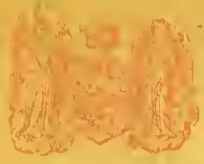

How the City of Norwich Grew into Shape.

With Five Maps.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HUDSON, M.A., F.S.A.,

Editorial Secretary of the Norfolk & Norwich Archæological Society

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HOW THE CITY OF NORWICH GREW INTO SHAPE.

How the City of Norwich Grew into Shape:

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT

THE TOPOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE CITY

(The formation of its Streets, Bridges, Market, and other distinguishing features)

FROM PRIMITIVE TIMES TILL ITS ENCLOSURE WITH A WALL IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

To which is added a Short Description of its Municipal Divisions at Various Times.

ILLUSTRATED BY FIVE MAPS.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HUDSON, M.A., F.S.A.,

Hon. Editorial Sec. of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society, and formerly Vicar of St. Peter Permountergate, Norwich.

Norwich:
AGAS H. GOOSE, RAMPANT HORSE STREET.
1896.

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M

TO

WILLIAM FREDERIC CREENY, M.A., F.S.A.,

VICAR OF

ST. MICHAEL AT THORN, NORWICH,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

MANY YEARS OF SYMPATHETIC INTERCOURSE.

PREFACE.

THE substance of this lecture is not now worked out for the first time. It suggested itself to me in 1889, when editing for the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society Kirkpatrick's *Streets and Lanes of Norwich.* In Appendix II., at the end of that treatise, I gathered up some information, in addition to Kirkpatrick's, with regard to the "Cockeys" and Watercourses, as clues to the primitive condition of the locality; and in Appendix III. I treated of the "Streets as Indications of Early Topography." Afterwards I traversed part of the same ground in a paper called "Notes about Norwich before the Thirteenth Century," published in *Norfolk Archæology*, Vol. XII., p. 25. Last winter, being asked by my friend, the Rev. W. F. Creeny, F.S.A., to give a lecture at a meeting of his debating society in St. Michael at Thorn schoolroom, I endeavoured to give to some of the intelligent inhabitants of Norwich some information about the gradual formation of the City, with whose external aspect they were so familiar. My endeavour was greatly assisted by some large coloured cartoons, made for the purpose by Mr. W. R. Weyer, and here reproduced. At the request of several friends the lecture was afterwards repeated, and has now been put into a written form for publication. I have to thank W. T. Bensly, Esq, LL.D., F.S.A., for some kind revision and suggestions.

W. H.

Norwich, May, 1896.

NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The cartoons, from which the illustrations are reproduced, having been made for the purpose of showing at a distance certain broad features and outlines which were being described at a popular lecture, strict accuracy in minuter details, especially of scale and measurement, must not be expected. If therefore in any such case the statement of the text should appear to be not exactly borne out on the map, the text must be followed rather than the map. It is hoped, however, that where smaller details are shown they will be found sufficiently accurate to convey the intended meaning.

MAP I. The features here shown are: 1, *In Primitive Times*—(*a*) the higher ground, (*b*) the valleys, (*c*) the riverside marshes and meadows; 2, *In Roman Times*—the suggested Roman road of "Berstrete" and "Holmstrete," together with its possible branch towards the north, shown across the river by dotted lines. The two crosses mark the spots where old roadways have been seen, as stated on pages 19 and 20.

MAP II. This shows the position (not the architecture) of the Castle, and the Earl's Palace, with the principal roadways converging on Tombland, up to the time of the Norman Conquest. The abrupt termination of Berstrete towards the Castle is much more obvious in reality than appears on the map.

MAP III. The changes which followed the Norman Conquest were chiefly caused by the establishment of the New Burgh and the Cathedral Monastery with its enclosed precinct. The bounds of the New Burgh are shown by dotted lines.

N.B.—In this and the two preceding maps the outline of the enclosing wall of the city is only shown for the purpose of comparing all the maps together.

MAP V., which comes next in chronological order, contains a summary of the evidence as to places and names actually mentioned in the earliest existing documents, not later than the end of the thirteenth century.

MAP IV. shows the municipal divisions and sub-divisions, as explained in pages 65 to 68. The small wards (p. 68) are numbered in their official order I. to XII.

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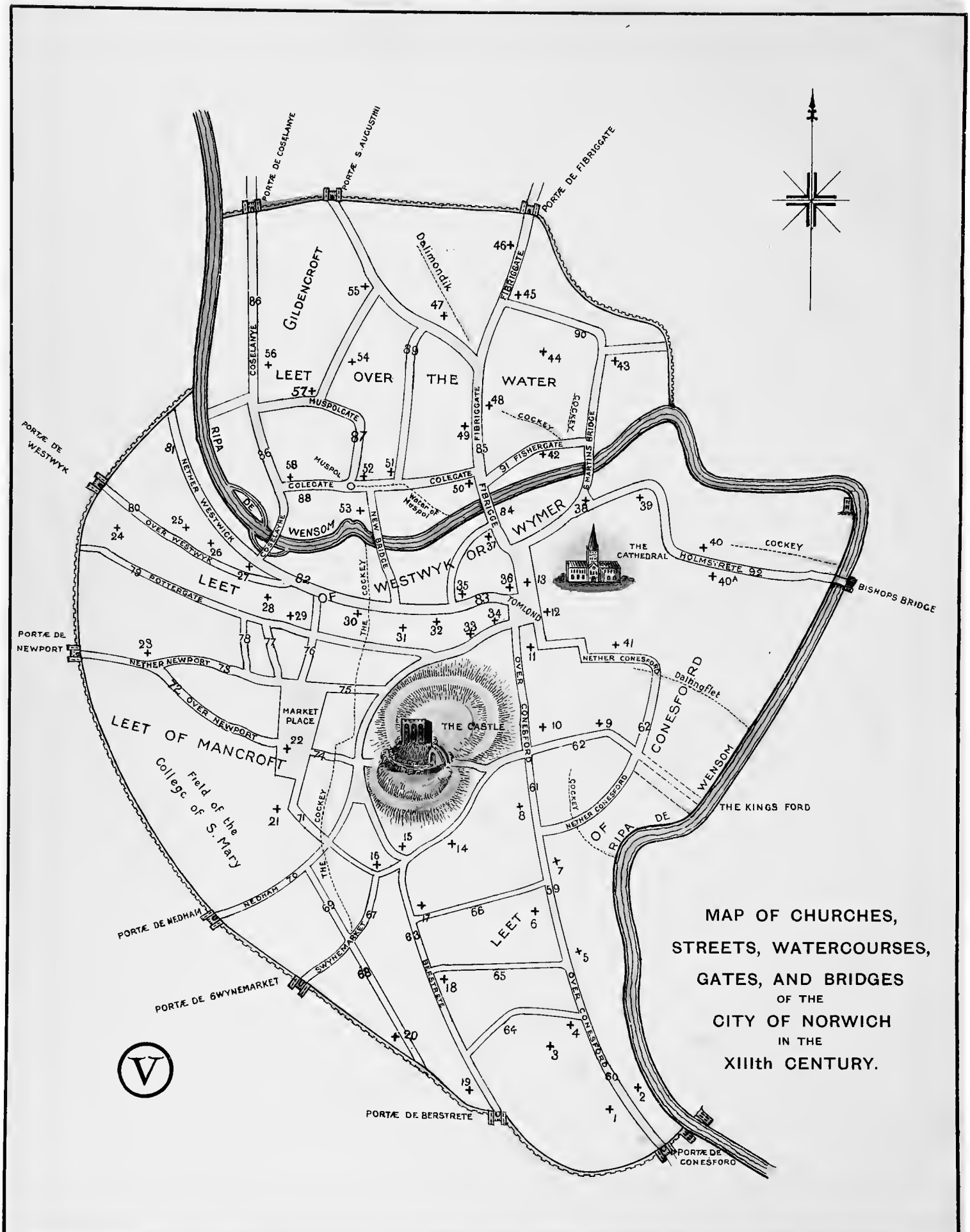


MAP OF CHURCHES, STREETS, WATERCOURSES, GATES, AND BRIDGES OF THE CITY OF NORWICH IN THE XIIIth CENTURY.

Reproduced from Cartoon drawn by W. R. Weyer.

The Churches, Streets, Gates, and Bridges of Norwich,

As actually mentioned in Documents of the THIRTEENTH CENTURY, or earlier.

CHURCHES.

1. St. Peter de Suthgate.
2. St. Olave.
3. St. Edward.
4. St. Etheldreda.
5. St. Clement de Conesford.
6. St. Julian.
7. St. Michael de Conesford.
8. St. Peter de Parmentergate.
9. St. Vedast.
10. St. John de Conesford.
11. St. Cuthbert.
12. St. Ethelbert.
13. St. Michael [on Tombland].
14. St. Martin in Ballia.
15. St. John de Berstrete.
16. All Saints de Berstrete.
17. St. Michael de Berstrete.
18. St. Bartholomew de Berstrete.
19. St. Sepulchre.
20. St. Winwaloy.
21. St. Stephen.
22. St. Peter de Manecroft.
23. St. Giles.
24. St. Benedict.
25. St. Swithun.
26. St. Margaret de Westwyk.
27. St. Laurence.
28. St. Gregory.
29. St. John de Maddermarket.
30. St. Cross.
31. St. Andrew.
32. St. Christopher.
33. St. Michael de Motstowe.
34. St. Mary the Little.
35. St. Peter de Hundegate.
36. St. George bef. the Gates of the Holy Trinity.
37. St. Simon and St. Jude.
38. St. Martin bef. the Gates of the Bishop; or, on the hill.
39. St. Matthew.
40. St. Giles' Hospital.

40a. St. Helen's.
41. St. Mary in the Marsh.
42. St. Edmund.
43. St. James.
44. Norman's Hospital [St. Paul's].
45. All Saints de Fibriggate.
46. St. Margaret de Fibriggate.
47. St. Botolph.
48. St. Saviour.
49. St. Mary Combust.
50. St. Clement de Fibriggate.
51. St. John Baptist.
52. St. George de Colegate.
53. St. Margaret de Newbriggate.
54. St. Olave.
55. St. Augustine.
56. St. Martin de Coselanye.
57. St. Mary de Coselanye.
58. St. Michael de Coselanye.

STREETS.

59. Vicus de Conesford or Over Conesford.
60. [Vicus de Suthgate].*
61. ,, Parmentergate].*
62. ,, Nether Conesford.
63. ,, Berstrete.
64. ,, Holgate.
65. ,, Skeythegate.
66. ,, Sandgate.
67. ,, Swinemarket.
68. ,, Newgate Parva
69. ,, Newgate Magna
70. ,, Nedham or Nedhamgate.
71. ,, Horsmarket.
72. ,, Over Newport.
73. ,, Nether Newport.
74. ,, Sadelgate.
75. Vicus de Hosyergate or Cutlerrowe.
76. ,, Holdthor or Smalegate.
77. ,, Stongate Magna
78. ,, Stongate Parva
79. ,, Pottergate.
80. ,, Over Westwyk.
81. ,, Nether Westwyk.
82. ,, Shereresgate, or Tonsoria.
83. ,, Hundegate.
84. ,, Fibriggate, or Cookrowe.
85. ,, Fibriggate.
86. ,, Coselanye.
87. ,, Muspolgate.
88. ,, Colegate.
89. ,, Gildenegate, or Merholt.
90. ,, Cowgate.
91. ,, Fisheregate.
92. ,, Holmstrete.

GATES.

Portæ de Conesford.
,, Berstrete.
,, Swinemarket.
,, Nedham.
,, Newport.
,, Westwyk.
,, Coselanye.
Portæ Sancti Augustini.
Portæ de Fibriggate.

BRIDGES.

Pons de Coselanye.
,, Newbrigge.
,, Fibrigge.
Pons Sancti Martini.
,, Episcopi [Bishop's].

* These two names do not actually occur as names of streets, only as the names of the churches numbered 1 and 8. It is thought, however, that the names of these churches imply that at some early time the street of Conesford must have been called by these two names. See *Streets and Lanes*, p. 3; *Norfolk Archæology*, xii., pp. 55 and 56.

HOW THE CITY OF NORWICH GREW INTO SHAPE.

I.—Introduction.

THE object of this little book is not to describe the municipal, commercial, or social growth of the city of Norwich, so much as its geographical, or (to use a more strictly correct word) topographical development. It is an endeavour to draw a picture of what the site on which the city stands must have been in primitive times before it was inhabited, and then to trace out (according to the views of the writer) the various settlements, changes, and other circumstances which caused it to assume the outward form which it maintained from the time when it was enclosed in 1253 down to the present century.

Subject.—The topographical growth of the City within the walls.

It must be understood that my story does not concern the modern growth which is now taking place under our eyes. It needs no searching out of hidden causes to explain why and how a new suburban Norwich, with its hundreds of villas and miles of streets of artizans' dwellings, has enveloped the old city and almost blotted out the line of its walls. My narrative will be confined to the old city within that line. It may easily be traced, and is plainly visible on the map of modern Norwich.

Mr. Woodward's similar enquiry.

In undertaking my present task I feel bound at the outset to allude to a former venture on something of the same lines by a well-known writer, Mr. Samuel Woodward. In the appendix to his *History of Norwich Castle* are printed some maps intended to illustrate his views of primitive Norwich, and of its condition at several subsequent epochs. As the maps by which I have illustrated my conclusions differ from his in some important respects, it is due to my readers to point out where I think he is in error, and on what evidence my own conclusions have been mainly formed.

His views as to the Castle Mound and the former level of the river.

In the first place, Mr. Woodward's views rested primarily on a belief in the great natural strength of the hill on which the Castle stands. He pictures it to himself in A.D. 500 as a commanding height on a promontory formed by the Wensum and the Yare. These rivers, he thought, filled the valleys at that time so far above their present level that all the low-lying lands on both sides up to Hellesdon on the Wensum, and to Earlham on the Yare, were permanently covered with water. "It is no matter of surprise," he says, "that on a place thus fortified by nature" the Britons should have set a fortress. He

accepted the theory that this fortress was surrounded by three concentric ditches, adding that this "indicated its British origin." He gives a sectional drawing to shew that the two outermost of these ditches were so deep, and the level of the river so high, that they were furnished from the river with "a constant supply of water."

