

RIPON:

ITS WAKEMEN AND THEIR ANCIENT BADGE.

By THOMAS CARTER, Esq.

THE city of Ripon¹ stands on a gentle eminence, about 250 feet above sea-level, and within an angle formed by the confluence of the rivers Ure and Skell. Hence, it is supposed to derive its name from Ripa, the bank of a stream.

The Ure, Yorkshire's noblest river, and the parent of its name, is of respectable volume as it flows past the city, having already received many tributaries from the hills and fells; and from its impetuosity, especially when in flood, it is said to take its name from Urus, a wild ox. The river Skell, from the Saxon word "Scell," a spring, immediately before its confluence with the Ure, gathers into its bosom its twin-sister, the Laver. Both these streams have their sources in a range of moorlands, some parts of which attain an altitude of 1800 feet, and which separate Ripponshire on the west from Nidderdale, and merge on the north into Mashamshire. It is a well-watered and a well-wooded district. On the east of the city, it is scarcely to be surpassed in the fine cultivation and the fertility of its corn lands, and which, doubtless, even in the times of the Wakemen, contributed largely to their "corn dues and market sweepings;" on the west, trending upwards towards the moors, in a series, partly of arable, but chiefly of pasture and meadow lands, intersected with narrow valleys; the beds of various becks or streams, but chiefly of those of the Laver and the Skell. On this

¹ Before I proceed to speak of the principal subjects of this memoir—the Wakemen of Ripon and their ancient badge—I have thought it desirable, by way of introduction and possibly elucidation, to give a brief description of Ripon and its neighbourhood, as well as a sketch of its history, compiled chiefly from the various local works, and especially that of the late Mr. J. R. Walbran, for the loan of several of which, rare and out of print, I have been indebted to the kindness of Mr. W. Harrison, who

inherits much of his father's antiquarian predilections and knowledge.

I cannot but regret that the compilation of this narrative has not fallen to the lot of others more able than myself. It has been in obedience only to the wishes of some eminent members of the Institute that I have undertaken the duty, and I therefore trust all the more for generous forbearance and indulgent criticism in this my first archæological essay.



Belt and Horn of the Wakeman of Ripon.

side would be the commons and the forests, of which I shall afterwards speak. It is a neighbourhood full of picturesque beauty and variety of scenery ; and one that offers very many objects of interest to the naturalist and archæologist ; and, may I breathe so light a word, to the sportsman.

Although there is no record of Ripon in the time of the Romans, yet, from the many evidences of their occupation, in stations, camps, and roads, in the immediate neighbourhood, as well as from the fact also of its name having a Latin origin, it is certain that the locality, if not the hamlet itself, was familiar to them. Possibly, however, its name might be given to it by the monks.

The earliest account of Ripon is that referring to the year 661, when we are told that there were about thirty houses, at the time that Eata, Abbot of Melrose, built a monastery here, called the Scots' Monastery.² This was situated about midway between the present minster and the river Ure. On the expulsion or retirement of the Scotch monks, in consequence of their protesting against the Romish computation of the time of keeping Easter, respecting which there was a very warm controversy in this part of England, the establishment was given to Wilfrid, who was soon afterwards made Archbishop of York. Wilfrid, quickly discerning the natural advantages of Ripon, erected there a monastic church, which was afterwards celebrated for its "curious arches, fine pavements, and winding entries."³

An eminent local antiquary, Mr. J. R. Walbran, was for some time of opinion, that this church of Wilfrid's was built near to the Scotch monastery, but he appears to have been afterwards inclined to believe that it was on the site of the present Minster.

Sir Gilbert Scott in his recent discourse on Ripon Minster, as published in the "Archæological Journal,"⁴ expresses it as his opinion also that the earlier establishment was on the site of the present Minster. It seems but reasonable to suppose that Wilfrid, with his observant eye, would assuredly dis-

² Beda, vit. Cuthberti. Prof. Stubbs, in his valuable memoir on "The History and Constitution of the Liberty of Ripon," read by him at Ripon, and which will, it is hoped, soon be given in these pages, said, "the Minster has a pedigree which brings it down at least to the year 640, which is about the time of Wilfrid's

childhood."

³ In Hyrpis basilicum polito lapide a fundamentis in terra usque ad summum ædificatum, variis columnis et porticibus suffultum in altum erivit et consummavit Eddie Vita Wilfridi.

⁴ Vol. xxxi. p. 309.

cern the superiority of the situation, and build his church on the higher ground, where the Cathedral now stands, rather than on the borders of what at that time was probably marsh land. We are told that Wilfrid received munificent gifts from royalty, and that the northern nobility also contributed liberally towards the erection and endowment of his church. Many people were thereby drawn to the town, which, under Wilfrid's fostering care and patronage, speedily became a place of some wealth and magnitude, and of something more than local importance. Hence the inhabitants of Ripon have ever since honoured the memory of Wilfrid ; regarding him as their great benefactor, as the builder of their church and the founder of their town. To this day his effigy is brought into the city on the anniversary of his feast-day, which is kept with various demonstrations of joy and satisfaction. Gent, the first historian of Ripon, says that the town was destroyed by the Danes in the year 860, during one of their periodical invasions,⁵ and there is, near to the Minster, a mound of considerable dimensions, called Ailey Hill, a name apparently of Danish origin, which is largely composed of human bones, collected, according to tradition, from some great battlefield near the spot.

Ripon was certainly pillaged and destroyed in the years 948 and 950, by Eadred, king of Northumbria, who, being wrathful at the disloyalty and faithlessness of those who had so shortly before pledged their allegiance to him, ravaged all Northumbria, and during this devastation Wilfrid's church was burnt to the ground. Eadred did his revengeful work so thoroughly, that when Odo, Archbishop of York, came hither, "he was struck to the heart with its lamentable condition," and with the ruin of the church and monastery. "He forthwith caused a new work to be edified wher the present minstre now is." Doubtless the inhabitants also rebuilt the town, to which and the church King Athelstan, in the beginning of the tenth century, granted many privileges. His curious rhyming charter, which puzzled Gent, who called it "a strange sort of English," is printed in Dugdale ("Monasticon," new ed. ii. p. 133), and copied thence by Kemble. In this charter the immunities of the sanctuary are specified, the limits of which were

⁵ Page 63, edition 1783.

