

SIR RICHARD ONSLOW.

1603—1664.

M.P. AND A MEMBER OF CROMWELL'S HOUSE OF LORDS.

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF ONSLOW,
President of the Society.

RICHARD, son of Sir Edward Onslow of Knowle, was born in 1603, and in 1618 was admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn. He was Knighted by James I. at Theobalds in 1624. In 1628, he became Knight of the Shire for Surrey, the first of his family to sit for any Surrey Constituency, and according to Speaker Arthur 'laid the foundation of that interest in the County and in the Town of Guildford that our family have ever since kept up.'¹

Edward, his father, was one of the Puritan party which had been increasing in strength under James I., and it is therefore not surprising to find that when his son was elected to Parliament he joined the party antagonistic to the Court, which was largely recruited from those inclining to the Puritan tenets. About eighteen months before the Parliament of 1628 met, Richard had been made a D.L. The Lords Lieutenant were Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, and Viscount Wimbledon, but the real executive power rested with the Deputy Lieutenants, since the Lords Lieutenant had too many other interests to pay attention to the details of County business.

In December 1626 the Army employed on Buckingham's expedition to La Rochelle was returning to England via

¹ The usual printed sources have been used in the compilation of this Article, including the *Victoria County History*, the Public Record Office Calendars, Journals of Parliament, and so forth. Where special points have been introduced from MS. sources at Clandon Park this is indicated in a footnote.

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SIR RICHARD ONSLOW, M.P.
from the painting at Clandon Park

Southampton, and orders were sent by the Council for the provision of billets for the soldiers on their way home. This evoked bitter protests, and a letter signed by the D.L.'s of the County shows the hostility felt in Surrey to the policy of the Court. The whole thing is really rather unreasonable; for the soldiers had to be accommodated somewhere, and they could not have come home by any other route than that of Southampton. Among the Puritan Party, however, Buckingham was loathed, and the expedition was therefore unpopular. This led to protests against the billeting of soldiers, which of course in any event would only have been suffered as a necessity.

Richard's proceedings during the Parliament of 1628 are not of great interest from the public point of view. He does not seem to have taken a very prominent part, as is perhaps not unnatural, seeing that he was but twenty-five at the time. The leaders of the Party in opposition to the Court in this Parliament were Wentworth, Eliot, Coke, Pym and Phillips, and among those next in prominence were Valentine, Strode, Selden and Holles. With the latter of these Richard soon became friendly. Denzil Holles was the second son of the first Earl of Clare. His second wife was a Shirley of Iffield and he thus was a connexion of Richard's by marriage.

The first business of Parliament was to draw up the 'Petition of Right,' an attempt at a settlement with the Crown in regard to the recent illegalities in the raising of money. After much hesitation, Charles consented to its provisions and as the price of his consent the Commons voted him the five subsidies. Having succeeded so far they proceeded to draw up the 'Remonstrance,' in which the evils in the Church were laid to the charge of Laud, and those in the State to that of Buckingham, and the House plainly asked for their dismissal. To this Charles replied by a direct refusal. Next they turned their attention to the grant of Tonnage and Poundage, and declared that the levy of this duty without grant of Parliament was contrary to the Petition of Right. Charles met this by an immediate prorogation.

When Parliament met again after the Recess, Wentworth had changed sides. The murder of Buckingham cleared the way for him and in 1629 he accepted a Peerage and the post

of President of the Council of the North. Eliot now became the principal leader of the Popular Party in the House of Commons. The dispute over the collection of Tonnage and Poundage proceeded. Charles continued to collect it while the Commons persisted in their assertion of its illegality. The Commons summoned the Custom House Officers to the Bar, but Charles accepted responsibility for their acts and ordered the House to adjourn. After a week, a second adjournment was ordered by the King, but this the House refused to accept. Denzil Holles and Valentine held the Speaker by force in the Chair and amidst a scene of tremendous excitement three resolutions were carried declaring innovators in religion and voluntary payers of tonnage and poundage enemies to the Kingdom. Charles immediately dissolved Parliament and arrested ten of the principal leaders of the Lower House, among them Holles.

Richard, now free from his Parliamentary duties, returned to the affairs of Surrey, where he soon became the leading man. From 1629 to 1640 no Parliament was summoned, and the personal government of Charles, Laud and Wentworth had free rein. It is unnecessary to describe the history of those years at length, but it will be remembered that one of the chief sources of grievance was the collection of Ship Money. Ship Money on the whole affected mainly the maritime counties, but its corollary 'Coat and Conduct' money for the maintenance of the land force affected the inland counties. In the State Papers of 1640 we find two letters from Richard to the Lords Lieutenant to the effect that no Coat or Conduct money could be collected. In May he reports that of £600 due only £3 had been paid, and in June the five hundreds of West Surrey refused altogether to pay the impost.

