DAVID DUNLAP DOINGS

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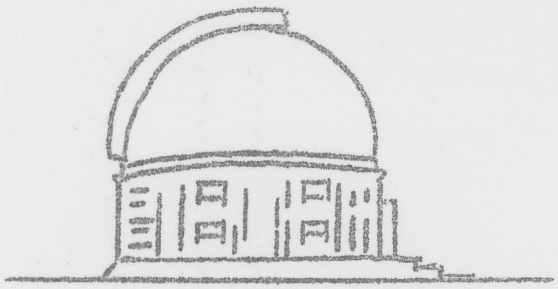

EDITORIAL

Astronomical Gaucheries

A few weeks ago I started reading a library book by George Malcolm Thomson entitled "The Crime of Mary Stuart" - a biography, not a whodonit. On page 13 I encountered: "The night was dark; the new moon would not appear for another four hours." . I was profoundly shocked, and, as I continued to read what purported to be a careful weighing of the evidence for Queen Mary's complicity in the murder of her husband, I began to worry about how far one could trust a person who was capable of such a lunar blunder. Anyway I took the book back unfinished.

Of course, better men than George Malcolm Thomson have been guilty of astronomical gaffes. There is the classic one of Samuel Coleridge in "The Ancient Mariner";

> "The horned moon, with one bright star
> Within the nether tip."

I recall a novel, "The Cardinal" by Henry Morton Robinson, which was a best-seller in 1949 and which I regarded as some sort of record for ostentatious and erroneous astronomical allusions. Here are a few of the ones I culled:

P.4 " 'The star has been known by many names - Lucifer, Phosphor, Hesperus. But, they are always one and the same.' The captain's finger pointed to the western horizon 'And there it lies, dusky red, fallen, but still proud"
'The oddest part of the story', he continued, 'is that this very star will rise from the sea tomorrow morning, blonde and golden, under the name of Venus. Is it not wonderful, this alchemy of the night?'"

p. 56 "' I hear', he said, not using his Arcturus-blue eyes on anyone in particular, that...'".

p. 172 " The star Sirius glowed in the mouth of the Great Dog, and the population of L'Enclume turned out to harvest high-bushed blueberries ripening in the August heat."

cont'd . . . .

p. 513 "Stephen knew the star (Dubhe). Below Polaris it burned in high magnitude, a sign to navigators, pointer nearest the pole".

I remember quoting some of these blunders to an adult class in which was enrolled the wife of our late colleague, Prof. E.J. (Ned) Pratt. A short time later Prof. Pratt called me for some astronomical help with a poem which he was writing about the building of the first Canadian transcontinental railroad in 1885. The month was to be December, the time midnight, and the sleepless Sir John was fretting as he sat at a north window pondering the rigours endured by the arctic explorers. Here is how the astronomical part came out in "Towards the Last Spike":

"Disturbed he turned
The lens up to the zenith, followed the course
Tracked by a cloud of stars that would not keep
Their posts - Capella, Perseus were reeling;
Low in the north-west, Cassiopeia
Was qualmish, leaning on her starboard arm-rest,
And Aries was chasing, butting Cygnus,
Just diving. Doubts and hopes struck at each other.
Why did these constellations look so much
Like blizzards? And what lay beyond the blizzards?"

The moral of all this? Perhaps biographers, novelists and poets should consult us more often. And, while one couldn't take money from a colleague, perhaps we could earn a few extra bucks as we improved their work .

J.F.H.

Correction

In last month's editorial on the University of Western Ontario reference was made to the new 40-inch telescope. This should have read 48-inch, of course.

OBSERVING

The re-aluminizing of both primary and secondary mirrors of the 74-inch telescope has resulted in a three-or four-fold increase in speed. With a somewhat wider and shorter slit than usual a strong spectrogram at 12 A/mm of a K1 star of photographic magnitude 9.64 was obtained on Nov. 20-21 in 3½ hours with poor seeing. On the following night, with good seeing and some cirrus cloud, the same star's spectrum was obtained in 2 1/4 hours.

The Newtonian mirror will be put on the 74-inch for the nights of Dec. 3-5. Drs. Terzan and van den Bergh will be taking direct photographs.

Dr. van den Bergh's radial velocity measures of Cas A remnants show changes with a time scale of months. In the brightest filament (OII) λ6300 has become ten times fainter in 15 years!

BL Lac, alias VRO 42.22.01, is again in the limelight. Dr. Racine, using a special photoelectric detector on the Mount Wilson 100-inch telescope, has observed fluctuations of light with a time scale of minutes. This makes the region of origin of the energy release about 1000 times smaller than the solar system.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Dr. Fernie attended a meeting of the American Astronomical Society's Committee on Education in Astronomy in New York on Nov. 7-8.

Dr. Garrison visited Harvard College Observatory in mid-November, confirming some spectral classifications in the Orion belt from Miss Cannon's plates, and giving a colloquium on Nov. 13.

Dr. van den Bergh was at U.W.O. on Nov. 13 and gave a talk on "The Time Scale of Creation"

SEMINARS

NOVEMBER

November seminars were as announced last month with the addition of a talk on "Stability of Differentially Rotating Stars" by Peter Biermann of Gottingen University on Wed. Nov. 19, and with the substitution of Tom Barnes on "Structure of Jupiter and Saturn" on Nov. 25.

