

Michell became Rector of Thornhill, he resided at Cambridge, where he was for two years Woodwardian Professor.

Blackheath, 1911, Nov. 10.

Yours faithfully,  
W. T. LYNN.

*Dr. John Smith.*

GENTLEMEN,—

Mr. Lynn, in the November number of the *Observatory*, explains that he has been unable to trace any particulars as to the career of Dr. John Smith, the second Lowndean Professor. The following facts, gathered from Dr. Venn's 'Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College,' may be of interest to your readers.

Born at Cottishall, in Norfolk, John Smith was educated at Norwich Grammar School and at Eton. He was admitted as a Pensioner in 1732, and was successively Scholar, Fellow, Dean, Bursar, President, and in 1764 Master of his College. In 1771 he was elected Lowndean Professor of Astronomy. It would be difficult now to ascertain his claims to the post, but it is certain that he was prepared to do observational work from his own house. There is an entry in the College *Gesta* (November 17, 1764) of a College order allowing him "to make such alterations in the south parapet, over the ante-chapel, as may be thought necessary for the reception of his Transit telescope." He seems to have given no lectures, and no scientific work of his has so far been traced.

The following short sketch of him is worth quoting:—"Smith is a plain, honest man, of strong passions when moved, . . . an eternal smoker of tobacco; pretends to a taste in painting, and may possibly understand it, though he looks as if he did not, and has such an inarticulate way of expressing himself that very few people understand what he says."

He left to the University a piece of land in Smallwood, Cheshire, for the increase of the Lowndean Professorship.

Gonville and Caius College,  
1911, Nov. 8.

Yours faithfully,  
F. J. M. STRAITON.

### *Recent Meteors.*

GENTLEMEN,—

September, like the two previous months of July and August, proved unusually fine here, and a considerable number of meteoric observations were made. On the first few nights of the month there were radiants at  $2^{\circ} - 2^{\circ}$ ,  $62^{\circ} + 35^{\circ}$ ,  $309^{\circ} + 61$ , and  $352^{\circ} + 4^{\circ}$ , and during the latter half at  $13^{\circ} + 5^{\circ}$ ,  $60^{\circ} + 50^{\circ}$ ,  $330^{\circ} + 58^{\circ}$ , and  $351^{\circ} + 39^{\circ}$ . In October there were fewer opportunities for obtaining materials and not many meteors were registered; but some flights were observed from two well-defined showers—one at  $28^{\circ} + 72^{\circ}$  in the northern region of Cassiopeia, and the other at  $206^{\circ} + 55^{\circ}$  near  $\zeta$  Ursæ Majoris.

Owing chiefly to the valuable and extensive observations of