

I.—FURTHER NOTES ON DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE.

BY W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON.

In a paper on Dunstanburgh Castle, read to the Society on 31st August, 1938,¹ I argued that the building of this astonishing fortress was due less to any private motive on the part of its founder, Earl Thomas of Lancaster, than to large considerations of public policy, connected with the defence of Northumberland at a time when the tide of the Scottish war had turned disastrously against the Plantagenet aggressor. To the evidence then adduced in support of this thesis I should like now to add a fresh chronological note that appears to be relevant to the question.

The first Scottish invasions of Northumberland took place in the summers of 1311 and 1312, and the first attempt to capture Berwick followed on 6th December, 1312—when the place was preserved from escalade only by the barking of a dog, even as the sacred geese had once saved the Roman Capitol. Meantime Lancaster was fully taken up with the liquidation of Piers Gaveston. "Now while the aforesaid things were being done with Piers," so records the Lanercost Chronicler, "the march of England had no defender against the Scots."² It is as soon as he has finished with Piers that Lancaster turns his attention to his responsibilities for defending the frontier. The first quarry

¹ *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., vol. xvi, pp. 31-42.

² "*Dum autem supradicta circa Petrum agerentur, marchia Angliae defensorem non habuit contra Scottos*"—*Chronicon de Lanercost* (Bannatyne Club), p. 219.

for the building of Dunstanburgh Castle accordingly was opened on 7th May, 1313.³

The three garderobes at intervals along the east curtain, far removed from the frontal or inhabited portion of the *enceinte*, indicate that the castle was intended on occasion to house a considerable number of inmates, men-at-arms and hobelars, as well as refugees, in addition to the regular garrison manning the gatehouse and frontal towers. These garderobes have been flushed by through drains from the courtyard. The southmost garderobe still retains its roof of flat slabs.

In my former account, I called attention to the fact that this east curtain has been built in short lengths, probably by local feudal labour. It may be worth pointing out that the Roman walls of Caerwent were similarly made in sections by different gangs, the sections being marked off by irregular vertical breaks just like those at Dunstanburgh.⁴

KIDWELLY AND DUNSTANBURGH.

There appears to be an architectural connection, not hitherto noticed, between the two great Lancastrian castles of the early fourteenth century, Kidwelly and Dunstanburgh. At Kidwelly the keep-gatehouse and the outer curtain look like a rehearsal of the thesis carried out with greater *Konsequenz* by its builder's elder brother at Dunstanburgh. At Dunstanburgh the effective fortification is the immense frontal curtain with its gatehouse and towers. The rest of the *enceinte* is a mere screen wall—the Lilburn Tower being an afterthought—and was built, so the structural evidence suggests, by local feudal labour. On the other hand the gatehouse and the frontal curtain are great architecture, and the former was carried out under the direction of a master mason (Master Elias) who may well have

³ *Hist. Northumberland*, vol. II, p. 197.

⁴ See *Archæologia*, vol. LXXX, pp. 251-7.

come from Wales.⁵ The resemblance in principle between the frontal curtain at Dunstanburgh and the outer curtain at Kidwelly is obvious. In both, we have the long wall defended by towers, and stretching from declivity to declivity across the whole front to be defended. At Kidwelly the curtain is curved to suit the bailey of the pre-existing

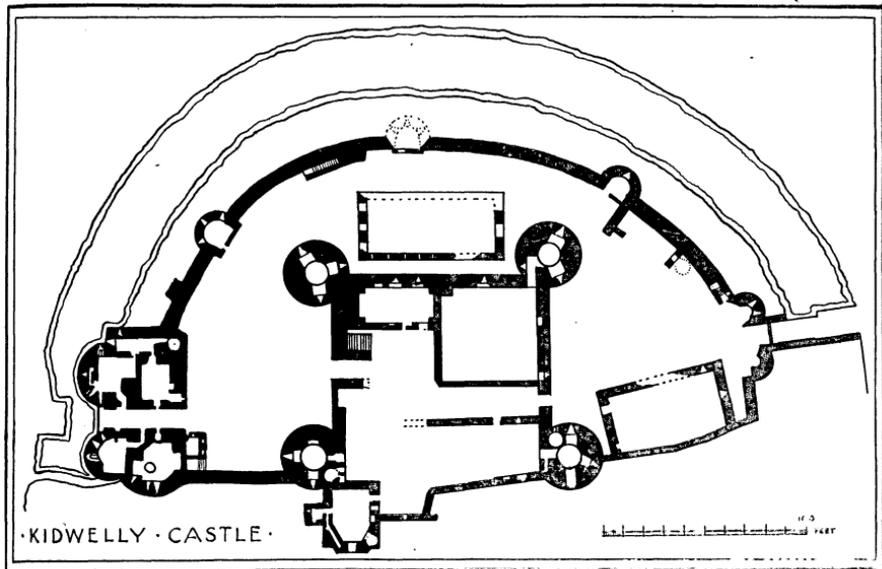


FIG. I.

Norman castle, and rests with either end upon the river bank. At Dunstanburgh, on a virgin site, the curtain extends in a straight line from cliff to cliff across the root of the promontory. Except for the difference in the track of the two curtains, the scheme is identical. In both castles, the keep-gatehouse is at one end of the curtain, and a postern gate,⁶ regularly defended, at the other. But at

⁵ Elias de Burton was one of the masons working on Llywelyn's Hall at Conway Castle in 1302-3—*Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1854, pp. 9-10.

⁶ No doubt at Dunstanburgh this is the "water-gate" of 1368—*Hist. North.*, vol. II, p. 200.

Kidwelly the postern gate, more elaborately than at Dunstanburgh, takes the form of a second gatehouse with round towers, though not a keep-gatehouse like that at the opposite end of the curtain; whereas at Dunstanburgh the postern is placed in a square mural tower. The mural stairs in the curtain are closely akin in both castles. The dimensions, also, are not dissimilar: over all, about 490 feet at Kidwelly, as against 465 feet at Dunstanburgh.

At Dunstanburgh, the keep-gatehouse was first built, then the curtain wall and towers. Probably this was the case also at Kidwelly.

THE FRONTAL CURTAIN.

The change from round to square towers, when the frontal curtain came to be built, is interesting, and deserves investigation.

