

or their *Proctors* for them, did always bestow particular Rewards on the *College*, the Officers of the *Order* and of *Arms*, the *Alms-Knights*, and some others who attended the Solemnity, and in particular *Garter* had anciently bestowed on him a rich *Gown*, to wear at the time of *Installation*, but of late he has been presented with some other thing of considerable Value. They also were liberal to the Officers of *Arms*, as appears by several *Largesses* given to them by their *Proctors*, and in general to the greatest part of those that gave their Attendance.

C A P. XVIII.

Of the Grand Feast of the Order.

The Grand Feast appointed to be celebrated Annually on *St. George's Day*.

§ 1. **B**Y the *Statutes of Institution*, it's ordain'd, That a solemn Festival should be Annually celebrated on the 23d Day of *April*, or *St. George's Day*, in Honour of the Patron of the *Order*, as is observed in other military Orders, erected since this of the *Garter*, to which this seems to give Rules of holding their Festivals on the Anniversary of their Patrons. Thus *Philip*, Duke of *Burgundy*, on his erecting the *Order of the Golden Fleece*, taking *St. Andrew* for its Patron, appointed the Festival on *St. Andrew's Day*. *Lewis XI.* King of *France*, appointed *Michaelmas Day* for holding the Feast of the *Order of St. Michael*. And so the Festival of the Duke of *Savoy's Order of the Annunciade*, on *Lady Day*. The Duke of *Bourbon's Order of the Knights of our Lady*, on the Conception of our *Lady* (8th *December*;) and other instances might likewise be given if it were necessary.

The Anniversary of *St. George* fixed by the Church, to the twenty third of *April*.

§ 2. That the 23d of *April* was the Day whereon *St. George*

George suffered Martyrdom by Beheading, appears from the Greek *Hexamiter* before his Commemoration; which was the Day observed both by the Greek and *Latina Church*; as also by our Predecessors, the Saxons.

St. George's Day made Festum duplex.

§ 3. After the Sovereign and *Knights-Companions* had encreased the Honour of their Patron's Festival, our Church began to take greater notice of it, being now also esteemed among us as the Patron of the Nation; and therefore they bestowed an addition of Honour upon it, by making it *Festum duplex, ad Modum Majorum Duplicis*. 3 Hen. V.

The Place for celebrating the Grand Feast, assigned to Windsor-Castle.

§ 4: The Founder of this most Noble Order having fixed on this Day, for performing its Solemnities, he made Choice of that of his Nativity, the *Castle of Windsor*, which for a long time after was inviolably observed there, either upon the very Day, or some other appointed by Prorogation, not long after: For which way of Prorogation, allowance was given by the *Statutes* of the Order, and of which the *Registers* are full of instances.

St. George's Day kept apart from the Grand Feast, and how then observed.

§ 5. How this Noble Order flourished from its Foundation to the time of Henry V. no Account can be given, since the *Annals* thereof are wanting to his Reign; but then it appears to have been in considerable Splendor; but the Civil Wars toward the end of Henry VIth's Reign, eclipsed it for a while. Under King Edward IV. when things were a little settled, it seem'd to recover; and in King Henry VIIIth's time, was at a greater height than ever. However, though the several Branches of the Order receiv'd some Augmentation from the influence of this Monarch,

Monarch, yet the Grand Feast began to decline, by a removal of the observation of *St. George's Day* from *Windsor*, and a prorogatory Celebration of the Grand Feast to other times.

The Article of the *Statutes*, causing this great alteration from the original design of the first Institution, gives the Sovereign Power to prorogue the Grand Feast at his Pleasure; but then 'tis evident from the same Statute, that *St. George's Day* was nevertheless ordained to be duly observed by it self, in what Place soever the Sovereign (if within the Realm) should then reside; *Windsor* hereby being not excluded.

It farther implies, the sacred *Rites* and *Offices* to be performed, with other Matters concerning the *Order*; for besides the particulars therein enumerated, this general Clause is observable: That what other urgent *Affair* soever, relating to the *Order*, should offer it self to be performed, the same might be treated of, and receive dispatches, in the *Chapter* held where the Sovereign then should be, as fully as if he were at *Windsor Castle*.

