

and the shoes; next, the defensive arms, the shield and the helmet; and lastly, the offensive weapon, the sword. This was the accoutrement which St. Paul had constantly before his eyes during his two years' (his first) imprisonment at Rome; when, though bound continually 'with a chain' to the soldier who kept him, a sentry who would often be relieved in his watch upon the prisoner, he was yet permitted to 'dwell in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him' (*Acts* xxviii. 16, 30).

XXVII.—A FORGOTTEN REFERENCE TO ROMAN MILE-CASTLES.

BY CADWALLADER J. BATES.

[Read on the 28th February, 1894.]

IN the very valuable but extremely complicated notes appended by the Rev. John Hodgson to the account of the Roman Wall in his *History of Northumberland*¹ is a passage said to be taken from a Treatise on the Art of War, written to Theodosius and his sons, which at first sight reminds us more of the line of mile-castles and turrets along the crags from Walltown to Sewingshields than does anything else to be found in classical literature.

'Among the advantages to the state,' it says, 'must be reckoned a care for frontiers on every side, whose security is best provided by a number of castles: so that they should be erected at the distance of every mile with a strong wall and stout towers, which fortifications the attention and care of the owners of the adjoining land will erect without charge to the public, keeping watch and ward of country people in them, that the repose of the provinces may remain secure within this circuit as it were of garrisons.'

It ought not perhaps to excite surprise that in the *cause célèbre* regarding the authorship of the Wall, the advocates of Hadrian and the advocates of Severus have not produced this passage in their more recent pleadings; but it is very strange that it should have been overlooked by the late Dean Merivale who so decidedly referred the construction of the Wall to the fourth century.

¹ II. iii. p. 278 n.; 1840.

One reason for this passage having been allowed to drop out of the series of stock quotations from the classics on the subject, appears to have been the difficulty writers experienced of finding where it actually came from.

Horsley, like Hodgson, is content to give Camden as his authority; but he begs the whole question in asserting that 'The walls (? castles) were built long before the reign of Theodosius, so that the builders of them could not properly follow the counsel of a writer of his time.' The passage is not to be found in the original edition of Camden's *Britannia*, but appears first in that of 1600.² Holland, in his translation (p. 793), quaintly renders it:—'Among the commodities of State & Weale publike, right behovefull is the care concerning the limits, which in all places doe guard & enclose the sides of the Empire: The defence whereof may bee best assured by certain castles built neare together, so that they be erected with a steady wall & strong towres a mile asunder one from another: Which munitions verily the Landlords ought to arreare without the publicke charge, by a distribution of that care among themselves, for to keep watch and ward in them and in the field forefences, that the peace and quiet of the Provinces being guarded round about therewith, as with a girdle of defence, may rest safe and secure from hurt and harme.' Horsley and Hodgson have both followed the revised translation of Gibson (2nd ed. ii. p. 1049), which was copied by Gough. The latter, intending to give his authority for the passage, has placed a (x) after it in the text, but the foot-note to which this refers is left hopelessly blank.³

Hodgson was misled by the vague phraseology of Camden and his translators into attributing the passage to Ammianus Marcellinus, in the *Northumberland* he wrote for the *Beauties of England and Wales*.⁴ 'When,' he says, 'we add the advice Ammianus Marcellinus, a little before the building of this Wall, gave to the Emperor Theodosius, and his son; 'to build castles on the frontier of the empire, a mile asunder, and joined with a firm wall and strong towers, and that these fortresses be garrisoned by the landowners adjoining, . . . it seems

² It is introduced by the words 'Adeò vt conditores eius consiliù sequenti videatur, qui de *Rebus bellicis* ad Theodosium & eius filios scripsit, sic enim ille,' etc. etc.—*Britannia*, ed. 1600, p. 715; ed. 1607, p. 652.

³ *Britannia*, ed. Gough-[2nd ed. 1806], vol. iii. p. 470.

⁴ Vol. xii. part i. p. 7; 1813.

past all doubt but that the Wall usually attributed to Severus, was built sometime about the seventh consulship of Theodosius the Younger.'

