

ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM



Pro Fac.

A BRIEF NOTICE
OF THE
FOUNDATION AND CONSTITUTION
OF ITS OBJECTS IN ENGLAND

Pro Cl. Nat. B. 1800

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LONDON

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THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

1. THE Order of St. John was founded 1092 at Jerusalem and had for its special objects the defence of the Christian Pilgrims on their journeys to and from the Holy Land, and the reception and protection of them during their sojourn. There was also a House of Ladies of the Order, who tended the pilgrims and wayfarers of their own sex.

Founda
A. D. 1092

2. The order was introduced into England A.D. 1100, when the Priory of Clerkenwell was founded by the Lord Jordan de Briset, and a House of Ladies of the Order was established at Buckland, in the county of Somerset, in A.D. 1180.

Introdu
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A. D. 1100

3. The head of the Order was the Grand-Master, who was represented by Grand-Priors in various European States; the subordinate establishments, or Houses of the Order, were presided over by Commanders or Preceptors, and were hence very generally called Commanderies or Preceptories. The Grand-Master's supremacy was limited, the government of the Order being shared by a Council representing each Languag or division of the Confraternity, in which he was only *primus inter pares*.

Govern
of the C

The Order was in its constitution sovereign, at once aristocratic and republican, a government in itself, owning no external control and possessing entirely, in its every part, that autonomy which enabled the perpetuation of its own existence and without which no branch of this venerable institution would be now existing to represent the ancient Brethren of the Hospital.

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gland was
Sixth.

4. Early in the 12th century it was divided into eight branches or langues, viz. :—1. Provence; 2. Auvergne; 3. France; 4. Italy; 5. Arragon; 6. England; 7. Germany; 8. Castile.

5. The eight principal dignities of the Order were assigned to the senior Knights' Great Cross of each Langue, of whom four, at least, were required to remain at the chief seat of the Order, and formed part of the Council of the Grand-Master.

These dignities were :—

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Ancient
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Grand Commander, the Bailiff of Provence.		
Marshal	”	” Auvergne.
Grand Hospitaller	”	” France.
Admiral	”	” Italy.
Grand Conservator	”	” Arragon.
Turcopolier	”	” England.
High Bailiff	”	” Germany.
High Chancellor	”	” Castile.

Age of
Order.

6. The Badge was a white Cross of eight points on a black field; but in war the Knights of the Order wore a scarlet surcoat with a white plain Cross on front and back.

e Order
England.

7. The European career of the Order, up to the capture of Malta by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, is matter of history; but it may be well to recall that in England the Order shared the fate of the religious establishments in the 16th century, being suppressed, and its property confiscated, by the statute 32 Henry VIII. c. 24 (A.D. 1540); but by a royal charter, dated 2nd April, 1557, Philip and Mary revived the Order in England and gave it the powers of a corporation with perpetual succession, with the title of “Prior and Brethren of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, in England,” much of the property being at the same time restored. The statute 1st Elizabeth, c. 24, annexed to the Crown the estates and goods of all the religious confraternities, but did not enact the suppression of the Order of St. John in England, although it then became practically dormant, and the dispossessed Knights retired to Malta.

8. The Order subsequently provided for the continued representation of England at the Councils of the Grand Master, one of the Knights being nominated for that purpose; and the English Langue was ever, at the chief-lieu, deemed existent. A letter addressed by the Grand-Master de Rohan to King George III. 8th June, 1782, explains that even in the incorporation of a Bavarian branch with the English Langue (a short-lived union), the privileges of the latter had been specially preserved.

England presented the Council of the Order since 1540

9. The 69th Grand-Master, Baron Ferdinand von Hompesch, retired to Trieste upon the capitulation of Malta to Napoleon, and after abdicating the Grand-Mastership, died in poverty on the 12th of May, 1805, at Montpelier, where he had entered the fraternity of the Blue Penitents.

After the of Malta.