So that henceforward, all things began to be ordered, both on the Eve the Day of *St. George*, and the Morrow after, with as great State; all *Affairs* as legally dispatched, and all Ceremonies as magnificently performed, except that of offering up of *Atchievements*, which is peculiar to the Chappel of *St. George* at *Windsor* only, as could be observed at the *Grand Festival* it self.

And how, by *Virtue* of this Article, and with what Ceremonies *St. George's Day* was held, when the Grand Feast was prorogued, is evident from a full and ample Precedent, 22 *Hen. VIII.* now remaining in the *Office of Arms*.

For though the Sovereign with 13 *Knights-Companions* were at *Windsor* that Year, upon the 22, 23 and 24 of *April*, yet at that time they observed only the Feast Day of *St. George*, with the Eve and Morrow after, but deferred, by Order in *Chapter*, the Celebration of the Grand Feast, to the 8th of *May* ensuing.

The Grand Feast neglected by King Edward VI.

§ 6. From the Accession of this Prince, the Sovereignty of this *Order* became more neglected, so that during his Reign,

Reign, no Anniversary of *St. George* was kept at *Windsor*; by a *Grand Festival*.

This is supposed to be owing to the common Calamity of that Age, wherein most Ceremonies, solemn or splendid, especially such as related to Divine Services, came under the denomination of being either Superstitious or Idolatrous. Infomuch, that at a *Chapter* held at *Greenwich*, 2 *Edw. VI.* an Abolition being intended for such Ceremonies as were not consonant to the King's Injunctions, lately prescribed, it was then decreed, that then, and for ever from thenceforth, at the Feast of this most Noble Order, no other Ceremonies should be observed than such as were appointed by his Majesties Letter.

That no Procession should be made with going about the Church, or Church-yard, but the King's Majesty's Procession, lately set forth in English to be used. His Majesty and other Knights-Companions sitting in their Stalls, at the Entry, such Reverences to be made to the King's Majesty only as was heretofore. The Offering to be in the Box for the Poor, without any other Reverence, or kissing any Paten, or other thing; but only at the return, due Reverence to the King, as was used before. The Mass of Requiem to be left undone; but yet, both on *St. George's Day*, and for next Day, a Mass to be sung with great Reverence; in which, immediately after the Words of Consecration is said, the Priest shall say the *Pater Noster*, and so turn and Communicate to all, or so many of the Order, or other, after they have done, as shall be disposed to receive the Communion, according to the Order prescribed by his Majesty's Book of Communion, and without any other Rite or Ceremony after the said Communion to be used; except some godly Psalm or Hymn to be sung in English, and so to end the said Service. All Chapters, and other Rites concerning the Order, not being contrary to these, to remain as they have been used.

This Decree seemed to mean nothing less than a Prohibition to the holding the Grand Feast at *Windsor*, at least the neglect of its Celebration there, whilst King *Edw. VI.* lived: And though toward the End of his Reign, some care was taken for a Permission to hold the said Feast, either on *St. George's Day*, or some other appointed by Prorogation; yet it was without any regard to the ancient and usual Place; for when the Act passed, commanding the Days therein mentioned to be kept Holy, and no other, whereby

whereby this was involved among many other Saints Days then prohibited to be kept, as not being found among the Feasts then Establish'd ; it was considered, that a Proviso and Allowance should be entered in the aforesaid Act, for the Celebration of this Feast, particularly by the *Knights-Companions*; which Act, though it suffered a Repeal by *Queen Mary*, yet stands in force at this Day, being revived by King *James I.* his repealing that *Statute of 1 Mar. Cap. 2.*

Removed from Windsor by Queen Elizabeth.

§ 7. But the most fatal Blow given to the growing Honour of the Castle of *Windsor*, was a Decree in *Chapter* held 9 *Eliz.* with the consent of the *Knights-Companions* then present, viz.

That if on the Vigil and Day of St. George, the Feast was not held at Windsor, according to the usual Custom, it should nevertheless be sufficient, if the Observation thereof were kept at the same Place where the Sovereign should then happen to be, where also the rest of the Knights-Companions were obliged to be present, no less than if the Feast had been held at Windsor.

