

## OBITUARY.

## HENDERICUS M. KLAASSEN, F.G.S.

BORN 1828.

DIED JANUARY 22, 1910.

WE regret to record the death at Croydon, in his 81st year, of Mr. H. M. Klaassen. He was born at Kritzum in Hanover, where his father was the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. After the ordinary school education in his native town he was trained for business, and in his twentieth year he came to England, and having gained experience he started on his own account as a seed factor on the London Corn Exchange in Mark Lane. The undertaking was successful, so that he was enabled to retire from business in 1874. He then followed his natural bent toward science, and attended the courses of lectures on Chemistry, Zoology, and Geology at University College, London. His predilection for this last-named science was greatly stimulated by John Morris, at that time Professor of Geology at the College, and he was induced to join the Geologists' Association in 1875, and was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1877.

In 1883 Mr. Klaassen contributed a paper, "On a Section of the Lower London Tertiaries at Park Hill, Croydon," to the Proceedings of the Geologists' Association, in which a detailed description was given of the character of the beds and their fossils exposed in a deep cutting on the Woodside and South Croydon Railway. During the eighteen months the cutting was in progress Mr. Klaassen visited the work regularly every day, and thus secured a complete record of the beds exposed, and moreover he discovered some fossil bones which were described by Mr. E. T. Newton, F.R.S., as in part belonging to a new species of mammal which was named *Coryphodon Croydonensis*, and in part to a gigantic species of bird, larger than an ostrich, which received the name of *Gastornis Klaasseni*<sup>1</sup> in honour of its discoverer.

A second paper by Mr. Klaassen, "On the Pebbly and Sandy Beds overlying the Woolwich and Reading Series on and near the Addington Hills, Surrey," was contributed to the Proc. Geol. Assoc. in 1890.

Mr. Klaassen was an earnest supporter of the Croydon Natural History and Microscopical Club, and he took a prominent part in founding a school in Croydon for the secondary education of girls in connexion with the Girls' Public Day School Company. Endowed with a genial temperament and sound judgment he won the regard of numerous friends, by whom his memory will be kindly cherished.

## ROBERT MARCUS GUNN, M.A., F.R.C.S., F.G.S.

BORN 1850 (? 1851).

DIED DECEMBER 2, 1909.

MR. GUNN, who was a distinguished ophthalmic surgeon, had devoted his leisure during many years to the collection and study of fossils. Born at Dunnet, in Caithness, he belonged to the Clan Gunn, and was son of Marcus Gunn of Culgower, on the eastern coast of Sutherland.

<sup>1</sup> See E. T. Newton, "On a Gigantic Bird from the Lower Eocene of Croydon, *Gastornis Klaasseni*, Newton": Proc. Zool. Soc., May 5, 1885, and Geol. Mag., 1885, p. 362.

In the reefs and low cliffs of Upper Jurassic rocks, near Culgow, many plant-remains occur; and these, together with other specimens obtained near Brora, were assiduously collected by Mr. Gunn, who had hoped to prepare a memoir, in conjunction with Professor A. C. Seward, on the fossil flora of that district. His valuable collection of Brora Jurassic plants had been given by Mr. Gunn, just before his death, to the Geological Department of the Natural History Branch of the British Museum. Mr. Gunn also obtained from the Old Red Sandstone of Achnarras, Caithness, a supposed fossil Marsipobranch fish, described by Dr. Traquair under the name of *Palæospondylus Gunnii*. A restoration of the remains was given in the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE for 1893, p. 471.

Mr. Gunn had become a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1908, and his death causes a sad gap in the ranks of enthusiastic amateur workers.

H. B. W.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE DARWINIAN THEORY.

The Darwin Centenary, to the commemoration of which we called attention in August last (GEOL. MAG., 1909, p. 375), naturally led to the choice of topic in several presidential addresses delivered during the same year.

This was the case in Dr. D. H. Scott's address last year to the Linnæan Society. He pointed to the evidence that at all known stages of the past history of plants there has been efficient adaptation to the conditions; and natural selection appears to afford the only key to evolution. The palæontological record reveals a relatively short section of the evolution of plants, and indicates that while there has been considerable change, there has not been, on the whole, any very marked advance in organization, except in such cases as the floral adaptations of Angiosperms. The simple forms of plants existing at the present day are, as a rule, of a reduced rather than a primitive nature, and yet they may have a considerable degree of antiquity.

Mr. B. B. Woodward dealt with Darwinism and Malacology in his address to the Malacological Society, 1909. He remarked that the Mollusca probably furnish the best means of tracing out the workings of evolution, as the shell, properly dissected, will yield evidence of the life-history of the animal. The nature of the changes in form during the growth of species of Cephalopods and Gasteropods was discussed and explained; and we are led to understand how it is necessary sometimes to break up an Ammonite before the species can be definitely determined. The address embodies the results of the latest researches on the subject.

Quite recently, in commemoration of the Jubilee of the Liverpool Geological Society, a meeting was held on January 11 at the Royal Institution, Liverpool, when Professor J. W. Judd delivered a lecture on "The Triumph of Evolution", justifying the selection of the topic by remarking that the foundation of the Society was coincident with the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.