At this time Lords Arundel and Maltravers were associated with Lord Nottingham in the Lieutenancy. Richard seems to have been on intimate terms with all the Howard family. They were Cavaliers whilst he was a Roundhead, but nevertheless their friendship was unimpaired and both were able, in the troubled times in which they lived, to render each other service.¹ Richard was able to procure a composition of only £6,000 for Arundel when his estates were threatened with

¹ Clandon MSS.

sequestration and, after the Restoration, he acted as a trustee of the first Duke of Norfolk, who was insane. With Henry Howard of Norfolk, the brother and successor of the former, he was all his life on terms of friendship.

In 1640 Richard was returned to the 'Short Parliament.' He was a thorough supporter of the Parliament and a firm adherent of Constitutional Government. The County of Surrey followed him. It was too close to London not to rank on the same side. There were of course Royalist gentry, clergy and peasantry and townspeople too, notably in Kingston, but the bulk of the population was strongly for the Parliament.

So soon as Parliament met petitions of grievances were brought in daily. Forty Committees were appointed to examine and report on them and on these reports the Commons acted. As in the Short Parliament, Richard was appointed to be a member of the Standing Committee on Privileges and he also served on other Committees. Furthermore, in 1641 a writ was issued to Richard and ten others to enquire into the boundaries of the Forest of Windsor in Surrey as they stood in the 20th year of King James I. This was to set right the attempt at encroachment made by the King during the last 11 years under the old Forest laws.

To save Strafford and Episcopacy the King seemed to assent to a proposal for the establishment of a Parliamentary Ministry under Bedford, but the negotiations were interrupted by the latter's death, and it was also discovered that Charles had listened to a proposal to incite the Army to seize the Tower and free Strafford. The failure to establish a Parliamentary Ministry, the discovery of the Army Plot and the execution of Strafford were the turning points in the struggle. Till May there were hopes for an accommodation, but after that but little chance remained.

Pym prepared the 'Grand Remonstrance,' a detailed narrative of what Parliament had done, the difficulties it had surmounted and the dangers that still lay in its path. Richard supported Pym, but the 'Remonstrance' was only carried by 11 votes. Shortly after this the King's Attorney appeared at the Bar and requested the surrender of Holles and four others on a charge of High Treason, but the House returned an evasive answer. On January 4th 1642 Charles

himself went to the House to arrest them, but they had taken refuge in the City. The King now resolved on war and left London for Windsor accompanied by the majority of the Cavaliers. The town of Kingston, an important military post and the County Magazine, containing the arms and ammunition for the Militia, was Royalist in sympathy. In January 1642 news was brought to London that Colonel Lunsford, 'wicked Tom Lunsford,' and other Royalist Officers and soldiers had made a rendezvous there, and that Lord Digby had gone to join them. Richard, who commanded the County Train Bands, entered the town with his Militia, but met with a hostile reception. The conspiracy, however, collapsed: Lunsford allowed himself to be arrested, Digby fled.

In 1642 Nottingham was confirmed in his position as Lord Lieutenant, but died on October 3rd of that year. Northumberland succeeded him, but he never appears to have had any real control. This was exercised by Richard. Northumberland's political views resembled those of Richard. He was too much of a Feudal Noble to sympathize with a blind devotion to the King and he held that, while subjects owed loyalty to the Crown, the Crown on its side had obligations to its subjects, which if disregarded must be enforced.

War broke out in August by the King's raising his Standard at Nottingham. Richard established himself at Kingston in the same month with his Train Bands. His Headquarters and those of the Surrey County Committee throughout the war were at 'The Crane.' He set about recruiting in earnest and before the Autumn was over had raised a regiment of Surrey Cavalry, of which he was Colonel, and most of the other Officers were Surrey men.¹ At first the fighting was far from Surrey, and Richard's business was chiefly the maintenance of order. To further this and also to guard the lines of communication on the Portsmouth Road, he established as strong a garrison as he could at Farnham Castle, which he placed under the command of George Wither.

On October 23rd 1642 Charles defeated Essex, though not decisively, at Edgehill. His object was to reach London and after the battle he seized Oxford. Essex in the meanwhile retreated to Northampton and fell back thence to Kingston.

¹ Clandon MSS.

Rupert's cavalry crossed to the south of the Thames and threatened Farnham, which in spite of all Richard's efforts was but ill defended. Wither clamoured for reinforcements and stores which Richard was unable to give him. He consequently went to London, leaving another Officer in charge of Farnham. Subsequently he returned to Farnham and was able to evacuate the Castle with most of his men and material. Nevertheless a charge was made against him for deserting his post, and in defending himself he stated that Richard had ordered him to do so. It does not seem that this was true, though possibly Richard, to get rid of his demands for the impossible, may have suggested that he should go and apply for them himself.