Now this great change in the level of the Norfolk rivers within historic times has been questioned on geological grounds, and there is good reason to suppose that by A.D. 500, when the Angles were beginning to settle, their permanent level could not have been very different to the present, though the tidal changes were much more marked. Apart, however, from this question of broad and impassable rivers, the whole theory of the natural advantages of the site of the Castle hill* falls to the ground, in face of the recently-ascertained fact that the mound is entirely artificial, so that from the top of the Cattle Market to Tombland the ground must have fallen away in a gradual slope. The spot, therefore, was not such as the Britons would have selected as a natural place of refuge.

Neglect of documentary evidence and local names.

Besides thus being unconsciously misled by a belief in physical features which did not exist, Mr. Woodward could not have made much use of the early city documents, nor did he sufficiently regard the evidence of ancient names. Although, for instance, the names of the streets and the dedications of several of the churches on the

* By the expression "Castle Hill" or "Castle Mound" the reader is intended to understand the mound within the moat, on which the keep stands, not any portion of the Cattle Market, often called "The Hill."

northern side of the river are just as Saxon or Danish as those of Conesford or Westwick, he represents Coslany and Fishergate in the time of Edward the Confessor (1050) as quite uninhabited and separated from the other side by a river as broad as the whole distance from St. Simon and St. Jude's church * to the site of St. Clement's. Or again, although the "bridge of Coslany" is frequently mentioned in early (thirteenth century) deeds, he supposes it not to have been built even in his map of 1500, thinking that the river at that spot was still too wide.

Later information.

Since Woodward's time a great deal has been done to assist an enquirer in working out this branch of local history. Mr. Harrod† took the lead by disproving the theory of the three great ditches which had been supposed to encircle the Castle Mound. This he did by the incontrovertible evidence of minute descriptions of the boundaries of lands gathered from the deeds in the possession of the Corporation. He thus recovered a knowledge of the true character of the earthwork which surrounded three sides of the Castle. Another great step was that already mentioned, the establishment of the fact that the Castle Mound is not natural, but artificial. Excavations purposely carried out during the clearing of the basement of the keep shewed conclusively that made soil extended to a depth of 30 ft. below the level of the present basement floor. Meanwhile, observations made throughout the kingdom have led to

Mr. Harrod and the Castle Ditches.

Recent excavations in the Castle keep. The mound artificial.

* That the river bed extended originally almost to the site of St. Simon and St. Jude's church is evidenced by the black alluvial soil turned up in the drainage trench just made (April, 1896).

† Harrod's *Castles and Convents of Norfolk*, p. 126, &c.

the conclusion that such great artificial mounds of circular shape with deep moats and outlying earthworks were not the work of Britons who used natural hills, or Romans who made square camps, but of the Teutonic chiefs, Angles, Saxons, or Jutes, or at a later time of the Danes.*

Such mounds Teutonic or Danish.

In pursuing this subject, therefore, I have had the advantage of starting my enquiry from a surer basis than my predecessors. It only remains for me to explain on what further grounds I have formed my own conclusions.

Additional foundation of the present enquiry.

It would not be far wrong to say that (apart from historical facts, such as the building of the Cathedral or the establishment of the New Burgh) they owe their origin almost entirely to a systematic study of the earliest existing documents relating to the City of Norwich, which are of the thirteenth century. As many of my readers may not be aware of the wealth of evidence to be thus obtained, I will explain what the documents are which so materially assist in our present investigation. They are of two classes, though strictly speaking of one character. They relate to the conveyance of lands, shops, houses, rents, &c., in the city. The practice of early times was as follows: — When the owner of a piece of land or a house in the city sold or leased it to some one else, the transaction was recorded on a small piece of parchment according to an almost invariable form, which contained, amongst other things, the names and probably the occupation of the parties, the character of the property conveyed, the parish in which it was situated, and what

Early Deeds of Conveyance, separate or enrolled.

* G. T. Clark's *Mediæval Military Architecture in England.*

was on each side of it, north, south, east, and west. Then the two parties, in company with ten or twelve of the neighbouring householders, went to the Tolhouse (now the Guildhall), where the four Bailiffs, who then ruled the city, presided over the city court. In that court the deed of conveyance was read and acknowledged publicly by the vendor, endorsed by the common clerk, and delivered to the vendee. After that if the vendee were a "citizen" he might claim to have it enrolled. This was done by copying it on a large sheet of parchment, slightly altering the form and leaving out the names of the witnesses. When this sheet of parchment was full the clerk began another, and when it took his fancy he had a number fastened together and began a fresh set.

Their large number in the thirteenth century.

Now although the deeds themselves were private property, yet, for some reason or other, several hundreds of them are found among the records belonging to the Corporation. They begin as far back as 1240. The enrolments commence in 1285. Between that date and 1300 there are about 1000 deeds enrolled, and if we add some 200 more which are not enrolled we have something like 1200 descriptions, more or less minute, of places in Norwich, as they were in the latter half of the thirteenth century. Not to mention other information,

Their topographical value.

it is plain that we have here the means of ascertaining the existence, names, and directions of all the principal streets and most of the smaller lanes at that time.

Importance of their evidence (when unmixed with that of later periods) as a clue to earlier history.

Although many writers, especially Kirkpatrick and Harrod, have made great use of these deeds for various researches, I am not aware that any one hitherto has made an exhaustive study of this early period with a

view to separate it from all that followed, and so make it disclose the secrets of earlier and unrecorded history. We may easily see the advantage of doing so. First the enclosing the city with a bank was done in 1253, at which time of course the city gates were made where they were wanted. We may be sure therefore that the roads for which the gates were then made were the old roads which had been formed in the course of many generations to meet the requirements of early settlers or of later inhabitants. Further, from a knowledge of what these streets and lanes were popularly called in the thirteenth century, we may fairly argue the date of their origin. Saxon and Danish names of streets, especially in conjunction with Saxon or Danish dedications of churches, furnish a fair proof that the districts where they occur were settled before the Norman conquest; and, again, the direction of these streets will give no uncertain clue as to the way in which the early inhabitants became organised into a united borough. One more piece of valuable information to be derived from these early deeds must be noticed. Besides streets and lanes, it not unfrequently happens that a piece of land is described as abutting on a "cockey" or a "course of water." These were certainly natural streams, some of which flowed constantly, some perhaps only after heavy rain. The largest, which flowed between the Castle and the Market, has been traced out by Mr. Harrod.* I have endeavoured † to trace out several others which are mentioned as still in existence in the thirteenth

The early highways.

Their earliest names.

Their original direction and object.

The "cockeys" or watercourses.

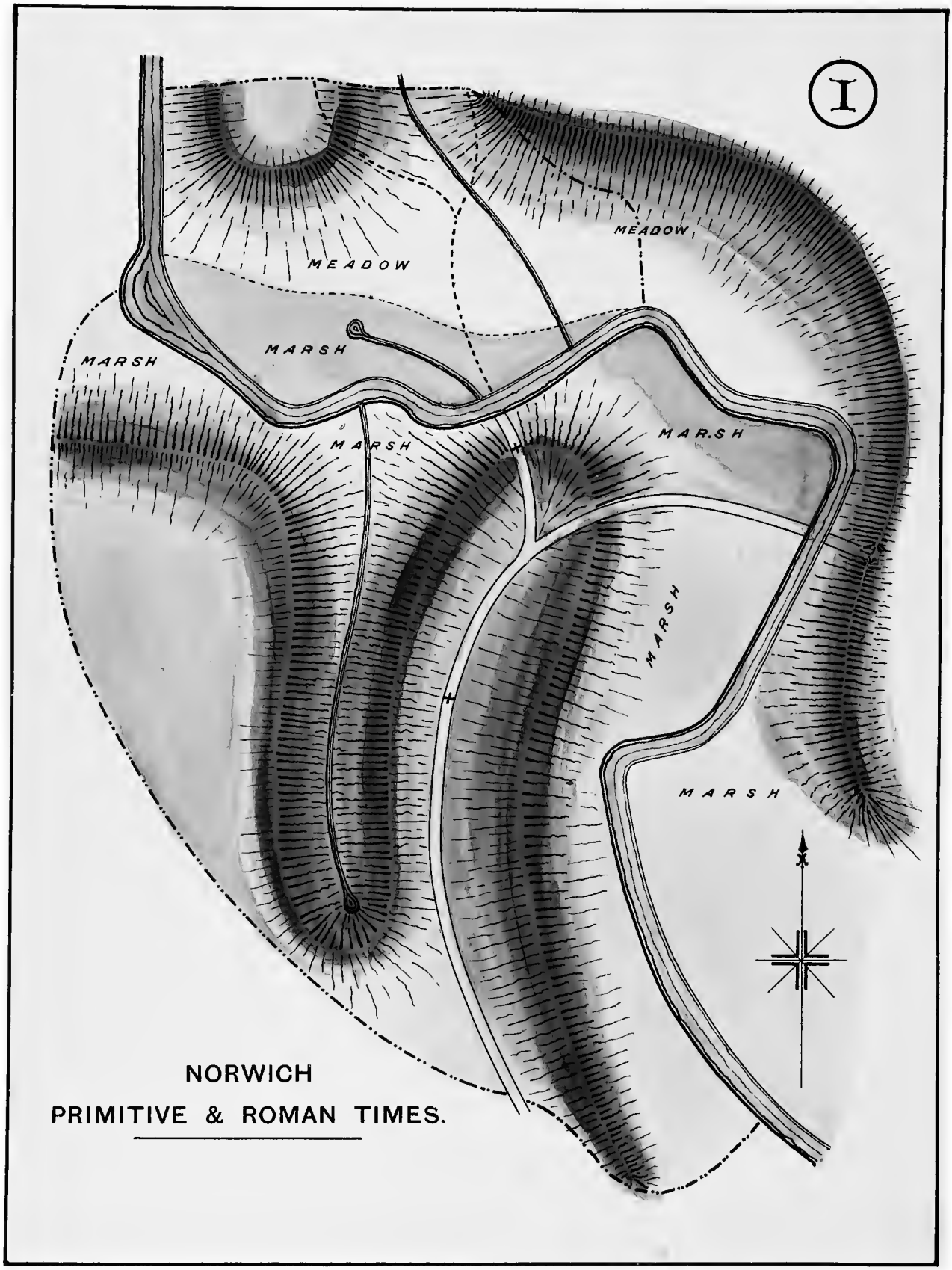
* Harrod's *Castles and Convents*, p. 130.

† *Streets and Lanes*, Appendix II.

century. They help us to form a clearer conception of the primitive features of the locality.

The thirteenth century map a key-map for this enquiry.

It is for these reasons that I have placed as the frontispiece of this book a map of Norwich in the thirteenth century, because its evidence is undeniable. It contains a sort of summary of our earliest reliable information. If, therefore, our theories as to still earlier history agree with what we here find to have actually existed in the thirteenth century, we may feel reasonably justified in accepting them. If they are contrary to that evidence we cannot but doubt their correctness.



Reproduced from Cartoon drawn by W. R. Weyer.

II.—Primitive Features of the Locality.

(MAP I.)

WE may now go back to the beginning of our subject, and try to picture to ourselves what the locality must have been like before it was inhabited by any permanent settlers, say 2,000 years ago, when Julius Cæsar had not yet landed on the shores of Britain. It is not difficult to trace out the principal features of the ground.

1. Beginning from Bracondale * the line of Ber Street stretched towards the north in the form of a high ridge. On the east (or river side) it fell away steeply to the level of the river. On the west (or market side) it sloped, a little at first and more distinctly afterwards, towards a valley which, beginning to the south of All Saints Green, Ber Street ridge.

* It is to be understood that, especially in the earlier sections of a work like the present, the name of a place is only intended to indicate a spot or locality *now so called*. It becomes wearisome to repeat such expressions as "site of" or "now known as," &c.

The Market valley.

widened and deepened till it became lost in the riverside meadow of St. Andrew's. Through this valley flowed a stream, beyond which the ground rose again towards Chapel Field, St. Peter Mancroft, and St. Giles. The end of the Ber Street ridge would be somewhere by St. John Timberhill. From that point it began to descend, the line curving rather to the north-east. It terminated in a fan-shaped piece of more level ground, not much elevated above the river, the greater part of which was afterwards known by the name of Tomlond,† now Tombland.

Tombland.

St. Giles' ridge.

2. The line of St. Giles' Street formed a ridge similar in one respect to Ber Street. It fell steeply towards the river level on the north, as that of Ber Street did towards the east.

High grounds on the north and north-east.

3. On the opposite or northern side of the river the ground rose steeply from the river to the site of St. Martin's Gates, and continued to St. Augustine's Gates. Between these and Magdalen Street Gates it made a dip into a valley which contained a stream coming from the direction of Catton. It then rose again and became part of the high ground of Mousehold, which then, as now, must have pressed close to the river from the Cavalry Barracks to Bishop's Bridge, and on almost to the Thorpe Railway Station.

The river-side marshes.

4. I have said nothing about the low-lying lands afterwards known as Conesford, Westwick, Coslany, Fishergate, or the Cow Holm. Most likely at the time of which we are speaking they were all too constantly

† The first syllable of "Tom-lond" is probably a Danish word meaning "open" or "vacant."

under water to be habitable. It was not that the actual level of the river was higher, but the influence at this early time of the sea tides on the river water was very much greater. Even now, when the only inlet from the sea is by the narrow mouth at Gorleston, an ordinary tide backs up the river, and causes a rise of some two feet at Foundry (now Thorpe) Bridge. When a strong north wind drives a high spring tide up the river the unprotected marshes are flooded as far up as Thorpe. Two thousand years ago the sand bank on which Yarmouth is built was not yet formed, and at every tide a great mass of sea water must have flowed straight up to Reedham and on up the river towards Norwich. Up to Norwich and beyond (whether by salt water or fresh) all the low riverside lands would be flooded. But for the same reason, when the tide receded large expanses of mud would be left, as at Breydon now. Where the space between the banks was not great it might even then have been possible to ford the river at low tide. The question does not need to be suggested at this point of our investigation. It will be an important one at our two next periods.

Tidal flow and ebb.

Low-water fords.

