

OBITUARY

John Willoughby Meares, C.I.E., F.R.A.S.

Mr. Meares was born in 1871 and educated at Winchester, where he observed the famous shower of Andromede meteors on 1885 November 27. The interest thus awakened was furthered by reading the Whewell-Brewster controversy on the plurality of worlds at the house of a Wrangler uncle, who, having written a thesis on the Moon's motions, was unable to explain how to distinguish a planet from a star!

Beginning observational work with a $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch telescope, power 12, he had the luck to fall in with the late Mr. Arthur Mæe, F.R.A.S., of Cardiff, in 1889, whose 8-inch Calver was available on every fine night. Joining the B.A.A. as a "founder member", Mr. Meares bought a $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch refractor, with which he began planetary observations—calling forth commendation from Captain Noble, our first President, in the pages of the *English Mechanic*. Presently he made an equatorial stand for this small instrument, with electrically illuminated circles, to see which Lord Kelvin climbed up a ladder on to the roof of the Hove Electric Lighting Company's power-house. In 1896 he took a 9-inch With-Calver equatorial with him to India, where the unrivalled skies of Darjeeling gave many visitors a thrill.

Up to about 1900 Mr. Meares contributed drawings and observations to the Jupiter and Mars Sections, as well as some articles to the *Journal*; but his official duties then precluded regular work. Halley's Comet was seen by him under very favourable conditions on 1910 May 19 from Calcutta; incidentally, his father saw this object both then and eighty-five years earlier.

He married twice, and leaves two sons. His elder son is a Life Member of the Association.