After the loss of Malta, many of the Knights took refuge at St. Petersburg, and prior to the abdication of Hompesch, they elected the Emperor Paul Grand-Master, hoping much for the Order from the Imperial favour of a ruler who had already accepted the title of Protector, whilst Paul, from reasons of policy, and intent upon aggrandisement, graciously accepted his illegal election.

10. The Treaty of Amiens (27th March, 1802) stipulated that Malta should be restored to the Order, and that for securing its entire independence of both the French Republic and Great Britain, there was not to be in future either a French or an English Langue; but before the stipulations of the treaty could be carried into effect war again broke out, and the ultimate destiny of Malta was decreed by the Treaty of Paris on the 30th of May, 1814.

The Treaty of Amiens

11. On the death of Paul in 1801, the Emperor Alexander nominated and proclaimed himself Protector of the Order, and appointed the Count Nicholas de Soltykoff as Lieutenant; but shortly afterwards, namely, on the 22nd June, 1801, an Assembly of the Knights at St. Petersburg took upon itself the title of "Sovereign Council of the Order," and in that capacity requested Pope Pius VII. to select a Grand-Master from certain names proposed to him. The Pope made three nominations; but this expedient proving abortive, he subsequently,

The successors of the last Legation Grand Master

on the recommendation of the Emperor Alexander, and of the King of Naples, and, be it added, without due authority delegated by the existing Langues or divisions of the Order, appointed the Count Giovanni di Tommasi, Grand-Master, a title which he retained until his decease in 1805, and which has not been again conferred. On his death-bed Tommasi nominated as Lieutenant-Grand Master the Bailiff Guévara Suardo, who was succeeded in the Lieutenancy by Giovanni y Centellès in 1814. Count Antoine Busca (1821), Prince de Candida (1834), Count Colloredo (1845), Count Alexander Borgia (1865), and the Venerable Bailli Fra Ceschi di Santa Croce (1872.) These Lieutenants have presided over an Association of Knights in Rome styled the "Sacred Council," which claims to be vested with a governing authority.

12. In Clarke's History of Knighthood it is stated that the total of the Order was 1,000, and that of this total the French Langues, in 1788, numbered 808. When Malta fell in 1798 there were 332 Knights in the Island, of whom 200 were Frenchmen. In 1814 the French Knights took heart at the humiliation of Napoleon, and assembling at Paris, elected a permanent Capitulary Commission, in which the Government of the Order was declared to be concentrated. In the scattered and disorganised condition to which the Order had been reduced this exercise of the constitutional right of autonomy by the great majority of its existing members would have been sufficiently valid, exercised as it was by the nation which had founded the Order in Palestine and had given it perhaps 40 of its 71 Grand-Masters; but it may be added that the formation of this Commission was confirmed by a Pontifical Bull issued by Pope Pius VII on the 10th August, 1814, and was recognised by the Lieutenant-Master, and the before-named "Sacred Council," by an instrument dated 9th October, 1815, addressed to the Prior of Aquitaine (de Rohan), the representatives of the Langues of France, Provence, Auvergne, and others of the Commission, it was moreover countenanced by the Kings of France and Spain, and its proceedings secured the cordial concurrence of those Knights of Portugal and of Spain who had resisted the conversion of their Langue into a Royal Order. This association, which represented five-sevenths of the existing

divisions of the Order, made several attempts between 1814 and 1826 to regain the influence and restore the sovereignty of the Order, and for a considerable period appeared as its only active representation. His Majesty George IV. accepted the Badge of the Order from the Chapter assembled at Paris.

