

Now therefore the first dignity, after the nobility, is a *knight* of the order of St. George, or of *the garter*; first instituted by Edward III, *A. D.* 1344^k. Next follows a *knight banneret*; who indeed by statutes 5 Ric. II. st. 2. c. 4. and 14 Ric. II. c. 11. is ranked next after barons: and that precedence was confirmed to him by order of king James I, in the tenth year of his reign^l. But, in order to intitle himself to this rank, he must have been created by the king in person, in the field, under the royal banners, in time of open war^m. Else he ranks after *baronets*; who are the next order: which title is a dignity of inheritance, created by letters patent, and usually descendible to the issue male. It was first instituted by king James the first, *A. D.* 1611. in order to raise a competent sum for the reduction of the province of Ulster in Ireland; for which reason all baronets have the arms of Ulster superadded to their family coat. Next follow *knights of the bath*; an order instituted by king Henry IV, and revived by king George the first. They are so called from the ceremony of bathing, the night before their creation. The last of these inferior nobility are *knights bachelors*; the most antient, though the lowest, order of knighthood amongst us: for we have an instanceⁿ of king Alfred's conferring this order on his son Athelstan. The custom of the antient Germans was to give their young men a shield and a lance in the great council: this was equivalent to the *toga virilis* of the Romans: before this they were not permitted to bear arms, but were accounted as part of the father's household; after it, as part of the public^o. Hence some derive the usage of knighting, which has prevailed all over the western world, since it's reduction by colonies from those northern heroes. Knights are called in Latin *equites aurati*; *aurati*, from the gilt spurs they wore; and *equites*, because they always served on horseback: for it is observable^p, that almost all nations call their knights by some appellation derived from an horse.

^k Seld. tit. of hon. 2. 5. 41.

^l *Ibid.* 2. 11. 3.

^m 4 Inst. 6.

ⁿ Will. Malmsh. lib. 2.

^o Tac. de morib. Germ. 13.

^p Camden. *ibid.* Co. Litt. 74.

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