

Yours truly  
W. H. D. Longstaffe

THE LATE MR. W. H. D. LONGSTAFFE.

*A Vice-President of the Society.*



## ARCHAEOLOGIA AELIANA.

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### I.—OBITUARY NOTICE OF THE LATE WILLIAM HYLTON DYER LONGSTAFFE, A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

By RICHARD WELFORD, M.A., a vice-president of the society.

[Read on the 30th day of March, 1898.]

On the 6th of November, 1850, the roll of members of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries was inscribed, for the first time, with the name of William Hylton Longstaffe—a young man of four and twenty, who had already given proof of precocious devotion to archaeological research, and promise of notable success in that absorbing pursuit.

Eldest son of a family of nine, Mr. Longstaffe was born at Norton, near Stockton-on-Tees, on the 2nd of September, 1826. His father and grandfather were surgeons, his great-grandfather was a clergyman who had married a descendant of the Hyltons of Durham—lawyers and doctors in the county palatine for several generations. His mother was a great-granddaughter of Dyer the poet.

Endowed with intelligence befitting this intellectual ancestry, Mr. Longstaffe was sent at the proper age to the free grammar school of his native village. In our day, when educational machinery is run at high pressure, the old grammar schools of the country are too often regarded as relics of the past—interesting, but obsolete. In Mr. Longstaffe's boyhood they were the mainsprings of intellectual progress, the mechanism by which the children of all but the poorest were prepared for the active pursuits of commerce and industry, or started on the highway to learning and scholarship. Intended for a professional career, young Longstaffe struck the higher path. Mingling devotion to the classics with excursions into heraldry and genealogy—his father's favourite studies—and occasional deviations into botany and natural history, he made rapid progress. A brilliant future seemed to be opening out before him; he was already upon its threshold, when the death of his father arrested his steps and threw

him back upon his own resources. Longstaffe senior died, a victim to adverse fortune, on the 1st of November, 1842, a few weeks after his eldest boy had completed the sixteenth year of his age.<sup>1</sup>

Deprived thus suddenly of the means of completing his studies, young Mr. Longstaffe sought temporary employment in the office of a family friend, Mr. Peters, a law stationer, in the city of York. Thence, after only a few weeks' trial, he entered upon the duties of clerk with a solicitor at Thirsk. In 1845 he came to Darlington under a similar engagement with Mr. John Shields Peacock, an attorney in good practice, whose wife was the daughter of Mr. Francis Mewburn, chief bailiff of the town.

While at Thirsk Mr. Longstaffe had followed the pursuits of his boyhood, and had increased their number by the study of church architecture. He came to Darlington with a collection of notes, drawings, and sketches which excited the interest of Mr. Mewburn (himself a careful annalist and collector), and brought about an introduction to Mr. Robert Henry Allan of Blackwell Grange, the descendant of munificent contributors with press, pen, and purse to local history and local authors. Seeing the bent of his mind, these gentlemen gave Mr. Longstaffe access to their libraries, their local muniments, and their collections of ancient records.

One evening in January, 1848, the assembly room of the 'Sun Inn,' at Darlington, was crowded by townspeople, assembled, under the presidency of the chief bailiff, to hear a lecture on the ancient history of their town by the young man from Mr. Peacock's office, then in his twenty-second year. The lecture was successful, so successful, indeed, that everybody wanted more. In this way was laid the foundation of Longstaffe's *History of Darlington*, or, as it was then more modestly designated, *Darlington : Its Annals and Characteristics*. With the assistance of Mr. Allan and Mr. Mewburn the youthful

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Longstaffe describes his father as 'a minute amateur etcher, collector, and illuminator of coins, shields, book plates, and seals.' 'The grass grows green on his unrecorded grave, and some may only name him as the vendor of ancient family possessions. But I knew him as a man so full of curious information that we never walked without my returning struck with something new and attractive.' 'An arrangement for his admittance into the Heralds' College fell through, but his collection of some 1,200 book plates, mostly original, from old books, but many gorgeously illuminated designs from his own pencil, form a volume of no ordinary beauty, and prove him to have been most fitted for such an office.'

historian began his great enterprise,<sup>2</sup> and in the *Darlington and Stockton Times* of February 26th, 1848, declared his intentions as follows:—

