

A CONTROVERSY TOUCHING SHIP-MONEY IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I.

BY R. N. WORTH, F.G.S.

(Read at Exeter, July, 1888.)

IN "An Expedition against Pirates,"* read by Mr. R. W. Cotton at the St. Marychurch meeting of this Association, will be found some interesting particulars concerning the Algerine pirates, who infested the shores of Devon and Cornwall in the earlier years of the seventeenth century, and singed the beards of James and Charles more effectually, because more continuously, than Drake did that of Philip. One wonders what could have become of the pluck and seamanship of Devon, when these corsairs were able, year after year, with impunity to haunt our coasts, and to enter and plunder not merely fishing-creeks, but such harbours as that of Plymouth. Hundreds of Devonshire men were carried into captivity by these rovers; scores died there; and from first to last thousands of pounds were raised within this county alone for their ransom.

In their degree all the maritime counties of England suffered by the depredations of these Moorish corsairs, with whom our Stuart kings proved themselves wholly unable to grapple; but the chief brunt of the attack was felt by the West of England. By good fortune, my friend Mr. Silvanus Trevail, of Truro, has rescued from destruction some highly interesting documents, referring to the operations undertaken against the Algerines by James I., long neglected among the muniments of the Corporation of the Cornish city, and, in fact, preserved only by accident. These form the staple of the present paper.

They consist in the main of a series of letters between the Mayor of Plymouth and the Mayor of Truro, arising out of

* *Trans. Devon. Assoc.* xviii. 184-196.

the refusal of the inhabitants of the latter town to pay their quota of an assessment of £1000, made upon Plymouth and its members, to fit out an expedition; with copies of letters from the Privy Council. No similar documents are preserved at Plymouth; but the character of the correspondence, and the weight of the duties thrown by the Privy Council upon the Mayor of Plymouth (and mayors generally were far more important personages once than they are now), together with the very imperfect account of this individual transaction preserved in the papers at the Record Office, afford some clue to the greatness of the historical loss sustained, in a national sense, by the wholesale destruction of the Plymouth archives.

The correspondence does great credit to the diplomatic ability of the Mayor of Plymouth, Thomas Fownes, whose original letters are preserved. The Mayor of Truro is clever at evasions, but cuts an undignified figure by comparison. I have supplemented the narrative of the correspondence, to make it complete, from the State Papers and other sources; but all the documents quoted are from the Truro archives, and now see the light for the first time.

The necessity of doing something against piracy was felt early in the reign of James I., and in 1610 a patent was granted to the Lord Admiral Nottingham to impress ships and mariners for the suppression of pirates, under which he, in 1613, made a grant to the mayor, &c., of Exeter to the same effect. Four years later, in March, 1617, the king brought the matter before the Privy Council; and this led to the suggestion of united action on the part of England with Spain and other powers, and to steps being taken to levy money in this county for fitting out the English expedition.

Thus in July, 1617, the merchants of Exeter declared that they were willing to pay any reasonable sum towards suppressing the pirates of Algiers and Tunis; and in the same month Sir Ferdinando Gorges wrote from Plymouth to the Privy Council, that the merchants of that town thought that a small fleet would effect little. Their trade was much injured by the pirates, but it was injured still more by the encroachments of the Londoners, whose proposal to give £40,000 was none too liberal, considering that they engrossed the commerce of the world. The best way to destroy the pirates was to make war, both by sea and land, upon the Turks.

After this the scheme practically slept until February, 1619, on the 7th of which month letters were sent by the Privy Council to several ports, demanding contributions towards the fleet. The amounts required give a very fair idea of the relative importance of the shipping and general commerce of the respective places.

Thus the sum levied on Southampton was £300; on Hull, £500; Weymouth, £450; Lyme Regis, £450; Pool, £100; Bristol, £1000 (promised; the demand was greater); Exeter, £500; Barnstaple, £500; Cinque Ports, £400; Yarmouth, £200; Newcastle, £300; Chester, including Carnarvon, Liverpool, and Beaumaris, £100. Plymouth was assessed in £1000.

Naturally there was a good deal of grumbling, and most of the ports seem to have declared their inability to raise the whole sum required. Exeter was a brilliant exception, as the £500 demanded on February 7th was ready by March 20th. The Mayor of Dartmouth too, having complained that Totnes would not join in raising the sum demanded of the outer port, the Mayor of Totnes replied in June that the Totnes people would pay £500 on their own account, on condition of being freed from the interference of Dartmouth or any other place.

This brings us to our correspondence. On April 16th, 1619, the Mayor of Plymouth wrote to the Privy Council that the merchants and shipowners of the town were unable to pay more than a third of the £1000 required, in consequence of their heavy losses, the serious expense they were put to in the defence of the town (a large proportion of which—arms, men, and munition—fell upon the inhabitants), and the money they raised to redeem their own captives.

The reply to this does not appear to be extant, but its character may be gathered from the first letter of Thomas Fownes to the Mayor of Truro.

