



ARCHÆOLOGIA ÆLIANA.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, MERCHANT ADVENTURER,
HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

BY JAMES CLEPHAN.

THE old nursery stories, the joy of our simple childhood, have their foundations deep down in sober fact. The venerable legend of "Jack and his Eleven Brothers," wherever it is told, or by what name soever it is known, how true it is! The sons of men have been going forth from the homes of their fathers, through all the ages, seeking their fortunes; waited upon in their wanderings by good spirits and bad; by Industry and Idleness, Wisdom and Folly, Duty and Pleasure, Good Luck and Evil Hap, and all the thousand imps and fairies that make or mar the adventurers in their journey through the world. To this good old town of Newcastle, in which we now play our several parts, young men have for centuries been bending their steps from country homes, braving its risks and striving for its rewards. Hither they have been drawn by a law of gravity as sure and as resistless as that which guides the planets in their courses. They were leaving the open plain and secluded valley for the walled city, to live and learn, in the days of the Plantagenets. Youths were sent from distant parts, in Tudor and Stuart times, to be apprenticed to various crafts and acquire municipal freedom. The Broughams, before the famous Chancellor added to the lustre of their name, sent sons out of the West into the East for mercantile lore. The bells of our church towers fell with sweet surprise on the ears of young rustics who stole timorously into the busy town to become in future years the Whittingtons of the Tyne. In the words of an adage of our ancestors,

At the West Gate came Thornton in,
With a hap, a ha'penny, and a lamb skin.

With this scant outfit, "the richest marchaunte that ever was dwelling in Newcastle" found himself a stranger in our streets in the fourteenth century. At the same gate, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, came in "George Gilpin, son of Randolph Gilpin, of Fairbank, Westmoreland, Gentleman," and nephew of Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, who, in February, 1598-99, was bound apprentice to William Riddell, Merchant Adventurer and Mercer. (Books of the Merchants' Company, Newcastle.—Pedigree of the Gilpin Family, printed by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society.) "Henry Brabant, son of John Brabant, of Pedgebank, Durham, Gentleman," left the county palatine in 1636, and came along Tyne Bridge, to be indentured to Alexander Davison, who died in 1644 of the wounds he endured fighting at four-score against the besiegers of our walls; and the then apprentice of the octogenarian merchant, sharing his master's sympathies with the Stuart cause, rose to the offices of Sheriff and Mayor after the Restoration. His name is distinguished in our local annals; and long were the roll of not less renowned Newcastle apprentices, written on a larger page, that might be extended from those books of the Merchants' Company, ever courteously open to the studious inquirer, which await the editor who shall one day make them the subject of a volume of Tyneside story. Gilpins many have been indentured since the days of Randolph, whose brother Bernard founded the grammar-school of Houghton-le-Spring, where a long succession of diligent lads have been receiving a good education for centuries. To George Blaxton, Merchant Adventurer and Boothman, was apprenticed, in the month of February, 1645-46, "Allen Gilpin, son of Isaac Gilpin, of the city of Durham, Gentleman," who was set over in March to Phineas Allen, churchwarden of All Saints' in 1642, 1646, and 1657; or "church officer," as it was at one time the pleasure of the Puritans to call the guardian of the temple. Allen Gilpin was a younger brother of Dr. Richard Gilpin, baptized at Kendal in 1625, Rector of Greystoke before the Restoration, and subsequently one of the Dissenting ministers of Newcastle; and in the next generation, in 1675-76, a son of the Doctor was bound to George Fenwick, Merchant Adventurer and Boothman, and set over to William Hutchinson, a chief subject of the present paper.

Two Yorkshire youths, in the reign of Charles the First, came from

the banks of the Tees and the Swale to the Tyne, for training in trade and commerce, Ambrose Barnes and William Hutchinson, both of whom flourished greatly on their adopted river; and the latter, described as "one of the considerablest merchants of his time," was the founder of the first meeting-house built for Dissenting worship at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The two young men arrived within a few months of each other, and in the same year. I call them young men, for such they were. Merchants' apprentices were in those days not uncommonly looking back on their boyhood before they were indentured; and as they were bound for a term of ten years; their manhood was well advanced ere their freedom was won. Ambrose Barnes, apprenticed on the 1st of August, 1646, was enrolled in the books of the company on the 10th of September thereafter, "son of Thomas Barnes, of Stratforth, in the county of York, Gentleman." Bound to William Blackett, Merchant Adventurer and Boothman, he was set over to Samuel Rawling; July 2, 1647, the Sheriff of 1649. Young Barnes, born towards the end of the year 1627, in "a small town standing upon the river Tees, in the edge of the county of York," over-against Barnard Castle, was approaching the age of 19 when he became an apprentice; and in the year 1654-55, being then more than 27, and with eighteen months of his servitude yet to run, he was admitted to his freedom on petition, as an act of grace and favour. The Merchants' Company, however, maintaining its privileges, required that he should pay a not burdensome fine of 50s. (three-fifths for the abbreviation of his contract, and the remainder for having entered into trade during its existence). An able and faithful servant, he had won the confidence and affection of Mr. Rawling, who had encouraged him in occasional ventures of his own. A signal contrast in his conduct to one of his younger colleagues, Hogarth's idle and industrious apprentices had their prototypes in the same bed-chamber on the Sandhill. Early to bed and early to rise, was the motto of Ambrose; but his bedfellow turned the maxim of "Poor Richard" the other way round. "He kept such disorderly hours, Mr. Barnes never knew when he came to bed; and Mr. Barnes was so assiduous in his master's business, the other never knew when he got up;" one of those "pleasant passages" of Commonwealth days over which, in an after-time, Ambrose would make merry with "a fellow-apprentice, Mr. Anthony Salvin, a gentleman of good estate of the city of Durham,"

