

of altering the specific names of fossils derived from place-names so as to accord with the present rendering upon the Ordnance Survey Maps. The well-known Rhætic fossil *Pleuromya crowcombeia* (Moore) is given as *Pleuromya crocombeia*—the *w* is omitted—in the Geological Survey Memoir on “The Geology of the Country between Wellington and Chard” (1906, p. 27).

L. RICHARDSON.

CHELTEMHAM.

14th December, 1907.

NORTH DEVON ATHENÆUM: GIFT OF THE PARTRIDGE COLLECTION.

SIR,—This institution has recently received a most valuable gift, the large collection (Partridge Collection) of Devonian and Culm fossils made by Mrs. Coomaraswamy in North and South Devon, and by Dr. Coomaraswamy on the Continent. Included in the Partridge Collection are fourteen specimens figured in the Rev. G. F. Whidborne’s Monograph of Devonian Fauna (Palæontographical Society) and the *Geological Magazine*, five of them type-specimens. This, added to T. M. Hall’s already there, makes the North Devon Athenæum Collection one of the most complete of its kind in the kingdom. The specimens being too numerous to be all displayed, Dr. Coomaraswamy has made a selection, for the exhibition of which special cases have been provided; the remainder have been placed in drawers, and, like all the specimens in this Museum, are available for purposes of study.

Devonshire, even prior to this most liberal gift, was rich in local geological collections. It may now be said without exaggeration that the Museums at Exeter, Plymouth, Torquay, and Barnstaple, between them contain practically a complete collection of the fossils and rocks (so far recorded) of the county.

J. G. HAMLING.

THE CLOSE, BARNSTAPLE.

OBITUARY.

THE RT. HON. WILLIAM THOMSON, BARON KELVIN,
P.C., O.M., G.C.V.O., LL.D., D.C.L.,
PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, ETC.

BORN JUNE 26, 1824.

DIED DECEMBER 17, 1907.

In the death of Lord Kelvin geologists have lost one who took keen interest in the physical and astronomical aspects of their science, and aided perhaps more than any other philosopher in this country to place the subject of Cosmogony on a scientific basis. He dealt with the evolution of the heavenly bodies, with changes in the position of the earth’s axis of rotation, with the probable condition of the earth’s interior, and with the thermal conductivity of rocks. In one respect his views regarding the earth found little support. His calculations on the increase of temperature beneath the surface and the rate of loss of heat from the earth led him in 1862 to argue that the age of the

earth must be restricted to about one hundred million years; and he subsequently reduced the estimate to between twenty and forty million years.¹ Huxley, in one of his famous addresses to the Geological Society (1869), showed that while geologists had no reason to be greatly concerned at an estimate of 100,000,000 years, yet the data on which the restriction was based were insufficient and inconclusive. Further researches have not tended to modify this judgment.

William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, was the second son of James Thomson, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow, and the son became Professor of Natural Philosophy in the same University during the lifetime of his father.

Regarded as the foremost man of science in Britain, it was fitting that a final resting-place in Westminster Abbey should be selected, near the tombs of Newton, Herschel, Darwin, and Lyell; and there he was buried in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering on the 24th December, 1907.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BRITISH MUSEUM MODEL OF *EURYPTERUS*.²

In the Upper Silurian rocks of the island of Oesel, in the Baltic, are found the fossil remains of an Arthropod called *Eurypterus Fischeri*. This animal is of interest as one of an extinct group of Arthropods that appear to have been allied to the modern *Limulus* or king-crab, as well as to the Scorpions. These particular fossils have a further interest in that the chitinous substance of the outer coat of the animal has been preserved unaltered in chemical and physical composition. Thus Professor G. Holm, of Stockholm, has been able to dissolve the remains out from the rock by means of acid, and to mount them on glass slides in Canada balsam. On the preparations thus obtained he based an elaborate description, published in the Memoirs of the Academy of Science, St. Petersburg (ser. VIII, vol. VIII, No. 2, 1898). It can now be said that the structure of this species is known better than that of any other extinct arthropod. Several of Professor Holm's preparations preserved in the Geological Department of the British Museum are quite marvellous, and it is difficult to believe that one is looking at a fossil at all, still more one dating from the Silurian epoch.

The perfection of these specimens and the interest of the animal suggested to members of the staff of the British Museum (Natural History) the advisability of preparing a complete model of it, and such a model in coloured wax, of about twice the natural size, has now been made under the direction of Dr. W. T. Calman and Dr. F. A. Bather by Mrs. Vernon Blackman, whose beautiful models of plants, of the parasite of malaria, and of the tsetse fly are well known to all visitors to the Natural History Museum in the Cromwell Road.

¹ See Sir A. Geikie's Text-Book of Geology, 4th ed., vol. i, 1903, p. 79.

² From *Science*, November 15th, 1907, pp. 679-680.