It is hardly necessary for me to stop to give any special proofs for the details of the picture I have drawn of the primitive features of the locality. The ridges of Ber Street and St. Giles' Street; the valley of the Market; the high ground from St. Martin's Gates to Bishop's Bridge; or the lower ground which borders each side of the river from Heigham to Carrow are to the present day perfectly plain to any one who takes a walk through the city for the purpose of satisfying himself on these

These primitive features still to be traced.

points. The former existence of a valley and stream between St. Augustine's Gates and Magdalen Street Gates is not quite so obvious. It may be left till we come to the Saxon Period of our story.

Was there a British Settlement at Norwich? Probably not.

Before we go on we must ask a question, to which, however, it is impossible to give a definite answer. If we had come to this spot in the days of the ancient Britons should we have found here anything in the way of a British settlement or fortress? As has been already observed, the theory that the Britons would have found in the Castle hill a place of great natural strength suitable for a stronghold must be held to have been disproved. In any case, as regards the Britons, they certainly had nothing whatever to do with the growth of the present city of Norwich. Not even a single name remains to indicate that they ever occupied the spot.

III.—The Romans.

MAP I.

THERE was once an accepted tradition that Norwich Castle having been built by a British king Gurguntus, was enlarged and surrounded with a wall by Julius Cæsar, who landed in Britain B.C. 55. Probably Julius Cæsar never penetrated into Norfolk at all. It was one hundred years after his time before this part of the country was permanently conquered by the Romans. They remained in possession till about A.D. 410. The question we have asked as to whether there was a British settlement at Norwich, must be also asked with regard to the Romans. In the later days of their occupation mention is made of a place somewhere in this neighbourhood, called by them "Venta Icenorum." The generally-received opinion at present is that it was at Caistor, where are still remains of a very large Roman camp. But it is also held by some that Norwich was the "Venta Icenorum." The decision of the question

Legendary History.

The Roman "Venta Icenorum." Where was it?

Various Theories.

turns chiefly on the calculation of distances on Roman roads, the direction of which in many places has long ago been lost and perhaps may never be recovered.* In favour of Venta being at Caistor and not at Norwich is the unquestionable existence of a Roman camp at Caistor, whereas at Norwich no trace of Roman walls or banks has ever been found, nor yet of any Roman building, only a few articles of pottery and some coins. Some have thought that Caistor was a Roman camp built to keep watch over a strong British "Venta"† at Norwich. But it has already been shewn that the existence of such a British "Gwent" at Norwich is extremely doubtful. Once more, a view has been held that when the Romans deserted Caistor in 410 the native inhabitants migrated to Norwich as a place of greater security, occupying the old British stronghold, and even bringing building materials with them, as some one at a later period expressed in a rhyme,—

> "Caistor was a City when Norwich was none,
> And Norwich was built of Caistor stone."

This theory also rests on a belief in the existence at Norwich of a British stronghold, or at least of a naturally strong site. As to "Caistor stone," the deserted Britons would have found it rather hard to break down Roman masonry to carry away with them, and there is no masonry in Norwich, even in a church, which can be proved to be earlier than the Norman Conquest. On the

* The mention of Norwich as "Guenta" by two of the Norman chroniclers, who knew nothing of the locality, can hardly have much weight. The Anglo-Saxon chronicler, speaking of its burning by Sweyn, calls it "Northwic"; and it is not pretended that the name "Venta" was ever in local use.

† The Roman word "Venta" is assumed to imply a previously existing British "Gwent" or clearing in the forest.

whole, unless the line of Roman roads can be definitely traced and the measurements as recorded in the *Itineraries* can be accurately gauged so as to prove beyond doubt that "Venta Icenorum" must have been at Norwich, the evidence certainly seems to be in favour of deciding that it was not.

Most likely at Caistor, not at Norwich,

In saying this I am not denying the existence in Norwich of anything Roman. There is no building, no trace of any Roman camp or town, but I believe that two of our streets, Ber Street and the lower part of Bishopgate Street, are relics of a Roman road which passed over the spot, and which, if so, constitutes the first dawn of the history of Norwich.

A Roman road crossed over the site of Norwich.

The argument in favour of this statement needs to be set out somewhat fully in order to be clearly appreciated. I must ask my readers to look at the map of Norwich at the beginning of this volume, shewing the names which were in use in the thirteenth century, as they are actually found in the earliest documents. Let them notice the names of the roads. I purposely call them "roads" and not streets. We must for the time put out of our minds our common use of the word "street" for all the main roads of a town. If we look, then, at the list of roadways which accompanies this map, we find a large number of the roads called by names ending in the word "gate"; Pottergate, Nedhamgate, Cowgate, Fishergate, and many others. This ending was the Danish word for "way." The names meant Potter-way, Nedham-way, and so on. We must next observe that the documents from which these names are gathered, were written by the official clerks or the professional scriveners in Latin, but the

Evidence for this statement.

Frequent occurrence in Norwich in the thirteenth century of the Danish termination "gate" ("*i.e.*, way.")

English-speaking vendors and Latin-writing clerks.

information which was given to them must have been given in English. The English owner of a house which he was selling, on being asked where it was, would say, "in Pottergate"; the clerk would write down "in vico de Pottergate," which was his way of expressing in Latin "in the highway or road of Pottergate." We may call this an unnecessary repetition, for it was like saying "in the highway of Potter-way." But we do just the same now, when we speak of "Pottergate Street" or "Cowgate Street." Very likely the Norman clerk did not know that "gate" meant "way"; no more do most people at the present time.

Among these "gates" two highways have the Roman termination "strete," Berstrete & Holmstrete.

But while we see on our map numerous "gates" all over the city, we cannot help being struck by the appearance among them of two names, which instead of ending in "gate," end in "strete." We have seen what "gate" meant. It was the common word by which the Danes called a "highway" and we cannot doubt that most of the highways so called had existed in Danish times, and had retained the names which had then been given them. When then we find in these same documents one highway called "Berstrete"* and another called "Holmstrete," we must account for this fact. We must explain the "stretes" as we have explained the "gates." Now "strete" is a Latin word "strata," meaning not only a way, but an artificially levelled or even paved way. The clerks would of course be familiar with this word, but it was not they who added it here. If they had taken a fancy to call the road a "street," they would not have put "strete" in English at the end of the word; they would have written "in via strata de Ber" or "in via strata de Holm." They

* Always written as one word, "Berstrete," "Holmstrete."

did occasionally use this expression, though very seldom. They almost always kept to the word "vicus," and so houses in these two highways are always described as "in vico de Berstrete" or "in vico de Holmstrete" just as it is with the "gates." The clerk was told a house was in "Berstrete" as he had been told another was in "Pottergate," and in both cases he left the termination as he found it used by his informant. With his Latin word "vicus" for highway, it did not sound more odd to repeat "strete" at the end of Ber than it did to repeat "gate" at the end of Potter. Now that we have come to call all our town highways "streets," we notice the repetition in one case but not in the other. We do not mind saying "Pottergate Street," but we should laugh at any one who said "Berstrete Street." Yet "Berstrete" is just as much the old name of the one street as "Pottergate" is of the other, and if we strike off "strete" in one case we ought to strike off "gate" in the other, and speak of Potter Street, Cow Street, Fisher Street.

If then the Latin-writing clerks did not invent this termination "strete" to "Berstrete" * and "Holmstrete," how did it get there? So far as I can judge there is only one explanation of these two names, and that is, that the same people who called the other highways "gates," found something special † in the case of these two highways which caused them to be called "stretes." In short, these two "stretes" formed two portions of a

* The word "Ber-strete" means the "street on the berg," a Danish word for hill; "Holm-strete" is the "street on the holm" or island meadow.

† The Saxon or Danish roadways would be merely beaten down by traffic, in marked contrast to a Roman road.

Roman paved way which still retained among the natives the Roman name of a "strata" or "street." Just in the same way all over the country when the English settlers established a "ton" or village on an old Roman "street" they called it "Stratton" or the "town on the street."

These two "stretes" at a very early time abruptly broken off.

If we look again at the map we shall notice another peculiarity of these two streets. "Berstrete" begins at Bracondale, and runs in a straight line along the top of the ridge and then comes to an abrupt termination. Similarly "Holmstrete" begins at Bishop's Bridge, and runs in a straight line for some distance, when it also is abruptly terminated. The reason why they are thus broken off I hope to shew presently. Evidently their original course was continued in the direction in which we find them where they are broken off, and, as I think, they united so as to form one road. "Berstrete" (or rather the Roman road afterwards so called) would keep on the highest part of the ground which sloped down towards the north-east, and when it reached Tombland would strike off to the east past the future site of the Cathedral and join the line of "Holmstrete." Soon after it left Tombland it would enter a swampy marsh and no doubt be carried across it in the form of a raised causeway, which the Romans could easily construct. Then it would reach the permanent bed of the river, and that would have to be crossed by a ford. The place was well suited for the purpose, for the wide tidal marsh of the "holm" would prevent the river from being very deep at that spot, and once over the Roman soldiers would come immediately on the high ground of Mousehold, and continue their road where they wished without any physical obstacle.

Suggestion that they had originally been one Roman road crossing the river by a ford at Bishop's Bridge.

In claiming that I have thus traced the line of a Roman road over the site of Norwich, I am not bound to decide where it came from or whither it went. Its probable starting-point is obviously Caistor by Norwich. From there it might have crossed the Yare at Trowse, and ascended the hill of Bracondale, or it might have crossed the Taes at Caistor and the Yare by a ford at Harford Bridges, and so proceeded to the line of Berstrete. Its destination after crossing the Wensum at Bishop's Bridge may have been Caister by Yarmouth.*

Such a roadway seen when a well was sunk in the keep in 1784.

Besides the evidence of a Roman road derived from the Latin termination "strete," it is possible that the road itself was actually seen in the last century. It is related in Gough's *Camden's Britannia* that when a well was being sunk in the basement of the Castle keep in 1784, the workmen "when they came to the level of the ground without the ditches found a regular and beaten foot-path, used before the hill was thrown up." This statement rests on the authority of Sir John Fenn,† a reliable witness. What was seen can hardly have been other than the Roman road just described.

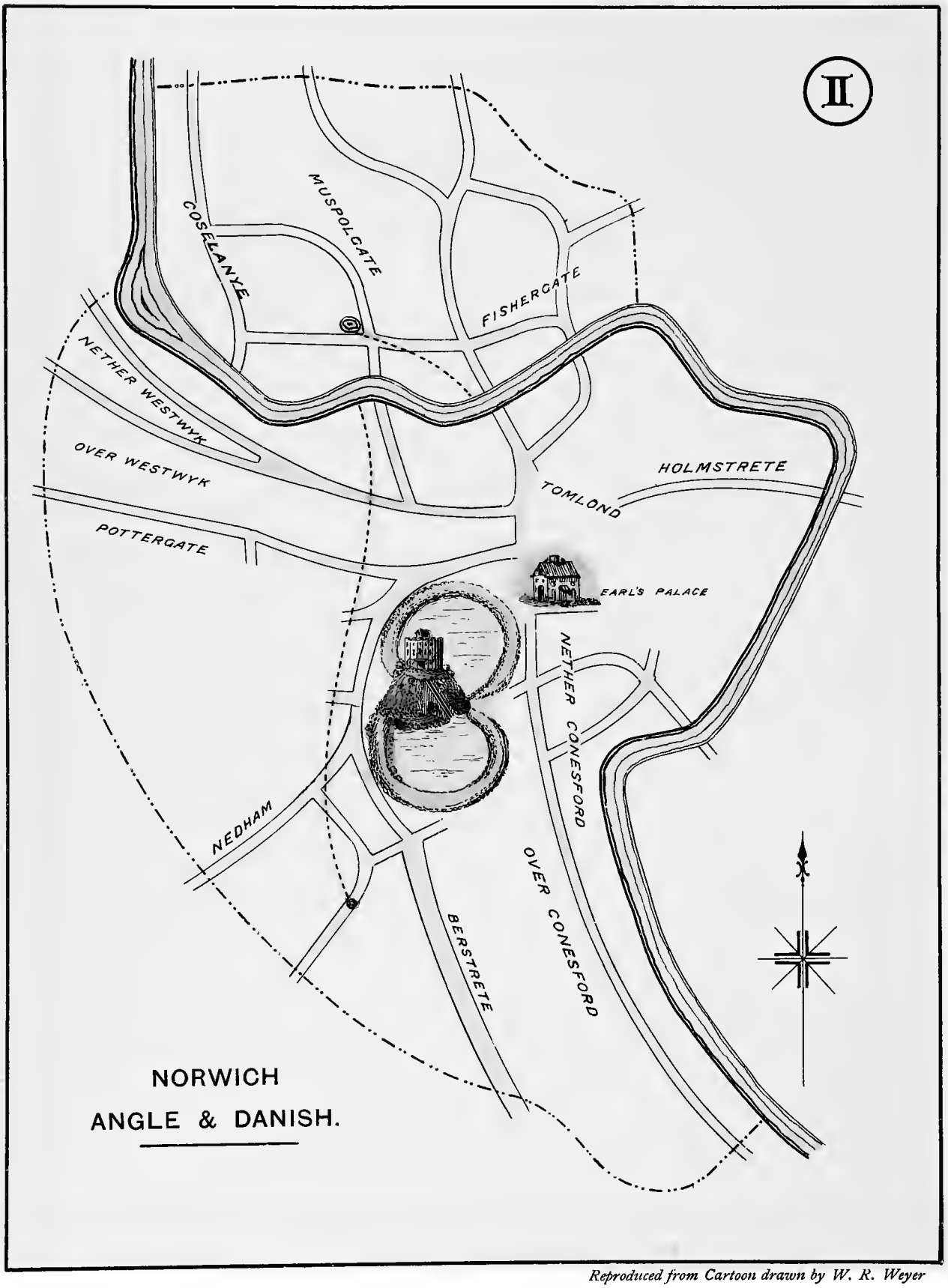
Another such road seen in Wensum Street, perhaps a branch of the former, crossing by a ford at Fye Bridge.

Possibly when the road reached Tombland and turned off to Bishop's Bridge, it may also have taken another branch and crossed over the river by a ford at Fye Bridge. It will be shewn that there must have been a ford there in very early times, and here also such a road may

* The route would be by the line of Plumstead Road, not the road up Gas House hill, which is modern.