who "heads the pedigree of Salvin of Sunderland Bridge in Surtees's Durham." (Surtees Society, vol. 50.) Persevering and sagacious, Ambrose Barnes amassed seven or eight hundred pounds as an apprentice. Naturally of an industrious temperament, he was, moreover, all the more active and anxious in his endeavours because he had fallen in love. It was the lady's attractions that inspired his wish to be rid of his indentures; and in the summer of 1655, emancipated from his master, he bound himself for life to his fair mistress, Mary Butler.

William Hutchinson was at this time still an apprentice. On the 10th of October, 1646, the "son of Francis Hutchinson, late of Gilling, Yorkshire, Gentleman, deceased," had been indentured to Benjamin Ellison, Merchant Adventurer and Mercer; and in the autumn of 1656, when his term was expired, he was admitted to his freedom. He and Barnes, sons of old north-country families numbered among the gentry of the riding in which they were born, ran their course side by side in the town of Newcastle. Their names are written on the same leaf in those books of the incorporated company to which I have had kindly access, and are inscribed on the same stone in that churchyard of Pilgrim Street so long open to all. In the old enclosure of All Saints' lies a sculptured memorial, with time-worn coat of arms, marking "the burial-place of William Hutchinson, Merchant Adventurer, who departed this life the 6th of March, 1689." The storms of six generations have chafed to a mere rudiment the tail of the closing figure of the year; no "Old Mortality" has restored the wasted line with his pious chisel; and 'tis little wonder that the local historian, copying the inscription, has not rendered it aright. The patient antiquary, kneeling on the ground for a "rubbing," would have a cipher given back to him for his reward; but, schooled by experience, he would check his transcript in the neighbouring vestry, and learn from the parish register, sheltered within its closet from the elements without, that "1680" was not the accurate date. "William Hutchinson, buried March 9, 1689-90," is the written word. The churchyard stone bears the name of his son Jonathan, who married Mary, daughter of Ambrose Barnes, and, having been returned to Parliament on the 9th of February, 1701-2, held his seat in the House of Commons till his death on the 11th of June, 1711; after which time he was succeeded in the representation of Berwick-

upon-Tweed by Richard Hampden, great-grandson of John Hampden, who fell on Chalgrove Field. Following the borough member on the family record comes his daughter Ruth, whose husband was Joseph Airey; and through the Aireys the library of the Literary and Philosophical Society derives the well-known "Barnes Manuscript," the substance of which was printed by the Surtees Society in 1866.

Under the old Puritan stone lie the ashes of the kindred dead. Ambrose Barnes, whose Memoirs, edited by Mr. W. H. D. Longstaffe, all may read with instruction and profit, and William Hutchinson, his brother-in-law, were linked together in life and death. They shared a common nativity, and were united by family ties. Hutchinson, with whom we are more especially concerned as the founder of the first meeting-house built at Newcastle for Dissenting worship, was brought up in the Church of England. In the troublesome times of his early manhood, he was known as "a moderate Churchman," but, "by accident," was "quite turned," as the biographer of Barnes relates, "to the Dissenters; for, going one Lord's Day to his parish church, he was stopt at the porch, and forbid entrance, as being just excommunicated; which gave him such disgust that the worthy man, who was, before, the less-half of a Dissenter, never afterwards went to church." The thriving merchant lived in an age not over-comfortable for "moderate" men. Minds that are what is called well-balanced were often perplexed not a little among contending sects and parties in Church and State, and knew not always how to reply, off-hand, to the swaggering demand of "mine ancient Pistol" in the play, "Under which King, Bezonian? speak, or die!" The excommunicated Hutchinson, "moderate Churchman," and "less-half of a Dissenter," was between two fires, and had stood for a time irresolute which way to turn. Now, however, he could halt no longer. The repulse at the porch drove him to a decision; and he cast in his lot with the Presbyterian Gilpin. At a period when the penal laws were in full swing against Nonconformity, he attended divine worship, at all risks and regardless of reproach, under the roof of the Doctor, in the quarter of Newcastle where the White Friars reared their new convent in the earlier years of the fourteenth century.

