

IX.—BERWICK ON TWEED

and the neighbouring parts of Northumberland on the
eve of the Armada

M. Claire Cross

Probably during the first three months of 1587 Henry, earl of Huntingdon, Lord President of the Council in the North, received from Robert Ardern a confidential report on the state of Berwick on Tweed and the surrounding countryside.¹ Already steps were being taken to strengthen the north against a possible Spanish invasion from Scotland and in the system of defences Berwick would play a key rôle. The list of reforms Ardern thought should be carried out at this crucial time is a comprehensive one. The picture he sketches of life at this English outpost is vivid though scarcely impartial. Ardern had already incurred the wrath of Hunsdon, the Governor of Berwick, and some of the townspeople apparently through enforcing too rigorously the customs regulations on trade between England and Scotland. A little later Carey, Hunsdon's son and deputy, described him as "a litle busy fellow . . . who is customer and somewhat too busye in his office".² The hostility of the Careys may well have been the reason for Ardern's sending his report to Huntingdon over the Lord Governor's head. Later in 1587 Hunsdon was very angry "that any showlde so farr overshootte hymself, as too informe hyr Majesti of the weknes and wante of a towne, wheryn I thinke he was never yn—if

¹ The report is undated but references to "this dangerous tyme" and to Flanders (where Ardern was serving in 1587) make the assumption that the year was 1587 fairly certain. Parliament, which Ardern also mentions, was sitting until 23 March, 1587.

² Carey to Burghley, 12 June, 1593. *Calendar of Border Papers, 1560-95*, pp. 466-7. Ardern had been appointed collector of customs in 1576. J. Scott: *Berwick upon Tweed* (1888), pp. 173-4.

he werr, yt ys so longe ago as he knowse ytt nott now".³ It may have been that it was to this report he was objecting: certainly Ardern had not up-to-the-minute information on Berwick for in 1587 he was serving as victualler to Leicester's army in the Netherlands.⁴

Ardern's report, of which there seems now to be only one copy, became intermingled with Huntingdon's private papers, and was brought down to Ashby de la Zouche, in Leicestershire, the seat of the Hastings family, on Huntingdon's sudden death in December 1595. In 1926 the Hastings manuscripts were sold to an American collector and consequently this description of Berwick is now to be found among unindexed English documents in the Henry E. Huntington Library in California. Its present relative inaccessibility may lend it an added interest for northern historians.

ARDERN'S REPORT ON BERWICK AND ITS ENVIRONS⁵

[To m]y verie honorable good Lord, . . . the Erle of Huntingdon.

. singuler good Lord. In respect of your Lo. many favors and goodnes bestowed [w]orthely to be condemned, yf I should not by all good meanes indeavour myself serve the same. And therefore (Right ho.) because I heare, and as it is thought [t]ake your repaire in to the North and to the Towne of Barwick, to be ymployed about her Maties. [businels of great ymportauce and trust as worthy thereof. My part can be, no lesse, in

³ Hundston to Burghley. 27 Sept., 1587. *Calendar of Border Papers, 1560-95*, p. 275.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 274.

⁵ Huntington Library. H.A. Manorial Papers unindexed. Box. Various counties and France.

The Report, which forms a little booklet of seven pages, is finely written in an italic hand. Unfortunately the top left-hand corner of the booklet has been eaten away, and this accounts for the omissions in the transcript. Any words I have supplied are in square brackets.

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respect of my long contynuance of service in the warrs, especially and for the most part in that place etc. being above 38 yeares, but to signifie such disorders, and causes of ymportaunce, as your lo. is necessarily to be acquainted with. Which in this dangerous tyme (in truth) I doe, for discharge of my duety towards almighty god, her highnes, and my service and faithfull hart to your Lo. viz.

First concernyng the Queenes Mats. Towne of Barwick uppon Twede.

