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THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTERS

By B. L. K. HENDERSON, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

Read March 21, 1912

IN Vol. XI. of the 'Camden Miscellany,' published by this Society, there appears the text of the charter granted to the city of Salisbury in the year 1656, under circumstances which are described by the late Dr. S. R. Gardiner in his 'History of the Protectorate,'¹ as well as by the Director of the Society, on whom devolved the task of editing the transcript which had been made for Dr. Gardiner from the city muniments.

In view of the interest attaching to the history of these civic charters, and the obscurity of the subject, I have had the honour of being invited to communicate to the Society a portion of the studies on which I have been for some time past engaged.

Throughout the Interregnum there was, apparently, a sustained effort to influence the towns through their charters. We can trace this process in some measure through the years ensuing upon the death of the king; but our information is much more complete in the years of the Protectorate, and this is doubtless due to the fact that the movement assumed an augmented significance in this later period. The operations of a Committee for Corporations are traceable in sundry references amongst the sources of this troublous time. In January 1649 a petition of the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London was referred to the Committee for Corporations,² and the Committee seemed to assume added

¹ Vol. iii. chapter x. and supplementary chapter xlix.

² *Journal of House of Commons*, vol. vi. 351.

importance as time went on. The act of July 1649 was referred to the same committee, and it was after that body had deliberated that the act was debated upon in the House and finally printed and published.¹ A further act followed in October of that year. In December 1650 we find the committee for the advance of money handing over some of its petitions to the Committee for Corporations. In 1651 the recorder of the city of Chester was discharged from his office, and later on other changes were effected in the composition of the same municipal body.² A further step in the work of the Committee was taken in September 1652, when the question arose 'how Corporations may be settled conformably with the government of a Commonwealth, and how their respective charters may be altered and renewed to be held from and under the authority of a Commonwealth.'³ In this same year it was enacted that 'all who come to the Committee for Corporations shall have voices,' and that 'if anything concerns the charter of any Corporation for which any member serves in Parliament notice shall be given to such member before the Committee sends for the charter.'⁴

Evidence as to the grant of charters at this time is very meagre, although there is a statement that York and Exeter received charters in 1653.⁵ It is, however, clear that the Government reviewed closely the question of the town charters and saw possibilities in this direction. In the case of Beccles, in 1652, we know that the charter was called for and that the Portreeve was enabled to evade the summons; from which we may possibly surmise that either the relations of the towns to the Government were felt to be ill-defined or else that the Government did not wish to enforce its authority.⁶

¹ In 1649 Parliament granted an exemplification of Charles I's Charter to Reading.

² *Journal of House of Commons*, vol. vii. 1651. Humble petition of the well-affected inhabitants in the city of Chester, vol. vii. 1653.

³ *Ibid.* ⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Wyon's Great Seals of England*, pp. 90-98.

⁶ Report of Commissioners on Municipal Corporations, 1835.

The Instrument of Government came into force the next year, and the system of government was thereby revolutionised. On the 21st September 1655 Cromwell appointed his Major-Generals, and, in response to their appeals, he evidently began to consider seriously the question of the Municipal Charters. Dr. Gardiner has said that the operations of the Committee for Municipal Charters have not been traced to an earlier date than the 4th April 1656, 'although it must have been working before then.' The full activity of the Committee is seen in the years 1656 and 1657, but that charters were granted earlier is shown by the fact that the first Swansea Charter bears date 26 February 1655-6. Chester received an exemplification in March 1654-5.¹ In September 1655 Lyme Regis, in Dorset, obtained a special grant.² Ipswich also received an exemplification between September 1653 and September 1654.³ Salisbury was busily agitating for its new charter in December, January and February 1655-6. It therefore seems uncertain when Cromwell definitely appointed a fresh Committee; but it is beyond dispute that he employed well-known and perfectly understood machinery for his scheme. It is also obvious that he employed men who were carefully chosen to give full consideration to the local circumstances which might arise.⁴ The names of Desborough, Sydenham, Jones, Lambert, Wolsley and Lisle appear in connexion with the Committee; and we find that Peter Brereton, William Sheppard, Thomas Manby and Gabriel Beck were to consider 'all the charters the renewing of which is prayed and draw up all alterations proposed to be made with such variations as they think best for religion and good government, and the discouraging of vice; also make a statement of the usual charge of passing charters that it may be

¹ Audit Office, Accounts Various, 663-5.

² *Ibid.*

³ Declared Accounts, Audit Office, Bdles 1377-8.

⁴ 'Cromwell always advised with the greatest lawyers of the land before he put his deliberations in execution.' Somers' *Tracts, First Collection*, vol. iii. 'A modest vindication.'

reduced to a moderate proportion, and present what they prepare to the Committee for Charters.' ¹ We also learn that the Committee was carefully watched so that no pecuniary motives should influence it. Certain men of importance were appointed to learn 'if the Commissioners do take fees and report.' ²

It is interesting to observe, at this point, that we are able to trace the career of one of the Commissioners in some detail. William Sheppard was a voluminous writer at the period, and amongst other works he published in 1659 a treatise entitled 'Of Corporations,' which appears to contain to some extent reflections based upon his work as a member of this Committee. As a lawyer, however, he lost caste after the Restoration from his close association with the Protector, and must have suffered considerable poverty. ³

In examining the machinery which produced the Commonwealth Charters, it is necessary to consider the nature of the charter in question. One can conveniently group the issues under the several headings: Charters for Municipal Incorporation, Incorporation of the members of a trade, Charters for the establishment of Colleges, or Markets, and Ecclesiastical grants. Generally it will be found that application preceded the issue of a charter. When a petition was received the Committee for Charters discussed its merits, and afterwards, if it saw fit, placed the matter in the hands of an experienced legal Sub-Committee to draft a charter. Disputed points were referred to counsel learned. The

¹ *Calendar of State Papers, Dom. Series*, 1655-6, p. 370.

² *Ibid.* 1656-7. January 13th. There are other references to the same effect.

³ For further information as to this man see the following works: *Reliquiae Baxterianae*; *Dictionaries of Literature and Authors*; *Bibliotheca Legum*; *Clarke Papers*, ed. by C. H. Firth (vol. iii. pp. 61 and 64); *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, ed. by B. H. Blacker (vol. ii. pp. 508 and 570, and vol. iii. p. 61); *Brief History of the Sheppard Family*, by W. A. Sheppard (Calcutta, 1891); *Cal. S. P., Dom. S.*, 24 Nov. 1657; *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, collected and edited by C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, *passim*.

Attorney-General perused the heads of the amended charter, and finally an order was given to advise his Highness to approve the report and issue a warrant for preparing a charter accordingly.¹ It is to be noted that in the case of many charters which were granted, there is apparently no evidence of enrolment amongst the Chancery Patent Rolls, nor can any subsidiary instrument or draft be traced at the Record Office amongst the Chancery Records. The Records for the period are incomplete. 'The MS. Chancery Index of Patents ends in the year 1655, and there is no bundle of Privy Seals, King's Bills or warrants for the date.'² The 'Hanaper Controlment Books' are for the following dates: 29 September 1654 to 29 September 1655; 27 January 1656 to 29 September 1657; and for the year ending Michaelmas 1659. There is a fragment for the period 12 December 1655 to 27 January 1656, but this is almost indecipherable in places. The Declared Accounts of the Pipe Office and Audit Office are dated 1654 to 1657.

