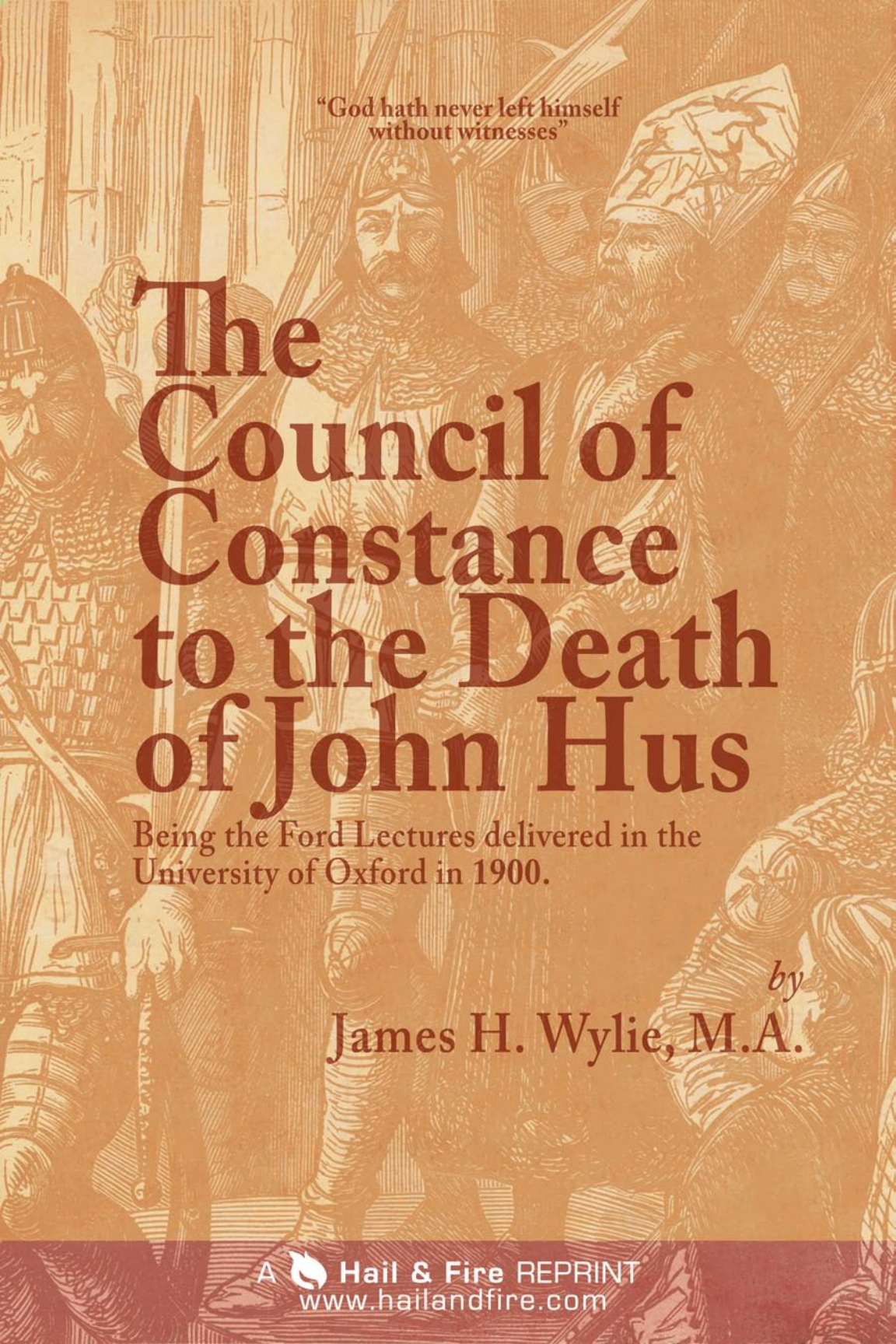

"God hath never left himself without witnesses"

The Council of Constance to the Death of John Hus

Being the Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in 1900.

by

James H. Wylie, M.A.

A Hail & Fire REPRINT
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PREFACE

to the Protestant Reprint of

"The Council of Constance to the Death of John Hus" by James H. Wylie

by Hail & Fire

PROTESTANT HISTORY & MARTYROLOGY

These works have been placed online so that those of a Protestant and Gospel faith might have these rare and historic resources readily available. Many today have hastily compromised this great cloud of witnesses for the same 'ecumenical unity' from which their own nations and peoples and families escaped by so dear a price paid in the past. To such we humbly address a word of caution: Look not to the past to whitewash it for the sake of what seems to be a new ecumenism; for the past is a record of the very trial of men's creeds and it is the record itself afforded to all that we might examine and judge the fruits of the religions and doctrines that men live by in this world. Only by putting out our own eyes of wisdom do we exonerate the doctrine and the dogma, and condemn the man only who lived by it. We may each study and analyze the facts of history; we may suspect and dissect; we may seek proofs and compile arguments and in polemical treatises put forth our findings, theories and our opinions; but we cannot change nor may we begin now to change or to suppress that which, in times past and in the ages in which the events took place, is witnessed and not denied by any party to the events, is testified by supporters and detractors alike, is recorded in decrees, dogmatic and ecclesiastical decisions, letters and histories written by men of every sort - even by all men. As Alexis Muston says to the purpose of his Vaudois martyrology and history, "Why relate such atrocities? more than one voice will exclaim with emotion. To inspire horror of the odious principles which have produced them. Do you suppose that an account of the blood which was shed will never be called for? Nay; these vile oppressors of mankind, tyrannizing by the sword, tyrannizing by deceit, tyrannizing by cupidity - these heroes of superstition and intolerance, who would have put an end to Christianity a thousand times over, if it could have been destroyed - these authors of so may wounds still bleeding in the world - must endure history to the last."

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE TO THE DEATH OF JOHN HUS

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The Council of Constance to the Death of John Hus

BEING THE FORD LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN LENT TERM, 1900

BY

JAMES HAMILTON WYLIE, M.A.

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS
AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF ENGLAND UNDER HENRY THE FOURTH"

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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PRELIMINARY.

I HAVE as yet found no complete bibliography of the Council of Constance, though there is every hope that before long we may have a full list from that diligent student of the subject, Dr. Heinrich Finke of Freiburg, who has long been busied with the history of the Council. His introductory treatise, entitled *Forschungen und Quellen zur Geschichte des Konstanzer Konzils*, was published eleven years ago, and the first volume of his *Acta Concilii Constanciensis* followed seven years later, but as this only deals with preliminary documents bearing upon the months immediately preceding the actual opening, I fear that it may be long ere the work approaches its completion. In the meantime I have myself accumulated some bibliographical material which I hope I may be able some day to prepare for publication.

To deal here with a few contemporary sources only, it is known that careful notes of official documents were made by notaries officially appointed to record the proceedings both in the public sessions of the Council and the separate meetings of the nations, though of the latter series none appear to have been preserved. A collection of these official *Acta* was

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made by Cardinal Zabarella, though it cannot now be identified, and many such were certainly circulating in various parts of Europe. One of them is known to have been given to Durham College in this university by one of the English envoys, and it was frequently consulted and quoted by Thomas Gascoigne, whose *Liber Veritatum* is still in MS. in Lincoln College Library. Last year I saw another copy in the library of St. John's College at Cambridge, but had not time to examine it critically, and there are doubtless many other copies elsewhere in England whose existence will be known to many in this audience. But it was not till the year 1500, *i.e.*, some eighty years after the Council had closed, that a lawyer of Tübingen, named Jerome of Croaria, published a volume of these *Acta* at Hagenau, and since his day many similar and enlarged editions have appeared, chiefly through the industry of successive librarians at the Vatican.

But besides official acts there were also unofficial diaries kept by several Churchmen who were present, in which they recorded current events that befell from day to day. The best known of these are the diaries of the French Cardinal Guillaume Fillastre, and Jacob Cerretanus who was then a priest at Turin. Others again wrote formal histories of the Council, such as John of Wallenrod, a knight who had seen much travelling (whose book has now apparently disappeared), John Dörre (Dean of the Andreaskirche at Worms) and an Austrian, Nicholas

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Elstrawe, whose MS., finished at Constance on October 8th, 1416, is still preserved at Vienna. To these may be added the rhetorical and semi-poetical history written by Dietrich Vrie, an Augustinian from Osnabrück, and entitled *De Consolatione Ecclesiæ* in imitation of Boethius. It was finished at Constance in 1417. All these *fontes*, so far as they remain, have been more or less consulted and incorporated in the great collections of the Church annalists and council-writers, and the substance of them will be found in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth volumes of Mansi published in the latter part of last century and never improved upon since. But before the *fontes* had reached this stage the Council of Constance had received the special attention of Hermann Van der Hardt, Professor of Hebrew and Librarian in the University of Helmstadt, who published his four folio volumes in the beginning of the eighteenth century, a work whose monumental industry is only equalled by its monumental confusion of arrangement.

But if official *Acta* were all that we possessed we should be but poorly off, and we are fortunately well supplied from other sources with much necessary human cement to tie and bind the official bricks together. The age was an age of quarrelling, and if it is often true that "the living do not give up their secrets with the candour of the dead" yet the living age of Constance certainly gave up its secrets with candour enough for most of us. A single Pope, officially revered by all, has too often passed for a colourless

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though saintly personality, but three deposed and discredited Popes, all living amidst their haters as well as their admirers, let loose men's tongues, and old Dietrich of Nieheim, who had personally known the Papal Curia for many years, and wrote his life of John XXIII. in Constance in the summer of 1415, being an eye-witness of much that he describes, was not the only critic of the great and fallen, for pamphleteers were all about, and many of their anonymous broadsheets have drifted down to us, in whole or in part, from the turmoil of that forgotten world. There, too, were many keen reformers who worked with heart and soul to stem the scandal and depravity that were ruining many of the religious houses. Among these we may name Gobelinus (or Gabriel) Persona who wrote his *Weltchronik* (which he called *Cosmodromium*) in the convent of Bödekken in 1418, and Ludolf Meistermann, the Abbot of Sagan in Silesia, whose book on the schism and the Hussites has a curious connection with some of the phrases used by Gascoigne in his *Book of Truths* written a little later in Oxford. It is true that neither Meistermann nor Persona appears to have been actually on the spot at Constance while the Council sat, but their information was first-hand and direct. Touches of great interest are likewise found in the writings of young Felix Hemmerlin of Zürich, who attended as one of the representatives of the town of Lucerne. Poets, too, like Muscatblut and Thomas Prisschuch of Augsburg, contributed songs and ballads, and we

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have many dated letters sent home by representatives of Cologne, Frankfurt and Vienna, as well as by Italian Humanists like Poggio and Leonardo Bruni. But the greatest and most matchless collection of letters are those of John Hus preserved in the narrative of Peter Mladenowicz who travelled with him from Prague and watched him dying at the stake.

Of dry statistics the supply is somewhat thin, for the Rathbuch of the town council of Constance is missing for the opening year, but the true researcher finds his heart positively jumpy as he reads the detailed items set down from day to day by the Pope's registrar, Stephen Prato, Bishop of Volterra, who fled with his master to Schaffhausen and whose account flickers out in the intervening days between the flight and the surrender at Freiburg. But of all personal records the most intensely personal is the story told by Ulrich Richental, a burgess of Constance, who passed about the streets and saw the crowds of strangers coming in and out; though such an inestimable witness is largely to be discounted by the fact that he did not write down his recollections till some years after the Council was at an end.

Among the chroniclers proper, the foremost place must be given to Rumbolt Slecht, a Cantor from Strassburg, who was certainly still writing his chronicle at Constance in March, 1415, and the French friar, Peter of Versailles, who is supposed to have contributed the events of these years to the great chronicle of St. Denys. Outside of the town, but at no great distance

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away, were the chroniclers of Bern (Conrad Justinger) and Strassburg (Jakob Twinger), and light is here and there shed from the chronicles of Engelhusen, Fistenport, Ebendorfer and others who were living and writing at the time. Sermons and theological tracts loom largely under the great names of Gerson and D'Ailli and others of less note, among them being at least one Englishman, Richard Ulverston or Ullerston, who was chancellor of this university in 1408 and Rector of Beeford in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Few of these disquisitions, however, contain much local colour, save perhaps the letters of Stephen Dolein against the Hussites, while complimentary and barren harangues abound, as the various envoys arrived and poured forth their floods of adulation upon Sigismund with a lively sense of favours to come.

But in this summary account I feel that I have only touched the fringe of the matter. France, Flanders, England, Scotland, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia and the Empire all caught varying echoes of the great events, and the chronicles yield some gleanings in every part of Europe from Perpignan to Pomerania, though the task of enumeration would be tedious to you. Sigismund himself found a singular panegyrist in Eberhardt Windecke, the bagman of Mayence, and an equally pungent enemy in Jean de Montreuil who watched his oddities both in Paris and in the streets of Constance.

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LECTURE I.

SIGISMUND.