In Norman times, mural towers were square, as is seen at the castles of Newcastle upon Tyne, Bamburgh, Framlingham, Ludlow and many others. In the thirteenth century, round towers became common, both in castles and in town walls. A round tower presents no angles to the battering ram or sapper's tool, and at its base there is no "dead ground." Hence in the thirteenth century the mural drum tower becomes universal, as at Conway (town and castle) or in the town walls of Newcastle upon Tyne. The latter instance shows that at that time round towers were the rule over all England, north as well as south. From the fourteenth century onwards, the building of castles became infrequent in southern England: but, when they were built, the towers continued to be round, as at Bodiam, Sherborne, Scotney, Nunney and Farleigh-Hungerford.

By contrast, in northern England the archaic fashion of square towers was re-introduced. Hence the fourteenth-century courtyard castles in the north, corresponding to Bodiam and the others of the southern group, all have

square towers, such as Ford, Chillingham, Ravensworth, Bolton, Sheriff Hutton, and others.

Probably the earliest instance of this northern fondness for square towers is our great curtain at Dunstanburgh. Mr. Honeyman has shown⁷ that while the lower part of the curtain next the gatehouse is contemporary with the latter, the curtain as a whole was built somewhat later. Master Elias's contract is only for the gatehouse, which seems to be of Welsh *provenance*. The curtain with its square towers betrays a different influence, and is probably the work of a north-country master mason. This view is confirmed by the northern style of the battlements of the Lilburn Tower, paralleled at Haughton, Helmsley, and elsewhere.

At this point, it will be useful to remind ourselves of some illuminating remarks of Viollet-le-duc upon the subject of round and square towers :⁸

“ Following the method then in use in Italy, the walls of Avignon are flanked by towers which, with some exceptions, are square. We have already seen that the ramparts at Aigues-Mortes are likewise, upon one front, flanked by square towers, and we should bear in mind that they were erected by the Genoese, Boccanegra. The *enceinte* of Paris, however, which was rebuilt under Charles V, was likewise flanked by oblong towers; but the *enceinte* of Paris never was considered as of any great strength. Square towers belong rather to the south than the north of France; the ramparts of Cahors, which date from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, show square towers, of a fine arrangement for defence; the ramparts of the towns of the *comtat* of Venaissin are mostly furnished with square towers which date from the fourteenth century, as well as the greatest number of the towns of Provence and the Rhone. Orange was provided with square towers, constructed at the close of the fourteenth century. The Normans and Poitevins, up to the time when the provinces were united to the *Domaine Royal*, that is to say, until the beginning of the thirteenth century, appear to have adopted, in preference, the square form for their towers and donjons. The majority of the ancient castles built by the Normans in England and Sicily contain rectangular defences.

⁷ *Dunstanburgh Castle* (official guide), p. 19.

⁸ *Military Architecture*, tr. M. M. Macdermott, pp. 144-5.

“ In France the round tower has been considered, and justly, as stronger than the square one; for, as we have already demonstrated, the pioneer, while engaged at the base of the round tower, was commanded obliquely by the adjoining curtains, whilst if he attained at the base of the external face of a square tower, at O, he was completely covered as regarded the defences in his immediate proximity; and by preventing those defending from showing themselves at the battlements, and by the destruction of a few of the machicolations immediately over him, he might pursue his sap-works in perfect security.” [See diagram, fig. 2.]

Bearing in mind that our frontal curtain at Dunstanburgh resembles rather a fortified town than a castle, I suspect that the *enceinte* may derive from a *bastide* in Gascony, then in English hands. Certainly it seems to be based upon southern French fashions in contemporary fortification. On this view, the square towers at Dunstanburgh may have been the pattern followed in the later courtyard castles with similar towers in northern England. Following up this idea, we seem to recognize the influence of the Dunstanburgh square towers first of all at Ford Castle, 1338-40,⁹ which appears to be the earliest instance in the north of the rectangular courtyard castles of the fourteenth century. Dunstanburgh influence may also be apparent at Etal Castle, 1341¹⁰—both in the rectangular towers and also in the presence of a keep-gatehouse, which, as at Dunstanburgh, is placed at one end of the main front. But both at Ford and at Etal we can see the older idea of the keep or tower-house re-asserting itself in the great rectangular building in one corner, containing the principal residential apartments of the lord. It is remarkable to see at Etal Castle, side by side in the same edifice, these two competing elements in late medieval castle design, that of the strong tower, or tower-house, and that of the keep-gatehouse. Possibly the latter is an afterthought, since the details of the tower-house look slightly earlier.

⁹ *Hist. North.*, vol. XI, pp. 410-25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 460-70.

A BURGHAL FORTRESS ?

In my former paper mention was made of Mr. Honeyman's suggestion that one of Earl Thomas's motives in the foundation of Dunstanburgh, with its vast fortified *enceinte* and attendant harbour, may have been to provide a substitute for Berwick, then gravely menaced by the Scots, who captured it in 1318. Since then Mr. Honeyman has further developed this very stimulating suggestion.¹¹ Dunstanburgh, he thinks, is "really a Welsh castle-town transplanted, and meant perhaps to give north Northumberland a second fortified seaport when English tenure of Berwick became precarious." And again: "Dunstanburgh is really a burghal fortress, an area of no less than eleven acres surrounded by a curtain wall, somewhat sparsely provided with towers, and entered by a magnificently conceived and finely executed gateway-keep. It is possible that the Earl's object in building it was to provide north Northumberland with a fortified seaport to replace Berwick, if that passed permanently into the hands of the Scots. An inferior port to Berwick, but better than none." John of Gaunt's inner ward is described by Mr. Honeyman as "a castle within a castle, or within a burgh."

The claim thus made for Dunstanburgh is nothing else than that in devising it Earl Thomas was proposing to found a *ville-neuve* or *bastide*, a new fortified town, a military and trading post such as Edward I had planted in Gascony and in North Wales. If anything so constructively far-seeing was present in his mind, it is clear that we shall have to revise the harsh judgment which modern historians have unanimously passed upon Lancaster. The matter is thus deserving of further exploration on general historical grounds, in addition to its bearing upon the special problem of Dunstanburgh.

