Jacques De Molay

By

H. L. HAYWOOD

Published for

THE ORDER OF DE MOLAY

A Story of the

LIFE AND TIMES

of

JACQUES DE MOLAY

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H. L. HAYWOOD

Editor-in-Chief of the National Masonic Research Society
and of Its Official Journal, The Builder.

Published for
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Dedicated
with all personal and fraternal regards to
Frank S. Land

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PREFACE

THIS little book was written on commission from the Order of De Molay. For this reason I kept in view while writing it the needs of lads ranging from 14 to 21 years of age, and I hope they will find it not uninteresting. At the same time, and remembering how many there are of them, I kept in the back of my mind those brethren within the Masonic Fraternity who belong to the Commandery and to the Consistory. Through the generous consent of Bro. Frank S. Land, Grand Scribe, a general edition for Masons has been published in addition to the De Molay edition.

It was with some trepidation that I accepted the commission to prepare the volume in the first place; had I fully known all the difficulties I should encounter I am afraid my courage would have failed me. There is not in existence, so far as can be discovered, in any language whatever, a biography of De Molay; a student is obliged to piece the story together, bit by bit, as best he may, from a great variety of historical works. I have done this as patiently as possible and tried to the best of my ability to use only the most authoritative sources. Even so, it is most probable that some slips may have crept in, and perhaps a few misjudgments concerning facts of history; a word concerning such of these as may be discovered by the reader will be much appreciated.

At my request Bro. G. B. Sykes, of the Order of De Molay, has prepared a brief sketch of the rise and development of that noble Order for boys:

"The Order of De Molay had its birth in the interest Frank S. Land, Kansas City, Mo., took in Louis G. Lower, a 16-year-old boy whose father had died. Louis

took his boy problems to Mr. Land. Soon the chums of Louis were doing the same thing. In Mr. Land they found a true friend and counsellor. There were nine of these fellows. At Mr. Land's suggestion they formed a club and called it De Molay Council. Their friend and advisor used to read them stories of Masonic heroes. Jacques De Molay was their favorite. Chums of these nine fellows became interested and asked permission to join the club. The result was that April 1, 1919, 31 young men, all over 16 and all under 21, met in the first charter meeting of the Order of De Molay. The organization's growth was immediate and rapid. The idea spread to other cities, to other states, to other countries. Its fundamentals are Love of Parents, Reverence, Patriotism, Purity, Courtesy, Comradeship and Fidelity. It is pro-citizen and anti-vice. From the small beginning above described, the Order has in less than six years reached a membership of more than 150,000, belonging to nearly 1,400 chapters. These chapters are in every state in the Union, Canada, Mexico, Panama Canal Zone, Porto Rico, Italy and France. The ritual, written in 1919 by Frank A Marshall, a 32nd Degree Mason of Kansas City, Mo., has been translated into French, Italian and Spanish. Headquarters of the Grand Council are 12th floor, Federal Reserve Bank Building, Kansas City, Mo. The Grand Council is the governing body of the Order. It comprises men prominent in Freemasonry and was organized in March, 1921. All chapters of De Molay are sponsored by recognized Masonic bodies."

H. L. HAYWOOD.

Jan. 26, 1925, St. Louis, Mo.

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I

THE MENANCE OF MOHAMMEDANISM

THIS is to be the story of a hero whose death brought to a sudden and dramatic end a great epoch in history. Where shall one begin such a narrative? Shall it be with his birth? That would leave too many things unexplained. Neither can it begin with an account of his own day and age, and that for the same reason; his was a generation in which an old order was dying, a new coming to birth, therefore it was a time of confusion, "of excursions and alarms." But this is true of all affairs of moment in human history. There are no dividing walls across time. What we call years and centuries are only artificial divisions that often mean nothing. Every end is a beginning, every beginning is an end. Past, present, and future are woven together into a web, of which every thread leads to another thread, and that to another, and so on until the beginning of things is lost in the unknown early times of the world. As the African chief said to a missionary, "Today is the son of yesterday and the father of tomorrow." Therefore is it that he who

tells a tale out of history must begin arbitrarily, like a swimmer suddenly diving into the water, for a beginning must somewhere be made.

For reasons that will later make themselves plain I shall begin my account of the memorable career of Jacques De Molay with the death of Mohammed, in 632, A. D. This man Mohammed was the most extraordinary individual that has lived since Jesus of Nazareth. He was born at Mecca, the holy city in which stood the Kaaba, containing the sacred Black Stone, worshipped as a god by the rough tribesmen of Arabia. Mohammed was an epileptic youth, of a sensitive but fiery nature, who was in his early life visited by dreams and visions that caused him to believe he was chosen to be the prophet of a new religion. Converts came slowly at first but after a time multitudes flocked about him, and later followed him to Medina. There he set up a new religion, and organized a powerful army. With this he returned to Mecca, conquered it, and from that crude town, ever since a holy city to his devotees, organized the Arab tribes into a confederation of irresistible warriors, planned the overthrow of Christendom, foretold the conversion of the world, and on dying bequeathed to the world his *Koran*, the sacred book of Mohammedanism

THE CALIPHS OF ISLAM

Mohammed left behind him a series of successors, or Caliphs, each of whom, like himself, was at once the chieftain in war and head of the church. These lords of the faithful were quick to push westward the frontiers of Islam, as their Mohammedan civilization came to be called. Their motto was "Islam, tribute, or the sword."

Omar, the second Caliph, took Jerusalem in 637 A. D. On the site of Solomon's Temple a great mosque was built, and where once St. Peter preached the gospel that Jesus was the Messiah, swarthy Bedouins proclaimed the Arabian gospel, "There is but one God, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." Inspired by their fanaticism and backed by their swords the Mohammedan multitudes began to push westward to attempt the overthrow of Christianity. They conquered Palestine, Syria, and Egypt and turned thousands of Christian churches into mosques. All of North Africa succumbed to them in 707. Four years afterwards they conquered southern Spain and set up their European capital in Cordova. In 732 they crossed the Pyrenees to attack France, their eyes all the while on Rome, the Christian capital, where they intended to stable their horses in St. Peter's. If Charles Martel had not defeated them at Tours they might have succeeded.

Unsuccessful in their raids from the west the Caliphs focussed their attention on the strongholds of the Christian frontiers in the east. Once again it looked as if they might break through into Rome, which was to the whole system of Christianity what the heart is to the body. They almost succeeded. Asia Minor fell to them in 1071 and they built a stronghold in Nicaea, only one hundred miles from Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Empire.

This vast menace looming to the south and east kept thrills of horror and fear coursing through the soul of Europe. What if Constantinople should fall! What if the infidels should seize Rome! After that would come the last deluge! In all the churches of Europe and Britain men prayed daily to be "delivered from the Turk"—for

it was the Seljuk Turks, the most fanatical of Mohammedans, who threatened to replace the cross of St. Sophia with the crescent of Islam.

Europe replied to this towering danger with the Crusades.

II

THE GRAND OBJECT OF THE CRUSADES

THE grand object of the Crusades was the overthrow of Mohammendanism in its own stronghold. To this day the Crusades are the amazement and the bewilderment of historians. It is not that historians do not see how necessary it was that Islam's flood be stayed; it is that the method used was so wildly strange, so foolishly superb, so romantically ineffectual. No government today, or group of governments, would dream of meeting such a danger by such means, nor would they find it possible to win the support of their populace if they should try. It is not the custom of nations to seek victory over a powerful foe by trying to commit suicide.

One will gain some light on this mystery by studying conditions as they existed inside Europe itself at the close of the eleventh century.

