

JAMES BURNES

SKETCH OF THE
HISTORY OF THE
KNIGHTS TEMPLARS

James Burnes

**Sketch of the History of
the Knights Templars**

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James Burnes
Sketch of the History of the
Knights Templars / Second Edition

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

Prince Augustus Frederick

DUKE OF SUSSEX, EARL OF INVERNESS, K.G. D.C.L

&c. &c. &c. &c

Grand Prior of England,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE DEDICATED

With every sentiment of Respect,

BY

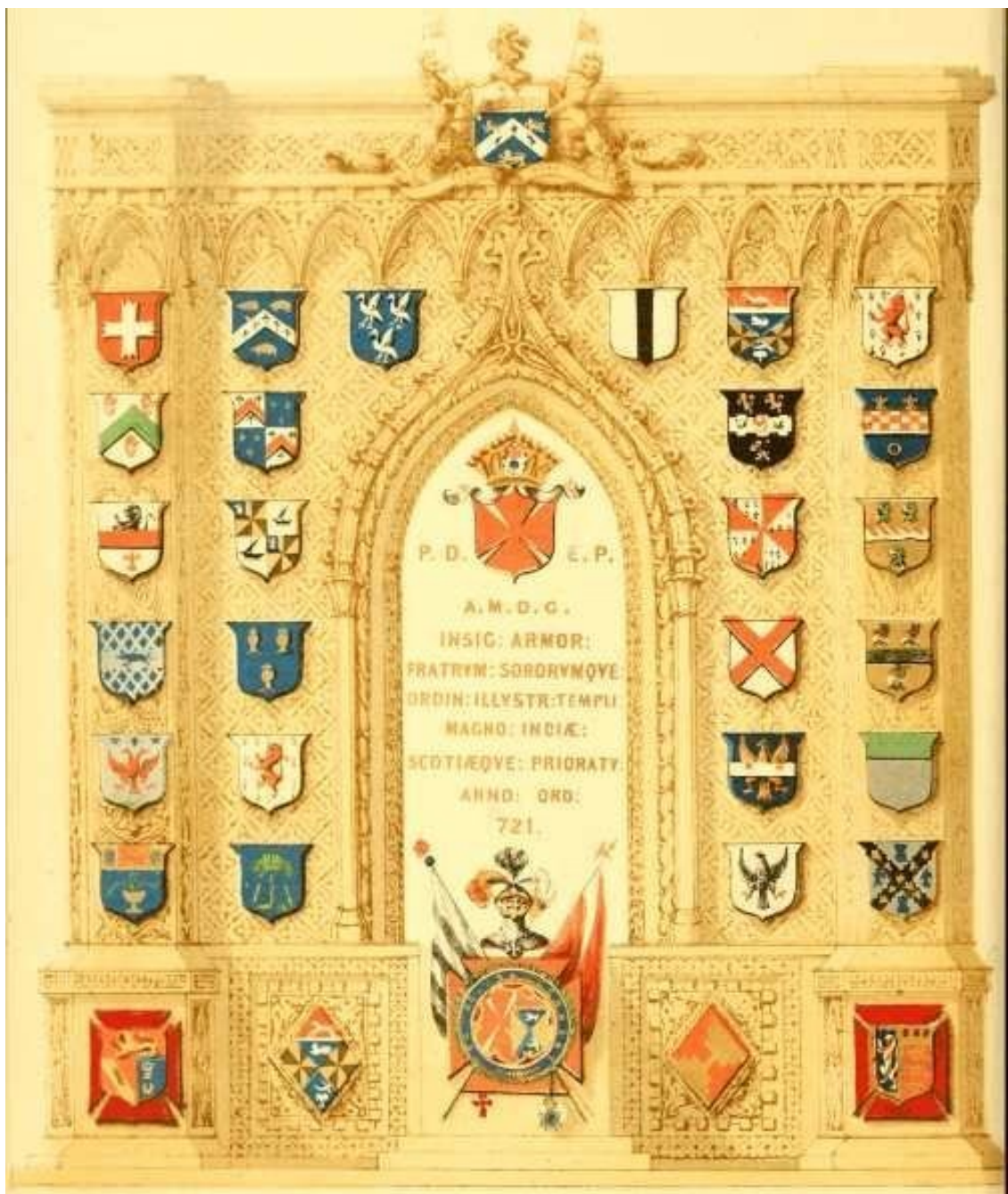
His faithful and obedient Servant and Brother,

JAMES BURNES

NOTICE

The very limited number of copies comprising the First Edition of this Work were exhausted by presentations amongst the most Illustrious Individuals, – leaving only a few copies for the Author's numerous circle of friends and associates. To remove a disappointment very generally expressed by many intimate friends of the Author in this Country, he has been induced to print a Second Edition of the Work, which is now offered to the Public, with many Additions and Illustrations, – for one of which, in particular, – the plate of Sir Sidney Smith, – the Publishers are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Bentley.

Edinburgh, August 1840.



P. D. E. P

A. M. D. C

INSIG: ARMOR:

FRATRVM: SORORVMQVE:

ORDIN: ILLVSTR: TEMPLI:

MAGNO: INDIÆ:

SCOTIÆQVE: PRIORATV:

ANNO: ORD:

721

List of Chevaliers,

Whose Armorial Bearings are emblazoned upon the *Gothic Gateway* at the beginning of this Work, and to whom the Plate is affectionately dedicated by their Friend and Brother,
James Burnes.

Sir William Sidney Smith, G.C.B

&c. &c. &c. &c

Late Regent and Prince Magistral of the

Order of the Temple

Outram.	Hair.	Gibson.	Erskine.	Burnes.	Le Geyt.
Le Messurier.	Kennedy.			Bogle.	Holmes.
Chalmers.	Campbell.			Campbell.	Lushington.
		ARMS of THE ORDER.		Fitzgerald.	Bortoleme.
Macan.	Shaw.				
Dunlop.	Le Geyt.			Pearson.	Simson.
Laurie.	Winchester.			Ramsay.	Pringle.

James Burnes,

Knight of Aquitaine, and of the Royal Guelphic Order,

Grand Prior of India

Bailiff of Berne. Harris

INTRODUCTION

Having learned from some of those kind and esteemed Friends who lately presented to me a magnificent piece of Plate, in the name of the Free Masons of Scotland, on the occasion of my approaching departure for India, that I could not more suitably evince my sense of gratitude, than by leaving amongst them, as a token of remembrance, some Memoir of the Order of the Temple, with which they seem to consider me in some measure identified, I have, in compliance with their wish, devoted the very few hours of leisure I have had during the last month, to the preparation of the following Sketch; – and feel confident, that from an individual almost constantly engaged in arrangements for quitting his Native Country, and labouring under the most painful feelings, at the prospect of parting from his family, and those with whom he has lived in cordial terms of friendship during the last three years, nothing very finished or original will be expected; and I offer no apology, therefore, when I state, that a considerable portion of the following pages consists merely of an abridgement or reprint of an admirable, but not sufficiently known article, written by Mr. Keightly, on the History of the Templars, down to the period of the Persecution, in the Foreign Quarterly Review for 1828, followed by some Extracts from Laurie's Free-Masonry, and Mill's History of Chivalry.

The account of the present state of the Order has been taken from the official "Manuel des Chevaliers de l'Ordre du Temple," published both at Paris and Liverpool; as well as from information gathered either in foreign books, such as the "Acta Latamorum," in which all the Statutes, &c. were given to the Public in 1815, or from conversations with which I have been honoured by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, General Wright, and other distinguished Templars, at home and abroad. For much of the information recorded in the Chapter on the Scottish Templars, I am under great obligations to Adam Paterson, and William Pringle, Esquires, both of whom furnished me with valuable Manuscripts. The latter of these gentlemen is the author of various papers on the Templars, in that valuable periodical, the Free-Masons' Review, nor was it until I had failed to induce him to give, in a continuous form, the result of his own researches on the subject, that I myself ventured to enter upon the present Work.

