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ENGLISH TOWNS IN THE WARS OF THE ROSES

BY

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PREFACE

The present study in English municipal history was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Professor Charles Gross of Harvard University, and completed under the direction of Professor Edward P. Cheyney, of the University of Pennsylvania. Association with the former remains a source of inspiration to every student fortunate enough to have come in contact with one whose scholarly attainments never obscured the sympathetic friend, the courteous gentleman; to the latter the writer is happy to be able to make his sincere acknowledgment for helpful counsel and suggestion placed so unreservedly at his disposal. Long ago honest Madox wrote that "Whoso desireth to discourse in a proper manner concerning corporate towns and communities must take in a great variety of matter, and should be allowed a great deal of time and preparation." The results attained in this investigation are disappointingly meagre compared with the amount of labor involved. So far as the number of town and county histories is concerned, their name is legion; from a slender portion only however of the many volumes consulted has it been possible to obtain any precise information touching the political history of the boroughs in the period under consideration. Happily the old-fashioned method of treating local history is being superseded more and more by the printing of town records, and a number of excellent studies of this character have been made available; the more important of these have been noted in the bibliography. It goes without saying that a thorough-going study of the subject under consideration would necessitate an examination of the archives of the various towns whose history has been dealt with; since this has not been

possible, the writer has been compelled to rely for the most part upon printed sources and upon those town histories whose authors have had access to manuscript sources. If only the writer shall have succeeded in suggesting a field of inquiry in which future investigators may achieve more marked results, his task will not have been in vain.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the attitude of some of the more important English boroughs in the civil wars of the fifteenth century. Historians generally have failed to reach any agreement about the part played by the towns in the Wars of the Roses, and in addition have unduly minimized it as a whole.[1] In general it may be said that three opinions have been expressed by writers dealing with this subject. By some historians we are assured that the great merchant towns, including London, were steady for the house of York.[2] On the other hand able writers have questioned whether the towns can be said to have exhibited any preference for one side of the other.[3] Thirdly, we are told that the towns were actuated solely by motives of self-interest; that they played fast and loose with the dominant powers in the state; that they manifested no constant devotion to the Red or the White Rose.[4] Says one writer: "The towns reluctantly sent their soldiers when they were ordered out to the aid of the reigning king, and whatever might be the side on which they fought, as soon as victory was declared, hurried off their messengers with gifts and protestations to the conqueror."[5] The last alleged attitude has been made the basis of a severe indictment of the towns: "If not actively mischievous, they were solidly inert. They refused to entangle themselves in

[1] Cf. Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England,* III, 611; Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century,* I, 164; Vickers, *England in the Later Middle Ages,* p. 439.

[2] Green, *History of the English People,* II, 551; Blomefield, *History of Norfolk,* III, 167. Cf. Green, II, 561. Lucas, *Illustrations of the History of Bristol and its Neighbourhood,* p. 209.

[3] Stubbs, *Const. Hist.,* III, 611.

[4] Gneist, *History of the English Constitution,* pp. 438-439; Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices,* IV, 9, 10, says that "not one of them suffered loss from fidelity to any side,"—a statement which can easily be shown to be wide of the truth. Cf. also Alice E. Radice, "English Society during the Wars of the Roses," in the *Antiquary* for August, 1904.

[5] Green, *Town Life,* II, 331.

politics at all. They submitted impassively to each ruler in turn, when they had ascertained that their own persons and property were not endangered by so doing. A town, it has been remarked, seldom or never stood a siege during the Wars of the Roses, for no town ever refused to open its gates to any commander with an adequate force who asked for entrance. . . . Loyalty seems to have been as wanting among the citizens as among the barons of England. If they generally showed some slight preference for York rather than for Lancaster, it was not on any moral or sentimental ground, but because the house of Lancaster was known by experience to be weak in enforcing 'good governance,' and the house of York was pledged to restore the strength of the Crown and to secure better times for trade than its rival."[6]

An attempt will be made to show that the attitude of the boroughs was not so selfish as it has been depicted. At the outset, however, it is admitted that a certain degree of cautious regard for their interests was imposed upon the townsmen by circumstances over which they had no control. The war, which began as a struggle to vindicate constitutional liberties, degenerated after 1460 into a mere blood feud between two reckless factions which were indifferent to the needs and well-being of the townsmen. If the towns were courted by one side or the other, it was largely from selfish motives. When we find the barons, who should have been their natural leaders, swayed by no principles save those of self-interest, it is hardly a matter of surprise to find the burghers actuated by similar motives. In material wealth and prosperity the towns had taken enormous strides since the days when John or Simon de Montfort had bid for their support. To have actively espoused one side or the other in the struggle between Lancaster and York was merely courting disaster to their trade and industry; and, above all, active partisanship on the part of the city governments meant ruin for those highly prized liberties and privileges of trade and of self-government which represented the slow and oftentimes painful efforts of centuries. In these uncertain times when "men wot not what wyll fall ther off, nor ther affter,"[7] it can hardly be a reproach to the townsmen that they oftentimes exercised their wits not unsuccessfully in

[6] Oman, *Warwick*, p. 11.
[7] *Paston Letters* (ed. Gairdner), II, 394.

refusing to become embroiled in the factional fights of the times, but held themselves aloof as far as possible, the greater part of the citizens pursuing their daily tasks until the tide of war approached their gates.

While, therefore, a prudent self-interest led many of the towns to pursue a temporizing policy during the dynastic struggles of the fifteenth century, such a policy would seem not entirely without justification. In the absence of any collective organization on the part of the boroughs, every town was forced to adopt whatever makeshifts the exigencies of the moment might demand. It was well for the future of trade and of industry that the towns as a rule were governed by motives of self-interest. It could hardly be expected that a borough should have maintained a struggle single-handed when a change of fortune had brought about the momentary downfall or lasting ruin of the cause it had espoused. Rather they bowed their heads to the storm and accepted a condition of affairs they were powerless to avert.

But the records show that the towns were far less generally actuated by purely local and selfish motives, that some of the burghers were far more consistently loyal to Lancaster or York, and that the losses incurred by them on account of this loyalty were far greater than has been assumed by modern writers. The fact that in a number of places there were throughout the struggle rival Lancastrian and Yorkist factions would seem to indicate that their course of action was not dictated solely by policy. But aside from this, evidence, scanty though it be, is not lacking to show that many of the towns, including some of the most important ones in the realm, were keenly interested in the outcome of the struggle, while not a few examples can be cited of unswerving loyalty and devotion to the party of their choice. In fact indications are not lacking to show that as the struggle progressed, the commonalty were drawn more and more into the contest, being every day made more and more parties in the cause. The very fact that a chronicler would make the grossly exaggerated statement that 30,000 of the commons were slain at Towton besides men of name lends colour to the belief that the number of commoners who fell on that field must have been unduly large. That a number of towns sent contingents to the field of Towton has been recorded

in a well-known contemporary song.[8] In this same connection another exaggerated statement of the chroniclers may be noted. When Edward IV was hurrying north in 1462, after the capture of Bamborough and Alnwick by Margaret, we are told by an ardent Yorkist that he was joined by troops from every town,[9] a statement in which we see reflected the belief on the part of the writer that a number of towns were sending, partly from compulsion, partly also of their own free will, troops to the support of the Yorkist cause.

Whatever may have been the attitude of the boroughs towards the conflict waged by the heads of the great families and their retainers in the fifteenth century, there is no mistaking the attitude of those rival factions towards the towns, for the contending parties were quick to recognize the help that could be gained from the support of the burghers, who were either to be respected as a powerful neutral body, or to be won over as auxiliaries. "Their aid was courted by the two contending parties in the state."[10] As early as 1450 we find one of the rival parties endeavoring to enlist the goodwill and support of the towns. In this year the civil authorities of Canterbury, Colchester, Oxford, Sandwich, and a number of other cities and boroughs received letters from the Duke of York or from his adherents for the purpose of strengthening his cause and furthering his interests. The purport of these letters may be gathered from the following explanation which accompanied the letter sent to the king: "He, (the Duke of York) continuing in his malicious entent, by subtle means thought to achieve his purpose by might, wrote letters to the many cities, boroughs and towns of this your noble realm, coloured under a pretence of a will to have made a common insurrection against you, to have destroyed your most noble person."[11] In February, 1452, we find the Duke of York writing to the burgesses of Shrewsbury praying and exhorting them "to fortify, enforce, and assist me, and to come to me with all diligence, wheresoever I shall be, or draw, with as many goodly and likely men as ye may, to execute the intent above said."[12] The large number of charters granted by Ed-

[8] *Archaeologia*, XXIX, 343.
[9] William of Worcester, p. 780.
[10] Cf. Thompson, *History of Leicester*, pp. 181, 186.
[11] *Acts and Proceedings of Privy Council*, VI, 91; *Rot. Parl.*, V, 346.
[12] *Historical Letters* (ed. Ellis), I, 11.

ward IV to boroughs record, in many instances, that the privileges granted are in return for the services rendered him in subduing his enemies and in gaining the crown. In fact we are distinctly told that Edward ratified all the franchises given to cities and towns, and granted to many cities and towns new franchises to a greater extent than had ever been done before. "For so moche as he fande in tyme of nede grete comforth in his comyners, he ratyfied and confermyd all the ffraunsches yeve to citeis and townes, and graunted to many cyteis and townes new fraunschesses more than was graunted before, ryghte largly, and made chartours thereof, to the extent to have the more good wille and love in his londe."[13] The progresses made in the summer after his coronation through Canterbury, Winchester, Bristol, and other places by Edward were largely undertaken no doubt for the purpose of winning the good-will of the townsmen for the new monarchy. In this respect Edward showed himself wiser on the whole than his Lancastrian rival, cultivating more successfully than Henry friendly relations with the body of the townsmen.

That there existed an important relation between the rising of Cade and the supporters of York admits of no question.[14] On the other hand, though the Lancastrian parliament at Coventry at its meeting on November 20, 1459, recited the Duke's connection with Cade's rebellion,[15] there seems no real ground for supposing any connection between Cade's rebels and the Duke. The insurrection of Cade found many sympathizers in London and was strongly supported by the corporate towns, the most disaffected centers being traced by those places to which quarters of the rebels were sent by the government after the collapse of the movement.[16] "Given to a man

[13] Warkworth, *Chronicle*, p. 2. For some of these charters see below, pp. 29, 31, 41, 54, 61, 63.

[14] The volume of the *Patent Rolls* for the years 1446-1452 contains a mass of evidence showing the regions affected by the insurrection and the character of Cade's supporters. See pp. 338, *et seq.*, 461, 503. Cf. Kriehn, *The English Rising of 1450*, pp. 120-124; *Paston Letters* (ed. Gairdner), Introd., p. lxxix, *et seq.*, p. xci; Cade's proclamation is printed in *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles* (*Stowe's Hist. Mem.*), pp. 94-95. Cf. also Bale's *Chronicle* (Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles of England*).

[15] *Rot. Parl.* V, 346.

[16] *Acts and Proceedings of Privy Council*, VI, 107-108; Davies's *English Chronicle* (Camden Society), p. 67; *Paston Letters*, Introd., p. lxxxvii. Cf. Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles of England*, Introd., p. 73.

carrying a quarter of a man, to supersede the said quarter 3s 4d"—"Paid 18d for a pair of boots, as a reward promised to him." The men of New Romney bribed a man to deposit his quarter of one of the rebels elsewhere.[17] It has been observed that the counties from which Cade drew the bulk of his followers,—those, namely, in the south-eastern parts of the realm, were warm supporters of the Duke of York.

[17] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, V, Pt. I, 543. For interest of Cinque Ports in Cade's cause see *Ibid.*, X, 520, 522, 543.

CHAPTER II

London

As may be imagined, the most active and conspicuous part assumed by any town during the struggle between Lancaster and York was taken by London, "the chiefe key and common spectacle to the whole realme." The history of London during these eventful years has been recorded with comparative fulness by contemporary chroniclers, and in spite of the somewhat contradictory accounts as to the part taken by the citizens of the capital in the struggle for the Crown, it is possible to set forth with a tolerable degree of certainty just to what extent the metropolis was involved in the politics of the time. The attitude of London had been decisive in the conflict between Stephen and Matilda; in the struggle between John and his barons, the citizens utterly forsook their king; in the quarrel between Henry III and Simon de Montfort, the populace of the city was devoted to the great Earl. It was London that had invited Bolingbroke to assume the crown, his troops being pensioned and subsidized by the citizens.[1] The house of Lancaster may be said to have been secure so long as it retained the affections of London. On the whole it may be fairly said that the adhesion of the Londoners, whose support could generally be counted upon at critical moments, turned the scale in favour of the Yorkist claimant to the throne, though the mass of the citizens were by no means at all times zealous for the cause of Edward, and there could always be found supporters of the Red Rose faction in the city. In 1454 for instance the London authorities deemed it best to assume a non-committal attitude towards the two rival factions. It is plainly evident there were "diverse opinions" amongst the citizens touching the merits of the claims of Henry VI and of his rival. So far as the civic authorities were concerned, at heart they may have been loyal to Henry, but they determined to support Edward who, with all his faults, seemed capable of enforcing

[1] *An English Chronicle from 1377 to 1461*, p. 15.

a strong rule. On several conspicuous occasions the citizens of London rendered the cause of Edward effective support. Only July 2, 1460, the Yorkists were admitted into the city; here they were aided in an attack made upon the Tower held by the Lancastrians; a few days later a loan of £1000 was voted the Yorkist Earls by the city.[2] When a prompt advance upon London after the second battle of St. Albans might have reinstated the King and Queen, the lower orders showed a spirit of determined hostility.[3] "And all this season was greate wacche made in the citie of London, ffor it Was Reported that the Queene wt the Northern men wold come downe to the Citie and Robbe and dispoile the Citie, and distroy it utterly, and all the Sowth Countre."[4] According to some accounts the Lord Mayor was almost the only one in London at this time who was faithful to the Red Rose; according to others, the mayor and chief commoners held to the Queen's party, and the commonalty was with York and his affinity. Be that as it may, "the comones, for the sauacione of the cyte, toke the keys of the yates were they shulde have entred, and manly kept and defended hit fro theyre enemyes, unto the commyng of Edwarde the noble erle of Marche."[5] The news of the depredations committed by the Queen's army had shaken the allegiance of many of her partisans; the presence in their midst of the Yorkist claimant to the throne no doubt resulted in others who were wavering being seduced from their faithfulness to the Lancastrian cause.

Edward upon his entry into the city is represented as being received with joy by lords, citizens, and merchants.[6] This was in the last week of February, 1461.[7] A few days later the young Duke was accepted as King by the commonalty of the city.[8] Among "the people of the erles part" were "a great number of the substanciall citezens there assembled to behold their order." After Edward had been enthroned at West-

[2] Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, I, 301.
[3] Stevenson, *Wars of the English in France*, Pt. II, 776; Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 253.
[4] Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, p. 172.
[5] *An English Chronicle from 1377 to 1461*, p. 109.
[6] *Whethamstede*, I, 404; *Waurin*, V, 330-331.
[7] Either February 27 or 28.
[8] Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 253; To the usual authorities for Edward's accession may be added Gough's account in *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Flenley). Contradictory dates are given by writers for the coronation of Edward which occurred June 28.

minster Hall "it was agayne demaunded of the commens, if they would admitte and take the sayd erle as their prince and souereigne lord, which al with one voice cried 'yea, yea.'" The Duke remained with Warwick a week in the city for the purpose of mustering troops. Thus his cause was linked with that of the burgesses, and the fortunes of both would stand or fall together. Edward knew the effect of this act would be wide and far-reaching. The significance of the event is realized when it is recalled with what eagerness the last of the Plantagenets sought to have his title ratified by the citizens of London. The news of Edward's victory at Towton was joyfully received in the capital. Had Somerset and the Archbishop held out a few days longer in 1471, it seems that nothing could have saved Edward's cause, for Warwick would then have been enabled to cut off his retreat; as it was, the lack of enthusiasm for Henry enabled Edward easily to effect an entrance and take possession of his capital.[9] The possession of London by Edward forced Warwick to give battle before he was ready.

Not only did the citizens of the metropolis render Edward effective moral support; upon more than one battle-field they proved their loyalty to his cause. A large body of trained bands of London citizens are said to have demonstrated their superiority in archery at the second battle of St. Albans. They assisted Edward in recapturing from Margaret the castles of Bamborough and Alnwick in 1463. The victories of Barnet and Tewkesbury were won with the help of the Londoners.[10] The attack of the 'bastard' Falconbridge upon the city in 1471 was repulsed by the citizens with no extraneous aid.[11] "But for all his sondes and letters made to the comons of the cite he cowde have no license." Edward rewarded the fidelity of the city by granting it two charters, one in 1461, and the other, conferring many privileges upon the city, in 1462; he moreover confirmed in the latter year the charter granted the

[9] See *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, pp. 15, 16; Warkworth, *Chronicle*, p. 15; Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, pp. 179, 318.

