

# Templars

TEMPLARS. The Knights Templars, or Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (*pauperes commilitones Christi lemplique Salomonici*), formed one of the three great military orders, founded in the twelfth century. Unlike the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights it was a military order from its very origin. Its founders were a Burgundian knight named Hugues de Payns (Hugo de Paganis) and Godeffroi de Saint Omer, a knight from northern France, who in 1119 undertook the pious task of protecting the pilgrims who, after the first crusade, flocked to Jerusalem and the other sacred spots in the Holy Land. They were quickly joined by six other knights and soon afterwards organized themselves as a religious community, taking an oath to the patriarch of Jerusalem to guard the public roads, to forsake worldly chivalry, “of which human favor and not Jesus Christ was the cause,” and, living in chastity, obedience and poverty, according to the rule of Saint Benedict, “to fight with a pure mind for the supreme and true King.”

To this nascent order of warrior monks Baldwin I., king of Jerusalem, handed over a part of his royal palace lying next to the former mosque of al-Aksa, the so-called “Temple of Solomon,” whence they took their name. They had at first no distinctive habit, wearing any old clothes that might be given to them. Nor was their community exclusive. Their primitive rule

seems to have enjoined them especially to seek out excommunicated knights, and to admit them, after absolution by the bishop, to their order, and they thus served a useful purpose in at once disciplining and converting the unruly rabble of “rogues and impious men, robbers and committees of sacrilege, murderers, perjurers and adulterers” who streamed to the Holy Land in hope of plunder and salvation. It was this rule which led later to the most important privilege of the order, the immunity from sentences of excommunication pronounced by bishops and parish priests.

This practice, as Prutz points out, might have brought them at once under the suspicion of the Church, and it soon became expedient to obtain the highest sanction for the new order and its rules. In the autumn of 1127 accordingly Hugues de Payns, with certain companions, appeared in Europe, where he was fortunate enough to secure the enthusiastic support of the all-powerful abbot of Clairvaux. Grateful pilgrims had already begun to enrich the order; the *De laude novae militiae*, a glowing panegyric of this new and holy conception of knighthood, addressed by Bernard to Hugues de Payns by name, insured the success of his mission. In 1128 the council of Troyes discussed and sanctioned the rule of the order which, if not drawn up by Bernard, was undoubtedly largely inspired by him.

Rule of the Temple. No manuscript of the original French Rule of the Temple (*Règle du Temple*) exists. Of the three extant manuscripts representing later recensions, one is preserved at

the Accademia dei Lincei at Rome (Codex 44, A 14), one at the Bibliothèque Nationale, the third in the departmental archives at Dijon. The last of these, probably intended for the use of the master of a subordinate house, is much abbreviated; it dates, however, from the early part of the thirteenth century, whereas the others are of the end of the century at earliest. In essentials these copies preserve the matter and spirit of the primitive Rule, and they prove that to the end the order was, in principle at least, submitted to the same strict discipline as at the beginnings.

The Règle du Temple in its final form as we now possess it contains the rules for the constitution and administration of the order; the duties and privileges of the various classes of its personnel; the monastic rules, regulations as to costume and as to religious services; rules for the holding of chapters, and a summary of offences and their punishment; the procedure at the election of a grand master and at receptions into the order; a definition of the relations of the order to the pope, and to other religious orders. It must be borne in mind, however, that the organization of the order as described below was only gradually developed, not having been fixed at Troyes. At first the master of the Temple at Jerusalem was only one among many; the seneschal and marshal appear not to have existed; and it was not till the bull *Omne datum optimum* of Pope Alexander III. (1163), the great charter of the order, that its organization was definitively centralized.

Constitution. As finally constituted, the order consisted of (1) knights (*fratres milites*), (2) chaplains (*fratres capellani*), (3) sergeants or esquires (*fratres servientes armigeri*), (4) menials and craftsmen (*fratres servientes famuli and officii*). All were bound by the rules of the order and enjoyed its privileges. Women were not admitted to the order.

1. At the head of the order was the master of the Temple at Jerusalem (in Cyprus after the fall of the Latin Kingdom), known as the grand master. His authority was very great, except in certain reserved cases his word was law, but he was not absolute. Thus in matters of special importance, alienation of the estates of the order, attack on a fortress, declaration of war, conclusion of an armistice, reception of a new brother, he had to consult the chapter, and was bound by the vote of the majority; nor could he modify or abrogate a decree of the council of the order without their consent. He had to obtain the consent of the chapter also to the nomination of the grand commanders of the provinces of the order; the lesser offices were absolutely in his gift. He was elected by a complicated process, a chapter summoned *ad hoc* electing a “commander of the election” and one other brother who, after vigil and prayer, co-opted two more, these four choosing another two, and so on till the number of the twelve apostles had been reached. A chaplain, representing Jesus Christ, was then added to complete the electoral college (see Curzon, *Règle du Temple*, page xxxv).

The grand master was allowed four horses for his ordinary use. His household consisted of a frater capellanus, a cleric, a frater serviens with two horses, a Saracen secretary (écrivain sarrazinois) as interpreter, a turcople, that is, a soldier belonging to the light-horse attached to the order, a farrier and a cook, two footmen (garçons à pied) to look after his special Turcoman horse, only used in war time. He was further attended by two knights of the order of high rank. The ensigns of his presence on campaign were the large round tent and the gonfanon baucant, the black and white pennant, charged with the red cross of the order.

2. The second officer of the Temple was the seneschal. He had a right to attend all chapters, even the most secret. His equipage, tent, banner and seal were the same as the master's. Attached to his person were two squires, a knight companion, a frater serviens, a secretary in deacon's orders to say the hours, a turcople, a Saracen secretary and two foot servants.

3. Third in order was the marshal, who was supreme military authority, and had under his charge the horses and arms. In the absence of master and seneschal he acted as locum tenens. His equipage and suite were much the same as those of master and seneschal.

The provincial marshals were absolute in their provinces, but subordinate to the marshal of the order.

The commander of the land and realm of Jerusalem was grand treasurer of the order, administered its estates in the province of Jerusalem, and was responsible for the lodging of the brethren. He also had charge of the fleet, the commander of the port of Acre being his subordinate. His equipage and suite were much the same as those of seneschal and marshal.

The commander of the city of Jerusalem was the hospitaller of the order. He was charged with the defense of pilgrims visiting the Holy Land, and with the duty of supplying them with food and horses. Ten knights were specially attached to him for this purpose, and to act as guard to the relics of the True Cross. Subordinate to him was a second commander for the city itself.

The commanders of Tripoli and Antioch enjoyed all the rights of the grand master within their provinces, except when he was present. They too had the round tent and the gonfanon.

Besides these, the rule mentions the commanders of France, England, Poitou, Portugal, Apulia and Hungary, whose rights and privileges are analogous to those of the commanders above mentioned.

Lastly, of the great officers of the order must be mentioned the drapier, who was charged with the supervision of the clothing of the brethren. He was closely associated with the commander of

the kingdom of Jerusalem, his equipage was that of the commanders, but his suite included a number of tailors.

