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Preface

I am extremely grateful to E.Kt. Colin Young, P.Prov.1st Con. for all that he has done as Registrar of The Worcestershire Preceptory, No. 549. It is a wonderful example of the enthusiasm of the members of the United Orders in this Province.

Knights who have attended the meetings of The Worcestershire Preceptory have been privileged to benefit from the scholarship of those who have devoted tremendous time and effort in the preparation of the papers which follow and the presentations which contained audio and visual content which, unfortunately, cannot be easily reproduced.

I had no hesitation agreeing to the suggestion from the Registrar that, in order to make the content of those papers available to a wider audience, he was willing to undertake the task of production. The booklet forms another reminder of the benefits of the age in which we live in so far as word processing and desktop publishing are available to us. Nevertheless, even these modern innovations have not done away with the need for great dedication on behalf of the person who offers to undertake the compilation. To this end, I am sure that I speak for all who will be fortunate to enjoy reading this publication, we are deeply indebted to E.Kt. Colin Young for making it possible.

The content will enable the reader to learn more about the two knightly fraternities which were formed and developed in the Holy Land during the first and second Crusades and, thereby, stimulate further interest in Christian Masonry.

John Denton
Provincial Prior

June, 2000

The Life of Richard Coeur de Lion

E.Kt. R.G.H.Goddard, Provincial Herald, Grand Master's Bodyguard

1st. June 1990

Richard Coeur de Lion, Richard Lionheart, Richard with the heart of a lion. Truly a name to conjure with. A name that struck a mixture of terror, awe, admiration and undying loyalty throughout Europe and the Middle East. A name which even after eight centuries, still possesses some of the mystique of all those years ago and inspires us to think in terms of heroic exploits and chivalrous conduct and - yes - also of savage slaughter.

It is one of those interesting ironies of history that Richard, who was, perhaps, the least English of all the Norman kings, who spent only six months of his ten year reign in England, and who did little to promote the integration of English and Normans in England and even cost them a sizeable sum in ransom, should later have become an almost legendary hero of the people he had so largely ignored during his lifetime.

Richard was born on 8 September, 1157, at Beaumont Place, Oxford. He was the third son and fourth child of one of the great marriages of history - that of Henry II of Normandy, England and Anjou and Eleanor of Aquitaine, who had previously been married to Louis VII of France. At birth he was handed over, as was the custom of those days, to a wet nurse called Hodierna, who brought him up with her own son, Alexander, for about five years, largely at Oxford. Clearly he had great affection for her since later, as king, he gave her a pension to live in retirement in the country.

There was no static court in those days with the country administered from one centre. With such vast domains in England and France, it was imperative that the monarch kept on the move, visiting as many of his possessions as often as possible. And so, aged five, Richard began to travel with his parents and also began his education. It is not known who was his main tutor, but he would have studied the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and the Quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy); indeed he later became a skilled musician, composing songs - two of which still survive - and vying with the troubadours of southern France for recognition as a poet. He also took to sports of all kinds and was a superb horseman of unparalleled prowess. It is also likely that the need of and skills required for firm leadership, also known then as ruthlessness, was instilled at an early age. There was, in addition, the influence of the Crusades, an ideal to which to aspire; and it should not be forgotten that his mother had been on the Second Crusade with her first husband.

Life began in earnest at a comparatively early age in those days. For instance, Richard was betrothed at the age of eleven to Alice, daughter of Louis VII of France

and his third wife Adela of Champagne - though he never actually married her. And, as his mother's favourite, he was, at the age of fourteen, on 11 June 1172, installed as Duke of Aquitaine in the abbey church at Poitiers. I personally find it difficult to imagine one of the youngest boys in my House, and probably incapable of organising his own study, being called upon to rule a quarter of France and in the process pacify a horde of turbulent barons whose favourite pastime was fighting their neighbours in general and their overlord in particular. But Richard's father wanted him to play a part in governing their extensive lands as soon as he could, and Richard never shirked the responsibility.

Possible because he was his mother's favourite, Richard did not get on with his father. Indeed, his parents were soon to become completely estranged. And it was in 1173 that there began the first of the intra-family feuds, which in the case of the Angevins took the form of full-scale wars, and which were to last for the rest of Henry's life and beyond. They were also bound up with the struggles of the King of France to unite and extend his territories at the expense of his neighbours and Louis, and then his son Philip Augustus, always seized every opportunity to cause trouble with the Anglo-Norman inheritance.

And so it was at the age of fifteen that Richard embarked on his military career, and with amazing flair for it, which immediately became apparent. By the age of twenty he had mastered most of Aquitaine and taught the barons there that rebellion was a far riskier business than it used to be. It was during this period that he spent a year in England and came under the notice of one of the foremost historians of the age - Gerald of Wales - who described his three greatest qualities as "courage, generosity and constancy (which some call ruddiness)". Six years later, in 1183, he unexpectedly became heir-apparent. His eldest brother, William, had died in infancy; but now his second brother, Henry, also died. His father immediately wished to transfer him closer to base that is to say, to put him in charge of Anjou and Normandy and to hand off Aquitaine to his younger brother and father's favourite, John, who, because he had as yet no lands vested in him, was nicknamed "Lackland". This would be the ideal opportunity of remedying that defect. But Richard flatly refused to move. He had done homage to Louis VII for Aquitaine, he had been invested as Duke by the Church and, above all, he had spent the last decade bringing the most difficult of the Angevin provinces into some form of order and tranquillity, and he was not going to surrender these gains to his sixteen year old brother who was far less ready for such responsibility than Richard himself had been at an even earlier age. But, apart from anything else, Aquitaine was his mother's duchy and she backed Richard to remain. Thus began a further stage in the internecine Angevin struggle, which was to cause no love to be lost between Richard and John, and which was to end with the loss of all Angevin possessions in France, as Philip Augustus, Louis VII's much abler but less attractive son, capitalised on the situation.

It was during this period in 1187, that two events occurred - one in Europe and one in the Middle East - which were to change the course of Richard's life. The European event took place at Chateauroux in June, where a pitched battle was averted at the last moment when the Papal Legate appealed to both sides to settle their differences amicably and make common cause against the infidel. Richard on the English side and the Count of Flanders on the French both promised to take the Cross

- that is, at some future date to pledge themselves to go on a Crusade. The other event, a week or two later in July, but which did not become known in Europe until November, was the disastrous Battle of Hattin where almost the entire Christian army in the Holy Land - or at least what was left of it after St. Amand's defeat eight years before at the Jordan - was wiped out and which led to the fall of Jerusalem eighty-eight years after it had been regained in the First Crusade. The victor was Salah ed Din Yusuf, a native of Kurdistan and better known in history as Saladin.

Richard was at Tours when he heard the news. He promptly went to the cathedral and fulfilled his promise made at Chateauroux earlier in the year, by taking the Cross from the Archbishop. The ceremony got its name from the crosses of red cloth which were given to those who promised to go and fight in the Holy Land, those who did not were given little pieces of wool to suggest that they were as cowardly as women - mirrored by the white feathers given to pacifists in the First World War. Surprisingly the kings of both England and France were cross at Richard's precipitate action, since he had first consulted neither of them and they were both his overlords. But they were forced to sing a different tune at Gisors the next year when both took the Cross themselves, having succumbed to the personal appeal of Archbishop Josias of Tyre who had travelled to Europe to appeal to its nobility to mount a third Crusade to recover Jerusalem. However, neither of them could go at the moment as the usual wars between them had broken out once again and this was to remain the position until Henry II's death in 1189.

Richard was now King of England and Duke of Normandy and Anjou as well as Duke of Aquitaine. Furthermore, he had become overlord of all his father's vassals whom he had recently been fighting. It was now that his well-known generosity was exemplified. He both forgave and rewarded those who had shown loyalty to his father, while treating less magnanimously any who had changed sides. It was a shrewd move. Not only did he demonstrate the chief quality he expected from his own vassals, but he was trying to ensure stability at home while he was in the Holy Land honouring his promise. He treated his brother John with equal generosity in an attempt to ensure his support for the future. But to gain the forbearance of the duplicitous Philip Augustus was quite another matter. Richard could only do homage for his French possessions, and urge him to join in the Crusade.

Only after he had settled affairs in Anjou and been invested as Duke of Normandy in Rouen Cathedral did Richard come to England in August. He met his mother at Winchester, and won immediate popularity by granting amnesty to all those imprisoned under the hated forest laws. On 3 September he was crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Westminster Abbey in a ceremony which has remained virtually unchanged to the present day. It was sad that the festivities were marred by anti-Jewish riots which spread throughout the country, reaching their worst in York; try as he might, Richard could do nothing to stop them.

Immediately after the coronation Richard began preparing for the Third Crusade. This was an enormous undertaking, for not only did he have to raise, equip, pay and maintain an army travelling 2,000 miles and liable to be away for well over a year, but he had to make provision for the government of his extensive territories while he was away. The ordering of 50,000 horseshoes from the Forest of Dean is a

trivial but illustrative example of the former. His secret pledge to marry Berengaria of Navarre, the daughter of Aquitaines's southern neighbour, was one shrewd precaution to assist the latter - secret, because he was still, after twenty years, betrothed to the French King's sister. When all preparations were completed on 27 June 1190 - eight hundred years ago this month - Richard went to Tours Cathedral, where he had originally taken his vow, to receive from the Archbishop's hands his pilgrim's scrip and staff. He then set out on the greatest undertaking of his life.

The Third Crusade has gone down in history as a glorious failure, and in many ways it epitomises Richard's life. Certainly his name is indissolubly linked with it, and although he failed to attain his principal objective - the recapture of Jerusalem - he enormously enhanced his already legendary military reputation. Richard's army of some 5,000 men - and incidentally including a local knight, Richard de Vernon - was the largest but by no means the only contingent taking part. Philip Augustus commanded about half that number and the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, an equal force. But most of the latter's army subsequently went home when Frederick fell off his horse on a river crossing and was drowned by the weight of his armour; a small contingent under Duke Leopold of Austria continued.

The English and French armies met at Vezelay and then proceeded together to Lyon where their combined weight caused the bridge over the Rhone to collapse. This, however, was not the main reason for their splitting up again. It was to spread the problems of victualling such a force over as wide an area as possible, and also for the more important and potentially damaging reason that the two allies just did not get on - after all, they were much more used to fighting one another. They therefore decided to travel separately and meet at pre-arranged strategic points on the way. One such was Sicily, where Richard's widowed sister, Joan, was Queen. Here another little story gives us great insight into the differences between Philip and Richard. The former had reached Sicily first and slipped ashore with the minimum of ceremony, much to the disappointment of the inhabitants. Richard's arrival was spectacular. Delaying his disembarkation to increase the sense of expectancy, he donned his royal robes and, preceded by trumpeters and accompanied by an escort, made the sort of stately arrival which brightened the drab lives of medieval crowds. Here was a king indeed!

Richard immediately championed the cause of the usurping King Tancred against those loyal to the rightful new Queen Constance, wife of the future German Emperor, Henry of Hohenstauffen, a decision which was to have serious consequences for Richard later on. He also had the first of several serious disputes with Philip. Having captured Messina for Tancred, Richard hoisted his standard on the ramparts; Philip, who had taken no part in the fighting, demanded that his be placed there too and a quarrel ensued. Matters were made worse by renewed fighting between the English and the French, which Richard did his best to stop, and even more so by the arrival of his mother Eleanor, now aged seventy, and Berengaria. The secret could no longer be kept from Philip and eventually he released Richard from his promise to marry Alice, mentally vowing to take his revenge later.

After wintering in Sicily, they set out for Cyprus in the spring of 1191, Joan chaperoning Berengaria while Eleanor went home. Never prepared to be idle for long

Richard promptly conquered the island from the hated self-styled Emperor Isaac Comnenus, later selling it to the Templars for 100,000 bezants, though only 40,000 were ever paid. He also married Berengaria there on 12 May, and then set sail for the Holy Land on 5 June.

The state of Christian forces in the Holy Land was one of disarray. Everywhere in retreat before the victorious Saladin, they hardly helped their cause by having rival claimants for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignan being the rightful king and Conrad of Montferrat being backed by the French. The siege of Acre, begun the previous year, was also not progressing satisfactorily. Richard's presence changed all this in a matter of days; his very name struck fear into the defenders, his military expertise redirected the assault and the fresh troops made all the difference. Acre fell on the 12 July. Richard and Philip immediately hoisted their standards and so did Leopold of Austria, whereupon Richard's men hurled it into the ditch on the grounds that a mere duke had no business to claim equality with kings. Leopold would not forgive the insult and went back to Austria where fate was to place Richard at his mercy no more than a year later. Three weeks later Philip Augustus also left for home. He was not a born crusader, always preferring intrigue to fighting; additionally the death of the Count of Flanders had left him a considerable inheritance which he would need to claim. This left Richard in an anxious position - undisputed leader in Palestine, but increasingly prey to the machinations of Philip back in France and his younger brother John, regent in England and Normandy.

It was at this juncture that there occurred what has been regarded as the blackest deed in Richard's career. Saladin had not been able - or possibly was unwilling - to honour the terms of the surrender of Acre and on 20 August, when the first instalment of the ransom was not paid, Richard had the garrison of men, women and children marched out of Acre in batches and butchered in full view of Saladin's camp. Brutal, even for those days, but regarded as military necessity. Richard could neither police nor feed them indefinitely, nor could he afford to leave them unattended in his rear. Saladin had massacred all the captured Templars and Hospitallers after the Battle of Hattin, because they were too dangerous to hold and he had not been condemned for it. Neither was Richard then; only the scruples of more modern historians, judging him by later standards have done so. Life was held to be of far less consequence then than it is now. Nevertheless, one has to ask if there was really such need to include women and children among the 27,000 said to have been slain?

Richard now proposed to march down the coast before turning inland to strike for Jerusalem and two days later he left Acre. Saladin's light cavalry harried the march all the way and the Templars and Hospitallers took it in turns to man the rearguard, the most exposed position on the march. On the tenth day Richard had split his column into five divisions, the Templars in the van, it being the turn of the Hospitallers to hold the rear. From 9.00 o'clock Saladin attacked the marching column, the fighting being particularly fierce amongst the rearguard, where an eyewitness described the Hospitallers as being "packed together so closely that you could not have thrown an apple without hitting man or horse". But such was their discipline that they held firm, although sending message after message to Richard to request a counter-attack. But Richard refused to allow the ranks to be broken and is

said to have replied, when even the Grand Master of the Hospitallers himself rode forward with the same request, "Be patient, good Master". Finally, after more than four hours' torment, a Norman Hospitaller, Baldwin le Carron, could bear it no longer and broke rank. He was quickly followed by his colleagues. Spotting the danger, Richard immediately ordered the attack along the whole length of the line and the Turks were overwhelmed almost before they knew what hit them. Richard's generalship also foresaw the counter-attack and he ordered the pursuit to return to defeat it. Not only was the battle of Arsuf on 1 September, 1191 Saladin's first defeat, it was a rout. Richard's reputation soared to new heights and it is said that for many years after he had long since left the Holy Land, exasperated Muslim mothers would command immediate effect when warning their obstreperous children that "Marek Rik" - that is, King Richard - would come and get them if they did not behave.

