

EBURACUM, A.D. 100.

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THE

MARTIAL ANNALS

OF THE

CITY OF YORK.

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FORMERLY A.C. TO H.M. TROOPS, YORK GARRISON.

PUBLISHED WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE MAJOR-GENERAL



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PREFACE.



HOUGH not claiming to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject, these chapters cover the whole period from the times of the Romans to the present day, and are divided into nine sections corresponding to the great epochs of English history. An effort has been made to avoid giving a merely antiquarian character to the book, and to make it as far as possible, without wholly obliterating its antiquarian worth, suitable for popular reading. How far I have succeeded in blending these two elements, I must let others decide.

Though York has fallen behind other cities and towns in commercial enterprise, it possesses a history busy with antiquity, and pre-eminently interesting as a study of the progress of the civilisation of our land. A native of York, in olden days, would surely say—

This city, of olden fame and renown,
With lofty towers and walls adorned,
It gave its name to the noblest of
Honour to the noblest of our land.

The site of York lacked nothing that was needed to attract to it the ancient conquerors of our country. Its central position in Britain, the conjunction of two rivers which readily lent themselves to the purposes of defence, its easy access to the sea, and the fertility of the surrounding plain, were a few of many advantages which no other place in the country, perhaps, possessed in an equal measure. Eburacum or York, in Roman days, was the capital of Britain. London was the great seat of commerce even then ; but the northern city was the principal garrison, and consequently the seat of imperial rule. York, and York alone, of all the cities of Britain, can boast of having been the dwelling-place of the Cæsars of Rome!

From Roman days to the present, York has been a great military centre, and, as such, merits a separate history. In the following pages I have given some account of the military persons, forces, sieges, battles, revolts, etc., associated with this enchanting old city. The various changes which have passed over the defences of the city are also generally described. Those who desire further architectural details as to these fortifications, I would refer to the *Fortifications of York*, by Leonard and Cates.

There are one or two matters about which I may be well to say a few preliminary words before speaking of the Roman city. It has been the older form of its name—Eburacum. This form, according to Dr. Müller, was in use down to the fifth century. It has probably, through Greek influence, it was supposed, been changed to Eboracum. This latter form has prevailed ever since, and is, in fact, the accepted form and is commonly used with reference to the city of York.

On page 22, after stating that the fate of the Ninth Legion of the Roman army is *not known*, I give the details of a theory concerning these men. My authority for making these remarks is Camden (Gibson's edition, vol. ii, p. 98). Canon James Raine, M.A., D.C.L., does not agree with this opinion in the least. His is the last authoritative word on this subject, and he says: "Why do we not find it (the Ninth Legion) on what we may term the roll-call of the Legions? I have sometimes thought that the Ninth may have shown cowardice in battle, and on that account may not have been reckoned for the future among the effective troops. The remnant may have been confined to the camp, acting as hewers of wood and drawers of water."¹

The object which, above everything else in the city, arrests the attention, is one which occupies but little space in these chapters, for it is only incidentally connected with our subject—the Minster. Its preservation is simply marvellous, especially considering the risks to which it was exposed in the great siege in the seventeenth century. There can be no doubt that the escape of this sacred building from serious injury at this time was due to Ferdinand, Lord Fairfax, who did his utmost to prevent firing into that part of the town where the Minster stands. It is also said that after the capitulation he placed a guard around the building, ordering that the penalty of death should be executed upon any soldier guilty of damaging the fabric.

The castles of York have occupied a prominent place in these pages. The keep of these stronghold is occupied

lofty artificial mounds, according to Norman usage. Possibly the mounds of the castle keeps at York were originally Roman work—afterwards *utilised* by the Norman builders. Gundulph, Bishop of Rochester, a celebrated architect, was the first to erect these castle keeps without elevation of the site. A specimen of his work may be seen in the keep of Rochester Castle, and in the keep (the White Tower) of the Tower of London.

A word respecting the Bars of the city. One of these—Micklegate—was pronounced by Drake and the Earl of Burlington to be largely Roman work. This theory was opposed by Sir Henry C. Englefield¹ and others, and has been abandoned. It is possible that there is Roman work in the Bar at Bootham.

Some of the engravings illustrating this work have been produced by special permission. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Sir William Smith, LL.D., and Mr. John Murray, publisher, for the coin portraits of Hadrian, Severus, Constantius, and Constantine (pp. 12, 14, 15); to the Council of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society for the plan of the Multangular Tower (p. 8), and permission to take several photographs in their grounds and Museum; to the Council of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries for the engraving of the Roman altar to Neptune (p. 24); and to the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for the engraving of the Roman altar (p. 138), and the *facsimile* of the fragments of the "Young Pretender" (p. 136). I also present my thanks to Ernest Crofts, Esq., F.R.S.A. for permission to reproduce the paintings, "Marston

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Moor" (p. 171) and "The Knights' Farewell" (p. 181); also to the Executors of the late J. Pettie, Esq., R.A., for the same favour granted with respect to the painting, "Bonnie Prince Charlie" (p. 203). The other illustrations are produced chiefly from my own negatives and sketches. I am indebted to Mr. W. Monkhouse for the use of three negatives, and to Rev. J. T. F. Halligey and Mr. George Cussons for the use of one negative each.

CÆSAR CAINE.

LONDON, *Easter*, 1893.





THE ROMAN PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.

Brigantia and the Brigantes.—Agricola founds Eburacum.—Its Extent.—The Walls.—Another Theory.—The Multangular Tower.



OF York, as of the whole of Britain, nothing thoroughly authentic is known prior to Roman times.

In the Celtic period, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Durham formed the kingdom of Brigantia, having for its capital Isurium, a site occupied by the modern Aldborough, near Boroughbridge. Of all the tribes of Britain, perhaps the Brigantes offered the stoutest resistance to Roman arms. Ostorius Scapula (p. 50-53), Avitus Didius Gallus (A.D. 53-54), and Petilius Cerianus (A.D. 70-75) tried in vain to effect the conquest of these people, or were engaged in holding them in check. Julius Agricola (A.D. 75-84), to whom is awarded the honour of constituting Britain a Roman province.

last compelled them to acknowledge that the Romans were their masters.

This brave and sagacious commander and statesman founded, on a site embraced within the modern York, a military camp. Doubtless the position was previously occupied by a Celtic settlement—a city of rude and primitive construction. Strabo, the ancient geographer and historian, speaking of the Britons, says: "Forests are their cities; for, having enclosed an ample space with felled trees, they make themselves huts therein, and lodge their cattle."

