

## THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TEMPLARS.

SOME authors have held that the first institution of military orders, particularly that of St. George, is to be ascribed to the emperor, Constantine; but it is generally conceded that the idea of chivalry was a fruit of the crusades, and that it originated at the close of the eleventh century<sup>1</sup> Like most of the institutions of the Middle Age, the idea of military orders came from the Church; it was her inculcation of religious devotion upon the soldier, even in the exercise of his profession, that gave birth to these organizations. As far back as the year 1022, in the time of the Fatimite caliphs, some Neapolitan merchants had established a hospital for pilgrims, under the patronage of St. John the Baptist, near the Holy Sepulchre. They assigned it to the care of certain religious who came to be known as Hospitalers. The rector of this institution was Gerald, a native of Scala, near Amalfi; he conceived the first idea of the Order of the Hospital of St. John, known in history, at first as Knights of St. John, then as Knights Hospitalers, afterward as Knights of Rhodes, and finally as Knights of Malta. Pope Paschal II. took the new order and its possessions under his protection; Calixtus II. conferred upon Raymond du Puy, the second provost, the title of Master, and he confirmed the statutes which Raymond had drawn up in 1104.

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<sup>1</sup> It has been debated whether chivalry, as we fancy it, ever really existed, or whether it is not merely a pretty dream, like the Golden Age. If you read the authors of those days, says Cantu, "you will find them all lamenting the bygone time, and deploring the decay of chivalry. . . . We may well believe that the chivalry of the romances, that is, an era of valor, of loyalty, of spontaneous order, of happiness, of disinterested sacrifice, of chaste love, no more existed than did the idyllic blessedness of the Arcadian shepherds; but that books have modified it, and substituted an ideal era for the true one. Nevertheless, there was considerable reality in chivalry, and its members formed an efficient organization, with initiatory forms, rights and prerogatives. . . . In the time of the third crusade its reputation had become so great that even Saladin asked to be enrolled. Its principal theatre was the south of France, whence it spread into all Spain, already chivalrous by nature. . . . Italy, devoted to commerce, science and religion, cared little for the punctilios of chivalry, unless in Sicily, where it was introduced by the Normans. The Suabians wondered that the Hungarians possessed no chivalry, and they sent a message to them, praying in the name of woman that they would fight in a more courteous manner, that is, with the sword; they replied by scourging the envoy. . . . England, more aristocratic than chivalrous, shows us only Richard the Lion Heart, and he was formed to the arms and poetry of France; the heroes of the Round Table lived only in the pages of romance; Edward III. and the Black Prince arose only from contact with France. The Greeks and the Russians never knew the institutions of chivalry, but they penetrated into Poland."—*Universal History*, b. xi., ch. 4.

This order was composed of three classes of brethren,<sup>1</sup> namely, ecclesiastics, for spiritual matters; laics, for menial service; and knights, whose duty it was to protect pilgrims. In 1252, Innocent IV. gave to the head of the Hospitalers the title of Grand Master.<sup>2</sup>

Following the example of Gerald de Scala and Raymond Dupuy, two illustrious chevaliers named Hugh des Payens and Godfrey de St. Aldemar, with seven companions, founded in 1118, another military religious order which, taking its name from the temple of Solomon, near the site of which King Baldwin II. lodged the first knights, came to be known as the Order of the Temple. For nine years the Templars received no novices, and so poor were they, that one horse was made to serve for two knights; whence, says Matthew of Paris, originated the representation on the seal of the order. The Templars took, from the first, the ordinary religious vows, with a fourth, to protect pilgrims; but in 1128, St. Bernard composed for them a special rule which was both mystic and austere. The Templar swore to dedicate his life to warring against the infidels; to never decline battle unless the odds were more than three to one; to never ask for quarter; and to never give up, as ransom, "one piece of wall or one palm of land." St. Bernard wished the community-life of the knights to be frugal but pleasant; personal property there was none, and the will of the individual was to be merged in that of the superior. The divine office was, as a general thing, of obligation; but on occasions of military duty, private prayer was substituted. Thrice a week the members ate meat; two ate from one plate, but each had his own bottle of wine. When a knight died, his ration was given to the poor for forty days. Hunting, in the ordinary sense of the term, was forbidden; but the knights might kill ferocious wild beasts. They were never to be idle, said St. Bernard; when not on the march, their weapons and armor should claim their attention. Games, spectacles and buffoonery of every kind were prohibited to the Templar. Their horses should be spirited but plainly caparisoned. When battle was imminent, the knight should prepare cautiously for it, being armed within by faith and without with iron. He should charge the enemy with confidence, being secure of victory or of martyrdom. In every danger, continued the saint, the Templar should say to himself: "Living or dead, we belong to the Lord; glory awaits the conqueror, heaven the martyr." Though not so aristocratic an order as that of the

<sup>1</sup> From the French word *Frères* came our *friars*, and their name in every language. The Latin chroniclers style them *frerii*; the Greeks, *phreri*.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives of the Grand Masters of the Holy Order of St. John of Jerusalem*, by the Commander, Brother Jerome Marulli. Naples, 1636.

Hospital,<sup>1</sup> the Temple soon received among its votaries the scions of the first families of Christendom. From all parts of Europe the knights received money and provisions; few wills were made without clauses in their favor; many sovereign princes donned the white mantle. At the close of the twelfth century the wealth of the Templars was so great that their landed estates numbered nine thousand; in the kingdom of Valencia alone they owned seven-teen fortified towns. Their riches and privileges soon engendered corruption, and thirty years after they had adopted his rule, St. Bernard was forced to say to them: "You cover yourselves and your horses with silk; you paint your lances; your shields, saddles, and spurs shine with gold, silver and gems; your flowing tresses impede your sight; your long trains interfere with your walk; fine gloves cover your delicate hands. Discord is rife among you because of unreasonable anger, of inordinate desire of glory; and of love of earthly riches." The jealousy of the Templars in regard to the Hospitalers was a chief cause of the loss of Palestine to Christendom. Instead of regarding every Islamite as an enemy, they entered into an alliance with the Old Man of the Mountain; they gave refuge to a fugitive sultan; they warred on the Christians of Cyprus and Antioch, devastated Greece, and refused to contribute to the ransom of St. Louis. Indeed, public accusations were made against the Templars long before the time of Clement V. William of Tyre charged them with disobedience to the patriarch of Jerusalem, and with disturbing the churches in their domains.<sup>2</sup> In 1200, King Leo I., of Armenia, complained to Pope Innocent III. that the knights had not only invaded his territories, but had refused to aid him in resisting the attacks of the infidels.<sup>3</sup> Even Innocent III., who had given many privileges to the Templars, lamented, in 1218, that the knights "had no respect for the Apostolic See," and that "they merited to be deprived of privileges so fearfully abused."<sup>4</sup> In 1244, Frederick II. charged the Templars with receiving Mussulman princes into their houses and with allowing Mohammedan rites in their cloisters; and he adds that they were given up to the pleasures of the world.<sup>5</sup> Gurtler gives many instances of Templar avarice in circumstances when religion needed their assistance. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the loss of the Holy Land, the Templars were regarded as entirely useless. Nevertheless, like the Hospitalers, they would have been allowed to subsist had not the world been

<sup>1</sup> The Knights of the Hospital were obliged, before admission, to show a noble descent of four generations by both parents; the chaplains and servant-knights were also of noble birth, though not necessarily by four descents.

<sup>2</sup> *Deeds of God through the Franks*, vol. i.

