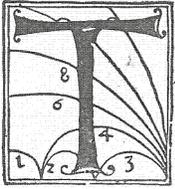


THE RECEPTION (INITIATION) OF A TEMPLAR.

BY BRO. E. J. CASTLE, K.C., S. W.



THE following somewhat short paper on the Order of Initiation or Reception of a Candidate for the Order of the Temple, may, I think, be of some interest to the Brethren, as it is an illustration of the working of a secret society that existed some six hundred years ago, based upon definite information contained in the records that have come down to us of the Reception of Candidates into the Order of the Temple. Strictly speaking the Templars were not a secret society but a religious order. But their receptions were secret, though why it is difficult to determine. Himbal Blanke, the Champion of the Order in England during its persecution under Edward II., when asked why they had made the reception and profession of the Brethren secret, replied "through their own unaccountable folly." From this secrecy arose a suspicion that something impious and wrong occurred behind the closed doors where the Candidate was taken from his friends and relatives who had come to see him admitted, and to whom he returned looking, as he sometimes did, pale and disturbed and when he refused, as he was bound to do, to tell what had taken place, the worst construction was put on what had passed. It was from this that the most horrible charges were made against the Order, which led to the torture and burning of the Brethren and its ultimate abolition. Personally, having read the depositions made before the Inquisitors and Papal Commissioners, I am convinced that these charges were untrue, but it would be too long a matter to prove now and indeed is foreign to my present enquiry, which is the method of Initiation.

It may be stated, that the Order was divided into provinces, such as France, England, Spain, etc., commanded, as a whole, by the Grand Master, and in the provinces were Houses, *domus templi*.

The punishments of the Brethren were principally expulsion from the House or loss of his religion, as it was called, in this case the Brother had forthwith to join a stricter Order, or if found at large was seized and imprisoned. "Deprivation of the mantle;" this was restored to him at the will of his Brethren, except in one or two cases where the deprivation lasted for a year, as, if he threw it off in anger and refused to resume it when requested by the bystanders, or if when so thrown off a bystander picked it up and put it on, then the latter lost his mantle. During this deprivation the Brother had to eat and live by himself and was generally in disgrace. In addition there was penance, public flogging, the cells, etc.

All these matters were regulated in Chapter, and in the account given of the constitution and proceedings of these Chapters we see what is, no doubt, the origin of many of our own ceremonies. The Templars may have borrowed their ritual from earlier societies and so on perhaps to Adam, who was, we are told, a "Buffalo." But in the Templars we have historical documents shewing, what was no child's play, but the serious life of serious men governed by rules that were enforced, if necessary, by death itself.

Before considering the method of initiation a few words are necessary on the constitution of the Chapter where the Candidate was received.

OPENING OF THE CHAPTER.

The Chapter was the governing body of the House. It was presided over by the Master or Preceptor, and everyone on entering had to make the sign in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost., and was bound to remove both his "chapeau de Bonnet" and his coiffe, unless he were bald, when he was allowed to keep on the latter, and when the Brethren or the greater part were assembled, the Master called the Brethren to order—"Estes sus en pies"—and directed them to pray, and each brother said a Noster Pater, and then all being seated, care was taken that no person who was not a brother Templar was able to hear what was passing in the Chapter.

The Master then commenced his address in the name of God to the best of his power, admonishing the Brethren, praying and commanding them to improve. During this address no one was permitted to quit his place without leave.

Then, any Brother who considered that he had done wrong had to make a confession to the Master, he was then ordered to retire to some place where he could not hear nor understand what was said in the Chapter. In his absence the Master had to repeat his confession to the Brethren and they gave their judgment, the brother was sent for, and this communicated to him without disclosing the decision of any particular brother, etc., but nothing in any case was to be done in Chapter before the prayers and address. I may state that this practice of confession in open chapels is still practised in Roman Catholic Religious Orders. For the sake of discipline, the Serving Brethren confess first, are punished and retire, then the Novitiates, and finally the Priests; all sins of crime, and offences against and disobedience of the Rules are thus dealt with.

There was a very wise provision that when he who held the Chapter sought the advice of the Brethren concerning any matter in Chapter he was to first ask those who were supposed to know best about the matter and the customs of the House and afterwards the others. And each brother whose advice was asked in Chapter ought to say what seems to him best and not to leave it unsaid for the love of one or the hate of another, etc., but he ought to have God fully before his eyes and for his love say and do that which he ought to say and do.

