

ALFRED MARSHALL GRAEME-THOM (b. 1886, d. 1943), a twin, came of a Scottish Highland crofter family with a long-standing military tradition. At the early age of fourteen years he volunteered for military service, enlisted in the Gordon Highlanders, took part in the Boer War and in the same year received the D.C.M., being probably the youngest holder of that decoration. Continuing on active service he distinguished himself in the field and in the air, playing a prominent part in the early days of the R.F.C., persisting in hazardous exploits in spite of serious wounds (and well-intentioned dissuasion), attaining at length the rank of Major and receiving, over the period of his service, numerous further military honours and decorations, including those of some of the highest European orders, namely, the Order of the Legion of Honour, the Order of St. Anne of Russia, and the Order of Leopold of Belgium. His military career was terminated in 1918 by the effects of a severe head wound which, on his return to civil life, caused him eventually to seek refuge in a solitary existence on his own estate, an extensive virgin terrain in a remote part of the East Gippsland "bush," Australia. Here he first devoted himself to the cultivation and curing of tobacco and to research in this subject, in which he was known to have a specialized knowledge. Here also he could indulge his love of nature and profit by his skill as an accomplished archer, using only bows of his own fashioning, while developing an interest in astronomy, especially as an observer of meteors.

For reasons of health Thom was eventually compelled to abandon the production of tobacco and thereupon decided to give full rein to his passion for astronomical observation. He then resolved to construct and equip a second and larger observatory. Having already considerable mechanical skill, he proceeded to perfect his knowledge of optics and cultivated this subject assiduously from both its theoretical and practical aspects. He experimented with success in the production of specula for mirrors and gratings and had already achieved a considerable measure of optical and instrument-making proficiency when, impelled by his craftsman's interest and thirst for optical knowledge, he was able, by virtue of sustained self-denial—in which he was aided by his wife, a lady of Gippsland descent—to arrange a world tour for the purpose of visiting the most important centres of optical instruction and production. This brought him in 1938 to Europe, where he worked for a time at various optical firms, including those of Messrs. Chance Bros. of Birmingham and Messrs. Hilger of London, after having travelled widely in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. The first contemplated completion of his plan by a visit to the great optical centres of the U.S.A. had to be abandoned owing to the exigencies of the present war. Thom and his wife lost their lives by enemy action on making the return journey to Australia, where Thom was to have taken up an appointment in which his newly developed optical ability would have been of value to the Empire's cause.

The discriminative knowledge gained from his intensive study and application to the craft and science of optics procured him many minor triumphs in this field, made him a keen judge of values therein and enabled him to contribute materially to the war effort in this country. Thom's capabilities in optics were not yet plumbed and his work in astronomy was not yet accomplished when in 1943, in his fifty-seventh year, he met his tragic death at sea, but his example as an amateur, in the true and literal sense of the word, is in the best traditions of astronomy and optics.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 1942 July 10.

J. W. PERRY.

HENRY ERNEST GREEN, Second Assistant in the Cambridge Observatory, died suddenly at Cambridge on 1944 September 18, at the age of fifty-five. Born at Greenwich on 1889 August 2, he was the third and youngest son of Charles and Esther Green. He was admitted to the Royal Hospital School, Greenwich (Upper Nautical School), as