

VIII.—ANTHONY HEDLEY : A CENTENARY MEMOIR.

BY ERIC BIRLEY.

[Read on 30th October, 1935.]

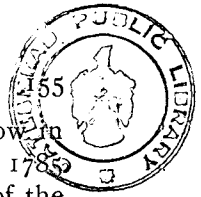
Anthony Hedley, who built the cottage of Chesterholm and so gave its modern name to the fort and settlement known to the Romans as Vindolanda—it had previously been called Chester-in-the-Wood, Little Chesters, or, usually, the Bower—died there after a week's illness on the 17th January, 1835; it seems proper to prefix a memoir of the first explorer of the site to a report on excavations at Chesterholm communicated, in the year that marks the centenary of his death, to the society with whose early activities he was closely connected. Hedley was fortunate in his friends—John Hodgson, the historian of Northumberland, who wrote the obituary notice of him that appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and afterwards expanded it into the admirable memoir that is given in part II, volume iii, of his history; John Fenwick, the Newcastle attorney and antiquary, whose *Treasure Trove in Northumberland* includes an anecdote of the beginnings of Chesterholm, and a touching tribute to its founder, "whom to know was at once to admire and to love"; Thomas Sopwith, the mining engineer, who in later life treasured Hedley's name, with those of Surtees and Hodgson himself, among his richest memories; and professor Pillans of Edinburgh, whose friendship with Hedley began when the two were fellow-students at the University there,

and continued unbroken till Hedley's death forty years later. He was happy, too, in his friends' friends, such as James Raine, in whose *Memoir* of John Hodgson there is a slight but expressive sketch of him, as well as correspondence that passed between him and Hodgson, that adds materially to our knowledge of his life and character. An obituary notice that appeared in the *Newcastle Courant* a week after his death (it is reprinted in Richardson's *Local Historians' Table Book*) gives further details, and to some extent enables us to understand with what grief a multitude of friends in all walks of life learnt of his sudden death; and Richard Welford, in his *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed*, adds to an abridged version of Hodgson's *Memoir* a number of particulars which seem to be derived from some other source, or from his own researches. But this society, which Hedley joined in 1820, and in whose proceedings he played an active part for fourteen years, seems quickly to have forgotten the man and his work. It was not until 1885 that a notice of him appeared in our transactions, written by Collingwood Bruce, who had never known him, and both briefer and less accurate than the sketch of Hedley which the same writer had appended to the first, and retained with slight alterations in the second edition of his *Roman Wall*; and in the centenary volume of *Archæologia Aeliána*, apart from the record of his election to the society, on the 6th September, 1820, and a list of the papers that he communicated to the first two volumes of its publications, there is only a brief précis of Hodgson's record of his career, and nothing to indicate his influence and intellectual standing. The present paper, for that reason, must be the attempt, however imperfect, of a distant successor to do tardy justice to the memory of one of the early leaders of our society.

Despite the welcome fullness of Hodgson's *Memoir*, there are still many points that require further investigation before an adequate account of Hedley's life and works

can be written; at present I cannot do more than give an outline, based for the most part on the writers to whom I have referred, but incorporating the result of some slight researches of my own, and information for which I am indebted in particular to our senior secretary, Mr. John Oxberry, and professor C. E. Whiting. If at times I seem to give undue emphasis to the outstanding problems, it is because I hope that those who are better versed in the history of the period with which I am perforce concerned, and more familiar with the sources for it, may be able to supply the information that I have not yet been able to secure.

His father was Edward Hedley of Hopefoot near Otterburn, his mother Elizabeth, a Forster from Woodburn; so that on both sides he came from a stock of Redesdale borderers, with a century's respectability and farming separating them from the moss-trooping and raiding days for whose annals, as Raine tells us and some of his own writings show, in later life he had ever a passion. Anthony Hedley was born at Hopefoot on the 29th March 1777; we know that at least one brother and one sister died before him, and a sister survived to present some of his papers to our neighbours of the Literary and Philosophical Society some years after his death. Of his life at Hopefoot we have no details recorded; but after a grounding in the "rudiments of education" under Mr. Hutton, curate of Felton, he went up to Edinburgh University in 1795, to read Latin and Greek, already (it seems) intending to enter Holy Orders. Here we meet with a difficulty. According to Hodgson, he went first to the University of Glasgow, intending to enter the Presbyterian ministry, and migrated to Edinburgh only when he had decided to take Orders in the Church of England. But there is no record of him in the matriculation books of Glasgow University; and it seems possible that Hodgson was confusing him with another Anthony Hedley. This was the third son of Roger Hedley, a