† Sir John Fenn's copy of the Norfolk portion of Gough's book is in the possession of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society. He has marked in it all the statements which he himself gave to Gough, and this statement is so marked.

have been actually seen. Some years ago in excavating for foundations at Messrs. Geldart's in Wensum Street, about 12 ft. below the level of the road there was found a roadway paved with round cobble stones, such as may be often seen used in old masonry. It sloped down towards the river bed, and had all the appearance of leading to a ford. In this case, however, there is no evidence on either side of the river of any road being described as a "strete." Muspolgate is once called "Muspolstrete," but only once, whereas "Berstrete" and "Holmstrete," though perpetually occurring, never in a single instance have their termination varied.



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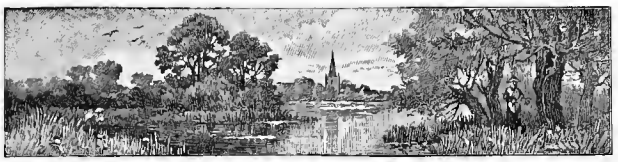


IV.—The Angles and the Danes.

MAP II.

THE Romans left Britain to itself in A.D. 410. If I am not mistaken the road I have traced was the sole relic which remained of their presence on the site of our city, and of that road there could have been little need for perhaps 200 years. It seems likely that with that exception the spot fell back into its primitive condition. A new day, however, was about to dawn in the advent of a race of men from across the sea, who (whatever may have happened before their coming) were assuredly the first founders of the city of Norwich which we know to-day. The Angles may have begun to ravage the shores and even settle in East Anglia by A.D. 500, but nothing certain is known about their progress for several generations. To get our first definite information about Norwich we must step over 640 years from the departure of the Romans. When William the Conqueror sent his commissioners throughout his English dominions to make

The coming of the Angles.

The testimony of "Domesday Book."

the minute enquiries, the results of which were compiled in the *Domesday Book*, he told them not only to put down what they found then, but what had been the condition of the places they visited when the land was still under the rule of the Saxon King Edward the Confessor. In that Survey, then, we have a glimpse into the state of Norwich about A.D. 1050. We may well contemplate with surprise the marvellous change which has taken place. On the uninhabited locality traversed by a single road had grown up one of the largest towns in the Kingdom. It could boast of 1320 burgesses, a number surpassed only by London and York. It had a castle, and was the residence of an earl.* It had ceased to be an ordinary township; it was organised as a burgh and rated as a hundred. Yet, though the *Domesday Survey* clearly reveals the importance and populousness of the place in the days of the Confessor, it gives us no details of its extent or the arrangement of its streets. Here we find the great value of our thirteenth century map. With its help we can fill in the Domesday picture, and find a great many clues to the tracing out of the previous growth of the burgh.

Norwich about A.D. 1050.

May work back from "Domesday" with the help of the thirteenth century map.

Before gathering up these clues we must bear in mind two facts. First, the 640 years had been witnessing a great change in the condition of the river valley, owing to the fact that a great sand bank at Yarmouth had blocked the mouth of the estuary. Mr. Woodward seems to have considered that this process took place almost suddenly, for between 1050 and 1100 he reduces the

Drying of the marshes through the blocking up of the river mouth.

* Canute divided the Kingdom into four Earldoms, one of which was that of East Anglia.

river in his maps by half its width. It is surely more likely to have been the work of centuries. Doubtless all through the times of the Romans the weight of the sea tides driving up the river had been decreasing. Riverside mud banks, flooded at every tide, had become grassy marshes and then habitable meadows. Long before 1050, as we shall see, the river as it flowed through Norwich from Coslany to Fye Bridge must have been reduced to its present width, with all the low lands on both sides thickly populated. The other fact is that the growth of the burgh had been due to two distinct races, Angles and Danes. The Angles had come first, beginning between A.D. 500 and 600. Then about 850 the Danes had got the mastery, and till the Norman Conquest the predominant influence was Danish. They were kindred races, but their languages differed in many ways. The early names, therefore, may help us a little to distinguish the settlements of each race.

The Angles, and the Danes.

Now let us turn once more to what I may call our key map. And first we will take the Castle. It is on a mound surrounded by a moat and guarded on three sides by earthen banks, forming two horseshoe-shaped enclosures, one called the Castellond (or Castle Land), the other the Castle Meadow. It stands in the middle of the town, and yet apart from it. It is not the centre to which the streets lead; they skirt it or go round it. The question then suggests itself; was the Castle planted in the middle of the town after it was settled, or did the town grow up at the foot of the Castle? There can be little doubt that the latter was the course of events. The Teutonic chiefs who formed these great strongholds did

The first beginning of modern Norwich. The throwing up of the Castle Mound.

so to consolidate their own power; settlers gathered round the "burhs" because of the protection and trade which they afforded. We may assume, then, that the first origin of the City of Norwich was the formation of the castle. Some early Angle chief sailing up the river, and having attained to a position of great power, selected this spot on which to plant a "burh."* He dug out a huge circular ditch and piled up the earth inside, and on the mound thus formed he placed a timber fort, and a stockade round the edge. Outside the moat he formed his two enclosures, each with its bank and ditch.

It blocked the line of "Berstrete."

In speaking of the Roman "Berstrete," we observed that in the later maps it terminates abruptly at its northern end. The reason is now plain. The Angle chief set his "burh" right across it and, if the pathway seen in 1784 was the continuation of Berstrete, he piled up his mound on the top of it. Such a road was of no use to him. The river was his highway. When the place grew into a town and the street was used once more, it was diverted towards the north-west, and the name Berstrete clung to it as far as Orford Hill.

The raiser of the Mound may have been Uffa, about A.D. 570.

Who did this great work is uncertain. There is a tradition that it was done by Uffa, the first to call himself King of the East Angles, about A.D. 570. That the founder must have been a chief of very commanding position is obvious. There is also one piece of evidence that there was a *king* here at a very early time. The

* By a "burh" is understood a fortified house or fort set up by Saxons or Danes on a mound thrown up for the purpose. It is to be distinguished from "burgh," a name first given to certain towns towards the end of the tenth century.

entrance to the "burh" or castle was on the east, between the banks of the two enclosures, by the line of what is now Rose Lane. This led from the castle to the district called "Conesford" or "Cyninges-ford," meaning the king's ford. The ford must have been there first; the district was so called from the ford. Where, then, was this ford? The line of Rose Lane would lead to the neighbourhood of Foundry Bridge, and this would be a very likely place for the chief and his followers to use for a passage over the river. He would not want, as the Romans had done, to keep on the higher ground. He would only want to go to some place on the waterside, doubtless Thorpe. He himself, we may be sure, would not have condescended to walk; he would have taken to his ship. His humbler followers would take the line of the Thorpe Road. The reason why this line of communication was not maintained will appear directly, when we speak of the Saxon burgh. This ford was for the use of the early inhabitants of the Castle only. It was not wanted by the inhabitants of the more developed burgh. Not till the close of the eighteenth century was a passage over the river at that point felt to be a public need.

"Conesford" or King's ford.

Near Foundry Bridge.

This passage abandoned till the eighteenth century.

From the Castle we may pass to the settlement, or separate settlements, which grew up about it, and see if we can in any way trace their progress. Turning again to our thirteenth century map, it will be seen that in three districts, Conesford, Westwyk, and Newport, there is a distinction made between "Nether" and "Over." They each have a "lower" street and an "upper" street. Of these three, Newport is known to be Norman, and in that case the names may have been merely the result of

Traces of the early settlements.

an earlier practice. Westwyk was most likely Danish. Conesford is unquestionably a Saxon name, and connected, as we have seen, with the castle and the first origin of the city. What, then, can we learn from the names of "Nether" and "Over" Conesford? We are dealing, it must be remembered, with a people who approached the locality entirely by water up the river, and who, at least for a few generations, must have used that mode of communication alone, and, when they settled down as traders, have traded chiefly in fish. The map shews that the district of Nether Conesford was exactly the place to suit the needs of the first settlers. It was just where the estuary came to an end and the river was about to begin. It had free access to both, and it was right under the wing of the powerful chief of the castle. There a little settlement was planted and grew. After a while the settlers spread along all the riverside meadow that lay at the foot of the Ber-strete ridge. Then a new condition arose. They wanted to establish a communication with other settlements, at first perhaps native Britons, afterwards with other Angle villages. They exchanged their fish and salt and other things only to be obtained from the sea for the produce of the land. A road was made by the traffic to and from the country on ground a little more raised above the risk of a flood. This was lined with settlers on both sides, and at a later time was called Over Conesford to distinguish it from the broad meadow where the settlement had begun, and which was called Nether Conesford. The same process must have taken place many generations afterwards, when the Danes occupied Westwyk. Nether Westwyk was the riverside meadow first occupied, Over

"Nether" & "Over" Conesford.

Nether Conesford, the riverside meadow. Over Conesford, the higher ground behind it.

"Nether" & "Over" Westwyk.

Westwyk the line of the road communicating with the country. It is, of course, only a conjecture that Westwyk was a Danish settlement. The termination "wyk" is understook to be Danish, and the description "West" seems to refer to Conesford, which was to the east of it.

We do not, however, really know the successive stages of the growth of Norwich before the time of Edward the Confessor, but we can form a very fair idea of its extent at that time, that is, about A.D. 1050. All the riverside meadows on both sides of the river were thickly peopled. We have spoken of Nether and Over Conesford. From Over Conesford (or King Street) the inhabitants had spread up the hillside as far as Berstrete. Three lanes connected these highways, all of them having the Danish ending "gate," Holgate, Skeythegate, Sandgate. The dedications of some of the churches tell the same tale. St. Olave, St. Edward, St. Etheldreda, St. Julian, were all Saxon or Danish saints. The seat of the Bishoprick had not yet been moved to Norwich, so there was no cathedral or monastery, but all round Tombland were parish churches long ago disused. All the district along the river through St. Andrew's, St. John Maddermarket, St. Gregory's, as far as St. Lawrence, if not further, was inhabited. On the other side of the river the districts of Coslany, Colegate, Fishergate, and Fibriggate (Magdalen Street) were well peopled. Throughout all these districts that have been mentioned, the map shews how numerous were the roads called "gate," and how thickly scattered were the churches, many of them with dedications which imply a pre-Norman origin.

Extent of Norwich in 1050 as gathered from the Domesday Survey, and the names still used in the thirteenth century.

Conesford district.

Tombland district.

Wymer and Westwyk districts.

Coslany and other districts over the river.

The Mancroft district not yet settled.

One part alone of the future city remained almost, if not quite, unoccupied. All round the west of the Castle from St. Stephen's Street to Pottergate, including the whole parish of St. Peter Mancroft and the greater part of the parishes of St. Stephen and St. Giles, were scarcely inhabited.

The Anglo-Danish streets; to what point did they lead?

As the names on our thirteenth century map have taught us a great deal about the *extent* of the borough before the Norman Conquest, so the directions of the streets will tell us something of its *organisation.* Few things in our land have a history reaching further back into the past than our highways. A very large number of towns and villages are mentioned in *Domesday Book*, and the lines of communication by which they were approached remain now as they existed then. In the case of the larger towns, which afterwards obtained licence to defend themselves with walls, the line of the old roads was fixed for centuries by the gates through which alone entrance and exit was allowed. Moreover, in the case of a large town, roads approached it from all sides. If, then, we can trace the spot or spots to which they led inside, we shall have a reasonable clue to their original object. The road I have already frequently mentioned will illustrate my meaning. "Berstrete" is undoubtedly one of the original streets of the city, but to what does it lead? Nowhere. If, as I have suggested, it was a Roman road leading to a ford by Bishop's Bridge, and was blocked by a later race which did not need it, we have an explanation of its apparent aimlessness, otherwise there is none.

The main streets of Conesford, Westwyk, & across the river, all meet on Tombland.

When we look at the other old roads it is different. Let us take the highway of Over Conesford (or King Street). It

enters the city by Carrow, and goes in a straight line to Tombland. Or take the streets of Nether and Over Westwyk. They join at Charing Cross and pass by St. Andrew's Street, and also come to a termination on Tombland. Or cross over the river. Two main roads enter at St. Augustine's Gates and at Magdalen Street Gates. They join at Stump Cross, pass over the river at Fye Bridge, and also meet the others at Tombland. It is impossible to look at the map of Norwich and to doubt that the lines of communication from all the three districts peopled before the Norman Conquest converged on Tombland. This fact is quite sufficient of itself to prove what was the centre of Saxon Norwich; what was the point to which the inhabitants or the country folk congregated.* There is no other point but Tombland which can possibly be called the "street" centre of Norwich. We are so accustomed to enter Norwich from the Thorpe Station, and pass by Prince of Wales Road to the Market Place that we have lost sight of this fact, but when there was no railway, no Foundry Bridge, and no Prince of Wales Road, and when people from Carrow had to go all the way round by Tombland to get to Thorpe, there was no mistaking it.

Which was the centre of Saxon Norwich, and continued to be "street" centre till the present century.

How came it that Tombland was the centre of the burgh? A stranger might think the Cathedral had something to do with it. But there was no Cathedral till after the times of the Angles and the Danes. The site of the Cathedral was then called the "Cow Holm." The original

Why was this so?

* In "*Streets and Lanes*," Appendix III., pp. 105-107, will be found a discussion as to the original direction of all the streets for which openings were provided in 1253.

cause of the important place which Tombland occupied in the burgh before the Norman Conquest was, no doubt, the position it held in respect to fords across the river. There was, perhaps, no difficulty in fording the river anywhere between the sites of Foundry Bridge and Fye Bridge. But we only know of three places where permanent fords must have been established, at Bishop's Bridge and Fye Bridge, because of the early roads which led to them, and somewhere in the district of Conesford, because of its name. The two former would lead a passenger straight to Tombland, the third would also, if he wished to skirt the north of the Castle. The Bishop's Bridge ford ceased to be wanted when the Roman road was neglected. The ford of Conesford apparently never became a line of public traffic, because no settlement took place on the Thorpe side of the river. It was the Fye Bridge ford, as I think, which decided how the future city should shape its framework of streets. We may even see why the ford became fixed at this spot. If we may judge by names (and they furnish most important evidence), the Angles, besides settling in Conesford, must have gone up the river, and at first found no suitable ground to settle on till they reached the district which they called "Coselanye." The meaning of the first part of this word is quite uncertain. The last can scarcely be anything but "eye," a Saxon word for "island." There were several islands about this part of the river, as shewn in maps even to the present century. The district included all the parishes of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. Martin (at Oak). It is plain that the island was accessible at first only from the northern side of the river, on which

The fords across the river.