In conclusion, I have to express my warmest acknowledgments to my friend, W. A. Laurie, Esquire, Secretary to the Grand Lodge of Scotland, for many valuable notes and additions, – to whose taste and exertions this little Volume owes its appearance before the Public, and to whom personally I am indebted for many favours, which he would not wish me to particularise.

United Service Club,
Edinburgh, 28th May 1837.

THE HOSPITALLERS



A HOSPITALLER



CHAP. I. The Hospitallers

The natural desire to visit places which have been the scene of memorable actions, or the abode of distinguished personages, had from a very early period drawn pious pilgrims from the east and the west to view those spots which had been hallowed by the presence of the Son of God. The toils and the dangers of the journey were unheeded, when set in comparison with the bliss of pouring forth prayer on Calvary, and bathing in the waves of Jordan, whose waters had consecrated the Saviour to his holy office. And, accordingly, we find that, so early as the ninth century, there was in the valley of Jehoshaphat, near the church of the Holy Virgin, an Hospital composed of twelve dwellings, for pilgrims from the west, which possessed corn lands, vineyards, and gardens, and an excellent library, established by the bounty of Charlemagne.

In the eleventh century, when the apprehension of the approaching end of the world, and appearance of Christ to judge mankind, had once more fanned the flame of pious pilgrimage which had been previously dying away, and men were hastening to the land where they expected to meet their Lord and Judge, there was built within the walls of Jerusalem an Hospital for the reception of Catholic pilgrims. This hospital stood within a very short distance of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and, by the favour of the Egyptian Khalif, a church, dedicated to the Virgin, and afterwards called St. Maria de Latina, was erected close by it; there an abbot and several monks, who followed the rule of St. Benedict, received and entertained the pilgrims who arrived each year from the west, and furnished such of them as were poor or had been plundered by the roving Bedouins, with the means of paying the tax exacted by the unbelievers. Decorum not permitting the reception of female pilgrims, the brethren established without their walls a convent, dedicated to Mary Magdalene, where a pious sisterhood entertained the pilgrims of their own sex. The number of the pilgrims still continuing to increase, the abbot and his monks erected a new *Hospitium* near their church, which they placed under the patronage of St. John, the Patriarch of Alexandria, named Eleemon, or the Compassionate. This last Hospital had no independent revenues, but derived its income from the bounty of the abbot of the monastery of the Holy Virgin, and the alms of the pious.¹

When, in 1099, Jerusalem was invested by the Crusaders, the Hospital of St. John was presided over by Gerhard, a native of Provence, a man of exemplary piety, and of a spirit of mild and universal benevolence, rarely to be found in that age; for while the city was pressed by the arms of the faithful, who sought for future glory by the extermination of those whom they deemed the enemies of God on earth, not merely the orthodox Catholic, but the schismatic Greek, and even the unbelieving Moslem, shared without distinction the alms of the good director of the Hospital of St. John. When the city was taken, the sick and wounded of the Crusaders received all due care and attention from Gerhard and his monks. The general favour they enjoyed with Godfrey de Bouillon and the other pilgrims now emboldened them to separate themselves from the monastery of St. Mary de Latina; and to pursue their labour of love alone and independent, they drew up a rule for themselves, to which they bound themselves to obedience in the presence of the patriarch, and assumed as their distinguishing dress, a black mantle, with a white cross of eight points on the left breast.² They still remained obedient to the abbot of St. Maria de Latina, and according to the law of the church, they paid tythes to the patriarch.

¹ "The Greek Convent adjoins the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. From the terrace of this Convent, you see a spacious enclosure, in which grow two or three olive trees, a palm tree, and a few cypresses. The house of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem formerly occupied this deserted spot." – Chateaubriand.

² At a subsequent period, the war-dress of the Knights Hospitallers was a scarlet tunic, or sopra vest, on which was embroidered the sacred emblem of the Order. In the Convent, they wore a black robe similarly adorned, with a cap of dignity. The knights were authorised to wear these dresses by a Bull of Pope Alexander IV, in 1259. The other insignia were, —*First*, A star which was worn on the left breast, in the form of a cross patée, having eight points, symbolical of the eight beatitudes and the eight languages, which

This continued while the brotherhood was poor; but riches soon began to flow in upon them. Godfrey, whose very name suggests the ideas of virtue and piety, pure, if not always well-directed, struck with their simple and unassuming charity, bestowed on them his domain of Monboire, in Brabant, with all its appurtenances. His brother and successor, Baldwin, gave them a portion of the booty gained from the infidels; several pious princes and nobles followed these examples, and the Hospital of St. John soon saw itself in possession of extensive estates, both in Europe³ and Asia, which were managed by members of the society named Preceptors. Pope Pascall II, in 1113, relieved the Hospitallers from the burden of paying tythes to the patriarch of Jerusalem – confirmed by his Bull all donations made and to be made to them – and gave them authority to appoint a successor on the death of Gerhard, without the interference of any other secular or spiritual authority. The society now counted among its members many gallant knights who had come to the Holy Land to fight in the cause of their Saviour; and there, actuated by a spirit more accordant to his, had flung aside their swords, and devoted themselves to the attendance on the sick and poor among the brethren of St. John. One of the most distinguished of these was Raymond Dupuy, a knight of Dauphiné, who, on the death of the worthy Gerhard, was chosen to succeed him in his office.

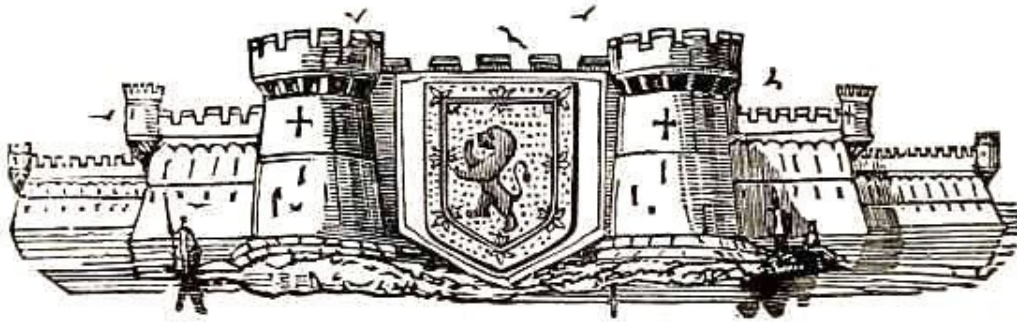
It was Raymond who organized the order of the Hospitallers, and established the discipline of the order. His regulations afford a specimen of the manners and modes of thinking of his time; and some of them require to be noticed here, on account of their similarity with those of the Templars, shortly to be mentioned. The usual monkish duties of chastity and obedience were strictly enjoined; the brethren, both lay and spiritual, were directed to wear at least a linen or woollen shirt, but no expensive dress of any kind; above all, no furs; when they went to collect alms, they were, for fear of temptation, never to go alone, but always in parties of two or three; they were not, however, to select their companions, but to take such as the director should appoint them; wherever there was a house belonging to their order, they were to turn in thither, and nowhere else, and to take whatever was given them, and ask for nothing more; they were also to carry their lights with them, and wherever they passed the night, to set these burning before them, lest the enemy should bring on them some deadly danger. When the brethren were in the church, or in a private house, in the company of women, they were to take good heed to themselves and avoid temptation; for the same reason, they were never to suffer women to wash their head or feet, or to make their bed. If a brother had fallen into carnal sin, and his offence was secret, a silent penance was deemed sufficient; but if it had been public, and he was fully convicted of it, he was on Sunday, after mass, when the people were gone out of church, to be stript of his clothes, and there, by the director himself, or such of the brethren as he appointed, severely beaten with thongs or rods, and then expelled the order. Any brother possessed of money or valuables, who concealed them from the master, was severely punished, the money which he had secreted was hung about the offender's neck, and he was scourged by one of the brethren, in

composed the Order; *Second*, A badge formed of a white enamelled cross, having the angles charged with the supporters, or principal device, of the respective kingdom to which the language belonged. This, surmounted by an imperial Crown, was worn originally suspended from the neck by a gold chain, latterly by a black ribband; to these were added the sword, scarf, spurs, &c. As an armorial distinction, the knights were privileged to augment their family arms with a chief, *gules*, charged with a cross, *argent*; and exteriorly adorned the shield with the mantle, cap of dignity, banners, badge, and motto, *Pro Fide*. These insignia, however, were of more modern adoption. — *Vide* Hospitallaria.

