

II.—JOHN HORSLEY AND HIS TIMES.

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In the preceding paper sir George Macdonald has examined Horsley's life and work, elucidated his relations with other and less scrupulous investigators of the Roman Wall, and thrown new light on his character. I have been asked to supplement his discoveries by some notes based in part on an address given at Morpeth, on the occasion of the unveiling of a memorial tablet on the outer wall of St. George's Presbyterian Church, on October 27th, 1932.

John Horsley's fame rests on his history of Roman Britain, a book which has become a classic. Not only did he see the need for such a treatise and supply it; he saw two other needs, less pressing because local rather than national, and set about collecting material with which to meet them—the need of a map and of a topographical history of his own county. The map, eventually completed by the pious care of his surveyor, George Mark, and the liberality of his friend Robert Cay, was issued in 1753. The history remained a project only, but in preparation for it Horsley jotted down a quantity of notes both for introductory chapters and for descriptions of parishes, which enable us to see the county through his eyes.

The beginning of the eighteenth century had found Northumberland a tract of open moors, with natural woods only in the deeper river-valleys or where a deer-park had survived the ruthless fellings of the Commonwealth. Round a few country-houses trees and gardens showed how royalists had busied themselves with planting during their compulsory retirement and set a fashion that was to

spread. Most of the old castles stood roofless and ragged. If a landowner still used his medieval tower, it was the most despised wing of a modern house, while the smaller peles sheltered tenants or labourers. The market-towns were long streets of thatched houses, Morpeth alone offering a choice of tolerable inns; the villages mere clusters of turf-covered huts, surrounded by open fields—oases in a wilderness of whin, broom and heather. Bridle-tracks, bad beyond belief, zigzagged in all directions; but since there were no maps and no sign-posts only a native could travel far without a guide. Travellers had to feed their horses on oat-straw and themselves on porridge and oat-cake. On the North Road rich men's coaches and carriers' wagons lumbered along at three miles an hour, but elsewhere men and goods went on horseback or not at all. Ponies carried fish, coal and lime; the cadger rode from farm to farm collecting eggs and parcels of grain; pedlars and packmen risked their lives when snow lay deep on the moors to supply the needs of housewives who had never seen a shop.

Long after the union of the Crowns Northumberland had been a nursery of soldiers, as William Gray boasted in 1649—"a most warre-like Nation, and excellent good Light-Horsemen, wholly addicting themselves to Mars and Armes, not a gentleman among them that hath not his Castle or Tower." The Restoration ushered in a peaceful industrial era. The wealth of Newcastle was growing year by year, and the enterprise of business men began to transform the neighbouring country. There was progress in spiritual as well as material things. Writing in 1695 Bishop Nicolson is at pains to declare that rude manners and thievish ways are a thing of the past; "men's persons are as safe, and their goods as secure, as in the most civiliz'd kingdoms of Europe."¹ And when Horsley in 1729 jotted down headings for his county history, he was emphatic on the same theme. Moss-troopers "have for some time been entirely rooted out and destroyed. . . .

¹ Gibson's *Camden*, p. 874.

The manners and conduct of the gentlemen, and those of lower quality, are much as in other counties, and very different from the representations that have been made of them. The accommodations of life may be plentifully enjoyed in this county." Formerly some of the inhabitants "lived in continual danger, and in great uneasiness and misery, but that is now entirely over." As yet the stormy past had no romantic charm. A generation was to elapse before ballads became the rage and owners who had not pulled down their castles were proud to repair and live in them.

After 1688 the Whig gentry, increasingly recruited from commercial leaders on Tyneside, took the lead in county business. Improvement was the watchword of the day. Ambrose Barnes, writing after the Revolution in his counting-house at Newcastle, lumps most of Northumberland with Scotland as "the northern uncultivated parts of this island beyond Adrian's wall," and declares his belief that "this, which useth with contempt to be lookt upon by the English as the inconsiderablest part of Brittain, is capable of great improvements." He had collected facts about the herring and cod fisheries on the Scottish coast, and dreamed of a joint-stock company to operate in the Hebrides and Shetland. But for most of his contemporaries improvement meant the development of agriculture. "Great part of the county on the western side," wrote Horsley a generation later, "is yet waste and almost uninhabited, but much of it has been improved of late years, and the proprietors and inhabitants are yearly improving it still more and more. They have just now this very year divided a large common near Elsdon, and Framlington Moor (part of Rimside) in order to enclose and improve."²

Scott, born less than sixty years later, has reproduced in *Rob Roy* the atmosphere of the Jacobite houses that dominated western and central Northumberland before the Fifteen. In 1712 Richard Parker, vicar of Embleton,

² *Ined. Contr.*, p. 5.

wrote a paper for the *Spectator* that shows fox-hunting already enthroned as the serious business of country society; anyone who suspects Di Vernon's talk of five-barred gates or the uniform of the hunt as anachronistic will find authority for it all there.³ Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone had a counterpart, less martial but not less adventurous, in Edward Arthur, Presbyterian minister of Barmoor and afterwards of Etal, who kept a pack of hounds and provided sport for the farmers of Glendale, finding time also to be agent for three adjoining estates and to manage a farm.⁴ A common love of sport was breaking down the barrier between Whig and Tory. As late as the beginning of the century there were firebrands to be found, cavaliers who had borne arms for the Stuarts, still smouldering in resentful old age. But the younger men who girt on their fathers' or grandfathers' swords in 1715 had neither experience of war nor passionate conviction. The prestige of the Jacobite families and the romance of a forbidden cult had won a nominal adherence from neighbours who rode and drank toasts with them. For many a shamefaced mock-conspirator it was touch and go whether he honoured his word or saved neck and lands by staying at home.

