



Dr Henry Lonsdale 1816-1876

Dr Henry Lonsdale's short biography of Sarah Losh is the main source of information on Sarah's life.

Lonsdale was born in Carlisle on 25th February, 1816, when Sarah Losh was thirty years old. His father was a tradesman. At fifteen he was apprenticed to the leading medical practice in the city and then, three years later, he went to Edinburgh to study medicine.

After graduating in 1838, suffering from overwork, he retired to the comparative quiet of a country practice at Raughton Head, within a few miles of Woodside. He was very active in the area: he was a founding member of the Inglewood Agricultural Society, gave scientific lectures and was a keen advocate of the Cumberland Muse, Susanna Blamire. Susanna Blamire was an unpublished eighteenth century poet who had lived in nearby Stockdalewath and had written a very able long poem of country life named after the village, as well as attractive lyrics in both dialect and standard English. Lonsdale later published her work. The Blamire family belonged to the rural gentry and moved in the same circles as the Loshes. Jane Blamire was Sarah's intimate friend. It is possible that Lonsdale came to know Sarah Losh at this time, although he remained in the area for under two years. It is almost certain that he was never acquainted with Katharine.

He returned to Edinburgh where he had a brief, busy and distinguished career, before he again retreated to Carlisle. This time he was suffering with bronchial problems.

In 1846 he was appointed physician to the Cumberland Infirmary and from then on he became closely involved in the public health of the city. He established a sanitary association in Carlisle and was publishing medical papers which received national attention.

It is at this time he probably came to be better acquainted with Sarah Losh. His wide culture, the range of his interests and his radical politics would have recommended him. He implies, in his biographical note, in passing, that he was a dinner guest at Woodside. He also claims to have been a close friend. In an anecdote about the reading of Baron von Reichenbach, he smoothly indicates how he was readily admitted to the retiring lady's Spartan private rooms. Sarah Losh was 59 when Lonsdale, then 29, returned to Carlisle in 1845, and she had eight more years to live.

Lonsdale married Eliza Indiana Bond in 1851 and seems to have settled into the life of a gentleman, living in a fine house, Rose Hill, two miles east of Carlisle, and travelling widely on the continent. He became an enthusiast for European, and especially Italian, art and architecture. He retained his post at the Cumberland Infirmary until 1868, but his later years were devoted to the writing of biographies on notable locals, including Doctor Heysham and the sculptor, Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson. The six volumes of *The Cumberland Worthies*, which contains the account of Sarah Losh together with brief notices of her father and uncles, began publication in 1867.

Lonsdale was writing at least fifteen years after Sarah Losh's death. He indicates that he had access to private papers. He was able to read what must have been an exceptional journal of her continental tour and her notes on history and possibly much else in the personal papers of a highly articulate woman, but nothing of her poetry and other literary writing. He was a friend of James Arlosh and would have been in contact for many years with people who had known her well. He claims a close acquaintance with Miss Losh and was well qualified temperamentally and intellectually to be her biographer. He certainly admired her, and, for someone thirty years her junior, he seems to have been very smitten by her physical appearance.

He was very perceptive in appreciating the artistic significance of Sarah Losh's work, and we are very fortunate to have such an able, if brief, biography of Sarah Losh by a near contemporary.