⁶ The Girthstole, according to the rhyming charter, was between the church door and the choir. If the criminal

originally marked by eight boundary crosses, each a mile from the church ; these crosses, however, with the exception of one at Sharow, have, along with the Gerthstole,⁶ the last and safe refuge of the criminal, long since disappeared. Ripon recovered so much prosperity during the succeeding century, that during the reign of Edward the Confessor the manor was assessed at the annual value of thirty-two pounds. But, in 1069, William the Conqueror, in revenge for the disasters which his soldiers and countrymen had experienced at York, ravaged the whole shire, and Ripon was reduced to so devastated a condition that, at the time of the Domesday Survey made in 1086, the district was entered as "*Omnis hæc terra wasta est*," except some portions in Markington, Monckton, and Erlesholt.⁷

During the twelfth and the three succeeding centuries Ripon attained the zenith of its fame and prosperity. Not only was its church nobly rebuilt, but the hospitals and chapels of St. Mary Magdalen,⁸ St. Ann's,⁹ and St. John's,¹ were also built and endowed by their pious founders. The Archbishops of York, who had a palace and park there, are said to have "had ever great favour for Ripon." Nor would the neighbourhood also of the stately Monastery of Fountains fail in contributing much to the renown and prosperity of Ripon, making it second only to York, and scarcely second to the palatinate city of Durham.

During this period also, in spite of the ravages committed by the Scots under Robert Bruce, for particulars of which I refer you to Mr. Bain's lately published narrative,² Ripon became a prosperous manufacturing town, celebrated for the excellence of its cloths and kerseys, and vying even with those of Bristol. The cloth manufacture in Yorkshire seems to have been at first confined to Ripon, for which it was admirably situated, being then, as now, in the centre of a great wool producing district, and surrounded with streams, the abundance and purity of which left nothing to be desired for the various processes of manufacture ;—strenuous endeavours were made to retain these manufactures at Ripon, but they gradually drifted away to Halifax, Wake-

reached this, however heinous was his crime, he was safe from punishment.

⁷ Domesday Book, I., page 303 b.

⁸ By Thurston in 1144. Drake's Ebor.

⁹ By one of the Nevilles, in the reign

of Edward IV.

¹ Founded before the fourth year of King John, by one of the Archbishops of York. Leland's Itinerary.

² Arch. Journal, vol. xxxi. p. 269.

field, and Leeds. Leland, who was here about 1534, says, "Idelness is sore increased in the town, and clothe makeing almost decay'd." Perhaps also the Archbishop of York and the monks of Fountains, the riparian proprietors, may have protested against the fouling of the streams.

The well-known passage in Ben Jonson—

"Why there's an angel, if my spurs
Be not right Rippon,"

together with the adage—"As true steel as a Ripon rowel," attest the eminence which the metal manufacture had attained in the time of Elizabeth, and this lingered till late in the eighteenth century, when John Terry, the last spurrier, died; the said John Terry having been Mayor of Ripon in the year 1773. Some of these spurs were so ingeniously made that the rowels only appeared when pressed against a substance, and were so finely tempered that they might be forced through a silver coin without the points being either bent or blunted.

The chartered periodical fairs also, of the importance of which, not only to the town but to a wide district, we shall shortly have sufficient evidence, largely contributed to the repute and the prosperity of the town. Ripon was summoned by Edward I. to send two members to Parliament.³ Its representation ceased towards the end of the reign of Edward II., but it was restored in the last Parliament of Edward VI., and so continued until 1867, when Mr. D'Israeli's Reform Bill left it with one member only. The inhabitants of Ripon appear to have been uniformly loyal and well affected; perhaps, however, they faltered somewhat in their allegiance during "The Pylgrimage of Grace." Nor can we be surprised that such was the case, as the people of the town and the district around were almost entirely tenants, feudatories, or servants of the Archbishop of York, and of the monks of Fountains, who had ever been their kind masters or indulgent landlords. Hence they regarded, with anger and apprehension, the sequestration of the monasteries and the persecution of their friends and benefactors.

No better expression and explanation of the motive which prompted this "pylgrimage" can possibly be given than

³ Palgrave's Parliamentary Writs, vol. i., pp. 36, 85.

what is contained in the confession of Captain Stapylton, who says, "There was a common brute [*i.e.* report] in Yorkshire, that divers parishh churches sh^d be putte downe and taken to the king's use. And that this, with the suppression of religious houses, and puttinge downe of certayne holidays, and the newe opynions of certayne persons concerning the faith; raising of farmes for taking of gressomes or incomes, intayles of the common; worshipful men taking of farmes & yomenens offices, &c. All whiche the promises did move, grudge and steve the people muche to suche rebellion."⁴ Other very interesting matter relative to this, may I call it, romantic rebellion, is to be found in other parts of the volume just quoted. The good people of Ripon received a severe warning for the part some of them had taken in this "Pilgrimage;" inasmuch as all the rebel constables of the West Riding, except those of Wetherby, Boroughbridge and Tadcaster, were, along with several of its over-zealous townsmen, executed in its midst.

The inhabitants of Ripon have suffered twice from the visitation of the plague. The first time in 1546, and the second time in 1645, so severely that the country people durst not enter the town, and it is said, that in consequence children were baptized in the fields outside. Henry IV. came to Ripon, and remained there seven days, when he fled terror-stricken from the plague in London, and from evil dreams at Hammerton. James I. paid it a visit, while on his way to Scotland, when he was presented, by Mr. Simon Brown, Maior, in the name of the Corporation and Burgesses, with "a gilte bowle and a pair of Rippon spurs, which cost £5"—and "which spurres were such a contentment to his Majestye, as His Highnesse did wear the same the daye followynge at his dep^{art}ture forth of the said towne." Hither, also, Charles I. twice came; first in 1632, when on his road to Edinburgh; and again in 1646, a prisoner in the hands of the Scots. He was allowed to rest two nights at Ripon, whose inhabitants showed him that respect and sympathy which his misfortunes demanded. The prosperity of Ripon, no doubt, suffered from the confiscation and alienation of the wealth and property of the Monastery; this, with the decadence

⁴ Walbran's "Memorials of Fountains Abbey," published by the Surtees Society, p. 268.

also of its manufactures, reduced it eventually to the level of a quiet, unenterprising country town, of which little was heard or known beyond its own shire, retaining, however, good markets and important fairs, which were attended by the inhabitants of a wide district, and disturbed only with the periodical turmoil of its municipal and parliamentary elections. The establishment, however, of the Bishopric of Ripon, with Ripon as the head of the diocese, has had a favourable influence on the city, bringing it more note and consideration and a considerable increase of population.

