

ART. III.—*On the Mediæval Defences of the English Border.*

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Read at Egremont, August 31st, 1881.

THE tract of land between the Tweed and the Tyne, and that west of the Eden to the Eamont, including the English counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and part of Westmoreland, were for centuries the scene of obstinate and bloody conflict. How strong was the resistance to the Roman Legions, and how great their apprehension of its renewal, is shewn by the strength and extent of those grand lines of defence, which stretched from sea to sea, and still, after centuries of decay and destruction, command the admiration of the beholder. Nor, in the centuries that followed upon the retirement of the Legions, though other races occupied the soil, was the contest laid aside, but, down to the fifteenth and even in the sixteenth century was continued with unabated ferocity.

With the appearance of the Normans late in the eleventh century was revived the Roman practice of constructing defensive works in masonry, of the earlier of which some few remain, and to the same period may be attributed several of the towers of the more exposed parish churches, the excessive solidity of which has led to their preservation. The lesser Castles, Towers, and Peels, being constructed for the defence of private estates, and by private, though often very important persons, followed closely upon the larger fortresses, but, partly from their smaller dimensions and partly from the vicissitudes of the families to whom they belonged, very few of the earlier examples remain, and the greater number, whatever may be their original date, present little that can be referred to the thirteenth or even the fourteenth century. In fact, following the sub-
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division of landed property, and in consequence of the wealth acquired in foreign wars by the practice of putting the richer captives to ransom, very many of the Towers and Peels were only founded in the fifteenth century. The fortified Halls and Houses belong, mostly, to a still later period, and are placed, generally, at some distance from the more dangerous districts. They are especially numerous in South Cumberland, and along the Eamont and the Lowther, and although defence was not forgotten in their construction, it was made subservient to comfort and convenience.

Going back to the centuries preceding and following the Norman Conquest we fall upon a time when the limits of the two kingdoms were as yet unsettled, and a cause of frequent wars in which each party considered itself to be asserting its right. Further on, although there was no lack of transgression from either side into the territories of the other, it was acknowledged that they were transgressions, and that there existed a settlement to which either party could appeal when the breach of the peace was of sufficient importance to bring about the interference of the Lords Marchers or their governments.

Early in the tenth century, when the relations between Edward the Elder and his northern neighbours became a matter of history, the Border land was divided between three peoples, differing in tongue and origin. The Irish Scots of that day, a Gaelic race, dwelt north of the Forth and the Clyde, beyond the old wall of Agricola. South and west of this line, the British kingdom of Strathclyde extended from the Clyde to the Solway, and thence to the Bay of Lancaster, and thus included the later Cumberland. South and east of the Forth lay the Danish or English speaking district of Lothian, attached to England by Athelstan, and ruled by the Lord of Northumberland as a part of his earldom. It was probably the existence of this strong English element that had already induced the
Scots

Scots and Strathclyde Britons to place themselves under the protection of the English King, and thus to lay the foundation for the claims of Edward the First three centuries later.

In 945 the English Edmund conquered Strathclyde from the Britons and granted or regranted it to the Scottish Malcolm to be held as an English fief. A little later, A.D. 1000, Ethelred found the southern part of Strathclyde, that is Cumberland, mostly peopled by Danes, whose language indeed enters largely into the present topography. Early in the eleventh century the Scots made a raid into Durham and forced Earl of Waltheof to take refuge in Bamborough. Uchtred, his son, drove back the invaders, but Malcolm continued to hold Lothian and Berwickshire with a part of Teviotdale, an acquisition soon after sanctioned by Canute, on the condition of the lands being held of the English Crown. Thus it was that at the Conquest the Scots held, on some terms or other, Cumberland and a strip of Westmoreland, on the west, and Lothian on the east, an extent of frontier very favourable for attacks upon the northern counties of England, and of which they were not backward to avail themselves.