CLOSING.

The following is a description of how the Chapter was to be closed :—

After the Brethren have been admonished about their faults and their penances given well and properly according to the custom of the House, and the Chapter is ready to finish, the Master or he who holds the Chapter, before they depart, ought to show and teach the Brethren how they should live, etc. And when all is ready he ought to say "Beaux Seigneurs Frères, you know that every time we leave the Chapter we ought to ask Our Lord for Peace," and he ought to commence his prayers to the best that God has taught him and ought to pray specially for Peace and for the Church and for the holy Kingdom of Jerusalem and for his House and for all religious houses and for all religious men and for his associate brothers and sisters and for all the benefactors of the House dead and living and lastly for those who have departed this world and are waiting the pity of our Lord and particularly those lying in their cemeteries and for the souls of their Fathers and Mothers that the Lord by his gentleness may pardon their faults and bring them soon to the place of repose, and these prayers they should do at the end of every Chapter and if he who holds the Chapter thinks it well to add to them it is in his discretion.

If the Chaplain were present the Chapter finished with his direction that they were to say their confessions after him and the brethren were to repeat what he said. He was then to give them absolution as it seemed to him good and according to the custom of the House, for the Pope has given power to the brother chaplains to absolve the brethren, etc. But if no Chaplain were present then each brother ought to say after the prayers a Noster Pater and Ave Maria. This absolution the ritual said was only to be given by a priest. There was undoubtedly a practice for the Master of the Chapter to forgive the Brethren their sins and offences, even when he was not a priest, this was one of the charges brought against the order, and it was on this ground *only* that the order was abolished in England. The Templars said that the Master only forgave these offences as the head of those present, the enemies of the order said he pretended to absolve them from their sins, which only a priest could do.

The Chapter was therefore a meeting of the brethren of the House conducted with some form and ceremony, and one of its extraordinary duties was to receive new candidates. Its ordinary duty was, as we have seen, to bring the brethren together for confession, etc., etc" but occasionally and exceptionally new candidates had to be received, and we have had brought down to us more than one account of how this Reception or Initiation was done. There is published by Mr. Curzon the actual ritual that was to take place, what were the instructions to the Master of the Chapter, who for this purpose was called "*Receptor*," what steps were to be taken and we have in the Procès des Templiers a very full and elaborate account of how one witness was himself received. It is not necessary to trouble the Brethren with both accounts, but it may be advisable to state shortly the directions showing what was to be done, and then if the description of the witness in question is read it will show, what in his particular case was done.

In the first place we learn from many of the depositions given in the Procès des Templiers that there was no period of probation. This was one of the matters that some said required to be remedied. A candidate might be made a Serving Brother, a Knight Templar, or Priest of the Order. He had, if the second, to be made an ordinary knight beforehand and so a priest had to be admitted to orders, but being thus qualified for the rank in the order they were desirous of obtaining they presented themselves on the day appointed, often with their fathers, mothers, friends and relatives before a Chapter which had been formed apparently in the Chapel of the House. If so it must have been in some way severed from the ordinary congregation, because one of the duties of the master or priest was to see that no one not a Templar could hear what passed. For this purpose it was said by some of the witnesses that a party was posted outside the chapel, sometimes on the roof of the building, so that no unauthorised person approached it, or for greater secrecy it is said that the chapel were generally held in the early morning, just before dawn.

The actual Reception was as follows:—

Notice was brought to the Chapter informing them of the presence of the candidate, and the Master addressed the brethren asking them if anyone knew anything against the proposed brother, if so he should say it then before he came before them, and if nothing was said he gave orders for the candidate to be placed in a room near the Chapter so that the candidate was cut off from his friends, who no doubt were curious and anxious to know what was going on. It was this clandestine reception as it was called which it was alleged as already stated gave rise to so much suspicion against the Order for the Templars.

But to resume, the Master then told two or three of the eldest of the brethren who best knew the ritual to tell the candidate what he had to do.