farmer in Elsdon parish, who matriculated at Glasgow in 1778, took his master's degree in 1781, and from 1783 until his death on the 29th June, 1817, was minister of the Presbyterian church at Longframlington. Our Anthony Hedley graduated as master of arts at Edinburgh on the 31st March, 1803, eight years after his matriculation; and we next find him acting for a time as tutor in the family of the marquess of Bath at Longleat in Wiltshire. His charges must have been Thomas and Henry Frederick (born 1796 and 1797 respectively), the sons of the second marquess. The gardens at Longleat had been laid out by his distant cousin, "Capability" Brown, and first inspired in him, as Hodgson tells us, the taste for horticulture that was to leave its mark on several vicarage gardens in Northumberland, before he came to create his masterpiece at Chesterholm. At Longleat, too, he married Margaret Staveley, who died in 1809, leaving him a daughter Elizabeth, born the previous year, who died in 1820; and it was probably during his residence in Wiltshire that he was ordained, for there is no record of the event in the archives of the diocese of Durham, in which his active life was spent.

His first curacy was at Gateshead, and from there he moved to St. John Lee, where we first meet with testimony from another source: "At that time," says an unnamed correspondent of the *Newcastle Magazine*, quoted in the *Courant's* obituary notice of Hedley, "the dissenters of Hexham were attracted by a voice which sounded vehemently from St. John Lee to the neighbouring parishes," and again, "they forgot those minor differences which separate churchmen from dissenters, thus bearing practical testimony to the truth, that there would be little need of conventicles were the pulpits of the establishment supplied with faithful ministers"—this seems to be the foundation for Bruce's comparison of his preaching with that of a Boanerges; apart from this, the only other reference to his preaching comes from the same notice: "in the pulpit he

was a clear, eloquent, and practical expounder of Divine Truth, suiting his discourses to the circumstances and capacity of his hearers"; and in his later cures it is as a manager of church schools, always his special interest, and of his attendance to the material needs of his parishioners that we hear, rather than of his preaching.

From St. John Lee he moved to Hexham in 1809, the year of his wife's death, and it was there, on the 25th September in the following year, that he first made Hodgson's acquaintance. Hodgson had just begun the first of his journeys through Northumberland, to collect materials for his description of the county for the *Beauties of England and Wales* series; writing to his wife, he says, "I have to-day been with Mr. Hedley, minister of Hexham, and have had great civility from him, and much pleasure in his company . . . Mr. Hedley has promised to breakfast with me in the morning"; and the first of Hedley's contributions to his new friend's historical researches was a letter of introduction to the owner and occupant of the Roman fort at Risingham, which Hodgson visited for the first time later in the same week. It is at this point that Raine's memoir of Hodgson comes to our help: "until the death of Hedley in 1835," he writes, "there were few events affecting the welfare, or the contrary, of the one, at which the other did not rejoice, or grieve; and in their mutual exultations and sympathies there was every character and proof of the most hearty and affectionate sincerity . . . Mr. Hedley was probably for several years the only one of Hodgson's correspondents to whom he wrote with freedom and ease, not merely on topographical pursuits . . . but on the ordinary topics of the day." In the closing years of his life, Hodgson bound up in a number of volumes the letters that he had received from his friends over a period of thirty years and more; and among these there were frequent letters from Hedley. Fifteen of these are quoted, in whole or in part, for their bearing on Hodgson's life by Raine in his *Memoir*; others

are referred to, directly or indirectly, in the *History of Northumberland* and in the papers, referred to by Raine, and now in Mr. Oxberry's possession, in which Hodgson began to collect materials for expanding his biography of Hedley. The whole collection, as Raine himself points out, must be of the highest value for an extended memoir of Hodgson's friend; but at present I can only make use of the selection that Raine extracted.

