

IV.—WAR AT SEA UNDER THE EARLY TUDORS: SOME NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE EVIDENCE.

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The city of Newcastle upon Tyne has a long and distinguished maritime history. It was an active and important trading centre as early as the twelfth century, and a hundred years later, already a considerable wool port, was one of 26 English towns commissioned by Edward I to provide galleys for the royal service.¹ At the end of the Middle Ages, after a series of lengthy and bitter disputes, it had crippled most of its potential rivals, gained effective control of an imposing hinterland, and in large measure defeated the monopolistic commercial claims of such powerful bodies as the Staplers and Merchant Adventurers.²

Political accident enhanced local enterprise. The ancient unsolved problems of the North—civil disorder, Border War, French intervention in Scotland—pressed heavily on English government under the Early Tudors, and in any attempt to solve them Newcastle was of capital strategic importance. It was an importance perhaps almost as much naval as military, for there was a general quickening of maritime activity in northern waters, characterized amongst other things by the reappearance of strong French and Scottish fleets—the latter the creation of the vigorous and able James

¹ See my *Hugh du Puiset* (Cambridge, 1956), 215-16; R. J. Whitwell and C. Johnson, "The Newcastle Galley", *Archæologia Aeliana*, 4th Series, vol. II (1926), 142-93; J. C. Davies, "Shipping and Trade in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1294-6", *Arch. Ael.*, 4th Series, vol. XXXI (1953), 175-204, and "The Wool Customs Accounts for Newcastle for the reign of Edward I", *ib.*, vol. XXXII (1954), 220-308.

² These developments took place roughly in the century after 1450. I hope to discuss them more fully elsewhere.

IV (1488-1513).³ In a conflict between England and France—and their rivalry was one of the subsidiary themes of European history throughout the period—Scotland was almost invariably allied to France.⁴ With the anarchy that followed James' death at Flodden there was a danger, strenuously resisted by Henry VIII, that an even closer association might develop, and so it was that Scotland became the field of a prolonged struggle between France and England to establish their respective power. The easiest route for French supplies and reinforcements was through Edinburgh, just as the surest place to intercept them, as also much of Scotland's most valuable trade, was the mouth of the Forth. But for obvious reasons English naval interests were traditionally in the Channel, and perhaps never more so than under the Early Tudors, who, conservative in this as in so much else, spent large sums on the construction of dockyards at Portsmouth, Woolwich, Deptford and Erith. Thus in the absence of any established base north of the Thames, and with the royal ships generally concentrated in the "Narrow Seas", Newcastle recovered for a brief, and as it transpired final period, that strategic importance it had enjoyed for similar reasons under the first three Edwards.

There were, of course, disadvantages: the North-East coast was notoriously dangerous. The Tyne, with its treacherous estuary, was never an easy river to make, especially in face of a Westerly,⁵ and in the early sixteenth century its many hazards were aggravated by heavy silting,

³ Ch. de La Roncière, *Histoire de La Marine Française*, I, 388; M. Oppenheim, (*History of the Administration of the Royal Navy etc.*), 47; (P.) Hume Brown, (*A History of Scotland to the Present time*, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1911), I, 240-1, 260-1, 276; (H. A. L.) Fisher, (*The History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the death of Henry VIII*, London, 1906), 171.

⁴ Apart from a short-lived alliance between James IV and Henry VII, Hume Brown, I, 244-5, 252-3; Fisher, 93-4.

⁵ A chart of the Tyne dating from the reign of Henry VIII bears the note "very nedfolle it is that thare ware at everye pointe of sande or Rockes, a becone or a boye, for at hoye watter bothe sands and Rockes are under watter, Even to the mane Lande", *A History of Northumberland*, vol. VIII, *The Parish of Tynemouth*, ed. Sir Edmund Craster (London, 1907), plate XV. Some of these hazards were moderated shortly after by the work of the Newcastle Trinity House.

due, according to the civic authorities, to fish weirs erected by the churches of Durham and Tynemouth.⁶ Many of the larger fighting ships were thus unable to enter and were obliged to use either Tynemouth Haven (already favoured by heavier merchantmen as an outport), the anchorage of Skate Roads at Holy Island, or, if need be, Hull, whilst those of shallower draught had a lengthy passage upstream to the town quays.⁷ Nevertheless Newcastle remained, as the Privy Council wrote on one occasion, "the meetest place to mount the sea" against the Scots.⁸ It was a walled city conveniently, but not dangerously near the Border, usually tolerably defended and victualled, or at least in a position to command supplies, and with good anchorages within easy reach and material and skilled labour locally available for repairs and refitting.⁹ But above all shipping was readily accessible, owned for the most part by a merchant class consistently loyal to the established regime. In 1544 about 50 vessels belonged to the port, of which as many of 25 were fit to be employed as men-of-war—though the figures for the preceding century must have been considerably lower.¹⁰ There was likewise an adequate, though not inexhaustible supply of masters and seamen experienced in what, on the East coast at least, were considered the distant trades—voyages to the Low Countries, Scandinavia, Normandy and Western France—besides men with an intimate knowledge of the seaboard from the Forth to the Thames.¹¹

⁶ *Select Cases before the King's Council in the Star Chamber*, ed. I. S. Leadam (Selden Society), II (1911), 70.

⁷ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. Brewer, Gairdner and Brodie (London, 1864-1932), (hereafter *LP*), XVII, 836. The importance of Holy Island is noticed in a Venetian report of 1551, *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 1534-54*, p. 353.

⁸ *LP*, XIX (I), 98.

⁹ There is a certain amount of material relating to the early history of shipbuilding in the North-East amongst the muniments of the church of Durham and in *LP*. I hope to examine this evidence more fully in due course.

¹⁰ *LP*, XIX (I), 107, 115, 140 (6); *The Hamilton Letters and Papers*, ed. J. Bain (2 vols., London, 1890-2), II, 185.

¹¹ These remarks are based on an examination of the Newcastle customs accounts and the records of the High Court of Admiralty, and will be developed elsewhere. For Newcastle's trade with Normandy see M. Mollat, *Le Commerce Maritime Normand à la Fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1952).

The purpose of this paper is to examine some of the occasions on which such shipping was used by the crown during that relatively obscure, but none the less significant period of English naval history, from the late fifteenth century to the death of Henry VIII. The general importance of hired or impressed merchantmen serving as transports, victuallers or fighting ships is too well known to require emphasis, but the diversity of their employment merits more attention than it has received.

