

XXXVI.—*Some Account of the Bronze Statue of James II., supposed to have formerly stood on the Sandhill, Newcastle, in a Letter from Mr. JOHN BELL, Librarian, to JOHN ADAMSON, Esq., Sec.*

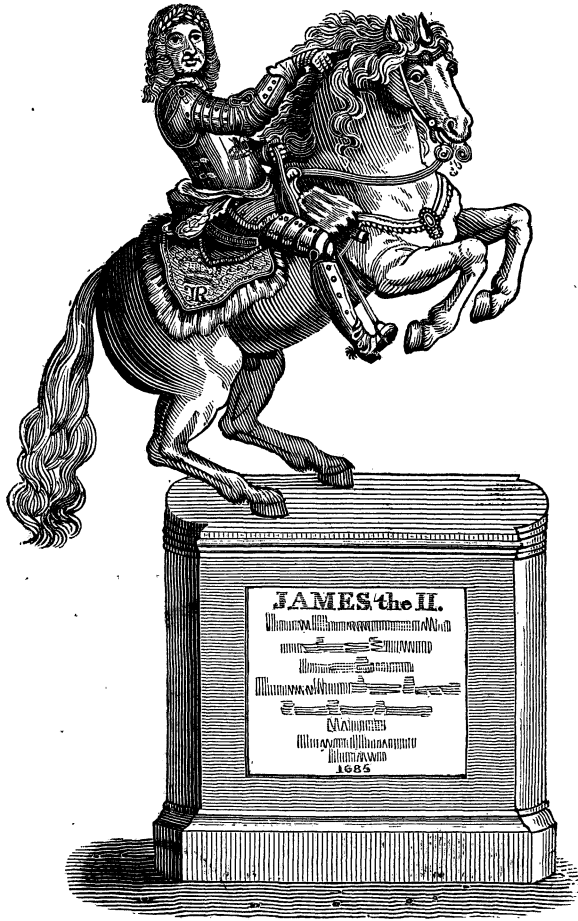
30th December, 1826.

SIR,

THE SOCIETY'S collection of local prints has had a valuable addition made to it, of the print of the Equestrian Statue of James II., which is said to have formerly stood on the Sandhill, in this town. This print was advertised to be published by subscription in 1742, by Joseph Barber, music and copper-plate printer, in Humble's Buildings, afterwards of Amen-Corner, and appeared the latter part of that year, with two side accompaniments of the Armorial Bearings of the subscribers; which latter plates he afterwards cut to pieces, and sold each individual arms at two shillings and sixpence per hundred, as book plates. The print of the statue gives the following inscription:—

JAMES *the II.*  
*By the Grace of God*  
*of Great Britain,*  
*France, & Ireland,*  
*King, Defender of the Faith.*  
*Sir William Creagh, Knight,*  
*Mayor.*  
*Samuel Gill, Esq.,*  
*Sheriff,*  
 1685.

A copy of so much of this print as the statue itself, is engraved in Brand's *History of the Town*, and in a wood-cut, published by Mr. J. Sykes,\* as follows:—



And also a smaller cut, as an embellishment to one of the numbers of the *Catholic Magazine* for 1826, each of these copying the foregoing inscription, which is evidently erroneous in the date. Sir William Creagh came to Newcastle early in 1684-5, and in the following year produced the King's sign manual letter, dated 17 March, 1685-6, to Sir

\* Mr. Sykes, has politely favoured the Society with the use of his Cut.

Henry Brabant, Knight, then Mayor of the town, to be admitted a free merchant of Newcastle, which was read to the Merchants' Company the 4th May, 1686,\* and complied with; in July, next year, he produced another letter,† from James, for his further admittance into the Corporation, and on the 3d January, 1687–8, he was, by mandamus from James, elected Mayor of the town, and Samuel Gill his Sheriff; they only continuing in office until the 1st of October next ensuing, so that the date, 1685, mentioned on the print, and by Brand and other succeeding publications (who have noticed it) is wrong.

Bourne, in his *History* (page 126), says, "it cost the town £1700." This I do not find to be the case, for on referring to the Corporation account books,\* in the Town's Hutch, the following items only are found respecting it:—

Apr. 14. 86.

April 1686 y<sup>e</sup> iiiii<sup>th</sup> Week.

Pd. out of y<sup>e</sup> Revenue of this Town as  
p. ord. of C.C. y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> of Apr. 86, for  
& toward y<sup>e</sup> Contract about his Maties  
Statue £300 as allso the sum of four  
Pounds ten Shillings & 10 p<sup>n</sup> return of c. l. s. d.  
y<sup>e</sup> said Moneys weh makes paid in all... iij iiij x

November. 1687.

