

THE "HALES" AT THE NEW TEMPLE ON THE OCCASION
OF THE KNIGHTING OF PRINCE EDWARD.

A DOCUMENT relating to this subject, which has been recently discovered among the records preserved in the Tower,¹ has been brought under the notice of the Institute, through the kindness of Mr. William Twopeny. It had been communicated to him by Mr. William Basevi Sanders of the Record Office there, whose researches have at various times been productive of information connected with the details of medieval architecture. There is no date, but from the hand-writing the record has been supposed to belong to the early part of the reign of Edward II. It is a petition to the king and council in the following terms:—

"Pleise a nostre seigneur le Roi, pur lamour de Dieu, et pur oeuvre de charite, comandier a son Tresorer paier a Wautier le Marberer de Londres et a Johanna sa femme viij livres, pur merin pur les Hales, faites au Noef Temple ou le dit nostre seigneur le Roi fust fait chivaler."

Indorsed is the following answer to the application:—

"Aconte la ou devera, et en soit le Roi certifie."

Brief as it is, this document involves some particulars of historical interest. It may be thus rendered into English:—May it please our lord the king, for the love of God, and as an act of charity, to command his treasurer to pay to Walter the Marbler of London and Joan his wife 8*l.* for timber for the booths made at the New Temple where (or possibly *when*) our said lord the king was made a knight. The answer indorsed is,—Account for (i. e., pay) it where due, and certify the king thereof.

Though undated, the contents show that the inference from the hand-writing is in all probability correct.

The New Temple, it is, perhaps, needless to mention, was on the site of the present Temple; the Old Temple having been near the site of Southampton Buildings, Chancery

¹ Petitions to the King in Council. M., 264.

Lane. The Templars took possession of their new house as early as the latter part of the twelfth century.

The first inquiry suggested by the petition is, on what occasion was it that timber had been furnished for erecting booths in the New Temple? From Rymer² and M. Westminster³ we may, I think, collect a satisfactory answer. It appears that in April, 1306, King Edward I., preparatory to his last expedition into Scotland, was minded to knight his eldest son and heir-apparent, Prince Edward, who had attained the age of twenty-two years without having had that distinction conferred upon him. The king, therefore, summoned all those young noblemen and gentlemen, who were bound by their fees to take such service, and had not been knighted, to attend at Westminster on the feast of Pentecost next, and there receive knighthood, promising them rich military garments out of his own wardrobe. At the time appointed, there assembled 300 young men, sons of earls, barons, and knights, and because the king's Palace at Westminster was not large enough to lodge them and their attendants, recourse was had to the New Temple, where the apple-trees in the gardens having been cut down, and some walls removed, booths and tents (*papiliones et tentoria*) were erected for their accommodation. The prince and the young men of noblest birth kept their vigils at Westminster, where, as the chronicler tells us, there was such a noise of trumpets and pipes, and such a clamour of voices, that the monks could not hear themselves from one side of the choir to the other. The other candidates, most likely the more numerous party, kept their vigils in the Temple. The next day the king knighted the prince in the Palace at Westminster, having given him the duchy of Aquitaine to support his new dignity. The prince then went to the Abbey Church, that he might confer the like honour on his companions, and so great was the concourse of people before the principal altar, that two knights were killed, and many fainted, though each candidate was attended by three knights to conduct him through the ceremony and take care of him. It should seem the pressure was such that in the church the way had to be kept by war chargers, (*dextrarios bellicosos*), and the prince could not gird his companions with the military belt except

² Rymer's *Fœdera* (new edit.) i. pp. 982, 983.

³ Sub anno 1306.

upon the great altar (*super magnum altare*). Another chronicler, quoted by Selden,⁴ says, that the prince knighted sixty of the candidates, and kept a feast at the New Temple. The rest probably received the honour from other distinguished knights. The last-mentioned chronicle states that 400 were knighted on the occasion; but this may be the error of a transcriber, as such a mistake, the addition of a c, might be easily made.⁵

The next inquiry is, why the petitioners should have asked for the money as an act of charity. It does not appear difficult to conjecture the cause, when we call to mind the events of the time. The next year, while the timber was evidently unpaid for, the Templars, on whose responsibility it should seem to have been furnished, fell into disgrace; and in France all who could be found were arrested in October, 1307. Edward II., who had in the meantime succeeded his father, was unwilling to credit the charges made against them, or to join in the persecution of the order, until he received a letter from the Pope urging him to do so. He then issued writs for the general arrest of those in England, which was effected on the 11th of January, 1308. He seized their property, and gave portions of it to his friends; but the Pope, having required it to be transferred to the Hospitallers, after some disputes, parts of it having been claimed by private individuals on various grounds, the king gave it up to the Hospitallers in November, 1313, and it was afterwards confirmed to them by an act of Parliament in 1324. That order took it subject to the Templars' debts⁶; and, therefore, under these circumstances, we may reasonably conclude the petition was presented between 1307 and 1313, while the property was in the king's hands, and Walter and his wife were without remedy for the debt.

If it be thought remarkable that a *marbler* should have furnished *timber* (for there is no doubt of this being the meaning of the word *merin*, which, in the form of *merrain*,

⁴ Titles of Honour, Part II. ch. V. s. xxxiv. p. 775.

⁵ W. Hemingford, with apparent precision, states the number knighted to have been 297; but Ashmole (pp. 37—8), adverting to the discrepancy in the text, says, it was only 267, and he gives their names from the Wardrobe accounts. Notwithstanding the great number then

knighted, it appears that in November in the same year others, who probably were not able to attend on that occasion, were summoned to the king at Carlisle to receive knighthood on the Feast of the Purification (Feb. 2) 1307. Rymer's *Fœdera* (new edit.), i. p. 1004.

⁶ Rot. Parl. II., p. 25 b.

marrian, *merrein*, and *marrin* is found in Lacombe, and as *merrein*, and *merrien* in Glossaire de l'ancien droit Français, by Dupin and Laboulaye), I would suggest that the timber was not furnished by him. This is to be inferred from the wife being joined in the petition, which would hardly have been the case had the money been owing to the husband. It is far more likely that the debt was due to the wife, as the widow or daughter and representative of the person who furnished the timber, and that she had in the meanwhile married Walter the marbler; for then the junction of them both in the petition would have been quite regular.

The word "halles" in modern French, for buildings in which markets are held, is well known. It was formerly spelt "hales;" such places were probably so called from the kind of structures in which the business was transacted. It was not very uncommon in this country as meaning booths or the like. In the Promptorium Parvulorum we have "Hale or tente,—papilio, scena," and several examples, diversely spelt, of the word in that sense are given there in a note by Mr. Way.

The class of documents among which the petition was found has not yet been completely indexed. Mr. W. B. Sanders was engaged in making a calendar of them when he discovered it. Many of them, he says, are printed with the Parliament Rolls. He has since been so obliging as to inform us, that there is a second petition from Walter and Joan nearly word for word like the first, from which we may infer that they experienced some difficulty in getting their money. The answer to the second application was, "Soit baillee au Tresorer et en face ce qil verra qe seit a faire." Edward's prodigality and the surveillance of the bishops and barons, who had been appointed to see to the better ordering of his realm and household, may have been alike unfavourable to the petitioners, notwithstanding the encouraging reply to their first application.

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