

## OBITUARY.

## DAVID HOMFRAY.

BORN JUNE 21, 1822. DIED JUNE 22, 1893.

Through the death of Mr. David Homfray, of Portmadoc, we have been deprived of one of the pioneers of Geology in North Wales. When but a mere youth Mr. Homfray left his home, Witley Lodge, near Hales Owen, Warwickshire, for Portmadoc, where his uncle, who was Manager of the Welsh Slate (Palmerston's) Quarry at Ffestiniog, resided. He took to the law, and was for many years, up to the time of his death, Clerk to the Justices of the Peace for the Penrhindraeth Division.

Prof. Sedgwick says that North Wales, when he entered it in 1831, "was little more than *terra incognita*," and it was not until after 1857 that Mr. Salter determined by their suite of fossils that the Tremadoc Rocks deserved to be ranked as a separate formation. These fossils were, to a very large extent, collected by Mr. Homfray, as, shortly after 1850, we find him, encouraged by Salter, employing his leisure in working the Portmadoc district, where, especially in the Tremadoc rocks, he discovered many new forms, several of which were named by Salter in honour of him, e.g. *Niobe Homfrayi*, *Asaphus Homfrayi*, *Conularia Homfrayi*, etc. As early as 1859 he presented to the Privy Council on Education a series of Trilobites, etc., illustrative of the Geology of the Lingula Flags of Portmadoc.

At Mr. Salter's request he searched for, and worked, the Menavian-beds of the Maentwrog Waterfall Valley, which beds were then only known at St. Davids through the labours of Dr. Hicks, F.R.S., and Mr. Salter. Here Mr. Homfray met with his usual good success, which led Salter to say of him: "He can find anything he likes in his territory." At Maentwrog he discovered for the first time in Britain, *Conocoryphe coronata*, Barr., and *Conocoryphe Homfrayi*, Salt. Having made an exhaustive study of the rocks of his own district, he visited Dr. Hicks' ground at St. Davids in 1872, and with Dr. Hicks and others worked at the Tremadoc rocks of Ramsay Island. He again visited St. Davids in Dr. Hicks' company in 1874. He spent a considerable portion of the summer of 1875 in accompanying Professors Ramsay and Etheridge, and Mr. Ward, in mapping the Garth Grit, and otherwise revising the Geology of North Wales. The numerous references to Mr. Homfray's labours, and quotations of his opinions in Ramsay's "Geology of North Wales," prove what a high opinion the latter entertained of him.

It is seldom that we meet with a geologist who has toiled so hard, and amassed such a store of valuable information, but has never published an article on his favourite subject. Such, however, was the case with Mr. Homfray. He was content with supplying information to others, which he always did most readily. The same generosity characterized him in giving away his specimens, for he not only gave away his duplicates, but often the only specimen he possessed of a rare species.

When he made a present to the Woodwardian Museum in 1869,

Salter writes: "Sedgwick is so pleased, his face quite glowed," and Sedgwick himself writes: "Most sincerely do I thank you for your kind letter, and for so kindly allowing us to select from the specimens what we think most important to our Museum. At the same time, I feel a difficulty in accepting (not of course on my own account, but on that of the University) some of your specimens, which are of inestimable value; the grand, almost perfect specimen, of *Paradoxides* is (so far as I know) unrivalled and above comparison." In October, 1872, after another consignment, Sedgwick writes: "In the number and value of the fossils you sent us you stand foremost in our list." Many of Mr. Homfray's fine specimens may also be seen in the British Museum (Natural History), and in the Owen's College Museum, Manchester.

Though he could in later years hardly keep pace with the advance of Geological Science, he took the keenest interest in it up to the time of his death, and gave, as the writer can testify from experience, every encouragement to younger lovers of his favourite science. In addition to being a Geologist, he was also an enthusiastic Botanist, and a devoted student of Natural History in general.

Dr. Hicks, who kindly read over these notes, says: "I can endorse every word you say in regard to the generous and estimable friend whose death we all lament. His keen eye, combined with shrewd observation and a highly sympathetic nature, has rendered invaluable service to Cambrian geology, and can only be realized by those whose pleasure it was to be with him in the field. When Salter and I were working on the Menevian rocks, now nearly thirty years ago, dear David Homfray was the first to offer assistance, and to be ready to join us in our explorations. I can never forget what we owe to his enthusiasm and to his delightful companionship. He was in truth a typical scientific man, who loved truth for truth's sake only, and cared little for the honour which it brought."

Mr. Homfray bore a painful illness with great courage; and by those who knew nothing of his geological labours he will long be remembered, as he was described in a local magazine, "a strict, upright, generous, charitable, and hospitable Christian gentleman."

G. J. WILLIAMS.

#### GEORGE WILLIAM SHRUBSOLE, F.G.S.

This well-known local geologist was born about 1827-28, and belonged to the Kentish family of the same name. He settled in Chester some forty years ago as assistant to a chemist, and in the course of a few years opened an establishment of his own in Market Square, which is still in the hands of his sons. Mr. Shrubsole was the Honorary Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, was an enthusiastic geologist, botanist, and antiquary, and was one of the founders, with Charles Kingsley, of the Chester Society of Natural Science. Mr. Shrubsole's health began to break in 1891, and although he submitted to an operation and was restored for a time, complications arose six weeks before his death, which occurred on the 22nd July, 1893.