To understand why Northumberland rallied for the Pretender as no other English county did one must remember that two families whose influence might have sobered the hot-heads were now off-stage. The Percy estates had passed in 1670 to an heiress who became duchess of Somerset and saw little of the north. It was not till 1750 that her granddaughter resumed the arms and surname of Percy and with her husband, created earl Percy and duke of Northumberland in 1766, returned to

³ *Spectator*, no. 474, September 3, 1712.

⁴ *History of the Presbyterian Church of Barmoor and Lowick* (1824), p. 8. Our librarian, Mr. Thomas Wake, has run to ground a copy of this rare tract, cited by J. C. Hodgson, *Ber. Nat. Club*, xxii, 117. The anonymous author was the rev. Israel Craig, minister at Lowick 1793-1843. Of the country ministers of their persuasion in Northumberland Arthur and his neighbour at Etal had the largest congregations in 1715, 400 and 500 hearers; both included "many substantial farmers." (*Evans MS.* in Dr. Williams' library.)

save Alnwick castle—and much else—from decay. Again the last lord Grey of Werke died in 1706, and his lands were divided between a niece who had married Charles Bennet, afterwards earl of Tankerville, and a nephew, Henry Neville. The new owners had homes and interests far from Northumberland. Chillingham played no great part in county life, and it was only when Henry Neville Grey—for he took the family name—died in 1740 that the younger line of Howick rose step by step to the place of honour it still holds. The eclipse of Percy and Grey left a clear field for Widdrington and Radcliffe, whose praise was in all men's mouths during Horsley's younger days. When he made notes for his history of Northumberland, they had vanished from the scene. He speaks regretfully of the deserted house at Dilston, and of Widdrington castle, purchased since its owner's forfeiture by a speculative company; "in a little time it is probable the same fate will attend this castle that has laid a great many others in ruin and neglect." Northumberland was fast losing the old stocks to which it had looked for leadership. But the Fifteen only carried further a wastage begun by sequestrations under the Commonwealth and increased by extravagant living after the Restoration. When sir John Fenwick plotted against king William in 1695, and Thomas Forster against king George in 1715, they had little to lose—their estates had already passed into other hands.

The process by which the wild borderland was being tamed and assimilated to the comfort-loving south, wherever an owner had the means and inclination to be in the fashion, may be illustrated by the great houses that lay within Horsley's horizon. Belsay exhibited three stages, a small fourteenth-century castle, a Jacobean house and an early eighteenth-century annexe, in close if incongruous union. Widdrington had the same composite character. Buck's drawing enables us to visualize its setting of walled fore-court and formal walks. So, too, Kirkharle with its elaborate gardens and wide plantations, where Lancelot Brown (1715-1783) was learning as a boy under sir William

Lorraine the art that he was to develop and transform, and Netherwitton, a "stately and magnificent" house of 1698, were built on to old towers. But at Capheaton sir John Swinburne had broken with the past, demolishing the castle and setting his ornate mansion on a new site; and at Wallington in 1688 sir William Blackett had buried the lower walls of the old Fenwick stronghold beneath a broad terrace, to support the two-storeyed grey quadrangle that seemed to Horsley—and most of us would agree with him—"by much the finest house in this part of the country." It is hard to-day to think of Wallington as new or the landscape round it as bare. Yet Horsley's contemporary, the third sir William Blackett, did little to adorn his estate or maintain the family tradition of efficiency in business. It was only in 1731 that his nephew and successor, "Walter Blackett *alias* Calverley, Esq.," entered on public life by serving the office of High Sheriff, a young man who was to remodel many square miles of central Northumberland by road-making, building and planting. And if the embellishment of Wallington within and without belongs to a later day, so does the gay hospitality of Seaton Delaval, a palacè reared by Vanbrugh on a bare sea-coast as though to advertise the wealth and energy of another great mercantile family. The exotic pile was still unfinished when Horsley called it the "rising glory of the North," and quoted Virgil's lines about Dido building Carthage.

The men who built these spacious symmetrical houses knew little of the past and disliked what they knew. They disdained not only medieval castles, but the Jacobean additions that had satisfied their grandfathers' ideas of dignity and comfort. A generation that had seen the old work at Dilston and Seaton Delaval swept away was hardly likely to share Horsley's regret over the fate of Widdrington. By a miracle Chipchase, Belsay and a fragment at Mitford survive to illustrate what has been destroyed elsewhere. It was the romantic revival that stayed the process; from 1755 the first duke of North-

umberland set an example by restoring his ruined castle at Alnwick and showed that it was possible to value the historic past and yet be progressive in the management of his estates. If Horsley's projected *History of Northumberland* had been written, it might have hastened the change. But when he began collecting his materials the flight from the Middle Ages was still in progress. The good side of all this modernization was that it spread outwards from the mansion to the estate and led to improvements in agriculture. William Loraine's canals, fountains, green-houses and grottoes, his avenues and "other pretty curiosities,"⁵ were the recreations of a landlord who enclosed, built farms and brought waste land under the plough by draining and clearing it of boulders. After twenty years he had so far relieved his father's encumbered estate as to be able to buy the forfeited lands of Jacobite neighbours. But such good management was still rare. The moralist author of *Cheviot*, written in part at least during the rebellion, denounces the narrow outlook of "our Northumbrian youth":

" Could I persuade them manly exercise
 May very well consist with being wise,
 That pleasant conversation may be had
 Without one's turning either drunk or mad;
 That 'tis below no man to understand
 The value and improvement of his land,
 And that a man of breeding may discourse
 Of something else besides his hounds and horse."

The fiasco of 1715 cleared the air. New men and new ideas came to the front, and Northumberland entered on an age of development. We begin to hear of ironworks, of quays and warehouses for exporting corn. There had been improvers even among the Jacobites. When the "well-beloved" George Collingwood of Eslington was drawn into the rebellion, he had begun to build good farm-houses,⁶ which after his forfeiture and execution were completed by the Liddells, who purchased his estate. "The

⁵ Warburton *c.* 1714, *A.A.* (3) xiii, 10.