During the reign of the first Tudor there was little regular naval action of any consequence, and none that concerned the North.¹² But the accession of Henry VIII, whose vanity and ambition were affronted by the growing power of France, led to the return of martial activity on a scale unequalled since the campaigns of Edward III and Henry V. His first French war (1511-14), which was to bring England renown such as she had not enjoyed since Agincourt, opened ignominiously. After some unimportant skirmishings there came the disastrous invasion of Guienne, accompanied by the more creditable performance of a fleet under Edward Howard. Louis XII, beset from all sides, sought the aid of James IV, and in April 1512 his ambassador, La Motte, en route for Leith, gave a timely demonstration of sea-power by capturing several English merchantmen, including a number from the Tyne.¹³ Newcastle responded, on orders from the Council, by fitting out the *Elizabeth* and *Trinity*, which may have taken part in the attack on La Motte on his departure from the Forth in July.¹⁴ One of his escorts was captured, another driven to Zealand and the ambassador

¹² A squadron sent north in 1497 in view of James' activities saw no action. Some of its supplies were drawn from Newcastle, *Naval Accounts and Inventories of the Reign of Henry VII*, ed. M. Oppenheim (NRS, VIII, 1896), xlv-xlvi, 102-3; Fisher, 72-3.

¹³ *LP*, I (I), 1262; (J. D.) Mackie, (*The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558*, Oxford, 1952), 274-5; Fisher, 171-8, 185; Hume Brown, 1, 264-5.

¹⁴ P(ublic)R(ecord)O(ffice), Exchequer QR, Accounts Various, E 101/62/63, which may be dated by its references to Sir Richard Cavendish (cf. *LP*, I (I), 1424 (i)), to Scottish prisoners apparently taken at Flodden, and to the detachment of the *Elizabeth* to the Thames.

himself "compelled to fly towards Denmark".¹⁵

Later in the year the *Elizabeth* was ordered south and replaced by the *Edward*, subsequently joined in 1513 by the *Gabriel* and the *George*.¹⁶ The activities of this flotilla are obscure, but appear to be connected with either an attempt to intercept the Scots fleet which left Leith in July 1513 to reinforce the French in the Channel, or with the campaign which resulted in the defeat and death of James IV at Flodden.¹⁷

Meanwhile the *Elizabeth*, diverted to the Thames, was commissioned into the main royal fleet, first as a victualler to the *Less Carrick* (c. December 1512-February 1513) and *Katherine Fortaleza* (c. March-April 1513), and eventually (c. April) as a fighting ship.¹⁸ Thus it was that under her owner, Lewis Sotheran, she came to take part in Sir Edward Howard's ill-fated expedition to Brest. The story is worth recounting in some detail, not only by reason of her distinguished role therein, but also since there is no adequate description and analysis of this important operation.¹⁹

Howard, the Lord Admiral, left the Thames in March 1513 with 23 royal, and 5 hired ships, and their victuallers to clear the way for an invasion of France. At almost the same time Prégent de Bidoux, an experienced galley commander of formidable reputation, sailed from Brest on a cross-Channel raid, but was obliged to put into St. Malo through sickness and stress of weather. He was thus already well established in northern waters, and not, as is sometimes

¹⁵ (*Letters and Papers relating to the War with France 1512-13*, ed. A.) Spont (NRS X, 1897), xvi-xvii, 27n. i.

¹⁶ E 101/62/23; *LP*, II (II), p. 1462. *Elizabeth* was in the South by December 1512, *LP*, I, 3591.

¹⁷ Spont, 176 and notes; Fisher, 185-8; Mackie, 279-82; Hume Brown, I, 267-72. They may have been concerned with French privateers then active on the coast, *LP*, I (I), 1645.

¹⁸ E 101/62/63; PRO, Exchequer TR, Misc. Books (E. 36), vol. 12, 25; *LP*, I (I), 1661, i, iii; Spont, 86-7, 105. Cf. below, note 24.

¹⁹ Cf. the accounts in W. L. Clowes, *The Royal Navy*, I, 455-7; Sir Julian Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, I, 21-2; J. A. Williamson, *Maritime Enterprise, 1485-1558* (Oxford, 1913), 353-4, 375-84; Spont, xxx-xl; D. Mathew, *The Naval Heritage* (London, 1944), 7-8; Fisher, 179-80; Mackie, 276-7.

suggested, still on passage from the Mediterranean.²⁰ In the meantime Howard had made contact with some of the heavier French ships (April 11) which, after their encounters with his fleet in the previous year, promptly ran for Brest pursued by the English, who were, however, unable to enter through foul wind and tide. Skirmishing parties were landed, but an attempted attack under sail failed after the grounding of the *Nicholas*, and the French, anticipating further assaults, took elaborate precautions, including the preparation of fire-ships. Howard then established a close blockade, though there were some doubts as to what would happen should the French galleys arrive—the admiral's view being that his own (2, and 2 rowbarges), together with his smaller vessels and ships' boats would "lay them sharply aboard".²¹ But on April 22 Prégent, with 6 galleys and 4 foists, broke through the fleet, sinking "the ship that was Mr. Compton's" and badly damaging the *Less Bark* by artillery fire, though at the same time losing one of his foists to Howard's boats and suffering heavy casualties. He anchored in Blancs Sablons Bay, protected by shallows, and with his flanks covered by fortified islets. Howard, short of supplies, but undismayed by the course of events, considered a landing to take him from the rear, but with the arrival of more victuallers (April 24), and on the advice of a Spanish officer, he decided to transfer men to some of his lighter craft and "run upon the galleys".²²

The assault, it should be stressed, consisted of something more than the 2 galleys, 2 crayers and unspecified number of ships' boats with which it is usually credited.²³ Prégent himself speaks of being attacked by 30 ships and 25 or 30 boats, of which 2 galleys and 3 ships boarded him, and his view is to some extent borne out by Sir Thomas Howard's account. From this there can be identified 2 galleys (probably

²⁰ Spont, 94-9, 122, 134; but cf. Corbett, *loc. cit.*

²¹ Spont, xxxv, 127-8. The French defences were organized before Prégent's arrival at Brest, and were not, as Fisher considers (180), part of a plan to draw the English to a sure destruction.

²² Spont, 135-6, 143, 146-7.

²³ Corbett, *loc. cit.*; Fisher, 180; Mackie, 277.

