

THE
SCOTTISH REVIEW.

JULY, 1898.

ART. I.—THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS IN SCOTLAND.

ON the map of Lowland Scotland one finds in places the name Temple, marking here a parish, and there, it may be, a farm, a hamlet, or a croft. The name, of course, is a relic of the presence and possessions of the order of Knights Templars in our country—the only relic and memorial of itself which the order has left on Scottish soil. Elsewhere throughout Western Europe, and even in the Mohammedan East, material remains not unworthy of the power and glory of the greatest military order of mediæval Christendom have endured till modern times. The ruins of the Pilgrim's Castle are still to be seen on the coast of Palestine, frowning over the perilous defile which, about the time of the Third Crusade, it was built to guard. In all its rich store of antiquities Cyprus has nothing more splendid than the noble halls and churches, which were the abode of the order in its later years. The last king of the old *régime* in France passed to the guillotine from the fortress whence his predecessor, almost five centuries before, had dragged the last Grand Master of the Temple to torture and death. The grey walls of more than one preceptory still stand among the meadows of England, and in the central throng and roar of London, the order has bequeathed to the Inns of Court not its name only, but also,

in its chapel, one of the finest and most venerable examples of Gothic art. Scotland alone possesses no tangible memorial of these monkish knights whose pride and riches once provoked the fear and envy of kings. Other monastic orders have left tokens enough of their presence to give beauty and melancholy to our landscapes. Black monks and grey, Cistercians, Augustinians, Praemonstratenses—one sees their ruined churches and cloisters rising in the heart of busy towns, or above the roofs of sleepy villages, or, in some quiet and fertile valley, peeping from amidst immemorial trees. Even the Knights of St. John, the masters of Rhodes and Malta, have their memorial in the church of Torphichen. But the Templars are without a monument. Chapel and preceptory have vanished.

‘ The Knights’ bones are dust,
And their good swords rust,’

and the place of their sepulchre is remembered here and there only by some vague and doubtful tradition, in the mouths of country folk, of ‘the Templar’s grave.’* Nothing but their name is left, haunting ghostlike and impalpable the ancient scenes of their habitation.

This utter lack of monuments is unfortunately accompanied by a great deficiency of written record. Our old chroniclers, while sometimes describing the exploits of the Templars in Palestine, never mention the organisation, estates, or membership of the order at home, nor does the list of our extant monastic chartularies include any collection relating to a preceptory of Scottish Templars. The early extinction of the order and the probable fact that most of its Scottish muni-ments were kept elsewhere than in Scotland will help to account for this want of information. The result at any rate is that for an account of the Templars in our country we have hitherto had to rely on the compilations of Father Augustin Hay and the careless Spottiswood—compilations extremely

* At Inchinnan, for example, and in the churchyard of Inchcaillach in Lochlomond. *New Statistical Survey*, Vol. VII., p. 124. Guthrie Smith’s *Strathendrick and its Inhabitants*, p. 101.

meagre and sometimes misleading. It is not possible, of course, to supply this defect in any adequate fashion, or to do for the Scottish Templars what has been done for their English brethren in the work of C. G. Addison. Yet by bringing together the few scattered references in old records and charters one may perhaps succeed in giving a slightly more copious and precise account than has hitherto been offered of the position occupied in Scotland by that famous military brotherhood, which, at the date of the battle of Bannockburn, was already a thing of the past.

The order of the Knighthood of the Temple—*Militia Templi Jerosolimitani* as it was styled in common official form—must have been introduced into Scotland very soon after its foundation. It was in 1118 that Hugh de Payens and Godfrey de St. Omer, two knights of Northern France, drew around them the little band of crusaders sworn to the defence of pilgrims on the dangerous roads between Jerusalem and the seaport towns of Palestine, and in 1128 the society, already largely increased by an eager throng of the most devout and adventurous warriors of Frankish Christendom, received confirmation and a code of rules from Pope Honorius II. at the Council of Troyes in Champagne. Hugh de Payens, the founder and first head of the order, was present at that Council, along with St. Bernard of Clairvaux, its great eulogist and legislator, and immediately afterwards he made a journey through some of the Western kingdoms, exhorting their princes and nobles to help the new brotherhood and send succour to the Holy Land. In Normandy he was honourably welcomed by King Henry Beauclerk, who sent him over to England, ‘and there,’ in the words of the English Chronicle, ‘he was received by all good men, and they all gave presents to him ; and in Scotland in like manner. And moreover they sent to Jerusalem great wealth in gold and silver. And he invited people out to Jerusalem ; and there went along with him and after him so many people as more had never done before since the first expedition during the days of Pope Urban.’

One may imagine the warmth of the welcome which the Templar would receive in Scotland from the devout King

David, who at this time had been four years on the throne. The year 1128 saw the foundation of the monastery of Holyrood and the building of the great abbey church at Kelso, and in all probability it witnessed also the gift of those lands on the South Esk in Midlothian which general tradition represents as David's benefaction to the Templars. At all events there is no doubt about the king's devotion to the new military brotherhood, since Ailred of Rievaulx tells us that he kept some of the brethren constantly at his court and made them judges and advisers of his conduct by night and day.* After all, this may be accounted but moderate devotion for an age wherein saints could become the panegyrists of the Templars, and a monarch could bequeath them his kingdom. Natural enough too it was, since the order embodied three of the great mediæval ideals which were at the height of their popularity in the century between Godfrey of Bonillon and Richard of the Lion Heart. As vowed to celibacy and the renunciation of all private aims, the Templars shared in the reverence paid to monasticism: as professed men-at-arms they attracted the admiration due to the knight and the warrior, while as the sworn foes of the infidel and guardians of the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem they represented the crusading spirit. They were the very model and mirror of Christian chivalry, and the days were still far distant when hideous stories of their greed and pride and profligacy should find credence or foundation.

It was of course the very reverence in which the Templars were held that served most effectually to destroy the pristine severity and humility of the order. The guides and guardians of pilgrims in the Holy Land were rapidly transformed into the standing army of the Latin Kingdom in the East; the 'poor comrades of the Temple' were the objects of so much devout munificence that within a century they had become the lords of some nine thousand manors† in different parts of Europe. This accumulation of property soon made it necessary for them

* *Eulogium Davidis*, in Pinkerton's *Lives of the Scottish Saints*, edition 1889, II., 276.

† *Matthew Paris*, IV. 291.

to frame a huge organisation in which the countries of Western Christendom, as well as the Levantine regions, were embraced. The Templars' proper sphere of duty and activity was of course in Palestine, where the brethren fought continually against the Saracens, and where the Grand Master had his headquarters at the so-called Temple of Solomon on Mount Moriah. But the territorial possessions of the order had also to be looked after, and thence arose the system of preceptories, and the great scheme of provincial hierarchy and organisation. Fortified houses, each, as a rule, with a chapel attached to it, were built on the principal estates, and served at once as offices for administration of the lands, as places of retirement for sick and aged brethren, and as centres for the reception of recruits. The Templar who was put in charge of one of these houses and who bore rule over its inmates, was called a Preceptor, from the *precipimus tibi* with which his commission began, and the establishments themselves, naturally termed preceptories, were grouped in provinces, each governed by a master or prior, according to the kingdom in which they chanced to be situated. Western Europe was thus divided into eleven provinces, of which two were allotted to Italy and three to the Spanish peninsula, four to the territory corresponding to the modern kingdom of France, and one each to Germany and England. Scotland never attained provincial rank, but, along with Ireland, formed part of the English province. As the whole order was ruled by the Grand Master at Jerusalem, so the Scottish houses and possessions were under the government of the Master of the Temple at London, which was the chief English house. This subordination is amply proved. In the inquisitions made at the dissolution of the order it was stated as a notorious fact that the brethren of Ireland and Scotland had always been subject to the English Master, and the Scottish Templars themselves admitted that they took their orders from him.* It is significant also that grants of land belonging to the order in Scotland were some-

