

## HEBBURN BASTLE.

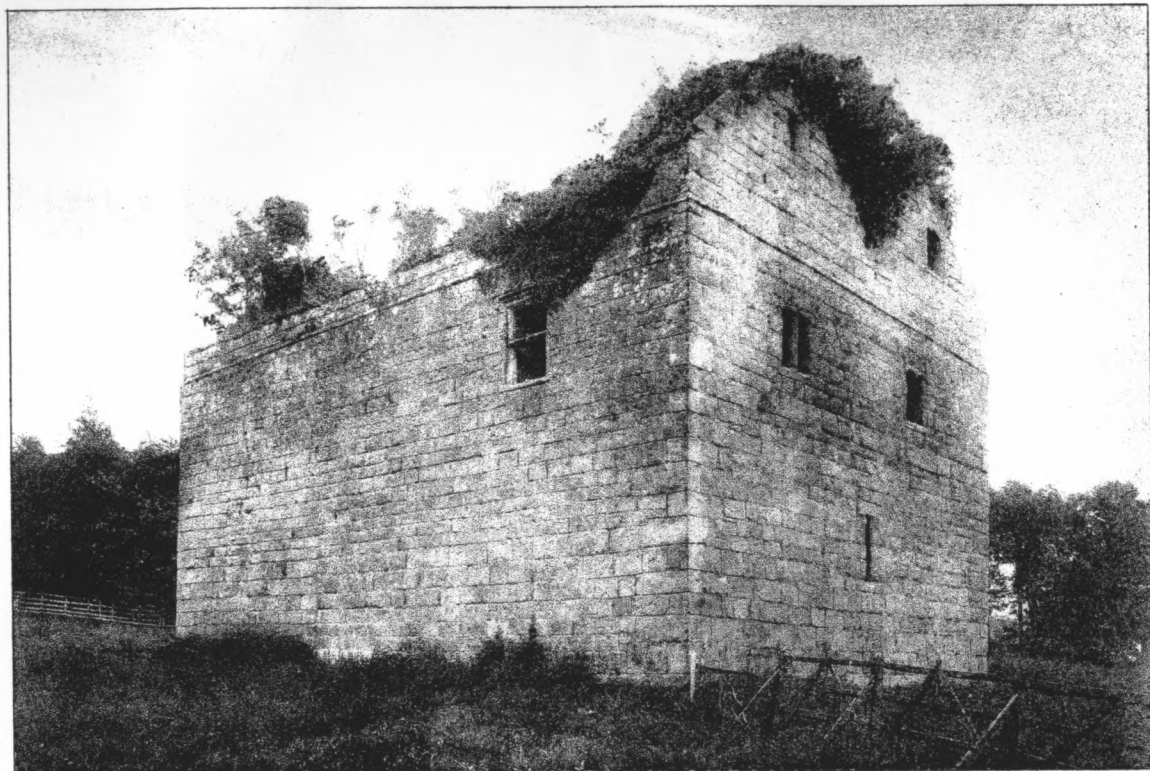
IN the south-east corner of Chillingham Park stands the ruinous bastle-house of the ancient family of Hebburn, who seem to have been in possession of the estate from which they derived their surname at any rate from the time of Nicholas de Hebburn, who in 1271 gave the vicar of Chillingham certain lands in Hebburn, together with the offerings of the village in honey and wax, on condition of his providing every year for the celebration of divine service in the chapel of St. Mary of Hebburn on the three principal feasts of Our Lady.<sup>1</sup> Hebburn appears to have passed by marriage into the hands of the Wendouts and then to have come back to the Hebburns in the beginning of the 15th century, or possibly the Wendouts took the name of Hebburn. The Hebburns bore for their arms *Argent, three cressets sable, flaming proper*, said to have reference to the fact of their living just under the great beacon on Ros Castle.<sup>2</sup> The first we hear of their hold here is in 1509, when it was owned and inhabited by Thomas Hebburn and was supposed to be capable of accommodating a garrison of twenty horsemen.<sup>3</sup> It is again mentioned in 1541 as 'a little tower of the inheritance of Thomas Hebburn in reasonably good reparations.'<sup>4</sup> There is a difficulty in conceiving how the present absolutely typical bastle-house could ever be called a little tower in a technical survey of the Border fortresses, and a heap of stones near the park wall has been pointed out as the site of the tower. On the other hand the bastle looks more like work of the reign of Henry VII. than of that of Elizabeth, and Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerker were certain to have mentioned this strong house if it were in existence, even near the tower, in their time. By the will of Thomas Hebburn of Hebburn, nigh Chillingham, esquire, dated the 18th of April, 1574, Michael Hebburn, his son and heir, was to be charged with his younger brothers

<sup>1</sup> *Registr. Eccles. Dunelm.*, III. p. 4; Hodgson, *Northumberland*, III. ii. p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, *General Armoury*. The cressets are also blazoned as uncovered cups, beacons, lamps or pots.—Papworth, *Ordinary*, pp. 676, 677.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 23. It should be noted that as in the cases of Gisburn or Guisborough, Sochasburg or Sockburn, Brincaburch or Brinkburn, the termination 'burn' is often the same as 'burh,' while in Old English 'hehburh' means simply a fortress—see Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, pp. 6, 416.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 42.



