

III.—TYNEMOUTH PRIORY, TO THE DISSOLUTION IN 1539, WITH NOTES OF TYNEMOUTH CASTLE.

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[Read on the 26th September, 1900.]

When I read a paper in December, 1895, on 'Tynemouth Castle after the Dissolution of the Monastery,' it was suggested that I should deal with the monastery from the earliest times to the dissolution. I have often thought of the subject, but hesitated to approach it as it had been so exhaustively dealt with by the late W. Sidney Gibson in his great work on the monastery, published in 1846 and 1847. Much information on the subject of our monasteries having however come to light during the last fifty years, I am emboldened to lay before the members of the society an outline of the history of the venerable ruins which stand upon the bold promontory at the mouth of the river Tyne, at the foot of which the North Sea beats with, too often, a loud 'shipwrecking roar.'

The history of the monastery is an eventful one, and carries us back to the time when Edwin, the first christian king of Northumbria, was converted to christianity through the efforts of Paulinus the Roman missionary. Edwin was married to a christian princess, Ethelburga, daughter of Eadbald, king of Kent, and was baptized on Easter eve in 627¹ at York.

It is stated that in the year 626 the first christian church at Tynemouth was built of wood by Edwin; but as he was not baptized until the following year it is probable the erection of the church would not take place until after his baptism. He was slain at Hatfield or Heathfield on 12th October, 633,² by Penda, king of the Mercians. His queen and her children escaped by sea to Dover with Paulinus, then bishop of Northumbria. Oswald ascended the throne in the year following the death of Edwin. He built a church of stone at Tynemouth. In 647 he was slain at Maserfield by Penda, who has

¹ *Leaders in the Northern Church*, by Dr. Lightfoot, bishop of Durham.

² J. R. Green, *The Making of England*, p. 271.

been described as the anti-christ of his time. At his death he was in his 38th year. His head was struck off and afterwards it was placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin by the monks of Lindisfarne. St. Cuthbert is invariably represented as holding in his hands the head of St. Oswald. On the death of St. Oswald, Oswin—who, it is stated, was born at South Shields—was elevated to the throne of Deira, which consisted of that portion of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria which lay between the Tees and the Humber, the capital of which was at York. He was betrayed by earl Hunwald and murdered by Oswy, king of Bernicia, on the 13th September, 651, at Gilling, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. His body was brought to Tynemouth and buried in the oratory of the Virgin Mary. It is from this king and martyr that Tynemouth obtained its great reputation as a place of pilgrimage.

The monastery at Tynemouth, from its formation until Norman times, had a separate existence and was not subject—as it became in after years—to any other religious house. In 685,³ Herebald is spoken of as abbot of the monastery. Although it ceased to be an abbey when it was made subject to Jarrow, afterwards to Durham, and lastly to St. Albans in Hertfordshire, the name of 'abbey' still clings to it. In songs which have been written about it, it is always spoken of as 'Tynemouth Abbey.'⁴ Old customs and traditions die hard.

During the Saxon period, the monastery suffered terribly at the hands of the Viking hordes who constantly made descents upon our shores. The close proximity of the monastery to a tidal river and standing on a bold promontory at the mouth of the Tyne, it was a conspicuous object to the Danish marauders. It was plundered by them in 788, 794, and in 800.⁵ In 865 the church and all the monastic buildings were destroyed by fire in an incursion by the Danes under Hinguar and Hubba, and the nuns of St. Hilda at Hartlepool, who had taken refuge in the church, were massacred. In a paper on 'S. Hilda's Church, Hartlepool,' by the rev. J. F. Hodgson (*Arch. Ael.* vol. xvii. p. 205) he doubts the story of the nuns of St. Hilda being burnt

³ *History of Northumberland*, by C. J. Bates, p. 73.

⁴ 'Where yon Abbey ruin stands hoary,
Nodding o'er the silent deep.'—*Stobbs*.

⁵ *The Monastery at Tynemouth*, by W. S. Gibson, vol. ii. p. 96.

with the monastery, and says it rests on the unsupported testimony of the late W. Sidney Gibson, although he does not think he invented the occurrence. The story is told in vol. i. p. 15 of Gibson's history of the monastery. If Mr. Hodgson had referred to p. 18 he would have found the authority for it. At this page is a condensed translation of the narrative given by Matthew of Westminster, who appeared to have derived his information from the ancient treatise of the life and miracles of S. Oswin, which has been attributed to a monk of St. Albans, who had taken up his abode at Tynemouth in 1111. It is preserved among the Cotton MSS. The passage reads :—

'In process of time the holy Virgins of the Nunnery of St. Hilda, the Abbess hoping by his (St. Oswin's) intercession to escape the persecutions of the Danes led by the brothers Hinguar and Hubba, took refuge in the church of the Holy Mother of God. In this rage of persecution the Nunnery was, with the others in the same (country) as it is believed, demolished, the holy Virgins being translated by martyrdom to Heaven.'

In the years 870-876 and 1008⁶ the church was ravaged and wasted by the Danes.

