

VII.—WILLIAM GRAY, THE AUTHOR OF THE  
"CHOROGRAPHIA."

---

BY W. H. D. LONGSTAFFE, VICE-PRESIDENT.

---

[Read on December 30th, 1884.]

---

WILLIAM GRAY, of Newcastle, merchant, desired to be buried in the burial place of his ancestors in Saint Nicholas's Church, mentioning his brother-in-law, Robert Ellison, in Newcastle, merchant. William Gray, consequently, was a son of Cuthbert Gray, of Newcastle and Backworth.

Robert Ellison was baptised in 1613-14, and Elizabeth, a daughter of the same Cuthbert Gray. There are tedious difficulties as to the details about the pedigrees of the Greys of Barton in Rydale, Southwick nigh Monkwearmouth, and Backworth; but from the names of Cuthbert and Ralph, and persistent arms, it is pretty clear that they were all related, springing from the *southern* Greys, a stock immortalized by Lady Jane Grey. This northern branch of the southern lines will not be forgotten so long as four persons, viz., the gallant defender of the rights of the customary tenants of Durhamshire, the lively diarist, the inimitable annotator of *Hudibras*, and the first historian of Newcastle, are remembered. The William Gray of Newcastle, merchant, who married Margaret Grey, great aunt of the editor of *Hudibras*, at St. Nicholas's, on 17th September, 1655, was probably the author of the *Chorographia*. She was baptised at Chester-le-Street, in 1632, and therefore was much younger than the historian.

Robert Ellison married Elizabeth Gray at the early age of 21, in 1635, and had issue by her fourteen children, of whom eight survived. He was sheriff of Newcastle in 1646, during the civil commotions, and M.P. for it during the settled Commonwealth, which existed from 1648-49 to 1660. Ellison had married Gray in 1635, Gray married Grey in 1655. Meanwhile the *Chorographia* had been published in 1649.

The marriage of 1655, if our William Gray was the bridegroom of his cousin, must have been brief and childless, as in his will, which is dated 8th December, 1656, he does not mention any wife or child. Although possessed of property, he had been in trouble, probably arising, to a considerable extent, out of the cost of royalist delinquency, and the consequent composition for forfeited estate. He directs payment of the debts due from him to Robert Procktor, the husband of his sister Margaret, and, stating that he had been very much engaged and beholden to his brother-in-law, Robert Ellison, in Newcastle, merchant, and to his wife, his (testator's) sister, Elizabeth Ellison, upon all occasions and straights, and had found much comfort and contentment with them, he therefore gave what appears to have been his whole real property to the husband. I much suspect that he had been received by the Ellisons as a resident on his own possessions in the Side, as two of his tenements there, were in Ellison's occupation, and he mentions neither any tenancy of his own, nor any moveables whatever. He must, however, one would think, have had some premises for his occupation of merchant. Possibly his messuage and water corn-mill at Pandon Dean Close were in his own tenure. Any pecuniary difficulties must have been fairly worked through, because he gave legacies, and on 6th March, 1655, had made a lease to his sister, Eleanor (*var.* Ellen) Harle, of the house in the Side in which she then dwelt, and two shops there, for eleven years, at a pepper-corn rent for the first year and a rent of £7 afterwards, which latter rent he bequeathed to her and her son, Edward Harle. This sort of temporary settlement in favour of a widowed sister at a light rent may either have been in connection with the marriage of 17th September, 1655, or the intended devise to Robert Ellison, according as to whether March 6th means in 1655 or in 1655-56.

Our next information is that on 8th December, 1656, the testator, on the very day of his making his will, paid his bequest of £100 to William Procktor, and by a codicil dated 27th March, 1658, William Gray revoked the bequests, insomuch as he had, on that 8th December, 1656, paid it to the legatee personally.

The testator calls William Procktor, son, and Jane Procktor, daughter, of his [the testator's] sister Margaret, *cousins*, kinswomen, nieces as we now should say, leaving them each £100. I much fancy

that the 8th December, 1656, was a more lucky day for the Ellisons than for the Procktors. Whether the legacy of £100 was, on that day, paid before or after the execution of the will, with all its compliments and advantages, can only be a matter of conjecture.