Swallow, under Sir Edward Howard, and *Sweepstake*, under Ferrer); the *Less Rowbarge*; 2 crayers (Sir William Sidney and Sir Henry Sherburn in one, Thomas Cheney and John Wallop in the other); the *Christopher Davy* (Wiseman); the *Jenet Purwyn* (Guerney); the *Elizabeth* of Newcastle (Sotheran); William Tooley of the *Sweepstake* in some unidentified craft; Sir Wistan Browne in the *Peter's* boats; a number of other ships' boats, and perhaps the *Lizard*.²⁴

Howard, leaving his main fleet to watch Brest, attacked on Monday April 25. He grappled and boarded Prégent's flagship, but his line was either slipped or parted, and he was left on the fo'c's'le to be thrust overboard by pikemen. That this was no accident is perhaps suggested by a letter of 7 May from Thomas Howard to Wolsey, complaining that Cook (*Swallow's* captain) "did his part very ill that day my brother was lost". After *Swallow* had drifted clear *Sweepstake* grappled Prégent, but was driven off, to be followed in succession by the *Less Rowbarge* and the crayers. It is not clear where *Christopher Davy*, whose captain "boarded not but had all his men slayne or hurt", *Jenet Purwyn*, and *Elizabeth* were engaged, but in Thomas Howard's opinion Guerney and "good Lewes (Sotheran) did as well as was possible, as well apperyd by the slaughter (? of their men) and bowging of their ships".²⁵ But with Howard's death, and the repulse of five attempts to board, the assault drew off and rejoined the heavier ships. Then, without orders, the whole fleet retired to Plymouth (April 30).²⁶

²⁴ Spont, 136-7, 146-7, 149, 155-6, 160. The vessels may be identified by their officers' names from the tables in Spont, 77-88. I have taken that on 87-8 to represent the fleet in April, since in this *Elizabeth* is a fighting ship and no longer a victualler to *Katherine Fortaleza* (above, n. 18), and it is known that the *Katherine* did in fact sail without a victualler (Spont, 105). It is suggested that Howard was in *Swallow* from the mention of her captain, Cook, which would leave *Sweepstake* as the only other galley present (but on her rating as a galley see C. S. Goldingham, "The Navy under Henry VII", *English Historical Review*, XXXIII (1918), 481). It is, however, possible that their roles were reversed. It should also be noticed that the crayers of Thomas Howard's account, which lost few men, cannot be identified with the *Jenet* and *Elizabeth*, which had heavy casualties.

²⁵ The *Jenet's* master, however, disgraced himself, Spont, 160.

²⁶ Spont, 136-7, 146-7, 149, 155-6, 160.

Though Dr. Mathew has found a deceptive modernity in this action, it was the very apotheosis of medieval naval war; grappling, boarding, and hand-to-hand fighting. Its most significant features were the indifferent performance of the larger French ships compared with Prégent's assured handling of his squadron, the complete inadequacy of English victualling, and the general and ominous lack of discipline in Howard's command: disputes among the Admiral's advisers; hesitations by the captains of *Swallow* and *Christopher Davy*; failures amongst the rowers in the galleys and rowbarges, all culminating in the final mutinous return to England.²⁷

It has often been implied, largely on the evidence of Sabin and Echyngham, two English captains who disapproved of it, that the operation was merely foolhardy and that no such action against galleys could ever have succeeded.²⁸ Yet Prégent himself felt that he had been in considerable danger, and his squadron was in fact in some measure disabled as a result of the encounter.²⁹ Moreover Howard, though a young man (he was about 36 at the time), came of a family which had realistic views on seapower, and was by no means inexperienced. He had taken a leading part in the capture of Andrew Barton in 1511, fought a triumphant campaign against the French in 1512, and what is perhaps more relevant, had been at Poyning's successful naval assault on Sluys in 1492.³⁰ The situation in April 1513 demanded action. He was on a dangerous station—as many subsequent blockading fleets off Brest were to discover—badly supplied, and with undisciplined ships.³¹ To have destroyed, or even crippled Prégent's galleys, thus removing the most effective element in French naval power, would have been sound strategy. But the operation was neither well planned nor

²⁷ Spont, 126, 151, 156, 160, and cf. xl-xli; Clowes, I, 457.

²⁸ Spont, xxxix, 143, 147; Fisher, 180; Mackie, 277.

²⁹ Spont, 137, 161.

³⁰ Spont, viii-x; Clowes, I, 449. It is clear from his correspondence that Howard was a real sailor. A letter in Spont (97) shows him testing the sailing qualities of his ships, carrying a press of canvas so they were gunwale under.

³¹ Spont, 126, 154-5.

executed. A diversionary landing might have assisted, but by mid-April there was no longer a chance of surprise. Again, Greek fire ("wyldfier") might have proved conclusive against closely moored vessels, but the idea was abandoned after some discussion, possibly because of memories of the disastrous burning of the *Regent* and *Cordelière* in 1512.³² Nevertheless Howard's attack was much more than "a fool-hardy venture in 4 small boats". It was directly into the fire of what was generally regarded as the heaviest naval artillery in the North,³³ but the assault was of a fair size, in which none of the ships were less than 70 tons, and two at least were over 100—incidentally suggesting there was more water available than the contemporary narratives reveal.³⁴ The opposition to these tactics came from Sabin and Echyngham, neither of whom appear to have had experience with galleys, whilst the admiral was supported and encouraged by a Spanish officer who might be expected to have known something of such things.³⁵

Despite her losses and "bowging", which presumably relates to damage by shot,³⁶ the *Elizabeth*, whose performance at Brest had clearly been appreciated by the new Lord Admiral, Thomas Howard, continued in service under Sotheran. She was with the fleet throughout the Summer and Autumn of 1513, her casualties apparently having been made good by a draft of Devon men,³⁷ and though due for discharge at Southampton in September, she was retained with a number of other selected vessels "to keep the sea this winter" in view of Franco-Scottish preparations. Early in 1514 she was in northern waters, probably with Sabin's squadron, ordered to the Forth when Louis XII threatened

³² Spont, 159.

³³ Spont, 51-2.

³⁴ Spont, 85-8. It appears that a rowbarge grounded, however, *ib.*, 156.

³⁵ Spont, 143, 147.

³⁶ According to Sir Julian Corbett a ship was said to "bulge" herself when she grounded and filled (*Fighting Instructions, 1530-1816*, NRS, XXIX, 1905), 16, n. 1, but this was not the case with the *Elizabeth*.