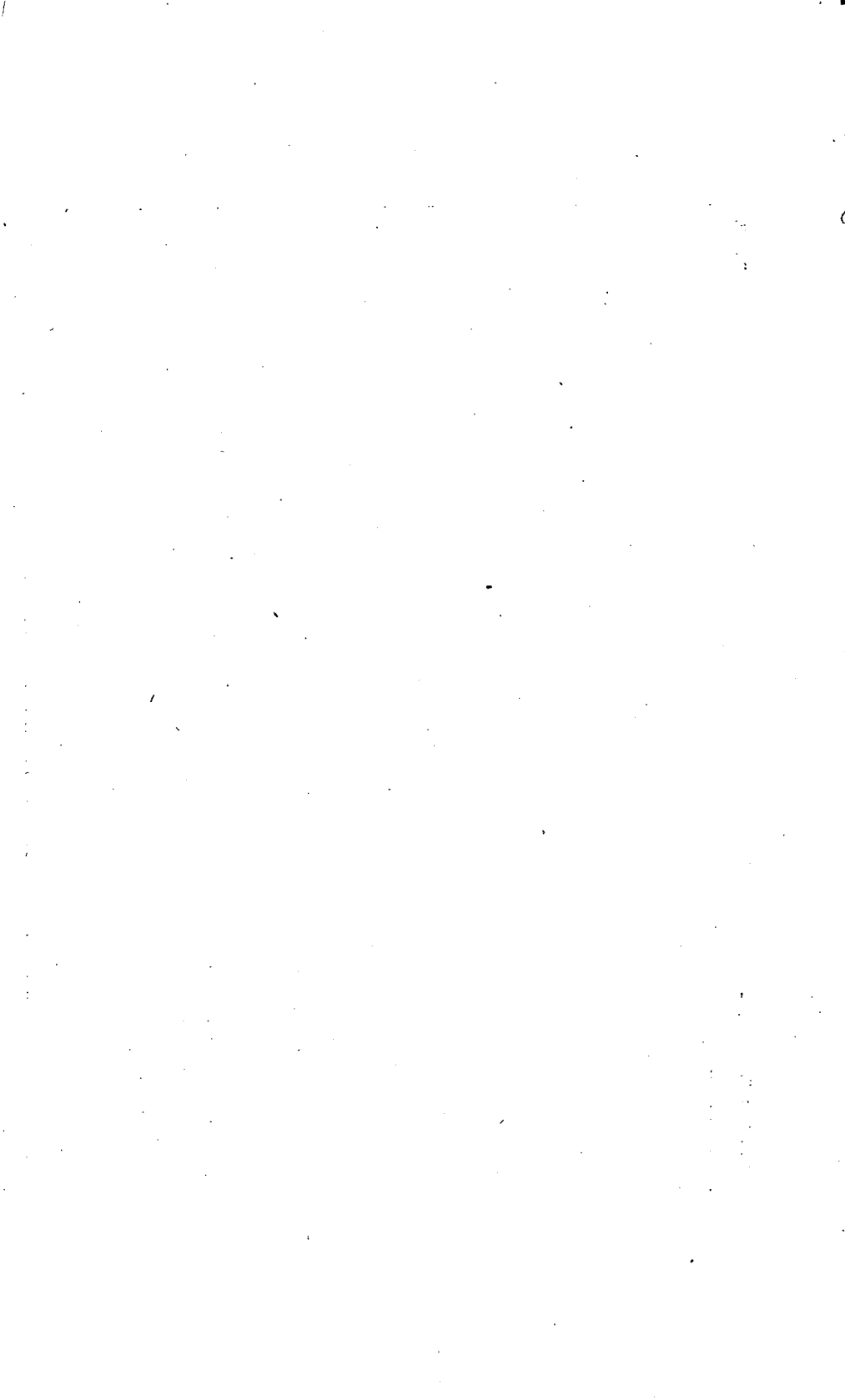
In the year 1065 an event occurred which was fraught with great consequences to the monastery. The relics of St. Oswin were discovered in consequence of a revelation to a monk named Edmund, who was sacrist of the monastery. Tosti, or Tostig, Saxon earl of Northumberland,⁷ to whom the earldom had been given by king Harold, commenced the rebuilding of the monastery, and the relics of St. Oswin were placed in a shrine in the new church, which was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Oswin. In the year 1075 the independent life of the monastery came to an end. The church of Tynemouth was given, with the body of St. Oswin, by Waltheof (son of Siward, the great earl of Northumberland) to Aldwine, the prior, and brethren at Jarrow, and the relics of the saint were removed there; but were afterwards brought back and placed in the shrine.

Albery, or Alberie, earl of Northumberland,⁸ confirmed the grant

⁶ *The Monastery at Tynemouth*, vol. ii. p. 96.

⁷ He was a son of Earl Godwin, and brother of Harold.—*History of Northumberland*, by Cadwallader J. Bates, p. 104; *Conquest of England*, by Green, p. 560.

⁸ *History of Northumberland*, by Cadwallader J. Bates, p. 110.





RUINS OF TYNEMOUTH PRIORY FROM THE WEST, SHOWING THE STONE SCREEN.

to the monks at Durham, who had then removed from Jarrow. While the monastery was annexed to Jarrow and Durham, the monks at Durham made provision for the service of the church at Tynemouth, from which circumstance it may be concluded there were no resident monks at Tynemouth. In 1085 the gift was confirmed by the bishop of Durham.

Robert de Mowbray, Norman earl of Northumberland, who had come over with the Conqueror, was allied to the best families in the land, and had inherited, in addition to his patrimony, 280 manors from his uncle, the bishop of Coutances, expelled, in 1090, the monks of Durham from the church at Tynemouth, and granted the monastery to the Benedictine abbey of St. Alban—the premier abbey in England—for ever, and it remained a cell to St. Albans until the dissolution in 1539. This act of Robert de Mowbray was the cause of much strife between the convent at Durham and the abbey of St. Albans. In the year 1174 pope Alexander III. appointed commissioners, consisting of Roger, bishop of Worcester, Robert, dean of York, and master John de Saresbury, treasurer of Exeter, delegates to enquire into and settle the dispute between the convent at Durham and the abbot of St. Albans as to Tynemouth monastery, and the dispute was settled by the prior and convent of Durham giving up all claim to the church at Tynemouth, and the abbot and brethren of St. Albans giving up to the church at Durham the churches of Bywell St. Peter and Edlingham. (See *Archæologia Aeliiana*, vol. xiii. p. 92.)

Robert de Mowbray completed the church at Tynemouth, which had been commenced by earl Tosti. The portions of the Norman church which are now standing are all that remain of the church commenced and finished by these renowned men. (See plate III.)

