

Obituary Notices.

CHARLES WILLIAM PEACH, A.L.S.

The death of Charles William Peach, A.L.S., in his 86th year, has removed a most zealous and hard-working man of science from the list of corresponding members, and one who had endeared himself to the older members of the Plymouth Institution by his enthusiastic and lovable nature while resident in the adjacent county.

Mr. Peach was born in the year 1800 at Wansford, in Northamptonshire, where he lived till early manhood. His birth-place being on the outskirts of the Bedford purlieus, one of the great English forests, he became passionately addicted to field sports, and there can be no doubt that the keen powers of observation developed in the pursuit of sport stood him in good stead when in after years his mind was directed to the more noble pursuit of science. Having joined the coastguard service while still a young man, he was stationed at various places on the east and south coasts of England. Those were the palmy days of smuggling, and Mr. Peach, who was always an indefatigable officer, had many hand-to-hand encounters with some of the most desperate characters engaged in the lawless traffic. It was while stationed at Cromer, in Norfolk, that his attention was first attracted to the objects cast up on the beach. The living marine animals and algæ, on the one hand, led him to study marine zoology and algology; while, on the other hand, the remains of the extinct mammalia exposed by the sea from the Cromer Forest bed naturally aroused him to the study of palæontology. To all these branches of science he afterwards made many valuable contributions. These studies brought him into contact with other workers in the same fields—in zoology, Darwin, Milne-Edwards, Edward Forbes, Allman, Owen, Huxley, Wyville Thomson, Bowerbank, Alder, Huxley; in algology, Harvey and Mrs. Greville; in geology and palæontology, Buckland, De la Beche, Murchison, Lyell, Hugh Miller, Nicol, Geikie, all of whom were more or less indebted to him for direct help in their researches, as reference to their works will fully bear out. Many of his discoveries, especially his earlier ones, were first announced by him before the British Association.

It was while stationed as Riding Officer of the Customs at Gorran Haven and Fowey, in Cornwall, that Mr. Peach did the admirable work that led to his election as one of our corresponding members. He was the first man to find fossils in the quartzite of Gorran, and thus to settle the age of the Lower Silurian rocks of Cornwall. Numerous communications were made by him to the Royal Cornwall Geological Society, the Polytechnic, the Royal Institution of Cornwall, and our Society; and our museum is still enriched with some of his presentations. His great Cornish collection is, however, in the museum of the Geological Society at Penzance.

Mr. Peach eventually went to Scotland, being stationed first at Peterhead, and afterwards at Wick, where he made the acquaintance of Robert Dick, the Thurso baker and geologist. The account of their friendship and mutual studies is contained in some of the most interesting chapters in Dr. Smiles's *Life of Robert Dick*, part of which book is devoted to a biographical sketch of Mr. Peach. It was also while stationed in the North that he made the discoveries, at Durness and Assynt, of those fossils which are now our means of determining the geological age of the Sutherland rocks. Not only among scientific men had Mr. Peach a large acquaintance; but his genial and sympathetic nature attached to him also many men of literary pursuits, amongst whom was Lord Tennyson, a frequent guest in Mr. Peach's house at Fowey, in Cornwall, with whom he formed a lifelong friendship.

When he retired Mr. Peach settled at Edinburgh, where he died in March, 1886. English science has hardly a more remarkable example of its successful pursuit under difficulties. His duties were always with Mr. Peach the first consideration, and at no time of his life did his salary exceed £150, while in Cornwall it was but £75 with an allowance for a horse.