THE BORDER HOLDS OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the chaos that succeeded the Recall of the Legions every sem-
blance of Roman civilisation entirely vanished from the country be-
tween the Tyne and Tweed. As far as such a thing is possible in
History, One and Indivisible, that which came after bore no relation
to that which went before.[1]   The Romans had been in possession for
a period as long as that from the Battle of Bosworth to the Fall of
Khartoum, but the example of their works conveyed no lesson to the
invading Angles. The stations along the Great Wall and the Watling
Street appear to have been left as desolate as the cities of Yucatan ;
•and the Imperial Border, that whether from the Solway to the Tyne,
or from the Clyde to the Forth, had always been traced by a sharp
line across the island, disappeared for ever.   The ·great natural
fortress of Dinguardi, the steep basalt rock on the sea shore on which
Ida is suddenly revealed as beginning to reign and 'timbering' a·
'burh,' becomes under the name of Bamburgh the one centre of our·
civil history.[2]

In theory at least, a Roman camp required for its stereotyped
arrangements a situation tolerably level.   Connected by a net-work of
straight roads with other similar stations it was calculated more
generally to answer the requirements of a highly centralized military
organization than those of a purely local character.   For defence it
could rely on its own artificial ramparts.   An Anglian ' burh,' on the
other hand, stood in absolute need of high ground so surrounded by

[1] The Teuton appeared, in fact, on the Border at the same time as the Roman.
The battle of Mons Graupius was won by a charge of Agricola's Tungrian aux-
iliaries; and three stations of the Great Wall were garrisoned by Tungrians,
Batavians, and Frisians, in the same order that those tribes occupied on their own
sea-board.   In enlisting the services of the Angles, &c., the Britons were only
following Roman precedents. These considerations, however, will not bridge
over the historic chasm between the Goth Stilicho and the Angle Ida.

[2] The history of the English Border is outside the limits of the present essay.
It is only necessary to remark that, so far as the Kingdom and Earldom of Nor-
thumberland were concerned, its general direction lay from north to south,
separating them from the Celtic population of the West.   Even after the battle
of Carham, in 1018, made the Tweed, instead of the Forth, the Border on the
north, the valleys of North and South Tyne continued to be practically parts of
Scotland till 1296.

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ravines or precipices that a mound and palisade run round the verge was the only fortification necessary; and provided it commanded a district fertile in supplies, the 'burh' gained in strength by isolation.[3]

With the transitory exceptions of AD GEBRIUM (Yeavering Bell), the British hill-fort occupied by Edwin,[4] and AD MURUM (Heddon-on-the-Wall), the royal 'villa' of Oswi,[5] Bamburgh is the only strong place mentioned in our annals till the middle of the eleventh century; and its strategic importance is attested by the fact that amid all the horrors of the Anglian civil wars and Danish invasions it is first recorded to have fallen in 993.

A short time before the Norman Conquest, Earl Tosti seems to have had a stronghold at Tynemouth which he made the scene of some of those drunken feasts in which the English took such delight.[6] The speedy manner in which the flames devoured the hall (*aula* or *domus*) of the Rich Man of Tughall and the smaller house (*domuncula*)' adjoining it, together with his servants and children, after the inhospitable reception he gave to the monks of St. Cuthbert on the 12th December, 1069, seems to show that it was constructed of wood, though the Rich Man's wealth was such that he had promised to hang shields glittering with gold round the walls in honour of the saint, while the cups used in the drunken brawl in which he passed the night were of gold beset with precious stones.[7]

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[3] This difference is well brought out along the coast, where Bamburgh, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth, seem to have been occupied by the Angles in preference to the earlier camps in their respective neighbourhoods—at Outchester (Ulcester), Craster (Craucester), and Gloster Hill (Gloucester).