Mr Mayor it is not vnknowne vnto yo^u howe that the Lords of his Ma^{ties} most ho^{ble} privy Coonsell haue required by their Lres a Contribucion of one thousand pounds to be raysed on the porte of Plymouth, and the members thereof towards the suppressing of pyrats, and sythence by their second Lres haue given commaunde to the Officers and the ffarmo^{rs} deputies of the porte of Plymouth, and to their deputies and substitutes in the seu^{all} members belonging to that porte to suffer noe Cockets to be deleu^{ed}, nor entry taken of any goods trading to and from that porte w^{thout} a Ticket vnder the hand of the Mayo^r of the Towne of Plymouth to thend the said Contribucion may be raysed by an indifferent

and equall charge of all suche as take benefit of that porte. Nowe these are to entreate yo^u that yo^u should be pleased to certefy yo^r neighbours of Trurowe w^h are Owners or Marchaunts subiect to this charge of the course and proporcon w^h we amongst our selves here, and our neighbours doe take for the raysing of this Contribucon. Where of this bearer (whome we haue sent of purpose) will give yo^u pfect notice, and that you would be pleased either by yo^r self, or by some other such as yo^u shall thinke fitting (to whome I give full Authoritie in that behalf) to graunt vnto them Ticketts for the satisfaccon of the Officers of the Custome house receiving from the marchaunts adventuring soe much mony as shalbe due for their said adventures according to the said porporcon and what yo^u or he whome yo^u shall appoint in that behalf shall doe in this busynes I shall ratify and allowe off wth many thanks. And so wth heartiest remembraunce of my love I commend yo^u to ~~th~~^{the} almighty and ever rest

Plymouth this first
of October 1619

Yo^r loving freind
Tho: fownes maior

[Endorse] To the Right Worth the
Mayo^r of Trewro
ddd these.
Cornwall:

To this no answer appears to have been sent, and Fownes then wrote:

Mr Mayo^r By these inclosed yo^u may perceive howe that the llds of his Maties most ho^{ble} privy Counsell require that the some of mony imposed on this Porte and the members thereof towards the suppressing of Pyrats of Argier and Tunis for the first yeires employm^t be in a readyness at London by the last of December next. These are therefore to entreat yo^u to make speedy collecon as well of such somes of mony as are due to be payd by th inhabitants of yo^r Porte for Tonnage of shippes, and the names and burthen of their shippes, as alsoe such monyes as are due for goods and marchandizes exported and imported w^{hin} yo^r harbour since the first order from the llds and to send yt to me the tenth day or the twentieth of the next moneth at farthest: otherwise I shalbe enforced agaynst my will to certefy agaynst all such as shall refuse soe to doe. Whereof I pray take notice that noe iust cause of complaynt may be ministred. And soe in all love I commend yo^u to th allmighty and rest

Plymouth this: 23th of
November, 1619

Yo^r very loving freind
Tho: Fownes maior

[Note at bottom.] I receaued theise llers the
24th of November betwixte the houers of
4: and 5: of the clock the same daie.

The enclosure was as follows :

After our very harty comendacons Whereas the Expedicon against Piratts and specially those of Argier and Tunis was for cavses best knowne to his Mat^{tie} deferred and leaft of for a while. And that neu^theles yoⁿ were required to goe on in the meane tyme wth your Collecons for the levyng and gathering of the Monyes that by an equall and indifferent allotm^t were layd vpon that Porte, according to former direcons of lres from this Board to be in readines for the prosecuon of this expedicon when his Mat^{tie} shalbe pleased to resume the same w^{ch} wee doubt not but yoⁿ have accordingly performed fforasmuch as his Mat^{ties} Royall pleasure and resolucon is to proceed in that expedicon wth the first of the next Spring, and hath comanded that tymely and due provision be made of all such things as are requisite for the furtheraunce of so Royall an Enterprise wee have thought meete to give yoⁿ notice of this his Ma^{ts} Royall pleasure and Comaundm^t and accordingly to require yoⁿ to take speedie and effectual order that the Summe of Mony w^{ch} that Porte and the Members thereof are to furnish for the first yeares Employ^mt may be in readines here by the last of December next whereof yoⁿ may in no wise fayle And soe we bid yoⁿ hartely farewell. ffrom Whitehall this 12th of November 1619

Yo^r very loving freinds

G Cant	Fr: Verulam Canc	Lenox	J Hamilton
La: Winton	J Digbye	J Edmonds	J Carye
Robert Naunton	Geo Calvert	Fulke Grevill	
Jul Caesar			C Edmonds
Mayor of Plymouth			

To this second letter Truro replied thus :

M^r Mayor I pceaue by your lres dated the 23th of this present Nouember, as also by the lres of the Lords of his Mat^{ties} most Honorable privy Counsell, that the summe of money imposed on your port, and the members thereof, towards the suppressing of Pyrats of Argier and Tunis for the first yeares employment be in a readinesse at London by the last of December next, and that you entreate that speedy collection should be made of such sommes of money as are due to be payd by the Inhabitants of our Port, for tonnage of Shippes and the names and burden of theyr shippes, as also such moneyes as are due for goods and Marchandizes exported and imported within our harbour since the first order from the Lords and to send it to you the tenth or twentieth day of the next moneth at furthest. Now theyse are to give you to vnderstand that sithence the receipt of your lres bearing date the first of October last past, there hath not any shippe or Barke arriued at our Toune of Treurow neyther any entry made for any goods or marchandizes neyther exported nor imported, where:vpon

any such dutie is to be levyed as may appeare by the Customers Bookes. And so not having else at this present to trouble you, in all loue I recommend you to thalmightie and rest

Your loving ffreind

Treuro this 25th

Gregorie friggens maior

of Nouember 1619.

A note appended states "This Coppie written in the p^rsence of Mr Thomas Burges, Mr Evared Edmonds, Mr Henry Williams, Mr Richard Daniell, Mr William Catcher, Mr Jerman Greet, and by their consent & Likinge."

December 2nd the Mayor of Plymouth writes the Privy Council that it is utterly impossible to raise the £1000, there being only twenty-four merchant adventurers resident; begs relief from great part of the burden; and asks authority to levy part on the inhabitants generally.

