



Y<sup>r</sup> affectionate friend &  
humble servant,  
J<sup>o</sup>hn Thomson

## V.—MEMOIR OF DR. THOMLINSON.

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BY MR. W. SHAND.

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READ ON THE 31ST OF OCTOBER, 1883.

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THE closing years of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth centuries do not belong to a brilliant period of British history, nor perhaps of any other history. The fierce political struggles that had come to a close in the manner that has been confirmed by the verdict of succeeding times, were followed by a repose that was needed to prepare the nation for those subsequent enterprises that have spread its influence throughout the globe at large. France then stood in the front rank, but there was there a worse weariness than that of Great Britain, the weariness of satiety, and there the resumption of national activity did not bring results in any way so satisfactory. The men in office were perhaps mediocrities in both cases, but it does sometimes happen that the right man in the right place belongs to that category.

In 1695, Robert Tomlinson, or Thomlinson, M.A., then about 27 years of age, was approved by the municipal authorities, as afternoon lecturer at St. Nicholas' Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It was arranged that he should have a salary of £120 a year, which was in those days a most liberal allowance for a young man, whose only duty consisted in the preparation and delivery of a sermon once a week. It does not appear upon what grounds, nor on whose recommendation the selection took place; but, as the preacher was the brother, younger by a good many years, of the Rector of Rothbury, the Rev. John Thomlinson, it may be presumed that there was a certain influence exerted from without, probably on the part of the county gentlemen with whom the Rector of Rothbury was necessarily acquainted, and perhaps also on the part of the Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Smith, a very distinguished and

energetic man, who had been in favour with King Charles the Second, and who, being patron of the vicarage of St. Nicholas', as well as of the living of Rothbury, might possibly intervene in such a case with effect.

The name of Thomlinson seems to belong to Yorkshire, where there have been several stocks, whose heraldic bearings are to be found in the records. The visitation of 1665 mentions three families:—1st, that of Byrdforth; 2nd, of Thorganby; 3rd, of Whitby. The two former families recognise a common origin. The last bears arms “sable, a fess between three falcons rising or.” To it belongs a certain Thomas Thomlinson, a mercer at the Ship, a sign most appropriate for a Whitby man, in Cheapside. He died in 1603, or thereabouts. Was it he who purchased, some years before his death, the manorial rights of Allonby, or Alanby, in Cumberland, of the Blennerhasset family, to whom they had descended hereditarily? If so, it would appear that he dropped the family escutcheon, which possibly might have appeared somewhat ridiculous if mounted on the ship which, on the hypothesis, had successfully navigated the perilous channels of the ward of Chepe. Some person of the name of Thomlinson, or Tomlinson, for the Cumbrian family frequently dropped the *h*, did become lord of the manor of Allonby, and thenceforward the name is associated with the house or hall of Blencogo, in that neighbourhood. Allonby lies on the seashore, a few miles north of Maryport, and at the time of our narrative the country must have been wild and bleak. The ground is very flat, and on one of the slight elevations overlooking the Solway, where the high lands of Galloway close in the view on the north, the very modest mansion was erected. The family probably charged itself with the cultivation of some small portion of the estate, and claimed in addition some trifling quit rents from about forty freeholders of the manor. There had previously been settled at Gateshead a family of similar name. A will of Barbara Thomplinson, dated 30th August, 1577, directs, amongst other matters, the eventual disposal of her body, which had been united to two Newcastle merchants successively, of whom the one preferred in the last event was named John Blaxton. But although, singularly enough, the name of Blakiston is afterwards found associated with the family of our Dr. Thomlinson, it does not appear that there was any relationship between the Gateshead and the Cumbrian families.

John Thomlinson, the Rector of Rothbury, was of St. John's College, Cambridge. His brother, Robert, was of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and perhaps had some connection with Queen's College. Indeed, the following inscription on the fly-leaf of the "Chronicon Saxonicum, edited and translated into latin by Edmundo Gibson, A.B., è Collegio Reginae; Oxonii, M.DC.XCII.," seems positive on this point:—  
*Dono dedit doctus aurei hujusce libelli Editor mihi dum sub aquilâ Reginensi Oxon. militabam amicus haud ingratus symmista coetaneus.*  
 Both Queen's College and St. Edmund's Hall have always been largely filled with undergraduates from Cumberland and Westmorland. To Queen's belonged the Bishop of Carlisle, who, born in 1614, had matriculated at the age of 16, and afterwards greatly distinguished himself. Charles II. had secured for him, in 1660, a Prebend at Carlisle, where, in 1671, he became Dean, having in the meantime, 1668, secured a Prebend also in Durham. Being an energetic person, he set himself vigorously to restore the dilapidations of his Deanery. The revenues of the Chapter greatly improved in his hands. On the decease of Dr. Edward Rainbow<sup>1</sup> in 1684, he was promoted to the See of Carlisle, which he held until his death in 1702. During his episcopacy, he founded the library at Carlisle Cathedral. The two bishops who next succeeded were of Queen's College, and the third of St. Edmund's Hall.