The desire expressed by many for the publication of the author's recent lecture on the fleeted days of Darlington has led him to believe that a work of greater scope will be acceptable to its residents and to antiquaries at large. The local naturalist will hail a category of the productions of its fields, its woods, its waters; and the student of statistics has long looked for a faithful picture of the manufacture and trade supporting the prosperity of his earthly home. Darlington, moreover, is now an important locality as the centre of several railways. She numbers among her inhabitants a gentleman (Edward Pease, Esq.), in the absence of whose energy and perseverance the present system of locomotive enterprise would, in the ordinary course of human calculations, have been deferred for many years, and it is thought that a copious chapter devoted to its first fruit, 'The Stockton and Darlington Railway' . . . . will be found an interesting addition in every commercial library.

Part i., consisting of about one-fourth of the volume, was issued within a few months; part ii., extending into the third chapter of the ecclesiastical division, made its appearance towards the end of 1849; the remaining parts were delayed from various causes, and it was not until 1854 that the work was completed.

While part ii. of the history was slowly passing through the press, Mr., afterwards Sir, John Bernard Burke, Ulster king at arms, projected a new monthly magazine. The subjects to be treated in this serial were heraldry, genealogy, biography, folk-lore, and matters that belong rather to the by-paths than the beaten tracks of history. Under the name of the *St. James's Magazine*, with Mr. Burke as editor, the new venture made its appearance in the early part of 1849. It lasted a couple of years, and among its contributors was Mr. Longstaffe. His name is attached to a series of sketches, entitled

<sup>2</sup> At the memorable meeting in the 'Sun Inn,' Mr. Longstaffe was introduced to a large and appreciative audience as the coming historian of Darlington. The manner in which he treated his subject had a delightful effect. It was shortly after this meeting that I made Mr. Longstaffe's acquaintance, and on May 20th, 1842, as is recorded in the journal of my dear father, Mr. John Ord, of Newton Ketton, is an entry: 'Mr. Longstaffe here, seeing old coins.' It was a dreary wet Sunday, but a walk of five miles in the rain did not damp the young man's ardour. Such was the beginning of a staunch friendship extending over the remaining twenty years of my father's life, during which Mr. Longstaffe was a frequent and always welcome visitor at Newton Ketton. Of those who accompanied him on such occasions, I may mention his brother-in-law (Mr. J. T. Abbott), Canon Greenwell, Canon Eade, and Mr. Henry Maddison.—Note by Mr. J. R. Ord, Haughton Hall, who also kindly provided from his local collections a copy of the prospectus of the *History of Darlington*.

‘Gatherings for a Garland of Bishoprick Blossoms,’ sketches which, it is not too much to say, exhibit remarkable ability, and disclose a marvellous acquaintance with the traditions, legends, and superstitions of the county palatine. They are not, the writer points out in a prefatory note, ‘solemn history.’ That must be sought in the splendid folios of Surtees, or the careful quartos of Hutchinson. These papers are ‘devoted to the lighter illustrations of private biography, and the legends, proverbs, popular poetry, and heraldic curiosities of my native county. The massive church, the ornate castle, the comfortable manor house, the old fashioned farmstead, and rude cottage, the gliding stream, its grassy leas, the golden fields, the soft woods, the rugged rock, and sable pit; all will afford me matter. The soil of the palatinate is drowned in story. We cannot move a mile without coming on some new legend or association.’

The people of Darlington were proud of their youthful historian and of his literary achievements. When the queen and royal family made their first visit to the north of England in the autumn of that year, 1849, who but he could prepare an address to the royal visitors? His father had taught him to draw, to sketch, and to emblazon, and he had profited by the parental tuition. ‘It was beautifully illuminated on vellum by Longstaffe the historian, a large paper copy of part i. of whose work was also presented and accepted.’ So writes the author of a *Memoir of Francis Mewburn*. Longstaffe himself describes the incident in a foot note to his history, thus:—‘It was on vellum in the fullest decoration of medieval art I could combine with chastity of effect. In an initial letter hung the arms of England. In the copy of my work presented I inserted a blank page containing a rich cross of foliage, which wreathed round four shields—1 and 4, England; 2, Scotland; and 3, Ireland. “Humbly presented to her most gracious majesty Queen Victoria upon the occasion of her first royal progress through the county palatine of Durham by her most dutiful subject, the author.”’