The Fye Bridge Ford, its importance as the line of communication between the early settlements of Coselanyeand Conesford.

"Coselaneye."

the name spread. How then would the Coselanye settlers get to their kinsmen in Conesford? I think they could only cross over at the site of Fye Bridge on account of the ground being too swampy elsewhere. I mentioned a valley with a stream which entered the city between St. Augustine's and Magdalen Street Gates. The stream was called Dalmondyk.* It is often mentioned in early documents, and, though its course to the river cannot be traced, it most likely entered the river by St. Edmund's Church. All about the Boys' Hospital in St. Edmund's were several dykes in quite modern times, and it is evident that the neighbourhood of Fishergate, though it might be suitable for fishermen, must have been a very watery locality long after other parts dried up. The same must have been true of the riverside meadows by Colegate. The church of St. George Colegate used to be called St. George de Muspol, from a pool close by. The pool must have been fed by a spring, for so late as 1313 a man was fined for stopping the "water of Muspol," so that it could not get away "towards Fibrigge as it was wont," and in consequence his neighbours' premises were flooded. The people of Coslany, therefore, would have to make their way round the swampy ground by Muspol, and also avoid that by St. Edmund's. This would bring them to the site of Fybridge. Now, in confirmation of this theory, I would ask my readers to look at the very strange shape of the street still called after the "Muspol." "Muspolgate" is one of our early streets. Why should it have been made in a half circle? I venture to think that the avoiding of the swamp by the early settlers

Swampy ground in Fishergate.

And in Colegate "Muspol."

Passage between the two would lead to Fye Bridge Ford.

* For an account of this stream, *see* Kirkpatrick's *Streets and Lanes*, pp. 80 and 102.

in passing from Coslany to Conesford affords a sufficient reason.

At Tombland the men of Conesford, Coslanye, and Westwyk all met.

Presuming that Tombland thus naturally became the rallying point of the men of Conesford and those of Coslany, it would follow that when Westwyk became settled the men of that district would congregate to the same spot. That the Norman district of Mancroft did not fall in with this organization was due to causes which will appear in our next section.

Tombland must have been the site of the common Market before the Conquest.

Whether or not I have correctly surmised the course of events, one thing remains certain that Tombland was the centre of the Saxon burgh, where the inhabitants of the different districts met together. What did they want to meet for? First of all for traffic and trade. A market may not be the centre of every town, nor the original cause which has drawn people to settle there in large numbers. But it is so generally. At least we cannot imagine several thousand people gathered into one population as at Norwich in Danish (if not in Angle) times without a common market, and when we come to see how impossible it is to suppose that the Mancroft Market can have existed before the Norman Conquest, we shall conclude that there is no other possible site on which a common market can have been held before the Conquest than Tombland.

The Meeting-place of the Burgesses for common business.

Another object for which they met belongs to the later period before the Conquest. When the various settlers in the different districts had become united together and attained the privilege of being reckoned as a "burgh" instead of a mere country township, the "burgesses" would meet to manage their own affairs so far as they

were permitted to do so. Fortunately a name survived for a long time which may best be explained to mean that they met on Tombland. The church of St. Michael at Plea was formerly called St. Michael "de Motstowe," that is, St. Michael at the Place of the Mote, or public meeting of the burgesses. We are not to suppose they met in the church. The church was so called because it was close to the meeting-place. The place, no doubt, was Tombland, perhaps some special part of it near that church.* Or perhaps (as seems to me more probable) there is another explanation. Towards the northern † end of Tombland in Saxon times there was another church of St. Michael, which seems from the *Domesday* account to have been the most important church then in the burgh. This church was removed by Bishop Herbert when he built the Cathedral in 1096. A churchyard was not an uncommon place for public meetings.‡ The churchyard of the great church of St. Michael on Tombland may well have been the meeting-place of the burgesses of Norwich; and that church may in consequence have been called St. Michael de Motstowe. It seems hardly likely that there should have been two churches of St. Michael so very near to each other. But there is nothing improbable in conjecturing that when the old St. Michael was removed, a new church that was built close by should have taken

St. Michael "de Motstowe."

* Kirkpatrick, *Streets and Lanes*, p. 45, thinks it might be Redwell (now Bank) Plain, then open to the Castle. Mr. M. Knights (*Highways and Byeways of Norwich*, p. 75) wants to derive "Redwell" from "Rede" well. But no such name, or even Redwell, occurs in early documents.

† *See* Harrod's *Castles and Convents*, p. 247.

‡ As in the churchyard of St. Mary-le-Tower, in Ipswich, in 1200.—*Black Book of the Admiralty*, Rolls Series, vol. ii., p. 167.

the old name and even the distinguishing title of "de Motstowe."

When were the first bridges built?

Before we leave the times of the Angles and the Danes, we may consider whether any of the bridges may have been built before the Norman Conquest. I have stated elsewhere* that the earliest mention of a bridge is that of Fye Bridge about 1150. I find this is not quite correct. The bridge of St. Martin is mentioned in a grant by King Henry I. to Bishop Herbert, soon after 1100.† It is not possible to say exactly when either of them was built. If not before the Norman Conquest, probably both of them were built soon after it. If it were merely a question of when a *bridge* at either place was first substituted for a *ford*, it would not be of much importance. But the very early mention of a bridge of St. Martin, suggests an enquiry of no little interest. Our thirteenth century map does not show any obvious reason why it should have been there. It is not in the line of any main streets, nor was there at that time any large population on either side of the river to require it. Yet there must have been some reason for its being built so early. Can we surmise what it was? I can only make a suggestion. On the further side of the river it is evidently connected with Cowgate. This must certainly have been (from its name) a pre-Norman street, and a church of All Saints which once stood at its Magdalen Street end is thought (by Blomefield) to be mentioned by name in *Domesday Book*. If this is so, the curved direction of Cowgate, like that of Muspolgate, must have been originally due to the necessity of avoiding marshy ground. But supposing such a road led down to

Fye Bridge and St. Martin's Bridge.

A suggestion as to the latter.

* *Streets and Lanes*, p. 108.

† Dugdale's *Mon. Angl.*, iv. 7.

the river and crossed over by St. Martin's church (which is also mentioned in *Domesday*), where did it go to then? The map only shews a road, such as there is now, leading to Tombland. It is contrary to common sense to imagine that people should have adopted such a roundabout route if a straight line from Magdalen Street over Fye Bridge to Tombland was already in use. We seem driven to conclude that a line of communication, important enough to lead to the building of a bridge, must have existed at St. Martin's before Fye Bridge was built, and before the establishment of the Cathedral and the enclosure of the Precinct by Bishop Herbert, that is, before 1096. Bishop Herbert's work entirely altered the condition of the city on the eastern side of Tombland. Of that we shall speak in our next section. At present I need only call attention to one alteration, in the street of Nether Conesford. We have spoken of that highway as being perhaps the very earliest of the roadways formed by the Angles, the real founders of our modern city. The name "Conesford" never extended northwards further than a little beyond the line of Rose Lane, and it seems tolerably certain that before the Norman Conquest, the riverside meadow between there and "Holmstrete," called the "Cowholm," as well as the Great Hospital meadows to the north of Holmstrete, were uninhabited. But all the site of the Upper Close and part of the Lower Close must have been populated before that time, though perhaps by the Danes and not by the earlier Angles. Now when we look at our map, we see that the street of Nether Conesford comes to an abrupt termination where it meets the Cathedral Close at the Horse Fair and skirts the wall

in a zigzag fashion round to Tombland. Of course this diversion is due to the enclosing of the Monastic Precinct. Originally the road must have continued in the same direction. A little to the east of Canon Robinson's house was a church and parish of St. Mary in the Marsh, known to have been there before the Cathedral. Some think that even on the site of the Cathedral itself there was a former church called Christchurch. That is doubtful, but certainly further still was the church and parish of St. Martin at Palace, mentioned in *Domesday Book*. It is therefore quite possible that the street of Nether Conesford extended right across the Close to St. Martin's, and thus formed a continuous line with Cowgate. There remains, however, the initial difficulty to be faced. From all these parishes Fye Bridge was a far more convenient place to cross the river than St. Martin's, which was quite out of the way of every other part of the Saxon burgh. That the *ford* at Fye Bridge was the principal passage across the river is plain from the direction of the main streets on each side. Could it be possible that when the burgesses took to building bridges the nature of the ground made it easier to build one at St. Martin's than at Fye Bridge or anywhere else further up the river towards Coslany ? Such a fact would be quite in accordance with our evidence. The ground was certainly not swampy by St. Martin's, for (strange as it seems to us now) one of the early names of that church was "St. Martin *on the Hill*" (super montem) which, to say the least, implies a great difference between that spot and the site of St. Mary *in the Marsh.*

There is a good deal of conjecture about this view. But

I see no better way of explaining the very early existence of a bridge at apparently so inconvenient and unnecessary a spot as St. Martin's must have been at that time. Whatever was the cause of its being built it had no permanent effect upon the street system of the burgh. A bridge was built at Fye Bridge,* and thenceforward it became the great medium of communication between the two sides of the river.

* It is interesting to note that in the drainage trench referred to above (p. 4) were found some extremely old piles blackened with age. They had been driven into the river mud, and (as the foreman informed me) the tops were 12 ft. below the present surface of the road. This was in the road exactly opposite to the spot where the paved way leading to the river had been discovered at the very same depth. One may conjecture that they had been used to form an approach to the first bridge, which would naturally be constructed by the side of the pathway to the ford, so as not to interrupt the passage during the progress of the work.

V.—The Norman Conquest.

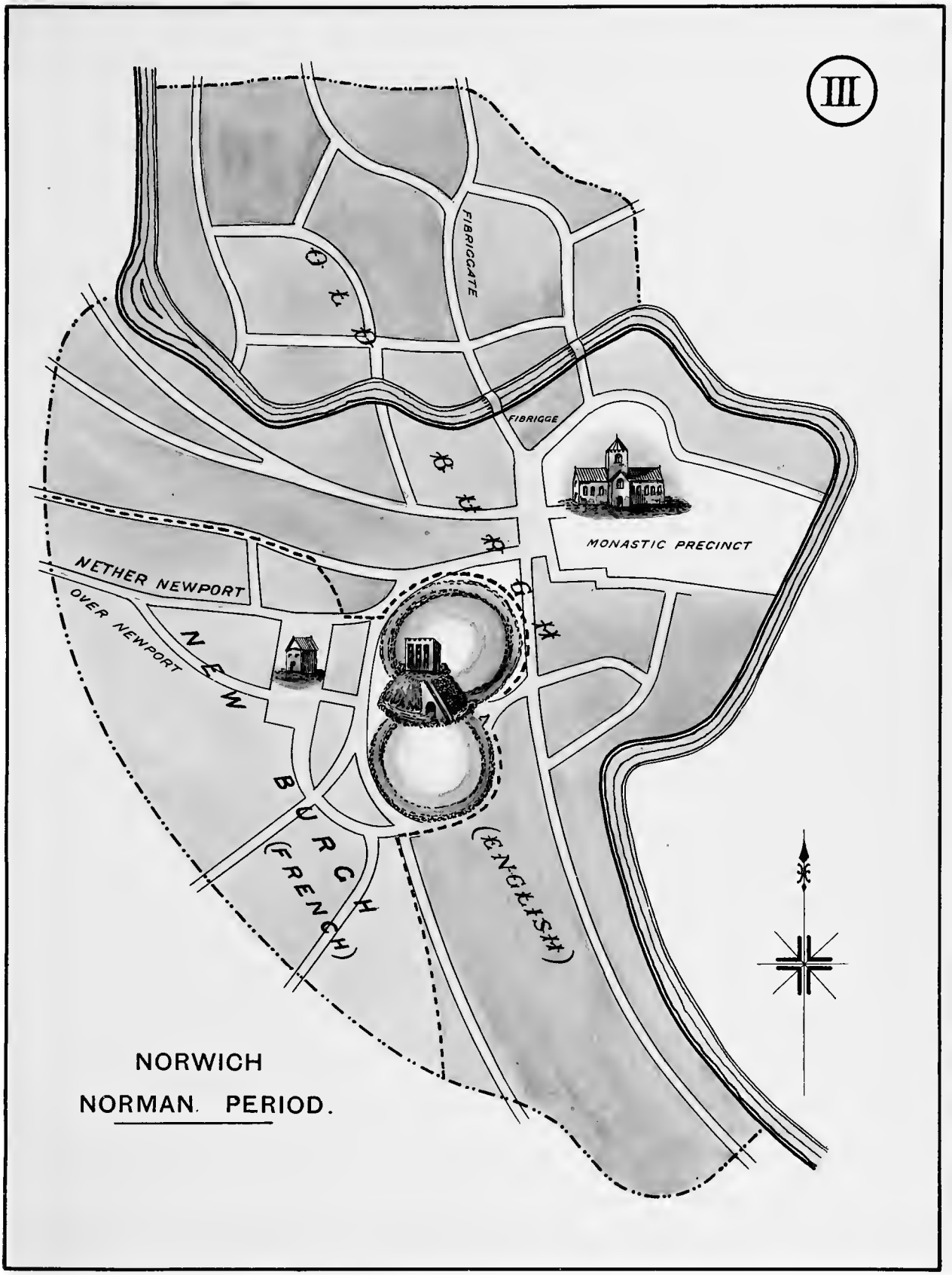
(MAP III.)

THE development which we have been tracing hitherto through the times of the Angles and the Danes may be called a natural growth, with one exception. The throwing up of the Castle mound and earthworks broke the line of Berstrete, but otherwise the Saxon burgh had been framing itself into shape as its own needs required. The riverside meadows had been settled on by people who wanted to use the river. As they prospered they spread up to higher ground, and gradually the growing together of an organised community and the traffic of the country people coming in to barter their goods, had formed a system of connecting highways centreing on Tombland which has not even to this day been altogether obliterated.