The army reached Jaffa on 4 September and re-grouped, intending to go on to capture Ascalon, an important fortress that commanded Saladin's supply route from Egypt. But, rather than let it fall into enemy hands, Saladin destroyed it first. So they rested before the assault on Jerusalem and it was during this period that on one occasion Richard was almost captured while out hunting, and on another when against considerable numerical odds he rescued a contingent of Templars who were attacked while escorting a foraging party. Richard also tried peace by negotiation, but failed. The attack on Jerusalem therefore began. But it was very slow progress, not least because the weather had turned foul. By November they were half way there, but on 10 January 1192, only twelve miles short, Richard gave the agonising order to retreat to the coast. He knew that his force was not strong enough to capture the City or, if it was, certainly not strong enough to hold it, since most of the Crusaders would then go home feeling that their mission was completed and it would fall to the Templars and Hospitallers to defend it with seriously depleted numbers. But, though militarily sound, psychologically it was a hard decision for his men to accept; they felt utterly betrayed, having fought so long and hard to win it and Richard's stock fell very low as the blame was put on him. The retreat also led to widening splits in the Crusader ranks, particularly without the French who had not previously left with Philip and Richard had to use all his diplomacy to stop more going now. He also received increasingly bad news from home, brought by the Prior of Hereford, who told him that his brother John was causing trouble and that Philip Augustus, despite his promise, was about to attack Normandy.

The remaining winter and spring months of 1192 were spent in re-building and fortifying Ascalon, thus cutting off Saladin's supply route to Egypt, and in waiting for fresh European reinforcements, which never materialised in the expected numbers. Then, on 6 June, Richard gave the order for the start of the second attempt on Jerusalem. It proceeded much as the first, except that this time the weather was favourable. The march was harried all the way and one counter-attack and chase gave Richard his only glimpse of the Holy City. Despite capturing a great relieving caravan from Egypt, nothing had really changed from January; Richard realised that Jerusalem was too strong to attack and Saladin was known to be there in person. The second order to retreat led to the same consequence as the first - bitter disappointment, with Richard taking the blame for what had in fact been a majority war-council; decision. It also led to further decisions, as Hugh of Burgundy and the French had not supported the majority decision. Peace negotiations again failed since Saladin could not believe

his luck on the abandonment of the attack on Jerusalem. Had Richard but known it, Saladin did not believe his forces could have held it.

Saladin now seized the opportunity to counter-attack and launched a full-scale assault on Jaffa. Richard, at Acre, hurried to its defence, sending Hugh of Burgundy and the Templars by land and himself going by sea. Arriving first and in the nick of time and although much outnumbered, Richard leapt ashore and repelled the assault. At dawn of 5 August, Saladin ordered a major attack on Richard's camp. Again the latter's brilliant tactics saved the camp and won the battle - a battle immortalised by one of those chivalrous gestures which often epitomised great medieval command. Watching the battle from the sidelines, Saladin was so full of admiration for Richard's personal exploits that when the latter had his horse killed under him, Saladin sent him two of his own across the battlefield under a flag of truce.

The Battle of Jaffa was followed by disease in the Christian camp and Richard himself fell very ill with fever. But both sides were exhausted and on 2 September a three-year truce was signed, whereby Ascalon's fortifications were again to be demolished in return for free access for pilgrims to all holy places. Unknown to Richard, Saladin was also worn out, and he died on 3 March, 1193 in Damascus.

The truce left Richard free to return home and on 9 October, 1192, he set sail from Acre. But it was considered too late in the year to sail the whole way home in safety and so, of necessity, some part of the journey must be made overland. Whichever way he went was beset with attendant dangers and enemies. He eventually chose to sail to the head of the Adriatic and travel through Germany. It is certain he knew of the risks thus involved, but it is thought that he calculated that few people would have expected him to go that way and that he therefore stood a better chance of slipping through unnoticed. And so he might, travelling incognito, particularly as his standard-bearer, Henry the German, could speak the language. But, though disguised as returning pilgrims, Richard found it well nigh impossible to cast off the mantle of royalty, paying lavishly for everything instead of begging and persisting in wearing his large ruby ring. Neither act being in keeping with his assumed role of a humble cook. Not surprisingly, as one of the most famous figures of his day, he was soon recognised and captured at a farmhouse just outside Vienna, right in the heart of Leopold of Austria's domain.

It was now January 1193. News of the capture spread quickly from Leopold to his overlord the Emperor, Henry of Hoenstauffen, and thence to Philip Augustus and Prince John. All plotted how to make best use of this unexpected windfall. Only pope Celestine III acted on his behalf, excommunicating Leopold for having molested a pilgrim and a Crusader. His mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, also stood firm, defended England from potential foreign attack and sent emissaries to find him - although the Blondel story, which every schoolboy knows, is almost certainly legend. He was first held in Durnstein Castle overlooking the Danube near Krems and was then sold by Leopold to Henry for 75,000 marks and transferred to Speyer on the Rhine, where he was put on trial at the royal court. He spoke so well in his own defence, however, that all present, including his enemies, broke into spontaneous applause when he had finished and even the Emperor felt compelled to step forward to offer him the kiss of peace and to invite him as his special guest for Easter. But this did not stop Henry from still holding Richard to ransom for 100,000 marks and the service of 50 galleys

and 200 knights for a year. 70,000 marks was required as down payment and in the meantime Richard was transferred to Trifels castle west of Speyer. Here he was visited by his loyal English Chancellor, William Longchamp, who secured his return to the imperial court and then went back to England to raise the ransom. At Worms in June 1193, Henry promised to release Richard and the German princes, who had been so inspired by Richard earlier in the year and who were always trying to secure an advantage at Henry's expense, held him to his promise, despite the fact that Philip Augustus tried to bribe him with an even larger sum to keep Richard prisoner. He was accordingly set free sometime in the summer when the main part of the ransom was paid. Ironically, Leopold of Austria died later the same year, having received very little of his money from Henry.

Eleanor went to meet her son on his release and they made a riotous journey down the Rhine and through modern Belgium, feted everywhere, much to the fury of Henry and Philip. All had heard of Richard's exploits in the Holy Land and they wished to honour the greatest soldier of the age. It was, therefore, March 1194 before Richard sailed from Antwerp to England, landing at Sandwich. He had been gone almost four years. He paid his respects at the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, received a rapturous welcome from the citizens of London and attended a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral. From there he speedily restored his authority over England, holding a Great Council at Nottingham at the end of the month at which, among others, the Bishop of Worcester was present. He then laid plans against Philip of France, attended almost a second coronation in Winchester Cathedral and on May 11 set sail from Portsmouth for Normandy. He was never to set foot in England again.

Richard's reception in Normandy was as ecstatic as it had been elsewhere. His brother John deserted Philip, acknowledged his guilt, was reconciled and, in characteristic fashion, pardoned. Within days Richard had raised an army and defeated Philip at the battle of Vermandois. Indeed, such was his military reputation that it is said many of Philip's troops ran away on hearing of Richard's approach. With equal speed Richard re-established his authority in Aquitaine. But, as has been intimated before, medieval battles were seldom decisive, intrigue and personal and local rivalry playing a constant part in the turmoil of the age. War between Richard and Philip, therefore, dragged on in the same old pattern for several more years and, although Richard was almost always on the winning side, he did suffer some reverses and he did suffer also from the extent of his territorial possessions, so that when his back was turned while dealing with one rebellion another would develop elsewhere.

It was in dealing with one minor rebellion in his beloved Duchy of Aquitaine that he met his end. On 26 March, 1199, he was besieging the castle at Chalus. It was not a very important place and was only defended by three knights and about three dozen mercenaries. One in particular was putting up a bold resistance from the battlements, wielding a frying-pan as a shield. Richard, who was not wearing protective armour at the time, laughed and applauded the man's courage. At that moment the latter loosed his crossbow and struck Richard between his neck and left shoulder. In trying to extract the arrow Richard broke the shaft; the head had sunk in deeper than at first thought and it had to be dug out. Gangrene set in and Richard knew his end was near. He sent for his mother and also for the archer. The latter he

forgave. The former arrived just in time as he died, so it is recorded, "at the time of Vespers" on 7 April 1199. He was only forty-one. He was buried on Palm Sunday at Fontevrault Abbey at his father's feet and his heart was placed in a casket and sent to Rouen Cathedral, whence it was thrown away at the time of the French Revolution.

But though Richard's remains may have perished, his reputation endures. Only forty years ago it was recorded in Kent that in playing their games, schoolchildren still took it in turns to be Richard Coeur de Lion, the greatest hero of them all.

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The Eminent Originals of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem

Address delivered by the R.E.Kt. M.V.Walsingham,KCM, Great Prior of Malta.

Friday, 4th., June, 1993.

Eminent Preceptor, R.E.Provincial Prior and Brethren of the Temple, it is a great privilege and a pleasure to address your Preceptory on the subject of the Hospitallers, who so often appear to be overlooked by Masonic historians in favour of the more flamboyant Knights Templar.

I find this surprising in every respect. The Order of the Temple existed between 1118 and its suppression in 1307, when most of its possessions were acquired by the Knights of St.John. It was a purely Military Order, fighting for the Holy City and the defence of Pilgrims in the Holy Land and by the time of its suppression had become somewhat tarnished.

In comparison, the Order of the Hospitallers existed from 1048, when the Hospital was founded, until 1798, when the Emperor Napoleon captured Malta. Throughout these 700 years of history the Order remained predominantly religious, with the care of the sick and the poor as its primary objective and the military aspect developed to protect these ideals. Its reputation remains intact and its achievements are enduring to this day.

Records of the Order, unlike those of the Templars, exist, including the Chronicle of Deceased Master, the Statutes promulgated by each, the Esgarts, or Judgements, and the Usances and Customs. All of which are well documented.

Now I am sure that you all wish to dine this evening, so I will not attempt to canter through seven centuries of history and I will do no more than glimpse at some of the details and rules governing the conventual life of our predecessors which I find of interest and have particularly caught my imagination.

I am assured by your R.E.Provincial Prior that as experienced Past Preceptors and Priors you all know the Address delivered at the Installation of a Knight, with the basic history of the Order, so I can use the dates as a framework:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1048 | the founding of the Hospital in Jerusalem |
| 1099 | the capture of Jerusalem and the foundation of the Order |
| 1291 | the fall of Acre and transfer of the Order to Cyprus |
| 1307 | the suppression of the Templars |
| 1310 | the transfer of the Order to Rhodes |
| 1522 | the capture of Rhodes by the Turks |
| 1523 | the Order moves to Candia and elsewhere |
| 1530 | the Order settles in Melita, or Malta |

In fact, the Hospital, erected in 1048 was built next to an Hospice previously established in about 600 A.D. by the Abbot Probus of the Church of St. Mary Latina on the instructions of Pope Gregory the Great. It stood in an area of Jerusalem called the Muristan, just south of the Holy Sepulchre, and to this day is commemorated by a memorial stone in a small garden where the flag of the Venerable Order is flown daily.

When the Crusaders captured the Holy City in July 1099, they received great assistance from the Master of the Hospital, a monk from Martigues in Provence, who is known to history as the Blessed Gerard. Through his foresight the Hospital was freed from the control of the Benedictine Order and a separate Order of Hospitaliers was established, which he governed with great humility and with the guiding principle of devotion to the poor and sick.

News of the capture of the Holy City was greeted with exultation throughout Europe and, together with reports of the establishment of the new Order and high ideals of the Blessed Gerard, considerable generosity was generated in the form of gifts and the endowment of estates and property by the wealthy.

The Order was recognised and confirmed in a Papal Bull by Pope Paschal II on 15th, February, 1113. This included seven existing Ptochias, or Hospices, situated in Europe which, together with the Hospital in Jerusalem, were to remain the property of the Order. The Statutes of the Order at this time were in accordance with the Augustinian Rule in which there was no military aspect whatsoever, being purely Conventual in nature.

The Blessed Gerard died in 1120 and was succeeded by another monk, Fr. Raymond du Puy, also known as the Blessed. The Order was fortunate to have a new Master whose administrative skills and discipline complemented the impetus and vision of the Founder, to ensure that the Order would continue to flourish. The Rule of Raymond du Puy formed the basis of all subsequent Statutes and Codes and Regulations. Let me quote just a few of the nineteen Rules to give an idea of the high ideals on which the Order was founded:

This is the Constitution ordained by Brother Raymond:

In the name of God, I Raymond Servant of Christ's poor and Warden of the Hospital of Jerusalem, with the Council of all the Chapter, both Clerical and Lay Brethren, have established these Commandments in the House of the Hospital of Jerusalem.

Rule 1. How the Brethren should make their profession:

Firstly I ordain that all the brethren engaged in the service of the poor should keep three things, with the aid of God, which they have promised to God: that is to say, chastity and obedience, which means whatever thing is commanded them by the Masters, and live without property of their own, because God will require these three things of them at the Last Judgement.

Rule 2. What the Brethren should claim as their due.

And let them not claim more than their due than bread and water and raiment, which things are promised to them. And their clothing should be humble, because our Lord's poor, whose servants we confess ourselves to be, go naked. And it is thing wrong and improper for the servant that he should be proud, and his Lord should be humble.

Rule 16. How our Lords, the Sick, should be received.

And in that Obedience in which the Master and the Chapter of the Hospital shall permit, when the sick man shall come there, let him be received thus, let him partake of the Holy Sacrament, first having confessed his sins to the priest, and afterwards let him be carried to bed, and there as if he were a Lord, each day before the brethren go to eat, let him be refreshed with food charitably according to the ability of the House; also on every Sunday let the Epistle and the Gospel be chanted in the House, and let the House be sprinkled with Holy Water at the procession. Also if any of the brethren who hold Obediences in differing lands, coming to any secular person offering allegiance and giving him the money of the poor, in order that those persons should cause the said brethren to prevail by force against the Master, let such brethren be cast out of all the company.

(The term Obediences used here refers to subordinate Houses, which were called either Preceptories or Commanderies)

Rule 19. That Brethren bear on their breasts the sign of the Cross.

Also let all the brethren of all the Obediences, who now and henceforward bear on their breasts the Cross, on their Chapes (that is, cassocks) and on their mantles, to the honour of God by their Gonfanon (that is the Banner) and through faith and work and obedience may guard and defend us in soul and in body, with all our Christian benefactors from the power of the Devil in this world and the next. Amen

(The eight-pointed Cross that we wear was the insignia of the merchants from Amalfi, in Italy, who established the original Hospital in Jerusalem in 1048)

In a later Statute by the Master William de Villaret, in 1301, it was decreed that "The Doctor (who was to dwell in the House), make oath and their fealty in the presence of several brethren and of the Infirmarian, that is to say of one brother of each Tongue. And that the Doctor be put on their fealty that they should prescribe the things that they know to be necessary for the sick brethren. And that the brethren should have them so far as they are able to be found and the House can provide. And that they shall not desist from this course for any order that they have from anyone." In fact an early Hippocratic Oath.

The Conventual life of the brethren was rigorous and discipline was strict. The bell tolled at midnight to call them to Matins, then again for Prime, when the Mass was said at 6 a.m. in summer, or at 7 a.m. in winter, and finally for Compline, which was 7 p.m. in winter, or 8p.m. in the summer months. After this service, which was not always held in the choir of the church, the Chaplain sprinkled each brother with

Holy Water and they retired to the dormitory in total silence for the night. Similarly, all meals were eaten in silence in the refectory.