I now proceed to the principal subjects of my essay—the Wakemen of Ripon and their ancient badge. And I must confess that they have required more attention than I had conceived of, or than my readers may be prepared to give to them. But the subject is very exceptional and curious, and therefore the more needful of consideration and discussion. At the very outset I am not able to tell you undoubtedly what duties the Wakemanship comprehended: whether or no he assumed in right thereof the authority and functions of a Mayor by virtue of Royal Charter. Neither can I, with any certainty, say what was the origin of the word Wakeman itself: if from "*Vigilarius*," a watchman—or from the Saxon *Wach*, to watch and guard. In the former case, it would originate with the monks or the Archbishop, but in the latter from an Anglo-Saxon community.

Very little, indeed, appears to be known either of the time or circumstances under which this titular name of Wakeman is supposed to have been instituted, or by whom the horn, with its embellishments, was adopted as his badge.

What information we have is obtained from Gent, who, as he states, wrote, from facts "faithfully and painfully collected," his somewhat fragmentary and erratic history of Ripon about 1730, and in which he informs us that Ripon was, "from an antient manuscript, incorporated in 886, in the 14th year of the Reign of King Alfred;" and he further remarks, that it was said, that it had a long time ago been called such as York is, and had walls too, on which watch and ward were kept, from whence came the *vigilarii*, or *wakemen*. Gent, however, doubts that Ripon ever had walls, and as no vestiges have ever been found of them, we may conclude that it was, so far, an open and

defenceless town. It is true that several of the names of the streets of Ripon have the affix of "gate," as those of York also have, but it has been suggested that there might be gates without walls of circumvallation. It is tolerably certain that there were at one time gates on the outskirts of the town, probably somewhat similar to those of a modern toll-bar; not, however, for any purpose of defence, but merely to keep the cattle, horses, swine, &c., from straying in or out; much of the surrounding district being, in those early days, and for some centuries afterwards, pasturage or commons, towards which, probably, the forest lands crept up. The term "gate," however, in this case is, I think, the North country word "gait," from the Danish "gata," a road, a path, or way. Hence Cowgate, or, as now named, Colts-gate, would be the road along which the cattle and young horses were driven to or from their pastures by the herds-men; Skellgate, the road leading to the Skell; and so forth.

Touching Gent's statement respecting the "vigilarii," or Wakemen, I find in a document printed in Rymer,⁵ that writs were sent out in 1367 to the chief officers of various cities and towns with reference to the coinage, and among these one was sent "Ballivis Villæ de Ripon," but where there was a Mayor it was addressed to him. This is, I think, of some importance, not only as affecting the name or title, but as suggesting some explanation of the office of Wakeman.

Gent gives the roll of Wakemen from the year 1400, and the title of Wakeman is corroborated by the following extract from the "Cope of the Towne Book of Ripon," dated 1598, for the loan of which I am indebted to the Mayor and Town-clerk of Ripon:—

"That whereas yt appeareth *upon record extant and to be seene*, that a laudable and auncient office hath been continued since the Conquest within the Towne of Rippon, and call'd by the name of Title of Wakeman wythin the saide Towne, for the pr'ble supposition is that the sayde office to have been continued before the sayde Conquest." Also Alderman Thekestone, who was Mayor in 1615, and who was a man who had taken great paines till his time in gathering the ancient chronicles and writings, transcribed the names of all the "Weakemen" from

⁵ "Fœdera," vol. iii., part 2, p. 838.

the year 1486 to 1622, and which correspond with the names of those given by Gent, and doubtless obtained them from the same ancient chronicles, which, as Thekestone tells us, were preserved in that record of the Ripon Corporation, which contains the curious Bye Laws of the several Guilds of the Town. I greatly regret that this record is not now to be found.

Another chronicler (circa 1724) also states, "that Ripon has been a corporation since the year 886, about the time that Oxford was made a university. The chiefe magistrate was called the vigilarius or Wakeman, who continued in his office during his life, but was afterwards yearly chosen out of the 12 Eldermen, so called because of their age before they were chosen."

I am not quite sure, however, whether this latter chronicler may not also be the garrulous Gent.

But whenever the title of Wakeman was first given, there seems no doubt but that this was the official title of the chief officer of the town from the year 1400. And under whatever designation they were elected and ruled, they had so much in common with all good Mayors, that they appear to have been vigilant and attentive to the interests of the town, not only as regarded its material prosperity, but its seemly and proper ordering and governance, taking sagacious precautions for the prevention of theft and fire, careful that no persons of indifferent fame or character resided in the town, &c. Also, as occasion served and circumstances required, they obtained from the Crown charters and privileges, and authority and assistance to amend bye-laws from their feudal and ecclesiastical lords, the Archbishops of York.

On the visit of Henry VII. to York, he confirmed to the Wakemen of Ripon the right to the toll of corn and sweepings of the market, which, according to Gent, had been given to the Wakemen before the Conquest. It would seem, however, that the Wakemen or their servants had been too exacting, as we are told "the grant was only for such corn as came into the market, not for corn that came into the town, and note that the dew belonging to the mayor is only about the two-hundred part of a bushell, though now by custom one hundred part is claimed." Two hands in lieu of one had probably been dipped into the sack.

In later times, Oliver Cromwell also granted a charter for a fortnightly fair. Nor were the people indifferent respecting the means of education, as Edward VI. commenced the endowment of a grammar school, afterwards completed by Philip and Mary.