These who correspond somewhat to Deacons, went and enquired of the candidate what he wanted, came back and reported, received instructions how they were to point out to the candidates what hardships, etc., they had to expect. They then came back and reported and then went back to the candidate to know if he still persevered and reported this again, and finally introduced the candidate to the Chapter. Further questions were put, the candidate was to be sworn to poverty, chastity, obedience, and then he received the Mantle, and was then kissed on the mouth by the Receptor, and if a Chaplain were present he had also to kiss him. The candidate then had, sitting at the Receptor's feet, a long homily addressed to him, and at same time according to the depositions of the witness, he had to change all his ordinary clothing for that of the Order.

It was during this reception that it was alleged he was told to deny God, to insult the Cross, to kiss the Receptor improperly and was ordered to commit a certain crime. This is what was alleged on one side, denied on the other, and in considering whether these charges were reasonable or not, it must be remembered that the Receptor was the Master of the Chapter for the time, the person responsible for the discipline and morals of his House. He was no doubt in full dress with Mantle and Sword, Boots and Spurs, and represented the military prestige of the Order. Let us consider the charge about the kiss. Let us see what one of the depositions say. It is said by many witnesses in the same or nearly the same form. In this case Johannes de Sancto Questo is speaking, and I must leave what he says in the Latin. "Dixit, quod post premissa dictus receptor præcepit ei quod oscularetur in . . . et levavit vestes suas. Non tamen deposuit braccus et ipse testes fuit cum osculatus in carne nuda inter braccale et zoniam." The premises spoken of were the oaths of poverty and the giving of the mantle, etc. In order that one may more fully realise what the reception was, of which I have only given the skeleton, I propose to give the evidence of *the witness* who gives the fullest description of the ceremony. We shall then be better able to say whether the statement is likely to be true, or whether a lie told from fear of torture and possibly the stake.

RECEPTION.

The following is the most complete account given of the Reception of a Candidate into the Order of the Temple. It was given by Bro. Geraldus de Cause knight, the account is in Latin, of which the following is a somewhat free translation ;—

" He himself was received into the said Order about the time of the feast of the holy apostles Paul and Peter 12 to 13 years ago in the Chamber of the House of the Temple Carturicensis in the morning by Brother Guigo Ademari since a knight then Provincial Preceptor. There were present brothers Raymond de la Costa priest, Raymond Robert then preceptor of Bassey. Peter then preceptor of the said House Caturicensis whose surname he did not know since knight companion of the said Guigo and certain serving brethren assisting whose names and surnames he said he did not remember. And Ger. Barosa and Bertrand de Longe Valle, Knights on the same day and hour and with the same persons present were received with him in this manner.

.He the said Ger. Barosa and Bertrand de Longe Valle who five days before and the witness himself on the day in question had been made new knights were in a certain room near the chapel of the said House when there came to them the said Raymond Robert and a

certain other brother and knight as it seemed to him of whom he had not taken notice (before) and said to them the words written below.”

“Do you seek the society of the Order of the Temple and the participation of the goods spiritual and temporal which belong to it, and we replying yes the two who had come, said; you seek what is a very great thing—you do not know the rigid precepts which belong to the said Order. For you see us ordinarily well clothed well mounted on horseback and in great appearance—but you cannot know the austerity of the Order and the strict rules that belong to it. For when you wish to be on this side of the sea you will go beyond and conversely, and when you would wish to sleep you must watch and go hungry when you would eat—are you able to undergo all these things for the honor of God and the safety of your souls, and upon our replying yes, if it should please God, they continued—We desire to learn from you whether you are free, and as to the matters which we wish to ask you. .

“ Firstly—We wish to know if you rightly believe in the Catholic faith according to the faith of the Roman Church, and if you belong to any sacred order or are bound in the bonds of matrimony—If you are bound by oath to some other religion—If you are of the military class and begotten in legitimate matrimony—If you are excommunicated on account of your own fault or that of another—If you have promised or given anything to anyone of the Brothers of the Order of the Temple or to others that you may be received into this Religion. If you have any latent infirmity which would make you unfit for the service of the House or the exercise of arms. If you are so burdened with debt for yourself or others which you cannot discharge by yourself or with the help of your friends without the Goods of the Temple.

“To which was answered by the Candidates that they believed in the faith and were free, noble and of lawful birth nor had they anything of the aforesaid impediments. Upon this the two Receptors said they were to turn themselves towards the said Chapel and were to ask God, the blessed Virgin and all the Saints of God that an entry into the Order should be for the health of their own souls, the honor of themselves and their friends and that God would perfect their petition and desire, and when they had finished making the aforesaid address the two brothers departed from them going as I the witness believed to make their report to the said Brother Guigo upon our reply and wish.