The Rector of Rothbury actively promoted education in his own parish. He also founded a school at Wigton, in Cumberland, where his sister Mary was married, and where, it is probable, he and his brothers and sisters had received their early education. There was another sister, a Mrs. Read, in Newcastle; and there was also no doubt an elder brother at Blencogo, respecting which place we learn that, in

<sup>1</sup> A volume in the library of Dr. Thomlinson, entitled, "Marston Moor, sive de obsidione praelioque Eboracensi Carmen," is dedicated to Dr. Rainbow in 1650. There occurs in it a verse in which Newcastle is designated by the name of Orrea, applied to that place in Sebastian Munster's edition of Ptolemy's Geography, published in 1549:—

"Nec Dunelmensis fera nec Northumbria tellus  
 Profuit, inducias cum flexo poplite turres  
 Morpeti peterent, et deditioe subacta  
 Orrea terribilis positus succumberet armis."

Can it be that Ptolemy had heard of the sister borough near the Slake, or at least of its future site? Munster must have known of the Venerable Bede, but it appears he did not refer Ptolemy to his dwelling-place. Jarrow was hardly terrible in the Commonwealth days, whatever it may be now.

1814, it had fallen to Anne and Catherine, daughters of Colonel Thomlinson, and co-heiresses under the will of their uncle, John Thomlinson, of the Gill and Blencogo. Ann, relict of John Thomlinson, of Blencogo, afterwards marries Dr. John Law, Bishop of Elphin, and second son of Dr. Edward Law, Bishop of Carlisle. The Bishop of Elphin died in 1816.

It is impossible to avoid recognising the influence of Dr. Smith in the fortunes of the Thomlinson family. How the valuable patronage of the living of Rothbury came to be bestowed on John Thomlinson, there is no evidence to show. It would be quite in accordance with the example of more distinguished historians if we were to assume that, whilst the appointment was made by Dr. Rainbow, the Dean, Dr. Smith, engaged in gathering up the fragments belonging to the See, which, in feebler hands and in troublous times, had been in danger of being lost altogether, had found it desirable to conciliate the holders of manorial rights by choosing for the subjects on whom the patronage belonging to the See should be bestowed, such families as from their numerous children might find it convenient to accept at his hands the favours in question. At the same time, he had ample opportunity of judging of the personal suitability of the recipients. The appointment of John Thomlinson to the Rectory of Rothbury was certainly a suitable one. In those times there was no lack of claimants whose appointment to a living so remote from town and court would have been a calamity for the parish, and who would have spent the income of the living in a manner very different from that in which it was administered by the incumbent in question. If the author of *Waverley* may be trusted to draw a picture of Northumbrian manners of the period, the residence of such a clergy as should maintain a character even decently becoming the cloth was a blessing indeed. If we have nothing brilliant to record concerning the subject of the present sketch, it will surely be admitted that the merit of a steady and consistent life, passed amongst the somewhat erratic ancestors of this northern population, was one the value of which may still be felt and acknowledged, even after the lapse of well nigh a century and a half since his death.

Before we conclude the details which relate to the family of Dr. Thomlinson in regard to its ancestry, it may be proper to mention

that the name of Colonel Matthew Tomlinson is to be found amongst those of the members of the High Court of Justice specially appointed for the trial of King Charles I., although it does not appear on the death warrant of the king. It is not possible to imagine that the circumstance of one so closely connected with the regicides having borne the same family name could have been otherwise than distressing to the subject of this paper. Yet it is recorded of this Colonel Tomlinson that whilst he was on duty in the immediate charge of the king's person, about the period of the trial, he conducted himself both "there and in all places wheresoever he was about the king, so civil both towards his Majesty and such as attended him, as gained the king's good opinion, and as an evidence thereof gave him his gold picktooth case, as he was at one time walking in the presence chamber."

In 1712, Robert Thomlinson is inducted to the Rectory of Wickham. It does not appear how this came about. Nor do we find any but the barest materials for conjecture as to how the seventeen years since his appointment as afternoon lecturer have been passed. He is now, however, 44 years of age, and it must have been about this time that the portrait was taken which represents Dr. Thomlinson in the clerical costume of the period. As to the authenticity of this sketch there is no evidence, nor is it known from what original the free copper-plate print is taken.\* The features confirm the impression of an absence of all brilliancy in the idiosyncrasy of the subject. The face is broad; the features commonplace; the eyes are large and well separated; the nose is not striking, and the sketch gives no indication of a bridge. The mouth is the best feature, and had it been associated with a face in other respects expressive, it would be considered a good mouth. The lips are full without sensuality, and the upper lip advances in the centre, with a general hint of a fair amount of precision of expression, if not of mind. The chin is round and full, with a slight fosse underneath, as if time might render it double. The eyebrows are arched, the forehead broad and high. The goats-hair wig of the period surmounts the head with its absurd volutes descending upon the shoulders, the lines of which are completely hidden by the loose and shapeless gown. A pair of broad bands, falling from the neck over the chest, complete the dress in so far as it is shown.

\* A photo-lithograph of this portrait is annexed.

There is not a vestige of the hair which nature places so plentifully around the masculine countenance. The eyebrows are not prominent, and the eyelashes are not visible. We have some evidence that during this period the office of afternoon lecturer was held in esteem. By indenture, dated 20th February, 1705, Mrs. Eleanor Allen assigned an estate at Wallsend to certain trustees for educational purposes. The Mayor of Newcastle is the first-named trustee; then the lecturer, or afternoon preacher, of the parish of St. Nicholas for the time being, and others. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the advice of the then lecturer went for something with Dame Allen, and that the person who should have the task of carrying out the objects of the foundation into practical usefulness was Dr. Thomlinson.