³ The first introduction of the Knights Hospitallers into England took place, according to Tanner, in 1101. Soon after this, the Grand Priory of St. John, at Clerkenwell, London, was founded by the Lord Jordan Briset. In 1185 it was formally dedicated by the Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem. Matthew Paris mentions that, in 1237, there went from the Priory of Clerkenwell three hundred knights to the wars in the Holy Land. It was set on fire by the rebels under Wat Tyler in 1381, and burnt for seven days; and it was not finally repaired till one hundred and twenty-three years afterwards, when the Grand Prior Docwra completed its reconstruction. This building is said to have exhibited curious specimens of the Arts of Europe and Asia, and contained collections of books and other rarities. — (Cromwell's Hist. Parish Clerkenwell.) The old gateway of St. John's, Clerkenwell, is nearly all that remains of the once princely Priory, the revenues of which, at the time of the Reformation, amounted to the sum of two thousand three hundred and eighty-five pounds twelve shillings and eightpence sterling. Besides the above, the Order possessed subordinate priories or establishments in almost every county of England and Scotland; to which were attached valuable lands, with rights of venison and fishing, and immunities of various kinds.

the presence of all those belonging to the house; he had then to do penance for forty days, during which time, on Wednesdays and Fridays, he had nothing but bread and water to support him. These regulations were made by Raymond, in the year 1118; a circumstance to be attended to, as some similar rules have been since made a ground of accusation against the Templars.

It is uncertain whether Raymond had any ulterior design of making the order of the Hospitallers a military one, but if such was his intention, he was anticipated. The kingdom of Jerusalem, over which Baldwin II. now ruled, had been in a very extraordinary state from the date of its conquest. It lay between two enemies, the Egyptians on the south, and the Turks on the north; and these Moslems, though of opposite and hostile sects, agreed in hatred of the Christians, and a desire to take Jerusalem – which was to them also the Holy City – out of the hands of the western infidels; the independent Arabs of the desert were also inimical to the Christians, and as fond of plunder as they have been at all periods of their history. Hence, the Holy Land was continually infested by predatory bands, who robbed and plundered all who fell in their way; the pious pilgrim who disembarked at Joppa or Acre, was fortunate if he reached the ultimate object of his journey in safety; and when he had visited all the consecrated places within the sacred walls, new perils awaited him on his way to bathe in the purifying waters of the Jordan, or to pluck in the gardens of Jericho the palm branch which he was to suspend in the church on his return.



THE TEMPLARS

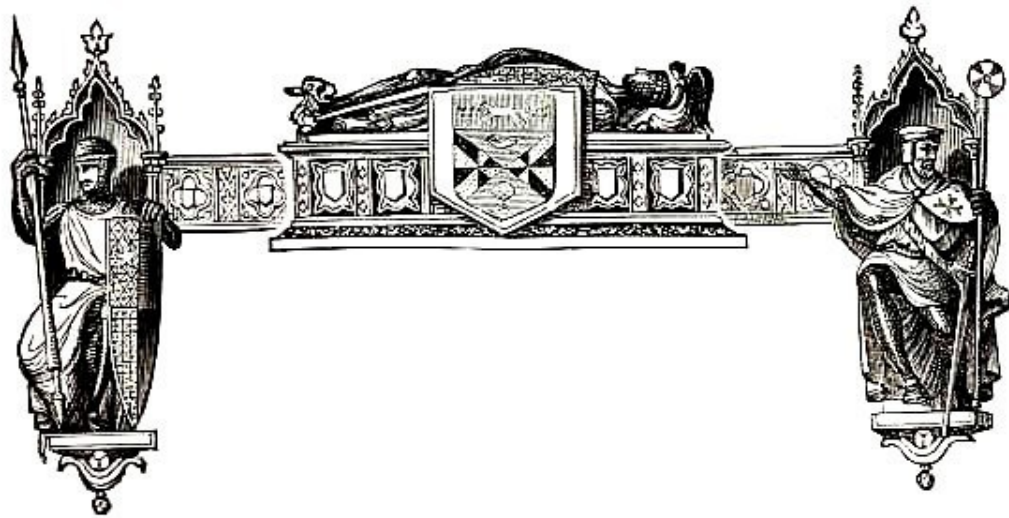


"And on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd;

Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sovaine hope, which in his helpe he had.
Right, faithfull, true he was in deede and word:
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad."



JACQUES DE MOLAY.
GRANDE MAITRE DE L'ORDRE DU TEMPLE.



CHAP. II. The Knights Templars

It was in the year 1119, the twentieth of the Christian dominion in Syria, that nine pious and valiant Knights, the greater part of whom had been the companions of Godfrey de Bouillon, formed themselves into an association, the object of which was to protect and defend Pilgrims on their visits to the holy places. These Knights, of whom the two chief were Hugo de Payens and Godfrey de St. Omer, vowed, in honour of the *sweet Mother of God*, to unite Monkhood and Knighthood;⁴ their pious design met with the warm approbation of the King and the Patriarch, and in the hands of the latter they made the three ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and a fourth, of combating without ceasing against the heathen, in defence of Pilgrims and of the Holy Land; and bound themselves to live according to the rule of the canons of St. Augustine, at Jerusalem. The King assigned them for their abode a part of his palace, which stood close by where had stood the Temple of the Lord. He and his barons contributed to their support, and the abbot and canons of the Temple assigned them for the keeping of their arms and magazines the street between it and the royal palace, and hence they took the name of the soldiery of the Temple, or Templars. When Fulk, Count of Anjou, in the year following the formation of the society, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the Order was even then in such repute that he joined it as a married brother, and on his return home remitted them annually thirty pounds of silver to aid them in their pious labours, and his example was followed by several other Christian princes.

For the first nine years after their institution, the Templars lived in poverty and humility, and no new members joined their society, which was eclipsed by that of St. John. Their clothing consisted of such garments as were bestowed on them by the charity of the faithful, and so rigorously were the gifts of pious princes applied by them to their destination – the benefit of pilgrims and of the Holy Land in general – that in consequence of their poverty, Hugo de Payens and Godfrey de St. Omer had but one war-horse between them. When the Order had arrived at wealth and splendour, its seal, representing two Knights mounted on one charger, commemorated this original poverty of its pious founders.

During the reign of Baldwin II. the kingdom was hard pressed by the Turks of Damascus, Mossul, and the neighbouring states, and the king had been a captive in their hands. On his liberation he sought every means of strengthening his kingdom, and as the Templars had displayed such eminent valour and devotion wherever they had been engaged, he resolved to gain them all the influence and consideration in his power. Accordingly he dispatched two of their members as his envoys to the Holy See, to lay before the Pope the state of the Holy Land, and also furnished them with a strong letter of recommendation to the celebrated Bernard of Clairvaux, the nephew of one of the envoys. Bernard approved highly of the object and institution of the Order. Hugo de Payens and five other brethren soon arrived in the west, and appeared before the fathers, who were assembled in council at Troyes, to whom Hugo detailed the maxims and the deeds of the Templars. The fathers expressed their approbation of all he said, the Order was pronounced good and useful, and some additions, taken from that of the Benedictines, were made to their rule. By the direction of Pope Honorius, the council appointed them a white mantle as their peculiar dress, to which Pope Eugenius some years afterwards added a red cross on the breast – the symbol of martyrdom. Their banner was of the black and white stripe, called, in old French, *Bauseant* (which word became their war-cry,) and bore the pious inscription, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tua da gloriam.*⁵ St. Bernard, if he did

⁴ The other original associates of the Order were the Knights Roral, Gundemar, Godfrey Bisol, Payens de Montidier, Archibald de St. Aman, Andrew de Montbar, and the Count of Provence, according to the German historian, Wilcke.

