TRIERMAIN CASTLE.

Photo. by Mr. W. L. Fletcher. TO FACE P. 247.

ART. VI.—*Triermain Castle.* By W. T. MCINTIRE, B.A.

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OF all the minor fortresses of the Borderland none, perhaps, is better known by name than that before the mutilated remains of which we are now standing—the far-famed Castle of Triermain.

The creative genius of Sir Walter Scott, in his "Bridal of Triermain," has raised from these scanty remnants of former strength—remnants, by the way, of more considerable extent in his day—an airy structure of magic and romance. The haunting melody of Coleridge's "Christabel" has given the name of Triermain a musical significance all its own; while even the few readers of Robert Carlyle's "De Vaux, or the heir of Gilsland—a poem I have seen blasted with the cruel epithet of "meritorious" —will bear witness to the soporific effect of the author's allusions to Triermain.

It may well be, therefore, a cause for momentary disappointment to find so small a relic of all the reputed splendours of Triermain; to find that these splendours themselves are but a figment of the poet's imagination, and that of all the Rolands of the junior branch of the De Vaux family who might have been the hero of Scott's romance, the only personal glimpse we obtain is an epitaph recorded by John Denton, in his "Accompt of the County of Cumberland," as existing in Lanercost Church—"S^{r} Roland Vaux y^{t} sometime was ye Lord of Triermaine is dead his body clad in lead and ligs lawe under this stane. Evin as we evin so was he on earth a levined man, evin as he evin so mon we for all the craft we can"—a

succinct and highly edifying statement, but hardly of the stuff whereon romances are made.

And yet, though stripped of their garment of romance and more fully recorded in the times of their decay than in those of their prime, these ruins are not without interest, bringing vividly before us as they do more than one phase of border history.

The site of the Castle, upon an elevated mound in the midst of a wide valley, is one of considerable strength; and its position, about a mile to the west of the old Maiden Way, between the passages of the King Water on the north and of the Irthing on the south, must have placed it right in the track of many a border raid by way of Bewcastle and Spade Adam. Doubtless, much in its history would justify the statement of Alexander King, in his well known report upon the fortified manors and castles late in the possession of Leonard Dacre, that—" a faire castle called Tradermayne, a house of great strength and of good receipt " was " a very convenient place for both annoying of the Enemy and defending the country."

With the early history of the site of the Castle and its neighbourhood, of its possession at the time of the Conquest by the British chieftains, Gilander and his son, Gilmore, and of its acquisition by a junior branch of the family of Hubert de Vallibus or De Vaux, I need say but little; for the matter has been dealt with previously in these *Transactions* both by the late Chancellor Ferguson and by Mr. T. H. B. Graham.

Upon one point, however, I should like to add a word. As is well known, the Chartulary of Lanercost records the fact that Gilmore, last native lord of Triermain, built on his land a chapel of wattles, which, when Robert De Vaux founded Lanercost Priory in expiation of the murder of Buith, was handed over to that institution, and finally disappeared about the time of Edward II. The site of this chapel is unknown; but, on the occasion of my visit

to Triermain a few days ago, I was informed by the tenant of the farm, Mr. Dalziel—to whose kindness I should like to bear a very willing testimony—that a strong local tradition connects the site of this vanished chapel with a level spot in the bend of a stream of clear water, at the bottom of the large meadow to the west of the farm. There is nothing to support this tradition, though it is of interest to record that, when last the fields had corn crops upon them, Mr. Dalziel noticed traces of a depression which looked like the remains of an old road or pathway leading down to the spot from the hill on the south.

From the time of the grant by Robert De Vaux to his bastard brother, Roland (living 1212) until the reign of Edward IV, the manor or Triermain remained in the hands of this junior branch of the De Vaux family. The well-known schoolmaster and antiquary, Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby—who, as an early student of the Roman Wall, visited the locality in 1599 and 1601—records, in a communication to his friend, the famous William Camden, that—" This Tridermaine, an old castle having the Vauxes' arms set in stone very ancient on the gaite-house, standeth a little without the picts' wall, northward on the water of King."