It was the time of feudalism. There were no governments, no states, no nations as we know them. Each individual belonged, body and soul, to a lord; each lord belonged equally to an overlord—bishop, cardinal, count, baron, earl, what not; the overlords in turn belonged to kings, cardinals, emperors, etc.; and over all, in theory at least, was the pope, possessing the keys of heaven and hell, and sovereignty, in theory at least, over all things temporal and spiritual. An ordinary man was not a citizen but a kind of human chattel, belonging to the land, like a plow or an ox, and going with the land when it changed from one lord to another. The lord owned all the products of the man's labor; he could demand at will all manner of personal service; and he could

order him into war at any time, whether the poor fellow had any interest in the conflict or not. The little lords fought among themselves, and with the big lords; and the big lords made war on each other; while kings and emperors were always quarreling with the pope, who alone possessed general authority throughout all Europe.

Being thus bound in feudal ties a man had no liberties but had to live and die in one spot, often without the privilege of leaving the lord's domain even for a brief visit. There were few roads, or none at all; no newspapers, books, railways, telegraphs, and very few ships; each unit of population was hemmed into their little spot, like the Chinamen behind their Great Wall. For these reasons there were no universal ideals, no national spirit, no general understanding. Nations had not been born. Europe itself, in our modern sense of it, had not yet begun to be.

There was no school system. The universities did not become a power until the thirteenth century, and books were not printed until after 1456, shortly before Christopher Columbus, by a happy accident, discovered this continent. Therefore the people were universally ignorant, full of superstitions, eager for marvels, the more ready to believe a tale the more impossible it was. More docile helpless human sheep it would be difficult to imagine.

THE CUSTOM OF PENANCE

Owing to the never ending wars—war was at once a sport and a learned profession—to the general poverty, to the awful fears of things seen and unseen, and to the general religious attitude a mood of pessimism took possession of the whole of Europe. Men gave up hopes for this world and began to brood on the next; multitudes of

the best minds withdrew into monasteries; everywhere was a morbid prepossession with sin, how to get rid of it, how to escape its consequences, how to avoid hell and win heaven. The church taught men that to escape sin they must do penance. Penance was some method of self-punishment in order to secure spiritual merit, and its forms were countless.

One of the favorite means of penance was the pilgrimage. A man believed that if he could visit the shrine of some saint, or worship before some sacred relic, or go on a dangerous journey to some holy place his sins would be forgiven in proportion to his pains. If such a man had a sincere belief in his religion, and genuinely loved its shrines, he had a double motive for risking limb and life in some pious journey; and if he had reason to expect to see a miracle performed his zeal was boundless. Such pilgrimages became the religious fashion, encouraged by priests and provided for in the rules of the church. Timid souls might venture a few miles; more daring ones pushed on farther; and some even went so far as Rome, next to Jerusalem, the holiest place of all, capital of Christianity, home of the pope, See of St. Peter. And there were a few, heroes among the faithful, avid of the glories of martyrdom or even of sainthood, who set off for far Jerusalem.

Because Jerusalem itself was so sacred, and because it lay so far across the world, to be reached only after hardship and peril almost insurmountable, a pilgrimage there held out the supreme rewards—forgiveness from sins of every sort and in case of death instant translation into Paradise. It is of record that 16 made this journey in the tenth century, and 117 in the century following before the beginning of the Crusades; of the latter, two were of

considerable number of persons; one, led by Duke Robert of Normandy, in 1035 A. D.; another, of 7,000 faithful, in 1064 A. D. These large expeditions had been made possible by the conversion of the Huns to Christianity, a thing that broke down one great barrier to the eastward.

PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM

In the earlier days the pilgrims, once they reached Jerusalem, received some consideration, but afterwards, especially after the Caliph of Egypt ordered the Holy Sepulchre destroyed along with all other Christian sacred things in 1009 A. D., many lost their lives in Jerusalem itself, or else at the hands of brigands in the narrow passes that led to it. The fate of these searchers after holiness, along with the infidels' desecration or destruction of all that Christians held dear in the Holy City, brought the impatience of Europe to a boiling pitch. Men began to writhe under the insults thus being heaped upon them by Islam; they prayed for an opportunity to bring upon the Turks and the Arabs the flaming vengenance of Heaven.

Such was the situation. Inside Europe itself human life was tugging at its fetters, craving for release, praying for adventure, hungry for knowledge of the world beyond, needing room for expansion, and smarting under the sense of Mohammedan insult; on the outside towered Islam with its eyes on Europe, planning and plotting for the overthrow of Constantinople, and then Rome, and ultimately of all Christendom. This world tension had to break. A volcano was ready to overflow with fire at the touch of a spark.

This spark was applied by Alexius, Emperor of the Eastern Empire, shortly after he came to the throne. In

1095 A. D. he came so much to fear the Turks then hammering at his door that he appealed for aid to the nations of the west by addressing an appeal to Pope Urban II. The Pope immediately consulted the more powerful nobles, who agreed that a time had come to act. Urban thereupon called a council to meet at Clermont in Auvergne. Such a throng came together of all classess—nobles, priests, and common folk—that no building could hold them, so that sessions were held in the open air.

On Nov. 25 the pope himself addressed the multitude and delivered what one careful historian has described as "the most effective oration recorded in history." Had the gift of prophecy been added to that of eloquence, so that he could have seen into the future, the inspired preacher might have found his tongue paralyzed in his mouth, for this speech of his launched Europe on the Crusades. Passion and flame and an unearthly zeal played through his utterances like summer lightnings. Witness such a passage as this:

"That land in which the light of truth first shone; where the Son of God, in human guise, deigned to walk as man among men; where the Lord taught and suffered, died and rose again; where the work of man's redemption was consummated—this land, consecrated by so many holy memories, has passed into the hand of the impious. The temple of God has been profaned, his saints slain, and their bodies cast out upon the plains for the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field to feed upon. The blood of Christians flows like water in and about Jerusalem, and there is none to do the poor divine mercy, and by virtue of the authority of Sts. Peter and Paul, of whose fullness we are the

depositary, we hereby grant full remission of any canonical penalties whatever to all the faithful of Christ who from motives of devotion alone and not for the procurement of honor or gain shall have gone forth to the aid of God's church at Jerusalem. But whosoever shall have died there in true repentance shall undoubtedly have the remission (*indulgentiam*) of sins and the fruit of eternal reward."

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Urban promised to each and every volunteer the protection of Holy Church and of Saints Peter and Paul and pronounced anathema on any who might molest them; declared a Truce of God among all warring princes and nobles; offered to cancel any indebtedness owing by one who should enlist; and declared he would release from prison any criminal offering to go. To the nobles hungering for money he offered new lands and plunder; to the youth he held out the lure of adventure; to the feudal slave he offered liberty; to those hungering for holiness, the martyr's crown and Paradise; to Europe as a whole he promised, with God's supernatural help, the extinction of Islam. At least, exhibiting a cross before the wide-opened eyes of his hearers, now completely carried away, he cried with a loud voice:

"Wear it upon your shoulders and upon your breasts; let it shine upon your arms and upon your standards; it will be to you the surety of victory or the palm of martyrdom; it will unceasingly remind you that Christ died for you, and that it is your duty to die for Him." (From this the movement had its name; "crusade" is from *crux*, cross.)

Immediately upon conclusion of this hypnotizing oratory an uncontrollable excitement broke out among the

hearers. Crying out with a loud voice, "It is the will of God," they trampled each other under foot in their mad efforts to find a place in the crusading throng; women and children pled for the privilege of going; old men tried to throw aside their crutches; even boys, too young to hold a weapon, wept in their enthusiasm. Like an epidemic, the mania swept through Europe, catching up both sexes of all classes, priest and laymen, until a human flood began to pour eastward with the rally cry, "It is the will of God!"

Jerusalem was 2,000 miles away. The barbaric Huns were on the path, and after them the Turks, and beyond them all the hardships of an unknown country guarded by walled cities, and in Jerusalem itself no provisions ready should they ever reach it; but these dangers did not chill the zeal of the throngs; they were confident that the Lord by His great power and through miracle and sign would secure them victory over all foes.