<sup>3</sup> In *Dupuy*, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

horrified by their crimes. "While the common people were frightened at these accusations, the great ones of the earth charged the Order with an aspiration for universal dominion; with the intention of founding an aristocratic republic which would embrace all Europe—a very improbable design on the part of knights entirely dependent on the will of a grand master. . . . Philip hated the Order because it had refused to enroll him as a member, and would not sign the appeal against Boniface VIII.; he hated it because he wanted its riches." Such is the judgment of Cantu in regard to the suppression of this Order, and many other historians of merit hold the same opinion. The object of the present paper is to show that the Order of the Temple deserved suppression; that, whatever may have been the motives which actuated Philip the Fair, Pope Clement V. performed his simple duty in putting an end to an organization which had survived its usefulness and had become a scandal to Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

On the feast of the Annunciation, 1307, the Faculty of Paris, having been consulted by king Philip as to his powers in the premises, issued a doctrinal judgment, attested by the seals of fourteen doctors, in which it was declared, that unless requested by the Church, the secular magistracy could take no cognizance of the crime of heresy, or of the cause of a religious order or of its members; but that, in case of imminent danger, the accused might be arrested, and then given over to the custody of the Church.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this decision, but not before October 13th, and

<sup>1</sup> The following are the principal works on this subject: 1. *The History of the Military Order of the Templars*, by Peter Dupuy, in 4to, Brussels, 1751. After one has read the many works that this suppression has called forth, he finds that he can come to no satisfactory conclusion, unless he examines the original documents. Hence he is grateful to Dupuy for the care with which, in 1650, he extracted many from the archives at Paris. 2. *The History of the Templars*, by Nicholas Gurtler, of Basel; Amsterdam, 1712; a work of some research but very hostile to the Church. 3. *A Critical and Apologetical History of the Knights of the Temple called Templars*, Paris, 1789; by M. J., a Premonstratensian canon; an enthusiastic, but not critical, apology for the order. 4. *An Essay on the Charges against the Templars*, by Fred. Nicolai; Amsterdam, 1783. Nicolai was a Protestant, but impartial and judicious. 5. *Historical Memoirs on the Templars*, by Grouvelle; averse to the Order, but unsatisfactory as to proofs. 6. *Historical Monuments Relative to the Condemnation of the Knights of the Temple*, by Raynouard; Paris, 1813; the best defence of the Templars ever attempted, but too much like the author's tragedy on the same subject which caused much excitement in France. 7. The excellent work of the Abbé Christopher, *The Papacy in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. i, b. 4; Paris, 1853. 8. The incomparable *Universal History of Cantu*, b. xiii., ch. 6. All the *Acts* of the Pontifical Commission in the cause of the Templars were published by Moldenhauer in 1791; and the statutes of the Order were edited in 1794 by the Danish author, Munter. In his *Collection of Unedited Documents Concerning the History of France* (Series 1, *Political History*), Michelet edited the *Process* of the Templars, of which Dupuy had given only extracts.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Dupuy.

after the grand master had complained to the Pope (August 24th), and demanded a juridical process,<sup>1</sup> all the Templars in France were arrested. On the 14th the clergy of Paris, and on the 15th the people, were informed of the charges against the knights. Then William of Paris, of the Order of Preachers, and inquisitor-general in the kingdom, undertook the necessary investigations, and interrogated one hundred and forty knights of the house in Paris. From the Continuator of Nange and the *Acts* of this inquiry, taken from the Royal Archives in 1650 by Dupuy, we learn that the following were the accusations. 1. On their entrance into the order, the knights were commanded to deny Christ and to spit thrice upon the crucifix; if the novice hesitated, imprisonment and torture forced him to yield. 2. Obscene signs of submission were made to the preceptors by the candidates. (*Ad præceptum præceptoris, nec-non præceptorem ipsum—quod nominandum quasi turpissimum—inferius in posterioribus osculabantur immunde*). 3. Although they had foresworn the society of women, sodomy was a prevalent and permitted practice of the Templars. 4. They were in the habit of adoring an idol, in the shape of a golden head with a long beard and fiery eyes. According to Hammer, in his "Mystery of Baphomet Exposed," this head was called "the head of Baphomet." He says that he found twelve of these heads in the prison of Vienna, with Arabic, Greek, and Latin inscriptions entitling them *Metis* or Wisdom; hence he concludes that *Baphomet* is derived from *Baphimiteos*, which would mean a baptism of the spirit or of fire—a Gnostic or Ophitic idea. These superstitious signs, says Hammer, the Templars must have derived from their intercourse with the Ishmaelites, and they have been frequently found, he adds, in the houses and tombs of the knights. He declares that he himself discovered several in the Templar churches at Stenfeld and Wultendorf. Teleky, in his "Voyage in Hungary," says that the same figures are found in the Templar church of St. Martin, in Muran. As for the obscenities ascribed to the knights, Hammer credits the charges, because of the many obscene anaglyphs found in the houses and sepulchres of the order; and he comes to the conclusion that the principal members and a large number of the rest were guilty of apostacy, superstition and gross impurity.<sup>2</sup> 5. The priests of the

<sup>1</sup> This fact explodes the charge that the arrest was secret and unexpected.

<sup>2</sup> See Palma's *Lectures*, cent. xiv., c. 30, and Mignard's *Hidden Practices of the Templars*, Dijon, 1851. The latter work is a dissertation on a casket found in 1789 on the Essarois estate of the marquis du Chastenay. This casket is made of limestone, and is about 25 centimetres long and 20 wide. On it is an image in relief, which Mignard lithographed. The image is of a sort of masculo-feminine being, standing naked, wearing a crenulated crown, and holding in its hand a chain which is surmounted, on the right, by the moon, and on the left by the sun; at the feet of the image is a death's head, set in a star and a pentagon; Arabic characters surround the

Order were accustomed, when pretending to celebrate Mass, to omit the words of consecration.

Among the knights questioned as to the truth of these accusations, were the grand master, James de Molay; Guy, the brother of the dauphin of Auvergne; and Hubert de Perault. There were one hundred and forty in all, and only three of them pronounced the charges false. Some protested that they had long since repented of having joined the Order, and had asked Rome for a dispensation; others insisted that they had already confessed their crimes to episcopal penitentiaries. The inquisitor, William of Paris, afterward held an examination of one hundred and eleven Templars at Troyes, and although these knights denied the adoration of the head of *Baphomet*, they admitted the truth of the other charges. At Caen, thirteen other knights admitted their guilt, when questioned by commissioners delegated by the inquisitor. At Pont de l'Arche, ten knights were interrogated by Peter de Hangest, governor of Rouen, with the same issue. At Carcassonne, John de Cassanhas, preceptor of the house of Noggarde, also confessed the alleged crimes. At Cahors, forty-four Templars admitted their guilt to the royal commissary. The *Acts* of all these inquiries were preserved, at least in Alexandre's time, in the royal archives, and had been diligently examined by Dupuy.

Pope Clement V. did not approve the high-handed measures of Philip the Fair in the affair of the Templars. He suspended the authority of the inquisition in France, and called the cause of the knights to the Holy See, requesting the king to surrender the persons and properties of the accused to the care of two cardinals deputed for that purpose. Indeed, so displeased was the Pontiff that he complained, eight months afterward, to the minister William Plasian, and declared that nothing could excuse the illegality of commencing so grave a prosecution without the consent of the Holy See.<sup>1</sup> Philip reluctantly complied with the papal request, and he sent many of the accused knights to Poitiers, where the Pontiff was residing, that Clement might himself inquire into their guilt. The Pope questioned seventy-two, and they all avowed the

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main figure. There are also three other masculo-feminine figures. From the records of the Chastenay family it is proved that the property on which the casket was found was once that of the Templars; and we know that the important priory of Voulaïnes-Temple was near Essarois. Following the interpretative systems of Nicolai and Hammer, Mignard finds a Gnostic meaning in the picture. In the Arabic inscription are found the *Ogdoagide* or Creator, and his seven *cones* or emanations; the fusion of the two sexes—the Gnostic *cones* were hemaphrodite; the denial of Christ: "If thou deniest, pleasure will environ thee." Basilides regarded this denial as the sign of true liberty; as to the sodomitic habits, the followers of Valentine and Basilides were addicted to such vices. This chest, concludes Mignard, reveals the key of the *Cabal*, with which the Templars were reproached, and proclaims infamous mysteries.

<sup>1</sup> Baluze, vol. i., p. 29.

crimes charged by the French inquisitor. We present the following rather lengthy extract from the diploma of Clement V. to the king, commencing with the words "Reigning in Heaven," as it throws much light on this entire subject.