We may be pretty certain that these privileges and favours were not obtained or granted without repeated and urgent representations from the worthy Wakemen and their brethren ; supported also by the influence and interest of their constant friends the Archbishops of York. They also applied for additional and amended bye-laws, which were granted to them by the Archbishops of York, and afterwards by James I., when his Majesty first incorporated the borough of Ripon, &c. From some of these bye-laws, framed in the time of Elizabeth, I propose to give a few extracts, not only as showing the charge and duties appertaining to the office of Wakeman, but also as affording us some insight into the peculiar circumstances and customs of those days. The extracts are given from the "Coype of the Towne Booke of Ripon," A.D. 1598, to which I have already referred.

But I must first explain that for some time there had been much strife and contention in the town respecting the election, not only of the Aldermen but also of the Wakeman. Party spirit and personal feeling had waged bitter civic warfare ; and the body corporate, or whatever else it was, had become altogether unruly and disorderly, "great controversies and disagreements occurring at the publique meetings," &c. The body of Aldermen, which it seems had never been "lymited," says the "Towne Booke," but had, by process of time and frequent admissions, become so exceedingly numerous, and "swollen into such a confusion of aldermen, as is not usual to meet for any matter of publique government." Thus the office of Wakeman had, I think we may presume, been rendered so vexatious and disagreeable, that for "dyvers years lately bypast, men who had been lawfully chosen, had utterly refused either to undergoe the office or pay the fine, which had brought the said office into great disrepute." Thus, between the years 1505 and 1536, there were in fifteen different years fifteen elected who had utterly refused, and therefore others had to be chosen ; or else, having assumed the Wakemanship, they had found

it so intolerable that they abandoned their charge and fled from the civic chair.

Also the office of Alderman, in consequence of this excessive and ridiculous number of their body and other irregularities, had lost much of its dignity and consequence. There had been great dissensions during the time of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., which Thomas Archbishop of York, Cardinal of England, and his Grace's High Steward, Lord Latimer, and Henry Duke of Cumberland, had severally endeavoured to allay, but with ill success. Therefore, such urgent representations were made to Matthew Hutton, Archbishop of York, of the sad state of affairs, that he vouchsafed his presence on two "severall tymes in the publique in the Towne Hall, with the said Hy. Singleton, wakeman, and no less than 29 out of the large number of his Brethren for the quieting of the controversies and for the establishing of the most wholesome and commodious orders for the public goode, according to the example of his predecessors." Then follows an account of the confusion and controversies, and of the incapacity and uselessness of many of the Aldermen ; "some, by reason of old age and weakness, not able to endure any pains—some so decay'd in their estate that they are not able to bestowe anything for defence or strengthening of their office—some so wilfull in their affections—never yielding consent with the wysest for the publique goode," &c. It was resolved to weed out the useless and wilful Aldermen, and to reduce the number to twelve. This, however, caused so much dissatisfaction, that it was presently afterwards increased to twenty-four.

But even this concession did not allay the excitement and dissatisfaction ; on the contrary, at the next election of the Wakeman, while the Aldermen, as was their right, chose Mr. Henley for Wakeman, the Commons elected one of their own, a Mr. Askew, probably one of the displaced Aldermen ; and in the end, as is not unusual even in these days, the Commons had their way. Mr. Henley had to retire, and Mr. Askew reigned in his stead. This state of things caused so much confusion and rancorous feeling, tending to the complete demoralising of the town, that Hugh Ripley was induced to make strenuous efforts to obtain its incorporation, so as to do away with these irregularities and complications.

But to return to the Wakeman ;—it was agreed and esta-

blished that he should be elected yearly out of the twenty-four, his brethren, and chosen successively according as they have had their places and borne office, and if he declined without sufficient reason, he was to be fined the ancient sum of 4*l*. Immediately after his induction into the office of Wakeman, he was required to "walke throughout the whole Towne, and the same tyme to make a supper, at which tyme all his Brethren the Aldermen, having had due notice, should repaire to the said Wakeman's house, and from thence by two and two in a Rank, every two having a Torche before them, accompanie the said Wakeman through the Town, or in default be fined 6*s*. 8*d*. to the common fund." After this inauguration supper, there had to be two others during his year of office, one at Midsummer and one at his going out of office. The two latter were, however, compounded for by a solemn feast, at which the wives also were to be admitted. If the Wakeman failed in this hospitality he was to be amerced in the sum of 20*l*. The Wakeman also during his term of office was allowed no indulgence in the way of a pleasant trip or tour ; but "if he flytted from the Towne except God do visite it with Pestilence," he had to forfeit for this also 20*l*.

The Wakeman was to have the custody of the common seal, but as there appears to have been some liberties taken with the seal, it was ordered "that he sh^d not sette the seal to any workinge whatever without the consent of at least 4 of his Brethren." It was also in the Wakeman's charge or duty that he should make periodical inspection from house to house for hedge-breakers and poultry stealers, also in the time of corn harvest for pilferers ; and that before winter he should ascertain that each householder had made ample provision of fuel. "The Wakeman and his Brethren are also required at all tymes to be ready to ride the Fairs in company with the Archbishop's Lord High Stewarde, or other officer ;" this would probably not only be in feudal service, but also as a precaution to ensure better order in the town at the time of these fairs, which were frequented by the inhabitants of a wide district, to whom these periodical fairs afforded the only opportunity either of selling their cattle, horses, corn, wool, or other produce, or of supplying themselves with such necessities in clothing, hardware, and farm gear, as they required. Such fairs were of great im-

portance, not only as a source of wealth to the town, but of convenience to the district. Thus we find in the "Plumpton Correspondence," p. lviii.,—"The men of Knaresborough Forest, memorialising the King, and complaining grievously that for 3 years they had been prevented attending the Fairs at Rippon to 'utter their caffer' (sell their produce, I suppose), and so they could pay no rent." They state that the Archbishop "kept Rippon at Faire tyme like a Towne of Warre, so that none of the King's tenants might ne durst come neare to it. And howe this last yeare the men of Tindale and Hexham had kept Rippon like a Towne of Warre, riding and coming to and fro like men of warre, equipped in every description of fighting gear, and how they had gone robling up the saide Towne and downe," saying, "would God these lads and knaves of the Forest would come hither that we might have a Faire day upon them." This state of things was not very favourable for peaceable buying and selling, and I misdoubt would much disquiet the worthy Wakeman and his brethren.

