



From my own
Walter H. H. H.

IX.—OBITUARY NOTICES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.

By RICHARD WELFORD, M.A., a vice-president.

1. HORATIO ALFRED ADAMSON, a vice-president.

[Read on the 28th of October, 1908.]

In the wide field of archaeological research, some of the most earnest workers have been drawn from two of the learned professions, the church and the law. Both of these honourable callings are linked to the past by strong and durable bonds, while their literary activities are always prominent.

Shortly after the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries was launched upon its useful career, now nearly a century ago, its leading members were about equally divided between these two great vocations. For there were on its roll seven well-known clergymen: Raine of Durham, Collinson of Gateshead, Thorp of Ryton, Hollingsworth of Haltwhistle, Clarke of Hexham, Edmonson of Newburn and Turner of Newcastle, with an equal number of eminent lawyers, John Trotter Brockett, Nathaniel Clayton, James Losh, Armorer Donkin, John Fenwick and John and Thomas Davidson, while John Hodgson of the church, and John Adamson of the law, were co-secretaries.

This preponderant influence exists no longer. Other interests have come in, and although, happily, both professions are still well represented among us, as our papers and our proceedings abundantly testify, yet, if a like comparison were instituted to-day, it would probably be found that the law somewhat overshadows the church. But 'comparisons are odorous.' Let us not stir them up.

On the 5th of September last, death deprived us of a colleague who was a notable member of the legal profession—Mr. Horatio Alfred Adamson. It is due to his memory that we should place upon record some account of his services, some appreciation of his character, some expression of our sense of the loss which the society has sustained by his removal.

Mr. Adamson was born at North Shields in 1836, the second son of Alexander Adamson by his marriage with a daughter of Henry Pyle of that town, shipowner. Adamson, the elder, was one of the old race of schoolmasters who for many generations were the book-keepers, land surveyors and problem-solvers of the community. Adamson, the younger, therefore, received a sound elementary education, and was in other respects fully equipped for the career that was opening out to him. In due time he entered the office of Messrs. Tinley and Adamson, the junior partner in which firm was his brother Charles. Mr. John Tinley, the senior partner, after a long life of public usefulness, died in 1862, and the following year, the name of the firm was changed to that of Tinley, Adamson and Adamson.

Entering thus auspiciously upon a professional career, Horatio Adamson rapidly obtained preferment in the civic life of his native town. His crowning appointment came to him in 1873, when he was elected town clerk of the borough, a post which he held for over thirty years, and only relinquished when failing health made his resignation desirable. Five years later, in 1878, he received another highly important and responsible appointment, that of registrar of the North Shields County Court.

In the same year that he obtained the high position of town clerk, Mr. Adamson joined our Society. Thus, at the date of his death, he was one of our oldest members. Only six of his early colleagues are with us now, namely, Robert Richardson Dees,* elected in 1839, nearly 70 years ago, Canon Greenwell,

* Died November 30, 1908.

who came to us in 1845; Dr. Gibb, who dates from 1859; Dr. Hodgkin and George A. Fenwick, who joined in 1865, and sir John Swinburne, whose membership began in 1866.

Absorbed in his official work, Mr. Adamson did not find time for some years after he had joined our ranks to contribute, by presence or pen, to our meetings and proceedings. But in the meantime, he was quietly accumulating historical material from parish registers and the various local muniments which passed through his hands, or to which his official position gave him access.

His first appearance in our literature is seen in the volume of our *Proceedings* for 1884, when he sent from his collections some notes relating to sir William Creagh, mayor of Newcastle by mandamus in the brief reign of James II. Thenceforward he became one of our active members, favouring the society at intervals with valuable papers drawn from his ever increasing stores. In 1890 he was elected a member of our council, and three years later rose to the higher honour of vice-president.

About the same time that his pen commenced to work in our service, he began to write for the *Shields Daily News* a series of most interesting articles on old times, localities and people connected with his birth place. Copies of these 'Old Landmarks,' as he entitled them, were printed and distributed among his friends, with other papers of a similar character, relating to the origin and development of institutions in which he himself had participated. Occasionally, too, he forwarded scraps of local history to the antiquarian departments of two Newcastle weekly papers, the *Chronicle* and the *Courant*.

Beyond his native town (and its environs) his antiquarian proclivities did not tempt him to wander. He devoted himself assiduously to the collection and preservation of its records, and there an end. To friends who urged him to utilise his undoubted gifts in biography by publishing sketches of departed Shields

worthies, he replied in that manly and generous spirit which characterised all his transactions—‘the ground is too treacherous; I might wound someone’s feelings.’

To his brother antiquaries, and indeed to all who sought his aid in elucidating historical matters within the scope of his limitations, his treasures were freely opened and his time cheerfully given. Whenever our society, or the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, of which also he was a member, or any other society or group similarly interested, visited ‘the cliffs of Old Tynemouth,’ he was not only ‘guide, philosopher and friend,’ but also the hospitable entertainer. A day with Horatio Adamson, among the ruins of Tynemouth Priory, or through the ‘long-shore’ streets of old Shields, was a rubricated day to most people.

