

HEROES OF BOHEMIA:

HUSS, JEROME AND ZISCA.



BY THE

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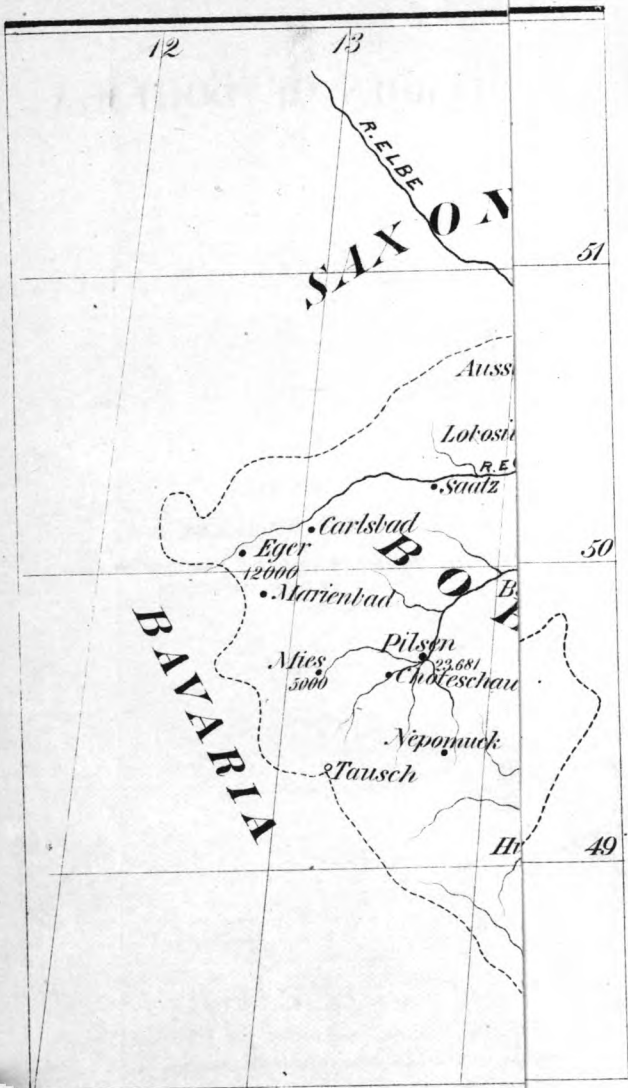


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# HEROES OF BOHEMIA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *ENGLAND AND BOHEMIA.*

THE 14th of January, 1382, was a day of universal rejoicing and festivity in England. It was the wedding-day of King Richard II. with Anne of Bohemia, daughter of Charles IV., emperor of Germany. Many gallant acts had distinguished the opening of the young king's reign. A formidable rebellion of the poorer classes had been quelled by his prompt and wise management. Every one anticipated a happy and glorious era for England under his government. A most enthusiastic welcome was given to the royal bride on her entrance into London. Rarely—mayhap never—had the city seen the like of the cavalcade, the pageantry and the feasting. The very fountains in the streets ran wine instead of water.

A few days after the marriage came the coronation of Anne as queen. All the festivities of the wedding-day were re-enacted. Grand tournaments were held, in which the German nobles who had accompanied the queen to England displayed their

chivalry, to the great delight of the English spectators. But it was an act of the young queen herself which brought the greatest joy of all to the hearts of the English people. The sedition of the lower orders, which had been suppressed only a little while before her arrival, had led to very severe punishments. Many of the rebels had been put to death, and the whole country was reeking with blood. Many more were lying in prison awaiting the same sad end. The very first act of the young queen was an earnest plea for a general pardon of the victims yet awaiting trial and execution. King Richard, who was always a loving and generous husband, yielded to his bride's request, and put a stop to the executions. A grateful people from that hour gave her the title of the Good Queen Anne, nor did she ever lose the popularity thus early won.

There is something more than remarkable—something providential—in this union of England with the remote, and then almost unknown, country of Bohemia. When the Bohemian government was informed that one of their royal ladies was offered the position of queen of England, they first felt it necessary to find out something about this distant land. A Saxon duke was therefore sent by the widowed empress of Germany, Anne's mother, on a voyage of discovery to England, and it was only when he had satisfied all parties concerned by the reports which he sent home, that the empress wrote

to him empowering him to treat in her name with King Richard for the marriage of her daughter.

Thus these two distant countries were brought into very intimate and friendly relations, and thus the way was prepared for a communication of ideas from one region to the other. Queen Anne herself, bringing from Bohemia that more liberal spirit which from the earliest time seemed natural to her country, was prepared to receive and to cherish the doctrines of Wickliffe, which were then agitating all England. In fact, she is called the first in that illustrious band of princesses who were the nursing mothers of the Reformation. Aiding in the defence and propagation of Wickliffe's views in her adopted country, she contributed not a little to introduce and spread them in her native land.

Wickliffe himself quoted the good queen as possessing the Gospels in three languages—Bohemian, German and Latin—in defence of his own translation of the Bible into English. Thus it may be said that the Bohemian queen actually carried a breath of free Protestant air from her own country to England, and contributed to strengthen the evangelical movement of Wickliffe's time.

Twelve years afterward, in 1394, this beloved queen was carried away by an illness of but a few hours' duration. It is supposed that she died of the plague, which was then ravaging all Europe. Her loss was felt most keenly by the king. Her funeral services were as splendid as those of the wedding.

All the nobility of England, male and female, were personally summoned by the king to attend. A torchlight procession seems to have been part of the ceremonial, and so vast were the preparations that the materials, chiefly wax, had to be procured from abroad. So great an illumination, says the chronicler, had never before been seen in England.

The bereaved king himself devised the plan of a monument to his wife. He ordered his own statue to be carved reposing by the side of that of the queen, with the hands of the two effigies clasped together.

Thus touchingly was symbolized that union of England and Bohemia, which contributed so largely to the religious movement in the latter country.

## CHAPTER II.

### *BOHEMIA.—DESCRIPTIVE AND EXPLANATORY.*

**B**OHEMIA is one of the smallest of the famous countries of the world. Not larger than the two States of New Hampshire and Vermont combined, it lies, diamond shaped, in the heart of the map of Europe, the four corners of the territory looking toward the four points of the compass. It is completely surrounded by mountain-ranges about equal in height to the Green and the White Mountains. So marked and complete is this mountain-boundary, and so like a bowl is the region which it encloses, as to suggest the fancy that all Bohemia was once a lake, about as large as Lake Michigan, with a few islands peering above the surface. Gradually a channel was worn through the sandstone ledge that forms the north-eastern border, and the waters were drained away in a great stream, which flowed northward through Germany and was known as the river Elbe. The bed of the lake then became the rich and beautiful region called Bohemia, the home of the Tzechs or Cechi, the aborigines of the country, a vigorous and high-minded people, the most gifted and most cultivated of all the Slavonic tribes.

In the heart of the country the copious streams which flow down from the four mountain-ranges, after carrying fertility and freshness to every part of the land, unite to swell the volume of the Elbe, thus connecting the otherwise land-locked territory, by a great navigable stream, with the world of traffic and action beyond.

Thus, in this little country, every variety of scenery, almost every geological formation, and every mineral except salt and platinum, can be found. Precious stones, especially very fine opals, are among its treasures. Its mineral springs, as Carlsbad and Marienbad, are numerous, and their fame is spread over the world. Sheltered by mountain-ranges, the climate is mild and genial. Bohemia is the favored garden-spot which supplies Germany with immense quantities of early vegetables. Dense forests clothe the mountain-sides, from which millions of cords of wood are annually taken.

Bohemia has also a great military importance. It has been styled by military authorities the "key" of the continent of Europe. Many fierce and critical battles have been fought within its borders. It was the centre of the dark and lurid drama of the Thirty Years' War for Protestantism in the seventeenth century. There the first blow was struck; there Wallenstein, the great ambitious chieftain, was born; in Prague he built his magnificent palace, to make room for whose courtyard alone, one hundred dwellings were demolished.

It was in Bohemia, too, that Frederick the Great of Prussia fought several of those great battles which made his name famous, and in 1757 he captured Prague itself.

Sadowa and Königgratz, where the Austrian power was humbled by Prussian arms in 1866, are within the north-western borders of Bohemia.

Important thus for situation, and as the scene of the settlement by force of arms of great international disputes, we shall in this volume see Bohemia convulsed by great questions of her own raising, and actually anticipating and preparing the way, by more than a century of assertion and of brave conflict, for the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Whether she will ever again assume an independent position, or whether she will continue to form a part of the complex and loosely-jointed assemblage of nations called the Austrian Empire, is a question which is interesting her own and other minds to-day. The native Cechs (or Czechs, or Tzechs), as distinguished from the large German element of the population, are even now restless and impatient under a government which they feel to be foreign. Some of the leaven of the ancient liberty-loving and Protestant spirit is still working, ready at the first opportunity to reclaim the lost nationality of Bohemia.

It seems appropriate here to correct a wrong impression which goes with a very common use of the word Bohemia. It has arisen from connecting Bo-



hemia with the gypsies and a gypsy mode of life. Writers who make an irregular and scanty living by their pens, and who have no fixed habits or home, but live a "gypsy life," are called "Bohemians." It is true that the first gypsies known to Western Europe professed that they came from Bohemia, and for a time that was believed to be their original country; but it is now well understood that their origin cannot be traced to any European country, but is probably Egyptian or Asiatic.

The earliest known inhabitants of this region are those mentioned in Cæsar's *Commentaries*, under the name of Boii, or "terrible ones." Although they were driven from the country, it continued to be called, after their name, Bohemia. These Boii came from the west, from Gaul. They were afterward displaced by the German Marcomanni. When these moved southward, they were followed by the Slavonic tribe of Cechs, who came from the east, and who remained in possession of the soil. A large portion of the present occupants are the descendants of the Cechs, who are very distinct from the German element which came in during the sixth and seventh centuries.

Christianity was introduced into Bohemia about one thousand years ago (in the year 894) under the following circumstances: Two priests from the Greek Church, Constantine, called a philosopher, and his brother, Methodius, labored successfully in the neighboring country of Moravia. A marked

feature of their work was their use of the language of the people, not only in giving instruction, but also in the public services. This was contrary to the prejudices of that period, which demanded that the Latin tongue should be exclusively employed in the Liturgy. They also gave the people the Bible, translated into their own tongue. The common sense shown by these Greek teachers brought them into frequent collision with men of narrower views. But the impression they left in favor of the use of the popular language for religious purposes never died out.

During the labors of these Greek missionaries in Moravia, Borziwoi, duke of Bohemia, visited that country and became a convert, with his wife, Ludmilla. It was a long time, however, before Christianity was fully established in Bohemia. The duke died; his son was married to a heathen wife, Dragomir. At first their children, two boys, were committed to the care of Ludmilla, their pious grandmother, who, like Lois, the grandmother of Timothy, trained them in the true faith. But the heathen daughter-in-law, full of blind zeal for her superstitions and of hatred toward Christianity, fearing doubtless the influence of her mother-in-law upon the boys, procured her assassination.

One of the grandsons had become a true Christian, like his grandmother; the other was a bitter pagan, like his mother. The pagan, having the example of his mother before his eyes, pro-

cured the murder of his brother and became ruler of the country. Surnamed the Cruel, he used all his power to strengthen and establish paganism, and it was only under his son and successor that the Bohemian Church was finally established, with Prague as the seat of the archbishopric. It was only after a century and a half of struggle, in 1038, that Christian laws, customs and morals really gained a general sway over the Bohemian populace.

In the twelfth century, Peter Waldo—from whom the Waldenses take their name—found a refuge from persecution in Bohemia, and many of his followers settled in this comparatively secluded region. As they lived and died here in peace, they doubtless added the force of their doctrine and example to the influences which were shaping the destiny of Bohemia.

Thus a way was prepared for the great religious movements of the fourteenth century. The Greek origin of the Bohemian Church was favorable to a certain spirit of independence from Rome. Instead of using the Latin tongue in their worship, their prayer-books were in their own familiar language. Their priests were allowed to marry, and the congregation partook of both the wine and the bread in the communion service. All these practices were contrary to the usages of the Romish Church, and all had been forbidden to the Bohemians. But the people never quietly sub-

mitted, and from time to time the Romish authorities were compelled to interfere and to issue new commands.

Down to the fourteenth century the anti-Romish tendencies of the Bohemian people continued to assert themselves, and there was always a spirit of resistance abroad which seemed only to wait for a suitable moment to break out in open rebellion.

Three powerful preachers and writers appeared in Bohemia during the early life of Huss—Conrad, Milicz and Janow. The first was aroused, like Luther, by a visit to Rome, and came back to denounce the vices and hypocrisy of the monks and to preach repentance and the necessity of a holy life. The second was so deeply in earnest that he would preach three, four and five times a day, in three different languages, Latin, German and Bohemian. He also established a kind of theological school, and had as many as two or three hundred young men under his training. These two men were heard by thousands of the people, and such impressions were made by their preaching as led to extensive reformations of whole communities and to a visible improvement in the morals of Prague itself. The last, Janow, exerted a wide influence by means of his writings. His inward experience, which is left upon record, showed him to be more evangelical than either of his famous contemporaries.

## CHAPTER III.

### *BIRTH AND YOUTH OF JOHN HUSS.*

IT was toward the close of the reign of Charles IV. that John Huss was born. Emperor of Germany from 1346 to 1378, Charles showed a marked preference for the kingdom of Bohemia and for the capital city of Prague, where he resided. His influence upon the destinies of this little kingdom were of the most powerful kind. It was his daughter, Anne of Luxembourg, who became the wife of the English king Richard, and thus brought the two peoples into contact during the great movement originated by Wickliffe.

Never did Bohemia flourish as under the reign of this beneficent monarch. He built a new Prague and adorned it with magnificent buildings, one of which was a palace containing four hundred apartments. He commenced the famous stone bridge over the river Moldau. Private citizens vied with the king in rearing churches and palatial residences. No kingdom in Europe could boast as numerous and splendid temples as Bohemia. The industry of the country was developed, and the manufacture of the beautiful Bohemian glass was founded by this sagacious sovereign.

But that which most directly prepared the way for the great intellectual and religious movements of the time, was the establishment by Charles of the University of Prague, on the model of the University of Paris. This was the first university in the German empire, and the only one for half a century. So great was the success of this undertaking that as many as twenty or thirty thousand students are said to have been in attendance at the same time. These extraordinary figures do not seem to have been called in question until very recently, by the German historian of Wickliffe, Gotthard Lechler of Leipsic (vol. ii., p. 153, note 3), but it is certain that students thronged to Prague by thousands long before the University of Leipsic had a beginning.

Thus a centre of intellectual and religious life, in sympathy with Oxford in England and with the great university in Paris, was provided at Prague, in time for the development and training of the man whom God had chosen to guide that life in the channels of a national reformation.

John Huss was born in poverty, July 6, 1373. He derived his name from his native village of Hussinitz, in the southern part of Bohemia. Many distinguished persons of that age were in like manner known by the places of their birth. His parents, though poor, were honest and worthy, and they must have trained their son with pious care. For, although his enemies were many and violent,

they never assailed his character. His life from the beginning was one of unquestioned simplicity and purity. He lost his life, but he kept his good name untarnished to the last.

His first school was in a monastery, where he made great progress and became a universal favorite. The monks made a companion of him and took him with them in their journeys. His father died when he was a school-boy, and in the poverty of the household a noble of the village, named Nicholas of Hussinitz, took charge of his education. Young Huss tried hard to read the Latin manuscripts in the library, but in vain. The monks could render him but little help, on account of their ignorance. The bright boy puzzled them with curious questions. At length he was sent to a high school, or collegium, at Prachaticz. When he had completed his academic studies, he returned home. But the fire of learning was burning in his bosom. "What shall we do now?" asked his widowed mother. "I am going to Prague," said John. "God will care for us there. The monks have promised that I shall certainly go."

Huss went to Prague to complete his education. His careful mother went with him. The story is that she took a goose and a cake to present to the rector of the university, but the goose flew away and could not be recaptured. She fell on her knees and commended her son to the care and

protection of God, and then the two continued their journey. He entered the university about the year 1389.

Huss, although a "charity" student, was not content to receive assistance for nothing. It is said that he rendered service in the family of one of the professors, for which he was paid in food and clothing. He also enjoyed access to a large and select library. Objections have been raised to the practice of helping poor students in preparation for the ministry. But Huss and Luther were both dependent upon the assistance of strangers in meeting the expenses of their education. Even Calvin's father sought assistance, through a bishop, to enable his son to continue his studies.\* Dr. Gillett, in his *Life and Times of Huss*, says that thousands and tens of thousands of students at Prague, Oxford and Paris were in the same position with Huss.

The University of Prague, which Huss now entered, was founded in 1348 by Charles IV. It was completely successful from the very start. The zeal of the emperor in securing the most learned and skillful instructors, without regard to land or language, was promptly rewarded. Scarcely was the university opened when it was thronged with students. It reached maturity at a bound. Bohemia, Saxony, Bavaria and Poland, each as a separate nation, had an equal vote in its affairs.

\* Henry's *Life of Calvin*, i. 24.



The emperor took a personal interest in the examinations and disputations. He would come in his imperial robes, attended by his court, and sit hours at a time. When his courtiers grew weary or hungry, he would send them away, saying, "Go get your supper; my food is here." It must have been a powerful spur to the ambition of the students to have the emperor as a witness of their exercises, and the university could not but gain in reputation and splendor from such royal attentions.

Huss entered this grand arena of intellectual activity in 1389, when in his sixteenth year. Charles had died, but the university did not decline. Crowds of earnest seekers after truth, among them men whose hearts God had touched, were his daily associates. A struggle more or less distinct was already going on between the more strict church tendencies of the Germans and the more liberal views of the Bohemians. Early in his course—so early as the year 1391—Huss' sympathies were drawn to the side of his countrymen. He was acquainted with some of the works of Wickliffe. His teachers belonged to the more liberal party. It cost Huss a severe inward struggle to ally himself with a movement which he foresaw would require the sacrifice of comfort, fame, and perhaps of life itself, but it was done. While yet a student his favorite reading was the history of the martyrs. Once he went so far as to thrust his hand into the fire, in order to test his own powers

of endurance. A friend who was present interfered to prevent the full execution of his purpose. A strange anticipation of his own fate!

The pure character of Huss naturally led him to look with distrust and repugnance upon the lives of the monks and the glaring inconsistencies of multitudes in high positions in the Church.

Ten years before the entrance of Huss upon his university course occurred the commencement of the famous forty years' schism in the popedom. Two men were, at the same time, claiming each to be the true pope. One had his court at Avignon, in France, and the other in Rome. The Italian pope, Urban VI., who was acknowledged in Bohemia, died the very year of Huss' matriculation. A successor, Boniface IX., was elected, while the French pope, Clement VI., continued to hold his court at Avignon. The excitement throughout the papal world at this schism was intense. The minds of men became unsettled at the unseemly spectacle of rivalry in the highest office in Christendom. Each pope claimed to be infallible; each had his powerful and enthusiastic followers; each hurled direful anathemas at the head of the other; each declared the other excommunicated; each styled the other a son of Belial and drew a full-length portrait of his rival, describing him as Antichrist, schismatic, heretic, thief, despot, traitor. And the pity of it was, that they were not far wrong in their representations. Their successors, Benedict

and Gregory, condemned and annulled each other's acts and appointments, forbade all obedience and dissolved all obligations each to the other, and convicted each other of schism, heresy and perjury, of dishonesty, baseness, impiety, abomination, audacity, rashness, blasphemy. Parties were formed everywhere. Kings and queens took sides and changed sides as their interests dictated. The papal kingdom being thus divided, taxes were doubled to support the doubled dignity. High official positions in the Church were sold without hesitancy or concealment. Indulgences promising pardon in advance for sins of the worst character, and assuring the purchaser of eternal bliss, were hawked about the country by peddlers as shrewd and persevering as the commercial agents of our day, and immense sums were thus gathered and the proceeds sent to the pope.

Such things aroused all ranks and classes of people. Oppressed and burdened by these various forms of taxation, in doubt year after year as to who was the true pope, they would naturally be prepared to question whether there was any need of one visible head of the Church at all. Thoughtful men saw plainly that some authority higher than either of the two claiming to be pope must be found to bring the contest to a conclusion.

This schism, says Neander in his *Church History*, was one of the most important links in the chain of events which led to the overthrow of the abso-

lute power of the popes of the Middle Ages, and to prepare for the great reaction of the Christian mind which took place in the sixteenth century. He again says of the great movements which began in England and Bohemia, of which Wickliffe and Huss were representatives, that had it not been for that schism in the Church, that prostration of the papal power brought about by its partition, these movements could not have arisen and developed themselves to the extent to which they did. The great Universities of Oxford and Paris were agitated by the question how to settle their disastrous dispute. Powerful writers came forward and spread out upon their pages the appalling facts of the situation, the ruinous condition of the Church and the necessity and means of recovery.

In the midst of such excitements the university course of the young Huss was passed. His mind was too active and his heart too much concerned for the honor of Christ's kingdom to remain insensible. But the influence on the religious thought of that day of one man, an Englishman, was so much greater than that of any other person, and was so especially felt in Bohemia, that we need to dwell upon his character and describe his work in order to a right understanding of what follows.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *CONNECTION BETWEEN WICKLIFFE AND HUSS.*

A BOHEMIAN princess, Anne, daughter of Charles IV., had married Richard II. of England. She was in the habit of reading the New Testament before she went to England, and she carried with her a book of the Gospels in the Latin, German and Bohemian tongues. This occurred, as above stated, in the year 1382. Wickliffe had just recovered from a dangerous illness, which his enemies rejoiced to believe was his last. They had gathered around his bedside, urging him to recant and retract all he had preached and written against the popes and monks. Wickliffe heard them through in silence, and as they waited, expecting a favorable reply, he begged his servant to raise him in the bed. Then, feeble and pale, he turned his face toward the waiting friars, and opening his livid lips and fixing upon them a piercing look, he said, with all the emphasis he could command, "I shall not die, but live and declare the evil deeds of the friars."

But when he arose from his bed his activity took another turn. He devoted himself to the work of

translating the Latin Bible into the language of his people, and in a year the first translation of the Bible into English, or, indeed, the first popular version into any of the vernacular languages of Europe, was accomplished. This gave England the foremost rank in the great work of supplying the people at large with the word of God.

The reception of the work surpassed Wickliffe's expectations. Something new seemed to have entered into the world. Citizens, soldiers and the lower classes welcomed the light with acclamations. The high-born not only curiously examined, but some studied and others defended the book. A motion having been made in Parliament to seize all copies, the duke of Lancaster exclaimed, "Are we, then, the very dregs of humanity, that we cannot possess the laws of our religion in our own tongue?"

Anne, the Bohemian princess, wife of the king, having learned English, began to read Wickliffe's version diligently. She did more. She commended the book to others in high stations. The archbishop of York, chancellor of the realm, was struck with the sight of a foreign lady—a queen—devoting her leisure to such reading. He followed her example, and rebuked the prelates who neglected this holy pursuit. So widely was the book diffused that you could not meet two persons on the highway but one was a disciple of Wickliffe.

As Wickliffe went farther in his opposition to Rome his difficulties increased. He denied the

Romish fable of transubstantiation.\* He exclaimed: "What! the thing that grows in the fields, the ear which you pluck to-day, shall be God to-morrow! As you cannot make the works which he made, how shall you make Him who made the works?" His former friends were alarmed at these bold and heretical sayings. A synod convened in London in May, 1382, although interrupted and thrown into confusion by a severe earthquake, yet proceeded to condemn his doctrines, and the king ordered all who professed them to be put in prison. Wickliffe answered by sending to the House of Commons a bold petition for the freedom of the Church of Christ. The House was moved by this petition to demand a repeal of the persecuting statute.

The Romish archbishop then summoned a convocation at the University of Oxford, and commanded Wickliffe to appear before him. Wickliffe, in failing health, nevertheless responded to the summons, and by his bold and spirited demeanor cowed his enemies, and returned unharmed to his parish at Lutterworth. There he passed his remaining days, peacefully employed in the composition of his great work called the *Trialogue*. This is an imaginary conversation between three characters called Aletheia, truth, Phronesis, wisdom,

\* *Transubstantiation*, the doctrine that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are turned into the body and blood of Christ.

and Pseudes, liar, in which the opposition between Christ and the pope, between the Bible and the doctrines of Romanism, is painted in vivid colors. He died the last day of December, 1384, having been stricken with paralysis two days previously, while administering the sacrament in his church at Lutterworth.

It was this last work of Wickliffe's, the *Tri-  
logue*, which summed up the Reformer's opinions and embodied the sentiment of the age against Rome, that attracted the most attention at Prague. The minds of men everywhere were prepared to yield these doctrines at least a serious attention. The protection of the great in England, and the well-known sympathy shown for them by the queen herself, would commend them to general regard. On the death of the queen (1394) her attendants, returning to Bohemia, would naturally carry with them some of the works of Wickliffe, and thus become an important link in the chain which united the Reformers of their own country with the evangelical doctor of England.

Students of the great universities were accustomed to pass from one to the others. Whatever, therefore, was matter of general interest at one institution would thus be communicated to the other. Oxford students visited the University at Prague; students from Prague were found in Oxford, and were there seized with enthusiasm for the doctrines of Wickliffe. Two students from Oxford,



one an Englishman and the other a Bohemian, are mentioned, who brought with them to Prague a document claiming to be the approval of the doctrines of Wickliffe by the University of Oxford, sealed, apparently, with the seal of the University. Huss gladly accepted the document as genuine, but later it was found to be a forgery. The fact shows, however, the high degree of interest which the position and writings of Wickliffe had excited among the learned classes of Bohemia.

Not that the views of Wickliffe were accepted by any considerable part of the students or authorities of the University at Prague. Condemned at Oxford, they excited vehement opposition as well as profound sympathy everywhere. For a time Huss made a wide distinction in Wickliffe's works, approving them but in part.

Jerome of Prague, one of the knights of Bohemia, who after a course of several years at Prague continued his studies at Paris, Cologne, Heidelberg and Oxford, became an enthusiastic and unreserved admirer of Wickliffe. He was especially gratified by the manly tone in which he rebuked the errors and vices of the age. He wrote out several of Wickliffe's books—for, it will be remembered, the art of printing was yet undiscovered—and brought them with him on his return to Bohemia (1397-98). He labored to circulate them among all ranks of the people. He stood up boldly for the doctrines which they inculcated. A saying of his is reported

to this effect: "Until now we had nothing but the shell of science. Wickliffe first laid open the kernel."

Jerome, shortly after his return from Oxford, showed Huss one of Wickliffe's books. Huss, regarding it as heretical, spoke severely against it, and advised Jerome either to burn it or to throw it into the river Moldau. To the last Huss did not accept all of Wickliffe's views, and at this date (1398) the views of Huss himself were not fully developed.

So intimate were the relations between Oxford and Prague that the movements for and against Wickliffe in the one, were reflected in the other. What Oxford had denounced as heretical could not be innocently upheld and defended at Prague. At a Convocation of the University summoned for May 28, 1403, forty-five articles were presented said to be drawn from the writings of Wickliffe. The Convocation was asked to condemn these articles. A separate assembly, composed of the doctors, masters and all the students of the Bohemian portion of the University, was held in the church of the Black Rose.

Several voices were raised in behalf of Wickliffe. The line began to be drawn between the Bohemians and the other three nations, who were mainly Germans. The Bohemians in part defended the forty-five propositions, and for the rest insisted that a wrong sense had been attached to them in the accusation. The first who was bold enough to open

for the defence was the teacher of Huss, Nicholas Stanislaus of Znaim. Nicholas of Leitomyšl declared with warmth that these articles had been falsified by the accuser, who deserved to be burned, as much as two poor fellows who had been recently punished thus for adulterating drugs.

Huss himself declared that he could not join in the indiscriminate condemnation of these propositions; neither could he defend them all, for many of them had been interpolated. He feared to bring upon himself the woes pronounced on such as called evil good and good evil.

The votes were taken by nations; the Bohemians had no more than the others—one vote. Of the other three nations, Bavarian, Saxon and Polish, all but half of the latter were Germans. Hence, when the Germans voted together, the Bohemians were powerless. So it was in this case. Through the votes of the Germans, the forty-five propositions were condemned as errors of Wickliffe by the Convocation of the University of Prague. The Bohemians and friends of Wickliffe had only this consolation—that they had not acknowledged all those propositions to be propositions really laid down by Wickliffe.

## CHAPTER V.

### *2 PUBLIC CAREER OF HUSS BEGUN.*

THE degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon Huss in 1393; that of Master followed in due course in 1396; and four years after, he was admitted to orders as a priest. The next year he was honored with the position of dean of the theological department of the University. Growing rapidly in popularity as a teacher and a preacher, his zeal and his eloquence, his pure life and devoted piety, won for him the exalted position of confessor to the queen of Bohemia, Sophia II., wife of the reigning monarch, a woman of strong mind and high character. This position secured for Huss the favor of the court, and brought him powerful friends.

His career as a preacher properly began in 1402. The young man of twenty-nine was called to occupy a position of commanding importance in the capital city. He was made pastor of Bethlehem chapel. This structure was reared at the time when private citizens were vying with the emperor Charles IV., in efforts to beautify and extend the city of Prague. It was entirely a work of private beneficence. But the object of the two men of Prague to whom its

erection was due, was far beyond merely adding to the adornments of the city. They wished to provide a place, such as did not then exist in the city, specially suited for preaching the word of God in the language of the people. The immense encumbrance of popish rites and ceremonies in the Latin tongue left no sufficient opportunity in the places of worship for preaching the gospel. Preachers in the Bohemian tongue especially were forced to go from house to house, and even to seek out secret places for performing their service.

At the court of the king, the founder of the chapel fell in with Huss, and soon a warm friendship sprang up between them. In 1402 he made choice of Huss to fill the vacant pulpit, and for twelve years it was the throne of his power. It was a most desirable position. It was not the gift of pope, prelate or king. It assured him a most enviable and congenial independence. It was controlled by John of Mulheim, a man zealous for the spread of Scripture truth. It was amply endowed. The preacher was obligated to reside in the city. After the death of the founder, he was to be chosen by the masters of one of the Bohemian colleges, in connection with the mayor of the old city. In fact, Bethlehem chapel played a great part in the reform movement, with which Bohemia and England, Huss and Wickliffe, were teeming.

The reputation of Huss has been maintained chiefly by his writings, and by the fact and circum-

stances of his martyrdom. He was, in truth, more of a logician than an orator. Nevertheless, crowds thronged to Bethlehem church and hung upon his lips. For nearly ten years he continued to occupy his post unmolested. The papal archbishop, Sbynco, was his friend, and even colaborer, in efforts for a reform. Several of Huss' sermons were preached at the suggestion of Sbynco, in which the corruption of the clergy, their ignorance, brutality, drunkenness, avarice and simony (or trade in church offices), were severely rebuked.

The sermons were upon such stirring texts as: "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Let us cast off the works of darkness;" "Quench not the Spirit;" "Go out and compel them to come in." On these and the like passages he based the most searching exposures of priestly vice, and the most powerful invectives against the prevailing corruptions of the Church.

From the pulpit in Bethlehem chapel, Huss wielded an influence exceeding that of archbishop or king. Whatever enmities he had to encounter, he still maintained his influence unimpaired in the pulpit of the chapel. The whole city was moved by his words. At no period in these last centuries, says Dr. Gillett, has the power of the pulpit been more strikingly exhibited. Luther found a powerful ally in the press. But Huss was dependent, during his lifetime, almost entirely upon the pulpit, and upon his correspondence. And here it was that

he stood forth without a peer or a rival in the kingdom.

He was not burdened by the duty of saying mass, or by ceremonial observance of any kind. His business was to preach the Word, and to apply its truths to the evils of the times. His works contain extended commentaries, which doubtless constituted no small part of his pulpit utterances.

A priest named Abraham, pastor of one of the churches of Prague, was accused of heresy. One of the charges against him was, that he asserted that laymen as well as priests might be allowed to preach the gospel. Huss had too much of the preacher-soul in him not to be deeply interested in the case. He was present at the trial and had a warm discussion with the prosecutor, but without effect. The accused, known as Priest Abraham, was imprisoned for two days. Huss was indignant. He wrote to the archbishop, Sbynco, and reminded him of the indolent and worthless priests in his diocese whom he left unmolested, while he banished as a heretic one who was an example of fidelity in every priestly duty. It was not very long before a worse fate befell Huss himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *HUSS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF PRAGUE.*

THE doctrines of Wickliffe were condemned by the University in 1403. This, it will be remembered, was not the work of the Bohemians. They had but one vote in four, and in the questions then dividing the religious world, the other nations were sure to stand as a unit against the better and more scriptural views, which the Bohemians were inclined to adopt. This policy of permitting foreigners to control the University was, indeed, one of the attractions which helped to collect such an immense throng of students in Prague, and the city was enriched and raised to extraordinary importance as a result. But the Bohemian students and faculties, naturally enough, were impatient of this outside control. The University of Paris had furnished the model for that of Prague, and at Paris all the foreign nations together had but one vote, instead of one for each.

Huss was a thorough Bohemian. As a patriot he was indignant at the usurpation of power by the foreign nations in Prague. But it was the progress of the doctrines of Wickliffe in the Uni-



versity and in the mind of Huss himself that gave greater importance to this question of national control of the University. Opposition to these doctrines came chiefly from the foreign elements.

The very condemnation of Wickliffe's writings excited curiosity and eagerness to read them. Huss himself continued to read and study them with increasing sympathy and enthusiasm. It was the exaltation of Christ above human masters, seen in Wickliffe, that won the spiritually-minded Bohemian, and prompted him to commend his writings from that great centre of influence, the Bethlehem pulpit.

There is a singular story told of two learned Englishmen, named James and Conrad of Canterbury, coming to the University of Prague about this time. They were followers of Wickliffe. But since his works had been expressly condemned, they rarely mentioned his name, although they did not hesitate to maintain some of his most objectionable doctrines in public discussions before the University. They were silenced, although many of the professors were with them in sentiment.

Nothing daunted, they chose another mode of illustrating and proclaiming their views. They lived in a house on the outskirts of the city, and there on the walls they spread a painting which told to the eye the story of the corruption of the Church, in contrast with the simplicity and purity

of true Christianity. On one side of the picture was Christ, "meek and sitting upon an ass," and thus making his simple but triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The people and children strewed branches in the way; the disciples, with feet bare, followed after. On the other side was the pope, mounted on a large horse richly adorned with gold, silver and precious stones; soldiers in armor with drums and trumpets served as a guard; behind followed the procession of cardinals, on richly-caparisoned horses.

If the story is true, the picture was a successful manœuvre. Men crowded to see it. Huss, it is said, recommended it from the pulpit, as a true representation of the opposition between Christ and Antichrist. No doubt Huss was fast losing his early horror at what was called heresy in Wickliffe. The change going on in his mind was like the experience of Luther, when he found in one of the libraries at Erfurt a volume of Huss' sermons. He says: "I was seized with a curiosity to know what doctrines this great heretic had taught. The reading filled me with incredible surprise. I could not comprehend why they should have burned a man who explained Scripture with so much discernment and wisdom. But the very name of Huss was such an abomination, that I imagined that the heavens would be darkened and the sun would fall at the mere mention of it. So I shut the book with a sad heart, consoling myself with

the possibility that it was written before he fell into heresy."

All that Wickliffe had written of the melancholy condition of the Church found almost daily confirmation. Not only the scandalous lives of the inferior clergy, but the audacious impiety of the rival popes, passed the bounds of belief; all the leading historians of the age, no matter to what party they belonged, united in condemning the prevalent and abounding iniquity.

Huss felt an increasing sympathy with Wickliffe. Some of his college associates saw him reading the works of the arch-heretic, and reproached him for it. They reminded him that by a decree of the council Wickliffe's soul had been sent to hell. Huss replied, "I only wish that my soul, when it leaves the body, may reach the place where the soul of this excellent Briton dwells."

Other prominent members of the University, disregarding the sentence of the Convocation of 1403, spoke out boldly in favor of the doctrines of Wickliffe. Thus the lines were more distinctly drawn, and the discordant elements in the University were more widely separated from each other.

Late in the year 1408, preparations were made for holding a Council to devise some way out of the extraordinary evils and embarrassments of the Church. King Wenzel of Bohemia agreed to send a deputation to the Council, and asked the University to pronounce a decision in accordance with his

policy. The Bohemian students and faculty sided with the king. But as usual the three nations voted solid, and the judgment of the Bohemians in favor of the Council was set aside by the majority.

The indignant Bohemians were driven by this act of usurpation to the last limit of endurance. They were tired out by the persistent opposition of the Germans to Wickliffe and reform, and this last vote, by which the wishes of Bohemia and the free tendencies of the people on a matter of such vital importance were stifled at their own University, determined them to decisive action. They sent a deputation to the king with the request that Prague should be conformed to the University of Paris, and that Bohemians should enjoy equal rights at their own University with the French students at the University of Paris.

Huss was ill at the time, and had to wait the result upon his bed. The king, after some delay, yielded to the request of the Bohemians, and on the 18th of January, 1409, issued a decree restricting the extraordinary privileges of the foreign nations. The decree gave to the Bohemians an equal vote and control in the University with the three other nations together. Neander says it gave to the Bohemians three votes, and to the remaining nations but one. Two friends brought the cheering news to the sick-chamber of Huss, who received it with the warmest gratitude and joy.

Joyful as was this decision to the patriotic and the

evangelical parties among the Bohemians, it was a stunning surprise to the foreign party, and ended in great disaster to the temporal welfare of the University, and of Prague itself. When a great body of students are not suffered to have their own way, they are very likely to do some rash thing, and they can readily be brought to combine for such acts. Already, before the decree appeared, they had pledged one another, in the most sacred oaths, to leave Prague in a body, if it should be carried into execution. At the first attempt to enforce the decree they resisted; but when they found that the king was in earnest, they were exasperated beyond measure. Some of them burned down the theological college, and a few days afterward, in February, 1409, thousands of the German students—doctors, masters, bachelors, undergraduates—left the city.

The numbers who left are put by some at extravagant figures. As high an estimate as forty-four thousand is on record, but we can certainly credit the lowest figure, which is five thousand. Only two thousand students, it is claimed, were left in Prague. Some argue that four thousand is the highest number of students ever in Prague, and that but five hundred remained behind. Eminent scholars were among these emigrants, who found important situations abroad. One result of the movement was the founding of the University of Leipsic. Prague necessarily suffered great loss in a business point of view. Huss and his friend Jerome were thus easily

put in an odious light by the multitude of the worldly-minded, who regarded them as the destroyers of their prosperity.

Jerome defended the course of the Bohemian authorities, on the ground that the Bohemian language itself was in danger of extermination, under the usurpation of the Germans in the University. Huss, when charged by his enemies with having driven away the German students, answered, "They were driven away by nobody. Their own oath alone drove them away. They had pledged themselves, on penalty of excommunication for perjury, the forfeiture of their honor and a fine, that not one of them would remain at the University if they did not have the right of three votes."

While this great body of students and learned men carried into every quarter injurious reports of Huss, he was treated with deserved honor at home. Rising from his sick-bed, he was elected rector of the University which his efforts and those of his friends had saved to Bohemia.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *HUSS AND THE ARCHBISHOP.*

THE influences which brought Huss at last to a martyr's pains and glory were all this time at work. The three nations of scholars in the University, who had always been on the side opposed to him on the question of Church reform, spread abroad all kinds of reports and accusations against his orthodoxy, as they scattered to their various homes.

Wickliffe had been condemned by the University as heretical. In spite of this, Huss continued to read his books, and with increasing freedom recommended them to others. The archbishop, Sbynco, required the clergy of the diocese to maintain the doctrine of transubstantiation, which Wickliffe had so powerfully assailed. As Huss was the foremost of Wickliffe's defenders, it was felt that this command was aimed at him. Yet Huss never denied the Romish dogma of transubstantiation.

Meanwhile, the conflicts between the rival popes and their adherents absorbed the attention of the Christian world to such a degree, that persons suspected of heretical opinions were not likely to be molested. The archbishop took sides with Pope

Gregory, whom the Council of Pisa had condemned. But the Bohemian authorities had been represented in that Council; hence, the king and the University, with Huss and his friends, adhered to the decisions of the Council, and accepted Alexander V., whom the Council had elected, as the legitimate pope.

Still, Sbynco persevered as the legate of the other pope, Gregory, and acted with high-handed presumption. He imposed silence upon all who denied the claims of Gregory; aiming especially at Huss, he forbade all teachers of the University who took that side, from performing any priestly duties in the diocese. Such of the clergy as had been offended by the scathing rebukes of their vices and immoralities, which they had heard from Bethlehem pulpit, took sides with the archbishop; otherwise, he was alone. This was in 1408.

Huss paid no attention to the fulminations of the archbishop. The archbishop turned to the king, but with no better effect. [“So long,” said King Wenzel, “as Master Huss preached against us of the laity you were very much pleased with it; your turn has come now, and you had best put up with it.”]

Huss went still farther in his advocacy and approval of Wickliffe. He translated some of his writings into Bohemian and sent them to leading nobles, who read and circulated them widely. Huss even pushed their circulation into Moravia, and gave to the prince of Moravia, who was uncle



of King Wenzel, a translation which he had made of the *Triologue*, which was counted the most dangerous of all the English Reformer's works. These books Huss is said to have recommended in his Bethlehem sermons, as containing most important and weighty truth.

Sbynco could make no progress against Huss so long as he continued to recognize Gregory as pope. An appeal went from Prague to Pope Alexander, complaining of the conduct of Sbynco. Alexander laid the case before the University of Bologna, and in accordance with its decision ordered Sbynco to appear at Rome and justify his course in Prague.

Sbynco saw where his interests as archbishop of Prague and persecutor of Huss lay, and changed the whole course of affairs by going over to the cause of Alexander. This occurred September 2, 1409. About the same time, some of the better Bohemians became alarmed at the progress of Wickliffism. A member of the University, a former friend of Huss, felt impelled to write to the archbishop, who was now living away from Prague, to inform his "fatherly reverence that various books of that pestilent Englishman, Wickliffe, are multiplied in your diocese—books full of damnable errors and errors that have been already condemned. On my bended knee most earnestly do I beseech you to be on your guard, lest by the multiplication of these pestilent books your flock

shall drink in that infidel poison which will destroy their souls. For neither pestilence, famine nor sword can inflict such evils as will spring from this perfidious depravity of heretical men." The archbishop, now in high favor with Alexander, easily procured the issue of a bull condemning the alleged heresies of Wickliffe, and giving him full power to proceed against heretics and to forbid preaching outside of the regularly-appointed churches. The bull reached Prague in March, 1410.

The bishop, emboldened, took extreme measures. He ordered all heretical writings of every sort to be brought to him. Huss came, bringing the works of Wickliffe, and asked that the errors in them might be pointed out. He was ready to reject everything proved to be opposed to Scripture and to reason. But the bishop well knew that his own strength and that of the papacy, which he served, did not lie in those directions. He had not come to argue, but to use Rome's logic, fire. More than two hundred carefully-written and splendidly-bound volumes of Wickliffe's works were committed to the flames. This was on the 16th of July, 1410.

The archbishop was pressing measures with characteristic vigor, when Pope Alexander died. A stay of proceedings was demanded. The king and the University both opposed the archbishop's policy.

The archbishop consented to a delay. Huss

himself unhesitatingly refused to obey the prohibition against preaching in Bethlehem chapel. He asked,

“Where is there any authority of Holy Writ or where are there any rational grounds for forbidding preaching in so public a place, fitted up for that very purpose in the midst of the great city of Prague? Nothing else can be at the bottom of this but the jealousy of Antichrist.”