Judgements and discipline was administered by the Master of the House. For minor misdemeanours the penance imposed could be the Septaine, the culprit being made to fast for seven days, with bread and water only on Wednesdays and Fridays, on which days he was flogged in the church in the presence of the Covent after the congregation had left. For more serious offences the miscreant was sentenced to the Quatraine, a similar punishment but for a period of forty days, during which he was forced to sit upon his mantle placed on the ground, whilst the other brethren were eating at table and he was treated as a stranger by all. If a brother was found to have private property, he was sentenced to the Quatraine and led through the Hospital naked and then flogged.

We learn from another Statute that, "if any of the brethren and may such a thing never happen, through sinful passions shall fall into fornication, if he shall sin in secret, let him do his penance in secret, and let him impose upon himself a suitable penance and if it shall be well known and proved absolutely for certain then in that town in which he has committed the sin, on Sunday after Mass, when the people have left the church, let him be severely beaten and flogged with virges (hard rods) or corroies (leathern thongs) in the sight of all by the Master and let him be expelled out of our company....."

However, if a brother accused another of an offence and was unable to prove the accusation before the Master, he received the same punishment that the accused would have suffered.

The militarisation of the Order was commenced by Raymond du Puy and a body of armed brethren was first formed in about 1123 to meet the threat of an Egyptian invasion of Palestine. By 1126 the Order garrisoned the castle of Jibelin, near Ascalon, and six years later the famous castle of Le Crac, together with a group of fortresses in the El-Bukaia valley.

Pope Alexander III refers in a letter to the guiding principle that, "The sword should not be drawn except when the Standard of the Cross was displayed, either at the defence of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, or in the siege of some pagan city." By the time of the fall of Jerusalem in the autumn of 1187, the Order was completely ruined and was rivalling the Templars in valour, leading to considerable jealousy between the Templars and the Hospitallers. It was necessary for the Pope to intervene to remind the Order that its primary objective was charitable and not military. An alteration to the original Rule of Raymond du Puy included the additional clause, "Firstly, I ordain that all the brethren engaged in the service of the poor and the defence of the Catholic Faith.....shall keep with God's help the three things that they have made."

After the fall of Jerusalem, the Order transferred to Margat, on the frontier between Antioch and Tripolis, where it was deprived of the Hospital for a period of five years until the new Hospital at Acre became the Headquarters of the order. The extensive remains of this Hospital survive, including the great crypt with tunnels

leading down to the shore, through which the Knights eventually escaped the siege when the Saracens finally drove the Order out of the Holy Land, to take refuge at Limassol, in Cyprus, in 1291. It is of interest that this splendid building was erected at the same time as the choir and chancel of Worcester Cathedral were being completed.

During the period at Margat the Master, Alfonso of Portugal, promulgated the Statutes of Margat in 1206, which became the cornerstone of all future Statutes. Whilst they contained nothing new, they consolidated and strengthened all the preceding Statutes. It is from the Statutes of Margat that we gain the first insight into the constitution of the Chapter-General, its composition and the duties of the Officers of the Order.

The system of organisation and administration was based on the Convent, the name given to the Headquarters of the Order in the East, which was governed by a Master, assisted by the Prior of the church, who was responsible for the Chaplains of the Order, together with five Capitular Bailiffs, later known as Conventual Bailiffs. These were as follows:

1. The Grand Commander, who exercised general supervision over the Estates and properties belonging to the Order.
2. The Marshal, who was Minister for war.
3. The Hospitaller, who was in charge of the Hospital and all other Hospices and charities.
4. The Draper, or Quartermaster of the Order.
5. The Treasurer or Chancellor of the Order.

Following the transfer of the Order to Cyprus, three more Capitular Bailiffs were appointed, as follows:

1. The Admiral, who was in charge of the galleys and armed barques. The Sub-saillens, or crew, were under his command at sea unless the Marshal was aboard with armament, when the latter took command. It is interesting that the Admiral was paid a proportion of the booty captured by his ships each year, but if none was taken he merely received a pittance and fifty measures of wine. It was an early form of productivity bonus!
2. A Turcopolier was also first appointed at Limassol, a title derived from the Greek word meaning son of a Turk, referring to children of Christian fathers and native mothers. It later gained a military meaning for light cavalry armed and equipped as horse-bowmen, similar to those of their Turkish opponents.
3. The other appointee was the Grand Commander d'Outremer, who was responsible for the supervision of the estates and properties in Europe. However, during the last hundred years France, Italy, Spain and Germany each had a Grand Commander in authority over those countries.

All of the Capitular Bailiffs were distinguished by the privilege of wearing a larger Cross on their robes. Hence the title, Knight Grand Cross.

The brethren of the Convent were divided into Chaplains, Knights and Serjeants-at-arms, and were organised by Tongues, or nations, originally four in number but eventually increased to eight. Each of these had lodgings in its own Auberge, or House, as can still be seen on the island of Rhodes to this day.

The Chaplains always took precedence over the secular brethren of the Order.

According to the Statutes of 1262, the Knights were defined as being the sons of Knights, or must be of Knightly families, "Noble by name or arms."

The Serjeants-at-arms comprised about 20% of the fighting force. They should be distinguished from the Serjeant-in-office, who were employed in ordinary domestic duties within the Hospital and Convent, being described in the Statutes as, "Serjeants-of-Office for common drudgery."

The supreme legislative authority was the Chapter-General, which was summoned by command of the Master. It consisted of the eight Capitular Bailiffs and such other brethren whom the Master and the Captain-General may have selected. The equivalent of our Grand Master's Council comprised the Prud'hommes, or the most experienced Bailiffs and Past Bailiffs.

In the event of the death or incapacity of the Master, the Seal of the Order was given to the most senior Prud'homme, whose responsibility it became to summon the Chapter-General and conduct the business, or preside over the election of a new Master.

The Provincial administration of Outremer, or Overseas, was in the hands of 19 Capitular, or Grand Priors, each having a fixed period of five years to serve. The Provincial administration Decamer, or this side of the sea, was in the hands of the Bailiffs of Syria who were the Castellans of Le Crac and Margat, and the Commanders of Armenia, Antioch, Cyprus, Tripolis, Tiberius and Tyre. Under each of these were grouped subordinate Bailiwicks, or Houses, presided over by lesser Bailiffs, known as Commanders or Preceptors, all of whom were appointed by the Priors and Provincial Chapters.

Eminent Preceptor, though I have not heard the bell to summon me to the refectory, I will, if I may, conclude with a contemporary description of the Hospital at Jerusalem written by a monk from South Germany named Theodderic. His pilgrimage was between 1169 and 1174, that is about 70 years after the Hospitallers had opened the Hospital. It reads:

"On the road from the Temple towards the South, the Church and Hospital of St. John the Baptist stands. I would not trust anyone else to believe it if I had not seen it with my own eyes, how splendidly it is adorned with buildings, with many rooms and bunks and with other things poor people and the sick

can use. What a rich place this is and how excellently it spends the money for the relief of the poor, and how diligently in its care for beggars. Going through the Palace we could in no way judge the number of people who lay there, but we saw a thousand beds. No king or tyrant would be powerful enough to feed daily the great number fed in this House. And it is not surprising, for besides the properties they have abroad, whose quantity is not possible to calculate, they possess almost all the cities and villages which once belonged to Judea and were destroyed by Vespasian and Titus. They and the Templars have put into use all the fields and the vineyards and set up military posts and well defended camps through the region against the pagans.”

This is a splendid testimony to the humanity of our Eminent predecessors at a time when in the name of Christianity, St. Thomas a Beckett was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral.

But, it is also worth reflecting on the words of the K.E.Mt. Sir Stephen Miller, KCT, in his brief history of the Knights of St. John:

“When the Crusaders captured the Holy City they all came rejoicing and weeping from an excess of gladness in order to worship at the Sepulchre of our Saviour. This expression of gladness was made following the murder of every man, woman and child of the Moslem faith in Jerusalem. When asked today why the Order continues to support an Hospital in Jerusalem where its patients as a result of the maelstrom of history are mainly of the Muslim faith, one is tempted to explain that the service is in part an expression of atonement for the sins of our forebears.”

Medicine at the time of the Crusades

E.Kt. Dr. A.J.Laidlaw P.Prov.Chan

Friday, 3rd, June, 1994

Western medicine was largely based on the theories and philosophies of Hippocrates, the Greek physician who has always been regarded as the father of medicine. The skeleton, liver, spleen, heart and lungs were well recognised and the brain was regarded as a gland which collected mucus and cooled the blood. The vital principle of heat was believed to have been generated in the heart and the function of respiration was to cool this heat down. The doctrine of the four elements, their four qualities and the four humours pervaded medicine right up until the eighteenth century and disease was regarded as a disharmony of the humours.

The surgical writings at that time gave accounts of the instruments used, the methods of reducing fractures, operations for haemorrhoids, trephining the skull and the surgical treatment for empyema.

Medical knowledge was well established in Syria and Palestine in the fifth century by the Nestorian Christians who had fled in 431 from persecution in Alexandria, the great university and centre of Greek learning in the classical world. Centres for medical study, staffed by Nestorians, continued to flourish at Jerusalem, Antioch and Tripoli throughout the Latin occupation of Syria and Palestine.

In the seventh century Islam swept over the near east and Greek medical thought passed into the hands of Syriac speaking Nestorian Christians. By the ninth century the united Moslem Empire had its centre at Baghdad and Greek medical writings had been translated into Syriac and then into Arabic, which was the common language of Islam. Thus Greek medicines spread into the Moslem world.

The standard of medicine practised in the East appears to have been equal to that in the West and some authorities have considered it to be superior.

Prior to the Crusades the most learned physicians were in Baghdad and these Nestorian Christians had their own medical school and colleges. Members of other faiths were not admitted to these institutions. Medical text books were numerous and covered the usual diseases, food, drugs and even birth control.

In 1099, when the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, a Saracen named Usamah wrote his memoirs and he compared and contrasted Arab and Western medicine. His uncle was asked to recommend a physician to treat two sick people. A Christian doctor, a Nestorian not a Crusader, named Thabit was sent to give advice and after ten days he returned disillusioned. His story was that there were two patients, one a Knight with an abscess on his leg and the other an imbecile woman. He placed a small poultice on the Knight's leg until the abscess opened and started to heal and the woman was put on a special diet to make her humour wet and she began to improve.

The treatment was based on the Hippocratic classification of diseases into wet and dry, hot or cold. The standard medical practice at that time was to administer a remedy of the opposite nature to the disease. All appeared to be going well until a Western Frank Crusader physician arrived who discredited Thabit's knowledge. He told the Knight he would die unless his leg was cut off. The Knight agreed to this procedure. A brawny Knight with a sharp axe was brought in and at the first blow the patient died. The Frank physician then announced that a devil was in the imbecile's head and he had her hair shaved off, put her on an ordinary diet and her imbecility became worse. He said that a devil had penetrated through her head, produced a razor, made a deep incision in her scalp, peeled off the skin in the middle until the bone was exposed. He rubbed salt into the wound and the woman then died.

The remedy may seem particularly strange and gruesome to us but this was recognised Frankish practice and had been described by Roger of Salerno. William Bures, Lord of Tiberia, told Usamah that he called in a priest to administer to a sick Knight. The priest on seeing the patient asked for some wax and with this he plugged the patient's nose. The man then died. The priest explained that he had done this as the patient was in such severe pain that death seemed preferable.

The Crusaders, when they arrived in the east, were fortunate in discovering that many hospices had already been established. There is a mention of a hospital for the poor to the south of Jerusalem, probably founded by Charlemagne. The Crusaders found themselves reasonably well supplied with doctors. The Franks were good organisers and they arranged for the testing of the ability of physicians to guard the public against their possible negligence. As well as physicians there were also oculists, scarifiers and surgeons. The Lieutenant of the Viscount of the Bailli and the head of the Sergeants of the Cour des Bourgeois was detailed to carry out inspections and to execute sanitary regulations.

In the field of battle the medical care of the Crusaders was poor and few adaptations were made to combat heat and disease. But in Jerusalem they had good facilities and the greatest hospital of all was under the Order of St. John and grew out of the hostel built by the merchants of Amalfi before 1070.

The Statutes of Roger des Moulins, promulgated at the Chapter-General of 1181, mark a great step forward towards giving positive medical care at the hospital and underline past deficiencies. The second decree is perhaps the most important, it says:

"for the sick in the hospital there should be engaged four wise doctors who are qualified to examine urine and to diagnose different diseases and are able to administer appropriate medicines"

Their importance is shown by the fact that they were allowed to dine at the Knights' table, not that of the sergeants.

Then followed decrees to provide for the comfort of the inmates: the beds were to be as long and as broad as is "most convenient for repose" and have their own coverlets and sheets. Each sick person was to have a sheepskin cloak and boots and caps of wool for going to and from the latrines. The brethren were to guard and watch the sick poor day and night, serving them with zeal and devotion as if they were their

lords. In every ward nine sergeants were to be kept at the service of the sick, to wash their feet gently, change their sheets, administer to the weak all necessary and strengthening food and do their duty devotedly and obey in all things for the sick.

To sum up, the provision of medical facilities in Syria and Palestine in 1096 was ample and this steadily improved and increased throughout the period of the Crusades. The Crusading Franks, on their arrival, built up services for themselves based on these secure foundations. And they rapidly entrusted their bodily welfare to experienced native doctors whom they often seem to prefer to their own.

The development of the medical aspects of the Military Orders, particularly St. John, is the best example of the Frankish Knights adaptation to conditions of war in the east.

The Statutes of the Hospitallers showed a distinct trend towards more professional and competent medical treatment. Saladin himself is supposed to have been impressed by the care the Order lavished on their patients in 1187. After he had captured the city he allowed the Knights to evacuate patients from Jerusalem. He even permitted ten brothers to remain behind for a year to attend to those too ill to move.

The main benefit to Western medicine at the time of the Crusades seems to have been the stimulus to the organisation of the Hospital of St. John. Through time their understanding of public health and disease, although primitive by our standards, gradually improved over the years and when the Knights were locked in a death struggle with the Turks in Malta in 1565, they avoided the diseases which drastically weakened their more numerous opponents. The reason why the defenders in their sheltered garrisons did not suffer so much as the enemy can probably be traced to the Knights principle avocation, that of the Hospitallers. Simple though their surgery was and ignorant though they were in many ways, they did at least understand some of the rudiments of hygiene. Even during the siege some attempt was made to look after patients properly. There is no doubt this is the reason that the garrison owed their relative freedom from the disease which decimated the enemy.

We learn of surgery during the Crusades from Theodoric, who wrote down the details of the surgical practice of his father, Ugo of Lucca. The most surprising things Theodoric tells us are the variety of the surgical operations performed by Ugo and the extent to which he went in for surgical intervention. He operated for tumours and abscesses within the cranial cavity, opened the thorax for pus and fluids and operated on the abdomen for many conditions. He and some of his contemporaries performed operations for the radical cure of hernia, with the patient in an exaggerated Trendelenburg position, head down on a board leaning against a wall, in order that the loops of the intestines might fall away from the site of the operation.

