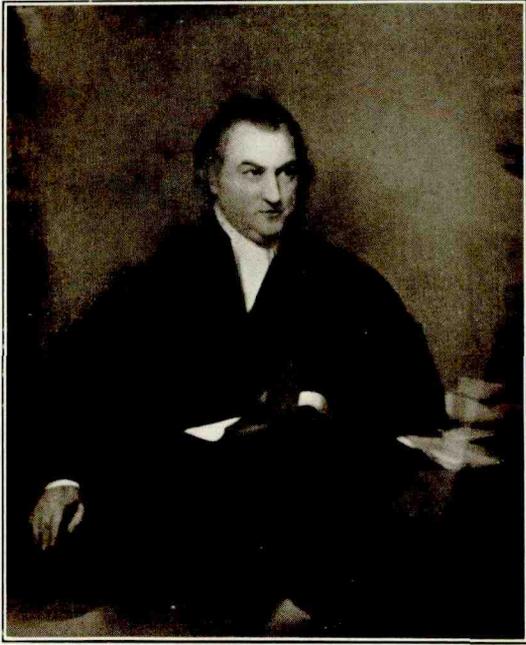


FIG. 15.



ROBERT WILLIAMSON.

SOME NOTES ON ROBERT WILLIAMSON,
 PRINTER AND STATIONER OF LIVERPOOL.

By A. H. Arkle.

Read 15 November, 1928.

THESE notes are not intended to be final and complete because in the first place I have not yet been able to discover when and from where he came to Liverpool. Nothing so far as I know has yet been printed to show whether he was born in Liverpool; there were certainly one or two families of that name in the town, but whether Robert Williamson was a member of any of these families I have not yet been able to discover.

He was the printer of a work called *The Liverpool Memorandum Book* published in 1752 for the year 1753, a book (said to be published annually at 2s. per copy) of which only two copies are known, one each at the Liverpool Free Library and the Liverpool Athenæum.

On the title-page of a pamphlet *Britain's Remembrancer* published in 1755, the printer is Robert Williamson "at his Circulating Library near the Exchange."

As Picton says, he was a man of multifarious occupations, viz.: printer, bookseller, stationer, editor, publisher, agent for the State Lottery, general broker, auctioneer, etc., etc.

He started his newspaper, *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, on the 28 May 1756, and he continued until about the latter end of 1763. In December 1763, the paper is stated to be published by A. Williamson. However, in January 1765, R. Williamson resumed the direction of the newspaper till the 31 March 1769, when he disappears once more, A. Williamson again resuming the position.

On the 19 December 1764, there is mention in the

Advertiser of Notice of Dividend on Estate of Robert Williamson of Liverpool, Merchant, so no doubt he had been in money difficulties.

It seems that some time in 1769 Robert Williamson left the country and must have died abroad. His wife's Will dated 26 January 1785 mentions the husband as "late of Liverpool but more late of Black Town, Madras (that was the name given to the Commercial Quarter)."

* I think most people assumed that A. Williamson was his wife or widow, but from further evidence, it is clear that the A. stood for Alice and was his sister.

It is only right to say that from information given by Mr. Tinne Berthon of Selsey, Chichester, who has old Liverpool connections, I first discovered that Mr. Robert Williamson's wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Josiah Wilkinson of Leigh, Lancs., and there were five children, two sons, James and Josiah, and three daughters, Mary, Elizabeth and Alice (no doubt named after her aunt).

This Alice, the sister of Robert, who for upwards of sixteen years (she took T. Billinge as partner in 1785) carried on the paper, must have been a woman of more than ordinary ability. She died in September 1793. Letters of administration were granted to her nephew, Josiah Williamson, mentioned above. Alice, one of the daughters of Robert Williamson, was married on 26 July 1789 at St. George's Church to Thomas Morland, partner in the firm of Gregson Sons, Peake and Morland, Bankers, 15/16 Paradise Street,¹ and she was still living as late as 1849.

A. Williamson printed or published the under-mentioned :—

1752. The Liverpool Memorandum Book.

1752. The Impenetrable Secret, being a new and curious method to discover person's thoughts with the key.

¹ See *Liverpool Banks and Bankers*.

- 1755. Britain's Remembrancer.
- 1756. Reply to Abraham Bourn's Free and Candid Consideration.
- 1757. Reply to Abraham Bourn's Free and Candid Consideration.
- 1757. Christianity of the New Testament, by Peter Whitfield.
- 1757/59. Correspondence of Joseph Clegg.
- 1758. The Linen and Cotton Broadware Weavers' Apology.
- 1757. The Liverpool Charter.
- 1756. Gary — Fables in two parts, by the late Mr. Gary.
- 1761. Poll Book.
- 1760. John Newton's Sermons (late Slave Captain).
- 1765. The Englishman's Guide to the French Language, by N. de Trogoff, Teacher in Liverpool.
- 1767. Nathaniel Tucker—a Catalogue of Paintings performed by N. T., etc.
- 1766. Williamson's Plan of Liverpool.
Williamson's S.W. Prospect of Liverpool (only copy in the Athenæum).

I ought to add for some of the particulars of Robert Williamson's Publications I am indebted to *Lancashire Printed Books*, Bibliography compiled and edited by A. J. Hawkes, Wigan Public Library.