⁵ *Bauseant* or *Bausant*, was, in old French, a pie-bald horse. The word is still preserved with its original meaning in the Scotch dialect, in the form *Bawsent*: —"His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face, Aye gat him freends in ilka place," says Burns, describing the

not himself draw up the rule of Order, had at least a considerable participation in it; throughout his life he cherished the Templars; he rarely wrote a letter to the Holy Land, in which he did not praise them, and recommend them to the favour and protection of the great.

Owing to the influence of Bernard, and the sincere piety and noble qualities of its founders, the Order rapidly increased in wealth and consequence. Many Knights assumed its habit, and with Hugo de Payens travelled through France and England, to excite the Christians to the sacred war. With Henry I. of England they met the highest consideration. Fulk, of Anjou, re-united himself to Hugo de Payens, and on the invitation of King Baldwin, prepared, though advanced in years, to set out for Palestine, to espouse the daughter of the king, and succeed him on his throne. Gifts in abundance flowed in on the Order, large possessions were bestowed on it in all countries of the west, and Hugo de Payens, now its Grand Master, returned to the Holy Land in the year 1129, at the head of three hundred Knights Templars of the noblest families in Europe, ready to take the field against the Infidels.

The Templars soon became, in fact, the most distinguished of the Christian warriors. By a rule of their Order, no brother could be redeemed for a higher ransom than a girdle or a knife, or some such trifle;⁶ captivity was therefore equivalent to death, and they always fought with Spartan desperation. The Bauseant was always in the thick of the battle; the revenue they enjoyed enabled them to draw to their standard valiant secular knights and stout and hardy footmen. The chivalry of St. John vied with them, it is true, in prowess and valour, but they do not occupy the same space in the History of the Crusades. The Templars having been from the outset solely devoted to arms, – the warm interest which St. Bernard, whose influence was so great, took in their welfare, – and the circumstance that the fourth King of Jerusalem was a member of their body, – all combined to throw a splendour about them which the Knights of St. John could not claim, but which also gave occasion to their more speedy corruption, and augmented the number of their enemies. Most writers, however, of the twelfth century speak respectfully of the Knights of the Temple, and those unsparing satirists, the Troubadours, never mention them but with honour. The history of the Order, as far as we can recollect, records only one instance of a Templar abjuring his faith, and that was an English Knight, Robert of Saint Albans, who deserted to Saladin, who gave him his sister in marriage on his becoming a Moslem; and in 1185, the ex-red-cross Knight led a Saracen army to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, wasting and destroying the country with fire and sword.⁷

By the Bull, *Omne datum optimum*, granted by Pope Alexander III. in 1162, the Order of the Templars acquired great importance, and from this time forth, it may be regarded as totally independent, acknowledging no authority but that – before which the haughtiest monarchs bowed – of the supreme pontiff, who protected and favoured them as his champions against all who might dispute his will. It is therefore of importance to look at its constitution, and what were its revenues and possessions.

The Order of the Templars consisted of three distinct *classes*, not *degrees*– knights, chaplains, and service-brethren, to which may be added those who were attached to the Order under the name of *affiliated*, *donates*, and *oblates*.⁸ The strength and flower of the Order were the Knights; all its

"Ploughman's Collie" in his Tale of the "Twa Dogs;" and in the Glossary, Dr. Currie explains *Bawsent* as meaning "having a white stripe down the face." Some conceive that the word *Beauseant* may be merely an old variation of the modern French word *Bienséant*, as referring to something handsome or attractive.

⁶ Expediency afterwards prompted the infraction of this original rule. Gerard de Ridefort, Grand Master of the Order, was liberated by Saladin, along with several other captives, for no less a ransom than the city of Ascalon. In 1244 also, the Templars endeavoured to redeem their brethren from captivity in Egypt.

⁷ Mathew Paris charges a certain Templar, named Ferrandus, with having gone over to the Infidels, and betrayed the state of the Christian garrison in Damietta, A. D. 1221. This deserter was reputed to have been a knight "*in armis strenuus et consilio circumspectus*."

⁸ The *affiliated* were persons of various ranks, and of both sexes, who, without any outward sign of connection, were acknowledged by the Order as entitled to its protection, and admitted to a participation in certain of its privileges, – such as exemption from the effects of ecclesiastical interdicts, which secured to them at least the occasional service of the mass, and Christian burial in consecrated

dignities and superior offices belonged to them. The candidate for admission among the Knights of the Temple was required to produce proof of his being the lawful issue of a Knight, or of one qualified to receive that distinction; and he must himself have already received the honour-conferring blow from a Secular Knight, for the Order was Spiritual, and, as members, could not deign to accept honour from a layman. The only exception was in the case of a bishop, who might draw his sword among the brethren of the Temple, without having been a secular Knight. The aspirant must moreover be free from debt, and, on admission, pay a considerable sum into the hands of the society.⁹ The most unlimited obedience to the commands of his superiors in the house and in the field of battle; the total abnegation of all interests but those of the society, (for the Templar could hold no property, could receive no private letter); the most unflinching valour, (for so long as a Christian banner waved in the field, the Templar, however severely wounded, must not abandon it), – were the duties of the Knights of the Temple. If he fled, disgrace and punishment awaited him; if he surrendered, he had to end his life amid the torments inflicted by the enraged Moslems, or to languish in perpetual captivity, for the Order never redeemed its members. Hence, then, the Templar was valiant as the fabled heroes of romance; hence prodigies of prowess, such as almost surpass belief, so frequently illustrate the name of the soldiers of the Temple. Every motive that could stimulate to deeds of renown combined to actuate the soldier-monk A Knight, he obeyed the call of honour and emulation; a Monk, (but the Templar was not, as some erroneously fancy, a Priest), he was, according to the ideas of the times, engaged in the service most acceptable to God.

The mode of reception into the Order corresponded with the dignity and importance of the character of a Knight Templar. Though a noviciate was enjoined by the original canons, in practice it was dispensed with; the candidate was, after all due inquiry had been made, received in a chapter assembled in the chapel of the Order. All strangers, even the relatives of the aspirant, were excluded. The preceptor (usually one of the priors) opened the business with an address to those present, calling on them to declare if they knew of any just cause and impediment to the aspirant, whom the majority had agreed to receive, becoming a member of their body.¹⁰ If all were silent, the candidate was led into an adjacent chamber, whither two or three of the Knights came to him, and setting before him the rigour and strictness of the Order, inquired if he still persisted in his desire to enter it. If he did persist, they inquired if he was married or betrothed; had made a vow in any other Order; if he owed more than he could pay; if he was of sound body, without any secret infirmity, and free? If his answers proved satisfactory, they left him and returned to the chapter, and the preceptor again asked if any one had anything to say against his being received. If all were silent, he asked if they were willing to admit him. On their assenting, the candidate was led in by the Knights who had questioned him, and who now instructed him in the mode of asking admission. He advanced, kneeling, with folded hands, before the preceptor, and said, "Sir, I am come before God, and before you and the brethren; and I pray and beseech you, for the sake of God and our sweet lady, to receive me into your society

ground. These were advantages of the last importance, for which both men and women, Knights and Burghers, were content to pay considerable sums while alive, and leave to the Treasury of the Temple the residue of their property after death. The *donates* and *oblates* stood in a somewhat different relation to the Order, being personally dedicated or offered, as their titles denote, to the Society. These were either youths whom their parents destined for the service of the Order, when they had attained a proper age, or they were adults who bound themselves gratuitously to aid and assist the Order so long as they lived, solely in admiration of its sanctity and excellence, a portion of which they humbly hoped to share. Among these latter, all classes were to be found, – princes and priests, as well as other persons. (See Secret Societies of the Middle Ages.)

⁹ No specific sum appears to have been exacted from entrants, but each was expected to pay according to his means. Thus it is recorded of the Prince Guy Dauphin, that he gave to the Order 1500 pieces (Livr. Tourn.) for his own entry-money, and a contribution of 200 a-year in name of his parents. Wealthy Squires of the Order, of respectable though not noble parentage, gave sometimes large sums at their reception. Of this class, Bartholomew Barthelet gave property to the amount of 1,000 livres Tournois to be admitted, and William of Liege gave 200 a-year of the same circulation.

