

“ANNIS 1651 & 1652”

BY RICHARD SCHLATTER

SOME years ago the Library acquired, in a miscellaneous lot of books bought from a bookseller, an interesting English manuscript of the 17th century. The manuscript contains 482 large folio pages bound in one volume. On the back of the volume

51

are two numbers written one above the other: 52. On the front cover is written “Annis 1651 & 1652.” In the upper left-hand corner of the front cover is pasted a slip of paper on which is written the number “42”; but the slip of paper is torn off on the left so that the number may once have read “142” or “242” etc.

The text, written by several seventeenth-century hands, consists of short, numbered entries divided into 67 parts for the year 1651 and 66 parts for the year 1652. Thus an entry can be cited, for example, as “1651, Prima Pars, No.10,” or “1652, Secunda Pars, No.1.”

Each entry is a reference to a transfer of real property—most of the entries record the sale or lease of manors, messuages, heriots, and fee farm rents, but a few record the creation of annuities secured by land, transfers of land by will, and so on. Each entry gives the names of the parties to the contract, describes very roughly the property transferred and its location, and most of the entries record the price paid by the buyer or lessee. In the right-hand margin opposite each entry is written the name of the county (or London when that city is involved) in which the property mentioned in the entry is located; and all the counties of England are represented.

A large number of the entries record the sale or lease of lands which had once belonged to the Crown, the Church, and prominent Royalists who had fought for Charles I. The Commonwealth Government had confiscated these lands and in the years 1651 and 1652 a large proportion of them were sold. The entries here show that Oliver Cromwell and other important Commonwealth officials were prominent buyers of the land which they had confiscated, a fact which has already been well-established from other sources. Along with these notations of property sold by the government are many entries recording the transfer of real property between private persons.

The following entries illustrate the general form of the manuscript:

s

Leistersh

1

London

1

London

1

Somershi

1

Devonsh

1

London

(1652 Vicesima Octava Pars No.19). Skynner was one of the trustees for the sale of confiscated lands, and the lands of the Duke of Buckingham had been confiscated. There is a reference to Cromwell and the Manor of Dalby in W. C. Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. II, pp. 560, 561.

John Ridley Staioner of Lon of one pt & Peter Cole
 Staioner of tother pt 80 Those 2 Mess in Flete Street One
 cald ye Old Castle & tother cal'd ye Hatt & feathers

(1651 Nona Pars No. 7)

Cole Bosvile etc. Trustees of one pt & James Stedman of
 Lincolns Inn & Jasper Edwards of ye same Gent of tother
 In fee farme Rent all yt M of Great Compton Com
 Som̄ wth ye App being pcel of ye Poss of ye late Bishop
 of Bath & Wells paying therefore yearly 56 18

(1651 Prima Pars No. 2) Col. William Bosvile was one of the Trustees for the sale of Church lands.

Sir Henry Vane of Fair (?) Lamie (?) Com Kent to
 Henry Baker of Cullumstocke Com Deṽ Gent 2200 M
 of Cullumstocke wth ye lands rents & all other App
 All wch prmises were late Poss of ye Deane & Chapter of
 ye Church of Exon

(1651 Tertia Pars No.36)

Isaac Pennington Alderman of Lon to Rich Turner of
 Southwarke 290 All those Mess & Hered in Chimney
 Alley in St Stephens prsh in Coleman Street wth all ye App

(1651 Nona Pars No.32)

In seventeenth-century England transfers of real property were usually recorded on the Close Rolls of the Court of Chancery. The

Rutgers manuscript appears to be a calendar or index of these records for the years 1651 and 1652. The Close Rolls of the Chancery are now in the Public Record Office in London and that Office has some manuscript calendars—one famous series is known as the Palmer Indexes—which are similar in form to the Rutgers manuscript and are cited as this manuscript would be: a reference from the Palmer Indexes might read “Close Roll 1640, Prima Pars, No. 1.” It is probable that a search in the Public Record Office would tell us exactly what the Rutgers manuscript is.