⁶ *Portland Papers*, vi, 126.

whole country," says Horsley, "since the lordship of Eslington came into the hands of sir Henry Liddell is so well replenished with houses, generally covered with pantile"—as opposed to thatch or even turf—"that it casts a vastly better figure than it used to do before. There is also nearly finished a long stone wall by the side of the highway to Whittingham."⁷ A fragment of Horsley's journal describes a visit to another Jacobite property, Otterburn. The new owner, "old Mr. Hall," was a grazier whose career illustrates the opportunities open in a backward district to men of energy and character. His forebears had been members of the lawless Redesdale community that preyed on both kingdoms alike. Anthony Hall of the Bog, one of the many homesteads in what was then a populous valley, is named as a dangerous loyalist in 1655. Thirty years later Martin Hall of the same place was a convinced Presbyterian who sheltered persecuted dissenters. Gabriel, second son of "Martin of the Bog," must have been a judge of cattle and improver of land, for he acquired estates stretching to the border, and by 1706 was a man of such substance as to hold the office of High Sheriff. He bought Otterburn after the attainder of its owner, John Hall—perhaps a distant kinsman—in 1716, and lived until 1733 in the tower that had defied the Scots in the days of Richard II. His son, Reynold Hall, is still more closely linked with the historian, for he was a trustee of the meeting-house built at Morpeth in 1721, and five years later his daughter Elizabeth married Robert Cay, Horsley's friend and collaborator in his Roman studies. It was natural that they should be fellow-guests at Otterburn tower in 1729.

Reynold Hall lived at Newbiggin in the parish of Newburn. His close connection with Tyneside industry arose through his marriage with Ruth Hudson of that place, daughter and co-heiress of Enoch Hudson, elder son of a notable industrial pioneer, Henry Hudson, who died in

⁷ *A.A.* (3) xv, 65. Cp. *Ined. Contr.*, 54, "considerable improvements." In Durham, too, the Liddells built roads and fenced them.

1704. One of Cromwell's Ironsides, he had fought at Dunbar, and used to recount how he had seen the Protector on the night before the battle riding "through the several regiments by torchlight upon a little Scotch nag, biting his lip till the blood had run down upon his chin." Henry Hudson settled at Whitley after the Restoration, and gave shelter there to persecuted dissenters. One account makes him a Baptist; if so, he had wide sympathies; for he befriended John Davis, the ejected vicar of Bywell, a Congregationalist, and when Davis died in 1676, leaving a boy five years old, Hudson took care of the child's education "and continued his kindness to him also after his entrance in the ministry."⁸ A man of energy and foresight, he worked mines, quarries, salt-pans and mills. His son Enoch did not long survive him, dying in 1715. The marriages of Enoch's four daughters are characteristic of the growing sympathy between the denominations. Ruth, the eldest, married Reynold Hall, a Presbyterian; the second, Sarah, a Presbyterian merchant of Whitehaven; William Hicks; the third, Mary, John Dove, a member of the Quaker family long settled at Cullercoats and Whitley; while the fourth, Hannah, became the wife of a member of the Established Church, Robert Ellison, second son of Nathaniel Ellison, vicar of Newcastle.

Gabriel Hall came of rough Border stock, and his son Reynold may have been the first of his line to form a library.⁹ But the Cays, a Tyneside commercial family, members for five generations of the Newcastle company of bakers and brewers, had an older tradition of culture. We start once more from an ancestor who took a bold line in the days of persecution—Robert Cay's grandfather of the same name had died about 1682, but his widow "freely ventured her malt-loft" for prohibited meetings. She was a member of the famous Dr. Richard Gilpin's congregation. He had graduated at Edinburgh, and it may have

⁸ Calamy, *Life of Baxter, Continuation*, ed. 1713, ii, 519.

⁹ Horsley speaks of a print in his "collection," and the name of Reynard [*sic*] Hall is in the list of subscribers to Burnet's *History of his Own Time* (1724).

been under his influence that she sent her eldest son to the university there. In later years this son and his sister Hannah married a daughter and a son of Gilpin, creating a double bond between the families. On Jabez Cay's escapade at Edinburgh light has been thrown by sir George Macdonald's inquiries. The energy that made him a ring-leader in that university riot was turned to more profitable ends when he returned from Leyden and Padua to practise medicine in Newcastle, for he found time to study the Roman Wall and copy its inscriptions. He was a correspondent of Ralph Thoresby of Leeds, whose collection he enriched with geological and other specimens, and of John Woodward, F.R.S., to whom he presented an inscribed slab from Benwell; and he must have possessed a good classical library, for Thoresby consulted him as to works on ancient military equipment, and got competent advice in reply.¹⁰ Thus in the Presbyterian circle to which Horsley and his parents belonged there were two scholars, Dr. Cay and his father-in-law Dr. Richard Gilpin, who would interest themselves in the promising boy who went in 1698, as sir George Macdonald has made probable, to their own university. And since Gilpin had a country seat on the line of the Roman Wall, where Jabez Cay sometimes went,¹¹ Scaleby castle in Cumberland, it is likely enough that Horsley may have been a visitor there, and made the acquaintance of William Gilpin, the eldest son, who was forming a collection of Roman altars.

The elder Gilpin died in 1700, Jabez Cay in 1703. His younger brother John (1668-1731) was now the head of the Cay family, a man of business, a landowner and a leading Presbyterian. It was not unusual for rich men of that persuasion to employ a candidate for the ministry as domestic chaplain and tutor, permitting him to pursue his theological studies in spare time. Some such engage-

¹⁰ *Thoresby Corr.*, i, 312, February 19, 1697/8. In *Phil. Trans.* 1702, no. 277. Thoresby calls him "my kind friend, the learned and ingenious Dr. Jabez Cay of Newcastle."