In considering the several types of Cromwell's charters we find that among the municipal charters there are six towns which present a specially interesting aspect to the historian, inasmuch as he is able in these instances to piece together, more or less satisfactorily, the local conditions which accompanied the application for and grant of the charter. These towns are Colchester, Reading, King's Lynn, Swansea, Chipping Wycombe and Salisbury. It is quite possible that, if local history in the case of other municipalities were equally illuminating, they also would supply circumstances more or less analogous to these six; but, as the matter now stands, we find it convenient to adopt these six charters as typical. It is impossible in the present limits to offer even a summary view of these municipal grants with their accompanying civic contentions. It must suffice to say

¹ See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, for 1655-8 *passim*. The case of Blandford is illuminating.

² *Camden Miscellany*, *loc. cit.*

that, as one naturally would expect, there is evidence in five instances of considerable contention ; in the remaining instance, that of Swansea, it can be readily inferred. In all these instances, except at Salisbury, one of the conditions of the new charters was either an added, or an altered Parliamentary representation. In the majority of these typical instances we can trace the intervention of the local Major-General. This is also partly true in the case of some of the other municipalities which are not here accepted as typical owing to the lack of contemporary local information, for example, Woodstock and Leeds. It will be well, however, to examine somewhat closely into the local history of one of our six types in order to appreciate in some measure the reasons for Cromwell's issue of a new charter.

Before so doing one may be pardoned, perhaps, for reference to the interesting discussion which some years ago ranged itself round the question of the Colchester Charter. Dr. Gardiner, recognising that the town corporations were in the great majority of instances far from being popular bodies but were controlled by a close body independent of central government, saw in Cromwell's policy the necessity for supporting the loyal minority in certain quarters. He argued that while charters were renewed in other places besides Colchester, the only trace of a political object is to be found in Carlisle.¹ Elsewhere, he observed, local causes prompted the remodelling of Corporations. The case of Colchester was exceptional, as nowhere else were parties arrayed against one another in a struggle so decided and prolonged.² On the other hand Mr. Round found Colchester a valuable type. He said that Cromwell, like Charles II after him, employed the same method of altering the electorate by obtaining a voluntary surrender of borough charters, and issued new charters framing the constitution on

¹ But it does not appear that Carlisle ever received a charter from Cromwell.

² *History of Protectorate, op. cit.*

a more oligarchical model.¹ Both these writers were content to argue from the case of Colchester. But other towns furnish us with facts which point to an approximation of civic disturbance. We must, however, be content to examine one town as typical.

Affairs at Reading at this time furnish a somewhat tedious and perplexed narrative, but they illustrate the question before us. A pamphlet at the British Museum hints very directly at a disturbed religious life in Reading in the year 1655.² It is a reply to slanders and calumnies which had been rife in the Corporation, and refers incidentally to the apparently vexed question of the election of the schoolmaster.³ Fortunately this pamphlet can be supplemented by municipal records which are published in the 'Historical Manuscripts Report.'⁴ Mr. Robert Jennings, M.A., was appointed schoolmaster in July 1655, and after a very short time was displaced in favour of a new man, Mr. Gerrard. We find that in December 1655 Mr. W. Brackston was discharged from his office, as alderman and justice of the peace, in pursuance of the Lord Protector's Declaration for settling the peace of the Commonwealth. In January Mr. Christopher Fowler⁵ on behalf of himself and Mr. Ford⁶ asked that the scandals on them should be removed. They had been charged with having inter-meddled unduly in the affairs of the town, and now desired to clear themselves. The Mayor, and aldermen present who had been Mayors, made affirmation in their support. Thus there was no sign of special contention in the municipal body on that occasion. But on this same day Mr. Gerrard, the newly appointed schoolmaster, produced his order from

¹ *Historical Review*, vol. xv.; *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xlv.

² E. 868, *Reply of the Mayor of Reading*, by Christopher Fowler.

³ This turbulence can be illustrated, of course, from many towns at this time; but Maidstone (*Calendar State Papers, Domestic Series*, August 1656) and Kingston (*ibid.* 2 May 1655) are very interesting examples.

⁴ Vol. ii. app. vii. pp. 190-4.

⁵ He was ejected from St. Mary's in 1662, and died 1679.

⁶ The well-known puritan minister and writer. He conformed after the Restoration, and died in 1699. See *Hist. MSS. Report* 11, app. vii.

the Lord Protector appointing him schoolmaster 'during the life of Mr. Page from whom the same was sequestered.' This was effected after the new man had produced certificates from University authorities as to his godly life and conversation. If there were no other cause for wrangling, here at least was a bone of contention. In March the plot thickens. Mr. D. Blgrave, a man who in January 1648-9 had been elected as burgess for Parliament, was discharged from the office of Steward of the Borough on the charge of insufficiency and neglect. Further he lost his office as one of the assistants, and finally in August 1657 he 'was removed and discharged.'

On the 7th April 1656 an application was made to the Lord Protector for confirmation of the charter of the town. On June 7th a further request was made that there be such additional privileges as should be thought fit; and in July Lord Whitlocke advised that the charter should be renewed as speedily as possible. On the 21st July 'the company and divers other people assembled in the Town Hall to seek God for a blessing in the choice of a burgess for the borough to serve in Parliament.' Mr. Ford and Mr. Jemmatt performed the duties of exhortation and prayer for that purpose, and the conclusion of the matter was that Sir John Barkstead, Lieutenant of the Tower, was elected. The next day he was admitted as freeman of the Borough. In October of that year (1656) there was a debate concerning the additional points to be considered in the renewing of the charter: (1) whether the company, or those that pay to the poor elect the burgess for Parliament; (2) whether the assizes for the county shall be held only at Reading.

The question of the schoolmaster now recurs. Mr. Gerrard made complaint that Mr. Jemmatt (who performed the duties of exhortation previously mentioned) 'comes into the school and beats and misuses the schollers.' This was in October. By the following March Mr. Gerrard was cited by an order of the Commissioners for Ejecting

Scandalous Schoolmasters to appear at Speenham upon a reference from the Lord Protector upon the petition of Mr. Robert Jennings. In July 1657, in the open market at Reading, Cromwell was proclaimed Lord Protector, the petition of Parliament to his Highness was read and published, and in August there was a perambulation of the out-bounds and limits of the borough made in accordance with the charter.

