

ANNALS OF THE ORDER

UNDER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF RICHARD II.



1377.

THE accession of Richard to the sovereignty was followed, almost necessarily, by a change of some importance in the economy of the Order. The principality of Wales having merged in the crown, the vacant stall of the heir-apparent was to be filled; and the mode of accomplishing this object created a precedent for translations from the lower to the higher seats in the royal chapel. The duke of Lancaster, by birth the most illustrious of the knights, was removed to the Prince's stall; and the one formerly occupied by him, the seventh on the same side, was filled by the election of sir John Burley.

At the same time occurred the first formal renunciation on the part of a member of the Order. Ingelram de Coucy, who had married Isabel, daughter of the late Sovereign, and had been created earl of Bedford, felt himself constrained, in consequence of the recent renewal of the war with France, to make this sacrifice. The instrument of surrender, dated the 26th of August, respectfully sets forth his motive—"because he was obliged to serve the king of France, his natural and sovereign lord, according to the duty of a liege subject."¹ The stall, thus vacated, was bestowed upon sir Lewis Clifford.

¹ See the letter of surrender in Rymer's *Fœd.* vol. vii. p. 172.

Some changes also took place, affecting the ornaments of the ensign. Two Garters were prepared, for the king and the young earl of Derby, with *roses*¹ thereon; and two others for the latter, garnished with his badges, the one with *ostrich feathers*,² the other with *sprigs of hawthorn*.³

INVESTITURE OF LADIES

WITH THE GARTER AND WITH ROBES OF THE ORDER.

To the chivalrous gallantry which characterises the heroes of the middle ages, and which tempered in no unimportant degree the natural ferocity of their spirit and manners, can alone be ascribed the happy conception of imparting to the fair sex a portion, at least, of the honours of this illustrious Order. The origin of the custom of decorating Ladies with the robes and ensign may readily be traced to the natural wish of the victorious knight, in joust or tourney, to share the distinction, which he had acquired, with the beloved witness of his triumph.

Whether an addition, at once so graceful and interesting, to the splendour of the ceremonies at Windsor had been made during the time of the Royal Founder, cannot be learnt from the statutes or other public records. We have noticed the superb array of queen Philippa, and her numerous train of ladies, at the first feast; and the large sum issued for her apparel on another occasion:⁴ we find also that, in 1352, she made an oblation during the celebration of high mass in St. George's chapel on the day of the feast;⁵ and that, in 1358, messengers were despatched to invite the attendance of ladies at the festival of the Order;⁶ but, admitting the inference from these facts that they were usually present at such solemnities, it might be considered that they assisted as spectators only.

In a wardrobe account, however, under a warrant of the

¹ Exit. Pell. Pasch. 1 Ric. 2.

² Ibid.

³ Comp. W. Loveney, cler. Mag. Gard. Hen. Lanc. com. Derby, in the office of the duchy.

⁴ See p. 5.

⁵ Exp. Philippæ regin. ab ult. Sept. A^o 25^o ad ann. 26 Ed. 3, in Dom Cap. Westm.

⁶ See p. 5.