The church consisted of nave, transepts, and choir. The choir was terminated by an apse. A tower surmounted the intersection of nave, transepts and choir. The foundation of the apse was uncovered a few years ago by the late Mr. R. J. Johnson, architect, during some excavations. The length of the Norman church, it is stated by Gibson, was one hundred and forty-five feet, and the breadth between the walls was forty-six and a half feet, but from the position of the

apse, as discovered by Mr. Johnson, the church was about one hundred and ninety feet in length. The position of the apse in Gibson's map is incorrect. The nave consisted of seven bays, with an aisle on each side.

In 1093 Malcolm Canmore, king of Scotland, was slain at Alnwick on St. Brice's day (November 13), and his eldest son, Edward, fell in the same expedition. They were both buried at Tynemouth in the chapter house. Queen Margaret died at Edinburgh of grief four days later. The bodies of Malcolm and his son were afterwards removed to Dunfermline, and buried in front of the high altar of the abbey, which was founded by king Malcolm and his queen. The date of the removal of the bodies is given by Gibson as 1247, but another and more recent writer gives the date as 1115.⁹

Since this paper was written, a correspondence has appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* about an article entitled 'The Royal Dust of Scotland,' and the question has been asked 'Where lies the dust of Malcolm Canmore?' It is stated that when the Scots arrogantly demanded the body of their king from the prior of Tynemouth, the body of a man of low birth of Sethune (Monkseaton), was given to them, and so the arrogance of the Scots was met. The writer of 1530, may be correct that the body still lies at Tynemouth in some unknown spot.

After Tynemouth became a cell of St. Albans, it was subjected to pastoral visits from the abbots. Abbot Simon, in the reign of Henry II., committed grievous havoc on the food supplies of the priory during his visit. It is said that when the abbot had swept away everything, oxen with the plough were brought to him, and he was told, with tears, that all had been devoured, and that these were the last that remained of the oxen of the prior's ploughmen, and they were offered to be devoured; whereupon the abbot, justly rebuked, prepared to depart with his retinue from the priory, leaving it despoiled of all its supplies for that year. The extent of the hospitality to be received from the prior was subsequently limited.

⁹ In the 'Heraldic Visitation of the Northern Counties,' by Thomas Tonge, Norroy King of Arms, in the year 1530, it is said that 'Malcolyn, Kyng of Scotland, lyeth buried in the said Monastery of Tynmouth, in the Chapter House.' (41 *Surt. Soc. Publ.* p. 36.)

Matthew Paris, the historian of St. Albans from 1217 to 1257, mentions the following decree of the convent of St. Albans :

‘If the Abbat were to go to Tynemouth with 20 men he might stay 15 days at the expense of the Priory ; but if the cause of the Abbat’s going should be on business of the Brethren he should travel and stay at the cost of the Priory accompanied by certain Feudatories who of right and custom ought to perform the part of Esquires, whom he enfeoffed and appointed for that purpose.’

The same writer gives a very quaint account of the manner of the abbot’s journey from St. Albans to Tynemouth :

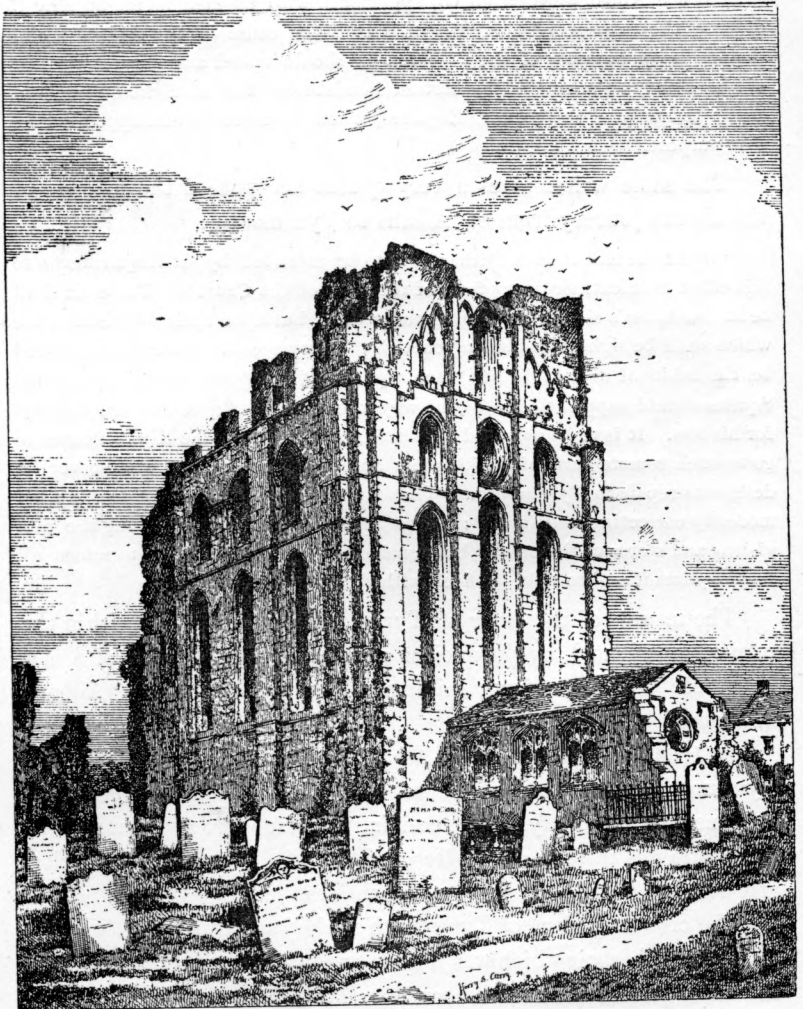
‘When the Abbat goes thither he is to be attended by six Esquires who to this effect have extraordinary feofs of the land of the Church. These six shall be at the Abbat’s charge both going and coming but upon their own horses, the which shall be sightly and strong enough to carry according to custom, if need be, the habits of a Monk behind each Squire. If any horse belonging to those Squires should happen to dye by the way, the Abbat is to give him ten shillings for his loss. It is to be observed that the Abbat is to ask the King’s licence to go to such remote parts of the kingdom and so neare Scotland whensoever he designs to repair to Tynemouth. When arrived there he is to behave himself modestly correcting the family : not to be a tyrant, not squandering the provisions and stores of the house ; but considering he is come thither to reform all that requires it and to visit his flock with Fatherly affection.’