SIGISMUND, King of Hungary, was the second son of the Emperor Charles IV. and grandson of the blind King John of Bohemia, killed at Crécy, whose plumes and motto are with us still. The family were Luxemburgers, but the grandfather had been chosen King of Bohemia, and their centre of interest had thus gravitated towards Eastern Europe, where Sigismund's half-brother, Wenzel, was now reigning in a renovated and modernised capital at Prague. Sigismund himself had married the daughter and heiress of Louis, King of Hungary, and had thus succeeded to a crown at Ofen. In 1396 he had been frightfully beaten by the Turks at Nicopolis; in 1401 he had been for a time deposed and imprisoned by his Hungarian subjects, and three years later had nearly died of fever, his life being saved by hanging him up by the heels for twenty-four hours to let the fever trickle out of his mouth. On July 21st, 1411, he had been unanimously elected King of the Romans at Frankfurt, though he had not yet received his formal coronation. By arrangement with Wenzel he had thus patched up the schism in the Empire, and all eyes were now

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turned to him to heal the great schism in the Church.

That schism had started with the disputed election of Clement VII. and Urban VI. in 1378, when all Western Christendom had been sharply divided into Clementines and Urbanists with rival heads at Avignon and Rome. At length, after successive deaths, successive elections and successive failures, the majority of the cardinals had agreed to disregard both Popes, and had summoned a Council in their own name to meet at Pisa in 1409, at which the contending Popes were both declared to be schismatics, and an alternative Pope (Alexander V.) was appointed to supersede them. But Alexander V. died within a year of his election and was succeeded by John XXIII. (Balthasar Cossa) who had the support of France, England, Italy, Scandinavia and the great bulk of the Empire, while one of his rivals (Benedict XIII.) could only count on Spain and Scotland, and the other (Gregory XII.) received but the tiniest modicum of recognition in isolated quarters such as Heidelberg or Rimini.

In his journeyings before he became King of England, Henry IV. had made acquaintance personally with Sigismund, and messages and presents had often passed between them afterwards. English envoys had been at Ofen in 1411 and had conferred with the Hungarian King as to the necessity of calling another General Council and stopping the faction fights in France. In the following year when English troops were entangling themselves in the French

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quarrels, Sigismund wrote to Henry IV., urging him to keep out of it and help neither side. He had been glad to hear a rumour that the English meant to help Pope John against Ladislas in Italy, and any such help rendered to the Pope he would regard as help rendered to himself. But if the English had made up their minds to interfere in France, let Henry join him in helping one side only, *i.e.*, the Armagnacs. And he told him that his enemies, the Venetians, had been making horns of iron to let the wind into the whole world, so he thought it would be the best thing if Henry would lay hands on those Venetian merchants that were in England and damnify them in their goods and stuff, adding that he hoped to be able to arrange for the much-wished-for union with the Greek Church, and afterwards to go to Palestine, where he knew that Henry was anxious to liberate the land made holy by the blood of Christ.

One of King Henry IV.'s envoys to Ofen was a Flemish knight, Hertonk van Clux, who was sent again after the accession of Henry V. with a letter from the new King to Sigismund, the text of which cannot now be found. This letter would appear to have been delivered to Sigismund in the summer of 1414, when he had moved through Switzerland into Germany for his coming coronation. In his reply he expressed a strong desire to be of one heart and one mind with the King of England, and told him that he was hoping to have a meeting with King Charles VI. of France at which he would certainly urge the

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question of a marriage between young Henry and one of the French princesses, as he had already done during the lifetime of his father; that he had suggested to the envoy a means of providing for the good estate of the King's brothers, though there is now no clue to the meaning of this mysterious sentence, and that he would like to confer with some theologians and jurists from the English universities before the General Council should begin. The envoy brought word also that Sigismund was wishful for an alliance with the new King of England, and Henry accordingly commissioned four representatives to proceed on a diplomatic errand to him and negotiate on his behalf. Van Clux himself was to be one of the envoys and the others were Sir Walter Hungerford, John Waterton, and Dr. Simon Sydenham, Archdeacon of Salisbury. Their commission was made out on 23rd July, 1414, but as they were only allowed £5 apiece for their expenses there and back, there was clearly no excessive eagerness on the part of the English King to impress his new friend with any extra sumptuousness of diplomatic display. As a matter of fact, the English envoys merely presented themselves before Sigismund at Coblenz, and were lost in the crowd of notables that attended the Diet there in August, 1414, and it becomes an interesting question whether the results of their mission were of any first-rate importance at all.

Two modern German writers have speculated with much ingenuity upon this uncertain point, one of them thinking that the negotiations originated in a desire

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on the part of Henry V. to make common cause with Sigismund against Wycliffists and Hussites, and the other that they were a countermove to curb the power of France. As to the first view, it is perfectly true that Sigismund was looked upon as such a deadly foe to heresy that it used to be said that whenever he roared the Wycliffists all ran away. He had established a solid claim to the admiration of every orthodox ruler who was troubled with heretical subjects (as the King of England certainly was) when he founded the Order of the Golden Dragon in 1408 to fight against all pagans, schismatics and other enemies of the Christian religion; and when Henry V. made his will before he started for Harfleur he left a jewelled sword to Sigismund, "his most dear brother," as being in his judgment the stoutest defender of the Church and the Faith. As to the second view, it must be observed that if Henry's purpose was to cause bad blood between Sigismund and the French he altogether failed in his attempt. Thus far the French had been Sigismund's natural and hereditary allies. They had helped him at Nicopolis, and as a fact he was at this very time concluding a defensive league with them against the Duke of Burgundy and all opponents—including the King of England himself, had all the truth been known—and when he went to Paris in 1416 he was heard to curse the memory of Henry IV. with insults that would have done for Cain and Judas.

It should be borne in mind, however, that both

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the above theories proceed upon the assumption that Henry was the first to seek the alliance, while the wording of his commission distinctly shows that the first overtures certainly came from the other side, so that the motive must clearly be sought in some prospect of gain to Sigismund rather than to Henry. But all doubt upon this question has been now set at rest since the discovery of a series of contemporary diplomatic documents in the library at the Vatican, which give a complete explanation of the whole transaction.

Late in the summer of 1413 Sigismund had sent a message to France, suggesting that the Duke of Orleans and other French princes should meet him at Avignon and proceed with him to Paris, so that he might have a personal interview with the French King, or, if this might not be, that the Dauphin or the Dukes of Berry, Bourbon, Bar and Orleans, or his brother the Count of Vertus, together with some doctors from the University of Paris, should meet him either in Provence or Dauphiné or at Asti in Piedmont, so that France, the Empire, the House of Luxemburg and the Roman Church might henceforth live in unity, and the old leagues of love might be compacted like an impregnable firmament and knit with a multifold cord that should not easily be broken. Such a league would first be turned against the sacrilegious Ladislas who had been already sounded by the Duke of Burgundy, and whose wickedness against God's sanctuary was known to all the world.

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But owing to the Cabochian disturbances in Paris and the general insecurity and cost of travelling, this plan had to be abandoned, though an alliance with the Duke of Orleans against the Duke of Burgundy was actually signed by Sigismund on 12th September, 1413, when he was at Coire, in the Grisons, on his way to Lombardy. Then came the news that the Duke of Burgundy had been again at the gates of Paris, that he had gone back to Flanders, leaving his troops hard by, and that there was no chance of any meeting in Italy or Provence as the French King must take the field against "that parricide"; to which Sigismund replied that he would like at any rate to see a few doctors from Paris, so that he might talk over some secrets of his heart and deep conceits of his thoughts which were too weighty to be written down, and which had never fallen from the chamber of his breast into the ear of any living man. In the meantime, the Pope and the Count of Savoy would try to make peace between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, and as there were some envoys coming to him from England, he would see that they were detained about his court until he received the French King's reply. Then the French suggested a personal meeting with their King at Verdun on the Upper Meuse at Michaelmas, 1414, as a mutually convenient spot before the coming coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle. But when Sigismund heard of the Peace of Arras, whereby the Duke of Burgundy was again admitted into the royal favour,

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his eyes began to open to the treacherousness of the ground on which his own ambition had thought to build so securely. At any rate, no Verdun meeting ever took place, and Sigismund would appear to have been as yet unaware that the King of England was also all this time negotiating for alliance with the Duke of Burgundy.

Thus the mysterious secrets meant for Frenchmen's ears were never dropped from Sigismund's breast, but what he wanted with England may be read in a letter that he wrote to King Henry V. in July, 1414, and forwarded by Hertonk van Clux. In this he referred to his efforts to secure the success of the coming Church Council at which he was already assured that Pope John would certainly be present. He said also that he meant to send urgent letters to the rival claimants, Benedict and Gregory, whose attitude was as yet uncertain. But what if he and the Kings of France and England could be mutually bound together? If God were for them, who could be against them? They could carry everything straight away, even if no Pope or claimant should appear at all. A Hungarian knight was commissioned to negotiate further details, and before long proposals were drafted for a definite alliance between Sigismund, Charles VI. and Henry V., as the three leaders of Christendom.

According to this, a marriage would be arranged between the royal families of France and England, and inasmuch as the King of France had often written and informed him how the Duke of Burgundy

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had killed the Duke of Orleans and driven his son from the court, but had been at last condemned as a traitor, and all his lands declared to be confiscated, it was now proposed that the three Kings should proceed jointly against him and his brother the Duke of Brabant, with whom Sigismund had his own individual quarrel, on the understanding that the King of England should receive all his sovereign rights over Flanders, little knowing apparently that the Duke of Burgundy was at that very time arranging to hand over four Flemish ports to the King of England, and to do homage to him for the whole county of Flanders of his own accord.

All these *pourparlers* had been broached at Coblenz, and when the English representatives were despatched to Constance they were authorised to approach King Sigismund in the intervals of Council business, and enter into a league of friendship on behalf of King Henry with that "most unconquered and super-illustrious prince," after discussing the amount of help and assistance that each might expect from the other. These negotiations certainly resulted in a separate alliance between the two sovereigns, though the fact was for a time concealed from the slumbering French.

Sigismund was at this time about forty-six years old, and he seemed to the churchmen of his age to have stepped upon the scene as a heaven-sent reconciler in the fulness of time, a very Messiah who was to come, a King of Kings and Lord of Lords, a Constantine or Charlemagne speaking peace to the nations,

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a second Moses, a David after God's own heart sent to slay the giant, the lion and the bear. He had lifted up his eyes and seen the whole world lying in wickedness and had risen to shed over all Christ's people his beams of glory, light, peace, joy and rest. Next God all Christendom now looked to him for bliss. The Church's prelates would not lift their poor torches to help the sun or teach Minerva wisdom. Let him but give his orders quickly and secure the crown of glory that the Almighty had reserved for him alone! It is true that he had enemies who had said at his election that he was too much occupied with other things and had so far left the Church to welter in schism, but this was only because of his excessive virtue, and if some spoke of him as a wolf, to others he was as guileless as a lamb whose only care it was to follow Christ. His panegyrist gives him special praise as a merciful King, though within a few pages he tells how, after defeating the Venetians at Motta, he made their captain hack off the right hands of 180 of his own countrymen and fling them into the sea; while in an earlier stage of his career he wreaked his vengeance upon some of his disaffected Hungarian nobles by calling thirty of them into his tent, one by one, and beheading them there and then, and only stopped the carnage when the rest refused to come in because they saw the blood of their slaughtered comrades trickling out from below the fringe of the tent. Wherever he went he was always borrowing money; he could drink with any one who

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was that way inclined; his big, burly form, broad brow, laughing eyes, ruddy cheeks and long, full, yellow beard captured all hearts with the genial charm of his gracious *bonhomie;* yet so versatile was he that when some envoys came out from Genoa with an unpleasant refusal to admit him into their town, he presented them with a copy of Justinian and left them with the impression that he was a kindly, God-fearing man, strong in body, simple in diet, and hedged about all round with prudence. Some critics called him a vain, silly, bumptious babbler, forgetting that this was just his strength, for he knew that if you cannot jump over you must creep under, and he played his men with wily shrewdness. Notorious as it was that he was flush of promise and slow of payment, yet his glib tongue could snite a loan from the canniest merchant when he dropped the courtly ceremonious "*Ihr*," and brought his friendly little "*Du*" to bear, and if he sometimes struck a money-lender in the face for venturing to press for his account, he very soon repented and had him paid up in full.

He was certainly a student of books, and amidst the distractions of his broken life he always spared some leisure time for reading, finding as he said that the pressure of business needs the relish of knowledge. From his youth up he had always loved Knowledge for her own beauty's sake, and had run without weariness into the odour of her ointments. He helped poor scholars where he could, as men whom nature meant

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to top the world, and he would sometimes say that though he could make 1,000 knights in a single day, he could not make one scholar in 1,000 years. Besides his native German he could speak in Latin, Czech, Hungarian and French, and for a layman and a worldling his knowledge of languages seemed in those days amazing. It is true that when Vergerio translated Arrian for him he put it into plain, easy Latin, because of the great man's limited knowledge of that tongue, but it is nevertheless on record that when the envoys from Paris presented themselves at Constance he welcomed them in a Latin speech, and nobody expressed any special surprise.