The reply of the higher powers ran thus:

After our harty Commendacons By the lre which we lately received from yo^u the Mayor you presented vnto vs the state and condicon of that Towne aswell concerning the Marchaunts inhabiting and resyding there, as the shipping of the same. In answeare whereof you shall understand that althoughe the scope and purporte of our former lres did principally ayme at March^{ts} and shipping as were ymedietely interested in the successe of this Expedicon, yet it was noe way meant that others of ability resyding in that Porte and taking benefit thereby should be exempted from a charge soe much concerning the comon security of Trade and Entercourse. And therefore we require yo^u to proceed to the leavy and collecting of the monies allotted vpon that porte by our former addresse aswell from the March^{ts} and Owners of shipping, as from such others as inhabite and resyde there, and are able and meet to contribute herevnto. And if any such persons shall refuse to conforme themselves with the rest in this Contribucon you shall certify their names vnto vs. And soe we byd yo^u hartely farewell

from whitehall this 14th of December 1619

Yo^r loving freinds

G Cant fr: Verulam Canc Lenox

Kellie G: Carew

T Edmondes J Carye Robert Naunton Jul: Cæsar
C Edmondes

Mayor of Plymouth

Next we have the record of an instalment of the Plymouth claims.

The xjth of December 1619

Of the Colladge of Tapson burden xviii tonnes John Weymouth
Mr from S^t Malous

Clement Harvy and Comp ^l m ^c chants for 32 ballets of vellery Canvas Cont 46 ^c ells wherof they are to haue 5 p ^c which is 2 ^c 30 ells so resteth 43 ^c 90 ells Subsitie and Import is	}	10 ^{li}	18 ^s	9 ^d
More 9 fardells of Tregar Cont 45 peces Subsitie & Import is				
More 10 fardells of dowles cont 60 peces Subsitie and Import is	}	12	00	00
		31	18	9

Wherof Mr Mayor is to haue 2^s p^{li} which is 3^{li} 3^s 10^d

The xiiijth of December 1619

Mr Mayor is to receaue of ffancis Norsworthy for	}	0	16	0
16 tonnes of wyne				
More for other Commodityties	.	0	2	7
more for the Bark being 20 tonnes	.	1	0	0
	all is	1	18	7

* Sum totall is v^{li} ij^s v^d

Mr Mayo^r I haue received of the wor^{ll} William Parker acording
to y^e note aboue written the some of five pounds Two shillings
and five pence, w^{ch} is for so much yo^u haue collected towardses the
mony required by his Ma^{tie} for the suppressing of Piratts the w^{ch}
some I pray repaie vnto Mr Parker. Thus in Mr Mayo^{rs} absence
I thought fitt to write, and so do rest

Yo^r loving freind

Nicholas Sherwill

Plymouth the last of December 1619

To the wor^{ll} Mr Maio^r

of Trewrow geive theise

Perhaps it was this very unsatisfactory result that led
Fownes, on the 7th January, to write to the Council that he
will do all he can to raise the money; but to enable him
to do so he begs to be armed with authority to assess the
merchants and shipowners of Fowey and other members of
the port. He obtained it in the following terms:

After o^r very harty Commendacons. We did expect yo^u should
haue retourned the Monyes allotted vpon that Porte for the
suppressing of Pyrats by the day prescribed by our former lres,
and not to haue stuck vpon such doubts and scruples as are

* From this point, in the Plymouth writing; above, in the Truro.

menconed in yo^r last lre. Wherein we haue already given more perticler direcons then to any other Porte of the kingdome. Neu^theles we haue ben moved for yo^r better satisfaccon to lett yoⁿ knowe that our meaning was that aswell the Porte of ffoy, as all other portes Members and Creekes w^{thin} the county of Cornwall should ioyn in this Contribucon, and be rated according to the purporte of our former direcons. And for the Collecting of the monies in ffoy, and other the members and Creekes, yoⁿ are to appoynt some such sufficient persons in each place for that purpose as you shall thinke meet. Wherein if any of the foresaid places shall not conforme themselves yoⁿ shall certefy vs thereof. And soe requiring yoⁿ to take order for the present advancing and sending vp hither the monies for this first yeares paym^t w^{thout} further delay or excuse. We bid yoⁿ hartely farewell ffrom Whitehall this 22th of January 1619.

Yo^r very loving freinds

E: Worcester Fr: Arundell G: Carew J Digby
Geo: Calvert T Edmondes Fulke Grevill

C Edmondes

Mayor of Plymouth &c.

Thus armed, Fownes again wrote Truro, enclosing the copy of the Privy Council's latest:

Mr Mayo^r my love in heartiest manner remembred. You may hereby perceive that by their honno^{rs} Commaundes menconed in their seu^{al} lres (the true Copies whereof I herewthall send yoⁿ) the first paym^t of the some of 1000^{li} is presently required to be advanced and sent vp. And by the said lres yoⁿ may likewise perceive that the said some is to be levyed as well on all thinhitaunts of ability resyding and taking benefit of trading or dealing in sea-faring Comodities w^{thin} the porte of Plymouth as alsoe of all thinhitants dwelling w^{thin} the porte of ffoy and all other portes members and Creekes w^{thin} this County of Cornwall. And that hereby they haue authorized me to appoynt some such sufficient person in each place as I shall thinke meet for the raysing and collecting thereof. These are therefore to entreate yoⁿ to afforde Mr James Bagge and Mr Thomas Ceelie whome I haue appoynted and send of purpose for the dispatch of this busyness yo^r best helpe and furtheraunce in the accomplishm^t thereof. The Course w^{ch} we haue taken amongst our selves for the levying of the said moneyes they will fully acquaynt yoⁿ wth. And soe nothing doubting but that you wilbe ayding vnto them in the performance of their honno^{rs} Commaunde the rather for that the busyness doth concerne the grall state and good of the land. I commit you to thallmighty and rest

Plymouth this 7th of
february 1619

Yo^r loving freind

Tho: fownes maior

However, the Truro folk were still obstinate. They were polite, but they did not pay up.