Later, Wither published a pamphlet entitled *Justificarius Justificatus*, in which he stated that in the four hundreds near Farnham there were not six gentlemen well affected to the Parliament, and accused Richard of carrying on clandestine correspondence with the King. He moreover said that he had tried to get him struck off the Rolls of the Justices of the Peace (although he admitted that he had not a legal qualification), and alleged that Richard had supremacy in the County over all causes and all persons, together with much else against him. Richard conceived himself injured by Wither's attack and brought the matter forward in 1646. By the unanimous vote of the House Wither's statement was declared false, scandalous and injurious to Sir Richard Onslow. When, however, the question of damages was raised, the House was not unanimous. It was proposed that Wither should be ordered to pay Richard £500. Cromwell opposed this and divided the House, but he lost by 11 votes.

In spite of the Civil War, an attempt was made by the Royalists to hold the Assizes in Surrey as usual. Mr. Justice Mallett proceeded to Kingston for the purpose, and Richard was directed to apprehend him, whereupon he adjourned the Sessions to Dorking; but Richard followed him thither and arrested him. This action was brought up against Richard after the Restoration and indeed seems to have been the reason for his impeachment for High Treason by the King at Oxford in July 1642.¹

¹ Hist. MSS. Report XI, pt. 5, p 3.

On November 9th the Royalists advanced from Oxford—Rupert's cavalry entered Farnham, but as we have seen Wither contrived to effect a retreat. Charles was advancing towards Kingston, north of the Thames, and Rupert had his Headquarters at Egham. At this juncture Richard found that his troops were in somewhat uncertain temper, for they were Surrey men and sympathized to a certain extent with feeling in Kingston. He thought that possibly they might not relish the destruction that an attempt to force the Thames and a consequent battle might cause at Kingston. For this reason he withdrew from Kingston and the town was occupied by Sir James Ramsey and 3,000 strange troops. Richard joined Essex at Turnham Green.

On November 11th Rupert defeated Essex's advance guard at Brentford, and on November 13th the King and Essex were face to face at Turnham Green. Neither side would risk a battle and Essex fell back to Putney whilst Charles occupied Kingston, but evacuated it a few days later and fell back on Oxford. Waller's troops then entered Surrey, clearing it of the Royalists. In the early days of December Richard occupied Farnham and made his headquarters there. Waller took command of the S.E. Association, which included all the Parliamentary troops of Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, but before we examine Waller's campaign of 1643-44, in which Richard took part, we must turn for a moment to record a matter of very great moment to the future of his family.¹

Richard's grandfather, the first Speaker Onslow, came into the Knowle property at Cranley through his wife Catherine Harding, and Knowle was for about a century the chief place of residence of the family. It is situated almost on the Sussex border and probably Richard found it inconvenient for communication with Guildford, Kingston and London. Moreover, during the war, his military duties kept him on the main lines of communication between London and Portsmouth, and he therefore probably found it convenient to have some more central residence, as at this time he was practically the Governor of the County and in charge of all business, both military and civil. He therefore purchased from Sir Richard Weston, the

¹ Clandon MSS.

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CLANDON PARK IN 1713
from the painting by Kneller, at Clandon Park

representative of one of the oldest Surrey families and a Cavalier in politics, the house at West Clandon.

The general conduct of the war and indeed the administration of the affairs of the Parliament in both England and Scotland was committed by an ordinance of Parliament of January 30th 1643 to the 'Committee of both Kingdoms,' a joint committee of both Houses, consisting of seven Peers and fourteen Commoners. This Committee, from the fact that it met at Derby House, was usually denominated the Derby House Committee. It became the administrative government of the country as well as the headquarters of the army. The Domestic State Papers show that Richard was in constant communication with this body on all matters connected with the war, and it was from them that all his orders were received and to them that his reports were addressed.

By January 1643 Waller had swept Surrey clear, and Richard was established at Farnham to watch the movements of the Royalist troops in the direction of Oxford and to keep open the lines of communication between Waller and London. Waller effectually barred the way of the Welsh and prevented both them and the Cornishmen from effecting a junction with the main body of Royalists at Oxford. Later, however, the King's troops gained ground. Hopton and Grenville won a victory in Cornwall, and Waller in attempting to check their forward march was defeated at Lansdown. This was followed by the fall of Bristol, and Charles besieged Gloucester, but was forced to raise the siege, and after a check from Essex at the first battle of Newbury retired to Oxford. Waller proceeded with the reduction of Hampshire, but the Parliamentary forces met with a stout resistance at Basing House, the centre of communication for the Royalists between Surrey, Kent and Sussex on the one hand and Abingdon and Oxford on the other. The house was large, the walls strengthened by earthworks, and it lay in open country and was difficult for an enemy to approach.