Mr. Honeyman's idea is that the castle was itself in-

¹¹ See *The Three Northern Counties of England*, ed. Sir Cuthbert Headlam, pp. 101, 326.

tended as the *bastide*. Its size, though small for a town, would not in itself preclude such an idea: the Norman borough of Kidwelly, for example, contained no more than eight acres, including the castle. But in the typical *bastide* we have a gridiron arrangement of *insulae*, with regular gate-houses where the principal streets pierce the *enceinte*. Of this there is nothing in the Dunstanburgh *enceinte*, where the deployment of walls, towers, and keep-gatehouse is that of the most up-to-date castle scheme of its time, and nothing more. If Dunstanburgh was intended to be a *bastide*, the existing castle clearly will have been devised as the citadel thereof, as at Ludlow, Flint, Conway, Caernarvon, Beaumaris, Denbigh and other English boroughs, or in Continental examples such as Aigues Mortes in Provence or many of the castellated towns founded by the Teutonic Order beyond the Vistula. The licence for Dunstanburgh specifies it as a castle pure and simple, and as such, for all its abnormal features, it must be regarded. If then we suspect that the desire to found a *ville-neuve* lay behind its builder's mind, we must seek the evidence elsewhere.

It is here that the harbour, and the conditions of the site generally, must come into the picture. The harbour first turns up, apparently, in August, 1326, when John of Lilburn, constable of the castle, served on a commission to provide ships from Dunstanburgh and other ports to secure the coast against the expected landing of the Queen and her paramour, Roger Mortimer.¹² And in January, 1514, an English fleet, on its way from Hull to the Firth of Forth, under stress of weather had to put in at Dunstanburgh, where it remained *perdu*, to the anxiety of the government, until discovered by an emissary specially despatched to the Northumbrian coast to look out for it.¹³ The harbour must thus have been of considerable magni-

¹² *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1324-7, p. 311.*

¹³ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 1, No. 4682.*

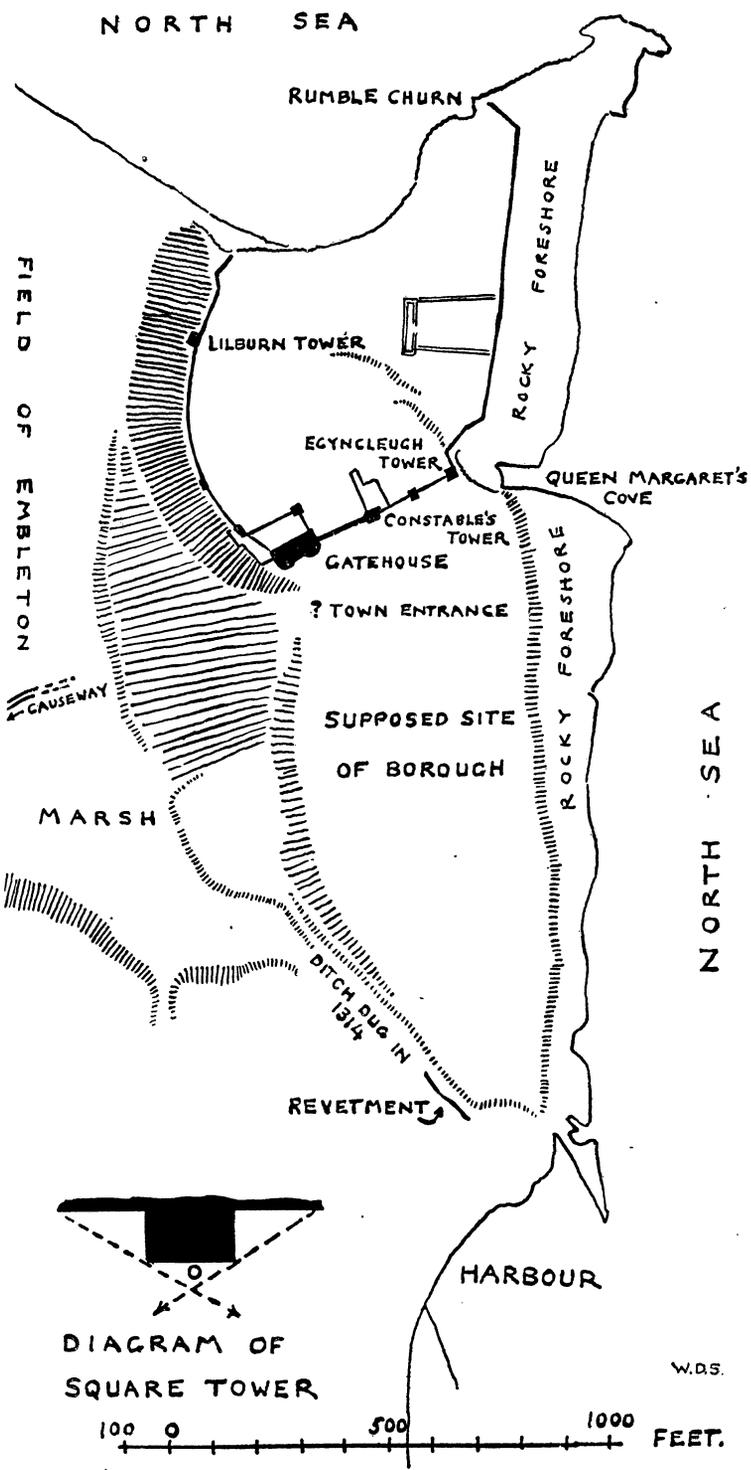


FIG. 2. DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE: SITE PLAN.

W.D.S.

tude, as indeed the still marshy basin immediately below the southern slopes of the castle hill sufficiently indicates, though a shingle bed and an embankment have long ago excluded the sea and transformed the whole aspect of the site.

South of the castle and between it and the harbour there exists a triangular area of good firm and fairly even ground, bounded on the west by a steep escarpment and sloping thence gently eastward to the shore and southward to its tail, which overlooks the harbour. This area of ground, extending to some fourteen acres, would be amply sufficient and eminently suited for laying out a town. Such a town would have reproduced, with singular fidelity, the dispositions of Scarborough. Here also we have a very large castle crowning the entire top of a precipitous hill, which forms a promontory thrust out into the North Sea. It is even larger than Dunstanburgh, covering some nineteen acres; and like Dunstanburgh in its final form, a small portion of the fortified area, overlooking the town, is walled off so as to form an inner ward or *Kernburg*. Below the castle on the south side is the harbour, and to the west extends the medieval town, with its grid of streets, its church, and its market stance. A similar *ensemble* could have been laid out, without difficulty, at Dunstanburgh.