³⁷ *LP*, I, 4377; I (II), 2304. The Mr. Crocker who was to supply her retinue was a Devon man, see index to *LP*, I.

to despatch the Duke of Albany (cousin and heir of the infant James V, and an ardent protagonist of French influence) to Scotland. She returned south in the Spring, only to be recommissioned into Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Denys' fleet (9 ships, of which 6 were merchantmen) "appointed to the North Seas", with which she served for some months before England came to terms with France (July 1514) and Scotland (May 1515).³⁸

The general European peace of 1518 was soon destroyed by the rivalries of Francis I of France and the Emperor Charles V, and when fighting was resumed in 1522 England, by popular inclination and Wolsey's direction, was allied to the Emperor against Francis, who in turn allowed Albany to reappear in Scotland to occupy Henry's attention.³⁹ But England, while preparing for action on the Continent, seized the initiative in the North. Before Albany could make any move a flotilla under Sabin, which perhaps included the *George* of Newcastle, attacked Leith and subsequently carried out a significant bombardment of Kinghorn, where they came in "one by one as near as possible and (the commander) made each fire against the town in succession"—which might be taken to indicate broadside firing from line ahead.⁴⁰ The damage inflicted on French and Scottish shipping is unknown, though probably slight, and the effectiveness of the whole operation was destroyed by three of Sabin's captains insisting on escorting a prize into Newcastle, thus allowing 3 French men-of-war to enter the Forth "to the great comfort of the Duke and his friends", who were rumoured to be on the point of abandoning Scotland before the timely arrival of this reinforcement (c. 20 May).⁴¹

The following year, after some abortive negotiations for the overthrow of the French interest, the Earl of Surrey

³⁸ *LP*, I, 4474 (Spont, 185 n. 1); 4682 (i); *LP*, I (II), 2722; 3148 (ii); 3501; Spont, xliv-vi.

³⁹ Fisher, 205, 227-43; Hume Brown, I, 291-3; Mackie, 305-12.

⁴⁰ *LP*, III (II), 2746; *LP*, III (I), App. 33.

⁴¹ *LP*, III (II), 2271.

(formerly Sir Thomas Howard) was appointed Lt. General against the Scots, and Sir Henry Sherburn commissioned (c. 18 February 1523) as Admiral or Vice-Admiral (the titles are used indiscriminately) of the North Sea. His flagship was the *William* of York, and his command of 16 (later reduced to 10) merchantmen included the *Jesus*, the *Katherine*, the *Matthew* and the *Mary Katherine* from Newcastle. Operations were under Surrey's general direction, and show a characteristic appreciation of seapower, but what is perhaps most remarkable was the concern—by no means exclusively English—with the disruption of trade and fisheries, foreshadowing in some measure the pattern of later Anglo-Dutch wars in the same waters.⁴²

In May 1523 Sherburn in the *William* with his son, Thomas, in the *Katherine*, were detached to seek commerce raiders at Flamborough, whilst Christopher Coo, a distinguished seaman who had already spent some profitable months in the Channel, and four other captains were ordered to lie "two kennyngs in the sea" off Holy Island to cut communications with Scotland. But these dispositions were almost immediately destroyed by storms which drove Sherburn to Holy Island and Coo to the Forth. With his ships so dispersed Surrey was exercised for Coo's safety, and by the danger of a Scots attack on the returning East Anglian Iceländ fleet, by which, as he wrote with the pardonable exaggeration of a harassed commander, "the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk will be undone, and all England destitute of fish next year".⁴³ But whilst he awaited Wolsey's permission to detail an escort for the fishermen⁴⁴—an ominous anticipation of a situation all too common in certain subsequent periods of naval history—Sherburn, seemingly accompanied by Thwayts in the *Matthew*, fell in with a French

⁴² *LP*, III (II), 2836, 3493, 3160; *LP*, IV (I), 691; Fisher, 248-9; Hume Brown, I, 293-5; Mackie, 313.

⁴³ *LP*, III (II), 3071, 3493. I hope to deal more fully with Sherburn and Coo in due course.

⁴⁴ An escort was apparently sent from Yarmouth (*LP*, IV (I), 691). It is possible that Sherburn himself was ordered to support the fishermen, and that the Frenchman he encountered was intended to stiffen the Scots attack.

“great ship” (11 June), with which he fought a brisk, though unsatisfactory action. Some of the *Matthew*'s artillery was disabled, the *William* had 34 men injured, and Sherburn himself was killed, but the Frenchman, despite heavy casualties, held on for Leith.⁴⁵

On Surrey's orders the command passed to the energetic Coo,⁴⁶ and there ensued a number of vigorous engagements in the North and in the Channel as the new Vice-Admiral, with a strengthened squadron, attacked commerce, and attempted (and on the whole quite successfully) to sever Franco-Scottish communications. The *Jenet Purwyn*, now a ship “of little value”, was recaptured;⁴⁷ the *Galere* of Dieppe and the *Marie* of Honfleur were intercepted on passage from the Baltic with cargoes of rye; and at least 5 other vessels were taken, including a Newfoundland banker from Rouen “laden with fish”, valued in all at £1,213. Some of Coo's men were wounded—he was allowed £6/18/- “for healing 16 burnt at the taking of the Newfoundland ship”—and several of his command damaged; a small sum was spent on “lead dice and hides” for repairs to artillery; the *John Baptist* of Lynn needed a refit costing £64 after her encounter with the *Paraunt*; and the *William* of York lost her bowsprit, foresail and spritsail in boarding the *Griffin*, before she became a total loss. In view of these activities it is hardly surprising that when in September Albany, who had withdrawn to France late in 1522, sought to return to Scotland, he chose to do so through the Irish Sea and Dumbarton rather than risk the passage to Leith.⁴⁸

With the ignominious failure of Albany's northern campaign (October 1523), and the landing of a large English army on the Continent, Coo's squadron was reduced, though somewhat prematurely in view of the continued presence of French warships on the East coast. The *Jesus*, *Katherine* and

⁴⁵ LP, III (II), 3116, 3191, 3493; LP, IV (I), 691; La Roncière, III, 180-1.

⁴⁶ Much to Coo's delight, LP, III (II), 3158.

⁴⁷ LP, III (II), 3158.

⁴⁸ LP, IV (I), 83, 691; La Roncière, 180-3; Fisher, 249; Humie Brown, I, 294; Mackie, 312-13.

