

XII.—HENRY BOURNE, THE HISTORIAN OF NEWCASTLE.

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HENRY BOURNE, the subject of this notice, was a native of Newcastle, and, as appears by the register of St. John's Church, was baptized December 16, 1694. His parents seem to have been in a humble station. Thomas Bourne, his father, was a tailor, but lowliness of birth and poverty of circumstances did not prevent him from attaining a respectable position and rising to some degree of eminence and distinction. After the usual amount of schooling, he was apprenticed, October 9, 1709, to Barnabas Watson, a glazier at the head of the Side. Soon, however, discovering such a decided taste for literary pursuits, and such an extraordinary aptitude for acquiring and retaining knowledge, he was permitted, before completing the full term of his apprenticeship, to quit his master's employment and follow the bent of his inclination. Accordingly he returned to school, and applied himself diligently to his studies. Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School had already attained considerable celebrity, both from the learned masters who had presided over it and from the eminent men who had been educated within its walls. At this period the head master was the Reverend Edmund Lodge, of whom, however, little is known excepting that he was some time curate of St. Nicholas, and upon his retirement from the school in 1738, after having held the mastership for upwards of twenty years, was appointed curate of Whickham by the rector, the Reverend Dr. Thomlinson, who, in his MS. correspondence preserved in our Library, speaks of him in high terms of praise and commendation. It is to be regretted we have no means of ascertaining the names of any of Bourne's schoolfellows. Horsley, the famous antiquary, was about ten years his senior, and in all probability,

therefore, must have left before he entered. Through the aid of some kind friends, who appreciated his rising talent, he was transplanted from the Grammar School of Newcastle to the University of Cambridge. Who were his patrons and benefactors we do not know, but he tells us himself that the Corporation of Newcastle at that time allowed £5 per annum to every youth who went from the Grammar School to either of the Universities; and there is no reason to doubt that he profited by this wise and commendable liberality. Nor must it be overlooked that £5 in those days would be worth considerably more than the same sum in times like these, when luxuries have increased and expenses multiplied. Besides, his admission as a sizar would confer upon him certain immunities and privileges, and materially curtail the expenses of a college life. The following record of his admission is from the books of Christ's College, Cambridge, and is valuable for the information it gives respecting his birthplace, parentage, and education:—"1717, Jun. 25. Henricus Bourne, a Thoma patre oriundus, natus in Novo Castro super Tynam ibidemque a Mgro Lodge literas edoctus vigesimo secundo cetatis anno admissus est ut sizator sub cura Mgræ Atherton Soc. Coll." The loss of time occasioned by his apprenticeship sufficiently accounts for the apparently late period of his entering the University. His tutor, the Reverend Thomas Atherton, then fellow of Christ's, and subsequently rector of Caufield Parva, county Essex, was also a native of Newcastle, being the son of Henry Atherton, M.D., who held the office of town's physician, and gave communion plate to the church of All Hallows. Dr. Atherton was the author of a work—now very rare—entitled *The Christian Physician*. Thomas Atherton had been himself educated at the Grammar School under Mr. Lodge's predecessor, the reverend and learned Thomas Rud, who was afterwards master of the Chapter School at Durham. Doubtless, therefore, he would take an interest in Bourne, and be anxious to do him justice; but whether he distinguished himself in any way during his abode at the University cannot be ascertained. We know only that he took the degree of B.A. in 1720, and that of M.A. in 1724; but previously to the latter date he had left college and become engaged in parochial work. One of his contemporaries at College, though his junior by six years, was Mr. Granville Wheler, the only surviving son and heir of the celebrated

oriental traveller, and excellently learned and pious divine, the Rev. Sir George Wheler, prebendary of Durham, and rector of Houghton-le-Spring. This gentleman, who afterwards entered into holy orders, in compliance with a wish expressed in his father's will, and inherited his good qualities as well as his estates, became prebendary of Southwell and rector of Leake, in Nottinghamshire. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and highly distinguished for his discoveries in electricity and his attainments in various branches of natural philosophy. He married the Lady Katharine Maria, daughter of Theophilus, seventh Earl of Huntingdon, and died at his seat, Otterden Place, county Kent, in 1770. With him it would seem, during their residence at Cambridge, Bourne contracted a close friendship and intimacy, which, if we consider the difference of their respective circumstances and position in life, appears rather unaccountable, unless we may be allowed to hazard the conjecture that they were chamber-fellows, occupying the same apartments—the sizar waiting upon the student, and gradually insinuating himself into the other's good opinion and affectionate regard by the meritoriousness of his conduct in that relation. Be that as it may, their friendship, however originated, continued after their separation on leaving College; and Bourne chose him for the patron of a little work on the Epistles and Gospels, published by him in 1727, as we shall see presently, and addressed to him the following dedication:—

TO GRANVILLE WHEELER, ESQ.