On abdominal operations Ugo insisted that whenever the intestines were wounded they must be sewed up or else the patient would die. He invented a series of instruments and elaborated detailed technique in order to repair intestinal wounds. Whenever the wound in the intestine was large, he suggested separating the bowel into two parts and placing a hollow metal cylinder within the lumen and the severed

intestinal ends were brought together over this and sewed "with fine thread made from the intestines of animals" or "with fine silk". The metal cylinder used for this purpose, he suggested, might be obtained from the sackbut, a musical instrument of the time, from which certain parts were readily removable.

Theodoric reported that many patients had been saved in this way and that the metal tube would pass out in due course and would not be displaced from its position until the intestinal ends had healed and thus prevent leakage from the bowels. Some generations later, dissatisfied with the use of the metal tube, the Brancas in Italy, father and son, proposed the use of the trachea of an animal to maintain the patulousness of the intestines until such healing took place as would prevent leakage.

In the Crusader times the surgeons learned that certain modes of dressing wounds saved complications and sequelae. They found that strong wine aided prompt healing. They soaked dressings of flax or linen in wine, covered the wound and, placing other dressings above, bound up the parts. As the strong wine evaporated they called this a "dry dressing" and Theodoric was proud that his father had used this so successfully. He reported that his father not only cured wounds by this means, but he made them "heal solidly as before" and succeeded in obtaining "very beautiful scars without any ointment". These last words are a reference to the fact that many surgeons thought it necessary to use ointment applications of various kinds in order to bring about healing. In fact this method only hindered union.

Theodoric understood the formation of pus and expressed himself very decisively against the teaching which maintained that pus was inevitable and that the one hope of the surgeon must be to encourage the formation of a kind of pus that would do as little harm as possible to the patient. There were advocates of "laudable pus" and some of the older teachers had laid down this doctrine which came to be accepted as a standard for teaching for centuries.

As well as insisting on special care in bringing together the edges of wounds, he declared against the common teaching of the time as to the use of a wick of absorbent material for draining. His reason was that this prolonged healing encouraged uncleanness, and hampered repair. He warned against the use of salves in wounds of the scalp and called attention to the possibilities of complications. He said the hair should be shaved and a compress soaked in hot wine employed to bring the edges together. He had seen many patients recover from injuries to the brain even after the loss of some brain substance. He described in detail how tonsils should be removed, the uvula clipped, pharyngeal abscesses opened and nasal polyps removed. He even suggested operations for goitre, though he warned of the danger from haemorrhage and that the operation must be undertaken only with the greatest care and foresight.

It would have been quite impossible to have performed such extensive, deliberate operations on the head, neck and abdomen without some form of anaesthetic.

The old Crusader surgeons and among them Ugo of Lucca, used a combination of mandragora, opium, wild lettuce and hyosyamus for anaesthetic

purposes. Tinctures of these pharmacals were employed and a sponge saturated with them. The technique of anaesthesia was to allow this to dry in the sun and then, having placed it in boiling water, to allow the patient to inhale the steam. The use of a sponge in this way and obtaining of narcosis by inhalation allowed sufficient anaesthesia for these operations.

The surgeons gave specific directions for bandaging compound fractures with a compress over the wound moistened in warm wine, the dressing not to be touched for ten days unless some complication developed. No albumen bandage was to be used in compound fractures and lard and honey salves must be avoided. They warned of the possibility of capillary fractures of the skull or of fracture by contre-coup that is on the opposite side from the blow or injury.

Good surgery, of course, could not have been accomplished except in well-conducted, thoroughly organised and faithfully maintained hospitals. We have the story of the organisation of a series of nursing orders, both men and women, whose one purpose was the care of wounded and ailing Crusaders. And we know of the greatest of these Orders and their beautiful hospital in Jerusalem - the Hospitallers.

The Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem

E. Kt. D. A. King, Provincial Chancellor

Friday, 31st, May, 1996

There are three principal orders of Knighthood or chivalry, which fall into three groups or historical phases. I propose to speak quite briefly about all of them and, after a gradual process of elimination, to say rather more about one of those groups and finally to expand at some length about one Order in that group in particular.

In chronological order, the first group to be mentioned is that of the Religious Military Orders, which include amongst others, the Hospitallers (founded in 1113), the Templars (c. 1118) and the Teutonic Knights (1190), together with several Spanish and Portuguese Orders. They were the product of the Crusades, an application of the monastic idea of fighting laymen banded together under a religious rule to attack the infidel or to protect pilgrims in Palestine, Spain or Russia. To this group I shall return later.

The second group was that of the Princely Orders, whose prototype was the Order of the Garter, dating from around 1348. This kept the notion of religious dedication, and was linked with a college of priests and an endowment for poor Knights, but had no specific religious purpose and was, indeed, essentially national and secular. When first planned by Edward III, it was to be a revival of King Arthur's mythical Order of the Knights of the Round Table and to comprise at least 300 Knights, but as it emerged, comprised but 25 besides the sovereign and its patron was not Arthur but St. George.

The third group, that of the Orders of Merit, had as its sole or main purpose to enable the sovereign to confer merely titular honours. As examples, the English Order of the Bath, instituted in 1725, and Napoleon's Legion of Honour of 1802, both purported to be revivals of mediaeval originals. I shall say no more about these Orders of the Princely Orders, but now return to the first group and deal with those orders that I mentioned in reverse order.

Of the Spanish and Portuguese Orders I know nothing and shall, therefore, say nothing. Of the Teutonic Order, I propose only to mention in passing that it originated as a Monastic Order to continue the good work of a German hospital which had been in existence in Jerusalem from 1128 onwards, with the same rules as the Knights Hospitaller of St. John and with Duke Frederick as its first patron. About the Knights Templar, of course, I could say much - but much has been said by very erudite speakers in the past and will, no doubt, be dealt with more than adequately many times in the future. With your permission, I hope, I shall, therefore, resist the temptation to extol their virtues now. I had wondered at one time if I might this evening debate the old question as to whether they were saints or sinners, but being convinced that the predominant view today is in favour of their virtual innocence, I shall leave that for, perhaps, another day.

We come back, then, to Hospitallers, to whom I referred first of all, known originally as Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, later as Knights of Rhodes and later still as Knights of Malta. It would be right, however, before I deal with the history of the Knights, which underpins our so-called Malta ceremony, that I should say a few words about the Religious Order of the Hospital; of St. John of Jerusalem. This considerably pre-dated the advent of the Knights and is worthy of a separate paper to chronicle its history right up to the present day. As many of you will know, the present Headquarters of the Order of St. John in this country is at St. John's Gate in Clerkenwell, London, where the first Priory was built in the middle of the twelfth century and from where many fine, courageous young men bid farewell to their native land, perhaps for ever, and set sail for the Holy land, or later for Rhodes or Malta, to serve the Christian cause of the Order overseas.

The origins of the Order of St. John are lost in antiquity, but quite probably date from around 600 AD, when a small group of Benedictine monks created a hospice for pilgrims visiting Jerusalem at the express command of the then reigning Pope, Gregory the Great. The hospice, later enlarged and restored (thanks to the bounty of Emperor Charlemagne, lasted for 400 years until it was destroyed by the mad Muslim Caliph-el-Hakim during a period of persecution of the Christian Church. Restoration came again with the help of the pious though rich merchants of the small, though powerful, republic of Amalfi. The hospice was rebuilt and a chapel was put up on a site close to the Holy Sepulchre where previously had existed a monastery dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Benedictine monks again served the hospital and wore the badge of the Amalfi republic, the eight pointed white cross which became the emblem of the Order and which we wear to this day.

Perhaps I may be permitted at this point to remind you, brethren, that the eight points represent the eight beatitudes which thou must ever preserve, namely:

1. Spiritual joy
2. To live without malice
3. To weep over thy sins
4. To humble thyself to those who injure thee
5. To love justice
6. To be merciful
7. To be sincere and pure of heart
8. To suffer persecution

The four arms of the Cross stand for the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice.

The first Master, or Warden, or Head, or Rector, as he is variously described, of the Order was Brother Gerard from Provence, known also as the Blessed Gerard. He it was who was able to offer succour and treatment to those injured during the First Crusade when Jerusalem was recaptured in 1099. Around this time, the discipline of the monastic order was changed from Benedictine to Augustinian and in 1113 a Papal Bull was published which effectively, under the protection of Pope Paschal II, brought into being the Knights Hospitaller of the Order. Members were

still monks, owing allegiance to their vows, but now they became fighters for their faith also, in a more literal manner. Gerard died in 1120. His elected successor was Raymond du Puy of Dauphine, who may truly be considered the first military Master of the Order and who ruled as such for a period of forty years. There developed in fact a military tradition similar to and comparable with that of the Knights Templar, with whom they worked in concert for some time (but not always), while never relaxing from their original charitable vows.

During the years that followed the Knights won lasting military renown in the Holy Land and elsewhere and acquired a daunting reputation. Branches, or "langues" were formed throughout Europe to administer the estates given to the Order, which provided much needed revenue for the campaigning Knights. Originally there were seven of these langues in Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England and Germany. Later another branch was formed in Castile. Despite their undoubted valour, and that of the Knights Templar, however, during the whole period of the Crusades from 1100 to nearly 1300, the fight for the Holy Land became a losing battle and the forces of the Muslim Sultan, the mighty Saladin, and his successors gradually destroyed the strongholds of the Knights and there were many martyrdoms. Eventually the Crusaders prepared to defend the town of St. Jean d'Acree, their last precious Palestinian possession, in April 1291. After a siege lasting nearly two months, the town fell to the enemy and the few Knights who survived the massacre fled in ships to Cyprus, where many years earlier the Order had been given the castle of Kolossi.

Here the Master of the Hospitallers, John de Villiers, recovered from his serious wounds and the Knights started to rebuild all that had been lost. At a meeting of all the Knights of the Order in Europe, it was decided that the work of the Order must go on, that they should remain as close to the Holy Land as possible and further that they should equip a squadron of galleys to escort pilgrims across the sea to such of the Holy Places as they could visit. In this way the Order became a great sea power and a new officer was appointed within the Order to be in charge of the fleet. He was known as the *Commandator Navium*, which title later became *Admiratus* - the first time the word *Admiral* had been used to denote a senior officer of the fleet. But it was also agreed that Cyprus was not the ideal place for re-establishing the Order, being unsuitable from a defence angle, and so the Hospitallers moved to Rhodes in 1310.

They did not just move. They actually laid siege to the island and captured it and then built a fortified city which they occupied for the next 210 years. Rhodes has long been of interest to the Hospitallers for it possessed many natural harbours, essential for the large fleet which they now owned. From those harbours, the galleys of the Order sailed forth to defend the many trade routes from Europe to the East and became the scourge of the pirates who infested the area. The status of the Knights changed to that of being the bulwark of Christendom in the Eastern Mediterranean, proving a serious obstacle to the advance of the Turkish Ottoman Empire into Europe. But the Turks were ultimately to prevail. After two unsuccessful sieges of the island of Rhodes, they returned in June 1522 to lay siege once again with a vast combined army commanded by Suleiman the Magnificent.

The defence of the mere 5,000 men at the disposal of the Grand Master, De L'Isle Adam, was heroic in the extreme, but ultimately the few surviving Knights capitulated to save the civilian population from massacre in December of that year. This act of chivalry was recognised by Suleiman, who allowed the Grand Master and the remainder of his Knights to withdraw with all the "Honours of War". They sailed away in their own galleys, taking with them all their records and much of their dignity and honour, to wander for the next seven years in search of a new home.

They went first to Crete, the largest town of which is Heraklion, then known as Candia, and subsequently to various Italian ports, but never staying long. The Grand Master visited many European courts to seek help in recovering Rhodes, including one visit to England where he was received by King Henry V. II, who provided him, according to my research, with 19 cannons and 1,023 cannon-balls. It gradually became clear that the recapture of Rhodes would not be possible and it seemed that the only hope for an improvement lay with the good offices of the newly-elected Pope, who had been a Knight of St. John. This hope was realised, for Clement VII eventually used his papal influence to persuade the German Emperor, Charles V, to transfer to the Knights the islands of Malta and neighbouring Gozo. On 26th, October, 1530, the Knights of St. John sailed into the harbour of Malta on board the fantastic "Santa Anna", probably the finest armour plated vessel known, under the command of the Prior Of England, Sir William Weston. It was in Malta that the power and influence of the Order probably reached its zenith and it was from this time that the Knights became commonly known as Knights of Malta. For two hundred and fifty years the Knights held command of the Mediterranean, beating off Turkish attacks, protecting shipping and caring for the sick in their hospitals.

I digress, albeit briefly, to note that things were not well in England. Henry VIII was at variance with the Pope over his many marriages and the resulting quarrels led the former to have all the monasteries throughout the Kingdom investigated and subsequently closed. He wrote to the Grand Master in 1539 an ultimatum demanding that the Knights renounce their basic allegiance to the Pope. Receiving no reply, but realising that the Knights could not accede to his demand, he passed an Act of parliament in 1540 dissolving the Order of St. John in England and vesting all its property in the King and his heirs and successors. The Prior, Sir William Weston, to whom I referred earlier, died it is said of a broken heart on Ascension Day that year. It was to be nearly 350 years before the Order was revived in England, by Royal Charter, in 1888, with Queen Victoria as the Sovereign Head.

Back to the Knights of Malta. Here they expended vast treasure and displayed great skill in building wonderful fortifications which to this day remain as an imperishable record of their energy and perseverance. The beautiful Church of St. John, with the tombs, and not least the library records of the Order, must render this stronghold a place of the greatest interest to the antiquary and the historian. And a stronghold it needed to be, as we shall see.

Jean de la Vallette of Provence became the Grand Master of the Order in 1557 well aware that the Turks were preparing to make an assault on the Maltese islands in order, they hoped, to inflict another crushing defeat upon their traditional enemies. The invasion finally came in May 1565. Suleiman landed in Malta with 20,000

troops, but de la Vallette and something under 10,000 troops were prepared. What became known as the never to be forgotten Siege Of Malta followed throughout the late spring and summer, watched with anxiety and admiration by all the Christian states of Europe. The forces of the Muslim General and the Knights of St.John were joined in battle without quarter being given on either side, until with the help of sorely needed reinforcements from Sicily, the defenders were able to beat off the invaders who began to withdraw on 8th., September. The Grand Master, the hero of the siege, founded a new city bearing his name, which we know as Valetta, though he was not to live to see his dream completed as he collapsed and died in August 1568 only three years later. His body was first to be laid to rest in the crypt of the Church of St.John in Valetta, with that of his trusted secretary, and English Knight, Sir Oliver Starkey, beside him.

There is much more I could say concerning the Siege of Malta, but perhaps someone in the years ahead may feel inspired to endeavour to do justice to this watershed in the history of the Order. For now I will only quote the words of the eminent historian Abbe Vertot, written in 1726,

“We may justly affirm, and indeed all the Knights of that time agreed, that the main strength of the island lay in the virtue, the courage, the resolution and the foresight of la Vallette, and the safety of Malta depended upon his preservation.”

While the next 100 years are not without interest for as a maritime force the Order still exerted an influence in the Mediterranean and reported victories from time to time over the Turkish fleets, the opportunity for fighting lessened with the arrival of other naval powers, and power began to slip from the Order.

There had been built in Malta a large and splendid hospital, constantly held ready for Knights returning wounded from expeditions, but it is recorded that the standards of the hospital gradually declined in later years as both activity among the Knights and the income of the Order became less.

