

OBITUARY.

The Council regret that they have to record the loss by death of the following Fellows and Associate during the past year:—

Fellows:—*Allen Abraham.

John Jepson Atkinson.

William Frederick Caborne.

Arthur Dallas.

William Henry Finlay.

Thomas Frederick Furber.

† Arnaud de Gramont.

Arthur Hands.

Joseph Hough.

Henry T. C. Knox.

William Henry Maw.

Thomas K. Mellor.

Margaret Theodora Meyer.

Edward Prentice.

† Abel Pérez Sanchez.

E. B. Simpson-Baikie.

Hugh Walsham.

Associate:—Hugo Seeliger.

JOHN JEPSON ATKINSON was born in Yorkshire in 1844; educated at Exeter College, Oxford; went to the Bar; married Isabella Foster of Apley Park in 1881; bought Cosgrove Priory, near Stony Stratford, in 1888, and resided there until his death on 1924 December 12. He was for more than thirty years a county councillor. His eldest son, a captain in the Royal Dragoons, was killed at Ypres in 1915. His widow, a second son (who served throughout the War) and two daughters, survive him.

Our Society owes an incalculable debt to some of its Fellows for whom astronomy has not been the business of their lives, nor even perhaps a primary interest, but who have been attracted by astronomers, and by whose friendship and companionship astronomers have gained, often in no small degree; Atkinson was such a genial friend to astronomy and astronomers. He was chiefly a keen sportsman. He kept racehorses even when an undergraduate at Oxford; and raced under the name of Mr. Doncaster. The name of the dearly loved eldest son he lost in the War, St. Leger, was a reminder of his birth on the day of that famous race. He was, moreover, as a young man a keen cricketer, a fast bowler for Yorkshire county. He was of an inventive turn, and some ideas he had for improving a gun brought him into association with the late Dr. A. A. Common. This led to his joining the Eclipse Expedition of 1896, of which Common took charge; to his joining our Society, and its dining-club, of which he was a

* Died in 1922, but death not reported till 1924.

† Died in 1923, but death not reported till 1924.

devoted and much-valued member so long as his health permitted; and to his undertaking several other Eclipse Expeditions, to the delight of his companions. One of these was Sir Frank Dyson, who has given his personal reminiscences as follows:—

“Atkinson’s introduction to astronomical circles dates from 1896, when he accompanied the large party of astronomers who went on the *Norse King* to Vadsö. He and I met first at the Royal Astronomical Society Club in 1900 January, a few months before the Eclipse of that year. An official expedition to Ovar near Oporto had been arranged, consisting of Christie, Davidson, and myself. We each had an instrument to take charge of, mine being two spectroscopes lent by Hills. So we very readily accepted an offer by Atkinson to accompany us as a volunteer observer. Our friendship began with this expedition. He shared in all the work of the unpacking, installation, and adjustment of the instruments, and on the day of the Eclipse gave the exposures for the spectra of chromospheres and corona, while I manipulated the changing of plates. Atkinson was the life of our party, keeping us all in good temper and good spirits in the small worries and difficulties incidental to Eclipse Expeditions. He evidently enjoyed the trip too, for the next year, when I asked him if he wouldn’t come to the Eclipse in Sumatra, he delighted me by saying he should love to go if he could get leave from his duties in Northamptonshire as member of the county council. Happily he was able to make the necessary arrangements, and we set out in the middle of 1901 March in company with Professor and Mrs. Newall and a number of Dutch and American astronomers. At this Eclipse we were assisted by a small gunboat, the *Pigmy*, and, though I cannot speak too highly of the help given by officers and men, Atkinson’s company and co-operation were invaluable. Living in this little ship, anchored just outside a reef surrounding the small island where our instruments were erected, each morning he and I at 6 o’clock went ashore and supervised building of huts and erection of instruments, and came back to the ship in the evening. The ship usually went away on Saturday to get provisions, water, etc., and returned on the Monday, leaving us with two marines to cook for us and assist in any way we wanted. After dinner we got into our hammocks and talked till we felt sleepy, Atkinson telling stories of his Oxford days, hunting adventures in America, or of his experiences as a barrister on circuit. No one ever had a pleasanter companion on an Eclipse Expedition or one who turned his hand more readily to taking the clock to pieces and cleaning it or whatever wanted doing. He was more distressed than I was when we thought the day was going to be cloudy. Not till the Eclipse had been satisfactorily observed did he take a holiday. Then he went away for a few days on an expedition after a tiger, where he had no luck but found the experience very exciting he said. He returned by the time I had finished developing the photographs, and helped me pack up and dispatch the instruments to England. The time I spent with him in Sumatra was one of the most delightful experiences of my life. He went and helped me at another Eclipse Expedition in Tunis in 1905, when we were guests for

a time of Lord Beatty, then Captain Beatty of the *Suffolk*. In the spring of 1912 I went at his invitation to see another Eclipse. He took his two-seater car from Southampton to Havre, and we went leisurely up the Seine in time to see the short Eclipse at St. Germain, and back again *via* Dieppe, and along the coast to Havre, taking a trip by boat to see the Bayeux tapestry. In the autumn of the same year he accompanied Eddington and Davidson to Brazil, where the fortune of weather was against them.