And so severe was the latter part of this Decree against the flourishing condition of that Place, that it commanded also,

That no other Solemnity, under the notion of St. George's Feast, should thenceforth be celebrated at Windsor, except upon occasion of the Installation of some illustrious Person, and then also, not without express leave of the Sovereign.

And to say truth, this *Statute* was but too strictly observed during her Reign ; for we meet but with one Feast of *St. George* held there, till 1 *Jac. I.* (unless we mistake the Feasts of *Installation* for those of *St. George*.) but then the Sovereign, who was yet in *Scotland*, sent his Commission, dated 5 *April*, to the *Earl of Nottingham*, his *Lieutenant*, to prorogue the Festival to the 3d *July* following, and after constituted him to hold the Feast, which was performed the 2, 3 and 4 Days of the said Month, with all Pomp and Ceremony. The King himself, being then at *Windsor*, was prevented from being present by some occasion not mentioned.

Thus;

Thus, after a long Interval, the Honour of the Feast was restored, which had this effect, toward the End of King *James I.* Reign, and that of his Son and Successor, King *Charles I.* that it begat a Re-union of the Feast and Place, whereby the Castle of *Windsor*, famous for the Institution of this most Noble Order, retrieved its ancient Honour, of having its Solemnities celebrated there.

Of Prorogation of the Grand Feast.

§ 8. Having thus noted, that from the beginning of King *Henry VIIIth's* Reign, till of late Years, the Grand Feast was seldom observed upon the precise Day of *St. George*; and that the occasion how both Day and Feast came to be celebrated apart, took its rise from the indulgence of the *Statutes* in point of Prorogation: 'Tis necessary farther to observe, that this Prorogation is of two sorts, either Absolute, as being enjoined by the *Statutes*; or else Arbitrary, at the Sovereign's Pleasure, upon intervening Reasons.

In the first of these the Founder's *Statutes* enjoin, That if the Feast of *St. George* shall happen within fifteen Days next after Easter Day, it shall be prorogued to the Sunday *Furnight*, or fifteen Days after Easter Day. And the reason is there given, That every of the *Knights-Companions* might have opportunity of coming thereto, without being constrained to ride upon any of those three Holy Days preceeding Easter Day. The same Rule for Prorogation, where there is a concurrence of these two Feasts, is likewise enjoind by the *Statutes* of King *Henry V.* and King *Henry VIII.*

And when the Grand Feast, in this case of *Easter*, has been kept before the expiration of the said fifteen Days, the *Knights-Companions* then absent, to avoid the Penalty for their not appearing, have made Excuse; that the ancient *Statutes* of the Order were violated in keeping the Feast within fifteen Days after *Easter*, as was alledged when Sir *John Denham*, Lord Treasurer, as Pretident, held the Feast of *St. George* at *Windsor*, 24 April, & *Henry VII.*

Anciently, where the Register mentions the Grand Feast to be held at *Windsor*, beyond the Day of *St. George*, 'tis observable upon Calculation, that *Easter Day*, in those times,

times, fell too near the 23^d of *April*, to celebrate the Feast on, without breaking the Law, which was the real cause of those Prorogations, of which there are many Instances.

And as the *Knights-Companions* had Prohibitions put upon the Solemnization of their Feast, in case of its interfering with *Easter*, so had the Church of *England*, in their Observation of *St. George's Day*, in reference to several other Festivals; and this continued till the time of the Reformation begun by King *Edward VI.* but since the Grand Feast has been celebrated upon any of them indifferently the Feast of *Easter* only excepted.

The second sort of Prorogations, which are merely Arbitrary, and wholly dependent on the Sovereign's Pleasure, yet warranted sufficiently from the Words, *Causa postulante*, mentioned in King *Henry VIII's* Statutes; as likewise the great Latitude given the Sovereigns of this most Noble Order, in reference to their Affairs, in the same Statutes: The first Precedent of which was, *Anno 5. Hen. V.* when about *August*, four Months after *St. George's Day*, that King being engaged in the Wars of *France*, ordered the Feast to be celebrated at *Caen* in *Normandy*, and with great Solemnity created fifteen Knights into the Order.