The fuller significance of this narrative of affairs is seen in the events which ensued upon Cromwell's death. It is recorded that Richard Cromwell was proclaimed Protector in September 1658-9, and the minutes contain a statement that the warrant of the sheriff, and form of proclamation, with a copy of the order of the Council 'remaine in the press cupbord in the Councell Chamber.' In December Mr. Joel Stephens was voted out of the office of Mayor for that 'he hath knowingly and willingly by forreine and private advice and practice attempted to acte and acted severall things against the judgment and consent of the major parte of the said Corporation and to the disinherison of the said Corporation of their rights and priviledges.'¹ The feelings of the town were clearly in a ferment; for there was a disturbance at the meeting owing to the dispute about 'a suit of law upon the former false returne of Sir John Barkstead as burgess in Parliament,' and the cupboard and great iron-bound chest were broken open and the books, mace and common seal removed. As a consequence all the aldermen and assistants who took part in 'these great, and insolent, and notorious misdemeanours and offences,' were removed from office. They endeavoured to take their seats later on, but upon refusal of permission

¹ It should be observed that there had been no settled rule for a considerable time with regard to elections in Reading. Dr. Gardiner draws attention to three methods adopted there in the years 1627, 1645 and 1648. In 1654 the mayor declared that Colonel Hammond was elected by the Corporation, but on a shout of protest from the crowd the townsmen were allowed to give their votes. *History of Protectorate*, vol. iii. p. 10.

the meeting was broken up. Law-suits followed and we find that in May 1660 the secluded members of the Corporation resigned. In the meantime, however, on the 30th December 1658, Daniel Blagrove (who had been turned out of office in March 1656) was unanimously elected burgess, together with Henry Nevill, by near 1000 persons. In February next Peter Burningham and William Brackston were restored as aldermen, Richard Bulstrade was removed from his position as steward and Daniel Blagrove chosen in his room. In April 1660 Thomas Richard and John Blagrove were elected burgesses by more than 1,100 persons.¹

This detailed account serves to illustrate the fact that Reading provides us with a position similar to that at Colchester. It is clear that the town received a charter in support of the well-affected minority, and directly the Protector died the bands which held the majority in check were burst asunder. The number of persons at the two subsequent elections gives us a clue to the size of the opposition and confirms the statement that the Mayor, Stephens, had acted against the major part of the Corporation. The election of Sir John Barkstead to the Parliament of 1656 was an answer to the appeal of Major-Generals for 'the doing of something effective in the charters.' The removal of the mayor from office in December 1658, and the subsequent removal and resignation of the aldermen, together with the re-appointment of those men who were ejected from office during the Protectorate, indicate most conclusively the fact that, in Reading as at Colchester, Cromwell employed his new municipal machinery to keep his enemies at bay. With regard to the charter itself we know nothing beyond the two points previously mentioned ; but we may infer from the intent of other charters, of which we know the substance, that Cromwell strove to improve the trade conditions

¹ These numbers appear very large. Dr. Gardiner has commented upon the paucity of voters in those days. In 1654 there were at Colchester only 200 ; at Leicester, in 1656, only 59 ; while at Newcastle (a very populous place) there were 600 voters. *History of Protectorate*, vol. iii. p. 7.

of the town. It would appear that he won little gratitude and that the town was ready to return to its old form of municipal government.¹

With regard to the intervention of the Major-Generals in municipal affairs in 1656, and particularly with regard to the election of the summer of that year, Dr. Gardiner observes that from the scanty evidence which has reached us the Protector showed no intention in the summer of 1656 of interfering with the elections—perhaps because he felt secure in the power of exclusion which he had claimed for himself and the council. Dr. Gardiner adds that when the elections were completed they did not appear so threatening to the Government as was anticipated, for with one exception all the eighteen Major-Generals were returned, together with the members of the council who were not Major-Generals, and he finally comes to the conclusion that the military officers exercised less influence on the elections than has usually been supposed. It may be observed that there is evidence that the Major-Generals did exert in some quarters considerable influence on these elections. It is probable that in certain towns their presence helped to decide the returns.

The electoral struggles at this point appear to have been stubbornly contested, and the very fact that so many of the Major-Generals were returned is at least outstanding. We can still hear across the ages the strife of at least eight hard fought contests² which tell us of bitter

¹ It may be mentioned that the struggle for the schoolmaster's position continued until October 29, 1660. There was a series of appointments and dismissals of Mr. Gerrard and Mr. Jennings until finally another man altogether was appointed. One wonders what the 'schollers' were doing all this time!

² Maidstone (*Cal. S. P., Dom. S.*, 1656-7, p. 87); King's Lynn (*House of Commons Journal*, vol. vii. pp. 428 and 441, *et seq.*); Hereford (*H. of C.J.*, p. 432, and *Hist. MSS. Com. Report* 14, App. 2, p. 208); Reading (*Hist. MSS. Report* 11, App. 7, pp. 190-4); Colchester, 1655 (S. R. Gardiner, *Hist. of Protectorate*, chap. xliii. pp. 268-94, and J. H. Round, *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 46, and *English Historical Review*, vol. 15); Westminster (*Thurloe*, vol. v., p. 337—Letter of J. Waddell); Middlesex (*Clarke Papers*, ed. C. H. Firth, vol. 3, p. 70).

contention, and in all these we find the soldier striving to influence the result. One or two illustrations of this strife will perhaps be pardoned. At Hereford the Cromwellian party and the opposition formed up in two separate groups in the Lugg Meadow, and according to a letter of Colonel Harley, the Cromwellian candidates were elected simply because the sheriff was standing nearer to the group which supported them, and by reason of their shouts he could not hear any other voters save those who voted for them. Colonel Harley rode up and insisted that a poll should be taken, with the result that he too was returned; but the sheriff, when the elections of the other members whom he had declared elected were challenged, rode out of the meadow, and the under-sheriff promised the discontented that they should have a poll next year. Thereupon certain of the voters were challenged as to whether they were worth £200 and they confessed they were not.¹ From Maidstone Major-General Kelsey wrote to Cromwell to say that there was 'A very sad spirit in the country. . . . Most of the Cavaliers fell in with the Presbyterians against you and the Government, and the spirit is very bitter against Swordsmen, Decimators, Courtiers etc. . . . Most of those chosen to sit in the coming Parliament are of the same spirit . . . the party give out they will down with Major-Generals. . . . We think a recognition may be so penned as to keep out those that are most dangerous . . . we will stand by you with life and fortune, but there is such perverseness in those chosen that without resolution in you and the Council . . . we shall return to our Egyptian taskmasters.' At Westminster we hear there was a very sad dispute, two slain and very many wounded. It arose between Colonel Grosvenor and one Mr. Lathom. The soldiers came to cry for Grosvenor and the citizens cried 'no swordmen, no mercenary men.' Whereupon they

¹ This account is of course a mere summary. There is a full and interesting account of the proceedings in the source indicated, namely, *Hist. MSS. Report* 14, App. 2, p. 208.

fell together by the ears ; the like were at Branford where the anabaptists took away the justices' swords and beat them miserably, insomuch that a regiment of horse was sent to part them. At the Middlesex election twenty people were hurt by reason of the great striving. These examples might easily be multiplied. Various estimates give the number of members secluded from this Parliament and turned back by soldiers posted at the lobby door as ranging from 99 to 160.¹ The returns for London 'were good' according to one letter² ; from another source we discover that at the time of election all who had been in arms against the State were ordered to depart out of London, Westminster and all places within twenty miles of the same.³ Now if we compare this information with the change of representation effected by the several charters referred to earlier, a relationship between the two sets of circumstances is discernible. At King's Lynn, for example, there was dispute about the election of 1656, and in July of that year we find the Mayor and aldermen petitioning for a new charter, while at the same time they surrendered their former charter to the Protector. Major-Generals Desborough and Skippon were chosen as representatives for the borough at the election.