In 1644 Richard was ordered to join Norton. He proceeded to Basing House with the Surrey Red Regiment, two Farnham Regiments, and three troops of Horse, and established his Headquarters at Audwell Priory Manor House. Norton's Cavalry were withdrawn on June 24th to help Manchester in the

North, and Richard therefore remained in command of all the Cavalry engaged in the siege. Fighting went on all through July and part of August, and in October fresh troops arrived from Essex, but owing to the defeat of Waller at Andover in November it was decided to raise the siege on November 17th and Richard fell back on Farnham.

The first period of Richard's active military career was drawing to a close. After the second battle of Newbury, which resulted in failure for the Parliamentary troops, it became plain that to end the war it would be necessary to remodel the Army on new lines. A widespread belief existed that the Parliamentary Officers were prolonging the war to retain their posts and it was consequently proposed that a self-denying ordinance should be instituted, whereby all members of Parliament should resign their Commands within 40 days. This brought about the resignation of Richard from his Command. But he still continued in administrative charge of the County, and throughout the year we read in the State Papers of orders being sent to him from Derby House.

The end of 1645 saw the final collapse of the Royalist cause; some desultory fighting still continued, but with the taking of Basing House by Cromwell in October we may say the end of the war, which really was decided at Naseby in January, was accomplished. Charles wandered aimlessly about, uncertain what to do and unable to raise fresh forces. In the Spring of 1646 he was driven by Fairfax from Oxford and sought refuge with the Scots. Richard, who seems to have entertained a personal dislike for the Stuarts, as he also did for Cromwell, made a speech on this occasion in which he compared Charles to a hedgehog, saying he had wrapped himself for defence in his own bristles. This speech was used against him later and was brought forward as one of the reasons why he should be excepted from the Act of Indemnity in 1660.

In January 1648 the Derby House Committee was reconstituted and Richard became a member.

During the second Civil War, while Cromwell was absent, the most influential among the officers was Ireton. At his instigation the Army drew up the 'Remonstrance' which denounced Charles as responsible for the renewal of the war

and demanded that he should be brought to trial. This was adopted by the Army on November 18th and presented to the House of Commons on November 20th. The Presbyterian majority postponed its consideration for a week and meantime continued to negotiate with the King. The Army replied by seizing Charles and imprisoning him at Hurst Castle, and on December 2nd entered London. On December 6th Ireton, finding that Parliament still persisted in trying to treat with Charles, proceeded to purge the House of the Presbyterian Members. Pride, who commanded a Guard placed in Westminster Hall, arrested 143 Presbyterians who were pointed out to him by Lord Grey of Groby: Holles and Fiennes were among them, and so were Richard and his son Arthur. The latter was not treated harshly, but Richard and 40 others being more conspicuous and having used strenuous efforts to save the King's life and arrive at a fair settlement with Charles were treated with considerable severity. They were conveyed by Pride to the Army Victualling Store near Westminster Hall, called 'Hell,' where they were kept all night without beds, and were afterwards driven as prisoners, amidst the jeers of the troops, through the snow and the rain to several inns in the Strand where they were confined. Richard's captivity did not last long, however, and although secluded from Parliament and turned out of the Derby House Committee, which was reconstituted as the Council of State, he returned to Surrey, where for two years he lived the life of a private person, though still enjoying considerable influence and power. His last act as the Chief of the Surrey Committee was the demolition of Farnham Castle, his old Headquarters. The Castle was destroyed, and the timber, lead, iron, and glass used to pay the arrears due to the soldiers.

We hear nothing of the Onslows, father or son, during 1650, but in July 1651 the Council of State writes to Richard to ask his assistance in raising men to resist the invasion of England by Charles II. and his Scots. In August he received a Commission to raise a regiment of Surrey cavalry and to be its Colonel. He was directed to raise and equip his regiment with all speed and to proceed at once to join Cromwell near Worcester. The orders were issued on August 20th, and so rapidly were they carried out that the regiment was on the road

to Worcester before the month was over. The Battle of Worcester, in which Charles was decisively defeated by Cromwell, took place on September 3rd, but Richard did not reach the Army until the following day. For his non-arrival in time he incurred Cromwell's resentment, and was called 'the Fox of Surrey.' Cromwell may have had some cause to suspect that Richard was not hearty in the cause, as he was a strong Presbyterian, a secluded member, and had never made any secret of his dislike of the fantastic views of the Independents nor of his advocacy of Constitutional Government under a King. Cromwell declared afterwards in the House of Commons that if he had come up in time for the Battle it was uncertain which side he would take. Moreover Richard, in a paper in his own handwriting, states that 'he had been put upon this service to try him and that he hovered about with his Force until he knew that the Battle was over.'¹ On the other hand, to have raised, officered, and equipped a regiment of Cavalry, and brought it from Surrey to Worcester between August 20th and September 4th is no mean feat, and Whitelock expressly states that Richard's troops marched hard to come up in time. As for his own explanation, it seems probable that after the Restoration, when there was some question as to his being excepted from the Act of Indemnity, he may have used the circumstance to engage the good will of the Royalists. One thing it is only fair to say—in no single contemporary document is there the slightest hint against his courage. Richard was a man of strong conviction; he was the antagonist at different times of both the Stuarts and Cromwell; he strongly opposed the execution of Charles I.; and he as strongly advocated the acceptance of the Kingship by Cromwell, and when that failed, the restoration of Charles II. All his life he acted up to an ideal of Constitutional Government under a King. His credit, however, in the case of the Battle of Worcester must suffer on one horn or other of the dilemma—either he was not true to his military duty, or what he said was untrue. Probably Professor Frith's suggestion that the latter is the correct solution is the right one.