The old order interrupted.

Great changes.

The Norman Conquest brought with it changes of quite a disturbing and even revolutionary character, which I will now describe. At the time of the Conquest King Harold held the earldom of the East Angles, and was therefore



Reproduced from Cartoon drawn by W. R. Weyer.

Governor of Norwich Castle. When Harold was defeated and killed, the Castle was committed to the charge of William Fitz Osbern, one of the Conqueror's captains, with instructions to fortify it, in order to overawe the neighbouring country. It was he, probably, who first commenced the building of a stone castle. Hitherto the Castle had not been used as a place of residence in time of peace, at least for some generations. The Earl had lived amongst the townspeople in a palace at the south end of Tombland, another proof of the importance of that locality. He was in the midst of his countrymen and feared no evil. But, doubtless, as soon as the new stone Castle was far enough advanced the Norman Governor would consult his safety by deserting the unprotected palace and shutting himself up in his castle. The palace became of no further use and was disposed of, as we shall see presently. Then there were the Conqueror's knights and followers to be provided for, and although there were not really many of them who settled here, the provision that was made for them altered the whole future course of Norwich history.

A Norman Governor.

And a stone Castle.

Domesday Book tells us what was done for the "Frenchmen," as the Normans were called. Perhaps at first they were too few to need any special provision, but after a lapse of about nine years, a new earl, Ralph de Guader, gave up his demesne land to the king to "make a burgh between himself and the king." This was called the New Burgh, to distinguish it from the Old Saxon Burgh. Now Blomefield recording the foundation of this new burgh says in a note, "It seems to be made in the Confessor's time, although there might not be such a

The "Frenchmen."

The "New Burgh."

number of burgesses, this burgh being much increased at the time of the Conquest by the Normans or Frenchmen settling in it," &c. He evidently understood the expression to imply no more than a new settlement, and when the *Survey* says that there had been "36 Frenchmen in the New Burgh, but now there are 41," he thought it meant that there had been thirty-six in the Confessor's reign (up to 1066), but at the time of the Survey (1086) there were forty-one. This would be the ordinary interpretation of the Survey, but it cannot be so here, for it distinctly says that the "New Burgh" was formed by Earl Ralph, who was not earl till 1075. There may have been some Frenchmen living on the spot in the Confessor's time, but if so they had to fall in with the old burgesses; they were not formed into a burgh of their own. Probably it means that when the new burgh was first formed in 1075 there were thirty-six original French burgesses, and others had been added when the Survey was made in 1086. The fact that the "new burgh" meant something more than a new settlement, is all important for the understanding of what followed. It was, in short, not only a new settlement, but also a new and rival *municipal organisation*. For, perhaps, one hundred years there were two "burghs" in Norwich, the old and the new, the English and the French. The English burgesses would continue to hold their "motes" on Tombland under their burgh-reeve, and exercise the customs of inheritance, preservation of order, and such matters as before, bemoaning more and more as time went on that they were no longer masters in their own town.

Not merely a new settlement.

But a separate organisation.

Two "burghs," English & Norman.

Meanwhile the French burgesses, who spoke another language, and had been brought up to different customs and ways of management, had their own meetings under their own head. By the time when the *Domesday Survey* was made there were already more than 120 burgesses in the New Burgh, not all French, but all under the customs and order of the French burgh. They were, it is true, vastly outnumbered by the English burgesses in the Old Burgh, though about one-third of these old burgesses had been scattered after the collapse of Earl Ralph's rebellion. But we can easily understand that for some time after the Conquest the social position of the Normans and their friends would greatly outweigh mere numbers, and what is more, they had the Castle at their back. The new burgh was a sort of outer garrison of the Castle, and was sometimes spoken of as the "Burgh of the Castle" (see *Blomefield*, ii. 17) while the Old Burgh was called the "Burgh of the Town."

A new Market in the Norman burgh, in Mancroft.

Although we have no records of what took place, yet (judging from what we find when our records begin) we cannot be far wrong in supposing that one of the first things which the Normans did was to establish a market for themselves. A theory had grown up that no market might be held without a royal licence. This the Normans would easily obtain, and possibly before long the old market of the English burgh may have been suppressed as unauthorized. I should rather suppose that it died away owing to the greater prosperity of the Norman market in Mancroft. I believe for a time the two went on together and that the Prior's weekly

market on Tombland, which in later days excited the jealousy of the citizens, was the relic of the old common market on the same spot. However this may be, I regard it as an indisputable conclusion that the public market in the Mancroft market-place was the result of the formation of the new (or Norman) burgh. Those who hold (as even Kirkpatrick* seems to have done) that there was a market there before the Conquest, have to explain away all the evidence of the development we have hitherto traced. They have to suppose that a common market, sufficient to satisfy the wants of a town containing 1320 burgesses (and probably each burgess was the head of a separate household) had gradually grown up, and yet not a single main road led to it and no traders had settled round it. There could not have been a market in Mancroft before the Conquest.

The new Burgh, called "Newport." Its two streets.

The new burgh was traversed by two streets, now called St. Giles' Street and Bethel Street. The former was then called the street of "Nether Newport," and the latter that of "Over Newport." The use of the distinctive "Nether" and "Over" could in this case have only been copied from its use elsewhere, it could hardly have been suggested by the situation of the localities. These streets were not called "Newport" from leading to a new gate (namely, St. Giles' gate), as Blomefield says. The city gates were not made until 200 years later. Kirkpatrick† more correctly explains "Port" to be an old English word for "town." "Newport" was only the English way of saying "New Burgh." These two streets were the streets of the new burgh.

* *Streets and Lanes*, p. 24. † *Streets and Lanes*, p. 22.

Whether the street of Lower Newport was then first made is very doubtful. St. Giles' Church is said to have been built before the Conquest, and St. Giles' Street, though it skirts the market, has every appearance in the map of having originally been designed to go on to Tombland, skirting the northern side of the castle bank. The street of Over Newport, however, alone of all the main thoroughfares from the country into the city, led straight to the market in Mancroft and nowhere else. We may even venture to make a further conjecture with respect to the direction of this street. At present it seems to be unnaturally blocked by St. Peter Mancroft Church and Churchyard. It was not so until 1367, when the churchyard was enlarged, and two of the market rows were enclosed. The right of way through the churchyard most likely marks the line of one of these rows, which would enter straight into the street of Over Newport. As the church was built immediately after the Conquest, the street must at first have led close to the north side of the churchyard. Moreover it will be noticed on the map that the line of the street of Over Newport exactly coincides with that of Sadelgate (White Lion Street) mentioned below as the line of communication from the Castle to the Market. The two streets would lead to the same spot. May we not conclude, then, that here was the central part of the New Burgh, that the market in its first beginning was held—as we so often see in old towns—just outside the churchyard, that here the country people coming in by the street of Over Newport, sold their goods to the Normans from the Castle, who came down by Sadelgate, and that some-

The street of Over Newport, or Bethel Street.

Led to the spot where probably the Market was first held.

where here the Norman burgesses met to discuss their common affairs?

The establishment of the Cathedral and the Monastic Precinct.

The establishment of this market, backed by all the influence of the ruling class in the town, would have been sufficient of itself to draw the whole life of the community towards a new centre. But in addition to this, another change, tending towards the same result, took place in the neighbourhood of Tombland itself. This was the removal of the episcopal see from Thetford to Norwich, and the consequent occupation of a large space of ground by the cathedral and its enclosed monastic precinct. In the *Domesday* account of Norwich in the time of King Edward the Confessor it is stated that the Bishop had fifty burgesses of whom he was in some way the lord. This was Stigand, Bishop of Thetford. His burgesses probably lived in the parishes of St. Simon and St. Jude and St. Martin-at-Palace. But Stigand offended the Conqueror, and his possessions were confiscated. So when Bishop Herbert decided to remove his see from Thetford to Norwich he had no land of his own on which to set up the necessary buildings. Accordingly, he purchased of the king the "Cowholm." We have already mentioned this as being the great riverside meadow extending from somewhere about the line of Prince of Wales Road on the south, to "Holmstrete" (or Bishopsgate Street) on the north. It may be as well to mention that at that time this tract of ground was not, properly speaking, a part of Norwich at all. It was part of the King's Manor of Thorpe across the river, and in the Hundred of Blofield. Had the Bishop confined his operations to that par-

ticular spot, it would not perhaps have interfered with the old arrangements of the neighbourhood. But wishing to obtain more ground of his own for ingress and egress on the Tombland side of his monastery, he effected an exchange with Roger Bigod, then Earl of Norfolk, the results of which exchange were most important in their influence on the development of the city. He gave Earl Bigod some private lands of his own at Syleham in Suffolk, and in return the Earl gave him his Palace and the "land of St. Michael, which is called Tombland." The land of St. Michael is said to have belonged to the Palace, and to have had on it a Chapel * of St. Michael. That church was either already in the hands of the Bishop, or was included in this exchange. These two buildings, the Earl's Palace and the Church of St. Michael, Bishop Herbert removed, setting up a cross on the spot occupied by the latter. At a somewhat later date, King Henry I. granted to this same Bishop some land to the north of "Holmstrete," presumably part of the parish of St. Martin at Palace and the Great Hospital site with the adjoining meadows.

Curtailment of Tombland. Destruction of the Earl's Palace and the Church of St. Michael.

When the Bishop had carried out his plans, building his Cathedral and founding his Monastery, he closed in the precinct with a wall. He did not, however, enclose the whole of the land of which he had obtained possession. In particular the lower part of Holmstrete

Enclosure of the Precinct.

* This statement is made by the Monks in a document of much later date, called "Historia Fundationis Ecclesie Norvicensis," &c., printed in Dugdale's *Mon. Angl.*, iv. 14. What they call a "Chapel" is in *Domesday Book* called a "Church," and said to have been endowed with 120 acres of land.

itself was not enclosed, nor part of Tombland, nor some land to the south in St. Mary in the Marsh. Over these the Prior of the Monastery rightfully claimed jurisdiction, but in after years, when the divided "burgesses" had become organized into a united city, the citizens were never tired of complaining to the King's Judges of the unauthorized proceedings of the Prior's Coroners and other officers in these localities.

Detrimental effect of these changes on Tombland.

It is not difficult to see how the enclosure of this large space of ground changed the whole aspect of that portion of the city, and altered its whole prospects for the future. Perhaps it was not a matter of much importance that it blocked the old line of Holmstrete, and drove passengers along that road all round the north side of the precinct. There is no reason to suppose that there would then be much need of communication across the river at the site of Bishop's Bridge, especially if bridges had already been built at St. Martin's and at Fye Bridge. Nor perhaps would much inconvenience have been caused by breaking the line of road which we have thought might have led from the street of Nether Conesford to St. Martin's Bridge. But Tombland must have been altogether despoiled of its former glory. It was apparently curtailed in its dimensions towards the east. The two important buildings which had distinguished it, the Earl's Palace and the Church of St. Michael, were gone, and in their place was a community which shut itself up behind a wall, and must at first have been less in sympathy with the neighbouring English burgesses of the Old Burgh than with their rivals in

the New Burgh. Bishop Herbert and the Norman Earl worked hand in hand together.

And on the whole district of Conesford.

The combined effect of the two changes I have described, the establishment of a central market in Mancroft, and the enclosure of the monastic precinct, acted (commercially) to the detriment of the oldest part of the city, the district of Conesford. Hitherto it might have seemed reasonable to suppose that it was commercially the most advantageously-situated district of all. Goods coming up the river could be landed there first. There was easy access to Tombland and the Earl's Palace and the Castle. Its prosperity was attested by the number of its churches. But now it became practically isolated. Goods landed there had to be taken by a circuitous route through narrow streets round to the Mancroft Market. So by degrees it dropped to a great extent out of the commercial life of the city.* It became the home of Friars and gentry, of orchards and gardens, till the present century with its Thorpe Railway Station and river steamboats and improved communications has restored it once more to something like equality with other districts.

A Tolhouse.

I must mention one other result of the Norman Conquest which we may safely assume followed very closely on the establishment of the Market in Mancroft. This was a "Tolhouse." The reason why in the

* There was a "Common Stathe" in King Street, near the disused church of St. Clement. It became "the Common Stathe" in connection with a great revolution in trade matters carried out about 1397, by which the governing body of the city endeavoured to withdraw all market business out of private hands into their own. See *Streets and Lanes*, p. 95. It did not, however, make any change in the locality.

Middle Ages so much stress was set upon the obligation of obtaining a royal licence to hold a market was because a market held a most important place in the social and commercial life of the people. It was considered to furnish the best security against fraud, for all transactions would be done before witnesses who could easily attest the truth. In return for this and other advantages, the lord, who in Norwich was the king himself, had the right to charge various tolls. For this purpose a building—at first no doubt a mere office—was erected, called a Tolhouse, or very often Tolbooth. Such a building must have been erected in the Norwich Market-place at a very early date. The king's officer would sit there to receive the tolls of the market; and I suppose that other tolls, such as those levied on ships coming up the river, as well as any other moneys due to the king, would be there accounted for. This was its first purpose, but it naturally lent itself to others, as for instance the seat of the official who was authorized to settle market disputes, and so in all large towns the Tolhouse became by degrees the official home of authority and justice. Many towns exchanged the name at a later date for that of "Guildhall" or "Town Hall," but Yarmouth has preserved its old "Tolhouse," though not its original use, to the present day.

VI.—The Thirteenth Century.

(MAP V., FRONTISPIECE.)

Period between A.D. 1100 and A.D. 1200. Little known of what was taking place.