Huss believed that he had been called of God to preach, and felt like Paul when he said, “Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.”

He wrote such noble words as these: “I avow it to be my purpose to defend the truth which God has enabled me to know, and especially the truth of Holy Scripture, even to death, since I know that the truth stands and is for ever mighty and abides eternally. And if the fear of death should terrify me, still I hope in my God and in the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord himself will give me firmness. And if I have found favor in his sight, he will crown me with martyrdom. But what more glorious triumph is there than this? Inviting his faithful ones to this victory, our Lord says, ‘Fear not them that kill the body.’”

Already, in June of this year (1410), Huss made a formal appeal to the pope. Many other masters and teachers joined him in the act. It was done in a formal and public manner in Bethlehem chapel, before a notary public and with the attestation

of seven witnesses. This appeal is a masterly document. Under twelve carefully-drawn heads, it shows the unlawfulness of the acts of the archbishop with reference to the burning of the books and the attempted closing of Bethlehem chapel.

The course of the archbishop enraged a large proportion of the citizens of Prague. A cry of indignation went throughout Bohemia at the burning of the books. The queen wept, Wenzel stormed and cursed. The people insulted the archbishop and sung songs in derision of him through the streets. Pay was demanded of him for the costly volumes which he had destroyed. Three Carmelite monks who had preached against Wickliffe were assaulted; one of them was thrown into the river, and barely escaped drowning.

Huss preached with greater power than ever to the crowds which thronged his chapel. "Fire," he said, "does not consume truth. Only little minds vent their anger upon inanimate objects."

The great congregations at Bethlehem chapel responded with lively demonstrations to the vigorous declarations and appeals from the pulpit. When Huss scornfully rehearsed the pope's charges of heresy against his countrymen, they cried out, "He lies, he lies!" When he announced that he had appealed to the new pope, and asked if they would join him in the appeal, the whole multitude cried out in their native tongue, "Yes, we will, we will!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *HUSS AND THE POPE.*

HUSS had appealed from the archbishop to the pope, as Paul appealed from Festus to Cæsar. There was just about as little hope for justice in one case as in the other. The pope, however, went through the formality of referring the appeal to a commission of cardinals. So important was the case considered, that authority was given to invite the theological faculties of the great Universities of Bologna, Oxford and Paris to advise with the commission upon the proper disposal to be made of Wickliffe's writings.

Finally, the whole matter was referred to a single member of the commission, Cardinal Colonna, who devoted himself wholly to the archbishop. He not only approved all that had been done, but he urged the archbishop to further measures. The appeal of Huss fell to the ground. Huss and the Bohemian king and University had aided to give the new pope his place, in the hope of reform. The archbishop, who had clung to the old pope until he saw it was of no further use, and had but lately gone over to Alexander, was treated with marked

favor, and was authorized to enforce his measures against Huss by calling in the aid of the civil power. Huss himself was summoned to appear at Rome and to defend himself before the pope. The clouds were indeed gathering over Huss.

Whilst our hero had no fears of a martyr's fate, as we have seen, he was no fanatical aspirant for martyrdom. As a cool and determined Christian man he could not but foresee the probability of meeting such a fate in the existing state of things. He was a genuine Christian confessor, who seeks not, but accepts with godly joy, the martyr's crown from the hand of the Giver.

The friends of Huss, including king and peasant, nobility and the university, protested against the injustice of requiring the personal presence of Huss in Rome. It was a journey of twelve hundred miles. It would be through a country swarming with his personal enemies. Huss, according to the writings of an enemy, intended to go, but both his own and the archbishop's council in Rome wrote him that it would be at the peril of his life if he came, and that nothing was to be gained by it. Doubtless, he would have found himself before a court exasperated at his exposure of the wrongs and vices of which its members were guilty.

The king and queen both took the liveliest interest in the case. Queen Sophia used all her interest in behalf of her father-confessor. The king, Wenzel, regarding Sbynco as the cause of the whole

trouble, wrote to pope and cardinals, begging them to stop the whole process, to impose silence on the enemies of Huss and to suppress the dispute concerning the books of Wickliffe. He styles Huss "loyal, devout and beloved," and demands that he be established over Bethlehem chapel, and be allowed to preach the word of God in peace. He demanded also that the citation of Huss to appear in Rome be revoked, and that whatever objections any one had be laid before the University of Prague.

So great was King Wenzel's interest that with the letter he sent two important deputies—one a personal friend of the pope—with an offer to pay the expenses of a legate to be sent to Prague. He also wrote to the cardinal who had the matter in charge, and who afterward himself became pope, begging him to come to Prague and inform himself of the actual state of things. He also charged his messenger to say, that nothing but the king's personal regard for the pope prevented him from bringing the author of all these disturbances in his kingdom to a condign punishment.

All these efforts seemed at first to be entirely unavailing. The archbishop had been most industriously at work. It is said that he was most lavish in his presents, sending even horses, vases and costly rings to pope and cardinals. When the term fixed for the appearance of Huss expired, the cardinal declared him excommunicated for contumacy in not appearing to answer. The decree of excom-

munication was published in Prague, March 15, 1411.

Huss paid it no attention, and continued to preach as usual. He declared that he would obey God rather than man. He held himself still a dutiful son of the Church, and felt no awe of an unrighteous excommunication. The archbishop replied by putting an interdict upon the city.

The "interdict" was one of the most powerful and dreaded weapons of the Romish Church, especially in early times. It was a sort of public excommunication of the entire city or province. While it lasted, no person except a clergyman, a beggar, or a child under twelve could receive Christian burial, or be taken to another diocese for such burial. There could be no public service in the churches, no church-bells could be rung, and mass could be celebrated only with closed doors. Communion could be administered only to the dying; weddings could not be performed. A general appearance of mourning and fasting must be assumed by the populace.

This terrible weapon brought matters to a crisis. Huss must stop preaching or the churches would be closed. The king now interfered authoritatively, and appointed a commission, to which the whole matter was referred. Both parties pledged themselves to submit to its decision. The commission decided that the interdict must be withdrawn. Meanwhile, the archbishop was required



to write to the pope, John XXIII., that the difficulty between himself and Huss had been arranged, and that no more errors prevailed in Bohemia. Hence he must counsel the new pope to revoke the sentence imposed upon Huss by his predecessor, and recall the demand for his personal appearance at Rome.

Reluctantly enough, yet with seeming consent, the archbishop wrote to the pope, rehearsing the facts in the case as they had occurred under his predecessor, and declaring that no errors existed in Prague, Bohemia or Moravia, and that he had been reconciled to Huss. He therefore begged the pope to annul the sentence against Huss, and allow him to remain at Prague in peace.

In a word, the archbishop met with overwhelming defeat. His high-handed measures brought their own overthrow. He had exhausted all his own resources. His spirit was broken, and he never came again into open collision with Huss. His letter, from some unknown interference, never reached the pope, and so accomplished nothing for Huss; but the pope himself was too feeble, too corrupt and too despicable to be an object of dread to any brave man. The pope, out of regard for the king, appointed a new commission, but the affair was kept in suspense for a year and a half.

Huss, meanwhile, had never forsaken his post nor ceased from his activity. In answer to his enemies, he drew up a confession of faith and laid it before

the University. "I am ready," he says, "to give to every man an account of the faith that is in me. I confess with my whole heart that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, and I am ready, trusting on my Lord Jesus Christ, to endure the punishment of a terrible death, sooner than consciously to say anything that would be contrary to the will of Christ and of his Church."

When the archbishop mildly remonstrated, as he still continued to do, at the tone of Huss' preaching, Huss replied in the next sermon in some such style as this: "It is a strange thing, my dear Bohemians, that we are to be forbidden to teach manifest truths, and especially those that shine forth so brightly in England and in many other places. These expensive church services serve only to fill the purses of miserly priests. What they call order is nothing else but confusion. Believe me, they wish to enslave you with this disorderly order. But if you will have courage, you may easily break your chains and give yourselves a freedom the value of which cannot be told. Is it not a shameful thing, and opposed to all law and sense, to have burned books that are the depositaries of truth and that were written only for your good?"

The archbishop was now only an object of contempt in Prague. His complaints to the king were unheeded. The priests who adhered to him, and even the archbishop himself, were hooted in the streets. The people said, "Let the archbishop again

bid us give up the books, and see whether we will obey him.”

Sbynco retired from Prague a broken-hearted man. As he went, he wrote a piteous sort of letter to the king, complaining that he had been compelled to write to the pope in behalf of Huss against his own conscience: “He had been hindered in the prosecution of ecclesiastical discipline. A wicked priest whom he had sought to punish had been rescued from his hands. The king had paid no attention to his remonstrances, and had rejected every application for relief.”

This ended the archbishop’s career.

The excommunication of Huss was published in Prague in March, 1411; the interdict followed a few days later. In June the commission appointed by the king, required the removal of the interdict.

On the 28th of September of the same year the archbishop died. It was reported that he deliberately poisoned himself. Whether that be true or false, it is pretty clear that in the attempt to sacrifice Huss he sacrificed himself.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *HUSS AND JEROME OPPOSE THE POPE.*

**J**OHAN XXIII., the pope who succeeded Alexander V., was one of those infamous characters that would blacken the pages of the history of any country since the world began. It is shocking to think that one who had been a pirate in his youth, who retained the very heart of a pirate in his manhood, and whose vile character was no secret, should by shrewdness, audacity and treachery work his way to the position of sovereign head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet such was the fact. The crime of poisoning his predecessor to make room for himself was, with good reason, charged upon this monster, who was known to be addicted to almost every form of vice—to avarice, ambition, cruelty, violence, injustice and the most horrid sensuality. Gibbon calls him “the most profligate of mankind.”

About the time of Sbynco's death, a bloody and belligerent proclamation—what was called “a bull of the pope”—was issued against Ladislaus, king of Naples, who was in arms against the papal authority. This bull, in the most awful terms, pro-

nounced a curse upon Ladislaus and called upon all Christendom to join in a general crusade against him. The bull was to be read every Sunday in the churches; Christian people were required to contribute to the expenses of the expedition against him, and boxes were conveniently placed to receive the gifts of the faithful. All who contributed as much money as they would have expended in a month's personal service, would receive forgiveness of sins.

When the bull reached Prague, Huss was summoned before the papal legate. It was highly important that the great preacher should not withhold his influence or oppose the measure, and no one knew but that he would.

"Will you obey the apostolical mandates?" asked the legate.

"I am ready," said Huss, "with all my heart to obey the apostolical mandates."

"Do you see?" said the gratified legate to those who stood by. "The master is quite ready to obey the apostolical mandates."

"But, my lord," rejoined Huss, "understand me well. I said I am ready with all my heart to obey the *apostolical* mandates. But I call apostolical mandates the doctrines of the apostles of Christ; and so far as the *papal* mandates agree with these, so far I will obey them most willingly. But if I see anything at variance with these, I shall not obey, even though the stake were staring me in the face."

One would think Huss might have expressed himself less pointedly on the bull, or have so acted as not to add another to the embarrassments in which he was already involved. Why enter into a new conflict while the old was yet unsettled? Does not this throwing down the gauntlet show a needlessly contentious spirit on the part of Huss?

We must suppose that Huss was entering more deeply into the whole subject of the authority of the pope. As a reformer by nature and by the call of the Holy Spirit, as a public and influential man, he felt impelled to resist the evil tendencies of the system wherever they appeared. Up to the present time he had limited his attacks to the clergy. But now he attacked the pope himself. He denounced the bull and the indulgences that accompanied it, from the pulpit of Bethlehem chapel. He declared it an act of malignant and unchristian usurpation.

Friend after friend now forsook him, until he stood forth almost alone. From one of them, Stephen Paletz, he parted, using the words of Aristotle in reference to Socrates: "Paletz is my friend, truth is my friend; and both being my friends, it is my sacred duty to give the first honor to truth." Paletz afterward became one of the fiercest enemies of the Reformer, and worked for his destruction at Constance.

The king, who was never suspected of being guided by principle, and who had supported Huss

thus far because he had his own personal grudges and grievances against the pope, now saw matters in a different light, and gave his assent to the bull.

Other friends, including Huss' teacher and early guide, Stanislaus of Znaim, now appeared as defenders of the papal authority. No man, they said, should dare to examine into the commands of the pope or pass any judgment upon them. But with Huss, obedience to Christ stood first in importance. Everything was to be examined, and the limit to all other obedience was to be determined, by this rule. The bull plainly required what was directly opposed to the law of Christ. He could not obey it. His rule could not be broken—to obey God rather than man. This is the rule which put Huss upon the roll of heroes. It was the rule of the apostles when arraigned before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. It was the rule of Socrates when facing the judicial assembly at Athens, of Paul before Felix and Agrippa, of Luther before the august Diet of Worms.

Huss was not satisfied to make vague declarations, or to preach single sermons, or to encourage mere impulses. He wished to lay a firm, comprehensive and logical foundation for his convictions. He announced by numerous posters or placards, that he would hold a public disputation on indulgences before the Convocation of the University on the 7th of June, 1412. All the teachers of the University, priests and monks, were challenged to meet him

with their objections. Of all his friends, only Jerome intended to appear on his side on that occasion. An immense throng responded to the announcement. The common people crowded in to listen to the arguments of their favorite preachers, and to feast their eyes upon the manly bearing of one who, for Christ's sake and their own, dared to question and to deny the authority of the pope.

It was a grand occasion. Huss began by naming the three motives by which he was led to propose the disputation—the glory of God, the advancement of His Church and his own conscience. The glory of God and the Church demanded that a man should lay aside all human ordinances that would hinder him in the pursuit of these ends: “I place myself on the immovable foundation, the corner-stone which is the truth, the way and the life, our Lord Jesus Christ. He who observes not the law which Christ established, goes in the broad way which leads to perdition.” Nothing but that which proceeds from love can be approved by Christ, but this bull proclaimed war and the laying waste of territories only for worldly dominion and worldly wealth. The pope's conduct was contrary to the example of Christ, who reproved his disciples for wishing to call down fire from heaven upon his enemies. “Why, we might imagine the Lord asking, Why do ye, then, set at naught my example—I, who prayed for those that



crucified me, Father, forgive them ; they know not what they do ? Let the pope follow the example of Christ ; let him pray for his enemies ; let him say, My kingdom is not of this world ; let him show kindness ; let him bless those that curse him. The pope, of all men, should exhibit in his conduct the highest degree of perfection, after the example of Christ and Peter."

This describes a kind of pope very different from John XXIII., who began life as a pirate, and the blackness of whose soul was not concealed under the glitter of the papal robes and crown. It was a style of argument which could make little impression upon him or his officers and adherents. So much the worse for them. As for Huss, it shows that he had gone to the root of the matter. He knew his ground and had taken his position, and was prepared for the consequences.

Huss next exposed the wickedness and blasphemy of the offers of indulgence which accompanied the bull. He quotes the scandalous language used by the papal commissioner for the sale of indulgences : "I bestow on thee the most perfect forgiveness of all thy sins, both from the guilt and the punishment of them, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Such an act presupposed divine power ; pardon was the work of God alone. Without a special revelation from God, assuring the priest or the pope of the true contrition of the sinner and the decree of God, it was blasphemy to

assure a person that if he died he would immediately enter into the bliss of heaven.

It was evident, said Huss, that the sole object of proclaiming these indulgences was to extort money. Not an instance was to be found in Scripture of a mere man, however holy, saying to any one, "I have forgiven thy sins." Nor were any to be found who had absolved from sin for a certain number of days. Nor could any one be named among the holy fathers who had assumed such power. We cannot even learn the time when indulgences sprung up.

Huss maintained boldly that the sentence of the pope was not final. Christ is the highest expounder of his own law, and he is ever with his faithful, even unto the end of the world.

Certain doctors interrupted Huss in his argument and offered to convince him of his errors. One, Dr. Leo, said he was too young to handle such grave matters. At this the crowd began to murmur, but Huss quieted them.

Jerome now followed the solid and logical discourse of his friend by a long and energetic address. His glowing words fired the hearts of the hearers. The knights and citizens broke in with applause. "He speaks the truth!" "He is right!" was the cry from every quarter. In the evening, large bodies of the students escorted him home in triumph. Huss, too, was followed to the door of his dwelling by sympathizing though less numerous crowds,

who cried out: "Do not desert us, Huss! Stand firm."

Popular demonstrations followed, in which Huss was not concerned, but which were perhaps suggested by the more lively Jerome. A mock procession was got up. It was organized in front of the bishop's palace. Women of low character, bearing certificates of indulgence around their necks, were placed in a chariot in front. Armed men surrounded the chariot, and a vast concourse of citizens, armed with swords and clubs, attended, marching through the principal streets of the city. Amid the shouts and cheers was heard the cry, "To the stake! to the stake with the rascally documents." Beneath the gallows, a pile of faggots had been gathered, which were fired, and the papal bulls were thrown upon them and burned. The prime-mover, who in this act designed to burlesque the burning of Wickliffe's books, was a favorite of the king; and he did not lose the royal favor in consequence of this undignified and useless performance.

Huss had no sympathy with any approach to violence. Referring to the abusive style of one of his enemies, he says: "Hitherto I have used no such language as this against my adversaries, and I should be sorry if any one of my party should brand his opponent as a heretic, or style him a Mohammedan, or ridicule or attack him in any way that implied a disregard of the law of love. I hope there is much good on both sides, and believe there

are sinners also on both sides." In this element of calm discrimination, Neander regards Huss as superior to Wickliffe. Certainly he was far above his contemporaries—even above the members of his own party—and stood virtually alone.

The next step was likewise one which he could not have approved, yet which illustrates the intensity of the excitement of the hour. Hot-headed students and workmen entered into an engagement to visit the churches on the Sabbath, and openly to contradict the priests who preached the indulgence. They carried out their determination amid scenes of great excitement. They told the priests in the midst of their discourses that they lied, and that Master Huss had taught them better than that. Three of them were arrested and sentenced to death the next day (July 11) as disturbers of the peace.

Huss was deeply distressed. He hastened from the college to the council-house, and begged of the authorities a remission of the cruel sentence. Two thousand men quickly gathered to enforce the appeal of Huss. With a word from him, the council-house would have been stormed and the prisoners released. But Huss was everywhere opposed to violence, as we have already seen. The authorities promised that no blood would be shed. Huss humbly thanked them, and, as it would seem, not doubting that they would keep their word, communicated the decision to the people and persuaded them to disperse.

Scarcely were they gone, when a scornful laugh passed around the council-table. Measures were at once taken for carrying out the death-sentence. A large escort of soldiers was procured ; but as the mob began to gather again, the executioner was introduced through a back door, and the prisoners were quickly beheaded. The blood, however, flowing out into the street, betrayed the secret of the murder, and the whole city was in a few moments informed of the fate of the young men. Fired with grief and vengeance, old and young flew to arms. Nobles and students led on the people. The council-house was seized, but the wicked and false judges had fled.

Search was then made for the bodies of the victims ; they were found in a vault where they had been hastily thrown. Every honor was lavished upon the corpses. They were wrapped in rich shrouds, placed upon a gilded bier and carried for funeral services to Bethlehem chapel. An immense train of mourners followed, bearing banners and singing funeral hymns. And, in fact, a new name was given to this famous preaching-place by its enemies. Instead of Bethlehem, it was called the chapel of the Three Saints.

But Huss felt this sad calamity too keenly to be able to treat it calmly. Two of the victims were his own students. For eight days, he shut himself up, as if completely overwhelmed and unmanned. It was only after he had revived somewhat from

his grief, that he could come forth and preach the funeral sermon. In that sermon, he declared the three young men worthy to be put upon the roll of martyrs and to be endowed with immortality as sufferers for the truth of the gospel. No doubt his feelings were like those of Luther, when the first two martyrs fell in the Reformation, one hundred and twelve years afterward. "God be praised," wrote Luther, "that we have lived to see righteous saints and real saints, after canonizing and worshipping so many false ones." The martyrs of Luther's time were Henry Voes and John Esch. The young heroes of Bohemia are known as JOHN HUDSK, MARTIN KRIDESCO and STANISLAUS PASSEC.

Huss now took a step decidedly in advance of his former positions. "Henceforth," said he, "no communion can exist between the adherents of Rome and the Bohemian Christians." The tide now seemed to set in his favor. No more executions occurred; the other prisoners, who were expecting martyrdom, were set free. King Wenzel, failing to receive the political advantage which he had expected from his alliance with the pope, showed less favor to his measures, and particularly toward the bull against Ladislaus. He found that the traffic in indulgences was draining the country of money. The poor superstitious peasant who had no money, sold his cow to satisfy the clamorous appeals of the pope's agents. Street-songs even rehearsed the story of extortion which the community were suffering.

Wenzel was aroused. He summoned before him the men who could testify to the truth of these complaints, and sent them to Rome, bearing his own vigorous remonstrances against the indulgences. "Your agents," he wrote to the pope, "where they are offered a span, take an ell. They promise heaven to all that will yield up their gold, and preach other things not likely to promote the salvation of their hearers. But while they deceive simple minds, they heap up great stores of wealth."

No zeal could be expected after this to be shown by Wenzel in behalf of the pope.

## CHAPTER X.

### *NEW ENEMIES AND NEW DANGERS.*

THE first bull of excommunication against Huss, served in the spring of the previous year (1411) by Sbynco, proved of no effect. Not only was this formidable-sounding document coolly disregarded by Huss, but, as we have seen, the bull against Ladislaus issued by Pope John in the following September was openly and earnestly opposed in the Bethlehem pulpit.

But now appeared another bull of excommunication against Huss. The case, for more than a year under the consideration of the papal authorities, had been finally decided against him. The former sentence of excommunication was reaffirmed.

The principal agent to bring about this result was a wretched character, formerly parish priest to St. Adalbert's church in the new city of Prague. His name was Michael Deutschbrod, better known as Michael de Causis. This name was given him by Huss and his friends, and was taken from the title afterward given him by the pope—"procurator de Causis fidei." He was a renegade priest, more



interested in reforms in mining than reforms in the Church. He had devised some new method of exploring veins of gold; and having become a boon companion of the drunken king, he induced him to put into his hands a sum of money to be expended upon this object. The plan failed, and priest Michael absconded in the night with a large sum of money. He knew where he would be welcome, with money and with cunning. He went to Rome and offered his services to John XXIII. Henceforth the Romish court could not boast of a more subtle knave or a more serviceable tool. With such men as the Church's chief agents, what fate could be prophesied for a man like Huss other than that which actually befell him? In fact, Michael de Causis was the chief agent in bringing to pass the martyr's doom.

Before the pope was aware of the tumults and executions in Prague, he had charged the cardinal who was considering the case to employ the severest measures against Huss. His counsel, who were watching the case in Rome, appealed to a future general council, and were immediately placed under arrest. One of Huss' friends, Master Jesenitz, escaped, and got back to Prague. The cardinal, Peter de Angelis, after communicating with the renegade Michael, carried out the request of the pope, and pronounced sentence of excommunication upon Huss.

This was done in the summer of 1412, and in

the most terrible style which Rome could employ. If Huss persisted for twenty days in his disobedience to the pope, the ban was to be proclaimed against him in all the churches. This was to be repeated on all Sundays and festival-days, with ringing of bells and casting of lighted torches to the earth. None might give him food or drink. None might have any business-dealings with him. None could offer him lodging, fire or water. Every city, castle or village where he might reside, was put under interdict. If he died excommunicate, he was to be denied Christian burial; or if buried in consecrated ground, his body must be dug up again from its grave.

As if this were not enough, the pope himself, the monster John XXIII., added a bull specially directed against the Reformer. In this he ordered the person of Huss to be seized by any citizen of Prague, and delivered up to the archbishop, to be burned according to the laws. Bethlehem chapel, that den of heretics, he ordered to be torn down to its foundations.

The king allowed these dire proclamations to be published, but he would not lift a finger to carry them into execution. An attempt was made by the Germans, who had a majority in the council of the old city, to break up the services in Bethlehem chapel and to seize the person of Huss. The council approved their design. A festival was observed by the Bethlehem congregation in honor of the

consecration of the church, October 2; very unwisely, as it would appear, the Germans selected that as the day of their attack. Headed by a Bohemian and carrying arms, they marched to the chapel, where they found Huss in the pulpit. But such was the immense size, and so resolute the bearing, of the unawed congregation that they quailed before it, and came back as they went.

They reported their ignominious failure to the council. A bitter discussion arose. The German majority insisted that the chapel must come down or there would never be any peace. But the Bohemian minority, backed by the great mass of the people, held them in check, and the chapel remained unmolested.

Huss and his friends, in fact, paid no more attention to this bull than to any of the others. His friend, Master Jesenitz, who had escaped from Rome, and who was excommunicated along with Huss, showed so little fear that, in December, he published an argument at the University to prove that the whole proceedings against Huss were without force and the sentence null and void. Huss himself had a similar declaration engraved on the walls of Bethlehem chapel, to which he more than once referred in his sermons. And finally, from the pulpit, he appealed from the decision of the Roman court, which cares not for the sheep, but for the wool, to the most just Judge and High Priest over all.

When the parish priests of the city attempted to enforce the provisions of the ban and the interdict, King Wenzel again interposed. It was not so much for the sake of Huss and the multitude, who thought with him, that this was done. They did not care for the interdict, and they performed and enjoyed religious services as before. But the Roman Catholic population, who were compelled to observe the papal instructions, were put to great inconvenience. For their sakes, the king issued a decree, requiring the parish priests to attend as usual to their duties, in spite of the presence of Huss within the walls. Those who neglected the royal order would be punished with loss of salary.

The effect was magical. The churches were reopened and everything seemed to return to its wonted channel. Meanwhile, the conflict raged in the University. The students and masters were with Huss almost to a man. But eight doctors, who claimed to speak for the whole theological faculty, united in opposing Wickliffe and Huss. Paletz, an early friend of Huss, led this opposition. They extracted forty-five articles from the writings of Wickliffe which they condemned as heretical. Six other articles, in which Huss is more directly aimed at, were denounced.

In these six articles it is declared to be heretical—  
(1) to differ from the Roman Church concerning the sacraments and the supreme authority of the Church; or (2) to say that Antichrist is present and

powerful in these days; (3) to claim that forms and ceremonies not required by Scripture, but ordained by the Church, may be omitted; (4) to refuse to reverence the relics and bones of the saints; (5) to hold that priests cannot absolve from sin in the sacrament of penance; and (6) to question the authority of the pope to demand contributions and assistance from the faithful, for the coercion and subjection of the enemies of the Church, and in return to offer full forgiveness to those who loyally come to the rescue, and who give evidence of true repentance.

As the eight doctors failed to secure the approval of the University to their propositions, they turned to the king, and asked that the preaching of these heresies be forbidden in Prague by a royal edict. They claimed that certain preachers, who had been the means of stirring up violence and strife, ought to be silenced, and that only in this way could peace be restored in the city.

To allow only one party to speak and to enjoin silence on the other—that is always Rome's plan of securing peace.

The king made a show of granting their demand. He issued an edict forbidding the preaching of the heretical doctrines, on penalty of banishment. At the same time, however, he sent word to the eight doctors that they had better employ their time in refuting the errors, than in trying to suppress them by royal edict. This

sounds like the modern doctrine of free speech. Truth is able to meet error in an open and fair conflict, and asks no defence which she cannot make for herself. The king utterly refused to issue an edict against any individual. The eight doctors were not in very good humor at the result of their appeal to the king. They pretended that they could not refute Huss because he would not lay his opinions before them in writing. Huss was called before the privy-council to reply to this complaint. Applying the words of Christ before the high priest, he said: "I have spoken openly in the schools and in the temple, in Bethlehem, where masters, bachelors, students and multitudes of the common people congregate, and nothing have I spoken in secret to draw men away from the truth."

Huss offered to engage in discussion with them provided they would agree to take the same risk with himself—namely, to be burned at the stake if they failed to make good their side of the case. They put forward one of their number, and agreed that he should suffer for the whole. Huss, with a kind of grim humor, insisted that the whole eight must take the risk, or he would refuse to enter into the discussion. The council, satisfied that no result would be reached, dismissed both parties with an admonition to make up their differences among themselves, which of course they had no idea would be done.

Huss still continued his activity as a preacher and instructor without interruption. A cheering letter reached him about this time from an English Wickliffite. He took it into his pulpit and read it to the great congregation. "See!" said he; "our dearly-beloved brother Richard has written you a letter full of good cheer and encouragement." Huss replied to the letter in fervent language. In the name of the Church of Christ in Bohemia he assured the Church of Christ of England that the king, queen, lords, knights and common people in the cities and throughout the land were holding fast by the true doctrine. This was in the year 1440.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *WITHDRAWAL OF HUSS FROM PRAGUE.*

HUSS maintained his ground in Prague until near the close of the year 1412. At that time it was considered expedient, both by himself and his friends, that he withdraw at least for a season, and thus relieve the city of the appearance of open hostility to the pope. Before leaving Prague he drew up a third and final appeal from the sentence of excommunication.

Christ, he says, "has given his disciples a noble example for committing their cause to the judgment of the almighty and the all-wise God. Imitating his holy and great example, I appeal to God, who sees me oppressed by this unjust sentence and by the pretended excommunication of high priests, Pharisees and judges, occupying Moses' seat. I follow the example of Chrysostom, who appealed from two councils; of the blessed bishop Andrew of Prague, who appealed with all humility and devotion to the sovereign and infinitely just Judge, who can neither be intimidated by fear nor corrupted by gifts nor deceived by false testimony.

"I desire," he continued, "that all Christian be-



lievers should be informed and moved to sympathy for the pretended excommunication launched against me by Peter, cardinal-deacon of St. Ange, commissioned to do it by Pope John XXIII., at the instigation of my enemy, Michael de Causis, and with the approval of the canons of Prague. This cardinal for nearly two years has utterly refused audience to my advocates, though he ought not to have refused it to a Jew, a pagan or a heretic. It is moreover established by all ancient laws, as well as by the Old and New Testaments and by church laws, that the judges are to visit the places where the crime has been committed, and there to take evidence of the facts, while he who is accused may appear in a safe place where he may be free to defend himself.

“Now, since all these conditions have been wanting, I am absolved before God from the guilt of contumacy and discharged from this pretended and frivolous excommunication. I, John Huss, present this appeal to Jesus Christ, my Master, who knows, protects and judges the righteous cause of every individual whomsoever.”

The question has been raised whether by such appeals, and by refusing immediate submission to the pope, Huss did not take the position of a rebel and virtually excommunicate himself. Why should he persist in claiming the rights of a member of the Roman Catholic Church, when he took such an attitude of open opposition to its highest authorities? Huss was right: he took the only ground

which Scripture would warrant ; the pope and the Church were wrong. Why did not Huss openly break off all connection with the Church, instead of trying to maintain himself as a member in good standing ?

The best answer to be given is, perhaps, the fact that the great schism or quarrel between the two popes had led good Catholics everywhere to question or to deny the authority of one or of both of the popes. They had different grounds for such denial. None of them were exactly like those of Huss. But when open, and even armed, opposition to the popes was common among those counted loyal Catholics, when the popes themselves excommunicated each other, it was natural that Huss should regard his own conduct as consistent with his claims to a good standing in the Church. And amid the war of popes and antipopes, and councils and doctors, he might have cherished with reason the hope that his purer and more scriptural views of the Church would have some chance to prevail, and thus a true reform might begin from within.

On the question, What is the Church ? Huss about this time wrote a treatise in Latin, which is considered the most important of his works. In this he takes what might be called decided, if not ultra, Protestant ground. The Church is the whole body of the elect, past, present and future. It is the Church militant on earth, the Church slumbering in the pious dead—who, he held, were in purga-

tory—and the Church triumphant in heaven. Outward forms or the will of the pope did not make a man a member, but only the will of God.

“Christ, and not any man, is the supreme Head of the Church. It is a comparatively modern claim for the pope, that he is head of the Church on earth. The pope is not a successor of Christ or Peter merely by virtue of his office, but only as he resembles them in spirit, in faith, humility and love, in virtue and in devotion. And many besides popes have been the successors of Christ in this sense—many better and truer successors than the present pope and cardinals. They, by worldly-mindedness, avarice, splendor and pomp, are successors, not of Christ and the apostles, but of Satan, of Antichrist, of Judas Iscariot. Pope Leo was a heretic; Popes Benedict and Gregory had both been set aside by the Council of Pisa.

“The office of pope is not necessary to the Church. Only deacons and presbyters are named as officers in the Church in the Scriptures. God can bring back his Church to the old and simple pattern. And as to the other orders of clergy—cardinals, bishops, priests—their office gives them no sanctity. Not every priest is a saint, but every saint is a priest.

“The true magnates of the Church are faithful Christians keeping the commandments; high officers who break them are the least—yea, have no part—in the kingdom of God. Absolute and unquestioning

obedience to the demands of fallible men cannot be required. Every true Christian must decide whether a command of the pope is in accord with the law of Christ. If it is not, he is bound to oppose it. To rebel against an erring pope is to obey Christ the Lord."

In such bold declarations Huss showed how far he had advanced toward the true idea, toward the simple Church order of the most advanced of Protestant organizations in our day. He would have been prepared to join hands with John Calvin at Geneva or with the Pilgrim Fathers on the Mayflower. Nevertheless, he held fast to the Romish dogmas of confession, purgatory, transubstantiation, and believed himself a true son of the Church.

Huss first repaired to his native village. His chief residence during the exile was at Tabor. His activity and fervor as a preacher did not suffer him to rest. Denied a church, he accepted God's first temples, the groves and fields. Rural Bohemia witnessed the scenes which, long before, had consecrated the waysides and the hillsides of Judea; which were afterward to become familiar to the persecuted congregations of the Pyrenees; which drew the swarming myriads of Hollanders abroad for days, and left their busy cities and villages almost as silent as the grave; which made the wild and picturesque glens of the Scottish Highlands echo to the voices of men with a price upon their heads, and gave them a tender renown far beyond

that of natural scenery or of deeds of martial prowess.

Crowds flocked to hear the famous preacher of Prague, the man bold enough to face the terrible edict of excommunication and pure enough not to deserve it. Peasants and nobles followed his appointments and hung upon his words. The head of the University of Prague had left his seat of honor and his cultivated circle of students and professors, and addressed himself to the ignorant multitudes of the land. From city to city, from village to village, from street to castle, alone he pursued his apostolic mission. Sometimes spies hung upon his steps and interrupted his discourses. But his hearers, coming in crowds from their homes, fields and workshops, were eager for the word of God, and they drank in the preacher's earnest and scriptural discourses with the sincerity of famished babes receiving the pure milk of the word.

But Huss was not a wanderer without a home. Like Luther, the favorite at once of the high and the lowly, more than one lord's castle opened its gates and gave him an asylum ; and like Luther, he spent the leisure thus afforded him in composing some of his most important works. Released from his duties at the University and from the distractions and tumults of his life at Prague, it is not unlikely that this time of exile was the happiest of his life. He writes to Bethlehem congregation that his enemies "had not hurt a hair of his head, but only

occasioned him greater cheerfulness and hilarity." No doubt, by his carefully-prepared and powerful works, and by his letters written at this time, he accomplished as much for the cause of spiritual truth and freedom as if he had remained in Prague. The country lords and knights were afterward found to be his most zealous defenders.

Huss never for a moment during his exile forgot his dear flock at Bethlehem chapel. He had been with great difficulty persuaded to leave them. He felt almost like the hireling who leaveth the sheep and fleeth when the wolf cometh, instead of imitating the good shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep. On the other hand, he did not wish to bring the interdict upon the city, and so to be the means of cutting off multitudes from religious privileges, and thus possibly to bring upon them the peril of damnation.

Just before Christmas, 1412, he writes to the congregation: "Dearly-beloved, the day of our Lord's nativity draws near; therefore seek to purify your souls. Hear diligently and devoutly the word of God. Heed not your enemies, who would keep you from the preaching in Bethlehem chapel. Once they could say that I was the reason why you should stay away. Now they have no such reason. As Christ often withdrew when his enemies would have seized him, so I follow his example. I go in order that godless priests may not wholly prevent the preaching of

the divine word. I have not yielded, therefore, with any intention that God's truth should be denied through me, because for this truth I hope to die. No doubt many priests would be glad to have me return, so that the interdict might be enforced and they relieved from duty and have an excuse for indolence. I would be glad once more to see you and preach to you again God's word. Woe to the priests who neglect God's word, who lead lives of indolent repose when they might be preaching it, and woe to those who hinder the preaching and the hearing of the divine word! But blessed are they who hear it and treasure it up in their hearts and by good works observe it."

Again he writes: "I would gladly die for Christ's sake and be with Christ, and yet I would gladly preach to you, for your good, the word of God. I am in a strait betwixt two, and know not which to choose." Playing upon his own name—which in Bohemian means "a goose"—he says: "Although the goose is a tame kind of domestic animal and has no wings for lofty flight, yet it has escaped and broken through their snares. So we may confidently hope that other birds, better fitted for flying by the word of God and by their own lives, will bring all the plots and toils of the enemies to naught."

Again he says: "The more truth is beat down, the higher it rises. This same truth has sent to Prague not only one feeble goose, but a flock of

keen-sighted falcons and eagles. These, by the grace of God, soar upward, high upward, and sweep other birds up with them toward Jesus Christ, who will strengthen and confirm all his faithful ones."

Such expressions were afterward, in the time of Luther, interpreted as prophecies of the great Reformation, although Huss was really thinking of that progress of truth which he sagaciously foresaw was about to happen in the immediate future of Bohemia. To that his earnest and brave counsels and example in exile, as well as his preaching and labors in Prague, were contributing.

He wrote again: "If Christ, the true God and mightiest Defender, be with us, who in his malice shall be against us? What do we lose when we for his sake lose earthly goods, friends, honors, this wretched life, if he who dies for Christ conquers? Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters, stand fast in the truth; fear not; attend not a whit less than you ever did, on account of cruel threats, to the preaching of the word."

"Pray for me," he writes, "that I may more richly write and preach against Antichrist, and that God may lead me in the battle, and when I am driven to the greatest straits in defence of his truth. For know that I shrink not from giving up this poor body for God's truth, but I desire to live that I may preach God's truth to those who need it. And so I travel from place to place, to cities, villages and castles, in the fields and the



forests, ministering to whoever may be found there, not knowing whether I shall die in my bed or by the violence of Antichrist."

Huss not only wrote to his friends; he gave attention to the enemies who were stirred up by his activity in exile. "What have you done," he writes to a parish priest in Prachatitz who was clamoring against him, "in the whole thirty years of your pastoral office, for the spiritual interests of your flock? Zealous as you are for orthodoxy, you have constantly neglected their welfare. You have sheared the sheep regularly for thirty years, but where is your residence, your work? where the pasturage of your sheep?"

Occasionally this year (1413) Huss slipped into Prague, but left again as soon as his presence made a stir. To be nearer to the church he now accepted the invitation of his friend, the knight Henry of Lazan, and took up his abode with him in his stronghold, the castle of Cracowec. From this place, too, he went abroad preaching the word, visiting especially the places where large multitudes were likely to gather. From all quarters, it is said, the people flocked in crowds to hear him. Indeed, it is claimed that during these years of exile Huss was the foremost man in all Bohemia. The very persecution which had driven him into exile gave him greater prominence and fastened upon him the regards and the sympathies of the mass of the people.





## CHAPTER XII.

### *HUSS AND THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.*

THE schism still continued in the Roman Catholic Church, and the world was still compelled to hear with disgust the storm of anathemas and excommunications hurled at each other by rival popes. The Council of Pisa only aggravated the difficulties of the situation. It had simply added a new pope, so that now there were three instead of two. The infamous John XXIII. was driven out of Rome by his enemy, King Ladislaus, against whom he had proclaimed a crusade, and who supported the claims of Gregory XII. Benedict XIII. had Spain and Scotland on his side.

The state of affairs was so unsettled, men's minds were so divided and distracted, that kings and secular rulers felt it necessary to interfere. The best minds in the Church were calling for a remedy. The doctrine was announced from high places, that a council of the whole Church is superior to any member of it, and to the pope himself. The heresies, as they were called, of Wickliffe and of Huss alarmed all "good Catholics." They looked upon

these movements in England and in Bohemia as symptoms of a deep and widespread dissatisfaction, which must be met and cured or crushed, otherwise the whole Church might be hopelessly divided, and finally overthrown.

Pope John had fled from Ladislaus and taken refuge with Sigismund, emperor of Germany, and brother to King Wenzel of Bohemia. Sigismund was ambitious to be regarded as the restorer of Christian unity, and had exerted himself in every way to remove obstacles, and to bring about the convoking of a council which should take into consideration all the perilous and momentous questions of the times. Sigismund himself issued the summons to the council in October, 1413, which he called to meet in the city of Constance on All Saints' day, October 30 of the following year. The pope, not liking to leave Italy, where his adherents were most numerous, and conscious of his own unsavory reputation among all the friends of reform, gave his assent very reluctantly. Only in the following December did he issue his proclamation, directing all bishops to be present in person in the council, and all princes who could not attend, to send deputies authorized to act in their name. It was only after a great deal of manœuvring between the crafty emperor and the pirate pope, that John consented to attend the council in person. His friends warned him that he would go as a pope and return as a private citizen.

All over the world extraordinary preparations were made to accept these invitations. Delegates were elected by provincial, or even by national, councils; definite provision was made for their expenses, so that nothing might interfere with their presence and regular attendance. A profound interest was felt in the proposed deliberations. They would touch the most vital points of the faith and polity of the Church. The worst and the most extraordinary division and disorder that the Church had ever known, the monstrous three-headed schism in the papacy itself, would have to be dealt with. The grave question whether a council was of higher authority than the pope must be met and answered.

Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Denmark and Sweden made arrangements to be represented in the council. On the first of October, 1414, one year from the time of the imperial summons, Pope John left Bologna and started on his journey. Many were his fears and forebodings of the result, but we have not the slightest evidence that an awakened conscience was the cause of his uncomfortable state of mind. His evil course had apparently hardened his heart, so that probably his only concern was lest he should lose his honors and emoluments, and be reduced to the position of a private individual again.

He did not travel as a private individual then, but as a prince, with a splendid escort of cardinals,

nobles and their attendants, gorgeously dressed and blazing with gold, silver and precious stones. On the 29th of the month he reached Constance, and made his entry into the city with great pomp and parade. From a neighboring hill, as he looked down upon the city for the first time, he called it "a pit for catching foxes." Perhaps he had a presentiment of his own fate. It was a trap for him, and for far nobler game than he. For at the very same time, Huss too was pursuing his way to the city, where he was to close his career and receive the crown of martyrdom.

It seems remarkable, and even providential, that an œcumenical council should feel it part of its duty to deal with individual cases of heresy. This unusual course served to give greater publicity to the event, and greater celebrity and renown to the man and his doctrines. Huss might have fallen in some obscure way which would have made his memory a purely local matter. The Council of Constance made it the common property of Christendom.

Sigismund had caused Huss to be cited to appear before the council. He was more than willing to respond to the summons, and to defend himself before the assembled representatives of the whole Church. But could he go in safety? Could he calculate upon just and honorable treatment? If Huss himself was indifferent on the matter of personal safety, the authorities of Bohemia were not. They demanded and received from the emperor

what was called a "safe-conduct" for their beloved Huss.

This document was destined to such a scandalous notoriety that it deserves to be given in full, first in the Latin in which it was originally written, and then in an English translation. These are the very words of the emperor :

"Honorabilem magistrum Johannem Hus, in nostram, et sacri imperii, protectionem recipimus et tutelam. Ipsum, omni prorsus impedimento remoto, transire, stare, morari et redire libere permittatis, sibi que et suis, cum opus fuerit, de securo et salvo velitis et debeatis providere conductu ad honorem et reverentiam nostræ Majestatis."