Equally gradually however, the influence of the Pope of the day became greater. While the magisterial authority of the Grand Masters was confirmed, at the same time the grip of His Holiness on the Order was tightened. It was thus in a strictly Catholic religious atmosphere that Freemasonry was said to have been introduced into the fraternity of the Knights of St.John of Malta in the early part of the eighteenth century and survived and flourished, notwithstanding the efforts of Popes (with papal Bulls), Grand Masters and Grand Inquisitors to forbid the holding of Masonic meetings and to stop the spread of Freemasonry. This period, like the Siege, is deserving of further scrutiny and study, and perhaps a paper in this Preceptory, but time does not allow me to indulge myself this evening.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Order of St.John was facing great difficulties, not the least of these being a shortage of money, an inadequate fleet and the French Revolution of 1789. Grand Master de Rohan (of France) faced these calamities manfully, but saw the work of years being torn apart as monasteries in France were dissolved and suppressed. Following his death in 1797, he was succeeded as Grand Master, the last of the line in Malta, by bailiff von Hompesch, one of a large

number of Bavarian Knights in the island, whose reign was short-lived as Napoleon Bonaparte captured the island, without too much of a struggle, in June 1798 and the Knights dispersed to various locations. Hompesch died in 1805 and it was to be 74 years, during which the Order was led by lieutenants only, before another Grand Master was appointed, following the re-establishment of the office by the then Pope.

While the Order had effectively ceased to be a fighting organisation, it remained, and is still considered to be, a sovereign order and an important and much respected religious body. In many countries, England, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Russia and Poland, its members are largely honorary, playing no part in the government of the national associations. There are also two other associations, independent of the Roman Catholic Order, the Protestant bailiwick of Brandenburg, supporting several hospitals in Germany, and the Grand Prior in this country which control the St. John Ambulance Brigade and Association and, of course, the ophthalmic hospital in Jerusalem. Not strictly within my self-imposed terms of reference and the title of my paper, I would nevertheless like to conclude with a few words about the English Order of St. John. It is always good to return home after one has been away - even to the Mediterranean!

The Headquarters, as I mentioned before, is located in the Priory of Clerkenwell, of which many of the original buildings, built around 1150 were destroyed by fire in 1381 at the hand of Wat Tyler's mob, rebelling against taxation and other grievances. But the substantial building known as St. John's Gate survived and was used by many famous names of their day, not least Dr. Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, the actor, and possibly William Shakespeare. In 1754, the gate was bought by a Freemason who turned it in to the "Jerusalem Tavern". Five years later it became the meeting place of the Jerusalem Lodge, No. 197, which stayed there for many years before moving to The Crown on Clerkenwell Green. The buildings were restored in 1846/47 and 26 years later the freehold was offered for sale. Sir Edmund Lechmere, a name not unknown in this City and in this Province, Secretary-General of the Order at that time, managed to buy it and immediately had it made over to the Order. He it was who was responsible for the founding of the ophthalmic hospital in Jerusalem. But time will not allow me to dwell upon the acknowledged major part he played in the Order's development, I have exceeded my brief already!

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England had been revived in 1831, the Rev. Robert Peet having been elected as its Prior and its members began to concentrate on the charitable side of the Order's work, the Hospitaller service. It took part in the first Geneva Convention in 1864 to discuss help for the wounded of armies in the field and organised aid for the combatants in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Owing to a dispute regarding the validity of the revival in England (and the admission of non-Roman Catholics into the Order), links with Malta had finally been broken and, in 1888, the English Order was incorporated by Royal Charter with Queen Victoria as its Sovereign Head and her son, the Prince of Wales, as its Grand Prior.

Today, Queen Elizabeth II is the Sovereign Head and the ideals nurtured by the Knights of old are as fresh now as they were then.

Address given at the Dedication of the Banner

E.Kt. G.S.Wyer, P.Gt. A-de-C. Provincial Prelate

Friday, 6th., June, 1997

So there it is. The new Banner for the Worcestershire Preceptory. It is there for us to admire, to feel proud of and to acknowledge that it will be an ensign for years to come. But is that all it is? Of course not.

In the prayer used a few moments ago were these words:

“that we may lift up our eyes and behold, beyond the things which are seen and temporal, the things which are unseen and eternal.”

The Banner should help us to do just that. It is a symbol enabling us to look beyond the skill and artistry that went into its making. It is not important in or of itself. It exists for the purpose of pointing people beyond itself.

As we look at the banner, we can see that contained within the whole banner are other individual symbols.

At the heart of the Banner is the Red Cross of the Order - the symbol of Faith and Hope. It reminds us that Jesus is Emmanuel - God with us - and that He should be constantly in our thoughts and in our hearts in every action or deed we undertake.

As the blood of Christ was poured out in love for us and for our Salvation on a Cross at Calvary, so we ought to pour out that same love to others.

We can then rejoice in His Name and carry that Cross with us in all our endeavours. Then the Preceptory may be seen as a veritable Temple of worship, praise and thanksgiving.

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

The Shield

The shield reminds us not only to defend our faith against unprovoked attacks, but to use it as a guard whilst we ourselves attack all those fiery darts of vanity and deceit that so often come from the Evil One into our modern society.

The shield reminds us that we should always be prepared to stand firm in the face of all the blows that may be rained down upon us. Having stood firm, we shall then be strengthened in our beliefs about the Order in general and this Preceptory in particular.

The Three Pears

The three pears, part of the Worcestershire Coat of Arms, and universally recognised as being from this area, stand proudly upon that Shield of Faith. The symbolism of them, however, takes us further.

They remind us of that Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity to which we have all professed our allegiance, not only with our lips, but in our lives, giving ourselves to God's service.

The three pears also remind us of the Fruits of the Spirit and how they refresh and sustain us as in said in Ephesians, chapter 5 verse 9:

for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth

and in Phillippians chapter 4 verse 8:

Whatsoever things are true
 Whatsoever things are honest
 Whatsoever things are just
 Whatsoever things are pure
 Whatsoever things are lovely
 Whatsoever things are of good report
 If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.

That is what the pears say to us. Live out your lives in the good and righteous way and the truth will be made known to you.

Belt of Truth

That truth is depicted on the Banner by the Belt.

The Cross, the Shield and the Pears are contained within The Worcestershire Preceptory by that Belt of Truth.

But the Belt has a buckle. The Belt of Truth can be opened up and so allow all the sentiments and tenets to be taken out by the members of the Preceptory into the wider world.

That should be our aim, whatever our Preceptory, not to securely lock those truths away when we leave, but take them with us as committed Knights, forming our own Crusade under the Banner of our Prophet, our Priest, our King.

So, the whole banner challenges us to take up that commitment and march out in grand array raising the standard of chivalrous honour, striving for the welfare of our brethren. May we find total commitment within The Worcestershire Preceptory, and may it continue in excellence of faith and duty to God and Man, from generation to generation.

The Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem

A Talk given by Mr. Michael Ward.

Warden of the Ophthalmic Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, 1990-1996

5th. June, 1998

The talk is one of the few not contained in the archives of The Worcestershire Preceptory. However, the following is the Registrar's report from the Minutes.

Mr. Ward began his talk, unusually, with a slide of the Burton-Taylor wedding and a quotation from Burton on the problem of marrying a number of times, "One knows what to do, the problem is to make it interesting." That, said Mr. Ward, was his problem. In the event it proved no problem at all. In a fascinating talk, skilfully and amusingly illustrated and ranging from the Crusades to the modern Intifada, Mr. Ward held his audience spellbound.

He began by pointing out that Jerusalem, the most fascinating and possibly the most beautiful city in the world, was sacred to the three great monotheistic religions. He pointed out that to understand the foundation of the Hospital one had to go back 1,000 years; to be precise, as he noted, to the evening of 14th, July, 1099, the day before the Crusading knights broke into the city, plundered it and slaughtered every man, woman and child. Some 60,000 - 70,000 were reported to have been killed and, Mr. Ward said, there was evidence that on one site alone there were 10,000 bodies.

The Muslims were never to forget the massacre even after Salah ed - Din Yusuf, better known to Westerners as Saladin, drove the Crusaders out of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. But, Mr. Ward pointed out, though something of trust and mutual respect had inevitably died on the day of the massacre, something was born, the Order of St. John founded by the Benedictines who ran a hospice in the city.

Mr. Ward gave a brief account of the fortunes of the Hospitallers up to the loss of Malta in 1798 and the separation of the British arm of the Order from the continental group. The British founded two charities, the St. John Ambulance and the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. It was this hospital that the United Orders supported.

The history of that hospital, the core of his talk, was as fascinating and as riven with blood and war as the Crusades and deserves the space given to it in these records by this chronicler.

Built in 1882 the hospital remained operational for over 80 years, except for a short period during the 1914-18 War when the hospital, used by the Turks as an ammo dump, was blown up. It was returned to service and continued in action until 1960, when a new hospital was built.

This hospital, in one of the most beautiful sites in Jerusalem, has born witness to extreme violence since its construction. One of the decisive battles of the 1967 War was fought only yards from its gate. With Israeli victory came occupation. The

Intifada saw car bombs being exploded outside Mr. Ward's hospital flat and the Gulf War had patients being treated in corridors away from windows to protect them from the Scud attacks.

Throughout this violence the Hospital kept working, indeed, as Mr. Ward pointed out, it was an oasis of peace and sanity amidst the madness. Naturally such continuing carnage meant that the hospital dealt with all manner of eye injuries caused by violence, but the vast majority of its work, Mr. Ward said, was normal eye care and surgery.

The figures Mr. Ward quoted illustrated his contention. 70,000 out-patients treated each year, 8,000 operations carried out, 300 corneal grafts completed, 30 nurses trained each year. There was more congenital eye disease than in the UK, large numbers of cataract cases and patients with glaucoma and, of course, far more trauma injury than associated with a British hospital.

The hospital serves a vast area around Jerusalem, but the most depressed and deprived area is the Gaza Strip. Mr. Ward pointed out that with its poverty, the rigidity of the regime and a population 47% of whom were under 14, the area was a time-bomb waiting to go off. Nevertheless, Mr. Ward said, there were patients there who needed treatment and, because the Israeli authorities would not let patients through the check-point to visit the hospital, the hospital went to them, setting up a clinic in the heart of the Gaza Strip and providing a machine operating theatre. This clinic, despite the delays of check-points etc., deals with 10,000 out-patients a year.

Mr. Ward ended his fascinating lecture with the thought provoking observation that the service that the Order of St. John and the hospital provide may be seen, in part, as atonement for the events of the 15th., July, 1099.

At the festive board that evening the R.E.Kt. Dr. Roy Edney and E.Kt. Dr.C.Gwynn gave further interesting and enlightening facts about the hospital.

The R.E.Kt. Dr.Roy Edney was able to point out that since the United Orders adopted the hospital as its sole charity in 1982, £500,000 had been raised for it, that 2 beds had been endowed by the Orders and that a Registrar's post had also been funded.

A cheque for £225, the result of the Alms collection, was presented to the Commander of the St. John Ambulance, West Midlands County, E.Kt. Dr.C.Gwynne, who, on receiving it on behalf of the Order, was able to point out that Sir Edmund Lechmere, a Past Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Worcestershire, was in the 1860's Commander of the Worcestershire County St.John's Ambulance, became Secretary-General and Chancellor of the Order of St. John, was responsible for buying the freehold of the Order in St.John's Gate, London and, with the Prince of Wales, bought the land outside the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem upon which the first hospital was built.

The Real Simon de Montfort

E.Kt. R.G.H.Goddard, P.Gt.A.-de-C.

Friday, 4th., June, 1999

The title of this talk was chosen by our hard-working Registrar as, I suspect, a safety-net to prevent me hiding behind a cardboard cut-out of Simon's effigy. But it is a good title, because medieval history is notorious for revealing more about the monastic chroniclers - i.e. the historians - of the day than for those they chronicled, and one has to be particularly careful in being aware of the prejudices of the writer when trying to disentangle fact from fiction, since they were not above making up what they did not know or could not find out - the medieval equivalent of the tabloid press. Fortunately, in dealing with so prominent a figure as Simon de Montfort, there are plenty of different accounts of the same events, so that it is easier to arrive at a more balanced view than might otherwise be the case with a lesser subject.

Although he spent a large part of his adult life in this country and made a considerable impact on its history, Simon de Montfort was not English; but to say that he was French is not entirely accurate either, given that we are dealing with the first half of the thirteenth century. At this time France was still a patchwork of semi-independent feudal states, whose allegiance fluctuated according to the proclivities of their leaders and the fortunes of war. Indeed, it must be remembered that up to the death of Richard Cœur de Lion in 1199, the kings of England - who, incidentally, were not English either - controlled more of modern France than did their French counterparts. The latter owned the Ile-de-France - that is, a block of territory centred on Paris - and were increasingly beginning to hold sway over other neighbouring dukedoms, particularly as English hegemony went into decline.

Montfort or, to give it its full title, Montfort-l'Amaury - the Amaury part is derived from the first name of many of its chiefs - was a fortified settlement some thirty miles south-west of Paris on the edge of the Ile-de-France and Normandy, and its rulers were thus liable to owe allegiance to either side and often married into either Norman, English or French families. Simon was born there in about 1208, probably the fourth son of another Simon, Simon the Crusader, and his wife Alice of Montmorency. Simon saw little of his father, who gained the sobriquet "the Crusader" by being the very able leader of the French forces in the Albigensian Crusade, that brutal war against the heretics of the Languedoc, from 1209 until his death at the siege of Toulouse in 1218. Nor did he see much of his mother, who often accompanied his father and who died in 1221 when Simon was only thirteen.

Little is known of Simon's childhood and teenage years; but it is fairly certain that he was well educated, since the de Montforts were keen on books and learning, and also well-versed in the arts of war, since that was the normal training of any male of noble birth. He is also said to have been handsome like the rest of his family, although there is no surviving contemporary likeness. We do know, however, that he had a good relationship with his eldest brother, Amaury, who helped foster his career

in England. Amaury, as head of the family, had thrown in his lot with the king of France, and was to hold the high office of Constable. The days of holding lands under both sovereigns was now nearly over, nobles being forced to choose allegiance; but an insurance policy was for a younger son or brother to owe allegiance to the opposite camp. Simon had a ready-made excuse to fulfil this policy.

In 1204 Robert IV, Earl of Leicester, had died childless, his estates being divided between his two sisters, the elder of whom was Simon's paternal grandmother. But - as was the custom in those days - the estates were administered by the monarch or one of his nominees. Both Kings John and Henry III exercised this right, but the administrator for the majority of the period was Ranulf, Earl of Chester, the grandson of the other sister and thus Simon's first cousin. He not only had extensive estates of his own, but he was also childless and thus when Simon appeared in England in 1230 to claim the Earldom - his brother Amaury having written a disclaimer to Henry III, and his other brothers having died - Ranulf supported him. On 13 August 1231 Henry III made over the estates to Simon, confirming his title seven years later. The timing was just right as Ranulf died the following year.