[10] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, p. 18; Polydore Vergil, *Historia Anglicana* (C.S.), pp. 144, 150. William of Worcester, p. 775.

[11] Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, p. 185. Warkworth's statement (*Chronicle*), p. 19, that but for the burning of Aldgate and London Bridge the commons of the city would have admitted Falconbridge does not appear to be borne out by the facts.

city by Henry IV.[12] It is thus seen how important for the success of Edward was the assistance rendered by the Londoners. So far as London is concerned,—and the same remark would perhaps, with certain important exceptions, apply to the towns as a whole,—the cause of Edward may be termed the popular one.[13] At any rate, the cause of the Yorkists was more popular in London, Bristol and Coventry after 1461 than was that of Margaret. The motives which led the townsmen to favour the cause of Edward and to discard the Lancastrian monarchy may be conveniently considered in another connection.

In size, wealth, and importance, London stood in a class by itself throughout the entire medieval period. And yet even London was in point of numbers what would be today considered as a small place; for the population of the city in the middle of the fifteenth century certainly did not exceed 50,000, —in fact was probably several thousand less. York and Bristol were the towns which ranked next in size to London, each with a population only about one-fourth or one-fifth as large; Norwich and Coventry stood next; the former contained perhaps some 10,000 inhabitants; the latter probably a few thousand less.[14] Any estimates of the populations of the fifteenth century municipalities can hardly be much more than rough guesses, since no satisfactory data exist upon which to base any accurate conclusions as to numbers. But these rough estimates, although they do not tell us the exact size of any of these five towns, show us accurately enough their relative size and also the importance of their alliance as compared with that of the majority of English boroughs, which reckoned their burgesses only by hundreds. Bearing these facts in mind we may next consider the part taken in the conflict by the towns just mentioned.

[12] Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, I, 307, 308; III, App. A., 391; Merewether and Stephens, *History of Boroughs*, II, 951.

[13] Polydore Vergil, p. 110, says Edward was a prince "much desired of the Londoners." Comines, I, 278, dwells upon the causes of Edward's popularity in London. Cf. Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, III, 223.

[14] Cf. Gross, *Gild Merchant*, I, 73; Ashley, *Economic History*, II, 11; Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, I, 385. Some conclusions may be drawn from the levy of Archers in 1453 as to the size of certain towns, *Rot. Parl.*, V, 232. In all probability the numbers given for Norwich and Coventry are too large.

CHAPTER III

York, Bristol, Coventry, Norwich

York's share in the dynastic struggle of the fifteenth century is both interesting and curious. Few English cities are said to have passed through more numerous and violent changes of fortune during the wars of York and Lancaster than the ancient city of York. From the fact that York was the capital of the north country, which portion of the realm, it is generally agreed, was one of the chief seats of Margaret's power, it might be inferred that the town was Lancastrian in its sympathies. In 1454 we find Henry writing to the citizens of York and commending them for their laudable behaviour and desiring them to continue at all times their good will and faith towards him. This inference would be strengthened by the fact that Edward found it necessary to discipline those of the citizens who resisted him.[1] On the other hand, the city rendered important services to the Yorkist King, and was rewarded by him in a substantial manner for its faithfulness. By some writers this extraordinary grant, which is dated at York, June 10, 1464, is considered conclusive proof of the city's devotion to Edward.[2] In this patent the King expresses his great concern for the hardships and sufferings the city had undergone during these wars, insomuch as to be almost reduced to the lowest degree of poverty by them. In consideration of which he now relinquishes the usual farm of the city, and assigns them an annual rent of 40 pounds to be paid out of his customs in the port of Hull, for twelve years to come.[3] Other writers mistakenly suppose that the citizens first espoused the cause of Edward at this time, or look upon his grant as an endeavour upon his part to gain their favour. But as early as March, 1462, when the Earl of Warwick, to whom

[1] See Whethamstede, I, 411.

[2] Drake, *Eboracum*, p. 112.

[3] Hargrove, *History and Description of the Ancient City of York*, I, 114. An account of the grant is given in a number of secondary authorities.

the people of Yorkshire are said to have been devoted and who possessed extensive lands in Yorkshire,[4] arrived at York, the council was induced to raise a troop of men-at-arms to join the royal forces under the command of the Earl. Two months later the York soldiers, equipped and with their captain, Christopher Berwyk, joined the Earl of Warwick at Carlisle which, in the preceding year had been besieged by the Scots at the instance of the Lancastrians. A number of entries in the York Records have to do with the manufacture of a standard for the troops. "And in two ells of buckram, 16d.; bought for the standard of the Arms of the City, on that occasion made and carried to Carlisle by Christopher Berwyk, Captain, 2s. 8d."[5] Warwick dispatched a messenger to York with good news of his proceedings in the north. Warwick's influence at this time with the authorities of York was thus used to further the cause of Edward. Communications continued to pass between the council of York and the Earl. On one occasion the sum of 8d was paid by the town on account of the expenses of a messenger riding from York to Middleham to certify to Lord Warwick the taking of a person coming from 'the northern parts' with certain letters upon him.[6] In November, 1462, Edward visited York. On the day following the bloody battle of Towton he had been received in the city "with great solempnyte, and processyons," though of course this proves nothing as to the predilections of the citizens. He had moreover sojourned in their midst several weeks after the battle.[7] Now he came in quest of assistance against Margaret who had landed in the north. At Pontefract he was greeted by two of the aldermen, one of whom was a member of Parliament for the city.[8] Edward doubtless had little difficulty in inducing the civic authorities to equip again a body of men-at-arms for the royal service. The very next month we find the city spending money for cloth out of which to make scarves for York soldiers riding with the King to the siege of the castles of Bamborough, Alnwick, and Dunstanborough.[9] That

[4] Davies, *Extracts from the Municipal Records of the City of York*, pp. 29, 47. Hereafter this book will be quoted as *York Records*.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 28.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[7] Edward remained at York till April 16; he was at the northern capital again from the 10th to the 14th of May.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 30.

Edward and the citizens of York were upon good terms at this time is furthermore shown by the fact that, while in the north, the King twice despatched messengers to the city with the news of his successes in Northumberland. It is also interesting to note that the city council deputed officers to ride to Durham and to Newcastle to learn the King's pleasure concerning the government of the city in his absence.[10] "And in the expenses of William Stokton and Thomas Scansteby, Alderman, riding from York to Pontefract, to confer with our Lord, King Edward, in the month of November, 13s. 4d." In 1464 he occupied the palace in the city for some time, prescribing to the citizens the manner in which they should elect their mayor.[11] It seems clear, therefore, that the citizens of York were favourably disposed to the cause of Edward prior to 1464, when he requited their services with the grant mentioned above. Of course it may be suggested that these evidences of friendship on the part of the townsmen were inspired by fear rather than by love, because the citizens had no alternative but to support the cause of Edward. On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there were those in the city who regarded the house of York with affection. Edward was by no means a stranger to the art of ingratiating himself with the burgher class. On a later notable occasion the very sight of his person, according to one of the chroniclers, was sufficient to quench the malice of his enemies and to turn a cold and perhaps hostile group of citizens into a crowd of enthusiastic supporters. Sandal Castle was a favourite residence of Richard, Duke of York.[12] The Duke of Gloucester, whose connection with city and county began at an early period, was said to be very popular in York.[13] From the town records it is evident that "Richard had constant intercourse with the citizens of York, and was regarded by them with much personal esteem and attachment." While most of Yorkshire may have been under the influence of the great Lancastrian families, yet the county possessed powerful supporters of the White Rose whose influence would tell with the townsmen in upholding the cause of Edward. Prominent among these was William, Lord Hastings, whose principal mansion was the castle of

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45, 46.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 7, note; Merewether and Stephens, *Boroughs*, II, 997.
[12] Davies, *York Records*, p. 199, note.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Slingsby in Yorkshire. His ancestors had settled here in the time of Edward II and had long been distinguished in the county of York. That Hastings was upon good terms with the municipality of York is evident from entries such as these in the town records: 'And in the expenses of William Worell, riding from York to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and to Alnwick, to confer with Lord Hastings, Chamberlain of the King." On another occasion expenses were incurred in connection with the servant of an alderman riding to Durham to speak with Lord Hastings in order to obtain his advice and favour in the government of the city touching Edward's visit.[14] So long as Edward retained the goodwill of the powerful Neville connection, he could count with a reasonable degree of certainty upon having friends in York. The same thing is true, though to a less degree, of the Scropes of Bolton, bitter foes of the house of Lancaster.

If any single year is to be taken as marking the turning of the inhabitants of York from Henry to Edward, the date 1461 might with a show of probability be assigned as the time; for we are told that after the battle of Towton Edward was generous enough to take the citizens into his favour, at the earnest request of Lord Montague and Lord Berners. "And the mayor and commons of the City made their 'menys' to have grace, by Lord Montague and Lord Berners, which before the King's coming into the said city desired him of grace for the said City, which granted them grace."[15] A more probable supposition is that the city of York contained adherents both of Lancaster and of York, as was the case with more than one municipality in the Wars of the Roses. York is said to have been the centre of the strong party formed in the north under the Earl of Westmoreland and Lords Dacre, Clifford, and Egremont. Here Henry and Margaret assembled their hosts before the battle of Towton. The Palm Sunday which was to prove so disastrous to them must have been an anxious day for the citizens of York, for no doubt many of the townsmen were engaged on that bloody field, fighting perhaps under the rival standards. But this is mere conjecture, since we have no positive knowledge to what extent the townsmen were engaged in

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 25. The Harringtons of Brierly in Yorkshire were also devoted, it is said, to the house of York. *Ibid.*, App., p. 289.
[15] *Ibid.*, App., p. 292.

the battle of York Field. The wheel of fortune took violent turns during the conflict between the rival factions. Hardly a decade had passed by when the victor of Towton found himself an exile and the Lancastrian cause in the ascendant. Writers have noted the similarity between the return of Edward IV in 1471 and that of Bolingbroke some seventy years earlier. Both landed at the little port of Ravenspur; each announced that he came only to claim his inheritance; and both were ready to resort to any means whereby they might attain their ends. From Ravenspur Edward proceeded by way of Beverley to York.[16] No enthusiasm had as yet been exhibited for Edward. What would be the attitude of the city of York towards his pretensions? To leave so important a place in his rear as a rallying point for his enemies would have been dangerous in the extreme. Three miles from York Edward was met by the recorder, who twice attempted to discourage him from approaching the city. On the other hand Robert Clifford and Richard Burgh gave him and his company better comfort. Thus heartened, Edward came to the gates of the city. Here the larger part of his followers stopped, while Edward with fifteen or sixteen persons under the guidance of the two citizens entered through Walmsgate Bar. Having made known to the body of the townsmen the intent and purpose of his coming, opposition was disarmed, and he and all his fellowship abode in York that night. The next morning, after being refreshed, Edward led his company out of the city for Tadcaster. Such is the plain unvarnished story in connection with Edward's entry into York as told by our best authority, the author of the "Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward IV in England."[17] It will be noted that no allusion whatever is made by the writer to Edward's promise to the citizens; on the other hand the testimony of Fabyan[18] that Edward was guilty of a gross act of perfidy in obtaining entrance into York in 1471 has been generally accepted. Edward may have resorted to perjury as his enemies charged, but the charge does not rest upon unquestionable evidence. The fact that he gave out his intention was merely to recover his ancient

[16] Edward had been in York in the fall of 1469, just after his release from Middleham; and in March, 1470.

[17] Page 5.

[18] Page 660. Fabyan was ignorant of the month in which Edward landed.

patrimony is hardly open to doubt. "And when he came at York the Citizens kept hym owte till they knewe what was his Entent; and when he had shewed that he cam to noon other entent but to clayme his Inheritaunce, which was the Dukedom of York, he was recyved into the towne, and there Refresshid hym and his people; and after that more people and more drewe vnto hym."[19] Such we may well believe is an accurate description of what took place. The testimony of the citizens of York themselves upon the point is interesting, though not conclusive. Years later they represented to a Lancastrian king that Edward was not suffered to enter until "taking on hyme the connysance of there said souverain lord and calling King Henry in the opyn streits, was promised and said openly that he wold oonely serve unto King Henry his souverain lord at all tymes by humble peticion for his right to the Duchie of York."[20] The story of Edward's entry into York through Walmsgate Bar is one which has stirred the imagination of the poet, the artist, and the sober recorder of historical facts. The incident of the walls of the city crowded with citizens looking down upon Edward and his followers below is a dramatic one, and naturally the chroniclers have seized upon the chance to invent parleyings between Edward and the inhabitants of York.[21] According to one account when the people had a sight of his person "their malice was quenched and they joined him";[22] on the other hand, Edward is said to have been received with cries of "Long Live King Henry," which arose from more than ten thousand throats.[23] Whatever may have been the precise mode of Edward's entry into York, the fact remains that he succeeded completely in disarming the suspicions of the citizens. They are even said to have accommodated him with a considerable loan, though this statement rests upon no sufficient evidence.[24] According to one account which is utterly improbable, Edward divided his men, seized the guards, confined the inhabitants to their houses, totally surprised the city after which he caused himself to be proclaimed king.[25] Perhaps after all the citizens were not so unwilling

[19] Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, p. 183.
[20] Davies, *York Records*, App., p. 296.
[21] Cf. *Hall*, p. 292.
[22] *Political Songs and Poems* (ed. Wright), R. S. II, 272.
[23] Waurin V, 647; Cf. Warkworth, *Chronicle*, p. 14.
[24] Hargrove, *History of the City of York*, I, 117.
[25] Ms. British Museum, *Lansd.* 890; Cf. *Hall*, p. 292.

to be convinced of his pacific intentions. There were no doubt those among the townsmen who were still loyal to his cause; and, as has been suggested, the reluctance to admit Edward may have been due in part to a fear of Warwick.

The story of York's part in the Wars of the Roses may be concluded by quoting some extracts from a document of unusual interest,—the account of the citizens' share in the troubles of the time as told by themselves. They were now endeavouring to gain the goodwill of Henry VI and naturally emphasized the services rendered to the Lancastrian cause. The civic authorities assured the King they were "sure and fast in disposicion toward hyme [*i.e.* Henry VI] ther naturall soverain lord, to ther dutie ever redie to receve and aid his grace and other nobles of the north parties, taking his lawfull and true part ayenst othre his adversaries in thoes daies and to ther grate charges and costs not oonely sent unto the battell of Wakefeld CCCC armed and well arrayed men to doo him service, conveing aftrwards the Quene grace there being, and the famous prince Edward ther sonne, unto the batell of Saint Albones, with other CCCC of like men to th' assistence of ther said soverain lord." The city of York was a harbour of refuge after Towton for king, queen, prince and their adherents. By the town there were "ML men defensible araied, of the which many was slayne and put in exile." At the coming of Edward, the inhabitants were robbed, despoiled and ransomed; Others were so impoverished that many were constrained to leave the city so that two parts of the said city after the battle were in a few years utterly "proferated, decaied, and waisted."[26] Such is the dismal account of the sufferings and losses endured by the citizens of York for the house of Lancaster. No doubt the city had befriended the cause of Henry just, as we have seen, it did that of York. But that the account exaggerated the services rendered the former, and glosses over those rendered the latter, there cannot be the slightest question. There is every reason for believing that in York, as in several other boroughs, there existed rival factions during the Wars of the Roses, the one or the other exerting the greater influence according as the fortunes of the White or the Red Rose obtained the ascendancy; the civic authorities, so

[26] See Davies, *York Records*, App. pp. 290-296.

far as possible, naturally strove to avoid incurring the wrath of the rival leaders.

The men of Bristol like the citizens of York were divided in their sympathies between the two rival factions. On the one hand it is stated that most of the merchants of the city were of the Yorkist party;[27] on the other hand we are told there were "many in Bristol who clung to the Red Rose and avowed their fealty to Henry.[28] Bristol was second only to the capital of the kingdom in wealth and population. Early in its history it was described as "a good and strong walled town." At this time the city was distinguished for the number of its wealthy merchants and for the flourishing state of its trade and commerce, though it had not recovered from the blow inflicted by the ravages of the Black Death.[29] Naturally the temper of the citizens was such as would preclude their feeling any great degree of interest in the dynastic struggles of the period. Compared with York, for instance, the chief city of the southwestern portion of the kingdom may be said to have enjoyed comparative tranquillity during the sanguinary conflict between the houses of York and Lancaster. Certainly the place suffered little from the ravages of civil war, and during the whole of the period under consideration her merchants and manufacturers seem to have pursued their lucrative callings with activity and success. The part taken in the conflict between York and Lancaster by the men of Bristol is therefore small when compared with that of other towns which could not pretend to vie with Bristol in wealth and populousness. The connection between Bristol and one of the rival factions however antedates the outbreak of actual hostilities. In 1451, Thomas Yonge, who was a half-brother of William Canynges, Bristol's foremost merchant, presented in parliament a petition from his constituents that the Duke of York should be declared heir to the crown; for his rashness Yonge was committed to the Tower. In the third year of Edward's reign Yonge became King's sergeant and four years later Justice of the Common Pleas. His son, John, a grocer, rose to be Lord Mayor of London and, in 1466, was knighted by the

[27] Cf. Seyer, *Memoirs of Bristol,* II, 200.
[28] Nicholls and Taylor, *History of Bristol,* I, 208, 212; Hunt, *Bristol,* p. 96.
[29] Cf. Cunningham, *English Industry and Commerce,* I, 453.