¹¹ See his letters from Scaleby, *Thoresby Corr.*, i, 163 ff., June 27 and July 18, 1694.

ment may account for the years between Horsley's graduation in 1701 and his settlement as minister at Morpeth in or before 1709. In view of the devoted friendship of which we have evidence in later years, it is possible that he had the training of John Cay's sons, Robert born in 1694, and John born in 1700.

Once settled as minister at Morpeth, he took pupils. Local Whigs, some—like John Cay—trained in Richard Frankland's academy at Rathmell (1669-98), would readily send their sons to a school that had the same high standard, though its pupils no doubt were younger and theology not a main subject. Some idea of its character may be borrowed from a much larger one opened in 1733 by the minister of Kendal, Caleb Rotheram, D.D., who is linked with our subject by the fact that he purchased Horsley's scientific apparatus when it was offered at auction about March of that year.¹² In 1735 Rotheram's terms were "eight Guineas a year for lodging and boarding, and four guineas a year for Learning, they find their own Fire and Candle in their Rooms, and wash their own wearing Linnen." A further charge was made for "a whole course of mathematics," but there were few other "extras." One of his pupils writes home about "the happiness I Enjoyed yesterday in the Company of the most Ingenious men in Westmoreland, I mean Mr. Rotheram and one Justice Shepard, the most accomplished Gentleman, Lawyer and Scholar in these Parts. We were shooting all day for Woodcocks and dined with the Justice and were handsomely entertain'd, and had the conversation that was to be expected from men of Parts, Learning, and Knowledge of the World."¹³

Though he may not have shot woodcock with his country neighbours, Horsley was on friendly terms with a number of the leading men of the district. Three neighbouring houses, Belsay, Milbourne Grange and Kirkley, had been strongholds of Puritanism for generations. At

¹² Hodgson, *H.N.*, II, ii, 444; *A.A.* (2) vi, 179.

¹³ *C. & W. Trans.*, N.S., v, 177 f. About a third of his students were preparing for ordination.

Belsay successive Middletons had maintained a private chapel, entertained emissaries of the Scottish Covenanters before the Civil War, and sheltered refugees in the persecution that raged from 1683 onwards. Though sir William Middleton accepted a baronetcy from Charles II, he did not change his religious views. Under the indulgence of 1672 he applied to have Belsay licensed for Presbyterian worship. Dying in 1691, he left his twelve-year-old son to the guardianship of his chaplain and tutor, James Calvert, a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, and ejected vicar of Topcliffe, Yorkshire. Calvert, "a man of great reading," lived to see the young sir John entered at Cambridge in 1697, but died before his marriage in 1699 to Frances, daughter and heiress of John Lambert of Calton in Craven, the eldest son of the Parliamentary General. Sir John and his wife carried on the family tradition, and employed a chaplain who ministered to a large congregation at Belsay. The Lamberts were friends of the Rathmell Academy, and had sheltered it at Calton in the difficult days of 1683; it is natural therefore to find that the Belsay minister was one of Frankland's men, Comberbach Leech. Sir John, who died in 1717, made him an executor of his will, and four years later, along with the son and heir, sir William Middleton, Leech became a trustee of Horsley's new meeting-house at Morpeth. The case of the Ogles is equally clear. John Ogle of Kirkley, "friend of Oliver Cromwell,"¹⁴ had his house licensed for congregational worship in 1672. His eldest son Ralph married a daughter of Thompson, ejected rector of Bothal, who held similar licenses for his house at Morpeth and the Tolbooth there. His younger son Nathaniel, who succeeded him at Kirkley, went (as Jabez Cay did after his expulsion from Edinburgh) to Frankland's academy,¹⁵ where medicine was one of the subjects taught, and then to Leyden. He served as physician in Marlborough's army, was appointed Deputy-Lieutenant of

¹⁴ *N.C.H.*, xii, 503.

¹⁵ List of Frankland's pupils, F. Nicholson and E. Axon, *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal*, pp. 557, 581, 584.

Northumberland in 1716, and had sons who rose to eminence in church and navy. Horsley speaks of Kirkley, "the pleasant seat of Nathaniel Ogle, Esq., who has lately very much improved and adorned it." There is reason to think that one or more of Ogle's sons came to him as pupils. At Milbourne Grange the Presbyterian tradition went further back than at Kirkley, but there too the eighteenth century had brought compromise; the owner had conformed and was taking part in local administration.

Southern folk thought of the border counties as places of exile, inhospitable to scholarship. When Butler was writing his *Analogy* at Stanhope rectory about 1735, his fame as a philosopher was mentioned to queen Caroline by the archbishop of York. She said that she thought he had been dead. "No, madame," was the answer, "he is not dead, but he is buried." Rothbury might seem as remote as Stanhope, and the post did not go there; yet John Thomlinson, rector 1678-1720, "had all the modern books that ever came out almost," though his library was outshone by Nathaniel Ellison's, which was rich in ancient works.¹⁶ Ellison, vicar of Newcastle 1694-1721, not only bought books but read and annotated them, and made collections for a history of Newcastle. Horsley is likely to have known them both. Thomlinson was on friendly terms with the Presbyterian minister of the Coquet-water meeting-house, and took his nephew to dine with him when they visited Harbottle fair. The young Johnian grumbles in his diary—"uncle in effect called Mr. Bell brother."¹⁷ As for Ellison, his son Robert married one of Horsley's circle, Hannah Hudson, sister of Mrs. Reynold Hall. A third clerical library, much nearer to Horsley's door, was that of Cuthbert Fenwick, rector of Morpeth 1691-1745. When Hickee and Wanley in 1705 brought out their long expected *Thesaurus* of the old northern

¹⁶ See his nephew's artless diary, Surtees Soc., 118, p. 166 f. The comparison was made by Ellison's son-in-law, Hugh Farrington the rector of Elsdon, in 1722 when the owners of the two libraries were recently dead. We hear of Horsley visiting Elsdon rectory in 1731. *A.A.* (3). xv, 64.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

languages, copies of the two costly folios went to Newcastle vicarage and to the rectories of Rothbury and Morpeth.¹⁸ Mr. Fenwick impressed the earl of Oxford's chaplain; who spent two days with his employer at Morpeth in 1725, as "a very grave and serious person," "a person of great gravity and goodness."¹⁹ We have no reason to doubt that Horsley found him a congenial neighbour.

