On that subject his most important paper was entitled "Terrain dévonien de l'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse: Les îles coralliennes de Roly et de Philippeville" (Bull. Mus. R. Hist. Nat. Belg., 1882). Dupont is perhaps best known for his long-continued researches on the Belgian caverns, especially those on the borders of the Meuse and of its tributary the Lesse, some account of which was given in the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE for 1866, p. 566. To the Quaternary deposits of the valleys, the fossil mammals, and the question of the Antiquity of Man he devoted much attention, and the results of much of this work was embodied in a volume entitled *L'homme pendant les Ages de la Pierre dans les Environs de Dinant-sur-Meuse*, 1871 (2nd ed. 1872). In 1865 Dupont had published an essay on a geological map which he had prepared of the country around Dinant, his birthplace. In later years he was associated with M. Mourlon, now Director of the Geological Survey of Belgium, in the preparation of a general map of the country, and in many of the separate sheets (on a larger scale) issued by the survey. In his *Géologie de la Belgique* (1880) M. Mourlon has given a list of Dupont's publications up to that date. In 1887 he turned his attention to the Congo, and after personal explorations in that territory he published observations on the geology, anthropology, and other natural history subjects, in *Lettres sur le Congo. Récit d'un voyage scientifique entre l'embouchure du fleuve et le confluent du Kassaï*, 1889.

As Director of the Royal Museum Dupont was much interested in the remains of *Iguanodon*, almost complete skeletons of which were obtained from the Wealden of Bernissart, near Mons, and mounted under his superintendence. A reproduction of the *Iguanodon Bernissartensis*, Boulenger, was set up in the Geological Department of the British Museum (Natural History) and figured with descriptive remarks by Dr. H. Woodward in the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE for July, 1895, p. 289.

Among the later publications of Dupont was an account of "Bernissart et les Iguanodons" in a Guide to the Collections in the Brussels Museum, 1897.

Dupont was elected a Foreign Correspondent of the Geological Society of London in 1879, and a Foreign Member in 1897.

H. B. W.

ALEXANDER SOMERVAIL.

BORN MARCH 4, 1841. DIED DECEMBER 30, 1910.

THE close of the year 1910 witnessed the death of Alexander Somervail, a worthy successor in his scientific pursuits to William Pengelly, F.R.S., whose post, as Hon. Secretary of the Torquay Natural History Society, he was chosen to fill when its noted founder, the explorer and historian of Kent's Cavern, retired after forty-five years unremitting work. The traditions, activities, and success of the Society were ably maintained by the succeeding secretary for nearly twenty years, when he, too, aged in its service, reluctantly resigned only a few months before his decease in Torquay on December 30, 1910, in his 70th year.

Alexander Somervail was born in 1841 in the Water of Leith

district of Edinburgh, and lived the larger half of his life within and near that centre of intellectual activity. His self-contained and contemplative temperament was early displayed in his solitary habits, and the interest he took in collecting 'curios' and an earnest regard for the study of nature which increased with growing years. To follow this inclination became his chief relaxation and recreation during the time he could spare from the business occupation which formed his necessary means of livelihood. With the care, attention, and judgment which ensure success he found himself, at length, the proprietor of a prosperous business in Edinburgh.

During these years he had associated himself with the learned Societies of the city, and became a member of the Philosophic Institution, the Naturalists Field Club, and the Geological Society of Edinburgh. He was thus brought into contact with many of the leading men of science in the city, and with such help and stimulus he soon became a keen student and active member. Turning his attention chiefly to geology he devoted all his spare time to traversing and examining the country around Edinburgh so as to gain practical knowledge of the district geologically.