✓ "The honorable Master John Huss we have taken under the protection and guardianship of ourselves and of the Holy empire. We enjoin upon you (the authorities of the empire) to allow him to pass, to stop, to remain and to return, freely and without any hindrance whatever; and you will, as in duty bound, provide for him and for his, whenever it shall be needed, secure and safe conduct, to the honor and dignity of our majesty."

This document was dated Spires, October 18, and was handed to Huss as soon as he had crossed the boundaries of Bohemia; others say it did not reach him until he actually arrived in Constance, Nov. 5. King Wenzel also took the precaution to appoint two faithful and valiant knights, the lords of Chlum and Duba, as special companions

and protectors of his most distinguished subject, Huss. Several other persons of rank joined the escort. But still other precautions and formalities were used by Huss himself. A few days before leaving, he fastened to the gates of the palace a challenge to any one suspecting him of heresy to meet him at the council, and there prove, if he could, that he had ever held or taught any false doctrine. He then, with the boldness of conscious innocence, demanded a certificate of orthodoxy from the very officer of the pope who, in that district, was charged with the duty of hunting out heretics, the grand inquisitor of Prague himself. And this is the document which he received in reply :

“By these presents we make known to all men that we have often held converse with the honorable Master John Huss, bachelor in theology of the celebrated University of Prague; that we have had several serious conferences with him relative to the Holy Scriptures and other matters; and that we have always considered him to be a faithful and good Catholic, not finding in him, up to this day, any evil or error. We certify, besides, that the said John Huss has declared that he was ready to render reason for his faith in the presence of the archbishop and his clergy, against any one that might come forward to accuse him of error or heresy, but that no one presented himself to support the charge.

“In faith of which, we have delivered to him

this letter, sealed with our great seal, this 30th of August, 1414.”

Besides this paper, he procured from the archbishop a public declaration that he had never known of any erroneous words on the part of Huss, and that this answer was given of his own free-will, and under no constraint.

Thus more than doubly armed and defended, Huss took his final departure from the city, the university and the country which he more than any other man has rendered famous—which but for him and his followers would scarcely rise above the most commonplace level of history. In spite of all these precautions, Huss wrote to his beloved congregation, “Probably you will nevermore behold my face in Prague.” Nor were the people without the worst forebodings. One of them said to him, “God be with thee! for hardly do I think you will get back again unharmed, dearest Master John, and most steadfast in the truth.” Others cautioned him against the emperor’s treachery, and expressed their fears that he would never return.

Huss commenced his journey October 11, 1414. From that day Chlum’s faithful secretary, Peter von Mladanowitz, kept a full diary of all that occurred and commenced gathering the original documents. Although the diary itself is a work of small literary value, it is a most precious store-house of material. So long as the Bohemians kept up their observance of the anniversary of Huss’



martyrdom, they were accustomed on every such occasion to read an extract from Mladanowitz.

Huss had been excommunicated by Pope John. Both the pope and his victim were on their way to Constance at the same moment. Both had similar forebodings of the effect of the council upon their own welfare; and in both cases were these anticipations fulfilled. In fact, Huss and the pope became fellow-prisoners before their cases were disposed of. The pope, in losing the honors and emoluments of his office, was more severely punished than was Huss, who, suffering the loss of all things, even life itself, counted himself happy in the possession of Christ, and honored above all the potentates of the earth in the privilege of dying a martyr to his cause.

There is no evidence that the pope's conscience awoke and reproved him for the enormities of his past life, as he approached what he feared would be the scene of his trial. But the tender soul of Huss, which had always cherished the influences of the Holy Spirit, was engaged in heart-searching and self-reproof. In a letter to a friend he accuses himself gravely of faults which might well be called trivial. He had taken pleasure in wearing rich apparel; he had wasted hours in frivolous occupations; he had not refrained from superfluities, but had been led astray by custom. He admonishes his friend not to imitate him in any of the vanities into which he had seen him fall.

So modestly, so unostentatiously, he goes upon his last journey, but without a particle of fear, without a sign of flinching or wavering. He anticipates a cruel fate; he does not seek nor shun it. No touch of blind fanaticism, no trace of terror, appear in his calm demeanor. As one visibly sustained by a higher than human power he moves to meet his fate. In all the history of martyrdom there is not a nobler, purer, more Christ-like example than that of Huss. From first to last, it was a model of quiet firmness and of unbending but undemonstrative consistency.

The journey to Constance was marked by kind treatment and cordial reception everywhere on the road. Even when he crossed the Bohemian frontier and entered the country of his old enemies, the Germans, he was surprised by the favor with which he was greeted. He found it perfectly safe to travel as a priest, without any attempt at disguise. Clergy, knights, councilmen and the masses of the people welcomed him to their cities, their halls and their homes. In all the places through which he passed, he posted up public notices in Bohemian, Latin and German, offering to give to any one who wished to speak with him on the matter, an account of his religious convictions, and to prove that he was far from cherishing anything like heresy.

At Nuremberg, where his approach had been announced, the people thronged the streets to see

him, followed him to the inn, and encouraged him with assurances that the council would not dare to harm him. A wish having been expressed to hear him, some were for making the discussion private, because they had scruples about speaking on such matters before laymen. But Huss would listen to no such proposal. Accordingly, placards were placed on the doors of the churches, inviting all to a religious conference the next day. When Huss had completed his argument and answered his opponents, all present, mayor, councilors, magistrates and people, overwhelmed him with clamors of applause.

When within fifty miles of Constance, at the village of Biberach, he held a similar disputation with the priests and learned men of the place. So great was the enthusiasm of the villagers at the result that Huss was borne in triumph through the streets. Here the knight John de Chlum engaged in the disputation, and spoke with so much warmth in favor of the doctrines of Huss, that he was taken for a doctor of theology; and Huss was accustomed afterward in his letters playfully to call him "the doctor of Biberach."

Knowing the great ignorance of the people from the negligence of their religious instructors, Huss was accustomed, wherever he lodged, to leave behind a copy of the ten commandments. Sometimes he traced them in the meal, as he had written them on the walls of Bethlehem chapel.

Huss and his friend finally reached Constance on the third day of November. The pope, with his brilliant escort, was just one week in advance. Huss writes that he had not found a single enemy on the road. In fact, his bitterest and most dangerous enemies were the obscure and depraved Bohemians who had been received with favor at the papal court, and who were following him to Constance with their crafty and murderous plan. Constance, situated upon the lake of the same name, a city of Baden, seventy-three miles east-north-east from the Swiss city of Basle, is now a place of little importance, with a population of sixty-five hundred to ten thousand. At that day it was one of the most prosperous and thriving of the inland cities of Germany, containing a population of fifty thousand. The attendants upon the council were nearly equal in number. At one time it was said thirty thousand horses might have been counted within the city limits. The English duke of Warwick had an escort of five hundred horsemen, the pope of six hundred, and the emperor of one thousand. Booths and wooden buildings were erected outside the city walls, and thousands of visitors were encamped in the surrounding country.

The historians and writers of that day give us full particulars of this great and famous assembly of princes and priests, with their vast body of followers. All classes of society, from highest to

lowest, were represented—not only clergy and nobility, but soldiers, magistrates, servants, entertainers and providers. It was as if a great fair was being held. There were shows and amusements of every kind, some religious and some irreligious. The streets glittered with the crowds of splendidly-attired dignitaries, with waving plumes and polished armor, with flaunting standards and with lengthened cavalcades, until the dreams of the *Arabian Nights* seemed to be realized, or until Bunyan's Vanity Fair was foreshadowed.

There were emperor and pope, kings, princes, dukes, nobles and knights; there were patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, cardinals and abbots; better and with purer aims than the most of these, were representatives of the great Universities, scholars who were the lights of their age, discoverers of precious classical manuscripts, historians, church jurists, who from their seats of learning, apart from the fierce and ignoble contests of the time, saw with clearer vision and felt with deeper earnestness the imperative necessity for reform. Eleven Universities, embracing those of Paris, Oxford and Prague, sent delegates. Doubtless they were encouraged to come by the literary character of the emperor, who used to say, "I can in a single day make a thousand noblemen, but in a thousand years I cannot make a single scholar."

All together there were counted, besides the em-

peror and the pope, twenty princes, one hundred and forty counts, more than twenty cardinals, seven patriarchs, over a hundred bishops and archbishops, and about four thousand priests, in attendance, drawn together by the sessions of the council.

Exactly what proportion of these could be regarded as members of the council entitled to take part in its proceedings, it is difficult to say. Certainly there was no place of assembly in Constance that would have accommodated a gathering of nearly forty-five hundred men. The place of assembly was the Merchants' Exchange, once a Carthusian monastery, built in 1338, close to the shores of the lake, and still standing. The room is in the second story, wide and low, supported by heavy oak beams, which were restored in 1866, and with a rough plank floor like that of a barn.

The chair in which the emperor sat and the one used for a short time by the pope are still preserved. Other relics, both of Huss and Jerome, are said to be numerous in the city.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *HUSS IN THE CITY OF CONSTANCE.*

AS soon as Huss arrived in the city, his faithful knights informed the pope of the fact, and asked if their charge would be safe in Constance. The pope's answer had a disagreeable tone of extravagance which might well have excited their suspicions. "Had he killed my own brother," he replied, "not a hair of his head should be touched while he remained in the city." It was this same pope who had charged the cardinal to treat Huss with the utmost severity, and who had added to the excommunication a special bull of condemnation.

However, the sentence of excommunication was suspended in order that Constance might not be under interdict on account of his presence. Although admonished not to give occasion for scandal by appearing in public, he was left unmolested in his own lodgings. Every day he had service in his chamber, which was attended by many persons in the neighborhood. But the expectation of being allowed to bear public testimony to what he felt to be the truth of Scripture, and to clear him-

self before the council of the charges of error which had been heaped upon him, was cruelly disappointed.

The enemies of Huss were close upon his track. There were twenty of them, including the swindler Michael de Causis, Stephen Paletz, once the warm friend and joint-advocate of reform with Huss, and others. His enemies among the clergy of Moravia and Bohemia had taxed themselves to meet the expense of sending a deputation to Constance, to secure his overthrow. With their appearance in the city, the fate of Huss may be regarded as sealed.

Their first move was to have Huss summoned before the cardinals who were attending the council. This they accomplished by perseveringly dogging their footsteps, waiting upon them in their dwellings, and heaping up all manner of charges, some of them utterly false, against Huss. They placarded him on the church doors as the vilest heretic. They circulated a report that Huss was a magician, a sort of "mind-reader," who could divine the thoughts of those who came within a certain distance, and especially of those who attended his religious services, and that he not unfrequently made these discoveries publicly known.

It is not impossible that some conscience-stricken offender, dropping in at these humble services, had felt that Huss described his own case; the secrets of his heart were made manifest, as often



happens, in the faithful preaching of the gospel. And this may have been the foundation of truth upon which his enemies built their absurd charge. Their purpose evidently was to frighten away his hearers, and thus to neutralize his personal influence.

On the 28th of November, while Huss was quietly pursuing his studies or conversing with his friends in his humble lodging, two bishops, a knight and the mayor of the city stood before the door. When Huss appeared, they informed him that they bore a summons requiring him to appear before the pope and cardinals to give an account, as he had desired, of the doctrines which he really held. Huss remonstrated against this comparatively limited and certainly prejudiced tribunal. He had expected to make his defence, as Luther was afterward permitted to do, before the whole council. He had written to the emperor asking that an opportunity might be provided for him to make such public defence in Constance, and it seems, from language employed by Huss, that the emperor had given him assurance that his cause should be conducted to a happy issue. "I have taught nothing in secret," writes Huss to the emperor; "so I wish to answer my accusers, not in secret, but publicly."

Before the emperor arrived in Constance, he sent word to Huss expressing his satisfaction at Huss' confidence in him, shown by coming to the coun-



cil; hence, Huss hoped that the emperor would arrange for the public defence which he must know was the grand desire of the accused. But the emperor did not reach Constance until December 24, a month after the arrest of Huss. The pope knew that his own case would be deferred if that of Huss was taken up; and wishing to make some reputation for orthodoxy, as well as to gain time, by sacrificing a heretic, he encouraged the proceedings of the cardinals.

John de Chlum was with Huss when the summons arrived. He saw through the plot in an instant. With indignation he rose and exclaimed against such a violation of the understanding. The emperor had given his word to Huss that he should obtain a free hearing at the council. He himself had charge of the safety of Huss, and was bound to see that nothing was done against the emperor's word. He could not permit this, and must protest against such a proceeding. The cardinals would do well to consider what they were about, thus trifling with the honor of the emperor and of the empire.

One of the cardinals protested that they meant no evil. They only wished to proceed quietly and avoid a stir. Upon this, Huss unwisely consented to go. Following the embassy down stairs, on the lower floor he met the hostess, Fida by name, who took leave of him with tears. A presentiment of the result, which had perhaps never

been entirely absent from his mind, now affected Huss so that he gave her his blessing. The real purpose of the cardinals appears from the fact that they had placed soldiers in the street, as a precaution against any movement of the people in favor of Huss. They had no intention that he should escape from their hands. In fact, they had been alarmed by a rumor that he had actually slipped away from the city. A hay-wagon covered with canvas had been seen to leave the city, and afterward to return without the covering. Hence the story arose that Huss had been concealed under the canvas. Nothing of the kind had happened, and they were resolved that nothing of the kind should happen.

Chlum accompanied Huss to the assembly of cardinals. After a brief interview, in which the cardinals professed themselves gratified with the temper of Huss, they left the two Bohemians under arrest until the afternoon. During the interval a monk, who afterward turned out to be a man of great learning, approached Huss in an insinuating manner, and attempted to draw him into a discussion; but Chlum, suspecting treachery, interrupted him and rebuked his impertinence.

In the afternoon the cardinals reappeared, and with them two of Huss' bitterest enemies, Paletz and Michael de Causis. These men clamored loudly for Huss' imprisonment, urging their accusations of heresy with vehemence, and asserting that

if left at liberty, Huss would do more harm than any heretic since the days of Constantine.

It was decided that Huss should be retained as a prisoner. And from that hour he never regained his freedom. Chlum was allowed to depart, but he had to go alone. The enemies of Huss were jubilant and insulting, and cried out to the prisoner, "Now we have you, and you shall not escape until you have paid the uttermost farthing."

This outrage against justice fired the chivalrous knight with indignation. Bitterly did he complain to the cardinals of their baseness and perfidy. From them he rushed to the pope, and overwhelmed him with passionate reproaches. He reminded him of the strong language in which he had promised safety to Huss. The pope coldly excused himself on the ground that he was powerless in the matter; the cardinals were quite beyond his control. Chlum went from cardinal to cardinal, who answered him with evasions or with open declarations that no faith was to be kept with heretics. Some closed their doors in his face.

Driven almost to desperation by such inhuman and shameful repulses, Chlum turned to the people who were gathered about the papal palace. But they joined with the prosecutors in insulting him. Taunts and threats were the response which they made to his appeals for sympathy. Thus Chlum spent the day, and only abandoned his efforts when

~~The~~ streets were deserted and the city lay in darkness.

Huss, meanwhile, was treated with a severity which was near closing his existence at once. For eight days he was confined in the house of a priest. But on the 6th of December, he was thrown into an underground dungeon through which a sort of sewer discharged itself into the river Rhine. It took but a few hours for the noxious stench and effluvia to throw him into a fever, which threatened his life.

The faithful Chlum never relaxed his efforts for his friend's release. The emperor, who had been crowned on the eighth of November at Aix-la-Chapelle, was still at some distance from the city. Chlum wrote him a letter, detailing the circumstances of the arrest and entreating him to interfere. This he sent by the hand of one of the imperial officers, who had been appointed to look after the safe-conduct. Meanwhile, he himself traversed the streets from day to day, carrying the large parchment, sealed with the imperial seal, containing the safe-conduct of Huss. This great and important document he exhibited to every one as he had opportunity.

Moreover, he posted up a placard, in which he solemnly declared that the pope had been false to his promise and had insulted the imperial authority. The emperor himself, in answer to Chlum's appeal, sent word that Huss should be set free even

if the prison doors had to be broken down. He even despatched ambassadors to Constance, sharply insisting on the immediate release of Huss from his unjust imprisonment; yet all was to no purpose. The pope insisted that the emperor had no right to interfere in the treatment of heretics. The prison doors remained closed. When his symptoms became so threatening, Huss was removed to apartments above ground. The pope, not from motives of humanity, but because he did not wish his victim to escape him in this manner, sent his own physician to wait upon him. Here, after partial recovery, he suffered a relapse. All feared he would die. But more liberty was granted him, so that his health began again to improve.

The emperor arrived in Constance on Christmas day. His presence completed the authority and pomp of this august assembly. The imposing religious services observed by the council on the day of his arrival were led by the pope; the emperor, dressed in the robes of an ecclesiastic, bearing an inferior part. The pope is said to have trembled when the passage in the Gospel for the day was read (Luke ii. 1)—“There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus”—as he saw before him, in the person of Sigismund, the successor to the throne and power of Cæsar.

At the right hand of the pope had been placed the throne of Sigismund, magnificently adorned; near by was the seat of the empress. At the side

of the emperor stood the marquis of Brandenburg, bearing the sceptre. The duke of Saxony, as marshal of the empire, held aloft a drawn sword. Between the emperor and the pope stood Count Cilley, the father-in-law of the emperor, holding the golden globe.

When the religious ceremonies were completed, the pope handed to the emperor a sword, charging him to use it effectually in defence of the Church. Sigismund accepted it, and promised to obey the papal injunction.

Chlum had made every effort to meet the emperor, and secure an interview immediately upon his arrival at Constance. But the first sight of him which he gained, was during the religious services just described. That scene—the emperor arrayed as a priest, with a candle in his hand and chanting the Scripture of the day—revealed to him at a glance the great unlikelihood of his success. The emperor had joined hands with the priests, and henceforth Chlum and his cause with difficulty found a hearing, and were manifestly unwelcome objects. “Nothing more,” he sadly wrote to a friend, “is to be hoped from the emperor.” The great ambition of Sigismund was to heal the papal schism, and so to be considered the restorer of Christian unity. When he arrived in Constance and tested the temper of the council, he learned—what, perhaps, he did not suspect when he gave his word of honor to Huss—that the schism could not

in all probability be healed, if he did not conform to the wishes of the majority, who considered Huss a pestilent heretic and demanded his punishment if he did not recant. If he had insisted on his liberation, the council would probably have broken up in disorder. Hence he permitted his sacred word to be violated, and Huss to be made a sacrifice, in the interests of that outward unity which he blindly sought.

In like manner, a century after, the successor of Sigismund, the emperor Charles V., had the successor of Huss, Martin Luther, in his power on the faith of a safe-conduct, at the Diet of Worms. But when the priests plied him with their sophistry, persuading him to imitate Sigismund in his infamous treatment of Huss and to violate his safe-conduct to Luther, he answered with a dignity worthy an emperor: "If honor were banished from every other home, it ought to find refuge in the heart of kings." Luther escaped, but Huss was burned. The emperor Charles is remembered as an emperor indeed, but Sigismund is chiefly remembered as the emperor who violated his safe-conduct to Huss.

Such an instance of treachery in high places could not well go unpunished even in this life. It cost Sigismund more than he could then foresee or imagine. It sowed the seeds of a long and bitter conflict. It came back to him in battles, sieges, defeats, disasters, panics, retreats and disgrace. Bohemia never



forgave him the wrong. Sigismund no doubt expected the people to be enraged, but what could such a little kingdom do against the emperor, who, by sacrificing Huss, was rallying around him all the forces of Christendom? We shall see.

Intelligence of the arrest and imprisonment of Huss soon reached Bohemia, where it was received with the astonishment and indignation which an outraged people might be expected to show. The Bohemian council assembled and drew up an address to Sigismund, in which they poured out their complaints of his conduct. Letters from the nobles of Bohemia, and even from Moravia, were addressed to him, earnestly supplicating for redress.

In these letters the declaration of the archbishop of Prague that Huss was free from all heresy was repeated; the emperor was reminded that he had given Huss a safe-conduct, which was violated by thrusting him into a horrible dungeon; he was told that there was no one, great or small, who did not view with indignation the imprisonment of an innocent man; and finally the writers—ten nobles, writing for their whole order—asked that Huss should at once be set at liberty. The council or states demanded the instant release of Huss, and his deliverance from the enemies and false witnesses to whom he had been surrendered.

The Moravian authorities interceded even more earnestly for Huss, and spoke emphatically of the

evil results which must follow from the violation of the safe-conduct. They warned the emperor that falsehood does not finally gain the victory over truth.

The only result of these letters was to disturb somewhat the tranquillity of the emperor's mind, and to draw from him a lame defence. In this he does not refer to the persuasions and sophistries of the priests, who by long and tedious arguments tried to show him it was wrong to keep faith with heretics. He referred rather to what he considered the public and ecclesiastical interests at stake. Huss, he said, should have waited and entered Constance with him instead of before him. Matters would not then have taken such an ill turn.

"God knows," writes the plausible emperor, "that we experienced a sorrow and pain for Huss too great to be expressed by words. The Bohemians certainly know how we interceded for him, and how, seized with indignation, we several times left the council. Nay, on his account, we even left Constance till they declared to us: 'If we would not allow justice to be executed, they did not know what business they had to be there.' Thus we came to the conclusion that we could do nothing, not even speak about the affair; for if we had done so, the council would have entirely broken up."

The emperor's defence rests, accordingly, upon the immoral Jesuitical principle, which Paul so

pointedly condemns in Rom. iii. 8: "Let us do evil that good may come." Afterward, in the year 1417, he justified his conduct on substantially the same ground, not choosing to avail himself of the shameful decrees passed by the council to exculpate him from charges of bad faith. These decrees, two in number, were as follows:

"First, the Holy Synod declares that whatever safe-conduct may be given by emperor, king or prince to heretics or persons accused of heresy, it cannot, and ought not, to cause any harm to the Catholic faith or hindrance to the jurisdiction of the Church, but that it is allowable, in spite of the safe-conduct, for any competent ecclesiastical judge to inquire into the errors of such persons, and to punish them as they deserve if they will not recant, even though they come to the place of judgment trusting to the safe-conduct, and would not have come otherwise."

Secondly, in reference especially to the case of Huss, they decreed that, since it was matter of complaint that the emperor's safe-conduct had been violated, on the contrary John Huss had by his heretical opinions utterly forfeited all right and privilege, and that no faith whatever, either by natural, human or divine right, ought to be observed toward him to the prejudice of the Catholic faith; that His Royal Majesty had acted rightfully and as became one in his position in the matter, and decreeing, moreover, that all true

Christians must cease all complaints of the acts of the council in reference to Huss. All who continued to complain would be punished as heretics to the Church and traitors to His Majesty.

It is such acts as these, in which falsehood is defended, black is called white and evil is called good, more than in its immense body of merely human dogmas and ceremonies, that the corruptness and unchristian character of the Romish Church is revealed. This is not Christianity; it is Jesuitism.

This double dealing, practised and decreed by a great œcumenical council, forced upon and assented to by an emperor in the name of the Church, for the destruction of one of the purest, ablest and best members ever upon its rolls, could not have sprung from the spirit of the New Testament. It is a proof of the immense distance which the Church had wandered and backslidden from this standard. It revealed the urgent necessity for the very reform which Huss vainly strove to secure, but for which his writings and martyr's death prepared the way. It took another century to bring it to pass.

That corruption had penetrated to the very vitals of the Church, might be learned not only from such acts as these, but from the sermons which, from time to time, were preached before the council by some of its own members.

In these sermons, the vices of popes and priests

were described and condemned in the boldest language, and reformation was demanded in terms as strong as Wickliffe, Huss or Jerome had ever used. The records of the council are a sufficient testimony to the corruptions of the Church, and the fact that the body adjourned without attempting a reform, but only after burning a sincere reformer, shows how incurable the evil was by any measures from within the Church itself.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *THE DOWNFALL OF THE POPE.*

ON the first day of the new year, 1415, after imposing religious ceremonies, the cardinals gathered around the emperor and demanded of him full freedom to proceed against Huss, unrestricted by the safe-conduct which he had given. The emperor in reply issued a decree to the effect that the council might proceed against those who were evidently charged with heresy, in so far that after a public citation they should be judged according to their deserts. This was a formal and final abandonment of Huss.

Strangely enough, the same document extended a safe-conduct to all who of their own accord should come to the council. This was added, not with reference to Huss and his friends, but in order to encourage the adherents of the rival popes, Gregory and Benedict, to appear at the council and help to counteract the influence of John XXIII. The emperor, on the same day and by the same act, deserted pope and reformer.

Contrary to the wishes of Pope John, the ambassadors of his rivals were admitted to the coun-

cil. Arguments were offered by leading members to show that the council at Pisa, which elected John pope, was in error. It was also maintained that the Council of Constance was not dependent upon John for its legitimacy, since not the pope, but the emperor Sigismund, as the advocate of the Church, had called it.

Secret consultations were held outside of the council on the troublesome question of getting rid of Pope John. But they could not be kept secret from him. His paid spies were members of the most secret of these conclaves. If they took solemn oaths of secrecy, the pope was ready to absolve them from perjury when they came to him with their reports. Some of them were detected and summoned before the council. But conviction was difficult; the scandal of an exposure would have been great, and so they went unpunished.

In the following month, a document was prepared by the cardinal St. Mark, in which he urged John to settle the difficulties in which the Church was involved, by joining with the two other claimants in abdicating the papal chair. It was maintained that they should consider it a favor to be permitted to abdicate. A good shepherd is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. In the present divided condition of the Church, a pope who claimed to be a good shepherd would show his sincerity by voluntarily resigning, in order to help

in the work of restoring unity. If he would not resign, he was no true pastor. If he was not a true pastor, he ought to be deposed.

Great excitement followed the publication of this document, and the friends of John made elaborate replies. But the emperor opened the doors of the council to a large number of individuals not in the interest of the pope, and belonging to lower orders of the clergy. The cardinal St. Mark showed from Scripture that bishops and elders or presbyters stood upon the same footing, and hence the former had no better right in the council than the latter. It is remarkable that this is the same view of the two orders of the ministry as that taken by Huss, in his book upon the Church, which, for just such doctrines, was considered one of the most heretical and dangerous of all his works.

Another measure hostile to the pope was adopted, which recalls the proceedings in the University of Prague in which Huss bore a leading part. It was determined that the voting in the council should be by nations, each nation to be restricted to one vote. Thus the numerous adherents whom John had brought with him from Italy, by whose votes he hoped to control the decisions of the body, were robbed of their power. Out of four votes they could cast but one. Still obstinate and deaf to all the proposals of the council, a new and terrible weapon was secretly devised against him.



This was no other than a judicial investigation of his conduct and life. A series of charges of the most horrible and scandalous character, and too likely to be literally true, was drawn up and secretly submitted to the German and English members of the council.

Of the result of such an investigation there could scarcely be a question. The pope himself had no doubt about it. His spies had brought him intelligence of the plan, and his consternation was great. He was compelled frankly to admit to his friends that some of the charges were true, and he even meditated going before the council and confessing so much, while he would deny other charges and would claim that a pope could be deposed only for heresy.

However, there really was no intention to bring the pope to a formal trial. Had a genuine desire for reform been uppermost in the minds of the council, doubtless the pope would not have been spared. But *outward unity* was the chief matter of interest. This once gained, it was thought reform could be better secured. Only so much was done in reference to the pope as would be likely to frighten him into a peaceable resignation, and so prepare the way for the coveted restoration of outward oneness in the Catholic Church, so sadly divided and distracted. The facts of his life were really too bad to be made a matter of public inquiry. The reputation of the Church itself would

be compromised by the exposure of the crimes of its earthly head.

Recovering somewhat from his fright, the pope now assumed a haughty tone. Pretending to yield to the wishes of the majority of the council, he prepared a form of abdication based on the understanding that the other rival popes would abdicate at the same time. The council demanded something more positive. The pope temporized, used bribes, and even sent to Sigismund the special gift of the Golden Rose, consecrated on Palm Sunday—a mark of favor seldom extended to princes by popes.

These devices proving useless, John next be-thought him of flight. The council would scarcely venture to proceed without a pope. Their acts would lack authority. They would become hopelessly divided. In fact, there had been suspicions in the council of his intentions, and he was so closely watched as to be virtually a prisoner in his own palace. Hence, he must disarm these suspicions by some new act of cunning. He must seem to yield unreservedly to the demands of the council.

Accordingly, on the 1st of March, he agreed to the form of resignation which had been urged upon him by the council. Kneeling before the altar and using the prescribed form of words, he said, "I profess, engage and promise, swear and vow to God, the Church and this holy council, voluntarily and

freely to give peace to the Church itself by an unqualified cession of my pontificate." Then, placing his hand to his heart, he added of his own accord, "And these I promise to observe." On the sixth of March, at the urgent personal request of the emperor, he issued a bull notifying to the Church his proposed surrender of the pontificate.

It still remained to secure the abdication of the rival pope, Benedict, Gregory having yielded through his ambassadors to the wishes of the council. John did not regard himself bound to carry out his promises until Benedict had resigned. Sigismund was about to visit Benedict in person, at Nice, to procure his surrender. He requested Pope John to give him power of attorney to conclude the whole transaction at Nice. Benedict would be more ready to yield upon seeing the power of attorney of John in the emperor's hands.

But at this point John became obstinate; he utterly refused the emperor's demand, and fears were aroused that he would after all disappoint the expectations of the council and evade in some way the necessity of resigning. The English proposed a public arrest of the pope; the French demurred. The emperor was for compelling the pope to give powers of attorney. He threatened to imprison the Italian cardinals who hindered his designs. Finally, three nations, English, French and Ger-

mans, united in the demand that the pope give the power of attorney.

John now felt that there was no alternative for him but flight. Sigismund suspected as much, and redoubled his guards. John had a friend in the duke of Austria. A grand tournament was appointed by the duke on the 21st of March, without the walls of the city.

The confusion which it created gave the pope his opportunity. Among the multitudes passing in and out of the gates toward evening might have been seen a figure disguised as a groom, wrapped in a large cloak and seated on a poorly-equipped horse, with a crossbow on the pommel of the saddle. He passed on unmolested to the bank of the lake, which here narrowed to the width of a river. Close at hand lay a boat, into which he stepped with beating heart. He counted the strokes of the oars; he listened with strained attention for any sound which indicated that he was pursued. He soon glided beyond the reach of his enemies, into the broader arm of the lake, into the river Rhine, beyond the boundaries of Baden, and was safe in the busy hillside town of Schaffhausen, thirty miles away from the hated emperor and the plotting council.

In the midst of the festivities of the tournament a servant approached the duke and whispered in his ear the intelligence that the pope had made good his escape. The duke received the news in silence, and the games were continued without in-

terruption. Shortly after, he withdrew to Schaffhausen and joined the fugitive pope.

Great was the consternation in Constance, great was the wrath of the emperor, when it was known that the pope had fled. The council was in danger of instant dissolution. The merchants began to pack up their wares and to close their doors and windows, not knowing what disorders might arise among the fifty thousand people, the mixed multitude which had been drawn together by the council, but which now would have no common object to influence or restrain them.

In order to quiet the people, the emperor was compelled to ride in person through the city, accompanied by his court, and to give his word and assurance, with the sound of the trumpet, that peace should be preserved and that the council was not dissolved by the flight of the pope, but that he would protect it to the very last drop of his blood. Measures were taken the very same day to bring the duke of Austria to account for his treacherous conduct in aiding the escape of the pope.

With equal promptness, the pope, on the day after his arrival at Schaffhausen, wrote a letter to the emperor, explaining his movement as necessary to his health and liberty, reaffirming his promises given at Constance, and exculpating the duke of Austria from all share in his flight. This letter he followed up by a peremptory summons to all the members of the papal court to meet him within six

days at Schaffhausen. Many obeyed. He also wrote specious letters to the king of France and the duke of Orleans, in which he endeavored to stir up the national jealousy of France toward the English and Germans, and toward the emperor himself.

Bold doctrines were now proclaimed in Constance. It was argued that a general council was superior to the pope, and could depose him, much more hold its sessions without his presence. Others refused to hear these arguments, and the majority, who were in conflict with the pope, began to waver.

A deputation of cardinals and bishops visited the pope on the 24th of March. They got no satisfaction, and returned to Constance as they went. It was clear that the pope intended to break up the council. Stormy altercations followed between the two parties, who met from day to day in an informal way. Finally, it was agreed that a regular session of the council should be held, in the absence of the pope, on the 30th of the month.

A cardinal, an officer next in rank to the pope, named Jordan de Ursinis, presided. A series of decrees was proposed embodying the idea of the supremacy of the council over the pope, denying the authority of John to detach any members from the council, and otherwise limiting his authority and forbidding his interference.

While these and still severer measures were

under discussion, the pope's fears for his personal safety increased in proportion. Schaffhausen was too near Constance to be comfortable for him. In a storm of rain and on horseback, with but few attendants, he fled once more to a little village twenty-five miles beyond Schaffhausen. He left behind him a written protest against all that he had so sacredly promised at Constance, as extorted from him by violence, and therefore utterly null and void.

This act of the pope consolidated instead of further endangering the council. Now that he was a fugitive, the presence and support of the emperor more than counterbalanced the influence of the pope and the traditional habit of unconditional obedience to his commands. The decree that a council is supreme in matters vital to the Church over every kind of estate and dignity, and has authority to reform the Church *in its head* and members, was passed. The emperor declared war against the duke of Austria. Forty thousand men were soon in arms against him, and city after city was wrested from his dominions.

Again the old pirate had to fly ; his refuge now was at Freiburg, between forty and fifty miles north-east of Schaffhausen. From this place he again opened negotiations with the council ; but when the messengers who were to treat with him on the part of the council reached the place, he had again taken flight, and was found at Breisach, on the borders

of France. In that country he hoped to gain protection and sympathy. Scarcely had the ambassadors come up with him at Breisach when he turned his back upon them and disappeared.

But now the duke of Austria and the French nation abandoned the cause of the pope, and he was left literally without a friend who could shield him from anything the council and the emperor chose to do in his case. By the advice of the duke he returned to Freiburg and remained there, virtually a prisoner, while the duke himself appeared at Constance, made his humble submission to Sigismund and promised to bring back the pope, whose flight he had aided. This was on the fifth of May, 1415. On the twenty-ninth of May, John was formally deposed from the papacy by a unanimous vote of the council.

In prison he awaited the announcement of his sentence, to which he gave his full confirmation. In a long document signed by his own hand he acknowledged himself deposed, and promised full submission to the decision of the council.



*5 lines here.*

## CHAPTER XV.

### *HUSS IN PRISON.*

HAVING thus traced the fortunes of John, we return to Huss, whom we left a prisoner in the Dominican monastery at Constance. About the first of March he was transferred to that of the Franciscans, in the heart of the city, near the papal palace. This movement on the part of the pope was doubtless intended to draw attention to the case of Huss and help to remove it from himself. The change was altogether favorable at first to the health and comfort of Huss.

But when the pope fled, his officers, including those who had charge of Huss, fled with him, or soon afterward. The keys of Huss' prison thus fell into the hands of the emperor, and the reformer's friends, including John de Chlum and other nobles, received permission to visit him. They found him in a pitiable condition indeed. Previous to the pope's flight he had been but scantily supplied with food from the pope's kitchen, but now for three days he had been entirely neglected. It would seem, but for this timely visit, that the reformer would have died of starvation.

The melancholy sight of their faint and prostrate friend, starving in his chains, kindled anew the indignation of the Bohemians. With uplifted and tearful eyes, they prayed Heaven to give them the opportunity to avenge with their swords such inhuman cruelty and injustice. Their prayer was granted to the full, as we shall see.

Huss had not been inactive during this period of imprisonment, and in the contests which raged between the council and the pope. His letters written at this time breathe the spirit of those of Paul, the prisoner in Rome. He was divided between a calm readiness to die and a more or less positive hope of restoration to liberty. He writes to John de Chlum: "The Lord delivered Jonah from the whale's belly, Daniel from the lions' den, the three men from the fiery furnace, and he can deliver me too, if it please him, for the glory of his name and the preaching of the word. But if the death comes which is precious in the eyes of the Lord, then let the name of the Lord be praised."

To another he writes: "And by the grace of God my return to Prague is a thing not impossible; still, I have no desire for it unless it be according to the will of God in heaven." These hopeful feelings doubtless were suggested by the fact that the keys of his prison had fallen into the emperor's hands, so that it was now in Sigismund's power to make good his promise of safety to Huss.

Huss was ever cheered and sustained by a kind of prophetic consciousness that, whatever might happen to himself, truth would triumph, would go on revealing itself ever more gloriously and mightily. "I hope," he writes, "that what I have spoken in secret will be proclaimed on the housetops."

Before his imprisonment weighed very heavily on his spirits, his dreams reflected his confidence in the success of the gospel. One night, he dreamed that his enemies had destroyed all the pictures of Christ on the walls of Bethlehem chapel. But next day, in his dream, he beheld many painters, who were busy drawing more numerous and more beautiful pictures than those which had been defaced. As he gazed with rapture the painters seemed to say to the great concourse of people: "Now let the bishops and priests come and destroy these pictures." And as the multitude of people rejoiced over it, he rejoiced with them, and amidst the laughter he awoke.

He wrote an account of the dream to his friend Chlum, and invited him to interpret its meaning. Chlum replies admonishing him not to put too much stress upon his dream, but he suggests that the pictures are the life of Christ, which the enemies of the cross seek to bring into oblivion; but the preachers are painters, making the truth of Christ known in a still more glorious manner than before, and this will give great joy to

Christendom; and though "the goose" is now brought down by sickness and may next be laid a sacrifice on the altar, yet will she hereafter laugh and hold them in derision who are the destroyers of Christ's image and of Scripture. Nay, even in this present life she will, with God's help, still restore those pictures and those words of Scripture to the flock with glowing zeal.

Huss returns a cheery answer to his friend, whom he styles "the doctor of Biberach," yet he intimates his own expectations when he says he has the "hope that the life of Christ will be better transcribed by a great number of better preachers than I am, to the joy of the people who love the life of Christ. Over this, as the doctor of Biberach says, I shall rejoice when I awake—that is, rise from the dead."

Nor did the dream nor the interpretation altogether fail of fulfillment. For many years after the removal of Huss, preachers of a like faith and spirit occupied the pulpit of Bethlehem chapel. Two centuries later Bethlehem chapel was still standing, with the very pulpit which Huss had used. It was made of pine boards covered with cloth, and was somewhat injured by those seeking memorials of the reformer. On the right hand of the pulpit was a picture of Jerome bound to the stake. In the centre appeared Huss, the flames kindling around him, while his bed, books, etc., are cast into the fire. On the left there is another

picture of Huss, with the executioner pouring blazing oil upon his head. In the vestry the black silk robe or scholar's gown worn by Huss was carefully preserved. The chapel is not now in existence. The Teinkirche in Prague, spoken of as the church in which Huss preached, could not have been his regular preaching-place, since one of the chests for gathering the contributions for the crusade against Ladislaus, was placed in the building. As the synod's preacher he may occasionally have occupied the pulpit, and during the reign of George Podiebrad over Bohemia (1457-1471) a gilt cup was placed over the door. This the Romanists afterward removed, and put a statue of the Virgin in its place.

No efforts were spared by Huss even yet to secure his coveted audience before the whole council, with freedom to make a full statement and defence of his position. Had this been granted, it was the opinion of Chancellor Gerson of the University of Paris, considered the leading mind of the council, that he could not have been convicted of heresy. Huss expresses the wish that if heard in the council he might be placed near the emperor, so that he would hear and understand him well.

"Pray the emperor," he writes to Chlum, "that for my sake and for the sake of justice and truth, and for the glory of God and the advancement of the Church, he would take me from prison, so

that I may have liberty to prepare myself for my public hearing." He would be glad to have just a single interview with the emperor before he was condemned, since he had come there by his will and under the promise of a safe-conduct. Finally, when these efforts were found unavailing, he writes: "I am surprised that the emperor has forgotten me and that he does not speak a word for me, and perhaps I shall be condemned before I can speak a word with him. Let him look to himself whether this is to his honor."

But not only his personal comfort and liberty occupied his thoughts and his pen. He wrote during his imprisonment a number of tracts or short treatises on the Ten Commandments, on the Lord's Prayer, on the knowledge and love of God, on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and other subjects. Some of these were written at the express request of his keepers and for their benefit. Like the jailer of Socrates, the keepers of Huss treated him with uniform kindness, were deeply moved by the meekness with which he bore his sufferings, and were led to adopt many of the reformer's views.

These writings were, like most of his other works, full of references to the Church fathers, and showed great learning in that field. Yet Huss was totally in want of books. At first he had not even a Bible, and was obliged to ask his friends to procure him one. It is difficult to ac-

count for the extreme accuracy of the quotations from the fathers, which are found in these writings composed in prison. Neander thinks he must have carried with him a collection of extracts, made in the period of his earlier studies. Otherwise he must have been gifted with a memory of extraordinary power.

The flight of the pope became indirectly known to Huss about as soon as it occurred. He was led to fear that he would be dragged, along with his adherents, to Schaffhausen, and he managed to send word to that effect to the Bohemian knights. We have seen, however, that he was mistaken, and that Huss was left behind to starve. The visit of his friends probably saved him from such a mode of ending his life.

These brave and faithful friends, powerless to rescue Huss, parted from him in the deepest affliction. When he had received their last embrace, he fell back fainting in his chains.

The measure of favor shown him by the pope in regard to a place of confinement, was now withdrawn without delay. At four o'clock on the next morning he was delivered to the custody of the bishop of Constance, and by his order carried by water to the castle of Gottlieben, three miles from Constance, in the canton of Thurgau. Here he was treated with a severity entirely new to him. His prison was a tower; his chamber was not high enough for one to stand upright. In chains in the

daytime, at night he was chained by the hand to a post. His keepers no longer treated him with mildness. His friends were not allowed to visit him. Here he was kept prisoner seventy-three days. New attacks of disease, violent headaches and toothaches, hemorrhage, colics, followed in consequence of this treatment. But the Christian meekness and resignation of Huss shone the more brightly through his accumulated trials. "These," he says, "are punishments of my sins and proofs of God's love to me." "Now for the first time I learn rightly to understand the Psalms. I ought not to wonder at this, when the apostles of Christ, and many other saints in prisons and deserts, have suffered like privations. I am well, as I hope, in Jesus Christ, and shall find myself still better after death if I keep his commandments."

The removal of Huss to Gottlieben tower occurred about the 25th of March. On the 6th of April a new commission to examine the case was appointed, to take the place of that appointed by John, whom the council no longer recognized as pope. His appointments, therefore, were replaced by others. The new commission was made up of two cardinals, a bishop and an abbot.

But as the Bohemian Christians continued to make progress in evangelical liberty, and departed farther and farther from the unscriptural rules and restrictions of Rome, the case of Huss himself grew more complicated. About this time a move-



ment began in Prague in favor of the giving of the cup of communion to the laity. This plainly scriptural practice was most stringently forbidden by Rome. Only the bread was allowed to the people; the wine was drunk by the priest alone. It would have been sacrilege for the priest to offer to share it with the people.

The idolatry with which Roman Catholics regarded the bread and wine after consecration is something almost incredible. They objected to the use of the wine by the laity, from the great guilt that may be incurred from spilling the *blood of Christ* upon the robes of the women, or suffering it to wet the beards of the men, or to fall to the ground.