Strict bye-laws were also framed for the regulation of the markets. The corn bell was not to be rung until twelve at noon, so that people afar off might have come, for the prevention also of the despoiling of the forests, and for the proper pasturage of the commons, the herdsmen of swine and cattle to collect and return with their charges on blast of horn at stated hours, &c., all which it was in the Wakeman's charge to see to. Stringent bye-laws were also made for the ordering of the Wakeman's servants, that in case of fire they should be prompt to give alarm by ringing the tolbooth bell. Also if they met with on their watch any disorderly person who would not go to rest, and who was too strong for them, they were to ring the bell, when it was the duty of every inhabitant to hasten to their aid, or they were liable to a fine, and such disorderly person was to be taken before the Wakeman, that he may bring them before some Justice of the peace in the said liberties.

To pay these servants, and towards the proper maintenance of the office of Wakeman, also to provide for certain liabilities, it was ordered that in addition to the corn dues, stallage at two head fairs—that is, pens for cattle and sheep, and stalls for the pedlar and perambulatory merchant, and all other and singular customs and commodities, which were to be as

ample as Thomas Mankin or Richard Smith had received ; fines for breach of bye-laws ; and premiums paid by apprentices when put to a manual business, or when commencing business, were to go to the common fund, and also that every householder—man or woman—dwelling in Ripon should pay to each Wakeman, during his year of duty, 2*d.* for any house having but one door, and 4*d.* for a gate-door and a back-door, and in default of payment the same to be levied according to ancient custom.

In the following entry, which relates to the watch of the town, is the first reference to the Horn :—

“Item, it is condescended, concluded, ordered, agreed, and established as aforesaid, that the Wakeman for the tyme beinge accordinge to auncient costome shall cause a Horne to be blowne by nighte during the Tyme he is in office at nyne of the clocke in the Eveninge at the foure corners of the Crosse in the market-shead, and immediately after to begin his Watche and to keepe and continue the same till three or foure of the clocke in the Morninge. And if yt happen any House or Houses to be broken on the Gatesyde within the Towne of Rippon aforesaid, and any goods to be taken away or withdrawne out of ye said houses or any of them, that then accordinge to old costome ye Wakeman for the tyme beinge shall make good and satisfye unto the partie so wronged in suche manner and to such vallue as sh^d be determined upon by a majority of his Brethren, providing the partie that had the wrong can prove it to be done within the hours of the watch, and that the Wakeman and his servants did not their dutye at ye time.”

It is evident from this bye-law that there were gates to the town, and from the preceding references to the herdsmen, that they would be for the purpose of cattle fence. It is also clear that the horn was blown, *not for the purpose of the curfew*, but to give notice of the setting of the watch. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that with this horn was first sounded the melancholy curfew, whereupon the startled villagers wrathfully raked out their fires of wood, and sullenly went to rest. And this is all that we know of the earliest use of the horn, excepting, as I shall presently show, as a badge. The rest must be left to conjecture. Can it be that the Wakeman and the horn had been instituted when Ripon was perhaps an Anglo-Saxon village. The locality, with its

streams, its woods, and its meadows, would be what, we are told by Tacitus, the Saxons preferred. He says they live scattered and apart even in their villages, just as a wood, a spring, or a meadow might attract them. Each apart in a piece of ground, this being also a precaution in case of fire, their houses being partly of wood.⁶

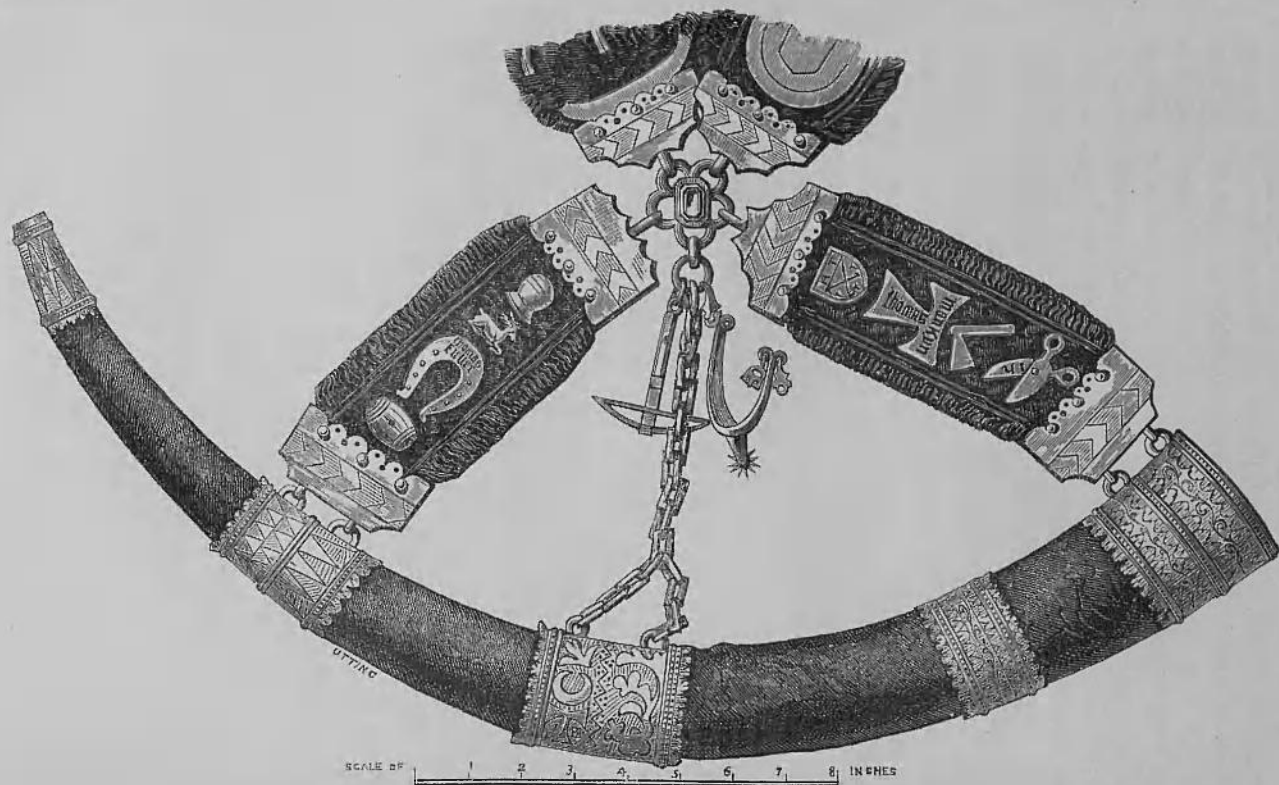
It may be that one was appointed to keep watch and ward, as the word denotes, over the rambling village. It is clear from the expression "gate-door" in one of the bye-laws I have just quoted, that, even in 1598, many of the houses had "gate-doors." Perhaps a certain number of Eldermen were also elected as a sort of council, and thus, as the village, with its dwellings and gardens and bits of land won from the neighbouring common or forest, covered much space, the Wakeman was provided with a horn to call the Eldermen or the villagers together, either for council or for defence. Hence, when Wilfrid took possession of the monastery and the manor, he finding such a council in existence, continued it; and afterwards bye-laws were framed, and certain dues allotted to the Wakeman towards the expenses of his charge: he being the representative, the chief officer, or bailiff of the successive Archbishops of York, to whom Ripon "entirely belonged."