The building accounts tell us that by Michaelmas, 1314, "16 perches of a moat, 80 feet broad and 18 feet deep, had been dug on the west side of the castle, between it and the field of Embleton."¹⁴ But on this side the castle rock falls in an exceedingly steep slope from the curtain wall to the level ground, 70 feet below. To dig a ditch at the foot of this scarp would seem to be a work of supererogation, since obviously such a ditch can have played no part in the defences of the castle. May we not conjecture that it was intended to be the western ditch of the town *enceinte*, as suggested above? In point of fact, the evident track of

¹⁴ *Hist. North.*, vol. II, p. 198.

such a ditch exists as a swampy hollow curving round from the inner recess of the harbour, now a tract of marsh, towards the northern shore. This ditch lies at the base of a gradual slope descending from what I have described as the western escarpment of the suggested town site. It would therefore provide the required town defence on this point, leaving inside the *enceinte* the slope upon which with its sunny westward exposure the inhabitants could lay out their gardens. The approach to the town will have been from the west, along a causeway which may still be traced across the swampy ground, ascending thence to the re-entrant angle between the north-western corner of the town site and the great gatehouse of the castle. Here it is permissible to suggest that the main entrance to the town may have been intended.

Remarkable confirmation of the foregoing view is obtained from the terms of another commission, one of a whole series entered in the Calendar of Close Rolls, under date September, 1326, by which the bailiffs and communities of the principal maritime towns on the east coast, such as Yarmouth, Hull, Scarborough, Whitby, Hartlepool, Tynemouth, Alnmouth, and Warkworth, are directed, in view of the expected French invasion,

“to cause to come to Erewell, County Suffolk,¹⁵ on St. Matthew’s Day next, all the owners and masters of ships of the burthen of 30 tons and upwards, together with their ships and arms, victuals and other necessaries for a month at least, under double manning, from that town and its members, so that they shall then be ready to set out in the King’s service, under pain of forfeiture of their bodies and goods, as the King has ordained that all ships of the burthen of 30 tons and upwards from the mouth of the Thames to the north shall be at Erewell on the said day. They are ordered to take and imprison any owners and masters of the said ships whom they shall find rebellious, certifying the King of their names.”¹⁶

Among the towns to whose bailiffs and community this

¹⁵ Orwell, where in the event Queen Isabella landed.

¹⁶ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1323-7, pp. 643-4.

letter was sent we find the name of Dunstanburgh. In the face of this evidence, it is impossible to doubt that a port with its appropriate installations, and an organized maritime town, already existed in dependence on the castle.

Are we then to think that the castle of Earl Thomas, stupendous in itself, is no more than the fragment of a grand unfinished design? Was the earl, as *de facto* independent ruler of the north, re-insuring Northumberland against the imminent loss of Berwick? Had he an understanding with King Robert that the northern port, as the price of peace, was to be returned to Scotland? Men whispered that he was in secret league with the Bruce, and even named the sum of money which he was alleged to have accepted. Had it not been for Lancaster, they added, Berwick would have been retaken by the English in 1319.¹⁷ If this tale is true, was his treachery simply the act of a blindly selfish factionary, resolved to down his sovereign at any cost? Or did he despair of restoring peace to the tormented Border land, and seek simply to salve what might be salvaged out of the general wreck—as Andrew de Harcla, at the opposite end of the frontier, ultimately seems to have done? That Lancaster did not regard Berwick as a part of England is clear from his celebrated refusal in 1311 to do homage to his King there, because it was not English soil. Was this just childish petulance, a mere parade of barren legalistic formalism, or should we regard it as proof of a secret understanding with the Scottish King as to Berwick's ultimate destination?

In the earl's indictment, it was alleged that an indenture had been found on the body of his confederate Hereford, slain at Boroughbridge, containing the terms of an agreement between Lancaster and Randolph and Douglas for the King of Scots. Among the clauses of this document is one which bears that Lancaster pledged himself and his

¹⁷ *Vita Edw. II, auctore Malmesburiensi*, in *Chronicles of the reigns of Edw. I and Edw. II*, vol. II, pp. 244-5, 249, 252.

allies to work for the independence of Scotland.¹⁸ Such an agreement, if it is not a forgery—and the caution is needful, for Lancaster was not allowed to open his mouth in his own defence¹⁹—must certainly have implied leaving the Scots in possession of Berwick. And if Earl Thomas planned a *ville-neuve* at Dunstanburgh to take the place of Berwick thus renounced, how shall we revise our judgment of the man who conceived so large a design? Was, after all, “the mighty Prince of Lancaster” something more than an ass overburdened with earldoms? If not, why did he enjoy the steadfast support, in fair weather and in foul, of so many of the leading northern clergy, from the wise and good Archbishop Melton downwards? And why did the commons of England revere his memory as that of a saint and martyr in their cause?

To all these questions no answer can be given, for the historical evidence is lacking. We have nothing but the unsolved mystery of the enormous castle and its derelict harbour upon a remote promontory of the wild North-umbrian coast. Whatever plans the great earl may have had for Dunstanburgh, they died with him on the Gallows Knowe at Pontefract:—

“O subject for some tragic Muse to sing
Of five great earldoms at one time possest
Son, uncle, brother, grandchild to a King.”²⁰

THE LILBURN TOWER.

The only side of Dunstanburgh Castle from which a formal assault might be feared was its southern front:

¹⁸ “*E quel heure qe les avaunt ditz Counte de Lancastre et de Hereforde, et lur alliez, eint lur queuele finit, il mettront lele peine, qe bon pes se fra entre les deu terres de Engleterre et de Escoce a lur poair; issint quil tendront lur terre dEscoce ansi peisiblement, com eux front lur terre de Engleterre*”—*Johannis de Trokelowe Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley, p. 120: cf. *Foedera*, vol. II, pp. 463, 472, 479.

¹⁹ Cf. *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, in *Chronicles, ut supra*, vol. II, p. 78: “*istud ultimum non affirmo, sed an sit verum nec ne nescio, Deus novit.*”

²⁰ Drayton, *Mortimeriados*, 561-3.

Here therefore we find a curtain wall powerfully defended, and protected by a fosse. On the east and north sides the castle area is bounded by inaccessible cliffs, and on these sides no more than a screen wall was deemed necessary. On the remaining or western side the ground falls away so steeply as to render impracticable a regular approach by sap or siege engine. None the less, this quarter was felt to be not so secure as the cliffs on the north and west: for it overlooks the field of Embleton, in which a large hostile force could find room to encamp, as the Scottish army did in 1384.²¹ From this quarter the western curtain might be taken by sudden escalade before the commandant in the keep-gatehouse, 200 yards away, would be able to intervene. That the western curtain was thus felt to be insecure is shown by the fact that, probably within a decade of the building of the main works of the castle, it was defended by the formidable Lilburn Tower. To anyone who knows the ground it is obvious that this lofty tower, placed on the highest point of the western verge, was intended as a look-out against the Scots, and probably as the garrison post of an officer charged with the special responsibility for securing the western curtain.

