. de Verneuil was for many years a Member of the Academy of Sciences of Paris, as well as a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London, and many other scientific bodies in France and elsewhere considered it a high honour to have his name upon the list of its members. In 1853 he received the Wollaston Medal from the Geological Society of London. His taste for travelling was quite extraordinary, he was constantly on the move, visiting every country one after the other, and collecting every fossil upon which he could lay his hands; he consequently formed one of the largest and most valuable collections of Palæozoic fossils to be seen anywhere, which he has with great liberality bequeathed to the School of Mines in Paris.

M. de Verneuil was eminently what the French would term a *bon enfant*, simple in his tastes, always cheerful and ready to assist and to impart information to others, and especially anxious to note down in his pocket-book every scrap of information he could obtain from his scientific friends. The joy he used to manifest on the discovery of some new fossil or geological fact was truly remarkable,

and he lost no time in communicating his discoveries to others. M. de Verneuil maintained during forty years a continual scientific intercourse with Sir R. Murchison and Mr. Davidson, for whom he continually expressed the most affectionate feelings and friendship. He was a constant attendant at the Geological Society of France, and rendered that Society the most eminent services. During the last few years of his life his sight was failing him to such an extent that, had he lived a year or two longer, he would, like Lamarck, have been doomed to complete blindness. M. de Verneuil has left a name behind him which will for years be remembered with honour by his numerous geological and palæontological friends.—T.D.

JOHN WICKHAM FLOWER, Esq., F.G.S., of Park Hill, Croydon, descended from a Norfolk family, was born in London on the 11th August, 1807. He was educated at a school in Cambridgeshire, where he was well grounded in classical literature, for which he retained a strong love and continued to cultivate throughout life. His special tastes led him, however, to the study of Archaeology and Natural History; and his first savings were spent in an excursion to Winchester, to examine the antiquities of that place and the tomb of William of Wykeham. His attention was early directed to Geology, and he spared neither personal trouble nor expense in enlarging his collections, which were always made as much in the general interests of science, and of his friends, as for himself. He closely explored the interesting Tertiary cliffs of Hampshire, and was instrumental in discovering the fine and unique jaw of an alligator at Hordwell. He collected also largely from the Brick-earth beds of Grays. Nor did he neglect the opportunity offered him by the residence of a friend at Moreton Bay, Australia, to procure a very fine series of the land, freshwater, and marine mollusca of that district, many of which were new to this country.

But the particular problem which he set himself to work out, on his settling at Croydon some twenty-five years ago, was to ascertain whether the immense pebble-beds of Addington, belonging to the Lower Tertiary series, were not formed of flints derived from the destruction of higher beds of Chalk than any which now remain in the neighbourhood of London. Stratigraphical Geology has shown that the Chalk formation, as it trends towards the Weald, had been largely planed down before the deposition of the Tertiary Strata, and Mr. Flower's palæontological researches seemed quite in accordance with this view, and to point to the former existence of beds older even than any now remaining in the London Basin. In pursuance of this object, he carried on for years an examination of the flint pebbles forming the Addington Hills, and broke up many thousands of them in search of the small fossils they occasionally contain.¹ Unfortunately the results of this long investigation have never been published. It was, however, evident that they were of a nature to confirm the views he had been originally led to form.

Another investigation in which he took an active part was that

¹ He also caused a large number of these flint pebbles to be cut and polished, in order to examine the structure of the organisms they contained.—*EDIT. GEOL. MAG.*