In 1715 he was appointed Master of St. Mary's Hospital in Newcastle. This was doubtless in the gift of the Municipality, and the appointment indicates a growing feeling in his favour. When he afterwards refers to "a generous Corporation" in his letter to Walter Blackett, this appointment is clearly in his thoughts. He was now no longer resident in Newcastle, having taken possession of his rectory some time before. But it was certainly in those days a pleasure to trot along the country lanes, and beside the fragrant hedgerows that intervened between Whickham and St. Nicholas'. It is true that even then in the family correspondence, a London doctor ventures to hint that the smoky atmosphere of this good town was not favourable to some complaints on which he was consulted by our doctor on behalf of a relative. Whatever may be the case at this present time of inspiration, who does not resent the imputation for the Newcastle of one hundred and seventy years ago? If there was one place in the world that could make John Wesley regret itinerancy, was it not this? The London doctor had clearly adopted the execrable theory that what made smoke in London must *a priori* make smoke in Newcastle. But did it? Comparatively, no! And as our doctor ambled along for pleasure, a generous Corporation added the claims of duty. It is somewhat doubtful if these peregrinations were regularly undertaken between the conclusion of the morning service at Whickham and the commencement of afternoon service on Sunday at St. Nicholas'. Certainly the doctor remained the lecturer *de jure*; but about 1709 there appears the name of another gentleman, Mr. Ridley, who might

be lecturer *de facto*. It was not until 1725 that Dr. Thomlinson thought proper to resign his original appointment. At that time Mr. Thomas Dockwray was appointed. His salary from the generous Corporation was only £70, to be raised at the death of Dr. Thomlinson to £100. We shall not be ungenerous, I think, if we assume that Dr. Thomlinson received £50 a-year during his life from the same source, unless, indeed, on his appointment to the mastership of St. Mary's Hospital, it was understood that he should receive a diminished income from the lectureship. But why then should Mr. Dockwray's salary be raised at the death of Dr. Thomlinson?

In 1719, on the 5th May, Robert Tomlinson is inducted to a Prebend in St. Paul's, London. The name is spelled in the register without the usual "h." The Prebend in question is called that of Chamberlain Wood, who was no doubt the founder, and it carried with it a certain endowment.

The Rector of Rothbury died on the 23rd May, 1720, and his executors were his brother Robert and a nephew, John Thomlinson, Rector of Glenfield, Leicestershire. This John Thomlinson had a brother, Richard, who was a merchant in Newcastle. These brothers, in all probability, were scions of the house of Blencogo, who were indebted to the family interest on this side of the island for their prospects in life.

In 1725, the Rector of Rothbury's will takes effect in the foundation of a hospital at Wigton, for the support of six widows of Protestant beneficed clergymen. An inscription was placed on the building, probably from the pen of our doctor, as follows:—

COLLEGIUM MATRONUM  
 PROVENTU ANNUO  
 INSTRUXIT  
 JOH. THOMLINSON, A.M.,  
 EREXIT  
 ROB: EJUS FRATER, S.T.P.  
 A.D. 1723.

Mrs. Read of Newcastle, said also to be of Carlisle, to which place she must have retired after the death of her husband, if she ever did live at Carlisle, gave £100 to this foundation, and for this sum a rent charge was procured over lands at Blencogo. The Rev. John Thom-



linson had previously secured the endowment of a school at Wigton, partly at his own expense and partly at that of the parishioners, and he had given in its favour a rent charge over lands at Easter Haughton, Simonburn, of £20 a year. Dr. Robert Thomlinson, finding that there was neither schoolhouse nor schoolmaster's house, proposed to the parishioners that if they would find a piece of ground, and also convey the building materials to the site, he would erect the buildings, which it is said he did, at a cost of £135. Over the school there was placed the inscription "Deo et E.A.S. Scholam hanc vir Reverendus R. Thomlinson, S.T.P. posuit L.M., A.D. 1730."

We find from these inscriptions our doctor in right of the title of Doctor of Divinity. The dates of his other academical honours are as follows:—B.A., November 7th, 1689; M.A., June 17th, 1692. There is no record at Oxford of the degree of D.D. having emanated from that University.

During all these years, Dr. Thomlinson had been forming a library, as opportunity offered for the purchase of books. He appears to have been always of a bookish turn of mind, although there is no evidence that at any time he was a seriously ardent scholar. Any book which came into his hands was preserved with that sort of quiet regard for property which operates to prevent the destruction of anything useful. Even school books, the spare leaves of which had received the usual scribbling of boys in the wantonness of their idle moments, he preserved; and as he grew older and came to understand the value of literature to mankind, the habit became a more serious one, and he systematically collected books. It was the practice of collectors to mark the prices paid in such cases, and Dr. Thomlinson conformed as usual to such small proprieties, particularly if, in the course of the journeys which he began to make southwards at intervals, he found anything remarkable. He seems to have always had a valetudinarian turn of mind, for there are books on medicine and physiology dating from an early period of his collecting. But perhaps it was then incumbent on every clergyman to know something of the physical ailments to which flesh is heir, for the faculty of medicine, like that of law, long was retained a certain theoretical connection with theology, which considered the mistress of all science. At any rate, Dr. Thomlinson became duly knowing in the properties of the Bath waters, although

his physicians very honestly tell him that any other water will do as well for him. Whether he made the journey to Bath on horseback, or whether there were any other way in which that journey could then be made does not appear on the evidence in this case, but certainly Dr. Thomlinson was in Bath in 1725, had likewise a horse there, and learned a wrinkle or two from a certain Alderman Colebye of that city in regard to horseflesh.

