

ART. XVII.—*An American in Westmorland, 1828.* By
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Read at Kendal, April 7th, 1962.

IN January 1960 Sir Shane Leslie kindly sent me a beautifully bound volume, which he found in a junkshop in Sandwich. The book came from the Rev. William Carus Wilson's library. The fly-leaf is inscribed: "Rev. Wm. Carus Wilson will please accept of this Volume as a small testimony of gratitude from his brother in the Gospel. Thos. G. Allen, in behalf of the much obliged family of the late Rev. Benjamin Allen, Philadelphia, N. America. April 16th, 1832."

The book is a memoir of the Rev. Benjamin Allen, rector of St Paul's Church, Philadelphia, written by his brother, Thomas, and it reflects the intense Evangelical atmosphere of the beginning of the 19th century. Its interest for us lies in the account it contains of Benjamin Allen's visit to England, and more especially his stay with the Carus Wilson family at Casterton Hall.

During the few weeks he was there he made a tour of Westmorland for the British and Foreign Bible Society with the Rev. William Carus Wilson, and his father — William Wilson Carus Wilson — and the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. They visited Kendal, Ambleside, Penrith, Appleby and Brough, and he records in his journal his impressions of Westmorland and the events of each day.

Allen was born at Hudson in New York State on 29 September 1789: his parents came from Rhode Island. At the age of about eleven he left school and entered his father's store. His mother died at the age of 37 in 1801. In 1810 he entered the Hudson Academy and made some money by publishing his poems. Two years later he

married Miss Harriet Swift of Hudson, and after this he pursued his studies for some time in the Theological Seminary in New York under the direction of the Scottish Presbyterian divine, Dr John Mason. In 1814 he decided to join the Protestant Episcopal Church and he moved to Virginia under the direction of Bishop Moore by whom he was ordained deacon at Richmond in 1816, and priest at Winchester in 1818. In the funeral sermon the Rev. G. T. Bedell, D.D., said, "I have frequently heard him spoken of by Bishop Moore as one of the most active and laborious clergymen in the Diocese of Virginia, sparing no pains and appalled by no labours or difficulties in the cause of his Divine Master." In October 1821 he was made rector of St Paul's Church, Philadelphia. Though his health was never good, he devoted his energies to the work of the Church and organised many religious and benevolent societies.

By the spring of 1828 his health had deteriorated so much that his doctors advised a voyage to England as a complete rest and change. He sailed from Newcastle, Delaware, on 20 March and landed at Liverpool on 13 April. He made his way in easy stages via Manchester and Birmingham to London, where he arrived on 22 April and stayed there until 19 May. Then he set off for the North by way of Liverpool and Lancaster to Westmorland. In June he toured Yorkshire and was back in Kendal by 13 July, when he was suddenly taken ill. The Rev. William Carus Wilson was called to look after him and he took him to Liverpool with the idea of sending him back to America on the next boat. Unfortunately he grew worse and was unable to sail until 23 November aboard the brig "Edward". The brig had a very tedious passage and Benjamin Allen died on the fiftieth day after sailing (13 January 1829).

I would like to thank Miss Barbara Holt, Mr R. G. Plint, Mr B. L. Thompson and our editor for their help with footnotes.

Extracts from the Rev. Benjamin Allen's journal, concerning his visit to Westmorland 1828:

"Monday [26 May 1828] at nine o'clock, started in the barouche along with Rev. A. Brandram,¹ Rev. W.C.W.² and his father,³ on the way to the considerable town of Kendall (*sic*) . . . There is a high degree of cultivation manifest in the vales, but much barrenness on the mountains; indeed this is by no means the most fertile part of England. There stands upon a hill near Kendall the remains of a castle in which was born Henry the Eighth's wife, Catharine Parr . . . The appearance of Kendall is interesting at a distance, and it was to us pleasant in a variety of respects. The utmost degree of hospitality was extended to us by some members of the society of Friends, more especially : at the indeed friendly dwelling of a Quaker⁴ we took up our abode. He was a relative of Anna Braithwaite,⁵ several of whose connexions, and one of whose children, we saw. The first Bible-meeting at Kendall was held in the Town Hall, our valued host, Mr W. in the chair. During this meeting I heard it stated, that at the two last assizes for the county of Westmoreland, not a single criminal case occurred. After the meeting, we dined with several Quaker and other friends, at the house of an officer of the Kendal society, and in the evening repaired to a second meeting at Friends' meeting house. This

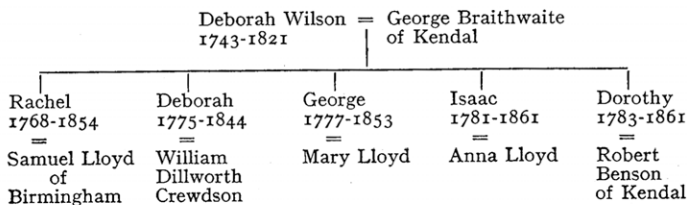
¹ *The Rev. A. Brandram* was Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society and is described by Allen elsewhere in his journal as "a sensible and excellent companion".

