

to spit and trample on the Cross, and blaspheme Christ—that if any novice, disgusted with this profligacy, wished to withdraw from the Order, he was secretly murdered—that they sacrificed men to an idol that they worshipped—that they had roasted a Templar's bastard, and drank his blood—that they had sold the Holy Land to the Infidels, and, in short, that the houses were the abode of every "damnable sin and beastiality."

The precise date of Squin de Florian's confessions has escaped history; but whether they were made prior or subsequent to the justification of the Order by Jacques de Molai, as already narrated, is a matter of trivial significance. They furnished Philip with that apology which his cupidity coveted; and he urged the Pope so earnestly to acquiesce in his ruthless project, that His Holiness, whose conscience, though not particularly tender, still smote him for having leagued himself against the Order, sought to smother the King's avarice by declaring, that if the Templars were found guilty of the crimes laid to their charge, their effects and revenues should be dedicated exclusively to the redemption of the Holy Land. To a monarch of Philip's warm and imperious temperament, this dilatory mode of proceeding was anything but satisfactory. Contemning the justification of the Pontiff, he sent secret instructions to all his governors to arm themselves on the 12th of Oct., 1307; and next day all the Templars in France were arrested and thrown into durance.

Notwithstanding the sensation which this event excited over Europe, Edward the Second of England alone showed a disposition to befriend the Templars in the dire extremity to which they were reduced. On receiving an invitation from Philip to follow his example, and commence a persecution against the Order, he treated the charges submitted to him as incredible calumnies, and wrote to the Kings of Portugal, Castile,

Arragon, and Sicily, beseeching them to receive with caution the rumors that were in circulation. But a papal edict reiterating the charges, and calling on him to imitate the King of France, and place all the Templars and their goods within his dominions in safe keeping, overcame his reluctance to declare himself among their enemies. All the Templars in England were forthwith thrown into confinement, and the persecution even extended to Ireland, Scotland and Wales; but it never wore, in any of these countries, that aspect of barbarity which characterized it in France.

The fiat of Philip against the Order had gone forth at that season of the year when the cell of the captive is rendered doubly dreadful by the rigor of winter. The sufferers were deprived of the habit of their Order, and of the rites and comforts of the church; only the barest necessities of life were allowed them; and those who refused to plead guilty to the horrible crimes of which they were accused, were subjected to every species of torture. Shrieks and groans resounded in all the prisons of France; their tormentors noted down not only their words, but even their tears and sighs; and the spirit of many a knight whom the terrors of Paynim war had failed to subdue, quailed at the stake and on the rack. But if some criminated themselves to escape the torments to which a cruel and flagitious policy subjected them, many bore their sufferings with invincible firmness, and died with as much of martyr-heroism as the most intrepid of their Order had ever met the nobler doom of death in battle. The Pope examined seventy-two himself, who confessed themselves guilty. A real or pretended letter of Jacques de Molai, their Grand Master, was shown them, in which he admitted several of the charges, and exhorted the whole Order to do the same; but on a sudden, the persecutors were foiled by the recantation