

THE BOWES OF STREATLAM, COUNTY DURHAM:
A STUDY OF THE POLITICS AND RELIGION OF A
SIXTEENTH CENTURY NORTHERN GENTRY FAMILY.

CHRISTINE MARY NEWMAN

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations.	p. 5
Introduction.	p. 7
1. The Bowes of Streatlam in the Later Middle Ages: the Foundation of Family, Inheritance and Tradition.	p. 22
2. Service, Rebellion and Achievement; Robert Bowes and the Pilgrimage of Grace.	p. 71
3. The Rewards of Loyalty: Robert Bowes and the Late Henrician Regime.	p. 126
4. The Bowes of Streatlam and the Era of Reform: 1547-1553.	p. 171
5. Sir George Bowes and the Defence of the North: 1558-1569.	p. 226
6. The House of Bowes and the end of an Era.	p. 260
Conclusion: The Bowes of Streatlam and the Tudor Regime: An Overview.	p. 307
Bibliography.	p. 344

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The conservative nature of sixteenth century northern society, at a time of profound political and ideological change, has long been acknowledged by historians. Yet the extent to which the region remained aloof from the Tudor polity can be exaggerated. Indeed, from an early stage the regime began to recruit, into its service, members of leading local gentry families in order to extend and reinforce its control in a region traditionally dominated by the rapidly declining magnate houses. It was at this time that the Bowes of Streatlam, a Durham gentry family was attracted into the sphere of royal service, particularly in respect of border administration and defence. Thereafter its political fortunes became inextricably linked with the efforts of the Tudors to create a centralized State. At the same time, the Streatlam family's remarkable attachment to Protestantism, in an age when much of northern society remained notoriously conservative in religion, continued to exert an influence upon its secular activities so that its religious idealism came into conflict with its political ambitions on more than one occasion. These twin themes of politics and religion provided strands of continuity throughout the family's history in the sixteenth century. From both perspectives, therefore, a study of the Bowes of Streatlam presents a useful medium through which to observe, in microcosm, the momentous upheavals that were effected in Church and State during the years of the Tudor regime.

ABBREVIATIONS.

Acts of the Privy Council of England, Vols. 1-11, ed. J. Dasent (1890-1895). (APC)

British Library. (BL)

Calendar of Border Papers, 2 Vols., ed. J. Bain (1894-96). (CBP)

Calendar of Patent Rolls, (CPR)

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James, 12 Vols., ed. R. Lemon and M.A. Everett Green, (1856-72). (CSPD)

Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1547-1553, ed. W.B. Turnbull, (1861). (CSP Foreign)

Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547-1603, 13 Vols., ed. J. Bain et. al. (1898-1969). (CSP Scotland)

Calendar of State Papers, (Scottish Series), Scotland 1509-1603, 2 Vols., ed. M.J. Thorpe, (1858). (CSP (Scot. Ser.))

G.E. Cockayne, The Complete Peerage, 12 Vols. (1910-59). (CP)

Durham County Record Office. (Durham C.R.O.)

Hamilton Papers, 2 Vols. ed. J. Bain, (Edinburgh 1890-92). (HP)

Historical Manuscripts Commission. (HMC)

J. Hodgson, A History of Northumberland, 3 parts in 7 Vols., (Newcastle 1820-28). (Hodgson, Northumberland.)

W. Hutchinson, History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, 3 Vols., (Newcastle 1785-94). (Hutchinson, Durham.)

The Works of John Knox 6 Vols., ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh 1846-64). (Knox Works.)

Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 21 Vols, with Addenda, eds. Brewer, Gairdener, et. al. (1862-1932) (LP.)

Northern History. (N.H.)

North Yorkshire County Record Office. (North Yorks C.R.O.)

Public Record Office. (P.R.O)

Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records. (Dep. Kpr.)

Rotuli Parliamentorum, 6 Vols., ed. J. Strachey, (1767-77). (Rot. Parl.)

R. Surtees, History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, 4 Vols. (London 1816-40). (Surtees, Durham.)

Surtees Society Publications. (S.S.)

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. (T.R.H.S.)

Victoria History of the Counties of England. (VCH).

All dates are given in accordance with the modern Calendar.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the Tudor Regime and members of the provincial gentry has long been regarded by historians as a major theme of sixteenth century political history. Indeed, as Penry Williams has pointed out, the major achievement of the Tudors was the successful unification of their realm into a centrally-controlled polity, a development effected primarily through the recruitment of leading members of the regional elites into the service of the Crown. (1) Indeed a variety of regional and county studies have been undertaken in order to assess the nature and impact of this political interaction upon individual localities. (2) Particular interest has been focused upon the north, for centuries the "bete noir" of English monarchs by virtue of its remoteness from the administrative centre and its proximity to the internationally-sensitive Scottish frontier. As such the characteristics of northern society in general, the political decline of the northern magnate families and the function and development of the Council in the North

- 1 P. Williams, The Tudor Regime, (Oxford 1979) pp. 440, 465.
- 2 See for example P. Clark, English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution (Hassocks, Sussex 1977); J.T. Cliffe, The Yorkshire Gentry, (London 1969); D. MacCullough, Suffolk and the Tudors, (Oxford 1986); R.B. Smith, Land and Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII: The West Riding of Yorkshire 1530-1546, (Oxford 1970); P. Williams, "The Crown and the Counties", C. Haigh (ed.), The Reign of Elizabeth, (Basingstoke and London 1984).

have been discussed in some detail. (3) As some of this research has shown, sections of northern society long resisted the encroachments of Tudor centralization and, at a time of considerable religious and ideological upheaval, remained notoriously conservative for much of the century. Yet the extent to which the north remained aloof from the Tudor polity can be exaggerated and, indeed, from an early stage the regime began to recruit into its service members of leading local gentry families in order to extend and reinforce its administrative and judicial control in a region hitherto dominated by the rapidly declining magnate families. It was at this time that the Bowes family of Streatlam, in the Palatinate of Durham was attracted into the sphere of royal service and its political fortunes thereafter became inextricably interlinked with the efforts of the Tudors to effect a centralized state. From both national and regional perspectives, therefore, the Bowes family provides a useful medium through which to observe, in microcosm, the impact of the political and religious upheavals of the sixteenth century.

3 A variety of his articles on northern society are included in M. James, Society, Politics and Culture, (Cambridge 1986). See also M. James, Family Lineage and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics and Mentality in the Durham Region 1500-1640, (Oxford 1974); M.J. Tillbrook, "Aspects of the Government and Society of County Durham: 1558-1642", University of Liverpool Ph.D. (1982); M.M. Meickle, "Lairds and Gentlemen: A Study of the Landed Families of the Eastern Anglo-Scottish Borders c. 1540-1603", University of Edinburgh Ph.D. (1989); R. R. Reid, The King's Council in the North, (London 1921).

To date there have been relatively few studies of individual gentry families, either in the north or elsewhere. M.E. James's study of the rise, through Crown service, of Thomas, Lord Wharton has done much to shed light upon the achievements of a particular Tudor border officer. (4) Dr. S.E. James's study of the Parrs of Kendal is also useful for the insight it gives into the foundation and rise of a border gentry family. However, this particular family can hardly be regarded as being representative of the northern Tudor gentry since the Parrs had achieved courtier status during the reign of Edward IV and had begun to shift their sphere of interest to their southern estates by the sixteenth century. Moreover, the marriage of Katherine Parr to Henry VIII ensured that the family remained highly individualistic in character and politically "unique". (5) In many respects the Bowes of Streatlam were also unique for their attitudes and aspirations did not always reflect those of their regional peer group. Nevertheless, throughout the century the family retained its essentially northern identity and, to the end, its political fortunes were bound up with those of its traditional locality.

The activities of certain members of the Bowes family have, in the past, often been noticed by writers on northern society in the early

4 James, "Change and Continuity in the Tudor North", Society, Politics and Culture, pp. 91-147.

5 S.E. James, "The Parrs of Kendal, 1370-1571", University of Cambridge Ph.D. (1977).

modern period. Any analysis of the Pilgrimage of Grace, for example, will furnish details of the role of Robert Bowes who acted as one of the leading rebel negotiators throughout the course of the revolt. (6) Similarly, studies of the early 1550s will cite the rise of Sir Robert Bowes into the highest ranks of the Edwardian administrative elite. (7) Subsequent generations of the family, too, have made their mark in the annals of the Tudor regime. Indeed, Sir George Bowes's loyal defence of the royal stronghold of Barnard Castle, on the Durham side of the River Tees, during the Rising of the Northern Earls, in 1569, is probably the best-known incident in the family's history during this period. (8) The family's periodically heightened profile was, moreover, by no means restricted to the sphere of Tudor political life. Students of the English Reformation are equally familiar with the name of Elizabeth Bowes, who became a close adherent of the Scottish Reformer, John Knox, to whom she subsequently married her daughter, Marjorie. (9) To date however, no attempt has been made to combine what have hitherto been regarded as disparate elements in the history of the Bowes of Streatlam into a cohesive

6 The role of Robert Bowes is well documented in LP, Vol.11 and Vol. 12, part 1. See also, M.H. and R Dodds, The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Exeter Conspiracy, 2 Vols. (1915).

7 D. Hoak, The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI, (Cambridge 1976); W.K. Jordan, Edward VI: The Young King, (London 1968) and Edward VI: The Threshold of Power, (London 1970).

8 Sir Cuthbert Sharp, The 1569 Rebellion, (London 1840).

9 J. Ridley, John Knox, (Oxford 1968), esp. chapter VIII; R.L. Stevenson, "John Knox and his Relations to Women", Familiar Studies of Men and Books, (London 1925), pp. 231-278; A.D.Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox: A Woman and Reformation Theology", Church History, Vol. 56, (3), (1987), pp. 333-347.

analysis of the family's fortunes during a period of momentous change in both Church and State. (10)

A variety of questions remain unanswered regarding the role of the Bowes family in Tudor society. The family needs, first of all, to be placed firmly within the context of its own local society in order to assess the extent to which it can be regarded as "typical" of the northern gentry as a whole. Its precise role within the national political sphere must also be analysed in order to explore the channels through which it rose, during the middle years of the century, to the highest echelons of the Tudor governing elite. Its relatively early association with the religious reform platform also needs further exploration in view of the fact that much of northern society remained conservative in religion throughout the sixteenth century. Equally, an overall review of the activities of individual members of the family highlights the need to clarify other, more specific, points such as the way in which Robert Bowes, the rebellious gentleman Pilgrim of 1536 was transformed into the eminently respected politician and administrator who became the Master of the Rolls and a Privy Councillor to Edward VI. Moreover, in view of the fact that many of the rebellious families of 1536 were "out" again

10 The major work on the family is that by Sir Cuthbert Sharp which is, essentially, a narrative account of the Northern Rising of 1569 but which contains a useful Appendix on the history of the Bowes family. This work is based, almost exclusively, upon primary sources, predominantly the Bowes family papers which were held at Streatlam before the sale of the family's Durham estates in 1923. Sharp, Rebellion, pp. ix, 366-406.

in the 1569 Rising, some further exploration is needed of the circumstances surrounding the Bowes family's rapprochement with the Tudor regime, a rapprochement which earned Sir George Bowes, on his death, the epitaph that "...he was the surest pillar Her Majesty had in these parts..." (11) The theme of religion runs strongly throughout the family's history at this time and some exploration of the impact of the Reformation upon its spiritual aspirations, particular those of its female members, must also be attempted especially in the light of the close relationship between Elizabeth Bowes and the leader of the Scottish Reformation, for it was the case that Elizabeth was, perhaps, the first avowedly Protestant northern gentlewoman. (12) The Protestantism of the family needs, also, to be set within the context of the wider political sphere in order to assess the extent to which its ideological attitudes came into conflict with the changing religious perceptions of the Crown. In all of these areas, the fate of the Bowes family was thus closely interlinked with the wide-ranging changes effected by successive administrations as they sought to implement their policies in Church and State. In these respects the history of the Bowes of Streatlam is that of the regime they served and, therefore, some exploration of the family's role may serve to shed further light not only upon the attitudes and ambitions of a northern gentry family but, also, upon the activities and aspirations of the Tudor Monarchy itself.

11 CSPD Addenda, 1580-1625, p. 17.

12 P. Collinson, The Birthpangs of Protestant England, (London 1988) p. 77.

In order to retain the coherent themes of politics and religion throughout, much has, of necessity, been omitted concerning the family's social relationships and its economic affairs. Much has also been excluded through sheer lack of source material. Some deeper insight into the family's estate management and business ventures, especially within the newly-emerging mining and metallurgical industries, would have been particularly desirable for, in future generations the Bowes family and its cadet branches, were particularly active in this sphere. (13) The paucity of evidence, however, has rendered such an undertaking untenable. Moreover, the lack of coherent estate accounts and rentals has similarly inhibited any major study of the family's land-holding practices and financial resources. (14) As Dr. Tillbrook has previously stressed, any attempt to assess the wealth of Durham landed society is extremely difficult for the usual sources used in such estimates, for example subsidy returns and records of profits of wardship, are lacking for the Palatinate which was not liable for payment of the subsidy and wherein wardship profits accrued to the Bishop. (15) Any attempt, therefore, to place the Bowes family within the wider financial context of northern gentry society as a whole has been fraught with difficulties. The only estimate attempted here has been based upon a comparison with the manorial

13 James, Family Lineage and Civil Society, pp. 70-71.

14 The majority of the surviving estate records are held in the Strathmore Archive Collection at Durham C.R.O.

15 Tillbrook, "County Durham", p. 674.

holdings of neighbouring Yorkshire gentry families; a valuation centred around the purchase price of the wardship of Sir George Bowes and estimates taken from the notoriously unreliable inquisitions post mortem of the period. In the absence of hard evidence such an estimate is, inevitably, dependent upon a great deal of speculation.

(16)

The uncertain nature of available source material has governed the scope and direction of this study of the fortunes of the Bowes family. At the outset, the intention was to undertake an in-depth survey of the family's political and religious development from the early fifteenth century until the death of Sir George Bowes in 1580. However, whilst the information provided by the Palatinate Chancery Records and various surviving charters was sufficient to build up an overall picture of the foundation of the House of Bowes, it was not enough to permit a detailed family study. There is, for example, little evidence of the religious attitudes of the Bowes of Streatlam at this time and the limited information provided by the two surviving wills for the pre-Reformation period suggests only that the family adhered to the religious conventions of the age. (17) Moreover, its cultural and intellectual aspirations remain shrouded in the mists of more than four hundred years. As a consequence, given the lack of

16 See below pp. 308-310.

17 The surviving wills are those of Lady Maud and the first Sir Ralph, made in 1421 and 1482, respectively. "Wills and Inventories", part 1, S.S., Vol. 2, (1835), pp. 63-65; Durham C.R.O. D/St/D1/1/20.

detailed early evidence, there has been little alternative but to concentrate upon the history of the family in the Tudor period.

Even for the sixteenth century, however, the sources for a history of the House of Bowes are often fragmentary and tantalizingly incomplete. There is, for instance, little in the way of personal testimony as the example of Elizabeth Bowes illustrates. During the early 1550s Elizabeth maintained a regular correspondence with the Scottish Reformer, John Knox, and of this some thirty of Knox's letters have been preserved, in the form of a transcript made in 1603. This, indeed, has provided a major source of evidence for the life of the Reformer at this time. Moreover, Knox's replies reveal that much of the correspondence was devoted to the discussion of Elizabeth's spiritual aspirations and uncertainties. Unfortunately, since her own correspondence has not survived, any conclusions about Elizabeth's religious beliefs have to be made from the less satisfactory perspective of the Reformer's own writings. (18) The political attitudes of the family, too, are equally hard to define. Certainly within the State Papers much evidence survives regarding the activities of the various members of the family in the sphere of public life; however there is little to provide an insight into, for example, the reasons behind the Streatlam House's rebellious stance in the Pilgrimage of Grace or, indeed, its decision to support Lady

18 The bulk of the Knox/Bowes correspondence is printed in The Works of John Knox, ed. D. Laing, 6 Vols. (Edinburgh 1846-64), Vol. 3, pp. 333-402.

Jane Grey in 1553. Even the collection of family papers for this period yields little in terms of personal detail although it is quite considerable in bulk. The Bowes Correspondence is, indeed, a diverse collection dating from the mid-sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries. In all it comprises some fifty seven volumes of which some forty are held amongst the muniments of the Earl of Strathmore at Glamis Castle. (19) Several of these volumes, however, consist of transcripts and notes compiled by the nineteenth century Durham antiquarian and historian, Sir Cuthbert Sharp who worked extensively on the papers following their discovery in 1833. Of the sixteen volumes relating primarily to the Tudor period almost all are concerned either with internal Scottish affairs, as observed by Sir George and his brother Robert who was Elizabeth's Ambassador to Scotland and Treasurer of Berwick from 1576 until his death in 1597 or with the events surrounding the Northern Rebellion of 1569. (20) The

- 19 B.H.L. Horn and F.J. Shaw, "A Glamis Miscellany: (2) Bowes Bound Correspondence and Papers", Archives. XIV, (1979), pp. 134-140, provides a comprehensive account of the full history and details of the Bowes Correspondence, including the locations of most of those volumes not in the possession of the Earl of Strathmore. (To date, however, it has proved impossible to locate the whereabouts of Volume 10 which, according to Horn and Shaw, contains useful evidence of the family's local interests in Durham and North Yorkshire.)
- 20 The sources relating to the latter event have been much exploited by historians ever since the pioneering work by Sharp who published a substantial portion of the relevant letters in 1840. His own annotated and interleaved copy of The 1569 Rebellion, along with various transcripts and notes, is in the Dean and Chapter Library, Durham. The most recent interpretation of the Northern Rising, and one that draws extensively upon the Bowes Manuscripts, is S.E. Taylor, "The Crown and the North of England 1559-70: A Study of the rebellion of 1569-70 and its causes", University of Manchester Ph.D. (1981)

correspondence, however, sheds little light upon the personal lives of the Bowes family in the sixteenth century. Indeed only five of the volumes contain evidence of family matters and these often provide only incomplete details of business, legal or financial affairs for, despite Sharp's "...industrious patching and pasting..." of the papers and his organization of them into bound letterbooks, the subject matter is often spread indiscriminately throughout the volumes. (21)

In view of the limitations of the chief sources it has, therefore, been necessary to base this study around a wide variety of additional fragments of evidence such as contemporary records, letters and writings. Inevitably, much of this is impersonal or based upon the opinions of those who stood outside of the immediate family circle itself. As such it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the true motives and aspirations of the Bowes of Streatlam themselves. Nevertheless, such a study is worthwhile if only for the insight it can provide, on a smaller more personalised scale, of the momentous political and religious upheavals of the sixteenth century. Too often the impact of such events is written from the perspective of the chief protagonists who, by their elevated nature, remain remote and unreal. Yet, in political terms, events such as the Pilgrimage of Grace or the Northern Rising are reduced to far more manageable proportions when viewed from the less elitist perspective of Sir Robert or Sir George

21 Sharp, op.cit., p. ix.

Bowes. Similarly, the spiritual confusion of the early Protestants is thrown more clearly into focus when perceived through the eyes of a chronically insecure middle-aged wife and mother, such as Elizabeth Bowes, than when considered from the loftier viewpoints of the architects of the Reformation.

Since the intention of this study is to trace the political and religious development of the Bowes family throughout the Tudor period, the subject will be approached chronologically. The first chapter explores the origins of the Bowes of Streatlam and the development of their role within local society and considers the growth and consolidation of the family's estates before placing it within the context of the local landed elite. To this end tenurial relationships, marriage patterns and affinities are explored in some detail. This chapter also considers the political role of the family in the fifteenth century and analyses its participation on the Yorkist side during the Wars of the Roses. Thereafter the concepts of royal service and religion are explored within the context of the careers of several Tudor heads of the Streatlam lordship beginning with Sir Robert, in political terms perhaps the most successful member of the Bowes family during the period in question. Sir Robert's career graphically demonstrates the attempt of the Tudor regime to impose effective control throughout the north. In Bowes's rebellious participation in the Pilgrimage of Grace it is possible to identify elements of the general concern shown by the traditional ruling elite towards the encroachments of royal authority. Moreover, Bowes's subsequent decision to come to terms with the Crown and his rapid

political advancement thereafter through the medium of royal service illustrates the growing rapprochement between the northern gentry and the regime at this time. This alliance reflected the need of the Crown to recruit and promote the interests of men experienced in the administration of the north, and in the defence of the diplomatically sensitive border regions, in order to further its own centralization policies.

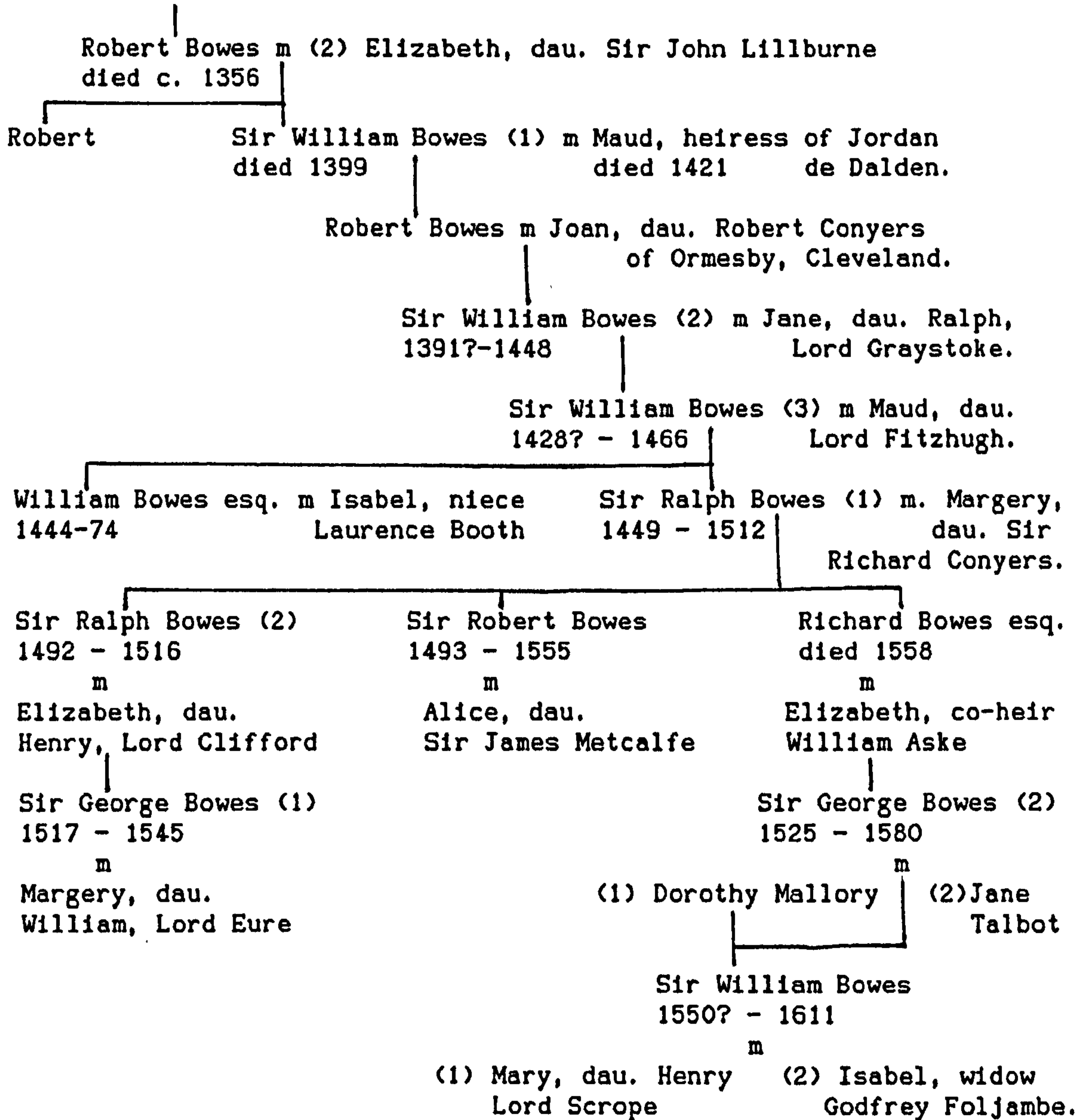
Also within the context of Sir Robert's career, the development of the family's Protestantism is considered, especially in the light of Bowes's close connections, in the early 1550s, with the radically reformist regime of the Duke of Northumberland. That the family's adherence to the faith transcended mere political considerations is shown by the example of Elizabeth, the wife of Richard Bowes, the head of the family from 1555-1558. Mrs Bowes's spiritual commitment, her relationship with John Knox and her exile in Geneva, during the religiously reactionary reign of Mary undoubtedly paved the way for her family's future political rehabilitation under the Protestant Elizabethan regime. This rehabilitation continued during Elizabeth's reign as Sir George Bowes sought, through the medium of royal service, to regain the former political momentum that had been lost by the family during its years of virtual proscription under Mary. Finally, an exploration of the careers of Sir George and Sir William, the last Tudor head of the Streatlam House, illustrates the declining political fortunes of this staunchly Protestant family during the twilight years of the Tudor regime. At this time the changing nature of the relationship between the rapidly centralizing state and its

servants, the increasingly dubious rewards of royal service and the gradually shifting emphasis of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy all served to prevent the family from consolidating its position within the upper ranks of the Tudor political elite.

Yet despite the family's subsequent failure to capitalize upon the opportunities for advancement through royal service during the years of the Tudor regime, its history is, nevertheless, worth analysing. Indeed, the family's fortunes were dictated by and, therefore, reflected the attitudes and aspirations of the regime it served. As such the history of the Bowes of Streatlam is inextricably bound up with, and provides a unique insight into, the momentous changes that were taking place within the religious and political spheres of sixteenth century English society.

THE BOWES OF STREATLAM

Adam Bowes m Alice, dau. and heiress of Sir John Trayne,
died c. 1347/8 Lord of Streatlam.



CHAPTER ONE.

THE BOWES OF STREATLAM IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES: THE FOUNDATION OF FAMILY, INHERITANCE AND TRADITION.

"The Bowes were gentlemen in the bishopricke of Durham long afore Henry the V's tyme and had the chief land and house of theyre name that they have there yet...". So wrote the Tudor antiquarian, John Leland, following his journey through the north in the late 1530s or early 1540s. (1) Leland was, indeed, correct for the Streatlam line was well established in the Palatinate by the middle of the fourteenth century although it seems likely that the family of Bowes originated in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Tradition suggested that it was descended from one William, a kinsman of Alan the Black, Earl of Richmond, who was appointed captain of the Tower of Bowes (in Richmondshire) and the leader of five hundred archers (2). This legend possibly contained more than a vestige of truth for, at some time during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, the Bowes family did hold lands in the town of Bowes. As late as 1473-4, the lord of Bowes was receiving the farm of 1lb. of cumin, of the free rent of William Bowes, a payment which was still being made in the 1530s. (3) From the beginning of the fourteenth century, members of the family

1 Quoted in Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 3, p. 254.

2 J. Foster (ed.) Durham Visitation Pedigrees, (London 1887), p. 35.

3 V.C.H., North Riding, Vol. 1, (ed.) W. Page, (London 1914) p. 46-7.

served as bailiffs of Richmond with William Bowes holding the appointment in 1304 and Adam Bowes serving in 1310 and again in 1332-4. Since this office was usually the preserve of prominent local gentry families, such as the de Burghs, Clesebys and Latons, it seems that the House of Bowes was already firmly established within the upper ranks of local society. (4)

The Durham branch of this family traced its origins from Adam Bowes, a successful lawyer who, in 1331, rose to become Chief Justice of the King's Bench for Ireland. During the early years of the fourteenth century, Bowes had begun to play a role in the administrative machinery of the Bishopric and was appointed its sheriff and escheator in 1312. (5) In consideration of his services he had by this time been granted, by charter of Bishop Kellaw dated 29 November 1311, five hundred and six acres of land, with all appurtenances, rights of pasture and easements, in Newton near Durham at an annual rent of 33s. (6) This property formed the basis of the Bowes' Durham estates and was still held by the family at the death of the first Sir George Bowes in 1545. There is little doubt, however, that the expansion and consolidation of the family's estates resulted chiefly from the advantageous marriages, to Durham heiresses, contracted by both Adam and later on, his grandson William Bowes.

4 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 101.

5 T.D. Hardy (ed.), Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense, The Register of Richard de Kellawe, (London 1873), Vol. 1, p. 223.

6 Ibid, pp. 1132-3.

Sometime after 1310, Adam Bowes married Alice, the daughter and heiress of Sir John Trayne, thereby acquiring various properties, including the family's main possession, the lordship of Streatlam with Stainton. (7) The estates had come into the inheritance through an ancestress of the Traynes, a niece of Bernard Balliol, former lord of Barnard Castle, to whom the lordship had originally belonged. (8) The full extent of Alice Trayne's inheritance is not clear, since there is no surviving documentary evidence regarding its precise distribution. The Durham antiquarian Hutchinson suggested that the estate consisted of lands in Barford, Osmondcroft, Cleatlam and Hullerbush, all within close proximity of the main Streatlam base. (9) Whilst all of these properties eventually came into the possession of the Bowes family, surviving family estate documents suggest that some of these were actually acquired as the result of various property transactions undertaken by Adam Bowes. It appears, for example, that the manor of Osmondcroft, along with certain lands in Winston, was purchased from one Robert de Bradwadde; later, in 1321 John de Brunninghill relinquished all rights in the estates to Adam. (10) Similarly, in the same year, Robert Testard conveyed to Bowes 6 acres of land in Barford on the Moor, although it was not until 1335, by

7 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 101.

8 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 3, p. 253; G.T. Lapsley, The County Palatine of Durham, (London 1900), p. 114.

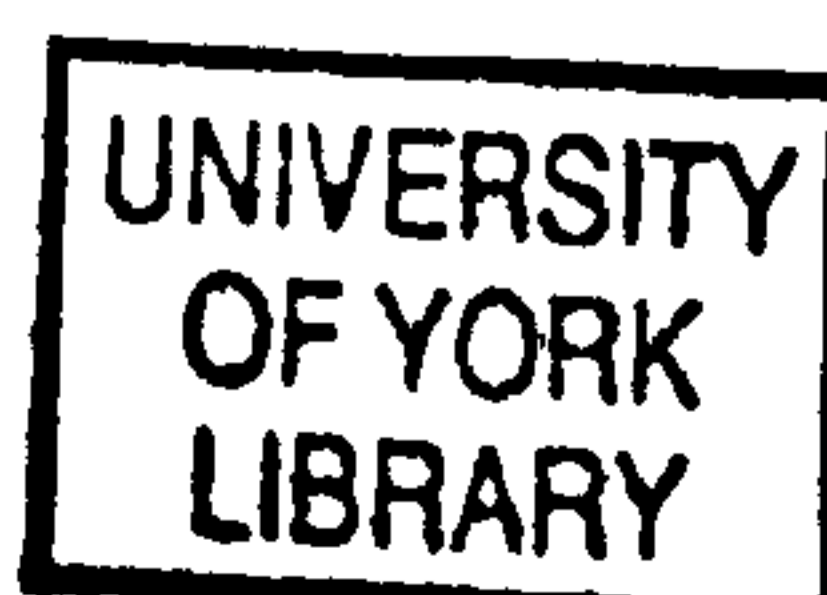
9 Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 253.

10 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2 p. 47.

virtue of a grant of Thomas de Raby, that Adam acquired the whole manor of Barford, along with the wood of Homildon and Barford moor and waste. (11). Cleatlam, some two miles south of Staindrop, did not appear in any of the Bowes' records until 1379, when it was listed in the inquisition post mortem of Thomas Bowes. (12) Hullerbush was apparently acquired at a much later date. Only in January 1441, did Sir William Bowes purchase from John Cotes two tenements, comprising tofts and lands with appurtenances, at Hullerbush, in the forest of Marwood. (13)

It is clear that the Bowes family continued to consolidate and extend its estates over the following years. In 1356 the then head of the family Robert Bowes, the son of Adam, entailed his estates upon the sons of his second marriage thereby virtually disinheriting his eldest son and rightful heir (14) The documentary evidence concerning this transaction - family deeds and chancery enrolments - makes it clear that by this time, in addition to those lands already discussed, the family either possessed, or had interests in various other properties. The details of the 1356 entail refer to the the family's possession of the manor of Willington as well as certain rents in Hilton, Ingleton and Evenwood. (15) More substantial lands and

- 11 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2, p. 48; Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 39.
- 12 Surtees. op.cit., Vol. 4, p. 33; Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, (1884), p. 162.
- 13 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2, p. 135.
- 14 See below p.
- 15 P.R.O. Durh. 3/30, m.11.



tenements had also been acquired in Hilton, near Staindrop, from Peter de Moreton and Sybilla, his wife, although the latter maintained a life interest in these. (16) A settlement was soon reached, however, regarding these and other, similarly burdened properties. For in a charter dated in the same year the aforesaid Sybilla (by that time married to Thomas de Greystone), released to Robert Bowes all her dower rights in the properties of Barford on the Moor, Hilton and Cockfield. (17) On a similar note, the family also held the reversion of the manor of Luttrington, after the death of Isabella, wife of Nicholas de Megre. (18) This manor, too, was in the possession of the family by 1379 when it was listed in the inquisition post mortem of Thomas Bowes. From this inquisition and that taken upon the death of Elizabeth, the widow of Robert Bowes, in 1384, it appears that the family also held properties in North and West Auckland and in Framwellgate, within the City of Durham. (19) Obviously, by a process of careful consolidation and prudent acquisition, Adam Bowes and his heirs had been able to build upon the foundations of his fortunate marriage alliance, thereby ensuring that, within a span of some fifty years the Bowes of Streatlam were firmly established within the ranks of Durham landed society.

16 Durham C.R.O., D/St D13/1/2, p. 66.

17 Ibid, p. 66.

18 Ibid, p. 68.

19 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, pp. 162-163; P.R.O. Durh. 3/30 m.11.

This pattern of accumulation and consolidation was considerably enhanced by the marriage of William Bowes, the grandson of Adam, to Maud de Dalden, in 1375. For Maud was the cousin and heiress of Jordan de Dalden, a descendant of the ancient Palatine baronial family of Escolland and as such inherited part of the considerable Dalden estates concentrated around Sunderland and in Weardale. Into the Bowes' patrimony Maud brought possessions in Dalden, Seaham, Ryhope and Seaton. (20) Foremost among these was the old Escolland manor of Dalden, situated on a headland to the south of Sunderland, which remained a favourite family residence until the sixteenth century. (21) Maud also brought with her a variety of smaller properties including lands in Byerside on Derwent and Budle and Spindleston in Northumberland. In 1421, Byerside was described, in the inquisition post mortem of Maud, as a "parcel of land and wood"; its terms were stated at one twentieth part of a knight's fee, at 40s. rent, each acre being worth 4d. rent. (22) The moiety of the two vills of Budle and Spindleston, in the episcopal enclave of Northamptonshire, Northumberland and held of the Percy barony of Alnwick, had passed to the Dalden family upon the marriage of William de Dalden, the father of Jordan, with Aline, the heiress of Philip de la Ley. (23) From her mother's family, the Herons, Maud Dalden had further inherited a moiety of the manor and vill of Great Chilton, near

20 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 3, p. 253; Lapsley, County Palatine, p. 113.

21 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 1, pp. 5-6.

22 Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 291; Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, p. 169.

23 E. Bateson A History of Northumberland, Vol. 1, (London and Newcastle 1893), p. 177.

Brancepeth in the Bishopric and this, too, she brought into the Bowes patrimony. At the time of her death, in 1421, Maud was also seized of the service of Little Chilton and by 1466 the family had acquired a moiety of the manor, once again, perhaps, indicating the Bowes' appetite for rationalising and expanding their estates where possible. (24)

The Dalden inheritance originally included several other properties in the eastern part of the Bishopric. Prominent among these were estates in Homilden, Plauseworth, Seaham, Hetton and Biddick-Water. Upon the death of William de Dalden, however, in 1368, parts of these properties passed to Robert Conyers of Ormesby in Cleveland through Aline his wife, apparently the widow of William. Whilst the details of this transaction are obscure, it seems likely that it was the focus of a dispute between the Conyers and the Dalden heir, Jordan - the son of William, since a series of inquisitions regarding the matter was enrolled in the Palatine Chancery. A settlement was eventually reached whereby the manor of Homildon and moieties of the manors of Seaham (including the the advowson of the church), Hetton and Biddick-Waterville were settled on the Conyers family with remainders to Jordan de Dalden and his uncle Robert, William's brother. The heirs general of Robert and Aline were to inherit upon the failure of the Dalden male line. In the event Robert's daughter, Maude, was the sole Dalden heiress and the lands remained vested in the Conyers family. The situation was, however, resolved to the advantage of the Bowes

24 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, p. 156. Ibid, Vol. XLIV, (1883), p. 319.

family through the agency of another judicious marriage settlement. For the Conyers' heiress, Joan, was married to Robert, the son and heir of William Bowes and Maude Dalden. Upon Joan's death, in 1438, the remainder of the Dalden inheritance thus passed to her son, Sir William Bowes. (25) By this stage, then, the bulk of those properties which formed the patrimony of the Bowes of Streatlam in the later middle ages had been acquired.

Since no estate records survive there is little evidence to show the full extent and actual economic management of the Bowes's patrimony during this period. Moreover, the home manor of Streatlam was held, not of the Bishop but of the lordship of Barnard Castle, which had been vested in the hands of the Earldom of Warwick since the early fourteenth century. As such it did not figure to any extent in the Palatine Chancery records. (26) The patchy evidence which does survive suggests that the estates may well have suffered from the effects of the population decline which followed in the wake of the Black Death and the recurrent plagues of the fourteenth century. As Professor Dobson has pointed out, the southern and eastern regions of Durham, wherein lay the majority of the Dalden estates included some of the richest arable areas in the Bishopric (27) Yet, on two of the Bowes family manors there it seems that over half of the land had been

25 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 1, pp. 5-6; Dep. Kpr. Vol. XLIV, p. 317.

26 See below p. 43.

27 R.B, Dobson, Durham Priory, 1400-1450, (Cambridge 1973), pp. 250-96.

turned to pasture by the mid-fifteenth century, a familiar indication of agricultural decline. Over half of the total 126 acres held by the family in the manor of Hetton on the Hill was pasture in 1466 (28) Similarly, of the family's larger holding in the manor of Seaham, 200 of the 405 acres were pasture in 1438. In this case also the site of the manor house was derelict and worthless, although the estate did include a further five messuages and four cottages, worth 10s. per annum. (29) In 1446, a Durham Priory survey noted that upon the 26 acres of land held by Sir William Bowes in Osmondcroft, the rent of 10s per annum had not been paid for ten years. Sir William was, at this time, in dispute with the Priory over these lands and his refusal to pay may have been more a matter of principle than one of financial hardship. (30) It is ,however, noticeable that there was little evidence of further land acquisition at this time, throwing some doubt upon the popular tradition that, as a result of his successful career in the French Wars Sir William, "...waxid riche and coming homme augmentid his lande and fame..." (31) Whilst Sir William did serve in France during the successful phase of war under Henry V, the evidence concerning his career is slight and sheds no light upon the financial perquisites of the venture. (32) John Leland, the source of the

28 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 1, p. 120.

29 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 270.

30 Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 38; "Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis", SS, Vol. 58, (1872), p. 51. See also below p.

31 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 3, p. 253. K.B. McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, (London 1981), p. 176.

32 R.A.Newhall, The English Conquest of Normandy, (Yale 1924), p. 209.

successful war theory, further related that Sir William at this time, "...did builde a fundamentis the manor place of Streatlam..." if so perhaps his war profits were used in this way. (33) Certainly, at the time of his death, in 1458, the vast bulk of his estate consisted of inherited lands. Only the property in Hullerbush and some lands and tenements in Sunderland, Ryehope and Stanhope had been further acquired. (34)

If, then, as seems likely, the family sought to expand its inheritance rather through the agency of heiresses than through the fortunes of war or profitable estate management, there may have been a further reason behind its failure to add to its patrimony at this time. It has, indeed, been shown that, in Derbyshire, after 1430 there was scarcity of gentry heiresses - perhaps due to the increased popularity of settling estates in tail male. Moreover, this scarcity enabled those heiresses that did exist to command a wider marriage market than had previously been the case, thus reducing the chances of other local gentry families to secure profitable marriage settlements (35). This may have been the case in Durham since, during the middle years of the fifteenth century the family, whilst often securing socially and politically advantageous marriages, acquired very little further property through marriage. Indeed, it was only in the latter decades of the century that this trend was apparently reversed when the family

33 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 3, p. 254.

34 Dep. Kpr., Vol. VLIV, p. 319.

35 S.M. Wright, The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century, (Derbyshire Record Society, 1983) p. 42.

came into possession of South Cowton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire which was granted by Richard Conyers, to his daughter Margery and son-in-law Sir Ralph Bowes by indenture dated 12 October 1487. Between the death of Sir Ralph, in 1512 and that of his son in 1516, the family's landed holdings appeared to have increased by some five manors, making a total of upwards of twenty in all. There is little evidence to shed any light on this but it is possible that, perhaps, the younger man's marriage, to the daughter of Henry, Lord Clifford, was equally profitable in this respect. (36) Despite the mid-century fluctuations, therefore, their overall fortunes in the marriage market were sufficient to guarantee the Bowes of Streatlam a prominent role within Durham landed society. Adam's grandson, William, was the first member of the family to be knighted, sometime before 1380 and it is likely that this enhanced status was acquired as the result of his marriage, in 1375, to the heiress of the Dalden patrimony. (37) Thenceforth, during this period, with only one exception (that of William Bowes, esquire, who was head of the family from 1466-74) each successive head of the family aspired to - and attained - the estate of knighthood.

Once a family, such as the Bowes, had risen through the ranks of later medieval society, one of its prime considerations was the conservation of its carefully acquired patrimony and the attendant social status

36 Durham C.R.O., D/St D13/1/3, p. 164. A.J. Pollard, North-Eastern England in the Wars of the Roses, (Oxford 1990), p. 106.

37 P.R.O. Durh. 3/30 m. 12d.

that landed wealth conferred. Studies of several gentry societies in this period have noted this preoccupation with the preservation of land and lineage (38) In Derbyshire, for example, Dr. Wright has shown that, amongst the knightly families and minor aristocracy in particular, "the preservation of the inheritance intact for succeeding generations was inseparable from the desire to perpetuate the family name". (39) A study of the Berkshire gentry has drawn a similar conclusion (40). Yet, as K.B.McFarlane's studies of the nobility have shown, this continuity was not always easy to achieve. Factors such as the failure of male heirs and the increasing popularity of legal devices such as entails and enfeoffments to use, which allowed landowners to circumvent the rigid feudal laws of primogeniture and provide for cadet lines from the main inheritance, both provided potential threats to the integrity and continuity of the patrimony. Moreover those burdens placed upon estates by heavy or prolonged dower and jointure commitments, in addition to the losses sustained during minorities, when the inheritance passed into wardship, all served to further deplete the inheritance and diminish the rights of the heir.(41) Yet, despite the drawbacks, the Bowes of Streatlam did manage to survive, in the direct line, to carry their inheritance intact, certainly into the next century . In the first place, the family was certainly favoured in respect of male heirs and was blessed, in every

38 C. Given-Wilson, The English Nobility, (London 1987) p. 74.

39 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, p. 35.

40 P. Jefferies, "The Medieval Use as Family Law and Custom: the Berkshire Gentry in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", Southern History, Vol. 1, (1979) p. 69.

41 K.B. McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, (Oxford 1973), pp. 64-67, 68-72, 78.

generation, with at least one surviving male child. The inheritance thus passed, almost without interruption, from father to son from the fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries. In 1474 upon the death of William Bowes, esquire, the inheritance did, in fact, pass to his younger brother, Ralph, the fourth but next surviving son of the third Sir William. In this case, however, the continuity of inheritance was not disrupted since William, esquire, died without issue and Ralph was, in any case, the next heir. (42)

Indeed, the only surviving evidence of a major resort to the entail in tail male, in the history of the Bowes family during this period was not, as was so often the case in medieval landowning families, in order to displace females in the succession but was to disinherit the rightful male heir. This intriguing case occurred in 1356 when, through the agency of deeds dated the 18th September and 3rd October, the then head of the Bowes family, Robert, son of the founder Adam, entailed the Bowes patrimony successively upon William and Thomas, the sons of his second marriage, to Elizabeth Lillburne. (43) The effect of this transaction was to virtually disinherit the rightful heir, also Robert, the son of Robert Bowes, apparently by his first marriage. Even more intriguing is the fact that the disinherited Robert confirmed this transaction by a deed enrolled in the Palatine Chancery, dated 12 December 1356. (44) One clue only exists

42 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 321.

43 Ibid, p. 329; Durham C.R.O. D/St D13 /1/2, pp. 66, 68.

44 P.R.O. Durh. 3/30 m. 11; Dep. Kpr., Vol. XXXI, (1870), p. 119.

to shed further light on this affair and this suggests that the family was protecting its inheritance. On the 19 May 1357 a royal pardon, on the grounds of self-defence, was granted to Robert de Bowes of the Bishopric, who had been detained for the death of one Thomas Paltokmaker and imprisoned in the Marshalsea Prison (indicating that Bowes was probably attached to the royal Household at the time). (45) It is, then, possible that the Streatlam heir was implicated in a murder case at the time of the entail and if so, the family settlement may have been designed to prevent the inheritance falling into the hands of a potential felon who, if convicted, would forfeit his estates. Possibly Bowes, senior, was a sick man at the time of the entail, for it appears he was dead by the time of the December Chancery enrolment. The majority of the Bowes estates were, at this time, held of mesne lords enabling the family to alienate freely - in accordance with the terms of the Statute Quia Emptores. However some lands, notably the manor of Newton, were held in chief, of the Bishop. Since an alienation of this nature probably needed to be licenced it seems unlikely that this would be granted under circumstances which were designed to deprive the feudal overlord of his rights. (46) Nevertheless, whilst the evidence is, admittedly, rather tenuous, the dates of the two incidents do more or less coincide. The fact, too, that he was willing to confirm the entail

45 CPR, 1354-8, p. 542.

46 J.M.W Bean, The Decline of English Feudalism, (Manchester 1968) pp. 79-88.

tends to dispel any notion of inter-family rivalry or dissent as the reason for the younger Robert's deprivation. We are left, therefore, with the distinct impression that, from the earliest days, the concern of the Bowes family was to protect its patrimony, even if this did mean excluding the rightful heir in the process.

From the surviving evidence, it appears that the subsequent property transactions of the family were far less dramatic in character and did little to tamper with the patrimony or its descent to any great extent. The family did make certain provision for its younger members for, as McFarlane has pointed out, "...neither kings' sons nor knight's sons could be cast landless upon the world without being reproaches to their fathers..." (47) Nevertheless, in common with the practices employed in other gentry societies, this provision tended to be modest in order to protect the interests of the heir. (48) Before his death in 1399 Sir William Bowes entailed, in tail male the properties of Osmondcroft, Luttrington, Cleatlam, Cockfield, and Chilton variously upon his younger sons, Roger, Adam and William and upon the issue of another (apparently deceased) son, Thomas. (49) Yet, once again the Bowes of Streatlam were fortunate, for the cadet

47 McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, p. 72.

48 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, p. 31; Jefferies, "The Medieval Use", p. 69.

49 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2 pp. 99, 100, 104; Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, (1884), p. 169.

lines died out within thirty years and, in line with the provisions of the clause, De Donis Conditionalibus, as stipulated in the 1285 Statute of Westminster, these estates reverted to the main inheritance. (50) Later provisions for younger sons were of a more limited nature. In 1512, for example, provision was made for his younger sons by the then head of the family, Sir Ralph Bowes, who settled lands to the value of £10 per annum upon Robert and Richard Bowes, for life only. Both Sir Ralph and his son, also Sir Ralph, made modest provision for younger brothers but, again, these were of a limited nature. By his will dated 4th March 1512, Sir Ralph senior provided for an annuity of £7 to be paid to his brother, Henry, for life out of the Bowes estates in Durham. (51) Amongst the more elaborate provisions and bequests made by the younger Sir Ralph (died 1516) in his will were annuities, of £5 and five marks, respectively, to be paid to his younger brothers, Robert and Richard, for life. (52) None of these provisions was excessive, however, and it does seem that the Bowes family, in common with others of its class, strove to maintain the integrity of the patrimony as far as possible.

Inevitably, of course, from time to time medieval inheritances were burdened with unavoidable charges and the Bowes family did, especially during the latter half of the fifteenth century, effect the majority of these through the agency of the enfeoffment to use. In common with

50 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, p. 171; Ibid, Vol. XLIV, p. 319.

51 Ibid, Vol. XLIV, p. 327.

52 Ibid, Vol. XLIV, p. 329.

members of the Derbyshire and Berkshire gentry, however, the Bowes family employed these primarily to facilitate the settlement of such necessities as dower and jointure settlements, dowry provisions, payments of debts and religious bequests rather than the permanent alienation of large portions of the patrimony.(53) Thus, in 1487 and 1498 the first Sir Ralph enfeoffed various properties to the use of himself and his wife Margery. In March 1512, he enfeoffed further properties in order to carry out the terms of his will which provided for the settlement of minor bequests and the payment of certain monies for debts and prayers.(54) Similarly, in order to carry out the provisions of his will, dated 1st September 1512, the younger Sir Ralph Bowes enfeoffed several manors and other properties. Whilst provision was made here, also, for bequests, debts and prayers, the main purpose of this transaction was to make dowry provisions - of 1,200 marks - for his daughters and also dower provision for his wife, Elizabeth.(55)

Jointure and dower provisions could, in the event of a long-lived dowager often be a considerable burden upon an inheritance since they deprived the heir of the full enjoyment of his estates, often for many years. In this respect, however, the Bowes of Streatlam were fortunate for, certainly during much of the fifteenth century they remained free

53 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, pp. 30-31; Jefferies, "Medieval Use", p. 69.

54 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 327.

55 Ibid, Vol. XLIV, p. 329.

of those dowagers whose "obstinate survival" depleted many an inheritance. (56) A dispute over the dower of Matilda, widow of the third Sir William Bowes, did arise in 1466 yet this can have had little effect upon the patrimony for the lady died shortly afterwards. (57) A further potentially inconvenient situation was averted in 1474, when Ralph Bowes secured a settlement over the dower of Isabella, the widow of his brother William. For Isabella, by then the wife of Thomas Bryan, agreed to demise her lands to Ralph, for a period of 60 years at £80 rent, payable during her lifetime. (58) The family was thus spared the dual inconvenience of supporting a dowager and seeing its property falling, albeit temporarily, into the hands of a second husband.

Jointure and dower provisions did, however, have advantages for they could serve to prevent a large portion of the estate from falling into wardship during the minority of the heir. The favourable settlement made by Sir Ralph Bowes, senior, upon his wife, Margery, for instance, ensured that a considerable portion of the Bowes inheritance remained within the family for several years until her death in 1524, during the minority of their grandson, George. The jointure of lands worth £40 per annum, settled upon Margery was certainly generous in comparison to the average £10-20 per year usually given to wives of

56 McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, p. 71.

57 P.R.O. Durh. 3/50 m. 8, 8d.

58 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2 p. 154.

the Derbyshire gentry. It seems likely, too, that this was in addition to her statutory dower provision. (59) As a consequence upon the death of her husband, in 1512, Margery's interest in the family's Durham estates represented more than half of the total of about sixteen manors, in addition to various other lands and tenements (60). This served the family well after the death, in 1516, of Margery's son, also Sir Ralph, for the estate became vested in the hands of his infant heir, George and as such liable for wardship. Under the terms of her late husband's will, the young heir's mother, Elizabeth, had been granted the manors of Homildon, Barnes and Pallion along with other various lands and tenements and the sum of £20, being in part discharge of her dower rights in the estate. Upon Ralph's death, however, she was granted a further provision of lands worth £60 clear per annum. (61) As a consequence, the combined jointure and dower settlements of the two Streatlam dowagers succeeded in depriving the Bishop of his rights of wardship over a considerable portion of the Bowes family estates for several years.

In many respects the Bowes of Streatlam owed the survival of their land and lineage, throughout the later middle ages, to a combination of good fortune and good management. They were fortunate in begetting a plentiful supply of heirs and in having to sustain few dowagers. In

59 Ibid, p. 184; Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 327; Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, p. 32.

60 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, pp. 327, 332.

61 Ibid, pp. 330, 332; Durham C.R.O. D/St D13 /1/3, p. 184.

practical terms, however, their refusal to tamper, to any great extent, with the composition of their inheritance, preferring to leave it intact for the next heir, was due to their own prudence and common sense. Increasingly, as the middle ages drew to a close, this emphasis on the integrity of the patrimony was reinforced by the introduction of stricter marriage settlements.(62) These were designed to guarantee the security of the bride and as such positively restricted the degree to which her prospective father-in-law could burden his estate. Indeed the marriage contract, drawn up in 1509, between Ralph, the son and heir of Sir Ralph Bowes, and Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry, Lord Clifford is a prime example. Sir Ralph agreed to make a "lawful estate of lands", valued at £40, to the use of the young couple and their heirs; all his other lands were then to descend, in tail, to his son apart from those already entailed in tail male. The only exceptions allowed were those lands designated in the jointure and dower settlements made upon Dame Margery, Sir Ralph's wife and upon further lands to the value of £40 per annum to provide for the family's younger sons or others, for their lives. In addition lands to the value of 40 marks per annum were set aside to provide for the payment of debts; once these were paid the lands reverted, in tail, to the heir.(63). Yet, whilst on the one hand, this particular settlement protected the interests of the patrimony handsomely, by

62 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, p. 43.

63 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/3 p. 184.

guarding against long-term, large-scale alienations, at the same time its provisions did tend to undermine the whole concept of that continuity of inheritance which the family had been fortunate enough to maintain, by vesting much of the descent in tail, which meant it could pass to the heirs-general - females as well as males. This reflected a growing trend among sections of the landed class, at this time, for a return to stricter principles of inheritance. It may have been due to a backlash against tail male entails, and the attendant danger that the patrimony might pass to a distant unknown male relative (64), or else perhaps, a desire to "rationalise provision for daughters" after generations of neglect in favour of male heirs. (65). Whatever the reason, in the Bowes' case, it was only a further stroke of good luck which prevented the virtual dispersal of the estate. For after Ralph's death in 1516, only the birth of his posthumous son, George, some six months later, saved a considerable portion of the Bowes inheritance from passing into the hands of his two small daughters and co-heiresses. (66) In the event, the patrimony survived intact in the main line for it was not until the sixteenth century that a considerable portion of the Bowes inheritance, comprising mainly the Dalden estates, (since the older properties were governed by the terms of the 1356 entail in tail male) was divided amongst the three daughters and co-heiresses of Sir George Bowes. (67)

64 McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, p. 80.

65 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, p. 43.

66 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 329.

67 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 103. The division of the estates is discussed in further detail in the concluding chapter, see below pp. 308, 311.

Any study of the family's land-holding relationships illustrates the complex nature of late medieval tenurial networks within northern society, a feature equally observed in studies of other regions (68). By the mid-fifteenth century the Bowes family stood in variety of tenant-landlord relationships to other local landholders - of both noble and gentry classes. For, as we have seen, the family continued to expand and consolidate its estates, mainly through marriage but also by purchase, during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries with the result that the complexities of its tenurial connections increased accordingly. Within the Bishopric, the Bishop exercised regalian prerogatives in regard to landholding, so that all land was held, ultimately of him. As a consequence, since the bulk of their property was held directly of him, the Bowes were substantial tenants-in-chief of the Bishop. (69) Nevertheless, the chief family manor of Streatlam, which fell within the ancient seignory of Barnard Castle, was actually held, by mesne tenancy, of the Earls of Warwick. For Barnard Castle, although technically within the Bishopric, had been seized by the King upon the downfall of the Balliols at the end of the thirteenth century and subsequently granted to Guy Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, to be held of the Crown. (70) Within the jurisdiction of the

68 See for example M.J. Bennett, "A County Community: Social Cohesion amongst the Cheshire Gentry, 1400-1425", N.H., Vol. 8, (1973), p. 33

69 Much of what follows is based upon the Inquisitions post-mortem of Lady Maud Bowes (d. 1421); the second Sir William (d. 1458) and the third Sir William Bowes (d.1466). Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLV, p. 169; Ibid, Vol. XLIV, pp. 318, 320-321.

