The Restoration

*England in the 1660s*

N. H. Keeble
The Restoration
A History of Early Modern England
General Editor: John Morrill

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England in the 1660s

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Preface

I must first express my gratitude to Professor John Morrill, FBA, for giving me the opportunity to write this book. I count myself privileged to have been asked to contribute to the History of Early Modern England series of which he is the general editor and I especially appreciate his taking a chance on one who is not a historian by training or profession.

I owe a considerable debt to the following friends and colleagues for giving their time to read through, and to comment upon, parts of this study: David Bebbington, Professor of History at the University of Stirling; Gordon Campbell, Professor of Renaissance Studies at the University of Leicester; Thomas N. Corns, Professor of English and Head of the School of Arts and Humanities at the University of Wales, Bangor; Mark Goldie, Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge; Richard L. Greaves, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of History at Florida State University. They have rescued me from many errors and infelicities. For those which remain, I alone am responsible.

I must acknowledge, too, how very much I owe to those whose work in the last twenty years has restored scholarly excitement to the 1660s (and to the later seventeenth century in general). In addition to the colleagues I have mentioned, among historians I think particularly of Tim Harris, Michael Hunter, Ronald Hutton, Steven Pincus, Paul Seaward, Jonathan Scott, John Spurr and Blair Worden; and among literary scholars, of Paul Hammond, Michael McKeon, David Norbrook, Annabel Patterson and Steven Zwicker. The many references to them in my notes to this book do not adequately record the extent of my indebtedness to their work. In one respect, however, I have not followed them. Repudiating anglo-centrism, the best current writing on the early modern period is alive to the complex interactions between the nations of the British isles. I, though, make no mention of Scotland, Wales or Ireland. This is not because I have forgotten the Celtic nations, but simply because the title of the series in which my book appears confines its attention to England.
Since, many years ago now, Dr Geoffrey F. Nuttall, FBA, acted as the external examiner of my D. Phil. thesis, he has been for me a model of scholarly accuracy, clarity and integrity. Although in the course of preparing this book I have (unusually) not troubled him with drafts and queries, I should not like something of mine to appear in print without my acknowledging how much in all I write I owe to his inspiration.

I am much indebted to Blackwell Publishers for the understanding and courtesy with which they responded to what became my annual letter explaining that the project was not yet completed. They (and Professor Morrill) have patiently tolerated the inordinate length of time which, because of administrative commitments, it has taken me to finish this book.

I am grateful to the British Academy for an award under its Research Leave Scheme which extended a period of research leave granted by the University of Stirling. To Stirling I am additionally grateful for a second sabbatical in which to finish the book. The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland generously provided a grant to fund travel to libraries.


I dedicate this book to my wife. It is because her life is so firmly rooted in the present that I am able to abscond to the seventeenth century sure of a safe return.

NHK
Abbreviations

Abernathy

Ailesbury
[Thomas Bruce], Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury, The Roxburghe Club, 2 vols (1890)

Baker
Sir Richard Baker, A Chronicle of the Kings of England... Whereunto is Added the Reign of King Charles the First, and the First Thirteen Years of his Sacred Majesty King Charles the Second... in which are... the most remarkable occurrences relating to his Majesties most happy and wonderful Restauration, by the prudent conduct, under God, of George late duke of Albemarle... as they were extracted out of his Excellencies own papers [cont. by Edward Phillips], 5th edn (1670)

Baxter CCRB

Baxter RB
Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, ed. Matthew Sylvester (1696); reference is to part, page and numbered section

BJRL
Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

Bosher

Browning
Andrew Browning (ed.), English Historical Documents, 1660–1714 (1966)

Bulstrode
Sir Richard Bulstrode, Memoirs and Reflections upon the Reign and Government of King Charles the Ist., and K. Charles the IId. (1721)

Bunyan G4
John Bunyan, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1962)
Bunyan *MW*  