Mary Katherine were paid off late in 1523, but the *Matthew* remained in commission till the following Spring—perhaps, as with the *Elizabeth* before her, on account of her fighting qualities—when there appears to have been a reduction of English armaments as Wolsey tired of the imperial alliance.⁴⁹

The next seventeen years brought a comparative lull in the wars of Charles and Francis, while ecclesiastical and political upheaval left England with little surplus energy for imperial ambitions. But in 1542, with the internal situation somewhat more stable, and France and the Empire again embattled, Henry renewed his attempts to destroy French influence in Scotland, where, through the policies of the Queen, Mary of Lorraine, and James V's chief counsellor, the sinister cardinal Beaton, it had rapidly increased since the late 1530's.⁵⁰

Sir Robert Bowes, Warden of the Marches, was defeated on a Border raid in August, and the king, in retaliation, ordered the Duke of Norfolk (the former Surrey) to attack unless the Scots agreed to humiliating conditions. Operations commenced on land early in October without any formal declaration of war. At the same time a squadron of 8 royal and private ships arrived at Holy Island, with John Cary as Vice-Admiral in *Less Galley*, commissioned to support the invasion and cut communications with France.⁵¹ On about October 3 the Council directed that this somewhat meagre fleet should be reinforced, and nine days later there was talk of sending up 2 ships from Newcastle; James Lawson's *Elizabeth*, and "one of Orwell of which Sabin is owner".⁵² But whilst Cary lay at Holy Island, windbound and short of supplies, awaiting his reinforcements, 16 French vessels slipped past into the Forth. The English commanders, undeterred by such setbacks and a series of disastrous mili-

⁴⁹ *LP*, III (II), 3493, 3536; *LP*, IV (I), 83, 691; Fisher, 249-52; Hume Brown, I, 294-5; Mackie, 313-15.

⁵⁰ Fisher, 453-6; Hume Brown, I, 309-14; Mackie, 404-5.

⁵¹ *LP*, XVII, 895, 946; Fisher, 456; Hume Brown, I, 314; Mackie, 405. I hope to deal more fully with Cary in a subsequent article.

⁵² *LP*, XVII, 910, 939; *Hamilton Papers*, I, 206.

tary failures, optimistically wrote (October 14) that they would strengthen Cary with 6 or 7 Newcastle ships to aid him "seek the enemies" in the Forth. After some further delay a number of vessels, including, however, only 4 from the Tyne (which may be identified as the *Elizabeth*, *Anthony*, *John Evangelist*, and *Robert*), were said to be joining, and by the end of the month the Vice-Admiral was at last under sail in pursuit of 2 French merchantmen "laden with ordnance".⁵³ But in the meantime the invasion, pressed with even less urgency, had collapsed. Norfolk was no longer the vigorous and able warrior of his youth, and the campaign, badly planned and worse executed, ended in November with the return of the fleet, which had burned a few villages just north of the Border, and, as the report baldly puts it, "killed certain persons". The irascible Henry expressed a not unreasonable wish that "such a costly and notable enterprise had been more displeasing to the enemies".⁵⁴

Cary paid off some of his ships, and on Norfolk's instructions left the rest "to lie at Holy Island and keep the seas this winter to prevent the Scots from uttering their wool and salmon, which is their only commodity unsold, and put them from their fishing in the seas this winter and in Lent"—a further instance not only of Howard's views on the functions of sea-power, but also of that concern with the disruption of commerce which particularly characterized these early operations in northern waters. The effect of the projected blockade remains obscure, though a number of prizes were apparently taken.⁵⁵

In the meanwhile, on the West coast, another of Henry's armies had won a decisive victory at Solway Moss, news of which killed the unfortunate James. To English politicians it appeared that the Tudor ideal of a

⁵³ *LP*, XVII, 946, 969, and cf. *LP*, XVII, 996; *LP*, XVIII (I), 765.

⁵⁴ *LP*, XVII, 1025; Fisher, 456-7; Hume Brown, I, 314; Mackie, 405.

⁵⁵ *LP*, XVII, 1043, 1083; *LP*, XVIII (I), 6. In September 1542 Norfolk had urged that Scots shipping returning from Denmark should be intercepted, *LP*, XVII, 731, 754.

union of the crowns was at last to be realized. To this end, while an Anglophile party was fostered under a suitable puppet, there were renewed efforts to seal off Scotland from French aid and encouragement, and to demonstrate the effects of English hostility by attacks on her valuable trade with the Low Countries.⁵⁶ Early in January 1543 the king wrote to Lisle—the future Protector Northumberland—then Warden of the Marches, that the Scots had certain “richly laden ships” in Veere, which it would be both politic and profitable to intercept, the more so since the most powerful Scottish warships were away seeking the English Bordeaux fleet. Six vessels already at sea were to be reinforced by 4 “of the tallest” from Newcastle, and the combined squadron was to lie in wait in the Forth. After some negotiations the “mayor and brethren” of Newcastle were bound by indenture (19 January) to have the *Elizabeth*, *Anthony*, *James*, and *John Evangelist* equipped, victualled, manned and fully prepared to join the Vice-Admiral, Sir Francis Bryan, within six days.⁵⁷ But whilst preparations were in progress the Council learned (wrongly, as it transpired), that the Duke of Guise, brother of the Queen Mother of Scotland, was about to leave Le Havre for the North with a Franco-Scottish fleet of 8 men-of-war, 3 or 4 “valuable merchantmen”, and 11 English prizes. Since it was essential to Tudor policy that no assistance should reach Beaton and his supporters at this stage, least of all from such a man as Guise, Lisle and Bryan were ordered (19 January) to get as many ships as possible to sea to meet this armada. Powerful reinforcements were promised from the South—including a number of royal ships—and Bryan was given specific instructions that if contact were made he was to take Guise regardless of all else.⁵⁸

By this time, though there were still plenty of “pratie ships” in Newcastle, the town was short of seamen. Nevertheless, despite this and a lack of ordnance, the *Trinity San-*

⁵⁶ Fisher, 457-9; Hume Brown, I, 315-17, II, 3-5; Mackie, 405-7.

⁵⁷ *LP*, XVIII (I), 17, 19, 43, 59.

