

XV.—THE WALLS OF NEWCASTLE IN 1638.

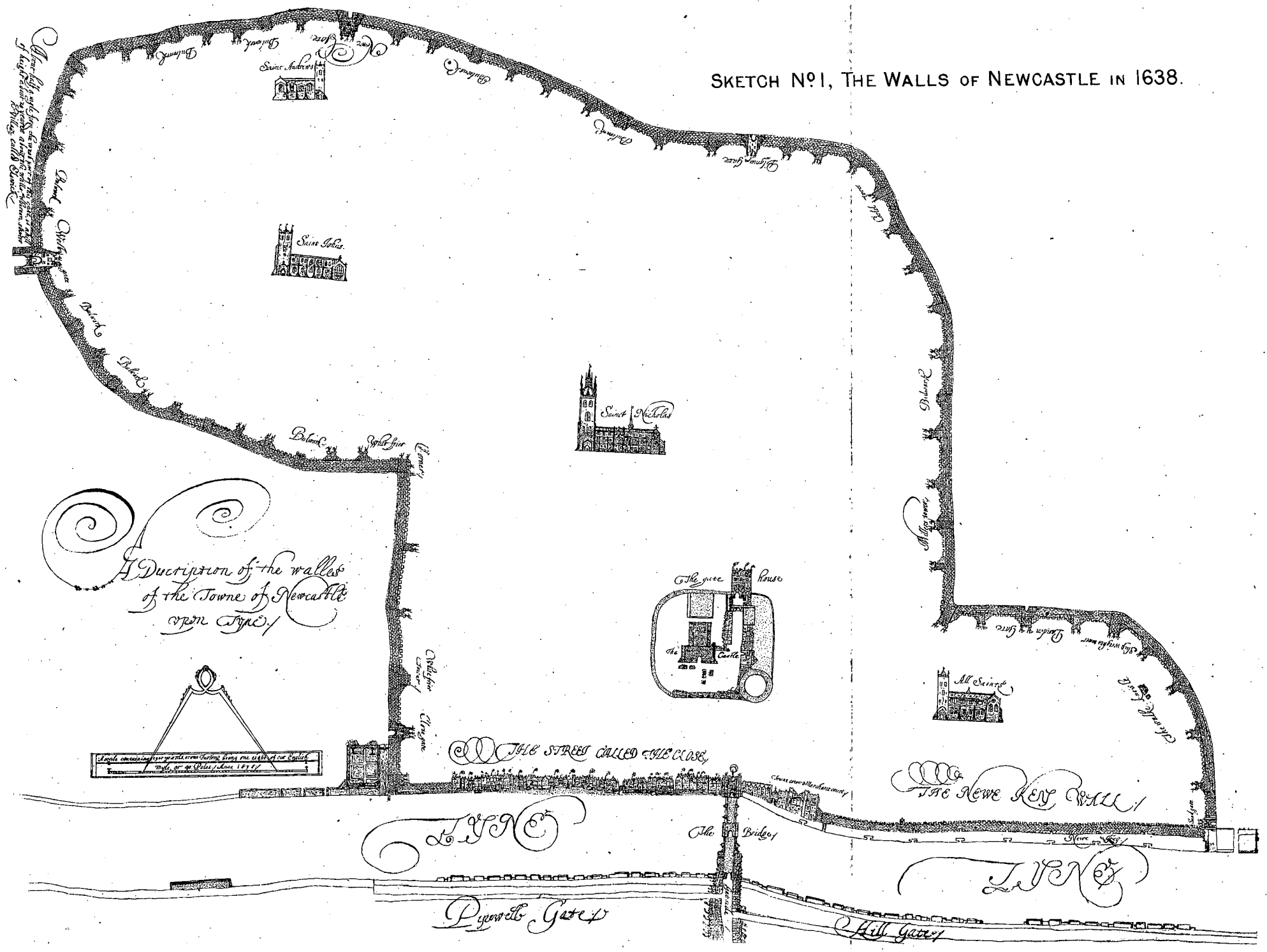
BY RICHARD WELFORD.

[Read on the 27th January, 1887.]