A general idea of the position and extent of Eburacum (such was the name the Romans gave their settlement) may be attained, with great facility, by employing present well-known streets and objects as landmarks. Petergate, from Bootham Bar to Goodramgate, indicates roughly the direction and extent of the central street of the original Roman camp, which lay on the right as far as Coney Street, within a hundred yards of the river, and on the left as far as the wall adjoining Monk Bar.¹

It is believed that the earthworks of this station were superseded by stone walls and fortifications by Agricola.²

The present walls on the north-west mark the line of the defences of the Roman camp on that side. The north-west gate of the site almost identical with the present Bootham Bar. It is interesting to

¹ See Webb's *Antiquities of York*.
² Webb and Case (*Antiquities of York*) doubt this.

learn that some time ago the foundations of this gateway were laid bare, also portions of the adjacent walls and their towers.

The Commander's headquarters (the Prætorium)

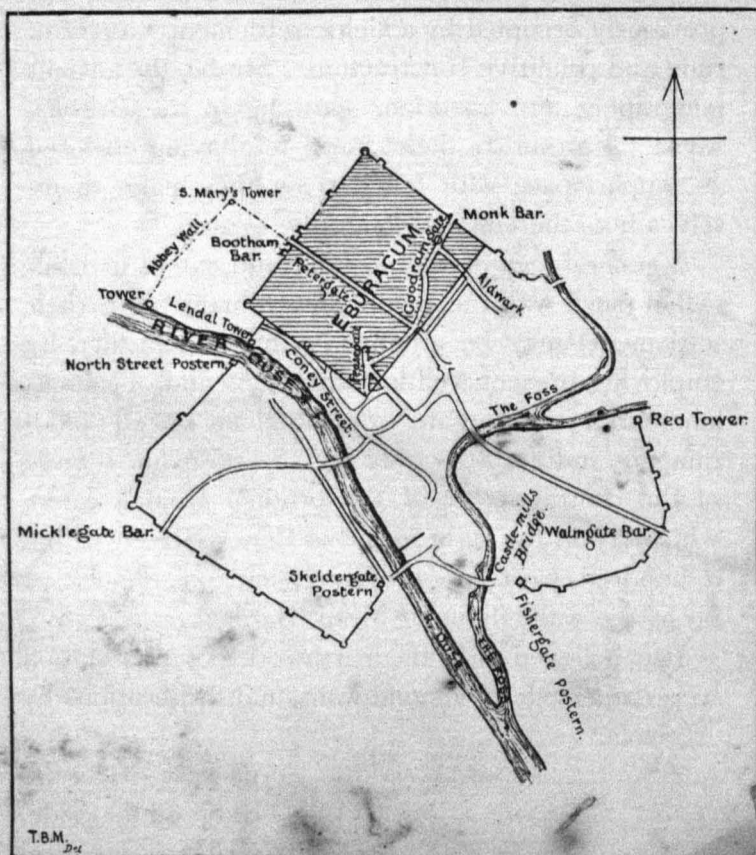


Fig. 1.

stood at the opposite side of the encampment, not far from the present junction of Petergate and Goodram's gate. Bedern and its vicinity have been accepted

as the site of this building. On this side, also, there was a wall and a gate, corresponding to those on the north-west. Traces of these defences have been discovered running from Coney Street across Feasegate towards Aldwark and the Monkgate walls.

The walls have also been traced on the side contiguous to the river—the south-west, but not on the opposite flank—the north-east.¹ On each of these sides also there was a gate.

Wellbeloved, the antiquary, following General Roy (*Military Antiquities of the Romans in Great Britain*), has called, in his *Eburacum*, the north-west gate of the Roman fortifications (where Bootham Bar now stands) the Prætorian Gate, and the south-east gate the Decuman Gate. Generally, however, the gate near the Prætorium bears the corresponding name, and the gate further removed from the Prætorium is called the Decuman Gate (see Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, article "Castra".) Wellbeloved, in a footnote, leaves this matter an open question.²

This general situation and extent of Eburacum, ascertained by excavating and surveying, correspond

¹ It must be remembered that all the present walls are of comparatively recent date.

² Some historians who, in the main, agree with the above theory as to the situation of Eburacum, differ from it in two particulars: (1) They carry the camp as far as the Foss on the south-east. (2) They place the Prætorium Gate on the wall, the direction of which is now indicated by Coney Street, and the Decuman Gate near where Monk Bar now stands.

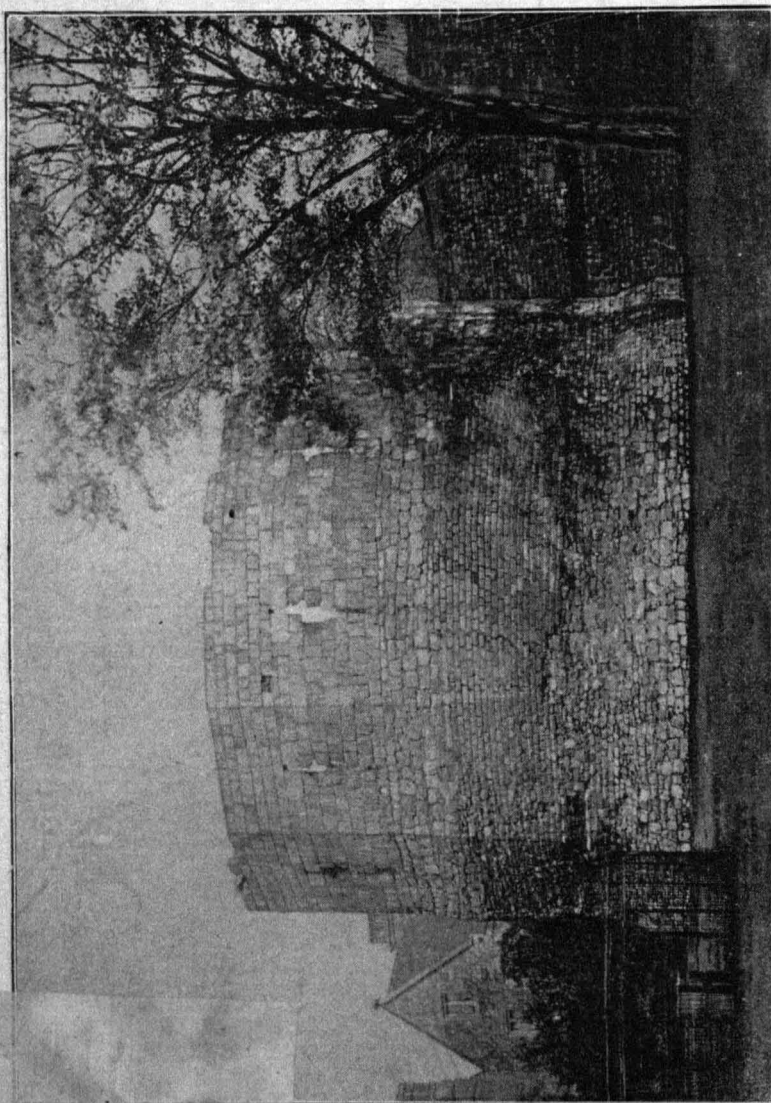
to the descriptions given of the arrangement and dimensions of Roman camps by Polybius, Titus Livius, Vegetius, Justus Lipsius, and other ancient authors.

