

A GUIDE TO ALNWICK CASTLE

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A Guide to Alnwick Castle by C. H. Hartshorne

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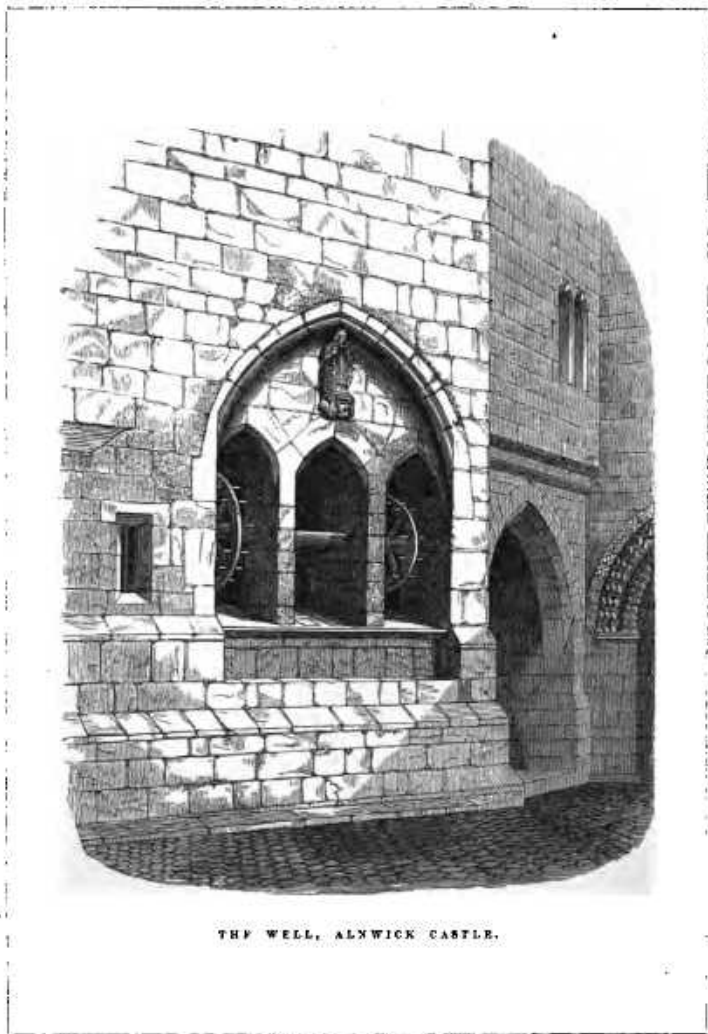
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C. H. HARTSHORNE

**A GUIDE TO
ALNWICK CASTLE**



THE WELL, ALNWICK CASTLE.

A GUIDE
TO
ALNWICK CASTLE.

BY
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RECTOR OF HOLDENBY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHILIP H. DELAMOTTE, F.S.A.



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MARK SMITH.

1865.





AS it would be useless to enter into the History of Alnwick during a period when there is nothing better than conjecture for direction, it may be sufficient to state, that all that is clearly known of it before it is first mentioned in authentic records is only what can be gathered from the name of the place itself. A reference to the Anglo-Saxon language, shews that it is so called from being the *wick* or habitation on the banks of the Alne.

A locality so highly favoured by the natural advantages of fine scenery and a salubrious climate, refreshed by the clear air from the western moors on the one side, and having the harsh atmosphere of the north changed into softness by the sea breezes wafted from Boulmer, Alnmouth, and Warkworth, on the opposite quarter, would offer irresistible attractions to the founders of a settlement.

It cannot then be wondered that when the Apostles of Religion had, with a purer faith, also introduced civilization, and at a still later period, when the feudal system had rendered the state of society a little more secure, some great chief should fix upon Alnwick as the head of his barony. There is mention made of a certain Gilbert Tysen as being its possessor at the earliest period, and it has been usual to deduce the barony from him. But upon carefully examining the proofs for such an assertion, it does not appear to rest on authority sufficient to render it worthy of credit. The information is derived entirely from the "Chro-

nicle of Alnwick Abbey," the production of an age so much later, that the fact is altogether traditionary and vague. It would be easy to indulge in other conjectures of the same kind, but it is perhaps more desirable that the general enquirer should have only those statements laid before him upon which full reliance can confidently be placed. This plan will necessarily leave out a somewhat long period of history, but it will possess the advantage of setting out with an amount of certainty, and spare the reader that perplexity which must always arise from attempting to reconcile discordant and doubtful statements with each other.

The family of De Vesci were in possession of Alnwick in the reign of Henry I. It is, however, difficult to date the time of their succession with exactness. They seem to have come after each other in the following order:—

- I. *Yvo de Vesci*, who is stated on questionable authority, to have married Alda, the daughter and heiress of Gilbert Tysen, and thus to have become seized of the barony.

- II. *Eustace Fitz-John*, who flourished during the greater portion of the reign of Henry I. He lived through the reign of Stephen, and died in 1157. He was the founder of Alnwick Abbey, and the builder of the Castle. He was Sheriff of Northumberland during the latter part of the reign of Henry I. and the beginning of Stephen.
- III. *William de Vesci*, the son of Eustace, Sheriff of Northumberland. He died in 1184, leaving his son aged 14. William de Vesci was Sheriff of Northumberland from the 3rd to the 16th year Henry II.
- IV. *Eustace de Vesci*, who was killed at Barnard Castle in 1216.
- V. *William de Vesci*, the son, succeeded, and died in 1252.
- VI. *John de Vesci*, his son, a minor, succeeded. He founded Hulne Abbey, and died in 1288.