

tion, as well as respected for his various attainments. He was a Fellow of this Society from its foundation.

Though the Count Cassini had retired from the pursuit of astronomy long before the formation of this Society, and was not, therefore, one of our associates, it is, nevertheless, impossible to pass over in silence the extinction of this ancient hereditary race of astronomers. He died on October 18, 1845, aged 97. From 1671 to 1793, that is, from the foundation of the Paris Observatory till the period of the Revolution, it was occupied by the four Cassinis in succession. The last of these, the Count Cassini, of whom we are now speaking, was driven out by the National Convention, at the time when he was pressing upon them the reconstruction of the Observatory and the introduction of modern instruments. Though an hereditary dynasty of astronomers was not found very favourable to the interests of astronomy, as tending to perpetuate the ideas and methods of its founder, in lieu of introducing acknowledged improvements from time to time, family groups of distinguished philosophers must always be objects of peculiar interest to the historical inquirer. Community of name and blood magnifies even the aggregate amounts of the successes of the Cassinis, the Bernoullis, the Lemonniers, the Maraldis, the Lalandes, and the Herschels; nor is it without a feeling of satisfaction that we take notice of five of these families having been families of astronomers.

The fifth Cassini, by name Henri, son of Count Cassini, was a judge of the Cour Royale, and was well known for his extensive knowledge of natural history. He died of the cholera at Paris in 1833.

Not long after the last annual meeting, our valuable Assistant-Secretary, Mr. Harris, was seized with a complaint in the knee-joint, which almost wholly incapacitated him from attending to business. It was at one time thought that he might have been restored to health, but, unfortunately, just at the time when the local complaint seemed to yield to medical treatment, rapid consumption came on, and terminated his life on the 25th of December. Mr. Harris was a native of Shipton, near Burford, in Oxfordshire, and was, at the time of his death, in his 35th year. After being occupied, from the age of 19, as a schoolmaster at Greenwich, he passed, in August 1841, into the employment of the Astronomer Royal, in whose opinion he soon ranked very high as a valuable computer and a trustworthy agent. In November 1843, he was appointed to fill the vacancy in the Assistant-Secretaryship made by the resignation of Mr. Hartnup; so that the Council had but time to form the decided opinion they now express of his worth and usefulness, before the first appearance of the disorder which terminated his life. Mr. Harris was a well-informed and even accomplished man, and a successful student of the arts of painting and music. He was also attached to the literature of astronomy, as well as to the practice of its methods. He is the author of a paper on an ancient almanac, which appears in the recently published volume. The Council feel that it will not be easy to supply his