13. In the year 1826 the five associated branches of the Order projected the revival of the dormant Langue of England and negotiations were entered into with the Rev. Sir Robert Peat, D.D., G.C.S., chaplain to King George IV., and other English gentlemen, who consented to aid in the re-establishment of the Order in England. Articles of Convention were executed on the 11th of June, 1826, and on the 24th of August and the 15th of October, 1827, with a view to the acquiring of a chef-lieu for the Order through English instrumentality. The Chevalier Victor Comte de Totemps Feuillasse and the Chevalier Comte Philippe de Chastelain were appointed delegates for carrying on the necessary negotiations; the Englishmen were invited "to raise again that Christian and famous banner which was in other times the pride and glory of their ancestors," and at a Chapter assembled at Paris, and representing the great majority of five of the then existing divisions of the Order, the resuscitation of the Order in England was resolved. The Chevalier de Chastelain was deputed to attend a meeting convened at London of the Englishmen interested in the project, when he formally revived the English Langue, and invested the Rev. Sir Robert Peat with the functions and authority of Grand Prior of England. On the 24th of February, 1834, Sir Robert Peat, at the instigation of Sir Lancelot Shadwell, then Vice-Chancellor of England, attended the Court of King's Bench, and before the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Thomas Denman, openly took the oath, "De fideli administratione," as Lord Prior of St. John, in Great Britain. What may have induced the Vice-Chancellor to suggest this procedure is now unknown; but it was certainly a most formal mode of giving publicity to the fact that the Order had been revived in England.

14. Sir Robert Peat has been succeeded in the dignity of Prior by Sir Henry Dymoke, Bart., (Hereditary the Queen's Champion,) Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb, Bart., Admiral Sir

Revival
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the Order
England

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Priors.

Alexander Dundas Young Arbuthnot, and by its present head, the Duke of Manchester.

ical work English the since 15. It now remains to be stated what the English branch of the Order has effected since its revival, and to point out the wide field of usefulness which lies before it.

Its first practical Hospitaller work was confined to the distribution of its funds in the relief of necessitous cases amongst the extreme poor. Subsequently it contributed help to some of the London Hospitals, and to such cases of local distress caused by accident or epidemic as were brought to the notice of the Chapter or governing body.

ork in on. 16. In 1868 a scheme was adopted for supplying nourishing diets to poor convalescents, out-patients of the Charing Cross and King's College Hospitals, and which has proved most valuable and welcome, the hospital authorities bearing high testimony to its great utility in completing restoration to health after medical treatment. Although none of the funds of the Order are consumed in working expenses, all personal service of its members being gratuitous in accordance with the spirit of the Statutes, yet its annual revenue is not sufficient to permit the extension of the system to other London Hospitals, to do which is the great aim and desire of the Order, convinced as its members are, after five years' trial, of the great efficacy of the system in proportion to its cost as compared with the course adopted by many charitable societies. The names, addresses and any particulars which may be known regarding the patients, are sent weekly to the Charity Organisation Society, and by these means the chances of the diets being unworthily distributed are reduced to a minimum.

ork in provinces. 17. The establishment of this diet system in the country by the formation of "Commanderies" has been tried at Worcester and has proved most successful; and the foundation of a Convalescent Hospital, on the provident system, at Ashford, in Kent, by a few members of the Order residing in that locality, has been equally satisfactory. In both these cases private individuals, as well as the local authorities, have testified to the good work done by the Order, and have come forward liberally in its support.

It is the aim of the Order to carry such works throughout the country, and the present organization, by which distinguished Medical Men are admitted as Honorary Associates, gives the Chapter the opportunity of obtaining the best practical advice and assistance in carrying out such undertakings.

18. It is part of the duty of Members of the Order to visit ^{Duty of Members} the Convalescents who may be recommended by the Hospital Medical Officers for the daily relief, the recipients of which are visited, in London, by the Sisters of St. John's House, who also issue the diets.