The famous story of *Rex Super Grammaticam* is, I fear, of too doubtful origin to afford any fair basis of inference as to his real acquirements. In the earliest form in which I have been able to trace it, which dates from about eighty years after his death, it is said that at one of the sittings of the Council at Constance he called *Schisma* masculine and was at once taken to task for his bad grammar by the Cardinal of Piacenza, possibly Cardinal Branda Castiglione, who, however, had ceased to be Bishop of Piacenza three years before the Council met. To this Sigismund is said to have replied: "Placentia, Placentia, you may *please* everybody else, but you don't *please* me, for you make me of less account than Priscian!"—or as we should say "than A B C"—and everybody roared. But the version of the story that Carlyle has rubbed into the English language occurs first about a generation later

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still, in an account of the House of Hapsburg, written by one of the Fuggers, the great merchant princes of Augsburg, who tells how in the first session of the Council at Constance (at which, as we shall see, he was not present) Sigismund made a Latin speech in which he said, "Date operam ut ist*a* nefand*a* schism*a* eradicetur!" and that the Cardinal of Piacenza said this was bad grammar because *schisma* was not feminine, quoting Alexander, Priscian and others. "And who were they?" asked Sigismund (another impossibility, seeing that Priscian was every beginner's text-book), and when they told him that they were learned grammarians, "But I am Emperor," he said (which in strictness he was not), "and above them. Can't I make a new grammar?" But the absence of any sort of evidence from contemporaries stamps the story as apocryphal like that of many another *bon-mot* that has been fathered on him, but of which he was probably entirely innocent.

For his reputation for a certain elephantine and child-like "wisdom" long survived him and in the next generation his name had become a peg upon which the collectors of anecdotes hung some of their most sententious apophthegms. "Kings would be blessed," they made him say, "if they had no flatterers about them." "The flatterer is worse than the crow, for the crow picks out the eyes of the dead but the flatterer the eyes of the living." "I kill my enemy by sparing his life" is certainly very neat, though "We should want no soldiers if town authorities did their duty"

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reads like the motto of the Progressives at a County Council election. "You cannot love a king unless you are afraid of him," the sage is supposed to have said; or "No prince deserves to reign who cannot shut his eyes and ears"; or "A donkey has a better time than a prince, for his master at least leaves him alone while he is eating"; and it is surprising to me that this plaintive tag has not done duty more often than it has in modern after-dinner speeches.

But whatever is to be said as to Sigismund's reputed wisdom it is certain that it never added balance to his character, for he was above all things unstable, the creature of impulse and passion, what Carlyle calls a "headlong, high-pacing, flimsy nature," "an imponderous rag of conspicuous colour, tossing upon the loud whirlwind of things". Pope John gauged one side of him aright when he spoke of him as a drunken fool, and one of his flatterers unconsciously let out the truth about him when he said that all came alike to him, the worst as well as the best, for in his hand he held both heaven and hell.

He had a keen eye for woman's beauty, and his handsome form made him everywhere a lion with the ladies. Many were the frail victims that fell to the yellow beard, whether in masked disguises of the night or in the open light of day, and it became a tradition among his people that when his grand butler travelled to Ireland at his request, and went down into St. Patrick's Hole in Lough Derg, he saw many lasses and pretty young brides waiting for his master in the

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Purgatory with a red hot bath and a bed of fire. "Then we must have that bed shifted to heaven!" said Sigismund, so he sold thirteen towns to the King of Poland for 80,000 florins and built a church at Ofen with the proceeds.

With such well-marked propensities in himself, he more than met his match when, after six years of widowhood, he married Barbara, the eldest daughter of Hermann II., Count of Cilli in Styria, who has left a frightful record as the Messalina of the Middle Ages. Estimates differ widely as to the date of her birth, but she was a tall, fair, graceful woman, though with a face somewhat marred with spots, when Sigismund married her as his second wife in 1408. Her father is said to have been surprised that he proposed for her hand, but the suitor was under obligations to him, and the pair were of like passions, and if her husband had his gallantries she soon began to "love other men too". At Constance her light conduct became the talk of the town. Her fondness for public dances and her free familiarity with men were scarcely suited to a queen, though they might have passed in a woman of lower estate. In all of this her husband never interfered; his own record was too slippery for that. But scandal was soon wide awake, and though it could not be said that Barbara was actually unchaste, yet the wiseacres predicted that there would soon be infamy and trouble in that home such as no royal house had ever seen before. Those who sought excuses for her found them in reflecting that "Faith-

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less man makes faithless wife," and that "those who make the horns must not refuse to wear them". She certainly made him wear the horns, and more than once he had to put her away. She used to mock at Christianity and to say that those were dreaming who looked for a life to come. She would get her maidens round her and make fun of the stories about holy virgins. At any rate she was not going to copy them, for she put no check upon herself, and when a priest exhorted her after her husband's death to live for a time in chastity, like a turtle mourning for its mate, she said that the turtle was a stupid bird, and that she preferred the sparrow, for it was always chirpy and gay.

Sigismund's heart was now firmly set on restoring unity in the Church as a prelude to the imperial crown for himself, but before the necessary Great Council could be called, he left his wife to govern his Hungarian kingdom, and moved down into Italy to settle matters with the Venetians and with Filippo Maria Visconti, Lord of Milan. But his forces were far too small for either purpose. Filippo Maria was twenty-two years old and had been represented as only a boy, but his cunning proved too much for Sigismund, who gave it as his opinion that, if the Italian *boys* were all like this, their *old men* must be very sharp indeed. So he made haste to agree with his adversary, and passed on towards the Rhine to secure his coronation as King of the Romans at Aix-la-Chapelle.

After wintering in Lombardy in 1413, he made

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a fruitless attempt to establish his influence in Genoa in the following spring. But the Genoese had only just got rid of the French and were in no humour to admit him, for fear of taking another Boucicaut on their shoulders instead. From May 8th till well into June, 1414, he was at Pontestura near Casale, on the Po, and he reached Turin on June 17th. Thence he travelled to Ivrea and Aosta, and crossed the Great St. Bernard at midsummer, accompanied by the Count of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat, and a cavalcade of 1,400 mounted men. Following the Rhône Valley he passed through the Canton Vaud to Romont, where he was met by the men of Bern who escorted him through Freiburg into their city at vespers on 3rd July.

The Berners needed his help to protect them and their new-formed confederation against the vengeance of Duke Frederick of Austria, and they gave him a right royal welcome. Four bannerers held up a baldachin of gold cloth above his head, and the townsfolk lined the streets with garlands in their hands. Priests, friars and scholars received him with the crucifix and the relics, and 500 youths, under sixteen years of age, paraded with the imperial banner at their head, each wearing in his cap an eagle painted on a sheet of paper. Sigismund, who had a firm belief that God was with him, could not conceal his delight, but pointing to the young fellows he exclaimed to the nobles at his side: "There is a new world opening for us!"

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They lodged him at the Black Friars, and four days were spent lustily amidst the wine and the women. Everything was put at the visitors' disposal entirely free of charge, and Sigismund and the Count of Savoy pronounced all the arrangements to be excellent, though the silver drinking cups had to be kept out of sight at the King's request, lest they should prove too great a temptation for his own thievish followers. The pageants and banquets cost the Berners some £2,000, and after the departure of their guests everything was found to be very dear, but they had their satisfaction in knowing that the King had said that no other city had ever received him with so much honour before.

Sigismund left Bern at noon on 6th July and rode by Solothurn to Basle whence he sailed down the Rhine to Strassburg. Here he stayed from the 11th to the 17th of July, flirting with the pretty burgesses, some of whom called on him before he was out of bed in the morning, threw a cloak over him and danced him barefoot through the streets with nothing on but his breeches, buying him a pair of shoes in the Kōr-bengasse to enable him to keep it up the longer. On leaving Strassburg he exchanged gold rings and other mementoes for *valete* with the wives of the leading burghers, who never forgot the merry days he spent there; for two years afterwards they sent him a present in Paris, and when he met some envoys from their city at Aix-la-Chapelle on his return from England he did not fail to ask for news of the Strassburg ladies.

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From Strassburg he sailed down to Spires, which he entered in state on July 19th under the usual baldachin with lappets painted with black eagles on a yellow ground. After a stay of fourteen days he took ship for Worms which he reached at six o'clock in the evening of Thursday, 3rd August. The Town Council presented him with two fother of wine, twelve pike, some carp and a salmon, but during the ringing of the joy-bells a clapper broke off and caused a great commotion in the town square. Sailing on, the royal party reached Mayence on August 4th, Bingen on August 8th, and Coblenz on August 12th. Here the King remained till September 4th, arranging weighty business at a Diet and giving audience to various envoys, amongst whom were the Englishmen whose visit has been already described.

Sigismund had previously made arrangements for his coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle on October 21st, so that he might appear as formally crowned King of the Romans at Constance for the opening of the Council which was fixed for the 1st of November. But he found grave difficulties in his path. Several of the Electors were either lukewarm or actively hostile. Duke Adolf of Berg was up in arms because Sigismund did not support his brother's claim to the vacant Archbishopric of Cologne; while the Duke of Brabant threatened to bar his way with an armed force if he should approach any nearer. Accordingly he withdrew disheartened to Heidelberg, where it was believed that he contemplated a return to Hungary,

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balked and uncrowned, even at the cost of a possible postponement of the Council, till the skies had cleared.

He left Coblenz on September 2nd, travelled back up the Rhine to Rense, where he took a meal at the Königstuhl, thence by Mayence to Frankfurt, reaching Heidelberg on September 7th, where he was welcomed by the clergy and the university and entertained for a fortnight as the guest of his loyal supporter Duke Louis, son of the late King Rupert, and brother-in-law to King Henry V. of England. Starting again from Heidelberg on September 20th, he journeyed on by Wimpfen, Waldenburg, and Hall to Krailsheim, thence by Ansbach to the Cistercian Abbey at Heilsbronn and reached Nürnberg on September 25th. Accompanied by the Duke of Saxony, the Bishops of Würzburg, Bamberg and Eichstädt, together with heralds, fifers, and bassooners, who all received their gulden from the burgesses, he rode into the city by the Spitlerthor, where he was received by three ex-burgomasters. Two religious processions awaited him at the adjoining St. James's Church where the relics were exposed in the street. The King dismounted, took the cross in his hand and kissed it; St. Cyprian's head was then placed upon his head and the clergy chanted a solemn introit: "Behold, the Lord cometh with the power and the kingdom in his hand! Let the tribes of the people serve thee and be lord over all thy brethren!" They then formed up and led on to St. Sebald's Church where Sigismund knelt and prayed and the chaplain burnt some linen

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tow as an emblem that the glory of this world passeth away

Eleven days were spent in Nürnberg, and by this time the King had satisfied himself that the lions were removed from his path. The Duke of Juliers, as mayor and bailiff of Aix-la-Chapelle, undertook to guarantee his safety there with 4,000 horse, and after bargaining to raise money from the Jews and arranging a *Landsfried* to secure a safe passage for travellers along the roads through Franconia to Constance, he started with a brighter outlook on his coronation journey, though even as late as 22nd October there is evidence that the opposition had not all been smoothed away. He left Nürnberg on October 5th, rode by Cadolzburg to Windesheim where he accepted a present of 100 florins for himself from the townsfolk and a few more for his minstrels, stayed four days at Rothenburg and arrived at Heilbronn in a storm of rain on 11th October. After arranging a further *Landsfried* he started for Spires on October 16th, remained there till 22nd October, and was at Mayence by 25th October, whither he had had 3,000 boards and other timber sent from Frankfurt to repair his ship for the further passage down the Rhine.

In the meantime Queen Barbara had been making her way across from Ofen to join her husband for their common coronation. Accompanied by Nicholas Gara, her sister's husband, and a cavalcade of 2,000 mounted followers, together with minstrels and *jongleurs*, she had travelled by Vienna, Salzburg and

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Regensburg to Nürnberg, which she entered by the Frauenthor on October 13th, a week after Sigismund had left. She had been expected at Frankfurt by 16th or 17th October, but she did not actually arrive there till October 24th. On the following day she was at Mayence, which she left for Bingen on 27th October. She met her husband at Walluf and the two arrived together at Boppart on October 28th. Halts were made on the three succeeding days at Coblenz, Andernach and Bonn, whence they started for Aix-la-Chapelle on November 2nd, arriving there with 18,000 mounted men at eleven o'clock on Sunday, 4th November, 1414. The townsmen presented Barbara with pieces of red Malines cloth and Brussels bluet, and the royal pair rode through the streets to the minster where the new Gothic choir had only recently been consecrated. Here they kissed the skull of Charlemagne, and while the "Te Deum" was being sung Sigismund lay prostrate with outstretched arms on the floor in the old circular crown of the church, with Queen Barbara kneeling at his side. When the service was over they took up their quarters in the adjoining presbytery, and during the next two days they spent several hours in the church arranging details for the coming ceremony.

Long before daybreak on Wednesday, 8th November, 1414, processions were afoot, and at nine o'clock or thereabouts Sigismund was crowned King of the Romans by the new Archbishop of Cologne (Dietrich Count of Mörs), in presence of a vast concourse of all

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the notables of Christendom, England being represented by the Earl of Warwick and Bishops Bubwith and Hallum and others, who were on their way to the Council. Sigismund himself read the gospel in alb and dalmatic, and on the following day he and Barbara were present at a solemn exhibition of the famous relics, when they were shown one of the under-garments of the Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph's stockings which he had taken off to swaddle the Holy Infant at the moment of the miraculous birth. The king then formally notified the Pope of the events of the preceding day and announced that he would start forthwith to be present at the Great Council which had already assembled by his direction at Constance.