² *Rev. W.C.W.* = William Carus Wilson (1791-1859), Rector of Tunstall 1816-1828, Rector of Whittington 1825-1857, Perpetual Curate of Casterton 1833-1856. Founded Casterton School 1823 and figures as "Mr Brocklehurst" in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*.

³ His father was William Wilson Carus Wilson (1764-1851). He was Conservative M.P. for Cockermouth 1821-1826 and built and lived at Casterton Hall where the Rev. Benjamin Allen stayed from 24 May until 13 June 1828.

⁴ *William Dillworth Crewdson* is referred to in a letter as "Friend Crewdson".

⁵ Anna Lloyd of Birmingham married Isaac Braithwaite of Kendal in 1808. The short family tree below will show her relationship to William Dillworth Crewdson, and her other Kendal "connexions":



(See *Isaac and Rachel Wilson; Quakers of Kendal 1714-85* by Somervell).

was a peculiarly large and delightful assemblage. Tuesday, proceeded with the Secretary of the B. and F.B.S.,⁶ the Rev. W.C.W., and some other friends, in a barouche to Ambleside. This place is at the head of lake Windermere; and in our way we coursed along almost the whole of that beautiful lake . . . Its length is about thirteen miles: its average width scarcely a mile: so that some may readily mistake it for a broad river. It reminded me of the Susquehannah near Harrisburg; the mountains that appear at a distance and indeed approach near the shore of the lake are in a high degree picturesque. We passed the dwelling of Professor Wilson,⁷ author of the *Isle of Palms*: also the seat of the late Bishop Watson⁸: who, though is diocess was Landaff, dwelt on the banks of Windermere. The poet Wodsworth (*sic*) lives within a mile of Ambleside. We went to Ambleside not to seek for natural beauties, though doubtless we enjoyed them quite as much as the despisers of the Bible, but to organize a Bible Association. This done, we ordered our jaunting car to ascend a neighbouring mountain while we took a nearer path for the purpose of seeing a beautiful cascade.⁹ This consists of two small streams of water, which uniting in one, descend into a wild, romantic glen. The height of the cascade is about fifty feet. On our way from the cascade to the road, on the summit of the mountain, a woman who dwelt at a farmhouse, told us she was without a Bible; and a girl of sixteen informed us she could not read. Would that the romantic poets in this neighbourhood thought of removing the

⁶ The Rev. A. Brandram.

⁷ Elleray was the home of Professor John Wilson. "Christopher North" (18 May 1785 — 3 April 1854). He was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, 1803-1807, and won distinction with his poetry. "The Isle of Palms" was published in 1812 but it was not so well received as "The City of the Plague" (1816). In 1820 he became Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at Edinburgh University. "It is not the writer, not the lecturer, but the man who has survived. His personality was greater than his work." For further details of his life see B. L. Thompson: *Professor Wilson of Elleray*.

⁸ Richard Watson (1737-1816) built a house at Calgarth Park in 1789. He was born at Heversham and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was second wrangler in 1759. He became Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge in 1764 and "besides chemistry he studied anatomy and practised dissection". In 1771 he was elected to the chair of Divinity in the same University. He was made Prebend of Ely in 1774 and became Archdeacon in 1777. On the accession of Lord Shelburne to power in 1782 he was made Bishop of Llandaff and was permitted to retain his other preferences on account of the poverty of the see. He married Dorothy Wilson of Dallam in 1773 and lived first at Dallam Tower and then at Calgarth, neglecting both his see and his professorship. De Quincey tells us that "his lordship was a joyous, jovial and cordial host". For further details see *D.N.B.*, A. G. Bradley: *Other Days* (1913), pp. 7-8; and Venn: *Alumni Cantabrigienses*.

