

WILLIAM THOMSON HAY

As a public character Will Hay was known to all, but modest and retiring as he was, there can be only comparatively few members who were really intimate with him, and particulars of his early years are little known. Originally destined for the life of an engineer, he abandoned this calling in early manhood and took up that stage and screen career of which he made such a conspicuous success. Astronomy was one of his earliest interests, and here his engineering training served him well, for in addition to his powers of accurate observational work he had the ability to design and construct not only his own observatory but many excellent pieces of apparatus of which the best known are his Blink-microscope and electric chronograph. In his generous way he was only too delighted to present such things to fellow astronomers, and many members profited by his constructional papers in the *Journal* and by personal advice.

He joined the British Astronomical Association and the Royal Astronomical Society in 1932 and gave valuable service on the former's Council to which he was first elected in 1945.

In 1935 he published a little book, "Through My Telescope", which was an attractively presented introduction to astronomy for the beginner and contained many useful hints on the use of an amateur's instrument. In the latter years of his strenuous life he endured much suffering. Not long after recovering from a serious operation he was stricken in 1946 by an illness which resulted in a permanent impairment of his health and activity, and his death from a heart attack occurred at the comparatively early age of sixty. Kind-hearted and friendly, it was a joy and privilege to be welcomed to his home and observatory at Norbury, or later at Hendon, and to see all around the evidences of his ingenuity and skill which he was as pleased to show as his visitor was to inspect. A widow, a son and two daughters survive him.—F.M.H.