¹⁰ Hugo de Payens, the founder of the Order, set a laudable example of rigour in the selection of candidates. When a certain Knight, named Hugo d'Amboise, was desirous of being received into the Order, the Grand Master refused to let him take the vows, because he had oppressed the people of Marmoutier, and disobeyed a judicial sentence of the Count of Anjou; and until he had given satisfaction to all whom he had injured, and otherwise amended his life, he was informed that he could not be admitted into the Temple.

and the good works of the Order, as one who, all his life long, will be the servant and slave of the Order." The preceptor then questioned him, if he had well considered all the toils and difficulties which awaited him in the Order, adjured him on the Holy Evangelists to speak the truth, then put to him the questions already asked by the Knights, farther inquiring if he was a Knight, the son of a Knight and a gentlewoman, and if he was a priest. He then asked if he would promise to God and Mary, our dear lady, obedience, as long as he lived, to the Master of the Temple, and the prior who should be set over him; chastity of his body; ¹¹ compliance with the laudable manners and customs of the Order then in force, and such as the Master and Knights might hereafter add; fight for and defend, with all his might, the holy land of Jerusalem; never quit the Order but with consent of the Master and the Chapter; never see a Christian unjustly deprived of his inheritance, or be aiding in such deed. The preceptor then said – "In the name, then, of God and of Mary, our dear lady, and in the name of St. Peter of Rome, and of our father the Pope, and in the name of all the brethren of the Temple, we receive you to all the good works of the Order, which have been performed from the beginning, and will be performed to the end, you, your father, your mother, and all those of your family whom you let participate therein. So you, in like manner, receive us to all the good works which you have performed and will perform. We assure you of bread and water, the poor clothing of the Order, and labour and toil enow." The preceptor then took the white mantle, with its ruddy cross, placed it about his neck, and bound it fast. The chaplain repeated the one hundred and thirty-second Psalm, *Ecce quam bonum*, and the prayer of the Holy Spirit, *Deus qui corda fidelium*, each brother said a *Pater*, the preceptor kissed the new brother, the chaplain did the same. The Templar then placed himself at the feet of the preceptor, and was by him exhorted to peace and charity with his brother Christians; to chastity, obedience, humility, and piety; and thus the ceremony ended.

At the head of the Order stood the Grand Master, who, like the General of the Jesuits in modern times, was independent of all authority but that of the sovereign pontiff. The residence of the Grand Master was the city of Jerusalem; when the city was lost, he fixed his seat at Antioch, next at Acre, then at the castle of the Pilgrims,¹² between Caiphaz and Cæsarea, and finally in Cyprus, for his duty required him to be always in the Holy Land. The Grand Master never resided in Europe until the time of Jacques de Molay. The power of the Grand Master was considerable, though he was very much controuled by the chapter, without whose consent he could not dispose of any of the higher offices, or undertake any thing of importance. He could not, for instance, take money out of the treasury, without the consent of the prior of Jerusalem; he could neither make war or truce, or alter laws, but with the approbation of the chapter. But the Grand Master had the right of bestowing the small commands, the governments of houses of the Order, and of selecting the brethren who should form the chapter, which power was again controuled by there being always assigned him two brethren as assistants, who, with the Seneschal, were to form a part of every chapter. The Order was aristocratic rather than monarchic; the Grand Master was like a Doge of Venice, and his real power chiefly depended on his personal qualities; he had, however, many distinctions; the greater part of the executive power was in his hands – in war he was the commander-in-chief; he had, as vicar-general of the Pope, episcopal jurisdiction over the clergy of the Order; he ranked with princes, and his establishment corresponded thereto; he had for his service four horses, a chaplain, two secretaries, a squire of noble birth, a farrier, a Turcopole and cook, with footmen, and a Turcoman for a guide, who was usually fastened by a cord to prevent his escape. When the Grand Master died, his funeral was celebrated with great solemnity

¹¹ The Rule of St. Bernard prohibited the Templars from even looking at a woman. The translation of the statute, chap. lxxii, is as follows: —"We hold it to be dangerous to all religion to look too much on the countenance of women, and, therefore, let no Brother presume to kiss either widow or virgin, or mother or sister, or aunt, or any other woman. Let the militia of Christ, therefore, shun feminine kisses, by which men are often exposed to danger, that with a pure conscience and secure life, they may walk continually in the sight of God."

¹² This stronghold of the Order was built about 1217, under the Grand Master, William de Chartres, who employed a number of pilgrims of the masonic class in its erection. Hence the appellation of Pilgrim Castle which it received.

by the light of torches and wax tapers, – an honour bestowed by the Order on no other of its Members. All the Knights and Prelates were invited to assist. Each Brother who was present was to repeat two hundred *Pater Nosters* within the space of seven days, for the repose of the soul of the deceased; and one hundred poor persons were fed at home, at the expense of the Order, with the same design.¹³

Each province of the Order had a Grand Prior, who represented in it the Grand Master; each house had its Prior at its head, who commanded its Knights in war, and presided over its chapters in peace. In England, the Grand Prior sat in Parliament as a Peer of the Realm. To complete this sketch of the Order, we may remark, that except Scandinavia, (for they had some possessions in Hungary,) there was not a country in Europe in which the lavish piety of princes and nobles had not bestowed on the Templars a considerable portion of the wealth of the state; for in every province the Order had its churches and chapels – the number of which was in the year 1240, as great as 1050 – villages, farm-houses, mills, corn-lands, pastures, woods, rights of venison, and fisheries.¹⁴ The revenues of the Templars in England in 1185, as given by Dugdale, will afford some idea of their wealth. The entire annual income of the Order has been estimated at not less than six millions sterling.

It cannot be denied, that this enormous wealth, together with the luxury and other evils which it engendered, provoked the hatred of the secular clergy and laity, and paved the way to the spoliation of the Order. In 1252, the pious pope-ridden Henry III. of England said, that the prelates and clergy in general, but especially the Templars and Hospitallers, had so many liberties and privileges, that their excessive wealth made them mad with pride; he added, that what had been bestowed imprudently, ought to be prudently resumed, and declared his intention of revoking the inconsiderate grants of himself and his predecessors. The Grand Prior of the Templars replied, "What sayest thou, my Lord the King? Far be it that so discourteous and absurd a word should be uttered by thy mouth. So long as thou observest justice, thou mayest be a king, and as soon as thou infringest it, thou wilt cease to be a king." A bold expression certainly, but the Prior knew his man well, and he would hardly have spoken so to the son of Henry. The anecdote of Richard I. bestowing his daughter Pride in marriage on the Templars, is well known; and numerous traits of their haughtiness, avarice, luxury, and other of the current vices, may be found in the writers of the thirteenth century; but till the final attack was made, no worse charge was brought against them, unless such is implied in a bull of Pope Clement IV. in 1265, which is, however, easily capable of a milder interpretation. Mr. Raynouard asserts, too, that the proverbial expression *bibere Templariter* is used by no writer of the thirteenth century. In this

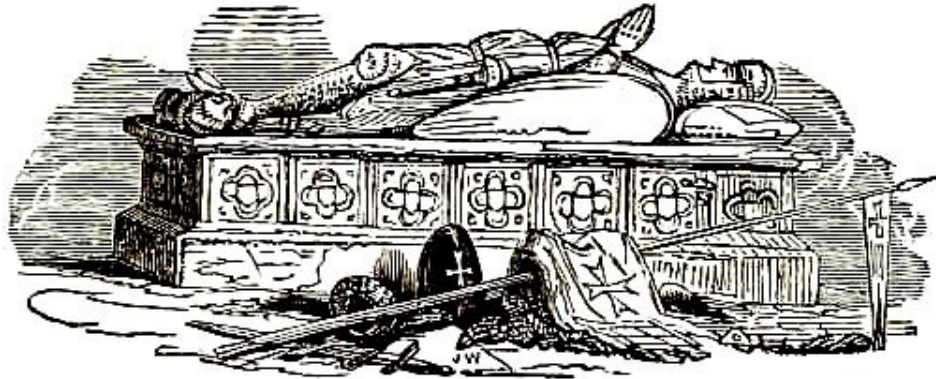
¹³ The Knights in general seem to have been buried with their swords placed beside the body. Several skeletons are said to have been found in the Templar Cemetery at Mount Hooly, near Edinburgh, lying cross-legged, with swords by their sides. See Maitland's History of Edinburgh.