“After a little delay the said two Brothers returning to them in the same place asked if they had well considered on the above matter and if they persisted in their desire as before, upon then replying yes they retired from us then (again) as I believed going to the said Brother Guigo to report these things and after a little returned to them telling them to remove from their heads their caps and coifs (*capucia et coifes*) and with clasped hands they should come before the said Brother Guigo and that with bent knees they should seek from him and should say the below written words. Sir (*Domine*) we come here to you and to these brothers who are with you and we ask for the fellowship of the Order and a participation of the Goods spiritual and temporal which belong to it and we wish to be the slaves for ever of the said Order and to get rid of our own will for that of another. And the said Brother Gaigo replied that they sought a great thing repeating the words above which the two brothers had told them and they replied as stated above on oath which they took with bended knees upon some book before him that there were not in them any of the impediments named above. He said to them ‘understand fully what we say to you.’

“You swear and promise to God and the blessed Mary that you will always be obedient to the Master of the Temple and to any brother of the said Order who is put above you and that you will keep your chastity and the good uses and good customs of the Order and live without private property unless the same is allowed you by your superior and will always according to your power help to the preservation of that which has been acquired from the Kingdom of Jerusalem and to the acquisition of that which is not yet acquired and that you will never go in any place where by your scheming or strategy any Christian man or woman may be killed or ungodly disinherited and if the goods of the Temple are entrusted to you that you will return from them a good and legal account for the holy land and you will not leave this religion for better or worse without the leave of your superior.”

Having sworn these things he said to them. “We receive you and your Father and Mother and two or three of your friends whom you shall choose to be elected to the participation of the spiritual goods done and to be done in the Order from the beginning up to the end. And these things being said he put on Mantles and other clothing, and during the clothing the said Raymond de la Costa, priest, said the Psalm. *Ecce quam bonum et quam jocundum habetur fratres in unum*, and the versicles, *Mille eis auxilium de sancto et nihil proficiat inimicus in eis*, with the oration of the Holy Spirit, *Deus qui corda fidelium*, etc., and then the Master raising them by the hands upright, kissed them on the mouth and the witness thought the priest and the knights similarly kissed them on the mouth. After this the said Master seating himself and making them sit near his feet and the Brethren who were standing also sitting, told them that they ought greatly to rejoice because God had brought them to such a noble religion as was the Military religion of the Temple, and that they ought to earnestly pray to Him that they should not do anything which should lose them the said religion and that this would not be pleasing to God, adding there were some faults by which they might lose the religion and some by which they might lose the Mantle of the Order, and some by which they might subject themselves to other punishments of which he would tell them those he remembered about, others they should enquire diligently from the Brothers of the Order. Amongst other things he told them they should be turned out of the House if they had by Simony entered the said religion, if *they revealed the secrets of the Chapter in which they had entered, to any of the Brethren of the Order or to others who had not been present* and if they were convicted wrongfully to have killed a Christian man or woman they should be sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. If they were convicted of (latrocinio) theft by which they understood they should not go out except by the customary door, and they should not make false key. If they were convicted of a certain crime for that also they should suffer perpetual imprisonment, if two three or more of them :by common counselor false faction brought forward any charge against the brothers of the said Orders and of these things they were convicted by their own confessions by two or more brothers of the Order or their (donatos).

“If they should turn aside to the Saracens with the intention of remaining with them even if afterwards they should return and be penitent and if they should be convicted of not fully believing in the Catholic faith, if they should fly when being in arms against the enemy of the faith, deserting their standard or their captain, and if without the license of their superior cause themselves to remove to other Holy Orders, then said Father Guigo to them they ought to lose their habit. If they refuse to obey their superiors and should be rebellious to them, and above all if they persevere in rebellion, they will be put in shackles. If they thrust maliciously or strike a brother to such a degree .that he is compelled to shift