"Some time ago, when we were first promoted to the height of the pontificate, and even before we went to Lyons, where we were crowned, and after that, in other places as well as there, we received secret information that the master, preceptors, and other brothers of the Temple, and even the Order itself, to which had been assigned the defence of the patrimony of our Lord Jesus Christ beyond the seas, had fallen into the horrible wickedness of apostasy against the same Lord, into the detestable crime of idolatry, into the execrable vice of the Sodomites, and into various heresies. But, taught by the example of our Lord, and by the doctrines of canonical Scripture, we wished not to lend our ear to such accusations; for, it seemed improbable, nay, incredible, that religious men who had shed their blood for Christ, and so often had exposed themselves to death for His sake, who had shown such signs of devotion in the divine offices, fasts, and other observances, should so far forget their salvation as to perpetrate such deeds. At length, however, you who had heard of these same iniquities, and moved, not by avarice—for you do not intend to claim or appropriate the property of the Templars, but have taken your hands altogether away from it, freely and devoutly yielding it up to us and to the Church, to be guarded and administered by our deputies—but excited by zeal for the orthodox faith, and following in the footsteps of your ancestors, having informed yourself, so far as you could, sent to us by messengers and letters many and extensive reports on these matters. Meanwhile, the infamy attaching to the Templars was becoming widespread, and we ourselves heard from a certain knight of the Order—a man of high nobility, and who was once of great influence in it, who swore to what he said, that a candidate to the Order, at the suggestion of the receiver or of his deputy, denied Jesus Christ; that he spat on a crucifix in contempt of Him crucified; that then, both candidate and receiver did things not befitting human decency; therefore, urged by the duty of our office, we were compelled to hearken to so many great complaints. Finally, we learned from public report, from you, and the dukes, counts, barons, and other nobles, as well as from the clergy and people of your kingdom, what we announce with great grief, that the master, preceptors, and members of the said Order, and the Order itself, had been charged with the aforesaid and other crimes, and that the premises seemed to be proved by many confessions, attestations and depositions of the said master, preceptors, and members of the said Order, made before many prelates and the French in-

quisitor into heretical depravity, and shown unto us and our brethren. Since then, the aforesaid rumors and clamors have so increased against the Order, and against each and every one of its members, that they cannot be disregarded without grave scandal, nor tolerated without imminent danger: We, following in the footsteps of Him, whose place, although unworthy, we hold on earth, deemed it proper to inquire into the aforesaid things. Having called into our presence many of the preceptors, priests, soldiers, and other brothers of the said Order, men of no light reputation, and they having sworn to tell us the simple and full truth in the premises, we interrogated and examined seventy-two of their number, many of our brethren diligently assisting. Their confessions were reduced to authentic writing, and were read in our presence and that of our brethren. After a few days we caused these avowals to be read in the Consistory, and before the accused, and to be explained in the vernacular of each one. Persevering in their confessions, they all, expressly and voluntarily, approved of them as they were read."

The Pontiff then recites how he had proposed to personally interrogate the grand master, and the preceptor of Normandy and others, but some of them being infirm and unable to travel, he had decided to take other means to discover whether they admitted the truth of the confessions made before the French inquisitor.

"Therefore," he continues, "we commissioned our beloved sons, the cardinals Berengarius of the Title of Sts. Nereus and Achilleus, and Stephen of the Title of St. Cyriacus *in thermis*, priests, and the cardinal-deacon Landulph, of the title of St. Angelus, of whose prudence, experience, and fidelity we are sure, to diligently inquire from the aforesaid master and preceptors into the charges made against the members of the Order and against the Order itself, and to report to us whatever they could discover, referring also to us the confessions, reduced to writing by public authority, conceding to them also the power to confer upon the said master and preceptors absolution from the excommunication which they had incurred, if the accusations were true, providing that they, as they ought to do, humbly and devoutly besought that absolution. These cardinals interviewed the master and preceptors, and explained the reason of their coming. And as *the persons and goods of all the Templars of the kingdom were in our hands*, the cardinals declared to them, by the Apostolic authority, that they might open their minds freely and without fear. Then, the master, and the preceptors of France, of the lands beyond the seas, of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Poitiers, having touched the Holy Gospels of God, swore that they would tell the full and simple truth before the three cardinals, in presence of four public no-



taries, and of many other public men. Before these, each one freely and voluntarily, without any coercion or fear, deposed and confessed: Among other things, to the denial of Christ, and the spitting on the cross, when they were received into the Order of the Temple; and some of them said that they had received many brethren with the same form, namely, the denial of Christ and the spitting on the cross. Some, also, confessed certain horrible and indecent things, about which, that we may spare their shame, we keep silence. They also avowed the truth of the confessions made some time ago before the inquisitor into heretical depravity; and those confessions and depositions of the aforesaid master and preceptors, reduced to writing by four public notaries, in the presence of the said master and preceptors and of certain worthy men, after a few days were read to them, by order and in presence of the aforesaid cardinals, and explained to each one in his own vernacular. Persevering in them, they all expressly and voluntarily approved them, as they were read. And after these confessions and depositions, they all, upon their knees, and with clasped hands, and with no slight flow of tears, besought of the cardinals an absolution from the excommunication which, because of the aforesaid things, they had incurred. Then, the cardinals expressly, and according to the form of the Church, extended the benefit of absolution by our authority, for the Church does not close her bosom to the returning one. Coming, then, into our presence, the cardinals presented to us the confessions and depositions, and all that had happened in regard to the said master and preceptors; everything being reduced to writing by public authority. From which confessions, depositions, and relations, we find that the aforesaid master and preceptors were grievously delinquent in the aforesaid matters, although some in a greater and some in a less degree."

If any confidence is to be placed in the solemn assertions of a Roman Pontiff, we have now shown the truth of what we undertook to demonstrate, namely, that the Templars acknowledged their guilt of the terrible crimes with which they were charged. But more light will fall upon the subject if we notice the following facts: In October, 1310, a Council of the province of Sens was held, and, according to the Continuator of Nange, "a diligent inquiry was made into the deeds of the Templars, and into everything regarding them; and their demerits having been weighed, and their quality and circumstances considered, with the approval of the Sacred Council, and with the advice of men learned in the Divine and Canon Law, it was adjudged and defined, that some of them should be simply dismissed from the Order; certain others, however, having performed an enjoined penance, were allowed to depart free and unharmed; some were detained in close confinement;

and many, having relapsed into heresy, were delivered to the secular power."<sup>1</sup> Bzovius quotes a Vatican MS., from which it appears that the archbishops of Florence and Pisa made an inquiry into the charges against the Templars, embracing therein all Lombardy and Tuscany; and that it resulted in proving the accusations well founded. In England, says Walsingham: "By command of the king (Edward II.), all the Templars in the realm were arrested, because of imputed indecencies and enormities contrary to the Catholic faith."<sup>2</sup> Pope Clement V. appointed as judges for the trials in Edward's dominions, the patriarch of Jerusalem, the archbishop of York, the bishops of Lincoln, Chester, and Orleans; the abbots of Lagny and of St Germain, in Paris; Richard de Vaux, canon of Narbonne, and Guy de Vichy, a London pastor. In 1309, a Provincial Council was held at Canterbury for the consideration of this question, but we have no documentary evidence as to its result. But that the English Templars were condemned is evident from the process, as found in Wilkins; although it appears that the guilt of the English knights was less general than that of the continental brethren. We shall notice this fact more particularly when we come to consider the arguments adduced by the apologists for the Templars. In Aragon, as we are told by Zurita,<sup>3</sup> there came from the French king, "on the 17th of the calends of November, 1307, an embassy, such as he had sent to all Christian princes, requesting each of them to undertake the defence of the Catholic faith in his own dominions against the Templars. The king received this request while residing in the royal castle of Valencia; and on the 3d of the nones of December he ordered the arrest of all those sectarians, and the sequestration of their property. John Lotger, of the Dominican Order, Apostolic inquisitor for the kingdom of Aragon, exercised the utmost severity in enforcing the law, repressing the guilty and their partisans. A large number of these shut themselves in the strong castles of Carthage, Montyon, Miravet, Villel, and Alfambra, hoping to escape the penalty following their indictments. In Catalonia, also, having no other hope, they acted in a similar manner. Then the king ordered them to be subdued by force." Pope Clement appointed the bishop of Valencia, the royal chancellor, as judge in the cause of all the accused Templars in Spain. We shall have occasion to notice the assertion that the Spanish Templars were pronounced

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<sup>1</sup> At year 1310.

