

October he was appointed Director of the Computing Section, to which position he was admirably suited by nature.

Astronomy surely owes him a debt for his valuable but unspectacular work in reducing occultations, but even more so for his achievement in 1929, when he designed and constructed a machine for predicting lunar occultations. For several years his machine was on loan to H.M. Nautical Almanac Office, and did valuable service in enabling the elements of occultations not visible from fixed observatories to be omitted from the *Nautical Almanac*, and in obtaining preliminary times; a copy of his machine, constructed professionally in metal, has made possible a great extension of occultation predictions, so that they now cover the majority of probable observing stations.

McNeile had many other interests and activities; he was very interested in and adept at carpentry and photography, while fishing and winter sports were his favourite pastimes. His profession gave him opportunities for foreign travel, of which he took full advantage. Although rather shy in a large company he could be a most entertaining companion; his keen appreciation of national characteristics and his intimate knowledge of many subjects made his conversation always interesting, often humorous, but never banal.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 1930 January 10.

D. H. S.

WILLIAM GRASETT THACKERAY, the eldest son of the Rev. Richard William Thackeray, Rector of the parish of Hunsdon, Hertfordshire, and second cousin of William Makepeace Thackeray, was born on 1853 September 4 and died on 1935 March 31.

He was educated at Bedford Grammar School, and after competitive examination by the Civil Service Commissioners was appointed to the staff of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, on 1875 February 25, to fill the vacancy consequent on the resignation of Mr. James Glaisher.

During the next sixteen years he was for the greater part employed on observing with the Transit Circle and in the reduction of the observations. In 1891 he was relieved from this work, and till his retirement on 1919 September 4 he superintended the miscellaneous astronomical computations, including the preparation of the Annual Greenwich volume for press and the formation of the star catalogues from the observations. Cognate to that work many papers by himself alone or in collaboration with others appeared in the publications of the Royal Astronomical Society.

He married in 1884 a Mrs. Hoare and had a daughter and a son. His wife died in 1902, and two years later he lost his son. For the last six years of his life he lived with his daughter and son-in-law.

His colleagues remember him as a gentleman of original outlook who expressed his views with freedom and with quaint humour.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 1890 January 10, and resigned his Fellowship in 1928.