The White Friars, or Carmelites, had their first settlement in England on the banks of the Aln. This was in the thirteenth century, when they found liberal benefactors in the Lords of Alnwick. The

romance and the history of their introduction to Northumberland, to fan the flame of learning and religion in the land, may be read in the late Mr. Tate's instructive volumes, where he speaks of the catalogue of the library in Hulne Abbey, "which reflects honour on the convent; for the list of books is large for the period—larger than the library of the house of Farne, and much larger than that of the priory of Lindisfarne." (History of Alnwick, by George Tate, F.G.S., 1866.) The Carmelites of Newcastle founded their house on the east side of the town, at the spot now known as the Wall Knoll. It was an unfortunate selection; for when the new town-wall was projected, towards the latter end of the thirteenth century, the chosen line ran through their grounds and narrowed their boundaries. But when King Edward was on the Borders in 1307, and within a few months of his death, he gave them leave to cross over the town to the foot of



TOWER AND WALL, WHITE FRIARS, APRIL, 1840.

the West Gate, by the Toot Hill, where Ada Page, one of the munificent women of her day, added a contiguous garden to their possessions. One wave of time flows after another, effacing old footprints. The Romans had erected an altar on the wooded spot to the god Sylvanus. The White Friars Tower of the wall usurped its site. The tower gave way in its turn, in 1840–41, when Hanover Street was in course of construction; and the altar, once more restored to the light of day, was presented by Mr.

Spoor to the Society of Antiquaries. (Transactions, vi., 231.) Some quarter of a century elapsed; and within the precincts of the priory the spade turned up further relics of Rome—fragments of pottery, lumps of charcoal, an inscribed stone, human skulls, and a skeleton indicating a stature of six feet and a half. Reverently the remains

of the Heathen dead, that had slept through so many revolutions, were restored to burial in a Christian churchyard.

When the Presbyterian minister had his house near the White Friars Tower, and was assembling his followers in one of his rooms, every parish in the town had its forbidden conventicle, subject to entrance and dispersion by the authorities. Cuthbert Nicholson, cordwainer, one of the town-sergeants, seems to have looked after such places with cheerful alacrity. He was keeping watch betimes, on the 1st of August, 1669, "about five or six of the clock in the morning," and "did see a great number of people go in to the house of Mr. Richard Gilpin, minister, in the White Friars." On Wednesday, the 4th, he appeared before the Mayor, and reported the fact. "After the doors were broken open," said he, "he did see several persons come out," to the number of about fifty, one of whom was William Hutchinson, now in middle life; and the witness, having closed his evidence, presented the Bench with a roll of the chief townsfolk in Newcastle who frequented conventicles, comprising "Mr. William Hutchinson and wife," with several burgesses who had held office as Sheriff and Mayor. (Depositions from York Castle, Surtees Society, vol. 40, edited by Canon Raine.)

Nonconforming families were at this period meeting for worship in private rooms, coming together in the early morning or under cloud of night. Sergeant-at-mace and churchwardens of the parish had scattered William Durant's congregation in Pilgrim Street, in the name of the authorities, on Sunday, the 18th of July, shortly prior to the breaking open of Gilpin's doors in the White Friars. The worthy cordwainer, going his rounds, had become aware that "a great multitude of people" were near at hand, "consisting to the number of one hundred and fifty persons, or thereabouts, under the pretence of religious worship and service, for he heard them sing psalms;" and forthwith he had them dispersed "in the name of Mr. Mayor." But soon there came a change. A few years more, and the celebrated Declaration of Indulgence was launched from the Throne. In the Diary of Sir John Reresby there is a note of March 15, 1672, in which he says:—"The King did issue out his proclamation for the indulgence of tender consciences. This made a great noise, not only in the succeeding Parliament (where at last it was reversed), but throughout the kingdom, and was the greatest blow that ever was given, since the King's restoration, to the Church of

England, all sectaries by this means repairing to their meetings and conventicles, insomuch that all the laws, and care of their execution, against those Separatists afterwards, could never bring them back to due conformity."

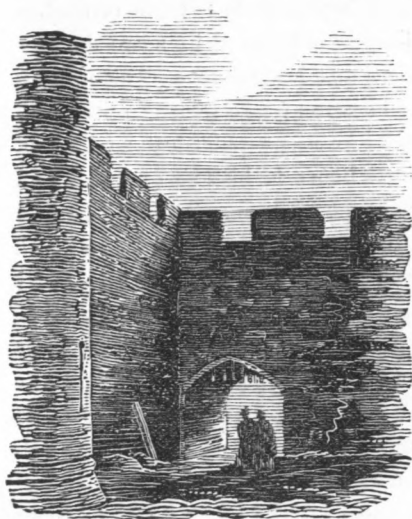
Never again could Humpty Dumpty be replaced on the wall. The King's hand had cast Exclusion down, and it was shattered beyond repair. The Cuthbert Nicholsons, in high estate and low, were afflicted; but more moderate Churchmen were not disquieted. Evidence is not wanting that men in office, not a few, had been slack to enforce the laws against their friends and neighbours on the other side, tempering the wind to Nonconforming flocks by their passive shelter. The Crown was also interposing, and there were tender consciences that could not brook freedom by prerogative: they must have it, if at all, by right of law, and not by royal power. Others, however, inclined to the policy of the homely proverb, and looked not the gift horse too closely in the mouth. The general result was the breaking down of the exclusive privilege of public worship; and after the equivocal movement in highest place, meeting-houses began to rise up in various directions. Some congregations licensed rooms: others erected buildings. "Rooms in the house of George Beadnell," one of the Dissenters on the town-sergeant's roll of 1669, were licensed on the 5th of September, 1672, "to be a place for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, who are of the persuasion commonly called Congregational, to meet and assemble, in order to public worship and devotions." (Surtees Society, vol. 50.) This place of worship was probably intended for the people of William Durant, who was Congregational (or Independent) in his principles. (Calamy.) What course was taken, at the same time, by the adherents of Dr. Gilpin, does not precisely appear. It is likely that they, too, would in the first instance license a room; but, after an interval of time, longer or shorter, they built the "handsome meeting-house" mentioned in the Memoirs written in 1791 by his descendant, Prebendary Gilpin. (Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin, edited by William Jackson, F.S.A., for the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society, 1879.) The building was founded on a site outside of the Close Gate of the town-wall, given for the purpose by William Hutchinson, not far removed from the residence of Dr. Gilpin in the Friars. There was also a house for the