In 1070, on the retirement of William from his wasting expedition into Yorkshire and Durham, the Scots entered England from Cumberland, laid waste Teesdale and Cleveland, at Wearmouth received the exiled Edgar and his sisters, and traversed the Bishopric and Northumberland, while Earl Gospatric, issuing from Bamborough, reversed the in-road, and laid waste Cumberland. This campaign provoked the memorable invasion of Scotland by the Conqueror in 1073, who penetrated to Abernethy on the Tay, received there the homage of Malcolm, and returned by the east coast to Monkchester, known soon afterwards by the New Castle attributed to Robert Curthose, at the command of his father. Thence he came to Durham and ordered the construction or reconstruction of its castle. He also took possession

possession of Carlisle as Cumberland was then sometimes called, and placed it under the care of the Earl of Chester, compensating Malcolm with the country between Stainmore and the Tweed, and a sum of money.

In 1091 the Scots entered the Bishopric on the eastern side, but were beat back by Rufus, who constituted Cumberland an English earldom, peopling it with emigrants from the south, built the castle, and restored the town of Carlisle which had lain waste ever since its destruction by the Danes in the seventh century. Malcolm Ceanmore retaliated two years later, but was slain before Alnwick Castle. Henry the First pursued his brother's policy, strengthened Carlisle, and erected it into an episcopal See, attached to the Northern Province.

On Stephen's accession David of Scotland took advantage of his weakness to enter England. He took Carlisle, Appleby, and all the northern castles except Bamborough, and laid siege to Durham. David, who had married Earl Waltheof's heiress, claimed his earldoms. Northumberland was refused to him, but Stephen allowed him the richer but less dangerous Earldom of Huntingdon. The Northumbrian castles were restored, but Stephen committed the grave error of allowing David to retain Carlisle. The consequence was a second invasion in the following year and the demand of Northumberland. Then followed the battle of the Standard, after which, notwithstanding the English victory, the hard beset Stephen allowed to the Scots the lands between Tyne and Tweed, the fortresses of Bamborough and Newcastle alone excepted.

Henry the Second repaired much of the mischief perpetrated by Stephen, and in 1157 regained Northumberland, and Cumberland south of the Solway. He also subsequently granted the Earldom of Huntingdon to William the Lion, who, in Henry's presence, re-granted it to his own son. William, however, in 1173, invaded England, in alliance with the rebel Earl of Leicester, and
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again in 1174, when he took Burgh, Liddell, and Appleby, and some other castles, and penetrated to the Humber. He failed, however, to take Carlisle, and was himself taken prisoner before Alnwick.

Richard the First, wanting money for his crusade and very careless of English interests, sold his Scottish rights, giving up Carlisle, which, however, was recovered by John, but it was not till the reign of Henry the Third that Carlisle and Cumberland were fairly made a part of England, the Scottish claims being waived by Alexander in 1237, in consideration of the Manors of Penrith, Scotby, Langwathby, Carleton, and Sowerby, with Tynedale, to be holden of the English Crown, the last with "jura regalia" and local rights of sovereignty. An attempt was also made to settle the border line between the two kingdoms. This was not at that time successful, but the disagreement between the commissioners was not very considerable, and it is clear that the proposed lines did not differ very much from those afterwards adopted and still maintained.

This understanding, and the final adoption of Cumberland as an unchallenged English county, did not indeed put an end to the invasions from the north, but it gave them more of a local character, and led to a complete extinction of the Scottish claims. In 1293, upon an in-road by Edward Baliol, Edward the First seized upon Penrith and the other manors, which were never afterwards restored. The attack upon Carlisle was repeated in 1296 and extended to Cockermouth, and in the following century, both before and after Bannockburn, Robert and Edward Bruce crossed the border, and in 1314, during the general depression, burned Kirkoswald Castle on the Eden, and penetrated to Richmond. During the whole of this century and for some time longer, England's weakness continued to be Scotland's opportunity, and the country was occasionally ravaged, even as far as Penrith. Carlisle Castle, though never taken, was often threatened, nor did men cease to fortify their
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their dwellings with moats, towers, and battlements, until the Scottish power was broken at Flodden, and the accession of James the First to the throne of Elizabeth converted, though slowly and unwillingly, the Elliots and Armstrongs, Scotts and Kerrs, from reivers and cattle lifters into peaceable subjects and friends.