* Raynouard *Monumens Historiques*, p. 259. Wilkins's *Concilia*, II. 368-71, 380.

times at least made at the Temple in London, and that the common seal of that house was appended to documents signed in Scotland and relating to the Scottish possessions.*

At the same time, although in this strict subordination to England, the Scottish Templars had a chief of their own who was usually styled the Master, but sometimes the Preceptor, of the House (or Knighthood) of the Temple in Scotland—*Magister Domus (vel Militiæ) Templi in Scotia* †—and who had his headquarters at Ballantrodach in Midlothian, the principal house of the order to the north of the Tweed. The name Ballantrodach has long ago vanished from the map of Scotland, but the significant name of Temple, which has succeeded it, and which designates the modern parish wherein the preceptory and its lands were situated, is the most notable vestige of the order that Scottish geography has to shew. The ruined church of Temple, which stands picturesquely on the banks of the South Esk a few miles above Dalkeith, is of a later date than the dissolution of the order, and apparently there are now no remains of the preceptory, although from a tradition rather vaguely reported by Augustine Hay, it seems that ‘the foundations of a vast building and the root of several big pillars of stone’ were discovered at some time in the seventeenth century, in a garden in the neighbourhood.‡

In this vanished preceptory, whatever was its situation, the government of the order in Scotland was carried on, and its business administered. Charters relating to the Templars’ lands were granted at Ballantrodach, and there also payments by and to the order were appointed to be made. The last preceptor who was ever stationed there, told the inquisition who examined him, that he was chief preceptor in Scotland, and had charge of all the order in that kingdom—in subor-

* Unpublished Charter in the Scottish Register House, by Robert de Stamford, Master of the Temple in England (c. 1250), relating to land in Falkirk. See also *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, II. 293.

† *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, I. 37. Rymer’s *Fœdera*, II. 572. *Rotuli Scotiæ*, I. 4, 5, 33. Stevenson’s *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, I. 220. *Ragman Rolls* (Bannatyne Club), 139.

‡ Account of the Templars, p. 7, in *Templaria* (Edinburgh, 1828).

dination, of course, as has been already said, to the English Master, whose vicegerent he was, and whose chapters at London he was obliged to attend.* The names of only a very few of these Masters of the Temple in Scotland have been preserved. A certain Bartholomew was Master some time between 1165 and 1169, and about 1180 the office was filled by Ranulf de Corbet, probably a member of that Roxburghshire family, lords of Clifton and Makerston, who appear as benefactors of the Abbey of Melrose. These apparently are the only Scottish Masters before the end of the thirteenth century of whom anything can be known. †

The Templars in Scotland of course enjoyed a full measure of those great and various privileges, both temporal and spiritual, the possession of which made their order one of the most favoured societies in Christendom. To understand their position, however, one must avoid the error of regarding them as ecclesiastics. They were monks only, not clerks; although sworn to chastity, obedience, and poverty, they possessed, no more than the meanest layman, any of the mysterious power and sanctity of the priesthood. But at the same time, the extraordinary meritoriousness of their vocation—for what higher or holier calling could there be for a layman than to fight, as Saint Bernard phrased it, the battles of the Lord?—gained them some important privileges which were strictly proper to the clergy, and some which made them even more highly favoured and advantaged than the great majority of ecclesiastics. By the great Bull of Pope Alexander II., known as *Omne Datum Optimum* (1163), they were not only exempted from payment of tithes, but were allowed to hold tithes themselves. They might have chapels and cemeteries of their own, and the priests whom they engaged as chaplains were not to be subject to any other authority than that of the order. In effect, the Templars and all their dependants were withdrawn from the ordinary episcopal jurisdiction, and made subject

* *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, I. 37; *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, II. 293; Wilkins's *Concilia*, II. 356, 368, 380.

† *Reg. de Dunfermline*, pp. 57, 418; *Reg. Ep. Glasg.*, I., 37.

directly to the Pope and to him alone. One very notable privilege was that which allowed the churches in any place lying under sentence of interdict, to be opened once a year on the arrival of any brethren of the order who might come for the purpose of collecting alms.* Obviously it was expected that the faithful, in gratitude for this relaxation of the interdict, would give bountifully for the succour of the Holy Land, and in order still more to provoke their liberality a remission of penance was promised. From the canons of the Scottish Church,† however, it appears that this privilege was sometimes abused by the Scottish Templars to the extent not only of admitting excommunicated persons to divine service, but even of allowing the bodies of such persons, and of public robbers and violators of churches, to obtain the rites of Christian burial.

Still more liable to abuse (although we do not hear any complaint of it), must have been the right of girth, or sanctuary, which was recognised as belonging to the Templars' houses as well as to those of the Knights of St. John. It was to their character as *crucesignati* that the Templars and Hospitallers owed this privilege, which strictly was an adjunct of churches and churchyards, and the token of it, as well as of the many other exemptions enjoyed in common by the two orders, was the cross which they engraved upon all buildings belonging to them. In the comprehensive charter‡ granted by Alexander II. to the Scottish Templars in 1236, there is formal recognition of this right of sanctuary as applying to murder, robbery, and other crimes of violence—*flemyngyrth, murthir et latrocinio et forsemento*. The tradition of the privilege lingered for centuries after the right itself had been abolished, and there is an odd story of an old woman, so late as the beginning of the present century, taking refuge in a

* Wilcke, *Geschichte des Tempelherrenordens*, II. 230.

† Robertson's *Statuta Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, II. 17.

‡ *Reg. Ep. Aberdon.*, II. 269; and *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1424-1513, No. 1791.

Temple tenement and defying the town officers to lay hands on her in that secure retreat.*

In the charter by Alexander II. which has just been mentioned, and the terms of which are in great part a mere repetition of a similar document granted by Henry III. of England in 1227, † the various civil privileges enjoyed by the Scottish Templars are enumerated and confirmed. They held their lands not only with the common feudal rights of *sac* and *soc*, *tol* and *theam*, *infangthief* and *outfangthief*, but also, as in *perpetuam elemosinam*, with freedom from all feudal aids and exactions, whether for the king himself or his ministers. They were exempt from *scot* and *gild*, from attendance with the king's host and in his courts, from the casualties of ward and relief, and from all services connected with the royal castles, fleets, parks, and houses. Any lands which they might reclaim and cultivate, even within the bounds of the royal forest, were to be exempt from the forest laws. Finally in fairs, harbours, and markets, and on highways and bridges, no dues or tolls were to be taken from the Templars or their serfs or tenants, while any fines or forfeitures incurred by these dependents were to be made over to the order. The extraordinarily privileged position of the military orders as landlords can hardly perhaps be better indicated in brief and in fine than by a quotation from a charter of William the Lion, granting certain lands to the Priory of St. Andrews 'with the same freedom from all custom, service, and exaction as is everywhere enjoyed by the brethren of the Hospital and of the Temple.' ‡ Evidently the conditions on which the Templars held their lands were regarded as a model of the most favourable kind of tenure.

The estates thus possessed were scattered over nigh every part of Scotland, from Drumfriesshire and Wigtown north to Forres, Nairn, Inverness and Dingwall. In fact, as one may see from the letters issued by Edward I. in favour of the

* *Abstract of Chartulary of Torphichen*, Introduction, p. 3.

† Dugdale's *Monasticon*, VI. 844.

‡ *Reg. Prior. St. Andreae*, pp. 227, 264.