To these conditions the tower is perfectly adjusted. A tower-house designed as a residence is rectangular in plan, because internally its make-up is centred on the lord's hall, an oblong apartment. Our Lilburn Tower, however, is square, showing that it is strictly a mural tower and garrison post, and was not intended as a lord's residence. On the other hand, it is carried up to a great height, fully 65 feet, as compared with its ground dimensions of about 29 feet by 27 feet. All three storeys, including the basement, are habitable, and the tower was clearly intended to house a considerable garrison. The curtain wall-walk passes through its eastern wall, communicating with the tower-stair, so that the soldiers quartered in the tower could man the curtain with the utmost speed, on a sudden call

²¹ *Hist. North.*, vol. II, p. 67.

from the look-out in the four open turrets by which the tower is crowned. Indeed the speciality of function for which the Lilburn Tower was built is apparent in every detail of its design—even down to the capacious aumbries or lockers in its basement, doubtless for the storage of quarrel-heads. The tower also gave cover to a postern from which a steep descent led down to the ancient roadway that passes underneath the castle from its harbour towards Embleton.

John of Lilburn was constable of Dunstanburgh from 1322 to 1326. The Lilburn Tower might derive its name either because he built it or because he lived in it. The fact that it is plainly not a residential tower justifies our accepting the former alternative. With such a conclusion the masonry agrees, since the square-faced ashlar is of a more advanced fourteenth-century type than that of the gatehouse and frontal curtain, and suits a date *circa* 1325. The records show that throughout his term of office John of Lilburn was before all things taken up with precautions against the Scots, so that his tower answers to the conditions of its time.

JOHN OF GAUNT'S REORGANIZATION.

The publication of John of Gaunt's Register has at last placed scholars in possession of the full text of the various documents connected with his work at Dunstanburgh. It seems desirable, therefore, to provide a complete translation of these writs, and this (together with some annotations) will be found in the Appendix to the present paper.

Let us first of all consider briefly the historical setting of the Duke of Lancaster's drastic re-handling of the castle. Since the year 1366, the Black Prince's policy in supporting Peter the Cruel in Spain had altered the whole balance of forces in the Hundred Years' War to the detriment of England. For the naval power of Castil  had now been united to that of France, and as a result the English, after

Pembroke's defeat off La Rochelle in 1372, had lost their naval supremacy, which they did not recover until Arundel's victory at Cadzand in 1387. During this period, England lay exposed not only to Franco-Castilian raids across the narrow waters, but also to naval intervention *via* Scotland. The triple alliance of Valois, Trastamara and Stewart all but brought Plantagenet imperialism to its knees. In the south, the climax came in the years of Edward III's death, 1377, when the Franco-Castilian fleet occupied the Isle of Wight, burned Hastings, Rye and other south-coast ports, and finally forced the entry of the Thames and gave Gravesend to the flames. In the north, the combined French, Castilian and Scottish naval raid upon Scarborough in 1378, when the harbour was plundered and many of the inhabitants carried off to Boulogne, was a portent of the crisis that loomed up seven years later, when in 1385 a French fleet arrived in the Forth and landed troops at Leith, in order to take a hand in the Scottish invasions which, almost every year despite the truce of 1369, had scourged the miserable northern counties. Small wonder that even the feeble English governments of the decadence of Edward III and the minority of his grandson bestirred themselves to energetic measures for securing the Border fortresses. At Carlisle, Bamburgh, Norham and Roxburgh, for example, extensive repairs were carried out during the period 1369-87. In 1383 the defences of Scarborough Castle were investigated: three years later in view of the threatened French invasion, a further report was called for, and extensive works of restoration followed. In Yorkshire also a new castle of the first rank was built at Bolton, under a royal licence granted in 1379, and another at Sheriff Hutton, licensed in 1382. Lesser fortalices such as Raby (1378) and Lumley (1389) tell the same tale of anxiety, confirmed by the similar date of many a minor tower-house. In 1380, Lancaster himself was appointed to the head of a royal commission to reorganize the Border defences; and in 1384 he led an army into Scotland, which occupied Edinburgh.

As lord of Dunstanburgh he could hardly fail to include the greatest of northern castles in the programme of strengthening the frontier defences that was carried out in those anxious years.

Such is the political background against which we must set John of Gaunt's reorganization of Dunstanburgh Castle, which was accomplished in successive stages between 1372 and 1384. For the nature of the work then carried out, I may refer to my former account. In the original scheme, the position of the keep-gatehouse illustrates that frontal massing of the main castle scheme which becomes characteristic of late medieval design.²² When the castle was turned round about, as it were, by John of Gaunt, and the keep-gatehouse converted into a purely passively defensive keep of the older style, it resumes the traditional retired position, in rear of the new courtyard. Note that the buildings round John of Gaunt's inner ward were of no great distinction. They include neither hall nor solar, and the various apartments seem to have been nothing more than office-houses. Clearly the old gatehouse was still regarded as providing the necessary state-rooms and living chambers. In fact, John of Gaunt's castle is simply the tower-house and barmkin conception, with offices (including kitchen) round the barmkin, that became normal in northern England during the fourteenth century. By adaptation, John of Gaunt's scheme arrives at something not very dissimilar from Ford Castle in its original state.

What quarters were assigned to the small standing garrison in the reconstituted castle of Dunstanburgh? It seems most probable that the converted keep-gatehouse was set aside for this purpose, and that from having once been the lord's residence it now declined into a barrack. A similar development may be traced in the special measures taken for the safety of the royal castle of Portchester under the threat of a French invasion in 1325. At that time

²² Upon this subject, see my paper on "Bastard Feudalism and the later Castles" in *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. xxvi, pp. 145-71.