The Earldom of Leicester traditionally carried with it the office of Steward of England. This was far more ceremonial than functional, but its significance was that it gave the holder unimpeded access to the sovereign, a most significant privilege in medieval times. And so it was that Simon began to gain great favour with the king, who rewarded him with more land and then the ultimate gift - the hand of one of his sisters in marriage. Eleanor had been married in 1224 at the age of nine to William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. He died without issue in 1231 when she was sixteen - and Simon and Eleanor were married privately on 7 January 1238. It was a union that was unpopular on three fronts: with the clergy, because when she became a widow Eleanor had taken a vow of chastity and had not sought papal dispensation with the magnates, because the king had not first discussed the impending marriage with them in Council; and thirdly, because Simon was regarded as a foreigner.

Simon's first reaction was to travel to Rome to secure the Pope's approval for the marriage, as a child was already on the way; this he achieved in May 1238. Simon and Eleanor's first son, Henry, was born at the royal castle of Kenilworth on 28 November, with the king standing as godfather; to celebrate the occasion he commended Simon to his estates and formally made him earl of Leicester. But one of the king's characteristics was fickleness and mood swings; in August the following year he suddenly rounded on the couple accusing them of adultery before marriage, and exiled them to France where their second son, Simon, was born. Simon's brother was about to go on the Sixth Crusade so Simon, who had previously taken the Cross himself - that is, pledged himself at some future period to go on a crusade - also decided to go. This was in 1240. Eleanor went as far as Brindisi in southern Italy and there gave birth to their third son, Guy, in 1241. The Crusade ended in 1242 having achieved very little, as was the general result of all the thirteenth century crusades. But Simon briefly stayed on; his reputation was such that he had been proposed as Governor of Jerusalem until King Conrad would be old enough to rule, but the Holy Roman Emperor did not confirm the appointment. Simon took the Cross once more, in 1247, but he never went on another Crusade.

In the latter part of 1242 he joined Henry III in France on his abortive Poitevin campaign against Louis IX. Simon distinguished himself in one skirmish, but the king's leadership was poor and the campaign cost a great deal and achieved nothing. So, after an absence of four years, the exiles returned to England in 1243 and enjoyed a peaceful time in the king's favour once more. The latter forgave Simon's considerable debts, made improved financial provision for his sister Eleanor, and gave her the custody of Kenilworth Castle in 1244, confirming it for life four years later. Simon became great friends with the scholarly Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln and the de Montfort boys were educated in his household.

The same year, 1244, the Moslems recaptured Jerusalem, whereupon Pope Clement IV declared a general Crusade. It took four years to prepare. As has already been mentioned, Simon took the Cross in 1247 and was preparing to lead the English contingent the following year when King Henry suddenly made him Seneschal of Gascony for seven years instead. Gascony bordered Navarre in south west France and was a particularly turbulent reminder of the Angevin inheritance; it needed a firm hand to deal with the feuding nobles, which was probably why Simon was chosen. Unfortunately he was too firm; while he quickly restored order in the short term, his high-handed methods of ruthless reprisals and arbitrary imprisonment caused a flood of Gascon complaints to Henry III who, far from the scene of the events, increasingly came to acknowledge them - to the extent that Simon was recalled and put on trial in the refectory of Westminster Abbey over a five week period in May and June 1252. He was acquitted, because he had the strong backing of his fellow magnates, who understood only too clearly - as the king did not - the problems that Simon faced. But the next day the two had a blazing row, Henry virtually accusing his brother-in-law of treachery. Matters were eventually patched up and Simon was allowed back to Gascony in the summer. Eleanor did not accompany her husband on this occasion; she had previously given birth to a daughter in Bordeaux who had died young, and she was about to give birth to another. But Simon did not remain long in Gascony. In October Henry made a move to confiscate all the Leicester estates in England, only the intervention of the barons preventing him. Simon thought it prudent to withdraw to France where, such was his reputation, he was offered the guardianship of the country as Louis IX was still on the Seventh Crusade and the queen regent had recently died. Henry decided to go to Gascony himself, but soon found at first hand the difficulties Simon had faced and was forced to ask Simon to return to help him, which he did.

While the two ostensibly remained friends, it is clear that the Gascon episode was the beginning of the deteriorating relations between them that was eventually to lead to civil war and Simon's death. The situation was not helped by the growing number and influence of the king's Poitevin relations (the offspring of his mother, Queen Isabella's second marriage to Hugh le Brun, Count of La Marche in Poitou), and there were also considerable policy differences and on-going financial disputes. However, Henry could not do without the services of his able brother-in-law and used him on a number of diplomatic missions during the period 1254 to 1259. He spent the majority of this time backwards and forwards to France, either renewing the truce between the two countries or negotiating the final settlement that was to be signed as the Treaty of Paris in 1259. By this treaty, and in return for peace, Henry renounced many of his claims to what had already become French territory, and Simon used his

wife's claims and King Louis's friendship and sense of justice as a bargaining factor to force Henry to honour his financial commitments to his sister Fleonor - something which he had continued to put off. This further soured relations between the two,

But it was the state of affairs in England which was to bring matters to a head. Ever since the hiatus in his father's reign, culminating in Magna Carta which - amongst other things - led to the imposition on the king of a Council of twenty-four elected magnates, the relationship between barons and monarch had been an uneasy one, the former wishing to extend their powers and the latter trying to curb them. Had Henry possessed the even temperament, sound judgement and conciliatory nature of his younger brother, Richard of Cornwall, all might have been well. But Henry's poor leadership, foreign favourites and risky diplomatic adventures - such as accepting from the Pope the Kingdom of Sicily for his younger son Edmund - constantly led him into difficulties. And, at the critical juncture in 1257, the moderating influence of his brother Richard was temporarily removed when the latter was elected King of the Romans and departed for the Holy Roman Empire.

The first test of strength came at the Oxford Parliament of 1258. In July the king was forced to accept the so-called Provisions of Oxford by which the Council was to be reduced from twenty-four to fifteen and Parliament was to be held three times a year. Although present and one of the barons' leaders, Simon was still crossing back and forth to France; he did not take control of the movement until 1263, once the king had shown himself determined to break his oath. The Provisions of Oxford were reinforced in 1259 by the Provisions of Westminster, but Simon was not present on this occasion.

The following year, 1260, saw the first signs of a split in the barons' ranks. King Henry was still in France celebrating the signing of the Treaty of Paris and wanted to delay calling Parliament in February; Simon, whose task in France was now complete, wanted it to meet without the king and pushed some of his fellow barons further than they really wanted to go. He had an unexpected ally in the king's son, Edward, and most of the clergy were on his side as well. Both sides started arriving armed at London towards the end of April; Simon and Edward stayed outside the wall in the Hospital of St. John. It was at this juncture that the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall, who was temporarily back from Germany, mediated and succeeded in detaching Edward from the barons and reconciling him with his father. Henry decided to proceed against the barons at the July Parliament, but King Louis heard of this and came to Simon's defence by sending a mediator. And, in answering the king's accusations, Simon cleverly involved the Council as much as possible so that they could not condemn him without condemning themselves. In the autumn the king sent Simon against the Welsh so that he was not present at the October Parliament.

And in 1261 Henry went on the attack. He objected that the Council was not governing the country properly, and secretly sent to the Pope to release him from his oath to uphold the Provisions of Oxford on the grounds that it had been extracted by force. The Pope agreed, and Henry published the agreement at Winchester in June. He then made his headquarters in the Tower of London in case the barons turned up armed. And in July he dismissed the sheriffs and castle custodians appointed by the Council, a move which re-united the barons and aroused public hostility. Both sides

began to arm, but at the crucial juncture the Earl of Gloucester lost his nerve, changed sides and joined the king. In disgust Simon went into voluntary exile in France and the other barons made their peace with Henry in November. But early in 1262 Richard of Cornwall went back to Germany and an important moderating influence was lost again. Henry decided to press home his advantage by going to France to discredit Simon once and for all before the French king. He tried this between July and December, but without success. Further attempts at arbitration between the king and his barons failed, and in March 1263 the two sides made preparations for war.

Despite having been marginally regarded as a foreigner himself, Simon de Montfort was seen as the natural leader of the baronial party because of his prestige and ability; he had been in France for some eighteen months, but was now scorned by several of his former colleagues. He arrived in England at the end of April and went to a secret meeting at Oxford where it was decided that adherence by the king to the Provisions of Oxford must be maintained. This was repeated at the end of May at a Parliament in London, where the opposition was led by Simon; the main complaint was that the king, queen and Prince Edward had committed perjury in defying the Provisions. By now the more hot-headed barons had begun to attack the property of any foreign favourites, beginning with the hated Bishop of Hereford and then moving on to Gloucester, whose new Earl was too young to hold his estates which had just been put into the hands of another foreigner. Both were defeated, captured and imprisoned. Simon took command of the army at this point and then marched north to Bridgnorth which was captured. He then turned towards London.

Meanwhile the king had again taken refuge in the Tower. He was desperately short of money as usual, but the London merchants refused to give him any. On 26 June, therefore, Prince Edward gained entrance to the New Temple which, like most Templar establishments of the period, also acted as a form of bank and safe deposit. He told the Templars that he wished to see his mother's jewels; in fact, his confederates had iron hammers secreted on them and, once inside, smashed the caskets in which money was stored and made off with £1,000 - a vast sum in those days. But time was running out. Simon had already deliberately by-passed London and made for the coast in order to cut the king's communications with the continent from which support could be bought. He succeeded in this aim and the king had to capitulate; Queen Eleanor and Prince Edward did so with an ill grace. The Bishop of Worcester, Walter of Cantilupe, was one of the chief negotiators on the baronial side.

But, once again, the success of the barons led to their undoing. Now their cause appeared to be won, some drifted away; others were skilfully detached by Prince Edward. Once again also, King Louis of France decided to mediate and the two sides agreed. In the first hearing in Boulogne in September no decision was reached, despite the fact that Simon only had the support of two clerics against the king and his entire party. The second hearing was scheduled for immediately after Christmas at Amiens; Simon had only gone twenty miles from Kenilworth on the journey when his horse fell, causing him to break his leg and to turn back. It was a bad omen. In his absence on 24 January 1264 King Louis found entirely for his fellow monarch, sweeping away the Provisions of Oxford. Despite having agreed to accept the French king's arbitration, the barons immediately rejected this so-called Mise of Amiens.

Trouble broke out almost at once in the Marches. Simon sent his two eldest sons, Henry and Simon, to deal with it and, as soon as he had crossed from France, Prince Edward followed them. One of the barons, Robert de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, sacked Worcester and the young de Montforts tricked their way into Gloucester, but they then agreed a truce with Edward, although he subsequently failed to keep his word. Fresh attempts at mediation failed and general lawlessness prevailed. London was almost entirely on the side of the barons and Simon went there from Kenilworth after his leg had mended. The king was already in the south east trying to secure an open route to France from where his wife was sending him men and money. Both sides then moved to Lewes. The barons once again tried to reach a settlement, but it proved fruitless. Battle was joined on Wednesday 14 May. Prince Edward chased the Londoners from the field, but pursued them too far and by the time he returned Simon's superior tactics had resulted in the capture of both the king and his brother Richard.

The decisiveness of the battle changed the pattern of English politics. For the next fifteen months, although the forms of government remained substantially the same, the hand at the controls was that of the Earl of Leicester and not that of the king. But Simon had many problems. For some reason he tried to secure French arbitration again, based on the provisions of Oxford, but there was no response. At the end of June he revised the Council of Fifteen, arranging for three electors (himself, the Earl of Gloucester and the Bishop of Chichester) to appoint nine councillors to advise the king; all were Simon's supporters, as were the majority of the clergy. In effect, Simon was ruling England. The castles and counties were changed from royal to baronial hands, and an army was raised to counter the real threat of invasion which Queen Eleanor was trying to foment from France; in the end it was used to crush another rebellion in the Marches. But the threat of invasion was sufficient for Simon to move his royal prisoners - Prince Edward having taken the place of his father - to the safe stronghold of Kenilworth.

In January 1265 a Parliament was called to London; its composition was broadened to include burgesses and knights of the shires, but it is now thought more likely that this was to secure further baronial support than that Simon was consciously setting a pattern for the future. On St. Valentine's Day in the Chapterhouse of Westminster the king accepted the terms agreed after the battle of Lewes; in return Prince Edward was partially set at liberty although always under the watchful eye of Simon's supporters. Then followed another more serious baronial split following a quarrel between Simon and Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester; there were many causes, possibly the main reason being Simon's curt and over-bearing manner in refusing the Earl's rightful claim to ransom of his prisoners after the battle of Lewes. The split involved the Marches once again, with the Earl of Gloucester joining forces against Simon, who set off to deal with the situation. It was to be his last campaign.

He first secured Gloucester and then went on to Hereford, taking the king and Prince Edward with him. But while at Hereford the latter, never above using trickery, slipped his guards and raced to Roger de Mortimer's castle at Wigmore some twelve miles west of Ludlow; Mortimer had long been one of Simon's main opponents in the Marches. Prince Edward and the Earl of Gloucester then came to terms at Ludlow and began to increase their forces as Edward's popularity grew. Simon went into Wales to

renew his pact with Llewellyn so as to secure his rear, but then found that in his absence Edward had cut him off by destroying all the bridges across the Severn including the strong one at Worcester, a city which he captured. A cat and mouse game ensued, this city of Worcester being the pivotal point.

Simon went from Hereford to Monmouth, hoping to cross the Channel to Bristol which he still controlled, but the Earl of Gloucester captured his ships and thus thwarted his plan. So he turned back to Hereford and, realising that the situation was becoming serious, urgently sent for reinforcements from his son Simon who was then in the south. Unfortunately the latter did not appreciate his father's precarious position. Not only did he dawdle on the way but, having eventually reached Kenilworth on the evening of July 31st., he held a feast and failed to set proper guards. Prince Edward had been kept informed of his every move. Riding the thirty miles from Worcester overnight, he arrived at Kenilworth at dawn and surprised and defeated the relief army before they knew what had hit them. It is said that the younger Simon only avoided death or capture by running naked from a house in the town and rowing across the lake to the castle. Edward immediately returned to Worcester to keep watch for his more dangerous foe.

On 2 August Simon managed to ford the Severn at Kempsey, three miles south of Worcester. As it was hot, thundery weather, he decided to march to Evesham overnight and would have continued the next day, but the king was tired, so they heard mass in the abbey and rested. Edward, of course, knew what was happening and followed from Worcester. Stopping just short of the town on August 4, he divided his forces into three, sending Mortimer round to the east to hold the bridge across the Avon. He and the Earl of Gloucester then led a two-pronged attack from the west, at first even pretending to be the relieving force by carrying in front the banners captured three days previously at Kenilworth. Simon soon recognised the danger, but admired the way his enemies came on, remarking to his colleagues that they had learned all their skills at arms from him. Simon's horse was killed under him and he then fought on foot to the last, with his eldest son Henry dying at his side and a younger son, Guy, terribly wounded. Such was the royalist hatred for the baronial side that, unusually for the period, no quarter was given and few prisoners taken. The king was wounded by an arrow before he called out to the opposing side, letting them know who he was.

Revenge for so many months of subservience to Simon did not stop at his death. His body was dismembered, his head being carried in triumph on the point of a lance to Wigmore Castle. The trunk was thrown to the dogs, but was later retrieved by the monks, placed on a ladder under an old coat and carried into the abbey. It was then put in a shroud and buried but, following complaints that he had died excommunicate, it was exhumed and thrown into the sewer from where it was subsequently retrieved and, after papal intervention, buried below the high altar in 1267. A cult to his memory soon developed, as the poorer people regarded him as a champion of their liberties. As for his family, his widow retired to the convent at Montargis in France and the surviving sons eventually went abroad and seldom set foot in England again.