⁹ Stockgill Force.

ignorance and supplying the spiritual wants of those in their own immediate vicinity! Arrived at the top of Kirkstone, a bare and lofty mountain, we beheld a sublime spectacle. The mountains of Cumberland: the adjacent ranges of Westmoreland: Windermere sleeping at our feet, with the little lake called Esthwaite adjoining: the rays of a bright sun enlivening the wild scene; all combined in forming a view worth much labour to enjoy. Almost the whole of the mountains in this region have, to my eye, the great peculiarity of being destitute of enclosure. They form a common pasturage . . . The vales between the mountains presented cultivated spots peculiarly sweet in their appearance. The little lakes slumbering in those vales form a perfect contrast to the wild magnificence of the mountains themselves. Brotherswater, a very little lake of this character, is at the foot of Kirkstone. At Patterdale, a little farther on, we arrived at Ullswater, another lake; on this lake it was our intention to travel in a boat, until we reached the opposite end, and thus proceed upon our journey to next Bible-meeting. After we had ordered our boat, however, we were surprised by the appearance of heavy clouds rolling down the pass of Kirkstone, through which we had just travelled. A storm of rain, with the reverberation of thunder, made us resign our boat for a post-chaise. Our road lay along the margin of the lake, and a most delightful ride we had. On the opposite shore we saw the abode of Thomas Clarkson.¹⁰ We passed through the grounds, and by a hunting seat of the Duke of Norfolk.¹¹ On the Westmorland shore, a relation of our friend W.¹² has some rein deer (*sic*). Common deer were seen by us near the Duke of Norfolk's seat. Having traversed the whole length of the lake, ten miles, we struck off from the head of it, for the town of Penrith, in Cumberland. There we passed the night. In the morning another chaise conveyed us to Appleby, the county town of Westmoreland. As we rode on, we passed the remains of two castles. At Appleby, we ascended Caesar's tower, part of the castle of the Earl of Thanet. We also saw in the castle, sundry portraits of the Countess Pembroke, who founded

¹⁰ Eusemere was built by Thomas Clarkson in 1796 and he sold it in 1804. He dedicated his life to the movement for the abolition of the slave trade: he was a friend of Wilberforce and of the Wordsworths.

¹¹ Lyulph's Tower, Ullswater, was the hunting-lodge of the Howards of Greystoke Castle. From 1777-1815 two of the Howards of Greystoke had been Dukes of Norfolk; but by 1828 the title had passed to another branch of the family: and Henry Howard, who then owned Lyulph's Tower, was a nephew of the twelfth Duke.

¹² Elizabeth Carus, the sister of William Wilson Carus Wilson, M.P., and aunt of the Rev. William Carus Wilson, married Edward Hasell of Dalemain.

a hospital for poor widows; and was otherwise a benefactress to the neighbourhood; as well as, in many respects a superior woman; also a suit of ancient armour, the helmet of which I put on. The walk through the principle avenue, as it may be called, of Appleby, and through a grove of oaks leading to the castle, is exceedingly fine. I enjoyed it much: as also the wild and picturesque view from the summit of Caesar's tower. This town is the pleasantest for residence I have seen in Westmoreland.

"Three of the 'Friends' from Kendall met us at Appleby. We were most hospitably welcomed by another Friend resident in A., who is actively engaged in promoting the Bible Society. The vicar,¹³ a nephew of the late Milner's, author of Church History, presided at the Bible meeting, and a niece of the same Milner's attended it. Part of our number dined at the Vicarage; and we then proceeded with our Kendall 'Friends' to Brough, eight miles distant. There, in the evening, we addressed a body of people in the Methodist meeting-house; and after their offerings to the Bible Society had been received by the officer of an association in the neighbourhood, and had expressed great thankfulness, we departed to Kirkby Stephen, a short distance, on our return, where the night was passed comfortably. Brough was the last of the places we proposed to visit. At Brough therefore, the Secretary took a night coach for London. Preferring more easy stages I placed myself under the care of Brother W. and our Kendall friends.

"Thursday, we rode twenty-four miles to the house of our friends across 'mountain and moor', though along a very good road. Scenes similar to those of the preceding days presented themselves. Half of Westmoreland appears to be mountain, the remainder beautiful vales of cultivated hill-side . . ."

¹³ Joseph Milner was vicar of St. Lawrence, Appleby, 1817-1864. "The History of the Church of Christ" was written by Joseph Milner (1744-1797) who lived to complete the first three volumes, and his brother Isaac Milner (1750-1820) who added another two. Isaac Milner was Dean of Carlisle 1791-1820 and re-edited this work in 1810. He had been Professor of Natural Philosophy at Cambridge (1783), President of Queen's College (1788) and later became Vice-Chancellor of the University.