Thomas of Saunford was constable of the castle; but on 8th December, the King issued letters patent appointing a professional soldier, Sir Robert of Haustede or Halstead "to the custody of the tower in the king's castle of Porcestre, so that, if need be, he shall apply all the force he can to the custody of the outer bailey of the said castle"—that is the walls and towers of the Roman fort within a corner of which the Norman castle is built. At the same time, a mandate was sent down to the constable to deliver the tower to Sir Robert of Haustede, together with "its armour, cross-bows, springalds, engines and other munition thereof." Next day a further order was issued to both men, instructing them "to cause the castle to be munitioned and fortified by men-at-arms, horsemen and footmen, if the admirals of any of the fleets of alien ships threaten to land towards the said castle or the neighbouring parts."²³ From all this it is clear that the keep then served as the quarters for the garrison and their arsenal, and that a professional captain was placed in command of it, with the special responsibility of providing for the defence of the whole castle. The constable must have had his residence elsewhere, no doubt in the buildings that surrounded the castle court.²⁴

A similar disposition may be inferred at Dunstanburgh Castle, after its reorganization by John of Gaunt. The Edwardian gatehouse then had its entrance passage walled up, and was converted, functionally considered, into a sort of revival of the old Norman keeps. It was now shut off from the great castle enclosure by a small internal, rectangular courtyard of buildings, very like that at Portchester. The constable's quarters were not here at all, but a separate lodging was provided for him against another part of the main *enceinte*, in contact with one of its towers, thereafter known as the Constable's Tower. It is hardly

²³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1324-7, p. 197.

²⁴ Not the existing structures, which belong chiefly to the reign of Richard II, but their predecessors, of which some fragments remain.

possible to doubt that the remodelled gatehouse now became the barrack of the garrison.

Although no doubt it is a mere accident due to the conditions of the site, we may note that in the final scheme, access from the outside of the castle to the inner ward is always by the right—i.e. exposing to the defenders the flank unprotected by a shield.

A NOTE ON THE PREHISTORY OF THE SITE.

One of the remarkable discoveries made during the operations conducted by H.M. Office of Works at Dunstanburgh was the existence upon the rock summit of a Romano-British civil settlement dating from the second century. A hint of man's presence on the spot, long before even that period, was forthcoming in the shape of a shard of "finger-printed" Hallstatt pottery. These discoveries bring our site into line with other evidence that the high exposed promontories on the north-eastern coast have been occupied by human beings since very early times: for example, the Tardenoisian settlements of which traces have been found at Bamburgh and Craster, and the Hallstatt village within Scarborough Castle. What led these early populations to settle upon such exposed and inaccessible sites is rather a mystery. The suggestion has been made that on them the raving sea winds created open tracts, suitable for inhabitation, in an otherwise tangled or forested country.²⁵

The Tardenoisians of the Northumbrian coastlands were doubtless wandering food gatherers, but at Scarborough and Dunstanburgh the indications are of a settled population in Iron Age and Romano-British times. Perhaps in both cases the harbour may have been the controlling factor, coupled with the wide seaward outlook and ample pasturage on the flat summit. Roman pottery recently found at Warkworth may indicate another such harbour settlement. The civilian bath-house excavated at Old Durham has

²⁵ R. E. M. Wheeler in *The History of Scarborough*, p. 11.

helped to teach us that the area of civilized Romano-British life, as early as the Antonine period, had pushed its way far up into what Haverfield used to insist was a purely military area. The excavators of the Old Durham bath-house comment that

“as in Yorkshire, the local agriculture of county Durham flourished under the ægis of the Roman army, which provided it with a market. . . . Under Antoninus Pius the frontier was pushed forward from Tyne and Solway to Forth and Clyde, and there may well have occurred a corresponding northward extension of the romanised civil area.”²⁶

The Devil's Causeway vouches for a Roman penetration of north-eastern Northumberland; and beyond its northern end we find yet another Romano-British cliff site, this time with a well-authenticated Dark Age and Early Christian history—Caer Golud *alies* Coludesburh on St. Abb's Head, where there is an undoubted fragment of massive Roman masonry.²⁷ But in spite of the Devil's Causeway, it is probable that our coastal settlements drew their supplies of Roman wares and knick-knacks by sea. In his well-known paper, Dr. James Curle has marshalled the evidence for a seaborne traffic from the Roman province up the eastern coast, which in the second century had reached as far as the Orkneys.²⁸ On an exposed and inhospitable coast like that of Northumbria, such traffic will have been carried by ships from South Shields creeping northward from one small harbour to the next, such as Warkworth and Dunstanburgh, until St. Abb's Head was rounded—was the masonry here a pharos?²⁹—and safer waters entered in the Firth of Forth. Clearly there is an interesting field for systematic exploration in these Romano-British cliff sites on the Northumbrian seaboard.

²⁶ *Arch. Ael.*⁴ vol. XXII, p. 17.

²⁷ *Antiquity*, vol. VIII, pp. 202-4.

²⁸ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. LXVI, pp. 346-7.

²⁹ The view from St. Abb's Head extends from Lindisfarne to Angus.

APPENDIX

DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE IN JOHN OF GAUNT'S REGISTER.

1. 1372-6, vol. II, p. 42, no. 954. 1372, 13th May, from the Savoy. John by the Grace of God, etc., to our well-beloved squire William of Quernby our receiver of Dunstanburgh, greeting. We wish and order you to repair our castle of Dunstanburgh and that you cause to be made a wall anew in the said castle, under the advice and in accord with our well beloved William of Nesfeld, our steward of those parts; and for the outlays costs and expenses which you shall incur reasonably in this undertaking, we instruct the auditors of your accounts to make you due allowance for the same.

2. 1379-83, vol. I, p. 101, no. 303.
1380, 11th May, from the Savoy. The Duke orders Thomas of Ildreton, constable of Dunstanburgh, to pay to the treasurer of his household all the issues of his lordship of Dunstanburgh, after deducting his expenses, including "the cost of the works paid for you at our castle."

3. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 291, no. 922.
1380, 25th October, from Bamburgh. This indenture made on the 25th day of October in the fourth year [of the reign of Richard II] between John King of Castile, etc., on the one hand and John Lewyn mason³⁰ on the other part testifies the agreements made between the said John King and Duke by the advice of his council and the said John Lewyn, that is to say that the said John Lewyn has undertaken to make anew well and truly a mantlet of freestone in a certain place pointed out to him by the said John King and Duke and his said council, round the great tower in his castle of Dunstanburgh containing in length by estimation eleven rods, and the wall of the said mantlet shall be in height above the ground twenty feet of the assize with the battlement, and in thickness four feet of the assize on all sides, and the said John shall bear all manner of costs for this work, alike for quarrying the stones, for hire, sand, carriage and all other things needful pertaining to the said work. And besides the said John has

³⁰ For John Lewyn see *Arch. Ael.*⁴ vol. XIX, pp. 93-103.

undertaken to complete entirely and well and truly the said mantlet at his proper charges, as said above, between now and the feast of St. Michael next after these presents, without further delay, and the said John Lewyn shall receive from the said John King and Duke for the making and costs of the aforesaid work for each rod of the said mantlet ten marks for all his costs, as aforesaid, by the hands of our receiver our said lord of Dunstanburgh for the time being.

4. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 135, no. 410.

1380, 26th October, from Bamburgh.

John, etc., to our very dear and well beloved bachelor, Sir Thomas of Ildreton, our receiver of Dunstanburgh, or to whoever shall be for the time being our receiver there, greeting. Because John Lewyn, mason of Durham, has taken in hand to make well and truly a mantlet of freestone round the great tower in our castle of Dunstanburgh, as is fully set forth in the said indentures made between ourselves and the said John, we order you that having received from the said John sufficient security that he will complete and accomplish well and truly the agreements contained in the said indentures, you cause pay to the said John, from the issues of your receipt, at the Feast of All Saints next twenty marks to account of the said work, and at Candlemas next twenty marks, and at the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross next thereafter twenty marks; and the rest of the sum payable by you to him for the said work to be paid him from time to time according to his good and speedy accomplishment of the work aforesaid, notwithstanding our other letters sent to you beforehand, directing you to pay to the treasurer of our household the whole issues of your receipt aforesaid; you receiving on your part letters of quittance sealed with the seal of the said John acknowledging the payments made by you to him; for which and by these letters we desire you to make due allowance in your account. Moreover we order you to deliver to the said John sufficient brushwood for burning lime and cement for the work above mentioned, from our standing wood in your baillery aforesaid.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 186, no. 566.

1381, 17th July, from Durham.

John, etc., to our dear and wellbeloved Thomas Galon, our receiver of Dunstanburgh, greeting. We order you from the issues of your receipt to cause pay to our wellbeloved John Lewyn our mason all that is due to him for a certain work of our device done by him in our castle of Dunstanburgh afore-

said in accordance with the tenor and agreement made between him and us as is more fully put forth in the indentures then made. And likewise to pay to the said John for another work of our device made by him there, for each rod in the same manner as is contained in the same indentures for the aforesaid other work; you receiving on your part sufficient letters of quittance under his seal containing the payments which you have made to him. For which and by these letters we desire you to make due allowance on each occasion in your accounts.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 202, no. 624. 1381, 1st December, from Fulham.

John, *etc.*, to our dear and wellbeloved Thomas Galon, our receiver of Dunstanburgh, greeting. Whereas by the advice of our Council we have ordered a new work of masonry beside and joining on to the new mantlet made within our castle of Dunstanburgh aforesaid, in a certain situation and place devised by us at our last being there, to be made by our dear and wellbeloved Henry of Holme, mason, we order you from the issues of your receipt to cause pay to the said Henry in the same manner at all times and occasions for each rod pertaining to the said mantlet, according to the agreement made and indentured between ourselves and John Lewyn, and as you have been paying to the said John Lewyn, that is to say at the terms of the Purification of our Lady, Pasch, St. John Baptist and St. Michael next to come, subject to your satisfaction that the said work is being pursued under the advice and supervision and testimony of our very dear and wellbeloved bachelor Thomas of Ildreton our constable there; provided always that the said Sir Thomas and you take sufficient surety from the said Henry for his good and loyal performance of the said work to our honour and profit and for answering to us as reason requires, and such surety as you yourself will have to answer for to us in future. And these our letters or the testimony aforesaid shall be your warrant.

7. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 236, no. 723.

1382, 10th September, from York.

John, *etc.*, to our dear and wellbeloved Thomas Galon, our receiver of Dunstanburgh and others, greeting. Since by our other letters you have been written to pay to our dear and wellbeloved Henry of Holme, mason, for a new work of masonry by us devised to be beside and joining to the new mantlet in our castle of Dunstanburgh, in the same way and for so much for each rod as you have paid John Lewyn for the

work of the said mantlet, and according to the effect of an indenture made between us and the said John, as appears more fully in our letters, which payment is much overdue to the said Henry, and has not been paid in spite of the tenor of our letters aforesaid, concerning which thing we marvel at you sorely and are very badly displeased: we order you strictly and charge you that, as soon as you have seen these presents, you cause pay from the issues of your receipt to the said Henry that which is owing to him of the said payment and thereafter from term to term and year by year, in accordance with the effect and purport of our letters aforesaid. And that you should neglect this in no wise if you would escape our grievous indignation.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 284, no. 903. 1383, 20th July, from Durham.³¹ John, *etc.*, to our dear and wellbeloved Thomas Galon our receiver of Dunstanburgh, greeting. We order you to pay to our dear and wellbeloved Henry Holme, our mason of Dunstanburgh, as soon as you have seen these presents, out of the issues of your receipt, twenty pounds sterling which we have granted to him for the making of six houses with six vaults, six chimneys and windows pertaining to the said houses, and for the making of an entry and a gatehouse with a vault and a portcullis and a vice³² made by the said Henry at his charges beyond his agreement within our castle of Dunstanburgh, you receiving on your part letters of acquittance from the said Henry acknowledging the twenty pounds aforesaid. And whereas the said Henry has also taken in hand anew to make a gatehouse at our said castle and other things thereat as appears by our letters patent and indentured, we order you to cause pay from the issues of your receipt to the said Henry for every rod of the said new work ten marks, in accordance with the effect and purport of our letters patent and indentured aforesaid, subject to your satisfaction that the said work is being pursued by the advice and supervision and testimony of our very dear and wellbeloved bachelor Sir Thomas Ildreton our constable there. Provided always that the said Sir Thomas and you shall take sufficient surety from the said Henry that he shall well and truly perform the said work to our honour and profit and to be answerable to us as reason demands, and such surety as you will be willing yourselves to answer for to us at a future time. And these our letters or the assurance aforesaid shall be your warrant.

³¹ This order evidently refers to the building of the inner court.

³² A newel staircase.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 292, no. 923. 1383, 20th July, from Durham. This indenture made between John King, *etc.*, on the one part and Henry Holme, mason, on the other part testifies that the said Henry has undertaken to make a new gatehouse of freestone at the said King and Duke's castle of Dunstanburgh, and to renew the voussoirs, jambs and barbicans thereof, and to take the old gatehouse thereof for use towards the work of the new gatehouse aforesaid, and the said gatehouse shall be vaulted and shall have a portcullis or barbican and a postern and provision for a drawbridge in the same work. And the said Henry shall bear all manner of costs for this work, alike for quarrying stones, for lime, for sand, as well as for carriage and all other things needful and belonging to the said work. And the said Henry shall receive from the said King and Duke for the making and cost of the work aforesaid, for each rod thereof ten marks for all kinds of costs, as aforesaid, by the hands of the said King and Duke's receiver of Dunstanburgh for the time being.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 285, no. 905. 1383, 23rd July, from Knaresborough. To John Cheyne, squire to our dearly beloved brother of Buckingham, bringing to us news at Dunstanburgh of the birth of the eldest son of our said brother, twenty pounds of our gift.³³

EDITOR'S NOTE.