Mr Mayor my commendations in all loue remembred. Hauing receaved your second lre for and concerning the pformance of your former touching the Raysing of 1000^{li} imposed on your Towne of Plymouth haue according vnto the lords former order directed vnto you, with your instructions by your lre vnto me, how and in what manner to collect such somes of money as you by the same desired, with good respect and care haue receaued, and accordingly sent to you the same, as by your receipte may appeare. And so hauing not otherwise for the present do comit you to god and rest

Treuro this 14th

Youre loving freind

of february 1619

Gorie ffriggens maior

This was sent by the concurrence of "Thomas Burgs senior, Everord Edmonds, Edward Castle, Will: Auery, Richard Daniell, William Catcher, ffrancis Gregor, Tho: Burges ju^r, Cuthbert Sidnam, Will: Cosins, Rich Hill, Robart Kente, Nicholas Pearse, John Adlington."*

Fownes now proceeded to more definite language.

Mr Mayo^r I am very sory that yo^r lres should give vs soe iust occasion of complaynt. Yo^u cannot be ignorant of the abilitie and wealth of yo^r Towne, and that yo^r Towne is a Porte Toune of itself, and therefore in all reason you should be very

* The following document is among the series, but it has no direct local bearing, and might have been obtained by the Truro Corporation to aid them if possible in their contention:

"A lre to the Constables of Woodbridge in the County of Suffolke.

"Whereas we were lately moued at your humble suite, and for your more ease and assistance in collecting the moneyes allotted vpon that place, for supply of the expedition agaynst Pyratts to enlarge our former directions and to authorize you to leavy that Contribution as well from such psons of ability as receave benefit by trade and were fitt to be charged, as from the meere Marchants and owners of Shipping, whom our first lres only aymed at, as more neerely interested in the good success of this Enterprize than any others. Our meaning was not, that such gent or others that liue vpon theyre lands and whose condition and course of life hath noe relation at all to Maerchandizing or trade should be any way charged in this seruice further then what of theyre owne free motion and will they should offer for the advancement of soe publike and worthy a worke. And therefore forasmuch as it appeareth by this enclosed Complaint exhibited vnto vs by certayne Inhabitants of that Towne that you haue altogether mistaken our sayd directions and charged them in this Contribution, who as they informe, do not any way intermeddle or deale in Marchandizing, or Shipping, nor receaue any manner of benefit thereby, but are otherwise beneficiall to that Towne, by theyre Residence and by howsekeeping there we haue thought good hereby to require you to take notice of this theyr complaynt and information and in case the same be true to acquit and free them of whatsoever hath been charged vpon them in ther behalfe or otherwise to show cause vnto vs to the contrary."

This is dated February 11th, 1619.

willing of yo^r selves to contribute liberally towards the raying of this some of 1000^{li} w^{ch} is not as you write ymposed on our Toune of Plymouth alone, but alsoe on all the portes harbours and creekes in the County of Cornwall. And therefore I pray consider better of it, and returne vs yo^r speedy answeare what you will certainly doe therein, otherwise we shalbe enforced to take such course wth you as by their honno^{rs} lres we are required to doe (to weit) to certefy their honno^{rs} of yo^r backwardnes in this Contribucon, w^{ch} we shalbe very loath to doe if we may finde you tractable to yeild to a reasonable some, somewhat proporconable to the place and abilities of the people inhabiting amongst yo^u w^{ch} I thinke cannot be lesse then two hundred pounds. This I leave to your consideracon desiring yo^r answeare herein as speedily as yo^u may. And soe wth remembraunce of my love I commit yo^u to thallmighty and rest

Plymouth this 28th of
february 1619.

Yo^r loving freind
Tho: fownes maior.

The Truro folk did not wish to press Fownes to extremities, but they must have had more faith in turning away wrath by soft answers than by hard cash, or their rejoinders would not have run :

Mr Mayor I haue receaued yours of the 28th of february last. And according to your desire do retorne you this my answere thereunto, that I neyther haue nor wilbe backward to farther the intended preparation but according to the purporte of the lres sent you from the Hono^{ble} Lords of the Councell and your aduice and instructions formerly giuen me haue leuid and sent you as much as hitherto I haue receaued. And for two barks more which are now newly arriued here, you shall soon after theyr entry not fayle to haue that w^{ch} is to be assessed on them speedily sent you by the next convenient messenger which I hope will giue you good satisfaction. And so with my kind commendations remembred do committe you to god and rest

Treuro the first
of March 1619.

Your louing friend
Gregorie ffriggens maior

This was approved by "Tho. Burges sen^r, Everard Edmond, Henry Williams, William Avery, Richard Daniell, Gewen Carveth, William Catcher, ffrancis Gregor, Cuthbart Sidnam, Thomas Burges, Richard Hill, Nicholas Cook, John Adlington."

Mr Mayor I heartily salute you : Whereas in my last lres sent vnto you dated the first of this instant March I signified that there were two barks arriued here ; and that after theyr entry you should haue that which is seized on them sent vnto you by the next conuenient messenger : So it is that I haue receaued of one Henry Spicer marchant in the Patience of Tapson the first of this

march the somme of xxij^s ij^d and is for so much for an entry made by the sayd Barke: as appeareth by the custome Booke. And also of ffrancis Norsworthy of Treuro the somme of xliij^s j^d which is for so much for an entry likewise made by the Hope of flalmouth as appeareth by the sayd Custome booke dated the fourth of March 1619 all which is collected for the provision for the setting forth of the Shipps agaynst the Turkes. And the sayd money I haue sent vnto you by this bearer M^r James Bagge the yonger. Vpon the receypt hereof I pray you deliuer hym an acquittance for the receipt of the sayd Somme, whom I haue requested to send the same vnto me by the next conuenient messenger. And so hoping this will giue you good satisfaction I commend you to the p^rtection of the Almighty and rest

Treuro xxvij^s

Your louing ffreind

Martij 1620

Gregorie ffriggens maior of Treuro.