The first letter, written in November 1810, accompanied some statistical particulars that Hodgson had asked for; and later we find Hedley sending a variety of materials for the *History*, and in due course reading its proofs, suggesting improvements in form and phrasing, and as each volume came out, encouraging Hodgson to further efforts; and this encouragement was not merely intellectual—we find Hedley introducing fresh collaborators, such as John Thompson, the miller of Crowhall near Bardon Mill, on whose extensive botanical knowledge the historian was able to draw, and fresh subscribers; and Hedley himself subscribed for two sets of the *History*, one royal and one demy. One passage, in a letter dated 9 Jan. 1826, deserves quoting: "You will have, you say, 140 pages for the parishes of Elsdon and Corsenside, i.e. at the rate of seventy for a parish; but the slightest calculation will show that you cannot afford this average; and this kind of calculation you must not lose sight of, even in the greatest heat and ardour of composition, and in places and subjects even of the greatest interest. I have always thought that compression and judicious selection from the immense mass of your valuable materials will be the most difficult task that you have to perform." Other friends of Hodgson's, notably Raine himself, supplied him with more of his raw materials; but Hedley added the practical advice that his experience as antiquary and indeed as printer enabled him to give; and he was able to help in other ways as well. Early in 1821 Hodgson found it necessary to spend a month in the south, to collect further

materials for his history; and it was Hedley—then (as we shall see) living in Summer Hill—who enabled him to do so, by undertaking the duties of his parish for the month; and a letter of Hedley's, written on the last day of February, shows him extending the period indefinitely: "To save post, I have little more than time to say that I have it now in my power to give you an unlimited extension of your furlough. You may riot among the luxuries of the Brit. Mus., etc., till Easter, if you please. What a joyous and most uncanonical Lent for an antiquary! Keep yourself quite easy as to every part of your duty, and reserve all the energies of your mind to gather in the harvest you have gone so far to reap. The pleasure I feel in serving you is a rich and most abundant reward. . . ." In the event, it was not till the last day of March that Hodgson returned home, with an ample supply of materials collected in London and in Oxford, that included "some curious papers" and "letters respecting Border quarrels" copied in the British Museum for Hedley.

In 1811 came Hedley's second marriage, to Miss Barrow, the eldest daughter of William Barrow of Hexham; Hodgson records three daughters of this marriage, who survived their father for many years; another daughter, it seems, died a few days after her half-sister in 1820 at the age of one year, and a son died in infancy. His second marriage brought him some land in Henshaw, to which in 1814 he added a neighbouring property—the estate of the Bower, with the Roman fort that he was presently to excavate; but at that time he had not yet turned his thoughts to Roman research, and it was not until an accidental discovery by one of his tenant's labourers disclosed the east gateway of the fort, four years later, that we find him realizing the possibilities of his new property.

In 1813 he resigned the curacy of Hexham, and for a year lived in Newcastle; and in July 1814 he moved to Kirkwhelpington, where for five years as curate he was

responsible, in the absence of its aged vicar, for the care of that parish. Kirkwhelpington at that period must have been almost as remote from Newcastle as Makendon itself to-day; there was no turnpike road, no post-town near; and the carrier's cart provided the only constant connection with the outside world. Hedley had private means, and the duties of the parish were light enough to enable him to travel, to Scotland—where he seems to have had many friends and acquaintances, including "the great Talisman of historical romance" (as Hodgson calls him), Sir Walter Scott, with whom he corresponded during this period, and whom on one occasion he was to visit at Abbotsford, giving rise to the anecdote which Hodgson relates—to the Lakes, and on one occasion, soon after Waterloo, to France and the Low Countries. But he did not neglect his parish; through his endeavours, the village school was repaired and enlarged, more than a tithe of the cost coming out of his own pocket, and a stone bridge over the Wansbeck was built, thus putting Whelpington in closer touch with Morpeth; and the gardens of the vicarage, as was natural, benefited from his attention. We may quote one of the passages from Hodgson's manuscript notes: "Besides his zealous attention to teach and civilize the poor of Whelpington, his benevolence was largely bestowed upon their temporal wants. Sir J. E. Swinburne of Capheaton for nearly half a century has been employed in either entirely building, or largely contributing to erect numerous bridges in Northumberland. Over the Wansbeck at Whelpington when Mr. Hedley came to the place, he found his inhabitants unable for many days to cross in a cart in winter—he, and the benevolent Baronet, his paritioner, were the first and large promoters of removing this serious difficulty; and the trimness of his garden and the neatness which in his time prevailed about the vicarage-house set an example, which the village had been long in want of."