Below the great dignitaries there were in the provinces commanders of houses, under the provincial commanders, and the commanders of the knights, who acted as lieutenants of the marshals.

Turning to the general body of the order: the knights (*milites*) were entitled to three horses and a squire, or by special favor to four horses and two squires. They had two tents.

Of the sergeants (*servientes*) five occupied an exceptional position: the deputy-marshal (*souz-mareschau*), who looked after the arms and armor, the gonfanonier, who was responsible for the discipline and catering of the squires, the kitchener (*cuisinier*) and the farrier. These had two horses, as squire and a tent. All the others, even if commanders of houses, had but one horse. At the head of all the sergeants in time of war was the *turcoplier*, the chief of the *turcoples*. He had four horses in his equipage and certain special prerogatives; in battle he took his orders only from the master or *seneschal*.

Of peculiar importance were the chaplains (*fratres capellani*). These did not originally form part of the order, which was served by priests from outside. The bull *Omne datum optimum* of 1163 imposed on clerics attaching themselves to the

order an oath of lifelong obedience to the grand master; by the middle of the thirteenth century the chaplains took the same oath as the other brothers and were distinguished from them only by their orders and the privileges these implied (such as, they were spared the more humiliating punishments, shaved the face, and had a separate cup to drink out of). The order thus had its own clergy, exempt from the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops and parish priests, owing obedience to the grand master and the pope alone. By the rules, no Templar was allowed to confess to any save a priest attached to the order, if one were available, and such priest was formally declared to have received from the pope more power to absolve than an archbishop.

It remains to be said that the brethren were admitted either for life or for a term of years. Married men were also received, but on condition of bequeathing one half of their property to the order (rule 69).

The chapters of the order were either secret, composed of such brothers as the master might esteem “wise and profitable for giving advice,” or general assemblies of the order, at the discretion of the master, who was to listen to the counsel given and do what seemed best to him (rule 36).

Habit of the Order. The characteristic habit of the order was the white mantle, symbolic of purity, with the red cross, the ensign of the champions of the Church, first granted by Pope Eugenius



III. (1145-53). Only the unmarried knights bound by life-long vows, however, were privileged to wear the white mantle, which was also given to chaplains in episcopal orders. The rest wore a black or brown mantle, the red cross being common to all. The chaplains were distinguished by wearing the mantle closed.

Conduct and Discipline. The brethren were to attend daily services; but the soldier out wearied with his nightly duties might on certain conditions absent himself from matins with the master's consent. Two regular meals were allowed for each day; but to these might be added, at the master's discretion, a light collation towards sunset. Meat might be eaten thrice a week; and on other days there was to be a choice of vegetable fare so as to suit the tenderest stomach. Brethren were to eat by couples, each keeping an eye on his fellow to see that he did not practice an undue austerity. Wine was served at every meal, and at those times silence was strictly enjoined that the words of Holy Writ might be heard with the closest attention. Special care was to be taken of aged and ailing members. Every brother owed the most absolute obedience to the master of the order, and was to go wherever his superior bade him without delay, "as if commanded by God." All undue display in arms or harness was forbidden. Parti-coloured garments were forbidden. All garments were to be made of wool; but from Easter to All Souls a linen shirt might be substituted for one of wool. The hair was to be worn short, and a rough beard became one of the distinguishing marks of the order. Hunting and hawking were unlawful; and the very allusion to the follies or secular achievements of earlier life

was forbidden. A lion, however, being the type of the evil one, was legitimate prey. Strict watch was kept on the in comings and outgoings of every brother, except when he went out by night to visit the Sepulcher of our Lord. No letter, even from the nearest relative, might be opened except in the master's presence; nor was any member to feel annoyance if he saw his relative's gift transferred at the master's bidding to some other brother. The brethren were to sleep in separate beds in shirts and breeches, with a light always burning in the dormitory. Those who lacked a mattress might place a piece of carpet on the floor; but all luxury was discouraged.

A term of probation was assigned to each candidate before admission; and a special clause discouraged the reception of boys before they were of an age to bear arms. Lastly, the brethren of the Temple were exhorted to shun the kiss of every woman, whether maid or widow, mother, aunt or sister.

For grievous offences, such as desertion to the Saracens, heresy, losing the gonfalon, murdering a Christian, or failing to account for all the property of the order in his possession, a Templar might be expelled (*perdre la maison*); for minor offences, such as disobedience, lowering the banner in battle, or killing a slave or a horse, he suffered a temporary degradation (*perdre son abit*). No member of another religious order was received by the Templars, and no Templar could leave the order without permission of the master, and then only on condition of joining a stricter monastic community. By mutual agreement the

Templars and Hospitallers, despite their long and deadly feud, were bound not to receive ejected members of the rival order; and the Templar cut off in battle and defeat from all hope of rejoining his own ranks might rally to the cross of Saint John.

History. Long before Saint Bernard's death (1153) the new order was established in almost every kingdom of Latin Christendom. Henry I. granted them lands in Normandy. They seemed to have been settled in Castile by 1129, in Rochelle by 1131, in Languedoc by 1136, at Rome by 1138, in Brittany by 1141, and in Germany at perhaps a still earlier date., Alphonso I. of Aragon and Navarre, if we may trust the Spanish historians, bequeathed them the third of his kingdom. Raymond Berengar IV., count of the Barcelona, and Alphonso's successor in Aragon, whose father had been admitted to the order, granted them the strong castle of Monzon (1143), and established a new chivalry in imitation of theirs. Louis VII. in the latter years of his reign gave them a piece of marsh land outside Paris, which in later times became known as the Temple, and was the headquarters of the order in Europe. Stephen of England granted them the manors of Cressing and Witham in Essex, and his wife Matilda that of Cowley, near Oxford. Eugenius III., Louis VII., and 130 brethren were present at the Paris chapter (1147) when Bernard de Balliol granted the order 15 librates of land near Hitchin; and the list of English benefactors under Stephen and Henry II. includes the noble names of Ferrers, Harcourt, Hastings, Lacy, Clare, Vere and Mowbray. Spiritual privileges were granted to them by the popes as lavishly as temporal possessions by the princes and people.

Pope Adrian IV. allowed them to have their own churches; Eugenius III. added to these the right to have churchyards; and churches and churchyards, as in the case of the order generally, were exempted from the operation of ordinary excommunications and interdicts. Thus a person dying excommunicated, refused burial elsewhere, sometimes, like Geoffrey de Mandeville, found a resting-place in the consecrated ground of the Templars. Eugenius III. also granted the Templars the right to have interdicted churches opened twice a year for the purpose of making their collections. They were, moreover, as defenders of the Church, exempted from the payment of tithes. Finally, they were exempted from the action even of general censures and decrees of the popes, unless mentioned in them by name. Very soon the order refused to submit in any way to the ordinary jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops and formed in effect a separate ecclesiastical organization under the pope as supreme bishop. The result was that, scarce twenty-five years after its foundation, the order was at open feud with bishops and parish priests, and the popes found it necessary to issue decree after decree to protect it from violence and spoliation. The complaints of the secular clergy, on the other hand, came to a head in 1179 at the Lateran Council, when even Pope Alexander III. had to consent to a series of decrees directed against the abuse of its privileges by the order.

