

# Obituary.

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## William Evan McFarlane, F.R.A.S.

Our late Member, whose regretted death occurred on 18th August at Irvinebank, North Queensland, was born in England in the year 1866. His father was a clergyman of the Anglican Church, and it was to this profession that our Member was in early life for some years attached. Later, however, it was decided for him that he should follow the medical profession, and after taking his degrees in medicine and surgery with some distinction, he practised for a short time in Edinburgh, and then spent a year or two in travelling round the world, visiting all the chief places of interest in both hemispheres. He then settled in China for a few years to the practice of his profession, and when the war broke out in South Africa, offered his services and went through the campaign as Medical Officer in the British Army.

About thirteen years ago he obtained the appointment as Government Medical Officer to a large mining district in North Queensland, which he retained until the time of his death.

Here he had three large public hospitals under his supervision, separated from each other by some 30 or 40 miles, and he showed untiring energy and endurance in riding from one to the other on horseback at frequent intervals in the execution of his duty. A little over four years ago the writer made his acquaintance through his desire to improve his astronomical equipment. He had for some years possessed a 3-inch altazimuth refractor, with

which he took a keen delight in studying the beauties of the starry sky, but realising its deficiencies he decided on a much larger instrument, and in a short time became possessed of a fine 7-inch Cooke equatorial refractor with micrometer, polarising solar-eyepiece and much refinement of apparatus, housed in a 16-foot white dome, which stands out conspicuously as a land mark for miles around.

The patience expended in getting this instrument on to the pole and in the meridian with the most extreme precision and the keen delight which he afterwards took in measuring double stars and observations of occultations, sometimes after spending many long hours in the saddle, was entirely typical of the man. He had been a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society for some years and also took much interest in the study of classical music. It was only last year that he had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and he was about to take a holiday, first to visit his brother in China, and when returning to stay awhile with the writer and other astronomical friends in Sydney, when the outbreak of influenza took place at Irvinebank, heart failure supervening upon an attack of which was the cause of his untimely death.

ERNEST H. BEATTIE.