Whelpington was not the only village for whose educa-

tion he laboured in this period; in December 1816 he conveyed land for a school and for the schoolmaster's house, at the rent of a pepper corn, payable on the feast-day of Saint Michael in every year, to the parish of Corsenside, and so helped to provide for the children of the village from which his mother's people had come. And it was during his residence at Whelpington that he began to communicate the letters to the *Northumberland and Newcastle Magazine*, that to-day give us the best idea of his intellectual attainments.

This paper has already run to greater length than I anticipated when I undertook to write it, and I must be content to forgo extensive quotation from these letters. The first, dated March 1818, gives statistics of longevity in Whelpington parish; Hodgson quotes it in part II, volume i, of his history, for which Hedley was already collecting materials. The next accompanies an extract from Sadler's *Letters*, volume iii, describing the state of the north of England in 1537, the year after the Pilgrimage of Grace, and ends with a quotation from Sadler: "I have copied it for your magazine wishing, Mr. Editor, that Newcastle may always have a 'wyse fellowe and a substancyall' for its Mayor!" The third letter, written in July of the same year, is the longest, and the most valuable of the series; I hope that it will be possible for it to be reprinted in our transactions, for it contains matter that does not appear in print elsewhere, as far as I have been able to ascertain, that has an important bearing on the economic life of Northumberland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. First comes an abstract from a cash account for 1628 and the following years, kept by "a gentleman who lived, at that time, near Stamfordham," and then in Hedley's possession; this is followed by a critical examination of the prices, of clothing and of the staple commodities, in relation to those of the early nineteenth century; and on the price of wool, in particular, he is able to draw on his knowledge of border life in a former

age for an explanation. After quoting four verses of a ballad of Rookhope, "It was this continual and mutual 'reif and felonie,'" he writes, "that brought the price of land, on both sides of the borders, almost to nothing, and that while it diminished the quantity of its produce"; and he quotes his great-grandfather's pocket-book for 1731: "About 100 years ago land was in no request, for the Scots came in and took what people had: for instance of the value of land at that time, Kidland lordship was let for £5 a year, and is now (1731) let for £400 a year." "This same district of sheep farms," Hedley resumes, "which lies around the sources of the Coquet and the Alwen, was, not long ago, farmed for somewhere between £2,000 and £3,000 per annum. So much for security of possession and the various and multiplied blessings of internal peace!"

It was in the spring of the same year that the discovery was made at the Bower, to which I have already referred; to quote the account Hedley communicated to this society three years later: "the tenant having occasion to build a fence, had recourse to some *rudera* near the ramparts of the station, which (*horresco referens*) had, from time immemorial, been the common quarry of the farm, and partly of the neighbourhood, for almost every purpose for which stone is wanted. On digging in front of its east entrance, where the ground slopes down very swiftly to a rivulet, called Bardon Burn, his labourer discovered a flight of stone steps, leading up this declivity, to the entrance itself. On clearing away the rubbish about the gateway, the wall on the left was found perfectly entire to the height of six feet, and about eight feet in width. . . . The entrance was about six feet wide, and had the ordinary bolt hole and cheeks for the door worked in the masonry. The wall on the right had been thrown down nearly to its foundation, and among its ruins was found" the inscription which provided the occasion for the communication from which this account is taken. Hedley himself learnt of the dis-