So long, however, as the attention of the papacy and of Christendom was fixed on the problem of recovering and safeguarding the Holy Land, the position of the Templars was

unassailable and all efforts to curb the growth of their power vain. The order as such had no European policy; the whole of its vast organization was maintained for the purpose of feeding the holy war against the infidels with recruits and with money; and its ultimate fate depended on its success or failure in the East.

After the council of Troyes Hugues de Payns came to England and induced a number of knights to follow him to the Holy Land. Among these was Fulk, count of Anjou, who would thus seem to have been a Templar before assuming the crown of Jerusalem in 1131. Hugues de Payns died about the year 1136 and was succeeded by Robert de Craon, who is said to have been Anselm's nephew. Everard de Barris, the third master, was conspicuous in the second crusade. In the disastrous march from Laodicea to Attalia his troops alone kept up even the show of discipline; and their success prompted Louis VII. to regulate his whole army after the model of the Templar knights. In the French king's distress for money the Templars lent him large sums, ranging from 2000 silver marks to 30,000 solidi. When Conrad III. of Germany reached Jerusalem he was entertained at their palace (Easter 1148); and in the summer of the same year they took part in the unsuccessful siege of Damascus. The failure of this expedition was ascribed by a contemporary writer to their treachery, a charge to which Conrad would not assent. This is the first note of the accusations which from this time were of constant recurrence.

Henceforward for 140 years the history of the Templars is the history of the Crusades. In 1149 the Templars were appointed to guard the fortress of Gaza, the last Christian stronghold on the way towards Egypt. Four years later the new master, Bernard de Tremelai, and forty of his followers, bursting into Ascalon, were surrounded by the Saracens and cut off to a single man. William of Tyre has preserved the scandal of the day when he hints that they met a merited fate in their eagerness to possess themselves of the city treasure. Next year the rumor went abroad that they had sold a noble half-converted Egyptian prince, who had fallen into their hands, to chains and certain death for 60,000 aurei. In 1166 Amalric, the Latin king of Jerusalem, hanged twelve Templars on a charge of betraying a fortress beyond the Jordan to an amir of Nūr al-Dīn of Damascus. The military power of Nūr al-Dīn (1145-73) was a standing menace to the Christian settlements in the East. Edessa had fallen to the prowess of his father (1144-45); Damascus was conquered by the son (1153), who four years earlier had carried his depredations almost to the walls of Antioch, and in 1157 laid siege to the Christian town of Paneas near the sources of the Jordan. In the disastrous fight that followed for the safety of the fortress of the Hospitallers, Bertrand de Blanquefort, the master of the Templars, and Odo de Saint Amand, one of his successors, were taken prisoners. Bertrand was released later when Manuel was preparing to march against Nūr al-Dīn. The Templars do not seem to have opposed Amalric's early expeditions against Egypt. It was Geoffrey Fulcher, the Templar correspondent of Louis VII., who brought back (1167) to Jerusalem the glowing accounts of the splendor of

the caliph's court at Cairo with which Gibbon has enlivened his great work. Nor was the order less active at the northern limits of the Latin kingdom. Two English Templars, Gilbert de Lacy and Robert Mansel, "qui Galensibus praeerat," starting from Antioch, surprised Nūr al-Dīn in the neighborhood of Tripoli and put him barefooted to flight. But jealousy or honor led the Templars to oppose Amalric's Egyptian expedition of 1168; and the wisdom of their advice became apparent when the renewed discord on the Nile led to the conquest of Egypt by Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh, and thus indirectly to the accession of Saladin, in 1169. In 1170 they beat Saladin back from their frontier fortress of Gaza; and seven years later they shared in Baldwin IV.'s great victory at Ascalon.

Meanwhile Saladin had possessed himself of Emesa and Damascus (1174-75), and, as he was already lord of Egypt, his power hemmed in the Latin kingdom on every side. In July 1173 Amalric was succeeded by his son Baldwin IV., a boy of twelve. Raymond III., count of Tripoli, a man suspected of being in league with the Saracens, was appointed regent, although in 1176 the masters of the Templars and the Hospitallers united in offering this office to the newly arrived Philip of Flanders. The construction of the Templar fortress at Jacob's ford on the upper Jordan led to a fresh Saracen invasion and the disastrous battle of Paneas (1179), from which the young king and the Holy Cross escaped with difficulty, while Odo de Saint Amand, the grand master, was carried away captive and never returned.

During Odo's mastership the Old Man of the Mountains sent to Amalric offering to accept the Christian faith if released from the tribute he had paid to the Templars since (according to the reckoning of Monsieur Defrémery) somewhere about 1149. The Templars murdered the envoys on their return (cerca 1172). Amalric demanded that the offenders should be given up to justice. Odo refused to yield the chief culprit, though he was well known, and invoked the protection of the pope. Amalric had to vindicate his right by force of arms at Sidon, and died while preparing to take stronger measures. The connection between the Templars and the Old Man was still vital eighty years later when the two grand masters rebuked the insolence of the Assassin envoys in the presence of Louis IX. Odo de Saint Amand was succeeded by Arnold de Torroge, who died at Verona on his way to implore European succor for the Holy Land. The power of Saladin was now (1184) increasing daily; Baldwin IV. was a leper, and his realm was a prey to rival factions. There were two claimants for the guardianship of the state, Raymond III. of Tripoli and Guy de Lusignan, who in 1180 had married Sibylla, sister of the young king. Baldwin inclined to the former, against the patriarch and Arnold de Torroge.

There is something Homeric in the story of the fall of the Latin kingdom as related by the historians of the next century. A French knight, Gerard de Riderfort or Bideford, coming to the East in quest of fortune, attached himself to the service of Raymond of Tripoli, looking for the hand of some wealthy widow in reward. But on his claiming the hand of the lady of Botron he



was met with a refusal. Angered at this, Gerard enrolled himself among the Templars, biding his time for revenge, and was elected grand master on the death of Arnold. Baldwin IV. died (1185), leaving the throne to his young nephew Baldwin V., the son of Sibylla, under the guardianship of Raymond, whose office was not of long duration, as the little king died in September 1186. This was Gerard's opportunity. The Templars carried the body of their dead sovereign to Jerusalem for burial; and then, unknown to the barons of the realm, Gerard and the patriarch crowned Sibylla and her husband Guy. The coronation of Guy was the triumph of Raynald of Chatillon, once prince of Antioch, and Saladin's deadliest foe. It was at the same time the overthrow of Raymond's ambition; and both Latin and Arabic writers are agreed that the Christian count and the Mahomedan sultan now entered into an alliance. To break this friendship and so save the kingdom, the two grand masters were sent north to make terms with Raymond. But the rash valor of the Templars provoked a hopeless contest with 7000 Saracens. The grand master of the Hospitallers was slain; but Gerard made his escape with three knights to Nazareth (1 May 1187). In this emergency Raymond became reconciled with Guy; and Gerard placed the Temple treasures of Henry II. at his king's disposal. Once more it was the Templars' rashness that led to the disastrous battle of Hittin (4 July). Gerard and the king fell into the hands of Saladin, but were released about a year later; Raymond of Tripoli made his escape through treachery or fortune; and 230 Templars fell in or after the battle, for the fight was scarcely over before Saladin ordered all the Templars and Hospitallers to be