Bunyan *PP*  

Burnet *OT*  

Burnet *SOT*  
*A Supplement to Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed. H. C. Foxcroft (Oxford, 1902)

*CH*  
*Church History*

*CHJ*  
*Cambridge Historical Journal*

*CJ*  

Clarendon *HR*  

Clarendon *LC*  

*CSPD*  
Mary Ann Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1658–1670*, 12 vols (1860–95)

*CTB*  

Davies  

Dryden  

*ExHR*  
*Economic History Review*

*EHR*  
*English Historical Review*

Evelyn  

Grey  
Anchitell Grey (ed.), *Debates of the House of Commons, from the year 1667 to the year 1694*, 10 vols (1763); reference is to volume I

*H*  
*History*

Hamilton  

*Harl. Misc.*  
*The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts... found in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library*, 8 vols (1744–6)
List of Abbreviations

Harris
Tim Harris, Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660–1715 (1993)

Henning

HJ
Historical Journal

HLB
Huntington Library Bulletin

HLQ
Huntington Library Quarterly

Holmes

HR
Historical Review

Hutchinson

Hutton CII

Hutton R

JBS
Journal of British Studies

JEH
Journal of Ecclesiastical History

JHI
Journal of the History of Ideas

Keeble

Lacey

Lister
T. H. Lister, Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon; with original correspondence, 3 vols (1837–8)

LJ

Ludlow

McKeon

Marvell CP

Marvell LI
[Andrew Marvell], Last Instructions to a Painter

Marvell P&L

Milton CPW

Milton PL  John Milton, Paradise Lost

Milton PR  John Milton, Paradise Regained

Milton S4  John Milton, Samson Agonistes

Milward  The Diary of John Milward, Esq., Member of Parliament for Derbyshire, September 1664 to May 1668, ed. Caroline Robbins (Cambridge, 1938)


Somers Tracts  John Somers, A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts, ed. Walter Scott, 12 vols, 2nd edn (1809–14)


Steele  Robert Steele, A Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns . . . 1485–1714, Bibliotheca Lindesiana 5, 2 vols (Oxford, 1910); reference is to item number in vol. 1
List of Abbreviations

Thomason  G. K. Forstescue (ed.), *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers and other Manuscripts...collected by George Thomason, 1640–1661*, 2 vols (1908)

TRHS  *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

Whitelocke  [Bulstrode Whitelocke], *Memorials of the English Affairs...or, An Historical Account of what passed from the beginning of the reign of King Charles the First, to King Charles the Second his Happy Restauration* (1682)

Wing  Donald Wing (ed.), *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales and British America...1641–1700*, 4 vols, 2nd revd edn (New York, 1994–8)
A Note on Conventions,
Procedures and Dates

Full details of works referred to by author’s surname and short title are given in an earlier note to the chapter in which the reference occurs. The place of publication of all works cited is London unless otherwise stated. The original spelling of seventeenth-century titles is reproduced, but not their capitalization or punctuation. In quotations from seventeenth-century texts, the spelling and punctuation of the original are reproduced. All dates, following seventeenth-century English usage, are Old Style. The year is taken as beginning on 1 January.
Introduction

No decade in English history opens so decisively as the 1660s. None so dramatically or emphatically announces itself with such splendid public affirmations of security and stability, of right order restored on the ruins of the past; none so loudly heralds a new age. The very date itself, 1660, has a euphonious harmony which, if it no longer has quite the numerological significance or millennial suggestiveness it had for some seventeenth-century witnesses, yet rings in English memory as resonantly as 1066. ‘Great joy all yesterday at London; and at night more bonfires then ever and ringing of bells and drinking of the King’s health upon their knees in the streets’ wrote Pepys in his diary on 2 May 1660, the day after the Convention’s vote that according to ‘fundamental laws’ the government of England was by King, Lords and Commons.1 Those bonfires have burned bright in many a subsequent account of 1660 and of the 1660s. Though there is increasing historiographical awareness that joy was by no means universal or unalloyed in May 1660 (Pepys himself added that it was ‘a little too much’), the ringing of church bells and the fountains flowing with wine continue to provide the key images of the moment of the Restoration: it remains a ‘watershed’.2

