

Office Bearer, or it may be deferred until the close of the Ceremony, at the discretion of the Eminent Presiding Preceptor.

SECOND HISTORICAL SKETCH.

“As a Novice Esquire you have already been informed of the history and nature of the Society in its earliest stages. You have yet to learn the dire catastrophe which befel it about two centuries after its formation in Palestine. During this period it flourished greatly, and had been of essential service in the cause of religion. Yet, strange to say, their overthrow was to be effected by men professing the same faith, but actuated by the base motives of possessing themselves of the treasures of the Order. To this effect Philip the Fair, King of France, and Pope Clement 5th, in the year 1307, entered into an unholy league, binding themselves to destroy the illustrious Order. On the night of the 10th of October of that year, when the Grand Master and his Knights were reposing in confidence in the Christian Capital of Paris, they were seized in the house of the temple there, and at break of day the whole of the Knights throughout the Province of France were arrested and thrown into prison. Many were put to the torture, to force them to confess crimes of which they were innocent, and those who survived the rack were condemned to pine in prison for years, without aid in their cause, and with scarcely sustenance sufficient to support existence.

“At length they were led out in bands, at one time fifty together, and were burnt to death upon fagots. The Grand Master, Jacques de Molai, with four of his Priors, were the last victims of this relentless persecution, after remaining nearly seven years in prison. These illustrious Brethren were on the 11th of March, 1313, led out for execution before the Cathedral of Paris and burnt alive before the assembled citizens, the glorious Martyrs of a glorious Order.

“Thus perished, after an existence of nearly two hundred years, The Order of the Temple, which was dissolved and ultimately stripped of its privileges and possessions. Some entered the Monasteries, others married and retired into secular life; many fled into Spain and Portugal, uniting with and creating a similar Order, called ‘The Order of Christ,’ which existed until 1854, when it was suppressed; others joined the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, subsequently known as Knights of Malta, where in England and Scotland the lands and Lordships of the Templars had been conferred. In Scotland they became known as the *combined* Orders of St. John and The Temple, thus the individuality of the Templar became forgotten, whilst the name of St. John of Jerusalem of Knights of Malta was continued up to the time of the Reformation; and from this source we derive our Templar existence. The combined Orders in Scotland, when they surrendered their rights and privileges to the Crown, were absorbed in the ranks of civil life and scattered over Europe.”