To the Right Wor:th the

Mayor of Plymouth

ddd these

The suggestion that £3 7s. 3d. could give him "good satisfaction" appears to have been quite too much for the patience of Mayor Fownes. Possibly he regarded it as adding insult to injury. At any rate, on the 6th of April he wrote the Council that he could not collect half the money—that the inhabitants of Truro, the largest seaport in Cornwall, refused to contribute, and that their example was followed by others at Peran [Penryn] and elsewhere. He has advanced the full £500, but begs that the parties refusing may be compelled to pay their proportion of the whole. That the Council sympathized with his position is evident by their rejoinder:

After ou^r hartie Commandacons, we pceiue by you^r leres the difficulties that occurre in raysing of the sume assessed vpon that Porte and members towards suppressing of Piratts, for remouing wher^eof we haue thought good hereby to require you to signify vnto these seuerall Tounes of Truro and Perin and others that refuse to contribute towards the sume required of the Ports of Plymouth and ffoy and other the ports w^hin the County of Cornwall, That o^r intent and meaning was to include them in this contribution wch is in tended for the security of Comon and free Trade, wherein they are specially interested, in regard the same may be interrupted as well in such pts neere hand, where they vsuallie traffique as farther of, vnlesse some curse be taken agaynst the sea Rovers, that are of late much increased and growne to extraordinarie strength and insolency, And therefore as we may in no waies give waie to any abatement of the sume required soe for yo^r better

assistance in the leavie hereof we doe hereby authorysie and require you to call vpon these severall Townes and psons aforesaid in our names to ioine with you in this service according to the proporcon of theire trades. And if any psons fitt to be charged therein shall refuse to conforme them selues as is meett, that then you take bonds of such refusers to make their immediate repaire vnto vs where they shall further vnder stand ou^r pleasure, and soe expecting the performance of this seruice wthout further excuse or delay, and that the one moitie of the sume be redie according to o^r former directions we byd you farwell

from whitehall this 25th of Aprill, 1620

You^r loving ffreinds

G: Cant	Fr: Verulam Canc	Lenox	Doncaster	Kellie
H Southampton	T Edmonds	J Digbie	J Cary	
Geo Calvert	fulke Grevill	Jul: Cæsar		

Elsmorton

Mayor of Plymouth

Then we have three receipts, one by Thomas Fownes of £3 7s. 3d., from James Bagg, March 30th, 1620; and two setting forth details, but no more calculated to give "good satisfaction" than their predecessors.

The viijth of Aprill 1620

Receaved of George Pasmere of Exon n ^{ch} ant the somme of Twenty foure shillings, which is for 60 quarters of wheate laden in the Mary Magdalyn of Tapsham burden 60 Tonnes Jasp Payne M ^r for S ^t Sebastian	} xxiiij ^s
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The vth of May 1620

Receaved of ffrancis Norsworthy of Treurow n ^{ch} ant the somme of fyue shillings, which is for vj Tonnes of ffrench wyne and other commodities brought in the John of ffalmouth burden 20 Tunnes John Hugo m ^r and brought from Rochell	} v ^s
Suma totalis recept xxix ^s	

The next letter in the series is imperfect. It is written by Fownes, and dated the 1st of June, 1620. Sorrow is expressed that the town of Truro should in any way hinder "the furtherance of their honno^{rs} desire in the raising of the Contribucon required for the suppressing of Pyrats, w^{ch} hath occasioned some other places to be backward likewise, whereby a great parte of the first payment required is kept backe, yo^u are unwillinge (as it seemeth) to take notis of their honno^{rs} pleasure whoe ought to be contributo^rs to this charg although they playnely signifie that their meanyng was not that only Marchants and Owners of Shipping should be

contributo^rs therevnto, but alsoe all others that inhabite and resyde theare, and bee able and meet to contribute therevnto; whereby you might playnely haue perceiued (if you had pleased) that such as are of abilitie in your Towne are not to be exempted out of the charge."

Then, after reciting what had taken place in the course of the correspondence, Fownes goes on to say, "We are required to take bonds of such as shall refuse to conforme themselves to this Contribucon as is meet to make their imediate repaire before their honno^{rs} w^{ch} we by the authoritie given vnto vs from them doe hereby require yo^u to performe."

Intimation is also given that the second payment towards the contribution "is by their honno^{rs} lres lately receaued to be sent vpp by the last of this instant." Speedy payment of this is asked, that there shall be "noe iuste cause to charge vs with any . . . of o^r duties;" and a copy of the last letter of the Council is sent. This is dated at Plymouth, June 1st, 1620. The letter from the Council is as follows:

After ou^r hearty Commendationes: Whereas yo^u receaued directiones from this board in februarie 1618 for the leauying of a certayne sume of Monney in the two next subsequent yeares to be employed for the furtherance of the expedicon which his Ma^{tie} is graciously pleased at the generall Suite and instance of his Marchants, to set forth to sea: And therein to employ Six of his owne Royall Shippes, for the suppressing of Pyrats. And though the fletee was for some important causes stayed and the voyage deferred the first yeare to take the opportunity of the next spring, yet you were required by lres from vs dated in Aprill 1619 to continue your Collections and keepe the moneyes in your hands vntill his Ma^{tie} should be pleased to call for the same: So as we doubt not but the monnyes are now accordingly in a reddinesse, for the last yeare in regard the tyme is now fully expired, forasmuch as his Ma^{tie} is constantly resolued not to Omitte this summer season but to sett forth the shippes now presently withall expedicon. Theise shalbe to pray and require you that as you have testified your readinesse in your first yeares proportion, see you cause monyes allotted vpon that Porte and the members thereof, for the second yeare to be sent vp hither vnto vs by the last of June next, whereof you may not fayle as you tender the furtherance and good successe of the expedicon: And so we bid you heartylie farewell from Whitehall this 17th of May Anno Dom 1620

Your very louing freinds

G: Cant	f Verulam Cane	La Winton	ffulke grevyll
F Arundell	J Digbie,	Robert Naunton	Edw: Coke
Geo. Calvert	Lionell Cranfeilde		

But Truro was still inclined to dodge and wriggle. The answer was—

Mr Mayor I haue receaued your lre dated the first of this June, and two inclosed Coppyes of theyr Honors lres, vnto which I can write you no farther answere, then formerly I haue donne. And that I cannot in any wise conceave by theyr Honors lres, that I haue any Authoritye to rate or impose any sommes of money vpon Gentlemen, husbandmen, or Artificers of ability, within our Corporation, that vse no trade by sea, or take benefitte thereby. And am the more confirmed therein: because I am credibly geuen to vnderstand that most cittyes and townes in the kingdome, in their pceding herein, doe soe vnderstand it, but such as are traders by sea within our Towne are willing and ready, from tyme to tyme, to contribute according to the pportion of theyr trades. And I for my part, have been and am still ready, to receaue and collect the same, as by the seuerall somes heretofore collected and sent you appeareth. And sithence my last, I send you by this bearer 29^s for which I pray send you a receipte as formerly. And so leauing you to the ptection of the Almighty do rest

Truro the 6th

Your loving ffreind

June 1620

Gregorie ffriggens mayor

This epistle seems, however, to have been an afterthought, for there is a draft of a letter dated June 5th, 1620, which can hardly have been sent, and which varies very considerably from the tenor of the above. In the draft Friggens says:

I perceiue that you in yo^{rs} require me to take some speedie coorse for the collection of a certaine some of all sorts of men of abilitie inhabbiting in o^r Towne, as well as of those that are traders by the seaes. Now for that I haue no suffitiente warrante for the pformance there of in rateing of all sorts of people of abilitie, not being traders by sea I doe therefore by this berer expect from you som powerfull Authortie, to inable me to proceede accordinglie

This was assented to by "Gregory ffriggens Mayo^r Euerard Edmonds Hen: Williams Ed: Castle Will: Auery Walt: Penarth Jarmanie Greiste Rich: Daniell Will: Catcher frances Gregor Cuth: Sidnam Tho: Burges frances Norsworthie Nicholas Pale Rich: Hill John Adlington"

Still there must have been some doubts in the minds of Friggens and his friends how long the game could be kept up, for next in point of date is the following resolution:

Wee the mayo^r and Burgesses of Trurow whose names are herevnder written, doe authorize and appoint M^r Everard Edmonds

of Trurow aforesaid m^echant to sollicite and manadge the buisness Concerninge the raising of mony towards the suppressinge of the Turkish piratts, wherevnto the Mayo^r of Plymouth goeth about to Constraine vs, although we haue truly and Carefully Collected & paid all such some and somes of mony as their hono^{rs} by their lres haue Comaunded, and the Mayo^r of plymouths direceon to that purpose.

Witness our hands att Trurow the xijth of June 1620

Grego: ffriggens mayor	Jerman Grete
Thomas Burgs	Will Catcher
Gawen Carveth	Nicholas Paulte
Henry Willeims	fra: gregor
Edw: Castle	Tho: Burges Jr
H ^{vy} Auerye	Edw: Gregor
Walter Pennarth	John Adlington

Fownes was not satisfied with resolutions—especially of this kind—and fell back on the Privy Council. On the 20th June he wrote them that the Mayor of Truro, which was one of the wealthiest ports in the West, and far abler than Plymouth, had only sent £10 instead of £300, and that the neighbouring places followed its example. Only £100 altogether had been raised in Cornwall. He was already £200 in advance for the first contribution, and begged that either the refusers might be made to pay, or Cornwall be held responsible for the second payment, Plymouth and its ports paying the first.

In the same month, too, the Mayor and Commonalty of Plymouth petitioned to be heard before the Council on the impossibility of raising a further sum; and this by what follows it would seem was carried out.*

Then Fownes wrote again to Truro:

Mr Mayor. I hope you are now fully satisfyed what theyr honors pleasure is touching the raysing of the somme required of the Westernne Ports for the suppressing of Pyrats: And therefore my hope is, you will noe longer hynder the expediting of the sayd seruice but will now conforme yourselves in some such reasonable pporcon as may answere your abilities: To that end and for the more speedy pformance thereof: Theise are (according to theyr Honors command menconed in theyre lres by vs very lately receaued a true Copy whereof I herewithall send you to giue you notice that we haue appoynted a meeting at Plimouth the ninth day of August next at which tyme and place we doe

* Barnstaple also had a grievance. It had raised one £250, but could not manage a second, because the Barnstaple merchants who traded through Exeter, Plymouth, and Dartmouth were assessed towards the contributions of these towns, and refused to pay twice over.

expect you or some sufficient deputies for your Towne of Truro to meete vs, to thend that after conference had betwixt vs and you; the businesse may be settled for the furnishing of the somme required with that expedicon as is requisite. Hereof you may not faill as yo^a will answere this and yo^r former contempt before theyr Honno^{rs} at yo^r perill. And see I leaue you to the ptection of thalmighty and rest