The novel character of Dr. Douglas Simpson's interesting suggestions as to the part played by Thomas Earl of Lancaster in Northumberland and his reasons for building Dunstanburgh Castle, seem to call for a short note.

Thomas, Earl of Lancaster from, at least, the year 1310, was in almost constant opposition to the king³⁴ and engaging in private wars³⁵ for his own aggrandisement. He ingeniously evaded his feudal obligations in the Scottish war,³⁶ refused to go on the campaign which ended at Bannockburn,³⁷ and his departure from

³³ For this entry it is clear that Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Buckingham, son of Thomas of Woodstock, was born in 1383, not *circa* 1381, as stated in *The Complete Peerage*, vol. v, p. 729.

³⁴ *Comp. Peer.*, VII, 389.

³⁵ *Parl. Writs*.

³⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*.

³⁷ *Parl. Writs, Comp. Peer.*, VII, 391.

the king when besieging Berwick in August 1319 led to the abandonment of the siege and the accusation that the earl was in traitorous correspondence with the Scots. He was king's lieutenant of all forces between Trent and Roxburgh in 1315,³⁸ but appears to have done little in defence of the Marches. The charge of the Northumberland March from 1298 onwards was given to specially appointed keepers (*custodes*).³⁹ Men such as Sir Walter Huntercombe, Sir John Segrave, Sir John St. John and Sir Robert Umfraville were keepers with very ample powers.⁴⁰ In 1319 John Lord Cromwell and the Earl of Angus with a strong force of knights, men-at-arms, hobelars and foot were given sole charge of the March in Northumberland with orders to strengthen the defences and augment the garrisons of the castles of Newcastle, Warkworth, Alnwick and Bamburgh; there is no mention of Earl Thomas nor of Dunstanburgh.⁴¹ He built Dunstanburgh Castle in his own barony, on a lonely inaccessible site far removed from the usual lines of Scottish invasion, where it could be of little use as a March defence, indeed it is hardly mentioned in Border warfare. It was built without the usual licence, which was only issued in 1315 when the earl was paramount in the king's council.⁴² All the evidence seems to the Editor to point to a private castle illegally built to serve the earl's personal ends maybe as a place of refuge should his restless ambition bring the need for one, as indeed it did when on 16 March, 1322, on his way north, the earl was intercepted at Boroughbridge, defeated, captured and executed six days afterwards. In the Wars of the Roses, Dunstanburgh was a Lancastrian stronghold "stuffed with Englishmen, Frenchmen and Scots," when it was besieged in 1461 and stormed in 1464. It may well be that the seaward wall and the latrines therein were then strengthened or made. The large area of the outer ward is of course accounted for by the nature of the site, it could not be smaller.

The suggestion that the little haven of Dunstanburgh was thought of as a possible substitute for the great port of Berwick, seems improbable. As the name indicates the "burgh" must have been in existence before the early fourteenth century. Its site was around the tidal basin, the approach to which is now silted up with the effect that the basin itself has become a marsh.

As a port Dunstanburgh would compare with other and small coastal harbours such as Holy Island, Warenmouth, Craster, Aln-

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Parl. Writs, Cal. Doc. Scot.*

⁴⁰ *Rot. Scot., passim.*

⁴¹ *Rot. Scot., Cal. Doc. Scot.*

⁴² *Cal. Pat. Rolls.*

mouth and Newbiggin, some of which also sent ships for the royal navy upon occasion. The burgh was ruled by a bailiff in the fourteenth century and it doubtless increased in importance whilst the castle was building and afterwards, but its relative unimportance is shown in 1355, when Berwick had been captured for a short time by the Scots. The ships of the English navy there in harbour were ordered to sail to Holy Island and there prepare to fight the Scottish ships if attacked.⁴³ In 1417 "three cobles" belonging to the king⁴⁴ were kept there for "sea fishing," which does not suggest a large and busy port. The same unimportance is indicated when in 1514 some ships of the fleet of Henry VIII were lost for three weeks and found sheltering at Dunstanburgh,⁴⁵ as though such a place was never considered a possible port of refuge. It is very difficult to believe that this remote place, with poor communications, far from the main roads, with little background and of restricted area, could have been thought of as a substitute for the great river port of Berwick with its fine harbour and easy lines of communication, even if it was expected, in 1313, that Berwick would be in Scottish hands by 1318 or that its loss would ever be accepted as permanent by the English. The site of the "burgh" was around the little harbour, protected from the north by a projecting reef, some little distance south of the castle; there is no evidence that a town was planned or contemplated on the southern slope immediately beyond the castle walls. The wide and deep ditch dug between the castle "and the field of Embleton" was surely made to strengthen the defence of the western side of the castle by scarping and so making the acclivity higher and steeper.

When such experts upon mediæval history and architecture as Dr. W. Douglas Simpson and our Secretary, Mr. H. L. Honeyman, disagree, the Editor feels at liberty to disagree with both of them. Mr. Honeyman considers Dunstanburgh Castle to have been built as a "burghal castle"—the "burgh" being within its walls. Dr. Douglas Simpson, for cogent and excellent reasons, rejects this theory but suggests that it was built for a national purpose as a defence of the March of Northumberland against Scotland. Dr. Simpson's own suggestion is that the "burgh" was possibly intended to be placed on the southern slope beyond the castle walls. Mr. Honeyman will have none of this, he holds that the "burgh" and the neighbouring harbour were planned as a substitute for Berwick which, with surprising foresight, the planners expected to be in Scottish hands six years later. The Editor thinks all these

⁴³ *Rot. Scot.*, 782.

⁴⁴ *Co. History*, II, 32.

⁴⁵ *Co. History*, II, 206.

speculations misconceived for the reasons given above. He considers that the castle was built by Earl Thomas as a private castle to help in his own ambitious projects, that the town of Dunstanburgh was around the present marsh where the small mediæval harbour was situated, and that it was neither designed nor ever thought of as a substitute for the great port of Berwick upon Tweed—*Quot homines tot sententiae!*

C.H.H.B.