The tenants of the prior of Tynemouth, holding lands within the manor, contributed, by the ancient custom on the first visit of a new abbot of St. Albans, forty shillings which was called the ‘Abbot’s Welcome.’

In 1294,¹⁰ the abbot of St. Albans having heard that the prior of Tynemouth with others wished to render himself independent, went to Tynemouth secretly, and receiving assistance from the mayor of Newcastle was introduced by Henry Scott of Newcastle to the prior, and he was arrested and sent beyond the sea.

The crowning glory of Tynemouth is the beautiful Transitional or Early English choir which was built between 1190 and 1200, of which the east end and part of the south wall are the principal remaining portions. The triple lancet windows are unrivalled. The choir was carried eastward of the transepts of the Norman church one hundred

¹⁰ Gibson’s *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. ii. p. 32.



EAST END OF TYNEMOUTH PRIORY FROM THE S.E.
(From a Drawing by Mr. H. S. Curry of Newcastle.)

and fifteen feet and the width of the choir, including the north and south aisles, was sixty-six feet, being much wider than the nave of the Norman church. The whole of the church eastward of the transepts was covered by a groined vaulted roof, having moulded ribs, parts of the springers of which are visible from the string course above the first tier of windows in the southern wall. Over the east end of the church was a room with a window in the upper part of the east gable and large windows at the sides. In an article in the *Builder* of 5th December, 1896, p. 463, it is suggested that this room was for the treasures connected with the shrine of St. Oswald, king and martyr. This should read St. Oswin. Another theory is that the room was intended for a beacon fire to guide ships to the Tyne, but as the fires used in these old beacons were wood or coal fires I think it is extremely unlikely a fire would be placed in such a position as the danger of setting fire to the church would be very great. If a beacon fire were lighted in these early days it is probable a separate tower would be used for the purpose as was done three hundred years ago. The first suggestion is, I think, the more likely one, unless there are other theories as numerous as those about 'low side' windows. In a letter written by the late sir Gilbert Scott about twenty-five years ago he says, 'I have visited and sketched the ruins of the priory church several times and I always think the eastern bays of the choir are the finest specimen I know of the earlier phase of the early pointed style.' At the time the choir was built a stone screen was inserted between the western piers of the tower,¹¹ and it divided the parochial church from the priory church. In this screen are two low and narrow doorways giving access from the parochial church to the priory church. In the centre of the east wall of the choir is a deeply recessed doorway opening into a small chapel. In the year 1336 there is mentioned in the chartulary of the priory the 'New Chapel' of our Blessed Lady within the priory. This is not the beautiful chapel which is commonly known as the 'Lady chapel,' although it may have stood upon the same site.

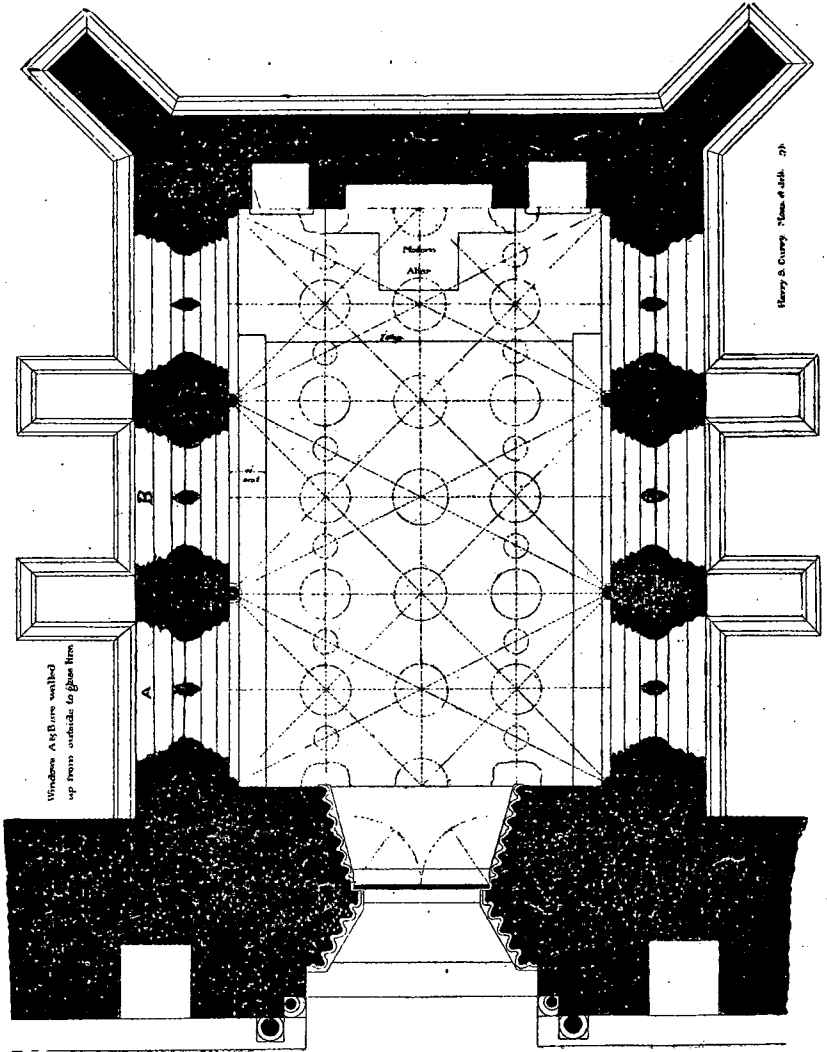
The present chapel dates from about 1400 and is Perpendicular in

¹¹ The Plate facing p. 22 shews the west side of this screen.