There are several other Examples, particularly one *8. Hen. VIII.* when the King being at *Eltham* on *St. George's Day*, it was in a Chapter there held, Decreed, That the accustomed Feast of *St. George* should be observed at *Windsor* 25th of *May* ensuing. And from this time it became Annually customary, to keep the Day of *St. George* where the Sovereign at that time made his Abode: On which Day, and the Day after, the usual Solemnities were observed. But as to the Solemnization of the Grand Feast it self, that was in one of the Chapters then held, adjourned to some farther time, and then solemnized at *Windsor* by Prorogation, not by the Sovereigns themselves, but by their *Lieutenants* and their *Assistants* appointed for that purpose.

But to proceed with the Causes of Prorogation, which were either for some weighty reasons, or upon emergent Occasions; *Anno 1. Mariae*, the Sovereign celebrating the Feast of *St. George* at *St. James's*, *Philip*, Prince of *Spain*, and the Earl of *Suffex*, were on the Morrow after elected into the Order; whereupon it was likewise De-

creed;

creed, that the Inauguration of these two *elect Knights*, till the Prince came to *England*, which happening 21st *July* following, the *Grand Feast*, together with that of the *elect Knights* Installations, were appointed to be celebrated at the same time.

Again 3 and 4 *Phil.* and *Mar.* at a *Chapter* held 22^d *April*, the *Feast of St. George*, together with the Installation of three *elect Knights*, was appointed to be held at *Windsor* the 9th of *May* ensuing; and by a *Chapter* Summoned the 3^d of *May*, before the appointed *Day* for holding the *Feast*, the same was prorogued to the 15th of *December* following, upon the pressing Affairs of the *King* and *Queen*. But before that designed time came, another *Chapter* was held on the 31st of *October*, wherein it was again prorogued to the first *Sunday* after *Twelfth-day*, viz. 9 *January*, if by that time the *King*, who was then in *Flanders*, should return to *England*: But that not happening, it was farther prorogued to the 20th of *February*; and thence by another *Decree* to *St. George's Day*. Of which there are many other *Examples*, and sometimes upon other *Occasions*, but still at the *Sovereign's Pleasure*.

Of Commissions of Prorogation.

§ 9. There is no *Precedent* of *Commissions* for *Prorogation*, ancienter than 12 *Car. I.* left by *Sir Thomas Rowe*, wherein notice is taken of all the adjournments of the *Grand Feasts*, from *St. George's Day* preceeding, till that time, with the reasons thereof, and chiefly upon consideration of the spreading *Sickness*, together with a *Command* to the *Knights-Companions*, and the *Officers* of the *Order*, to attend the *Sovereign* on the new assigned *Days* for celebrating the *Feast*.

As to the substance hereof, the succeeding *Commissions* very near agree, yet with some little difference; as first, the *Preambles* are general, and run thus: *Whereas, upon special Reasons, and other important Affairs, &c.* except the *Commission* issued 25th *February*, 1637. where the *Preamble* was fitted to a special *Occasion*, and runs thus:--*Whereas we have determined to Create the Prince, our eldest Son, a Knight, and to propose him in Election as a*

Companion of our most Noble Order, for the more conveniency of his Installation, we have thought fit to defer the Feast of St. George, &c.

But in the Commissions of Prorogation of the Grand Feast, 25th February, 19 Car. I. the Place appointed for Celebration is omitted, which defect we find in the above-mentioned Precedent also; yet afterwards that material part came to be inserted, and first of all in that Commission of the 26th February 14 Car. I. where the Place, being the City of York, is put into the Body of the Commission. And when the Civil War drew on, and the Sovereign could not well ascertain any Place, then the Grand Feast was appointed to be kept at any such Place, as on a nearer view should seem convenient, afterwards it varied something, and came to be inserted thus--*Where-soever we shall then be; or thus; at such Places as we shall timely appoint.*

The most ordinary course, preparatory to the issuing such Commissions of Prorogation, has been by the Sovereign's Declaration in Chapter, or otherwise the signification of his Pleasure to the Chancellor of the Order at any other time, who thereupon drew up the Commission, and presented it to the Sovereign for his Sign Manual, and then affixed thereto the Great Seal of the Order. But where the Chancellor was not at hand to receive the Sovereign's Commands, in this case it was conveyed to him by some other Hand, with Command to Summon the Knights-Companions and Officers accordingly. For so it was done to Sir Francis Windebank, Kt. Secretary of State, by his Letter to Sir Thomas Rowe, 13 Car. I. for Prorogation of the Grand Feast.