Finding the severe winters of Edinburgh affecting his health he determined to leave his native place for a milder climate. Consequently in 1880 he started a business in Falmouth. There he met Mr. Howard Fox, F.G.S., whom he also inspired with an enthusiasm for geological research, by which a warm friendship was established, resulting in many visits to the strange complex of rocks of the Lizard district, and other geological excursions, even as far afield as the Western Isles of Scotland. Some of the results of these investigations were placed before the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, for which that body later on elected him an honorary member. For his paper on "The Geology and Scenery of Falmouth and District", read before the Royal Polytechnic Society of Cornwall, he was awarded the bronze medal of that Society.

After two years residence in Falmouth he removed to Torquay, attracted by the Natural History Society and Museum, of which he at once sought membership and was elected in October, 1883, reading his first paper to the Society a month later.

He started a business in Torquay, but soon disposed of it and devoted his whole time and attention to geology and to the work of the Natural History Society. In 1890 he was called upon to take in hand the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society, a work for which he was well fitted. The Society passed through some critical phases during his secretaryship, but the lectures and monthly papers never failed, and his genial presence, courteous interest, and ready help drew many members. His never-flagging enthusiasm for nature study was contagious, and he inspired many to follow Natural History pursuits in the field. He attended the meetings of the British Association, of which, as well as of the Devonshire Association, he was a member, and contributed papers on geology to both.

Having satisfied his desire by a personal visit to the most interesting geological areas in Britain, he sought wider fields for geological observation abroad. Alone and with command of no other than his

native language he rambled the Eifel district, the Auvergne, parts of Norway, and Southern Italy. In the same way he visited Egypt, going up the Nile to the First Cataract, Jerusalem, Damascus, Athens, Constantinople, Vienna, Berlin, and Amsterdam. He also paid a visit to Switzerland and accompanied the British Association in its meeting to South Africa.

His contributions to the literature of geology are contained mostly in the Transactions of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall and of the Devonshire Association, in the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE, and the Journal of the Torquay Natural History Society, the present number of which contains a list of twenty-four of his geological papers. Unfriendly criticism attended the publication of some of his views, but he never alluded to the matter nor appeared to resent the harshness of the treatment.

His interest in geological matters continued unabated. Apparently little concerned by his critics he pursued his favourite study satisfied with the new facts and interest it unfailingly gave him. The value of his services to the Torquay Natural History Society will be long appreciated, and his memory will be kept green by a legacy left by him to its funds, which betokens the interest and pleasure he experienced in the performance of his duties to that institution.

H. J. L.

PROFESSOR M. H. NEVIL STORY MASKELYNE, M.A., HON. D. SC. OXON., F.R.S., F.G.S.

BORN 1823. DIED MAY 20, 1911.

WITH deep regret we have to announce the loss of the well-known mineralogist Professor Story Maskelyne, at his residence, Basset-Down House, Swindon, Wilts, at the age of 87. His grandfather, Nevil Maskelyne, was Astronomer Royal for forty-seven years; his father was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a double-first at Oxford when he was 19. Mr. Maskelyne followed his father, and graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, of which, afterwards, he became an honorary Fellow. He was Professor of Mineralogy in Oxford 1856–95.

But his most distinguished services to Mineralogy are those associated with his appointment of Keeper of Minerals in the British Museum in 1857, a post which he held for twenty-three years, until he entered Parliament in 1880. The collection he found was but a small one, but by timely purchases he was enabled to make it probably the best in the world. He practically created the collection of Meteorites, now one of the finest in existence. His researches in the structure and composition of Meteorites were amongst the most important of his time, and led to the discovery in 1862 of a new mineral in the Bustee Meteorite, which he named 'Oldhamite', and in 1863 he detected enstatite as a meteoric ingredient. Another new mineral named 'Asmanite' was added in 1869. Commencing in 1858 with only Mr. Thomas Davies to assist him, he acquired (1) the eminent services of Dr. Viktor von Lang; (2) W. J. Lewis, F.R.S., now Professor of Mineralogy in Cambridge; (3) Dr. Walter Flight, a very able chemist; and (4) Mr. Lazarus Fletcher, M.A., F.R.S. (afterwards his successor as Keeper of Minerals and now Director of the Natural History Museum).