On the occasion of some such journey it would be that he picked up the book of which the title and several other pages are wanting, beginning in the "Table of the principall matters," arranged alphabetically, at the words "Chastitie is the gift of God," &c., and inscribed:—"Robert Thomlinson. Bought at Tewksbury, in Gloucestershire, Dec. VIII. fr. 8s. 6d. Binding, 2s. 3d. Price, 10s. 9d."

"N.B.—This I take to be Tindall's Bible, publish'd by Mr. Rogers, the martyr. For Tindall suffer'd in the year 1536. And Rogers put out 2 editions of Tindall's Bible w<sup>th</sup> notes; the one 1537, under the borrow'd name of Thomas Matthews, w<sup>th</sup> an index & notes, the other in y<sup>e</sup> year 1551.

"For this & y<sup>e</sup> lives of Tindall and Rogers see Mr. Johnston's Preface to *Holy David* and his old English Translators clear'd. Pref: 3d page before Tindall's life."

This notice fairly indicates a bookworm. It is written by a person to whom books, as books, are a source of pleasure; one who knows something of the various editions of books, and to whom the knowledge that he knows this adds something to his sense of self-respect. So also another memorandum on an imperfect copy of Robert Stephens' Greek Testament without distinction or numbering of verses:—"Y<sup>e</sup> 1st Edition of R. Stephens's Gr. Testament was in y<sup>e</sup> year 1546. This of 1549 is the 2nd Impression. The 3rd was in folio, 1550." Unfortunately there is no indication of the dates at which these notices are made. But in general the dates of purchase are carefully registered, and these run forward from about the year 1694. It may be presumed that at that time the means in hand for the purchase of books were limited, and the taste already formed found few opportunities of indulgence; but as the income provided by the liberality of the municipal authorities of Newcastle, which was equal in proportion to the value of a good many hundreds a year now-a-days, afforded scope, the collecting tendency became confirmed, and what was doubtless at first a want

which professional duties imposed, became a luxury. The collection of sermons, pamphlets, and controversial treatises seems to have gone on continuously, and no doubt these were at fitting times arranged, bound in volumes, and provided with carefully written indexes in the owner's handwriting, on the blank leaves. It was much the practice at that time to publish larger works by subscription, and persons known to be patrons of literature were applied to by authors and publishers for engagements in advance. In one case of this sort only, does Dr. Thomlinson's name appear in a printed list. Yet some books were bought in sheets, as the memoranda upon them expressly declare, and many works issuing from foreign presses, even of old date, were purchased, as such are now sold on the Continent, without the boards which have become usual in Great Britain. For there are numerous cases in which it is evident that even the waste-paper used by the binder was supplied by the owner of the books, in whose house it seems likely that the work was done by a journeyman, to whom materials were supplied as required. This is evident by the remains in the library of a kind of dictionary of canon law, printed very beautifully at Venice in 1500, the bulk of which seems to have been used up to provide the fly-leaves within the boards of works issuing from foreign printing presses. The fact indicates that in those days of wretched mechanical style, paper, and type, the elegance and archæological interest attaching to a Venetian folio of a date somewhat early in the scale of typographical interest as understood to-day, did not prevail against the tendency to economise upon the item of new paper that would otherwise have been necessary in the circumstances. Yet Dr. Thomlinson must have been generally in very comfortable circumstances. He was in receipt of an income derived from four different sources at least. First, the lectureship at St. Nicholas'; next, the rectory of Whickham, which may possibly even then have brought £300 a year. The mastership of St. Mary's Hospital produced an income which is perhaps ascertainable. Then the Prebend of St. Paul's came in addition; altogether one cannot help feeling that Dr. Thomlinson was in a position towards which there was a convergence of lines which might justify the acknowledgment that to him they had fallen in pleasant places. It was then the policy of the Church to imitate the State, the upholding of which was thought to rest rather with the great and wealthy adherents of the

reigning family than with the numerous, but also obscure and patriotic partisans of the State as such. It is possible, however, that in the age in which statesmen like Sir Robert Walpole administered the public purse, and manipulated the strings by which many consciences were made to move, or at least to offer the compliment to virtue which is said to be due from vice, Dr. Thomlinson may not exactly have had all these preferments for nothing. There were curious expenses then, as there are now, in many a private note-book, and our worthy pluralist was not above a little transaction in a mild way of business, such as, it is said, ecclesiastical morality still tolerates, but, so far as we know, nothing worse. For instance, on the 26th May, 1728, it is duly noted above the cautious initials R. T., "Received of Sir William Loraine the sum of £31 10s. for the second turn of Presentation to the vicarage of Kirkharle, having given to his son ten guineas according to promise."