The arms of this branch of the De Vaux family, " Vert a bend dexter checquy Or and Gules "—whereas those of the senior branch were " Argent a bend checquy Or and Gules "—occur on a tomb in the choir of Lanercost Church.

The last direct descendant of the Triermain branch of the family was Jane Vaux who married Sir Richard Salkeld of Corby (d. 1500), and is buried with him in the tomb in the north aisle of Wetheral church, visited by this Society upon the occasion of a recent excursion. This Jane's daughters married respectively a Blenkinsopp and a De Multon; and their moieties of the manors of Triermain and Corby were eventually purchased by the Howards

With the advent of the Dacres as barons of Gilsland, the castle of Triermain seems to have been more or less abandoned for the new castle of Askerton, some 3½ miles away, and to have fallen into neglect and ruin.

Indeed the whole district, toward the close of the 16th century, was evidently in a pitiable state of lawlessness and disorder.

In Christopher Dacre's "Survey" of 1580, we are told that—"Trivermain house or castel . . . . . is all for the most pte fallen downe and decayed, the repairing and new reedifieing where of wth helpe of ye stones of ye olde buildinge and ye woods belonginge to ye lord and owner of ye same is esteamed to 300^{li} beside the new casting of ye moote w^{ch} untill a greater necessitie may be spared." The neighbouring castles of Naworth, Askerton and Thirlwall seem to have been in little better repair; in fact the state of the defences of this part of the Border was a grave anxiety to the Warden.

It is almost amusing to read the reports of 1580 upon the decay of border service, and to note the causes to which it is attributed: the long peace (perhaps we who have enjoyed nearly six years of a peace can understand); the neglect of horse-breeding by tenants who prefer to keep cattle "to manure their dear farms;" the exactions of owners in fines and grassums; the absenteeism of keepers of Castles; deadly private feuds.

Triermain evidently suffered along with neighbouring places, though the figures of the muster of 1580 of "Tredermaine Lordshippe" are not so discreditable. Thirty-one tenants attended this muster; and it is interesting, in reading their names, to note how many of their descendants are still residing in the neighbourhood. There are several Tweddalls, Bells, Cragills, Hathertons or Hethertons, Barnfathers and Robsons upon the list. Their accoutrements, according to the report were: jacks 7; steel caps, 13; spears or lances, 32.

Sorely were these weapons needed. In the list of complaints of raids in 1583, Christopher Tweddall accuses "Long John Elliot and Simonds Rynion" of the theft of "ij oxen"; and Hobbe Tweddall claims for "ij horses" stolen by Hugh of Harden. In 1589 "Robert Tweddall of Burdoswald" claims for "26 kye and oxen, 2 horses and spoil etc"; Hobbe Tweddal for "30 kye and oxen and a horse and mare"; Thomas Barnfather and "poor widow Hatherton" for "40 kye and oxen"; The widow of John Cragill and Michael Cragill of Walton Woode for "31 kye and oxen, a naig and spoile of his house." These are only a few examples which serve to illustrate the manner in which Triermain suffered at the hands of raiders.

It is not to be wondered at that the muster of 1598 held before John Musgrave, the land serjeant of Gilsland, shows a very unsatisfactory state of things. The muster record reads: sufficient, 3; not sufficient, 32; footmen, 5. Of the neighbouring Askerton it is reported—"Richard Graeme came not, all the rest of the tenants are heryed and gone."

Perhaps, the responsibility for this grevious state of affairs is to be traced to Thomas Carleton and his family—those "Inglish disobedients" as they are termed in a report upon a raid against Carlisle.

As land serjeant, Thomas Carleton resided at Askerton Castle, and was responsible for the defence of the barony of Gilsland. He seems to have been a thorough opportunist, at one time secretly favouring the Scots and harbouring their raiding bands, at another sending a most useful and interesting report to Burleigh upon the duties of a land-serjeant—duties he seems to have neglected so thoroughly. Poor Lord Scrope, the warden of the Western Marches, seems to have found him a thorn in the flesh. Scrope's reports are full of the enormities committed by Thomas Carleton and his family. Among the crimes attributed to them in his dispatches, are border-treason,

raiding, unjust exactions of fines, harbouring of Scottish raiders, conspiracy to rescue Kinmont Willie—then a prisoner at Carlisle, arson and murder.