Morpeth indeed was by no means out of the world. Most of the travellers between London and Edinburgh passed through it, and Newcastle, the third city in the kingdom, was within a morning's-ride. We may be sure that many learned men visited Horsley's manse, as Calamy did in 1709 and professor Hamilton of Edinburgh in 1727. Sir John Clerk and his party, who lodged at Morpeth on their way to the Roman Wall in 1724, do not seem to have inquired for him—an indication that his proficiency in Roman antiquities was not yet widely known. There is no mention of him in the account of lord Oxford's visit; Stukeley and Roger Gale, who rode along the Wall that same summer, did not come to Morpeth to present their letter of introduction. A few years later Clerk and Stukeley and Gale were among his helpers and correspondents, while Oxford, a collector and patron to whom all the literary world paid court, gave his support unasked. We get a glimpse of Horsley as he appeared to a fellow-antiquary who called upon him at Morpeth in a book that is often mentioned in the *Britannia Romana*, Salmon's *New Survey*.

As sir George Macdonald has shown,²⁰ Horsley's great achievement was to fix the names of the Wall forts by comparing the list of garrisons in the *Notitia* with those recorded in inscriptions—identifications so certain and

¹⁸ This was the book, issued from the Oxford University Press, of which a learned German said, *Per Deum, nihil Gallia sub auspiciis Ludovici magni magnificentius aut augustius edidit.* Bliss, *Letters written by Eminent Persons*, etc. (1813), no. 99.

¹⁹ Hist. MSS. Comm., Welbeck vi, 107, 128. Oxford came to visit the Ogle and Bothal estates inherited by his wife through her mother, a daughter of the second duke of Newcastle.

²⁰ See p. 39 above.

seeming so obvious to-day that we can with difficulty realize what an enigma that list presented to Horsley's contemporaries. He made no secret of his solution. Nathaniel Salmon came to ask his help "in this dark affair" and found it was plain as day to him. A non-juring clergyman turned historian and antiquary, he was bringing out in shilling parts a *New Survey of England* which combined a reconstruction of Roman topography with discursive notes on history and manners. The republication of Gibson's *Camden* in 1722 had quickened interest in local antiquities, but it was cumbrous and costly, and its treatment of the Roman period unsystematic and incomplete. Salmon saw that there was room for a popular sketch of the subject. He travelled over much of England in search of the roads and stations of the *Antonine Itinerary*, setting up his own theories and rejecting those of Camden and Dean Gale with an off-hand confidence that makes his respectful submission to Horsley's better knowledge all the more significant. He speaks of him thus in part viii, published early in 1730:

"The Stations of the *Notitia* are not my Province, because I have no figures to regulate them by" [whereas the *Itinerary* gives the distance from one place to the next]. "I am informed by a Gentleman of Northumberland, well qualified both by Knowledge of History, and Ocular Inspection to determine in this dark Affair, That of the twenty-three Stations which the *Notitia* places *ad lineam Valli*, the eighteen first correspond with a most surprizing Exactness to the Stations in Fact upon the Wall, and every Station just in its Place or Order, particularly all those that happen to be confirmed by any inscription: That the five last have lain cross the Country, in a Line nearly parallel to the Wall, and at no great Distance from it, and communicating with it by a Military Way.

"My Obligation to this Gentleman is to be acknowledged in the most respectful Manner, to whose Humanity I owe more than I could have made a Discovery of in much longer Time, had I been Equally instructed to improve by those Hints he had. I forbear to name my Benefactor, because the materials he gave me may be put to Such Uses as perhaps he cannot justify me in; and because I hope in a short Time to see his judicious Collections made publick, in which his Thoughts will appear to much Greater Advantage than any Endeavours of mine can set them."²¹

²¹ N(athaniel) Salmon, LL.B., *A New Survey of England*, pt. viii (1730), p. 607.

Could there be a more cordial testimony to Horsley's frankness and generosity? We have his own account of the matter in a letter to Roger Gale of February 12th, 1729/30. Gale had written asking whether he had seen part viii of the *New Survey*, dealing with the northern counties. Horsley replies that he has not yet seen it, and then refers to his meeting with Salmon. "I saw him much at a loss; and found it out of my power to retrieve him according to the scheme in which he was embarked, and which I suppose he thought himself obliged to go through." So it was. Salmon persisted in his interpretation of the *Antonine Itinerary*. He placed the *Brovonacis* of the Second Iter at Carlisle, *Voreda* at Caer Vorrán—"here is Name as plain as a Lover of Etymology can desire"—*Luguvallium* near Walwick, *Castra Exploratorum* near Rutchester, *Blatum Bulgium* at Tynemouth. And because Horsley's system could be strained to support this last identification, he reproduced a fragment of it:

"the Stations of the *Notitia* seem to begin from *Tinmouth* to Boulness, which is some Countenance to our Scheme. They that are for the Way leading from West to East, think themselves happy in having *Tunocellum* for *Tinmouth*. On the contrary, *Tunocellum*, as my learned Friend of Northumberland makes it, is *Boulness*, in Fact *Promunturium Itunæ impendens*. And the second of these Stations where the Cornavii were cantoned seems to be at *Newcastle*, where, I presume, was the *Pons Ælius*, which *Adrian* built when he built the Wall."