There are indications, in 1720, of Dr. Thomlinson's health being a matter of some consideration. A letter is extant of a certain Dr. Mead, in which his case is referred to in the way of professional advice. A scorbutic habit of body, and a disposition to a paralytic relaxation of the nerves are spoken of, also an afflicted arm and leg. But no very serious measures are recommended. Riding and dumb-bells are suggested, and toast and water mixed with wine faintly recommended. It is possible that too much comfort was telling on the constitution, and that a tendency to spend one's time all day in the library pottering over books was not so conducive to health as a life of more activity, or one mingled with some stirring incidents would have been. In 1734 Dr. Thomlinson's eyes began to give him trouble—another symptom of pottering. Who Mrs. Knowles was may not be now known, but she must have been an authority, or had some trouble for the guinea she received for advice and eye-water. Then, in the next year, there is a journey to London, costing £50. It would be worth something to know the incidents of that trip. In the year following, 17th August, 1736, Dr. Green receives £10 10s., and thereanent we have the entry:—"N.B.—I was couched y<sup>e</sup> 17th July." It must have been about this time, probably, before the couching, but perhaps after it, that Dr. Thomlinson contributed very liberally to certain extensive repairs at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. He is said to have been the principal contributor towards its rebuilding, the expense of which was borne by

him along with three other benefactors. Each of the four was complimented by having his bust exhibited in the hall, and that of our doctor, which has since disappeared, is said to have represented him as being blind. It is certain that for some time at least, perhaps altogether from that time, he was compelled to employ an amanuensis. The work on the fly leaves of his volumes of pamphlets is in the writing of another hand.

Under these circumstances, the project of handing over his books to the public seems to have taken shape in his mind. Whilst it was doing so, he was still buying, and a year after he was couched he pays his cousin Clerk, £79 19s. 6d. for various books purchased at auction, as well as new books, cost of binding, and expenses. Although the various documents connected with this foundation are printed in the volume containing the catalogue of the library, which was got up at his own expense by Mr. Charnley in 1829, it may not be out of place to insert here the letter, which is the earliest indication of this purpose, addressed to his friend Mr. Blackett:—

“To the Right Worshipful Walter Calverley Blackett, Esq.,  
“Mayor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

“Dear Sir,—Being desirous when I die, y<sup>t</sup> my books should be put into a public way of being useful, and placed near y<sup>e</sup> sacred walls of y<sup>t</sup> church in which I spent the flower of my age as an unworthy lecturer. I designed a plan for a library above y<sup>e</sup> Vestry of St. Nicholas, w<sup>ch</sup> if executed I have left in my will my whole Sudy (*sic*) of books to y<sup>e</sup> Mayor and Burgesses of Newcastle, &c. This the best return I can make for y<sup>e</sup> many and singular favours received from a kind Providence and a generous Corporation; as well as y<sup>e</sup> sincerest expression of my great esteem for y<sup>e</sup> Church of England and her clergy, w<sup>ch</sup> I hope, will flourish and outshine all opposers till books and time itself shall be no more.

“And if you, generous sir, will be so good as to build y<sup>t</sup> library, so designed by me, I do promise y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> legacy of all my books shall never be reversed by,

“Sir, your most affectionate friend,

“And most obedient Servant,

“ROBT. THOMLINSON.

“Whickham, January 31st, 1735-6.”

It would be satisfactory to know if the word *designed* in the above letter is to be taken in the strict architectural sense. The repetition of the words in the very formal manner in which it is made, would seem to indicate that the elevation of the building itself is the conception of the founder of the library.

It is quite conceivable that such was the case. At the same time, there is no evidence on the point, nor would it be presumed from the contents of the library itself that architecture was an art to which Dr. Thomlinson had directed his attention. This is all the less likely from the state of his eyes at the time. Yet that very circumstance may have stimulated his ideality, so as to have induced him to give the directions upon which the very careful ashlar work of the building was carried out at the expense of Sir Walter Blackett. Or it may be that the project of creating such a library may have been long occupying a place in his mind, after the example of the vigorous Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Smith, and that the design for the building had been prepared at an early period.

In 1740, November 19th, occurs the entry in Dr. Thomlinson's memoranda of the following. "Paid to Mr. Blackett for a rent charge of £5 a year for ever to buy books for the library in Newcastle £105."

The will under which the library is devised is dated 4th November, 1741; and in it are the words:—"Walter Blacket of Wallington hath built a handsome fabrick consisting of two stories for the reception of my books and those of other benefactors and has endowed the same with a rent charge of £25 a year to be paid to a library keeper." The Rev. Nathaniel Clayton, B.D., is named the first librarian. The books already removed are said to be about 1,600 in number, and there are devised to Walter Blacket and the Rev. Thomas Sharp, D.D., Archdeacon of Northumberland, all the books already put into the library, and also the residue and remainder in the 24 presses in the study at Whickham, together with the presses themselves. The rent charge of £5 a year, purchased of Walter Blacket, is also conveyed to be a perpetual fund to supply the said library with books. The will further provides for the appointment of future librarians, which is to rest with Mr. Blacket and his heirs male, failing whom, the Mayor of Newcastle, the Archdeacon of Northumberland, the Vicar of Newcastle, and the Lecturer of St. Nicholas are to appoint, with a casting vote to the Mayor.