Templars in 1296, there was but one Scottish sheriffdom—that of Argyll—in which they owned no lands.* Their particular estates, however, it is as a rule impossible to identify, for in the aggregate of so-called Temple Lands, familiar to every Scottish lawyer and antiquary, they are confused with the original possessions of the Knights of St. John who succeeded to the property of the Templars on their suppression. But the mere extension of the name of Temple Lands to the estates of the Hospitallers would suffice, even if we had no more effectual means of definite comparison, to show the preponderance of the Templars' possessions. From a report, however,† which was made in 1333 by Prior Philip de Thame of the Hospital, it appears that the Scottish estates of the Templars exceeded in value those of the Hospitallers in the same country by a third. The Templars in Scotland, it is there said, used in time of peace to pay as 'responsions,' or annual contributions to the headquarters of their Order, the sum of 300 merks, while the Hospitallers paid only 200 merks. Responsions were usually fixed at one-third of the gross receipts of the order in any district, so that the annual income of the Scottish Templars before the outbreak of the desolating War of Independence must have been about £600. After the vague statements one often sees about the vast wealth of the Templars, this sum will perhaps appear strikingly small. Not only is it, at the most, a mere fifth of the annual income of the order in England—a difference due doubtless in great part to the comparative poverty of the northern kingdom—but, as may be seen from the ancient rental of Kelso,‡ it was inferior even to the revenue in some cases enjoyed by a single Scottish abbey. It is clear that the Templars in Scotland, though fairly well endowed, were not, for so popular an order, burdened with extravagant wealth.

The bulk of their possessions was doubtless situated in the Lothians. Round the preceptory of Ballantrodach their lands

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, II. 724.

† *The Knights Hospitallers in England* (Camden Society), pp. 129, 201.

‡ Morton's *Monastic Annals of Teriotdale*, pp. 161-179.

(part of which, as appears from a charter of the year 1350 in the General Register House, was obtained from the second or third Alexander) stretched down the Esk to Carrington and Harvieston, and up towards the Moorfoot Hills by Halkerston, Utterston, Rosebery, and Yorkston. In the richer flats towards Gullane and Aberlady, they had the acres which afterwards became the barony of Drem. Temple Liston, the older name of Kirkliston, shows their presence on the Almond in Linlithgowshire, which is proved also by the mention of their neighbours at Liston in the Inquisition of 1309; but the fine old Norman church at that place was not in their hands. At Falkirk and in the carse around it they had land and salt pits. Like most of the better endowed monasteries, they owned property in Berwick, that great and wealthy seaport, which seemed to the chronicler of Lanercost a second Alexandria, while in Glasgow, as yet a poor episcopal burgh, struggling hard against the oppression of Rutherglen, they possessed, by the gift of Bishop Jocelin, a tenement (probably in the Stockwell) worth twelve pence yearly, and a right of fishing in the yet unpolluted Clyde.* The Temple Lands in Rutherglen itself may be set down as belonging to them, seeing that letters on their behalf, but not on the Hospitallers', were addressed by Edward I. in 1296 to the *vicecomes* at that place. Spottiswood, copying blunderingly from the inquisition of the English Templars' lands made in 1185, † has spoken of their house at Oggerston in Stirlingshire, and in this he has been incautiously followed not only by George Chalmers, but also by so learned and careful an antiquary as Cosmo Innes, who, in one of his books, includes the name of Oggerston as the site of a preceptory of Knights Templars in a geographical index of mediæval Scotland. As a matter of fact, however, '*baillia de Ogereston, apud Stiucle,*' was not in Scotland at all,

* Bain's *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, III. 432; *Chartulary of Newbottle*, 86, 127, 134; *Chartulary of Holyrood*, 83; *Reg. Prior. St. Andreae*, 344; *Reg. Ep. Glasg.*, I. 37; Charter in Scottish General Register House; *Abstract of the Chartulary of Torphichen, passim*; *Processus contra Templarios in Scotia* in Wilkins's *Concilia*.

† Dugdale's *Monasticon*, VI. 829.

but within the territory belonging to the English earldom of Huntingdon, and the Templars' lands there were granted to them by one or another of the kings of Scotland as holder of that fief. Stiucle is not Stirling, but Stewkley in Huntingdonshire, while the ruins of Oggerston may be found marked on any map of that county a few miles to the south of Peterborough.

Oddly enough the Scottish possessions of the Templars of which we have most knowledge were those lying in the remote district of Deeside, in Aberdeenshire and the Mearns. Shortly before 1239 Walter Bisset, the head of that powerful family which within a few years was to come to ruin through the suspicion that its members were concerned in the murder of the young Earl of Athole at Haddington, built a house for the order in what was then the undivided parish of Culter. This house, which is the only Scottish preceptory we know of besides Ballantrodach, was erected on the south side of the Dee, where also was situated the greater part, if not the whole, of the land attached to it. Blairs, Tulichezirt, Estirtully, Kincolsy or Kincausy, and the two Deliburries or Tilbouries are still recognizable in the geographical nomenclature of the present parish of Maryculter.*

Within a few years the possessions of the order on Deeside were augmented by a grant of the church of Aboyne, some thirty miles up the river, which was conveyed *ad proprios usus* by Ralph, the Bishop of Aberdeen, between 1239 and 1249. By the terms of the grant the Templars were bound to maintain a vicar in the church, and to present him, duly qualified, to the Bishop, to whom he should be answerable in spiritual matters and for the cure of souls, while to the Templars he was to account for the temporalities of his benefice. It is significant of the position of Scotland in the Templars' hierarchy that this episcopal donation was confirmed by Pope Alexander IV. in a Bull addressed to the Master and brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple in England. That the rights thus conferred on the Order were exercised we have evidence in

* *Liber de Calchou*, I., 191. *Reg. Ep. Aberdon.*, II., 288-93.

the record of the presentation of a certain John of Annan, King's Chaplain, to be vicar of Aboyne in 1277.*

Ten years later the Templars were engaged in an arbitration concerning their lands at Culter, and from a copy of the sentence, fortunately preserved in the episcopal chartulary of Aberdeen,† we get a most interesting glimpse of their relations with the ecclesiastical orders in Scotland, and of the kind of disputes to which their extraordinary privileges gave rise. The parish church of Culter, which embraced under its jurisdiction both sides of the Dee, belonged to the Monks of Kelso, who had obtained from Pope Urban, IV. an indult to the effect that no one in any of their parishes should rebuild any church or chapel without their consent. In spite of this the Templars had lately rebuilt the chapel at their preceptory at Culter, and also refused to pay the tithes due from their lands. The monks therefore asked for payment of the tithes, and for the destruction of the chapel. To this the Templars replied by a reference to their privileges. They were exempted, they said, from the payment of tithes from waste lands which they had brought into cultivation, and in such a category were the lands of Estirtully, Kincolsy, and the two Deliburries, as well as those of Tulichezirt and Blairs, which had formerly been part of the royal forest. Farther, it was their privilege in these waste lands to erect churches with cemeteries for themselves and their vassals and also for wayfarers. The parish church of Culter was on the north bank of the Dee, and, as the river had no bridge, their men, living on the other side, often could not get to mass without danger. On this account they had built the chapel, with cemetery and baptistery, at their house at Culter, and had possessed it peaceably, along with the tithes of their lands, for more than forty years. The dispute, after reference to arbiters appointed by the Pope, was settled in 1287 by a compromise very favourable to the Templars, who were allowed to keep their chapel and teinds, but adjudged to pay, as compensation to the monks of Kelso, the sum of eight marks a year. The

* *Reg. Ep. Aberdon.*, II., 271, 272.

† *Ibid.*, 288-93.

result of this virtual disjunction of the southern part of the parish is seen in the existence of the two parishes of Peterculter and Maryculter at the present day.

