

With a sound mathematical knowledge and untiring zeal as an observer, he was recognised by the late Mr. Russell, then Director of the Sydney Observatory, as a most desirable addition to the volunteer observing staff for the transits of Venus in 1874 and 1882. Mr. Macdonnell accompanied one of the former expeditions to Eden, under the leadership of Mr. Scott (formerly Director of the Sydney Observatory), and one of the latter expeditions was left largely under his control at Port Macquarie. Mr. Macdonnell settled in Port Macquarie for many years, having charge, as manager, of a bank there. He imported a 6-inch equatorial refractor from Grubb of Dublin, which, with a transit instrument and clock, were housed in a locally made observatory. Later on he resigned his situation at the bank and went to Sydney, where he went into business as legal manager, and in this capacity he was well known in business and mining circles. He resided at Mosman, near Sydney, where he built another observatory, in which was placed a $4\frac{3}{4}$ -inch refractor by Parkes of Birmingham. Mr. Macdonnell was an active member of the New South Wales Branch of the British Astronomical Association, and was President of it for two years. He held afterwards the offices of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, and it is recognised that the success of the Branch has largely been the outcome of his active work in connection with it. Mr. Macdonnell possessed a large and valuable library of books, chiefly in connection with Astronomy, and this, as well as his instruments, were freely at the disposal of his friends for reference and use. His kind and sympathetic nature, and the interest he took in the young amateur, endeared him to many who, through his influence and example, were induced to take an active interest in the science which he had so much at heart. He died on September 22, 1910, at the age of sixty-eight, and leaves a widow.

Mr. Macdonnell contributed to the *Monthly Notices* an account of his observations of the transit of Mercury, 1891 May 10.

He was elected a Fellow on 1873 January 10; he ceased to be a Fellow in 1899, and was again elected 1910 February 11.

[The Council are indebted for this notice to his friend Mr. G. D. Hirst, of Sydney.]

JOHN McLAREN was born at Edinburgh in 1831 April 17, the eldest son of the late Duncan McLaren. After graduating at Edinburgh University he was called to the bar, or rather, in Scottish phrase, he passed advocate, in 1856. He wrote several legal treatises, some of which are still highly valued for their clear, precise language and luminous treatment of principles. In politics a Liberal, he was returned to Parliament in 1880, and was created Lord Advocate by Mr. Gladstone. His political experiences were not untroubled. At the resulting bye-election he lost his seat, and was without a seat in the Commons for nearly a year, when he was returned for Edinburgh. His office was then subordinate to that of Home Secretary; some friction

developed between Mr. McLaren and Sir William Harcourt, and ultimately the difficulty was solved by his promotion to the Scottish bench. He was thoroughly successful in his new capacity. He made a capital Judge, accurate, precise, fair-minded, and patient, and his death is a loss to the bench.

Lord McLaren's scientific interests were constant throughout his life, and active when promotion to the bench gave him leisure. He served as Vice-President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh for many years, and as a member of its Council continuously from 1883 to 1909, where his advice in matters of business and his skill in drafting documents were of high service. He also contributed several papers to its *Proceedings* and *Transactions* which show considerable mathematical skill. Among these may be mentioned *Tables of Differential Refraction*, and one on *Aplanatic Lenses*. He was a keen astronomer, and acquired, among other telescopes, the 4-inch heliometer with which Sir David Gill made his observations of Mars at Ascension. With Lord Crawford, Professor Copeland, Professor Tait, and an official of the Exchequer, he had charge of the arrangements for establishing the Royal Observatory at Blackford Hill. He continued to take a lively interest in its working, and lent his heliometer to Dr. J. Halm for observations of the solar rotation by the method of displacement of the spectral lines. He was also a Director of Ben Nevis Observatory. His own university conferred the degree of LL.D. upon him in 1882, and Glasgow the same degree in the following year. He leaves a widow and three children.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society 1884 December 12.

R. A. S.

Sir CHARLES TODD was born at Islington, England, on 1826 July 7, and was educated at Greenwich.

On 1841 December 6 he entered the service of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich as Astronomical Computer.

In 1847 he was appointed Assistant Astronomer at the Cambridge Observatory, under the Rev. James Challis. While at Cambridge he made a galvanic determination of the difference of longitude between Greenwich and Cambridge. He was also in charge of the Northumberland telescope, and was justly proud of the fact that with it he was the first in England to take a daguerreotype photograph of the Moon. He was also, in 1846, one of the earliest observers of the newly discovered planet Neptune.

But the Astronomer-Royal (Airy), recognising his exceptional abilities, was anxious to have him back; in 1854 he was offered an appointment as Assistant at Greenwich, and placed in charge of the new galvanic department. When in charge of that department he was responsible for the transmission of time signals throughout England and the dropping of the time-balls.

In 1855 he had occasion to visit Deal, some trouble having occurred in the dropping of the time-ball, and on his way back to headquarters he received a letter from Mr. Airy offering him, on