

THE LATE MR. A. C. RANYARD.—In its late Vice-President the British Astronomical Association has lost a firm supporter, and not a few of its Members a true and valued friend.

Arthur Cowper Ranyard was born in 1845, and was the son of a lady well known under the initials "L. N. R." as an earnest philanthropist and as an influential and popular religious writer. He was educated at University College School, Gower Street, and by the celebrated Prof. De Morgan, with whose son he formed a close friendship, and the two young men were instrumental in starting the body which has since had a successful career as the London Mathematical Society. Indeed, the first paper read before it was by young Ranyard.

Astronomy early attracted him, and he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society when only 18. Later he entered Pembroke College, Cambridge, graduating in 1868. He then took up the study of the law, but though adopting it finally as his profession, his strong attachment to the science of Astronomy still continued, and in 1870, the year before he was called to the Bar, he, in conjunction with Mr. J. Norman Lockyer, acted as secretary of the Eclipse Committee, appointed by the Royal and Royal Astronomical Societies to arrange for the observation of the total solar eclipse of that year, and he joined one of the expeditions sent out. The station he occupied was Villasmunda, near Augusta, Sicily, where he was favoured with a fine view of the phenomena of totality, and obtained a very successful set of polariscopic observations of the corona. Shortly after his return to England from this expedition, he was elected to a seat on the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society, which, except for one interval of four years, he retained till his death. He then collaborated with Sir G. B. Airy in the preparation of the great Eclipse Volume of the Memoirs of the Royal Astronomical Society and after a short time the entire work devolved upon him. How admirably, and with what skill and conscientiousness that very heavy task was

fulfilled, is known to all. This early participation in solar research greatly influenced his choice of the particular side of astronomy to which he was to devote his attention in the future. The nature of the various solar envelopes, and the structure of the corona were matters of great interest to him, and he gradually secured a favourable reception for some of his views concerning them. He undertook two eclipse expeditions at his own expense, one to America in 1878, and another to Egypt in 1882; and his high appreciation of the work of Hale and Deslandres led him, quite recently, to construct a large spectro-heliograph, which he lent to Prof. Hale for use in his late expedition to Mount Etna. Mr. Ranyard was on his death-bed when the instrument to which he had hoped to devote many years of work, but which he had never had an opportunity of using, reached England. It will not, however, be wasted, for with a clear apprehension of the hands in which it would be of the greatest value, he willed it to Mr. Evershed, Director of the Solar Spectroscopic Section of the Association.

Nevertheless, Mr. Ranyard's chief astronomical work was literary rather than observational, and his editorship of R. A. Proctor's "Old and New Astronomy," and of "Knowledge," form—of course with the "Eclipse" Memoir—his main title to astronomical distinction. In the former, the chapters on stars and nebulae are Mr. Ranyard's alone, and he proved himself well able to maintain Mr. Proctor's reputation in a field where the latter had won the highest reputation as a clear and original thinker. "Knowledge," he certainly raised to a higher standard than even his gifted predecessor had been able to do, and by the reproduction of a great number of astronomical photographs added greatly to the interest of the publication and conferred a great benefit upon amateur astronomers.

Mr. Ranyard's industry and business capacity were very high. He proved an admirable hon. Secretary to the Royal Astronomical Society from 1874 to 1880; and, during the last three years of his life was a most devoted and respected Member of the London County Council. But details such as these give no idea of the regard he won as a man. His manners ever most courteous and kindly, his unflinching generosity of spirit, his perfect freedom from self-seeking, and his untainted honesty of purpose, endeared him to a very large circle of friends, amongst whom were numbered a large number of foreign as well as of English astronomers.

As a proof of his kindly interest in the British Astronomical Association, it may be mentioned that he had arranged to give a lecture on "Stellar and Nebular Distribution" to the Members of the Association, and to invite them afterwards to an inspection of his observatory, when the earlier symptoms of the disease, which afterwards proved fatal, obliged him to forego his purpose.

Throughout the weary months of conflict with that disease,—an internal cancer,—he maintained his bright and patient courage. His death took place at the time of the Meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society on December 14, 1894.