

OBITUARY.

THE REV. GEORGE GORDON, LL.D.

NEWS has reached us of the death of this veteran geologist, at the advanced age of 92. Born in the Manse of Urquhart, Morayshire, on 23rd July, 1801, the son of the late Rev. William Gordon, minister of Glenlivet, he entered Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1815, graduated in 1819, and afterwards studied divinity at Aberdeen and Edinburgh. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Elgin in 1825, and was presented to the parish of Birnie in 1832 by the patron, Francis, Earl of Moray.

He was thus for 67 years a minister of the Church of Scotland, 57 years of which he ministered uninterruptedly to the parish of Birnie, near Elgin. He was the second oldest minister in the Church, and one of the two oldest graduates of the University of Aberdeen.

From his youth upwards Dr. Gordon was devotedly attached to the study of Natural History. In 1839 he published "Collectanea for a Flora of Moray," which is regarded as a standard authority on the botany of the county, and he was instrumental in adding the plant *Pinguicula Alpina* to the British flora. He also contributed papers on the fauna of Moray, with which he was equally conversant, to the "Zoologist." As regards archæology, and in fact in all matters of local antiquarian interest, he was an industrious collector, and might always be found to the front investigating anything new about anything old. In the branch of geology, there has been nobody in the neighbourhood of Elgin who has pursued a closer study nor acquired such an intimate knowledge of the subject. The formation of the Old Red Sandstone, in particular, long engaged his attention, and nothing could excite in him a livelier interest than any new discovery of fossil remains. In fact in every such case it was customary for the finder to appeal to Dr. Gordon of Birnie for an explanation.

He was ever ready to impart his knowledge to others, and felt pleased when anyone sought to share in his investigations: his enthusiasm even at the great age of 90 being most encouraging to witness. Among his geological services may be mentioned the procuring of remains of a number of fossil reptiles from the Elgin Sandstone, some of which have been described by Prof. Huxley, others quite recently by Mr. E. T. Newton; the more recent discoveries include a number of very remarkable forms, and one of these, a new *Dicynodont* genus, has been named *Gordonia*. Dr. Gordon maintained steadfastly the view that the Elgin Sandstones belonged to one continuous series of Old Red Sandstone age; a view that is not supported, however, by palæontological evidence.

His efforts in connection with the Elgin Museum are well known. Along with other gentlemen of kindred tastes, he was influential in founding the Elgin and Morayshire Literary and Scientific Association.

Although in November last nobody would have expected on seeing

him walking along the street with the briskness and vigour—one might almost say of youth—which so characterized him, that his end was so near. But a severe cold, caught at the end of the month, developed other complications, which at his great age it was impossible to resist; and it was not with surprise that many received the sad intelligence of his death, which occurred at his residence of Braebirnie, Elgin, on the morning of Tuesday, 12th December.¹

MR. T. C. J. BAIN, OF THE CAPE COLONY.

MR. THOMAS CHARLES JOHN BAIN, son of the eminent South-African Geologist, Andrew Geddes Bain,² lately died at Rondebosch, near Cape Town, September 28th, 1893, aged sixty-four. He inherited his father's taste for engineering, travel, and geological research, with a strong constitution for withstanding hardships of work and travel in the wildest parts of the Cape Colony. In 1854 he succeeded his father as the Inspector of Roads (after an Assistantship for six years) and District Railway Engineer. In 1874 he was the District Inspector of Roads, and in 1888 he became Geological and Irrigation Surveyor. He was a J.P. for the whole of the Western Province. The magnificent roads and passes in the Colony are monuments of the skill of father and son; and with both of them opportunities for observation and discovery were not neglected; but geological results of great importance followed the noting of sections and the unearthing of fossils, particularly of the numerous great and small reptilian bones and skeletons. Several of these are known specifically by the appellation of *Bainii*, after either the father or the son. One particularly interesting skeleton of the great *Pariasaurus Bainii* was unearthed by Mr. T. Bain and Prof. H. G. Seeley, near Fraserburg, in the Nieuweld Range, about two years ago, and is now mounted perfect in the British Museum (Natural History), London, and represented by a good model, life-sized, in the Museum at Cape Town.

Mr. Thomas Bain furnished some of the earliest Reports on the Colonial gold-fields of Kuysa and Prince-Albert; and of late had been successful in boring for water in British Bechuanaland and elsewhere.

The widow survives, with four sons, and four married and three unmarried daughters. One of the sons is under the Civil Commissioner of Albany, and one in the Public Works Department; and we may fairly hope that, though the Country has lost such good and useful public servants as A. G. and T. C. J. Bain, yet some of the surviving successors of those eminent men may further advance the scientific status of the Colony, and add to its prosperity and importance by elucidating its geological structure, thereby increasing the benefits derived from agriculture, stock-growing, and mining; especially by the aid of good water-supply and irrigation. T. R. J.

¹ We are indebted to the *Moray and Nairn Express*, of December 16, for most of the above particulars.

² An obituary notice of Mr. A. G. Bain appeared in the *GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE* for January, 1864, pp. 47, 48. Mr. Thos. Bain is mentioned therein as an already known geologist.