By the spring of 1096 a multitude, estimated at some 600,000 of the common folk, set out, in several divisions, under the general leadership of Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless. Alas! Tragedy unspeakable was the lot of these self-deluded enthusiasts; many of them were slaughtered by the Huns; and such as did not lose heart and turn back perished at the hands of the Turk, or were carried away into slavery.

The first Crusade, properly so-called, was better organized, and did not leave until the fall of 1096. Knights from Provence were in charge of Count Raymond of Toulouse; the Germans had Godfrey Bouillon and his brother Baldwin as leaders; the French and Italian Norman forces fell in behind Bohemond and Tancred. It

was arranged that this army of trained men, estimated by the pope at 300,000, should meet at Constantinople.

THE CRUSADERS IN THE EAST

There is neither need nor opportunity here to give a history of the Crusades, of which there were eight in a little over 200 years, or to describe the confusion, the quarrelings, treasons, and awful bloodshed through which the knights fought their way to Jerusalem. The invaders conquered Antioch and established a principality under the control of Bohemond. Next they conquered Tripoli and organized about it another principality to be ruled by Raymond. And at last, in the spring of 1099, some 20,000 hardened sun-burned knights, grown accustomed to death and danger, carved their way through to the Holy City, which they conquered after a siege of two months, treating the inhabitants with such barbarity that the soldiers rode up the streets through a writhing mass of men, women and children, their horses, as one chieftain boasted, "knee deep in Moslem blood." With Jerusalem as its capital and Godfrey of Bouillon as its first king, the "Kingdom of Jerusalem" was set up.

With this we must leave the Crusades. What little has been told is sufficient for purposes of background and to make clear our present story, the focus and climax of which lies elsewhere.

III

RISE OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

LONG before this time, as already described, Christian pilgrims had succeeded in reaching Jerusalem, some of them to remain a few years, others permanently. According to an account left by William of Tyre a number of merchants from Amalfi obtained permission from the Caliph of Egypt, then in possession of the city, to form a hospital for poor and sick Christians. This was about 1023. The experiment was a success, so that out of a very small beginning there developed, after a course of years, a well organized order of devoted men, sworn to Christian charity, and dedicated at first to St. John the Almoner, afterward to St. John the Baptist. At the time the Crusades began its master was one Gerard. He obtained from Pope Honorius II a Bull confirming to the order such land and buildings as it had come to possess in Palestine and in Europe, and granting to it the immediate protection of the Holy See. Upon Gerard's death Raymond du Puy became master. During his term of forty years he transformed the brotherhood into a military organization and filled up its ranks with fighting knights, who battled in behalf of the Crusades for more than 200 years. These Knights Hospitallers, as they came to be called, afterwards became known as the Knights of Malta and as such, though now honorary rather than military, survive until this day.

Can you imagine yourself a member of the Knights Hospitallers? Most of the knights, appearing to us so formidable in their forbidding uniforms of flexible mail, armed with sword, shield and lance, were just such eager

young men as now fill with so much enthusiasm the ranks of the Order of DeMolay. And De Molay itself, if one will consider it, has its own ideal of charity and of valor, and teaches its youth how necessary it is to unite for kindliness and courage. Perhaps the more than 100,000 young knights of DeMolay will some day find themselves in a new Crusade! Who can tell! We have Jerusalems of our own, and Saracens, and pilgrims to succor, and wounds to heal!

There were other earnest and idealistic young men in Jerusalem in those far days who found other and equally important work to do. In spite of the powerful military organization sustained by the kings of Jerusalem, pilgrims seeking the Holy City fell into many dangers. Enemies camped among the inaccessible valleys among the hills, always on the lookout for plunder; small bands of bedouins haunted the passes up which wound the narrow paths (there were no highways) to rob or murder the travelers; because of these, or through mishaps otherwise, many pilgrims, wearied from a seemingly interminable journey, were cut down within sight of Jerusalem.

TWO YOUNG KNIGHTS

Two young French Knights of noble birth, Hugh de Payens and Godfrey of St. Omer, by name, no doubt still in their twenties, though they had won their spurs on the battlefield, conceived the idea of forming an organization to guard the road between Jerusalem and Acre, the Jerusalem port on the Mediterranean. Finding seven other young men to unite with them these youths joined themselves into a solemn organization and called themselves "Poor Soldiers in Christ," dedicated themselves to Him and to Mary His mother, and in the presence of the Pa-

triarch, head of the Christian Church in Palestine, took the triple vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The palace of King Baldwin II stood on the supposed site of Solomon's Temple; a suite of rooms in one wing of the palace was set aside for them as headquarters, for which reason they were afterwards known as Knights of the Temple, or Knights Templar.

Before many years had passed these young men along with others who joined them from time to time, became famous, even in Europe where enthusiasm for the Crusades was running high. From the home lands other knights, many of them of gentle birth, came out to enlist with them. "The Order was like a seed sown into a soil exactly prepared for it."

King Baldwin discerned great possibilities in this young Knighthood. He knew that if he was to retain Jerusalem, and later overthrow the Moslem powers, he could not depend on the chance volunteers who might come out at their own expense, fight awhile and then return; but would require a fixed garrison, well disciplined, permanently established, and always ready for war at a moment's call. So he sent two of the Templars to St. Bernard, the greatest churchman of the century, to ask if he would not recommend them to the pope, Honorius, to the end that the Church Council scheduled to be called at Troyes might establish them regularly and as an official part of the church's crusading system. Bernard received them with delight, and so did the pope, and so did the Council. The Council gave them official sanction, and a Rule, similar to that under which the Monastic Orders were governed, either inspired or written by Bernard himself. This happened in January, 1128.

Immediately upon this high sanction the Order became immensely popular. Hugh de Payens himself was received in Paris and even in England. Money was poured into the Templar treasury; rich estates were settled upon it; nobles and princes sent their sons to unite with it. Headquarters were set up in England, Spain, France, and Germany, and soon the valor of the soldiers in Palestine was backed and sustained by a vast systematized organization in the home lands.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ORDER

It will be worth our while to see how the Order was managed, how its membership was graded, and what were the rules under which its members lived. At the head stood the Grand Master, elected by a complicated process, of great authority but not absolute, for he was made to consult his council, even on the battlefield if need be. His headquarters were at Jerusalem, and he was given four horses, a chaplain, a cleric, and household. Second in command was the Seneschal, who ruled in the absence of the Grand Master, and was very similarly equipped. Third was the Marshal, supreme military commander, with provincial marshals under him to have charge of the provinces, the headquarters of which were at Tripoli, Antioch, France, England, Poitou, Aragon, Portugal, Apulia, and Hungary. There was a Grand Treasurer, a Grand Hospitaller, and a Drapier, the last of whom had charge of all clothing. In addition to these were the Preceptors, Priors, and many other dignitaries, all working together in the harmony of a vast and powerful system, which, if this were a history of the Templars, it would be interesting to describe or explain.

The Knights comprised the highest grade in the general membership, each of whom was entitled to two horses

and a squire, or body servant, and two tents. Next in order came the serjeants, or serving brothers, membership among which was eligible to men not in knighthood; such serjeant, unless he was in some official position, had one horse, one tent, and a squire. In addition to these there was attached to the Order a body of light armed horse troops called Turcopoles, the head being the Turcopolier, who was also commander of the serjeants in time of war. Working in all these grades were a number of associates, men who had not taken the vows. Of the chaplains I shall speak later, for they are a key to much in the sequel that would be otherwise mysterious. The Knights wore white mantles, and the serjeants brown or black, each one embroidered with a red cross.

Each brother was bound to attend religious services, at least once a day. All self-indulgence, idle amusement, games, and love-making was strictly forbidden, though it was made obligatory that they have two full meals a day, and sometimes three; so great was their religious zeal, and the temptation to fast, that all knights ate in couples, each watching the other, lest he deny himself food, and so undermine the strength so much needed in battle. Those bound by the lifelong vows were not permitted to marry, or to associate with women, or kiss a woman, even a mother or sister. Hunting was forbidden, except for lions, believed to be the type of Satan; and no knight was suffered to kill a Christian under any circumstances. Obedience to superiors, without question, was always stringently required. And a knight, if captured by the Saracens, was never to be ransomed; to die in the cause was his first duty.