It has, however, been suggested that the first appointment of Wakeman was probably owing to the necessity of protecting the town from a sudden attack; and that in the north many instances of cornage tenure exists. The service being that of blowing a horn when the enemy is perceived, and persons thus watching for the enemy would be called "Vigilarii" or Wakemen. This also seems to offer a solution of the origin of the term.⁷

⁶ C. Cornelii Taciti Germania, cap. xvi. p. 545.

⁷ More than a century ago (1773) many of the more remarkable specimens of ornamented tenure horns were the subject of an able dissertation in the "Archæologia" (vol. iii. p. 1), by Mr. Pegge. Of these several examples are there engraved, and three of them, "Mr. Foxlowe's Horn" (that of Tutbury), "The Borstal Horn," and "Lord Bruce's Horn," have appendages and decorations which might be compared with those attached to the Ripon Horn. In this respect the last-named more resembles that of Ripon,

in the ornamentation of the belt by which it was suspended and worn. This is described as being "of green worsted, with buckles and hinges of silver gilt, embellished with enamelled figures and fourteen bosses of the same metal," on which is represented coat armour. The horn itself is richly decorated with borders of silver, engraved with objects of the chase, &c. The Horn of Borstal relates to a place in the forest of Bernwood, Bucks, given by Edward the Confessor to Nigel, a huntsman, to hold *per unum cornu, quod est charta predictæ forestæ*. (Inquisition, A.D. 1266.) That exhibited



Horn, and portion of Belt, of the Wakeman of Ripon.

And yet Ripon was not like a border town, subject to sudden forays from marauding neighbours and wild moss-troopers. Its enemies, when they came, came with an army at their backs, against which any summons of the horn could gather no equal force. But under whatever conditions the Wakeman and the horn were instituted, it is easy to understand how, from the service which the latter rendered, it eventually became the symbol or badge of the Wakeman, and was ultimately adopted as the arms of the town : the arms of Ripon being gules, a buglehorn or stringed and belted sable, deemed to be embellished argent ; the word Ripon of the last, letter P in pale, R and I in chief, and O N in fesse ; the mouthpiece of the horn in dexter.

At some period another horn was provided for the Mayor's servants, which afterwards was used by the Mayor's horn-blower. This also is a fine old horn, but it was replaced a few years since by a new one, which was mounted and presented to the Corporation by Mr. Ascough, when Mayor. The original horn is the one which is attached to what is now called the Serjeant's belt, figured at the beginning of this memoir. It is worn by the Serjeant-at-mace, when robed and carrying the large gilt mace on his shoulder, he walks in front of the Mayor on occasions of ceremony, or when his worship attends morning service on the Sunday. In ancient days the horn and belt were worn by the Wakeman himself five days in the year ; hence called horn-days, namely, Candlemas, Easter Monday, Wednesday in Rogation week, the Sunday after Lammas, and St. Stephens. The horn is said to be of true Saxon shape, though seeing it is the natural horn of an ox, I do not quite know how this has been managed—by natural selection perhaps. It measures 30 inches from end to end, is beautifully tapered, and has a fine crescent-shaped curve. It is covered with purple velvet and has five silver bands

in 1773 is supposed to have been the original horn, and is "tipped at each end with silver gilt, fitted with wreaths of leather to hang about the neck, with an old brass seal ring, a plate of brass with a sculpture of a horn, and several lesser plates of silver gilt with fleurs de lis." The Tutbury Horn is said to be appurtenant to the office of Escheator and Coroner of the Honor of Tutbury and bailiwick of Leyke, and in this respect has some

analogy to the Ripon horn ; and is described as being "a white hunter's horn, decorated in the middle and at each end with silver gilt ; to which also was affixed a girdle of black silk ('singulum byss: nigri') adorned with certain *fibulæ* of silver, in the midst of which were placed the arms of Edmond, the second son of King Henry III." The attribution of these arms is however considered doubtful.

or circlets round it, one of about three inches in width in the centre, one at each end, the small end being a mouth-piece covered, and also two intermediate ones. The two bands at the smaller end of the horn appear to be of the oldest work, especially as one of the ancient bosses has the same design on its ring. The broad band in the centre is perhaps the next in date, and is covered with confused looking engraving, amidst which there is some appearance of armorial bearings or fleur-de-lis. The other two bands are of more modern work. The horn has also perforations, which show where other bands have at some time been.

On the intermediate silver bands of the horn are links to which massive silver clasps are attached, in which are secured velvet bands, which pass obliquely to a silver divisional ring, and from which ring a silver chain is attached to the horn at its central band. On these velvet bands, of about 3 in. in width, are displayed various of the ancient badges or symbols, all of silver—a woodman's axe, significant of forestry; a pair of shears, suggestive of cloth; a badge, also in the form of a T, or Tau Cross. The latter badge is that of Thomas Mankyn, Wakeman in 1521. There is also on this band a small rude shield, bearing the initials R. T., with two crosiers saltirewise, belonging most probably to Richard Terry, Wakeman in 1529. On the other band is a silver barrel or hogshead, with R. C. engraved upon it, supposed to be the badge of Richard Cooke, Wakeman in 1589; also a prettily-shaped horse-shoe, inscribed Thomas Fisscher, 1515, perhaps one of the oldest ornaments on the belt. Then again there is an evidence of forestry in a silver stag; also a sort of helmet. On the silver chain are suspended a crossbow and a spur, the latter having a sharp rowel of Ripon steel.