With the benefit of hindsight, 1660 does indeed appear to mark a turning-point in history: the end of one story and the beginning of another. There is no denying that Charles II did come back in 1660, nor that monarchy and episcopacy were restored, nor that the republican experiment was never again attempted in England. Some such sense of finality has shaped many accounts of the period, sometimes to the point of taking 1660 to mark the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the ‘long eighteenth century’. At the time, panegyrists, anxious to recommend themselves to the new regime or to secure a patron, developed just this conception of the events of 1660, speaking of a new dawn, a new age, akin to the settling of Rome by Augustus after its civil wars, if not to the universal peace promised by the birth of Christ. In the experience of those who lived through those events, however, 1660
carried with it no assurance of finality. Though the return of Charles II had long been both plotted and resisted, its achievement in 1660 was virtually unforeseen. Contemporaries found only providential explanations sufficient to accommodate an occurrence so swiftly and unexpectedly accomplished, apparently without human contrivance — even, indeed, contrary to human contrivance, ‘without’, as Evelyn put it in his diary, ‘one drop of blood, & by that very Army which rebell’d against [the King]: but it was the Lords doing’.

The Restoration was consequently as startling to its beneficiaries as to its victims; disorientation and apprehension were common to both.

In this predicament, neither tradition nor history offered any guidance. The Restoration was not only unplanned but unique, an event without precedents by which to interpret or understand it. Neither those who relinquished nor those who gained power in 1660 quite knew what had been won and lost, nor how far they might trust to what, contemplating in Samson an image of victorious heroism reduced to powerlessness, Milton called ‘the change of times’. Nor could they have confidence that yet another ‘revolution’ (in the seventeenth-century sense of that term) did not lie in store. No one who had lived through the unprecedented turmoil of the previous twenty years, and particularly through the bewildering eighteen months since Cromwell’s death, had any reason to be confident that this settlement in the affairs of the state would prove more durable than the succession of constitutional contrivances which had succeeded each other with increasing rapidity, accelerating in 1659 to intervals of a few weeks in the increasingly frantic ‘maygame of fortune’ in the ‘braine-sick’ state. Despite the public acclamations which greeted Charles, both he and his Chancellor, Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, were well aware that there could be no guarantee what the enduring loyalty of English people might prove to be. The pamphleteer Marchamont Nedham opined in 1659 that ‘A Great part of the Nation may be said to be Neuters . . . not addicted to any one Party’. Perhaps a good many shared Pepys’s private opinion (after the event) that the Puritans ‘at last will be found the wisest’ and his apprehension (as late as 1668) that the fanatics (as he styled them) and nonconformists might ‘get the upperhand’. Certainly, from the moment Charles landed at Dover, the restored authorities lived in constant fear of plots and uprisings. London’s experience of plague and fire further unsteadied nerves, for these were providences more readily interpreted as divine punishments than as blessings in accord with the great mercy (as the royalists had it) of the Restoration.

And by 1665 there was good reason to suppose there might indeed be divine dismay at the way things were going. If no decade began more confidently, none so quickly slipped into disappointment, disillusionment and resentment. Long before 1670 it was clear that the victors in 1660 were making no better a job, and in many ways rather a worse job, of running the country than had Oliver Cromwell, if not the Republic. From the middle
of the decade what begins to assume the characteristics of a political opposition increasingly challenges the restored regime, drawing its inspiration at least in part from the supposedly discredited 1640s and 1650s. The experience of defeat in the Dutch war unleashed a satirical campaign which demonstrated that the revolutionary aspirations of the Interregnum had not simply vanished overnight and that the clamant vociferousness of the dominant public voice in 1660 had drowned out, but not finally silenced, many other discordant voices. In the end, the 1660s proved inconclusive; they brought back the King, but settled nothing.

