THE
COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE
AND
THE WAR IN BOHEMIA.

BY
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PREFACE.

THE volume here offered to public notice is not controversial, but purely, and, as far as human nature—the Author's nature at least—allows, impartially historical. Its influence, if it obtains any, will tend to the extinction of controversy, by promoting the legitimate object of all disputes, viz. the acknowledgment of truth, and the extension of charity. Such should surely be the effect of exhibiting in their just light the evils, both of despotic bigotry, and of that vindictive licence which is at once its natural offspring and its opposite.

Great events are of slow production, as well as consequently, of rare occurrence. That great work of Providence, the Reformation, was not effected at once, nor brought forth without preparative and painful throes. Luther's and Cranmer's Reformation, though, when viewed as one, embracing all we popularly mean by the word, was neither the only nor the first Reformation: it indeed towers so high, and "looms" so broadly on the eye of imagination, that we are apt to overlook both the remoter progressive heights which lead up to it, and the basis of gradual inquiry and heroic self-sacrifice for the truth on which it rests.

Throughout the Middle Ages—not to speak of here and there a solitary member of her communion—who, like Berengarius, had discernment to perceive, and courage to point out, the grosser blemishes of the Roman Church, some sect or society was always to be found bearing witness, though it might be obscurely and imperfectly, to the same facts. Among such, the Paulicians in the ante-mediaeval period, the Waldenses in the mediaeval, were the most distinguished. But their strength was unequal to the task of delivering mankind from the evils they protested against, even had the soundness of their own faith been sufficiently manifest to attract converts, or their light adequate to guide them safely in a better way. No very formidable blow had been dealt upon the fabric of Roman supremacy, until the revolt of the Bohemians, provoked by the transactions at Constance. Of those events which contributed to prepare the way for the more general and more effectual effort in the following century,—of such of them at least as largely mix with the social history of any people,—the most remarkable series is undoubtedly that which the present work aspires to make familiar and profitable to the general reader.

If we except the Waldenses, to whose claim the works of some popular writers have imparted perhaps a disproportionate celebrity, those early attempts to recall the Church's purity and freedom have failed, even in this age of historical and religious inquiry, to elicit much admiration. It is not denied that they who in the palmy state of ecclesiastical power stood up, few and without support, in the cause of religious freedom were sincere, self-denying, heroically-minded men; but their labours and sacrifices, it is objected, were ineffective. True, the fruit of them is not now very clearly discernible. We shall, nevertheless, show ourselves both mistaken and ungrateful, if we deny its existence. No band of reformers, no protesting sect, no single asserter of obscured truth, is unworthy of or unentitled to our regard. Each and all of such contributed in their day towards furthering that greater but kindred achievement in the light of whose completion we now live. Their very faults and failures read a lesson full of instruction to their successors. John Huss and Jerome of Prague saw but half the truth; shall we therefore question the worth of the noble example those men set of patient and triumphant endurance for its sake? Or ought not we, who ourselves possess it entire to acknowledge for that very reason a double force in their example? The characters and events presented in the Bohemian religious wars are in many cases detestable, and the result appears small and ill-proportioned. But at the least they afford us matter of warning and of thankfulness. We learn from them the mischief of allowing fierce and revengeful passions to mix themselves up with a just cause; we read in their unsatisfactory issues that bigotry and injustice cannot be effectually corrected by cruelty and violence. We are taught to be modestly grateful for our national and more mature information, which yet was not without its blots and imperfections. Thus the deadly struggle of the fifteenth century was precious, though only the rude breaking up of the soil by the iron ploughshare of a peopled wrath for the growth of future improvement. As the blood of unquestionable martyrs is the effectual watering of the Church, so every drop of blood sincerely shed, every effort made in earnest love for the truth and the right, counts as labour done in the Vineyard of the Great Householder.

To have encumbered a volume of such moderate pretensions with current references for the facts stated in it would have borne an appearance of affectation. The Author deems it sufficient to point out in this place, once for all, the chief sources from which his statements have been derived. The acts of the Councils of Constance and Basle, the works of Huss, with his Life and the Life of Jerome of Prague, and

Bourgeois de Chastenel's *History of the Synods held in France*, regarding the great Western Schism, for the first eight chapters; the Bohemian histories of Eneas Sylvius and Dubrasky, for the remaining eight; have largely supplied materials: not of course without reference to more modern and general histories. But the Author is bound to acknowledge larger obligations in another quarter. To the patient and impartial historian Lenfant he is more indebted than to any other authority for substantial facts. In his six consecutive quarto volumes, comprising an account of the Councils of Pisa, of Constance, and of Basle, this estimable writer has brought together with laudable industry, and related with honest plainness, not devoid of elegance, the whole of the information requisite for understanding the ecclesiastical, and to some extent the civil history of Europe, throughout the former half of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT PAPAL SCHISM.—BENEDICT XIII.—COUNCIL OF PISA.—ELECTION OF JOHN XXIII. CHOICE OF CONSTANCE FOR A GENERAL COUNCIL.

IN the year 1414, through all the pleasant month of October, the high roads round Constance were alive with travellers on their way to that ancient city. They might be seen in parties of all sizes, and with every variety of equipage, from the little band of half-a-dozen pedestrians, driving before them two or three beasts of burden loaded with provisions or other necessaries, to the princely cavalcade headed by "an army with banners", and followed by a train of heavily laden carriages and their steel-clad escort.

The party in which our narrative is more immediately interested consisted of about twenty-five or thirty persons, of whom three, distinguishable in rank from the rest, rode a little in advance. The two outermost appeared by their stately bearing, and rich half-military dress, to be knights or nobles; the third, who rode between them, wore the scholar's bonnet and furred gown of an ecclesiastic or university professor;—a condition to which his pale countenance, attenuated figure, and beard of venerable length, yet unblanched by age, well corresponded. But the firm brow and keen dark eye of the man expressed courage as well as intelligence; and in his collected, though mild demeanour, there was nothing that betrayed a sense of inferiority to his companions; on the contrary, their deportment to him was pointedly expressive of deference and respect. The rest of the company seemed mostly burghers or attendants. All rode armed; hauberk and helmet glittered, pike and arquebuse rang, as they went; and even the scholar's mantle, when blown aside for a moment by the wind, revealed the hilts of a sword and dagger worn in his belt. He in the midst, the scholar-like rider, was JOHN HUSS. His immediate companions were two Bohemian nobles, by name, John, lord of Chlum, and Wenceslaus, knight of Duba, to whose charge the Emperor Sigismund, and his brother Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, had confided the reformer, in his journey from Prague to Constance.

Imagine you see them, halting at first sight of the towers and battlements of the city of Constantius regarding with earnest looks that spot which Huss, brave and religious as he was, had not approached without some presentiment of evil (*Constance City was founded by Constantius Chlorus, on the spot where he encamped after a victory over the Germans. It is situate on the left bank of the Rhine, at the place where that river issues from the Lake of the same name. Till the year 1048, when it became subject to Austria, Constance was a free and imperial city*); and where he soon afterwards won the protomartyr's crown of the Reformation. Meanwhile, a brief review of the circumstances which led to that memorable event, and thereby drew on, in Huss's native country, consequences more fearfully tragical, seems requisite as a prelude to the history we have undertaken to relate : to speak more correctly, it is an essential part of a series of most remarkable events, diversified by many great and strongly marked characters, and still not without a direct, though obscure influence upon the opinions and moral state of Christendom.

From 1317 the popes resided for sixty years at Avignon in France. This long absence from the legitimate seat of their power was prominent among the causes which first loosened its fabric. It encouraged the factions whose violence made Rome a constant scene of misery and bloodshed, and caused the loss of the remaining cities in the papal dominions to one or other of the petty tyrants who ravaged Italy. At length Gregory XI resolved to re-establish the pontifical residence in the metropolis of the Christian world. He went to Rome in 1378, and in less than two years afterwards died there. During the election which followed, the Roman populace, fearing to be again deprived of the pope's residence among them, if the choice fell on a foreigner, violently broke into the conclave. The deliberations of the sacred college were disturbed by furious menaces: cries of "An Italian pope, or death to the cardinals!" were uttered by a lawless multitude, prepared with arms to carry their threats into execution. The trembling cardinals, to appease their invaders, hastily announced as the object of their choice the archbishop of Bari, a Neapolitan, who took the name of Urban VI. Some months afterwards, the great majority of the college, Frenchmen whom Gregory had brought to Rome, disgusted with the arrogant behaviour of Urban, escaped to Fondi, in the kingdom of Naples. There they were joined by three of their

Italian brethren, one of whom, the high chamberlain of the apostolic palace, brought with him the tiara and the other pontifical ornaments of which he had the charge. Declaring their own act in Urban's election void, as made under restraint, they elected one of their number, Robert, cardinal of Geneva, a member of a family neither French nor Italian: he assumed the title of Clement VI, and held his court at Avignon.

Such was the origin of what is called in history the "Great Papal Schism". In the course of forty years during which the schism was continued, several popes succeeded to Urban in Italy; but Clement had only one successor. Of this latter anti-pope, either by his pontifical style of Benedict XIII, or by his personal name, as Peter de Lune, frequent mention will be made in the following pages.

To the influences already in operation, calculated to shake the prodigious fabric of papal authority, such as the rising spirit of literature, the quarrels of the popes with temporal sovereigns, and their long absence from their legitimate diocese, a more powerful one was now added, in the strange phenomenon of a two-headed popedom. With the doubling of the popes, the incubus with which the papal abuses had so long lain upon the heart of Europe, then oppressed with that heaviest sleep which just precedes the struggle to awake, was likewise doubled. In an age when the belief was almost universal that it was only through the medium of ordinances, ultimately depending for their efficacy upon the pope, that any one could be saved, it cannot have been an inconsiderable evil that all society was thrown into a state of uncertainty as to which of two ecclesiastics was the true vicar of Christ; and on which part God could be acceptably worshipped. The rivals, in more than one instance, emulated each other in the display of just those qualities—pride, contentiousness, rapacity—that were best calculated to make Christendom sensible of the whole pressure of its burden. The first of either series were men of fierce and tyrannical dispositions, which they were far from taking care to restrain. Urban, in particular, indulged his love of cruelty to such an excess, as, even in a period when ferocity in rulers was general, brought on him the suspicion of madness. He caused seven of his cardinals to be cruelly tortured, and then imprisoned under circumstances of so much severity that some of them perished; the rest with one exception, that of Adam Eston, bishop of London, whom King Richard delivered from the tyrant's hands, were all either beheaded or strangled. The pope, it is true, was free from some of the grosser vices of his victims; but their actual crime was not the violation of the laws of morality or religion, but disaffection, real or imputed, to his person.

To such men it was matter of no regret that the wars and revolutions of a rude and tumultuous period were fomented, and frequently caused, by the conflict of interest and supposed duties resulting from the divided state of the Church. The larger part of these evils was, in fact, their own immediate work. Not satisfied with pursuing one another with mutual anathemas, the rival pontiffs desolated Europe, above all, Italy, with their armies and the armies of their partisans. Germany also had a full share of the miseries their quarrels occasioned, the more because it was divided in its allegiance between the competitors; Urban being acknowledged by the greater part of the empire, with Italy, England, Portugal, and the nations of the north; while to Clement adhered France, Spain, Scotland, Sicily, and Savoy. It would be impossible to point out where repose and security were to be found. Combats, massacres, assassinations, robbery, wasted the entire continent.

A bishop was appointed to the important see of Liege by each of the anti-popes. The citizens sometimes acknowledged the one, sometimes the other; but rebelled at last against John of Bavaria, who had been confirmed by Urban, and was supported by the duke of Burgundy. A war was the consequence; when, in one battle, 24,000 of the Liegois were left dead upon the field, and by the duke's orders many besides, who had been taken prisoners, were afterwards put to death. The above is only one of many such instances. A new-made bishop, on taking possession of his palace, having inquired where he should find the library of his predecessors, was shown into an arsenal stored with all sorts of arms. "There", was the reply, "are the volumes your predecessors used; and you too must use the same, if you mean to defend your rights against the usurpations of your neighbours".

Moreover, as each of the competitors affected all the magnificence, and practised every costly abuse, that had scandalized reflecting minds under the undivided pontificate, each was compelled to compensate himself for the loss of half his subject kingdoms, by doubling on the remainder those contrivances which centuries of rapacity had been maturing for the supply of the papal treasury. Benefices reserved or appropriated,—annates, or first fruits, violently exacted,—tenths repeatedly levied upon the clergy,—expectatives,—fees annexed to all the endless forms of ecclesiastical law,—sale of indulgences, and

exemptions from ordinary jurisdiction; were but a part of the means which supported the avarice and luxury of Avignon, of Rome, or Bologna. Can we wonder, when we are further told that churches and other ecclesiastical structures were allowed to fall into decay; that the poor were left to perish in misery and neglect; that parishes and districts were without pastors and religious rites? As time went by, and brought no cure, but rather a continual aggravation, of these evils, it became at length evident, either that steps must be taken to close the abyss out of which they were continually issuing, or that all hope of the social state of Europe must be given up.

The means of putting an end to so intolerable a state of things Were difficult, not to effect only, but to devise; each of the competitors maintaining, with equal positiveness, his own exclusive legitimacy, while an equal ambiguity rested on the election of both. No sufficient authority existed to decide the point of right, much less to apply the remedy. These questions, momentous at the time beyond what we now can readily conceive, employed the most cultivated intellects of the age; in particular the more distinguished canonists in that then important body, the university of Paris. The solution they agreed in was, that both popes should resign their authority, and a fresh election take place. And this method the cardinals themselves kept in view; the whole college, before entering the conclave for the latest election, having solemnly engaged, each for himself, that he would, if elected, devote himself to procuring the peace of the Church, even by his own abdication, should that be judged necessary. Accordingly, when Benedict XIII. announced his election to the states in the obedience of Avignon, he protested that he had taken the pontificate with a single view to terminate the schism, and was ready at any time to abdicate, and retire to a cloister. In confirming this protestation, at a dinner given by him on the same occasion to the deputies of the university of Paris, he stripped off his cope, and throwing it upon the table, declared that he would as willingly lay down the pontificate, if by so doing he could promote the desired union. Yet, when the pious but unfortunate king of France, stimulated by the just impatience of his people, claimed the performance of his oath, the perfidious pope denied it, till forced to produce the document itself; and even then, though the request was presented by the most splendid embassy ever sent to any potentate, and seconded with urgency by his own cardinals, he obstinately resisted every form of persuasion. On their knees, with joined hands and tearful eyes, they implored him for the Church's sake to yield. "Know", replied this *servus servorum Dei*, "that you are my servants, and that I am not your master only, but the master of all men; since God has submitted all the world to my authority"

On the return of the ambassadors, the nobility and clergy of France assembled, and resolved no longer to acknowledge the pope of Avignon; no further payments were allowed to be made to his officers; and the Gallican Church was declared to be henceforth "in the enjoyment of all its ancient liberties". Benedict, perceiving that the cardinals approved these resolutions, and purposed to deliver him up to the king, obtained a body of troops from Ferdinand of Aragon, under the command of Rodriguez de Lune, his brother, and with them garrisoned his palace. The cardinals, all but two, abandoned him. The celebrated Marshal Bourcicault, at that time governor of Provence, laid siege to the palace, and was on the point of storming it, when a treaty was negotiated, one of the articles of which was, the renewal of Benedict's promise to resign the pontificate, on condition that his rival, now Boniface IX, did the same, died, or was deposed. He engaged in the meantime to dismiss his Aragonese, and to receive a garrison of Normans into the palace, until this engagement was performed.

While the pope remained a prisoner in his palace, the garrison were often visited by their brethren of the neighbouring town of Villeneuve, particularly by the commandant of that place, Robert de Braquemont, an officer under the duke of Orleans, his holiness's chief supporter in France. At the suggestion of the duke, Benedict disguised himself in the habit of one of Braquemont's followers, and passed the gates unrecognized. He was received outside the town by five hundred of his partisans, French and Spanish, who conducted him to a fortress among the mountains. The completion of the plot was reserved for the duke himself. As soon as he had information of Braquemont's success, he hastened to the king, whom he found at his devotions in his private oratory. He represented to Charles that adversity had produced its usual wholesome effect upon the temper of the pope; that the Holy Father ought now to be left in the enjoyment of his liberty, on condition of renewing his former engagement, and confirming it with fresh sanctions, which he was prepared to do. The king hesitating, the duke took the crucifix from the altar, and holding it up before his royal brother, extorted from him an oath to return to the obedience of Benedict, and order him to be once more acknowledged throughout France. The pope repaid the benefit by an abundance of promises, none of which he kept, but carried his exactions further than ever.

Boniface IX died the same year. The pope of Avignon, however, instead of abdicating, went over into Italy, and landed at Genoa, then held by France, under the pretence of treating with his successor, Innocent VII. The show of preparation for an interview for that purpose had been carried on nearly two years, when Innocent likewise died. The Roman cardinals, though well assured that as soon as the vacancy of the see was known, earnest requests would be made to them not to proceed to a new election, immediately chose in his place Angelo Corario, who assumed the name of Gregory XII. Corario, as cardinal, had, like the rest, taken the precautionary oath; after his election he ratified it, and applied without loss of time to Benedict, soliciting his concurrence in procuring the union of the Church. Benedict was too well practised in alternate professions and evasions to display the least backwardness. For yet another year the rivals amused or exasperated Christendom with the comedy of an endless interchange of messages and embassies, preparatory to a conference never meant to take place, in which it was pretended the terms of mutual abdication were to be arranged.

France, as the most aggrieved, or perhaps from the ability and reputation of Gerson, and other great canonists in her flourishing university, feeling herself the nation most competent to cope with the question, now finally revolted. She proclaimed Peter de Lune a schismatic, a heretic, and perjured; resolved by her synods and her sovereign, that all her ecclesiastics who continued to favour him should be deprived, and that she would obey no pope until one was canonically elected. The anti-pope replied to this decree by a bull excommunicating the king, laying an interdict on his dominions, and releasing his subjects from their oath of fealty. The contempt of the prelates and clergy of the Gallican Church for this violent proceeding was manifested in no very dignified exhibition. During a synod assembled in August, 1408, one Loup, and another person, once a servant of the pope, each crowned with a paper tiara, and wearing a tunic, on which were painted the arms of Benedict reversed, with a description of the bull, were paraded through the streets of Paris in a dung-cart, and exposed to the derision of the populace on a scaffold erected before the palace.

A more serious retaliation was attempted in Italy, where Bourcicault, now governor of Genoa, received orders to arrest the anti-pope. Benedict, then at Portovenere, escaped on board one of several galleys that had been long lying in that port, as if to transport him to Savona, where Gregory had appointed a meeting; and crossing the sea, landed near Perpignan. Other nations, wearied like France with the subterfuges and evident collusion of the popes, now followed her example. Hungary, Poland, England, Germany, which had hitherto adhered to the Italian pretender, withdrew their obedience. Gregory's cardinals, imitating the deserters of Avignon, left their master in disgust, and joining their brethren, the united college became the head of a predominant neutral party, who looked to the assembling of a general council as the means of obtaining peace, and a reformation in the Church. France, already indefatigable in her endeavours by negotiation, remonstrance, argument, and concession, to subdue the obstinacy of the rival popes, was equally foremost among the promoters of the new project. The cardinals who were expected to give to the proposed assembly the stamp of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, and to arrange the preliminaries, laboured earnestly; and in March. 1409, the council met at Pisa.

The Council of Pisa, if we regard only the number and dignity of its prelates and ambassadors, ranks among the most considerable on record. But it effected none of the objects for which it was convened. Whatever good intentions existed in the assembly were frustrated by the intrigues of the higher clergy, those in particular of Italy, among whom the legate of Bologna, Cardinal Cossa, a man whose priestly ambition was his most pardonable vice, took the lead. It indeed pronounced a sentence of deposition against Peter de Lune and Angelo Corario, and it elected a new pope, Alexander V. But its labours for the reformation of the Church were confined to certain promises of Alexander's, which, as usual, were never fulfilled, though made and reiterated on oath, and its authority was spurned by the anti-popes. They answered its excommunications by mimic thunders from Rimini and the Pyrenees, created other cardinals in the room of those who in the council sat in judgment upon them, summoned councils of their own, and continued as before to oppress with their exactions the narrow territories over which they were respectively acknowledged. The Council of Pisa, in short, found the Church intolerably tormented with two heads, and left it proportionately worse vexed with three.

Within less than a year Alexander V died. The election of this feeble pope, but charitable and accomplished man, was the work of Cossa; that crafty and unscrupulous prelate judging him just fit to

occupy the chair of St. Peter, till he could make sure of his own. Instead of proceeding to Rome after his election, Alexander with his train of cardinals was persuaded to accompany Cossa to Bologna, where the latter ruled in the capacity of legate, but with the fury of a tyrant. Here Cossa lost no opportunity of paving his way to the pontificate, the professed object of his early ambition, by bribery, if by no worse means; it is even said by murder, a crime not too great to be imagined, in the plenitude of his power and daring, by the man who is confidently reported to have begun a career of prodigious wickedness by the practice of piracy in his youth. It is at least certain that he was accused in the Council of Constance of hastening the vacancy which so soon occurred by means of poison. Be this however as it may, his own immediate intrigues being seconded—a sort of advocacy not easy to resist—by a powerful prince, then at hand with an army, Cardinal Cossa was raised to the apostolical seat in March, 1410. The enthronization of this profligate pope, as John XXIII, was celebrated with peculiar splendour and solemnity.

Within a week of Cossa's election, the imperial dignity was conferred on Sigismund, king of Hungary. Towards the choice of this potentate the new pope found himself interested to contribute his influence with the electors; he received in return the obedience of the German states, which was followed by that of nearly all Europe.

An important step was thus made towards the accomplishment of the work which the Council of Pisa had left undone. Sigismund, both by his personal sentiments and the interest of his distracted territories, was zealous for the Church's reunion, and to some extent for its reform. The pains he had already bestowed upon that engrossing subject, and the energy with which he was disposed to pursue it, were indeed his ostensible motives for desiring an elevation, which, while it enlarged his authority, could add nothing to the tranquillity of a life of troubles. On the other hand, John XXIII, however little inclined to desire a reformation, longed for that undisturbed possession of his dignity which could be had only by the extinction of the schism; while the example of Pisa held out a hope that a like synod, under his own presidency, might effectually accomplish that object, and then be dissolved, or submit to become the tool of his own purposes. The two great potentates had therefore little difficulty in agreeing to convoke another general council. To fix the place of meeting was not so easy. His own city of Constance was proposed by Sigismund, as central and easily accessible; a place, besides, of happy augury, it having been the seat in the twelfth century of a synod remembered for its useful enactments. The pope's interest and convenience pointed to some cisalpine city; but his own craftiness betrayed him into a consent, which in spite of ominous warnings he dared not afterwards revoke. Soon the emperor's decree and the pope's bull, embassies imperial and pontifical, with other solemn forms of intelligence and invitation, summoned the princes, prelates, and dignitaries of the Christian world, secular and ecclesiastical, to appear at the council of all nations, to be opened at Constance on All Saints' Day, the 1st of November, in the following year, 1414.

CHAPTER II.

BOHEMIA PREPARED FOR REFORM.—EARLY LIFE OF HUSS.—HIS POPULARITY.—CAUSES OF THE ENMITY CONCEIVED AGAINST HIM BY THE ECCLESIASTICS.—JEROME OF PRAGUE.—HUSS RETIRES FROM PRAGUE.—IS CITED BEFORE THE COURT OF ROME.—DISORDERS AND EXECUTIONS IN PRAGUE. HUSS IS EXCOMMUNICATED.—AGAIN RETIRES.—IS SUMMONED TO THE COUNCIL.—HIS ARRIVAL AT CONSTANCE PRECEDED BY THAT OF THE POPE.—HE IS IMPRISONED.

MEN are so slow to perceive anything wrong in what is habitual, that a conviction of the need of public reform, whether in morals and religion, or in the government of states, must always be of gradual growth. The world, nevertheless, spell-bound as it was by "the witcheries of Rome", was not so besotted, but that in earlier times than those of Luther, or even of our own Wicliffe, both the word Reformation, and a call for the thing, were familiar in men's mouths. Through a great part of the fourteenth century, it had been rising into a popular demand. In every European country, men of thought and information had shown, in writings eagerly read, both the want of it, and its feasibility. The subject had exhausted the resources of eloquence; indignant denunciation, earnest persuasion, satirical invective, had all been employed. The tyranny of popes, the avarice and luxury of prelates, the ignorance and depravity of the inferior orders of ecclesiastics, have never been painted in stronger colours by Protestant writers, in all the light and security of later times, than by such men as Aretin and Poggio Bracciolini among the laity, Pileus of Genoa, Zabarella of Florence, D'Ailly of Cambray, Gerson and Clemangis, heads of the university of Paris, among the clergy, of the Church of Rome. The announcement therefore of a general council, legitimately convoked, for the purpose not merely of healing the schism, but also of remedying other deplorable evils in her condition, was joyfully received throughout Europe.

But nowhere was a livelier interest awakened than in the little, but haughty kingdom of Bohemia. The Bohemians, a brave and independent people, were converted by Greek missionaries. They, consequently, adopted the ritual of the Greek Church, translated into their vernacular tongue; and they continued in the undisturbed use of it as long as Bohemia remained free from foreign interference. At length the popes insisted, amid the disgust and opposition of the people, on the introduction of the Latin service. The Bohemians, however, had never wholly conformed to the Romish customs. The denial of the cup in the Eucharist to the laity, the chief subject of complaint till the nation was driven to frenzy by the tragedy of Constance, dates only from the establishment of the university of Prague, in the year 1347; when certain theologians, invited from Italy, France, and Germany, by its founder, the Emperor Charles IV, brought in, among other novel practices, this innovation. Bohemia was, therefore, not likely to be the last of the European states to join in the general call for reformation. Its desire of even something more than the recovery of its suppressed religious privileges was kept alive by the presence of the Waldenses, considerable numbers of whom had found a refuge from their persecutors within the circuit of its mountains. Nor were there wanting, among the native Bohemians, pious and learned men, preachers of a purer doctrine, and examples of a holier life, than the generality of Romish ecclesiastics. Among such were John Milicius or Milicz, and Conrad Stickna, forerunners, by many years, of Huss; such too was Matthias Janaw, his immediate precursor, and, for a time, his contemporary.

In whatever land we sojourn, if we inquire for the birth-places of its men of large moral influence on posterity, we are directed more often to the obscure hamlet or solitary cottage than to the palaces of the great and the mansions of the wealthy. The name of John Huss—a name humble in its origin, mean in its etymology, but how much higher in historical significance than any other his country has given to history!—is derived, after the custom of professors and men of learning in his time, from the place of his birth. He was born at Huss, or Hussinecz, a Bohemian village on the confines of Bavaria, on the 6th of July, 1373. His parents, though of humble condition, were enlightened enough to avail themselves of every

means of procuring for their son the advantages of learning. Doubtless, he was one of those children, whom not only the quick eye of parental love perceives to be worthy of a great effort, but whose promise gathers friends about a family. From the little school of Hussinecz he was transferred, by the kindness of the feudal lord of the place, to a college at Prachaticz, the nearest town. His instructors, pleased with the gentleness, docility, and steady application of the lowly-born youth, procured his admission into the university of Prague, then flourishing in extraordinary vigour. Here, again, the same ingenuous qualities gained him friends; and one of the professors supplied him gratuitously with books, and otherwise assisted him. Concerning this part of his career, we only find it recorded further, that his manners were modest, his morals pure; and that his application to study being exemplary, he passed through the usual exercises with more than common credit.

In the year 1400 the reputation of Huss as a scholar and divine obtained for him the somewhat dangerous honour of being appointed confessor to the queen. It was in the same year he began to preach. Some pious and patriotic inhabitants," considering that among all the places for divine worship in Prague, there was not one where there was preaching" (*i. e.* for the people), had founded a chapel in that city, dedicated to St. Matthias and St. Matthew, with a sufficient endowment for the support of two clergymen to preach in the vernacular tongue. This building, known by the name of Bethlehem, was the scene of Huss's chief labours and popular triumphs as a preacher. He now rose rapidly in public estimation. He was made dean of the theological faculty, and received other tokens of the regard in which he was held by his university, and generally by those in authority in Prague; such as his being repeatedly chosen to preach before the synods and convocations of the clergy. But dearer to him than these honours was the thorough hold he had obtained upon the hearts of the people. Deeply affected by the earnest plain-speaking of his discourses from the pulpit, they were no less charmed with the unaffected sympathy and regard shown in his private intercourse.

The divided state of the Church, with the mischiefs it caused, above all, the duplicity and secularly of the anti-popes, were in Bohemia, more than elsewhere, the common subject of indignant discourse. The zealous preacher, neither blind to the facts, nor insensible of the iniquity of the prevalent corruption, but too diffident of his comparative youth to stand forth the censurer of his fathers in age and authority, his brethren in the sacred calling, had hitherto confined his rebukes to the abundant vices of the laity. 'The time was now come when he determined to deal with the evil nearer its source, by reproving the more scandalous misdeeds of the official guardians of the public faith and morals.

Huss had already entered on this new and perilous course, when the writings of Wicliffe, then creating a great sensation all over Europe, came under his particular notice. Some of these productions had been brought into Bohemia, about the beginning of the century, by a gentleman of that country who had studied at Oxford; others were introduced a few years later by two English youths, sent to Prague for their education. Huss, at first, partook of the horror with which the clergy everywhere regarded those imperfect, but courageous efforts of the pioneer of reformation. On becoming, however, better acquainted with their contents, he admired and delighted in them. He extolled the fearless Englishman, whose writings he from that time employed as his key to the

Scriptures, and the terror inspired by whose name proved, more than any thing else, fatal to him. Some of the imported treatises he translated into the Bohemian tongue, and distributed copies of them. He expressed his admiration of the author and his works, in his sermons at Bethlehem: when he himself, he said, departed this life, his desire would be to go to that heavenly place, whither he was well assured holy John Wicliffe was gone before.

It was about the year 1408 that, in imitation of the rector of Lutterworth, Huss dismissed all reserve on the dangerous topic of clerical depravity, inveighing, in unmeasured and bitter terms, against the rival popes, the cardinals, prelates, and monks; and holding up to popular scorn their avarice and ambition, their pride, their debauchery, and their ignorance. Such a course, affecting the interests as well as the credit of the most powerful body in the kingdom, it is manifest he could not pursue without raising about him a swarm of enemies. Circumstances, unconnected with his preaching and its effects, likewise added to their number and their animosity.

The dominion of the schoolmen in all the European seats of learning, though secretly beginning to be undermined, was now at its height. In the University of Prague, as elsewhere, the doctors were divided

into two parties, each animated against the other with furious hostility. In these disputes the foreign teachers at Prague sided with the Nominalists, while Huss, with the Bohemian professors and students, was on the side of the Realists; and he warmly (for moderation was unknown in the disputes of the schoolmen) returned the hatred he experienced from their enemies. A more serious cause of offence had likewise its rise in the university. The imperial founder of that institution designed it for two collective nations, viz. Bohemia (including also Hungary, Moravia, and Slavonia), and Bavaria, Poland, and Saxony, under the one name of the German nation. The statutes of the university, modelled upon those of Paris and Bologna, reserved for the Bohemians the privilege of three votes, to one of foreigners, in the academic deliberations; but the Germans, having greatly the superiority of numbers, practically set this distinction aside, and had appropriated more than an equality of votes. Huss demanded justice for his countrymen; and by his vigour and perseverance in carrying the cause through the royal court, obtained it. This triumph, however, caused so much exasperation in its progress, that lives were sacrificed in the mutual quarrels of the parties; and at its completion the Germans in a body, including the rector, John Hoffman, after committing several acts of violence, abandoned the university. This result filled all Germany with Huss's personal enemies. It was likewise such a blow to the flourishing foundation of Charles IV, as brought down obloquy upon the reformer from all persons interested in its prosperity; for the seceders are said to have been numerous enough to found for themselves the university of Leipzig, besides sending off detachments to Erfurt, Ingolstadt, and other towns. Still a sufficient number of the Germans remained, particularly in the senate, to be thorns in the side, and ultimately torches to the death-fire of Huss. But as the reformer had the countenance of the court, and the support of the liberal members of the university, he in the same year (1409) was elected to the office of rector; and he now spoke and acted with greater freedom for the cause he had espoused, in proportion to his greater authority.

Long ere this time the zeal, the capacity, and the courage of John Huss had gathered round him the choice of the Bohemian youth; foremost among whom was that Jerome of Prague (there was also another divine of the same name) who is for ever joined with him in the admiration and pity of mankind. Like Luther and Melancthon, a century later, though for other reasons, the two were admirably suited, by their aptness to imbibe, actuate, and enforce the same truths, in a marked diversity of character, to cooperate in the great work they had taken in hand. In Huss was the graver and more authoritative intellect; in Jerome, greater fire and eloquence—perhaps, profounder erudition: both, the one in the academy, the other mainly among the people, labouring to the same end, and with the like applause. While Huss had been at once widening and consolidating his influence at home, Jerome, by his advice, had enlarged his experience by visits to foreign countries. He passed some time with profit and honour at Heidelberg, Cologne, Paris, and, probably, Oxford. On his return the king of Poland employed him to draw up a body of statutes for the University of Cracow. He was invited into Hungary by Sigismund, before whom he preached with so much boldness the doctrines ascribed to Wicliffe, that the sovereign's interference with some difficulty rescued him from the persecution of the monks. In Austria, whither he next proceeded, he did not so easily escape: the same enemies succeeded in procuring his imprisonment at Vienna; but being claimed by his university, he now returned to Prague to assist his friend and master in the liberation of his country from papal thraldom.

For some time Sbynko, archbishop of Prague, seems to have paid little regard to the complaints of the monks and other ecclesiastics against Huss. When, in 1408, yielding to their importunity, he assembled a synod for the purpose of searching out and punishing heretics,—by whom were meant Huss and the preachers associated with him,—his report was, that no heretics existed in Bohemia. But so much forbearance was not to continue. Nearly the whole of Europe having withdrawn obedience from the anti-popes to embrace the neutrality, Huss exhorted his countrymen also to abandon Gregory, whom Bohemia had hitherto acknowledged, and join the college of cardinals in their demand for a general council. By the force of his arguments, and the influence of his character, he succeeded with the university. But the archbishop and his clergy, persisting in their adhesion to the Italian, were incensed against both, especially against Huss. The ears of the prelate were now freely open to the reports of Huss's accusers. He summoned the reformer before him, and required him both to desist from the use of insulting language towards the Holy Father, and to be silent on the heretical opinions of Wicliffe. Huss answered submissively, but in language which left him free to pursue his course with more determination than ever.

The pope (Alexander V) was now persuaded to interfere for the purpose of arresting the progress of the "new opinions". Alleging the reception of a bull to that effect from the pontiff, Sbynko required all

persons within his diocese, who were possessed of any copies of Wicliffes works, to surrender them in order to their being burned. Many, though with reluctance, obeyed; but the king and the nobility, having ascertained that the bull said nothing of burning, but merely authorized the archbishop to “take the books out of the hands of the people”, refused obedience. Sbynko was proceeding, nevertheless, to consummate the proposed sacrifice, when Wenceslaus, upon the petitions of the clergy and university, interfered. The execution was in consequence suspended; but shortly afterwards, Sbynko, having assembled some of the bigoted clergy to countenance his proceedings, and introduced a guard of soldiers to prevent interruption, committed the surrendered volumes to the flames in his own palace. Together with Wicliffe’s, some writings of Huss’s, of Jerome’s, and of their predecessors Janaw and Milicz, are said to have been likewise consumed. The ancient historian of Bohemia relates, with ill-directed indignation, as a proof into what estimation the labours of Huss and his disciples had raised Wicliffe’s name, that the greater part of these manuscripts were remarkable for the beauty of the writing, and the costliness of their ornamental bindings. The people of Bohemia had taste and piety enough to resent the archbishop’s conduct for a better reason. An indignant outcry against his act of vandalism, in which the voices of the sovereign and the nobles were among the loudest, rang through the land.

On the Sunday following, Huss made it the ground of a violent attack upon the archbishop, in his pulpit at Bethlehem. He showed the folly and barbarism of such a sacrifice to ignorance and bigotry: he pointed out to his eager audience its illegality; such an act being a violation of the privileges of the university. The archbishop vindicated his authority by forbidding the masters of the university to officiate in the churches and chapels.

Huss, against whom chiefly this order was directed, withdrew to the place of his birth; not from fear to bear witness to the truth—for which, he truly said, he was ready to die,—but in the hope of allaying the storm, and to avoid bringing persecution upon his associates and followers. Under the protection of Nicholas de Hussinecz, he preached in that and the neighbouring places to crowds of enthusiastic admirers. The leisure and comparative quiet he now enjoyed were given to the composition of several treatises, mostly controversial, or letters of affectionate exhortation to his absent flock. But his absence did not restore tranquillity to the capital: it rather inflamed still more the quarrels of the mutually opposed parties; the one making it an occasion of insolent triumph, the other resenting it as a public misfortune and injustice.

On both sides, an appeal was made to the pope: by Huss against the illegal acts, as he deemed them, of his diocesan; by Sbynko, for the support and protection which were refused him by Wenceslaus. These appeals were made, in the first instance, to Alexander V, and again, after the decease of that pontiff, to his successor John XXIII. King Wenceslaus at length exerted himself to effect a reconciliation between the prelate and the reformer. To what a length religious disputes had now proceeded in Bohemia, and how important was become the persecuted champion of the Gospel, are facts strikingly shown in the measures adopted for this purpose. The reconciliation took place in a synod specially convoked, and was ratified by a formal treaty, to which the names of the patriarch of Antioch, of the bishop of Olmutz, of the elector Frederick of Saxony, of the ambassador of Sigismund, of the heads of the University, of many barons and gentlemen of Bohemia, with the consuls and citizens of Prague, were appended. The archbishop publicly declared Huss innocent of the charge of heresy; and by the king's direction repeated the same in a letter to the pope. Either, however, Sbynko’s communication was purposely worded to intimate enforced simulation, or the court of Rome gave ear to the other, and less placable enemies of the reformer; for the pontiff and cardinals were impressed with a belief, that the dreaded errors of Wicliffe had profoundly infected Bohemia, and that Huss was the author of all the troubles which agitated that kingdom. He directed Cardinal Colonna to institute an inquiry; and the zealous cardinal cited Huss to appear without delay, at Bologna, to answer in person to the charges laid against him. The reformer, in a letter to the pope and cardinals, represented that he could not travel into Italy without manifest danger to his life, on account of the enemies he had in Germany; urging, on that ground, his canonical right to, exemption. Upon this, the pope granted a dispensation; but Colonna, determined that his own act, in forwarding the citation, should not be made void, suppressed the dispensation, and sent a more peremptory summons.

The danger of compliance appeared so formidable to the king and queen, the nobility and university, that they unitedly petitioned the pope to allow the accused to appear by proxy. They urged, that besides the danger from the malice and violence of his enemies, the summons was issued on false

information; John Huss being in truth an innocent and worthy person. To this prayer the archbishop himself joined his attestation, that Bohemia was free from all taint of heresy; and that as to the disputes between Huss and his superiors, they had been set at rest by the intervention of the king. With the Bohemian embassy Huss also sent his own personal advocates: neither were regarded. Colonna, without even hearing his vindication, fulminated against the upright, but too plain-spoken churchman, a sentence of excommunication. Sbynko, old and infirm, unable to brook the storm of displeasure which now burst upon him, as chief representative of the Church of Rome in Bohemia, retired to Hungary; and, while supplicating advice or assistance from Sigismund (the Protector, as he styled himself, of the Bohemian kingdom), there died.

It has been already remarked, that the ambitious intrigues of Balthasar Cossa to ascend the pontifical throne were supported by a prince at the head of an army. This was Louis, duke of Anjou. He disputed the crown of Naples, the gift of its late Queen Joanna to his father, with Ladislaus, son of Charles of Durazzo. In this war Ladislaus invaded the States of the Church, took and pillaged Rome, and forced the pope to flee to Bologna. To avenge this outrage, and the allegations brought in excuse of it, relative to the crimes of the pope, his holiness appealed to Christendom for aid. Bohemia was not forgotten among the nations to which on this occasion John XXIII. dispatched his bull, offering plenary indulgence—*i.e.* full remission of sins,—to all persons who should either use their swords, or sacrifice their money, in his quarrel.

It was the year 1412. Huss had lately returned to Prague, nothing subdued by his reflections in retirement, or by the excommunication he was lying under. His patriotic, as well as his religious zeal flamed out at once against this fresh instance of papal presumption. He demonstrated clearly, in the pulpit, that the Bohemians had no interest in the dispute between Ladislaus and John, and that forgiveness of sins was not to be purchased by means either of steel, or silver and gold. He gave public notice that he would maintain, against all opponents, the unlawfulness of a crusade against a Christian king. The disputation was attended by multitudes of every class. The friends of the pope were wordy and confident; but Gratian and the Decretals must have given way, even in stronger hands, to Huss's honest use of Scripture and the decrees of the primitive councils. The powerful dialectics of his master were followed by a discourse of burning eloquence from Jerome. At length the rector interfered, and put an end to a discussion which too plainly revealed both the strength and exasperation of the mutually opposed parties. While the students, never weary of listening to Jerome of Prague, followed him from the schools to a place more suitable for popular debate, the townspeople accompanied their champion to his house, with exclamations of encouragement and affection. In short, the attitude of all parties on this day plainly spoke of fiercer contests to come; the seeds of those terrific events, which not long afterwards, desolated Bohemia, were visibly germinating.

A number of the popular party now agreed in future to allow no one to be heard in public in favour of the crusade. The conspirators accordingly distributed themselves, the next Sunday, in those churches and monasteries where the clergy were known to be eager partisans of the pope, and furious against Huss. Among the rest, three young men, in as many different churches, interrupted and contradicted the officiating priests. One of them, a student, while the priest was extolling the virtues of the papal bull, cried aloud, “If the pope were not Antichrist, he would never have proclaimed a crusade against Christians”. All three were arrested. When the facts transpired, great apprehensions were entertained for the result, on account of the well-known opinions of the majority of the magistrates. The penalty of death too had been threatened against any who should oppose the sale of indulgences. Huss, informed that two of the prisoners were scholars, and all of them hearers of his own, hastened to the council-house, where they were under examination. He earnestly entreated their judges to take a lenient view of the offence; the prisoners, he said, were young and thoughtless, and had been hurried into their fault by zeal for religion, and by the universal excitement on the subject of indulgences. His mediation was uncourteously received, but he bore without reply the taunts of the senators, content with their assurance that no harm was intended to the prisoners. A crowd of students, and others, many of them armed, had gathered about the council-house, angrily demanding the release of their friends. Huss reported to them the promise he had received, and succeeded in persuading them to disperse. At night, when all were retired, the council sent for the public executioner, and the prisoners were beheaded. The appearance of blood beneath the gate revealed at dawn the deed done within. From all quarters the infuriated populace rushed to the spot: forcing their way with loud threats of vengeance into the hall, they found—not those on whom they

intended to wreak their fury, but the bodies of the victims. Rage now changed to tears and lamentations. They bore off the bodies, and carried them, covered with a costly pall, through the city, while a thousand voices sang the Martyrs' Hymn—"Blessed and holy are they that have given their bodies for the witness of Jesus and the word of God",—to the chapel of Bethlehem, where they were solemnly interred.

The double grief experienced by Huss, first, at the mournful death of his young friends; secondly, at finding himself in the invidious position of a popular leader, and idol of a frantic mob, did not deter him from pursuing the course his conscience pointed out. In his sermons oh the following Sunday, he mingled lamentations for the rash act that had covered the city with mourning with praises of those young martyrs to the cause of the Gospel. A burning zeal now took entire possession of his faculties. He opposed the crusade with all his might, and denounced the whole scheme of indulgences (that abuse in the Church, which, a century later, roused the tremendous indignation of Martin Luther), as an impious profanation of Gospel grace. Summoned once more to Rome, he declared that the pope had no right to cite before him a citizen of Bohemia, and appealed from his holiness to the expected council. He inveighed against the use of images and auricular confession; maintained that all priests, the pope himself included, ought to be poor men; and that canonical hours, enforced abstinence, &c., are human inventions, without foundation in the Word of God. In short, he proclaimed his faith the faith of Wicliffe; and recommended the study of the English doctor's writings to all who could procure them.