The natural lines of defence between England and its northern neighbours were chiefly the Tweed, the Wansbeck, and the north Tyne, on the eastern side, and behind them the main Tyne and the Eden, extending from sea to sea. About the head waters of these streams, near the centre of the country, the Cheviot range of hills presented a formidable barrier to the north of the Tyne, and the lofty fells about Alston and Stanhope one still more formidable to its south. The deep ravine and the rapid stream of the lower Tyne rendered the passage into the Bishopric hazardous and indeed fatal, should a retreat become a flight.

West of the high ground, the valley of the upper Eden afforded naturally an easy way into Westmoreland and north Yorkshire, and the possession of Carlisle gave the Scots a partially parallel passage along the old Roman road to Penrith, whence the valley of the Eamont lay convenient for a flank march, joining the Eden valley at its widest and least secure part, and thus laying open the heart of Westmoreland.

It will be seen from the following condensed and, as regards the inferior strengths, imperfect lists, how numerous throughout the Border Counties were the castles, peels, towers, and fortified halls, and that it was the former only, and those of them of the chief magnitude, that were posted on the main passes and rivers, that is to say were intended for the general defence of the frontier.

The most northern fortress of England, placed not behind but beyond the Tweed, between a fold of that river and its junction with the sea, was the Castle, and dependent upon it the fortified town of Berwick, a strong place, and
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for a long time within the Scottish border. In later times it became the English bulwark, was walled and moated by Edward the First, and underwent more than ever the usual share of the extremities of border warfare. The fragment of the castle is now traversed by the railway, and within the walls of Edward has been constructed a citadel of the Vauban type, now almost equally obsolete.

On the south of the Tweed, between that river and the Tyne and Eden, a breadth of about seventy miles, are placed five fortresses of the first class, Norham and Bamburgh on the north, Newcastle and Carlisle on the south, and Alnwick in the centre. All are of Norman construction, four of the five have rectangular keeps, and the shell keep of Alnwick, though rebuilt, retains its ancient Norman entrance. Norham, built on the elevated bank of the Tweed above the Saxon Ubbanford, was the work of Bishops Flambard and Puiset. It is a superb structure even in its present ruined condition. It stands on the verge of a Roman camp and is defended, landward, by the Roman lines. Bamborough is the only absolutely impregnable fortress of the north, and rivals even Dunedin in position and appearance. It covers the table summit of a rock of basalt, 140 feet above the adjacent sea level. It was founded by the Flame-bearing Ida, was the seat of the early Kings and Earls of Northumbria, and was finally held by the Mowbrays, the most turbulent of the border lords. The keep, a magnificent structure, is still inhabited, and contains a well sunk in the hard rock to the level of the sea. Windsor itself cannot boast a greater history nor a grander position.

Of Newcastle, attributed to Curthose in 1080, there remains a very perfect keep, not indeed of the first class in point of size, but of excessive strength, and unusually complete in the appendages of such buildings, possessing a forebuilding, chapel, well chamber, and mural cells and galleries. It stands high above the Tyne and within the
walled

walled circuit of the town. No invader could hope to take it, and an invasion with the new castle in its rear was hazardous. Newcastle may be said to mark one end of the Roman wall, and near to the other was Carlisle.

The position of Carlisle is very remarkable. No inhabitants of the border could have neglected to occupy it. A bold promontory of rock juts out defiantly towards the north, having at its foot the deep and rapid Eden. It was for centuries the central point of the Strathclyde kingdom, and, fortified as we now see it, it was for other centuries the gate of England on the western side.

Alnwick, the central fortress of the border, derives its name from the Aln which forms its northern defence, and the moated knoll which gives figure to its keep was probably occupied in the eighth or ninth century. The Tysons and de Vescis were among its earlier Norman lords; Malcolm Caenmore was slain before it in 1093. Eustace Fitz John, who married the de Vesci heiress, probably built the keep before which William the Lion was taken prisoner in 1174. It was not, however, till above a century and a quarter afterwards that this castle became the chief seat of that branch of the House of Louvain with which, under the name of Percy, its glories are mainly identified.

