

XVIII.—WILLIAM LONDON, NEWCASTLE BOOKSELLER.

BY JAMES CLEPHAN.

[Read February 24th, 1886.]

MIDWAY in the seventeenth century there were two remarkable men in Newcastle—William Gray and William London, who distinguished themselves in authorship, each in his own characteristic way. The former, better known in the present day than his contemporary, published his *Chorographia, or a Survey of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, in the year 1649. The original edition and the reprints of 1813 and 1818 are in the library of the Society of Antiquaries; and Mr. Welford and Mr. Longstaffe have also contributed welcome memoirs of the author and his father, Cuthbert Gray, merchant, to this volume of the Transactions* in further discharge of the debt due to the memory of the earliest of our local historians. That William London should not, like William Gray, be a household word on the Tyne, is owing chiefly to the nature of his subject, *The Use of Books*, which is not local, but general. His time, however, will come; and, meanwhile, unable as I am myself to meet his claim, I would fain help to keep it alive. If I can do no more, I would not willingly do less. Therefore, pending the promise of his future day, let me add one little leaf to the literature of the Society on William London.

Mr. Longstaffe, editing for the Surtees Society the *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes*, annexes a copious chronological appendix, in which due place is given to the bookseller and stationer who published, in 1657, his *Catalogue of the most Vendible Books in England*, with *An Introduction to the Use of Books*, worthy to stand by the side of the kindred discourse of the tutor of Edward the Third, Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham from 1333 to 1345; and, indeed, the peculiar

* pp. 65-81 and 61-64.

name of the Newcastle bibliopole was, in some distant quarters, misconstrued into William Juxon, Bishop of London, a Lord Treasurer of the seventeenth century! Yet he who turns to Mr. Longstaffe's instructive leaves, in the fiftieth volume of the Surtees Society's publications, illustrative of the religious life of Newcastle and the district through a succession of generations, will find that after Cromwell and his Council had scattered the Four-and-Twenty of Gateshead in the summer of 1658, William and John London were among the foremost of the inhabitants of St. Mary's substituted in their room, and that when, after the Restoration, the government of Gateshead, in common with that of all England, was remodelled, although John London was retained in the Vestry William London was not.

John was a family name with the Londons. In the month of January, 1668-69, John, son of Samuel London, born on the 12th of November, had baptism and register in St. Mary's, Gateshead; and some sixteen years later, February 3rd, 1684-85, as appears by the books of the Merchants' Company in Newcastle, John London, son of Samuel London of Gateshead, gentleman, was apprenticed to Jonathan Hargrave, merchant adventurer and mercer, and had enrolment on the 17th of March thereafter.

Both sides of the river have records wooing research, and promising the reward of success to loving and patient pens in any grateful endeavour to give William London, one of those trusty tradesmen whose "tokens" passed current through the country in times of commercial need, the prominence due to the author of the *Catalogue* and the *Introduction* in the life and literature of Newcastle and the Tyne.