[4] It is now generally admitted that Yeavering Bell is the AD GEBRIUM of Bede; but 'Melmin,' to which he says the later kings descended, seems to have been identified with Millfield solely through the similarity of the first syllables. Much of the topography of Northumberland in Anglian times is in a state of innocence similar to that which fixed SEGEDUNUM at Seghill and PONS AELII at Ponteland. Melmin (a Celtic name cf. Melrose. &c.) was probably the same place as Kirk Newton. the ancient church of which is dedicated to St. Gregory.

[5] *Arch. Ael.*, N.S., XI., p. 243. The hill on which Heddon Church stands, though close to the twelfth mile-castle on the Wall, reckoning from Wallsend, does not seem to have been embraced by the fortified lines of the Romans. It affords another instance of the selection by the Angles, for their 'burhs,' of positions stronger by nature than those of the Roman camps. 'Oswigesdune,' the hill on which Guthred was proclaimed King of Northumberland in 885 (Sym. Dun., *Hist. de S. Cuthb.*, § 13), may have been the same as Oswi's 'villa,' AD MURUM.

[6] *Vita Oswini* (Surt. Soc. Publ., 8), p. 20.

[7] Reginald. Dunelm., cap. xvi. (Surt. Soc. Publ., 1., pp. 30-31). Tughall, and not Bedlington as stated by the Editor (*Ibid.* p. 295), seems undoubtedly to

On the return of the Conqueror to the banks of the Tyne from his expedition to Scotland in 1072, the inhabitants of the district are stated to have conveyed all their stores to Tynemouth for protection.[8] In the autumn of 1080 Robert Curthose built the New Castle (*novum castellum*) on Tyne, probably a wooden edifice erected on the mount in the outer bailey, levelled in 1810.[9] Tynemouth remained, indeed, the strongest castle on that river. It endured a siege of two months before it was taken by William Rufus in 1095.[10] The fortress (*firmitas*) of Newcastle and a small stronghold (*munitiuncula*), probably Morpeth,[11] appear to have been secured without much difficulty. Bamburgh proved impregnable.

During his suppression of Mowbray's rebellion, the Red King probably founded the walled town of Newcastle, and did much to strengthen the castle there.[12] It is not, however, too much to say that at the present day there is in Northumberland no masonry

have been the home of this 'prædives Nobilium de (*sic*) vicinarum confinio regionum.' St. Cuthbert's body rested at only three places on the journey—in the church of St. Paul at Jarrow (Sym. Dun., *Hist. Dun. Eccl.*, cap. xv.; Rolls Ser., I., p. 100), at Bedlington, and at Tughall. Reginald had just related how one of the Tods of 'Bethligtune' had prophesied to the Rich Man the reception he would give St. Cuthbert, and would assuredly have mentioned the fact had both come from the same place.

[8] *Vita Oswini*, p. 21.

[9] Longstaffe, 'The New Castle upon Tyne,' *Arch. Ael.*, N.S., IV., p. 74.

[10] Tynemouth is then called 'Castellum comitis Rodberti ad ostium Tinæ fluminis situm' (Sym. Dun., *Hist. Reg.*, § 177; Rolls Ser., II., p. 225), but afterwards (*Ibid.* p. 226) it is said to have been in the 'monasterium ^ancti Oswini,' there that Robert de Mowbray was taken after a siege of six days. The monastery, however, was 'infra ambitum castri ejus de Tynemudtha' (*Vita Oswini*, p. 15).

[11] *Ibid.* Rolls ed., p. 225. The 'munitiuncula' can hardly have been Newcastle, which Symeon had already called 'Novum Castellum' (*Ibid*, § 167; Rolls ed., p. 211). Gaimar says :—

> 'Li reis od son·ost i alad,
> · Le Nouvel-chastel i donc fermad;
> Puis prist Morpathe un fort chastel
> Ki iert asis sur un muncel.' ·

(*Estorie des Engles*, v. 6149-52, Caxton·Soc. Publ., 1850, p. 213.) The word *fermad* seems to refer to the *firmitas* of Newcastle, while *muncel* is the nearest approach to *munitiuncula* that the minstrel, a close translator, has been able to work into his rhymes, though, of course, the derivation (from *monticulus*) is different. It is not easy to comprehend how Professor Freeman can gravely maintain the paradox that the 'castle at the mouth of the river Tyne' is Newcastle, and the 'munitiuncula' Tynemouth.—*Reign of William Rufus*, vol. II., p. 606.