It was, however, neither Ammianus Marcellinus nor Vegetius Renatus who tendered this advice to Theodosius, but the unknown author of, as it seems, an almost unknown tract on military matters.

This tract seems to have formed part of the codex containing the *Notitia*, the list of the Roman provinces with their officials and troops which has proved so great a boon to pilgrims along the line of the Wall from Wallsend to Birdoswald, and it is therefore of some importance in confirming the date of that document.⁵ Both were printed by Andreas Alciatus at Basle in 1552, from a copy of the codex in the library of Spire.⁶ The tract appears also in the edition of Pancirolli's *Notitia* printed at Lyons in 1608,⁷ and in a collection of Latin military writers edited by Peter Scriverius and published that same year at Leyden; also in the Geneva edition of the *Notitia*, 1623.⁸ This is apparently the last edition of it; at any rate it is not mentioned in Engelmann's list of classics printed since the year 1700.

Although the names of the Augustus and two Augusti to whom the preface is addressed are not given,⁹ there is little reason to question the conclusion that they were Theodosius and his sons Honorius and Arcadius. The writer is extremely bitter against Constantine for having through his spoliation of the temples largely substituted gold for brass in the coinage;¹⁰ to gold he attributes all the existing misery with the fervour of a modern bi-metallist; the real Golden Age, he

⁵ 'NOTITIA VTRAQUE CVM ORIENTIS TVM OCCIDENTIS . . . SVB iungitur Notitijs uetustus liber DE REBVS BELLICIS ad Theodosium Aug. & filios eius Arcadium atq: Honorium ut uidetur, scriptus, incerto autore . . . BASILEAE, M D LII.'

⁶ 'NOTITIA VTRAQVE &C. NVNC NOVISSIME FRANCISCI RHVARDESII, I.V.D. præstantissimi Commentariis illustratum . . . LVGDVNI, M.DC.VIII.'

⁷ 'V. INL. FL. VEGETII RENATI COMITIS, ALIORVMQVE ALIQVOT VETERVM De Re Militari LIBRI . . . *Omnia emendatiùs, quædam nunc primum edita à PETRO SCRIVERIO . . . EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA RAPHELENGIJ. M.D.CVIII.*'—p. 81, 'ANONYMI DE REBVS BELLICIS, &C. &C.'

⁸ 'NOTITIA DIGNITATVM &C. &C. GENEVAE, Excudebat Stephanus Gamo-netus. M.DC.XXIII.'

⁹ 'Præfatio. AD * * A. & * * AA. COELESTI semper instinctu, felices Reipublicæ vestræ commoditas, Sacratissimi Principes &C. &C.'—ed. Scriverii, p. 83.

¹⁰ 'CONSTANTINI temporibus profusa largitio aurum pro ære, quod antea magni pretij habebatur, vilibus commerciis assignavit. &C. &C.'—*Ibid.* p. 86.

declares, was when gold was quite unknown.¹¹ He suggests a short-service system of five years, and a scheme of military colonisation on the frontiers as means of alleviating the burdens of a standing army. He describes and depicts various improvements in the apparatus of war. His four-wheeled 'balista' drawn by a pair of horses is one of the earliest prototypes of the Maxim gun. His 'Tichodifrus' for approaching and mounting the walls of a besieged city is less easily comprehended; it looks like a cross between a hay-tedder and a turnip-drill. Three varieties of the scythe-chariots, used in Eastern as well as in British warfare, are recommended. We are then shown a 'Thoracomachus,' or sort of woollen guernsey, for wearing under a cuirass or coat-of-mail, which has little remarkable about it, unless it be its resemblance (if the woodcut in the Basle edition is to be trusted) to the Holy Coat of Trêves. To the general reader the most interesting thing in the whole tract is the account of a *liburna* or swift frigate to be propelled by three sets of paddle-wheels, each worked by a pair of oxen going round in a 'gin' on the deck; this employment of wheels and oxen for ploughing the deep in pursuit of an enemy's ships was by its novelty, the writer thought, certain to ensure complete victory.¹²

The passage relating to frontier fortifications is the last paragraph in the tract except one, urging a thorough revision of the laws of the Empire, advice which was certainly acted upon by Theodosius. The Latin, of which Gibson's is an awkward and not altogether accurate translation, runs:—

De limitum munitionibus.