covery too late to save the flight of steps from the labourer's misguided energy ; but as soon as he heard of it, he made a journey to the site, and my own excavations in 1930 and 1934 have shown that he saved the gateway itself from further destruction. This account is further noteworthy as the first to be communicated to this society, in which dimensions and a view of an excavated Roman structure are given ; and it begins the series of excavation reports, soon to be continued by Hodgson, and in turn by Clayton and Glassford Potter, that makes the quarto series of our transactions still worthy of the closest attention from those of us who follow in his footsteps to-day. His later researches at Chesterholm were to show that Hedley's interest was not merely a casual one ; and the closing sentences of this, his first communication to our society, show him as a pioneer of scientific excavation : " It is strange," he writes, " that from the time of Camden, who first explored them with an antiquarian eye, down to our own, nothing, or next to nothing, has been done towards systematically clearing the ground plan of one of these stations. Might not a proportion of the funds of this society be usefully and legitimately employed in an attempt of this kind ? Great Chesters, Housesteads, and Risingham in Reedwater, each still afford a promising field for this kind of research. Half a dozen labourers for a fortnight, at an expense of not more than five pounds, would clear away much of the rubbish from any one of these stations, and not only discover, it is to be hoped, many curious and precious fragments of antiquity, but throw a very interesting and desirable light on the stationary economy of the Romans, and on the form and arrangement of their castra stativa." To us the estimate of expense may sound as optimistic as Agricola's legion and few auxiliaries to conquer Ireland with ; but the aim was one new to Northumbrian research. And in passing we may rejoice that his advice was to bear fruit. During the next twelve years, a start was made, under Hodgson's direction, at

Housesteads—to be resumed by this society in Bosanquet's classic excavation of 1898; it was this society which carried out the excavations, mainly directed by Gibson, at Great-chesters earlier in the nineties; and the early and most recent researches alike at Risingham have been made by our members: and each site has yielded ample material for that stationary economy whose importance Hedley pointed out.

Late in 1819 Hedley resigned the curacy of Kirkwhelpington, and came to live in Newcastle, where he remained for the next five years; during this period he twice stood for the lectureship of St. John's church, the second time in 1821, in May of which year we find him writing to Hodgson: "I stand again for the Lectureship; and have again pledged to me two-thirds of the subscribers; but I have, nevertheless, I am well aware, not the remotest chance of success"—for his connection with liberal politics was too open for him to have much prospect of preferment in that period of political patronage; and although he was often able, as we have seen on one occasion already, to take duty for his friends, it was not until 1824 that he obtained further active employment. But he used his leisure to good effect. Welford refers to his connection with the Savings Bank and several charitable institutions, as well as with the Lit. and Phil.; in that institution he appears to have taken a particular interest, and one of his services to it was the collection of a series of papers, some of them issuing from his own printing-press at Bensham, whither he presently removed, describing the origins and early days of the society. And now that he was freed from the care of a parish, he was able to devote more time to the study of antiquities. In September 1820 he became a member of the Antiquarian Society (as it was then content to style itself); in January 1821 he communicated to it the paper that has already been quoted; at the February meeting he presented "an ancient ornament of Jet, found in a Stone Chest, in a field called Cruises—at

Park End ”; and during Hodgson’s visit to the south at the end of the month, we find Hedley treating with him for further materials to lay before the society. In December of the same year, he went with Hodgson, Adamson, and Thomas Hodgson to inspect and value the Gibson collection at Ryton, the purchase of which for twenty-five guineas really founded the society’s magnificent collection of Roman inscriptions and sculptures; and in the list of officers for 1822, his name appears, like those of J. T. Brouckett and Thomas Hodgson, among the council of the society. In that year he contributed a longer paper, published later in the first volume of *Archæologia Aeliana*: “An Essay towards ascertaining the Etymology of the Names of Places in the County of Northumberland,” extending to twenty-one pages, that still deserves attention; here I will only quote the closing words of the introduction: “In the meantime, as to the derivations about to be presented to their notice, I conclude, in the often quoted words of the great Roman classic:

—si quid novisti rectius istis;
Candidus imperti; si non—his utere mecum.”

It was a serious essay, sound in method and cautious in judgment, that does credit to its author and to the society that published it, in an age when place-names were seldom studied critically. In the same year, Hodgson’s own paper on the Mithraeum at Housesteads took the form of a letter to him.