The average number of Templars in Scotland is, of course, not ascertainable, yet by inference we may conclude that it was but small. At the extinction of the order there were between two and three hundred members in England, and, if we keep in mind the wealth of the Templars there, represented by a revenue of more than £3000 a year, and the multitude of their preceptories, which were about forty in number, it cannot be imagined that the brethren in poor and sparsely-peopled Scotland, with their income of some £600 a year, were ever more numerous than forty or fifty.* This, however, is not to say that the order contained on an average no more than forty or fifty Scottish members. Until the fall of Acre in 1291, the great majority of the Templars, made up of men of all nationalities, must have been stationed at the various posts in the Holy Land, while even after that event most of them would naturally be found at the headquarters of the order in Cyprus. We know, too, that Knights were received in any preceptory, and were moved about from one kingdom to another. Thus, for example, a certain Robert the Scot, in his examination by the English Inquisitors in 1309, admitted that he had twice been received into the order—once at the Pilgrim's Castle in Palestine, and the second time, after desertion and repentance, at Nicosia in Cyprus. Again, Robert de Hamilton, who was examined at Lincoln in the following year, said he had been admitted at the preceptory of Dynnesley in Hertfordshire.† And yet again we hear of a Richard Scot received as a serving brother at Paris, and of a John Scot admitted at a house in the County of Ponthieu.‡ Doubtless, therefore, there were Scottish Templars stationed from time to time in many parts of Western Christendom, as well as in

* Addison's *Knights Templars* (second edition), pp. 103, 467. *The Knights Hospitallers in England*, *passim*.

† Wilkins's *Concilia*, II., 345, 365.

‡ Michelet's *Procès des Templiers*, I., 292; II., 36, 132-3.

the East, while, on the other hand, knights of other nationalities must have been often sent to the Scottish houses. In most cases these knights would naturally be Englishmen, and it is noteworthy that all the Templars mentioned in the Scottish Inquisition of 1309 as being quartered in the Scotch preceptories are also described as born in England. The Templar, of course, had no nationality from the moment he assumed the red cross. He was the soldier of Christendom, and not of any particular country or kingdom, and so could pass from one realm to another, finding everywhere, in the prior and preceptory of his order, the only master and home that he owned. In Scotland this general cosmopolitanism must have well accorded with the peculiar character of the Scottish knights. These would, in almost every case, be members of the Norman baronial class, introduced by David I. from England, and in ways of thought and feeling, and often, too, from family interest, they would generally be more in sympathy with Englishmen than with the people among whom they lived.

Although there exist no remains of any preceptory of Scottish Templars, we may be sure that the houses of the order to the north of the Tweed were of the same kind as those in England. The ruins at such places as Temple Bruere in Lincolnshire and Temple Balsall in Warwickshire, show a half-baronial, half-monastic type of structure, with strongly fortified towers, and enceinte enclosing a stately hall which served for refectory, and a chapel which, like that of the Temple in London, appears sometimes to have been of circular shape. Of this type, doubtless, though on a smaller and humbler scale, were the Scottish preceptories at Ballantrodoch and Culter. The Templars who inhabited them were of three classes, knights, chaplains, and serving brothers.* The knights, who alone were the proper and original Templars, were distinguished by the famous white mantle with a red cross on the left breast, which they wore over a complete suit of chain mail. Each knight had three horses and an esquire, and whatever may be

* The general organisation of the Order is described by Addison, chapter iv. Its rule is printed in Wilcke, II. 203-22.

signified by the well known seal bearing the device of two cavaliers on one saddle, the Templars were expressly forbidden to ride in this manner. The serving brethren (*fratres servientes*), though taking the vows of the order, were only a kind of inferior attendants, and their inferiority was marked by the black or brown robe which they wore. They served the knights as esquires, tending their horses and following them to the field armed with bows, bills, and swords, while at home they did the menial work of the preceptory. The chaplains were ordinary ecclesiastics who had been admitted to the order that they might perform divine service and administer the sacraments to the brethren. In addition to these, a house of Templars generally contained some servants and esquires who were not members of the order.

The administration of the preceptory was conducted by the Master or Preceptor, with advice of the other brethren, who formed his chapter. This form of government prevailed in all grades of the order, from the highest downward. As the Grand Master in Jerusalem or Cyprus was advised by the Priors of the various provinces, and the English Master at London by the Masters of Scotland and Ireland and the preceptors of the three kingdoms, so the Scottish Master had for councillors the brethren under his command. The composition of a chapter at Ballantrodach may perhaps be gathered from the list of witnesses to a charter* granted expressly with counsel and consent of the brethren there by Master Ranulf Corbet, about 1180. In this list we find the names of brother Roger, the Almoner, brother Alan, the Preceptor, brother Anketin, brother William, Warin, the chaplain, and Peter, Walter, John, and Hugh, 'our clerks.' Legal documents affecting the property of the order were usually signed at a chapter, where also disputes were settled and appointments to offices or benefices made. Some of the witnesses at the Scotch inquisition of 1309, spoke of the chapters in Scotland being held by night and in secret, but it is noteworthy that no one had ever seen or heard of the most solemn and mys-

* *Reg. Ep. Glasg.*, I. 37.

terious ceremony of the order—the reception of a new brother—taking place at any of them. Doubtless the most important and exciting of the Scottish chapters were those convened to meet the Master of the Temple at London, when, in the ordinary exercise of his office, he came down to visit the Scottish houses, to correct the faults of their discipline, and remove any brethren who had proved themselves incompetent or unworthy.

The round of life in the preceptory was the common monastic one. The brethren were bound to daily observance of all the canonical hours from matins to compline. In the refectory they ate their meals in silence, while one read aloud some passage of scripture, or homily, or sacred legend; four days a week they abstained from flesh, and on Fridays had nothing but Lenten fare. At supper it was commanded that wine should be used but sparingly, and when compline was over, all went to bed, conversation, save in case of absolute necessity, being forbidden after they had left the common hall. Every day a tithe of the bread was given to the poor, its distribution being the duty of the almoner, whose office is more than once mentioned. The vow of chastity was so strictly interpreted that the knights were forbidden to accept any service from a woman—even so much as a basin of water for washing the hands. Of course they were denied all the ordinary luxuries of apparel. They might not wear furred garments, pointed shoes, or baldricks: the adornment of their arms with gold and silver was discouraged, neither might they suffer their hair and beards to grow to picturesque length. The delights of hunting and hawking, too, were prohibited. ‘None of you,’ so ran their rule, ‘may catch one bird with another, or shoot with bow or cross-bow in the forest, or ride shouting after the hounds. Your strength is devoted *ut leo semper ferietur*—to the smiting of the adversary that goeth about like a lion seeking whom he may devour.’

Such, at least, was the rigour of the rule given by St. Bernard, but there is no question that in later times that rule was greatly relaxed. From the first its stern monastic character must have been profoundly modified by the fact that the

Templars were not only religious devotees, but men-at-arms, who

‘ With a stronger faith embraced
A sword, a horse, a shield.’

The preceptory, indeed, must have been an odd mixture of the monastery and the feudal castle, where mailed and bearded monks passed from the narrow cell, the solemn chapel, and the droning refectory, to the armoury where hung the red-cross shield and the banner of Beau-seant, to the stables where the war-horse champed and whinnied, and the tilt-ground where martial exercises were practised. Among minor and particular causes of relaxation none perhaps can have been more effectual than the rule which allowed married brethren to be associated to the order on condition that they and their wives made over their property to it. These married brethren were not members of the order, inasmuch as they had not taken the vows, nor been initiated, and consequently they might not wear the white habit. They participated, however, in the privileges of the Order, received pensions from its funds, and sometimes, in spite of the prohibition of St. Bernard, were allowed to live in the preceptories—of course apart from their wives. In Rymer's *Fœdera* * we have records of a number of pensions of this kind granted by the English Templars. A certain Richard Osmund, for example, had 3d. a day for food, and 20s. a year for clothes, in return for a donation beforehand of £24, while the widow of Sampson of Hull received an annual allowance of corn, straw, forage, and firewood, besides the pasturage of two cows, and the liferent of a house and garden, in consideration of a grant of lands which she had made to the Templars out of her dowry. That the practice prevailed in Scotland may be seen from an unpublished charter in the Scottish General Register House, † granted in 1354 by Thomas Lyndsay,

* III., 292-94.

† For access to this and other documents in H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh, the author is indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Maitland Thomson, Curator of the Historical Department there.