Yorkist King on the field for bravery.[80] Yonge, as will be seen, was only one among several prominent citizens of Bristol who favoured the Yorkist cause. On the other hand Margaret, who it may be well believed was "on the alert to win the great towns to the side of her husband," visited Bristol[81] in 1455, presumably for the purpose of cultivating the townsmen. Several facts would seem to indicate that Margaret was not unsuccessful in her endeavour to enlist the sympathy and aid of a portion at least of the citizens of Bristol. Among those who favoured the Red Rose was Henry May, a merchant, who seems to have been a follower of the Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond. In 1463 the King was concerned with bringing about the punishment of certain persons, who had stirred up commotions and insurrections in the town of Bristol and its neighbourhood.[82] That a party in the town was on the side of Lancaster seems evident from the fact that when Warwick and Clarence landed in England in 1470, they were favourably received in Bristol, where they were joined by seven or eight thousand men.[83] The next year Margaret came to Bristol to meet the Duke of Somerset and other chiefs of the Lancastrian party. According to one account "they were greatly refreshed and relevyd by such as were the King's rebells in that towne of money, men, and artilerye." "They toke new corage the Thursday aftar to take the field," and on May 1 the Lancastrians marched out of Bristol and "toke theyr way streyght to Berkeley."[84] Only seven, however, of the burgesses are named as the principal offenders.[85] In this same year Edward sent letters to the town complaining of the conduct of certain person. Three years later he levied large sums upon the city for its fickleness.[86]

Edward on his part was not indifferent to the help of the Bristol burghers, and, as has been already intimated, he was rewarded with the zealous support of a number of leading citizens. In the fall of 1461 Edward was a visitor at Bristol

[80] Cf. Nicholls and Taylor, *History of Bristol*, I, 214.
[81] *Great Red Book*, p. 77. Cf. Nicholls and Taylor, *History of Bristol*, I, 206.
[82] Seyer, *Memoirs of Bristol*, II, 192.
[83] Waurin, V, 611.
[84] Quoted by Lucas, *Illustrations of the History of Bristol and its Neighbourhood*, p. 264.
[85] *Little Red Book*, II, 130-131.
[86] *Ibid.*

and was most royally received,[37] though of course this proves nothing as to the preference of the citizens for one side or the other. This was during the mayoralty of Canynges who had already given proof of his zeal for the cause of Edward. Shortly after the battle of Wakefield, the mayor and council, at the order of the King, sent a fleet against Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, at a cost of 500 marks. It was probably in 1462 that we find the city sending the King forty men defensibly arrayed for the space of two months to attend his service at a cost of £130. Men were sent into the north for his service; the sum of £200 was furthermore lent the King;[38] while at the battle of Towton the cause of the White Rose was upheld by a contingent from Bristol which fought beneath the "White Ship," the banner of the town.[39] "At this time both before and after, the state was in much combustion," is the terse comment of one of the writers of the times. Some light is thrown upon the attitude of the men of Bristol by the feud between the Berkeleys and the Talbots in which the men of Bristol were involved, and which culminated in the fray of Nibley-Green, fought March 20, 1470. On this occasion Philip Mede and John Shipward, the mayor, both of whom were zealous Yorkists, led out of the town the men of Bristol to the aid of the Berkeleys. Mede had been mayor several times and his daughter had married Maurice Berkeley. If further proof were needed of the popularity of Edward's cause in Bristol, it would be found in the fact that he granted the citizens of Bristol a charter of great and valuable privileges. On October 22, 1461, Edward signed at Westminster a charter similar in tenour to one of Henry VI. This King in the 24th year of his reign had let the town to farm to the mayor and burgesses.[40] December 14, 1461, King Edward signed a charter confirming that of 19 Richard II. In a new charter dated February 12, 1461-2, the King regrants the former lease of Henry VI of the town and its profits forever. A grant was added of every profit which could possibly arise to the King from the possession of the town excepting only escheats of land paying

[37] Nicholls and Taylor, *History of Bristol*, I, 207; Hunt, *Bristol*, p. 99. The date of the visit is wrongly assigned to the year 1462 by the editor of Warkworth's *Chronicle*, pp. 31-32, Notes.

[38] *Great Red Book*, p. 205.

[39] *Archaeologia*, XXIX, 346.

[40] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.* 15,663.

annually a fee-farm of £160. The charter furthermore makes mention of the "notable services bestowed in various ways by our beloved and faithful subjects the mayor and commonalty of Bristol."[41] Philip Mede, the mayor, is said to have gone to the King when one or all of these charters were granted. The chief interest perhaps in connection with the history of Bristol during the period covered by the War of the Roses is to be found, not so much in the relations of the townsmen as a whole to the rival parties, as in the attitude of one of its most distinguished citizens—William Canynges.

The name of this eminent merchant has already been mentioned in connection with important services rendered the Yorkist cause. A signal proof of Canynges's loyalty to Edward was shown during the reign of Henry VI, when Canynges, who was mayor, seized with the approval of the common council a quantity of ammunition sent to Bristol by the Lancastrian government and put it in the "tresoure chambyre of the saide towne." At the instance of the Duke of York the mayor and council took upon themselves the rule of the King's castle in Bristol, using a portion of the ammunition in this connection. The balance was expended in the expedition against Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, alluded to above.[42] It is true that several historians have asserted that Canynges was a Lancastrian,—at any rate, until he felt himself compelled to change his politics by the success of Edward IV. In spite of the fact, however, that Henry VI in 1449 refers to Canynges as "his beloved and faithful subject," we are pretty safe in assuming, as do the most reliable Bristol historians, that Canynges was on the side of the house of York; and the same motives which determined the attitude of this successful business man towards the dynastic quarrels of the day would no doubt weigh with others of his class. Though Bristol was surrounded by estates whose lords have been generally represented as Lancastrian in sympathy, yet a portion of the inhabitants certainly favoured the cause of Edward. The town as a whole did not exhibit a clean-cut loyalty towards one side or the other.

Between the King's levies and the Earl's retainers, the county of Warwickshire probably supplied many men on both sides for several of the campaigns in the Wars of the Roses. The chief

[41] Seyer, *Charters and Letters Patent of Bristol*, p. 98.
[42] Cf. Nicholls and Taylor, *History of Bristol*, I, 213.

town of the county likewise sent armed men to the support of both the rival factions, for the city of Coventry was deeply concerned in the politics of the time. The influence of the powerful Duke of Buckingham, who became definitely Lancastrian in his politics in 1458, together with the old connection between the city and the first prince of the blood doubtless go far towards explaining the loyalty of the citizens of Coventry to the Lancastrian cause. In addition the Court steadily cultivated the good-will of the people of Coventry, which came to be known as the "Queen's secret harbour." In return the men of Coventry loyally supported the cause of the Red Rose until alienated from her cause presumably by the violence of Margaret and the unruliness of her troops.[43] In the year 1449 we find the authorities of Coventry making provision for the equipment of over six hundred men for the city's defence.[44] Two years later the city's defences were strengthened and a plentiful supply of ammunition laid in. In this same year the *Leet Book* records the gracious welcome accorded their sovereign Lord, Henry VI, by the mayor and his "wurthy bredurn," who were thanked by the King for having the best ruled community within the realm during the year just past. As a reward for their loyalty and as an evidence of his appreciation of the honour done him during his stay in their midst, Henry conferred the dignity of sheriffs upon the bailiffs of the city.[45] The men of Coventry equipped 100 men with bright coloured badges for their "soveren lorde" at the outbreak of hostilities, but through no fault of their own "they wenton not," and so the blood of none of the citizens of Coventry was spilled at St. Albans' fight.[46] In 1456 Margaret, distrustful of the Londoners, moved the Court to Coventry, where it continued with intervals for upwards of a year.[47] The Queen was welcomed with pageants and costly entertainments.[48] Here Margaret rallied her forces after the defeat at Blore Heath. On November 20, 1459, parliament met at Coventry, the Yorkists being conspicuous by their absence.

[43] A vivid account of the ravages of the northern troops is given by Whethamstede, I, 388-390.
[44] Harris, *Story of Coventry*, p. 114.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-121.
[46] Harris, *Life in an Old English Town*, pp. 147,150.
[47] See *Paston Letters*, I, 403. Cf. *Ibid., Introd.*, p. cxcvi, *et seq.*; Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 631.
[48] Harris, *Story of Coventry*, pp. 124-126.

At the battle of Towton a detachment of Coventry men is said to have fought on Henry's side. In 1460, however, the zeal of the men of Coventry for the Lancastrian cause seems to have abated. This may have been due to the ruthless actions of the Queen and the violence of her followers, whose devastations, we are told, completely alienated the Coventry burgesses.[49] The death of Buckingham probably removed one of the influences which had been powerful in keeping the Coventry citizens loyal to Henry.[50] Probably there was a Yorkist faction in the city which now succeeded in gaining the upper hand. Whatever may have been the cause, the fact remains that the men of Coventry became for the time being staunch followers of Edward, nor is there any record of their having been impelled to this course by bribes or promises on the part of the King.[51] After the battle of St. Albans £100 was collected throughout the wards for the men to go to London with "the earl of March." On the day after his coronation Edward despatched a letter to the mayor and his brethren full of thanks for the citizens' loyalty to his cause, praying their "good continuance in the same," and praising their good and substantial rule." At Towton the men of Coventry fought in the Yorkist ranks under the standard of the "Black Ram." £80 was collected throughout the wards for the 100 men "which went with oure soverayn liege lord Kyng Edward IIII^{the} to the felde yn the north." When Edward returned to his "cite of Coventre from the felde yn the North" he was presented with £100 and a cup. In the year after Towton £40 was collected to be given to Warwick for the payment of forty men that went to the north to resist "Kyng Henry and Quene Marget *that were.*"[52] In the years that followed Edward is said to have treated the Coventry folk graciously, paying them several visits.[53]

The power formerly exercised by the Duke of Buckingham in the Midlands now seems to pass to the Earl of Warwick who, in 1464, was meddling in the internal affairs of Coventry.

In 1467 King and King-maker were upon such bad terms that

[49] *Ibid,* p. 132.
[50] For an illustration of the influence exerted by Buckingham, see *Paston Letters,* I, Introd., p. cxxix.
[51] Cf. Harris, *Life in an Old English Town,* p. 169; *Story of Coventry,* p. 169.
[52] These facts are taken from the *Story of Coventry,* pp. 133-134.
[53] *Ibid.,* p. 136.

we find the former going to Coventry to keep watch upon the great Earl. When it came to choosing between Edward and Warwick the men of Coventry, like those of the Cinque Ports, seem to have preferred to cast in their lot with the powerful nobleman who was now plotting Edward's overthrow.[54] In the summer of 1469 both the King and Warwick were soliciting the aid of the civic authorities; and, at the command of Edward, troops, raised not without difficulty, were sent to the north to join the royal forces. Shortly afterwards the people of Coventry saw their sovereign a prisoner in the hands of Warwick. The men of Coventry found themselves and their property between the upper and the nether mill-stones in these trying times. In February, 1470, in response to a command from Edward money was collected throughout the wards for men to go to Grantham.[55] Warwick and Clarence with their levies tarried at Coventry while Edward was winning the battle of "Losecoat Field." Clarence succeeded in cajoling the citizens into a loan of 300 marks, leaving in pledge a handsome jewel.[56] When Edward passed through Coventry in pursuit of the rebels, forty men joined him, receiving 12d a day for their services.[57] "For the citizens of Coventry—provident men—afforded help to either party, hoping surely to have their reward whichever side might prevail in the end." A proceeding which was surely most natural under the circumstances; such a policy seemed the only one left to the burgesses whereby they might avert the ruin which threatened their business and their finances. With examples of treachery rife before their eyes, the citizens can hardly be condemned for pursuing a temporizing policy. Their attitude of seeming double-dealing takes on a different light when it is borne in mind that it is by no means improbable that parties in the city were pretty evenly balanced, the partisans of the White or the Red Rose gaining the upper hand for the time being, according as the fortunes of Edward or of Warwick were in the ascendant. These were times when every "house was divided against itself, and few except the chief actors in the drama sustained their part with honesty and consistency." To Margaret and

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 145.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[57] *Ibid.*

her cause the men of Coventry showed a commendable loyalty till alienated by justifiable reasons. As the war progressed, and it became increasingly evident that neither side was contending for any just principle, small wonder that the citizens felt they were justified in making the best terms they could with the predominant party.

The most trying times of all were yet in store for the men of Coventry. When Edward began his march southward in 1471, Warwick retired to Coventry. Here Edward failed to dislodge him.[58] The townsfolk lent Warwick 100 marks; they had now burned their bridges behind them, for when Warwick departed to give Edward battle twenty horse and twenty foot accompanied him and fought at Barnet Field.[59] "Military items crowd the years 1469-71, when money flowed like water for the pay of soldiers, whose wages rose from the normal rate of 6d to 12d a day."[60] If "the Lenton next afore Barnet ffeld" had been a season of terrible anxiety to the townsmen, what must have been their consternation when they heard of the defeat and death of the King-maker! Nothing remained for the men of Coventry but to make their peace on the best terms possible with the Yorkist King. Accordingly a letter from Prince Edward was sent the King as an indication of the good-will of the townsfolk.[61]

In May Edward came to Coventry, having crushed Margaret and her forces at Tewkesbury. Here he remained for nearly a week raising new levies, as there were threats of a fresh rising of northern Lancastrians.[62] But the rebellion came to naught, the "citie of Yorke, and other good townes and countryes, lowly submittinge them." Edward left Coventry for London on May 16. But before setting out, unmindful of the costs and burdens of the citizens in his behalf, he avenged himself upon the city in summary fashion for having taken the wrong side in the campaign ending at Barnet. The mayor was deprived of the civic sword, the liberties and franchises of the city seized, and the charter suspended until redeemed by a fine of 500 marks.[63] Thus did the citizens experience "the

[58] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, p. 13.
[59] Harris, *Story of Coventry*, pp. 150-151.
[60] *Coventry Leet Book*, Pt. IV, Introd., p. xlvi.
[61] Harris, *Story of Coventry*, p. 152.
[62] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, pp. 31-33.
[63] Whitby, *Parliamentary Representation of the City of Coventry*, pp. 27-28.

hevy greffe that our souveraign lord beer to the citee . . . ffor the tyme that Richard, late Erle of Warwyke, with oder to hym then acompanyed, kept the citee in defence agenst his Royall highness in the Lenton next afore Barnett ffeld."[64]

Looking back over the long period of twenty years during which their city had been so frequently drawn into the conflict between selfish princes and nobles, the townsmen could see as a result of that struggle nothing but disordered finances and ruined trade. In support of the Yorkist cause alone the town had raised £320 and put 180 men in the field. Even more ungrudgingly had the city given proof of its loyalty to Margaret until by her own violence she had alienated the good-will of the townsfolk. Neither Margaret nor Edward nor Warwick seems to have felt any concern on account of the hardships that befell the town or to have shown a spark of sympathy with the burghers in the trying circumstances in which they found themselves. To Margaret and to Edward alike the city was merely a storehouse from which men and money could be obtained for the furtherance of their own dynastic aims. It has been a general impression that the Wars of the Roses did little harm to the towns. Such a notion finds a striking refutation in the case of Coventry, whose finances were sadly disorganized by the active participation of the city government in the civil broils of the time.[65] Nor was Coventry the only borough which suffered in this respect.

