



Bulstrode and the Templars.

By W. H. Wadham Powell.

THE rise and fall of the Knights Templar in England is perhaps one of the most dramatic episodes, when viewed from this distance of time, in the early history of the country. This Order of Knights had its origin in the 12th century, and was the most renowned of the three great Military Orders founded for the defence of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and for the purpose of affording armed protection to the numerous bands of pilgrims, who, after the First Crusade, flocked to Jerusalem and other sacred sites in the Holy Land.

These Knights, almost from their foundation as an Order, had quarters on Mount Moriah, known as Solomon's Temple, and it was from this circumstance the Order derived its name. Their costume consisted of a white mantle, with a red cross on the left shoulder, for the Knights, but the Squires and the Retainers wore black mantles.

Even before the death of St. Bernard in 1153 the new Order had established itself in almost every kingdom of Latin Christianity, and it soon became a powerful factor in the political events of that period. Members of the Order were Almoners of Henry III. of England, and Philip VI. of France, and one of them became King of Jerusalem.

They were summoned to the Great Councils of the Church, and were sought after as God-fathers to the children of many of the Royal Families of the Europe of that age.

They owned lands in almost every part of Christendom, from Denmark to Spain, and from Iceland to Cyprus, and Matthew Paris reckons that the number of Manors they held was about 9,000.

They also became bankers to many of the Potentates of Europe, and lent them large sums of money and acquired great influence on that account. It was all this greatness and power no doubt which occasioned their downfall. They became an object of envy and

jealousy, and perhaps of fear, to the rival power of the Church, and at last, at the instigation of the Pope, Philip IV. of France, brought accusations against the Order of heresy, and of crimes of great profanity. Amongst other things, they were said to have made the practice of spitting on the Cross a part of their secret rites, to have worshipped certain animals, to have murdered children, and to have committed many other evil practices, and it may be remembered that Sir Walter Scott, in "*Ivanhoe*," makes his heroine Rebecca exclaim, when somewhat closely pressed by the gallantries of the Templar Knight, Brian de Bois Guilbert, that "she would rather trust her soul with God, than her honour to the Templar."

In France the Order was dissolved in October, 1307, and in 1312 it was finally suppressed by the Council of Vienne, and its wealth and territories were for the most part handed over to the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem.

In this country the Order was suppressed by decree of Pope Clement V., and in January, 1308, King Edward II. seized their lands and their goods and chattels, and the revenues and monies derived therefrom were placed in the hands of the Sheriffs of the respective counties in which the property was situated, by whom they were handed over to the King's Exchequer.

There must always be considerable doubt as to how far the accusations made against the Templars were proved. So far as their wealth and power were concerned, the matter admitted of no doubt, but the malignant practices assigned to them were only proved, if proof it can be called, by means of the infliction of terrible tortures on the unfortunate Templars, under which many of them in France lost their lives.

In this country the Order held Manors in most of the counties, and among those which were so held in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, which at that time were both under the same Sheriff, was that of Bolestrode, now called Bulstrode, in the former county, and there are still preserved at the Record Office, in excellent condition, several rolls relating to the Templar Possessions, among which may be especially mentioned two important rolls, each of which is five feet in length and seventeen inches broad. They are written in Old English character and in Mediæval Latin, and are classed among what are called "Ministers' Accounts." In one of these documents may be found the detailed compotus, or account, which William de Molesworth, the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, returned to the King's Exchequer with reference to the revenue and

expenses relative to this Manor of Bolestrode in the first year of the reign of King Edward II., and it is probable that some few notes from one of these most interesting and hitherto, so far as we are aware, unpublished documents, dating from the 7th year of the fourteenth century, may not be out of place in the pages of the Berks, Bucks, and Oxon Archæological Journal.

This roll commences with an account rendered by the said Walter de Molesworth for £4 3s 6d for rents received out of the Manor of Bolestrode. At that period there seems to have been a Water Mill there, for which a return of 26s. 8d. is made. For the "Talewode," which it is stated was composed of the boughs of the trees in the wood with the small twigs attached, £4 2s. 6d. is accounted.

Corn was sold for 30s. 10d. and the sale of mutton, pork, and butter is also accounted for, and also the sale of lambs' wool, the total amount accounted for being £18 6s. 10d., the period of the account being from the Feast of Easter to the Feast of Michaelmas.

Among the expenses of the Manor are mentioned the repairs of the carts and cart wheels, and the cutting of the Talewode—de Talewode amputando—and the expenses of weighing the wool and taking it to London are also mentioned.

Then come the expenses of the harvest, which consisted of the cutting, gathering up, and binding of the oats and other grain.