In the spring of 1850, being in indifferent health, Mr. Longstaffe came to stay for a while with his father’s cousins, Mrs. Taylor of Cleadon (widow of John Brough Taylor, F.S.A., a well-known local collector and antiquary), and her brother, the rev. Edward James Midgley, perpetual curate of Medomsley—recreating himself among what he playfully calls ‘kind companions, rills, woods, hills, and—

parish registers.' Under the title 'Notes from Northumbria,' he contributed to the *St. James's Magazine* a graphic account of his journeys. First of all, he notes 'the deep grace of the green fields and quiet streams' in spring time; 'the feathery, bursting, glowing appearance of every thing in its proud, young beauty;' then, giving further flight to his poetical fancy, he adds:—

Beautiful as our wild flowers are, they must be improved by horticulture, and antiquaries must aid the progress. We must rise higher than to a charter or painted escutcheon. We seek to raise architecture, and the more exquisite the profile of the petal and the leaf, the more delighting will our sculpture be. The winter style of our Norman ancestors was partially brushed up by massive fronds—the Early English had all the crispness of spring herself, with its wiry stems, curled foliage and drooping blossoms . . . the Decorated at its birth assumed such flowery lightness as charmed the eye and sunk into beds of roses and ivy in wanton summer profusion; while the last school of those powerful designers of the middle ages, the Florid, with the cunning of autumn, clothed its deformed leaves and unnatural distortions with acres of rich brown screen and tabernacle and arched roofing work. All this may appear fanciful, but we must spiritualize art, whether in forming or looking back. The Egyptian copied his lotus and palm; the Greek adored his acanthus; the Jews repeated their 'pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet,' their 'bowls made like unto almonds with a knop and a flower,' their 'palm trees and open flowers,' their 'flowers of lilies'; and I would perpetuate all our fair favourites, be they rose, or fern, or moss.

About Newcastle and its antiquaries he writes some appreciative lines, as follows:—

The Newcastle people have their Literary and Philosophical Society, Natural History Society, and Society of Antiquaries. . . . The last have, in all proper taste, taken up their abode in the deserted keep. There they have their Roman altars, their armour, and relics of all sorts; there, in the great chamber, have they caused the banners and the pennons of the Fenwyke, Hylton, Percy, and all the great houses of the North, once more to float over fair foreheads and devoted squires. The *literati* of the metropolis of the North have their own peculiar style of literature. They love red lettering and creamy tracts. Their most unimportant imprints are *brochures*. The Richardsons have carried this taste to the extreme of country perfection, and in a private way sir Cuthbert Sharp, John Trotter Brockett, and John Fenwick, have exercised no small influence over the printers of their *minutiae*. . . . I spent the day in the company of John Fenwick, esq., G. Bouchier Richardson, the young and ardent topographer of the town, and that 'vary *moral* of a man'—as Teasdale folks say—Mr. Robert White, the Scottish minstrel of ballad fame. I was also introduced to Collingwood Bruce, the learned discussor of the Roman Wall, whose book I long to dip into . . . and John Bell, a wondrous collector of all things—hand-bills, ballads, and MSS., good, bad, and indifferent; picked up in the street or sent from gentle fingers; clean, dirty, and of neutral tint.

Mr. John Fenwick, the Newcastle host of the Darlington historian during these joyous wanderings, had been an old friend of the Longstaffe family, and his remembrance of the father found expression in hearty recognition of the budding genius of the son. He was at this time one of the council, and, in after years, the treasurer of our society, a leading solicitor, identified in many directions with the public life of Newcastle. Among his colleagues on the council was Mr. William Kell, town clerk of Gateshead. Shortly after the visit recorded above, Mr. Kell needed assistance in the management of an increasing business. Who could be better qualified to render it than one already versed in the routine of a lawyer's office, with literary abilities and antiquarian tastes to boot? Before the summer of that eventful spring had run its course, Mr. Longstaffe had transferred his services to Mr. Kell, and his residence to Gateshead.