The Battle of Worcester over, Richard returned home and disbanded his troops. His military career was now at an end.

¹ Clandon MSS.

During the rest of 1651 and 1652 he seems to have been occupied in private affairs.

In 1653 Richard returned definitely to active politics. Cromwell dissolved the 'Rump' by force in the Spring of 1653, and in July a Parliament was summoned. Neither Richard nor his son was a member of this body. Barebones's Parliament, as the nominated Parliament of 1653 was called, lasted but a short time and was dissolved on December 16, 1653.

Three days later, the 'Instrument of Government,' a new Constitution devised by Lambert, was accepted by the Council of Officers, by which the executive and legislative powers were divided between a Protector, a Council of State, and a Parliament. Cromwell immediately accepted the office of Protector, and was inaugurated at Westminster Hall. It was arranged that the first Protectorate Parliament should meet on September 3rd 1654; so that during the months that intervened Cromwell and the Council of State reigned supreme.

The first Protectorate Parliament was not of long duration. The opposition of the elder Republicans to Cromwell rendered business impossible, and on January 2nd 1655, the first opportunity given to the Protector under the Instrument of Government, he dissolved Parliament. In March, the Penruddock Rising took place, Cromwell crushed the rising by force, and to provide against future disorder, England was divided into eleven Military Districts, over each of which a supporter of his was established as Major General. To the rule of the Major Generals Richard immediately declared himself opposed—so much so that in a letter to Thurloe, Major General Goffe writes that he had some hesitation in including Anthony Shirley in the Commission for Sussex on account of his relationship to Sir Richard Onslow of Surrey.

The elections for the new Parliament were conducted on a new basis. The Counties returned a certain number of Members according to population, and the boroughs were largely disfranchised. In Surrey the Onslows retained their ascendancy, the Members being Richard, General Lambert, Arthur Onslow, Francis Drake, Robert Holman and Robert Wood. Richard's position as a Presbyterian and supporter of Constitutional Government was a somewhat difficult one, and

although he was serving in a Parliament called by the Protector he was doubtless in touch with what was going on upon the Royalist side. In a paper of his own he states that he was engaged to assist Penruddock in his insurrection at Salisbury. Probably he did know of Penruddock's plot, but he was of far too cautious a temper to become deeply involved at the outset in any such schemes.¹ As his paper was written later, it is probable that he claimed more connection with Penruddock than was really the case.

The first Protectorate Parliament was dissolved in 1655, and it was not till the following year that Cromwell again called Parliament together. The House met in September 1656 and for some months business proceeded quietly.

On February 23rd 1657 Sir Christopher Pack presented a paper to the House 'tending to the settlement of the Nation and of Liberty of Property.' The Preamble revealed the secret at once, and asked Cromwell to assume the name, style, title, and dignity of King. The re-establishment of the Kingship had for long been advocated by the less extreme party. Many were swayed by the uncertainty in which the death of Cromwell would again involve the Government if no method of providing for a successor were adopted; others felt that in the event of a restoration of the Stuarts the acceptance of the Crown by Cromwell would give them the protection of the Statute of Henry VII.² Richard was now the head of a strong party of country gentlemen who joined with the lawyers, the majority of the Civilian members of the Council and the Irish representatives against the officers in support of Pack's proposal. The debates on the question raged from February 23rd to Saturday, February 28th. At Richard's suggestion a compromise was effected, which had the result of diminishing hostility and facilitating progress. It was agreed that no vote passed on any part of the scheme during the debates should be binding unless the whole was passed, and the paragraph asking Cromwell to accept the title of King was postponed for consideration till the whole of the rest of the scheme had been considered. After the postponement of the consideration of

¹ Clandon MSS.

² Which protected those who gave allegiance to a *de facto* King in the event of the *de jure* King obtaining the Crown.