The rest of the will amounts to this. Samuel Ellison, a son of Robert, was to have £100 on his attaining the age of 18 years. Dorothy Oswald, a sister of the testator, was to have £10 yearly during her life. Elizabeth Maddison, eldest daughter of his sister Rebekka, then wife of William Rutter, was to have £50 payable at two years' end after the testator's death. The re-marriage of Rebecca Gray to Rutter is new. Her former husband, William Maddison, brother to Sir Lionel Maddison, made his will in 1646. The arms of Gray, on the fine Maddison monument in St. Nicholas's Church, as to this match, *were* [I am sorry to italicize *were*] those of the south-country Grays. The next bequest of £50, to the eldest daughter of the said Rebekkah Rutter, payable at 16, and, in case of death, to her next younger sister, payable at 16, refers, as I presume, to children of the second marriage to Rutter. The last legacy refers to the family of Ile, of Darlington and Newcastle, over the pedigree of which, as given in my *History of Darlington*, Sir Cuthbert Sharp (whose signet seal on five lines gave *C sharp*, and whose initials in the Newcastle Custom-house figured as the Arabic 5), George Bouchier Richardson, bent under herculean efforts to produce an impossible *History of Newcastle*, and I, gave special attention. Gray gives £100 to Anne Ile, daughter to his sister Deborah, wife to his brother Robert Ile, merchant, on her attaining the age of 16, in failure by death to go to Bulmer Ile, their eldest son, or to the next younger sister at that age. The register of *Deborah* Ile's burial, in 1666, curiously calls her *Rebecca*, the name of her sister. In 1666-7, Robert Ile, in consideration of his natural affection for his daughter Ann, re-leased to Robert Ellison (who seems to have been the family friend) and *William Grey*, of Newcastle, merchants, a house in the Side, adjoining that in which he himself lived. Bulmer Ile, her brother, was apprenticed to Ellison, and died in 1685-6.

From 1667 to 10th February, 26 Car. II., 1673-4, save by an autograph, we practically know nothing. On that day a true and perfect inventory of his goods was taken.\* In his own chamber were

\* See page 80.

a standing bed and bedding, eight old pictures and a map of England, and a pair of horns. "In the next chamber" five bedsteads, apparently without bedding, a table "*in the closett or studdy,*" an "*old chaire and one old desk,*" a "pictor box," four long cushions and 16 small old cushions. In the fore chamber, considerable good linen and "two lawne aprons," with a bedstead. In the Dyneing Room three pictures and a table. In the Lowe Hall a small marbell table; four cloths, and the deceased's "purse, apparell, and *Library,*" valued at £20 out of the total value of his whole chattels which amounted to £29 16s. 3d. The strange contents of the respective localities suggest that, if he was a householder, his goods had been removed from their ordinary places for convenient appraisement. Whether the closet or study was a parclosed portion of the "next chamber," or opened out of it, may admit of doubt. The will was proved in 1673-4, and on 23rd February of that period, Robert Ellison, the sole executor, gave a receipt to the Registrar at Durham for the original will, which was to be returned into court when wanted. We therefore, unfortunately, have only a certified copy to refer to, the autographed original never having been returned. It might be required by the executor in connection with the real estate.

Enough has now been shown to account for the possession of Gray's own copy of his *Chorographia* by the descendant of Robert Ellison—Lady Northbourne. It lies entombed among a large collection of 17th century small 4to tracts, collected by Gray and Ellison, or both.\* Ellison, in September, 1660, was paid "by order of Common Councill the sum of £100 in parte payment of his sallarye the time he sate as burgesse for this towne in the longe parliament the yeares 1647 and 1648."

Elizabeth Ellison died 30th June, 1665, and her husband on 1st January, 1677. Their monumental tombstone in St. Nicholas's Church presents the arms of Ellison impaling the arms of the southern Greys, and over her coat is placed the crest of a demi-swan out of a coronet, which continued to be worn by the Backworth Greys.

\* Since the above was written Gray's own copy has been presented to the Gateshead Free Library. As to the orthography of Gray and Grey, it is a mere matter of fancy on the part of the owners of the name.