Plimouth this 31th
of July 1620,

Your loving friend
Tho: fownes maior

To the right worth Gregory
ffriggins mayor of Truro
these be dld
Cornwall

The copy of the Privy Council letter enclosed runs as follows:

After o^r harty Commendacons. The expedicon nowe intended agaynst the Pyratts was principally moved vpon the Complaynts of the Western Portes w^{ch} were aggravated by the losse of 300 Shippes spoyled by the Pyrats of Argier and Tunis to the infinite damage of the Merchaunts of those partes. And yet nowe when his Ma^{tie} vpon ressentinge of soe greate a mischiefe and Inconuenience hath resolved to vndergoe the charge of putting to sea six of his royall Shippes besides such as are voluntarily furnished out by the City of London to cleere the seas of those Rovers, and to give security to free trade and Commerce. There is more backwardnes found in those western portes for supply of such contribucons as are equally allotted vpon them then in any other parts of this Realme that are lesse interested in the daunger as may well appeare by the difference nowe on foot betweene that port and the Towne of Truro and other the Members. ffor the readyer accomodating whereof we haue thought fit to let you knowe that as there is question made whither 300^{li} be not too great a proporcon for the Towne of Truro to whome (as we are informed) there are not above two or three Shippes belonging, Soe for that the same Towne is othwise of good meanes and ability, as being the Staple of Tynn and makeinge great gayne by saving of pilchards and other fisherfare. It is expected that they doe conforme themselves in some such reasonable proporcon as may answere their abilities. And for the better performance hereof we require yo^a by vertue of these our lres to give orders for a meeting and conference betwixt yo^rself and such as shalbe deputed as well by the Towne of Truro, as other Members of that Porte. And there vpon to settle the busynes for the furnishing of the Sume wth that Expedicon as is requisite. Wherein if such as shalbe soe deputed shall not conforme themselves as is meet: we require you to certefy vs particularly thereof, and of the names of

such as are most refractory, and obstinate, and specially of such as refused to give Bonds to appeare before vs, according to the direcccons of our former lres, vnlesse their present Conformitie be such as may excuse their said contempt. And soe we byd yoⁿ hartely farewell ffrom Whitehall this 7th of July: 1620

Yo^r loving friends

ff^r: verulam Canc

E: Worcester

ff. Arundell

H: Southampton

J. Digbie

T Edmondes

Robert Naunton

Geo: Calvert

Jul: Caesar

Mayor of Plymouth.

Truro still resisted, but only in a verbal sense. The Corporation sent a deputation to the Plymouth Conference, who do not seem to have braved the matter out. They went back home, and left the following "note" behind them, which it will be seen begins by protesting, continues by declining, and ends by consenting:

Mr Mayor

By the Coppie of the Ho^{rs} last lres, we vnderstand that it was there Ho^{rs} pleasure yoⁿ should give order for a meetinge and Conference to be had betwixt yo^r selfe and the mayo^r of o^r Towne of Truroe (or some deputed for that purpose); yoⁿ havinge appointed this day for that meetinge and Conference here at Plymouth (being fortie miles from Trurow); and the mayo^r of Trurow being an aged man not able to vndergoe such a Jorneye, hath (wth the Consent of the rest of the Burgesses) sent vs hither to confer wth yoⁿ, as wee haue done, concerninge mony to be raised for the suppression of the Turkish Piratts, and to Cleer such wrongfull informacons wher with (as it should seem by their hono^{rs} lres) their ho^{rs} have byne informed. And in regard we cannott give yoⁿ satisfaccon by o^r Conference we haue thought good to sett downe our answear in writinge, vnder our hands, whereby nothinge may be mistaken or misconceiued; but that their ho^{rs} (and also yo^r selfe) may be truli possest of the State and qualitie of o^r Towne.

1. It should seeme their ho^{rs} haue byne informed that our Towne hath two or three shippes belonginge vnto it.

2. Secondlie that our Towne is the staple of Tynne.

3. Thirdlie that it maketh great gaine by savinge of pilchards and other fisherfare.

To the first we answear that we haue not one shippe belonginge to our Towne, but only one small Barke of Twentie Tonnes. The owner and m^echant wherof hath paid accordinge vnto yo^r owne order, as also all other Barks that haue Come to our Towne from tyme to tyme, as by yo^r receipts for the same appeareth.

To the second we answear that wee haue no staple of Tynne, but only a place of Coynadge, as is Liskeard, Lostwithiell, and Helston, reaping no benefitt att all therby, but rather damage, by breakinge of our streets and pavem^{ts} wth Cartes w^{ch} bring the same to be Coyned. And no Trade or Commerce is or may be taken in that Comyditie in these pts, for that the Sole p^{re}emption thereof is by Lo:ⁿ marchants ffarmers as yo^r selfe well knoweth.

To the third we answear that we haue no pilchard nor fyshinge trade here, nor haue we one fishinge Boate belonginge to our Towne, it lying ten or Twelve myles into the land from the mouth of the harbour.