19. The Chapter earnestly wishes the Order to be the ^{Rewards Saving} means of supplying a want which has long been felt. For gallant service in saving life from drowning a reward is provided by the "Royal Humane Society;" for similar service in saving life from fire the "Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire" has also provided rewards; but for brave conduct in saving life in the many contingencies to which it is in these days exposed from the extensive use of machinery, and on railways and in mines, there is no recompense. The Chapter desires to institute suitable rewards, which, as in the case of the Societies mentioned, would consist of medals and honorary certificates, in the belief that they would be highly valued by the recipients, and would prove an incentive to noble exertions in times of peril.*

20. The Chapter has also commenced the establishment of ^{Ambulance Service} an Ambulance Service in different parts of the country especially in the mining and colliery districts, where accidents are of frequent occurrence. The gift by Surgeon Manley, V.C.,

* Since the date when the above paragraph was written, silver and bronze medals for the reward of deeds of gallantry in saving life *on land*, have been instituted by the Chapter, and have been conferred, after strict investigation, in several cases, where conspicuous heroism has been displayed. Amongst the most notable are that of Deputy Commissary J. S. Young, when the medal was presented by H.S.H. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, at a full dress parade of the Guards at Wellington Barracks in March, 1876, Mr. Young receiving permission from H.R.H. the Field-Marshal Commanding in Chief to wear the medal in uniform on the right breast in accordance with the Queen's Regulations; and the Pontypridd miners, to five of whom, Major F. Duncan, R.A., on behalf of the Chapter, presented medals in August, 1877, in the presence of upwards of 50,000 persons, the Albert medal, conferred by Her Majesty the Queen, being bestowed, with other rewards, upon the same occasion.

of the Royal Artillery, of £100 forms the nucleus of a fund specially devoted to this purpose, and there can be no doubt that such a service, spread throughout the country, would be of the greatest value in cases of severe accidents, or during epidemics, whilst in the event of war the training which such a service necessitates would be of incalculable value to the State. In the remarks made by Inspector-General T. Longmore, C.B., on the "Replies to questions issued by the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War," at the request of the Council of that Society, he says:—"Captain Burgess has pointed out the need for an Order or "Confraternity in England which would be capable of furnishing proper agents for the work of the National Society when required at a short notice, and if a Confraternity could be established, answering such ends, it would doubtless be very serviceable." (See "Replies," pages 38,39.)

21. The Order of St. John was the first to take up in England the suggestion for forming a National Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded in War, the Council having in April, 1869 (more than a year before the breaking out of the recent Continental war), pledged itself to endeavour to form such a Society, and appointed a Committee for the purpose. And although the eventual firm foundation of the National Society is due to the spontaneous charitable feeling of the whole country, it should not be forgotten that public attention was first called to the subject by the Order of St. John, through one of its members, that the subsequent preliminaries were arranged by its Committee, and that the public meeting at which the National Society was formally established was presided over by the Prior, the Duke of Manchester.

22. The National Association for providing Trained Nurses for the Sick Poor, an Institution designed to raise the standard of Nurses, and to supply a want which has long been felt, was initiated, and has been subsequently organised and promoted by the Order of St. John.

The immediate objects of the Association are to train intelligent women (who will be attached to various Hospitals for this purpose) for service as District Nurses amongst the Sick Poor; to secure a Home where the Nurses of the Association may

obtain occasional rest when suffering from the effects of over-work, and to provide Pensions for them in old age.

It is hoped that the Nurses of the Association would be also available, if required, in time of war.

23. With ever-increasing accession to its roll of persons of rank and influence, the Order of St. John in England is advancing in its power and means of doing good, and its unobtrusive and persevering efforts in the cause of humanity, as well as its opportunities of applying those efforts, are happily becoming enlarged. Its roll of members comprises many names well known for high philanthropy, and others distinguished in the world of science; they are actuated by undoubted devotion to the principles of the Order, and with such opportunities of extended influence as would be afforded by the co-operation of many of our countrymen, to whose sympathies the associations and principles of the Order should strongly appeal, there can be no doubt but that the Order in England would speedily rank as one of the most valuable, as well as practically useful, of English Institutions.

The Chancery,

St. John's Gate,

Clerkenwell.

St. John Baptist's Day.

1874.