Congenial as may have been his surroundings on the banks of the Skerne, it cannot be doubted that the young antiquary found his opportunities vastly increased by his settlement upon the shores of the Tyne. Here was the society he had admired a few months before; here were the men who had made it famous—Adamson and Raine, Clayton and Bruce, Fenwick and White, Hodgson Hinde and Sidney Gibson, Dr. Charlton and Bouchier Richardson. What would not most of us give for an evening with these departed worthies, assembled once more within these venerable walls that so often echoed and re-echoed the sound of their voices?

Mr. Longstaffe became a member of our society, as already related, in November, 1850, very shortly after his removal. Two months later—at the ordinary meeting of the society in January, 1851—he read a paper on ‘The Sun of the Plantagenet, the Crescent of Percy, and the Star of Vere.’ Then began a career of activity in antiquarian pursuit and of contribution to antiquarian literature which finds no parallel in local annals. No matter what the topic might be—heraldry, numismatics, church architecture, local history and biography, ancient land tenure, local muniments, folk-lore—points relating to these and similar subjects that were curious, abstruse, or obscure, received fresh elucidation from his vigorous and facile pen. Thus we find him in that same year (1851) writing a series of papers which, first appearing in the *Gateshead Observer*, were

afterwards issued, with additions, under the title of *Hylton Chaplets*; next publishing an illustrated booklet on *Martial Mottoes*<sup>3</sup> in continuation of M. A. Denham's 'Slogans of the North of England'; and thirdly, preparing and reading at the Mechanics' Institute of Gateshead two elaborate papers on 'Old Gateshead and its Associations.' During the following year he published an illustrated handbook—*Richmondshire: Its Ancient Lords and Edifices: A Concise Guide to the Localities of Interest to the Tourist and Antiquary; with Short Notices of Memorable Men*; and prepared for the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute, held in Newcastle that year, the exhaustive paper which appears in the *Proceedings* of the Institute, on 'Durham Before the Conquest.' By 1854 he had completed his *History of Darlington*, delayed until then by superabundance of material, and the natural hesitation of the faithful historian to withhold so much that is useful and attractive from the expectant reader. Whosoever glances through these books and papers, with their elaboration of detail—the work of three years only—will appreciate the diligence and admire the ardour of the writer.

When Mr. Longstaffe came to Newcastle a 'burning question' had arisen in our society: it related, as already explained in the sketch of the late canon Raine,<sup>4</sup> to the size and form in which the society's publications should be issued. The older men cherished the unwieldy quarto, issued at long intervals, to which they had been accustomed; the younger ones wanted a handy octavo, frequently published. For six years the question lingered in the lap of sentiment through dread of change; then Mr. Longstaffe drove the wedge that eventually broke down the opposition of the veterans, for he induced the society to arrange with his friend, Mr. James Clephan, editor of the *Gateshead Observer*, to report the proceedings at their monthly meetings, and with the proprietors of that paper to publish the reports every month in the coveted octavo. That step achieved, the forward movement became comparatively easy. One year's experience of the monthly reports converted the objectors, and in 1856 the derided quarto was finally abandoned.

<sup>3</sup> The introduction to this booklet is curious:—'Entereth W. Hylton, of the Long Staffe, and striking at the flagstaffs of chevaliers and squires, museth on their mottoes.'

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. Ael.* vol. xix. p. 127..



While the question was burning, Mr. Longstaffe allowed none of the papers which he had prepared for the society to appear. But as soon as the change was effected he began to print abundantly. The first volume of the new series contains six papers from his pen, and volume two, at the commencement of which he was appointed editor, comprises two of his contributions. It is not necessary to enumerate them, nor to particularize those which follow. A reference to our general index discloses a crowded column and a quarter of subject headings attached to his name, ranging from a mere note of half a dozen lines to a valuable paper like that upon the building in which we are assembled, occupying nearly half a volume. Calculating roughly, and excluding annual reports and business matters, his contributions to our first nine volumes, in octavo, cover 660 pages, equal to two volumes and a half. In none of them is quality sacrificed to quantity. There is not a paragraph or a foot note too much. In reading them one is struck by the industry and acuteness in research which they disclose, the painstaking accuracy of statement that is evident in every line, and the style in which they are written—clear, masculine, and direct—terse, pointed, and impressive.