All the Roman defences have perished, with the exception of one small fragment, enclosed within the grounds of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, the well-known Multangular Tower and the contiguous walls. This tower formed the west angle of the fortifications, and is perhaps the most notable and interesting relic of those early days of York.

One of the best descriptions of this tower appears in *The Yorkshire Archæological Journal*, in an address by G. T. Clark, Esq., on "The Defences of York". This account reads: "It is a shell of masonry, presenting nine faces, 45 feet in exterior diameter, and 24 feet wide at the gorge which is open. It is not placed, as in mediæval works, so as merely to cap the junction of the two walls, which would have met at a right angle, but the whole angle is superseded, as in Roman camps, by a curve of about 50 feet radius, and the tower stands in the centre of this curve, three-quarters of it, presenting its nine faces, being disengaged. The tower, and its contiguous wall, are 5 feet thick. The Roman part of the work is about 15 feet high. It is of rubble, faced on either front with ashlar, the blocks being from 4 to 5 inches cube. There is one band of five courses of bricks, each brick 17 inches by 11 by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, that may be traced along both tower and wall, although the surface of both has been in some

patched and injured. Upon the Roman work has been placed an ashlar upper story, composed of larger stones, and about 3 feet thick and 12 feet high, pierced by nine cruciform loops, one on each face, and each set in a pointed recess. This addition is of Early English or early Decorated date. The wall extending south-east from the tower for 53 yards is of the same date, material, and workmanship. Both having escaped destruction in the post-Roman period, were incorporated into the defences of the later city. The wall on the other side of the tower has been partially destroyed, and at a short distance becomes buried in the later bank. It is to be observed that the Roman tower and wall, where perfect, are entirely unconnected with any bank of earth, and the ashlar facing, both inside and outside, shows this to have been originally intended. The wall stands on the natural surface of the ground, and is seen of equal height on either face. There may have been, and no doubt was, an exterior ditch even in Roman times, but a bank of earth sustaining the wall, it is pretty clear, there was not. This feature in the Roman defences, so different from the practice in later times, is not peculiar to York. It is seen at Dorchester, Silchester, and in other Roman fortresses where each face of the wall was intended to be seen. It is thus evident that the earthworks, which form so important a feature in the defences of York, are all of post-Roman date."

There is a particular description of the *interior* of the tower in the *Hand-Book of the York Museum*.



THE MULTANGULAR TOWER.

Opp. p. 7.

(*Y. P. S.*)¹: "The masonry of the interior of the angle-tower, reaching very nearly, it is probable, to its original height, is remarkably fresh and perfect, owing to its having been concealed many ages by an accumulation of soil, which was removed soon after the building came into the possession of the Society in 1831. The tower has been divided by a wall (a small part of which is still remaining) into two equal portions. At the height of about five feet there seems to have been originally a timber floor; and, above this, at the height of about nine feet, another floor. The lower compartments had a mortar floor laid upon sand, and having no light but from the entrances, may have been used as depositories for stores or arms. The two apartments above these were probably guard-rooms; each of them having a narrow window or aperture, so placed as to enable those within to observe what was passing without, along the line of each wall. The opening of these apertures externally was not more than six inches in width; but within it expanded to about five feet; their height, owing to the change that has been made in the upper part of the tower, cannot be exactly ascertained. The annexed woodcut will exhibit a clear view of the arrangement of this part of the ancient fortification. The diameter of the interior at the base or floor is about 33 feet 6 inches; the plan consists of ten sides of a nearly regular thirteensided figure, forming nine very obtuse angles, whence it

¹ Page 4.

has obtained the name of THE MULTANGULAR TOWER."

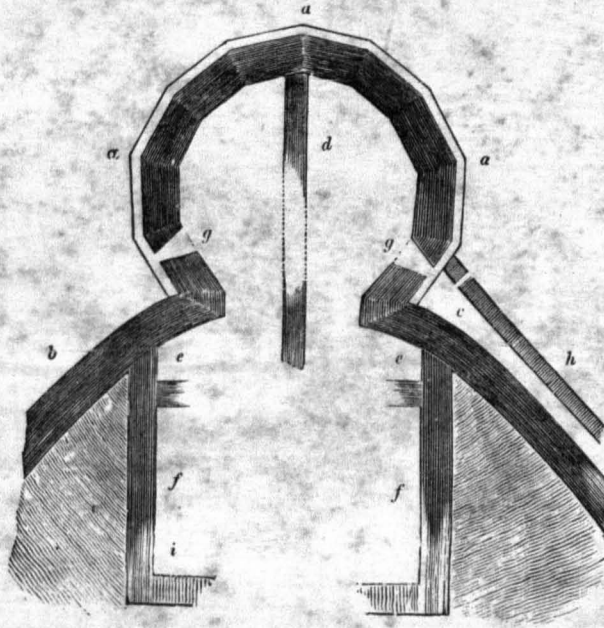


Fig. 2.

- a, a, a.*—The multangular wall of the tower.
- b.*—The wall of the Roman station proceeding from the tower in the direction of Lendal and Coney Street.
- c.*—The wall proceeding in the direction of Bootham Bar.
- d.*—The wall dividing the tower into two portions.
- e, e.*—The wall at the entrance into the tower. Traces of a similar wall have been seen at *i*.
- f, f.*—Walls built for the purpose of supporting the interior ramparts.
- g, g.*—The apertures in the upper rooms of the tower, which commanded a view of the exterior of the walls.
- h.*—The modern city wall.

CHAPTER II.

*The Rise of the City.—The Prætorian Palace.—The Roads.—
The Foss.*

THE Roman camp gradually assumed the magnificence of a city, and "far exceeded the bounds of the military post, and included suburbs thrown out in every available direction far beyond the defences, showing that the inhabitants were very numerous and rich, and lived entirely free from any apprehension of danger."¹

Constantius Chlorus has received the credit of adding fortifications to this civil city, which lay chiefly on the west of the river.