Sir Henry Woodrington Marshall there, being deputie Governor, is a man utterly unable for that place. First, he is that Countryman borne, and in that Shire, and therefore, by vertue of her Mats. establyshment is of her Highnes Raigne not to be admitted to any publike office in ye Garrison. Also he is, and continually sheweth hymself, parcially affected to

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there.*

his Contrymen etc. as many of his actions have testefied. For divers of the Freemen of that towne, and others of the Contry, doe drawe hym to what course they will, he having no respect to Justice, but onely as shall please their humors, and serve his owne affection. He is a man very impatient and furious in all his doings, whereby it cometh to passe, that no man of meane calling can have Justice at his handes. And by reason of that humor, cannot stay hymself, but will commytt them to prison; and thereby (amasing the greived party) discideth his cause as pleaseth hymself; and hath beaten diverse that hath byn before hym, with great indiscrecion. In his lief, a right Epicure, giving hymself wholly to eat, drinck, and ease, which hath fild hym full of diseases and distemperatures, and also so besotted hym, that he is almost of no Capacity, nor inclined to any goodnes. In his Religion, an Atheist, seldom comyng to Church, to heare Sermons and praier, but nowe and then for fashions sake, affirmyng his diseases are the cause of his absence. When notwithstanding, it is well knowne he rideth abroad to an Alehouse at Skyrmeston ii myles from the Towne, and will indure to sett at gamyng and play.

And whereas by the said establishment, none is to be entred in pay, but such as he (in the absence of the Lo. Governor) doth allowe of: To make unconscionable proffit thereof, he entreth very fewe or none, but such as give hym consideracon. As by the Muster Rolls of the tymes past since he hadd that place, (being searched) may be proved, even by the partyes which have so come in and receive pay.

And also, he both knoweth and suffereth such extr[eme] usurers, and usurie taken by them in that Towne, as the like I perswade my selfe is not elsewhere in the worlde: ordinarily exacting vi^s. viii^d. for the loan of xiii^s. iiiii^d. for half a yeare and yet none be in greater favor with hym then those lewd persons who have onely from a meane and beggerly state, by this execrable gaine and extort meanes, within fewe yeares

[p. 2] risen to great welth.

And further, the said Marshall for favor he b having the Queenes Customes in farme) ma Officers of the Customes there: suffering them to in England to passe into Scotland from the said to passe into England, (being nowe very much sea Traffique) without the privity and serche office it is, being sworne thereunto, and bound and because I (then being Customer there) did interc disorder and ment to signify their unlawfull dealings [Mar]shall put in the vilest prison in that Towne (called Haddock sustained for doing my duety. Although his part hadd byn to have comytted and rather to have supported me Because in the same packs, departing (as is before said) without serch, there may passe lettres, money, bookes, or any unlawfull wares, of such ymportance that her Highnes were better to lease the whole revennew of those customes being but lxⁱⁱ per annum then such faultes should scape comytted. And albiet, in my defence concernyng the premyssses I alledged those things in her highnes behalf, yet being ledd awaie with affection towards his said Contrymen, he would have no regard thereof; neither to this day will seek refor-

macon therein, but still sufforeth them to persist therein: to what danger (respecting the tyme) your Lo. can Judge.

The great benefit and proffit which that garrison and Towne shall reap by the payes, yf the same may be made half yearely, may quickly be conceived. It would much relieve ye poore Souldiers, and also inrich both that towne and the Contry adioyning because ye Contry will vent their victuales to the Garrison and Burgers uppon credit, yf they may be paid half-yearely: and likewise the Garrison and Burgesses shall buy the same at easier prises then they can have it out of the Stoare. And to make the same payes half-yearely (whereas it is aledged by the iii receavors viz. of Lyncoln, York and ye Bisshoprick) that their receipts are not paid the first half yeare by the farmors: although, to the receavors of Lyncoln & York the same be no excuse, for assuredly the farmors pay the same, because yf they doe not, they forfeit their leases, which they will not doe. Mr. Scudamore hymselfe being readie (as it is well knowne to diverse her Maties. tenaunts whome he hath so served) yf any make default therein, to take a newe lease to his owne use or to nominat some other to procure the same. But for Mr. Clopton the Receyvor of the North parts: It is knowne he is forced to forbear in the first half yeare uppon just cause for yt his chardge lieth nearer the borders of Scotland etc. And therefore it being truely knowne what the want is to make the pay in the first half yeare. Yf so muche may be received from the Bisshoppes of Yorke and Duresme of their receipts of the first fructs and Tenths. And the same nowe onely but in this half yeare to furnish the said somme still, to rest and remaine in charge with the Treasurer, or hym who maketh the payes yearely. It will still from yeare to yeare supply the want, which is nowe saied is the cause thereof. And so hereafter from half yeare to half yeare the payes of that Garryson may be contynued.