At the same time his adversaries, both at Prague and in the papal court, grew more determined and vindictive. The advocates he had sent to Rome, after having for nearly two years in vain solicited to be heard, were ill-treated, and some of them shut up in prison. The pope solemnly confirmed the sentence of excommunication against him, and placed the city of Prague under an interdict as long as he remained in it. The time was not yet come when Bohemia would dare to set at nought such an order; and Huss, naturally peaceful and unassuming, was not the man willingly to deprive his fellow-citizens of the means of public worship, or to hasten that deadly strife which, intensely as he deprecated it, he now foresaw must shortly come. A second time he voluntarily embraced the peaceful exile offered by the scenes of his childhood.

At Hussinecz, he again divided his leisure between the instruction of the neighbouring population, and the exercise of a facile and learned, though, when urged by provocation, a somewhat licentious pen. No less than eight of the chief zealots of the pope's party at Prague had put forth treatises in support of the bull for the crusade. Huss wrote answers to all the eight in a tone sufficiently offensive to their authors. One of their number was Stephen Paletz, once the disciple and intimate friend of Huss, but recovered to the adverse party by means of alternate persecution and caresses, and, for an earnest of more considerable rewards, made dean of the faculty: the inveterate hatred now conceived by this man against his former master, proved of fatal import in his affairs.

Matters had, however, proceeded too far, for the absence of Huss from the immediate centre of disturbance to have the effect of pacification. It had, in fact, by increasing alike the insolence of his adversaries and the irritation of his friends, the directly contrary effect. The falsehoods and calumnies, resorted to for the purpose of blackening his reputation, provoked the reformers to a more strenuous adherence; while acts of violence against the priests and monks afforded the partisans of Rome just cause of indignant complaint, and some excuse for retaliation. The pope now wrote a strong remonstrance to Wenceslaus. The irresolute king, though no friend to either pope or priest, was persuaded to issue a decree, commanding submission to the pontiff, and forbidding all interference with his measures against Huss. Yet, when the Hussites answered his decree, and continued to declaim as loudly as ever against the vices of the Romish ecclesiastics, he so far countenanced them, as to forbid the payment of tithes to priests of immoral lives.

Huss was still living in retirement with his patron at Hussinecz, rather than be the occasion of closing a single church against his fellow-citizens at Prague, when the time approached for assembling the Council of Constance. The first professed object of the council—viz., to restore peace to the Church, was well understood to imply, besides the closing of the schism, the extirpation of all other religious differences. Twice had the alarming doctrines of Wicliffe been solemnly condemned, by the procurement of John XXIII; once in the Council of Pisa, and again in the Synod of Rome, assembled shortly after his election. Huss had, consequently, no cause for surprise, when his intended appeal was anticipated by a summons to appear and justify himself, before the fathers at Constance, from a charge of heresy.

Supported as he was by many of the nobles, as well as by a majority of the people, he might have resisted; or, like Luther at Wartenberg, have lain hid in some secure retreat till the storm had blown over. But, confident in the righteousness of his cause, he at once returned to Prague, and cheerfully set about preparing for his journey. A provincial synod was sitting in Prague, under the presidency of the archbishop: he publicly challenged his accusers to meet him, and maintain, before it, the charges they had advanced against him. The capital was swarming with his enemies; yet the pale excommunicate calmly walked its streets without injury or insult. Did they already make sure, that the council might be depended upon for effectually dealing with him; or, was it that "they feared the multitude, for all held *John* as a prophet", and knew that thousands, who loved him for his affability and ready sympathies, as much as they admired his earnest eloquence, were on the watch for his safety?

Whatever were the thoughts of Huss's enemies, his friends were not without misgivings for his safety. Archbishop Conrad presented him with a testimonial of orthodoxy. Nicholas, bishop of Nazareth, inquisitor of the kingdom, declared, in a similar document, that having had abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the sentiments of "the honourable man", master John Huss, bachelor in divinity, he had always found him faithful and catholic in his discourses, conduct, and public acts; never having remarked in him any thing evil, perverse, or erroneous. He further testified that Huss had published, in the most effectual manner, a challenge to his enemies to come forward, before his departure, and confront him in the presence of the archbishop and clergy of Bohemia, if, as was pretended, they had any thing to accuse him of; but no one appeared. The summons to Huss to appear at the council was accompanied by a letter from Sigismund to Wenceslaus, requiring him to provide for its being obeyed, and promising perfect security for the reformer. Wenceslaus' Queen Sophia (who was full of anxiety for the safety of her confessor), and the Bohemian states assembled in diet, not satisfied with this general assurance, demanded for their countrymen the emperor's safe-conduct. Huss himself, in the document referred to by the inquisitor, which was affixed, in Latin German and Bohemian, to the doors of all the churches, upon the gate of the royal palace, and on the other public buildings, notified his intended departure, asserting his innocence, and inviting any of his fellow-countrymen who chose, to appear at Constance, and be witnesses either of his acquittal or his condemnation. He was then consigned by Wenceslaus to the care of his destined companions and protectors, the lords of Chlum and Duba; and on the 11th of October, took his departure from Prague.

The journey was a kind of triumph. Not only within his native boundaries, but in Germany, the hostility of whose people he had reason to dread, the reformer was welcomed with respect and sympathy. Bernau, Neustadt, Weiden, Sulzbach, received him joyfully, and "bade him God speed". Notwithstanding these encouraging circumstances, and the sustaining conviction of his innocence, a presentiment of what was to befall him distinctly appears in his letters to his friends. He knew the number and unscrupulousness of the enemies, both clerical and secular, he was likely to encounter at Constance. At the free city of Nuremberg, where his reception was peculiarly cheering and hospitable, he was met by the lord of Latzemboch, whom the emperor had sent from Aix with the imperial warrant for his safety. The important influence of this celebrated document, not only upon the fate of Huss, but upon the fame of Sigismund and of the council itself, entitles it to insertion in this place:—

"Sigismund, by the grace of God, chosen emperor"

The morning after Huss's arrival, the lords of Chlum and Latzemboch waited on the pope, to announce his presence at the council, in obedience to his superiors. John received the Bohemians and their communication graciously:—"He comes, you say, under the safe-conduct of the emperor". "The document, Holy Father," answered Chlum, "is here; but we further solicit for him your holiness's protection. Can he remain in this place in safety?". "Had John Huss killed my own brother", replied the pope, "no harm should, with my consent, be done to him while here in Constance". Again his holiness inquired about the safe-conduct, and received the same answer. "John Huss", he continued, "is not only in safety, but shall have full liberty to do what he pleases here, with one exception. To avoid offence, until he can be relieved from his excommunication, I require him to abstain from preaching and from appearing publicly in the churches". Accordingly, Huss kept himself strictly retired; conversing, however, freely with his friends, and with all comers, and daily performing a mass, at which many persons communicated, in his own chamber.

Among those who flocked to the great rendezvous of all nations, were, towards the end of November, Stephen Paletz, already mentioned as a sworn enemy of Huss, and Michael de Caussis, both doctors in theology of the university of Prague. The origin of Paletz's enmity has been described; that of his associate seems to have had no better excuse than servile devotion to the patrons he met with at Rome, after abandoning in disgrace his post as a parish priest in Prague. Others were associated with them in their plot; but these two, for the prominent part they assumed, may be called the Anytus and Melitus of this Christian Socrates. They came to Constance expressly in the character of his prosecutors. The objects for which the Council of Constance was convened were,—to procure the union of the Church, and its reformation in the head and in the members. Yet before any one step had been taken towards these objects, we shall see this august assembly hurried on, by fierce party zeal and private animosity, to the destruction of a man, acknowledged by themselves to be of saint-like virtue, whose only fault was, that he had imparted a more distinct shape, and more intrepid, perhaps haughtier utterance than his judges, to truths demonstrating that need of reformation which they admitted, and "Whereof all Europe rang, from side to side".

The greater part of Huss's treatises were suggested by immediate circumstances, and hastily composed with all the inconsiderate fervour of a soul wrapt up in one great purpose. From such writings, it could be no difficult task to detach some passages, which acute and cunning malice might brand with the terrible name of "heresy". This was the task imposed, with something more than their consent, on Paletz, de Caussis, and their associates. Mingling, in person, or by their spies, with those who habitually visited the reformer at his lodgings, they also picked up fragments of his unguarded conversation. From materials thus obtained, and coloured to suit their purpose, the accusers prepared articles of impeachment, and laid them before the pope and cardinals. De Caussis, in presenting them, concluded an harangue against the iniquities of the accused, by describing him as a heretic more pernicious than any that had been heard of since the time of Constantine. They likewise recommended his immediate arrest, before the arrival of the emperor, who was daily expected at Constance. A guard of soldiers was accordingly brought into the palace, and others concealed in the neighbourhood of Huss's apartments;—and now the first act of the tragedy is fairly begun.

On the 28th November, while John Huss and the knight of Chlum were seated at dinner, a mounted party drew up at the door of the house. Two prelates—the bishops of Augsburg and Trent —with the chief magistrate of Constance, Henry of Ulm, and other gentlemen, entered the apartment. Addressing Huss: He had often, they said, expressed his readiness to give an account of himself and his opinions; the pope and cardinals were now assembled, and being at leisure, desired to hear him. "It is true", replied Huss, "that I am willing to declare what I have taught; and am come to Constance expressly with that view. But my wish is, to speak in open council, and not in a private meeting of the pope and cardinals. Nevertheless", he added, "since I am required, I will go with you, and whatever may be the consequence, I will not deny the truth". With the brave and faithful knight, as ever, at his side, Huss presently stood in the conclave. When all had compared, by means of a scrutinizing gaze, the modest but self-possessed person before them, with the idea they had formed from report of the Bohemian heretic, one of the cardinals thus addressed him:—"Master John Huss, you are accused by common report, of having taught in Bohemia many and capital errors, thereby leading your countrymen astray from the Catholic faith. We have required your attendance here, that we may know from your own mouth whether these charges be true". "Reverend fathers", replied, Huss, "be assured that I would rather die than persist in any errors, much less capital ones. For this reason it is that I come freely to the council. And I again promise, as I have often before done, that when I am shown my errors I will heartily renounce them". This seems not to have been the kind of answer expected; for after a pause, apparently from embarrassment, the pope rose, and saying merely, "So doing, thou wilt do well", left the room with the cardinals. It was instantly occupied by a party of armed men, and the amazed Bohemians found themselves prisoners.

While they were thus detained, a monk entered, and approaching Huss with an affected air of simplicity, he represented himself as a novice desiring to be instructed on some points respecting which scruples had arisen in his mind, and which he understood Huss had deeply studied. "Is it not, for instance", he asked, "your opinion that only bread exists in the sacrament of the altar, after consecration?". Huss, looking keenly at the man, answered with sharpness, "No, truly—it is not. The imputation is false". The monk begged pardon, if he had offended; it was, he said, from ignorance, and a desire to be instructed in the truth. Falling then upon more indifferent subjects, till he perceived that

Huss had recovered his usual unsuspicious readiness to communicate instruction, he required to know what the reformer thought of the union of the Divine Word with human nature. Huss turned to his companion, who had been standing silent with obvious impatience, and observed, in Bohemian, “The suspicions I perceive you entertain are just; this is not the simple fellow he wants to pass for”. Then again addressing the monk, “You assume”, he said, “for some malevolent purpose, the garb of innocence, but guile is in your heart”. A stern rebuke here burst from Chlum, and the stranger suddenly withdrew, still preserving the same affected manner, and again apologizing for his importunity. Huss learned from his guards that the spy, thus basely employed by the pope and cardinals to entrap him, was Didacus, a celebrated theologian and professor of Lombardy. One of the pope’s officers now entered, and informed Huss that he had orders to conduct him elsewhere; as for the knight of Chlum, he was at liberty.

While the soldiers were hurrying away his friend, Chlum rushed into the apartment to which the pontiff had retired. In terms of honest indignation, he protested against so flagrant a breach both of the imperial safe-conduct and of the pope’s own word; John answered with calmness and courtesy: the arrest of Huss, he affirmed, had not been effected by his authority, but by that of the cardinals, in whose power he himself was. He advised Chlum to apply to them. He did so: by one he was assured that the emperor’s safe-conduct was of no authority in the council in a case of heresy; from the presence of others he was rudely repulsed. He had even the mortification to meet with little sympathy from the people, who had hitherto thronged Huss’s chambers, and lingered about his door; for the enemies of the reformer had industriously spread a report that, conscious of his guilt and insecurity, he had meanly attempted to escape, by hiding in a hay-cart on its way out of the town, but had been detected, and by his own countrymen given up to justice.

The brave knight of Chlum urged not only by grief for his friend, but by the affront to his own honour (Huss having been entrusted to his charge), exerted himself, in every way, to procure his liberation. He wrote to the emperor a circumstantial account of the contempt with which his safe-conduct had been treated, and implored his interference. To the same effect he wrote home to Bohemia. In spite of the pope’s evasive denial, he daily presented himself before the Holy Father, soliciting his friend’s freedom. The enemies and calumniators of Huss having asserted that he had in reality no safe-conduct, Chlum exhibited the document publicly in all the chief places of resort in Constance. Sigismund answering the knight’s appeal from Aix, where he breathed an atmosphere less infected with bigotry than the air of Constance, and where he had not to dread that spectre of his own raising, the authority of a general council, ordered his ambassadors to obtain the instant release of Huss; he even commanded them forcibly to break down the prison doors if they encountered any resistance to his orders. The ambassadors were either dissuaded, or terrified, from obedience; for in spite of this command the prisoner was removed from a chamber where he had been hitherto kept under guard, in one of the canon’s houses, to a secure dungeon in the Dominican Convent. Great minds, when greatly supported and impelled by great motives, rise, by the force of dangers and distress, into regions of unwonted calmness and power. John Huss found, in the midst of his present sufferings and perils, the needful strength and tranquillity of soul to compose some of his best treatises and most interesting letters.

Meantime, the pontiff appointed two committees to inquire into the truth of the charges brought against his prisoner. The first, consisting of the patriarch of Constantinople and two other prelates, was to receive the depositions of witnesses; the second undertook the examination of his published doctrines. It consisted of four cardinals, two generals of religious orders, and six doctors:—enough to decide the question of Huss’s orthodoxy, if upright and impartial men; more than enough to crush one poor infirm priest, if unjust and irritated.

CHAPTER III

SIGISMUND ARRIVES AT CONSTANCE.—HIS CHARACTER.—EXTRAORDINARY ATTENDANCE AT THE COUNCIL.—DESIGNS OF THE POPE OVERRULED.—ORDER OF MEETINGS.—CRUEL TREATMENT OF HUSS.—THE EMPEROR PERMITS THE VIOLATION OF HIS SAFE-CONDUCT.

FROM November to January the streets of Constance echoed continually with the sound of fresh arrivals. Today enters some sovereign prince, preceded by heralds, escorted by the blazonry of his house and dominions; tomorrow will witness the arrival of a train of prelates, the delegates of a nation, following the cross—though with little appearance of the humility of men inured to bear it. One day, all, even to the cardinals, issue forth to meet the ambassadors of France,—that important nation having sent to the council men of the highest rank and celebrity; another day, those of England —fewer, less magnificent, and, unlike the French, with no cardinal at their head, but prepared to play a bolder part,—are conducted in with loud welcome. At length, the advocate and protector, as he was called, of the council,—the Emperor Sigismund—made his appearance: he entered Constance on Christmas Eve, accompanied by the empress, and many princes and lords of Germany and Hungary. Sigismund had appointed the pope to receive him in the cathedral. Thither, after a short interval of rest, he proceeded; and at the mass, in which the pope himself officiated, the emperor, habited in his imperial dalmatic, chanted the Gospel. He was thought to intone the passage—"It came to pass, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus", with an air of authority peculiarly significant. After the mass, the pope presented the emperor with a naked sword, exhorting him to use it for the defence of the Church. Sigismund solemnly promised to do so, and kept his word, by soon after making war, indirectly, upon the pope himself.

If to have done and suffered the most bravely there, and thereafter worthily to live in the memory and hearts of more enlightened and sympathizing generations, is to be the hero of the Council of Constance, then may we justly claim that distinction for John Huss. But if we call him the hero, who was the inspirer and director of its acts, its good genius in what it did well, its mistaken instrument in what it did most ill—then, it is to the Emperor Sigismund that name belongs. Undoubtedly, this emperor was cast in the heroic mould: in him, the poet and the painter might find a subject for each sister art. Body and mind, faults and excellences,—temper, intellect, aims;—all were, in him, upon a certain scale of grandeur. He was at this time in his forty-seventh year—the period of perfection of the united bodily and mental powers of man. Of lofty stature and majestic presence, his long fair hair and beard floating over his ample chest and shoulders, those who beheld him felt that they were in the presence of one who bore nature's stamp of authority. He was brave; magnanimous he would have been, but for the withering influence of superstition; prodigal—not an unpardonable vice in the master of kingdoms. He often acted with cruelty; but that, in those times, was deemed less the fault, than the necessary attribute of rulers. At least, in the instance of Sigismund, it was redeemed by a generous scorn of danger. His early career, as king of Hungary, was beset with perils and misfortunes. On one occasion, the detection of a conspiracy against his life, he caused no less than thirty-two of his nobles to be beheaded. A second conspiracy was presently formed, to avenge the death of those unfortunate persons. Perceiving the conspirators approaching, he drew his sword, and advanced to meet them. "Which of you all" he exclaimed, "is the man that will first lay hands upon his king? What have I done, that you seek to kill me? dastards as you are, so many of you to think of setting upon one man! If any one among you be bold enough, let him come forward, and I am ready to fight with him". So great was the emperor's readiness of mind, that some of his sayings are to this day apophthegms everywhere current. The same imperial temper which never spared those who obstinately opposed him, was equally gratified by indulgence to the submissive. His answer when reproached for making no sterner use of victory, was, that in pardoning he both got rid of an enemy and gained a friend. His remark to the jurist Fiscellinum is familiar to all the world. Sigismund had raised the lawyer to knightly rank. Being presently after to appear in some public solemnity, the *parvenu* hesitated which party to join, the jurisconsults or the nobles (knights were nobles in Hungary), but from vanity decided for the latter. "Are you not ashamed, George", said the monarch, laughing, "thus to prefer rank to learning;—you who know well, that I can any day make a hundred knights out of as many blockheads, but not one doctor?" To this emperor is likewise attributed the maxim, adopted by the tyrant Louis XI of

France, that a prince who does not know how to dissimulate does not know how to reign;—words which Sigismund's conduct, in several instances, shows he by no means adopted as an invariable rule. He was sincerely religious, after the fashion of his age namely, by slavish and unquestioning confidence in popery as *a system*, with some admission of the vices in its practical administration; and if, in his zeal for the extinction of differences and divisions in the Church, he was seduced into a course justly fatal to his reputation for humanity and good faith, the censures of the charitable may be mitigated when they remember the cruelly intolerant spirit of all contemporary parties, as well as the peculiar prejudices of the emperor's birth and education. To his zeal for the peace of the Church, rather than to personal ambition, it is fair to ascribe the circumstances of his elevation to what was still called the empire of the Caesars. When the electors were assembled, Sigismund, as a king, was the first to be asked whom he intended to nominate to the vacant throne:— "Myself", was his answer, "I know myself; others I do not know. I know not whether there be any other so capable of governing the empire in these difficult times". The rest, pleased with a boldness which responded to their secret wishes, without hesitation saluted him Caesar.

The self-complacency of the present age, contemplating its astonishing facilities for travelling, and still more for the interchange of ideas by the use of printing, the aid of steam, and the invention of the electric telegraph, is apt to draw, in colours too flattering to itself, the contrast between the nineteenth and the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It would, however, be a gross mistake to imagine, that any kingdom or considerable district was shut up in all the isolation of ignorant barbarism. On the contrary, Europe presented in the middle ages a nearer approach than it now does, to the condition of a family, or society, of nations; —not, it is true, an harmonious or orderly family; but a brotherhood of communities, having many interests in common; above all, the bond of the same ecclesiastical system. Even the endless wars of those times were means of intercommunication; the innumerable monasteries kept up a constant system of mutual correspondence; and pilgrimages and travels of ecclesiastics supplied a medium for the perpetual circulation of news.

It is probable, that during the year which preceded its assembling, the Council of Constance was at least as much the leading topic of conversation throughout Europe, as such an expected event would be in our own time. The interest excited by it is sufficiently shown in the numbers and rank of the persons that from all sides flocked to it: their aggregate rendered this council the grandest representative assembly that ever met in Christendom. Not a kingdom or state of any kind—scarcely a town of importance—but sent its noblest. Authentic lists, drawn up at the time by the emperor's order, give the names of 30 cardinals, 4 patriarchs, 20 archbishops, 150 bishops, above 100 abbots, 14 auditors of the *rota* (judges of the chief civil tribunal at Rome), above 150 generals of orders, all mitred prelates; besides 270 doctors. Two popes presided; one at the commencement, the other at the close. The emperor himself was always present, except when the affairs of the council required him elsewhere. Among the other lay persons of rank were—the elector Palatine, protector of the assembly in the emperor's absence, and the other six electors; the dukes of Bavaria, Austria, Silesia, Lignitz, and Briez, with margraves, burgraves, counts, barons, and other lords in prodigious numbers, and the ambassadors of the absent.

But the completest list of the more distinguished personages would convey no adequate notion of the multitude whom this high European solemnity brought together. At the time of the emperor's arrival, there were already in Constance more than 100,000 strangers on the business of the council; exclusive of the thousands attracted by curiosity and pleasure, and the many others of both classes that came afterwards. The pope had in his suite 600 persons; the cardinals, the patriarchs, and the legates of the two antipopes, 1200. With the archbishops, bishops, and abbots, came from 4000 to 5000 persons. The auditors of the *rota*, and 18 secretaries of the pope had under them 200. There were reckoned 1200 scribes or copyists, besides their attendants. The pope and cardinals had among them 273 proctors, of whom each brought his servant. The number of simple priests amounted to 1800, besides their dependents and petty officers. The 272 doctors brought with them above 1000 followers. The escorts of secular persons of rank numbered not less than between 4000 and 5000. One hundred and sixteen envoys as deputies had with them 1600 persons. The gentlemen, esquires, and military officers, amounted, with their followers, to 3000. Lastly, there was quartered in the town a garrison of the imperial troops 2000 strong.

The motive of John XXIII in consenting to convoke this great synod, was simply the hope of consolidating his own authority. Hence he insisted upon its being regarded as a continuation of the

Council of Pisa; because, upon the deposition of Benedict and Gregory by the latter assembly, depended his claim to canonical election, as the legitimate successor of Alexander V. For the same reason, he strove hard to exclude all persons from voting at Constance, except the clergy; and of these, to admit only cardinals, archbishops, abbots, generals of orders, and others of prelatical rank; a large proportion of whom were Italians, and devoted to the apostolic see. He was overruled on both points; though, on both, ancient custom was undoubtedly in his favour. It was resolved, that not only ecclesiastics inferior to prelates, but lay persons, as being no less interested in the result than the clergy, should be allowed to vote. Another innovation, adopted, to bar the ascendancy of the swarming Italian deputies, not merely against the pope's interest and in spite of his opposition, but contrary to former example, was, that the suffrages should be taken by nations, not by individuals. The nations represented were reckoned four,—Italy, France, Germany, England. Every subject to be proposed by either nation in a session of the council, after being prepared by the appointed procurators, was first discussed in a committee of that nation; the resolutions were then reported to a general meeting of the four nations; again discussed; and only brought before the full council, when approved and confirmed by all.

These and other preliminary forms being settled, the council proceeded to hold its public sessions. The cathedral, not the hall now shown to strangers who visit Constance, was the place of assembling. Each session began with a solemn religious service. A cardinal, or other prelate as appointed, celebrated the mass of the Holy Ghost. Mass ended, the prelates put on their pontifical robes, with their mitres: the mitres were white except the president's, which was of embroidered work, enriched with jewels. The president, his deacons, sub-deacons, and other ecclesiastical functionaries, then seated themselves at a table in the middle of the assembly; the president having his back towards the altar. When all had taken their places an anthem was sung, followed by an appropriate collect, which everyone present repeated, on his knees, in a low voice. Chanting followed, a litany, and a portion of one of the Gospels. A short exhortation was added by the president, and the service closed with the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*. As soon as the devotions were finished, the whole assembly again took their seats, the prelates resumed their mitres, and one of them, ascending the tribune, read the decrees proposed to be passed in that session; the presidents of the four nations standing by and answering, each for his nation, *Placet*—"we approve". Consistently with the religious solemnities observed in its meetings, the council styled itself, "The sacred council assembled at Constance"; its decrees were enunciated in the name of the Holy Trinity; in short, nothing was omitted that could impart to it a venerable and awful character. It is said, that no passer-by dared even to look up at the walls, within which this pompous assembly was sitting, without making the sign of the cross.

From the contemplation of this magnificent parade, the order of events now calls us to witness the treatment of the poor Bohemian professor. The convent of the Dominicans stood without the city walls, where the Rhine issues from the lake. Monasteries and episcopal palaces were, in those days, always provided with dungeons. What sort of places they were is testified by those which, to this day, appal the curious in the pontifical palace at Avignon. The dungeon where those persons who now had charge of him were not ashamed to immure John Huss, was contiguous to the channel by which the filth of the place was carried down to the river. Confinement in this noisome abode in a few days brought on violent illness. Here, after some days, he was visited by the patriarch of Constantinople and his colleagues. They brought with them a schedule of the charges laid against him. "You see in what a state I am, reverend fathers", faintly observed the sufferer—"sick, and a prisoner. I cannot myself appear before the commission to speak to these articles. My judges will not, I trust, refuse me an advocate. With such necessary assistance I doubt not, God permitting, to defend both my doctrine and manner of life". His petition was refused. The commissioners explained to him, that by the canon law no one was permitted to undertake the defence of a person charged with heresy. This visit was not, however, without benefit to the sufferer. Shocked at the condition to which they found so eminent a person reduced, or fearing to lose, by his death, the opportunity of making a public example, the commissioners, on their return, sent to Huss the pope's physicians. By their orders he was removed to a more habitable apartment; his faithful friend Chlum, likewise, had leave to minister to his comfort. Whether these indulgences were continued through all the remaining weeks—they were many—of his imprisonment with the Dominicans seems doubtful. At all events, the fever engendered in that hideous vault gave place to such a degree of health as enabled him to resume his pen for the completion of the treatises begun on his arrival in Constance, and for continuing his powerful and pathetic letters to his friends.

It will be seen hereafter with what dread Sigismund regarded the return of Huss to his own country. The motives of this apprehension were no less political than religious, and of this the ecclesiastics took advantage. Immediately on the emperor's appearance in Constance, they represented to him, that by the imprisonment of Huss, they had secured from doing farther mischief a disturber of the state, as well as a subverter of the Catholic faith. Once persuaded of the political necessity for this monstrous act of injustice, the emperor made but little difficulty about accepting their assurance of its ecclesiastical legality. In withdrawing his promise of protection from Huss, he could not, they argued, be accused of violating an engagement, because the council, which is superior to the emperor, not having given its consent to allow the accused a safe-conduct, he had no right to grant one; or, if he had, it was still provided in the Decretals, that no faith need be kept with heretics. Already ensnared—and not unwillingly—by these sophisms in private, Sigismund was desired in general terms, by the commissioners, at the first meeting of the "nations" after his arrival, "to allow them liberty of action"; referring to the impediment laid in their way by the safe-conduct. Sigismund made answer, like a good son of the Church, that the council was free to treat of matters of faith, and might proceed in the usual manner against persons notoriously attainted of heresy, delivering them up to condign punishment, after publicly hearing them; that with respect to the threats[3] which had been put forward in favour of John Huss, he had forbidden their execution, and was ready to repeat the prohibition if needful.

Any excuses that can be advanced for the superstitious weakness of the emperor, in his general relations with the Papal Church, are immeasurably too feeble to bear out this act of perfidy. To attempt, however, to characterize its iniquity is needless in an age when the name of the victim is never mentioned but with the accompaniment of words that burn the brand of infamy deeper into that of his betrayer to the malice of his bigoted enemies. Roman Catholic historians, indeed, have laboured to strip this melancholy transaction of its true character;—one pretending that the provisions of the famous document applied only to Bohemia; another endeavouring to make it appear, that the safe-conduct violated by the arrest of Huss was not the emperor's, but one given him, after his arrival in their city, by the magistrates of Constance, and expressed in less comprehensive terms. The latter pretence may be at once passed by as a gratuitous and useless fiction: as regards the other, the reader has before him the means of judging for himself, whether the document issued, under the imperial hand, at Aix, engaged for the reformer's safety in Constance also, and during his return, or merely for a portion of the road thither.

CHAPTER IV.

INDIGNATION OF THE BOHEMIANS.—JOHN XXHI. REQUIRED TO ABDICATE.—HE MAKES A SOLEMN PUBLIC PROMISE TO DO SO.—EVADES IT, AND ESCAPES FROM CONSTANCE.—THE COUNCIL ASSERTS ITS INDEPENDENCE OF THE POPE.—ARREST OF JOHN.—HE IS DEPOSED.

THE news of Huss's impris6nment caused a violent excitement in Bohemia. The states assembled immediately, and addressed an indignant remonstrance to the council, accompanying it with a fresh testimonial from Archbishop Conrad, in which the prelate declares, that "he had never found an erroneous opinion in the writings of John Huss, and had nothing to accuse him of". "We Bohemians", say the states, "demand that he who in the presence of our bishops was fully justified, and in whom no shade of unsound doctrine was found, should be immediately freed from prison, and not given up to scorn and contempt, through the false witness and calumny of his enemies, and without being heard". They reminded the emperor and the fathers of Huss's willingness to submit to the judgment of the council, and his promise to retract if found to be in error. They represented, that high and low in Bohemia were alike struck with consternation at hearing of their countryman's shameful treatment; and they implored Sigismund, from regard to his own honour, to put an end to so enormous an injustice. This was only one of many such expostulations by the countrymen and fellow-subjects of Huss. All alike proved ineffectual, except to draw from Sigismund some tardy and evasive excuses for his conduct. They were, indeed, worse than ineffectual; for it was under the pretext of apprehension lest the Bohemians in Constance should attempt the rescue of their countryman, that Paletz and the other prosecutors obtained the order for the prisoner's removal to the pestilential dungeons of the Dominican Convent.

The trial of John Huss, for which, chiefly, this gathering of the mighty of the earth is now remembered, was considered at the time as no more than an episode in the great drama, whose main action was to be the extinction of the schism. The anti-pope Gregory had already made known by his legates, that he was willing to resign, provided his two rivals consented to do the same; and he only desired further, in order to avoid any hindrance to free discussion, that when the act of abdication was performed in the council, Balthazar Cossa (John XXIII) should not be present. The step thus gained was followed up by a resolution, in which all but the Italians were unanimous, that to restore unity and peace to the Church, it was necessary that all three popes should resign. In order to obtain the concurrence of Benedict XIII, the emperor made known his purpose to go himself into Spain. The chief difficulty appeared therefore to rest with John, who had hitherto presided in the council as the legitimate successor of St. Peter.

John XXIII had of late been conscious, that the chief influence in the council was passing from himself to the emperor. Though some caution was deemed a requisite in communicating to him the determination of the "nations", that he too, as well as the others, was bound to abdicate, it was not long before the necessity of adopting that course began to be openly urged upon him. Some of the cardinals even suggested to him, in no equivocal terms, that it was in the power of a general council to depose the pope, should the good of the Church require it. Hints, urgencies, and even threats, he had borne with stoical imperturbability, when he was made aware—for all that occurred in his absence was brought to him by his creatures—that a list of the criminal acts of his life had been secretly laid before a meeting of the fathers. Though this document was for the present suppressed, he now, with good reason, felt alarm. In a general assembly immediately following its production, the patriarch of Antioch, president of the French nation, undertook to demand of him the step so necessary for remedying the existing evils. Without a moment's hesitation, affecting indeed the utmost cheerfulness, he accepted the proposal; and, drawing a paper from beneath his robe, handed it, as his deed of resignation, to the cardinal of Florence to be read. But the writing was rejected as ambiguous and insufficient. He drew to a second: it was found liable to the same objections, and met with the same fate. At this juncture, the representatives of the University of Paris arrived, and joined the assembly. They at once united with the Germans and English in obliging the Pope to yield. A third more stringent form, prepared by themselves, subjoining the words

“voveo atque juro” to John’s evasive “promitto”, was then presented for his acceptance. He tried every wile to escape; the three nations only grew more urgent and resolved.

Threatened with deposition as the alternative, he summoned a meeting of the four nations in his palace, to receive his consent. The patriarch of Antioch presented the paper. The pope received it, examined it apart, then read it aloud.

The next day, March 2nd, after the usual solemnity of the mass, as soon as the pontiff had taken his seat before the altar, the patriarch rose. With a loud voice, while all around a breathless silence prevailed, he announced, that the pope was about to accept, in the most solemn manner, before the whole council assembled in session, the formula of resignation read by him the preceding day. John took the hated scroll, again distinctly repeated its contents; and, on coming to the words “spondeo et promitto, voveo atque juro”, he rose, knelt towards the altar, and laying his hand upon his breast, said, “This oath I swear literally to observe”. As soon as the pope had finished reading, the emperor rose up, laid aside his crown, and, throwing himself on his knees before him, kissed his foot, and returned him thanks for himself and all Christendom. His example in this histrionic baseness was followed by the patriarch in the name of the council. The organ pealed forth, the choir sang the Te Deum, and the session closed.

The solemn farce of affected courtesies, vainly meant to hide mutual distrust and dislike, was for some days kept up by the two potentates. The pope presented the emperor with the golden rose, then a less common bait for kings than when his easy successor gave it to our Henry VIII. Sigismund accepted the sacred bauble with every imaginable demonstration of respect, paraded it publicly through the city, and wore it at a grand banquet given by himself and the other secular princes to the pope. But the emperor’s gratitude had reference rather to what the pope had engaged to do, than to what he had already done. As John took no step towards the performance of his oath, but, on the contrary, refused, in spite of urgent applications, to appoint procurators for his cession, and continued as before to preside in the council, and otherwise discharge the functions of the pontificate, the emperor, on the very day following the banquet, convoked a meeting for the purpose, as he said, of giving a pope to the Church—a plain intimation to Balthazar Cossa, that the protector of the council no longer regarded him as really the pope, and that the council already assumed the right of proceeding to the election of his successor.

Feeling that Constance was no longer the place for him, John XXIII resolved at once to put in practice his meditated plan of retreat. It was ascertained, however, that strict watch was kept on all persons who were suspected of designing to quit the town; a precaution adopted by the emperor, not merely to prevent the escape of the pope, but the retreat of other prelates of his faction, who, like him, hoped by retiring to cause the breaking up of the council. John bitterly complained of being made, as he alleged, a prisoner: the council’s reply was a more urgent demand than ever that he would complete the forms of his resignation. His arrest was even proposed by, it is said, the English ambassadors.

He now became, or feigned to be, indisposed. The emperor paid the illustrious invalid, whom he found in his bed, a visit little calculated to promote his recovery; its object being to represent to him, in the strongest terms, the mischief and the futility of any attempt to desert the council until the completion of the business for which it had been convoked. “At least, holy father”, said Sigismund, “if you are resolved to adopt that course, do not depart clandestinely. Leave the council in a manner worthy of yourself; permit me to be your escort”. The attendance of so important a guard by no means according with the pontiffs designs, he parried the ironical offer by a positive promise to remain. The imperial visitor’s choice of a companion in this interview was intended to convey a further hint to the pope. He had taken with him Robert Hallam, bishop of Salisbury, a prelate whose plain-speaking on the subject of John’s past life had already made him a most distasteful person to the pope. He now repeated the offence, in an aggravated form, to his face; while the emperor, sitting by, offered no check to the uncourtly Englishman’s tongue.

The pope had already concerted his plans with the duke of Austria. A tournament was held by the duke’s arrangement on the 28th day of March. It was the popular sport of the age, and all classes and conditions crowded to the spectacle. In the midst of the jousts, one of the duke’s officers was observed to come and whisper in his ear. He made no reply, but continued running at the ring. Presently, however, he quitted the lists, and passing hastily out of the city, took the road to Schaffhausen. The pope was already there before him. While the attention of every one was fixed on the sports, John, disguised as a postillion, mounted on a rough nag, with a coarse horseman’s cloak flung across his shoulders, and a cross-bow

hanging at his saddle, had passed unrecognized through the gate which opened upon the Austrian territory. From Schaffhausen he wrote to the emperor, apologizing for his departure and that of the duke, who, he affirmed, was previously ignorant of his purpose. His excuse was, that his health required a better air than that of Constance, and that at Schaffhausen he would be free to complete, without interruption, the arrangements for his resignation.

They, and he was himself of the number, who had looked to this event as the signal for the council's dissolution, were quickly undeceived. For a few hours, indeed, wonder and alarm succeeded its discovery; for pains had been taken to identify, in the popular mind, the council with the pope. But the emperor showed himself well prepared for the emergency. Attended by the elector and a numerous retinue of princes and knights, with heralds and other officers, he rode through the town, and at once restored confidence, by assuring the people, in a tone of authority which of itself inspired it, that the council suffered no interruption by the flight of the pope, and that there would be the same security for every one as before.

The council itself lost no time in affirming the same. A session was held for this purpose, at which more than the usual solemnities were observed. During the mass, the emperor sat crowned, and wearing his imperial robes and other insignia. The palatine, duke of Bavaria, stood at his right hand, habited in purple, wearing the electoral cap, and holding between his hands a golden globe; on his left, another duke similarly robed sustained a naked sword; a third, standing before him, held the sceptre. But the fathers were not satisfied merely to affirm, that "neither by the retirement of the pope, nor of any other prelate or person, is the sacred council dissolved, but retains, and will retain all its integrity and authority; nor shall be dissolved till the schism is closed, and the Church reformed in faith and manners, in its head and in its members". The superiority of a general council to the pope was determined by the council of Pisa, when that assembly deposed the anti-popes Gregory and Benedict. The Constantian synod had all along proceeded, tacitly but really, upon the recognition of this important principle. It was now demonstrated by the most learned canonists, with the renowned Gerson at their head. And in its fifth public session the council declares, "that it possesses by divine right supreme authority in all matters of faith, for the extirpation of the present schism, and the reform of the Church in its head and in its members; and that every person, of what rank or dignity soever, even the papal, who shall obstinately refuse to submit to its decrees, or those of any other general council lawfully assembled, is liable to such punishment as shall be necessary".

Meantime John, thinking himself too near to Constance, removed further on to the castle of Lauffenberg. As, in this second retreat, he was still under the protection of the duke of Austria, Sigismund, who had already applied to the council for aid against the duke as a public enemy, now placed him under the ban of the empire. Again the pope removed his quarters, exchanging Lauffenberg for the more distant town of Freiburg. To the repeated demands of the council that he would return—for ambassadors were, on both parts, continually going and returning—he gave only false or evasive answers; and finally he went on to Brisach, a place three days' journey from Constance.

His choice of Brisach was determined by its nearness to the dominions of the duke of Burgundy; for, foreseeing that the duke of Austria would most likely fail him, he had for some time been intriguing to secure the protection of the former more powerful prince. At Brisach he was once more overtaken by a deputation, consisting, as usual, of cardinals and other prelates! Their business was to entreat him, with the most positive assurances of safety and respect, from the council, and personally from Sigismund, to return to Constance. The pope promised an answer the next morning. But when morning came, he descended, accompanied only by his private secretary, from the castle to one of the gates which led directly to the territories of his new patron. It was shut, and the captain of the guard refused to let them pass, but directed them to go out by a gate leading to Neuberg, a little town three leagues distant. This gate they likewise found shut, and guarded by two German soldiers, who recognized the pontiff, and with loud cries of "The pope, the pope is escaping!" brought the townspeople about them. John, to avoid the tumult, was on the point of taking refuge in a neighbouring outhouse, when, as it was now the hour of opening the gate, he and his attendant were allowed to depart; and the officer who had relieved the guard closed it behind them, to secure the fugitives from insult. He likewise ordered a party of men-at-arms to follow and escort the pope to Neuberg. There, however, he was refused admittance, and was obliged to return to Brisach. Midnight had struck, when, weary and disconsolate, he once more presented himself at

the barrier where he had been detained in the morning. An hour and a half more elapsed before he could gain admittance. Meantime the prelates, finding the pope gone, had returned towards Constance.

While John XXIII was engaged in these undignified adventures, Louis of Bavaria had undertaken to obtain the submission of duke Frederick. On his way back from an interview with that prince, he met the prelates at Freiburg. Louis pointed out to them, that by the emperor's instructions relative to the duke of Austria, they were empowered to prevent the pope from proceeding further. Upon this, some of them agreed to accompany him in pursuit of the fugitive. They found him at Brissac, and brought him back with them to Freiburg. John perceiving that nothing now remained but submission or an ignominious deposition, professed his readiness to do every thing required of him; and, as a pledge of his sincerity, dictated an instrument appointing proctors to complete his resignation.

The council rejected the writing; and cited the pope to appear in person at Constance within the space of nine days, or in default to be proceeded against in his absence. This citation was fixed, first upon the Swiss gate by which John had left Constance, and afterwards on all the other gates of the city. At the same time, the archbishops of Besançon and Riga were sent to deliver it to the pontiff. They were escorted by a body of three hundred imperial troops, nominally under the orders of the prelates, but in reality to be commanded by the duke of Austria. It was an age in which the selfishness and ingratitude of our nature were displayed with little shame. Within how short a space was this prince both the victim and the subject of those vices! No sooner had Sigismund made known his purpose to revenge the part taken by Frederick in the pope's evasion, than friends, vassals, dependants, whom he had loaded with benefits, revolted to his powerful enemy; and now he himself, who but lately had entered into a treaty with the pontiff, and taken his wages, willingly purchased reconciliation with his suzerain, by assuming the office of gaoler to his friend and spiritual father. He even went beyond what the more generous temper of Sigismund can have authorized. The fallen pontiff's attendants were every day changed. He was deprived of his jewels, his plate, his purse, and even of the contents of his travelling trunks:—lord of the princes of the earth, without a change of raiment!

John felt his degradation, and affected contrition for his crimes. He was seen bathed in tears. He lamented aloud having so long followed ill advice, professed himself ready to submit implicitly to the will of the council, and—in secret—was all the while contriving plans of escape.

The appointed day came, but neither John XXIII, nor any one to answer for him, appeared. The council declared him contumacious, and suspended him from the pontifical office. Four several times, at intervals of two or three days, a cardinal, or other prelate, was heard, at each door of the sacred edifice where the council held its meetings, with a loud voice summoning the fugitive pope. No answer being made, the fathers prepared for his deposition. We have no report of any regular judicial process, but the testimony of many witnesses was taken, of whom twelve or thirteen were cardinals; the result of whose declarations appears in seventy articles of accusation. Fifty of these, relating to the *minor* offences of simony, sacrilege, oppression, &c., were publicly read; the remaining twenty, in which this monster of a pope was charged with adultery, incest, murder, and worse (if there are worse) enormities, were, out of respect for his sacred office, suppressed in the more public proceedings.

As John refused to return to Constance, he was conducted to the fortress of Ratolfsell, or Zell, a town of Swabia, two leagues from that city. There the fact of his suspension was communicated to him. He was at the same time deprived of "the fisherman's ring" and the other pontifical seal; and when the cardinals and other dignitaries deputed by the council came into his presence, they omitted the usual ceremony of kissing his foot.

At length, in a session, the eleventh, held expressly for the purpose, John XXIII was deposed, by the unanimous vote of the assembly, from the function he had polluted and abused. To the last, he refused to appear before his judges; but he heard the sentence of deposition read, acquiesced in, and confirmed it, with so much appearance of exemplary resignation, that his partizans have not scrupled to claim for him on this ground the honours of a hero and a saint. As soon as the ambassadors sent to announce the decree had done their office, he ordered the pontifical cross to be removed from his apartment, and protested that nothing but the want of other clothing withheld him from stripping himself, in their presence, of the habits, with every other token, of his justly forfeited dignity.

The council declared Balthazar Cossa, Peter de Lune, and Angelo Corario, for ever incapable of being elected to the pontificate. It announced to all Europe the deposition of John, and authorized the emperor to assume, throughout his dominions, during the vacancy of the Apostolic chair, the imperial claim of his predecessors, to dispose of the benefices and maintain the rights belonging to the Church.