Silver boss.

The belt from which all these are hung is a band of purple velvet lined with purple silk, and having a short, thick silk fringe on each side, between which are displayed 38 badges and shields of armorial bearings of Wakemen and Mayors.

Five of these are silver bosses like the model of a low-crowned hat. One of them is the badge of Thomas Gayteskar, in 1520; another

has a woodman's axe engraved on its crown, and here figured ; two have characters or initials, which I am not able to decipher ; and on the other is the design which corresponds with that of two of the bands. There are also two escutcheons of Town Clerks.

We cannot but regret that amid these honourable badges of civic dignitaries there does not appear that of Hugh Ripley, the last Wakeman and first Mayor of Ripon, elected also twice, as Mayor in 1616, and again in 1630, when probably of a green old age. We do not know whether his escutcheon was ever on the belt ;—perhaps he thought that his faithful service to the town was his best and more modest memorial. He gave to “Mr. Mayor all that parcell of land called Bull Close, to be given amongst forty poor men for ever.” As I have already said, it was through his earnest endeavours, and with no little expenditure of his substance, that the “ancient and populous” borough of Ripon was incorporated in the time of James I., and had then given to it a Mayor, twelve Aldermen, and twenty-four assistants, which were called the Common Council ; with a Recorder, Town Clerk, and two Serjeants-at-mace, their attendants.

It would seem from an old letter printed, it is said, in the “Corporation Minute Book,” that the horn and belt had been sent up to London for repair or renewal in the time of Charles II., and as eight of the Aldermen had been purged from the corporation by the commissioners who sat at Ripon, it is suggested in this letter that their badges should be removed from the belt. Fortunately, however, their friend was more tolerant than the writer, as some of these badges are still there.⁷ This repair of the horn and belt, however, was not attended with happy results, as it seems to have excited the cupidity of some of the citizens, who evidently had as little regard for honesty as for archæology. We are told in the “Corporation Minutes” that in the year 1686, “in ye time of Mr. Hunton's mayoralty, the antiquities of the town were shamefully pillaged.” It appears that this said foolish and unlucky Christopher Hunton kept a “publique inn, in this towne,” at that time, and in the pride of his office and the vanity of his heart he

⁷ From the initials in the letter they would be those of Horner, Kitching, Newell, and Rownthwaite.

must needs display in a common room, where all his customers drank and smoked, the appurtenances of his office—to show his guests the honour and worship of his place; whereby the lately repaired and beautified belt and horn were grievously despoiled, but especially the horn, which was robbed of all its ancient ornaments.

In the year 1702, however, John Aislable, Esq., one of the former proprietors of Studley, and a spirited and popular Mayor, had the horn and belt again repaired and beautified. Two silver bands were placed on the horn, and on the belt such ancient badges as could by any means be recovered from the shameless parties who had stolen them while in Mayor Hunton's charge. By way of record there was engraved on one of the bands, "*Antiquis et honorem et præmia posci. Vetustate lapsum restituit.*" Mr. Aislable also gave a large silver cup to "ye use of Mr. Mayor of Ripon for ever"; also a large Book of Common Prayer. The horn and belt have since then, from an inscription on the other Aislable bands been repaired and beautified by another spirited and more recent mayor, Mr. H. Morton, who was also three times Mayor of Ripon—in 1851, 1853, and 1854. Let us return to the belt; which is worn across the right shoulder to the left side, having shields or badges throughout, arranged in a double row across the chest of the wearer—the horn with its ornaments swinging in suspension. The more ancient shields and badges are very easy of recognition, on account of their greater simplicity, and, as it seems to me, better taste and better work. The following are such as remain from the scandalous pilfering in Mayor Hunton's time:—

A fine shield, engraved with a hog's head and "John Middleton," but no date. There is, however, among the Wakemen, a John Middleton in 1517, and also in 1598; doubtless the latter a son of the former. It is interesting to note how some names, evidently of the same family, recur from time to time. The next shield, in order of place, bears the date 1526, with the initials M. G.; and on the same shield what appears to be a cooper's mallet and chisel, with the initials H. S., and date 1570. Neither of these initials, with their connecting dates, correspond with the names in these years in either "*Gent's History*" or "*Alderman Theakstone's Chronicle.*" The next shield in date is that of Thomas Hebden, 1576, and with a pair of scales engraved on the

shield. Perhaps no other name than that of the Hebdens occurs so frequently in the list of Wakemen. Then follow the shields of W. Fawcett, Wakeman, 1593 ;—Thomas Harland, 1596, with a deer couchant, in silver ;—Thomas Wardroper, 1602 ;—Leonard Thompson, twice Mayor, 1629, 1641 ;—Nicholas Kitchin, twice Mayor, 1644, 1658 ;—John Jefferson, 1646 ; who, we are told, repaired St. Wilfrid's Well. In this year, also, the frame was fixed in the church to place the great mace by the seat of the Mayor, the said mace having been purchased in 1606, two years after the incorporation of the town ;—William Newell, Mayor, 1647. The said William Newell was turned out of the Corporation on the 25th October, 1659, for several aspersions and slanders in contempt cast upon "y^e said corporation."

While noting such delinquents, I may remark that the two Mayors of 1639 and 1640 were each, in 1643, grace having been given them, fined 15*l.* for not giving the Mayor's customary feast. Also Arthur Burton was displaced some years after his Mayoralty, inasmuch as he being affronted in the matter of precedence, to the great astonishment and indignation not only of his brethren of the Corporation, but of the good people at the Minster, walked in his robes before the mace and the Mayor, then sat on the opposite side of the choir, and, to crown all, during the Communion, went to the other end of the Table, from the rest of the Corporation.

Then follow the shields of :—

Thomas Rownthwaite, 1648.

Christopher Horner, 1650.

Henry Kirkby, 1650 and 1659.

William Busfield, 1671.

John Milner, 1672.

Henry Craven, 1673.

