

R E P O R T
OF
The Society of Antiquaries
OF
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

M.DCCC.LXXXV.

THE year 1884 will be memorable in the annals of the Society for two events—the visit of the Royal Archæological Institute and the completion of the Black Gate Museum.

Notwithstanding that the Archæological Institute had, so recently as 1882, visited the neighbouring county of Cumberland, it seemed fitting that the recent installation of Earl Percy as President of that Society should be commemorated by a visit to the county of his ancestors. This Society accordingly, on its own responsibility, offered an invitation to the Institute, which was cordially accepted, and the meeting which took place in consequence, from the 5th to the 13th of August, is one upon which both Societies may look back with pleasure. A succession of days of almost cloudless brilliancy, and a temperature which, if it had a fault, erred in the direction of too great heat, gave our visitors a very favourable impression of the character of our Northumberland summers, and greatly promoted the success of the excursions, which were well attended and universally enjoyed. Alnwick, Warkworth, Holy Island, Bamborough, Chesters, Ravensworth Castle, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Corbridge, and Durham were all visited, and the interchange of opinions between our local antiquaries and the visitors could hardly fail to be profitable to both. One rainy day, if we had been favoured with it, would probably have caused more justice to be done to the very interesting loan collection of antiquities which was exhibited in the new Museum at the Black

Gate; but even as it was, in presence of the uniformly brilliant weather, there was a fair attendance of visitors. The sectional meetings, held for the most part late in the evening after very long excursions, were necessarily somewhat hurried, but have, at any rate, enriched our Transactions with a number of valuable papers.

As for the Black Gate, it will be in the remembrance of all the members of the Society how recently this interesting monument of antiquity was threatened with entire demolition. The offer of the antiquaries to rent it at a nominal sum for the purpose of a Museum was received with favour by the Corporation, and the building, which has been put into a state of thorough repair, is now in the occupation of the Society. The Roman altars are all stored upon the first floor, and this interesting collection, which is believed to be the finest in our island, can now be seen under more advantageous circumstances than when it was dispersed about the dark halls and passages of the Castle. The cost of adapting the Black Gate to its present purpose has been about £1,600, the funds for which have been provided by a special subscription from members and friends of the Society. The Council have every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which the contractor, Mr. Burton, has performed the work, under the able superintendence of Mr. R. J. Johnson, a statement by whom, as to the details of the work accomplished, is appended to this Report (page vi.)

It is proposed formally to open the new Museum on a date to be fixed by the Society, and in order to add interest to the ceremony a loan collection will be formed, contributions to which have been solicited by your Secretaries from the chief collectors in Northumberland and Durham.

The archæological record of the year that has just closed has been an interesting one, and will be found, we trust, fairly set forth in our Transactions and Proceedings. The excavations which Mr. Clayton is carrying forward at Chesters between the camp and the river continue to interest and perplex antiquaries. The generally accepted theory appears to be that they disclose the site of a Roman villa, and in this connection it is interesting to observe some resemblances of plan between this building and the villas described in Cohausen's superb monograph on the *Limes Germanicus*. The hypocausts and



ΕΚΚΑΙ ΔΕ ΧΕΤΗ Η
ΔΩΝΤΩΝ ΒΑΚΙΩΝ
ΥΠΟΝΙΜΕΣ ΑΥΤΩΝ
ΚΑΙ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΝ ΕΙΔΟΣ
ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ
ΧΑΙΡΕΙΤΑΙ ΠΑΡΕΛ
ΚΗΝΤΡΟΝ ΗΤΩΝ ΒΙΟ
ΕΡΩΝ ΕΩ ΚΙ ΤΑΤΩ
ΤΕΙΝΑΡ ΜΗΡΩΝ ΜΕΤ
ΚΙ ΜΗ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΘΩΚΟΥ
ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ ΤΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΗ

ascending flues for warming the various chambers are in an admirable state of preservation. But the chamber at the north end of the building, with its five semi-circular recesses remains an unsolved mystery.

The altar found at Housesteads containing an inscription in honour of *Mars Thingsus*, the work of a Frisian Cohort, greatly interests our German fellow-workers, who deem that this inscription may throw some light even on the political institutions of their and our Teutonic forefathers.

Another important sepulchral monument has been discovered at South Shields, only second in interest to the monument of Regina which was found there some years ago. The subject of this epitaph was a young man, freedman of an officer in an Asturian *ala* (that which was stationed at Benwell), and may possibly have been waiting for a ship to convey him to the warmer climate of Italy when death overtook him in his northern exile. (See Vol. X., pp. 311-318.)

In this connection we may refer to the celebrated stone found at Brough, in Westmoreland, and now deposited in the Fitzwilliam Museum. The deciphering of the inscription on this stone has been the subject of a keen controversy, chiefly carried on in the columns of the *Academy*. It was commenced by Professor Sayce, and has been continued by Messrs. Bradley, Isaac Taylor, Nicholson, Evans, and Ridgeway. Though some parts of the inscription still remain obscure, it is now universally admitted that it contains six lines in Greek hexameters, recording the fate of *Hermes* of Commagene, apparently a youth of sixteen years, who seems to have met his fate in the land of the Cimmerii. There is an obvious temptation to connect this word with the Cymric inhabitants of Britain, but some of our most competent Celtic scholars doubt the possibility of such a connection. From the character of the letters the inscription is believed to belong to the fifth century of our era. An inscription in Greek letters in honour of a Syrian youth, carved in the century which witnessed the fall of the Western Empire, and now brought to light upon a lonely hill in Westmoreland, suggests abundant materials for reflection. (See illustration* facing page iv.)

