

year, we much regret to have to record. Mrs. Visger was a woman of considerable attainments, with a good deal of masculinity in her character, both mental and physical. She had an absorbing interest in anything appertaining to Nature, and her mind was a storehouse of material acquired during her long life. Her powers of observation were great, and she used to the full in her literary work the excellent memory which Nature had given her, and the many opportunities which travel afforded her.

The real "Son of the Marshes" was understood to have been a working naturalist in Surrey, but it is probable that J. A. Owen's editorship went a good deal further than mere editing. One might say, in effect, that the books were practically written by her. They contained much interesting natural history gossip, following the Richard Jefferies style, but, as a rule, the information was quite unlocalised, and so lost much of its scientific value. The books followed rapidly on one another, and amongst them may be mentioned, "From Spring to Fall," "With the Woodlanders and by the Tide," "Annals of a Fishing Village," "Within an Hour of London Town," "Forest Tithes," and "On Surrey Hills."

Mrs. Visger was twice married, first in 1863, in which year she went to live in New Zealand. There she remained for five years, visiting Tahiti and the Sandwich Islands. She returned to reside in England in 1876, and married again in 1883, afterwards travelling considerably in Europe and in the Pacific. She finally returned to England in 1913. Beside a few books of travel, Mrs. Visger wrote, "Forest, Field, and Fell," "Birds in a Garden," "Birds Useful and Birds Harmful," and in collaboration with the late Prof. G. S. Boulger, "The Country Month by Month." Her books are not now read, perhaps, so much as they deserve to be.

#### PROF. H. BATTERMANN.

HANS BATTERMANN, who died in Blankenburg, Harz, on June 15, at the age of sixty-two, has left a record of much useful work in astronomy. In his youth he studied at Berlin University under Förster and Tietjen, gaining the degree of doctor in 1881 for a dissertation on aberration. After a short period at Hamburg Observatory he returned to Berlin as a member of the Commission which was appointed, under the direction of Auwers, for the discussion of the results obtained at the transits of Venus in 1874 and 1882. During this period he observed a long series of occultations of stars by the moon, utilising them to obtain a value of the moon's parallactic inequality, and hence of the solar parallax; the value that he found for the latter was 8.789", which is a good approximation to the accepted value; a still longer series of occultations, observed near the first and last quarters of the moon, should give a very accurate solar parallax. Battermann also conducted two other useful investigations at this time, one on the nature of the images in a heliometer, the other a triangulation of the Pleiades with that instrument. In 1888 he observed for nine months at the Göttingen Observatory; on his return to Berlin he took the chief part in the star observations with the transit circle, and in their reduction to a Catalogue, including the discussion of proper motions.

In 1904 Battermann was appointed professor and director of the University Observatory at Königsberg; he continued there his researches on proper motion, and also observed further occultations with the 13-inch refractor. He was compelled to resign his professorship in 1919 through a complete breakdown in health, brought on by overwork; he retired to Blankenburg, where he died three years later, after much suffering.

A. C. D. C.

### Current Topics and Events.

DR. M. O. FORSTER, who, since November 1918, has been director of the Salters' Institute of Industrial Chemistry, is relinquishing this post at the end of next month, having been appointed director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He expects to take up his new duties early in November.

A NEW biological station for the study of limnological problems and for research on the development of fresh-water fishes has been established at the Lake of Trasimeno, in Umbria. The University of Perugia has assumed responsibility, and the director of the station is the professor of physiology, Dr. Osvaldo Polimanti. Further details of the equipment are promised at an early date.

THE excavations at the Meare Lake Village, near Glastonbury (Shapwick and Ashcott are the nearest stations), will be resumed by the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society on August 25, and continued until September 9 (exclusive of the filling-in). As in previous years, the work will be under the personal direction of Dr. Arthur Bulleid and Mr. H. St. George Gray. The antiquities discovered in past years at Meare are exhibited in the

Somerset County Museum at the society's headquarters, Taunton Castle, while those from the Glastonbury Lake Village (described in two royal quarto volumes) are to be seen, for the most part, in the Museum at Glastonbury. Donations are needed and will gladly be received by Mr. St. George Gray, at the Somerset County Museum, Taunton.

ONE of the oldest organised scientific societies, the "Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft," is holding its 103rd Annual Meeting at Berne on August 24-27. In addition to the usual business of the society, there will be scientific discussions, and a number of important papers will be read, including: "The Trend of Modern Physics," Dr. C. E. Guye (Geneva); "The Nature of the so-called General Neuroses," Prof. Sahli (Berne); "The Aar Massif—an Example of Alpine Granitic Intrusion," Dr. E. Hugi (Berne); "The Natural Form of Substances as a Physical Problem," Dr. V. Kohlschütter (Berne); "Experimental Genetics in regard to the Law of Variation" (illustrated by lantern slides), Dr. A. Pictet (Geneva); and "Investigations into the Physiology of Alpine Plants," Dr. G. Senn (Bâle). Banquets will be held at the end of each session, and there will be concerts