murdered in cold blood. One after another the Christian fortresses of Palestine fell into the hands of Saladin. Jerusalem surrendered on second through third of October 1187, and the treasures of the Temple coffers were used to purchase the redemption of the poorer Christians, part of whom the Templar warriors guarded on their sad march from the Holy City to Tripoli. Part of their wealth was expended by Conrad of Montferrat in the defense of Tyre; but, when this prince refused to admit Guy to his city, both the Templars and the Hospitallers from the neighboring parts flocked to the banner of their released king and accompanied him to the siege of Acre (22 August 1189). In his company they bore their part in the two years' siege and the terrible famine of 1190-91; and their grand master died in the great battle of 4 October 1189, refusing to survive the slaughter of his brethren.

On the fall of Acre Philip Augustus established himself in the palace of the Templars, who are, however, stated to have sympathized with Richard. This king sold them the island of Cyprus for 100,000 besants; but, unable to pay the purchase money, they transferred the debt and the principality to Guy of Lusignan. The English king consulted them before deciding on any great military movement; and in June 1192 they advocated the bold plan of an advance on Egypt rather than on Jerusalem. In the disputes for the Latin kingdom of the East the Templars seem to have supported Guy, and, like Richard, were credited with having had a hand in the murder of Conrad of Montferrat (April 1192). It was in the disguise of a Templar and in a Templar

galley that Richard left the Holy Land. When Acre was recovered, the Templars, like the Hospitallers, received their own quarters in the town, which from this time became the center of the order. On the death of Henry of Champagne (1197) they vetoed the election of Raoul de Tabarie; after the death of his successor Amalric they refused to renew the truce with Saladin's brother, Saif al-Dīn, and led an expedition against the Saracens before the arrival of the new king, John de Brienne, at whose coronation in 1210 William de Chartres, the grand master, was present. Seven years later, with the aid of Walter de Avennis and of the Teutonic Knights, they commenced the building of their fortress of Castle Pilgrim, near Acre, on a rocky promontory washed by the Mediterranean on every side except the east. This wonderful structure, whose ruins are still to be seen, was fortified with a strong wall, founded on the substructure of a yet more extensive one running from sea to sea, and was flanked by lofty towers of huge squared stones. Within was a spring of pure water, besides fishponds, salt-mines, woods, pastures, orchards, and all things fitted to furnish an abode in which the Templars might await the day of their restoration to Jerusalem.

It was from this castle that in May 1218 the fifth crusade started for the expedition against Egypt. The Templars were the heroes of the siege of Damietta, at which William Fifth de Chartres was slain. "First to attack and last to retreat," they saved the Christian army from annihilation on 29 August 1219; and when the city surrendered (5 November) the only one of its twenty-eight towers that had begun to give way had been shaken by

their engines. On the other hand, it was largely owing to their objections that John de Brienne refused the sultan's offer to restore Jerusalem and Palestine.

From the very first the Templars seem to have been opposed to Frederick II., and when he landed at Acre (7 September 1228) they refused to march under the banners of an excommunicated man, and would only accompany his host from Acre to Joppa in a separate body. They were accused of notifying Frederick's intended pilgrimage to the Jordan to the sultan, and they were certainly opposed to Frederick's ten years' peace with Al-Kāmil, the sultan of Egypt, and refused to be present at his Coronation in Jerusalem. Frederick was not slow to avenge himself: he left Jerusalem abruptly, publicly insulted the grand master, demanded the surrender of their fortresses, and even laid siege to Castle Pilgrim. He left Acre on the 3 of May 1229, and on landing in Apulia gave orders to seize the estates of the order and chase all its members from the land.

Long before the expiration of Frederick's peace Europe was preparing for a fresh crusade against the now divided realm of the Ayyubids. Theobald of Navarre and his Crusaders Seventh reached Palestine about August 1239. The Templars shared in the great defeat near Jaffa, an engagement which their temerity had done much to provoke (13 November 1239). If the king ever accepted the overtures of Ṣāliḥ of Damascus, he was supporting the policy of Hermann of Perigord, the grand master, who towards the summer of 1244 wrote a triumphant letter to

England, telling how he had engaged this sultan and Nasir of Kerak to make an alliance against the sultan of Egypt and restore the whole of Palestine from the Jordan to the sea. Theobald, however, before leaving the Holy Land (27 September 1240), signed a ten years' truce with Şāliḥ of Egypt. The Hospitallers seem to have been won over to his view, and when Richard of Cornwall arrived (11 October) he had to decide between the two rival orders and their opposing policies. After some hesitation he concluded a treaty with the sultan of Egypt, much to the annoyance of the Templars, who openly mocked his efforts. On his departure the three orders came to open discord: the Templars laid siege to the Hospitallers in Acre and drove out the Teutonic Knights "in contumeliam imperatoris." They were successful on all sides. The negotiations with Damascus and Kerak were reopened, and in 1244 Hermann of Perigord wrote to the princes of Europe that after a "silence of fifty-six years the divine mysteries would once more be celebrated in the Holy City."

It was in this moment of danger that the sultan of Babylon called in the barbarous Kharizmians, whom the Mongol invasions had driven from their native lands. These savages, entering from the north, flowed like a tide past the newly built and impregnable Templar fortress of Safed, swept down on Jerusalem, and annihilated the Christian army near Gaza on Saint Luke's day (18 October) 1244. From this blow the Latin kingdom of the East never recovered; 600 knights took part in the battle; the whole force of the Templars, 300 in number, was present, but only 18

survived, and of 200 Hospitallers only 16. The masters of both orders were slain or taken prisoners. Despite the admirable valor of the Templars, their policy had proved the ruin of the land. Jerusalem was lost to Christendom forever; and, though the Kharizmians melted away in the course of the next three years, they left the country so weak that all the acquisitions of Theobald and Richard fell an easy prey to the sultan of Babylon.

Recognizing the fact that the true way to Jerusalem lay through Egypt, Louis IX. led his host to the banks of the Nile, being accompanied by the Templars. Their master, William de Sonnac, attempted in vain to restrain the rash advance of the count of Artois at the battle of Mansura (8 February 1250), which only three Templars survived. Saint Louis, when captured a few weeks later, owed his speedy release to the generosity with which the order advanced his ransom-money. Shortly after his departure from Acre (April 1254) they consented to an eleven years' truce with the sultans of Egypt and Damascus.

