



## James Losh 1763-1833

James Losh was the eldest of Sarah's uncles. After the death of John Losh, he concerned himself with the welfare of his nieces and made regular visits to Woodside. He was a radical and a political and social reformer and a friend of Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge and many other significant writers and thinkers. He was a Unitarian, and though he was a distinguished barrister and a great man of public affairs, it was only after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, at the end of his life, that he was made Recorder of Newcastle.

Henry Lonsdale described his life as follows:

James Losh was born at Woodside, June 10, 1763. . . . He had the same education as his brother John, at Wreay, Sedbergh, and Cambridge, where he took his Bachelor's degree in 1786. During his residence at Cambridge he made happy friendships with men who distinguished themselves in different walks of life—*e.g.*, John Bell, K.C.; John Tweddell, the classical scholar and traveller; the Hon. Charles Warren.

After leaving Cambridge, he for some time studied for the Church; but being led to adopt Unitarian principles, he forsook theology for the law, and having entered Lincoln's Inn, was in due time called to the Bar.

His love of liberty, not less than a desire to improve his educational status, induced him to visit France during the throes of the great Revolution in 1792. . . .

In the year 1797 he settled as a barrister-at-law in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in February of the following year (1798) married Cecilia, daughter of the Rev. Dr Baldwin of Aldingham, Lancashire, by whom he had five sons and three daughters. In 1799 he became a member of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, and shortly afterwards had the honour of being elected one of its vice-presidents. In 1802 he warmly promoted the new institution for permanent lectures. He co-operated with Dr Clarke and others in the enlargement and rearrangement of the Infirmary, and the establishment of a fever-house.

Being in communion with the Unitarians—a large and influential, and, it may be added, most intellectual body in Newcastle, under the happy guidance of the Rev. Mr Turner—Mr Losh aided his minister in many excellent schemes for the improvement of the morals and education of the young. In 1810 he assisted in the establishment of the Jubilee Schools, and took no less interest in the formation of infant schools. . . .

Mr Losh was an active member of the Society of "The Friends of the People;" and in conjunction with Mr Tierney drew up the celebrated petition for Parliamentary Reform, which was presented to the House of Commons by Mr Grey (afterwards Earl Grey) on Monday, 6th May 1793 . . . For nearly forty years he took a leading part in all the great movements of the day on the Liberal side of politics, and was equally active in promoting a knowledge of social questions then but little recognised by the general public. In the cause of the Abolition of Slavery, Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Test or Corporation Acts, and other efforts to ameliorate the social and political status of Great Britain, Mr Losh was a conspicuous actor, and rendered prizeable service to the cause he espoused. One who knew him long and intimately, described him as "high-minded, honourable, and independent in his public conduct; warm-hearted, affectionate, and benevolent in private life; and mild and unassuming in both; ardently beloved by his friends, and held in the highest estimation by all who had any intercourse with him." . . . He was among the most active promoters, if not mainly instrumental, in obtaining powers for constructing the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway. The directors of the railway appointed Mr Losh their chairman; and the same honour was subsequently conferred on his son James, in token of their appreciation of the meritorious services rendered by both gentlemen to the undertaking.

In his own professional walk Mr Losh enjoyed large public confidence. His legal acumen, honourable and straightforward dealings, made his opinions respected beyond most men of the day. He was the personal friend of Bell and Brougham, and all the lawyers of his time. On the decease of Mr Cookson, the Corporation of Newcastle did themselves honour by electing Mr Losh to the dignified office of Recorder.

Mr Losh died at Greta Bridge, Yorkshire, on 23rd September 1833, in the seventy-first year of his age. . . . Among many friends at a distance who regretted him was Wordsworth the poet, who, in writing to Archdeacon Wrangham in 1834, said he had been robbed of Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and James Losh in the previous year. '