Next to our own society, the organization which bears the name of the great Durham historian, Surtees, held the highest place in Mr. Longstaffe's affections. He became a member of it in 1855, was elected a vice-president in 1859, and so remained till his death. Three of the society's volumes were issued under his editorship, and of two others he was part editor. The three for which he alone is responsible are vol. 34, *The Acts of the High Commission Court within the Diocese of Durham* (1857); vol. 41, *Heraldic Visitation of the Northern Counties*, by Thomas Tonge, Norroy King of Arms (1862); and vol. 50, in which he printed that most curious and valuable manuscript, the *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes* (1866). The two in which his name is associated with those of other editors are, vol. 37, a volume of *Miscellanea* (1860); his contribution being Nathan Drake's journal of the Sieges of Pontefract Castle, and vol. 82, *Extracts from the Halmote Court or Manor Rolls of the Prior and Convent of Durham, A.D. 1296-1384* (1886). Another volume was announced to be edited by him in collaboration with the rev. Dr. Greenwell, viz: 'The Lords of the Soil of



the County of Durham, from the earliest period to the Reformation, comprising the descent of the estates, with engravings of seals, etc.' But this, if begun, was never completed.

The books above quoted as bearing his name are, in themselves, contributions to local history of great interest and utility; but his editing added enormously to their value. For upon nearly every page are notes illustrating and expanding the text, with biographical and genealogical detail in luxuriant abundance. Even these annotations, copious as they are, do not exhaust his editorial resources. Each volume is enriched by the addition of important documents pertinent to the subject matter. Thus, to *Tonge's Visitation* he appended what had been known as 'The Carr MS.,' being 'A Cathelogue of all the Maiores and Sherifs of His Maiestie Towne and Covnty of Newcastle-vpon-Tyne, with they're Cotes of Armes' etc., from 1432 to 1634, with a continuation to 1730. To the *Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes* he added a voluminous appendix of evidences illustrative of the history of religion in Newcastle and Gateshead between the Reformation and the Revolution. Merit, in this case, accompanies chronology. The Barnes Memoirs—last in order of date—is far away the best book of the three. Indeed upon the subject to which it relates it is probably the most important local work that has been issued in our generation. North country historians, genealogists, bibliographers, and even polemics, find it a happy hunting ground swarming with quarry.

Of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, started in 1861, Mr. Longstaffe was a co-founder. At their first meeting, held at Darlington on the 3rd of June in that year, he read a valuable paper on 'Bishop Pudsey's Buildings in the Present County of Durham,' in which he announced his discovery of the name of Pudsey's architect—Gulielmus Ingeniator. For some years, sharing with Dr. Greenwell, the president, and the rev. J. F. Hodgson the heat and burden of conductorship, he accompanied the society on its periodical outings, and helped to describe the objects of interest which the members went to see. Between 1869 and 1879, for example, he read papers or gave *vivâ voce* descriptions to his fellow members at Lumley, Norham, Medomsley, Ebchester, Hylton castle, Walworth, Thirsk, Hexham, Auckland palace, Sheriff Hutton, and Durham castle. Some of the papers are printed in the society's

*Transactions*; of the descriptions only remembrance remains. While his health permitted he performed similar service for our society whenever we rambled among places that he cared to visit. Upon these occasions he was seen at his best—a real ‘guide, philosopher, and friend.’

To the study of that interesting branch of archaeology which reads history, biography, and the progress of the arts upon the faces of coins and medals, Mr. Longstaffe devoted himself with considerable success. He had a faculty of minute observation, and a soundness of judgment which, applied to the workmanship of the old minters and moneyers, enabled him to establish new definitions, and to shed upon ancient controversies fresh light. His abilities, in this direction, are exemplified in a series of articles which he contributed to the *Numismatic Chronicle*. The first of them (2nd series, vol. iii. p. 162), entitled ‘Northern Evidence on the Short Cross Question,’ deals with the length of the cross which, during many successive reigns, appeared on the reverse of English pennies. In the long cross pennies the arms of the emblem reached to the verge of the coin and the name and place of the moneyer around it were thus divided into four parts by the arms of the cross, while in those which bore a short cross the inscription was continuous. Mr. Longstaffe showed, by comparison with coins struck at Durham, that pennies stamped with the name ‘Henry’ only, and no numerals (which had been ascribed to Henry III.), were not only made in the reign of Henry II., but also in the reigns of Richard I. and John, of whose coinage no English examples, bearing the names of those monarchs, have been found. The second and third papers (2nd series, vols. vii. p. 21, and ix. p. 256) are headed, ‘On the distinctions between the pennies of Henry IV., V., and VI.’ Here also, although no numerals follow the royal name, the writer, by pointing out slight differences in mint marks, styles of portraits, weights, etc., allocated to each king his own coins, and evolved order out of chaos. In the fourth article (2nd series, vol. xi. p. 193) he answers his title-question, ‘Did the kings between Edward III. and Henry VI. coin money at York on their own account’ in the negative. All these articles, treating as they do of abstruse questions of identity, were exceedingly valuable contributions to numismatology.