Edward Kirkby, 1674.

William Waterhall, 1691.

This Mayor kept his mayoralty so jovially, with such "grandiure and feasting," that he exhausted all the Corporation stock, and therefore a fresh purse had to be made in 1716, towards which every Alderman and gentleman had to contribute 1*s.*—not very extravagant—and every assistant and other inhabitant, 6*d.* So the Corporation became rich again.

The next shield is that of Cuthbert Chambers, four times Mayor, in 1675, 1684, 1693, and 1706. There appears to have been no other Mayor who has had the public spirit to so devote himself and his substance to the service of the town, with the exception of B. P. Ascough, who was Mayor in the years 1862, 1864, 1865, and 1866.

Then follow the shields of Charles Lister, thrice Mayor, 1700, 1714, 1728 :—Matthew Beckwith, twice Mayor, 1755, 1767 ;—and on the same shield, probably a son, Richard Beckwith, 1778, 1790.

Thomas Wilkinson follows in 1787, 1792 ; also the escutcheon of Peter Taylor, Town Clerk, elected in 1784, and of Richard Nicholson, who succeeded the said Peter Taylor, on the latter's death, in 1809, and continued in the office until 1853, when, on his demise, he was followed by his son, Richard Ward Nicholson, the present able occupant of the honourable office.

The custom of the Wakemen and the Mayors leaving a record of their terms of office on the Belt has unfortunately been very capriciously observed, long intervals occurring from time to time. Thus, from the year 1706 to 1792, there has been no escutcheon placed on the Belt ; nor again until 1813, when William Farrar, who is also one of the historians of Ripon, resumed the time-honoured usage. Many succeeding Mayors have followed his example, whose names appear on the roll which I have transcribed, but there is no need here to name them. Perhaps, however, I may remark that in consequence of Mr. Robert Kearsley's hospitable and public spirited discharge of his two years' Mayoralty in 1858 and '59, a handsome chain and badge were presented by the gentry and the citizens to the Mayor and Corporation, in compliment to Mr. Kearsley.

I think that I have said sufficient to prove that the Corporation of Ripon possesses in the ancient horn and the belt, with its escutcheoned records of Wakemen and Mayors, representing nearly four centuries, insignia as invaluable from their historic associations as they are also rare, if not unique, among the civic possessions and insignia of the Corporations of England.

But not only is the Wakeman's badge rare and exceptional, but the Wakeman himself is also exceptional. It is scarcely possible to say when he was first elected, and wherefore

thus entitled ; also what was his position or *status*. Was he a Mayor proper in right of royal prescription, or was he, as he is termed in the writ of 1367, a bailiff, or sort of deputy of the Archbishop of York, to whom Ripon "wholly belonged," ? If we review the circumstances, we find that Gent's statement, that Ripon had "*vigilarii*," or Wakemen, is so far confirmed that he is able to furnish us with an uninterrupted roll of Wakemen from 1400 ; and that Alderman Thekestone, in his "*Chronicle*," which is copied from the ancient "*Chronicles and Wrytings*," gives us a list which, from 1486, corresponds with that of Gent's. We have also ascertained from the "*Towne Booke*" of Ripon, of 1598, that "from *recoard extant* and to be seen, there were Wakemen of Ripon from the Conquest, and by probable supposition from before the Conquest." It is evident, also, the office of Wakeman had been one of dignity and position. Thus, we find many are styled "*gentlemen* ;" a much more significant and truthful title than what it is at the present day. We have seen, also, that to him was entrusted the civil government of the town, as well as its watch and ward ; and there seems to have been a sort of prevision in his various dues, as if the emoluments depended upon his vigilance. He is also required to entertain the Aldermen with what we may call Mayoral hospitality, and the Aldermen are bound to attend upon his bidding, and that he and they assume their robes of office on appointed occasions.

On the other hand Gent appears to be the only authority who states, as he says, from an ancient manuscript, that Ripon was incorporated in the time of Alfred in 866, but he gives us no particulars respecting this document. His statement that this is confirmed by King Alfred having then changed the kingdom into a better form, dividing the provinces into counties, hundreds, tythings, parishes, is inconsequent, and does not touch the question.

The Wakeman seems to have had no magisterial functions, as his prisoners are taken before the justices of the liberty. There appears to have been no clerk or recorder until 1604 ; true, there was an official seal, but that would be required, were he styled only bailiff. In case of any grievance application for redress was made, not to the Sovereign, but to the Archbishop of York. Permission to amend bye-laws, as we have seen, was also sought from the Archbishop, and

they were subject to his sanction and approval. In short, we find no appeal or reference to the Crown, excepting for charters for fairs or for the school. No reference is made in King James's Act of Incorporation to any preceding Mayor or other official having Mayoral *status*.

In conclusion, is it possible that the Wakeman and the Eldermen were originally instituted to govern and watch over Ripon, as I have before suggested, when it was an Anglo-Saxon parish or town, and that Wilfrid, when he came to Ripon, finding such an official and such a Council, retained them in the like capacity, and that eventually somewhat more of civic pomp and circumstance was imported into the body by after Archbishops copying somewhat the municipal government of York? That, in short, from the time that Ripon became the Archbishop's manor, the Wakeman was his representative, and not that of the Crown.

I trust the subject may sufficiently interest some antiquary more competent than myself to make further search and inquiry.

A very few words in conclusion respecting some of the ancient customs.

No more does Mr. Mayor receive his 2*d.* or 4*d.*, as it may be, from each householder, neither are the householders assured from loss by fire or thieves during the hours of the watch. No more does Mr. Mayor receive his market sweepings, his corn dues and stallages. These were long since appropriated by the Archbishop of York, but are now transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Surely there would be some fitness, if not equity, in their return.

But the rites of hospitality are still honoured as of old, never more so than by the present worthy Mayor, and the Mayor's "solemn feaste" is still at his outgate; but it would not do—no wives are now admitted. And still at nine each night the ancient horn is heard at each corner of the Cross, and three times, loud, dismal, and long, in front of the Mayor's house.

But no watch now is set over the sleeping city; the two policemen, the modern watch, retire, hoping for peaceful sleep, to their beds; and the city is left to the watch and ward of that good Providence of whom, as the legend on the mayor's badge says, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."