A new enemy was now threatening Mahomedan and Christian alike. For a time the Mongol advance may have been welcomed by the Christian cities, as one after another the Mahomedan principalities of the north fell before the new invaders. But this new danger stimulated the energies of Egypt, which under the Mameluke Bibars encroached year after year on the scanty remains of the Latin Kingdom. The great Frankish lords, fearing that all was lost, made haste to sell their lands to the Templars and Hospitallers before quitting Palestine forever. In 1260 the

former purchased Sidon and Beaufort; next year the Hospitallers purchased Arsuf. In 1267, by a skilful adaptation of the banners of both orders, Bibars nearly surprised Antioch. The Templar fortress of Safed surrendered with its garrison of 600 knights, all of whom preferred death to apostasy (June 1266). Beaufort fell in 1268, Antioch six weeks later; and, though the two orders still made occasional brilliant dashes from their Acre stronghold, such as that to Ascalon in 1264 and that with Prince Edward of England to destroy Ḳāḳūn in 1271, they became so enfeebled as to welcome the treaty which secured them the plain of Acre and a free road to Nazareth as the result of the English crusade of 1272.

But, though weak against external foes, the Templars were strong enough for internal warfare. In 1277 they espoused the quarrel of the bishop of Tripoli, formerly a member of the order, against his nephew Bohemond, prince of Antioch and Tripoli, and began a war which lasted three years. In 1276 their conduct drove Hugh III, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, from Acre to Tyre. In the ensuing year, when Mary of Antioch had sold her claim to the crown to Charles of Anjou, they welcomed this prince's lieutenant to Acre and succeeded for the moment in forcing the knights of that city to do homage to the new king. Thirteen years later (26 April 1290) Tripoli fell, and next year Acre, after a siege of six weeks, at the close of which (16 May) William de Beaujeu, the grand master, was slain. The few surviving Templars elected a new master, and, forcing their way to the seashore, sailed for Cyprus, which now became the headquarters of the order. A

futile attempt against Alexandria in 1300 and an unsuccessful effort to form a new settlement at Tortosa about the same time (1300-2) are the closing acts of their long career in the western parts of Asia.

For more than a hundred years the Templars had been one of the wealthiest and most influential factors in European politics. If we confine our attention to the East, we realize but a small part of their enormous power. Two Templars were appointed guardians of the disputed castles on the betrothal of Prince Henry of England and the French princess in 1161. Other Templars were almoners of Henry III of England and of Philip IV of France. One grand master was godfather to a daughter of Louis IX; another, despite the prohibition of the order, is said to have been godfather to a child of Philip IV. They were summoned to the great councils of the Church, such as the Lateran of 1215 and the Lyons council of 1274. Frederick II's persecution of their order was one of the main causes of his excommunication in 1239; and his last will enjoined the restoration of their estates. Their property was scattered over every country of Christendom, from Denmark to Spain, from Ireland to Cyprus. Before the middle of the thirteenth century Matthew Paris reckons their manors at 9000, Alberic of Trois-Fontaines at 7050, whereas the rival order of Saint John had barely half the latter number. Some fifty years earlier their income from Armenia alone was 20,000 besants. Both in Paris and in London their houses were used as strongholds for the royal treasure. In the Temple in London Hubert de Burgh and the



Poitevin favorites of Henry III. stored their wealth; and the same building was used as a bank into which the debtors of the foreign usurers paid their dues. From the English Templars Henry III borrowed the purchase money of Oleron in 1235; from the French Templars Philip IV exacted the dowry of his daughter Isabella on her marriage with Edward II. To Louis IX they lent a great part of his ransom, and to Edward I. of England no less than 25,000 livres Tournois, of which they remitted four-fifths. Jacques de Molay, the last grand master, came to France in 1306 with 150,000 gold florins and ten horse-loads of silver. In the Spanish peninsula they occupied a peculiar position, and more than one king of Aragon is said to have been brought up under their discipline.

Such were the power and wealth of the Templars at the time when Philip IV. of France accused them of heresy and worse offences, had them arrested (13 October 1307), and forced them to confess by tortures of the most excruciating kinds. Five years later (26 May 1312) the order was suppressed by decree of the council of Vienne and its goods transferred to the hospital of Saint John.

Never had the order of the Temple been to all appearance more powerful than immediately before its ruin. Sovereign power, in the sense of that of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia or the Knights of Saint John in Rhodes and later in Malta, it had never possessed; but its privileges and immunities constituted it a church within the church and, in France at least, a state within

the state. Philip IV., indeed, in pursuance of his policy of centralizing power in the crown, had from 1287 onwards made tentative efforts to curtail the power and wealth of the order; in 1287 he commanded the sequestration of all its property acquired since the confirmation of its privileges by Louis IX. in 1258; in 1289 the ordinance of Ferrières in Gâtinais was directed against its illegal acquisitions and its interference with the jurisdiction of the king and his vassals; in 1290 the parliament decided that the privileges of the order could only be enjoyed by those who actually wore its habit. Soon, however, the king's necessities forced him to change his policy. In January 1293 the privileges of the order in and about Paris were confirmed and extended, and in 1297 Philip borrowed 5200 livres tournoises from the Paris Temple. Then came the great quarrel with Pope Boniface VIII., and on the 10 of August 1303 the king signed with Hugues de Peraud, the general visitor of the French Templars, a formal treaty of alliance against the pope. On the 6 of February 1304 Boniface's successor, Benedict XI., once more confirmed all the Templars' privileges; while Philip, for his part, appointed Hugues de Peraud receiver of the royal revenues and, under pressure of the disastrous campaign in Flanders, in June granted a charter exempting the order from all hindrances to the acquisition of property. Two years later the king took refuge in the Temple from the violence of the Paris mob, and so late as the spring of 1307 was present at the reception of a new Templar.

Yet for some two years past the king had been plotting treacherous attack on the order. His motives are clear: he had

used every expedient to raise money, had robbed and expelled the Jews and the Lombard bankers, had debased the coinage; the suppression of the Templars would at once rescue him from their unwelcome tutelage and replenish his coffers. He cherished also another ambition. The question of an amalgamation of the great military orders had often been mooted; the project had been approved by successive popes in the interests of the Holy Land; it had been formally proposed at the Lyons council of 1274, only to be rejected by the opposition of the Templars and Hospitallers themselves. To Philip this scheme commended itself as an opportunity for bringing the orders under the control of the French crown; there was to be but one order, that of the "Knights of Jerusalem," of which the grand master was always to be a prince of the royal house of France. Clearly, it only needed an excuse and a favorable opportunity to make him attack the Templars; and, once having attacked them, nothing short of their entire destruction would have been consistent with his safety. The excuse was found in the denunciation of the order for heresy and unspeakable immoralities by a venal informer; the opportunity was the election of a pope, Clement V., wholly devoted to the interests of the king of France.