(Where life abounds, as at Constance, death will not long be absent. The first of note among the fathers of the council who died there was the celebrated Manuel Chrysoloras. He had come as ambassador from Greece; and accompanying Cardinal Zabarella out of Italy, both left their bones upon the banks of the Rhine. The tomb of Chrysoloras, in the church of the Dominicans, is among the few genuine monuments of the council which Constance now contains. His epitaph informs us that he was descended from one of those Roman families who migrated to Byzantium with Constantine; and it concludes with the equivocal praise, that this man of consummate learning, wisdom, and worth, was considered by all the world the fittest person living to fill the papal seat. This epitaph is in prose: a poetical one at its side, composed by Eneas Sylvius, deservedly commemorates the labours of Chrysoloras for the revival of literature in Europe).

CHAPTER V.

JEROME OF PRAGUE ARRIVES AT CONSTANCE.—IS ARRESTED.—CONDEMNATION OF THE WRITINGS AND MEMORY OF WICLIFFE.— HUSS IS TRANSFERRED TO GOTTLIEBRN.—HE APPEARS BEFORE THE COUNCIL.—URGED TO RETRACT.—CONDEMNED BY SIGISMUND.

THE proceedings of the council in the deposition of John XXIII comprised the better part of what it did towards the accomplishment of those objects for which it was convoked. In achieving this one purpose, it may be compared to the fearless knights of romance, whose occupation it was to rid the world of monsters. In its following exploits, it rather resembles those fabled giants whom the same knightly champions had sometimes to contend with—strong, but using their strength savagely and blindly to oppress the weak and innocent; and, when tired of that cruel pastime, sinking into dulness or inanity.

Among the friends who, when John Huss was setting out for the council, pressed round him with affectionate adieus and prayers for his safety, was, of course, Jerome of Prague. Jerome, while he entreated his friend and master to maintain with firmness at Constance the principles he had taught in Bohemia, promised immediately to follow and give him his support, if he heard of his having any need of friends. Though Huss, as we have seep, had shortly great need, he was so far from desiring Jerome to keep a dangerous promise made at such a moment, that he wrote in urgent terms to their common friends to persuade him to reserve himself for better times, and by no means to incur the same fate as had befallen his master. Nevertheless, as there were not wanting others who, seconding Jerome's own inclinations, blamed him for allowing himself to be deterred by any inducements from succouring his friend in his adversity, he resolved at all risks to do as he had said.

He arrived at Constance, with a disciple or two, on the 4th of April. His countrymen alarmed by his appearance—for spies were already on the watch for him—assured him that his hopes of obtaining favour for Huss were wholly futile; and obliged him to consult his own safety by retiring the next day to the neighbouring town of Uberlingen. From this place he applied to the emperor and the council for a safe-conduct, promising to appear with it at Constance, and either clear himself from any suspicions cast upon his faith and teaching, or in case of failure willingly to submit to the punishment due to his offence. Sigismund, smarting from the recent violation of his safe- conduct granted to Huss, at once refused; the cardinals, after some delay, granted an ambiguous form, offering protection "salva tamen justitia" a clause which rather pointed to the condemnation of the applicant, than promised him security. A second application being followed by no reply, he caused to be published throughout Constance, by the usual means, the request he had made to be admitted to a hearing; and with a testimonial from the Bohemian lords and knights at the council to the same effect, set out, by their advice, on his return to Prague. It is said he discoursed, with imprudent freedom, on the way, respecting the conduct of the council: if so, the issue was natural. Some officers of the duke of Salzbach's, into whose company he fell at Airchau, recognized and arrested him. The duke detained him till he had communicated with the council; and then sent him back, loaded with chains, to Constance. He was immediately taken to the elector-palatine, the duke of Bavaria, and by his order dragged before a meeting of magistrates and ecclesiastics then sitting in the Franciscan Convent.

Jerome's examination was conducted with brutal coarseness. Being reproached with his flight, and asked why he had not appeared in answer to his citation (a citation had been issued by the council some days after he had left Uberlingen), he replied, that he had been forced to leave Constance for want of a safe-conduct: as to the citation, had he received it, he would have forthwith returned. It has been already related that Jerome had travelled much, and had studied in most of the universities of Europe. Gerson,

who was famous for his skill as a dialectician on the Nominalist side, charged him with having offended the university of Paris by presuming-to maintain before it the doctrines of the Realists. Jerome modestly answered, that having been admitted to a master's degree in that university, he had used his liberty as such to dispute: he had not, he said, been reproached at the time with advancing any error; but he was ready, if permitted, to repeat his argument, and to retract it if found erroneous. A doctor of Cologne accused him of broaching erroneous sentiments in that university. "Will you name an instance" asked Jerome. The doctor hesitated, and at last excused himself on the score of a defective memory. A third accuser, from Prague, complained that in a lecture before the students, Jerome had once compared the Trinity in Unity to water, snow, and ice. "And I still maintain", he exclaimed, "that the indivisible God may be faintly represented under such an emblem : prove that I am wrong, and I will gladly recant my error". Here he was interrupted by cries of—"To the flames with the heretic!" "You desire to take my life, then?" said he fearlessly: "I am ready to resign it, if such be the will of God". The Bishop of Salisbury now threw in the one solitary remark that had a touch of compassion in it. "No, Jerome", he cried, "not so. For we read, that God hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and live". In the end, he was given into the custody of the Archbishop of Riga, Wallenrod, keeper of the seals to the pope, a prelate notorious for his severity.

As the officers were leading him away to prison, one of his Bohemian friends whispered in his ear—"Fear not, Jerome, to maintain the truth, even to death". "I am not afraid to die" he replied, "with God's help, I will maintain as a prisoner, all I professed when at liberty". The archbishop had his prisoner conveyed to a tower in the cemetery of St. Paul's. There he was chained so tightly, both by his hands and feet, to a post, that he was unable to sit, or to rest otherwise than by painfully inclining his head forwards. In this posture was the victim of remorseless bigotry left, without other nourishment than bread and water, and sometimes even in want of that. During many days, his friends and countrymen were ignorant what had become of him. At length, one of them discovered the place of his confinement, and reported his disgraceful treatment to the emperor. A stern remonstrance from Sigismund was followed by some mitigation of his sufferings; but not before he had become so ill, that it was necessary to allow him a confessor.

The case of John Huss and Jerome of Prague seems to have been studiously associated by their persecutors with that of our own morning star of Reformation, Wicliffe; not only because the Bohemian reformers seized on many of the same truths Wicliffe had taught, but because no easier way could be devised of exciting general odium against any person, than to represent him as the disciple of a teacher, whose opinions were everywhere a terror to priestly tyranny and corruption. Hence that brute act of vengeance by which the council of Constance, while proposing to extinguish the memory of our primitive reformer, only assisted to render, and did render, its own disgrace immortal. The condemnation of Wicliffe was the exclusive business of one session—the 8th (May 4th)—a session previous and designedly introductory to the public examination of Huss. Three hundred and five propositions, said to have been collected from his works, and already (in 1408) condemned at Oxford, were read, and with all the books which contained them, but especially the *Dialogus* and *Trilogus*, solemnly stamped with the council's damnatory censure. Such copies as could be got together were burned; and all others forbidden to be read, unless for the purpose of refutation. With respect to their author, as "the said Wicliffe lived and died an obstinate heretic", the council anathematized his memory, and ordered his bones to be dug up and thrown out of consecrated ground. It is well known that, in pursuance of this decree, the remains of Wicliffe were actually disinterred and burned, and the ashes cast into the adjoining brook, called the Swift. "The brook", writes Fuller, in that passage which every English Churchman has by heart, "did convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wicliffe are the emblems of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over". Even the grim atrocity of John XXIII's character escaped a deeper shade, in consequence of his absence from the great synod when these decrees were passed.

Huss's detention in the penal cells of the Dominican Convent lasted two full months. Through the incessant and angry remonstrances of his countrymen he, at the end of that period, obtained the relief of a removal to the more endurable prison of the Franciscans. He thankfully acknowledges in his letters that, during this part of his imprisonment, he was treated with comparative kindness. But after the flight of John XXIII, his keepers, being the pope' servants, followed their master to Schaffhausen. The poor prisoner was now in actual danger of starving. In a hurried letter to his friends Chlum and Duba, he says, "My keepers are gone, and have left me nothing to eat, nor do I know what is to become of me in prison. I

beseech you to go with some others of the lords to the king, and petition him to have my affair brought to some conclusion, lest he fall into both sin and shame on my account. Lose no time—there is danger in delay. The bishop of Constance has written to me, that he will not concern himself about my affairs: the cardinals have done the same. If you love your unhappy friend get the king this very night to appoint persons from among his own servants to take charge of me, or else give me my liberty". He was the next day committed to the rigid custody of the bishop of Constance; and conveyed by the prelate's order to the castle of Gottlieben, half a league from the city.

It was to the same fortress that, by command of the council, John XXIII was taken by the elector-palatine after his deposition. Each was aware that he was under the same roof with the other; and strange must have been the reflections of both upon their common fate. If Huss had been the fanatic leveller his enemies represented him to the emperor, what an occasion for triumph when he knew of his prison doors opening to receive *a pope*—the very pope who had directed his own cruel incarceration! The deposed and degraded pontiff had broken his word in order to be guilty of this inhumanity, he had refused to have him set at liberty at the desire and peremptory command of the emperor, who was still more solemnly engaged for his safety; he had even complained to all Europe of Sigismund's indulgence towards the "notorious heretic". And now, behold him, mainly by the grasp of that strong imperial hand, thrust into the same stronghold with his victim. Yet the downfall of his enemy was no gain to Huss: for the aristocratic shape of papal government, now ruling in the Council of Constance, was no whit less intolerant than the pure despotism that, in his person, had sat triple-crowned in the apostolic chair.

The interval of two months, since the first list of accusations against Huss was presented to him, had been sedulously employed by his prosecutors in enlarging and completing it, in the way most favourable to their object. Fresh charges, founded on vague rumour, or the pure invention of malignity, were continually being inserted. Advantage was taken of every available incident, and the arrest of Jerome was an important one, to exasperate the members of the council against him. On the other hand, his friends and countrymen were not silent. The emperor was unceasingly solicited by Chlum and the other Bohemian lords at Constance to interfere for his liberation. From his native country, from Moravia, and from Poland, memorials were despatched to Constance, demanding freedom and a public hearing for the reformer, as Sigismund had promised. With such appeals the official records of the council for the month of May are loaded. But a majority of the fathers, dreading some disturbance, endeavoured by every means to avoid a public trial. The commissioners repeatedly visited him at Gottlieben, with the view of drawing from him either a retractation, or some acknowledgment on which they could proceed by a more summary process. Their interrogatories were conducted with a degree of coarseness and violence, calculated to bear down a man already weakened by the hardships of a long and severe imprisonment. "There", he writes, "was Michael de Caussis, holding a paper in his hand, and urging the patriarch to oblige me to answer article by article. He examines, with the air of an inquisitor, all by letters and discourses; and Paletz brings up every conversation we have had together for years. Great indeed is the vexation I have borne today". In these examinations, he readily answered such questions as were put to him, explaining, admitting, or denying the charges brought forward; but he always refused to undertake his defence before any private commission. He would submit, he said, to the council if proved before it to be in error, and with that view continued to demand a public hearing.

At length the emperor was prevailed upon to issue an order to the cardinals and other representatives of the four nations, to allow John Huss to defend himself before them. June the 6th was the day appointed. On the 5th, Huss was brought to Constance from Gottlieben, and again securely lodged in the convent of the Franciscans where his trial was to take place. The attendance of ecclesiastics comprised nearly all the cardinals, prelates, and priests in Constance. The articles of accusation were already being recited, before the accused had been sent for, when Duba and Chlum hearing of it, informed the emperor that Huss's trial was going on in his absence. Sigismund immediately sent an order to the fathers to stop the proceedings till Huss was present to be heard; and then not to pas£ sentence without first submitting the charges to himself. They reluctantly suspended the reading, and directed the prisoner to be brought in. The elector-palatine and the bur-grave of Nuremberg, to whom the books of Huss had been confided for the purpose of reference during the examination, now delivered them to the cardinals. The fettered and unfriended captive was then brought in, and confronted with all that louring cloud of scornful faces, beneath mitre, cowl, or tonsure, that filled the apartment. The Cardinal of Cambray directed his attention to the manuscripts:—"Did he acknowledge them for his!" "Yes: but if they contained any erroneous

matter, he was ready to disavow it, when shown to be such". Hardly had the first article of accusation been read, and Huss was beginning to answer it, before the impatient anger of the assembly broke out. He was interrupted, from every side, with shouts and insulting remarks. Such an uproar filled the hall, that (as a witness present reports) the judges could scarcely hear one another, much less the answers of the meek confessor before them. When quiet had been somewhat restored, Huss was proceeding in his defence to cite Scripture and the Fathers; immediately he was interrupted with cries of, "That is nothing to the purpose". Overpowered by clamour and derision, he remained silent: his silence was interpreted as the effect of conscious guilt, and an admission of the truth of the change. In short, such was the confusion in this assembly of the great, and the reputed wise and holy of the earth, that the few less violently disposed seized the first opportunity to dissolve the meeting, and put off the business to another day.

To prevent the recurrence of a scene so disgraceful and unchristian, Sigismund resolved to be himself present the next day. He came attended by Chlum and many other Bohemian lords. Huss was standing, as he had stood the day before, surrounded by armed guards, and chained like a felon. When all had taken their places, De Caussis, holding the indictment in his hand, read from it some of the many errors which, as it averred, Huss had taught at Bethlehem and other places in Bohemia; errors partly derived from Wicliffe, and partly of his own invention. The articles selected bore, that John Huss had taught and still maintained, that the natural bread remains in the sacrament of the altar after consecration; that he had taught and obstinately maintained the doctrines of Wicliffe; that he had recommended the people to take arms in defence of his heresies, and had raised a conflict in Bohemia between the ecclesiastical and civil powers; and that he had caused the ruin of the university of Prague.

Attempts had repeatedly been made to ensnare the prisoner, by drawing him into disputes on that terrible test of Roman orthodoxy, transubstantiation, but always without success. He now solemnly declared, that he had never taught nor believed what the first article imputed to him. This formal denial did not save him from being involved in an intricate scholastic discussion on this subject with some five or six opponents, the greater part of them Englishmen, who endeavoured to identify his opinions with those which the council lately condemned as Wicliffe's. These witnesses he triumphantly refuted by a reference to his works, in which the opinions of Berenger and Wicliffe on this head are many times disclaimed as *magna heresis*. Being interrupted in his repeated denials, and told to proceed to the second article, he affirmed that he had never taught in Bohemia "the errors" of Wicliffe, or of any other person. His accusers objected that the opposition he had made to Archbishop Sbynko's condemnation of Wicliffe, was a manifest proof he partook of the errors of that heresiarch. He replied, that he had spoken against that condemnation as unjustifiable, because too sweeping and general. He could not in conscience say, as had been required of him, that all which Wicliffe had taught was alike heretical. Taking up some of his volumes from the table, he showed that his sentiments respecting Wicliffe were thus divided between what he approved and what he disapproved; but he freely acknowledged his agreement with many of Wicliffe's opinions, and voluntarily indicated several of the articles said to have been taken from the Englishman's works, in the condemnation of which he could not conscientiously agree. "When Sbynko", said he, "issued his order that all of Wicliffe's books which were in Prague should be brought to him, I myself put into his hands such as I had, remarking, at the same time, that I was willing to disavow, publicly, whatever errors he might find in them. But the archbishop burnt all the books, mine with the rest, without pointing out any errors". Much derisive laughter was provoked by Huss's saying, in answer to a question respecting his exclusion from his pulpit by Sbynko, that when he found no redress was to be had from the pope, he had appealed from him to the Supreme and ever merciful Judge in heaven; and this burst of unseasonable merriment was renewed on his acknowledging the observation as his, that he trusted Wicliffe was among the saved, and desired no better for himself than to be admitted where Wicliffe was.

With respect to the article in which he was charged with recommending the people to have recourse to arms, it was, he said, absurdly untrue. It seemed to have grown out of his observations on a sermon in that passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, in which Christians are exhorted to equip themselves with "the armour of God", as "the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit", &c. So far from inculcating any resistance to the decrees of even an anti-pope by means of temporal weapons, he had, on the occasion referred to, taken what might be thought unnecessary pains to make it clear that he spoke only of spiritual arms. This charge was eked out with other particulars devoid of any shadow of foundation. That some of the Bohemian clergy had been deprived was true; but he denied that he was in

any manner the cause. Several priests had voluntarily abandoned their livings rather than obey the king's command to transfer their obedience from Gregory XII to the neutral party of the cardinals; and it might be imagined, that King Wenceslaus saw without regret others take possession of those cures which their owners had quitted from a principle of rebellion. He likewise denied that he was the cause of the Germans leaving the university: the true reason was the king's determination to carry into effect the rule regarding the suffrages, established by its founder Charles IV. "For the truth of this I appeal", he said, "to an honourable professor, now present, who left Prague with the German students". The professor alluded to—Albert Wareentrop—was rising to speak, but the cardinals ordered him to sit down; while Paletz, and one Naso, who had also risen, were encouraged to maintain that Huss and Jerome had poisoned the king's mind against the Germans.

It was now too late to continue the examination further that day. But before the prisoner was removed, the cardinal of Cambray, who had throughout distinguished himself by the severity of his remarks, now addressed him reproachfully and said, "A word more, Huss. When first brought before us you boasted, that if you had not come to Constance of your own free will, neither king, nor emperor, nor the council itself, could have compelled you". "What I did say", he replied, "was, that so many nobles in Bohemia honoured me with their protection, that if I had not chosen to come of my own accord, they could have put me in a place of security from which neither the emperor nor the king could have forced me". "Audacious!" cried the cardinal, "hear him!" A loud murmur applauded the exclamation. Instantly Chlum stood forward. "John Huss", exclaimed the brave Bohemian, "has spoken the truth. I myself, though of small account among the nobles of my country, would have sheltered him in my own castle against the whole strength of his enemies. And I say only what a hundred others would say, wealthier men, and possessed of stronger places than I". This honest burst of friendship and humanity the cardinal only noticed by a look of some surprise, adding, more mildly however, as he turned again to the prisoner, "Be that as it may, if you desire now to consult your safety and credit, you will be advised by me, and, as you promised, submit yourself to the council". Then Sigismund, addressing Huss, said, "Though some maintain that you had no safe-conduct from us till after you had been a fortnight in prison, others, of the most honourable rank and reputation, can attest that it was delivered to you before your departure from Prague by the knights Wenceslaus of Duba and John of Chlum, under whose safeguard we placed you, that you might come without harm, and freely declare your opinions before the council. And our friendly intentions towards you have been so well seconded (as the granting of this public audience shows) by the cardinals, prelates, and others, that we are bound to thank them; albeit there are those who say, we have no right to take under our protection a heretic, or a person suspected of heresy. It is from the same friendly feeling that I now also, as well as the cardinal, advise you to submit dutifully to the holy synod. Do this; and we, out of our consideration for our brother Wenceslaus, and his kingdom of Bohemia, will take care to have you dismissed by the council in peace, with the reasonable satisfaction of a slight penance for the faults that have been alleged—proved, indeed—against you. Should you obstinately refuse, the council will know how to deal with you. As for ourselves, be assured, we will in such case afford no countenance to you, nor to your errors; sooner than endure such obstinacy, we would with our own hands light the fire for your execution. Once more, then, we advise you to submit to the judgment of the counci". This was the first time Huss had stood face to face with the emperor. He had hoped, from Sigismund's attending, and especially from the known motive of it, that he should at length be treated with justice—perhaps, even with compassion. The severe tone of the address he had just heard, crowning the harsh proceedings of the day, had extinguished that hope. The humble man, for the moment quite subdued, began his reply by some superfluous and rather incoherent expressions of gratitude for the emperors letters of protection; but Chlum, in a whisper, recalling his attention to the more important matter of his vindication, '"Gracious sire", he said, "God who best knows me is my witness, that the obstinacy you are pleased to impute to me is no part of my disposition: on the contrary, I am come here with the full intention to renounce any of my opinions, as soon as I am better instructed". The signal for his removal was then given, and the officers reconducted him to his cell.

On the following day, June 8th, the fathers again met. The trial was resumed by the production of a series of thirty-nine propositions alleged to be extracts from Huss's treatise *De Ecclesia*, and others of his works, which had already been presented to him in the examinations at Gottlieben. These propositions were now read, together with his answers, as there made and recorded. Some of them he freely acknowledged, some he corrected, as imperfect; others he wholly disclaimed. Few of them related to

points of doctrine. They referred chiefly to the origin, authority, abuses, and inutility of the papacy; to the right of temporal rulers to a control over the clergy; to the antichristian nature of ecclesiastical censures; and the like. In many cases they were of a very harmless character, even in the estimation of Roman Catholics of more liberal times. But as this did not prevent their being tortured by his prosecutors into monstrous crimes, neither did it hinder his answers and explanations from being cut short, or otherwise insultingly received, by his judges. Frequently his remarks were made the ground of fresh charges. Thus, when he affirmed that the true head of the Church is Christ, and that it can exist very well without any other; adding, that the time may come when there will be no pope, and yet the Church will continue to flourish. Some of the cardinals cried out, "So, truly, Huss is among the prophets". "But", he replied, "have we not the proof now before us? You have at this moment no pope, and yet you will not deny that the Church exists: who, then, sustains it?" Throughout the day his books were handed about, and any one of a hundred ecclesiastics present, or many at once, were free to harass him with questions from them.

Among the articles alleged was this: "If a pope, prelate, or priest, be in a state of deadly sin, he is in effect neither pope, prelate, nor priest". "I acknowledge this article", said Huss; "and I refer you to St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, and other holy fathers; who unanimously affirm that a man in mortal sin, so far from being a true pope, or bishop, or priest, is not even a true Christian. It is of such that God says by his prophet: 'They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew them not'. At the same time I allow, that though such a pope, or bishop, or priest, is an unworthy minister of the sacraments, yet his ministry is not therefore null: God does not therefore refuse to impart efficiency to the office he administers". Huss was proceeding, somewhat rashly, to apply the same argument, on scriptural authority, to civil rulers, asserting that a king in mortal sin is, in God's sight, unworthy of his office. At this moment the emperor was standing in the recess of a window, in conversation with some of the other princes. The cardinal of Cambray immediately called him forward, and ordered Huss to repeat what he had said. He did so, at the same time asking pardon of Sigismund for his freedom. Sigismund merely made the becoming remark, that "there is no one free from sin". But the cardinal, less indulgent, reproved Huss, saying angrily, "Not content with insulting the priesthood, would you also treat sovereigns in the same manner?" Here Paletz interfered. Huss was quoting a passage from one of the Fathers, to the effect that a man who does not imitate Christ is no Christian, when Paletz cried out, "You are not keeping to the question. For, though a king or a pope were not truly a Christian, he might nevertheless be a true king or a true pope; for these names regard only office, but the name of Christian is personal". "But", retorted the prisoner, "if John XXIII was a true pope, why have you deposed him?". The emperor diverted this home thrust by remarking, that the cardinals had unanimously regarded John as the true pope, but had deposed him for bringing scandal on the Church by notorious crimes.

The cardinal president now earnestly exhorted Huss, without further delay, to submit himself to the council, representing to him the imminent danger of longer persistence. "I speak to you", he said, "not now as your judge, but as your faithful adviser and friend". Other cardinals and prelates urgently joined in his entreaties. Huss replied with humility, "Most reverend fathers: I have already declared that I came hither, not obstinately to maintain my own opinions, but humbly to receive instruction on those points wherein I may have erred. I beseech you therefore to grant me a further hearing, in order that I may more fully explain my sentiments. Should I fail to support them by solid and convincing arguments, I will then thankfully submit to be better instructed by you". "Observe how cunningly he equivocates!" exclaimed one of the judges: "your instruction, he says; not your censure and decision". "Call it what you will", resumed Huss, "instruction, censure, or decision. God is my witness, I speak from my heart". The cardinal, resuming his discourse, then said, that what the council, advised by above fifty doctors of divinity now present, or who had been so during the examinations, required him to do was—in the first place, to acknowledge the errors that had been proved against him; secondly, to engage never again to preach or hold the same; thirdly, to abjure publicly what he had professed. Before Huss could reply, he was assailed from all sides with loud cries of "Abjure! abjure!" "I will readily submit", he said, "to be instructed. But, in the name of God, our common Father, do not, I beseech you, compel me to an act contrary to my conscience, and perilous to my salvation. To abjure is to renounce an error one has held. But in several of these articles I am accused of errors I never taught nor imagined; how then can I renounce them? Or how, on the other hand, can I renounce doctrines which I believe to be true, until I have been shown my error?" The emperor now interposed. "Why", asked the imperial logician, "should you find any difficulty in abjuring even such errors as (you say) are falsely imputed to you? I, for my part, would, without

hesitation, abjure all conceivable errors. Would any one have a right thence to conclude, that I must previously have held them". Huss respectfully pointed out to his majesty, that there is a great difference between abjuring all sorts of errors in general, and renouncing certain particular errors imputed to a person, but which he never held. The cardinal of Florence and other fathers of the council here renewed their solicitations: a form of abjuration so moderate should be prepared, they said, that he could find no difficulty in adopting it. Their persuasions were seconded by Sigismund in a warning, in the strongest terms, of the consequences of refusal. "Retractation or death, there is no other alternative; retractation or death to the obstinate heretic!" ran in muttered iteration round the hall. Huss, though deadly pale from exhaustion and from the bursting of a blood vessel during the previous night—to him a night of sleepless pain—stood calm and unmoved. Some of the judges, as if willing to seek a relief to their minds from the weight of a foregone resolution, here reverted to various points in or connected with the evidence. "Who", it was asked, "were those students who, they, say, brought Wicliffe's books to Prague?" "One of them", answered Huss, "was well known to my good friend there (pointing to Paletz) : as to the other, I know not who he was, but have heard that he died on his way home to England, his native country". "The first", said Paletz, "was a Bohemian"; and he added some particulars in a tone unlike his usual confident manner. The word "friend" had recalled the time when Huss and he had had "sweet converse together" as men of one sentiment; and now "when he saw what would happen, he repented himself". He came forward and excused himself to his victim: only his oath as a doctor of divinity, and his duty to the Church to oppose heresy, no malicious or personal motive, had induced him to appear as a witness. De Caussis too averred the same. "Let God judge between us", observed Huss. While the cardinal of Cambray was complimenting the two on their moderation and forbearance, Huss was removed by his guards from the scene of this painful and protracted examination.

On his retirement Sigismund, indignant at his own and the whole synod's inability to overbear the scruples of one unfriended man, spoke as follows: "You have heard the charges alleged against John Huss. They are established by witnesses worthy of credit—many of them by his own confession; and there is not one of them but, in my opinion, deserves death. If, therefore, he will not retract them, one and all, let him be burned. Even should he now submit, he ought, according to my judgment, to be for ever forbidden to preach. Above all, let him never be permitted to return to Bohemia; for, once again there, he would not fail to resume his former course, or to become even more dangerous". After advising the adoption of vigorous measures, in Bohemia and elsewhere, to prevent the further spread of the mischief, by cutting off the branches as well as destroying the root, the emperor concluded : "Wherever there are any friends and followers of Huss, let them be unsparingly dealt with, especially if we have any now in Constance; but, above all, take care of his disciple Jerome".

Suffering as Huss was in body and mind, he had no little comfort, when taken back to prison, in finding that there was in that hostile assembly at least one breast from which neither the frost of bigotry, nor the terror of bigots, could expel the glow of manly friendship. "What consolation it was to me", he writes, while giving his countrymen an account of that eventful day, "to see that the generous lord of Chlum did not disdain to offer his hand to the unfortunate heretic, though in bonds, and abandoned by almost every one"

CHAPTER VI.

HUSS STILL IMPORTUNED TO RETRACT.—HIS FINAL DECLARATION ON THAT SUBJECT.—IS ALLOWED A CONFESSOR. DEPUTATION TO HIM FROM THE COUNCIL.—AFFECTING SCENE WITH CHLUM—HUSS'S SENTENCE, DEGRADATION, AND EXECUTION.— HIS OPINIONS AND CHARACTER.

FROM this time to the day of his execution, Huss was incessantly importuned to abjure the errors imputed to him. Compassion for the prisoner had, indeed, no great share in these solicitations. But, as it was firmly resolved, at all events, not again to give him his liberty, the priests, except some sanguinary zealots, were willing to forego revenge for what appeared a more politic course ; nor could all his servile regard for the hierarchy conceal from Sigismund the injurious consequences to himself that must follow the contemplated martyrdom. His conscience was ill at ease on the score of his violated word, and he knew that the Bohemians, once deeply offended, were a people not easy to reconcile. Successive deputations from the council, generally comprising the highest dignitaries in the Church, endeavoured to shake the fortitude of Huss; now employing flatteries and promises, now assailing him with menaces and warnings. Different forms of recantation were submitted for his choice. All these attempts were met with the same temperate, but firm refusal. “Better for me”, he said, “that a millstone were tied about my neck, and I were cast into, the sea—better, a thousand times, to perish at the stake, than that, after preaching patience and fortitude to others, I myself, to escape a momentary pain, should refuse to set an example of patient endurance, or submit to the least denial of the truth”. He relates, that among those who earnestly sought to persuade him, Paletz was one; and when the accuser found his victim immovably resolved, he burst into tears. A characteristic instance of the blind submission to authority, inculcated on her priests by the Church of Rome, relieves with an unmeant touch of the ludicrous the gravity of these interviews: “Even if the council were to tell you”, urged one of the fathers, “that you have no more than one eye, though you know you have two, it would, in ray opinion, be your duty to agree with its decision”. “But I”, replied Huss, “as long as God grants me reason, would never say such a thing, if all the universe desired it; because I could not say it without wounding my conscience”. As his final answer, and to put an end, if possible, to importunities which interfered with his preparation for death, he, on the first day of July, wrote, and delivered to a committee of cardinals and other prelates, the following declaration :—“From fear to offend God and take a false oath, I refuse to abjure all or any of the articles which were, by false witnesses, alleged against me; many of those articles being such as, God is my witness, I never preached nor held. With respect to those which were extracted from my writings, if there be any one contrary to the truth I detest it; but I refuse to abjure any, for fear of sinning against the truth, and the judgment of the fathers of the Church. And were it possible that my voice could be heard by all the world, as clearly as every falsehood and all my sins will be laid open at the day of judgment, I would heartily disclaim before the Universe every error and false statement I ever spoke or conceived Nevertheless, firm and unshaken as he was, no particle of stoic pride appeared in Huss. On the contrary, he felt strongly the natural fear of death. “I dare not”, was his confession, “rashly say, with Peter, that I would never be offended, though all men should be offended. My zeal and my strength are incomparably less than those of the apostle. I am, besides, exposed to more violent struggles, and have far worse assaults to sustain. Still, resting my entire confidence in my Saviour, I am resolved, when I shall hear my sentence, to be faithful to the truth, even unto death”.

All the urgency of the council proving vain, they ordered him to be informed that his books would be burned, and sent to have them taken from him for that purpose. If this measure was meant to intimidate him, it failed of its purpose: "They cannot", he remarked, "burn the truth together with the books in which it is contained". He was now solicitous for nothing, but to prepare himself for dying worthily. He wished for a confessor; and though he left the choice of one to the council, he intimated a wish that it might fall on Paletz;—intending by that preference to show that he was reconciled to his enemy, and, at the same time, that he had nothing to confess which he desired to conceal from the world. The council, however, sent instead a certain monk; of whose behaviour Huss makes grateful mention, remarking that he advised him, as so many others had done, to make his submission to the council; but prescribed nothing.

It was now the 5th day of July, the eve of the day appointed for the impending festival of cruelty and intolerance, should John Huss persist in his resolution, when a last attempt to shake his constancy was made by the express order of the emperor. The four cardinal presidents of the nations, with many bishops and doctors of theology, formed the deputation, accompanied likewise by the knights of Chlum and Duba. To the anxious persuasions of the ecclesiastics, the harassed prisoner only replied, that he had nothing to add to the declaration already signed by his own hand. But the knight of Chlum was not so easily answered. Taking his friend a little aside, he said—"Dear Master John Huss! I am an unlearned man, and incapable of giving counsel to you. You should best know whether you are conscious of the errors publicly laid to your charge. If you are, be not ashamed to yield, and retract them. If, on the other hand, your conscience testifies to your innocence, I exhort you rather to bear any kind of torment than to deny before God what you know to be the truth". Huss was overcome by the discovery, that his best friend could entertain doubts of his sincerity. With a voice broken by emotion, he replied, while tears bathed his pallid cheeks:—"Noble knight! God is my witness, that I am not conscious of having taught or held any error. If I can be convicted of any by the testimony of Holy Scripture, I am ready now, as I have ever been, with all my heart to renounce it". One of the bishops, overhearing this protestation, said: "Are you so presumptuous as to prefer your own opinion to the judgment of the whole synod?". "No", replied Huss, "far from it. Let but the least member of the council instruct me better out of the Scriptures, and I will yield at once".

A month had now elapsed since the meeting at which, as all knew, the prisoner's doom was fixed. Worn out with suspense and with harassing importunities, he nevertheless, on religious grounds, welcomed the delay. "God in his wisdom", he writes, "has doubtless reasons for thus prolonging my life. He would give me time to repent of my sins, and would console me with the sure hope of forgiveness. He grants me this respite that, by meditation upon my Saviours sufferings, I may be strengthened to support my own".

At length, on the 6th of July, the council prepared to hold its fatal fifteenth session. It was the birthday of Huss, now forty-two years old. The emperor, surrounded by all the princes of the empire, by the cardinals, bishops, and other priestly heads of the council, with a vast concourse of people, attended early mass in the cathedral of Constance. In the middle of the church, opposite to the imperial throne, a platform was erected, on which lay a complete set of vestments for a priest of the Roman Church. Upon the platform stood a bench, or stool, sufficiently elevated to allow of a person on it being seen by every one present. Mass was still proceeding when John Huss was brought to the door: there he was ordered to stop till it was concluded, that the holy sacrifice might not be profaned by the presence of a heretic. He was then led forward to the platform, and placed on the stool. He immediately knelt down, and continued a long time in prayer, while the bishop of Lodi, who had in the meanwhile ascended the pulpit, began to preach from the words, "*That the body of sin might be destroyed*". Schism was the subject of the bishop's discourse; and so exactly did he describe the evils which had so long afflicted the Church, we might have supposed that, not the poor Bohemian divine, but a Benedict XIII or a John XXIII was waiting to be sentenced. He made his application clear, however, at the close, by addressing Sigismund—pointing at the same time to John Huss—in these words:—"It is your majesty's duty, as head of the temporal power, to suppress heresy and punish its authors. Perform that duty now, in the name and for the honour of God, and to your majesty's own eternal honour, by the condemnation of this obstinate heretic, John Huss". When the bishop had concluded, the procurator of the council presented Huss to the assembly, to receive sentence.

A decree of the council was first read, ordering all persons present to preserve strict silence during the proceedings, on pain of excommunication, and imprisonment for two months. For the purpose of heaping greater odium upon Huss, the propositions collected from Wicliffe's writings were now again condemned. Then followed the articles of accusation against Huss, with the supplementary evidence of the witnesses; the latter not being named, but merely designated as "a canon of Prague, a doctor of theology, one of the common people", &c. When the first article had been read, the accused was beginning to answer; but he was told, it would be sufficient to reply when the whole had been heard. He objected that it would be impossible to remember such a mass of accusations. The cardinal of Cambray again stopped him; and on his once more endeavouring to obtain a hearing, the cardinal of Florence directed the officers forcibly to stop his mouth. "Venerable fathers", he cried, "in the name of God, I implore you to give me leave to speak in answer to these cruel falsehoods". The prelates persisting in their refusal, he again knelt down, and raising his hands and eyes towards heaven, commended his cause aloud to the Sovereign Judge of all. This attitude he preserved till startled by the extraordinary charge, now first brought forward, on the testimony of "a certain doctor", that he had declared there were four persons in the Trinity, he rose from his knees, and indignantly demanded to know the name of the author of so monstrous a calumny. He was, of course, refused. Some other glaring instances of false-witness he was permitted to contradict, and he briefly explained some misapprehensions. The last charge he noticed was, that he had treated the pope with contempt, by continuing to preach and say mass while lying under a sentence of excommunication. "I did not treat him with contempt", he said. "But I believed the excommunication to be invalid by the canon law. Nevertheless, not being able, for reasons I have before alleged, to appear in person, I sent procurators to appear for me at Bologna; but they were imprisoned and otherwise ill-used. This determined me to come of my own accord to the Council. I came", he added, pausing, and looking fixedly at Sigismund—"UPON THE PUBLIC FAITH OF THE EMPEROR; confident that, bearing the imperial passport, none would dare to do me wrong". The grand countenance of Sigismund reddened, and showed manifest confusion. The bishop of Concordia then rose, and read the sentence of the court. It declared that John Huss, having obstinately resisted all endeavours to draw from him an acknowledgment of his errors, the council decreed: First, that his books and writings should be burned; secondly, that he should be degraded from the priestly office, and delivered to the secular power to be put to death. Huss heard the sentence on his knees; but rising at its close he solemnly protested against it, as the result of false-witness against an innocent man, and ended by earnestly praying to God to forgive his judges and accusers. His protestations were unheeded; while the fathers, and especially the princely ecclesiastics, expressed their scorn in murmurs and reproaches.

The ceremony of degradation was performed according to the usual practice in the Romish Church.

Seven bishops, previously appointed to the office, came forward, and directed him to put on the robes which had been placed ready, and to take the cup in his hands, as if about to celebrate mass. He obeyed; and on successively assuming each sign of the sacred function, quoted some suitable passage of Scripture, or made some other apposite remark. The prelates then exhorted him, once more, to save his life by renouncing his opinions. Turning towards the people, he answered, "God forbid, that I should scandalize and betray the people, before whom I have preached the truth, by such an act of impious hypocrisy!" Immediately he was commanded to come down from the elevation where he had been standing, and the prelates, taking from him the cup, said, "O accursed Judas, who having rejected the offer of peace, art entered into counsel with the Jews, we take from thee the cup, wherein is the blood of Jesus Christ". "I trust, nevertheless", he answered, "through the mercy of God, to drink of this cup today in the kingdom of heaven". When, one by one, they had taken off the robes and ornaments, pronouncing, as each object was removed, some special words of malediction, they came at last to the tonsure. A dispute arose among the bishops, whether the sacred mark ought to be removed with the razor or the scissors. Huss, turning to the emperor, said, "You see, they cannot agree about the manner of insulting me!" The dispute was terminated in favour of the scissors, and his hair was cut in the form of a cross, so as to obliterate all resemblance to the holy crown. The ceremony of degradation being completed, a paper cap, or mitre, having three hideous figures of devils painted on it, and bearing the inscription, "Heresiarcha", was put upon his head; and the officiators concluded by exclaiming, "Herewith we devote thy soul to Satan". "But I", said Huss, "commit it to my Saviour. As for this crown of shame, I rejoice to wear it for His sake who wore for me a crown of thorns". The ceremony of degradation being completed, the officiating prelates, in the name of the Council, solemnly delivered Huss to the secular power.

The procurator then asked leave to proceed with the rest of the sentence. “Placet!” answered the presidents and the emperor; and a hundred voices of the fathers ratified the assent. Accordingly, the elector-palatine, by command of the Emperor, took charge of him; and by him he was given up to the magistrates of Constance, with orders to see him burned with fire, together with every thing about him—“his belt, his knife, his purse”,& c. The completion of the tragedy was delayed a short space, while the council passed some decrees relative to other matters. Soon, however, was to be seen the spectacle of John Huss, now no longer fettered, walking with unaffected calmness—with all the alacrity, indeed, his exhausted strength allowed— towards “the place of justice”, as, with a sort of solemn irony, it is named in the acts of the council. The officers of the elector and those of the city shared between them the easy duty of his guard. Even his enemies were struck with admiration at observing the simple fearlessness of his demeanour. The sad procession halted before the bishop’s palace, in order that Huss might see the execution of the sentence on his books. He smiled to see the foolish and unavailing work of destruction; and resuming the friendly discourse he had before been engaged in with his attendants and the people, in the German tongue, he assured them that his books contained nothing heretical: he was no heretic, but a sacrifice to the injustice and hatred of his enemies; nevertheless, he added, he willingly laid down his life for the truth. Again the procession was retarded, by having to cross a narrow bridge which led to an island in the Rhine—the place where Huss was to die.

Here a party of five hundred men-at-arms was drawn up round a post, erected in the middle of an open space. As soon as he arrived at the fatal spot, he knelt down, and repeated some portions of the 31st Psalm;—“In Thee, o Lord, have I put my trust, for Thou art my strong Rock and my Castle: into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Have mercy upon me, Lord, for I am in trouble!” The cheerfulness with which he uttered these and other pious exclamations excited the sympathy of the spectators. “This man ought not to die without the aid of a confessor”, they cried. One Ulrich Schorand, a priest, looking on among the crowd, was called forward. “Are you willing”, demanded Schorand, “to abjure the errors for which you have been condemned? For, if not, you yourself know I may not administer to you any sacrament”. “It is well”, replied Huss: “I have no need to confess, being conscious of no mortal sin”. He then began again to speak to the people in German; but was stopped by the elector, who ordered the execution to proceed. Once more he prayed aloud for pardon for his enemies, and declared that he submitted willingly to that cruel death for the truth’s sake. The action caused the paper cap to fall from his head. One of the soldiers purposely replaced it in such a way as to cover his eyes: “Let the devils burn”, said the man, “with him who served them”. But Huss’s jailors, observing the insult, came and removed it. He courteously thanked them for their humane treatment, and prayed that in the day of judgment it might be put to their account.

When they had stripped and were about to fasten him to the post, it was observed that the chain attached to it was black with soot; he smiled, and made some appropriate remarks on the greater ignominy to which his Divine Master had been subjected. A member of the council observing that, as it chanced, his face was turned towards the east, a position of which, he said, a dying heretic was not worthy, he was removed, and made to look westward. The wood and straw were now piled about him. When all was ready, but the fire not yet lighted, the elector-palatine, with the marshal of the empire, Count Oppenheim, came up to the pile, and desired Huss even then to confess his errors. He replied, with a cheerful voice, “What errors? I am ready to seal with my blood all that I have ever written or taught”. The princes, striking their hands together in amazement at his obstinacy, as they called it, turned, and rode away—fire was put to the pile, and, for some few minutes, the martyr was heard, in the midst of the smoke and rising flames, uttering prayers and pious exclamations.

As soon as it was perceived, by the dropping of his head on his shoulders, that he was dead, the executioners, in brutal impatience to finish their task, tore down the half-consumed body with pikes and staves, throwing the fragments into the burning mass. Having found his courageous heart entire, they insulted it with blows, and fixing it on a pointed stick, burned it by itself. When the whole was consumed, they carefully collected the ashes, and threw them into the Rhine, lest his friends and disciples should take them to Bohemia: an unavailing precaution; for, a contemporary historian affirms, the Bohemians dug up the earth from the spot on which their martyred countryman had suffered and carried it to Prague—a memorial sacred to piety and vengeance.

It is related, that while the wood was being laid to destroy this brave victim of persecution, Huss observed a woman earnestly engaged in the meritorious work, as she thought it, of adding a faggot to the

pile. “O sancta simplicitas!” he exclaimed—O pious ignorance!—words, in another sense, most applicable to himself. For history does not hold up to us a more striking instance of holy simplicity, of steady, unostentatious adherence to the truth, as far as it was granted to him to perceive it. A preacher in Bohemia, shortly after Huss’s death, drew, with an apparently honest pencil, this character of him, as he had been seen and heard by thousands: “The purity of his life and conversation are known to all. He passed his time in preaching or in writing, in hearing confessions, in converting sinners, in comforting the afflicted. He was chaste, sober, fearing God; without avarice, without envy, without pride or hypocrisy; equally mindful of rich and poor, he gave to the former good counsel, to the latter sympathy and assistance”.