[12] Longstaffe, in *Arch. Ael.*, N.S.. IV., p. 58.

remaining of any except ecclesiastical buildings that can be attributed, with any degree of certainty, to these early times, when many castles must have been mere earthworks with wooden superstructures.[13]

I.—CASTLES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

In 1121, Ralph Flambard, bishop of Durham, built a castle at Norham.[14]   The almost square ashlars of the masonry of the keep make it probable that much of this is his work.   The Pipe Roll of 1131 mentions Osbert, the master-mason (*cementarius*), as having then been employed at Bamburgh.[15]   In 1138, Alnwick, then in the possession of Eustace Fitz John, is styled a most strongly fortified castle (*munitissimum castellum*),[16] and much of the masonry of the curtain-wall, similar to that of the keep of Norham, agrees with this date. About this time, too, Walter Espec founded at Carham on the Tweed the castle which received the name of Wark.[17]

[13] The Umfrevilles of Redesdale, before they received a grant of Prudhoe from Henry I., had no doubt a stronghold of this description at Elsdon, possibly on the Mote Hills. The lords of Bolam appear to have occupied an oval camp, within which a tower, measuring externally 30 × 40 ft., was subsequently built (Hodgs. *Northd.* II., i. p. 337).   The fortress of the Muschamps, which stood on the high mound at Wooler, is returned as waste, and of no value, by an Inq. taken in 1254 (Berw. F. Club *Transactions*, IV., p. 161). Several of the baronies of Northumberland appear to have had no castles at their capital seats--*e.g.*, Callerton, Beanly, Styford, Embleton, Ellingham, and Whalton. Of course, there was no necessary connection between a barony and a castle, and the grants to Normans of land in Northumberland appear to have been made on principles that were applied equally to the rest of England.   Professor Creighton's account of the origin of the Northumberland baronies, especially in the valley of the Tyne (*Archaeol. Journal*, vol. XLII., p. 45), restson no historical foundation, and the statements made in it are quite at variance with the *Testa de Nevill*, &c. (*e.g.*, Heddon-on-the-Wall formed part of the barony of Bolbeck, not of Merlay, &c. &c.)

[14] 'Anno MCXXI. . . . Rannulfus Dunelmensis episcopus castellum apud Norham incepit super ripam Thwedæ.'—*Chron. Rogeri de Hoveden*, Rolls Ser., I., p. 179.

[15] 'In liberatione Osberti cementarii de Baenburg xxxvs.'

[16] 'Habuit idem (Eustachius filius Johannis) in Northymbria castrum munitissimum Alnewich.'—*Hist. Joh. Hagustald* § 5 (Rolls Ser. Sym. Dun. II. p. 290).

[17] 'Carrum quod ab Anglis Werch dicitur.'—Ric. Hagustald. (*Chron. Stephen-Hen. II.*, &c., Rolls Ser., III. p. 145). 'Walteri Espec, cujus illud oppidum (Carrum) erat.'—*Ibid.* p. 171. This use of the term *oppidum*, to describe the *castle* of Wark, makes it probable that the *castle* of Mitford was in existence in 1138, when Richard of Hexham describing the advance of David of Scotland says, ' circa Milford (*sic*), oppidum Willelmi Bertram, et in pluribus locis per Northumbriam segetibus vastatis &c.'—*Ibid.* p. 158.   *Oppidum* conveys the idea of a fortified town ; and Caesar applies it to the stronghold of Cassibelan, 'locum egregie naturâ, atque opere munitum,' adding, ' oppidum, Britanni vocant, quum silvas impeditas vallo atque fossâ munierunt, quo, incursionis hostium vitandæ causâ, convenire consueverunt.'—*De Bell. Gall.*, V., § xvii.