Closing Address. By The Hon. Lord M'Laren.

(Read July 21, 1890.)

As the Chairman for this evening, I have been asked by the Council to lay before you a brief summary of the events of the session, which will conclude the public business of the session.

In this retrospective view the most interesting point is the number and variety of the papers which have been read. Of these there were in all 74 papers, of which 19 were in the department of Natural Philosophy, 16 in Mathematics, 11 in Chemistry, 1 in Geology, 9 in Zoology, 1 in Botany, 6 in Physiology, 2 in Anatomy, 5 in Meteorology, 2 in Physical Geography, and 2 in Philology. These contributions, I may say, in the opinion of competent judges, are calculated to maintain the reputation of our publications for originality and accuracy. In the present session, moreover, we have had two important contributions in the department of philology and literature, for which we are indebted to Professor Blackie. In these papers the author emphasised the remarkable fact that the Greek language, as now spoken and written, is substantially the same language as the Greek of Lucian and Plutarch, having undergone no material change during the elapse of 2000 years. A late learned and enthusiastic French Hellenist, Monsieur d'Eichthal, held the opinion that Greek (I will not call it Modern Greek, which I take to be a misnomer) will one day take the place of Latin as the medium of correspondence between cultivated men of all countries. Without going quite so far, we may at least point to the vitality of the ancient Greek tongue and its power of adaptation to modern requirements as an answer to the arguments of those who seek to discourage the study of classical literature at our universities, on the ground of the supposed discordance between the ancient and the modern modes of thought and expression.

A more true explanation of the comparative decline of pure scholarship and the preference accorded to the more recondite and perhaps more laborious researches which are necessary for the development of scientific truth, may be found in this observation of M. Renan :—"The intense satisfaction attending scientific work arises from the assurance which the scientist feels that he labours

at work which reposes on an eternal basis of fact, and of which the object at least is eternal,—a work which all civilised nations feel bound to pursue.”

There were 12 admissions of new Fellows this session. Last session the admissions amounted to 18; whilst during the three preceding sessions the admissions attained the average number of 36. The high rate, therefore, which characterised those three sessions has not been maintained either in this session or the immediately preceding one. But the admissions have been more than sufficient to maintain the numerical efficiency of the Society, notwithstanding the inevitable diminution of its numbers through death. It is with regret that I have to record the fact that during the past session the Society has lost ten Ordinary Fellows and one Honorary Fellow by death. Of these obituary notices will be forthcoming at the proper time and place, but I may be permitted to say a few words regarding some of the deceased Fellows who are personally, as well as from their public position, known to most of us who are here engaged in carrying on the work of the Society.

SIR HENRY YULE, an Honorary Fellow of this Society, was born at Inveresk in May 1820, He was destined for an Indian military career, and in December 1838 he joined the Bengal Engineers. He served in the Sutlej and Punjab campaigns, and during the Mutiny, and was afterwards successively Under-Secretary and Secretary of the Public Works Department in India. In 1875 he was appointed a Member of the India Council. He was editor of the *Travels of Marco Polo* and of many other books of mediæval adventure in Asia. His Glossary of Anglo-Indian Terms is considered a very valuable work.

ANDREW YOUNG, a man of true literary and poetic feeling, died on Saturday, the 30th November 1889. He had attended a meeting of this Society on the Monday preceding. After a brilliant career in arts and theology at the university of this city, where he gained in Professor Wilson's class the prize for the best poem on “The Highlands,” he was appointed to the Head-Mastership of Niddrie School, and afterwards became English Master in Madras College.

He regularly attended our meetings, and was much esteemed by his friends and fellow-citizens.

Many amongst us will remember the portly presence and genial manner of PATRICK DON SWAN, who was provost of Kirkcaldy continuously from 1842 to 1886. The celebrated Thomas Carlyle assisted him as tutor in his early life: the friendship of tutor and scholar was unbroken to the last. During the provostship of Mr Swan, Kirkcaldy became prosperous largely through his efforts, and he will long be remembered there for the civic improvements he did so much to effect, and for his munificence to the poor. He died on the 17th December 1889.

It will not be necessary for me to say anything further regarding our much esteemed associate Dr ANDREW GRAHAM, as an obituary notice of him has already been communicated to the Society.

JAMES LESLIE was educated at the University of Edinburgh, his uncle Sir John Leslie being then professor of mathematics there. It would occupy too much time even to enumerate the various engineering works with which he was connected. These consisted chiefly in the construction of docks, in increasing the water supply of cities, and in fixing the limits of estuaries. Among his other undertakings, he designed a plan for the Monkland Canal, by which empty boats could be conveyed by an inclined plane instead of through locks. This ingenious expedient, which foreshadowed the ship railway, has been much admired by engineers. He was a liberal subscriber to every public purpose. He died on 29th December 1889.

The career of Dr JAMES LORIMER is too well known to render it necessary for me to do more than briefly advert to it here. After studying at the universities of Edinburgh, Geneva, Berlin, and Bonn, he was called to the bar of Scotland in 1845, and was appointed successively to the Principal Lyon Clerkship and to the Chair of Public Law in the University of Edinburgh. His principal works are the *Institutes of Law*, which has been translated into French and Spanish; and his *Institutes of the Law of Nations*. He was the only Scottish Professor to whom the high distinction of an

honorary degree was accorded by the University of Bologna at its octo-centenary in 1888. He died on February 13, 1890.

Sir PETER COATS was Paisley's foremost citizen, esteemed alike for his charitable benefactions to the poor of the town, as well as for his princely gifts to the community. The manufacturing firm of which Sir Peter was at the head employs about 6000 persons. It was to his liberality that Paisley is indebted for the buildings of its Public Library and Museum, costing with the site about £18,000. In recognition of this gift he received the honour of knighthood. He died on 9th March 1890, at Algiers, in the 82nd year of his age.

Dr LEONHARD SCHMITZ was born at Eupen, near Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1807, and settled in England in 1837. In 1844, he published from the notes which he had taken in the class-room at Bonn two volumes of Niebuhr's Lectures on Roman History, for which the King of Prussia awarded to him the great gold medal for literature. In 1846 he was appointed rector of the Royal High School at Edinburgh. He was selected to give lectures in history to the Prince of Wales and to the Duke of Edinburgh, while the Duc d'Aumale, the Prince de Joinville, and the Duc de Nemours placed their sons under his tuition at the High School. After leaving Edinburgh he held various appointments connected with the higher education of the country. He was projector and editor of *The Classical Museum*, wrote several historical works, and contributed largely to the great classical dictionaries, to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and other publications. He died at the age of 83.

On looking over the work done in the last session, and the papers in our *Transactions* recently published, we cannot fail to remark that some of the most important communications come from the laboratories of the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and from the laboratory recently founded in this city by the Royal College of Physicians. The Firth of Forth also, which Professor Ray Lankester has called "the classic sea of naturalists," has furnished materials in its fauna for important biological work.

It will be noticed that the elaborate investigations of our Secretary,

Professor Tait, on the Theory of Knot Forms, have induced other scientists in England, in the United States of America, and on the Continent, to follow him in the same department of research, and to give to our Society valuable communications on these subjects. I think we may also attribute to the same source the revival of interest in the abstruse subject of the Quaternion Calculus with which the name of my distinguished friend is largely identified.

It is also pleasing to observe that many papers have been received from comparatively young men, who, after distinguishing themselves at the university, now hold important appointments in distant colonies and dependencies of the Empire and among the old and rapidly advancing nations of the extreme East.

I have now only to announce the conclusion of the public business of the session of 1890.