But if Sigismund's efforts to reconcile conflicting secular interests in Northern Italy were practically without result, his visit to that country in the preceding winter has left a lasting mark on the history not only of the Christian Church but of the whole European world. Early in the year 1413 disquieting rumours had reached England as to the precarious position of Pope John XXIII. at Rome, owing to the threatening attitude of Ladislas King of Naples, and Henry V. had intimated his anxiety for definite information, expressing at the same time a courteous hope that the facts might not really be so bad as they were represented. On May 22nd, 1413, John Caterick was appointed as the English King's ambassador and proctor at the Roman court, but before he could reach the Holy City the Pope was again a fugitive.

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At nine o'clock in the morning on June 8th, 1413, he was awakened from his sleep with the news that a breach had been made in the wall, and he had barely time to scramble out of Rome when Ladislas with his victorious army entered it. Late in the same evening the Pope and his followers arrived at Sutri and journeyed forward through the night to Viterbo. Thence they pressed on to Montefiascone where they rested for two days. Leaving again for Acquapendente on June 13th, they reached Radicofani on the following day, where again they called a two days' halt. During this dreadful panic flight many died on the roadside in the scorching heat; others, including Cardinal Landulf of Bari, were caught and plundered; many were killed by the troops of Ladislas or the Pope's own mercenaries, or seized by sailors and sent to work in the galleys. The Pope himself at length reached Florence on June 21st, but public feeling there was so divided that he could not enter the city, and had consequently to find an asylum in the bishop's palace in the suburb of San Antonio just outside the walls. Here he stayed four months, sending indignant letters to the various Christian princes throughout Europe. In one of these written to the King of England, on September 4th, 1413, he declaimed vehemently against the perfidy of Ladislas and begged for help against him. The story of the sack of Rome was too harrowing for him to tell or for his "dearest son" to hear, but he hoped soon to send a legate who would lay the whole case before him in full. Meanwhile all

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Christian Europe, except that small portion of it that owned obedience to Benedict XIII., was shocked with stories of the unspeakable crimes of Ladislas, how his horses were stalled in St. Peter's Church, where the soldiers robbed the sacristy, broke open monstrances, threw out the relics and trampled the Host upon the ground.

And yet it was this very calamity that proved the salvation of the Church, for while the Pope could make no head against the armies of Ladislas, he had been forced to throw himself into the hands of Sigismund.

It was while the latter was at Como on October 13th, 1413, that he was visited by two cardinals who had been deputed to approach him on behalf of Pope John XXIII. These were Antonio de Chalant, Cardinal Priest of St. Cecilia, and the famous Francesco Zabarella, Cardinal Deacon of SS. Cosmas and Damian, popularly known as the Cardinal of Florence. The latter was now a man of fifty-three years of age, and had lately given up a position of immense influence as "King of the Canon Law" at Padua, whither crowds had flocked to him as a sort of shrine of peace. He ate but sparingly, took little sleep and guarded with all diligence against waste of time. He helped and lodged poor scholars and made hosts of friends, who would find their relaxation in visiting his house at night after a day's unbroken study, or spend a holiday with him hunting, fishing or fowling in the hills, with a Cicero, a Virgil or a Terence constantly at

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hand. Whoever once knew him always loved him, and none could hate him but the utterly depraved. He was only in minor orders and had no special bent for a clerical life, believing as he did that it would be better for the Church if her leaders were trained in law rather than theology. His commentaries on the Clementines and Decretals had been finished more than a dozen years before, and no Doctor of Decrees could now afford to do without them. He had gone to the Council at Pisa as one of the representatives of Venice in 1409. On July 18th, 1410, he had been chosen Bishop of Florence, and in the following year Pope John created him a cardinal. But in this his friends saw matter for much regret. They knew that he must give up his books, his frugal habits and even his individual name, and be lost under the weight of his new dignity, and indeed before he had been many months a cardinal the fever-laden air of Rome, the threatenings of war, the dearth of all the necessaries of life and the modesty of his means combined to convince him that he had started on a dangerous cruise, and he was forced to confess himself a poor man with it all. Still they were rejoiced that in him they had a man who could deal with men, not a huckster higgling over a parcel of goats. No one amongst the clergy worked harder than he to get the Council called and rightly guided. When the Pope began to vacillate before the Council met, Zabarella was ever at his elbow, urging and praying him to keep to his word, and in the Council all men, high and

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low, looked to him as a pledge for unity, and possibly to be one day the coming Pope himself. But this was not to be, for he died at Constance in 1417, and was buried for a time in the Grey Friars there, his body being afterwards removed to Florence.

The two cardinals were accompanied in their visit to Sigismund at Como by the famous Greek scholar Manuel Chrysoloras, who was now nearing the close of a notable career of influence, such as it has been given to very few ever to exercise in this world. He certainly, if any one in that age, had come in the fulness of time and, if a man is to be known by his fruits, he was great and fortunate indeed, though it may be doubted whether the occasion did not make the man and not the man the occasion. Near the close of the fourteenth century, he had been visited in his home in Constantinople by the keen Veronese student, Guarini, who was then full of enthusiasm for the lost literature of the old pagan world. As a consequence of this, Manuel left his native country and came to Italy, where he settled in Florence in 1397, receiving an allowance of 150 florins a year on condition that he would teach Greek to all comers free of charge. Though he soon had to complain of the smallness of his stipend, yet he was to some extent repaid by the lifelong friendship of such Humanists as Salutato, Bruni, Poggio, Vergerio and Cenci who all praised the ease with which he taught. In 1400 he attended on the Greek Emperor Manuel Paleologus in Milan, when he came to beg for assistance

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against the Turks, and subsequently received letters from him in which he gave his impressions of the princes of the western world. After staying for a time in Pavia, Rome and Venice, he returned to his own country in 1405. Ere long, however, he was back again amongst his former friends, visiting France and Spain and travelling all over Italy. In the winter of 1411 he spent six months in Rome, where he received an allowance of fifty florins per month from the Pope, and when it was known that the question of reunion with the Greek Church was likely to be a topic for discussion at the coming General Council he was deputed, together with his nephew John, to represent the Emperor Manuel, and speak with authority on the subject, and it was probably in this connection that both the uncle and nephew were ennobled by Sigismund at Pontestura in June, 1414, with the dignity of Counts Palatine of the Empire. Both of them afterwards made the journey to Constance with Cardinal Zabarella and stayed there at the sign of the Sun. In February, 1415, they attended a meeting of the German nation, and it was understood that they were prepared to make their submission to the Pope, return to their own country, and then come back and attend the sittings of the Council officially as long as it should last.

But Manuel Chrysoloras was never destined to return to his country again. He was struck down with fever at Constance about Easter, 1415. They nursed him at the Black Friars, but he died there after

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a few days' illness and was buried in the convent in presence of Poggio and young Agapito Cenci. It is true that the general admiration for him was not absolutely unqualified, and that some of the more flippant of his scholars called him unpleasant names and never altogether got over their rooted repugnance to him, but on soberer souls his earnest talk and the dignity of his presence left the impress of a heaven-sent voice, and they cherished his memory as of a sunbeam thrown upon the deep darkness of his time, a true philosopher and a real god-like man. An epitaph written by Peter Paul Vergerio still marks his resting-place at Constance, and a funeral oration delivered at Venice five months after his death remains as a record of his pupil's personal veneration and esteem.

In dealing now with Sigismund at Como, the two cardinals (De Chalant and Zabarella) were authorised to signify the Pope's willingness to summon a General Council without further delay, but they were to stand out against its meeting in any place where Sigismund's influence would preponderate. A list of suggested places such as Bologna, Genoa, Nice or Rome had been at first drawn up to serve as a basis for negotiations; but the paper was subsequently torn up by the Pope's own hand, and though he afterwards deplored his hard luck and declared that his interests had been betrayed, yet his envoys started finally on their mission with practically a free hand to agree upon the best conditions they could get.

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They opened their case with long speeches which are still extant. But as they contain little but flattery and common-place, they must have made the royal listener very impatient, for he knew that he had the game in his hand and he meant to have his own way. However, the visitors (especially the learned Zabarella) are said to have made a good impression on him, and when the case was closed he raised three of their suite to the dignity of Counts Palatine.

There were many interviews extending over eighteen days, but there was nothing like the same delay over preliminaries that there had been in the case of Pisa, and on October 30th, 1413, Sigismund was able to issue a proclamation announcing that Constance had been agreed upon for the meeting of the Council, and that he had himself selected it as a place where "by his imperial office" he could secure protection to all comers. A full year's notice was now accordingly given that the sittings would begin on November 1st, 1414; that Sigismund would himself be present, and that all who had business there should be assured of full liberty and security in coming, staying and returning. Straightway he despatched a letter to the King of France, informing him that he had taken the Lord's penny to root out the thorns of vice and the thistles of sin from His vineyard, and to plant the seeds of virtue in which He delighteth, and so he invited his royal brother to his most sweet feast at which they would reform the Church and reconcile the East and West, that the One Bride might

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be brought back to her Lord's undivided house where the Good Shepherd would let her in, clad without spot or wrinkle in the golden garb of Truth. He likewise wrote, as the Church's official Advocate and Defender, to Gregory at Rimini, exhorting him to come to Constance with those of his obedience, and warning him that he must not afterwards plead ignorance of the summons. But Gregory declined the call, though he was offered 2,000 gulden per month as long as the Council lasted.

Meantime the position of Pope John was becoming dangerous at Florence, so he left there on November 8th, 1413, and travelling by Pistoja entered Bologna on November 12th. Here his chapmen sold prospective archbishoprics, bishoprics, prebends and parish cures, some of them many times over, so that those who before had been top on the list of expectants now found themselves near the bottom, while the tail was getting very near to hell. Bulls, sacraments, indulgences were all to be had for the buying, and benefices were weighed out by the pound. It was commonly said that the Pope took more than a million ducats with him to Constance, and that if he had not been Pope he would have been the richest priest in Christendom. After this successful trafficking, he moved out to hold a formal interview with Sigismund at Lodi near to Milan.

The Pope and the King, who were the great enigmas of their age, now saw each other for the first time, and a story went abroad that a sententious

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old Florentine was asked by Sigismund which of them he thought the sadder man. The sage thought that perhaps the Pope was, because the hair was off the top of his head, which made Sigismund laugh. This curious anecdote may perhaps refer to the well-known gallantries of the two men, and it was often repeated when the Council met. Two weeks were spent in talk in a large hall, and a last effort seems to have been made to get the Council held in Italy, "for," said the Pope, "I cannot take my cardinals, archbishops and bishops across the Alps!" "Neither can I take my electors and princes," replied the King, and he suggested Kempten in Southern Suabia as a mountain city equally inconvenient for both. But in the end the weaker had to give way, and on December 9th the Pope addressed a letter to Christendom calling a General Council to meet at Constance, as a place centrally situated and safe from the violence of party strife. On January 3rd, 1414, the Pope and thirteen cardinals entered Cremona by the Porta del Po, and Sigismund rode in by the St. Luke's Gate on the same day, together with the Marquis of Montferrat, and many German and Hungarian lords, and then the two great lights in the firmament of the Church and the world together mounted the great Torazzo which rises 400 feet on the north side of the cathedral, the Lord of the place, Gabrino Fondolo, who went up with them, afterwards expressing his regret that he had not pitched them both over into the square below.

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The Pope left Cremona on January 14th, and reached Mantua on the 17th, where he was received by Francesco Gonzaga, and entertained for about a month. He re-entered Bologna on February 26th, and remained there until the time came for his journey across the Alps. True to his promise, he wrote again to King Henry V. from Bologna on April 1st, 1414, announcing that his nephew Marino Municolo, accompanied by the Bishop of Pesaro and Master Austin Del Lante, would soon visit England to raise money for a crusade to recover Rome from Ladislas. The necessary safe-conducts were accordingly issued on June 1st, 1414, and on the 1st of September Archbishop Chichele granted the requisite permission at the manor of Langley Marisch near Windsor, whereby the Italian bishop was authorised to beg for this purpose throughout the whole of the Province of Canterbury on Sundays and Feast Days, between the celebrations of the Mass, in any place where he could collect a crowd, promising forty days' indulgence to all who would give or bequeath any money for this work of love ; and though the University of Oxford entered an academic protest against the degrading results of the system of indulgences as a whole, and the excessive sums paid to secure them, yet the quietness with which Englishmen generally submitted to the appeal, as contrasted with the recent rioting of the Hussites in Prague, is only one of many proofs of how utterly their Lollardy had been crushed and cowed.