minister or his assistant—a “manse” belonging to the place of worship. In the present day, a pastor living on the now crowded spot, amid noise and dust, and smoke and steam, would be loth to acknowledge that his lines were cast in pleasant places; but when church and home were erected on Hutchinson’s soil, in the reign of Charles the Second, the river flowed along by field and hedge-row, grove and garden. If we look on William Mathew’s map of Newcastle in 1610, as printed in miniature by John Speed in his Theatre of Great Britain, we shall see the town-wall making for the Close Gate, descending a verdant slope with open ground on both sides; and in much the same condition was the margin of the Tyne when James Corbridge published his plan of 1723; copied with abridgment into Bourne’s history of 1736, and without note of the changes made in the interval. From the Postern Gate in Pink Lane an avenue of trees leads to the Forth House, with its double row of limes brought from Holland, as ordered by the Common Council in 1680. Thence runs a living fence to the Skinner Burn, and to the thoroughfare by the river-side that conducts us to the Close Gate, where the town-wall, climbing some seventy yards to the White Friars Tower, pursues its onward way, upwards of 214 yards, to the gate of the White Friars near the Neville Tower; and so, forward, by West Spital, Stank, and Gunner Towers (the last of which still lingers in Pink Lane), till we come again to the Forth Gate, where we began our round. Within these limits not a house is to be seen save the freemen’s mansion surrounded by the limes. Nothing presents itself, in the enclosed area, but the recreation ground of the inhabitants, with its trees and gardens and grass-grown lawn, the traditionary gift of one of England’s kings. On the inner or eastern side of the wall, down from the Neville Tower to the Tuthill Stairs, lies the domain of the Carmelites, comprising their second home among the trees; a sylvan retreat, still appropriate, not more than two centuries ago, for the altar dedicated by the Romans to the guardian of rural haunts and woodland glades.

The Forth and its foliage, walls and towers, Close Gate and meeting-house adjoining, all are alike gone, leaving but faint traces behind; and he who would realize the transformation that has been accomplished between Now and Then, let him ponder Corbridge’s plan of 1723 by the side of Reid’s of 1878. It is impossible for any thoughtful man to

look on such a scene, and think of what is gone, without some touch of sadness. Around the White Friars Tower, which kept its place in living memory, dwelt an order of monks cultured after the spirit of their age, one of whom, dwelling in the priory of Newcastle, Dr. Nicholas Durham, achieved a name as an opponent of John Wickliffe. From the gate in the wall neighbouring the Carmelite convent, in the mayoralty



POSTERN, WHITE FRIARS, REMOVED 1805.

of 1342, issued a band of valorous warriors, under the shades of night, who fell upon an invading host of Scots, and made a sleeping commander captive, with many of his men, delivering them over to Lord Neville, then captain of the castle within the walls. Here, too, in a later day, outside the White Friars Tower, the Covenanting army of 1644 made one of their formidable assaults on the beleaguered town, and left behind them enduring marks of the fury of war—

rents and scars once visible to eyes not yet closed, but now obliterated by the ruin that has fallen on stone and mortar happily no longer needed for defence.

The Close Gate, near which the Dissenters, outside the walls, built their first meeting-house two hundred years ago, bestrode the street for a period of five centuries, bearing its part in those extended barriers that were thrown around Newcastle in the days of the earliest Edwards; till at last, in the year 1797, it was cast to the ground, and carted away, as an obstruction to the increasing trade and intercourse of the district that could be tolerated no longer. Important it is that we should duly estimate the significance of this instructive fact. When walls and towers and gates were renewed, in wider circumference, round about our growing town, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with an added strength and magnificence that made them one of the wonders of

Europe, the Heptarchy was gone, yet the island was divided between two hostile nations, often at war, but still more often wasting each other's border lands with fire and sword in miserable raids. The walls of the Edwards were still new when the Scots poured into England under King David, in 1342, burning and destroying Northumberland down to the Tyne, and lost the Earl of Murray by a sally of the defenders of the town. Inroads and reprisals were of common occurrence; and visionary would the man have then been counted, on either side of the Tweed, who dreamt of the two countries ever living together in peace, or of their becoming one. Yet who dreams, now, of England and Scotland ever being divided and at war? And is there no lesson for us here? Is not the outcome of the centuries big with hope and encouragement? The two kingdoms north and south of the Scottish Borders have long been one: the two countries north and south of the English Channel, once in almost perpetual conflict, have been for more than threescore years in perpetual peace. Is the vision too sanguine that the same pacific relations may one day be established all over the globe?

