

from the use of a uniform system are generally realised, and astronomers will therefore welcome the invitation to submit, by correspondence, to the President of the Commission any alterations they may wish to suggest for the improvement of the list.

On the part of the many to whom the *Transactions* will prove of service we take this opportunity of expressing our indebtedness to Prof. Stratton, as General Secretary and Editor, and to all others who have contributed to this useful compendium of current astronomical information.—H. F. F.

O B I T U A R Y.

William Alfred Parr.

The passing of W. Alfred Parr at the Hazeldene Nursing Home, St. Albans, on Thursday, April 2, 1936, removes from the ranks of amateur astronomers a man of fine character and one who endeared himself to many by his charming personality, courtliness of manner, and the ever-ready help and advice which was always at their disposal.

It was at the writer's suggestion that Parr should accept the office of Librarian to the British Astronomical Association in 1919, and possibly it was as Librarian that so many came to know him best. It is safe to say that no one was better fitted for that office, as apart from his well-founded knowledge of the history and literature of astronomy, he possessed a strongly linguistic mind, and many of the works in foreign languages were handed over to him for review. Later volumes of the *Journal* of the B. A. A. contain numerous reviews by him and also historical notes of famous observatories and astronomers in Europe.

His chief interest in observational astronomy was in solar physics, and when he removed to St. Albans in 1926 he erected a beautiful 4-inch Cooke equatorial to which was attached a 2-prism Evershed spectroscope made especially for him by Adam Hilger, Ltd. The observatory was inaugurated in the presence of Sir Frank Dyson and others well-known in the astronomical world.

In a letter from Parr written a few days before his death he referred to the possession of this equipment as one of the ambitions of his life, and added that he regarded his nomination to the Presidency of the British Astronomical Association in 1932 as the culminating point in his scientific career, and an honour which he deeply appreciated.

At the first Conference of the International Astronomical Union at Rome in 1922 Parr was one of the guests, and the writer well remembers more than one occasion when the Italian language presented difficulties, the solution of which was "Ask Parr"—this by reason of the fact that he had spent a number of years at Florence, where he had settled with his mother and sister.

He received his education at Stuttgart (Württemberg) and thence proceeded to Berlin for his musical training at the hands of Prof. Barth. Whilst there he took his degree of Ph.D. Music was almost a passion with him, and to hear his interpretation of some of the well-known works was always an inspiration. It may be said that his two real interests in life were astronomy and music, thus combining science and art; and possibly here lies the secret of his personality.

During the war he was engaged in the Censor Office, and in dealing with enemy correspondence he carried out work of great value to the State. In 1919 he entered the London office of Messrs. Vickers, Ltd., as Librarian, his knowledge of languages and his scientific attainments again being a great asset to his work there.

Whilst living at St. Albans he frequently lectured to the Adult School, and at one time was a member of the St. Albans Orchestral Society. In 1933 he was President of the Baconian Club, and his services were greatly in demand in organising musical programmes for Baconian evenings.

He joined the British Astronomical Association in 1893 and the Royal Astronomical Society in 1913. As a Fellow of the latter he was chosen as representative of the Society at the celebrations of the University of Pavia a few years ago. Mr. Parr was 71 years of age, and is survived by his widow and his son, the Rev. A. Cecil Parr.

A. M. N.