The headquarters of the General, at this time, gave place to a Prætorian Palace,² which was the residence of certain Emperors when visiting the island. It has been said: "In the city of York, and almost within shadow of the Minster, there is a little street leading from Goodramgate to St. Andrewgate, called the Bedern. Until very recently it afforded no thorough-

¹ *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 1874, p. 224.

² For a bronze tablet found at York, punctured with Greek uncial letters, "To the Gods of the General's Prætorium", see *Cat. Y.P.S.*, p. 121; *Trans. Y.P.S.*, 1876, p. 206; *Journal of the Archaeological Inst.*, vol. xxxix, p. 23.

fare, and a stranger might have passed the end of it without being aware of its existence : certainly without suspecting that he was passing a spot memorable in Roman history. Yet so it is. Here was the palatial residence of the Cæsars when York was dignified with the designation 'Altera Roma'; here Severus gave his dying charge to his two sons, the infamous Caracalla and the unfortunate Geta ; here Papinian, the famous Roman lawyer, discharged the high functions of the Prætorian Prefect ; here Constantius died, and Constantine the Great was invested with imperial purple by the Roman legions ; and here every loyal Yorkist believes that that first Christian Emperor was born, though perverse historians give their verdict in favour of Naissus in Dacia."¹

Eburacum was connected with neighbouring camps and cities by well-constructed roads, the chief workers in making and repairing which were the soldiers of the legions stationed in the neighbourhood. For this reason, these roads claim some notice here. One road ran from the gate, the site of which is marked by Bootham Bar, and led to Isurium. A second road crossed the river near the spot where the Guildhall now stands, and led to Calcaria (Tadcaster). Another road passed from the city, at the gate situated near the junction of Petergate and Goodramgate. This road led to the river Derwent,

¹ Drake, Wellbeloved, Dr. Lyth (here quoted), and other authorities, agree in placing the Prætorium here.

perhaps to Stamford Bridge. There was a fourth road, which has not been traced so satisfactorily, and which led northward to the river Tees.

Speaking of these roads brings to mind a water-way of the city, which possessed some interest to the Roman garrison of Eburacum.

Of the Latin words which have kept their place in the English language ever since these days of Roman Britain, several are strictly military; and one of these, besides being found in other forms, is preserved in the name of a sluggish stream which flows into the river Ouse at York. We get the word Foss from *Fossa* (a ditch or a trench).

The idea that the Foss was cut by the Roman soldiers to drain the Forest of Galtres, which lay on the north-east of the city, is now abandoned. The Foss is a natural water-course, and not an ancient canal. Nevertheless, it is true that the Foss was both improved and utilised by the Romans. It was certainly used for draining purposes, and also, what is of greater interest here, as a means of defence. Probably also the Romans converted the low land, now known as the Foss Islands, into a dock or basin, where both war galleys and corn vessels found harbour.

CHAPTER III.

Emperors resident in York:—Hadrian; Severus; Constantius Chlorus; Constantine the Great.—Troops resident in York.

OF the Emperors of Rome who came to Britain on military expeditions, or to receive the submission of native kings, four resided for a time in York.



Fig. 3.—HADRIANUS, ROMAN EMPEROR, A.D. 117-138.

Hadrian came to Britain A.D. 120, and is reported to have rested at York on his northern march. This, however, has been disputed.



Fig. 4.—SEPTIMUS SEVERUS, ROMAN EMPEROR, A.D. 193-211.

The Emperor Septimus Severus came to Britain A.D. 208, and after defeating the Caledonians, retired to York. Here he died February 4th, A.D. 211, in

the 65th year of his age and the 18th of his reign, "after having acquired more glory in war than any of the Emperors before him, none of whom could boast of so many victories, won both in civil wars against his rivals and in foreign expeditions against the barbarians."¹ Dion Cassius has thus described the death of Severus: "It is said that being at the point of death he spoke to his sons in these words: 'Live peaceably together; enrich the soldiers, and make no account of the rest of your subjects.' His body was borne by the soldiers to the funeral pile, about which the army and the two sons of the deceased Emperor made several processions in honour of his memory. Abundance of presents were cast upon it, and at last the fire was put to it by Caracalla and Geta."² The locality where these rites were performed bears the name of Severus to this day—the hillocks on the south-west side of the city, known as Severus Hills. It was long believed that the Severus Hills were *tumuli*, but it is now ascertained that they are natural formations. The author just quoted adds: "The ashes were collected, received into an urn of porphyry, carried to Rome, and deposited in the tomb of the Antonines. It is said that Severus ordered the urn to be brought to him some few days before his death, and taking it between his hands, he said, 'Thou shalt contain a man, that the world has not been able to contain.'"

¹ *Herodian*, Hart's edition, 1749, p. 156.

² *Dion Cassius*, Manning's edit., 1704, vol. ii, p. 305.

It is believed that, at the time of Severus, Eburacum saw her palmiest days. A temple erected here to Bellona, the goddess of war, and which was built only in Rome and the principal cities of the Empire, is associated with a tradition of the life of this Emperor. Hargrove gives the following summary of all we know of this martial shrine :—

“In this Emperor's reign, a temple dedicated to Bellona, the goddess of war, was standing at York; and Camden remarks that Severus, on entering the city, being desirous to sacrifice to the gods, was met by an ignorant augur, who led him by mistake to this temple, which in those days was considered as ominous of the Emperor's death. Drake believes this temple to have stood without Bootham Bar, but in what exact situation none can tell. Before the temple stood a small column called the Martial Pillar, whence a spear was thrown when war was declared against an enemy.”



Fig. 5.—CONSTANTIUS I, ROMAN EMPEROR, A.D. 305-306.

Constantius Chlorus (the father of Constantine the Great), it is said, married a British lady—Helena. He became Emperor A.D. 305, and died at York in the July of the following year, A.D. 306, when on an expedition against the Picts. Constantine (the Great), who had accompanied this expedition to Britain,

hastened to York to attend the death-bed of his father, upon whose decease he was immediately and enthusiastically elected Emperor by the Roman and



Fig. 6.—CONSTANTINUS I, THE GREAT, ROMAN EMPEROR,
A.D. 306-337.

British troops. This incident is represented by a beautiful painted window in the Guildhall. The window is thus described :—

“Constantine, habited in a mourning cloak, is represented as receiving the principal military and civil authorities (among the former of whom would be the commanders of the Sixth, or Victorious Legion, so long stationed at York), who bring him the sceptre, the golden orb, the laurel crown, and the imperial mantle.

