

Prof. Pritchard, born in 1808, has passed away from the list of active workers in the field of astronomy, in which he may be said to have laboured both as an amateur and a professional. The consideration of his life is of interest as showing the capacity for endurance and variety of work which one mind can possess under favourable conditions of health.

Of the long list of astronomical papers produced by him, especially in later years, and concerning the honours for which he was the just recipient, little mention need here be made, as they have been chronicled elsewhere, but hardly any of the accounts make mention of his early days when he may be said to have been practically an amateur.

He commenced life, after being fourth wrangler, as a schoolmaster at Stockwell, near London, in what may be termed, in comparison to his after success, an humble manner. His very considerable knowledge of classics, however, his great depth of theological learning, and his untiring energy, coupled with his great aptitude for explaining difficult subjects in language at once intelligible and accurate, descriptive, and even at times eloquent, won him very rapidly a great reputation. It was owing to this that a deputation of leading gentlemen in Clapham, which at that time was but a small village surrounded by a large residential property, called upon him to request him to start a grammar school in the immediate neighbourhood. After some consideration he consented, and here he was destined to meet with still more



(From photograph, Taunt & Co., Oxford.)

success, and to be the means of educating a very large number of students, some of whom have risen to positions of great eminence in different spheres of life.

About this time he became possessed of what was then considered a large telescope, viz., a refractor of six inches aperture, and of a transit by (it is believed) Troughton & Simms; and there are those still living who well recollect the parish clocks of the neighbourhood being regularly set by the time of the then first-rate clock of the Grammar School Chapel. But what was more surprising was the fact that notwithstanding the calls on his time and leisure, not to mention his energy, which his attention to his school and his astronomy made upon him, he was yet able to indulge very extensively in microscopy, botany, and in floriculture of the highest order, and in the collecting of ferns. Well can the writer recollect this collection, which at one time nearly won the reputation of being the best in England. This delight in his garden never forsook him, even in his old age, for it was only a few weeks before his death he wrote to a friend one of his amusing letters couched in language almost pathetic, "how he bemoaned the state of his peas," adding that owing to the continued drought he feared the "renowned association and delicious harmony of his mint with his lamb would be rudely broken!!"

Whilst a schoolmaster he took a keen interest in extending education, and owing to the large attendance of amateurs who flocked to his open lectures held in his class-room, a meeting was called in the year 1841, and at the request of the celebrated Gassiot with others, he was persuaded to start in Clapham a lecturing society called the Athenæum. This society enjoyed a very great reputation for years, many of the leading *savants* of that day having lectured there.

Prof. Pritchard left Clapham somewhat suddenly after having had about 30 years of teaching, declaring that his future pleasure was to settle down in some active parish work. This, however, never seemed to suit him, and he has said to several of his friends that "Providence made him an astronomer, but had given him the heart of a divine." Certainly, as a preacher, his powers of oratory were decidedly great, in acknowledgment of which he was appointed "Select Preacher" at Oxford, and chosen a preacher before the British Association on several occasions. It has been said that his finest effort was his celebrated sermon at Nottingham in 1866 at one of these meetings.

In conclusion, attention must be drawn to the special ability which the late Savilian Professor showed in the conduct of the Observatory placed under his charge; he was never at a loss for a moment what to work upon, but always selected some special line of research fitted to the means at his command, and with an important bearing on the general progress of science at the time. His early recognition of the powers of photography as a weapon of astronomical research, and his application of it to the observation of the lunar libration, and later to stellar parallax, furnishes the best illustration of this quickness of apprehension. His labours also on the determination of stellar magnitudes by means of the wedge photometer, and on the relative positions of the members of the group of the Pleiades are too well known to require extended comment.

. In his latter years he was extremely anxious that his assistants at the Observatory should be conscious of his best acknowledgments for their zealous services; and it was not long ago he said with a touching pathos to the writer, "How can I ever repay them for all their extra trouble, especially as for years, owing to my growing infirmities, I have never even been able to look through a telescope." He delighted, too, in stating the depth of his affection for his late senior assistant, expressing always a strong admiration of his services, both to friends and to those more closely about him, in a manner, too, they can never forget, and which will remain a lasting memorial as to how, in his heart, he regarded one, who, in recent years, was so very closely associated with his successful researches.

It is an instance of how thoroughly alive, even in his latest years, Prof. Pritchard was to the various movements in the scientific world that he took a warm interest in the British Astronomical Association from the very commencement. He was one of the first to join it, being an original Member, and fearing that it might not be financially strong enough to maintain the "Journal," the general plan of which met with his approval, he suggested to the President the formation of a subscription list for its support. Although this has not proved necessary, to have made it illustrates his quick sympathy with everything tending to the promotion of the science.

He was born in 1808, and entered the Royal Astronomical Society in 1849, of which he became President in 1866. He became Hulsean Lecturer in 1867, and Savilian Professor in 1870. He was the possessor of the Royal Medal of the Royal Society and the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, besides, in recent years, having had the distinction of being made honorary Fellow of his old college at Cambridge.