70 Lapsley, The County Palatine, pp. 41-42.

Palatinate, the manor of Dalden, centrepiece of the old Escolland inheritance, was held by the Bowes family as a mesne tenancy of the Earl of Northumberland, as were the properties of Budle and Spindleston in Northumberland. Further properties in Ingleton, Willington, Whitworth and Cockfield were similarly held of the Neville, Earls of Westmorland, The family stood in the same relationship with the Barons of Hilton, of whom it held the manor of Clowcroft, and was similarly connected with a number of local gentlemen including Robert Claxton, Brian Boys and Christopher Conyers of Sockburn. Several of the older properties of the Bowes family, including lands in the city of Durham and in Osmondcroft, Cleatlam and Barford near Barnard Castle, were further held of the Priory of Durham. (71) Similarly, the head of the Bowes family himself stood as landlord to an equal variety of local landholders. The prominent local families of Claxton, Eure and Elmedon all held land of the lord of Streatlam. Similarly, in 1487, John Carlisle died seized of several Bowes properties, including lands in Clowcroft and Penshaw and a fishery on the River Wear. (72) The old Trayne property of Stainton, which bordered the Streatlam estate, had at an early stage passed out of direct family control and was held as a mesne manor by the Headlam family until 1526, when it was re-united, by purchase, to the main Bowes patrimony. (73) It is possible, too,

71 "Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis", pp. 51-53, 196.

72 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, pp. 325, 376-377, 381.

73 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 97.

that the John Frost, described as a yeoman, who acted as a witness in a property transaction on 10 March 1456, involving the second Sir William and Ralph Chilton of Stainton, was also a tenant of the Bowes family in Osmondcroft. (74)

Certainly Frost's participation in this way is one illustration of the degree to which tenurial relationships extended beyond purely formal bounds and cross-networked the social sphere. During the 1440s, for example Sir William Bowes and Christopher Conyers acted as feoffees for Sir William Elmedon, a substantial Durham knight, and as such became involved in Elmedon's long-running dispute with Durham Priory, centred around rights of pasture on Quarrington Moor. (75) Elmedon apparently had close links with Bowes spanning many years; in September 1422 he had stood bail for Sir William, who had been bound over to keep the peace during a dispute with John Nicholson, Thomas Golan and Elizabeth Headlam (76) Acting as arbitrators or negotiators for fellow land-holders also formed a major feature of social interaction within the close-knit landed communities of the later middle ages and, occasionally, members of the Bowes family and their tenurial associates were involved in this way. In the early 1460s, for instance, the services of Sir Robert Claxton were called upon by Dame Elizabeth Bulmer, who entreated her "...outerley well biloved cosyn..." to intercede on her behalf with Sir William Bowes over the

74 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 99.

75 J.S.Roskell, The Commons in the Parliament of 1422, (Manchester 1954), pp. 175-176; Dobson, Durham Priory, p. 193; P.R.O. Durh. 3/43 m. 9-10, 3/46 m. 15-16, 3/47 m. 14-15.

76 P.R.O. Durh. 3/38 m. 8d.

possession of certain rents to which Dame Elizabeth laid claim. (77) Several years later, in 1470, Sir Robert, along with William Bowes, esquire (the son of the third Sir William) were two of the arbitrators called to adjudicate in a dispute between William, Baron Hilton and William Hagirston, concerning dower rights (78) Nevertheless, despite the notoriously litigious nature of late medieval landed society little evidence survives of any serious dispute between the Bowes family and its tenurial associates. Indeed the only one of significance during this period ran, apparently concurrently, with the Elmedon dispute and concerned Sir William Bowes' own disagreement with the Prior of Durham over lands in Osmondcroft. (79) Whilst the details of the dispute are obscure, it seems that at one point Bowes apparently felt sufficiently under threat to have an exemplification recorded, on the 20th August 1447, at the Palatine chancery, confirming his rights in regard to various properties, including those held of Durham Priory. (80) It seems likely that, in the end, the dispute was settled through the intercession of the powerful Earl of Salisbury, to whom the Prior appealed for support and to whose affinity Bowes himself belonged. (81)

77 BL. Addenda MS. 40746, f. 6.

78 P.R.O. Durh. 3/50 m. 11.

79 See above p.

80 Dobson, Durham Priory, p. 173; P.R.O. Durh. 3/43 m. 9-10

81 J. Raine (ed.) "Wills and Inventories etc. of the northern counties of England", S.S., Vol. 2, (1835), pp. 70-71

Yet whilst the Bowes family was closely allied to neighbouring landholders in terms of tenure and mutual co-operation, undoubtedly its most influential ties were those forged through marriage alliances. For these underpinned its social and political role within its sphere of contact. As a leading gentry family, the Bowes of Streatlam tended to marry beyond the confines of purely local landed society and negotiated alliances throughout the north with comparable knightly and even noble families. The second Sir William, for instance, who took delivery of seisin of his lands on 14 May 1409, was married to Jane, the daughter of Ralph, Lord Greystoke, whose patrimony included lands in Cumberland and the Yorkshire Wolds. (82) Their son, also Sir William had married, by 1442, Maud, one of the daughters of William, Lord Fitzhugh of Ravensworth, in the North Riding of Yorkshire. This alliance was, perhaps the most influential of the period since it provided a kinship connection with the powerful junior branch of the Neville family, whose influence within the north was, at that time, paramount. For Maud's brother, Henry, Lord Fitzhugh married Alice Neville, a daughter of the Earl of Salisbury, the head of the junior Neville family. A further Fitzhugh sister was married to a younger Ralph, Lord Greystoke who had become one of Salisbury's retainers by 1454. (83) Undoubtedly, this alliance served to

82 P.R.O. Durh. 3/35 m.3. The information regarding the marriage alliances of the family is taken primarily from the pedigrees printed in Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 107 and Foster (ed.) Durham Visitation Pedigrees, pp. 35-39.

83 In September 1442, Sir William Bowes settled various properties to the use of his son, William and Maud his wife. Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 317. For the Fitzhugh pedigree see CP, Vol. 5, p. 428. R.L. Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster, (London 1966) p. 123.

strengthen ties between the Bowes family and the north's leading magnates and the connection continued in the next generation. For, although Sir William's heir, also William, married (possibly after his father's death) Isabel Clifton, a Lincolnshire heiress and, perhaps more to the point, the niece of the Bishop of Durham, Laurence Booth, a long-term adversary of the Nevilles, other of the Bowes children married firmly within the Middleham affinity. (84) Sir William's second surviving son, Ralph, who ultimately succeeded to the Streatlam lordship married Margery, the daughter and co-heiress of Richard Conyers of South Cowton. Richard was a younger son of Christopher Conyers, the head of the prolific family based at Hornby, in the North Riding, which provided the most influential of the Neville retainers. (85) The connection was further reinforced by the marriage of Ralph's sister, Katherine, who became the second wife of Richard. Conyers and Bowes apparently maintained close connections. Both participated in the Anglo-Scottish war of 1480-3 and were knighted for their services. Later in June 1488, Ralph loaned Conyers the sum of £166.13s.4d. which it was agreed, by bond dated the

84 Provisions for Isabel's dower settlement were not set in motion until 1468 some two years after Sir William's death. Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2 pp. 144-145. See also the series of Palatine Chancery enrolments concerning the transaction. P.R.O. Durh. 3/50 m. 13d.

85 For the connections of the Conyers family with the Nevilles of Middleham see especially, A.J. Pollard, "The Northern Retainers of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury", N.H., Vol. 11, (1976) pp. 53-69 and A.J. Pollard, "The Richmondshire Community of Gentry during the Wars of the Roses", C. Ross (ed.) Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Late Medieval England, (Gloucester 1979), pp. 37-59.

20th of the month, should be repaid by Sir Richard's heirs within a year and a day of his decease. In a further transaction of June 1496, Conyers acted as one of Bowes' feoffees with regard to the moiety of the manor of Little Chilton. (86) Another of Sir Ralph's sisters, Anne, married Ralph Wycliffe, of Wycliffe, again in the North Riding, whose family also had close connections with the Neville affinity. (87) The marriages of two other Bowes' sisters, however, reflect the border interests of the family. For Isabel married John Swinnowe of Rock, in Northumberland, whilst Margaret was contracted to Sir Humphrey Lisle of Felton, the head of a substantial Redesdale gentry family. Here again, it seems likely that Bowes maintained a close relationship with his brother-in-law. In March 1493, Lisle was involved in a dispute with the vicar of Newcastle upon Tyne over the church at South Gosford, in Northumberland. An enrolment in the Palatine chancery makes it clear that Bowes, who was at the time Sheriff of the Bishopric, was involved on Lisle's behalf, since both men were bound over to keep the peace towards the said vicar and others. Moreover, several years later, in 1505, Sir Ralph was one of the witnesses to the marriage contract of Lisle's sister. (88) Only two members of the family, however, made alliances within the Bishopric - Margery to Sir William Hilton of Hilton Castle (already connected, by

86 W.S. Shaw, The Knights of England, Vol. 2, (London 1906), p. 20; Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/3, p. 165.

87 Pollard, "Retainers", p. 59; "Flowers Visitation of Yorkshire", Harleian Society, Vol. XVI, (1881) p. 352.

88 P.R.O. Durh. 3/63. For the Lisles see Hodgson, Northumberland Part 1, Vol. 2, pp. 170-174. See also Chapter Two, below p. 84.

tenurial ties to the Bowes family) and Elizabeth to Sir Ralph Bulmer, of Wilton Castle in Cleveland - both to members of old episcopal baronial families. (89)

These marriage alliances forged a series of kinship ties which served to connect the Bowes of Streatlam to a large proportion of leading northern gentry families. Yet the political implications of these alliances can be overemphasised. Undoubtedly such affiliations and aspirations inevitably drew the family into a particular sphere of social contact. Certainly the marriage, in 1509, of the Streatlam heir, Ralph, to Elizabeth Clifford, the daughter of the 10th Lord Clifford and sister to the future first Earl of Cumberland, whilst illustrating the family's traditional preference for contracting alliances within the nobility, indicates also its continuing political aspirations. For the Cliffords numbered amongst the ranks of the minor nobility, upon whom the Tudor regime relied in order to extend its control in a region traditionally ruled by the northern magnate families. (90) Yet, in the main, the marriage alliances of the Bowes family were arranged within a logical regional catchment area and once forged, came surely to depend far more upon interests of locality and community than upon purely political attitudes. The fact that the majority of these marriage and kinship ties survived the upheavals of magnate and dynastic factionalism indicates the degree to

89 Lapsley, County Palatine, pp. 64-65.

90 M. James, "The First Earl of Cumberland" in his Society, Politics and Culture, pp. 148-150; Durham C.R.O. D/St D13 /1/3 p. 184..

which social considerations overrode all others. Almost twenty-five years after the death of Richard III, the Bowes family was still marrying into - and drawing upon - the social network which had once revolved around the mighty lords of Middleham. The younger sons of Sir Ralph Bowes were both married into this affinity. For Robert married the daughter of Sir James Metcalfe of Nappa Hall, in Wensleydale, whilst Richard was matched with Elizabeth, the granddaughter and co-heiress of William Aske, of Aske in Richmondshire. The list of those assembled to witness the marriage contract drawn up, in 1510, by Sir Ralph and William Aske bears further testimony to this continuity. For prominent among these are names such as Conyers, Strangeways, Hansard, Place and Burgh, the families of whom all had, at some time, moved within or married into the Middleham sphere of political influence, yet remained tied by the far more durable social bonds of kinship and community. (91).

Within the Palatinate it is possible to discern two levels of socio-political activity. On the one hand there was, of course, the formal, quasi-regal structure of Palatine authority, which focused upon the Bishop in his secular capacity as the lord of the most extensive

91 Durham C.R.O. B/BO/F17. For the affinity of Gloucester in North Yorkshire and Durham see particularly C. Ross, Richard III, (1981), chap.3; A.J. Pollard, The Middleham Connection, (1983), passim; A.J. Pollard "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", R.A.Griffiths and J.W.Sherborne (eds.), King's and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages, (Gloucester 1986), pp. 109-129.

franchise in the kingdom and which provided the channels of patronage and influence around which local society naturally revolved. Underpinning this, however, was a local community of nobility, knights and gentry upon whose co-operation the Bishop was utterly reliant. For as a royal appointee and often, therefore, an outsider with few close local ties, he was dependent upon their local connections of blood affinity and influence to promote cohesion and continuity within his government. In this way substantial Durham landed families such as the Nevilles, Lumleys, Hiltons, Eures and Claxtons had been able to forge, in varying degrees of influence, long-standing traditions of local political leadership. The rise of the Bowes family within this society during the fourteenth century ensured that it too, was soon assimilated into this ruling clique. This collective involvement in Palatine government was, however, inevitably overlaid with further strands of political interaction as families competed for dominance within the social hierarchy. From the late fourteenth century, the dominant element in Durham political society was provided by the Nevilles of Raby, who had risen to a position of national prominence through the patronage of John of Gaunt. The effective founder of the dynasty had taken as his second wife Joan Beaufort, Gaunt's daughter and the half-sister of Henry IV and through this royal connection the family amassed considerable wealth, influence and prestige throughout the north. The close affinity of Bishop Langley with Gaunt and his progeny ensured that, throughout his long episcopate, Neville influence within the Palatinate was paramount. Indeed the family's influence was such that when, in 1425, the terms of the first Earl's will, which settled the bulk of his estates upon the issue of his

prestigious second marriage at the expense of those of his first, created a breach within the family, the factionalism that this engendered dominated Palatine politics for several years.(92) The rivalry was exacerbated by the fact that whilst the estates of the senior Neville line, headed by the Second Earl of Westmorland, were actually centred in the Palatinate, at Brancepeth and Raby, it was the influence of the more powerfully connected junior line, headed by Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, which permeated Durham politics in the decades leading up to the Wars of the Roses. Whilst a settlement was eventually effected, the bitterness remained, only to re-emerge in the network of alliances and alignments of the civil war itself.

The head of the Streatlam line during this period, the second Sir William Bowes, had taken little part in the political life of the Bishopric before 1430, possibly as the result of his involvement in the French wars.(93) Nevertheless, after this time and during the period when the Neville inter-family rivalry was at its most intense, Sir William's name became increasingly associated with the junior Neville faction. (94) Certainly by the time of the attack on the Bishop's franchise, led by Sir William Eure in 1433, Bowes was

92 Dobson, Durham Priory, pp. 183-192; R.L.Storey, Thomas Langley and the Bishopric of Durham 1406-1437, (London 1961) pp. 105-108; E.F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, (Oxford 1961) pp. 319-323.

93 See above p. 30.

94 Some of my conclusions regarding Sir William's role in the Wars of the Roses have been published in, "The House of Bowes and the Wars of the Roses", Medieval History, Vol. 1, No. 3, (1991) pp. 139-146.

recognized as a member of Salisbury's ruling Palatine clique (95). Historians have viewed the attack on Langley's regalian privileges as a further episode in the Neville family dispute. Langley, true to his Lancastrian sympathies, staunchly supported Salisbury, the grandson of Gaunt, whilst Eure, although apparently motivated by personal grievances, had strong affiliations with the senior Neville faction. (96) At the height of the trouble, in December 1433, Langley sought to strengthen his hold on the government of the Bishopric and appointed a particularly sympathetic Commission of Peace. Included amongst the junior Neville heavyweights, Salisbury, his brothers Lords Latimer and Fauconberg, Thomas Lumley and Sir Robert Ogle, was the name of Sir William Bowes. (97) It is possible that Sir William's sympathies for the junior Neville faction had been swayed by the existence of a dispute between the Bowes and Eure families. For, some years before, the Streatlam family had been at odds with Sir Ralph, the father of Sir William Eure, over his failure to fulfill his duties as the executor of the will of Thomas de Coksed, formerly the husband of Lady Maud, the grandmother of Sir William Bowes. As a result the Bowes family claimed payment of £333 6s 8d from Sir Ralph. (98) By 1421 the claim had been outstanding for some fifty years and since Sir Ralph died the following year, it is possible that the money remained unpaid. A disagreement of this nature may well have played its part in

95 Storey, Langley, pp. 116-134.

96 Ibid, p. 120; Dobson, Durham Priory, p. 186.

97 Storey Langley, p. 132; P.R.O. Durh. 3/36 m. 7.

98 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2, p. 116.

deciding Bowes' loyalties during Eure's dispute with the Bishop. (99) Sir William's decision to back the junior Neville faction, however, served him well since throughout the 1430s he continued to play a prominent role in the Palatine political arena. In addition to serving upon Commissions of Array, in May 1435 and July 1436, Bowes was one of the Commissioners appointed, in March 1436, by the Bishop to assess contributions for the subsidy imposed upon the Palatinate by the Parliament of 1435. (100) The following month, on the 6th May 1436, William was appointed Sheriff and escheator of the Bishopric, thereby fulfilling what he undoubtedly perceived as his natural role in local society. Indeed, in the fourteenth century Adam, Robert and the first Sir William Bowes had all served in this capacity. (101) After Bishop Langley's death in July 1437, the temporalities of the Bishopric were granted to Salisbury until the translation to the see of Durham of Robert Neville, the Earl's brother in April 1438. During this time Bowes was one of those chosen to serve as a Justice of the Peace, in the commission undoubtedly appointed by Salisbury in January 1438. (102)

There is no evidence to suggest that Sir William participated in any of the "great routes and companies upon the field", which

99 The two were, however, reconciled by 1443 when Bowes acted as one of Eure's feoffees. P.R.O. Durh. 3/42 m.19.

100 P.R.O. Durh. 3/36 m. 10.

101 P.R.O. Durh. 3/36 m. 11, 11d, 14; 3/31 m. 12; Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 1 pp. 265, 311, 319, 324;

102 P.R.O. Durh. 3/42 m. 1.

characterised the later and more violent phase of the Neville family feud (103) Yet it is clear, from the evidence of his prominent participation in a political sphere completely dominated by the junior Neville branch, that Bowes retained close ties with Salisbury and his affinity based around the Earl's stronghold of Middleham Castle in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Moreover, as has been noted, by the early 1440s this connection with Salisbury was probably strengthened as the result of marriage ties.(104) This close connection was further illustrated by the involvement of the Earl, apparently as an arbitrator, in the dispute between Sir William and Durham Priory over the property of Osmondcroft. In a letter, written by Salisbury to the Prior, the Earl was certainly at pains to offer "to support youre place and convent of ye said seynt Cuthbert...". The letter went on to to make it clear, however, that Bowes was upon equally good terms, "in as moche as he was hymself in his own p'son here at Middelham with us a Monday was a vij night..". Salisbury further related how, during the visit, he tried to persuade Sir William by virtue of his knighthood, "to maintain and sustene ye right of holy kirke". (105)

There is little to suggest that Sir William, or any other member of the Bowes family, was ever formally retained by the Nevilles of

103 Storey Lancaster, p. 113.

104 See above p. 26.

105 Raine (ed.) "Wills and Inventories", pp. 70-71; see above

Middleham. As one of the Palatine governing elite, however, he certainly moved within the charmed circle of long-term Neville adherents, such as Sir Thomas Lumley and Sir Robert Ogle, both of whom were subsequently retained by The Earl of Salisbury. (106) Moreover, the Bowes and Neville families undoubtedly had been closely connected over a long period of time. Geographically, Streatlam was situated only a few miles from the traditional Neville seat of Raby and the Bowes family had long been mesne tenants of the family. It is unlikely, however, that feudal ties played any part in this relationship, although it has been suggested that ancient feudal bonds of loyalty persisted between some of the great northern border families, such as the Percies, Cliffords and Dacres, and their tenants until well into the sixteenth century. (107) As has been shown, however, the varied and disparate nature of the Bowes family's tenurial connections within the Palatinate almost certainly rendered untenable any feudal notions of loyalty in respect of mesne lordship. Moreover, upon the partition of the Neville inheritance in 1425, the Durham estates, of which the Bowes family's holdings formed part, remained vested in the hands of the rival senior branch of the family. The lordship of Barnard Castle did fall into the hands of the junior Neville family in the late 1440s, upon the marriage of Salisbury's son with the Beauchamp heiress, yet as the evidence has shown, this can

106 Pollard, "Retainers", pp. 57, 59.

107 James "Cumberland", pp. 154-155; M. James "English Politics and the Concept of Honour", in his Society, Politics and Culture, p. 331.

have only strengthened existing ties based probably more upon the Nevilles' capacity to provide "good lordship", within the more flexible bonds of "bastard feudalism", than any ancient perceptions of feudal loyalties. Ties of locality and community undoubtedly figured within this relationship, also and it is noticeable that the Bowes family maintained no similar bonds of affinity with their other non-resident, magnate, mesne lords, the Percy Earls of Northumberland and the Beauchamp, Earls of Warwick. Indeed it is possible that the Beauchamp's own steward for the lordship of Barnard Castle in 1421, one John Stockdale, was a member of the Richmondshire family of Stockdales, who were long-term fee'd retainers of the Nevilles, illustrating further the degree to which "bastard feudal" ties had superceded feudal notions of lord and vassal. (108)

Despite these close ties of affinity, it is, nevertheless, probable that fears regarding the maintenance of its traditional role in Palatine politics, rather than mere blind loyalty, lay behind the decision of the Bowes family to follow the Nevilles of Middleham and their Yorkist allies into rebellion against the House of Lancaster. There is, for example, no evidence to suggest any family involvement in the early manifestations of the Percy/Neville hostility during the early 1450s, despite the involvement on the Neville side of Lords Greystoke and Fitzhugh, the brothers-in-law of William Bowes esquire,

108 C.D. Ross, "The estates and Finances of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick", Dugdale Occasional Papers, (1956) p. 9; Pollard, "Richmondshire Gentry", p. 52.

the Streatlam heir. (109) It seems, then, likely that the family had no particular axe to grind until 1457 when, upon the death of Bishop Neville, Laurence Booth, the chancellor of Margaret of Anjou, was translated to the see of Durham. The political apparatus of the Palatinate, although easily manipulated by an assertive local political elite when in the hands of a sympathetic prelate, such as Langley or Neville, was less easy to control when in the hands of a man such as Booth whose Lancastrian loyalties were outweighed only by his highly developed perceptions of his own regalian privileges and authority. (110) From the outset, Booth was not prepared to countenance the use of the Bishopric and its patronage as a further extension of the junior Neville patrimony. He thus began the gradual process of eroding the influence of Salisbury and his supporters within the political sphere, undoubtedly reviving, in the process, the embers of the old inter-family rivalry, as members of the senior Neville line were appointed to fill the vacuum left by supporters of the junior branch. Thus, although Salisbury retained his position on the Palatine Commission of the Peace until his attainder in 1459, his son, Sir Thomas Neville was quickly replaced as Steward of the Bishopric, the most important of the Palatine Offices of State, by Thomas Neville of Brancepeth. A similar appointment placed the second Earl of

109 For the Percy-Neville feud see R.A. Griffiths, "Local Rivalries and National Politics", Speculum, Vol. XLIII, (1968) pp. 589-632; Storey, Lancaster, p. 193.

110 For Booth's subsequent defence of his privileges see Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", p. 114.

Westmorland's brother at the head of the Durham judiciary. (111) That these upheavals affected the Bowes family is illustrated by the fact that, after Booth's translation, it too disappeared from all Palatine Commissions. The second Sir William died in 1458, having last appeared upon a Palatine Commission of Array in July 1456, but was succeeded by his son, William Bowes, esquire, who upon his father's death was aged upwards of thirty and therefore certainly of an age to participate in political life. (112) It seems, therefore, logical to assume that the Bowes family was too closely associated with the old Palatine ruling clique to remain politically acceptable to the new. It was probably the realisation of this, coupled with the knowledge that their former prestige and influence - built up during more than a century of episcopal service - would thenceforth count for nothing, which served to push the Bowes family into an even closer alliance with the Nevilles of Middleham and, ultimately, rebellion. (113)

In the event, the Bowes of Streatlam did rather well out of the Wars of the Roses, although it was to be almost a hundred years before the family again felt its interests sufficiently threatened to warrant further rebellious activity. (114) The extent to which William Bowes, esquire, the new head of the Streatlam lordship, participated

111 Storey, Lancaster, p. 183; Pollard, "St Cuthbert and the Hog", p. 125.

112 Dep. Kpr., Vol. XLIV, p. 319.

113 In September 1458, for example, John and Thomas Neville, the brothers of Warwick, acted as feofees for Bowes. Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/2 p. 140.

114 See Chapter Two.

in the actual fighting during the most intense phase of the Wars, from 1459-61, is not clear. Certainly he was present at the Rout of Ludford, in October 1459 although he escaped from his part in that debacle with a fine and a pardon, granted in the Coventry Parliament of that year. (115) As Dr. Pollard has suggested, it is possible that this lenient treatment was due to the intervention of William's brother-in-law, Lord Fitzhugh, who had recently re-affirmed his loyalty to the Lancastrian regime. (116) Yet it is unlikely that Bowes ever seriously repented of his rebel sympathies. Indeed the inclusion of the recently knighted Sir William in the Yorkist inspired Commission of Oyer and terminer, appointed by the Palatine Chancery on the 4 April 1461 (a week after the battle of Towton) and apparently designed to eliminate all vestiges of Lancastrian support in Durham, illustrates the extent to which he was numbered amongst the most committed supporters of the new regime within the Bishopric. (117)

During the last few years of his life, the third Sir William Bowes went on to play a prominent role in the struggle to eliminate the traces of Lancastrian resistance in the north and border regions. On the 13 September 1461, at the new king's command, he took over the government and custody of Alnwick Castle, holding it until the end of

115 Rot. Parl., Vol. V, pp. 368-9.

116 Pollard, North-Eastern England, p. 275.

117 P.R.O. Durh. 3/48 m. 8. R.L. Storey, "The North of England", S.B.Chrimes, C.D. Ross and R.A. Griffiths (eds.), Fifteenth Century England, (Manchester 1972), p. 139.

November with the aid of one hundred men. (118) Later, Bowes served as one of the English commissioners during the negotiations to secure a truce with Scotland - designed to starve Lancastrian supporters of crucial Scottish support - presumably that concluded at York in June 1464. (119) Undoubtedly the high point of his career came less than a year before his death when, in November 1465, Bowes was appointed Sheriff of Northumberland. (120) This was almost certainly in recognition of his unstinting service to the new regime and perhaps also to the Nevilles since John Neville, Warwick's brother had, shortly before been created Earl of Northumberland. Nevertheless, this appointment, perhaps, also reflected the family's longstanding connection with border defence and diplomacy, an association almost certainly reinforced by Bowes' own recent experiences in this field.

It has been suggested that the proximity of the Anglo-Scottish border determined the political and social character of the north. From the late thirteenth century a state of hostility, with intermittent periods of open warfare, existed between England and Scotland. (121) The unruly nature of border society exacerbated an already volatile situation so that raids and private bloodfeuds became inextricably

118 For which service Bowes was later granted £100, "from the issues of the lordship of Alnwyck", in recompense. CPR, 1461-67, p. 79.

119 A.A. Cardew, "A Study of Society in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, 1455-1502", University of St. Andrews Ph.D. (1974) p. 254; C.D. Ross, Edward IV, (London 1974), p. 62.

120 CPR, 1461-67, p.536.

121 For the "problem of the north" see particularly Reid, King's Council, pp. 1-21 and Storey, "North of England", passim.

interlinked with national tensions. The existence of the Franco-Scottish alliance, especially during the period when England was embroiled in the Hundred Years war with France, had further opened up the sinister possibility that the Scottish border would be used as the "back door" into England by a foreign invader. Its distance from the centre of government meant that, for much of the period, control of the region was left in the hands of the local ruling elite, a factor which had contributed significantly to the build-up in power and influence of the northern magnate families of Neville and Percy. (122) The defence of the region and the maintenance of military preparedness, therefore, became the major factor in dictating the lifestyles and attitudes of the men of the north. Since the Bishopric was charged with a special responsibility for the defence of the borders, for the episcopal enclaves of Norham, Islandshire and Bedlington, in Northumberland, fell within the immediate border region, it is hardly surprising that the men of Durham were called upon to play a prominent role in border affairs. (123)

Certainly, Sir William was following in a tradition of border defence that dated back to the days of the family's founder. During the 1330s and 1340s, a period of intense Anglo-Scottish hostility, Adam Bowes

122 M.H. Keen England in the Later Middle Ages, (London 1973), chap.2; J.A. Tuck, "Richard II and the Border Magnates", N.H., Vol. 3, (1968), pp. 27-52; Storey, Lancaster, chap. VII.

123 Lapsley, County Palatine, pp. 303-309; Storey, Thomas Langley, pp. 303-307.

had participated actively in the administration of justice in the borders and had served as a member of the English Commission appointed to secure a truce in 1343. (124) In the 1380s Adam's grandson, the first Sir William was also possibly involved in the later phase of Anglo-Scottish warfare which culminated in the battle of Otterburn in 1388 (although firm evidence of the Palatinate's involvement in the affair is scanty). A list of the Bishop's councillors dated 1385 noted that William de Bowes, militi, was retained, in peace and war, for the sum of £6.13s.4d. (125) Since the Bishop was present on the Scottish expedition, mounted by Richard II in the July and August of that year, it seems likely that Bowes, as a fee'd retainer of the prelate was also in attendance. (126) Moreover, despite the fact that the Bishopric forces were upbraided for arriving too late to aid Hotspur at the Battle of Otterburn, in August 1388, the levies had, nevertheless, been alerted and were prepared for involvement. (127) Indeed, Sir William was one of those appointed to the Durham Commissions of Array in July 1388, undoubtedly the Palatinate's response to the affair. (128) In the second decade of the fifteenth century, the second Sir William, too, was appointed to act as one of the English Commissioners during the negotiations surrounding the

124 CPR, 1330-34, pp. 292, 573; Ibid, 1340-43, pp. 320, 327; Ibid, 1343-45, p. 93, 493-94, 511; Foedera, II, part. iv, pp. 149, 156.

125 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 1 p. 316.

126 N.B. Lewis, "The last Medieval Summons of the English Feudal Levy", E.H.R., Vol. 73, (1958), pp. 4, 26.

127 Tuck, "Border Magnates", p. 44.

128 P.R.O. Durh. 3/32 m. 6d.

release of the Scottish King, James I, who had been held captive in England since 1406. (129) Moreover, his later appointment as sheriff and escheator of the Bishopric, in 1436, had occurred at a time when Anglo-Scottish war was imminent, suggesting that his experience in this sphere played as great a part in the appointment as did his close affinity to the ruling Palatine elite. (130)

It was undoubtedly this involvement with the governance of the borders which, more than any other factor, gave northern society its regional characteristics and which distinguished the Bowes of Streatlam from comparable families in other regions. Indeed, whilst military service traditionally provided the dominant feature in the lives of the knightly classes, whose original *raison d'etre* was, after all to fight, it has been suggested that, in England generally, by the mid-fifteenth century the military role of the knightly class had begun to decline significantly. This was partly due to the failure of the French wars but was also, perhaps, consistent with the rise of a nobility of talents, whose abilities lay within the spheres of government and administration. (131) The entrance of the Bowes family, into the ranks of the local ruling elite was, as we have seen, effected in this manner and it continued to play a prominent

129 Foedera, IV, part iv, p. 111; Storey, Langley, p. 155.

130 Storey, Langley, p. 61, 159-162.

131 Wright, Derbyshire Gentry, pp. 8-9; Given-Wilson, The English Nobility, p. 17.

part in local government throughout the period of this study. Nevertheless, within the north, the proximity of the border and its attendant problems continued to present opportunities, also, for the pursuit of a traditional military role. As such the administration and defence of the borders came to form a major and recurrent theme in the history of the Bowes family throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

The political achievements of Sir William Bowes, under the auspices of the Nevilles of Middleham were the highest to which a member of the Bowes family aspired during the fifteenth century. Moreover, Sir William's heir, William Bowes, esquire, a somewhat shadowy figure who did not attain knightly status, adopted a low political profile during this period, preferring instead to spend much of his time on the estates of his wife, Isabel Clifton, in Lincolnshire. Indeed, since Isabel was the niece of Bishop Laurence Booth, a Neville adversary, it was perhaps the case that William's retiring stance was in response to conflicting loyalties since Warwick's influence within the region remained paramount throughout the 1460s. (132) Nevertheless, after William's death in 1474, his brother and heir, Ralph Bowes, continued to build upon the family's reputation for local administrative and border service. To this end, during the 1470s Bowes, in company with many other former Neville adherents, entered into the affinity of

132 Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", p. 114.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the successor to the estates and influence of Warwick in the north, after the fall of the Nevilles in 1471. (133)

By 1474, Gloucester had acquired the lordship of Barnard Castle and it is likely that Bowes, as one of his leading tenants, became acquainted with the Duke at this time. (134) Certainly by 1476, the two men were engaged in a property transaction whereby Gloucester purchased, from Bowes, the advowson of Seaham church. (135) Moreover, by this time Ralph was contracted to the daughter and co-heiress of Richard Conyers of South Cowton, a member of the North Riding family which formed the core of the affinity of the lords of Middleham, and a retainer of the Duke's since 1471. (136) Given this close association of affinity and interests it is not surprising that, by the early 1480s when Gloucester's control over the Bishopric was paramount, Bowes was figuring prominently in the administration of the Palatinate. (137) In June 1481 he was appointed chief chamberlain for the term of the Bishop's life and, in October 1483, he was appointed to the office of sheriff. (138) His close connection with Richard's affinity at this

133 Ross, Richard III, chap. 3; Pollard Middleham Connection, passim.

134 Pollard, "St Cuthbert and the Hog", p. 114.

135 Durham C.R.O. D/130/D22.

136 Durham C.R.O. D/13/1/2 p. 155; Pollard "Richmondshire Gentry", p. p.53.

137 Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", pp. 115-120.

138 P.R.O. Durh. 3/54 m. 14, 17. Bowes's appointment as sheriff came at a time when Richard, who was then King, was facing rebellion. The appointment was, perhaps, an indication of Sir Ralph's support for the new regime at this time.

time is illustrated by the fact that on the 5th July 1482, he acted as a feoffee for Richard Hansard, a close associate of the Duke. Three days later Hansard and John Hoton, another leading member of Gloucester's affinity, were named by Bowes as two of the executors of the will he had drawn up, presumably before his departure for the Scottish War of 1482. Indeed, it is probable that Gloucester's aggressive policy towards Scotland gave the Bowes family a further opportunity to enhance its reputation in the sphere of border service.

(139) Ralph Bowes was appointed to the Palatine Commission of Array in July 1480 which summoned the levies of the Bishopric following the breakdown of the Anglo-Scottish truce and went on to serve under Gloucester in the ensuing campaign. (140) Undoubtedly the high point of his career came on the 22nd August 1482 when, two days before the English forces re-captured the key border stronghold of Berwick, Bowes was created a knight and banneret by the Duke. (141)

There is little evidence regarding the career of Sir Ralph after Gloucester's assumption of the throne since the records of the Palatine Chancery, for that period, are missing. Yet it seems unlikely that Bowes supported Richard at Bosworth. Indeed, less than a month after the battle the new Tudor regime appointed him, along with

139 P.R.O. Durh. 3/54 m. 15; Durham C.R.O. D/St D1/1/20. Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", pp. 114-115.

140 P.R.O. Durh. 3/54 m.11

141 Shaw, Knights of England, Vol. 2, p. 20; M.A. Hicks, "Dynastic Change and Northern Society", N.H., Vol. 14, (1978) p. 105.

sixteen other members of the north's leading families, to the Commission of Array for Yorkshire. (142) This Commission was appointed, primarily, in response to further Scottish aggression, for Berwick was again under siege. However, it was also intended to consolidate support within the north for the new King, Henry VII. Certainly many of the appointees soon became royal officials. Indeed, there is a possibility that this Commission may even have been an attempt to revive the Council in the North. (143) Certainly Sir Ralph's inclusion on this body indicated his acceptability to the new regime, although the reasons behind his apparent volte-face are unclear. It has been suggested that, during his reign, Richard III alienated sections of northern political opinion by refusing to relinquish effective control of the region to the traditional ruling families, preferring instead to appoint his own officials to key posts. (144) This may well have been the reason for Bowes's subsequent lack of support for Richard's regime. On the other hand, since Sir Ralph's initial attachment to Gloucester was apparently based upon pragmatic considerations, it is possible that his ultimate loyalty lay with whosoever served his own best interests and that, after the 22nd August 1485, was undoubtedly Henry Tudor.

142 CPR, 1485-94, pp. 39, 40.

143 Reid, King's Council, p. 72.

144 Hicks, "Dynastic Change", pp. 90-92; Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", p. 121.

Given the paucity of the surviving evidence, it is impossible to do more than scratch the surface of the lives of the Bowes of Streatlam in the later middle ages. Important facets of the family's history such as its cultural and intellectual pursuits and its early religious ideals remain shrouded in the mists of more than four hundred years. All that can be stated, with any certainty, is that the family apparently displayed certain attitudes and aspirations which have also been identified in other comparable social groups of the period. In its attitudes to land, family and social affinity, therefore, the Bowes family was, perhaps, typical of its class. Despite these similarities with other gentry societies, however, the unique nature of northern political life dictated that a major theme in the family's history, and one that the Bowes family continued to expand upon considerably, was an attachment to border defence and diplomacy. Its activities in this field enabled it to build up a reputation which was to influence and enhance the careers of successive family members and, indeed, the problem of the far north continued to exert its influence over the Bowes of Streatlam until the beginning of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER TWO

SERVICE REBELLION AND ACHIEVEMENT: ROBERT BOWES AND THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE.

Historians have often been tempted to view the early Tudor north almost in the light of a nation apart. Indeed the traditional orthodoxy is that of a remote inaccessible region, rendered virtually ungovernable by the ravages of border warfare. This thesis supports the vision of a politically and intellectually backward, feudal society with an ultimate loyalty not to the Crown, whose encroachments were fiercely resisted, but with one or other of the leading local noble families - the Percies, Dacres or Nevilles. (1) A more recent interpretation, too, has sought to stress the independent nature of northern society by placing it in the context of an outlying territory within the English polity, in company with, for example, the lordship of Ireland, the Principality and Marches of Wales, the Channel Islands and the town of Calais (which remained in English hands until 1558). (2) Each of these was far removed from the centre of government and was administered locally yet, it is suggested, each remained an integral part of the political whole by virtue of its allegiance to the Crown and by the dominance of an identifiably English culture in terms of language, law and government. This second interpretation, reconciling as it does traditional perceptions of

1. Reid, King's Council, p. 6.
2. S. Ellis, "Crown, Community and Government in the English Territories, 1450-1575", History, Vol. 71 (1986) pp. 187-204.

northern society with more recent research into the nature and development of the Tudor state, is obviously more attractive to the modern historian. Nevertheless, in its portrayal of the region as an outlying territory, this thesis, too, lends weight to the notion of the early Tudor north as an independent entity.

Given such viewpoints it is all too easy to over-stress the politically isolated nature of northern society. If, however, the extent of royal authority within the region at this time is scrutinised more closely it becomes apparent that, by the end of the fifteenth century, the Crown held far greater sway over the north than is generally accepted, most importantly because of the lessening of noble power. Indeed the Neville patrimony, which encompassed much of the region (and always overshadowed that of the Percies in terms of authority and prestige) fell into royal hands upon the accession of Richard III who, as Duke of Gloucester, was the successor to the Nevilles in the north. (3). The Percy affinity, too, came under royal control after the assassination of the fourth earl of Northumberland in May 1489 and failed thereafter to effectively regain its former influence. (4)

3. Ross, Richard III, chap. 3; Pollard, The Middleham Connection, passim; Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog". pp. 109-129.
4. M. James, "A Tudor Magnate and the Tudor State", in his Society, Politics and Culture, p. 66.

From its earliest days, therefore, the Tudor regime had, in theory, control of the north. Indeed, recent research into the Yorkshire insurrection, which followed in the wake of Northumberland's death, has indicated that by this time Henry VII was able to command a reasonable degree of support from the northern elite, perhaps suggesting that he was capable of translating, albeit tentatively, his theoretical control into practical terms. (5) Admittedly, vestiges of lineage society, based upon ties of loyalty to blood and affinity rather than to any distant royal authority, may have survived within the immediate vicinity of the borders up to the time of the 1569 Northern Rebellion. (6) Nevertheless, from the reign of the first Tudor, the old and hackneyed adage of the north knowing no Prince but a Percy was rapidly ceasing to be representative of the region as a whole. Undoubtedly, as resistance to the administrative and religious reforms of the 1530s illustrated, Tudor perceptions of centralized kingship and authority, in addition to the intellectual and ideological changes associated with the Reformation, took longer to permeate the social fabric of a region physically so far removed from the centre of government. Nevertheless, the probability remains that, almost from the inception of the dynasty, much of the north was far more politically and culturally integrated into the "Tudor polity"

5. M.J. Bennett, "The Northern Rising of 1489", English Historical Review, Vol. CV, no. 414, (January 1990), pp. 51, 58-9.
6. M. James, "English Politics and the Concept of Honour", in his Society, Politics, Culture, pp. 302-3.

than has traditionally been acknowledged. Indeed, as has already been shown families such as the Bowes of Streatlam already shared many characteristics in common with their more southerly counterparts and whilst there was an extent to which they were hardened by the militaristic consequences of border defence, there is much to suggest that they were, nevertheless, familiar with the social and cultural aspirations of the ruling "Court" elite. Admittedly royal influence within the Palatinate had been seriously undermined during the faction-ridden period of magnate politics in the years leading up to the Battle of Bosworth. (7) However, from the early years of their regime, successive Tudor monarchs sought further to reinforce their authority and influence through the appointment of a series of highly-capable administrative bishops, beginning in 1494 with the translation to the see of Richard Fox, keeper of the Privy Seal and a close associate of Henry VII. (8). From the evidence, therefore, it does seem to be the case that, by the end of the fifteenth century, the influence of the Crown loomed large in the sphere of northern political life and to a greater degree than has often been acknowledged. The extent of this influence and, indeed, of the heightened political interaction between central government and

7. Storey, "North of England", pp. 138-9.

8. James, Family Lineage, p. 45; M.M. Condon, "Ruling Elites in the Reign of Henry VII", Ross (ed) Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Late Medieval England, p. 117.

locality is illustrated by the greater opportunities presented to the northern ruling elite in the sphere of royal service during the years of the Tudor regime.

The enhancement of royal authority within the Bishopric undoubtedly forged bonds of closer co-operation between the Crown and local society. As has already been noticed, the nature of Palatinate politics is unclear for much of the 1480s due to the loss of the Chancery records for this period. Nevertheless it seems to have been the case that, from an early stage, Henry VII sought to establish a degree of political consensus with the traditional ruling families, despite the former connections of several with the affinity of the vanquished Richard III. Certainly the names of major Durham landowners such as the Neville earl of Westmorland, Lord Lumley, the Hiltons and the Eures as well as the Bowes family were evident in the Palatinate Commissions by the beginning of the 1490s. (9) Sir Ralph Bowes, unlike the heads of the Lumley, Hilton and Eure families, is not mentioned as being amongst those of the Bishopric who rallied to the royal cause during the 1489 insurrection. (10) Nevertheless, the degree of his

9. See for example P.R.O. Durh. 3/58 m. 5, 7; 3/60 m. 1. Along with Sir Ralph Bowes, the Earl of Westmorland, Lord Lumley and the Baron of Hilton had all been connected with Richard's affinity. Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog", pp. 118-119.

10. Bennett, op. cit., p. 59.

accommodation with the Tudor regime can be gauged by the fact of his re-appointment to the Durham shrievealty by 1491, a position he retained until 1502 in addition to serving regularly upon various Palatinate commissions. (11) The career of his eldest son, also Ralph, followed on in similar fashion. After distinguishing himself at the Battle at Flodden, for which exploit he was knighted, the younger Sir Ralph, too, remained primarily in local administration. Following his service on the Commission of the Peace for Northumberland in 1515 he was appointed sheriff of the Bishopric a few months before his premature death in 1516. (12) Perhaps the highlight of his short career, and one which illustrates the extent to which northerners were in touch with leading personalities and events, was his reception of the King's sister, Margaret of Scotland, who travelled through the Bishopric during her journey to London in April 1516. (13) Working in such close co-operation with the policies and personnel of the Tudor regime undoubtedly reinforced the family's political and cultural ties with the centre and almost certainly facilitated the entrance into royal service of Robert Bowes, perhaps the most distinguished member of the family during the sixteenth century.

11. P.R.O. Durh. 3/58 m. 5, 7; 3/60 m. 1; 3/62 m. 1; 3/64 m. 2, 10; 3/67 m. 2. His last documented appointment was to the Commission of the Peace in March 1508, some four years before his death. Ibid. 3/68 m. 2.

12. LP, Vol. 1, part 2, no. 2246; Vol. 2 part 1, no. 249. P.R.O. Durh. 3/70 m. 18. Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 1, p. 399

13. LP, Vol. 2, part 1, no. 1759.

Certainly by the early years of the sixteenth century the Streatlam family was sufficiently attuned to the social and cultural aspirations of the central ruling elite to appreciate the value of an education at the Inns of Court for its male progeny. In common with, perhaps, one-third of the English gentry in the period 1450-1550 Sir Ralph Bowes sent two of his sons to be educated there. (14) The younger Ralph Bowes entered Lincoln's Inn in November 1509 and was followed some two years later, in May 1511 by his brother, Robert in what proved to be the start of family tradition that lasted for much of the century. (15) By the middle of the fifteenth century the inns had become, in essence, the third university of England and the two hundred or so students who attended at any one time were schooled in "history, scripture, music, dancing and other noblemen's pastimes", in addition to receiving a thorough grounding in English Common Law. (16)

14. J.H. Baker, "The English Legal Profession, 1450-1550", W. Prest (ed.), Lawyers in Early Modern Europe and America, (London 1981) p. 34.
15. Bowes was not the first of the Durham gentry to attend the Inns for Sir Thomas Tempest of Holmeside, Co. Durham, was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1496 at the start of what was to prove a highly successful legal career. Tempest, perhaps provided Bowes with a role model for he acted as Robert's sponsor upon the latter's entry to Lincoln's Inn. The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, Mss no. A1A3, Admissions Book, Vol. 1, f. 42b. Records of the Society of Lincoln's Inn: Admissions, (1896), Vol. 1 pp. 33, 35. For Tempest's career see S.T. Bindoff (ed.), The House of Commons: 1509-1558, (London 1982), Vol. 3, pp. 431-433.
16. Baker, op.cit., p. 35. W. Holdsworth, A History of English Law, Vol.2 (1902), p. 494.

A limited number of students, however, actually went on to pursue legal careers and it has been suggested that the majority attended simply to gain some education and to benefit from the rich social and cultural advantages that such an experience inevitably provided.(17) This undoubtedly was the case with Ralph Bowes whose future, as the heir to the Streatlam lordship, was already mapped out. Nevertheless, apart from its intellectual, professional and social desirability, such an education was also increasingly regarded as a stepping stone to a career in the service of the Crown. Indeed, as Erasmus noted, "...there is no better way to eminence...for the nobility are mostly recruited from the law..." (18). As a landless second son, with a need to make his own way in the world, it seems that Robert Bowes chose this particular course. When Serjeant Caryll sent his son to study in the Inner Temple in 1523 he anticipated his costs would amount to £10 per annum and this sum, at the time, was widely accepted as a reasonable amount of financial support for a law student.(19). It thus seems likely that the inheritance of lands worth £10 a year, granted to Robert under the terms of his father's will in 1512, was intended specifically to finance the legal training that was to provide the foundation for his later career. (20).

17. Baker, "The English Legal Profession", p. 33.

18. Ibid., p. 35.

19. Ibid., p. 33.

20. Dep. Kpr. Vol. 44, p. 327.

The re-organization of the government of the north in 1525, under the auspices of Cardinal Wolsey, marked the beginning of Robert Bowes's administrative career on his appointment to the Duke of Richmond's Council, the forerunner of the Council in the North. There is no mention of his name in the Palatinate administration before this time yet it seems likely that it was through this channel, between 1523 and 1529, when Wolsey was bishop of Durham, that Bowes rose to prominence. Certainly by 1526 he was noted as being of the Bishop's Council. Moreover, in 1528 the Cardinal made known his decision to appoint Bowes to be Escheator of Durham, although the appointment was not ratified until 1529, after Wolsey had exchanged the Bishopric for the richer see of Winchester. (21) That Wolsey was drawing heavily upon the local expertise of his Palatinate officers is evident from the composition of Richmond's Council. For it included Sir Thomas Tempest, the Steward and Comptroller of the Bishopric, Sir William Eure, the then Escheator, William Frankleyn, the Chancellor and Sir William Bulmer, the Captain of the Bishop's border fortress of Norham. (22). A further reason for Bowes's inclusion in Richmond's Council was undoubtedly his familiarity with the practice of equitable law.

21. Lapsley, County Palatine, p. 128. W.H.D. Longstaffe, The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington, (Darlington, London, Newcastle, 1854), p. 191. LP, Vol. 4, part 2, no. 5111. Bowes was first appointed Escheator of the Bishopric during the vacancy of the See in 1529 and was re-appointed to the office by Bishop Tunstall in November 1530. Dep. Kpr., Vol. 36, p. 157. Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 1 p. 444.
22. Reid, King's Council, pp. 103-4. J.G. Nichols (ed.) "Inventory of the Wardrobe Plate & c. of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset", Camden Miscellany, Vol. III, (1855), pp. xxii-xxiv.

Indeed, by 1528 he was listed as a Master of Requests and it is apparent that, after his initial training in the Common Law at Lincoln's Inn, Bowes must, at some stage, have gained experience in the inns of Chancery. (23) This quality would undoubtedly have made him doubly attractive to Wolsey whose aim was to expedite the administration of more efficient and accessible conciliar justice within the localities and who apparently intended the newly formed Council to function partly as a northern Court of Requests. (24)

Rachel Reid has emphasised the judicial nature of Richmond's Council and has suggested that it was primarily created to facilitate the more efficient administration of justice in the north. (25) Yet inevitably, given the perpetually volatile nature of Anglo-Scottish relations, the desire to consolidate royal authority in the region at this time was linked to the government's need to strengthen and defend its frontier against the threat from across the border. Tension, interspersed with intermittent bouts of overt hostility, had existed between the two countries throughout much of the early 1520s due to the renewal of the "auld alliance" between Scotland and France. Whilst the immediate threat had subsided in the summer of 1525, on the negotiation of the Treaty of the More between England and France, the

23. I.S. Leadam (ed.), "Select Cases in the Court of Requests", Selden Society, (1898), p. cv.

24. P. Gwyn The King's Cardinal, (London 1990), p. 115. Reid, op.cit., pp. 106-7.

25. Reid, King's Council, p. 106.

conflict of the preceding years had highlighted the pressing need of the Crown to strengthen its control in the sensitive frontier regions. (26).

If the demise of the Neville and Percy power-bases, towards the end of the fifteenth century facilitated the attempts of the Tudor regime to impose its authority in the north, it nevertheless created immense difficulties in the sphere of Border administration. For, as the era of the "overmighty subject" declined, so the Crown began to experience new problems associated with its inability to recruit suitably qualified personnel capable of filling the vacuum left by the northern magnates who, by dint of territorial power and influence, had traditionally kept the unruly Marches under some degree of control.

(27) The weak and faction-ridden wardenship of Lord Dacre, who had sought vainly to administer the East, West and Middle Marches from 1515 almost up until his death in 1525, had contributed little to the implementation of effective royal justice within the more remote and troublesome border areas. Indeed, his long standing feud with the Clifford family, for the dominance of the West March, undoubtedly did much to exacerbate the endemic lawlessness of the frontier where

26. For a discussion of Anglo-Scottish relations at this time see, D.M. Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy: A Reassessment", The Scottish Historical Review, Vol. LXI (1982), pp. 9-10.

27. M. James, "Change and Continuity in the Tudor North", in his Society, Politics and Culture, p. 91. D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, (Oxford 1928), part 1, passim.

murder, robbery, theft and cattle-rustling (or reiving) remained an accepted part of daily life and where the perpetuation of cross-border rivalries and blood feuds did much to foment tension during the frequent outbreaks of Anglo-Scottish hostility. (28)

It was in the face of such administrative difficulties that the jurisdiction of the new northern Council was extended to cover the policing and defence of the border regions with the duke of Richmond being appointed as Warden-General of the Marches and Lieutenant-general north of the Trent. This aspect of the Council's duties was further underlined by the fact that several of its members were border officers. Bulmer and Eure were, respectively, lieutenants of the East and Middle Marches, Sir Christopher Dacre held the lieutenancy of the West March and Sir George Lawson was Treasurer of the key border stronghold of Berwick. (29) As has been shown, the family of Robert Bowes, too, had long participated in the sphere of border defence. His father and brother were both knighted during Scottish campaigns and Robert and his younger brother, Richard, continued the family tradition by participating in the Scottish invasion of 1522-3.

28. Reid, King's Council, pp.92-94. James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 91-95. Gwyn, Wolsey., pp. 214-217.

29. Reid, op.cit., pp. 102-105.

Outbreaks of plague and the consequences of bad harvests had apparently limited the contribution of the men of the Bishopric to this campaign. (30) However, the Bowes brothers, who were appointed as Commissioners of Array within the Bishopric, were involved in the conflict and took part in the raiding, counter-raiding and burning which characterised the nature of Anglo-Scottish warfare at this time. Both indeed led a company of some 285 men on a raid to Jedburgh, in the Scottish Middle Marches, in 1523. (31).

It is probable, therefore, that Robert Bowes's own growing experience of border affairs was instrumental in effecting his political advancement and it became an aspect of his career which he sought, thereafter, to emphasise. Indeed, almost from the beginning of his membership of the Council in the North Robert Bowes displayed a particular predilection for the administration of the frontier. Moreover, as early reports of the Council's activities seemed to indicate, Bowes and his colleagues had some initial success in dealing with the perennial problem of border lawlessness. In August 1526, for example, accounts of the Newcastle assize, held before Bowes and others of the Council, noted how "...there never was so great an assize with so good appearance of gentlemen that no one was afraid to complain or give evidence..." Evidently sixteen

30. G. Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, (Sussex 1985), p. 115.

31. Dep. Kpr., Vol. 36, p. 156. LP, Vol. 3, part 1, nos. 2186, 3410.

thieves were executed, many belonging to the great surname groups of Tynedale and Redesdale, the most lawless part of the region, and the report concluded that, "...such a thing was never seen before in those parts...the Borders never kept better rule..."(32). Unfortunately this situation changed in 1527 when, in response to more widespread Border unrest, generated by the activities of the outlaw Sir William Lisle of Felton in Northumberland, a client of the Percies, the government decided to place the East and Middle Marches under the wardenship of the earl of Northumberland, the traditional Percy ruler of the region.(33) Nevertheless, Bowes retained some influence in the Borders for he was appointed to "...be of counsell with the said Warden...", along with several other members of Richmond's Council.(34) Bowes's general experience of border affairs at this time was undoubtedly strengthened by his personal knowledge of the Lisle family, for Sir William was his first cousin, a factor which may have played a deciding role in Bowes's appointment. For whilst, as M.E.James has suggested, the eventual surrender of the outlaw was probably based upon his expectation of the "...succour and good lordship..." he could hope to receive, as a longstanding Percy client, at the hands of the new Warden, the presence of a kinsman amongst the northern Councillors

32. LP, Vol. 4 part 2 no. 2402.

33. James, "A Tudor Magnate", pp. 56-57, 60.

34. LP, Vol. 4 part 2 no. 3629.

could well have been designed to lull him into an even greater sense of security. However, any hopes that Lisle may have entertained regarding his future were soon to be dashed for he was subsequently executed. (35) Moreover, that Bowes and his colleagues were intent upon the imposition of law and order within the region was quickly made plain. For, as Northumberland noted, shortly after his appointment, they had taken, "...all possible pains for the reformation of justice..." and had devised "a book of articles" for the governance of the area. (36)

Throughout his early years in the service of the Crown, Bowes thus continued to build up a reputation for the administration and implementation of royal authority, particularly within the far north. Indeed his expertise was acknowledged to the extent that, in the wake of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, the Duke of Norfolk was moved to note how Bowes had "...no equal in the north either for war or law..." (37). Yet despite his growing renown it was nevertheless the case that Bowes's opportunity for further advancement came about, not as the result of his royal service but rather because of his rebellious participation in the Pilgrimage. It is, in fact, in this context that his career, both before and after 1536, can best

35. For the Bowes/Lisle connection see below p. 49. James, "A Tudor Magnate", pp. 61-62.

36. LP, Vol. 4 part 2, nos. 3796, 3816.

37. Ibid, Vol. 12 part 2, no. 100.

be understood. For his responses to the revolt were almost certainly conditioned by the expectations and aspirations he had acquired, as a servant of the Henrician regime, in the years leading up to its outbreak. Moreover, his prominent role in the rebellion itself proved to be the enterprise which propelled Bowes firmly into the political limelight and thus served to determine the course of his subsequent career.

