

Walter Heath.

We have to record with regret the death, on May 6, of a valued member, who though little with us in recent years owing to advancing age, was formerly a regular attendant at the meetings of the Association and took an active interest in its affairs.

Walter Heath, the younger son of the Rev. John Moore Heath, Vicar of Enfield, Middlesex, was born on 1855 May 11. At the age of 12 he went to school at Westminster, as his father and brother had before him, and was second in the list of those elected as scholars on the Foundation in the year 1869. He was

awarded school exhibitions tenable at Trinity College, Cambridge, on leaving in the spring of 1873, but did not proceed to the University until 1874. He was elected to a scholarship at Trinity in 1877 and took his degree as 23rd Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos of 1878. After a short period as an assistant master at Tonbridge School, he qualified as a solicitor, went to Queensland in 1885 and practised at Brisbane. On returning to England in 1899 with a sufficiency of means, he took up astronomy as a hobby and joined our Association in 1900 February, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in January of the following year. He established a small observatory at Cobham, Surrey, where he practised astronomy of a geometrical kind, and a communication to the *Monthly Notices* mentions circumstances in connection with a determination of the longitude of his observatory from the observation of twenty-three occultations of stars by the Moon. He also determined the latitude of his observatory, and its variation, by skilful and ingenious observation. Results to be deduced from the observation of occultations were obviously of interest to him, for in 1905 he communicated to our *Journal* a collection of such results from various sources, leading finally to a table of the length of the Moon's radius at different position-angles. Papers by him of a similar nature will be found in the *Ast. Nach.*, No. 4206, and in the *Monthly Notices* for 1911 May, the latter comprising the reduction by himself of 363 observations of occultation of 65 stars at various places during the Lunar Eclipse of 1898 December, collected by Dr. Backlund, each giving a value of the departure of the Moon's actual surface from that of a mean sphere. Graphical methods for the conversion of co-ordinating was also a subject to which he made ingenious contribution. He was elected to the Council of the Association in 1912, and served in that capacity for several years and as Secretary from 1916 to 1918. He was also a member of the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society for a few years, and as a member of the Library Committee, in which position he continued almost until his death, he was most assiduous in his duties and spent much time at Burlington House in a re-organisation of the books with which he was entrusted. After the death of his wife in 1926 he gave up his house at Cobham and lived a rather nomadic existence, but eventually resolved to settle again and set up an observatory at a village near Hastings. This, however, was not to be; health failed, and the work was not begun. He died as has been said on May 6; less than a week before completing his 77th year, leaving no family.—H. P. H.