

A. L. ... Douglas

"Astronomical Reflections"

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Astronomical Recollections

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After two more years at McGill to qualify for a bachelor's and a master's degree, the latter for some research in radioactivity under the supervision of Dr J. A. Gray, F.R.S., I went to Cambridge ^{nearly} to Rutherford's famous Cavendish laboratory where for a year I struggled ~~rather~~ ineffectually ~~with~~ to measure the heat emitted by a rather rapidly disintegrating product of uranium. In the spring term 1922 I read that Professor Eddington and the Chief Assistant, ^{later Regius Professor at Glasgow,} W. M. Smart were offering a course entitled Practical Astronomy on Saturday mornings at the Observatory. Pure curiosity led me to attend these lectures by Eddington and demonstrations by Smart. Five or six young men, an enthusiastic Newnham College undergraduate (Cecilia Payne, later Mrs Gaposchkin) and I formed the class. We also sat in at E. A. Milne's lectures on Radiation Theory and ^{Eddington's} Relativity, ~~later~~ and I attended Harold Jeffreys's ^{lectures on} Interior of

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Study in Cambridge with Professor A. S. Eddington, he had received a travel grant which brought him on the first of his several visits to North America, Mount Wilson being the ultimate goal. As I had left Cambridge only ~~two~~ years earlier, we found much in common to talk about and a friendship was formed which I valued throughout his life. In subsequent years we would meet at I.A.U. general assemblies and when ^{he} visited Montreal on his way to or from California.

My work on the A-star spectra progressed steadily and before I left the observatory ~~in mid-September~~ Dr Frost offered me three nights with the 40-inch if I had a list of wanted spectra. I jumped at this opportunity to get as many double stars as possible with what was generally referred to as the Sha ⁱⁿ test in mind - Thirty years later I found that Eddington had suggested this test in 1916 in a letter to W. S. Adams in response to Adams' request that Eddington give him ~~any~~ ^{his} comments on this new line of research of himself and Kohlschütter. Aided by the friendly helpful Mr Sullivan, engineer in charge of the telescopes, I was happy to get good spectra of both components of about 10 ~~stars~~ binaries. By mid-September I felt certain that I had the material for a doctoral thesis and I returned to my duties at McGill with great satisfaction and deep gratitude to Dr Frost and all the kind helpful members of the Observatory. This had been a wonderful summer for me.

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193

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Another night when I was guiding for Otto Struve, Dr Frost came up into the dome with a Russian gentleman who had fled from Bolsheviki rule and recently ^{came} ~~got~~ to Chicago where he had some menial job. He had been an operatic singer in ~~Leningrad~~ St Petersburg and Dr Frost asked him to sing in the great dome. I shall never forget the thrill of hearing the Toreador song from Carmen, the rich baritone voice filling the darkness of the dome.

During that summer at Yerkes, the Abbe' Georges Lemaitre came for about 4 days. Having completed a period of

study in Cambridge with Professor A. S. Eddington, he had received a travel grant which brought him on the first of several visits to North America, Mount Wilson being the ultimate goal. As I had left Cambridge only ~~two~~ ^{two} years earlier, we found much in common to talk about and a friendship was formed which I valued throughout his life. In subsequent years we would meet at I.A.U. general assemblies and when he visited Montreal on his way to or from California.

My work on the A-star spectra progressed steadily and before I left the observatory in ~~mid~~ ^{late} September Dr Frost offered me three nights with the 40-inch if I had a list of wanted spectra. I jumped at this opportunity to get as many double stars as possible with what was generally referred to as the Shajn test in mind - Thirty years later I found that Eddington had suggested this test in 1916 in a letter to W. S. Adams in response to Adams' request that Eddington give him ~~any~~ ^{his} comments on this new line of research of himself and Kohlschütter. Aided by the friendly helpful Mr Sullivan, engineer in charge of the telescopes, I was happy to get good spectra of both components of about 10 ~~stars~~ binaries. By mid-September I felt certain that I had the material for a doctoral thesis and I returned to my duties at McGill with great satisfaction and deep gratitude to Dr Frost and all the kind helpful members of the Observatory. This had been a wonderful summer for me.

Nov 3
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