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SIR ARTHUR ONSLOW, BART., M.P.
from the painting at Clandon Park

the proposal to re-establish the Kingship the debates progressed more rapidly; the opposition were beaten by 120 to 63 in an attempt to postpone the proposed request to Cromwell to appoint a successor, and on March 5th it was decided to re-establish the two Houses of Parliament. Up to now the matter had proceeded fairly smoothly, as the soldiers felt that the majority of the House was against them, but on March 17th when the question of religion and toleration came up for discussion, the controversy became bitter. The debate lasted from March 17th to March 23rd. Article XXXV. of the Instrument of Government laid down that the Christian religion as contained in the Scriptures was to be held forth and recommended as the 'Public Profession of these Nations.' Parliament went much further on this occasion and attempted to establish a National Church with a definite Creed. This had long been the aim of the Puritans and the proposal was strongly urged by Richard. He moved, and the House accepted, that a 'Confession of Faith' to be agreed upon by the Protector and Parliament according to the rules and warrant of the Scriptures 'was to be asserted, held forth and recommended to the people of these Nations,' and he further carried the proposal that 'no Divine who did not accept the profession' was to be capable of receiving the public maintenance appointed for the Ministry.

The day after the acceptance of Richard's scheme for a National Church, came the postponed debate on the re-establishment of the Kingship. The soldiers made a last struggle against it, but the debate only lasted the day, the division was taken in the evening, and by a majority of 123 to 62 it was decided to ask Cromwell to accept the Crown. Of the Surrey Members, Richard, Francis Drake and George Duncombe voted with the majority, but Arthur Onslow, Lewis Audley and Blackwell did not do so. Three further days of debate were devoted to improving the drafting of the new Constitution, and on March 27th it emerged complete as the 'Humble Petition and Advice.' On April 9th 1657 a Committee of the House of which Richard was a Member was appointed to 'wait' on the Lord Protector and to receive from His Highness any doubts and scruples touching any of the Particulars contained in it, and in answer thereunto to offer

to H. H. reasons for his satisfaction and for the Maintenance of the Resolution of the House; and such particulars as they could not satisfy H. H. in to report to the House.¹ To the surprise perhaps of Richard's Committee they found Cromwell in no haste to enter on the discussion with them. Sometimes he was indisposed and could not see them, and often he pleaded that he was otherwise engaged on important business. Three times however the Committee met him and strongly urged his acceptance of the Kingship. Cromwell said he wished to argue the question on the ground of experience. If the power were the same under a Protector, where, he asked, could be the use of a King? The title would offend men, who by their former services had earned the right to have their prejudices respected. To these arguments Richard replied on behalf of the Committee in a lengthy speech to which Cromwell promised to give attention. To his confidential friends he confessed that his scruples were removed, but he was loth to give a definite answer for fear of the Army. By referring certain passages in the Petition to the House for interpretation he contrived to waste a fortnight, during which time he was in constant consultation with the chief supporters of the project. At length it became rumoured that he intended to accept the title, and immediately Lambert, Fleetwood, and Desborough announced their intention of resigning their Commissions and severing themselves from his Councils for ever. Again Cromwell hesitated, but on May 8th his mind was made up and he summoned the House to meet him at Whitehall. He addressed them and said that neither his own reflections nor the reasoning of the Committee had convinced him that he ought to accept the title of King. If he were to accept it he would do so doubtingly and if it were not of faith it would be a sin. 'Wherefore,' he concluded, 'I cannot take this Government with that title of King, and this is mine answer to this great and weighty business.'

The duty of nominating the members of the Second Chamber had, after considerable discussion, been conferred on the Protector. It was a difficult task, as it was essential that the new Lords should be representative as far as possible of the various

¹ The Committee's sole object really was to persuade Cromwell to accept the Crown.

interests that supported the Commonwealth. Richard and Cromwell hated each other, but Richard was for Constitutional Government, and if he could not have a King he was content with a Protector, so he accepted membership of the new House of Lords. But the jealousy of the House of Commons and the objection of Hazelrig and the Republican Party to the new Constitution was soon to bear fruit. Although styled 'The House of Lords' by Cromwell, the House of Commons, if they referred to it at all, would only do so as 'The Other House.' On January 22nd an attempt was made to enter into communication with the Commons. Two Judges were sent with a message to the Commons in regard to a joint message to the Protector, but the attempt was unsuccessful. The judges were kept waiting an hour and then admitted to the Commons, who told them they would send a reply by messengers of their own. On January 25th Cromwell summoned both Houses to the Banqueting Hall with a view to getting them to reconcile their differences and carry out the Constitution laid down by the House of Commons in 'The Humble Petition & Advice'; but although he spoke strongly, he does not seem to have gained his point.