Our knowledge of the history of Norwich during the struggle between Lancaster and York is provokingly meagre. From the influence of the Mowbrays it would be inferred that Norfolk was Yorkist in its sympathies; on the other hand it would seem the county did not take any active part in the party conflicts of the time. So far as the city itself was concerned, its leanings were probably towards the house of Lancaster. But as in the case of Coventry bad times had overtaken the citizens; city politics had been in a state of turmoil for years before the outbreak of civil war; while from one cause and another poverty and exhaustion were making themselves felt among the townsfolk. In 1452 the Queen visited Norwich among other cities, endeavouring to make what friends she

[64] Harris, *Life in an Old English Town*, p. 172. See also *Camden Miscellany* (C. S.), I, 25.
[65] See Harris, *Story of Coventry*, pp. 135-139.

could against the stormy times which were at hand. The commons resolved to advance 100 marks as a loan to the King; the aldermen on their part made her a present of £40, which was raised to 100 marks by the commons, who in addition added £10 for the King's brothers. The result was that the King had in all 200 marks of the citizens. The consideration for the gift was a new charter confirming all the old liberties of the citizens and granting them several new ones. To ingratiate herself with the city, Margaret had the charter consented to in full parliament. It was dated at Westminster, 17th of March, 30th Henry VI. The mayor, recorder, and all such aldermen as had borne the office of mayor were to be justices of the peace for the city and county, the said justices being empowered to enquire of all things belonging to the office of justice of the peace; the aldermen were permitted to elect the under-sheriff, town clerks, and sheriff's bailiffs.[66] In 1460, another commission, bearing date of June 3rd, commanded the mayor to make immediate proclamation through all the city and suburbs, that all the King's subjects should repair to him well armed upon pain of forfeiture. The mayor and aldermen accordingly raised forty armed men, and the commons eighty. At his earnest request, William Rookwood, Esq., was made their captain. An agreement was made with the men at sixpence a day for each soldier who went to the assistance of the King. Henry wrote the authorities a letter of thanks which contained the request that they would maintain them for one month longer, which was readily complied with.[67]

A letter from King Edward IV, however, commanded the townsmen to proclaim him by the name of King Edward; and that all persons of what degree so ever between sixteen and sixty years of age should arm themselves in a defensible manner and hasten to him with all possible speed. Nothing was left for the citizens to do but to submit, since it would have been folly for the city to hold out against the Yorkist King now that Henry was powerless to render them aid. Accordingly Edward was proclaimed King and assigned a competent number of soldiers. A great quantity of provisions was also provided, for which the moiety of a whole tenth was assessed

[66] Blomefield, *Norfolk*, III, 158-159.
[67] *Ibid.*, III, 162.

throughout the city. It is interesting to note that the town's captain and his 120 soldiers were still with King Henry in the north parts of the kingdom.[68] To ingratiate himself with the townsmen, who sympathized with the fallen Henry, Edward confirmed all the former charters of the city by inspeximus, wherein they are recited at large. This was done at the request of the citizens, and is another instance of the eagerness of the Yorkist monarch to win the favour of the towns. The charter is dated at Westminster, February 10, 1461.[69] In 1469 the King was at Norwich and was grandly received.[70] Two years later, however, Edward avoided landing on the Norfolk coast, since he received no assurances of a friendly reception. Probably if left to its own inclination, the city of Norwich would have adhered to the cause of Lancaster; from this attitude it was prevented by fear of incurring the wrath of Edward, when his fortunes were in the ascendant.

We have now surveyed the part played by five of the leading boroughs of England in the Wars of the Roses, each town representing a different portion of the realm. It is apparent, from the foregoing account, that the general impression that the more flourishing centers of trade and industry steadily favoured the cause of Edward, must be modified in certain important particulars. Of these, London, as we have seen, while containing adherents of both the Red and the White Rose, practically decided the contest in favor of Edward "who had found good friends in London"; for had the capital of the kingdom held out against the supporters of the house of York, the efforts of the Duke of York and of Edward to oust the house of Lancaster must have ended in failure. The city of York likewise contained followers of both of the rival factions; nor is this surprising when we consider the influence wielded by the great families of the north, some of whom favoured York, while others remained loyal to the cause of Henry and of Margaret. A portion of the burgesses of Bristol sided with the house of York, but as has been shown, this flourishing centre of commerce and industry had its Lancastrian sympathizers also. On the whole the attitude of Bristol was not decisive one way or the other, so far as the fortunes of the

[68] *Ibid.*, 163; Cf. *Patent Rolls*, 1461-1467, p. 67.
[69] Blomefield, *Norfolk*, III, 166.
[70] *Ibid.*, 167.

conflict were concerned. Its location, together with the fact that its citizens were engrossed in profitable business enterprises, rendered the town comparatively free from the evils of civil strife. Coventry and to a less degree Norwich were conspicuous for their efforts in behalf of the Lancastrian cause, though the former partly of its own volition and partly from force of circumstances rendered aid to the Yorkist cause also, The leaders of both parties showed, as we have seen, themselves keenly alive to the necessity of winning the support of the burgher class. Evidence of this is to be observed not only in the case of the towns whose history has just been considered, but is to be seen also in the case of those smaller boroughs which found themselves drawn into the civil conflict. In a few instances we find the governing officials and the body of townsmen consistently adhering to one side or the other throughout the struggle. As has been intimated already, the leaders in the conflict were actuated by no consistent set of principles, and it is hardly surprising in view of all the circumstances to find the townsmen governed in their attitude to a great extent by motives of expediency.

CHAPTER IV

LINCOLN, COLCHESTER, SOUTHAMPTON, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Of all parts of England, Lincolnshire is perhaps the one in which the Nevilles had least interest and following, since the great estates of the shire belonged to the duchy of Lancaster and to the supporters of Henry VI. It is natural therefore to suppose the region was hostile to Edward IV. Prominent among those who incurred the enmity of Edward were Lord Welles and his son, Sir Robert Welles, both of whom were executed for being involved in the rising in Lincolnshire in the early spring of 1470, in which the Duke of Clarence and Earl of Warwick were both implicated.[1] The army defeated under Sir Robert in the action near Stamford was in all likelihood recruited partly in the city of Lincoln. The city was therefore presumably Lancastrian in sympathy and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, was in all probability attached to the cause of the Red Rose. Evidence is lacking to support the statements of those writers who refer to the devotion manifested by the city to the house of Lancaster. The town is said to have suffered much in the course of the struggle between the rival factions. To the honour of the townsmen they refused to espouse the cause of Edward after he had granted them, by way of a bribe, no doubt, many privileges unenjoyed before. When he visited the city in March, 1461, on his way to Towton, naturally he was received with honour by the townsfolk. By order of the mayor and corporation, twelve pike, twelve tench, and twelve bream were allotted to the King's table during his stay in the city. On August 23, 1463, Edward signed letters patent acquitting the city from payment of £100, part of the fee-farm rent of £180, and in February, 1466, he granted the mayor, Thomas Grantham, and citizens, in relief of the desolation which had come upon the city, the four villages of Bramstone, Wad-

[1] See *Camden Miscellany*, Vol. I.

yngton, Bracebrigge, and Camwick, and a large number of quit-rents paid to the Crown for various houses in the city, many of which had formerly belonged to Jews.[2]

On the other hand the loyalty of the townsmen may have been due in part to the fact that the city of Lincoln had received marks of favour from three Lancastrian kings in a substantial manner; for each of the Henries had granted the townsmen charters. Henry IV commanded the judges of assize in Lincolnshire to permit the mayor and citizens of Lincoln to enjoy without interruption the liberty of trial of causes formerly granted to the mayor and bailiffs; the city moreover was permitted to acquire lands, tenements, and rents to the annual value of £120, while the citizens were excused from all payments of tenths and fifteenths for forty years. From this it may be inferred as in the case of Norwich that Lincoln was by no means the flourishing borough that it had been at the beginning of the century. Indeed there were said to be scarcely 200 citizens in the city, to such an extent had the place suffered from pestilence, the withdrawal of merchants, and the evils consequent upon civil war. Though this may be an exaggeration, it is evident that Lincoln was no longer the important town it had been at the beginning of the century.[3] It was not to be expected therefore that the citizens should be able to render either side effective support.

"Yorkist Colchster" is the designation given to this borough by one writer, yet there is no record of any active part taken by the town in the Wars of the Roses. There are reasons, however, for believing the townsmen sympathized with the house of York in its struggle with Lancaster. At the time of the insurrection of Cade, it will be recalled that Colchester was one of the cities to which "a quarter of oon Niclas Jakes atteint of high treason" was to be sent. In the county of Essex, however, were to be found many Lancastrian lords and retainers. More pertinent in its bearing upon the attitude of the town is the fact that Henry VI deprived the borough of its most valuable privileges, the Fishery of the Colne, and bestowed it upon his favourite, John de Vere, the Earl of Oxford. On the other hand Edward IV granted the townsmen the fullest charter they had ever had. This charter which

[2] Cf. Sympson, *Lincoln*, pp. 99-100.
[3] *Ibid.*

amounts to a "reorganization of the constitution of the corporation" is in part as follows: "Considering that the burgh of Colchester was one of the ancientest burghs in the kingdom of England, that it was situated near the seacoasts, to oppose the attempts of his enemies that were disposed to invade the kingdom, and remembering the very great faithfulness and loyalty of the burgesses of that burgh, both to himself and his predecessors, Kings of England," all previous charters were confirmed, and it was granted also that the bailiffs and burgesses and their successors consisting of two bailiffs and one commonalty, should forever be one perpetual body and commonalty, incorporated by the name of the bailiffs and commonalty of the burgh of Colchester, and that the bailiffs should hold, in the Moothall, a court every week, on Monday and Thursdays; that a common council shall be elected, besides other considerable privileges. No person was allowed to remain within the precincts of the town forty days without taking the oath of fealty to Edward.[4] As to the influence exerted by the great families of the county in explaining the preference of the citizens of Colchester for the Yorkist cause, little can be said. If the de Veres were Lancastrian, the Bourchiers threw the weight of their powerful family connection in favour of Edward. With Colchester our survey of the more important boroughs in the Wars of the Roses is concluded, for there is no record of Lynn having had any share in the civil strife of the period.

We may now turn our attention to the group of average middle-sized boroughs. The population of most of these ranged perhaps from 1500 to 5000, though here again it should be borne in mind that nothing more is attempted than to indicate roughly the relative size of the different towns which were concerned in the Wars of the Roses. As has been seen, no relation exists between the size of a particular borough and its activities in the civil strife of the period; for local causes, such as the influence of neighboring magnates, or the strategic location of a town might bring it about that a place of relatively small size played a much more important rôle in the politics of the time than one of relatively greater population and wealth. Instances of this have already been noted, and fur-

[4] *Red Paper Book of Colchester,* p. 4; *Charters of Colchester,* p. 46.

ther illustrations of the same fact will be given below. Already in the fifteenth century we meet with indications of the decay in wealth and population of certain boroughs, and it is well known how general a complaint arises in this connection in the succeeding century, though it would seem the evidence for the decay of towns in the time of Henry VIII by no means justifies the gloomy picture that has been drawn of the condition of the towns of that period. Inasmuch as agriculture was the dominant form of industry in the English medieval boroughs, and if, as we are assured, agriculture remained stationary during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, then it can readily be seen why the inland towns of England made relatively such slow gains in the period between the reign of the third Edward and the close of the fifteenth century. On the other hand, towns which were favourably situated for purposes of commerce would reap the benefits of increased trade relations with foreign countries, as was the case with Bristol and some of the southeastern ports. Southampton, for instance, which ranked among the smaller boroughs of the realm at the time of the subsidy of 1377, had by the middle of the fifteenth century become one of the most important commercial centers in the realm.

Naturally the reputed treasures of the great southern port were coveted by the rival claimants to the throne. In the case of Southampton, as in that of Coventry, the struggle between York and Lancaster spelled ruin for the municipal finances. What with the demands made upon them by the Lancastrian lords on the one side, and by Edward upon the other, the town government was sorely perplexed at the disaster which threatened their city's prosperity. Surely little love must have been lost upon the leaders of either the White or of the Red Rose faction by the merchants of Southampton; for whichever side the townsfolk favoured, they were likely to regret it. Edward IV, with his characteristic policy of winning to his side the more important boroughs, visited Southampton in the autumn of 1461. The King received a pipe of wine as a present from the town and, what was of more consequence, for the townsmen, he granted them a new charter in which mention is made of "the faithful and laudable submission with which they (*i.e.* the townsmen) have shewn themselves hitherto grateful in all things to us and to our ancestors . . . and especially ready

in late years for the expenses, costs, labours, burdens, and perils, and these not small" . . . The hope is expressed that the citizens "will be more strongly and effectually bound to pay to us and our heirs similar gratitude for the future, and will show themselves more ready to serve us according to their income."[5] In April, 1470, the King was again at Southampton. Among other expenses incurred by the commonalty were those for presents and for entertainments for Lord Scales and other notables. This entry occurs among the town records: "Item, payde to Watkyn Latham, towne clerke of this towne, the XXIJ day of May, when he rode wt the kyng to Chichester to have a wrytyng of the money pt the kyng had granted to the towne." The reason why the King had made a grant to the town is not stated; most probably it was a token of Edward's gratitude for the services rendered him by the burgesses. Another entry which is more significant reads as follows: "Item, payde to the sowdyers that were sent to the kyng into the northe countrey by the town; when they were come home agen they asked alowaunse, and the maire by the assent and avysement of his brethren in the churche of Holy Rodes allowed them XXVJ^{s} VIIJ^{d}."[6] If they could have had their own way no doubt the majority of the burghers of Southampton, like those of Bristol, would have preferred to hold aloof from the strife of the warring factions, reaping the rewards of their prosperous foreign trade and fighting out their own civic battles over the election of a mayor or some other matter of internal polity. From the evidence presented above it is reasonably clear that the men of Southampton favoured the cause of Edward, nor is there any reason for believing that their allegiance was entirely a matter of compulsion. The same motives which led Canynges and the more prominent merchants of Bristol to side with the Yorkists would likely prevail with the traders of the great southern port. Moreover Southampton, in common with the southeastern ports of the realm, would feel a keener interest than inland towns in the foreign policy of the Crown and would be more directly affected by the loss of England's foreign possessions. There was nothing in Henry VI's hapless foreign policy to enlist

[5] Gidden, *Charters of the Borough of Southampton*, I, 101.
[6] Quoted by Davies, *History of Southampton*, p. 472.

either the enthusiasm or the support of the burghers of Southampton in behalf of the Lancastrian cause.

If Southampton was firm in its friendship for Edward IV, it is not so clear that such was the case with Newcastle-upon-Tyne; for this town, like York, was disciplined by Edward for containing those hostile to his cause.[7] "We have people I know here," wrote John Paston the younger.[8] On the other hand, the men of Newcastle, in 1463, repulsed a Lancastrian attack without help, and seem to have denied Queen Margaret admission the year before. In this same year the mayor and burgesses were among the recipients of some of the forfeited estates of the third earl of Northumberland who fell at Towton, obtaining from the Crown the manor of Byker. Four years later Edward confirmed the charters and privileges of the townsmen.[9] From this it may be inferred that the men of Newcastle sided with Edward or else that he desired to gain their good will by the favours bestowed upon them.

[7] Whethamstede, I, 411.
[8] *Paston Letters*, II, 121.
[9] Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, pp. 345, 349, 356.

CHAPTER V

HULL, GLOUCESTER, EXETER

The assertion that the boroughs were actuated solely by self-interest in the wars of the Roses and were swayed by no sentiment of loyalty, finds a striking refutation in the case of Hull, whose citizens from first to last remained devoted to the cause of the Red Rose. The town of Hull was beholden to Henry VI for proofs of that monarch's favour, and on its part continued firm and unshaken in its fidelity to him. "Yet for all that to the eternal honour of this town, it would forsake neither him nor his, but stood upon their guard in defense of him to the last." Nor was the loyalty of the townsmen confined to empty words; for, as will be seen, both magistrates and inhabitants gave unequivocal proofs of their gratitude and loyalty to Henry VI. In the 18th year of his reign the corporation of Hull received its present form of municipal government; at the same time the King constituted the town with its precincts a county of itself. By another charter of the same year, bearing date of July 2d, still further privileges and dignities were granted the governing bodies.[1] The favour shown Hull by the Crown may have been due to the influence of the powerful Duke of Suffolk. In September, 1454, the year before the actual outbreak of hostilities, Henry VI was "most joyfully and royally received and entertained with all the satisfaction, splendour and demonstration of that hearty loyalty" of which the townsfolk were capable,[2] though of itself this proves nothing as to the attitude of the town. In 1460 the whole town was put in a posture of defence by Richard Hanson, the loyalist mayor. He formed two or three strong troops of the best men of the town and country and joined the Queen before she reached Sandal castle. In the battle of Wakefield-green, the brave mayor of Hull, after having distinguished himself by his intrepidity and valour, fell

[1] Merewether and Stephens, *Boroughs,* II, 861, 869.
[2] Ms. British Museum, *Lansd.,* 890.

covered with wounds in the moment in which victory was declaring itself for his party.[3] At the battle of Towton, the blood of the men of Hull in all probability flowed freely on Henry's side. Nor did the townsmen neglect any opportunity after this defeat of their royal master of promoting Henry's cause. In 1464 after the capture of Bamborough castle by the Yorkists, Henry VI marched towards Hull, expecting no doubt to secure the town to his interests. But Edward was too quick for him, and, coming unexpectedly to Barton upon Humber, he entered Hull "which was mightily inclined to King Henry," thus preventing the latter from reaping the fruits he might otherwise have expected from the gratitude of the inhabitants. These Edward is said to have summoned to attend him at York, having put a strong garrison in the place, since he knew how favourably inclined the townsmen were to the cause of his rival.[4] "But what could any people do, when two kings reigned in one kingdom?" There is no record of any manifestation of joy at Edward's visit, for the townsmen seem to have continued firm in their affection for Henry. As a result partly of the expenses incurred in his behalf, the town found itself encumbered with a heavy debt. To liquidate it, the market cross, a large and stately structure, was pulled down, and a vast amount of lead, with which it was covered, was sold by weight and paid for in specie. The building had been founded by a former mayor, Robert Holm, who also provided the lead.[5] In 1470 Henry VI was restored to the "incredible joy of this town, which was a constant lover of King Henry." But the season of joy was brief, for the very next year Edward landed at Ravenspur.