The historian of the Council of Constance, one of the fairest and most learned writers of the last century, thus describes him, as he appears in the interesting letters written by him from that city to his friends and fellow-countrymen. “In these unstudied records”, says Lenfant, “we discover, in spite of some bitterness which, from time to time, escapes him, the greatness and the piety of his sentiments, the tenderness of his conscience, his charity towards his enemies, his affection and fidelity for his friends, his gratitude to his benefactors: a degree of magnanimity and modesty, altogether extraordinary in the same person”. In extenuation of the occasional invectives, alluded to as detracting from this favourable estimate, it should be remembered, that in these letters he is secretly unbosoming his griefs to intimate friends; that his language speaks the deep and earnest convictions of his soul, is extorted from him by injustice and most cruel wrong, and is at least equalled in its vituperative qualities by the best and most enlightened writers of an age little studious of delicate phraseology.

For what, then, was this man put to death? He was *a heretic!* But, to repeat his own words, what heresy did he teach? In the opinion of the cardinals and other ecclesiastics who condemned him, all were heretics who differed from themselves in any opinion. We shall hear them, at a later period of the council, crying out, “heresy!” against the slavishly orthodox emperor himself, and those who supported him in a brief opposition to their interested views. A heretic! He was not even a Protestant, nor had entered by any one decisive step those debateable confines which divide Popery from primitive Catholicism—as it exists, for instance, in the Church of England. What were his sentiments regarding transubstantiation—the special test of Popish orthodoxy? He always vehemently maintained that doctrine, though with a certain obscure modification. Hence he adhered to the Romish tenet on the sacrifice of the mass, performing that service to the last day of his freedom. He attributed great efficacy to the intercession of the saints. He believed in purgatory. He defended the use of images, and the necessity of confession. He acknowledged seven sacraments; and even as regards indulgences, he did not so much condemn the practice itself, as the abuse of it to promote war, and set the world in a flame at the will of an ambitious and avaricious priest. On this, as on other opinions objected to him, he went no further than he could challenge for his guides and associates the most enlightened ecclesiastics of the time.

From all this it is evident, John Huss stopped far short of the point arrived at by his greater predecessor, Wicliffe; greater, mainly because living in a land, even then, more free and more indulgent to inquiry than the continental nations. But the name of the illustrious English reformer was the supreme ecclesiastical bugbear of that age; and Huss’s refusal, in his prison, and before the council, to approve the condemnation of Wicliffe and his books, was not to be forgiven. The troubles that now began profoundly to agitate Bohemia, had also a great share in procuring his condemnation; for, doubtless, his alarm at the state of that country, more than his subserviency to the priesthood, decided Sigismund to take the course he did. The number and malignity of Huss's enemies in the council, are likewise in no small degree to be ascribed to the result of the dispute with the Germans in the university of Prague. Many of that nation, among the rest John Hoffman, now become Bishop of Misnia, were present in the council; and all, to a man, had sworn his destruction. But the chief cause of all was the severity with which he, a simple priest, not even a doctor, had presumed to reprove the vices and disorders of the clergy: the whole ecclesiastical body, then all-powerful—popes, cardinals, bishops, monks—were inflamed with deadly hatred against him. He had not, indeed, spared the laity; but that was in his allowed vocation, and applauded. “As long as John Huss did nothing but declaim against the vices of secular persons, everybody said that he spoke by the Spirit of God; but he began to be odious as soon as he attacked the clergy, because that was touching the sore.”

That if Huss had lived long, and been left in peace, he would have approximated more nearly to primitive Catholicism, there is no reason to doubt. Even Wicliffe, well understood, would have lighted him on to clearer views. And his was not a temper, to stop short of the whole truth, if he had seen it clearly. He was himself aware, that a much further progress remained to be made, and would be made. He was full of confidence that, in spite of his death, and in spite of all that his enemies, in the council and out of it, could do, the work of reformation would go on. This faith was even the subject of his dreams. He dreamed one night, that some scenes from the life of Christ had been painted upon the walls of his chapel at Bethlehem; that the work was effaced; but that, the next day, some abler artists had supplied the place of those pictures by others much better executed; and, encouraged by the plaudits of the people, loudly defied all the prelates and priests to destroy them. This dream he thus explains: "Many better preachers than I am will come after me, by whom the life of the Christian—the living in Christ—will be better set forth. Thereat the people will rejoice, for they have in them the love of Christ; and I too shall have my share in the joy, when I awake at the resurrection of the dead

CHAPTER VII.

EVASIVE CONDUCT OF THE COUNCIL.—DECREE FORBIDDING THE CUP TO THE LAITY.—THVE BOHEMIAN STATES VINDICATE HUSS.—JEROME OF PRAGUE RETRACTS.—THE COUNCIL DECREES THAT FAITH IS NOT TO BE KEPT WITH HERETICS.—CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION OF JEROME.—HIS CHARACTER.

THOUGH, as it seemed, merely incidental, not contemplated at least, among the professed objects of the great synod of Constance, the trial of John Huss absorbed for a time the chief attention of the fathers. The important business of reformation they had scarcely otherwise noticed, than by listening, if indeed they did listen, to an interminable series of discourses on its necessity. Some other subjects, of more confined or more temporary interest, were at intervals brought under its consideration; but nothing determined.

Among these was the contention between the kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic knights. This powerful fraternity had been invited into Poland, about two hundred years before, for the purpose of protecting that country against the incursions of its pagan neighbours. Like the Saxons in England, they presently became tyrants where they had engaged to be protectors. Sanguinary but indecisive wars ensued between the Poles and their imperious guests. At length, in the year 1410, the knights, with their allies the Prussians, were defeated by Ladislaus Jagello, the Polish king, in a great battle, in which from fifty to sixty thousand are said to have fallen on their side. Recovering from this blow, they were again defeated two years later. A treaty of peace followed, as had often been the case. But fidelity to engagements was not a virtue of these pretended champions of religion. Jagello, and his brother Withold, duke of Lithuania, applied for protection to the council. The justice of the matter was plain; but, besides their ambassadors, the knights had so many powerful friends in the assembly, Sigismund himself not being indifferent to their cause, that by no urgency could the Poles obtain redress: often discussed, their appeals were as often deferred or eluded.

Similar was the notice taken of the disastrous feud between the great families of Orleans and Burgundy. The treacherous murder of the head of the former house by order of the duke of Burgundy, had found an apologist in Jean Petit, a doctor of the University of Paris. Petit, in a discourse pronounced before the dauphin and other princes, maintained the lawfulness of tyrannicide, and pretended to prove the assassination a meritorious act. This monstrous doctrine was justly condemned by the university, whose judgment it was reasonable to expect the Council of Constance, then the court of final appeal for all Christendom, would confirm. The advocates of either side were frequently heard, and the Orleanists, or Armagnacs, were supported in the council by all the argumentative powers of Gerson, a school divine in every respect superior to Petit. Yet the fathers avoided a positive sentence, referring the affair to a future synod, from cowardly fear to offend the potent homicide.

More decision, though not greater success, marked the council's interference in the affairs of Bohemia. This was probably owing to the emperor's direct interest in that country, as presumptive heir to the crown. It has already been mentioned, with how much reluctance the Bohemians surrendered—if they ever did wholly surrender—the use of the cup in the Eucharist by the laity. Shortly after the departure of John Huss, some of the clergy of Prague, followers of his opinions, began openly to communicate to the people in both kinds. Huss had not himself moved this particular question: he did not believe the reception of both the bread and the wine essential. Writing however from prison to his friends in Prague, he approved of what was done as lawful and expedient; and, no doubt, the scenes of violence between the two religious parties into which Bohemia was now divided, and whose disputes in part arose out of that question, were among the causes that ensured, or hastened, his condemnation.

The condemnation of Huss was the solemn business of the fifteenth session. It was in the thirteenth that the council adopted its famous decree against administering the holy Sacrament to the laity under the kinds of both bread and wine. Having pronounced that the communion ought not to be received after supper, a prohibition inapplicable to the Bohemians, since they do not appear to have ever fallen into this abuse, the council thus decrees: “That although in the primitive Church this sacrament was received by the faithful under both kinds, nevertheless afterwards it was not so received, except by the officiating priests, and under the species of bread only by the laity. Wherefore, since this custom was reasonably introduced by the Church and the holy fathers, and has been very long observed it ought to be observed as a law, which it is not permitted to reject or to change without the authority of the Church. And they who maintain the contrary of what is above decreed, are to be severely punished as heretical, by their diocesans and by the inquisitors of the faith, in the kingdom or province in which anything shall have been attempted against this decree, according to the laws canonically and wholesomely established for the protection of the Catholic faith against heretics and their abettors." This decree has for four hundred years invariably ruled the practice of the Church of Rome.

After the execution of Huss, the council acquainted the nobles of Bohemia with that event; reciting the facts which, in the view of the fathers, justified his death, and ordering the archbishop of Prague to proceed against his followers. There needed not this communication to set all Bohemia , in a flame: the news had travelled faster than the council’s messengers. The indignant reply of the states assembled at Prague vindicates the doctrine and life of Huss, reproaches the fathers with the cruel execution of that “excellent man”, and the imprisonment of the “incomparable” Jerome, refutes the calumny that Bohemia was unfaithful to the Church, and gives the lie to the authors of it, be they who they may. In the same assembly, they resolved to send ambassadors to the council, there to maintain the innocence of their countrymen and themselves, and defend the right of the bishops and clergy of Bohemia to preach the word of God, and administer the sacraments as taught by it, without hindrance.

While the horror of his friend and master’s execution was yet fresh, Jerome was brought before the committee of the nations, in the hope that, with that terrible example before his eyes, he would be found more compliant. At his first hearing, he was unmoved alike by argument and entreaty. On the next occasion, he gave a qualified assent to the condemnation of Wicliffe and Huss, but at the same time bearing witness to the purity of the Bohemian reformer’s life. It was at a subsequent appearance, that temptation and natural frailty drew upon him the stain which renders the fame of the brilliant disciple so much inferior to that of his master: he consented to read before the council an express retractation of his opinions. The date of this unhappy violation of his conscience is Sept. 22nd, 1415.

In the same session (the nineteenth), two memorable decrees were adopted. By the first, the council declares generally, that the safe-conducts of secular princes, and by the second, that the particular safe-conduct given to Huss by the Emperor Sigismund, ought not to interfere with the ecclesiastical tribunals in their proceedings against heretics; and it expressly justifies the emperor’s consenting to Huss’s death, on the ground of his unworthiness of the imperial protection. In these two decrees, the Church of Rome expressly owns the maxim imputed to her by Protestants, and not repudiated by the later Council of Trent, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, or persons suspected of heresy.

The council was now divided respecting Jerome, some among his judges contending for his liberation, others eagerly listening to fresh accusations prepared by Paletz, de Caussis, and the monks of Prague, when the prisoner removed their embarrassment by withdrawing his retractation. His trial, if such it may be called, consequently proceeded. In the month of February, 1416, he was again brought

before a private commission, and shortly afterwards before a general assembly of the nations. The charges adduced on both occasions were the same, viz., that he was a follower of Wicliffe and Huss; that he had shown contempt for ecclesiastical authority, and for the ceremonies of the Roman Church; and had taken part in various acts of violence and sacrilege committed at Prague, particularly on the persons of certain monks. The acts of violence he altogether denied, unless it were committing violence to defend one's own life, which he had been obliged to do, from the attacks of his enemies. He replied also to the other charges, but refused to answer on oath, except publicly before the council, and where he might be permitted to speak in his defence. His judges, on the other hand, would not allow him to plead his cause in public, till he had answered the accusations preferred against him. "What injustice!" he exclaimed; "for three hundred and forty days you have kept me chained in a damp and infected dungeon, destitute of everything; you have all along been listening to my enemies, and to me you now deny one hour's audience. They have had all the opportunity they desired to impress you with the belief that I am a heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor of the priesthood; and this, doubtless, is the reason why you refuse to hear me, because you have judged me before you could know whether I am guilty or innocent. But you are men, and not gods; you are mortal, and will not live always. Neither are you infallible; you may deceive yourselves, or be deceived by others. It is said everywhere, reverend fathers, that the wisdom and intelligence of all the world is assembled here with you: it concerns then your honour and your interest to do nothing lightly and without mature deliberation, for fear of committing an injustice. For me, I am of no great importance, and though my life is at stake, I know I am mortal. It is, therefore, less from regard to myself that I speak, than to prevent so many venerable persons from being hurried into any resolution which may dishonour them, and serve for an evil precedent".

At length, on the 26th of May, he was allowed the unavailing privilege of a public defence. His speech was at once moderate and powerful. Having prayed, and besought the prayers of all present, that he might say nothing untrue or unbecoming, he complained of fresh commissioners being appointed after the-former had found him innocent. The affair of the retirement of the Germans from Prague had been alleged against him, as it was with fatal effect against Huss: he narrated the circumstances as they occurred, and showed that both Huss and himself had been actuated purely by motives of patriotism and justice. His voice faltered as he spoke of Huss. That admirable person, he said, had never taught any doctrine contrary to the Church: what alone he opposed in it was, the vices of the clergy, the pride, pomp, and luxury of the prelates. It was true, he could not endure in silence to see the revenues of the Church, which were designed for alms and hospitality, and for building and repairing the temples of God, perverted to the support of concubines, to pamper dogs and horses, and to pay for rich dresses and costly furniture, Adverting to his retirement from Constance, he said: "When I arrived here, finding John Huss in rigorous confinement, I listened to the advice offered me by several persons in authority not to stay; and I accordingly retired to a place at some hours' distance. From thence I wrote to the emperor, complaining of the injustice done to my countryman, and demanding a passport for myself. It being refused in the form I believed indispensable for my safety, I resolved to return into Bohemia. I was arrested in the way, and brought back to Constance, chained hand and foot. My subsequent, my recent weakness, I am not ashamed here publicly to confess. Yes! I confess, and with horror I do it, that dread of the punishment of fire made me consent, in a cowardly moment, against my conscience, to the condemnation pronounced on the doctrines of Wicliffe and John Huss—doctrines as pure and salutary as the lives of the men were holy and without reproach". He then made an exception as to the doctrine of Wicliffe respecting the sacrament: he disapproved it, he said, holding thereon the opinions of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome. He concluded with an eloquent invective against the pride, avarice, unchastity, and other immoralities of the popes, the cardinals, and clergy. The attendants then reconducted him to his prison.

When Jerome of Prague was brought before the council to receive sentence (May 30th), the bishop of Lodi, the same prelate who preached at the condemnation of John Huss, again occupied the pulpit. He described the prisoner as "the worst of heretics, surpassing in infamy Arius, Sabellius, Faustus, and Nestorius; a heretic whom his great talents only made more abominable". So gross was the language of this invective, that there are passages which the historian of the council does not venture to allow a place in his pages. A pathetic description followed, of the disturbances and miseries which the opinions of Huss and Jerome were causing in Bohemia. The prelate then extolled the unusual mildness of Jerome's treatment by the council: the passage is worth quoting, as the testimony of an unimpeachable witness to

the sort of indulgence shown by the Church of Rome, in the plenitude of its power, towards heretics, *i. e.* all who ventured to dissent from her dogmas, or diverge from her usages. “You know”, he said, addressing Jerome, “how it is usual to treat heretics. First of all, they are subjected to the most severe confinement. Every sort of accusation and every description of witness, even that of persons notoriously infamous is received against them. They are obliged on oath to speak the truth; or, if they refuse, they are put to the question, and made to undergo every extremity of torture; nor is any person permitted to converse with them”.

Jerome replied with energy and intrepidity. No act of his life, he repeated, caused him so much pain as his retractation. He revoked that act with all his might. He at the same time declared that he was devoutly attached to the faith of the holy Catholic Church. “I am conscious of no crime”, he exclaimed, “unless it be a crime to mention those vices of the clergy that are patent to all the world. If, after this solemn declaration, and the more particular denials I have already given, you, fathers of the council, persist in giving credit to those false accusations that have been brought against me, I cannot do otherwise than regard you in the light of unjust and unworthy judges”. The manifest sincerity of the speaker produced, at this point, its effect upon that hostile assembly. Many voices were heard, calling upon him to retract his errors. But their urgency only reminded him of his former weakness, and steeled him in his inflexibility. He thus concluded: “You have resolved to condemn me, without proving me guilty of any crime. Be it so. But when you have put me to death, I shall leave within your consciences a sting and an undying worm. I appeal from you to that Supreme Judge, before whom you will hereafter give an account of this day’s judgment”.

The patriarch of Constantinople read the sentence. It condemned Jerome of Prague as both a heretic and perjured; forasmuch as he had held and taught obstinately the doctrines of Wicliffe and Huss; and, after publicly retracting them, had again returned to his former errors. The sentence then received the solemn approval of the council, and the prelates delivered up the prisoner, with the usual ceremonies, to the secular power, recommending to the officers of justice, with the established official mockery, to treat him with humanity. At this moment, Caspar Schick, the imperial chancellor, a man of the highest merit and reputation, rose up in the council, and, in the name of his absent master, protested against the condemnation of Jerome. Whether this interpellation was by Sigismund’s order, or whether it was the simple dictate of the chancellor's own humane conviction, does not appear: at all events, it was disregarded, and the honest layman, turning indignantly away, left the assembly.

Jerome’s behaviour in the last trying scenes of his life has extorted universal admiration. When the insulting paper crown was brought forward, he himself took it, and calmly placed it on his head. He began the solemn progress to the place of execution—the same where Huss had suffered —by reciting aloud the Apostles’ Creed; and, all the way as he went, he sang the litanies, and hymn to the Virgin, On seeing the wood placed round him, he chanted with a loud voice the Paschal hymn, “Salve, festa dies”,& c,, and having again sung the Creed, “This symbol”, he said, addressing the people, “has always been my belief; in this faith I die; and I suffer for no heresy, but for refusing to approve the condemnation of John Huss, because I well know that he was a faithful preacher of the Gospel”. Observing that the executioner was going to light the fire behind, that the sufferer might not see it done, “Light it before me”, he said; “if I had feared the fire, I need not have been here”. The clothes and the furniture he had used in prison were then thrown upon the pile. After suffering a long time—for, unlike Huss, he was of a strong bodily constitution—the second martyr of Constance was suffocated by the flames. “Thus ended”, writes a witness worthy of all credit, the celebrated scholar, Poggio Bracciolini, “thus ended a man excellent beyond all belief”. He was an eye-witness of this tragedy, and present at all its acts. “You would have believed yourself present at the death of one of the philosophers of antiquity, Screvola put his hand into the flame, Socrates took the cup of poison, with less courage and intrepidity than Jerome of Prague suffered the punishment of fire”. With regard to the abilities of Jerome, Poggio declares that he had never met with anyone who approached nearer than he to the eloquence of the ancients. His knowledge, the solidity of his arguments, his noble boldness, his great presence of mind, the grace and vigour of his language, are all highly extolled by the elegant Florentine. Another, a less friendly but not inferior contemporary, Aeneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, describing the end of those victims of barbarous intolerance, writes: “They both went to death as guests invited to a banquet: they made haste to the flames. Not a murmur escaped them to betray any sense of suffering. Their hymns of praise ascended from the midst of the flames, in tones which the fire itself could scarcely overcome by its heat or its noise.

Never did philosopher so cheerfully meet death as these men their fiery tortures". As in the instance of John Huss, the ashes that remained of this sacrifice to the Moloch of intolerance were collected and flung into the river Rhine.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUED OBSTINACY OF BENEDICT XIII.—DIVISIONS IN THE COUNCIL RESPECTING THE ELECTION OF A POPE. DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY.—CARDINAL BEAUFORT.—ELECTION, ADORATION, AND CORONATION OF MARTIN V.—HE EVADES THE SUBJECT OF REFORMATION.—ATTEMPTS TO PUT DOWN THE FOLLOWERS OF HUSS. ABRUPTLY DISSOLVES THE COUNCIL.—TRANSACTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE CHARACTERIZED. THE ANTI-POPES.

SOON after the execution of John Huss, the Emperor Sigismund prepared, as he had promised, to obtain, if possible, in a personal interview, the resignation of the anti-pope Benedict. He took a solemn leave of the fathers of the council, receiving their benediction bare-headed, on his knees, before the altar. His authority, as at once the head and the ambassador of the council, was seconded by a numerous retinue of prelates and others. The effect of this great embassy upon the inflexible nature of Peter de Lune, was that of the summer streamlet upon a rock of granite in its path. John XXIII's acquiescence in his own deposition, and Gregory's voluntary abdication, far from acting on their competitor as examples, only confirmed him in his obstinacy. He was the true pope before, he was now the sole claimant of the title. The council, not himself, was in schism; let the fathers submit to him, and the union they were seeking was already found.

Such was the temper in which the unyielding schismatic, after long delay, obeyed the emperor's summons to meet him at Perpignan. He came attended by a troop of armed guards, like some warlike temporal sovereign. Benedict must have been strong in bodily health, as-well as in mental resolution; for though now seventy years of age, he, in one day, continued to speak on the indefeasibleness of his election to the pontificate for seven successive hours, without exhibiting, in voice or countenance, the least symptom of fatigue. In vain was he solicited by Sigismund, by the king of Aragon, and by the ambassadors of Scotland, and every other state that had hitherto adhered to him. He argued, chicaned, threatened, by turns. It was plain to all that he would have no peace but upon his own terms. One by one his remaining adherents left him, and sent their ambassadors to the council: only the castle of Peñiscola, and some few obstinate individuals, remained in his obedience. Shut up within that secure retreat, he consoled himself by thundering harmless excommunications against the Council of Constance, and the king of Aragon; the latter, it is said, he anathematized once (some accounts read thrice) every day. To the day of his death, he maintained that at Peñiscola only was the true Church, and centre of Christian unity. Had Benedict's cause been a just one, such pertinacity would not have been without grandeur. In its thirty-seventh session, July 26th, 1417, the council, having first gone through the requisite preliminary forms, pronounced his deposition, at the same time absolving all in his obedience from their oaths and obligations.

The majority of the nations assembled by their ambassadors at Constance, the French, the Germans and the English were sincere and ardent in pursuit of reformation. Special sermons recalled to the minds of the fathers—were it possible for them to forget—the urgent need of correcting those enormities that were devouring the very life of the Church, and exhorted them continually to begin the work. Meetings of the deputies, to prepare resolutions to be laid before the council, were likewise frequent. From the language, scarcely inferior in strength to his own, in which the council was content to hear the vices of ecclesiastics officially denounced, we must infer that even the stern reproofs of the Bohemian reformer were secondary among the motives of his condemnation, to the fears and the malignity of his prosecutors. The "insatiable avarice", the "indomitable ambition", the "shameful laziness and execrable mundanity" of the priesthood, were familiar, and not the worst terms of opprobrium, constantly resounding from the synodical pulpit. Nor did any of their preachers more distinguish themselves by a vehement use of such language, than some among Huss's most inveterate enemies. "Is it just", asked a doctor, whom the collectors of the acts of the Church call "Stephen of Prague", and who could be no other than Huss's most determined criminator, Stephen Paletz, "is it just, that fools should rule in the Church, and the wise obey; that inexperienced youth should employ the aged as their servants; that the management of the most delicate affairs should be entrusted to the ignorant, while the well-informed dare not open their mouths; that grooms and serving-men should be preferred before doctors and preachers of the Word of God ? Yet such things we see every day in this age of simony".

But if the wishes of the more numerous portion of the assembly went along with these denunciations, they were early opposed by the obstructive policy of the interested minority, headed by the Italian cardinals and prelates. The absence of the emperor, at a time when the vacancy of the apostolical seat left a larger amount of influence at his command, was unfortunate; prolonged as it was by the delay of many months in England, and elsewhere, after all hope of conquering the obstinacy of Benedict had disappeared. Sigismund's purpose was, after the deposal of the anti-pope, first to proceed to the reform of the Church, and not till then to permit the election of a pope; because he clearly foresaw, that if precedence were given to the election, the Italian party would be so much strengthened as to render a real reform impracticable. His plan, however, was obstinately traversed. The cardinals, maintaining that it was the business of the head of the Church to reform it, refused to approach the question of reformation, as long as there was no sovereign pontiff. In this resolution they were supported by the Aragonese ambassadors, who had lately arrived in Constance, but who refused to make their appearance publicly in the council, until measures should be taken for filling the vacant pontifical throne. Even the French, eager at first beyond all the other nations, for the purification of the Church, now joined the Italians and Spaniards in their protests against every attempt of Sigismund to engage the council in that most needful work. Hatred to the English, then the triumphant possessors of a part of their country, was the secret motive of this change. The three nations even caballed to deprive the English of their privileges at the council, under the pretext that they ought to be reckoned one of the northern nations, and unite their votes with the Germans. The attempt was defeated by the firmness of Sigismund: it nevertheless further

inflamed the already violent disputes which disturbed the council, and was not put down without much difficulty and long debate.

The resolution of the fathers to maintain the English in their right, in some degree restored Sigismund's confidence. He was still hoping to disappoint the cardinals in their design to prevent the dreaded reform by electing a pope before it could take place, when the prospect was suddenly overcast by the death of Robert Hallam, bishop of Salisbury, the ablest and most resolute of his supporters. This prelate had gained a reputation in Europe by proposing, at the Council of Pisa, an admirable plan of ecclesiastical reform; he was, in consequence, received with great distinction at Constance. He died at Gotlieben, September 4th, and was buried in the Cathedral of Constance; —the emperor, the princes, the cardinals, the clergy, and a great concourse of people, attending his obsequies.

After Bishop Hallam's decease, the English fell off in the boldness of their tone; and presently they, too, joined the faction of the cardinals. The immediate election of a pope was now urged more earnestly than ever. On one occasion, while a violent memorial from the cardinals to that effect was being read, the emperor rose with strong signs of impatience; and, followed by the patriarch of Antioch and others, abruptly retired. On the instant, a cry of "There go the heretics!" was heard from among the partizans of the sacred college. Such was the hateful intolerance of the age; to differ on any point from the hierarchy was heresy, even in the zealous emperor. The day following, the cardinals' party insisted on the interrupted memorial being again read; when a scene of disorder ensued, in which Cardinal Zabarella so strenuously exerted himself, that he went away ill, and died within a month. The German nation answered the cardinals in another memorial. But the sacred college having gained over two of the leading German bishops, by the promise of great preferment, the whole body of representatives of the nation followed their example. Thus deserted, Sigismund could no longer effectually resist. He consented to the immediate election of a pope, provided that without any delay, on his election, and before his coronation, the pontiff would labour jointly with the council for the Church's reform, and should not quit Constance till it was obtained. To these conditions the cardinals at first agreed; but afterwards withdrew their consent, on pretence that the pope ought not to be bound to any thing. Sigismund had therefore to content himself with some vague promises by the college, and some decrees of the council scarcely more definite; and even these were obtained only by the help of an unexpected ally. This was Henry, bishop of Winchester, uncle to the king of England, known in our history as Cardinal Beaufort. The bishop, while passing through Germany on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was invited by the emperor to visit the council: he accordingly appeared there, in his pilgrim's garb; took part in the deliberations; and, by his influence, reconciled the emperor and the cardinals.

A minute account is extant of the election of the pope. The ceremony, though essentially the same as on ordinary occasions, was in some points changed to meet the peculiarity of existing circumstances. The principal innovation consisted in admitting the deputies of the nations to vote with the cardinals. The place chosen for the conclave was the town-hall, or exchange, of Constance, now erroneously shown as the place of meeting of the council itself. Round the walls of this apartment, fifty-three little chambers, or cells, covered with purple cloth, were fitted up for the electors; viz. for twenty-three cardinals, and thirty deputies, six of each nation. On the front of each cell were placed the name and arms of its occupant; these escutcheons, or their modern representations, may survive in the emblazoned bucklers now suspended upon the pillars of the hall.

Each elector, or conclavist, was allowed two attendants, either lay or clerical, besides whom no person was to be admitted to speak with them. Their food, of a quality prescribed, was delivered in at a window, so contrived that no person could pass through. The guards of the conclave, fifteen nobles and gentlemen, were sworn to enforce these regulations. The emperor himself took the same oath: he took it seated on his throne, at the same time touching with his hands the Gospel and the Cross; the rest kneeling one by one at his feet. Certain prelates were likewise sworn, whose business it was to examine the dishes, &c. in which the food of the electors was brought, lest any letter, or other writing, should be introduced in them. When everything was ready, the emperor ordered a decree, in Latin, French, German, and Italian, to be published by sound of trumpet, forbidding all persons to approach within a certain distance during the sitting of the conclave. A popular privilege allowed at Rome was forbidden by the council, on pain of excommunication; the rabble of that ill-governed city had been accustomed to plunder the house of the

elected cardinal, or sometimes of him who was only reported to be elected. Having arrived at the summit of wealth, that fortunate individual was supposed to be now no longer in want of anything.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon of Nov. 8th. 1417, when the fifty-three assembled before the door of the episcopal palace. They found there the emperor waiting for them. He dismounted on their arrival, and received them "with such marks of respect as drew tears from their eyes". At the same instant, the patriarch of Antioch, preceded by the cross, and attended by a numerous body of the clergy, was seen to issue from the cathedral. The electors knelt, and received the patriarch's benediction. They then rose, and proceeded to the conclave: meantime the emperor had gone thither, and taking each by the hand as they came up, led them in. They entered by the light of torches, for the daylight was wholly excluded. Each, though permitted to have two attendants, was accompanied by only one, a notary, whose office it was to take and record the votes, as well as to wait on his principal. When all had entered, the emperor administered to them an oath, that they would choose for pope a man of piety and good report, able and determined to reform the Church. He then took leave of them, and the conclave was closed.

The order and precautions adopted without were not less curious. Two princes, with the grand-master of Rhodes, Philibert de Naillac, remained day and night at the door, with the keys suspended at their necks. Six soldiers kept guard on the steps in profound silence. Below the steps was placed a table, at which sat the prelates appointed to examine the dishes taken into the conclave. Each cover, or cup, after being examined, was brought separately to the window by the grand master, and delivered to the attendant of the conclavist for whom it was designed; at the same time he took back the empty vessels previously handed in.

In the conclave there was little prospect of early agreement. The Germans, indeed, as the most likely means of securing a peaceable election, when one of their bishops would have been chosen, gave way to the Italians; the English, when the choice was about to fall on the Bishop of Chester, followed their example. But those nations in vain endeavoured to persuade the French and Spaniards to adopt the same generous course. Each of the latter fiercely asserted its right to supply a sovereign ruler to the Church. The dispute was continued to the middle of the night between the 10th and 11th. All this time frequent divine services were performed, both without before the conclave, and by the electors in a little chapel enclosed for that purpose within the building. The usual rule in the election of a pope is, that when two-thirds of the votes are in favour of any individual, that person is declared to be elected. Sometimes, however, the election takes place by "inspiration", as it is called. On the morning of the 11th, while the inmates of the conclave were sitting together in their chapel, and could hear the voices of the emperor, the princes, and clergy, singing the *Veni Creator*, the Germans suddenly cried out, "We are all assembled here in the name of the most Holy Trinity; and lo, the Holy Spirit is working with us to produce unity!" At that instant, avers the narrative, as if by Divine inspiration, the assembly exclaimed with one voice, "We elect the Cardinal of St. George!" One of the cardinals presenting himself at the window, proclaimed aloud, "We have a pope—Otto di Colonna!" That day was the festival of St. Martin; Colonna assumed, in honour of it, the pontifical name of Martin V.

The announcement was followed by the shouts of the princes and people without. The emperor immediately entered the conclave, and prostrating himself, kissed the pontiff's foot, and did homage, with an eagerness of debasement which excited the disgust even of his contemporaries. On rising he thanked the electors for making so worthy a choice. Martin could do no less than embrace the emperor affectionately in return, and acknowledge the zeal he had testified to promote the Church's peace. In the afternoon, the fathers of the council walked in procession to meet the pope. The emperor and the elector of Brandenburg led out the Holy Father, assisted him to mount his horse, a white palfrey, caparisoned with red, and taking hold of the reins, one on each side, conducted him to the cathedral. The pope excepted, all were on foot. The assembly in the cathedral was the grandest yet beheld, even in that scene of frequent magnificence; the princes and prelates—all that was illustrious in the council, the city, and the neighbouring territories, had met to do honour to the new spiritual lord of Western Christendom. As soon as the pope entered the sacred edifice, the cardinals led him up to the high altar, and having seated him upon it, the ceremony of adoration was performed amid the acclamations of the assembly, and the sounds of joyous music. *Te Deum* was then sung, the pope pronounced a blessing on the prostrate multitude, and retired, pale and exhausted, to his abode in the bishop's palace.

The following Sunday, Martin V, assisted by one hundred and forty mitred prelates, performed his first pontifical mass. The next three days were spent in receiving the homage of the secular princes, the monks, and mendicants. He was consecrated on the 21st, and the same day, with great pomp, celebrated his coronation. The latter ceremony took place upon a kind of stage, erected for the purpose in the court of the palace. The procession of the clergy advanced from the cathedral, led by the patriarchs, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and mitred abbots, all in their pontificals; the emperor and other secular princes following on foot. The pope, with the pontifical cross borne before him, was assisted up the platform to a lofty throne raised against the front of the palace beneath a gilded canopy. He wore a superb tiara encircled with three coronets, adorned with pearls, and surmounted by a cross of gold. On either side of the pope's throne was a range of seats, inferior in height, and less ornamented, but each also a kind of throne. Upon these, as soon as the pontiff was seated, eighteen cardinals arranged themselves, nine on each side. Next to the cardinals were .seated, on the right and left respectively, the emperor and the elector of Brandenburg; and further on, a row of archbishops, succeeded by as many electors, princes, and prelates as there was room for; others occupied the steps, and vacant spaces. The rest of the cardinals knelt before the pope, one of them carrying a tuft of tow at the top of a wand, the others bearing each a taper. The court beyond the platform was likewise filled with persons of rank, ecclesiastical and secular, mounted or on foot. A vast throng of inferior spectators filled all the outer space.

When the prelates and princes had taken their places, the patriarch of Antioch advanced, and removed the triple crown from the pontiff's head. The music, with which a numerous band of performers had hitherto been filling the air, at this moment ceased. The cardinal who bore the tow now lighted it, and holding up the momentary blaze before the pope, exclaimed, "Sancto Pater, sic transit gloria mundi!" The other three cardinals rose from their knees, took the crown from the hands of the pope, and all kneeling before him upon the upper step of the throne, held it while they pronounced a prayer; then rising, placed it on his head. The officiating persons resumed their places, *Te Deum* was sung, and the pope with his retinue descended from the platform.

All now returned to the cathedral. The clergy led the way; the inferior orders on foot, the abbots, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals on horseback. Then came the pope seated on his white palfrey, but preceded now by three other white horses similarly caparisoned. Again the emperor and the elector of Brandenburg, walking one on each side, led the pontiff's horse: the other princes and nobles followed. A remarkable incident occurred as the pope was leaving the court. The Jews of Constance had assembled there, to do honour after their manner to the new vicegerent of "the Nazarene", they bore flambeaux in their hands, and were chanting a religious service. One of their number, who carried a parchment roll containing the Pentateuch, came forward and presented the volume to his holiness. Martin, it is said, turned aside. But Sigismund, more courteous, if not more tolerant, took it in his hand, with a remark which, in those times when the race of Israel were continually liable to the most frightful persecution, was probably not considered harsh, even by themselves. "Your law", said the emperor, "is just and good, and none of you reject it, but none observe it as you ought". When Sigismund had given back the roll, the pope addressing them said, "May God remove the veil from your eyes, that they may see the light of eternal life!" He then gave them his benediction.

It is a common remark that the popes have mostly shown themselves after their election, quite different persons from what they had appeared as cardinals. The saying can hardly be applied to Martin V. He who as cardinal had been one of the most obsequious servants of such a pope as John XXIII, could not reasonably be expected to display much zeal for reformation, when himself raised to the pontificate. Men's eyes had scarcely closed upon those brilliant pageants, when the impatient deputies demanded, in a general assembly, the fulfilment of the promise he had made, to set without delay about the great work of reforming the Church. He agreed to the appointment of a college or committee of reformation. The members of this body were mostly interested parties, whose chief object was to spend time in laboriously doing nothing. The nations grew impatient: first the Germans, then the French, loudly remonstrated. The latter, now sensible too late of their folly in pressing on the election, brought their complaints to Sigismund, entreating him to be urgent with the Holy Father. The emperor replied by this just retort, "When I begged you to take care and see the Church reformed before you consented to an election, you refused. You insisted on first having a pope. You have one now as well as we; go to him yourselves. As for me, I have not the same interest in the matter as I had while the see was still vacant". Martin found himself reduced to the necessity of making some attempt to satisfy both parties, in the hope of silencing the *nations*, now

unanimous in their demands, for by this time even the Spaniards had joined in the general cry: he proposed, towards the end of January, 1418, a plan of reform, for consideration in their assemblies. Further to pacify Sigismund, by this time, in spite both of dissimulation and superstitious respect, abandoning even the show of patience, he resorted, like his predecessor, to the stale device of the Golden Rose.

The attempts of the pope to suppress the roused spirit of the Bohemians, were stimulated by the same motive. Sigismund had himself been in correspondence with the chiefs of that kingdom, and of Moravia, both during his long absence, and since his return to Constance. Sometimes he threatened: in one of his letters he even hinted that the council was about to proceed against Wenceslaus himself, as guilty of countenancing, at least by culpable indifference, the licentious conduct of his people. Again, he condescended to write in a milder strain. In the same way, the council also mingled persuasion with severity. At once to instruct and alarm the followers of Huss, the fathers employed Gerson to compose, and read before the council, a treatise on the communion under the two species. They resolved likewise to send one of their number into Bohemia, to explain and vindicate their proceedings in regard to John Huss and Jerome of Prague. They selected for this mission the bishop of Leutomischel: an unfortunate choice, if their object was to appease rather than to intimidate, inasmuch as this prelate had both taken an active part against Huss, and had made himself further odious by denouncing, in the council, Jacobel and the revived administration of the cup.

Between four and five hundred of the more distinguished Hussites were cited to the council, and safe-conducts sent to them. None of these persons appeared, nor was any notice taken by them of the citation. The council now passed a decree, requiring the abjuration of the doctrines of Wicliffe and Huss; restitution of their benefices to the clergy who had been deprived for refusing to administer the cup; the expulsion of Wicliffites from the University of Prague; the suppression of the writings of Huss and Jacobel. The “error of the cup” was to be renounced; all preaching without the licence of the ordinary forbidden; combinations, and even the songs made against the council, to be put down; and all ceremonies of the Roman Church, including the veneration of relics, to be strictly observed. The pope, on his part, issued a bull of excommunication against the followers of Huss. By this edict the authorities in Bohemia and Moravia, ecclesiastical and secular, were required to proceed with rigour against all heretics and persons suspected to be favourers of heresy. It also set forth, with exact particularity and at great length, a series of questions (constructed upon the condemned propositions of Wicliffe), to be put to the accused.

Dilatory and undecided as was the committee of reformation, it prepared a body of resolutions not wholly disproportioned to the evils to be redressed. Of these resolutions, the pope confirmed some few, the more important he eluded. Some insignificant decrees were sanctioned in the forty-third session (held March 21), for the regulation of benefices and ecclesiastical habits; but the scandalous abuses existing in the court of Rome, the rapacity and other vices of the prelates and ecclesiastics, both regular and secular, were left untouched. Where were now the loud complaints, which so lately resounded in the united voice of the nations? That voice was no longer heard. The pope had long been treating separately with each nation in secret, and had succeeded in evading their joint demands, by granting some few concessions in a convention made with each in particular. These treaties were disavowed on the return of the ambassadors, in France and Spain: the pope himself, indeed, paid little subsequent regard to them. Meantime, they answered the present purpose; and in spite of the emperor’s vehement, but nearly unsupported ostentations, the pontiff dissolved the council, April 22, 1418, after it had sat just three years and a half'.

Martin V left Constance on the 16th of May. Mounted as usual upon his milk-white horse, and wearing his triple crown, he was attended, at his departure, by the whole council. The emperor and the elector of Brandenburg once more led his palfrey by the reins, while four princes supported the animal’s housings, as many counts of the empire held a rich canopy over the rider's head, the clergy and the rest of the nobility followed. At Gotlieben the pope embarked, and proceeded down the Rhine to Schaffhausen, the cardinals and others keeping pace on land with the pontifical barge. The emperor returned from Gotlieben to Constance, and remained there till the 21st of the month, when every other member of that famous assembly had already departed.

We have now done with the proceedings of the Council of Constance; but not with their fruits and consequences. Of these a terrible history remains behind. In the cruel death of John Huss and Jerome of

Prague, that great synod had “sown the wind”; it remains to relate how its adherents, and those of the pontiff of its creation, were doomed to “reap the whirlwind”. Little fruit was there besides of all that mighty gathering of nations, so laboriously prepared, and from which the Christian world had expected so much. It removed indeed from the Church one hideous plague-spot, the pontificate of John XXIII; it extinguished, or reduced to a harmless mockery, the pretensions of Gregory XII and Benedict XIII. But with this brief statement ends the record of its deservedly memorable deeds. The head it gave to the Church, as the pledge and conservator of restored union, became, like his predecessors, the official guardian of its abuses. The insignificant reforms it extorted were quickly withdrawn, or silently allowed to pass into oblivion. The great principle, that a general council is in authority above the bishop of Rome, though asserted by it, and, as will be seen hereafter, reasserted by a bolder synod, took no general hold upon the convictions of Christendom. While it condemned to a cruel death the honest and eloquent, but premature reformers of Prague, it spared the author and the advocate of assassination; it countenanced by its indifference the sanguinary aggressions of a corrupt military combination; and it refused to check by its censures the heresy of the Flagellants, a sect apparently as offensive to orthodoxy and decorum as any to which fanaticism had yet given birth. Hence, the great Council of Constance derives its best for being remembered by its worst act, the martyrdom of Hus and Jerome; and while the thousand learned harangues addressed to the assembled fathers, with their many trivial decrees, are forgotten, or lie imprisoned in splendid but dusty tomes, the courageous words and triumphant death-songs of the martyred pair are become an heirloom in the memory of the free in soul through all generations.

The reader, before his attention is transferred to scenes of fiercer turbulence than the war of words at Constance, or the mutual pointless maledictions of pseudo-popes, may reasonably desire to be told what became of those repudiated heads of the papal church.

Gregory, who had won the council’s favour by timely submission, was created Cardinal-bishop of Porto, and perpetual legate of the march of Ancona: he died in peace two years afterwards, at the age of ninety. As to John, after the election of Martin V, he was formally transferred from the custody of the emperor to the friendly care of the pope. He acknowledged Martin as the legitimate pontiff; was chosen into the number of his cardinals, made dean of the sacred college, and allowed precedence of his brethren. He ended his days at Florence, in 1420, and received the honour of a pompous funeral from Cosmo di Medici. The death of Benedict XIII occurred in the year 1423, at Peñiscola, where he had continued to the last to play the pope. Resolving to be true, even after his decease, to the tenor of his extraordinary life, he ordered the two cardinals who had remained with him to elect his successor. The king of Aragon, having a quarrel with Martin, favoured the schism, and chose for the future anti-pope one Gil Muñoz, a canon of Barcelona. This poor man long refused to be made the puppet of a faction; but was forced finally to yield to the threats of Alphonso. He took the name of Clement VIII. When, after some years, Alphonso reconciled himself to the lawful pontiff, Muñoz joyfully resigned his tinsel tiara, receiving in return a solid mitre.

CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF RELIGION IN BOHEMIA BEFORE HUSS.—VIOLENT OPPOSITION THERE TO THE COUNCIL.—WENCESLAUS.—HUSSENECZ. ZISKA.—CARDINAL DOMINIC IN BOHEMIA. TABOR. GREAT MEETING OF HUSSITES.—ZISKA AND HUSSENECZ ENTER PRAGUE WITH AN ARMED FORCE

It has been seen that the Church of Rome could not claim Bohemia, as originally subject to the popes, and adopting their usages. For about a century and a half from their conversion to Christianity, the Bohemians worshipped without disturbance according to the Greek ritual. During a second period of about two centuries, while the Roman pontiffs were making continual efforts to supplant the rival Church, their practice wavered between the Greek and Roman forms. About the close of the twelfth century many

of the persecuted Waldenses took refuge in Bohemia, and by the example of their purer doctrine and blameless lives, confirmed the aversion of its people to the corruptions of the Latins.