By the early 1530s there was growing consternation amongst the northern political elite at the increasing intrusion of central government and its apparent aim to wrest control from the traditional rulers. Just as the regime's various legislative measures against the church were breaking down the old liberties and franchises, thereby destroying the major independent obstacle to royal control, so within the political sphere the traditional order was being similarly undermined. The authority of loyal Tudor servants, such as Lord Dacre and the earl of Cumberland, was being systematically eroded. In 1534 Dacre was arraigned on a charge of treason which, although he was acquitted, effectively destroyed his political influence. (38). Cumberland, too, was experiencing a more insidious decline in influence as his traditional clients and supporters gradually defected to Crown service (39) Moreover, the

38. James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 108-111.

39. M. James, "The First Earl of Cumberland", in his Society, Politics and Culture, pp. 151-152, 157-158. For a recent reassessment of the Earl, however, see R.W. Hoyle, "The First Earl of Cumberland: A Reputation Reassessed", N.H., Vol. 22, (1986).

government's infiltration of the Percy interest, under the guiding hand of Thomas Cromwell, resulted in the virtual destruction of the largest magnate power-base in the region when, in January 1536, the Sixth earl of Northumberland disinherited his brothers and made the Crown his heir. In the administrative sphere, too, the encroaching tentacles of central authority were increasingly undermining the authority and credibility of northern justice, whilst doing little to stem the tide of lawlessness. Judgements given by the Council in the North were increasingly subject to interference from Chancery and the Star Chamber, whilst Cromwell's blatant intimidation of the Yorkshire Grand Jury in March 1536 served further to reinforce apprehensions regarding future government policy. Such developments, striking as they did at the very core of northern political life, inevitably affected the career prospects of Robert Bowes whose position, as a leading member of the region's administration, was increasingly undermined by the interference of central authority.

Within the sphere of border government the erosion of Bowes's authority, although gradual, took place within the context of the regime's manipulation of the Percy interest. Admittedly the young Earl of Northumberland had long been under the influence of Wolsey, in whose household he had been brought up and who, it has been suggested, may have initiated the policy of securing control of the Percy inheritance for the Crown, by alienating the Earl from

his natural affinity. (40). This process was intensified when, after the fall of Wolsey, its operation came under the control of Cromwell and apparently beyond that sphere of influence of which Robert Bowes was a part. It is noticeable that, as Northumberland, under Cromwell's controlling hand, began to promote the interests of the "new men" in the Borders, notably Sir Reynold Carnaby and Sir Thomas Wharton, so the evidence regarding Bowes' involvement in Border affairs dwindles correspondingly. Undoubtedly the re-organization of the northern Council in 1530, during which it lost its figurehead, the Duke of Richmond, had much to do with this. For whilst Bowes and most of the existing councillors were appointed to the new institution, the Council lost much of its old jurisdiction, confining its influence to Yorkshire (41). Admittedly Bowes remained attached, in his capacity as a member of the Council in the North, to the household of the Warden until 1532 when he was also appointed to the Commission of the Peace for Northumberland. (42) After that time, however, despite his involvement in the Scottish offensive during the Spring of 1533, under Northumberland's command, Bowes's name ceased to appear on the Commissions of the Peace for the Border counties. (43) Indeed his influence thereafter, in keeping with the revised scope of authority of the Council in the North, appeared to be confined to Yorkshire.

40. E. Ives, Anne Boleyn, (Oxford 1986), pp. 77, 126.

41. James, Society, Politics, Culture, p. 101.

42. LP, Addenda, Vol. 1, part 1, no. 828. LP Vol. 5, no. 909.

43. Ibid., Vol. 6, nos. 322, 409. Ibid., Addenda, Vol.1 part 1, no. 831.

As Rachel Reid has pointed out, the activities of the Council in the North after this period are uncertain. (44) It is, in fact, quite possible that it gradually ceased to function. Certainly the evidence gleaned from the State Papers of this time shows that Bowes's administrative duties were increasingly restricted to affairs within the immediate vicinity of his own Durham and North Yorkshire locality. In 1534 and 1535, for example, he was appointed only to several minor commissions. One, which was dated August 1534 and included Bowes as one of, "...the wisest men of the country...", was to inquire into the wrecking and spoiling of a Scottish ship upon the coast of the Bishopric. Another, in June 1536, was to look into a dispute between the Durham noblemen, the Earl of Westmorland and Lord Lumley, over the stopping of a water course. (45) This pattern persisted until the outbreak of the rebellion itself. Indeed, in the years 1535-6, apart from his appointment to the Commissions of the Peace for the North and East Ridings, Bowes's only major contribution to the government of the north was in his capacity as a commissioner for assessing Tenths and Spiritualities within the Bishopric of Durham and Yorkshire, during the compilation of the Valor Ecclesiasticus. (46)

44. Reid, King's Council, p. 120.

45. LP, Vol. 7, no. 1061; Vol. 10, no. 1180.

46. Ibid., Vol. 8 nos. 149, 696; Vol. 10, no. 777.

It appears then that, after the fall of Wolsey, men such as Robert Bowes, who had enjoyed a position at the forefront of northern political life, saw their influence decline as the new men of the Borders, such as Carnaby and Wharton, worked to promote the interests of central government. Certainly, shortly after the Pilgrimage, the Earl of Westmorland was to stress the hatred with which Carnaby was regarded in the region. (47) Moreover, the men of the north were forced to witness the further breakdown in law and order which these upheavals brought about. In July 1535, for example, Bowes, whose regard for the maintenance of Border justice has already been noticed, accompanied the Earl of Westmorland to the Lake Counties to restore peace in the wake of disturbances involving Sir Edward Musgrave, a supporter of the disgraced Lord Dacre and Sir Thomas Wharton, who had played a significant role in the arraignment of Dacre in 1534 .(48). (In this affair, too, in keeping with his apparent decline in influence at this time, Bowes seems to have been relegated to a relatively minor advisory role, under Westmorland's direction). Wolsey had undoubtedly conspired to bring the region under the thumb of the Crown for, indeed, most of the original members of Richmond's Council had been connected with him in some way (49). Yet he had seen fit to

47. Ibid., Vol. 12 part 1 no. 901.

48. Ibid., Vol. 8, no. 1030. S Harrison The Pilgrimage of Grace in the Lake Counties, (London 1981). p. 37.

49. Reid, King's Council, p. 103.

rely on the experience of the region's traditional rulers. Cromwell, on the other hand, worked to re-arrange the entire political "pecking order", thus alienating men such as Robert Bowes from a central authority which sought to destroy the conventional avenues through which they were able to exert their influence as the north's ruling elite.

In the sphere of judicial administration also, central government continued remorselessly to exert its influence. It is interesting to note that the few surviving positive indications of Robert Bowes's reasons behind his rebellious role point to his preoccupation with the inadequacies of the judicial system. In his statement, Robert Aske, the leader of the Pilgrimage, recalled that Bowes had shown his concern for the need to find "remedys for pulling down enclosures and remedy for variances betwixt party and party" (50). Reference to both of these can be found in the Pontefract Articles, perhaps as the result of Bowes's influence, since the expertise of several of the members of the Council in the North was called upon during the formulation of the Pilgrims' demands. (51)

As has been pointed out, the influence of Wolsey was paramount in the formation of the Duke of Richmond's Council and it has been suggested that his intention was partly to create a northern Court

50. LP, Vol. 12, part 1 no. 901.

51. Ibid., no. 901. Reid, King's Council, p. 141.

of Requests, basically a court of equity for "poor mennys' causes". (52) It is interesting that, whilst in its administration of criminal law, the Council in the North provoked widespread hostility (leading to its reorganization in 1530), within the sphere of equitable justice it proved rather more popular. (53) However its rulings had often been undermined by the ability of defeated parties to appeal to the Star Chamber, or else to apply for a subpoena to have the case re-examined before Chancery (54). As has also been pointed out, it is possible that the Council, along with its facility for dispensing equitable justice in the north, may have ceased to function altogether by 1536. Under such circumstances much injustice was undoubtedly perpetrated, for poor men could rarely afford the expense of a journey to London to pursue their grievances. It seems likely, therefore, that Bowes's "...remedy for variances betwixt party and party..." lay at the root of the Pilgrims' demand that "no man upon subpoena is from Trent north to apeyr but at York or by attorney oles it be directis uppon payn of allegeance and for lyke maters concernying the king". (55) It is, after all, understandable that Bowes, as a Master of Requests (a post he continued to hold

52. Reid, King's Council, pp. 106-107. Leadam, "Select Cases in the Court of Requests", p. xi.

53. Reid, op.cit., p.109. F.W. Brooks, The Council in the North, (Historical Association pamphlet, 1966) p. 14. Dodds, op.cit., Vol.1, p. 366-367.

54. Brooks, op.cit., p. 15.

55. LP, Vol. 11 no. 1246, printed in A.Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, (London 1968), p. 112.

certainly up to the mid 1540s), with an obvious interest in the expedition of poor men's causes, should become increasingly resentful of the Council's judicial authority being thus eroded.

It is possible, in fact, that Robert Bowes did have some genuine sympathy for the causes of the poor. During the early part of the rising, at least, he was exceedingly well thought of by the commons. (56) Certainly his call for the pulling down of enclosures would have struck a popular note. Enclosures were undoubtedly a source of constant friction, especially among the commons of Cumberland, Westmorland and the northern Yorkshire dales, with the Earl of Cumberland proving a major offender in this respect. (57) Some legislation existed to deal with the problem but, again, for poor men legal redress proved almost impossible to obtain. One such case in point had a link with Bowes and possibly served to draw his attention to the problem. The action involved one Anthony Pecoek, one of the King's tenants of Arkengarthdale, who obtained an injunction in the Star Chamber against Lord Conyers, steward of Middleham and Richmond, who had enclosed the local common and deprived the tenants

56. During the rebellion, according to the statement of John Dakin, "...the people were very glad of Bowes's coming and, whatever he said, took it as of authority...". LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 789.

57. For the connection between enclosures and the Pilgrimage of Grace see Harrison, Lake Counties, and James, "Cumberland", pp. 148-175.

of pasture and lead-mining rights. The response of Conyers was simply to imprison the protesters in the various castles he had at his disposal. (58) Pecock's case is interesting since, during the rebellion, he was one of the commons' leaders and "...the principal stirrer of the business beside Barney castle...", an operation which resulted in the surrender of the castle to the rebels and the involvement of the Bowes family in the Pilgrimage. (59) He was later hanged in chains on Richmond Moor for his seditious activities. Moreover, Pecock was apparently a close associate of Henry Wycliffe, a fellow rebel and the brother-in-law of Richard Bowes. (60) Through this connection it is likely that Robert Bowes had close-hand knowledge of the evils of enclosure and, once again, it is possible to detect his influence in the Pilgrims' Article calling for the "statute for inclosors and intacks to be put into execution". (61)

The family of Harry Wycliffe was also, apparently, at the centre of the case which perhaps did more than anything to engender widespread hostility and resentment against the intrusion of central authority into the administration of the north. In March 1536 one William "Wicliff" was brought before York Assizes, charged by Mrs Carr of

58. Reid, King's Council, p. 124. "Yorkshire Star Chamber Proceedings", II, Yorkshire Archeological Society Record Series, Vol. XLV, (1911), p. 178.

59. LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 416.

60. Ibid., no. 775. For the Wycliffe pedigree see, Flowers, "Visitation of Yorkshire, 1563-1564",. See also, T.D. Whitaker, A History of Richmondshire, Vol. 1, (London 1823), p. 198.

61. LP, Vol. 11, no. 1246. Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions., p. 112.

Newcastle with the murder of her husband, George. In 1532 Ralph Wycliffe, of Wycliffe in Richmondshire, had been involved in a suit against Margaret, widow of George Carr over the marriage settlement of her son and Wycliffe's daughter, thus it is highly probable that this later case featured the same two families. (62) Despite the decision of the Yorkshire Grand Jury to acquit Wycliffe he remained in prison as the names of the jurors were sent to Cromwell who bound them, under a recognizance of £100 each, to appear before the Star Chamber. (63) Robert Aske later noted the hostility that the case generated against Cromwell who, "for the extreme punishment of the great jury of Yorkshir, for Wykelyf cause and for the extreme assessment of their fines was and yit is, in such error and hatred with the people in those partes, that in maner they wold eat him...." (64)

In view of the evidence it is easy to understand the concern of Robert Bowes for the future of northern justice. In his capacity as a Councillor in the north he had been forced to watch as the administration of that justice was increasingly undermined - rendering an apparently already lawless area still further out of control. Undoubtedly he shared also in the horror of the north at the treatment meted out to the Grand Jury, perhaps experiencing an even greater

62. Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, Vol. 1, pp. 59-60. V.C.H., North Riding, Vol. 1, p. 141.

63. Dodds, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 59-60.

64. M. Bateson "The Pilgrimage of Grace", E.H.R., Vol. V, (1890), p. 340.

sense of injury and injustice than most, since the Wycliffes were connected by marriage with the Bowes family. Thus in the administrative sphere, also, the advancing arm of royal authority sought, increasingly, to disrupt and intrude, reinforcing still further the fear that Cromwell's aim was the control of every aspect of northern society.

By 1536, therefore, it seems likely that Robert Bowes, in common with many northern gentlemen, had ample cause for dissatisfaction with the policies of the Crown. Yet there is still a further issue to be considered in relation to his rebellious actions, for Robert Aske had mentioned also how "Mr Bowes at Pomfret touched the statute of the declaration of the Crown by will...." (65) Since this declaration was enshrined in the Second Succession Act, it seems that Robert Bowes was concerned with the uncertainty surrounding the succession of the Crown.

The fall of Anne Boleyn in May 1536 had necessitated the restructuring of the 1534 Act which had vested the succession in the issue of the Boleyn marriage. Consequently, in June 1536, the draft of the Second Succession Act was presented to Parliament. The new Act repealed its predecessor, pronounced the King's previous marriages void and their issue illegitimate and vested the succession in any

65. LP, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 901.

future heirs of the Seymour marriage. (66) Professor Elton, in his interpretation of the Pilgrimage of Grace as an expression of court factionalism transferred to the country, has suggested that it was the passing of this Act which pushed the pro-Aragonese faction of the court into rebellion, since its provisions destroyed the hopes of such courtiers as Lords Darcy and Hussey of seeing the Princess Mary restored to the succession. In despair, Professor Elton suggests, the defeated faction leaders then conspired to overturn the ruling court elite (headed by Cromwell) by capitalising upon the growing dissent in the north. (67) It is possible that Robert Bowes was connected with an upper-class conspiracy aimed at Cromwell's overthrow. Certainly, from the evidence available it appears he had sufficient cause to desire the latter's removal from power. Moreover, Bowes and Darcy were connected through their membership of the Council in the North. (68) Yet Bowes's particular concern with the succession was not so much with the restoration of Mary as with the provision enabling the Crown to be declared by will. This clause gave the King authority to "give, dispose, appoint, assign, declare and limit by your letter patent under your Great Seal or else by your last will made in writing and signed with your most gracious hand...the..crown...to such person or persons as shall please your highness..." (69) It was widely thought, at the time, that Henry

66. S.E.Lehmberg, The Later Parliaments of Henry VIII, (Cambridge 1977), pp. 22-23.

67. G.R. Elton, "Politics and the Pilgrimage of Grace" in his Studies of Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government, Vol. 3, (Cambridge 1983), pp. 210-211.

68. Reid, King's Council, p. 116.

69. Lehmberg, op.cit., p. 23.

intended to name as his heir his illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond, but the boy died on the 23rd July thus throwing the succession question wide open. (70) From the Pilgrims' Articles which touched upon the subject, it is clear that this turn of events generated fears that the Crown might pass to a Scottish claimant. (71) These fears were fuelled by the passing of an Act of attainder against the half-brother of the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Thomas Howard, in the June/July Parliamentary session of 1536, which had also passed the re-constituted Succession Act. The grounds for Lord Thomas's attainder and subsequent execution were that he had conspired to marry the King's niece, Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of Henry's sister, Margaret, Queen of Scotland and her second husband, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. Since Lady Margaret was, at the time, second in line to the English throne (if Mary and Elizabeth were presumed to be illegitimate), preceded in terms of heredity only by her half-brother, James V of Scotland, the implications of the case were that Lord Thomas aspired, through the intended marriage, to the throne itself. (72) Thus the whole issue, coming as it did in the wake of the Second Succession Act, accentuated the possibility of a Scottish succession. The Duke of Richmond's death, less than a week after the passage of the Act of Attainder, served only to increase the uncertainty still further.

70. LP, Vol. 11, nos. 147, 148, 221.

71. Ibid, no. 1246. Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, p. 112.

72. Lehberg, Later Parliaments, pp. 34-36, 270.

There is little doubt that the possibility of a Scottish succession would have proved anathema to families such as the Bowes, to whom the Scots had always been the natural enemy and whose whole raison d'etre had, hitherto, been to defend the borders against a Scottish invasion. Admittedly, the question of James's place in the succession had arisen earlier in the reign, when, in 1525, in the interests of achieving Anglo-Scottish amity Henry had mooted the possibility as part of a marriage treaty between his daughter Mary and his Scottish nephew. However, this plan had never evolved beyond the negotiating stage and in any case had made provision for the young James to be brought firmly under the control of the English court in the event of the marriage. (73) By 1536, however, the possibility of the succession of the adult James V - who had, indeed, long sought to renew the Franco/Scottish "auld alliance", a manoeuvre he actually managed to achieve by the autumn of that year - must inevitably have presented a far more daunting prospect to his erstwhile enemies. (74)

Whether or not Robert Bowes was involved in a conspiracy of the ruling sort there is much to suggest that his preoccupation with the Succession Statute was over the possibility of a Scottish claimant to the English throne. Perhaps, also, Bowes' anxieties were given further

73. Heads, "Scottish Policy of Henry VIII", p. 10.

74. G. Donaldson, Scotland: James V - James VII, (Edinburgh 1971), pp. 24-25.

impetus by the death of the Duke of Richmond, less than three months before the outbreak of the rebellion, for it has been suggested that, whilst Richmond ceased to act as the figurehead for the Council in the North after its reorganization in 1530, his original leading household officers, including Bowes, retained their positions until his death. (75) Under such circumstances, had the Duke lived to be named in the succession, the political status of Bowes would have been greatly enhanced. The evidence for this latter hypothesis, however, is slight, for it is based upon a document enumerating the "...yerely fees of the laite Duke of Richmondes Counsaile..." which upon closer scrutiny appears to be a retrospective summary of the Council's composition and expenditure during the time it was operating as the Council in the North. Indeed, one of the officers named, Sir William Bulmer, had died in 1531. (76). Thus it is probable that Robert Bowes was no longer attached to the Duke's household. Indeed, in a letter to Thomas Cromwell, dated 1 June 1534, the young Duke sought to promote the cause of one Thomas Delaryver, a gentleman usher of his chamber, who had been accused by "...oone Roger Lassels, with Raffe Every [Eure], Robert Bowes and John Barton, esquiers, wrongfullye and onlye of malice..." of hunting and slaying a stag within the estates of the

75. LP, Vol. 11, no. 164. Nichols, "Inventory of the Wardrobe etc, of the Duke of Richmond", p. lxx.

76. "Testamenta Eboracensia", V, S.S., Vol. 79, (1884) p. 319.

abbot of Byland..". Whilst Delaryver's position is made clear in this, there is little to suggest that Bowes had retained any such connection with Richmond. (77)

Nevertheless, his connection with the Duke's household up until 1530 may well have been sufficient to heighten Bowes's awareness of the humanist and reformist ideas which were beginning to gain a foothold by the 1520s. Certainly the young Duke was given a humanist education and for a short while was under the tuition of the noted humanist John Palsgrave. Moreover by the early 1530s Richmond and his young wife, Mary, the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk and the sister of the Earl of Surrey, were firmly entrenched within the reformist court circles of Anne Boleyn. (78) As Dr. Brigden has noticed the young Duke was undoubtedly influenced by the early Protestant movement which he may well have regarded in the light of a "...perfect protest movement for youth..." (79) Moreover as Dr. Brigden has also pointed out by the early 1520s the Inns of Court, with which Robert Bowes had been long associated had begun to absorb the new reformist ideas. Indeed, the Protestant nature of the Inns influenced the religious ideals

77. LP, Vol. 7, no. 762. Nichols, op.cit., p. xcvi.

78. R.M. Warnicke, Women of the English Renaissance and Reformation, (Connecticut and London, 1983), pp. 33, 39. For the reformist influence of Anne Boleyn upon the Henrician Court see M. Dowling, "The Gospel and the Court: Reformation under Henry VIII", P. Lake and M. Dowling (eds.) Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England, (London 1987), pp. 49-55.

79. S. Brigden, London and the Reformation, (Oxford 1989), pp. 120-121.

of several noted figures of the Reformation including, most importantly, Thomas Cromwell. (80) Thus whilst there is no specific evidence regarding Bowes's religious attitudes at this time, it is possible that, far from being a religious conservative, he may well have begun to nurture the seeds of his later Protestantism.

Certainly there is little evidence that Robert Bowes was motivated in his rebellious stance by considerations of attachment to the "old religion" although the traditional view of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and one put forward by the Misses Dodds in their pioneering study of the rebellion, is one of an essentially conservative religious protest wherein all sections of northern society united in their resistance to the reforms of the Henrician regime. (81) More recently, C.S.L. Davies, whilst acknowledging the many-faceted nature of the revolt, has also stressed the importance of the religious dimension, not least from the point of view of the rural commons, since the influence of the Church permeated the fabric of their social and economic, as well as spiritual, lives. (82) As Davies has also pointed out, religion gave to the rebellion not only a cohesive framework which bound together the diverse elements of discontent, but also the necessary justification, by virtue of its appeal to the ultimate power of the Almighty, for the challenge to royal authority. (83)

80. Brigden, op.cit., pp. 110, 116.

81. Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, passim.

82. C.S.L. Davies, "Popular Religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace", A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), Order and Disorder in Early Modern England, (Cambridge 1985), p. 79.

83. Davies, op.cit., pp. 75-76. C.S.L. Davies, "The Pilgrimage of Grace Reconsidered", Past & Present, No. 41, (1968), p. 74.

Certainly considerations of cohesion and legitimization may well have played some part in prompting Robert Bowes to administer the Pilgrim's oath to the men of the Bishopric at the start of the revolt, especially if he was, indeed, involved in conspiracy of the "ruling sort". (84) Yet, in spiritual terms, there is little to suggest that Robert Bowes was unduly concerned by the nature of the Henrician religious reforms. Admittedly, he may have been concerned about their administrative drawbacks for he was, after all, a fee'd official of three Durham ecclesiastical establishments and, as such, held the stewardships of Sherburn Hospital and the Priories of Finchale and Neasham; with the revenues of the latter two houses falling well short of the £200 per annum required to exempt them from the confiscation permitted by the Act for the Dissolution of the Smaller Monasteries, passed in March 1536. (85) Nevertheless, as Dr. Wilson has shown, the senior monastic officials were, in general, treated fairly upon the suppression of their houses. Bowes certainly continued to receive his fee as steward of Neasham until 1553 and it is possible that the Crown similarly maintained his annual allowance of 40s for the stewardship of Finchale. Certainly Anthony Rackett, the receiver of Finchale in

84. LP, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 29.

85. B.N. Wilson, "Changes of the Reformation Period in Durham and Northumberland", University of Durham Ph.D, (1939), pp. 11, 15, 18. "The Priory of Finchale", (ed. J. Raine) S.S., Vol. 6, (1837), p. ccccxv.

1535 was still receiving his 30s fee in 1553. (86) Under such circumstances Bowes can hardly have had cause for complaint. Moreover, during the revolt itself Bowes seemed anxious to avoid the involvement of the clergy, whose influence he perhaps felt would cloud what he perceived to be the main aims of the rebellion. Indeed, according to the testimony of Dr. Dakins, the vicar of Kirby Ravensworth, Bowes quickly "...advised them [the commons] to let priests remain at home, for before they were fully resolved to have all priests that were young and able in their company...". (87) Certainly, following the breakdown of the rebellion, he appeared happy to participate in the implementation of the sweeping religious changes wrought by the Henrician regime. By the 28th December, only twenty days after the conclusion of the peace negotiations at Doncaster, Bowes was involved in expediting the Crown's collection of tenths and first fruits in Barnard Castle (88). A few months later, in May 1537, he was one of the officers deputed by the Duke of Norfolk to, "...put things in order..." at the suppression of Jervaulx Abbey in Richmondshire. (89)

Yet even if the religious connection is disregarded there is still sufficient evidence to suggest that, by 1536, Robert Bowes had ample grounds to be dissatisfied with royal policy and these may well have accounted for his rebellious stance during the Pilgrimage.

86. Wilson thesis, pp. 81, 96.

87. LP, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 789.

88. Ibid, Vol. 11, no. 1380.

89. Ibid, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 1307.

Despite, however, the evidence in support of his increasing alienation from the Tudor regime, the extent to which Bowes was a willing rebel still remains the subject of some conjecture, since he, in common with many of the gentlemen rebels, subsequently claimed that he had been "taken" by the commons against his will. (90) At issue, therefore, is the question of whether Bowes was coerced into participating in the leadership of a spontaneous, commons-inspired movement, which had at its roots purely religious, social and economic grievances; or whether, as one of the "...Alienated members of the ruling sort...", he deliberately aspired to overturn the ruling political elite through the medium of a popular rising, "...leading at first from behind and soon enough from the front..." (91).

The first evidence of Bowes's involvement in the Pilgrimage comes in a letter written, on the 14th October 1536, by Katherine, Lady Scrope of Bolton to her father, the Earl of Cumberland, advising him that the Richmondshire commons had risen. They had, she noted, divided into three companies. The first group was detailed to fetch her husband, Lord Scrope along with Sir James Metcalfe and Richard Sigiswick; the

90. LP, Vol. 11, nos. 921, 1175. The debate concerning the role of the upper orders in the Pilgrimage has been considered in the following: A.G. Dickens, "Secular and Religious Motivation in the Pilgrimage of Grace", in his Reformation Studies, (London 1981); Davies, "Popular Religion"; Elton, "Politics and the Pilgrimage of Grace"; M. James, "Obedience and Dissent in Henrician England" in his Society, Politics and Culture. For a re-appraisal of James's conclusions see S.J. Gunn, "Peers, Commons and Gentry in the Lincolnshire Revolt of 1536", Past & Present, Vol. 123, (1989).

91. See for example Dodds, Pilgrimage; Reid, King's Council. Elton, op.cit., p. 192.

second to bring in Lord Latimer and "Mr Danby", along with others in the Wensleydale area; whilst the third company was to go "...to Barnard Castle to bryng to them my cousyn, George Bowes, and his two uncles...", Robert and Richard Bowes. (92). Similar references, connecting Robert Bowes with Barnard Castle and drawn primarily from the State Papers led Rachel Reid to conclude that Bowes was deputy-steward of the lordship, although there is little direct evidence to support this. The steward at the time was probably Lord Conyers, whose tenure of the office was referred to in the commission, dated May 1543, appointing Robert Bowes himself to the stewardship. Certainly Conyers was the steward of the King's other northern castles of Middleham and Richmond at the time of the rebellion. Nevertheless, as the leading local gentry family it is highly likely that the Bowes of Streatlam were attached, in some capacity, to the lordship. It was, moreover, later deposed that Robert Bowes had jeopardized the castle's security from the outset of the Pilgrimage by failing to keep it in "good governance", suggesting that he had some personal responsibility in this sphere. Certainly at the time of the commons' siege Bowes was in command of the castle and allegedly surrendered it to the rebels "...without a stroke...". (93)

92. A.G. Dickens (ed.) "The Clifford Letters", S.S., Vol. 172, (1957) p. 112.

93. LP, Vol. 18, part 1, no. 623 (no.26); Vol. 12 part 1, no. 775.

Given the poor state of the castle's defences it is possible that there was little that Robert Bowes could do to resist. Moreover, that the rebels would brook no resistance at this time is evident from the further testimony of Lady Scrope, who noted that their mood was such that they were prepared to pull down and otherwise "spoil" the houses of reluctant gentlemen, an observation which certainly lends credence to Bowes's coercion story. (94) Nevertheless, the authenticity of his explanation remains in some doubt. In the first place it would surely have been out of character for a man with Bowes's reputed military propensities to have allowed himself to be pushed into rebellion without putting up even a token show of resistance. The commons' rising was not, after all, totally unexpected. The Lincolnshire rising had occurred at the beginning of October and even before the main Yorkshire phase, parts of the region had been in turmoil for some considerable time, a state of affairs surely not unknown to Bowes. As early as the 6th October Lord Darcy had informed the Earl of Cumberland, at Skipton Castle, of seditious activities in Dent, Sedburgh and also Wensleydale, where some five hundred men had already been "sworn". (95) Since the Barnard Castle lordship was capable of mustering some eight hundred men, it seems extremely surprising that Bowes had failed to make any attempt to prepare and defend the castle. (96) Its surrender,

94. Dickens, "Clifford Letters", p. 112.

95. LP, Vol. 11, no. 564.

96. Ibid, Vol. 12 part 1 no. 775.

too, without a "stroke" appears somewhat less innocent when viewed in the light of the fact that one of the Richmondshire rebel leaders was Harry Wycliffe, the half-brother of Richard Bowes' wife. (97)

Admittedly, since there were such disparities in regard to family loyalties during the rising, the presence among the rebels of a kinsman of minor gentry status can hardly be taken as proof of the rebellious inclinations of the Bowes family as a whole. Certainly the Bowes of Streatlam were allied, through marriage and affinity ties, to many of the region's leading families, including the Bulmers of Wilton who were heavily implicated in Sir Francis Bigod's last-ditch attempt to revive the Pilgrimage. (98) Yet at the same time they were equally connected to those such as the Cliffords who remained loyal to the Crown. The earl of Cumberland was, indeed, the uncle of George Bowes, the young heir to the Streatlam lordship who was in turn married to the daughter of Sir William Eure, another loyalist stalwart of the Tudor regime. (99) Nevertheless, setting family ties aside, the suggestion that Robert Bowes was in sympathy with the rebel cause seems further to be reinforced by his subsequent actions. Almost immediately, it appears, he adopted the role of leader of the commons. With apparent relish he began organizing them into formal parish muster formations

97 See above p.94.

98 Dodds, "Pilgrimage of Grace", Vol. 1, p. 39. Durham C.R.O, D/St D13/1/3 p. 116.

99 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/3, pp. 63, 124. Surtees, Durham, Vol. IV, p. 107.

and sought to maintain order and control amongst those, "...who would have been revenged on each other for old grudges...". It was, indeed, observed at this time that, "...the people were very glad of Bowes' coming and took whatever he said as of authority..." (100). Shortly afterwards, when the main force mustered at Spennymoor and proceeded to raise the Bishopric, Bowes rode to Brancepeth, to enlist the support of the leading Durham lay magnate, the Earl of Westmorland. The traditional view of this encounter is that, although the Earl did not wish to commit himself to the enterprise, he allowed his young heir, Lord Neville, to join the rebels.(101) This view is reinforced by a letter sent to Robert Aske by one Henry Eure - apparently an officer of Westmorland's - assuring the Pilgrim's leader,"... that my lord is true according to his first promise to Mr Bowes..."(pointing still further to Bowes involvement in the affair (102). Recent research has suggested, however, that the Earl was probably given very little option in the matter and was, "...forced to send his eldest son with St Cuthbert's baner, or else to have dyed..." (103). The inference here is surely that Bowes, far from being a reluctant rebel, was himself guilty of, or at least party to, coercion. Certainly the Earl viewed Bowes with suspicion thereafter. In April 1537 Westmorland refused the Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches. According to Norfolk, one

100 LP, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 789.

101 Ibid, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 29.

102 Ibid, Vol. 11, no. 945.

103 R.W. Hoyle, "Thomas Master's Narrative of the Pilgrimage of Grace", N.H., Vol. 21, (1985) p. 71. (Bodleian Library, Jesus College MS., 74. The narrative is entitled "Rebellion in the North Partes" and occupies fols. 322-327 of the text.)

reason for his refusal was that, "...he cannot trust Robert Bowes, a man of great wit and esteem in these parts, among his allies and friends, who he thinks would be too strong for him in any new business..." (104)

Once Bowes had been taken by the rebels, however, it is possible that he decided, in the light of such an overwhelming multitude, to take control as far as possible to prevent a total breakdown of order. Certainly Lord Latimer and Sir Christopher Danby, "...durst say nothing that should sound contrary (to) th'insurgents...". It was later stated that, "...the gentlemen could have done little amongst the commons, Mr Bowes was the most influential..." (105) The precise role played by Robert Bowes in the alleged coercion of the Earl of Westmorland is difficult to establish, not least because the Earl's own role in the affair is unknown. Eure's letter to Aske makes it clear that it was beyond the power of his master to resist the commons (106). Moreover, the testimony of Marmaduke Nevill, the brother of Lord Latimer and also an officer of the Earl's, reveals that he too was coerced and that, "...neither my lord my brother nor any other could help me.." (107). Thus it is possible, as has been suggested, that the Earl lost control of his household during the rising (108). Certainly afterwards Westmorland hinted that his steward and servants had deceived him. (109)

104 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 919.

105 *Ibid*, Vol. 12, part 1, nos. 786, 789.

106 *Ibid*, Vol. 11, no.945.

107 *Ibid*, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 29.

108 Hoyle, "Thomas Master's Narrative", p. 62.

109 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, nos. 151, 919.

Perhaps in view of the sheer weight of commons' numbers, in all some 8-10,000 men allegedly mustered under the Banner of St. Cuthbert, Westmorland and, for that matter, Bowes, had little option but to acquiesce to their demands (110) Nevertheless, on balance the available evidence does seem to point towards an initial willingness on Bowes' part to adopt the rebel cause. His decision to surrender Barnard Castle without any show of resistance indicates that, at the very least, his frame of mind was such that little was needed to persuade him towards rebellion. On the other hand, of course, this failure to prepare and defend the castle, at a time of such widespread unrest, suggests the possibility that Bowes was already committed to rebellion. This interpretation is perhaps confirmed by his almost immediate and enthusiastic assumption of the role of rebel leader - a role he was to sustain and develop throughout the duration of the Pilgrimage.

Nevertheless, the issue is far less clear-cut than it seems for, as the rebellion progressed, Bowes's attitude towards the Pilgrimage changed. As such his early stance, that of the committed rebel captain who arrayed his company most expertly and "scrimmaged" with the Duke of Norfolk's scouts before the first appointment at Doncaster, was transformed into that of a cautious negotiator who counselled his comrades to do all in their power to "...further the peace..."

(111)

110 Bateson, "The Pilgrimage of Grace", p. 336. LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 369.

111 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, nos. 29, 901, 1022.

Thomas Master's narrative again possibly sheds some new light on the subject. He refers to a letter (now apparently lost) written by Norfolk to the King immediately prior to the first meeting between the Duke and the rebels at Doncaster. The Duke, noting that the men of Yorkshire, "are more considerable than them of Lincolnshire" - having seen much in the way of warfare - speaks of the need either to persuade them, "to lay downe arms, or to sow seditions amongst them". (112) It is possible that Robert Bowes was one of the means by which Norfolk sowed his "seditions". Bowes had played a leading role in the first meeting at Doncaster, since it was to his memory that the Pilgrims' initial five demands were committed. (113) Moreover, shortly afterwards he and Sir Ralph Ellerker (whose own role in the Pilgrimage also needs further exploration) accompanied Norfolk to Windsor, in order to place these demands before the King. (114) Sometime during this period it is apparent that Bowes was persuaded of the necessity for a peaceful conclusion to the rebellion. Perhaps, by a carefully orchestrated combination of extreme royal displeasure, tempered by Norfolk's assured good offices (since by his mediation, the Duke "much assuaged" Henry's initial outburst of fury against Ellerker and Bowes) the rebel negotiators were won over to the royal point of view. (115) Certainly, upon his return to the north, Bowes took great pains to ensure a

112 Hoyle, "Thomas Master's Narrative", p. 68.

113 LP, Vol. 12 part 1, no. 1022.

114 Ibid, Vol. 11, no. 921.

115 For the account, by Ellerker and Bowes, of their first interview with the King see P.R.O SP1/111/fols. 13-22 (LP, Vol. 11, no. 1009)

peaceful settlement by stressing the promised good faith of the government and declaring especially "the goodness of my Lord Privy Seal (Cromwell) to the commons". (116) In the event, Bowes's approach won through. That he had played his role well is indicated by the degree of royal favour shown to him thereafter. That he had betrayed the Pilgrims' trust is shown by the dramatic change in the attitude of the commons. During Bigod's Rising, which erupted only weeks after the initial rebellion had subsided, the commons of the Bishopric were reported to be "driving Mr Bowys' goods because they thought he would be against them". (117)

In view of his later behaviour, the role of Robert Bowes appears increasingly more complex, perhaps underlining the dilemma for historians of the Pilgrimage of Grace, since few of the participants kept to a straightforward, uncompromising line. Perhaps throughout the rising Bowes, as with many others, deliberately temporized, planning each move as of necessity, rather than following any premeditated plan of action. In such a situation pragmatism, rather than idealism perhaps became the order of the day, with Bowes forced to adapt his aspirations to suit the changing situation. The available evidence seems to suggest that, after Doncaster, Bowes found much favour with

116 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 392.

117 Ibid, nos. 201, 370.

Norfolk. The two men were undoubtedly well-acquainted for they had served together during the Scottish campaign of 1523 (118) Moreover, the Duke had also been the father-in-law and mentor of Bowes's former master, the Duke of Richmond. (119) As has been noted, Norfolk was quick to mediate, on Bowes' behalf, with the King and he thenceforth took every opportunity to press Bowes's suit to advantage. Shortly after the north settled down the Duke wrote to Henry, advising that Bowes was not only much esteemed but, "...is a wise hardy man and dare well enterprise a great matter...". He went on to suggest that the King should give Robert Bowes, "...such a living as would encourage him to do good service...", noting, "...he may be very useful...". (120) Perhaps there was also some truth in the rumour, strenuously denied by Norfolk, that the Duke was trying to build up a Howard power-base in the region (121). A man of Bowes's experience and influence would indeed have proved useful to a potential Lord of the North. Perhaps the hint of this, a new and powerful patron, was sufficient to persuade Bowes where his best interests lay in regard to the Pilgrimage.

118 Norfolk, as Earl of Surrey, was appointed Lieutenant-General in the North in the spring of 1523. Reid, King's Council, p. 75. For Bowes's involvement in the campaign see LP, Vol. 1, part 1, nos. 2186, 3410.

119 Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 141.

120 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 919.

121 Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, Vol. 2, pp. 234, 251-252. James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 123-124. For a refutation of the argument suggesting Norfolk's northern ambitions see M.L. Bush, "The Problem of the Far North", N.H., Vol. 6, (1971), p. 47.

It is probable that, at this time, Robert Bowes was motivated primarily by notions of political advancement and, indeed, the natural instincts of survival. Yet there is, nevertheless, an extent to which deeper, more ideological factors may have been at work. For the "code of honour", the body of chivalric virtues and rules of conduct which provided the traditional moral framework for those of noble birth, may also have played its part in determining his attitudes in respect of the rebellion and its outcome. As Mervyn James has shown, this code was originally based upon the ideals of militaristic, medieval society. It incorporated the values of martial prowess along with notions of fidelity towards the international chivalric brotherhood and attachments to lineage, blood and kinship ties. It could transcend, in extreme circumstances, the principle of loyalty to the reigning monarch and could ultimately sanction the notion of resistance to that ruler if his kingship failed. (122) As James has pointed out, however, this code of honour underwent a profound transformation during the sixteenth century as a combination of Tudor centralizing policy and the decline of the great magnate affinities modified the code into one based upon service (civil as well as military) to the State and ultimate obedience to the sovereign. (123). It is, in fact, interesting that in his letter to Bowes and Ellerker,

122 M. James, "English Politics and the Concept of Honour", pp. 312, 319, 325, 343.

123 Ibid, passim.

written after their return to the north with his instructions, Henry VIII appealed to both traditional and mid-Tudor perceptions of the honour code. On the one hand, Henry clearly drew attention to the modern concept of obedience to the Crown, suggesting that any attempt to identify the revolt with the notion of a religious Pilgrimage, was fundamentally flawed, since its whole foundation was contrary to the law of God, for "...God commanded them to obey their prince whatever he be, yea though he should not direct them justly and their oath of allegiance passeth all other oaths...". Later in the letter, however, the King called upon the traditional ideals of honour to hammer home to the dissident nobility and gentry the extent of their contumacy, so that, ..."We think it no little shame to all you that have been accounted noble to suffer such a villain as Aske...as if he were your ruler...We and all our nobles here consider your honor greatly touched by the same..." (124). The use of words such as "shame", along with references to the staining of honour were an integral part of the knightly vocabulary. (125) The stressing, moreover, of the values of honour by the King suggests that the moral issues surrounding the concept of rebellion were, as James has asserted, a very real issue to those concerned. The fact, too, that Henry was drawing on strands of both the old and revised aspects of the code perhaps underlines the dilemma of both the Crown and its subjects in coming to terms with the last gasps of medieval chivalric society and the stirrings of the new centralized State.

124 P.R.O. E36/121/ fols. 20-25. (LP, Vol. 11, no. 1175).

125 James, op.cit., p. 324.

Such contradictions were perhaps of great concern to Robert Bowes. He was, after all, of an ancient landed family which was imbued with all the traditions of chivalry and lineage associated with the "concept of honour". His own taste for chivalric pursuits was, indeed, illustrated by his abiding appetite for border warfare. It is thus conceivable that Bowes, who was the senior male member of his family, associated his own decreasing political fortunes with the decline of his house. (126) Traditionally, under such circumstances, the man of honour had little option but to try and preserve his lineage - with recourse to rebellion if all else failed. At the same time, however, Robert Bowes was a royal servant who, by training and profession had taken upon himself many of the attitudes and aspirations of the rising "nobility of the robe". For such men honour increasingly centred around service to the State and ultimate loyalty to the Crown. Much of the intellectual theory behind this redefined ethos of honour had found expression in the humanistic writings of the age and had, indeed, received popular transmission through the writing of Sir Thomas Elyot, whose Boke named the Govenour was published in 1531. (127) Given, therefore, Bowes's position, as a senior northern royal official, it was probably the case that this new and increasingly influential ethos of service to Crown and State had also made some impact upon his perceptions of honour and morality.

126 Ibid, p. 326.

127 Ibid, pp. 338-339, 381. J. D. Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, (Oxford 1952), p. 582.

Inevitably, as Bowes was drawn into rebellion, he would have had great difficulty in reconciling two such widely differing interpretations of what constituted honourable conduct. Such a conflict of loyalties would certainly have accounted for his somewhat inconsistent behaviour as the Pilgrimage gathered momentum, swinging away from its original posture of protest towards one of overt treason, with the possibility of taking up arms against the King looming ominously nearer. It is, moreover, notable that Bowes's change of heart, from militant to moderate occurred after his audience, as the Pilgrims' negotiator, with Henry. Perhaps it was then, when confronted with the magnificence and majesty of his sovereign, that Bowes finally came to terms with the new honour code of service to the State and obedience to the Crown. Thereafter, for Robert Bowes the conflict would have been resolved and he would have had little difficulty, as indeed seemed to be the case, in carrying out his duties as a loyal and devoted servant of the Tudor regime.

The Pilgrimage of Grace has been described as the last great protest movement of the century, wherein the upper and lower orders of society were united in a common cause. Indeed, as the argument continues, popular revolts had little chance of success when devoid of gentry leadership. (128) It has been suggested that, by careful exploitation, therefore, of those rifts between gentry and commons that had already

128 Williams, The Tudor Regime, pp. 323, 331.

arisen, as the result of the peace negotiations which concluded the Pilgrimage, the Crown was able to factionalize and dissipate the agencies of northern discontent, thereby strengthening its own control in the region. (129) Rachel Reid has suggested that this was achieved by using those reconciled gentlemen Pilgrims, such as Bowes, who had been re-engaged in the royal service, as the principal instruments "of the royal vengeance", during the operations to eliminate the remnants of the rebellion, in the early months of 1537. (130) Certainly after his own reconciliation Robert Bowes was quickly thrust into the forefront of the government's campaign of suppression. Indeed, less than a week after his appointment to the Council in the North, on 14 January 1537, he was called upon to return to the Bishopric in order to contain some of the "stirs" which had broken out again in the north and were to culminate in Bigod's unsuccessful attempt to resurrect the Pilgrimage. (131) Indeed, Bigod allegedly claimed that it was after hearing of the unrest in the Bishopric and elsewhere that he decided upon his fateful course of action. Moreover, the rebel leader spoke of the activities of the Durham commons who, he had heard, had already taken to "spoiling" the possessions of Robert Bowes in retribution for his perceived betrayal. (132) Thus, it can be argued that the alienation of Bowes from the rebel commons was already underway.

129 Brooks, Council in the North, p. 16.

130 Reid, King's Council, pp. 142-144.

131 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, nos. 171, 200, 259.

132 Ibid, Vol. 12, part 1, nos. 201, 370.

Such a process of alienation can easily be seen to have been intensified, during the following weeks, for Bowes and his fellow members of the region's governing elite were detailed to attend to the apprehension and punishment of those members of the commons deemed to have persisted in rebellion. At Carlisle, where on the 17 February some six thousand men, had risen in response to Bigod's activities, seventy four rebels were chosen as principal offenders, "...by the advice of the Council and gentlemen of these parts and judged to suffer death by martial law...". To oversee these proceedings, under the direction of the Duke of Norfolk, Robert Bowes was chosen as the King's prosecuting attorney, with his Council colleague, Sir Ralph Ellerker being appointed to act as marshal. (133) On the 9 March Bowes was similarly employed in his home territory, the Bishopric of Durham, wherein "diverse offenders" (probably some twenty in all) were indicted.. Of these, some sixteen were later hanged in chains near their homes. (134) Given the overall numbers of rebels involved in the Pilgrimage and its aftermath (Aske estimated that some thirty four or five thousand men were assembled at Doncaster at the height of the Pilgrimage proper) the proportion of those condemned by Bowes, on this circuit, seems slight. (135) Yet it has been suggested that the treatment of the Carlisle rebels was regarded as being particularly

133 Ibid, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 498. Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, Vol. 2, pp. 118-119.

134 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 615. Dodds, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 125-126, 134.

135 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no.6.

brutal and unjust. Indeed, Norfolk later boasted of the fear he had engendered in the north.(136) Moreover, Bowes's role in the condemnation of members of the Durham commons, the leadership of whom he had enthusiastically undertaken at the outset of the Pilgrimage of Grace, must inevitably have discredited him in the eyes of the Bishopric's lower orders. It is possible, therefore, that the government was, indeed, able to create an irreparable breach between the northern commons and Robert Bowes, the gentleman credited, a few months before, with wielding the most influence over the unruly Pilgrim host. (137) If this was the strategy of the Crown then it it was probably successful for there is little doubt that the ability of Bowes and his colleagues, thereafter, to "raise the mob" successfully against their sovereign would have been as effectively inhibited as would have been the commons' own inclination to engage gentry support in any future protest.

This theory, of the Crown's determination to "divide and rule" in the north, has been extended to account for the government's treatment of the upper class rebel leaders. Certainly, once the threat of further commons' support had been crushed, the government began the process of eliminating the rebel leaders and Bowes, as a member of the Council in the North was involved in every aspect of the operation to bring his former rebel comrades to justice.(138) In April 1537 , for example, he

136 Dodds, op.cit., Vol.2, pp. 120-121, 134.

137 LP Vol. 12, part 1, no. 786.

138 Reid, King's Council, pp. 143-144. Brooks, Council in the North, p. 16. Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, p. 37.

was detailed along with Sir Thomas Tempest, also of the Council, to escort a batch of gentry prisoners to London for interrogation, among them Sir John Bulmer who was heavily implicated in Bigod's rising. (139) Both Councillors were, however, back in the north in early May where they had been appointed to serve on the special commission convened at York to indict those rebels (including Darcy, Aske and Constable) who had taken part in the Yorkshire phase of the Pilgrimage. (140) Under such circumstances it is, perhaps, difficult to see, in the government's actions, motives other than the desire to extract the ultimate show of loyalty from the reconciled rebels by forcing them to condemn their fellow conspirators. Moreover, it has been argued that such moves must inevitably have compromised Robert Bowes and his colleagues in the eyes of northern society to the extent that they had little option, thereafter, but to bolster the authority of the Crown, to which they were thenceforth irrevocably committed. (141)

The idea of a positive Crown policy, using the principle of "divide and rule", to regain and enhance its authority in the wake of the Pilgrimage is attractive. Indeed, there is certainly an extent to which the career of Robert Bowes can be used to illustrate the thesis. Yet in practical terms the Crown's strategy in the restructuring of northern government at this time was much constrained by the paucity

139 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 1025. Dodds, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 133, 135.

140 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 1207. Reid, King's Council, pp. 143-144.

141 Brooks, Council in the North, p. 16.

of its reserves of suitably qualified administrative personnel. A purge of gentlemen rebels from the region's government was completely impractical since so many royal officials had joined the rebellion. It has, in fact, been suggested that the extent of the alienation of the northern elite, in the face of the intrusions of central government, was sufficient to create an atmosphere almost akin to the "court and country" divisions of the seventeenth century. (142) The scope of this argument obviously extends far beyond the confines of this particular discussion. Nevertheless, the fact that so many of the Councillors in the North, the region's leading leading royal servants, participated in the rebellion perhaps serves to reinforce such a theory by illustrating the intensity of upper class resentment at this time. (143) The execution or proscription thereafter of so many able and experienced administrators was thus obviously untenable and indeed, as has been pointed out, reprisals against the upper class participants were restricted to those most deeply implicated in the Pilgrimage. (144) Given, therefore, the Crown's immediate need to impose some semblance of order in the aftermath of the rebellion, it is perhaps less than surprising that many erstwhile rebels regained their places in the region's government. Certainly Bowes, himself, benefitted almost immediately from the government's administrative predicament and, along with many of his fellow councillors, was

142 Elton, "Politics and the Pilgrimage of Grace", p. 209.

143 Reid, King's Council, pp. 138-140.

144 Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 323.

quickly sworn of the newly re-constituted Council in the North. (145) Undoubtedly his experience and intimate knowledge of northern affairs would have counted for much at such a troublesome time and indeed it was in this context that Norfolk remarked upon Bowes's reputation in the north for "law and war". Moreover, the government was undoubtedly aware that a penitent ex-rebel would probably be only too willing to prove his loyalty to the regime if given sufficient encouragement. Norfolk, again, made this point in a letter to Cromwell, noting how, "...Though I dare not speak assuredly of a man so lately reconciled, yet if he (Bowes) may be assured he may be very useful..." (146)

In view of this, it was, perhaps, the case that, for the upper orders at least, the Pilgrimage of Grace proved to be the watershed between the old political order and the new. Indeed, as a result, the ground rules dictating the working relationship between the emerging Henrician state and the northern ruling elite were laid down. For the rebellion of men of the calibre of Robert Bowes served to convince the Crown that its attempts to impose a more centralized form of government could only be accomplished with the acquiescence of the traditional regional ruling elite. This elite had been long aware that the old order, based as it was upon ties of blood, kinship and magnate affinity, was outdated. The disparate nature of family loyalties during the rebellion bore testimony to this. Moreover, in

145 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 86.

146 Ibid, Vol. 12, part 2, no. 100.

common with Robert Bowes, many of its members had recognized the necessity of acquiring the appropriate professional skills and training in order to secure their places within the new political society. What they were not prepared to do was stand by and watch as their positions were eroded by the regime they had striven to accommodate. Nevertheless, the anxiety of the northern administrative elite to maintain and expand its working alliance with the Crown is illustrated by the willingness of those, such as Bowes, to negotiate a peaceful conclusion to the rebellion, thereby incurring the animosity of the more militant sections of the Pilgrim host and, perhaps, at the same time inspiring of their own accord, the class-based tensions that were to become, increasingly, a feature of Tudor society. In the long run both the Crown and its northern servants benefitted from the repercussions of the rebellion. For the disturbances gave the the Crown the excuse to extend and reinforce its authority in the region, initially through the agency of the greatly strengthened and revitalized Council in the North. As the career of Robert Bowes has illustrated, too, the events of 1536 enabled many of the northern gentry to emerge not only unscathed but in a position of some strength from the political upheavals which had characterised the preceding years. For the extension of royal authority in the region provided them with even greater opportunities for advancement in the service of the Tudor regime.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REWARDS OF LOYALTY: SIR ROBERT BOWES AND THE LATER HENRICIAN REGIME.

Historians have long recognized that a major feature of the Tudor regime was the increased opportunity afforded to the politically ambitious in the sphere of royal service, although views vary as to the extent and intensity of this phenomenon. Some twenty five years ago, for example, Laurence Stone suggested that the expansion of the court and central administration was of such enormity as to "suck" the entire political nation into the vortex of a vast patronage system.⁽¹⁾ Penry Williams, on the other hand, has put forward the view of a less spectacularly bureaucratic regime but one which, nevertheless, in its determination to prevent the resurgence of the magnate-dominated politics of the Lancastrian and Yorkist eras, "...worked to establish a countervailing force at the centre and in the localities..."⁽²⁾ More recently, however, Diarmid MacCulloch has suggested the existence of a far more conciliatory operation whereby the Tudor Monarchy, in an

1 L. Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, (Oxford 1965), p. 385.
2 Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 440.

attempt to impose its policy by a process of "collective bargaining", sought the co-operation of "...the most influential people in the localities..." (3) Nevertheless, whichever interpretation is adopted, it is difficult to escape the conclusion drawn by Peter Clark, that of a society wherein, particularly after the administrative and religious upheavals of the 1530s, the potential for and rewards of royal service expanded significantly. (4)

Within the north, the scope for royal service was undoubtedly broadened by the Crown's attempts to reinforce and enhance its authority in the wake of the Pilgrimage of Grace. The resurrection and re-vitalization of the Council in the North in 1537 began, almost immediately, the process of bringing the region under central control as the Council's powers were extended to make it the supreme executive and judicial authority within the five northernmost counties.(5) Within its area of jurisdiction, the Council fulfilled the same functions as the Privy Council and the Star Chamber; becoming, as such, the chief expression of royal authority in the north. (6). From the outset it was through the appointment to the Council of local "...personages of honour, worship and learning..." that Henry sought to enlist the co-operation of the northern ruling elite.(7)As has been

3 MacCulloch, Suffolk and the Tudors, pp. 223-224.

4 Clark, English Provincial Society, p. 55.

5 Reid, King's Council, p. 147.

6 J. Guy, Tudor England, (Oxford 1990), p. 175.

7 Reid, op.cit., p. 150.

suggested, this inevitably involved the reinstatement of the majority of former Council members, despite the participation of several in the late rebellion. These men, some of whom were connected with the north's leading gentry families were, in many cases, professional and experienced administrators or soldiers. As such, their localised knowledge and understanding of the vagaries of northern government or of the particular problems associated with the defence of the Anglo-Scottish frontier was of vital importance to the regime. In the aftermath of the Pilgrimage, Robert Bowes was one of the first of the former members to be reappointed to the Council in the North, for indeed, his expertise covered the spheres of both "war and law", a combination of qualities irresistible to a government anxious to impose law and order in a highly troubled region. Through the agency of this service to the Henrician regime, his early career in regional government laid the foundations for his later rise to the highest echelons of the central administration.