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But before the pardoners began to beg in England, Ladislas had been removed from Italy, and the Pope had been relieved from the pressure of his formidable foe. That "wicked pest" had died in great agony, as we have seen, at Castel Nuovo near Naples, in the night of August 6th, 1414, before he had lived out half his days. The story went that he had been poisoned by his mistress and had died shouting "Devils!" and the churchmen delighted to record how the sacrilegious wretch's body rotted away with sores, and was unceremoniously buried like a Tartar. But there were some who denied the truth of the story altogether. It is certain that Benedict XIII., in whose obedience he was, spoke of him as having "passed to God," while the piety of his sister and successor Joan erected to his memory in the church of S. Giovanni Carbonara at Naples a stupendous monument which is the admiration of every student of Renaissance workmanship to the present day.

At any rate, those were certainly wrong who looked upon his death as opportune, for no sooner was he removed than Pope John redoubled his shifty efforts to back out from his engagement with the Council. But it was now too late, for he had taken another master on his back, and Constance must be faced whether he would or no.

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LECTURE II.

CONSTANCE.

IN the summer of 1413 an immense flock of chaffinches flew over Switzerland. They stretched, it was said, in a line a mile long and half a mile broad and darkened the air as they passed. At Bern they lit on the trees, but did no harm, and the wiseacres saw that something toward was going to happen, for the birds meant foreigners who would be welcome because they would bring so many good gulden to the land. As the year wore on, it gradually became known that King Sigismund had set his mind on calling the Council together on the German side of the Alps. Strassburg and Basle and even Kempten had been mentioned as possible meeting-places, but the two former were too far from Italy, and the latter had no means of providing for a large assemblage, so that in the end the choice lay easily with Constance as a strongly-fortified imperial city, situated actually in Suabia, but fairly central of access from both sides of the Alps. Compared with many another imperial town it could not rank as large, but its good roads and cheap water-carriage by the Rhine and the lake offered excellent facilities for supplies of fish, flesh,

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fodder and beer. As many as twenty-five boats loaded with hay and straw were sometimes to be counted in one day alongside the quay by St. Conrad's Bridge. Carts were to be had on hire from the Town Council, and none but a fool would deny that the air was healthy and the water pure, while the lovely setting of gardens, vineyards, woods and meadows made it a veritable field that the Lord had blessed.

The burghers had long enjoyed a prosperous time under their own steady local government. When the south-western portion of the town was destroyed by fire in 1399 it was quickly rebuilt, and the population was now estimated at 5,500 souls, including many Jews, students and foreigners, as well as a large number of workers employed in the linen trade, for which the place had then a high repute. Soon after the meeting of Sigismund and the Pope at Lodi, messengers began to arrive at Constance with inquiries as to its possibilities for the means of living, but those who had early information had already bought up the hay in the Thurgau and other neighbouring districts, and the villagers about informed the foreign prospectors that they had not half enough of lodgings. By midsummer 1414 the inrush had begun, and strangers were coming in thick. Counts, bishops and abbots were travelling up from far and near, and whoever found a good inn fixed up his arms and snapped it up straightway. Still no one could feel really sure that the Council would actually meet until

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the arrival of the Papal Chancellor, Cardinal Giordano Orsini, who rode in with eighty-five horsemen on August 12th, and then the demand for beds, hay, straw, corn, cheese, butter, fish, flesh and everything went up with a bound. Next came the news that the Pope was really on his way and expectation was still further strained. For it was known that extreme pressure had been required to get him to consent to the meeting of a Council at all, and even after the invitations were out it was rumoured that he was secretly arranging that Ladislas should threaten Bologna and so give him a colourable excuse for wrecking Sigismund's plans. On hearing of the death of Ladislas he had proposed to return to Rome, but the whole body of his cardinals opposed him vigorously, knowing that if he went to Rome he would never go to Constance and so no Council would be held at all. Much against his will, therefore, he left Bologna on October 1st, 1414, travelled by boat to Ferrara and thence to Verona, accompanied by eight cardinals and 600 followers all on horseback, including auditors, scribes, secretaries, bakers, beadles, ushers, grooms, macers, silversticks, and other officials, many of them being the sons of noble families. A knight rode before him on a white pad with a monstrance containing the Host, covered with a red cloth and strapped upright to the saddle, well shielded from the rain and sun.

The party followed the valley of the Adige through Trent to Meran, where on October 15th the Pope entered into a secret bond with Frederick Duke of

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Austria, under whose safe-conduct he was passing through the Tyrol. By this he appointed the duke *Gonfaloniere* or Captain-General of the Army of the Church in Italy and Germany, with an annual allowance of 6,000 florins when actually employed in military service. In return it was understood that the duke would protect the Pope if any danger should threaten him at the Council, and in order to provide against all contingencies he invested the duke's confessor with full power to absolve him in case he should have to face a possible excommunication, and exempted all his subjects from the jurisdiction of the spiritual courts. Through this connection Pope John assured himself also of the support of John of Nassau Archbishop of Mayence, Bernhardt Margrave of Baden, the Duke of Burgundy and other powerful lords who sucked the Church's milk, though the whole transaction was carried through in such absolute secrecy that not even the cardinals were made aware of it.

The *cortège* then moved on for their dreaded journey across the High Alps with great risk and toil and cost. The Pope was placed in a low-wheeled carriage with a waggon-roof drawn by a couple of horses and so they crossed the watershed of the Inn. On the Arlberg the carriage broke down and the Pope was pitched out into the snow. His courtiers came round him as he lay on the ground to ask if they could do anything for him, but he only said: "I lie here in the Devil's name! Why didn't I stay at Bologna?" They righted him, however, and got him

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down the Klosterthal to Bludenz, and when he saw the kind of country he was in, he said: "Foxes trapped here!" and continued his way with sore foreboding through Feldkirch and Rheineck to the Augustinian Abbey of St. Ulrich at Kreuzlingen, just outside the southern wall of Constance, where he passed the night on Saturday, 27th October, 1414. On the following day after breakfast he entered the city in state, preceded by a long procession of priests. He was clad in white and rode a white horse with scarlet trappings. A baldachin of cloth of gold was held above his head and with him rode the cardinals, two and two, in scarlet hats and capes, the sergeants with their maces keeping back the crowds that scrambled forward to pick up the scattered largess. After a "Te Deum" had been sung in the cathedral the Pope was lodged with his principal attendants in the bishop's house in the adjoining square, which had been previously repaired by the timber-masters and other workmen and fitted with fireplaces, lanterns, windows and all necessaries for winter occupation. The chapel had been furbished up, the stools were painted, seven chaplains and six singers were housed to serve it at four florins each per month, and the whole building became henceforth known as the Apostolic Palace. Then followed presents of wine and beer from the citizens to the Holy Father, who in return gave a black silk gown to the burgomaster, Henry of Ulm. The bells rang out and all was joy. But when the burgomaster's sons claimed the horse on

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which the Pope had ridden as their perquisite, according to an ancient custom, the Papal servants resisted and fought the question out.

It might perhaps be legitimate to attempt a calculation of the numbers who visited the town, and at first sight there would appear to be some hope of success; but such data as we have are too fugitive to be reliable, and I can only give a rough statement or two without attempting to reconcile contradictions. According to one account 18,000 bishops and priests, 24,000 knights and 80,000 other laymen are said to have been in the town during the three and a half years that the Council sat. Of these the first group might have been capable of approximate verification, for no clerks were allowed to come to Constance without express permission, and there is a record that the Council was attended by 217 Doctors in Theology, 361 Doctors in Laws and 1,400 licensed Masters of Arts. These with their attendants amounted to 9,460 persons, while besides this there were 5,300 priests and scholars, some of them alone and some with one or two body servants to attend on them. If we limit our figures to those who were officially deputed to transact either secular or ecclesiastical business in the town, we have a contemporary statement that envoys were present representing 83 kings and princes, 352 lords and 472 imperial and other towns.

At bottom it will be found that all the statistics now available were originally compiled by Ulrich Richental, a substantial citizen of Constance who was on the spot

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at the time and made it his business to collect whatever information he could. For this purpose he went diligently about the town copying the coats of arms which he found affixed to the inns, talking with heralds and inviting them to his house, though as he often paid for his information, and he knew where to find the best Polish and Silesian beer, it is to be feared that in too many cases his informants filled in the desired items from their own imagination. He continued his inquiries from house to house as the occupants came and went, and he has left a list which a later hand has totalled as amounting to 72,460 persons, though besides these he puts in a "countless number of others who rode in and out every day," which would in itself invalidate the whole calculation and render any possibility of accurate results quite out of the question. Richental did not write his book till some twenty years after the Council had closed, and his figures passed subsequently through different hands, reappearing in such inextricable confusion that I can only hope that some diligent dissertationist may some day arise, either in this university or elsewhere, who will try his hand at harmonising and disentangling the conflicting lists, and lay bare the *Ur*-Richental on his bed rock below.

In the meantime we may note that writers of varying degrees of credibility have rounded off their totals at anything between 40,000 to 150,000 souls, and we must be content with the barren reflection that in these, as in all mediæval statistics, exactness of

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arithmetic is not now to be looked for. The greatest throng was certainly there during the seven months that intervened between the arrival of Sigismund at Christmas 1414, and his departure for Nice in the middle of the following July, and there are statements by contemporaries that during this time there were 30,000 horses stalled, 16,000 (or as some said 60,000) beds let and from 70,000 to 80,000 strangers quartered in various parts of the town and suburbs, many even of the great ones lying on the ground outside. Two thousand six hundred courtiers had to find room where they could, sometimes as many as twenty together in the same house, sleeping in wine-vats or in the yards and stables with the grooms, and there is a dismal record that 263 bodies were found drowned in the lake, to say nothing of many unknown persons who were secretly murdered or otherwise made away with. But whether exact enumeration is attempted or not, contemporary writers are one and all agreed that such a gathering of notables was unparalleled in the history of the Great Councils of the Church, while the assembled numbers were countless as the drops of water in the sea.

The great centre of clerical interest was the Apostolic Palace, which contained two large halls, an upper and a lower one, in which the business of the Curia was transacted, and a cushioned throne was kept for Sigismund whenever he should pay a ceremonial visit. Every Monday and Wednesday the cardinals met here in secret consistory, with a public sitting every

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Friday morning after Mass. Eight prelates were appointed as referendaries to examine and report upon business matters coming in from Italy, France, Germany, England, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary and Spain respectively, and then pass all bulls through the Papal Chancery for signature, those of great importance requiring to be countersigned personally by one of the cardinals with his own hand. The Pope himself gave private audiences every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday and was open to see all comers on Saturday afternoons. Strict regulations were required to be observed as to the proper official dress to be worn by passers in and out. Bishops and auditors were to come in copes, chamberlains in cloaks and hoods, scribes in tabards and so on, but there was no abatement of the old abuses so long notorious in the Church courts of the middle ages; the rich got all attention, and the poor might go to the devil if they could not stand the brow-beating of the bullies that had the preparation of the bulls.

But the great assemblage at Constance was no merely clerical gathering, but a vast political congress, a Reichstag of Christendom, for which Sigismund had reserved a whole network of secular questions which were pressing for immediate solution. When he was at Mayence he had notified all the electors, princes, nobles and towns of the Empire that he meant to take in hand all matters concerning the Empire at Constance, and when some envoys from Frankfurt

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submitted business to him at Heilbronn they were told that he would discuss with them further at the Council. So though there was no formal diet, yet the King frequently sat for judgment at the Grey Friars after his arrival.

It has been urged that at Constance the distinction between secular and ecclesiastical subjects was strictly maintained, in contrast to the mode of procedure at the subsequent Council at Basle; but inasmuch as every large political question had its clerical side, and every clerical question its political side, it is difficult to see how the overlap could be prevented, when practically the same subjects were under discussion by the same delegates at the meetings of the nations. But other issues from outside the Empire came up at Constance for review. The representatives of the University of Paris had come prepared to press for the condemnation of Jean Petit's thesis in favour of tyrannicide and thereby convict the Duke of Burgundy of heresy that he might be humbled and acknowledge his fault for the good of his soul. Yet this was essentially a political stroke with a strong partisan bearing on the internal faction feuds of France, though it was reserved as a clerical issue for the decision of the Council, to whom the duke had expressly appealed. The fierce quarrel between the King of Poland and the Teutonic Knights had been for the moment patched up by a peace signed at Strasburg, near Thorn, on October 7th, 1414, whereby King Jagiello agreed to sheathe the sword against the Christian

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knights and turn its edge against the Turks, on the understanding that both sides should submit their quarrel to Sigismund's arbitration at Constance. Accordingly the High Master of the Order sent ten of his commodores with a retinue of twenty-seven knights and 360 attendants to represent his case, while the King of Poland's envoys entered Constance with 600 mounted men and twelve carts of baggage on January 29th, 1415. The envoys were all Polish bishops, and they were armed with authority to deal both with Church matters in the Council and with Polish national affairs in treating with Sigismund. But with advocates and arbitrator alike clothed in a double capacity, it was impossible to maintain a theoretical distinction between issues secular and issues ecclesiastical, and when the vexed question of periodical raids against the heathen to kill them with their wives and children, or forcibly convert them and seize their lands, was submitted as a Church problem to the consideration of the Council, the contestants would have been more than human if they had been able to discuss it apart from the rancour attaching to all battlegrounds of purely secular and national policy. The Swedish envoys pressed for the recognition of their Brigit as a regularly canonised saint. The ceremony had been actually completed some twenty-four years before, but doubts were thrown on its validity as performed while the Church was in schism, and the Universities of Paris and Oxford had in the meantime been quite outspoken in submitting

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the revelations of the saint to a very searching criticism indeed.

