

WILLIAM PECK was born in 1862 at Castle-Douglas, in Galloway, Scotland, and in early childhood his parents removed to Edinburgh, where his whole life was spent. While still a boy he became deeply interested in astronomy and his mechanical genius finding expression in the construction of his own telescopes and his own celestial maps, he commenced regular observations of the stars and planets. In 1883 he became a lecturer on astronomy and for many years he was an outstanding figure in the intellectual life of the City of Edinburgh by reason of these lectures.

While still in his twenties, Peck was appointed to direct a private Observatory at Murrayfield, one of the western suburbs of Edinburgh, and in 1889, when Piazzì Smyth retired from the post of Astronomer-Royal for Scotland, it was decided to build a new Royal Observatory on Blackford Hill, and to transfer the old Calton Hill Observatory to the Town Council. Peck was appointed Astronomer to the City of Edinburgh, entering on his duties in 1896 as director of the City Observatory, in which the old Murrayfield Observatory was merged.

About 1886 Peck published "The Constellations and How to Find them," in two volumes; in 1890 "A Handbook and

Atlas of Astronomy"; and in 1898 a much more ambitious work, "The Observer's Atlas of the Heavens," in which 9,000 stars were mapped. This atlas, the result of much labour, is one of the best of its kind.

After his transference to the City Observatory, a more elaborate piece of work engaged his attention. In conjunction with Mr. T. W. Backhouse he began a star-catalogue and chart embracing the entire heavens. To ensure accuracy in the stellar magnitudes, Peck consulted every available authority and reduced all magnitudes to a standard scale. The charts were constructed under his supervision, by his brother-in-law and assistant, Mr. George Pearson. The catalogue was published about sixteen or seventeen years ago; but, owing to lack of funds, the charts have never been issued. These are the largest star-charts ever constructed.

Peck observed the total solar eclipse of 1905 in Spain. Some years later he visited Egypt in order to study the Pyramids. This subject ever appealed to him and formed the subject of several of his popular lectures. In 1885 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and, some years later, of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 1917 he received the honour of knighthood.

After the death of his wife in 1921, his health rapidly failed. For over fourteen months he was an invalid and during this period the work of the Observatory was carried on by his assistants, Mr. J. M. Field and Mr. George Pearson. He died at his house in Edinburgh on March 8, 1925, and was interred in Warriston Cemetery.

CHARLES NEWSON died at Jevington, Polegate, Sussex, on July 13, 1925, aged 42 years. He served as Hostility 3rd Writer in the Royal Navy during the Great War, and was released by Admiralty Order in 1918 to assist in the design of concrete ships. His health, however, had become seriously impaired and for this reason, in 1922, he gave up his post as Chief Engineer to the firm of D. G. Somerville & Co., Victoria Street, Westminster, and thenceforth lived a very retired life. He had been a Fellow of the R.I.B.A.; a Member of the Institute of Structural Engineers, and was elected a Member of this Association on March 28, 1923.