There is a significant fact which deserves some slight attention. A glance at the list of towns in the Appendix will show that it is easy to group many of them geographically. Thus Chepstow, Swansea and Abergavenny all lie in a comparatively restricted area in South Wales ; Ipswich, King's Lynn, Norwich, Colchester form another group ; Chipping Wycombe, Aylesbury, Thame, Hemel Hempstead, Stony Stratford are all comparatively close together. So also we might associate Durham, Leeds, Gateshead ; or Gloucester, Salisbury, Blandford and Lyme Regis. With

¹ *Calendar State Papers, Domestic Series*, Sept. 18, 1656 ; also *Clarke Papers*, ed. C. H. Firth, August 23, 1656.

² *Letter of E. Barnes*, Thurloe, 1656, p. 337.

³ *Calendar State Papers, Domestic Series*, August 28, 1656.

each of these groups it would be possible to connect various other towns which were affected by grants or trade privileges at the Protector's hands: as, for example, the woollen trades in the eastern, northern and south-western areas; groups of companies such as the Gardeners, the Framework Knitters, etc., in the London district. Without further elaboration of this idea it would seem, *primâ facie*, that we have in this classification a suggestion of the activity of the Major-Generals in their several districts, and a comparison of the charter localities with the several districts assigned to the Major-Generals substantiates the theory that their work is largely seen in the application of the towns for charters as well as in the election of 1656.¹ Either by prompting the 'well-affected' party to apply, by indicating to the traders of a district or town the advantages likely to accrue from the acquisition of privileges from the Protector—or even, it may well be, by coercion in some localities—these men were doing the duties appointed to them and, by upholding the new policy, were endeavouring not only to stimulate trade and purify civic life but also to placate the populace. A perusal of the names of the constituencies for which these officers were returned is also instructive. King's Lynn, Middlesex, Guildford, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Essex, Nottingham, North Riding, Herefordshire, Carmarthen, Woodstock² form the list. Some of these towns and districts have, it will be remembered, already figured in these pages as being places affected electorally or as recipients of Cromwellian charters, or both. In any case we may infer that Cromwell, as early as 1656, had perceived what the later Stuarts realised and afterwards practised more extensively, namely, that in the corporate towns there lay the possibility of a more effective control of Parliament. If this were so, then the Protector helped to create the precedent upon which Charles and James sub-

¹ See Professor Rannie's article on the Major-Generals, *English Historical Review*, vol. x.

² *Ludlow's Memoirs*, vol. ii. Clarendon Press.

sequently acted. And by carrying the movement to its logical conclusion, we see the Protector helping to place in the hands of these kings the machinery which, perhaps more than any other subsidiary cause, led to the expulsion of James II.

The revulsion of feeling which swept over the country when once the iron grasp of Cromwell was relaxed must account in large measure for the absence of any clue, in the great majority of towns, to any charter granted under the Protectorate. Nor can we wonder at the jubilation of the classes which had so long been subjected to what, to them, was absolutely distasteful. In their minds there was every reason to hasten to forget the years of famine in the anticipation of the fat years that were to come. The symptoms which had made themselves felt so premonitively for many years now appeared without restraint, and the royalist section was in a fever-heat of exultation. This movement, so far as it concerns the charters which Cromwell had bestowed, can be partly estimated by the petitions which appear during the years 1660 and 1661.¹ All those officers who had been ejected from corporations would at once take the necessary steps to be reinstated in their vacated places. We have seen such an instance in our review of the course of events at Reading. There is no evidence as to what happened to the charter granted to that town; but it is possible that in the riot which took place at the meeting of the 17th December 1658 the charter was permanently lost. Certainly the town would never again desire it; and it is almost equally certain that any one possessing it would keep its existence secret.² At any rate the charter is not among those which Reading now holds. If the town is aware of its Protectorate charter, its knowledge is derived only from the records of the period. The instance of King's Lynn is not so conclusive. From the evidence of one painstaking historian of the eighteenth century it is clear that as late as

¹ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1660 and 1661, passim.*

² Reading preferred to buy a new charter from Charles II at the cost of £229 17s. 9d. (*Hist. MSS. Com. 11th Report, App. 7, p. 196*).

1788 he obtained information with regard to Oliver's charter 'from MSS. sent him by two eminent merchants in the town.' It would appear, at first sight, that party feeling in King's Lynn did not wax as hot as in other localities; and, if this assumption is correct, it might well be that the charter escaped the changes and chances of those stormy years.¹ In the case of many towns it is indisputable that all knowledge with regard to Cromwell's charters is buried among the ruins of the Cromwellian administration. It is perhaps certain that many towns would openly exult in the destruction of all that savoured of the late régime. So soon as it became apparent which way the tide of political feeling had turned, after Monk's march to London, their hands would turn instinctively to destroy.

There is clear evidence as to this in the instance of one town which may well stand as a type. Some of the contemporary glosses in the town records of Chipping Wycombe are instructive in the insight they give to local feeling. 'In anno 1647 King Charles marched through this town from Casam towards Woburn';² and to this is added in another hand: 'Mr James Big then being Mayor'; and a third person has supplied this sentence: 'and was afterwards beheaded at Whitehall Gate, upon the 30th day of January, A.D. 1648.' Another person still has written: 'To the perpetuall infamy of the English Nation.' This antiphony of opinion illustrates the sentiment of all England besides indicating the access of the two parties to the town records. In 1657 there is an entry to the effect that moneys were raised for the renewing of the town's charter, by anticipating the rent yearly paid by Jerome Gray for the old Guildhall. At the head of this page some royalist has written, 'This is to gain a charter from Oliver in the Rumpers' time, which

¹ The charter is not now in the Municipal Record Room of King's Lynn. Information through the courtesy of Mr. E. M. Beloe, Borough Coroner, King's Lynn.

² For these details see *Hist. MSS. Com. 5th Report*, p. 555.

charter was burned on the day our most gracious King Charles II was crowned, whom I pray God to send long to reign.' Below this are written, in the same hand, the words, apparently, 'Rumpers' Charter.'¹ The charter itself has not been preserved.

It is, however, perplexing to consider the total disappearance of not only the charters themselves but also any reference to them in town records. If we take one instance only—that of St. Albans—the situation is clearly illustrated. This town, so far as one can judge from the scanty facts extant, no doubt received a charter from Cromwell. It petitioned for one,² and matters went so far in 1656 that the Committee for Charters was instructed to consider the first list of officers under the new municipal circumstances. We also find its mayor and seventy-eight of its inhabitants, earlier in the year, petitioning for improved trade privileges for the neighbouring town of Hemel Hempstead.³ There is, however, no record of the issue of the charter in the Declared Accounts or the Controlment Book of the Hanaper. It is true, as we have seen, that these records are not intact, and the Charter Rolls for our period do not exist. A charter that was actually issued should be enrolled in Chancery; but the incomplete Hanaper Accounts make no mention of this issue. In fact they only refer to the issue of the municipal charters for Marlborough and Blandford although incidentally they refer to other issues; such, for example, as the exemplification to Gloucester. 'The MS. Chancery Index of Patents ends in the year 1655, and there is no bundle of Privy Seals, King's Bills or Warrants for that date.'⁴ But it is the absence of any reference to the charter and the local circumstances which prompted its issue, in the records of St. Albans, which is most strange, unless these records were

¹ *Ibid.* f. 22 b.

² *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, August 1656 (not indexed).

³ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1655-6, p. 374. See also Appendix to this paper.

⁴ *Camden Misc. op. cit.* (Preface).

not diligently kept or else were partially destroyed at the Restoration. The following extract is very interesting: 'Although the town was avowedly Cromwellian there has never been even a suggestion of any return for it locally.

. . . Colonel Coxe who lived near was a great friend of Cromwell, and the latter was often here—otherwise there is nothing in the proceedings of that time to differentiate it from a hundred other towns of the same size. I have looked through the local records for that time and find nothing . . . We had no charter, set of constitutions, municipal insignia, grants to the market, appointment of special local officers, which might be included in the query.'¹

We know also that with the town of Leeds the position is much the same: 'It is to be regretted that the records of the Corporation relating to this period are, with the exception of one insignificant fragment and that not original, irrevocably lost.'² Leeds petitioned for another charter in 1661; and its merchants, clothworkers, and others, the inhabitants of the parish, obtained their request in that year. Colchester also has no record of what happened to the Protectorate charter, and all that is known in connection with its contents is derived from the few facts given in 'The Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series.'³

The Analytical Index to the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, under the Act of 1835, mentions that the charters granted by Cromwell were those to Chester, Gateshead, Newport (Isle of Wight), Salisbury and Swansea. Of course this information is totally inadequate, as a glance at the Appendix will prove, but it is serviceable in that it supplies a clue to what the Commissioners found in the local records. Of the Cromwellian charters possibly only those granted to Chester, Swansea, Gloucester, Newport,

¹ Extract from information courteously given by Mr. C. H. Ashdown, Hon. Sec., St. Albans and Herts Architectural and Archaeological Society.

² See local histories, *passim*.

³ June 12, 1656.

and perhaps that for the College of Durham,¹ remain in existence at the present time. In addition, one may probably add the charter granted to Gateshead. Through the courtesy of Mr. Swinburne, Town Clerk of Gateshead, we learn that the charter granted by Cromwell to the drapers, etc., of that city, disappeared mysteriously some years ago. Fortunately, however, there is a photograph of it in the Public Library. In 1835 the Commissioners described the Chester charter as being written in English, highly ornamented and in the most perfect state of preservation. Gloucester Corporation has possession of its Cromwellian charter.² The following description has been kindly sent by Mr. T. R. Pratt, Town Clerk of Newport (I. of W.): '1655, Oliver, Protector, Westminster, 20 February, 1655. Seal, yellow wax, broken, exemplification of letters patent "Rex (Ed. VI.) Capitaneo Insulae." Parchment in good condition.'³ With regard to Salisbury it is not known whether the cancelled charter is still preserved among the papers of the House of Commons⁴; but it does not appear among similar instruments in the Records of the Exchequer. All the other charters of the Protector are either lost or hidden away in unknown places. 'Not only are the charters Cromwell granted missing in almost every instance owing to the partial loss of the Patent Rolls and the destruction, locally, of the original, but the circumstances surrounding their grant also remain of necessity obscure, requiring as they do for their elucidation a knowledge of local politics at the time and some acquaintance with the local records preserved in municipal archives. It is certain that in many boroughs most of the books previous to 2 Charles II, 1661, are

¹ There is an imperfect draft of a project of Oliver Cromwell (for erecting a new college at Oxford) amongst the MSS. at Queensberry Place, Kensington, *Hist. MSS. Com. 5th Report*, p. 314.

² This information is derived through the courtesy of Mr. G. S. Blakenay, Town Clerk of Gloucester. See also W. H. Stevenson's *Records of Gloucester*, p. 45.

³ This account comes from P. G. Stone's *Records of Newport*.

⁴ *Camden Misc.*, *loc. cit.*

destroyed, and those now existing commence with the acts of the Commissioners under that Statute.' ¹

Considering this state of affairs, it is a matter for congratulation that we have in the case of Salisbury ample details of what ensued in that city upon Cromwell's death, and that at Swansea a piece of marvellous good fortune added to a diligent and intelligent search brought back to the light of day the actual charters of the Protector. They are now at the Guildhall in Swansea. The charter of 1655 is written on four stout skins tied together with string. The laces and the seal are gone and the margin of several skins has been cut, otherwise the document is in good condition except that some ink or reddish liquid has been spilt over the sheets. The charter has a good portrait of the Protector in armour drawn within the initial 'O.' The 1658 charter has been subjected to rough usage. 'It is much crumpled and stained, and on the top the margin is cut away beyond the initial word Oliver, but on the whole it may be said to be in sound condition and the writing legible.' In this charter the seal has gone, but some small fragments of wax yet remain in the folds of the tawny and white laces. Both charters are written in English. The story of the recovery of these charters is extremely interesting and deserves to be more widely known. It is told in the book from which this information of the Swansea charters is obtained.² During the five centuries between 1200 and 1700, Swansea had received nine charters. Two of these were from the Lords Marchers (the De Braose charters), five from kings, and two from Cromwell. For a long period four of these were missing from the muniment room of the Guildhall at Swansea, namely one of a Lord Marcher, one of King John, and both those granted by Oliver. It appeared from the records that Cromwell's

¹ J. H. Round, *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 46; *English Historical Review*, vol. 15.

² Charters granted to Swansea. G. G. Francis (Introductory chapter and *passim*). Mr. Francis has edited these Protectorate Charters with very full and valuable notes upon the charters in their bearing upon the History of Swansea.

charters had been taken by Mr. Gabriel Parker when, about 1730, he had the Corporation papers in his hands as solicitor carrying on some litigation for the borough which caused the town great difficulty, both in the settlement and in obtaining the return of the municipal documents. Mr. Francis being in possession of these facts commenced a long and anxious search, and was eventually rewarded for his perseverance by the discovery 'amongst a mass of old papers in a loft over a stable at Cantreff near Brecon,' of the two Protectorate charters. After some bargaining with a reverend gentleman named Powell, he purchased them for £12, and had the satisfaction of restoring them to their proper custody. With the help of these existing charters the copy of the Salisbury charter, and the details forthcoming from the 'Calendar of State Papers,'¹ together with the several precedents given at the end of W. Sheppard's book 'Of Corporations,'² there need not be much doubt as to the nature of the Protectorate issues. It may well be that the muniment chests of some of our old towns have in their peaceful keeping further treasures for future revelation; but to search through these would be a long and arduous task. All our information for the present comes from such sources as those already indicated together with local history—often a painfully meagre supply.

Two different seals were used in turn for the authentication of the Commonwealth charters, and we know that Cromwell as Protector also used two seals.³ The earlier type was employed for the charter granted to Eton College in September 1655; the latter for Gloucester City Charter in August 1657. The latter seal was also employed by Richard Cromwell. There is said to be little difference between these two seals. The former is bigger and in the latter Cromwell's sword is longer. Thomas Simon, 'an artist of rare capacity and ability made them.' Why the

¹ *E.g.* in the instance of Abergavenny notes of practically the whole of the charter are supplied. See Appendix.

² *Press Mark*, B.M.E. 1912 (2). ³ *Wyon's Great Seals of England*, *op. cit.*

second seal should have been made is beyond explanation. Besides the differences already mentioned, it is said that there are other minute variations, but so minute as to require close inspection to detect them.