It has been stated that the building was provided in 1736. This is exceedingly unlikely, although the letter of Dr. Thomlinson, addressed in that year to Mr. Blackett may have been called for by the latter before proceeding with the work; which, considering the deliberation with which all business matters were transacted in those

times, would take some time to carry out. It is not until October, 1741, that the statutes adopted for the regulation of the library are fairly put in order, and the formal appointment of the Rev. N. Clayton, the first librarian, takes place on the 14th October, 1741. It may fairly be assumed that it is from this date that the library was opened to the public. Dr. Thomlinson was then about 73 years of age.

After the arrangements for this foundation had been completed, we find the attention of Dr. Thomlinson turned towards the locality with which his earliest recollections were probably associated. He is stated in one of the local histories to have been himself the lord of the manor of Allonby. It is possible that on the demise of his elder brothers, he may have succeeded to some rights of this sort, although it does not seem likely. It is stated, however, in the "History and Antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland," by Nicholson and Burn, that, in 1743, Dr. Thomlinson proposed to assist the inhabitants of the village of Alanby to build a chapel on a piece of waste ground assigned by him for that purpose as lord of the manor, but the project was not acceptable to certain of the inhabitants, on account of their religious principles being those of the people called Quakers, and it did not succeed. Next year, Dr. Thomlinson built, at his own cost, a chapel which he furnished with books and ornaments. This building measured 54 feet by 22 feet, and contained 31 pews, besides a large one for the lord of the manor, another for the curate, and a third for the clerk. It was consecrated in 1745. In Lyson's "Cumberland" it is further stated that Dr. Thomlinson's widow gave £100 for the use of the school at this place, which sum having been laid out in the purchase of land at Blencogo, produced in 1813, £8 per annum.

This is the only intimation found by the writer of these lines of the fact of Dr. Thomlinson's having been a married man, except the entries in his accounts of cash paid to his wife. Who the lady was, by whom at that time the honours of the Rectory of Wickham were performed remains a mystery, which some of the family records of Newcastle may be capable of dispelling. A casual visitor to that charming parsonage may be pardoned the hope, although he can hardly indulge the belief, that a lady may never have been wanting to grace its interior.

The patronage of the chapel at Allonby was reserved to Dr. Thomlinson and his heirs. An inscription was placed over the door

in these words:—"This Chapel was built by the Rev. Dr. Thomlinson, Rector of Whickham and Prebendary of St. Paul's, London, 1744." Soon after the consecration, it was certified by Bishop Fleming to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty at £7 per annum, being £5 for the seats and £2 for the house, stable, and chapel yard. £200 seems to have been provided towards an endowment, and Dr. Thomlinson adding £200 more, the whole £400 was laid out in a rent charge upon the estate of Southernfield Hall, in Holme Cultram, amounting to £16 a year.

From this time to the death of Dr. Thomlinson we have no farther particulars to record. The inscription on the north wall of Whickham Church runs as follows:—

Under  
This Monument  
Lies the Body of  
ROB. THOMLINSON, D. D.  
Prebendary of St. Paul's Lond.  
Rector of this Parish 36 years  
and sometime  
Lecturer of St. Nicholas  
in Newcastle upon Tine.  
He died the 24th March, 1747,  
aged 79 years.  
Reader, if thou wouldst know  
the character of y<sup>e</sup> deceased  
Learn it  
From the following account  
of his Pious Munificence  
and Charity.

Dr. Thomlinson built and endowed y<sup>e</sup> Charity School for this Parish at his own expense save £100 left by Mr. Blakiston For this purpose. He also built a Chapel at Allonby in Cumb<sup>d</sup> and a schoolhouse there and gave to procure the Queen's Bounty to y<sup>e</sup> said Chapel £200 To the Col. of Matrons at Wigton in Cumb<sup>d</sup> £600 To the Charity School there £100 To Queen's College Oxford £100 To Edmund Hall there £200 and left by his will to the Societies for propagating y<sup>e</sup> Gospel £500 for promoting Christian Knowl. £100 for working schools in Ireland £100 He also bequeathed his library a large and most valuable Collection of Books in all kinds of Literature to the Corporation of Newcastle for Public use with a rent charge of £5 a year for ever as a Fund for Buying new Books.



Amid all the information gathered from all sources respecting the founder of Thomlinson's Library, is it singular that personal reminiscences should be almost entirely wanting. Various efforts have been made, at different times, to awaken public attention to the foundation in question; but the material of which the library is composed is not popular, and although of the highest value to such persons as may wish to acquaint themselves with those stores of information which lie a little below the surface of current literature, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that comparatively few persons have at any time availed themselves of it. Amongst those who have directed attention to the matter in the public prints was Mr. William Charnley, who, in a letter dated 12th May, 1788, addressed to Dr. Sharp, the then Archdeacon of Northumberland, expresses himself as having received many marks of real friendship from Dr. Thomlinson when he was himself an apprentice to Mr. Bryson. In another letter, dated 3rd July in the same year, Mr. Charnley speaks of the generous donor of the library, "who," he says, "in my youth took as much notice of me as if I had been his own child." This is all. It is not much, and only indicates that Dr. Thomlinson had a kindly word for his bookseller's apprentice, for whom he perhaps hoped that he might learn in due time to exchange his love of lollypops for a regard for books somewhat akin to his own.