Tynemouth Priory Church

Lady Chapel. Date 1400

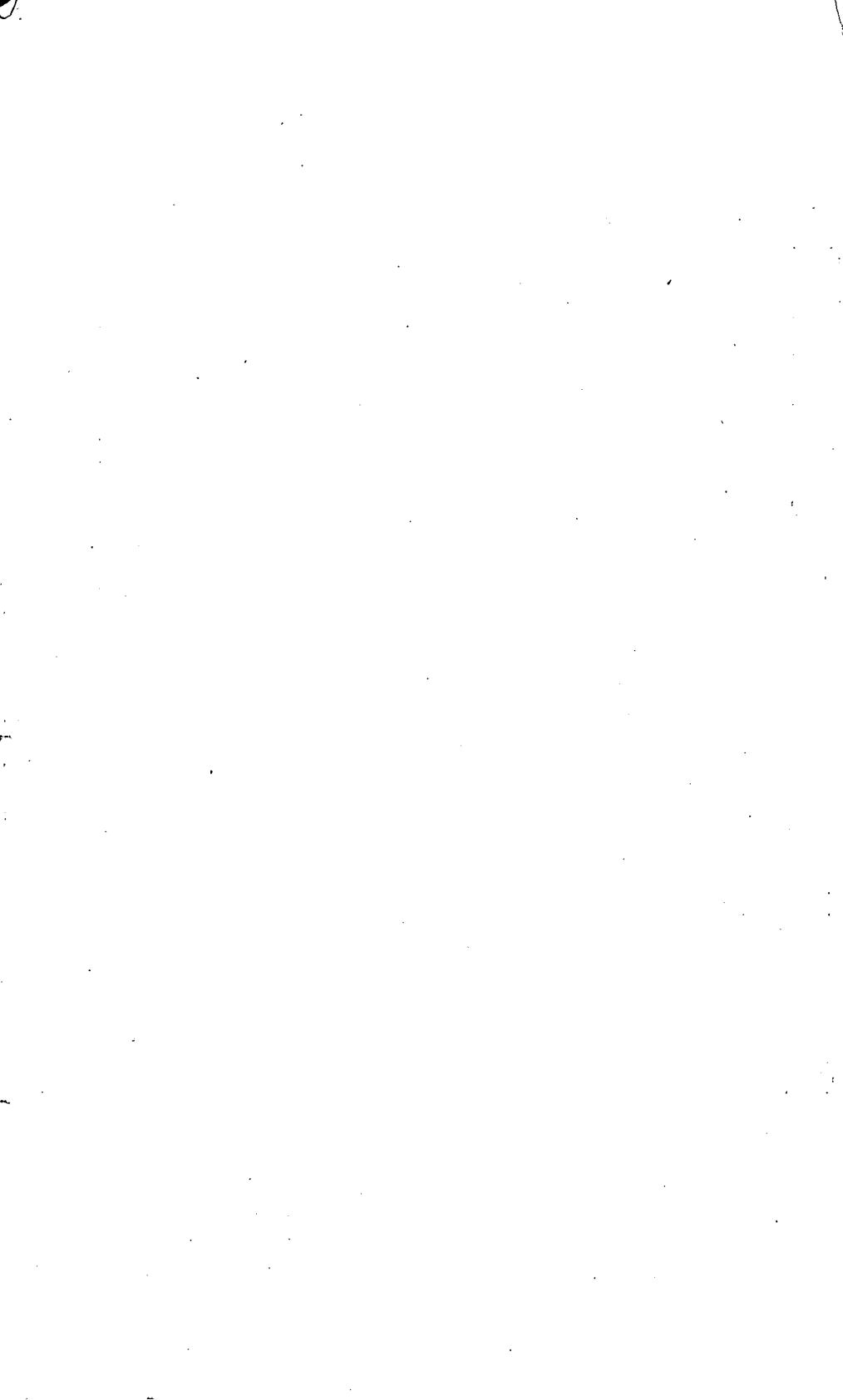
Windows A & B are worked up from outside to give lines



Harry S. Curry. Mass. A. J. S. 27



TYNEMOUTH PRIORY. INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL AT THE EAST END OF THE CHOIR.



style. It is eighteen feet ten inches in length and eleven feet four inches in breadth. The richly vaulted roof is unique. It contains fifteen large bosses. Upon the central boss is a representation of the Almighty enthroned in Judgment, his feet resting upon an orb. On each side of the principal figure are two angels. On the rim of the boss is inscribed 'In die iudicii libera nos Domine.'

Twelve of the larger bosses contain effigies of the Apostles; the name of each is inscribed on the rim with the invocation 'Ora pro nobis.' Another boss at the eastern extremity of the centre line contains the figure of Our Lord bearing the Cross and Banner, and, kneeling at his feet, Mary Magdalene. On the rim is the inscription 'Rabboni,' 'Noli me tangere.' The boss at the other extremity of the same line contains the figure of St. John the Baptist bearing a lamb. Each of the apostles bears his peculiar symbol. Twelve minor bosses, six on either side of the centre line, contain several devices, among them, on a shield, a fetter-lock within a crescent, a badge of the Percys; a monogram P.L. on a cross, the monogram P.L. repeated on the other side. On the south side of the door, at the west end of the chapel, is a shield bearing the arms of VESCŶ (*or*, a cross *sable*), and on the north side of it another shield bearing the arms of Percy (quarterly, *or*, a lion rampant *azure*, for the ancient dukes of BRABANT, and *gules*, three lucies *or*, for LUCY). In a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries in 1852, it is stated there were grounds for the belief that the chapel was founded by one of the Percy family. The shield and the monogram P.L. (read as Percy and Lucy), together with the Percy badge of the crescent and fetterlock, the only armorial badge on the roof, seem to offer strong corroboration of this interesting surmise. Over the door is a figure stated to be that of the Virgin Mary, and, kneeling at her feet, is the founder of the chapel; in a drawing in Brand's *History of Newcastle* the figure of the Virgin looks more like that of St. Oswin with the founder of the chapel kneeling at his feet; beneath the figures was an inscription 'St. Oswinus ora.' It is now illegible.