“The young Prince, hesitating at first to take upon himself the burden of the empire, is beginning to yield to the persuasions of Eroc (a German King, who had come to Britain as an auxiliary of Constantius), who urges him to grasp the sceptre without further delay.

“The portrait of Constantine has been carefully studied from his coins in the British Museum.

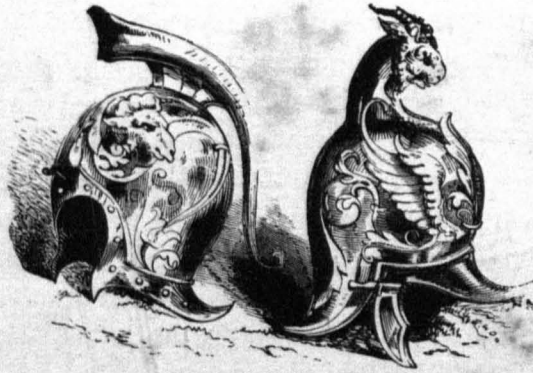
“In the lower compartments are introduced on each side the Roman eagle; and in the middle the monogram of our Saviour, which Constantine after his

conversion adopted as a device for the imperial standard."

Two of the valiant Roman legions which visited Britain (the Ninth and the Sixth) occupied York successively as their headquarters.

It may be well to remark here that a Roman legion was very different from a modern regiment. The legion was a miniature army, consisting of cavalry, foot, and engineers, and numbered about 6,000 men.

We cannot dismiss summarily the history of two legions so closely allied with the records of the city, but will consider them separately.



ROMAN HELMETS.

CHAPTER IV.

The Ninth Legion: Defeated at Colchester.—Defeated in the North.—At the Grampians.—A Slab.—A Monumental Stone.—Other Relics.

THE Ninth Legion, called Hispana or Hispanica, or the Spanish Legion, because it was recruited in Spain, came over with the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 44. The story of the vicissitudes of this legion in Britain is not a cheerful one. Twice it suffered defeat, and indeed narrowly escaped annihilation, and once it broke out in mutiny.

The first occasion of defeat was when the heroic British Queen Boadicea, A.D. 61, attacked Camulodunum (Colchester), which had been made a Roman colony about ten years previously by Ostorius Scapula, and which was garrisoned by the Fourteenth Legion. Unfortunately, at this time most of the Imperial troops were with the Governor, Suetonius Paulinus (A.D. 58-62), on an expedition against the tribes of North Wales, and the Britons committed fearful ravages. The Ninth Legion, commanded by Petilius Cerialis, hastened to the relief of their comrades, only to suffer a most disastrous overthrow at the hands of the enraged Britons. The infantry were destroyed, and Cerialis fled with his cavalry.

to camp, and defended himself in his entrenchments.¹

A similar catastrophe occurred some twenty years later, when the legion was serving under Agricola (A.D. 78-84), in the northern part of the island. The story of the escape of these men from slaughter is very graphically told by the celebrated historian, Tacitus. The Britons made a sudden and powerful night attack upon this legion, which was the weakest in the expedition.

"'Tis the soldier's life
To have his balmy slumbers waked with strife."

They slew the guards, and, favoured by the profound sleep of the camp and their own expeditious movements, they forced their way into the Roman lines. Agricola, being acquainted by scouts of the state of affairs, ordered his swiftest horse and foot to hasten to the rear of the foe, and to fall upon them at that point. When the Britons heard the cheers on their rear, and responding cheers on their front, and saw Roman arms and standards shining in the approaching dawn, both behind and before, they were panic-stricken. The Romans fought with great courage and determination, one contingent being resolved it should be said that they had rescued their fellow-soldiers, and the other being equally resolved that it should never be said that they had needed assistance. So complete was the repulse of the

¹ *Annals of Tacitus*, Book xiv, par. 3.

Britons, that they sought safety in a precipitous flight.¹

The Ninth Legion also took part in the bloody battle in which Agricola vanquished the Caledonians near the Grampian Hills.² On its return from the north, the legion was stationed at York, about A.D. 108.

Numerous mementoes of the residence of these troops in this city have been discovered, and are chiefly preserved in the Museum of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. It would not be proper here to compile a list of these curiosities. We must be content to direct attention to the most instructive Catalogue of the Museum just named, and to refer to one or two objects which will indicate the great wealth of historic relics so easy of access.

As one enters the lower room of the Hospitium in the grounds of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, there may be seen a large flat stone fixed upon the wall on the left, and on the wall, immediately opposite the door, a sculptured monumental stone.

The one on the left is part of a large lettered slab which, perhaps, commemorated the building of the Prætorian Palace by the Ninth Legion. It is thus described in the Catalogue of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society:—

“The greater part of a large inscribed tablet of limestone, 3 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 4 inches, discovered

¹ See Tacitus, *Agricola*, xxvi.

² *Ibid.*; also General Roy, *Rom. Brit.*, Plate XI.

in 1854 by some workmen whilst digging a drain in King's Square (the old Curia Regis), at a depth of about 28 feet. The inscription is arranged in six lines. The letters, beautifully cut, vary in height from 6 inches to $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches. In its perfect state the inscription was probably as follows, the missing letters being supplied in italics :—

IMP CAESAR *DIVI*
 NERVAE FIL. *NERVA TRA*
 IANVS. AVG. GERM. *DAC.*
 PONTIFEX MAXIMVS *TRIBVN.*
 POTESTATIS XII. *IMP. VI. COS V. P. P.*
 PER. LEG. *VIII. HISP.*

Which may be thus rendered :

“ ‘ The Emperor Cæsar Nerva Trajan, son of the deified Nerva, Augustus, Germanicus, Dacicus, Chief Pontiff, invested the twelfth time with the Tribunitian Powers, Consul the fifth time, Father of his country, caused this to be performed by the Ninth Legion, (called) the Spanish.’¹

“What the work was that the Ninth Legion performed by order of the Emperor cannot be ascertained ; but, from the character of the tablet, it may be inferred that it was of magnitude and importance. As it was found in the old Curia Regis, it is quite possible that it recorded the erection of the Imperial Palace.”¹

¹ *Yorkshire Philosophical Society's Catalogue*, p. 47, No. 32.