St. Bernard composed a famous tribute to the Order in its early days, which, even if it did exaggerate, shows

what hopes and dreams stirred in the souls of the young knights who were proud to be called The Poor Soldiers of Christ. Here is one of his paragraphs:

"They live together without separate property, in one house, under one rule, careful to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Never is an idle word, or useless deed, or immoderate laughter, or a murmur, if it be but whispered, allowed to go unpunished. Draughts and dice they detest. Hunting they hold in abomination; and take no pleasure in the frivolous pastime of hawking. Soothsayers, jesters, and story-tellers, ribald songs and stage plays they eschew as insane follies. They cut close their hair, knowing, as the apostle says, that 'it is a shame for a man to have long hair.' They never dress gaily, and wash but seldom. Shaggy by reason of their uncombed hair, they are also begrimed with dust, and swarthy from the weight of their armour and the heat of the sun. They strive earnestly to possess strong and swift horses, but not garnished with ornaments or decked with trappings, thinking of battle and victory, not of pomp and show. Such hath God chosen for His own, who vigilantly and faithfully guard the Holy Sepulchre, all armed with the sword, and most learned in the art of war."

IV

THE CAREER OF DE MOLAY

THE Order existed for 186 years. To give here an account of its high deeds, its amazing heroism, its countless battles, its conquest and its defeats, its quarrels, feuds, and its failures would require as many pages of closely written prose; once again we must narrow the scope of our tale, because the youth of De Molay are concerned chiefly to know the story of the Order's last and most famous Grand Master, the proud soldier whose melancholy end, hanging like a sinister shadow over the annals of the terrible fourteenth century, shows how easy it is for fame to become infamy, how quickly the world forgets its heroes, how the enthusiasm begun with the cross may well end in flames at the stake. The youth with generous fire coursing through his blood may naturally expect some praise if he gives his life away in service to his fellows; his hard lesson comes when he discovers that he may be despised for his sacrifices instead. The true young knight whose patron is Jacques De Molay knows that it is his part to be a good soldier let the consequences be what they may, which alone is the part for a real man to play.

If you will turn to your map of France you will discover in the upper right-hand corner the Department of Haute Saone, the capital of which is the famous old city of Belfort. The Vosges Mountains lie to the north, as does Alsace-Loraine, and in it are many towns made familiar to us by the World War. From this region the Marne River flows north and west to unite with the Seine at Paris, and the Rhone to flow south through Avignon to

the Mediterranean. In the northwest corner of the Department you will find Vitrey, in the canton of which, so modern historians believe, Jacques De Molay was born, in a village by the same name. Older writers believed he had been born farther south, in the diocese of Besancon, of the Department of Doubs, but researches in recent years tend to show the fact as stated above. In the thirteenth century Haute Saone was in Franche-Comté, a territory belonging to the Dukes of Burgundy.

The year of De Molay's birth is not known but a little calculation enables us to guess it closely. In an examination before a French inquisitor in October, 1307, he said he had been a Templar forty-two years, or since 1265; if, as is most likely, he had been made a member of the Order at 21, he was born in 1244.

Strangely enough, considering what a figure he became in the history of his times, almost nothing is known about his early life. It is believed that his father was a poor obscure nobleman, for De Molay described himself, at the end of his life, as "a poor and illiterate soldier." Perhaps he received the education customary to a boy of noble birth in that period. If so, he was left in the care of his mother and her ladies until seven, then sent to the household of some lord to live and serve, and by serving to learn at first hand what would be required of a young knight of France. As such he was called a page ("student"), or henchman, and was set to wait on table, work about the kitchen, attend the horses, assist the knights to care for their armor and weapons, and also, it may be, taught hawking and riding with the hounds. It was an outdoor life, for the most part, and filled with such activities as a healthy boy would relish. It may be that Jacques was

taught by some cleric to read and write, but this is not probable, seeing that he described himself as "illiterate."

"LEARNING COURTESY"

Such an apprenticeship was described as "learning courtesy," that is, the breeding and customs required at the court of a prince or noble. There was nothing disgraceful in it; quite the contrary, for the sons of dukes and kings underwent the same discipline. Philip the Hardy, son of a King of France, served thus in his own father's house. The great Lord Joinville waited on table for the King of Navarre until such time, so he relates, as "he put on the hauberk," an expression signifying the being made a knight. Stephen of Blois, who became King of England, was a page in the house of Henry I. The Scotch King Malcolm was apprenticed to Henry II; and Henry II had himself paged it in the palace of his uncle.

If such was the education of Jacques De Molay he worked at humble tasks as a page until 14 and then became a squire, the next superior rank. The squire attended the person of his knight or lord, saw to his accoutrements, and helped to superintend the pages and menials. If as a squire he proved himself intelligent, daring, courageous, apt in the use of arms, not faltering in combat, and cultured in the manners of courts he might assume the honors and responsibilities of knighthood.

Inside the charmed circle of chivalry, as the system of knighthood was called, all knights were free and equal, entitled to own land, and revered by all for their valor, their religious faith, and their brotherliness, all of which qualities and privileges, heightened, transfigured, and made almost divine, have been made familiar to us by Tenny-

son in his epics of the Round Table, and by Walter Scott in those romances which every youth in the Order of De Molay should read. Knighthood became the glory of Europe during the Crusades, when young soldiers from every part of Europe were thrown into contact with brothers in arms from far places; when princes and their followers engaged in friendly rivalry as to whom should become most perfect in their knightly arts; when the church consecrated the services of chivalry by sacramental rites. To be a knight in those days was the one shining ambition of every boy worth his salt.

JACQUES IS DUBBED A KNIGHT

When the young squire Jacques De Molay became of military age, or about 21, he underwent an elaborate ceremony somewhat after the following manner. On the appointed day his fellow squires removed his clothes in a manner solemn and ceremonial. Then they put him into a bath as a symbol of purification. On arising from this he was clad in a white robe, the emblem of his knightly purity, and with a scarlet doublet, which signified his nobility. At nightfall, all fully armed, and alone, or else in the company of a priest, he kept armed vigil in a church; after which he made confession, received absolution, heard mass, and participated in the sacrament. Next he presented his sword to the priest, who, after laying it on the altar, blessed and returned it; then, after kneeling at the feet of the lady who was to arm him, he presented his sword to his patron knight, and made to him his knightly vow. The lady, assisted by the squires, then invested him with hauberk, gauntlets, spurs, and all his armor, along with sword and sword-belt. Once more on his knees before his patron he was given the *accolade*, three strokes

with the flat of the sword on his neck or back, and the *Colie,* a slight blow on the cheek. After this he received gifts (*largess*) from his patron, and in turn distributed gifts to his companions. After this he went forth to prove in tournament or in more serious work his right to the new honor.

Through some such ceremony as this the young man Jacques became a knight, the most exalted rank, next after the high dignities of church and state, a boy could aspire to reach. Wherever he might go now he would find other knights, similarly trained and under like vows, who would receive him as a brother in arms, for knighthood was an order, or fraternity, a kind of Freemasonry of the times. (And as far as that is concerned many of the old ideals and ceremonies of chivalry are still retained in some of the "higher grades" of the Masonic Order.)

What use was DeMolay to make of his new honor? Would he unite himself to one of the lords of Burgundy for military service? Would he establish a household of his own, with pages and squires about him? Would he select a life of adventure, travel in foreign lands, or go on pilgrimage? Jacques elected to enter the Order of Knights Templar. From his boyhood he had lived not far from a Templar commandery, and ever since his earliest recollections had heard tales of their greatness; perhaps this inspired him to take his next step of applying for admittance into the Order. He was received into membership in the parish of Beaune, of the diocese of Autun, in or about the year 1265, by a Templar "visitor" named Imbert of Paraude.

