

XIII.—OBITUARY NOTICES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.

1.—JOHN CLAYTON, F.S.A., ONE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS; by the
Rev. Dr. Bruce [read on the 30th July, 1890.]

SINCE our last meeting our oldest, and I think I may truly say, our most influential member, has passed away. It becomes us to put upon the records of the Society our profound regret at the circumstance, and our high estimation of his character and the services he has rendered to antiquarian science. I doubt not that you will heartily agree to this.

In making this proposal to you I need not dwell upon the services which he rendered to the town of Newcastle and the North of England generally. These were very great, but they have been already detailed in the newspapers of the day.

I enjoyed his friendship for nearly half a century, and now that he has been removed, a cloud has come over my existence. He allowed me to approach him whenever I needed his help, and that help was always freely given, notwithstanding the number and the onerous nature of his own public engagements. When passing my book upon the Roman Wall through the press, I submitted the proof sheets to him, and they always received his careful attention. In my numerous journeys along the Wall I always found a home at Chesters. He was essentially a kind man, and I have heard of noble deeds of generosity performed by him of which the outside world knows nothing. As showing the character of his demeanour towards others, I may perhaps be allowed to make a few extracts from a letter which I had from a youthful relative the other day. He says:—‘I am indeed grieved at the news received this morning concerning the death of Mr. Clayton. I have been hoping week after week to go to Chesters to see him, but have not been able, and now, alas! I shall never see him again. It was always a great treat to me to go to Chesters, and I thoroughly enjoyed my little chats with Mr. Clayton, for he always acted the part of a thorough gentleman, and although my powers of conversation are very poor, yet he always seemed pleased to see me, and made me feel quite at home. I feel very sad at losing Mr. Clayton, for not only was



John Clayton

he your friend, but I have learned to look upon him as my friend also, for he has always been wishful to help me on in my profession, and has given me enjoyment times without number by the side of the grand old river, the North Tyne.'

Mr. Clayton was not a sportsman, but he did indulge in one form of rural recreation. He was fond of the calm and thoughtful sport which Izaak Walton so strongly commends, and the river at Chesters afforded him abundant means of indulging in it. I remember one little incident which he related to me respecting his earliest endeavours in this direction. He had been fishing, whilst yet a boy, in the North Tyne, with such appliances as boys can readily procure for themselves—a long stick, a bit of twine, a crooked pin, and worms. Becoming thirsty, he went to a cottage which then stood between the house and the river, to get a drink of water. He left his rod with the worm on the hook outside the house. A hen unfortunately swallowed the worm, and of course the hook also. The woman of the cottage manifested her displeasure for the probable loss of her fowl in a way that he never forgot.

I have said Mr. Clayton was not a sportsman. Occasionally, however, meeting in his rambles on the moors with friends armed with guns, he was sometimes tempted to try his skill, but without doing much damage to the feathered tribes. Once, however, he shot a black-cock, and it fell appropriately upon the Wall. For a moment he rejoiced in his success, but presently remembering that he had not a licence to shoot, the thought occurred to him, what an extremely unpleasant thing it would be if he the Town Clerk of Newcastle should be prosecuted for shooting without a licence. Next day he repaired to Newcastle, and procured the necessary document, of which, however, it may be supposed he made little use.

One of Mr. Clayton's recreations was the study of the classics. At the Uppingham Grammar School he had obtained an extensive acquaintance with the best writers of Greece and Rome. To the *School Magazine* which is now produced by the pupils of that establishment, he was recently asked to communicate some reminiscences of his schoolday life. This he did in a letter dated so late as July, 1889. From it I learn that amongst the Greek authors which he read were Homer, Theocritus, Thucydides, and Herodotus. In Latin

besides Cicero and Terence, he read nearly the whole of Horace and Virgil and a great part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Epistles*. But what surprises me most as to his school occupations is that, not content with reading the classics in school, he studied them in his play hours. In a letter which he wrote to his father, in 1808, he says:—'My leisure hours (which are principally on saint days, *id est* whole holidays) I partly employ in reading Sallust, as we do not read it at all in school. I have already finished the *Bellum Catalinarium*, and am beginning the *Jugurthine War*, which I hope to finish before the Christmas holidays.' A youth must be exceedingly fond of the classics who would persevere in reading Sallust in his play hours.

In further illustration of his love for the classics, I may state that after he had entered upon the cares of business in Newcastle, finding his youngest sister had a desire to acquire the Latin language he became her instructor. The only time that he could spare for this work was at a very early hour in the morning, and this he cordially dedicated to it. Not only was Mr. Clayton a thorough classical scholar, but he was a most loving brother. He has sometimes told me how much he bewailed the loss of that sister, who was cut off at an early age.

I now proceed to speak of our departed friend as an antiquary. Some may think that I should have done this sooner. Perhaps they are right; but I am glad of an opportunity of showing that antiquaries do not simply haunt the tombs of the dead, but that they are equally alive to the keenest and kindest sympathies of those among whom their lot is cast.

During the greater part of his public life Mr. Clayton was an active member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, presiding over its meetings and contributing to its Transactions. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. The first paper which he read to our Society bears the date of November 6th, 1843. It gives an account of the excavation which revealed the fine series of chambers near the east rampart of the station of Cilurnum. The first paragraph of that paper will be read with special interest now, revealing, as it does, the modesty of the man. 'Understanding,' he says, 'that a statement of the results of a recent excavation within the Roman Station of Cilurnum is desired by your Society, I will endeavour to supply such a statement, begging, however, that it may be received as that of a very unlearned antiquary.'