⁵⁸ *LP*, XVIII (I), 57; *Hamilton Papers*, I, 283.

derson and *Mary Grace*, with the *Robert* as a packet, were added to the command. It was originally intended to rendezvous off Holy Island, where the Newcastle contingent, with the Vice-Admiral in the *Elizabeth*, was to meet those from Yarmouth, Hull and London, but by the end of January the Tyne had frozen so hard that there was "great business to get two of the ships loosed out of the ice, which at the quay . . . is 2 fathoms thick".⁵⁹ In view of these delays Bryan's final instructions (27 January)—drafted, it should be observed, by Norfolk—were that when the Newcastle squadron was up to strength—which meant a detour to Holy Island to pick up artillery from Berwick for the *Trinity Sanderson* and *Mary Grace*—he was to go south to meet the rest of his fleet, unless Guise had already reached Scottish waters, in which case he was to follow and await further orders. As soon as he had 9 sail he was to lie off Orford Ness and watch for the enemy. Should they put into Zealand they were to be blockaded by "riding between Flushing and the Rumkyns", and cut out if opportunity offered, but if they went into Veere they were not to be attacked—presumably because of the large amount of Scottish shipping already there—but were to be "drawn North".⁶⁰

By now, however, Bryan was so late that when he eventually left the Tyne (2 February) he was informed that 21 "great ships", thought at first to be Guise and his "conserve", but later identified as the powerful Scots, *Mary Willoughby* and *Salamander*, with 19 English prizes, were off Holy Island on a northerly course. Suffolk, then commanding on the Border, rightly feeling that his Admiral was but "slenderly furnished" for an encounter with such a force, advised him to abandon the projected call at Holy Island (and consequently the ordnance for the *Trinity* and *Mary Grace*), and to fall back south for reinforcement. Following this counsel Bryan met the Hull contingent within a day or

⁵⁹ *Hamilton Papers*, I, 287; *LP*, XVIII (I), 75, 80.

⁶⁰ *Hamilton Papers*, I, 288; *LP*, XVIII (I), 88. Orford Ness to Berwick was a recognized station as early as 1415, Clowes, I, 372.

so, and with his squadron now up to 14 sail he again came north, only to run into heavy weather which scattered his ships, and sent some into the Tyne "with great leaks". By February 7 it was known that the Scots had entered Leith, and the local command despondently wrote that further action was thought to be pointless.⁶¹

After this fiasco, and in the absence of Guise's threatened descent, there was a short-lived revival of interest in the Scots still at Veere, but plans languished. Part of Bryan's squadron—"the meanest ships"—was ordered to the Downs, and such of the rest as were fit for sea (including the *Elizabeth*) were employed in patrolling between the Humber and the Tyne in conditions such as were later to be only too familiar to British blockading fleets.⁶²

But now more than ever, with the English interest apparently on the point of prevailing, Henry's policy demanded that Scotland be isolated, and that Beaton's party (the cardinal himself having been seized by the "English Lords" or "assured Scots", as they were known, on January 27) should receive neither supplies nor reinforcement.⁶³ Hence on February 28, despite Bryan's failure and an exceptionally severe winter, 4 Newcastle ships (the *Trinity*, *Anthony*, *John Evangelist*, and *Mary Grace*) were appointed "to keep the North Seas between the Humber and Berwick", under the command of William Woodhouse, with his flag in the *Trinity*. The Council gave detailed instructions for the commission. Woodhouse was to be victualled by the Lord Admiral (Lisle) and the governor of Hull, and was not to come inshore unless "upon stress of weather or some chase". All French and Scots vessels were to be taken as prize, and their crews impressed for English service. The ships themselves were to be sent "in Englishmen's charge" into the nearest port, where the local officials were to be ordered to secure their cargoes, and notice was to be given

⁶¹ LP, XVIII (I), 108, 123, 127.

⁶² LP, XVIII (I), 143, 162, 200. The *Elizabeth* was in service till March or even April 1543; LP, XVIII (I), 434, 765.

⁶³ Fisher, 458-9; Hume Brown, II, 4-5; Mackie, 406-7.

to the Council and the Lord Admiral of all such captures. No Flemish, Spanish, Portuguese or Hanseatic ships (a valuable indication of the merchantmen likely to be encountered on the North-East coast) were to be held unless they had committed some hostile act, or were carrying men, victuals or munitions to Scotland, in which case they were to be kept "to the strength and commodity of his majesty's navy" until further instructions. Danish vessels, since the king of Denmark was an ally of Francis I, were to be searched for letters and information, but not otherwise molested, and finally Woodhouse was warned to prevent plundering and acts of violence against neutrals.⁶⁴

These comprehensive instructions for blockade invite comment at a number of points, the more so since a distinguished naval historian has recently overlooked the existence of any such ideas at the time.⁶⁵ At the date of Woodhouse's appointment England was nominally at peace with both France and Scotland,⁶⁶ and he was thus in fact empowered to treat what in strict law was neutral shipping as lawful prize. But the point must not be pressed too far. Such niceties weighed lightly in Henry's diplomacy, or indeed in the policies of most of his contemporaries, and for all practical purposes the commission relates to a state of hostilities. The machinery of arrest outlined is of a pattern which can be discovered as early as 1426, and there is nothing unusual in the definition of victuals and munitions as contraband.⁶⁷ But the power to seize, and even impress neutral shipping found armed or carrying contraband, though again not entirely without precedent, is an example of the increasing severity of prize law in the mid-sixteenth century, and an

⁶⁴ LP, XVIII (I), 225.

⁶⁵ Sir Herbert Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (Oxford, 1946), 12-13, attributes their origin to the Elizabethans, but cf. F. W. Brooks, "Naval Administration and the raising of Fleets under John and Henry III" (*Mariner's Mirror*, XV, 1929), 378; C. J. Kulsrud, *Maritime Neutrality to 1780* (Boston, Mass., 1936), 204, 214, 242.

⁶⁶ War with Scotland commenced December 1543 (Hume Brown, II, 10), and with France in June (Fisher, 460).