<sup>2</sup> *History of England*, Rymer, b. iii., nos. 30, 34, 43, 301.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome Zurita (b. 1512) was historiographer of Aragon, and private secretary to the king. He wrote a collection of *Annals of the Crown of Aragon* (6 vols., fol., 1562-79), commencing with the rise of the kingdom and ending with Ferdinand the Catholic.

innocent of the alleged crimes;<sup>1</sup> but here we would remark that, according to Zurita, the knights were guilty of contumacy towards their legitimate judges, and of rebellion against their sovereign; which crimes, committed precisely because of the accusations brought against them, would indicate a consciousness of guilt.

All the above inquisitorial, pontifical, and episcopal *Acts*, as well as others of less importance,<sup>2</sup> were laid before the Fifteenth General Council, and in its second session, held on April 3, 1312, Pope Clement V., having preached a sermon on the text, "The wicked shall not rise again in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the just," and having adapted it to the existing circumstances of the Templars, promulgated the following decree: "With the approbation of the Sacred Council, and not without grief and bitterness of heart, by our ever-valid and irrefragable decree, not by means of a definite sentence, since we could not, according to the inquiries and processes held in the premises, so pronounce *de jure*, but by way of provision and Apostolic ordinance, we have abolished the Order of the Soldiers of the Temple of Jerusalem, and its state, name, and habit; because of the master and brethren and other persons of the said Order, residing in every part of the world, being stained with various and diverse not only wicked, but even unmentionable obscenities, depravities, and foulnesses, on which we are now silent because of their filthiness. We subject the said Order to perpetual prohibition, especially commanding that no one shall dare to enter the said Order, or to receive or wear its dress, or to present himself as a Templar. If any one does so, he incurs, by the very fact, excommunication. By our Apostolic authority we have decreed that all the property of the aforesaid Order be held at the disposition of the Apostolic See. With the approbation of the same Sacred Council, we give forever, concede, unite, incorporate, apply, and annex, out of the fulness of our Apostolic power, to the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and to the Hospital itself, the house of the Soldiers of the Temple and all their other houses, churches, chapels, oratories, towns, castles, villas, lands, granges, possessions, jurisdictions, revenues, rights, all movable and immovable goods, with all their rights and appurtenances, on this side and beyond the sea, in any part of the world where they may be found whatever, at the time the master and certain knights of the Temple were arrested, that is, in the month of October of the

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<sup>1</sup> The authors of the *Catholic Dictionary* say that "in Spain and Portugal the knights were put on trial on the same charges but honorably and enthusiastically acquitted."

<sup>2</sup> Such as the investigation in the province of Sens; that in the province of Ravenna; and that in Castile.

year of the Lord 1308, the said Order and the said master and brethren of the Soldiers of the Temple, either by themselves or others, held and possessed . . . excepting such goods of the late Order of the Soldiers of the Temple as are found outside of the realm of France, in the kingdoms and dominions of our beloved sons, the kings of Castile, Aragon, Portugal and Majorca; these we have deemed proper to especially except and exclude from the above donation, concession, union, application, incorporation, and annexation; reserving them, nevertheless, to the disposition of the Apostolic See."<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the clause, "not by means of a definitive sentence, since we could not, according to the inquiries and processes held in the premises, so pronounce *de jure*," it is to be observed, that these words by no means imply a deficiency of power on the part of the Pontiff to abolish, definitely and *de jure*, any religious order or community whatever, when he deems such action conducive to the good of the Church. The only reason for the existence of any religious order or religious institution is the good of the Church; it is only by a decree of the head of the Church that a religious order attains a legal status, and only so long as he and his successors will that said decree shall retain its force, does that Order remain a legitimate organization. What then did Clement V. mean by the above clause? We must remember that the entire Order of Templars, as an order, had not been called to judgment;<sup>2</sup> that in some provinces, the Order, as such, had been acquitted. Hence the Pontiff deemed it proper to abolish the Templars, as Durand of Mende is said to have put it, not "according to the rigor of the law" by a definitive sentence, but "by the fulness of his power," by way of Apostolic ordinance. Raynald<sup>3</sup> gives the testimony of one of the fathers of the Fifteenth Council, a "bishop conspicuous for piety and knowledge," whose name he omits, but whom Alexandre says many regarded as Durand of Mende, one of those delegated by Clement V. before the Council, to inquire into the cause of the Templars. This prelate informs us that in the process preliminary to the issue of the decree of abolition, some of the fathers thought that the Order ought not to be abolished without every observance of law, whereas others contended that it "should be destroyed without delay, both because of the grave

<sup>1</sup> The property of the Templars in the Iberian peninsula was afterward appropriated to defray the expenses of the Crusades against the Mohammedan invaders of that land.

<sup>2</sup> Those who undertook the defence of the knights before the Apostolic commissioners at Paris, declared that they possessed no legitimate "procuracy," and that they could not act as procurators without the commission of the grand master.

<sup>3</sup> *Annals*, at year 1311, No. 55.

scandals said Order had furnished Christendom, and because more than two thousand witnesses had shown its guilt of error and heresy." The bishop himself deemed it "expedient for the Church of God and the Christian faith that the Pope, either by the strict letter of law (*de rigore juris*), or by the fulness of his power, should abolish that most infamous Order which, so far as it could, had rendered fetid the odor of the Christian name among the incredulous and the heathen, and had weakened the faith of some Christians . . . . and without delay, I say, even though the Order was good at its first institution; since we read in Dist. 63, cap. Verum, that if our predecessors effected anything which, though good in their day, lapsed into error and superstition, as is patent in the case of the said Order, it should be destroyed by posterity without delay . . . again I say without delay, lest this obstinate spark of error become a flame to fire the whole earth, and then there happens what Jerome spoke of, saying: 'Arius was only a spark in Alexandria, but not being extinguished, his flame scorched the entire world.'" Such is the interpretation of the qualifying clause in the Clementine decree given by two authors quoted by Alexandre; namely, Walsingham,<sup>1</sup> and the Continuator of Nange.<sup>2</sup> The former says that when the members of the Council debated whether "the entire Order could be condemned because of the citations of particular guilty members, as it was evident that the said Order had not been cited, the said Council decided (it should be done) not *de jure*; therefore Pope Clement inserted this clause." The Continuator of Nange says that the Pontiff "condemned the Order of Templars, not by means of a definitive sentence, because the Order had not been convicted as an Order; but merely by way of provision and ordinance. However, because the manner of reception, which hitherto they had refused to divulge, was suspected of old, and had now been revealed by many principal men of the Order, the Apostolic authority, with the approval of the Sacred Council, both wiped out the name of the Order, and abolished its habit; for the Order was now useless, since no good man would wish to enter it, and other evils were to be removed and scandals to be avoided."

It is asserted by certain apologists of the Templars<sup>3</sup> that Pope Clement V. abolished the Order by his own authority, in a secret Consistory. When this objection is made by a Catholic, it may be met with the reply that the sole authority of the Pontiff was sufficient in the premises. But the assertion is untrue. The decree of suppression was drawn up on March 22, 1312, but it was published on April 3d, in full Council, the Pope declaring that it was

<sup>1</sup> *English History*, y. 1311.

<sup>2</sup> Y. 1310.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Voltaire in his *Essay on Universal History*; and C. G. Addison, in his *Knights of the Temple*, London, 1841. See Palma, *loc. cit.*

issued *with the approbation of the Holy Council*. Against this declaration of the Pontiff a certain writer<sup>1</sup> alleges that the fathers, with only four exceptions, evinced a repugnance to the decree. It is impossible to avoid accusing this writer of bad faith in this matter. He appeals to the "Annals" of Raynald (y. 1311, No. 55), but if the reader will examine for himself, he will find that in the cited passage the annalist simply narrates how the fathers were divided as to the *manner* of condemnation, and how a bishop (supposed to be Durand, cited above) insisted on an immediate abolition, whether it were to be effected, as some wished, *de rigore juris*, or as others preferred, "by way of Apostolic provision." There is no mention or insinuation that the prelates disagreed with Pope Clement as to the necessity of suppressing the Templars.

