

Church was erected in Osborne Road at a cost, exclusive of the site, of £6,000. It affords sitting accommodation for 700 persons and was opened for public worship on the 19th December, 1887. The Presbyterian Church was erected at Burdon Terrace in 1888, and was opened by the Rev. Dr. Seward Dykes on the 4th September, 1888. Mr. W. L. Newcombe was the architect of the building. On the 18th January, 1903, a Roman Catholic church, dedicated to the Holy Name, was opened on the West Jesmond estate opposite St. George's Terrace. It is an iron church, which is intended to be replaced in time by a more permanent structure. The first service, a solemn high mass, was held on the above date. The Methodist Free Church have also erected schools on the same estate, opposite the same terrace, and contemplate erecting a church on the adjoining site.

JESMOND DENE PARK.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the first Lord Armstrong, who lived at the house called Jesmond Dean, had acquired from its prior owners the dene or river valley of the Ouseburn, opposite his house and extending from Sir Andrew Noble's residence, Jesmond Dene House, on the north, as far south as Benton Bridge on the east side and as far south as Jesmond Terrace on the west side of the stream. He closed in the dene, planted it with shrubs and trees, laid out walks along the banks on either side, threw bridges across the stream, and in 1862 built in the dene, from designs by John Dobson, a spacious banquet hall fitted for public entertainments, and adorned it with statuary and pictures.⁸

Jesmond Wesleyan Church, Newcastle, the performance was almost as good as a play. It was less a sermon than an entertainment. All the same the preacher was terribly in earnest, for he perspired like a racehorse.'—*Memoirs of a Social Atom*, by W. E. Adams, vol. ii. p. 621.

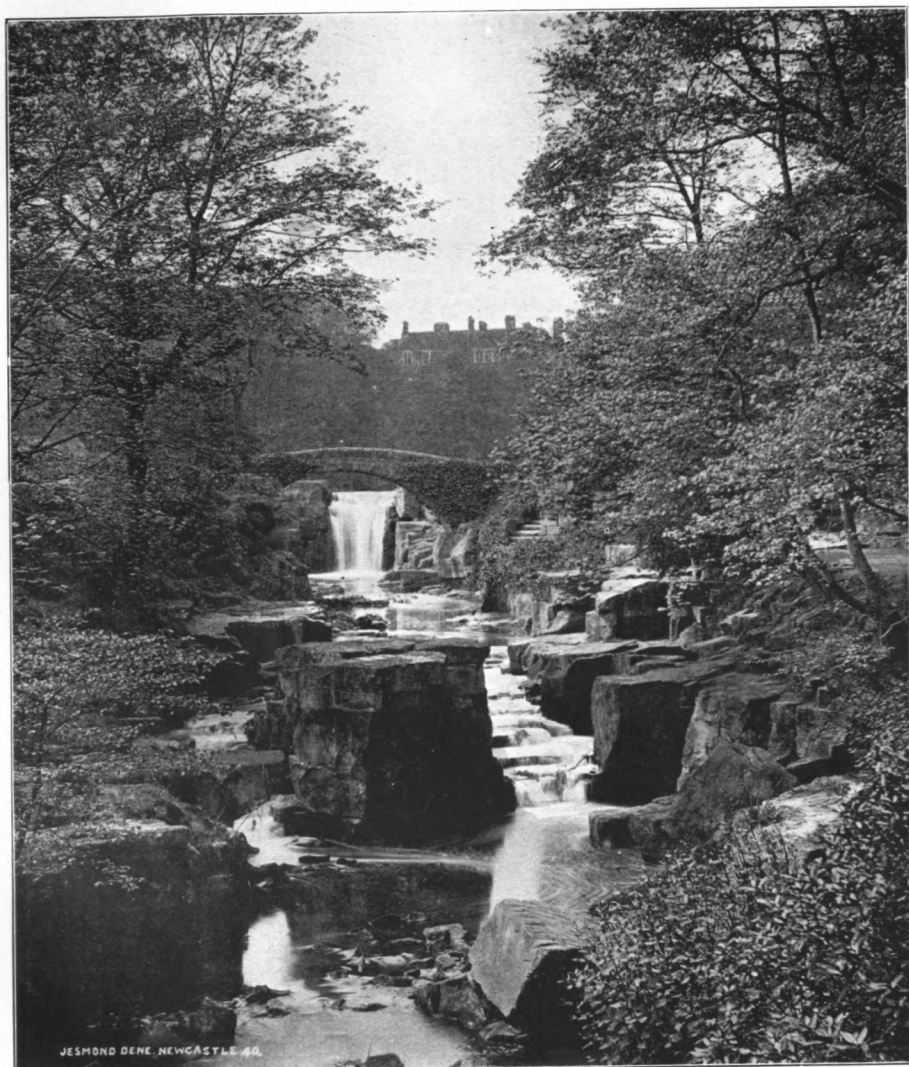
⁸ The first entertainment in the banquet hall was given by the then Sir William George Armstrong to the members of the Elswick Engine Works

He had already, in 1880, given to the people of Newcastle the neighbouring Armstrong Park lying to the southward of the Benton Road when, in the year 1883, he presented this more beautiful pleasure ground of Jesmond Dene to the Newcastle Corporation for the benefit of the inhabitants of the city.