⁶⁷ Kulsrud, 24, 252-3, 267. .

earlier instance of such instructions than those generally cited.⁶⁸ The authority to search vessels belonging to the ally of a hostile power for information is likewise an innovation: search itself was long established—it can be found at least as early as the time of John—but it was to ascertain the nature of a cargo rather than to gather intelligence, though doubtless this would have been secured in any period by an enterprising officer.⁶⁹

Woodhouse and his squadron can be traced at sea from March to June, and guided by information from Henry's representative in Edinburgh they appear to have taken a number of prizes.⁷⁰ But the English position in Scotland was rapidly deteriorating. By the beginning of April 1543 Beaton was once more at large and speedily had forces at work against which the Tudor puppet, Arran, could make no head. Shortly after, Henry, provoked amongst other things by the intimate connection of France with the frustration of his Scottish plans, declared war on Francis. The ensuing campaigns again reveal strategic ideas of a higher order than the period is usually credited with. The French aimed not only to supply and finance Beaton, but also, in conjunction with the Scots and Danes, to intercept the Flemish Icelandic fishermen and Baltic grain fleets, and so damage the economy of the Low Countries (which belonged to Henry's ally, the Emperor Charles V), whilst the English had plans for a joint Anglo-Imperial operation against the French herring fishery.⁷¹ There was heavy fighting on the North-East coast, in which Woodhouse, now in *Sweepstake*, distinguished himself. A French squadron returning from Scotland in July was so handled as to have to put back for repairs, and in August a number of Dieppe ships were taken

⁶⁸ Kulsrud, 18, 116-17.

⁶⁹ Kulsrud, 166; F. W. Brooks, "The King's Ships and Galleys" (*MM*, XV, 1929), 44. It should be noticed, however, that in Howard's commission of 1512 he was to examine "monuments, indentures, writings and cokets and none other", i.e. only commercial papers.

⁷⁰ *LP*, XVIII (I), 434, 483, 503, 596, 765, 908.

⁷¹ Fisher, 459-61; Hume Brown, II, 5-6; Mackie, 407; La Roncière, III, 396-7.

off the Tyne. Not only were Francis's more ambitious designs disrupted, but when in October he attempted to reinforce Beaton it was found expedient to do so through Dumbarton rather than risk any further encounters in the North Sea—a situation comparable to that of 1523.⁷²

But despite these admirable indications of sea-power Henry continued to lose ground. In September his one-time creature, Arran, came to terms with Beaton, thus moving the king to characteristic paroxysms of wrath. His first reaction (September 14) was that the pair should be surprised and captured, to which end 5 or 6 ships were to be sent to the Forth from Newcastle and Berwick “lest they should fly by sea”, but a few days later (September 30) he was contemplating large-scale military operations against Edinburgh.⁷³ No action was possible till the following Spring, when the earl of Hertford was commissioned to destroy Edinburgh and Leith, and sack the surrounding countryside. After Norfolk's failure in 1542, when the army had been exhausted by a long march across difficult Border country, it was decided to put Hertford ashore in the Forth—a further demonstration of Tudor naval power which the Scots were unable to dispute. To convey the expedition merchantmen were arrested all along the East coast—the resultant returns being among the most valuable evidence concerning shipping during the period⁷⁴—whilst the earl of Suffolk was instructed to spread rumours that these preparations were for the invasion of France. A royal fleet was in the Tyne by the end of March 1544 (*Sweepstake* grounding on entering), but though many Newcastle ships were employed in supply, and later, when the disastrous results of Henry's policy became apparent, as privateers, none were used as men-of-war in the operation.⁷⁵

⁷² *LP*, XVIII (I), 908; *LP*, XVIII (II), 63, 70; La Roncière, III, 398-9; above, 84.

⁷³ *LP*, XVIII (II), 184, 234; Fisher, 460; Hume Brown, II, 7; Mackie, 407.

⁷⁴ *LP*, XIX (I), 107, 115, 116, 140, 194, 355.

⁷⁵ *LP*, XIX (I), 98, 264, 290; Fisher, 461-2; Hume Brown, II, 10-11; Mackie, 407.

The king's "godly purpose" having been accomplished Hertford withdrew, leaving northern commerce exposed to the depredations of Scottish privateers, against which Newcastle, exhausted by incessant royal demands and an epidemic of plague, made little showing. But Henry had now turned all his energies to the South, where Francis, heartened by the Emperor Charles' withdrawal from the war (September 1544) and an English defeat in Scotland (February 1545), had prepared elaborate plans for the destruction of the English fleet and the recapture of Boulogne.⁷⁶ To meet this danger the royal ships under Lisle were to be heavily reinforced, chiefly from the West Country, but before the arrival of these auxiliaries there was an indecisive skirmish in the Solent (July 19, 1545).⁷⁷ By August 10 the fleet had increased to 104 sail; 24 in the van; 40 in the battle—including the *Mighell* of Newcastle which had served as a privateer in the Spring—and 40 on the wing.⁷⁸ Thus strengthened Lisle fought an action off Shoreham which ended in a French withdrawal—strategically at least a fitting conclusion to naval operations under the early Tudors.⁷⁹

There were a number of other duties for armed merchantmen besides fleet service, which have so far attracted little notice. They might, for instance, be employed, under varying degrees of supervision, as privateers in areas for which no royal ships, or what is perhaps more relevant, no royal officers, could be spared, or in routine tasks, such as reconnaissance, convoy escort or guard work. Thus in 1488, when despite generally pacific relations between England and Scotland, civil disorders which resulted in the overthrow of James III produced a resurgence of Scots claims to Berwick, the garrison was strengthened and the *Mary Huberd* (or *Mayr Hayrbred*) of Newcastle sent with an escort to victual

⁷⁶ Fisher, 463-6; Mackie, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁷ Fisher, 467-8; Mackie, 409.

⁷⁸ *LP*, XX (II), 88. This evidence is discussed by Sir Julian Corbett in *Fighting Instructions*, 18-24.

⁷⁹ Fisher, 468-9; Mackie, 409-10.

the town and remain as a guard during the king's pleasure.⁸⁰

Convoy "wafting" was a more frequent and likewise a more hazardous employment, especially when towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII high policy kept the royal ships fully occupied, and ill-advised Tudor depredations in Scotland had stirred up privateering in the North Sea. In February 1545, when the newly acquired English enclave at Boulogne was in danger, it was planned to supply it with coal from Newcastle and other provisions from elsewhere on the East coast, to which end transports were to assemble off Ravenspur, and from there sail in protected convoy. The coal fleet was to be covered on passage from the Tyne to the Humber by 2 Newcastle vessels which were to wait on the rendezvous till the escort arrived. But the operation was marred by administrative difficulties and a general lack of enthusiasm. The colliers lay in the Tyne for more than a week before one of the masters "revealed" that the escort was already at Hull. There was then some argument as to whether it should be summoned further north, despite the original arrangements, and a marked reluctance to proceed unless this were done. The evidence thereafter is obscure, but it is worth noticing that when in November 1546 another coal fleet was to sail for Boulogne, 2 men-of-war were appointed to join it at Newcastle.⁸¹

There were also occasional demands for reconnaissance and intelligence. The prominent role of espionage in sixteenth-century war and politics needs no emphasis, though it might be observed that unsuitable agents and impossible delays in communication frequently vitiated its results—as indeed was the case until comparatively recent times.⁸² But much information reached the government through less

⁸⁰ *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, ed. W. Campbell (2 vols., London, 1873-7), II, 297; A. Conway, *Henry VII's Relations with Scotland and Ireland*, 26; Fisher, 49-50; Hume Brown, I, 228-31; Mackie, 76.