At the four corners of the roof are the emblems of the four evangelists bearing scrolls. In the east wall was a quatrefoil window which was replaced in 1852 by a rose window. Why Mr. John Dobson,

who restored the chapel, did not retain the original design of which there was ample evidence it is difficult to conceive. On each side of the chapel are three windows. These windows were built up by the Ordnance authorities while they had possession of the chapel, when it was used as a receptacle for government stores. In the year 1850 possession of the chapel was given back to the parish of Tynemouth. A subscription was raised and Mr. Dobson of Newcastle was entrusted with the restoration of the building. Successful as a railway station and domestic house architect, he lacked the spirit of the early church builders. He placed a stone altar in the chapel, and opened out four of the windows, in which stained glass was placed by Mr. Wailes of Newcastle. The remaining two windows on the north side had never been pierced and remain so to this day. The vaulting shafts of the roof were carried to the ground as they had been cut off by the string course to make more room for casks while the chapel was in the possession of the Ordnance department—one of many disgraceful acts of vandalism for which government departments are answerable.

Other alterations were made in the interior but happily the beautiful roof was not touched. Some years ago some person with a meretricious love of colour studded the roof with blue and gold which is a great disfigurement to it. At the east end of the chapel on the exterior and above the rose window is the sacred monogram and on either side of it were shields bearing the arms of the abbey of St. Albans and of the priory of Tynemouth, but the arms are no longer discernible.

Mr. E. Ridsdale Tate in 1895 described the priory in the *Builder*, and in speaking of the choir says 'There is a bold simplicity about the exterior which harmonises well with its bleak situation being exposed to the fury of the gales from the North Sea.'

In the fifteenth century monasticism was losing its hold upon the people, the dwellers in the monasteries not having maintained the high ideal of the founders of their orders and laxness in discipline was a growing feature in the system. In addition there was, more or less, a feeling of antagonism between the monastic orders and the parochial or secular clergy. In the early part of the century king Henry V. dissolved one hundred and forty alien priories.

They had always been a source of weakness in the monastic system. The people objected to so much money being collected and sent out of the country for the aggrandisement of foreign monasteries. In 1485 Selborne priory in Hampshire was dissolved by the bishop and prior and the dissolution was confirmed by pope Innocent VIII. The revenues were granted to Magdalen College, Oxford. Towards the close of the century it was difficult to keep up the numbers of the monks in the abbeys and priories and gradually the spirit of the old race of monks was departing. In the next century the end was approaching. In 1528 pope Clement VII. granted king Henry VIII. permission to suppress monasteries to the value of eight thousand ducats, provided there were not six religious in them and that the inmates were placed in other religious houses; and in November in the same year permission was granted by the pope to suppress monasteries where there was not the proper number of monks or nuns (twelve) and to unite them to other religious houses.¹² The manner in which the monasteries were suppressed, in 1536 and 1539, by Henry VIII., is one of the blackest pages in our annals. By their suppression the king gathered a harvest of spoil in the shape of land and plate and jewels such, as a writer says, 'had not fallen to the lot of a king since Alaric, the Goth, sacked Rome.' The chief inquisitors appointed by the king to visit the monasteries were unworthy of credit, and the brutal treatment of the mitred abbots of Reading and Glastonbury has left an undying stain upon the memory of Thomas Cromwell, the too-willing agent of the king. The notes which have come to light, which are in his own handwriting, show the merciless nature of the man. One reads thus: 'Item, the Abbat of Reading to be sent down to be tried and *executed* at Reading with his complices.' Another reads: 'Item, the Abbat of Glaston (Glastonbury) to be tried at Glaston and also *executed* there with his complices.' The venerable abbot of Glastonbury was executed in a most barbarous manner and his head was placed over the abbey in which so many years of his exemplary life had been spent. The lesser monasteries were suppressed in 1536 and the greater ones in 1539. Among the latter was the priory

¹² *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, by F. A. Gasquet, monk of the Order of S. Benedict.

of Tynemouth. The last prior was Robert Blakeney. Before he and his convent surrendered the priory he endeavoured to purchase exemption from the payment of an annuity which the convent was legally bound to pay. His predecessor in office had paid some 200 marks in fees and although the value of the priory had diminished he still professed his willingness to compound with Cromwell for that amount, provided the abbot of St. Albans were made to secure the office to him for life 'by convent seal.' He also desired to escape the payment of an annuity which 'my Lady Mary Carey, now Stafford, had granted to her by my predecessor under convent seal. It was for 100 marks yearly for what cause I know not.' The person addressed is asked, 'To take it into your hands and for your panes as your L^p has an annuity from me of 20 nobles, it shall be 20 marks and that not only to yourself but to William your son if it chance him to survive.'¹³

On the 12th January, 1539, in the thirtieth year of king Henry VIII., the priory and all its valuable possessions were surrendered to the king. The deed of surrender is signed by the prior, fifteen presbyters, and three novices. The prior retired to Benwell, the summer residence of the priors. In my paper on 'Tynemouth Castle, after the Dissolution of the Monastery,' I have dealt with the subsequent history of it.

Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the abbots, priors, and monks; nothing can justify the brutal manner in which they were treated at the dissolution of the monasteries. The splendid churches which they built, the ruins of which add so much beauty to our land, are imperishable memorials of their work.

In an account of the downfall of the Monastic Order of Black Monks or Benedictines in England is a quotation from W. H. Hart's introduction to the *History of the Monastery at Gloucester*. It, in well chosen language, expresses what was probably the feelings of many of the abbots, priors, and monks as they took leave for ever of the houses which had sheltered them so long. It is as follows: 'Having existed for more than eight hundred years under different forms, in poverty and in wealth, in meanness and in magnificence, in

¹³ See *R. O. Crum. (Crom.)* Corr. xiv., 63 vol. xlv., No. 37; quoted by Gasquet in his *English Monasteries*.



THE RUINS OF TYNEMOUTH PRIORY FROM THE CASTLE GATEWAY, BEFORE 1852.