For perhaps half a century there had been strange stories circulating as to the secret rites practiced by the order at its midnight meetings, stories which probably had their Awusa origin in the extreme precautions taken by the Templars, originally perhaps for military reasons, to secure the secrecy of their proceedings, which excited popular curiosity and

suspicion. Among the Templars alone of the religious orders the ceremonies of reception were conducted in strict privacy; chapters were held at daybreak with closely guarded doors, and no one participating was allowed to reveal what had passed, even to a fellow-member of the order, under pain of expulsion. It was inevitable that, considering the temper of the age, all this should lead to stories of rites too repulsive to bear the light. It was said that on his initiation each member had to disavow his belief in Christ, to spit upon the crucifix, to submit to indecent ceremonies. When the mass was celebrated the consecrating words *Hoc est corpus* were omitted; on Good Friday the holy cross was trampled underfoot; and the Christian duty of alms giving had ceased to be observed. Even the vaunted chastity of the order towards women had, it was said, been turned into the formal obligation to commit more horrible offences. These evil practices were part of the secret statute law of an order which in its nightly assemblies worshipped an idol named Baphomet (that is, the devil depicted as a hermaphrodite goat) or else the devil in the form of a black cat. Devils, too, appeared in the form of beautiful women (*succubi*), with whom the brothers had carnal intercourse. In England the very children at their play bade one another beware of a Templar's kisses. Stranger stories yet were rife in England and gravely reported before bishops and priests, of children slain by their fathers because they chanced to witness the nightly orgies of the society; of one prior's being spirited away at every meeting of the general chapter; of the great preceptor's declaring that a single hair of a Saracen's beard was worth more than the whole body of a Christian man. In

France they were said to roast their illegitimate children and smear their idols with the burning fat.

In the spring of 1304 or 1305 a certain Esquiu de Floyran of Beziers pretended to betray the “secret of the Templars” (factum Templariorum) to James II. of Aragon. The pious king, who had every reason to think well of the order, did not affect to be convinced; but the prospect of spoils was alluring, and he seems to have promised the informer a share of the booty if he could make good his charges. Esquiu now turned to Philip of France, with more immediate success. For the purpose of collecting additional evidence the king caused twelve spies to find admission to the order, and in the meantime sought to win over the pope to his views. Bertrand de Got, archbishop of Bordeaux, who on the 5 of June 1305 became pope as Clement V., owed the tiara to the diplomacy of Philip’s agents, perhaps to their gold; but though a weak man, and moreover a martyr to ill health, he was not so immediately accommodating as the king might have wished, expressing his disbelief in the charges against the order, and, though promising an inquiry, doing his best to procrastinate. Philip determined to force his hand. All France was at this time under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, and the Inquisition could act without consulting the pope. The grand inquisitor of France, William of Paris, was Philip’s confessor and creature. The way was thus open for the king to carry out his plan by a perfectly legal method. His informers denounced the Templars to the Inquisition, and the grand inquisitor, as was the customary procedure in the case of persons accused of heresy,

demanded their arrest by the civil power. On the 14 of September 1307, accordingly, Philip issued writs to his baillis and seneschals throughout the kingdom, directing them to make preparations to arrest the members of the order on the following 13 of October.

The Templars had for some time past been aware of the charges against them. On the 6th of June 1306 Pope Clement had summoned Jacques de Molay, the grand master, from Cyprus to France, in order to consult him on the projected crusade. He had obeyed the call, and, in an interview with the pope, had taken the opportunity to demand a full inquiry. They had, however, taken no measures to defend themselves; the sudden action of the king took them wholly by surprise; and on the night of Friday, the 13 of October 1307, their arrest was effected without difficulty, Jacques de Molay himself with sixty of his brethren being seized in Paris. Next day they were haled before the university of Paris, to hear the recital of their crimes; on Sunday the populace was collected in the royal gardens, where preachers inveighed against the iniquities of the order.

The Templars were caught in toils from which there was no escape. To force them to confess, they were first tortured by the royal officials, before being handed over to the inquisitors to be, if need were, tortured again. In Paris alone thirty-six died under the process. The result was, at the outset, all that the king could desire. Of 138 Templars examined in Paris between the 19 of October and the 24 of November, some of them old men who

had been in the order the greater part of their lives, 123 confessed to spitting on (or “near”) the crucifix at their reception. Many of the prisoners, on the other hand, confessed to all the charges, however grotesque. But the most damning confession was that of the grand master himself, publicly made with tears and protestations of contrition and embodied in a letter (October 25) sent to all the Templars in France. He had been guilty, he said, of denying Christ and spitting on the cross; the grosser charges he indignantly repudiated.

To the pope, meanwhile, the proceedings in France were to the highest degree unwelcome. He had, indeed, become convinced, if not of the general guilt of the order, at least of the guilt of some of its members. But the affair was one which he desired to reserve for his own judgment; Philip’s action he interpreted, rightly, as an encroachment of the civil power on the privileges and property of the Church, and his fears were increased when the French king, without consulting him, sent letters to King James of Aragon, Edward II. of England, the German king Albert and other princes, calling upon them to imitate his example. On the 27 of October Clement issued letters suspending the powers of the Inquisition in France. What followed is not clear, for the documentary evidence for these months is very defective. On the 17 of November James of Aragon wrote to Philip, in answer to his letter and the report of the proceedings in Paris forwarded to him, expressing his surprise at the charges against the Templars, who had done himself and his forefathers great service against the infidel, but promising to proceed against

them since required to do so by the Church.” In Portugal no action was taken at all. Edward II. of England replied that he must first receive information as to the charges from his officials in Agen (whence the charges had originated), and on the 5 of December he wrote to the kings of Aragon, Castile, Portugal and Sicily begging them not to believe the evil reports against the order (Prutz, page 159). But meanwhile, on the 22 of November, Pope Clement had issued a bull calling on all kings and princes to arrest the Templars everywhere, his motive probably being (according to Finke) to forestall the probable action of the secular powers and keep the affair in his own hands. All scruples and hesitations now vanished. In England the Templars were arrested on the 10 of January 1308, in Sicily on the 24 of the same month, in Cyprus on the 27 of May; in Aragon and Castile the process was less easy, for the knights, forewarned, had put their fortresses into a state of defense, notably their strong castle of Monzon, which was only taken after a long siege on the 17 of May, while the last of the Templars strongholds, Castellat, did not fall until the 2 of November.

Meanwhile, on the 26 of May, Philip had made his solemn entry into Poitiers, where the pope and cardinals had already assembled for the purpose of conferring with the king on the matter. The debates that followed were protracted and stormy; but Philip was in a position to back his argument for the suppression of the order by pressing other and more dangerous claims: the canonization of Celestine V., the condemnation of



Boniface VIII. for heresy, the absolution of Guillaume de Nogaret, the executer of the outrage at Anagni, the summoning of a general council, the settlement of the papacy at Avignon. At last, on the 27 of June, an arrangement was come to. The king agreed to handover to the papal commissioners the property and persons of the Templars; Clement, for his part, withdrew the sentence of suspension against the grand inquisitor of France (July 5) and ordered an inquisition into the charges against individual Templars by the diocesan bishops with assessors nominated by himself. The examination of the grand master, of the grand visitor of France, and of the grand preceptors of Cyprus, Normandy and Aquitaine he reserved to himself. Inquisition was to be made into the conduct of the order in each country by special papal commissions; and the fate of the order as a whole was to be decided by a general council.