. further the Treasurer there (according to the said establishment) to be made privie [en]traunce

[p. 3] and discharge of every one within that Garrison, so that thereby both the suffic[iency] of every man may be sene, and also knowne whither he come in for money, and whoe [rece]aveth the bribe, as likewise what his conversacon is, and to be provided that he be h[onest, no] papist, banckrupt, or of other notorious misdemeanors. And that he be not intertayned by the Captaines onely or some others (as nowe commonly they be) who in any the take [*sic*] never respect the person, but what he will give. For nowe there is ordinarily in that Towne given for a pay of viii^d. per diem xiiii, xvi or xx^{li} and for greater paies, after the same rate. And also the said Treasaurer ought to be privy to their pasports given by the Governor or his deputie, or the highest in office of government there together with hymself and the Muster Master of Clerck of the Check. And the Captaine is not to enter or discharge any or give pasport. As is also lymitted by the said establishment.

Yet for further knowledg touching the Treasurers and Pay Masters office, your Lo. may see in the booke of her Mats. said Establishment of that Towne, signed by her Highnes, and remaying with the Treasaurer there, as also all other the principall officers, what doth appertaine to every of them.

Sir Simon Musgrave deputie to Mr. Thomas Sutton the Master of the Ordinaunce in the North parts. The estate of this office would with all possible speed be knowne. Of all the municon within his Chardge in all the severall places where there is any store.

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ye ordinance
his office.*

First what the number of all the peeces of great Ordinaunce is in all places of every kinde, and howe the same be in repaire, and fit for service; and their wants with speed to be supplied and made complete.

And also what store of Poulder there is, both for smale shott and great Artillery: and likewise the goodnes thereof. And that order be taken for supplie and convenient porcion in all places. And what stoare of Armor, Pikes,

small shott of all sortes, and other habilements of warre there is and what state for service. And such convenient number of muskets and other shott to be provided as may furnish so many as are to be put in armes.

Item that there be knowne what number of Canoiners or gonners of the great Ordinaunce be in those partes, with the skill and habilitie they be of to serve, and by what meanes they have entred, whither by desert and skill for service, or for money, Which would be done speedely by search of the Muster Master his books of their entraunce and discharges from former tyme unto this present So as there may be provided (yf need require, as it is to be doubted there doth) a sufficient and hable number to serve aboutes so much ordinaunce as may furnish the service.

Item it is to be seene what number and stoare of yron shott and bullets of all sorts, Crosse barres, Cheane shott, and lead for smale bullets, fire workes, and stuff to make the same there is, And what Iron, Tymber of Elme, Ashe and Oke for necessarie uses in the office of the Ordinaunce be in stoare. And other needfull things touching the said Office. Whereby such proporcon may be gotten as is and shalbe thought needfull to be provided.

Item That it may be seene what store of Pickaxes, shovells, spades, scoopes and all other Iron and steele Tooles and engines be in the places of stoare that
[p. 4] in tyme of need there be no want.

First, that the indent with Sir Valentyne Browne delivered that Office to Mr. Vernon may be seene; what the same contayned in amounted unto in money.

*The
Comissarie
of the
victuales
his office.*

Item. what ymprests of money he received since his entraunce to the office: wherewith he is also to be charged. The Totall of both which being set downe and knowne, Then that his remaine of every kinde of provision with the goodnes and value thereof may be taken valued and seene what it is, by sufficient honest men of skill. Also his victuales delivered

and to be deducted upon the pay next to be made, must be likewise knowen. And lastly, what he hath remayning in his Chardg and Custodie in ready money to her Mate. All which Three sommes likewise being cast into one other totall, and conferred with his chardge, it wilbe seene what his estate is. And hereby also may be gathered what further ymprest there is to be received to furnish the said office, for such a proporcon as shalbe needfull.

