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

Never had the order of the Temple been to all appearance more powerful than immediately before its ruin. Sovereign power, in the sense of that of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia or the Knights of St John in Rhodes and later in Malta, it had never possessed; but its privileges and immunities constituted it a church within the church and—in France at least—a state within the state. Philip IV., indeed, in pursuance of his policy of centralizing power in the crown, had from 1287 onwards made tentative efforts to curtail the power and wealth of the order; in 1287 he commanded the sequestration of all its property acquired since the confirmation of its privileges by Louis IX. in 1258; in 1289 the ordinance of Ferrières in Gâtinais was directed against its illegal acquisitions and its interference with the jurisdiction of the king and his vassals; in 1290 the parlement decided that the privileges of the order could only be enjoyed by those who actually wore its habit. Soon, however, the king’s necessities forced him to change his policy. In January 1293 the privileges of the order in and about Paris were confirmed and extended, and in 1297 Philip borrowed 5200 *livres tournoises* from the Paris Temple. Then came the great quarrel with Pope Boniface VIII., and on the 10th of August 1303 the king signed with Hugues de Peraud, the general visitor of the French Templars, a formal treaty of alliance against the pope. On the 6th of February 1304 Boniface’s successor, Benedict XI., once more confirmed all the Templars’ privileges; while Philip, for his part, appointed Hugues de Peraud receiver of the royal revenues and, under pressure of the disastrous campaign in Flanders, in June granted a charter exempting the order from all hindrances to the acquisi­tion of property. Two years later the king took refuge in the Temple from the violence of the Paris mob,@@1 and so late as the spring of 1307 was present at the reception of a new Templar.@@2

Yet for some two years past the king had been plotting *a* treacherous attack on the order. His motives are clear: he bad used every expedient to raise money, had robbed and ex­pelled the Jews and the Lombard bankers, had debased the coinage; the suppression of the Templars would at once rescue him from their unwelcome tutelage and replenish his coffers. He cherished also another ambition. The question of an amal­gamation of the great military orders had often been mooted; the project had been approved by successive popes in the in­terests of the Holy Land; it had been formally proposed at the Lyons council of 1274, only to be rejected by the opposition of the Templars and Hospitallers themselves. To Philip this scheme commended itself as an opportunity for bringing the orders under the control of the French crown; there was to be but one order, that of the “ Knights of Jerusalem,” of which the grand master was always to be a prince of the royal house of France.@@’ Clearly, it only needed an excuse and a favourable opportunity to make him attack the Templars; and, once having attacked them, nothing short of their entire destruction would have been consistent with his safety. The excuse was found in the denunciation of the order for heresy and unspeak­bound to respond to demands of the grand master for consignments of men and money, but their main duty was to assist the king in his wars against the Moors at home *(ad Sarracenorum Yspanie ofensionem),* a duty they fulfilled with conspicuous success and courage to the last. See Finke i. 3, *Papsttum und Untergang des Tempjerordens* (p. 27), “ *Die Sonderstellung der aragonesischen (und spanischen) Templer."* See also Prutz, *Templerherrenorden,* p. 61 seq. In Portugal the Templars were practically feudatories of the crown, the master taking an oath of fealty to the king and his heir *(ib.* p. 59). (W. A. P.)

able immoralities by a venal informer; the opportunity was the election of a pope, Clement V., wholly devoted to the in­terests of the king of France.

For perhaps half a century there had been strange stories circulating as to the secret rites practised by the order at its midnight meetings, stories which probably had their origin in the extreme precautions taken by the Templars, originally perhaps for military reasons, to secure the secrecy of their proceedings, which excited popular curiosity and suspicion. Among the Templars alone of the religious orders the ceremonies of reception were conducted in strict privacy; chapters were held at daybreak with closely guarded doors, and no one participating was allowed to reveal what had passed, even to a fellow-member of the order, under pain of expulsion. It was inevitable that, considering the temper of the age, all this should lead to stories of rites too repulsive to bear the light. It was said that on his initiation each member had to disavow his belief in Christ, to spit upon the crucifix, to submit to indecent ceremonies. When the mass was cele­brated the consecrating words *Hoc est corpus* were omitted; on Good Friday the holy cross was trampled under foot; and the Christian duty of almsgiving had ceased to be observed. Even the vaunted chastity of the order towards women had, it was said, been turned into the formal obligation to commit more horrible offences. These evil practices were part of the secret statute law of an order which in its nightly assemblies wor­shipped an idol named Baphomet @@4 or the devil in the shape of a black cat. Devils, too, appeared in the form of beautiful women (*succubi*), with whom the brothers had carnal intercourse. In England the very children at their play bade one another beware of a Templar’s kisses. Stranger stories yet were rife in England and gravely reported before bishops and priests— of children slain by their fathers because they chanced to witness the nightly orgies of the society; of one prior’s being spirited away at every meeting of the general chapter; of the great preceptor’s declaring that a single hair of a Saracen’s beard was worth more than the whole body of a Christian man. In France they were said to roast their illegitimate children and smear their idols with the burning fat.

In the spring of 1304 or 1305 a certain Esquiu de Floyran of Beziers pretended to betray the “ secret of the Templars ” *(factum Templariorum)* to James II. of Aragon. The pious king, who had every reason to think well of the order, did not affect to be convinced; but the prospect of spoils was alluring, and he seems to have promised the in­former a share of the booty if he could make good his charges.@@5 Esquiu now turned to Philip of France, with more immediate success. For the purpose of collecting additional evidence the king caused twelve spies to find admission to the order, and in the meantime sought to win over the pope to his views. Ber­trand de Got, archbishop of Bordeaux, who on the 5th of June 1305 became pope as Clement V., owed the tiara to the diplomacy of Philip’s agents, perhaps to their gold; but though a weak man, and moreover a martyr to ill health, he was not so immediately accommodating as the king might have wished,

@@@1 For details see Lavocat, p. 120.

@@@2 Finke 1. 119.

@@@3 He himself was to be its first head, with the title of “ King of Jerusalem.” See the letter (No. 75) from Leget F. to Bernart F. in Finke ii. 114.

@@@4 Two of the Templars examined at Carcassonne spoke of an idol named Baphomet or a piece of wood on which was represented a figure of Baphomet. A Templar at Florence called the idol Mahomet or Magomet. Baphomet was a common medieval cor­ruption of Mahomet (Maphomet, Mahom, &c.), who was regarded, not as a false prophet only, but as a demon, a false god to whom human sacrifices were offered. Hence any unholy or fantastic rites came to be called *baffumerie, mahomerie, mômerie, i.e.* “ mummery.” Hammer-Purgstall's derivation from *'βaφi∣* Mtjtoûs, *i.e.* the baptism of Metis (the supreme wisdom), has no trustworthy evidence to support it. See Loiseleur, *Doctrine secrète,* p. 97 seq.

@@@5 Finke ii. 83, No. 57, publishes a letter of Esquiu to the king, dated 21st January 1308, claiming his reward. Esquiu is the Squin de Florian of Villani; the other informer mentioned by him, Noffo Dei (Deghi) of Florence, had, however, nothing to do with the matter; he was in financial relations with the Temple at Paris, and was hanged for swindling. Nor was Esquiu’s motive to save himself from execution, but purely mercenary. The exist­ence of an informer, doubted by Lea *(Inquisition* iii. 255) and others, is now proved.