Coming now to the arguments adduced by the apologists of the Templars, we first notice the one based on the authority of Villani, St. Antonine of Florence, Dante, Boccaccio, Trithemius, and Paul Emilius. Of what value is the authority of Villani in the subject-matter? His diction is certainly Tuscan in its purity, and he is a lucid and ingenious chronicler when unfettered by prejudice; but his writings are not always to be taken as gospel truth. Muratori, than whom no better judge in such matters can be desired, says that "this historian gives us not a few fables when he describes remote events,"<sup>2</sup> and that, in regard to the time of Frederick II., and the following period, "he is not always to be believed."<sup>3</sup> And we know that Villani could never forgive the blunder of Clement V., whereby the Italians had to lament the seventy years of the "Babylonian captivity." As for St. Antonine, we must respect his sanctity, admire his canonical and moral science, but as a historian we must place him in the same category with John of Salisbury—among those who feed upon popular rumors, but who cannot digest such deceptive morsels. Like Villani, Dante, Boccaccio, and most Italians of that day, he naturally regarded the papal residence at Avignon with a religious and patriotic aversion, and was ready to credit Clement V., the cause of the "captivity," with many foolish and wicked actions. Thus, he records the popular notion that this pontiff was guilty of lust, simony, and necromancy, although the most reliable records of his time show Clement to have been an upright, though, perhaps, too compliant a pastor. And it may be reckoned that St. Antonine, when treating of the events of Clement's reign, is a mere transcriber of Villani; two-thirds of his sentences are literal translations from this author's Italian work. Seldom, indeed, does he seem inclined to venture

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<sup>1</sup> Addison.

<sup>2</sup> In Preface to his edition of Villani's *History*.

<sup>3</sup> *Writers on Italian Affairs*, vol. xiii., pt. 3.

an opinion which he is ready to defend as his own. Nearly every passage is introduced by a "they say," or, "it is believed," or, "many dignitaries assert." Therefore, since he must be regarded in the same light with Villani, we decline his authority in this matter of the Templars, especially because he is directly refuted, as we shall soon prove, by contemporary or quasi-contemporary authors of undoubted reliability.

Dante can be of little avail in defence of the knights; for, although he condemns Clement V. to hell,<sup>1</sup> it is because of that pontiff's reputed simony that the poet so writes, rather than on account of the abolition of the Order. We may here observe, that when Dante's politics required such obliviousness, he quite forgot his enmity to "the Gascon," as he often styled Clement in his letters; transcendent as was his genius, he was very human in his policy. Thus, when he heard that Henry of Luxembourg, just elected "king of the Romans," was about to descend into Italy, he wrote, in 1310, a letter "to the kings Robert of Naples, and Frederick of Sicily; to the senators of Rome; to the dukes, marquises, counts, and all the peoples of Italy,"<sup>2</sup> in the interest of unity and peace; in which letter, since hitherto Pope Clement had been favorable to Henry, the poet forgot his trick in the "Comedy," and tried to unite Guelphs and Ghibellines in honoring that pontiff. Encouraging his countrymen to obey Henry, Dante exclaims: "Open the eyes of your minds, and see how the Lord of heaven and earth has given us a monarch. This king is the one whom Peter, the vicar of God, commands us to honor; he is the one whom Clement, the successor of Peter, illumines with the light of the Apostolic benediction." And, in a letter to Henry, he thus vituperates rebel Florence: "With the cruelty of a viper she tries to wound the bosom of her mother, when she directs the horn of rebellion against Rome, who made her in her own image and likeness. With perverse obstinacy she tries to nullify the consent given in your favor by the Roman Pontiff, who is the father of fathers."<sup>3</sup>

Boccaccio is represented as favoring the innocence of the Templars, but he also merely echoes popular Italian rumor, naturally ready to second any report hostile to the pontiff who had transferred the papal residence to France.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hell*, canto 19

<sup>2</sup> This letter of Dante's was known of old only by means of an anonymous translation into Italian, supposed to be by Marsilio Ficino. But in 1843, Torri published the Latin original from a Vatican MS.

<sup>3</sup> An Italian translation of this letter was first published by Doni in 1547; but it being suspected as not very faithful, the original Latin text was greatly desired by the learned and the curious. It was finally discovered by Moschini, prefect of the Marcian Library, in Venice, in 1827.

Trithemius is also presented as an apologist for the Templars, since he tells us that Clement V. condemned them, "at the instigation of king Philip, by whose favor he had been made Pope; the Templars were very wealthy, and that he might obtain their possessions, the king, falsely, as many think, charged them with heresy." But this author shows himself unworthy of credence in anything concerning the Fifteenth Council, for he asserts that it lasted two years, whereas it is certain that it lasted only seven months. Again, he, like St. Antonine, hesitates as to his position, for he inserts the qualifying clause, "as many think." Paul Emilius is also adduced to defend the knights. He asserts that the movable goods of the Templars were kept by Philip, and only the immovable handed over to the Hospitalers; but that this is untrue will be shown when we come to the defence of the king in this matter. Papire Masson is also quoted by the friends of the knights, but as he simply relies upon Villani, we reject his authority in the premises.

To the above authors, quoted by the Templarites in order that they may prove that the vile passions of Philip the Fair found ready instruments in a Roman pontiff and his court, and in nearly all the bishops, inquisitors, kings, and magistrates of his time, we now oppose some contemporary authorities of greater weight than any adduced against our position. The testimony of the Continuator of Nange has been already given. Bernard Guido, a Dominican, and for eighteen years an inquisitor at Toulouse, died in 1331, leaving a reputation for great learning and sanctity. Among many valuable works, he wrote a "Chronicle," reaching to 1330, which he dedicated to Pope John XXII. Speaking of the year 1307, he says: "On the feast of St. Edward the Confessor, the 3d of the ides of October, by order of the king and Council, all the Templars in France were arrested; everybody wondered that this ancient Order of knights, so greatly privileged by the Roman Church, should be thus treated, for, excepting a few sworn secretaries, all were ignorant of the reason. However, the cause was finally manifested and given to public execration; namely, their profane rite of profession celebrated with a denial of Christ, and by a spitting upon the crucifix in contempt of the Crucified. Many of them, even dignitaries of the Order, acknowledged this abominable, execrable, and unmentionable ceremony of initiation, of which hitherto all (outsiders) had been ignorant. Some of them, however, though subjected to question and torture, would not confess. Finally, the Roman See, *which at first had regarded the accusation as incredible, and had been greatly displeased at the arrest,*<sup>1</sup> became

<sup>1</sup> Here Bernard directly contradicts the assertion of St. Antonine that Clement V. had "conceded by Letters Apostolic that all the Templars, throughout the world,



better informed at Poitiers, where the curia was residing; for, several of the Templars, being brought before the Pope and some cardinals, there avowed that the previous confessions were true; and therefore, it was then ordered, that the Templars should be arrested everywhere, and the truth be brought to light." The testimony given in the Fifteenth Council, by the "bishop renowned for learning and sanctity," supposed to have been Durand of Mende, may also be examined. Albertino Mussato (d. 1329) has the following: "About seventy-two of the masters, preceptors, and soldiers of the house of the knights of the Temple of Jerusalem having been convicted, and having confessed, awaited the Apostolic censures; and, O shame! although we ought not to relate such infamous things, yet, they are to be spoken of for the punishment of the transgressors, and that posterity may be more cautious in avoiding what our age has experienced; these abominable beasts, endowed with human forms, these brothers—or rather enemies—armed with the sign of the cross, long ago devoted their souls to Satan in their reception into the Order, by a denial of Christ, by a spitting on the cross, and by other things not to be mentioned for the sake of human shame." Mussato, well remarks Alexandre, was an Italian, and therefore not likely to be sympathetic with the court of Avignon; therefore, his testimony is of double weight. Walsingham, whose "English History" is one of the best sources of information for the historian, tells us in his "Life of Edward II.," that "the Templars were accused and convicted of this, that when they received any one into the Order, all but the brethren having been removed, they led the candidate to a private place, *et totalitur denudaverunt et tunc unus accederet ad eundem, et eum oscularetur in posteriori parte*. . . . Then, a cross was brought forward, and he was told that Christ was not crucified, but a certain false prophet, who was condemned by the Jews to death for his crimes. Then, the candidate was made to spit thrice upon the cross, and it was thrown to the ground, and they made him trample upon it with his feet. After this, they showed him the head of a certain idol, which they daily adored. Besides these things, it was deposed against them, that they were polluted with the vice of sodomy. . . . Hence, when a Provincial Council was called at London, to consider these accusations, the accused Templars acknowledged the rumor, but not the fact, unless on the part of a few. Nevertheless, all finally admitted that they could not clear themselves