THE accompanying sketches show the walls of Newcastle as they appeared in the year 1638, and illustrate a method by which it was supposed the town could be defended when threatened by invasion. The originals are preserved at the Record Office among the State Papers, and copies were taken for the *Archæologia Aeliana*, because the drawings show (at least one of them shows) the course and elevation of the walls and the structure of the gates, towers, and turrets, with a minuteness that has not been attempted in any other known picture of a date anterior to the middle of the 18th century. No. 1 is a finished sketch, drawn to scale (363 yards to an inch), by a skilful draughtsman; No. 2 is a rough design, hastily pencilled by a soldier.

These sketches were made at a time when England was threatened by an invasion from the sister kingdom. An attempt which James I. had begun, and his son, Charles, was earnestly pursuing, to enforce uniformity of religious worship throughout the united realm, had failed. Scotland would not tolerate prelacy, and was prepared to fight for freedom. The National Covenant, which had for its object, Sir Walter Scott tells us, "to annul all the prelatie innovations that James's policy and his son's violence had been able to introduce into the Presbyterian Church," was sworn to in the spring and summer of 1638 by hundreds of thousands of Scotchmen of every age and description, "vowing, with uplifted hands and weeping eyes, that with the Divine assistance they would dedicate life and fortune to maintain the object of their solemn engagement!" It was feared that, in fulfilment of these earnest declarations, they would cross the border, invest Carlisle and Berwick, and possibly advance as far as Newcastle. The Privy Council were thoroughly alarmed at the determined attitude which the Scots had taken up. They sent Sir Jacob Astley, Col. William Legge, and Sir Thomas Morton down to the North as com-

SKETCH N^o 1, THE WALLS OF NEWCASTLE IN 1638.





missioners to inspect fortifications, and muster the train bands ; at the same time two ships of the navy were ordered to cruise in the North Sea to intercept supplies of arms and ammunition which it was reported the Scots were obtaining from the Continent. The following letter from the Corporation of Newcastle to their Recorder (who was in London on the town's business), shows that one or more of the Commissioners had been here in the late summer or early autumn, and finding the walls in poor condition had ordered considerable work to be done to them at the burgesses' expense.

Yo^r Ire of the sixt of November instant we haue reciened, and hopes eare this yo^w haue receiued ou^{rs} in aⁿswere [*sic*] touching Sr Robert Heathe's businesse and the Shipp money. We haue beene at excessiue charges in repaireinge o^r walls, gates, percullises and doeing such other things as we are directed by the gentleman sent hither by Captaine Legg ; the truth is o^r dayly charge is soe great, the towne in soe much debt, and the reuenues soe small, by occasion of the small trade of shipp, that we runne still further and further in debt, soe that it is not probable we shall get out of debt. What charges we haue beene at already we are content to beare, but if we shall be putt to any further or new charges, neyther the Comon purse nor o^r pticulers are able to support it. Yo^w know o^r pouerty as well as o^r selves, and therefore we desire yo^w to doe yo^r best indeauour to p^ruent any further charge that may be aboue in any respect imposed uppon vs, of w^{ch} nothing douteing, wth o^r loues remembered, we rest,

Yo^r very loueing friendes,

November the
15, 1638.

The fall of y^o
Windoes will cost
vs aboute 1200*li*.

ALEXANDER DAVYSON, Maior.
PETER RIDDELL.
LIONELL MADDISONNE.
WILLM. WARMOUTH.
ROBT. BEWICKE.
JOHN CLAUERINGE.
ROBERT ANDERSON.
RAUFFE COCKE.
JOHN MARLAY.

[Addressed] To our verie loueing freind Mr. Thomas Riddell at Mr. Scargells over against the Sunn Taverne in Holburne neare Chancerie laine end, be this dd.—(6d. London.)