Also Inge Sackmann is expected to speak on Germany and her work there on Wed. Nov. 26 in place of the regular G2000 seminar.

DECEMBER

Tues. Dec. 2 D.D.O.	Dr. G. Beaudet, University of Montreal, "Problems of Nuclear Rates in Stars".
Wed. Dec. 10 Room 202 McLennan	Dr. J.E. Felten, Institute of Theoretical Astronomy, Cambridge, Eng., "Observations and Theories of the Jet of M87".
Tues. Dec. 16 D.D.O.	Christmas Countdown

SEMINARS IN ASTROPHYSICS G2000

(Room 202 McLennan 4:10 except as noted)

Wed. Dec. 3	Dave DuPuy, "Solar Flares".
Tues. Dec.9(at DDO)	Walter Gorza, "Origin of the Moon".
Wed. Dec. 17	Jeff Crelinsten, "Gravity Waves".

Papers Submitted in November

S.P.S. Anand and I.J. Sackmann ,	"Structure and Evolution of Rapidly Rotating B-Type Stars." (Ap.J.)
P.G. Martin	"A Study of the Structure of Rapidly Rotating Close Binary Systems".(Ap.Sp.Sc.)
R. Racine	"Photometry of BL Lac with a Time Resolution of 15 Seconds" (Ap.J.L.)
E.R. Seaquist	"A Search for Circular Polarization in Compact Radio Sources at 3240 MHz (Ap.L.)
S. van den Bergh	"Collapsed Objects in Clusters of Galaxies" (accepted by Nature).

Departure

Dave and Sherry Goodenough have gone to Victoria. Dave, having passed his final Ph.D. oral, will be a post-doc student at U. Vic., and Sherry, having completed her residence requirements at U.of T., will continue work on her doctor's thesis in linguistics.

Visitors

Inge Sackmann (Ph.D. 1968) is visiting the Department and the Observatory and friends in Toronto. Before returning to Germany she will visit her mother in Vancouver and hopes to spend a day at the D.A.O. in Victoria. Accompanying her on the visit to Canada is Peter Biermann, son of the distinguished Prof. L. Biermann, Director of the Institute for Astrophysics of the Max Plank Institute in Munich. Peter is finishing his doctor's program in stellar structure at Göttingen.

Jobs

Dr. MacRae has learned that an advertisement will soon appear concerning a position for an astronomer at the University of Calgary; details can be obtained by writing directly to Dr. Brian G. Wilson, Dept. of Physics, U. of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta. It appears also that positions may be available next year in the Institute of Astronomy at Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ont. (the Director is Prof. Roger Leclaire) and at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg (Dean R.J. Lockhart), and at the University of Waterloo (Dr. G.A. Bakos, Dept. of Physics).

In the United States the Secretariat of the A.A.S. has undertaken in an informal way to serve as a clearing house for information on available positions in astronomy there. The teaching staff here have discussed the need for a similar clearing house in Canada, both for available Canadian jobs and candidates. As a start towards this end Drs. Reeder and Kronberg will write to a selection of Canadian Universities. Opinions and information will be welcomed by them.

Married

On Nov. 15 in Massey College Chapel, Dave DuPuy and Liese Kruska. Liese came to Canada in 1967 and is a medical photographer at the Hospital for Sick Children. She and Dave recently visited her parents in Marl near Dusseldorf. The newlyweds are living in an apartment in the High Park area of Toronto.

To be Married

Helen Blanchard has written to say that she and Fred Hickok (M.Sc. 1969) are planning to be married at Helen's parents' home in Barbados on Dec. 27. At present Helen is in Pensacola. She and Fred will leave for Barbados on Dec. 17.

Born

To Walter and Nancy Gorza in St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto, a son, Mark.

To Kim (Ph.D. 1964) and Sandra (M.A. 1962) Innanen of York University, a daughter, Sally Elizabeth.

To Pim (M.A. 1963) and Pat FitzGerald, at Waterloo, a son.

Died

In September, R.J. (Bob) Burrell (B.A. M and P. 1965, M.Sc. Eng.) who was a Ph.D. candidate with the radio astronomy group in Electrical Engineering.

Graduate Degrees

At the Fall Convocation on Dec. 5 degrees will be granted in astronomy as follows: Ph.D. Tom Clarke and Dave Goodenough; M.Sc. Check-Sen Chai, Jim Clarke, Chalmers Hardenbergh, Fred Hickok and Peter Martin.

Per Ardua ad Astra

Harlow Shapley's reminiscences entitled "Through Rugged Ways to the Stars" has recently been received in the DDO Library. It is well worth a few hours of the time of anyone interested in the recent history of astronomy. All the great astronomers of the 20's to the 60's are there in facts and anecdotes. Of particular interest are the many pictures: Helen Hogg and Peter Millman in 1929 and Donald MacRae and Shirley Patterson in 1939, not to mention Albert Einstein and Franklin Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII.

Reversed Roles

The University Administration has dropped the designation "Non-academic staff" in favour of the more positive designation "Support Staff". We welcome the change, but Joan Topley has wondered out loud if the academic staff should now be known as the "Non-Support Staff".