The other stone is thus described :

“A large monumental stone, 6 feet 2 inches high, by 2 feet 2 inches wide, on which is the figure of a Standard-bearer in an arched recess. In his right



Fig. 7.

hand he holds the Standard or *Signum* of the cohort, ending in an open hand, in his left an object about which there has been some doubt. It has been considered by Horsley and others that it represents the vessel used in measuring the corn, which was part of the Roman soldiers' pay, but Dr. Hübner and Mr. Price have shown satisfactorily that it is a collection of tablets, or the wooden box which contained them.

“The following is the inscription :

L . DVCCIUS
L . VOLTRVFI
NVS . VIEN
SIGNIF . LEG . VIII
AN . XXIIIX
H . S . E .

Which may be read :

“ Lucius Duccius Rufinus, son of Lucius, of the

Voltinian tribe of Vienna (in Gaul), Standard-bearer of the Ninth Legion, aged twenty-eight, is buried here.'

"This stone was found about the year 1686, probably where it had been originally placed, in Trinity Gardens, Micklegate, and was for a long time inserted in the churchyard wall; afterwards it was removed to Ribston Hall, the residence of the Goodrickes, where it continued in the garden wall, exposed to the weather, until 1847. Dr. Hübner thinks that this is a monument of the first century."¹

Surely, apart altogether from military bias, no man interested in the records of his country, or even in history at all, can look upon such mementoes of the past without being stirred by the strongest emotions of wonder, pleasure, and veneration.

In the centre of the room, where these stones are to be seen, there are the tombs of soldiers of this legion, constructed of large red tiles of a similar shape to those used for roofing purposes.

The history of this legion, subsequent to its settlement in York, is not known, but it is believed that it was incorporated with the Sixth Legion. After their incorporation with the Sixth, they took the title of *Victrix*, in common with that legion. Roman bricks have been found in the city bearing the stamp, *LEG IX . VIC.*

¹ *Yorkshire Philosophical Society's Catalogue*, p. 49, No. 35.

CHAPTER V.

*The Sixth Legion: An Altar.—Building Hadrian's Wall.—
Repairing Agricola's Wall.—In York.—Monumental Stones.
—Departure.*

THE Sixth Legion, which also bore the names Victrix (Victorious), Pia (Dutiful), Fidelis (Faithful), arrived in Britain nearly eighty years after the Ninth Legion. This splendid body of men came from Germany with Hadrian, A.D. 120.

During the removal of the old bridge and the erection of the swing-bridge at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, about twenty years ago, an altar of very considerable interest was recovered from the bed of the river. It was not found complete, but was dredged up in parts at different times. The panel on the head of this altar bears the inscription :

NEPTVNO LEGIO

The centre panel is inscribed with the letters

VI VICTRIX

PIA FIDELIS.¹

These abbreviations are to be read : "To Neptune,

¹ The letters in italics are supplied.



Fig. 8.

the Sixth Legion, the Victorious, the Dutiful, the Faithful (erects this altar)." The centre panel is decorated by a trident and dolphin, emblems of the god of the seas.

This valuable relic was "erected as a thank-offering for the safe arrival of the Legion on their reaching Britain". It is now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.¹

These gallant troops were highly esteemed in the Roman army. The Emperor Severus said that they would venture "naked through the fire" for his sake.

Hadrian, with whom these forces entered Britain, was a renowned builder. "No prince, perhaps, ever raised so many public and private edifices as Hadrian. In every city of note throughout the empire some erection perpetuated his memory—bridges, aqueducts, temples, and palaces rose on every hand. Many cities, likewise, were either wholly built or repaired by him. Building seems, indeed, to have been a main feature in his system of government. He was the first who appointed that each cohort should have its quota of masons, architects, and all kinds of workmen needed for the erection and adornment of public edifices."² This emperor raised to himself an enduring monument in Britain by erecting a fortified wall from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway Firth. The Sixth

¹ See *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, or *Catalogue S. A. Newcastle*, or Scarth's *Roman Britain*.

² *Hist. Rome*, Tract Soc., quoted by Dr. Bruce.

Legion, with the Second and Twentieth Legions, was engaged A.D. 121 in the construction of this wall. Though some evidences of their presence have been found at other points, the troops forming the Sixth Legion were employed chiefly upon the western portion of this barrier. Dr. Collingwood Bruce, in his *Roman Wall*, describes a relic of this legion found near Carlisle, Luguwallium of the Romans, and another discovered at Birdoswald, the ancient Amboglanna. The former relic is an altar, and merits some attention. It is inscribed with bold lettering, which reads :

LVCIVS IVNIVS VIC
TORINVS ET
CAIVS AELIANUS LEGATI
AVGVSTALES LEGIONIS VI VICTRICIS
PLAE FIDELIS OB RES TRANS
VALLUM PRO
SPERE GESTAS¹

which, translated, runs :

"Lucius Junius Victorinus, and Caius Aelianus, Augustal Legates of the Sixth Legion Victorious, Pious, and Faithful, on account of achievements beyond the Walls prosperously performed."

Some of the quarries from which the stones were hewn for the masonry of Hadrian's barrier have been found, and one of these, a quarry at Halt-

¹The letters in italics are supplied.

whistle Fell, once bore the name of the Sixth Legion "written" on its rocks.¹

A.D. 139 these forces were again employed, with the Second and Twentieth Legions, under the Legate Lollius Urbicus, in restoring Agricola's wall and forts, first erected A.D. 81, between the Firth of Forth and the river Clyde.

After the completion of these enterprises, the legion was stationed in York. Ptolemy, the geographer and chronologist of Alexandria, states that York was the headquarters of the Sixth Legion, and the fact is referred to by other and later writers.

The monumental and other remains of the Sixth Legion are, as might be expected, from its more protracted residence here, more numerous than those of the Ninth.

As illustrating the character of the relics of this legion, which may be seen in the collection of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, we quote those numbered 39, 40, and 41 in the Catalogue of that Society.

No. 39 was erected by a soldier to the memory of his wife and children. It is "a large tablet, 5 ft. 8 in. high and 3 ft. broad, found in use as a cover to the sarcophagus of Ælia Severa (No. 47). The upper part of the slab shows the figures of a father and mother and two children. The inscription is faint, and, as far as it can be read, is as follows :

¹ Mr. J. Clayton, quoted by Dr. Bruce, p. 80, in *The Roman Wall*.

D . M . FLAVIÆ AVGVSTINÆ
 VIXIT . AN . XXXVIII . M . VII . D . XI . FILIVS
 . . . VS . AVGSTINVS . VIXIT . AN . I . D III
 VIXIT AN . I . M VIII . D . V . C . ÆRESIVS
 MIL . LEG . VI . VIC . CONIVGI . CAR
 FILIIS . ET . SIBI . F . C .