We also find from the wages bill that there were three carters who were paid 3s. 2d., a mower had 2s. 6d., and a cowkeeper, a shepherd, and a swineherd got 21s. among them, and there was also another shepherd who got 9s.

From this record we find that there was a Chapel on the Manor, and the Chaplain, one Edmund de Burnham, received payment from the proceeds of certain lands, not mentioned, which were assigned for that purpose by Richard de Turville; and for the daily performance of the service in the Chapel, the Chaplain seem to have received 15 pence halfpenny a week, and we shall find another account of this further on; altogether, the total expenses of this account are reckoned at £10 3s. 5½d. for the period from the Feast of Easter to the Feast of Michaelmas.

Then is given an account of the corn in the granary, of which there were 6 quarters, 1 bushel, and 1 peck, the good old English measures, observe, of six centuries ago. This was received from Gilbert de Holm. There were also peas, which were used for the small pigs, and there was also "drag," a coarse kind of corn—Dragum—which was used for the sustenance—Sustenendo—of the

pigs. But the carter, the ploughman, the 8 herdsmen, the shepherd, and the reaper seem to have been fed on "Mixture," a blend of corn and rye, or of other grain, and for four weeks in the autumn this mixture seems to have been used at the table of the Lord of the Manor.

A very interesting and detailed account is also given of the live stock on the farm—Instaurum—from which we find that there were 2 carthorses, 7 farmhorses, 10 oxen, 1 bull, 10 cows, 2 steers, 3 mares, 4 young oxen, 6 heifers, 100 sheep, 125 mother sheep, as they are quaintly called—oves matrices—75 hoggetts, 4 rams, 60 lambs, 1 boar, 2 swine, 19 pigs, 8 little pigs, and so on. There were also a goose and 3 ganders "found on the manor," wandering about no doubt, as is often still the custom of these creatures in the 20th century.

Then there were also 44 cheeses accounted for, together with 2 tubs of butter, 304 fleeces, 56 lamb fleeces, and 30 lamb skins, and 44 sheep skins, and altogether one William Servett has to answer for 48 cloves of wool, a clove being 7 or 8 pounds' weight, and 13 lamb skins. These figures give a good idea of the amount of wool produced at Bolstrode at that time.

The scene now changes, and an account is rendered for the first half of the second year, wherein we find 3s. 4d. as the value of pulse, the produce of the garden, 1s. 6d. for willows—probably for making baskets—and 9s. 4d. for brushwood—subboscum. There were also 2 oxen, 7 wether sheep—multones—17 ewes, and 22 pigs, which, with some more peas and mixture, mixtilum, made up the receipts to £12 2s. 1½d.

Among the expenses for the same period we find some interesting items, which disclose still further the husbandry operations carried on at Bolstrode by the Templars all but six centuries ago. Iron was used for the repair of the carts or ploughs. There were also two new carts made of timber, and the wheels apparently required grease, much the same as cart wheels do at the present day. There were also drinks provided—or libations shall we call them?—on the birthday of the lord of the manor. Wages were paid to 16 women for (probably) winnowing—eligendo—the corn. Some poultry were also purchased, as well as milk for the lambs and "drag" for the pigs.

Three carters received 8s. 2d. between them, a reaper got 2s. 6d., and the shepherd of the wethers 2s., but for what periods of labour is not mentioned; 2d. a day, however, was probably the wage of farm servants at the early part of the 14th century, and in some cases

4d., as appears from other Templar accounts. There was also a cook who was paid 1s. 1d. for making soup for the household, and lastly, is recorded the payment of the Chaplain for the daily service at the Chapel at Bolestrode, for which, as we are already aware, one Richard de Turville had assigned certain lands and rents, the value of which for the 22 weeks and 6 days from the Feast of St. Michael to the 7th day of March amounted to £1 9s. 5½d. Note the exactitude of this account, 22 weeks and 6 days—not 23 weeks—which works out at the rate of 1s. 3½d., and taking the value of money at three times the present value would be about £1 7s. 1½d. a week.

The Chaplain, it seems, had also 9 quarters and 2 bushels of corn granted to him by brief and letter of indenture. And altogether in addition to this grant, 22 quarters and 7 bushels of corn were apportioned among the farm servants. On the back of this roll—in *dorsum*—are also given the details of the account of the goods and chattels of the Manor, as received from Gilbert de Holme, who it is stated was sheriff before the aforesaid William de Molesworth. This account gives some additional, and very interesting information, relating to the furniture of the Manor House of Bolestrode nearly six centuries ago, and from it we learn that :

In the hall were 2 tables with 4 trestles, the value of the former being 2s., and of the later 1s. 6d. There were also 2 sleeping tables—*tabulas dormientes*—worth 1s; these were probably similar to the sloping board beds used in the guardrooms of military barracks at the present time. There was a skin worth 1s., and an iron fork worth 8d.; and in the roof, on the rafters, hung a bell worth 2s. This is all that is mentioned in the hall, but probably there must have been benches or forms as well. The Chamber seems to have had little in it except chests, and one of these it is stated was empty, which seems to show that the others had something in them, clothes perhaps.