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should be arrested on the same day." We may, also, passingly remark, that these arrests did not take place on the same day. Those in the French dominions occurred on October 13, 1307; those in England, on January 10, 1308; those in Aragon, in November, 1307.

of the accusations, and hence the Council condemned them to perpetual penance." When Walsingham says that the Templars admitted "the rumor, but not the fact," he evidently alludes only to the English knights, for at the moment he is talking of the Provincial Council, convened in 1309 by the English primate, Robert of Winchelsea, and when he speaks of the Templars in general, he says that the charges were proved.<sup>1</sup> To these testimonies, of authors contemporary, or nearly so, with the abolition of the Templars, we may add that of a more modern writer, one who is frequently quoted by the apologists of the Order, namely, the famous Jesuit historian, Mariana. After enumerating the charges against the knights, this author asks: "What will the reader now say? Will he regard these accusations as founded in fact, or rather as fictions, and not unlike the tales of silly old women? Certainly, Villani, Antonine, and others, reject them as calumnies; but the more general report, and a nearly universal consent, condemns the Templars. . . . That the Order so soon degenerated into every kind of wickedness, would scarcely be credible, unless the Diplomas of Clement, from which we have drawn these things, and which are extant among the archives of the great church of Toledo, were proof that the reports were not unfounded; for he affirms that sixty-two (seventy-two) of the Order when questioned before himself, admitted the mentioned crimes and sought pardon."

The partisans of the Templars insist upon the comparative innocence of the English knights, and tell us that "in Spain they were honorably and enthusiastically acquitted. In Germany also they were acquitted."<sup>2</sup> That the English Templars showed a far better record than their continental brethren is true; and "if it be fair," says Lingard, "to judge from the informations taken in England,

<sup>1</sup> "*Depositum fuit contra Templarios et compertum*"—in his essay on the *Accusations against the Templars*, the Protestant Nicolai explains the contradictions of the witnesses, in reference to the initiations, by the fact that there were various kinds of receptions, and that all the knights did not receive the same secrets. Many of the depositions show this to have been the case.

<sup>2</sup> *Catholic Dictionary*, by Addis and Arnold. In this work we are told that "whatever confessions individual Templars made, were extorted by torture . . . and were invariably retracted when the victims found themselves out of the king's power. The Pope, Clement V., interfered so far as he dared, but too weakly and irresolutely to save them. . . . The Order was dissolved in France, and all its wealth seized by the king." The assertions as to torture and Philip's avarice are noticed by us in the text. The remark on Pope Clement's conduct is unjust to that Pontiff. So soon as he heard of the king's initiative, he reserved the cause of the knights to himself, and took their property under the protection of the Church. He "dared to interfere" just so long as justice demanded his intervention. He secured to the accused a fair trial before himself, in one case, and before his deputies, in all the others. To have gone further than this, to have shielded the impenitent, and to have continued the Papal sanction to so foully stained an institute, would have been worse than weak and irresolute.

however, we may condemn a few individuals, we must certainly acquit the Order."<sup>1</sup> But it would not be fair to so judge; nor was Pope Clement V. guilty of any such unfairness. He did not form his decision from an inspection of isolated cases, nor should we so form one. Again, we must remember that the English Templars had three years in which to defend themselves, for so long did their trial last; that Archbishop Robert of Winchelsea, who presided, was one of the most inflexible and independent prelates who ever sat in the chair of Canterbury, and that neither he nor his suffragans had anything to expect or fear from Philip; and yet, after mature deliberation, the English knights were condemned. We may well refuse, therefore, to believe, even with regard to this portion of the Order, that it was condemned "upon evidence so flimsy that in the present day a man could not be convicted on it of the most trifling offence."<sup>2</sup> As for the acquittal of the knights in the Synods of Salamanca and Metz, the innocence of some of the Templars does not acquit the entire Order, as was well understood by Mariana: "In the cause of the Templars it was decreed that their name and Order should be entirely abolished. To many this decree seemed cruel, nor is it probable that those crimes were found in every province, contaminating all the members. However, by the destruction of this Order, a warning to avoid similar iniquities was given to all, especially to religious, whose value and strength consist more in a reputation for virtue than in anything else."<sup>3</sup> It must be observed, however, that according to the same Mariana, the prelates assembled at Salamanca gave no final and positive decision of acquittal in regard to the Spanish knights, but "referred the ultimate settlement of the whole affair to the Roman Pontiff." The apologists of the Templars do not gain sympathy for their clients by adducing the action of the Synod of Metz. The German bishops there assembled to consider, by order of Clement V., the case of the Templars, did not acquit the knights; but referred the matter to the Holy See. And even that leniency was procured by violence; for Serarius and Mariana tell us that Hugh, count of the Rhine, and twenty armed Templars burst into the Synod, "terrifying the fathers by their ferocity;" whereupon, lest a tumult might arise, the archbishop received their protest, and promised to use his influence with the Pontiff to secure their not being disturbed."<sup>4</sup>

Voltaire insists that King Philip, in his anxiety for vengeance on the Templars, many of whom had been outspoken against his oppressions, and in his covetousness of their great wealth, prepared

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<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, vol. iii., ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> B. xv., ch. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Catholic Dictionary*.

<sup>4</sup> B. viii., ch. 92.

in advance the mine which, in his own good time, he exploded. Villani tells us that the grand master had condemned the prior of the Templars of Montfaucon to perpetual imprisonment because of immorality and heresy; that during his confinement the prior became acquainted with one Nasso, a Florentine, also a prisoner; that this pair, with a view to obtaining their release, invented the famous charges against the Order. Such, says Voltaire, was the origin of Philip's scheme. But while this narration of Villani may be true, and Mariana receives it as such, nevertheless, the evidence of the worthy pair was not uncorroborated. "The first witnesses," says Mariana, "were two members of the Order, the prior of Montfaucon in the county of Toulouse, and Nasso, a Florentine exile—not sufficiently reliable, as was shown by the testimony of many. Then came others, among whom was a chamberlain of the Pontiff himself, who had joined the Order in his eleventh year, and who related what he had seen and done."<sup>1</sup> But the favorite argument of Voltaire and the other apologists is derived from the tortures which, they say, extorted the confessions of the Templars. James Molay, the grand master, and others who were burnt at Paris, retracted these extorted avowals, and died protesting their innocence, and that of their Order. Even the Continuator of Nange, an author whom we often quote in favor of our thesis, gives the following melancholy picture. When treating of the year 1310 he says: "Outside the city of Paris, in the fields not far from the abbey of St. Anthony, fifty-nine Templars were burnt to death. All of these, with no exception, acknowledged none of the imputed crimes, but constantly and perseveringly declared that they were unjustly put to death." And at the year 1313 he writes: "When the aforesaid four, the general or transmarine master of the Order of the Temp'le, the visitor for France; and the masters of Aquitaine and Normandy, the final disposition of whose cases the Pope had reserved to himself, had, without exception, publicly and openly confessed the imputed crimes, and had persisted in that confession, and had appeared to wish to finally persist in it, a council was held with great deliberation on the Monday after the feast of St. Gregory, in the vestibule of the great church at Paris, by mandate of the Pope, and the aforesaid four were adjudged to perpetual imprisonment by the lord-cardinal of Albano and two other cardinal-legates the archbishop of Sens, certain other prelates, and other persons versed in Divine and Canon law, specially summoned to Paris for this case. But behold, when the cardinals had thought an end had been put to the business, two of the aforesaid, namely, the transmarine master and the master of Normandy, suddenly and un-