two feet and if spilling of blood should happen they would be liable to imprisonment. If they were to strike a Christian man or woman with stone, stick, or iron, with which by one blow he might be maimed or grievously injured, if they indulge themselves carnally to know a woman or to be in any suspected place with her. If they should accuse the other Brethren of any offence on account of which they ran the risk of losing their Mantle, and if they should fail to prove it, if they themselves fraudulently asserted anything which should not be true, which if true would expel them from the order, if they should say 'other Brethren being present' even in the heat of passion that they would cross over to the Saracens, even if they did not do it. If in fact carrying the banner in actual war without the command of their superiors they should fight with it so that others followed or they should fight with it and misfortune followed from these things they would be liable to be imprisoned for it. If being in the Army without the Captain's order they should go to engage the enemy, unless this was done for the succour of some Christian man or woman, if they should take foreign pay as their own so that the temporal lords should lose the ransoms which might be customary. If they should venture maliciously to deny a temporal lord, his property or any service for the fulfilling of which they should be responsible. If they should fail to receive and entertain any travelling brother of the Order in the House of the Order where they might be. If they received anyone into the brotherhood of the Order without authority and the presence of the Chapter or their superior or otherwise than they should if they receive one not noble in the said Order. If they opened letters which by the Master were sent to others, and if they should break his seal wilfully. If they should break any bolt or fastening of any sack in which money might be carried or similar or other securities and from such breaking loss should follow, they will be treated as for theft (*latrocinio*). If they should give away the Goods of the Order which have not been entrusted to them, or if they should dissipate the goods of the House given to them, or if they should become surety for such persons that by being surety or accommodating them the goods may be likely to be lost, or if they should give away any animal belonging to the Order except a dog or cat which might not be in their own power, if by hunting or following the hunt they lost or killed any horse or in any other way they should bring injury on the Order as if wishing to try arms without the authority of their superiors they should treat them so that they damage your House beyond the value of four denarii, or if with the intention of leaving the Order they should sleep one night outside the Houses of the Order, or if for two nights or more they sleep outside the House, they will not be allowed for the space of one year to get their mantle again, and if in the presence of other Brethren moved by anger they throw off their mantle and do not, immediately at the admonition prayers or requisition of those standing by, resume it, or if when any brother so throws down his mantle and is unwilling to resume it at the admonition prayers or requisition of those assisting, they should put it on his neck, in these three last cases they will not be able to receive their mantle until after a year.

But in other cases it will be left to the decision of the Master and of the Brethren when they should receive back their mantle when for proper causes they have lost it."

And after these premises the aforesaid Receptor told them that when they should come to religion it should be told them how they ought to come in the Church and table and he told them that in strict matins they should rise and quietly entering the Church say twenty-eight Pater Nosters fourteen for the honor of the blessed Mary, and they ought to preserve silence from the time they rose until after primes, and for each hour of the day

they ought to say fourteen Pater Nosters, i.e., seven for the hours of the day and seven for the honour of the Blessed Mary and they ought to hear them said or sung in the Church when they were in a place, when they would do this at matins, primes thirds, mid-day and evening, and afterwards at the table of the hall they were to come to the table or repast, and if in the house there was a Brother Priest before they sat were to wait for him to give the Benediction at the table, and before they sat they were to see that they had meat, salt and wine, and water where they had no wine, and at table they were to speak little, and having partaken of the food they were to return to the Church, if it were near, to give thanks, and the priest was to give the thanks by saying the Orations or the Miserere, and that they were to say the Pater Noster once, and if there 'was no Church, or if it was far off, they were to do this in the Refectory at the hour in which they were, standing and not sitting, and afterwards at the sound of Nones they were to enter into the Church and to say for it fourteen Pater Nosters and in Vespers seven. But they were not obliged to say this number of Noster Paters each hour if they had heard them said or sung in the Church, unless they wished. That at all times they were to begin by first saying the Pater Noster for the honour of the Blessed Mary, but at the finish they were to say the Pater Noster for the honour of the Blessed Mary last, signifying as the Receptor told them, "that the order was inchoate for the honour of the Blessed Mary, and would he finished when God pleased."