‘Restoration’ is, then, better understood as process than as an event, and as a process which never achieves the closure its public propaganda so vehemently claimed. Something certainly happened in 1660, and of momentous importance, dominating the consciousness of everyone who lived through the ensuing decade. What had occurred, however, and what it might mean for the future, were questions which admitted of answers only as the decade developed, and, even then, the answers were neither single nor simple: save in the narrowest political sense, there was not one Restoration but many. This diversity of experience and expectation is the subject of this book. Its interest is in the anxieties and tensions, insecurities and bewilderments through which the decade represented itself in personal terms; in the rival models of the past and the future, and the competing efforts to vindicate the one and to secure the other, which shaped political and religious life; in the reactionary and the innovative in a cultural sensibility poised between the medieval and the modern, between Renaissance and Enlightenment; and in the interactions through which notions of personal, church and state identity were received from the 1650s and passed to the 1670s. The Restoration it sets out to describe is not a tidy affair and certainly not a finished affair. For this reason, there are very few conclusions in this study.

Consequently, though it aspires to coherence and accuracy, this is not primarily a narrative account of the events of the 1660s. Its progress is in the main chronological, but it is structured around a series of topics which are explored largely through the versions of their experience compiled by those who lived through the decade. From this point of view, it matters less whether or not they constitute accurate historical records (if we may still suppose there are any such documents) than that they reveal the aspirations and fears of their writers. This book is interested in the construction of identities, in roles and role-playing, in culturally supportive or subversive myths, in perceptions, claims and counter-claims. It therefore depends heavily upon diaries, journals and memoirs, upon contemporary chronicles, polemical tracts, pamphlets and newspapers. It is no wonder that anyone writing on the 1660s with this kind of bias should call Pepys in evidence, but here he is accompanied not only by Evelyn but by Lucy Hutchinson, by Clarendon, Baxter, Burnet and a host of others. Milton, Dryden, Marvell, Bunyan and Rochester are also among those
called in evidence, for, though they may take up genres and conventions which derive from literary precedent and tradition (often, ultimately, classical or biblical), their matter is immediate and to hand in the 1660s. *Paradise Lost* may very well be an epic for all time, but it is also emphatically a poem of and for its age. As a result, this study has a more literary side to it than is perhaps usual, or to be expected, in a study which appears in a History of Early Modern England series. It does, however, also take up with acts of parliament, though again with as much interest in the preconceptions and assumptions they articulate as in the details of their legislation: despite the implicit claim to a kind of omniscient and impartial justness in their formulaic and legalistic language, their sense of the significance of the past, the duty of the present, and the shape of the future is no less specific or partisan than that of the republican Edmund Ludlow, let us say, or the Quaker George Fox.

These various names might give us pause. An extraordinary thing about the decade is that it is quite the richest yet in our cultural history in diaries, memoirs and other kinds of autobiographical writing. There are a host of particular motives for these – apologetic, confessional, memorial, exculpatory, polemical, laudatory and so on – but inescapably an unprecedented number and variety of individuals felt compelled to get their experiences down on paper. Literary scholars are much exercised by the history of subjectivity, which they tend to find especially interesting in the Renaissance, that is, in England, in the sixteenth century and in Elizabethan drama. In truth, however, it is the 1660s which are the decade of ‘what I felt, what I smartingly did feel’.¹⁰ We are now all well schooled in the irrecoverability of history, in its textuality, if not fictionality; yet there remains the incontestable fact that, with all the qualifications we might wish to enter about the shaping effect of the circumstances of their production, here are texts which had authors compelled into words by what they felt, and authors for whom we are the readers addressed: posterity is their intended audience. No previous decade had been so determined to have its voice heard by subsequent decades. This study tries to listen.
1

The Return of the King
(1658–1660)