These decisions were at once acted on. At Poitiers Clement had already heard the confessions of seventy-two Templars, carefully selected from the royal prisons (June 29 to July 1). The grand master and the three preceptors were re-examined at Chinon, and renewed their old confessions (20th August). Lastly, the bull *Regnans in Coelo* summoned a great council at Vienne for the 1 of October 1311, when the question of the guilt of the order might be considered. Meanwhile the pope and cardinals had elaborated the organization of the new inquisition. In this the actual inquisitors, though admitted, played a quite subordinate part: the commissions centred round the diocesan bishops, who had as assessors prelates, abbots, priors and

canoeists. These commissions were twofold, usually, though erroneously, distinguished as papal and episcopal (both were in fact papal); the first were charged with the inquisition into the accusations against the order itself and the grand preceptors of the various countries, the second with that into the accusations against individual Templars. The papal commission in Paris began its sessions on the 9 of August 1309; on the 12, citations were issued to those Templars who "of their own free will" were prepared to come and defend the order. There was much confusion and delay, however, and the actual public trial' did not begin till the 11 of April 1310. Many Templars, trusting in the assurance implied in their citation, had volunteered to defend the order and withdrew their previous confessions. They were soon undeceived; the commission, presided over by the garde des sceaux of the king, the archbishop of Narbonne, was packed with creatures of the crown. The evidence given in Paris for or against the order was, it was soon found, used against the individual Templars on their return to the provinces; the retractation of a confession, under the rules set up for the diocesan inquisition, was punished with death by fire; On Tuesday the 12 of May, fifty-four Templars who had retracted their confessions before the commission were burnt in Paris by order of the archbishop of Sens; a few days later four were burnt at Senlis, and towards the end of May nine more, by order of the archbishop of Reims. Forty-six Templars now withdrew their defense, and the commissioners in Paris decided (30 May) to adjourn till November. The second examination lasted from the 17 of December 1310 to the 16 of May 1311. Meanwhile (cerca

April 1311) Clement and Philip had come to terms. The pope condemned the Templars. The council of Vienne met in October 1311. A discussion arose as to whether the Templars should be heard in their own defense. Clement, it is said, broke up the session to avoid compliance; and when seven Templars offered themselves as deputies for the defense he had them cast into prison. Towards the beginning of March Philip came to Vienne, and he was seated at the pope's right hand when that pontiff delivered his sermon against the Templars (3 April 1312), whose order had just been abolished, not at the general council, but in private consistory (22 March). On 2 May 1312 he published the bull, *Ad Providam*, transferring the goods of the society, except for the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Portugal and Majorca, to the Knights of Saint John. The order was never formally pronounced guilty of the crimes laid to its charge; its abolition was distinctly, in the terms of Clement's bull *Consideranics Dudum*, "non per modum definitive sentential, cum eam super hoc secundum inquisitiones et processus super his habitos non possemus ferre de jure sed per viam provisionis et ordinationis apostolicæ" (6 May 1312).

The final act of the stupendous tragedy came early in 1314. Jacques de Molay, the grand master, had not hitherto risen to the height of his great position; the fear of torture alone had been enough to make him confess, and this confession had been used to extract avowals from his brethren, subject as they were to unspeakable sufferings and accustomed to yield to the military chief. Humiliation on humiliation had been heaped on the

wretched man, public recantations, reiterated confessions. Before the papal commission he had flamed into anger, protested, equivocated, only in the end to repeat his confession once more. The same had happened before the commission of cardinals at Chinon; the audience with the pope, which he demanded, he had never obtained. On the 6 of May 1312 Pope Clement issued his final decision as to the fate of the Templars in general; that of the five great offices of the order he reserved in his own hand: With this a silence falls over the history of the Templars; the fate of the order had been decided, that of the individuals still under trial was of little interest to contemporary chroniclers. Then the veil is suddenly lifted. Jacques de Molay has found his wonted courage at last, and with him Gaufrid de Charney, the preceptor of Normandy; on the 14 of March 1314 they were brought out on to a scaffold erected in front of Notre Dame, there in the presence of the papal legates and of the people to repeat their confessions and to receive their sentence of perpetual imprisonment. Instead, they seized the opportunity to withdraw their confessions and to protest to the assembled thousands the innocence of the order. King Philip the Fair did not wait to consult the Church as to what he should do; he had them burnt "in the little island" of the Seine "between the Augustinians and the royal garden"; with them perished Guy (the Guido Delphini of the trials), the youthful son of the dauphin of Auvergne. After the deaths of the pope and king, which followed shortly, the people remembered that the grand master had summoned them with his dying breath before the judgment seat of God; but the sole recorded contemporary protest is that of the

Augustinians against the trespass committed by the royal officers on their land!

On the question of the guilt or innocence of the Templars in respect of the specific charges on which the order was condemned opinion, has long been divided. Their innocence was maintained by the greatest of all their contemporaries, Dante, and among others by the historian Villani and by the sainted Antoninus, archbishop of Padua. In more recent times a certain heat was introduced into the discussion of the question owing to its having been for centuries brought into the arena of party controversy, between Protestants and Catholics, Gallicans and Ultramontanes, Freemasons and the Church. Thus in 1654 Pierre Du Puy, librarian of the Bibliothèque Royale, published his work on the Templars to confute those who sought to establish their innocence in order to, discredit a king of France. On the other hand, Nicolas Gurtler published his *Historia Templariorum* (Amsterdam, 1691, second edition, 1703) to show, as a good Protestant, that the Templars had the usual vices of Roman Catholics, while, according to Loiseleur, the later editors of Du Puy (especially of the 1751 edition, ostensibly printed at Brussels) were Freemasons who, under false names, garbled the old material and inserted new in the interests of the supposed origin of their own order in that of the Templars. Several Roman Catholic champions of the order now entered the field, such as the Benedictine historian of Languedoc, Dom Dominiue Joseph Vaissète, and notably the Premonstratensian canon R. P. M. Jeune, prior of Etival, who in 1789 published at Paris his *Histoire*