In connexion with this subject it may be noted that two or three of the papers which he read to our society relate to the same branch

of study, and that his one special contribution to the *Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club*, of which body he was elected a member in 1862, describes a 'find of groats at Embleton in Northumberland, ranging from Edward III. to Edward IV.' Some time before his death he had nearly finished a paper on the coinage of Durham, founded on the work of Mark Noble,<sup>5</sup> but declining health prevented its completion.

Whether life-long devotion to antiquarian pursuits has the effect of modifying human form and feature may be questioned. Yet in the very appearance of Mr. Longstaffe there was something, intangible and unexplainable it is true, but still something which suggested the antiquary, a man who lived in the past. His features seemed to be moulded from the antique, and everything about him appeared to say in Goldsmith's phrase, 'I love everything that's old—old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine,' to which those who saw his garden-plot at Gateshead might add, 'old herbs likewise, and flowers of ancient fame.' This love of everything that's old was the one absorbing passion of his life. It began, as we have seen in childhood, grew with his growth, and attained its highest development ere he had reached his prime. Blest with a vigorous understanding and a correct judgment, he was able to grasp whatever of ancient lore came within the range of his knowledge, while his skill in assimilating it, his dexterity in weaving scattered facts and figures into clear and consecutive narrative, were special gifts vouchsafed to few. His possession of these rare gifts led some of his friends to hope that he might take up the pen that had fallen from the hands of Surtees, and complete that magnificent work—the history of Durham. Among the most hopeful of them was his early friend and patron, Mr. Robt. Henry Allan, who, dying in October, 1879, bequeathed to him the sum of £1,000, conditional upon his undertaking the task, and carrying it to a successful issue. At the time Mr. Longstaffe was disposed to fulfil the conditions, but upon consideration he deemed the bequest inadequate and allowed the legacy to lapse.

Outside of his historical and archaeological pursuits, Mr. Longstaffe occupied a prominent position as a lawyer, and interested himself

<sup>5</sup> *Two Dissertations upon the Mints and Coins of the Episcopal-Palatine of Durham*. 4to. Birmingham, 1780.

in various phases of public life. He came to Gateshead, as we have seen, in the summer of 1850, as managing clerk with Mr. William Kell, senior partner in the firm of Messrs. Kell & Apedaile, solicitors. A few months afterwards, on the 4th of January, 1851, he was articled to Mr. Kell, and in due course passed his examination and was admitted to practice. While serving articles, he added to his baptismal designations the name of his maternal ancestor, the poet Dyer, and, having obtained the necessary leave from the Court of Queen's Bench, he signed the roll of attorneys in January, 1857, as William Hylton Dyer Longstaffe. As soon as these formalities had been completed, Mr. Apedaile retired, and Mr. Longstaffe taking his place, carried on the business, under the style of Kell & Longstaffe, till the death of his friend and partner, in June, 1862, left it entirely in his own hands.

Into the details of his professional career, this is neither the time nor the place to enter. But it may be said of Mr. Longstaffe that he was a sound lawyer, specially versed in ancient rights, customs, and tenures, and often consulted about matters relating thereto. Upon one very delicate and difficult question he concentrated his time and attention for years. That was the claim of leaseholders under the dean and chapter of Durham, who had been accustomed to obtain leases for twenty-one years, renewable every seven years upon payment of certain fines, but who, upon the transference of the church estates to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, were confronted by a refusal to renew. Mr. Longstaffe, with others, contended that the estates had been originally copyhold, and that the tenants were entitled to even better security than twenty-one years' leases. He fought this battle with great energy and tenacity, and after a prolonged controversy secured, or helped to secure, from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, at annual rentals based upon the old fines, leases for 999 years, the equivalents, almost, of freeholds.