1 The Fall of the Protectorate (September 1658–April 1659)

‘All Men wondred to see all so quiet, in so dangerous a time’ wrote the Puritan minister Richard Baxter of the autumn of 1658. The death of Oliver Cromwell on 3 September signalled no discernible quickening of either royalist or republican pulses. There was no sudden or general upsurge of public opinion either against the Protectorate or for a return to monarchy: ‘Contrary to all expectation both at home and abroad, this earthquake was attended with no signal alteration’, recalled Charles II’s Chancellor, Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon. Nor, though ‘all the commonwealth party’ may have ‘cried out upon [Richard’s] assuming the protectorship, as a high usurpation’, was there any concerted attempt by republicans to undo what they saw as the perversion of the Good Old Cause into the tyranny of rule by a single person: ‘There is not a dogge that wagges his tongue, soe great a calm are wee in’, observed John Thurloe, Oliver’s, and now Richard’s, Secretary of State. The Humble Petition and Advice, the Protectorate’s constitution since 1657, empowered Cromwell to name his successor, but this was managed ‘so sleightly, as some doubt whether he did it at all’ reported John Barwick, future Dean of St Paul’s, in a letter to Charles II. Nevertheless, despite the want of any formal or written nomination, Richard Cromwell’s succession was generally accepted not only without opposition but with signs of positive relief. The proclamation of his succession was acclaimed in London and provincial cities, and a hundred or more loyal addresses were received in which ‘the Counties, Cities, and Corporations of England sen[t] up their Congratulations, to own him as Protector’. National stability and civic welcome marked the inauguration of the second Protectorate. The experiment of the major-generals had caused resentment, and there was no escaping the ultimate sanction of military power which legitimized Cromwellian rule, but in its later years the increasingly traditional and
conservative manner, court and constitution of the Protectorate had begun to win confidence in what was beginning to appear to be a settled form of government. Many were impressed that Cromwell’s foreign policy was more to the credit of a Protestant nation than that of the Stuarts, and many were coming to recognize that in significant respects the experience of Cromwellian rule was more liberal and humane than that of Charles I, particularly in its quite exceptionally generous policy of religious toleration, its allowance of an unusual degree of freedom to the press, and its aspiration to reform the law. All the indications were that the Protectorate would survive.

The welcome in the country at large was not, however, matched in the estate upon which the Protectorate depended, the Army. As Protector, Richard Cromwell was constitutionally its commander-in-chief. It was in this role that his father had been supremely successful, demonstrating superlative qualities as a military leader and forging bonds of loyalty through war. This exceptional achievement only accentuated Richard’s complete lack of military experience. His younger brother Henry, or any one of a number of senior officers, were better qualified to exercise high command. The unfavourable comparison with his father and the estimate of his character which became current was succinctly put by the fiercely republican Lucy Hutchinson in her memoir of her regicide husband, Colonel John Hutchinson: Oliver’s ‘son Richard was a peasant in his nature, yet gentle and virtuous, but became not greatness’; he ‘had not a spirit fit to succeed his father, or to manage such a perplexed government’.5 Upon Richard Cromwell’s succession, Charles Fleetwood, as lieutenant-general of all the army the highest ranking officer, did secure the signatures of the senior officers of the armies of England, Scotland and Wales to a loyal address, presented to Richard two weeks after his father’s death, to which he responded with undertakings to promote only ‘Men of known Godliness and sober Principles’, to maintain ‘an equal and just Liberty to all Persons that profess Godliness’ and to improve Army pay, as the address desired.6 This was reassuring, but the Army wished supreme command to be vested in Fleetwood and, as he himself wrote in October to Henry Cromwell, had ‘a great desire, that the good old spirit may still be kept alive’. That spirit, more republican in politics, more enthusiastic in religion and more extreme in temper than Richard Cromwell’s, led to confrontations between him and Army officers in October and November, but Richard’s appeals for unity and loyalty reassured his critics, at least sufficiently to permit Oliver’s state funeral on 23 November to pass without incident and to allow the issuing of writs in December for a new parliament.7

