

juries and military despots, whence money and soldiers were regularly supplied to Palestine. So well did their institution harmonize with the feelings and wants of the times, and so rapidly did they increase in wealth as well as repute, that some have estimated their annual income at six millions sterling!—a preposterous fact if not a impossible amount. Matthew Paris, with more probability, fixes the number of their manors or lordships in Christendom at nine thousand, besides a casual but large revenue arising from the gifts of the pious. The Popes granted them many spiritual privileges—such as freedom from clerical domination, and power of providing their own priests independent of any authority short of the Pope himself; and many temporal advantages—such as freedom from tithes, and the power of holding that species of property. Monarchs bestowed upon them, and the tenants of their estates, various secular privileges. In England, they had power to hold courts, to impose and levy fines and amercements upon their tenants, to judge and punish their villains and vassals, and to try thieves and malefactors belonging to their manors and taken within the precincts thereof. They were also relieved from royal and sheriff's aids, from tolls in all markets and fairs, and upon all bridges and highways, as well as from different feudal burdens.

Wealthy, privileged, and powerful, and combining in themselves the consideration paid to the sole principles of their age, arms, knighthood, and religion, the ranks of the Templars were constantly recruited by the scions of the aristocracy; for it is a trait of the upper classes, and perhaps of human nature, to neglect every thing whilst its success is doubtful, and to fasten themselves upon it as soon as credit or profit is to be gotten. The consequence, as may readily be supposed, was corruption. Pride was the characteristic vice imputed to the Templars by a monarch who knew them in their efflorescent state. Scott, in his notes to *Ivanhoe* charges them with copying closely the luxuries of the Asiatic warriors, but adduces no authority whatever for this charge; and writers in general have

assumed their dissoluteness. That their vow of chastity was always kept by the younger spirits of the order, is not probable, when the notorious conduct of contemporary priesthood is considered: that, in the compliance with the rules of their order, "none of the brethren followed the sport of catching one bird with another," or "presumed to go forth with a man following such diversions," or "ventured to shoot in the woods," and so forth, is very unlikely: ambition or love of enterprise may have prompted the professions of many, and the hopes of remaining idly and luxuriously at home of some, though their history contradicts this last supposition. For, as Gibbon remarks, "in the most dissolute period, the Knights of the Hospital and Temple maintained their fearless and fanatic character; they neglected to live, but they were prepared to die, in the service of Christ." Constantly trained to arms, experienced in the warfare of the country, and yielding implicit submission to their superior, less as soldiers than as vowed monks, and attended by a body of professing or paid followers, the Templars formed the flower of the Christian forces. As circumstances required, they led the assault, restored the conflict, decided the victory, or covered the retreat. We believe no stain of cowardice, no suspicion of apostasy, rests upon the order. Wherever impatience or cupidity broke the ranks to pursue too early or to plunder, or fear impelled to flight, or treachery deserted with contrivance and purpose, there the Templars sustained the combat, till the action was restored, the retreat insured, or their lives or liberties lost. And if secret scepticism obtained in the order, whenever the stern alternative to the captive Templars was Mahomedanism or death, the point of honour led him to choose the grave.

At the battle fought near Jacob's Ford, on the River Jordan, the whole of the Templars present were killed or taken prisoners; a similar event befel the order at the battle of Tiberias; and when Saladin, after a series of successes, marched upon Jerusalem, two knights and a few serving brethren alone remained to defend