It will be instructive to turn now to the events in Swansea and Salisbury which transpired subsequently to Cromwell's death. At Swansea there is no notice in the Corporation records that the burgess mentioned in the charter of 1658 was ever elected, although William Foxwist (formerly connected with the municipal life of St. Albans) represented the town in Richard Cromwell's Parliament. Prior to the Restoration the Corporation simply set aside the charter, and at Michaelmas 1659 reverted to the old order of things and bestowed the title of portreeve upon William Jones. In 1661 the portreeve excluded in 1647 reassumed office; but the records make no mention of his re-election. He had for colleagues at least nine of the aldermen nominated in the charter of 1656; but there are three prominent names absent, Philip Jones, Major-General Roland Dawkins and Matthew David. Of these men two were of course well known as ardent supporters of Cromwell and were highly esteemed by him. Philip Jones sat in Cromwell's House of Peers as Philip, Lord Jones, and became Comptroller of His Highness' household. The only trace of all the privileges granted to the town in the 1656 charter is Cromwell's May Fair, which is still used.¹ This fact illustrates the dependent nature of the municipalities and their indifference to their individual interests. A perusal of the Protectorate charters granted to Swansea shows that Cromwell granted the town considerable power in self-government, but it was apparently willing to set all these aside on its own initiative and relapse into its old state. The country was not ready for Cromwell and failed to appreciate his administration. Swansea received no other charter till the reign of James II, when it slavishly surrendered its former charters and spent £100 in the process.

¹ This is interesting because James's charter (1685) ignored it and re-established three others which were allowed for by the bye-laws of 1584.

The charter it obtained from James, says one writer,¹ 'forms an admirable key to the causes of James's loss of his throne and the political changes involved in his mistakes and misfortunes . . . If the burgesses carelessly accepted his charter the King by an order of council could at any time have suspended their privileges or inflicted heavy fines upon them.'

There was a somewhat different attitude at Salisbury; and a study of the long struggle which had preceded the issue of the Protectorate charter would lead one to anticipate an unwillingness to relinquish the privileges so dearly purchased. The Corporation shows itself loath to lose at least one of the grants made at its request by Cromwell, and they gave good reasons for their desire to retain the acquisition. The citizens do not appear to have taken any leading part in the events which followed after the death of the Protector; but on August 2, 1659, the Mayor and Commonalty were authorised by the remnant of the Long Parliament to act under their former charter and surrender the new charter to the House to be cancelled.² It is, perhaps, to be inferred that the city was uneasy as to the future and desired reassurance in the fluctuating circumstances. At a meeting of the Council, held on August 11, the Corporation seemingly acquiesced in this act, and Cromwell's charter was definitely declared null and void. Moreover, the Council readmitted to its ranks some sixteen aldermen and eighteen assistants and other municipal officers under the terms of its old charter. From knowledge of what had transpired earlier in this period one may perhaps surmise that among these men who now resumed their civic status there would be a large proportion of Presbyterians.

It is to be noticed that while 'our well-beloved' William Stone lost his office of Mayor in yielding place to Christopher Batt, who had been one of the aldermen nominated under Oliver's issue, yet the Recorder, Henry Eyre, was reappointed

¹ G. G. Francis, *op. cit.*

² Hoare's *Wiltshire*, chapter xxxvii. The Town Records of Salisbury are ample for this period.

to his office. The Independents were still a strong element in the municipal situation.

The Corporation again took up its old request and solicited the renewal of Oliver's grant of St. Nicholas' Hospital on the ground that during recent years its disposal by them had been for the 'great relief and maintenance of the Poor of the City, wherewith they were overgrown and burdened by the great decay of trade.' The grant of this hospital had figured largely in Oliver's charter and it was accompanied by stringent rules for the control of its Master and other officers, its accounts, regulations and income. This income was to be devoted 'towards the reliefe of the pore of the said Cittie.' This renewed assertion of the poverty of the city confirms the statement of earlier years that trade had dwindled in the locality, while the fact that the grant had been for the relief and maintenance of the poor bears testimony that, even in the short time the Protector's charter had been in force, it had produced a beneficial result so far as the poor were concerned. The municipal records give evidence of a desperate struggle between the parties. At the next mayoral election the result of the poll perhaps indicates the tone of the city. Of the five candidates put forward for the office Thomas Abbott was chosen. This is another of the fifteen chosen by Oliver as aldermen. Furthermore it is to be noted that the appointment of the officers for the Hospital of St. Nicholas had been placed in the hands of the Corporation (the Mayor, eight or more aldermen, and twelve or more assistants for the election of Master) 'to elect some able, knowing, and sufficient person to be Master and Governor.' Under Cromwell's charter the Corporation elected two of their aldermen to the offices of Master and Steward of the Hospital, namely John Ivie the elder and John Ivie the younger. It is significant that these men were again elected in the altered circumstances.

The name of Antony Ashley Cooper now becomes more prominent in the quickly moving events of the time. He

had played a leading part in the local drama, and with his keen political acumen he saw the direction of the impending storm. He urged the Mayor to take shelter and they two repaired to London to render homage to the King. Cromwell's charter was treated with contumely. The Sword and Cap of Maintenance granted under its provisions were sold; the Sword of State was ultimately broken at the Whipping Post. We have to imagine the dejection of the late triumphant Independents and their gloomy anticipations of the future. The Bishop came back to Salisbury. Robert Hyde was replaced in his position as Recorder. Before the Corporation Act was executed the Mayor and Commonalty were summoned before the Commissioners for Charitable Uses to give account of the purposes to which they had applied the various 'benefactions, gifts and legacies.' When that sinister Act came into force the city naturally experienced disaster. Some thirteen officers were summarily ejected from their positions. Ten others were required to take the oath, and upon refusal were dismissed from municipal service. On the day of their dismissal eight other corporate officers were discharged for no apparent reason. In all, eight new aldermen and twenty-two assistants, besides subordinate officers, were appointed to fill the vacant places. Dr. Gardiner tells us that the Corporation of Salisbury petitioned for a charter from Cromwell to obtain confirmation of the purchase by the city of the property of the Dean and Chapter whilst at the same time they wished for a diminution of their numbers on the ground that the trade of the place had decayed.¹ It seems legitimate to say, however, that at Salisbury the Independents had won another victory. The Presbyterians there had menaced the 'well-affected party,' and as a consequence the Independents (under the clause for reducing the number of aldermen) excluded many of their Presbyterian brethren. There is extant a letter from a Mr. Stephen, who complained

¹ *Gardiner's History*, vol. 3, chapter xliii. p. 292.

that although he had been active in acquiring power and privilege for the city without any charge or cost save only to himself, yet he was turned out and not even referred to by the Mayor in the business of the city. His place was bestowed upon Mr. Eyre, 'who will punish sin, suppress ale-houses and administer justice with greater courage than he himself had done.'