But apart from these national issues there were multitudes of domestic questions waiting to be solved, and when both Pope and Emperor kept court side by side in the same town there would be no lack of employment for the 142 bull-writers and 600 or 700 scribes who had found their way to Constance from every country in Europe. The Count of Clèves and the Lords of Rimini and Milan wanted to be created dukes, Frederic Burgrave of Nürnberg was to be made Margrave of Brandenburg; fiefs, honours, royalties and investitures had to be granted or confirmed; a reform of the coinage was called for in view of the floods of bad money issuing from the mints at Mayence and other great commercial centres; the Julian Calendar was in complete confusion, and did not conform to solar facts; by an accumulation of errors the equinoxes were coming about thirteen days too soon and seriously throwing out the true date of Easter; great imperial towns such as Frankfurt were groaning under the burden of exorbitant tolls; safe-conducts had to be issued, jurisdictions defined and pacifications effected not only in the feuds of individuals but in internal quarrels within towns and states.

On the wider field King Sigismund aspired to arrange a peace between France and England and to organise some systematic help for the Greek emperor against the advancing Turks, but many minor

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knots awaited his untying also. The burgesses of Lübeck had risen against their magistrates and kept them out of the town till Sigismund should settle the dispute, but though their envoys brought large sums to Constance, and entertained the King at a banquet, yet he gave the case against them and they had to promise 25,000 florins, even to get the execution postponed. At Brunswick much clerical passion was raging round St. Ulrich's Church which the Council was if possible to allay. At Augsburg there were two claimants for the bishopric, one of whom was supported by the town and the other by the cathedral chapter. The latter was rejected by the Pope, but he secured a confirmation from the Archbishop of Mayence and appealed to the Dukes of Bavaria and Landshut, who told him to keep quiet till the Council met. Strassburg was the scene of a still fiercer struggle. The bishop, William of Diest, was charged with alienating the lands and squandering the revenues of the Church. The chapter thereupon elected a substitute and a state of war ensued, the bishop being supported by the nobles and the pretender by the town. The bishop was seized and thrown into prison at Molsheim and in retaliation put the town under interdict. Envoys then approached Sigismund, who gave them a gracious reception, and a truce was called till the question should be dealt with by the Council. In the end the excommunication was suspended, but not before 100 Strassburgers had proceeded to Constance on this business alone.

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These instances will indicate the enormous amount of traffic that was thrown suddenly upon the little town and very special regulations were needed to cope satisfactorily with it. On December 18th, 1414, the town council issued a notice that no one was to be about after curfew without a light; chains were to be stretched across the streets at various points and none were to ride or shout at night under penalty of the hue and cry; and although it may be going too far to say with a modern writer that there was "no clamour, no confusion, no quarrel and no riot," yet the fact that only two men were actually killed in street brawls, though many were expelled, during the whole time that the Council sat is rightly pointed to as evidence of a surprising power of organisation, even in a town so well reputed for the excellence of its police, though it is to be remembered that the presence of Sigismund and the fear of after-consequences must have acted as a strong deterrent against hot-headed violence such as we know to have occurred when one German duke called another German duke a cook's son and got stabbed for it in the street, though not mortally, while his assailant ran away.

As the throngs of travellers swarmed along the great trunk roads, they found that the cost of posting and carriage increased out of all proportion the nearer they came to Constance, and in the town itself there was every prospect of a reign of famine prices for the bare necessaries of life. The congestion was bad enough when the Pope came in at the end of October, and a

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week later it was noticed that there were plenty of cardinals riding on mules, but that they generally looked hungry. But when Sigismund arrived at Christmas the dearth was so critical and the extortion so great that on Twelfth Day he sent a serious remonstrance to the burgomaster, which resulted in charges being fixed by the town council for bed, board, horse-hire and provisions, and after this forcible interference with the law of supply and demand no similar complaint came before the magistrates as long as the Council lasted. It is true that when Lent came there was a general dearth of suitable food, except as regards beans and floury buns, but as a rule there was no lack, extortion was checked and poor and rich could all buy alike.

According to the new tariff the charge for a bed large enough for two persons comfortably, with sheets, pillows and cushions, was not to exceed one and a half Rhenish gulden per month, the linen to be washed every fortnight. Stalling for one horse was to be had for two pfennigs per night, a good white loaf was sold for a penny with fourteen of them to the shilling, three haller (or a halfpenny) might be charged for a throstle or a fieldfare and two plaffer for a pigeon. Meat, eggs, birds, etc., were all to be sold in the open market with fixed prices for corn, oats, peas, hares, badgers, otters, beavers and the like.

The market life of the town may be studied in some nearly contemporary pictures which are still extant. In these the women are selling bread and the men

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chopping venison or weighing pork, while clerks stand by and bargain for birds, eels, and fish, with saucy snails and toothsome frogs set out on boards to tempt the passer by.

Thousands of workers of all kinds took rooms or houses for their trades; plenty of old women found occupation in washing linen and mending clothes; over 150 vintners hired shanties where they welcomed all comers, retailing their Rhenish from the vineyards of Alsace and the Breisgau, as well as Romney and Malmsey and the wines of France and Italy; and an army of bakers trundled their little round ovens in wheelbarrows from street to street, with pasties, flatcakes and ringpuffs made of fish, flesh and chicken, well spiced and seasoned. Besides these there were untold throngs of foreign tailors, goldsmiths, furriers, hatters, hoofsmiths, shearmen, mercers, barbers, bloodletters, shoemakers and such like, who came and went as their trades required, and the keepers of the poorer class of lodgings had their houses always full.

But trouble with the Constance guildsmen was evidently not far ahead if any unlicensed interloper was to be allowed to ply his trade on equal terms with those who claimed a monopoly by chartered rights, and to meet this danger orders were issued securing freedom for all to trade on equal terms, so long as the Council lasted, and allotting to each particular trade its own particular locality. In order to settle disputes between outlanders and burgesses as to rent or other such matters a rota of fifteen

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papal auditors of various nationalities arranged to sit three days a week, each at his own desk, attended by his beadles, in St. Stephen's Church between prime and breakfast. Over ninety scribes were kept at this work, and the church was filled with noise and scurry as throngs of suitors presented grievances, and as each case was disposed of the winning parties took off their proctors and writers and drank their healths in good French wine.

Money was negotiated through groups of foreign changers, who paid sums varying from five to sixty Rhenish gulden per month to the town council for the privilege. The total number of these is given as seventy-four, forty-nine of whom were Florentines, amongst them being young Cosimo dei Medici, now twenty-five years of age, who came to represent his father Giovanni dei Medici, the rich merchant and money-lender of Florence, who "enjoyed most of the Pope's wealth".

Ulrich Richental drew up a list purporting to give exact particulars as to the numbers in each trade, but the great variations in the different editions of it detract considerably from its statistical value. Many traders brought their wives and children with them, and as the lowest riffraff also swarmed in from all lands, the lingual difficulty was superadded to the rest. The lists of reputed envoys from the far East, such as Egyptians, Ninevites, Medes, Persians, Indians and even the Great Khan of Tartary, are rightly put down as fabulous inventions, but there

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were certainly Letts, Poles, Serbs, Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Armenians and White Russians to be met with, besides representatives of all sections of Western Christendom, and there were some Ethiopians who were supposed to have come from Prester John, but as they knew no Latin and no one could speak their tongue, they failed to secure official recognition.

Besides the three great European languages (*i.e.*, French, German and Italian) it was believed that there were twenty-seven others spoken in the streets of Constance. To meet these varied needs, twenty-four penitencers took turns in rotation to hear confessions in the minster, each one putting up a notice on his shriving-pew as to the languages with which he was prepared to deal, and when the Bishop of Posen (himself a Pole) attempted to preach in German in St. Stephen's Church with a very imperfect knowledge of that tongue he had a German priest standing handy in the pulpit beside him, so that he could turn round and consult him whenever he was at a loss for a word.

Each of the great lords had brought his minstrelsy and the streets echoed with hundreds of fifes, trumpets, bagpipes, and viols; no business was done on feast days, when everything gave place to the jongleurs and players, and crowds expressed their delight at the representations of the Birth of Jesus, the Three Kings, and the Slaughter of the Innocents given by the English at the house of the Bishop of Salisbury. Every day the courtyard of the Apostolic Palace was

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alive with tilting and a vertigo of shouts, while scarce a week went by without its ridings, feasts, dances, tournaments and processions.

Thus Constance was a merry place for those whose hearts were gay. But there were many strugglers who had begged their way thither in poverty or spent their little all upon the road and entered the city penniless. These needy folks must somehow be fed, and though all those who were connected with the Council were expected to keep up a certain amount of external appearance, yet there were very many unofficial hangers-on who found it hard to live, and every day some 2,300 priests, monks and friars might be seen carrying their platters for a pittance to the houses of the great lords who had foregathered in the town. One hundred and sixty students are recorded to have travelled up, some from mere curiosity or the fun of the thing, others to look out for prebends, and many of these were known to be passing about from house to house, content to earn a day's keep by grooming horses or cleaning out stables; while the generosity of the Archbishop of Salzburg provided any poor man who cared to ask for it with a half-penny loaf every day, together with some soup and a piece of meat or a mess of pease on fast days.

This picture of the outdoor life of the mediæval world at Constance may be supplemented by a perusal of the letters and sermons of those who saw the bishops pass about the streets in parti-coloured jackets, with sleeves like wings, stopping short at the waist to

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show off their shapely shanks and shiny shoes. Very few of them were seen praying or fasting, or giving alms, but very many lounging and carousing and dressing up, more bent on pleasing the ladies than on pleasing God. No wonder that if some zealous preacher urged a shrift, the public laughed him down; if he quoted the fathers, he was told that they were out of date; and if he spoke of penance, they said that the rules of penance must be softened to make them easier for men to bear.

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LECTURE III.

THE COUNCIL.

ON November 1st, 1414, the Pope attended a solemn Mass in the cathedral, when a sermon was preached by one of the canons, and Cardinal Zabarella then announced that the Council would be opened in the same church two days hence, after the services had been held on the morrow for the souls of the dead. Accordingly, on November 3rd, the cardinals were all robed and ready in the Apostolic Palace, but just as the Pope had left his room in full pontificals he was seized with sickness and had to be undressed and put to bed, and everything was put off for two days more. At 7 o'clock in the morning of November 5th, the Pope walking under a canopy of gold cloth and accompanied by fifteen cardinals, thirty-three bishops and abbots and a crowd of priests and religious passed along the cloister into the cathedral, where Cardinal Zabarella mounted the pulpit and announced that the sittings of the Council would formally open on the 16th of November.

On that day the first public session of the Council was held accordingly in the cathedral. The Mass was said by Cardinal Orsini. After the litanies had

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been sung, the Pope discoursed nicely about loving Truth, and then Zabarella stood up and told them that there must be no noise or jibes or laughter in their meetings, on pain of three days' excommunication, in accordance with a regulation passed at one of the early Councils 840 years before. During the whole time that the Council sat there were forty-five of these public sessions, all of which were held in the cathedral, beginning usually at 7 o'clock in the morning.

It used to be the practice in Constance to show visitors over the large hall of the Kaufhaus on the quay, and to tell them that the meetings of the Council were held there, or even that the building was specially erected for the Council to meet in, and tourists were shown the chairs on which the Pope and Sigismund sat, the sword of ceremony, two wax figures clothed in black to represent Jerome and Hus, a model of Hus' dungeon with two real bricks upon which he had carved some marks, and his Bible with his name in it and notes written by his own hand. But all these details are fictitious. The Kaufhaus was never used for any Council meeting, all of which were uniformly held in the cathedral and nowhere else. Each meeting was preceded by a Mass of the Holy Spirit, after which the Pope or other president took his seat on a throne in the middle of the choir with his back to the high altar facing the assembled throng. The bishops were seated in due order of precedence, vested in long copes with plain

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white linen mitres on their heads. An antiphon was sung and the whole assemblage kneeled for a while in silent meditation. Then at the word all rose, while the celebrant stood and offered a noble prayer, that God would cleanse their hearts and teach them what they ought to do, that no ignorance might draw them off into devious tracks, no fear or favour sway them and no bribe corrupt them, but that they might not swerve from Truth because they were one with Him. Then as the sitting closed the resolutions of the day were read aloud, the proctors of the different nations signified assent, copes and mitres were laid aside and all dispersed their several ways.

