ARMSTRONG John (Rev) Appointment

An extract from The Courier (Hobart, Tas.) Friday 20 January 1854.

New Bishop - The Rev. John Armstrong, vicar of Tidenham, Gloucestershire, has been nominated by the Duke of Newcastle to the new bishopric of Graham's Town, South Africa.

An extract from The Courier (Hobart, Tas.)

Thursday 21 August 1856.

DEATH OF THE LORD BISHOP OF
GRAHAMSTOWN.

We have recently briefly reverted to the unexpected death of the Lord Bishop of Grahamstown, Cape of Good Hope, and now deem it our duty to place upon record some particulars of his previous career, for which we are indebted to Mr. Godlonton's journal.

"The Lord Bishop was the eldest son of Dr. Armstrong, the eminent physician, whose wife was Sarah, daughter of Charles Sparman, Esq., of Thornely, in the County of Durham; was born at Bishop's Wearmouth, August 22nd, 1813, and had the misfortune to lose his father at the early age of 16. He was educated at Charter-house School, after which he became Crewe Exhibitioner at Lincoln College, Oxford; and in 1836 he took his degree of B.A. with honours.

Shortly after this he was ordained Deacon on a curacy in Somersetshire, and subsequently Priest. He next became vicar of Exeter Cathedral, and very soon afterwards Saints-day preacher in the Cathedral. In 1843 he was presented to the Rectory of St. Paul's in the same city, and was married on the 23rd of February of the same year to Frances, eldest daughter of Edward Whitmore, Esq. It was at this period of his life that the late Bishop turned his active mind to the promotion of literature, and published his first paper in the British Critic. He also contributed several successful articles to the Christian Remembrancer and English Review. But he was not contented with these efforts while opportunities presented themselves for effecting further good by increasing exertion, and hence he became the chief instrument in forming a society

for the cultivation of church music, and a Literary and Scientific Institute, and by his zealous efforts these rapidly attained success. He was also a valuable member of the Architectural Society in that City, before whom he read an interesting and able paper on monuments in churches,which was afterwards published.

In October 1845, he exchanged Boroughs with Rev. J.H.S Buur of Tidenham, Gloucestershire, to which he then removed. Shortly after this he began what is termed the great work of his English lifethe reform of the female penitentiary systemy. These efforts were eminently successful, and great credit is due to His Lordship for thus using his power on behalf of those who had been unfortunately led from the paths of virtue. Too frequently the cold neglect and inattention of the world leads them to deeper crimes, and hence they seldom retrace their stepsso that it is more gratifying to speak of the labours of one in a neglected field of this nature, which is despised by most, than in one which sought for and well looked after. This work was begun by a very powerful article in the "Quarterly," which attracted particular attention even from parties in this country; it was followed by other able articles on the same subject, which resulted in an entirely new system, the distinguishing feature of which is, that the penitents are under the care of unpaid gentlewomen, instead of paid matrons. This Christian and benevolent work, together with his literary labours, encroached upon a large portion of his time, but yet he did not neglect the efficient discharge of his duties as a parish priest. His zeal and industry were unbounded, and two schools, used also as chapels, in outlying parts of the parish, and a church, remain as monuments of his labours at Tidenham. The Tracts of the Christian Seasons,' edited by him (and published by Parker, Oxford) began in 1849, and met with surprising successto these he contributed largely. They were followed by a second series equally successful.

