

The parish, manor, or shire of Tynemouth, forms the south-east corner of Northumberland; its extreme length, from north to south, is about four and a half miles, and its breadth, from east to west, about three miles, being bounded on the south by the Tyne, on the east by the sea, and on the north and west by the parishes of Earsdon, Long Benton, and Wallsend. Its surface is generally level, and the soil strong and well suited for the growth of wheat and beans. It abounds with coal, contains some ironstone, and the only magnesian limestone strata in the county. Tynemouth-Moor, Shire-Moor, and Billy Mill-Moor, containing 1300 acres, were divided and enclosed by acts of parliament, passed in the 29th, 39th, and 46th years of the reign of George III.

TYNEMOUTH PRIORY AND CASTLE.

The first buildings and fortifications erected in the vicinity of North Shields, were raised at Tynemouth, which is said to have been called by the ancient Britons *Penbal Crag*, or the head of the rampier on the rock, where the Romans are supposed to have had a strong fortress, as two inscriptions belonging to that people were found there in 1783, one of which is upon an altar dedicated to Jupiter, by *Ælius Rufus*, prefect of the fourth cohort of the Lingones; and the other is upon a tablet, and is usually read thus—“*Gyrum cumbas, et templum fecit Caius Julius Maximinus Legionis sextæ Victricis ex voto.*” Perhaps the Maximinus here mentioned was that gigantic favourite of Severus, who, from a common soldier, was made a centurion, then a tribune, and afterwards commander-in-chief, in which character he usurped the empire. Edwin, King of Northumberland, about the year 625, built a small chapel of wood at Tynemouth, in which his daughter, Rosella, took the veil; and his successor, St. Oswald, afterwards rebuilt it of stone. It was dedicated to St. Mary, and, on account of the celebrity of the divines who officiated at it, the place was considered to possess an extraordinary degree of sanctity, and the illustrious dead were brought to it from various parts to be interred. St. Oswald, King Edred, and Henry, hermit of Coquet Island, were buried here, as also were Malcolm of Scotland, and his son Prince Edward. It was plundered and destroyed by the Danes, and afterwards refounded by Tostig, Earl of Northumberland, who, according to Leland, re-built the monastery from the foundation; and his successor, Waltheof, about 1074, gave it, with all its possessions, to the monks of Jarrow: but both these houses were soon afterwards made cells to the church of Durham. In 1090, Earl Mowbray refounded Tynemouth, filled it with Black Canons; and made it a cell to St. Albans, in Hertfordshire. In his unsuccessful conspiracy against William Rufus, he converted this monastery into a fortress, which, after a siege of two months was taken by storm, when, Mowbray fled to Bambrough Castle, but finding himself insecure, he returned to the sanctuary here, but was dragged from the altar and imprisoned. During this siege the edifice was reduced to a ruin, but it was again rebuilt in 1110, and in 1121, the monks of Durham, made a fruitless attempt to recover it from the church of St. Albans. King David of Scotland spared it from the general devastation which he inflicted on Northumberland in consequence of its great sanctity, and twenty-seven marks of silver paid to him by its monks.

After this period, the monks had the churches of Eglington, Norton, and Hartburn, given to them, for the purpose of ‘*mending*