In the Chapel of the Manor we hear of a vestment, valued at 10s., 3 handtowels worth 3s., 2 surplices, and a silver-gilt chalice, worth 14s. The missal was worth 13s., the antiphonarium—the book containing the invitations, the responsaries, and the verses which were said in the choir (with the exception of those used at mass)—was valued at 15s. There was a book of collects—*Collectaneum*—a *Textum*, or Book of the Gospels, bound in brass, and a Gradual, and other sanctuary furniture. There were also 3 stoles, worth 1s, a pyx., valued at 2s., made of brass, a candlestick, a holy water vase, a pewter basin for washing the sacred vessels in, two large bells, each of which was worth 10s., and there was also a smaller bell, worth 8d.

The contents of the cellar are also given, but no mention is made of any liquor, the contents were chiefly various chests, casks, flagons and cups, and there was also a canvass cloth and sundry towels.

In the kitchen, among other things was a ladder, 2 large brass pots which stood on the ground, besides other brass pots. There were also a clay pot, some dishes and pitchers, and 3 "dresing bordes," which were probably the French dressoirs—low Latin dressorium—*tabula, ubi vasa reponuntur ad mensæ ministerium*.

In the bake-house were 2 leaden cauldrons, standing on the ground, and various sorts of vessels. There were also a large malt tub and various corn measures, barrels and so forth, as might be expected.

In another place there was a trough for salting meat, and a hatchet, and a basket made of twigs.

In the house of the baker—this really sounds quite Pompeian in character—there seems to have been a press, a meal tub, and a sort of little cart or drag—*tribulo magna*—which was used for thrashing out the corn, before the introduction of the flail. There was also a cart house, with carts in it. The stable seems to have had little in it, besides 2 saddles, 2 collars, and some hempen ropes, perhaps used for halters.

In the dairy there were sundry tables, forms, and utensils for making butter, and the whole account winds up with the workshop, in which there was an anvil, a hammer, a grindstone, a pair of pincers, and various other unimportant articles, and the adjoining Court, where we find 2 ladders, 3 new sacks, 2 ploughs with their tackle, worth 2 shillings, and a stool worth 1 penny, all of which were duly handed over to Edmund de Burnham, who was probably then in possession of, or, as we should now say, farming, the Manor, by brief and letter of indenture, in the usual way.

The preceding notes will serve to give a very close idea of the nature and construction of these Accounts, or *Computuses*, as they are called, and it will be unnecessary to carry on the examination of them any further, especially as they are all of a very similar character to that roll which has been now under consideration.

These documents serve to show that whatever may have been the luxury and wealth displayed by the Templars in high places, their mode of life in the smaller country manors was of the simplest and humblest description, and as might be expected of an entirely agricultural character, at an age, it may be remembered, when printing

was unknown, and, for all people knew to the contrary, the sun moved round the earth.

These Accounts are also of great interest to us at the present day, as, being contemporary documents, they take us back face to face, as it were, with the daily life of the people of Buckinghamshire, at a time when the white-robed Templars were the occupiers of the undulating glades and forests, and the Banner Beauseant of the Order floated over the manorial demesnes of the Bolestrode of some six centuries ago.

“Norman Tympana and Lintels in the Churches of Great Britain.”

By Charles E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A.

LOYAL Members of the Berks Archæological Society will welcome with much satisfaction the appearance of a learned work written by their President. Those who have listened to Mr. Keyser's lectures on Architectural subjects, or visited old Churches in his company, know well his enthusiastic love of Norman Architecture and the careful study which he has made during many years of the details and the sculpture and symbolical interpretations of Norman doorways. By careful personal observation of these relics of ancient art in all parts of England, Mr. Keyser has acquired a very special knowledge of his subject, and we have in this volume, enriched with very numerous illustrations of curious carvings, the results of his research, which will be especially valuable to those who admire the skill and fertility of design of the ancient Masons of England. Very strange and remarkable are many of these figures so clearly shown in this volume by the aid of the camera, and moreover, as Mr. Keyser says “they serve to illustrate the methods of religious teaching which were carried on in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in no slight measure through the medium of these practical appeals to the observation and sentiments of those on whom the Church wished to exercise and maintain its influence.”

The author has a thorough and complete knowledge of the subject concerning which he writes, and his volume abounds with