IT would be a fruitless task to attempt to trace out in detail the topographical development of Norwich during the century which followed the changes of which I have just been speaking, because we have no evidence to teach us. It is not till we come to the thirteenth century that we really can rest on the sure evidence of existing records. The map in which I have shewn the names then in use is compiled from records belonging to the close or at least the second half of that century. But it might be possible to pick up isolated evidence of most of the names at an earlier date. As to the principal streets we have already accounted for nearly all of them. The growth which took place between 1100 and 1200 must evidently have been of two kinds, first, in the development of the market, and next, in the development of internal communication. With regard to the latter, we may

observe that it is surprising how few even of the side streets in the thirteenth century map we can certainly attribute to a time much later than the Norman Conquest. The list of their names shews how many of them were called "gates." We must not, of course, assume that every "gate" was in existence in Danish times, because it would certainly be a generation or two before the native people ceased to call things in their old language. There is evidence that one street called a "gate" in the thirteenth century was not so called even in the middle of the twelfth. This was "Newgate," now Surrey Street. For a long time the jurisdiction there was claimed by the monks. Though they finally had to relinquish their claim, they had no difficulty in proving that the street passed through land which had been given to them by King Henry II. under the name of Thedwardescroft. As King Henry did not begin to reign till 1154, it would seem that the street was not made and the name "Newgate" was not given till towards the end of the twelfth century. This street, it will be observed, takes a direction towards the market and may have been formed for that purpose. Then there is one of the bridges, Newbrigge, of the road leading to which, called Newbriggate, I think we must form a somewhat similar opinion.

Newgate.

Newbriggate.

This may be the most convenient place to say a word in general about the early bridges. Our map shews five. Beginning up the river they are—1, Coselanye Bridge; 2, Newbrigge; 3, Fibrigge; 4, St. Martin's Bridge; 5, Bishop's Bridge.

The five early bridges.

This is not the place to enter into the disputed

question of the meaning of the name "Fye" Bridge. Because just a very few times in some of its earliest mentions it is spelt "Fifbrigge," and in much later documents the road leading to it is spelt "Fivebriggate," Blomefield suggests that it was the fifth or last of the five bridges that was built. Kirkpatrick for the same reason suggests that the ground between it and Stump Cross being swampy required five bridges to cross it, and the road was therefore called "Five-briggate," or the road of the five bridges. It is somewhat presumptuous to reject an opinion accepted by two such writers. But their opinions do not carry conviction. If Kirkpatrick's were right the bridge ought to have been called "Pons de Fifbriggate," or "Five-bridge-road Bridge." To call it "Fifbrigge" or "Five Bridge" is not sense, and yet the only name by which it is ever called is "Pons de Fibrigge." The road was certainly called from the bridge, not the bridge from the road. And if Blomefield's were right, it is very strange that the last of the bridges built should be the very one to which the principal streets converge on each side of the river. In point of fact there seems to be no real reason for paying so much attention to the early spelling "Fifbrigge." It is very rare, and, if I am not mistaken, is in documents written by strangers at a distance. I am not aware that it occurs once in all the numerous local deeds and documents among the City records of the thirteenth century, whereas it would be easy to find at least a hundred instances of the spelling "Fibrigge" or "Fibriggate." What the syllable "Fi" Fibrigge.

means I cannot pretend to say. There is the Norfolk word "fye," to clean a ditch or a river, but its connection with a bridge is not obvious. I venture, then, to hold to the opinion I have expressed in the last section, that Fye Bridge, if not the first bridge built, was only anticipated for a short time by one at St. Martin's, and, if so, for some local difficulty which was soon overcome.

St. Martin's Bridge.

Bishop's Bridge.

Bishop's Bridge is not mentioned till the thirteenth century, and is not likely to have been built very early, for it was only a private bridge for some time.

Coselanye or St. Miles' Bridge.

There remain Coselanye Bridge and Newbrigge. The former, now St. Miles' Bridge, may have been a very early one, for it communicates directly with the main street of Coslany on the north side of the river. But it will be noticed that on the other, or Westwick, side this street does not follow on with a main street, as the streets do on both sides of the river at Fye Bridge. If I am right in supposing that at first the Coslany people turned off by Muspolgate to cross the river at Fye Bridge ford, then the passage over the river at Coslany may have been a late one, and the bridge built to facilitate access to the Mancroft market. So late as the thirteenth century it was a double bridge. One deed speaks of the "two bridges of Coselanye," which I understand to mean, a bridge from the Coslany side on to an island in the middle of the river, and then another bridge from the island to the Westwick side.

Newbrigge or Blackfriars Bridge.

The last bridge to be spoken of is the one called "Newbrigge" in the thirteenth century, and now called "Blackfriars Bridge." It is evident from the map

that this line of communication was quite a late arrangement. The bridge was plainly built after the main roads on each side of the river had been already formed, for it does no more than make a junction (at right angles) between two main streets, one on either side of the river. Its name "New" confirms this opinion, and it is of the street leading down to it which was on both sides called "Newbriggate," or the way of the New Bridge, that I observed that like "Newgate" it was probably another instance of a new street formed after the Norman Conquest being called by the old Danish word "gate."

No more bridges built till the present century.

I have made this digression on the subject of the bridges because in their own way they as clearly indicate the growth of the city as do the streets. It may remind us how rapidly even at this early period we are approaching the completion of the "shaping" of the city, when we remember that not till the present century were Foundry Bridge and Duke's Palace Bridge added to these five.

The Market.

We will now return to the development of the market. Our map is not large enough to shew the details of the market. If it were we should see that the whole way from the line of London Street and St. Giles' Street on the north to Rampant Horse Street on the south was occupied by different portions of the market. The various portions were called originally from the goods which were sold in them or the names of the traders who had stalls, shops, or sheds. There was the Drapery, the Mercery, the Spicery, the Fish Market, the Flesh Market, the Bread Market, the Nedler

Rowe, the Yronmonger Rowe, the Parmenter Rowe, and so on in great variety.

Access to the Market.

Our present purpose, however, is rather to show how this great development affected the external aspect of the city. Of all the numerous names which once marked the spot only one, I think, has survived, and that indirectly. Rampant Horse Street was the "Horse Market." Its present name is derived from the sign of the old inn, the "Rampant Horse." But that sign was, no doubt, a relic of the former use of the street. This street, as we all know, forms one of the principal approaches to the market, the only one from the whole

From the South.

southern circuit of the city, nor has there ever been any other. Can anyone suppose that, when the streets on this side of Norwich were first formed, the people who formed them had any thought of coming to the site of the market? It is plain that the street of the "Horse Market" was quite an afterthought, intended to accommodate the older streets to new conditions.

From the West.

From the west the approach was by the street of Over Newport, already mentioned as the original line of access from the country.

From the East.

On the east or Castle side the market was approached by White Lion Street, then called Sadelgate. The object of this line of approach is evident. It was the communication with the Castle, for a continuation of Sadelgate led right into the enclosure called the Castellond. At its north-east corner the Market was approached by Hosyergate, now London Street. We must not, however, be misled by our present ideas of London Street into thinking that Hosyergate possessed

the same importance in the thirteenth century. It was really little more than an extension of the market at that corner. It could not then have been important as a line of communication. Between Castle Street and Bank Plain it skirted the northern bank of the Castle enclosure, and finally emerged at the south end of Tombland. Such a line might have been used by people from Conesford, but it would have been useless for any other purpose.

From the North.

The chief access to the Market in the thirteenth century was from the north, that is, from the side of the river. There are obvious reasons for this. Though country people brought their produce in from all quarters, there were certain goods of primary importance which could only come by water. One of the chief materials of clothing, for instance, was woollen cloth. Now cloth was not at this time manufactured in Norwich; it was purchased from abroad, and the greater part of it would come up the river through Yarmouth. Again, there were salt and iron, two necessaries of civilized life at all times, the former more so than we can understand in an age when winter food for animals was unknown, and they were killed in the autumn and salted down for the winter. Both of these articles came by the river. Once more, fish for many reasons was one of the most important articles of food, and that of course came by way of the river. Then there were foreign spices used not so much as luxuries, but as medicines, and helps to make bad food eatable. And lastly there were wool and skins, and other articles which the merchants exported. All this rendered access

The Market and the River. Goods that came and went by water.

between the river and the Market all important. The great landing-place for goods at this time seems to have been Fye Bridge Quay, called "Caium de Fibrigge," and still called Quay Side. From there goods would be conveyed to the Market either by way of Elm Hill, which was then continued across the site of St. Andrew's Hall, or else by Wensum Street (Cookrowe) and Princes Street (Hundegate), and so by St. Andrew's Street almost to Charing Cross (Tonsoria or Sherersgate). Thence they would turn off by the east end of the Church of St. John Maddermarket across Pottergate and by Dove Street into the Market. Dove Street was called Holdthor Lane, and Kirkpatrick* says that by Edward II.'s time the other street by St. John's Church was also called by that name, shewing that there was a continuous line of traffic through them both.

Fye Bridge Quay.

Besides the goods that were landed at Fybridge Quay there were no doubt others that were taken higher up the river, especially cloth, for all about the district between the river and Charing Cross were numerous "blexters" or fullers, and further up in Nether Westwick Street in St. Laurence were "litesters" or dyers. The cross at Charing Cross is not mentioned in the thirteenth century, but the street in which it was placed was called Sherers Street, and when the cross was set there it was called Sherers Cross, of which Charing Cross is a corruption. All these traders prepared foreign cloth for sale in the market.

Fullers, Dyers, and Shearers.

That the prosperous influence of the market extended

* *Streets and Lanes*, p. 48.

chiefly in this direction is manifest from some documents of the close of the thirteenth century called Leet Rolls. A "leet" was a sort of popular police court. With some exceptions the whole adult male population was divided up into small associations, called tithings, for the preservation of order and the punishment of petty offences by money fines. The heads of the tithings once a year reported the offences. For this purpose the city parishes were divided into eleven districts, so arranged that each district included at least twelve tithings, because the law did not allow a man to be punished by less than twelve of his fellows. If a district did not contain twelve tithings it could not produce twelve heads (or chief pledges, as they were called) to form a jury. Now at the court in 1288 the parish of St. Peter Mancroft produced no less than thirty chief pledges, shewing that it contained thirty tithings. St. Stephen's also stood alone, and produced twelve. St. Laurence and St. Gregory, though so limited in area, could form a sufficient jury between them. No other two adjoining parishes could do the same. Across the river in the district traversed by Magdalen Street it took ten parishes to furnish fifteen jurors. This is plain proof of the populousness of St. Laurence and St. Gregory, and their prosperity was obviously due to their position between the river and the market.

Beneficial effect of the Market on the district of St. Laurence and St. Gregory.

Thirty-five years before the date of the document just quoted, the citizens had taken a step which fixed the bounds of the city, and the places of ingress and egress, for more than five hundred years. In 1253

Enclosure of the City with a bank and ditch in 1253.

they obtained licence from King Henry III. to enclose the city with a bank and ditch. Many years afterwards the monks accused them of thereby unlawfully enclosing large tracts of ground, which were under the jurisdiction of other owners. The object of this enclosure, as represented to the king, was, no doubt, to defend the king's city against the king's enemies. But I strongly suspect that there was another object equally present to the minds of the citizens. If no unprivileged traders could bring in their goods or their merchandize except through a limited number of openings easily watched and closed at night, it would be so much easier to exact tolls.

Reasons for the enclosure.

The City Gates made where main roads existed at the time. Names of the Gates.

The bank and ditch made in pursuance of this licence took the same line as that of the wall, which was afterwards built upon it. Openings were made where the principal thoroughfares required them, and were protected by gates. Beginning at the King Street end of the wall, the gates were those of—Conesford, Berstrete, Swinemarket, Nedham, Newport, Westwyk. There the bank struck the river near the City Railway Station, and was not resumed till it started on the other side in St. Martin at Oak. Then came the gates of Coselanye, St. Augustine, and Fibriggate. From the spot where the bank met the river in the parish of St. James, the river itself was considered to afford sufficient protection down to the point where the bank started in King Street. I do not think there was a proper gate for the street of Nether Westwick, nor, until the next century, for the street leading to Pockthorpe. Strange to say, no opening was

made for Pottergate, which we must conclude had ceased to be needed for country traffic.

The City "Gates" & the Danish termination "gate," or way. Frequent confusion as to the two words.

It is hardly necessary, after all that has been said of the old streets, to warn my readers not to confuse these city gates ("portæ" in the Latin documents) with the streets called by the termination "gate" inside the city. Such a confusion has been made by writers who might have been expected to avoid it. The expression, "gates of Fibriggate," for instance, means the gates of the city through which the street passed which was called Fibriggate, or Fibridge Street. Blomefield, therefore, uses misleading language when he says of these gates—"They were called (from the hospital) Magdalen Gates, the old name of Fibridge-gates being totally disused." They were not the gates of Fibridge, but of Fibridge Street. Worse still, he calls the church of St. Margaret (close to these gates), "St. Margaret in Fybridge," as if that were the name of the street and not of the bridge. Very likely the use of "gate" for way or street was forgotten by the end of the thirteenth century, and "Barre-gates" in Pockthorp, built in the fourteenth century, may have really described the city gates and not the road. So, too, "Bishopsgate Street," which supplanted "Holmstrete," as the name for that highway, referred originally to the gate on the Bishops' bridge. But in every other case in Norwich, the word "gate" is certainly to be understood to mean a roadway and not doors. It may be observed that to this day Norwich people always speak of "King Street Gates, "Ber Street Gates," &c., in the plural, never of "King Street