It is difficult to number the lesser castles or the peels. The house of every man, even of moderate estate, was literally his castle; and very many have long been levelled and are forgotten, or are only incidentally mentioned in the scanty local records. It has been much the custom to include the old towers in the modern houses, so that nothing of them is visible, and their presence is only revealed by the exceptional thickness of their walls, as shewn on a plan. Thus, at the old Senhouse seat of Netherhall, the peel occupies the centre of the present house, and is used as either cellar or strong room; so also at Dovenby and Irton. At Woodside, near Carlisle, the peel was only discovered

covered when Mr. Arlosh and the house planned with a view to alterations. It has been truly said, scratch a Cumberland or Westmorland squire's house and you find a peel. Of the lesser castles, on the Tweed were Twisell, Heaton, Cornhill, and Werk. Behind them were Etal, Ford, and Coupland; and at various not distant points the towers and peels of Tweedmouth, Goswick, Cheswick, Scremeston, Thornton, Felkington, Berrington, Grindon, Tillmouth, Newbigging, Duddon, Ancroft, Fenwick, Kyløe, Elwick, Buckton, Fenham; and in the Farne Islands the castle of Holy Island. Nearer to Alnwick, and along the waters tributary to the Aln and the Coquet, were the castles of Dunstanborough, a pile of much grandeur upon the sea coast, Harbottle a rather celebrated Umfraville castle on the upper Coquet, Elsdon, with its adjacent mote hill near the field of Otterbourne, Cartington, Edlingham, on the sea coast Warkworth, Esbott, and Hirst, while along the Coquet are the Ogle castle of Bothal, that of Morpeth, and Mitford, a very ancient structure remarkable for its secluded position and the peculiarity of its Norman keep. In these districts also are or were to be found the peels of Heiferlaw, Newton, Hepburn, Lilburn, Tosson Tower near Rothbury, Low Clibburn, Cresswell, Cockle Tower, Nether-Whitton, Crag, Branshaw, and Barrow near Harbottle. There are also the three peels near Highshaw, Whitlees, Cleugh-brae near the Roman Rochester, two peels on the Tarse Burn, and one at Yarrow on the skirts of Cheviot.

The tract between the Coquet and the Tyne, traversed by the Roman wall, in parts tolerably fertile and more thickly inhabited, was also studded over with strong places. Here were the castles of Horton, Ogle, Ponteland, Belsay, Tarsset, and Dalby on the north; Birtley, Chipchase, Haughton, Hemmell, and Simonsburn, about the North Tyne. Further south are Aydon and Halton, and the peels of Shortflatt, Bitchfield, Capheaton, Wallington, Littleharle, Burraden, Swinburne, and Hole Peel. Upon the main
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stream of the Tyne was Prudhoe with its Norman keep, the chief seat of the Umfravilles, and higher up the towers of Bywell, Corbridge, Dilston, Hexham, Langley, Thornton, and Staward Peel; and about Haltwistle, Bellister, Featherstone, Blenkinsop, and Thirwall castles. Hereabouts the waters begin to flow to the west, and upon the Irthing, and other tributaries of the Eden, are the famous castle of Naworth the abode of Belted Will, Walton, Scaleby, a treble-moated and very perfect castle of the Tilliols, Netherby, Shank, Brackenhill and Kirklington on the Line, Triermain, a castle of the Barons Vaux, Askerton, Braes, Crew, St. Cuthberts, Bewcastle placed within the Roman station, Kirkandrews on Esk, Liddell Strength, at the junction of Esk and Liddell; Nether-Denton with its tower and moated mound, Stapelton, Bonshaw, Crumlogan, and Stonehouse upon the Liddell. Nearer to Carlisle were Irthington and Bleatarn with their moated mounds, Linstock and Drawdykes, all four close to the Roman wall, and to its south Woodside peel and Newbiggin tower attached to the Priory. A little east of the city were Warwick! and Corby castles, while westwards Rockcliffe and Drumburgh castles guarded the estuary of the Eden, and upon the Caldew the Episcopal seat of Rose Castle, a place of some strength.