Early in 1824 began the last of Hedley’s cures, at Whitfield in Allendale. Mr. Scott, the rector of Whitfield, had been appointed the first archdeacon of Australia, and secured Hedley to take charge of his parish. This was a situation even more remote than Kirkwhelpington, but with its garden and its forty acres of glebe for him to farm it suited him well; “it is indeed quite the bishopric of curacies,” he writes to Hodgson at the end of February, after his first visit to inspect it. And later we are able to

judge of the improvements that he made; "Mr. Hedley's garden at any place would be beautiful," Hodgson writes in 1830, "but here especially, in a very high and exposed situation"—where the contrast with the wildness of the surrounding scenery would enhance the pleasure of the picture in that romantic age.

At Whitfield, Hedley was too far away to take as active an interest as he had previously been able to take in our society's proceedings, though he communicated another paper to it, on some excavations at Whitley Castle, whither (as he tells Hodgson in a letter of December 1826) "Mr. Trevelyan . . . left us on Thursday morning last, professing to be much pleased with our Whitfield lions, and on his road to get a *snoke* of the Roman dunghill at Whitley"; and he made the tedious journey in to Newcastle to attend the December meeting of the society in the following year. Raine now quotes his correspondence with Hodgson more frequently; we find him collecting further materials for the *History*, and fresh subscribers, and at times the two exchange visits. In October 1829 Hedley came to see Hodgson, as the latter writes to Henry Petrie, "for the express purpose of naming a time for our meeting at the station of Little Chesters," to undertake an excavation of the kind that Petrie had been urging Hodgson to carry out; but an early fall of snow, followed by a hard frost, made the project impossible; and it was at Housesteads, in 1830, that the first researches of the kind were made, with Hedley among Hodgson's little band of supporters. And presently it became possible for research to be put in hand again at Little Chesters.

For some time—indeed, as Hodgson tells us, "from the time he purchased the estate of Little Chesters . . . he had marked out this spot as a place to retire to at some period of his life"; but it was not until 1828 that his project began to take shape. The story that Fenwick gives is worth quoting: "The late Mr. Bates, when about to

quit Ridley Hall . . . entertained various parties of his friends at that very beautiful residence. It happened that Mr. Hedley . . . and I, were invited to Ridley Hall at the same time. One morning he asked me to ride with him to examine his station, VINDOLANA. After examining in detail this interesting remains of Roman power, and hearing him expatiate in his glowing style on the several parts of the station, we went through the remainder of his estate. When we came to the site of Chesterholme House, I was overpowered with the beauty of the scene, and giving vent to my feelings, I exclaimed, 'If this property were mine, I should build a cottage ornée on this spot.' He immediately replied, 'I will build such a cottage.' From this simple incident Chesterholme House owes its existence." For his architect Hedley chose John Green, the architect of the Lit. and Phil., who for once let his fancy rove, to produce what Hodgson called "a sweet picture of mosaic work, enlaid upon an emerald gem; a cottage in the Abbotsford style," in place of the "plain, severe, and economical style" with which Welford credits his work.

Hodgson gives different dates for the building of Chesterholm, and for Hedley's removal there from Whitfield, but from Raine's *Memoir* we are able to make out the course of events. On the 20th June, 1831, Hodgson writes to Hedley: "I long to hear of your being at Chesterholm, but not at it as your residence. It must never be anything else but your *Aedes recreandi*: and as soon as you get to it, and can see me, let me know." That same week Hodgson put in hand further digging at Housesteads, and there Hedley joined him, riding there from Chesterholm, "and his horse," says Raine, "mounted the hill with difficulty, so laden was he with his master and the good things which he was bringing to our relief." On the 10th July, however, Hedley is still dating a letter from Whitfield; but on the 5th August Hodgson dedicated his *Memoirs of the Lives of Thomas Gibson, Jonathan*

Harle, and William Turner to the Rev. Anthony Hedley, M.A., of Chesterholm, and by the following month the removal had been made, and we find Hodgson writing, "How do you and Mrs. H. like your new residence?" By a misprint, this letter is dated 1832 in Raine's *Memoir*, but it appears in the chapter devoted to 1831, and all the later references are to Chesterholm, not Whitfield.