Sir Jacob Astley arrived in Newcastle as "Sergeant-Major-General of the Field," at the turn of the year, and on the 21st of January (1638-39), the Mayor and his brethren sent to the Earl Marshal and others a copy of the suggestions for the defence and safety of the town which Sir Jacob had made to them. The document reads as follows :—

Right honorable,

We haue receiued yo^r hono^{rs} lre by S^r Jacob Ashley, who hath bene pleased to veiwe our trained bands, consisting of foure companiès, each companie haueing fourescore Musketteires and fforty Corsletts of whose sufficiencie and equipage we hope S^r Jacob will giue yo^r hono^{rs} satisfaccion. We make bould to send yo^r hono^{rs} here inclosed, a Copie of such direccions and instruccions as S^r Jacob vpon conference wth our selues hath bene pleased to resolue vppon, for the safety of this Towne. ffor what concernes our selues by these instruccions to be done we shall not faile (god willinge) wth all expidicon to performe the same. And for what other things therein contained, w^{ch} we haue made bould to craue the assistance of the right honorable the lordes of his Ma^{tes} most hono^{ble} priuie Councill, our humble suite to yo^r Lo^{p^e} is that yo^u wilbe pleased to doe vs that honorable fauoure as to comend our suite therein to their Hono^{rs}. And as duty bindes vs we shalbe, as we haue alwayes bene, most ready and forward to aduenture our liues and fortunes for the advancem^t of his Ma^{tes} service in the defence of this our ancient Towne and liberties. And soe we humbly take our leaues and reste,

Yo^r hono^{rs} to be commanded,

Newcastle vppon
Tyne the 21^o
Januarie, 1638.

ALEXANDER DAVYSON, Maior.
THOS. RIDDELL, recorder.
PETER RIDDELL.
LIONELL MADDISONNE.
WILLM. WARMOUTH.
THO. LYDDELL.
ROBT. BEWICKE.
JOHN CLAUERINGE.
ROBERT ANDERSON.
RAPH KOLE.
RAUFFE COCKE.
JOHN MARLAY.

[Endorsed] Jan. 1638.

Lre from y^o Maiore, etc., of
Newcastle vppon Tyne touching
S^r Jacob Ashley's view of the
trained bandes, etc.

[ENCLOSURE.]

Vppon consultacon had by S^r Jacob Ashley Knight wth the Maior and Aldermen of Newcastle vppon Tyne for the safety of the same Towne the xviiith of January, 1638.

ffirst, the said S^r Jacob Ashley conceiues it necessarie that a draw-bridge be made at the South end of the Tyne bridge, where a draw-bridge formerly hath bene, and to be drawne vpp to the Towne side wth out any respect to the houses and shoppes lately built vppon it, w^{ch} ought to be broaken downe, in w^{ch} case they are to treat wth the lord B^p of Durham, in whose liberty the same is and whom it doth concerne.

2^{dly}—Aboute the midle of the Bridge there would be a fireese Rooter firmly fastened, and made to be opened on the day and shutt on the night as occasion shall require.

3^{dy}—And being there lies vpon the Keay foretene small peeces of ordinances belonging to the Towne, and other particuler men, shooteing a bullett of aboute thre pound weight & upwarde. It is fitt that these peeces be laid vpon shipp carriages, and placed vpon the fittest Towers of the Walls to defend the Portes and passages to the Towne, and ouer against the hills w^{ch} over looke the Towne, and that 50 bullettes be prouided for euery peece, wth powder and all other things fitt for the same.

4^{ly}—The six demiculverings of the King's being already vpon carriages, some would be placed vpon the sides of the Portes, and others vpon convenient Batteries that shalbe appointed to hinder the enimies accesse to the Towne.

5^{ly}—That the foure companies of the Towne, being 500 men, they be appointed their seuerall places, whereto meete to make good the Portes and Walls vpon occasion.

6^{ly}—That we haue numbred 1500 men in the Towne and subbords besides the trained bandes all able of body to beare Armes vpon occasion, and we suppose there wilbe at least 1000 more, that if there be occasion will come into the Towne for their owne safetie.

7^{ly}—We humbly pray their Lor^{pes} there may be Armes and ammunition laid in the Towne to arme these men if there be occasion, the Towne being only to be made good by strength of men, all other fortificacons being in vaine, the Towne is soe commanded by the hills adiacent, saue only the makinge of the Portes defensible, a great part whereof is done, & the rest shalbe done wth all possible speede, by w^{ch} addicon of Armes and ammunition We conceiue we may be the better enabled to maintaine this Towne for some time vntill his Ma^{tie} shall send Succo^{rs}.

8^{ly}—There is in the handes of our merch^{tes} 3000 quarters of Ry besides other graine, and there is dayly expected more to be brought in by the said merch^{tes}. And for other victualls we haue noe prouision, but it is all brought to vs weekely out of the country, and great store of fresh fish is brought from the Sea to the Towne w^{ch} is a great releife to the inhabitantes thereof.