But Carlton had powerful friends at court, and was aided and abetted by the Lowthers. Lord Scrope generally had to stand on the defensive and to bear—as he complains in his letters to Burleigh—"the brunt of calumny and misrepresentation."

To those of us who know how hard it is to be quit of an objectionable tenant, it is amusing to trace the failure of Lord Scrope to eject Carleton from Askerton Castle—"the only house in the neighbourhood," the latter maintains, "fit to be the habitation of a land serjeant." Though Lord Scrope had secured the appointment of John Musgrave as land-serjeant in the place of his enemy, the latter stoutly refused to vacate his office or to budge from the coveted castle, and the long correspondence upon the subject leaves him still in possession of the field of battle.

For one thing we may have to be grateful to Thomas Carleton; for it was he or one of his family, who by his timely warning put Robert Cary upon his guard, and enabled him to save bloodshed between the men of Carlisle and the Graemes, an episode which ranks among the most interesting of those recounted in that fascinating record of border history—the memoirs of Robert Cary.

As late as 1600, the Carletons fluttered the dovecotes of the peaceful burghers of Carlisle by raiding "Ricardgate." "They brack and cut upp postes that contayned the yron cheynes (made for the keepeing and strength of Eadenbrygg by night) and cut up their doores, toke prisoners, etc., and some of them came to the City Walls near the Castle crying "upon them, upon theym, a Dayker, a Dayker, a read bull, a read bull . . . . . forcing the citizens in their defencyve array for the repayre of the

walls, and the beacon to be set in fyre, for the warning of the Wardenry."*

We can understand, then, the gravity of the situation, reported at the muster of 1598—" The Carletons have all the Queen's houses of strength in Gilsland in their hands and placed divers Scots in them. Thomas Carleton has Askerton House, demesne and mill; Tryermaine House and demesne mill called the Hole Mill."

With the union of the crowns of England and Scotland, the state of the district seems to have changed gradually for the better; but the castle of Triermain was not repaired. Mention of the manor occurs several times in the Household Accounts of Lord William Howard, under the headings of rents received, repairs to the mill, etc.

The Lysons quote Thomas Denton's MS., as stating that, at Triermain, a tower of the mansion of the Vaux family was removed in 1688.

In 1832, a great portion of the remaining ruin fell, and its stones—largely pillaged in the first instance from the Roman Wall—found a new employment in the construction and repair of neighbouring houses.

The Castle occupied a plateau upon the summit of a slight rising. It was moated, the remains of the moat being very clearly traceable upon the east and south-east.

A Robert De Vaux was granted a licence to crenellate on Feb. 4th, 1340; and the existing fragments of masonry may probably date from somewhere about the 14th century.

In plan, Triermain Castle was a quadrangle, enclosed by a curtain wall, with its sides facing the cardinal points of the compass. There were towers at its eastern and western extremities.

So far as it is possible to ascertain the original dimensions of the castle by reference to the scanty remains of the

* Cal. Border Papers, II, 736.

masonry of its curtain wall, I would estimate these as 73 feet from east to west and 69 feet from north to south. Triermain was, therefore, a smaller castle than its somewhat similar neighbour at Bewcastle.

The larger fragment of masonry—now buttressed and preserved from further dilapidation through the care of the late Earl of Carlisle—was evidently a portion of some interior building. The springing of the arches of two doorways may be seen in it.

At the western end of the plateau are fragments which may represent the remains of a gate-house, and still further to the west are the scanty remains of some smaller structure.

Such is the Castle of Triermain, a place more remarkable for the number of different spellings of its name than for the extent of its remains, but one of which the fragmentary history does something to help us to realise the state of the borders at the end of the 16th century and might well repay further research.