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<sup>1</sup> B. xv., ch. 15.

expectedly defending themselves against the cardinal who had delivered a sermon, and against the archbishop of Sens, returned to a denial of their confession, and of all that they had acknowledged, most irreverently and to the wonder of many. Then the cardinals handed them over to the provost of Paris, who was present, to be merely guarded until the morrow, when their case would be more carefully considered. So soon as the news of what had occurred reached the king, who was then in the royal palace, having counselled with his courtiers, but wisely (*prudente consilio*) calling no clergyman to the conference, he commanded that both should be burnt at the same stake, on a little island of the Seine between the royal gardens and the church of the Hermits. They appeared to undergo the burning willingly and readily, and their final constancy in death excited the wonder of all the beholders. The two others were confined in the prison to which they had been sentenced." Now Voltaire asserts that the confessions of the Templars were drawn from them by torture. While, on the one hand, we would not attempt to defend the use of "the question" in a law court, neither would we, on the other, assert with Voltaire that every confession so obtained is valueless. But granting the worthlessness of every evidence so evolved, is it true that the testimony because of which the Templars were abolished was extracted by torture from unwilling lips? We do not deny that the torture was applied in some instances, but certainly there was no such thing in the case of the hundred and twenty-four knights examined before the inquisitor at Paris, or in that of the seventy-two interrogated by the Pontiff at Poitiers; and yet these knights, and others similarly situated, admitted their guilt.<sup>1</sup> This is shown by the *Acts* of the trial, by the diploma "Reigning in Heaven" already cited, and by the other diploma given by Raynald at the year 1307,

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the prosecution of the Templars of Lombardy and Tuscany, conducted by the archbishops of Pisa and Florence and by a Roman canon, Cantu's love of truth forces him to say: "Here the accused had no fear, as they would have had in France, of being sent to the stake; for they were being tried by an ecclesiastical tribunal which assigned as punishment only repentance and retraction. This adds to the reliability of the deposition which they swore to have made, 'not out of hatred, or out of love; not for reward or because of fear; but merely for the sake of truth.' Some of the accusations were admitted by all; some others only by certain knights, and as regarding particular cases and persons, or as being matters of hearsay, or as being customary beyond the sea. But, above all, they agreed in admitting the most jealous secrecy of the chapters, and the guilt of infidel blasphemy. *If, therefore, the wicked prosecutions instituted in France tempt us to regard the Templars as innocent, and as victims of Philip the Fair, the calm with which the Church proceeded, the processes instituted during many years in Italy and in other lands, and without violence, allow us to suppose that many of the knights were guilty, and that the king of France should not be compared with Clement V., who, by suppressing the Order, 'not de juri, but by way of provision,' saved innocent individuals, and disappointed the royal greed by assigning its wealth to the defence of the Holy Land.*"—*Heretics of Italy*, Discourse viii.

No. 12. As for the fact that the grand master and other Templars died asserting their innocence; that the former and the master of Normandy retracted their former confessions; such facts by no means prove that the Order was unjustly suppressed. Criminals very frequently die with lies on their lips; and that James Molay lied most solemnly, either at the stake or in his repeated and spontaneous confessions, is indisputably proven. We are not bound to explain his vacillations. It is well to know, however, that in the inquiry held at Chinon in Touraine on August 18-20, 1308, by three cardinals deputed by the Pope, the grand master was so astounded on hearing the many depositions which had been made at Paris and at Poitiers, that he kept silence on all the points saving that of the denial of Christ, which he expressly admitted to have been practiced. When interrogated at Paris on December 26, 1309, he disavowed this confession, and accused the commissioners of forgery; demanding afterward to be judged by the Pontiff. Whom ought we naturally suspect of falsehood, asks Bergier, the three cardinals or James Molay? The Pope had insisted on the observance of the strictest equity in the premises; the king had consulted the universities, the clergy, and the parliaments; nor did he need any forgeries, as we have seen, to attain his end, the extinction of the Order. We would therefore suspect the grand master of falsehood, rather than the cardinals. When finally the Fifteenth Council had been held, and the Templars had been suppressed, Clement V. appointed new commissioners to close the process, namely, three cardinals, the archbishop of Sens, several bishops, and many learned men. Before these, Molay, Guy of Auvergne, and two others again avowed their guilt, and on March 18, 1313, they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. A platform, on which they were to affix their confessions, was erected in front of Notre Dame, but at the commencement of the ceremony, Molay and Guy suddenly retracted their avowals. For the grand catastrophe the Papal commissioners were not responsible. That was consummated in obedience to an order from king Philip, after they had delivered the culprits to the custody of the provost of Paris, intending to deliberate as to the sentence on the following day.

The grand master and the brother of the dauphin of Auvergne retracted their confessions, but we must remember that thirty or forty thousand other knights, who had been condemned to different kinds of punishment, survived the "persecuting" Philip and Clement, and did not retract or attempt to justify the Order. Again, even Michelet admits that "in the interrogatories which we publish, the denials are nearly all identical, as though according to a settled formula; while on the contrary, the avowals are all varied by special circumstances, often very naive, which facts give them

a peculiar stamp of veracity. Contrary, indeed, would have been the case, if the avowals had been extorted by torture ; then they would have been nearly alike, and the diversity would have been found in the denials."<sup>1</sup>

In his zealous championship of the Templars, the prince of modern incredulists asserts that "seventy-four of them, who had not been accused, undertook to defend the Order, but were not heard." Bergier's reply to this absolute falsehood is worthy of the reader's attention : "In other places the apologist cites the "History of the Templars," by Peter Dupuy. Now this historian relates that these seventy-four defenders of their Order were heard by the commissioners for the first time, on Saturday, March 14, 1310, and that they deputed four of their number to speak in the name of all. Not only were they heard, but they presented requests and memorials in writing. The verbal reports of their speeches were exactly drawn up, and the author of the "History of the Gallican Church" has copied them. They protested against the confessions made by the accused ; like the apologist, they declared that these admissions had been extorted by threats and promises, or that those who made them were wicked persons ; they demanded to be judged by the Pope, and by the Council of Vienne, then about to assemble. Now what follows from this defence? Simply that those seventy-four Templars were innocent, for they were not accused ; that until then they had been ignorant of the crimes of their brethren, and that they found it difficult to credit them. But this is only a negative proof ; ignorance proves nothing ; they adduced nothing positive capable of destroying the confession of the accused." Voltaire endeavors to evade the charges of obscenity among the knights by pleading that "this infamy never could have become a law among them. I do not doubt at all that many of the Templars yielded to those excesses which have been, at all times, the inheritance of youth ; but these are passing vices, which it were better to ignore than to punish." To this characteristic remark we again reply with Bergier : "Here the author confounds two methods of reception. It is to be presumed that the public reception, performed by the grand master or others, was decent ; but there was another, a private one, invented by the libertines of the Order, to which the new knights were subjected, and in which

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<sup>1</sup> The name of Michelet is dear to all well-informed Masons, and should be cherished by all the Templarites. In the *Collection of Unedited Documents Concerning the History of France*, published by care of the Minister of Public Instruction, this writer gave to the world the verbal process of the Templars. Speaking of the interrogatory undergone by Molay and two hundred and thirty-one knights before the Pontifical commissioners at Paris, he says : "This inquiry was conducted slowly, and with much care and kindness."

were committed those abominations and profanations already mentioned. Many witnesses declared that they had been forced into this latter rite by prison and torture. It is well known that wicked persons desire to have accomplices in their crimes. The majority of those who were executed were not young men; therefore their vices were not passing ones. It is but too true that aged libertines are more given to excessive lubricity than are young people." Voltaire pretends to find it difficult to believe that the Templars denied Jesus Christ, and asks what had they to gain by renouncing a religion which cherished them, and for which they had so gloriously combated? But many impious men, and among them Voltaire himself, blaspheme against the religion which has nourished them; and what they have to gain we do not know. As for the combats of the Templars in the cause of the faith, these had long been, at least for the French members, things of the past.