One of the popes had decreed that if a drop of the consecrated wine should by negligence be spilled upon the earth or upon a cloak, the sin should be expiated by forty days of prayer and fasting. If the drop had fallen upon a stone, the stone is to be rasped and the fragments deposited with the sacred relics. If it fell upon a cloak, the cloak was to be burned. If upon the sod; it was to be licked up with the tongue and the sod laid away in the sacred repository.

What direful fate, then, should befall a layman if, in handling this sacred article, he should spill a drop on his beard or garment? The zealous Catholics of that day thought that he, with beard

and garment, ought to be burned up and thrust to the bottom of hell, unless he repent.

One may readily see what new prejudice might be roused against Huss, when the news arrived that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in both kinds or elements to the laity in Prague. As one of the bishops put it, "the blood of Christ was carried about by the laity in flasks, and they gave the communion to one another."

Although this whole development took place after Huss left Prague, yet it was enough for his enemies in Constance to know that it originated with those who had been his friends and followers. Parties were divided in Prague, and fierce controversies arose over the question whether any one but the priests should take the wine at the Lord's Supper. Those who opposed it finally appealed to the council for a decision.

The adherents of Huss in Prague appealed to the reformer himself for an opinion. From his prison-tower at Gottlieben he pronounced in favor of the ministration of the cup. The result was that the University of Prague decided almost unanimously in favor of the practice, which now spread rapidly throughout Bohemia.

It was on the 14th of May that the subject was brought before the council by Bishop John of Leitomischl, a town of Bohemia. He had been a soldier and a general, and his qualities

were such that he was called John of Iron. His appointment as bishop had been opposed by King Wenzel, and by the reformers generally, as well as by the archbishop of Prague, but in vain. He now appeared as one of the most violent of the opponents and persecutors of Huss. He charged him before the council with originating this new movement of the ministry of the wine to the laity.

The Bohemians in the council boldly repelled the charges of the bishop, and demanded the liberation of Huss, or, if that were refused, that the severity of his imprisonment be mitigated, and that he be allowed a public audience before the council.

But now that the all-absorbing business of deposing the pope was nearing a conclusion, every other question was set aside for a fortnight. The rigors of Huss' imprisonment at Gottlieben were unabated. For nearly two months, he was cut off from almost all communication with his friends. During the day, he could move only the length of the chain fastened to his feet. At night his arms were chained to the wall.

But he learned what important events were transpiring, and he could think, and even write, as keenly and effectively as ever. As the crimes of Pope John were being exposed before the council he wrote to his disciples in Prague: "Courage, friends! You can now give answer to those who

declare that the pope is God on earth; that he is the head and heart of the Church; that he is the fountain from which all virtue and excellence issue; that he is the sun, the sure asylum where all Christians ought to find refuge. Behold this earthly god bound in chains! His sins are unveiled; the fountain is dried up; the sun is dimmed; the heart is torn out; the asylum can give no protection.

“The council has condemned its chief for having sold indulgences, bishoprics—in fact, everything; yet among those who have condemned him are many bishops who are themselves guilty of the shameful traffic. O profligate men! why did you not first pull out the beam out of your own eye? They have declared the seller to be accursed and have condemned him, and yet themselves are the purchasers! They are the other party in the compact, and yet they remain unpunished!”

It was not strange that such an assembly should refuse justice and show hatred to the pure-minded Huss. Reform was but a secondary object with them. It was the outward unity of the Church which they sought. More than one person of the same atrocious character as John had held the papal chair undisturbed. If it had not been for the scandalous schism with its three rival popes, the infamous Balthasar Cosa, as John XXIII., might have ended his career in peace.

And so the prison doors remain closed, and calmly, firmly, bravely, without doubt or fear, without resentment, obstinacy or boastfulness, Huss meets the varying phases of his lot. He will perish rather than yield an iota of what he feels to be the truth, and yet he is docile as a child to proofs and arguments drawn from the word of God. He must indeed expose the iniquity of his persecutors, but in almost the same breath he prays God to forgive them. Powerful in intellect, with commanding energy of will, fervid and resistless in eloquence, he was always humble in his own estimate. Wise as a serpent he certainly was not, for a human policy would have kept him away from the snares of the council at Constance, but none can doubt that in spirit he showed himself harmless as a dove.

Once, on the 3d of June, the prison doors were opened. It was to admit Balthasar Cosa, the deposed pope, John XXIII., the once powerful enemy of Huss. The same prison now held both the judge and his victim. Balthasar probably remembered that he had excommunicated Huss, and sent a bull besides to Bohemia urging his immediate punishment as a heretic. Huss had come boldly to the council. No one cast a word or breath of suspicion upon his moral character, and his doctrines he upheld with Christian manliness, and challenged any one to disprove them from Scripture. The pope had been hunted down as a fugi-

tive ; his character and deeds had been so infamous that the council dared not venture upon a full exposure of them. Huss came surrounded with earnest friends and sympathizers, who never deserted him to the last, and who cherished his memory and propagated and fought for his doctrines long after he was gone. The fallen pope was rewarded for his own selfish and treacherous life by the desertion of all the friends he ever had. Huss kept up a lively correspondence with devoted friends. No one cared enough for the deposed pope to write him a letter of sympathy. Balthasar fell from his lordly and magnificent position to that of a whining supplicant, cringing before the emperor and council, submitting in the most abject terms to their decrees after he had vainly fought them with all the art and craft of an unscrupulous and subtle Italian. Huss, with his frank nature, his clean conscience and his faith in God, faced the emperor and council and the prospect of a cruel death, with a splendid intrepidity, which neither the malice nor the arts of his enemies could shake for an instant.

No word of exultation is known to have escaped Huss' lips at the humiliation of his greatest foe. He only noted it as a proof of the nullity of his own excommunication—a proof which the Bohemian people did not forget. On the 8th of May, ten barons of Moravia sent a memorial to Sigismund, complaining of the harsh treatment of Huss

and demanding a public hearing instead of the secret proceedings thus far held in his case. On the 12th of May, no less than two hundred and fifty knights and noblemen of Prague sent a similar memorial, demanding that Huss be set a liberty and allowed to return home. On the 13th of May, before the arrival of these letters, the Bohemian nobles had held a consultation with other members of the council, representing all the four nations, and had labored to secure some relief for their imprisoned countryman.

On the 31st day of May, the pope's case having been finally disposed of, the Bohemian members of the body brought the case of their accused and falsely-imprisoned countryman before the council. They claimed for Huss entire willingness to recant if he should be proved to be in error according to the Scriptures. His grand aim had been in all respects to conform himself to the truth of the gospel, and by no means to defend or sustain any article contrary to the most holy Roman Church and to the Catholic faith.

They complain that the charges against Huss are the work of personal and bitter enemies, who have made unfair disconnected extracts from his works, and put them together falsely and artfully with a view to secure his disgrace and death, in violation of the safe-conduct openly granted by the emperor. Hence they urge that a suitable commission be appointed to hear him carefully

on all the charges, and inasmuch as he has not been condemned, or even convicted, they petition that he may be released from his fetters, and thus allowed the opportunity to recover strength and be prepared more carefully to answer the inquiries of the commissioners.

The Bohemian nobles pledged themselves that Huss should not be allowed to escape from the hands of the commissioners until the final issue of the affair.

The council showed no disposition to grant even these moderate requests. But the emperor felt the imprudence, if not the injustice, of an utter refusal. He urged that a public audience should be granted to Huss by the council. "To-day," writes Chlum, "the king, assembled with the deputies of the nations, spoke of your case, and contended for a public audience. It was finally and definitely allowed you."

In regard to sureties that Huss should not escape if allowed his liberty, the council probably saw that a very loose example had been set in the matter of personal assurances by the emperor on their side. Judging from themselves, they had no right to suppose that the Bohemians would keep their word. They saw they could not with a safe conscience receive the sureties, even though a thousand were given, in behalf of a man in whom they professed to believe, no faith was to be reposed.

It was determined by the council that Huss should



be brought to Constance the 5th day of June following, and that he should have full and free opportunity of speaking before the council, and that they would hear him affectionately and kindly. This was their promise; how well they fulfilled it remains to be seen.

## CHAPTER XVI.



### *HUSS BEFORE THE COUNCIL.*

THE enemies of Huss dreaded to have him appear in person before the council. They knew the power of his eloquence and feared its effect. They denied him the privilege of an advocate, and would have condemned him unheard if it had not been for the politic Sigismund. In fact, they knew that in a fair contest he would have been more than a match for them. Gerson, intellectually the leader of the council, and an enemy of Huss, declared that if he had been properly defended he would have escaped.

Chlum wrote to Huss to stand firm: "In God's name, and for the sake of truth, take good care not to desert the holy cause through any fear of losing this wretched life; for it is for your great benefit that God visits you by this trial." There was no reason for fear in regard to the firmness of his friend. He only needed the opportunity to maintain and defend his views before the whole multitude of his enemies. Hope never left him that he might find, or make, not a few supporters in this assembly of the representatives of all Christendom.

It was the first day of June. Once more the friends of Huss called the attention of the council to the fact that Huss had come to Constance with a safe-conduct, prepared to defend his views or to abandon them if better informed. The same day a commission of the council visited Huss in his prison in the tower.

The hope was still cherished by his enemies, that the public audience which had been promised to him might be evaded. A story was circulated that a sedition would break out in Constance as soon as he should be brought to the city. The enemies of Huss, Paletz and De Causis, accompanied the commission. The object they had in view was to wring some confession from the prisoner, which might settle his case beyond possibility of further inquiry. Long imprisonment and sickness had debilitated Huss and unfitted him physically to meet these crafty foes, who had so greatly the advantage of him—at least outwardly. His friends, who knew what was going on, trembled for the result.

But the annoying and pertinacious questions, the insults and threats, which were tried upon the enfeebled and suffering prisoner, were of no avail. Huss was unsubdued. Without being overawed, he did not suffer himself to be betrayed into violent language. He constantly declared his readiness to answer before the council, and his entire willingness to be instructed by them if he could be made

to see that he had written, taught or maintained aught against the truth.

Huss tells us in one of his letters that "De Causis stood by with a paper in his hand, urging the patriarch to use force to make me reply to his questions. Let my friends be under no alarm on the score of my answers. I firmly hope that what I have said under the roof will yet be preached upon the housetops. De Causis remarked upon my letters, and Paletz upon conversations of many years past. The patriarch would insist upon it that I was exceedingly rich; an archbishop even named the very sum—seventy thousand florins. My answer simply was, Why do you overwhelm me with outrages?"

Reference, perhaps, is here intended to a letter written by Huss to friends in Bohemia, complaining that a hearing before the council was denied him. In that letter he says he had learned from the mouth of his enemies that he could not obtain a public hearing except by paying two thousand ducats to the people of the Roman court, whom he styles servants of Antichrist. This letter his enemies' spies contrived to get into their hands, as well as the answer, which reflected severely upon the council. Thus intercepted letters, and expressions dropped in conversation years before, distorted and exaggerated beyond their natural meaning, were among the weapons which were to be used against him by these unscrupulous adversaries.

On the 5th of June, Huss was removed from the tower of Gottlieben to the monastery of the Franciscans in Constance. This was his final place of imprisonment. Here he remained, for the most part loaded with chains, until brought out for martyrdom. His friend Jerome, of whom we shall speak hereafter, was at the same time a prisoner in the tower of St. Paul's cemetery.

Several hours before his arrival in the city, and in the absence of the emperor, the council, as it would seem thirsting for his blood, held a session in the monastery of the Franciscans, and proceeded to examine and condemn articles said to have been drawn from his books and treatises. This was virtually a condemnation in advance. It could have no other effect than hopelessly to prejudge the case, and to rob Huss' defence of all significance, if not to prevent it altogether. The scene was, however, witnessed by one of his friends, Peter of Mladanowitz, secretary to the knight of Chlum, a man enthusiastically devoted to the cause. Burning with indignation at this gross act of injustice, he rushed out of the council and hastened to inform Chlum and Duba of the doings of the body.

Together the three men sought the emperor's presence, and laid the matter before him. The emperor acted promptly and energetically. He despatched two princes of Germany to the council with injunctions not to condemn Huss unheard, and requiring them, too, to hear him with calmness and

impartiality. He moreover directed them to submit to himself whatever writings of Huss they should judge to be erroneous. The council were as reluctant as a wild beast to turn from the prey just as it is in his grasp. They yielded to the first part of the demand, and ordered Huss to be brought into their presence, but they declined to send the emperor the erroneous articles. Meanwhile, Duba and Chlum handed to the princes copies of Huss' writings, from which these articles were professedly extracted. It was reported afterward that these copies were burned.

In the afternoon of the same day the prison-cell of Huss was unlocked; and bearing his chains, he was brought before the council. It was almost as if a lamb had been placed amid a pack of hungry wolves. At first he was asked if the books bearing his name, which had been laid before the council, were his. He said "Yes," and declared himself ready to retract every expression in which it could be shown that he was in error.

The first article among those considered erroneous was then read. But when Huss undertook to reply, his voice was almost instantly drowned by the clamor and disturbance which arose from the whole assembly. It was simply impossible to be heard. He was amid a mob of his enemies instead of a grave, judicial assembly. Socrates, accused before an assembly of the Athenian people, was allowed to make as long a defence as he pleased with

no serious interruption ; but Huss, before a representative assembly of all Christendom, was overwhelmed with outcries and tumult. At a lull in the storm Huss renewed his attempt at defence ; they cried out : " Stop your sophistry, and answer Yes or No ! " He appealed to the doctrine of the Church and began to cite passages of Scripture. They cried out that that was nothing to the point, and the tumult broke forth anew. Seeing that all attempts at making himself heard were futile, he determined to remain silent. His enemies then exclaimed, " He is dumb ! He is evidently guilty. "

Luther's comment upon the scene is found in a letter which has been published with the letters of Huss : " All worked themselves into a rage like wild boars. The bristles of their backs stood on end ; they bent their brows and gnashed their teeth against John Huss. "

Huss himself has left on record his impressions of the scene. As for himself, he stood among the raging throng as calm as Daniel in the den of Babylonian lions. " There were given to me, " he says, recognizing the divine support, " boldness and presence of mind. " Two of the articles were stricken out. " The same fate, " he writes—too hopefully, indeed—" is augured for the rest. "

Huss with a keen eye detected some gleam of friendly feeling, even amid the storm of malignant opposition which he had to encounter. He speaks of the cardinal-bishop of Ostia, president of the

council, as a father, and recognizes his kindness. A Polish doctor is also mentioned. Even the "iron bishop" of Leitomischl seemed softened toward Huss. But these were of small account amid that fierce mob of enemies. No order could be maintained. The members interrupted one another as well as their prisoner.

"I supposed," cried out Huss, "that there would have been more fairness, kindness and order in the council."

The cardinal of Ostia answered him reprovingly: "You were more modest when we saw you in the tower."

"With good reason," answered Huss, "for there no one vociferated against me, and now all do."

Huss asked to be instructed in what respects he had erred. "Recant first," was the outrageous reply, "and then you will be informed." It would seem as if not the faintest idea of fair dealing with Huss was entertained by the council. Nothing but a preliminary and downright plea of guilt would be tolerated. A trial, in any true sense of the word, they did not consider due to one whom they in advance had set down as a Wickliffite and a heretic of the deepest dye.

As the clamor continued and increased, Huss declared that he had expected a different reception and a fair hearing: "But of necessity I am silent. I would willingly speak if I were listened to."



The more moderate members of the body at length were disgusted. They demanded an adjournment, to save, if that were possible, the honor of the council, and insisted that the case should be deferred to another session. This was carried, and the council adjourned to the seventh of June.

On the sixth Huss wrote: "To-morrow, at noon, I am to answer, first, whether any one of the articles extracted from my writings is erroneous, and whether I will pledge myself to abjure it and henceforth teach the contrary; secondly, whether I will confess that I have preached those articles which it shall be proved on good testimony that I have preached; thirdly, whether I will abjure these. May God in his mercy so order it that the emperor may be present to hear the words that my gracious Saviour shall be pleased to put in my mouth!"

On the 7th of June there was an eclipse of the sun, nearly total. At the hour for assembling, the sun was still obscured. A superstitious awe prevented the opening of the council until the eclipse had entirely passed away. Readers of the life of Wickliffe will remember that in May, 1382, a synod which had met to condemn his writings, was interrupted, when in the act of pronouncing sentence against them, by an earthquake, which shook the city of London and all Britain, and which so alarmed the synod that with one voice they de-

manded the adjournment of a decision which was so manifestly rebuked of God.

At one o'clock the sky was clear, and the council resumed its session in the Franciscan monastery. The emperor was present. Huss, in chains and guarded by soldiers, was led into the assembly and placed directly in front of the emperor. Sigismund unquestionably had enough conscience to feel remorse for his part in the scene then enacting. He must have felt that no one but himself was responsible for those fetters and that haggard and fever-wasted form. But for his violated word of honor, that oppressed and maltreated captive would have been as free as the emperor himself. Perhaps he hoped now to be able to restore him to liberty.

Paletz and De Causis appeared as his accusers. Against these malignant and well-prepared adversaries, backed by the overwhelming sentiment of the council, Huss had to contend entirely unassisted. His request for the aid of an advocate had been denied early in the process.

The first charge was that Huss had followed Wickliffe in virtually denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. By this doctrine the Romish Church taught, and still teaches, that when the priest, in administering the eucharist, utters the words, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," or "This is my body," the bread is instantly turned into the veritable body and the wine into the real blood of Christ; that the bread and wine, although presenting the

appearance or "accidents" of bread and wine are such no longer, but are replaced by the real presence of Christ, and should be worshiped as divine.

Huss, it was charged, taught that after the words of consecration the material bread still remained. Huss solemnly denied that he had ever taught such a doctrine—for he had not fully emerged from Romish errors in which he had been raised from infancy—but he admitted that he had objected to an utter prohibition of the word *bread*, since Christ had called himself "the Bread which came down from heaven" many times, particularly in the sixth chapter of John.

The renowned French cardinal of Cambrai now gave a special turn to the accusation, revealing quite a different source of enmity to Huss from that which had hitherto appeared as merely theological or ecclesiastical. It was on the ground of differences upon purely speculative questions in philosophy that the cardinal now attacked Huss. The cardinal was a Nominalist; he demanded of the prisoner whether he was not a Realist. Huss answered in the affirmative. He believed that the general idea of bread was a reality, instead of an abstract conception, and that this general idea was present in every particular piece of bread. Hence his opponent tried to force upon him the conclusion that a general idea was indestructible and incapable of change into anything else, and therefore Huss,

as a consistent philosopher, could not believe it to be changed into the body of Christ in the sacrament.

Huss denied that he was compelled to adopt any such conclusion. The general conception, or *breadness* (*paneitas*), might be removed from the particular substance in the hands of the priest without being destroyed. It would still exist in other particular substances.

An old dispute, which had raged with warlike fierceness and bitterness, and which had divided the philosophers and doctors of the Church into rival camps for three centuries, now broke out on the floor of the council. The French ecclesiastics and the University of Paris were ranged under the banner of Nominalism. They denied the real existence of general ideas, and held that nothing besides individual things and names really existed. In the eyes of the French school, the Realists were guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Had not their prejudices against the speculative opinions of Huss been aroused, they would not have been so easily led to join in the persecution. For in the freedom and boldness of their attacks against the vices and corruption of the Church, in their attitude toward the claims of the pope, and in their outcry for reform, they had been at least as unreserved and emphatic as Huss.

The English doctors, fresh from their debate with Wickliffe, which touched upon the very same

question, now insisted that Huss could not believe in a miraculous transformation of the bread into the body of Christ, since the bread, as a universal reality, remained, although not in the particular substance, in the eucharist. Huss replied that by the miracle the general substance, bread, disappeared there, though remaining everywhere else.

“Was, then,” persisted the Englishmen, “that body of Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died, rose again and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, wholly and truly present in the sacrament of the altar?” Huss answered that it was. On that vital point of Romish doctrine Huss had never wavered; he had not advanced so far as Wickliffe. Some of the English prelates saw this, and their British good sense revolted against the subtle sophistries in which the French and Italians tried to entangle the prisoner.

“Have done with this disputation about universals, which have nothing to do with the faith! This man,” they exclaim, “so far as we see, has right views as to the sacrament of the altar.”

But the others were resolved to make out Huss a thorough Wickliffite. Wickliffe himself had escaped them, having ended his heretical career in peace. “Here is Wickliffe’s most famous follower, and we must at all events punish that heresy in him which escaped us in its author.” Violent disputes arose. The outcries of the previous session broke out

afresh. As the chief captain of the Roman forces in Jerusalem had to interfere when Paul stood before the contending factions of the Jewish Sanhedrim, so the emperor Sigismund had to exercise his authority and command silence in the council.

An English doctor, John Stokes, returned to the charge. He claimed to have seen in Prague a treatise of Huss' in which it was distinctly maintained that after consecration the material bread remains in the sacrament. "With all due respect," calmly replied Huss, "this is not the case."

Here broke in another accuser, a priest of Prague, who had preached in Bethlehem chapel before Huss was called to that position. His charge was that Huss had spoken disrespectfully of one of the saints. "On the contrary," said Huss, "I ever accounted St. Gregory a most holy doctor of the Church."

At this point it would seem that a zealous and skillful advocate of Huss might have hopefully taken up his defence. The absurdity and maliciousness of the charges was so evident that the energy of the prosecution was dampened. But his enemies, having every opportunity for recovery and readjustment of their charges, were soon again on the alert.

Cardinal Zabarella of Florence now took up the case. "Thou knowest, Master Huss," said the cardinal, "that by the mouth of two or three witnesses

every word should be established. But now, as thou seest, thou hast against thee the testimony of twenty men, or thereabouts, of great credit and respectability, some of whom have themselves heard thee teach. We must therefore believe them. I see not how thou canst still maintain thy cause against so many distinguished men."

"I call God and my conscience to witness," said Huss in reply, "that I have not so taught, and that it never entered into my mind so to teach. These persons testify against me what they never heard."

The cardinal reiterated his charge, and had the assurance to affirm that the witnesses were not influenced by personal enmity to Huss. But the charge, as it would seem, was abandoned.

The next article was now read, in which Huss was charged with obstinately teaching and defending the erroneous doctrines of Wickliffe in Bohemia. "I never have taught," said Huss, "the errors of Wickliffe, or of any other man. If Wickliffe scattered abroad the seeds of error in England, let Englishmen themselves look after it." Among the particulars brought forward under this charge was Wickliffe's doctrine that a pope or priest in mortal sin could not consecrate or baptize.

"This article," replied Huss, "I have qualified so as to say that such a one, because he is then in mortal sin and is an unworthy minister, consecrates and baptizes unworthily."

The accusers, with their witnesses, insisted that Wickliffe's article had been adopted and expressed in the very words of the English reformer by Huss. "Why," said Huss, "I refuse not to die if you do not find it qualified just as I have said."

The book of Huss, was brought, and the passage was found written precisely as Huss had stated. Other points of slight importance were brought forward. Huss was cut short in his replies. But on the general charge of refusing to approve of the wholesale condemnation of Wickliffe's works, he was heard at some length. He could not with a clean conscience give his consent until the reasons of such condemnation should be stated and sustained by the Holy Scriptures. He says that when Sbynco, the archbishop of Prague, gathered up the books of Wickliffe throughout the whole city to be burned, he handed to the archbishop some of the books, and asked him to detect and note down any error which they contained, that he might publicly acknowledge it. But the archbishop, without so much as naming a single error, took the books which Huss had brought, and cast them into the fire. The same archbishop had procured a bull of excommunication against him, against which Huss had appealed; and when this bull was reaffirmed by John XXIII., whom the council had just deposed, Huss renewed his appeal. When his case had been pending two years, and his advocates had not been admitted to



a hearing, he had appealed from the pope to Christ, his sovereign Judge.

The idea of appealing from an unjust pope to Christ, which to Huss seemed so serious and so effectual, appeared simply ridiculous to this council, notwithstanding their main business so far had been to depose this very pope for his outrageous crimes. They heard this declaration of Huss with jeers and mockery.

Another article charged Huss with giving an exaggerated account of the so-called "Earthquake Council," when the proceedings against Wickliffe were interrupted as already described. This charge he does not appear to have answered. He might well have heard such exaggerated accounts and honestly have accepted them as true, and as judgments of God against the enemies of so holy a man as he esteemed Wickliffe to be. For when it was added, as another of the charges in this connection, that Huss had wished his soul to be where Wickliffe's soul was, he admitted that such was his admiration of the stainless life of the man, that he would that his soul might be where John Wickliffe's was. Renewed jeers and derision were heard in the council at this admission.

The charge that Huss had advised the people in Prague to resist their adversaries by force of arms, was shown to rest upon a false and malicious interpretation of one of his sermons, in which he had spoken of the Christian's spiritual

armor. Again it was said that scandals had arisen, that discords between the clergy and the civil authorities had been stirred up, and finally that the prosperity of the University of Prague had been destroyed by his doctrine.

As to the alienation of the clergy and the civil government, Huss showed that it sprung from entirely different causes, which were in operation before his day. But he was contradicted on hearsay testimony.

To the charge of ruining the University, Huss replied that the change by which the Bohemians obtained three votes, while the other nations had but one, was only a restoration to the Bohemians of the privileges granted them by the founder of the University, Charles IV. When his son, the present king, restored this principle, the Germans were aggrieved, and of their own accord left the city, binding themselves by oaths and penalties never to return. As a Bohemian, Huss freely admitted that he heartily approved of the king's determination.

In support of his statement, Huss appealed to the dean of the faculty of the arts at that time, who was now present in the council. Though a German who took the oath which severed him from the University, Huss was confident that he would substantiate the account just given.

The dean was about to speak, but the council was indisposed to hear him. A member of the

council, who claimed to have been in a high position in the court of King Wenzel when the change complained of took place, testified that it was chiefly the work of Huss, Jerome and their friends. Paletz added that not only learned men of other nations, but even Bohemians, had been driven out by John Huss, some of whom were still in exile in Moravia.

“How can that be true?” replied Huss. “I was not in Prague when those Bohemians left.” Huss himself was in exile when they were banished. It would seem as if a Church council, concerned properly with matters of doctrine and Church order, was traveling entirely out of its sphere in this inquiry into the relations of Huss to the management of a University. Whether Bohemian institutions should be controlled by Bohemians or by foreigners, one would think was an affair of Bohemia alone. If a general council interfered at all, we should naturally expect it to do so in behalf of the state to whom the University belonged.

But the council permitted every method of attack to be used against its intended victim. Everything that could raise suspicion or create or strengthen prejudices, or that by indirect inference could be made to tell against Huss in any position—as a public man, as a metaphysician or as an officer in the Church—was welcomed. But all this time it is noteworthy that nothing was so

much as breathed or intimated against his private character.

The council was about to adjourn, and the keepers were leading Huss to his cell, when the cardinal of Cambray called him back. "John Huss," said he, in the hearing of Sigismund, "when you were first brought before us, I heard you say that unless you had chosen to come to Constance of your own accord, neither the king nor the emperor could have forced you to do so."

Huss did not deny the charge: "With all respect, reverend father, I confess that I used such language; for unless I had chosen to come, there are princes enough in Bohemia—personal friends of mine—who could with the greatest ease have kept me in some secret and safe place to prevent me being forced to come here, even against the will of the king and of the emperor."

It was perhaps imprudent for Huss to put the case so strongly, but he knew the hearts of the Bohemian people, and he had spoken the simple truth. The cardinal, who perhaps intended to lead Huss into some rash statement which would compromise him before the emperor, and would counteract any favorable impression he may thus far have made, saw his advantage, and exclaimed, "Behold the presumption of the man!"

Unfriendly comments were echoed from all parts of the house. But Chlum was on his feet in a moment with unqualified confirmation of the bold

declaration of Huss: "John Huss has spoken the truth. Compared with other knights, I have but little power in Bohemia, yet even I could protect him a whole year against all the power of both emperor and king. How much more could be done by those more powerful lords with their stronger castles!"

Upon this the cardinal thought it wise to drop the subject. "Let us pass over these things," said he. Then he proceeded in a milder tone to persuade and urge Huss to submit himself unconditionally to the will of the council.

Whether such a course would have saved the life of the prisoner is by no means certain. Disgrace and deposition from the ministerial office, with imprisonment for life, might have been substituted for capital punishment. The emperor, who seemed really concerned to save Huss from the consequences of his own treachery and weakness, now took up the cardinal's line of remark, and urged Huss to accept the cardinal's advice.

He seized this opportunity to correct some wrong impressions about the safe-conduct. Some had affirmed that Huss had not received it until fifteen days after his arrest. This was untrue, as De Chlum and De Duba could testify; "to whose loyal care," said the emperor, "we committed you, that you might suffer no injustice, but that the privilege of speaking and answering before the council in regard to your faith and doctrine might be

fully secured to you. And this, as you see, the most reverend lord-cardinal and bishops have so allowed that we are much obliged to them, although there are some who say that we have no right to afford protection or countenance to one who is a heretic, or is even suspected of being such.

“Now, therefore,” he continued, “we give you the same advice with the lord-cardinal—that you defend nothing with obstinacy, but in all those things credibly charged against you, that you submit yourself to the will of this most holy council with a becoming obedience. If you pursue this course, we will see to it that for our own sake and that of our brother [King Wenzel], and the whole kingdom of Bohemia, you be discharged by the council itself with good grace and fitting penance and satisfaction.” Even this qualified promise of liberation was only a promise—only a promise from the same man who had so shamefully violated his safe-conduct. The very chains which now clanked with every movement of the prisoner protested against putting faith in these new declarations, and seemed to say to his face, “False in one thing, false in all.”

But the emperor, who had broken his faith, feeling, perhaps, the uselessness of promises, proceeds to threats.

“Otherwise,” he continues, “the leaders of the council shall have what they determine in regard to you; for we surely will never countenance your

errors and stubbornness. Yea, with our own hands we will make ready the fire for you sooner than suffer you to persist in that stubbornness which you have hitherto shown. It is our advice that you choose to abide by the decision of the council."

That the emperor, who had taken such pains to provide Huss with a safe-conduct, and had even ordered the doors of his prison to be broken down when the safe-conduct was first violated, should now offer to kindle the fire and to be the first to sacrifice him, seems wellnigh incredible. Perhaps the violence of his declarations arose from the attempt to drown the clamors of a self-accusing conscience. Perhaps by this mixture of promises and threats he expected to influence Huss to recant, and so to save his life, after all. Perhaps he was influenced entirely by selfish policy, and had no conscience whatever in the matter. To conciliate the Bohemians he gave the safe-conduct. To secure friends on a broader scale he violated it. He did not remember that the man who violates his word of honor is not worth having as a friend, and is generally treated on the same selfish principles on which he has dealt with others.

Huss answered the emperor respectfully, thanking him for his clemency, and at the instance of Chlum he added: "I call God to witness, most indulgent emperor, that I never conceived the purpose of defending anything with extreme stubbornness, and that I came here of my own accord

with this intent—that if any one could give me better instruction I would unhesitatingly change my views.”

The soldiers now led Huss away, and the session, thus remarkably and unexpectedly prolonged, came to an end.

Huss himself in his letters tells us that he wondered at the ignorance, the incapacity and the prejudice of the council. He believed that if he were permitted to make a fair defence, many of those who cried out against him would be struck dumb. Only let him state what he had to retract, and at the same time be allowed to give his explanations. “I will then,” writes Huss, “speak out the truth without reserve. I would rather be burned by the fagots than be kept hidden behind them so miserably.” “Much would I prefer,” he writes to Chlum, “that you should see me led to the stake than that I should be kept so treacherously in the dark.” He had rather have an open and fair trial, if it resulted in his death by fire, than escape by the suppression of what he felt to be vital truth.

In these letters he makes various requests of his friends. He asks their prayers, not so much for help in his public defence, as that he might patiently endure his solitary life in prison. He grieves that he has not been able to pay many of them for their services. He asks that some of the wealthier of his creditors would settle up his affairs and pay the poorer what he owed them. And so he



passed the night, waiting once more to face that great gathering in which he could count but two friends besides the Bohemians. "They cry out," he wrote, "nearly all of them, like the Jews against the Master Christ."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *LAST AUDIENCE OF HUSS BEFORE THE COUNCIL.*

ON the 8th of June, Huss appeared for the third time before the council assembled in the Franciscan monastery. The emperor was present and took an important part in the proceedings, which turned out to be final, although, perhaps, not at the time expected to be.

Former proceedings were of a miscellaneous character, mixed up often with matters trivial and irrelevant. To-day they were restricted professedly to the works of Huss himself. When the prisoner appeared, thirty-nine articles were produced which purported to be selected from his writings, twenty-six of them from a single work, the *De Ecclesia*, (*Concerning the Church*), which he wrote during his exile from Prague. These articles had already been presented to Huss in prison, and they were now brought forward and read, together with the answers which Huss had given at the time, and which the commission had taken down in writing. And this was the form of defence granted to Huss. The answers which he had given without opportunity for thought or preparation, on the moment when

the questions were propounded, in his close and cruel confinement in the tower of Gottlieben, were now to be read in his presence before the council. Any member of the council might comment upon, argue and misrepresent them, but it does not appear that Huss was allowed to take any considerable part in the discussion—at least of those relating to his treatise upon the Church.

In these answers, Huss acknowledged that some of the doctrines charged were truly his, and he briefly endeavored to establish them or to guard them against misapprehension. But in regard to a majority of them, he declared that they were not to be found in his writings, or that they had been unfairly torn from their connection and did not mean what was charged upon them.

✓ The main doctrine of Huss concerning membership in the Church is contained in the fifth article. In this he is charged with saying that no outward sign and no high place and no choice of man could constitute one a member of the Church, but only the electing grace of God. He admits the charge, and answers by an illustration. Judas Iscariot, without this grace of God, was not a member, although he possessed all the other evidences. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Romanists, who believed that men are regenerated by outward forms, and that heaven can be merited by outward performances and by works of the law, must have considered Huss' doctrine of the Church a great and dangerous

innovation. And yet it belongs to the A, B, C of scriptural and evangelical Christianity that an inward change, which only the Holy Spirit can work, and which is in accordance with the holy will and purpose of God, is absolutely necessary to make one a member of the true Church. All the outward forms which are added to this are worthless and ineffectual, except as they are meant to recognize it, and to set it forth.

In like manner, Huss is charged with maintaining that the pope is the vicar, or representative, of Christ, only as he imitates Christ in his life. If he pursues opposite courses, he is the agent of Antichrist. This Huss admitted to be the teaching of his book. He quoted from Bernard, one of the acknowledged authorities of the Church, in defence of his position, and the quotation had been taken down by the commission, and was now read in the hearing of the council. It was an extract from a letter of Bernard to Pope Eugenius, as follows: "Thou delightest and walkest in great pride and arrogance and art surrounded by splendor. What benefit do the sheep receive? If I durst say it, these are rather the pastures of devils than of sheep. In these matters you have succeeded, not Peter, but Constantine."

When this was read, those prelates who had just united in deposing such a pope looked at one another, shook their heads and laughed. Perhaps they thought, If Huss deserved to be burned for

saying such things, what severer punishment did they themselves deserve for carrying out the doctrine as they had just done?

Huss also freely admitted, in the prison examination, that he had taught that the papal dignity in outward things was derived from the Roman emperors, and not from Christ. Here the reading was interrupted by Cardinal Cambray, who attempted to prove that Huss was mistaken. Huss remained firm, but he just as freely admitted that the spiritual dignity of the pope was derived immediately from Christ. But those who did not regard both the temporal and the spiritual dignity of the pope as equally sacred passed for heretics then with Rome, as they do at this day. Within the present year an eminent Jesuit has been expelled from the order for arguing that the pope would be in a better and stronger position, if he would renounce all claims to temporal power.

When the seventeenth article was reached, in which Huss was charged with speaking against the evil lives of the cardinals, the cardinal of Cambray again interposed. He could not deny the facts which Huss had proclaimed. He had spoken and written against the whole Roman court with all the emphasis of Huss. But he complained that Huss had not used discretion in his attacks. A council assembled for the avowed purpose of reform, and a cardinal who was notorious for his advocacy of reform, are thus seen, with a shameful inconsistency,

endeavoring to convict Huss of heresy and of unpardonable sin for his zeal and earnestness in the same cause.

In the eighteenth article, Huss was assailed for demanding a greater degree of leniency in the treatment of errorists than the leaders of the Church and rulers of the people, in that age, were willing to allow. "He who is a heretic," said Huss, "ought to be first instructed kindly, justly and humbly from the Sacred Scriptures. But," he continued, "if there are those who utterly refuse to desist from their errors after all suitable instruction, then they should be subjected to corporal punishment."

This advance upon the sentiments of the age was regarded as a new proof of heresy. Some severe expressions of Huss on the subject were quoted. He had compared those who would deliver up a heretic, not yet convicted, to be punished, to the scribes and Pharisees who delivered up the unconvinced Christ to Pilate. Of them Christ had said, "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin;" they were greater murderers than Pilate himself.

The reading of this passage produced great commotion in the council. Some one asked Huss, "Who are they that are like the Pharisees?" intending doubtless to draw from him a personal charge against themselves. Huss promptly replied, evading their snares, "All those who give up to the civil sword any innocent man, as the scribes

and Pharisees did Christ." "No, no!" was the reply; "you mean to condemn the dignitaries of the Church."

Enlightened and able as he was, the cardinal of Cambray joined in the outcry against Huss at this point, and declared, as he had done before, that the writings of Huss contained doctrines far worse than had even been specified in these articles.

^ The twenty-first article brought up the fact, already made matter of scorn in the council, that Huss had appealed from the pope to Christ. It shows how far the Romish Church had gone in the direction of man-worship, and in the substitution of mere official dignity for the real headship of the Church, that they counted it heresy to recognize Christ as superior to the pope. The French cardinal here again interposed. "Would you be above Paul," he asked Huss, "who appealed to the emperor, and not to Christ?"

Huss replied sensibly and boldly: "Though I were the first to do this thing, am I to be accounted a heretic for appealing to Christ? Paul appealed to the Roman emperor by divine revelation to fulfill the words of Christ, who said to him, 'Be of good cheer, for thou must needs bear witness of me at Rome.'" As Huss continued in the defence of his appeal, the council again silenced him with derisive outcries.

In the twenty-second article Huss laid down the very simple moral principle that an evil nature can-

not do good ; that the quality of our actions depends upon the intention and the motive. This intention he called the eye of the mind. If that were evil, everything proceeding from it is evil. In a state of grace, on the contrary, every natural affection is ennobled, and the man, whether he eat or drink or sleep, does everything to the glory of God. Hence a priest of impure and unholy life cannot worthily perform the duties of his office. The usual opposition and questioning followed, upon a doctrine which struck at the validity of so many of the things which have been done against Huss by unworthy church officers, and by the deposed pope himself.

The remaining articles of the twenty-six extracted from *De Ecclesia* refer to the duty of a member of the Church who is unjustly censured or excommunicated by the authorities of the Church, and condemn the wrong exercise of this power. A priest, otherwise blameless and having a gift for preaching, ought not to cease from preaching because of a pretended excommunication. It was objected to Huss that he had called such unjust excommunication a benediction. "In truth," replied Huss, "I say the same thing now—that unjust excommunication is a benediction in the sight of God, according to that word of Scripture, 'They shalt curse, but thou shalt bless.'"

Cardinal Zabarella, who had a reporter at his side to note down everything which he should direct,



here interposed: "Yet there are canons which show that even an unjust excommunication is to be dreaded." "True," replied Huss; "I remember there are laid down eight causes why excommunication should be dreaded." "No more than that?" asked the cardinal. "It may well be that there are more," answered Huss; and here the discussion on this point, important as it seems to have been, was closed.

The council now passed to the consideration of seven other articles, taken from a treatise of Huss against Paletz. The first of these was sweeping and dangerous enough in the eyes of the council. It ran thus: "If pope, bishop or prelate be in mortal sin, then is he no longer pope, bishop or prelate."

Huss' recorded answer freely admitted the sentiment to be his. And he had added, "He who is in mortal sin is not worthily king before God, as is plain from God's declaration to Saul (1 Sam. xv. 11): 'It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me.'"

At the time this article was under discussion, the emperor was standing in the recess of a window, speaking of Huss. He had just made the remark, "There never was a more mischievous heretic." What had particularly stirred him up to use such language does not appear. Perhaps it was the general impression of obstinacy which he had received from the steady tone of defence

which Huss had maintained, as one after another of the charges was brought forward.

He was asked to come from the window and listen to the new article, in which Huss spoke not only of bishops, but of kings, as forfeiting their authority by mortal sin. The words were again read for the emperor's special benefit. The emperor listened, and then said, "Yet no man living is without sin." His meaning doubtless was: Then, according to Huss, no man can rightfully be king in the sight of God.

The French cardinal cried out angrily, "Is it not enough that you have disparaged the spiritual order, but you must now seek to push kings from their thrones?"

Paletz, against whom the treatise under consideration had been written, now came to the rescue. He showed that Saul was still king, and was so regarded and treated by David, even after he had heard the words of Samuel. Huss replied by quoting from Cyprian that he who did not resemble Christ in conduct could not claim the name of Christian. "But this," replied Paletz, "is nothing to the purpose. Even though one be not a true Christian, is he not therefore a true pope, bishop or king? For these are names of offices, but Christian is a name implying moral worth."

But Huss was more orthodox than his opponent, if judged by the tenets then accepted in the Catholic world; for the old doctrine of the Church was

that an infidel king had no authority from God to reign, and might therefore justly be deposed. However, Huss had no need of traveling far for an illustration. "If, then," said he, "John XXIII. was a true pope, why did you depose him from his office?"

Here the emperor took up the discussion. "We all agreed," says he, "upon this very point—that he was true pope; but on account of his notorious wickedness, by which he scandalized the Church of God and wasted its energies, he was deposed from his office." This was certainly yielding the question on its real merits—viz., that an unworthy official was not to be protected from removal by his office. It did not deny to him the name or the right of pope, bishop or king, no matter how bad he might be, so long as he was not deposed.

Again the council came around to the charge already so often repeated and discussed in different forms. It was under the fourth head of the new set of articles. Here Huss was accused of saying that a wicked pope or prelate is not truly a pastor, but a thief and a robber. To this Huss replied: "I limit all that I have said in regard to such persons to the matter of their worthiness, and it is in this sense that they are not truly or properly shepherds in the sight of God. But as it respects the mere office or standing among men, they are popes, pastors, priests."

This was a concession which seemed to place

the reformer upon the ground just taken by the emperor. Instead, however, of noting and welcoming it as a concession, a monk who sat behind Huss warned the council against allowing itself to be deceived. "I lately," said the monk, "had a dispute with him on those articles, in which I said myself that a wicked pope is not true pope as respects worthiness, but as respects office he is. He is indebted to me for this explanation. He does not draw it from his book."

Huss insisted that it was in the book: "Did you not hear it so read from the book? This very matter is clearly illustrated in the case of John XXIII., who may be seen as he was, whether true pope or true thief and robber." The cardinals and bishops, looking to one another, said John was a true pope. Other members of the council, however, took a different view of the pope's position, and it was doubtless felt that the point had been pressed far enough. In the fifth specification Huss is accused of refusing to the pope the title of "most holy." No one seemed inclined to discuss this point, which Huss had freely admitted to be his. On the sixth specification—that a pope who lived in an unchristian manner, even though lawfully elected by man, has yet climbed up some other way than by Christ—Huss, so far from denying that he held this doctrine, added, in reply to questions, that according to the gospel he was a thief and robber.

The last of these seven charges brought up

again the forty-five articles professedly selected from the writings of Wickliffe. Huss had refused to assent to the wholesale condemnation of these articles. The cardinal of Cambray here addressed the prisoner: "John Huss, you said that you would not defend any of Wickliffe's errors, and now it is plain from your books that you have publicly advocated his articles."

