

XVI.

Preface, page vii, note 4.

The Records of the Order, in the custody of the present Register, the Hon. and Rev. Henry-Lewis Hobart, D.D. Dean of Windsor.

Volume I.

THE BLACK BOOK, a large volume in folio, bound in black velvet, written in Latin on vellum, containing 321 pages. The initial letters of each paragraph, and of the names of the knights nominated at elections, are placed on squares, alternately gold and azure. The effigies of the Sovereigns, from Edward III. to Henry VIII. inclusive, are prefixed to the records of the several reigns. The volume is also embellished with a representation of the last-mentioned Sovereign, sitting in chapter, and with a procession of the Sovereign and knights to the altar in St. George's chapel, in the 26th year of his reign.

This book was (as is fully stated by Ashmole, pp. 198, 199,) compiled by Dr. Robert Aldrydge, canon of Windsor, provost of Eton, and register of the Order from 1534 to 1538, (when he was promoted to the see of Carlisle,) from a book written on paper, and usually cited as "Registrum Chartaceum," which commenced in the 4th year of Henry V, and was written in French by John Corynham, canon of Windsor, rector of Clewer, the first recorded scribe or register of the Order. That officer died in 1445; and the record is said to have been continued, by different hands, until the death of Richard Sydnor, register, which happened in 1534. It has been missing since the time of Ashmole; but a transcript amongst the Ashmolean collections at Oxford has enabled us to detect numerous errors in the compilation of Aldrydge.

The Black Book, which was written by one person from its commencement until the year 1539, is continued in another hand to the close of the reign of Edward VI. It was published, in 1724, by John Anstis, Garter, with copious notes.

Volume II.

THE BLUE BOOK, a large volume in folio, bound in blue velvet, written in Latin on vellum, and containing 194 pages. It is embellished with the effigies of queen Mary, king Philip and queen Mary, queen Elizabeth, and king James I, drawn in colours at the commencement of the annals of the Order under those Sovereigns. The initial letters are illuminated on squares of gold and azure, or red and azure. The illuminations are not continued after the 28th of Elizabeth. The record ends with the account of the feast of St. George, held on the 23rd April, 19 Jac. I, 1621.

Volume III.

THE RED BOOK, so called from its cover in crimson velvet, is a large MS. in folio, on vellum, containing 146 pages. It was secured with a silver clasp and lock. The clasp has been taken away; but, in the time of S. M. Leake, Garter, there was engraved upon it the figure of St. George within the Garter on one side, and on the other two pens in saltire, with the royal cypher C. R. ensigned by a crown.

The record commences where the Blue Book ends. In the beginning is a well executed painting of king James I, in the robes and collar of the Order, sitting in his chair of state, and with his crown, sceptre, and orb. The border of the page is adorned with the arms and badges of that Sovereign, in the same manner as the preceding volumes with those of the respective Sovereigns therein portrayed. On the 25th page is the figure of king Charles I; but much defaced. The initial letters are, in some instances, illuminated as those in volumes I. and II; and the text is also between red lines. It is written in a fair engrossing hand until the year 1626; and, from that period until the end of the volume, the record is continued in an italic print hand.

See a description of the volume by Ashmole, p. 201. The concluding entry is an account of the election, investiture, and installation of prince Charles, afterwards king Charles II, on the 21st May 1638.

Volume IV.

THE CAROLINE BOOK is of the same size as the former registers, and bound in red Turkey leather. It is also written in Latin, upon vellum, and between red lines; but without any illuminations.

No registration having been made from the installation of prince Charles in 1638 to the Restoration, the register of the Order, at the latter period, entered a continuation of the annals during the above interval, with the assistance of sir Edward Walker, Garter.

The Caroline Book contains 172 pages, and concludes with the election and investiture of the dukes of Berwick and Ormond, 28th Sept. 1688.

Volume V.

This volume is of the size of the former; the record being made in a fair round hand, upon vellum leaves, between red lines; but without any illuminations or other decorations. It is bound in yellow morocco, with silk strings of that colour and gold tassels. It is sometimes cited as "Liber Aureus."

The entries, contained in 168 pages, commence with the accession of the prince and princess of Orange to the crown: they are in Latin until the close of the reign of king George II, and thenceforward in English; concluding with the chapter 25th November 1803, and the death of the duke of Saxe-Gotha, 20th April 1804.

Volume VI.

Is of the same size, and bound similarly to the last, and contains the annals of the Order since 1803.

Registers are also officially kept by the Chancellor and by Garter king of arms. They contain brief notices of all transactions within the Order; but, more especially, precedents for the due discharge of the respective duties of those officers. The Chancellor's registers are of very modern date; and those of Garter, which are contained in four volumes, commence with sir Edward Walker's narrative of the acts of the Order from the year 1642. That there were books formerly belonging to the office of Garter, appears from the answer made by sir William Dethick, at a court of the Earl Marshal held on the 30th December, 44 Eliz. wherein he declared that his father, sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter, was very poor in books, except "*in such as concerned his office of Garter, and were hereditary to the same.*"—(I 25 in Coll. Armor. p. 2.) Anstis refers to a letter, in the custody of the Chamberlain of the Exchequer, from the register of the Order temp. Hen. VIII, which imports, as he states, that the then Garter had laid up, *among his records deposited in his tower at Windsor*, an account of the ceremonies observed at installations.

Sir Edward Walker, by his will,¹ bequeathed to his successor in the office of Garter "his two books in MS. relating to the m. n. Order of the Garter, with the book of the Coronation, and the book of the arms of the nobility." Sir William Dugdale, his successor, by his will,² reciting this donation of his immediate predecessor, of those four MSS. directs that "within three months next after his decease, the said books (to which he added a large printed book in folio of the ceremonies observed at the coronation of Charles II.) be carefully delivered to his next successor in the office of Garter, and so to his successor, and from successor to successors, according to the will and appointment of the said sir Edward Walker."

¹ Lib. "Hale" in Cur. Prerog. fo. 26.

² Lib. "Lloyd," fo. 41.