The expansion of the Henrician state, with the attendant increase in the opportunity for royal service, facilitated the rise of the first Tudor careerist administrators whose ultimate loyalty lay, not with the affinity of some magnate house, but with the Crown as the source of the patronage by which they were advancing. Their loyal service to the Crown often enabled such men to survive the factional vagaries of sixteenth century political life, as the career of Sir Ralph Sadler, a protege of Thomas Cromwell, illustrated. (8). Nevertheless, in terms

8 A.J. Slavin, Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, (Cambridge 1966), pp. 132-133.

of the scramble along what has been described as "...the winding stair of preferment...", ambitious Tudor careerists were forced to seek the intercession of those closest to the royal favour. (9) In such a manner it seems likely that, in the years following the Pilgrimage of Grace, Robert Bowes looked to and perhaps benefitted from the favour of Cromwell before his fall in 1540. Bowes had, apparently, been won round to Cromwell's point of view during the late rebellion and had defended the motives of the Lord Privy Seal during the conference held by the rebels at York. At that time, as has been suggested, Bowes seemed to be looking towards the good offices of the Duke of Norfolk, perhaps with an eye towards some preferment in a potential northern Howard power-base. (10) After the events of 1536, however, Norfolk's influence within the ruling elite, which had been in decline since the fall of Anne Boleyn, dwindled still further. (11). If thereafter Bowes sought the good offices of a highly placed patron it is possible that it was to Cromwell he appealed. Indeed, in November 1538 he wrote, from York, to request Cromwell's influence in furthering the career of his nephew, George Bowes, the head of the Streatlam house, who was "...anxious to devote his youth to the King's service...". Offering an ambling gelding as an inducement, Bowes went on to suggest that, if the young man's manners "...be too northern and rude...", Cromwell himself should take George, for a time, into his own service. (12)

9 Williams, Tudor Regime, pp. 89-90.

10 See above p. 114.

11 J.J. Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, (London 1968), p. 377.

12 LP, Vol. 13, part 2, no. 762.

There is little evidence to indicate the extent to which the family, at this time, shared Cromwell's reformist religious views although its adoption of the reformist cause served, in later years, to make the name of Bowes synonymous with that of Protestantism. The fact, however, that Robert Bowes was anxious to place the young head of his House under such tutelage suggests that he entertained some degree of sympathy for Cromwell's theological attitudes. Under such circumstances it is indeed possible that the seeds of the family's Protestantism were, in part, nurtured through this connection.

Perhaps, too, the sympathetic support of Robert Bowes was sought by Cromwell in the Spring of 1539 when Bowes was returned as a Knight of the Shire for Yorkshire to the Parliament summoned at that time. Indeed it was during the course of this Parliament that Bowes gained his knighthood. (13) By that time Cromwell's religious policies were coming under increasing attack from his conservative opponents, led by the Duke of Norfolk, who did, in fact, achieve a major victory with the passage of the Act of Six Articles. Admittedly, opinion remains divided over the extent to which Cromwell sought to engineer the election of a tractable Commons and, indeed, over the precise nature of the opposition ranged against him at this time. (14) Moreover, little evidence remains of the background to Bowes's election. Yet, in

13 Bindoff, House of Commons, Vol. 1, p. 472. Lehberg, Later Parliaments, p. 47. W.A. Shaw, The Knights of England, (London 1906), Vol.2, p. 51.

14 D. Starkey, "Privvy Secrets: Henry VIII and the Lords of the Council", History Today, Vol. 37, (August 1987), p. 30. G. Redworth, "A study in the Formulation of Policy: The Genesis and Evolution of the Act of Six Articles", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 37, (1986), pp. 42-67.

view of the nature of his request to Cromwell, made only months before, it is conceivable that the return of Bowes may have been bound up in the attempts of the King's chief minister to rally support to the reformist cause.

Nevertheless, despite any incidental patronage that Bowes may have attracted during these years there is little doubt that it was the decision of Henry VIII to engage in war with the Scots which paved the way for Sir Robert's future political achievements. Indeed, Bowes's involvement in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish defence and diplomacy during the 1540s was the means by which his reputation as an expert on border affairs was forged and his career prospects considerably advanced. The destruction, by the Crown, of the Dacre and Percy power bases created a void within the sphere of Border government and defence, which had traditionally been occupied by the northern magnates in their capacity as Wardens of the Marches. The ensuing confusion, exacerbated by the outbreak of the Anglo-Scottish war, and the inability of the Crown to successfully administer the region through the agency of more politically amenable noblemen gave local gentlemen such as Sir Thomas Wharton, Sir William Eure and Bowes himself, the opportunity to achieve prominence through the agency of royal service. Certainly by 1545 all three men had been appointed to the wardenship of the Marches, with Bowes holding office in the Middle Marches. Once again, as in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace, Robert Bowes was able to exploit the Crown's need, in the face of its centralizing policy, for loyal, experienced and reliable administrators.

Bowes had, in fact, begun to acquire some distinction in the field of border defence and administration from the early years of his membership of the Duke of Richmond's Council. As the result of the machinations of central authority in the administration of the north during the early 1530s his influence within this sphere declined noticeably in the years leading up to the Pilgrimage of Grace. In the disturbed aftermath of the rebellion, however, Bowes's knowledge of border affairs was quickly acknowledged by a government anxious to restore order and authority and in August 1537 he was called to London to advise the King and his Council of the particular problems associated with the administration of North Tynedale and Redesdale, the most notorious blackspots of the English frontier. (15) During the latter part of the 1530s his duties as a Councillor in the North further revived his association with border affairs, for the jurisdiction of the re-constituted Council extended throughout the five northernmost counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham and Yorkshire. The Council held quarterly sessions in four regional centres, so that its visits to Durham and Newcastle in the far north were initially on the same regular basis as those to the less turbulent venues of Hull and York, the latter of which remained the Council's headquarters. (16) That this schedule was generally

15 LP, Vol. 12, part 2, nos. 589, 650, 712.

16 Reid, King's Council, p. 154; Brooks, Council in the North, p. 17.

adhered to is illustrated by a letter, sent by the Council to the King in August 1538, which noted that, whilst it would be unable to fulfill its aims regarding the administration of justice in the far north that winter because of outbreaks of plague at Durham and Newcastle, it would, nevertheless, venture as near those parts as possible. In the event, by December the Council was able to hold a month-long session at Darlington. The Council's report from that town, incidentally, noted the sending of Robert Bowes, along with Sir Ralph Ellerker and Robert Chaloner to Carlisle, to officiate at a general session of oyer and terminer. (17). During this period it is evident that Robert Bowes continued to build upon his knowledge and experience of the specific problems associated with the administration of the frontier. The strategic importance of this region in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish relations meant, therefore, that when confrontation occurred, Bowes was well placed to capitalize upon his expertise and advance his prospects accordingly.

The Scottish policy of Henry VIII in the 1540s has remained a subject of considerable debate although, in terms of modern research, historians are generally agreed that the King's attempts to contain Scotland were enmeshed in the wider issues surrounding Henry's "sovereign concern", a glorious enterprise against France. (18)

17 LP, Vol. 13, part 2, nos. 156, 1010, 1101, 1129.

18 Guy, Tudor England, p. 190; Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, p. 424; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 27; Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy", p. 21.

Certainly, English fears regarding the re-activation of the "auld alliance", between Scotland and France, had already been fuelled by the marriage of the Scottish king, James V, to a French princess in 1537 and by the pro-French tenor of his foreign policy thereafter. The vulnerability of the northern frontier had been further highlighted, in 1539, when Scotland gave its support to a proposed Papal crusade, to be spearheaded by France and Spain, against England. Fortunately, a realignment of European alliances had quickly ensued, thereby forestalling the invasion threat. Indeed, by the summer of 1542, England had begun its own negotiations with Spain to launch a joint invasion of France in 1544, a plan which obviously reinforced still further Henry's need to counteract the threat of the "auld alliance".

(19)

Yet whilst diplomatic factors loomed large in the run-down to the Scottish war there was, nevertheless, an extent to which its outbreak was precipitated by the continued existence of unrest and disorder in the north of England. As Professor Dickens has illustrated, a rising on the scale of the Pilgrimage of Grace and one, moreover, which had much potential for success was hardly likely to subside quickly or quietly. It is clear, from the evidence, that the region continued to foment disorder in the years immediately following the Pilgrimage. Whilst hints of sedition and dissent were rigorously

19 Guy, Tudor England, p. 184; Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 361-362, 434; Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 25-26.

searched out and crushed, there is little doubt that the effective implementation of royal control in the region continued to pose problems for the regime for some considerable time. (20) Moreover, and of even greater concern to the government, was the evidence of heightened Scottish intervention in the affairs of the north, as the Scots sought to gain advantage from the disarray of their traditional enemy. This threat had begun to manifest itself in the immediate aftermath of the Pilgrimage, for the staunchly papist Scots had given asylum to various rebels and clerics fleeing from Tudor retribution and the consequences of the English Reformation. (21) Further, in the spring of 1537, as the Scottish king was returning home with his French bride, there were rumours that, when his ship provisioned at Scarborough, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, local fishermen sought him out and begged him to launch an invasion in order to return the nation to the old religion. (22) So great was the perceived invasion threat at this time that the garrisons of Berwick and Carlisle were ordered to be refurbished. Attempts were also made to control the endemic lawlessness of the Marches, wherein the frequent cross-frontier raiding by members of both the English and Scottish border surname groups, served, as ever, to exacerbate tension between the two

20 A.G. Dickens, "Sedition and Conspiracy in Yorkshire during the later years of Henry VIII", in his Reformation Studies, pp. 1-20.

21 HP, Vol. 1, intro. p. xviii.

22 Slavin, Politics and Profit, pp. 79-80; Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, Vol. 2, p. 253.

countries. (23) Whilst the immediate invasion threat subsided the menace remained, to arise again in 1541 with the discovery of a further northern plot centred around the West Riding of Yorkshire. This conspiracy which, it has been suggested, drew its inspiration from "...the continuance of that complex of grievances observable in 1536-7...", hoped also to draw support and assistance from the Scottish king. (24) From the standpoint of internal security, as well as international diplomacy, the Henrician government was faced, therefore, with the pressing need to contain the threat from across the border.

The nature of this "containment" policy has also been widely debated, with historians suggesting a variety of possible interpretations. These range across the spectrum; from those which assert Henry VIII's determination to impose by force the ancient English claim to suzerainty over Scotland to that which sees, in English policy, merely a concern to preserve Anglo-Scottish peace in order to pursue more lucrative commitments abroad. (25). All of these, however, are based upon the fundamental perception (perhaps partially fostered by the somewhat biased editing of the Hamilton Papers, the main source

23 LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 1092; Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, pp. 245, 260-264. For the activities of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers see G. MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, (London 1971), *passim*.

24 Dickens, "Sedition and Conspiracy", pp. 1, 13.

25 Slavin, Politics and Profit, p. 95; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 59; M.L. Bush, The Government Policy of Protector Somerset, (London 1975) p. 7; Head, "Henry VIII'S Scottish Policy", p. 2.

for the period) of the Scots as innocent victims of the Tudor lust for power. Yet, closer scrutiny of the period leading up to the English defeat of the Scottish host at the battle of Solway Moss, in November 1542, reveals that the Scots played an equal role in the cross-border confrontational politics which characterised the period. Moreover, it seems likely that, for much of that time, there was no deliberate attempt, on the part of England, to promote an all-out war. An analysis of the career of Sir Robert Bowes helps to bear testimony to this for his entrance into the sphere of mainstream Border defence and diplomacy resulted directly from the responses of Henry to the heightening of Anglo-Scottish tension which occurred in the autumn of 1541, following the failure of James V to respond to his uncle's peace initiative at York. (26). Moreover, such an analysis may also help to restore Bowes's own reputation, for he too, in the prosecution of his duties, has been branded as a warmongering aggressor. (27)

Admittedly, shortly before Henry left York on the 29 September 1541, after waiting in vain for the promised arrival of his Scottish nephew in response to his overtures for peace and lasting amity, he issued instructions ordering the Wardens of the Marches to retaliate harshly in the event of further border incursions, ordering them to inflict

26 For the background to Henry's York peace initiative see Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 427-428.

27 HP, Vol. 1, intro. p. xxiii; Slavin, Politics and Profit, p. 99; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 59; Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy", p. 17.

upon the Scots, "... in spoyles burnyngs and killings, thre(e) hurtes for one...". (28). Yet whilst anger at the Scottish snub may have played some part in motivating Henry's policy at this time, his decision was undoubtedly influenced also by the news he received, at York, of several cross-border raids by the Scotsmen of Liddesdale, which had resulted in the burning and spoilation of Bewcastle, in the English West Marches and the murder of seven men of the Fenwick surname group in the Middle Marches. (29) At the same time, in response to what Henry undoubtedly perceived as the treachery of the Scots in the face of their pretended, "...fervent love and amity towardes us...", a Commission was issued within the East and Middle Marches to enforce the law for the expulsion of aliens, a device intended to discourage Scottish encroachments within the English border regions. (30) It was in this capacity, as one of the commissioners, that Bowes's involvement in Anglo-Scottish politics thus began in earnest. Additionally Sir Robert, along with Sir Ralph Ellerker, was further instructed to survey the wastelands along the frontier of the East and Middle Marches, in order to assess the repairs and requirements necessary for its defence and re-fortification. (31)

28 HP, Vol. 1, no. 87.

29 Ibid, no. 86.

30 Ibid, no. 87.

31 BL Addenda MS. 32646, f. 229, (LP, Vol. 16 no. 1206). Bowes and Ellerker's survey of the borders is calendared in LP, Vol. 16, no. 1399 and printed in Hodgson, Northumberland, Part 3, Vol. 2, pp. 171-248.

The coming to the Borders of Bowes and Ellerker, well furnished as they were with attendants, to the number of one hundred each, was undoubtedly designed to harrass and intimidate the Scots.(32) Not surprisingly this considerable contingent, as it moved towards the frontier at the beginning of October, destroying in its wake all Scottish corn sown on the English side of the border, did indeed create widespread panic amongst the Scottish borderers who, fearing an invasion, fled homewards with their goods and cattle.(33). Moreover, the mission provoked an outraged protest from the Scottish king to Henry on 22 October, wherein he noted how "...laitlie eftir the cumyn to youre bordouris of certane gentilmen fra youre consale at York youre subjectis in grete number hes cummyne withinoure realm, rasit fire and maid slauchter upoun our liegis of our Myddill Marchis..." (34) This response, however, had been anticipated by Bowes and Ellerker who had written to their royal master the previous week expressing their concern that the Scots had taken the expedition somewhat out of context by likening it to an invading army. Yet, as they assured Henry, they had done, "...all that we coude devise possible to make theyme think oure commynge thider to bee for nothings contrarius to peaxe or trewis...". As they also noted, however, tension remained high between the lawless surname groups of both the English and Scottish Middle Marches, with raid following counter-raid

32 BL, Addenda MS. 32646, f. 229. (LP, Vol. 16, no. 1206).

33 Ibid, ff. 233-234. (LP, Vol. 16, no. 1263).

34 HP, Vol. 1, no. 94.

and with events culminating in a large-scale attack by the Scots borderers who declared their intention thereby "...to provoke warre bitwene this youre gracis realme of England and the realme of Scotland..." (35). In order to forestall this possibility the English Commissioners, Bowes and Ellerker, along with Sir William Eure and Sir Cuthbert Radcliffe, deputy wardens of the East and Middle Marches, respectively, sought to keep the trouble within a localised context. Pressure was thus brought to bear upon the Keeper of Tynedale, the borderer John Heron of Chipchase, to induce the Tynedale and Redesdale men to take reprisals against the most notable Scottish surname groups of Liddesdale for the recent murder of the Fenwicks. By such means it was hoped to teach the more "...notable Scottes theves and trewes breakers..." a lesson, thereby diminishing their enthusiasm for cross-border raiding. Within the volatile confines of border society, however, such a course of action was regarded as dangerous in the extreme, for it risked the initiation of a "deadly feud" between the rival groups. As S.J. Watts has pointed out, the "deadly feud" was the ultimate resort of the borderer for it involved the entire surname group in a particularly violent form of vendetta, the repercussions of which could survive for generations. In his own Survey of the Borders, produced in 1551 for the instruction of the Marquis of Dorset, Sir Robert Bowes himself noted the deleterious effect of the "deadly feud" mentality upon the administration of justice in Tynedale and Redesdale, wherein the kinsmen of a lawfully executed thief would do

35 HP, Vol. 1, no. 91.

all in their power to seek revenge upon those involved in the bringing to justice of their relative. Under such circumstances the Commissioners' plan was doomed to failure and, as Heron duly reported, whilst his charges were happy to make several forays into Teviotdale, where they indulged in the usual reiver pastimes of arson, murder and theft, they were, nevertheless, unwilling to risk entering into a "deadly feud" with the more fearsome men of Liddesdale. (36)

At this stage, however, there is no evidence to suggest that Henry felt constrained to contemplate outright war with Scotland. In a letter to Ellerker and Bowes, dated the 20 October, in which he commended the activities of his Commissioners, the King noted how "...our subjectes have metely well requited the Scots for thiese last displeasures doon unto them...". In view of this and, in the hope that "...the Scottes woll amend and redubbe this ungentle manner of dealing towardes us...", Henry suggested that "further attemptates" should be avoided, unless provoked by the Scots. (37). The Scottish king, too, in view of the ambivalent attitude of some of his nobles towards the prospect of an Anglo-Scottish confrontation, was anxious to make peace. (38) In early December it was, in fact, rumoured that James had personally visited his borders in order to "...punyshe and refourme

36 BL, Addenda MS. 32646, ff. 235, 237, 238. (LP, Vol. 16, nos. 1250, 1259, 1264); HP, Vol. 1, no. 92; S.J. Watts, From Border to Middle Shire Northumberland 1586-1625, (Leicester 1975), pp. 25-26. See below p.

37 BL, Addenda MS. 32646, f. 251. (LP, Vol. 16, no. 1274).

38 Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 26-27.

the Liddesdelles..." (39). In the short term, therefore, it seemed that the mission of Bowes and Ellerker had been successful for, apart from a few minor incidents, the region remained in relative order, with the Scots forced to re-appraise their tactics. (40) Perhaps more importantly for Sir Robert, the affair had brought him once more to the notice of the Crown and indeed in December 1541 the King and Council decided to send for him once more to advise them during the forthcoming negotiations with James's ambassadors. (41)

Ironically, given Bowes's undoubtedly high reputation for border expertise, it was a military defeat which served to thrust his name to the forefront of English politics in the early 1540s. For, indeed, the rout of the English raiding party at Haddon Rig, near Kelso in the Scottish Middle Marches on 24 August 1542, with which Sir Robert's name is still commonly associated, was a humiliating disaster. The encounter ended in disarray with the capture of several prisoners of considerable importance to the English military machine, including Bowes himself, along with a further four to five hundred men. The event can be seen, too, as a personal failure for Bowes who has generally been credited with instigating and leading the expedition. Moreover, as a result of the action, Bowes remained a prisoner in Scotland for several months, thereby missing one of the major English

39 HP, Vol. 1, no. 106.

40 Ibid, no. 105.

41 LP, Vol. 16, nos. 1463, 1465, 1471.

military successes of the 1540s, the destruction of the Scottish army at Solway Moss in November 1542, a blow, indeed, to one whose perceived metier lay in the sphere of border defence.

Some penchant for military adventure may well have lain at the root of Bowes's involvement in the expedition. Certainly, upon first sight, the circumstances surrounding the foray at Haddon Rig seem curious and lead to the conclusion that Bowes, described by one historian as the "obvious aggressor", in the affair, was primarily concerned with winning chivalric acclaim. (42) As Dr Bernard has pointed out, war and the gaining of battle honours remained a major concern of the Tudor nobility and gentry. (43) The emphasis of the honour code may have been in the process of changing, away from lineage and affinity and towards the state, yet its chivalric aspect survived to be focused upon "...the military apparatus of the monarchical state...". (44) The chivalric attitude of the King himself towards his wars has been considered by several historians, with Dr Bernard, again, stressing the extent to which Henry identified with the aspirations of his warrior predecessor, Henry V. (45) It is thus possible that in August 1542 Sir Robert Bowes looked forward to emulating the feats of his father and brother (who, unlike him, had both been knighted on the

42 Head, "Henry VIII's Scottish Policy", p. 17.

43 Bernard, Power of the early Tudor Nobility, p. 105.

44 James, "English politics and the Concept of Honour", p. 439. See also above pp. 115-118.

45 Bernard, op.cit., p. 106; Guy, Tudor England, p. 190; Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, p. 427.

field of battle) by some notable military exploit. Certainly, the testimony of Sir William Eure, at that time deputy Warden of the East March, suggests that the entire notion of the raid was conceived by Sir Robert. According to Eure, Bowes approached him and the earl of Angus (the Scottish brother-in-law and at that time, the pensioner of Henry VIII) to ask for aid in the execution of an expedition into Scotland. Somewhat cryptically, it seems, Bowes then persuaded his colleagues to enquire no further into the nature of his plan, "...for he hade it in his oun hede previe to hyme self.." but gave assurance that, should the need ever arise, he would return the favour. Bowes then wrote separate letters of instruction to the two men and they duly accomplished his request. (46) The recourse to secrecy of Bowes at this point appears to suggest that he intended to remain in complete control of the enterprise, thus gaining full merit in the event of its success. Yet as the communications of Eure, Angus and George Bowes (who, unlike his uncles, had avoided capture) revealed, the raid ended in disaster. For as the company of some 3,000 men returned homewards after burning several Teviotdale towns, it was intercepted by a smaller Scottish force led by the earl of Huntly. In the ensuing skirmish the English host which had been split into "forays" broke ranks and scattered in disarray with the result that Sir Robert, Sir Cuthbert Radcliffe the deputy Warden of the Middle March, Sir John Widdrington, the marshall of Berwick, John Heron the Keeper of Tynedale and several other leading English officials, along

46 LP, Vol. 17, no. 662; HP, Vol. 1 no. 127.

with diverse other gentlemen and some 400 or 500 men were captured by the Scots. Inevitably, perhaps, it was the men of Tyndedale and Redesdale who, in seeking to hold on to the cattle and goods they had taken during the raid, were the first to flee the field and were followed, thereafter, by a "...gryt nummer..." of Englishmen who "...fled with out merssy..." As the earl of Angus later remarked, "Trewly it was nocht tha [the Scots] that wan the feyld, it was we that losd with our mysordour." (47)

This allegedly provocative raid by Bowes and his company is generally regarded as the first battle of the Anglo-Scottish war of the 1540s, for it has been credited with breaking the formal peace that had existed between the two countries since 1513. (48) Nevertheless, such an interpretation belies the complexity of Anglo-Scottish relations at this juncture. For, by the summer of 1542, both countries were on a war footing with the peace negotiations of the previous winter having resolved little. Indeed, Bowes himself was despatched, by the King, to the East and Middle Marches, on 28 July, in order to levy some 600 men in preparation for the arrival of the Earl of Rutland, the newly appointed Lord Warden of the Marches, whose brief was to police the region with a "convenient force", which would remain on alert in the event of further Scottish "attemptates". As the King made clear, both to Bowes and Rutland, whilst they were not to precipitate any hostile

47 LP, Vol. 17, no. 663; HP, Vol. 1, nos. 127-128.

48 Slavin, Politics and Profit, p. 99.

activities of their own account, they were to retaliate with "...one shrewd turn for another..." in the event of a notable Scottish incursion. (49). It may well, indeed, have been this instruction, rather than his own inclination merely to gain military acclaim, which prompted Bowes's actions in respect of the Haddon Rig expedition. For during the early part of August reports had begun to filter through the north of large scale mobilization on the Scottish side of the frontier. On the 14th of the month, the President of the Council in the North notified the Privy Council that the Scottish Council, apparently in response to rumours of an approaching 10,000 strong English invasion force, had ordered the mustering of all men from Edinburgh to the Borders. As the Lord President noted, the gentlemen of Lothian had been instructed to muster upon Lammer Moor, within ten miles of the English Border, on the following Tuesday, the 22nd August. (50) By the 19th of that month Sir William Eure, too, was writing to the Privy Council with information that the Scots were not only mustering to their own defence but were actively contemplating an invasion. (51).

When viewed in this context, the Haddon Rig episode takes on a slightly different tenor to the traditional interpretation, often portrayed by historians, of an ill-conceived, war-mongering attack

49 LP, Vol. 17, nos. 540, 577.

50 HP, Vol. 1, no. 119.

51 Ibid, no. 120.

which deserved its subsequently ignominious outcome. (52). As letters, dated the 21st and 22nd August, respectively, from Henry VIII to Sir Thomas Wharton, in the West March, and to the new Lord Warden, Rutland, (at that time en route to the north) make clear, English military preparations in the north were far from advanced. Indeed, it was not until the 24th that the King, "...determynd to sende my Lord of Norfffolke] in all diligence with a mayn force agaynst the Scottes..". (53). In the mean time Henry advised both Rutland and Wharton to take whatever measures they could for the defence of Berwick, Carlisle and other border strongholds. Both men were ordered to muster forces of some 3,000 men each which, in addition to defending the garrison towns, were to make forays behind enemy lines in the event of an invasion in order, "...to cut the tailles of the Scottes to kepe them from their vitailles...". (54). It is, in fact, quite possible that Sir Robert Bowes had earlier received similar instructions. For the Haddon Rig enterprise seemed designed along the same lines, in terms of both manpower and strategy, as those forays suggested by the King. Whether Bowes's raid was, indeed, pre-emptive, remains a matter of some conjecture, although Henry later maintained to his nephew that it was in response to an invasion by the earl of Huntly's Scottish force. (55) Certainly the evidence contained within the notes taken from original State documents by Thomas Masters, the

52 HP. Vol. 1, intro. pp. xxiii-xxiv; Head, "The Scottish Policy of Henry VIII", p. 17; Slavin, Politics and Profit, p. 99; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 59.

53 HP, Vol. 1, nos. 123, 126.

54 Ibid, nos. 122-123.

55 Ibid, no. 142.

amanuensis of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in the seventeenth century suggests that the English government held to the belief that Bowes's raid was retaliatory. (56) Conversely, the Scottish King claimed to have written proof, contained in a document subscribed by Bowes and taken from one of the English prisoners, that the raid had been part of an English military offensive. (57) Since, however, the Commission for summoning the levies had only been issued on the 24th (the day of the Haddon Rig incident), the authenticity of this claim, too, remains doubtful. Indeed, English defences remained in a state of disorganization for some time thereafter so that as late as the 27 September, less than a month before the confrontation at Solway Moss, the government was receiving reports of the parlous state of its military machine. (58). Without further evidence the true facts of the inspiration behind the Haddon Rig enterprise inevitably remain unclear. Given, however, the state of uncertainty, tension and disorder, compounded by rumour and widespread alarm, which existed upon both sides of the Border at this time, it seems that the existing evidence is hardly sufficient to sustain the theory of Bowes as the "obvious aggressor" in this affair. For even if Henry's claims of a retaliatory action are dismissed, the Haddon Rig enterprise can, at the very worst, be regarded as a pre-emptive strike, intended to disable an enemy perceived to be already poised on the brink of

56 Bodleian Library, Jesus MS. 74, f. 224. For this source see Hoyle, "Thomas Master's Narrative", p. 54.

57 HP, Vol. 1, no. 142.

58 Ibid, nos. 185, 224.

invasion. Such a strike, therefore, was hardly as provocative as the Scots (and later historians) tried to suggest. At the most Bowes's action can be regarded as hasty and ill-considered yet even this, given the peculiar difficulties of the time, is bordering on the unjust.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Haddon Rig, whilst not the catalyst for conflict, forced the pace of the Anglo-Scottish war. As the earl of Angus astutely observed, "...thys gryt mysfortoun..." of the English undoubtedly boosted Scottish morale, thereby facilitating still further James's military viability.(59) Moreover his bargaining power was greatly increased by the capture of the Haddon Rig prisoners. Indeed, the refusal of the Scottish government to release Bowes and his colleagues, instead of allowing them to be put to ransom by their "takers" as was the custom, was regarded as further and even graver provocation by Henry. It seems that it was, indeed, from this time onwards that the attitude of the English king began to harden towards Scotland and it was as the peace negotiations between the English and Scottish Commissioners faltered, during the autumn of 1542, that he resurrected the ancient English claim to suzerainty over the Scots.(60)

59 Ibid, no. 128.

60 Slavin, Politics and Profit, p. 98; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 59. The various reports of the English Commissioners can be found in HP, Vol. 1.

Notwithstanding his defeat, Bowes emerged from the Haddon Rig incident with his reputation intact, perhaps an indication of the extent to which his activities met with the approval of his contemporaries. Admittedly their perceptions were possibly influenced by the fact that English fortunes were, shortly afterwards, considerably revived by the success of Henry's army against what was, in terms of manpower, a vastly superior Scottish host at the battle of Solway Moss, on the 24 November 1542.(61). The subsequent death, a few weeks later, of James V and the succession of his newly-born daughter to his throne enhanced still further Henry's advantage in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish affairs for it opened up the possibility of an English-dominated alliance to be enshrined in a marriage treaty uniting Prince Edward and Mary, Queen of Scots. (62) In the short term, therefore, the repercussions of Haddon Rig had helped to shift the balance of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy towards the English side, a factor which undoubtedly enabled Sir Robert to emerge from the affair with some credit. Indeed the only casualty, from the point of view of his prestige, was the loss of his Parliamentary seat as Knight of the Shire for Yorkshire. For Bowes, although re-elected for the Parliamentary session of 1542, was unable, due to his captivity, to take up his seat and was subsequently replaced following a by-election held only days before his release in February 1543. As a result, in the following Parliament, summoned in 1545, Sir Robert was forced to

61 HP, Vol. 1, no. 240.

62 Slavin, Politics and Profit, pp. 100-101; Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 436-437.

settle for a less prestigious Burgess's seat for Newcastle upon Tyne. (63) In terms of royal service, however, his prospects were undiminished. Indeed, his knowledge of Border affairs had been missed almost immediately following his capture. The day after Bowes's capture, the earl of Rutland, wrote to the King, bemoaning the loss of Sir Robert's "...experience and knowledge...", to his Council and begging for someone similarly well qualified to be appointed in his absence. (64) It was, moreover, the case that Bowes, who had been "...varaye straitlye kept..." in Scotland by Cardinal Beaton at St Andrews, felt sufficiently at ease, immediately following his release, upon bond, from his Scottish captors on 12th February 1543, to "... cometh himself to the court with diligence to declare such things as he hathe harde and seen in Scotland whilles he hath ben there..." (65) That Henry was far from displeased with Bowes is illustrated by the fact that, on the 1st May, Sir Robert was appointed steward of the royal lordship of Barnard Castle, a position which, thenceforth, was to remain in the hands of the Bowes family throughout the sixteenth century. (66). That Sir Robert's reputation in the sphere of Scottish affairs remained intact was further confirmed by his appointment as a councillor to William, Lord Parr, the new Lord Warden of the Marches (67). Despite Parr's northern connections and

63 Lehberg, Later Parliaments, p. 206; Bindoff, House of Commons, Vol. 1, p. 472.

64 HP, Vol. 1, no. 130.

65 Ibid, p. lxxii, no. 301.

66 LP, Vol. 18, part 1, p. 362 (no. 26).

67 Ibid, Vol. 18, part 1, no. 464.

influence, the evidence suggests that he, too, had considerable need of Bowes's specialist knowledge. Indeed, upon the King's instructions, Sir Ralph Sadler, Henry's emmissary in Scotland, was required to obtain the prorogation of Bowes's day of re-entry into Scotland - to negotiate the ransom demand of his captors - in order that Sir Robert, "...may continue with the said Lord Parr for his better advice and the better knowledge of all things in those parts..." (68)

Had the plans of Henry VIII regarding Anglo-Scottish unity come to fruition at this time it is possible that the career of Sir Robert Bowes would have veered immediately thereafter towards some greater involvement in the machinery of the central administration - as it did during the next reign. Indeed, the decision of the King, in the light of the apparent easing of cross-border tension during the spring and summer of 1543, to join with the Emperor in a limited enterprise against France, probably laid the foundations of Bowes's future career within the upper echelons of government. (69) For this strategy led to the appointment of Sir Robert, in June 1543, as Treasurer of the 6,000 strong force, commanded by Sir John Wallop and despatched to Flanders, "...for the defence of the Emperor's Low Countries against the common enemy, the French King..." (70). In his reports to the

68 LP, Vol. 18 part 1, nos. 464, 580, 584.

69 Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, pp. 408-409; Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 440-441.

70 LP, Vol. 18, part 1, nos. 683, 831; APC, Vol. 1, p. 145.

Privy Council, Wallop commended Bowes highly for his wisdom and discretion and noted how Sir Robert had won the esteem of, among others, the Governor of Flanders. (71) Sir Robert took with him a contingent of 100 northern horse and fifteen foot, led by his brother, Richard Bowes and Sir Ralph Bulmer, Richard's brother-in-law, which was also "much praised" for its skillful conduct during skirmishes. (72) It was undoubtedly as the result of this success that Bowes was appointed, during the main Anglo-Imperial campaign against France in the summer of 1544, as one of the under-treasurers for the war, an advancement which was to place him alongside some of the leading administrative personnel of the Tudor regime. (73) Indeed, both the high treasurer of the wars, Sir Richard Rich and one of Bowes's fellow under-treasurers, Sir Richard Southwell, were officers of the Court of Augmentations; an institution set up by Thomas Cromwell in the wake of the Dissolution of the Monasteries to "augment" the revenues of the Crown and regarded by its major historian as "...the central treasury of the realm..." until its abolition and absorption into the Exchequer in 1554. (74). Rich, the chancellor of the Court had already gained his place on the Privy Council of Henry VIII and both he and Southwell, a receiver of Augmentations, became Privy Councillors in

71 LP, Vol. 18, part 1, no. 960; part 2, no. 426.

72 Ibid, Vol. 18, part 1, no. 832; part 2, no. 345.

73 Ibid, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 610.

74 W.C. Richardson, History of the Court of Augmentations, (Baton Rouge 1961) pp. 2, 6, 66.

the reign of Edward VI. (75). There is little doubt that the experience and connections gained by Bowes at this time proved crucial for his later career and indeed his main administrative preoccupations, as a Privy Councillor to Edward VI, lay within the sphere of royal finance. Had a resurgence of Anglo-Scottish hostility not intervened it is, indeed, quite likely that Bowes's career within the central administration would have taken off much sooner than was actually the case. His immediate prospects of such advancement, however, were inhibited by the turn of events across the Border.

Certainly the optimism of Henry VIII regarding an early solution to the Scottish problem had been short-lived, with English attempts to force through an Anglo-Scottish peace treaty, based on the proposed marriage alliance between Prince Edward and the infant Queen Mary, ending in failure. Initially, in the months following the rout of Solway Moss and the premature death of James V, Henry had appeared to retain the diplomatic advantage. Despite, however, the attempts of the King to influence Scottish affairs by the formation of an "anglophile" party (drawn from those Scottish noblemen who had been captured at Solway Moss and from whom written guarantees of support had been extracted) and despite the apparent acquiescence of the reputedly Reformist Scottish Governor, the earl of Arran, Anglo-Scottish amity had not been achieved. Admittedly the seemingly

75 Richardson, Augmentations, p. 67; Jordan, The Young King, p. 80; Jordan, The Threshold of Power, p. 50.

successful negotiation of the Treaty of Greenwich, concluded on the 1st July 1543, had raised English hopes and it was, in fact, against this diplomatically favourable background that the preliminary Anglo-Imperial offensive against France had been undertaken. By August, however, the initiative in Scottish politics had been seized by the avidly pro-French Cardinal Beaton and in December the Scottish Parliament revoked all Anglo-Scottish treaties and re-affirmed those with France.(76) By the beginning of 1544, Anglo-Scottish relations had thus returned to their now familiar war footing whilst the English king sought, yet again, to find a solution to the problem on his northern border.

As a consequence, Sir Robert, who had returned from his first expedition to France at the end of November 1543 was, within weeks, once more embroiled in Scottish affairs.(77) Indeed, by the beginning of February, as plans for a new invasion of Scotland began to take shape, the Duke of Suffolk, at the time the King's Lieutenant on the Borders, was writing to his royal master suggesting that, along with the earl of Hertford, Lord Parr and others necessary to the war effort, "...Mr Bowes myght com doun which I think may do your majestie good service in that vyage...". (78). Initially, in an assignment which reflected his recent experience of fiscal management with the

76 Donaldson, Scotland, chapter 5; Slavin, Politics and Profit, chapter 6; Head, "The Scottish Policy of Henry VIII", pp. 19-21.

77 LP, Vol. 18, part 2, no. 426.

78 HP, Vol. 2, no. 161.

army in France, Sir Robert was appointed to assist Sir Ralph Sadler, the high Treasurer of the Scottish campaign. (79) Yet in the event, Bowes missed Hertford's spring expedition, which succeeded in devastating the Scottish Lowlands from Leith to the Borders, although the Streatlam family was adequately represented by his nephew, George, who was knighted at Leith on the 11th May. Sir Robert, however, was otherwise engaged for, in the March, he had been given his first major diplomatic Commission when he was appointed, along with Lord Wharton, to negotiate with the Scottish earls of Lennox and Angus and others of the "anglophile" party. (80) These had promised, rather optimistically given the limited nature of their political power-base, not only to further Henry's plans for the infant Queen of Scots but also to promote the Reformation within Scotland. (81) As Hertford explained to his royal master, since Wharton and Bowes were so preoccupied with the Lennox negotiations, which involved the wooing of the earl to the English cause by the promise of his marriage to the King's niece, Lady Margaret Douglas, he had not thought it fit to send for their services. (82) These negotiations were completed in May and shortly afterwards Bowes took up his second, more major appointment as an under-Treasurer to the army which crossed to Calais in June 1544 in order to prosecute Henry's "glorious enterprise", the invasion of France.

79 LP, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 141.

80 Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 443-444; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 70; LP, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 531. Shaw, Knights of England, Vol. 2, p. 54.

81 LP, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 220; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 69.

82 HP, Vol. 2 no. 220; LP, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 522.

The French campaign was neither as glorious nor decisive as the King had anticipated for it dragged on until the following summer and achieved only the temporary annexation of Boulogne. (83) Little evidence remains of Bowes's involvement in the affair and in any case, it was events in Scotland which continued, at this time, to dictate the course of his career. Indeed, by the beginning of March 1545 Sir Robert had been recalled, with some urgency, to the border in the wake of a serious English military set-back. At the end of February, Sir Ralph Eure, Warden of the English Middle Marches and the son of the recently ennobled William, Lord Eure, had been slain in an Anglo-Scottish confrontation at Ancrum Moor, near Jedburgh. (84) Eure's contingent, of some 3,000 men, had ridden across the border in support of the "assured" Scots of Teviotdale who were under threat of attack from an approaching Scottish army. According to English reports of the subsequent confrontation, these "assured" Scots who, through Eure's own effort, had pledged themselves to support the English cause, had turned their coats during the ensuing battle with the result that both Eure and Sir Brian Layton, the captain of Norham Castle, were killed and many of their men either captured or slain. (85). The death of Eure and the overthrow of his forces created considerable alarm within the sphere of English Border defence and administration. The strain of

83 Guy, Tudor England, p. 191.

84 HP, Vol. 2, no. 189; Bush, "The Problem of the Far North", p. 59.

85 HP, Vol. 2, nos. 414, 418, 420; (BL. Addenda MS. 32656 ff. 185-6); M.H. Merriman, "The Assured Scots: Scottish Collaborators with England during the Rough Wooing", Scottish Historical Review, Vol. XLVII, (1968) pp. 10-34.

campaigning on two fronts, the Scottish Border and France, had already begun to take its toll in terms of manpower and resources, a situation exacerbated by the decision of the Emperor to make a separate peace with the French King thus leaving England alone and vulnerable on all sides. (86) Now, as the earl of Shrewsbury, who had taken over the lieutenancy of the Borders in June 1544 upon Hertford's departure for France, pointed out to the King, the whole defence system of the East and Middle Marches was undermanned to the extent that it could barely raise five hundred men and few or no horsemen. Such loss of control was particularly dangerous within the strategically weak Middle Marches, which encompassed the perennial troublespots of Tynedale and Redesdale. For a time the situation was so critical that "...the hole power of the Bishopricke.." was drafted to the Northumbrian border and the levies of Yorkshire placed upon an hour's warning. (87) Admittedly, within a fortnight, men of the defeated contingent had begun to drift home. Most, however, were unfit to serve for they were lacking horses, harness and gear and were bereft of their captains, who remained in Scottish hands. (88). Against this background of chaos and disorganization Sir Robert Bowes was chosen, on the 4th March, barely a week after Ancrum Moor as Warden of the Middle Marches and Keeper of Tynedale and Redesdale. (89) '

86 Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 450-454.

87 HP, Vol. 2, nos. 414, 419.

88 Ibid, no. 423 (BL. Addenda MS. 32656 f. 295).

89 LP, Vol. 20, part 1. no. 306.

Undoubtedly Sir Robert's appointment was based primarily upon his acknowledged expertise in the field of border affairs and he quickly repaid the Crown's confidence in his ability. Indeed, within days of Bowes's return to the the borders, the King was receiving favourable reports, from Shrewsbury, of the "... wise discourse of his proceedings..." made by the new Warden since his entry into office."

(90) By the end of March, moreover, Bowes had sufficiently appraised the shortcomings of the Northumbrian border defence system to be able to recommend a series of restorative measures. His suggestion that the frontier garrisons under his command be immediately refurnished with weaponry from the King's stores at Newcastle and Berwick met with considerable royal approval, whilst his resolutions to have more archers and billmen upon the Borders but to place less reliance upon the untrustworthy borderers of Tynedale and Redesdale were equally well regarded. (91) Almost immediately, it seems, the most vulnerable part of the Anglo-Scottish frontier, which for a time had veered dangerously out of control, had been brought to some semblance of order by the newly appointed Warden.

Inevitably, however, any discussion of Bowes's appointment to the wardenry leads into the debate concerning the motivation behind the Crown's employment of the northern gentry in high border office. Indeed, the reliance of the later Henrician regime upon men such as

90 LP, Vol. 20, part 1, no. 393.

91 Ibid, nos. 420, 466.

Sir Robert Bowes has been viewed as part of a conscious attempt, by the Crown, to consolidate its control of the far north by appointing "meaner men" to the wardenries, traditionally the preserve of the nobility, thereby preventing the rise of a powerful and influential successor to the displaced Percy and Dacre magnate power-bases. (92) A further interpretation, however, has sought rather to emphasise the expedient and haphazard nature of Henry's border policy at this time and has discerned, "...no pre-conceived policy of opposition to the employment of northern magnates as wardens..." by the Crown. (93) This thesis suggests that it was only in the face of the inability or unwillingness of the northern earls, Clifford, Westmorland and Rutland, to serve in the wardenries that the King was himself forced, in 1537, to assume the nominal role of Lord Warden of the Marches, whilst leaving the day to day administration in the hands of deputies, Sir Thomas Wharton and Sir William Eure, members of the substantial northern gentry. Such an argument is further supported by the assertion that, upon the outbreak of war, the King was only too willing to return the wardenries to aristocratic hands and thereafter secured the services of a succession of southern noblemen to serve as Lord Wardens until forced, by the paucity of candidates sufficiently experienced in Border administration, to promote his local deputies, Wharton and Eure to full Wardens. (94)

92 Reid, King's Council, p. 163; James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 123-124.

93 Bush, "The Problem of the Far North", pp. 40-41.

94 Ibid, passim, a thesis broadly supported by H. Miller, Henry VIII and the English Nobility, (Oxford 1986) p. 196..

In Bowes's appointment, however, it is possible to identify an attempt, on the part of the Crown, to move towards the policy of promoting the "meaner" man at the expense of the nobility. For he was, in practice, the first member of the gentry without noble expectations to hold the office of full Warden. Indeed, both Wharton and Eure had been ennobled before their promotions, thereby paying lip service to tradition. Moreover, whilst, in theory, Bowes's predecessor, Sir Ralph Eure, was still possessed of gentry status upon his appointment as Warden of the Middle Marches in 1544, as heir to his father's newly created barony he could expect, ultimately, to enter the ranks of the nobility. (95) Bowes, on the other hand, had no such expectations and, indeed, was never raised to the peerage. By his appointment, therefore, the Crown made the decision to openly pursue its policy of centralization in the far north by promoting a noted royal servant who was devoid of all trappings of nobility. In all other respects, of course, Bowes, as highly regarded member of the northern administration with considerable experience of Anglo-Scottish affairs, was an obvious candidate for the post, a factor which undoubtedly muted the impact of his innovative appointment. Certainly upon his elevation to the wardenry there was little sign of any aristocratic opposition, such as that which had been voiced in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace by the duke of Norfolk, at that time the king's lieutenant in the north, at the first suggestion of

95 Bush, "The problem of the Far North", pp. 49, 52; Miller, Henry VII and the English Nobility, p. 196.

the appointment of a "meaner man" to the wardenries. (96) As has been pointed out, despite the King's outrage at Norfolk's presumptuous behaviour, it was essentially the duke's proposals, recommending, in the first place, the employment of the earl of Rutland and thereafter other southern noblemen, that the Crown implemented during the early 1540s. (97). It may, in part, have been this stirring of aristocratic discontent which persuaded the King, in a period of acute political sensitivity, to retain the status quo in regard to the wardenries. Any resistance by the peerage to encroachments from below in respect of border office was probably diminished, however, in the face of the formidable problems encountered by the successive southern noblemen who were drafted to the frontier after the outbreak of war. (98) Indeed, the current lieutenant, the earl of Shrewsbury greeted the news of Bowes's appointment to the wardenry of the troublesome Middle Marches with considerable relief. Upon Sir Robert's subsequent arrival at Alnwick, the headquarters of the Middle Marches, Shrewsbury wrote to the King, "...assuring your hyghness that in our poore opinions your Majestie could not have chosen a meter man to send in the same, aswell for his wisdom and experience as also for the knowledge and acquaintance which he hath of this country and of the maners of the people". So high was the earl's estimation of Bowes's

96 James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 123-124; Bush, "The Problem of the Far North", pp. 46-49; Miller, Henry VIII and the English Nobility, pp. 192-194.

97 Bush, op.cit., p. 49.

98 Ibid, pp. 59-60.

ability that he ventured, too, to predict that, "within these x [ten] days your Majesties garrisons here on the borders shallbe (god willing) as full and aswell furnished as they were before this latmisfortune.." (99). By 1545, it seems, any apprehensions that Norfolk's successor may have entertained, at the prospect of a noble office being usurped by a man of "meaner" birth, had been placed in perspective by the realities of Border warfare. Indeed, the unqualified acceptance of Bowes's appointment by Shrewsbury reflects the extent to which, in regard to affairs of the north, the political elite had acquiesced in the increasing reliance of the Tudors upon locally-grown gentry experience and expertise. It is thus possible that, through the agency of Sir Robert Bowes, a committed royal servant of considerable standing within the political hierarchy and one, moreover, with an unrivalled knowledge of the increasingly complicated sphere of border affairs, the Henrician regime saw its first real opportunity, albeit belatedly, of furthering its centralization policy within the far north.

From a second perspective and one which continues further the theme of increasing royal authority within the border regions, the apppointment of Bowes was also unique. For Sir Robert was the first leading gentry recruit to be appointed to the wardenries from beyond the sphere of the Percy affinity. Admittedly men such as Lord Wharton, the Eures and Sir Cuthbert Radcliffe, the former deputy Warden of the Middle Marches, may have had long records of service to the Tudor

regime (the Eures especially were amongst the few members of the northern gentry to remain overtly loyal to the King during during the Pilgrimage of Grace) nevertheless, they had all been clients of the Percies. (100) Whilst, therefore, the personal loyalty of these men to the King may have been beyond reproach, the very fact of their strong Percy affiliations must inevitably have contributed to a sense of continuity which, in turn, must undoubtedly have perpetuated local allegiance to the traditional lord. Admittedly Bowes, too, had served for a time in the household of the sixth earl, during Northumberland's Wardenship of the Marches in the late 1520s and early 1530s. However, this was strictly in his capacity as a member of the Council in the North, for the Bowes family had no discernable tradition of affinity to the earls of Northumberland. Indeed, the lords of Streatlam had traditionally followed the junior Nevilles, the enemies of the Percies during the era of magnate politics.(101) In this respect, too, it seems, Bowes's appointment formed part of the Crown's strategy to strengthen its control by undermining the remaining vestiges of Percy support within the Northumbrian borders. This break was translated into more tangible terms when, following the death of Sir Cuthbert Radcliffe in June 1545, Sir Robert was granted his former offices of constable of Alwick Castle (the former Percy stronghold and thereafter the headquarters of the Middle Marches wardenry) and

100 James, "A Tudor Magnate" p. 66; James, "Change and Continuity", pp. 101, 105-107, 110-111; Gwyn, The King's Cardinal, p. 220; Hicks, "Dynastic Change and Northern Society", pp. 87, 91, 107.

101 See above chapter one.

steward of all the King's lands, previously held by the late earl of Northumberland, within that county. (102) Bowes himself, aware of his lack of patrimony within the area, requested the offices in order to strengthen his position therein for, as has been pointed out, the Warden's capacity to raise a viable fighting force was a major factor.

(103) Indeed, the constablenesship of Alnwick which carried with it responsibility for the leading of the men of the lordship, "...was ever thought convenient for the Warden of Middle Marches..." and had come into Radcliffe's hands when he was appointed deputy Warden.

Shortly before this Bowes had also been granted the stewardship of the liberty of Hexham, recently acquired, by the Crown, from the Archbishop of York. (104) From a defensive viewpoint, too, Hexham was important, for it stood at the gateway to Tynedale. Indeed, as early as July 1543 the then Lieutenant on the Borders, the earl of Suffolk, was writing to the Privy Council suggesting that the stewardship of Hexham would be "...a verie useful and expedient office..." for the governor of Tynedale, since it would give him a useful base from which to control the "wild people" of the area. (105) However, as Rachel Reid has shown, the acquisition of Hexham which, along with the other archiepiscopal enclave of Ripon, was surrendered to the crown by the

102 APC, Vol. 1, p. 206; LP, Vol. 20, part 1, nos. 1042, 1085.

103 Miller, Henry VIII and the English Nobility, p. 187.

104 LP, Vol. 20 part 1, no. 465 (no. 54).

105 HP, Vol. 1 no. 413; Vol. 2, no. 9.

newly appointed Archbishop, Robert Holgate at the beginning of 1545, was also in line with the regime's desire for the total subjugation of the independent liberties. Moreover, the deputy-steward of the liberty had again been Sir Cuthbert Ratcliffe, who lived nearby. (106) By the transfer of its jurisdiction, therefore, to the wardenry of the Middle Marches the Crown secured control of a vital border stronghold and at the same time extended its authority in the north.

The elevation of Sir Robert Bowes to the Wardenry of the Middle Marches, without the benefit of prior ennoblement, underlined the determination of the Crown to rule the north on its own terms. Yet, as has been pointed out, Henry VIII entertained no particular antipathy towards the nobility, as long as its political aspirations remained firmly under his control. (107) Indeed, the opportunities to win honour and titles for those, considered by the King to be deserving of his favour, remained particularly high in the first part of the 1540s when the fortunes of war and administrative reorganization provided rich pickings. Admittedly the nature of Sir Robert's promotion to high border office, by reinforcing the government's reliance on the "meaner" man, probably ruled out any immediate prospect of his being called to the ranks of the peerage in the manner of his contemporaries, Wharton and Eure. In this respect Bowes was, perhaps, unfortunate. However, he was, upon his appointment, only a cadet of

106 Reid, King's Council, pp. 162-163; HP, Vol.2, no. 9.

107 D Loades, The Tudor Court, (London 1986) p. 140.

the Streatlam family with little in the way of landed wealth. Even after his unexpected succession to the Streatlam lordship, an inheritance depleted by the transference of those Bowes properties not held in tail to the heirs general, in December 1545, his resources were probably insufficient to sustain the burdens of noble rank. As Professor Loades has noted, the average noble income from land in the reign of Henry VIII was approximately £1,200 per annum, whereas the Streatlam estate probably yielded only about a third of this. (108)

Intriguingly, the opportunity, albeit a brief and tenuous one, of attaining noble status did not by-pass the Bowes of Streatlam completely. For in 1545 Sir George Bowes, at that time the head of the Streatlam family, requested and received royal approval for the grant of a barony centred around the estates of Coldingham Abbey, in the Scottish East Marches, which had recently been seized and occupied by English forces. Whilst the defence and fortification of the captured Abbey was considered untenable by the earl of Shrewsbury, the king was keen to retain his new acquisition and responded favourably to Bowes's request for the grant of an hereditary barony. For Sir George had agreed to maintain the garrison with his own retinue, of a hundred men, without further expense to the Crown than the payment of normal war-time wages. In peacetime he offered to maintain the garrison at his own charge and "...to fortifie the same

108 Loades, Tudor Court, p. 145. For a discussion of the landed wealth of the family see below pp. 308-310.

in suche wise as he trusteth it shalbe tenable agaynst thennemyes..."

(109) It was an offer the King could hardly refuse. As the Privy Council confessed to Shrewsbury, "...the grant of a hole barony in aparence importeth much, yett in consideracon of his sundry good services his grace is content to gyve the said barony unto hym and unto his hayres males...the said Sir George observing all such condicions for the keping and maytaining thereof..." (110).

Unfortunately, Bowes's enjoyment of his spoils of war was not destined to last long. Within weeks he was forced to repulse a considerable Scottish counter-attack on his newly acquired garrison and in January 1545 was captured by the Scots whilst participating in an expedition to Dunbar. (111) In March, following his release, he was appointed captain of the border fortress of Norham, replacing Sir Brian Layton who had been killed at Ancrum Moor. Thereafter, however, his name disappeared from the records of border affairs, suggesting that he had already contracted the illness which was to take him to a premature grave in December 1545. (112). Not surprisingly, perhaps, given that his expectations were based entirely upon the dubious ability of the English to retain control of newly occupied enemy territory, no further evidence has come to light regarding Sir George's barony. Certainly no patent was ever granted to the family and it seems that

109 HP, Vol. 2, nos. 353, 363, 366, 367.

110 Lambeth Palace Library MS. 3192, f. 171.

111 LP, Vol. 19, part 2, nos. 691, 692, 707, 720; Vol. 20 part 1, no. 129.

112 LP, Vol. 20 part 1, no. 381; Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/3.

the sudden death of Sir George and the succession to his inheritance of Sir Robert, thus ended the family's prospects of entering the ranks of the Tudor nobility.

