

O B I T U A R Y

Captain D. Cameron-Swan

Donald Cameron-Swan was born at Gateshead-on-Tyne on April 22, 1863 and died at Cape Town on August 19, 1951. He was the eldest son of Sir Joseph Swan F.R.S., famous for his work on the incandescent electric lamp, artificial silk, chrome tanning and, of more importance to astronomers, on the development of various photographic processes including bromide paper and the rapid photographic dry plate, the introduction of which in 1877 revolutionised astronomy.

It was with the photographic side of his father's work that Donald became associated soon after he had finished his training as a mechanical and electrical engineer at the University College, Bristol. In 1885, Swan formed a company with Thomas Annan of Glasgow to exploit the process of photogravure. This company was managed by J. Craig Annan and Donald Cameron-Swan, the sons of the two partners, and many fine works of art were produced at the firm's studio at Lambeth. In 1893, after the death of Thomas Annan and the withdrawal of his son to

Glasgow, Donald was taken into partnership with his father and the style of the firm was changed to "The Swan Electric Engraving Company". The manufacture of half-tone blocks was added to photogravure at the company's new premises in the Charing Cross Road and later typographic printing from the "Swan-type" blocks was undertaken. Donald was the Managing Director and later the Proprietor of this business. He invented and patented several improvements in photo-engraving and at various times was a Medallist of the Royal Society of Arts and of the Royal Photographical Society of which he was a Fellow.

During World War I, Cameron-Swan served for two years with the 1st. Volunteer Battalion of the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, but transferred in 1917 to the Royal Naval Air Service. In 1918 he was gazetted to a Captaincy in the Royal Air Force, an appointment in which he took great pride. He retired soon after the war and in 1922 emigrated to South Africa where he settled in the Cape Peninsula and entered fully into the life of the community.

Soon after his arrival in South Africa he met Mr. A. W. Long and became interested in our Society and was soon a frequent lecturer to the Cape Centre which he served for many years as Chairman. He joined the British Astronomical Association in 1927 and became a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1931. Captain Cameron-Swan was President of our Society for the year 1930-31. His Presidential Address on the Rev. Fearon Fallows, the first H.M.A., reflected both his astronomical and historical interests.

Captain Cameron-Swan was beloved and respected by all who knew him. His dignified, cultured bearing called forth the instinctive designation of a "fine old English gentleman". He listed his hobbies as water colour sketching, photography, astronomy and Highland lore. He was immensely proud of his Scottish origin and took a keen interest in all things Scotch. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, a Chieftain of the Clan Cameron Association, a member of the Scottish Historical Society and of the Cape Town Caledonian Society. He was christened Cameron after the maiden name of Sir Joseph Swan's mother, but it was not till 1900 that by means of a Deed Poll he formally adopted the Cameron as part of his surname.

Though of an advanced age, Captain Cameron-Swan kept all his faculties until within a few weeks of his death. His mind was ever alert and he took a constant interest in the various societies of which he was a member. He was punctilious in correspondence and it was always a great pleasure to receive a letter from him so carefully and harmoniously composed and so neatly written in his beautiful copy-plate handwriting.