Master of the Hospitallers as successors to the Templars, which narrates certain events that had occurred near Ballantrodach in the Templars' time. According to this document, a certain William the son of Geoffrey of Halkerston—a man 'fonder of ease than of labour'—conveyed his wife's property at Esperston to the Templars and was, as part of the bargain, received into their preceptory, and maintained there for the rest of his days, his wife with her children being left in a house which had been reserved for her on a corner of the estate. It is evident that such a practice, offering as it did a life of privileged ease to idle and selfish persons, must have been very pernicious alike to the community at large and to the Templars, whose discipline it was bound to relax. In this particular case it not only wrought gross injustice to a family which was robbed of its inheritance, but resulted, as we shall see farther on, in a series of acts of cruelty, oppression, and treachery which forms the blackest blot on the history of the Templars in Scotland.

Passing from the preceptory and its inmates to the lands around it, one has to note that these, like the generality of monastic lands at the time, were doubtless partly tilled by serfs *adscripti glebae*, and partly farmed out to husbandmen who paid their rent in money as well as in services and in kind. What these services were like on the lands of Ballantrodach we may learn from some charters of the fifteenth century preserved among the Arniston papers,* which, although they refer to a time when the Templars' lands had long been in the possession of the Hospitallers, represent doubtless a state of things that had remained unaltered for centuries. The tenants of Utterston and Yorkston were bound to do so many days' ploughing in winter and harrowing in Lent, and in autumn they were required to labour at harvest in some cases for three full weeks. They must also lend their horses to carry a load from Ballantrodach to the Templars other lands at Kirkliston—an obligation which was known as the Listonlade. While performing these enforced

* *Historical MSS. Commission, Report III., Appendix, p. 414.*

labours, however, they were fed—and not ill-fed—by the Templars who had to give them their ‘disjune’ and to provide for each man’s supper a peck of meal and a pound of cheese. Of course they were all ‘thirled’ to the Templars’ mill, which, along with the baronial dovecot, probably stood close to the preceptory gates. One of the conditions of a tenancy under the Templars was that on the tenant’s death the order took half of his goods if he left no heir, or a third if he were survived by wife or children.* Doubtless it was also the custom in Scotland, as in England, that the tenants were forbidden to sell any horse colts foaled upon their lands, and to marry their daughters without license. † The latter of these restrictions was a common feudal condition, while the former was evidently meant to provide the order with a supply of good horses for purposes of war.

It was, of course, from the rents of their estates that by far the greatest part of the Templars’ wealth was obtained. Another source of income was found in the tithes of the churches bestowed upon them, which, as in the case of the church of Aboyne, they appropriated to their own uses, filling the cure with a vicar, who no doubt was underpaid. Something also was derived from the *confratriæ* or collections which they were authorised to make in churches other than those that belonged to them, and even, as has been seen, in churches closed by sentence of interdict at the time. The money thus gained seems to have been turned to the best account, for the Templars, in all that we know of them, shew as good business men. The Scottish burghs soon found it necessary to protect themselves against their encroachments by enacting that no Templar should meddle in buying or selling goods belonging to the guild unless he were a guild brother. ‡

The order, however, must have had a high reputation for trustworthiness in money matters, else it would not have be-

* *Reg. Ep. Aberdon.*, II., 260.

† Addison’s *Knights Templars*, p. 109.

‡ *Curia Quatuor Burgorum* in Acts of the Scottish Parliament, I., 704.

come, as it did, virtually the greatest banker of the time. Not only was the money collected for the Holy Land commonly paid into the hands of the Templars and by them transmitted to the East,* but laymen also habitually found in the Templars' houses a safe place of deposit for their wealth, while these houses were often named in contracts as the places where payment was to be made of money due. When the Sieur de Joinville, for instance, received the arrears of his pay from St. Louis at Acre, he at once banked the greater part of the sum with the Commander of the Palace of the Temple there.† The Temple of London seems to have been a kind of thirteenth century Bank of England, where the King and his nobles, as well as the rich burghers of the capital, regularly kept their money and jewels. Matthew Paris tells us how the treasure of Herbert de Burgh, the great and patriotic Justiciary, was entrusted to the Templars, and how they refused to surrender it to King Henry III.; and what is still more curious, he gives the form of a bond by which the money-lenders of Cahors in Guienne—those same usurers who are damned by Dante to the seventh circle of the Inferno—bound their debtors to repayment at the 'New Temple' in London.‡ There are several instances of important money transactions concerning Scotland being settled in a similar manner through the medium of the great military order. When, in 1225, Queen Ermengarde, the widow of William the Lion, bought the lands on which she meant to found the monastery of Balmerinoch, it was arranged that the title deeds of the property should be deposited at the Temple in London until the price was paid down there. Three years later, Roger le Bigod bound himself to pay two thousand pounds of silver at the same place on behalf of Alexander II., while in 1282 Alexander III. was apparently under obligation to deposit a sum of money there.§ How St. Bernard would have mourned over all this, and especially over the reception

*Bliss's *Calendar of Papal Registers*, I. 74, 170, 384, 423.

†Joinville (Wailly's edition), p. 272. ‡Matthew Paris, III. 232, 329.

§*Liber de Balmerinach*, pp. 6, 7; Bain's *Calendar*, I. 183-5; Rymer's *Foedera*, II. 217.

of the Cahors bonds, it is easy to imagine, and certainly the successors of Hugh de Payens and Godfrey de St. Omer would have had some difficulty in making it out to be a fashion of smiting the lion.

What has been said so far almost exhausts the known history of the Scottish Templars until the great interregnum and the beginning of the troubles with England. Only two small details, in fact, remain to be added. The Master of the Temple in Scotland, whoever he was, seems to have taken part in the unfortunate Egyptian Crusade of 1249, since he is mentioned in the Cotton MS.* as an authority for the amount of St. Louis' ransom, and in 1255 we find the name of Richard the Almoner of the Templars in the list of counsellors of the Comyns' party removed by the influence of Henry III.† The latter detail supplies the only instance of a Templar busying himself in the politics of Scotland, while the former adds another figure, though not another name, to the meagre roll of Scottish Crusaders. As companions in the eighth Crusade, this shadowy Master of Ballantrodach would have the Earl Patrick of Dunbar (who, however, died at Marseilles on the outward journey), and the equally vague 'Monseigneur Hugues d'Escoz,' who, according to Joinville, '*moult bien se prouva en la sainte Terre.*'‡

With the beginning of the last decade of the thirteenth century, our information about the Scottish Templars is suddenly and substantially increased. While from the preceding century and a half we have the names of only two Masters of the Temple in Scotland—Bartholomew and Ranulf de Corbet—the subsequent twenty years yield the names of no less than four. The first of these, Brian de Jay, appears in the Ragman Rolls as *Preceptor Militiæ Templi in Scotia*, in July 1291, and next month he is found receiving from King Edward two grants of oak trees from the forests of Clackmannan and Selkirk. Next year he was appointed to act in place of the

* *Matthew Paris*, VI. (Appendix), 521.

† *Acts of the Scottish Parliament*, I. 419.

‡ *Chronicon de Lanercost*, 54 ; *Joinville*, 148, 386.

English Master, Guido de Foresta, and on the elevation of Guido's successor, the hapless Jacques de Molay, to the Grand Mastership of the whole order, Brian was appointed to the command of the English province.* His successor in Scotland was John de Sautre, a member of a family which seems to have given several brethren to the Order, since mention is found of three other de Sautres as Templars about this time.† Both Brian and de Sautre appear to have been Englishmen, and about the former two or three curious and picturesque anecdotes have been preserved, which shew him, with strange vividness, as a sinister figure, the very embodiment of the cruelty, arrogance, and impiety with which the name of Templar was associated in the order's later years. At the English inquisition in 1309, one witness asserted that Brian de Jay had denied Christ to be true God and man, and had said that the least hair in a Saracen's beard was worth a Templar's whole body. Worse still, on a certain winter's day, when some poor men asked alms for the sake of Our Lady, Brian had answered, 'Go and be hanged with your lady!' and, throwing down a farthing on the frozen mud, had made the wretches grovel and pick it up with their mouths.‡

It is true that the evidence given against the Templars at their dissolution is not to be accepted with implicit faith; but there is from another source a very ugly story about Brian's conduct in Scotland. Mention has already been made of William, the son of Geoffrey of Halkerston, who conveyed his wife's estate at Esperston to the Templars, and became an inmate of their preceptory at Ballantrodoch. The gift (so at least it was asserted) had been made only for the husband's lifetime; yet on his death Brian de Jay, then evidently Master of the Temple in Scotland, proceeded with a band of followers to expel the widow and her children from the house in which they lived. When she resisted and closed the door in his

* *Rotuli Scotiæ*, I. 4, 5; Stevenson's *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, I. 346; Addison's *Knights Templars*, 547.