Nevertheless, by the close of Henry's reign the House of Bowes had consolidated and reinforced its position, not only within the northern ruling elite but also within the higher echelons of national political life, primarily as the result of the career of Sir Robert Bowes. Undoubtedly his qualifications as a lawyer, combined with his early training in and natural inclinations towards the sphere of border administration and defence, made him an ideal candidate for royal service at a time when the Crown was seeking to extend and consolidate its authority throughout the north. In some respects, of course, Bowes and his fellow members of the northern administrative elite had laid the foundations of their own good fortune. For, as has already been suggested, their large scale participation in the 1536 rebellion ensured the survival of all but the expendable few, since the execution or proscription of the entire rebel leadership would have rendered inoperable the machinery of northern government. The assimilation of a man of Bowes's experience and standing into the re-organized government of the north, at a time of continued disorder and dissent, was, therefore, almost inevitable. Good fortune, beyond the sphere of his own control, thereafter favoured his career for the key to his subsequent advancement undoubtedly lay in the Anglo-Scottish confrontation of the 1540s, which enabled Bowes to employ to the full his particular abilities and expertise in the field of border diplomacy and defence. Yet good fortune is ultimately dependent upon

opportunity and the career of Sir Robert Bowes illustrates the extent to which the politically ambitious, when possessed of the necessary qualities and qualifications, could achieve advancement in the service of the expanding Henrician regime.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BOWES OF STREATLAM AND THE ERA OF REFORM: 1547-1553

During the late the 1540s, the Anglo-Scottish conflict continued to affect the career of Sir Robert Bowes. Indeed, in the years immediately following the death of Henry VIII, Bowes's experience of border defence and diplomacy proved to be as useful to the new Edwardian regime as it had been to the old. As M.L. Bush has shown, the Scottish policy of Somerset's Protectorate was, leaving aside the differences in strategy, essentially a continuation of that pursued by Henry VIII from 1543 onwards. As such this sought to achieve the annexation of Scotland, preferably by means of an enforced dynastic union between Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots, thereby securing forever the perennial troublespot across the northern frontier.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, if for Henry VIII the Scottish campaign was of secondary importance to his more "glorious enterprise", the invasion of France, the same could not be said for Somerset. Indeed, the Protector, who forged his formidable reputation as a military commander during the Henrician Scottish war and whose preoccupation with the subjugation of Scotland has been described as "obsessive", made the campaign to attain Anglo-Scottish unity his primary objective; an objective which, W.K. Jordan

1 Bush, Protector Somerset, pp. 7, 12.

has suggested, was motivated as much by point of honour as by the need to achieve national security. (2) With the revitalization of the Scottish war effort, therefore, Sir Robert Bowes, as a leading Marcher official, continued to play a prominent role in Anglo-Scottish affairs. Yet, as has been pointed out, whilst, under Henry VIII royal service provided the key to political advancement, the accession of a minor inevitably disturbed the relationship between the Crown and the political nation. The reins of patronage, once manipulated to great effect by an adult monarch whose *raison d'etre* had been to enhance and extend royal authority, became the playthings of political faction in the hands of the ruling aristocratic elite which governed in the name of his son. (3) Under such circumstances, political promotion was achieved rather by the whim of potential "overmighty subjects" than by any ability to provide loyal and efficient service to the Crown. Certainly the opportunities for advancement which had been presented to Sir Robert Bowes in the service of Henry VIII, were not so readily available during the ascendancy of Protector Somerset. Thus whilst his loyal and efficient service continued to be of use to the new regime during the years of Anglo-Scottish hostility, they were, in fact, apparently taken for granted and Bowes received little in the way of reward. Indeed, by the closing months of Somerset's administration, Bowes's position within the northern elite seems to have been considerably undermined, a factor which may well have contributed to his support for the Earl of Warwick.

2 Jordan, The Young King, p. 247; Bush, Protector Somerset p. 10.
3 Loades, Tudor Court, pp. 140-141.

As D. Hoak has indicated, however, the major "by-product" of the political intriguing of the era was the introduction, under Warwick's guiding hand, of an overtly reformist regime and it was undoubtedly the association of the Streatlam family with the Protestant cause which facilitated the rise of Sir Robert Bowes from the relative obscurity of regional administration to the upper echelons of national political life. (4) Admittedly Bowes's experience in the affairs of the north must have played a major role in his advancement, since the security of the new radical regime was dependent upon its ability to stave off the threat of armed resistance from a region notable for its religious conservatism. (5) Yet there is little doubt that it was the Bowes family's adoption of the reformed faith, nurtured not least by its association with the increasingly influential Scottish Reformer, John Knox, which came to play the major role in deciding the political fortunes of the House of Bowes, both at that time and in the years to come.

Initially, however, for the career of Sir Robert Bowes, the new Edwardian era promised little more than continued involvement in the problems of the frontier as the Henrician campaign to achieve Anglo-Scottish unity was taken up with renewed vigour during the Protectorate of the Duke of Somerset. From its earliest days, in fact, the Edwardian regime was forced to take account of the persistent

4 D. Hoak, "Rehabilitating the Duke of Northumberland: Politics and Control, 1549-53", J. Loach and R. Tittler (eds.) The Mid-Tudor Polity., (London 1980) p. 50.

5 Reid, King's Council, pp. 173-77.

threat from beyond its northern frontier. Admittedly the conclusion of a peace treaty with the French in the summer of 1546 had served, to some extent, to remove the international dimension from the sphere of Anglo-Scottish affairs. (Scotland was included in the treaty, but only upon the unlikely condition that it ratified the Treaty of Greenwich) Moreover, within Scotland itself, the murder of Cardinal Beaton at his stronghold of St Andrews by what has been described as a "diversely-motivated", although essentially pro-English faction had appeared, at first, to signal some degree of success for the English cause. However the resultant disunity and confusion which Beaton's assassination engendered within Scottish political circles did little to further Tudor dynastic ambitions and, upon the accession of Edward VI, the problem of Scotland remained unresolved. (6) Historians have long debated the extent to which Somerset's personal desire to effect the conquest of Scotland influenced his political strategy at this time and, indeed, he has been accused of behaving "...like Attila the Hun on the Borders...". (7) Moreover, it has further been suggested that he was committed, by a promise made to the dying Henry VIII, to achieving a favourable outcome to the affair. (8) Nevertheless, leaving personal motivations aside, there is little doubt that considerations of national security also figured largely in Somerset's calculations at this time. In April 1547, the prospect of foreign

- 6 Jordan, The Young King, pp. 231, 243; Donaldson, Scotland, p. 74.
7 Bush, Protector Somerset, p. 10; Guy, Tudor England, p. 201; Jordan, op.cit., p. 247; MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, p. 272.
8 Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, p. 283.

intervention in Anglo-Scottish affairs had re-emerged following the accession to the French throne of the anti-English monarch, Henry II, who quickly made clear his intention not only to regain possession of Boulogne (which, by the terms of the 1546 Treaty of Campe, was to remain in English hands until 1554), but also to resurrect the traditional "auld alliance" with the Scots. (9)

From its earliest days, therefore, the Edwardian government was forced to take account of the renewed Scottish threat and Somerset began, almost immediately, the task of fortifying border defences. Sir Robert Bowes, as Warden of the Middle Marches was obviously drawn into these preparations from the outset. In April, apparently in response to Bowes's own intelligence reports of Scottish activities, he was advised by the Privy Council to keep his wardenry in good order and to bring in and thresh the corn in anticipation of any Scottish incursion. (10) The expected attack failed, however, to materialise and by the summer of 1547, as English preparations for the mobilization and defence of the borders gathered momentum Bowes's diplomatic skills were employed, by Somerset, in a last-ditch effort to obtain a negotiated settlement to the Anglo-Scottish dispute. Accordingly, on the 8th July, Sir Robert and Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of Durham, were appointed as the King's commissioners to treat with the Scots in

9 Jordan, The Young King, p. 236; Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, p. 482.

10 APC, Vol. 2, p. 473.

the hope of persuading them to ratify and confirm the marriage alliance proposed by the terms of the Treaty of Greenwich. (11). The Scots refused, however, to respond to this overture of peace and this, along with the breaking, by a French expeditionary force, of the siege of St Andrews, which had been held by the Scottish rebels and provisioned by the English fleet since the murder of Cardinal Beaton, acted as the catalyst for war. (12) By the beginning of September the English army had crossed the border at the beginning of the campaign which was to result in the crushing Scottish defeat at the battle of Pinkie. (13).

There is little evidence to shed any light upon the extent to which Sir Robert participated in this campaign and whether he was, in fact, present at the battle itself. It appears, however, that the Warden of the West Marches, Lord Wharton, remained at his base of Carlisle during the campaign, although he did lead a week-long foray into the Scottish Western Marches during September. (14) It is thus quite possible that Bowes, too, was detailed to remain at his post during this time in order to maintain the defences of the Middle Marches. He was, however, directly concerned with the subsequent phase of Somerset's Scottish policy for, as has been demonstrated, the aim of

11 CSP (Scot Ser.), Vol. 1, p. 64; CSP Scotland, Vol. 1 p. 9.

12 Jordan, The Young King, pp. 243, 245, 249, 250; Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 75-76; Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, p. 483.

13 This campaign is discussed in some detail in Jordan, op.cit., pp. 253-63.

14 Ibid, p. 255.

the Pinkie campaign was to facilitate the implementation of the Protector's main strategy which was to consolidate his newly acquired hold over the Scots by the erection of a number of garrisons, based predominantly in the Scottish Lowlands, thereby obviating the expensive necessity of periodically launching large invading armies across the border. (15) Preparations for the erection of the garrisons were underway by the beginning of 1548 and towards the end of January Sir Robert had entered into consultation with the other leading border officers, Lord Grey of Wilton, at that time the Lord Lieutenant of the Borders, and Lord Wharton, over the viability of several of the proposed garrison sites such as Newark, Branxholme and the strategically-placed Haddington, which was situated some eighteen miles east of Edinburgh. (16) By mid-March Bowes was in the Scottish Marches supervising the fortification of Roxburgh and by the 23rd of the month was preparing to depart for Lauder which was garrisoned in April. (17) Indeed, it seems clear, from a report written by Lord Gray to Somerset on the 3rd of April, that Bowes's brief at this time was to traverse the eastern Scottish Lowlands in order to implement the Protector's directives regarding the fortification of the various garrison sites. (18). At that time too, following the death of Lord Eure, Bowes was appointed to the additional office of Warden of the

15 Bush, Protector Somerset, pp. 13-18.

16 CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 1, p. 76; Jordan, The Young King, p. 265.

17 CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 1, pp. 83, 85; Bush, op.cit., p. 15.

18 CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 1, p. 84.

East and Middle Marches. (19) Admittedly this can be viewed as an expression of the new regime's growing confidence in Bowes's ability and experience. Yet, at the same time, it is clear that his loyalty and reliable service were taken for granted since the appointment was unaccompanied by any attendant rise in salary. Bowes was thus forced to prevail upon the good offices of Lord Grey whose appeal, on his behalf, to the cost-conscious Somerset enumerated the burdens imposed upon Sir Robert by an appointment made "...without enlargement of pay or consideration for his necessary expenses...". The appeal was to no avail, however, for Somerset's response was that, "...Sir R.B. take pacyence for a tyme. (20) The financial implications of this were quite considerable for the Warden's fee was worth about 700 marks per annum with a further 100 marks for the captaincy of Berwick which was also held by the Warden. Moreover, as research has shown, additional perquisites could increase the Warden's income threefold. (21) In terms of real income, however, the office was hardly profitable for it involved much expenditure in the way of household maintenance, hospitality and staffing costs. (22) As Bowes had pointed out to Grey, the costs of his old wardenry had already "suced up" not only his official allowance but had also "...spent more than less of his own

19 CSP Scotland, Vol., 1, p. 92; CSP (Scot. Ser.), p. 85; CP, Vol. V, p. 181; Bush, "The Problem of the Far North", pp. 57-58.

20 CSP Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 109; CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 1, p. 85; Bush Protector Somerset, pp. 33-34.

21 P.G. Boscher, "The Anglo-Scottish Border, 1550-1560", University of Durham Ph.D, (1985), pp. 49-50.

22 Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, p. 84.

patrimony..." (23). Without the requisite recompense, therefore, the additional appointment must have imposed a considerable financial burden upon the new Warden.

Shortly after this incident, which can have done little to endear Somerset's administration to Sir Robert, Bowes was involved in the second military defeat of his career and one, again, with which his name, unfortunately, became associated. As has been pointed out, the garrison of Haddington was perceived, by all sides, to be the linchpin of the English military machine in Scotland. (24) As such, its destruction became the primary objective of the joint Franco-Scottish offensive which was launched in June 1548, following the revitalization of the "auld alliance". (25) Consequently, by the 30th of the month Haddington was placed under siege by a French-dominated force of some 10,000 men. (26) In England preparations were mounted for a military offensive, whilst upon the borders several small-scale raids, designed to relieve the pressure on the beleaguered garrison, were quickly undertaken and it was on one of these that Bowes's party was attacked. On the 7th July Sir Robert Bowes had accompanied the expedition, mounted from Berwick by Sir Thomas Palmer, which had successfully endeavoured to supply Haddington with a quantity of

23 CSP Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 109.

24 Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, p. 125.

25 Donaldson, Scotland, p. 79.

26 HP, Vol. 2, p. 441; Jordan, The Young King., p. 284.

badly-needed ammunition. (27) In view of this good fortune, a further enterprise, also apparently inspired by Palmer and led by him and Sir Robert, was undertaken a little over a week later. This time, however, the raiding party was intercepted by a contingent of French troops and in the ensuing skirmish some sixty English soldiers were slain; whilst Bowes and Palmer, along with a considerable number of their men, were captured. (28)

The evidence surrounding Bowes's activities in the months following Haddington is limited and the possibility exists that he remained in captivity for some considerable time. However, it is more likely that he was released fairly quickly, since the Scots were making arrangements for his exchange within a month of his capture. (29) If, as suspected, Bowes was freed relatively quickly, then the repercussions of Haddington, in terms of his career, were considerable. Indeed, within a week of Sir Robert's capture, the wardenries of the East and Middle Marches had been granted to Richard Manners who retained them until the following May when, during a general re-shuffle of border commands, they were granted to the Earl of Rutland. (30) Admittedly, Bowes's early replacement was

27 HP, Vol. 2, p. 442; Jordan, The Young King, p. 285.

28 HP, Vol. 2, p. 452; Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, p. 125, estimates that between 120-180 English prisoners were taken by the Scots.

29 HP, Vol. 2, p. 454; Jordan, The Young King, p. 286.

30 HP, Vol. 2, p. 456; CPR, 1548-9, pp. 402-3.

understandable for, in view of the war, the security of the border was of prime concern and it could not be left ungoverned for any length of time. Yet although the ability of the new warden was quickly called into question, he remained in situ until his replacement by Rutland. whilst Bowes, on the other hand, apparently played little part in border affairs for some considerable time thereafter.(31) Under such circumstances the only conclusion that can be drawn is that Bowes's role in the Haddington debacle had damaged, still further, his already strained relationship with Somerset's administration. Much of the blame for the defeat was, admittedly, laid upon the shoulders of the allegedly impetuous Palmer who, according to one interpretation of the affair, deliberately ignored Bowes's instructions to "...venture nothing..." during the expedition. (32) Yet the affair provoked considerable criticism, not least from the Protector himself, for it had cost much in terms of resources and had done little to revive the sinking morale of the besieged garrison. To add insult to injury it was rumoured, initially, that the triumphant French were threatening to send Sir Robert, by far the most important of their captives, to France, although the threat was not carried out. (33) W.K. Jordan has, indeed, suggested that the Protector's adverse reaction to the whole

31 CSPD, 1601-3 with Add. 1547-65, p. 394.

32 Quoted in Jordan, The Young King, p. 286.

33 CSPD, 1601-3 with Add., 1547-65, p. 392.

affair was sufficient to earn him, thereafter, the enmity of Palmer, who was later to testify against the Duke at his trial in December 1551. (34) In similar fashion Sir Robert, too, may have been alienated further from the regime, if not by the apparent intensity of Somerset's disapproval then certainly by the loss of his border offices. It is not, of course, certain that Sir Robert was being penalised for his participation in the Haddington debacle. His removal from border office may, indeed, have had more to do with the administration's decision to return the wardenries to the hands of the nobility. It has been suggested, in fact, that Somerset's regime anticipated the policy, generally attributed to the Marian government, of rehabilitating the "old" nobility. (35) Certainly at the same time that Rutland was appointed to the wardenries of the East and Middle Marches, the recently ennobled Thomas, Lord Wharton was dismissed from his office in the West Marches to make way for Lord Dacre, the traditional "ruler" of the region. (Interestingly, Somerset's administration also reversed the attainder against the Percies and restored the heir, Thomas Percy, to his father's estates. It was not, however, until the reign of Mary that he was restored to the patrimony and title of his uncle, the sixth Earl of Northumberland. (36)

34 Jordan, The Young King, p. 286; Jordan, The Threshold of Power, pp. 52-53. B.L. Beer, Northumberland, (Kent State 1973), pp. 83.

35 Bush, Protector Somerset, pp. 129, 141-42.

36 Ibid, p. 129. Jordan, The Young King, p. 296; James, "Cumberland", p. 174..

Whatever the reason behind this move, there is little doubt that such a policy hardly augured well for the future career prospects of Sir Robert Bowes. Indeed there is much to suggest that, by 1549, he had joined the ranks of the many disaffected, whose future security was dependent upon the downfall of Protector Somerset.

In view of the paucity of available evidence any attempt to interpret the activities and aspirations of Sir Robert Bowes at this time must remain purely speculative. Nevertheless, the suggestion of his alienation from the Somerset government does become more credible when viewed from the perspective of Sir Robert's career during the Dudley ascendancy. Indeed, within weeks of the coup, in October 1549, which effectively deprived the Protectorate of its initiative, Bowes's fortunes revived considerably. On the 1st January 1550 Sir Robert was restored to the wardenries of the East and Middle Marches, with fees of £466.13s.4d. and £333.6s.8d. respectively. (37). Moreover, in the following month he was re-appointed to the Council in the North, which had been re-organized and placed under the Presidency of the earl of Shrewsbury in order to purge it of Somerset's influence. (38) Almost immediately his career, which had been almost in tatters at the end

37 CPR, 1549-51, p. 162; Bindoff, The House of Commons, Vol. 1, p. 471-73.

38 Reid, King's Council, p. 168-69; Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, pp. 62-63. Dr. Bernard's research has indicated that the document calendared in CSPD 1601-3 with Add. 1547-65, pp. 399-400, which details this commission has been mis-dated at ? May 1549 and that the Council was actually re-appointed sometime in December 1549.

of Somerset's administration, was revitalized. Admittedly Sir Robert's position was undermined slightly by Warwick's decision, in the April, to appoint himself to the wardenries. Nevertheless, the bitter pill of his dismissal was sweetened somewhat, for it was decided that Bowes should receive a yearly stipend until further employment could be found for him. (39) Bowes could take comfort from this for it underlined the fact that his removal was based rather upon political expediency than upon any desire of the government to dispense with his services. Indeed Warwick's decision to take control of the wardenries at this time was motivated by the fear of a northern backlash against his government. Initially, his coup against Somerset had drawn upon elements of conservative support, including that of Shrewsbury, the newly appointed Lord President of the Council in the North. (40) Warwick's decision, however, in February 1550, following his successful bid to consolidate his authority in both the Privy Chamber and the Council, to advocate thenceforth the cause of religious reform did much to alienate the conservatives. Shrewsbury certainly was increasingly at odds with the earl after this time. (41) Opposition to the new administration was reinforced further by the political revival of Somerset, who was re-admitted to the royal

39 APC, Vol. 3, pp. 6, 10.

40 R.R. Reid, "The Political Influence of the 'North Parts' under the Later Tudors", R.W. Seton (ed.) Tudor Studies, (London 1924), pp. 210-12.

41 Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, pp. 64-65; J. Murphy, "The Illusion of Decline; The Privy Chamber 1547-1558", D. Starkey, (ed.) The English Court, (London 1987), pp. 128-130; Hoak "Rehabilitating Northumberland", pp. 38-39.

Council in February and who, from this time onwards, provided a focal point for political dissent. (42) Yet whilst, as has been noted, Warwick remained obsessed with the notion of a rising in the religiously conservative north, such an idea proved, in reality, to be the least of his problems for, during the summer, the southern part of the country was threatened by a resurgence of the popular unrest which had first erupted the previous year. (43) As a result, the earl felt unable to take up his appointment on the northern borders and accordingly, on the 18th July, Sir Robert was informed of the government's decision to retain his services in the wardenries. (44)

The initial decision of the new administration to re-appoint Sir Robert Bowes to the wardenries of the East and Middle Marches, at the beginning of 1550, was almost certainly taken in the light of the precarious state of Anglo-Scottish relations at that time. Indeed, the young Earl of Rutland, who had served in the post since his appointment in May 1549, had little experience of border warfare and society. (45) Moreover, the Earl owed his position to Somerset and it is possible that he was not, at that time, regarded as completely

42 D. Hoak, The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI, (Cambridge 1976), pp. 242-43; Hoak "Rehabilitating Northumberland", p. 38-39.

43 Hoak, "Rehabilitating Northumberland", p. 39; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 60-62.

44 APC, Vol. 3, p. 88. Nichols, Literary Remains of King Edward VI 2, Vols, ed. J.G. Nichols, (1857), Vol. 2, p. 285.

45 Jordan, The Young King, p. 296; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 147-48.

reliable by the new regime. (46) From the point of view of both political expediency and practical necessity, therefore, Bowes was a far safer choice of candidate for the wardenries. Certainly throughout 1550 and the first half of 1551 he remained preoccupied with border affairs as the new administration, in its turn, sought to come to terms with the Scottish problem. This had, in fact, intensified in the wake of the Franco-Scottish accord of 1548 and the decision of the French King to declare war upon England in August 1549. The main objective of the French campaign was, not surprisingly, the re-capture of Boulogne. However, the strain which the subsequent defence of the city placed upon English resources and manpower forced the newly re-structured Edwardian government quickly to initiate peace negotiations which inevitably involved the re-appraisal and ultimate abandonment of its ambitions towards Scotland. As early as November 1549, only weeks after the Dudley coup, the government began the peace negotiations with France which led, ultimately, to the treaty that was formalised in March 1550. By this England agreed not only to cede Boulogne but also to negotiate an Anglo-Scottish peace treaty. (47) By midsummer, therefore, Sir Robert was engaged in implementing the

46 Whilst the precise nature of Rutland's sympathies at this time remain unclear, he was apparently reconciled to Northumberland by the time of Edward's death. Indeed, upon Mary's accession, the Earl was imprisoned in the Tower. Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 79-80; Beer, Northumberland, D. Loades, Mary Tudor, (Oxford 1989) p. 185.

47 Jordan, op.cit., p. 148; Beer, op.cit., p. 102.

various measures that had been called for in the truce, including the exchange and delivery of English and Scottish prisoners and the evacuation and destruction of the remaining garrisons such as Roxburgh and Eyemouth, which were "ruinated" by Bowes in the July.(48) The peace, however, remained tenuous with matters such as the precise location of the frontier-line still requiring negotiation. Moreover, since the French continued to maintain a high profile in Scotland, much attention was focused upon the fortification of the border strongholds. As a consequence Bowes, in the East and Middle Marches, and Dacre in the West were required to reinforce their respective fortresses of Berwick and Carlisle. In July, too, Sir Robert was further instructed to assist Sir Richard Lee and Sir Thomas Palmer who had been commissioned to assess the frontier fortifications. (49) The problem of the frontier remained a particular concern of Sir Robert's during this period. In August 1550, for instance, he and Lord Wharton were instructed "...to signifie with diligence unto the Counsaill their whole knowledge tooching the Kings Majestie's astate and interest in the Debateable Lands..." (50) Shortly afterwards Bowes went on to complete his Survey of the Borders, a work still highly regarded by modern historians for the insight it gives into the nature of frontier society in the sixteenth century. This was, in fact,

48 CSP (Foreign), 1547-53, pp. 48-50; APC, Vol. 3, pp. 47, 70.

49 APC, Vol. 2, p. 417; Ibid, Vol. 3, pp. 5, 92.

50 Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 108.

prepared for the instruction of the Marquis of Dorset upon his appointment as Warden General of the Northern Marches in February 1551, at a time when Franco-Scottish military manoeuvres near the frontier were giving the English government cause for renewed concern. (51) Sir Robert's undoubted expertise in the sphere of border affairs was further employed when he was named in the Commission, appointed in the April of that year, to negotiate the Anglo-Scottish boundary. (52)

Given Sir Robert's apparently harmonious relationship with the Dudley administration it is somewhat surprising to discover his name linked to a conspiracy which proposed to raise the north in support of the Duke of Somerset. The Duke's relationship with the new regime had remained uneasy since his re-appointment to the Privy Council in April 1550 and, by the beginning of the following year, he was actively canvassing support in order to regain his former political dominance. (53) In February 1551, for instance, his servant Richard Whalley, was imprisoned for his part in trying to persuade "...divers nobles of the realm..." to re-appoint Somerset to the

51 Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 304; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 151-52; Bowes's 1550 Survey has been printed in M.A. Richardson, Reprints of Rare Tracts, Vol. 4, (Newcastle 1847-8), although it is wrongly entitled, "the English Border in the days of Henry VIII". The Survey is also printed in Hodgson, Northumberland, Part 3, Vol. 2, pp. 171-248.

52 Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 312; APC, Vol. 3, p. 251.

53 Hoak, "Rehabilitating Northumberland", p. 39.

Protectorate. (54) Indeed, as research has shown, it is clear that there was growing discord within the political nation as a whole, with members of the conservative northern nobility at the forefront of those showing disaffection towards the increasingly radical Dudley regime. (55) By April there were rumours that London was about to be seized by Somerset whilst, simultaneously, the north was to be raised on his behalf by the earls of Derby and Shrewsbury. (56) Gossip from abroad, too, which was reported at the end of May, hinted at the spread of "great seditions", particularly amongst the northern nobility who, it was suggested, were disaffected "...by reason of changes among the wardens...". It was from this source, which had originated in Flanders and had thence been transmitted to England via Rome, that the name of Robert Bowes was mentioned as being amongst the "knot" of noblemen, which included the earls of Derby and Shrewsbury and Lord Dacre, who were opposed to Warwick's policies. (57)

The circumstances surrounding this affair are shrouded in mystery and, inevitably, little evidence remains to throw any light upon Bowes's activities at this time. Certainly Sir Robert may well have taken exception to the appointment, at the beginning of the year, of the

54 Beer, Northumberland, p. 116; Literary Remains, Vol.2, p. 303;

55 C. Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire, (Cambridge 1975) p. 141; Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, p. 67.

56 Haigh, op.cit., p. 141; Bernard, op.cit., p. 67; Brigden, London and the Reformation, p. 511.

57 CSP (Foreign) 1547-53, pp. 19-120.

Marquis of Dorset as Warden-General of the Marches. (58) Such a move could have been resented by Bowes, since it inevitably undermined his own position in the wardenries of the East and Middle Marches and harked back to the traditional policy, lately used by Somerset, of recruiting high ranking noblemen to border office at times of heightened Anglo-Scottish tension. (59) Once again, Bowes may well have felt that such a policy did not augur well for his future interests. Perhaps insult was added to injury by the fact that Sir Robert, himself, was commissioned to prepare the border survey for the instruction of the sadly inexperienced Dorset. Nevertheless, Bowes remained at the centre of border affairs for, as has already been noticed, he was shortly afterwards appointed to the Commission to negotiate the boundary between England and Scotland. In view of this it seems unlikely that Bowes can have been suffering from any perceived decline in regional influence.

Moreover his participation in any conspiracy becomes even less likely when viewed from the perspective of subsequent events for, on the 25 September Sir Robert was sworn of the Privy Council and thenceforth appeared to take up a position as a prominent Dudley adherent. (60) Admittedly, as has been suggested, during the summer Warwick had quickly sought to achieve a degree of rapprochement with the earls of

58 Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 150-51. See above p. 188.

59 Ibid, p. 151.

60 APC, Vol. 3, p. 363.

Shrewsbury and Derby, thereby forestalling their participation in any proposed coup attempt. Yet these men were leading magnates, whose influence and resources were sufficient to provide a substantial threat to the ruling regime. (61) Bowes, on the other hand, was of little threat to the regime in terms of political and territorial influence and would presumably, therefore, have proved expendable if his loyalty had shown itself open to question. Moreover, Bowes's appointment to the Council occurred only three weeks before the final overthrow of Somerset (who was arrested on the 16th October). It is thus unlikely that, at a time when Warwick was seeking to eliminate faction and consolidate his own authority within the Privy Council, he would have risked including anyone of doubtful political complexion. Indeed, from the earliest days Bowes appears to have been an active and highly regarded member of the administration and benefitted accordingly. In August 1551, shortly before his appointment to the Council Bowes was discharged from debts totalling £663.9.8.3/4d, which had accrued during his years as a border officer and were derived mainly from overdue revenue payments. (62) In November 1551, he was granted the office of Master of the Savoy Hospital and in June 1551 was appointed Master of the Rolls, an appointment which, in terms of his legal career, confirmed his rise to the top of his profession. (63)

61 Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, pp. 68-69.

62 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/2.

63 CPR, 1550-53, p. 110; BL Add. MS. 38136, ff. 27-8..

Yet the question, nevertheless, remains as to why Sir Robert Bowes found such favour with the man who, in October 1551 was created Duke of Northumberland. Certainly, as a soldier of distinction, Bowes fitted perfectly into the Privy Council of the Dudley era, a body noted for its martial composition. Indeed, D.E. Hoak has claimed that Northumberland carried his authority rather with the air of a military commander than a politician, preferring to surround himself with what have been described as "aristocratic courtier-soldiers" such as Clinton, Cobham and Huntingdon. (64) Moreover, if as has been suggested, the Duke remained perpetually in fear of a northern rising then the recruitment of a man of Bowes's background and experience was an obvious advantage since he knew the region, its politics and administration intimately. (65) Indeed, Bowes's regional knowledge undoubtedly served the Duke well during his attempt to secularise the Palatinate of Durham. Historians have generally come to view Northumberland's scheme as a further extension of the late Henrician policy of centralization. (66) Whilst in theory the extent of the Bishop's franchise had been greatly undermined by the terms of the 1536 Act for the Resumption of Liberties to the Crown, which had

64 Hoak, King's Council, p. 263.

65 Hoak, "Rehabilitating Northumberland", p. 39.

66 Reid, "Political Influence", p. 214; D. Loades, "The Dissolution of the Diocese of Durham, 1553-54, D. Marcombe (ed.) The Last Principality, (Nottingham 1987) p. 105.

transferred the administration of justice into the King's hands, in practice he retained much of his authority and privilege and the administrative structure of the Palatinate remained virtually intact. (67) Northumberland's plan, however, by transferring the Bishop's secular Palatine authority to the Crown (and, at the same time, dividing his ecclesiastical jurisdiction into two smaller dioceses) sought to effect the destruction of the last bastion of ecclesiastical privilege, thereby completing the unification of Church and State under the authority of the Crown. Admittedly, as recent research has shown, in financial terms Northumberland could have expected to gain comparatively little in the way of profit, either for himself or the Crown, from the reorganization. His appointment as Chief Steward of the secularized Palatinate would, however, have certainly enhanced his political influence in the north, thereby consolidating further the security of his regime in that region. (68)

From the evidence it seems unlikely that Sir Robert was deeply involved in Northumberland's attempt to discredit the conservative Bishop, Cuthbert Tunstall, whose deprivation from the See of Durham was a necessary pre-requisite to the secularization plan. (69) Bowes's only contribution to that affair, in fact, seemed to have been his involvement in the interrogation of Elizabeth Huggins, a maid of the

67 James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, pp. 41-42.

68 Loades, "Dissolution", pp. 104, 106, 108.

69 Ibid, pp. 100-116; Beer, Northumberland, pp. 141-42; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 381-84.

Duchess of Somerset, whose testimony, it was hoped, would connect Tunstall (who had already been implicated, in July 1550, in a plot to raise rebellion in the north) with the allegedly treasonable activities of the erstwhile Protector. (70) Nevertheless, once Northumberland's ambitions towards the Bishopric began to be realized, Bowes's experience of northern administration in general and of Durham politics and society in particular, was indeed utilized for in June 1553 he was appointed Chancellor of the newly secularized Palatinate, a grant which was undoubtedly intended to lend practical application to Northumberland's own appointment as Chief Steward of all the lands therein which had formerly been part of the late Bishopric. (71)

Nevertheless, it was not only Sir Robert's experience of northern affairs which made him of particular use to Northumberland's regime. As the analysis of the Privy Council at this time has shown, many of the Councillors appointed by the Duke had, during their earlier careers, acquired considerable expertise in the field of administration. (72) Indeed, the primary concern of Northumberland's government seemed to have been the reorganization and rehabilitation of the royal finances, which had been severely undermined by the

70 Hutchinson, Durham, Vol. 1, p. 427; Literary remains, Vol. 1 p. clxvii; Jordan Threshold of Power, pp. 383-84.

71 The appointment was granted by Privy Seal on the 14th June, although it was not recorded in the Patent Rolls until the 15th July, after the death of Edward. CPR, 1553, p. 68; Loades, "Dissolution", p. 104.

72 Hoak, King's Council, p. 263.

successive wars of Henry VIII and Protector Somerset. (73) Undoubtedly, therefore, the experience of fiscal management which Sir Robert had gained during his appointments as treasurer to the French Wars, during the reign of Henry VIII, proved to be of considerable value to the Edwardian regime. (74) This earlier experience had been enhanced by Bowes's further appointment, in 1546, as a Commissioner for the survey of Chantries in the border counties of Northumberland, Westmorland, Cumberland and the Bishopric of Durham, a post which enabled Sir Robert to gain further insight into the workings of the Court of Augmentations, which supervised the survey. (75) Certainly Bowes's growing expertise in this field facilitated his rise to the Privy Council and of the fifteen Commissions to which he was appointed between December 1551 and May 1553, thirteen were directly concerned with the fiscal affairs of the Crown. (76) The first of these, appointed in December 1551, was set up in order to identify the extent of all outstanding monies owed to the Crown. As such the Commissioners, all of whom were Privy Councillors, were empowered to call before them the various officials of the royal revenue courts and "...to take order with them for the leveing of the Kings Majestie's dettes..." (77) In March a further Commission, with Bowes again

73 Guy, Tudor England, pp. 202-203; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 392-93.

74 See above pp. 152-154.

75 LP, Vol. 21, part 1, no. 302.

76 Hoak, King's Council, p. 70.

77 Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 383; CPR, 1550-53, p. 144.

appearing as one of the Privy Council representatives, was issued with instructions, this time to survey and report upon the administration and operation of the revenue courts. (78) Later, in May, the young King noted the inclusion of Sir Robert in another Commission appointed to "... sel some part of Chantry lands and of the houses for the payment of my dettes which was £251,000 sterling at the least..." (79) Bowes continued to be employed in similar fashion for the remainder of the reign as Northumberland's regime sought to rationalize and revitalize the royal finances. (80) From an early stage, therefore, Sir Robert became one of the administrative "workhorses", upon whose shoulders the day to day running of the later Edwardian Privy Council depended. Indeed, as D.E. Hoak has shown, he was one of the twenty-one most active councillors, with an attendance rate of 106 out of a possible 218 meetings. Moreover, in March 1552, Sir Robert was named as a member of the King's "Council of State", an inner working party of those councillors most closely associated with the Duke of Northumberland. (81)

78 CPR, 1550-53, p. 353; Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 406.

79 Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 413.

80 See for example, CPR, 1550-53, pp. 354-55, 390, 392, 398; CPR 1553, pp. 184, 411. Literary Remains, Vol. 2, p. 468. The workings of the various Commissions are discussed in some detail in Richardson, Augmentations, pp. 194-213 and a useful summary of Northumberland's fiscal policy is given in Guy, Tudor England, pp. 216-219. See also, Hoak, King's Council, pp. 207-208.

81 Hoak, King's Council, p. 110; Literary Remains, Vol. 2, pp. 499-501.

Yet if in terms of military, administrative and regional experience Sir Robert Bowes was an attractive addition to the higher echelons of Northumberland's government, these were not his only qualities. Indeed, there is little doubt that the Bowes family's adoption of the reformist cause did much to commend its leading representative to the ruling regime. As Professor Loades has pointed out, the court of Edward IV was not particularly distinguished for its piety and godly demeanour. (82) Moreover, the spiritual integrity of Northumberland himself, was as much a matter of debate amongst his more committed contemporaries as it was later to be amongst historians. (83). Under such circumstances the decision of the Duke to promote the cause of radical reform has remained a matter of some debate. (84) Indeed, as recent research has indicated, the pious reformism of the young king himself, coupled with the increasing influence of Edward's maturing personality upon the governing elite, was, perhaps, more instrumental than has hitherto been acknowledged in motivating Northumberland's government towards an overtly Protestant policy. (85) Nevertheless, whatever the reason, it was the case that the Dudley administration undertook to implement some of the most radical religious policies of the Reformation era. (86) Under such

82 Loades, Tudor Court, p. 180.

83 Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 374-75.

84 Ibid, pp. 362-63; Guy, Tudor England, p. 225.

85 Guy, op.cit., p. 225; Murphy, "The Illusion of Decline", pp. 128-29.

86 These reforms are detailed in Jordan, Threshold of Power, chaps. 8 and 9 and are summarized in Guy, op.cit., pp. 219-225. For a contemporary account of the the grass roots impact of Northumberland's religious policies see A.G. Dickens, "Robert Parkyn's Narrative of the Reformation" in his Reformation Studies, pp. 301-307.

circumstances political advancement was inevitably dependent upon a professed commitment to the Protestant cause. The appointment, therefore, of Sir Robert, in September 1551, to a Privy Council whose membership had been carefully overhauled by the supremely powerful Northumberland, reflected the extent to which Bowes's religious, as well as administrative, reliability was recognized by the regime.

Perhaps because of their rebellious involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Bowes of Streatlam have often been portrayed as typically conservative northern gentryfolk whose strong attachment to the "old faith" led them to accept the religious upheavals of the Reformation era with some reluctance. (87) Yet, as has already been suggested, the rebellious inclinations of Robert Bowes at that time certainly appeared to be more firmly associated with his fears regarding his declining political influence in the north than with any notions of defending the traditional institution of the Church. (88) Moreover, it seems likely that, by the end of the 1530s at least, perhaps as the result of its association with Thomas Cromwell, the family was moving towards some acceptance of the new reformist ideology. (89) Unfortunately, the paucity of evidence renders impossible any detailed analysis of the extent to which Cromwell's reformist sympathies

87 J. Ridley John Knox, (Oxford 1968) pp. 313-32; Lord Eustace Percy, John Knox, (London 1937) pp. 142-43.

88 See above pp. 102-104.

89 See above pp. 129-131.

influenced the spiritual attitudes of the young lord of Streatlam. However, details of young Bowes's last will and testament, made in December 1545 have survived in a copy, taken in 1556, of his inquisition post mortem and certainly its preamble appears to be reformist in tone. (90) In this Bowes bequeathed his soul "...to the infinite mercy of almightie Jhesus my saviour and redeemer..." and instructed that his body should simply be buried, "...in some convenient hallowed sepulture by the discrecon of my friends and executors nye unto the place where it shall please almightie god to call me...".

As has been suggested, however, the evidence gleaned from preambles should be treated with caution since the sentiments contained therein may well indicate rather the religious views of the scribe than the testator. Hence the need to compare such sentiments with the further evidence of the will's bequests and provisions which may, perhaps, more properly reflect the true beliefs of the testator. (91) These, indeed, in Sir George's will indicated a far greater degree of religious conservatism for he subsequently went on to bequeath to the gild priests of Dalden and Seaham the annual sums of £4 and 13s 4d, respectively, in order that they might pray for Bowes's soul for the period of twelve years thereafter. (92) At first sight, therefore,

90 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/3, ff. 35-37.

91 M.L. Zell, "Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Wills as Historical Sources", Archives, Vol. XIV, no. 62 (1979) p. 69.

92 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/3, ff. 35-37.

it does seem that Sir George's initially reformist sentiments may, in reality, have been those of his scribe, perhaps his chaplain Thomas Wright who, by the terms of the will, was to be presented to the parsonage of Elton (in Bowes's gift) when it next became vacant. (93) Yet if, as seems likely, this was the same Thomas Wright who was later named as a supervisor in the more conservative testaments of two Durham clergymen, George Baytes and Anthony Farrell, in 1548 and 1560 respectively, such a hypothesis becomes less plausible. Indeed, during the reign of Elizabeth, one Thomas Wright, then the aged Vicar of Seaham, was accused of lapsing into traditional practices. (94) Moreover, whilst, in wills of the York diocese, the incidence of bequeathing the soul to God alone became more common after 1538, in Durham this did not occur until after the 1540s. (95) Sir George's will of 1545, therefore, seems to have been quite unusual and, from the evidence, it seems likely that Bowes himself may well have been responsible for the, albeit contradictory, nature of its religious sentiments which, indeed, perhaps reflected, more than anything else, the spiritual confusion of the late Henrician era. Indeed the conservative bequests to the priests of Dalden and Seaham may, themselves, have been little more than an acknowledgement of family tradition for similar bequests appeared in in the will of Bowes's forebear, Lady Maud, in 1421. (96) It is thus possible that, at a

93 Ibid, f. 51.

94 L.M. Stevens Benham, "The Durham Clergy, 1494-1540", Marcombe (ed.) The Last Principality, pp. 24-25.

95 Ibid, p. 24.

96 "Wills and Inventories", S.S., Vol. 2, pp. 63-65.

time of profound religious uncertainty, Bowes was simply hedging his bets since, in the opening paragraph of the preamble he acknowledged his loyalty to the King as "...defender of the faith and in earth of the Church of England...". Certainly, in other respects, the Bowes family gave little indication of any lingering attachment to the "old religion". Only months before the drawing up of his nephew's will, Sir Robert Bowes had happily accepted the stewardship of Hexham, thus benefitting from the Crown's acquisition of the former ecclesiastical liberty.(97) Moreover, the family's ambivalent attitude towards traditional religious practices at this time is illustrated by the fact that some two months later, in February 1546, Sir Robert Bowes was named as one of the commissioners, within the border shires and the Bishopric, for the survey of chantries, gilds, fraternities and so on, following the decision of the Henrician government to dissolve these institutions.(98) The family's inclination towards the ideals of humanism and reformist theology can also be discerned in its provisions for the education of its younger members. Indeed, Robert Bowes, Sir Robert's nephew and the son of Richard, was sent to Cambridge, from where, in 1547 he matriculated as a pensioner of Queen's College. In this his education followed closely along the lines prescribed for the children of other noted Protestants, such as the Duchess of Suffolk whose two sons entered Cambridge in the

97 See above p. 165.

98 LP, Vol. 21, part 1, no. 302.

late 1540s. (99) Shortly afterwards in 1549, Percival and Robert Bowes, (the illegitimate sons of Sir Robert and Sir George, respectively) were admitted to Lincoln's Inn, thereby maintaining a family tradition which had begun, with Sir Robert, in the early years of the century. (100). Admittedly these provisions were indicative of the wider preoccupation of the gentry, at this time, with the benefits of higher education, not only at the Inns of Court (which had been popular for over a century) but, increasingly, at the Universities. (101) However, the provisions, nevertheless, provide some insight into the religious inclinations of the Bowes family, for both institutions were associated with the cause of reform. Indeed, the Inns of Court had played a leading role in the dissemination of reformist ideas since the 1520s, whilst Cambridge, too, had inclined towards Protestantism since the early days of the Reformation and had provided the Reformation with some of its foremost protagonists. (102)

The family's Protestantism was, moreover, undoubtedly strengthened, after 1549, by its association with the charismatic Scottish Reformer, John Knox, who probably came to the notice of the Bowes family when he took up an appointment as a preacher in Berwick, shortly after his arrival in England in March 1549. Indeed, Sir

99 J and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, Part 1 to 1751, (Cambridge 1922), p. 191. Jordan, The Young King, p. 149.

100 Lincoln's Inn, Admissions, Vol. 1, p. 58.

101 Jordan, The Young King, p. 328.

102 Brigden, London and the Reformation, p. 116; Jordan, The Young King, p. 333; C. Cross, Church and People 1450-1660, (Fontana Press edn. 1976) p. 86. Dowling, "The Gospel and the Court", pp. 36-77.

Robert, who had been re-appointed to the wardenry of the East and Middle Marches at the beginning of 1550, was undoubtedly resident in Berwick at the same time as Knox, who quickly built up a formidable reputation as a preacher. Certainly Knox's radical style of preaching soon attracted widespread attention, not all of it favourable for he gained, too, the opposition of the conservative Bishop Tunstall of Durham, in whose diocese the town of Berwick was situated. Tunstall, indeed, objected to Knox's denunciation of the concept of the sacrifice of the Mass and his denial of the existence of the Real Presence in the sacrament, issues which, due to the ambiguous nature of the 1549 Act of Uniformity, remained hotly-debated points of theology. (103) As a consequence Knox was summoned to appear before the Council in the North, which convened at Newcastle in April 1550, in order to defend his opinions. It is more than likely that Sir Robert, as one of the Councillors bound to continual attendance, was present to hear the Reformer stress the necessity of Scriptural justification as the basis for all religious practices. (104) Perhaps, too, it was as the result of this encounter that Knox came into contact with Bowes and his family, especially since the Reformer's congregation at Berwick seemed, initially, to have been made up, primarily, of Scottish Protestant refugees whose inferior social and political status would have almost certainly precluded any

103 Ridley, Knox, pp. 92, 94; Jordan, The Young King, p. 317.

104 Ridley, op.cit., pp. 95-97.

regular attendance on the family's part. (105) There is little doubt, however, that, at some stage, Sir Robert entertained Knox during the latter's period of residence in the north. In one of his letters the Reformer referred to an encounter between himself and Elizabeth Bowes, Sir Robert's sister-in-law, which occurred whilst they were, "...standing at the copburd in Anwik...", which was, that time, in the occupation of Sir Robert, who was steward and constable of the castle. (106)

As Knox's letter also illustrated, it was at this time, too, that he became acquainted with Elizabeth, the wife of Richard Bowes (Sir Robert's younger brother) who was captain of the Norham garrison, situated only some seven miles from Berwick. (107) Indeed, most of the evidence regarding the family's early relationship with Knox is centred around his relationship with Elizabeth, who became one of his most ardent followers and with whom he corresponded during the early 1550s. (108) The spiritual aspirations of Elizabeth's husband are unknown at this time although other members of the family appear to have been in regular contact with Knox, if only on Mrs Bowes's behalf.

105 Ridley, op.cit., pp. 101-2; C.M. Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes: A Study of a Sixteenth Century Northern Gentlewoman", Studies in Church History, Vol. 27, (1990) p. 329.

106 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 350.

107 Ridley, op.cit., p. 85. Richard Bowes had been appointed to the captaincy of Norham by May 1546, perhaps through the patronage of Sir Robert who had been given the Wardenry of the Middle Marches the previous year. LP, Vol. 21, part 1, no. 1279.

108 A. Daniel Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox: A Woman and Reformation Theology", Church History, Vol. 56, (3), (1987) pp. 333-347. Newman, op.cit., p. 325.

In his correspondence, for example, Knox mentioned a letter he had received from Harry Wycliffe, Elizabeth's half-brother. (who, intriguingly, had been one of the leaders of the Richmondshire rebels during the Pilgrimage of Grace) (109) Elizabeth's eldest son, George, also acted as her emmissary on at least two occasions, for Knox noted how her letters had been brought to him by "...your sone, Mr George...", indicating that it was, perhaps, at this stage that the future, staunchly Protestant, head of the family imbibed the reformist attitudes which characterised his later career. In a further letter to Elizabeth, Knox referred to his meeting (possibly in Newcastle), "...with your dochtir Bowis..." who extended her good wishes, "...unto you and unto our sister Marjorie..." another of Elizabeth's daughters and the one who was, in fact, later to become the Reformer's wife. (110)

As the Reformer was later to remark, Elizabeth's battle with her conscience, "...by reason of her former idolatry and other iniquities...", began long before her acquaintanceship with him, confirming the fact that she, and, perhaps, other members of the family had seriously begun to confront the spiritual uncertainties thrown up by the Reformation long before the advent of Northumberland's reformist regime. (111) Nevertheless, there is

109 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 350. For Wycliffe see above p. 94.

110 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, pp. 354, 376, 380.

111 Ibid, Vol. 6, pp. 513-14; Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes", pp. 337-38; Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes", p. 328.

little doubt that the connection with Knox did much to define and enhance the family's commitment to the Protestant faith. In a letter, dated 26 February 1552, Knox pointed out to Elizabeth how, at that time, her acquaintanceship with Christ's "...maist plane doctrine..." was of shorter duration than the period of His three year earthly ministry, suggesting that her actual conversion to the Reformed faith had taken place only after his arrival in Berwick, less than three years before. (112) Nevertheless, it seems likely also from this that well before the time of Sir Robert's appointment to the Privy Council in September 1551, his family had, indeed, reconciled itself to the Protestant faith. If this was, indeed, the case then Sir Robert Bowes, in the sphere of reform as well as administration, was surely an attractive and reliable addition to the Dudley administration. Indeed shortly after his appointment as a Councillor, Bowes openly declared his allegiance to the new religious practices by obtaining a licence, granted for life, which permitted him and all guests at his table to eat flesh and milk foods in Lent and on other fast days. Technically this licence did little more than give its holder a dispensation from the terms of an Act passed in 1549 which sought to redefine traditional customs according to the precepts of the reformed faith. Specific days of fast and abstinence were thus retained in order to encourage virtue and holiness and also, as the statute made plain, to

112 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 349; Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes" p. 328.

promote and preserve the fishing industry. (113) Nevertheless, the point of the matter is that clearly, had Bowes retained any vestiges of ideological attachment to the "old religion", it is unlikely that he would have sought a dispensation of this nature.

Yet if the family's spiritual aspirations were strengthened and defined by its association with John Knox then his influence was no less important in determining its political allegiances at a time when religion and politics were inextricably linked. Indeed, the connection of the Bowes family with Knox undoubtedly pushed Sir Robert Bowes into a closer alliance with the reformist Dudley administration for Knox quickly attracted the attention of the ruling court circle and thereafter gained the favour of the young king and the admiration of the Duke of Northumberland. Indeed, following Northumberland's meeting with the Reformer, during the Duke's visitation of the north in the summer of 1552, Knox was invited to preach at court and was subsequently named as one of the six chaplains appointed to serve the King. (114). At one point Northumberland was strongly in favour of Knox's appointment to the see of Rochester although the Reformer, who remained outspokenly sceptical of the Duke's commitment to the Protestant faith, rejected

113 CPR, 1550-53, p. 53; Jordan The Young King, p. 309.

114 Ridley, Knox, p. 102; Literary Remains, Vol. 2, pp. 376-77.

this patronage in a manner that was "...neither grateful nor pleaseable..." (115) It was probably after his return to the north in the autumn of 1552 that Knox entered into a pre-contract of marriage with Marjorie Bowes, thus strengthening still further his ties with the Streatlam family. Certainly by the beginning of the following year he was referring to Elizabeth, in his letters, as "deirlie belovit mother" and to Marjorie as "deirest spouse".(116) Given, therefore, his family's alliance with one of the leading architects of the Protestant reformation, it is hardly surprising that during the succession crisis of the following summer Sir Robert Bowes supported the attempt to implement the "Devise for the Succession of the Crown" which sought to subordinate the claim to the throne of the papist Mary Tudor in favour of that of Northumberland's daughter-in-law, the Protestant Lady Jane Grey. As early as the winter of 1552, John Knox himself, disturbed perhaps by rumours regarding the king's failing health and by the growing rapprochement between the Duke of Northumberland and Mary Tudor, began to warn of the dangers of a return to Papistry. (117) On Christmas Day 1552 the Reformer preached a sermon in Newcastle in which he railed against the dissembling activities of "covetous noblemen" who were only waiting for the king's death in order to return the kingdom to the "old religion".

115 Literary Remains, Vol. 2, pp. 463-64.

116 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 379; Ridley, Knox, pp. 140-143; Newman "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes", p. 331.

117 Ridley, op.cit., p. 120; Loades, Mary Tudor, p. 169.

The conservative magnate, Lord Wharton and the volatile Durham nobleman, the Earl of Westmorland reacted indignantly to Knox's remarks with the result that Wharton reported the incident to the Council whilst Westmorland angrily summoned Knox to his presence, undoubtedly to account for his activities. (118). It is, indeed, possible that Westmorland, who was noted for his unpredictable temperament, may have felt threatened by Knox's remarks regarding dissembling and "covetous" noblemen. After all, the Earl's name had already been associated with the shadowy northern plot of 1550, which had contributed to the downfall of the Bishop of Durham, although his political allegiance had been later sought, and apparently won, by Northumberland. (119) It is possible, too, that his anger extended towards the Bowes of Streatlam who had nurtured and consolidated their association with the Reformer. After all, tension between the Neville and Bowes families had existed since the days of the Pilgrimage of Grace. (120) Certainly, little more than a year later, in May 1554, the Earl wrote to his brother-in-law, the Earl of Rutland, complaining of the activities of members of the Bowes family and their associates, the Wycliffes and Rokebys, referring to them as "...mye aunceent enymies and they which sought my bloyd to please the Duke of Northumberland...". (121) At this time a confrontation erupted between

118 Ridley, Knox, pp. 120, 540; Knox, Works, Vol. 3, pp. 357.

119 Hoak, King's Council, p. 63; Reid, King's Council, pp. 173, 176.

120 See above p. 109-110.

121 HMC. Calendar of the Rutland Manuscript, Vol. 1, (London 1888), p. 63.

the two factions, at the famous Gatherley Race Meeting, in Richmondshire, resulting in a serious disturbance which necessitated the involvement of the Council in the North. Later in the month, the Privy Council commended the Earl of Shrewbury for his "...good circumspection and wyse handling..." of a matter which could easily have threatened "...the good order and quiet of those partes..." (122) As Professor Fletcher has noted, the affair echoed down the years to the Rising of 1569 when the loyalist Bowes, Wyecliffe and Rokeby families aligned themselves against the rebellious Nevilles. (123)

Yet if, from a local perspective, Knox's preoccupation with the return of "idolatry" led to the intensification of rivalries between the Bowes of Streatlam and their Durham neighbours, within the national context the family's connection with the Reformer almost certainly influenced the decision of Sir Robert Bowes, in 1553, to support the claim to the English throne of Lady Jane Grey. Indeed, Bowes remained as a member of Jane's Council until the 19 July when he and his colleagues were forced, by the weight of public opinion, to acknowledge the succession of Mary Tudor. Admittedly historians have questioned the extent to which the "Devise" was genuinely supported by the political elite. It has been suggested, for example, that the majority of the Privy Councillors acquiesced to the scheme only under

122 Lambeth Palace Library MS. 696, f.69.

123 Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, pp. 92-3.

considerable pressure. (124) Indeed, the traditional view of events, which stresses the inspirational role of the Duke of Northumberland in the affair, has been increasingly challenged by the interpretation which highlights the greater involvement of the staunchly Protestant Edward VI himself in the drafting and promoting of the "Devise". (125) Nevertheless, such a scheme can hardly have been other than attractive to Sir Robert who, in both political and spiritual terms, was irrevocably committed to Protestantism. Along with other leading members of the government Bowes, in his capacity as Master of the Rolls, was one of those who, on 21st June, signed the letters patent for the Limitation of the Crown, which settled the succession in favour of Lady Jane Grey. (126) Thereafter he apparently remained steadfast to the cause of reform and supported the attempts of the Duke of Northumberland to secure a Protestant succession. In the event, Jane was proclaimed Queen on the 10th July, four days after the death of Edward, with the support of the Privy Council. From the evidence, however, it seems that the allegiance of this body began to dwindle almost immediately in the face of the overwhelming support of the political nation for Mary Tudor. (127) Nevertheless, Bowes apparently remained loyal to the last for, on the 19th July, the very day that the Council finally declared for Mary, he was one of the

124 Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility, p. 74.

125 Loades, Mary Tudor, pp. 171-72; Jordan, Threshold of Power, pp. 515-17.

126 "Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary", ed. J.G. Nichols, Camden Society, XLVIII, (1850), p. 100.

127 Loades, op.cit., pp. 178-181; Brigden, London and the Reformation, p. 522.

signatories to a letter sent to Lord Rich, the lord Lieutenant of Essex, urging him to remain loyal to Queen Jane. It was only on the following day, when Mary's succession was assured, that Bowes signed the Council's command ordering Northumberland, who, after taking to the field in support of Lady Jane, had retreated to Cambridge, to lay down his arms. (128)

Following the accession of Mary in July 1553, however, the attempts of the deeply reformist Elizabeth Bowes to maintain the connection with her spiritual mentor, John Knox, apparently came into bitter conflict with her family's political aspirations as Sir Robert, anxious to salvage his both his career and the fortunes of of his House, attempted to reconcile the Bowes of Streatlam to the new conservative regime. Given the extent of his support for Northumberland's reformist regime Bowes was, in fact, fortunate for the new Queen determined upon a policy of clemency towards the fallen Duke's supporters with the result that Sir Robert escaped comparatively lightly from the consequences of his treachery. (129) Admittedly his career as leading politician lay in tatters, with his exclusion from the new Marian Privy Council, a body notable for its recruitment of a considerable number of former Councillors, bearing testimony to the depth of his association with Northumberland. (130) Moreover, he was

128 "Chronicle of Queen Jane", p. 109.

