

## ST. ANDREW'S DAY AND THE ORDER OF THE THISTLE.

The 30th of November stands distinguished in the Ecclesiastical Calendar as the Festival of St. Andrew, the titular saint of Scotland. It was formerly a day of considerable observance in the country north of the Tweed; but of late years it has been stripped of all its antique honors, and is now only celebrated by a homely feast of "sing'd sheep's heads." In the time of James the First of England it was a day of great festivity to the Scots resident in London to walk in procession on St. Andrew's Day, with a large dish of this national dainty borne before them.

In England, instead of becoming a feast of sing'd wool, it was formerly, and even very recently, celebrated as a day for the wanton destruction of squirrels and other harmless tenants of the woods and coppices. Hasted, in his history of Kent, speaking of the parish of Easing, says, that "on St. Andrew's Day there is yearly a diversion called squirrel-hunting in this and the neighbouring parishes, when the labourers and lower kind of people, assembling together, form a lawless rabble, and being scouted with guns, poles, clubs, and other weapons, spend the greatest part of the day in parading through the woods, with loud shoutings, and under pretence of demolishing the squirrels, some few of which they kill, they destroy numbers of hares, pheasants, partridges, and, in short whatever comes in their way, breaking down the hedges, and doing much other mischief, and in the evening betaking themselves to the ale-houses, finish their career there, as is usual with such gentry." A similar custom was kept up in Essex till within the last thirty or forty years, many people now living have often joined it. Now, however, in consequence of the inclosure of coppices, and the stricter preparation of game, the practice has wholly

These, it must be confessed, are not the noblest observances by which the festival of a patron Saint could be celebrated; and were there nothing to mark the sky beyond the sing'd sheep's heads of Scotland and the rough squirrel-hunting of England, St. Andrew might reasonably consider himself the most neglected Saint in the whole Calendar.

But it is not so. The name of St. Andrew has from an early period been prominently associated with one of the noblest orders of British chivalry—the ancient Scottish Order of the Thistle, or, as it is sometimes styled, Order of St. Andrew, having been specially founded in his honour.

Some particulars respecting the origin and history of this knightly Order may prove interesting.

Much obscurity prevails as to the period at which the Order was instituted, as well as to the exact nature of the circumstances which gave rise to it. Some few Scottish historians assign it to an origin of extreme antiquity. The Abbot of Melrose says it was instituted by Achais I. of Scotland, A. D. 809, when that monarch made an alliance with Charlemagne, and then took for his device the thistle. It is told that King Hungus, the Pict, had a dream, in which St. Andrew made him a midnight visit, and promised him a sure victory over his foes, the Northumbrians; and that the next day, when the two armies confronted each other in battle, St. Andrew's cross appeared in the air, and the Northumbrians were defeated. This story being told to Achais, he at once founded the Order to evince his gratitude for the Saint's intervention. Such is the account of the Abbot Justinian.

This extreme antiquity of the Order, is, however, believed by many eminent authorities to be considerably over-rated. The chief ground for questioning the remoteness of its foundation consists in the fact that the thistle does not appear to have been adopted until the latter part of the fifteenth century as the badge of the Kingdom of Scotland; and that the institution of the national order of Knighthood must have had for its ensign, a national symbol, as the Order of the Garter possessed the Rose and that of St. Patrick the Shamrock. Those who main-

tain its modern origin consider it sufficient, therefore, to call attention to the recent introduction of that ensign, upon which the foundation of the Order is essentially dependant, and these authorities trace the Order as an organised fraternity only as far back as the reign of James VII. of Scotland and II. of England.

The Cross of St. Andrew, however, is by all allowed to have been used in the arms of Scotland in the reign of James I. of that country, who occupied the throne from 1106 to 1137, and even the advocates of a modern origin admit that the thistle was used previous to 1498, since it occurs in the inventory of the effects of James III. of Scotland, who died in that year. The collar of the Order occurs on the coins of King James V., and his portraits also contain a representation of the ensign.

But notwithstanding these facts, it is contended that the use of all or any of these decorations are of no avail in proving the existence of a brotherhood or fraternity, having a succession of knights governed by established rules, and wearing certain ensigns. Thus, although the antiquity of the Order is upheld by writers of considerable weight, it is yet questioned by other authorities of much acuteness and research.

Beaumont's account of the origin of the Order is this:—"The Order was founded in 1540 by James V., who, being honoured with the Order of the Garter from his uncle, Henry VIII. of England, with the Golden Fleece from the Emperor, and the Order of St. Michael from France, resolved to establish this Order of the Thistle for himself and twelve Knights, in imitation of Christ and his Apostles; but James dying in 1542, an end was put to the design for that time, for it being about the period of the Reformation, when religious disputes ran to a great height, it was deemed impious to imitate, in an Order of Knighthood, Christ and his Apostles."

There can, indeed, be no doubt that whatever the previous prosperity of the Order may have been, it fell, shortly after the commencement of the Reformation, into desuetude, nor was anything more heard of it until James II. of England issued a warrant, on the 27th of May, 1687, commanding letters patent to be passed under the great seal of Scotland for "reviving and restoring the Order of the Thistle to its full glory, lustre, and magnificency."