The old Close Gate, a jealous compromise between the needs of peace and war, afforded but a narrow way of intercourse for town and country, yet wide enough for the time in which it was constructed. Three floors rose over the small aperture below—the “needle’s eye” of the venerable building—as shown in the accompanying engraving, copied (with the preceding cuts) from Richardson’s Table Book. Fifty yards from the frowning tower, on the south, was a turret by the river; and aloft, on the north, distant about two hundred feet, was the fort of the White



CLOSE GATE, EASTERN SIDE, REMOVED 1797.

Friars, connected with the gate by a hundred and forty "breakneck stairs," several of them still remaining, and worthy of a visit from the curious townsman or passing stranger. A massive remnant of the masonry where wall and gate adjoined, also keeps its ancient place by the wayside, marking the locality of what came to be known as "The Old Meeting House," erected after the royal declaration of 1672. The historian Brand, a century or more after it was built, has to say (1789):— "In the street that leads from the Close Gate to the Skinner Burn were several glass-houses, one of them formerly a meeting-house of Protestant Dissenters;" for such was the conversion that had happened to the first place built for public worship, apart from the Church of England, by the Nonconformists of Newcastle—a change effected within a generation or two from its foundation.

About the time when this primitive meeting-house was rising up in the West, under the direction of William Hutchinson and his fellow-Dissenters, Churchmen were active in the East, making further provision for worship and instruction. The ruined chapel of St. Ann's was having its resurrection, and a school was rising by its side, by the liberality of the Corporation, who were also to endow a lecturer. "The instruction of poor children, and such as were ignorant," was to have perpetual care; and in the spring of 1682 came the inaugural rites. The Vicar of Newcastle, John March, B.D., who has come down to us in gown and bands, and flowing wig, with contemporary testimony to his "worth and excellency," was the preacher of the day. Diligent "in instructing the youth of his parish," and "an excellent practical preacher," the "main objection this degenerate age had against him," observes Dr. John Scott, "was that he was a faithful son of the Church of England, and a zealous asserter of its doctrines and discipline;" or, as it is put by the biographer of Barnes, "he blemisht himself with a virulent animosity against Nonconformists;" "clamouring against such Magistrates as showed them any marks of civility or good-will; telling them they let those frogs of Egypt creep into their halls and bedchambers, when orthodox divines could not be admitted." In a tract entitled "Th' Encaenia of St. Ann's Chapel in Sandgate," dedicated to the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, etc., who were present at the opening, the discourse of the day was printed. The passing period is described as "a time of distraction;" "the loyalty and conformity shining forth" in the

corporate body are commemorated; and they are complimented on "the due exercise of their authority in suppressing conventicles, those notorious seminaries of Popery, schism, and rebellion." Nearer the end, however, of the reign of Charles the Second, the Vicar uneasily remarked, from his own pulpit, that "he had observed of late that the Catholics had begun to nestle more in and about the town than formerly they had done." This was in 1684, when England was entering within the shadows of the great crisis in which William Hutchinson was to play a conspicuous part. Parliament had been dissolved early in 1681, and for three years the King was reigning without Lords and Commons. He desired, also, to have the Municipal Corporations in his own hands, and intimated to the local authorities in Newcastle that a surrender of the old charter was expected of them. It was to be renewed, however, on condition that the Crown might appoint the Mayor, Recorder, Sheriff, and Town Clerk, or, at least, have the power to confirm their election. The clock of time was to be put back for centuries. Under the Plantagenets Newcastle had acquired increase of popular privileges. Its burgesses were empowered to choose their Chief Magistrate. Under the Stuarts the town was called upon to renounce its freedom of choice, retaining hardly a voice—not more than a whisper—of its own. Charles died on the 6th of February, 1685, and was succeeded by his brother James. The Duke of Monmouth, eldest natural son of the deceased monarch, rebelled. He flew to arms; and at Sedgemoor, in July, took place what Macaulay has described as "the last fight, deserving the name of battle, that has been fought on English ground." The rebels were overthrown. "James the Second," observes the unknown writer of the Barnes Memoir, "flusht with his success against the Duke, to usher in liberty to Papists, did, by his dispensing power, grant a toleration of Dissenters. Both sorts now opened their public meetings for worship, and the Magistracy was mixed with Papists and Protestants, Conformists and Nonconformists. Men were at a loss to see how suddenly the world was changed; the cap, the mace, and the sword, one day carried to the church; another day to the mass house, another day to the Dissenting meeting-house; and those of the best penetration concluded so portentous a phenomenon must needs issue in some strange revolution." Palpable traces of this sudden overturn in the times of the second James, so characteristically hit off by the biographer of the