The citizens of Hull furnish a striking exception to the assertions generally made by writers that the Wars of the Roses fail to afford an illustration of townsmen being actuated by any principle of loyalty in their adherence to one side or the other. Aware of Hull's partiality for Lancaster, Edward proceeded to the eastward in his march upon Beverley, taking no chances of being refused admittance into the town, for he found "all this part of the country very much averse to his title, and perfectly easy under Henry's government."[6] Warwick is

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

said to have sent strict orders to Hull not to admit Edward upon any pretext whatever; the result was that Edward, knowing the disposition of the inhabitants and their determination to defend the town against him, made no attempt upon the place. From the foregoing it is evident that the men of Hull were deeply concerned in the fortunes of the Lancastrian monarchy. Grateful for the favours accorded their town by the Crown, the inhabitants never wavered in their loyalty to Henry, but ungrudgingly gave their blood and treasure in his behalf. Nor is there any evidence whatever that a rival party existed in the town; on the contrary, the governing authorities and the townsmen seem to have been a unit in their opposition to the house of York. In these times when self-seeking, heartlessness, and treachery were the qualities which shone so conspicuously among the rival leaders, it is refreshing to find the citizens of this northern town actuated so largely by a sentiment of loyalty and patriotism.

The town of Gloucester lay in a region which, on the whole, was well affected to the Yorkist cause. With one exception, however, the place does not seem to have been concerned in the factional strife of the times. This was in 1471 when the Lancastrians under Margaret were planning to march into Wales; but she learned "that the towne of Gloucester was firme and fast to duke Richerd, King Edward's brother."[7] For the place was held by Richard Beauchamp, the governor, secure in the interests of the King. She was thus forced to march to Tewkesbury, though there were those in the town that could have been well contented that the Queen should have been received.[8] The "quene, and the lords with her, had good intelligence with diverse in the towne, so as they were put in great hope to have entred the same; whereupon they travelled their people right sore all that night and morning, coming before the towne of Gloucester upon the Fridaie about ten of the clocke. And when they perceived that they were disappointed of their purpose, they were highlie therewith displeased; for they knew verie well, that diverse within the towne bore their good willes towards them."[9] So ended the attempt of Margaret before Gloucester. Had she been enabled

[7] Polydore Vergil, p. 151.
[8] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, p. 27.
[9] Quoted by Fosbrooke, *History of Gloucester*, pp. 45, 46.

to gain admission into the town, it might have been used as a base for procuring recruits from Cheshire and Lancashire.

Though the southwestern counties did not witness much of the military action of the time, bearing quietly their share of the common burden, yet the extreme west and north are the two regions which have been commonly represented as the mainstay of the cause of Margaret and her husband.[10] A majority of the landholders in Somerset, Cornwall, and Devon were adherents of the Red Rose faction though even in this region the Yorkist cause was not destitute of supporters. The Courtenays, staunch Lancastrians, possessed extensive estates in Devon and Cornwall, "districts presumably primitive and ignorant." The Beauforts could always count upon a following in this section of the country. According to one account, "the heart both of city and shire of Devon was on the Lancastrian side, but the wise men of Exeter always knew how to stand well with the powers that were."[11] Another writer affirms that "no city gave stronger proofs of attachment to his (*i.e.* Henry's) cause than Exeter";[12] but this statement is not justified by what we know of the history of Exeter during this period, and it overlooks the important services rendered the Lancastrian cause by such places as Coventry and Hull. Indeed at a later period the citizens seem to have been divided in their attachment to the two claimants of the Crown. On the whole, however, it is fair to say, the men of Exeter evinced a greater partiality for the cause of Henry than for that of Edward.

In 1451 Henry VI had spent eight days among the townsmen renewing their charters. Four years later, however, the city received Lord William Bonville, to which no significance would be attached but for the fact that he was the antagonist of Thomas Courtenay, Earl of Devon, between whom and the citizens of Exeter no love was lost. "And the civil war between the houses did then begin to break out, and no wonder the city of Exeter opened its gates to the Lord Bonville, for the Duke of York had at that time all the power in his hands, and no doubt the city favoured those of the prevailing side.[13]

[10] Cf. Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, III, 186.
[11] Freeman, *Exeter*, p. 191.
[12] Oliver, *History of the City of Exeter*, p. 68.
[13] Quoted by Rogers, *Strife of the Roses in the Days of the Tudors*, p. 49.

This, however, is mere conjecture for there is nothing to indicate the preference of the citizens of Exeter for the White Rose, unless their hostility to their former lords, the Earls of Devon, would lead them to espouse the cause of York. More to the point is the fact that in 1460 the inhabitants cheerfully raised at the solicitation of the Queen a large sum of money by voluntary contribution, and levied 31 soldiers for her use. These they armed and maintained at their own expense, and sent them, with the money, to the Queen's army, accompanied by a messenger to assure her of their steadfast loyalty to the King and their readiness to assist him to the utmost of their power.[14] The leanings of the city of Exeter towards Henry were not unknown to Edward. In 1461 and 1466 he granted charters to the Tailor's Company, possibly thus endeavouring to win the good will of the trading classes that had no share in the town government.[15] In 1463 Edward granted the city fresh franchises and powers. On Saturday, the 14th of April, 1470, the city was visited by Edward, who was hot in pursuit of Clarence and Warwick; he refrained, we are told, from making manifest his anger at the citizens' behaviour. This did not prevent the mayor and citizens from filing out of the city to Liverydole to meet the King. At East Gate the mayor handed the King the keys and maces; and at the Guildhall he was presented with a purse of 100 nobles in gold, which, it is needless to add, Edward did not refuse. More than once the city of Exeter was used by the Lancastrian party as the base of operations. In 1470 the city received within its walls several of the leaders of that party, fleeing before Edward. The following year Margaret after landing upon the southwest coast marched to Exeter. Here she was joined by the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Devon who set up the standard of King Henry. Sir Hugh Courtenay of Powderham, Sir John Arundel with the principal men of Devon and Cornwall joined them with almost the whole power of the two counties.[16] The Earl and the Duke "sent alabout in Somarsetshire, Dorsetshire, and a part of Wiltshire, to arays the people by a certain day. And for that they would gather and arays up the power of Devonshire and Cornewaile, they drew from thence

[14] Jenkins, *History and Description of the City of Exeter*, p. 79.
[15] Gross, *Gild Merchant*, I, 124, note 2.
[16] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, p. 23.

more westward to the Citie of Excestar," . . . gathering "the hable men of those parts." Naturally such proceedings drew upon the inhabitants of Exeter the ill will of Edward. "The King having gotten the victory over all his enemies bethinckeeth hymself nowe upon suche as were adversaries or had succored and taken pte with theym and being advertyzed both of succors and monyes geven and contributed unto them out of this citie waxed very angrye, and was of the mynde to have benne revenged thereof untill he was advertyzed and pacyfied."[17] From the foregoing account it is tolerably clear that the town of Exeter favoured the cause of Henry, nor is there any reason for believing that such assistance as was rendered the Lancastrian faction was not on the whole a matter of their own free choice. This was no doubt true both of the governing officials and of the townsmen as a whole. Situated in a region which contained may adherents of the Red Rose faction, it is not surprising that the inhabitants of the chief city of these parts should have espoused the Lancastrian cause.

On the whole the county of Nottinghamshire is said to have favoured the Yorkists, though many of the county nobles were Lancastrian. Prominent among these were Thomas, Lord Ross, the lord of Orston, and Sir Gervase Clifton, both of whom paid with their lives for their devotion to the cause of Henry. Nottingham occupied a strategic position; its castle was a station of the highest importance from a military standpoint and was a frequent rendezvous of Edward IV. Here he first rallied his forces, holding a court, it is said, for the purpose of affording an opportunity to the nobility and gentlemen of the district to render him their honour and support.[18] In spite of this, however, we are informed that the town of Nottingham sided with Henry VI at first. "They stood by him so long as the triumph of the rebels was doubtful, but no sooner were the fortunes of Edward the Fourth in the ascendant than by gifts out of their treasure and little detachments of their militia they testified to a new loyalty, and thus obtained the renewal of their charter and a reduction of their ferm for twenty years, 'to have a reward to the town of Nottingham for the great cost and burdens, and loss of their goods

[17] Cotton and Woolcombe, *Gleanings from the Records of the City of Exeter*, pp. 17, 18.
[18] Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire*, I, 328-332.

that they have sustained by reason of those services.' "[19] The date of the renewal of the charter is 1462. A contingent from Nottingham under their banner "the George," had fought in the Yorkist ranks at Towton.[20] In 1464 the townsmen ordered off a little troop in red jackets with white letters sewn on them to join the King at York. "The Coste of Makyng of Jackettes to S(au)deours ridying to the Kyng to Yorke," is one of the entries which occurs in the town records. Also the following one: "Item paied for IX. yerdes of rede clothe to make jackettes of the saudeurs; price of a y(er)de, IXd-56s 3d."[21] In the fall of 1470 when Edward heard of the landing of Warwick, he hastened with his followers to Nottingham, according to one account, to collect what forces he could. When Edward landed in 1471, he refrained from proclaiming himself King till he had reached his old haunt of Nottingham Castle. Collecting all the forces possible he marched out of the town "amidst the cheers of the assembled populace." Nor was this all; for the townsmen are recorded to have spent some £60 for "loans for soldiers" and liveries, besides many other costs.[22] Whatever may have been the motives that lay behind the support rendered Edward by the men of Nottingham, the fact remains that they rendered his cause effective aid. As noted above, we are told the burghers "stood by Henry the Sixth," until supplanted by his rival; but there is no record of any material help afforded the Lancastrian King. If the preferences of the men of Nottingham were for the Lancastrian dynasty, they failed to give any effective demonstrations of loyalty. The mere presence of Edward and the desire to merit his favour seem to have been sufficient to induce the townsmen to support the party that happened for the time being to be in the ascendant. But the assertion that this Vicar of Bray-like attitude is just what every other town in England did throughout the Wars of the Roses is, as we have seen, too sweeping a statement and is not warranted by what we know of the attitude of some of the boroughs during the period of civil strife. And even in the case of Nottingham, it seems not a little curious that, in spite of the weather-vane

[19] *Nottingham Records,* III, 414, 416. Cf. Green, *Town Life,* II, 330.
[20] *Archaeologia,* XXIX, 346.
[21] *Nottingham Records,* II, 377.
[22] *Ibid.*

attitude attributed to the townsmen, we find them invariably siding with the Yorkists.

As was the case with most of the counties of England, Leicestershire was divided in its allegiance between the two rival parties. The capital of the county has been referred to as "a famous Lancastrian fortress," though it would be a mistake to infer from this that the men of Leicestershire were staunch adherents of the house of Lancaster. It is true a faction seems to have favoured the Red Rose.[23] In 1450 Parliament was adjourned to Leicester, and nine years later Henry summoned his nobility and gentry to meet him there.[24] But Leicester was situated in that region of England,—the Midlands—in which it has been represented by some writers that the majority of the citizens and freeholders were ardent Yorkists,—by others, and this is more probable, that the two parties were fairly balanced—though a different impression might be obtained from the coloured maps in certain secondary authorities which so nicely parcel off the realm of England between the two rival factions.[25] The impression derived from most writers that the towns were slightly affected by the strife between the Lancastrian and Yorkist leaders and their retainers seems to find another exception in the case of Leicester. Equally exaggerated is the assertion that during the bloody civil commotions of the period, Leicester and many other places were drained of their young men to serve in the wars. Be that as it may, there is no lack of evidence to show that Leicester was deeply concerned in the politics of the time. At the very commencement of the reign of Edward IV, the mayor and burgesses are found exerting themselves in behalf of the Yorkist cause; and that too in spite of the fact that we are assured the house of Lancaster's protection had been afforded the people of Leicester for a long time, though the townsmen now found it convenient to forget the benefits which the town is said to have derived from some of the members of the Lancastrian family. The earls and dukes of that family had moreover been frequent visitors at the castle, and had furthermore given evidence of their good will for the townsmen by numerous awards of lands and privileges.

[23] Cf. Thompson, *History of Leicester,* pp. 182, 188.
[24] *Chronicles of the White Rose,* Introd., pp. xxiii, lxviii.
[25] An exception should be made of the map to be found in Vickers, *England in the Later Middle Ages.*

At this time the corporation is said to have held the bailiwick of the town under a lease from Queen Margaret. But as indicated above, not all the inhabitants of the borough were guilty of such ingratitude. The Lancastrian cause had its partisans in the borough, who showed so little policy as to refuse to attend the musters of the Yorkist mayor; they even went so far as to entrench themselves in their houses and to bar the doors rather than "ride against" the new King, "the dire foe of the ancient and popular house of Lancaster." So it was in vain that the mayor strove to compel all the inhabitants to attend the Common Hall and fall into his gathering.[26] From this it appears that the men of Leicester had not acquired the policy of double-dealing in which the burghers of the period are said to have been so proficient, otherwise we should hardly find a faction in the town continuing to adhere to Henry when so much pressure was being brought to bear upon his partisans to forsake his cause. Among the motives which no doubt must be taken into account in explaining the partiality of the townsmen for Edward is the local influence and authority exerted by Sir William Hastings. The men who were brought together in 1470 by Lord Hastings at Leicester were largely composed, it seems, of his immediate dependents and friends living in the county.[27]

Edward on his part was not slow to recognize and reward the allegiance of the burgesses. In 1462 the Yorkist King was a visitor at the castle; his coming, it may be presumed, was due to his desire to cultivate the good will of the inhabitants. On May 15th of this year at the instance of Robert Rawlett, the mayor, and Thomas Green and John Roberds, the two parliamentary representatives of the borough, Edward granted the inhabitants 20 marks yearly for twenty years from the previous Michaelmas. What is more to the point, the grant was made "in consideration of the good and faithful and unpaid services which the mayor and burgesses of our town of Leicester have cheerfully rendered of late in our behalf against our enemies hostilely raising war against us, as also of the heavy burdens of their no small losses incurred touching such business of ours."[28] In a word, the grant is for the

[26] Cf. Thompson, *History of Leicester*, p. 188.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 194.
[28] Bateson, *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, 1, Pt. II, 373.

services which the men of Leicester rendered Edward IV against his enemies. Two years later in an act of resumption of grants, there was a clause for saving the grant of 20 marks to the town of Leicester. The borough continued to be the recipient of the marks of Edward's favour. A charter bearing date of April 2, 1463, granted the corporation the license of holding an annual fair in the month of May. The fair was to be held three days before and three days after the feast of St. Philip and of St. James yearly forever; the profits, government, and liberties appertaining to the same fair were to belong to the mayor and corporation.[29] In the summer of 1464 a further important grant testified to the favour entertained for the burgesses of Leicester by Edward. The mayor and "four of the discreetest burgesses" were made justices to keep the statutes of servants, artificers, and labourers; the town was to be exempted from the jurisdiction of the county justices; provision was made for the appointment of the magistrates, and for a recorder, who were to wield extensive powers.[30] Finally on January 4, 1472, another grant was made of £20 per annum for twenty years to the mayor and burgesses, for services done against his enemies and in consideration of their great costs; this was to be paid out of the profits of the honour of Leicester, unless within that time lands and tenements would be given them to that value.[31] From this array of royal grants it is evident that the people of Leicester had given evidence of hearty fealty to the house of York. They had certainly fought for the White Rose at Towton, for among the standards unfurled on that field was the banner of Leicester, "The Griffon cam fro Leycestre, fleyng in as tyte (quickly)."[32] When Edward returned in 1470 for the purpose of recovering his throne, the chronicler says, "wherefore fro Notyngham, the Kynge toke the streyght way towards hym, by Leicestre." "At Leycestar came to the Kynge ryght-a-fayre felawshipe of folks, to the nombar of iijM men, well habyled for the wars, such as were veryly to be trusted, as thos that wowlde uttarly imparte with hym at beste and worste

[29] Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, I, Pt. II, 376; Thompson, *History of Leicester*, p. 194.
[30] Cf. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, I, Pt. II, 375.
[31] Kelly, *Royal Progresses and Visits to Leicester*, pp. 222-224.
[32] *Archaeologia*, XXIX, 346.

in his qwarell, withe all theyr force and myght to do hym their trew service. And so, better accompanyed than he had bene at any time aforme, he departed from Leycestar."[33] This was the force for which Edward was indebted to Lord Hastings, whose messenger had raised the country round about. The town of Leicester thus affords a clean-cut instance of the attitude of a borough during the Wars of the Roses. It furnishes moreover a striking exception to the statements of those writers who have generally characterized the attitude of the boroughs as stamped with indifference to the politics of the time, or else marked by a reprehensible policy of double-dealing.

