THE LATE MR. A. J. RAMSAY.—We regret to note the death of Mr. Andrew J. Ramsay, of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh. He died on the 5th of March 1899, after little more than three weeks' illness, having nearly completed his 37th year.

Andrew James Ramsay was born at Crieff, on the 27th March 1862, and was a descendant of a family settled since 1630 in the neighbourhood of Maderty, in Perthshire, where his great-grandfather was parish minister from 1741 to 1783. His father was well-known in Crieff and the district as a man of wide and

advanced views, and his influence made itself felt in the early education of his family. Andrew J. Ramsay, his youngest son, was educated at Morrison's Academy, Crieff, and the Royal High School, Edinburgh, and afterwards at Edinburgh University, where he attended the classes of astronomy, natural philosophy, and chemistry for several years, commencing with the Winter Session of 1889–90. He was awarded the medal for proficiency in astronomy at the close of the session 1890–91.

He joined the staff of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, early in 1893, and at once began to take an active part as well in the regular work of the old observatory on Calton Hill as in the organisation of the new establishment then in course of erection on Blackford Hill. For work of the latter kind he exhibited special mental qualities of a practical kind, and he rendered most valuable assistance in elaborating the internal arrangements of the various departments of the new buildings. He took particular interest in such practical problems as the laying down of the wires for the electric control of clocks, for the chronograph service and electric illumination of the telescopes, and for other purposes. He had also a large share in arranging the books of the Crawford Library in their new home. In this work his knowledge of Latin, French, German, and Italian was of much assistance to him.

Amongst his more strictly astronomical work may be mentioned the auxiliary tables computed by him for facilitating the prediction of occultations visible at Edinburgh, and other tables to be used in the reduction of observations. He was one of the members of the Edinburgh Observatory party, who went to Vadsö in North-eastern Norway to observe the total solar eclipse of August 1896. To the preparations for this expedition he applied himself with the most unflagging zeal for many weeks, and the eagerness and perseverance with which he devoted himself to the work at the observing station, in spite of inclement weather, will not easily be forgotten by the other members of the party. He was a skilful photographer, and was most successful in photographing the moon under ordinary circumstances, as well as during the various phases of eclipse. He also made a series of photographs of the spectra of stars, and of various elements. Amongst his most interesting photographs were those showing the short and slender crescent of the sun as it reappeared at Vadsö in 1896.

He joined the British Astronomical Association soon after its foundation, and was one of the 10 members who signed the usual application for the sanction of the parent society for the formation of the East of Scotland Branch in October 1896. As a member of the local council he made himself exceedingly helpful in the organisation of the early proceedings, and on several occasions he contributed papers to the meetings. Of these we may mention his paper, entitled "The Determination of Time by means of the "Transit Instrument in the Meridian," in which with the aid of models and diagrams he gave a lucid and exhaustive description of the actual methods of determining time in a fixed observatory. Another was on the "Edinburgh Eclipse Expedition to Vadsö in 1896." A third paper on Signor Cerulli's "Observations of Mars," and Prof. Tacchini's "The Moon with an Opera-glass,"

was read within the present Session, and was listened to with great attention on account of the novelty of the subject matter, exhibiting, as it did, curious divergence of opinion, between well-known observers, as to the more debatable points in the observation of planetary surface markings.

Mr. Ramsay will long be remembered by his colleagues at the Edinburgh Observatory for his untiring and unselfish devotion to the work of the establishment, with which he so absolutely identified himself.