"Most reverend father," replied Huss, "I say the same thing now that I said before—that I will not defend the *errors* of John Wickliffe, or of any other man. But inasmuch as it seemed to me to be against conscience to consent to their unqualified condemnation without proof against them from Scripture, on this account I was not willing to consent to their condemnation. It would require proof of a very complex nature to suit all the different propositions."

Huss, therefore, was perfectly willing to let it appear that he did not in the least sympathize with the intensely bitter feeling with which Catholics generally regarded the works of Wickliffe, and which was a prominent feature of the present council. The council considered the heresy of Wickliffe as too evident and too glaring to need reconsidering, whereas the attitude of Huss toward Wickliffe was that of friendly inquiry. He wanted proof that Wickliffe was wrong—a foregone and perfectly notorious conclusion with the whole body of the council. Huss was necessarily

a heretic because he could not see—what was so plain to every believer—the heresy of Wickliffe.

Another treatise of Huss against Stanislaus now furnished material for six other charges, completing the number already stated—thirty-nine. Among these six charges were two to the effect that it is not necessary that the Church should have an earthly head—a pope—but that Christ, the true and only Head, can rule his Church better without than with these heads, often so monstrous. The Church might with entire safety dispense with them through a long course of years.

This was heard with a shout of derision. “He is trying to pass for a prophet!” they exclaimed. But Huss calmly replied, “Surely the Church in the times of the apostles was infinitely better ruled than now. At present”—referring to the deposition of the pope, whose place had not been filled—“we have no such head at all, and yet Christ does not fail to rule his Church.”

This was one of those arguments drawn from the acts of the council which in so many ways justified the positions taken by Huss. It could not be answered, and therefore it was treated with derision. The only approach to an argument was the assertion of an Englishman in the council that this doctrine of Huss put him exactly on Wickliffe’s ground; which was true. And though it proved nothing, it threw the odium of the terrible heresy of Wickliffe on Huss.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *RECANT OR DIE.*

THUS the examination—it cannot fairly be called the trial—of Huss was brought to a close. It was conducted upon the understanding—reached in advance—that Huss was a heretic, a creature to be abhorred and got rid of in the most summary manner possible; not a brother man, a humble, useful, holy man, a faithful Christian worker, who had a right to be patiently and respectfully heard and furnished with every means for defence. No; he had been excommunicated again and again. He had withstood the authority of bishops, cardinals and popes; he had shielded the books of the hated and notorious English heretic Wickliffe from condemnation.

No matter now what he might offer in explanation of his alleged errors, or how many orthodox doctrines it might appear that he held, or how similar some of his boldest and most important positions might be to those held by leading members of the council, he was a heretic, and deserved only the treatment of a heretic. In fact, he had been treated with marked leniency, in deference to

the wishes of the emperor. He had been admitted to the privilege of a public audience, when the utmost that he could possibly have demanded was an opportunity to recant.

As we have seen, the council would have utterly refused to hear him, even when brought before them, but for the command of the emperor. As it was, they heard him with undisguised impatience and disdain to the end. They flattered themselves that they had exercised almost a miracle of clemency. Under all the circumstances, it would have been more than a miracle for Huss to have escaped. It would have been a change of front for the whole Romish Church. It would have shown not only sincerity in the cause of reform, but a tendency toward the great Reformation of Luther's day, which placed the Bible above human ordinances, Christ above the pope, and made every true follower of Christ a priest in his own right.

The examination of the prisoner had closed, and it now remained to determine how his case should be finally settled. Three things were required of him: First, he must confess that he was in error; second, he must promise never to teach the doctrines which had been condemned; third, he must recant or renounce his belief in them.

The French cardinal now addressed Huss: "You have heard of how many atrocious crimes you are accused. Decide now what course you will take.



You may humbly submit to the sentence of the council, and endure without remonstrance whatever punishment shall be imposed upon you by the common voice. If you shall take this course, we shall, out of regard to the honor of His Most Merciful Majesty, the emperor, here present, and his brother, the king of Bohemia, as well as for your own sake and your salvation, proceed toward you with all due kindness and humanity. But if, instead of submitting to the council, you still purpose to defend some of these articles which have been laid before us and demand a further audience, we will not deny you the privilege. But you should reflect that here are so many men of such great learning, with such powerful arguments against your articles, that it may prove only a further inconvenience and danger to you to attempt it. I say this to you by way of admonition, and not as a judge."

As for any further attempt at a defence, Huss' experience in the three audiences already granted was sufficiently discouraging. Could he have been allowed a fair opportunity to state, explain and defend his views—could he deliberately meet and remove the gross misrepresentations of these doctrines with which malice, prejudice and stupidity had overlaid them—he would gladly have let the council do with him what they pleased. To gratify this darling wish of his heart, to appear as the champion of gospel truth and gospel liberty before

the assembled representatives of all Christendom, he would have gone gladly to the stake. The fire did not frighten him; he went to it grieving, not that it should burn him, but that he had been compelled to carry the unuttered truth with him as an inner fire burning to his very soul.

Other exhortations of a like nature with that of the cardinal were addressed to him. In a submissive tone and manner he now responded:

“Most reverend fathers, I have already said repeatedly that I came here freely, of my own choice, not to defend anything with stubbornness, but if in any point whatever my views were incorrect to submit to be instructed with cheerful readiness. I ask, therefore, that I may have further opportunity to declare my views, in behalf of which, unless I bring plain and sufficient proof, I will readily submit to your instruction in all respects as you require.”

“Notice,” cried out some member in a loud voice, “how cunningly he chooses his words! He says ‘instruction,’ not ‘correction’ or ‘decision.’”

“As you wish,” calmly replied Huss. “Instruction, correction or decision, I protest before God I spoke in all sincerity of mind.”

“Well, then,” said the cardinal Cambray, perhaps intentionally pushing the words of Huss beyond their plain meaning, “since you subject yourself to the instruction and favor of the council, you have only to perform the three conditions

required of you—to confess your errors, to promise not to teach them hereafter, and to renounce all the articles charged against you.”

But Huss had intended no such thing, and he firmly held to his position: “Again I say, I am ready to be instructed and set right by the council. But in the name of Him who is the God of us all, I ask and beseech of you that I may not be required to do what is against my conscience and to the peril of my soul’s salvation—namely, to abjure all the articles charged against me. To abjure, according to Catholic authority, is to renounce an error previously held. Since many articles have been charged against me which it never entered my mind to hold or to teach, how can I on oath renounce them? But in respect to those articles which are indeed mine, if any one will instruct me to different conclusions, I will readily yield to your demand.”

Huss here drew a distinction which he had always maintained, and which he had made good even in the brief opportunity afforded him by the council. Certainly, in very important instances, doctrines had been charged against him—as in the case of transubstantiation—which he had never held or taught. It was nothing less than an outrage to require him to abjure where he had never been at fault.

Even the emperor, who had shown some little regard for fair dealing, and whose voice was now

again heard, did not sustain, or even notice, this point. On the contrary, his advice to Huss now was to strain his conscience and yield to the demands of the council in every respect. "And why not renounce all the articles," asked the emperor, "even those that are falsely charged against you? I should not hesitate to abjure all errors whatsoever. It would not follow from that that I had held any error."

The conscience of the politic Sigismund, the violator of his word of honor, was no guide for the tender, childlike soul of Huss. "Most merciful emperor," he replied, "the word *abjure* carries a very different meaning from that which Your Majesty gives it."

"In that case," said the cardinal Zabarella, "a written form of abjuration shall be presented you, sufficiently mild and proper. You will then easily be able to decide whether you will adopt it or not."

Again the emperor urged upon Huss the necessity of submitting. He would be treated with favor if he did. That probably meant banishment from Bohemia, if not imprisonment for life. "But," said the royal tool of the bigoted priesthood, "if you persist in defending your opinions, the council will probably determine, in your case, to proceed according to the laws of heresy."

"Most merciful emperor," said Huss, "I refuse

not my consent to anything whatsoever that the council shall decree concerning me. I only except this much—that I may not sin against God and my conscience, and say that I have professed and taught those errors which it never entered my mind to teach or profess. But I beseech of you to grant me the further privilege of declaring my views, that I may answer so far as is proper in regard to the points objected against me.”

“You are of age,” answered Sigismund, “and can easily understand what I told you yesterday and to-day. We are forced to believe the testimony against you. If Scripture says, ‘In the mouth of one or two witnesses every word shall be established,’ how much more by the testimony of so many men and persons of such standing as have borne witness against you! If you are wise, therefore, you will accept the penance which the council shall impose with a contrite heart, and renounce all your evident errors, promising on oath that you will hereafter hold and teach the contrary. But if you will not, there are laws by which you will be judged by the council.”

“Recant now, or die,” is the meaning of the emperor. “You can expect no further privileges. It remains for you only to submit.” But Huss persisted in refusing to recant what he had not taught, and in requesting to be heard further. The council cried out against his obstinacy. But it was the council that was obstinate in charging

him with what he did not believe, and in demanding his sworn recantation of what he had never taught or held.

A priest distinguished by his rich attire cried out: "Do not allow him the privilege of recanting. He would not mean it if he swore it." Paletz exclaimed, "Of what use is it for you to protest that you will defend no error, when you defend Wickliffe himself?" Scarcely a show was made of granting him a further hearing. New charges were brought forward in an utterly arbitrary way and without connection; of course they had to be met, without a particle of preparation, in an entirely offhand way. Huss was like some hunted animal brought to bay by a pack of wolves, who, without giving him time to recover, plied him with incessant attacks upon the right hand and the left, seeking to overwhelm him with worrying rather than to vanquish him in an open and fair conflict.

Amid all the cross-fire of embarrassing questions Huss maintained his calmness, his presence of mind, his secret repose in God and confidence in the truth. New and unheard-of charges were made. Huss' sympathy for the three young men, executed in Prague for interrupting the sale of indulgences, was commented upon, to his evident disadvantage. The letter purporting to come from Oxford in support of Wickliffe, which Huss had publicly commended, but which turned out

to be a forgery, was brought forward and read to the council.

Huss admitted that he had read it to his people in Prague—of course under the supposition that it was genuine. It had been brought to Prague by two scholars under the seal of the University. "Who were these scholars?" was asked.

"That friend of mine," said Huss, pointing to Paletz, "knows one of them as well as I do. With the other I have no acquaintance whatever." This transaction occurred at the time when Paletz was intimately associated with Huss, and as deeply implicated in the matter as was Huss himself.

Another letter, bearing the seal of the University of Oxford, was now produced, distinctly condemning the doctrines of Wickliffe. Whatever the parties presenting the letter expected to accomplish by it, Huss deigned no further reply. He had acted conscientiously and in perfect confidence that the first letter was genuine. Its claims were probably quite as good as those now produced in behalf of the second letter.

No further charges were entered. Huss, doubtless, felt that he could not, without preparation and at the close of a long and fatiguing session, enter, with any prospect of good results, upon a formal defence. He was silent, and there was a pause in the proceedings, as if all hesitated to take the final step.

At this opportunity the renegade Paletz arose

and committed what can scarcely be regarded otherwise than an act of atrocious perjury. "I call God to witness," he dared to say, "in presence of the emperor and all the prelates here assembled, that in these complaints against Huss I have not been moved by any hatred or malice toward him, but only by regard to my doctor's oath, or sworn pledge, to be the unrelenting antagonist of every heresy and error." The swindler Michael de Causis, the tool of John XXIII., went through the same empty form of protest.

The indignation of Huss at this ostentatious piece of mockery and falsehood must have been great. Yet he contented himself with a few sober words in reply: "But I commend all this matter to the Judge in heaven, who will judge the cause of both parties with impartial justice."

The council now adjourned, and Huss was remanded to prison. As he turned away, the faithful Chlum drew near and testified his admiration and love by a warm pressure of the hand. "What joy," Huss afterward wrote, "did I feel from the pressure of my lord John's hand, which he was not ashamed to give me, the wretched, outcast heretic in chains!"

The emperor now gathered the leading members of the council around him. The matter was sufficiently grave to demand special deliberation. By his own confession, Huss, according to the emperor, was guilty of errors any one of which deserved to



be punished with death by fire. But if he should submit to the judgment of the council, and his life thus be spared—which Sigismund seems to have taken for granted would be done—then he should be forbidden to teach, preach, or even live, in Bohemia. The articles condemned by the council should be sent to the king of Bohemia, to Poland and other regions, to which his doctrines had penetrated, together with the edict threatening punishment, both from Church and State, to those who continued to hold those views.

“On the other hand,” said the emperor, “the bishops and others who have labored in those regions to suppress this heresy should be commended by the unanimous vote of the council to the kings and princes under whose government they dwell. Finally, if there are any intimate friends of Huss in Constance, let them also be held in close custody, and especially his disciple Jerome.”

Without, perhaps, wishing or expecting that Huss would really be burned, but only silenced, the emperor had gone over to the ranks of his enemies. The first of all his wishes was, not that truth might prevail, but that the council might be a success, and that he might have the credit of it. Necessarily, he must go with the current that set so strongly against Huss. At the same time, he did not wish to alienate the Bohemians, and possibly he hoped, by conceding so much to the council, to save a life which, he must have known, was

esteemed to be far more precious in that country than all the gems and ores with which it abounded.

What alternative the council contemplated in case Huss should recant appears from the following resolution, which is left upon record, but which Huss gave them no opportunity to act upon:

“Since it is evident, on the ground of certain conjectures and outward signs, that Huss repents of the sins he has committed, and is disposed to return with upright heart to the truth of the Church, therefore the council grants with pleasure that he may abjure and recant his heresies and the heresies of Wickliffe, as he voluntarily offers to do; and as he himself begs the council to release him from the ban, so he is hereby released.

“But, inasmuch as many disturbances and much scandal among the people have arisen from these heresies, and inasmuch as great danger has accrued to the Church by reason of his contempt of the power of the keys” (meaning the discipline of the Church, which Huss had disregarded), “therefore the council decrees that he must be deposed from the priestly office and from all other offices. And the council pronounces and decrees that John Huss, as a man scandalous, seditious and pernicious to the holy Church of God and dangerous to the Christian faith, shall and ought to be immured and imprisoned, and thus perpetually remain, at some place appointed, and shall be proceeded against, in other respects, according to canonical sanctions.”

These cruel ordinances would have represented the *tender mercies* of the council. Truly, if Huss had been inclined to recant, it can scarcely be said that he had any inducement offered him for such a course. Over and over again he had declared that he would rather die by fire than live misrepresented and misunderstood by the false statements even of his enemies.

But to misrepresent himself totally by a deliberate and formal act of recantation, and then to be shut up, speechless for life, behind prison-walls, haunted by remorse and by the thought of the anger of his God, would have been a torment greater than burning many times at the stake, with a clear conscience and a Saviour's presence and support. Not the most distant idea of recanting ever entered his mind. When he left the council on the 8th of June, it was under the impression that his fate was sealed, and that in a few hours the stake would be prepared for its victim.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *WAITING FOR DEATH.*

**L**IKE Socrates, after his case was virtually settled Huss enjoyed an unexpected reprieve. With the Bohemian as with the Athenian martyr, it lasted about a month. The evident reluctance of the emperor to proceed to extremes, the leaning of some of the more powerful members of the council to mild measures, the hope excited by Huss' frequent declaration of willingness to be instructed by the council, led to this delay.

Meanwhile, Huss made his final preparations for an event which he felt to be unavoidable, and which he believed to be near. On the tenth of June he wrote a farewell letter to his flock in Bethlehem chapel, in which he pours forth all the ardor of his affection and all the treasures of his tender concern for their welfare. With the modesty of one who feels himself no more than man, conscious of sin and imperfection, he joins the lofty tone of one wellnigh apostolically inspired.

"I, Master John Huss," he writes, "in the hope that I am God's servant, wish, on behalf of all the faithful of Bohemia who love God, that they may

live and die in the grace of God, and at last be saved. Amen! Ye princes, high and low, I pray for and admonish you that you obey God, reverence his word and live according to it. I beseech you to abide in the truth of God which I have preached and written to you from his word. I beseech you, if any one among you has heard from me, by public speech or otherwise, or has read in my books, anything contrary to the truths of God, that you reject it, although I am not conscious of having written or taught any such error.

“I beseech, moreover, if any one has observed any levity in my speech or conduct, that he copy not my example, but intercede with God in my behalf that such levity may be forgiven me. I beseech you to love and hold in high esteem those priests who discharge well the duties of their office, especially those who labor in the word of God” (meaning those who added to the performance of ceremonies the more important business of preaching). “But beware of those godless pastors that go about, as the Master says, in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye nobles, I beseech you, deal fairly with your subjects and maintain just government. Ye burghers” (wealthy citizens), “I beseech you, each so live in his estate as to keep a clear conscience. Ye artisans, labor faithfully and earn your bread in the fear of God. Ye servants, serve your masters in truth.

“Ye schoolmasters, instruct the youth to purity

of life, and teach them with diligence and fidelity, first of all that they fear God and keep him before their eyes, then that they study with all diligence, not for gain or the honor of the world, but for God's glory, the good of man and their own salvation.

“Students in the University, and all other pupils, I pray you, be obedient to your masters in all that is honorable and praiseworthy, following their good example and diligently studying, that by your means God's glory may be promoted and yourselves and others advance in all that is good.

“Finally, I pray you all gratefully to regard the excellent lords Wenzel de Duba, John de Chlum and other nobles from Bohemia, Moravia and Poland, and treat them with studious respect. For many a time have they set themselves against the whole council and manfully defended the truth, exerting themselves to the utmost to save my life, especially Duba and Chlum, to whom you may give full credit in the entire account which they will render you of what has taken place. They know how the whole council cried out against me when I merely answered the questions which they asked.

“I beseech you, moreover, to pray to God for the emperor, and for your king and queen, that the God of mercy may be with and among you for ever.

“This letter I have written to you in prison in

chains, and this morning I have heard of the decision of the council that I must be burned. But I have full confidence in God that he will not forsake me, nor permit me to deny his truth, or with perjury confess, as mine, the errors falsely imputed to me by lying witnesses. But how gently God my Master deals with me, and supports me through surprising conflicts, ye shall learn when, amid the joys of the life to come, we shall, through the grace of Christ, behold one another again.

“Our bitterest enemies, the Bohemians, who have ill-treated us, go from bad to worse. I beseech you pray God in their behalf. Especially do I beseech you cherish the Bethlehem church, and see to it faithfully, as long as God shall give you grace, that God’s word be preached there. For Satan is the sworn enemy of such a church, and he raises up against it the priests and their tools, fearing lest by it his kingdom shall be broken up. But I hope in God that he will sustain the church, and cause his word to be imparted more largely than it has been by my poor efforts.

“I beseech you love one another. Turn not from the truth. Consider how the righteous may not be crushed.”

From this letter it appears that Huss expected to be executed the very next day, the 11th of June. But the day came and wore away, and Huss found himself still an occupant of his lonely cell. The next and the next day came, and still he remained

unmolested. So long did this inaction last that a slight hope of deliverance began to creep into his mind and to express itself in his letters. For Huss was never idle. Chains, sickness and pain, accumulated wrongs and injustice, the prospect of a cruel martyrdom, did not cripple his intellectual energies or check the wonderful flow and elasticity of his teaching and preaching spirit. Quickly again he writes to his friends at Prague :

“God be with you, my most beloved in the Lord! My joy that I am spared is that I may write to you yet once again and testify my gratitude. God has kept me so long in prison that I may think so much the more humbly on my past sins, and so much the more deeply repent of them ; that I may have time so much the more fully to reflect upon the shameful ignominy and cruel death of our loved King, the Lord Christ, and be so much the more patient to suffer.”

“I have refused to abjure,” he writes to the University—“at least till the articles I hold are proved to be erroneous on the authority of Sacred Scripture.”

Some of the predictions of Huss in these letters met a remarkable fulfillment. Among other things he writes : “The fathers of the council will fly away like butterflies, and in winter they will see that their summer’s work has been of no more strength than a spider’s web.” In view of the Hussite wars, which soon broke out, and of the



Council of Basle, which undid nearly all the work of the Council of Constance, these anticipations were almost literally fulfilled.

As the delay was prolonged, Huss begged for a final hearing, such as he felt was promised him by emperor and council alike. He wrote to his friends: "It must redound greatly to the emperor's dishonor if those promises shall not be fulfilled. But I think his words are about as much to be relied upon as his safe-conduct." Again he writes:

"Put not your trust in princes and the sons of men, in whom is no salvation. To-day they are, to-morrow they shall perish. This word," he says, "I have constantly borne in my heart: 'Trust not in princes. Cursed is the man who trusteth in men, and maketh the arm of flesh his confidence.' I thought the emperor had some regard for law and truth; now I perceive that these weigh but little with him. Truly did they say that Sigismund would deliver me up to my adversaries: he has condemned me before they did. Would that he could have shown as much moderation as the heathen Pilate, who, after hearing the accusation, said, 'I find no fault in this man,' or at least that he had said, 'I have given him a safe-conduct; and if he refuses to submit to the decision of the council, I will send him back, with your sentence and the evidence against him, to the king of Bohemia, to be finally dealt with by him and his clergy.'"

An unknown friend now appears upon the scene — possibly one of the two members of the council whom Huss had recognized as showing kindly feeling to himself during the trial. Neander conjectures that he was one of those monks who were called "The Friends of God." In the solitude of their convents they had been led, through inward experiences, to the knowledge of Christ as the true object of the soul's trust, but their eyes had not been opened to the errors of the ancient Church system. They made it a point to avoid all debate and criticism, and sought in quietness to spread their views from one individual to another, and thus, as a secret leaven, acted powerfully and widely to prepare the way for the regeneration of Christianity.

"A Friend of God" would easily recognize in Huss a man of kindred spirit, only too vehement and contentious; he would lament that he should sacrifice his life by giving way to these impulses, and not rather preserve it by accommodating himself to the existing order of things, and so remain within the Church as salt to season and save it. On the principle of obedience, which these monks carried to great lengths, he would think it well for Huss to submit to the decision of the council, and thus perform a wholesome act, a sacrifice of self-will, and learn a lesson of moderation and prudence in the future.

This unknown friend brought or sent to Huss,

in writing, the milder form of recantation which had been promised him in the council by Zabarella, cardinal of Florence. It ran as follows :

“ Besides the protestations made before by me, and which I hereby renew, I protest, moreover, that though a great deal has been charged against me which never entered into my thoughts, yet I submit in all that has been charged against me, or objected to me, or extracted from my books, or even uttered against me by witnesses, humbly to the merciful direction, determination and correction of the council, and agree to abjure, to recant, to submit to such merciful penance as may be imposed upon me, and to do all that the council may in its goodness see fit to determine for my salvation, commending myself, with all submission, to its mercy.”

Huss could not fail to see in this softened language precisely the same meaning as in the ruder demands of his enemies. The same sacrifice of truth, the same act of perjury, the same scandal to all who had heard his preaching, would be the result of accepting this new form, of recantation.

But his unknown friend was as ingenious and insinuating as he was persevering : “ Let it not trouble you, my dearest brother, that you condemn truths, since it is not you that condemn them, but those who are your superiors. As regards the breaking of your oath, even if it were really a perjury, the guilt of it will not fall upon you, but

upon those who require the oath. I write with brevity because I write to one who understands. You will not depart from the truth, but come nearer to the truth. You will cause no scandal, but will edify. The Lord Jesus will release you from your appeal to him, that you may still answer in the lower court, since you still have work to do in his cause."

It would seem that the writer accepted Huss as a brother believer and true worker in the cause of Christ, one whose life he earnestly wished to save. But the affectionate tone and plausible arguments of the letter had no perceptible influence on the resolute will and clear moral convictions of Huss. "It were better for me," he replied, "that a millstone were hung about my neck, and that I should be cast into the midst of the sea."

This was the true greatness of Huss—that, with all his humility and childlike simplicity, he could not be blinded or imposed upon by the unanimous voice of a great council as to his own personal responsibility; that he preferred to bear the reputation of an obstinate heretic, and to die by fire, rather than to suffer on his conscience a single stain by an abjuration involving a falsehood on his part.

Other persons used similar arguments with Huss. A learned doctor said, "If the council declared thou hadst but one eye, when thou hadst two, thou wouldst still be bound to submit to their decision. All the world might tell me this; yet

if I had my reason, I could not admit it without violating my conscience."

Paletz, his former friend, but now a leader in the prosecution, was among those who labored for his recantation. His argument was that of the Jesuits: "Do evil that good may come." Huss should not dread the shame of recantation, but look simply to the good which would come of it.

But Huss repelled the suggestion with the greatest energy :

"I do not dread the greater shame of being condemned and burned ; why, then, dread the lesser shame of recanting ? But come ! what would you do if errors were ascribed to you which you never taught ? Would you consent to abjure them ?"

Paletz acknowledged that it was an awkward position, and the tears came into his eyes.

It was perhaps at the same interview that Huss, with his wonted humility and tenderness of spirit, made his confession to Paletz. "Paletz," said he, "I uttered some expressions before the council that were calculated to offend you. Pardon me."

The astonished prosecutor was deeply affected, and earnestly labored with Huss to abjure.

"Are you the same man," said Huss, "who in the council pointed to me and said, 'That man does not believe in a God' ?"

Paletz denied having said it.

"You said so, however," repeated Huss, "and you added that, since the birth of Christ, there

never was so dangerous a heretic. Ah, Paletz, Paletz! why have you done me so much harm?"

Paletz could only renew his exhortations to Huss to recant, and then, weeping bitterly, he withdrew.

Michael de Causis, the swindler, showed no such tenderness. A hardened villain and a tool of villainy, he gloated over the success of his murderous schemes. He, too, visited Huss in prison, but only that he might more fully enjoy his cruel triumph.

"By the grace of God," he exclaimed, "we shall soon burn this heretic, whose condemnation has cost me so much money."

Not a spark of revengeful feeling was kindled in the mind of Huss. "I leave him to God," he wrote, "and pray for this man most affectionately."

On the first of July, Huss was brought before the council, meeting in the Franciscan monastery, to give him opportunity for public recantation. His reply was in writing and remains on record, as follows:

"I, John Huss, fearing to sin against God, and fearing to commit perjury, am not willing to abjure all and each of the articles which have been produced against me on false testimony. For, God being my witness, I have not preached, asserted nor defended them, as they have said that I have preached, defended or asserted. Moreover, in

regard to the articles extracted from my writings, if any of them implies anything false, I disavow and detest it. But through fear of sinning against the truth and speaking against the views of holy men, I am unwilling to abjure any of them. And if it were possible for my voice now to reach the whole world—as every falsehood and every sin which I have committed will be brought to light in the day of judgment—I would most cheerfully recall everything false or erroneous which I ever spoke or thought of speaking, and I would do it before the world. These things I say and write freely and of my own accord.”

A holy boldness breathes through this brief document. No fibre of the writer's being has bent or broken under the prolonged and tremendous pressure to which he has been subjected. He faces the council as modestly, but with as unsubdued mien, as ever. Unprepared for such a response, the council order him back to prison and proceed to other business.

A few more days of respite remain for Huss. His mind and pen are busy. Letter after letter issued from his prison-cell, giving instead of asking consolation; cheering, advising, counseling and encouraging, until the narrow cell seemed transformed into a lighthouse, pouring forth its guiding rays upon the almost unbroken waste of darkness and peril without.

He concludes one of the noblest of these epistles

with the following prayer : " O most faithful Christ, draw us weak ones after thee, for we cannot follow thee if thou dost not draw us. If the flesh is weak, succor us beforehand by thy grace, and accompany us, for without thee we can do nothing ; and least of all can we face a cruel death. Give us a ready and willing spirit, an undaunted heart, the right faith, a firm hope and perfect love, that patiently and with joy we may, for thy sake, give up our life."

One of his last requests was to the beloved Chlum. " O thou kindest and most faithful friend," writes Huss, " may God grant thee a fitting recompense ! I conjure thee to grant me still this—not to depart until thou hast seen everything consummated."

On the fifth of July a deputation of the council, embracing some of its most eminent members, visited Huss. This deputation was sent by the emperor, who had requested Chlum and Duba to join it, that they might add the force of their friendship to this last effort to overcome the steadfastness of Huss and persuade him to recant.

Chlum was the first to speak. " Dear master," said he, " I am not a learned man, and I deem myself unable to aid you by my counsels ; you must therefore decide for yourself what course to adopt, and determine whether you are guilty or not of those crimes of which the counsel accuse you. If you are convinced of your error, have no hesi-



tation ; be not ashamed to yield. But if in your conscience you feel yourself to be innocent, beware, by calumniating yourself, of committing perjury in the sight of God, and of leaving the path of duty, through any apprehension of death."

Far different were these noble and affectionate entreaties from the rude or the insinuating demands hitherto made of an unqualified submission to the council. Almost overcome, Huss replied amid a flood of tears :

"Indeed, as I have done before, so now, I call the almighty God to witness, that if I were aware of having taught or written anything contrary to the law or orthodox doctrine of the Church, I would retract it with the utmost readiness ; and even at the present time, I desire exceedingly to be better instructed in sacred learning. If, therefore, any one will teach me a better doctrine than I have inculcated myself, let him do it. I am ready to hear him ; and abandoning my own, I will fervently embrace the other and confess that I have erred."

But the council had long ago made up their minds that Huss was deeply, dangerously, scandalously, in error. "Do you, then," asked one of the bishops, "believe yourself to be wiser than the whole council?" Huss might have answered : "With the Holy Scripture on my side, I am wiser than any body of men who reject it." He did say in substance : "Let the least person in the council

show me, out of the word of God, that I am wrong, and I will submit in a way that will satisfy the whole body."

It was Luther anticipated. "I am bound by the Scriptures," said Luther before the Diet at Worms; "my conscience is held captive by the word of God. Here I take my stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen!" Luther, after ample time for preparation, had been allowed to make a formal defence two hours long. He came under the emperor's safe-conduct; and though he absolutely refused to recant, he went away unmolested.

The answer of Huss was accepted as final.

"See," said the bishops, "how obstinately he persists in his errors!"

## CHAPTER XX.

### *CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION OF HUSS.*

THE emperor had been informed of the failure of the last conference with Huss. Nothing more could be done to stay his fate unless the emperor, doing right regardless of consequences, had rescued the reformer from the hands of the council and protected him back to the borders of Bohemia, where his safe-conduct had found him. That act, indeed, besides vindicating his honor, would have conciliated the brave little nation of Bohemia; but would it not have put the whole Catholic world besides in arms against him? Doubtless the emperor believed it would, and so policy, not honor, controlled his decision.

It was the sixth day of July. By a singular coincidence, Huss on that day was exactly forty-two years old. His remarkable career, which has filled so large a place in the history of the Church and in the history of free thought, was completed when he was comparatively a young man. Luther's work attained its highest point in his appearance before the Diet of Worms, when he was but thirty-seven.

The council assembled in the cathedral church. The emperor was present, seated on his throne and surrounded by the princes of the empire. An immense crowd had been drawn together by the news of what was to take place. Huss, as an incorrigible heretic, was detained outside until the religious ceremonies were over. These hollow and unscriptural performances could not easily have been profaned, and it was no privation to any sincere worshiper to be debarred from witnessing them.

Huss was now brought in and placed in an elevated position, so as to be seen by the whole assembly. It is said that he stood on a white spot in a large stone slab, which may still be seen in the cathedral, and which is said to be dry when all the rest of the stone is damp. Here he fell on his knees, and remained engaged in prayer for some time. A sermon was now preached by one of the bishops on the text Romans vi. 6: "That the body of sin might be destroyed." This was to be accomplished, according to the bishop, by extirpating heresy.

He drew a picture of the abounding heresies of the time, and the consequent perils of the Church. Many had toiled in vain to suppress these heresies—kings, bishops and prelates. "Wherefore," exclaims the preacher, turning in flattery to the emperor, "most Christian king, this glorious triumph has awaited thee, this unfading crown is due

to thee, and a victory ever to be celebrated is thine. in order that by thee the wounded Church may be bound up and heretics be rooted out. So mayest thou destroy heresy and error, and especially this obstinate heretic, by whose malign influence many regions have been infected with heresy and many things have fallen into ruin." After the sermon silence was formally enjoined during the remaining proceedings of the council. Sixty articles of Wickliffe were read and condemned, and thirty articles were presented purporting to state the doctrines of Huss. Some of them he now heard for the first time, and with none of them were the names of the witnesses given.

As each of these articles was read Huss attempted explanations, comments or denials, as the case seemed to require. The cardinal of Cambray ordered him to be silent. "When you answer," said he, "answer to all at once," meaning, perhaps, abjure them all at once.

But Huss was too keenly alive to the injustice done to himself, and, above all, to the wrong done to truth, readily to submit to this demand. As another article was read he again attempted to reply. "You deafen us," cried Zabarella. The ushers of the council were ordered to compel him to be silent. With a loud voice and hands uplifted he exclaimed, "Almighty God, I beseech thee, deign to afford me an equitable hearing, that I may clear myself at least before those who sur-

round me, and remove from their minds the suspicion of errors. Grant me this favor, and then do with me what you will."

The extreme of unfairness, however, was not reached until the old charge that Huss denied the doctrine of transubstantiation was repeated. Huss could not endure this in silence. The cardinal Zabarella in vain interrupted him. Huss was urgent that he might have liberty to undeceive the bystanders on this point. "For," said he, "I utterly deny that I ever believed or taught that, after the consecration, in the sacrament of the altar the material bread remains."

The absurd and insulting charge, which Huss had never before heard, was now made that he pretended to be a fourth person, added to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, in the Trinity. Only a single witness had testified to this incredible accusation. Huss demanded the name of the witness. It was flatly refused. "There is no need of it," said the prosecutor. "God forbid," said Huss, "that such an imagination should ever have entered my mind!" He then repeated a portion of the Athanasian Creed, the most complete and comprehensive statement known to the Church of the doctrine of the Trinity, and declared it to be his firm and abiding belief.

Next, the appeal of Huss from human to divine judgment was read, and the appeal pronounced an impious error. To the council Huss cared to make

no reply on this point. But looking up to heaven, he repeated his appeal in these impressive words:

“Most blessed Jesus! behold how this council holds as an error, and reprobates thine own deed, and the law which thou didst prescribe, when thou thyself, overwhelmed by enemies, didst commend thy cause to thy Father God, the most holy Judge, leaving us an example in our woe and weakness, that with prayer for aid we should suppliantly flee in our wrongs to the most righteous Judge.”

When the charge of treating the papal excommunication with contempt was reached, Huss denied it, and explained that he had three times sent representatives to the papal court to defend himself, and that they could never obtain a hearing. “For this reason,” he added, “I came freely to this council, relying upon the public faith of the emperor, who is here present, assuring me that I should be safe from all violence, so that I might attest my innocence and give a reason of my faith to the whole council.”

As he said these words Huss turned and looked the emperor full in the face. That was one of the historic moments in the emperor's life. Seated there as king and judge, in that instant the relations of the parties were changed. Sigismund blushed violently—*vehementer erubuit*, says the chronicler—under the gaze of Huss. Sigismund became the culprit and Huss the judge. Sigismund's blush burned into his soul. The fires

which burned Huss' body to ashes left his soul unscathed. So Felix, the Roman governor, trembled before Paul, the prisoner, preaching of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come.

The blush of Sigismund has never been forgotten. It was remembered in Germany. Charles V., when urged to betray Luther, remembered it. He said, "I should not like to blush like Sigismund."

When the reading of the articles was completed, the repeated refusals of Huss to abjure were rehearsed. Then followed the formal sentences of condemnation—one in reference to Huss' works, which were condemned to be burned, and the other to Huss himself, who was sentenced to be degraded from the priesthood and to be given over to the civil authorities—to the "secular arm," as it was called—to be punished as an obstinate heretic.

As the various charges in the sentence were read Huss interposed brief comments. When the reading was concluded, Huss fell upon his knees and earnestly and audibly prayed for his enemies: "O Lord God, through thy mercy I pray thee deign to pardon all my enemies, for thou knowest that I have been unjustly accused by them, overcome by false witnesses, oppressed by fictitious accusations, and unrighteously condemned. For thy mercy's sake therefore, remit their sins."

As this prayer recalls our thoughts irresistibly to the great Victim of Calvary, so, it has been re-



marked, the other parts of the scene are not wanting in the scornful looks and sneers of the persecutors of Huss. They laughed him to scorn.

Huss must now suffer the first part of the sentence directed against himself—degradation from the priesthood. On a platform behind him had been lying the priestly robes with which he must first be clothed. The sacramental cup was also put into his hand, as if he was about to celebrate mass. As they put the white robe upon him Huss recalled the circumstances of Christ's sufferings: "My Master Christ, when he was sent away by Herod to Pilate, was clothed in a white robe." This part of the ceremony being complete, as he stood in his priestly robes he was once more urged to abjure his errors. Standing on the platform to which he had been raised, turning toward the people with tears and a voice trembling with emotion, he said:

"These bishops persuade and exhort me to retract. How could I, after such an act of hypocrisy, lift my face to heaven? How could I support the looks of the multitude whom I have instructed, if by my example I caused confusion and doubt in so many consciences, so many souls which I have filled with the pure doctrine of Christ's gospel and have strengthened against the snares of the devil? How could I commit falsehood before God and confess myself guilty of errors which I never held and never taught, and thus sin against

my conscience and divine truth alike? No, no! It shall never be said that I preferred my life to their salvation."

To all this the hardened judges could only say, "See how perverse he is in his wickedness—how he holds on to his heresy!" They now bade Huss descend from the platform, and piece by piece they removed his priestly garments and emblems. As they took from him the cup they said, "O thou accursed Judas, who, breaking away from the counsels of peace, hast consulted with the Jews! behold, we take from thee this chalice, in which the blood of Jesus Christ for the redemption of the world is offered."

"But I," quickly answered Huss, "trust in God the Father almighty, who will never take from me the cup of salvation, but will give me to drink of it this day in his kingdom."

As the priests formerly had part of the head shaven, the question arose as to the way in which to remove this mark of the sacred office from Huss' head. Some were for using a razor, and some the shears. While this frivolous debate was agitating the proud assembly Huss said to the emperor, "It is strange, when all are alike cruel, that they cannot agree as to the mode of insulting me." Finally, it was decided to use the shears, and his hair was cut to leave bare the form of a cross. This childish act was followed by one equally trivial. His head was washed as if to

remove the oil of anointing with which he had been consecrated to the priesthood. A high-pointed paper crown, painted with devils, was now placed upon his head. "My Lord Jesus Christ," said Huss, "wore for me a crown of thorns; why should I not for his sake wear this easier though shameful badge?" "We devote thy soul to the devils of hell," said the bishops. "But I," responded Huss, "commend it into thy hands, most merciful Jesus, by whom it has been redeemed."

The various brief expressions let fall by the prisoner during this scene were so fitting, so spirited, and yet so humble and devout, that in his case it is clear the Scripture was fulfilled, "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Matt. x. 19.

Huss, doomed by the Church, was delivered over to the civil power. It was now the emperor's affair. Sigismund committed the prisoner to the custody of Louis, duke of Bavaria, who in turn transferred him to the mayor of the city of Constance; finally the latter handed him over to the executioners, with strict instructions to burn him, with all his clothes and all that belonged to him, including even his knife and his purse, from which they were not to remove so much as a single penny. He was led to the place of execution unchained, but surrounded by guards and followed by an escort of eight hundred armed men, and an immense multitude of people curious to witness

the final scene. On the way, the procession passed by the episcopal palace, that they might witness the spectacle of the burning of Huss' books. The fire was kindled and the books burned as the procession passed. Huss had said in the council, when this sentence was passed upon his books, "Why condemn them, when you have not offered a single argument to prove that they are at variance with the Holy Scriptures and the articles of faith? And what injustice to condemn with the others my books written in Bohemian—books that you have never seen, much less read!" The spectacle of the burning Huss beheld with a smile. It was nothing less than childish to attempt thus to suppress writings which had taken such a hold on the popular heart, and which were scattered abroad in multitudes of copies.

The procession came to a bridge which was considered unsafe. Huss and many of the crowd had to wait, while others passed over, one by one. His indomitable zeal and brave spirit showed themselves in seizing the opportunity to address the throngs who crowded around to catch a glimpse of him. Using the German language, he told them it was not for heresy that he was condemned, but through the injustice of his enemies. They had not been able to convict him of any error, though he had challenged them to do so over and over again.

The place of execution was a meadow, outside

the city gate, on the north side. While the preparations were being completed Huss kneeled down and prayed, using the language of the thirty-first and fifty-first Psalms, often repeating the words in the fifth verse of the former: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." The people about him were awed, and said one to another, "Whatever this man may have done, we certainly see and hear him speak and pray most devoutly."

It was still hoped by some that the near approach of a cruel death would tell on Huss' resolution and lead him to recant. "Will you not have a confessor?" some bystander asked. A priest near by on horseback, dressed in a green gown and a sash of red silk, heard the question asked. He had come to see a heretic executed, and had no fancy for a recantation which would snatch a victim from the flames. "No confessor ought to be allowed him," said the priestly cavalier. Huss, however, said he would be glad to have a confessor; and the narrator of the story, Ulric Reichen-thal, called upon a priest then present to come and perform the office.

This priest, a man of high standing with the council, drew near, and told Huss that he could not act as his confessor unless he would first recant. On this condition Huss declined to receive him. He was now permitted to speak with his jailers, although forbidden to address the crowd as he wished. "You have shown yourselves,"

he said to the former, "not merely keepers, but brethren most beloved. Be assured that I rest with firm faith upon my Saviour, in whose name I am content calmly to endure this sort of death, that I this day may go to reign with him." Huss was now fastened to a large heavy stake or post, by several cords passed around his body and limbs. Some of the bystanders called attention to the fact that his face was turned toward the east. It was too great a privilege for a heretic to die with his face toward the Holy Land, so his body was turned to face the west. This, too, might be accepted as a good omen, for it was in the west that Wickliffe, the morning-star of the Reformation, had appeared, and it was on the west that the doctrines of Huss would break out anew in the coming century.

As a final preparation for the torch, the neck of the prisoner was fastened to the stake by a sooty chain. Huss bent his head, so as to catch a glimpse of it, and then, with a cheerful smile, he said, "My Saviour was for my sake bound with a harsher and more cruel chain. Why should wretched I blush to be bound with this sooty one?"

At this cruel and scandalous scene the marshal of the empire, Von Pappenheim, and the count-palatine represented the emperor, who, for obvious reasons, preferred to be absent. One more effort was made to induce Huss to recant. The marshal rode up to the funeral pile and called upon Huss to save his life by abjuring his doctrines. Sub-

limely rose the loud and clear voice of the unconquerable martyr, as, from the verge of eternity, from the side of the chariot of fire on which he was about to mount to heaven, he gave his last faithful testimony to the truth of what he had taught:

“What error shall I recant, when I am conscious of no error? God is my witness that I never taught or wrote that which has been falsely brought against me. But the chief aim of all my declarations, teachings and writings has been to bring men to repentance and the forgiveness of sins, according to the truth of the gospel of Christ and the teachings of the fathers. No! I gladly this day seal that truth which I have written and proclaimed with the pledge of my death.”

The two lords smote their hands together and turned away, and the executioners, coming forward, applied the torch to the pile. As the flames rose around him Huss prayed: “O Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me!” Twice he was heard to utter these words. Then he was heard repeating the words of the Creed; and when his voice was choked by smoke and flame, it could still be seen that he was engaged in devotion. His last act was prayer. Cut short by a cruel death, it was transformed into praise amid the joys of heaven.