129 Loades, Mary Tudor, pp. 208-209.

130 Loades, Tudor Court, p. 159; APC, Vol. 4, p. 327.

required, in August 1553, to resign from the office of Master of the Rolls. (131). Nevertheless Sir Robert received a pardon and quickly achieved some degree of rapprochement with the new regime. (132) Indeed, his career was probably salvaged by his reputation as an expert in Border affairs, although his direct involvement in that sphere had ended upon his appointment to the Privy Council. Certainly by the 14th October he had been appointed to the Commission, headed by Sir Thomas Cornwallis, to enter into negotiation with the Scots in order to settle outstanding grievances pertaining to the Anglo-Scottish frontier. (133) His involvement in Border affairs apparently continued for at the time of his death, on the 28th February 1555, he was in Berwick where he had been commissioned to "view" the defences of the garrison. (134) Perhaps even more importantly, for the prestige of the House of Bowes, Sir Robert and his family were also allowed to retain their positions within the administration of the north. Sir Robert kept his seat on the Council in the North and acted as its Vice-President until his death whilst both he and his brother, Richard were re-appointed to the Commissions of the Peace for the northern counties in February 1554. (135)

131 Bindoff, House of Commons, Vol. 1, p. 472; CPR, 1553-54, p. 327.

132 CPR, 1553-54, p. 464.

133 APC, Vol. 4, p. 357; Boscher, "The Anglo-Scottish Border, 1550-1560".

134 APC, Vol. 5, p. 102; "Wills and Inventories", S.S., Vol. 2, p. 145; P.R.O. C142/102/46.

135 CPR, 1553-4, p. 22; Reid, King's Council, p. 181.

It was against the background of her family's apparent reconciliation with the Marian regime that Elizabeth Bowes thus strove to retain her faith and to strengthen her connections with John Knox. Indeed, even after the establishment of a papist monarchy rendered impossible the idea of clerical marriage Elizabeth persisted in her plans to promote the planned alliance between the Reformer and her daughter, Marjorie. As has been noticed, a precontract of marriage had probably been negotiated between the two towards the end of 1552, when Knox was basking in the regard of the Edwardian ruling elite. (136) However, by the following September the family's opposition, in the light of the new political alignment, became clear. In a letter to Elizabeth, dated at that time, Knox expressed concern over the "...proces betwene your Husband and yow, tuiching my matter concernyng his Dochter...and begged her, "...to trubill not yourself too muche thairwith..." (137) In November 1553, at Elizabeth's request, the Reformer discussed the marriage with Sir Robert whose, "...disdaneful yea dispytfull wordis..." led Knox to conclude, despairingly, that Bowes was "...becumin not onlie a dispyser (presumably of the Protestant faith) but also a taunter of God's messingeris..." (138)

136 See above p. 208.

137 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 376.

138 Ibid, Vol. 3, p. 378.

The family's opposition towards Knox continued throughout the reign of Mary. Moreover, it is possible that pressure was put upon Elizabeth to renounce her faith for, whilst the realm was not formally reconciled to Rome until November 1554, the Marian regime began, almost immediately the process of repealing the religious reforms of the previous reign. (139) Certainly within the family's home diocese of Durham the Edwardian clerical hierarchy which, following the fall of Tunstall, had been presided over since 1551 by the ultra-Protestant Dean Robert Horn, was quickly replaced. Indeed, within weeks of Mary's accession, the conservative Tunstall was again officiating as Bishop of Durham whilst the machinery was set in motion to gain the repeal of the Act of Dissolution, thereby restoring his Palatine authority. (140) Undoubtedly the impact of this religious reaction upon Mrs Bowes's fragile spiritual sensibilities worried Knox. Indeed, in his answer, sent from Dieppe in July, 1554, to her letter confessing that she had been "...grevouslie temptit and sair assaultit to revolt and turne back agane to that abominabill and blasphemous ydolatrie..." he exhorted her to retain her spiritual convictions. He went on to assure her that "...Gif ony trubill yow abufe measure whether thai be majestratis or carnall freindis, thai sall beir thair just condempnation unles thai spedilie repent..." (141) In the end, however, Elizabeth's determination to retain both her faith and her

139 Guy, Tudor England, pp. 233-34.

140 Loades, "Dissolution", pp. 109-112; James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 58.

141 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, pp. 344-45.

relationship with the Reformer triumphed for, as Knox later reminded her, she chose rather to forsake "...freindis, contrey, possessioun, children and husband than to forsaike God, Chryst Jesus his Sone and his religion knawin and professit..." (142) Along with Marjorie Bowes, who had probably married Knox during his visit to Scotland in 1555, Elizabeth accompanied the Reformer to Geneva where, on the 13 September 1556, all three were admitted to the English Congregation. (143)

The ease with which the leading male members of the Bowes family reconciled themselves to the Marian regime inevitably leaves them open to the accusation that, in the interests of political expediency, they were prepared to compromise their religious principles. Under the circumstances, however, such conduct was perhaps understandable for the family's position at the forefront of national political life had been irreparably damaged by its decision to back the subsequently unsuccessful regime of Lady Jane Grey. Admittedly its elevated political position had been centred, primarily, around the career of Sir Robert Bowes and, as such, would almost certainly have suffered some decline upon his death in 1555. Nevertheless, the ability of other family members to attract the potentially lucrative patronage necessary to advance their own political prospects was

142 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 392.

143 Ridley. Knox, pp. 224-25; Livre des Anglois a Geneve, ed. J.S. Burn, (London 1831) p. 8.

obviously diminished by Sir Robert's fall from favour. Indeed, Richard Bowes was apparently stripped of the captaincy of Norham after his brother's fall. By 1555 this was in the hands of the conservative northern knight and later Elizabethan rebel, Sir Richard Norton. (144) Similarly, Sir Robert's offices of chief steward of Hexham and constable of Alnwick which, in a more favourable climate could well have been passed to his heirs, were granted, after his death, to the conservative northern magnate Lord Wharton. (145) Admittedly, in February 1558, George Bowes, the eldest son of Richard and nephew of Sir Robert, was granted his dead uncle's office of steward of Barnard Castle. However this appointment, made initially in 1544, had been re-granted in survivorship, naming George as heir, in February 1549 and was thus secured by hereditary tenure. (146)

Nevertheless, as has been shown, the family's understanding and experience of northern affairs, particularly with regard to the ever-sensitive border regions, undoubtedly ensured its political survival for no Tudor monarch could afford to regard the security of the northern frontier with complacency, even in times of relative Anglo-Scottish accord. As such the Bowes of Streatlam were able to retain their leading position within the regional hierarchy and it was this

144 APC, Vol. 5, p. 102.

145 CPR, 1555-7, p. 27. As Penry Williams has pointed out, the heirs of former office holders were often first in the queue when vacant posts were being re-assigned. Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 87.

146 CPR, 1557-8, p. 257; Williams, op.cit., p. 85.

that Sir Robert and the leading male members of the family sought to preserve even if that meant maintaining a low profile in respect of religious considerations. In many respects their plight resembled that of the leading representatives of the later recusant families of Elizabeth's reign who were forced outwardly to conform to the precepts of the new Religious Settlement in order to safeguard both lineage and inheritance. Elizabeth Bowes, on the other hand, again in common with the later recusant wives who were not bound by considerations of inheritance or political expediency, could afford the luxury of adhering to her conscience which, as the norms of society dictated, was held to be beyond the control of her husband and family. (147) Through the agency of Elizabeth, therefore, the Bowes family was able to maintain its link with the reformed faith during the troubled years of the Marian reaction. Admittedly, Elizabeth was fortunate in that, by virtue of her social and financial status, she was able to flee abroad, in company with what Professor Cross has suggested may have been "...a disproportionate number of Protestants in the upper ranks of society...", thereby escaping the horrors of the Marian persecutions. (148) It was, however, in respect of religious persecution that the experiences of the recusant and early Protestant women parted company. Indeed, whilst Queen Elizabeth shrank from

147 K. Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects", T. Aston (ed.) Crisis in Europe, (London 1965) p. 321; J. Bossy, The English Catholic Community, (London 1975) p. 154. M. Rowlands, "Recusant Women", M. Prior (ed.) Women in English Society, (London and New York 1985), pp. 161-2.

148 Cross, Church and People, p. 119.

executing women for their religious persuasions, with the result that few recusant women, even of the lower classes suffered the ultimate penalty for their faith, her sister Mary had no such inhibitions. As a result a significant proportion of the Marian martyrs were female, in all some fifty out of a total of three hundred, and almost all belonging to the lower orders of society. (149) Whilst, therefore, Elizabeth Bowes was remarkable in that she was, as Professor Collinson has recently pointed out, "...the first Protestant of her sex and class in the whole north-east of England...", it was the latter attribute, her social standing, which was instrumental in preserving her faith; in the harsh religious climate of Marian England her femininity would have counted for little. (150)

Yet, whilst the temporal sufferings of Elizabeth Bowes did not bear comparison with those of other, less fortunate, early English Protestant women she displayed, nevertheless, a remarkable degree of tenacity in the maintenance of her faith, being prepared to go to almost unprecedented lengths for a woman of her background and position. As I have suggested elsewhere, unlike other notable female exiles of the Marian period, such as Catherine Bertie and Anne Locke, Elizabeth Bowes was not blessed with an understanding husband and was forced, as a result, to sacrifice her marriage for the sake of her

149 Sister Joseph Damien Hanlon, "These be but Women", C.H. Carter (ed.) From the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation, (London 1966) p. 394.

150 P. Collinson, The Birthpangs of Protestant England, (London 1988) p. 77.

faith. (151) Certainly the estrangement between Elizabeth and Richard Bowes, who had succeeded to the Streatlam inheritance upon the death of Sir Robert, seemed complete. It is, indeed, possible that Richard, a shadowy figure in the annals of the family's history, was not highly motivated, in spiritual terms. Indeed, his will, drawn up in August 1558, was bereft of religious sentiments or bequests of any kind with Bowes stating only his desire to be buried in some "convenient sepulchre" near to the place where he was called to God's mercy. Perhaps more importantly, from his family's point of view, Richard Bowes made no mention in his will of his exiled wife and daughter. Moreover, in respect of the marriage arrangements of his other daughters, he made the pointed proviso that, if one of them should attempt to marry without the consent of the leading members of the family, she would lose her allotted marriage portion. (152)

The estrangement may not, of course, have been entirely unwelcomed by Elizabeth. As research has shown, the desire to escape from earthly attachments in order to concentrate more fully upon the pursuit of spiritual fulfilment was a characteristic common to particularly pious Reformation women, of both Protestant and Catholic sympathies. Indeed, the phenomenon was not wholly confined to the Reformation era as the example of the fifteenth century mystic, Margery Kempe

151 Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes", p. 331.

152 "Wills and Inventories from the Archdeaconry of Richmond", S.S., Vol. 26, (1853) pp. 116-120.

illustrated. (153) In many respects the lives of Elizabeth Bowes and Margery were similar with both women developing a deep sense of spiritual commitment and the desire for a religious lifestyle after years of marriage and the birth of many children - Margery had fourteen and Elizabeth fifteen. This does, indeed, tie in with the suggestion that such women, after years of subordination and physically exhausting child-bearing, sought emancipation and psychological release through the medium of intense spiritual commitment. (154) In Elizabeth's case, of course, her commitment was intensified as the result of her relationship with Knox. The Knox-Bowes correspondence is, in fact, devoted primarily to the discussion and analysis of her spiritual anxieties. Indeed, upon reading the letters, one cannot help but be reminded of Robert Louis Stevenson's rather cruel pen-portrait of Elizabeth as a "...religious hypochondriac, a very weariful woman, full of doubts and scruples, and giving no rest on earth either to herself or to those whom she honoured with her confidence..." (155) Certainly Knox himself gave that impression of Elizabeth for, in a letter, dated 1572 and written after her death, he spoke of her "battle" with a troubled conscience "...which never suffered her to rest but when she was in the company of the faithful, of whom (from the first hearing of the Word at my

153 E. Macek, "The Emergence of a feminine Spirituality in the Book of Martyrs", Sixteenth Century Journal, Vol. 19 (1988), pp. 72, 75; J. Delumeau, Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire, (London 1977), p. 44. Newman, "The Refomation and Elizabeth Bowes", p. 330.

154 Collinson, Birthpangs of Protestant England, p. 75; Newman, op.cit., pp. 331-32.

155 R L Stevenson, "John Knox and his Relations to Women", Familiar Studies of Men and Books, (London 1925) p. 261.

mouth) she judged me to be one...". Moreover, he went on to confess that, "...Her company to me was comfortable...but yet it was not without some cross; for besides trouble and fasherie of body sustained for her, my mind was seldom quiet for doing somewhat for the comfort of her troubled conscience..." (156) Yet Knox had good reason, at the time, to stress the spiritual nature of the relationship and, as such, may well have felt constrained to overemphasize the extent of Elizabeth's "religious hypochondria", for his letter was undoubtedly designed to quash the speculation surrounding the true nature of his relationship with his mother-in-law who, in age, was probably his senior by some nine years. (157) Indeed, the subject has continued to provoke as much debate amongst historians as it did to contemporary observers although, as research has shown, the relationship was not unusual for the dependence of pious women upon charismatic preachers and confessors was a noted feature of late-medieval and Reformation feminine spirituality. (158) Since, however, it is Knox's letters, rather than Elizabeth's, which have survived, we are dependent, for any analysis of her character, upon the writings of a man whose supreme confidence in his own salvation must inevitably have rendered him slightly contemptuous of a soul plagued by spiritual doubts and

156 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 333; also printed in Ibid, Vol. 6, pp. 513-14.

157 Elizabeth was born in August 1505. Durham C.R.O. D/BO/F17. Ridley, Knox, p. 531, has estimated Knox's probable date of birth as November 1514.

158 Ridley, op.cit, pp. 131-38, Stevenson, "John Knox", pp. 261-67; Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes", pp. 335-6; Collinson, Birthpangs of Protestant England, pp. 75-77.

uncertainties. (159) Moreover, as has recently been pointed out, by confronting Elizabeth's uncertainties Knox may have been forced to re-appraise his own beliefs; a state of affairs which could have led him to exaggerate, almost defensively, the gulf between her spiritual commitment and his own. (160)

Whilst without her own testimony it is impossible to gauge, with any certainty, the true religious motivation of Elizabeth Bowes it was, nevertheless, the case that her staunchly Protestant stance during the years of the Marian reaction maintained the link between the Bowes of Streatlam and the cause of Reform. As such she was to lay the foundations of her family's faith for succeeding generations. Admittedly Elizabeth's sons George, the heir to the Streatlam estate, and Robert had reconciled themselves, along with their father and uncle, to the Marian regime. Indeed, George had been pardoned, along with his uncle Sir Robert, after the accession of Mary and had thenceforth endeavoured to serve her regime in the administration of the north. (161) Yet apparently his reformist reputation amongst his fellow Protestants had not been diminished by his political expediency. In July 1559, shortly after his mother's return from her Genevan exile, George resumed his role as an intermediary between Elizabeth and Knox, who had by then returned to Scotland. (162) Given

159 Newman, "The Reformation and Mrs Bowes", pp. 329-330.

160 Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes", pp. 336-37; 346-47.

161 CPR, 1553-4, p. 464.

162 CSP Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 238.

Knox's intransigence in regard to papist sympathizers it is hardly likely that he would have received George if he had harboured any doubts regarding the religious reliability of Elizabeth's son. Indeed, his confidence in the integrity of his brothers-in-law was such that, after Marjorie's death in 1560, the Reformer apparently arranged for the two young sons of the marriage to be cared for by the Bowes family. In August 1562, Knox had requested that Mrs Bowes be allowed to travel to Scotland in order that "...she maybe a relief unto hym in the burdayne of household and brying up of his children, hir dawtere sonnes..." However, it seems likely that, after Knox's re-marriage in 1564, the two boys returned with their grandmother to England, perhaps to the household of Robert Bowes, upon whom Elizabeth's family manor of Aske in Richmondshire, had been settled. Indeed, upon his death in 1572, Knox left £500 to Robert in trust for his sons. (163)

Moreover, as subsequent events showed, in the eyes of the early Elizabethan regime, too, the family was regarded as reliably Protestant and, as such, politically and administratively indispensable in the north. Indeed, the overtly Reformist stance of the family during the Rising of the Northern Earls, with its overtones of Catholic conspiracy, was notable in a region which, for generations to come, continued to cling, tenaciously, to the "old

163 Ridley, Knox, pp. 384, 460, 518; V.C.H, North Riding, Vol. 1, p. 60.

religion". Nevertheless, the experience of the Bowes of Streatlam in the Reformation period illustrates only too clearly the difficulties of reconciling political ambition and spiritual conviction in an age of intense religious upheaval. In the event the family was fortunate for it survived, with its political and religious aspirations more or less intact, to prosper in the relatively calmer atmosphere of the Elizabethan era. Yet, there is little doubt that its staunchly reformist reputation owed everything to the remarkable faith of a singularly remarkable woman whose spiritual determination, in the face of ever-present doubts and uncertainties, preserved and enhanced the link between the Bowes of Streatlam and the Protestant faith. Thus the legacy of Elizabeth Bowes was of a dual nature for it laid not only the foundations of the family's spiritual aspirations but assured also the political security of future generations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIR GEORGE BOWES AND THE DEFENCE OF THE NORTH: 1558-1569

There is little doubt that the survival of the House of Bowes, during the reign of Mary, was due to its recognized understanding and experience of border defence and diplomacy at a time when overt French influence in Scotland rendered imperative the need to secure the frontier against the potential threat posed by the "auld alliance". Moreover, the outbreak of war in 1557, following the decision of the the English administration to join with Spain in its offensive against France, provided the Streatlam family with the opportunity to further revive its political prospects through the agency of military service on the borders. Professor Loades has pointed out the extent to which this war healed the breaches between disparate sections of the ruling elite and it was, indeed, the case that numerous former adherents of the Duke of Northumberland, including his sons Ambrose and Robert Dudley, provided loyal military service to the Marian regime during the conflict .(1) Certainly it was at this time that George, the son and heir of Richard Bowes, attempted to regain some of his family's former political prestige.

1 Loades, Mary Tudor, p. 279;

George Bowes had first gained experience of border conflict during the Scottish war of Henry VIII for, in 1546, his participation was noted in a raid wherein five Scots were killed, twenty prisoners taken and numerous homesteads and towers in Teviotdale burned. (2) By such means he was undoubtedly quickly initiated into the bloodthirsty and volatile world of border defence. That he learnt his trade well is illustrated by a letter of introduction, written by the Earl of Rutland on the 3rd November 1549, and given to Bowes upon his despatch to the Privy Council, with information pertaining to Anglo-Scottish diplomatic manoeuvres. Indeed Rutland spoke of Bowes, who at that time was a captain of light horsemen, in glowing terms and noted that, "...He has been present at every enterprise much to his praise and commendation. None that has served here has been comparable to him in seeing that his men were well horsed and well armed and in bringing his full number to the field and keeping them together. He deserves encouragement from you..." (3) Shortly afterwards, however, an Anglo-Scottish peace was negotiated and there is little evidence concerning George's career during the next few years. Nevertheless, it seems that he maintained his connection with the frontier, perhaps in company with Sir Robert who, after his fall from political grace, spent his last few years in Berwick attending to the affairs of the border. Indeed, by December 1555 George Bowes had been named in the Commission appointed to oversee the refurbishment of the border fortresses and

2 LP, Vol. 21 part 1, no. 1279 (p.630).

3 HMC. Rutland, Vol. 1, p. 47.

the enclosure of lands within the proximity of the borders in accordance with an Act of Parliament apparently designed to forestall the decay of the border counties. (4)

Upon the outbreak of war with France in June 1557, therefore, George Bowes was well placed to prosper as the security and defence of the vulnerable Anglo-Scottish frontier became, once more, a matter of urgency. Indeed, at this time the Marian government was pleased to take account of his "experience and faithful service" in the sphere of border service and, on the 15th January 1558, he was appointed as Marshal of Berwick. At this time Bowes, a widower, was also trying to advance the political fortunes of his family by negotiating a marriage alliance with Jane Talbot, a kinswoman of the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Lord President of the Council in the North. (5) Indeed, Bowes was hoping to have formalised the marriage during a thirty day abstinence concluded with the Scots, as his letter to the Earl dated the 8th February 1558, made clear. (6) However the alliance was still being negotiated in March for, on the 21st of that month, George wrote again to Shrewsbury noting that his brother had been sent to wait upon the Earl in order "...to sett forward the solemnization of the marriage betwixt Mistres Jane Talbot and me...". (7) Nevertheless, even at this

4 CPR, 1555-57, p. 54; Tough, Last Years of a Frontier, p. 149.

5 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 373-76,

6 Lambeth Palace Library MS 696, f. 47.

7 Ibid, f. 45.

stage of the proceedings, Bowes felt sufficiently well-connected to the Earl to ask for his "good lordship" in obtaining the patent for his Berwick office which had not, so far, been forthcoming. As Bowes pointed out, without such authorization he was unable to perform his duties as Marshal. Moreover he was concerned that the expenses of the office would be greater than his allowance and living would bear and he informed the Earl that he had, accordingly asked for an increased "entertainment". (8) The extent of Shrewsbury's assistance in the matter is not clear, although Bowes's patent of office was registered on the 14th April. Moreover the marriage with Mistress Talbot was finally formalised on the 1st July 1558. (9) By the end of Mary's reign, therefore, the Bowes of Streatlam had begun to regain some of the political momentum that they had lost in 1553. As Professor Loades has pointed out, since the French war was still in progress at the time of Mary's death, it is impossible to speculate upon the extent to which the formerly disaffected members of the elite, would have retained their new-found loyalty in the face of peace (10). Certainly, as Gerry Bowler has shown, by the end of the reign, Protestant exile polemicists had begun to formulate radical theories of resistance to Mary's rule. (11) Prominent amongst these were the works of the Genevan exiles Christopher Goodman and Bowes's own brother-in-law,

8 In 1544 the Marshal of Berwick's half-yearly fee was £16 13s 4d. HP, Vol. 2, no. 338).

9 CPR, 1557-58, p. 63; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 376.

10 Loades, Mary Tudor, p. 279.

11 G. Bowler, "Marian Protestants and the Idea of Violent Resistance to Tyranny", Lake and Dowling (eds.) Protestantism and the National Church, pp. 124-143.

John Knox, who justified the use of resistance on the grounds of Mary's femininity as well as her idolatry. (12) Had matters come to the point of overt Protestant resistance, the loyalties of someone, such as Bowes, who possessed close ideological ties with the Genevan exiles may well have given the Marian regime cause for concern. In the prevailing atmosphere of reaction, however, Bowes's alliance with the powerful Talbot family was a shrewd move for Shrewsbury, although conservative in religion, had been equally acceptable to Northumberland and Mary and was apparently adept at accommodating all shades of political opinion. With such a patron George Bowes probably hoped, in the future, to avoid the association with political extremism which had, in the past, led to the proscription of his House. At the same time, however, his family's close connection with the cause of reform ensured that, in the event of a Protestant restoration, it would be well placed to benefit accordingly.

Upon the accession of Elizabeth, Bowes, who had succeeded to the Streatlam title upon the death of his father in October 1558, was re-appointed as Marshal of Berwick. (13) In this capacity he participated in the English campaign which gave aid to the Scottish Lords of the Congregation, who were seeking to overturn ascendancy of the Catholic and pro-French Regent, Mary of Guise. (14) Indeed, in

12 Ibid, pp. 137-140.

13 "Wills and Inventories in the Archdeaconry of Richmond", S.S. Vol. 26, pp. 116, 120.

14 W. MacCaffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime, (London 1969), p. 56; Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 29-30.

consideration of his services, Bowes was knighted at Berwick by the Duke of Norfolk, at that time the Queen's Lieutenant in the North, on the 23rd April 1560. (15) For a while, therefore, a degree of continuity persisted in terms of both Bowes's career and in the general character of the new regime. However the passing of the religious Act of Settlement in 1559 and the re-emergence, through royal favour, of the Dudley faction determined thereafter the establishment of a Protestant polity which was dominated, to a large degree, by survivors of the regime of the late Duke of Northumberland. (16) By virtue of its close associations with Northumberland's regime and its continued affinity with the Protestant cause, the political fortunes of the Bowes family were transformed to the extent that it became firmly established as a pillar of the new northern establishment. Little wonder then that, in 1569, Sir George Bowes was prepared so staunchly to defend this position, at Barnard Castle, during the Rising of the Northern Earls.

Several historians have considered the Northern Rebellion in the light of a reaction, by disaffected sections of the northern ruling elite, to the political changes implemented by the Protestant Elizabethan regime. (17). Certainly, in contrast to the interference, by central authority, in the government of the north during the reigns of Henry

15 CSP Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 375.

16 Guy Tudor England, pp. 258-264; Loades, Tudor Court, p. 144.

17 Reid, "Political Influence", pp. 217-224; James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, pp. 49-51; Taylor, "The Crown and the North of England, 1559-70", p. 370.

VIII and Edward VI, the Marian regime had instituted the policy of allowing the region to drift back into the hands of its traditional rulers. Indeed, as has recently been pointed out, the restoration of the Percy earl of Northumberland in 1557 "...represented an extremely conservative, almost reactionary, policy towards the government of the north..." (18) Moreover, Mary's patronage of the leading Durham magnate, the earl of Westmorland, placed the house of Neville in a hitherto unparalleled position of northern predominance. (19) The insinuation, however, of Protestant courtiers into the government of the region during the 1560s and the corresponding decline in the power of the traditional elite almost certainly rekindled the embers of northern noble dissent and dissatisfaction. In this light, a re-run of the Pilgrimage of Grace, which had been the north's response to Henry VIII's political machinations, was perhaps almost inevitable. (20)

If, however, northern political perceptions were still conditioned by the expectations and aspirations which had inspired rebellion some thirty years earlier, the same cannot be said for the attitudes of the Bowes family. In 1536, the Streatlam house had, initially, been solidly behind the rebel cause. Yet the family's defence of the Elizabethan regime during the Northern Rebellion ensured that the name

18 Loades, Mary Tudor, p. 243.

19 James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 49.

20 D. Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People: the local community and the Rebellion of the Northern Earls", Marcombe (ed.) The Last Principality, pp. 199-120.

of Bowes became a by-word for loyalty and dependability. Indeed, upon the death of Sir George Bowes, in August 1580, his friend and neighbour, Christopher Rokeby, who also participated in the defence of Barnard Castle, wrote to Lord Burghley of the loss of "...the surest pyllore the Quens Majestie had in these partes". Rokeby went on to assure Burghley that, "...all we that is leffte shall stand faste in our dutyes to hyr Majestie ...", yet he nevertheless felt obliged to admit that, "...we thynke our selves now nakyd, withowte a head to leane unto." (21) The reason for this transformation appears relatively straightforward. In 1536 the position of the Bowes family - and particularly that of its leading adult member, Robert Bowes - in the northern political sphere was under threat from the encroachments of central authority. By 1569, however, the family's staunchly Protestant sympathies in a region notorious for its religious conservatism, had secured its position within the new regime. Indeed it is perhaps possible to see the family as part of that "alternative-faction" local elite, as suggested by Dr Marcombe, who, in company with the "new men" of the region, became the beneficiaries of the new Protestant order. (22).

Initially, the new Elizabethan regime proceeded cautiously in its dealings with the northern political establishment and little immediate change was implemented. However, favourable changes in

21 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 394-5.

22 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 121.

border personnel were facilitated by the military mobilizations which accompanied the English intervention in the Scottish war of 1559-1560. (23). The major casualty in these upheavals was, of course the earl of Northumberland who was forced to relinquish his Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches. Moreover, the death of the earl of Shrewsbury, the religiously conservative President of the Council in the North opened up the possibility, after September 1560, of implementing effective Reformist policy from the highest level, under the new administration of the Protestant earl of Rutland. Certainly, within the Palatinate of Durham political change was in evidence from 1561 with the appointment of the new Bishop of Durham, the Genevan exile, James Pilkington. (24) Under the new Bishop the administration quickly adopted a distinctly Protestant hue and under such circumstances it was almost inevitable that the Bowes family would be drawn back into the local political elite. Certainly the reformist influence of the Dudleys made its presence felt in Durham for Lord Robert and his brother, Ambrose Dudley, patronized several of the returned Marian exiles such as William Whittingham, who acted, at one point, as Ambrose's chaplain. (25) Both Whittingham, who was appointed Dean of Durham in 1564, Bishop Pilkington himself and others of the Durham Chapter were Dudley nominees and it is conceivable that this

23 Reid, "Political Influence", p. 217; MacCaffrey Elizabethan Regime, p. 70.

24 Reid, King's Council, p. 193; Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 121.

25 MacCaffrey, op.cit., pp. 93-94.

patronage may have extended to the Bowes family. (26) Sir Robert Bowes, the family's illustrious predecessor had, after all been closely associated with the reformist regime of the Dudleys' father, Northumberland, and as research has shown the restoration of his father's estates and affinity seems to have become one of Leicester's objectives from an early stage in his career. (27) Indeed, in 1566, Robert Bowes, Sir George's brother, was to marry into the Cumbrian Musgrave family, identified by Dr. Adams as long-standing Dudley adherents. (28) It is likely, too, that Robert's son was the Ralph Bowes mentioned, in the State Papers, as being in Leicester's service in 1569. (29) Certainly in January 1570 Sir George was writing to his "cousin Ralph" begging the latter's intercession with the Queen and Council "...and specyally with your L. and Master Secretary..." (undoubtedly a reference to Leicester and Cecil, the two leading members of the political elite) over his suit for compensation in the wake of the rebellion. (30) Whilst there is little further evidence regarding the family's connection with the Dudleys at this time, it was nevertheless the case that, from the early 1560s, the political revival of the Bowes family was quite spectacular. Within months of Pilkington's appointment Sir George and Robert Bowes were appointed to serve, of the quorum, upon the Durham Commission of the Peace, by a

26 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 122.

27 S. Adams, "The Dudley Clientele and the House of Commons, 1559-1586", Parliamentary History, Vol. 8, part 2, (1989), p. 220.

28 Ibid, pp. 227, 237.

29 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 240.

30 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS, Vol. 2, no. 17.

commission dated 11 February 1562. Similar appointments placed the Bowes brothers on the North Riding bench and in the same year Sir George was appointed Sheriff of Yorkshire, whilst Robert became Sheriff of the Bishopric (an appointment he held - during the Bishop's pleasure - until 1575). (31). The political ascendancy of the family in the sphere of local politics at this time was matched by the propulsion of Sir George into the still more exalted circles of regional government. Indeed, as early as April 1561 he was appointed to the Council in the North. (32) Sir George was one of only two Durham gentlemen - the other being Sir George Conyers - to be included on the Council at this time and thereafter members of the Streatlam family remained the only representatives of the Durham landed gentry to sit on the Council for much of Elizabeth's reign. (33) Moreover, on the 5 May 1561 Bowes was named as a member of the newly established Ecclesiastical Commission at York, the body that was thenceforth destined to act as the guardian of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement within the region. (34) Thus within the space of a few short months Sir George Bowes, had firmly established himself as a pillar of the new northern establishment.

31 CPR, 1560-63, p. 437, 445; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 378; Tillbrook, "Aspects of the Government and Society of County Durham", p. 151, 284, 286.

32 Reid, King's Council, p. 194.

33 Tillbrook, op.cit., p. 286.

34 CPR, 1563-66, p. 124.

As recent research has illustrated, however, the implementation of the new Elizabethan religious and political order did not initially destroy the traditional relationships and connections that made up the fabric of landed society within the Bishopric. For, as Dr Marcombe has suggested, given the regional scarcity of religiously accommodating families such as the Bowes, even the radical Pilkington regime was forced to assimilate the more conservative elements of Durham society in order to maintain its administration. (35) Until 1569, therefore, the cohesion and continuity of local society was preserved with families such as the Nevilles, Lumleys, Bowes, Eures, Hiltons, Claxtons, Tempests and Salvins (in roughly that order of predominance) retaining the ties that had bound them together through centuries of communal leadership and social interplay. (36) Thus, the family of Sir George Bowes, the staunchly Protestant darling of the new regime retained, up until the outbreak of the Rising itself, close personal ties with the sixth Earl of Westmorland, traditionally regarded as the disaffected representative of the old order. The survival of a bond, made out to Sir George by the earl and others (Sir William Bellasis of Newburgh and Roger Ratcliffe of Mulgrave) in December 1568 indicates that the friendship between the two extended to the point where Sir George was ready to provide financial assistance when necessary. (37) Moreover, in late September 1569, not long before the outbreak of the rebellion, Bowes and Westmorland arranged a joint "hawking"

35 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People" pp. 121, 143.

36 James, Family Lineage and Civil Society, pp. 36, 51.

37 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol. 11, no. 2. Sharp, Rebellion, p. 291.

expedition, to take place the following week. (38) As Bowes noted, this was one appointment the earl failed to keep and shortly afterwards both Westmorland and the earl of Northumberland were called before the Council in the North in order to account for the various rumours, linking their names with hints of sedition and conspiracy, that were suffusing the region.

Sir George's younger brother, Robert Bowes, was even more closely connected with Westmorland and had, in 1563, acted as one of the executors to his late father's will. (39) Robert was probably present at some of the hunting parties which, it has been suggested, were used by the earls and their fellow conspirators to discuss their plans. Indeed, it was this involvement which led to his being named, by the Earl of Sussex, the President of the Council in the North, as one of the "evil consellers" who persuaded the earls into rebellion. (40) According to Sussex, Robert was in the company of some future rebels when they discussed the possibility of using religion as "the cause of the stir" they were about to initiate. Fortunately for him, it was later confirmed that he was one of those who disagreed with this whole course of action and Bowes thus avoided further involvement and indeed went on to serve the Queen loyally during the rebellion. Nevertheless,

38 Sharp, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

39 "Wills and Inventories from the registry at Durham", Part 2, *S.S.*, Vol. 38, (1860), p. 4.

40 Taylor, "The Crown and the North of England, 1559-70", p. 164; CSPD Add. 1566-79, pp. 90-91, 94-95.

it was perhaps inevitable that the Bowes of Streatlam, moving easily as they did within the social sphere of the rebellion's leading protagonists, would be drawn, to some degree, into the complex web of conspiracy and connection which formed the background to the Rising in the North. From the evidence it seems almost certain, for instance, that Sir George must have been aware, and indeed stood upon the periphery of, the intrigues surrounding the Norfolk marriage plot, perhaps almost from its inception around the time of the conference convened in York in October 1568 to settle the future of the exiled Mary, Queen of Scots (41).

As the earl of Sussex reported to the Queen, a major topic of concern to the rebels during their discussions was apparently, the plan to promote a marriage between the Duke of Norfolk and the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. It seems that this scheme - promising, as it did, the possibility of Mary's ultimate succession to the English throne and a restoration of the "old religion" - was a major motivating factor in the 1569 Rebellion. From a different perspective, however, the union was also favourably regarded by many Protestants, who similarly viewed it as a viable solution to the problem of the Succession. Mary's claim to the English throne was beyond dispute and her accession, with her religious proclivities safely neutralised by a Protestant marriage to the leading member of the English nobility,

41 MacCaffrey, Elizabethan Regime, p. 206.

seemed for many to be the logical means of settling the Succession and and the same time protecting the newly established Religious Settlement. Indeed the intrigues surrounding this became further enmeshed in a factional court struggle between the earl of Leicester and Sir William Cecil. (42).

Sir George Bowes actually came into contact with Mary Queen of Scots, shortly after her arrival in the north of England. Indeed, in July 1568, Bowes had been detailed, along with forty armed horsemen, to attend the "conduction" of Mary from Carlisle to Bolton Castle, in Wensleydale in the North Riding of Yorkshire. (43). It does seem, in fact, that the Bowes family became quite closely acquainted with Mary while she was in the north perhaps through its connection with Lord Scrope, Mary's gaoler, whose daughter had been contracted to Sir George's son, William by January 1569 (44) Indeed the Queen's agent, the Bishop of Ross, later noted how, during his mistress's sojourn in Bolton, the wives of many local noblemen and knights, including the Lady Northumberland and Sir George Bowes's wife, "...wold send tokynnes and wyild meit to the Queen...and she lykewyse to tham as the use is amonges Ladeis...".The Bishop, however, pointed out that this was unconnected with any plans for rebellion. (45) Around this time

42 R. Reid, "The Rebellion of the Earls, 1569", T.R.H.S., Vol. XX, new second ser., (1906), pp. 184-5; MacCaffrey, Elizabethan Regime, pp. 199-203, 239-241.

43 CSP Scotland, Vol. 2, p. 462.

44 Dep.Kpr., Vol. 44, p. 342.

45 CSP Scotland, Vol. 3, p. 237.

too, Sir George was also in touch with the Duke of Norfolk, the other leading figure in the Marriage Plan, As has been noted Bowes probably first came into contact with the Duke during the Scottish enterprise of 1560 and apparently gained his favour. Indeed, after knighting Sir George at Berwick the Duke had confided to Cecil that, "considering his (Sir George's) long service and living, I marvel he has been so long unknighthed...". (46) The two were still in contact, in the summer of 1568, probably through the agency of the earl of Westmorland, Norfolk's brother-in-law. Indeed, on the 2 July, 1568 Westmorland wrote to Bowes, enclosing a letter from Norfolk, regarding the delivery of some hawks that Sir George had given to the Duke. (47).

Under the circumstances it is highly likely that Sir George knew of the intrigues surrounding the Marriage plan. Lady Scrope, the wife of Mary's first gaoler was after all the sister of Norfolk whilst his other sister was the Countess of Westmorland and the Bowes family was close to all of these at the time the plan was first mooted. (48) Westmorland himself was undoubtedly in favour of the match, whilst the sympathies of the earl of Sussex, the President of the Council in the north, of which Bowes was a member, were also open to question (49) Indeed after the rebellion Sir George was at pains to assure the

46 CSP Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 375.

47 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol. 3, no. 2; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 290.

48 MacCaffrey, Elizabethan Regime, p. 206.

49 Ibid., p. 229; Sharp, op.cit., p. 193.

Earl that he had not been involved in spreading any gossip regarding Sussex's attitude towards the match. (50) Moreover, the Bowes family was also associated with the earl of Leicester who, until Elizabeth's opposition translated the Norfolk intrigue into the realms of treachery, was a leading supporter of the Marriage plan. (51) Of course, on the eve of the Rising itself, Sir George's report to the Privy Council, on the 2 November, naturally gave little indication of his own knowledge of the intrigues. Indeed, he suggested that the rumours surrounding the Marriage conspiracy had only spread to the north - by route of "...the assemble and conference of people at fares..." shortly before the departure of the Duke of Norfolk from Court in early September 1569. (52) In thus minimising his own, almost certain, awareness of the conspiracy, Bowes was undoubtedly distancing himself from what had become a highly dangerous issue. However, it is also possible that he was anxious to play down the full implications of the matter, since he seemed, reluctant, initially, to acknowledge that a confrontation was inevitable. Indeed, as Bowes noted to the Council, "...I have always declared myself ready to serve and die for her Majesty, but have rather avoided than inquired into these troubles...". (53) Even on the 7th of the month, Bowes was informing Sussex how, despite the rumours that the Earls were mustering their tenantry, he had advised the local loyal gentlemen,

50 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS, Vol. 2, no. 23.

51 Sharp, Rebellion., p. 240; Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, p. 82.

52 Sharp, op.cit., p. 8.

53 CSPD Add. 1566-79, p. 96.

who had sought his protection, to remain calmly at home until they heard from "...suche as be in autoryte...". For as Sir George continued, "I much doubt that evyl counsel hath more place with the noble corage of these two Earls than wysdom or dewtye..." (54). Down almost to the last, it seems, Sir George was unable to reconcile himself to the conflict that was to shatter, for ever, the traditional social framework of his community.

Nevertheless, Bowes's loyalty to the Crown was beyond question and, as his subsequent actions illustrated, once the rumours of rebellion became reality he fulfilled his duties with diligence and enthusiasm. Indeed a major feature of the Rising from Bowes's point of view was the degree of hostility shown to him by the rebels from the early stages of the rising. As Sir George himself admitted at the beginning of November, "...sundry persons of good credyt..." had even then begun to warn him of the need to take care for his own safety. (55) Indeed by the 12th of the month, "...dowting what myght happen to myself whom theye (the rebels) greatly menace...", Sir George moved himself and his household into the Queen's fortress of Barnard Castle, the stewardship of which Bowes held. (56) It was from

54 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 10-11.

55 Ibid., p. 9.

56 Ibid., pp. 10, 19.

there that he later wrote, to the earl of Sussex, relating how the Durham rebels, as they rallied to the earls - who were, by then, moving towards Ripon - had greatly threatened him, "promising upon their return to assalte me". (57) In the same letter, dated 17 November, Bowes noted, too, how the rebel forces had "soght for my children, where they were at schole but yesterdaye I brought them hither". (58). The surrender of Barnard Castle, too, on the 14 December, after a seige lasting almost two weeks, was due, in no small part to the treachery of some of Bowes's own men. For, as he reported, "I fownde the people in the Castle in continuall mutenyas, seakyng ... by greatt numbers, to leape the walles and run to the rebells..." Indeed Bowes was convinced that their intention was "with open force to deliver yt and all in yt to the rebells". (59)

Yet for Sir George, the threats and subsequent betrayal were not the worst of it for, whilst he was under seige, the rebels laid waste to much of his goods and property and, as he later deposed, "dyd spoyle all my house and grounds of Streatlam, the Isle, South Cowton, Stockton and Evenwood, being theym demaynes in myne own occupation" (60) The rebels had apparently gained control of Streatlam during the early days of the siege (the Bowes's estates being only some two or three miles from Barnard Castle) and had held it for a week. (61) As Sir George complained to Ralph Bowes on the 23rd

57 Ibid, p. 47.

58 Ibid, p. 45.

59 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/5.

60 BL Harleian MS 6991, f. 33.

61 Dean and Chapter Library, Durham, Sharp MS. Vol. 81, ff. 405-6

January 1570,, "... all I had (is) utterlye spoyled and gone and my cheyff howse defayced, the losses whereof was to me above ffoure thowsand pounds for they neyther left me in all my howses or groundes stuff, corn or cattall..." (62)

Sir George was convinced that religious grievances lay at the root of the rebels' animosity. At the beginning of November he had warned the Privy Council, from York, of the "...general fear and bruits of harm to be done to Protestants..." by those intent upon an "alteracyon of religion". (63) During the rebellion itself, the Council was informed how the rebels "...have spoiled such in all places as they misliked and specially protestants..." (64) Certainly within the Bishopric, where antagonism over the stringent economic policies of the new clerical elite was combined with antipathy to its religious innovations, much destruction was apparently perpetrated upon the property of leading Protestants. (65). Moreover, incidents such as that which occurred in the town of Barnard Castle in 1567 can hardly have endeared Bowes and his religious beliefs to the local populace. For, in response to the activities of the townsmen who had contrived to lock the greatly resented Puritan curate, Thomas Clarke, out of his

62 Bowes Musuem, Bowes MS., Vol. 2, no. 17. For a detailed discussion of the losses sustained by Bowes during the Rebellion see below p.

63 CSPD Addenda, 1566-79, p. 96; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 9.

64 Sharp, op.cit., p. 90.

65 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", pp. 125-135; James Family, Lineage and Civil Society, pp. 58-59.

church, Sir George and his brother-in-law, Thomas Middleton arbitrarily imprisoned those responsible in the town's tollbooth. (66) The extent of feeling which the case engendered can be gauged by the fact that in December 1568 the townsmen cited Clarke before the High Commission in York for Puritanism and eventually the curate was transferred to Berwick upon Tweed. (67) Certainly tensions remained within the town for some considerable time. Indeed, years later in 1578, Thomas Middleton wrote to Sir George, still complaining of the disorders in the keeping of the courts in Barnard Castle. (68) Undoubtedly incidents such as the Clarke case fuelled animosities towards men, such as Bowes, which found expression in the Rising. Unfortunately we have little indication of the precise numbers of Barnard Castle men involved in the rebellion. According to Sir George some two hundred and twenty six men "lapped over the walls" to join the rebels and of these, twenty were later appointed to be executed in the town itself. (69) However, men from other parts of the Bishopric and Richmondshire were also in the castle so, without a precise breakdown of the figures, the Barnard Castle involvement is impossible to judge. (70)

- 66 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", pp. 139-140; For the Middletons of Barnard Castle see, Dean and Chapter Library, Sharp MS. Vol. 45, f. 71.
- 67 Marcombe, op.cit., p. 140
- 68 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 3, no. 21.
- 69 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/3; University of Durham Library, MS 942. 81. B7. no. 3; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 133.
- 70 Sharp, op.cit., pp. 48, 57.

We do know, however, that men from the manor of Long Newton, in County Durham, which was situated within the Barnard Castle lordship were indeed involved in the rebellion and certainly their participation has been linked to religious unrest. (71) Indeed, at the instigation of Thomas Colling, the local churchwarden, several Long Newton residents were involved in the setting up of an altar during the rebellion. (72) Moreover, according to the testimony of Christopher Hall, the bailiff of the manor, Colling, along with John Thorpe, the constable of the township and others were instrumental in persuading several of their neighbours, within the Barnard Castle garrison, to defect during the siege. (73) Yet despite any religious animosities that the conservative tenants of Long Newton may have felt towards Sir George Bowes, it is also possible that economic grievances may have played some part. Indeed, within his local context, Sir George Bowes was probably best-known as the steward of the Crown lordship of Barnard Castle, which stretched roughly from upper Teesdale to Gainford, near Darlington and which included the Bowes's own principal estates of Streatlam and Stainton. In his capacity as steward, an office that the family held by hereditary tenure, Bowes was effectively the chief source of local authority. (74) As such he was responsible for the

71 D.S. Reid, The Durham Crown Lordships, (Durham County Local History Society, 1990), p. 74.

72 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 258-60.

73 BL Add. MS. 40746, f. 21. Those involved later sued for pardons. CPR 1569-72, nos. 821, 852.

74 See above p.217; Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, p. 16.

effective maintenance of the Crown's interests, as well as the administration and regulation of virtually all aspects of economic and social life within the lordship. (75) Within this sphere it is possible that local hostility towards Bowes may have been building up over several years prior to the Rising. Certainly the royal directives of 1564 and 1565, intended to increase the profitability of the northern Crown lands, may have created dissension and resentment - especially against Sir George, who was responsible for the implementation of the new policies. (76) In June 1568, for example, Bowes received instructions to conform to the Orders of the Court of the Exchequer for the Crown's profit in Barnard Castle and in the following year, on the 16 August 1565, in response to a Border Commission directive, he convened a court in Barnard Castle in order to re-define and rationalise the terms of tenure within the lordship. Part of this process was the phasing out of the traditional customary "tenancies at will", and their replacement by the less flexible leaseholds, either for life or forty years. (77) This indeed was one particular grievance over which the Earl of Northumberland, the Steward of Richmond and Middleham, took issue with the Crown. (78) Whilst it has been suggested that the tenants of the Barnard Castle lordship apparently acquiesced without protest it is interesting to

75 Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, pp. 27-8.

76 Reid, "Rebellion of the Earls", p. 182.

77 CSPD 1601-3 with Add. 1547-65, p. 548; Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, p. 34.

78 Reid, Council in the North, p. 199.

note that in 1567, John Thorpe, Thomas Colling and other tenants of Long Newton were granted an indentured, twenty one year lease for their various holdings. (79)

Undoubtedly then, there is evidence, although somewhat speculative, which can be used to link the animosity shown to Sir George, by the rebels, with local economic and religious tensions. Moreover, of the thirty five indicted before the Council in the North for the spoil of Streatlam in December 1575, the majority were Durham yeomen, where they can be positively identified from the lists of pardons granted in April 1570. (80) Several were from South Durham where the harsh economic policies of the staunchly Protestant Dean and Chapter towards its tenantry created widespread unrest. Indeed two of those indicted, William Trotter and Giles Gowland came from Merrington, a township identified by Dr. Marcombe as a particular troublespot. (81). However, none appeared to be from the immediate Barnard Castle area and at least seven were from Yorkshire. (82) Depositions concerning the destruction of Streatlam, taken at Barnard Castle and Northallerton in April 1573 and May 1574, respectively, show also that rebels from as far afield as Thirsk and Richmond were involved in the "spoil". (83) Moreover, the idea, too, that the rebels were acting

79 Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, pp. 35, 61.

80 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol.11, no. 52; CPR 1569-72, pp. 81-114.

81 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 130.

82 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol. 11, no. 52.

83 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/4 (nos. 6, 8).

of their own accord in destroying Bowes's property is somewhat undermined by the evidence, also given in the depositions, of the involvement of men specifically named as belonging to the affinity of the Earl of Westmorland. Indeed, at Barnard Castle on the 14th May 1574, one William Topliss noted how several of those that he knew to be "...great trespassers..." of Sir George, had also "aided and assisted" Westmorland during the rebellion. (84)

This, of course does not, at first sight, agree with the evidence that has been cited regarding the close relationship between Bowes and the earl and indeed it is clear that during the Rising itself the earl was extremely reluctant to enter into conflict with Sir George. Certain information, given probably to the Northern High Commission in October 1571, suggests that the earl's attitude in the matter was considered by some of his fellow rebels to have been detrimental to their cause. The examinee, one Henry Simpson of Darlington noted how he had "...heard other English (exiles) at Louvain often wish that the Earl (of Westmorland) had taken Sir George Bowes at the first and kept him, as then they might have gone and taken York and then all England would have taken their parts..." (85). According, moreover, to the testimony of Christopher Norton, one of the leading rebels Westmorland's influence actually prevented the slaying of Sir George

84 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/4 (nos. 6, 7, 8).

85 CSPD Addenda, 1566-79, p. 361.

after his surrender of Barnard Castle". (86) However, as we have already noted, both the earl of Sussex and Sir George acknowledged the influence of "evil councillors" over the Earls. Indeed, the confession of the earl of Northumberland makes it clear that Westmorland was, in the first place, a reluctant participant in the Rising and one who had actually declared how he would never blot the reputation of his house with the stain of rebellion. (87) Prime movers in the whole affair, however, were Westmorland's two uncles Christopher and Cuthbert Neville. Sir George certainly made little secret of his views concerning the malign influence of Christopher Neville who, he noted, "... hath doyne more harme to that noble young Erle, hys nephew, than can be thoughte..." (88) There is, moreover, evidence to suggest that tensions between Sir George and Neville may, in part, have lain at the root of the animosity levelled at Bowes during the rebellion.

Certainly, as has been shown earlier, ill-will had existed between the Neville and Bowes families since the days of the Pilgrimage of Grace, when the fourth Earl of Westmorland had feared the usurpation of his regional influence by the Streatlam family. This dissension between the two families had, thereafter, erupted periodically as was illustrated by the incident between Christopher Neville and members of

86 CSPD Addenda, 1566-79, pp. 276-78.

87 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 196.

88 Sharp, op.cit., p. 34. Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 144.

the Bowes, Wyecliffe and Rokeby families at the Gatherley Race Meeting in May 1554, which was only resolved following the intervention of the Council in the North. (89) Sir George was probably also at odds with Christopher Neville on a more personal level. In the first place, Neville had long been at odds with the staunchly Protestant Dean and Chapter over the non-payment of the debts of his late brother, the fifth Earl, and was further incensed by the decision of the Chapter to cease the traditional payment to Westmorland for leading its tenantry during times of war. (90) The longstanding enmity between the Bowes family and Neville, coupled with Sir George's close association with the Durham Protestant elite, therefore, undoubtedly maintained a high level of tension between the two men. Secondly, this was almost certainly compounded by Neville's outrageous treatment of the Wandesford family. In October 1559, Bowes had been granted the wardship and marriage of Christopher, the son and heir of Francis Wandesford of Kirklington, to whom Sir George married his daughter, Elizabeth. (91) Neville, on the other hand, married Christopher's widowed mother and thus managed to gain control, through the lady's jointure settlement, of much of the Wandesford inheritance. Thereafter he had treated the family with the greatest of contempt. (92) Indeed,

89 See above pp. 209-210.

90 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 128.

91 CPR, 1558-60, p. 18; Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 110.

92 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 36.

after the Rising, Sir George forwarded an appeal to Cecil, begging that young Wandesford, who had fought by his side in Barnard Castle and was about to take livery of his lands, be allowed "to farm such of his inheritance as shall come to her Majesty by the attainder of Christopher Neville". As Bowes pointed out, Neville, through his "evil dealings" had frittered away much of the inheritance, had "... used the mother in a most evil manner and has now forfeited the rest, both lands and goods...", apparently leaving mother and son almost destitute. (93). There is, thus, little doubt that there was cause for much dissension between Sir George and Christopher Neville and given the latter's apparent influence in the rebellion it is probable that it was he, rather than Westmorland, who was responsible for inciting certain of the Neville tenantry - and indeed perhaps the rebel host as a whole - to move against Sir George. Whilst he later moved on to take the port of Hartlepool, Neville was certainly prominent in organizing the seige, for he issued a precept dated 1 December 1569 ordering armed reinforcements to assemble at Barnard Castle (94). Moreover, even after the collapse of the rebellion, Sir George was writing of the activities of Neville who, he feared, had returned to Brancepeth where he was trying to "create new stirs" and conspiring to arrange the murder of the Bowes brothers. (95)

93 CSPD Addenda, 1566-79, p. 291.

94 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 86; BL Harleian MS 6991, f. 33.

95 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol. 17, no. 22.

Nevertheless, whilst Christopher Neville was apparently Sir George's main adversary, there is some further slight evidence to suggest that another rebel gentleman, Sampson Norton, may also have borne a grudge against the lord of Streatlam. Sampson, the son of Richard Norton one of the leading rebels, had been involved in a series of property transactions with Sir George shortly before the Rising and it is possible that there may have been some dispute over the payment. Certainly, in later years it was claimed that, at the time of Norton's attainder, he was owed more than £450 by Bowes. Indeed, after his death Norton's widow (who was Sir George's cousin) pursued the claim with vigour, thereby involving the Streatlam family in a series of complex legal proceedings. Admittedly, there is little other evidence to substantiate Norton's claim, yet it was the case that the depositions regarding the ruination of Sir George's estates, noted the involvement therein of several of Norton's followers. In this respect also it was, perhaps, the case that Norton's personal animosity towards Bowes found expression during the upheavals of 1569.

(96)

It is obvious, then, that the reasons behind the hostility shown towards Sir George Bowes, during the Northern Rising, were complex and varied. As such, they were indeed far removed from the somewhat simplistic explanation given, in his confession, by the rebel Thomas Bishop. He suggested that the seige of Barnard Castle (and thus

96 See below p. 274.

presumably the spoliation of the Bowes's estates) was instigated by the Durham rebels who were afraid that Sir George would exact retribution upon their lands and families. (97) It was, perhaps, as a result of rumours such as this that Bowes acquired his reputation for cruelty in the aftermath of the rebellion. Indeed, less than a century after the Rising Thomas Fuller, in 1662, thought fit to condemn the behaviour of a man who, by virtue of his office of Provost Marshal was "...severe unto cruelty..." in the execution of his duty. (98) This reputation has, however, been undermined by the research of H B McCall and Cuthbert Sharp who have striven to argue that, in reality, Bowes was put under considerable pressure, probably by the Queen herself, to extract the ultimate revenge from the meaner sort who were too poor to buy their lives from a vengeful monarch. (99)

Certainly, as these arguments have suggested, it is likely that the numbers executed fell, in reality, far short of the 700 condemned by the government; for instance, as has been pointed out, only 57 of the 215 appointed were actually executed in Richmondshire. (100) This was perhaps due to Sir George's distaste for his task but was more probably in view of the severe weather conditions which pervaded the north during the winter of 1569-70 and rendered extensive travel

97 Taylor, "The Crown and the North of England, 1559-70", p. 226; HMC Salisbury MS, part 1, p. 471.

98 T. Fuller The History of the Worthies of England, Vol. 2, (London 1811), p. 534.

99 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 383-85; H.B. McCall, "The Rising in the North: a new light upon one aspect of it.", Yorkshire Archeological Journal, Vol. XVIII, (1905), pp. 85-86.