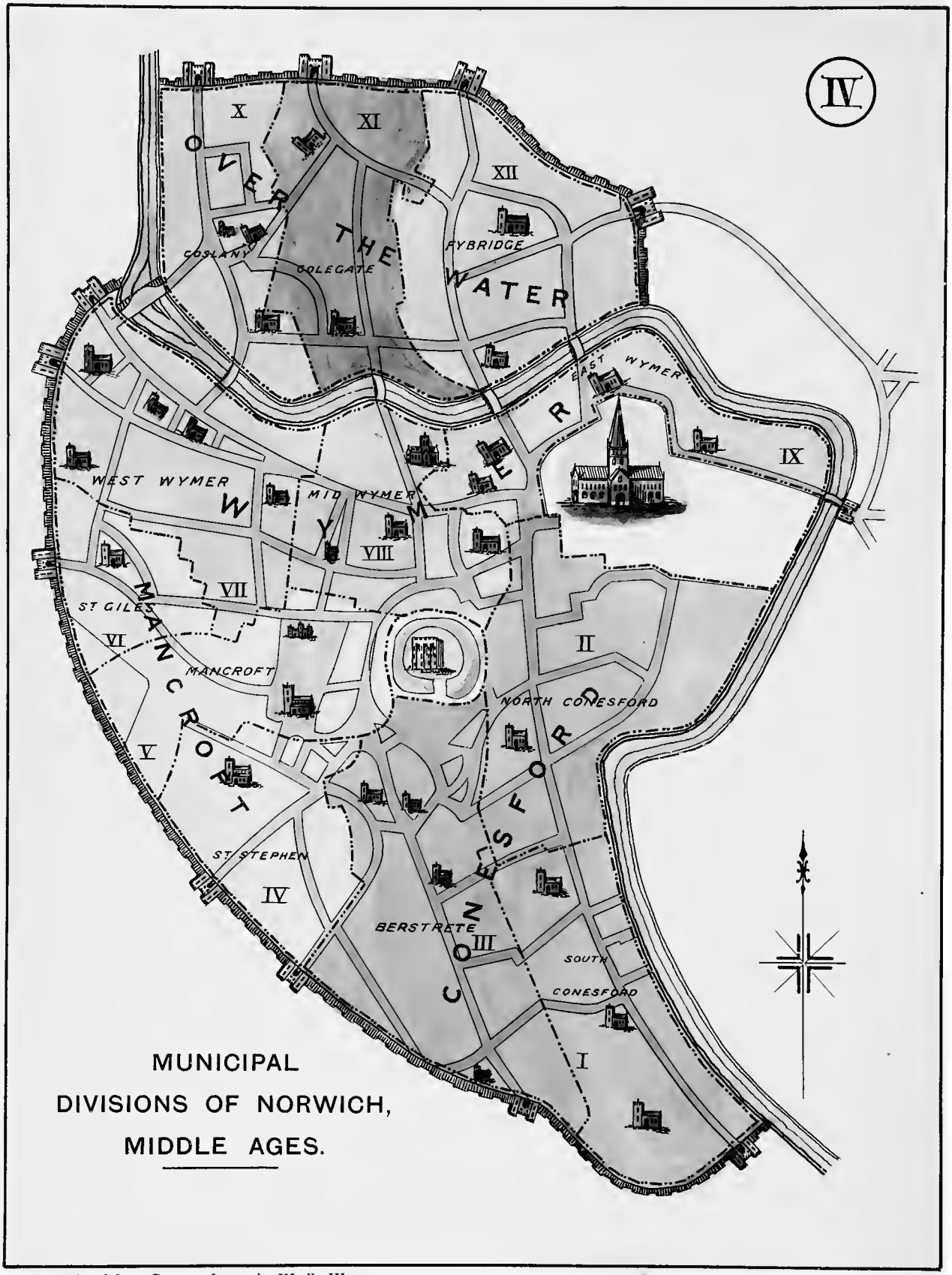
Gate." In fact, the termination "gate" and the City "Gates" expressed exactly opposite ideas. For instance, "Fibrig-gate" was the way or "thoroughfare" through the opening; the "Gates [portæ] of Fibriggate" were the two great doors by which the thoroughfare was blocked and the opening closed every night.

The wall built on the bank.

Forty-one years after the bank was made the citizens began to build on it a stone wall. This was a laborious and expensive work, and twenty-six years elapsed before it was finished.

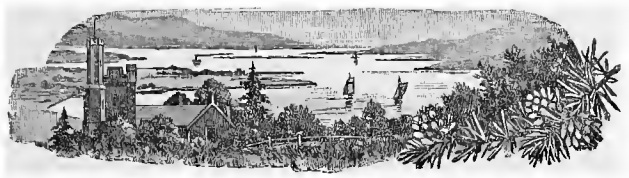
The stone wall, however, made no difference in the line of boundary. That was settled in 1253. At that date Norwich, which had been growing and shaping itself for some 600 years, ceased to grow. For the next 500 years or more it shut itself up within its self-imposed limits. In one or two places, especially outside the gates of Conesford and those of Westwick, inhabited portions of old city parishes were unenclosed. Trowse (Milgate) was always claimed to be part and parcel of the city, and when the city acquired the position of a county by itself it fought endless battles about jurisdiction over the surrounding hamlets. But through all those years there seems to have been no feeling of being straitened for room, no extra-mural extension of inhabited districts. The city life inside the walls ebbed and flowed in alternate prosperity and decay, but it never overflowed its bounds till the present century. To enter into any account of the causes or the progress of its modern expansion is beyond the limits of my present subject.

No further extension for 500 years.



MUNICIPAL
DIVISIONS OF NORWICH,
MIDDLE AGES.

Reproduced from Cartoon drawn by W. R. Weyer.



VII.—Municipal Divisions.

(MAP IV.)

WE have now finished the story of how the external aspect of the city of Norwich became defined; how and why its streets came to take their direction towards Tombland which very early lost its central importance; how the Mancroft Market-place came to be the home of its commercial enterprize and official rule; and how at last the citizens shut themselves in, partly for protection against violence, perhaps even more for the more ensured enjoyment of their privileges. I will add, however, a brief account of those internal divisions artificially made for municipal purposes, which are a necessary condition of the organisation of a large town, as necessary as a market or a Town Hall.

Story of external shaping finished.

An addition about Municipal divisions.

It is the universal custom in these days to call these divisions "wards," and many historians write as though no other name had ever in any place been given to them.

This was not the case at Norwich, and, in fact, the history of the municipal divisions of Norwich is one of unusual interest. I have in a former publication* endeavoured to describe their origin and character. Here I will confine myself to a brief account of them at various stages of the city's growth.

Three Anglo-Danish divisions, perhaps three townships united in one burgh.

1. If we go back to the picture of the Anglo-Danish burgh in the days of King Edward the Confessor, as we found it presented to us in *Domesday Book*, we saw that it contained 1320 burgesses. More correctly it was the whole "villa" or town of Norwich which contained 1320 burgesses. Of these, 50 were in the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Thetford, 32 in that of the Earl, and the remaining 1238 in what was specially called the "burgus" or burgh. How far the Bishop's and the Earl's burgesses joined in the same municipal organisation with the burgesses proper is hard to say, nor is it of much importance here, for their limited numbers would not make much difference. We need not take them into account. Now we saw reason to think that the burgesses had a meeting-place on Tombland. But there our information ceases, and we feel that it is altogether insufficient. An occasional meeting of a Burgh Mote would hardly be sufficient to meet the needs of a community of several thousand persons. For watch and ward and for keeping the peace, two essential conditions of a burgh, we must suppose that the burgesses were organised in some smaller divisions. As we get no hint of this from *Domesday* we can only conjecture. It is plain that there were three naturally distinct portions of the community. There were the

* *The Wards of Norwich; their origin and history.* Norwich, Jarrolds, 1891.

people of Conesford, the people of Westwyk, and the people across the river from Coslany to Fishergate. These districts were like three separate townships, and so they may have been even after they were counted as one burgh. Perhaps each would arrange its own watchmen, and appoint its own collectors for the king's dues and other common contributions.

Two rival burghs after the Norman Conquest.

2. With the Norman Conquest came an addition of a new set of burgesses. But as we have seen, they did not at first form a fourth unit in the common organisation. They were organised apart as a separate "burgh." For a long time, from 1075 till perhaps 1194, there were two great municipal divisions as shewn in Map III. Still the separate organisations of the old burgh must have been kept up, for the Norman rulers required a great deal more of their subjects than the Saxons had done. Almost every man was made responsible for his neighbour.

One burgh with four divisions (1194). First called a "city" at this time.

3. After a lapse of one hundred years Normans and English had learned to settle down together throughout the land, and in 1194 King Richard I. granted to the citizens of Norwich the possession of their city, that is, the right to manage it to their own profit, on payment of a fixed annual rent to him. They might also elect their own head, or Borough Reeve. This would require still more internal organisation, and as there is no hint in the charter of any divided authority, we seem justified in assuming that the four municipal divisions of which we have spoken had by this time united together, and were thenceforward utilized as four distinct and equal units of municipal organisation.

The four "leets" and their sub-divisions, 1223-1404.

4. Our next step brings us on to firmer ground. In 1223, instead of a Reeve, the citizens were allowed to

appoint four bailiffs for their chief rulers. It would take too long to explain all I think this change implied. I believe it was connected with that "frankpledge" or "tithing" system of which I spoke in illustrating the beneficial influence of the market on the parishes between it and the river. The offences which, as I there said, were annually reported to the "Leet" court were punished by money penalties. These fines had hitherto gone to the king's sheriff in whose court (called the Sheriff's "Tourn") the offences had been reported. Now they were to go to the citizens themselves, who were authorized to hold this court for themselves under officials, who were nominally the king's bailiffs, but who were practically independent chief citizens. This jurisdiction over petty criminal offences was exercised on the basis of the four divisions we have mentioned, and there is little doubt that from the first one bailiff represented each of these four divisions. They are always described in the same official order (1) Conesford; (2) Mancroft; (3) Wymer or Westwyk; (4) Over the Water. Thus we see that the New Burgh had entirely by this time fallen in with its neighbours. The four divisions were called the four leets, which meant that each of the four might have held its own leet court for the purpose just mentioned.

Sheriff's court and "Tourn."

See map of thirteenth century.

The sub-divisions or "police" districts.

5. This was not actually done; the courts were divided. That is, instead of one set of jurors appearing for the leet of Conesford, there were three sets: one for the parishes of South Conesford, one for those of North Conesford, and one for those of Berstrete. So in the case of the other three leets. Mancroft had two sets, one for St. Stephen's and one very large one for St. Peter's.

Wymer had four sets, and Over the Water only two. Thus there were eleven of these sub-divisions altogether. This was in 1288, but probably at first there had been twelve. I have explained that each had to contain twelve tithings. From not being able any longer to fulfil this condition one may have dropped out. As the localities of these sub-leets nearly corresponded with those of the small wards to be described directly I may refer to Map IV. for both. The four leets or great divisions were used for all electoral purposes; the sub-divisions existed only in connection with this jurisdiction. They were "police" districts, as we might call them now.

The four great "wards" and the Common Council, 1404-1835.

6. This system lasted till 1404, when another great change took place. A mayor was appointed as chief ruler of the city, and the city was made into a separate county. In a borough the bailiffs might have continued to act under the mayor; but a county is administered by a sheriff, and so two sheriffs were substituted for the four bailiffs. The old leet system had become too old fashioned for the times, and the citizens of Norwich wanted to be more like London. They had got their mayor and their sheriffs. They had also long possessed a body of twenty-four leading citizens, who had acted as council to the bailiffs, and now became the mayor's council. These twenty-four soon obtained leave to call themselves "Aldermen," like the great men in London, and to hold their office for life. And then the rest of the citizens feeling themselves rather left out in the cold, obtained, after a little fighting, the right to elect annually sixty of their number to form a common council. This municipal assembly of a mayor, two sheriffs, twenty-four aldermen, and sixty common councillors, lasted till 1835.

It was this new organization which made use of the divisions represented in Map IV.

The four great divisions, it will be observed, are the very same that we have had with us almost all through our story. For a time they were called, as before, the four leets. But in 1415 the London word "Wards" was adopted. Otherwise, they remained the same as before. The electoral franchise was in the lands of the freemen of the four great wards, who elected the aldermen and the members of the common council.

The twelve small wards or "magisterial" districts.

The history of the smaller divisions is very curious. At this time they had been reduced from eleven to ten, the sub-leets of South and North Conesford being united in one. In this form they were used for some time in the election of the Common Council. The freemen of the Ward of Conesford were to choose twelve, six for Conesford and six for Berstrete; the freemen of the Ward of Mancroft elected sixteen, five for St. Stephen's, seven for St. Peter's, and four for St. Giles' (which parish had previously been transferred to this ward). So with the other wards and their sub-divisions, the freemen of the great wards chose a certain number of councillors for each of the smaller divisions of their ward.

The smaller divisions were thus of little practical use, and might possibly have been discontinued had not a new reason for them come into operation. The twenty-four aldermen who at first were, as before, only twenty-four citizens (six from each great ward) chosen to act as a council of assessors to the mayor, became, after a time by virtue of their office, Magistrates or Justices of the

Peace, with power to deal with the offences previously dealt with at the leet courts. This change was accomplished by about 1452, and then (I suppose again in imitation of London) it was thought necessary that a magisterial alderman should have a district of his own. There were the ten old "leet" or police districts ready to hand, but the number ten did not fit in with twenty-four aldermen, so the ten districts were made into twelve. The only changes required for this purpose were to divide the Conesford sub-division once more into two, and also to sub-divide the second division over the water. Each of the twelve sub-divisions was assigned to two aldermen, and for a time the districts were called the twelve "Aldermanries." The aldermen, however, never held separate courts or meetings in their districts corresponding to the "wardmotes" held by the aldermen of London. In Norwich an alderman was a kind of official link between his district and the city assembly, being responsible for keeping the peace and carrying out official orders, and generally taking the lead in that particular part of the city. By the end of the fifteenth century the title of "Aldermanries" had died out, and given way to that of "Small Wards," and this division of the city continued till the passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835.

The four great wards, which were really the municipal divisions for electoral purposes, always retained their old names and their old order (1) Conesford; (2) Mancroft; (3) Wymer; (4) Over the Water.

The twelve sub-divisions or small wards were three in each great ward, named as follows:—

The great Ward of Conesford contained the three small

Wards of South Conesford, North Conesford, and Berstrete (spelt in the old correct way as one word).

The great Ward of Mancroft contained the small Wards of St. Stephen's, St. Peter Mancroft, and St. Giles'.

The great Ward of Wymer contained the three small Wards of West Wymer, Middle Wymer, and East Wymer.

The great Ward over the Water contained the three small Wards of Coslany, Colegate, and Fibridge.

The situation and limits of the four wards and their sub-divisions will be easily traced on the map.

I need only say, in conclusion, that in 1835 the twelve small wards were disused. The four great wards were made into eight, distinguished merely by numbers one to eight. The suburban districts were included.

It is matter of quite recent history how in 1892 the eight wards were doubled. So changed had circumstances become, that six of the sixteen sufficed for the city, while ten were needed for the suburbs. Happily at that time most of the old historic names were restored, and appropriate new names added.

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