

Obituary.

MR. DAVID FORBES, F.R.S., &c., was a brother of the late Edward Forbes, the eminent naturalist. They belonged to a Scotch family, descended from Lord President Forbes, which had been compelled to remove to the Isle of Man, on account of having taken the side of the Pretender. Mr. David Forbes was at one time assistant to the late Dr. George Wilson, of Edinburgh, and was subsequently a partner in the firm of Evans & Askin, of Birmingham, the great miners and manufacturers of nickel. For some years he resided in Norway, taking charge of the extensive mines belonging to the firm; and both his natural tastes and business requirements led him to study in great detail the mineral riches of that country. This was when still so young, that, on being presented to the king, his majesty could not imagine that so young a man could be *the* Mr. Forbes, and enquired after his father. During his residence in Norway, he discovered new sites for extensive mines, and some new minerals, of which tyrite was one, described in papers published in Norwegian Journals, as well as in several English periodicals. He afterwards resided in Birmingham, and one of his chief duties was to inspect the mines belonging to his firm in various parts of the world, which gave him most excellent opportunities for the study of mineralogy. Partly in the interests of business, and partly for the advancement of science, he passed several years in South America, and went through almost all sorts of adventures. He was at Mendoza very soon after the disastrous earthquake, and made a report on it for the native government. He was also mixed up in some of the revolutionary wars, was captain of a troop of Pampas horsemen, was wounded, and was near taken prisoner, but escaped with some others in an open boat, the tiny crew being compelled to make sails of their clothing. He afterwards went on a long voyage in a native vessel, all the while paying every possible attention to geology and mineralogy. Nothing having been heard of him for a long time, his friends concluded that he was dead; but all on a sudden he turned up again. After having made every arrangement for a

scientific exploration of some little known parts of South America, and even having secured his passage, he suddenly changed his mind, married a very young wife, and in the course of a year or two took up his residence in London, as a mining engineer, quickly rising to the very highest eminence in that profession. His house in York Place, Portman Square, contained a most complete laboratory, having every appliance for chemical analysis, an admirable collection of rocks and minerals, and an extensive library of nearly all the English and Foreign works related to his science. He became one of the secretaries of the Geological Society, and the foreign secretary of the Iron and Steel Institute, for both of which posts his great experience made him in every way most suitable. In the latter capacity he wrote a series of half-yearly reports on the iron and steel industries all over the world,—a task for which his linguistic knowledge fitted him in a remarkable manner. These duties and his professional engagements occupied so much of his time, that he failed to adequately make known the vast amount of information stored up in his memory, and contained in his voluminous note books. Though his contributions to the science of mineralogy have been very considerable, it is a matter of deep regret that he was not spared to retire into less active life, and publish the results of so many years of travel and study. During his residence in South America, he suffered from a fever, which returned at regular intervals; and was finally, in great measure, the cause of his death. Two or three years ago he was also stricken by a sun stroke, while travelling in Spain, and the death of his wife in the early part of this year, was to him a sad blow, from which he never recovered. He leaves a young family, who must be comfortably provided for. By his death, which took place at his residence, on Tuesday, Dec. 14th, we have lost, at the age of 51, one of that most valuable type of mineralogists, who combine great practical experience, both in the field and in the laboratory.—H. C. S.