¹⁴ The first preceptory of the Templars in England was founded at Holborn, then in the suburbs of London, whence they afterwards removed to Fleet Street about 1185. The only remains of the latter place of residence is the beautiful circular edifice still called the Temple Church, supposed to have been built after the model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. This seems to have been a favourite form with the Order. The Church of St. Sepulchre at Cambridge, built by the Templars, is of a circular construction, having the appearance of a fortified tower. In examining this building (says Mr. Britton) we are struck with its ponderous and durable appearance, as if it was intended for a castellated edifice. The masonry of the ancient walls, and also of the pillars and arches, is such as to evince great skill in the building, the stones being all squared and chisselled with the most perfect accuracy to fit their respective places. At Northampton, the same form seems to have been observed. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre (says Pennant, speaking of this place,) was supposed to have been built by the Knights Templars on the model of that at Jerusalem. Others of the chapels appertaining to the Order do not, however, present a similar plan. The principal Bailiwicks of the Order in England were the following, viz. London, Kent, Warwick, Waesdone, Lincoln, Lindsey, Bolingbroke, Widine, Agerstone, York. In these were seventeen preceptories. Most places having the prefix of *Temple* belonged to the Knights, – such as Temple-Bruer in Lincolnshire, where, Camden says, that in his time there were the ruins of a church or chapel, "not unlike that of the new Temple at London." Probably it was of the circular form above noticed. Some account of the Irish preceptories will be found in the [Appendix](#). The Pope (Clement V.) committed the glaring absurdity of making a provisional decree to be executed in perpetuity. The Bull which is issued at the Court at Vienne, without asking the judgment of the assembled bishops and others, declares, that although he cannot of right, consistently with the Inquisition and proceedings, pronounce a definite sentence, yet by way of apostolical provision and regulation, he perpetually prohibited people from entering into the Order, and calling themselves Templars. The penalty of the greater excommunication was held out as a punishment for offending.

he is preceded by Baluze and Roquefort, who maintain, that, like *bibere Papaliter*, it only signified to live in abundance and comfort.



PERSECUTION OF THE TEMPLARS



CHAP. III.

The Persecution of The Templars

When Acre fell in 1292, the Templars, having lost all their possessions and a great number of their members in the Holy Land, retired with the other Christians to Cyprus. Having probably seen the folly of all hope of recovering the Holy Land, they grew indifferent about it; few members joined them from Europe, and it is more than probable that they meditated a removal of the chief seat of the Order to France.¹⁵ The Hospitallers, on the other hand, with more prudence, as events showed, resolved to continue the war against the infidels, and they attacked and conquered Rhodes; while the Teutonic knights transferred the sphere of their pious warfare to Prussia against its heathen inhabitants. Thus, while the Templars were falling under the reproach of being luxurious Knights, their rivals rose in consideration, and there was an active and inveterate enemy ready to take advantage of their ill-repute.

Philip the Fair, a tyrannical and rapacious prince, was at that time on the throne of France. His darling object was to set the power of the monarchy above that of the church. In his celebrated controversy with Pope Boniface, the Templars had been on the side of the Holy See. Philip, whose animosity pursued Boniface even beyond the grave, wished to be revenged on all who had taken his side; moreover, the immense wealth of the Templars, which he reckoned on making his own if he could destroy them, strongly attracted the king, who had already tasted of the sweets of the spoliation of the Lombards and the Jews; and he probably, also, feared the obstacle to the perfect establishment of despotism which might be offered by a numerous, noble, and wealthy society, such as the Templars

¹⁵ This seems somewhat countenanced by the great additions made to the buildings of the Temple at Paris previous to the arrival of the Grand Master. In 1306, was erected a large square tower, flanked by four round towers, with an adjacent building on the north side, surmounted by turrets. The principal tower contained four stories, in each of which there was an apartment thirty feet square: three of the inferior towers had also each a hall. The remaining tower contained a fine staircase, which conducted to the different chambers and battlements. The walls of the central keep were nine feet in thickness. This *Tower of the Temple* has been rendered memorable in modern times by the captivity of the unfortunate Louis XVI. and his family. It is also noted as the place of imprisonment, by Buonaparte, of the celebrated Sir Sidney Smith, now the Head of the Order of the Temple.

formed. Boniface's successor, Clement V. was the creature of Philip, to whom he owed his dignity, and at his accession had bound himself to the performance of six articles in favour of Philip, one of which was not expressed. It was probably inserted without any definite object, and intended to serve the interest of the French monarch on any occasion which might present itself.



LA TOUR DU TEMPLE À PARIS

It had been the object of Pope Boniface to form the three Military Orders into one, and he had summoned them to Rome for that purpose, but his death prevented it. Clement, on this, June 6, 1306, addressed the Grand Masters of the Templars and the Hospitallers, inviting them to come to consult with him about the best mode of supporting the Kings of Armenia and Cyprus. He desired them to come as secretly as possible, and with a very small train, as they would find abundance of their Knights this side the sea; and he directed them to provide for the defence of Limisso in Cyprus during their short absence. Fortunately perhaps for himself and his Order, the Master of the Hospitallers was then engaged in the conquest of Rhodes, but Jacques de Molay,¹⁶ the Master of the Templars, immediately prepared to obey the mandate of the Pope, and he left Cyprus with a train of 60 Knights, and a treasure of 150,000 florins of gold, and a great quantity of silver money, the whole requiring twelve horses to carry it.¹⁷ He proceeded to Paris, where he was received with the greatest honours by the King, and he deposited his treasure in the Temple of that city. It is, as we have said, not impossible that it was the intention of Molay to transfer the chief seat of the Order thither, and that he had, therefore, brought with him its treasure and the greater part of the members of the chapter; and indeed it is difficult to say how early the project of attacking the Templars entered into the minds of Philip and his obsequious lawyers, or whether he originally aimed at more than mulcting them under the pretext of reformation: and farther, whether the first informers against them were suborned or not. The records leave a considerable degree of obscurity on the whole matter. All we can learn is, that a man named Squin de Flexian, who had been a Prior of the Templars, and had been expelled the Order for heresy and various vices, was lying in prison at Paris or Toulouse, it is uncertain which. In the prison with him was a Florentine named Noffo Dei, "a man," says Villani, "full of all iniquity." These two began to plan how they might extricate themselves from the confinement to which they seemed perpetually doomed. The example of the process against the memory of Pope Boniface, shewed them that no lie was too gross or absurd not to obtain ready credence, and they fixed on the Templars as the objects of their charges. Squin told the governor of the prison that he had a communication to make to the King, which would be of more value to him than if he had gained a kingdom, but that he would only tell it to the King in person. He was brought to Philip, who promised him his life, and he made his confession, on which the King immediately arrested some of the Templars, who are said to have confirmed the truth of Squin's assertions. Shortly afterwards, it is said, similar discoveries were made to the Pope by his chamberlain, Cardinal Cantilupo, who had been in connexion with the Templars from his eleventh year.

Squin Flexian declared, **1.** That every member on admission into the Order swore on all occasions to defend its interests right or wrong; **2.** That the heads of the Order were in secret confederacy with the Saracens, had more of Mahommedan unbelief than of Christian faith, as was proved by the mode of reception into the Order, when the novice was made to spit and trample on the crucifix, and blaspheme the faith of Christ; **3.** That the superiors were sacrilegious, cruel, and heretical murderers; for if any novice, disgusted with its profligacy, wished to quit the Order, they secretly murdered him, and buried him by night; so, also, when women were pregnant by them, they taught them how to produce abortion, or secretly put the infants to death; **4.** The Templars were addicted to the error of the Fraticelli, and, like them, despised the authority of the Pope and the Church; **5.** That the superiors were addicted to the practice of horrible crimes, and if any one opposed them, they were condemned by the Master to perpetual imprisonment; **6.** That their houses were the abode of every vice and iniquity; **7.** That they endeavoured to put the Holy Land into the hands of the Saracens, whom they favoured more than the Christians. Three other articles of less importance

¹⁶ Jacques de Molay was elected Grand Master in the year 1297, and was the second elevated to that dignity after the expulsion of the Christians from the Holy Land. He was of an ancient family in Besançon, Franche Compté, and entered the Order in the year 1265.