† *Ragman Rolls*, 139; *Documents Illustrative of Sir Wm. Wallace* (Maitland Club), p. xxxix; Wilkins's *Concilia*, ii. 341, 343, 356.

‡ Wilkins's *Concilia*, II. 383, 386.

face, the Templar ordered his men to break their way in and drag her out by main force. This was done, and as the poor woman clung desperately with both hands to the door of her dwelling, a ruffian in the band unsheathed his dagger and cut off one of her fingers. So, in the words of the old charter which tells the tale, they dragged her forth '*vulneratam, clamantem, et ululantem,*' and Brian de Jay took possession of the house and inheritance from which she had been iniquitously expelled.

This, however, is only the beginning of the story. Christiana (for that was the widow's name) seems to have been a woman of spirit, and as soon as her hand was healed she set out to seek the King at the Abbey of Newbottle, where he chanced to be lodging. The King, of course, must have been John Baliol, and one is glad to hear, for the credit of poor 'Toom Tabard,' that he was very effectually moved to indignation by her tale. By his royal letters Christiana was at once restored to her inheritance, and there she lived in peace until the sad outbreak of the war, by which the courts of justice were closed. The Templars, as might have been expected, took advantage of the commotion to lay hands upon Esperston, and the widow was again violently driven forth. So things went on till the eventful summer of 1298, when Brian de Jay, marching with a band of Welshmen to join the army of Edward I., arrived at Ballantrodach four days before the battle of Falkirk—or, in other words, on the 18th of July—and put up there for the night. With some faint hope of obtaining justice, Christiana's eldest son, Richard, betook himself to the Preceptory to plead his mother's cause. He was well received by Brian, who promised, if he would guide the Welshmen on their march towards Kirkliston, to make all right there. Private orders, however, were given to the Welsh captain to make away with the young man, who, accordingly, was treacherously slain next day at Clerkington (now Rosebery), when he came to fulfil his engagement. Thenceforward the disputed land at Esperston remained in the hands of the Templars until the dissolution of their order.

Such is the story which one finds told with wonderful vivid-

ness and circumstantiality in the Hospitallers' charter of 1354, to which reference has already been made. As embodying with solemn legal attestation a tradition which then was only sixty years old, and which from its relation to particular legal rights and claims was more likely than usual to be preserved with accuracy, it may surely be accepted as authentic. Certainly no other extant story gives a more striking or significant picture of the lawless violence which Scotland endured through the aggression of Edward I., or enables one better to understand old Barbour's impassioned eulogy of freedom. As for the Templars, it serves to confirm some of the most serious charges against them, and to show Brian de Jay as a somewhat blacker Bois-Guilbert. With the traditional insolence of his order, however, Brian evidently combined its characteristic bravery, and when, three days after the treacherous murder of the widow's son, he fell, the only slain man of note on the English side at Falkirk, he left behind him the reputation of a 'templer of pris' and a 'douhty man.' The exact circumstances of his death are variously related, for while Trivet says that he fell in the beginning of the battle, and the chronicler of Lanercost that he was killed while too rashly charging the Scottish schiltrons, Hemingford and Robert de Brunne assert that he came to his end through pursuing the Scottish fugitives till his horse floundered in a bog and left him at the mercy of the foe.* Along with him was slain the Master of the Scottish Templars—doubtless the John de Sautre already mentioned. Following an error of Lord Hailes, several writers have spoken of the Preceptor of the House of St. John at Torpichen as killed along with Brian at Falkirk, but the words of Trivet, '*socius ejus (i.e., Preceptoris Militie Templi in Anglia) qui erat Preceptor Scotiæ,*' make it indubitable that the Templar, and not the Hospitaller, was the man.

For all the crimes and errors of the Templars a dreadful reckoning was soon to be held. Within a decade after the death of Brian de Jay, the order had been attacked by Philip

* The various accounts of the battle are brought together in *Documents Illustrative of Sir William Wallace* (Maitland Club). See also Trivet (Oxon 1719), p. 313.

the Fair of France, and ere fourteen years were over it had ceased to exist. This is not the place to discuss anew the oft-vexed question of the Templars' guilt or innocence of many of the charges brought against them, or to tell over again in detail the story of the greed and cruelty of Philip, the miserable weakness of Pope Clement, and the martyr-like heroism of Jacques de Molay. The story is one of the blackest tales of inhumanity and injustice in the whole range of history, yet whatever indignation the sufferings of the Templars may rightly stir, there is no doubt that their day of usefulness was over, and that their abolition was of benefit to Europe. After the Saracens' capture of Acre in 1291, and the complete and final loss of the Holy Land, they had no longer any reason for existence. The similar order of Hospitallers, it is true, managed to secure a new lease of life which was to last for five centuries, by establishing itself as an outpost of Christendom in the island of Rhodes; but the Templars lacked either the foresight or the good luck to do likewise. In Cyprus, whither they retired after the loss of Acre, they got into disputes with the reigning family of Lusignan, while the utter perversion of their activities was shown by the fact that, in breach of the vows which forbade them to fight against their fellow Christians, they began to take part in the wars of Western Europe. We have seen the Templars of England and Scotland enlisting in the army which Edward I. led against Wallace, and about the same time other members of the order drew their swords in the struggle between the houses of Aragon and Anjou. The continued existence of a rich military brotherhood, perfectly trained and armed, and ready to mix in the internal wars of Christendom, while neither possessed any natural tie or owned allegiance to any sovereign, would have been a terrible calamity to Europe.

There was, however, no lack of causes at work to bring the order to a speedy end. The decline of the crusading spirit had much impaired the reverence and admiration in which the Templars were formerly held, and made men listen to stories against them which doubtless had often a fatally good foundation. Their arrogance as well as their greed was proverbial;

more than a hundred years before their downfall Richard Cœur de Lion had scoffingly left them a legacy of his pride. A fraternity of soldiers, of course, could hardly be expected to shew a shining example of humility: on the contrary such incidents as Brian de Jay's brutal treatment of the widow of Esperston were only what one might look for from warriors whose manners and habits had been acquired in that sink of all dissoluteness and violence, the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. It is morally certain, too, that among their Eastern surroundings the vow of chastity must have become mainly a mere dead letter; the ominous proverb, 'beware of the kisses of the Templars,' points to a corruption only too natural in that age, and too credible in this.

If all these causes combined to bring popular odium upon the order, there were others which were effectual to raise up dangerous enemies to it in high places. The numerous exemptions conferred by the Pope ensured the hostility of the clergy of all ranks, whose tithes were withheld, whose revenues from oblations were diminished, and whose jurisdiction, parochial and episcopal, was invaded. The nobles must have grudged the possessions heaped upon the Templars by their more pious ancestors, and, last and most dangerous of all, the kings of Western Europe, then just beginning to consolidate the fabric of monarchy, cast envious and jealous eyes upon their wealth and power. Both Edward I. and Edward II. of England robbed the Temple at London of large sums in money and jewels, but it was left for Philip IV. of France, with the aid of his obsequious creature the Avignonese Pope Clement V., to effect the thorough spoliation and destruction of the order.

