

P R E F A C E.

IN a communication from Mr. Milward to the Archæological Journal, December, 1850, the following statement occurs, with reference to the charters, &c. preserved in the Record Office at Malta.

“ There is also a volume of the fifteenth century, containing the accounts of the Commanderies. It is a continuation of an older and still more interesting volume which has, by some means, found its way into the Public Library. The latter gives the accounts of the property belonging to the Order in England and Scotland. Unfortunately these accounts are very difficult to decipher. I remember, however, looking over it, in company with a Scotch gentleman, who had edited various antiquarian works, and with another gentleman from Northumberland. The Scotchman read the MS. with tolerable facility; my friend from the North repeatedly identified certain allusions with property that he knew, and felt much interest in the book. There is also much that is valuable in the statement of the different prices paid for commodities, labour, &c.”

This is the volume whose contents I have here printed.

Compelled by ill-health to pass the winter of 1838-9 in the island of Malta, I took the opportunity to inspect the MSS. in the Public Library at Valetta. At that time no catalogue had yet been made, although one was in a state of progress under the care of Dr. Vassallo,* the librarian, a man of erudition, of great talent, and

* Author of a most interesting work on the antiquities of the island of Malta, published in 1851, and dedicated to Lord Londesborough.

fully competent to his charge. To this gentleman I take this opportunity of tendering my thanks for first bringing the MS. to my notice, and for the great courtesy and attention which, in common with all who frequented the library, I invariably received at his hands.

Besides this "Extent," there were in the library about twenty volumes in manuscript, quarto, entitled "Bulls." They appeared to be a registry of letters-missive from the Grand Masters, relating to the government of the different preceptories in Europe, appointments of priors and other officers, grants and exchanges of lands, settlements of disputes, rebukes for misconduct, &c. They commence with the year 1346, but most of them are merely transcripts in a hand of between two and three centuries later, irregularly made, and written in a most slovenly and illegible character. A very small portion of them relate to England. They were very uninviting, and, having only a very few weeks at my command, after transcribing about a dozen of them, I reserved the rest for the chances of future investigation, and applied myself to the task of transcribing the "Extent."

It is contained in a thin folio volume, bound in parchment, consisting of 160 pages, well and very legibly written upon paper (the water-mark an axe) in a hand of the same date, and in excellent preservation. Several errors of the scribe, in his figures, names of places, omission of words, &c. would indicate that the MS. itself has been only a copy. There is more than one instance of a word which palpably he could not read, and wrote down without any definite idea what it meant. I would specify "expedoz," at page 38; and perhaps "Brex," miswritten for "Brey," i. e. "Bray," in various places, as instances in which we may suppose the scribe to have misread his MS; but, after all, this volume seems to have been a transcript, only so far as it is the work of a clerk registering in a book the returns made to him from the different preceptories.

I give the MS. exactly as I found it, excepting that I have extended the contractions, and more distinctly spaced out the different

items in the accounts, instead of giving them, as they sometimes occur, lumped in one paragraph. I have made the headings, too, more distinct than they appear in the MS.; but have added nothing, unless it be an occasional heading, where such appeared necessary, and when I have done so I have always marked the fact by including the word or words in a parenthesis.

In many instances the counties are decidedly assigned wrongly in the original; but, perhaps, in these cases, the parishes, vills, &c. which are wrongly appropriated, may have been cells, or granges, or preceptories, dependent on the head preceptory in another county, and so, in the Survey, put into the same county as the head house itself. Where no county is named in the original, I have assigned it conjecturally, and then always placed it within parenthesis.

To many of the knights' and brethren's names an "3" is added. It stands probably for "serviens," one of the three classes, "milites," "capellani," "servientes," into which the order was divided. Not feeling sufficient certainty on the subject, I thought it best to leave the contraction unextended; but the above is, I believe, the correct interpretation.

One word as to my attempt at printing the MS. "in extenso." Even skilled and practised antiquaries find the literal copy of a MS. with all its contractions, in printed type, very uninviting to the eye, and very disagreeable to read. By the advice, therefore, of several eminent antiquaries, I determined to give the MS. "in extenso," though I confess that my own opinion leaned strongly to the contracted form, as more accurately correct, and as giving the genuine text. All readers of ancient MSS. know that it is practically impossible to give always with certainty the true extension. Instances constantly occur in which there is nothing in the context to guide the copyist in his choice between the singular and plural. Sometimes, for instance, it is impossible to decide by the word "fit" whether one son or more are meant, or even whether it may not stand for daughter or daughters. Who can decide whether "rob" stands for "roba" or "robæ" in this Extent? and yet upon a correct

reading of this turns a point of some importance, viz. what the allowance of robes per annum was to the brethren, whether they were to have one or more. It will not be necessary to enumerate more instances of the uncertainty which must ever attach to a MS. printed "in extenso." Now that it is completed I feel some regret that I adopted a plan which never can be perfectly satisfactory; but, having done so, I have endeavoured to obviate the evil by giving the literal original in a note whenever there can be a doubt as to the mode in which a passage should be extended; and I think I can claim the confidence of my readers that the MS. has been faithfully rendered.