Worcestershire was probably Yorkist on the whole. The Earl of Warwick's influence in this district would tell in favour of Edward. The extensive Mortimer influence must also be taken into account. On the marches Edward was stronger than his rival.[34] So far as the city of Worcester itself is concerned, however, there is no indication that the town was actively concerned in the civil broils of the time beyond the fact that we know the men of Worcester were represented at Towton under their banner, "the Wolf."[35] In the absence of evidence to the contrary we may infer, therefore, the town was Yorkist in its sympathies. In spite of the fact that Hereford is situated in a region which has been generally represented as Yorkist in its leanings, it would seem that the shire was divided in its allegiance, some writers even asserting that the Lancastrian interest was predominant. In 1457 the burgesses and gentlemen about Hereford professed themselves ready to take the King's part.[36] Sir John Skydmore was a consistent Lancastrian. On the other hand the possessions and influence of the Mortimers would certainly inspire a considerable sentiment in favour of the house of York; moreover Richard, Duke of York, held extensive possessions in Herefordshire while the same party had a powerful supporter in the Earl of Pembroke, of Raglan Castle, and in Sir Walter Devereux, whose estates were confiscated at the Parliament

[33] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, pp. 8-9.
[34] Cf. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, p. 89.
[35] *Archaeologia*, XXIX, 346.
[36] *Paston Letters*, I, 417.

held at Coventry.[37] It will be recalled that the victors at Northampton had on their arrival in London procured from the Duke of York "dyvers straunge commissions fro the Kyng for to sitte in dyvers townys comyng homward," among others in Hereford, "to punysh them by the fawtes to the Kyngs lawys."[38] In view of these considerations no positive statements can be made touching the attitude of Hereford. It belongs in that class of towns whose activities in the Wars of the Roses were almost negligible. In 1451-52, as noted above, the Duke of York wrote to the bailiffs of Shrewsbury from his castle at Ludlow to supply him with a body of men, which being done, the Duke marched to Blackheath.[39] The Duke is said to have shown this town much favour. From the bailiffs' accounts it appears he visited the capital of Shropshire in 1446, and again in 1449-50; a pipe of red wine was given him upon his coming to the town from Ireland, and players and minstrels were employed on this occasion; in 1451 a similar present was made on his coming for the sessions in July. In this year he sends venison, and 24s are spent by the bailiffs and other worthy men of the town in providing a suitable repast.[40] The friendship entertained for the Duke of York by the burghers of Shrewsbury was felt likewise for his son Edward. In 1458-59 wine was given to various knights, esquires, and gentlemen of the Duke of York and his son, the Earl of March. Expenses were incurred by reason of two citizens riding to Nottingham to speak with the King, who had written to the town authorities. On another occasion the sum of 6s 8d was expended for a similar purpose.

In 1460 there is an entry recording the expending of £8, 13s. 4d. in connection with 61 men proceeding in the service of the lord King to Northampton. At the command of the King soldiers were sent with the Earl of Worcester to the castle of Denbigh at a cost of 79s. 2d. On another occasion the sum of £18 was laid out for a similar purpose, forty soldiers going to the castle of Harelagh. Nine years later when the times were more uncertain a messenger was sent all the way to York at a charge of 10s. to learn the rumours in regard

[37] For the influence exerted by Sir William Herbert, cf. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, p. 159.
[38] *Paston Letters*, I, 525.
[39] Above, p. 4.
[40] *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, XV, App. x, 29.

to Edward.[41] It is clear from the foregoing that the town authorities of Shrewsbury felt a keen interest in the fortunes of the Yorkist chief and testified to their loyalty in deeds as well as in words.

If Shrewsbury was loyal to the cause of the White Rose, just the reverse was true in the case of Winchester. But the ancient capital of the kingdom was no longer able to support effectively the partisans of either the White or the Red Rose, for decay and desolation had settled down upon the city. It is beyond question that "in the Wars of the Roses the Winchester people had neither energy nor power to play any important part." A petition to Henry VI several years before the actual outbreak of hostilities recites the fact that 997 houses wont to be occupied were void, and that 17 parish churches were shut up. The citizens, mayor, and commonalty prayed the King to grant unto them 40 marks of the aulnage of subsidy of woolen cloths sold within the city and suburbs; for "the desolation of the poor city was so great and there is such decay that without the gracious comfort of the King, the mayor and bailiffs must deliver up the city and keys into the King's hand." Henry did not turn a deaf ear to their prayer, but granted the 40 marks for fifty years from the first of Michaelmas in the 28th year of his reign.[42] The citizens of Winchester were no doubt influenced in adhering to the cause of the Red Rose largely through the efforts of their bishop, William Waynflete, who was chancellor during the years 1449-1459, and who was at all times a zealous Lancastrian. At his instance, the citizens refused to proclaim or acknowledge Edward IV as their sovereign, declaring at the same time their resolution of supporting the cause of the dethroned King.[43] For this the bishop and citizens are said to have been sentenced to a severe chastisement. On the final overthrow of King Henry, however, Edward granted the city a special pardon.[44] Though powerless to render the cause of Henry effective support in a material way, and situated in a region which is generally reputed as Yorkist in its leanings, nevertheless, so far as we know, the ancient capital of the kingdom

[41] *Ibid,* XV, App. x, 30. Cf. Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury,* I, 224, 227.
[42] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.,* 5830.
[43] *Hist. Mss. Comm.,* VI, 147. Cf. Green, *Town Life,* I, 326.
[44] Kitchin, *Winchester,* p. 147.

remained loyal, and that, too, in the face of incurring the wrath of Edward for so doing. Its attitude therefore affords another exception to the view that the towns in the Wars of the Roses never acted from motives of sentiment, but were actuated solely by selfish considerations.

Without exception, the county of Kent has been represented as ardently Yorkist in its sympathies. Some of the considerations which must be taken into account in explaining why Kent, in common with the southeastern part of the realm, was led to adopt an attitude of hostility toward the Lancastrian party may be conveniently dealt with in another connection; for the present we are called upon to notice only the attitude of Kent. The county in this respect seems to constitute an exception to the statement of Stubbs that in most of the counties the two parties were pretty evenly balanced.[45] As early as 1452 the men of Kent had suffered for the favour shown the Duke of York, 28 being hanged and beheaded in that year.[46] They are said to have formed the bulk of the Yorkist army at Northampton, but this statement rests upon no contemporary evidence. A host of Kentish men joined the Yorkist lords when they marched upon London in the spring of 1460.[47] Warwick was very popular with the Kentishmen, who seem to have felt nothing but hatred for Margaret; this resentment would naturally extend to the cause represented by her. By some this resentment has been attributed to the charge that Margaret in 1457 incited the French to ravage the Kentish sea coasts for her own private purposes, and to the anger felt at the loss of the French provinces. Be that as it may, the cause of the Yorkists was ardently espoused by the commons of Kent. Nor was Edward without supporters in the city of Canterbury, though the city was by no means whole-hearted in his support; for among the citizens was an active Lancastrian faction. From the town records it appears that the townsmen were deep in the politics of the time. Unlike the citizens of Winchester the town authorities of Canterbury endeavoured to trim their sails to the veering currents of the time. They prudently accepted the new order of things

[45] *Const. Hist*, III, 186.
[46] Wright, *History of Ludlow*, p. 281.
[47] *English Chronicle* (ed. Davies), p. 86; William of Worcester, p. 772.

in 1460, but still maintained a connection with the dethroned family at York. Edward visited Canterbury in the first year of his reign, upon which occasion three prominent citizens advanced a large sum of money for the expenses of his entertainment. As might be expected, much expense was incurred by reason of presents to the leading personages of the time, irrespective of their party affiliations. There were gifts of capons, oxen, sheep, and wine to the two brothers of the then King; horses, bread, and choice wines were presented to the Duchess of York; from the variety of wines mentioned the vintners evidently plied a thriving trade during the period. In 1464-65 loans aggregating £20 were repaid for sums advanced for the purpose of giving Queen Margaret a silver-gilt cup and the gift of a sum of money. Then, of course, there were payments for messengers riding to London and elsewhere to hear the rumours and for having the good will of this or that influential person. These were ticklish times, and the city fathers evidently had much difficulty in attempting to steer a clear course between the rival factions.[48] At Towton Canterbury had been represented by a contingent under the "Harrow."[49] The citizens naturally desired to have their charters confirmed by the new government. On August 2, 1461, the King ratified the former charters of the citizens and confirmed all their privileges; mention is made of "the faithfulness and laudable services of the citizens to the King and not the little charges, costs, expenses, labours, jeopardies, and hurts of our said mayor and citizens exhibited."[50] Edward's concern for the commonalty, however, did not prevent his exacting a considerable sum for this mark of his favour. The total expense incurred in connection with the renovation of the charter amounted to £25, 19s. 2d. During all this time a powerful Lancastrian faction seems to have been active in the city. In the trying years, 1469-70, both Lancastrians and Yorkists being represented among the town officials, it seems to have been decided to send a party of soldiers into Lincolnshire to help Edward, while the Lancastrian mayor, Nicholas Faunt, repaired to the court of Henry in London. If this was the case, it presents one of the few instances of such un-

[48] See *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, IX, Pt. I, 140.
[49] *Archaeologia*, XXIX, 346.
[50] *Charters of Canterbury by a Citizen*, p. 50.

precedented action that has been met with. During the years 1470-71 there were contributions to Warwick and Lancaster, the mayor showing great activity in his devotion to the Red Rose party. Walter Hopton, an innkeeper, was his lieutenant in command of the Lancastrian party; his name headed the list of proscribed rebels when Edward had recovered his throne. the bailiffs' accounts for these years bear witness to the numerous expenditures incurred in connection with the equipment and movement of soldiers, the sending of messengers to various points, the purchase of bread and wine for "honest" persons, which was the manner in which the adherents of the Red Rose faction are characterized.[51]

In 1471 Edward visited Canterbury for the purpose of taking vengeance upon those citizens who had taken the wrong side in the late troubles. Nicholas Faunt, who had aided Falconbridge in his attack upon London, was hanged. When Faunt was arrested after the disaster of Blackheath, in his pocket was found a list of the loyal Lancastrians of Canterbury. This incriminating bit of evidence was sent to the city by a well-wisher of the citizens, who rewarded with 10s. the servant bringing the compromising paper. An inquiry set on foot at Canterbury revealed the fact that some 150 citizens, comprising those of lower social position as well as a number of the most respectable and wealthy, were implicated in rebellion against the King. Edward granted a pardon to Will Sellow, a member of the corporation, and some others who had been in arms against him, but the more prominent rebels were put to death for their loyalty to the losing side. In 1471-72, the sum of of 26s. 8d. was allowed to Will Sellow for riding to London to see the King in regard to the restoration of the liberties of the city. For the charter of the town had been suspended by Edward and was ransomed only at heavy cost to the citizens; in the meanwhile the city had been ruled by Captain Brimstone "by a gentle exercise of martial law." The house of York being now secure upon the throne, the citizens generally acquiesced in the rule of Edward, purchasing at the public cost three-quarters of a yard of white kersey to be made into Yorkist badges for the corporation and its officers to be worn on the occasion of Edward's visit. A great brass gun, captured from Falconbridge at Blackheath, was pre-

[51] *Hist. Mss. Comm,* IX, Pt. I, 140, 141.

sented by the King to the city at the instance of certain Yorkist citizens. Thus closed the incidents connected with the unhappy years of civil strife. Echoes of that strife continue to be met with, however, in the town records for several years after the cessation of actual hostilities; the heirs of Faunt still had to settle his accounts with the Exchequer. An old debt of 20s. was discharged for the cloth made into jackets for the contingent led by the unfortunate mayor when he left his city for the last time to strike a blow in behalf of his sovereign.[52] The attitude of the mayor and his "honest" partisans goes a long way towards redeeming the burghers of the towns from the charge of wholesale double-dealing with which they have been accused. Forced by the circumstances of the time to scatter their bribes right and left, nevertheless when the crisis drew near, there were not wanting those among the townsmen who were ready to fight and, if needs be, die for the cause they espoused. In Canterbury the Lancastrian party seems to have been unusually active and vigilant. By its very location, the city was inevitably drawn into the contest between the two warring factions. Of the inhabitants of Canterbury it was peculiarly true that authority came home to them "as a mere matter of arbitrary and violent caprice," and the "main function of government as that of rough extortion and successful pillage."[53] In a region which has been commonly represented as devotedly Yorkist in its attachments, it is interesting to find the house of Lancaster not without ardent supporters among the burghers of Canterbury. The history of the town during the years of civil strife furnishes moreover a refutation of the statement made by Stubbs and repeated by writers generally, namely, that Edward IV remained till his death a favourite with the people of London and the larger towns generally.

[52] *Ibid.*, IX, Pt. I, 142.
[53] Green, *Town Life*, I, 216.

CHAPTER VI

The Cinque Ports

Though differing among themselves in wealth and population, the Cinque Ports may be conveniently treated as a whole; for the men of Cinque Ports may be fairly classed as Yorkist in their sympathies until they were called upon to choose between Edward and Warwick. For from first to last Lord Warwick seems to have been the favourite of these hardy mariners, and not undeservedly. It is not difficult to believe that the sailors of the Cinque Ports were alienated from the support of the government partly by the loss of the French provinces. Above all it was to Warwick and the Yorkists that the portsmen looked for protection from French attack against which the men of the ports were bound to give their services. The utter incapacity of the Lancastrian government to afford this protection was signally shown in 1457 when Sandwich was captured and spoiled by a fleet of Norman and Breton ships under command of Pierre de Brézé, seneschal of Normandy. One result was the conferring upon the Earl of Warwick of a commission to "keep the seas" for three years. And right valiantly was this service performed by the Yorkist commander, for the very next year witnessed a brilliant victory over the Spaniards.[1] This was an achievement which would not soon be forgotten by the men of the Cinque Ports. As we have seen, the men of the southeastern portion of the realm, including the Cinque Ports, were ardent followers of Cade, and it is reasonably clear that the Yorkists considered Cade's cause as their own. It is not, therefore, surprising that the cause of Edward found ready partisans among the portsmen. "There was never a rising in which they were not the most eager partisans of the revolutionary side."[2] So long as Edward retained the affection of the men of the Cinque Ports, so long was he secure from attack on the part

[1] *Paston Letters*, I, 429.
[2] Green, *Town Life*, I, 415.

of enemies operating from across the channel; but this security was dependent upon maintaining friendly relations with the great Earl, as was shown in the years 1469-70.

