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M. le Prof. W. H. YOUNG

Fellow & Delegate of the Royal Society
(London)

Monsieur le Recteur,
Monsieur le Doyen de la Faculté des Sciences,
Mesdames et Messieurs !

Comme il s'agit d'une occasion vraiment internationale, on veut bien me prier de parler en anglais ; je vais donc m'exprimer dans ma langue maternelle.

I am, as you have just been told, delegated by the Royal Society to represent it on this interesting occasion. Pierre PREVOST was a foreign member of the Society for more than 30 years, & it is only natural that the Royal Society should take a pleasure in this public recognition by the University of Geneva, & its friends, of the services rendered by Pierre Prevost to Science & to Learning.

The very fact that this recognition has come somewhat late has its advantages. There is much that we may learn from the scientists of a century ago, & we are far less likely to have their work present to our minds than that

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of our immediate predecessors. I must confess that but for the fortunate fact that I am a delegate on the present occasion, I should not have realised the extent to which Pierre Prevost may be taken as an example by the men of today.

He had a wide general culture & came therefore to the study of physical science with an imagination already awakened. He was a thinker & not merely a successful experimentalist, & was thus able to appreciate the inner significance of the facts which experiment disclosed. Moreover he was one of the first to realise that in all branches of science the quantitative surpasses the qualitative in importance, & though far from being a professional mathematician in the modern sense of the term, he knew how to employ the mathematical tools at his disposal, not only in the Theory of Probability, & in his investigations in the domain of Experimental Physics, but even in the infant science of Economics. Some of us will regret that he was not also a doctor, as well as a theologian, a philosopher, a lawyer, & a man of letters. Had he been so he might have shown us the way in Medical Science also.

Pierre Prevost is a personality which possesses great interest for an Englishman. Not only was he on the most friendly terms with many of the more prominent British scientists of his day, he found time also to translate several of their treatises into French, & more than one of his memoirs contains copious extracts from their works.

It is indeed almost a matter of course that we in England should have for Geneva genuine appreciation & look to Geneva for scientific support. The intimacy between England & Geneva has an antiquity as great as that of the Royal Society itself, & it has been displayed not only in frequent interchange of visits by distinguished men of

letters & of science, but also in intermarriage, & in the long-continued custom among the old Genevese families of sending their sons to our schools & colleges.

It is then with peculiar pleasure that I venture to congratulate in my own name, as well as in that of the Society to which I have the honour to belong, Geneva, the University of Geneva, & more especially the Faculty of Science, on the success which has attended the ceremony of today.