Then followed other directions about the number of Pater Nosters to be said for the living and the dead, and that they were not to talk much at table, and that they were to visit their houses, and when they were on a warlike expedition to look to their harness and afterwards to return to their beds, and that they were to sleep in their clothes, and they were to bind themselves with some cords, a sign that they were to live chastily and to restrain their flesh, and they were to keep a light burning in the place where they slept and even in the stable if they could, lest some evil enemy might do them an injury, and he told them they should not be Godfathers (compadres) nor enter a house where a woman was lying in childbirth nor allow women personally to wait on them unless in case of sickness where there were no other servants, and then only with the authority of the superior, and they were not to kiss any woman, even their own relations, and they were not to say any improper things to anyone, nor to repeat disgusting sayings, nor to swear by God, because all that was right was permitted to them, and all that was unnecessary forbidden. 'And then the Receptor said to them, "Go, God make you worthy men," and the Receptor then retired, those who had been received remaining.

This finishes what has come down to us as the recognised mode of receiving a brother in the Order of the Temple. I am not a Knight Templar, and therefore know nothing of the modern ritual, though this is the ancient one. It was after this Reception was finished, when sometimes the Receptor had retired, as in this case, that the alleged immoral and depraved ceremony was said to have taken place.

This is foreign to the present paper. But some other time I may be able, if the Brethren wish it, to state why I consider these charges were false, and only existed in the hatred or imagination of the enemies of the Order.

Bro. E. A. WAITE said :— Bro. E. J. Castle will earn the thanks of students of the history of the Knights of the Temple, and certainly of myself, if he will furnish references in each case to the various authorities whom he cites as regards the reception of candidates.

I should like in particular information on the following points :

- (i.) The source of the citation regarding the champion of the Order in England during its persecution under Edward II. The general reference is, I conclude, to the Synod held in London, 1311, when seventy-eight English Knights were interrogated and two months spent in taking information and verifying evidence.
- (ii.) The particular authority from which Bro. Castle has derived the depositions made before the Inquisitors and Papal Commissioners.
- (iii.) The source from which he has obtained the deposition of the Knight Johannes.
- (iv.) Similarly the source of the deposition of Bro. Geraldus.

Both as regards the ceremony of reception and the constitution of the Chapter, the ground has already been practically covered in English by an unpretending but judicious account of the Templars published in the anonymous work "Secret Societies of the Middle Ages," 1846, which can usually be obtained for a shilling at old booksellers. Everything depends, however, on the position of the documents and many Templar documents rest under strong suspicion, which may or may not be well founded.

It is suggested by several writers that the manuscripts published by Frederick Munter at the end of the last century were forged by him, but a truly critical judgment has still perhaps to be passed on these. In connection with Munter, Raynouard's *Monumens Historiques relatifs à la Condamnation des Chevaliers du Temple* should also be consulted. Both works were evoked by the celebrated treatise of Von Hammer.

The original proceedings against the Templars were published in Germany towards the close of the last century, but Findel and others allege that the work was bought up by the Freemasons, who were greatly interested at the time in the Templar hypothesis as to the origin of Masonry, and were, therefore, correspondingly anxious to suppress anything in the way of documents which appeared detrimental to the Order. The book is consequently extremely rare, though extracts from it have been furnished by later writers. I should add that the large historical work of Dupuy cites in succession the revelations, so called, of two hundred and forty Templars, and it may be further consulted for the alleged occult and scandalous side of Templar initiation, which, as compared with Bro. Castle's account, is like saying the Pater Noster backwards. Dupuy's treatise on the "Condemnation of the Templars," forms part of his history of France, and was republished separately in an enlarged form at Brussels in 1751. Perhaps as regards the charges the Jesuit, Mariana, was as near the truth as we can get when he said, in his *Historia Hispaniæ*, that to all appearance the Templars were neither all innocent nor all guilty. It has been pointed out that practically every contemporary authority condemned the Order. The epistle of Pope Innocent III., addressed to the Grand Master in 1208, sufficiently establishes the corrupt condition of the Templars at that period, although the admonition was friendly. According to Eliphaz Levi, the secret end of the Templars was the reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon on the model of Ezekiel. He also says that neither Pope nor King could make public the true end of the conspiracy, and the accusation of magic was, therefore, preferred as a substitute. As regards other motives which are supposed to have actuated the suppression of the Order, it is not generally remembered that the Templars were believed to have offered money to Pope Boniface VIII. to support him in his hostile policy towards King Philip le Bel. The summons which brought Molay to France was designed also to

bring the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, Fulk de Villaret, who actually arrived later on, but at the time of the arrest of the Templars he had made good his return to Cyprus. Some think that the suppression of the Hospitallers was also an end in view. As to what followed the spoliation, I may mention in justice to all parties, that the Council of Vienna transferred the possessions of the Temple to the Knights of Rhodes. History is not quite clear as to how much they absolutely obtained, but they are believed to have paid heavy and crippling quittances to the Pope and King.

This is of course no place for re-opening the vexed question as to the continuation of the Order of the Temple to modern times, but I may perhaps just mention that one of the most sober statements made upon the subject is that of King, in his work on the Gnostics, wherein he observes that, considering how widely the Order had spread its branches, it would be mere absurdity to believe that all its traditions were swept away at a single stroke. Michelet, in France, had preceded King to the same effect, and it may be added, with all due reservation, that according to Barruel, 30,000 or 40,000 Knights survived, not only the condemnation of the institution, but the deaths of the Pope and King who were concerned in it.

It will interest my fellow students if I point out that the burial rite of the Order of the Temple was published in the Rosicrucian and Masonic Record for April, 1876, but, as in the present instance, without indication of its source.

I should like, in conclusion, to ask Bro. Castle whether he is acquainted with any full text of the rule given by the Council of Troyes for the government of the Order. According to L'Abbé de Vertot, there is only an extract extant, but he wrote in the last century and I am not quite sure as to the accuracy of the statement. About the document itself there is considerable confusion and it is almost universally referred to S. Bernard, which is to be accounted for by the fact that he wrote the *Liber de Laude Novæ Militiæ ad Milites Templi*. This was addressed to the Founder of the Order and can be readily consulted in S. Bernard's collected works, or at least in the Benedictine edition and the Lyons reprint of 1845. It is a work of exhortation which in a certain sense may contain the elements of a rule, but it is not the rule itself. S. Bernard, however, was present at the Council of Troyes and may have had a hand in the construction of the rule.

Bro. W. H. RYLANDS said:— I think we must all feel grateful to Bro. Castle for having reduced into convenient form the tedious and somewhat difficult contents of the volume of the *Procès*. We now possess the depositions and evidences, bearing on the subject, sorted and arranged into a consecutive story, by one whose legal training and knowledge well fit him for the task. This paper contains probably all that is ever likely to be known about the reception of a Knight Templar.

All ceremonies of Initiation have an interest to our Lodge, which is naturally increased, when they have a respectable antiquity, and the information produced about them comes as in the present instance, from a reliable source. The greater our knowledge on this subject the easier it may some-day be to give a rational explanation of our own. In considering the supposed connection between the Freemasons and the Templars, it must, however, never be forgotten that the Templars being a religious Order, it of course possessed in its Rule many laws and customs, common to the whole of the Religious Orders. The fact that the Knights were called *Militia Templi Salomonis: Fratres Militiæ Salomonis* and their statutes, *Regula pauperum Commilitonum Templi Salomonis*, is only natural. This and the similarity of certain general rules is not a satisfactory basis for

argument. A little more imagination would no doubt make it quite easy to reverse the order of things, and derive all the Religious Orders from Freemasonry.

One word about the condemnation of the Templars. It was a religious Order, wealthy and powerful: the only way of satisfactorily attacking it was to charge the Templars as an Order, with outraging moral and religious laws. Truth appears to have entered very little into the question: and I am inclined to agree with those historians, headed by Voltaire who declared that "cette terrible condamnation fut le crime d'un Roi avare et vindicatif, d'un Pape lâche et vendu, d'Inquisiteurs jaloux et fanatiques."

Bro. E. J. CASTLE, K.C., S.W., in reply, stated that it was almost impossible at this distance of time to understand exactly what was meant by admitting the parents and friends of a newly received Templar to spiritual benefits of the Order. One could only hazard an opinion. The Templars admitted Sisters to the Order, about whom, in some cases, considerable scandal arose, but these Sisters were admitted in their own right, and not as the friends or relations of male candidates. Their case therefore differed entirely from that of the parents and friends, for they were under the obligation of chastity, though if scandal spoke truly they did not always observe such obligations, whereas there is nothing to show that the persons admitted as being the parents and friends of a candidate were put under any obligations at all, the participation in the spiritual benefits possibly meaning a right of being buried in the cemeteries of the Order, and, where they were people of importance, having a public funeral attended by the members of the Order, etc. There may have been other similar spiritual benefits, though without information it must remain a matter of conjecture.

With regard to the guilt or innocence of the Templar of the charges preferred against them, in my opinion this is hardly a question for the Quatuor Coronati.

I should however like to answer the suggestion of Bro. Waite that the Templars were neither all innocent nor all guilty, which observation he makes on the authority of the Jesuit Mariana. Now this suggestion is entirely beyond the question. In a numerous body like the Knights Templars there may have been wicked and dissolute men, no doubt there were, but the Order was destroyed not because some of its members were bad, but because the Order itself was bad. It may be said how can the conduct of an Order be distinguished from that of its members, but the distinction must and has to be made. It is evident that an Order can be good, teaching what is right, etc., professing at all events regard for virtue and decency, whilst the practice of its members may be very bad. Why then cannot we conceive that the position may be reversed, that is, the Order may be bad, teaching what is wrong, professing in its Chapters a contempt for religion, inviting and even compelling the shrinking Brethren to acts of indecency and depravity, whilst the Brethren themselves try to live a proper life, so that we might have the Brethren under the pressure of the rules and regulations of the Order promising to do and agreeing to do matters almost too horrible to mention. Promises and agreements which they never intended to keep, and those who proposed them to them, never intended they should keep, which everyone agreed were only so promised and agreed to, because they were required by the rules of the Order. This is the case the French King tried to make out against the Templars, that is that the Order itself was corrupt and bad, and no suggestion, that the question can be answered by supposing that some members were bad and some good, is logical. Hallam puts this very clearly in his *Middle Ages*, vol. i., p. 141.— "Some have endeavoured to steer a middle course and, discrediting the charges brought generally against the Order, have admitted

that both the vice and the irreligion were truly admitted to a great number. *But this is not at all the question, and such a pretended compromise is nothing less than an acquittal.* The whole accusations which destroyed the Order of the Temple relate to its secret rights. If these were not stained by the most infamous turpitude these unhappy knights perished innocently and the guilt of their death lies at the door of Phillip the Fair." With regard to the authority from which I have taken my statement about Himbertus Blanke's celebrated answer, "It was due to folly that the reception of the Knight Templar was made a secret one." The reply of Bro. Himbertus Blanke, as I have given it, is in the words which are to be found in many modern writers. I have, however, found the original question and answer in the depositions taken of this Brother's evidence which are said to be in MS. in the Bodleian Library.

It appeared that Himbertus Blanke was with other Brethren examined by the Bishop of London, and by two Frenchmen whom Philip had kindly sent over to assist in the examination of the Templars, and to shew Englishmen how to torture them if necessary. Himbertus stoutly denied all the charges upon the articles sent over for the examination of the Templars, so much so that he was asked why then did they keep these matters secret, and he replied on account of folly, as the following extract from his deposition shews.

"Asked that he should speak of the mode of his reception and the hidden *occulta* things which they did there." He replied that "they promised obedience, chastity and the giving up of property, and they did no hidden things there except what all the world might see." Asked why they had kept these things secret, he said it was on account of stupidity.

"Interrogatus quare tenuerent ista secreta dicit quod propter stultitiam."

Himbertus Blanke was a most distinguished soldier, and every modern writer recognises the ingratitude with which his warlike exploits were recompensed. In spite of his denials he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, but was to be visited from time to time to see if he would confess anything more.

With regard to the Rule of the Templars, which the same Brother speaks about, a copy of it has come down to us and has been published by Henri de Curzon in 1886.

The depositions made before the Inquisitors and Papal Commissioners, including those of the Knights Johannes and Geraldus, were in two copies, one on vellum was sent to the Pope and is probably now at the Vatican, the other being the one which was written up daily on paper was put in the Treasury of the Church of Notre Dame, where it remained for many centuries and finally was published by M. Michelet, the celebrated French historian, in 1841.

I think the method of reception or initiation which has come down to us intact after a lapse of nearly 600 years, is a matter which does concern this Lodge, there is so much mystery and fanciful speculation about the constitution of secret societies in the past, that when one comes to something which is not only true, but can be proved to be so, so that the student and enquirer has something firm and solid to tread upon, it seems to me that in taking matters out of the realm of speculation and dealing with them as matters of history and fact, the Brethren are being presented with a somewhat more solid food than usual.