Cumberland was so long in Scottish occupation that it contains but few examples of military Norman masonry, though many strong places, some of which upon the lower Eden have already been mentioned. South of that river and the estuary of the Solway is Burgh-upon-Sands, the death place of the great Edward, celebrated locally for its military church tower and for a castle taken by the Scots in 1174 and 1253. Newton Arlosh also boasts a strong church tower, and at Wulsty near Silloth was a small castle; the moated mound of Down Hall, Aikton, was a seat of the Morvilles, and the Upper Hall or Vicarage has also a moat. Brackenrigg, near Bowness-on-Solway, was a place
of

of strength. But the principal castles of Cumberland, south of Carlisle, were Cockermouth and Egremont. Cockermouth was founded probably by the Saxon lords of Allerdale, whose earlier seat is thought to have been within the Roman work at Papcastle, but it is better known as the castle of the Barons Lucy. The Toothill, at no great distance, is probably the seat of its early jurisdiction. Egremont is attributed to Meschines, Earl of Chester, early in the 12th century; but its lofty mound is probably of much earlier date. Of lesser strongholds were St. Andrews, and the towers and houses of Highhead, Castle Hill in Sowerby, Hayton, Hayes, Millom, Drumburgh, Hutton-in-the-Forest, Catterlen, Blencowe, Castle Howe in Ennerdale, Castle Rigg, Dalston Hall, Dacre, Dovenby, Greystoke, Harlybrow, Hardrigg, Hewthwaite, Hutton John, Isell, Irton, Lamplugh, Lees Gill, Muncaster, Netherhall, West Newton, Haltcliffe, Wraysholm, and Unerigg. Torpenhow on the Ellen seems to have been fortified, as was probably the Mote of Aldingham, a mound by the sea shore, 96 feet high, thought, upon very doubtful authority, to have been originally sepulchral. Barton Kirkhall in Patterdale, and Hartsop Hall, were also strong houses.

In that part of Cumberland, intersected by the Eden, there are, above Corby, the castles of Armathwaite, Castle Carrock, Dunwalloght, and Kirk-Oswald, with a dependent castellet five miles to the east, on the Ravensbeck, among the Geltsdale Fells, which here rise to a height of 2,000 feet. Higher up the Eden is Great Salkeld, with its fortified church.

On the Eamont and the Lowther are several strong places. On the Cumberland bank of the Eamont are Penrith, a castle of the time of Richard the Second, Carleton Hall, and the old house of Edenhall. On the Westmorland bank are the Halls of Sockbridge, Yanwath, Brougham, Clifton, and Askham, and the castle and Norman keep of Brougham, a stronghold of the Viponts and

and Cliffords, and one of the great military centres of the district, Appleby and Brough being the others. These three castles, each with a rectangular Norman keep, were the guards of the valley of the Eden above the junction of the Eamont, and below the union of the two roads from Carlisle into Yorkshire. At various points in the open valley were the castellets of Howgill, Bewly, Hartly, Waitby, Lammerside, and Pendragon, with the halls of Wharton and Crosby Ravensworth. The lateral opening eastward towards the Bishopric was guarded by the keep of Bowes and the strong post of Barnard Castle on the Tees.

The western division of Westmorland, forming the Barony of Kendal, was far less exposed to the Scottish in-roads. Here were Kendal Castle with Castle Howe, the seat of an earlier defence, and another Castle Howe at Low Scales in Bretherdale, and in the south the towers of Dallam and Hazelsbeck. At various points, shewing the general insecurity of the district, were the towers of Wraysholm, Arnside on Ullswater, Godmond near Kendal, Greencastle, Halscal, Peele, and Whelp. The district, though removed from the border, and out of the line of the principal invasions, was still liable to be over-run by the stragglers from a force advancing by the road from Carlisle towards Penrith.

The *Transactions* of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Society contain already many valuable papers upon the more remarkable and more perfect of these strong places: it is to be hoped that the industry of its members will continue to be directed in this direction, so that in time the materials may be collected for a complete and accurate history of the ancient military defences of the border.
