nouncing his private property and dedicating his future life to the Holy Land. The order prided itself specially on the splendour of its religious services, the abundance of its alms, and its reckless valour for the Christian faith. At the time of its suppression it was calculated to number 15,000 members. Three MSS. of its ancient statutes, written in Old French, are still extant at Dijon, at Paris, and at Rome. Of these the first was transcribed about 1200, the last two from 1250 to 1300. They have been published by Μ. Maillard de Chambure (Paris, 1840).

A scheme for the union of the three great military orders into one had received the sanction of Gregory X. and Louis IX., of Nicholas IV. and Boniface VIII. The recovery of the Holy Land was the dream of the last pope’s highest ambition ; and when he died a prisoner in the hands of Philip IV. of France this king con­tinued to advocate the plan for his own purposes. His gold or influence secured the election of Clement V. as pope (5th June 1305). According to a slightly later tradition, before consenting to the new pope’s appointment he exacted from him an oath to assist in carrying out six propositions, one of which he would not disclose as yet. This sixth condition, if it ever existed, must have been the suppression of the Templars ; and, whether false or true, Villani’s story emphasizes a popular and almost contemporary opinion. It is known that Philip was urging Clement in this direction before the latter’s coronation at Lyons on 14th November 1305, and all through the two succeeding years. On 6th June 1306 the pope summoned the grand-master from Cyprus to France. James de Molai obeyed the call, and, hearing of the charges against his order, demanded a prompt investigation. In this demand he was supported by the leading Templars of the realm. Clement, who disbelieved the accusations, fenced with the question. But, though only a very short time previously Philip had spoken of his special love for the order, and though it had sheltered him from the fury of the Paris mob in 1306, he was now determined on its destruction. Its wealth would fill the royal coffers, and the rumours of the day afforded a ready engine for its overthrow.

For perhaps half a century there had been strange stories circulat­ing as to the secret rites practised by the order at its midnight meetings. It was said that on his initiation each member had to disavow his belief in God and Christ, to spit upon the crucifix, to submit to indecent ceremonies, and to swear never to reveal the secrets of the society or disobey the mandates of a grand-master, who claimed full power of absolution. 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 a sanction for more horrible offences. These evil practices were part of the secret statute law of an order which in its nightly assemblies worshipped hideous four-footed figures,—a cat or a calf. In England the very children at their play bade one another beware of a Templar’s kisses. Stranger stories yet were rife in this country 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.

For nearly two years Philip waited for Clement to fulfil his bargain. A certain Templar from the prisons of Toulouse now offered to put the king in possession of a secret that would be worth a realm. Acting on the evidence of this informer, Philip issued orders (14th September 1307) for the arrest of all the Templars in France on the night of Friday, 13th October. He seems to have written to the neighbouring princes urging them to act in the same way. James de Molai was seized with sixty of his brethren in Paris. On Saturday they were brought before the university of Paris to hear the enumeration of their crimes ; and on Sunday the Paris mob was gathered in the royal gardens, where preachers were inveighing against the iniquities of the order. The inquisitors began their work at once ; and inhuman tortures forced the most horrible avowals from the lips of many. In Paris alone thirty-six Templars died under torture.@@1 Of 140 Templars examined at Paris between 19th October and 24th November 1307, the experience of some of whom extended over nearly half a century, there is hardly one who did not admit the dishonouring of the crucifix at his reception. Very many confessed to other charges, even of the worst description. Clement V., although he suspended the inquisitors’ powers on 27th October (Loiseleur, 159), before the end of the next month wrote to Edward II. to arrest all the English Templars, who were accord­ingly seized on 10th January 1308. About the same time they were arrested in Sicily (24th January) and in Cyprus (27th May). As Clement did not move fast enough, Philip went to Poitiers with 700 armed men, and the pope was at his mercy. It was agreed that the prisoners, their lands, and their money should be nominally placed in the hands of Clement’s commissioners. The power of the inquisitors was restored (5th July) ; and the property forfeited was to be devoted to the recovery of the Holy Land. Clement now gave orders for fresh diocesan inquiries into the guilt of the Templars. He had already heard the confessions of seventy-two at Poitiers (29th June to 1st July). The grand-master and the three preceptors were re-examined at Chinon, and renewed their old confessions (20th August). Lastly, the bull *Regnans in Cælo* sum­moned a great council at Vienne for 1st October 1310, when the question of the guilt of the order might be considered. The diocesan councils were only empowered to inquire into the conduct of individuals.