Hardly had the House met on February 4 (the Clerk at the table had not time to enter more than one name on the list of those present), when Cromwell suddenly entered and took his place on the Throne. After a few words of approval of the conduct of the House of Lords in their 'faithfulness to the Publique interest and their readiness to carry on the Government' he sent Black Rod for the Commons. To them he addressed a speech of angry rebuke. He told them that they were pledged to establish a Second Chamber and he had undertaken the Government on that condition. 'I would not undertake it without there might be some other body that might interfere between you and me on the behalf of the Commonwealth to prevent a tumultuary and a popular Spirit.' 'You granted,' he went on, 'that I should name another House and I named it with integrity, I did, I named it out of men that you can meet wheresoever you go, and shake hands with you, and tell you that it is not titles, it is not lordship, it is not this nor that they value, but a Christian and an English interest. Men of your own rank and quality and men that I

approved my heart to God in choosing.' 'I do dissolve this Parliament,' said he in conclusion, 'and let God judge between you and me.'

So soon as Parliament was dissolved Richard returned to Surrey to look after his affairs at Knowle and Clandon. He was now at the zenith of his career, and his influence stood higher, both in the country and in his own county, than it ever had before. He had been for many years the chief man of the county, and in 1659 became *Custos Rotulorum* in addition to his other offices.

When Oliver Cromwell died, Richard Cromwell, his eldest son, whom he had named to be his successor, succeeded quietly to his father's office. It seems that Monk, who then commanded in Scotland, was one of his chief advisers. Soon after his accession Monk addressed a letter of advice to him, dealing with the chief points of difficulty which would meet the new Protector. The Memorandum is in Clarge's handwriting, and Speaker Arthur Onslow thinks it was drafted by him,¹ but doubtless Richard Onslow had a hand in it as he is one of those whom Monk advises the Protector to call into his Inner Council to assist him in carrying it out. The Memorandum runs briefly as follows:

1. The Religious Difficulty.—Monk advises Richard to call a meeting of 'Godly Divines' with a view to settling the religious strife.
2. Parliament.—Richard is advised to summon Parliament, and as regards the House of Lords to obtain the adherence of as many of the old Lords as possible, adding thereto certain gentlemen of substance and importance of whom he quotes a few names.
3. Retrenchment.—Curtailment in expenditure is strongly urged.
4. Naval & Military Reform.—With a view to cutting down expenses certain measures are recommended somewhat in detail.

Lastly Monk adds that if the line of policy laid down is agreeable to the Protector, he advises him to take the following persons into his Council in order to assist him in

¹ Clandon MSS.

carrying it out: Lord Broghill, Lord Whitelocke, Lord Onslow.

Whether Richard Cromwell ever constituted this small Cabinet does not appear; and, indeed, if he did, his reign was so short that there was scarcely time for anything to be accomplished. Parliament was immediately summoned. It met on January 27th 1659, and Richard Onslow took his seat in the Upper House. On April 8th the Protector addressed a letter to the two Houses, together with a representation signed by Officers of the Army. This representation set forth 'their want of pay, the insolence of the enemies, and their designs together with some in power to ruin the good old cause and bring in the enemies thereof.' It was referred to a Committee, of which Lisle was Chairman and Richard a member, but it was not until April 18th that they produced the draft of a Bill to remove persons who had served against the Parliament from London.

The quarrel between the Parliament and the Army was, however, now reaching a climax. On March 28th the House of Commons had agreed by 198 to 125 to transact business with the Other House. This was a victory for the Army, since the majority of the House of Lords were prominent soldiers. On April 19th, however, the Commons sent two Resolutions to the Lords:

1. Forbidding a General Council of Officers during the Session of Parliament.
2. Forbidding any person to hold a Commission unless he agrees not to disturb the Free Meetings of Parliament.

These two Resolutions brought the quarrel between the Army and the Parliament to a head. Richard Cromwell met the difficulty in the same manner as Oliver had met the difficulty of the quarrel between the two Houses, by Dissolution.

This Dissolution led to the fall of Richard Cromwell. The Army was now supreme, and finding that the Protectorate Government was impossible under Richard, they secured his resignation, and having effected a reconciliation with the Republican Party, they recalled the 'Rump' to the House of Commons. About 90 members returned, among them of

course, neither Richard nor Arthur Onslow were included, as they had been amongst the secluded members in 1648.

The House and Army were soon at variance, but the Army showed signs of division. In Ireland and Scotland the troops protested at the conduct of the English troops, and Monk threatened to march on London and free Parliament from their pressure. He advanced to Coldstream and crossed the border, whence he gradually moved on London, which he entered unopposed and greeted everywhere with cries of "A free Parliament."

Richard had, during his political career, been in close friendship with Ashley Cooper, and he now joined with him in urging the restoration of the Secluded Members. At the instigation of Ashley Cooper, who was now supported by Monk, they re-entered Parliament, but only to secure its dissolution and the election of a new House of Commons. This decision was reached on February 24th 1660, three weeks after Monk had entered London with his troops. A new Council of State was appointed to carry on the Government, and of this Richard was made a Member.¹

Before the Long Parliament dissolved it settled the qualifications for the elections to the new Parliament. Royalists who had borne arms against the Parliament were allowed to vote at the elections, although they were not allowed to be returned unless they had redeemed their fault by giving some proof of their good affections. Members were no longer to promise that they would be faithful to the Commonwealth, as established without King or Lords. An opportunity was thus given for securing perfect freedom of opinion in the elections and fair play to the Royalist Vote.