Once again history leaves us in complete ignorance as to any of the details of this memorable event, but if the

virgin knight was received in the customary fashion it is not difficult to imagine what manner of ceremony it was. The rite of admittance was called "Reception," and the Grand Master, or his substitute officiating, was called the "Receptor." Only members of the Order could be present and though the Order was a religious fraternity and not a secret society, the ceremony of reception was held behind guarded doors. There was no period of probation.

HE BECOMES A TEMPLAR

Jacques, accompanied by his parents, relatives and friends, presented himself on the day appointed, and was taken alone into a near-by room to await summons. Notice was then given the Receptor that the novice was ready. The Receptor asked the assembled brother knights if anybody had objections against him. None being made, a brother was sent to tell the young man something of the duties to be required and the hardships to be expected. After confessing himself ready to endure all, and to abide by the strict rules of the Order, Jacques was then introduced before the chapter, as the official local body of the Order was called. Further questions were there put to him, that he might not enter blindly into his new duties. He was solemnly sworn to poverty, chastity and obedience, was invested with the white mantle on which a red cross was embroidered, and afterwards was kissed by the Receptor, also by the Chaplain if one was present. He was then seated at the feet of the Receptor, who delivered to him a long homily concerning the Order, its traditions and ideals, and all that was expected of a Templar. That done, Jacques was permitted to show himself to his friends outside, attired in his new costume, to receive their prayers and congratulations.

We are curious to know what happened next. To what post of duty was the young Templar allotted? How did he comport himself in the ordeal of battle? Alas! on all these matters niggard history is silent. Indeed there were no historians in the thirteenth century. It was a wonderful century—as wonderful in its way as the nineteenth, celebrated in a famous book by Alfred Russell Wallace—a century of many great and fine beginnings, St. Francis' century, and Dante's but it knew nothing of history writing properly so-called, nor of biography, which came into vogue four or five centuries later. There were annals and chronicles, mostly of battles, great lords, saints, and marvels but no ordered presentation of the facts of the past in the service of the present prepared by writers with no axe to grind. Therefore it left behind no record of the career of Jacques De Molay. If any facts were recorded in the archives of the Order of the Temple they have perished, or else lie somewhere lost or hidden.

We do know, however, that Molay won his spurs and high honors, and passed up to great offices, and was sent to duty in Palestine, and finally was elected Grand Master. Pierre Dupuy tells a tale to the effect that this election came about "through the intriguing of the nobility of France," but his story was based on the alleged "confessions" of a renegade Templar and therefore has no bottom to it. It is probable that Molay was in France on absence leave from the Holy Land at the time, and that he was elected to an office that ranked him with great lords and princes in 1298, in which year his predecessor, William de Beaugen, had passed away.

The new Grand Master had no easy task, for things were in a bad way in the east. Antioch, Tripoli, Jeru-

salem, and Acre had fallen, one after the other; the Crusaders had been killed or had fled back to Europe; only the Hospitallers and the Templars were left to confront the Saracens. The Templars, with only a shadow left of their former strength, settled in the Island of Cyprus, hoping against hope for a new crusade, and spending their time in attacking small detachments of the enemy.

But it was vain to expect support from Europe; after two hundred years the crusading spirit had died away, men were thinking new thoughts and cherishing new ambitions; the masses began to say that God Himself had evidently left Jerusalem to the infidel and to fight for it further would be impious. The Templars were strongly entrenched in Europe and Britain, with their great houses, their rich estates, their treasures of gold; their leaders were respected by princes and feared by the people; but there was no popular support for them in their war plans.

LAST DESPERATE EFFORTS

But not for such reasons would the Templars, champing at the bit, consent to remain inactive. Cazan, prince of the Tartars, had designs on Egypt. His wife was the daughter of Leon, king of the Armenians, a Christian people; and for that reason, perhaps, the Tartars showed a friendly spirit toward the Christian powers, so that when Armenia was menaced by Malek-Nazer, Sultan of Egypt, a great Tartar army was sent against the Egyptians. De Molay, with as large a contingent of knights as could be spared took charge of one wing of the Tartar forces and helped defeat the Sultan.

After that, and working in conjunction with a Tartar general, De Molay had the good fortune to retake a few

of the cities that had been lost to the Saracens, Jerusalem among them, where the Templars celebrated Easter. Upon this the Tartar authorities appealed to Europe for assistance, thinking that combined forces might at last break Islam forever.

This was not to be. The pope promised to organize another crusade, but France and England were indifferent. Treachery and dissension broke up the Tartar forces, the Saracens defeated them and in 1300 once again captured Jerusalem. The Templars retreated to the Island of Arade but were driven back to Cyprus, where they waited for support from Europe, or for another Tartar expedition. But Cazan died and his brother and successor, Kharbende, turned against the Christians after a futile attempt to enlist their aid in another attack on the Egyptian Sultan. Without allies in the east or support from the home lands there was nothing for the Templars to do other than bide their time in Cyprus.

V

PHILIP PLOTS OVERTHROW OF THE ORDER

IN the meantime—and verily it was a mean time—forces were shaping themselves behind the political screens of France that proved infinitely more disastrous to De Molay and his remnant of followers than a dozen Saracen armies. The King of France plotted the destruction of the Order!

It will be necessary to examine at some length the principal causes for this astonishing procedure on the part of Philip the Fair. In doing so let us keep it in mind that we have no need whatever to take sides; at our far remove in space and time, and so long after the old bitter controversies have died away, we can have no desire except to know the facts. Only thus can we avoid falling into the misinterpretations and errors that are the lot of them who let feeling and prejudice darken the mind. De Molay himself, if he could return from the world of shadows, would ask of the multitudes of young men now enrolled in a new knighthood under the patronage of his name that they ignore the old quarrels and free themselves from the old violent passions to the end that they be sincere soldiers of truth. It is folly to stir religious prejudices in our own living breasts merely because, six hundred years ago, a great crime was committed in the name of religion. The King of France destroyed the Templars, with the assistance of the pope, a helpless old man, who for the time being chanced to lie in the king's hands. The king found forces at work to make such a thing possible; he believed himself to possess reasons to make it desirable. To discover the forces and to understand the reasons is the only thing needful for us.

The Templars had grown rich and powerful. Their great officials were on a par with princes; their Grand Masters were respected as almost the equal of kings; they were asked to be represented in the great councils of the church. Multitudes of the poor made them innumerable presents; hundreds of lords gave them gold, jewels, houses, and large estates. Alberic estimated that at the time when Jacques De Molay was received, the Order possessed 7,500 manors in many lands from Spain to Scandinavia, from Palestine to Britain; Matthew Paris, perhaps more correctly, reckoned the number at 9,000. Kings stored great treasures in their strongholds or borrowed huge sums from their treasuries. In Paris, one-third of which was in their possession at the time, their Temple was the money center of Europe, a kind of European "Wall Street." Owing to their international organization, to their system in which the commands of a superior in London or Paris could be carried out with military precision in places a thousand miles away, and to there being no legally controlled general system of finance such as is now found in every nation, the Templars became the bankers of their time, and this, even more than their measureless estates, added to the piling stores of their wealth. With such resources, backed by such an organization, the Order became a kind of super-state, before the power of which even a king might be compelled to humble himself.

It was such splendor and power as this that confronted young Philip the Fair when, at 16 years of age, he became ruler of France, the most powerful king in Europe. A truculent ambitious monarch, eager for war, fearless in subjugating the French lords to his own will, extravagant in all his plans, he was everlastingly in need of money. He ground from his own people every possible penny of tri-

bute and taxes; first robbed and then expelled from his kingdom the Jew and Lombard bankers; and at last even debased the national coinage in a desperate attempt to fill his own treasuries. What wonder that he coveted with all his being the overflowing wealth of the Templars, a portion of which had once been revealed to his own eyes in the Paris Temple! What more natural than that he should plot the destruction of the Order to secure its wealth!

