

In his early years Sir David was a 'crack' rifle shot, and if he had not been appointed as Her Majesty's Astronomer at the Cape would have become eminent as a marksman. At the Cape he was a successful deer stalker and in his later years, when he returned from South Africa, he was always a welcome guest on the moors and deer forests of Scotland and the English coverts. His great skill in observing, his handling the telescope and its many minute appurtenances, his steady hand, delicate touch and clear sight were simply sequences to his skill with the rifle.

On October 1906 Sir David Gill left the Cape but with no signs of failing vigour; on the contrary he plunged into a strenuous life of scientific activity in London. He became President and afterwards foreign Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, President of the British Association at Leicester, and in many other positions, became a centre of energy and initiative. Universities and learned societies through the world honoured themselves by ranking him on their Rolls of Distinction. Some of these may be stated: Knight of the Prussian Order pour le mérite; Commander of the Legion d'Honneur, Hon. LL.D. Aberdeen and Edinburgh, Hon. D.Sc. Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Cape of Good Hope. Rome, Amsterdam, Petrograd, Washington, Sweden, Boston, Philadelphia, South Africa were proud to inscribe his name on their rolls of fame. Science has indeed no geographical boundaries, no "pools of salt and plots of land" separating her devotees. Indeed we may add that her domain extends through the entire universe, wherever light shines, or orbs roll, or space extends, and also for all time, from when the morning stars sang together down to the remotest hour in the great everlasting. Her kings and prophets form a mighty army.

This address would however be less complete without some references to the human side of Sir David which illustrate the charm of the real astronomer and put him among his fellow-men.

After his retirement, when resident in London, he became what he called "a dress-coat astronomer", and many a table found him a genial companion and a brilliant raconteur. Earl Grey from Ottawa wrote to "my dear Astronomer" and they swapped yarns. Here follows one written to him at Johannesburg by the Earl from Government House, Ottawa: