

DEGRADATION AND REDUCTION FROM KNIGHTHOOD.

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Sir William Segar, the herald, in his *Honor Military and Civil*,¹ gives what is supposed to be the degradation of a knight. This was probably copied from some earlier work on chivalry, but it is interesting to find in history an actual account of such a painful ceremony. In one of Jost Ammon's woodcuts illustrating the *Levée de Tournoi*, published at Frankfort in 1566, and reproduced by the late Mr. James, F.S.A. is a representation of this ceremony.² In Jost Ammon's woodcut it forms a small part of the large plate.

Monluc tells us how in 1523 an old captain Frauguet was degraded at Lyons for having surrendered the fortress of Fontarabia. It appears that Don Pedro of Navarre, son of the marshal of Navarre, having been banished his country for espousing the cause of Henry, grandfather of Henry IV of France, was placed in this town with 400 men banished like himself. The place was apparently impregnable, though two breaches had been made in its walls, but at the solicitation of the constable of Navarre, Don Pedro his nephew surrendered it, and the blame fell on the old captain Frauguet. By the surrender of Fontarabia the French lost an important foothold in Spain, which by its defence for a whole year had at an earlier date covered its defender, the sieur de Lude, with great glory.

The subsequent degradation of captain Frauguet was conducted in this manner. First, in the presence of several knights a herald of arms recounted the circumstances of his crime, and accused him of cowardice: his judges then condemned him to be turned out of the nobility and to be declared *roturier*, or of no position. Two scaffolds were erected, on one of which stood the knights,

¹ Bk. 2, ch. 4.

² James, *Book of the Spur*, which appeared

serially in *Brit. Arch. Assoc. Journ.* 1855, and following years.

squires and heralds in their tabards of arms ; on the other stood the wretched Frauket in full armour, with his shield emblazoned with his coat of arms placed upside down on a post in front of him. Beside him twelve priests chanted the service for the dead, and at the end of each psalm the priests paused while the heralds stripped off some portion of his armour, the heralds at the same time crying out, " this is the surcoat of the traitorous and disloyal Frauket," and so on. His shield was then broken into three pieces with a hammer.

When the funeral service ended the heralds again proclaimed the sentence, and the priests sang over his head psalm cix, *Deus laudem meam ne tacueris*. We know the curses and denunciations contained in this psalm. Frauket was then brought down from the scaffold, bound with a cord under his arms, and carried to the church on a bier covered with a hide and a pall. His judges accompanied him in hoods and other mourning garments, and then pronounced him as *roturier*, ignoble and incapable, him and his posterity, of bearing arms, under pain of being flogged with rods as a rogue and infamous man. In consideration of his age his life was spared.

Favyne notes that in earlier times a degraded knight had to carry a dog on his shoulders round the scene of his offence.

Painful as the degradation of a knight must have been to all concerned, however well deserved the punishment, the reduction to ordinary rank and position, for no fault of their own, of knights created by the representative of the sovereign must have been a sore experience, and this fate overtook some thirty-eight gentlemen toward the end of the reign of Elizabeth. The earl of Essex, it will be remembered, was pretty free in his bestowal of knighthoods, and the cheapening of the dignity gave rise to the well-known verse referring to his action in regard to the expedition to Cales or Cadiz.

A knight of Cales, a squire of Wales,
And a laird of the north countrie,
A yeoman of Kent with his yearly rent
Would buy them out all three.

Elizabeth seems to have taken no action in the matter of the Cadiz knights, but that expedition was in a way successful. Far different was the Irish campaign of the earl, and the royal patience seems to have been exhausted, as we find in the State Papers for Ireland, ccv, 241, where a list is given of the unfortunate objects of Essex's approval. Their names, thirty-eight in number, are as follows¹ :

Alenck, Francis	Draycott, John	Morrison, Richard
Baynham, Edward	Follyet, Henry	Osborne, Robert
Bonsherd, William	Foulkes, Henry	Peetoe, Jonathan
Brocket, John	Goodere, Henry	Poley, John
Broke, Robert	Heydon, John	Ratcliff, John
Blunt, Edward	Leyster, John	Reade, Edward
Carie, Henry	Loftus, Richard	Sandes, John
Chamberlain, John	Loftus, Thomas	Talbot, John
Clovel, William	Lovelace, Richard	Wallop, Henry
Cornwallis, William	Manners, Charles	Weston, Symon
Coultray, Fowlke	Michelbourne, Edward	Wilmot, Charles
Crofts, John	Morgan, Edward	Yaxley, Robert
Digby, Robert	Moore, Garret	

We know that Elizabeth's successor on the throne did in some cases reverse the action of his predecessor, as in that of captain Thomas Lee, executed for his share in the rising of Essex, not that he could restore the gallant soldier to life, but he did restore to captain Lee's son the property which his father had forfeited by his shameful death. We cannot, however, find that James, given as he was to knighting and baroneting, ever restored the disallowed knights to the dignity of which the angry queen had deprived them. And it seems hard, for no doubt most or many of them had done good service in the disastrous campaign which Essex left unfinished in Ireland. Not even a baronetcy, which would have at least added to the thrifty king's purse, was given to these reduced knights.

The list may be of interest to some, as the late Mr. Metcalfe in his *Book of Knights*² omitted many of them,

¹ For convenience the names are arranged alphabetically.

² London (1885).

and none are to be found in the calendar of State Papers for 1599-1600. Sir John Harrington's list, which is from a journal kept in Ireland, and appears in the calendar of Irish State Papers, 1600, p. 105, also omits many of the above list.