⁸¹ *LP*, XX (I), 129, 135, 141; *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, vol. I (ed. J. R. Dasent, London, 1890), 550, 557-8.

⁸² A Scottish spy was surveying English ports in 1539 (*Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, VII, 59). For an English spy in Scotland see *LP*, XVIII (II), 281.

dramatic channels: the mayor of Newcastle for instance—whose services to the crown in this and other respects were very considerable throughout the period—forwarded details of foreign naval operations gathered from masters using the port.⁸³ At times, however, more active steps were required. Hence, in October 1544, after the Emperor Charles' withdrawal had left Henry to contend alone with France and Scotland, the Council, in order to assess the situation in the North, ordered the royal Lieutenant on the Borders to send out craft "to learn the number of Scots ships on the coast" and their "size and fittment". In due course he accordingly instructed Berwick, Hull and Newcastle to provide 2 vessels each, but Newcastle, stricken by plague and harried by privateers, refused, claiming it had none fit "to view the enemies and yet save themselves".⁸⁴

Such cautious counsels had not always been the case, for the city, like most ports, had a long tradition of piracy and privateering. These activities, much intensified in the mid-fifteenth century, had subsided towards the end of the reign of Edward IV, only to reappear, albeit somewhat less exuberantly, with the resurgence of French and Scottish power in northern waters. Whatever the nominal relations of Tudor, Valois, and Stuart, vigorous fighting continued on the East coast, now perhaps best remembered from accounts of the almost legendary exploits of the Scottish hero, Sir Andrew Wood, and of the no less stirring deeds of the Bartons and Howards. But private war is rarely on such a heroic plane, and far commoner was the profitless plundering of small merchantmen and fishermen,⁸⁵ provoking retaliation of varying degrees of effectiveness and legality. In June 1522 Wolsey was informed of a general desire among Newcastle merchants to attack 3 French vessels that were on the coast, and eleven years later, with the Scots out in strength, there

⁸³ *LP*, XIX (II), 364.

⁸⁴ *Hamilton Papers*, II, 330; *LP*, XIX (II), 364.

⁸⁵ William Woodhouse himself had been taken prisoner by "wild Scots" while on a fishing voyage "to the out Isles of Scotland" early in his career, *HCA*, 13/3, 274.

is mention of 2 prizes taken by local ships.⁸⁶ Men of enterprise might seek wider fields; in the 1530's a Tynesider, Giles Carr, became master of a vessel from a village near Cromer and subsequently figures in Admiralty records for his assaults on Scottish shipping.⁸⁷ But as the century wore on Henry's preoccupation with the continent, denuding the North Sea of men-of-war, and his heavy demands on merchant tonnage combined with enemy action to produce an even more subdued frame of mind.⁸⁸ On November 3 1544 Shrewsbury wrote to the Council asking for aid, and pointing out the feats of privateers fitted out by "desperate merchants of Edinburgh and Leith, who having lost almost their whole substance at the army's late being in Scotland, seek adventures either to recover something or lose the rest". They had recently taken the *Anthony* and some smaller craft, whilst earlier in the year the *James*, "loaded with goods valued at 2,000 marks", had been boarded and cut out as she lay within 300 feet of the walls of Veere.⁸⁹ The king replied forthwith in a letter of scathing exhortation. Newcastle was urged to emulate the West Country and East Anglia, which sent out their own privateers "and gained much thereby". The "great Navy" in the Channel was declared indivisible—it was at this time, it will be recalled, that England, abandoned by Charles V, was facing France alone—followed by the splenetic pronouncement that "it were over burdensome that the king should set ships to defend all parts of the realm and keep the Narrow Seas withal".⁹⁰ These are doubtless the views of a harassed man in a moment of crisis, and as considered indications of strategy they must not be pressed too far. But the resources of the government were badly over-

⁸⁶ *LP*, III (II), 2328; *LP*, VI, 606; *LP*, Addenda, I, 835.

⁸⁷ *HCA*, 13/1, 64.

⁸⁸ In the year September 1543 to September 1544 only 29 ships used the port of Newcastle, making 38 sailings (*PRO*, E122/109/9). In a normal year there were often several hundred sailings.

⁸⁹ *LP*, XIX (I), 224; XIX (II), 540, and cf. XVIII (II), 281. It is commonly and incorrectly, assumed that Scottish sea power was negligible after Hertford's campaigns in 1544 (e.g. Fisher, 466). For Hertford in Scotland see above, 92-3.

⁹⁰ *LP*, XIX (II), 560.

taxed, and despite the much discussed, and often deceptive modernity of Henry's administration, in this matter at least he was forced into a policy of a remarkably antique pattern. It was still a far cry to the omnipotent state that could and would protect all its citizens, and Newcastle was ordered to look to its own defence. But the city was exhausted, and there was little, if any, response.⁹¹

The following Spring, with Boulogne threatened, the French and Scots active on the East coast, and the fleet, if not decayed, as M. de La Roncière would have us believe, at least heavily committed in the Channel, the merits of self help were once more rehearsed. If Newcastle would emulate the initiative of Hull, which had provided a small flotilla, "the king should be well served on the North Seas".⁹² After some argument the city reluctantly agreed to fit out the *Mighell* and the *George*, but before they were ready for sea the threat of a Franco-Scottish invasion led the local command to seek permission to withdraw its privateers from service. There was some renewal of activity in the Autumn, and a number of unidentified Newcastle ships took a Flemish vessel bound for Scotland.⁹³

(To be concluded).

⁹¹ LP, XIX (II), 599.

⁹² LP, XX (I), 189; La Roncière, III, 411.

⁹³ LP, XX (I), 243, 285, 321, 535; LP, XX (II), 332. For a general reluctance to serve at this time, see Oppenheim, *Administration*, 88.