* Kindly lent by the proprietors of the *Athenæum*.

In mediæval archæology, perhaps the most interesting fact has been the discovery of the foundations of the Abbey of Alnwick. This has been accomplished by excavations carried on in Alnwick Park by the Duke of Northumberland, under the able superintendence of Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, F.S.A.

The following is the position of the Society as regards members:—

No. of Members on January 1st, 1884	181
Elected during year	50
			231
Died, 1; Resigned, 6	7
			224
No. of Members on January 1st, 1885	...		224

In conclusion, the Council feel that they may congratulate the Society on the flourishing state of its affairs, and trust that in a district so peculiarly calculated as ours is to attract fresh recruits to the study of archæology, a career of yet wider usefulness and popularity lies before it.

APPENDIX.

The Black Gate was the principal entrance to the Castle enclosure, and is a building of great historical interest, as it forms the sole relic of the extensive works of Henry III. in the Castle. Up to June, 1247, the works of a certain new gate in the Castle cost £514 15s. 11d., and a further sum of £36 0s. 8d. was afterwards laid out on the repair of a gate at Newcastle. These sums resulted in the erection of the fabric that now remains to us.

Formerly the outer archway was protected by a drawbridge and moat, with a further outwork or barbican, but these outworks have entirely disappeared.

Of the actual work of the time of Henry III. the main walls of the gate and the two interesting and beautiful vaulted chambers on either side of the archway are the principal remains.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the gate had become ruinous, and a lease of it was granted to one Stevenson, who inserted the stone mullioned windows, some doorways, and some pretty fireplaces in the style of the period.

In the eighteenth century ruin again took place; part of the eastern wall fell down and was reinstated in brick in a poor way.

Afterwards, the place was very much neglected, and another part of the walling had fallen away some years ago, and was made up with rough wooden boards. The space was divided into tenements, hardly fit for human habitation, and when it came into the Society's hands its condition was inconceivably squalid and miserable.

The whole of the interior was gutted, and the walls were thoroughly cleaned and replastered. That part which had given way was reinstated in stone. New floors were put in, and a new roof was put on, covered with the old tiles.

The vaulted chambers were repaired, and three fine apartments of considerable size have been secured, above which there are some rooms for a caretaker.

A new wing joined to the east side of the gate contains the staircase for access to the upper stories and a porter's lodge, waiting room, &c.

The chamber on the first floor being of ample size, and supported by the strong vaults of the ground floor, forms an admirable Museum for the reception of the fine collection of Roman altars, &c., belonging to the Society. The upper chambers are being arranged as Museums for the preservation and display of the other collections of the Society.

WITH THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

Cr.

1884.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	BY PRINTING—						
	Andrew Reid	93	1	0			
	Journal Office	20	7	6			
	Lambert & Co.	16	12	6			
	G. Nicholson	18	9	6			
	„ DRAWINGS, ENGRAVINGS, AUTOTYPES, &c.—				148	10	6
	D. Mossman	3	13	6			
	J. Akerman	13	10	0			
	R. B. Utting	91	15	0			
	Autotype Company	5	15	4			
	Sprague & Co.	13	0	0			
	Bradbury & Co.	0	7	6			
	Whiting	0	19	0			
	Ellis & White	3	0	0			
	J. Wilson... ..	0	3	0			
	Dallas	0	8	1			
	Photo Engraving Company	0	18	0			
	„ BOOKS—				133	9	5
	W. Scott	0	15	0			
	C. C. Hodges	0	11	0			
	Learmount	0	10	6			
	Sir G. Duckett	0	12	3			
	Asher & Co.	3	5	9			
	Wm. Dodd	5	0	0			
	D. Nutt	0	18	0			
	R. Robinson	1	19	6			
	H. W. Ball	0	14	0			
	Griffin & Co.	0	6	0			
	„ BLACK GATE—				14	12	0
	Town Clerk for Lease	2	2	0			
	Carriage of Cases	1	7	6			
	Printing	3	17	0			
	Rent, 2 years	2	0	0			
	Charwoman	0	5	0			
	Archæological Institute for Case	10	0	0			
	Insurance	3	12	3			
					23	3	9
	„ J. Gibson, 1 year's Salary and Gratuity... ..	52	8	4			
	„ Charwoman, &c.	1	8	6			
	„ Rent of Castle	0	2	6			
	„ Insurance do.	0	7	6			
	„ Two Cheque Books	0	5	0			
	„ Subscription to Surtees Society	1	1	0			
	„ Do. Harleian Society... ..	1	1	0			
	„ T. W. Waters, Binding	12	0	0			
	„ Bronze Spear Head, from River	1	0	0			
	„ Chronicle, Advertising	0	4	6			
	„ G. H. Moor... ..	3	1	6			
	„ H. Watson	0	12	0			
	„ Mawson & Swan	0	12	6			
	„ T. & J. Hancock	0	5	8			
	„ Secretary's Expenses to London, &c.	4	12	6			
	„ Postage and Carriage	23	15	4			
	„ Gas, Coke, and Firewood	2	0	5			
	„ Commission on Subscriptions	10	14	0			
	„ Sundries	0	15	5			
	1885, January, Balance in hand	358	1	5			
					£794	4	9