RIVALRY OF THE ORDERS

There was another reason. During the past two centuries the Knights Hospitallers had likewise become rich and powerful. Their Order also had become a military power, its original philanthropic ideals lapsing into the background; and though it had neither the numbers nor the wealth of the Templars, it stood a close second as an engine of international influence. There had been much rivalry between the two organizations, and at times malignant feuds that more than once broke into armed conflicts. What if the two Orders could be united!

This had been the dream of many kings and popes. Indeed it had been openly proposed at the Council of Lyons in 1274 but had been defeated then, as in all other instances, by the opposition of the two Orders themselves, each jealous of the other's power. Philip cherished the ambition to achieve this hitherto impossible feat. He would amalgamate the two; he would bring the great new order under the control of France; and he would himself become the head of it. He had already chosen a name, the "Knights of Jerusalem"; and as its head he would be the "King of Jerusalem." It should be so organized that each succeeding Grand Master would be a prince of France.

Moreover there was the papacy to be considered. Philip had long been at war with the popes. He had quarreled with Boniface VIII. He had brought the French clergy to heel, and gained control of the French bishops. Philip had addressed His Holiness as "Your Fatuity." Boniface excommunicated him but Philip boldy burned the Bull, denounced Boniface as a heretic, and made war upon him.

Benedict X, Boniface's successor, made peace with the king, fearing his haughty power. He suffered Philip to pack the college of cardinals with French cardinals. Benedict died in one year. Philip then had a French archbishop, Bertrand of Bordeaux, made pope with the name of Clement V. This happened early in 1305.

This aged pontiff was like wax in the hands of the king of France. He moved the papal court to Avignon in France, where for seventy-one years he and his successors lived in such luxury as might have been found in palaces of rich worldlings. This long absence from Rome, ever afterwards called "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church," was disastrous to the dignity of the papacy in the eyes of the populace, for it meant that the pope was subservient to the French kings; and the shameless attempts always to raise money, by fair means or foul, became a general scandal that brought the once lordly papacy itself into general contempt. All this was as Philip devised it.

It may be that other monarches were secretly in sympathy with Philip's plans to humble the popes, because there had been an increasing friction between the papacy and the kings ever since Hildebrand had dreamed his great dream of making the pope supreme over all, with control of powers temporal and spiritual in his hands, the real sovereign of Europe. Pope after pope followed

Hildebrand in the great ambition. They seized every available piece of territory, and sought control of every possible court, and set one king at war with another in order to weaken both, and humbled every royal head possible.

In their beginnings the Crusades strengthened the papacy because in the nature of things it was the pope alone who could speak for all of Europe and function as general leader; the religious charter of those costly adventures made such a leadership appear the most natural thing in the world.

TEMPLAR PRIVILEGES

When the Order of the Templars came into existence it is probable that the popes welcomed it as much for the military support it would give them as heads of the church as for its warrings against Islam. At any rate all the policies adopted by the popes with regard to it suggest this view. For thirty years the Order was subject ecclesiastically to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose priests ministered to the knights in spiritual matters; then the popes released them from obedience to the patriarch and assumed immediate control of them themselves. Bishops were permitted no authority over the Templars, wherever the knights might be. They were given chaplains of their own, and these chaplains were bound only by the Order's own rule, and that rules rested on the pope's authority. Templar lands were released from tithes, princes were not permitted to demand feudal service from them; a prince or bishop could not even put a Templar on oath. The brothers of the Order were set apart, a distinct and favored class, unconnected with any of the church's own orders.

If a bishop laid an interdict on any city or land, suspending church services, withhold the sacraments, forbidding marriages, the lands and houses of the Templars were made exempt. The person of a Templar was made sacred. The Order itself was the Templar's fatherland, and the pope was his chief. The Templar might be in Italy but he was not an Italian; in Scotland but he was not a Scotchman; in France, but he was not a Frenchman. The Templar Order became a kind of a nation in itself, an empire existing among governments, proud and powerful, drawing its strength from them all but owing obedience to none. No wonder the Templars became proud and haughty, thus set apart and girded about with the dread authority of the head of the whole church!

No wonder if the popes themselves dreamed of having the Order some day as the church's own army, at hand for battle against a stubborn king! Boniface schemed to unite Templars, Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights (a third military Order born of the Crusades, recruited from among the Germans) into one big Order, even as Innocent III had schemed before him. It was a grand ambition, which Philip understood thoroughly; and it was the most natural thing in the world for him (Philip) to determine that if he could not seize control of the united military orders for his own purposes he would at least destroy them and thus prevent another papal theocracy such as Hildebrand had built.

Moreover Philip knew that in spite of all the appearance of its strength, there was a mortal weakness at the heart of the Templar Order. The Order was the child of the Crusades, brought into existence to wage the holy wars and supported therefor; but now the Crusades were over,

and had been in reality ever since the frail and saintly King Louis had died in Egypt. Europe was weary of fruitless holy wars, had other problems to solve, and other tasks to perform. Why then should the peoples continue to support a great but now useless Order, useless at least to them? It had become like a foreign body in the flesh, a tool outworn, an anomaly. Knighthood itself was decaying; the whole system of chivalry was falling to pieces. Private, humble men, who always carry the burdens, compelled to pay (in the last analysis) for the upkeep of so many great houses and so many men and horses that produced nothing, began to wish them out of the way; and kings also wished out of existence what might be seized by the papacy to bring each monarch once again to the heel of the church.

Philip understood all this and the understanding of it emboldened him in his plans. Those plans were diabolical, and have won for him since the execration of eighteen generations who know that other tactics might have been used; but Philip cared little for moral scruples and cared nothing at all what men might think of him after he was dead.

The gradually growing resentment among the masses began to give evidence of itself. People whispered among themselves rumors of strange happenings behind the carefully guarded doors of the Order. There was black sheep among the knights as there would be in any large organization, renegades, and men expelled for violating the rules. Just before Clement V became pope one of these renegades, Esquiu de Floryan, hoping for pay, pretended to "expose" the "secrets" of the Templars. It was formerly believed that there was a second informer, one Noffo Dei,

but recent scholars believe he had nothing to do with the affair.

De Floryan told Philip that on his reception every Templar swore to defend the Order in all matters, just or unjust, as long as he lived; that Templar chiefs had long been in secret correspondence with the Saracens, and had themselves become Mohammedans, and required novices to spit on the cross and deny Christianty; that any brother suspected of intending to betray the Order was secretly murdered; that inside the Temples the knights were heretics and worshipped idols; that they were guiity of profligacy, secret vices and unnatural crimes; and that they had betrayed the Holy Land, and had therefore been responsible for the failure of the Crusades.

All these accusations were of a piece with the rumors gradually gaining currency among the masses. The Templars worshipped an idol they called Baphomet (a corruption of "Mohammed"), so these whispered, invoked the devil, kidnaped children, burned babies alive, and indulged in unspeakable debauches. Of all these wild rumors it was the allegation that the Templars were heretics and trafficked with the Saracens that received most general credence; the long stay of the knights in the east, in close contact with Islam, lent a certain plausibility to this belief.

Philip took depositions containing these accusations and sent word concerning them to the pope in a secret letter. On Aug. 24, 1305, Clement replied by saying that he found it hard to believe such tales, but would investigate, and added that the Templars had written to him to say they had wind of the rumors and asked for an investiga-

tion. To this Philip replied by sending the depositions themselves and demanding trial. But the pope was evidently little moved and let the whole matter drop for a year.

Then Clement sent a kindly, and even affectionate, letter, to De Molay to ask him to come with a few of his knights for an interview; the pope wrote concerning general subjects, the state of affairs in Palestine, prospects of another Crusade, etc., but said nothing about the charges. Upon this De Molay, with some knights, and twelve mules' load of gold and silver, returned to the Temple at Paris, where he was received with every mark of courtesy by the king.