100 McCall, op.cit., p. 83.

virtually impossible. As such many condemned rebels undoubtedly fled before the Provost Marshal could reach them. (101) Moreover it is clear that Sir George carried out his duties with painstaking diligence. Indeed he later deposed that he had taken great care to execute only the main culprits, i.e. those who took the lead in stirring up their neighbourhoods and those who admitted to remaining under arms after the expiration of the first pardons. (102) This same attention to detail can be identified in the instructions given by Sir George to his officials, his brother-in-law Thomas Middleton, his cousin, another Robert Bowes (of Great Chilton) and his servants Peter Harrison, Nicholas Young and Henry Jackson, regarding the seizure and disposal of the goods of the executed men. Bowes advised them to attend to their distasteful task with thoroughness, but advised them to deal as favourably as possible with the wives and children of those executed "...and wth as lyttle offence to the people as ye can..." (103) It was undoubtedly this diligent attitude, of Bowes's, which provoked the rebuke, sent by the earl of Sussex, on the Queen's behalf, that the "...executyons be very longe in doynge..." so that "...the Quenes Majestie wyll fynd cause of offence with her charge contynued so longe for that purpose..." (104). Yet there is little direct evidence to suggest that Bowes retained any sympathy for his

101 Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, p. 91.

102 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 188.

103 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS, Vol. 2 no. 26.

104 Sharp, op.cit., p. 153.

victims over and above his concern for their relatives. Certainly in his letter to his cousin, Ralph, dated 23 January 1570, Bowes's attitude appeared to mirror that of the administration. Indeed, as he admitted, during his circuit through the Bishopric, Richmondshire, Allertonshire, Cleveland, Ripon and Wetherby he executed, by Martial Law, some six hundred and odd rebels (perhaps an exaggeration in the face of the Crown's impatience with his dilatory progress) with the effect that "...the people (are) in marvellous feare so that I trust there shall never suche thinge happen in these parties agayne..." (105) Moreover, it was also suggested, at one point, that those assisting Sir George in the identification of rebels, in the various townships, were actually bargaining with the condemned men for their own profit. (106) Indeed, throughout the entire proceedings the behaviour of Sir George was in keeping with that of an unquestioningly loyal Crown subject. As such, in March 1570 he was further appointed, along with the north's leading royal officials, the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, the Warden of the East Marches, to the Commissions which convened in York and Durham to try the leading rebel agitators. (107) Thereafter he sought to recoup the losses he had sustained at the hands of the rebel host by petitioning the Queen for the lands of several of the attainted rebel families, the Markenfields and Nortons

105 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS. Vol. 2, no. 17.

106 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 153.

107 Sharp, op.cit., p. 225; CPR 1569-72, pp. 163, 168, 249, 268, 283, 289-92, 341.

of the North Riding of Yorkshire and the Tempests of Durham. (108) Moreover, as has been noted, he later instituted a series of actions before the Court at York against those of the rebel commons suspected of spoiling his property. As a result some of these men were ordered to make restitution to Sir George to the tune of one thousand marks in addition to 40s. costs. (109) That Bowes was determined to have his pound of flesh is made clear in the petition of one of these men, Thomas Harrison, who begged the Earl of Huntingdon to intercede with Bowes, "...that he may take some resonable order with us according to oure abilities and not to let us die in prysonne, all we not being able to paie the fourth of this we are condempned in..." (110) Whilst, therefore, it may be difficult to accuse Sir George Bowes of overt cruelty towards the rebel commons in the aftermath of the Northern Rebellion, his attitudes were, nevertheless, hardly as "lenient" or "forbearing" as has sometimes been suggested. (111)

Sir George Bowes's involvement in the Rebellion of the Northern Earls is perhaps the best-known incident in the history of the Streatlam family during the sixteenth century. Moreover, the details were extremely well documented in both the State Papers of the period and the Bowes family papers. As a result the rebellion has, ever

108 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS. Vol. 2, no. 29.

109 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 11, no. 52.

110 Ibid, Vol. 11, no. 24.

111 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 385.

since, remained a subject of interest to historians. Whilst, however, Sir George's activities during the course of the Rising are well known, his actual role in the affair has not previously been analysed in any detail. Yet, as a closer examination reveals, his involvement in the upheavals of 1569 was conditioned by the same combination of forces, personal animosities, political alignments and religious and social tensions, which apparently activated the rebellion itself. Certainly the ill-will of Christopher Neville played its part in generating hostility towards Sir George during the Rising. Nevertheless, as the evidence illustrates such hostility was probably further fuelled by animosities based upon resistance to religious and economic change. In addition, therefore, to the wider issues, identified by historians as forming the background to the rebellion, it is clear that a variety of locally-inspired, often petty grievances were instrumental in fostering rebellious resentment at this time. In respect of the role played by Sir George himself, the issues are equally complex. Indeed, the Rising forced him to choose between his attachment to the traditional social network, with which the Bowes of Streatlam had been intimately connected for generations, and his loyalty to the new reformist regime which had effected the political regeneration of his family. An exploration of the role of Sir George Bowes in the Rising of the Northern Earls, therefore, throws into sharper relief the whole gamut of influences at work in the rapidly changing early Elizabethan north and highlights the extent of the conflict between tradition and innovation that was taking place at that time, a conflict that was irrevocably resolved by the events of 1569.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HOUSE OF BOWES AND THE END OF AN ERA

Despite its loyal support for the Crown in 1569, the House of Bowes did not, in the Elizabethan era, achieve the same level of political prominence that it had acquired during the reign of Edward VI. Admittedly along with other more important survivors of the Edwardian Protestant ascendancy, such as the Dudleys and Cecil who were the main beneficiaries of Elizabeth's favour and patronage in the early years of the new reign, the Bowes family had been able to regain some of the political ground it had lost in the Marian era by its support for Lady Jane Grey. (1) However, as Dr. Adams has shown, the tendency of the Queen to use substantial grants of office primarily as a reward, and then only in cases of the most exceptional and devoted service, inevitably inhibited the career prospects of all but the most favoured few. (2) Under such circumstances spectacular advancement through royal service, as had been possible during the later years of Henry VIII, became increasingly difficult. Moreover, whilst the growth of the administration during the later part of the sixteenth century increased the number of offices and preferments available under Elizabeth, the patronage barrel was not bottomless. (3)

1 Loades, Tudor Court, p. 144.

2 S. Adams, "Eliza Enthroned", Haigh (ed.), The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 61.

3 Guy, Tudor England, p. 391.

As Laurence Stone and Penry Williams have pointed out, in contrast with the extensive bureaucracies of continental powers such as France and Spain, the Tudor administrative machine recruited relatively few officials. This factor, combined with the growing competition from an increasingly "educated and ambitious" gentry class, led, by the 1580s, to an overwhelming demand for grants of office and place. (4) As a result of this it was far less easy for later members of the Streatlam family to make their way in the jungle of Elizabethan royal service than it had been for Sir Robert Bowes in the late 1530s and early 1540s when the initial expansion of the Tudor State facilitated the rise of ambitious and talented gentry careerists.

Nevertheless, the family's inability to rise to the political heights it had achieved under the leadership of Sir Robert Bowes was due to a variety of factors. In the first place it was the case, throughout the Tudor period, that those who ascended to the higher echelons of central government were, almost invariably, highly trained and experienced professional administrators and lawyers. Indeed, despite his glowing reputation in the sphere of Border defence and diplomacy, it was almost certainly his qualifications as a successful lawyer which provided the key to the successful career of Sir Robert Bowes. The fact, therefore, that Sir George Bowes, the head of the

4 L. Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy, (Oxford 1965), pp. 466-67; Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 107; R.C. Braddock, "The Rewards of Office Holding in Tudor England", Journal of British Studies, Vol. 14, (1975), pp. 29-47.

family during the first twenty years of the Elizabethan era, was essentially a professional soldier with little in the way of educational or administrative qualifications undoubtedly helped to account for the failure of his family to regain the political momentum which it had built up in the reign of Henry VIII and had capitalized upon during the reformist regime of Edward VI. Certainly, as has been shown, it was the family's religious attitudes, rather than the administrative ability of its members, which brought about its political regeneration upon the accession of Elizabeth and enabled it to regain the position it had forfeited, during the years of Marian reaction, at the forefront of northern political society. It was thus by virtue of his staunch Protestantism that Sir George Bowes was able to retain his position within the Council in the North up until his death in 1580. (5) Indeed, the Protestant complexion of that body was to increase considerably in the years following the Northern Rebellion, with its overtone of Catholic conspiracy for, in 1572, the Lord Presidency of the Council was conferred upon the Puritan Earl of Huntingdon. (6)

Sir George's connection with the Ecclesiastical Northern High Commission, which had first begun with his appointment to that body in 1561, was also maintained and his name was included in March 1573 when the High Commission's authority was renewed in order to take

5 Reid, King's Council, p. 494.

6 C. Cross, The Puritan Earl, (London 1966), p. 159.

account of Huntingdon's new appointment. (7) As such Sir George was associated with a body noted for its evangelical leanings and one which, through the agency of Huntingdon and the equally Puritan Archbishop of York, Edmund Grindal, sought to impose the precepts of religious reformism in the religiously conservative north. (8) From this time, therefore, the combined energies of the Council in the North and the Northern High Commission were directed towards the elimination of the Catholic threat. Certainly in November 1574 Sir Ralph Rokeby, one of the salaried "workhorses" of the Council in the North, was writing to Sir George urging him to deal severely with local recusants for, as he pointed out, "...ye papists here gather great boldness..." (9). Sir George's appointment to the Northern High Commission was again confirmed when its authority was renewed in July 1577, at a time when the recusant cause was gathering momentum, and he was simultaneously appointed to a Commission for ecclesiastical causes in Durham where, despite the early imposition of a Calvinist clerical hierarchy, religious conservatism remained rife amongst the indigenous population. (10) Undoubtedly, therefore, whilst his lack of administrative and legal training precluded his entry into the upper echelons of national government, the Protestant reliability of Sir

7 CPR, 1572-5, p. 168; Cross, Puritan Earl, pp. 227-8.

8 P. Tyler, "The Significance of the Ecclesiastical Commission at York", N.H., Vol. 2, (1967), p. 39, 40.

9 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS, Vol. 3, no. 11.

10 CPR, 1575-8, p. 382, 387; James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 59.

George Bowes, at a time of upheaval and religious uncertainty in a region far removed from the centre of authority, was sufficient to maintain his position within the northern administration.

As Laurence Stone has pointed out, however, the disadvantages of royal office holding under Elizabeth often outweighed the advantages, with years of loyal service often reaping the rewards of only "...debts and disappointment...". (11) Indeed, in Kent, as Peter Clark has shown, the onerous burdens of office holding were beginning to take their toll upon the increasingly "put-upon" local gentry by the end of Elizabeth's reign. (12) It is thus possible that, especially in the later years of his life, Sir George Bowes was increasingly less inclined to seek further advancement through the agency of royal service. After all, his position within the northern ruling elite was more or less guaranteed by virtue of his religious reliability. Moreover, through membership of the House of Commons Sir George was able to gain some experience of life at the centre of political activity for, at a time when the acquisition of a Parliamentary seat was increasingly becoming a symbol of prestige and status amongst the gentry, he was able to secure election to the borough seats of Knaresborough, in 1571, and Morpeth in 1572. (13) His election to the former was possibly effected by Francis Slingsby, a friend and

11 Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, p. 462.

12 Clark, English Provincial Society, p. 256.

13 A.G.R. Smith, The Emergence of a Nation State, (London and New York 1984), p. 126; Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 387-8.

associate of Sir George's, who lived near Knaresborough and who seemingly controlled the nomination of the borough since he and his two sons were all, at one time or another, also returned for the borough. (14) The background to Sir George's nomination for Morpeth is less clear for, until the Northern Rebellion, it had fallen within the sphere of influence of the Dacres of Gilsland who were actively involved in the Rising. Indeed, one of its former Members of Parliament, Thomas Bates, was actually indicted, in 1569, for his treachery (15). The election, in 1572, of the loyalist stalwart, Sir George, thus perhaps reflected, in part, the town's attempt to rid itself of its rebellious associations. Moreover, apart from his involvement in the national legislative and regional administrative spheres, Sir George remained active in a local capacity. He continued to serve in his hereditary office as Steward of the Queen's lordship of Barnard Castle and served also as Steward of the Bishop of Durham's lordship of Northallerton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, from 1560 and as sheriff of the Bishopric from 1576. (16.) Thus while Sir George Bowes failed to rise to the upper levels of the central administration, there is little doubt that, through his continued involvement in regional and local politics, he was able to maintain his position at the forefront of northern gentry society.

14 P.W. Hasler, The House of Commons, 1558-1603, Vol. 3, p. 394.

15 Watts, from Border to Middle Shire, p. 58; Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 360-63.

16 J.L. Saywell, The History and Annals of Northallerton, Yorkshire, (London 1885) p. 56; Dep. Kpr., Vol. 37, (1886) p. 82.

Secure in this knowledge he may well have sought actively to avoid the increasingly onerous burdens associated with higher office.

Indeed, Sir George's perceptions of the costs of loyalty to the later Tudor regime were undoubtedly influenced by his experiences of the Northern Rebellion. As has already been shown, Sir George estimated that the damage inflicted, by the rebels, upon his goods and property during the Rising amounted to well in excess of four thousand pounds.

(17) That Bowes was not exaggerating the extent of his losses is confirmed in a letter, dated 13th January 1570 and sent by the Earl of Sussex to Sir William Cecil. Indeed the Earl noted how, upon seeing the plight of Sir George who had emerged from the seige of Barnard Castle to discover "...the spoil of all he had...", he had been moved to grant certain goods, seized from the rebel Earl of Northumberland, to "...him that had nothing left...". (18). The Earl, moreover, willingly lent his support to Sir George's petition to the Queen, requesting the grant of certain of the lands of attainted rebels, in order to make good his losses. As Sussex pointed out, Sir George's loyalty and ability were beyond reproach whilst, "...his service has been equal with the best of this country's birth and his losses have been very great..." In recompense, therefore, Bowes petitioned for lands, in North Yorkshire and Durham worth £101 19s 10d which had been in the tenure of several attainted rebel families, primarily the

17 See above p. 245.

18 CSPD Addenda, 1566-79, pp. 193-4.

Nortons, Markenfields and Tempests. (19) As Laurence Stone has pointed out, while the Queen remained perpetually reluctant to part with Crown lands, she was more willing to reward a favoured minority of subjects with estates that had come into royal hands by reason of attainder and certainly the Northern Rebellion had enabled the Crown to increase, considerably, its reserves of landed patronage. (20) In view of his loyal service, therefore, Bowes must surely have expected some reasonable reward. From the evidence of the petition, however, it is clear that several of the estates were not particularly profitable, being already burdened with considerable charges and reserves for terms of life or lives, so that Sir George and his heirs could look forward only to the reversions of the properties. (21) In the event, however, even this was more than the Crown was prepared to part with and Bowes was forced to settle for lands comprising only two-thirds of his original suit. In November 1572, he was granted the Tempest's manor of Bradley, in the Bishopric, the former Markenfield manors of Scruton and Markington in North Yorkshire, along with various other adjacent properties, to the annual value of only £66 11s 4½d. (22)

Moreover, the further opportunity for royal service which was thrust upon a reluctant Sir George in the spring of 1579, when he was

19 Ibid, p. 287

20 Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, pp. 411-12.

21 Bowes Museum, Bowes MS. Vol. 2 no. 29.

22 Ibid, Vol. 2 no. 34.

appointed to take temporary charge of the garrison of Berwick, seems also to have caused him considerable inconvenience and financial distress. Bowes was apparently drafted in to manage the garrison on behalf of his brother, Robert, who had been called to London and who, as Treasurer of Berwick, seemingly undertook the charge of the town during the frequent absences of the official Governor, Lord Hunsdon. (23) For Sir George, however, the sojourn was apparently less than fruitful. In the first place Bowes was apparently ill for much of his stay, perhaps suffering from the sickness that was to cause his death in the August of the following year. (24) Moreover, the stay had cost him dearly in terms of his financial and business interests. Indeed, as Robert Bowes pointed out, in a letter, dated the 2nd November 1579, requesting the favour of the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, towards his brother's causes, "...the expense of his great charge here was not sufficiently recompensed, by the small allowance granted, as he looked for...". (25) Upon his appointment Sir George had, in fact, been granted "...soch entertaynment as is dewe unto the Marshall [of Berwick]..." yet, as he was complaining by August 1579, his actual expenses fell far beyond this (unspecified) allowance, to the tune of some £14 or £15 per week, with the result that he expected to be out of pocket for at least the next two years. (26). To add to his financial woes, Sir George's Berwick interlude had an equally

23 APC, Vol. 11, p. 226; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 391.

24 Sharp, op.cit., p. 392.

25 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 17, no. 20.

26 APC, Vol. 11, p. 226; Sharp, op.cit., p. 392.

detrimental effect on his business concerns for, in his absence, the workmen in his Durham lead mines could, "...not be brought to do there labour and dewtie as appertayneth..." resulting in the "...disordinate working of the sayd mynes...". (27) Since Sir George, who began leasing the leadmines, within the Crown lordship of Barnard Castle in 1568, had built up his mining interests to become one of the leading suppliers of lead to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers, he could obviously ill-afford such economic disruption. (28) From the evidence, therefore, it seems that, for Sir George Bowes, royal service was devastatingly unprofitable with the result that, far from wishing to remain in the competitive and increasingly court-centred world of patronage and preferment, he may may well have been unwilling to seek further the increasingly uncertain rewards of office.

The precise financial situation of Bowes at this time is not clear. As he pointed out himself, the "...evydence, charters, leases and wrytyngs..." pertaining to the family's estates up to 1569 had been destroyed by the rebels. (29) Information for the following years is, moreover, patchy and incomplete with the result that Sir George's testimony, regarding the extent of his losses in the service of the Crown, remains more or less unsubstantiated. Certainly it is

27 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 17, no. 20.

28 CPR, 1566-69, no. 2132; James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 71; "Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne", Part. 1, (ed. J.R. Boyle and F.W. Dendy), S.S., Vol. 93, (1895), pp. 95, 96, 98, 100.

29 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 387.

traditionally believed that the Streatlam family was ruined as the result of its loyal service during the Northern Rebellion, with the Queen's "tardy" reward contributing little to its financial recovery. (30) During the 1560s, however, Sir George had apparently sought to consolidate and extend the Streatlam estates for he engaged in a considerable number of property transactions. The most notable of these was his purchase, in September 1561, of the manors of Mickleton and Lune, with the forests of Lune and Thringarth Park, which lay on the Yorkshire side of the Tees not far from Streatlam and which was intended to provide for the children of his second, more prestigious marriage contracted in 1558 with Jane Talbot, a relative of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Mickleton and Lune was thus purchased from Sir William Parr, Marquis of Northamptonshire for a consideration of £2,746.13s.4d. Since Sir George also engaged in a spate of smaller property sales around this time it is probable that he was trying to raise the capital to cover this purchase. (31) Shortly afterwards Bowes obviously conceived the idea of buying up the former estates of his uncle, Sir Ralph Bulmer, of Wilton in Cleveland, which included part of the former Aske inheritance (brought to Sir Ralph by his wife Anne Aske, the sister of Sir George's mother, Elizabeth) along with numerous manors and properties throughout North Yorkshire. These had

30 Ibid, p. 388.

31 Durham C.R.O. Calendar of the Strathmore Archive, D/St/D3/1/9; Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 103. "Yorkshire Fines", Part 1, The Yorkshire Archeological and Topographical Association Record Series, Vol. 2 (1887), pp. 252, 239, 241, 252, 257, 262, 263.

passed into the hands of Bulmer's eight daughters and co-heirs upon his death in 1558. (32) As a consequence, from 1565 onwards Sir George pursued the policy of systematically buying up the individual shares from his female cousins. (33) Many of these were later sold, however, and it is possible that the extent of this property buying, combined with his simultaneous lead-mining venture, may well have stretched Bowes's resources to the limit for in 1568 he was apparently forced to raise £1,000 by mortgaging his chief manors of Streatlam, Cleatlam and Barforth. (34) It is, therefore, possible that, by 1569, Sir George was already in straightened financial circumstances, a situation which was undoubtedly exacerbated by the events of 1569. Indeed, thereafter it may well have been the preoccupations of his financial and business affairs, rather than any overt unwillingness on his part to serve, which inhibited his chances of attaining higher Crown office.

Certainly during the last few years of his life Sir George's financial affairs caused him much distress and at one point he tried, unsuccessfully, to sell his Lunedale and Thringarth forests to the Cavendish family (35). In 1577 he took out a further mortgage, of slightly more than £1,600, by assignment of the leases of Gainford

32 V.C.H. North Riding, Vol. 2, p. 306.

33 "Feet of Fines", Part 1, pp. 314, 323, 324, 328, 371, 383.

34 "Feet of Fines for the Tudor Period", Part 2, Yorkshire Archeological and Topographical Association Record Series, Vol. 5 (1888), pp. 32, 38, 47, 70, 79, 204, 116; Durham C.R.O. Calendar of the Strathmore Archive, D/St/D1/1/23.

35 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 104.

rectory and manor, in Durham, which had been held since 1546 by the Streatlam family on a 95 year lease from Trinity College, Cambridge, and lands in South Cowton and Atlow Cowton, in North Yorkshire. This mortgage was obtained from Edmund Gresham, a London merchant and financier who, in the 1570s, had begun to buy up Crown properties within the Bishopric for investment purposes and to whom Sir George and his equally hard-pressed brother, Robert, increasingly turned in their financial distress. (36) Indeed, throughout the later 1570s Bowes appeared to be dealing with Gresham on a regular basis, as letters sent by Sir George to his servant Ambrose Barnes and his lawyer, John Allen illustrated. Included in these were instructions for the negotiations of new loans, in return for various leases and also the extensions of existing mortgages. Gresham, however, was not the only city financier with whom Sir George dealt, although the identification of others is extremely difficult since their full names are often missing from the correspondence. A case in point is "Mr. Revett" who, in November 1578, had mortgaged "sundrie" of Sir George's lands for the sum of £566 13s 4d. Moreover, as Bowes's letter of June 1580 to Allen makes clear, he also turned for credit to the London Aldermen who were becoming increasingly active in the money

36 Durham C.R.O. Calendar of the Strathmore Archive, D/St/D1/8/2-3; Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 17, no. 1; Reid, The Durham Crown Lordships, pp. 5, 138. In 1568 Robert mortgaged his manor of Aske to Gresham. North Yorks. C.R.O. ZNK 1/1/1-7 (detailed in the Calendar of the Zetland/Dundas Family, Richmond Estates, Richmond and Aske, 1488-1908.

lending market towards the end of the sixteenth century. (37)

At the same time, Bowes's problems were exacerbated by his involvement in two particularly acrimonious property disputes, both of which resulted in tortuous (and undoubtedly costly) legal proceedings. The first of these related to the estates purchased by Sir George in 1569 from Sampson Norton and his wife Bridget, one of the co-heirs of Sir Ralph Bulmer. Bowes had apparently purchased Bridget's one-eighth share of the inheritance (which was individually valued at £34 per annum) for the sum of £980. (38) However, a dispute arose over Sir George's alleged non-payment of the bulk of this sum and in 1574 Bridget and her second husband, James Laybourne, began a series of actions, before the Council in the North and the Exchequer, to recover the outstanding balance. (39) The dispute was complicated by the fact that Sampson Norton had been attainted for his rebellious stance during the Northern Rebellion; he had, in fact, fled abroad and later died as a pensioner of the King of Spain. (40) Indeed, part of Sir George's defence was that, if any money was still owing, it was due rather to the Crown than to the beneficiaries of an attainted rebel. Norton had, however, claimed that Bowes owed him at least £450

37 Several letters concerning Sir George's complex business dealings at this time can be found in Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 7 (see for example nos. 3, 5, 7, 27). Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, p. 533.

38 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 287.

39 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 11, nos. 30, 49; P.R.O. E134/18-19 Eliz. Mich.

40 Sharp, op.cit., p. 287.

and, as has been suggested, it is possible that the initial animosity between the two may have added to the network of grievances which surfaced during the Northern Rebellion. (41) Despite attempts to reach a settlement by arbitration, the legal proceedings dragged on throughout much of the 1570s. As late as May 1580, only weeks before his death, Sir George was instructing his lawyer, John Allen, to arrange a further meeting with Laybourne's legal advisors and the dispute was still only in the process of being settled by the following spring (42)

Running parallel with this was another dispute, this time between Bowes and one John Palmer over the lease of Thringarth Park which, Palmer alleged, had been granted by the former owner, the Marquis of Northampton, to his father. This proved to be even more acrimonious than the Laybourne case for Bowes indicted several of Palmer's followers before the Court of Star Chamber, alleging that they had forcibly entered the Park and attacked his bailiff, Michael Raine, who later died of his injuries. In retaliation, Palmer took his complaint before the Privy Council and in the early months of 1580 Bowes was forced to journey to London, again apparently to the neglect of his mining interests, in order to plead his case. (43) The two parties were subsequently persuaded to have the case tried, upon special issue, before an impartial Middlesex jury. The verdict, however,

41 See above p.

42 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 7, nos. 10, 22, 32.

43 P.R.O. STAC 5/B30/27, 5/B43/13, 5/B54/39; Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 11, no. 23.

obviously went against Sir George for in June 1580 he was instructing John Allen to appeal against the decision. Again the matter seems to have been unresolved at the time of Bowes's death on the 1 August 1580 for, in the November of that year his son, George, acting as one of his late father's administrators, took out a further Bill of Complaint in the Court of Requests against Mr Palmer. (44)

Much of the evidence regarding Sir George's straightened financial circumstances is gleaned from snippets of information scattered throughout the family papers of the period. As such it provides a woefully incomplete and impressionistic picture which reveals little of the true extent of his indebtedness. In the final analysis it is necessary to rely upon the uncorroborated testimony of another head of the Streatlam family, this time Sir George's son, Sir William who, in 1598, suggested that the repayment of his father's debts had, up to that time, cost him more than £30,000. Admittedly this was probably a gross exaggeration and indeed, shortly after Sir George's death his widow suggested, to her stepsons, that his debts could be redeemed by the sale of his goods. As such, the true extent of the debt was probably only in the region of several thousand pounds (45) Moreover, as has been suggested, it is possible that Sir George's early property and business ventures had already strained his financial reserves by 1569. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the losses he incurred

44 P.R.O. Req. 2/96/5.

45 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 576; Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 7, no. 32.

as a result of the Rebellion gravely undermined the economic viability of his House. Thereafter Sir George was trapped in a vicious circle for as he became increasingly preoccupied with the recovery of his finances, so he was accordingly less able (and, perhaps, less willing) to seek the political rewards that royal service could undoubtedly provide.

As Professor Loades has suggested, attendance at court or the assiduous cultivation of a highly placed patron was an essential prerequisite for the politically ambitious. (46) Certainly as the administration expanded and the struggle for patronage and place intensified, the acquisition of office, without such support, became a virtual impossibility. It is also possible, therefore, that as Sir George Bowes became increasingly burdened with his estate and business concerns, he became increasingly isolated from the political centre and the available channels of preferment. As has been pointed out, Bowes was compelled to rely upon the political connections of his younger brother in order to seek the good offices of Lord Burghley in promoting his property suit against John Palmer for it was Robert who furnished him with a letter of recommendation to the Lord Treasurer. (47) Admittedly at the time Robert Bowes, the Treasurer of Berwick, was beginning to gain a reputation in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish affairs. Indeed, he had recently been appointed as Elizabeth's

46 Loades, Tudor Court, p. 133.

47 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 17, no. 20; see above p. 268.

Ambassador to Scotland. (48) As such, he was obviously in regular contact with the leading members of the political elite. Nevertheless, the fact that Sir George, who only ten years before had gained national attention by his service during the Northern Rebellion, was forced to seek the intercession of a cadet member of the Bowes family in this matter indicates the extent to which his ties with the centre had been allowed to lapse. Sir George's decreasing political influence was further illustrated by an incident which occurred during his London journey and which concerned the wardship of the heir of James Metcalfe of Nappa, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, which Bowes hoped to secure for his eldest son, William. On the 9th May 1580, William Bowes wrote to his father, who was still in London, asking him to move the Lord Treasurer to grant him the wardship of Metcalfe's heir. At the time Metcalfe himself, apparently a friend of William's, was still alive, although his recovery was despaired of, and the younger Bowes was obviously hoping to further his cause by staking his claim well in advance. (49) Sir George accordingly pressed the suit with Burghley and became convinced that he had been successful. However, as he later discovered from his discussions with some supper companions, during his stay at the "Angel Inn" in Stamford, on the 21st May, Burghley had subsequently granted the wardship to another suitor. (50) Moreover, an unfavourable account of

48 W. MacCaffrey, Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, (New Jersey 1981) pp. 407-9.

49 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 5, no. 3.

50 Ibid, Vol. 11, no. 29.

Sir George's conversation at Stamford was reported to the Lord Treasurer who quickly took offence. Undoubtedly Bowes's political credibility, which had not, in the first place, been of sufficiently high standing to gain a wardship that was "...not of anye greate worthe...", declined further in the wake of this incident. Indeed, he later received a reproofing letter from Burghley urging him thereafter to curb his tongue in respect of the matter. (51)

Sir George's growing isolation from the ruling central elite almost certainly had much to do with his personal preoccupations during the later years of his life. However, to an extent his alienation was, perhaps, due to his inability to adjust completely to the new centralized Tudor State and the attendant growth of an increasingly court-centred political culture. (52) This began more keenly to exert its influence in the north in the wake of the Northern Rising when the traditional magnate affinities were finally crushed and the region came increasingly under the sway of royally appointed southern noblemen, most notably the Earl of Huntingdon. Yet Sir George was, in many respects, a representative of the old "lineage" society, as discussed by Mervyn James. (53). His reputation had been made, for the most part, in the military sphere for he had been schooled in

51 Ibid, Vol. 1, no. 32, calendared in National Register of Archives (Scotland) Survey 885, Papers of the Earl of Strathmore, Glamis Castle.

52 For the growing impact of the Court see, Loades, Tudor Court, chap. 5.

53 James, "English Politics and the Concept of Honour", *passim*.

accordance with the chivalric traditions of the knightly classes, and had gained his spurs during the course of successive bouts of Anglo-Scottish warfare. In essence, therefore, although he was of a younger generation than Sir Robert Bowes he was far less attuned to the concept of the Tudor state than his illustrious forebear who, despite his formidable military reputation, by education and profession was much more a member of the rising "nobility of the robe". (54) Whilst, therefore, Sir George remained totally loyal to the regime which had rescued his family from the virtual proscription of the Marian years, there was perhaps an extent to which he was still not completely at one with the concept of the centralized state. Indeed, his close associations with the traditional regional elite in the days leading up to the Northern Rising bears testimony to this. (55) It is thus possible that Sir George had difficulty in coming to terms with the new order and this, too, may have accounted for his unwillingness or inability to seek further advancement within the changing sphere of Tudor political life.

In view of this it may have been the case, too, that Bowes felt increasingly out of step with the region's leading Crown officials such as the admirably Protestant but disturbingly powerful Earl of Huntingdon. Certainly at the time of Sir George's death in 1580 there was a hint of some tension between the Lord President of the

54 See above p.115-118.

55 See above p.237-239.

Council in the North and sections of the traditional northern gentry. As Professor Cross has suggested, at the time of his appointment there were rumours that Huntingdon had acquired his powerful office through the machinations of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Leicester and that, in the event of the Queen's death, the two men would stage a political coup. Indeed Huntingdon possessed a substantial claim to the throne through his mother Katherine Pole, a direct descendent of the House of York. (56) In the light of this it seems possible, therefore, that this potential threat was taken seriously by Sir George himself. Admittedly the surviving evidence for this hypothesis is flawed, for it comes from the testimony of the Bowes family's neighbour, Christopher Rokeby, of Mortham Tower on the Yorkshire side of the River Tees, who had long been an adherent of the Percies. (57) Nevertheless, in his letter to Burghley, dated the 4th September 1580, informing the Lord Treasurer of the recent death of Sir George, Rokeby complained of Huntingdon's increasing power and the fear of many northern gentlemen that he would try to take control of the north. Moreover, Rokeby's letter revealed that the faction which opposed Huntingdon was greatly weakened by the death of Sir George, who seemingly carried sufficient weight within the northern political elite to provide a counter to the Earl's power-seeking activities. Indeed, as he continued, "...If my cousin William Bowes, his son and

56 Cross, Puritan Earl, pp. 7-8, 160.

57 Ibid, p. 160. Rokeby had, however, served loyally with the Bowes family during the Northern Rebellion. BL. Add. MS. 40747 f. 18.

Mr Treasurer of Berwick [Robert Bowes] would join with me and our friends, as his father did, we should be a full party, but my Lord President gives William Bowes such good countenance that I fear will draw him from us..[whilst] Mr Bowes, the treasurer is much feathered of the President's wing...". (58) No further evidence surrounding Huntingdon's supposed conspiracy manifested itself and the Earl remained a loyal servant of the Crown until his death in 1595. It is possible that, in reality, the plot was nothing more than a figment of conservative northern imagination, dreamed up by minds as yet unable to fully comprehend the idea of a regional administration, headed by noblemen but controlled from the centre. The fact that Rokeby, in his letter, went on to suggest the restoration of the northern power-base of the Earl of Northumberland, as a counter to Huntingdon's alleged ambitions lends weight to this theory, for it indicates the extent to which the perceptions of himself and his associates (which presumably included Sir George) remained attuned rather to the outdated concept of magnate factionalism than to the new state-centred politics of the Elizabethan regime.

If, in many respects, the political perceptions of Sir George Bowes remained rooted in the past, this was in no sense the case with his son and heir, William Bowes who succeeded to the Streatlam title on

58 CSPD Addenda, 1580-1625, p. 17.

the death of his father on 1 August 1580. (59) Indeed, in common with both his uncle, Robert and his great-uncle, Sir Robert, William had been educated at both Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn. (60) As such there is little doubt that the experiences and connections he acquired during his time at university and in London ensured that, by the time of his succession to the Streatlam lordship, William Bowes was far more attuned than his father had been to the political and cultural conventions and attitudes of the Elizabethan central administrative elite. Certainly, as Christopher Rokeby noted, William, along with his uncle Robert Bowes, was sufficiently aware of the political advisability of cultivating a highly placed patron, to maintain a close relationship with the President of the Council in the North, the Earl of Huntingdon. It is probable that Huntingdon and Robert had been acquainted since the days of their youth for both had attended Queen's College, Cambridge in the late 1540s. Moreover, both Huntingdon's father and Robert's uncle were highly placed members of the Dudley administration. (61) Huntingdon's appointment as Lord President of the Council in the North in 1572, therefore, provided the Bowes family with the chance to acquire a sympathetic and highly placed patron. While the hidebound Sir George Bowes may, therefore, have failed to take advantage of this situation, such was not the case with his

59 W. Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, 2 Vols., (London, Newcastle, Edinburgh 1857), Vol. 2, p. 52.

60 Venn, Alumni Cantab., Vol. 1, p. 191; Lincoln's Inn, Admissions, Vol. 1, p. 77.

61 Cross, Puritan Earl, p. 11; Venn, op.cit., p. 191.

more politically attuned brother and son, who quickly sought to revive and revitalize their ties with the north's leading royal official.

As has been pointed out, if the testimony of Christopher Rokeby can be believed, Huntingdon was as anxious to promote the interests of the Bowes family as they were to court his good offices. Of course if Sir George, before his death, had been one of the leading members of a group determined to undermine the Earl's authority, as Rokeby suggested, this may well have given the Lord President cause for concern and perhaps made him all the more determined, thereafter, to secure a greater degree of co-operation from the head of the north's leading Protestant family. Indeed, immediately following Sir George's death, William Bowes sought the good offices of Huntingdon in effecting the settlement of a dispute, apparently taken before the Council in the North, with his step-mother, Jane Bowes, over her jointure settlement and the payment of his father's debts. (62) Moreover, by the following year William had been sworn of the Council in the North, thereby replacing his father. (63) The harmonious relationship with Huntingdon continued and in 1587 the Earl, who was, himself, financially hard-pressed, was prevailed upon to ease William's debts by purchasing two of the Bowes family's Durham properties, the manors of Hilton, which was sold for for £2,000, and

62 Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 5, no. 7; Ibid, Vol. 7, no. 32.

63 CSPD Addenda, 1580-1625, p. 81.

Bradbury. (64) Several years after this, in 1593, the two men were again closely associated for William acted as Huntingdon's secretary during the Lord President's tour of the Anglo-Scottish Marches in 1593. (65)

Through Huntingdon, therefore, the Bowes family maintained its link with the Dudleys. Admittedly, from the 1570s, as the court power-struggle between Burghley and Leicester was resolved in favour of the former, the family seemed to have accepted the inevitability of seeking the good offices of the Lord Treasurer, rather than Dudley, — in matters pertaining to the governing elite. This was illustrated by Robert Bowes's plea, on Sir George's behalf, for the intercession of Burghley with the Privy Council in the Bowes/Palmer property dispute. Yet it is likely that this was purely a matter of expediency; indeed, even Leicester's brother-in-law, Huntingdon, came increasingly to rely upon Burghley's influence within the sphere of high politics. (66) It is possible, however, that the Dudley connection was maintained and perhaps, extended by Sir William Bowes (who was knighted in 1586) for there is evidence to suggest that he was associated with the Earl of Essex, Leicester's step-son and the heir to his influence, during the early years of the Earl's ascendancy. Indeed, Bowes was granted a Master of Arts degree upon accompanying the Earl of Essex to Cambridge

64 Cross, Puritan Earl, p. 79.

65 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 224; Reid, King's Council, p. 228.

66 Cross, op.cit., p. 155.

in 1594-5. (67) Again this connection was perhaps inspired by Huntingdon who, in the early 1580s, had acted as guardian to the Devereux children. (68) Undoubtedly, too, Bowes fell increasingly under Essex's sway during the early 1590s when, as part of his factional feud with Sir Robert Cecil, Burghley's son, the Earl sought to gain control of the Council in the North. Religion figured prominently in this feud for whilst Cecil was determined to maintain the 1559 Church settlement Essex, whose early puritan sympathies had given way to considerations of political expediency in order to attract wider support, began to advocate toleration towards all shades of religious dissent, Puritanism and Catholicism alike. This had been further penalised in 1593 by the punitive legislation passed, as part of a government backlash, against what was regarded as the increasing threat of religious nonconformity. (69) In the conservative north, of course, recusancy was the main problem and Essex exerted his influence upon the Council in the North and its religious arm the Northern High Commission in order to ameliorate the harsher effects of the penal laws against Catholics. (70) The extent to which Sir William Bowes was party to this particular activity is not clear, although any course of action which gave relief to Papists was hardly in keeping with the Protestant tradition of the Streatlam family. Nevertheless,

67 Venn, Alumni Cantab., Vol. 1, p. 191.

68 Cross, Puritan Earl, p. 55-56.

69 Reid, King's Council, p. 224; J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, (Oxford 1959), pp. 185, 204; C. Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth, (London 1960), pp. 488-89.

70 Reid, "Political Influence", pp. 226-27.

at the same time, the Bowes family was closely connected with Matthew Hutton, whose son Timothy had, in 1592 contracted a marriage alliance with Sir William's step-sister, Elizabeth. (71) Hutton (who, as Bishop of Durham and, from 1594, Archbishop of York, was also a member of the Council in the North and an Ecclesiastical Commissioner) was a leading northern supporter of Essex. Indeed, it is likely that it was the Earl's influence which prompted his appointment as Lord President of the Council in the North, following the death of Huntingdon in 1595. (72) The weight of evidence therefore, certainly connects Sir William with the Earl of Essex, although it is probable that it was the Earl's initial support for Puritanism which first attracted Bowes to his cause. Certainly there is no further evidence of the association and it is likely that, as Essex's professed reformist sympathies were absorbed by his expanding political ambitions, Sir William's initial support for the heir to the Dudley affinity waned considerably. His loss of enthusiasm for Essex's cause may well also have been influenced by the fact that, by November 1595, Sir William Bowes was anxiously sueing for the hand (and the estates) of Isabelle, the widow of Sir Godfrey Foljambe, who was not only a staunch Puritan but also the sister of one of Burghley's officers. (73)

71 North Yorks. C.R.O., ZAZ 75 and 76 (Papers of Archbishop Matthew Hutton), MIC 1286; Frame 8T56.

72 Reid, King's Council, p. 227.

73 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 70.

The emergence of Sir William Bowes as a probable Essex adherent illustrates the extent to which the regional gentry, by dint of their need to cultivate highly placed patrons, became enmeshed in the wider court-centred factionalism which characterized the early 1590s. As Peter Clark has noted, this phenomenon was certainly apparent in Kent where, by the latter part of the sixteenth century the local gentry was "enlisted en-bloc" in the service of the Crown and, as such, became unavoidably embroiled in the political intrigues of the central administrative elite.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Yet the experiences of Sir William as he tried, at this time, to maintain a reasonable political profile, illustrate also the extent to which the North, the traditional "bete noir" of successive English monarchs, had been tamed by the Tudor regime. Admittedly the region was still remarkably backward in terms of religion and would continue to pose a security threat as long as Scotland remained an independent entity. Yet the fact that, even in the politically remote north, ambitious members of the leading gentry were forced to enter into the machinations of a court-inspired patronage system, wherein favour was obtained solely through the good offices of highly placed royal officials or favourites, indicates the extent to which the Tudor polity had triumphed over regional particularism.

74 Clark, English Provincial Society, pp. 255, 259.

Despite his links with the centre, however, the course of Bowes's career was at the same time influenced by his family's connections with the borders and it was within this sphere that his service to the Crown was undertaken. This may have been due to the fact that his main political patron, the earl of Huntingdon, although a useful and highly placed contact, had little direct influence within the sphere of the court. Indeed, in order to promote his interests the earl himself was forced to work through the auspices of the more politically favoured, such as Leicester and Burghley. (75) As such he was apparently able to offer little in the way of direct patronage in respect of royal office and preferment. Indeed, even with regard to border service it is likely that Huntingdon's influence was restricted for, while, as Lord President of the Council in the North, the Earl's jurisdiction theoretically extended throughout the border regions, in practice the responsibility for the day to day administration of the borders was left in the hands of the Wardens, Henry, Lord Hunsdon and Sir John Forster in the East and Middle Marches, respectively, and Henry, Lord Scrope in the West Marches. (76) Only in the later 1580s, when the threat of a Spanish invasion rendered imperative the security of the northern border, did Huntingdon take effective control of the region and even then this roused the antagonism of Hunsdon who saw, in the Earl's assumption of command, a threat to his own authority. (77).

75 Cross, Puritan Earl, pp. 143, 155.

76 Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, p. 99; Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, pp. 279-81.

77 Cross, op.cit., p. 214.

When, therefore, in the early 1580s Sir William began his career in the sphere of border service it was probably through the good offices of his father-in-law, Lord Scrope whose daughter, Mary had married Bowes at the beginning of 1569. (78) . This was undoubtedly the case in 1580-1 when Bowes was appointed to the Commission for the Survey of Border Forts and Castles, within the West Marches. Moreover, it is likely that Scrope's influence was also in evidence when, on 4 September 1585, his son-in-law was appointed as one of the Commissioners to meet with the Scots in order to investigate the murder of Lord Francis Russell, at Cocklaw in the Cheviots. Russell had been killed during the course of a Day of Truce, arranged by his father-in-law, Sir John Forster the warden of the English Middle Marches, and his Scottish counterpart. (79) The precise identity of the murderer was unknown but the English government, nevertheless, used the incident to try and bring down the Scottish regent, the Earl of Arran, whose religious persuasions were not sufficiently reformist for the more Protestant elements of Elizabeth's administration. As such the incident assumed a far greater political significance that it actually merited. While the English Commissioners failed to obtain custody of the murderer the wider aims of the exercise succeeded for Arran duly fell from office as a result of the negotiations. (80) Throughout the affair Bowes attended to his duties with diligence

78 Dep. Kpr., Vol. 44, p. 342.

79 CBP, Vol. 1, pp. 34-35; BL. Add. MS. 32657, f. 179; Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, p. 99.

80 Donaldson, Scotland, p. 183; Watts, op.cit., p. 99.

and it was during the course of these negotiations that he received his knighthood. (81)

Despite this initial success, however, it was not until the 1590s that Bowes became more deeply involved in border affairs. In July 1593 he was instructed to attend his uncle, Robert Bowes, who had been taken ill during an embassy to Scotland. (82) By this time, too, the state of the borders had begun, increasingly, to preoccupy the central administration for widespread rumours were suggesting that the Scottish King, James VI was planning an alliance with Spain, which had been at war with England since 1588. (83) Relations between England and Scotland had remained upon a fairly stable footing since the signing of the Treaty of Berwick in 1586, when the young Scottish King, who had only recently assumed his majority, agreed to become a pensioner of England. However, Scottish amity could never be taken for granted, as English preparations to defend the border during the Armada crisis of 1588 had acknowledged. Moreover, the Protestant James's often equivocal attitudes towards Catholics gave the English government periodic cause for concern. (84) In early 1593, therefore, in an attempt to effect the more efficient defence of the frontier,

81 CBP, Vol. 1, p. 203; .

82 CSP (Scot. Ser.) Vol. 2, p. 630.

83 Reid, King's Council, p. 225.

84 Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 183-95; Cross, Puritan Earl, pp. 212-14; Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, p. 107, Black, Elizabeth, p. 370.

the Earl of Huntingdon was given a Commission to survey and redress the decay within the border regions. It was apparently during this survey that Sir William acted as the Earl's secretary and it is possible that it was at Huntingdon's request that Bowes was appointed to repair to Scotland. (85)

Thereafter, as his patron, Huntingdon, began to play a greater role in the administration and defence of the frontier region, so Sir William became increasingly involved in the affairs of the borders. In 1595, for example he played a leading role in effecting the removal of Sir John Forster, the aged and incompetent warden of the Middle Marches, whose lax handling of his wardenry had long been a thorn in Huntingdon's side. Indeed, the task of removing the rolls of the Warden Courts from Forster's possession was entrusted to Bowes, who was also detailed to interrogate the old man regarding irregularities in his administration. (86) As a result of his involvement in this affair, Sir William despatched a long missive, the first of several such reports, to Lord Burghley informing him of the parlous and decayed state of the Middle Marches at this time, for the reiving and raiding which had so occupied earlier administrators had not abated over the years.. In his report Bowes noted the poor administration of justice within the region and the extent of the losses suffered by the inhabitants as a result of the incursions of Scottish raiders. Indeed,

85 Watts, op.cit., p. 107; CBP, Vol. 2, p. 224.

86 CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 59, 70-71.

as he pointed out, the problems were beginning to extend beyond the immediate frontier region and raiding had been reported in the Bishopric and even in Richmond, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, some seventy miles from the border. The poor state of the reformed religion in the frontier regions also concerned Bowes and he noted how, for lack of preachers the work of the seminary priests was taking hold in many of the "best houses". Indeed, as he concluded there was an immediate need "...to cure the aforesaid gangrene thus noysomly molesting the foote of this kingdom..." (87). During the course of his appointment to the Commission issued in October 1596 to treat with the Scots over border causes, Sir William sent further detailed reports to Burghley noting further the decayed state of the frontier and as a result of these he was summoned to court, in March 1597, in order to report his observations to the Privy Council. (88) At this time his presence in the north was sorely missed, as the letter of Bishop Matthew, one of the border Commissioners, to Burghley makes clear. (89) However, in March 1597, in the light of his knowledge of border problems, the Council decided to send Sir William on an embassy to James VI with a view to seeking redress for border outrages. Since the Scottish border officials Robert Ker of Cessford and Walter Scott of Buccleuch were themselves major instigators of cross-border

87 Ibid, p. 80.

88 Ibid, pp. 224, 242, 270, 274.

89 Ibid, p. 272.

violence, the Scottish government, was also to be prompted into appointing more responsible wardens. (90)

By such means, therefore, Sir William came, in the time-honoured tradition of his family, to be acknowledged for his expertise in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish affairs and at this stage his career seemed destined to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious great-uncle. Yet from the start he appeared to have lacked the expertise and diplomatic skills which made Sir Robert Bowes the leading expert of his day and, perhaps, of the century. Certainly Sir William's first embassy was not particularly successful for although the Scots had already agreed, in May 1597, to a series of peace proposals which were ratified by the English and Scottish Commissioners at Carlisle, the Scottish king refused to allow the villainous lairds of Cessford and Buccleuch to be used as pledges, or hostages, until the terms of the treaty had been honoured. (91). Only after months of fruitless bargaining did Buccleuch surrender himself into English hands, whilst Cessford contemptuously avoided capture and turned himself, in the process, into a hero on both sides of the frontier. (92). Moreover, it was the case that, even at this early stage, Sir William's staunchly Protestant sympathies, which had apparently become increasingly

90 Ibid, pp. 277-78; CSP (Scot. Ser.) p. 733; Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, p. 117.

91 CSP (Scot Ser.) Vol. 2, p. 737; Tough, Last Years of a Frontier, p. 266; Watts, op.cit., p. 122.

92 CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 417-18; HMC, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury, 24 Vols, (London 1883-1976), part 7, pp. 451-52.

Puritan over the years, antagonized the Scottish King who, at the time, was involved in something of a power-struggle with the presbyterian ministers of the Scottish Reformed Church. (93) Indeed, the letter of a Scottish papist, George Leslie, which was intercepted by Burghley, made it clear that Bowes's staunchly Puritan stance over the cause of the Scottish ministers was converting many Scots, who were resentful of English interference, towards the Catholic cause. Indeed, as Leslie noted, the King himself, was fearful of the ministers' "...seditious...and malicious behaviours...", which, it was generally feared, would lead to the establishment of a democratic regime. Under the circumstances he can hardly have been pleased with the attitude of Sir William Bowes. (94)

Bowes's second diplomatic mission to the Scottish King, undertaken in early 1598 fared scarcely better. Indeed, at the time the relationship between Elizabeth and James was particularly unstable, for the Scottish King had reputedly been in touch with the Irish rebel, the Earl of Tyrone and was rumoured to have intrigued with other parties hostile to English interests. As a consequence, Bowes was authorized to remonstrate with the King, over his behaviour which Elizabeth deemed "...predjudicial to any right of his to the English Crown..." (95) Such an embassy, again, was hardly designed to commend Bowes to

93 Donaldson, Scotland, pp. 194-95.

94 HMC, Salisbury, part 14, pp. 20-24.

95 CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 2, p. 746.

James and, sometime afterwards Sir William was informed of the Scottish King's hostility towards him. (96) Yet this early dissension was nothing compared to the antagonism which Bowes's third mission to Scotland engendered. This embassy took place in the spring of 1599 and was again in response both to rumours of James's increasing rapprochement with the Catholic cause and the perennial problem of border unrest. However, within a short time of Bowes's arrival in Edinburgh he was implicated in the kidnapping of one Ashfield, an English Catholic agent who had attracted the favour of the Scottish King. In actual fact Ashfield had been involved, probably on James's behalf, in the unauthorized trafficking of English horses to Scotland which, in view of the scarcity of these animals, was a felony and it was on this account that Hunsdon's successor to the wardenry of the East Marches, Lord Willoughby, sought to obtain his apprehension. (97) In the event, it was alleged that Ashfield had been spirited away to Berwick in Sir William's coach. The Scottish King was infuriated over Bowes's involvement in the affair and, for a time, the English Ambassador was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle. Moreover, Elizabeth, too, was greatly displeased with Bowes's mishandling of the affair and James allegedly relished the story of Sir William's subsequent chastisement at the Queen's hands. (98)

96 Ibid, pp. 752, 759.

97 Tough, Last Years of a Frontier, pp. 148, 272.

98 CSP (Scot. Ser.), Vol. 2, p. 771; HMC Salisbury, part 9, p. 307; CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 610, 648-54.

The Ashfield affair obviously signalled the end of Bowes's diplomatic career and thereafter he was forced to content himself with the more mundane office of Treasurer of Berwick which had been granted him in April 1598, following the death of his uncle, Robert Bowes, the previous incumbent of the office. (99). Yet this, too, was not without its difficulties for by the end of the Elizabethan era the garrison was in a state of disorder and disrepair whilst, amongst its personnel, petty rivalries rendered its day to day administration increasingly difficult. Indeed, Bowes fell victim to the latter almost before his appointment had been confirmed for Sir John Carey, the acting Governor of the garrison, had sought the post for himself and, upon hearing of Bowes's candidacy, immediately wrote to Burghley casting doubt upon Sir William's suitability for the office. (100) It is moreover, probable that elements of the old rivalry between Carey's father, the late Lord Hunsdon and Bowes's former patron, the also deceased Earl of Huntingdon, lay at the root of this for throughout the course of Bowes's tenure of office, Carey seized every opportunity to undermine his rival's reputation. (101) In July 1600, for example, Bowes was severely reprimanded by the Lord Treasurer, Thomas Buckhurst, for failing to reimburse various warrants and dockets drawn by authority of the Queen. One such charge was levelled by Richard Musgrave, the master of the Berwick ordinance, who claimed that Bowes's malice

99 CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 529.

100 Ibid., p. 487.

101 Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, p. 101.

towards him was at the root of the trouble. (102) In fact it is likely that the controversy over the payments actually arose as the result of the tightening up of administrative procedures within the garrison. Nevertheless, Carey exploited the situation for all it was worth and advised Sir Robert Cecil to keep an eye on Bowes who, he suspected, was re-directing funds towards the building of a new church in Berwick. (103) This imputatation Bowes strenuously denied and he begged Cecil to give the Queen notice that "...this place of her service will be attended with my ruin..." (104) Such accusations were, however, difficult to live down and in the following year Bowes was still defending himself against charges of his mismanagement of the Queen's treasure which amounted to some £52,500. (105)

A further major bone of contention with Carey seems to have been Bowes's alleged absences from his office. Indeed, even before Sir William's last embassy to Scotland in 1599, he had been forced to justify his absences to Burghley, who had been informed that Bowes's devotion the Berwick garrison had been "...less than meet...". (106) Bowes's record of attendance, moreover, apparently remained poor for in November 1602 Carey was still complaining that Sir William was

102 CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 669-70, 675, 706.

103 Ibid, Vol. 2, pp. 671, 720.

104 HMC Salisbury, part 10, p. 380.

105 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 769.

106 Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 601.

rarely at his post. (107) It is clear, from the substance of Sir William's replies to this charge that he was, indeed, frequently absent from the garrison. Whilst his failing sight and hearing, combined with bouts of ill-health due variously to the coldness of the Berwick garrison or to an attack of the "stone", were sometimes cited as excuses for his absences it seems obvious that, like his father, Sir William was increasingly preoccupied with his troublesome financial and business affairs. (108)

As has been previously noted, Sir William was burdened with considerable debts, following the death of his father. Moreover, the main Bowes manors of Streatlam, Cleatlam and Barforth, along with diverse other lands had, in 1569, been settled to the use of Sir George and his wife, Jane, for life, thereby depriving William of a valuable portion of his inheritance until the death of his stepmother. (109) Thus, in addition to his other financial problems, Bowes had succeeded to a considerably depleted patrimony. His debts apparently increased over the years and in 1597, he complained to

107 Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 809.

108 Ibid, pp. 587-88, 601, 762.

109 This settlement was almost certainly the cause of the dispute between Sir William and his stepmother. Indeed, until his second marriage, in the late 1590s, Sir William seems to have resided chiefly at the Durham manor of Bradley which had been granted to Sir George Bowes in 1572 following the attainder of the Tempest family. North Yorks. C.R.O. ZAW/1 (Clifton Castle Archive, Streatlam and Stainton Deeds, 1570-1754), MIC 1764, frames 1-45; Durham C.R.O. Calendar of the Strathmore Archive, D/St/D1/1/24; CPR 1569-72, p. 357. See above p. 283.

Burghley of the decay and disgrace of his House which, "...as it hath not wanted of many years men employed in public service and in that trust less regarding of their private [affairs] than had been fit, hath received impoverishment of more than £1,000 land within these last forty years..." (110) Indeed, upon Bowes's appointment to Berwick, Carey scathingly remarked that, in view of the fact that Sir William's lands were already mortgaged, the further burdens imposed by the joint offices of Treasurer and Scottish Ambassador would almost certainly lead to his financial downfall, as had been the case with his uncle, Robert Bowes. In the event such service did little to enhance Sir William's financial position and, during a visit to London in March 1603, he was actually arrested for debt as the result of proceedings begun while he was on one of his Scottish embassies. The action was taken by Richard Barrat, a City of London grocer, who claimed that Bowes owed him £600. Sir William denied that the sum was still outstanding and was eventually released upon the intercession of the government. (111) Nevertheless, the incident illustrated clearly the inconveniences and burdens of office. Indeed, as Bowes's account for his Scottish embassy of 1598 made clear he had, on that occasion, spent more than £1,000 over and above the losses sustained through the neglect of his works. (112) Bowes had taken over his father's lease of the Teesdale lead mines in 1581 and as he pointed out to

110 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 293.

