

INVESTITURE OF OLIVER CROMWELL

Edmund Prestwick

26 June 1657

In Westminster Hall, at the upper or south end thereof, there was built an ascent, whereon was placed the chair of Scotland, brought for this purpose out of Westminster Abbey and here set under a prince-like canopy of state. Before His Highness, and below him, was set a table covered with pink-coloured velvet of Genoa, fringed with fringe of gold. On this table, besides the Bible, sword, and sceptre of the Commonwealth, were pens, ink, paper, sand, wax, etc., etc.

Before this table, on a chair, sat Sir Thomas Widdrington, the Speaker to His Highness and the Parliament. At some distance were seats built scaffold-wise, like a *theatrum*, where on both sides sat the Members of His Highness' Parliament, and below were places for the Aldermen of London and the like.

After all things were thus ordered, the Protector came forth out of the council room adjoining to the Lords' House, and in the order following proceeded into the Hall.

First went His Highness' gentlemen, two and two
A herald
Aldermen of London, two and two
A herald
Edmund Prideux, His Highness' Attorney-General
The judges following of both Benches
John Glyn, Lord Chief Justice
eter Warburton and Richard Newdigate
Justices of the Upper Bench
Barons of His Highness' Exchequer
Robert Nicholas
John Parker
Roger Hill
Norroy, King at Arms
Commissioners of the Treasury
Commissioners of the Great Seal of the Commonwealth, and their officers, *viz.*,
Commissioner Nathaniel Lord Fiennes, carrying the Great Seal
Commissioner John Lord Lisle
William Lenthal, Master of the Rolls
Officers attending, *viz.*,
Henry Middleton, Sergeant-at-Arms
Mr. Brown and Mr. Dove.
Garter King at Arms

Before the Protector came first, Robert Earl of Warwick, with the Sword of the Commonwealth, bare-headed, on the right-hand; and on the left, the Lord Mayor, Tichborn, carrying the sword of the City of London, bare-headed. His Highness, Oliver Cromwell, richly dressed, habited with a costly mantle of estate, lined with ermines, and girt with a sword of great value, His Highness' train supported by three generals, bare-headed and armed with drawn swords. Close to His Highness followed the Members or Lords of the other House—*i.e.*, House of Lords—in order, two and two.

In like manner, in order, two and two, were the Members of the Parliament, as knights of the counties, citizens of the cities, and burgesses of the boroughs and towns, and Barons of the Cinque Ports of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Of which first came those of England, the County of Middlesex and the

northern counties leading the way; as Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, and so in like manner. Besides these, were many persons of distinction, and no small number of Scotch and Irish nobles.

Installation of His Highness

The Protector, with loud acclamation, was enthroned, being seated in the Chair of State. On the left hand thereof stood the Lord Mayor, Tichborn, and the Dutch Ambassador; the French Ambassador and Robert, Earl of Warwick, on the right.

Behind the Protector stood his son, Lord Richard Cromwell; Charles, Lord Fleetwood, lieutenant-general of the army; John, Lord Cleypole, Master of the Horse to His Highness; and the Privy Council, of whom, as of the nobility, were the Earl of Manchester, Lord Wharton, and Lord Mulgrave, the rest being very much their inferiors. Upon a lower descent stood the Lord Viscount Lisle, Lords Montague and Whitlock, with drawn swords.

The heralds in the name of His Highness and the Commonwealth commanding silence, then the Speaker, Sir Thomas Widdrington, in the name of the Parliament, presented to His Highness, Oliver Cromwell, a rich and costly robe of purple velvet, lined with ermines; a Bible, ornamented with bosses and clasps, richly-gilt; a rich and costly sword; and a sceptre of massy gold. At the delivery of these things, the Speaker made a short comment upon them and on the ceremonies thereof, which he addressed to the Protector, dividing them into four parts, *viz.*,

First, the Robe of Purple. This is an emblem of magistracy, and imports righteousness and justice. When you have put on this vestment, I may say you are a gown-man. This robe is of a mixed colour, to show the mixture of justice and mercy. Indeed, a magistrate must have two hands, *plectentem et amplectentem*—to cherish and to punish.