From 1831 until his death, Hedley's time was largely spent in excavation, and in the elaboration of his garden; of his excavations there will be more to say elsewhere, but here we may note that they were devoted to the end that he had laid down so clearly in his first communication to this society: it was no mere hunting for treasure, but a serious and successful attempt to throw light on the internal arrangements of the fort; we cannot but regret that his untimely death prevented him from communicating the detailed account which he must have had in mind, and so detracted from the real value of his researches. Many of his friends visited him at Chesterholm, and all speak in the highest terms of its gardens, as well as of his hospitality. "This beautiful little cottage, or antiquarian villa, as it may justly be termed," says Sopwith in his *Treatise on Isometrical Drawing*, published in 1834, "with its adjoining gardens and terraces, forms a striking example of landscape and architectural beauty, though situated in a district where the general aspect of the scenery is wild and forbidding." Professor Pillans writes of "that beautiful and sequestered retreat"; Edward Swinburne of his "very pretty little oasis at Chesterholm"; and Hodgson, in a long account published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1833, and reprinted with slight modifications in his memoir of Hedley, gives an admirable description, too long to quote here. But I cannot forbear to quote Hedley's comment on that description: "(it) is so *John Wilson-ish* that it would seem to have mistaken its way to Sylvanus Urban instead of Blackwood. Mrs. Hedley threatens to send you in a bill for *wine and cake*, should

your account of us tell upon the curiosity of the public; and there are already symptoms that this may be the case." Hodgson made Chesterholm his base for the excavations at Housesteads in 1833, and Sopwith was there at the same time—in passing, I cannot help wondering where room was found to fit them both in; and Chesterholm became the regular port of call for antiquaries wandering in search of Roman remains. It seems that Hedley now conceived the idea of himself attempting a treatise on the Wall, and we find Hodgson reserving the right to quote as much of it as he might please. But it was not to be. To quote John Fenwick once more: "I visited him once after he was comfortably settled in this most enviable situation, where I not only partook of his hospitalities, but enjoyed an intellectual feast of the first order. But, to use an idea of Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall*, I may say that 'the angel of Death was then waiting for him' at Vindolana! and with many good men, I had soon to mourn the loss of a friend whom to know was at once to admire and to love." John Hodgson describes his last days. He had been unwell and confined to the house for a time, when one of his labourers came with news of a Roman vessel, which he had come across in the course of draining, had already broken, and feared he might break further in trying to get it out; and Hedley went out there and then to supervise the work; he caught a chill, and in a week was dead. "The account of his death," says Hodgson, "soon spread far and wide, for the circle of his acquaintance was extensive, and the lamentation within it touching and sincere. His remains were interred at the east end of the beautiful and sequestered chapel-yard of Beltingham; and his grave is now protected with iron railings, and a marble tablet . . . erected to his memory in the chapel."

So far as I have been able to ascertain, no portrait of him survives; and the only description is that given by Raine: "In his personal appearance and demeanour he

was robust, frank, and open-hearted, just for all the world the kind of man to have been looked up to in his native vale of Reedwater in days of old, as the best planner and leader of a foray, or the best fighter when it became a matter of blows." In the obituary notice in the *Courant*, we are told of the suavity of his manners, the liveliness of his disposition, and the exhaustless stores of his cultivated and capacious mind; and the writer concludes, "His library was peculiarly rich in local works and MS. collections, and his residence of Chesterholm, by the beauty of its antiquarian villa and romantic grounds, will remain a lasting monument to his taste."

That library is now dispersed and forgotten—thanks to the kindness of our member Mr. John Gibson I am able to exhibit two of Hedley's books, but they testify to his travels rather than to his study of local antiquities; and the garden whose beauties Hodgson described was soon to become overgrown and lost. The Roman altars which Hodgson found deep in the earth in Beltingham churchyard in September 1835, and placed "one on each side of the green grave where a 'Druid lies'" (to quote a manuscript note from Mr. Oxberry's collections), have been removed to our museum, and Anthony Hedley has become little more than a name, known only through Bruce's slight picture. But I hope that I have been able, however imperfectly, to show you that his career and character were such as his successors in this society may rightly remember. His works, such of them as survive, may be few: but his influence remains, and we will look on him as well as his friend John Hodgson as a patron of our researches into the history of Northumberland's early days.