

of several I can vouch from my acquaintance with them in the Parsonstown six feet.

It is greatly to be regretted that this noble telescope was not acquired by some national Observatory. Lassell was willing to dispose of it to the Victoria authorities, who were thinking of establishing a great telescope at Melbourne; but an unhappy misunderstanding prevented them from accepting his offer. After a few years the instrument was broken up, and its materials sold. On his return to England he re-erected the two-foot Equatorial and continued to observe with it till his sight failed him. He died October 5, 1880, in his 82nd year. He was not less active as a writer than as an observer. In the Royal Society Catalogue his name occurs seventy-seven times, and there is scarcely one of those papers that does not contain valuable information. And his work was well appreciated. The University of Cambridge conferred on him the degree of LL.D. He was a member of many celebrated scientific Societies, and was President of the Astronomical Society, whose gold medal he received; he received also a royal medal from the Royal Society of London.

I conclude this notice by stating that my intercourse with him gave me the impression that he was a good and noble-minded man of high purpose, and utterly unclouded by any of that jealous and contentious spirit which too often darkens scientific life.

MAURICE LOTHIAN. By Sheriff Hallard.

MAURICE LOTHIAN, formerly Procurator-Fiscal of this county, died at St Catherine's, in the neighbourhood of this city, on 15th July last, in his 85th year.* He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1869, having then for some years outlived that critical moment in old age mentioned by the Psalmist. For him, as for others, our diploma was one of the crowning honours of an active and well-spent life.

* Born in the end of the eighteenth century, he was wont to tell of a family incident which connected him with its beginning. His grandfather was in the Porteous mob. Disguised in his wife's clothes, this ancestor took his share in the business transacted in the Grassmarket on that memorable night, came home before dawn, resumed his male attire, went down to Leith, took ship, and never was heard of more.

A shrewd lawyer, an effective speaker for a popular audience, keen in his aims, fertile in resources for attaining them, he rapidly achieved that local notoriety which some slight change of circumstance and a higher ambition might perhaps have developed into fame. But he was content with that pre-eminence which he quite irresistibly won in his own surroundings, with the admiration of some and the respect of all. His busy professional and official life left him little leisure to cultivate literature and science, much as he, from a popular point of view, was able to appreciate both, though he recoiled somewhat from the audacities of modern thought. Many years ago he contributed to the eighth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* an article on "Master and Servant," a short treatise, clearly and vigorously written, with reliable and sufficient information upon the law of that important subject as it then stood. Whenever the cause of morality and religion seemed to invite his services, Maurice Lothian stood forth as an energetic and impressive lay preacher. In that connection one is apt to picture to one's self that fine head and presence which we all remember.

For many years he was one of the leading directors of an institution which, among other things, aims at popularising some of the results of scientific enquiry. As a vice-president of the Philosophical Institution, Maurice Lothian will be long remembered. We desire that as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh he may not be forgotten.

MUNGO PONTON, W.S.

(From materials chiefly supplied by Mrs Ponton.)

MUNGO PONTON was born at Balgreen, near Edinburgh, in the year 1801. He was educated for the legal profession, and, in due course, became a Writer to the Signet. He was one of the founders of the National Bank of Scotland, and it was in his office that the plans were matured for the establishment of that institution. He held the office of legal adviser to the Bank, and subsequently that of secretary. The strain of the double duties thus imposed on him proved too much for his strength, and a serious attack of illness compelled him to retire from active life while yet comparatively a young man. Since that time he continued more or less of an invalid, but his