Then began the 'Parochial Tracts,' and while these were going on, the Sermons for the Christian Season's' all eminently successful. When he was designated Bishop of Grahamstown, he had embarked on another literary work, so that during the whole of his career in the mother country he was most actively engaged in promoting literature and science, administering to the spiritual wants of his congregation, and in employing his talent and the influence his position gave him, on behalf of neglected, suffering humanity. As soon as he was consecrated, which was on St Andrew's day, 1853, at the parish of Lambeth, he displayed the greatest anxiety to leave for the field of his future labours, but being unavoidably detained he found ample employment during the interval in publishing a volume of sermons, and in collecting men and means for carrying on the work of his diocese. Dr. Armstrong arrived in Table Bay on the 29th Sept, 1854, and in Grahamstown on the 26th October. Since this period his Lordship's labours, whether in religious or social matters, are known to many of our readers. His first care was to look after his Church in this City, and in this work he displayed great

zeal and activity. New life and vigour were infused into its management, and the consequence was, a large increase of members, and a still larger sphere of usefulness. Vitality and life, by his example and teaching, were imparted to every department, and, in many matters of detail, renovation and improvement took place. Shortly after this, he visited the stations in the country towns, and in Kaffraria, and fixed upon other spots on which to establish mission stations. For the conducting of these he sent urgent appeals to the mother country for men and money, which were successful. As soon as these preliminary arrangements were made in aid of the Church, His Lordship exhibited a desire to advance the mental and intellectual tastes of the people, and through his exertions a course of lectures were given in aid of the Albany Library. Something more endurable, however, was aimed at, and efforts were made to establish a Literary Society, which should unite all classes and conditions of men upon a common platform.

This unfortunately was not so successful, but still the design was good, and whatever may be the opinions of those who did not agree with the means employed for effecting this desirable object, all are agreed that the zeal, earnestness and ability displayed in the prosecution of this work were most commendable, and though not attended with direct success, they were indirectly not without their good effect, since they assisted to awaken in the minds of many a desire for literary pleasures, while in others they excited a praiseworthy spirit of emulation, and inspired them also with the same feelings which animated his own breast.

During this period His Lordship frequently laboured under indispositionhis general health was not very goodhis constitution was shattered, and the untiring exertions he made increased his physical infirmities. Shortly before his final illness, he took a journey to King William's Town on a tour of inspection; this, together with the jolting of the waggon, unfortunately proved too much for his then state of health, and the ill effects of it were felt immediately after his return to this city; he was attacked with the influenza, and while thus affected, he delivered the first lecture in aid of the General Institutea society which he had laboured to establish, and for whose prosperity he was deeply solicitous. This lecture was universally approved ofbut the exertion hastened his final separation. In a few days small spots of purpura appeared, and shortly assumed the dangerous form of purpura haemorrhagica, in which copious bleeding from internal muscous membranes takes place. Every effort was made that medical skill and experience could devise to stay the progress of the disease, but human efforts were unavailing.

The invitation had gone forth from a gracious Providence, and the spirit quitted its mortal tenement for the bosom of its Redeemer, at eight o'clock on Friday evening the 16th May. His death was immediatethe exertion made to sign a paper led, it is supposed, to the rupture of an internal vessel, for suddenly the pen fell, a shriek was

uttered, and in a few moments the spirit had returned to God who gave it. The sad toll of the church bell announced the fact about an hour afterwards. Very general and deep sympathy is expressed for the bereaved family, and all felt that a public loss had been sustainedone who during his short sojourn amongst us fully proved that he would have laboured zealously for the advance of science, literature, and religion.

The funeral took place on Monday, the 19th May, and though no invitations were issued, almost all the inhabitants were present at the Church at the hour appointed. The coffin was placed upon a guncarriage, and as it was silently conveyed up the aisle of the church the congregation stood up. The pall bearers were, R. Graham, Esq., civil commissioner, R. Southey, Esq., Resident Secretary, and Messrs. Irving, Booth, Beck and Campbell. The funeral was attended by the Clergy of every denomination, by the members of the Albany Brethren Benefit Society in procession, by the public, by the boys of St. Andrew's collegiate school, by the children of the Sunday school and by all the officers in garrison, together with His Excellency General Jackson and Staff. Many ladies attended in their carriages, while others in mourning attire moved with the procession. It was one of the largest that has ever been seen in this town, and thus sufficiently testifies that the late Bishop of Grahamstown was highly respected and esteemed by the whole community, in whose behalf he appeared anxious to employ all his powers.

Article Transcribed by Don Cameron

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