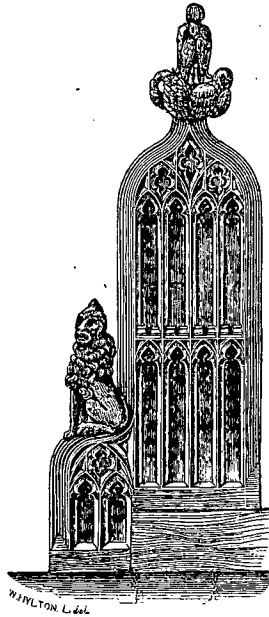
The public life of Mr. Longstaffe was chiefly official. For civic honours he had no desire, and he cared as little for those of learned societies. He did, for a time, use the initials of the London Society of Antiquaries—F.S.A.—but no other. His public life, in so far as it was not professional, was literary and philanthropic. Upon his coming to Tyneside he joined the Gateshead Mechanics' Institute, at

that time a flourishing institution, having for its leading spirits Mr. William Hutt, the member for the borough, James Clephan, William Kell, William Lockey Harle, George Crawshay, W. H. Brockett, and James Guthrie, all of them men of mark, and earnest promoters of the public welfare. Within a year he was elected a member of the committee, and from 1864 to 1868, was one of the secretaries of the institution. He succeeded Mr. Kell as honorary secretary to Gateshead Dispensary in 1862, and so continued till 1875. Twice he was chosen rector's warden at the Easter vestry meetings, and in 1865 he became a member of the Gateshead 'Four and Twenty,' an ancient body with prescriptive rights and privileges, in the investigation and elucidation of which, for the rest of his life, he took great interest. Under the Local Government Act, 1858, he assisted in creating the local boards of Felling and Hebburn, and was clerk of the former from 1868 to 1878, and of the latter from 1873 to 1875. Finally, during the parliamentary elections of 1868 and 1874, he acted as agent in Gateshead for the North Durham liberal candidates, and in the latter year, and again in 1880, represented the interests of the present lord Northbourne.

It has not been found practicable to include in this rambling obituary a full list of Mr. Longstaffe's contributions to local history. Although most of his literary work is described, or its whereabouts indicated, in the preceding paragraphs, there is a residuum, more or less valuable, that eludes the search and defies enumeration. It is known, for example, that he wrote many interesting articles on local institutions for the *Gateshead Observer*. Sometimes a few copies were separately printed from the *Observer* type for private distribution, but the majority remains entombed in the files of that long defunct newspaper. Occasionally, too, he issued in pamphlet form a paper which had been prepared for our society, and not read—such as *The Old Official Heraldry of Durham*—or one that was read and not printed by us, e.g., *A Leaf from the Pilgrimage of Grace*. Other pamphlets bearing his name are reprints, or reprints with emendations, (1) from the *Archæologia Aeliiana*, viz., *The Old Heraldry of the Percies*, and *Some Account of Francis Radcliffe, First Earl of Derwentwater*; (2) from the *History of Darlington*, such as *Parentalian Memoranda*, which contains the pedigrees of the Hyltons and other ancestral families;

(3) from a Worcestershire newspaper, a series of articles on churches, etc., at Droitwich and Dodderhill; and (4) a paper on *The Reading Penny*, apparently from the *Numismatic Chronicle*.

Mr. Longstaffe died, after a prolonged illness, on the 4th of February, 1898. He had been unable to join our gatherings, or to contribute to our literature, for nearly eight years. Few of us, indeed, can remember him in the fulness of his intellectual activity, and to some of our younger members he can be known only by repute. But to us and to them—those who knew him, and those who knew him not—he has left an example of earnest application in research, and of generous promptitude in communicating results, which we may profitably try to imitate. His work remains, his writings survive, and over the door of our council chamber, the benevolence of his friends and the skill of the artist help us to keep his memory ever green.



BENCH END, DARLINGTON CHURCH.  
(From Longstaffe's *History of Darlington*.)