The pope was at Poitiers. With the four French Preceptors De Molay went to him there. We do not know the subjects discussed, except that the pope broached the subject of the amalgamation of the military orders, a project to which De Molay expressed determined opposition.

This was at the end of 1306, nearly two years since Esquiu de Floryan had made his charges before King Philip. Nothing came from the conference, and the winter passed into spring. In April of 1307 De Molay and the four Preceptors again visited Clement to inquire about the accusations, rumors of which steadily increased. It is apparent that Clement reassured him, because the Templars returned, and all went on as usual in their various headquarters. If there was any secret understanding between Philip and Clement, if all this was a plot to render the knights unsuspicious, it was successful; but we have every right to doubt such a secret agreement, although the pope very much feared the power of the king and

probably felt unable to oppose him, for, as we have already seen, the pope had every reason to retain the Order intact.

VI

THE "TRIAL" OF THE TEMPLARS

IN any event, it was Philip who acted. On Sept. 14, 1307, he issued secret writs to his bailiffs and seneschals in all the provinces ordering them to arrest every Templar. At dawn of October 13, the knights, everywhere taken by surprise, were suddenly everywhere in France, taken into custody.

De Molay himself, and sixty of his brethren, were arrested in Paris. In a day or two these amazed knights were taken before the heads of the University of Paris, where they met with a number of abbots and bishops, who had long waited such an opportunity; and were by them presented with a long Act of Accusation in which they were described as blood-thirsty wolves, guilty of vile crimes, heretics, idolaters, traitors, and perjurers; and they asserted, though falsely that the Grand Master and Preceptors had already confessed to these crimes.

Philip sent a circular to other rulers urging them to follow his example, but his proposal was met with blank amazement or open incredulity. Edward II of England asked his fellow rulers not to believe the absurd charges. James of Aragon promised to take action if compelled to do so by the church. Portugal took no action whatsoever.

Pope Clement also vigorously opposed the action. On October 27 he suspended the powers of the Inquisition in France but this did not stop the persecution of the Order; then, perhaps fearing that the whole preceedings might be snatched from the church's control by secular forces,

he issued a Bull on November 2, calling for the arrest of the Templars everywhere. This was like setting the house afire. In all the lands where they were established the Templars were overpowered during 1308, in obedience to the Bull.

Philip determined to maintain control himself. His own safety, now that matters had gone so far, lay in the utter extinction of the Order. On May 26 of the same year he went to Poitiers himself and held a long and stormy session with the pope and his cardinals, who opposed Philip's plan; but Philip made such threats against the ecclesiastics themselves, and already had such control of the church, that he won his case. The pope withdrew his suspension of the powers of the Inquisition in France, and ordered an examination into the charges, reserving the trial of the Grand Master and certain Preceptors to himself.

There is no need that we harass ourselves with a rehearsal of all the horrors that followed, especially since we are primarily interested in De Molay. The knights were thrown into damp cells and cold dungeons, where many died from exposure; hundreds of them were subjected to torture, too barbaric to be described; many of them confessed guilt to escape the rack; sixty-seven were burned at the stake in France. A nightmare of horror settled over Europe. All this was managed by twenty-five papal commissions established in every important center. The public trial at Paris, most important of all, began April 11, 1310.

CLEMENTS CONDEMNS THE ORDER

In April, 1311, Pope Clement, now completely defeated in any effort he may have made to defend the Order, came

to a formal agreement with Philip, issued a Bull to condemn the Order, and called a General Council to meet in Vienna in October of the same year. On April 3, 1312, he preached a sermon in condemnation of the Templars, Philip sitting at his right hand; and on the second of the month published a Bull to order the transfer of Templar property to other hands. Much of it he gave to the Hospitallers, but a great portion went to the various sovereigns, with Philip claiming the lion's share. In Spain most of it went to other military orders; Portugal gave it to the Knights of Christ; and so on and so on.

The sufferer in chief through this long witches' nightmare was Jacques De Molay. Approaching his seventieth year, wrecked by a lifetime of hardships and cares, and broken-hearted at what to him seemed a monstrous ingratitude on the part of his countrymen, he was in poor condition to endure the dungeon and the torture chamber. Outside the Order to which he had given his life were he knew not what foes, or how many; within were he knew not how many traitors. He trusted Philip, only to find him a fiend; he relied confidently on Clement, only to find him a broken reed. One cannot be surprised to find this veteran of a hundred battlefields cracking under the strain, or making false confessions or growing delirious from his agonies.

When Philip had gone to the conference with the pope at Poitiers in 1308 he took seventy of the accused knights with him, among them De Molay and four Preceptors; but on some subterfuge the Grand Master and the Preceptors were left behind at Chinon, much to Clement's apparent displeasure. A commission was sent back to Chinon to examine the five high officials of the Order. Their ex-

amination was conducted August 17 to 20. Thereupon the commission sent a curious report to Philip in which it was said that all five had confessed guilt. The paragraph concerning DeMolay is most strange; "On the following Tuesday, the Grand Master appeared before us. Having taken an oath and heard the reading of the articles imputed to him, he confessed having denied God * * *"

De Molay was brought before the court at Paris on November 26, 1309. At first he demanded to be heard before a mixed court of prelates and lay peers, but this was denied him on the ground that since the Order was religious in its constitution it was the church that must give trial. When one of the commissions of the court read the charges to him De Molay heard that he had already made full confession of the guilt of the Order, as described above. This "stupified him." He crossed himself three times. Then he burst into a rage. He cried that if only the commissioners were not priests he would know how to deal with them!

They rebuked him for such conduct. He exclaimed that he wished to God there were as much justice in France as among the Turks and Saracens, then claimed the privilege to be heard by the pope in person. His anger subsiding, he suddenly became abashed. He admitted that this was no way for him to speak, and asked for two days in which to arrange his defense. The delay was granted.

This had happened on Wednesday. On Friday he appeared again before the commission. He thanked them for granting the delay, and in a rough manner made excuse for his previous conduct before them. The commissioners asked him if he would still defend the Order. "I am only an untutored knight," he replied. "In the pontifical letters

you read me yesterday, I noticed, I remember, that the pope has reserved to himself the right to try the Grand Master and the chiefs of the Order. And for the present, considering the situation I am in, I shall stand by that disposition."

DE MOLAY STANDS FIRM

But this did not satisfy the commissioners. "Will you defend the Order, yes or no?" "At this time, no." Then he asked them to use their influence to have the pope hear him. The commissioners urged him to explain. He asked leave to make three remarks:

"The first," said he, "is that there is no religious order whose churches are better provided with relics and with equipment pertaining to the cult than ours, and no churches, unless it be the cathedrals, where the devotees fulfill their religious duty better than in ours. The second is that there are no orders where alms are distributed more abundantly than in ours. Everybody knows that by general decree alms are distributed three times a week in all our commanderies. The third is that there is not in the Church of God any nation, nor any society, that has shed more blood for the faith than we have. None has exposed his life to save that of his brother oftener than the Templar; none has ever rendered himself more formidable to the enemies of the name of Christ. And it is for that reason that the Count of Artois placed us in the vanguard of his troops at La Massoure, where he with so many others perished; only because he refused to follow the advice of men more experienced than he."

This was a declaration of the innocence of the Order. It did not move the commissioners, who told him all this

meant nothing if faith was lacking. "I fully agree to the truth of this, but thanks to Jesus Christ, we do believe in only one God in three persons and we believe everything the Catholic faith teaches us." Then the king's chancellor, Guillaume de Nogaret, said he had read from an old book how even Saladin, the Saracen, had accused the Order of lack of faith. De Molay denied this. He then asked that he might have religious ministrations while in prison. The commissioners congratulated him on his piety and the hearing concluded.

Months in prison dragged away until March 2, 1310, when De Molay was again brought before the commissioners, who once again asked the Grand Master if he would defend the Order; he replied by reiterating his former argument that since the Templars were under the pope's own care the pope alone had the right to try it. It was his only possible defense. The commissioners promised to write to Clement.