J. P. GIBSON, PHOTO

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THE BASTLE-HOUSE, HEBBURN (IN CHILLINGHAM PARK), FROM THE N.W.  
1884.

THIS PLATE CONTRIBUTED BY THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF TANKERVILLE.





Ralph and Robert 'for meat drink and lodging in my Mansion-house of Hebburn or elsewhere,' from the time of his decease till they should reach the age of eighteen.<sup>5</sup>

No account of Hebburn would be at all complete without the following extraordinary agreement for appeasing one of those blood feuds that are as characteristic of Northumberland as of Corsica :—

'Where there was a deadly Feude alledged by the Storyes against the Hebborns for the slaughter of one John Story, late of Hebborne. It is fully agreed by the consent of all the Storyes, especially by Andrew Story and Jeffry Story, brethren unto the said John Story deceased, to stand to the award, arbytrament and judgement of Edmond Crawster of Crawster in the County of Northumberland, esq., and Luke Ogle of Eglingham in the said County, Gentleman.

'Therefore we, the said Arbitratours, by good and sufficient proof to us had and made, Fynde that the said Slaughter of the said Story was fully and wholly agreed for of a long time since, by Martyn Story called Red Martyn, late of Hebborne aforesaid, father of the said John Story, and received such certaine sommes of money for the said agreement with the said Hebbornes, as the Storyes of that time was fully contented and agreed with.

'Wherefore, We award and judge by the full consent of the said Storyes and Hebbornes, in the consideration aforesaid : That this shall stand and be a full agreement between the said Storyes and Hebbornes for the said Slaughter, and from all other accions of dyspleasure, from the Beginning of the World to this Day ; and that hereafter they, the said Storyes and Hebborns shall be Lovers and Friends as they ought to be.'

'Given the xxix of August, 1588; Anno Reg. Elizabeth xxx.'<sup>6</sup>

The estate continued in the possession of the Hebburns till, towards the end of last century, their heiress married a clerical adventurer of the name of Brudnell, when it was purchased in about 1770 by the Earl of Tankerville.

The entrance is by a passage, vaulted by two stones meeting in the middle, in the thickness—9 feet 4 inches—of the south wall. The outer doorway seems to have been rebuilt ; a circular-headed doorway on the east side communicated with the wheel-stair at the south-east

<sup>5</sup> *Wills and Inventories*, I. (Surtees Soc. Publ. 2) p. 401.

<sup>6</sup> *Annals of House of Percy*, ii. p. 385 ; Collins, *Peerage*, 5th ed. ii. p. 421, from Craster MSS.

angle of the bastle. The basement contains a vault about 34 feet long, 17 feet 7 inches wide, and 12 feet 4 inches high to the crown of its flat roof of long-shaped stones. There is a loop in the centre of the west, and another at the north end of the east wall. Near the latter a fire-place has been inserted in the north wall, so roughly that the smoke from it was allowed to escape in the fire-place immediately over it on the first floor. On the east side of this vault, and approached by a door at the south end of the east wall, is a smaller vault measuring about 13 feet from north to south and 4 feet 9 inches from east to west. This vault, which is 10 feet 8 inches high, was probably a prison. At the south end of it is the mouth of a dungeon, now 8 feet 8 inches deep, a sort of worse fate held in reserve for recalcitrant captives. The square mouth of the dungeon, which had fallen away, has recently been rebuilt and a slit cut in the east wall of the upper prison, previously pitch-dark, in order to prevent strangers falling into it.

The wheel-stair, now so entirely broken away as to render the ascent to the first floor very dangerous, was continued to the gabled second floor, and probably, therefore, terminated in a sort of turret.

The first floor, the outer walls of which are a little over 6 feet thick, was divided into three rooms. The eastern room, into which a door opened off the stair, is about 10 feet wide to the door-jamb of the central room still left in the south wall. There are two square-headed windows with transoms and mullions in the east wall. The southern of these retains some cusping. The fire-place, with a head formed of two converging stones, is in the north wall. The central room, 17 feet 6 inches wide, has a transomed window to the south, and a fire-place 8 feet broad, the head gone, at its north end. The west and innermost room is about 11 feet wide. There is a small mullioned window on either side of the fire-place with a huge stone 6 feet long and 21 inches high over it; and a window, with transom and mullions, in the north wall. On the right of the latter is a small mural closet.

The second story, which was almost wholly in the roof, had pairs of small square windows in both the east and west gables.

Altogether the bastle of Hebburn, covered in the early summer with a profusion of berberry blossom, is a most interesting example of a class of house that must at one time have been very prevalent in Northumberland.