critique et apologétique de l'ordre des chevaliers... dits  
Templiers, a valuable work directed specifically against Gurtler  
and Du Puy. In the nineteenth century a fresh impetus was given  
to the discussion by the publication in 1813 of Raynouard's  
brilliant defiance of the order. The challenge was taken up,  
among others, by the famous orientalist Friedrich von Hammer-  
Purgstall, who in 1818 published his *Mysterium Baphometis  
revelatum*, an attempt to prove that the Templars followed the  
doctrines and rites of the Gnostic Ophites, the argument being  
fortified with reproductions of obscene representations of  
supposed Gnostic ceremonies and of mystic symbols said to  
have been found in the Templars' buildings. Wilcke, while  
rejecting Hammer's main conclusions as unproved, argued in  
favor of the existence of a secret doctrine based, not on  
Gnosticism, but on the Unitarianism of Islam, of which Baphomet  
was the symbol. On the other hand, Wilhelm Havemann  
(*Geschichte des Ausganges des Tempelherrenordens*, Stuttgart  
and Tübingen, 1846) decided in favor of the innocence of the  
order. This view was also taken by a succession of German  
scholars, in England by C. G. Addison, and in France by a whole  
series of conspicuous writers: such as Mignet, Guizot, Renan,  
Lavocat. Others, like Boutaric, while rejecting the charge of  
heresy, accepted the evidence for the spuitio and the indecent  
kisses, explaining the former as a formula of forgotten meaning  
and the latter as a sign of fraternité! Michelet, who in his history  
of France had expressed himself favorably to the order,  
announced his conversion to the opposite opinion in the  
prefaces to his edition of the Procès. This view was reinforced by

the work in which Loiseleur endeavored to prove that the order had secretly rejected Christianity in favor of an heretical religion based on Gnostic dualism as taught by the Cathari; it was crowned with the high authority of Ranke in the great *Weltgeschichte* (8 Theil, 1887, page 621); it has been adopted in the later *Weltgeschichte* of Weber (page 521). The greatest impulse to this view was, however, given by the brilliant contributions of Hans Prutz. The first of these, the *Geheimlehre*, in the main an expansion of Loiseleur's argument, at once raised up a host of critics; and, as a result of five years study of the archives at Rome and elsewhere, Konrad Schottmüller published in 1887 his *Untergang des Templerordens*, in which he claimed to have crushed Prutz's conclusions under the weight of a mass of new evidence. The work was, however, uncritical and full of conspicuous errors, and Prutz had little difficulty in turning many of its author's arguments against himself. This was done in the *Entwicklung und Untergang des Tempelherrenordens* (1888), in which, however, Prutz modifies his earlier views so far as to withdraw his contention that the Templars had a "formally developed secret doctrine," while maintaining that the custom of denying Christ and spitting on the cross was often, and in some provinces universally, practised at the reception of the brethren, "as a coarse test of obedience, of which the original sense had partly been forgotten, partly heretic ally interpreted under the influence of later heresies." This view was maintained by Mister T. A. Archer in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It was criticized and rejected by Döllinger in the last of his university lectures (19 November 1889), and by Karl Wenck in

several articles in the *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*; and it was further attacked by J. Gmelin (*Schuld oder Unschuld*, 2, 1893), whose work, in spite of its somewhat ponderous polemic, is valuable as a mine of learning and by reason of the sources (notably the tables of the evidence taken at the trials which it publishes. H. C. Lea, in his *History of the Inquisition* (1888, volume 3), had already come independently to the conclusion that the Templars were innocent. Lastly appeared the fascinatingly interesting and closely reasoned book of Professor H. Finke (1907) which, based partly on a mass of new material drawn from the Aragonese archives, had for its object to supplement the work of Gmelin and to establish the innocence of the order on an incontrovertible basis.

In the opinion of the present writer, the defenders of the order have proved their case. Even the late Mister Archer, who took the contrary view, was inclined to restrict it to the Templars in France. "The opinion that the monstrous charges brought against the Templars were false," he wrote, "and that the confessions were only extracted by torture is supported by the general results of the investigation (in almost every country outside France), as we have them collected in Raynouard, Labbe, and Du Puy. In Castile, where the king flung them into prison, they were acquitted at the council at Salamanca. In Aragon, where they held out for a time in their fortresses against the royal power, the council of Tarragona proclaimed in their favor (4 November 1312). In Portugal the commissioners reported that there were no grounds for accusation. At Mainz the council pronounced the



order blameless. At Treves, at Messina, and at Bologna, in Romagna and in Cyprus, they were either acquitted or no evidence was forthcoming against them. At the council of Ravenna the question as to whether torture should be used was answered in the negative except by two Dominicans; all the Templars were absolved, even those who had confessed through fear of torture being pronounced innocent (18 June 1310). Six Templars were examined at Florence, and their evidence is for its length the most remarkable of all that is still extant. Roughly speaking, they confess with the most elaborate detail to every charge, even the most loathsome; and the perusal of their evidence induces a constant suspicion that their answers were practically dictated to them in the process of the examination or invented by the witnesses themselves. In England, where perhaps torture was not used, out of eighty Templars examined only four confessed to the charge of denying Christ, and of these four two were apostate knights. But some English Templars would only guarantee the purity of their own country. That in England as elsewhere the charges were held to be not absolutely proved seems evident from the form of confession to be used before absolution, in which the Templars acknowledge themselves to be defamed in the matter of certain articles that they cannot purge themselves. In England nearly all the worst evidence comes at second or third hand or through the depositions of Franciscans and Dominicans," that is, the rivals and enemies of the order. But what is the nature of the evidence "too strong to be explained away" on which Mister Archer bases his opinion that certain of the charges were proved "at least in

France.” The modern practice of the English courts tends to discount altogether the value as evidence of confessions, even freely made. What is the value of these confessions of the Templars which lie before us in the Tables published by Gmelin. The procedure of the Inquisition left no alternative to those accused on “vehement suspicion” of heresy, but confession or death under lingering torture; to withdraw a confession, meant instant death by fire. The Templars, for the most part simple and illiterate men, were suddenly arrested, cast separately into dark dungeons, loaded with chains, starved, terrorized, and tortured. They were told the charges to which their leaders had confessed, or were said to have confessed: to repeat the monotonous formula admitting the *sputio super crucem* and the like was to obtain their freedom at the cost of a comparatively mild penance. The wonder is not that so many confessed, but that so many persisted in their denial. The evidence, in short, is, from the modern point of view, wholly worthless, as even some contemporaries suspected it to be.

A word must be added as to the significance of the work of the Templars and of the manner of their fall in the history of the world. Two great things the order had done for European civilization: in the East and in Spain it had successfully checked the advance of Islam; it had, deepened and given a religious sanction to the idea of the chivalrous man, the *homo legalis*, and so opened up, to a class of people who for centuries to come were to exercise enormous influence, spheres of activity the beneficent effects of which are still recognizable in the world.

On the other hand, the destruction of the Templars had three consequences fateful for Christian civilization: (1) It facilitated the conquests of the Turks by preventing the Templars from playing in Cyprus the part which the Knights of Saint John played in Malta. (2) It partly set a precedent for, partly confirmed, the cruel criminal procedure of France, which lasted to the Revolution. (3) It set the seal of the highest authority on the popular belief in witchcraft and personal intercourse with the devil, sanctioned the expedient of wringing confessions of such intercourse from the accused by unspeakable tortures, and so made possible the hideous witch-persecutions which darkened the later Middle Ages and, even in Protestant countries, long survived the Reformation. "If I were to name a day in the whole history of the world," said Döllinger at the conclusion of his last public lecture, "which appears to me in the truest sense as a dies nefastus, I should be able to name no other than the thirteenth of October 1307."