

and that which I had computed for Christchurch. As my home is some distance north of the city, I thought it advisable to recalculate the last contact for the actual place of observation; and the final result is that I saw the eclipse end 38 seconds before its predicted time. This seems rather a large discrepancy.

The slides are prepared in such a way that the south point of the Sun's disc is approximately at the top of the picture, the Moon of course appearing to north of the Sun all the time.

Christchurch, New Zealand,

May 7th.

Obituary.

Mrs. Fleming.

Williamina Paton Stevens was born at Dundee, Scotland, on the 15th of May 1857. She was educated at her native town, and became on her marriage Mrs. Fleming. But she went to America soon afterwards, and has been connected with Harvard College Observatory since 1879. Stellar photography formed a very important part of the work there, and Mrs. Fleming was appointed curator of the photographic plates in 1898, with a large staff of lady assistants, her own special study being the examination of the stellar spectra plates of the Draper Memorial. In the course of this she discovered several *novæ*, a large number of variable stars, stars having peculiar spectra, nebulae, and other objects. The photographs were taken with the Draper telescopes, set up at Harvard and Arequipa, so that they include both hemispheres. An enduring memorial of Mrs. Fleming's work is the Draper catalogue of stellar spectra, in which she classified the spectra of more than 10,000 stars down to about the 8th magnitude. The distinction was conferred upon her in 1906 of being made an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society; and in the same year she was elected an honorary associate of Wellesley College, Mass. Her death occurred on the 22nd of May last. She had been seriously ill in the early part of last year, but it was hoped that she had recovered, and she joined a scientific party on their journey to California in the summer, so that the news of her death came rather as a shock to this country.

W. T. L.

Mr. W. Coleman, F.R.A.S.

The death of William Coleman, who was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1884 and was an original Member of our Association, took place on the 9th of April, at

the age of 87. Of late years Mr. Coleman had resided at Buckland, near Dover, where he set up an 8-inch Cooke equatorial and obtained a large number of observations of double stars, the results of which were published in the Memoirs of the Royal Astronomical Society.

W. T. L.

Correspondence.

Astronomy in the Encyclopædia Britannica: A Warning.

Having had occasion recently to refer to the article on Aberration of Light in the eleventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, I was much surprised to find it defective in some important particulars, and think it well to call attention to the matter as a warning to our younger Members that implicit confidence should not be placed in statements appearing in this much-advertised work. Certainly if the article to which I refer may be taken as a representative one, the new edition of the Encyclopædia cannot be accepted as a safe guide for students. The particulars to which I desire to call attention are the following:—

(1) In attempting to explain the parallelogram of velocities in connection with the subject of aberration the author expresses himself thus: If the observer “traverses the distance BA in the same time as light passes from the star (S) to his eye, the star will appear in the direction AS.” By how many years are we to suppose the time specified to be measured? And how can the Earth’s path be represented by a straight line for such intervals of time? There is some very careless writing here.

(2) With regard to the constant of aberration, the author states that “the generally accepted value is $20''\cdot445$, due to Struve.” It looks as if this statement had been extracted from a nineteenth century text-book by a writer who had not taken the trouble to ascertain whether it was still applicable. Has the author never heard of the Paris Conference of May 1896?

(3) I note the omission of any reference to “planetary” aberration, which is an essential part of the subject for the astronomical student.

A. M. W. DOWNING.

Mr. Davidson’s Explanation of Meteorites.

If an imposing array of formulæ could prove his case every one would agree that Mr. Davidson’s explanation was complete and sufficient. In commenting upon it (as I am sure the Council would allow me no such longitude as they have accorded him) I am compelled to be brief. Fortunately I am not called on to