Puritan Alderman, were long afterwards visible in an Elizabethan residence at the foot of the Tuthill Stairs, on the eastern side, known for many years as "The Mayor's Chapel," and occupied in the eighteenth century by the Baptists, who were therein ministered unto, in the year 1792, by John Foster, the admirable essayist. Affixed to the old pews were hands for holding the sword and mace, the lingering evidences of its corporate use up to the time of the Revolution. (Douglas's History of the Baptist Churches in the North of England.—Ryland's Life and Correspondence of John Foster.) "Some Account of the House in the Close," with "the orchard belonging to it," written by Mr. Longstaffe, may be read in the first volume of the Society's Transactions, N.S., pp. 140-48. A pleasant home on the bank-side, overlooking the river and the opposite shore, with flowers and fruit-trees blooming around, "the light of other days" has gone out. Panelled walls and decorated ceiling are eloquent of what has been, and carry us back to the year in which the stately room resounded with joy and triumph over the scattering of the Armada. A pointed archway in the Close, and a narrow passage in the Tuthill Stairs, lead up to the walls of the mansion "whose owner in 1587 was Henry Chapman, merchant and alderman," elected Mayor in 1586, and one of the Parliamentary Burgesses, with Henry Mitford, in 1597. At what time the Baptists entered upon it as a meeting-house is uncertain, but it became theirs by purchase in 1720, and had probably been in their occupation long before. From the anecdote told of Colonel Axtel in volume 50 of the Surtees Society, it is to be learnt that they had the use during the Protectorate of the chapel of St. Thomas on Tyne Bridge, and that Ambrose Barnes was at that time one of the congregation of All Saints', when William Durant was lecturer.

In the course of the mayoralty succeeding the overthrow of Monmouth, when the King felt securely seated on his throne, the Common Council was removed by royal mandate, and new members were nominated. Sir Henry Brabant, the zealous royalist, the Mayor of 1685, having been succeeded in 1686 by Nicholas Cole, John Squire was chosen in 1687, but was removed by mandamus in favour of Sir William Creagh. The Sheriff also, William Ramsay, had to give place to Samuel Gill. Creagh had previously been made free of the Corporation, by royal command, with a view to the exercise of the pleasure of the Crown

after Michaelmas. Mayor and Sheriff were both removed. Nor was this all. Six of the Aldermen, the Deputy Recorder, and fifteen Common Councillors, were superseded by nominees. In the ensuing month of January, 1688, an address to King James, couched in terms of lofty adulation, was signed by the Mayor, and by some of the Aldermen who were Catholics, and by others, also, who were Dissenters; but not sent. Not even as composed by the Crown was the Council complaisant; and so, on the 9th of March, the Mayor and Sheriff, and upwards of twenty of their colleagues, signed a surrender more complete than had been made under King Charles; whereupon a new charter was sent down, not only altering the mode of choosing the Mayor, but of the Burgesses representing the town in Parliament. The choice was to be centred, chiefly, in the Mayor and Aldermen.

The King, moreover, was writing to the Governor of the Merchants' Company, near the end of August, 1688, requiring him to have one Edward Grey, on whose loyalty he had great reliance, made a Free Merchant of Newcastle. No shadow of title had Grey to the privilege, either by birth or servitude, or in any other way whatsoever; and the Company might well demur to his admission. The Court of September 16 appointed a Committee to take counsel and prepare a petition setting forth "the evil consequences that would fall upon the fellowship" by such a proceeding. A letter was also to be sent, on "this so great and important affair," to the Lord President of the Council, the Earl of Sunderland, an official party to the arbitrary measure, and, at the same time, of loyalty hardly perhaps so reliable as that of the King's protégé. The Committee met on the day subsequent to its appointment. Ambrose Barnes was one of its members; and—still an early riser—he and his colleagues were in conference at eight o'clock in the morning. Petition and letter were in readiness for consideration on the 20th, and adopted. They were sent off, accompanied by a memorial from the apprentices, whose interests were involved in the endeavour to have merchants made by royal ordination, while the indentured youths must undergo a preliminary ten years' training. What finally became of the demand does not appear. Grave as was the emergency, it was doubtless swallowed up by the "so great and important affair" on foot in other quarters, the upshot of which is apparent enough. The King's adherents on the Tyne had designed the appointment of Mayor and Sheriff

of their own party on the coming Monday after Michaelmas, falling on the 1st of October, 1688. "But the electors, though of the Mayor and Aldermen's own making, refused to choose them, and elected two Protestants, who continued till November 5th following." (Surtees Society, vol. 50.) The two burgesses thus chosen were William Hutchinson and Matthew Partis.

The drama had been moving on from act to act; and the great scene-shifter, Time, was about to let fall the curtain. Michaelmas Monday came and went; and the Prince of Orange was shortly afterwards taking leave of the States of Holland. Then, all too late, proclamation was made restoring the overthrown constitution of the Municipal Corporations of England. The new charters had been found void through want of enrolment. Some form, essential to their validity, had been overlooked. Such was the plea, but it failed of success. The Stadtholder was on the seas, and on the 5th of November landed on our shores. On the same day, Nicholas Ridley and Matthew White were appointed, by ancient form and usage, to be Mayor and Sheriff to the end of the municipal year; corporate life had flowed back to its old channels; the new statue of James the Second was cast down by the populace.