The Presbyterians, of which party Richard was a leading member, had always been in favour of Constitutional Monarchy, but held no brief for the Stuart family. The Royalists therefore disliked them as much, or perhaps even more, than the Republicans. There were not many Royalists in Surrey, though there were sufficient to show that the Cause was not dead there. Besides these there were a certain number of people who opposed the ascendancy of the Onslows in the county from jealousy and were determined to humble their pride. Richard

¹ Clandon MSS.

played into their hands. He doubtless foresaw the recall of the King, and he determined to show that come what Government there might, he and his family were supreme in Surrey, and to stand with Arthur again for the County, which it must be remembered now would only return two Knights of the Shire. That he had some misgiving is clear, as he arranged with the town of Guildford that the Borough Election should be postponed until the result of the County Election had been declared. In spite of great exertions throughout the County by the Onslows and their friends, both father and son were defeated. Probably had Richard agreed to stand alone he would have been returned, but the Royalist Vote coupled with the feeling of jealousy against two members of the same family attempting to monopolize the whole County representation secured their defeat. Beaten as Knights of the Shire the two Onslows were returned, as previously provided for, in the capacity of Burgesses for the Borough of Guildford and took their seats in the Convention Parliament on April 25th 1660.¹

Richard was still a Member of the Council of State, and was a party to the proceedings preceding the recall of the King, and was present at the scene in Parliament on May 1st 1660. This being so, it might have been supposed that he would be taken into favour by Charles on his return; but the contrary was the case and an attempt was made to procure his exception from the Act of Indemnity on the ground that he had arrested the King's Justice, that he had destroyed the King's Powder Mill at Chilworth, that he had in a speech compared the King to a hedgehog and that he had been indicted for High Treason before the Parliament at Oxford. This does not seem to have been insisted on, but in case the next Parliament might not confirm the Act of Indemnity on the ground that it had been passed by a Convention irregularly called, he took out a Pardon under the Great Seal in practically similar terms to those of the Act.²

Richard was now growing old, and he was bitterly disappointed at the turn events had taken. He still maintained his ascendancy in Surrey and especially in Guildford,³ but his Parliamentary influence was on the wane. He was no longer

¹ Clandon MSS.

² Clandon MSS and Hist MSS Commission Report XI, pt. 5, p. 3.

³ Clandon MSS.

a Member of the Council of State, nor was he given any office in the new Government. In 1664 he died whilst staying with the Duke of Norfolk in London. He was buried at Cranley.

Sir Richard Onslow had gone down to posterity as somewhat of a schemer and a time server. Cromwell called him the Fox of Surrey and vowed that he had 'Charles Stuart in his belly.' Speaker Arthur Onslow says 'He was without doubt a person of great spirit and abilities, very ambitious and much set upon raising himself and his family; but he seems to have had a sort of art and cunning about him which by no means deserves imitation, and can only be justified by the uncertainty and confusion of the times he lived in, which made it very difficult for a man to act in them, whose principles did not lead him to the extremes of any party; and this must be his excuse.' But after a very careful examination of all the contemporary records regarding Richard, we cannot endorse this verdict or that of Cromwell.

Richard Onslow seems to us to have been an honest man with a clear idea of the principles he believed in. He was firmly attached to Constitutional government by King, Lords and Commons. He was opposed to Episcopacy and supported the Presbyterians. He hated tyranny in Charles, in the Army and in Cromwell; but he would support either Cromwell or Charles II. if they would be Constitutional Sovereigns and he would even have supported Charles I. if he had shown any sign of grace in this direction. Perhaps this is why both Cromwell and the Stuarts disliked him—he wanted to limit their power.

It is true he was ambitious and 'set upon raising himself and his family.' This seems to have caused him to make the one equivocal statement which we can convict him of. There is no doubt that he did his best to be in time for the battle at Worcester in 1651. His efforts to raise a regiment and get there in time for the battle were most strenuous, and it is quite extraordinary how much he was able to accomplish in the limited time at his disposal. But Cromwell, who disliked him, was glad to have a bone to pick with him. Later, hoping for some favour from the Stuarts after the Restoration, he tried to make use of this circumstance to show that he really

could have been at the battle but kept his troops back because of his Royalist sympathies. His subsequent conduct from 1651 to 1660 entirely belies this theory. Except for this one incident Richard Onslow was a thoroughly honest man and he never wavered throughout his career in his advocacy of the form of Constitutional Government in which he believed: but he was no respecter of persons and would as soon have Cromwell King as the Stuarts, or vice versa.