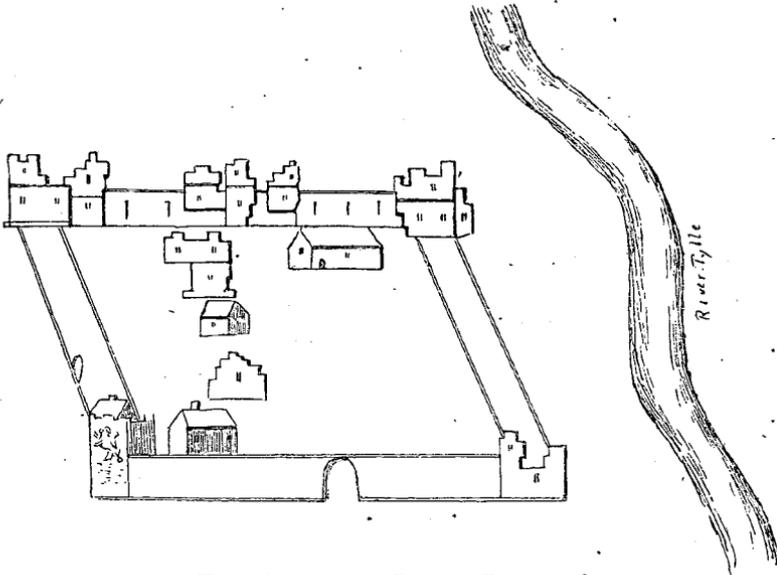


HETON CASTLE.

THE manor of Heton passed, probably by marriage, soon after the middle of the thirteenth century, from a family bearing the local name to the Grays, who here acquired their principal, if not also their earliest, settlement on the Border. In 1415 the castle was in the possession of Sir Thomas Gray, who was executed that year at Southampton on the 8th of August for plotting against Henry V.¹ It was 'rasen and

HETON CASTLE IN THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH.²

casten down' by James IV. of Scotland when he invaded Northumberland in 1496, in support of the pretensions of Perkin Warbeck. A great part of the vaults and walls were still standing, without any roofs or floors, when Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerker surveyed the Borders in 1541. They estimated the cost of repairing it at about two hundred marks.³ The Survey Book of Northumberland and Islandshire

¹ See above, pp. 13, 14.

² *Collections relating to Camps and Castles*, by Sir David Smith, Alnwick Castle MSS. There is unfortunately no note to say where the original is to be found. It appears neither to be at the P.R.O. nor at Chillingham.

³ See above, p. 29. Raine, *North Durham*, p. 337, and others, have entirely mistaken the meaning of this passage in supposing it to agree with Leland's erroneous statement as to Heton that 'the scotts at floden fild bet it sore' (see above, p. 27).

in 1561 mentions it as 'the site of a fayre castle decayed, which was 'destroyed by the Scotts in tyme of Kinge Henry the Seaventh, and 'neuer syne repaired, so that there remayneth no buildings save y^e 'vauts of y^e same, and a dwelling house for y^e fermor, and a barnekin.'⁴ The Border Commission of 1584 considered it 'a verye fit and convenient place to defend the country and annoy the enemye.' It would take in their opinion £560 to restore it to its former state or £300 to make it capable of receiving a garrison of three hundred horsemen.⁵

A Survey of uncertain date, out said to have been made in the reign of Elizabeth, informs us:—'This Castill of Heton haithe bene a 'pleasaunt and beawtiful Buildinge, in manner square, with goodlie 'Towers and Turrettes, as is yett remaininge, the Lyons tower on the 'west side thair of the sowth coyne or Corner, and on the northe syde 'or pairte one mention⁶ of an Vawte that a hundreth horse may stande 'in, and a number of shelles and walles that haithe been glorious 'buildings and howsinge, now rewinous and all in decaie.'⁷ A sketch of the castle made at the same time shows that it was a quadrangle with four corner towers like Ford and Chillingham. Carved in stone on the south-west of these was a colossal representation of the lion rampant of the Hetons and the Grays. The entrance, apparently unprotected by any gatehouse, was in the centre of the south curtain, and in the east curtain was a small postern. The domestic buildings appear to have stretched along the north curtain.

Heton Castle stands on high ground about 100 yards west of the Till, and is further protected on the south by a burn that here enters the river. The site is now occupied by farm buildings, the principal vestige of the castle being the large vaulted stable, of which Raine gives the dimensions as 70 feet by 17 feet.⁸ A hideous boiler, used as a water-tank, has been set on the good fourteenth-century base of one of the projecting turrets. The cradle of the house of Grey might be dealt with in a spirit of greater reverence. Fragments of stone carving have been found in the ruins.⁹ Heton, like Brussels, has its *Manneken*.

⁴ See above, p. 53. ⁵ See above, p. 71. ⁶ Probably meaning 'mansion.'

⁷ *Collections relating to Camps and Castles*, by Sir David Smith, Alnwick Castle MSS. This passage appears with several misreadings in Mackenzie's *View of Northumberland*, i. p. 341.

⁸ Raine, *North Durham*, p. 387.

⁹ 'In digging for stones, two wells were discovered by the workmen, in which were found four pewter plates, with part of the arms of the *Greys* engraved upon them; also one bow made of yew. They came into the possession of Mr. *Gregson of Wark upon Tweed*.'—Wallis, *Antiquities of Northumberland*, ii. p. 458.