In 1460 the coast of Kent proved a safe landing place for the Yorkist leaders and troops marching to Northampton. Having landed at Sandwich, the Earls of March, Salisbury, and Warwick pushed on toward London. They were joined by practically all Kent, their ranks including no doubt many men from the Cinque Ports. After the overthrow of Henry, we find the Yorkist government in relation with the different towns. The men of New Romney paid a messenger coming from Edward and Warwick 6s. 8d. with the mandate to have men ready for sea, in support of the King's ships.[3] Likewise we learn from the *Dover Corporation Accounts* of similar payments by that town.[4] From this document it is seen that the mayors of Dover took an active part in the politics of the time. The three who served in this capacity for ten years of Edward's reign, beginning in 1462, were Thomas Grace, Thomas Hextall, and Richard Palmer. Grace and Palmer represented their town in the parliament which met at York, February 5, 1464. Judging from the records of the small dependent town of Lydd, its citizens were deeply interested in the fortunes of York and incurred heavy expenses in his behalf. Soldiers were fitted out who fought under the Earl of Warwick at the battle of Northampton. A sum was raised for the services of thirty-four men who marched to the second battle of St. Albans, while anther contingent under the Earls of March and Warwick represented the town in the campaign which ended at Towton.[5] At a later date there is a reference to a payment of "9 li 6s. 8d. being delyvered to Henry Bate and John Pultone, and there felyschypp assigned with them, going to the helpe of Kyng Edwarde, our Sourayne Lord, with my Lord of Warwicke";[6] and "21 menne, goyng on the viage with the Lordes of Clarence and Warwyk," are paid 7 li. 6s. 8d.[7] Thomas Caxton, the town clerk, was seemingly kept busy recording the numerous items of expenditure incurred by the town in these exciting times. We read of "expences of diverse menne goyng

[3] *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, V, 544.
[4] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.*, 26,619.
[5] *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, V, Pt. I, 523.
[6] *Ibid.*, V, Pt. I, 528.
[7] *Ibid*, V, Pt. I, 525.

to Dovorre unto the Lord of Warwike, for to have go to the see 13s. 2d." Payments are recorded for "Wayche ynne the steple"; there are numerous items as to the "town gunnes"; expenses are incurred for getting news in regard to the landing of Queen Margaret and the support she received from Scotland; for "gunne powther"; for men going to London to speak with the city officials touching the entrance of Warwick's men, and for "to know how we shuld spede and be guydyd."[8] Then gifts had to be provided for influential persons, whose favour the townsmen sought, for strengthening the fortifications, for "exspences of ledyng up the manne to the Kyng, that was take with letters from the Duke of Somerset," who was beheaded in 1463. Money was laid out for "two cryes for the muster," and for various and sundry other things.

The charter granted the Cinque Ports by Edward IV in 1465 alludes to the "good, ready, and grateful services which the barons and men of the Cinque Ports have done in the redemption of the right of our kingdom" during the long contest between him and Henry VI for the crown of the realm. As an evidence of gratitude for the same he confirms in the most full and ample manner all the rights, liberties, and privileges enjoyed by the Ports and their members since the time of Edward the Confessor; nor are they to be forfeited by non-use or abuse of the same on the part of the barons of the Ports. Wherever there may be parts difficult or defective in any of their customs, the mayor and jurats in any port, where such difficulty or defect may be apparent, shall have the power of examining the same and granting a remedy for it.[9] It is thus seen of how great importance to the Cinque Ports was this charter of Edward IV; and the powers contained therein bear witness to the close allegiance between these independent barons and the Yorkist King.

The most exciting times, however were still in store for the men of the Cinque Ports. For the year 1469-70 found these hardy mariners seemingly in alliance with Warwick in his rebellion against King Edward. In 1469 the King being at Sandwich ordered all the women to be sent out of town, whose husbands or lovers—"viros seu sponsos"—were abroad in

[8] See *Ibid.*, V, Pt. I, 522-523.
[9] Jeake, *Charters of Cinque Ports*, p. 52.

the service of the Duke of Clarence and Earl of Warwick.[10] The next year there is record of "a silver gilt cup to be given to the Earl of Warwick." An expense of 5s. 3d. was incurred on the occasion of the mayor riding "to my Lord Warwick."[11] As a penalty for siding with his enemies, Edward by a privy seal deprived the corporation of all its privileges, freedoms and liberties, the town to be governed by a lieutenant during the suspension of its privileges.[12] Dover likewise opened its port to the Earl of Warwick after he had deserted the Yorkist King. There are numerous entries in the *Dover Corporation Accounts* which illustrate the political activity of the corporation during these years. Expenses are incurred in connection with the Lord Mayor riding to meet Lord Warwick, also for a dinner to "Ld Warwicks counsell"; there are references also showing a friendly relation with the Duke of Clarence. John Fuller was paid for riding to London with the "money for ye Kyng's service." Three barons were paid for riding to Canterbury to "ye King," and were given 26s. 4d. for riding to London "for to come to ye King's counsell."[13] These are no doubt allusions to the period after the restoration of Edward IV. There are likewise payments for gunpowder, for "scout wache," while many an item of expense is incurred in connection with the "Gret Gune." "Tom Grygg and Tom Day pd. 1/6 for dressyng of the gret gonne above Wall." Eight pence was paid for carrying the "Grett Guns," and 2d. for bearing the said gun or guns from the "strete to ye clyff."[14] In November, 1471, Edward appointed a commission to try the rebels who had supported Warwick when he raised Henry VI to the throne.[15] The liberties of Dover were seized and "for the good and decent government and happy rule of the town and its members, and our people of the same, Thomas Hextall, receiver of the Lord Warden, was appointed custos of the town, with its members, with power to rule and govern the same, and have the keys and administration, even as the mayor hitherto had had."[16] The town, however, seems to have been pardoned almost immediately.

[10] Boys, *Collections for a History of Sandwich*, p. 676.
[11] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.*, 26,619.
[12] Boys, *Collections for a History of Sandwich*, p. 676.
[13] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.*, 26,619.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Statham, *Dover Charters and Other Documents*, p. 249.
[16] Hueffer, *The Cinque Ports*, p. 269.

From the records it is evident that the town of New Romney also was inclined to side with Warwick rather than with Edward when these two became estranged. At the beginning of his reign we find the following entry: "Paid for our share of a certain gift of 100 marks to Richard, Earl of Warwick, our Warden, to have his friendship in the office of Warden aforesaid, at the Court of Shepwey, 11 li. 2s. 3d." And in the same year is another entry: "Paid to Robert Clytherow, bringing letters of our Lord the King, and the Earl of Warwick to have men ready for sea, in support of his ships."[17] In 1469-70 the sum of 34s. 10d. was paid John Cheynew, Thomas Couper, and others, employed on the voyage of the Earl of Warwick.[18] The town of Lydd likewise "paid to 21 menne, goyng on the viage with the Lordes of Clarance and Warwyck, 7 li. 6s. 8d." In the following year occurs this entry: "Paide to a manne bryngyng commandement that we shulde areste all manner of schippes by longyng to the Yerle of Warwicke 4d."[19] It is thus seen that the Cinque Ports on the whole figure prominently in the politics of the time. Nor is this surprising when we consider the strategic position of the Ports, the independent character of the government enjoyed by the barons of these sea-coast towns, and their eagerness to have a hand in every fray that came near their shores. With characteristic readiness they cast off their allegiance to Henry and adhered to the fortunes of Edward until his breach with Warwick, who, from first to last, seems to have enjoyed the confidence of the men of Cinque Ports. For the cause of Henry VI they seem to have felt no enthusiasm. Their allegiance was reserved primarily for the bold and successful sea-captain who knew how to deal the Spaniards or the Bretons a heavy blow; the Lancastrian government had shown its utter incompetence to protect the coast of the southeastern part of the realm from the attacks of the enemy. Naturally the barons of the Ports turned to the Yorkists as likely to afford that protection which the rival administration was either indifferent or powerless to give.

Ipswich favoured the cause of the White Rose. In 1462 the town provided for twenty armed men for the King's service.

[17] *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, V, Pt. I, 544.
[18] *Ibid.*, V, Pt. I, 545.
[19] *Ibid*, V, Pt. I, 525.

Two years later Edward guaranteed all the privileges of former charters, with some alterations and additions. The ample charter of Henry VI had incorporated the town by style of "the Burgesses of Ipswich"; the charter of Edward IV substituted for this the phrase the "Bailiffs, Burgesses, and commonalty of the Town of Ipswich," and authorized them annually to elect burgesses as bailiffs. The town granted a loan of £40 to the King and paid the same by two instalments of £20 each. By an assessment as an aid to the King who called for the sum "under the specious appellation of a benevolence," the townsmen raised £21. 2s. 7d. In 1469 provision was made for twelve soldiers for five weeks, a fifteenth being collected for that purpose; twenty men were moreover kept armed and in readiness for the King's service when the same should be called for.[20]

Ipswich thus affords another clean-cut instance of loyalty to the Yorkist faction; the Mowbray influence, together with the concern of the townsmen for trade and good government no doubt go far to explain their sympathy with the Yorkist cause. If a Lancastrian faction existed in the town, no trace of any activity on its part is disclosed in the town records.

[20] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.*, 25,334. Cf. Bacon, *Annalls of Ipswiche*, pp. 120, 122, 129, 130.

CHAPTER VII

NORTHAMPTON, BEVERLEY, LUDLOW

Northamptonshire no doubt contained many Lancastrian lords; and the capital of the county probably had Lancastrian sympathizers; any active participation in the war, however, on the part of the citizens seems to have been confined to the partisans of York. In the thirty-eighth year of his reign Henry VI granted the men and burgesses of Northampton a charter incorporating the town by the name of the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses of Northampton, and appointing the mayor justice of the peace. This charter was granted in consideration partly of the great and memorable services which "they have now lately performed by their daily attendance on and assistance to our royal person at their heavy costs, expenses, and charges for the resistance, reduction and correction of divers of our rebellious people." In the first year of his reign Edward granted the town a general pardon for all offenses committed before November 4, 1461.[1] On the other hand, it should be noted that the "Wild Rat" of Northampton is mentioned among the Yorkist standards at Towton. Edward was at Northampton from the 8th to the 28th of July, 1463.[2] In 1471, when returning from exile, he was well received, says the chronicler, at a good town called Northampton,[3] though no inference is to be drawn from this as to the predilection of the citizens. On another occasion the commons of Northampton manifested friendly concern for King Edward. "And the Kyng fulle lovyngly gave the comyns of Northampton a tonne of wyne that they should drynke and make merry."[4] Most probably the town, as most of the others, contained adherents of both the Red Rose and the White.

The story turns again to the north, and in the little town of Beverley we have an interesting illustration of the manner

[1] Markham, *Records of the Borough of Northampton*, I, 84, 85, 89.
[2] *Paston Letters*, I, 135.
[3] *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, p. 14.
[4] Gregory's *Chronicle* (ed. Gairdner), p. 222.

in which the politics of a borough was influenced by the magnates of the neighbouring country; for the town records disclose a frequent and active intercourse between the townsmen and certain powerful lords. The feudal lord of Beverley was the Archbishop of York. The primate of the northern province was Bishop Booth, of Lichfield, who had been translated to York in 1452; in 1464 he was succeeded by George Neville. But the appointment of a Yorkist bishop failed to exercise any change in the feelings of the men of Beverley, who afford another instance,—contrary to the commonly accepted view—of loyalty from principle to the party of their choice. The town is said to have been chiefly occupied by merchants and ecclesiastics; it is not surprising, therefore, to find the inhabitants not taking an active part in the civil strife of the times. But there is no doubt that the men of Beverley sympathized with the cause represented by the Red Rose. The town accounts reveal expenditures for wine given to Henry Percy, third Earl of Northumberland, who was slain at Towton. He and his wife visited Beverley for the purpose of preserving their own and the Lancastrian influence in the town; messengers passed between the borough and the Earl touching matters pertaining to the commonalty. Rewards were given to the servant of the Earl, capons to Ralph Percy, bread and wine to Lord Egremont, who fell at the battle of Northampton, carp and wine to Lord Clifford.[5] There were numerous expenditures in connection with letters sent to George, Lord Neville. "And in monies given to Cuthbert Colwell on the 23rd of October hired to labour and ride as far as Raby to speak with the lord Neville concerning the rule of the said town of Beverley, 13s. 4d."[6] The town was likewise busy in Margaret's support, lagans of red wine being given to the Queen's servants and expenses being incurred in connection with providing victuals for her household. It is only fair to add, however, that after the battle of Wakefield, Beverley became alternately subject, it seems, to the expense of providing for and entertaining Yorkists as well as Lancastrians, heavy expenses being incurred in connection with the new government of Edward IV. The King commanded the bailiff and the burgesses to repair to him with a force of armed men.

[5] Poulson, *Beverlac*, I, 226, 227, 234, 235.
[6] *Ibid.*, I, 229, 231.

Provision was made for the men, numerous items of expense being incurred in connection with raising and equipping "twenty armed men" for the field of Northampton." Also "paid to three minstrels of the town for their labour in playing at the time of the passage of the said armed men out of the town, 6d."[7] The men of Beverley were also engaged at Towton in upholding the cause of the Red Rose. "And in wine given to the armed men of the town when they rode towards Towton, 12d."[8] On several other occasions the town provided archers for a similar purpose. Expenditures were incurred for clothing and arming men sent in King Edward's service to Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[9] While it is apparent therefore that Beverley supported the cause of Edward IV on certain occasions, it is reasonably clear that such support was rendered from compulsion rather than from choice, for the inhabitants of the town sympathized with the house of Lancaster,—a fact which no doubt is to be explained in large measure by the influence exerted over the townsmen by the powerful adherents of the Red Rose who lived in that part of the country. The history of the town during the period of civil strife further illustrates another fact to which allusion has already been made: the helplessness, so to speak, of the burghers to protect themselves from oppression on the part of the Crown and of those who had it in their power to make the townsmen feel the weight of their resentment. Hence the readiness with which the town officials sought to conciliate by gifts and bribes powerful members of the nobility. The men of Beverley, as those of many another place during the period of civil strife, were keenly alive to the importance of keeping themselves informed of the events of the time. This is shown by the entry in the town records of the following: "Also paid to one labourer walking to Leconfield to hear the rumours, 4d."[10]

Few towns were more devoted to the Yorkist cause than Ludlow which belonged to the Duke of York, and which bore no small share in the calamities of the times. This "town of noble fame" was the chief seat of the Mortimer power and its

[7] *Ibid.*, I, 227, 228. See also *Hist. Mss. Comm.*, IX, 140, 142, 144, 145.
[8] Poulson, *Beverlac*, I, 238.
[9] *Ibid.*, I, 239-242.
[10] *Ibid.*, I, 231.

castle the favourite residence of Richard Plantagenet. Here he mustered the army which melted away in the rout of Ludford Bridge. When Edward IV recovered the sovereignty, Ludlow was chosen as the proper seat for the residence of the Prince of Wales; here he kept his court at the time of his father's death. In 1459 the town was cruelly ravaged by the northern army of Margaret.[11] "And forth with the Kynge rode unto Ludlowe & dyspoiled the towne and castell." The men of Ludlow were probably engaged in the battle of Towton. Edward's partiality for the town is shown by the valuable charter granted the townsmen in the first year of his reign; by this act he assisted in recovering Ludlow from the desolate state to which it had been reduced by adhering to his father's cause. Until this charter the town held all its rights and franchises by grant from the lord of the manor. The charter of incorporation makes mention of "the laudable and gratuitous services which our beloved and faithful subjects the burgesses of the town of Ludlow have rendered unto us in the obtaining of our right to the crown of England for a long time past withheld from us and our ancestors, in great peril of their lives: and also the rapines, depredations, oppressions, losses of goods, and other grievances, for us and our sake in divers ways brought upon them by certain of our competitors; being therefore desirous for the amelioration and relief of our town aforesaid and of the burgesses and inhabitants in the same, to bestow our grace and favour on the same burgesses, by our royal munificence we have granted and by these presents do grant to our burgesses of our town aforesaid, that the same shall be a free borough for ever." The charter thus relieved the townsmen of all feudal dependence, with the absolute right of managing their own affairs and of electing their own officers, on condition of an annual payment of twenty-four pounds, thirteen shillings, and four pence; a gilda mercatoria was also granted by the King, with further extensive liberties and privileges.[12] It is thus seen that the services rendered Edward by his town of Ludlow must have been considerable, for the grant is one of unusual value, and is recorded to be in return for assistance rendered the King.