In the progress of the new county history of Northumberland, Mr. Adamson took a lively interest, and when it was arranged that the eighth volume of that work should be devoted to his own beloved borough, the whole of his valuable collections were placed at the editor’s disposal. He lived to see the volume completed, and to read in the preface the following generous appreciation of his services:

To Mr. H. A. Adamson the editor is under deep obligation for the generous way in which he has placed at his disposal his wide and extensive knowledge of the local antiquities of Tynemouth and North Shields, and for the ample use allowed to be made of his legal and historical collections. The Committee have also to thank him for donations for extra illustrations.

The following is a list of Mr. Adamson’s principal contributions to local literature:

PAPERS IN THE *Archaeologia Aeliana* (2ND SERIES):

- Vol. xii. p. 172. A Terrier of Lands in the Manor of Tynemouth.
- Vol. xv. p. 218. Tynemouth Castle: The Eve of the Commonwealth.
- Vol. xviii. p. 61. Tynemouth Castle after the Dissolution of the Monastery.
- Vol. xix. p. 93. Gleanings from the Records of the Parish of Tynemouth.
- Vol. xix. p. 197. Tynemouth Parish Registers.

- Vol. xx. p. 15. The Villiers Family as Governors of Tynemouth Castle and owners of the Lighthouse.
 Vol. xxiii. p. 22. Tynemouth Priory to the Dissolution in 1539, with notes of Tynemouth Castle.
 Vol. xxv. p. 111. The Villiers Family (as above); supplemental.

NOTES, ETC., IN THE SOCIETY'S *Proceedings* (2ND SERIES):

- Vol. i. p. 122. Notes on Sir William Creagh, knight.
 Vol. iii. p. 19. Communion Plate, etc., of Christ Church, Tynemouth.
 Vol. iii. p. 35. The Hospital of St Leonard, Tynemouth.
 Vol. iv. p. 153. Possessions of the Earl of Oxford and Mortimer in Northumberland in 1724.
 Vol. v. p. 100. The Milbournes of North Shields.
 Vol. vii. pp. 42, 50. On a carved capital of a column from Ascalon, Syria.
 Vol. vii. p. 168. On a black letter Act (21 Hen. VIII) concerning Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
 Vol. vii. p. 242. Ralph Gardiner of Chirton.
 Vol. viii. p. 124. Tynemouth Lighthouse and the Governor's House.
 Vol. ix. p. 24. Proposed Suspension Bridge across the Tyne at Shields in 1825.
 Vol. x. p. 182. Seaton Delaval Hall.
 Vol. x. p. 273. Tynemouth Priory.

NOTES, ETC., IN THE SOCIETY'S *Proceedings* (3RD SERIES):

- Vol. i. p. 38. Waterville, North Shields: The Home of an Antiquary.
 Vol. i. p. 119. A Civil War letter of 17th December, 1642, relating to Newcastle.

'OLD LANDMARK' PAPERS.

1. Tynemouth Lodge.
2. Matthews's Hall.
3. Lawson's Hall at Chirton.
4. Chirton House.
5. Wakefield House.
6. Storey's Hall, Low Lights.
7. Christ church, Tynemouth.
8. Tynemouth House.
9. The George Tavern Assembly Room.
10. Clifford's Fort, Low Lights.
11. The Low Light House.
12. Tynemouth Castle.
13. No. 39, Church St. and the Rev. William Haswell.
14. Tynemouth Lighthouse.
15. The Subscription Library and the Town Clock.
16. Harriet Martineau's House at Tynemouth.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

Reminiscences of the Volunteer Movement.
 Borough of Tynemouth 50 years ago [in 1849].
 Centenary of the North Shields and Tynemouth Library.
 The Wreck of the Stanley, 40 years ago [in 1864].
 Low Lights Dock: Laying the Foundation stone [in 1864].
 Jubilee of the Tyne Sailors Home.

Mr. Adamson also compiled a volume entitled 'Gleanings from the Records of Tynemouth,' which remains in the possession of his family.

2. ROBERT RICHARDSON DEES, a vice-president.

[Read on the 24th March, 1909.]

The *Tyne Mercury*, in its issue of the 16th November, 1813, contained the following announcement of marriage:

Yesterday, Mr. Robert Dees, of the Customs at this port, to Martha, third daughter of the late Mr. Robert Richardson, of this town, corn merchant.

In the autumn of the following year, in a house in Westgate street, where the Tyne theatre now stands (eldest of ten children, issue of that marriage), was born our late venerable and venerated colleague, Mr. Robert Richardson Dees. On the 30th of November last, in the 95th year of his age, the oldest member of our society, he passed away.

Robert Dees, the father, was chief searcher and landing waiter in the Customs. Soon after the advent of his first-born, he removed from Westgate street to Hanover square, and there brought up his family. In after years he lived, first in St. Mary's place, and then at Wallsend, where he died on the 11th of December, 1868, aged 78 years.

Robert Richardson Dees received his education at the far-famed commercial school of Mr. John Bruce, known to several generations of north countrymen as the Percy Street Academy. From thence he proceeded to the University of Edinburgh for a