Notes.

THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.—The first meeting of the Session 1898–9 was held on Friday, November 11, the President, *Sir R. S. Ball*, in the chair. *Mr. Newall* read the list of presents received by the Society, making special reference to Mr. McClean's spectra of the southern stars, and to the valuable books presented by Mr. Leeson Prince, of Crowborough, and the vote of thanks to the latter was seconded by Capt. Noble. *Dr. Johnstone Stoney* read a paper on the approximate ephemeris of the Leonid meteor swarm, and also gave an account of the perturbations of the current revolution in that part of the stream through which the earth passed in 1866. This computation was done by the members of the staff of the "Nautical Almanac," under the superintendence of Dr. Downing, and showed a considerable shift of the node, due to a near approach to Saturn on the outward journey, and a near approach to Jupiter on the inward journey. *Mr. Maunder* suggested that in photographing meteors it might be sufficient to fix the cameras and let the stars trail on the plate, exposing for a period of a quarter of an hour. *Prof. Turner* said that there was no need to fix the camera by stars if it could be fixed by proper objects. *The President* gave an account of the new photographic telescope at the Cambridge University Observatory, and the *Astronomer Royal* showed photographs of the new asteroid D Q, of Comet Brooks, and of sunspots taken at the Royal Observatory; and *Mr. Newall* showed a series of slides presented by Prof. Barnard to the Society, a discussion on these ensuing between *Dr. Isaac Roberts* and the *Astronomer Royal*.

THE LATE EDWIN DUNKIN, F.R.S.—An original Member, and one of the founders of the British Astronomical Association, has just passed away from among us in the person of Mr. Edwin Dunkin, late Chief Assistant at the Royal Observatory. As Assistant, and as Chief Assistant, Mr. Dunkin was connected with Greenwich Observatory since the early days of Sir George Airy's reign there, and his more important astronomical works were intimately connected with the routine of its departments. From it he was sent as a deputy to observe the solar eclipse of 1851, at Christiania, and to take part in the Harton colliery experiments for the determination of gravity. In the Observatory he was a man after Sir George Airy's heart, methodical in the highest degree, a strict disciplinarian, an able observer, and a master computer. His more popular works were chiefly contributed to the "Leisure Hour," in the form of papers or scientific notes. Some of these papers were afterwards published in book form with the title of "The Midnight Sky," a work which, without being in the slightest degree meretricious in style, may be said to be the pioneer of astronomical literature provided for the lay public, and it still holds one of the highest places amongst such literature. It has done as much to enlist practical observers as perhaps any book in the English language. Mr. Dunkin served the Royal Astronomical Society in several capacities. He was its Secretary for several years at a time when the

secretarial duties were especially onerous and important, embracing, as they did, those of editor, and covering the time when the Society was practically without its permanent Secretary. He was subsequently President and Vice-President. He died on November 26, at the ripe age of 77.

THE LATE SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL, K.C.M.G.—To astronomers, Sir George Baden-Powell's name will always be associated with the "Saving of the Situation" in 1896, when alone amongst the British Expeditions sent out to observe the total solar eclipse of that year, the party, conveyed to Novaya Zemlaia by his yacht "Otaria," was favoured with a view of the phenomenon. It was thus entirely due to his generosity and scientific enterprise that the important photographs were secured, among which one, for the first time, registered the "flash." He took a deep interest in many branches of science, but his connexion with astronomy was an hereditary one, being a relative of the late Admiral Smyth and of Prof. Piazzi Smyth, so long Astronomer Royal for Scotland. His value as a politician is well known, and his death, at what must be considered the premature age of 51, is a loss not merely to science but to the Empire, whilst his genial and unaffected character endeared him to a very large circle of friends.

THE LATE DR. HERMAN ROMBERG.—Dr. Romberg was born on 1835, November 13, and came under the influence of Encke when at the University of Berlin in 1857. From 1862–1864 he was an assistant in Barclay's private observatory at Leyton in England, but in 1864 he returned to Berlin and took part in the meridian observations at the Observatory until 1873. In this year he went to the Pulkowa Observatory as assistant astronomer, and three years later he was chosen by the Imperial Academy of Science at St. Petersburg as senior astronomer. At Pulkowa the Repsold meridian circle was given into his charge, and it could not have been committed into better hands. In some years his star observations amounted to 9,000 in both co-ordinates, and this in a region where the long winter nights were often clouded and the short summer nights almost as bright as daylight. The results of Romberg's earlier Pulkowa observations (1874–1880) are published in his "Catalogue of 5,634 stars," made from 32,000 observations. His later work (1881–1894) was published in two volumes, comprising 20,000 and 15,000 observations respectively. Above all things Romberg was an astronomer of the exact school. When he returned to Berlin in 1894 and left behind him in Pulkowa his dearly beloved Repsold circle, he remarked, "Now am I an astronomer without an astronomy, "since my astronomy rests in the meridian circle at Pulkowa." Dr. Romberg died on 1898, July 6, at Berlin, after a long and severe illness.

THE LATE DR. J. F. HÖFFLER.—Dr. Höffler has been known rather on account of his theoretical researches in astronomy than his practical observations. In 1889 he took Russian influenza, which left tuberculous effects, and though he filled the office of assistant at the Zurich Observatory for a few months in 1896, he was compelled by his weakening health to