It must not be supposed that all Dr. Thomlinson's love for books regarded their cubical rather than their intelligible contents. There is indeed no particle of evidence that he was really a scholar. Even if he was without the *sacra fames*, he read. He even corrected palpable mistakes, and sand from his standish may still be gathered from the marks that were made by the pen which he held in his hand. He even judged of the books which he bought, from which it may be inferred that he read some of them through, and when he added a bad or a doubtful book to his collection, he sometimes took care to say where and by whom it had been refuted. The "Fable of the Bees," London, 1724, contains on a fly-leaf these remarks:—"This vile Book was answered at its first appearance by Mr. Law, of Cambridge, in his 'Remarks.' Mr. Hutcheson, in his 'Inquiry into y<sup>e</sup> original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.' By Dr. Fiddes, in his 'Preface to his general Treatise of Morality.' By Dr. Innes, *alias*

Mr. Campbell." Then underneath, by way of anathema maranatha, "By Dr. man devill." One is pleased to find a little passion beneath that mass of hair curled to the mode by the doctor's barber-surgeon. Even where there is no passion, there is sometimes a genuine interest. In Gataker's "Disquisition on the Style of the New Testament:"—"N.B. in y<sup>e</sup> year 1725, Mr. Blackwall published a Book in English (4s.) called y<sup>e</sup> *Sacred Classics*, wherein this book of Gataker's is answered." This is only one of many of the same sort, but it is perhaps unique in the little characteristic parenthesis containing the price of the antidote to Gataker.

Books were comparatively expensive in those days. Sixpence or a shilling may not seem much for a sermon; but that meant in those days the whole or the best part of the wages of a skilled workman for a day; and when these little treatises are multiplied into hundreds, and carefully bound up in volumes, with an hour or two's work in each, of the owner in scheduling the contents, there is implied thereby a high sense of the moral value of an afternoon lecturer who should understand his duty and do it. All the books are not of this fugitive character fortunately, nor of this cost; multitudes were bought at sales by auction or picked up on stalls. A low price is often supplemented by the words "at 2nd hand." Some are high priced; Grabe's "Septuagint" costs, in quires, at Cambridge, £2 5s., binding 4 vols. 5s.—£2 10s.; "Mabillon de re Diplomatica" costs in 1719, at 2nd hand, £3 15s.

There are many books in the library marked "J. Allason, of Godfrid's," and these are of the learned sort. It may be that these were purchased by the doctor at some auction sale, but it is likewise possible that they formed no part of the bequest. They are none of them, however, books that would be purchased for a parish library, unless the managers should understand by such an institution something to assist the teachers of the public in the preparation of their prelections.

Dr. Thomlinson was not without a certain respect for his own judgment in literary matters. There is a certain "Paraphrastical Explication of the Twelve Minor Prophets," by Dr. Stokes, D.D. It contains the remark:—"The value of this Book is not comonly understood by Divines. Robt. Thomlinson [91], pr. 2s. 6d." Also,

at the conclusion of "Religion and Reason adjusted and accorded," may be found these words, "In magnis voluisse sat est."

The most extensive autograph notes that we have from the hand of the doctor are to be found in certain books of farriery. "The Experienced Farrier, or Farring Completed in Two Books, Physical and Chyrurgical, bringing Pleasure to the Gentleman and Profit to the Countryman," contains much valuable matter in addition to the text. It is there, for instance, he must go who would learn from y<sup>e</sup> Cow-leech at Gateshead in the year 1733, how to prepare a receipt or drink for a Cow y<sup>t</sup> does not clean well, or does not thrive after calving. Nichs. Hunter of Alnwick, W. Calvert of Blencogo, Mrs. Crowley's husbandman at Winlaton, and others contribute to this interesting miscellany. One feels half inclined to change places with Beauty and Pegg, "y<sup>e</sup> mare I bought of Jo. Laidler," when the Prescription is "an ounce of Cinnamon boyld in a quart of Claret." We are not told, however, whether the cinnamon was munched or the claret imbibed. But could it really be that Sir Walter Calverley and Sir Chaloner Ogle were so much interested in broken-winded horses as they appear in this record to have been? The former contributes a receipt for a "broken-winded hors," not, we presume, that he received the "hors" in such state, but having ridden him too hard for his lungs, the baronet became intent upon a cure. Sir Chaloner more modestly proposes only to help a "broken-winded hors."<sup>1</sup> Were these the Osbaldistons of the day? One thing is clear, the owners of the horses attended to them in person when they were ailing. "I gave this purge to Pegg," says our divine, and Spot, on one occasion, had too much of it from the same hand. The remedies were furnished forth from the cool wine cellars of the rectory and the still-room of Mistress Thomlinson. Take, for instance, "a gill of burnt sack, of Sallet Oyl, and Red wine Vinegar," etc. But enough of this, except to say that not only the roadsters but the cows had their own literature in the library. Is not the merciful man merciful to his beast?