One instance of the uncertainty which attaches to copying "in extenso" may be exemplified by the word "Thes" in this Extent. It regularly occurs in the record of the balance to be paid to the treasury, under the accounts of each preceptory. I long hesitated whether I should extend it, "thesauraria" treasury, or "thesaurarius" treasurer. The opinions of antiquaries, and the best authorities whom I consulted, were divided upon the point, so I took a kind of middle course, adopting "thesaurarium" as standing either for treasurer or treasury, though, certainly, not of common usage in the latter sense. To my very great regret, when I was correcting the proofs of the closing pages of the MS., I found two or three instances of "thesauraria" indicated by the gender of the accompanying adjective, and, in one instance, actually written in extenso in the original MS. "thesauraria." I have to apologise, therefore, for this decided error running through the entire Survey, an error which I ought to have avoided, as in my own first transcript I had written it all through "thesaurarium" in a most marked manner, frequently in the form of an actual correction from "thesaurarium." The fact is, I had corrected my transcript, and forgotten my motive for so doing.

Many passages will be found in decidedly bad Latin—these errors the reader will be pleased to ascribe to the original. In those instances in which they have been there written in extenso, nothing

was left for me but to give them as I found them, whether in correct Latin or otherwise. The most marked of these cases are specified in the notes.

The constantly recurring errors in the products and sums of the different items in the accounts have been purposely left unnoticed by me; all antiquaries are familiar with the bad arithmetic of ancient accounts.

I have endeavoured to identify most of the places with their modern names, but have not always been successful. The work has been so long delayed by the transmission of the sheets to Malta for collation, and by my own protracted ill-health, that I have thought it better not to delay the publication any longer merely for the discovery of the places not yet sufficiently identified. They will all, probably, be well known to the topographers of their respective localities. I must here take the opportunity of thanking the Rev. John Webb (to whom our Society is indebted for a most interesting and valuable volume—"The Household Roll of Bishop Swinfield") for his kind assistance in identifying some of the Herefordshire names. To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle the Society is under great obligations for his obliging endeavours to procure the loan of the original MS. from Malta, and, on failing to obtain it, for facilities most kindly rendered in transmitting the sheets to that island for collation. To Dr. Luigi Vella, the Keeper of the Records in Malta, and W. Winthrop, Esq. the United States Consul in that island, I am deeply indebted, for their indefatigable zeal and kind assistance, in collating the sheets, as printed off, with the original MS. I am also indebted to them for the very interesting document printed in the Appendix, which they discovered among the records at Malta, and kindly transcribed for me.* It would indicate that the property of the Hospitallers

* When I was there in 1839, neither the governor nor any of the authorities to whom I had access could give me any information as to the Records of the Order. They were all supposed to have been lost. The following extract of a letter which I received from Mr. Winthrop will testify that they still exist,

at that period was ruinously encumbered. How they were relieved does not appear; probably, by further grants of some of the Templars' estates, which had not yet been given to them. Our Extent will show how fearfully burthened they were with payments of fees, pensions, and extortionate charges. Hence, probably, many of the "fieri facias" which they so feelingly deplore. The grants, too, of the Templars' lands must have involved them in much litigation. The former lords of the fee, and the families of the original grantors to the Templars, would not sit down quietly, now that that Order was suppressed, and patiently witness the transfer of their grants to another body. They, doubtless, claimed them in many instances for themselves, and would hardly allow the Hospitallers to take undisputed possession. There are many indications of hostility, and sometimes of a revengeful spirit, on the part of these lords of the fee, both in the Extent itself and in this Appendix. These litigations must have cost the poor Hospitallers dear. Still they seem to have raised their heads again in sufficient opulence.

and that great facilities are afforded to all who wish to inspect them. I cannot forbear inserting it as a tribute of justice to Dr. Vella, and for the benefit of all lovers of ancient Records who may chance to visit the island. "I have always found Dr. Vella most civil, kind, and attentive. He is a learned man, and invaluable in the office which he fills. I have found in my researches that what without his assistance might have been a hard labour, has, with it, been an agreeable pastime. No one is so well acquainted with the manuscript history of the Order of St. John, and the thought has frequently struck me that, when removed from the Record Office, either by illness or age, who is there capable of taking his place? This reflection leads me to remark, that Dr. Vella is as much in want of an able assistant, whom he can instruct in his duties, as those who visit him are in want of a printed catalogue of the two or three thousand manuscripts which are placed under his charge. If the former were given the latter would come." Let us hope that Mr. Winthrop's account of present wants and prospective deficiencies may be no longer real; and that the learned Keeper may, ere this, have been provided with a competent assistant, and that, together, they have been enabled to arrange and catalogue the MSS.

A body of proprietors like these, with large estates in every county, must have been possessed of no ordinary power and influence ; and, owing allegiance to a foreign master, must have been at the best but questionable subjects.

It is hoped that the topographer will find much that is new and interesting in this Extent. It will fix with certainty the exact position of the Hospitallers' estates in each county at the middle of the fourteenth century, and in so far cannot be without its value. Much additional information, too, will be found which was not available to the editors of the Monasticon.

Long-continued illness, during which my medical advisers prohibited all unnecessary mental exertion, compelled me to devote what little energies were left to me, to the duties of my higher calling. I could not, and dared not, sacrifice these to mere literary labours. The publication of this work having therefore been too long protracted, and having but little hope of immediate improvement in health, I have gladly and thankfully availed myself of the services of my valued friend Mr. Kemble, who has most kindly relieved me of all further labours, and has written the introductory remarks which are prefixed to this volume. To his hands, far abler than my own, I leave the analysis of the record, and the bearing of its details upon the state of society, &c. forbearing any other remarks myself than such as seemed necessary to a history of the MS. I am sure that the transfer will be most acceptable to the Society ; for his extensive learning and powerful pen will accomplish the work infinitely better than I could have done, and the public will have a dissertation far surpassing in value any thing that I could have presumed to offer.

L. B. L.