Second, the Bible is a book that contains the Holy Scriptures, in which you have the happiness to be well-versed. This Book of Life consists of two Testaments, the Old and New. The first shows *Christum velatum*, the second *Christum revelatum*—Christ veiled and revealed. It is a book of books, and does contain both precepts and examples for good government.

Third, here is a Scepter, not unlike a staff, for you to be a staff to the weak and poor. It is of ancient use in this kind. It is said in Scripture, that “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”¹ It was of the like use in other kingdoms. Homer, the Greek poet, calls kings and princes scepter-bearers.

Fourth, the last is a sword; not a military, but a civil sword. It is a sword rather of defence than offence; not to defend yourself only, but your people also. If I might presume to fix a motto upon this sword, as the valiant Lord Talbot had upon his, it should be thus, *Ego sum Domini Protectoris, ad Protegendum Populum meum*—I am the Lord Protector’s, to protect my people.

This comment or speech being ended, the Speaker, Sir Thomas Widdrington, took the Bible and gave the Protector his oath.

After the administration of the oath, Mr. Manton, who for this purpose was appointed, made and delivered a prayer wherein he recommended the Protector, Parliament, Council, the forces by land and sea, government, and people of the three nations to the protection of God. Which being ended, the heralds, by loud sound of trumpet, proclaimed His Highness Oliver Cromwell Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions and territories thereunto belonging, commanding and requiring all persons to yield him due obedience. Then did the trumpets again sound and the people with loud shouts cried, “Long live His Highness! Long live His Highness! Long live His Highness! Huzza, Huzza, Huzza!”

¹ Genesis 49:10

Silence being commanded and His Highness being respectfully saluted, he rose from the chair of estate and descending, proceeded as follows, himself leading the way:

The Protector, his train carried up by the Lord Sherard, Warwick's nephew, and Lord Roberts, his eldest son. After followed those who had before inarched in the first of the procession; the Protector and these returning in the same posture to the great gate or entrance of the hall, without which was a state coach ready to receive His Highness. The Protector being now seated in his coach, with him sitting opposite at one end was Robert, Earl of Warwick, Lord Richard Cromwell, his son, and Bulstrode, Lord Whitlock, in one and Philip, Lord Viscount Lisle, and Lord Montague in the other boot, with swords drawn; and the Lord Cleypole, Master of the Horse, led a horse of honour in rich caparisons to Whitehall. The Members, two and two, proceeded to the Parliament House, where they prorogued their sitting to the twentieth of January.

At night were great proclaimings of joy and gladness, both in London, Westminster, and the surrounding towns, villages, and hamlets. On this occasion, for His Highness and the Parliament were ensigns armorial of their power; which signs or tokens of honour were commanded to be engraven and cut on seals for the sealing and stamping all public writings.

The Great Seal of the Commonwealth was a large circle, having thereon the Protector bare-headed, mounted on mare-back, attired in a short coat or jacket of mail, over which was a military sash, placed over his right-shoulder and under his left-arm, tied behind; pendant to his left-side a large and broad sword, his right-hand grasping the head of a truncheon, which he holds before him, one end resting on the pommel of the saddle, his left-hand holding the bridle. Behind, on the space on the sinister side, and near the top, was a civic shield with four quarters; the first and fourth with the Cross of Saint George for England; second, the Saltier or Cross of Saint Andrew for Scotland; and third, the Harp of King David for Ireland. On the margin of this side the seal, these words, *Olivarius, Dei Gra. Reip. Angliae, Scotiae, et Hiberniae. etc., Protector.* On the other side of the broad seal, the like arms as that for proclamations, as before described, only with this difference, the mantling lamberquined with four doublings or folds. On the margin of this side, *Magnum Sigillum Reipub. Angliae, Scotiae, et Hiberniae.*

John Towill Rutt, ed. *Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), II:511–515.