(Woodcut lent by Mr. James Hall of Tynemouth.)

misfortune and in success, it finally succumbs to the royal will ; the day came, and that a drear winter day, when its last mass was sung, its last censer waved, its last congregation bent in lowly adoration before the altar there, and doubtless as the last tones of that day's evensong died away in the vaulted roof, there was not wanting those who lingered in the solemn stillness of the old massive pile, and who, as the lights disappeared one by one, felt that for them there was now a void which could never be filled, because their old abbey, with its beautiful services, its frequent means of grace, its hospitality to strangers, and its loving care for God's poor, had past away like an early morning dream and was gone for ever.'

Benwell, to which the last prior of Tynemouth retired, after passing through the hands of seven or eleven laymen has, in accordance with a supposed tradition, come back to the church through the munificence of Mr. J. W. Pease, and is now the residence of the bishops of Newcastle.

TYNEMOUTH CASTLE.

Robert de Mowbray, who made the gift of the church at Tynemouth to the abbey of St. Albans, fortified the place, and, it is stated, built a castle. He and William Rufus, the Red King, were at feud. He was thrice summoned by the king to appear at his court ; but paid no regard to the summons. The king proceeded north and besieged the castle for two months, when it was taken and apparently dismantled. Mowbray escaped to Bamburgh, but afterwards returned to Tynemouth, where he was, after two days, taken prisoner and conveyed to Durham.¹⁴ He died a monk at St. Albans in 1106. It was important for the protection of the priory at Tynemouth that the fortifications should be maintained. The position was almost inaccessible from the sea, but owing to repeated inroads of the Scots the castle was found to be insecure from the land. In 1296 a licence to the prior and convent to crenellate the castle was granted by king Edward I. while he was at Berwick. The prior of Tynemouth, who was also lord of the manor, exercised the rights of hospitality not only to his over-lord the abbot of St. Albans, but also to the kings of England in their frequent journeys to and from Scotland. In 1293, 1296, 1299,

¹⁴ *History of Northumberland*, vol i., and Bates's *Northumberland*, p. 113.

and 1300, the warrior king, Edward I., was at Tynemouth priory. On the last occasion, he was there with his youthful bride Margaret, the 'Flower of France,' from the 22nd to the 26th June. In 1303 queen Margaret resided at the monastery while king Edward was on his way to Scotland, at the head of his army. In the following year the king was at the priory, and the prior obtained a licence or grant to hold a fair annually on the eve of St. Oswin (20th August) and for thirteen days afterwards, but, in the following year, on the petition of the mayor and burgesses of Newcastle, the grant was revoked. For a long series of years the prior and the mayor and burgesses of Newcastle were at feud. The first great fight between them was in the years 1291-2 and the struggles continued at intervals until the dissolution of the priory. It was taken up in later times by Ralph Gardner of Chirton, the river reformer.

In 1312, king Edward II. was at Tynemouth, and his queen was left there. The king, who was accompanied by his favourite, Piers Gaveston, or Peter de Gaveston, on hearing that his nobles were approaching, fled by sea to Scarborough with his favourite, and left his queen (then unable to travel) at Tynemouth. In 1316 and 1322 the king was again at Tynemouth. In August and September in the latter year queen Isabella remained at the priory. In 1335, king Edward III. was at Tynemouth.

While the kings of England were at the priory they and their queens made offerings of great value at the altar in the priory and at the shrine of St. Oswin. Early in the reign of king Edward II., the prior maintained eighty armed men for the defence of his monastery. There is a tradition that after the battle of Neville's Cross, in October, 1346, Douglas, the Scottish leader, was a prisoner at Tynemouth. In 1380 there was a confirmation by king Richard II. of the charters. It is said the defences of the castle had become weakened by the encroachments of the sea. In 1389, the monastery was plundered by the Scots under the earl of Moray. Thomas Woodstock, duke of Gloucester and youngest son of king Edward III., resided for a few days in the castle in 1391. In August, 1415, Tynemouth castle was stated to be in the care of the prior of Tynemouth (castrum de Tynmouth, priori de Tynmouth).

An inquisition was held at Newcastle in January, 1447, about encroachments by the prior of Tynemouth, and the proceedings give some information about the rising town of North Shields. The jury found that a certain place called North Shields, which erewhile was called *Shields*, was contiguous and adjacent to the Tyne. That for sixty years last past the prior of Tynemouth, having demesne lands of his priory adjoining the said water at a place called North Shields, had added to his lands four acres of land within the ebb and flow of the water, and had newly erected two hundred messuages, and permitted common inns for men and horses, taverns of wine and ale, stalls, shops, booths and shambles for the sale of victuals and other vendable articles to be brought together, and also herring houses and fish houses, and had called that place the town of *North Shields*, where, beyond the water, namely upon its bank there had been of old time only three cottages, called fisher lodges. The rent stated to be received by the prior and his convent amounted to fifteen hundred marks, and it is stated they baked one thousand quarters of wheat in the ovens, and brewed two thousand quarters of malt per annum. The jury found that the mayor and burgesses of Newcastle had sustained an annual loss of £340.¹⁵

In October, 1462, Margaret of Anjou, queen of king Henry VI., attempted a landing at Tynemouth, but she was repulsed and went to Bamburgh and Dunstanborough. On the 24th July, 1503, princess Margaret, eldest daughter of king Henry VII., was on her way to Scotland to marry king James IV. She was met three miles from Newcastle by the 'prior of Tynemouth well apoynted and in hys company xxx horsys. Hys folks in hys liveray.¹⁶ Under date 1510, is a paragraph there in Bourne's description of Jesmond to the following effect, 'To this village it was that a great number of the people of Newcastle, headed by some of the aldermen and principal men of the town, came, to kill the prior of Tynemouth, in the first year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.'¹⁷ Mr. Welford adds that the prior's name was John Stonewell, and he had been but recently appointed. Lands

¹⁵ *Newcastle and Gateshead in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, by Richard Welford, p. 317.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 30.