Scrupulous care was taken that the destruction of Huss' body should be complete. One of the

executioners attempted to retain, as part of his fee, some of the martyr's garments. He was commanded to throw them into the flames. Then, when all was over, the ashes were gathered up, and every fragment and relic that remained carted away to be emptied into the Rhine. It has been well said that as the course of the river, ever widening, passing through populous regions and by many and great cities, at last empties into the sea, and the sea into the broad ocean, whose currents go around the world, so the doctrines and influence of Huss were scattered over the world by the very means which persecuting hatred used to overthrow and annihilate them.

The heroic and manly bearing of the martyr drew forth eulogies from his enemies. A Roman Catholic writer of the time, who afterward himself became pope, testifies of Huss and Jerome: "They went to their punishment as to a feast. Not a word escaped them to give indication of the least weakness. No philosopher ever suffered death with such constancy as they endured the flames." No word of reproach or calumny has ever been uttered by his worst enemies against the purity of his character. And this, it should be remembered, was at a time when charges of corruption of every kind against the priests were the burden of current literature. His life was without a blot; his conscience was scrupulously tender; his sympathies were freely given to the poor



and ignorant, although he was at the head of one of the greatest educational institutions of his time. His conscientious devotion to truth was such that it brought him without flinching to the stake.

The only criticism that could be made would be that he often seemed more vehement and less cautious than he might have been in reaching his ends. He did not join enough of the wisdom of the serpent to the harmlessness of the dove. In Prague he trusted to the authorities, when they falsely promised that the three young men should not be put to death, for crying out against the sale of indulgences in church. He trusted in the safe-conduct of Sigismund, and came to Constance in spite of the fears of his friends. He trusted the word of the officers of Constance, and put himself in their hands in spite of the remonstrances of Chlum.

There are times, indeed, when the world needs such frank characters—men who care little for danger or death if only the truth can be fully and unreservedly spoken; men who would count it a light thing to be burned, but a calamity not to be repaired, to compromise a hair's-breadth; men who know that a martyr's death will spread abroad the truth more rapidly and widely than their own most energetic but peaceful labors could do it, and who therefore welcome a martyr's death from their strong desire that truth may triumph.

Such a man was Huss. Perhaps no amount of prudence consistent with honor would, after all, have

saved his life. Yet when we, by anticipation, picture to ourselves the immense power developed in little Bohemia after the death of Huss, in resisting the crusades proclaimed against that heretical country by the pope, in baffling the efforts and scattering the great armies of Sigismund for nearly a score of years; when we consider how readily Huss could have put himself at the head of the popular movement—we cannot help entertaining the thought that the costly sacrifice might have been avoided, and that not only Huss himself might have been spared, but that the excesses and divisions and final overthrow of his followers might have been prevented, and that the great Reformation might have dated from Bohemia, and from the fifteenth instead of the sixteenth century. As it was, it came very near doing so.

The services of Huss to his country were not exclusively of a moral and religious character. His influence on the Bohemian language, as that of Luther upon the German language, was beneficial as it was lasting. He guarded the purity of the Bohemian against the foreign influences that were tending to efface its native peculiarities. He labored to establish fixed rules of grammar, and he even invented a new system of spelling, which by simplicity, precision and consistency so commended itself that it was accepted by publishers of books and is at this day in general use.

The whole Bible had been translated into Bohe-

mian by an unknown hand in the fourteenth century. It was revised by Huss, and printed, probably during his life, in the peculiar orthography which he had invented. Huss, with his many gifts, was somewhat of a poet also, having left hymns as well as other verses of a didactic character in his writings. But it was his theological works, his grand force of character, his powerful discourses glowing with love for souls, sharply, clearly, skillfully penetrating to the merits of every question and unfolding it with perfect ease to the apprehension of every hearer; it was his great learning, especially his familiarity with Scripture truth, and finally his triumphant martyr-death, that gave him his place in history.


His epitaph might well have been the words of Erasmus: "JOANNES HUS, EXUSTUS NON CONVICTUS"—"John Huss, burned, but not convicted." Lechler, the latest German authority on Huss (1873) says: "Im Erliegen siegen, das war sein Loos"—"In defeat to conquer was the lot of Huss."

Was Huss fairly condemned as a heretic, even according to the principles acknowledged by his accusers and judges? It was, in a certain sense, natural and in accordance with the instincts and suspicions of the members of the council that he should be condemned, but he was not a follower of Wickliffe in that most objectionable of all his

opinions to the Catholic world, the denial of transubstantiation. His general respect for Wickliffe was not heresy; his doctrine of the Church was largely based upon Augustine, one of the acknowledged fathers and authorities of the Church, and, in fact, there existed no authoritative standard of doctrine on the subject.

The great fault of Huss, in the eyes of the council, was his endeavor to secure a reform, not by the authority of the Church, but by depending upon the word of God and the power of the individual conscience. If anything could have justified Huss in discarding the authority of the Church, it was the gross inconsistency of the council, which on the same day on which it condemned Huss, and even while he was on his way to the place of execution, virtually endorsed the doctrine of the lawfulness of assassination in getting rid of an unacceptable ruler.

The substitution of the word of God for Church authority was probably the only clear ground which a Catholic Church lawyer could have used, in carrying on a prosecution for heresy against Huss.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### *JEROME OF PRAGUE.*

A DIFFERENT character from that of Huss now presents itself to our view, yet that of one enlisted in the same cause and finally sharing the fate of his fellow-reformer. "Jerome of Prague" was so called because that city was his birthplace; Huss came from a country village. Jerome belonged to a noble family; Huss was a plain and humble citizen. Jerome's life was varied: he was philosopher, traveler, knight, almost adventurer, as well as reformer; the life of Huss was simple, confined almost exclusively to Bohemia, with few adventures before the last. Jerome was gifted, brilliant, versatile. He studied not only at the University of his native city, where he received his degree of Bachelor in Theology (1399), but also in Heidelberg and Cologne, in the Universities of Paris and of Oxford. So famous was his learning that he was called upon by the king of Poland to organize the newly-founded University of Cracow.

How or when the mind of Jerome was first led to adopt views like those of Huss and Wickliffe is not

clearly known. Physically far more active than Huss, he has left behind few memorials by which to trace the course of his inner life. As a born Bohemian, his very nature would be inclined and open to freer and more scriptural impressions, and his liberal education, with the expanding influences of extensive travel, would still further dispose his mind to new views of truth and duty. At the University of Paris he made a powerful impression, and aroused even dangerous opposition by advocating, against the famous chancellor Gerson, some of the doctrines of Wickliffe. The chancellor was making preparations to bring him to trial as a heretic and to force him to recant, but Jerome made a timely escape.

At Oxford, he drank deeply of the doctrines and spirit of Wickliffe. He became a far more thorough Wickliffite than Huss. The ability with which these doctrines were presented captivated his intellect, and the manly tone in which they rebuked the errors and vices of the times called forth his hearty sympathies. He transcribed several of Wickliffe's books, and brought them home with him to Prague. This was in 1398, although some place his Oxford life in 1401-1407.

Without hesitation or reserve, he proclaimed his admiration of the English reformer. With characteristic zeal and eloquence, he advocated these views in the University, and may be considered as the first to introduce Wickliffism to the learned

circles in Prague. Great divisions of sentiment at first prevailed. Even Huss, according to some authorities, regarded the movement with distrust, and advised Jerome to burn the books of Wickliffe or throw them into the river.

We hear nothing of Jerome in Prague during the twelve or fifteen years which followed his introduction of the works of Wickliffe in the University. Doubtless, in this period he was occupied in spreading the doctrines of the English reformer in other countries, including Moravia, Austria, Germany and Poland. His impetuous zeal involved him in many dangers.

At Vienna, his presence and actions created disturbance. The magistrates arrested him, but set him at liberty on condition that he would remain in the city until he had a fair trial. But Jerome, once free, sought a place of safety beyond the city walls. He defended his flight on the ground that the proceedings against him were wholly irregular, and such an exercise of arbitrary power as fully justified his conduct. It could not fairly be exacted of him to wait until they were ready to burn him, which they surely would have done.

In the year 1410 he is found at Ofen, the capital of Hungary, and is received by the emperor Sigismund and a crowd of bishops. But the archbishop Sbynco, who gave Huss so much trouble, complained to the emperor of his heretical views, and he was arrested. Here again his usual good

fortune favored him, and he was released after an imprisonment of five days.

In 1413 we find him in Prague again, where he took part in the opposition to the pope's bull commanding a crusade against Ladislaus, king of Naples. He has the reputation of getting up the mock procession to ridicule the bull and the indulgences connected with it. He was also charged with throwing a priest in the Moldau, who came near drowning.

Notwithstanding the widely different tempers and methods of the two men, Huss and Jerome deeply sympathized with each other, and were warm friends to the last. When Huss, in 1412, held a public disputation against the crusade, Jerome followed up his friend's more logical argument with a practical appeal, ending with the words: "Whoever holds with us, let him follow us. Huss and myself will go to the council-house and tell the council boldly to their face that the papal bull and indulgence are iniquitous."

When Huss bade adieu to Prague, in October, 1414, he parted for ever in this world with Jerome. The scene was one of deep emotion on the part of each. "Dear master," said Jerome, who was some years younger than Huss, "stand firm; maintain bravely what you have written and preached against the pride, avarice and other vices of the churchmen with arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures. Should this task become too severe for thee, should



I learn that thou hast fallen into any peril, I will fly at once to thy assistance." Six months afterward Jerome arrived in Constance, only to fall into the hands of the same relentless enemies who condemned Huss, but nevermore to see—except at a mere glimpse—or to succor his "master."

Meanwhile, he seems to have visited Poland. In its capital city, Cracow, his presence excited great commotion. The bishop of Cracow, who stood forth as his opponent, professed that Jerome made no impression upon the people. This is singular, if, as the bishop writes, "never had such violent commotions been produced there by any individual since the memory of man." It is believed that he expressed himself in very liberal and catholic terms in reference to the Greek churches which had been established by the Russians in some parts of Poland. This, however, was no more than Chancellor Gerson of Paris had said and done in the hope of preparing a way for the union of the Greek and Latin Churches.

But when the cruel and traitorous imprisonment of Huss at Constance became known at Prague, a great stir arose among the people. Men began to blame Jerome for having left his friend to contend unsupported against a host of enemies. Huss had, indeed, expected his friend to stay and preserve himself for better times. If a sacrifice was demanded, he would willingly give his own life, but the cause of truth must not be deprived of Jerome

also. All this did not weigh with the brave and impetuous knight, especially in view of the odious insinuations which had been uttered. He hastened to Constance.

On the fourth of April, a few days after the removal of Huss to Gottlieben tower, Jerome arrived in Constance prudently disguised. His countrymen were terrified for his safety, and urged him to leave the city without delay, since all hopes of the release of Huss were at an end, and since it was only too evident that a like fate awaited Jerome if he remained.

It is said that, before he left Constance, he managed to gain access to Huss in the prison of Gottlieben, and that when he saw the low chamber at the top of the tower, in which one could not stand upright; when he beheld the chains on his friend's limbs and the harsh treatment to which he was subjected; when he heard, as a common rumor, that Huss would not be admitted to an audience, but would be tried and condemned in secret; when thus all the worst fears of his friends were confirmed,—he departed as suddenly as he came, leaving his sword behind him at the inn.

It was well that he tarried no longer, for his arrival had become known, and the agents of the council were on his track. He fled, but only to the city of Uberlingen, some ten miles distant, on the upper side of the lake. As it was a free city, he felt comparatively safe from sudden arrest

by outside authorities, and he could treat with the emperor and council for the privilege of a hearing on behalf of himself and his friend Huss.

To both of these parties he wrote, demanding from each such a safe-conduct as could not be doubted or questioned, in order that he might appear before the council and clear himself and his friend from all the calumnious accusations which had been brought against them. The emperor refused his request point-blank. He had gone already too deeply into the business of pledging his word of honor for the safety of heretics, and did not wish to be disgraced a second time in the same way.

Instead of a safe-conduct, the council sent him a summons to appear before them as a suspected person within a fortnight, to answer charges in the first session that should be held after his arrival. They promised him safety, *excepting from the claims of the law and the orthodox faith*. If he did not appear in the time specified, they would proceed against him nevertheless. The cardinals wrote under his petition the words, "We grant you our protection to this place, but not back again."

These replies had the merit of frankness, and were so much the more to be preferred to the lying safe-conduct granted to Huss. In spite of their threatening character, Jerome made another brief visit to Constance, and posted up his appeal for a safe-conduct on all the public places—the city gates,

the doors of the churches, the monasteries and palaces of the cardinals. Then, yielding to the urgent entreaties of his friends, he turned his face toward Prague, not, however, before he had received from the seventy Bohemian nobles then in Constance, a document testifying to the fact of his visit, and to the uselessness of all the efforts he might make for Huss and the impossibility of his remaining at Constance in safety.

But Jerome's homeward journey was conducted without the slightest degree of caution. He gave unreserved expression to the indignation of his impetuous and lofty nature, and everywhere proclaimed his opinion of the council in the most emphatic and unqualified terms. On the 24th of April, he was stopping at the house of a priest in the village of Hirschau, two hundred miles from Constance, near the borders of Bohemia. A number of the neighboring clergy were present by invitation, and at dinner Jerome gave free vent to his feelings where common prudence would have counselled the utmost self-restraint. When he so far forgot himself as to call the council "a school of the devil, a synagogue of iniquity," his fate was sealed. The priests, leaving the table, informed the officers of the village, and Jerome, when almost in sight of his own country, was seized, cast into prison and bound in chains.

One month afterward, May 24, behold him entering Constance loaded with fetters. Louis,

duke of Bavaria, received him, and expressed his exultation by dragging him by his chains through the whole city. He was first brought before an assembly of priests in one of the convents, and upbraided with not obeying the citation of the council and appearing to answer the accusations against him. He replied, that he had been refused a safe-conduct, and, in fact, that the summons of the council had never reached him.

Great confusion now rose in the assembly. A multitude of noisy accusations were presented against Jerome. He had visited so many places, and had overwhelmed so many disputants by his eloquence, that now personal hostilities, arising from jealousy and wounded pride, gave keenness to the accusations of heresy. Doctors from the Universities of Paris, of Heidelberg and of Cologne took turns in thrusting at him and in gratifying old grudges.

Chancellor Gerson stooped so low as to rail at him in such terms as these: "Jerome, when you came to Paris, you fancied yourself, with your eloquence, to be an angel from heaven." He further reproached him with his philosophic views, for Jerome had upheld Realism against the Nominalist doctors at Paris. Jerome insisted that these speculative views should be judged by themselves, and not be mixed with the questions now at issue.

A doctor from the University of Cologne reminded him that, in that city, he had maintained several erroneous doctrines.

"Will you name one of them?" asked Jerome.

The doctor was disconcerted. "None occurs to me at present. They shall be stated hereafter," was all he could reply.

After further conference, in which no impression was made on Jerome, a murmur arose in the assembly: "Let him be burned! let him be burned!" "So be it," returned Jerome. But the bishop of Salzburg interposed almost the only voice of mercy heard through all these sorrowful scenes. "Not so! not so!" he exclaimed; "for it is written, 'I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live.'" No response was made to this gospel sentiment, but clamor and confusion prevailed until the assembly broke up.

Jerome was now taken in custody by the city authorities. His place of imprisonment was noted by the secretary Peter Mladanowitz, who managed to get the prisoner's attention through one of the windows. Jerome recognized Peter's voice and called out, "Welcome! welcome!" Peter brought him a message from Huss, who at Gottlieben could scarcely have heard of his arrival, but who had at some previous occasion entrusted the message to Chlum or to his secretary.

"Strengthen thy soul" (this was the message). "Be mindful of that truth which thou hadst so often in thy mouth, when thou wast at liberty and thy limbs were free from shackles. Do not fear even to face death for it." Jerome replied that he hoped, with

the grace of God, to remain faithful to the truth even unto death: "We have talked a good deal about death; now we are to learn what it is."

The soldiers now interfered and drove Peter away. Another servant of De Chlum who attempted to communicate with Jerome was seized, and with difficulty regained his liberty. The same night the prisoner was removed to a dungeon, and so chained that he could neither sit nor hold his head erect, his arms being crossed at the back of his neck and held in that painful position by manacles. His only food was bread and water. These cruelties were kept up for two days. One of the keepers was kind enough to send word of the circumstances to Peter, the notary, and through his influence, the rigors of the imprisonment were somewhat abated.

The council was thus fulfilling the worst charges made against it by Jerome. Nothing short of "a school of the devil, a synagogue of iniquity," could pursue such a shameful course. They seemed determined to murder him by inches. His health gave way and his life was in imminent danger. Some of his irons were taken off, for this was not the way in which the council proposed to destroy him. They meditated a death more public and striking. His health was restored, and his prison-life continued a whole year.

Six weeks after the imprisonment of Jerome his friend Huss met his fate at the stake. Two weeks

more were allowed to pass, in which it was hoped by the council that a sufficient impression would be made upon Jerome to induce him to submit. On the nineteenth of July he was brought before the council. We have scant records of what took place at this examination, but we are informed that the philosophical question between Nominalists and Realists was again agitated.

But the council were about this time getting the early mutterings of the storm which their treatment of Huss had aroused in Bohemia. They shrank from a too early repetition of the same process with another, at least equally prominent, leader of opinion in that brave little country. Besides, the emperor Sigismund was absent from the council on an errand to one of the rival popes—Benedict—who still held out against the council, at Perpignan, on the Mediterranean coast of France.

During the emperor's absence the business of the council was almost suspended. In fact, its very existence was imperiled. So many were leaving that a commission was appointed to look after absentees and bring them back and keep them at their posts. Fruitless and angry discussions prevailed. Disorder spread throughout the city and neighborhood; acts of violence, robbery, and even assassination, were frequent, both within and without the city. Members of the council were forced, by fear, to vote against their convictions.

For so many reasons, therefore, the most powerful



of which was the commotion in Bohemia, action on Jerome's case was not decisive or sudden. It was the eleventh of September before he was again summoned before the council. The hardships of his prison-life had been even greater than those of Huss, and they had told on him terribly. His elastic and active disposition, his love of travel, his former mode of living amid the indulgences which wealth allows, would have made a comparatively light infliction bear more severely upon him than upon the more simple and abstemious Huss. His legs had broken out in incurable ulcers. He had been compelled to hear of the melancholy fate of his former friend and teacher.

Bold, versatile and brilliant as he was, his powers of endurance were far inferior to those of Huss. Born to command, he could not endure captivity. Conscious of strength, over-confident of his own abilities, he ventured into situations for which his powers were not equal. That thorough distrust of self which, in the humble Christian heart, is associated with the most complete dependence upon divine strength, and which was a memorable feature in all the experience of Huss, was scarcely noticeable in the earlier encounters of Jerome with his enemies. The necessary lesson of his own weakness was taught him by a sad experience.

Before the demands and threats of the council that he must abjure or die by fire, he quailed and

fell. He signed a paper, declaring that he submitted to the council, and that he joined in condemning the errors of Wickliffe and Huss. To this, however, he added the explanation that he was not to be considered as thereby doing any prejudice to the holy truths which these men had taught and preached. Especially did he imply no disparagement of the person and the excellent morals of Huss, nor of the many truths which he had heard from his mouth. Nor did he mean to recant, for he had never held Huss' doctrines as articles of faith, and had never preferred his own judgment to the authority of the Church.

This concession did not satisfy the council; they required an unconditional, unqualified rejection of every doctrine and person which they had condemned. It showed, however, that the spirit of the brilliant heretic was broken, and gave encouragement to expect further developments in the same direction. Four days afterward this expectation was fulfilled, and Jerome's recantation was made sufficiently comprehensive and unreserved to meet the utmost demands of the papal party.

On the 23d of September he appeared before the body, whom he now addressed as "a glorious assembly," as "the temple of the Lord, this present most holy general council," and read his recantation, which had been prepared by the cardinal Cambray. In this document he anathematized every heresy, especially those with which he had been charged,

and which, as held by Wickliffe and Huss, had been condemned by the council. He professed "with heart and mouth" in respect to all matters, especially the keys, sacraments, indulgences, relics, ecclesiastical liberty, rites, and whatever pertains to the Christian religion, as the Roman Church itself and this sacred council profess. As to the philosophical tenet of Realism, he declared that he would not stubbornly adhere to it, and that he did not regard it as necessary to the defence of Catholic truth. More particularly, as to the doctrines of Huss, however he may have heretofore doubted that they were such as the council condemned, he now had seen them exactly as described and condemned by the council, in the books of Huss and in the reformer's own handwriting, which he knew as well as his own. "Whence," he says, "I have apprehended, and do now apprehend, that he and his doctrine, with those that follow it, were not undeservedly condemned by this sacred council as heretical and insane. To the sentences against the doctrines and the person of Huss, I, as a devoted Catholic, in all and regarding all, consent and adhere."

The recantation closed with a solemn oath, as follows: "I moreover swear, by the holy Trinity and by these most holy Gospels, that I will abide undoubtingly in the truth of the Catholic Church, and I do pronounce all those that shall contravene this faith with their dogmas worthy of eternal

anathema. And if I myself shall ever presume to think or preach anything to the contrary, I will subject myself to the severity of the canons, and shall be found exposed to eternal punishment. This copy of my confession and profession before this holy general council I freely and voluntarily present, and have subscribed with my own hand."

Did this act of humiliation and surrender of principle secure the liberation of Jerome? By no means. Notwithstanding he had sacrificed everything, he was a prisoner still. The rigors of his prison-life were softened; that was all. Worse still, after remaining in close confinement for nearly three months after his recantation, a leading member of the council, John Nason by name, declared himself dissatisfied with what had been done in his case, and disclaimed all faith in the sincerity of his recantation. He and the Germans, whom he represented in the council, demanded that severer measures against Jerome should be taken. The same day, December 19, one of those indignant, earnest and powerful epistles from the nobles of Bohemia and Moravia which had begun to reach the council since the burning of Huss, was received, borne this time boldly by a friend of Jerome. The letter, bearing the seals of no less than four hundred and fifty-two persons, most of them barons, nobles and persons of distinction, sharply criticised and condemned the proceedings of the council toward Huss, whom the writers de-

scribed as a holy and just man, whose equal for sanctity and integrity could not be found. The Bohemians would never adhere to the council nor yield to it obedience.

In another letter, emanating from a full council of the nobility of Bohemia and Moravia, convened September 2 expressly to consider the action of the council in regard to Huss, bitter complaint is made that the sacrifice of Huss did not satisfy them, "but that honorable Master Jerome of Prague, a flowing fountain of eloquence, master of the seven liberal arts, as well as an illustrious philosopher, him you have mercilessly arrested and thrown in prison, and perhaps even now you have put him, as you did Master John Huss, to a most cruel death."

Such letters, with abundant evidence that a storm of no ordinary character was gathering in Bohemia, might well have disposed the council to be satisfied with one victim from that country. The recantation of Jerome had given them every pretext which they could have asked, for dealing even more leniently with him than he or his friends could have expected. The commission of cardinals appointed to manage the case, at the head of which stood Cambray, having brought it to such a favorable result, resisted all further proceedings, and demanded that Jerome should be set at liberty.

But Nason persisted in his demands, and insulted the cardinals by insinuating that they had been

bribed to this course of clemency. They indignantly denied the charge, and resigned their places on the commission. A new commission was appointed with one of the most active of the persecutors of Huss, the patriarch of Constantinople, at the head. Paletz and De Causis repeated against Jerome the arts which they had used so successfully against Huss. But the most formidable enemy of Jerome was his rival in eloquence and in the arts of debate, and his antagonist in speculative philosophy, Chancellor Gerson of Paris. Personal feeling seems to have made him a more decided enemy of Jerome even than of Huss. The monks of Prague, smarting under the insults which they had experienced from Jerome himself or through his influence, when they heard of his recantation, hastened to draw up new charges against him, and sent them by the hands of Carmelite friars to Constance, with a demand that he be again put upon trial.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *SPLENDID DEFENCE AND MARTYRDOM OF JEROME.*

**M**ORE than four months rolled by before the council, in April of the following year, again took up the case of Jerome. In the mean time, the prisoner's mind and conscience had not been inactive. He had reflected deeply, painfully and profitably upon the act, by which he gainsaid and dishonored his whole previous career. If he had allowed his mind to be confused by the sophistry of the cardinals, or if, for the sake of escaping death and gaining his freedom, he had belied his own honest convictions and was acting the part of a hypocrite, the momentary confusion or moral obscurtion had passed away. The new enginery which his enemies were preparing against him would only the more fully reveal and the more firmly establish this recovery.

These new charges were contained in a document which might almost be called a romance founded on the facts of Jerome's life. It occupies twenty folio pages of the historian who put it on record. By its extraordinary length it would seem to have

been designed to overwhelm and silence the prisoner. In no instance is the name of a solitary witness given. Jerome refused to answer to these charges before the commission, and demanded a public audience. Finally, this demand was granted, and on the twenty-sixth of May he appeared before the council, and, with a privilege not granted to Huss, was allowed at great length to plead his cause and to answer his enemies.

From the records which we have of this most remarkable defence, from the testimony of witnesses, including his enemies themselves, we may rank the plea of Jerome with the apology of Socrates for its energy of thought and expression, for its fearless attitude toward his enemies, and for its lofty moral tone. To these qualities Jerome added the graces and the magnetism of an irresistible eloquence, through which played the varied light of the most extensive culture and learning that the world at that day could afford. Add to this the effect of a great moral reaction, a strong indignation against himself for his former recantation, which must have wrought up the speaker's powers to the highest tension of which they were capable, and we may well believe that the council was more than once visibly awed by his appeals.

After offering a prayer to God for help, Jerome commenced by addressing the council in very different phrase from the flattery he had employed in his recantation. "Most learned men," he said,



“I am aware that many excellent persons have suffered things unworthy of their virtues, borne down by false witnesses, condemned by unjust judges. If I myself should in like manner be condemned, I shall not be the first, nor do I believe that I shall be the last, to suffer. Still, I have a firm hope in God, my Maker, that yet, when this life is past, they who condemn Jerome unjustly shall see him take precedence of them and summon them to judgment. And then they shall be bound to answer to God and to him, and give an account for the injustice which he has suffered at their hands.”

He then brought forward the long array of the world's heroes in heathen and Christian lands, beginning from Socrates and coming down to Stephen and the apostles, who had suffered unjust condemnation and had died cruel deaths in spite of their innocence. “What an odious thing,” he exclaimed, “that a priest should be condemned by a priest! and yet this has been done. It is more odious still to be condemned by a college of priests; yet this too has taken place. But the crowning point of iniquity is when this is done by a council of priests; and yet we have seen even this to come to pass.”

Every eye was fixed upon Jerome as he uttered these climaxes, in which the council was placed at the pinnacle of all the injustice of the world; yet no one ventured to interrupt him. He now proceeded to explain the causes of the enmity which had been directed against him. “No one,” he said, “now

condemned him but his former friends, now alienated from him by hostility, and the Germans, who were offended by the loss of their three votes in the University of Prague." Jerome spoke of the Bohemians as representing the Greeks, and of the old jealousy of the Germans toward the Greeks as revived in the University. He described the odious tyranny which the Germans had exercised, not only in the University, but in the city government, of Prague, and how the very life of the Bohemian nation and tongue was in danger of perishing, when Huss and himself interfered.

Huss, whom Jerome in his recantation had described as righteously condemned, he now declares to have been a just, holy, upright, devout man, *abiding inflexibly by the truth*. With his aid the revolution had been accomplished, and Bohemians now occupied the places formerly filled by Germans. Hence the opposition shown by that nation to himself and Huss in the council. Michael de Causis was not a Bohemian, but a German.

After referring to the earlier proceedings against Huss, Jerome then dwelt on the various steps in his own case and the treatment which he had received from the council. Referring to his recantation, he said that his human weakness and dread of cruel death by fire had induced him to yield, and to abjure his opinions and approve of the condemnation of the works and the teachings of John Huss. This he now declared he had done in violation of

his conscience, since *the doctrine* of Huss, like his life, was holy and just, and in this conviction he would abide and to it he would firmly adhere. In the same terms he spoke of the doctrines of Wickliffe: "I have never met with the man whose writings were so excellent and profound. I did wrong in speaking of them otherwise; for in my recantation I had no intention to change my opinions, but through cowardice and fear I suffered the dread of fire to extort it from me. The letter of abjuration which I wrote to Bohemia I have also recalled."

Only meagre notes of an oratorical effort which astonished and overawed a great and magnificent assembly of hearers are left to us. Contemporary writers among the Catholics give us a vivid impression of its power. A distinguished Italian scholar of the time, Poggio by name, the discoverer of the manuscripts of Quintilian, Lucretius and others, was present in the council, and heard Jerome's defence. He was a careful observer and a man of critical judgment, and held office as papal secretary under no less than seven popes. "I confess," writes this classically trained and widely learned man, "I never saw one who approached so near, in pleading his own cause, to the eloquence of those ancient models which we regard with so much admiration. It was wonderful to see with what language, what arguments, what oratory of face and gesture, what confidence, he answered his prosecutors and summed up in his own defence. It is sad

that so noble, so superior, an intellect should have been led off to heretical pursuits, if, indeed, the reports in regard to him are true.

“When the articles of accusation were read to him one by one, it was wonderful with what ability he replied and what arguments he urged in his own defence. He adduced nothing that was not worthy of a good man; and if his real belief was what he professed, not only could no cause of death be found in him, but not even the lightest ground of accusation. His exposition of his own life and pursuits was admirable. It showed him great and virtuous.

“Often his sarcasm was stinging; often, even in his sad and perilous situation, he forced the council to laughter as he exposed the absurdity of the charges against him and met them with ridicule. When interrupted, as he often was, in his speech by clamorous and caviling persons, he left not one of them unscathed. All the confusion did not break him down. He retained throughout his firmness and self-possession. How wonderful was his memory, that never failed him, notwithstanding his imprisonment of three hundred and forty days, most of the time in a dungeon so dark that he could not read! Yet he quoted so many authorities of the highest wisdom and learning, so many doctors of the Church whose words testified in his behalf, that you might well have supposed the whole time of his imprisonment to have been devoted in un-

disturbed leisure to the studies of wisdom. His voice was full, sonorous and impressive. His gestures were those of an orator, well adapted to express indignation or to excite pity, which, however, he never asked for nor showed any anxiety to obtain. He stood before the assembly so fearless and intrepid, not only scorning to live, but welcoming death, that you would have called him a second Cato. 'O man,' exclaimed this secretary of seven popes, "worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance among men! I do not praise him in any respect in which he was opposed to the institutions of the Church. I admire his learning, his extensive knowledge, his eloquence and his skill in argument."

Among those who still labored to save his life was this same Poggio, through whose eloquent description we gain so clear a view of Jerome's defence. But it was generally felt to be a hopeless case. "He has pronounced his own sentence," they said to one another. Whatever efforts were made even yet to change his purpose, he continued inflexible.

From the records of various interviews and conversations held with him about this time, we judge that his estimate of sacred Scripture as the only final authority in matters of faith and practice was even clearer and more positive than was expressed by Huss.

"I will abjure," said Jerome, "if you demon-

strate to me from the Holy Scriptures that my doctrine is false."

"Can you be to such an extent your own enemy?" replied the bishops.

"What!" exclaimed Jerome, indignantly; "is my life so precious to me that I refuse to yield it for the truth or for Him who gave his life for me? Are you cardinals, bishops, and can you be ignorant of what Christ has said: 'He that giveth not up all that he hath for my sake is not worthy of me'? Behind me, tempters!"

The cardinal of Florence tried flattery: "Jerome, you are a learned man, loaded with the choicest gifts of God. The council is compassionate, and would grieve to send a man of your rare talents to execution. You may reach high honors and do great service to the Church if you will but be converted. The Church is not so cruel as to refuse a pardon if you but show yourself worthy. I promise you every kind of favor if you will submit."

Jerome returned to the Scriptures: "The only favor I demand is to be convinced by the Holy Scriptures." "Do you believe yourself wiser than all the council?" asked the cardinal. "By no means, since I am anxious to be instructed," replied Jerome. "And in what manner?" asked the cardinal. "By the Holy Scriptures, which are the torch to enlighten us," replied Jerome. "Always the Scriptures!" said the cardinal, whose patience was

giving way. "Who can perfectly comprehend them? Must we not go back to the fathers to learn how to interpret them?" "What do I hear?" exclaimed Jerome, mounting to the highest ground of Protestantism. "Shall the word of God be declared fallacious? And shall it not be regarded? Are the traditions of men more worthy of confidence than the holy gospel of our Saviour? Paul did not exhort the priests to listen to old men and traditions, but directed them to the Holy Scriptures. O sacred Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Ghost! already men esteem you less than what they themselves forge every day. I have lived long enough. Great God, receive my life! Thou canst restore it to me!"

"Heretic!" exclaimed the cardinal, bound fast in the traditions of men and tangled in the worldly policy of a backslidden Church, "I repent having so long plead with you. I see that you are urged on by the devil."

When Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness, he knew enough Scripture and sufficiently appreciated its value to quote it in reply to arguments drawn from Scripture. The cardinal would certainly have showed better in this discussion, if he himself had taken a lesson from the devil, who, he said, had urged on Jerome. But what sort of Church is that which denounces and destroys those who hold the authority of the word of God as above the opinions of men, and ascribes their firm

adherence to this ground to the influence of the devil? It is surely an apostate Church—a human, not a divine, institution.

On the 30th of May the council met to pronounce sentence upon Jerome. A great multitude had been drawn together, and troops were on duty to preserve order. When Jerome was brought in, he was called upon once more to recant. This was his reply :

“Almighty God, and you who hear me, be witness. I swear that I believe all the articles of the Catholic faith as the Church believes and observes them, but I refuse to subscribe to the condemnation of those just and holy men whom you have unjustly condemned because they have denounced the scandals of your life, and it is for this that I am about to perish.”

He then repeated the Creeds, and went on to speak with such eloquence that all were lost in admiration. Several persons drew near and renewed their persuasions, presenting a new form of recantation, but to these offers Jerome turned a deaf ear.

A sermon was now preached, which, with slight regard to dignity, was largely addressed directly to Jerome, and was little more than a rehearsal of the charges which had been made against him. He was accused of being a worse heretic than all others, even including Arius. He had been treated with far more leniency than he deserved. He ought to have been tortured. He should not have been



allowed an audience. His public addresses had convicted himself and closed the lips of his friends. He was his own enemy.

Speaking of Jerome's defence of Huss, the bishop had to admit that Huss' life had been chaste, sober and virtuous, and that his heresy was all that could be charged against him. Notwithstanding the objections urged in the sermon, Jerome was granted another opportunity to speak before hearing his sentence. He turned first to the preacher, and after repelling his charges, he pronounced the sermon a fiction in the sight of God. He then repeated his declarations of adherence to the faith and order of the papal Church. Referring to his recantation, he declared that if he had ever said anything wickedly, it was when he recanted and spoke against his conscience. He had done it through fear of bodily suffering.

Here Jerome's abjuration, bearing his own signature, was read and exhibited. "Yes," said Jerome, "that is my signature, but the fear of the fire extorted it, and bitterly have I grieved over the wicked act. Especially do I condemn myself for consenting to the condemnation of Huss, whom I believe to have been a just and holy man. In all this I have done most wickedly. Nevertheless," he continued, "I shall die a Catholic, as I have lived. I defy the council to prove me a heretic in any point. You have determined my death because I honor men who have

exposed your pride and avarice. Is that a sufficient ground for decreeing my death? Why, before you had found any evil in me whatever, you had resolved upon my death! Courage, then; proceed! But know that in dying I shall leave a sting in your hearts and a gnawing worm in your consciences. I appeal to the sacred tribunal of Jesus Christ, where within a hundred years you shall answer for your conduct toward me."

These words were his death-warrant. They became memorable in connection with the Reformation of Luther's time, one hundred years afterward, and were quoted as a prophecy and referred to Huss, and were even stamped upon coins struck in commemoration of that later event. Jerome, doubtless, meant no more than that the lapse of a century would be more than sufficient to bring him and all his accusers, judges and persecutors before the bar of God.

Sentence against Jerome was now read. It was based upon the violation of his previous submission and recantation, and on his approval of Wickliffe and Huss. It condemned him, cursed him, and handed him over to the civil authorities to receive "the just punishment of his great crime."

The emperor Sigismund was still absent, engaged in tedious negotiations with the obstinate pope Benedict, who as yet had not been induced peaceably to resign the papal office. There is a story that at this stage of the proceedings against Jerome

the emperor's chancellor advanced into the midst of the assembly and protested in the name of his absent master against the whole business, and threatened all persons engaged in the condemnation with the anger of Sigismund. If such an interposition ever was attempted, it effected nothing. The chronicle says, "The chancellor retired without gaining anything."

A paper crown, covered with pictures of devils in the flames, was now produced. Jerome threw off his hat, and with his own hands placed the emblazoned paper on his head, repeating as he did so the words of Huss: "Jesus Christ, who died for me, a sinner, wore a crown of thorns. I will cheerfully wear this for him." He was then given over to the civil authorities.

It was Sabbath morning, still early, for the council opened its sessions by seven o'clock. A file of soldiers took charge of Jerome and led him to execution. As he turned to leave the cathedral he chanted the Creed in a firm voice and with a radiance on his upturned face, as if it were already illumined with light from heaven. He continued his chant until he reached the place of execution, the same spot where his friend Huss had died.

Here, turning his face to the stake, he knelt down in prayer, and so continued until raised by the executioners and prepared for execution. While they piled the wood and bundles of straw around him he sang a hymn of joy beginning, "Hail,

festal day!” and followed it by chanting the Nicene Creed. Addressing the assembled crowd in German, he said, “This which I have chanted is my belief. I die, not because of wrong belief, but because I would not approve the condemnation of Huss, whom I knew as a true preacher of the gospel of Christ.”

Seeing a poor man bringing a fagot to put upon the pile, he smiled and said, “*O sancta simplicitas!*” (“O holy simplicity!”) “A thousand times more guilty is he that misleads thee.” The executioner who bore the torch, with some feelings of delicacy, approached from behind. “Come forward boldly,” called out Jerome, “and apply the fire before my face. Had I been a coward, I should not have been here.” As the flames began to spread he prayed: “Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.” Still later he was heard to say, “O Lord God, almighty Father, have compassion on me and forgive my sins. Thou knowest that I have ever delighted in thy truth.” For a long time after his voice ceased to be heard his lips moved, and it was evident that he continued praying until his unusually-protracted sufferings ended with his life. “One might have gone from St. Clement church to the bridge over the Moldau before he ceased to breathe.”

The papal secretary, the learned Poggio, was an eye-witness of the scene. He was at a loss, even as a heathen might have been, to comprehend what

it was that enabled Jerome to meet his fate so nobly. "With cheerful looks," writes Poggio, "he went readily and willingly to his death. No stoic ever *suffered* death with so firm a soul as Jerome seemed to *demand* it. He endured the torments of the fire with more tranquillity than Socrates in drinking the hemlock." And Eneas Sylvius, as we have seen, said, "Jerome and Huss went to the flames as if invited to a banquet."

Carefully every article of his personal property was gathered; his bed, cap, shoes, clothing, and whatever he had with him in prison, were brought and cast upon the burning pile. His ashes were carted away and thrown, like those of Huss, into the Rhine. These precautions were taken lest his friends should seize and retain them as relics, and so help to perpetuate his memory. In place of some such memento, the very soil around the stake was afterward dug up and carried to Prague, and kept as a precious memorial of Jerome and of Huss.

But little need was there of relics to perpetuate the memory of these glorious martyrs or to keep alive the admiration and love with which they were regarded in Bohemia; and after the century prophesied by Jerome had rolled by, in half the Christian world, as not unfrequently happens, the names of their judges and persecutors are scarcely known otherwise than by the fame of their victims. Jerome and Huss are living memories and living forces in the world to-day. The most illustrious

names in the great Council of Constance are scarcely known beyond the circles of antiquarian research or the narrowest lines of Romish exclusivism. Jerome and Huss shine in the light of that great Reformation which they anticipated by a century. The Council of Constance is infamous as the agency by which the darkness was prolonged, the corruptions of the Church perpetuated, and the people kept in ignorance of the word of God for another hundred years.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *THE NEWS IN BOHEMIA.*

POWERLESS indeed might the little kingdom of Bohemia have appeared, in the presence of the body which represented all the leading governments of Christendom. The Council of Constance, with the emperor Sigismund at its head, needed scarcely to have taken into serious account any opposition to its wishes that came from that quarter. We have seen how summarily the opposition of the duke of Austria was crushed when he undertook to sustain and shelter the fugitive pope John. It is certain that the council carried out to the end its fell purpose against the two most famous and most beloved of the entire Bohemian nation.

But a subdued feeling of uneasiness accompanied all these murderous proceedings toward the Bohemians. They belonged to a powerful and warlike race. Their territory was of great importance in a military point of view, being in some sort a key to the whole of Europe. Thoroughly aroused, they were capable of the most stubborn resistance. Had they been governed by a man fit to be their

king, instead of the feeble Wenzel, they might have poured down from their mountain-fastnesses upon the council, especially during the absence of Sigismund, and driven the members like a flock of frightened sheep in every direction from Constance. To divide Christendom, too, at a time when the dreaded Moslem was thundering at the gates of Hungary, was, moreover, felt to be a dangerous policy.

All these considerations had not availed to restrain the council from violent measures. The deed was done. Extreme provocation had been given to the Bohemian people, and the consequences must now be endured. The executioner's torch had kindled a fire beyond the power of council or emperor to control.

When the news of the execution of Huss reached Prague, the whole city was in commotion. Grief, indignation, resentment, fired the populace. They rushed, as by a common impulse, to the place of all others hallowed by his memory—to Bethlehem chapel. They were ready for any measures of reprisal, and only needed a leader to set them on the march to Constance itself. The burning of Huss had made him the apostle and martyr of his nation. The cruelty and faithlessness of the council were the theme of unmeasured and indignant invective. The dwellings of the priests known to be hostile to Huss were sacked and destroyed. The archbishop Albius was besieged in his palace and compelled to fly. The king, roused from his prevalent in-



difference, took the burning of Huss as a personal affront, and the queen Sophia went over openly to the party of Huss. The people felt that the nation of the Czechs and the Slavic race had been irreparably wronged and insulted, by the unjust and cruel burning of one, who was not more a religious than a patriotic and national leader. The sense of a grievous wrong, united with violent religious excitement and with outraged patriotism, is sufficient to explain the rise and the vehement and formidable character of the Hussite wars.

The University of Prague, as might have been expected, vehemently protested against the cruel and shameful death of their most renowned member and rector. Without a dissenting voice, the convocation of doctors appealed to the whole of Europe against the action of the council, and in vindication of the insulted reputation of the University. They are resolved that "the great renown of one of our own children, John of Hussnitz, surnamed Huss, should not fade away, but shine forth more and more, in the eyes of the universe."

With a burst of uncontrollable feeling they write: "O man, truly pious, truly humble, conspicuous with the lustre of great virtue, accustomed to despise riches and to succor the poor, even to experiencing want thyself, whose place was by the bedside of the unfortunate, who invitedst by thy tears the most hardened hearts to repentance, and soothedst rebellious spirits by the persuasive-

ness of the gospel word, in whose mouth the ancient Scriptures appeared as new doctrines, who, following the footsteps of the apostles, restored the morals of the primitive Church in the clergy and the people!

“Beyond a doubt,” they continue, “Nature had loaded this man with all her gifts, and divine grace was so abundantly vouchsafed to him that he seemed rather to be virtue itself than to be merely virtuous. His acts speak for themselves. A frightful death, borne with wonderful patience, proves that he placed his trust on a heavenly foundation. It is, in fact, a divine thing, the effect of a courage inspired by God alone, to endure so many outrages, so many tortures and so much infamy for the truth of God, to receive all these insults with a calm and serene countenance, to shine forth with an illustrious piety in the most bitter and cruel death.”

