

## OBITUARY NOTICES

CHARLES PRITCHARD BUTLER, son of Charles Butler, cutler and wood carver, and of Elizabeth Pritchard, was born in Sheffield on 1871 August 19 and died in Cambridge 1952 November 21.

He was educated at the Central School and Firth College, Sheffield, where he was awarded the Lancastrian Scholarship, and at the Royal College of Science, London, of which he was an Associate. He had originally planned a career in medicine but changed his plans during his student days.

He was appointed a computer by the Solar Physics Committee in 1898, working under Sir Norman Lockyer; in 1902 he became Second Assistant at the Solar Physics Observatory at South Kensington. He moved with the Observatory to Cambridge where he was placed, as a Senior Observer, in charge of the work of the spectroheliograph. At the time of the move, 1913, Butler was actually in India, acting as Director of the Kodaikanal Observatory during the interregnum between the Directorships of Michie Smith and Evershed. He retired from his Observatory post in 1937.

He published several papers in the *Monthly Notices* on an eruptive prominence, on the distribution and life history of solar calcium flocculi and on variations in the spectrum of Nova Aquilae, 1918. He was a member of expeditions to observe three total solar eclipses, 1905 in Spain, 1914 in the Crimea and 1927 in Norway. He was probably the first to isolate in a laboratory spectrum of a helium tube the line 4686 Å of He II, though this was before its identification was established. He served for many years on the Council of the British Astronomical Association as Director of the Solar Section.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 1908 November 13.

F. J. M. STRATTON.

LESLIE JOHN COMRIE died on 1950 December 11, the Society thereby losing an outstanding individualist who was always wholeheartedly devoted to its interests, and wholeheartedly devoted to certain aspects of astronomy. It would be an untruth to say that Comrie was wholeheartedly devoted to astronomy in the general sense; his devotion was, in the nature of the man, limited to that part of our science in which he was himself interested. This excluded most of what we call astrophysics, which was perhaps his *bête noire*. On one occasion he remarked with characteristic sarcasm that he supposed that in future we should no longer have an Astronomer Royal but an "Astrophysicist Royal". But there was no doubt about his devotion to positional astronomy; when Comrie gave his allegiance he gave it completely, and, let it be said, often fanatically. He was apt to have no interest in anything unless he could devote himself to it with something like fanaticism, with the result that his range of interests was such that if he had been a normal man he would have been called "narrow". But he was not a normal man; paradoxically enough, his "narrowness" made him completely lovable to those who really understood him. A colleague once told him that he was a fanatic; Comrie regarded this as a high compliment. And there can be no doubt about what astronomers owe to his fanaticism; they are indebted to him for the complete revision and revolutionary