The Greek error, for so it was called by the Romanists, of administering in both kinds, was violently suppressed, as already intimated, after the establishment of the University of Prague. The people nevertheless clung in secret to a privilege so dear to them; and theirs, as they rightly believed, by the appointment of Christ Himself. Some of the clergy likewise, more courageous than their brethren, openly revived the apostolical form of administration, and defended it in their sermons. The most distinguished of those ecclesiastics, who, while they sought the general reform of the Romish Church, laid peculiar stress on the denial of the cup, and themselves administered' the communion in both kinds, were Conrad Stickna, John Milicz, and Mathias Janow; the last, confessor to the emperor Charles IV. Janow was silenced by a synod held at Prague in 1389; banished; and all who were known to have adopted his sentiments were subjected to severe persecution. From this time, if any ventured to practise the most sacred rite of their religion in the form ordained by its Divine Founder, it was done secretly in private houses, or more often in woods and caves, with which the country abounded, where, like the Scottish Covenanters, whom in other respects also they resembled, they met in arms under the friendly shades of night. If they were discovered, loss of goods, of freedom, or even of life, was the consequence. Drowning seems to have been the favourite mode of inflicting the last of these penalties.

Though the reform demanded by Huss bore no express reference to the question of the cup, yet among the effects of his teaching was of course its revival. Soon after the reformer's departure for Constance, Jacobel, or John of Mies (so named from a town in Bohemia), priest of a parish at Prague, a man of note in his country, renewed the controversy with much zeal. Having satisfied himself respecting the antiquity and scriptural authority of communion in both kinds, he both defended the practice in public disputations before the university, and restored it in his parish, to the equal satisfaction of that learned body and his parishioners.

Here, however, was a fresh element of disturbance thrown into the seething cauldron of dispute and mutual hatred. The clergy and monks were furious. The archbishop reluctantly deprived and excommunicated Jacobel; but as the preacher, emboldened by the public sympathy, only lectured and wrote more resolutely in the same strain, the ecclesiastics carried their cause before the Council of Constance. It was in consequence of this appeal, that in the session immediately preceding the condemnation of Jerome of Prague, the fathers adopted the decree cited in a former chapter; which stamped what had been hitherto but a plausibly defended custom, with the force of irrevocable law.

The measures adopted at Constance were far from producing any salutary effect on the Bohemians. Letters, edicts, excommunications, were alike powerless to subdue or soften the rising fury of that stern but excitable people. Every fresh act or message of the council was treated as a fresh injury, and only operated as fuel to the fire. The university had followed up its defence of Huss by a declaration in favour of communion in both kinds; the apostolic practice was consequently adopted by large numbers of the clergy. The bishop of Leutomischel heard on his arrival only bitter lamentations for the fate of the martyrs, and fierce invectives against the "sacred synod". The papal thunders directed against the most popular, and many of the greatest and best in the land, were answered by mingled scorn and indignation. The churches resounded with the praises of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and with the voices of thousands, who, borne onwards by the mightiest of all impulses that sway the bosoms of multitudes, swore to resist the tyranny of the council, and to maintain for themselves and their children the freedom of their altars. The 6th of July, the anniversary of Huss's death, was declared a day of solemn mourning in Bohemia for ever; and medals were struck in honour of the martyred reformer.

All this might have ended well, in the simple emancipation of their country from its unwilling thraldom to Rome, had the Bohemians been unanimous in their resistance. But the adherents of popery were powerful, and though perhaps a minority, still numerous. The Council of Constance had set the one half of the nation against the other half. The priests, finding their livelihood invaded with their faith, resorted to every kind of artifice, in order to maintain their own credit and make the Hussites odious. Among the tricks, worthy of mountebanks, which they were not ashamed to employ, was this: they daubed mortar on the candles used in the excommunications of the Hussites; and when the flame on reaching the place went out, they made the ignorant populace believe that God had wrought a miracle for the purpose of showing that those accursed heretics were enemies of the light, and ought to be expelled from the

Church. The exasperated champions of the cup retaliated by the more serious injuries of ejecting the papists from their benefices, and by violence against their persons and those of their adherents. Nor, while more formidable weapons were yet allowed to rest, was the use of hard names and scurrilous lampoons despised by either party: satirical songs, composed at the time, in ridicule of both the council and the Hussites, are still extant.

Few Christian princes have a more unenviable name in history than Wenceslaus, the reigning sovereign of Bohemia. The reason is not to be found only in his vices, though he had vices numerous and gross enough to warrant his deposition from the imperial throne, and his imprisonment, first by his brother Sigismund, and a second time by his own subjects. His supineness and sensuality are attested by the whole course of his life; his cruelty, by the doubtful story of his cook roasted alive, for serving up an indifferent dinner, and the too certain one of sundry ecclesiastics thrown by his orders into the Moldau; among them John of Nepomuc, the queen's confessor, a saintly man, afterwards canonized, for refusing to betray the secrets of the royal confessional. But the clergy were his only historians, and Wenceslaus loved not the clergy; nor, when we remember what as a body they in his time were, can we fairly reckon that dislike among his faults. It was a frequent saying of his, that they were "the most dangerous of hypocrites". Hence the exposure of their depravity by John Huss and his followers met with no check from the king. Yet it was more from want of foreseeing that popular resistance to authority in the Church might prove destructive of his cherished quiet, and even perilous to his throne, than from regard for the purity of religion, that he encouraged the reformer while living, and shared the general indignation at his death. He retired about this time from Prague to Conraditz, a place at the distance of three leagues, where he had erected a castle, contiguous to a fortress built there by the emperor, his father; but, probably, rather that his repose might not be disturbed by the clamours of a mob, than from any dread of an incipient rebellion.

The histories describe partial risings, not only in Prague, but in various parts of Bohemia, before we meet among the leaders with any names that became subsequently conspicuous. The first which did so, are those of Nicholas of Hussinecz, and the Knight of Trocznow. The former has already been mentioned as feudal lord of John Huss's native village, and in some respects his patron; the latter is famous throughout the world under the name of ZISKA. Trocznow, the cadet of a noble Bohemian family, was, in his youth, placed as a page at the court of Charles IV. He served honourably in the Polish wars, and signalized himself at the battle in which Ladislaus (or Uladislaus) Jagello gained his great victory, in 1410, over the Teutonic knights. On some occasion, early in life, he lost an eye: it was for this reason he was called Ziska; that word signifying in the Bohemian language, one-eyed. At the time of Huss's execution, Ziska was one of the chamberlains to King Wenceslaus: in so unwarlike an employment had passed some of the best years of the greatest military genius of that age. On no other among the martyr's countrymen did the tragedy of Constance produce an equally deep impression. It was the subject of his passionate meditations, of his nightly dreams. Profound was his resentment at the cruelty and injustice of Huss's treatment, for the reformer's own sake; profounder still the sense of the insult offered, in his person, to Bohemia and its people.

The king one day observed his chamberlain lost in silent thought. "Trocznow", he inquired, "what is the subject of your reverie?" The chamberlain acknowledged, that he was meditating how to revenge the murder of John Huss upon the priests and monks, its instigators. "Methinks, neither you nor I", replied Wenceslaus, "are in a condition to take due vengeance for this affront. If you, however, know any way, take courage, and set about it". This was enough for Ziska. From that moment he resolved on the course which he afterwards followed with such tremendous effect.

Soon after this occurrence, the Hussites of Prague sent a deputation to the king. Their numbers they informed him were now greatly increased, they therefore prayed his majesty to order more churches to be assigned them, for celebrating divine service according to their method. The orator of this deputation was Hussinecz. Wenceslaus answered, "Your demand is a grave one. I must have time to consider it; at the end of three days, come again". He spoke with great mildness of manner before the deputation; but when the rest had left his presence, calling back Hussinecz, he added, in a severe tone, "You, Nicholas, are weaving a web to entangle me; take care I do not make of it a halter for your own neck". Alarmed and irritated by this menace, Hussinecz retired to his estate, and diligently set to work to strengthen and enlarge his party.

At the end of three days the others came as appointed. Wenceslaus, deputed one of his lords to them with this message: “The king is deliberating on your demand. He is disposed to favour you. But is it the way to ask for churches, with arms in your hands? He requires you first, in sign of obedience, to bring all your arms and lay them down before him here in his palace”. They returned to Prague in no small perplexity and consternation. Ziska smiled at their alarm. “You are a very simple set of folks”, said he, “to be so easily frightened. I know the king better than you. Do as he says. He will be so well pleased to see you with your arms, and disposed to use them, that he will rather make you a present of more, than take what you have from you. Come, I will put myself at your head this time. Let us arm ourselves and go”. They followed his advice. Ziska spoke : “Sire”, he said, “we are here, as your majesty commanded, with our arms; and ready to shed our blood to the last drop in fighting against your enemies, when we learn who they are”. Charmed with the spirit and bearing of his chamberlain, Wenceslaus dismissed the whole party in the best humour. From that day, “The One-eyed” became the favourite of the multitude, and assumed the character of a popular leader.

One of the last acts of the Council of Constance was the appointment of Cardinal Dominic as its ambassador to the Bohemians, with full power either to reconcile or to punish. The appearance of this violent man among them was the signal, his conduct in no small degree the justification, of the furious explosion that now burst forth. Entering into one of the principal churches of the Hussites, he threw down from the altar a coffer containing the cups prepared for the communion, and administered the “maimed rite” in accordance with the council’s decree. But this was a trifle: on his bare authority, as the accredited agent of the council, he ordered two persons who had opposed him, a priest and a layman, to be burned. A civil war may now be said to have begun. The followers of Huss, and the partizans of Dominic, could not but look upon each other as irreconcilable enemies. Nothing was now regarded in any man but the side each took in the deadly quarrel. Father to son, brother to brother, friend to friend, stood mutually opposed, with all the fury and animosity to which religious intolerance can move a people naturally fierce, haughty, and self-willed. Ere long the land was filled with fire, massacre, and pillage, in the abused name of religion. Dominic, scarcely escaping with life from the storm he had evoked, went into Hungary, to the emperor, and reported that the tongue and the pen were useless now in Bohemia. “Time it is”, he exclaimed,” to unsheath the sword, and make ready the fire, against heretics so incorrigible”.

Ziska’s first warlike movement was against Pilsen, a town some leagues from Prague, notorious for its popish zeal. Proceeding thither from the capital, at the head of an armed party, he took possession of the town, drove out the priests and monks, and plundered the churches and monasteries. His next care was to provide himself a place of strength, for security in case of need. For this purpose he made choice of a strong position on the river Lucinitz, not many miles from Prague. At a spot where the river is joined by a torrent, in a peninsula nearly surrounded by the converging streams, stood the remains of a fortress, the dismantled memorial of some former war. The place was naturally defensible, the peninsula consisting of a hill with steep rocky sides, approached by a neck of land not more than thirty feet in breadth. Ziska immediately set about fortifying it with ramparts and towers. Until buildings could be erected for their accommodation, he and his followers lived on the spot in tents: from this circumstance the name TABOR, famous in Bohemian story, was given to the town, begun there by Ziska, but further enlarged and strengthened after his death. Aeneas Sylvius, the historian of Bohemia, who minutely describes this “refuge of all the heretics”, as he calls it, subjoins to his narrative the following account of the means taken by Ziska to give to the party of devoted, but undisciplined and unprovided adherents, he had assembled in this spot, somewhat more of the character and efficiency of an army. The Bohemian towns and castles—the whole country was studded with them—were by this time occupied by Sigismund’s troops. These were partly placed under the command of the emperor’s master of the mines, an officer of trust and importance in the country. This officer had posted 1000 horse at a village in the vicinity, for the purpose of keeping the Taborites in awe. Ziska surprised the post, seized the arms and horses, and in a short time, from being without a mounted follower, found himself master of an effective force of cavalry.

As the churches hitherto possessed by the Hussites were wholly insufficient for the accommodation of the multitudes who had now joined them; the people met for divine service, as their forefathers had often done, in the fields and upon the mountains. An extraordinary meeting of this kind took place in the summer of 1419, in a plain near the royal town of Aust, not far from Tabor. Above 40,000 persons were collected together on this occasion, under the presidency of Jacobel,

Coranda, also an ecclesiastic of note, and other priests. That all things were not done in order in such an assembly maybe readily imagined. The tables for the communion were formed of boards, laid across rude tressels, or barrels just before emptied of their contents. No clerical vestments distinguished the officiating ministers; the communicants approached the tables without previous confession, or any other preparative act, and bearing in their hands, pikes, cross-bows, clubs, and other weapons then in use, prepared for resistance in case of interruption. The multitude, among whom were many women and children, left the scene of this memorable celebration towards evening, and reentered Prague by torchlight. No act of violence, however, disgraced the meeting; on the contrary, when, at its close, a gentleman exhorted the people not to depart till they had compensated a poor man whose corn had been trampled down, a sufficient collection for that purpose was immediately made.

Such assemblies were not long permitted to be held so peaceably. Before the meeting at Aust broke up, the clergy gave notice of a second, to be held in the same place, on a subsequent day. This the German garrisons resolved to prevent. When the day arrived, several parties on their way to the spot were attacked and dispersed with the loss of many lives; but these being presently reinforced by others, better armed, the imperialists were repulsed, and the victors passed the remainder of the day upon the field, occupied with burying the dead, and celebrating divine service. The following letter, addressed by Ziska to some of the survivors, gives a just idea of the temper with which he was entering on his fearful mission.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—GOD grant that by his grace you may return to your first love, and that as true children of God you may continue in his fear, and show it by your works. If he has visited you with chastisement, I beseech you in his name not to allow yourselves to be discouraged by this affliction. Consider those who labour for the faith, and suffer persecution from its adversaries, especially from the Germans, whose exceeding wickedness you have experienced for the name of Jesus Christ. Imitate the ancient Bohemians, your forefathers, who were always ready to defend God's cause and their own. For us, brethren, having always before our eyes the law of God, and the public good, we ought to be extremely vigilant; and every one who is capable of handling a knife, of hurling a stone, or carrying a club, should be prepared to march. Therefore, my dear brethren, I give you notice that we are raising troops in all directions, to fight with the enemies of the truth and the destroyers of our nation; and I earnestly request you to give notice to your preacher to animate the people in his sermons, to the war against anti-Christ; and let every one, young and old, prepare for it. I hope that when I come among you, I shall find no lack of bread, beer or pasturage, or other provisions, and that you will be provided with good arms. It is time to arm ourselves, not only against foreign, but domestic enemies. Keep in mind your first battle, in which you were few against many, and without arms against well-armed troops. The hand of God is not shortened ; be of good courage, and keep yourselves in readiness.

God strengthen you.

ZISKA *of the cup, by Divine hope chief of the Taborites."*

While events were thus rapidly advancing, the king, either from fear, or from indifference, continued in retirement. That the revolters no longer considered him favourable to their objects, appears from an incident that occurred at the meeting above described. The question was openly mooted, whether they should not depose Wenceslaus, and elect a king of sentiments in religion wholly conformable to their own. It is said that Nicholas Hussinecz aspired to be named Wenceslaus's successor; but the design was frustrated by the tact and good sense of Coranda.

"It is very true, brethren", said the ex-rector of Pilsen (for such Coranda was), "that our king is lazy, and given to drink. But, compare him with other princes, and where shall we find one whom in reason we could prefer? He is for our purpose the pattern of princes; peaceable, good-humoured, and well-disposed to our cause. He lets us live as we please; and though he is not of our way of thinking in religion, he neither molests us on account of our worship himself, nor allows others to molest us. For these reasons, instead of wishing to get rid of him, I am of opinion we ought earnestly to pray for his preservation; since his indolence is our safety and our peace".

The careless king, always willing to owe to any one, and on any terms, the support he wanted energy to find in himself, was delighted with Coranda's oration.

Ziska was delighted too with its effect on Wenceslaus. Hitherto he had withheld his followers from any serious undertakings; merely employing them on short excursions, and less with a view to actual conflict, than to accustom them to a military discipline. He was, moreover, willing to concede for a time to Hussinecz the superior leadership, not unreasonably affected by the patron of Huss. By his order or advice they now advanced to Prague, where Ziska's presence was eagerly desired.

CHAPTER X.

PRAGUE. MAGNIFICENCE OF ECCLESIASTICAL EDIFICES IN BOHEMIA.—TUMULTS AND MASSACRE AT PRAGUE.—DEATH OF WENCESLAUS.—DESTRUCTION OF CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES IN PRAGUE. PARTY DISTINCTIONS OF THE HUSSITES. —CONFLICTS IN PRAGUE.—ESCAPE OF THE QUEEN.—ARMISTICE.— DESTRUCTION OF MONASTERIES IN THE PROVINCES.— RETALIATION.—ZISKA BLINDED. —

DIET AT BRÜN. CRUELTY OF SIGISMUND.—CAPTURE OF THE FORTRESS OF ST. WENCESLAUS.—THE EMPEROR PREPARES TO ENTER BOHEMIA WITH AN ARMY.

THAT the reader may more easily comprehend those events, upon a narrative of which we are now entering, it will be proper to glance in this place at the main features of that ancient city, of course, as the capital, their focus. For this purpose, no statement can be more effectual than a few sentences from the History of Bohemia, by Aeneas Sylvius, a contemporary with, and in some respects, an actor in these events. Previously, however, let the reader recall to mind an outline of Bohemia itself, a country in the centre of what we now call Germany, in shape nearly resembling our Isle of Wight, and containing about half the superficies of England. It is a basin or amphitheatre, varied with fertile plains, and hills less remarkable for elevation than for beauty; and bounded on all sides by mountains, covered with magnificent remains of the ancient Hercynian (now the Black) forest. The Elbe, rising at the foot of the Reichengebirge, sweeps through its northern provinces; and at the distance of some leagues before it falls through the gorges of the mountains into Saxony, is joined by the Moldau, the second of the many Bohemian rivers in importance: the Moldau divides the kingdom into two nearly equal portions, and at about its centre washes the walls of Prague. Bohemia comprises many considerable towns; each of which, as well as many villages, was defended, in the times we are treating of, by its castle, the abode of some baronial or knightly proprietor of the soil.

"Prague", writes the historian, "the residence of the court, and an archbishop's see, a city inferior neither in size nor in splendour to Florence, is divided into three parts, Little, Old, and New Prague. Little Prague lies on the left bank of the Moldau, at the foot of a hill, on which are seated the Royal Court (or Castle of St. Wenceslaus), and the magnificent cathedral of St. Vitus. Opposite, more on a level with the river, lies Old Prague, everywhere enriched with noble buildings; among them the guildhall, the law courts, the senate house, and the university, founded by Charles the Fourth, are wonderfully admired. Old Prague is joined to Little Prague by a stone bridge of twenty-four arches. A deep moat, flanked on both sides by a wall, and easily filled with water from the river, divides Old from New Prague. The latter, in itself a large city, extends to three adjacent hills, St. Charles's, St. Catherine's, and Wisgrade: this last is surmounted by a fortress, also enclosing a college, whose provost is chancellor of the kingdom, and a prince".

Historians are unanimous in extolling the magnificence of the churches and monasteries at this period in Bohemia. Aeneas Sylvius, who saw them fresh from the glorious monuments of his native Italy, is excelled by none in his admiration. "I think", he writes, "that no other kingdom in all Europe was in our times so thickly set with such noble ecclesiastical structures. The churches, of surprising loftiness and dimensions, were roofed with arches of stonework. Their stately altars groaned under the weight of the gold and silver shrines which enclosed the relics of the saints; the priests' vestments were inwrought with pearls; the furniture was of the costliest description; light was admitted through tall and spacious glass windows, admirable both for the workmanship and the beauty of the material. Nor was all this magnificence confined to cities and towns: it met the eye of the wondering stranger even in villages".

He goes on to describe in particular the splendid monastery of the Royal Court. "Besides the main building, the dormitory surrounded with elaborate and beautiful carvings, and the other apartments for the inmates, all on a scale of uncommon grandeur, there was a quadrangular cloister, called the circuit, which enclosed a garden of considerable extent. On the walls of this cloister, or piazza, were inscribed in capital letters the 6ntire contents of both the Old and New Testaments, from the beginning of Genesis to the Apocalypse; the characters gradually enlarging in proportion to their height above the eye, so as to allow of the whole being read with ease from below".

Besides the church of St. Vitus, the Royal Court contained, among others, the basilica of St. Mary, the place of sepulture of the Bohemian kings, a magnificent edifice, surrounded by seven chapels, each of them as large as an ordinary church. These were the noble foundations of Elizabeth of Bohemia, mother of the emperor Charles the Fourth. Within the circuit of the castle of Wisgrade, in the New Town, were included no less than fourteen churches, besides the cathedral, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. The

castle itself was of remarkable antiquity and splendour, having been founded in the seventh century by Croccus, second Duke of Bohemia, and enlarged or adorned by many later sovereigns.

Four thousand armed followers entered Prague with Ziska and Hussinecz. The Hussites, already more numerous in that city than their opponents, set no bounds to the confidence inspired by the arrival of the popular leaders. In vain the magistrates exerted themselves to restrain the seditious passions of the multitude. The *Cup*, either real or represented, had been assumed as the expressive symbol of the Hussite cause and party. It was now insultingly paraded through the streets, in defiance of a public prohibition. The dwelling of a priest, who attempted to restrain the frantic rage of the people, was sacked; according to some accounts, the owner himself killed. If we believe this murder to have been really perpetrated, and, as is also alleged, by the hand of Ziska, we must likewise credit what is added on the same authority, viz. that his provocation, or excuse, was an atrocious outrage committed by this priest on the person of his sister, a nun in a convent at Prague. It seems more probable, however, that the immediate instigator and director of this day's horrors was John, a Praemonstratensian monk, who had assumed the character of ringleader of the ignorant and excited populace.

By this time the senators had assembled, and were deliberating with the magistrates in the town-hall, on the means of arresting the tumult. Thither the mob of Hussites immediately hastened. They demanded the release of some persons who had been imprisoned for administering or receiving the wine in the communion. The senators refused; and at the moment when this answer was returned, a stone, thrown from a window, struck the monk, who had presented himself in front of the rioters, exhibiting a banner on which was represented the eucharistic cup. Instantly the doors were forced, the crowd rushed in, and fell upon the senators, of whom five, with one of the judges and his attendant, were thrown from the windows, and their destruction completed by the javelins, clubs, poignards, or whatever weapons the mob below were armed with. The officer in command of the garrison at the castle of Wisgrade came down against the revolters at the head of three hundred horse, but was presently glad to seek safety for himself and his men within the walls of the fortress. The next objects to which the rage of the populace was directed, were the monasteries. The convent of the Carmelites, founded by Charles IV, and the beautiful chartreuse in the Old Town, called *the Garden of Mary,* the foundation of his father, John, surnamed "The Blind", were among the first to be attacked; the inmates having distinguished themselves by their zeal in the prosecution of Huss and Jerome at Constance. The priority of destruction given to these establishments had most likely another motive—the possession of the rich booty and good cheer they were known to contain. The insurgents regaled themselves with the copious contents of the conventual cellars; they then plundered and set fire to the buildings. The prior of the Carthusians, of whose zeal for popery we may judge by the appellation of the *Scourge of Heretics,* given him by his party, had already escaped into Moravia: his brethren were unhappy in not having followed his example. They were crowned with thorns, and in that state dragged through the streets, while a drunken artisan in the habit of a priest went before, leaping, and flourishing in his hand the sacred cup. At the bridge of Prague the mob quarrelled about the disposing of their captives; some wanting to drown them in the river, others determined to spare their lives. The parties fought; many were wounded, and two killed. The more humane faction proving victorious, the poor Carthusians were lodged in prison, and afterwards allowed to follow their prior. Nor was this the only quarrel among the insurgent party, which that day ended in blood. The atrocities we have described were the work of the men of the New Town, those of the Old Town having, in violation of a promise given, failed to join them. A combat in which blood flowed abundantly was the consequence: from that time the two towns remained violently opposed to each other. No certain evidence appears that in any of these deplorable excesses Ziska took part.

King Wenceslaus was at dinner, when news was brought him of the disturbances in his capital. He rose, as well he might, in consternation from the table. Exclamations and remarks proceeded from all sides for the court of the easy monarch had little of the restraint usual in royal palaces. Among others who spoke their sentiments, the king's cupbearer was heard to say, that he foresaw all which had happened. The king, either stung by the reproof of his own supineness implied in the words, or suspecting the poor cup-bearer to be privy to the plots of the insurgents, took him by the hair, threw him on the ground, and would have slain him with his dagger, had not the bystanders arrested the blow. At the same instant, Wenceslaus was seized with a fit of apoplexy; and after lingering a few days, he expired. Those historians who take pleasure in painting him as a monster, mention with real or affected horror his dying cries; his "roaring", as they term it, "like a wounded lion". It is easy to imagine that the king shrank from death,

were it merely through dread of leaving his kingdom in so lamentable a state of anarchy: hence his cries are explained by more favourable chroniclers, as invocations of his absent brother, and impatient calls on the neighbouring princes for aid.

After the embalming of the body, on the decease of a Bohemian prince, it was the custom to carry it in a pompous funeral procession to the principal churches of the capital, before depositing it in its final resting-place. In the instance of Wenceslaus this solemnity was necessarily omitted, because a great part of the city was occupied by the insurgents. The corpse was therefore borne directly to the church of St. Vitus, in the Royal Court, and thence to the burial-place of the kings in the adjacent basilica. There was Wenceslaus laid with his fathers. But in the dreadful times that ensued, the monastery was destroyed, the royal sepulchres violated, and the remains of the Bohemian kings disinterred and thrown into the river. The body of Wenceslaus was picked up by a fisherman, to whom the king had shown kindness, and concealed by him in his house. Many years afterwards, when Bohemia had returned to a more settled state, it was restored, and deposited in the royal cemetery with the accustomed solemnities.

Wenceslaus died childless, and Sigismund, who claimed the crown by natural succession, was in no condition to assume it in the face of an armed and angry people. In vain the widowed queen implored his aid: he was, in his kingdom of Hungary, too much occupied with endeavouring to check the progress of his old enemies the victorious Turks, to concern himself with any less urgent affairs. Little Prague, separated from the Old and New Towns by the Moldau, remained still firm in its attachment to the Roman religion. Thither the queen removed, hoping to find safety in the citadel. She at the same time caused some other defensible points in that quarter to be garrisoned, as the church of St. Thomas, the episcopal palace, and an edifice called the Saxenhausen: the last, which commanded the bridge, she strengthened by the addition of wooden towers and gates.

Little formidable as Wenceslaus was reckoned while living, his death rapidly precipitated the impending civil war. After the massacre of the senators, the shadow of royal authority which surrounded his dying bed had been sufficient to force the Hussites for a time to suspend their violence, and even to implore his clemency. His decease was the signal for acts provoked by papal tyranny, which show by their enormity how oppressive that tyranny must have been. All the restraints, not only of religion, in whose abused name these excesses were perpetrated, but of decency and humanity, were now broken through. The populace of Prague, swelled by hourly arrivals from the provinces, crying out that the monks and orthodox clergy were lazy, useless beings, who fattened like hogs in their styes, at the general expense, ran madly from quarter to quarter, wherever the richest monasteries and most splendid churches were to be found. If their possessors were notorious for papal zeal, or hesitated to conform their services to the Hussite model, the work of destruction was instantly begun; the altars were stripped, the organs broken in pieces, the images and carved work brutally disfigured. The more precious objects, such as the rich sacerdotal vestments, statues of gold and silver, rosaries, pixes, &c., the rioters carried off. They greased their boots with the sacred chrism, they cut in pieces the pictures, or, if too high to be reached, threw dirt upon them to deface them. A list is given of not less than fourteen monasteries, said to have been plundered and burnt at Prague in the year 1419. But as nearly one half of these, viz. those of the Benedictines, of the Praemonstratensians, of the Eremites of St. Augustine, of the Knights of Malta, of the Vestals of Penitence of St. Mary Magdalene, appear to have stood in Little Prague, there seems an error at least in the date; for that division of the city did not fall into the hands of the insurgent party till the beginning of the year 1420. The following, among others in the New Town, had already met with the same fate; viz. the convent of the Dominicans, or Friars Preachers, that of the Daughters of St. Claire of the order of St. Francis, one of the monks of the same order, one of the Teutonic Knights. Nor were the inmates more the objects of pity than their houses. Few of either sex were left alive, except such as escaped the popular fury by taking refuge with friends or relations, or consented to join the party of their assailants: and those few were only allowed the alternative of banishment. Among the sumptuous edifices with which Charles IV, its founder, ornamented the New Town, was the monastery of St. Jerome: he established in it a community of Benedictines of Slavonia, and obtained for them from the pope the privilege of performing divine service in the Slavonian language. The abbot of this fraternity, seeing the Hussites approach, went forth with his monks; and all, kneeling before them, promised, on condition of being spared, to administer the communion under the two kinds. The abbot's sincerity was instantly put to the test; a score of the fierce military rabble demanded, and received, the sacred elements from his hands upon the spot, armed as they were with their bows, halberds, clubs, and other weapons.

How far Ziska was personally concerned in the perpetration of these enormities, it is hard to determine. He at least connived at them—partly, perhaps, from another motive, not less powerful than his hatred of the ecclesiastics: the wealth of these establishments not only offered a temptation, as the means of carrying on the war against the papists, but by gratifying the cupidity of his followers, both augmented their numbers and heightened their audacity.

Nor is it easy to draw the line between the several parties into which the insurgents were divided. Hitherto we have employed the term *Hussites* as the collective designation commonly applied by historians to all alike. But this word it is now time to drop; or, at the least, to show in what sense it will be hereafter used. This is necessary, both for the sake of precision, and in justice to the memory of John Huss, whose name ought not to be coupled with the perpetration of deeds, which, it is certain, his humane and pious nature would have shrunk from with horror. Four parties are frequently mentioned in the original narratives,—the *Calixtines*, the *Taborites*, the *Orebites*, lastly, those who, for a reason hereafter to appear, styled themselves *Orphans*. All alike assumed, for the original basis of their religious freedom, the use of the cup by the laity; but the Calixtines alone, who thence derived their name (i. *e*. from *calix*, Lat. a cup) continued to regard this as their chief distinctive object. Even the Calixtines however demanded, besides communion under the two species, the concession of three other points:—namely, free preaching of the word, public correction of morals by the use of church discipline, and the appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues to charitable or other general uses—the most moderate and rational party, they consisted chiefly of the more educated classes in Prague, or of the provincial nobility. As to the other three, their tenets, or demands, are not with more difficulty to be distinguished one from another, than each from itself at different stages of development. As the Calixtines, notwithstanding their common acknowledgment of the *four points*, held many shades of opinion among themselves, more or less distinguishable from the corrupt Catholicism of the time, so the opinions of the other three ranged over the whole space between the tenets of the sober Independents of our own day, and those of the wildest fanatical sects of Cromwell's republic, or the Anabaptists of Munster. Equal obscurity surrounds the religious principles of Ziska himself. Perhaps the stern soldier had no very clear notions of doctrine: perhaps, since he aspired to be—and, in effect, became—the head of the whole heterogeneous body of anti-catholics, he judged it prudent to avoid all nice definitions of his faith. One terrible and inexplicable trait in his conduct deepens this obscurity: he regarded with the like merciless intolerance, those who went a little beyond what he approved in their deviation from Romish orthodoxy, and the Romanists themselves.

The insurgents were now masters of nearly the whole of Prague on the right bank of the river; the inhabitants of the Old Town, being mostly Catholics, had quitted it, and sought safety in the provinces: of the New Town all was theirs, except the castle of Wisgrade. That fortress was feebly garrisoned; it surrendered to them after a brief but fierce assault. Their next attempt was upon the Little Town. Here they met with more serious resistance. For one entire day, with Ziska and Hussinecz at their head, the insurgent forces were kept at bay by the brave garrison of the Saxenhausen. This temporary check is attributed by the chroniclers chiefly to the bombards employed by the garrison—a kind of warlike machine now forgotten, but at that period new, at least in Bohemia.

When night came, and the garrison could no longer aim their missiles with precision, the attack was pressed with redoubled fury. An eye-witness declares, that never was a more frightful carnage beheld than in this nocturnal conflict. At length the post was carried. The like success attended the assailants at the other two—the church of St. Thomas and the bishop's palace. And now the way to the citadel of St. Wenceslaus was defended only by the scattered fugitives from the other three garrisons. Attended by Ulric Rosemberg, the only one of all the Bohemian nobles who seems to have aided her in this crisis of peril and bereavement, the affrighted queen with difficulty escaped. Her fears rf immediate capture were, however, needless the fortress defied every effort of the besiegers. A reinforcement arriving from Sigismund, they were forced down the hill into the town. Seizing this breathing-time, some of the more powerful nobles, struck with horror at the state of their capital, endeavoured to reconcile the combatants, and succeeded in persuading them, on both sides, to agree to a truce of four months. The following were the conditions of this armistice:—that either party should be free to communicate in the Eucharist in their own way, without molestation from the other; that the Taborites should leave the remaining convents undisturbed ; that the castle of Wisgrade should be restored to the imperialists; and that the citizens should send an embassy to Sigismund, to treat with him of their affairs.

Some little respite was thus obtained for Prague, but for Prague alone. The Taborites withdrew; the senate and magistrates resumed their functions. But those Catholics who had left the city from fear of the Hussites, deferred their return till the arrival of the emperor, who had promised soon to enter Bohemia. Unhappily all hope of peace was again cut off, by his adding in a letter which conveyed that intelligence, that he intended, when he came, to govern as his father Charles IV had governed. The reformers, remembering that the late emperor, in return for the pope's assistance in his elevation to the empire, had submitted to be the slavish minister of Romish persecution, looked upon this as a menace directed against themselves. Assuming it as a pretext, they continued their ravages, merely transferring the scene of military violence from Prague to the provinces.

Among the first monasteries destroyed without the walls of Prague, was that of Chizek. Its destruction was the work of the Taborite party belonging to the town itself; being the majority, they rose against their fellow-townsmen of the opposite faction, murdered, or expelled them. The popish historian affirms, that the alternative was proposed to the monks of communion in the two kinds, or death; when they cheerfully chose death, and were massacred, and their monastery burned to the ground. The same author relates the destruction about the same time of the town of Aust, belonging to Ulric Rosemberg, a nobleman then zealous for popery. It was near Mount Tabor—too near, in Ziska's opinion, for the security of his stronghold. He entered it at the dead of night, in carnival time, and in the absence of Rosemberg. The miserable inhabitants were roused from sleep to perish by the sword, to be consumed with their blazing houses, or crushed beneath the ruins. Their monastery, an establishment of Dominicans, was razed, and the friars included in the general slaughter. "I myself", adds the historian, "have wept over the remains of this city, among which corn now grows". It would be a wearisome, as well as a painful task, to describe minutely the destruction of so many of these retreats—often, doubtless, of grovelling superstition, in some instances of luxury and vice; but frequently, also, of penitence and piety. The following are among the religious houses destroyed at this period—the first drops of the vast rain of ruin : a convent of Praemonstratensian monks at Midolitz; one of nuns of the same order, and another of Benedictine monks, at Laung; two convents of Cistercians, one of either sex, at Nepomuck; a vast and wealthy house of the same order at Crumlau. To all of these, and to hundreds after them, the same description applies. It recurs with sickening frequency in the pages of the historians; but take it in a few words, as given by the Jesuit Balbi: he is speaking of the magnificent Cistercian convent at Graetz. "The Orebites", says the historian, "carried off the spoils; with which their chief paid his troops. It was not a combat, but a butchery. The monastery was reduced to ashes, and the monks perished by the sword and by the flame". These more direct ways of murdering the victims of popular vengeance were not always chosen: the Dominicans of Glattau were imprisoned, and left to die of hunger; at Crumlau, the Cistercians were hanged upon the lindens in their garden. This last villany was perpetrated by the Orebites.

Hardly any difference beyond the name appears to have existed between the Orebites and the Taborites, unless it be found in the greater eagerness of the former for bloodshed. The two factions mostly engaged in their expeditions separately, only uniting for greater strength in case of need. The Orebites were chiefly peasants, and being regarded by their Taborite brethren with some degree of contempt, made it a point of honour not to fall behind the latter in their proofs of zeal for the common cause. All authors who have written of those miserable times, whether Catholic, Hussite, or Protestant, agree in yielding, upon the whole, the palm of ferocity to the Orebites.

Defenceless as were, in most instances, the religious houses, and indifferently prepared as even the towns were for resistance, a severe retaliation sometimes overtook the aggressors. One Hinek of Lichtenberg was leader in the attack upon Graetz. On retiring from the place he was pursued by the inhabitants, who by this time had recovered from their surprise and terror. They retook the booty, killed many of Hinek's people, and some whom they made prisoners they afterwards hanged; an "apostate" priest, the instigator of the expedition, suffered the more terrible punishment of burning. The Taborites were exposed to severe reprisals from the vengeance of the Kuttenbergers, who wrought in the silver mines of the mountainous districts bordering on their city of refuge. These men were Germans, bigoted papists, and remarkable, for strength and a savage disposition. They hunted the Taborites with the fury and perseverance of bloodhounds; seized, and threw them into the deep pits with which their district abounded.

It would be unjust to impute to Ziska, or to his influence, all the atrocities perpetrated by those who apparently made common cause with him. The whole of Bohemia was in a state of anarchy, and everywhere traversed by bodies of insurgents; many of them were banditti, assuming—but not always—religion as the pretext of their villanies. He, nevertheless, beheld this lawless condition of his country with satisfaction, for it offered materials and instruments suited to his purpose. Meantime, it was no part of his intention to be outdone in violence and cruelty. His resolution, on the contrary, at quitting Prague, was to pursue an inflexible course of vengeance. It was shortly after that event that he, too, suffered in his own person some small share of the miseries he inflicted. While besieging the fortress of Rabi, he had placed himself on a rising ground at the foot of a tree, for the purpose of observing the movements of the besieged, and at the same time directing those of his own troops. A stone, launched from a machine on the wall, striking the tree, shivered it to atoms, when one of the fragments entered his remaining eye, and he was made wholly and irrecoverably blind. But neither the abilities, the amazing energy, nor the inflexible temper of this extraordinary man, were at all affected by the accident. He continued the siege; took, and burnt the town; and then returned to Prague to have his wound healed.

Being unprepared to enter Bohemia, Sigismund assembled a diet at Brün in Moravia, to consider the means of appeasing the troubles in that country. He arrived at Brün in the middle of December, 1420, accompanied by Queen Sophia the widow of Wenceslaus, by the pope's legate, several Hungarian prelates, and a great concourse of nobles. The nobility, magistrates, and clergy of Prague, in obedience to the emperor's summons, soon followed. The satisfaction expressed on both sides at the first meeting of the emperor with the representatives of his new kingdom, seemed to promise a favourable issue to the deliberations of the diet. These hopes, however, were a little clouded when, the next day, the Bohemian clergy publicly administered the communion under the two species to all who would receive it. Again those expectations appeared to revive, when the representatives of the Bohemian people asked pardon of the emperor-king, in their name, and promised him allegiance. They even earnestly entreated Sigismund to appear without delay at Prague, to take possession of his inheritance, and, in person, put an end to the troubles. But the conditions on which they proffered the general submission deprived it, in Sigismund's estimation, of much of its value: they demanded liberty, without regard to human traditions, to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist according to Christ's institution, and that no ecclesiastic should be allowed to interfere in secular affairs. With these demands were mixed praises of John Huss, and lamentations over his and Jerome's tragic end; "by which", said they, "our martyrs have won more favour with God than St. Peter himself". Sigismund only smiled and replied—dissembling, as he well knew how, his displeasure—"My dear Bohemians, let us leave that matter. We are not here in a general council. Those complaints might have suited Constance; they are out of place at Brün. With regard to the business now on hand,—the succession to the crown,—as you are willing, you say, to receive me, expect me shortly to come and take possession of my right. In the meantime, I require you to remove the chains and barricades from the streets of Prague; to deposit your machines of war in the fortress of Wisgrade; to level the ramparts and entrenchments you raised against it after my brother's death; to leave the monks and nuns that remain in quiet; and, dismissing the men you have placed in command of the strongholds, especially of Wisgrade, to admit governors of my appointment. Upon these conditions, but not otherwise, I consent to a general amnesty and oblivion of the past; and am willing to come and govern Bohemia as the father of his country should—after the model, namely, of my father, Charles IV".

On the return of the deputation to Prague, all was done as Sigismund had required. The Romish party, especially the Germans who were there, assumed a tone of insolent triumph; the ecclesiastics who had fled and hid themselves in the provinces returned. On the other hand, the lately triumphant Hussites quitted the capital in consternation, and sought the camp of Ziska, or the quarters of Hussinecz. Sigismund, on hearing of the ready submission of Prague, and the departure of the Hussites, sent to thank the citizens for their obedience, and secretly enjoined the chiefs of the Romish party never to yield to their adversaries, but utterly to root them out. Less than this, as the emperor was now expected immediately to enter Bohemia at the head of an army, was signal sufficient for those who had so cruelly suffered, to fall upon their enemies with all the eager fury of revenge, whenever an opportunity offered. Combats, massacres, and devastation were renewed in all their horrors. What the reformers were to expect from the clemency of Sigismund, he now taught them by a terrible example.

Thinking it still unsafe to appear at Prague, the emperor proceeded from Brim to Breslau, the capital of Silesia. Resolved to punish the inhabitants of that city for an insurrection which had broken out

there some time before, he gave way to the cruel severity of his earlier years. The execution of twelve of the ringleaders appears to have steeled him for the more dreadful punishment of an offender of a sort deemed more heinous. There came to Breslau one John Crasa, a priest, sent by the Calixtines of Prague, to solicit the emperor for permission to administer the communion under the two kinds. Ferdinand, bishop of Lucca, the pope's nuncio, was likewise there. By his order Crasa was imprisoned. In his examination the priest acknowledged, that he approved the opinions of John Huss, and warmly eulogized the martyr himself. He was sentenced to be torn limb from limb by four horses, in the streets of Breslau, and his remains to be burnt. Sigismund's zeal for the destruction of this unhappy man is said to have been even more ardent than the legate's. After this characteristic preliminary, the nuncio published at Breslau Martin V's crusade against the Hussites; and active measures were instantly adopted, throughout the empire, to carry it into effect.

The news of these events raised a fresh storm in Bohemia. The university and inhabitants of Prague assembled, and bound themselves by an oath never to receive for their king the enemy of their country, their language, and religion; and to defend to the death the right to communicate in the sacrament according to their consciences. In this solemn engagement the provincial towns were invited to join; and the strife of arms was renewed with greater fury than ever. Repulsed in several attempts to seize the castle of St. Wenceslaus, the anti-catholics returned to their former practice of demolishing the convents and massacring their helpless inhabitants. Ziska, summoned to take charge of the capital, fell in, upon his march thither, with an advance party of horse under the command of the Archduke Albert of Austria, and routed it. Near the entrance to Prague, some of his adherents were busy as he went by in the sack of a monastery. "Brother John", cried they, with a familiarity he rather encouraged than repressed—for it was part of the secret of his wonderful influence with his followers, and hence of his invariable success—"Brother John, are you satisfied with the treat we are giving these anointed grimaces?" Ziska, pointing to the basilica of St. Wenceslaus, towering in the distance, replied, "What has persuaded you to spare so long yon haunt of baldheads?" "Shame to us!" was the answer; "we met with a rebuff there yesterday. But if once it falls into our hands, be sure we will not leave one stone upon another".

And soon was that promise fulfilled. Ziska had with him no more than about thirty horse. But these, with that "tower of strength" which resided in his own name, were enough to warrant a repetition of the attempt. He failed, indeed, to get possession of the fortress; but the monastery was destroyed; the magnificent chapel of St. Wenceslaus, built all of jasper inlaid with gold, was pillaged and broken down, the royal sepulchres rifled, and the bodies of Wenceslaus and his predecessors thrown into the river.

Ziska returned to Tabor to bring up his forces for the defence of Prague. As usual, havoc and bloodshed marked his track. Leaving Hussinecz in charge of the city of refuge, he hastened back to the capital. While halting in a small plain, he was attacked by a corps of the imperial cavalry, who had been concealed in the surrounding woods. They were quickly beaten off, and Ziska entered Prague in triumph. The clergy, the magistrates, and citizens, who had come out to meet their champion, conducted him in with hymns of thankfulness and defiance. Success and forethought seldom go together. While Ziska's troops were regaling themselves on the rich provisions taken from the plundered convents, or in drunken bands traversed the town, a nobleman of the opposite party, named Michaletz, undertook to throw succours into the fortress of Wisgrade. The Taborites, however, mustered in sufficient force to defeat the enterprise, and only Michaletz and three of his followers succeeded in making good their entrance. Hussite parties of inferior note continued to come in, for the purpose of giving or of finding support in the capital—the centre of the approaching struggle—their track, according to custom, marked by fire and massacre. On the other side, the greater part of the nobility and Catholics, quitting Prague, either voluntarily or by compulsion, assembled their vassals, and seizing several fortified places in the vicinity, held them for the emperor.

