

MASONIC KNIGHTHOOD.

BY SIR KNIGHT GEORGE S BLACKIE.

PAST GRAND GENERALISSIMO GRAND COMMANDERY OF GEC' GIA.

Concluded.

The Knights of the Temple were introduced into Scotland before 1153, by King David I., who established them in a Temple on the South Esk, not far from Edinburgh; and being much attached to them, did them many favors and granted them many privileges. Malcolm, his grandson, made them grants of money, and this foundation was still further enlarged by his successors, William the Lion, and Alexander II. The charter of the latter is still in the possession of Lord Torphichen. The general privileges granted were very extensive. The Templars were freed from all tithes to the Church, and their prelates were entitled to celebrate mass, and to absolve from sins to the same extent as the Bishops—a privilege not particularly liked by the Bishops. Their houses were also sanctuaries for criminals. These, with other privileges, rendered them, in a manner, independent; but they regarded themselves as subjects of the countries to which they belonged. Thus we find them ranged against each other at the Battle of Falkirk, in 1298, where, the author of the "Annals of Scotland" tells us, the only persons of note who perished, were Brian le Jay, of the English Templars, who was slain by Sir William Wallace's own hand, and the Prior of Torphichen, of Scotland, on the other side.

Little is known of the farther history of the Knights Templar in Scotland, from the time of Alexander II. to the beginning of the fourteenth century, except that their privileges and immunities were continued to them, by the various kings, and we find that their possessions had increased until they had ten wealthy establishments, or Priors, in different shires of Scotland. The date of the spoliation of the Knights of Scotland corresponds to that of the persecution of the Order in France, England, and elsewhere, but, to the credit of bigoted Scotia be it recorded, no account can be obtained of any member having been subjected to personal indignity or suffering. Their estates, however, appear to have been transferred to the possession of their rivals, the Knights of St. John, into which Order, like their brethren in England, it is not improbable that a number of the Templars entered.

In November, 1309, John De Solcure, the papal legate, and William, Bishop of St. Andrew, held an inquisitorial court at the Abbey of Holyrood, to investigate the charges against the Templars, but Walter de Clifton, Grand Preceptor of the Order in North Britain, and William de Middleton, were the only two Knights who appeared before the tribunal, from the proceedings of which, as recorded at length in Wilkins' *Consilia*, making no allusion to any punishment having been inflicted, we may fairly conclude they were set at liberty. The Preceptor, in his examination, readily confessed that the rest of brethren had fled and dispersed themselves, on account of the scandalous accusations against the Order. There is little doubt of the place of their refuge. Robert Bruce was at that time a fugitive, and they ranged themselves under his standard, until the issue of the Battle of Bannockburn, in 1314, in