We now come to the assertion that the suppression of the Templars is to be ascribed to the covetousness of King Philip the Fair;<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, Potter, Voltaire, in fine, all the apologists of the proscribed Order, assign this as the prime cause of the abolition. St. Antonine says that "many dignitaries asserted that the knights were innocent, and condemned without just cause, in order that their property might be confiscated. They were afterward despoiled of their goods by the Pope, and their revenues applied to the House or Hospital of St. John. But as the property had already been seized by the king of France and by other princes, it had to be redeemed at a heavy price; whence these latter religious were rendered very poor. . . . It was ordered (in the Fifteenth Council) that all the goods of the Templars should be assigned to the Hospital of Jerusalem, and as they had already been seized by various lay lords, the Hospitalers were compelled to pay a large sum to the king and others who held the property." And we are told by Paul Emilius that Philip's treasury "retained possession of the movable property, while that affixed to the soil was given by a Pontifical decree to the Hospitalers of St. John." Even Walsingham inveighs against Philip in this matter, although he admits that the king did not gain his point. He says that "Philip, king of France, thought to make one of his sons king of Jerusalem, and to obtain for him all the revenues of the Templars. . . . But he did not attain his wish in regard to the property, for the Pope assigned it to the Hospitalers." Now the innocence of Philip in this matter is proved, firstly, by the Diploma "Reigning in Heaven" of Clement V. The Pontiff says to the king: "At length, how-

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<sup>1</sup> The *Catholic Dictionary* says that Philip "coveting their wealth, laid a deep plot for their destruction . . . all its wealth was seized by the king"



ever, you who had heard of these same iniquities, and moved, not by avarice, for you do not intend to claim or appropriate the property of the Templars, but have taken your hands altogether away from it, freely and devoutly yielding it up, to be guarded and administered by our deputies." The same is proved, secondly, by the letter sent in March, 1311, by Philip to the Pontiff, requesting that the property of the Templars be assigned either to some new Military Order, or to some old one engaged in the cause of the Holy Land. It is shown, thirdly, by the instrument of transfer of the property in question to the Hospitalers. In this document, dated August 24, 1312, we read: "Since the aforesaid properties, inasmuch as they are in our kingdom, are under our special care and protection, and it is known that we fully possess in them, either mediately or immediately, the right of patronage; and having been induced by you, together with the prelates united in Council, to give this consent: We, therefore, whose interest it is, accept this disposition, ordinance, and transfer, and give to it our consent; perpetually reserving to ourselves, and to the prelates, barons, nobles, and others of our kingdom, all our and their rights such as hitherto obtained in the said properties." The same is evinced, fourthly, by the agreement entered into between Louis X, the son and heir of Philip the Fair, and Villaret, the grand master of the Hospitalers, on February 14, 1315, in which it was arranged that the knights of the Hospital should pay the king 260,000 livres, for which sum, expended by the monarch in the prosecution of the Templars, the ceded property had been pledged; not that, says the agreement, the Knights of Rhodes had not already been in the enjoyment of the Templar revenues, by virtue of the possession given them by authority of King Philip, but because there were many expenses to be liquidated, dating from the time when the Templars were arrested.

We would now observe in conclusion that much of the sympathy which has been manifested for the Templars is due to the connection supposed—whether rightly or not, is of little importance—to subsist between the unfortunate Order and Freemasonry. "We shall see," says Condorcet, "whether we ought not to number among secret societies this celebrated Order, against which Popes and kings so barbarously conspired."<sup>1</sup> In his valuable work on secret societies, Deschamps derives Masonry from four sources, Gnosticism, Manicheism, the Albigenses, and *the Templars*.<sup>2</sup> "The Masons," he says, "and all the philosophical revolutionists and

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<sup>1</sup> *Historic Tableau of the Progress of the Human Mind*, epoch 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Secret Societies and Society, or the Philosophy of Contemporaneous History*, vol. i., b. 2, ch. i., § 5; Avignon, 1882.

Jacobins had a great interest in defending the Templars," and then he proceeds to show, from Masonic authorities, how these secretaries claim a descent from the proscribed Order. Among the authorities cited by this zealous and indefatigable writer, we select one which will prove of interest to the reader. On April 8, 1839, M. de Banville, an ex-officer of the Grand Orient of France, spoke as follows in a Lodge of the Knights of the Cross: "The Masonic Order is an emanation from that of the Temple, with the history and misfortunes of which you are acquainted, and reasonably it can have no other origin. Masonry was born in Scotland, and originally it was a prudent and ably arranged disguise conceived by some knights of that country in order to hide the continuation of their illustrious Order from the keen eyes of its powerful enemies. The heroic William de Moure, grand prior of England and Scotland, directed from his prison the knights of his language in the creation, organization and development of the Masonic rite, destined to shield, from the eyes of the profane, the proscribed and anathematized Order of the Temple. We may conceive how this local transformation, in the language of Scotland, of the Order of the Temple into that of Masonry, was enveloped in secrecy; how the unfortunate Templars, calumniated by vile renegades, cowardly betrayed by ignoble apostates who tracked them like wild beasts in nearly every land of Christendom, forced to hide their names and quality under pain of the most frightful persecution and of the most horrible torture, innocent victims of a king's avarice and a Pope's jealousy; succeeded in inventing, that they might recognize and aid each other *in all, for all, and everywhere*, in France, Germany, and Sweden, where Masonry soon penetrated, those sacred passwords, signs, and grips, which have come down to us from generation to generation. How can we otherwise explain, on the part of a vast philanthropic association, organized for the honorable purposes of giving to suffering humanity the consolations and alms of Christian charity, those severe commands to *say nothing, write nothing, signify nothing*, concerning the praiseworthy object of this secret society, under pain of incurring the certain effects of an atrocious vengeance, exposing the traitor to have his throat cut, his heart and entrails torn out, his body burnt and reduced to ashes, the ashes thrown to the winds, and his memory execrated by every Mason? All this would become a revolting absurdity, without the explanation, so simple and satisfying to reason, that the knights of the Temple had a powerful interest in hiding themselves under the mantle of Masonry, specially organized by themselves for that purpose. I therefore affirm that the Masonic Order was established in the fourteenth century by the knights of the Temple, in obedience to the grand prior of Scotland, and that this

beautiful institution emanated from that centre, and easily propagated itself in the European countries, then covered by our proscribed predecessors. I could easily adduce numerous proofs, drawn from a comparison of the rituals in use in the two Orders, and at first it would astonish one to notice the same system of reception, proceeding by way of physical and moral tests."<sup>1</sup> This theory of the Templar origin of Freemasonry is well developed in the "Masonic Manual" or "Tiler" of Willaume, and in the "Philosophical and Interpretative Course" of explanations of the symbols and mysteries of Masonry, published by Ragon, founder of the celebrated Lodge of the Trinosophists—a work solemnly authorized on June 24, 1840, by the Grand Orient of France. In contradiction to the above theory may be adduced the opinion of Guyot, printer to the French "Templars," who published in 1825 a "Manual of the Knights of the Temple," in which he contended that the Masonic claim is false; that Molay named his successor; and that the Templars continued to have an uninterrupted succession of grand masters down to Fabr -Palaprat, elected in 1804. As Philip d'Orleans was grand master of these "Templars" in 1706, it is amusing to read that they sign with their blood the oaths of obedience, poverty, chastity (!), fraternity, hospitality, and military service; and that each "knight" is obliged, if he can possibly do so, to visit the Holy Land once in his life. Lenoix, in his "Origin of Freemasonry," insists that St. Bernard, who gave their rule to the knights, was a Mason. If this assumption surprises the reader, he should know that Ragon, than whom there has never been a more authoritative writer on Masonic subjects, declares that the chevalier (*sic*) Gerson, or Thomas A'Kempis, the author of the "Imitation of Christ," was also a Mason, and that his book, "the masterpiece of one deeply initiated, undoubtedly gave rise to the mystic veil with which, under the titles of 'Rose-Cross,' 'Knight of the Eagle and of the Pelican,' the last mysteries of Masonry are covered."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Globe*, a journal of Masonic initiations, Paris, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*