¹⁷ It is probable that part of this treasure was formed from the spoils of Greece, which the Templars had been invited from their retirement to invade, at the instigation of the King of Sicily. After overrunning great part of that country, they returned loaded with the plunder of its cities, leaving their possession to some allies. — *Vide Michaud, Histoire des Croisades.*

completed this first body of charges. It is remarkable, that we do not find among them those which made such a figure in the subsequent examinations; namely, the devil appearing among them in the shape of a cat; their idolatrous worship of an image with one or three heads, or a skull covered with human skin, with carbuncles for eyes, before which they burned the bodies of their dead brethren, and then mingled the ashes with their drink, thereby thinking to gain more courage; and, finally, their smearing this idol with human fat.¹⁸

It was unfortunate for the Templars that their chapters were held in secret,¹⁹ and by night, for an opportunity was thereby afforded to their enemies of laying whatever secret enormities they pleased to their charge, to refute which, by the production of indifferent witnesses, was consequently out of their power. Philip having now all things prepared, sent, like his descendant Charles IX. previous to the St. Bartholomew massacre, secret orders to all his governors to arm themselves on the 12th of October, and on the following night, but not sooner, on pain of death, to open the king's letter, and act according to it. On Friday the 13th of October, all the Templars throughout France were simultaneously arrested at break of day. The unhappy Knights were thrown into cold cheerless dungeons, (for they were arrested, we should remember, at the commencement of winter), had barely the necessaries of life, were deprived of the habit of their Order, and of the rites and comforts of the church; were exposed to every species of torture then in use, were shown a real or pretended letter of the Grand Master, in which he confessed several of the charges, and exhorted them to do the same; and finally, were promised life and liberty, if they freely acknowledged the guilt of the Order. Can we then be surprised that the spirit of many a Knight was broken, that any hope of escape from misery was eagerly caught at, and that falsehoods, the most improbable, were declared to be true? And it is remarkable that the most improbable charges are those which were most frequently acknowledged, so just is the observation, that men will more readily in such circumstances acknowledge what is false than what is true; for the false they know can be afterwards refuted by its own absurdity, whereas truth is permanent.

Of the Templars in England 228 were examined;²⁰ the Dominican, Carmelite, Minorite, and Augustinian friars brought abundance of hearsay evidence against them, but nothing of any importance was proved; in Castile and Leon it was the same; in Aragon the Knights bravely endured the torture, and maintained their innocence; in Germany all the lay witnesses testified in their favour; in Italy their enemies were more successful, as the influence of the Pope was there considerable, yet in Lombardy the Bishops acquitted the Knights. Charles of Anjou, the cousin of Philip, and the foe of the Templars, who had sided with Frederick against him, could not fail, it may be supposed, in getting some evidences of their guilt in Sicily, Naples, and Provence. It is not undeserving of attention, that one of these witnesses, who had been received into the Order in Catalonia, (where all who were examined had declared the innocence of the Order), said he had been received there in the usual impious and indecent manner, and mentioned the appearance and the worship of the cat in the

¹⁸ A French writer gives the following opinion regarding the origin of some of these charges: – "Les Chevaliers supportaient un grand nombre d'épreuves religieuses et morales avant de parvenir aux divers degrés d'initiation; ainsi, par exemple, le récipiendaire pouvait recevoir l'injonction, sous peine de mort, de fouler aux pieds le crucifix, ou d'adorer une idole; mais, s'il céda à la terreur qu'on cherchait à lui inspirer, il était déclaré indigne d'être admis aux grades élevés de l'Ordre. On conçoit, d'après cela, comment des êtres, trop faibles ou trop immoraux pour supporter les épreuves d'initiation, ont pu accuser les Templiers de se livrer à des pratiques et d'avoir des croyances infâmes, superstitieuses." – (Recherches Historiques sur Les Templiers. Paris, 1835.)

¹⁹ "Quod clam consueverunt tenere capitula sua;" and "Quod similem clandestinitatem observant et observare consueverunt ut plurimum in recipiendo fratres," were principal counts in the indictment against them. From this secrecy, some writers have inferred that the Templars practised a species of Freemasonry, of which certainly no direct evidence transpired during the inquest. Signor Rosetti, the celebrated commentator of Dante, has, we understand, a work in the press, in which he seeks to demonstrate that the Templars were a branch of that great secret confederacy which was formed against the papacy, which included the Troubadours and all the *litterati* of the time, and which ultimately produced the Reformation. This information is derived from a letter to Dr. Burnes by Mr. Keightly, the talented reviewer and friend of Rosetti.

²⁰ In June 1310, Pope Clement wrote to the King of England blaming his lenity, and calling upon him to employ the torture upon the unfortunate Knights. The Council of London, after a long discussion, ordered it to be employed, but so as not to mutilate the limbs, or cause an incurable wound, or violent effusion of blood.

chapter!! Such is the value of rack-extorted testimony! In fine, in every country out of the sphere of the immediate influence of Clement, Philip, and Charles, the general innocence of the Order was acknowledged. In Portugal they were preserved under the altered appellation of the Knights of Christ, – a change which was effected by the friendly policy of Prince Denys, who in 1218, secured for them the sanction of the successor of Clement.²¹

Throughout the entire process against the Templars, from October 1307 to May 1312, the most determined design of the King and his ministers to destroy the Order meets us at every step; Philip would have blood to justify robbery; several Templars had already expired on the rack, perished from the rigour of their imprisonment, or died by their own hands; but on the 12th May 1310, fifty-four Templars who had confessed, but afterwards retracted, were by his order committed to the flames, in Paris, as relapsed heretics. They endured with heroic constancy the most cruel tortures, asserting with their latest breath the innocence of the Order, though offered life if they would confess, and implored to do so by their friends and relatives. Similar executions took place in other towns. The Pope soon went heart and hand with Philip. In vain did the bishops assembled at Vienne propose to hear those members who came forward as the defenders of the Order. A Bull of the Pope was fulminated against the Order,²² and transferred its possessions to the Knights of St. John, who, however, had to pay such enormous fines to the King and Pope before they could enter on them, as almost ruined them; so that if Philip did not succeed to the utmost of his anticipations, he had little reason to complain of his share.²³ The members of the society of the Templars were permitted to enter that of the Hospitallers, – a strange indulgence for those that had spitten on the cross, and practised horrible vices.

But the atrocious scene was yet to come which was to complete the ruin of the Templars, and satiate the vengeance of their enemies. Their Grand Master, Molay, and three other dignitaries of the Order, still survived: And, though they had made the most submissive acknowledgments to their unrelenting persecutors, yet the influence which they had over the minds of the vulgar, and their connection with many of the Princes of Europe, rendered them formidable and dangerous to their oppressors. By the exertion of that influence, they might restore union to their dismembered party, and inspire them with courage to revenge the murder of their companions;²⁴ or, by adopting a more cautious method, they might repel, by uncontrovertible proofs, the charges for which they suffered; and, by interesting all men in their behalf, they might expose Philip to the attacks of his own subjects, and to the hatred and contempt of Europe. Aware of the dangers to which his character and person would be exposed by pardoning the surviving Templars, the French Monarch commanded the Grand Master and his Brethren to be led out to a scaffold, erected for the purpose, and there to confess before the public, the enormities of which their Order had been guilty, and the justice of the punishment which had been inflicted on their brethren. If they adhered to their former confession, a full pardon

²¹ The Knights of Christ have continued to exist as a recognized Order of Knighthood down to the present day. The supremacy is vested in the Sovereign of Portugal, and the greater part of the revenue is understood to accrue to the royal coffers. The sums, however, paid in pensions to Knights of the Order, about the beginning of the present century, are said to have amounted to about £4000 per annum. In 1793 they possessed twenty-one provincial towns and villages, and counted four hundred and fifty-four commanderies, exclusive of colonial acquisitions. The various recent changes, occasioned by war and intestine commotions, probably have reduced their income and possessions. In 1820 the Grand Prior of Portugal was Louis Antonio de Fontado, of the House of Barbasena, and who died in 1832. We are not informed as to his successor. The Cross of the Order of Christ is sometimes bestowed upon foreigners as an honorary distinction. Dr. Bowring, (who was employed on a mission to the Portuguese Government,) and several other Englishmen, have of late years received its Cross; generally, it is believed, that of the third class of Knights.