Item, the severall Offices for the victuales, both in Barwick, the holy Island, and Warke Castle are to be viewed, and their readines for service to be regarded, with the chardges what the repariing or new making of such things as are needfull will amount to. And what sufficient supply as well of all the severall kyndes of provision is to be made, as also of Clabbords for Caske and hoops is to be provided. And in what places every severall kynde of the same provisions is to be hadd viz. The wheat to be bought in such places as may be gott best cheap, and so neare the sea as possible may be for transportacon.

The malt to be Cambridgeshire malt, and from other places of like goodnes, and that care be taken that choise be made of suche as is perfectly good and well condicioned. The like order for provision of Rye for bread, and beanes and oats for horsemeat.

Also, a sufficient porcon of Cheese and Butter to be provided which ought to be the greatest kyndes of Stoare of victualls to be spent ordinarily. Because the same is ready to be eaten without the use of any fier. which ii kyndes would be provided out of the Lowe Contries of Holland and Zeland, and in Essex Suffolk and Holdernes in Yorkshire. For the better provision whereof, it must first be knowne what the number shall be yt shalbe fedd therewith, and for what tyme: because the proporcon is to be made accordingly.

Item a convenient porcon of hopps and Seacole is to be provided, for brewing of beare, & wood for baking of bread. And all such other necessaries as are to be spent & ymployed in and abouts the brewhouses and Bakehouses.

Item the Commissarie of the victuales must have Com-
 mission to prest and take upp bakers, Brewers, Coopers,
 and all other artificers to be used for and in that office: as
 also for taking of Shipps Carriages etc.

[p. 5] is very convenient, that Captaine Nicholas
 Arington, Clerck of the Checquer and [Master of the M]usters
 of that Towne, being also Comptroller of the workes, might
 by your Lo. good [pleasure? o]btaine the lawfull suit which
 he hath here unto her Matie. for his pay due at Flussh[ing]
 to be sent downe to serve his chardge in Barwick
 hymself in person, who being both very and of
 great experience (by reason of his age etc.) wilbe a good help
 to your Lo. in many respects.

Item. yf the bookes of the entraunce and dischargd of all
 that have byn entred and discharged within theis vii yeares
 might be diligently without parciality perused, thereby it
 shalbe knowne by whose order every one hath come into pay,
 and who without desert or unworthely hath byn placed,
 Which is very needfull nowe at this tyme to be knowne:
 because so many bankrupts and badd men are taken into
 pay, and not of value or personage worthy their places, and
 that every man be knowne what he is, and from whence he
 cometh which searche is to be made out of his office, and by
 his help, with other good meanes, after the musters have byn
 taken before your Lo.

Item that hereafter no entraunce be taken by hym of
 any, but by the warrant of the governour for the tyme being,
 with the knowledg of the Treasurer for the tyme being, or
 his deputy who is to see the person and to take his oath,
 with the consent also of the Captaine, who is to Judge
 the persons abilitie for service, and the choise of weapons
 etc.

Item, the like order to be kept for such as shall hereafter
 be discharged. To weet, that none, without the privy of
 the said iiii persons be discharged, by the Captaines alone,
 nor by them alone entred as nowe they usually doe, because
 thereby diverse inconveniences insue which are not to be

tollerated. Which order is also diligently to be kept in making of pasportes.

Item for the workes: none to be begonne but by sufficient warrant and privy of the Governor Treasurer Comptroller and Surveyor. And the entraunce discharge and pasports of all serving in the workes, to be by privitie and consent of the Treasurer Comptroller and Surveyor of the workes onely. As in the said booke of establishment your Lo. shall see touching the same.

First your Lo. shall fynde them almost generally for the greatest number to be poore men, except some fowre or fyve, who also be but of a meane welth. And those of the Towne onely Twoe, who by their subtle and connyng dealings have circumvented the rest, being one Thomas Perkynton and William Mooreton the elder who have so wrought that they have the heades of the greater parte under their girdles, and have obtained the profitablest livings belonging to the towne unto themselves viz. the Salmond Fyshings and farmyng of the Customes. And yet they be both further in debt, then they be hable to pay.