A review of the petitions for the years 1660 and 1661 is interesting, for by their help we actually come in touch with the discontent of the Royalist Party, with the presence, on the municipal bodies, of their political opponents, and with their desire to effect an alteration of the conditions established under the Protector. As we have seen, no time was lost in the case of some towns to effect this change. But the warrant for the Act of Reservation to the Crown of nomination of the first officers was dated May 7, 1661. The Act against Promiscuous Petitioning (13 Charles II)¹ had either not yet been passed or else its influence had not yet had time to make itself felt. The Licensing Act was issued in 1662, so that the instances supplied in the 'Calendar of State Papers' for the intervening period assume considerable interest. They are not too numerous, but yet are sufficient for our purpose. We find Denbigh, Droitwich and Doncaster applying for confirmation of their charters as a reward for the suffering which they had endured by reason of their loyalty. St. Edmund's Bury asked for a renewal of its Charters of Incorporation with the appointment of such corporate officers as the King should see fit. 'During the late troubles things have been done not justifiable by their former patents and many of the present Corporation are not duly elected so that their Government is exposed to danger.' The Mayor of Wallingford petitioned for an 'order to restore those persons still surviving, who in 1647 were ejected from the Corporation by ordinance of the pretended Parliament, for loyalty, when officers and soldiers of the Parliamentary army and others were introduced . . .' He also asked for

¹ C. G. Robertson, *Select Acts*, p. 5.

the annulling of all burgesses elected since 1647, that the government of the town might be rescued from slavery and tyranny. There is a request that factious aldermen may be ejected at Norwich: the Printers and Stocking-Weavers desired the removal of conditions established under Oliver. The Shoemakers of Salisbury complained that the late mayor had detained their charter because they would not receive orders from Cromwell. Finally, we see the commencement of the work of ejection in a communication from Lord Lovelace and five other Commissioners for Regulating Corporations in Berkshire to the effect that they have turned out of the Corporation and secured three aldermen of Newbury, who had refused to take the oath prescribed by Parliament.¹

APPENDIX

A LIST OF TOWNS THAT APPLIED FOR, OR RECEIVED CHARTERS AND GRANTS UNDER THE PROTECTORATE

ABBREVIATIONS

(Reference is to the 'Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Interregnum,' unless otherwise stated.)

- H. of C.J. = House of Commons Journal.
 B.C.H. = Book of the Controlment of the Hanaper in Chancery.
 D.A. = Declared Accounts, Audit Office.
 R. = Roll.
 B. = Bundle.

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|--------------|---|
| Abergavenny. | Committee for Charters to consider petition.
November 13, January 6, July, September 29, 1656-7. |
| Aylesbury. | Petition of inhabitants for a renewal of charter. March 1656-7, April 1, 1658. |

¹ For further instances see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, for years 1660 and 1661 *passim*.

- Aberdeen. See under Glasgow.
- Anglesea. Petition for a weekly market and five yearly fairs. December 1, 1657.
- Bath. Grant of Hospital of St. John Baptist. 1656-7; B.C.H. 664, May 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378.
- Blandford. Committee to consider charter. November 13-18, June 1655-6, Patent of Incorporation, B.C.H. 664, February 26, 1656; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Bromyard. Petition for three yearly fair days. July 5, 1655-6, September 25, 1655-6, July 1, 1656-7.
- Cambridge. Patent to Master and Fellows of Emanuel College. D.A., R. 140, B. 1377, 1654.
- Chipping Wycombe. Committee to consider draft of charter. November, January, February 1656-7; Hist. MSS. Comm. Report V.
- Chepstow. Committee to speak with Governor of Chepstow (Major-General Berry); Heads of Charter prepared by Sheppard, December 1656.
- Chichester. Grant to Mayor and aldermen. B.C.H. December 1656. (Price paid was £8 4s. *od.*)
- Colchester. June, August, September 1655-6; April and August 1656-7; Records of Colchester.
- Chatham. Petition of Commissioner Pett. August 1656-7. Grant of Hospital of St. Bartholomew, D.A., R. 144, B. 1377, 1655-6.
- Chester. Exemplification at request of Edward Bradshaw. March 1654, B.C.H. 663.
Petition from Mayor and Council for Hospital. February 1656-7; August 1657.
See under Newport, I. of Wight.
- Cranley. Grant for two fairs. B.C.H. 664, May 15, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Durham. Petition for erection of a college. Hutchinson's 'History,' vol. i. (which contains full text of the charter); Tracts relating to Durham, 1302-21; Perpetuity for college at Durham, B.C.H. 664, May 27, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.

- Edinburgh. { See under Glasgow.
Petition of Robert Leighton for a grant,
August 25, 1657. He refers to grants
already made to Aberdeen and Glasgow.
- Eton. Wyon's 'Great Seals of England'; September
1658.
- Gateshead. Committee to report on charter (Long-
staffe's article in *Gentleman's Magazine*,
vol. xiii. for 1862). December and Feb-
ruary 1656-7; March 1657-8. (The last
date refers to a petition of the well-
affected of Gateshead concerning the
government of the town.) See under
Newport, Isle of Wight.
- Guernsey. Committee to consider charter. July,
August 1656.
- Gloucester. Petition of Mayor and Council for grant of
Cathedral. July 1656.
Exemplification at request of Mayor and
Burgesses. B.C.H. 664, August 4, 1657;
D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Glasgow. Petition of Patrick Gillespie, Principal of
University, for special grants and issue
of a new charter. March 1656-7. A
charter at Aberdeen is dated June 18,
1658. Robert Leighton obtained a
special grant of £200 for Edinburgh
University. A grant was issued for
erecting a College of Physicians in
Scotland, B.C.H. 664, April 13, 1637;
D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7. See also
Acts of Scottish Parlt. vol. vi. part ii.
passim; *Fasti Aberdonensis*, printed for
Spalding Club, 1854; *Fasti Academise
Mariscallanæ Aberdonensis*, edited by
P. J. Anderson; Acts and ordinances
of the Interregnum, collected and
edited by C. H. Firth and R. S.
Rait.
- Hatfield Chace. Petition for incorporation, August 1656-7.
- Hemel Hempstead. Grant for three fairs yearly. B.C.H. March 4,
1656-7; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
Also 'Calendar of State Papers, Domestic

- Hemel Hempstead. 'Series, Interregnum,' vol. for 1655-6,
p. 374.
- Ipswich. Exemplification at request of Mayor, etc.
D.A., R. 140, B. 1377, September 1653-
September 1654.
- Ilford. Grant of the Hospital of the Blessed Mary.
D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Jersey. Petition against a Patent granted in 1654-5.
August 30, 1655-6.
- Leominster. Petition of John Patshall, Bailiff, for reduc-
tion in number of officers of corporation
from 24 to 13 or 7, 'because there are few
well-affected.'
New officers to be named by Protector.
Complaining of ale-houses, vice, and
wickedness. December 16, 1656-7.
- Leeds. Petition for new charter. December, Jan-
uary, 1656-7.
- Leicester. Letters Patent to all the inhabitants of the
Borough and Town of Leicester. Given
at Westminster under the seal of the
duchy of Lancaster. Hist. MSS. Comm.
Report VIII.
Petition for grant of Hospital. H. of C. J.,
November 21, 1656.
- Lynn Regis,
Norfolk. Petition of Mayor and Council for renewal
of charter. July 1656. 'History of
King's Lynn,' by B. Mackerell.
- Lyme Regis,
Dorset. Special grant to Mayor and Burgesses.
B.C.H. 663; D.A., R. 142, B. 1377,
Sept. 1654-Sept. 1655. (Price paid for
privilege, 20s. 3d.)
- London. Perpetuity to Framework Knitters. B.C.H.
664, June 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378,
1656-7.
Commission to Lord Mayor for conservation
of fish in the Thames. B.C.H. 664,
Sept. 16, 1657.
Patent for special grant to Lord Mayor and
commonalty. D.A., R. 144, B. 1377,
1655-6. (Pardon by patent.)
Petition of Master, Wardens and Company
of Gardeners of London. May 22, 1656.