The Merchants' Company, at one of their customary Courts of the coming year, were quietly remodelling "the oaths of the governor, wardens, clerk, beadle, and admission of freemen," who were no longer to swear allegiance to King James, his heirs and successors, but to William and Mary, "our Sovereign Lord and Lady, the King and Queen, their Majesties;" a practical commentary on the nomination of Edward Grey before the Revolution. Good Vicar March found Conformity now hard. He could pray for King and Queen, but name them not. The Corporation were exacting:—"July 15, 1690.—Mr. Mayor, etc., ordered by the Common Council to acquaint Mr. March, Vicar, that his salary will be stopt unless he pray for King William and Queen Mary by name."

William Hutchinson, not long surviving his election to the office of Mayor, was now dead. His brother-in-law, Ambrose Barnes, born for greater length of days, lived down to 1710, when his years were more than four-score. The companion of his youth died in March, 1690, at an age little beyond sixty. He was a follower of Dr. Gilpin to the last; and

his pastor's son Isaac closed an apprenticeship in his service in 1686. In the early days of the young man's servitude the meeting-house of which his master was so liberal a benefactor would probably be built. We know nothing of the laying of the foundation-stone nor of the opening ceremony; but some of the circumstances connected with the erection are to be learnt from a letter of the year 1698, first printed in 1867 by the Rev. A. B. Grosart, in his handsome edition of the Doctor's "Dæmonologia Sacra; or, a Treatise of Satan's Temptations." The letter, written by Gilpin, on the 13th of December, to the Rev. Richard Stretton, minister of the Gospel, Hatton Garden, London, throws light on local history. It affords us a stray glimpse of the inner life of the Old Meeting House, and is our only informant as to the donor of its site. Stretton had been ejected from a church-living in 1662, and was thereafter chaplain to Lord Fairfax until his lordship's death in 1672. A leading man among the Dissenters in his latter years, he was formed for the office of referee and arbitrator in emergencies. In time of trouble and difficulty he was a counsellor and comforter, and the benediction of the friend and peacemaker was his. The world and its affairs, always and everywhere, run oft awry; and all was not perpetual plain-sailing at the first Dissenting meeting-house erected on the Tyne. When the aged Doctor wrote to his confidant in 1698, he had but recently lost his beloved associate, the Rev. William Pell, M.A., "a sad stroke (says he) upon us all; but it falls at present most-heavily upon me. Ever since his sickness it became necessary for me (such are our circumstances) to preach twice every Lord's Day; and I must continue to do so at least twice every other Lord's Day for some time, because there are a small party (and but a very small party) who have formed a design, and are now encouraged upon this sad occasion to open it. This party were the few remainders of Mr. Durant's congregation, who have kept communion with ours, in all ordinances, without making any exceptions, about fifteen years."

These fifteen years carry us back to 1683, when Durant, who died in 1681, was but lately dead; and the fact becomes pretty evident that down to his death the Independents had a congregation altogether separate and apart from the Presbyterian flock. After his decease the two churches seem to have flowed amicably into one, worshipping together at the Close Gate. In the course of time, however, a schism

arose. Hutchinson was gone. "Old Mr. Barnes," who remained, was "the politic engineer" (as the Doctor calls him) of the Durant section; and, furthermore, he had a son Thomas, named after his grandsire on the Tees, the youngest born of seven children, studying for the ministry, who, in due season, had been brought home from London. The "few remainders" "presently showed their intention to choose him for their pastor;" and, "as introductory to that, they, in my absence," Gilpin continues, "thrust him into the pulpit, without so much as asking my leave. I was silent, and suffered him to preach in the evening; but they, being weary of that, few people staying to hear him, thought it more conducive to their design to separate from us, and set up at the Anabaptists' meeting-house; but no great party would follow them, and now they have chosen him to be their pastor, though before this he had in our pulpit vented some unsound Crispian notions."

The "unsoundness" is probably that of the Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D., Rector of Newington in Surrey, a divine of the earlier years of the seventeenth century, whose venerable volumes lie in dusty repose. "That the design" of Barnes's followers, adds Dr. Gilpin, "is to worm us out of our meeting-house, and to break our congregation, is visible to all. They now openly claim the meeting-house for their pastor's use (when he pleaseth), and pretend old Mr. Hutchinson (upon whose ground the house is built) promised them so much when they contributed towards the charge of building; but Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, his son, denies any such promise, and stands firmly to us, though Mr. Barnes (his father-in-law) surprised him with solicitations; but we offer to repay them all the money they contributed towards the building."

Thus much is to be gathered from the letter of 1698, written when its author had completed the three-score and ten, and advanced three years into the decade of labour and sorrow. He was suffering in mind from a sore bereavement, and the peace of his church had been invaded. Seeking the sympathy of a distant friend, he thereby admits us, at the distance of long generations, to the interior of the Old Meeting House, and supplies the historian with facts as to its foundation not known to our local annals until his letter was printed by Mr. Grosart. How the controversy that disquieted him ended is unknown, and it were bootless to inquire. It has had its solution long, long ago. Troubles and trials all come to a close in this world; and when we learn how the good

Doctor, the first minister of the Old Meeting House, who had resigned a benefice and refused a bishopric for conscience' sake, had his worries and vexations, all now in the deep bosom of the centuries buried, we may the more readily be reconciled each to his own crosses, that are hastening away to the same sea of the ages that are no more. Gilpin sought in his trials the counsel and consolations of Stretton, and had no doubt the advantage of his good offices. Stricken in years, and drawing nigh to his rest, the anxious pastor hoped for "the nomination of a man of parts, prudence, piety, and authority, to assist him at present, and succeed him when he was gone." "Much," he remarks, "of the Dissenting interest in the North depends upon the welfare of our own congregation. The Episcopal party have long since made their prognostics that when I die the congregation will be broken, and then there will be an end of the Dissenters in Newcastle."