It appears that C, Æresius a soldier of the Sixth Legion Victorious, raised this memorial to his wife, Flavia Augustina, who lived thirty-nine years, seven months, and eleven days ; to his son, Augustinus, who lived one year and three days ; and to a daughter, who lived one year, nine months, and five days ; providing at the same time a memorial for himself. It is probable that the missing name of the son was Flavius. The stone was found on the Mount."¹

No. 40 is a brief but an eloquent tribute to the fatherly sorrow of which the Roman soldier was capable. The Catalogue thus speaks of it : "A finely-wrought coffin, 4 ft. by 2 ft., found in the excavation of the North-Eastern Railway, near Holgate Bridge. It bears the following beautifully simple inscription :

D . M . SIMPLICIAE FLORENTINE
 ANIME INNOCENTISSIME
 QVE VIXIT MENSES DECEM
 FELICIVS . SIMPLEX . PATER . FECIT
 LEG . VI . V .

¹ *Catalogue of Museum Y. P. S.*, p. 51.

‘To the Gods, the Manes. To Simplicia Florentina, a most innocent being, who lived ten months, Felicius Simplex, her father, of the Sixth Legion Victorious, dedicated this.’ No mother’s name appears, a circumstance which suggests the probability of the birth of this darling child having been marked by a lamentable event that gives still greater interest to this tribute of paternal affection. It is remarkable also that the words ‘anime innocentissime’ are found on the Christian tombs in the Catacombs, a fact which opens out a most interesting field of thought.”¹

It has often been remarked that the larger proportion of the Roman tombstones found in Britain, particularly in the north, record the deaths of comparatively young persons. Dr. Bruce remarks that “the climate of the north of England must have told with fearful severity upon the constitutions of those who had been reared under the sunny skies of Italy and Spain.” The monument which is referred to in the following extract perhaps furnishes an illustration of this fact.

“No. 41.—A large coffin of coarse grit, 7½ feet long by 2 feet 11 inches, found whilst excavating the Castle Yard in 1835, and thus inscribed in a panel :

¹ Tertullian says that large numbers of the Roman soldiers were converts to Christianity in the reign of Severus.

D . M .
AVR . SVPERO . CENT
LEG . VI . QVIVIXITANIS
XXXVIII . MIII . DXIII . AVRE
LIA . CENSORINA . CONIVNX
MEMORIAM . POSSVIT .

‘To the Gods, the Manes. To Aurelius Superbus, a centurion of the Sixth Legion, who lived thirty-eight years, four months, and thirteen days, Aurelia Censorina, his wife, set up this memorial.’”

Nothing can surpass the pathetic interest of these affectionate memorials.

In the museum of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society there are also tile-constructed tombs of soldiers of the legion similar to those of the Ninth.

Early in the fifth century the Romans bade farewell to Britain. Macaulay has said: "Of the western provinces that obeyed the Cæsars, Britain was the last that was conquered, and the first that was thrown away."

A.D. 410 Honorius freed the Britons from their allegiance, and A.D. 426 Valentinian III recalled all the imperial troops from foreign service ; for, surging like a devastating flood, the barbarous Goths and Vandals were sweeping towards the gates of Rome. At this time the Sixth Legion left Britain to serve nearer home, having been in York for nearly three hundred years, throughout which period the ranks were regularly recruited, partly from the Continent and partly from the flower of British youth.



MARTIAL STATUE (ROMAN).

Opp. p. 31.

CHAPTER VI.

Other Troops associated with York.—A Military Statue.—Neighbouring Stations.—Outposts.—Roman Idea of War.—The Romans leave Britain.

IN addition to the two legions so very closely associated with York, other troops have been represented, by the relics which have been unearthed from time to time; and it is possible that these forces also resided in the city, though only temporarily. An altar bearing the inscription of the Second Legion has been found, and also a bronze badge of the Fourth Cohort of Gauls. The permanent station of the Second Legion was at Caerleon in Wales, and the Fourth Cohort of Gauls garrisoned Little Chesters, on the great wall erected by Hadrian.

Besides the relics referred to which are associated with particular legions, there are many preserved in York which possess a more general interest. In the vestibule of the museum of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society there is a piece of statuary in a marvellous state of preservation. It is thus described: "A fine statue, probably representing the youthful Mars. It is carved in light-coloured grit, probably by a local artist, who has chosen as

his model a marble statue. The figure, defective, unfortunately, in the feet and right arm, is 5 feet 10 inches high, and represents a martial personage in helmet, breast-plate, and greaves, with the left hand resting upon a large oval shield. In the right hand, which has been in two parts, was no doubt a lofty spear of wood or metal. The hair is arranged in fillets, and the face is beautifully cut."¹ This is the finest specimen of Romano-British workmanship that has been found in Britain.

Other objects of deep interest might be spoken of did space permit.

So long as York was the headquarters of Roman troops, detachments would be sent out to occupy neighbouring stations. For instance, we know that a cohort of the Sixth Legion garrisoned a camp the site of which is now marked by the town of Malton, and where many Roman remains have been found. Another detachment occupied a camp where the village of Aldborough now stands.² In fact, the Sixth Legion, while stationed at York, garrisoned all places between the Humber and the Tyne.

"Further, it is highly probable that there were small forts or outposts in the neighbourhood, connected with the principal stations by vicinal roads.

¹ *Catalogue Y. P. S.*, p. 36, No. 12. For a full discussion of this subject, see the treatise by the late Rev. C. W. King, M.A., Trin. Coll., Cambridge.

² Ecroyd Smith, *Reliquiæ Isuriane*.

The term Acaster,¹ belonging to two villages on the bank of the Ouse—Acaster Malbis and Acaster Selby—seems to indicate a Roman origin, and to



Fig. 9.—ROMAN SOLDIERS ON THE OUSE BANKS.

warrant the conjecture that they were forts established for the protection of the river.”²

¹ *Castra*, a camp.

² Wellbeloved, *Eburacum*.

The Roman idea of war was not a noble one.

“To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Manslaughter,”

was, indeed, counted by them to be the “highest pitch of human glory”. Nevertheless, Britain will ever remain in many ways a debtor to the imperial legions.

When the Romans left Britain, York is said to have been a second or another Rome; but their departure was the signal for spoliation, and, by a series of merciless wars, the city was reduced to a heap of ruins.





THE SAXON AND DANISH PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.

A Time of Strife.—Ruin of York.—First Native Army.—Edwin, King of Northumbria.—A Danish Officer.—The Danes as Builders.—York Castle.—Siward, Earl of Northumbria.