By the autumn of 1729 the text of the *Britannia* was so far complete that Horsley was able to begin collecting materials for a history of Northumberland. He had been elected a fellow of the Royal Society in May of that year, and was formally admitted during a visit to London—his last—on April 23rd, 1730. In July some of the sheets were being printed off, and during the winter Horsley was led to hope that the book might be published in March, 1731. He wrote as follows to lord Oxford, who had offered, it seems, to subscribe for three copies.²² There is nothing to

²² The original belongs to the duke of Portland and is calendared in Hist. MSS. Comm. Welbeck, vi, p. 36. For the copy I have to thank his Grace's librarian, Mr. Francis Needham, and Mr. C. J. Connolly of the department of MSS. in the British Museum, where the volume containing this letter is at present on loan.

suggest that they had met, though Horsley had visited the Harleian library—he refers to some funeral monuments in that “unvaluable collection,” which besides its famous manuscripts and books contained a few antiques.²³

Morpeth. 11 Feb^{ry} 1730/31.

MY LORD,

I am very much obligd to your Lordship for y^e encouragement M^r Saunders²⁴ has given me by your order w[i]th respect to y^e expensive & laborious undertaking I have so long been engag’d & employed in. The honour done by this to y^e work & its author requires my grateful acknowledgements. Your just character, a compleat master as well as a generous Patron of good letters, could not fail to raise in me y^e highest esteem & regard, and to render me very desirous of having y^e design imparted at y^e very first to your Lordship. But my natural diffidence of myself heighten’d in this case by some particular circumstances, and y^e want of a proper person to introduce & recommend me prevented my making an attempt, to which I had a strong inclination.

It was indeed resolvd from y^e beginning not to publish y^e book by subscription. But I am to have some copies to dispose of on my own account on y^e same terms w[i]th y^e retailing booksellers, and shall be extremely proud to have three of these put into y^e hands of your Lordship. A small number are printed on superfine paper, one of which I shall order (with two of y^e common sort) to your Lordship at y^e first publication. The bookseller has told me y^t y^e book woud be publishd some time y^e next month. But as I don’t care to have my credit rest on such tottering props as y^e words of booksellers & printers, I dare not venture to assure your Lordship of it so soon, tho’ I see no reason yet to suspect y^t y^e publication will be much later.

The whole bears y^e title of *Britannia Romana*, and consists of three books. In y^e first is contain’d a compleat history of all y^e Roman transactions in Britain, with y^e chronology, and a large account of y^e Roman walls in England & Scotland. The copper-plates belonging to this book contain some draughts of Roman forts, views & profiles of y^e walls, but more especially general & particular maps of these walls & y^e several parts of y^m, laid down from a geometrical survey thereof.

The second book contains a compleat collection of all y^e Roman

²³ *Brit. Rom.*, 340.

²⁴ Perhaps Lord Oxford’s surveyor in Northumberland. His chaplain, Mr. Thomas, describing their visit in 1725, mentions that “Mr. Sanderson, his lordship’s surveyor in these parts,” made a drawing of a grave-cover in Stamfordham church which had interested the travellers. Thomas was careless about names, turning Nafferton into Norburton and Thirlwall into Theringworth. The suspicion that his Sanderson should be Saunders is confirmed by C. J. Bates’s mention of a drawing of Bothal castle, which was on Oxford’s estate, “made by Saunders in 1722.” *A.A.* (2) xiv, 294.

inscriptions & sculptures in Britain cut on copper plates w[i]th y^e readings at large set under each inscription. I have discover'd & inserted in this collection above a hundred originals which never have been publish'd before, and by a careful reexamination cleared such as have been made public already from an infinite number of errors. The printed part of this second book contains an historical account of these inscriptions & sculptures, and large critical & explanatory observations on y^m.

The third book is purely geographical, and contains y^e originals (as far as relates to Britain) of Ptolemy, Antonine's Itinerary, the Notitia, Ravennas &c, with essays on each of these authors, and maps proper for them.

But it is time for me now to ask pardon for having detain'd your Lordship on this subject, and to subscribe myself

My Lord

Y^r Lordships most obliged
Obedient Servant

JOHN HORSLEY.

[Endorsed]

The Rev^d M^r Horsley
Morpeth 11. Feb. 1730/31.

The letter shows that with characteristic independence Horsley had decided against publishing by subscription, the usual method for costly books such as his. Nor did he follow the practice of his day and dedicate the *Britannia Romana* to a great nobleman, though in his preface he pays a compliment to men of rank who cared for the monuments of the past. "It is the glory and felicity of the present age that we have a HERTFORD, a PEMBROKE, an OXFORD, . . . who have both apply'd themselves with industry and success to these polite and agreeable studies, and have generously encouraged them in others."²⁵ How Oxford encouraged him we have seen. The earl of Pembroke was a friend of Stukeley and baron Clerk, either of whom may have brought Horsley to his notice.²⁶ The earl of Hertford was president of the revived society of Antiquaries, and had shown "his great and so well-known humanity" when Horsley visited his London house to examine an altar. There too he saw the famous enamelled cup found at Rudge in Wiltshire, and acknowledged its

²⁵ *Brit. Rom.*, p. iv.