The Maior and Burgesses of the said Towne called Freemen. Item theis Twoe men have the marshall so their frend, that what for favor, because he is their Contryman; and partly for feare, least they should bewray the order of his misgovernment (which heretofore they have not stuck to doe, till that nowe they have reduced hym to their devocon) They nowe both can and doe drawe hym to what they will, or write what they desire, either to the Lo. Governor or Counsell here, whereby he hath in nothing more discovered and laid open hymself, then in his dealings for them: for which he hath also worthly received divers reproches.

They be also very factious amongst themselves, whereby there is fostered little or no love at all. The whole number of them is not above 150 persons, and the using any trade but onely their Salmond fysshings; and the [p. 6] rest of house keeping. And very fewe of them given to trade of merchandize, be very great,

which cannot but be a great hynderaunce to their

The Countie of Northumberland.

First Because the greatest number of the parishes in the said Country be impropriat, wherby they either belonged to some Bisshoprick, or were of Religious houses in that Shire or within Yorkshire, so as the vicars livings or parsonages be very small and none of any learnyng doe seeke the same. Whereuppon there are not passing Three or fowre preachers in the whole shire, and so ye people for want of Teachers have byn brought upp in ignoraunce: And the most of the gentlemen there being Papists, traiterous Jesuits and seminaries have byn intertayned, and throughly poysoned and infected very many of them. So as they, their wieves, bretheren, systers, Children and Kyndred are fowly bewitched and very hardly to be reformed. It were very expedient in my simple Judgment, that there should some speedy order be taken that good preachers may be appointed to indeavour by sounde doctrine, and example of integrity of like, [*sic.* surely life??] to reduce and draw them from their blydenes to the right knowledg of God.

And for the better accomplishing thereof; That those in that shire which doe affect religion should be countenaunced, preferred, and advaunced by all good meanes and helps. To encourage not onely others to followe and ymitate their Course, but also to deface and discourage the contrary mineded, whereuppon this comoditie at the least will accrewe that yf any seditious Jesuit shall come amongst them, he shalbe apprehended and taken.

Item albeit there be diverse contentious and deep rooted hatreds amongst divers of the woorshipfull in that shire: yet themselves, or their kyndred being papists have diverse conferences and conventicles amongst them: and the women also have like conversing and meetings at gentlewomens labours Childrens Christnyngs and by such other meanes.

Item whereas Sir John Forster hath the tythes of most of

the livings in that shire in his hands; as the Abbaies of Hexham, and Alnewick, the Colledg of Banbroughe, and parsonages of Warkworth and Carham, and yet maintayneth no preacher uppon any of them. It weare a most comendable & godly deed yf your Lo. would vouchsafe to deale with hym by perswasion, that nowe after he hath so long tyme gathered the fleice, he would ymploie some porcion of every of the same livings for fyneding of preachers: or yf that milde course serve not: (as it is greatly to be feared) Then that nowe in this parliament some good order may be established in that behalf.

Item: That the Bisshopp of Duresme would hereafter be carefull in admitting any to spirituall preferment in that shire, but suche as be able preachers, learned, and fitt to discharge that function: wherein the said Bisshopp is to have especiall regard, to see that all such as shalbe presented be examined and faithfully apposed, either by hymself, or such other as is both learned, of godly lief, and good reporte, who will not conceale and admitt the Ignorant or insufficient person for advantage; as many examiners are nowe suspected to doe.

And thus my very good Lord, humblie beseeching pardon of your honour for this my great bouldnes. Protesting before god I doe the same in all obedience and willing duety-
 [p. 7] fulnes to your Lo. As also offring myself and service to my farthest indeavour (even next to my dread Sovereigne) to be at your honorable devocion: which knoweth god, who blesse your good Lo. with your ho. Lady with long lief and happynes in this worlde, and after with everlasting joy in his glorious Kyngdom.

Robte. Ardern.