More than seven centuries later it is difficult to arrive at a balanced assessment of Simon. Undoubtedly one of the greatest men of his age, he had a marked impact on his times, though only indirectly a lasting impact. Clearly a mixture of qualities, his opponents saw him as avaricious and haughty and a man of double standards, his followers as loyal and true. Admired rather than loved, he tried to keep an oath at all costs and despised those who did not. Afraid of no one, many were afraid of him. As the royalists had the last word on the battlefield, perhaps King Henry III should have the last word here. During one of his brother-in-law's frequently violent arguments, the king exclaimed: "I fear thunder and lightning terribly, but by God's head I dread you more than all the thunder and lightning in the world."

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The Foundation and First Rule of The Templars.

E.Kt. C.V.Young. P.Prov.Con

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You will know much of the history of the First Crusade of 1096-99. That took place not just because of the capture of Jerusalem in 1071 nor just because of the preaching of Peter the Hermit, inspirational and hugely successful though that was. It came in large measure, as all events in Europe, from a power struggle, or a series of power struggles, this time between the Roman Church and the Church of Byzantium, from the danger posed by the incursion of Normans into the Mediterranean, the wish of the Popes to establish their secular power more firmly, the expulsion and return of the Popes from and to Rome and the elevation to the Papal throne of the cardinal-bishop of Ostia, Odo de Lagery as Urban II.

Urban was shrewd, persuasive and conciliatory and by this, deft diplomacy and a careful selection of supporters was able to return to Rome in 1083, from which as you know, the Popes had been driven and where the Anti-Pope, Guilbert of Ravenna, had sat as Clement III, until his death in 1087. Having returned to Rome, Urban still wanted to establish the posture and supremacy of the Roman Church and an appeal from the Emperor Alexius of the Eastern Empire for help against the Turks was too great an opportunity to miss.

A Holy War in the service of God would enable the Christians to take possession of the Holy Land, which had been conquered by the Muslims, and thus restore it to Christian control, and, more importantly to Roman control. In addition it would be a common goal that would put all European Christians on the same side, finish their seemingly never-ending wars against each other and provide land for the landless second sons who, as a result of primogeniture were landless and promising to turn into bandits.

The Church would have to play a leading role because men of many nations would be taking part and that would establish the supremacy of Mother Church and, possibly more importantly, the rescue of the Holy Land and the protection of Byzantium would result in the recognition of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff who was instrumental in effecting it.

It was Urban himself who travelled through France taking soundings and planning and on November 27th 1095 at a great assembly at Clermond it was Urban who addressed the crowd and by all the arts of black propaganda and half-truths stirred them to arms. It must be remembered that, despite the occupation of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands, the Hospital of St John still existed in Jerusalem, pilgrims were dealt with tolerance and there was open access to the Holy places. Urban's speech then must have been truly remarkable. But, he did hold out the hope of a land of milk and honey for the taking and instant absolution.

The outcome of that great meeting was more than he could have anticipated. He had touched a chord and over the next weeks and months his influence and planning and the preaching of Peter the Hermit inspired Europe and soon it was obvious that a Crusade had been well and truly launched.

That is the background, sketchy and as partial as Jane Austen's history was. And I too have an agenda, for it is not my intention to tell the story of the Crusade, but this background is important, for it is as a result of that Crusade that a group of knights founded the Order which was to become the richest in Christendom and able to maintain the largest standing army in the Christian kingdom - the Templars.

To pass quickly on. With the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine had been offered the throne, but refusing the title of King in the city where Jesus had worn but a crown of thorns, he was called *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*, Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. On his death, the Frankish knights of the Crusade summoned Godfrey's younger brother, Baldwin of Boulogne from Edessa to rule the kingdom. On November 9, 1100 he entered Jerusalem and on November 11, 1100 was declared Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem.

He had no reservations about being the King of Christ's city and was a King the time demanded, for without him there would probably have been no Kingdom of Jerusalem. He spent as much time in the saddle as on the throne and was, by all accounts, an aggressive, hands-on ruler.

But he died - in 1118 of some unidentified disease and on April 14 1118 his cousin, Baldwin of le Bourg of Edessa was crowned Baldwin II. A few weeks later he would change the course of crusading history and effect the history of Europe by giving his royal blessing to a new religious order of warrior monks, knights who took sacred vows to live or die for the True Cross.

It is worth spending a moment on considering just what a knight was, for the Hollywood version is, as ever, more sparkle than reality. Even in Chaucer's time the idea of "knight" held some ambiguity and in those days some men refused to become knights because of the expense involved and the dangers inherent in having to fight..

Originally, the word "knight" did not necessarily indicate high social status. The Anglo-Saxon "*cniht*" primarily meant a youth. It also meant "servant, man, follower" and in German "*Knecht*" still means servant, as does "*knegt*" in Danish, while "*kne*" in Norwegian means "rogue, rascal". It was only in about the tenth or eleventh century that "*cniht*" in England began to take on connotations of rank, for when William I invaded England native writers unhesitatingly applied "*cniht*" to his followers. These followers were rewarded with grants of the land they had helped to conquer and so William's "*cnihts*" became the landed gentry of the future.

Do not believe, however, that they were wealthy or even aristocratic. Many were poor, of lowly and even unfree origin and a recent analysis of the "Domesday Book" shows that the majority of knights at that time held only about 150 acres, which puts them on a social level only just above the most well-to-do peasant.

Such knights then often fought for money, land or loot - in 1180 the daily rate for a knight was 4d. The knight was pledged to his Lord for a certain specified number of days for war service - for that he needed money, money for horses, armour, weapons and servants - and one should remember that a heavy war-horse could cost up to two hundred times the price of an ordinary plough horse. Again, the knight of Chaucer's day would pay the equivalent of twenty years rent on Chaucer's home in Westminster for a good horse.

Poverty, therefore was not an option and the knight learned early in his training that common soldiers could be killed freely, but he must not kill men of obvious rank and wealth, unless to save his own life. Capture and ransom were the major objectives of the knight in battle - and if his adversary were poor, then his horse, armour, sword, axe etc. were all items that would enrich the victor.

It would be better, therefore, if we considered knights to be rather like mercenaries.

As for chivalry! There was no such thing as chivalry, in fact there is no use of the word in English prior to 1300 and then it had a specific technical meaning deriving from the Latin "*caballus*" being an inferior pack horse through the Northern French "*cheval*" to eventually become the name for a mounted nobleman "*chevalier*" and the host of mounted warriors, "*chevalerie*".

Indeed chastity, decent behavior to women and concern for the weak did not enter a knight's mind especially in the heat of battle or its aftermath. And obedience was only given to the strong, not by pledge, or trust or loyalty but naked fear.

The above makes what happened in Jerusalem in 1119 even more remarkable.

Hugh de Paven, a knight of the lower nobility of Champagne, approached Baldwin II with a completely new concept. He and eight other knights had joined together to dedicate their entire lives to the service of the Holy Land. The extraordinary aspect of this little band was that its members had evidenced their dedication by approaching the Patriarch of Jerusalem to take the same triple vow that was common to monastic orders, the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience!

But they were not going to disappear behind the walls of the cloisters, they planned to patrol the roads of Jerusalem fully armed, ready to fight all enemies of Christendom and protect pilgrims to the Holy Places.

A medieval chronicler called James of Vitry describes the dual nature of the knight's commitment : "to defend pilgrims against brigands and rapists" and to "observe poverty, chastity and obedience according to the rules of ordinary priests". Certainly the kingdom of Jerusalem needed policing. In Holy Week 1119 700 unarmed pilgrims were ambushed by Saracens, 300 were killed and 60 taken as slaves

When one considers the flow of silver and gold brought by the pilgrims to the city and the livelihoods of the hundreds relying upon the continued flow of pilgrims,

their gifts and their money one can understand the enthusiasm with which the Patriarch received the vows of those nine men.

The petition to Baldwin was for a base for the warriors and he assigned to them a portion of the al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, a structure said to have been built on the site of the original Temple of Solomon. It was from this HQ that the group ultimately took its name, "*Pauperes commilitones Christi Templique Salomonis*", the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon. The members became known as the Knights of the Temple and later by the name most popular, the Knights Templar.

In establishing and maintaining themselves, they had substantial expenses and to provide them with a sufficient income, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the King endowed them with a number of benefices, an interesting precursor to a practice that was going to happen throughout the West in the coming years.

As to expense : a knight required at least two horses, his war-horse and a lighter one for normal travel. A knight required at least one attendant to help him with his armour, shield and weapons. Generally this man carried the knight's shield, or "escu" and was known, therefore as "*escuier*" or esquire. In those early days he was usually a sergeant or man-at-arms and he also required a horse. Servants were needed to care for horses, food etc. and it is possible, therefore, that the first establishment of the Templars on the Temple Mount consisted of some twenty-five or thirty men with forty to fifty horses.

Their services to Baldwin earned his approval, as well they might, for Runciman points out that they provided him with what he most needed, the core of a regular well-trained army. Accordingly, with Baldwin's approval and encouragement, in 1127 Hugh de Payens wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux, the most influential churchman in Europe, and later St. Bernard, to intercede with Pope Honorius II to ask for official papal sanction of the military order and for the Pope to provide it with a formal Rule to govern the life and conduct of the Templars.

It is interesting at this point to note that Bernard of Clairvaux was the cousin of Hugh de Payens and the nephew of another of the founders Andre de Montbard, who was one of the knights sent to carry the appeal to Bernard. Furthermore, the Abbey of Clairvaux was built on land at Troyes which had been given in 1115 by Hugh of Champagne who in 1125 had renounced all his worldly wealth and joined the Templars and, it seems probable, would have informed the man to whom he was a patron and a friend, Bernard of Clairvaux, of the Order of the Temple.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux is a fascinating figure and it is almost impossible to overstate his importance in the establishment of the Order and difficult now to look back and appreciate the impact of his personality on those he knew.

He joined the Cistercian Order at the age of 21, by the time he was 26 he had become Abbot and had set up 65 "daughter houses" whose complement of monks he had recruited himself. Now, at age 28 he was one of the most powerful voices in Christendom and generally respected as the "second pope".

We are told by a contemporary biographer that he was slim and fragile, his physique average, his skin soft, his hair fair, beard reddish and complexion fresh and pink, and another contemporary says, "His face radiated with a bright splendour, which was not of earthly but of heavenly origin". A modern historian, Dom David Knowles, summarises: He was, "one of the small class of supremely great men whose gifts and opportunities have been exactly matched."

On a personal note, and by way of an aside, reading his Rule for the Order even in an inadequate and rather stilted Nineteenth Century translation, something of the man comes through. A belief in discipline, especially self-discipline in matters of conduct, bearing, religious observance, sexual morality, diet permeates the whole of the Rule as does an all-compelling faith and a confidence in the necessity for a moral order to life that is strangely refreshing in its austerity in this increasingly secular and self-centred age. Be that as it may. He welcomed the opportunity of helping the Order and did far more than merely get the Church's endorsement at the Council of Troyes and secure the approval of Pope Honorius III, he helped shape the Order, defined its aims and ideals in a Rule to govern its conduct and called for gifts of land and money for this army of God. The grant of land at Troyes became the base for the concept of "Preceptories" throughout Europe.

These establishments in each Christian country acted as provincial supply bases to support Templar operations in the Holy Land. They recruited new members, instructed them in the Rule and even gave them basic training in fighting together, something unheard of in the medieval military. The Preceptors were charged with extracting the maximum revenues from the properties, which came to include mills and bakeries, market franchises and even whole villages. The revenues were then forwarded to Jerusalem. They provided the tools for warfare, the heavy horses, weapons, armour, and supplies for arrows, timbers for siege engines and masonry for the erection of buildings.

de Payens travelled through France and England getting grants from King Stephen and Queen Matilda including the manor of Cressing which became their most productive holding. Eventually the Order acquired over 9,000 manors in Europe and in Worcestershire there was a Preceptory at Getinges a manor at Templars Lawen and lands in Flavel, Temple Broughton and Hanbury. The whole is a measure, not only of their success, but also their wealth, which at its peak was estimated as an annual income of some six million sterling.

Bernard gave as much attention to recruits as he did to land and money. He urged young men to take up the Templar sword, comparing the Templar's holy way of life, so pleasing to God, to the degenerate ways of the secular knights. The dedication to Christ, to a life of chastity and prayer, to a life that might be sacrificed in battle against unbelievers was enough penance to atone for any sin or any number of sins. Bernard appealed to "*sceleratos et impius, raptos et homicidas, adulteros*". "the wicked and the ungodly, rapists and murderers, adulterers" to save their souls by enlisting as Knights of the Temple. Absolution was the guarantee they were given.

The poor knights provided another pool of recruits - they could not afford the accoutrements they required but the Order would provide.

It quickly became apparent that the vow of poverty was a bond on the individual, not on the Order as a whole.

According to the Rule, the Templar could have no personal possessions and all gifts had to be handed to the Order.:

Article 43 states:

If any gift shall be made to a Brother, let it be taken to the Master or Treasurer. If, indeed, his friend or his parent will consent to make the gift only on condition that he useth it himself, he must not receive it until permission hath been obtained from the Master. And whosoever shall have received a present, let it not grieve him if it be given to another. Yea, let him know assuredly, that if he be angry at it, he striveth against God.

The warrior-monk had to content himself with what the new Templar Rule gave him :

three horses, according to Article 30.
clothing,

a white robe, that, as Article 20 states: "those who have cast behind them a dark life may know that they are to commend themselves to their Creator by a pure and white life. For what is whiteness but perfect chastity, and chastity is the security of the soul and the health of the body". It has a familiar ring, does it not, to those who remember their investiture as a Knight!

There was also supplied, of course, chain mail, a helmet and equipment for his horses together with the requisite sword, shield, lance, knife, battle-axe and mace and also personal gear such as bedding and eating utensils.

Each knight was also granted, according to Article 36, "only one esquire; but if that esquire serve any knight gratis, or for charity, it is not lawful to chide him, not to strike him for any fault".

A person so equipped could in no way fit any medieval definition of poverty.

The whole gave the new Templar pride and the development of an esprit de corps that might be said to be the opposite of Christian humility.

But, the rules by which the Order was governed, pragmatic though they are in places, soon dispel any idea of hypocrisy or self-serving, though one must admit, that the exclusive, superior nature of the Order held the danger of arrogance, abuse of privileges and overweening pride, all crimes attributed to the Templars in the trial held 180 years after the founding. But that is another story.

The Rule that Bernard of Clairvaux prepared for the new Order was modelled on the Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia and consisted of 72 heads or chapters - I have called them Articles.

Based on the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, it also called for regulations of diet, extensive daily prayers and time alone in meditation and devotions in an atmosphere deliberately separated from the world of non-members. However, these monks were not contemplatives, but warriors functioning in the centre of the secular world. Accordingly, the Templars were permitted more meat on their tables and, rather than being encouraged to fast, were forbidden to do so. No one wanted knights going into action and fainting through lack of food! They had daily prayers, but they also had military duties and no Templar on watch or guard duty would ever be called to prayer, thus the military integrity of the Order was not compromised. But St. Bernard did lay down thirteen appointed prayers to be sung if they could not attend, for instance, matins!