The tardy council suffered twenty days to pass after the execution of Huss, before they took the trouble to notify the Bohemians of their action in the case and of the grounds upon which they justified its severity. In their letter, addressed to the clergy of every grade in Prague, they begin by dwelling upon the evils of heresy and schism, singling out the perverse doctrines of Wickliffe, who holds the first place among pestiferous heretics. The minds of many, particularly of Huss and Jerome, had been infected by this heresy. Through

the urgency of men of the Bohemian nation, the council had been led to consider the state of things in that country. They had examined Huss and his writings, and had used every means in their power to induce him to recant his false doctrines. They claimed to have treated him with great charity. They had sought, not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn and live.

All, however, had been in vain. Convicted of the most manifest and intolerable heresy, he had been necessarily condemned and degraded, and delivered over to the secular arm. Therefore, king, bishop and clergy are exhorted by the bowels of Jesus Christ to perfect the work of reform, to silence all those pestiferous men who teach and preach the doctrine of Wickliffe and his zealot Huss, and to root out their dangerous doctrines from the very extremities of the kingdom.

Accompanying these admonitions were those violent and cruel threatenings, which are still natural in the mouths of Roman Catholic officials, of punishment, excommunication in its worst form, and degradation from the priesthood, to all those who opposed the good work or failed to render it all due assistance.

This or similar letters were sent not only to Bohemia, but also to Moravia and Silesia, where Huss had numerous followers. On the 25th of August, 1415, they despatched the famous military bishop of Leitomischl—John of Iron, as he was

called—with the power of an extraordinary apostolical legate, to represent the council in Bohemia. But neither the iron qualities nor the high-sounding titles of this personage availed with the incensed populace. Even the king forbade him to enter his dominions. Venturing, nevertheless, to prosecute his mission, he found himself an object of such universal odium that he scarcely showed himself in public and considered his life to be in danger.

Not that the bishop, or the council even, was without friends in Bohemia. The large German element always found in that country, embracing many of the clergy who did not share in the national feeling toward Huss, was easily held in allegiance to the council. Already, before the arrival of the bishop, the clergy connected with the cathedral church of Prague had held an assembly, and passed sharp decrees against the spread of the communion of the cup and of lay-preaching in the rural districts. October 1 they formed a union, to which only fourteen barons subscribed, pledging unconditional obedience to the council. Later, in the month of November, they laid the city of Prague under an interdict on account of the presence of Jesenic, the friend of Huss, within the walls. Even after he had left the city, the interdict was strenuously observed by that part of the clergy. As an interdict forbade all official acts of the clergy, they must have enjoyed a long vacation.

Meanwhile, the Hussites did not allow them-

selves to be disturbed by bishop, council or interdict. An extraordinary meeting of the nobles of the whole kingdom was held at Prague, September 2, 1415, at which a letter to the Council of Constance was prepared and adopted. It was freighted with the whole burden of indignation and defiance, with which the leaders and the mass of the people were inspired toward the council. It arraigned the council for putting their beloved and honored neighbor and master, John Huss, of blessed memory, to a shameful and cruel death, to the perpetual infamy and disgrace of their country. It reaffirmed, in the most emphatic manner, the confidence of the Bohemian nation in the innocence and orthodoxy of Huss. It complained of the arrest of Jerome, whom perhaps even by that time the council had also put to a cruel death.

The letter repelled as atrocious the charges of widespread errors and heresies in Bohemia, and pointed triumphantly to the whole history of the country as a record of consistent and unwavering fidelity to the Roman Church. "Each and every individual bringing such charges directly lies in his teeth, is a wicked wretch and traitor, a child of all malice and iniquity and of the devil himself, who is a liar and the father of it."

The letter closed by declaring it the purpose of the assembly to defend and protect the law of our Lord Jesus Christ and his devoted, humble and constant preachers, even to the shedding of blood,

all fear and all human statutes enacted to the contrary being trampled under our feet.

To this document was appended the signatures of nearly sixty of the nobility of Bohemia and Moravia, embracing the most important personages in both countries. It was followed up, three days afterward, by a decree requiring every proprietor to allow the doctrines of Huss to be preached on his estate. A religious covenant or union was also entered into for mutual support and encouragement, in which it was agreed that the decisions of the Romish Church and of the future pope, as well as of bishops in Bohemia and Moravia, should be respected and executed only so far as they were in accord with the will of God and of Holy Scripture. Excommunications and other severe measures, that might result from this action, would be met by the mutual and combined resistance of the union. This league was to last six years, and then to cease unless renewed.

Thus the banner of Holy Scripture as a supreme authority in religion was raised, and by that bold act the Hussite party was organized.

Later in the year another letter was despatched to the council of a still more positive character. Bearing the seals of no less than four hundred and fifty persons of eminence in the Bohemian nation, it declared that on account of the evil proceedings of the council, the Bohemians will neither adhere to it nor yield it obedience.

This is the letter which reached Constance on the 19th of December—the very day when the German nation, through John Nason, demanded the reopening of the case of Jerome. It no doubt had influence with the council in delaying proceedings against Jerome; at the same time, it sharpened the purpose of the body to deal effectually with this uprising against their authority.

On the 20th of February, 1416, the council issued a citation couched in severe language to the four hundred and fifty-two signers of the letter of December, requiring them peremptorily to appear and answer the charge of heresy. As King Wenzel had forbidden the bishop John to enter his dominions, and as his queen Sophia had introduced Hussite pastors in all her estates, it was designed to include even these royal personages in the citation, but the interference of Sigismund prevented this extreme manifestation of consistency.

It was not until the fifth of the following May that the citation was posted upon the doors of the churches of Constance. A commission to conduct the trial was also appointed, and the day was fixed for the 3d of June. Little recked the Bohemian barons of all this parade of authority in the remote city of Constance. They treated it with contempt. Not one of all the four hundred and fifty answered the summons in person or by letter. They had heard of the fate of Jerome, which, if it had been possible, would have added intensity to feelings

already strained to the highest pitch of indignation and resentment. Not appearing on the day of trial, they were judged guilty of contumacy by the council.

The Hussite preachers prosecuted their labors with ever-increasing popularity. The communion of the cup was freely enjoyed by the laity. One after another the Catholic clergy of the country espoused the cause of the Hussites. The archbishop Conrad of Prague himself, in 1420, united with the moderate party of the reformers. Churches were thrown open for the use of the Hussites, and for the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the scriptural form.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *THE HUSSITES AND THE COUNCIL.*

WHILE the proceedings of the council dragged, the Hussite movement gained in strength daily. The absence of Sigismund was protracted to eighteen months—from July, 1415, to January, 1417. He had been vainly chasing and negotiating with a fugitive but inflexible pope, and now the work of getting rid of Benedict had to be done by the council, after all. This repetition of a most annoying process, and the still more important and delicate business of supplying a new pope, occupied the council nearly seventeen months, from the time first fixed for the trial of the four hundred and fifty-two signers.

Meanwhile, a diversity of opinions appeared among the Hussites themselves; and as early as the opening of the year 1417, we behold the beginning of those differences which, more than the death of both their leaders and more than all the power of their mightiest enemies, brought about their own overthrow. The germs of two parties might be clearly seen—the moderate and the extreme. Those holding moderate views were called

“Calixtines,” from the Latin word for cup, *calix*, because they allowed the laity the use of the cup in the Lord’s Supper. The extremists were called Taborites, from the name Tabor, which was applied to a favorite place of rendezvous, a hill fifty miles south of Prague.

On the 25th of January the University, which espoused the moderate side, under the lead of its most famous professors, Jesenic, Jacobel, Christann of Prachatitz and John Cardinalis, took action upon the prevalence of extreme views. With pain they learned that in some communities it was taught and believed that there was no such place as purgatory—consequently, that prayers and alms for the dead were of no avail; that it was contrary to Scripture to keep or to worship images of the saints; that such ceremonies as the use of holy water, palms, Easter-eggs, and the like, were needless and wrong. In September of the following year a kind of synod of these Calixtines was held in Prague, in which a creed of twenty-three articles was adopted, in which the attempt was again made to restrain the rapidity and extravagance of the ultra wing, and to hold the reform movement close to the lines of Catholic orthodoxy.

Even these moderates, however, were far enough from admitting the decrees of the Council of Constance. In March, 1417, the University declared the communion in both bread and wine to be the true form, and that the Bohemians need not fear

to go wrong in that practice, even though an angel from heaven would undertake to teach them differently. But harsh language to those who adhere to the prevailing use of the bread alone is not employed. The University urges indulgence in behalf of those who, through past observances or through ignorance and simplicity, had never adopted their own opinion. The two divisions of the Hussites—one holding that only that which was required by Scripture was binding (Taborites)—the other claiming that all doctrines and ordinances of the existing Church not contrary to Scripture should be observed (Calixtines),—are likened to the two different parties in the great Reformation, the first corresponding to Calvin and the second to Luther; or, again, the first followed more in the footsteps of the uncompromising Wickliffe, and the second in those of the conservative Huss himself.

Thus the movement against papal authority, as represented in the Council of Constance, continued to develop itself in spite of all the threats, exhortations, citations, embassies and sentences directed against it. Even the emperor Sigismund took part in these efforts, and wrote letters to the Hussites to dissuade them from their course. In one of these letters he speaks in a tone of hypocritical affection for his brother, King Wenzel, and declares himself deeply anxious that nothing may occur to the prejudice of him or of his kingdom. "The council,"

he writes, "had determined to proceed against his brother as a favorer of heresy, but he had dissuaded them from such a purpose."

"This state of things," adds the emperor, "had now lasted three years, but how much longer he should be able to hold back the vengeance of the council it was impossible to say." He exhorts the Bohemians to resist the new opinions; he who failed to prosecute the offenders was guilty of cherishing them. No object could be more precious or more important than diligently to promote the true faith. If these counsels and commands are rejected, the Council of Constance will proceed against them, and will, if necessary, invoke the secular arm. The emperor also wrote to his brother, King Wenzel, warning him of the danger of a crusade against his kingdom, in which case he would be compelled to march against his own brother.

So unwise and so exasperating are some of the emperor's expressions that a Jesuit historian has suspected the genuineness of the letters and has preferred to believe them Hussite forgeries, designed to cast odium upon Sigismund. But the evidence is too clear, and the emperor, as well as the council, is convicted of folly in his dealings with the Bohemians.

In the year 1417 the emperor wrote a letter to the Bohemian nobles intended to explain and defend his conduct, especially in reference to Huss. In this, he confesses that he was overpowered by

the council, which threatened to dissolve if he did not yield to their demands: "Should he, for the sake of one man's life, defeat all the hopes of Christendom, which centred in the existence and proceedings of the council?" He repeats his threats of a crusade if the Bohemians persist in their course.

At the close of the year 1417 safe-conducts had been sent into Bohemia for all those who had been cited to appear before the council. But whatever possible inducements the Bohemians had for attending the council, among them could not be reckoned the mockery of safe-conducts. It is not known that a single individual of the four or five hundred responded to the summons.

The following February (1418) the council passed a decree embodying its demands in regard to the Hussites. This required King Wenzel to swear to maintain inviolate the rights of the Church against the Hussite movement, and demanded the utter suppression of every heretical doctrine and practice, including the ministration of the cup to the laity, the reformation of the University, so that the disciples of Huss and Wickliffe should be excluded therefrom, the surrender and burning of the books of Huss, Wickliffe and Jacobel, and the destruction by fire of all convicted of teaching the doctrines of Huss and Wickliffe or maintaining the sanctity of these men.

This extreme and impracticable decree—which,

in fact, was never enforced—was followed up by the bull of the new pope, Martin V., in the following month. In the habitual fashion of such documents, it overflows with Italian vehemence and passion; it mutters, roars and thunders like one of the volcanoes of that unsettled portion of the earth's crust. Gillett calls it "a written *auto-da-fé*, a legible funeral-pile, every line aglow with the spirit of the inquisitor;" "a model from which bigoted intolerance and persecution might copy." Such models, however, can be found in abundance in the records of the Vatican.

In this document the Hussites are described as schismatic, seditious, impelled by Luciferian pride and wolfish rage, duped by devilish tricks, like Samson's foxes tied together by the tail, even though scattered over the world, and thus leagued together to accomplish the work of Wickliffe, Huss and Jerome. All who held the doctrines or defended the characters of Huss and Wickliffe were to be punished for their enormous crimes.

All kings, princes, lords, nobles, knights, cities, Universities, etc., must banish such persons beyond their jurisdiction; they must not be suffered to preach, dwell, possess property, engage in business, or have anything to do in common with the faithful. If they died heretics, even though not formally declared to be such, they were to be denied Christian burial. Their property was to be confiscated. Suspected persons must clear themselves

under oath ; if they did not do so in a year, they were to be condemned as heretics.

The secular authorities of all ranks were required to render all necessary aid, and the ecclesiastics of every degree must diligently search out all heretics and favorers of heresy, under penalty of deposition and punishment, according to the enormity of their crime.

Not content with general denunciations and commands, the bull went into minute details ; it enumerated the forty-five condemned articles of Wickliffe and the thirty charged against Huss. To these thirty-nine others were added, making over a hundred points on which suspected persons might be examined. Moreover, they were to be asked whether they had known or conversed with these heretics, or had prayed for them, or had spoken of or had regarded them as holy ; whether they approved of their condemnation in the very terms used by the Council of Constance.

These questions were to be answered under oath. No counsel was to be allowed to suspected persons, and no appeal from the decision, whatever it might be, was to be suffered. If necessary, the secular power was to be summoned to execute the sentence ; and woe be to those who neglected any of the duties here laid upon them !

Thus, one of the earliest acts of the new pope, who had been elected the preceding November, was to carry out the spirit which he had shown

when cardinal, for it was into his hands that the case of Huss in its earliest stages had been committed. It was the cardinal Colonna, now Pope Martin V., who had sustained the complaints carried by the enemies of Huss from Prague to Pope Alexander at Rome, who refused to listen to the advocates of Huss, and who, in despite of the interposition of the king and queen, the University and a deputation of the lords and barons of Bohemia and Moravia, issued a decree of excommunication against Huss, and encouraged and sustained the archbishop Sbynco in all the violent measures—the burning of the books, the interdict, etc.—by which he attempted to enforce the decree.

The same violent measures which had in vain been tried upon individuals were now threatened against a whole people. Besides the bull, the dark possibility of a crusade or religious war now loomed up in the near distance. Such a measure was at this time actually invoked by the pope, at the request of Portugal, against the Moors. That a Christian people, a pure and harmless population, might be subjected to the same merciless process, had not long before been illustrated by the crusade against the Albigenses, which in the name of peace had turned the garden of Southern France into a solitude.

A few months afterward—July or August, 1418—the pope sent Cardinal Dominic as legate into Bohemia. He discharged his mission in the same



uncompromising and violent spirit. Entering a Hussite church near Prague, he dashed down a box supposed to contain the vessels used in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and ordered that the old method of communion should be restored. The burning of two victims at the same place is charged upon him in connection with the archbishop.

He thus gave an illustration of the spirit of the late bull more forcible than even the strong language in which it was couched. Had he remained in the country much longer, he would have furnished an illustration equally distinct and impressive of the attitude of the people toward the pope and council and their agents.

Alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, greeted everywhere with derisive songs, ridicule and insult, his life threatened, Dominic retired, having accomplished no more than the Iron Bishop of Leitomischl on his embassy of 1415. His conclusion, which he wrote to pope and to emperor, was that the day for words with the Bohemians had passed, and that nothing now remained but to reduce them by force of arms.

But before the clash of arms silenced the voice of law the Bohemians made manful answer to the cruel bull of the pope. Not that their answer was addressed to the obdurate enemy, first of Huss, and now of themselves. That would have been a superfluous piece of simplicity. Their paper is

entitled "A faithful and Christian exhortation of the Bohemians to kings and princes to stir them up to the zeal of the gospel." In this circular letter, they indignantly protest against the effort to stir up against them a religious war, and charge that the purpose of this crusade is not for the defence of the Christian faith, but because the projectors fear their secret vices and heresies shall be revealed. If they had a true cause, they would take the books of Holy Scripture, and would come to us and confute us with the weapons of God's word; and that is our chief desire. The truth ought not to be afraid of falsehood.

The writers earnestly beg for an assembly to be called by general agreement among rulers and people, where the opposing parties may contend together by peaceful argument on the basis of Scripture alone; they promise that if confuted out of Scripture they will submit and do penance for their errors. But if, instead of the weapons of reason and Scripture, they are to be assailed by violence and war, then they will take the Lord and his truth to their help, and will defend it to the death. "We will not be afraid," they say, "for the excommunication and curse of the pope or his cardinals, or of the bishops, because we know that the pope is not God, as he makes himself, nor have his excommunications in the past hindered us from enjoying the divine grace and blessing."

The apology closes with a statement of the articles which they will strive for and maintain, to the last extremity. These are: (1) the prohibition of gross public sins, whether in clergy or laity; (2) the discouragement of great revenues and worldly pomp as inconsistent with the simplicity of ministers of Jesus Christ; (3) the freedom of preaching and reading the word of God in all places; and (4) the communion of the cup in the Eucharist.

With what expectations this apology was written appears from the offices held by the signers. They were the four military leaders of the Bohemians. Sincerely desirous of peace, they meant their apology to be understood as a declaration of readiness for war whenever that event should come; and, without doubt, the four generals fairly represented the sentiment of the nation. In fact, this document was the close of the period of negotiations, the last of the communications between the representatives of spiritual usurpation on the one hand, and of reasonable and scriptural resistance on the other. The appeal was now made to the God of battles.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *THE HUSSITE WAR.*

NEVER did a little kingdom, just entering upon a life-and-death struggle with foes many times stronger than itself, so painfully lack a competent ruler. The man who sat on the throne of Bohemia at this most critical hour was eminent only in unfitness. Not wanting in good impulses at times, he was without firmness, without principle, without character—a mere cipher, feared by neither the friends nor the enemies of Huss. Extravagant, cowardly, passionate, he might have been dangerous if he had not been intemperate and indolent besides. The best that can be said of him is, that he offered no serious hindrance to the spread of Hussite opinions, nor, for that matter, to any other movement in or out of his kingdom.

Had Bohemia enjoyed such a ruler as the still smaller states of Holland afterward possessed in the prince of Orange, under whose leadership they finally triumphed over still greater odds and secured their triumph by wise organization—had Huss been spared to quell by the sanctity of his character the divisions and the fanaticisms of his followers, to

hold before their path the mild and steady light of the gospel,—a fairer record and a more fortunate ending would have been ours to transcribe than the bloody annals and almost fruitless struggles of the Hussite war.

Such was the marvelous prowess of this little nation, and such was the skill of its *military* leaders, that, though torn by anarchy within, it was literally unconquerable by any force that could be brought to bear upon it from without. As France, struggling and seething with violent internal commotions, was through her Napoleon crushing all armed opposition from without, and even shattering the proud governments that opposed him, so, on a smaller scale, Bohemia, always virtually, and soon actually, without a king or civil government, set at naught and scattered in panic the vast armies sent against her, and spread dismay to the heart of Germany by the invasions of her fierce soldiery, whom no force could hinder or withstand.

The last of the heroic names that shine through the darkness now descending upon Bohemia is that of ZISCA. Of noble parentage, his birthplace was the open field, under the shadow of an oak tree. John de Trocznow—for that was his family-name—was born about the year 1360. From his early youth he was of a bold and warlike disposition. His name, Zisca, is said to mean “one-eyed;” but whether this is its meaning or not, he certainly lost an eye in early life. His military

experience was gained in wars with the Poles and in Hungary against the advances of the Mohammedan hordes. He warmly espoused the views of Huss, and shared in the deep and general indignation called out by his fate. In fact, the event cast a noticeable gloom over his conduct. He went about as one absorbed in schemes of revenge for the great wrong. Besides this national insult, he carried in his bosom the memory of a grievous wrong done to his own sister by a wicked priest. And now both his gallant countrymen, Huss and Jerome, had fallen a sacrifice to their zeal for reforming the clergy from their corrupt and scandalous lives. Zisca had surely abundant material for bitter meditations.

One day King Wenzel observed him walking in the court of the palace, absorbed in revery.

“What is it,” asked the king, “that so intensely occupies your thoughts?”

“The grievous affront,” he answered, “which has been offered to the Bohemian nation in the punishment of John Huss.”

“Neither you nor I,” said the slothful monarch, “are in a condition to avenge the affront; but if you can find means to do it, take courage and avenge your fellow-countryman.”

That was sufficient to bring to a decision the half-formed purpose of Zisca. Free from all hostile interference on the part of the king, his plans could now be prosecuted with some prospect

of success. He soon appears as the leader of the irresistible hosts which defied and alarmed all the nations of Central Europe.

The early friend and neighbor of Huss, Nicholas of Hussinitz, a powerful baron, was associated with Zisca in these opening scenes of the war. Of Nicholas, however, the weak monarch was jealous; suspecting him of designs upon the throne, he banished him from Prague. Zisca also withdrew at the same time. Soon, Nicholas had gathered from the district where himself and Huss were natives an army of no less than forty thousand men, all eager to maintain their rights against royal or priestly opposition.

To this great assembly Nicholas proposed, somewhat rashly, the election of a king who would be of the same belief with themselves. Had the whole nation united in such an act and been guided to a wise choice, it would have been timely, and years of anarchy would have been saved to the nation. But under the circumstances, the advice of a priest—Coranda, who had joined the Hussite movement, and who was a popular and powerful speaker—was more judicious. He reminded the assembly that Wenzel was king only in name, and it was better to have the harmless shadow of a king on the throne than to put one there in whom all would not be united, and whose decided opinions might unnecessarily prejudice their cause in the eyes of the world.

Thus, practically, there was no government in Bohemia, except as the leaders of the Hussite movement exercised restraint over their followers. Just here the influence of a man like Huss would have been most wholesomely felt. The war-cry was "Wickliffe and Huss!" but Huss would have rebuked, and to a great degree prevented, the acts of violence done in his name. Rapine and disorder spread over the land. Priests were driven from their parishes. Churches were pillaged. Monasteries were plundered and burned. Resistance to the Hussite movement was overawed. The sacramental cup was freely administered to the laity throughout Bohemia.

King Wenzel now withdrew from the capital, and shut himself up like a frightened refugee in the castle of Fossenicz, refusing to see any one. It does not appear that any arrangements for carrying on the government during his absence had been made. The nobility, in large numbers, went to visit him; but when he saw them coming, he redoubled his guards and denied them admittance. Two venerable men were selected from the deputation to convey to the king their demand for an audience, which was at length granted, and the king was persuaded to return to Prague.

Established once more in the royal palace, he was induced to grant to the Hussites the use of certain churches in the city, where they might celebrate the communion according to Christ's original



institution. From that time (1415), the memory of Huss and Jerome was celebrated on the anniversary of the burning of Huss, the sixth day of July. So long and so zealously was this day observed that toward the close of the sixteenth century, more than one hundred and fifty years afterward, the abbot of the cloister of Emmaus in Prague was severely handled for allowing work be done in his vineyard on the sixth of July, as if it were an ordinary work-day.

A sermon is preserved in the records of the time which was preached in Bethlehem chapel during this month, and possibly on this very anniversary. Introduced with an invocation to Christ instead of the popish *Ave Maria*, which Huss himself had been accustomed to use, it shows progress in Christian simplicity. The topic is "The blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." A large part of the sermon is devoted to a eulogium of the pure and matchless character and heroic death of Huss. "We are constrained to believe," says the preacher, "that his spirit, like that of Elijah, mounted to heaven in a chariot of fire, to be received into the company of the angels."

A prominent matter of discussion in this disturbed state of affairs was the management of the schools. When the churches were not taken from the priests, as was for the most part the case, the congregation refused to yield up the schools, which they claimed in any case to be their own. Hence

the Catholic priests were driven to hold their schools in belfries and other unsuitable places. Two sorts of scholars would thus be found in the same church, one studying in Latin and the other in Tchechish. The citizens mingled in these strifes. Blows, wounds, and even death, sometimes resulted.

It was probably after the return of the king to Prague that the Hussite leaders were summoned to appear before him unarmed. What may have been the purpose of the vacillating monarch is unknown, but the energy and promptness of Zisca showed him equal to any possible emergency. On the 15th of April, 1418, he placed himself at the head of an armed body of Hussites, and they entered the palace in answer to the royal summons.

"Sire," said Zisca to the astonished Wenzel, "behold a body of your faithful subjects. We have brought our arms, as you commanded. Show us your enemies, and you shall acknowledge that our weapons can nowhere be more useful to you than in the hands which now hold them." To this audacious address the overawed monarch could only gasp out in reply, "Take your arms and use them properly."

Thus Zisca was immensely strengthening the popular movement and gaining for himself that eminent position before the people for which his great abilities as a leader fitted him. Yet his whole career, from beginning to end, seems to have been clear of all personal ambition. Fanatical and vio-

lent at times, even unsparing in his cruelty, he was conspicuous among all the great leaders of men for absolute unselfishness.

The proclamations of Napoleon to his soldiers are not more stirring than the messages of Zisca to his adherents. "May God grant," he says to the inhabitants of Tausch, "dear brethren, that, performing good works, like the true children of your heavenly Father, you may remain steadfast in his fear! Let not affliction abate your courage; imitate the old Bohemians, your ancestors, always ready to defend God's cause and their own. Let us constantly have before our eyes the divine law and the common good, and let whoever knows how to handle a knife, or to throw a stone, or to brandish a club, be ready to march. Let your preachers encourage your people to war against Antichrist; let every one, young and old, prepare for it. Be ready with provisions and forage; lay up a store also of good works. Behold, the time is now come to arm yourselves, not only against your outward enemies, but also against those among yourselves. Remember your first combat, when you were few in number against many, and without arms against those that were well equipped. The hand of God is not shortened; courage, therefore, and be ready.

"ZISCA OF THE CUP."

Thus we have in Zisca a leader like Cromwell. A kind of anticipation seems to echo through this

letter of the famous piece of advice given by Oliver to his soldiers: "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." A religious enthusiasm, the mightiest spring of action which the world has ever seen, animated the Hussite hosts. The unconquerable resolution and trust in God which enabled Huss and Jerome to face the stake without flinching, might be witnessed with indifference by a council which had them in their power; but the degree of resistance which that same spirit, infused through the rank and file of a great army, could make in battle, was a problem in dynamics surprisingly beyond the powers of the wisest and most learned doctors of the council to calculate.

The army of Zisca, now gathering at Tabor, was composed of patriots, of men burning with indignation at the treachery of the emperor and the violence of the council toward the two idols of the nation, but, above all, of men of deep religious convictions. They demanded liberty of opinion and of worship within the limits of Scripture doctrine.

They saw in council, pope and emperor who threatened them with dire penalties, no evidence of a zeal for religious truth, or even of moral principle. The council had dissolved, after electing Martin V., without any attempt at reform. They had burned Huss and Jerome, but they had refused to condemn the cold-blooded assassination of the duke of Orleans, as well as the elaborate argument in

defence of the deed which had been published and maintained by a priest; they had suffered the ferocious violence of the Teutonic knights in Poland and their apologist to pass unreprieved.

Gerson himself cried out in despair at the flagrant inconsistency of the council. The emperor Sigismund protested in vain against the dissolution of the council without undertaking anything in earnest for reform; he even reprovved the newly-elected pope for corrupt and venial practices in which he had been detected. What wonder that every pulse of religious feeling among the Hussites was left free to throb at will against the pretended representative body of the Roman Catholic world? To them it was the very incarnation of injustice. It was an engine of Antichrist.

The gathering-place of the Hussite forces was a spot to which they had given the name of Tabor. It was a high hill, about fifty miles directly south of Prague, difficult of access and chosen as a place of safety. Prague could not be regarded as such under German influence and with the palace of the vacillating king. To Tabor, from all parts of Bohemia, thronged the supporters of the national cause. Here they established a vast fortified camp; here, too, they built houses, and took up their abode with wives and families. Here, although they objected to the Latin tongue in the Church service, and thus allowed their Latin studies to fall into neglect, they faithfully instructed the children in their own lan-

guage. Women and children could read and write. Æneas Sylvius, afterward pope, writes that he visited Tabor in 1451, and that scarcely a woman was to be found who could not read the Old and New Testaments and give intelligent answers to questions upon their contents. He was ashamed of the priests of his own country—Italy—who had not once read the New Testament. Here, to the number of forty thousand, they celebrated the Lord's Supper. This was on the 22d of July, 1419.

A week and a day afterward the war may be said to have begun; Zisca led his army upon the capital city. King Wenzel once more had abandoned his palace and retired to a castle some miles distant. The queen bravely remained. The officers and soldiers left behind by the king had been guilty of violent and oppressive acts toward the Hussites. Some had been assaulted and imprisoned. Churches into which they had been admitted for the performance of their rites were closed against them. It was clear that the Hussites of Prague were unsafe while the soldiers of the king occupied a strong position within the city walls.

The army of Zisca was no mere mob of undisciplined fanatics. He had trained them by severe drill into the fair semblance of a regular army. They were prepared for genuine military enterprises when he led them against Prague. Yet Zisca was evidently not ready for open war. He intended to go no farther at present than to intimi-

date the papal party. But events soon passed out of his control.

Entering the old city, which was distinct from that occupied by the king's representatives, they were joined by the inhabitants. Some of his soldiers, finding St. Stephen's church barred against them, broke it open, and hung the priest, who tried to exclude them, from a window of his own parsonage. Then they entered the church, and without a thought of the inconsistency of the act, they celebrated the Lord's Supper in their own fashion.

Then, forming in regular order, they marched to the council-house, and made a peaceable but peremptory demand for the release of their imprisoned brethren. While the council hesitated and the soldiers waited without, a stone was thrown from the window of the council-house, which struck the Hussite priest.

That stone began the Hussite war. The soldiers and people could not but regard it as a challenge. Led on by Zisca, they stormed and captured the council-house; out of eighteen councilors eleven escaped, but the seven captured were Germans, who were thrown from the windows and killed by falling on the lances and spears of the armed multitude below. This act was not followed up, as might have been expected, by general outbreaks of violence. On the contrary, a proclamation was issued, calling upon the citizens to meet at the council-house and elect magistrates who should

take charge of the affairs of the city until the regular time of electing such officers recurred.

The assault upon the king's forces, which had withdrawn to the castle, was kept up unsuccessfully for several days. The queen, who had remained behind, and who had now become hostile to the Hussite movement, sent messenger after messenger to Sigismund imploring his aid. Zisca withdrew to Pilsen, fifty or sixty miles south-west of Prague, to hold in check any such possible succor.

The obstinate resistance of the castle led to proposals of a compromise; but as the citizens insisted on freedom of worship and the garrison refused to grant it, no progress was made, and the castle remained in a state of siege. The news of what had taken place in his capital soon reached the ears of Wenzel, and threw him into a fit of uncontrollable fury. That which most incensed him was the appointment of an election of magistrates without the least reference to his authority. As he poured forth a torrent of abuse upon all concerned in the measure, one of the attendants ventured to say that he had foreseen what had taken place; probably he was understood to intimate that it was Wenzel's own fault in withdrawing from Prague.

Wenzel, excited beyond all self-control, sprang upon the speaker, hurled him to the ground, and drawing his dagger prepared to despatch him. Had not the king been forcibly restrained by his



attendants, he would have murdered him on the spot. Instead of slaying the free-spoken courtier, Wenzel's fit of passion led to his own death. He was struck with paralysis, at first in the left side. After lingering eighteen days, a second stroke put an end to his unworthy life. This was August 16, 1419.

Doubtless, Sigismund now thought the way was open for him to add Bohemia to his dominions. This was the wish of the widowed queen Sophia, and to this she endeavored to gain the assent of the people of Prague. Vain attempt! The prospect of such an event as the accession of the betrayer of John Huss to the throne of Bohemia, filled their minds with horror, and served but to unite and stimulate them in their determination to gain religious liberty.

The death of Wenzel was followed by great disorders in the city of Prague. Churches in which the cup was not allowed to the laity were attacked and despoiled. The Carthusian monastery was seized, the monks made prisoners and the buildings burned. The disorder spread to the surrounding regions. A multitude of sympathizers from the rural districts marched in procession to the city, and were welcomed at the gates with beating of drums and with lighted torches, and entertained several days at the expense of the citizens.

A truce was patched up between the queen and the citizens which lasted some weeks. But when

it was discovered that the queen's party was negotiating with the Germans, the citizens flew to arms and called upon Zisca for aid, while they once more assailed the garrison and attempted to drive it from the city. Alarmed at the partial success of the citizens, the queen fled from Prague at midnight.

For several days the contest lingered on indecisively. At length Zisca and Nicholas appeared before the walls with four thousand Taborites. This reinforcement enabled the citizens to drive the garrison back to the castle, and to press the siege with such vigor that they were glad to offer terms to the besiegers. According to these terms, the Hussites were allowed to celebrate the Lord's Supper in their own way, and the law of God and the truth of the gospel should be maintained throughout the kingdom. On the other hand, the citizens were to abstain from further violence, either toward the churches or the garrison.

Thus the enemies of the Hussites retained their stronghold in the capital, and Zisca withdrew to his encampment. The truce began November 12, and was to last five months. But it proved of no avail as a protection to the Hussites. Wherever their enemies were in the majority, every kind of violence and insult was heaped upon them. They were imprisoned, sold as slaves and put to death. A Hussite priest, who had been visiting the sick, was captured and sold to a band of Germans. They bound him to a tree and burned him alive.

Sixteen hundred persons suffered death by these persecutions.

Meantime, Sigismund summoned the Bohemians to recognize him as their sovereign, and demanded that, as proof of their loyalty, the citizens of Prague should level their fortifications and take down the statues which they had set up since the death of Wenzel. The monks must not be molested. All magistrates who adhered to the cup in the sacrament should be deposed, and zealous Catholics appointed in their place.

A part of the citizens were willing to acquiesce in these conditions, and the siege-works erected against the castle were actually taken down in the midst of the derision of the Germans. Fortified places containing large sums of money were also relinquished to Sigismund. The enemies of the Hussites who had fled, now flocked back to the city. Hussite victims were demanded.

On the 9th of January, 1420, a prominent citizen and former officer under the king, who had lain a prisoner for several weeks, with three Hussite priests and many laymen, were put to death. These acts were defended by quoting the acts of the fierce and revengeful Taborites, who in the course of a few months had sacked and burned several hundred monasteries, forty of them in Prague alone.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *THE EMPEROR'S POLICY UNITES THE OPPOSITION.*

**I**T was the moderate or Calixtine party of Hussites who were disposed to accept Sigismund as their king. Largely composed of the nobility and of citizens of Prague, they began to look with distrust upon the extreme opinions and violent measures of the Taborites, who were made up chiefly of the masses of the common people. A politic course on the part of Sigismund would have bound the Calixtines firmly to his cause and completely isolated the Taborites in the ensuing struggle.

But the emperor failed to see his advantage, and made little or no difference in his treatment of the two parties. He received the Calixtine deputies, who came to lay their country at his feet, with bitter reproaches and threatenings of vengeance. He not only wrote to the governor of the castle at Prague, "Exterminate the Taborites," but he persecuted and burned the Calixtines who came within his reach. A citizen had been deputed from Prague to the emperor at Breslau, to inform him that he could not be recognized as king of Bohe-

mia until he declared himself in favor of the Calixtine usage.

Sigismund was furious at the demand. He ordered the messenger to be imprisoned and burned.

On the 11th of March he was led out to die. But when his feet were fastened to the horse which was to drag him to the place of execution, he was overcome with terror, and saved his life by abjuring the doctrines which he had been commissioned to maintain before the emperor. A merchant of Prague, who had visited Breslau on business, and who happened to speak in condemnation of the burning of Huss and in favor of the communion of the cup, and who refused to recant, was dragged forth at the horse's heels and burned. In May, the burgomaster of Leitmeritz seized twenty-four respectable citizens, his own son-in-law among the number, and drowned them in the Elbe. His daughter plead in vain with her cruel father for the life of her husband; then, declaring she would not be separated from him, she jumped into the river. The next day they were found clasped in each other's arms, and were buried in one grave.

Zisca had been inactive for some months. He probably wished the experiment of a convention with Sigismund to be fairly tried, foreseeing that it must come to nothing, but hoping, through the failure of the attempt, to unite the elements of the opposition. He now saw, in the universal alarm aroused by these bloody acts of the emperor and

his partisans, that the time for action had come. With several Hussite knights he forswore obedience to Sigismund, and founded a league of all who would join in the oath. The league increased rapidly. Barons, knights and cities joined it.

Meanwhile, the emperor was gathering an army to invade Bohemia and to take possession of Prague and other important cities. One of these cities which had been pledged to the emperor was Pilsen, fifty miles south-west from Prague, in the direction of Bavaria. But Pilsen was also an object of special interest to the Taborites. It was one of the "five cities of refuge" which their preachers, in their fantastical interpretation of Scripture, believed would survive the near-approaching destruction of the world and personal coming of Christ. Hence, crowds of Taborites flocked to these cities, and Pilsen especially was full to overflowing.

Zisca now occupied Pilsen, and repelled an assault of the royal party, who wished to retain it for the emperor in fulfillment of their pledge. Both sides lost considerably. Reinforcements reached the royalist army, and they persisted in their attempt. Wearing with failure and delay, they began to negotiate, and finally Zisca was induced by representations from Prague to evacuate the place.

The conditions of surrender were full liberty of religious worship in the city and permission to all who desired, with their families, to withdraw unmolested to Mount Tabor. These friends of

Sigismund showed no more regard for their word than their imperial master had displayed. They fell upon the retreating Taborites near Sudomertz and nearly surrounded them. Destitute of cavalry, the Hussites drew their baggage-wagons in a circle around them, kept the enemy at bay for several hours, and finally repelled the attack. Their loss, besides killed and wounded, was thirty prisoners. Resuming their march, they reached Tabor in safety. The date of the battle was March 25, 1420.

About this time came news of the proclamation of a crusade against Bohemia by both emperor and pope. It was announced during service, March 17, 1420, in the cathedral at Breslau, in the presence of the emperor, and was published in all parts of the empire through his exertions. The pope's bull announcing the crusade is one of those characteristic effusions of papal malignity of which the age had already produced so many horrible specimens. It excels in wickedness the others which we have seen, because it proposes to give over an entire Christian nation to the violence of a horde indiscriminately drawn together from all quarters of Europe, chiefly by the hope of rapine and plunder.

The bull calls upon all kings, dukes, margraves, princes, barons, counts, lords, captains, magistrates and all officials, states, free cities, Universities and villages, by the sprinkling of the blood of our

most glorious Redeemer, and in hope of the remission of their sins, to aid in the extermination of the followers of Wickliffe and Huss, to contribute all their power and influence to promote the purpose of the emperor, even to the raising and equipping of armies. Ecclesiastics must fasten the cross with their own hands upon the shoulders of volunteers. The pope himself grants to those who enter on the crusade, or even to such as die upon the roads, plenary pardon of their sins if repented of and confessed, and, in the retribution of the just, eternal salvation. Such as cannot go in person, but contribute by sending others and equipping them according to their ability, should have full remission of sins. Even those guilty of gross crimes might fight their way to heaven by warring against the followers of Wickliffe and Huss.

Thus all Christendom was summoned, by force of arms, to crush the evangelical movement in the little kingdom of Bohemia. But Bohemia, lying like a diamond in the midst of Europe, was developing a power of resistance against these crushing forces, which exceeded their utmost preparations and calculations.

At Prague even the enemies of the Hussites were alarmed by the news of the crusade. If successful, crusaders made little difference between the persons and property of captives. Friends and foes were lawful prey. Over a thousand of the wealthiest anti-Hussites of Prague sought refuge in



the citadel, fearful of what might happen on the expiration of the truce, April 23. The other party, made up now of Taborites and Calixtines, united in a solemn league for mutual defence, and appointed captains and leaders for both the old and the new city, to whom unlimited powers were entrusted.

Sigismund was leisurely advancing, allowing the reinforcements time to overtake him, and intending to make sure of every fortified place in his path. His numbers were said to reach one hundred and forty thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand. Zisca strengthened to the utmost his position on Mount Tabor. Almost impregnable by nature, lofty and precipitous, nearly surrounded by rivers, the narrow neck of land by which alone it was approachable was defended by a deep ditch and a triple wall, strong enough to repel all the enginery of attack known to those times. This has been considered the first essay in the modern style of fortification. It is even said that the Taborites invented new appliances for repelling assaults upon their walls. One instrument used in hand-to-hand encounters appears to have been original with the Taborites. It was an *iron flail*, which was wielded with such terrible effect, that the bravest of their opposers shrank from the encounter.

It was the first aim of the emperor to succor the beleaguered castle containing the royal garrison of Prague. So closely were they besieged that they were nearly starved into a surrender. Tired

of living on dogs, cats and rats, they agreed to surrender in fifteen days, if not relieved by the emperor before that time.

When within a few days' march of Prague, a strong detachment was sent from the imperial army to make an assault upon Tabor. It was hoped that this movement would draw away Zisca and the Taborite forces from Prague to the defence of their own homes. Zisca, however, was too well aware of the strength of the position to allow himself to be much disturbed with news of the proposed attack. He deemed it quite enough to send three hundred and fifty cavalry, under Nicholas de Hussinitz, to the assistance of the Taborites.

The imperialist forces scarcely had opportunity to make their assault. On the 30th of June the Taborites came down from their stronghold and attacked the enemy on one side, while Nicholas with his little band of horse attacked them on the other. The struggle was brief. Though the numbers of the enemy were said to be twenty times as great as those of the Taborites, they suffered an utter defeat that soon became a rout. Pursued by the Taborites, large numbers of them were slain and taken captive. The booty of the victors was immense. "It consisted of gold and silver goblets, ornaments and costly garments, which probably the fugitives of the imperial army had plundered on their march, besides weapons and engines of war and a large supply of provisions of various kinds."

Great was the rejoicing of the Taborites as they came back loaded with the spoils of victory. Loud thanksgivings ascended to the God who had given them such signal deliverance from their foes.

Other victories followed. A body of the enemy's cavalry, four thousand strong, was routed between Tabor and Prague. The walled town of Hradisch, near Tabor, was surprised and captured by the Taborites. Ten thousand picked men were sent from Sigismund's army to retake it. Not venturing on a battle, they tried negotiations and fair promises. But the Hussites were not to be duped; and without striking a blow the ten thousand men returned to the main body.

These were disheartening incidents in the emperor's advance. Their unfavorable augury was but little relieved by the cruelty and devastation which marked the progress of his army. Friend and foe suffered nearly alike in its path. Twenty Hussites were drowned in the Elbe. The monasteries were put under contribution to pay his troops. Churches and convents were pillaged by the army which professedly had engaged in a holy war for their defence. Plundered, sacked and ravaged thus by both armies, the condition of Bohemia was simply deplorable. In our own day the fair and beautiful region of Bulgaria, the vale of roses, alternately in the hands of the contending Russian and Turkish armies, the scene of fierce struggles and fiercer ravages, may furnish us with an illustration of the

condition of Bohemia, as Taborite and imperialist in turn passed over its smiling surface with the tramp and torch of war.

On the 30th of June the emperor reached the neighborhood of Prague, and the castle was surrendered into his hands. But the city itself was so strongly held by the Taborites and Calixtines that all thought of assault was abandoned, and the slow process of siege and starvation was adopted in its stead.