9^{ly}—ffor Gunsmithes, Armorers or Pistoll makers, we haue not any, nor any that can mend them, if there be need, and therefore we humbly pray their Lor^{pes} that they wilbe pleased to cause some Artificers of that kinde to be sent from London to this Towne, who may be resident here for the better accomodacon of the Towne and the adiacent countries.

10^{ly}—ffor all the moneys that haue been taken for his Ma^{tes} Armes and ammunition being as yet but about 300*li* it is all receiued by M^r Maior, who is ready to pay it when he shalbe therevnto required.

11^{ly}—Being that there is much butter by licence exported out of the ports of Yorkshire, Durham, and this Port, whereby it is become verie scant here, and the price almost double to that it hath bene of late Wee humbly pray that the same may be restrained in these times of scarcety.

12^{ly}—The Towne doth vndertake that there shalbe presentlie in their owne

particular storehouse fourescore barrells of powder wth 600 weight of Match, 3200 weight Muskett shott, 200 demiculvering shott, 150 Sacer-shott, and 500 Minion shott, w^{ch} shalbe distributed when occation serues for the vse of the fouretene peeces of Ordinance, and the 320 Musketeires. Vppon Saturday the 19th of this instant Januarie Sr Jacob Ashley & thre of the Aldermen wth two Engineires went to veiwe Tynemouth Castle, and the Sheeles, and the groundes on both sides of the Riuer neare the Harboure mouth. ffor the castle of Tynemouth it wilbe needlesse to demolish it, because the ground wherevppon it standes will command all the lower workes to the waterside. And for the makeinge of any fort vppon the side of the ground towards sheeles being aboute a mile of Tynemouth Castle neare the vpper light, where we conceiue it would be most convenientest, the ground close by it to the land inward is soe hie, that it would overlooke any ffort that could be made by the side of the Riuer, and there is soe good ground to approach to it as an Army by land in six dayes may take it, and y^e ground on the South side of the Riuer is farr worse to build any ffort vppon, soe that it is conceined by vs all that the best safety for this Port, in time of Hostilitie wilbe for two of his Ma^{ties} shippes to lie neare the harbour mouth.

All w^{ch} we humbly submitt to the graue wisdomes and further consideracon of the Lordes of his Ma^{ties} most honorable priue Councell. And in all obedience most humbly submitte our liues and fortunes to his M^{ties} service for whose happie and prosperous reigne we shall dayly pray.

ALEXANDER DAVYSON, Maior.

JACOB ASTELEY.

THO. RIDDELL.

PETER RIDDELL.

LIONELL MADDISONE.

WILLM. WARMOUTH.

THO. LYDDELL.

ROBT. BEWICKE.

JOHN. CLAUERING.

ROBERT ANDERSON.