Misled by the apparent conciliatory attitude of the pope's commission several hundred Templars, many of whom had confessed under torture, went before it to retract; they assailed the inquisitors who had tortured them and denounced the methods that had wrung false acknowledgments from their unwilling lips. This alarmed Philip. Would Clement after all save the Order! He determined on a drastic measure that would put an end to the parleying and delay. He had fifty-four of the retracting knights immediately seized and taken before one of his own councils. This council immediately condemned them as relapsed heretics. During the 11th and 12th of May they were burned before the door of the papal commission, resolute and unyielding, singing hymns to the

Virgin. This series of shambles lasted for fourteen months. It came to an end with the Council of Vienne at which the pope formally abolished the Order, as has already been described.

Throughout this long period De Molay was left in prison, apparently forgotten. The Order was broken up; its houses closed; its land distributed; its treasuries expropriated. The people began to forget about it all; their attention was drawn elsewhere. Had Jacques De Molay been left to slow death in the cell it would have occasioned no comment among those who were beginning to forget that there ever had been a Grand Master to lead Christian armies against the Saracens, to attend great church councils in state, to sit at the side of kings, to lead cavalcades of silent armed men through the streets.

VII

THE MARTYRDOM OF DE MOLAY

IN an edict of Dec. 22, 1313, more than six years after the first arrest of the Templars, the pope commissioned a number of prelates to determine the fate of Jacques De Molay, and with him Godefroy de Goneville, Preceptor of Poitou and Aquitaine, Guy, Preceptor of Normandy, and Hughes de Peralde, Visitor of France. The commissioners of doom erected a public platform, and along with it a pulpit, in the square before the church of Notre Dame. To the platform, quickly surrounded by an awe-stricken throng, the four men were brought early in the morning of March 18, 1314.

A prelate preached a sermon about the great things happening in their times, a discourse of rambling rhetoric that must have puzzled the men awaiting to learn their fate. Commissioners then read a number of documents, among them a report of the investigation of De Molay at Chinon, six years before; and immediately, without further ceremony, announced sentence. The four knights were condemned to life imprisonment. Hughes de Peralde and Godefroy de Goneville acquiesced. But not De Molay! Upon hearing the old forged confession again attributed to him he arose, and with a loud voice declared it false, and false also the vile charges against the Order. Guy of Auvergne stood with him.

A wave of horror swept through the crowd. According to the legal customs of the time this was a retraction of confession and punishable by death. Philip was not present, but he was in Paris. Word was immediately carried

to him. The commission adjourned until the following day, in order to deliberate; but Philip would adjourn nothing. Instantly, and ignoring all the regular processes of the law, he ordered the two stiff-necked prisoners burned on a small island of the Seine that same evening.

At sunset they were taken to the stake. The accounts left of this martyrdom are confused and confusing but all agree in describing Molay as firm and brave in the last hour. The aged Grand Master stripped himself of his garments and stood ready, his eyes steady, his voice clear and strong, as befitted the soldier. When they came to tie his hands he exclaimed in a manner almost joyous:

"Gentlemen, let me join my hands a little and make my prayer to God. It is truly time for it; for I am going to die immediately. God knows that I have not deserved my torture. Misfortune will soon come to those who have condemned us. God will avenge our death upon our enemies; I die with that conviction. For you, gentlemen, turn, I pray you, my face towards the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ."

"Then," says Godfrey de Paris, the poet, a witness of the scene, "they granted him his request, and death took him so sweetly in that attitude, so that all marvelled at it."

Strange rumors ran through the masses, who had not been present. The folk imagination, always so greedy for marvels, conferred on the dead Grand Master the gift of prophecy. It attributed to De Molay these words: "Clement, sole judge, I summon thee to appear within fourteen days before the judgment seat of God; and thee, Philip, within a year."

Had De Molay actually uttered these strange phrases he would have been a prophet indeed. Within the year Clement died, a victim of strange terrors, abandoned by his own friends, his body a long while unburied; and Philip, as if pursued by the furies, died a violent death soon after. Death also came upon his three brothers and with them ended the king's branch of the Capetian family.

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

Was the Order guilty of the alleged crimes? Until this day historians have differed violently among themselves. Many of the records of the time were lost or destroyed; others were preserved in a mutilated condition; and the rest are full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Until the middle of the past century the majority of historians —I make a broad generalization here—tended to accept their guilt; but of late years the pendulum has swung to the other side. It is worthy of note in America that the most thorough examination of the trial of the Templars thus far undertaken was made by the greatly learned and rigidly scientific Philadelphia historian, Henry Charles Lea, whose histories of the Inquisition stand above all other works on the same subject. He came to the conclusion that while individual Templars here and there were doubtless guilty of folly and even of crime, the Order itself was innocent; and that while the aged Grand Master weakened for a time under torture, his deep sense of guiltlessness strengthened him at last to die like the real hero he was. Lord Acton, "the most learned Roman Catholic scholar of the nineteenth century," set the seal of his own approval on Lea's work; he says that the great argument of the *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* constitutes "a sound and solid structure that will survive the

censure of all critics," then adds: "Apart from all surprises still in store at Rome, and the manifest abundance of Philadelphia (referring to Lea's own scholarship), the knowledge which is common property, within reach of men who seriously invoke history as the final remedy for untruth and the sovereign arbiter of opinion, can add little to the searching labors of the American." We shall not go far astray, therefore, in accepting Lea's conclusions.

During the two centuries of its existence the Order of the Temple had built itself into the life of the period and into the system of civilization in Europe to an extent not adequately realized even at the time; it had made largely possible the continuity of effort which alone rendered a series of crusades feasible; to it more than to any other power (though this is not intended to underestimate the strength of the Hospitallers) was Europe indebted for the expulsion of Islam from its own borders and the curbing of its dangerous might in the east; it had exalted and given a new meaning to knighthood, the framework of much of the culture and arts in that age of chivalry; it helped bring to a focus of definite purpose the energies of men in a time when every social condition tended to disperse them; all of this tended powerfully to make for the unity of Europe when Europe was suffering most from its own internal disruptions.

THE BLACK AFTERMATH

The manner in which this great confraternity of knights dedicated to religion and valor was brought to an end came to stand in exact antithesis to all this, and left behind it a brood of woes from which the nations could not release themselves until long after the Reformation, if

ever. The violent destruction of the Templars removed the most formidable obstacle in the path of the Turks, leaving them free to follow conquest until modern times; and even now they remain a thorn in the side of south-eastern Europe, a shadow and a menace in the presence of the greatest of the Powers. It gave the highest possible sanction, and a disastrous extension, to a diabolically cruel criminal procedure that remained in France until broken down in tears and blood by the terrible French Revolution.

The charges of witchcraft and devil worship, the possibility of which was confirmed by the highest authorities of Church and State, tended to fix more firmly on the necks of the ignorant peoples a set of superstitions from which many of them are not yet free. The diabolical cruelty of the Templar trials established a precedent for horrors to come, culminating in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and many similar horrors. And it left standing at the center of European history the dark memory of a dreadful crime from which has flowed nobody can know how much cynicism, pessimism, and hopelessness.

Little wonder that Dollinger was led to exclaim, contemplating it all five centuries afterwards, that if he were to name out of all the days in the history of the world one that was in deepest truth a Day of Satan it would be that autumn day in the sunset of which Jacques De Molay perished amid the flames.

All this is a sign and a summons even until now, but not for the renewal of hatred or the bestirring of passion. Our own young knights in this new order of things will let the old fires die. They have new crusades in hand, to be waged in the Holy Land of their own natures, where

ignorance, prejudice, and unbrotherliness are the only Saracens. If they learn to forgive the old enemies of a free and enlightened civilization, the while they forge themselves into a new chivalry wherein to learn and practice honor, toleration, citizenship, manhood, and a wise and reasonable love of country, they will prove themselves worthy of a place in an Order dedicated to the memory of Jacques De Molay.

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