A high hill called Galgenberg commands the approach to the city by the Moldau. As supplies reached the city by this river, it was important to get possession of this hill. While the emperor was making his arrangements for this purpose, the daring and active Zisca seized the height and thoroughly fortified it. Things now looked very serious for Sigismund. Accordingly, he resolved to divide his great army into four parts, three of which should assail the city on three different sides, while a fourth should assault Zisca's new position on the Galgenberg, which was the main object of attack.

The movement was made July 14, 1420. The outworks of Galgenberg were carried by the imperialists. A tower defended by twenty-nine Taborites, three of whom were women, for a time held out against the attack. After their associates had retired, this brave handful persisted in maintaining their ground. An unarmed woman was especially conspicuous in the defence. "A Christian be-

liever," she cried out, "should never yield to Anti-christ." She fell at her post. Zisca himself lost his footing and was in danger of capture, but his Taborite friends, with their iron flails, came to the rescue and beat off the assailants.

The city was full of alarm. The voice of prayer mingled with the cry of battle. So powerful and extensive an assault could not be repelled by unassisted human strength. But faith in God and the impulse of religious enthusiasm made the beleaguered citizens more than a match for their unprincipled foes. Under the guidance of a Hussite priest, bearing the bread and wine, a sortie was made from one of the gates, consisting of fifty bowmen and a crowd of peasants armed with nothing but their iron flails. At the same time the bells of the city were rung and the shouts of the people rent the air.

The imperialists were panic-struck, and turned without making any resistance. Zisca seized the moment to rush down the steep sides of Galgenberg and hurl the enemy from their entrenchments. Multitudes of them were slain and taken captive, and their rout was complete. From a point where he could overlook the field the emperor beheld the repulse of his forces at two of the most important points of attack. Not choosing to press the assault in the other directions, and probably feeling little confidence in the temper of his motley army, he ordered a retreat to the camps.

Great was the joy of the citizens at this unexpected deliverance. They knelt down on the field of battle and sang *Te Deums*. They formed processions, and marched through the streets singing hymns of praise. Even the little children caught the intoxication of victory, and sang hymns of joy composed on the occasion. And to mark the services rendered by their great general, the name of the hill which he had so gallantly defended, and which was so necessary to the safety of the city, was changed to Ziscaberg. It bears that name to-day.

The effects of defeat were just as manifest in the imperialist army. Made up of more than twenty different nationalities, it had no inward coherence or common sympathies to hold it together. The Bohemians and Moravians in the ranks, in arms against their brethren, were objects of jealousy to the Germans. If a Bohemian, Catholic or Hussite, fell into the hands of the Germans, he was treated with about equal cruelty. The Bohemians were exasperated at such instances of indiscriminate barbarity. Passions were aroused, mutual recriminations were heard. The Germans charged the Bohemian soldiers with treason, and declared that if they had been left alone to fight the battle they would have won the victory. The host was so divided that all further idea of assault on the city was abandoned.

A further disaster greatly added to the sense of depression. On the 19th of July, during a high

wind, the tents of the imperial army took fire, and the encampment was utterly destroyed.

The emperor might well have listened to the proposals which the Calixtine party now made to him. If he would concede to them the four articles—1st, freedom of preaching; 2d, the communion of the cup; 3d, limitation of the possessions of the clergy; and 4th, the punishment of gross sins in clergy or laity—he would secure an immense loyal following in the city and gain possession of it with little or no further resistance.

But the infatuated Sigismund refused even to grant the modest wish for an audience, in which the four articles should be discussed and defended, and the nation vindicated from the false accusations which had brought upon it the horrors of a crusade. He only remained at Prague long enough to be crowned king by an empty ceremonial in the castle, July 28, and then drew off his defeated army from the walls.

The line of his march was marked by plunder and devastation. Zisca also retired from Prague, and directed his course toward the cities which stood out against the Hussites. Resistance was punished with a cruelty rivaling that of the emperor and characteristic of the age. At Kniczan, a league distant from Prague, seven priests were burned. Prachatitz was summoned to surrender, and favorable terms were offered. The terms were refused, and the city was taken by storm. No

mercy was shown. Hundreds were left dead in the streets. More than eighty were burned. Even women and children were driven into exile by the hard-hearted commander.

Late in the autumn the emperor had reorganized his army and strengthened it by reinforcements. It was November when he opened his second campaign. In the absence of Zisca he thought he might successfully venture an assault upon the defences of the city. But a still more violent and fanatical leader, with a more desperate set of followers, called Horebites, had come to the help of Prague.

These Horebites did terrible execution with their iron flails. When the emperor saw his forces flying from these novel and destructive weapons, he said to his officers,

“I want to come to blows with those flail-bearers.”

“Sire,” replied a Moravian nobleman, “I fear we shall all perish. Those iron flails are exceedingly formidable.”

“Oh, you Moravians!” retorted Sigismund; “I know you. You are afraid.”

Stung by this taunt, the Moravians dismounted and rushed upon the entrenchments, only to be beaten down and driven off by the fierce defenders. A great part of the Moravian nobility were left on the field, and the besiegers were more completely routed than before. Once more Sigismund



was compelled to abandon the siege and to leave the capital divested of every mark of his authority.

And now the union of parties, under the evident purpose of the emperor to make no concession to either, was complete. All agreed that Sigismund was not fit to be king of Bohemia. A convention of barons and other authorities representing the entire nation was held in Prague, December 30, 1420. By invitation, Zisca attended the convention, and was received with great honors in his entrance into the city. The convention voted to offer the crown of Bohemia to the king of Poland.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *THE CAMPAIGNS OF ZISCA.*

THE one-eyed general saw clearly that more thorough military measures must be taken to hold the country against the emperor. It was not enough to capture and punish a city, and then leave it to fall again into the hands of the enemy. Permanent occupation of captured places was now his policy.

First, marching south-westward from Prague, he seized the two rich cloisters of Choteschau and Kladrub, and fortified instead of destroying them, as heretofore. Kladrub afterward successfully withstood a siege from Sigismund. Several cities were brought into a league with Prague on the basis of the four Calixtine articles. Three other towns fell into Zisca's hands during the year 1421. Jaromirtz, in the extreme north-east, refusing to yield, was captured and sacked, and many of the inhabitants were drowned or burned, including twenty-three priests. Leitmeritz held out successfully against two of Zisca's assaults, but offered to surrender to the army of Prague, the Calixtine forces.

This was permitted, and the city joined the league, which was spreading over all the cities of the land. Finally, the castle of Wenzel, in the city of Prague, was attacked by Zisca, and after a siege of fourteen days it surrendered, and Czenko, the governor, went over to the Calixtine ranks. Four cannon, the first used in Bohemia, were taken with the castle.

These successes gave great *éclat* to a convention of the estates held at Czaslau, south-east of Prague, July, 1421. Ambassadors from Sigismund were allowed to be present, but they accomplished nothing for their now universally hated master. The four Calixtine articles were adopted; it was voted that they should be received by all, and that they should be maintained and defended to the last extremity. Fourteen reasons were assigned for rejecting Sigismund; and as the king of Poland had been forbidden by the pope to accept the crown offered to him in the previous year, a regency of twenty was appointed, among whom Zisca occupied a leading position.

Zisca now resumed his campaigns, and undertook the siege of a place called Raby, which refused to accept the four articles. Here he lost his only eye. He had mounted a tree from which to inspect the enemy's entrenchments, when he was struck in the eye by an arrow. It is not certain that the wound would necessarily have destroyed his sight. He consented, with some reluctance, to be removed to Prague, and to put himself in the hands of the

physicians of the city. But whatever possibility of recovery there might have been, Zisca was too reckless and impatient to submit to the irksome restraints which the case demanded. He became incurably and totally blind.

A general-in-chief totally blind—one would suppose for all active operations he might as well have been killed. At all events, his place should be filled by another possessing all his senses unimpaired. Zisca might remain behind as a counselor, but he must certainly be superseded in the field.

So thought his friends, who would have detained him in Prague; but not so Zisca himself, not so his soldiers. So wonderful was his skill and prowess, and so great his influence with his soldiers, that they believed Zisca, even when blind, to be worth more than any one with two eyes whom they could put in his place; and they were right. They clamored for his return to the camp, and declared that they would march under no other leader. Zisca hastened to rejoin the army.

There was need of his generalship, for the obstinate emperor once more was marching upon Prague with a powerful army. This was in December, 1421. As the emperor advanced, Zisca was compelled to retreat. Under a blind general such a movement might easily become a rout. On the contrary, although lasting three days, it was conducted in a masterly manner. Entering Prague, where he was received with acclamations, Zisca

recruited his army, and again marched out to meet Sigismund, who had reached Kuttenberg, forty miles east of the city.

Just as the two armies were about engaging, Kuttenberg, which had opened its gates to Zisca a few days before, now betrayed the national cause and submitted to the emperor. This gave him so great an advantage that Zisca felt it necessary to change his own plans, and again ordered a retreat. The Pragers in his army were disheartened and began to drop away. The evil example of Kuttenberg began to be widely felt. It was a critical time. The Hussite army took refuge on a high hill called Transkauk, and the imperial army, coming up with them, spread out its lines and enfolded the hill in its mighty grasp. As night fell, they congratulated themselves that they had the dreaded Zisca and his Taborites a certain prey.

For a day Zisca remained immovable, but not idle. The emperor hesitated to assail him in his strong position, feeling that any effort on his part was altogether superfluous. The next night Zisca's plans were matured. Quietly he marshaled his army, and while the enemy was slumbering he passed through their camp, and with scarcely a blow, and almost no loss, led his forces out of the toils which surrounded them to a place of safety.

When William, prince of Orange, suddenly appeared with his army on the other side of a deep river without bridge or boats, the duke of Alva,

struck with amazement, and incredulous, asked if the army of the Prince was a flock of wild geese. What exclamation broke from the lips of Sigismund when he found that his game had so shrewdly escaped him we do not know; it would not have been strange if the meaning of the word Huss had occurred to his mind, and if thus he had been led to apply a similar expression to the escaped Hussites.

But the emperor, who could see, was so completely outgeneraled by his blind antagonist that he was disheartened. Of what use was all his campaigning in Bohemia, and to what would any attempt to capture Prague amount, so long as the dreaded and invincible Zisca kept the field? In fact, Zisca quickly recruited his army, and turned and faced the imperial host before the emperor had quite recovered from his unpleasant surprise.

It was now Sigismund's turn to retreat. He took the direction of Moravia, eastward; but rewarded Kutteneberg for its adherence to his cause by doing what Zisca himself would have done in revenge for its treason. He laid it in ashes.

At Deutschbrod, January 18, 1422, he was overtaken by Zisca's forces, and a fierce battle ensued—the first open and fair contest between the Hussites and the emperor in the field. The action lasted three hours, when victory decided for the Taborites, and the imperial army made a hurried retreat. A river lay in their path. The bridge was crowded

with fugitives and a delay occurred very embarrassing to those who were in the rear. Fifteen thousand Hungarian cavalry, a splendid body of troops, attempted to cross the river on the ice. But the ice was too weak to bear the enormous weight, and gave way beneath it. Multitudes were precipitated into the water and drowned. Some accounts say that nearly the entire number perished. Others put the number lost at two thousand.

Sigismund continued his retreat to Iglau, in the mountainous border of Moravia. His losses in material, as well as men, were enormous. Seven standards and five hundred baggage-wagons, besides immense stores, fell into the hands of Zisca, and were distributed among his soldiers. An attempt to aid Sigismund by a movement of the bishop of Leitomischl, "John of Iron," was met by Zisca on his return, and the bishop's forces were cut to pieces near Broda.

These decisive and great victories, snatched from the very jaws of defeat, attest the generalship and military genius of the blind Zisca. His thorough acquaintance with the whole face of the country was better than unobstructed vision would have been to most men. It seemed to be spread out before him like a map. Every needed precaution was therefore taken in laying his plans. In battle he took his stand on a baggage-wagon; and using the eyes of others, he watched every phase of the conflict, caught every weak point and false move-

ment of the enemy, and quickly and energetically adapted his plans to the emergency of the moment.

Friends and enemies agree in recognizing Zisca's extraordinary military qualities. He trained a rude but fiery peasantry into a mighty army of disciplined and victorious soldiers. His own daring and indefatigable spirit communicated itself to his followers. They relied upon him and believed in him with a most unquestioning confidence. Some of his greatest victories were gained after he became blind, and certainly the Hussite hosts and the Bohemian cause were never more prosperous than under his leadership.

Zisca was about to advance into Moravia, when great dissensions at Prague recalled him to that city. A king had been found for Bohemia, Corybut of Lithuania, a Polish nobleman. The Calixtines of Prague, not approving the choice and preferring Sigismund himself, became restive. They gained control of the city government, and arrested and put to death ten Taborites, whom they accused of tyranny and bloodshed. The Taborites arose in turn, assaulted and massacred the magistrates, seized the council-house and destroyed the library. They were no great friends of literature. Corybut could not be crowned. Zisca in vain endeavored to harmonize all parties and unite them on the Polish candidate. The rugged warrior was not ignorant of the spirit of the gospel. At the diet held in



Prague, November, 1421, he exhorted the opposing parties, "Forgive one another, that you may unite in saying 'Our Father.'" But the division was too decided and had been embittered by sanguinary measures on both sides.

Zisca himself was assailed as too dictatorial, and the aspect of the Calixtine party was so threatening that they could not be regarded as a whit more favorable to the liberties of Bohemia than Sigismund himself. The general withdrew from Prague and put himself once more at the head of his armies. The Calixtines gathered an army composed chiefly of the nobility, and marched against the Taborites. There could not well be a sadder sight than the hostile array of these two parties, who ought to have been united against their common foe. It was the beginning of a conflict which, through various stages, at last brought the liberties of Bohemia to the dust.

The Calixtine army was soon severely beaten, and Zisca proceeded to capture and beat down the fortresses and walled towns that had espoused their cause. Hastening toward Koniggratz, an important city on the east, he commanded a night-march of the army. The soldiers began to murmur. "Zisca," they exclaimed, "is blind, and can march and fight in the dark. It is enough for us to march in the daytime." The general was embarrassed. Only a prompt movement could ensure his success. "It is for you," he argued, "that I fight. It is no con-

cern of mine personally. I could make peace for myself if I chose. All is for your good."

This appeal from one who had been a Calixtine, to the army of Taborites, needed to be enforced by a shrewd stroke of policy before it was entirely successful. "In what neighborhood are we now?" asked the blind general. The locality was described to him. Comprehending it all in a moment, he said, "Go with all despatch; set fire to the village of Miestecz, so that we may see our way." It was done; the barbarous impulses of the soldiers were gratified, and the light of the burning village showed their way to the walls of Koniggratz. The city fell into Zisca's hands without a show of resistance.

At the loss of this city the Calixtines of Prague rallied for another effort against the Taborites. It was in vain. Under the walls of Koniggratz they suffered a complete and annihilating defeat. Borzek, the commander, was badly wounded, and retired to the castle of Prague.

Not content with the work he had done in his own country, Zisca turned his arms toward Moravia, on the eastern boundary of Bohemia, where the doctrines of Huss enjoyed a wide acceptance. A nephew of Sigismund, the archduke Albert, claimed Moravia as a gift from his uncle, and was waging war against the Hussites in that country. A Hussite general, Procopius by name, was already in the field; but when Zisca appeared, the arch-

duke retreated. Zisca followed him up across the country, and never stopped in his daring pursuit until he reached Stockerau, almost in sight of Vienna.

Leaving Procopius in Moravia, he returned to Bohemia. Here, by a series of flying marches of the most energetic character, he sent dismay into the hearts of the Calixtines and the imperialist sympathizers, throughout the rural portions of the land. When the Calixtines of Prague once more came out to offer him battle, he manœuvred and retreated for several days until he obtained an advantageous position, and then met and overthrew the enemy.

These campaigns occupied a large part of the years 1422 and 1423. On the 11th of September of the latter year, we find the victorious and dreaded Zisca once more at the gates of the now Calixtine city of Prague. Three times he had beaten their armies in the field. Consternation reigned within the walls; nevertheless, the gates were closed, and it was resolved to resist the Taborite attack. It was a strange and sorrowful necessity that was to change those once ardent defenders into assailants of the walls of Prague. No wonder Zisca's army demurred. Victorious over his enemies in the field, Zisca was no less influential and successful in dealing with disaffection in his camp. Mounting a cask in the midst of the army, he remonstrated with them in such language as this:

“Comrades! why do you murmur? I am not your enemy, but your general. It is by me that you have gained so many victories, by me that you have won fame and wealth. And yet for you I have lost my sight; I am condemned to ceaseless darkness. For all my labors what is my reward? Nothing but a name. It is, then, for you that I have acted, that I have conquered. It is not my own interest that arms me against this city. It is not the blood of a blind old man that it thirsts after, but it dreads your intrepid hearts and your invincible arms. When they have taken me in their nets, they will lay snares for you from which you will scarcely escape. Let us, therefore, take Prague. Let us crush the sedition before Sigismund is aware of it. Now make your choice. Will you have peace? Take care lest it prove an ambush. Will you have war? Here I am.”

This appeal silenced opposition, and preparations were hastened for the assault. Meanwhile, a second and a soberer thought moved the citizens, and before the attack was made they surrendered on honorable terms. The treaty of peace was signed in the camp, and a pile of stones was raised upon the spot to commemorate the act. Zisca made a triumphal entry into Prague, and his authority was recognized as supreme.

This bloodless victory put the crown upon all his other achievements. The emperor, who had watched the progress of events without directly

mingling in them, had built his hopes on the overthrow of Zisca, or on the continuance of the feud between the two parties. When he saw all once more harmonized under the victorious general, he felt himself utterly baffled in his plans of conquest.

Despairing of every other expedient, the proud Sigismund now turned to Zisca himself, and offered to make him virtually king of Bohemia, if only he might enjoy the empty honor of being proclaimed king. Zisca should really govern the kingdom, and should have all the wealth which his position demanded.

So extraordinary was this offer, that the papal historian grows indignant at Sigismund in recording it. As no demand was made of the Hussites to renounce their heresies as a condition of the agreement, the Catholics of that day must have regarded it as a virtual surrender of all that was claimed by the Council of Constance, as a condemnation of the proceedings against Huss and Jerome, as a sacrifice of the authority claimed and exercised by the pope in his various papers against the Bohemians, and especially in the extreme measure of the crusades. All this was certainly implied in the offer to elevate the most prominent and most powerful of the followers of Huss to the viceroyalty of the kingdom. For six years he had been in arms against emperor and pope, and now rebellion and heresy were alike to be honored by the highest gifts in the power of the emperor to bestow.

It seemed, indeed, as if the Bohemian reformation was to prove a success, and that the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome was about to be most signally avenged. Under Zisca, whose moderation and wisdom as a ruler seemed equal to his prowess as a general, a strong government would have arisen. Factions would have been suppressed. The four articles of the Calixtines would have been maintained, and a fair measure of liberty allowed to the more radical Taborites.

But a providence as mysterious almost as any in the history of the race interposed. It was not so to be. Zisca was carried off by the plague before he had signified his assent to the proposals. He was besieging a town on the Moravian border, October 11, 1424, when he died.

Thus, at the very summit of his honors, he ended his wonderful career. It is characteristic of his disposition, that he is said to have ordered his soldiers to abandon his body to the birds of prey and to have his skin made into a drum, the very sound of which should make his old enemies tremble. This story is pronounced fabulous, but it might well be true of one whose life was stained by many and grievous cruelties, and whose path in every direction was marked by the ashes of ruined cities, and whose treatment of his popish enemies was on the principle of revenge to the last drop of blood and the last dying groan of their victims.

The command of Zisca in regard to his body

was not obeyed, and he was buried in the church at Czaslau, near Kuttenberg, and his iron mace was hung up in the same building. Two inscriptions are reported to have been placed upon his tomb—perhaps one of an earlier and one of a later date, after the former had been effaced. The first opens as follows:

“Here lies John Zisca, inferior to no other general in military science, the rigorous punisher of the pride and avarice of the priesthood and the zealous defender of his country. What the blind Appius did for the Romans by his counsel, and Curius Camillus by his actions, I accomplished for the Bohemians. I never failed fortune, nor she me; and although blind, I always perceived what ought to be done.”

The other is in few words and in better taste:

“Here lies John Zisca, the leader of oppressed freedom. In the name and for the name of God.”

Another inscription is said to have been engraved near by in the following words:

“Huss, here reposes John Zisca, thine avenger, and the emperor himself has quailed before him.”

Two centuries afterward, popish bigotry destroyed the tomb and scattered the bones of the warrior whom it had never conquered.

When the immense disadvantages under which Zisca labored and the marvelous and unbroken successes which he won are considered, he must be admitted to a place among the great names of his-

tory. With the armies of a vast empire hurled against him by the fiery blast of a popish crusade, and with but the resources of a petty kingdom of twenty thousand square miles, itself divided by internal dissensions, at his disposal, he so completely crushed opposition and silenced civil discord as to bring his powerful enemies to the most humiliating terms. In successful strategy, in advance and retreat, he might be compared with Hannibal; in rapidity and fiery vigor of movement, this blind general recalls the great Napoleon himself. In the utter unselfishness of his devotion to the cause of religious liberty, he reminds us of William, prince of Orange. In all his hundred battles and engagements he was never defeated, unless once in Moravia, where all the evil consequences were averted by the skillfulness of the retreat. As military engineer he was equally eminent. Without cavalry, he disposed bodies of infantry at intervals in wagons to repel the attacks of the enemy's horse. His defensive works on Mount Tabor are regarded as the germ of modern fortifications. After he became blind, he was borne in a car in front of his army. In the battle, he received descriptions of the field and of the progress of events from his officers, and these, joined with his own minute knowledge of the country, enabled him to direct the movements of the soldiers.

Zisca completes the triad of heroes of Bohemia.



As wonderful in gifts as Jerome, as pure in motive and self-sacrifice as Huss, his blindness gives his achievements a lustre surpassing that of his compatriots, and his death was even a greater loss to his cause and country than was theirs.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *BOHEMIA RECEIVES SIGISMUND.*

WITH the death of Zisca, the negotiations opened by Sigismund came to naught, and the hostile relations of the parties were resumed. For ten years longer the war continued, with occasional attempts at pacification, which failed as invariably as did the armed invasions. Great and imposing armies were again and again sent into Bohemia, but with a surprising and shameful regularity they became panic-struck almost before encountering the dreaded Hussites, and fled, leaving behind them for the benefit of the heretics the immense stores of material which had been gathered for their destruction. In 1427, the leaders of the Taborites saw that merely to resist invasions, however successfully, would not secure them the religious liberty which they sought. Hence they changed their tactics from defensive to offensive, and led a series of the most formidable expeditions beyond their borders, which for three years kept the central districts of Europe in a state of alarm only less than that caused by the Turks in the south-east. The excitement reached even the borders of Spain. Aus-

tria, Silesia, Saxony, Hungary, Bavaria, were invaded, and cities saved themselves from assault by paying large sums of money. From these expeditions the Taborites invariably returned in safety to their own territory, since no opposing armies could make an effective stand against them. A third crusade was proclaimed by Martin V., but the great armies which entered Bohemia in pursuance of this measure were completely routed. The papal legate, bearing a copy of the bull, accompanied the powerful army which entered the country from the west. It counted eighty thousand infantry forty thousand cavalry and a formidable array of artillery; for cannon were now coming into use, though clumsy and of no great efficiency.

The Hussites allowed an exaggerated report of their chronic divisions to reach the enemies' ears; this spread a false security through the ranks of the invaders, and they marched somewhat negligently into the hilly and broken country in the south-western boundary. Here they were suddenly informed that the Hussites were united and were rapidly advancing in the order of battle. A panic seized the imperialists; and abandoning their stores, they turned and fled. The cardinal-legate succeeded in rallying them for a short time, but the approach of the Hussites renewed their former terror, and they fled in complete rout.

Unresisted, the Hussites pressed forward, cutting down the fugitives and seizing the booty. Eight

thousand wagons, all the heavy guns and the military chests of the enemy were captured, and, to crown all, the papal legate fled for his life, leaving behind him his hat, cross and clerical robes, and *the papal bull itself*. This was carried off in triumph, and was long preserved as a trophy of the victory. The battle of Tausch, fought August 14, 1431, ended the Hussite wars, so far as their foreign foes were concerned. Sigismund felt himself compelled to admit that the heroic people of Bohemia could be conquered only by themselves. "Peace on any conditions must be made with them, and then, in the course of time, they will become a prey to internal dissensions, which will lay them helplessly at our feet."

In accordance with this conclusion of the emperor, all military expeditions were abandoned, even against the wishes of the pope, who urged another crusade. A new œcumenical council was called at Basle, in Switzerland, to complete the work which had been neglected by the Council of Constance. A very different temper characterized this body. The cry for reform had swelled to far greater proportions; the unconquerable spirit and the formidable invasions of the Hussites had spread universal alarm, and had created an imperious demand for measures of reconciliation.

The cardinal who had headed the last crusade, and had personally tested the spirit of the Hussite army, was president of the council. In the gentlest and

most plausible terms he now wrote to the Hussites, urging them to send delegates. The defeated emperor also wrote, almost supplicating the same favor from the victorious Bohemians. Every assurance of protection was given to them, and they were to be allowed to celebrate worship in their own form during their stay within the walls of the city.

It was not until January 4, 1433, that the sturdy Bohemians overcame their strong objections to the slight concession entreated of them. On that day the deputation, numbering three hundred of their leading nobility and generals, entered Basle. It was a marvelous reverse of fortune. These men, with all their associates, had been anathematized, excommunicated, given over indiscriminately to the violence of the crusade again and again. The fate of Huss had been threatened against them; they had been summoned, with the most lordly assumption of power, to meet the Council of Constance and submit themselves and their country unconditionally to its decrees.

From their mortal foes they had wrung an acknowledgment of their invincibility and of their right to treat on equal terms with the representative council of Christendom. Their coming, announced in advance, was waited with irrepressible curiosity. The council adjourned, and the members hastened without the walls to catch the first glimpse of their approach. Immense crowds thronged the streets; women and children filled the windows and

stood upon the roofs. They gazed with wonder at the battle-scarred visages and piercing eyes of these warriors, whose achievements had been more those of demigods than of mere men.

Procopius, the successor of Zisca, with eagle nose and swarthy complexion, the hero of countless battles, marches and sieges, walked in advance, and was the observed of all observers. Rokyzan, afterward bishop and now at the head of the clergy, was their spokesman. The council received them the next day in the most gracious manner. On the 16th of January, a special audience was given to the deputies, and their demand that the council should approve the four Calixtine articles—of free preaching, communion in both kinds, prohibition of excessive wealth and luxury of the clergy, and punishment of gross crimes in clergy and laity alike—was heard.

For the ten following days, the council patiently listened to one and another of the deputation in a formal defence of each of these propositions. They must have winced, but they did not dare to do more, when they heard Wickliffe and Huss described and lauded as evangelical doctors. Not to be outdone in the disputation, the opposition consumed eighteen days in replying to these arguments. Stormy scenes took place. The term "heretic," applied to the Hussites, roused the stalwart Procopius to an indignant protest. Some left the council in disgust. But Rokyzan made a six days' argument in reply.

This unparalleled scene, in which Hussite deputies from little Bohemia were allowed unlimited liberty to debate the subject of reform before a general council, was of the utmost importance. It lent to the idea of reform dignity and honor, which effected more for that object unintentionally than all that had hitherto been purposed or uttered—more than all the eloquent complaints and tangled negotiations of the past. The journey itself of the three hundred deputies through Germany, like that of Huss twenty years before, was attended with the most friendly demonstrations; and not only the public transactions, but the private intercourse of the Hussites with leading members of the council, were of the utmost importance.

It could hardly be expected that a satisfactory solution would be easily reached by the council. The discussion was prolonged for fifty days. Procopius was reproached with having declared that the monks were an invention of the devil. He did not make a very soothing or apologetic reply: “Whose else can they be, since they were instituted neither by Moses, nor the prophets, nor Christ?”

Nothing had been definitely accomplished when the Bohemians prepared to return to their homes. But the council, not willing to abandon the idea of reconciliation, sent in company with them a deputation of ten of their own number, who left Basle on the 14th of April, and on the 8th of May were received with demonstrations of welcome in Prague.

It took, however, a second delegation from Basle and six months of negotiation before a basis of agreement was reached.

On the 30th of November, 1433, the first *compactata*, as they are called, were agreed upon. They consisted of modifications of the four Calixtine articles, which already were the very least that all true friends of Bohemian and Christian liberty could ask, but which, as amended, left the door open to endless popish perversion and imposition. They were as follows :

1. The cup in the sacrament should be permitted to the laity, as demanded, but the communion in the use of bread alone should also be allowed.

2. Preaching should be free, but only when done by ordained priests.

3. Ecclesiastics should not possess, but might have control of, property—a distinction of no practical importance whatever.

4. Gross sins should be punished, but only by the legal authorities.

When the Hussites accepted these modified articles, they were greeted in flattering terms by the overjoyed council as “the first sons of the Church.” But the agreement, being the work of the Calixtine wing of the party, could by no means satisfy the mass of the Taborites. They rose in armed resistance against their reactionary brethren. On the 30th of May, 1434, a great and decisive battle between the two parties was fought at Böhmissbrod,



some twenty miles east of Prague, in which the Taborites suffered their first and last great defeat. The general, Procopius, seeing the battle going everywhere against him, gathered his bravest men around him and threw himself into the midst of the conflict. There, overcome by numbers, overwhelmed by showers of darts, he fell, and with him fell for ever, as a military power in Bohemia, the cause which he represented.

In this terrible battle the prophecy of Sigismund was fulfilled that "the Bohemians will only be conquered by themselves." On the 23d of August, 1436, Sigismund entered the coveted city of Prague in triumph, after a struggle which lasted twenty years. His brother Wenzel had been dead seventeen years. This long delay he owed to his violation of the safe-conduct of Huss, but so little did he profit by his hard experience that the few months remaining of his life were spent in projects of a like dishonorable character, for annulling even the slight concessions which had been solemnly guaranteed to the Bohemians by the Council of Basle.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *CONCLUSION.*

**A**T the death of Sigismund, in 1437, his son-in-law, Albert of Austria, became nominally the king of Bohemia. But the leaven of independence still agitated the bosoms of the people. They preferred Casimir, a younger brother of the king of Poland; and when, two years afterward, his unexpected death left them again without a ruler, the government fell into the hands of two of their own number, one of whom, George de Podiebrad, was the real master of Bohemia for more than twenty years. In 1457 he was elected king.

Podiebrad, while adhering to the four Calixtine articles, wished at the same time to satisfy the pope; thus he violated his own humane convictions by sacrificing both Hussites and Calixtines to the demands of persecuting bigotry. But when the pope demanded the abrogation of the Four Articles, and even declared them null and void, Podiebrad drew back and refused to go a step farther. In 1463 the pope excommunicated him, and subsequently proclaimed a crusade against Bohemia. Podiebrad did not wait to receive the shock in his own coun-

try, but boldly declared war against the emperor. In 1468 he ravaged Austria as far as the Danube, and drove back the Hungarians, compelling them to make peace, April 2, 1469. Podiebrad died in 1471, and was succeeded by Ladislaus.

It was during the reigns of Podiebrad and Ladislaus that the "United Brethren," better known as the "Moravians," took their rise as a denomination, and commenced that career of simple, earnest and self-denying piety which has always been one of the brightest proofs of the reality and power of the Christian religion. Among the Hussites, whom we have known chiefly as the warlike and often cruel followers of Zisca and Procopius, there was an element, perhaps purified and softened by their severe disappointments and overthrow in the field, who demanded something more positively scriptural and evangelical than the Four Articles, and yet who entirely discarded carnal weapons and the use of force, and withdrew absolutely from the civil and public life in which they had formerly borne so conspicuous a part.

Under the preaching of Rokyzan in the Teyn-  
kirche, Prague, in 1454, this element drew together, forming a narrower circle within the Calixtine Church. A nobleman of decided character, poor, devout, humble, yet gifted, eloquent and energetic, named Gregory, led the movement. He soon found, in a certain Peter Chelciky (Cheltschitz), a better guide than the ambitious preacher Rokyzan. Chel-

ciky, from a village of that name in the south-west, had written a number of works in the Bohemian tongue. He taught a real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but he insisted more upon a genuine Christian life than upon speculation and dogma. The life of Christ was to him the highest good, and the law of laws was to love God with all the heart, and one's neighbor as one's self. Chelciky held all government to be wrong. He condemned all war, all shedding of blood, even in self-defence, all capital punishment, and every kind of oath, as unchristian.

Gradually a company of devout, earnest and yet peaceable spirits gathered around Gregory and Chelciky, and in 1457 the Church of the Brethren, at first taking the name "Brethren of the Rule of Christ," and finally "the United Brethren," was formed. This took place in the village of Senftenberg on the north-east boundary toward Silesia. Persecutions followed which were encouraged by Rokyzan and Podiebrad. Infamous crimes were charged against the Brethren. They were called by the hated name of Picards. It was forbidden to perform worship without Roman Catholic ceremonies on pain of death. Many took refuge in pits. In the daytime they dared not kindle a fire, lest the smoke should betray their hiding-places. When traveling through the snow, in order to prevent detection by their footsteps, they trod in each others' tracks, and the last of the party dragged

after him the branch of a tree, so as to leave the impression of a peasant dragging his brushwood after him.

Those who were caught were imprisoned, tortured, maimed, or even put to death. Many perished, many were reduced to the extreme of wretchedness. Nevertheless, their numbers continued to increase and their zeal was unabated.

In 1467, Gregory called a synod of the Brethren of Bohemia and Moravia to choose officers and to give the body a more complete and independent organization. Nine brethren were selected as fit for the ministerial office; twelve lots were prepared; three were inscribed *est*, and the remainder were left blank. A child drew the lots, and presented them one after another to the nine candidates. If all the nine had drawn blanks, it would have been regarded as the voice of God against the project. But the three inscribed *est* were all drawn, and the three who drew them were regarded as designated by God for the work of the ministry, and were further set apart by the laying on of hands. Thus the United Brethren cut themselves off from the Romish succession, and laid the foundations of a new and independent Church. Afterward ordination was sought and obtained from the Waldenses.

Meantime, the Calixtines, who still adhered to the Romish Church under the agreement of the Four Articles (see page 331), were also the object of frequent and violent persecutions. Ladislaus,

who succeeded Podiebrad in 1471, so exasperated the Calixtine population of Prague by his zeal for the pope that, according to the Bohemian fashion, they threw one of his officers out of the lofty window of the council-house, beheaded some of the town councilors, and furiously attacked the priests and monks. After a lull of a few years, in 1480, the persecution was renewed. The singing of Hussite hymns was prohibited, and imprisonment, and even death by torture, were inflicted as penalties. A night was set apart—September 24, 1483—for a general massacre of the Calixtines, and Prague might have had its St. Bartholomew but for the timely discovery of the plot. The indignant people turned upon their persecutors, attacked and plundered all the monasteries, and killed several monks and senators. This put a stop to violent proceedings for a number of years, although the mutual hatred of Papists and Calixtines was unappeased.

Meanwhile, the Church of the United Brethren continued to grow in numbers and to develop in organization. They were so far from cherishing an exclusive and sectarian spirit that, in 1491, they sent out various embassies to make inquiry after some better and more scriptural form of church government, and to extend and to receive the hand of sympathy from any believers of like spirit who might be scattered in various parts of the civilized world. Their agents went to Turkey and Greece,

to Russia, to Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and even to Egypt, but failed to find what they sought.

The same year they settled the diversities of opinion which had arisen among them as regards their relations to the civil power, by a more liberal construction of their own principle. They resolved that if any one of their number was called by the civil authority to serve as a judge, as a soldier, or the like, he might with a good conscience yield to compulsion and faithfully serve God in such a calling. Soon after, the binding authority of the writings of the founder Gregory was denied, and the Scriptures were thus left as the only final standard of the Church. This was followed by admitting the validity of baptism and of the administration of the Lord's Supper by Roman Catholics and others, and by giving up the notion, which they had hitherto cherished, of salvation only within the narrow limits of the United Brethren themselves.

As they threw overboard these dead weights of bigotry, and at the same time retained a firm and clear hold of the essentials of evangelical piety, they made great advances in numbers and strength. At the close of the fifteenth century, they embraced no less than three hundred churches and one hundred thousand members. They procured the printing of two editions of the Bohemian Bible, the first at Venice and the second at Nuremburg. But these being insufficient to meet the demand, three presses were put in operation in Bohemia for the printing

of Bibles alone. At this time, too, new persecutions were threatened. In 1503, King Ladislaus declared that the Brethren must be exterminated, for they were worse than the Turks. A conference was vouchsafed to their representatives at Prague in 1504, but so excited were the masses against them that their lives were in danger, and they were compelled to make a hasty flight. In these persecuting movements the Calixtines were even more bitter than the avowed papists. They were anxious not to be confounded with the hated "Brethren;" they wished to recommend themselves at Rome while adhering to the Four Articles. This conduct drove the more conscientious of the Calixtines into the arms of the Brethren. In 1508 the king issued a decree commanding all "Picardines" without distinction of sex or age to be put to death. Nevertheless, the decree was never fully carried out; the threatened storm never really broke. The dawn of the German Reformation found the Brethren a compact, intelligent, devoted body of Christians; a pure Church amid prevailing corruption; a growing and flourishing community, in spite of continued and grievous annoyances and frequent bloody persecutions.

While yet a papist, Luther hated the Brethren and Huss alike, but after his conversion he says: "I am constrained to honor those as saints and martyrs whom the pope condemned and murdered as heretics. In this number I reckon the Brethren



commonly called 'Picards,' for among them I have found what I deem a great wonder, and what is not to be found in the whole extent of Popedom—namely, that, setting aside all human traditions, they exercise themselves day and night in the law of the Lord." These words are found in the preface which Luther wrote to the Confession of the Brethren, which he printed for them at Wittenberg in 1532. But while Luther gave the right hand of fellowship to the Brethren, he declined to enter into organic union with them. In 1540 he said to their bishop, John Augusta, "Be ye the apostles of the Bohemians; I and mine will be the apostles of the Germans."

Meanwhile, the influence of the Lutheran Reformation was spreading through Bohemia. It was even proposed in a meeting of the States, in 1523, to take measures for promoting a reform movement.

In 1530, Bohemia fell under the rule of the archduke Ferdinand of Austria, who had married the daughter of Ladislaus. From that time, Bohemia as an independent State disappeared from the map of Europe, and constituted a part of the loosely-compacted empire of Austria. The reign of Ferdinand began under favorable auspices. Persecution ceased; the Reformation spread; the Brethren took courage; the Reformers showed a deeper interest in their condition. Bucer wrote to the Brethren: "I believe that at this present time ye are the only ones among whom not only a pure doctrine,

but a becoming, gentle and useful church order, prevails." Calvin studied their church order, and was not ashamed to receive hints from them in framing the constitution of the Church of Geneva.

Seventeen years afterward, the whole aspect of things was changed and the Brethren were driven into exile. They found a refuge in Prussia and Moravia. Those who remained behind were cruelly persecuted and denied the rights of citizenship. In 1562, Maximilian II., a wise and liberal-minded ruler, became king of Austria and emperor of Germany. His lenient policy encouraged and fostered every branch of the Protestant Church. A persecuting decree was indeed wrested from him by the arch-chancellor of Bohemia in 1563, but he had scarcely left the emperor's presence and started on his return to Bohemia, when the bridge on which he was crossing the Danube gave way, and he and his persecuting edict were lost in the depths of the stream. Maximilian's favorite physician was John Crato, one of the Brethren. Under his reign, the Bible was allowed to be translated into the vernacular of the Slavonians, and the Brethren made a new version of the Scriptures from the original, with annotations, into the Bohemian tongue.

With some slight interruptions, this era of peace and progress was protracted through half a century. The successor of Maximilian, Rudolph II., though inclined to bigoted views and measures,

found himself compelled from considerations of policy to yield full liberty of worship to his Protestant subjects.

But when, in 1618, Ferdinand II., a pupil of the Jesuits, and their ready tool, came to the throne, the fate of Bohemian Protestantism and of the liberties of the country was sealed. Ferdinand's character was revealed in such sayings as these: "Better a desert than a country full of heretics;" "He would rather with his wife and children beg his bread from door to door than have a heretic in his service or tolerate one in his dominions." His encroachments on the chartered rights of the Protestants were answered by an uprising of the nobles, who flung his ministers from the windows of the council-house and deposed him from the throne.

This event, which took place May 23, 1618, was the real beginning of the Thirty Years' War. Begun in Bohemia, that country suffered the direst evils during its long continuance, and was left a helpless, bleeding captive in the chains of the papacy at its close. The attempts of the nobles to maintain themselves against Ferdinand were utterly futile. They chose Frederic V., elector palatine, a Calvinist prince, as king. He was the son-in-law of James I., king of England—a fact which no doubt led them to count on the support of England and her continental allies in the struggle which they foresaw was coming. But Ferdinand met the new king at White Hill, in sight of

the city of Prague, October 29, 1620, and utterly defeated his army, and Prague and Bohemia lay at the mercy of the victor.

The defeated monarch, called in derision "the summer king," fled to the court of his father-in-law. The whole English nation was aroused at the appearance of the fugitive prince, and would gladly have armed in his defence. Repeated addresses were made by Parliament inviting and urging James to make a vigorous effort in his behalf. Thus, as England, through Wickliffe and the good queen Anne of Bohemia, was honorably and providentially connected with the rise of the Reformation in that country, so she might have contributed to maintain it in the hour of extreme peril, and have prevented its utter overthrow.

But the feeble efforts which James actually undertook were soon frustrated, and Romanism was allowed to establish itself, with all its worst enginery of bigotry and persecution, in the land of Huss, Jerome and Zisca. After the battle of White Hill, no less than twenty-seven leaders of the Protestant party were executed in front of the council-house in Prague. Their heads were exposed to view on the gallery of a tower at the entrance of the famous bridge over the Moldau. The sword with which these nobles were beheaded, together with specimens of the terrible iron flails of the Hussites, is still on exhibition in the National Museum of Prague.

But the awful drama of popish cruelty was not yet concluded. Seven hundred and twenty estates of the nobility were confiscated. Forty million dollars thus went into the royal treasury. Five hundred noble and thirty-six thousand citizen families were driven into exile. Protestant books were eagerly sought and burned under the gallows; Bohemian literature was almost annihilated; Zisca's monument was destroyed; Protestant churches were shut up or burned; Lichtenstein's dragoons drove the peasants to the Catholic churches. Fearful sufferings, imprisonment and death were visited upon those who continued faithful.

Thousands escaped to more favored regions, and Bohemia sank from a foremost place among the nations of Europe to that of an insignificant province of the Austrian empire. "High as the Bohemians had risen," says a Romanist writer, "in the arts and sciences under Maximilian and Rudolph, just so low were they now sinking. I do not know of a single learned man who distinguished himself in Bohemia by any marks of erudition, after the expulsion of the Protestants."

There still outlives all these centuries of revolution, the one pure and beneficent result of the Bohemian reformation and the Hussite movement, in which all its errors, extravagances and violence are purged away, and only its genuine Christian excellences remain. The United Brethren, or the Moravians, are the successors and representatives

to-day of the Hussite exiles, who as early as 1453 began to leave their country in order to enjoy their religious opinions and perform their rites without molestation.

But to recount their deeds and sufferings for the cause of the Redeemer would be to repeat, in fairer and softer lines, the story of bravery and endurance which we have just completed, and to show that in other ages and regions of the earth can be re-enacted **THE HEROIC AGE OF THE CHURCH IN BOHEMIA.**

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THE END.