\* "126. 4 May, 1686, a letter from the King, signed James R., dated 17 March, 1685–6, directed to Sir Henry Brabant, Knt., Mayor, and Govr. of the Hostman's Co., and to Timothy Davison, Esqr. Gov. of the Merchts. Co., was read, requiring them forthwith to admit Sir Will<sup>m</sup>. Creagh, Knt., a free Hostman and free Mercht., and undersigned Sunderland, P.; and immediately after reading the letter, y<sup>e</sup> Co. in obedience to his Majesty's command, did admit Sir William Creagh, Knt., to his freedom of this fellowship."

† "142. 19 July, 1687, Sir Wm. Creagh, Knt., presented a letter from the King, directed and signed, and undersigned nearly as the former, dated 31 May, 1687, reciting the letter of the 17 March, 1685–6; and also, that he had been admitted, but not in so ample manner as his Majesty intended, therefore requiring his Freedoms to be recorded by order of the Common Council, and the Company of Hostmen and Merchts. so as he and his posterity may be enabled to take apprentices, and enjoy all other franchises which any Freeman of the Corporation enjoys, either by descent or servitude. In obedience to which it was ordered, that Sir Wm. Creagh shod be recorded an absolute free Brother, as Merchant Draper.—*Vide Record Book of the Merchants' Company,*

N. B. Sir William Creagh's freedom, by order of the Common Council of the 23<sup>d</sup> 7<sup>br</sup>. 1689, was made void.

\* These were politely ordered for my inspection, by Archibald Reed Esq., when Mayor.

Novr. 26. 87.

	c.	l.	s.	d.
The fourth Week of Novr. 1687.				
Paid as p order dated ye 23 <sup>d</sup> of Novr 1687, out of ye Revenues of this Town for ye Statue ye Sum of .....	ij	—	—	—
July, 1688.				
Pd fr a Sledge here for ye Statue .....	—	—	xx	—
Septembr ye 4 <sup>th</sup> Week, 1688.				
Pd Mr. Wm. Larson ye Statue in full	ij	lxvi	v	vij $\frac{1}{2}$

Which makes the cost of it little more than £770., which appears to have been the total amount paid to the founder for casting the figure; there being no sum charged for erecting it, or for the pedestal (in marble of some size) on which it is represented to have stood, or for the iron palisades which are also represented to have surrounded it. The inference I draw is, that the erecting of such a statue had been projected by the King, or those about him, and that Sir William Creagh, a personal friend of his Majesty's, was sent down to Newcastle to carry the scheme into effect, and was followed by sign manual letters, to introduce him still further into the company of the leading families, the more closely to watch over the political interests of his Majesty in that town; and on coming down he brought with him impressions of the plate alluded to, and in a short time procured an order for its erection;\* but such a statute, I think, never was erected, for Bourne, page 126, in noticing the Sandhill says, "the effigies of King James II. which stood here, as I have been told," "for I never saw the statue itself, nor the picture of it." Sir Christopher Wren's certificate to the Common Council, in August, 1688,† and the payment for the sledge in July, 1688, shew that it had come to Newcastle in the middle of that year, when it would be landed on the Quay, where it might be lying, either owing to the political ferment which was agitating the country, or waiting its removal to the place of erection, through any of the narrow water gates

\* Brand, page 30, gives an extract from the Common Council Books, "March 16, 1685-6. A figure of his Majesty, in a Roman habit, on a capering horse, in copper, as big as the figure of his Majesty King Charles I. at Charing-crosse, on a Pedestal of black or white marble, to be set up for £800. sterling."

† August 27, 1688. Sir Christopher Wren's certificate was read, "that Mr. Larson had very sufficiently performed his work in casting the said Statue."

in the town's wall, which then stood parallel with the Quay, and where its contiguity to the river would easily suggest to the mob,\* the idea of overturning it into the water. The supposition of the print being co-eval with the projecting of the statue, arises from examining the lettering of the inscription on the pedestal.

JAMES the II.  
*By the Grace of God*  
*of Great Britain,*  
*France, & Ireland,*  
*King, Defender of the Faith.*

Thus far it is in a bold style of engraving, and the remainder of the inscription, except the letter M in mayor, the S in sheriff, and 16 in the date (which are done by the same bold hand as the former) the writing is in a more modern style, evidently shewing that the inscription has been put on at twice, and by two different engravers.

*Sir William Creagh, Knight,*  
*ayor.*  
*Samuel Gill, Esq.,*  
*heriff,*  
 85.

are in the same hand-writing as the five descriptive lines at the bottom of the plate, and must have been put on in 1742, when Barber published the print. It is quite evident that it had been engraved and printed in London, as there was no one in Newcastle who could do any such thing at that time; it is probable, that after the plate had been first done, it had been suffered to remain in the hands of the engraver, as plates often are, and his successors offered it to Mr. Barber, to publish as a speculation, as the price it was published at (5s.) would scarce have paid for engraving it.

JOHN BELL.

\* November, 1688.