Further, the Rule called for full and immediate obedience of the Templar knight to his superiors. Article 33 that upon orders being received, "there must be no hesitation, but the thing must be done without delay, as though it had been enjoined from heaven."

and Article 35 lays down, "no man shall make war or peace of his own free will, but shall wholly incline himself to the will of the Master, so that he may follow the saying of the Lord, I come not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

This brought about a sea-change in battle tactics. Nowadays a military commander in the field does not expect orders to be questioned, but obeyed. In medieval warfare this was not always the case and now an entire Order of Knights was emerging trained to obey instantly and to move quickly without question. One can imagine the impact that would have on a battle-field. Nor were the highest officers of the Order exempted - the Templar Marshal for Ireland was confined in a cell built into the walls of the Temple Church in London, there to starve to death, because he had been insubordinate to the Master for England.

Sex has ever been a preoccupation of the Church and the medieval Church was no exception. For the Church every aspect of sex, from lustful looking to enthusiastic participation, was at the instigation of Satan. A Templar Knight fighting for the True Cross must obviously be free from all Satanic control, so every aspect of sexual behaviour was forbidden to him, with every temptation to be avoided.

A Templar could not embrace or kiss his own mother or sister. He was not allowed to be alone in the company of any woman of any age. He was not permitted to be in a house where a woman was giving birth. Bernard also emphasised the prohibition of homosexual activity within the Order.

In addition to a white lambskin girdle to be worn always as a reminder of his vow of chastity, the Templar had to wear sheepskin drawers at all times, even when he went to bed.

The dormitory was required to have a lamp lit at all times as a deterrent, one supposes, to nocturnal visiting. The Templar was never to allow another person to see his naked body, not even another Templar and he was never to bathe his body. One

could imagine that the sheepskin drawers, together with the heat and not bathing soon put paid to all romantic thoughts.

Knights were ordered to crop their hair short but to let their beards grow, this in contrast to the then current fashion for a clean-shaven face. The smooth faces of the Crusaders appeared feminine and disgraceful to the Muslims to whom facial hair was a symbol of virility and masculinity. The Templars, therefore, would be regarded as a race apart from the norm, the manliest and, therefore, the most respected of the Crusaders.

The Rule also considered the treatment of sick, wounded and dying Templars, exhorting the knights "diligently and faithfully to administer to them" demanded honour and support for the elderly, laid down a system for the dealing with transgressions from the minor to the venal and called upon the Knights to avoid "contentions, envyings, spite, murmurings, backbiting and slanders". It also laid down that applicants have the Rule read to them, that they make a profession and petition of their desire to join in front of the Knights assembled and undergo a term of probation to be determined by the Master - that latter too, sounds familiar.

The Rule, as might be expected, was amended, added to and sometimes set aside during the course of next nearly 200 years, so much so that in time the original 73 clauses had grown to 600 and concerned all aspects of life from the cutting of cheese, Article/Clause 371 to the wearing of leather gloves, (325) - only chaplains and mason brothers were allowed to wear leather gloves. But, for all change, the power structure remained inviolate. The Masters in any country had autocratic control over the Templars in his country, but the Grand Master was in total control.

Within ten years of Christendom was put on notice that this Military Order of warrior Monks was to have rare privileges, for Pope Innocent II issued the bull, "*Omne datum optimum*", bestowing "Every great gift" on the Templar Order. It has been called the Magna Carta of the Order and its provisions show why. It exempted the Templars from all authority on earth, secular or temporal, except that of the Pope himself. Now the Templars could collect tithes, but didn't have to pay them. No one could ask a Templar to swear an oath, no one could demand any change in their Rule, no monarch could impose his own civil law on the Templars, no Bishop, Archbishop or Cardinal could give them orders or interfere with their activities. They could even get rid of any priest who didn't suit them - one section of the bull read:

"... you shall have your own clerks and chaplains, to keep in your house and under its jurisdiction, without reference to the Diocesan Bishop, by direct authority of the Holy Church of Rome. These chaplains shall undergo an novitiate of one year and should they turn out troublesome or simply useless to the House, you shall be at liberty to send them away and appoint better priests. And these chaplains shall not meddle in the government of the Order..."

It is interesting to note that the Bull made the Templar vow lasting for life!

And it is fascinating to consider that Innocent II only won the Papacy, which had been contested by a rival taking the name of Anacletus, by the support of - yes - Bernard of Clairvaux who brought Louis VI of France and Henry I of England to his

side. It has been suggested that *Omne datum optimum* was a reward for that support. It is an interesting speculation, but certainly gratitude seems to have played some part in the proceedings.

A further bull reinforcing the privileges of the Temple was issued by Celestine II, *Milites Templi* in 1144. And in 1145, Bernardo Pignatello, once a monk in the abbey at Clermond, became Pope Eugenius III and seven weeks later issued a bull, *Militia Dei*, whereby:

“...we grant you the right to set up sanctuaries in the precincts of any Templar domain, that you may there attend divine services and also be interred. For it is indecent and dangerous for the souls of the professed Brethren of the Temple that they should rub shoulders with sinful persons and frequenters of woman...”

This continued public granting of unique privileges suggests that support for the Order was now the established policy of Rome. Holding the Holy Land remained a priority whoever happened to be Pope and the Order of the Temple had become a mainstay of Christendom's war against Islam.

The building and maintenance of fortification, the arming, training and supply of a standing army required a river of revenue, thus the exemption from tithes and taxes, though it annoyed the rest of the Church, was essential for the Templars. But that alone was not enough and they set about finding new sources of money. They took in associate members who lived or fought with them for a time in exchange for gifts to the Order. They bought or built their own merchant ships and their own war-galleys to protect them and with their fleet transported supplies from Europe and pilgrims for a fee. Their farms and estates in the Holy Land were developed so that their crops became exports on their ships returning to Europe.

It is interesting here to note that it was a Templar sugar factory in Acre that produced for export to the West a product the Arabs called “*al-Kandiq*”, and other exports included fine cotton cloth, prepared by the weavers of Mosul in Kurdistan, called *Mosulin* and a very loosely woven cotton fabric made by the people of the southern castles of Gaza now called gauze.

Over the years surplus funds accumulated and the Templars entered the financial services business.

The easiest was safe deposit. The Templars carefully guarded their own treasures and it required little extra effort, if any, to do the same for others - for a fee or a gift. The service grew to eventually offering security for treasuries and even crown jewels. A healthy trade had existed for 200 years between Europe and the Middle East and it is possible that the trading skills shown by the merchants of Genoa, Amalfi and Venice and the Muslim merchants, whom the Templars were to know well, helped the Knights develop their own. Certainly it does not take much imagination to see the influence of the Genoese method of finance called the *commenda*, whereby the investor provided all the capital and took 75% of the profit, being replicated and developed by the Templars.

It is further possible to suggest that the Templars invented the system of branch banking, whereby a deposit could be made with the treasurer in Paris and a receipt presented for collection to the treasurer in Jerusalem. All for a fee to the Templars, of course, but, no money was actually moving and security and safety were assured.

In the Holy Land there were nineteen different languages being spoken but over nineteen forms of currency, and the Templars provided a useful, and profitable, money-changing business - indeed the only one that could be trusted.

The Churches laws against usury made it difficult, if not illegal, to exact interest for a loan. The Templars never took interest, they would accept a gift of land, commodities or privileges and they seem to have invented the concept of interest deducted in advance. They gave a man a loan of four thousand gold pieces, but the loan document stated only his promise to repay a loan of five thousand, with no reference to interest. Another popular transaction was the mortgage in which there was no interest - but the Templars took the revenue from the property, 100% of the revenue from the property, until the mortgage was repaid. Could this be a development of the Genoese *commenda*?

With ingenuity, surplus capital and a whole army to back their moves to collect and foreclose, the Templars became for a time the foremost banking house in Europe just as a revenue producing sideline to their basic military objectives.

Such a large-scale and successful commercial enterprise argues a sophisticated, skilled and efficient management of resources and personnel. Those undoubted skills and abilities were put to direct application in their military affairs.

Wars fought a thousand miles from home required logistical skills that were almost unknown at the time. One only has to instance the massacre at Nicaea of the People's Crusade in 1096. As Kucicman says, "Faith alone without wisdom and discipline would not open the road to Jerusalem", nor, might we add, could "faith alone" defend it. The Templars had both the wisdom and the discipline.

With wisdom they carefully planned for food and water supplies in the field, including the vital necessity of transport of water supplies where required, necessities frequently overlooked or underestimated by other Crusaders. They entered the armaments business using both employees and slave craftsmen to turn out supplies that would take too long to bring from Europe. The Templar castle at Safed, for example, had a normal complement of 300 archers. If each archer shot just ten arrows per day during a thirty day siege, the Templars at Safed would have needed an armoury of 90,000 arrows! The best chain mail was made of flattened rings, with each little loop held together by rivets. A calf-length chain hauberk required 40,000 thousand of such loops and took 7 weeks to make, with more time needed for the leggings, foot coverings and gauntlets. To equip 100 recruits with armour meant an impressive battery of armourers. For the chain mail, the weapons, spurs, bits and horseshoes for their horses the Templars maintained forges in the Holy Land and in Europe, including two in Fleet Street near the London Temple and, though Henry Ford may have believed that he invented the production line, when one hears of whole

villages working in teams to provide parts of armour, one might suggest that the Templars came near it.

Discipline was second nature to a Templar and to that they wedded skill. Every secular knight received some individual training, but the Templars were drilled to fight together. They had training fields on which to practice maintaining a line during the charge and to wheel or turn about on command. Such drills were revolutionary. The armies of the time were generally mobs who rarely acted in concert, unlike the Arab armies, who for years had achieved great success by acting as a disciplined whole.

On the battlefield the Templars rallied around the battle standard Beauceant, thus giving them a focus. The meaning of the word has often been debated by members of this Order, what is important is that it was the rallying point and no Templar could leave the field whilst it flew. The standard was black and white, representing the sin of mortal life and the purity of a life spent fighting for God and it was not a flag, but a vertical banner held by rods top and bottom so that it required no breeze to be seen.

Another advantage learned in the field was the necessity for light cavalry. The knights used their swords mainly for hacking, the Muslim's sword was curved for slashing and with a sharp point for thrusting. A European sword thrust into a body at speed from the horse could be wrenched out of the hand of the knight by the motions of the falling body and the speed of the horse. The curved blade of the Muslim, sharpened either on the inside or outside edge, would tend to free itself by arcing out of the body as the rider moved on. These advantages were not missed by the Templars and they formed their own light cavalry, the Turcoples recruited from men born of European fathers and native mothers. In time every European army would have light cavalry and the curved blade would become the identifying feature of the cavalry sabre.

The Templar rule stated in Article 37, that all clothing, weapons etc. must be without decoration, concentrating on quality rather than show. The result of such a decree was that the Templars appeared ready for business and, despite their white robes rather daunting.

It is difficult today to appreciate the impact a group of warriors, disciplined by their monastic rule, identically dressed in plain, sober fashion must have had. This was the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire that a uniformed, heavy cavalry had taken the field that was not subject to shifting personal loyalties or the uncertainties of the feudal levy. I believe the impact must have been profound. In fact their approach to the whole tradition of warfare would have seemed revolutionary. Because Templars were not allowed to take personal plunder there would be no dropping out of the fight to loot. All loot went to the Templar treasury and looting was only allowed after the fight and on the command of the field commander.

The Rule also prohibited the use of Templar funds for ransom, so for the Templars there was not the opportunity to resign, surrender in the knowledge that a few weeks discomfort would result in a ransom being paid and a return to loved ones.

The enemy knew this and, therefore, Templars were usually killed when captured. For the Templar the prohibition of ransom meant fighting to the bitter end, even if wounded, and retreat was forbidden except under the direct order of the commander, and that order was never given unless the Templars were out-numbered at least three to one!

For all this, no Templar fought for personal glory, the Templar motto, often attributed to Bernard, was "*Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomine tuo, da gloriam*", "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory". One pilgrim noted that though the Templars fought in silence "they burst into song at the moment of victory with *Non nobis Domine*". It's interesting, is it not, that when Henry V won at Agincourt it is said that his men sang "*Non nobis Domine*."

It is worth noting here that the Templars recognised the need for and implemented the idea of delegation of authority. The Grand Master was C-in-C, the Seneschal, Chief Executive Officer, the Treasurer, was, well, the Treasurer, the Marshal was the field commander, the officer in charge of the light cavalry the Turcoploier etc. etc. As to the total body of Templars, they were divided into three classes, which might be said to parallel naturally the hierarchical structure of the feudal society of the lay world. First were the Knights, who had to be drawn from the knightly class. Initiation into the Order did not make a man a knight, it made the knight a monk. Their robes were white and no one else, according to Article 22, was permitted to wear the white robe or white mantle. The sergeants or mounted men-at-arms were drawn from the bourgeoisie and had to be free born. They were assigned two horses each and their chain mail was not as long nor as complete as that of the knights. They acted as squires, guards, stewards etc. and were addressed as "Brother". They wore robes of black or brown as laid down in Article 31.

The remaining class, the smallest, was the Templar priests, who acted as chaplains but also, at times, formed a sort of secretariat, because of their literacy. They wore green robes and also wore gloves at all times to keep their hands clean when they touched the Host in serving Communion.

When we wear the cross on our robes, the Templars only acquired the cross at the time of the Second Crusade, when the Pope decreed that the Knights Templar and only the Knights Templar would wear a special red cross with blunt wedge-shaped arms, called the cross patee, on the left breasts of their white robes, with a smaller version on the left shoulder.

Incidentally, it was Bernard de Clairvaux's "incomparable rhetoric", to quote Runciman, that led the crowd, listening to him preach the Crusade at Vezelay in March 1146, to cry out, "Crosses, give us Crosses!" And he himself gave up his outer garments to be made into crosses when the material previously prepared had all been cut up. Note that "previously prepared"- it shows that Bernard had a grasp of crowd dynamics that would not be amiss in any century - here was the crowd thinking that they had taken control, it was their idea to have a cross, and lo and behold, there was the material for the crosses which Bernard was calling upon them to take up and carry to the Holy Land!

As a final note on the Rule, although the Templar Order came to relish its own privacy with secret meetings, secret initiations and secret correspondence, the individual knight was permitted no secrets and was not even permitted a level of personal privacy. He was not allowed to have any debts, which would put him under an obligation to an outsider and was forbidden to act as a godfather, even to children of his own family, to prevent the possibility of any future obligations. The Rule was revealed to him just a bit at a time on a "need to know" basis, nor could he discuss with anyone, not even a brother Templar, any part of the Rule that had been exposed to him. He was restrained by strict punishments from discussing Templar business with an outsider, especially the proceedings of any Templar meeting or initiation. He was not to concern himself with the administration of the Order, unless prompted to do so. His only concern, his only purpose in his new life, was to fight the infidel for God.

Omne Datum says, "You have most conscientiously sworn on your breasts the sign of the living Cross, because you are especially reckoned to be members of the knighthood of Christ warriors most versed in holy battle."

It is best, I feel, to leave them there, before the lure of wealth, poor leadership, lust for conquest, politics and even treachery tempts them, to remember them in the glory of the principles of their foundation and to be aware that they were men of their time, but remarkable men.

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