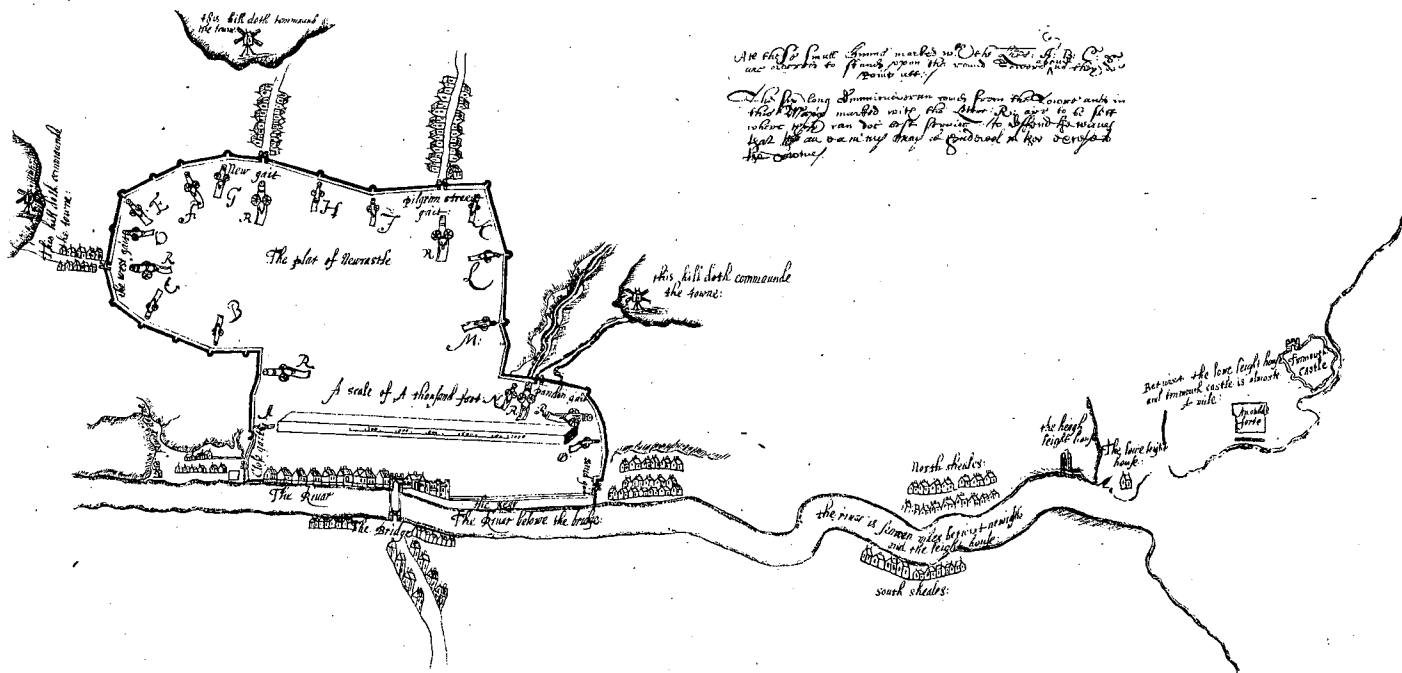
RAPH. KOLE.

RAUFFE COCKE.

JOHN MARLAY.

[Endorsed] Jan. 1638.—State of the Towne of Newcastle, wth the means to strengthen it: vpon a survey taken by Sr Jacob Ashley, & the Maior and Inhabitants there.

It must have been about this time, and probably to elucidate Sir Jacob Astley's Report, that Sketch No. 1 was taken. A day or two after that report was despatched, Sir Jacob followed up his suggestions by a letter and sketch of his own. He reported that he had viewed



SKETCH N^o. 2.



the circuit round about Newcastle and found the place "no ways possible" to be defended by its fortifications against a siege. But though the hills on every side commanded the town, and rendered efficient defence impracticable, partial protection might be given; and he explains in his letter how this could be accomplished. For the local train bands he had nothing but words of praise. "The town takes pride in their well-doing," and he himself had not seen better companies "in any of these parts." Tynemouth Castle he had visited with three Newcastle Aldermen, and could find no means of fortifying it so as to enable it to stand a siege. In conclusion, he stated that he had sent with the letter "a card" of Newcastle, Shields, and Tynemouth, and that in the Newcastle part he had shown guns placed in position to hinder the approach of an enemy. This is Sketch No. 2.

There is not much in Sir Jacob Astley's outline map or "card" to arrest attention, but in the larger picture two or three noticeable features may be pointed out. First of all it is to be observed that there are no houses on the Newcastle end of the bridge—all is clear from the Magazine Gate to the Central Tower; but on the Gateshead side they are somewhat thickly clustered. In the next place it may be noticed that there is a turret on or overlooking the Quay Wall; that the Maison Dieu has a square crenellated top; that there is a similar crenellation on the summit of the castle keep; that the inner bailey of the castle has a large south postern, and that the Moot Hall does not overlap the "Half-Moon Battery"—which, by the way, is a full moon in the drawing. Further, it will be seen that Austin Tower is called "Millers'" Tower (because the Millers' Company at that time met in it); that there are no stone men in armour on the top of White Friar Tower; that the relative positions of the four churches are incorrectly drawn, and that the tower of St. Andrew's is at the wrong end of the nave. Other peculiarities will, no doubt, disclose themselves when the drawing comes to be examined by those who understand fortifications and are acquainted with the minute details of the walls published in the histories of Bourne and Brand.