The trial began on 11th April 1310. On 23d April Reginald de Praino protested against the unfairness of the proceedings. On Tuesday, 12th May, fifty-four Templars were burnt by order of the archbishop of Sens, and a few days later four more. Next day the terror spread (19th May). Forty-six Templars withdrew their de­fence and the commissioners decided (30th May) to adjourn till November. The second examination lasted from 18th December 1310 to 5th June 1311. Meanwhile (c. April 1311) Clement and Philip had come to terms. The pope condemned the Templars. The council of Vienne met in October 1311. A discussion arose as to whether the Templars should be heard in their own defence. Clement, it is said, broke up the session to avoid compliance ; and when seven Templars offered themselves as deputies for the defence he had them cast into prison. Towards the beginning of March Philip came to Vienne, and he was seated at the pope’s right hand when that pontiff delivered his sermon against the Templars (3d April 1312), whose order had just been abolished, not at the general council, but in private consistory (22d March). On 2d May 1312 he published the bull *Ad Providam,* transferring the goods of the society, except for the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Portugal, and Majorca, to the Knights of St John. The order was never formally pronounced guilty of the crimes laid to its charge ; its abolition was distinctly, in the terms of Clement’s bull *Considerantes. Dudum,* “ non per modum definitiv® sententiae, cum eam super hoc secun­dum inquisitiones et processus super his habitos non possemus ferre de jure sed per viam provisionis et ordinationis apostolic®” (6th May 1312).

The individual members of the order seem to have been left to the judgment of provincial councils. They were divided into three classes,—(1) those who confessed at once ; (2) those who persisted in denial of the charges ; (3) those who, having confessed at first, withdrew their confessions later on the plea that they had been extracted by torture. The penalties for the three classes were respectively (1) penitence, (2) perpetual imprisonment, (3) death by fire. The cases of the grand-master, the visitor of France, and the masters of Aquitaine and Normandy were reserved for the pope’s decision. Early in 1314 they were forced to make a public con­fession in Notre Dame, and had already been condemned to per­petual imprisonment when the grand-master and the preceptor of Normandy publicly proclaimed their entire innocence. The king, without consulting the church, had them burnt “in the little island ” of the Seine “ between the Augustinians and the royal garden.”

The opinion that the monstrous charges brought against the Templars were false and the confessions were only extracted by torture is supported by the general results of the investigation (in almost every country outside France), as we have them collected in Raynouard, Labbe, and Du Puy. In Castile, where the king flung them into prison, they were acquitted at the council of Salamanca. In Aragon, where they held out for a time in their fortresses against the royal power, the council of Tarragona proclaimed in their favour (4th November 1312). In Portugal the commissioners reported that there were no grounds for accusation. At Mainz the council pronounced the order blameless. At Treves, at Messina, and at Bologna, in Romagna and in Cyprus, they were either acquitted or no evidence was forthcoming against them. At the council of Ravenna the question as to whether torture should be used was answered in the negative except by two Dominicans ; all the Templars were absolved,—even those who had confessed through fear of torture being pronounced innocent (18th June 1310). Six Templars were examined at Florence, and their evidence is for its length the most remarkable of all that is still extant. Roughly speaking, they confess with the most elaborate detail to every charge, —even the most loathsome ; and the perusal of their evidence induces a constant suspicion that their answers were practically dictated to them in the process of the examination or invented by the witnesses themselves.@@2 In England, where perhaps torture was not used, out of eighty Templars examined only four confessed to the charge of denying Christ, and of these four two were apostate knights. But some English Templars would only guarantee the purity of their own country. That in England as elsewhere the charges were held to be not absolutely proved seems evident from the form of confession to be used before absolution, in which the Templars acknowledge themselves to be defamed in the matter of certain articles that they cannot purge themselves. In England nearly all the worst evidence comes at second or third

@@@1 Michelet, *Proces,* i. 36 ; Gruelle, 35, &c.

@@@2 See the evidence in full ap. Loiseleur, pp. 172-212.