²² Mills' Chivalry, Vol. I. Chap. 7. An extract from the Bull, in the original Latin, will be found in the [Appendix](#).

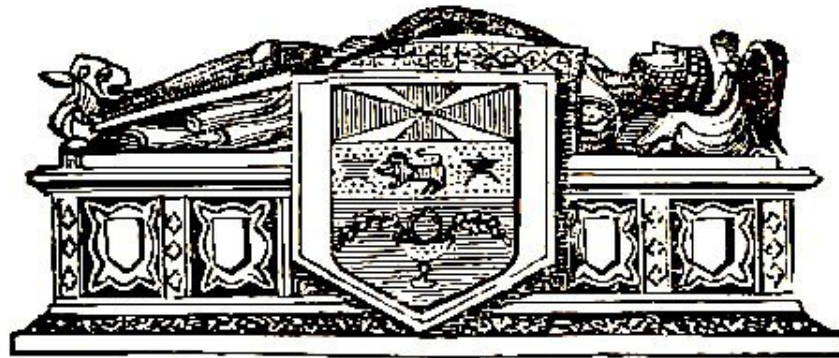
²³ Besides appropriating to himself all the moveable property of the Order, three hundred thousand livres of France were retained by the King, ostensibly to repay the expense of the prosecution. No doubt the treasure brought by De Molay from Cyprus would be amongst the first booty seized, as well as the rich gold and silver utensils and plate, with which the chapel and palace of the Temple at Paris were furnished.

²⁴ On the 28th March 1310, no fewer than 546 Templars were assembled under a strong guard, in the gardens of the Bishop of Paris, who had been conveyed thither to make the defence of the Order, and hear read the accusations against them. This shew of justice was, of course, a mere pretence of their persecutors, to save appearances. The number of the Templars in Paris afterwards increased to nearly 900. Ferrati of Vicenza has reckoned the entire members of the Order throughout Europe at 15,000 persons.

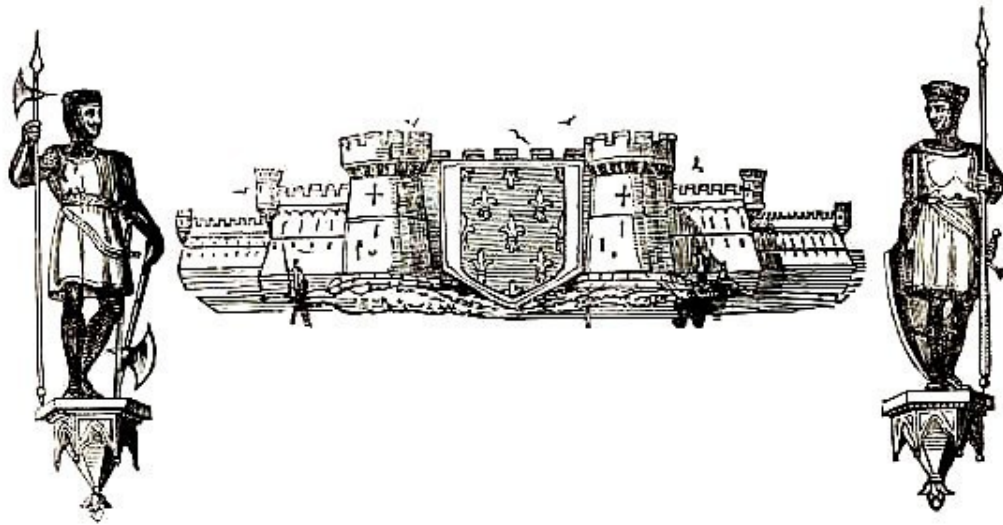
was promised to them; but if they should persist in maintaining their innocence, they were threatened with destruction on a pile of wood, which the executioners had erected in their view, to awe them into compliance. While the multitude were standing around in awful expectation, ready, from the words of the prisoners, to justify or condemn their King, the venerable Molay, with a cheerful and undaunted countenance, advanced, in chains, to the edge of the scaffold; and, with a firm and impressive tone, thus addressed the spectators. – "It is but just, that in this terrible day, and in the last moments of my life, I lay open the iniquity of falsehood, and make truth to triumph. I declare then, in the face of heaven and earth, and I confess, though to my eternal shame and confusion, that I have committed the greatest of crimes; but it has been only in acknowledging those that have been charged with so much virulence upon an Order, which truth obliges me to pronounce innocent. I made the first declaration they required of me, only to suspend the excessive tortures of the rack, and mollify those that made me endure them. I am sensible what torments they prepare for those that have courage to revoke such a confession. But the horrible sight which they present to my eyes, is not capable of making me confirm one lie by another. On a condition so infamous as that, I freely renounce life, which is already but too odious to me. For what would it avail me to prolong a few miserable days, when I must owe them only to the blackest of calumnies."²⁵ In consequence of this manly revocation, the Grand Master and his companions were hurried into the flames, where they retained that contempt for death which they had exhibited on former occasions. This mournful scene extorted tears from the lowest of the vulgar.²⁶ Four valiant Knights, whose charity and valour had procured them the gratitude and applause of mankind, suffering, without fear, the most cruel and ignominious death, was, indeed, a spectacle well calculated to excite emotions of pity in the hardest hearts. Humanity shudders at the recital of the horrid deed; and if the voice of impartial posterity has not, with one accord, pronounced the unqualified acquittal of the Templars, it has branded with the mark of eternal infamy the conduct of their accusers and judges.

²⁵ *Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de Saint Jean de Jerusalem*, par l'Abbe Vertot, tom. ii. pp. 101, 102.

²⁶ So dreadful and impressive an event could not fail to be the source of many strange stories with the vulgar. Among these, chroniclers report, that the venerable martyr, ere life was extinct, summoned Pope Clement to answer before the bar of the Almighty Judge, within forty days, and King Philip before the same tribunal, within the space of a year. Certain it is, that the Pope did suddenly die in the night between the 19th and 20th of the following month; and the church in which his body was placed taking fire, one-half of the corpse was consumed, – a circumstance which naturally confirmed the people in the belief that his death was a special judgment of Heaven for the burning of the knights, and which probably also suggested the prediction. In the month of July following, a tumult arose in the town where the half consumed corpse was kept, during which the populace tried to get forcible possession of the remains; but whether from some superstitious motive, or with a view of avenging on the Pope's body the murder of De Molay, is not known. Philip of France expired within the year, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and others of the persecutors of the Order met a violent death.



CONTINUATION OF THE ORDER



CHAP. IV. The Continuation of the Order

But the persecution of the Templars in the fourteenth century does not close the history of the Order; for, though the Knights were spoliated, the Order was not annihilated. In truth, the cavaliers were not guilty, – the brother hood was not suppressed, – and, startling as is the assertion, there has been a succession of Knights Templars from the twelfth century down even to these days; the chain of transmission is perfect in all its links. Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master at the time of the persecution, anticipating his own martyrdom, appointed as his successor, in power and dignity, Johannes Marcus Larmenius of Jerusalem, and from that time to the present there has been a regular and uninterrupted line of Grand Masters. The charter²⁷

²⁷ A copy of this remarkable Charter, the original of which I had an opportunity of examining through the kindness of the Grand Master and Sir Sidney Smith, at Paris, will be found in the [Appendix](#). The Charter was submitted to the inspection of nearly 200 Knights of the Order, at the Convent-General held at Paris in 1810.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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