And as all the preceeding Adjournments of the Grand Feast have been either Decreed in Chapter, or directed immediately from the Sovereign; so there is a Precedent where the Lieutenant has been impowered to Prorogue the same, yet to the Time and Place appointed by the Sovereign, and inserted in the Commission of Lieutenantcy: And this was in a Commission, 1 Jac. I. directed to Charles, Earl of Nottingham.

That the Grand Feast ought to be celebrated once a Year.

§ 10. Though the Prorogations of the Grand Feast have been occasionally made use of on the aforesaid important Reasons, yet no such Adjournment or Prorogation is legally to be enlarged beyond *St. George's Day* ensuing; because once within the compass of every Year, the Grand Feast ought to be solemnized; for so it was ordained by the *Statutes* at the Institution of the Order, and confirmed likewise by the succeeding *Statutes*. And when our Historians take notice of the Grand Feast, they speak of the same thing, that it ought annually to be performed; whence it is frequently called in the Registers, *Annua Festivitas, solemnitas annua, Celebritas annua*, and the like.

Of late times an occasion happened that brought this of the *Statutes*, into a solemn debate in Chapter, which for the result thereof became very remarkable.

At a Chapter held at White-Hall, 2d February, 1640.

The Sovereign proposed to the Knights-Companions, that having prorogued the Celebration of St. George's Feast from time to time, to the 1, 2, and 3 of March, so near Lent, that if the Feast were not held on these Days, it could not be done within the compass of that Year; because the 23d of April, for the next Year, did fall on Good-Friday, and so consequently must have been kept in Lent this Year, or not at all; and considering the great and important Affairs of the Parliament, he moved the Question, whether, if there were no Feast kept this Year, it would be any Blemish to the Honour of the Order? And whether he might not dispence with the Statute, and defer it till next Year? They all confessed the Sovereign's dispensing Power, yet some of the Knights seeing from the Institution to that time, no Precedent was found where the Grand Feast had been wholly omitted, but that some of the Sovereigns, even though engaged in War beyond Sea, either solemnized the Feast in their own Presence,

sence, or by Commission in England, which was averred by the Chancellor to be both the fundamental and constant Practice,) humbly besought the Sovereign not to begin to make any breach in the constant Order, so long and uninterruptedly continued. Whereupon it was resolved, by general Vote, that the Feast should be celebrated on the aforesaid Days of Prorogation.

By which Determination it sufficiently appears of what Moment the Sovereign and *Knights-Companions* then conceived it to the Honour of the Order, to follow the Statutes, for the Celebration of the Grand Feast once every Year. Besides, it is observable, that it was not thought expedient to be dispensed with, even on the most pressing and important Occasions. But rather than the Statutes should suffer any Violation, the Feast was then solemnized, tho' they were so straiten'd in point of time, as not to have above two Days to make preparation for it.

And though indeed on the breaking out of the unhappy Civil War, the Sovereign was obliged to defer the Solemnity from Year to Year, it was not to be looked on as any Precedent; and on the Restauration of King Charles II. it renewed its former Order.

C A P. XIX.

Of Preparations for the Grand Feast of the Order.

Of Letters giving notice of the Time and Place.

§ 1. **A**Mong many other things which are necessary to be prepared beforehand; the first of course is, the Letters directed to all the *Knights-Companions* and Officers of the Order, resident within the Kingdom, to give them notice of the Time and Place, when and where the Feast is to be held. (2.) Letters of Dispensation to such Knights, as the Sovereign shall please to Excuse from their attendance at the Feast. (3.) Commissions