
Few astronomers, nowadays, do indeed remember even the name of James E. Keeler, one of the founders of the Californian Astronomy. This book, more than a study of the early developments of American astronomy, is a lively biography of James E. Keeler, of his early achievements, of his career (he has been the second Director of Lick Observatory, after Edward S. Holden). Indeed, Keeler was a remarkable person, deep in his physical insight, a man faithful to his friends (such as J. E. Hale: both were the founders of Astrophysical Journal), and eager to promote all fields of the newly born spectroscopical astrophysics, in spite of a definite tendency to be modest, and benevolent in his relations with others.

It is impossible, in a few lines, to give a proper account of this fascinating book. Through the life of Keeler, we attend a vivid account of what was going on in the most exciting period of the quickly developing astrophysical science. Not only had Keeler known all astronomers of his time, but his personal input in this development has been broad, and many important fields have been influenced by his physical sense, and by his need for precision and accuracy.

The book is well written by one of the followers of Keeler at Mount Hamilton. One can see the enormous amount of work done by Donald Osterbrock to collect unpublished material, private correspondence (at that time most confidential), original documents, which make this book an exemplary model of scientific biography, and should help young scientists to realize that anyone’s influence is not only to be measured in term of quotation index, and that great men of a relatively recent past may have been, although now somewhat forgotten, the best leaders of the science of their time, and the best inspirators of its present developments.

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Remote sensing from satellites has in very few years become an important additional method to study a range of properties of the surface of the oceans and, in some cases, of deeper layers.

This book discusses the principles of various techniques – satellites, sensors, data retrieval, calibrations and image processing – so that they become accessible to oceanographers, and explains the oceanographic phenomena to which remote sensing can be applied.

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