²⁶ Stukeley inscribes a chapter of his *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1724) to Pembroke whose guest he had been, extols his library and catalogues his marbles (pp. 126, 177). Clerk, *Memoirs* (Roxburghe Club 1905), 124.

owner's "regard for good letters" in allowing him to illustrate it.²⁷ Hertford, afterwards duke of Somerset, was half a Northumbrian, being son of Elizabeth Percy, daughter and heiress of the last earl of Northumberland;²⁸ he had represented the county in parliament and shown interest in northern writers, subscribing for six copies of Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, and befriending the border poet James Thomson.²⁹

It was, however, to none of these *virtuosi* that the Morpeth minister inscribed his book, but to a scholarly recluse of his own church, sir Richard Ellys, Bt., of Nocton near Lincoln. The terms of the dedication imply that he had seen him in the intimacy of his home, perhaps in 1728 when he rode that way after visiting Stukeley at Grantham. They must have been in correspondence before that, for Horsley speaks of "your kind and early disposition to encourage this undertaking." He was not the only northern student whom sir Richard helped. A far more lonely worker, Thomas Boston of Ettrick, author of that *Fourfold State* which is still dear to many Scottish readers, had composed an abstruse book on Hebrew accentuation which might never have seen the light if Ellys had not sent for the manuscript and submitted it to high authorities in Holland. Boston died a few months after Horsley, and in his case, too, a posthumous work appeared with a dedication to Richard Ellys.³⁰ It must not be thought that his sympathy was restricted to members of his own denomination; Stukeley called him patron and dedicated to him his *Palæographia Sacra* (1736).

The *Britannia Romana* was not published as Horsley had hoped in the spring of 1731. Fresh material came in from correspondents. Ward obtained additional drawings and embodied some afterthoughts in a *Letter to the Author*, pp. 343-355, which overstepped the allotted space

²⁷ *Brit. Rom.*, 263, 329.

²⁸ He had succeeded to the barony of Percy on his mother's death in 1722.

²⁹ Thomson dedicated his *Spring* to lady Hertford in 1728.

³⁰ *Tractatus Stigmologicus*, Amsterdam, 1738. See Boston's *General Account of my Life*, ed. G. D. Low, 1908.

—hence the duplication of pp. 353-355—and is dated 2nd December, 1731. Before that he had finished his *Essay on Peutinger's Table*, pp. 505-520, and to save time sent the manuscript to the printer without submitting it to Horsley, who must, however, have had it before him in proof when he revised his preface, since he quotes from it on pp. iv and xxiv. The preface, grown to thirty-two pages, may have been dispatched to London with the dedication, which is dated January 2nd, 1731½. Horsley died on January 12th, and on January 18th Ward wrote to Roger Gale, "Everything was finished that he had to do in the present work before his death, and the whole is printed except the indexes and preface."³¹ It was ready at the end of March, as appears from an advertisement in the *Newcastle Courant* of April 1st. Robert Cay at Newcastle and his brother John in London exerted themselves to place the author's copies mentioned in the letter to Lord Oxford.³² Outside the circle of friends and fellow-workers one suspects that the book made its way but slowly. In the following July it had not been seen even by so diligent a student of Roman antiquities as Thomas Hearne, second keeper of the Bodleian at Oxford. On July 24th Hearne had a visit from Samuel Gale, who found it difficult to convince the sturdy non-juror that a book from such a writer could have merit. Hearne notes in his diary: "He told me Mr. Horsley had exhausted whatever had been done with relation to Roman Inscriptions found in Britain. He said this Horsley was a Presbyterian Preacher, and died presently after the printing of his Book, which he said is two guineas and a half price the common Paper. I never yet saw it. It is cried up by those of the Presbyterian Perswasion."³³ With equal reason it has been asserted in Germany that Einstein owes his fame to Jewish newspapers.

³¹ *Stukeley Corr.*, iii, 407.

³² *A.A.* (3) xiii, 67, note. "Just Published (Price in Sheets £2 10s.) *Britannia Romana*. . . . Those who have promised, or intend, to buy Books of the Author's Widow and Family, are desired to send Notice to Mr. Robert Cay in Newcastle upon Tyne. N.B. There are some printed on large Paper." Cf. Hodgson, *H.N.*, II, ii, 446.

³³ Hearne, *Collections* (Oxford Historical Society), xi, 88. Diary for July 27, 1732.

The book was "Printed for JOHN OSBORN and THOMAS LONGMAN at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noster Row*." Mr. R. G. Longman, of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., who carry on business under the same sign, has been so good as to examine the records of the firm, but can find nothing relating to our subject. "Most of these records," he writes, "were destroyed in a fire in the middle of the last century, and we have no ledgers extant of so early a period." It is probable that more copies were printed than could be absorbed immediately, for it was some time before the book became rare and of interest to collectors. We can follow the fortunes of a copy that belonged to Dr. Richard Mead, F.R.S., fashionable physician, classical scholar and collector, a close friend of professor John Ward and an acquaintance at least of Jonathan Harle. At the sale of his library in 1754 his *Britannia Romana*, "on large paper," went to Dr. Askew for only £2 15s., much under its original cost. But when Askew's books came under the hammer in 1775, it sold for £6.³⁴ In later years this would have seemed a ridiculous price; at the Dent sale in 1827 £36 15s. was paid for a similar copy. The highest recorded price for one on ordinary paper is £17 6s. 6d., at the Brockett sale in 1823.³⁵

The *Britannia* set a standard of sober and methodical investigation whose influence is still unspent. In his last years Horsley had the willing co-operation of men like archdeacon Sharp, the rev. Thomas Andrews, lecturer of Hexham, who had the crypt opened that he might examine inscriptions built into it, Dr. Christopher Hunter of Durham and Richard Gilpin of Scaleby castle. Discoveries in remote places were recorded, with a zeal and accuracy unknown before, by men who had learned from him or from his book. Robert Cay became a regular correspondent of Roger Gale. On the discovery of Roman baths at Netherby in 1732 Gilpin was early on the spot to

³⁴ Beloe, *Anecdotes of Literature*, i, 27. Mead's sale excited much interest. Horace Walpole passed "five entire days" at it, and grumbled at the extravagant prices.