Meantime active preparations went on in Prague, both against Sigismund, and against those still within the city who were, or were suspected to be, faithful in their allegiance. To defend the New Town against the sallies of the imperial garrison in Wisgrade, the citizens employed themselves night and day in sinking a ditch before the fortress; women and children working beside their husbands and fathers, or taking their places when the latter were called away to the conflict. Intrenchments were thrown up round those quarters most open to attack; the inhabitants cut down the trees of their gardens and public walks, wherever they were likely to cover the approach of the enemy; and garrisoned every point by which it

seemed possible to introduce supplies into the citadel. Such was the attitude in which the Bohemians waited the arrival of their king.

CHAPTER XI.

SIEGE OF PRAGUE.—SIGISMUND'S RETREAT.—FURY OF ZISKA. SIGISMUND RETURNS. HIS DEFEAT AND FLIGHT. FANATICISM OF THE TABORITES.—HUSSITE DISPUTES.—SANGUINARY PROCEEDINGS OF ZISKA AND OTHERS.—JOHN THE PRAEMONSTRATENSIAN.— ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIGISMUND.

IT was the middle of June, 1420, when the Emperor Sigismund began his march towards Prague, at the head of an army of 140,000 men, commanded by the most illustrious and warlike princes of the empire. The frontier town of Bohemia, on the side of Silesia, is Konigsgraetz. On arriving there, he sent word to the citizens of Prague to prepare to receive their king, as they had promised; at the same time commanding them once more, in testimony of obedience, to remove the barricades from their streets, and carry their arms and military engines into the citadels. This summons the inhabitants answered only by redoubling their exertions to strengthen the defences of the town, and provide themselves with necessaries for a siege. At Kuttenberg the emperor was joined by the German miners. At Leutmeritz, he was joyfully welcomed, and supplied with provisions for his army; in return, he gratified its orthodox inhabitants with the execution of twenty-four Hussites, whom he ordered to be thrown into the river, in retaliation, it was said, for the recent burning of some monks of Prague. Strange r that during his long life of infinite experience in the knowledge and government of mankind, this able sovereign should not have learned the worse than uselessness of these

"Bloody instructions, which being taught, return

To plague the inventor."

On the 30th of June, the imperial forces appeared before Prague, and on the 11th of July, the first assault was made, at once from the fortresses of St. Wenceslaus and Wisgrade, in both of which the emperor had garrisons, and from the open heights above the town. There was one eminence, to the

eastward, so completely commanding the place, that its occupation by the imperialists would have placed that whole quarter at their mercy. Here Ziska had constructed works of great strength, and now occupied the post himself with his Taborites. Much blood had already flowed in various skirmishes and encounters, chiefly at the Saxenhausen and in the vicinity of the bridge, when the emperor ordered his Saxons, the bravest of the imperial troops, to storm Ziska's position. The attempt proved partially successful. In spite of the most determined resistance, the imperialists forced the main entrenchments. The Taborites fought as men fight in the last extremity, for their altars and their hearths; and conspicuous among the group who bravely supported their blind chieftain, were two women: they refused to save their lives by a surrender, and were cut down. A few rustics—of whom one, a vinedresser, noted for his Herculean frame and indomitable courage, that day won special mention in the history of the time—were all that remained to oppose the overwhelming advance of the Saxons, when a party of the men of Prague, observing the unequal contest, advanced to their support. Led by a priest who, for a standard held high with one hand the sacramental cup, and with the other furiously rang a bell to animate the soldiers, they ascended the steep. The contest now raged anew, on less unequal terms. The imperialists, in spite of reinforcements continually sent up by Sigismund—himself a spectator of the fight—were repulsed and driven down the hill (since called "Ziska's hill"), with the loss of their bravest men. The battle lasted all the day. It deprived Ziska of half his Taborites; bub it decided the fate of the campaign.

Discouraged by repeated failure, and by a disastrous fire which broke out in his camp, Sigismund raised the siege, after it had continued just one month. As he remained master of Little Prague, and consequently of the fortress of St. Wenceslaus, where the sovereigns of Bohemia were crowned, he caused the ceremony of his coronation to be performed there by Archbishop Conrad; and prepared for his departure by an act little calculated to ingratiate him with his new subjects. Using for a pretext the expenses of the war, but probably also to supply his general wants—at all times urgent—he seized and carried off the contents of the national treasuries. The accumulations of his father and brother, at Carlstein and elsewhere, even the crown jewels—which Queen Sophia had, for safety, deposited in that fortress—might have been abstracted with but little remark. But both patriotism and religious reverence were justly offended when the gold and silver plates were stripped from the tombs of the saints in the royal sanctuary: and when the imperial relics, and the royal towns of Bohemia were pledged, to supply pay for the defeated Germans.

The Emperor's losses did not end with his discomfiture and retreat from Prague. Ziska hung upon his rear, cut off in detail his flying columns, and enriched his Taborites with imperial spoil. "We have been defeated", wrote the duke of Bavaria, "with the loss of our troops, our arms, our machines and instruments of war, our provisions and baggage. The greater part of our men have perished by the sword and by the miseries of flight. The most deplorable fatality has attended all our measures". Leaving his generals in Moravia to collect the scattered remains of his host and raise new forces, Sigismund returned into Hungary.

Flushed with victory—his thirst for vengeance upon the adherents of that religious system to which he attributed all the miseries of his country, inflamed by growing experience of power to gratify it—again Ziska burst in fury upon the Catholics in the provinces. His present resolution was nothing less than to destroy the images and pictures in all the churches, to massacre or drive away the whole fraternity of monks, and utterly to exclude the Romish service from Bohemia. Burning had now become his favourite means of punishment for obstinate ecclesiastics and inmates of religious houses; it continued, however, to be occasionally exchanged for any other mode of death which cruelty or the convenience of the moment might suggest. A monk, styled bishop of Nicopolis, and suffragan of the archbishop of Prague, had incurred Ziska's displeasure, by first joining, and afterwards deserting the Taborite party: this poor ecclesiastic, with two of his priests, he caused to be drowned. The inhabitants of Prachavitz, where he had been educated, having refused, when summoned, to submit to him, and imprudently added to their refusal some expressions of contempt, he took the town by assault; and, according to some accounts, massacred the whole of the inhabitants. Others state that, after putting to the sword all who had attempted any defence, he proceeded to the church, where the rest of the population, including the clergy, had taken refuge; turned out the women and children, and then closing the doors, ordered the building to be set on fire. Humanity clings to the belief that historians, both Romish and Protestant, are misled by popular exaggeration, when they agree in asserting, that more than 800 persons perished on this occasion in the flames.

At Prague the Taborites, under the command of Hussinecz, joined by the Orebites and other reinforcements from the provincial towns, renewed the siege of Wisgrade. Sigismund, whose hold upon Bohemia mainly depended on the possession of that fortress, hastened his return to Moravia, where his generals had been employed in organizing a second army; and again advanced to its relief. He halted, as before, at Kuttenberg; and while his hussars wasted the country round with a fury rivalling that of Ziska himself, sent proposals of peace to the people of Prague. But concessions were required on both sides that neither would consent to make; the result was, consequently, increased irritation, and further occasion given the insurgents to reproach the emperor as the manifest foe of their country and their religion. He was fulfilling, they said, to the letter a prediction of his father's, that one of his two sons would be the destroyer of the capital and kingdom, which he had himself improved with so much care and at so much cost

Before Sigismund made his second appearance at the gates of Prague, Wisgrade had been reduced to the utmost extremity. At length, on the 31st of October, the famished garrison beheld the imperial columns advancing over the adjacent heights. Conspicuous at their head appeared the majestic figure of Sigismund. Raising his sword, he pointed to the enemy, signifying that they were to sally out upon them, while he himself attacked their entrenchments on the other side. Not a weapon left its scabbard! They had promised to surrender on a certain day, named by the emperor himself, if not previously relieved by him; the day was come, and they steadily refused to violate their engagement. The officers who surrounded the emperor, perceiving that the garrison made no attempt at defence, and at the same time, that the enemy's position was too strong to be forced, advised him to retire, and not uselessly expose his person and his army. "Not yet", he exclaimed, "I mean first to have a turn with yonder flail-bearers". The governor of Moravia—one of those who had counselled a retreat—remarked that those flails, in such hands, were formidable weapons. "You think so", retorted the emperor, "because you Moravians are cowards". At this reproach the governor and a dozen other officers dismounted. "Your Majesty shall see", said they, "that we are not afraid to go where you yourself will not follow". With these words, throwing themselves upon the lines, they were to a man cut to pieces, or struck down by those rude Taborite weapons which the emperor had held in so great contempt. The fight now became general. The invaders were routed, and Sigismund himself submitted to be among those who gladly saved their lives by a precipitate flight. No quarter was given, no prisoners taken by the pursuers. The flower of the Hungarian and Moravian nobility, to the number of three hundred, perished; and the bodies of the slain lay for many days a prey to dogs, and polluting the atmosphere; for the Hussites disdained to afford graves to the vassals of the pope. The fortress of Wisgrade was demolished, together with its cathedral and fourteen other churches. Only some few fragments were left, and the spot was made a garden of kitchen herbs. A second time Sigismund added to the ignominy of flight, the worse disgrace of cruelty and ravage in a land he claimed for his own.

The presence of an urgent common danger was the only tie which held together the discordant factions of the Bohemians. Sigismund had not passed the frontier before Calixtines and Taborites —the inhabitants of the Old town and those of the New—began violently to dispute about their peculiar interests, aims, and dogmas. A few persons of rank and station, capable of more sober views, having regained in some degree their natural influence, proposed a conference between the two great parties for the arrangement of their religious differences. The voluminous series of articles brought forward at this meeting by the Taborites, show a degree of fanaticism as extreme as the Christian world had witnessed in any country or sect. The following propositions are a brief summary of the first ten:—"That this year will be the end of the world, when all sinners and enemies of God will be cut off by various plagues, as predicted, Ecclus. XXXIX. 27—31. That this, consequently, is no season of compassion, but of zeal, and fury, and cruelty, upon God's enemies : that all they are accursed who hesitate to draw the sword, and dip their hands in the blood of the enemies of Christ. That in the approaching time of vengeance, all cities and towns will be overthrown, as were Sodom and Gomorrah : that all persons, of what rank or condition soever, who will not accept the four articles, shall be. trodden under foot by the armies of the Lord: that the Church having been by such means cleansed and made perfect, Christ will descend visibly from heaven and reign over the faithful, and then shall be accomplished what is written in Isaiah LXV. and Apocal. XXI".

When such notions were once caught up by a populace naturally fierce and superstitious, a prey to anarchy, and exasperated by wrong, the savage excesses they were found capable of can excite no surprise in the mind of the student of human nature. These notions tended, in another way, to the aggravation of

the common miseries; and indeed to the total disruption of the remaining bonds of society. Immense multitudes forsook the towns, which they were taught to believe devoted to destruction; bartered their lands and houses for paltry supplies for the moment; and retired for safety to the woods and mountains. Such of these unhappy creatures as survived the effects of want and inclement seasons, returned when the predictions of their prophets had proved false, to find their property in other hands, and to endure the mockery of men wiser in their generation.

Many, however, of the Taborite propositions were of a less pernicious tendency. These related to the ordering of affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the expected millennium; and present a strange mixture of the sensible, the utterly absurd, and the purely ridiculous. Some were directed against auricular confession, purgatory, and the invocation of saints; others regulated the habits of priests and women. The list, as printed in Lenfant, concludes with—"30. That hymns and spiritual songs are to be abolished. 31. That it is not lawful for Christians to eat stuffed meat, nor the flesh of any animal with its blood".

The sane part of the assembly, including the university and all the Calixtines, having objected to these propositions as, in many particulars, erroneous or scandalous, they were for the present withdrawn; and their authors were content to insist that the priests of both parties alike should lay aside their ecclesiastical robes, and officiate at the communion in their ordinary garments—ecclesiastical habits being popish inventions unknown to Christ and his Apostles. "If", retorted Jacobel, "our brethren, the Taborites, are determined to imitate Christ in every point connected with the administration of the Sacrament, let them administer after supper, and begin by washing the feet of all the communicants". That the Taborites so easily yielded on this occasion to the force either of argument or ridicule was, in part, owing to a severe blow the party had lately received in the death of their leader, Nicholas Hussinecz. It was probably for the same reason, that they found themselves unable effectually to resist the Calixtines on the great political question which was now violently agitated between them. This was the choice of a king in the place of Sigismund; or, more correctly, whether any king at all should be allowed in the room of him, whom both parties were equally determined to reject. The Taborites contended that they needed no king, while the Calixtines persisted in offering the crown of Bohemia to the king of Poland. Had Uladislaus listened to the suggestions of resentment rather than of prudence, he would have accepted the offer; for he had just cause of displeasure against Sigismund, on account of the favour shown by the emperor to his enemies, the Teutonic knights. As it was, he wisely declined it; proposing instead his mediation, for the purpose of reconciling them with the emperor and with the Church.

At these discussions Ziska was not present; he felt himself more at home in the pursuit of his chosen occupation, as the exterminator of the Catholics. An unavoidable, however repulsive, part of our undertaking consists in following this domestic Attila through the more striking incidents of his sanguinary career.

At Beraun the inhabitants defended themselves with great bravery, and slew many of their assailants. All that remained alive after the capture of the town were massacred. Their leader, John Chabletz, was flung from the top of a tower, which he with a few others had held against the Taborites, after the rest had surrendered, and was beaten to death with flails where he lay upon the ground. The pastor of Beraun, by name Jaroslaus, with twenty-seven other ecclesiastics, priests and monks, was burned alive. At Broda a church, into which the people had fled for refuge from their assailants, was set on fire, and more than two hundred, including twenty priests, perished in the flames. Among the clergy of this place was one Nicholas Navarre, secretary to the metropolitan church of Prague. This man had distinguished himself by his zeal against Huss; he was taken out of the town and thrown into a barrel of burning pitch. In his treatment of the conventual houses and their inhabitants, Ziska had now ceased to make any distinction between the sexes. At a placed named Brüx, seven nuns of the order of Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene were butchered at the altar. The Jesuit Balbi, who relates this tragical event in his history of Bohemia, adds, that the earth trembled at the sacrilege; that the statue of the Virgin averted its head from the sight; and that the Divine Infant in her arms laid his finger on his lips.

Nor, in spite of his habitual familiarity with them, was Ziska always more merciful towards his own followers. At the taking of Seidlitz, five hundred religious, most of whom had fled thither for safety from other places, were destroyed. By a singular freak of forbearance he, nevertheless, resolved to spare the monastery itself—a structure of uncommon beauty. Strict orders were given to the soldiers not to injure it.

It was, nevertheless, secretly set on fire. Ziska, dissimulating his resentment, and even affecting satisfaction, gave out that if he knew who was the incendiary, he should be rewarded with a considerable sum of money. The cupidity of the perpetrator, a soldier, was not proof against this temptation. He came to Ziska, confessed the fact, and had the money—but in the form of melted silver,-poured down the miserable wretch's throat.

Any attempt to palliate atrocities such as every page of this extraordinary man's history presents, would be an insult to the good sense, as well as an outrage upon the humanity, of the reader. Yet it should be remembered, that the cases were not few, in which some provocation was offered, more positive and immediate than the mere fact, that the victims refused to give up some particulars of the religion which identified them with the persecutors of Huss and Jerome of Prague. Suffering had made enthusiasts of the Catholics also: they both defended themselves in numerous instances with the most obstinate valour, and also naturally retaliated upon their enemies whenever an opportunity offered. The persecution of the Hussites by the Kuttemberg miners has already been mentioned: these wretches not only hunted them down like beasts, but bought them (their price for a priest was five florins, for a lay person one florin) for the pleasure of butchering, or throwing them into pits. The imperialists had one of their garrisons at Jaromir. The officer in command, choosing his time to fall upon the people while they were celebrating the Communion, massacred great numbers. Such occurrences were ordinary enough. But what marked the present case with a character of peculiar horror was, that the profane soldier made his troopers'" horses drink the consecrated wine. At Commotau, where Ziska committed horrible carnage, thousands of men, women, and children being put to the sword, or exterminated by fire, what raised his fury even beyond its ordinary pitch, was the recent cruel execution in that place of some of the Taborites.

It is right, moreover, to bear in mind, that not all the frightful acts of vengeance committed by those who bore the name of Hussites, are to be attributed directly or indirectly to the sightless chieftain. Neither massacre nor pillage was first begun, or at any time exclusively carried on, by him, or under his orders. Much of the work of destruction was performed by parties who had no pretension to a military character. No law was acknowledged in Bohemia, but the will of the strongest or the boldest. Town sallied forth against town, neighbours rose against neighbours. In short, merciless bigotry and raging fanaticism had destroyed all traces, not only of civility, but of humanity, throughout this miserable and ruined kingdom. The elements were all there, and at work, each in its own way, before the master mind of Ziska reduced them to a system. And even then, though for the common defence against the foreign enemy all parties united under his command, yet as soon as the great danger was past, each claimed a right to pursue the work of destruction independently of all the rest. The populace of Prague made frequent inroads into the provinces. In one of these expeditions, they seized upon the castle of Conraditz, or Carlstein, built by Wenceslaus for his own residence, destroyed its library, collected at great cost by Charles IV, a noble patron of learning, and carried off such of its other precious contents as Sigismund himself had spared. During a foray beyond the mountains upon the frontier of Silesia by one Hinko of Podiebrad, a member of a family afterwards distinguished by its share in the public affairs, this monster cut off the noses, ears, and hands of his prisoners, and so dismissed them. After every allowance made, however, a frightful amount of responsibility, even up to this period, remains with Ziska, if there be any approach to truth in the statement, that in the one expedition we have been noticing, as many as thirty religious houses, besides towns and castles, with their inmates of both sexes, were given up by his orders to the flames, and to the sword of the fanatical soldier.

Among the demagogues of Prague, John the Praemonstratensian—the apostate friar, as the Romanist historians call him—occupied a prominent place. The tragical end of this man throws a light upon the state of parties there in the beginning of the year 1421. By his violent and overbearing conduct, he had made himself odious to the Calixtines. The senate, now composed wholly of that more moderate faction, resolved to get rid of him. Their purpose having been betrayed to the friar, he suddenly appeared, in company with a dozen of his stoutest followers, at the town hall, where they were sitting, and threatened to have them thrown from the windows, as their predecessors had been. Thus provoked, the senators seized the monk and his companions, closed their doors, sent for the executioner, and had them beheaded on the spot. The news of this summary proceeding no sooner got abroad, than the populace assembled, assaulted the senators, and murdered eleven of their number. The houses of the victims were plundered, and among other outrages, the valuable library of the university fell a sacrifice to the popular fury.

In July 1421, the inhabitants of Prague assembled a diet of the Bohemian states at Czaslau, at which deputies from the Moravians were likewise invited or required by the victorious Bohemians to attend. The president of this assembly was Ulric of Rosemberg, the same by whose assistance the queen had escaped from the castle of St. Wenceslaus. Archbishop Conrad also took part in the deliberations, for both had by this time joined the party of the Calixtines. The first resolution of this assembly bound the whole kingdom to receive the four Calixtine articles; by the second, it was agreed to abandon Sigismund, and to acknowledge no king but one freely elected by the Bohemians themselves. In the meantime, a regency was appointed for administering the affairs of the kingdom, to consist of twenty persons, viz., four magistrates of Prague, five barons, seven nobles of the second order, with Ziska at their head, and five other persons. As soon as Sigismund became acquainted with the sitting of this convention, he accredited to it two ambassadors. When with difficulty these deputies had obtained a hearing, they began their address to the meeting with some extravagant praises of their imperial master. Rosemberg abruptly cut short this unwelcome eulogy, and demanded their credentials. The correspondence which followed between Sigismund and his revolted Bohemians presents, when the statement on both sides are balanced, as complete a picture as can be desired, of the state of things at that time in Bohemia.

Asserting, in the highest style of sovereignty, his hereditary right to the crown, the emperor professes his regard for its laws, and his sorrow at witnessing the miseries which afflict the kingdom. He proceeds in strange defiance of fact: “It is for this reason that we have always refused, and will refuse, to enforce our rights by *any act of hostility*, because we would not give occasion to strangers to invade the realm”. With regard to religious freedom, he declares that it shall be no wise interfered with; and having again referred to his good intentions towards the country, and the sacrifices he had made for its advantage, he concludes with the following imperial threat: “If there be still those whose object is to exclude us, against all right and equity, from our hereditary kingdom, we are resolved no longer to suffer them. We will engage the aid of our friends and the bordering states, and will apply ourselves vigorously to remedy the public disorders, and defend our just rights, even should we be convinced that it could not be done but by the infliction of irreparable losses upon you and your posterity, besides such disgrace as will expose you to the derision of all the world”.

To this letter the Bohemian diet made answer:

“Most illustrious prince, your majesty having by your letters promised, that if you have been the cause of any trouble or confusion in Bohemia, you are willing to remedy it, we beg leave to submit our grievances as follows.

1. You permitted the council of Constance, to the great dishonour of our country, to burn Master John Huss, who had gone thither upon the faith of a safe-conduct given by yourself.

2. To aggravate more the affront offered to the Bohemian nation, you likewise caused the same punishment to be inflicted on Jerome of Prague, who had appeared at Constance with nearly the same title to the public protection. All sorts of heretics, however far gone from the true principles of the Gospel, had liberty to speak at the council of Constance: only to our meritorious countrymen was that liberty denied.

3. In the same council, your majesty caused a bull of anathema and excommunication to be issued by the pope against Bohemia, in the persons of our countrymen and their priests (or rather preachers), with the view utterly to root them out.

4. This bull your majesty ordered to be published at Breslau, to the shame and ruin of Bohemia.

5. By that publication your majesty excited and stirred up all the circumjacent countries against us, as public heretics.

6. Those foreign states whom your majesty has let loose upon us have carried fire and sword through Bohemia, sparing neither age, sex, nor condition—secular or religious.

7. You ordered at Breslau one of our citizens, by name John Crasa, to be dragged to death by horses, and burnt, for approving the Communion under two kinds.

8. You caused certain citizens of Breslau to be beheaded, and others to be sent into exile, for a fault committed against Wenceslaus, but which he had pardoned.

9. Your majesty has alienated the duchy of Brabant, acquired with enormous labour and expense by Charles IV, and mortgaged the marches of Brandenburg without the consent of the nobility or citizens.

10. You have, also without their consent, caused the crown of Bohemia to be transported out of the kingdom, as if on purpose to expose us to the scoffs and contempt of the world.

11. You have done the same with the sacred relics of the empire, collected at great cost and with much trouble by the same prince, and which did so much honour to the nation.

12. You have besides carried off from the church at Carlstein divers jewels, obtained at great expense and trouble by our ancestors, as well as from various monasteries.

13. You have in like manner, contrary to our laws and customs, alienated the revenue of the royal bounty to widows, orphans, and other deserving persons.

14. In short, your majesty has violated and taken from us our rights and privileges, both in Bohemia and in Moravia; it is you, consequently, that are the cause of the troubles in our country. We therefore pray your majesty:

1. To return to us all these things, and remove this disgrace from Bohemia and Moravia.

2. To restore the provinces which have been detached from the realm without the knowledge of the three orders of its people.

3. To replace the crown of Bohemia, the sacred imperial ornaments, the jewels, the treasures, the public letters and archives, and whatever else was taken from Carlstein.

4. To prevent the neighbouring states, particularly those which belong to Bohemia (viz., Brabant, Lusatia, Brandenburg, Moravia, and Silesia), from troubling us and shedding our blood.

5. We also pray your majesty clearly and distinctly to acquaint us with your resolution respecting the four articles, which we are absolutely resolved never to surrender, any more than our rights, constitutions, privileges, and customs, which the kingdom of Bohemia and Moravia has enjoyed under your predecessors."

The emperor replied:

1. That he was innocent of the deaths of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and of the troubles consequent thereupon; that he had undertaken at the council the defence of his brother Wenceslaus and of the kingdom of Bohemia, and that even his interposition on their behalf had drawn upon him severe annoyances.

2. That the council had not condemned Bohemia itself, but only those persons who, to repair the consequences of their own profligacy, had attacked the monasteries and temples consecrated to God, and built with so much cost and care, everywhere plundering, slaying, burning, treading under foot all holy things, and involving without distinction in fire and massacre all orders of people, ecclesiastical and secular, men and women, bad and good, with insatiable cruelty and bloodthirstiness.

3. That it was these deeds of fury and impiety which had armed against them the neighbouring princes, and that it was to those persons they must impute the miseries of Bohemia. For his part, there was no proof, nor could anybody believe, that he had any wish thus to lay waste his inheritance, whose misfortunes he, on the contrary, infinitely deplored.

4. That he had taken away the crown and other sacred objects only to secure them for the nation, by rescuing them from the destruction which had befallen the rest. With respect to the revenues of the royal bounty, he had removed them with the consent of the chief persons in the nation, who had themselves seen them transferred to a place of security under their own seal and warrant.

5. He desired to leave to the arbitration of the neighbouring princes and lords, in what proportion he himself, or the Bohemians, had occasioned the troubles in their country, in order that each party might repair the mischief of which each should be judged to have been the author.

6. As to the four articles, he had never prevented the consideration of them; but before ever those articles had been brought forward, the Bohemians had themselves wasted with fire and sword his and their kingdom.

7. Nor, as regarded their rights and privileges, had it ever been his intention to violate one of them; he was, on the contrary, still ready to confirm and enlarge them.

"Therefore", concluded the emperor, "it is for you to determine who it is by whom you have been injured. Consider the engagements by which you have bound yourselves one to another, you will then see whether it is by yourselves, or by other parties, that your rights have been infringed. We have learned, too, that you have broken the statues of stone, carried off those of silver, and burned those of wood, belonging to the church of St. Vitus, in the fortress of St. Wenceslaus. Am I to understand that this was done for the confirmation of your privileges? We are told, you intend to destroy even the citadel itself (which was not built by you), with its beautiful churches .dedicated to the honour of God; we therefore pray you, in the name of God, neither to destroy those temples, nor suffer them to be destroyed. You have already too „much disgraced the country by the destruction of Wisgrade, that celebrated ornament of the kingdom, with the august temple of St. Peter and St. Paul, and fourteen other churches, all belonging to the same fortress. Should you likewise destroy that of St. Wenceslaus, you would draw down upon yourselves, in the sight both of God and the princes your neighbours, everlasting shame and abhorrence. God will deliver you to be a prey to them, and to irreparable ruin; for you are not ignorant that this temple is the greatest glory of the Bohemian crown. In it lie buried St. Wenceslaus and the other patron saints of the kingdom, the emperor Charles, our lord and father, of blessed and sainted memory, with other kings, princes", &c.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WAR EXTENDS TO THE NEIGHBOURING STATES.—BISHOP OF OLMUTZ. SIGISMUND INVADES BOHEMIA A THIRD TIME, AND AGAIN RETIRES.—CORIBUTH AT PRAGUE.—SIEGE OF CARLSTEIN. VICTORIOUS PROGRESS OF ZISKA.—HE DEFEATS THE MEN OF PRAGUE. IS RECONCILED WITH THEM.—DEATH OF ZISKA.—HIS MONUMENT AND CHARACTER.

THE affairs of Bohemia continued more and more to involve the adjoining states, as participators, as enemies, or as sufferers. During the sitting of the diet at Czaslau, an army of twenty thousand Silesians entered and laid waste its nearest provinces, but retired into their own country at the approach of Ziska. In return, the Taborites no longer confined their operations within the limits of Bohemia; the frontiers of Austria, the marches of Brandenberg, &c. were now included in their devastating incursions. That their doctrines, as well as their arms, penetrated at an early period into Moravia, was the natural consequence of the intimate connexion, or rather union, between the two countries. In the tenth century, Moravia, previously an independent sovereignty, became a province divided between the Hungarians, the Poles, and the Bohemians. Towards the end of the following century, Breteslaus, king of Bohemia, entirely conquered, and united it, under the name of a marquisate, to the Bohemian crown.

The advance of Hussitism into this part, of Sigismund's dominions met with a powerful opponent in John of Prague, the same prelate who, when bishop of Leutomischel, denounced Jacobel in the council of Constance, and was sent into Bohemia to pacify the people after the execution of Huss and Jerome. As ruler of the important, diocese of Olmutz, he had now the means of carrying on the controversy with the heretics in the manner most agreeable to his own temper, and to the advice he, on that occasion, gave the emperor, namely, by means of fire and sword. After saying mass, this warlike son of the Church, the Iron Bishop, as he was called, would throw aside his sacerdotal habits and pastoral staff, and, armed with casque and cuirass, sword and lance, mount his war-horse; arguments whose use the sanguinary logic of

Ziska too much justified. He gloried in never sparing a Hussite. Several thousands of the people who bore that name perished by his means,—not less than 200, it is said, by his own hand. Two of the Hussite nobles, of whom one was Victorin Podiebrad, father of George Podiebrad, afterwards king of Bohemia, marched against John of Olmutz. The bishop's troops were at first routed, but the Bohemians, learning that the archduke Albert was advancing with a strong force to his support, fell back into their own country. Thither the redoubtable churchman pursued them, executed some successful feats of generalship, and only returned into Moravia when the season obliged him to seek winter quarters. He chose for the companions of his *pastoral* seclusion a regiment of infantry.

Towards the end of the year 1421, the emperor again entered Bohemia with an army. He was met on the border by several of the Bohemian nobles, who did homage to him as their sovereign. Ziska, summoned to Prague, as usual in the hour of danger, passed some days in repairing and improving the defences of the city. He then visited, for the same purpose, the neighbouring towns and garrisons. At Tabor he was besieged by Sigismund, who greatly coveted the possession of that singular fortress. Leaving behind a sufficient garrison to defend it, Ziska cut his way through the besieging forces, and collected reinforcements in the open country. While the emperor was employed in cruelly devastating those towns which favoured the Hussites, or were likely to afford them shelter, Ziska attacked the army by divisions, some of which he succeeded in entirely cutting off. One hundred and forty of the imperialist carriages fell into his hands, laden with the spoils of churches and monasteries, among which are said to have been a vast quantity of books, in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues. After this victory, the Hussite general, seated on the colours he had taken from the foe, knighted several of his officers. The emperor, in despair of recovering Bohemia by force of arms, retired once more in haste to his kingdom of Hungary. Among the misfortunes he met with in this campaign, was the loss of one of his best officers and ancient companions in arms, the Florentine general Pipo. While following Sigismund in his retreat, Pipo attempted the passage of a river on the ice; it gave way, and with him perished 1500 men. To aggravate the imperial disasters, Moravia rose, and made common cause with the Bohemians. Sigismund, in disgust, resigned the marquisate to his son-in-law, the Archduke Albert of Austria, on condition of his reducing it to obedience.

But now a fresh source of misery and distraction for Bohemia burst out at Prague. Three parties, to omit all minor divisions, possessed that miserable capital:

1. The nobility, who, especially those of the first order, were for the most part in favour of Sigismund.

2. The Taborites, with Ziska at their head, who were resolved to have no king.

3. The people of Prague, who desired a king of their own choosing. Having failed to persuade the king of Poland to accept the unenviable honour of their suffrages, this party next proposed it to his brother, Withold, grand duke of Luthuania.

Accordingly, the duke dispatched his son, Sigismund Coributh, with a body of 5000 horse, to take possession of the proffered kingdom,—whether in his own name, or in his father, does not clearly appear. In the welcome experienced by this prince at Prague, the nobles took no part; the Taborites on his arrival burst into commotion or withdrew. But the inhabitants of the other towns, weary of the miseries of anarchy, and abhorring Sigismund, joined those of Prague in adhering to Coributh, though in their view but little better than a heathen; and, in truth, he had been, not long before, a heathen in reality. For the light of the Gospel was slow to penetrate those districts in the centre and east of Europe, which lay upon the obscure boundary between the Greek and Latin Churches.

As if eager to evince his fitness to be chosen their king, by a display of zeal and ability in war, Coributh undertook to recover Carlstein, that fortress having fallen again into the hands of the imperialists. His army was sufficiently numerous to assault the place from four points at once, with 6000 men on each point. The catapults and other machines, which accompanied it from Prague, are described as the admiration of that and of succeeding ages. From these the besiegers discharged into the town, not only stone and iron bullets, fire-balls, &c., but barrels filled with dead carcases, and filth of the most noisome description, a sort of missile no less fatal, by reason of the diseases it engendered, to the lives of the besieged. The efforts of the assailants were specially directed to getting possession of a certain conspicuous tower, which covered a fountain without the walls, whence the town was supplied with water,

and at the same time enabled the besieged to observe what passed in the enemy's camp. It happened, that while the contest raged at this point, a citizen of Prague was made prisoner by the garrison. Having bound their captive, they fastened him to a part of the tower most exposed to the artillery of the besiegers, and putting into his hand a fan made of a fox's tail, bade him, in derision, take good care and drive away the flies. The intention, of course, was to induce the assailants to relax their efforts. Indifferent, however, to the life of one man, they pressed the assault with greater vigour than before. One whole day, it is said, the poor fellow remained in this situation unhurt; when the soldiers of the garrison, more compassionate than his fellow-townsmen, unbound and dismissed him. After an, unsuccessful siege of six months, during which the brave garrison underwent incredible labours and privations, the men of Prague raised the siege, and returned home.

For a moment, Ziska's star paled before that of Coributh: his influence seems to have been contracted almost to within the limits of Tabor. He remonstrated with the men of Prague. They wondered, they sent him word, at his objecting to the proposed election of a king, since he so well knew how greatly the republic needed a chief. At this, raising his baton with vehemence, "Twice", he exclaimed, "have I delivered these people of Prague, but now I am resolved on their destruction. They shall see that it is equally in my power to be their oppressor, as their deliverer". But the other towns that had made common cause with Prague were first to feel the weight of his indignation: he fell upon them, one after another, with more than his accustomed fury. He had resolved to surprise Graditz, a strong town, in the night. His troops, wearied with a long march through incessant rain, halted, and refused to go on till daylight. "This blind chief of ours", they said, "thinks nobody can see any more than himself, and reckons day and night both alike to us as to him". Ziska addressed them in some of those inspiring phrases that had so often roused their courage. He demanded the name of the next village. They informed him. "Fire it, to light us forward", was his order. They obeyed, proceeded, and inflicted on the unfortunate town its full proportion of murder and ruin. In Graditz he was besieged by those of Prague, but they were beaten off after a sanguinary conflict. He next burst into Moravia. A great part of that province being in the power of the Hussites, he was welcomed with enthusiasm in many places; but wherever he met with resistance, he acted with his usual cruelty. From Moravia Ziska advanced into Austria. Here, as all were Catholics and enemies, he laid all waste indiscriminately with fire and sword. While engaged in pillaging Cremsir, his forces were surprised by the bishop of Olmutz and the abbot of Trebitz, the latter a man of high birth, and, like his associate, more used to handling the sword than the breviary. The armies fought by the light of burning habitations. In this battle Procopius Rasa, Ziska's favourite aid-de-camp, displayed that prodigious valour and ability which afterwards raised him to the chief command, and obtained for him the name of the Great. The result of this action appears to have been less decisively than usual in Ziska's favour. The bishop retired, however, from the field to Olmutz, where he expected to find reinforcements; while his opponent marched through Moravia to Graditz, leaving behind him, as he ever did, smoking and sanguinary tokens of his presence.

The men of Prague, led by the nobles in Sigismund's interest, were by this time in a condition to offer him battle. He heard of their approach in the open country, where his little army would have been surrounded by the numerous forces of his antagonists. Ziska feigned to fly only that he might get possession of more favourable ground, in a mountain district whose advantages were familiarly known to him. When he thought he had reached the desired point, "Where", inquired he, "are we now?" "At Malechau, on the slope of the mountains". "Is the enemy far off?" "He is just below in the valley, in hot pursuit. The colours of Prague are clearly distinguishable". "Here then lift the victorious standard of the cup. Now, dear brothers and brave companions", he continued, "this is our time; I, who have so often witnessed your valour in the greatest dangers, know you need no words from me. You see how these people, whom I have twice delivered from the emperor, are pursuing us. They thirst for that blood which we have been prodigal of for them. You will advance upon them with the courage I have never known to fail you. This day decides our fate—to conquer or die". Ziska was still speaking, when he was told that the enemy were now close at hand. He gave the signal for the onset. At the first encounter the vanguard of the pursuing host was put into disorder. Before they could rally, the attack of the veteran Taborites was renewed on both front and flank. The men of Prague fought with courage and determination, but were forced at last to give way and take to flight, leaving three thousand of their number dead on the field; among them a large proportion of nobles.

Ziska now directed his course upon Prague. Encamping within a bowshot of the walls, he prepared to lay siege to the city. His troops were flushed with victory, confident—as well they might be—in the fortunes of their leader; and Prague, weakened, dispirited, and disunited, must have fallen. But his officers were unwilling to assist in the destruction of the metropolis of their country,—a city, too, whose inhabitants professed their own religious sentiments. There was an end, they said, to Bohemia, if their enemies saw them divided among themselves. Abundant occasion of fighting was offered them by the emperor: it was madness to turn against each other those arms with which they ought to oppose the common adversary. "Why, my dear companions in arms", he replied, "do you murmur against me who have so often defended your lives at the hazard of my own? I am your chief, not your enemy; have I ever led you to any place, whence you have not returned victorious? It was but yesterday you conquered under my command. Under my command you are become famous, you are grown rich; while I— what have I gained by all my victories and all my toils? An empty name—and blindness! It was whilst fighting in your cause I lost my sight—a loss I lament, only because it unfits me for serving you with the same vigour and efficiency as before. I have no wish to destroy Prague, neither is it so much my blood as yours that our enemies thirst for. They dread your invincible arms and fearless hearts. Let us then go forward; since it has come to this—that you or they must perish. Let us put an end, at once, to civil war, and with it all cause to dread our foreign foes. We shall take the town, and put down the seditions among its inhabitants, before Sigismund will have had information of our quarrels. We shall be in a better condition to encounter him with a small force cemented by unanimity, than with a large army, of which these double-minded men of Prague formed any part. However, that I may not again come under your censure, I give you leave to deliberate. Do you wish for peace! I consent, provided it be a sincere and true peace. Will you have war? You see me ready. Choose as you may, you will have Ziska to support your resolve". "War, war! Let us have war!" was the cry of the soldiers, as Ziska concluded his harangue. They were already armed, and hastening to the gates—already Ziska was directing the advance of his machines for battering the walls—when a deputation of the citizens appeared with overtures of peace. At their head was Rockizane, an eloquent ecclesiastic of the Celestine party. The offer was accepted and a treaty signed, September 13th, 1424. Ziska entered the capital amid the acclamations of the people. To commemorate this event the populace raised a great heap of stones upon the spot where the treaty was concluded; and swore to make use of them against any who should disturb that solemn act of pacification.

The archduke having, with the assistance of the bishop of Olmutz, succeeded in reducing the greater part of Moravia to submission, the emperor now proposed to employ him in Bohemia. Previously, however, Sigismund hoped to gain over Ziska, for he had now become thoroughly convinced that without first winning the blind chieftain he could not hope to win Bohemia. The reward he proposed was nothing less than the vice-royalty of the kingdom and the command of its armies, on condition that the victorious Hussite would support his claim to the crown, and put an end to the rebellion. "Strange and disgraceful sight!" exclaims Aeneas Sylvius, "to behold an emperor and king of so proud a reputation as Sigismund, throughout Italy, Germany, France, Spain—in short, throughout all the world—constrained, in order to recover his own inheritance, to make proposals so humiliating to a simple gentleman—a man old, blind, a heretic, profane, sacrilegious—in a word, an audacious villain. But divine Providence", he adds, "saved the world from the contemplated ignominy".

Whether won by this offer, and intending to treat personally with the emperor; or whether determined to recover the losses of his party in Moravia, we have no certain account; Ziska had reached the confines of that country, and was engaged in an assault on some border fortress, when the plague, which prevailed in his army put an unlooked-for end to his career of wild heroism and successful vengeance. "A more peaceful death", writes a popish historian, "than his monstrous deeds—his parricides and atrocious sacrileges—deserved". "A monster", chimes in our oft-quoted friend Sylvius, "cruel, hateful, atrocious; whom, since the hand of man sufficed not to destroy, the finger of God at length struck down".

Yet, regarding events from the other side—and they have always a double aspect, but never had they so more decidedly than in this war,—may we not conclude, that if, when this scourge had gone through the land, it was taken away—if the hand of God arrested Ziska—it was the same hand engaged in a work surely not less judicial, that first launched the avenger on his course. The calamities of Bohemia were a terrible example of what must be the consequence when a church, tyrannical and grossly corrupt, if not apostate, obstinately persists in poisoning the fountain of truth provided for mankind's salvation, in order that, while the infected multitudes stumble in their bewilderment and perish, the servants of her polluted

altars may riot in worldly enjoyment at their expense. It was not in placid and beautiful repose that the *first dawn* of reformation, after such a night, could make its appearance—

"Not in the sunshine and the smile of heaven,

But wrapp'd in whirlwinds and begirt with woes."

There is no reason to suppose that Ziska did what he did with any selfish views—not even for the sake of indulging a naturally cruel disposition. He believed honestly in his own mission— to avenge the death of the martyrs of religious truth and freedom at Constance, on the authors and instigators of the crime, and to deliver his country from the tyranny of a worldly and sensual priesthood. He fulfilled that mission. Never was vengeance more complete. Alas! never was vengeance more tremendously executed. It was affirmed, apparently with truth, in a sermon preached about this time before the Council at Sienna, that within three years fifteen thousand priests and religious had perished in Bohemia by various torments—roasting before fires, swallowing melted lead, drowning, drawing by horses, &c., besides those who fell by the sword. Nevertheless, barbarous as he was, to a degree hardly known among barbarians, this man had, even by the acknowledgment of his enemies, great and even kindly qualities. They admire his valour and intrepidity; they praise his prudence and penetration; they extol the rapidity as well as the success of his achievements; they commend his self-denial and (one great ingredient in his success!) his warm fellow-feeling for those who shared his toils and his victories. "If", says an historian of Italy, "·we look on the one side to the obstacles which his blindness put in his way, and on the other, to the great achievements he in spite of that impediment performed, we shall not hesitate to place him above Hannibal and Sertorius, of whom each had lost but one eye". He fought eleven pitched battles besides innumerable sieges, skirmishes, &c., and was never once beaten. No wonder, fanatic as he became, if the impression grew upon him, that the hand of God was with his undertakings. He it was who first taught the Bohemians the military art; he was indeed the inventor of an entirely new system of tactics—that of barricading by means of waggons. With these he, and after him the generals trained by him—some of them but little inferior to himself—constructed ramparts, serving not only for an effectual defence to the camp, but as a sort of moveable citadel in the field, and arranged according to a most ingenious scheme of tactics. Beginning wholly without horse, he in a short space of time created for himself a most efficient mounted force, by unhorsing the cavalry of his enemies; and from being followed by rude peasants and artisans provided, as chance supplied them, with such weapons as flails, forks, and clubs, he soon saw himself at the head of well-appointed and well-disciplined legions, girt with cuirass and coat of mail, and wielding with practised hand the sword and javelin. His own favourite weapon— apparently his only weapon except his lance—was an iron club, preserved long after his death as a memorial of him, in the cathedral church of Czaslau, where he was buried. The emperor Ferdinand I., when passing through that town, wished to visit the cathedral. His eye was attracted by a magnificent tomb, in front of which was suspended a huge iron club, still bearing sanguinary tokens of the fatal use to which it had been applied. Some Bohemian hero, rightly thought the emperor, must be buried here. He inquired whose tomb it was. His courtiers were silent. One, bolder than the rest, at length whispered—"Ziska!" cried the emperor, "this evil beast, dead as he is these hundred years, can still frighten the living".' So saying he hurried out of the cathedral, and ordered horses to proceed to the next town, a league further on, though he had designed to pass the night at Czaslau. On an altar near the tomb were two figures representing Huss and Ziska, with several inscriptions in Latin verse, of which the shortest, and not the least expressive, is this:—

"Huss come from heaven? Should Ziska too be there,

His dread avenger, impious Rome, beware!"