Tension between ‘Commonwealthsmen’, or republicans, who resented rule by a single person, and Cromwellians (‘the Court Party’ to its opponents), Presbyterians and crypto-royalists sympathetic to such rule, doomed the parliament which met on 27 January 1659. The former shared a deep-rooted suspicion of the constitution of the Protectorate and of Richard as inadequate
defenders of the republican ideal. They feared, wrote one contemporary chronicler, ‘that the Protector did intend to cast them out of their Places, and put the Army into the hands of the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation, thereby to bring in the King’. The traditional inclinations of the latter preferred the Protectorate to a Republic and disrelished the Army’s role in government. The shape of things to come was intimated by the House’s inability to agree to a bill in recognition of Richard’s right and title as Lord Protector and Chief Magistrate, and this despite every member having sworn on taking his seat to ‘be true and faithful to the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth’.\(^8\) However, though coherent and committed as a group, republicans had no clear majority in the Commons. While they could delay business and prolong debates, members of a more conservative temper continued to recognize Richard as the chief magistrate and to co-operate with the House of Lords, whose constitutional identity republicans did not accept. The result was stalemate: ‘The proceedings at Westminster’, wrote Barwick in February to Hyde, ‘are so full of distraction, that it is probable they will end in confusion. For the one party thinks the protectorists cannot stand, and the other that the commonwealth cannot rise.\(^9\) While the Protectorate’s legislative arm was thus being effectively crippled by republican filibustering, the republican campaign was being conducted still more vigorously outside parliament. *The Humble Petition of Many Thousand Citizens to the Parliament*, presented on 15 February, called for the restoration to parliament of supreme authority and a succession of tracts promoted the Good Old Cause by presenting the Protectorate as a threat to Army power, to civil liberty and to religious toleration. Their heady and inflammatory mix of biblical oracles, apocalyptic imagery, millenarian expectancy and Fifth Monarchist fervour incited agitation and civil disobedience.\(^10\)

This fervour outside the House served only to stiffen resolve within not to yield to military, republican or enthusiastic demands. Although republican members such as Sir Arthur Haslerig, Sir Henry Vane and Thomas Scot spoke in its favour, the Commons rejected the *Humble Petition*. It appeared increasingly willing to criticize all that had been done by the Rump Parliament, to circumscribe the national church more narrowly, to limit toleration, to favour the peers and, in the case of some members, even to contemplate monarchy. Nor was anything done to meet the Army’s pressing pay arrears. Both it and Richard came increasingly to be seen as more sympathetic to moderates and to Presbyterians than to the Army and to religious radicals. Certainly, men like Baxter, politically conservative and deeply opposed to Oliver Cromwell, invested in Richard Cromwell great hopes of religious and political recovery for the nation. What to his Army critics might appear Richard’s lamentable want of military experience was to Baxter his strength: since he ‘never had any hand in the War’, he might ‘be used in the healing of the Land’: 
Many sober Men that called his Father no better than a Trayterous Hypocrify, did begin to think that they owed him 

Birth their Rightful Sovereign... But they were astonhished at the marvellous Providences of God, which had been against that Family all along, and they thought that there was no rational probability of his Restoration, having seen so many Armies and Risings and Designs overthrown, which were raised or undertaken for it: They thought that it is not left to our liberty, whether we will have a Government, or not; but that Government is of Divine Appointment; and the Family, Person or Species is but of a subservient, less necessary determination: And that if we cannot have him that we would have, it followeth not that we may be without... 11

