



George and William Losh

George Losh (1766 - 1846)

George Losh was born at Woodside in the year 1766, and educated for commercial life in Newcastle. Like his other brothers, he studied abroad, and imbibed a stronger liking for technical and scientific work than commerce. He was a well-informed person, and his conversation was copious, engaging, and instructive. In his tall, handsome figure, and well-developed head, you discerned a marked superiority of character; and his cleverness, geniality, and worth, gained him hosts of friends. During a winter's visit to St Petersburg he surprised the Russians by walking out on days of intense cold without a topcoat, whilst they were wrapped up in furs. His bodily temperament, so fair and sanguine, explained this power of resistance to cold on the same ground that nature has clothed the bear of the arctic regions in white, and given dark skins to the inhabitants of the tropics.

Returning to Newcastle, he instituted some commercial undertakings with Mr Lubbren, and one of these was the manufacture of alkalis. Success did not attend the copartnery, and the failure of Surtees' Bank affecting so many interests, threw a cloud over all commercial efforts.

About the year 1798, George Losh married Miss Frances Wilkinson, one of the "three beauties of Carlisle," a most fascinating and clever person, by whom he had a family of five daughters. After residing for some years at Saltwellside, near Gateshead, he took his family to France, and continued his interest in the progress of chemistry, not unfrequently communicating his views on the science derived from his Parisian contemporaries, to his brother William, in charge of the Walker Alkali Works. In his latter days he returned to Newcastle, and died there at the venerable age of eighty years.

William Losh (1770 - 1859)

William Losh, born at Woodside in 1770, shared the same teaching as his brother George. He was then sent to a collegiate institution in Hamburg, where he met Alexander von Humboldt. Humboldt and Losh were great companions, and one day ventured out to sea in an open boat, when a storm arose that baffled their exertions for hours. Humboldt felt the cold, became desponding, and might have succumbed had not Losh stripped off his own coat and vest and wrapped his friend in them, at the same time encouraging him by hopeful words, and showing redoubled vigour at the oars; in this way the German's spirits and bodily circulation were kept up. They parted in their teens; yet so true had been their friendship, that Humboldt, after forty years engaged in travel and exploration of the earth's surface, making the civilised world largely his debtor on account of his geographical discovery and general philosophic culture, retained a thoroughly kind regard for his collegiate friend; and in his old age stood godfather to a granddaughter of Mr Losh's christened in Paris.

William Losh was brought up with the view of representing his brother John's interest at the Walker Alkali Works. He was a clever and successful man of business . . . and had the art of making the most of everybody under his direction. Few men possessed greater educational advantages. He resided in Sweden for some time, and could speak its language; he afterwards travelled through the Baltic provinces, indeed through the greater part of Europe. He was the consular representative of Sweden and Prussia at Newcastle-on-Tyne. His name is specially associated with the alkali manufacture and engineering works at Walker.

He married Miss Alice Wilkinson, sister to his brother George's wife, and had issue two daughters.

Henry Lonsdale from *The Worthies of Cumberland*, 1873.