His next paper describes the mile-castle at Cawfields, which he had previously exhumed. The excavation of this mile-castle was a most important event. Previous to this there was not a single *castellum* along the line of the Wall which was not covered with *débris*. We consequently could not understand their structure. I am inclined to think that even Horsley, who wrote more than a century ago, was not thoroughly acquainted with them, for he does not mention the important fact which Mr. Clayton's excavation revealed, that the mile-castles were provided with a wide gateway opening northward. This circumstance throws an entirely new light upon the purpose served by the Wall, showing that it was not a mere fence to exclude the Caledonians, but was a line of military works for the better managing their assaults upon them.

His next paper describes the mile-castle west of Housesteads, which is the finest upon the Wall and is full of interest, but which, before it received the attentions of his excavators, was a blank page. Need I add, that in these two mile-castles were found fragments of the inscriptions bearing the names of Hadrian and his legate, Aulus Platorius Nepos—inscriptions which bear strongly upon the question, 'Who was the builder of the Wall?'

Before Mr. Clayton began his operations, the turrets of the Wall were completely excluded from view. Now, with how much interest the traveller along the barrier examines the turrets on Black Carts farm and at East Brunton, the former of which is described by Mr. Clayton himself, in the seventh volume of the *Archaeologia Aeliana*, (new series).

The uncovering of the Roman bridge on the North Tyne, which was formerly covered with a plantation, was an event of the greatest importance in the annals of archaeology. No other structure in Britain so strikingly displays the skill and the power of our teachers in the Roman era.

The laying bare of the walls and gates and streets of the 'Tadmor of Britain,' the station of Borcovicus, the excavation of the gates and forum of Cilurnum, together with the finding of the bronze tablet conferring the freedom of Rome upon certain troops serving in Britain, were events of which any one might be proud.

All antiquaries must be grateful to Mr. Clayton for securing that

collection of coins which were found in their bronze purse, in the township of Thorngrifton, in the vicinity of the station of Borcovicus—a collection which has so curious a history, and which is not unconnected with the mural controversy.

And then, what shall we say of the varied contents of the well outside the western rampart of Procolitia—its numerous altars and sculptures, its vases and beads and ornaments, and its thousands of coins; all of which are so well described by Mr. Clayton in the eighth volume of the *Archaeologia*? These discoveries may almost be said to have formed a new era in antiquarian research. Mr. Clayton continued his mural investigations to the close of his life, though the loss of his eyesight must have greatly interfered with the enjoyment of the discoveries which his excavations revealed. His communications to our Transactions were continued to a late period. In the ninth volume of the *Archaeologia Aeliana*, he gave us an important paper upon some inscribed stones (two of them mile-stones) found near Cawfields; in the tenth volume he gives an account of some unusually large and important altars to Mars Thingsus—altars which have excited a good deal of attention abroad; in the eleventh volume we have a paper of his on an altar to Fortuna Conservatrix; and in the thirteenth, which is the last complete volume which the Society has published, we have a paper by him, giving us some interesting details in the life of our great Newcastle hero, Lord Collingwood.

Mr. Clayton was not one of the founders of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries (his father was one of its first members), but he joined it early, and has formed as it were a connecting link between the honoured men who, in 1813, brought it into being, and we who at this late day carry on its work. I am struck with the kind way in which he speaks of his seniors. In one of his papers, after quoting a passage from Mr. Hodgson, the historian, he says:—‘There are amongst us those who cherish a pleasing recollection of the amiable author, and who delight to dwell on the memory of his gentle nature, his simple manners, and the enthusiasm of his character, which sometimes inspired the use of language, which the cold in blood are disposed to regard as extravagant.’

I feel sure that there are many among us who, so long as they live, will cherish the memory of our departed friend, and will transmit

to their successors the sense which we entertain of his great abilities, his true gentlemanly feeling, his kindness, and the value of his labours in elucidating the history of the land we love—the land of our nativity.

I ought not to add another word; but I think I may say that I doubt not but that his successor will follow in his footsteps. One thing I know he intends to do, and that is to take steps by which all the altars, the carved stones, the vases, and the various interesting relics which have been collected by the late Mr. Clayton during his long continued investigation of the Wall, and which are now deposited in various places in the house and in the grounds, may be brought together in one place, arranged in proper order, and rendered easily accessible to the student who has leave to visit the station of Cilurnum. This, at least, is one step in the right direction.

2.—CHARLES ROACH SMITH, F.S.A., Honorary Member; by Dr. Bruce [read on the 27th August, 1890].

It was my sad and solemn duty at the last meeting of our Society to call your attention to the loss we had sustained in the removal by death of our aged and much valued friend Mr. Clayton. At that time I had by me a letter from another valued friend and honorary associate, Mr. Charles Roach Smith, which I had intended to read on the occasion, but which in the excitement of the moment I neglected to do. I now produce it. It runs thus:—

TEMPLE PLACE, STROOD, July 16th, 1890.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At present all I can say is that I should wish it recorded that but for my serious illness I should attend Mr. Clayton's funeral.

Years ago I proposed that a medal should be struck of him. This I hope will be one of the honours paid to his memory. Vol. 3 of my *Retrospections* has much about him. Shall I live to complete it?

Ever yours sincerely, C. ROACH SMITH.

On Saturday, the 2nd of August, shortly after noon, Mr. Roach Smith departed this life. He was, it is believed, about 84 or 85 years of age. His loss to the antiquarian world and those who had the pleasure of personally knowing him is very great.

Mr. Roach Smith was born at Landguard, near Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight.

His school-days being passed he was sent to Chichester and