The gift, which was announced in a letter to the mayor dated the 5th February, 1883, included the banquet hall and the dwelling-houses in the dene, but excluded the house and garden called St. Mary's Mount on the Benton Bank and three cottages on the side of the road running past Jesmond Dean House. By a further letter dated the 28th April, 1883, there was added to the gift a piece of land on the Heaton side of the Ouseburn and a plot of ground containing about one acre, on which the ruin of St. Mary's Chapel stands, with access to it by a subway from the banquet hall. The gift of the chapel was only to come into effect after the then Lady Armstrong (who predeceased him and died in 1893) had ceased to live at Jesmond Dean House. The deed, carrying out the terms of this magnificent offer in its entirety, was executed by Lord Armstrong and was sealed by the corporation on the 3rd October and enrolled in the High Court on the 22nd November, 1883. The land comprised in it amounted to 62 acres, and is delineated on the plan annexed to the deed. The greater part of the land, being on the east side of the burn, is in Heaton and not in Jesmond. One of the stipulations made by Lord Armstrong was that, in consequence of new roads thrown open by him the Corporation should close the foot and bridle road at the north end of the dene, and this was done by an order sealed by the corporation on the 5th March, 1884.⁹

The present king and queen (then Prince and Princess of Wales) formally opened the park in 1884, and near the banquet Literary and Mechanics' Institute on the 9th August, 1862. Amongst those still living who were then present are Mr. W. D. Cruddas and Sir Andrew Noble.—Fordyce, *Local Records*, vol. iii. p. 400.

⁹ Printed *Proceedings of the Newcastle Corporation for 1883*, pp. 107, 246, and 410.



JESMOND DENE : THE OUSEBURN LOOKING NORTH.

hall is a tree (a Turkey oak) which was planted by the Queen on that occasion.

There are few public grounds in England more beautiful than Jesmond Dene Park. The paths up the valley from the south end lead the visitor first by banks covered with rare shrubs and a wealth of heaths and flowers, then under hanging woods by the burn-side, then through a rocky gorge in which the stream is seen rushing past huge masses of rock, then, after passing a ruined mill with its wooden wheel and red tiled roofs, a pretty waterfall is reached, and beyond it are a calm swan pool and stepping stones that lead the visitor reluctantly out by a sloping path to the Jesmond Dene Road. Beautiful as the valley is in the early spring, when white with wild cherry blossom, and in the early summer when it is golden and crimson with azaleas and rhododendrons, it is at no time more lovely than on a fine winter's afternoon when a bright sun colours its snow-laden trees and icy waters with variegated tints.

The mill, which is on the Heaton side of the burn, existed, as we have seen, in the thirteenth century.¹ There is an interesting note of its later history in the *Newcastle Monthly Chronicle* for 1890, as follows:—

For three or four generations the mill was occupied by a family named Freeman, who used it as a flour mill. It was then taken by a person named Pigg, who used it for grinding spoiled grain into pollards, a kind of feeding for pigs. It was next leased to a person named Charlton, who turned it into a flint mill. The flint was carted there and ground and then put in barrels and conveyed to the Pottery down the Ouseburn. The present caretaker at the banqueting hall, Jesmond Dene, worked the mill for Mr. Charlton. He helped to put the present water-wheel in about twenty-five years ago. The mill formerly belonged to Dr. Headlam. It was purchased from him by Sir William (now Lord) Armstrong, who also bought the lease from Mr. Charlton. It has never worked since it became his property, but has been painted and photographed by innumerable artists and photographers.—(Signed) O. M., Jesmond Dene. ²

¹ See p. 56.

² *Newcastle Monthly Chronicle* for June, 1890, p. 282.

William George Armstrong, the donor of the park, was, for his services to the State, knighted in 1858. In the Jubilee year, 1887, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Armstrong of Cragside. He died without issue on the 27th December, 1900. In 1889 his heir, William Henry Armstrong Fitzpatrick Watson, grandson of the late Baron Watson and of Ann his wife, only daughter of William Armstrong of Newcastle (sometime mayor of that city) and sister of William George Baron Armstrong of Cragside, took by licence the surname of Armstrong in addition to and after that of Watson. In the same year Mr. Watson Armstrong married Winifreda Adye, eldest daughter of General Sir John Adye, G.C.B., R.A., and in 1903 he also received a peerage and is now Lord Armstrong of Bamburgh and Cragside.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It only remains to repeat, by way of summary, that this single square mile of land, once a country township in a remote county and now a small suburb of a provincial city, possesses, like many other neglected things lying in odd corners, more interest than most people would suppose.

Under its cold boulder clay and under the stone beneath it were deposited, at long ages apart, layer after layer of that luxurious vegetation with which our earth was clothed in the earliest stages of organic life.

Millions of years later, when its surface had obtained its present formation and had been covered with the verdure of plants more familiar to us, prehistoric men lived amidst its woods and glades, cultivated its fields, buried their dead carefully and reverently on the banks of its beautiful stream and left beside their dear ones, for their sustenance in the spirit-world, food in the earthen vessels which have been found in the township and have been preserved in the museum of our Society.