- London. Commission to Lord Mayor of London. D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7. (Pardon by charter.)
 Proposed charter of incorporation for Eastland Merchants. June 1656.
 Grant to Lord Mayor to purchase coal. 4th Report Deputy Keeper, appendix ii. 1655.
 Petition of Needlemakers for incorporation. Aug. 7, 1656-7.
 Petition of Master, Wardens, etc., of the Parish Clerks of London, Westminster and Southwark for alteration in their charter. Feb. 4, 1656-7.
 Petition of professors of music for a College of Music. Feb. 19, 1656-7.
 Merchant Adventurers. Confirmation of charter. Cal. S. P., Dom. Ser., May 13, 1656. Whitlocke, March 1656.
 Market in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Whitlocke, March 1656.
- Maidenhead. Committee to consider new charter. October 1656-7.
- Marlborough. Petition from Mayor and Burgesses. December, January, March 1656-7; Committee to consider charter.
 Grant of charter. B.C.H. 664, May 5, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Norwich. Petition of Worsted Weavers. H. of C. J., November 1656; Cal. S. P., Dom. Ser., 1655-6, p. 201; Sheppard 'Of Corporations'; Acts of 1653 and 1656. Report of Committee on petition of inhabitants of the Close concerning a new charter and report of counsel learned and John Archer on the charter for Norwich, February 1657-8.
- North Molton. Perpetuity for a fair. B.C.H. 664, July 11, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Newport, Isle of Wight. Exemplification at request of Mayor. D.A., R. 144, B. 1377, 1655-6. Report of Commissioners of Municipal Corporations. They refer also to charters granted by

- Newport, the Protector to Chester, Gateshead,
Isle of Wight. Salisbury, Swansea.
Newcastle. Petition of Wherrymen for incorporation.
Longstaffe's article in *Gentlemen's Magazine*, vol. xiii. for 1862.
- Northampton. Grant of Hospital of St. John Baptist.
D.A., R. 144, B. 1377, 1655-6.
- Ottley. Grant for a fair. April 18, 1657 ; B.C.H.
664.
- Oxford. License in Mortmain of St. John the Baptist
College. B.C.H. 664, March 26, 1657.
Imperfect draft for erecting a new
college at Oxford among MSS. at
Queensberry Place, Kensington. Hist.
MSS. Com., vol. v. p. 314.
- Reading. Grant of a new charter. Hist. MSS. Comm.
vol. ii. 6 and 7. Petition for new
charter, April 1656.
- Ripon. Grant of Hospital of St. Magdalen and St.
John. D.A., R. 144, B. 1377, 1655-6.
- St. Albans. Committee to consider list of names of
persons to be inserted in new charter.
August 1656.
- St. Austin Grant for one market and two yearly fairs.
(Cornwall) B.C.H., 664, Sept. 16, 1657 ; D.A., R. 147,
B. 1378, 1656-7.
- St. Briavell. Exemplification at request of inhabitants.
D.A., R. 150, B. 1378, 1658-9.
- Salisbury. Salisbury Records supplied in Hoare's
'History of South Wilts'; Salisbury
Charter, edited by H. Hall. Report of
Commissioners on Municipal Charters.
See under Newport, Isle of Wight.
- Scotland. College of Physicians. B.C.H., 664, April
13, 1657 ; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
See under Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen.
- Smethwick. Grant for two fairs. March 26, 1657 ; B.C.H.
664, D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
- Swansea. Issue of two new charters. G. G. Francis's
Collection of Swansea Charters. Patent
granted to Mayor of Swansea. D.A.,
R. 144, B. 1377, 1655-6. See also under
Newport, Isle of Wight.

Stony Stratford.	Petition for Market. December, March, 1657-8.
Sudbury, Suffolk.	Petition for renewal of charter. August 6, 1657.
Taunton.	Petition of Clothiers, Weavers, etc. April 10, 1656.
Thame.	Petition of inhabitants concerning market for Aylesbury. March 1656-7.
Thirske.	Petition for alteration of markets. B.C.H. 664, April 30, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
Thorne.	Grant of a weekly market. B.C.H. 665, December, 1658.
Uxbridge.	Petition of Burgesses for confirmation of former liberties and further franchises. Attorney-General to prepare draft charter, Dec. 24, 1657. Referred to Committee for Petitions.
Wakefield.	Petition to regulate market. July 8, 1656-7.
West Riding.	Bill for Incorporation of Makers and Workers of Mixed Woollen Goods. (<i>Mercurius Politicus</i> , Dec. 11-18, 1656.) H. of C. Journal (for other incorporations such as that of Cloth Workers in Exeter and Devon and Norfolk, Merchant Adventurers, etc., see this same source).
Wells.	Petition as to Cathedral, July 1656-7. Another petition, March 23, 1657.
Wisbeach.	Grant for fortnightly fair. B.C.H. 664, July 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378, 1656-7.
Whitehaven.	Grant to Town and Port. B.C.H. Dec. 18, 1656. (Price paid was £8 9s. 0d.)
Woodstock.	Report on Charter. August 1656.
Woworth (Surrey).	Grant of Fair and Market on Shamley Green. B.C.H. 664, May 15, 1657; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378.

The sources indicated also give instances of special grants made to individuals under the Protectorate. A few of these have been selected as types.

A grant to Thomas Banks and Antony Foster for the trans-
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portation of all wool cloths for thirty-one years. December 8, 1658. B.C.H. (ending Michaelmas, 1659).

A Patent granted by the Lord Protector to the Society of the Governors and Assistants of London of the new plantations in Ulster in Ireland. Pardon by charter. April 6, 1656. B.C.H. 664 ; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378.

The like to Colonel John Howson of several lands in Ireland in perpetuity with other things. (£16 18s. 0d.) April 6, 1656. B.C.H. 664 ; D.A., R. 147, B. 1378.

(Duplicates of these charters were issued on July 11 and April 25, 1657 respectively at the price of 20s. 4d. each. B.C.H. 664.)

Patent to John Barrington. D.A., R. 150, B. 1378.

(The Barringtons were relations of Oliver Cromwell. See *English Historical Review*, vol. vi., 'Cromwell's Kinsfolk.')

Grant of one-third of any discoveries that he or they may make to William Murford of King's Lynn in Norfolk and his heirs in discharge of debt owing to him from the Commonwealth and in recompense for faithful services. Fifth Report, Deputy Keeper, appendix ii., 1657.

Grants to Christopher Packe, Thomas Foote, Thomas Andrews, Aldermen of London, out of moneys to be brought in under Act for preventing multiplicity of buildings in London. *Ibid.*

Grant to Lord Launcelot to purchase fee farm rent of Hatfield Chase. *Ibid.*

A Patent of Creation of the dignity of a baronet granted to Sir John Claypole (privilege). D.A., R. 147, B. 1378.

The like to Thomas Howard, Esq. £15 3s. 4d.