

atoms was not in a satisfactory state to justify extrapolation to stellar conditions with the possible exception of hydrogen". We may note that astrophysical observations show the best quantitative agreement with theory in stars with spectra of class A, where hydrogen absorption predominates. It has been suggested that absorption by negative hydrogen ions, which has a flat maximum in the visual region, may provide a solution to the problem in theoretical physics. But to the astrophysicist the situation must appear as a great opportunity for first class astrophysical observation followed by a proper astrophysical theory to lead the way for terrestrial physics to follow.

O B I T U A R Y.

Henry Park Hollis.

READERS of the Observatory magazine will have learned with deep regret of the death of Mr. H. P. Hollis which occurred on the twenty-fifth of August. Mr. Hollis was Editor of *The Observatory* from 1893 to 1912 and, as such, was well known to all our readers. Henry Park Hollis was born on the ninth of January 1858. He was educated at Westminster and afterwards went to Jesus College, Cambridge: he sat for the Mathematical Tripos and took his degree in 1880. In November 1881 he was appointed to the post of Assistant at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich. His was the first appointment to be made under Christie, who had succeeded Airy in August 1881. Coming to Greenwich so soon after the retirement of Airy, Hollis thus became a link between the Observatory of those days and the present time. When Hollis joined the staff the greater part of the work centred around the Transit Circle and Altazimuth and it is not surprising that, at the commencement, Hollis should have been employed on the regular observations made with those instruments. But it was not long before he was chosen to assist Mr. Maunder with the measurement and reduction of Solar photographs. He also assisted in the preparation of the Greenwich Ten Year Catalogue of Stars and superintended the reduction of some pendulum observations. He gave some of his time to the care of the library including the

old manuscripts of the Observatory. It may well be that the extensive knowledge of the history and work of the Observatory which he possessed was due to the variety of his duties in these early years. During his period of service a number of longitude determinations were carried out. He was chosen as one of the observers in the determinations of the difference of longitude between Greenwich and Paris in 1892 and 1901, and superintended the reduction of these observations as well as those of several subsequent longitude determinations.

In 1896 Hollis was placed in charge of the work of the Astrographic Chart and Catalogue, and, though much had been done by way of clearing the ground, it was only then that the actual routine measurement of the Catalogue plates began. During the next twenty-four years Hollis devoted himself to the completion of the Greenwich portion of this international project, and when he retired in 1920 he could say that not only had Greenwich completed the measurement of the Catalogue plates and published the rectangular coordinates of the stars in the Greenwich zones (declination $+65^{\circ}$ to $+90^{\circ}$), but that photographic reproductions of all the Chart plates had also been made and distributed to the participating observatories. In addition, two supplementary volumes had been published giving the right ascensions and declinations, magnitudes and proper motions of the reference stars and others of the brighter stars shown on the plates.

Besides contributing many articles and notes to this magazine Hollis wrote, for many years, a fortnightly letter on astronomical subjects to the *English Mechanic* in which he imparted much useful information to amateur astronomers. When the British Astronomical Association was founded in 1890 Hollis became one of its first members; for many years he served on the Council and was President in 1908-09.

Hollis was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1884, his first paper being one on a Comparison of some places of stars observed at the Sydney Observatory with the places of the same stars as given in the Cape Catalogue 1888 (*M. N.* vol. 55). He served on the Council of the Society from 1909 to 1911. For many years he contributed the astronomical notes and data to Whitaker's

Almanac, and he was the author of a very readable book 'Chats about Astronomy'. He also wrote that part of the History of the Royal Astronomical Society covering the years 1870–1880.

For a number of years after his retirement Hollis stoutly refused to give way to increasing physical disability and would never allow his infirmities to prevent him from attending the meetings of those astronomical Societies with which he had been associated for so long a time.

Forty-four years ago the writer became a computer under Hollis. First impressions and experiences remain. Never did a harsh word fall from his lips. When finding mistakes in the computations he had a habit of giving a low whistle followed by the (not inaudible) remark *silly ass*. We, his computers, never knew whether it was ourselves or the examiner who had made the mistake. We also recall that he joined in our games and proved himself to be an efficient goal-keeper in the Observatory's hockey team. He was respected and regarded with affection by all his friends and colleagues and by all those who served under him. We who knew him will ever remember him as a kind and courteous gentleman.

P. J. M.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

To the Editors of 'The Observatory'.

Anomalous Behaviour of Fe II in ϕ Persei.

GENTLEMEN,—

In a recent paper on ϕ Persei by Dustheimer * the radial velocities of Fe II show large differences from those of H and other elements. No explanations are offered of these differences, and it has been suggested to the writer by Prof. F. J. M. Stratton that the Sidmouth plates of this star might throw some light on the subject—particularly whether the differences might be caused by setting on one component only of an emission double. The Sidmouth (9-inch) spectra have a dispersion of 17 Å/mm. at 4500 Å, and amongst them are a number taken during the same period as the Michigan negatives.

* *Michigan Obs. Pub.* vol. 7, no. 8, 1939.