In the beginning of 1307 the Grand Master Jacques de Molay came from Cyprus to Paris, with a train of knights and a hoard of treasure, on the invitation of the Pope. On the 13th of October in the same year he and all the members of the order throughout France were arrested by secret orders of Philip on charges of heresy, idol worship, and impurity. They were accused of renouncing Christ and all his saints at their secret initiation, of spitting and trampling on the cross

and using indecent ceremonies, of causing their chaplains to omit the words of consecration in the mass, of worshipping a cat and a human-headed image in their chapters, and of regular and universal indulgence in unnatural vice. Along with these monstrous charges were some more credible accusations. The Grand Master, it was said, and also the visitors and preceptors, presumed, although laymen, to absolve the brethren from their sins. Templars were forbidden to confess to any priest who was not a member of the order. Almsgiving and hospitality were not duly observed, and it was accounted no sin to acquire the property of others by fair means or foul.* To make good this indictment some nine hundred Templars were cast into the prisons of Paris alone, and subjected in many cases to horrible and nameless tortures, and when a number of the victims afterwards withdrew the confessions which had thus been extorted, one hundred and thirteen of them, including the Grand Master Jacques de Molay, were burned, as relapsed heretics, at the stake.

Edward II. of England hesitated at first to follow the example of Philip, but by strenuous exhortations from that monarch and from the Pope he was urged to take action, and on the 8th of January 1308, the English Templars were seized. Their examination did not take place for more than a year and a half, but at length, on the 20th of October, 1309, the Bishop of London and two other Commissioners began to investigate the charges against them. At that time there were two hundred and twenty-nine Templars in custody in England, but it was said that many others were still wandering about at large, and that some had escaped to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Orders had been given by King Edward for the seizure of the Scottish Templars at the same time as their English brethren,† but their examination was still longer delayed. It was not until the beginning of October, 1309, that the Inquisitor for Scotland, Master John de Solerio, papal chaplain and canon of Hereford and St. Radegund's, Poitiers,

* The articles of accusation are printed in Wilcke, II., 265-280.

† Rymer's *Fœdera*, III., 45.

started on his northward journey from London, and that orders were given to John de Segrave, the English Guardian of Scotland, to bring up the Templars there for examination.* On the 17th of November along with William Lamberton, the politic and versatile Bishop of St. Andrews, Solerio opened the inquisition in Holyrood Abbey. Edinburgh, like the greater part of the Scottish Lowlands, was still at that time in subjection to the English, although Bruce was every day gaining strength in the northern wilds and the fastnesses of Galloway and Carrick. Most of the year 1309 had been consumed in negotiations for a truce, and in the month of November Edward was being approached by ambassadors from France, who came to attempt a mediation between him and the Scots. The disturbed state of the country, however, and the growing power of Bruce are shewn by the inquisitors' statement that their work had to be hurried over because of the incursions of the enemy and the continual expectation of war. †

Only two Templars, Walter de Clifton and William de Middleton, appeared before the inquisitors at Holyrood, and according to their evidence they were the only members of the order left in Scotland. Both were Englishmen by birth, and had been initiated at English preceptories, the one by William de la More, the last Master of the Temple at London, and the other by his predecessor Brian de Jay. Their time had been spent partly in the English houses—at Temple Newsom, Temple Rockley, and Aslakeby, for example—and partly in the Scottish ones. Middleton had lived both at Culter and Ballantrodach, while Clifton had been for three years at the latter house as Master of the Scottish Templars in succession to John de Hufflete, also an Englishman, who in his time had filled that office for two years, but who now, along with some other brethren of the order, had fled beyond sea.

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, III., 182.

† The report of this Inquisition, known as *Processus Factus contra Templarios in Scotia*, is in the second volume of Wilkins's *Concilia*, but is perhaps more accessible in the reprint in the *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, II., 1-16.

The examination of the Templars in France had been systematically accompanied with most horrible tortures, and in England also, although to a comparatively limited extent, the rack and other engines of torment had been used. That no torture was employed in Scotland is proved in the most convincing way not so much by the lack of all mention of it, as by the fact that the witnesses made none of those horrible and incredible confessions which elsewhere were extracted by mere physical pain. Of all the accusations against their order Clifton and Middleton admitted that one only which charged the Masters, Preceptors, and Visitors with usurping the priestly power of absolution. Middleton had seen and heard the English Master absolve the brethren from all sin—*a quocunque peccato*—‘by the authority given unto us by God and St. Peter and our lord the Pope.’ Clifton, who described the Grand Master as signing the penitents with the cross, believed that the absolution did not extend to the crime of murder or of violence offered to a priest. In all probability the witnesses, or else the reporter of their evidence, simply misunderstood the exercise of that mere disciplinary power of absolution from offences against the rules of the order which, according to the priest of the Temple Church at London, was possessed by the Grand Master and his representatives.*

The mysterious secrecy of their rites of initiation was what gave opportunity for the most horrible charges against the Templars, and Clifton sadly admitted that it was, and had long been, the cause of strong suspicion. He had, however, no startling revelation to make, and his story of his own reception, which is perhaps the most detailed and picturesque account of the ceremony that we possess, discloses a sufficiently solemn and edifying scene. After telling some Templars of his wish to become one of them, and being at first discouraged and told that he sought a great and hard thing in desiring to give up his own will and enter into obedience, he was at length introduced to a chapter held by the English Master at the Lincolnshire preceptory of Bruere. There, with

* Addison, 477.

joined hands and on bended knees, he asked to have the habit and brotherhood of the order. The Master questioned him as to possible impediments—was he in debt? was he affianced to a woman? had he any secret infirmity of body? When these questions had been answered in the negative, and the brethren present had given their consent to his reception, the ceremony of initiation at once took place, for with the Templars there was no period of probation. Still on his knees, the postulant promised to be servant for ever to the Master and brethren in defence of the Holy Land, and swore to God and the Virgin, placing his hand beneath a copy of the Gospels which had a cross depicted on it, that he would live in chastity, poverty, and obedience. Then the Master handed him the mantle and cap of the order, gave him the kiss of peace, and, making him sit down upon the ground, recited and explained to him certain of the rules of discipline.

In addition to the two Templars, nearly fifty witnesses, lay and clerical, were examined at Holyrood on that 17th of November, 1309; but their evidence, although strikingly significant of the general dislike and suspicion of the Templars, is almost entirely of the vaguest and most worthless kind. The abbots of Dunfermline, Holyrood, and Newbottle knew nothing for certain of any of the enormities mentioned in the articles of accusation, but had been told that such things were done, and thought the secret and nocturnal chapters most suspicious. The Warden of the Greyfriars at Haddington had a more particular grievance, for he had never heard of any Templar confessing to a friar. The chaplain of Liston, a 'neighbour' of the order in Scotland, declared that its members had always been hostile to the Church, and swore that for his own part he had not heard of any of them dying a natural death, nor had he ever seen a Templar's grave. This last statement, of course, has reference to the ridiculous story of the Templars burning the bodies of deceased brethren, and making the ashes into a powder for the younger brethren to drink as a pledge of secrecy. Somewhat more noteworthy was the evidence of brother Adam de Wedale, a monk of Newbottle, who asserted that the Templars gave no alms and

shewed no hospitality save to the rich and powerful, and that through their greed and injustice in seizing by fair means or foul the possessions of their neighbours, they were generally defamed. Doubtless, Brother Adam was thinking of the sufferings of the widow of Esperston, and the fate of her son, who had been slain within a few miles of his own convent wall some nine years before, and in this part of the evidence we reach at last a grave and quite credible charge against the order. The same accusations of unjust greed and lack of hospitality were repeated by William de Preston, William de St. Clair, and a few other young esquires (*domicelli*), who also asserted that they had heard their fathers say that if the Templars had been good Christians the Holy Land would never have been lost. Finally, some nine or ten of the Templars' own tenants and servants spoke of the secrecy of their chapters and their habit of giving and receiving lay absolution.