But these formal sittings were nothing more than great parade-days for officially publishing pre-determined issues. The real debates were all outside, and burning questions were handled by pamphleteers or argued by disputants in another place. Two days before the Council actually began, a memorandum was addressed to the Pope, asking that as far as possible the preliminary work should be all done by deputy, some of the bigger representatives being commissioned to hear the opinions and record the votes of the lesser ones at outside meetings. In order to facilitate this method and ascertain the mind of the visitors, they were grouped for debating purposes into four nations, *viz.*, the Italian, the German, the French and the English, according to the plan then prevailing in Paris and the other universities of Europe, though the arrangement was more convenient

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than ethnographical, for the Greeks were reckoned with the Italians, the German nation included Huns, Poles, Letts, Turks, Bohemians, Moravians and Russians, besides Flemings and Scandinavians, while the English were allowed to admit Scots (*i.e.* Irish), Asiatics and all other outlandish people from places beyond the sea. But this latter shadowy multitude had no real numerical existence, and it is no wonder that Richental never ventured to go into particulars, for he could not quite find out the truth about them. As a matter of fact they never put in an appearance at the deliberations of the English nation, which still remained altogether disproportionately small, being sometimes estimated at twenty persons, or even as low as twelve all told.

Each of the nations had its own meeting-place. The English and the Germans sat at the Grey Friars, and the French and Italians at the Black, though in different rooms. Each had its own president, together with six counsellors, whose business it was to tender advice in the intervals between the sittings, and a certain number of deputies, all of whom held office for a month at a time. The votes were taken by counting heads, and in the French nation, where on critical days some 200 or more doctors and masters would sometimes assemble, a special portion of the room was set apart for those who had the right to vote. But even this obvious precaution was not taken in the German nation, where shouting and clamour are said to have often carried the day.

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Each nation had its own notaries to make official records of its proceedings, those for the English being John Reynolds, William Pursell and Thomas Polton. Of the two former I can find little further mention, except that Reynolds appears to have been made Sub-Dean of Wells in 1424, and that Pursell was deputed to act as proctor for some Irish bishops. Of Master Thomas Polton we know that he had recently been appointed ambassador for King Henry V. at the Roman court. He was Archdeacon of Taunton and held prebends in connection with the cathedrals of York and Hereford. He spent much of his time in diplomatic service abroad, and rose to be successively Dean of York and Bishop of Hereford, Chichester and Worcester.

After a proposition had been discussed in the meetings of each separate nation it was submitted to a joint gathering of the representatives of all four, and when these were agreed their resolutions simply went up without further debate for formal approval at a public sitting in the cathedral, which alone was acknowledged as a valid recognition by the Council.

At first it had been expected that all the business would be run through in three public sittings, and some of the delegates had supplied themselves with funds for a stay of three months only, on the supposition that this, like other previous Councils, would be over in a few weeks, and it had even been anticipated in some quarters that one session might suffice for everything. When John Hus arrived he expressed

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his opinion that the Council might break up about Easter, and though this hopeful view did not last long, yet on March 1st, 1415, when the Pope promised to resign, the prospect cleared a little and the more sanguine envoys thought that all might be finished by the end of July. But all these forecasts proved hopeless miscalculations, for the Council dragged on over three and a half years, and the last of its sessions was not held till April 22nd, 1418.

The subjects to be dealt with were understood to fall under three general heads: (*a*) to restore unity to the Church; (*b*) to reform abuses in the Church, and (*c*) to strike summarily at Wycliffry and heresy.

Under the first head it was known that in spite of the Pisan settlement lions and dragons were still raging in the road, while the ill-matched team of Popes was dragging the Church's car in three ways at once; and as soothing medicines often do good when stronger remedies would fail, it was urged that means should be taken to offer a safe and commanding position in the Church to each of the opposing claimants if they could be made to give way of their own accord, but if not that they should all be smartly forced to. Here then was contentious matter enough, and from the very first the outlook seemed big with trouble, one side, with the Pope at its head, maintaining that the issue was closed by the decisions of the Council of Pisa, of which this was only a continuation since its adjournment in 1409. From this point of view Pisa,

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Rome and Constance were all one Council, just as the Rhine was the same river that it was 100 years before though not one drop of its water remained the same. The partisans of Pope John maintained therefore that the policy of cession could not apply to him, since he was "the true and undoubted Shepherd and Vicar of Jesus Christ," while the other two were only playing with the question and putting in their usual cloud of words merely to gain time. The other side declared that the Pisan Council had not been canonically called, that it had only torn another rent in the veil and started a cursed Trinity of Popes and that its decrees came perilously near to heresy. To this it was replied that God had certainly been there if the rival Popes had not, and that those who did not see it in that way were dogs with vipers' tongues, fathers of lies and so on, and that being the case the Pisan decrees ought to be reaffirmed as holy, just and canonical, and the contending claimants must be once for all put down.

But it was very soon apparent that the contestants were in no submissive mood, and that if great care were not exercised the threat of forcible deposition might result in the Church having four Popes instead of three. Invitations to the Council had been issued to Benedict and his protector, King Ferdinand of Aragon, and the question of acceptance or refusal was discussed between them in the summer of 1414. Here the singular proposal was formulated through the influence of Vincent Ferrer, that as faith could move

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mountains the assembly at Constance should pray very hard for a miracle to settle the disputed claims. But if God would not grant one because of their sins they should prepare three pieces of paper each with the name of one of the claimants written on it with the words: "So-and-so is the true Pope," and throw them into the fire, and the one that was not consumed would indicate the real elect. King Ferdinand then wrote to Sigismund expressing surprise that he should have addressed him "in virtue of his imperial office," as he was in no sense connected with the Empire, and he could only suppose that the phrase had been put in by mistake. Benedict on his side would rather die than have anything to do with the Council, declaring that there could be no peace till they took down "that idol that had been stuck up at Pisa". Indeed so confident was he that Sigismund would disavow the Pisan Council, and not let the "gentlemen assembled at Constance" embark in any novelties, that he declared his own Council of Perpignan to be prorogued till Easter, 1415, when all would acknowledge him as the only valid Pope. In this delusion he was nursed by letters which were constantly reaching him from Paris, informing him that a great reaction was spreading in his favour in France, that many who were connected with the court of Pope John were weeping and lamenting for what they had done, that the French found that things used to go very differently from what they did now, and that all were saying that the Church had never been justly

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governed since they subtracted their obedience from him six years ago.

But whatever their grievances both Ferdinand and Benedict agreed to send envoys to Constance, who for convenience' sake should ignore the Council and be accredited to Sigismund in person. These envoys arrived on January 8th, armed with instructions to avoid any quarrel with Sigismund, but when they had an audience with him and it appeared that they had come merely to affirm that Benedict was the one and only Pope to whom all must submit, even to the extent of allowing him to appoint his successor if ever he undertook to resign, Sigismund flew into a passion and called out: "I don't know who you are!" which so terrified them that they agreed to accept any Pope that the Council should choose. After this they spoke immensely in praise of Benedict's holy life, his knowledge, tact and experience, and of his aspirations to drive back the Turks and reform the Empire. They regarded him as one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of his time, and said that it would be worth a journey from the farthest East to the farthest West to get a sight of such a jewel and have a talk with him; but as he never did anything by deputy it would be necessary that any interview should be a personal one, and so it was proposed that Sigismund should himself meet Ferdinand and Benedict at some place such as Nice in the following June, when the latter would be prepared to resign his claim to the Papacy if Gregory and John would undertake to do the same.

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But if Benedict sat coy behind the shield of Ferdinand, so neither was there any real sign of yielding in the aged Gregory XII., who after varying fortunes had settled down at Rimini under the protection of his faithful supporter Carlo Malatesta. Short as his days might be he would not help to shorten the schism by means of a Council summoned by his hated rival. He called it a sacrilegious sham which was bound to break up peace and foster error. He reproached Sigismund with having countenanced it and told all Catholics to have nothing to do with it. Though he kept up the official terms of abuse in public documents addressed to Benedict, yet he did not scruple to negotiate with him for a coalition to dislodge their mutual enemy, the intruder John. Benedict suggested a number of suitable places for a Council on the Spanish coast, any one of which would be easily accessible by sea. Gregory on the other hand preferred Rimini or Fano, and thought it would be easy enough if the three claimants were agreed, or if a powerful prince could be found to call a Council, and so on with the old familiar futilities. Nevertheless he was only irreconcilable to the same extent as Benedict, for though he would not recognise the existence of the Council he had no objection to sending envoys to Constance to meet with Sigismund, to whom indeed he had already written, signifying his willingness to leave everything in his hands. He might choose the time and place for the Council and act throughout on his behalf, as a father delegates his power to a trusted son.

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The envoys that Gregory thus sent were Giovanni Contarini, titular Patriarch of Constantinople, and Cardinal Giovanni Dominici, both of whom were absolutely devoted to his cause. They crossed the mountains, having in their company the poet-historian Dietrich Vrie, and arrived at Arbon on the Lake of Constance about the middle of November, whence they sent in to seek for lodgings in the town.

Guarantees had been already given that if Gregory would come in person he should be allowed to choose his own quarters and be received with all respect. But this was evidently not to be considered as applying to his deputies, for no sooner had arrangements been made for them to stay at the Austin Friars and Gregory's papal arms had been fixed up on the convent doors than some one tore the sheet down in the night, and there was so much wrangling over the incident that eighteen cardinals and a large number of representatives met to consider the question on the following day in the lower hall of the Apostolic Palace. Opinions were deeply divided. Cardinal D'Ailli, who had just arrived from a legation in Germany, was in favour of admitting the representatives' claim, but Cardinal Chalant opposed it in the interest of Pope John, and after much "spitfiring and babble" the majority decided that as Gregory had not come himself his arms should not be put up at the convent. So, as Dominici would not be allowed to enter in his cardinal's dress, the envoys preferred to remain outside the city till Sigismund should arrive.

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But if Pope John was successful in this matter of ceremonial etiquette he was doomed to an early defeat on a far more vital point. He had from the first strongly opposed the plan of meeting by nations, and when after much negotiation this method was recognised as an accomplished fact, it was considered that the nations were constituted merely as advising bodies, but that the final voting in the Council was to rest exclusively with the cardinals, patriarchs, bishops and abbots, as it had in all previous Councils up till Pisa, when doctors were for the first time admitted also to the vote. But to this view a vigorous opposition was now made under the lead of the French cardinals D'Ailli and Fillastre. "If abbots were to reckon," it was said, "why not priors?" And surely it was absurd to give the same voting weight to a mere titular abbot who administered no one but himself as to a French or English bishop with all his parish churches and his vast population. Then why exclude the theologians and legists who were authorised teachers? or the kings and princes who would have to carry the mandates of the Council into effect? And again, what was an abbot with his ten or twenty monks compared with a curate of a parish with 1,000 up to 10,000 souls? Let every man in holy orders and every doctor have a vote—and so before such powerful advocacy all prospect of restricted voting was summarily swept away, and all were admitted to the nations, whether clerk or layman, graduate or non-graduate, honest or abject, bond or free, and when

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the cardinals complained that the higher dignitaries were thereby reduced to impotence they were told that if they wanted their influence to tell they must use it in their respective nations.

But even when the Pope had been defeated on this question, there was still a further rebuff in store for him. According to previous precedents the voting had been always taken by counting heads, whereby the power was vested in the hands of the absolute numerical majority. But the decision to admit all ranks and orders to vote in the nations entailed a further radical alteration in the balance of power. Pope John had come to Constance in the belief that he had the Council in his pocket, for not only had he brought with him enormous sums of money in the hope of bribing off opposition, but he had lately created a large number of Italian chamber-bishops who were bound by charity to yield him implicit obedience and support. By this means the Italian nation was packed with some eighty bishops and masters in theology and law who could be relied upon to vote solid for his interest. To counter-balance this advantage vigorous efforts were made that resolutions which were to be submitted for the final approval of the Council should be passed by a majority of the nations and not by an absolute plurality of individual votes. This was the policy of Sigismund, and as the small English nation was practically at his disposal there was for a time a deadlock, the French and Italian nations objecting fiercely

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to an innovation whereby they would lose their preponderating advantage. But when in the course of the struggle for union the French decided to support the vote by nations, the game was lost for Pope John and the backing of his Italians was altogether thrown away.

The first six weeks' deliberations had thus resulted in nothing, save to disclose marked lines of cleavage. Comparatively few of the accredited representatives had arrived except Italians, and nothing whatever had been done to promote the unity of the Church. A letter written at Constance on November 10th reported that no embassy from any king or prince had yet come in, that nothing had been heard for certain of Gregory or Benedict, that no Council business had yet begun, neither was any expected to begin for some weeks, and by November 28th there was still an entire absence of any representatives of kings, princes or universities.

From the first great things had been expected of the English and the Germans, but none of them had been present at the opening. Sigismund was at Aix-la-Chapelle and was not expected much before Christmas. So that although a sitting of the Council had been fixed for December 17th, it had to be postponed till the 14th of January. Moreover an angry scab known as the "Touch-me-not" was beginning to break out in the crowded city; folks did not care to risk sitting in meetings with tetters on their faces, and it looked as if a very strong hand would be needed to make the Council march.