³⁵ Lowndes, *Bibliographer's Manual* (1885), p. 1122.

copy the inscriptions, while the rev. Richard Baty, rector of Kirkandrews, made a plan, afterwards published by Roy. Some of the northern clergy became vigilant antiquaries; such were Henry Wastell, rector of Simonburn, who sent copies of inscriptions to Gale in 1735, and John Walton, vicar of Corbridge 1742-65, who formed a collection of altars, coins and pottery. Francis Swinhow after a visit to the Wall draws up "Observations on five Roman inscriptions after the manner of Mr. Horsley,"³⁶ just as Horsley had indexed his "in the manner of Gruter and Reinesius."

Yet even in the north of England Horsley's fame was a plant of slow growth. Warburton's dishonest compilation, the *Vallum Romanum* of 1753, had a large sale there if we may judge from the list of subscribers; a York bookseller took two dozen copies, and two Newcastle booksellers seven apiece. It had the advantage, as its author claimed, that previous books relating to the Wall were "large unwieldy folio volumes," and learned travellers might use it as "a pocket companion." George Allan, the Darlington antiquary (1736-1800), wrote in his copy a pungent note on Warburton's shady character and the discreditable origin of his book, "no more than Mr. Horsley's account of the Walls reprinted;" and the publication of this judgment in Mackenzie's *Northumberland* may have done something to overthrow an exaggerated reputation.³⁷ Hutton in 1801, though aware that Warburton "transcribes Horsley," honours him with the epithets *faithful* and *judicious*.³⁸ Bishop Pococke, Wallis and Hutchinson relied on the *Britannia Romana*. Lingard in 1806 carried tracings and transcripts from it to Housesteads, to check them on the spot.³⁹ But it was William Turner, a leader in popular education at Newcastle, who first attempted to recover the main facts of Horsley's

³⁶ *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 1752, p. 105.

³⁷ *Hist. of Northd.*, 2nd ed., ii, 216 (1825). Allan copied Grose (p. 41 above).

³⁸ *Hist. of the Roman Wall*, 2nd ed., xxvii, 130, 187.

³⁹ *A.A.* (4) vi, 157 ff.

life and give him the honour that was his due.⁴⁰ The rev. John Hodgson did more, for while writing his Morpeth volume he set inquiries on foot that brought to light the historian's letters, fragments of journals, and notes for a county history, preserved by Robert Cay's descendants, and with the help of these papers produced a brief but sympathetic memoir, just a century after the death of his hero. I say hero, for to Hodgson, overpowered by the magnitude of his own task, Horsley appeared as a tragic counterpart of himself, who had died "with the sad reflection that his labours were not only profitless, but might never repay his family the sums he had expended upon them. One dying under such circumstances is little lamented and soon forgotten."⁴¹ He underestimated both his own and Horsley's future fame. The memoir brought the *Britannia Romana* into fashion, just as his own enthusiasm and his pioneer excavations at Housesteads were winning converts for Roman studies. Five years later, when Hodgson was busy with the volume containing his treatise on the Wall, Dibdin the bibliophile wrote down his impressions of a literary circle in Newcastle. "Mr. Brockett is justly proud of his *Horsley*: he opened it with evident pride. They are all at Newcastle, necessarily, *Horsley-mad*." He tantalized his host by describing a copy he had seen at Belvoir, "upon LARGE PAPER, such as eyes never beheld," "in old morocco binding, of dimensions scarcely to be equalled, and in condition quite unsurpassable." But he parts from Brockett with a double compliment: "his *Horsley* was only equalled by his Hock."⁴² It was something that a *dilettante* like Brockett, a discriminating collector of rare coins and beautiful books, should prize this particular treasure.⁴³

⁴⁰ Rev. William Turner, *Mr. Horsley*, in *Newcastle Magazine*, March, 1821, p. 426.

⁴¹ *Hist. Northd.*, III, ii, 443-448 (1832); printed separately, with other memoirs of local men, Newcastle, 1831. The latter, now very rare, contains a valuable appendix of letters.

⁴² *Northern Tour*, I, 68, 391-393 (1838). "Of course every lettered inhabitant of this renowned town must be miserable without a choice copy" (p. 375).

⁴³ He had owned, and sold in 1823, a still finer copy. See p. 78 above.

But there were other Newcastle antiquaries whose enthusiasm took a more practical form. Fired by Hodgson's discoveries at Housesteads John Clayton purchased the site when it came into the market in 1838, and began a long series of explorations, first at Chesters and afterwards at Housesteads and other places. Writing in 1848, soon after Hodgson's death, he adopts his view that Hadrian built the Wall, and almost apologizes to the shade of Horsley who "with his usual terseness of expression, and sagacity of reasoning," had argued in favour of Severus.⁴⁴ Elsewhere he is roused by a slighting reference to Horsley's "astonishing expansions" of two Manchester centurial stones, and points out that Camden's expansion of them had been still more astonishing. Then he compares their opportunities. "Camden was headmaster of Westminster School and Clarencieux King-at-Arms in the Herald's College, and he wrote his *Britannia* in the sunshine of royal patronage. Horsley was a schoolmaster and Presbyterian minister at the small market town of Morpeth, where by the exercise of his talents and industry, and unaided by patrons or subscribers he achieved the composition of his immortal work, *Britannia Romana*."⁴⁵ John Clayton, who wrote that at the age of eighty-eight, was not only a scholar and an antiquary but a great public servant, town clerk of Newcastle through forty-five strenuous years, and a shrewd judge of men.

I add one more testimony, from a writer who is philosopher as well as historian. "To John Horsley," says Mr. R. G. Collingwood, "still belongs the glory of having written the one exhaustive work on Roman Britain. For his period Horsley is as indispensable as Gibbon for his; and bearing in mind the difference between the extent of their fields, Horsley is Gibbon's equal."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *A.A.* (1) iv, 54. Cp. (2) ix, 30.

⁴⁵ *A.A.* (3) ix, 38.

⁴⁶ *Journ. of Rom. Studies*, xi, 52.