INVASION, intrigue, massacre, and bloodshed of every description, fill the records of the next six hundred years, the Britons, the Saxons, and the Danes alternately fighting their way into power, only to enjoy the most uncertain and varying fortunes. During this period York was repeatedly besieged, taken and retaken, and deprived by neglect and wanton vandalism of nearly all the magnificence with which Roman wealth and art had invested it.

We now for the first time meet with a native military organisation. "The first military establishment introduced into England was that of the Anglo-Saxons. By their system, every able-bodied adult male was compelled to serve his country and present

himself in military array in time of invasion, or any emergency. The case of emergency was decided by the governing power. Only the clergy were exempt from the universal service, and they did not always claim the privilege. The regular army, few in number, consisted only of the personal body-guard of the king and the great nobles. Most, if not all, Saxon freemen were armed."¹

One of the central figures in the Saxon Heptarchy was Edwin, King of Northumbria, the story of whose conversion to Christianity has so often been told. He claimed dominion over Mercia, a claim the Mercians firmly resisted. A battle was fought at Hatfield, near Doncaster (A.D. 633), and Edwin was killed. The head of Edwin was buried at York, in the porch or chapel of St. Gregory, in the Minster, then in course of erection. It is a very common error to confound this chapel with the church of St. Gregory, which stood on the right ascending Micklegate, between Micklegate and Tanner's Row.

The name of a soldier of Danish times is perpetuated by the name of one of the chief streets of the city. When the Danes established themselves in Northumbria, they made York their headquarters. Proceeding with the victors to the further conquest of England, the Danish governor of the city left as his deputy an officer named Godram, who resided, so says tradition, in the street now called Goodram-

¹ Harrison, *The Volunteer, Militiaman, and Regular Soldier*, p. 16.

gate.¹ Doubtless his residence was an official building standing on the site of the old Roman palace.

The original foundations of the present walls and bars are supposed to be Danish. "The Saxons, excepting their ecclesiastics, were little skilled in the art of fabrication, and the first subjection of York by the Normans is rendered more memorable by the building of two castles to keep the citizens themselves in awe, than marked by the repair of the outward fortifications, which would in some measure have contributed to their protection. . . . Thus must the preference be given to a Danish origin."²

We first read of a castle in connection with York in the reign of Athelstan (925-940), "to whom belongs the glory of having established what has since been called the Kingdom of England." He was already King of Wessex and Mercia, and on the death of the Danish king, Sithrick of Northumbria, he also seized that kingdom. The castle at York being strong, held out against him, even when the city was in his hands. The two sons of the late king entered the Humber with six hundred vessels from Denmark. York was retaken from Athelstan, and the Danes opened communication with their friends in the castle. Flushed with this success, they went to encounter Athelstan, who at this time was near the Scottish Border. The contending forces met in

¹ Monk Bar, at the extremity of Goodramgate, used to be called "Goodrome Bar". (Leland.) •

² Lockwood and Cates, *Fortifications of York*, p. 12. •

Northumberland, and the Danes sustained an overwhelming defeat. Athelstan now proceeded to York, and "razed the castle to the ground, lest it should any more be a nursery of rebellion."¹ This castle stood between the Rivers Ouse and Foss, and near their confluence, and where, in Roman times, there is supposed to have been a fortified granary.

A famous military character during the period of the restored Saxon dominion was a Dane, Siward, the eighth Earl of Northumbria, and one of the Lords of the Manor of Malton.

In 1054, Edward the Confessor, the English king, sent Siward with ten thousand men against Macbeth, who had slain Duncan, King of Scotland, and had taken possession of the Scottish throne. One reason why this grim old warrior was selected for this expedition was that the wife of the murdered Duncan was his daughter.² This event, and Siward's valour, are immortalised in Shakespeare's tragedy of *Macbeth*, Act iv, Scene 3:—

"Gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men;
An older, and a better soldier, none
That Christendom gives out!"

Macbeth was defeated, and the kingdom was given to Malcolm, son of Duncan, as the rightful ruler.

Earl Siward died in the following year, in York,

¹ "Ye Castel of Euerwyk to grounde he let caste." (Robert of Gloucester.)

² Holinshed.



ST. MARY'S ABBEY.

Opp. p. 39.

and was buried at the church of St. Olave,¹ which had been built by his own munificence.²

There is a very characteristic legend preserved concerning Siward's death. Feeling that his end was near, he cried out that though he had not fallen soldierlike on the field of battle, yet he would even now die as a soldier. "Arm me", said he, "with my impenetrable coat of mail; gird me with my faithful sword, and set my helmet upon my head; give me in my left hand my large buckler; and in my right my gilded battle-axe; that, being a valiant soldier, like a soldier I may die." We are told that his friends complied with his request, and that, sitting erect in his bed, he died.

¹ "This Abbey was rebuilt by William Rufus (1087-1100), and dedicated to St. Mary, the name by which the ruins are known to-day. This fabric was destroyed by fire in the time of King Stephen (1135-1154). In the year 1270 (Henry III) it was begun to be rebuilt under the direction of Simon de Warwic, then Abbot, who lived to see it finished in twenty-two years, and which is the fabric whose noble remains we see at this day." (*Fragmenta Vetusta*. Halfpenny. Plate xxx.) The church of St. Olave, in Marygate, is a modern structure, rebuilt after the great siege of 1644.

² *Saxon Chronicle*, A.D. 1055.

CHAPTER II.

The Battles of Fulford and Stamford Bridge.

THE great military event of this period was the traitorous and unbrotherly invasion of the North by Tostig, the outlawed Earl of Northumbria.

When Siward died, he had no son who could assume the earldom of Northumbria. The victory in Scotland had forfeited Siward the life of his eldest son and heir. In the tragedy (*Macbeth*) already referred to, Siward is thus made to acquiesce in this sore deprivation. When the Earl is informed of the death of his son, the following conversation occurs :

“ Siward : Had he his hurts before ?

Lord Rosse : Ay, on the front !

Siward : Why, then, God’s soldier be he !

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,

*I would not wish them to a fairer death !”*¹

In these circumstances, the Witenagemôt, or Great Council of the nation, elected Tostig, the son of Godwin, Earl of Wessex, as the successor of Siward.

Tostig proved himself to be thoroughly unworthy of the people’s confidence ; a cruel, unprincipled tyrant, “ rapacious to grasp, but impotent to hold,—able to ruin, but strengthless to save.” Enduring

¹ Act v. Scene 7.