111 Ibid, Vol. 2, p.473-74; HMC Salisbury, part 15, p. 3.

112 Ibid, p. 533.

Burghley, these provided him with his main source of income so he could not afford to neglect them for long periods of time. (113) Sir William had also taken up iron-ore mining and in a further letter to Burghley, he noted how his experimentation with steel-making processes, in addition to eating up "...more money than were fitt for myne estate...", had taken up much of his time and effort. (114) Such preoccupations, however, inevitably gave rise to pointed remarks regarding his reliability and lent weight to the notion, articulated again by the sharp-tongued Sir John Carey, that Sir William had a greater interest in his minerals than in Border causes. (115) Bowes had sought to ease his financial difficulties by contracting a second marriage, sometime before 1599, with Isabel Foljambe, a widow, who had apparently been left with an interest of more than £300 per annum in her late husband, Godfrey's, estates in Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Yet here too, the enterprise was not without its drawbacks for almost immediately Bowes was drawn into an acrimonious dispute with the Foljambe heir over Isabel's right to the properties. After much dispute the case was referred to Chancery and, by 1601, Bowes was

113 CPR 1578-80, p. 26. Bowes also had a partnership in a leadmill which had been erected upon lands leased from the Bishop of Durham in Weardale. J.L. Drury, "More stout than wise: tenant right in Weardale in the Tudor period", Marcombe (ed), The Last Principality, p. 92.

114 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 576. The iron-ore mining may have commenced after his marriage to Isabel Foljambe for there was certainly iron-ore on her share of the Foljambe estates in Derbyshire as the action for waste, brought against Bowes by the Foljambe heir in 1606, made clear. C Dalton, The Wrays of Glentworth, 2 vols. (London 1880), Vol. 1, p. 110.

115 CBP, Vol. 2, p. 432.

facing charges of having "wasted" the estates to the tune of some £40,000. (116) This again involved Sir William in much time-consuming and costly litigation and, despite his repeated protestations to the government regarding his willingness to serve, there is much to suggest that Bowes's reputation, which was already tarnished by the Ashfield affair, was damaged further by his preoccupation with financial affairs.

In many respects, therefore, Sir William Bowes was hardly more successful than his father had been in his attempts to re-capture, through royal service, the political prestige that the House of Bowes had accumulated during the later Henrician and Edwardian eras. Unlike Sir George, however, whose political conservatism had probably inhibited him from seeking fully to exploit the growing rapprochement between the Crown and the localities, Sir William had actively courted patronage and office and, for a time, had seemed destined to follow in the footsteps of his famous predecessor, Sir Robert. Yet his early successes gave way to disillusionment as professional setbacks, combined with the same personal pressures which had dogged his father, prevented him from rising through service to the upper echelons of the Elizabethan administration. Indeed, it can be argued that the Bowes of Streatlam had been the architects of their own decline for, by aiding the Tudor Regime in its centralization policy, the family

116 CBP, Vol. 2, pp. 601, 633, 669-70, 762.

had opened up the north to the attentions of of the wider political elite. Whilst southern gentlemen may not have relished their postings to the farthest outreaches of the Tudor polity they were nevertheless, greedy for any scraps of royal patronage, including the various border offices which, formerly the preserve of northerners such as the Bowes family, fell increasingly into the expanding melting pot of the Elizabethan patronage system. It was, thus, because of it's previous diligence in furthering Tudor centralization, that the Bowes family of the later sixteenth century found itself forced to compete with jealous outsiders such as Sir John Carey. In similar fashion, as Sir William himself noted, the family's earlier preference for royal service, above estate management and consolidation, led to the later financial difficulties which inhibited its ability to effectively promote its career prospects.

In the event, any future political ambitions that Sir William may have entertained were effectively dashed in 1603 by the accession, to the English throne, of the Scottish king, James VI. He retained his membership of the Council in the North and also his hereditary offices of constable and steward of Barnard Castle. (117) However, he was quickly deprived of his other northern offices, those of steward of the Westmorland lordships and constable of Raby Castle, within the Bishopric and in other respects also, Bowes's career in the service of

117 Reid, King's Council, p. 495; CPR 1557-8, p. 257; Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, p. 24.

the Crown was over. (118) Thereafter he retired to the estates of his wife, Isabel, at Walton in Derbyshire where he spent the remainder of his days "...continually vexed with lawsuytes...". Indeed, the suit of the Foljambe heir against Sir William continued for several years. Moreover, towards the end of his life, Bowes, whose only child was a daughter, Katherine, was also locked in legal combat with his half-brother, Talbot, over the succession to the Streatlam inheritance. This, by the entail created by Sir George in 1569 was due, upon Sir William's death, to pass to Talbot at the expense of the heirs of his older deceased half brother, George Bowes of Biddick, whose claims Sir William supported. (119) It was at this time, too, that Sir William, probably at the instigation of his indomitably Puritan wife, Isabel, began increasingly to adopt a more militant stance in order to defend the cause of advanced Reform.

From the evidence it appears that both Sir William and Isabel were disappointed by the negative reaction of the ruling elite towards the 1603 Millenary Petition which called for moderately Puritan reform of the established Church. In particular Bowes and his wife apparently took exception to a book brought out at this time by the university of Oxford and ratified by Cambridge. (120) It seems likely that they

118 Reid, Durham Crown Lordships, p. 25-6.

119 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 396. See the letters appertaining to this affair in Glamis Castle, Bowes MS. Vol. 5, especially nos. 8, 10, 13, 15.

120 P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, (London 1967) pp.343-44; B. Coward, The Stuart Age, (London 1980) pp. 111-113.

were, in fact, objecting to Oxford's condemnatory Answer to the Petition. Indeed in a heated written exchange which took place throughout December 1603 and January 1604, between Bowes and the Earl of Shrewsbury, the leading Derbyshire magnate, Sir William declared the objections of himself and his wife, whose opinion he especially valued since, "...she is verie wyse and especially in thynges of this kynde...", much to the alarm of the Earl who was horrified by the schismatical nature of their arguments. (121) Thereafter it seems that the couple became yet more concerned with the need for religious reform - to the point of separatism if necessary. Again, Isabel apparently took the initiative in this for in 1606 the home of Lady Bowes was used as a conference centre by a group of leading Coventry Puritans. (122) The conference was attended by many leading divines including Arthur Hildersham, the inspiration behind the Millenary Petition, John Dodd, Richard Bernard (Isabel's own protege) and the separatist minister, John Smyth. Also present was Thomas Helwys who later played a major role in the formation of the early Baptist movement and who dedicated to Isabel his Declaration of the faith, which articulated his radical views on predestination and the inadmissibility of infant baptism. (123)

The Puritanism of Sir William had always lain at the root of his alienation from James Stuart for, it had, in essence provided the

121 Lambeth Palace MS. 3203, ff. 89, 166, 173.

122 V.C.H, Warwick, Vol. 8, ed. W.B. Stephens, (London 1969), p. 373.

123 Cross, Church and People, pp. 167-70; R. Marchant, Puritans and the Church Courts, 1560-1642, (London 1960) pp. 149-151; W. Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, (Columbia 1938) pp. 185-6.

background to the unfortunate Ashfield affair. His subsequent decision to adopt an increasingly heightened reformist profile, under the auspices of his staunchly Puritan wife, can thus have done little to recommend his services further to James whose continued displeasure towards Bowes was illustrated by the refusal of his administration to audit and settle the accounts pertaining to the Berwick treasury. As a result, the Streatlam estates were temporarily seized by the Crown upon Sir William's death in 1611, on the grounds that his Berwick accounts were still in arrears. (124). In many ways, in fact, Bowes's fate mirrored that of his near contemporary and probable acquaintance, Sir Francis Hastings, the brother of the Puritan Earl of Huntingdon. Hastings's support for religious reform also brought him increasingly into conflict with the new administration with the result that he was summoned before the Privy Council to answer charges of alleged sedition. Thereafter he too, was forced into retirement and excluded from all participation in the service of the Stuart regime. (125).

Yet the roots of Sir William's problem went even deeper, for the Bowes family's position within the confines of the Tudor political elite had always been maintained through the medium of border service. From the earliest days of Sir Robert's career through to the last few

124 Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 110. Sharp, Rebellion, p. 396; Durham C.R.O. Calendar of the Strathmore Archive D/St/D1/33.

125 "The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings, 1574-1609", ed. C. Cross, Somerset Record Society, Vol. LXIX, (1969), pp. xvii, xviii, xix, 16, 19.

uncertain years of Sir William's professional life, the Bowes family had been noted for its expertise and experience in the sphere of Anglo-Scottish affairs. The accession of James, however, transformed the nature of the borders thus destroying for ever the political framework which had provided the Bowes of Streatlam with their whole *raison d'etre*. Ironically, Sir William, in what was apparently his last official duty in the service of the Crown, was one of the Commissioners, appointed on the 4th December 1603, to oversee the dissolution of the Berwick garrison, for generations the focal point of Anglo-Scottish hostility. (126) As the fortunes of the Streatlam family had risen with the attempts of the Tudors to extend their authority to the farthest reaches of the northern borders, so they declined with the metamorphosis of those frontier regions into strategically insignificant "middleshores". In 1553 the political career and, probably, the head of Sir Robert Bowes had been saved, in the face of his treacherous support for Lady Jane Grey, by the Crown's need to retain his professional expertise in the field of border defence and administration. Fifty years later, however, his successor was unable to survive the consequences of relatively far more trivial misdemeanours because of the simple fact that his political accomplishments had, overnight, become obsolete.

CONCLUSION

THE BOWES OF STREATLAM AND THE TUDOR REGIME; AN OVERVIEW

Given the far-reaching reforms that were effected in the English Church and State in the sixteenth century it is, perhaps, not surprising that the central themes in the history of the Bowes of Streatlam at that time were those of royal service and religion. The political fortunes undoubtedly reached their apogee with the career of Sir Robert Bowes who, through the medium of royal service advanced to the highest echelons of the central administrative elite. Thereafter, however, a variety of political and personal setbacks conspired to prevent later members of the family from emulating his success. At the same time, moreover, the family's remarkable commitment to the cause of advanced reform continued to exert an influence upon its secular activities with the result that, for the Streatlam House, religious idealism came into conflict with political ambition on more than one occasion. A variety of factors, economic, political and religious combined, therefore, to prevent the Bowes family from capitalizing upon the undoubtedly rich pickings that were to be had within the sphere of royal service during the years of the Tudor regime. Other similarly placed northern gentry families, such the Whartons and Eures who had been able to take advantage of Crown patronage were, by the end of the century, firmly entrenched in the ranks of the lower Tudor nobility. For the Bowes of Streatlam, in contrast, on the death of Sir William in 1611, the family's social and political status was no greater than it had been at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Economic factors undoubtedly played a major role in the failure of the Streatlam family to consolidate and strengthen its political status throughout the century. As Sir William noted in 1596, his family's devotion to royal service had done much to undermine the economic viability of his House. Indeed, as the careers of Sir William and his father illustrated, the financial burdens of royal office holding became particularly onerous during the later years of the regime. (1) Yet there is little doubt that much structural damage was done to the House of Bowes by the division of the estates in 1545 when, upon the death of the first Sir George, that part of the inheritance not entailed in tail male descended to the heirs-general, his three daughters and co-heirs. (2) Until this time the family had enjoyed a position, in terms of landed wealth, at the forefront of northern gentry society. At the height of its economic fortunes, in the early years of the sixteenth century, the family possessed more than twenty manors, in addition to numerous other properties. (3) Whilst no precise valuation of the inheritance exists for this period, it is likely that, in terms of landed wealth, the family's fortune was probably on a par with that of leading members of the North Riding gentry, families such as the Conyers and Strangeways who, by the end of the fifteenth century were possessed of incomes in the region of

1 Chapter 6 passim.

2 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 370.

3 Dep. Kpr., Vol. 44, p. 329.

£600 per annum. (4) The Bowes's income may well have been slightly higher by the 1520s for, in 1524, the wardship of George Bowes was sold to Sir William Bulmer by Wolsey, who was at that time Bishop of Durham, for £800. It has, indeed, been suggested by Dr. Tillbrook that this was the most profitable wardship ever to fall into the hands of a Bishop of Durham. (5) Admittedly, estimating the value of an estate from the purchase price of its wardship is fraught with pitfalls. Considerations such as the age and health of the heir, the extent of the reversionary interest and the extent of the non-landed possessions of the ward were all taken into account when an estimation of the wardship's value was undertaken. (6) Yet as Joel Hurstfield has suggested, the policy of Lord Burghley, who was appointed as Master of the Court of Wards in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, was to base the purchase price of wardships upon the annual yearly rental value of the lands, a practice which had also been adopted by a Commission appointed by Edward VI to oversee the selling of wardships in Ireland. By this method wardships were generally disposed of at either the equivalent annual value or less, or up to fifty percent more than the annual value. (7) Admittedly this is a very rough and ready method of estimation and moreover, there is no way of knowing whether Wolsey followed this practice in deciding upon the selling price of George Bowes's wardship. If he did, however, it

4 Pollard, North-Eastern England, p. 90.

5 Durham C.R.O. D/HH 5/1/145. Tillbrook, "County Durham", p. 123.

6 J. Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards, (London 1958), p. 85.

7 Ibid, pp. 85-87, 275-76.

is likely that the Bowes inheritance was probably worth something in the region of between £600-800 per annum. The wardship was re-sold in 1529 to Sir William Eure, Robert and Richard Bowes and William Tonge (the second husband of the young heir's mother) for 2,400 marks although since the re-sale of a wardship to the heir's family was more often than not a profiteering exercise, little significance can probably be attached to this later figure (8) The wardship was, in fact, the subject of a dispute between Sir William Bulmer and one Thomas Strangeways who claimed that it had been granted to him in recompense for services rendered to Wolsey's predecessor, Bishop Ruthall (and there is a paper substantiating Strangeways claim in the Bowes family papers). Strangeways claimed, that Bulmer had disposed of the wardship for £1,900 although evidence from the family papers suggests that the selling price was, indeed, 2,400 marks. (9)

The value of the inheritance at the time of the death of the first Sir George, in December 1545 is equally difficult to assess. Admittedly part of a copy of his inquisition post mortem, made out in 1556, does survive yet, as Laurence Stone has suggested such assessments were essentially "legal fiction". (10) This assertion is borne out by the fact that several of the property values given, such as that for the chief manor of Streatlam which was given a yearly value of £50,

8 Durham C.R.O. D13/1/3 p.212; Hurstfield, Queen's Wards, p. 274.

9 Durham C.R.O. D13/1/3 p. 204; LP. Vol. 4, part 2, nos. 6583-65888.

10 Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, p. 132.

were simply repeated in the inquisition taken upon the death of the second Sir George in 1580. The manor of Barforth, also was given the same value of £14 5s in both 1556 and 1580, as were the properties of Newbiggin, Broomlaw, Whorlton, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Eggleston which were valued, in total, at £8 4s. (11) Nevertheless, it is likely that, in the 1540s the landed income of the lord of Streatlam was comparable with that of Sir Thomas Wharton and Sir William Eure, both of whom were ennobled in 1544. Wharton probably enjoyed an income, from land of £750 per annum with Eure's income falling, broadly, within the same range. (12) Indeed, as has been suggested, the failure of the first Sir George to secure the grant of the barony of Coldingham was probably due rather to the political impracticability of his proposal, than to his inability to maintain noble status. The subsequent loss, however, of the properties in the eastern part of the counties to the heirs-general possibly halved the value of the inheritance since, in 1560, it was suggested that the landed estate of the lord of Streatlam (at that time the second Sir George) was worth only around £400 per annum. (13)

His lack of landed patrimony probably helped to account for the failure of Sir Robert Bowes to attain the noble rank which had been

11 Durham C.R.O. D/St/C1/2/3; North Yorks. C.R.O. ZAW/1, (Clifton Castle Archive, Streatlam and Stainton Deeds, 1570-1754), MIC 1764, frame nos. 1-45.

12 James, "Change and Continuity", p. 130; Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, p. 760.

13 CSP, Scotland, Vol. 1, p. 375.

granted to his contemporaries, Eure and Wharton, at a time when the opportunity for such advancement, through the medium of service to the Henrician regime, was far greater than it later became. (14) Thus whilst the career of Bowes himself, based as it was upon the Crown's need for his personal administrative and military qualifications, continued to flourish, his ability to reinforce and perpetuate the political fortunes of the Streatlam House, which he headed from 1545, was severely undermined. Sir Robert undoubtedly did rather well, in terms of the financial rewards of office. His fee as a member of the Council in the North was £66 13s 4d (or 100 marks) per annum, whilst his offices of chief steward, receiver and bailiff of Hexham and constable, keeper and master forester of Alnwick brought in a further £100 each year. (15) Additionally Bowes served for five years as Warden of the Middle Marches with a yearly fee of £333 6s 8d. This rose by a further £466 13s 4d upon his appointment to the joint wardenries of the East and Middle Marches from January 1550 to September 1551. (16) His appointment as Master of the Rolls, although of relatively short duration, also carried a yearly salary of well in excess of £300. (17) Additional perquisites, such as the annuity of £100 granted to Bowes in March 1544 and the grant of the wardships of the three

14 See above pp. 166-167.

15 CSPD 1601-3 with Addenda 1547-65, p. 399; CPR, 1555-57, p. 27.

16 CPR, 1549-51, p. 162.

17 The Master of the Rolls enjoyed a fee of some £310 per annum in the 1530s. Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 99.

daughters and co-heirs of his nephew, the first Sir George, which Sir Robert acquired in January 1548, also boosted his income. Indeed, Bowes later sold the wardship and marriage of Dorothy Bowes to the Northumbrian Collingwood family for 450 marks. (18) Moreover, as has been noted, shortly before his appointment to the Privy Council, he was granted a discharge from debts worth well over £660. (19) In all, the rewards of Bowes's royal service must have run into several thousand pounds although, as with the wardenries of the Marches, his outgoings must also have been considerable. The bulk of his profits, however, must, inevitably, have been swallowed in the maintenance of a lifestyle befitting a member of the central political elite for, in terms of his patrimony, Bowes's landed income placed him only within the socially inferior ranks of the substantial northern gentry. (20) Certainly Sir Robert was unable to plough any of his profits of office into the Streatlam inheritance. Indeed, he succeeded only in placing further charges upon the estate for, after his death, his brother and heir, Richard Bowes was forced to stand upon bond, before the Exchequer, for the payment of Sir Robert's considerable debts. (21) Undoubtedly, therefore, the economic impact of the division of the Streatlam inheritance contributed significantly to the family's failure to capitalize upon the political success of Sir Robert and

18 LP, Vol. 19, part 1, no. 278; CPR 1548-9, p. 1; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 370.

19 See above p. 191.

20 In the reign of Henry VIII, the substantial Yorkshire gentry would have enjoyed an annual income of a around £400. Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 98.

21 "Wills and Inventories in the Archdeaconry of Richmond", S.S., Vol. 26, p. 117.

thereby consolidate its position within the upper ruling elite. Admittedly the family did re-emerge from the political wilderness upon the accession of Elizabeth and it is likely that the attempts of Sir George to extend his patrimony in the 1560s could well have increased his rental, by the time of the 1569 Rising, to around the £600 per annum suggested by Mervyn James. (22) As such the family retained its standing within the upper ranks of local gentry society. Nevertheless, the increased competition for, and the uncertain rewards of, Elizabethan royal service thereafter inhibited its attempts to rise beyond the confines of the regional political elite.

Yet if financial considerations played some part in deciding the political fortunes of the Bowes of Streatlam in the sixteenth century, there is little doubt that the family's experiences, in respect of royal service, were greatly influenced by the changing relationship between the Crown and its subjects as the Tudor regime gradually began to consolidate its authority throughout the kingdom. In view of this, the career of Sir Robert Bowes contrasts sharply with those of Sir George and Sir William. Indeed, the foundations of Sir Robert's career in the service of the Tudors were laid at a time when the regime was beginning, uncertainly, to extend its control in the far north, a region with little tradition of direct Crown control and a history of overt magnate factionalism which had, on more than one occasion,

22 James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 30.

provided a direct threat to the authority of previous monarchs. As such Sir Robert's service in the administration of the north and the defence of the borders was valued far more highly than the efforts of the later lords of Streatlam whose service was performed for an administration confident in its ability to exert its authority to the farthest corners of the kingdom.

Since the evidence for border unrest is so much more complete for the sixteenth century, it is tempting to assume that frontier problems became particularly acute during that period. As Dr. Pollard has shown, however, the security threat posed by the Anglo-Scottish borders was of equal concern to fifteenth century monarchs. (23) Lancastrian and Yorkist kings, however, tended to delegate responsibility for border control to the northern magnate families, whose power, throughout the region, increased in accordance with their military and administrative responsibilities. (24) It was only with the decline of these magnate Houses, at the end of the fifteenth century, however, that the Crown acquired the potential for expanding and consolidating its own authority within the north. The subsequent attempts of the regime to assert this control, through the agency of lesser noblemen, such as the Dacres, and members of the leading northern gentry, thus presented Robert Bowes, the senior adult male representative of the Streatlam family, with the opportunity of

23 Pollard, North-Eastern England, p. 219.

24 Storey, "Wardens of the Marches of England towards Scotland, 1377-1489", English Historical Review, Vol. 72, (1957) passim.

seeking political advancement as a servant of the Crown during the reign of Henry VIII. Indeed as has been pointed out, Bowes was doubly qualified for the task in hand for in addition to his natural aptitude for border defence and diplomacy, derived from a family tradition which stretched back for generations, he had wide-ranging legal expertise and an understanding of the wider political nation, gained from his experiences at the Inns of Court. (25) In Robert Bowes, therefore, the chivalric aspirations of the "nobility of the sword" were admirably tempered by the humanistically-inclined, state-orientated ideals of the "nobility of the robe". (26) As such he was admirably placed to exploit the needs of the expansionist Henrician regime as it strove to extend its authority to the farthest reaches of the northern frontier

The strength of Sir Robert's position at this time is illustrated by the fact that despite his rebellious stance in the Pilgrimage of Grace, he emerged not only unscathed but in a position of some strength and was able, thereafter, to consolidate his position within the central administrative elite. As the analysis of Bowes's participation in the Pilgrimage has indicated, it seems likely that that he was rebelling rather against the regime's attempts to dispense with the services of members of the traditional northern elite than against the government's centralization policies, from which he had,

25 See above p. 77.

26 James, "English politics and the Concept of Honour", pp. 310-14, 375-83.

indeed, benefitted. (27) Moreover, whilst traditional interpretations have stressed the strength of the Tudor Crown in crushing the 1536 rebellion, primarily by a policy of "divide and rule" in respect of the various rebel factions, it is clear from an analysis of Bowes's role in the affair that the government's position was far less secure than has generally been acknowledged. Indeed, the Crown's enthusiastic recruitment of Bowes and the majority of the other reconciled gentlemen Pilgrims in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion suggested, more than anything else, the extent to which it was utterly reliant upon the administrative abilities of these men. Indeed, far from the Crown using Bowes and his colleagues "as instruments of the royal vengeance" at this time, as Rachel Reid has suggested, it is probable that, given the lack of suitably qualified alternative personnel, its attempts to re-impose law and order were undertaken on a far more conciliatory basis. (28) Admittedly, as the reconciled rebel elite no doubt recognized, the regime was forced to make some gesture of retribution in order to bolster its weakened authority and it is likely that Bowes and his associates, when once assured of their own political survival, were prepared to acquiesce in this - up to a point. Hence the fact that the subsequent policy of suppression was on a small-scale and intended rather in the nature of a deterrent than a punitive exercise. Indeed, the regime's lack of confidence in its own authority at this time was illustrated by the

27 See above p. 91.

28 Reid, King's Council, p. 142-44.

relatively few executions that were meted out, only 178 died out of a total rebel host of some 35,000. (29) As has previously been suggested, the Pilgrimage of Grace and its aftermath provided the watershed in the career of Robert Bowes for, by his rebellious stance, he convinced the Tudor regime of the necessity of continued co-operation with the northern ruling elite, thereby reinforcing and consolidating his own position as the Crown, simultaneously. sought to achieve the same ends in respect of the government of the north.

In contrast some thirty years later Sir Robert's successor, Sir George Bowes, achieved far less, in terms of both recognition and reward, although his role in the Northern Rising was quite the reverse of that of his famous predecessor in the Pilgrimage. Yet in many respects Sir George's indisputably heroic gesture in defending Barnard Castle against the rebels was of symbolic rather than strategic importance, for the 1569 Rising represented nowhere near as great a threat to the Tudor regime as the Pilgrimage of Grace. Indeed, the Pilgrimage had been a large scale protest against the government which had enjoyed the support of a considerable proportion of the regional elite. It was this fusion of popular demonstration and upper class discontent which made the rebellion such a potential threat to the Henrician regime although, ultimately, the involvement of the upper orders, many of whom were royal officials, undoubtedly exerted the restraining influence necessary to bring about a peaceful

29 Fletcher, Tudor Rebellions, p. 37; LP, Vol. 12, part 1, no. 6.

conclusion. (30) Conversely, the Northern Rising was of a limited, localised nature which, although dangerous from the point of view of the Catholic connections of the leading protagonists, provided little actual threat to the security of the Elizabethan administration. There is, indeed, much evidence to suggest that the roots of the rebellion lay in the increasing alienation of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland from the central elite for although, as Dr. Taylor has suggested, it was not purely a revolt of the Earls and their tenants, much support for the Rising was drawn from the diminishing spheres of influence of the two noblemen. (31) Admittedly Sir George's attempt to defend the north from the royal stronghold of Barnard Castle did much to provide a focus for loyalist northern sentiment in a region that was out of control for several weeks. Moreover, his steadfast loyalty was in contrast to many leading members of the Durham establishment, including Lord Eure and the Dean of Durham whose sudden departure from the Bishopric in the uneasy aftermath of the Rising contributed further to the unrest. At that point Bowes was apparently the sole source of authority in Durham and he was forced to appoint his brother, Robert, to take charge of Durham Castle, "...both for the safetye of hys prisoners and the better governemente of the contrethe..." (32) Yet his attempt to hold Barnard Castle ended in failure, with Bowes being forced to surrender to the rebel host and it

30 Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 323; James, "English Politics and the Concept of Honour", pp. 350-51.

31 Taylor, "The Crown and the North of England, 1559-1570, pp. 366-67.

32 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 175, 177.

was the advancing might of the royal army which ultimately led to the disintegration and defeat of the rebel host. (33)

The Northern Rising posed little direct threat to the Elizabethan administration although the size of the army sent to crush it, in all a force of some 10,000 men, indicated the seriousness with which any expression of northern discontent was still regarded by the Tudor regime. (34) Nevertheless, by the limited nature of its scope and support, the revolt of the Earls demonstrated the extent to which the Tudors had succeeded in imposing their authority throughout the north. Indeed, the power of the northern noble Houses, which had been in decline since the later years of the fifteenth century, had not been able to withstand the onslaught of the Henrician centralization policies, implemented largely through the agency of royal servants such as Sir Robert Bowes, which had systematically destroyed the last vestiges of magnate influence within the region. (35) The short-lived resurrection, under Mary, of the authority of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland had done little to reverse the structural damage of decades and, in essence, the Rising was little more than a last-ditch protest, by the two men, at the further diminution of their already greatly-diminished influence. (36) The

33 Fletcher, op.cit., pp. 87-89.

34 Ibid, p. 87.

35 See above p. 163-165.

36 M. James, "The Concept of Order and the Northern Rising" in his Society, Politics and Culture, pp. 291-98.

punitive nature of the government's reaction to the rebellion indicated, moreover, the extent of its confidence in its own security at this time for, leaving aside the debate surrounding the total number of executions, some 700 of the poorer rebels, out of a total host of only 5,000, were actually condemned to die with many more of the "better sort" being forced to sue for composition. (37)

The contribution of George Bowes to the stability of the Tudor regime was thus far less than that of his illustrious predecessor for during the course of the thirty or so years that separated the two northern rebellions the nature of the relationship between the Crown and its northern servants had been re-structured. In 1536, the authority of the Henrician administration in the region was so tenuous that it was forced to compromise with the reconciled rebel leaders of northern society in order to suppress the revolt that was, arguably, to pose the greatest threat to the security of the Tudor regime. Thereafter, it was forced to rely upon the services of men such as Robert Bowes (who, by virtue of birth and qualification, was able to move with ease between the centre of political life and the regions) in order to reinforce and extend its control in the north. Through the medium of such service, however, royal control in the region had been consolidated by 1569. As a consequence, the Crown, working by this time through the combined agencies of lesser northern noblemen, such

37 Reid, "Rebellion of the Earls", p. 199; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 187.

as Lord Scrope, and southern courtiers like Lord Hunsdon, became increasingly less reliant upon the services of the regional gentry. (38) Thus the Crown, secure in its control of the north, had far less reason to reward the services of Sir George in 1569 and, as an analysis of his later career has indicated, the losses incurred by him as the result of his loyalist stance did much to undermine the later financial and political viability of his House. Ironically, therefore, it can be argued that, whilst the career of Sir Robert Bowes flourished as the result of his contribution to the extension of Tudor authority within the north, by the same token his success did much to diminish the later prospects of the Streatlam family of material gains from royal service.

The consolidation of royal authority within the north was coupled, towards the later part of the sixteenth century, with a shift in the balance of Anglo-Scottish relations which also did much to diminish the prospects of a family whose reputation had been built upon its career in border defence and administration. Indeed, in the 1540s border service had provided the springboard for Sir Robert's rise, through his successive appointments to the wardenries of the Middle and East Marches, into the upper echelons of the administrative elite. During this period, however, the war with Scotland, with its repercussions in the wider arena of Anglo-French relations, became

38 Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 446.

the central concern of late Henrician and early Edwardian government policy. Control of the frontier was, therefore, a matter of primary importance and Sir Robert was thus able to build upon his growing reputation as an experienced and enthusiastic border officer to further his prospects in the service of the Crown. Bowes's career was not, however, without its setbacks as his participation in the debacles of Haddon Rig and Haddington illustrated. (39) Nevertheless, as his subsequent advancement illustrated, such foibles were willingly overlooked by a regime which could ill-afford to dispense with an official of undoubted expertise and experience.

Again, however, the experience of subsequent lords of Streatlam in the field of border affairs contrasted sharply with that of Sir Robert, as the career of Sir William Bowes in particular illustrated only too clearly. As has been noticed, Sir William's route to advancement through the medium of border service was beset by a variety of obstacles such as those presented by the increasingly competitive patronage system and, perhaps, most importantly that created by Bowes's own personality clash with the King of Scots. Nevertheless, a more fundamental issue was that of the changed nature of Anglo-Scottish relations in the later years of Elizabeth's reign. Whilst the border retained its international dimension until James's accession in 1603 it was the case that, from the mid 1580s, the degree of rapprochement between England and Scotland was sufficient to remove

39 See above pp. 179-180.

much of the intensity from the sphere of border affairs. Admittedly the vagaries of James's foreign policy periodically gave the Tudor regime cause for concern. Yet the agreement enshrined in the Treaty of Berwick in 1586, which confirmed the Scottish king as a pensioner of the English Crown, coupled with Elizabeth's grudging acceptance of James's claim to the English throne, did much to calm the traditionally troubled waters of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy thereafter.

(40) - While the effective administration of the immediate frontier region continued to present problems until well after the accession of James, it was increasingly the case that border unrest was generated primarily by the incessant cross-border feuding and reiving that had characterised the region for generations. (41) As a consequence English border officials, who, in times past, would have expected to be called upon to defend the frontier from the foreign foe, were forced to expend their time and energy in curtailing the notoriously violent but diplomatically innocuous activities of Scottish border raiders such as "Kinmont Willie" and the bloodthirsty lairds of Cessford and Buccleuch. Policing the frontier nevertheless remained just as violent in the latter part of the sixteenth century as it had been in Sir Robert Bowes's day, as the murder of Lord Francis Russell at the Day of Truce in 1585, illustrated. Indeed, in the autumn of 1597 during an Anglo-Scottish exchange of pledges,

40 W.T MacCaffrey, Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy: 1572-1588, (Princeton 1981) pp. 424-427; Williams, Tudor Regime, p. 461.

41 Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, pp. 133-157.

(intended, by the terms of the Treaty of Carlisle, to promote cross border amity) Sir William Bowes and his party were attacked by a band of Cessford's Teviotdale raiders. As a result, several men were slain and the whole episode served only to provoke a further series of blood-feuds and raiding expeditions. (42) In relative terms, however, the international significance of the Anglo-Scottish frontier had begun to diminish well before its transformation into a "middleshire" in 1603 and, as such, the potential for achieving political advancement through the medium of border service had decreased accordingly. Under such circumstances, the opportunity for Sir William to emulate the success of Sir Robert Bowes was, inevitably, extremely limited.

Within the relatively narrow social sphere of upper political society connections based upon kinship and marriage were the most enduring. Indeed, as Dr. Adams has pointed out, the leading families within the Elizabethan court circle were almost all connected by ties of marriage and kinship. (43) Yet whilst the Bowes family, through the agency of Sir Robert, moved within the upper echelons of political society during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, it never succeeded in capitalizing upon this connection in terms of politically advantageous marriage alliances. Undoubtedly this was, in

42 Ibid, p. 122; Tough, Last Years of a Frontier, pp. 267-68.

43 Adams, "Eliza Enthroned", p. 69.

part, due to the family's reduced financial status, following the division of the estates in 1545. Nevertheless this, too, represented a missed opportunity in terms of future political prospects for, again, it led to the family's increasing isolation from the political centre. This isolation was, moreover, exacerbated by the family's apparent preference, throughout the century, for contracting marriage alliances within the confines of the traditional border elite, made up of the leading northern gentry and lower nobility, with which it had always been associated. As such it is likely that the Bowes family restricted, still further, its opportunities for political advancement beyond the sphere of regional government. Indeed, such alliances served only to reinforce and perpetuate the image of the Bowes of Streatlam as an archetypal border administrative family; an image that was, ultimately, to signal its demise in the sphere of royal service.

Some of the family's marriage transactions were, however, beyond its immediate control. As has been discussed, the minority of the first Sir George resulted in his wardship escheating to the Bishop. As such the responsibility for the arrangement of his marriage was taken out the hands of his family. Some family control was re-established in 1529 when Robert and Richard Bowes joined with the leading border administrator, Sir William Eure, in order to purchase the wardship and marriage from Sir William Bulmer. Part of the bargain, however, was that Eure should have the marriages of George and his sister, Margery,

who were subsequently contracted to his own son and daughter.(44) Although Eure was later ennobled for his services to the Crown, the alliance was still contracted within the traditional localised context. Indeed, as has been noticed, by 1539 Robert Bowes, George's uncle, was only too aware that the young heir's manners were "...too northern and rude..." to fit easily into the charmed social circle of the central political elite, within which the family was beginning to make its way.(45) Sir Robert himself was, indeed, the best placed member of the family to negotiate the entrance of his offspring into this elite but, by dint of tragic circumstance, his four sons all died before reaching maturity and the Bowes of Streatlam, thereafter, persisted in their traditional alliances. (46). As such, in the next generation the first Sir George's three daughters and co-heiresses were similarly married within the traditional sphere. Dorothy was allied to Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, of Eslington in Northumberland, who in the later years of Elizabeth's reign became deputy-Warden of the East Marches, Elizabeth was contracted to John Blakiston of the Bishopric and Anne became the first wife of her cousin, Robert, the younger son of Richard Bowes of Aske, whose border career spanned much of the later years of the sixteenth century. (47)

44 Durham C.R.O. D/St D13/1/3 p. 207, 212.

45 LP Vol. 13 part 2, no. 762.

46 Foster, Durham Visitation Pedigrees, p. 38; Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 107.

47 Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 108.

Although his first marriage, to the daughter of Sir William Mallory of Studley near Ripon, in the North Riding, was concluded within the confines of traditional northern landed society, the second Sir George did move away, somewhat, from this tradition for he took as his second wife Jane Talbot, a close kinswoman of the Earl of Shrewsbury. This represented the only major attempt by a member of the Bowes family, at this time, to extend its connections into the wider sphere of the national political elite (and indeed Sir George and his wife were careful to stress the association by naming one of their sons Talbot). (48) Subsequently, however, Sir George reverted to family tradition and married his considerable brood of nine sons and six daughters within the regional framework. (49). Indeed, his heir, Sir William Bowes, was contracted to the daughter of Henry, ninth Lord Scrope of Bolton which again stressed the continuity of the family's border connections for Scrope, a member of the lower northern nobility, was the Warden of the West Marches. (50). Initially, this connection promised more than it subsequently produced, in terms of widening the Bowes's sphere of political influence, for Scrope's wife was the sister of the fourth Duke of Norfolk and the Countess of Westmorland. However, the involvement of those two Houses in the Northern Rising effectively put an end to

48 Durham C.R.O. D/St/D13/1/3, p. 215. See above pp. 228-229.

49 Sharp, Rebellion, pp. 396-99.

50 D.K.P.R., Vol. 44, p. 342; Tough, Last Years of a Frontier, p. 281.

the political potential of that connection. (51)

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Bowes family's position, as a leading pillar of northern Protestantism, began to influence its alliances, as the marriages of Sir William, to the formidably Puritan Isabelle Foljambe, and his sister, Elizabeth, to Timothy, the son of Matthew Hutton, Bishop of Durham, illustrated. Moreover, it was on religious grounds that Sir George refused to countenance the marriage of his daughter, Jane, to the son and heir of the Yorkshire gentleman, Robert Aske. (52) Nevertheless, tradition ultimately overruled even ideological considerations for Sir William's only daughter, Katherine, married Sir William Eure, a member of the ennobled border family who, in later years, was noted for his recusant sympathies. (53) Throughout the century, therefore, the family retained a distinct attachment to the frontier, not only from the perspective of its own tradition of service within that sphere but also in its close ties of marriage and affinity with members of the northern border elite. Admittedly, in view of the family's limited landed assets after 1545, much of this was probably beyond its control. Moreover, as Laurence Stone has pointed out, even members of the higher northern nobility remained essentially particularist, in terms of negotiating the

51 MacCaffrey, Elizabethan Regime, p. 206; Sharp, Rebellion, p. 305.

52 Sharp, op.cit., p. 399.

53 Political considerations may also have figured in this alliance, however, for Eure was, at one stage, an agent of the Earl of Essex. Watts, Fron Border to Middle Shire, p. 116; Surtees, Durham, Vol. 4, p. 110. See above pp. 284-286.

marriage alliances of their children, until the growth of London and the court, during Elizabeth's reign, broadened their perspectives in terms of geographical limits. (54) Nevertheless, the failure of the Bowes family to sustain and reinforce the the links it had forged with the central administrative elite during the days of the ascendancy of Sir Robert Bowes undoubtedly inhibited its future political prospects for it simply slipped back into the ranks of the regional elite from whence it had come. The restricted nature of its alliances, too, further reinforced its image as a traditional border service family. As a consequence, during the later part of the century the family's service to the Crown was seen only in this context. As the career of Sir William illustrated, the failure of the family to break out of this mould contributed to its declining political fortunes for the de-militarization of the border counties in 1603 deprived the Bowes of Streatlam of their traditional area of service.

The attachment of the House of Bowes to Protestantism in the sixteenth century exerted a considerable influence over its political fortunes. Indeed, as has been shown, the family's religious stance contributed as much to its rise under Edward VI and re-emergence under Elizabeth as it did to its decline under Mary. Undoubtedly the Streatlam family's decision, taken at the beginning of the sixteenth century, to take advantage of the educational opportunities which were

54 Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, p. 624.

increasingly available to the sons of the gentry at this time, was instrumental in extending its ideological as well as social and political perceptions. As has been suggested, the seeds of Sir Robert Bowes's later reformism may well have been sown as a result of his connection with the Inns of Court, which were early centres of religious radicalism. (55)

Indeed, the family's preoccupation with education throughout the century undoubtedly reflected and, at the same time, reinforced its Protestantism. As has been shown, during the 1540s even the cadet and illegitimate male members of the Streatlam family were educated at the Inns of Court or Cambridge, the university most inclined towards Protestantism. (56) By the later part of the century, this trend had expanded to include practically all the male offspring of the main Streatlam line. Moreover, in keeping with increasing numbers of the northern Protestant gentry, Sir George apparently sent his younger sons to a local grammar school as a preparatory for higher education. (57) Certainly he made mention of the fact that, at the time of the Northern Rebellion, he had been forced to remove his children from their school to the safety of Barnard Castle in order to protect them from the unwelcome attentions of the rebel forces, although the precise location of this particular institution was not mentioned. (58)

55 See above pp. 101-102.

56 See above pp. 201-202.

57 Cliffe, Yorkshire Gentry, pp. 68-69.

58 Sharp, Rebellion, p. 45.

Since the grammar school at Barnard Castle was not founded until the beginning of the seventeenth century it is possible that Sir George's children may have been pupils at Darlington Grammar School, situated only some ten miles from Barnard Castle, which had been founded in 1563 by the Bishop of Durham, James Pilkington, and the Earl of Westmorland. (59) Religious considerations continued to play a major role in the family's choice of educational establishment for, of the six sons who entered Cambridge, during the period 1564-91, all but one matriculated from St. John's College, which had a strong tradition of Puritanism. Only Richard Bowes proved to be the exception in this case for, in 1588, he matriculated from Trinity College. However this, too, had entertained strong Puritan leanings in the 1560s and 1570s. (60) The intellectual reinforcement and perpetuation of its faith was mirrored by the Bowes family in practical terms too. In the later part of the century both Sir George and Sir William were involved, through the agency of the Council in the North and the Ecclesiastical High Commission, in the government's attempts to promote Protestantism and suppress recusancy in the conservative north. Indeed, in the later 1590s, Sir William actively supported the reformist endeavours of his friend and colleague Toby Matthew, the Bishop of Durham, who was noted for his vehement

59 Marcombe, "A Rude and Heady People", p. 143; J. Vickerstaff, "A Gazetteer of Durham County Schools, 1400-1640", Durham County Local History Society Bulletin, Vol. 41, (December 1988) pp. 7, 8.

60 Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, pp. 128-29; Venn, Alumni Cantab., Vol. 1, p. 191.

opposition to recusancy. (61). Yet it was not only the male members of the Streatlam family who strove to maintain the Protestant faith. Indeed what was, perhaps, even more remarkable was the attachment of Elizabeth Bowes to the cause of advanced reform, for her example not only set the Bowes family apart from religiously conservative northern society as a whole but also, as has been discussed, dictated the course of the family's political fortunes.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were undoubtedly times of particular feminine religious revival amongst all demoninations. Professor Cross and Dr. Thomas have both discussed, in some detail, the prominent role played by women in the Civil War sects and parallels have, equally, been drawn between the activities of Protestant non-conformist women and the female recusants of the later Elizabethan age. (62) As several historians, notably Professor Collinson and Dr. Thomas, have suggested, this was, perhaps, the inevitable impact of the Reformation, with its increased emphasis upon theological dissension and debate, upon the spiritual sensibilities of women who were credited with possessing a

61 See above p. 263; HMC Salisbury, part 7, pp. 62-64, 108; Ibid, part 9, p. 396; James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, p. 155.

62 C. Cross, "He-Goats before the Flocks: A note on the part played by Women in the founding of some Civil War Churches", Studies in Church History, Vol. 8, (1972), pp. 195-202; Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects", pp. 317-340; R.L. Greaves, "The Role of Women in Early English Nonconformity", Church History, Vol. 52, (1983), pp. 299-311; Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p. 93; P. Collinson, "The Role of Women in the English Reformation illustrated by the Life and Friendships of Anne Locke", Studies in Church History, Vol. 2, (1965) p. 259.

"...greater natural propensity..." towards religion than men. (63) Yet the reason behind the early Protestant stance of Elizabeth, in particular, is less easy to define. The limited scope for feminine participation in the pre-Reformation Church (where even women in holy orders played no active role in the performance of sacred duties) meant that women had always figured prominently in the medieval heretical sects, such as the Lollards, which allowed them greater freedom of religious expression. (64) Yet there is little to suggest that the Reformed faith provided any greater degree of feminine emancipation. Indeed, the teachings of both Luther and Calvin displayed essentially traditional attitudes which, whilst acknowledging the spiritual equality of females, continued to stress their earthly subordination to men. Calvin, in fact, went so far as to suggest that women who refused to accept their allotted role were defying the law of God. (65) It has, moreover, been pointed out that the very attraction of Calvin's teachings to French noblewomen was that he placed much stress upon the importance of their subordinate roles as wives and mothers. (66) Professor Collinson, too, has questioned the extent to which upper-class Protestant women desired

63 Collinson, The Birthpangs of Protestant England, p. 75; Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects", p. 321; Rowlands, "Recusant Women", p. 161.

64 Thomas, op.cit., p. 322; Cross, Church and People, p. 37.

65 C.M. Jenkins, "Women in the Lutheran and Calvinist Movements", R.L. Greaves (ed), Triumph over Silence: Women in Protestant History, (Connecticut and London 1985), pp. 20-27.

66 Ibid, pp. 31-33.

either spiritual or social emancipation. (67) Yet an explanation based upon the comfortable reconciliation of social and spiritual aspirations does not begin to account for the Protestantism of Elizabeth Bowes who, as it has been suggested, may well have actively sought some degree of spiritual emancipation from earthly constraints through the medium of intense religious commitment. Moreover, whilst she was, indeed, influenced by the Calvinist-inspired teachings of John Knox this did not prevent her from going into exile in Geneva and thereby forsaking her allotted role as a wife and mother in order to keep faith with her conscience during the years of the Marian reaction. (68)

It has been suggested, however, that early Protestantism did enable women to achieve a hitherto unprecedented degree of intellectual parity with men through the medium of "...prayer and learning..." and it may well have been this particular aspect which attracted Elizabeth Bowes to the Reformed faith. (69) Certainly by the later years of Henry VIII's reign there was a greater movement amongst women, particularly those within the sphere of the court, towards the acquisition of some education in order to attain a greater understanding of the humanistic principles of the "New Learning". (70)

67 Collinson, Birthpangs of Protestant England, p. 77.

68 See above p. 216.

69 E. Macek, "The Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in the Book of Martyrs", Sixteenth Century Journal, Vol. 19, (1988) p. 69.

70 M. Dowling, Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII, (London 1986), pp. 235-42.

This trend obviously intensified in the reformist atmosphere of Edward VI's court with the result that, in addition to the King's half-sister, Elizabeth, the daughters of several leading politicians and courtiers, including those of the Dukes of Somerset and Suffolk and the late Earl of Surrey, were soundly educated according to humanist principles. Moreover, the four daughters of the avowedly Protestant Sir Anthony Cooke were renowned, within court circles, for their learning and scholarship. (71) Since, therefore, the male members of the Bowes family were attracted by the increased educational opportunities that were available to them at this time, it is not entirely beyond the bounds of possibility that Elizabeth Bowes was equally impressed by the educational achievements of her own sex. Elizabeth was, after all, literate, a point illustrated by the fact that Knox exhorted her to read specific portions of biblical text during their correspondence, and was, moreover, possessed of reasonable intelligence, as her later discussions on points of theology showed. It is thus possible that, standing as she did on the periphery of the ruling central elite, she may well have been influenced by this upper-class trend towards reformist and humanist scholarship amongst women. (72)

71 Warnicke, Women of the English Renaissance and Reformation, pp. 96-99; Dowling, Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII, pp. 240-42.

72 Knox, Works, Vol. 3, p. 372. The point regarding Mrs Bowes's intellectual ability, in respect of theological debate has previously been made in Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes", p. 337. See also my discussion in "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes", pp. 327-8.

As her later commitment to her faith showed, however, Elizabeth's reformism subsequently surpassed considerations of mere social emulation. As Ellen Macek has suggested, religious martyrdoms inevitably inspired further conversions and it is possible that Elizabeth's early fervour may well have been further motivated by the execution, in 1546, of Anne Askew who had also moved within the periphery of the ruling court circles. (73) Yet, although the seeds of Mrs Bowes's Protestantism were undoubtedly sown long before her association with Knox, there is little doubt that her relationship with the Reformer underpinned and perpetuated her faith. Indeed, it was in the context of this relationship that her momentous decision to flee to Geneva was undertaken. As such, Elizabeth was, perhaps, the first of many devout Reformation women who developed a close relationship with her religious mentor. As Professor Collinson has pointed out this dependence was not a new nor a particularly Protestant phenomenon for many pre-Reformation women had been equally devoted to their confessors as, indeed, were many sixteenth century female recusants. (74) Nevertheless, Elizabeth carried the notion of spiritual dependence to its extreme with the result that her preceptions of Protestant salvation became closely interlinked to her relationship with the Reformer.

73 Macek, "Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality", pp. 68-69. Cross, Church and People, pp. 78-79.

74 Collinson, Birthpangs of Protestant England, pp. 75-76.

An interesting comparison can, indeed, be made between the early, spiritually insecure, Protestant stance of Elizabeth and the robustly militant Puritan stance of her grandson's wife, Isabel Bowes who, far from passively seeking solace from spiritual mentors, actively set out, some fifty years later, to subsidise the missionary endeavours of diverse Puritan divines whilst, at the same time, promoting the cause of advanced reform almost to the point of separatism. (75) Such a comparison usefully illustrates the extent to which the religious attitudes of the two women were conditioned by widely differing political and ideological perceptions. Indeed, Elizabeth's hard-fought battle for salvation came at a time when the upheavals of the immediate Reformation era had succeeded only in creating an atmosphere of extreme religious instability. As a consequence she remained spiritually fragile and chronically insecure to the end. Isabel's assuredly militant spirituality, on the other hand, was based upon the far more secure foundation of more than a generation of state-oriented Protestantism which instilled in her the confidence to challenge and re-define the frontiers of her faith. Moreover, Isabel's family background was decidedly Protestant. Admittedly her father, Sir Christopher Wray, the Elizabethan Chief Justice, played a part in the judicial proceedings surrounding the government's campaign to suppress Puritanism during the 1580s and 1590s. Yet, towards the end of his life there were rumours that he was more personally committed to the reformist cause than his activities

75 See above p. 304.

suggested. Indeed, both Wray and his wife made provision in their wills for the support of the moderately-Puritan Magdelene College, Cambridge. (76) Their three surviving children, too, all grew up to adopt radically Protestant stances. Isabel and her sister Frances financed the education, at Cambridge, of the noted Puritan preacher Richard Bernard whilst their brother, Sir Christopher Wray became a noted patron of radical Protestantism in his native Lincolnshire, supporting, among others, the separatist, John Smyth. (77)

This formidable pedigree undoubtedly equipped Isabel Bowes with a confidence which enabled her to proclaim her religious beliefs bodily and with complete conviction, unlike her oft-times spiritually despairing predecessor, Elizabeth. Indeed, as her reaction to the Millenary Petition illustrated, Isabel was possessed of sufficient intellectual assurance to be able to decide for herself the direction in which she wanted her faith to go, to the point of taking on the universities themselves when the need arose. Again, however, unlike Elizabeth she was possessed of a sympathetic husband for Sir William Bowes openly admired his wife's wisdom and actively encouraged her forthright religious views as his correspondence with the Earl of Shrewsbury illustrated. (78) Moreover, whilst Elizabeth Bowes, isolated as she was in her Protestantism, could only struggle, with

76 MacCullough, Suffolk and the Tudors, pp. 205-8; Dalton, Wrays of Glentworth, pp. 50-51.

77 J.F.W Hill, Tudor and Stuart Lincoln, (Cambridge 1956), pp. 112-113.

78 See above p. 304.

Knox's guidance, to come to terms with the precepts of the new theology, Isabel was composing her own devotional tracts and distributing them amongst her like-minded Puritan contemporaries. Indeed, it appears from the diary of the staunchly Puritan Lady Margaret Hoby that she and Isabelle were acquainted for in the November of 1601 Lady Margaret noted how she had "...read some meditations of the Lady Bowes, hir making as I heard..." (79)

The experiences of Elizabeth and Isabel Bowes, separated as they were by the religious upheavals of more than half a century were dissimilar in many ways. Yet the impact of the faith of both women upon the political and religious fortunes of the Bowes of Streatlam was considerable. Admittedly, of the two, Elizabeth's contribution was the greatest for her staunchly Protestant stance laid the foundations of the family's faith. Her equally staunch resistance to the encroachments of the Marian Counter-Reformation ensured, moreover, her family's political rehabilitation upon the accession of Elizabeth Tudor. In political terms the religious fervour of Isabel Bowes was less productive and it is probable that the existence of his indomitably Puritan wife did little to bring about the rehabilitation of Sir William Bowes, whose relationship with James I had already been soured by the repercussions of the Ashfield affair. Nevertheless through her commitment Isabel continued to maintain and enhance the Streatlam family's Protestant reputation. Indeed, upon the death of

79 D.M. Meads, The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, (London 1930), p.191.

her husband in 1611, Isabel, disturbed by stories of the wretched state of religion in the more remote parts of Sir William's ancestral Durham homeland, was instrumental in securing the appointment to the region of the charismatic Puritan divine, Richard Rothwell, whose activities in that region earned him the reputation of the "Apostle of the North" and attracted congregations from as far afield as York, Newcastle and even London. (80) As such Isabel ensured that, from the point of view of militant Protestantism, the name of Bowes remained a force to be reckoned with until well into the seventeenth century.

To a great extent, therefore, in political and religious terms, the history of the Bowes of Streatlam mirrored that of the regime it had served and through which it prospered and declined. As a consequence, by the end of the Tudor age, the family, too, had virtually disappeared from the national political arena. In many ways it was the victim of its own success for its contribution to the consolidation of the Crown's authority within the north rendered the family's service increasingly more dispensible. Its success, indeed, was founded upon the early insecurity of the regime in respect of the government of the north. The career of Robert Bowes was, in fact, built upon the twin qualities of legal expertise and military endeavour for both were of vital consequence in the northernmost parts of the region where acute international sensitivity and virtual

80 S. Gower, "The Life of Master Richard Rothwel", S. Clarke (ed.) The Lives of Thirty Two English Divines, (London 1677). (Microfilm Wing Reel No. 309, English Books, 1641-1700)

administrative anarchy inhibited the implementation of effective government. The regime's need of men such as Robert Bowes was further illustrated by the events of 1536 when their rebellion convinced the Crown of the necessity of retaining the cooperation of the northern elite in order to expand upon its centralization policy. Through the medium of Scottish war Bowes was able to increase his expertise in respect of Border affairs with the result that he became the agency through which the Henrician regime demonstrated its growing control of the north by the appointment of Sir Robert as the first essentially non-noble March Warden. Moreover, his lack of affinity with the traditional Percy rulers of the region was instrumental in breaking down the remaining vestiges of magnate authority within the north.

Border service provided the essential theme of political continuity for the Bowes family during the years of the Marian reaction. However, it was religion, the other major element in the family's history at this time which, through the endeavours of Elizabeth Bowes and her connections with the leading Marian exiles, provided the link between the family's former political ascendancy under Northumberland's reformist regime and the Dudley-dominated political sphere of the Elizabethan age. The theme of the family's royal service remained in evidence throughout the century but it was, ultimately, not sufficiently strong to withstand the increasing pressures of a heavily over-subscribed court-centred patronage system and the declining rewards of loyalty. Indeed, by the middle years of Elizabeth's reign there was an extent to which the head of the family, Sir George, was out of step with the attitudes and aspirations of the rapidly

centralizing state which he had helped to consolidate through his defence of the royal cause in 1569. Despite the fact that the last Tudor head of the family was far more attuned to the requirements of the newly-blossoming state, the same constraints of financial pressures and the increased competition for crumbs of royal patronage conspired to prevent his rise beyond the sphere of border service which, in the re-defined atmosphere of late sixteenth century Anglo-Scottish diplomacy was becoming increasingly less viable as the means to greater political advancement. The union of the English and Scottish Crowns in 1603, combined with the personal antipathy displayed by James I towards the staunchly Protestant Sir William Bowes, thereafter signalled the virtual demise of the family's prospects within the national political arena of the new Stuart age. For the immediate future, at least, the Bowes of Streatlam were thrust back into the ranks of the regional gentry from whence they had risen to prominence during the embryonic years of the expanding Tudor state.

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