Ziska was of the middle height, robust and well made; his chest and shoulders broad, his head large; he had an aquiline nose and wide mouth; his hair was of a chestnut colour, and he wore moustaches after the fashion of the Poles. He was fond of jests, as men of severe dispositions often are; and in the highest degree affable and cordial with his soldiers—his *brothers*, as he loved to call them, allowing them in return to address himself as their brother. The immense booty taken by him he distributed among his followers; nothing was reserved for himself, except a supply of hams and other smoked provisions needful for him in his campaigns. He called these his *cobwebs*, because the country people keep them hanging in the chimney or suspended to the ceiling. After he had wholly lost his sight he rode in a waggon or chariot, on which was also carried the great Hussite standard; whose device, as well as that on his buckler and

those of his soldiers, was the sacramental cup. Standing there, he ascertained from his officers the exact nature of the ground where he proposed to fight— the valleys and hills, the rocks and forests, with the disposition of the enemy; he then issued his orders accordingly, ranged his troops, gave the signal of onset;—in short, performed all the functions of a general.

Strange as it seems, there rests some uncertainty upon the religion of this man, who did such terrible things for the sake of his religion. It is evident, from the name he assumed—"Ziska of the Cup", as well as from other circumstances, that the distinctive object for which, above all others, he contended, was the full administration of the elements in the communion to the laity. But for what religious privileges he fought besides, it is not easy to say. Was he a Taborite denying transubstantiation and the material presence, and rejecting the ceremonies and usages of the Romish Church. Was he merely a Calixtine? or, lastly, did he oscillate between the two factions? It no where appears that he required the abolition of the mass, or the disuse of the priestly vestments. In endeavouring to draw his own conclusions, the reader will bear in mind the following among other facts:—

1. The altar mentioned as standing near his tomb at Czaslau was endowed for the purpose of having masses said for his soul.

2. He was no less furious in the persecution of those who went farther than himself in their deviations from Rome, than against the monks themselves; most cruelly exterminating by fire the unhappy people called Picards or Adamites (probably Waldenses, maligned under those nicknames) for supposed heresies; the strongest proofs of the existence of which, at least as regards the Picards, is the very fact, that this merciless avenger did treat them thus inhumanly. If we may take the religious opinions of Procopius. his pupil and successor, as any guide to those of Ziska himself, the latter must have had little faith in transubstantiation; for Procopius declaimed with extreme violence against that dogma. "Though a hundred doctors", said he, "should tell me that the material bread does not remain in the Sacrament of the Eucharist after consecration (agreeably to the declaration of our Saviour and his Apostles), I would say they lied, and would maintain the same at the Day of Judgment."

The Taborites, notwithstanding a horror of paintings common to Puritanical sects, placed over the gate of their city a picture of Ziska, attended by an angel holding a cup.

The Bohemians likewise celebrated every year the festival of their terrible captain. With respect to the venerable tradition which still tenaciously holds its place in our popular histories, that by the dying command of Ziska his skin was converted into a covering for a drumhead, and borne in the van of his " orphan" host, in order that he who had so often put his enemies to flight while living, might still be their terror in death; writers of sense and research have long since proved it worthy of a place among those fictions invented to excite the wonder and awe of childhood or of adult ignorance, which history ignominiously discards from her pages. The utmost entitled to credit respecting this matter is, that his followers, in their subsequent wars, deemed it politic to invent and give currency to the fable.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIVISION OF THE ARMY.—THE ORPHANS.— PROCOPIUS RASA SUCCEEDS TO THE CHIEF COMMAND. FIRST CRUSADE AGAINST THE BOHEMIANS. ITS FAILURE. RASA INVADES AUSTRIA, SILESIA, &C. CARDINAL BEAUFORT. SECOND CRUSADE. ITS TOTAL DEFEAT. NEGOTIATIONS WITH SIGISMUND. PREDATORY EXPEDITIONS RENEWED. COUNCIL OF BASLE.—CARDINAL JULIAN AND THE THIRD CRUSADE. THE INVADERS DISGRACEFULLY DEFEATED.

THE death of their great captain occasioned a more distinct separation of the armed Bohemians into parties, without greatly diminishing their united strength when opposed to foreign adversaries. The habits of ferocity and endurance, the confidence inspired by long success, the skill they had learned under Ziska, above all, their unexhausted and inexhaustible religious enthusiasm, combined to render them not merely formidable, but terrible, nay, invincible. Neither were there wanting chiefs capable of controlling and directing the passions and the potency which had been called into existence or activity by Ziska; commanders inferior to him in genius, but trained in his school, and thoroughly imbued with his spirit.

The army separated into three divisions, or rather, distinct forces. The first, consisting of the *Taborites* and the men of Prague, chose for leader, in pursuance of Ziska's dying orders, Procopius Rasa. The second refused to elect any leader, affirming that none was worthy to take the place of their late commander, for which reason they assumed the title of *Orphans*. Certain officers were however appointed by them, with coordinate authority; among whom the most remarkable was a second Procopius, called, by way of distinction from Rasa, Procopius the Less. The Orphans occupied no towns, but lived within their barricades, or lines of entrenchment, formed of waggons. The third party were the *Orebites;* they chose for their general Hincko Crusinez of Kuttemberg. The first Procopius was the nephew and adopted son of a Bohemian gentleman, who gave him a good education, and sent him to travel in France, Italy, Spain, and the Holy Land. On his return, he, by his uncle's request, prepared himself for holy orders, and actually received the tonsure, whence his agnomen of Rasa (shorn). But on the breaking out of the Hussite war, he indulged his preference for a more active and adventurous career. Attaching himself to Ziska and his cause, he was treated by him with peculiar regard, and became the inheritor of his personal qualities, together with his authority.

Applying in petty but not insignificant details, the notion of a resemblance between themselves and the nation whom God of old selected to exterminate a race of idolaters devoted to destruction for their crimes, the Hussites had early adopted the names of Taborites, Orebites, &c. They now extended this insidious nomenclature. As Bohemia was the land of promise, so the Germans of the neighbouring states were Idumaeans, Amalekites, Moabites, Philistines. The ravages these appellations were intended to justify or to excite, for from ceasing, or even slackening, after the death of Ziska, were prosecuted with more eager fury than before. In the sanguinary expeditions which now took place, the most active party were the Orebites, with the more restless of the Taborites, whom the Calixtines had expelled from Prague. Their chiefs were Wilichs and Procopius the Less. From Bohemia they carried their devastations into the bordering districts of Austria, Moravia, and Silesia; not always without encountering stout resistance or severe retaliation. On their return, they attempted to enter Prague in a hostile manner. Those of Prague applied for protection to Procopius Rasa. It was readily afforded; and through the intervention of that commander, assisted by the influence of some Calixtine priests, peace was solemnly ratified between the contending factions. One of the ecclesiastics who shared in this service to humanity was Peter Pain, or Peyne, Peter the Englishman, as he was called. He was subsequently present at the Council of Basle, and had the courage to defend the Hussites in that assembly. A second was John of Rockizane, a Bohemian priest, of mean birth but good abilities, who by his talents and ambition raised himself into a position of note in his country.

A letter is extant from Martin V to Sigismund, dated February, 1424, in which the pontiff endeavours to animate the emperor, by mingled persuasions and reproaches, to march another army into Bohemia. Desirous however as Sigismund was to obtain possession of his kingdom, the experience of the past by no means encouraged alacrity in fulfilling the pope's wishes. Martin renewed the expedient of a crusade, in which he earnestly exhorted the German princes, in particular the king of Poland, to join; yet the summer of 1426 had arrived before the soil of Bohemia was again disturbed by the march of Teutonic chivalry. The invading army is reckoned on this occasion at 160,000 men; but in regard to these estimates great uncertainty and confusion prevails. It was under the command of the counts of Schwartzenberg and Wieden. The Bohemians, commanded by Procopius Rasa, had taken up a position near Aust. Five hundred carriages ingeniously disposed, and strongly fastened together with chains, formed a rampart upon and behind which his troops were posted. They had, besides, the protection of huge bucklers of wood, of the height of a man, made either to be carried on the arm in the ordinary manner, or fastened into the ground with iron cramps. They were further provided with a newly-invented weapon, a sort of hooked lance, with which a foot soldier could dismount a horseman. The Germans, confident in their great superiority of numbers, in spite of the exhausting effect of a long march, advanced impetuously to the assault. While the front ranks with their double-edged battle axes, wrenched asunder the chains, and overturned the bucklers of the Bohemians, showers of arrows, sent from those more distant, swept the enclosure. But the efforts required to break through the iron barrier, and at the same time to fight, under a summer sun of unusual power, had begun to tell upon the invaders ere their entrenched opponents had lost any part of their freshness and vigour. The Bohemians now, in turn, became the assailants. The battle raged from noon till night was closing in, when the imperialists gave way, and suffered a total rout. In this the bloodiest conflict the plains of Bohemia had yet witnessed, above 12,000 fell on the side of the

invaders, including a large proportion of noblemen and knights: the Bohemians lost about one fourth of that number.

Again at leisure to take the offensive, Rasa led his victorious Taborites into Moravia and Austria. These irruptions into a hostile territory might be excused, in principle, on the ground of patriotic retaliation, had not the spirit in which they were conducted been rather that of banditti warring on social life, than that of armies fairly contending for national freedom and independence. Nevertheless an instance, unhappily a rare one in these wars, of the just and honourable treatment of a captured garrison occurred in this expedition. At Kamenitz, a border town between Bohemia and Moravia, Procopius invested a fort belonging to a noble family named Sezima. Procopius Sezima, its late lord, had died while all around was raging the fury of religious and predatory warfare, leaving the possession of his stronghold to his daughter, a girl of eighteen. This young heroine, expecting to be attacked,, provided every thing needful for a siege. As soon as the Bohemian forces appeared before the walls, the soldiers, not doubting but their summons would be instantly obeyed, demanded with furious clamour the surrender of the fortress. Agnes Sezima appeared to answer for herself. “I am but a weak girl”, she said, “but I have courage enough not to be frightened at noises, nor ever to give up my castle without doing my best to defend it”. For fifteen days she maintained so stout a resistance, that Rasa, despairing of success, was on the point of abandoning the siege. At length, when the walls were in many places breached, and all hope of succour was cut off by the defeat of a party who were marching to her relief, she agreed to a capitulation rather than allow her castle to be wholly destroyed. The conditions of surrender— that the garrison should be permitted to march out whither they chose, only leaving behind them their machines and munitions of war—were honourably observed by the conquerors; and one of their captains, Schwamberg, conducted the lady with a sufficient guard to the place she chose for her retreat. A kinsman who had attempted to succour her was not so mildly dealt with; they razed his castle, and put his garrison to the sword. Silesia was now included by Rasa within the compass of his victorious campaign; nor did he return into Bohemia until recalled by the imminence of a fresh and still more formidable invasion.

In 1427, Pope Martin employed Henry of Winchester (Cardinal Beaufort) to organize a new crusade for the reduction of the Bohemians. Having first published the crusade in his own diocese of Winchester, the cardinal passed over into Germany, where Martin had appointed him legate *a latere*. His arrival put an end once more to the strife of parties in Bohemia, which constantly broke out as soon as danger from foreign invasion was removed to a distance. Coributh, whose pretensions were the chief recent object of dispute in Prague, having retired into Silesia, the Calixtines, the Taborites, and the Orphans agreed to act together under Procopius Rasa as general-in-chief of the Bohemian forces.

So much horror and detestation of the Bohemians pervaded Germany, that a legate of less energy and personal influence than the cardinal of St. Eusebius would have found no difficulty, in spite of past failures, to levy an army for such a purpose among the principalities of that extensive, populous, and warlike region. At his summons a formidable force quickly gathered, in the cause of Catholicism, round the standard of the cross. It entered Bohemia in three divisions, each by itself an army, at three different points. The first consisted of the Saxons and citizens of the Hanseatic towns, commanded by the dukes of Saxony; the second, composed of the troops of Franconia and the adjoining states, led by the duke of Brandenburg; the third, comprising the Bavarians, the Carinthians, and the inhabitants of the imperial towns, was under the orders of Otho, archbishop of Treves. Having traversed the Black Forest, and simultaneously reached the frontiers, the three bodies joined, and in one united host, amounting, as some authorities affirm, to 80,000 cavalry and about an equal number of infantry, descended into the Bohemian, plains. To oppose against this enormous force, the Bohemians mustered about 1500 horse and 5000 foot; veterans, however, strangers to defeat, contemptuous of danger and death, and whose very name inspired terror. The Germans were preparing to invest the town of Mies, when perceiving on a sudden the Bohemian army near at hand, they were seized with a panic, and took to flight without striking a blow. At Tauch, where the fugitives re-entered the forest, they met the cardinal, following, at convenient speed, the destined conquerors, as he fondly believed, of that heretical kingdom. Breathless with consternation and rage, he attempted to turn back the flying columns,—in vain, for the Bohemians had already come up with their invaders, and were mercilessly slaughtering in the rear. Full 10,000 are said to have fallen by the sword of the Hussites; multitudes were knocked on the head as they straggled through the defiles of the forest. Many prisoners were taken, together with all the baggage, stores, and

ammunition of the defeated armament; an amount of spoil so enormous, that some great families in Bohemia are said to date their prosperity from the gathering of that day.

While the Bohemians, as usual when the hour of urgent danger had gone by, were employed in disputing among themselves, or in harassing the enemies of their faith in their own and the neighbouring countries, Sigismund yielded to the necessity of adopting more conciliatory measures. He sent an embassy into Bohemia, by whose invitation Procopius entered Austria, where, in an interview with the emperor, terms of peace were mutually discussed; but as neither side would yield any point in dispute, nothing was concluded. Again they met in a diet at Presburg, held during a truce of three months. This armistice appeared on the point of being succeeded by a peace, when the negotiations were broken off in consequence of a refusal by the Orphans to consent to the indispensable condition of acknowledging the emperor's sovereignty. “A free people”, they said, “needed and could endure no king”

Impatient at what seemed to them a long period of repose, the Bohemians returned at the end of the three months to their fierce predatory warfare. Silesia, Austria, Lusatia, were successively the scenes of sanguinary vengeance; and in a single incursion into Saxony above one hundred towns or fortresses are said to have been destroyed. Altenburg, an ancient town of Misnia, may be taken as no singular instance of the invaders barbarity. Having got possession of the place, they passed some days in collecting the rich booty found in it. While this was going on, the nobility of the town had retreated to the citadel. There, for a time, they kept their assailants at bay; but in the end were all either cut to pieces or made prisoners. The unfortunates who met with the latter fate had cause to envy those who died fighting. The conquerors insulted their miseries with cruel and malicious jests, while, before their eyes, they erected gibbets and piles, on which they were afterwards executed. The town, including its beautiful cathedral and three monasteries, besides the noble house of the knights of Rhodes, was set on fire and consumed with most of the wretched inhabitants. “We are celebrating the obsequies of John Huss”, exclaimed the perpetrators of these enormities. From Saxony the Bohemians passed into Franconia, where they ravaged the duchy of Coborg, burning and massacring every where. Now and then these inundations of ruin were checked by .the resistance of separate states and towns, or by leagues formed for the common defence; but in general the fury of the invaders swept all opposition before it.

The pontificate of Martin V, begun so brilliantly, was darkened towards its close with abundant cares and apprehensions. The total failure of the cardinal bishop of Winchester was a grievous blow. In order to repair this disaster the pope endeavoured to incite Ladislaus, king of Poland, to undertake the reduction of Bohemia. Perhaps the zeal of a recent convert might have been effectually moved to make the unpromising attempt, but for an occurrence which exhibited Ladislaus rather as an object of compassionate assistance than as the champion of an alien cause: this was his imprisonment by his brother Switrigal, whom, against the wish of his people, he, at the decease of Withold, had placed over the duchy of Lithuania.

According to a decree of the Council of Constance, another general council was to be assembled for the government and reformation of the Church within five years, and a second at the end of seven years more. Above five years had elapsed since the abortive close of that synod in the year 1418; but Martin V was in no haste to revive the perplexities he had suffered at Constance. At length, all the holy father's ingenious pretexts for delay being eluded or overruled, by Sigismund and other potentates and great persons interested, he consented to summon a council to meet at Pavia. Before any business had been transacted it was removed, on account of the plague appearing in that city, to Sienna; and afterwards, in spite of the dread of ultramontane councils entertained by the popes, it was transferred, by Martin’s appointment, to Basle. The pope did not survive to witness the proceedings, of the Council of Basle; but in the meantime he had the satisfaction of seeing what he hoped would be a principal object of its care, viz. the extermination of the Hussites, anticipated by the zeal of the emperor. Sigismund had assembled a diet of the German states at Nuremberg expressly to devise means for arresting the progress of the Bohemians. Thither came the pope’s legate in Germany, Julian, cardinal of St. Angelo, with a bull appointing a new crusade against that formidable people. The most liberal allowance of pardons and indulgences was offered by the pontiff to all who would join or otherwise promote the armament. In this, the third crusade and the sixth great expedition against his heretical and revolted subjects, Sigismund took no personal share. All was left to Julian. A grand, and, it was believed, a conclusive effort was to be made; nor could the preparations for it have fallen into abler or more zealous hands. The cardinal was indefatigable in

preaching the crusade, and in sending out his orders to the princes and prelates, especially of Germany, to stir up the people to join "the great and mighty army of all Germany, to be assembled next St. John's day on the frontiers of Bohemia, in order to enter into that kingdom for the purpose of extirpating the heretics if they refuse to return to the bosom of the Church". For this purpose they were to exhort them "to arm and fortify themselves with the salutary sign of the life-giving cross, that, strengthened by spiritual gifts and graces, they might, crush those foes of God and man".

The Bohemians prepared, in their usual manner, for the approaching storm. They called in their predatory expeditions from the neighbouring states, and sacrificed to the common cause their mutual enmities and dissensions. All classes in Bohemia eagerly flew to arms; Moravia likewise sent its contingency of determined foes to Roman domination. An army of 50,000 foot and 7000 horse with several thousand carriages—the largest force the revolted kingdom had yet sent into the field —was presently assembled. Martin V. had by this time been succeeded by Eugenius IV, and the Council of Basle was already sitting under the presidency of his representative, Cardinal Julian.

Before quitting Basle to appear at the head of the armament which his zeal had succeeded in assembling, Julian wrote to the Bohemians, exhorting them in a strain of affected pathos to submit to the apostolic see. Their reply was firm, manly, and decisive. They refused to return to the communion of the Church of Rome till she herself returned to the Scripture, on which rested, they said, those principles they were contending for—above all, that of communion in both kinds. "You are coming against us", they write, "with all those myriads of soldiers, whose warlike weapons serve you instead of Scripture and reason. Are swords, and spears, and arrows the arms which a father, as you call yourself, makes use of to reclaim his children? Since, however, you have chosen those arms, we too have arms of the same temper; and we are prepared to use them in a contest for life or death. Had you come among us as St. Peter entered into the house of Cornelius, you would doubtless have reaped much fruit; your coming would have rejoiced the fathers of the Christian Church who are with us; and instead of the calf of the parable they would have slain their fattest ox, and invited their neighbours to rejoice with them". Against the Council of Basle, which, with all the intolerance of the pope it so resolutely opposed, was launching against them its thunders of excommunication, they published a vigorous manifesto. It asserted their right to maintain the four articles, the whole being grounded in Scripture; and it denied the right of the ecclesiastics in the council—who, say they, "stick to the emperor as close as scales to a fish, so that truth can find no entrance to him",— to judge their cause. "If", concludes this document, "seduced by the artifices of your priests, you come among us with arms in your hands, we, supported by the help of Him whose in truth is the cause for which we stand up, will repel force by force; and will avenge upon you those wrongs which, indeed, are not so much ours as God's. As for you your dependence is upon the arm of flesh; but ours is on the God of armies who fights for us". Both of these documents bear the date of Prague, July, 1431.

It has been seen that St. John' day—the 24th June—was fixed for the assembling of the forces of the crusaders. At the appointed time the duke of Austria appeared with his contingent on the frontiers; but, receiving no tidings of the Germans, he fell back into his own territories. At length the imperial armies began to move. In the month of August 130,000 warriors, including 40,000 cavalry, descended through the woody defiles of the mountain range that separates Bavaria from Bohemia. All the noblest of Germany, the emperor excepted, were there. The chief military command was assumed by the elector of Brandenburg; but it was a *holy* war, and Cardinal Julian was at the head of the entire expedition, supported by the bishops of Wartzburg and Eichstadt. "The cardinal", (to do his memory no wrong, we use the words of his admirer Aeneas Sylvius,) "advancing upon the borders of Bohemia, burnt many country houses of the Bohemians, and sacked the towns. In thus punishing the heretics the soldiers indulged not only their avarice but their cruelty; for all they met with were put to the sword— males and females, old and young, without distinction".

Before the imperial crusade had emerged from the forest, Procopius—worthy pupil of Ziska—divided his army into three separate forces, with orders to march in as many different directions; at the same time causing a report to be spread that the three factions—those of Prague, the Taborites, and the Orphans—had revived their ancient animosities, and separated in mutual displeasure. The news is quickly carried to the German commanders by their spies. The invaders advance anticipating an easy victory. They halt while the generals consult how best to secure their triumph. At this moment their scouts came in with the unwelcome tidings that the three divisions of the enemy had again united, and were already

marching in one compact body towards them. “Whether”, writes Aeneas, “there was treachery in the army of the faithful—which many have thought—or whether men’s minds were overcome by a causeless fear, alarm seized the whole army; and even before the enemy appeared in sight a most disgraceful flight had begun”. The cardinal alone stood firm, and exerted all his eloquence to stop the fugitives. “It amazes me”, he cried, “to see valorous men and true children of the Church, thus cover themselves with infamy and desert a cause so righteous. For what is the nature and what the motive of this war? Are we come hither only for earthly glory or for any temporal interest whatever? No; we are here to fight for our holy religion, for the honour of Christ, for the salvation of our own souls! What would the brave Germans, your forefathers, say, could they return to life and witness an army of their descendants taking to flight even before they had seen their enemies? Where are now those Germans, the fame of whose intrepid deeds fills the world? Better to die than thus to turn our backs when none is pursuing. But whither would you fly? You shun Bohemia; but Bohemia will follow and overtake us wherever we seek to hide ourselves. Walls will not protect you; in the open field and in using your arms as brave men should, lies your only safety; any other course will bring upon you only death, or captivity worse than death. Your ancestors, pagans as they were, fought with unconquerable bravery even for their dumb idols; but you, unworthy to be their children, have not courage to meet these heretics in the cause of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and Mary his holy mother. Consider, one moment! What would the Ariovisti, the Tuiscones, the Arminii, say were they now present here? O my sons, take courage and meet your enemies like men. What is wanting to you for victory, which they have? But why do I use arguments? Enough, surely, that I remind you of your oaths; for I cannot believe that all this mighty host intend to incur, by dishonourable flight, the guilt of perjury”. But Julian’s eloquence made no impression. Dashing their standards to the ground, throwing away their arms, abandoning their baggage and magazines, the whole army fled with incredible precipitation and disorder. The duke of Bavaria and the elector of Brandenburg were among the first to turn their backs. The cardinal had no choice but to follow. Soon, as he had foretold, the enemy was upon their rear. About twelve thousand were cut off in the pursuit, besides prisoners taken. The whole of their military stores, including one hundred and fifty cannon, two hundred and forty carriages, several of them laden with plate and specie, and many with wine—an article never forgotten by Germans—became the prey of the heretics. Julian lost, for his own share, besides the pope’s bull, his cardinal’s hat and robes, his cross and bell;—all, long after, shown as trophies at Tauch, where this disgraceful defeat took place. Believing the enemy still at their heels—as for a time, they indeed were— the fugitives never stopped till they reached Ratisbon. In truth, the mere name of Bohemian—of Ziska’s men, Hussite, Taborite, or Orphan—had become a sound of terror to German and to all European ears. “Who could have credited”, writes a Romish historian, “that an army in which were forty thousand German knights would have taken flight thus suddenly? I do not believe that the Turk himself, powerful tyrant as he is, and ruler of so many kingdoms and provinces, would dare to meet an army of forty thousand German knights. It is hardly two years since that he declined to encounter our emperor, Charles V, although he had not an equal amount of cavalry”.

The archduke Albert, on learning the disastrous fate of the expedition, retired with his forces into Moravia; and in a short time reduced that province to such distress, that the Moravians were forced to accept peace on condition of acknowledging that form of religion only which the Council of Basle should order. The Bohemians, on $_{V1}$their part, freed from all apprehension, and more than ever confirmed in the opinion of their own invincibility, once more renewed their incursions into the adjoining states: Silesia, Brandenburg, Hungary, were invaded but not with unvaried success.

CHAPTER XIV.

BOHEMIANS INVITED TO THE COUNCIL AT BASLE.—ENTRY OF THEIR AMBASSADORS.—DISCUSSIONS.—FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS.—COMPACT AGREED TO WITH THE COUNCIL. REJECTED BY THE TABORITES, WHO RENEW THE CIVIL WAR.—TABORITES DEFEATED AND PROCOPIUS SLAIN.—THE THRONE OF BOHEMIA OFFERED TO SIGISMUND. HIS CORONATION.

THE Hussites, in imitation of their martyred chief, had uniformly professed great willingness, and had indeed sought an opportunity, to submit their demands to fair and open discussion. Sigismund, now fully convinced that they were not to be subdued by force of arms, invited them to a discussion of their differences at the Council of Basle. In spite, however, of an insidious mildness which now prevailed in his communications, it was apparent, that by reconcilement to the Church he meant nothing less than absolute submission. The Bohemians answered by a firm, but respectful, refusal to submit their cause to the decision of any body of Roman ecclesiastics. "Both divine and human laws", they write, under date of October, 1431, "forbid that submission and return to union with Rome which your majesty requires. Do not be surprised, then, that we refuse to yield either to your august majesty yourself, or to the Church of Rome, since, setting yourselves up against the will of God, you deny us a hearing, though we desire to give an account before you of our faith. It is not our own wilfulness that forces us to this honest disobedience, but the Word of God itself. Wherefore we notify to all and every one, that against the solicitations of those ecclesiastics who, preferring their own to the Divine Will, would force us to an unlawful obedience, we are resolved by God's help to defend ourselves". As for the pope, he was still in favour of the harshest measures: nothing short of the extermination of the "heretics" would satisfy him, though how that object was to be effected, since the armies of the cross dared not even look them in the face, it was hard to say. He would rather, he said, dissolve the council than allow the Hussites to be heard there. He did declare it dissolved—not indeed on that plea, but because it proceeded with resolute steps in the work of reformation, for which it had been convoked. The fathers nevertheless persisted, declaring the pretended dissolution null; and Cardinal Julian, in the name of the council, offered the Bohemians a free conference, with a promise of perfect security and a favourable reception. In order to place the invitation in a fairer light, and remove every obstacle, the council despatched commissioners into Bohemia. In return, the Bohemians sent an embassy of their own to the council. The result of these mutual explanations was the transmission to Bohemia of a safe-conduct, granting perfect freedom of speech, worship, and action, at the council, to any number of Bohemians not exceeding two hundred. It was accepted. Aeneas Sylvius, our authority so often cited, was present at the entry of the Bohemian embassy into Basle. We present the reader with a description of the scene in that historian's own words:—

"The chiefs of the deputation, consisting of three hundred horsemen, were Procopius Rasa, called also for his many victories the Great, and no less known for his prodigious villanies; William of Costeka, less remarkable for his nobility, than for his plundering of churches; John Rockizane, a false apostle of Prague; Nicholas Galetz (or Biscupecz), priest of the Taborites; Peter of England, a deserter from his country, and a great dialectician. The entire population of Basle, with not a few members of the council, attracted by the reputation of this most warlike and celebrated people, turned out to witness their entrance. Men, women, children, persons of every age and condition, filled the public places, choked up the doors and windows, or covered the roofs, to get a sight of them, eagerly pointing with the finger as they passed, some to this individual, some to that. They gazed with wonder on their strange dresses, so unlike any they had ever before seen; they remarked the terrible countenances of the men, their eyes full of fierceness, and declared that report had barely done justice to their appearance. Above all, the eyes of every one were fixed upon Procopius. That is he, they whispered, who has so often put to flight the armies

of the faithful, who has laid waste so many towns, massacred so many thousands of people; the chief, dreaded no less by his followers than by his foes; the daring, intrepid, invincible captain, whom neither toil nor danger can subdue"

The reception of the Bohemians was hospitable and friendly. After a few days of repose, they were admitted to an audience. Cardinal Julian then addressed them, nearly to the following effect. "The Church, the spouse of Christ", he said, "the mother of all the faithful, has power to bind and to loose, and, being without spot or imperfection, cannot err in those things which are necessary to salvation. Whoever despises her is to be regarded as an alien, a profane person, a pagan, and a publican. The church is nowhere better represented than in a general council. The decrees of the councils ought to be considered as the will of the Church, and as such to be believed equally with the Gospels; for it is on their authority that the Scriptures themselves are received. Since the Bohemians call themselves the children of the Church, they ought to listen to the voice of their mother, who never forgets her children. For a long time they had been living separate from their mother, not indeed without exception; some, moved by the desire of salvation, having returned to her bosom. In the time of the deluge, all perished who entered not into the ark; the Paschal lamb must be eaten in one house; without the Church there can be no salvation. She is a closed garden, a fountain sealed; whosoever drinks of it shall never thirst. It was well for the Bohemians that they had sought this living water in the council, and had at length resolved to listen to their mother. Let them lay aside all their animosities, throw down their arms, and remove far off all occasions of war. The fathers were prepared to hear favourably all that the Bohemians had to say in their defence, provided they were ready on their part to follow the salutary counsels of the sacred synod; by which, not the Bohemians alone, but all Christians ought to be ruled". To this smooth sophistical commonplace, Rockizane replied, in the name of the embassy. After a devout and affecting prelude, he said :—"We have been much comforted by the invitation of the Council of Basle; for we are not ignorant that councils, when duly and legally assembled, have power to remove evils from the Church, as was seen in the first apostolic council. Nor has it been a small comfort to us, that the manner of our invitation was marked by so much affectionate and paternal regard, as has appeared in the several letters in which we have been entreated to make our appearance here. We further acknowledge the merciful kindness of God to us, in our being received in this town with every demonstration of respect and security both by secular and by ecclesiastical persons. Consequently, though nothing is as yet effected, we rejoice to perceive that everything promises a favourable issue". Addressing, then, more particularly, the legate, he continued: "As far as we can judge, your paternity has been the exclusive, or at least the principal, instrument of these divine consolations. We therefore offer you most humble thanks in our own name, and in the name of the absent Bohemians, both ecclesiastical and secular, earnestly praying that you may be preserved for the advancement of the Church, and being ready to submit to your paternity in all things, as far as our duty to God will permit. Having gone so far, we trust you will not pause, but will proceed to employ happily every means that can contribute to the establishment of the truth and law of Christ, and to a just and holy union; that, thus comforted ourselves, we may return home to comfort those who, these many years past, have been a prey to anguish and oppression in the midst of all the miseries of intestine war".

At their second audience, on the 16th January, 1433, the ambassadors proposed their demands, in the terms of the famous four articles. The cardinal, with an appearance of surprise, asked if that was all? "He had been assured", he said, "that there were many other particulars in which they had departed from the Church's doctrine". "Our commission", they replied, "is to propose those four articles, on the part of the whole kingdom, as the basis of union; and we have nothing further in charge to propose". "But", resumed the legate, "do you not maintain, for example, that the mendicant orders are an invention of the devil?" "And in that", exclaimed Procopius, rising, "we maintain no falsehood. For if neither Moses nor any other patriarch or prophet, and if neither Jesus Christ nor His apostles, founded the mendicant orders, who does not see that they are an invention of the devil, and a work of darkness?" This speech of the Bohemian captain's was received with a loud and general burst of laughter. But the legate, preserving the most politic suavity of manner, answered, that besides what the patriarchs, the prophets, and Christ Himself and His apostles had taught, there were moreover the Church's decrees; which were equally the work of God, because the Church is under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. "However", he added, "the manner of life of the mendicants may be very well justified by the Gospel".

The Bohemians chose four of their theologians to defend their four articles. The first, on the necessity of administering the communion in both kinds, was maintained by Rockizane. A Taborite and an

Orphanite divine undertook, respectively, the defence of the second and third; while Peter, the Englishman, supported the fourth thesis, that the clergy ought not to possess any temporal wealth. Each of the orators, except Rockizane the Calixtine, shocked the council by introducing into his oration the praise of Wicliffe and Huss. The council, on their part, appointed four doctors to answer the Bohemians; of whom, the first was John de Raguze, himself a Bohemian. In the course of his address, which occupied eight days in the delivery, he applied the terms heresy and heretics to his opponents and their opinions. At this Procopius lost patience. “What”, he exclaimed, “does this man (and he our countryman too) mean by insulting us, over and over again, with the term heretic*?*”. Raguze replied, “It is because I am your countryman, by nation and language, that you see me so earnest to lead you back to the bosom of the Church, that I care not to measure my words”. The Bohemians all rose to retire, but were at length with difficulty appeased. The other three respondents were then heard; when the orators of the Bohemians again spoke in reply. Fifty days had already been consumed in these wearisome disputations: Procopius and the rough warriors, his companions, could no longer repress their impatience.

The legate endeavoured to soothe them. In a private conference, he commended the temper shown by both sides throughout the discussions; and he expressed his great satisfaction with the following affirmation, made by Rockizane and the rest, viz., “We believe with St. Gregory and St. Augustine, that the Church is the total of the faithful dispersed through the world. We believe that this holy Church is in such wise founded upon a rock, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and we trust by the grace of Jesus Christ, who is its Head, rather to endure the crudest martyrdom, than knowingly to say a word contrary to its doctrine”. “But”, continued the legate, “besides mildness and forbearance in disputing, it is necessary, if a solid union is to be obtained, and for preventing by the council's decision all future disagreements, that every point in controversy be fairly explained and clearly understood on both sides, without any sort of suppression or evasion. You have, in all the many days this discussion has been continued, brought forward only four propositions. But we know, on unquestionable authority, that there are many other singular dogmas respecting which you differ from us ; and some of yourselves have made it evident, by the fact of calling John Wicliffe an evangelical doctor; for it is well known what Wicliffe’s opinions were concerning various doctrines of the Church”. He then submitted to them ten propositions from the writings of Wicliffe, relating to transubstantiation, confession, extreme unction, the use of chrism, prayers for the dead, the invocation of saints, veneration of images, &c.; to each of which he required the Bohemian doctors to return a categorical answer—“We believe”, or, “We do not believe this article”. They answered as before, “We are come here only to propose the four articles already laid before the council; and that, not so much in our own names, as in the name of the whole kingdom of Bohemia”. It was now manifest that, as neither side would yield anything, no agreement was to be expected. The deputies, impatient to return home, avoided further conference; and, on the 15th day of April, took leave of the council.

At home, the Taborites and their allies were not less anxiously desiring their return, for they both feared the effect upon their, determinations of so long a stay at Basle, and perceived that their enemies were deriving advantage from the absence of their warlike leaders. The numbers, in fact, and influence of those who, in Bohemia, desired peace and order at any sacrifice had greatly increased since the death of Ziska. Successful soldier as he was, and the idol of his fierce battalions, Procopius had never acquired that general ascendancy which belonged to his wonderfuf predecessor.

In the same assembly of the states to which the Bohemian deputies made their report, appeared a splendid embassy from the Council of Basle. The general instructions of the fathers to the prelates and doctors selected to represent them in Bohemia were to arrange an accommodation: but they had secret orders to widen the breach between the nobles who were eager for peace, and the party of Procopius; and, especially, to afford encouragement to the Roman Catholics. They were received with every possible mark of honour. In return, their speakers were most liberal in praise of Bohemia and its capital, and in promises that the council, on a simple recognition of its authority, would restore the nation to its former condition of prosperity and splendour. “You shall share”, said they, “in all our privileges and advantages. We will have the same churches, the same sacraments, the same services. Those venerable fathers, the bishops you now see present, will, with your permission, celebrate mass in your temples, will fortify your children with the sacrament of confirmation, of which, for want of bishops, you have so long been deprived : in short, they will perform for your benefit all those important functions, now neglected among you, which belong exclusively to their order”.

The Bohemians remained firm against these insidious blandishments. They threw the blame of the miseries that had befallen upon the Council of Constance. General councils, they affirmed, like the popes whom they sought to supplant, were liable to err—nay, had grossly erred; consequently, they would bow to the authority of neither pope nor council, except so far as they found them agreeing with Scripture. In short, they would have no peace but upon the basis of the four articles. “As for the war”, observed Procopius, “to which you ascribe all our evils, it has been the source of many benefits to us. Multitudes of those who, at the beginning, were opposed to our four articles, have been convinced since they have borne arms with us in defence of our country, that they "re scriptural, and have embraced them. The victories we have gained have been the means of confirming multitudes more, who would else have been forced by violence to abjure them, contrary to the truth of God, and the testimony of their consciences. In fact, was it not our success in war that induced the Council of Basle to grant the Bohemians a hearing, and thereby to supply the means of making known those holy truths for which we contend, all over the world”.

In spite, however, of Procopius and his party, the Bohemians finally consented to some modifications of the four articles, tending to an acknowledgment of the Church's authority. A formula of agreement, shaped on these modifications, was sent to the council, the chief particulars of which bore: that no doctrine or ceremony unauthorized by Scripture should be imposed on the Bohemians; and that the reformed should suffer hereafter no kind of molestation from the Catholics. The return of the commissioners employed on this occasion was followed by a second embassy, with authority to allow the four articles, but accompanied by certain restrictions and interpretations. What the object of these was, may be gathered from the condition attached to the administration of the communion in two kinds. This was conceded for a season (or, until the Bohemians could be better persuaded), on condition that in all other particulars, relating both to faith and practice, they conformed to the Universal Church and further, that at the time of administration, their priests clearly explained to the communicants that both the body and blood of Christ are contained entire under either species. This concession, small at the best, as the purchase of so much bloodshed and misery, is so cunningly guarded that, far from relaxing, it confirms the Church's decisions. Nevertheless, all remonstrance was overruled, chiefly by the means of Rockizane, whom the prospect of an elevation to the archiepiscopal seat of Prague had rendered eager for an accommodation; and deputies were despatched to Basle to signify to the fathers the acceptance of their proposals.

The chiefs to whom Procopius had entrusted the command of the Taborites in his absence, were not idle. They plundered the Catholic towns of Moravia, assisted the Poles to drive out the Teutonic Knights from the marches of Brandenburg, and even penetrated as far as Danzig. From before that place, however, they retired without attempting its capture, only bringing back with them some vessels full of the water of the ocean—a kind of trophy rare in Bohemia—to testify to the remoteness of their exploits.

Urged equally by disgust at the compact entered into with the council, and by a longing to return to his habitual element, war, and his natural sphere, the camp, Procopius retired, with a body of Taborites, from Prague. The second city in Bohemia was Pilsen: its garrison, and most of its inhabitants, were zealous partizans of Rome, and, though the first objects of his vengeance, had successfully resisted more than one assault in Ziska's lifetime. Being joined by the Orphans, under the command of Procopius the Less, the Taborite chieftain resolved on one more attempt for the reduction of this important place. Pilsen was feebly garrisoned, not containing above six hundred fighting men; it was also without the provisions necessary for maintaining a siege of long continuance. The brave inhabitants, nevertheless, assembling in one of their churches, unanimously took an oath rather to die in defence of their faith, than to yield the place on any terms whatever.

Procopius began his preparations in July. In October he was joined by the Bohemian army returned from Poland, under a chief named Czapec. Pilsen was now completely invested by a force amounting in all to thirty-six thousand efficient troops. Despairing, after repeated failures, to take the place by assault, Procopius converted the siege into a blockade, with the design of reducing it by famine. Meantime the little garrison made frequent sorties upon their assailants, in one of which they secured a singular captive. This was a camel taken from the Prussian knights by Czapec. Such a beast was as rare as salt water in Bohemia, and the men of Pilsen conducted it into their town with more satisfaction than they had felt in the destruction of three hundred of their enemies, who had that day fallen. The loss of their camel irritated the besiegers in at least an equal degree: they vowed never to leave Pilsen till they had recovered that trophy of their foreign victories. But it never was recovered; and in memory of the gallant defence of the city, a camel was afterwards chosen by Sigismund for the arms of Pilsen. Procopius, however, persevered; the besieged were reduced to a state of starvation, and must have perished but for some timely succours, purchased with a sum of 8000 ducats, secretly sent for their relief from Basle.

Events of more important bearing on their deliverance were, in the meanwhile, taking place in Prague. When the deputies returned from Basle with the council's ratification of the compact as agreed to by the states, the Taborites, the Orphanites, and Orebites refused to sign it, affirming that it was altogether deceptive and nugatory. They withdrew from the assembly, which had been convoked for that purpose, leaving the nobles and other friends of the measure to consult what in this emergency should be done. "To what purpose", argued the latter, "had they refused submission to a rightful sovereign, if they were to live under the dictation of a lawless military adventurer? The will of Procopius had too long been law in Bohemia. He alone had levied imposts, exacted contributions, retained absolute command of the

military resources of the country, led its armies wherever he pleased, to havoc, to plunder, to massacre. Nobles and commonalty, all alike, he regarded as his slaves, and required to execute his bidding. Was ever any people", they asked, "reduced to so miserable a state as the once proud and happy Bohemians? burdened as they were at once with the accumulated evils of both foreign and intestine war; living, summer and winter, in the open air, in camps; sleeping (when permitted to sleep) upon the ground, always bearing harness on their backs, and weapons in their hands. Meantime the land lay fallow; the people, as well as the herds and flocks in which their country, had so abounded, were fast disappearing. In a word, Bohemia was becoming a wilderness. All this was well for Procopius. War and calamity were to him the breath of life. But it was high time they should resolve no longer to let their country be sacrificed for the pleasure and advantage of one man". They agreed to elect a chief of their own to administer the public affairs. Their choice fell on Alexius Rizemberg, baron of an ancient house, who took the title of governor of Bohemia; and with him they associated Meinhard of Maison-Neuve, a gentleman of knightly rank, remarkable by his talents and activity.

Notwithstanding the show of unity at Prague, the adherents of the war party—Orphans and Taborites—who remained in the capital, kept exclusive possession of the Old Town. They closed the entrance to their quarter, and erected wooden towers and other defences, from which they annoyed with missiles those of New Prague. Summoned by Rizemberg to remove their barricades, and acknowledge the authority of the magistrates appointed by the nation, they replied, "That they, too, were a part of the nation; that the authority they acknowledged then lay before Pilsen; and that they had no intention to separate their cause from the cause of their friends: they were resolved to defend themselves against all who attempted to interfere with their liberty". On receiving this reply, Meinhard, with the troops under his command, stormed the barricades. In spite of aid despatched by Procopius, the dissidents were unable to support the furious assault. Between fifteen and twenty thousand of their number fell upon the ramparts, or in the disorderly flight which followed—a loss that largely contributed to the ruin of their party.

When the news of this defeat reached Pilsen, the citizens, unable to restrain their joy, thronged to the walls, insulting Procopius, and recommending him rather to go to the assistance of his friends, or to provide for his own safety, than to indulge the futile hope of subduing them, who defied his power. Two days later, he put in practice this sarcastic advice, having persevered in the siege eleven months.

