

The worthy Representative of St. Peter pretended to be dissatisfied at the precipitancy of his too zealous son Philip, but he soon threw off the mask, and joined in the death-cry. In the years 1308 and 1309, he addressed bulls to all the Sovereigns of Christendom, commanding them to inquire into the conduct of the Knights. He afterwards declared that seventy-two members of the Order had been examined by his Cardinals and other officers, and had all been found guilty, *but in various degrees*, of irreligion and immorality, and he threatened to excommunicate every person that should harbor, or give counsel, or show favor to, any Templar.

Without waiting for these Papal bulls, however, Philip, as soon as his plans were ripe, had endeavoured to stimulate his son-in-law, Edward of England, to similar measures; but the English court and council, while they engaged to investigate the charges, expressed the greatest astonishment at them; and two months later, Edward wrote to the Kings of Portugal, Castile, and Arragon, imploring them not to credit the accusations which had been most maliciously heaped upon the Knights. He also addressed the Pope a letter in their favor, representing them as an injured and calumniated body of men. But Edward the II. was never firm to any purpose, except where his favourite was concerned; he forgot the old friendship which had existed between the English Kings and the Knights Templar; and the Barons, on their side, forgot the day when Almeric, the Master of the English Templars, stood with their ancestors on the field of Runnymede, an advocate for the nation's liberties. The ruin of the Order was resolved upon, and accomplished; but to the credit of our English origin, let it be said, that the suppression was made without any of those terrible cruelties which accompanied that act in France.

In 1308, the second year of Edward's reign, after the feast of the Epiphany, one of the royal clerks was sent round with writs to all the sheriffs of counties, ordering each and all of them to summon a certain number of freeholders in the several counties—"good and lawful men"—to meet on an appointed day, and discuss matters relating to the King's peace. The sheriffs and freeholders met on the day fixed, and they were all made to swear that they would execute certain sealed orders, which were delivered to the sheriffs by the King's Messengers. These orders, when opened, were to be executed *Suddenly*. The same conspiracy-like measures were adopted in Ireland, and in both countries, on the same day, nearly at the same hour, all their lands, tenements, goods, and all kinds of property, ecclesiastical as well as temporal, were attached, and the Knights themselves arrested.

The number of Templars seized was about two hundred and fifty. Of these, about thirty were arrested in Ireland. It appeared that only two Knights were arrested in Scotland, but of them more hereafter.

The Templars were to be kept in safe custody, but not "in vile and hard prison." They were confined more than eighteen months in different towns and castles. In the month of October, 1309, courts were constituted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in London, York, and Lincoln. Forty-seven of the Knights, the nobles of the Order in England, who were brought from the Tower before the Bishop of London and the envoys of the Pope, boldly declared their innocence. The evidence at first produced against them amounted to less than nothing; but the courts were appointed to convict, not to absolve, and, in spite of all law, they sent the Knights back to their prisons, to wait