Margaret seems to have cultivated not unsuccessfully the

[11] Whethamstede, I, 345.
[12] For the charters, see Wright, *History of Ludlow,* pp. 5-44.

friendship of the citizens of Chester. Cheshire was a region in which the Lancastrian party could generally count upon securing recruits. Prominent among her supporters was Lord Stanley, whose influence in the county is said to have been considerable. In 1453 Queen Margaret "came to Chester upon progresse with manye greate lords and ladyes with her and was graciously received by the Mayor and citizens." Two years later Margaret was again a visitor at Chester; the following year the Queen is said to have resided for some time in the city entertaining with great hospitality the citizens and gentlemen of the county, who were in general well affected to her.[13] In 1457 Margaret and her son again came to Chester during the summer where she kept open house, hoping thereby to draw the county to her party.[14] Likewise in the following year Margaret seems to have been in Chester for the purpose of enlisting the sympathies of the townsmen. In the summer preceding the battle of Blore Heath, which proved so disastrous to the men of Cheshire and in which many of the citizens of Chester are said to have fallen fighting in behalf of the Red Rose, the Queen lodged at Eccleshall Castle, the residence of her chaplain, John Halse, bishop of Chester. As on previous occasions, the Queen is said to have kept "open and royal house" and by her liberality to have gained the hearts of the gentry. Margaret went to the field of battle and stood in Eccleston Steeple; from thence she saw the fatal rout of the King's army on Blore Heath. As noted above, the citizens of Chester and the gentlemen of Cheshire were the principal sufferers in this engagement. On that day the Queen's adherents wore silver swans, the cognizance of the Prince of Wales; these had been given her partisans by Margaret as marks of her favour.[15]

Among the towns which suffered cruelly for their Yorkist proclivities was Stamford. In 1459 Edward by letters patent incorporated the town and granted it immunity from all external jurisdiction; the chief alderman was raised to a position of exceptional privilege and responsibility, being within his jurisdiction the immediate lieutenant of the King: "also granting him one or more mace or maces of gold or silver,

[13] Ms. British Museum, *Stowe*, 811.
[14] Ms. British Museum, *Addit.*, 29,780.
[15] *Ibid.*, *Addit.*, 11,334.

at his choice, to be carried before him for his greater honour or dignity; and the further privilege of a common seal at arms."[16] Two years later the Lancastrian army under Sir Andrew Trollope burst in and ravaged the town with fire and sword. "These devastations were of such magnitude that Stamford never afterwards recovered its ancient dignity." Not even the vessels and books of their altar were spared; a number of churches were partially or completely destroyed as well as all the municipal archives." Edward IV was a visitor at Stamford in 1462 and was entertained by John Browne, alderman, a wealthy merchant. In spite of the ruin visited upon the town by the Lancastrians, it was able to furnish a powerful contingent to the royal army when Edward IV passed through in 1470 from Fotheringay Castle against Sir Robert Welles and Sir Thomas de la Launde. In return for the horse and foot furnished by the men of Stamford with which Edward won the battle of "Bloody Oaks," he granted the town permission to bear the royal arms upon a surcoat.[17] The loyalty of the inhabitants of Stamford to the cause of the White Rose is not difficult to explain. In 1363 the castle and manor of Stamford were given by Edward III to his son Edward, Duke of York. The dukes of York were thus the lords of Stamford. The loyalty thus naturally felt by the citizens for the chiefs of the Yorkist party was "fanned to a white heat" by the cruelties inflicted upon their town by the followers of Margaret. Among other towns sacked by the northern troops of Margaret after the battle of Wakefield was Grantham, the lordship and manor of which were granted by Edward IV in 1461 to his mother, Cicely, Duchess of York. While there is no record of any active participation by the men of Grantham in the civil strife of the period, it may very well be believed that the townsmen were loyal to the Yorkist side. No affection would be felt by the inhabitants for the despoilers of their town; furthermore, Edward IV granted the place a charter in 1462, from which Grantham dates its existence as a corporate borough, the recognition of its merchant gild, and the right of sending two burgesses to Parliament.[18] When King Henry VI sent to Newbury in order

[16] The charter granted Stamford by Edward IV is printed in Drakard's *History of Stamford in the County of Lincoln*, IV, 77-78.
[17] Cf. Nevinson, *History of Stamford*, pp. 59-60, 61-63.
[18] Merewether and Stephens, *Boroughs*, II, 970-971.

to collect money, the inhabitants refused to pay saying they would keep what they had for the Duke of York.[19] Newbury seems to have been one of the towns which had declared most openly for the Duke and had previously supported his cause. In 1460 the Earl of Wiltshire, Lords Scales and Hungerford, visited Newbury for the purpose of discovering and punishing those who had been in arms against the King. In consequence of this visit some of the townsmen were hanged, drawn and quartered, and all the other inhabitants despoiled of their goods.[20] Newbury suffered the same fate as Grantham and Stamford, being sacked by the followers of the Earl of Wiltshire. The ravaging of the town by the troops of Margaret was a potent cause in alienating from her support those who had hitherto sided with the house of Lancaster. An illustration of this has already been instanced in the case of Coventry. From first to last the burgesses of the royal borough of King's Lynn are said to have espoused the cause of the White Rose; and that, too, in the face of overwhelming odds. When King Edward was hotly pursued by the Earl of Warwick, the fugitive was generously entertained by its citizens. Among the adherents of the house of York should be included the little town of Wenlock. In 1467, its lord, Sir John Wenlock, who was killed at Tewkesbury, obtained from King Edward IV a grant that Wenlock should be a free borough, incorporated with a bailiff and burgesses, and that its liberties should extend throughout the parish of the Holy Trinity of Wenlock. The charter makes mention of the laudable services that the men of the town performed in assisting the King to gain possession of his crown.[21] Finally, we are told that "in the revolutionary times of 1470, the citizens of Bridport were unluckily associated with the party of Henry VI, and for years after their wealth was lavished in buying back the favour of the court."[22]

[19] DeWaurin, V, 270.
[20] *English Chronicle* (ed. Davies), p. 90.
[21] Merewether and Stephens, *Boroughs,* II, 1000.
[22] Green, *Town Life,* I, 215.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

This completes our survey of those towns which were actively concerned directly or indirectly in the Wars of the Roses. As has been seen, the account includes some thirty or more boroughs, representing every part of the realm and every degree of wealth and size. At the head of the list stand London and those cities which ranked next to the metropolis in wealth and population such as Bristol and York; at the other end of the scale are insignificant places like Bridport and Wenlock. The struggle involved flourishing seaports like Southampton, and decaying inland towns like Winchester and Lincoln. Contrary to the view which has been generally held, it would seem that the boroughs assumed a more determined and active attitude in the Wars of the Roses than has generally been ascribed to them. And though their lack of unity and of concert prevented their achieving any marked results, or swinging the fortunes of civil war one way or the other, yet the part played by the townsmen in the struggle is by no means an insignificant one, considering the unwarlike character of the inhabitants of a medieval town, and the comparatively small size of the majority of fifteenth century English boroughs. If a comparison be made with the levy of archers voted by Parliament in 1453,[1] it will be seen that towns like Coventry and Norwich put forth vigorous efforts in behalf of the cause espoused by these cities. Virtually every flourishing municipality sent its contingent to Edward's banner at Towton. More than one illustration has been given of towns which were consistently loyal to the party of their choice, and loyal at the cost of ruined trade and depleted finances. A sufficient amount of evidence of this character has been adduced to relieve the towns of the imputation of wholesale double-dealing with which their attitude has been characterized. That there were such instances is very evident; nor is a policy of self-

[1] *Rot. Parl.* V, 232.

preservation to be wondered at on the part of the townsmen, when one takes into consideration the dangers that confronted their liberties and well-being in consequence of too active a participation in the civil strife. At the same time there were not lacking those among the burgesses who clung with fidelity to the party of their choice even after the conflict had degenerated into what has been termed a blood-feud between two reckless factions. And more than once this fidelity had as its reward only forfeited rights and injured trade. On the whole it would seem not unfair to refer to the cause represented by the Yorkists as the popular one, though as has been seen, every leading borough contained adherents of the Red Rose as well as of the White. We are pretty safe in assuming, however, that the number of burghers who favoured the house of York exceeded the number of those who sided with Lancaster.

In seeking for an explanation of the reason why a majority of the townsmen should have sided with York rather than with Lancaster, we shall hardly err in adducing as the most potent the instability of Henry VI's government. The unsettled state of the realm during the years just preceding the outbreak of actual hostilities has been frequently commented upon. The tenth article of the "Kentish Memorial" constitutes a vigorous arraignment of Henry VI's administration: "His law is lost; his merchandize is lost; his commerce destroyed; the sea is lost; France is lost; himself is made so poor, that he may not pay for his meat and drink; he oweth more and is greater in debt than ever was King in England."[2] The order and security which is the very life of trade and industry were woefully lacking in the middle of the fifteenth century; to the dwellers in the towns it was only too evident that "the realme of England was oute of all good gouernance," whereby "the hertes of the peple were turned away from theyme that had the londe in gouverance, and theyre blyssyng was turnyd into cursyng."[3] Not only was the Lancastrian government powerless to secure order within the realm; it was equally helpless in protecting the sea-coast towns from attack,—a fact which no doubt goes far toward explaining the attitude of the Cinque Ports in adhering to the Duke of York's party until the breach between Edward and Warwick.

[2] *Chronicles of the White Rose*, Introd., p. 75.
[3] *English Chronicle* (ed. Davies), p. 179.

Generally speaking Henry VI's reign is a striking instance of the final failure of saintly feebleness. The pious King was such an "innocent person" as was not fit to govern the realm. As a chronicler puts it, "King Henry was a goostly and good man, and set little store by worldly matters." The conduct of Margaret's northern troops in ravaging the helpless towns widened the breach between the Lancastrian party and the class of burghers. The Queen's followers openly said they had been given leave to spoil and rob the places south of the Trent. Every town felt it might suffer the same fate that had befallen St. Albans. "And all this season was greate wacche made in the citie of London ffor it was Reported that the Queen w[t] the Northern men wold come downe to th Citie and Robbe and dispoile the Citie, and destroy it vtterly, and all the Sowth Cuntre."[4] The fear of the Londoners in this regard would be shared by more than one municipality. According to the chronicler, the citizens of the metropolis dreaded this queen and her fury "leste she wolde have spoyled the cyte,—for as moche as the quene with her counselle had graunted yeve leve to the Northurmen for to spoyle and robbe the sayde cyte, and also the townes of Couentre, Bristow, and Salesbury, . . ." "bot God wolde not suffre such a fals robbery."[5] It was clear that trade and industry had nothing to hope for from the vindictive Queen. The government of Henry VI was not only powerless to restore order, but the followers of the Lancastrian chiefs were even incited by their leaders to rob and destroy the more populous and flourishing communities of the south. Hence it is not surprising to find those among the townsmen who up to this time had been loyal to the Lancastrian government, attaching themselves to the Yorkist party.

But there were other causes besides the instability of Henry VI's government and the havoc wrought upon the towns which would weigh with the burghers of the realm in determining whether they should continue to adhere to the Lancastrian party, or should yield allegiance to the cause of the White Rose. "The treasurer, by severe requisitions from the Yorkist towns, and by the exercise of the right of purveyance . . . drew down popular hatred on the cause which was re-

[4] Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, p. 172.
[5] *Paston Letters*, III, 250; *English Chronicle* (ed. Davies), pp. 98, 109.

duced to such expedients."[6] This is an allusion to the exactions of Henry's treasurer, the Earl of Shrewsbury, the effect of which would be to intensify the ill-will felt for the government in the towns with Yorkist leanings, and to excite an alarm in towns which were disposed to be neutral, lest they too might be forced to experience such illegal exactions. Lastly, Edward IV's commercial policy deserves consideration since there are those who find in this an explanation in part of the reason why the cause of the Yorkists found more adherents among the townsmen than did their rivals.[7] This policy, generally speaking, was to favour the natives at the expense of foreign merchants, a policy which naturally would appeal to the native merchants and the artisans in the towns. Upon trade Henry VI looked with indifference, and Margaret with aversion; Edward, on the other hand, "had the instincts of a merchant, and sympathized, as much as he could sympathize with anything, with the interests of trade." In a proclamation following his coronation on June 28, Edward referred to the "verrey decay of merchandise wherein rested the prosperity of the subgetts." Despite the fact that Edward was a favourite with the people of London and the great towns, Stubbs questions whether the towns felt any real affection for the house of York.[8] On the other hand, one of the chroniclers states that Edward failed to bring the wished for peace and prosperity and was blamed by many for hurting merchandise.[9] "After ten years of reign he had clearly less hold on the affections of the country than the house of Lancaster." Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that Edward's protectionist policy and his program of reform appealed to the commonalty and to the trading classes of the realm and would have no little weight in attaching these to his cause. An observer of foreign birth stated: "I am unable to declare how well the Commons love and adore him, as if he were their God." And Edward's interest in the welfare of the trading classes had its reward, "for so moche as he fande in tyme of nede grete comforth in his comyners."[10] On the whole, however, we are justified in concluding that for various

[6] Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, III, 187.
[7] Cf. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, pp. 159, 270, 272.
[8] *Const. Hist.*, III, 595.
[9] Warkworth, *Chronicle*, p. 12.
[10] *Cal. State Papers, Ven.*, I, 105.

reasons, the Yorkists were more *bourgeois* in their sympathies than were their rivals, cultivating more skillfully the goodwill of the townsmen; in consequence the cause of York was more popular with the townsmen, all things considered, than was that of Lancaster.

Though no geographical line can be drawn separating the towns which were faithful to York from those which favoured Lancaster, a comparison may be attempted contrasting the distribution of the magnates who supported the rival factions with the location of the towns mentioned above. It has come to be almost a commonplace of historians to refer to the struggle between Lancaster and York as one between the more backward north and west and the more highly developed south and east.[11] Only in a rough sense is this an accurate representation of the division of parties; for while it is true that the strength of the Lancastrians lay in the extreme north and west, and York drew its partisans largely from the south-eastern counties and the marches, yet the facts do not warrant the division of the realm in so precise a fashion between the adherents of the two rival factions. More than once allusion has been made in these pages to the attitude of the nobility in the different counties. It is not necessary, therefore, to consider the matter of the distribution of the magnates again in detail. There is hardly a general statement which can be made in this connection to which exceptions could not be noted. For instance, The Yorkists were strong in the north, nor were there wanting adherents of the White Rose faction among the magnates of the southwest. On the other hand, Margaret drew supporters from counties in which a majority of the lords were Yorkist in sympathies. The very fact that the estates of the great lords were not compact, but were scattered in different counties confuses the conflict and renders difficult an alignment of parties corresponding to precise geographical units. No section of England presents a uniform political complexion in the struggle between Lancaster and York. To some writers the struggle was a war of the more populous and more advanced south against the more baronial and wilder north; others represent the conflict as one between the democratic

[11] Cf. Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, III, 180-181; Oman, *Warwick*, pp. 41, 94; Wright, *History of Ludlow*, p. 304; Traill, *Social England*, II, 313; Montague, *Political History of England, 1603-1660*, p. 270.

element of the south and the aristocratic north.[12] If the facts do not warrant the drawing of a hard and fast line between those portions of the realm which sided with Lancaster, and those which favoured York, still more is this true in the case of the boroughs. The statement which has been repeated by different writers that the great towns of the south were steady for the house of York is only partially true. For as has been shown, the party of the Red Rose found warm partisans among the burghers of some of the southern cities. At the same time it is undoubtedly true that a majority of the townsmen south of the Trent espoused the cause of the White Rose. Perhaps the safest general statement which can be made,—and it is a commonplace one—is that the towns of the realm as a whole were divided in their allegiance, the attitude of any particular town being determined by a variety of considerations.

In conclusion, it may be permitted to summarize the results which this paper has attempted to establish. First of all, it would seem that the general view that the towns bore an indifferent part in the Wars of the Roses must be modified in view of the evidence presented to show that they were far more keenly interested in the struggle between Lancaster and York than is commonly supposed to have been the case; their attitude was not actuated to such an extent by motives of self-interest as has been represented. Instances have been given of unswerving loyalty and devotion on the part of the burghers to the party of their choice. Edward had more partisans among the class of burgesses than his rival did; this was particularly true of the larger towns in the southern part of the realm. But no line can be drawn separating the boroughs which favoured Lancaster from those which sided with York. A variety of motives has to be taken into account in explaining the attitude of any particular town toward the rival factions. Generally speaking, it would seem that the desire for a strong and settled government was the prevailing motive with the majority of the townsmen in determining them to uphold the cause of York rather than that of Lancaster. While it may be true that the Wars of the Roses wrought no very serious effect upon the national prosperity as a whole,

[12] Cf. Lappenberg und Pauli, *Geschichte Englands,* IV, 352.

the towns were injured, it would seem, far more by the civil strife than has commonly been supposed. A number of the towns suffered severely from being sacked by one party or the other; the finances of others were sadly impaired; and in other ways they were called upon to bear a heavy burden in consequence of the turmoil of the times. There are good reasons for believing the plight of many of the fifteenth century towns was wretched; and in not a few instances this condition was the result of the disasters which overtook them in consequence of the Wars of the Roses. Naturally the great mass of the citizens were affected chiefly by their own class interests. So far as the bulk of the town population of England is concerned, their attitude toward the struggle between Lancaster and York was the same as the feeling of the bulk of American provincials toward the war that their fellow-countrymen were engaged in with the mother country. This feeling is tersely expressed in the words of a member of a prominent colonial Virginia family: "Altho' our political rulers may have gotten together by the ears," there is no reason for "private peoples" joining in the fray. And just as Robert Beverley wanted to fight on neither side, but to stay at home and grow tobacco, so the majority of English traders and artisans wanted to hold aloof from the faction fights which distracted England in the fifteenth century and devote themselves to buying and selling and getting gain. But in spite of the desire to remain neutral, a number of the boroughs of the realm were drawn into the conflict between the rival houses of York and Lancaster; on more than one battle-field the representatives of the towns fought by the side of the feudal retainers; with their money they aided the fortunes of the cause they had espoused; and more than one town suffered severely in consequence of its loyalty.

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