SIR,—The labours of study, of whatsoever kind they are, do naturally choose their proper patrons. There will be always some excelling in every sort of knowledge to whom the various parts of learning will be more justly adapted.

As, then, every part of the Common Prayer speaks the breathings of the greatest of saints, the earliest antiquity, and the soundest faith, so a treatise on any part of it will be most suitably patronised by a lover of our Church and a practiser of her doctrines, by one skilled in her offices and unshaken in her faith. I hope, therefore, you'll excuse the freedom of a dedication, since the nature of this performance calls for this protection of it.

Or whether you are considered as sprung from a great ornament of our Church, from one learned in antiquity, truly orthodox, primitive in his example, and holy in his life; or whether, as you are allied to that noble family which gives examples to the world of the earliest virtue and a lasting piety, of veneration for the Church and esteem for her clergy, of such as rejoice in doing good works to the one and deeds of hospitality to the other, your right to this treatise is not a little strengthened.

But when, together with these, I reflect on your placing me in your friendship and familiarity, and the many kind and affectionate offices you have done me, you'll easily pardon my choice, as it affords me so just a patron, and gives me an opportunity of somewhat acknowledging your many favours to, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

HENRY BOURNE.

It remains to be stated that Mr. Wheler's name occurs in the list of subscribers to Bourne's posthumous work, *The History of Newcastle*.

In a MS. book in the Vestry of St. Nicholas, we find it recorded on the occasion of his preaching for the first time in that church, Feb. 5th, 1720-1, that he was ordained by Edmund Gibson, Bishop of Lincoln, afterwards Bishop of London, and well known as a zealous antiquary and editor of *Camden's Britannia*. We are unable to give the precise date of his ordination, or to state where he first exercised his ministry; but in 1722 he was licensed to the curacy of All Hallows, in his native town, in succession to the eccentric Cuthbert Ellison, at this time removed to the vicarage of Stannington, on the nomination probably of the Rev. William Bradford, the then Vicar of Newcastle, whom he survived, and of whom, in his history, he gives the following character:—"He was universally beloved, being a man of great humanity and condescension, and of an open, generous temper, and very much lamented at his death, on account of these and his many other good qualities." The parochial chapelry of All Hallows or All Saints was one of the largest cures in the kingdom, and many of the principal inhabitants had their residence within its limits. Though, so far as preaching was concerned, the curate or minister was relieved by the two lecturers whom the Corporation generously provided, yet his duties were onerous and pressing, for he was responsible for saying the morning and evening prayers, not only on Sundays and holidays, but on every day of the week; for baptising, marrying, and burying the parishioners; for visiting the sick and relieving the poor, for imparting spiritual advice and consolation to all who required either from him. And we believe that Henry Bourne faithfully and diligently fulfilled his office as a parish priest and pastor of the flock entrusted to his care and oversight. We may, I think, properly infer so much from the praise he bestows on those of his brethren who distinguished themselves in this respect, and the sympathy he manifests in speaking of their work.

In 1728 some gentlemen of the parish founded a lecture by subscription, for the instruction of the people in the rubric and liturgy of the church. This lectureship was settled upon Bourne, who delivered his course on alternate Sunday evenings, from Low Sunday or the Sunday after Easter, until the Sunday after Holy Cross, the 14th of September. He resided in Silver Street, in the immediate vicinity of the church, and there, after a lingering illness, he expired at 4 p.m., Feb. 16, 1732-3, at the early age of 37, and was buried two days afterwards.