'Est præterea inter commoda Reipublicæ utilis limitum cura, ambientium ubique latus Imperii. Quorum tutelæ assidua melius castella prospicient: ita ut millenis interjecta passibus stabili muro et firmissimis turribus erigantur. Quas quidem munitiones possessorum distributa sollicitudo sine publico sumptu constituat, vigiliis in his et agrariis exercendis, ut provinciarum quies circumdata quodam præsidii cingulo inlæsa requiescat.'¹³

Although Britain is not mentioned in the tract, it is evident that it was in the mind of the writer, when he speaks of some of the bar-

¹¹ 'Certè aurea (tempora) nuncupamus, quæ aurum penitus non habebant.'—*Ibid.* p. 87.

¹² 'Quòd si navali bello terras fugiens maria hostis obsideat, nouo celeritatis ingenio terrestri quodammodo ritu rotis & bubus subacta fluctibus Liburna transcurrens restituet sine morâ victoriam.'—*Ibid.* p. 96.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 101.

barians on the frontiers being sheltered by forests, supported by mountains, and protected by frosts, '*pruinis*,' this last word being specially coupled with Caledonia in the well-known squib written on the emperor Hadrian;¹⁴ or again, when he recommends that the soldiers marching in cold countries, '*per glaciales plagas*,' should be provided with the woollen '*thoracomachus*.'¹⁵

The emperor Severus Alexander, whose reign was a period of great activity along the line of the Wall, had already favoured the policy of planting military colonists along the frontiers; and when we remember the regularity with which the castles occur at the end of every Roman mile, in marked contrast to the ever-varying distances between station and station, the question suggests itself whether the guard of the actual Wall may not have been confided to bodies of soldiers distinct from the auxiliaries quartered in the stations.

It will be noticed that Gildas, in speaking of the Wall having been built 'at public and private expense,' reproduces the ideas of the writer of the tract;¹⁶ but it is not my intention this evening to do more than bring the passage I have quoted again prominently before the notice of the Society. For any final verdict on the history of the lines of earth-work, ditches, and masonry existing between the Tyne and the Solway, the evidence in our possession is too meagre and too contradictory. But if we remember the bronze celt found in the so-called *vallum*, and this advice given to Theodosius for the erection of mile-castles, we shall grasp the two most widely separated horns of this nest of dilemmas, and there will be little danger of our views becoming cramped and contracted.

¹⁴ '*De bellicarum machinarum utilitate*. INPRIMIS sciendum est quòd Imperium Romanum circumlatrantium vbique nationum perstringat insania, & omne latus limitum tecta naturalibus locis adpetat dolosa Barbaries. Nam plerumque memoratæ gentes aut silvis teguntur, aut extolluntur montibus, aut vindicantur pruinis, nonnullæ vagæ solitudinibus ac sole nimio proteguntur.'—*Ibid.* p. 89.

¹⁵ 'Conueniet tamen per glaciales euntem militem plagas et Thorocomacho muniri, et reliquis ad tutelam pertinentibus rebus, prout membrorum poscit vtilitas, armari: vt et frigoribus sufficiat, et telis possit occurrere minoribus sine clipeis assumptis: ne sit, quod vsu plerumque euenit, pro armorum latitudine silvarum densitas inaccessa, et amittatur armorum enormitate refugium.'—*Ibid.* p. 101. Claudian (viii. 26), it will be remembered, specially speaks of Theodosius having opposed castles to the Caledonian frosts.—'Ille Caledoniis posuit qui castra *pruinis*'—while he applies the epithet '*glacialis*' to Ireland.

¹⁶ 'Sumptu publico privatoque, adiunctis secum miserabilibus indigenis.'—*Historia Gildæ*, § 18, ed. Stevenson, p. 24.