Stung by the double disgrace of his party's expulsion from Prague, and the necessity of his own retirement from before Pilsen, Procopius vowed the completest vengeance. His answer to those who came to him from Prague, recommending an accommodation for the general benefit, was, that there should be peace when he had either perished in battle, or had retaken the New Town of Prague, driven out the nobles, and returned once more to invest Pilsen. The two armies, reinforced from the towns that respectively adhered to either party, soon after encountered at Boemischbrod, about four leagues from Prague. Procopius wished at that time to avoid an engagement, and rather to push on to Prague. His intention therefore was, to remain on the defensive within his intrenchments; but the barriers being formed with less care than usual, the enemy's cavalry, in which arm they had greatly the advantage, presently discovered a space where the chains were ill-connected, and the guard weak. On this point they concentrated their force, and, bursting through the line of carriages, charged furiously into the enclosure. Procopius the Less, who commanded in that quarter, for a time kept up a brave resistance; but, overpowered by numbers, his ranks were broken and put to flight, and himself slain. Rallied by their great captain, they renewed the contest, and held the victory in suspense, till Czapec, who had the command of the Hussite horse, treacherously drew off his squadrons. The infantry then gave way. Procopius, fighting with the desperation of a madman, sensible that all was now lost, sought death in the melee, rather than fall into the power of an enemy at whose hands he could expect only the severest treatment. The rest of the Hussite troops immediately surrendered. This victory proved the truth of a saying often repeated by Sigismund, that the Bohemians could be conquered by none but the Bohemians.

The chiefs of Prague had now to consider what was to be done with so many prisoners; for, habituated as the Hussite soldiers had been to a wild unsettled life of war and plunder, there was no prospect of tranquillity for the kingdom while such men wore at large. The opinion of the majority devoted them to the sword. Meinhard, however, mixing compassion with perfidious cruelty, suggested that they ought not to take the lives of those among them whom Procopius had forced unwillingly from

their homes to join hos ranks. Addressing the miserable captives in a tone of friendly consideration, he told them, that though the Procopii had met with the fate their rebellion deserved, the war was not yet at an end. Czapec with his cavalry had taken refuge in Colin: ho must be besieged there, and by his death a final close would be put to the troubles of Bohemia. This was a service suited to brave men inured to war. "If you", he continued, "will serve me as faithfully as you served Ziska and Procopius, pay shall be assigned you out of the public purse, till the affairs of the kingdom be settled". They intimated that they were willing. "Such of you, then, as are fit for the service retire to yonder building" he said, pointing to a large barn near at hand; there officers will presently attend, to enter your names on the muster-roll. Take care, however, that none go in but those who have seen and are fit for service". The following extract, in which the conclusion is related by Aeneas Sylvius, exhibits little more pity for these victims of the policy of Jehu than was shown by Meinhard himself. Under the fatal roof, chosen for his horrid purpose on account of the combustible materials of which it was composed, "several thousands of the Taborites and Orphans entered,—swarthy wretches, hardened by the sun and wind, accustomed all their lives to the smoke of camps; men terrible and frightful to look upon, with their eagle eyes, their uncombed locks, and long beards, their enormous stature, limbs soiled and covered with hair, and skin so hardened by exposure, that it seemed as capable as mail of resisting the blow of a sword. As soon as they were inside, the doors were fastened, fire put to the building, and this scum and off-scouring of mankind, guilty of a thousand enormities, received, by perishing in the flames, the punishment due to their contempt of religion". After this great quell, the Hussites were so much reduced as hardly ever again to appear in arms. Some scattered garrisons and a few irregular bands for a time held out; but, one after another, they were subdued. Even Tabor was given up to the emperor, and the once invincible followers of Ziska and Procopius finally became parties to the convention with the general council.

The Bohemian kingdom was now as eagerly offered to Sigismund as hitherto it had been obstinately refused. The following are the principal conditions with which the Bohemians accompanied the offer:— That the king should confirm the Four Articles, and issue a general amnesty. That he should retain at his court Hussite preachers. That the alienated possessions of the Church should remain with the present holders, unless repurchased. That the religious of both sexes banished or retired from the kingdom should not be readmitted, nor the people be required to rebuild the ruined monasteries. That all the privileges of the kingdom should be restored, together with the relics, jewels, &c., belonging to the crown. That the king should re-establish the university, and enlarge the endowments of the royal hospitals. That both the Bohemian and German languages should be used in preaching. That no foreigner should be appointed to govern the kingdom in the king's absence.

These articles Sigismund, with more readiness than sincerity, accepted; and confirmed them, first at Brün in Moravia, again at Alba in Hungary, and a third time, with added solemnity, at Iglau, on the confines of Bohemia and Moravia, in the presence of the assembled nobility, clergy, and people. At the same time, the Bohemians and Moravians, represented by Alexius of Rizemberg, governor of the kingdom, the barons, knights, esquires, and vassals, the municipal officers of Prague and the other towns, with the priests representing the general congregation of the kingdom of Bohemia and the marquisate of Moravia, likewise submitted, and promised canonical obedience to the Church, the general council, and the Roman pontiff, then present by their ambassadors. The ambassadors of the council then took off the sentence of $_{t}$ excommunication against the Hussites. By the joint authority of the emperor and the legate, a * decree was published in the Latin, Bohemian, Hungarian, and German languages, granting liberty to the Bohemians and Moravians to communicate either under one kind or under both; and declaring that those who chose the former should, equally with the others, be deemed true children of the Church. This edict, inscribed in letters of gold, was set up in all the churches of Prague.

Sigismund, delighted with the near prospect of obtaining, so much more easily than he had expected actual possession of his kingdom, manifested on this occasion unwonted affability and kindness. He promised the Bohemians liberty to elect an archbishop and suffragan bishops; "which election", he added privately, "we will confirm, without the necessity of any further confirmation; and the persons so chosen shall be consecrated without the ceremony of the pallium, and without any payment to the notaries of the apostolical see". He likewise, at their request, nominated Rockizane to the archbishopric of Prague, an elevation towards which he had so long been wishfully looking.

The diet of Iglau was held in June, 1436; and, on the 23rd day of August, the emperor-king made his entry into Prague. Never had the mutability of human passions and purposes been more strikingly shown. This same potentate, to whom the Bohemians lately applied every epithet of contumely,—this "adulterer", this "son of anti-Christ", this "abettor of sacrilege"—they now welcomed with all imaginable demonstrations of honour and delight. The whole population of every rank went forth to meet and hail him as their legitimate sovereign. Four days afterwards, he was a second time crowned, by Philibert, bishop of Constance, ambassador of the council. Seated on a throne, and wearing the royal diadem of Bohemia, he then, in the public square of the Old Town of Prague, received the homage of the barons, knights, military officers, and the municipal authorities of Prague and the other towns, re-establishing the consuls and senators, and confirming with new patents the rights and immunities of the capital.

CHAPTER XV.

SIGISMUND VIOLATES THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED THE CROWN.—HIS DEATH.—IS SUCCEEDED BY THE ARCHDUKE ALBERT.—DEATH OF ALBERT.—STATE OF RELIGION IN BOHEMIA.—ROCKIZANE.—MEINHARD MADE SOLE GOVERNOR OF BOHEMIA. THE POPE REFUSES TO RATIFY THE COMJPACT OF BASLE.—PODIEBRAD SUCCEEDS MEINHARD.

IT soon became evident that Sigismund, in granting, with so much facility the conditions on which the crown of Bohemia was offered him, strictly adhered to his favourite maxim that he who would govern must dissemble. As if that unexampled series of calamitous contests, in which his armies had been a dozen times defeated by a comparative handful of men, who fought with unconquerable prowess, because they fought for their altars and their hearths against those whom they deemed the enemies of both, had not sufficed to open his eyes, he already discovered his intention to re-establish, in all its dominant splendour, a form of worship held in abhorrence by the greater part of the Bohemians. The exiled clergy, both regular and secular, were recalled. Monks and nuns of all orders began once more to swarm in Prague: Celestines, Benedictines, Servites of St. Mark, Religieuses of St. George, Teutonic knights, knights of Jerusalem, & c., &c., returned to their ruined houses, or settled themselves in other near abodes. The cathedral establishments were restored, if with less magnificence, yet with all their ancient decorations.

The remaining adherents of the papacy appeared on a sudden to have quadrupled their numbers and their confidence; and the delighted pontiff presented the emperor with that supreme mark of grateful satisfaction at Rome, the Golden Rose. All this was directly in contravention of Sigismund's solemn oath and decree at Iglau. Yet all this the historian Sylvius records without disapproval, or rather excuses as done from necessity; that is, it was the throwing aside of a cloak assumed for the object, necessary to satisfy ambition, of obtaining a kingdom. To serve a temporary purpose, he had promised to appoint Rockizane to the most important station in the realm; he now, by threats in return for importunate calls for the performance of his promise, drove the ambitious and time-serving priest into exile. Coranda and Peter the Englishman, better and more consistent men, were likewise expelled from Prague.

A disposition to revolt naturally began to show itself. Commotions had in fact already broken out, particularly in Moravia, when Sigismund fell ill, and expired at Zoroima in that province, in Dec., 1437, in the seventieth year of his age. Among the objects which had engaged the emperor's earnest care during the latter years of his extraordinary and laborious life, was the securing of the succession to the Bohemian crown, with his other dominions, to his son-in-law, the Archduke Albert. This cherished purpose of the declining monarch was, from views of personal ambition, secretly thwarted by his imperial consort Barbara. For this offence, he caused her to be imprisoned; and not the least remarkable nor the least melancholy incident, witnessed by the people of Prague at the magnificent obsequies of the departed Caesar, was the appearance of his widowed consort, as a captive, in the funeral cortege.

To the Catholic party, the arrangements made by the late emperor were extremely acceptable; and that party was sufficiently powerful, in spite of a vigorous opposition by the Calixtines, to procure the election of Albert. He was crowned king of Bohemia in the church of St. Vitus, on the 29th of June, 1438. The same year likewise witnessed his coronation as emperor, and again as king of the Romans; an accumulation of royal honours unexampled within so short a space. Short, likewise, and disturbed was his enjoyment of them; for while the Calixtines, who, on their part, had offered the crown to Casimir, brother of Ladislaus, king of Poland, were commencing, with Ptaczeck, a popular noble, at their head, a resistance to his pretensions, which threatened to plunge Bohemia once more into the horrors of civil war, Albert also died. His death occurred suddenly, in the flower of his age, in October, 1439.

This unexpected event for a moment reconciled all parties in Bohemia. But the great question of the choice of a king, whose authority might fix and confirm the shifting elements of peace, seemed now

farther than ever from being decided. Albert died childless, but a posthumous son, born long enough after his imperial parent's decease to admit, in the interval, a world of contention and intrigue respecting his succession, was crowned and baptized on the same day by the name of Ladislaus; both name and coronation being designed as barriers against the encroaching ambition of the king of Poland, who had already put forth a claim to the vacant throne of Hungary. After many disputes, the two parties agreed to wait the majority of the royal infant. In the meantime, Ptaczeck and Meinhard were elected joint governors of the kingdom. For a short season the two parties, of whom these chiefs were respectively representatives, found a common useful employment in clearing Bohemia and Moravia of the numerous bands of robbers, the refuse of the wars, with which they were infested. But the show of peace was false and deceptive, continually disturbed by disputes, and sometimes eclipsed by hostile arms. Conference succeeded to conference, upon their religious differences; synod to synod, in which either faction brought forward its crude profession of faith, and urged its exclusive claim to toleration. In these encounters, Rockizane, now again powerful in Prague, and supported by numbers in the provincial towns, always took a prominent part. The letter of a contemporary describes the state of religious parties and opinions at this period in Bohemia.

After bitterly complaining of Rockizane, and other "brothers of our confessions", the witness of whose "worldly ambition and popish compliances" would, he says, have shocked "those faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who, after the example of the Maccabees, shed their blood for the maintenance of the truth, and sacrificed their lives in battle for their country";—the writer, Nicholas Biscupecz, describes the party whom he calls the accomplices of the pope. "Their only object", he affirms, "in all their machinations, is to make themselves masters of the world; and without this inducement, there would not be even the appearance of religion amongst them. Regard attentively the Italians: their sole object is to obtain pre-eminence. For this, they use every sort of artifice; and when artifice fails, they resort to violence. Consult the annals of Rome; it is by means of war, and by the effusion, or rather by the profusion, of blood, that they have made themselves masters of all countries, and subjected to their power all the princes of Europe. Under the pretext of religion, they have the art to breathe discord, and scatter the seeds of war between sovereigns and people, in order that they themselves may benefit by reconciling them at their common cost. How successful these contrivances have been in our time, is proved by the unnatural spectacle so long before our eyes, of people united by the closest ties of country and of language, mutually persecuting and destroying each other.

"But what, in reality", he continues, "is this dominion of the pope? It is altogether political; it has, at least, no foundation in the Word of God. They who have been at Rome will tell you, that hardly once a year does the pope cast his eyes upon the Bible. But we want no other proof than the manner in which the faithful are governed by this pretended successor of St. Peter, whom Jesus Christ commanded to feed his sheep, not to exercise dominion over them; the latter being an office which, says his brother Apostle St. Paul, belongs to secular persons. To pass, however, from the conduct of the pope to his doctrine; think, in how many particulars he has disguised and set aside the principles of that faith, of which he affects to be the arbiter and judge.

1. We believe in one only God. But the Roman pontiff pretends that on earth he too is God. What a monstrous thing that a sinful man, one of the criminal race of Adam, should set himself up for a divinity! May God keep you and me from ever taking him for one.

2. The faithful hold, that we obtain eternal life by the sacrifice of Christ, who has reconciled us to God; but the popes maintain that man is justified by good works. This proposition might appear more reasonable, if the good works meant were such as God has commanded in his Word; although St. Paul affirms, that even these cannot of themselves merit salvation. But what they understand by good works, are dutiful submission to the pope and clergy, spending money at or in pilgrimages to Rome, expeditions of Christians against Christians, at the fancy of the popes, in which those who join them receive for pay a cross fastened to their garments or their arms. In a word, he does good works, who undertakes to maintain to the death the authority assumed by the Roman pontiff.

3. Christ, by the sacrifice of his body and blood, has fully and finally expiated our sins. But the papists pretend to create a God out of piece of bread, a material substance, produced from the earth, threshed, ground in a mill by an ass, steeped in water, kneaded by some old woman, baked (not in an oven, but in a certain machine of heated iron), and finally shaped into a peculiar form by a monk, then

placed upon the altar, and consecrated with a peculiar form of words, accompanied by certain incantations. Of this they make a God, by whose sacrifice they pretend to be reconciled to the Almighty. They adore the God thus created, enclosed in a vessel of glass; an abomination surpassing the idolatry for which the prophet Jeremiah reproved the Babylonians.

4. But even this is not all. We believe that we have one only High Priest, and one offering before God, namely, Jesus Christ; they employ persons to go into the places which they call holy, to search for the bones of the dead (although we are forbidden in Scripture to consult them), and make people believe that they intercede for the living. We believe that the Word and the Sacraments are the means of uniting us spiritually with God. But they will not permit the Word of God to be read in a language understood by the people; they will have it read, contrary to the commandment of St. Paul, only in Latin, which is hardly understood now, even in Italy. Yet it would be something, were it permitted to read the whole Bible in Latin, but even that is not permitted. As to the Sacraments, I am persuaded, that if the twelve Apostles, and those who lived nearest to their times, could be informed of the manner in which the Sacraments are now administered, it would excite their horror. Gracious God! with what severity did thy justice visit our fathers; and into what gulphs of darkness art Thou likewise bringing us their children, because of our iniquities, at a time when we might have expected to possess thy Word and Sacraments in all their purity! Thou art just, O Lord; to Thee it belongs to complete the work. Have Thou pity on us!

"I shall add but little to what I have said; for these things are not unknown to you, brother. What is their purgatory but a pagan fable, drawn from Plato, from Homer, and Virgil? since for the good among mankind there is heaven in reserve, for the bad, hell. But their object in these inventions is to extract money, and to domineer over men's consciences. Were that not the case, I do not believe they could defend such gross errors. There are many who defend them from pure ambition, and who, if not led away by this passion to bury their talents in the earth for the pleasures of this world, and seduced by the charms of wealth and preferment, might be good husbandmen in the Lord's vineyard. To their own consciences we leave them. For you, my brethren, all you who read this letter, or hear it read, come out, I exhort you, come out of Babylon. Shun those snares of the devil, who has seduced Rockizane by the hope of possessing the archbishopric of Prague. Oh, unhappy kingdom of Bohemia, whose ruin could not be averted by the blood of so many holy men! But such is God's will. It is not by might, nor by arms, that the work will be accomplished, but by ways that God Himself will choose. He will yet raise up, in answer to our prayers, those who in a short time will execute it.

"Arm yourselves, therefore, with patience; be constant in prayer, abounding in hope. The help of God will come when we look not for it. Our undertakings have ended ill, because they were ill begun. Let us take our disappointments in good part, and keep up our courage: God will provide for us. You and I are accused of exciting the people to war. God knows how grieved I myself am at this imputation; and I believe that you are yourself clear from anything so criminal. For my own part, I never approved of having recourse to arms; if there are any guilty of such an intention, God will punish them. Is it likely that I should desire to embroil myself in such a course at my advanced age, and when with difficulty I can find safety among my few friends? But it does not follow that I ought to allow myself to be the slave of anti-Christ, and hide the truth which God has revealed to me. Rather would I have never seen the light of day. Such is not the example left us by the fathers of the Old and New Testaments, any more than by our blessed martyrs, John Huss and Jerome of Prague. The prophets, to whom no one of us is worthy to be compared, met with the same fate. Their example I counsel you to follow, to study holiness, to inculcate it among your people, and to maintain Church discipline, for without discipline all will go to ruin".

The historian Theobald, on introducing the above letter into his work, takes occasion from it to remark, that the Taborites were not the rude unlettered race they have been represented. "True it is", he writes, "that the greater part were but little acquainted with literature or the learned languages, yet their clergy were well versed in the works of the Greek Fathers, which they read in Latin translations, and quoted abundantly. They took great pains to instruct the people, enforcing with the utmost strictness their attendance upon sermons". The Bible was diligently read in the families of the Bohemians from a version in the vernacular tongue; copies of this version were numerous, and it was early printed, viz., in 1506, at Venice, ten years before Luther raised his powerful voice against the sale of indulgences.

The intrigues and mutual ambition of the joint, or, more correctly, the rival governors were threatening to become hardly less grievous to Bohemia than the preceding anarchy, when Ptaczeck was

removed from the scene by death. His colleague, Meinhard, now aspired to the sole government. Meinhard wag master of Prague, and of the Romish party throughout the country; but the friends of the reformation resolved to have a successor to Ptaczeck; and chose George Podiebrad, a nobleman of distinguished character and influence, and a Calixtine. Nevertheless, both the emperor, now Frederick III and Pope Eugenius considered the occasion a favourable one to attempt bringing Bohemia under the papal authority; the former offering, in return, to fix his residence among them until the majority of young Ladislaus; the latter, to grant them perfect liberty to communicate under the two kinds. An embassy sent to Vienna, and another to Rome, soon found, as was suspected, that these offers were merely specious, and the negotiations proved as usual abortive. No better fate attended an attempt made by Eugenius's successor, Nicholas V, on his elevation to the pontificate, to pacify the religious troubles of Bohemia. His holiness's legate, Cardinal Carjaval, was gladly received, and heard with respect in a conference at Prague. But as that functionary evaded both the demands of the Bohemians, viz., the ratification of the compact made with the Council of Basle, and the consecration of Rockizane to the Bohemian primacy, he, who had entered the capital in a kind of triumph, quitted it without taking leave.

A new revolution enabled the popular party to dispense with the second of these demands. That party seized suddenly on Prague, drove out their opponents, shut up Meinhard in prison, where he shortly after died, and left Podiebrad without a rival in the government. Rockizane, after eleven years of banishment, took possession of the cathedral as archbishop of Prague, and the establishment of the Hussite, or evangelical faith, was celebrated by a grand public solemnity.

The ability and judgment displayed by Podiebrad justified the ambition, or the public confidence, which had placed him at the head of the nation. He put down the brigands by whom the country was infested, and found employment in the neighbouring states for the disbanded soldiery, tired of inaction and maddened with want, from whom these lawless bands had been supplied. Returning in triumph to Prague, from a successful expedition at the head of the Bohemian and Moravian troops, to assist duke William of Saxony against the elector, he was invested, by common consent, in an assembly of the states, with the title and authority of sole governor of the kingdom. The praise of moderation can hardly be denied to this man, if at such a moment he gave with as much sincerity as he gave it with readiness, a promise that he would, use the utmost urgency with Frederick to send the Bohemians their youthful sovereign without more delay. A fresh embassy—the third—was accordingly despatched to Vienna. The demand being accompanied this time with a hint not to be mistaken, that if it were refused they would elect another king, it met with, at least, grave attention.

CHAPTER XVI.

AENEAS SYLVIUS SENT INTO BOHEMIA.—HIS DESCRIPTION OF TABOR AND ITS INHABITANTS. ACCOUNT OF HIS CONFERENCE WITH PODIEBRAD ON THE STATE OF RELIGION IN BOHEMIA. HIS UNCHARITABLE JUDGMENT OF THE BOHEMIANS.—THEIR CONVERSION ATTEMPTED BY JOHN OF CAPISTRAN.—AND BY CARDINAL CASA.—ULADISLAUS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE THRONE.—HE DIES AND IS SUCCEEDED BY PODIEBRAD.—REUNION AND MODERATION OF THE DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

THE head of the imperial embassy sent with the answer to the demand of the Bohemians to have their king was the same Aeneas Sylvius, who has been repeatedly named in the foregoing pages. He was now bishop of Sienna; and though not yet the severe advocate of papal prerogative he became when raised to the pontifical throne, had already repented of his share in the firm opposition it met with in the Council of Basle. Nevertheless his was the first attempt to deal rationally—charitably no man did—with the Bohemians; and it was not wholly vain. He plainly demonstrated that the presence among them, considering the state their country was in, of a prince still a minor, could prove no real benefit; and he soothed their impatience by assuring them that their country, not Hungary, which likewise was pressing the same claims, should be preferred by the young Ladislaus, when he came of age. In what spirit, and with what degree of success, he treated the more difficult topic of religious differences, he has himself told us in a letter to Cardinal Carvajal. This epistle is highly curious, and, though strongly marked with the prejudices of the writer, rich in authentic information upon the state of Bohemia.

The learned prelate relates how he and his colleagues, finding themselves, towards nightfall, not far from Tabor, resolved, though unwillingly, to pass the night there. The Taborites, as soon as their intention was perceived, came out to meet, and joyfully received them. “A curious spectacle”, he writes, “it was, to see this rustic and rude people exerting themselves to appear courteous. Some of them, although it was very cold and rained hard, were stripped to their shirts; others wore cloaks. Of those we saw on horseback some had no saddles; others had neither bridles nor spurs. One had lost an eye, another had but one arm. They walked and conversed in the coarse country fashion. However they offered us refreshments, such as fish, wine, and beer. Their city I know not how better to designate than by calling it the stronghold and asylum of heretics, for it is the home and refuge of every monstrous form of impiety and blasphemy to be met with in Christendom. There you may find as many heresies as heads, and every one is at liberty to believe just what he pleases.

“Over the outer gate of the town were placed two bucklers. On the one was painted an angel holding a cup, as if inviting the people to communion under the species of wine; on the other, a representation of the blind old man, Ziska, once chief of the Taborites. This was the man who gained so many victories over the faithful, who massacred so great a number of Christians, burnt so many towns, churches, and monasteries, abandoned so many virgins to the lust of his soldiers, and put to death so many priests. Wherever he led the Taborites followed, even after he became wholly blind; and rightly enough, for who so fit as a blind man to be the chief of a people ignorant of God, without religion, and without morals? Therein they accomplished our Saviour’s saying: ‘If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch’. After the death of 'Ziska, one part of the Taborites elected Procopius for their chief; the other part so affectionately cherished his memory that, believing no person worthy to succeed in his place, they assumed the name of *Orphans*. Not satisfied with having followed this blind chief while living, they were willing to follow him when dead, though it were to the infernal regions. The Taborites venerate him as a god. They hold all paintings in abomination, yet they worship one of him, paying those honours to Ziska which they refuse to Christ.

“It is an abominable and pernicious sect, worthy of the extremest punishment. They refuse to acknowledge the pre-eminence of the Roman Church. They maintain that the clergy ought not to possess any property: they destroy the images of Jesus Christ and the saints, and deny purgatory. They maintain that the prayers of the saints who reign with Christ are of no service to the living. They observe no other festivals but Sunday and Easter Day. They despise fasts and canonical hours. They communicate under both kinds, and give the communion to children and natural fools. Those who officiate in the mass repeat only the Lord’s Prayer and the words of consecration wearing at the time their ordinary habits, without any sacerdotal ornament. There are some among them who are even so mad as to affirm that the real body of Christ is not in the Sacrament of the altar, but only represented by it, as Berengarius also did before his retractation. They allow no other to be sacraments than

Baptism, the Eucharist, Marriage, and Orders; rejecting penance, confirmation, and extreme unction. They are sworn foes to the monastic way of life, which they regard as an invention of the devil. They make use of water alone in Baptism. They have no consecrated burial-places, but bury their dead in the fields with the beasts, as indeed they deserve. They assert that prayers for the dead are useless. They laugh at the consecration of churches, and administer the Communion in all places indifferently.

"On the other hand, they are exceedingly careful to hear sermons. If any one neglects them—if he stays at home to sleep, to work, or to amuse himself at sermon time—he is scourged, and taken by force to hear. They have a wooden building like a barn, which they call their temple; and in it an unconsecrated altar, at which they communicate. Their priests have no tonsure, nor do they shave their beards. The Taborites supply them with corn, beer, milk, vegetables, and all necessary household conveniences; they likewise allow them a certain sum to purchase fish, fresh meat, and (if » they please) wine. Nothing is offered on the altar. They disapprove of tithes and first-fruits. They are not all agreed about religion, but one believes one thing, another another, each according to his fancy. Nevertheless, sacrilegious wretches as they are, Sigismund, by an exercise of toleration disgraceful and prejudicial to himself as well as to the kingdom, has granted them the rights and immunities of citizens; only reserving an inconsiderable impost; instead of exterminating them, or banishing them to the ends of the earth, far from all commerce with mankind, as he ought to have done.

"But it is time to give you a description of Tabor itself. The town is surrounded by a double wall, with towers and ramparts. Towards the west it is defended by steep rocks. On one side it is washed by the river Lusinitz, and on the other by a torrent of moderate width, but deep, and difficult of approach: this torrent winds in a circuit round the town till it joins the river. Thus the place is defended by rocks and streams, with the exception of one narrow entrance, where there is a deep ditch, and a triple wall so thick that no battering machines could make any impression upon it. At the first of the three gates, which must be passed before gaining admission into the town, there is a rampart twenty feet wide and forty in height. In the public square are displayed a variety of warlike machines, taken by the Taborites in their victories. Their houses are of wood or plaster. The streets are irregular in consequence of the houses having been built where the inhabitants had previously pitched their tents. They possess abundance of precious furniture and other wealth, the spoils of many nations.

"At first they resolved to follow the customs of the primitive Church, and have all things in common; but they grew tired of imitating that example, and now every one lives for himself. After a short indulgence of fraternal charity, they returned to their natural disposition, and are all miserly. Being no longer able to follow their old trade of rapine, they apply themselves to commerce and sordid gain. There are in the town four thousand inhabitants capable of bearing arms ; but having taken to trade and to gaining their livelihood as weavers and handicraftsmen, they are no longer considered fit for War. They had originally no landed property, but they seized on the lands of the nobility and monasteries, and Sigismund, contrary to all law, Divine and human, has secured these possessions to them in perpetuity.

"What I have now communicated to you respecting the state of this senate of heretics—this synagogue of wickedness—this abode of Satan this temple of Belial, and kingdom of Lucifer—I learned from the person at whose house I passed a night. I exhorted this man to renounce his errors, and he did not appear indifferent to my advice. He had in his bedchamber images of the blessed Virgin and of Jesus Christ, to which he secretly paid his devotions. I even think he might be converted if he were not afraid of losing his goods. But he is rich; and the greater part would rather lose their souls than their wealth.

"The next day the magistrates of this sordid town came and returned us thanks for our visit. Considering their civility to be more assumed than real, I said to my colleagues: We have done wrong to have any communication with a set of people enemies to God by their crimes. I did not suppose I should find among them such monstrous errors as I have found. I thought they were separated from us only by communicating in both kinds; but I now know by experience that they are a race of heretics and infidels, rebels to God, and without religion. Consequently, if we desire to clear our consciences, we must speak to them in such a manner as to leave them no room to believe that we approve their ways, or to boast that the ambassadors of the King of the Romans have had any correspondence with them. Procopius approved my proposal, but the timid Austrians refused to agree to it, although I assured them that I would say nothing which could give the Taborites offence. We retired, therefore, without celebrating divine service.

"It was my wish to visit Prague, that renowned capital. But the plague was raging so violently there, that the Bohemians had been obliged to transfer their diet to Benechau, twenty-fite miles off. On arriving at Benechau, we found the diet already assembled. George of Constad and Podiebrad, Henry

of Rosenberg, Zdenko, and many other barons were there. There likewise were the deputies of all the towns—Prague, Cuttenberg, Pilsen, Leutomeritz, &c., &c., including Tabor—Catholics and heretics, all confounded together. The nobility are mostly Catholics, the towns mostly Taborites or Calixtines. Many of both parties were present. As this diet was held on our account, and for the purpose of hearing the emperor's answer to the Bohemians, we spent three days in conference with them; on the fourth, our business was at end on both sides, and we separated, after the barons had agreed to a proposal we had been desired to make, for an interview between them and the cardinal of St. Peter, legate apostolic, for the pacification of the church. The conference is to take place on St. Martins Day, at Leutomeritz, the margraves of Brandenberg to be mediators between the kingdom and the legate. May it please God to put an end to the discords, and make the faith flourish in Bohemia.

"It was with a view to the furtherance of this desire that, believing if I could win over a nobleman of so much power and credit in the kingdom, it would greatly influence others, I begged Procopius to undertake the office of interpreter between myself and Podiebrad. We were a long time discoursing together, and for the sake of brevity I will set down the substance of what passed in the form of dialogue".

Aeneas then reports that after mutual compliments had passed between them, he represented to Podiebrad the unhappy state of his country, in consequence of its quarrel with Rome; assuring him that he, who could lead the people of Bohemia as he pleased, might gain immortal honour and secure the favour of the apostolic see, by bringing back those of its children whom Satan had seduced from communion with it. George (as he calls him) replies:

"I thank you, reverend father, for the interest you take in our kingdom. It is indeed, as you say, much weakened and depressed,—by whose fault is known to God. For us, we ask only peace. We do not make war for its own sake, but for the sake of peace. It is in spite of ourselves that we arm and engage in battle. We sent an embassy to the Council of Basle, and entered into an agreement with the fathers. If that agreement had. been observed we should have been at peace with the apostolic see, and there would have been no divisions in the kingdom; but it is daily violated. We are treated as heretics and schismatics: if one of our people dies among you, he is buried as they bury an ass. Our clergy, albeit wise and learned men, can nowhere obtain consecration. Our custom of communicating in two kinds is made a subject for ridicule. The cardinal of St. Angelo (Carjaval himself) came among us in the character of legate. Our preachers attended his conference; I myself was also present. We demanded the renewal and confirmation of our compact; and if he had chosen to give us a favourable hearing it would have prevented the scandals that have happened since. But he refused our request, and even talked as if he had never heard of any such compact with the council. We well know notwithstanding that it is valid and authentic, and that it was authorized by the council before its dissolution by Eugenius IV. If Nicholas V wishes us to submit to him he has only to order faith to be kept with us. That is the shortest and the only way to make peace.

"It is customary with mankind to render like for like. How can you complain that the compact has been violated when you yourselves were the first to violate it? For, not satisfied with communicating under the two species yourselves, you condemn those who communicate under but one".

GEO. Where do we condemn them?"

AEN. When you say, 'There is no salvation without communion under both kinds', you condemn us all as heretics. Who can be surprised if you in return receive the same treatment? You say that your compact was authorized by the council. I grant it. The council is for all that not of your opinion; for it does not believe that the communion under both kinds is necessary, nor that Jesus Christ commanded the people to communicate so.

"GEO. If communion under both kinds was not commanded, neither was communion under one only commanded; for He who commanded the communion to be administered under the species of bread, commanded it to be also administered under the species of wine.

"AEN. Christ did not give the sacrament to the people, but only to the Apostles. But this is not the time to enter upon that matter;—allow me to resume the thread of my discourse.

"GEO. Proceed; I listen.

"AEN. Who can be surprised that the legate refused to renew the compact? When you were allowed the communion under the two kinds, your priests were ordered to say at the administration, that entire Christ is no less under one than under the other; they do nothing of the sort. They were forbidden to give the communion to children and idiots; they give it. They were forbidden to oblige any

one to communicate under both kinds; they do oblige them, and deny burial to those who refuse—they admit none into their society but upon this condition. They ought to observe the rites and usages of the universal Church; they wholly neglect them, and even introduce hymns in the vernacular tongue into divine service. Pretty obedience this! Nice observance of the compact! doing what they were forbidden to do, and not doing what they were commanded. While thus you abuse your privilege, while you transgress the laws of the fathers, and disobey the council, you have no right to complain of the legate for refusing to renew an agreement which you have abused.

"GEO. Among the articles of our convention one is to the effect, that although there be some who do not at first receive the ritual generally observed, that circumstance shall not prejudice the treaty nor disturb the union.

"AEN. True, if there were no more than *some;* but as all reject the rites and usages of the Church, it is an infraction which deprives the compact of its force. Besides, it is not a question only of a rite or a ceremony, but a matter that touches the faith; for by maintaining the necessity of communion under both kinds, allow me to say, you depart from the faith.

"GEO. These questions I do not pretend to understand. This only I will tell you, that if our compact is not observed, there will be neither peace nor in future even the mention of agreement. If again we resort to arms, you will not fail to offer us the observance of the compact; but we will not accept your offers. We are not so few as you think; there are many on our borders of the same opinion as ourselves, who will be ready to join us in arms at the first signal. The pope is not ignorant of what has taken place here of late years: if he is wise, he will no longer amuse himself with discussing whether we have forfeited our privileges or not, lest, appealing once more to the sword, we not only make those sure, but win greater. When men have arms in their hands they can force from their enemies what has been unjustly denied them. You will on your side, perhaps, have the promise of large armies to bring against us; but we know both the temper and the power of our neighbours. If I therefore were called upon to advise the pope, it would be to observe the compact. If the pope shows himself obdurate, he will find Bohemia obdurate too".

Aeneas replies by reminding Podiebrad of the uncertain issues of war, and of the probability that the tide of good fortune, so long in favour of the Hussites, might now turn against them. He then returns to the charge, that the Bohemians had themselves violated the convention, particularly in their election of Rockizane to the archbishopric, contrary to the customs of the Catholic Church, which they had promised to follow. In the end Podiebrad is persuaded of Rockizane's unfitness, and promises to withdraw his support from the intruder after hearing John of Capistran, a learned monk and doctor of laws, whom Aeneas proposes to send into Bohemia to discuss the whole matter in detail. They then separate.

As the ambassadors, in their way from Benechau, again passed by Tabor, the Taborites came out, and it being the hour of dinner, earnestly entreated the bishop and his company to honour them by partaking of their repast. The colleagues of Aeneas, and the Bohemian lords who accompanied them, were very desirous to accept the invitation; but the bishop at first steadily refused: "Never again", he exclaimed, "will I lodge among these enemies of the faith". They urged, that he ought to make it a matter of conscience to seize this fresh opportunity to say what he ought in truth to have said before. To this reproach he at length yielded; protesting at the same time that, though he consented to re-enter the town, he was resolved not again to eat or drink in it. Accordingly they proceeded to the house of Aeneas's host on the former occasion. They were immediately waited upon by three of the Taborite clergy, with whom, while the rest of the party were at dinner, Aeneas entered into discourse. "The three", he says, were "Nicholas, whom they call their bishop, a man far advanced in an ill-spent life; John Galeth, who had fled from Poland to escape the flames; and the old slave of satan, Wenceslaus Coranda. With them came also several students and townsfolk who understood Latin: for the perfidious race has this and only this good quality, that they are lovers of learning. We are greatly indebted to you, father, they said, that you have been pleaded to honour our town with this visit. Most heartily do we welcome you here and offer you such as we have. We were not present the first time you came among us. Since we enjoy that pleasure on the present occasion, we now entreat you to favour us with some words of consolation, that so your visit may not be without fruit". The ambassador thanked them and commended them for their Christian virtue of hospitality, adding, however, "I am myself resolved to fast till evening. But since you seek words of comfort from me, I will say what your circumstances seem to require —not in lofty and affected terms, the language of human wisdom, but in the sincerity of my regard I will open to you the treasures of wisdom and truth; and God grant that you may receive my words in as good part as I shall speak them".

The conference that followed was devoted to subjects, such as the authority, doctrines, rites, and ceremonies of the Church, which Podiebrad said truly were not within his province. The learned envoy spoke with great force and subtilty, and with a considerable degree of moderation. Nevertheless the prejudices, and even the untruthfulness of his party, are throughout painfully apparent.

Moreover the picture is the work of the man, not of the lion. Aeneas gives his own arguments at great length, and with all the advantage of subsequent revision; while he cuts down the objections of the Taborites to a few short sentences. He labours hard to prove that, though it cannot be denied that at the institution of the Eucharist our Lord administered to those then present in both kinds, yet He did so merely as to Apostles, not at all designing thereby to intimate that they were in turn to administer in like manner to the people. Nor does he find the least difficulty in the equally undeniable fact, that for many hundred years the practice of administering to the laity in both kinds prevailed; and it was then arbitrarily changed; for (as he argues), the Church, ever under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit—infallible and incapable of error—may change all things according to times, persons, and circumstances. Of this he alleges many instances; and he affirms that when, as has often been the case, the decree of any subsequent pope directly reverses the decree of a predecessor, there is no mark whatever of fallibility; circumstances had changed; both popes were equally right in their decrees—both equally and absolutely infallible! Here is the peroration of his address:— "If then you would receive the consolations of the Spirit, if you long for quiet, if you seek truth, if you wish to save your souls, listen to the apostolic see; follow her traditions, honour the Church as the chaste spouse of Christ, the pure and saintly dove, holding forth the olive-branch, a signal of peace to the meek, but menacing war to the proud".

When the prelate had finished his discourse, one of the principal Taborites came up to him, he says, with an arrogant air, and asked how he could so extol the papal see; since it was well known to them that the popes and cardinals were avaricious, haughty, sunk in intemperance and incontinence; men who made their belly their god, and pelf their heaven? "This man", writes Aeneas, "was bursting with fat, and had a huge paunch. I looked at him", he continues, "and laying my hand gently upon his belly, said to him with a smile: 'You, I clearly perceive, macerate your body wonderfully with fasting'. Thereupon they all laughed and rallied him. Turning then to the rest," My colleagues", said the bishop, "have dined, and are prepared to go. It is time for me likewise to take my leave. We have had a long discussion; nevertheless since, as I perceive, you do not yield to my arguments, and I cannot admit the force of yours, we must remain on both sides as we were. I expected nothing else; but I thought it my duty to speak, for fear by my silence I might be supposed to authorize your opinions, and lest it should be said, the bishop of Sienna paid a visit to the Taborites without protesting against their tenets. Either he thinks them in the right, or he is afraid of not being able to answer their arguments. If what I have said has had no other good effect, it at least has answered the purpose of letting those present perceive that I am very far from agreeing with you. You will reflect on what you have heard, however, and, it may be, change your opinions". They replied, "If time allowed, we could bring our books hither and prove to you that we are sincere disciples of Christ and zealous for the law of God?". "Adieu! Adieu" cried Aeneas: "neither you nor I have leisure for further talk". And so he took his leave.

When fairly outside the walls of Tabor and on his way to Kuttemberg, Rosemberg, and other Catholic towns he was about to visit, the envoy's delight to be relieved from breathing that heresy-polluted atmosphere knew no bounds. "I seemed", he writes, "as if I had been beyond the land of the Sarmatians and the Frozen Sea, among the barbarians, the Anthropophagi, the monsters of India and Lybia. There is not under heaven a more monstrous race than these Taborites. Among the Scythians and in Taprobane there are monsters in body; but the soul of the Taborite is monstrous, and covered with a thousand deformities. Tabor is the common meeting-place of all the heresies that have ever sprung up from the birth of the Church to this day: Nicolaitans, Arians, Manicheans, Arminians, Nestorians, Poor Men of Lyons, all are there. The chief however are, I am told, the Waldenses, those capital enemies of the only vicar of Jesus Christ and the Roman see. On leaving them I felt as if retiring from the deep of hell; nor did I think myself once more returned to the living world till I reached Budweiss"

Aeneas's letter to Carjaval is dated August, 1451; and before the end of the year the pope, as he had promised, despatched into Bohemia John of Capistran. This monk had already been employed in a similar mission against the Fratricelli or Begards, in Italy. He was reckoned a wonderful preacher; he was, moreover, a person of ecclesiastical importance, being apostolic nuncio and inquisitor-general in Styria, Carinthia, Austria, &c., and had even the reputation of a miracle-worker upon the grandest scale. Though the conversion of Bohemia was the special object of Capistran's mission, he went first to Olmutz in Moravia, and there preached, with so much success (if we may trust his own report), against "the opinions of those who maintained the necessity of communion under the two kinds, that a vast

number of barons and gentlemen, and even some priests, abjured the errors of the Hussites". Rockizane, alarmed at the progress of the wonderful missionary, challenged him to a public conference on the great Calixtine tenet; the invitation was accepted, but the meeting, owing apparently to the evasive conduct of Capistran, never took place; and the inquisitor-general disappeared from the scene almost without setting foot in Bohemia.

In the year 1452, a further attempt to recover the Bohemians to the Roman Church was made by Cardinal Casa; but as the cardinal wholly threw overboard the compact, and demanded in offensive terms their unconditional and unlimited submission, the attempt, of course, proved abortive.

In the following year the Emperor Frederick consented to resign young Ladislaus to the importunity of the Bohemians. Arrived on the frontier at Iglau, he solemnly engaged to respect the ancient rights and liberties of his future subjects, as enumerated in twenty articles previously agreed on by the estates assembled at Prague. The following, the first two, are those which chiefly bear upon the subject of this work: "That the king shall maintain the four articles of the Calixtine faith: That he shall confirm the engagement entered into with the kingdom by Sigismund; shall leave the election of their archbishop to the free choice of the people; and the election having already fallen on Rockizane, and been confirmed to him by Sigismund, Uladislaus shall confirm it likewise". The conduct of the youthful sovereign, however, as was to be expected from his birth and education, presently showed that in accepting these conditions he had merely yielded to a political necessity. The ceremony of his coronation, which soon after took place in the cathedral at Prague, was performed by the Catholic bishop of Olmutz; and Ladislaus not only refused to be present at the Hussite services, but would neither enter any church belonging to that party, nor acknowledge the validity of the sacraments as administered by their clergy. So imperfect and insecure was the toleration won by that deadly struggle of five and thirty years[1] continuance!

Nor was much more gained, when at the end of six more years Ladislaus died, and was succeeded on the throne by the Calixtine magnate, George Podiebrad; the greater part of this king's reign being disturbed by foreign and intestine wars incited by the popes.

In short, neither the time, the country, nor the persons were yet indicated, by whose instrumentality Divine Providence designed to carry through the great work of the Reformation. The Bohemians had as a nation proved themselves too ignorant, bigoted, and cruel; no great, enlightened mind—no man in any degree capable of conducting the contest to a safe issue—had risen since Huss; nor was indeed that small, obscure country, girded with mountains, a suitable centre for a "new light of the world" to radiate from. The powerful intellect suited to take the first effectual step, and occupy the middle ground of progress between the fierce fanatics of Bohemia and the mild, serene English reformers, was a star as yet below the horizon; and the nation that was finally to take the lead in evangelizing mankind, was at this time absorbed in the pursuits of war and conquest.

Yet the brave Bohemians had shown that the spiritual despotism which claimed to be infallible was at least not invulnerable. Huss and his avengers had not only laid bare some of the corruptions of the Romish Church, but had shaken the triple-crowned tyrant on his throne. The comparative security they had won by an unsparing use of the sword was employed in reviewing and settling their ill-defined religious tenets. The other, and more eccentric forms of dissent from Rome, appear to have gradually merged in Calixtinism. When, under more promising auspices, the Reformation broke out in Germany, it found well-prepared supporters within the belt of the Bohemian mountains. The resistance of the Protestants of Bohemia to the perfidious efforts of the popes and papal states of Europe to crush them at a later period, is a well-known chapter in modern European history. At length the Peace of Westphalia, at the close of the thirty years' war, secured in Bohemia, as elsewhere among the German states, equal rights for Catholic and Protestant.