

MASONIC KNIGHTHOOD.

BY SIR KNIGHT GEORGE S BLACKIE.

PAST GRAND GENERALISSIMO GRAND COMMANDERY OF GEORGIA.

(Continued.)

Setting aside the literature of other countries, how large a portion of English literature is thus employed! What else is the main secret of the fascination of the "Idylls of the King" with the exquisite pictures in the "Holy Grail!"

"Many a noble deed, and many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon, with host to host,
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who, falling down,
Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen, and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insults, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs,
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead."

From the midst of all which horror and confusion, the brave and pure old knightly monarch passes

"To the island valley of Avillion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor even wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows, crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

Chivalry and knighthood have long been synonymous terms. They are different, however, in their origin. We take the word "chivalry" from the French (*cheval*, a horse,) and the French took it, like the Spaniards and Italians, from the Latin. It has the same origin as our word "cavalry," and simply means, in its primitive sense, military service on horseback. The word "Knighthood" comes from, the German or Saxon "Knecht," which was used primarily to designate a servant, and then the immediate body attendants of servants of the feudal lord. The two terms gradually came to mean the same thing. From the personal distinction which was attached to the office of a Knight, and the importance and superiority which a body of well-armed horsemen had over large bodies of infantry, knighthood was a personal distinction—a man might be a knight without reference to other title or dignity, or whether he had possession or not. Hence, under the feudal tenures, it was assumed that the king could compel a man to be a knight ("Theking can mak' a better knight," says Brother Robert Burns,) if he were possessed of a certain amount of property; and small grants were frequently given to poor knights.

Chivalry itself is just as airy and impalpable a thing as Fashion, though, like that visionary monarch it had its arbitrary laws and necessary accomplishments. But though chivalry did not exist in an organized form, the spirit of chivalry produced a number of institutions, some of which exist to this day; as for instance, is seen in this assembly of Masonic Knights Templar, and many which have been created in modern times, in imitation of them, the three or four hundred