He was twice married. At page 94 in his *History*, where he is describing the monuments in All Saints' Church, he thus alludes to the burial place of his first wife—"At the east end of this tomb of the family of the Collingwoods, under a stone with a Latin inscription on it, which formerly belonged to one Blount, lies interr'd the body of Margaret Bourne, wife of Henry Bourne, curate of this church of All Hallows. She dyed Aug. 8th, 1727, in the 30th year of her age. *Δωη αυτη ὁ Κύριος ἐνρείν ελεος παρα Κυρίου εν εκεινη τη ἡμερα.*" We do not know the maiden name of the lady for whom this pious wish is expressed (2 Tim. i. 18), but she had three children, one of whom, Thomas, died in infancy, the others, Henry and Eleanor, survived their father, and joined in dedicating his posthumous work to the Mayor and Corporation, but, unfortunately, we fail to find any subsequent traces of them. Bourne's second wife, whom he married May 20th, 1728, was Alice, daughter of Mr. Ellis Inchbald, whose name occurs as one of the original subscribers to the charity school set up in 1709. By this lady he had two children, Christian and Ellis, both of whom died in infancy. the mother long survived her husband, and, having found a retreat in Mrs. Davison's Hospital, died there in the year 1772. Although, as we have seen, this exemplary clergyman was almost incessantly employed in parochial work, he yet found time for indulging his literary taste and pursuing his antiquarian researches. His first essay was the little work entitled—*Antiquitates Vulgares or the Antiquities of the Common People*, which issued in 1725, as did also the other works he published, from the press of John White, the printer who came from York and started the *Courant* newspaper, in 1711. The author had a practical object in view in the publication of it, as he wished to show which of the customs commonly prevalent

amongst the people might be innocently retained and should be encouraged, and which, on the other hand, were more honoured in the breach than in the observance of them. The volume was gracefully dedicated to the Corporate Body, whom he commends as, both in their public and private capacities, encouragers of learning and rewarders of merit. "You," he says, "not only lay the ground-work here, but you help to the top of art and science in the greater schools of learning." He expresses the obligation under which he feels himself bound, of offering to them the first fruits of his literary labour as the genuine offspring of their generosity. This work having become scarce, was re-printed by Brand in 1777, with considerable addenda to each chapter; and an appendix. His next appearance in print was in 1727, as the author of a small but useful liturgical manual, showing the "harmony and agreement between the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, as they stand in the Book of Common Prayer." This is the little work that was dedicated to his old college friend, Mr. Granville Wheler; and its publication probably led to the foundation of the lecture which we have already mentioned. The principal work, however, on which he bestowed so much care and labour, and on which his fame chiefly rests, was the *History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, or the Ancient and Present State of that Town*. He had been long collecting, with indefatigable industry, materials for his purpose, when, in September, 1731, he inserted an advertisement asking for the perusal of ancient deeds and writings, and any other information respecting the monasteries, churches, charities, almshouses, &c., of the town. His proposal for publishing the work by subscription was issued in November, 1731, but before it could be finally prepared for the press, the author took ill and died, and it was not until three years afterwards that the book was announced as ready for delivery to the subscribers. In the preface, Bourne, whilst acknowledging with gratitude the generous help afforded him by a few, complains of the ill nature and malice of many, who took all means and opportunities to decry the work and lessen it in public estimation. There were 200 subscribers and the price was 10s. 6d. There were very few copies printed on large paper; only three are known to exist, one of which has been recently exhibited by Miss Boyd, in our Museum; another is in the possession of Mr. Robinson, Pilgrim Street; and the third, which

was the presentation copy to Sir Walter Blackett, and was, we believe, profusely illustrated, was sold at Mr. Brockett's sale for £50, to a Mr. Jupp. When we consider the early period at which Bourne wrote and that his was the first attempt, if we except the *Chorographia* of Gray, to illustrate the history and antiquities of Newcastle, and that he laboured under all the difficulties and disappointments to which he alludes in his preface, we must, I think, allow that he achieved a great result and well deserved the thanks of posterity. No one can peruse Bourne's *History* without being convinced of his wide and extensive reading, and of his familiarity with classical, patristic, and mediæval literature, as well as with all the best authors of more modern times. We cannot fail to be pleased with the quaintness and simplicity of his style, the reverential tone that pervades his pages, and his regard for learning and piety, his respect for antiquity, and his desire to preserve and hand down the records and remains of the past, which, but for his loving care and labour, might have been altogether neglected and lost; especially also his enthusiasm for Newcastle, which in his time must have been such a picturesque town with such pleasant environs. This thin folio of 245 pages, if I dare to say so in this place, has a greater charm for me than the ponderous tomes of his successor, not that I wish to depreciate Brand, but I do maintain that considering the use he has made of Bourne, quoting him in almost every page, he should have formed a more generous estimate of his predecessor's labours, and given him more credit than he has done.