During the whole of the reign of William and Mary, the Order was neglected; but, after having remained in abeyance fifteen years, Queen Anne determined on its revival, and in December, 1703, letters patent again passed the great seal of Scotland for that purpose.

By the statutes published at the same time, no change was effected in the number of Knights or the other regulations of the fraternity; but under an ordinance issued by George I. the new Knights were to be elected by the suffrages of the pre-existing members of the Order in chapter assembled.

At the coronation of George IV, four extra Knights were appointed without permanently increasing the original limits of the Order; and two of these were subsequently elected to fill vacancies in the constituent number of twelve; but in May, 1827, the Order was permanently extended to sixteen Knights, which form its present complement.

The title of the Order is "The Most Noble and Most Ancient Order of the Thistle or Saint Andrew."

No foreigners have ever been admitted to this Order, nor have any commoners, except a few who were heirs-apparent to Dukedoms.

The principal decorations worn by Knights consist of a collar of enamelled gold, composed of sixteen thistles interlaced with sprigs of rue, and a medal or badge of gold, having an image of St. Andrew within a circle containing the motto of the Order, "Nemo me impune lacessit" (No one provokes me with impunity.)

The officers of the Order are the Dean, the Secretary, the King-at-arms, and the Usher, each of whom receives a salary, and a fee on the election of a Knight.

Such, slightly sketched, is the history of the Order of the Thistle and St. Andrew. It may be appropriately read on the anniversary of the Saint in whose honour it was instituted.

## Army and Navy Intelligence.

Vice Admiral the Hon. G. F. Crofton is appointed to the reserved list in receipt of service pension, vice-Admiral Watson, deceased. During Thursday, the 4th, the number of troops who received their discharge from Captain Garrison was upwards of 300, on account of general disability.

The reserve steam-gunboats at Plymouth got up steam on Wednesday, the 3rd, to try their engines—an operation, which will take place every three months.

Amateur garrison the stricts at the Carragh are spoken of for the winter, and the officers in camp propose to ask assistance of her Majesty's government in the shape of a grant of money, which has been given to the Aldershot Amateurs.

Vice-Admiral of the Blue the Hon. George Alfred Crofton has been appointed to receive a pension of £150 a year, as provided for by her Majesty's orders in Council of the 25th June, 1861, vacant by the death of Admiral Frederick Watkins.

We hear that Colonel Ames, of the 4th Light Dragoons proposes retiring from the British army. The marvel is, that he ever entered a service in which pluck is a necessary ingredient.—*Lancet Service Gazette.*

Major-general Sir Frederick Love, K. C. B., now Lieutenant-general of Jersey, will be succeeded by Major-general Sir H. W. Bouverie in the command of the troops at Dover and Sherburn. Colonel Mundy, who has been under secretary for war since the creation of the department, will, in all likelihood, succeed Sir F. Love as Lieutenant-governor of Jersey.

ESCAPE OF PRISONERS FROM ST. GEORGE'S BARRACKS.—On Sunday night, four men of the Scots Fusiliers, who had been confined in the guard-house of St. George's Barracks—tried for desertion and for being away with leave—made their escape. Having taken advantage of an available moment, they studied the vigilance of those on duty, broke out of the guard house, and by scaling the barrack wall, a height of fourteen feet, gained the street and got clear off. Only one of them has been retaken.

The Medical Staff Corps having been found of great value when employed as hospital orderlies and nurses it has been determined to increase the strength of that force from its present establishment to about 1200 men.

The Queen has conferred the equivalent honorary rank of Lieutenant-General on Robert Cannon, Esq., a clerk in the Sultan's service. The number of troops detached from St. Mary's Barracks, Chatham, during the month of November, was nearly 1000 men of all ranks. The number still waiting their discharge at Chatham is about 1100.

The *Globe* announces the death of Lieutenant-General the Hon. Henry Edward Butler, colonel of the 50th regiment, who in the early part of the war lost his three sons within a few weeks, viz. Captain Butler of the 50th, Captain B. L. Butler of the Ceylon Rifles, whose name is so nobly associated with the defence of Sumatra.

By an act of last session the coast-guard service is placed under the government of the Admiralty, and premises have been taken in Spring gardens. In a short time the Admiralty will exercise their control. The number is not to exceed 1000.

The Select Committee of Woolwich Arsenal assembled on Tuesday, the 9th, at the proving range in the Arsenal marshes, for the purpose of directing some experiments which then took place, tending to prove the important advantage to be obtained by the substitution of liquid iron in the uses to which red-hot shot has been hitherto applied. Lord Panmure, who expressed his intention of being present, arrived punctually at 11 and took particular interest in the prosecution of the various tests which were carried out. The experiments consisted in firing a number of Martin's shells, filled with about 30lb of molten iron, at a bulkhead, near which were erected some wooden sheds. These latter were occasionally hit, and were speedily ignited by the exact occasioning the sudden explosion of the shell, and the expansion of the liquid fire. The result was proved to be considerably more certain and efficient than that produced by hot shot, and the supply furnished with much more readiness and facility from a melting crucible than from the ordinary furnace.—The experiments were ordered to be repeated.

The Provincial Parliament has been convened for the Session of 1862, for the 28th of February.