As Army grandees and Commonwealthsmen alike found themselves increasingly dissatisfied with the direction Richard and his parliament appeared to be taking, approaches were made in late March by the Wallingford House party (so known from Fleetwood’s London residence where the senior officers met) to the republican Edmund Ludlow, and through him to Vane and Haslerig, to attempt to forge a joint policy. This new resolve produced a challenge to the civil authority and to Richard in The Humble Representation and Petition of the General Council of the Officers of the Armies of England, Scotland and Ireland of 6 April, which called upon Richard to support and promote the Good Old Cause, to act against royalists now prominent in London, and to meet the Army’s arrears of pay. It was an ominous flexing of military muscle. To it Bulstrode Whitelocke, at this time one of the Keepers of the Great Seal, traced ‘the beginning of Richard’s fall... set on foot by his relations; [John] Desborough who married his Aunt, and Fleetwood who married his sister, and others of their party’. Baxter was implacably hostile to the ‘Firebrands of the Army’, to ‘the Sectarian party’ and to those he called ‘the Vanists’, but he understood well enough the power struggle that was taking place:

when they saw that he [Richard] began to favour the sober People of the Land, to honour Parliaments, and to respect the Ministers, whom they called Presby-
terians, they presently resolved to make him know his Masters, and that it was they and not he, that were called by God to be the chief Protectors of the Interest of the Nation’. 12

The Commons, however, was unresponsive when Richard forwarded this petition to them two days later and the rift with the Army became unbridge-
able when, on 18 April, the House resolved that commissioned officers should subscribe an undertaking not to disrupt its proceedings and, by the over-
whelming majority of 163 votes to 87, that the General Council of Army Officers should not meet except with the approval of the Protector and both houses of parliament. Even as this motion was before the Commons, Richard attempted to assert his authority by dissolving the General Council and
ordering officers in London back to their regiments. On 21 April the Army in return demanded the dissolution of parliament. In this contest, troop loyalty was to their senior officers rather than to their notional commander-in-chief, Richard. Bereft of military support, Richard had to submit. The compliance of the Commons was secured on 23 April by the simple expedient of locking and guarding the doors to the House.¹³

Following this coup, ‘All matters were at a stand’, observed Whitelock.¹⁴ This was to be the first of four Army interventions in public affairs within the next year. In each case, again in October, through Lambert, in December, through Fleetwood, and in February 1660, through Monck, the result was constitutional uncertainty and administrative disorder while political thinking strove to catch up with events. On this occasion, in the absence of a parliament, the Council of Officers (a smaller body than the all-inclusive General Council), sitting at Fleetwood’s residence, Wallingford House, assumed the constitutional authority to govern. The inclination of these grandees, bound to Oliver and his legacy by personal, familial and professional ties, was to preserve the Protectorate, with or without Richard as its head. However, the body of Army opinion, as expressed by junior officers, was religiously enthusiastic and politically republican and this carried the day. On 6 May the General Council issued a declaration in which, observing that ‘the good Spirit, which formerly appeared among us, in the Carrying on of this Great Work, did daily decline, so as the Good Old Cause itself became a Reproach’, it invited the return to government of those former ‘eminent Assertors’ of the Cause who had sat as members of the purged Long Parliament between December 1648 and 20 April 1653. In its reply, the restored Rump readily accepted the Army’s contention that there had been a ‘special Providence of God’ with the members of that assembly and resolved ‘not to neglect this opportunity…for the Prosecution of what yet remains of their great Trust’. Prudently, but ominously, neither they nor the Army chose to recall that it was their failure in that trust which had led the Army itself forcibly to turn them out in 1653.¹⁵

2 The Rump Restored (May–September 1659)¹⁶

Some 42 MPs assembled on Saturday 7 May out of what the House itself took to be a total of eligible survivors of the purged Long Parliament of 78.¹⁷ This rump of a rump comprised the core of radical, enthusiastic and republican opinion in England, to its supporters the essence of the revolution; but it had less show of legitimate authority than any regime since the execution of Charles I. Though ultimately dependent upon the military might of Cromwell, Barebone’s Parliament and the Protectorate parliaments could lay claim to some constitutional legitimacy. This body sat solely by the authority of the Army, to which it was twice indebted, for its original formation in 1648 and for this