THE RUINS OF TYNEMOUTH PRIORY FROM THE SOUTH EAST BEFORE 1852.
(Woodcut lent by Mr. James Hall of Tynemouth.)

at Jesmond belonged to the monastery, and as the men of Newcastle were always quarrelling with the priors about alleged encroachments upon their privileges, they may have taken the opportunity of Stonewell's visit to his Jesmond property to make a demonstration.

In an interesting document recently communicated to the society by Mr. F. W. Dendy, and printed at p. 263, of the *Proceedings*, vol. ix., is the explanation of the quarrel between the town of Newcastle and the prior. In this document it is alleged among other things, that about five hundred men 'forcibly armed in hernays, with speres, gleyves, bowes & arrows,' by the exhortation of the prior assembled at Tynemouth with great numbers of the inhabitants of Tynedale and Reddesdale to whom as it is supposed the riot was committed. The prior gave wages of vjd per day to the intent that the said persons should murder the mayor, aldermen, and other inhabitants of Newcastle.

On the 9th September, 1513, the battle of Flodden Field, which was so disastrous to the Scots, was fought. The prior of Tynemouth had sent his armed men to the battle, but the account of their behaviour in the battle is not pleasant reading; at the first boom of the Scottish cannon the men of Tynemouth and Bamboroughshire, in the wing of the rearguard that lord Dacre was bringing up to support Edmund Howard, son of Thomas Howard the lord Admiral, took to their heels. Edmund's Cheshire followers, already half mutinous at not being led by a Stanley, and cowed by the fall of the heroic sir Brian Tunstall, followed their example. This stampede it is understood largely contributed to the success of the battle, as it caused king James to leave his vantage ground and charge madly down the hillside with the Scottish centre who were mercilessly raked by the English artillery.

The castle did not possess a keep but consisted merely of the gateway, which until 1783 presented an imposing appearance. In that year the upper portion of the gateway, with the picturesque turrets at its corners, was removed, and the unsightly structure which now presents itself was built over the old archway. In my paper on the Castle is an illustration of the gateway as it existed before the War Office laid its heavy hand upon it.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH.

When the Transitional or Early English addition was made to the priory church and it was carried eastward, as already described, it was also carried westward to the extent of forty feet. The deeply recessed west doorway which meets the eyes of the visitor as he approaches the ruins, after passing through the entrance to the castle, was then inserted. The screen separating the priory church from what was to become the parish church was also inserted but not bonded. The length of the parish church was one hundred and twenty-six feet, and the breadth forty-six feet six inches. As was too often the case disputes arose between the bishop of Durham and the prior of Tynemouth as to the rights of the former with respect to the parochial church. In 1247 the bishop claimed the right to visit in his episcopal character the parish church of Tynemouth, and the dispute was settled that the bishop should exercise the office as visitor of the parish church, but he was not to interfere with the conventual church. The vicars of the church of Tynemouth were to be appointed by the prior and convent with the assent of the abbot of St. Albans, and to be presented to the bishop for institution. The great tithes were, as usual, received by the prior and convent.

Among the vicars of Tynemouth was John of Tynemouth, a native of the place, and an eminent writer. He afterwards became a monk of St. Albans and dedicated his great work, the *Sanctilogium Britanniae*, to Abbot de la Mare of St. Albans. The latter became abbot in 1349 and died in 1396. The church at Tynemouth continued to be used until the time of Oliver Cromwell, when the castle was taken by the Scots. After the restoration the church was used for a short time, until the consecration of Christ Church at North Shields in 1668, after which it crumbled into ruins.

HOSPITAL OF ST. LEONARDS.

Annexed to the priory was the hospital of St. Leonards, which was placed in a secluded and well-sheltered spot at the Spital dene. The site of the hospital is now enclosed in the Northumberland park—a place of sylvan beauty; but little frequented by visitors to Tynemouth. The hospital is first mentioned in the year 1320.¹⁷

¹⁷ See *Proc.* iii. 35, for Mr. Adamson's account of the hospital.

In forming the park, about the year 1885, two stone coffins and a medieval grave cover were dug up, and also a tiled pavement, but this was again covered up.

PLANS OF THE PRIORY.

The earliest plan of the priory, of which I am aware, is one of the time of queen Elizabeth.¹⁸ The priory church and the monastic and other buildings are shewn. In Fryer's map of the Tyne, published in 1773, the church has three windows on its south side. In a drawing made by Waters in 1786 five bays are shown westward of the three windows—these bays are also shown in Bucks' crude and inaccurate drawing of the monastery published in 1728. In Vivares's drawing, published in 1747, the five bays are not shewn. It is difficult to reconcile these drawings. The drawing by Waters was taken from a painting by his father, Ralph Waters. The son was born in 1750. It is probable the father's drawing was made when he was quite young, and before so much of the ruins had fallen down. It is improbable that the drawing could have been made except from the building as it stood, or perhaps it was copied from that of the brothers Buck, which it greatly resembles. There is a ground plan from actual survey by Dobson, but in this the apse of the Norman church is incorrectly shewn. Some years ago, Mr. R. J. Johnson, carried out some excavations and discovered the foundations of the apse much farther eastward than shewn in Dobson's plan. The actual position is shewn on the ground plan prepared by Mr. E. Ridsdale Tate for the *Builder* in 1895. In a plan prepared by sir Gilbert Scott in 1876, the position of the foundations of the Norman pier at the north-east angle of the nave are incorrectly shewn. He made drawings for the restoration of the choir of the priory church, but beyond the preparation of these drawings nothing was done, nor is it likely the priory will ever be restored. The War department is rapidly curtailing the space around the ruins. For the last thirty-five years the authorities have been constructing batteries, taking them down and reconstructing them, and at present they are erecting batteries for heavy guns. The lighthouse, after an existence of nearly three hundred years, is a thing of the past, and upon its site are being constructed batteries which it is hoped will never be required for the defence of the Tyne.

¹⁸ See *Arch. Ael.* xviii. 76.