The prognostics were not fulfilled. As the Doctor in his prime, when a meeting-house was needed, had the Yorkshire boy by his side, who had come from his home on the Swale to seek his fortune, ready with heart and hand to supply the site; so, when anxieties were gathering round him in his decline, and care for the future, and the pastoral staff was about to fall from his relaxing fingers, the man of parts and worth whom he had longed-for was at his elbow to take it up, and carry forward the work. The world, with its thorns and flowers, its lights and shadows, and its manifold lessons of experience and discipline, is ever bidding us be of good cheer; animating us, by its unfoldings, with the assurance that the harvest will come as the reward of the husbandman.

The seventeenth century ran coldly and negligently to its end. The religious world was not too munificent in the dawn of a new day. Bishop Fleetwood was predicting, in the reign of Queen Anne, that unless the good public spirit of building, repairing, and adorning churches prevailed a great deal more, and were more encouraged, a hundred years would bring a huge number to the ground; and Bishop Butler, quoting his words, forty years later, from the pulpit long occupied by Vicar March, remarked that the good spirit invoked in 1710 was absent still. "A wonderful frugality" was observable "in every thing which had respect to religion, and extravagance in everything else."

The good spirit, however, if it slumbered as soundly as their lordships feared, was not dead. While the Bishop of St. Asaph was delivering his charge, a new church was rising up on the southern verge of our northern diocese; and with the coming of the young King, after the reign in which "the greatest of the Bishops of Durham" stood in the church of St. Nicholas, our forefathers on the Tyne were rolling two good works into one. England had seen the last of its civil wars; and the governing body of Newcastle were removing the ancient wall from the Quayside, where it was out of place, and effecting its romantic metamorphosis into a church, where new walls were wanted. St. Ann's had again become ruinous, and the discarded defences were converted into a substitute on a neighbouring site. It was a day of rejoicing over the wall that was gone and the church that had come. The Mayor and his Brethren were once more assembling, in 1768, within the walls of "St. Ann's Chapel in Sandgate" on an opening day, when another century had been added to the record of time. We turn to the map of Corbridge, and the site of the suburban church, whose builders had made a quarry of the town-wall, bears little resemblance to its aspect of to-day. "How idyllic is the scene! From Pandon Gate to the Red Barns all is woodland. Sheep and cattle are grazing by the Keelmen's Hospital and St. Ann's. A dashing horseman scours the fields that lie outspread by the Ropery; a coach of the Georgian era is rumbling past a stob-mill of the antique mould; and the boys of Newcastle are flying kites in the pleasant suburbs!" (Reid's "Prospectus of a New Plan of Newcastle," 1878.)

When the Centenary of St. Ann's came round, in the autumn of 1868, the daring rider, and the fields over which he flew, were gone, with also the coach and the cattle and the kites. The Mayor (Henry Angus), the Magistrates, Aldermen, and Councillors, were repairing to the old church by a "new road." All around was change. Men were looking back, in an age of trains and telegrams, on the wondrous revolution that time had wrought; nor was the least of its evolutions the development so appropriately alluded to by the Vicar of Newcastle (Clement Moody, M.A.) in his discourse:—"Another century has passed away, and we find the Right Worshipful the Mayor—with honour be it spoken, because he does not belong to our communion—supported by his colleagues, assembled again in this church, celebrating its anniversary.

The Mayor and members of the Corporation are not by law required to be members of the Church of England." All persuasions were now eligible to seats in the Council Chamber; and within three or four days of the celebration of the Centenary on the New Road, the Dissenting Mayor was presiding over a meeting in vestry of the Committee of Management of the St. Nicholas' Steeple Restoration Fund! In the days of proscription and repression, "Vicar March would step privately out by night, and make Ambrose Barnes respectful visits, throwing the blame of these rigorous proceedings upon the misfortunes of the times." But, at last, not only were the rigours gone—in their place honours and dignities were come—the obligations and responsibilities of municipal office were shared among the burgesses without distinction of church.

All Saints' had been rebuilt since Vicar Fawcett, in 1768, preached in St. Ann's before Alderman Mosley (the Mayor whose name is associated in our thoroughfares with one of the greatest improvements of the eighteenth century); and now, all round "The Burial Place of William Hutchinson, Merchant Adventurer," the town is studded with towers and spires, and fanes of every form and fold, with a grace and a profusion that would have gladdened the catholic heart of Bishop Butler; and even the worthy Vicar of 1682, with his beloved St. Nicholas still stately and secure, and fairest among the throng, might have paused ere he decided "that the former days were better than these."