Now the state of our Towne standing thus, and Consistinge of Gentlemen, Retaylers, husbandmen, and artificers, w^{ch} reape no benefitte by tradinge at Sea, we Conceave not that their ho^{rs} intention is to charge such, farther than their owne free & Christiane feelinge to the furtherance of this service shall move them ther vnto, w^{ch} if wth vs, yoⁿ doe so vnderstand, then we promise not only for our selves (according to our abillities) to Contribute herevnto: but also to pswade & incourage all the Inhabitants of abillite w^{hin} our Towne to do the like. Wherof yf yoⁿ please to accept (vpon notice from yoⁿ) ther shalbe a Carefull indeavour in the p^{re}formaunce thereof. And such monyes as shalbe so Collected shalbe sent vnto yoⁿ wthall convenient expedicon, besidis such Collections as shall growe dew by trade accordinge vnto yo^r former order

By vs yo^r ffreinds in the behalfe of the mayo^r
of Trurow & his brethren

Plymouth the 9th August
1620

Rich: Danyell
Tho: Burgs
Edw: Greste

To the Right worth Thomas
fflowens mayo^r of Plymouth

vera copia

It is an amusing illustration of the *bona fides* of the assertion that Truro was damaged by being a coinage town, that in June, 1682, the Corporation of Truro instructed John Foote, their town clerk, to go to London and oppose the making of Penryn a coinage town, voting him a gratuity; and that in the October following they granted him a lease of a house for ninety-nine years in favour of his son, voted £5 for a piece of plate to be given to his wife Jael, and paid him £12 5s. 9d. "for soe much money layd out & disbursed by the s^d Mr Jo: ffoote about the defence of the Coynadge."

Fownes being a sensible man, cared very little about the way the money was raised in Truro, so long as it was got. His reply on this note—one of the shrewdest letters of the whole series—very frankly says as much; and as with it the

controversy appears to have come to an end, we may take it that "good satisfaction" was at length given, after the Plymouth interpretation of that phrase.

Mr Mayo^r

Yo^r . . . and freinds (to weit) Mr Richard Danyell, and others deputed by yoⁿ as it seemeth to conferre wth vs by order from his Maties most hoble privy Counsell touching the supply expected from yo^r Towne of Truro for suppressing the Turkish Pyratts have been here, who instead of furnishing and taking order wth vs for satisfaccion of what is meet to come from yoⁿ for that service, have left here a note subscribed by them conteyning as followeth

1. ffirst certeyne excepcons w^{ch} it seemeth yoⁿ take to their honno^{rs} lres.

2. Secondly yo^r desire to be informed of their honno^{rs} intencon by whome amongst yoⁿ this charge is to be borne.

3. Thirdly and lastly their note w^{ch} they have left behinde them conteyneth a conditionall promise (vizt) to contribute according to their abilities, and to perswade and encourage all others of that Towne to doe the like if, &c.) Wherevnto my answeare is

1. ffirst that this bearer Mr Abraham Jennens (whom I have requested to come vnto yoⁿ) can give yoⁿ best satisfaccion touching their honno^{rs} lres, who was present when it pleased their honno^{rs} to give order for their sayd last lyres, and knoweth what was then alledged: for my self can say nothing to it, onely I hope yoⁿ doe not thinke their honno^{rs} to be ignorant of the preemption of Tynn, and howe it standeth wth yoⁿ and other partes of this Countrey in that comoditie, our selves in this Towne vndergoing in that as great preuidice as any other place.

And for yoⁿ it is well knowne that it hath and doth rayse not onely to yo^r Towne, but to some others of yo^r neighbours great benefitt.

2. ffor the next it seemeth straunge yoⁿ should desire further informacon of their honno^{rs} intencon, I having from tyme to tyme sent you their honno^{rs} lres, or true Copies thereof, and at some tymes men of cheife respect and place amongst vs, to certefy you howe we proceeded here in levying the Contribucon thereby required. If yoⁿ interpret them in another sence then they seeme to vs to beare, yet if the leavy had ben made in a manner proportionable to the abilitie of yo^r Towne and Porte, it had ben all one to me howe yoⁿ had vnderstood the lres: yet for yo^r further adu'tisem^t yoⁿ may please to take notice that besides meere Marchants this Towne alsoe doth consist of some Gentlemen, Retaylers, Husbandmen, and Artificers: and if any . . . haue formerly exercised marchandize haue attayned to such . . . that they may nowe live more retyred w^{thout} the vse of marchandize, we doe take such wth vs to be lyable to this charge. Retaylers

likewise of abilitie are in the comon estimacon taken wth vs for marchaunts although their dealings be not by sea. And we doe alsoe charge Artificers that are of abilitie, or meanes, for all such in probabilitie doe take benefit by the Porte.

3. Lastly therefore whither yoⁿ rayse the same by charging any soe farre as their owne free will and christian feeling to the furtheraunce of the service shall move them, or otherwise as shall seeme fittest to yo^rself: that w^{ch} we are here to expect is the speedy supply of what is to be furnished by yoⁿ regarde being had to the greatnes of the sume w^{ch} lyeth on these partes, together wth the great meanes and abilitie of most of thinhabitants of that Porte, wherein if yoⁿ proceed wth that carefull endeavor, w^{ch} yo^r sayd deputies have vnderaken I am perswaded it will not be lesse then what hath been formerly required: the greatnes of the enterprize, the good to be expected thereby to the whole Realme but especially to these westernne partes, and the satisfaccon to be given to their honno^{rs} being soe great motives therevnto. And soe expecting to be fully satisfied by yoⁿ herein w^{thout} any further delays, I commend yoⁿ to thallmighty and rest

Yo^r loving friend

Tho: fownes maior

Plymouth this 23th of
August. 1620.

After many delays, the expedition which was got up with so much labour, sailed to Algiers under the command of Sir Robert Mansell, on the 12th October, 1620. Sir Richard Hawkins was the Vice-Admiral. Mansell was duly entertained at Plymouth:

Item given to S^r Robert Mansell Knight Generall of his M^{ties} Fleet agaynst the Pyrats of Algeir at his goeing to sea two fat sheepe two sugar loafes, twelve capons and six fat gennies v^{li} ij^s iiij^d