This was all the evidence that could be got for the condemnation of the Templars in Scotland, and to most who have dispassionately studied the story of their fall, the two grains of serious and pertinent matter in its bushel of hearsay and irrelevance will seem to represent very nearly the worst that could be said against them. But the order as a whole was prejudged and doomed on charges so monstrous as almost to carry their own refutation. Within six months after the inquisition at Holyrood the burning of the 'relapsed' brethren had begun at Paris, no less than fifty-four being led out on a single morning to the stake. In this island, fortunately, no such scenes of cruelty were witnessed. The Master of the English province, it is true, died a prisoner in the Tower of London; but in England no Templar was actually put to death, while the great majority, after making confession of their guilt and being absolved and reconciled, were sent to do penance in various monasteries, where a small pension was allowed for their support.

The formal abolition of the order was reserved for the Council of Vienne, which met in the month of October, 1311, and before which the great mass of hideous confessions ob-

tained under torture was produced. Nine Templars, however, unexpectedly made their appearance before the Council, demanding to be heard in defence of their brethren, and, to the credit of the Assembly be it said, the great majority of its members, including the English, Scottish, and Irish bishops,* decided in favour of their request. But the ruthless policy of Philip and the Pope was not to be so frustrated. Clement prorogued the Council, called a secret consistory of Cardinals on whom he could depend, and with their advice prepared an ordinance abolishing the order by way of 'prudent provision, not of condemnation.' This ordinance was published in the Council at its reassembling on the 3rd of April, 1312, and on that day, consequently, by the sole decree of the Pope and without consent of the Church, the Order of the Temple, one hundred and eighty four years after its formal incorporation at the Council of Troyes, ceased to exist.

The fate of the Scottish Templars has been the subject of much unprofitable conjecture by the more fantastic writers on the history of the order, and especially by those who have tried to trace a connection between the Templars and the Freemasons. The fact that only two brethren were arrested in Scotland has been regarded as especially mysterious, and the question has been asked, What became of the others? Michelet,† in support of the wild theory that the fugitive Templars formed themselves into secret societies, remarks it as significant that 'the most secret arcana of freemasonry are reputed to have come from Scotland, and the highest grades of the society have Scottish names.' In regard to such vague and vain imaginings, however, one does well to follow the example of Raynouard,‡ who declines to lift the 'mysterious veil of conjectures' by which the fate of the Scottish Templars has been explained. History is absolutely silent on the subject, nor, after all, is there anything so very mysterious in their disappearance. As has been already said, the number of

* Raynouard, *Monumens Historiques*, 187, note.

† *Histoire de France*, livre V., chap. 3, note.

‡ *Monumens Historiques*, 200-201.

Templars in Scotland can never have been great, and during the disquieting and desolating Wars of Independence it must have become smaller than ever. That war, too, would make it all the easier for the brethren to escape when the news came of the proceedings in France and England. Some, like John de Hufflete, fled over the sea, probably to Norway or Denmark, while others, perhaps, found a refuge in the little army of the excommunicated King Robert, whose fear of offending the French monarch would doubtless be vanquished by his desire to secure a few capable men-at-arms as recruits. This also, however, is a mere conjecture, which may pass for what it is worth.

But, while nothing is known of the escaped Templars, there is fortunately a scrap or two of authentic information as to the subsequent fate of one of the captives.* On the 4th of February, 1318, Brother William de Middleton received from the Archbishop of York a certificate stating that the bearer, on whose identity some doubts had been cast, was really an ex-Templar, and had spent three years and a half in the Cistercian monastery of Roche, and behaved himself well. Next year the same Archbishop wrote to the Prior of the English Hospitallers, asking for payment of Middleton's pension, which apparently had been delayed. Evidently the Templars in this island, though robbed of their property and reduced to a dependant condition, were not left in absolute want. In fact, from a papal letter † addressed to certain English deans and priors in 1318, reminding them that the Templars were not to be allowed to live in luxury on their pensions or save up money out of them, it would seem that their condition was in some quarters regarded as rather too easy. As for Middleton, he appears to have drawn his pension for but a few years longer, for if he is the same as the *quondam frater Willelmus de Middleton* mentioned in one of the documents of Coldingham Priory ‡ as lately occupying a cell in that monastery, he must have been dead in 1325.

* Raine's *Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Register*, p. 269.

† Bliss's *Calendar of Papal Registers*, II., 183.

‡ *Correspondence of the Priory of Coldingham* (Surtees Society), p. 16.

The main and original object of Philip the Fair had been to seize the Templars' possessions, and during the course of the judicial proceedings against them the greater part of their estates, both in France and England, passed into the royal hands. In the year 1311 and 1312 many Scottish nobles who had taken the English side—David Earl of Athole, for example, John of Argyll, David de Graham, and David Beton—were rewarded by Edward II. with gifts of Temple lands in England.* The moral and religious sense of Christendom, however, forbade a general and formal secularisation of property given for religious purposes, and on the suppression of the order its possessions, by a papal bull dated 16th June, 1312, † were transferred to the Knights of St. John. So far as Scotland was concerned, effect was given to this bull in November of the following year by letters from King Edward to his Scottish chancellor and chamberlain, ‡ ordering that all the churches, houses, manors, lands and rents of the Templars in that country, with the crops in their fields and the ornaments of their churches, should be delivered to two Commissioners appointed by the Grand Master of the Hospital. It is odd to find such letters granted so soon before Bannockburn, but doubtless Albert de Nigro Castro and Leonard de Tiberis put King Edward's sign manual discreetly into their pockets, and trusted to the bull of His Holiness, when they crossed the Border and found themselves in a country where the real master was Robert Bruce.

Of the actual transference of the Scottish lands there is no record, but its accomplishment is an historic fact. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries all the known possessions of the Templars in Scotland—the houses of Ballantrodoch and Culter, the church of Aboyne, the lands of Drem and Liston—are found in the hands of the Preceptor of Torphichen as local chief of the Knights of St. John.§ In these hands they remained until the Reformation, when, in the great scramble

* Bain's *Calendar*, III., 49, 51, 60, 61, 66.

† Wilcke, II., 323.

‡ Rymer's *Fœdera*, III., 457.

§ *Abstract of Chartulary of Torphichen*, Introduction, pp. 7-10.

for ecclesiastical and monastic property, they were secured by Sir James Sandilands, the last Preceptor, who, having turned Protestant, obtained from Queen Mary in 1563 * a grant of all the lands of his order in his own favour. Thus definitely secularised, the great aggregate of Temple Lands, in which the original possessions of the Temple and the Hospital were hopelessly confounded, soon became dispersed among various owners. Ballantrodach, for example, passed to the Dundases of Arniston, while the estates at Drem became the property of that shrewd and grasping lawyer, Thomas Hamilton, first Earl of Haddington. † The distinctive character of the Temple Lands, however, was long preserved because of the privileges which still clung to them as relics of the ancient vast immunities of the military orders. In towns, for instance, the old exemptions from scot and gild and from the dues of fairs and markets persisted, as giving some claim to freedom from civic obligations and burdens, and it was in token of these and other privileges that the cross was so religiously kept engraved on every Temple tenement within burgh. ‡ The exemption from payment of teinds, also, endured for more than a century, as may be seen from the mention of it in Stair's *Institutions* (Book II. title 8, cap. 7, and Book IV., title 24, cap. 9). But all these lingering relics of a vanished order have vanished in their turn, and the Temple Land, as indicating a privileged variety of tenure, is now as much a thing of antiquity as the knighthood of the Temple itself. In Scottish law, as in Scottish geography, the Templars have left, of all their power and glory, only the shadow of a great name.

ROBERT AITKEN.

* His charter is printed in the *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, II., 17-32.

† Omond's *Arniston Memoirs*, p. 2, and *Templaria*, Proceedings in Claim for John Hamilton, p. 2.

‡ *Templaria*, *ibid.*, p. 8.