"This was his sixth and last Eclipse Expedition. He frequently attended the meetings of the Society and sometimes those of the British Association. In later years, when he was hardly fit to travel, he would come to London to see his old friends. No one ever made less of his own illness. I shall always remember with gratitude the help he has given me, and think of him as the kindest and cheeriest comrade in expeditions which are not free from worry and anxiety, but which his companionship made the pleasantest of experiences."

The value of such a man is not conveyed by records of facts, but by the testimony of his friends. Another of those who knew him well was Father A. L. Cortie, of Stonyhurst, who has written this:—

"The chief trait in the character of J. J. Atkinson was his exceeding kindness of disposition, which made him friends with everyone. For instance, on the Eclipse Expedition to Sumatra, the sailors of the man-of-war conveying the astronomers were so captivated by his open-hearted geniality, that they invited him to lie full length on the deck with his head over the hatch, to get the first whiff from the rum cask when it was broached for the crew. He appears, too, to have been a great favourite with an important local chief. In fact, in whatever society he might be found, his attractive personality gained for him the goodwill of everybody. He was greatly esteemed by the Fathers at Stonyhurst.

"The death of his elder son, killed in the War, affected him very deeply, but he bore his loss with exemplary resignation and courage, and was sincerely grateful for any expressions of condolence and sympathy. Captain St. Leger Atkinson commanded the 6th Signalling Troop of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade of the 6th Division, and was killed in France early in 1915. At the memorial service, held in Cosgrove Church, he said: 'There is not a real man here, who will not wish for such an end as his, and who does not thank God with me for having given me such a son.' For to those who knew him intimately he was a man of sincere faith, and of deep religious spirit.

"In early life he had been an adept in all forms of sport—cricket, hunting, racing. His prowess in cricket was well known in Yorkshire, and he kept a racing stable, even when he was an undergraduate at Oxford. A valuable painting, which was given to him in lieu of a racing debt, now hangs in the main corridor at Stonyhurst.

"The people about Cosgrove Priory idolised him, and gentry and labourers gathered together at his funeral to express their esteem and regard for one who had endeared himself to all their hearts. He is buried in the cemetery attached to the parish church of SS. Peter and Paul at Cosgrove. He died on 1924 December 12, aged eighty years."

The testimony of Professor R. A. Sampson, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, loses nothing of its emphasis or effectiveness by its opening reference to the exceptional nature of the relationship:—

“I find myself very little inclined to express in ordinary terms what Atkinson represented to us. He met us on a side which has nothing to do with the usual scientific categories. A sportsman, a country gentleman, bred on the classics at Oxford, and retaining no little interest in them, with a very extensive knowledge of people of all stamps, he ended by adopting astronomers. Frankly, I accepted that as evidence of his shrewdness. It was no doubt the sporting side of the science that led him in—eclipse-hunting in queer parts of the world. To picture him in his element I recall the Eclipse of 1905 at Sfax in Tunis, a festival dinner with tables set in the open street, the company British, French, and Italian astronomers, with the officers of H.M.S. *Suffolk*, and Arab dignitaries from the native town, and Atkinson pouring out a tremendous fire of chaff, and asking in vain for the French for ‘Keep the ball rolling.’ But while he entered into that game like the splendid old boy he was, and though he never became an astronomer in any technical sense, the science meant a real interest to him. He knew extraordinarily well what was what, in this world, and his curiosity in matters of ideas, in the people that propounded them, was the sign of his active, joyous mind searching for food where he knew he would find it good.

“Add that he was one of the most constant of friends, and that it was impossible to be dull in his company.”

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 1899 Feb. 10.

H. H. T.

CAPTAIN WARREN FREDERICK CABORNE, son of Warren Caborne, Esq., Apparitor-General of the Diocese of Rochester, was born at Danbury, Essex, on 1849 July 5. He entered the Mercantile Marine in 1865 as a midshipman on board the frigate-built East Indiaman “Hotspur.” In 1875 he obtained command of a sailing-ship, and later he commanded several ships. He had some thrilling experiences at sea. In 1867 October he was in the “Blenheim” when it was dismasted during a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, and he was in the Banka Straits at the time of the great eruption that wiped out Anjer and submerged Krakatoa in 1883.

In 1879 he joined the R.N.R., and he served with distinction on several of His Majesty’s ships. These services were recognised by the conferring upon him in 1897 of the companionship of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.

On the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, although beyond the age limit of recall, he volunteered his services to his country. These were accepted, and he was appointed an inspector of steel in the Naval Ordnance Department. He was awarded the Royal Naval Officers’ decoration, and on the conclusion of the war he was promoted on the retired list to the rank of Captain, R.N.R.

His interest in the sea is shown by various offices he held, *e.g.* Director of the Sailors’ Home, Gravesend; Deputy Chairman of the