In the absence of any more serious writings from the hand of Dr. Thomlinson in the shape of sermons or compositions indicative of the

<sup>1</sup> To Sir Chaloner Ogle may perhaps be due the obligation implied in the following advice:—"N.B.—A washy hors y<sup>t</sup> is soon empty requires more feeding y<sup>n</sup> another on y<sup>e</sup> road."

hidden man of the heart, it may be desirable to quote *in extenso* a letter in which he expresses the modest hope that animated him with regard to those future prospects that are of universal concern. On the 24th of April, 1726, he writes to Cousin William Grainger on the subject of his brother's (John Thomlinson's) death:—

“Dear Sir,—The death of my brother was a great surprise and affliction to all his friends here. He died of a short illness, which should be looked upon by all his relations not only as a remembrance of their own mortality, but as a providential caution to live religiously as he did, and to be in habitual preparation for death and the day of judgment. Our loss is his gain. He's removed to a region of peace and happiness, where the minds of all religious persons will be at rest.  
“ROBERT THOMLINSON.”

One omission in the contents of this multifarious collection of books of many sorts must not be passed over. There are valuable works on theology in all departments, philology, philosophy, law, history, physics, medicine, and controversy of all sorts. Poetry is almost entirely wanting. It is doubtful if there is even a Greek play. It is next to certain that there is not an English one. Nor amid all the treasures, real and pretended, of the creative faculty as exercised in these islands, has it ever been thought desirable, whether by the founder or his successors, to add one single masterpiece to this collection. Verse is not entirely wanting, but it appears to come in by accident, and not as verse.

In a collection of miscellanies, by John Norris, M.A. and Fellow of All Souls', Oxford, there occur some wretched verses which hardly seem to possess even such merits as were appreciated at the date of their publication, 1687. This person may have been a friend of the doctor, who seems to have possessed himself of the various works which he issued afterwards. There is reason to believe that the purchase of these miscellanies was made in the college days of Dr. Thomlinson. A page is turned down at the following ode, occurring with others in a collection a large portion of which is in prose. The same author does not again appear as a poet, and it must be admitted that his muse does not improve as these verses proceed, the last lines being the worst in the batch. Dr. Thomlinson perhaps thought them worth a second perusal, and he turned down the leaf, as he frequently did in the prose writings of the same author:—

## THE ASPIRATION.

## I.

How long Great God, how long must I  
 Immured in this dark Prison lye ?  
 Where at the Grates and avenues of *Sense*  
 My soul must *watch* to have *intelligence*.  
 Where but faint gleams of thee salute my sight,  
 Like *doubtful* moonshine on a *Cloudy* night.  
 When shall I leave this magic Sphere,  
 And be all mind, all eye, all ear !

## II.

How cold this clime ! and yet my sense  
 Perceive's even here thy influence.  
 Even here thy strong magnetic charms I feel,  
 And pant and tremble like the amorous Steel.  
 To lower Good and Beauty less Divine  
 Sometimes my *erroneous Needle* does decline ;  
 But yet (so strong *the sympathy*)  
 It *turns*, and *points* again to thee.

## III.

I long to see this Excellence  
 Which at such *distance* strikes my sense.  
 My 'impatient Soul struggle's to disengage  
 Her wings from the Confinement of her cage.  
 Wouldst thou *great Love* this Prisoner once set free,  
 How would she *hasten* to be linkt to Thee !  
 She'd for no Angels conduct stay,  
 But fly, and love on all the way.

Dr. Thomlinson seems at one time to have been Vice-Principal of St Edmund's Hall, Oxford, as the following extract from the "Liber Benefactorum" implies:—"Robertus Thomlinson, S.T.P., Rector de Whickham in agro Dunelmensi, necnon Ecclesiæ Divi Pauli apud Londinenses Prebendarius, olim Joanni Millio hujasce aulæ Principali literatissimo in Adolescentibus instruendis coadjutor diligentissimus, ne plusquam dimidia pars hujasce aulæ jam lapsura funditus corrueret, ut eadem nova a fundamentis ipsis extrueretur pro insigni sua Liberalitate et Munificentia D.D. Ducentas Libras."

As this record of diligence in teaching cannot apply to any period embraced within the time covered by the present sketch, it follows that it refers to a date previous to the appointment to the lectureship of

St. Nicholas'. It therefore assists in filling up the record of his life, and may cover the period intervening between his degree of Master of Arts in 1692, and his appointment at Newcastle in 1695. Coming from the discharge of such functions at Oxford, there was a certain prestige in his favour with reference to the municipality of Newcastle.

At some period unknown, Dr. Thomlinson provided in the north aisle or nave of St. Nicholas' a pew for his own use, which is thus referred to in the "Life of Ambrose Barnes," published by the Surtees Society (Appendix, p. 446):—"On the north aisle, answering to the nave or body of this church, is a large gallery, which is chiefly for the use of the boys of the Grammar School, at the east end of which an addition was made to it by the Rev. Dr. Thomlinson for the use of his successor, the Lecturer of St. Nicholas', and his own family."

Dr. Thomlinson also contributed £100 towards the foundation of Mrs. Anne Davison in 1715, for the maintenance of six poor widows, the preference to be given to widows of clergymen of the Church of England.