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In this *impasse* all thoughts were turned to Sigismund as the head and foundation of the whole thing, without whose protection and presence nothing of weight could be decided, and all their labour would be in vain. Accompanied by an escort of 1,100 mounted men he started from Aix-la-Chapelle on November 12th, 1414, and travelled by Cologne and Bonn to Mayence. On December 22nd the party were at Stuttgart, and they reached Ueberlingen on the north shore of the Lake of Constance an hour before midnight on Christmas Eve. Word was at once despatched to the Pope requesting him to postpone the morrow's Mass till after the King's arrival. The town council sent over boats in the darkness, and had the Stadthaus heated up in readiness, and so at 2 o'clock on Christmas morning King Sigismund and his wife Barbara landed at St. Conrad's Bridge in Constance. With them were Sigismund's sister Elisabeth, the wife of Twartko II., King of Bosnia; his niece Elisabeth, wife of the Count of Würtemberg; Queen Barbara's father, Hermann Count of Cilli, and her brother Frederick; Louis, Duke of Saxony, and a brilliant suite including two fugitive Turks, one of whom was said to be a duke and the other a king. They went straight to the Stadthaus near the adjoining fishmarket, where they warmed themselves and drank malmsey for about an hour. Then without taking time for change or sleep they went out at cockcrow in the darkness to the minster, the burgesses holding canopies of cloth of

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gold over their heads as they passed with flaring torches and other royal racket along the wintry streets.

The Pope was waiting for them with a splendid mitre on his head, and they spent eight, or according to another account eleven, cold hours in the church, hearing three Masses at intervals without changing their place; Sigismund, crowned and vested in a dalmatic, acting as gospeller in virtue of his deacon's privilege, and reading about the decree that went out from Cæsar Augustus to all the world. After this trying morning it is not surprising to hear that everybody in the church was "very tired".

The royal party then lodged for three days at "The Steps" in front of St. Stephen's Church, removing afterwards to the Benedictine Monastery at Petershausen on the other side of the Rhine bridge. After a four weeks' stay there the King returned into the city and lived in a house in the Münstergasse, his wife and the other great ladies each having a separate establishment in the immediate neighbourhood. The Hungarian knights, of whom there were more than 100 in the royal retinue, each with his own squire and attendants, were left on the other side of the river, where they showed much ill-temper and often came into serious conflict with the burgesses. On New Year's Day the Pope visited Sigismund to drink with him from a large loving-cup belonging to the cathedral, and on Twelfth Day he blessed the people from the Apostolic Palace, where the crowd

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was so dense that it took an hour to clear them all away.

And now the town began to fill up rapidly. Bishops and archbishops came trooping in from all parts of Christendom with retinues ranging from a modest two or three, as in the case of the Archbishop of Ravenna, up to many hundreds, like those of the Archbishops of Salzburg and Mayence. On January 2nd the representatives of the city and university of Cologne arrived after a long and fatiguing journey, and reported that Council business was beginning to be taken up in earnest, that Sigismund was showing great zeal for the reform of the Church, and that his influence had been strong enough to cut through the first initial difficulties which had threatened to wreck the Council at the outset. Four days after his arrival the King had ordered a schedule to be read recounting all that he had done to promote union in the Church. The mere reading of this took up three hours in itself, and Sigismund then proposed that the representatives of the contending Popes should be admitted to state their case, but that no final decision should be taken till after the arrival of the English.

Gregory's two representatives were still waiting outside the town till the question of their status should be definitely settled. On January 12th it was decided after much disputation that Sigismund himself should settle it, and he at once arranged that a message should be sent to Dominici and his colleague at Kreuzlingen to ask if they had anything

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to say on the question of union. This being the essential point the question of uniform was discreetly waived, and on January 22nd the two envoys made a ceremonial progress through the streets with thirty mounted followers, Dominici being clad in full cardinal's dress and wearing the official scarlet hat. The friends of union had expected much from his arrival, and well they might, for he had already written to Sigismund in the previous spring that Gregory would leave him to settle everything and it was believed that he was now the bearer of a mandate of resignation. But he was in reality supplied with a double set of instructions, one of them to be used in public in order to throw Pope John off the scent, and the other for private use as occasion should require.

But while this knotty tangle was being unravelled delegates had continued to arrive daily from every part of Europe. On January 12th the whole available space had been severely taxed by the entry of John of Nassau, Archbishop of Mayence, with 700 mounted followers. He was one of those clerks in name and soldiers in dress, but neither in reality, whose numbers were now rapidly dying out, and he scandalised the more peaceful observers by riding in clad in scarlet and fully armed with helmet, corslet, braces and greaves of mail. On January 17th King Sigismund went out with a brilliant cavalcade to meet Duke Louis of Bavaria, who travelled up with the Bishops of Spires and Worms and a retinue of 400 horsemen

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and eight or nine baggage carts, and on the same day several "heathens" arrived with very sumptuous appointments, who presented Sigismund with twelve fine stallions and a rich pavilion lined with silk and surmounted with a gilt eagle on a gilt knopp. A number of Greeks came in on January 21st and were subjected to no annoyance. They had Mass in their own houses according to their own rite, and it was hoped that if the Council would give way to them on certain points they would gladly submit to the Holy See of Rome, and when a legate arrived from the Emperor Manuel on March 3rd the hopes of the Greek Church "becoming Christian" were distinctly advanced a stage. Moreover there were embassies from Lettowe and Samogitia charged with requests that missionaries should be sent to those parts and bishoprics founded there, so that it is not surprising that in a letter written on March 9th a belief was expressed that not only all Christendom but many pagan lands also were now ready to be subject to the Church.

It was while these rosy prospects were abroad that the English contingent arrived, and at once made their presence felt. Our countrymen had, as usual, been slow to move until they were assured with certainty that the Council would really meet, and it was not till the 1st of October, 1414, that a synod had met at St. Paul's, and voted a tax of 2d. in the £ on all benefices to defray the expenses of the representatives who were to proceed to Constance as proctors

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on behalf of the clergy, while the Northern Province did not meet in York Minster for a similar purpose till November 6th, nearly a week after the proceedings at Constance had been timed to begin.

The delegates chosen to represent the English clergy were Robert Hallum, Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Bubwith, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and John Caterick, who had just been appointed Bishop of St. David's and was soon afterwards promoted to the see of Lichfield. The north was represented by the Abbots of York, Jervaux, Selby and Fountains, and with them were also John Fordham, Prior of Worcester, and William Colchester, Abbot of Westminster, who was looked upon by the foreigners as a prince. The churchmen in Ireland made their own arrangements, and were represented at the Council by the Bishops of Cork and Ossory. On October 30th Archbishop Chichele appointed four clerks to act as proctors for him, and the representatives of the English King were Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Henry, Lord Fitzhugh, Walter Hungerford, and Ralph Rocheford. Master John Hovingham went with them as their protonotary, and they had a large following of knights. Queen Joan was separately represented by William Cave, a Canon of Wells, and three other doctors. The Earl of Warwick, the Bishops of Bath and Salisbury, and a vast retinue started on their journey about the end of October. They crossed to Calais, travelled through Flanders and Brabant and reached Aix-la-Chapelle in time to

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be present at Sigismund's coronation on November 8th. There were still some of the party, however, who had not yet left England, and it was far into January before the whole contingent were near their journey's end.

At length on January 21st, 1415, nearly three months after their date of summons, the English cavalcade of 700 or 800 mounted men, all handsomely equipped and headed by their fifers and bassooners, rode into Constance with carts and sumpter horses carrying their knapsacks and other stuff. They were met by the Bishop of Lausanne, the Duke of Saxony and the Count of Cilli, who escorted them with great ceremony to their quarters in the town, the Earl of Warwick being lodged in the painted house in the upper market, and Bishop Hallum with seventy-four horsemen in a house at the back of the steps leading into the Cathedral cloister. The next day they had an audience with the Pope, when Bishop Hallum made a "most beautiful speech" about union which was greatly appreciated by all present, though his language was somewhat vague and he did not then commit himself to any remedial policy. But it very soon appeared that the English had come commissioned to press for the resignation of all three Popes, and as they met in the same building as the German nation, and had practically arranged their policy beforehand on similar lines, it was not long before they ranged themselves entirely on the side of Sigismund, who bound them and led them about at his will. Thus

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far the French had not come in, and the Pope had still his hopes, but he found that the English, though small in numbers, were bent on business and upset everything as soon as they arrived.

The second public session of the Council had been fixed as we have seen for January 14th, but before that date arrived Sigismund again advised a postponement till January 24th or 25th because of the non-arrivals. The same reason necessitated further delays till February 1st and February 4th, and even then the representatives of the University of Paris had not come in and the sitting was put off till February 6th. But when that day arrived there was too much heat and passion in the air to allow of any official session until certain vital questions had been settled in the nations outside. On February 3rd there was a general meeting at the Apostolic Palace where the thorny question of Pope John's resignation was raised by the English, for though the Lord had opened the door no one so far had had the courage to go in. The Archbishop of Mayence declared that no man ought to be listened to who proposed the election of any other Pope but John. Then a patriarch called out that the archbishop ought to be burned for saying such a thing, and the meeting broke up in confusion. They reassembled on February 6th, when the English and Germans proposed that all disputed questions should be left to be discussed by an equal number of representatives from each of the four nations. But though this method of delegation failed

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to carry, yet on the following day the French decided to support the vote by nations as a whole, and the Pope saw that the ball was going to roll the other way.

For already it was matter of common knowledge that there had been "disturbances" between him and the King, whom he did not scruple to speak of as a beggar, a drunkard, a savage and a fool. "You Italians," Sigismund had said, "seem to think that you head the world in knowledge and power, but I call you the dregs of the earth." "And do you suppose," retorted the Pope, "that you sit on the same bench with me because you are a Luxemburger? I can tell you that if you were not officially King of the *Romans* you would be sitting at my feet, and I only grant you this honour as an Italian, not as a barbarian."

But it was not long ere he found to his cost that the barbarian ass was more than a match for the Italian fox. The French cardinals D'Ailli and Fillastre knew that this loud, wordy war between Pope and King meant silence for the union of the Church, and the latter now drew up a paper in which he declared it to be dangerous as well as dishonourable to call in question the decisions of the Pisan Council whereby two of the contending Popes had been already legally deposed. With this he pressed for the voluntary resignation of the third, urging that if it were not forthcoming of itself the Council should pronounce the deposition of all three. The plan was submitted to Sigismund who received it "with exultation," and copies of it were submitted to the four nations. Of

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course it did not take long to expose the inconsistency of the proposal, and counter-schedules were soon circulating to prove that if Pisa was right then John was right and the other two were impenitent heretics. Here he had come all the way to Constance to rescue the sheep from the jaws of the wolves and you want him to walk into the jaws himself! To talk of deposition was really war, and if the man who proposed it had been a Christian who knew his Bible he would not have dinned such stuff into good men's ears. D'Ailli replied by calling the other side nagging flatterers with itching ears, while Fillastre sought an interview with Pope John, pointing out to him, diplomatically, that the plan acknowledged him as canonically elected, and assuring him that he was only acting in the true interest of the Church. But the Pope made no attempt to conceal his hatred for the cardinal, and assailed him passionately with offensive and insulting words.

It was while this fire was burning in high quarters that a statement was drawn up by an Italian and secretly circulated amongst the German and English nations, in which Pope John was charged with every mortal and abominable sin and public inquiry was demanded into his character. Some advised silence to avoid scandal in the Church and confusion to those whose promotions and provisions would thereby be placed in jeopardy, while others urged that the facts were so notorious already that any further inquiry was superfluous. News of the movement was carried

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to the Pope who called together a few of his most trusted cardinals, to whom he admitted the truth of some of the charges but denied the rest, and proposed to make a public statement to the Council in the belief that deposition would never come except for heresy in doctrine, where he felt his ground to be quite unassailable. In the end it was decided to postpone all action in the matter for a few days. But the ferment once started could not be held in check. By February 15th the French, English and German nations had agreed to support the policy of cession, *i.e.*, that all three Popes should resign and leave the field open for a fresh election. In favour of this view the Patriarch of Antioch was told off by Sigismund to attend a meeting of the Italian nation on their behalf, where he made such a sweet, pretty, elegant speech that everybody was in tears, and now that the four nations were agreed it was felt that union was really at last in sight.

Finding himself thus powerless, Pope John decided promptly on his course. He had pledged his word to Sigismund that he would not leave Constance till he had given peace to the Church, even if he had to lose his right hand for it, and on the very day when he saw that the nations were at one he made a solemn declaration in the presence of Sigismund and all the notables that he was quite willing to resign as soon as his opponents would do the same. On the following day a great meeting was held in the palace where Zabarella read out a schedule in which the Pope

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agreed in writing to resign. The whole assembly received the statement with immense joy, crying out that it was the Lord's doing and marvellous in their eyes, while the Frankfurt envoys immediately wrote home that the end was now very near, and they hoped to be back by the 3rd of March as their funds were already beginning to give out. But when the wording of the Pope's promise was more closely scanned it was noted that the time, manner and other particulars of his coming resignation were to be reserved for a future fixture. Accordingly when Sigismund and some representatives of the nations approached him to thank him for his gracious declaration they begged him to substitute other words for those to which exception might be taken. To this he agreed, but his subsequent edition gave even less satisfaction, for in it he called his rivals damned heretics, and made his promise conditional on their actually resigning first. Moreover he claimed that the question of reform was more pressing than any other and should be dealt with first of all, but Sigismund saw through him and insisted upon one step at a time.

On February 22nd the long-expected deputies from the University of Paris arrived. They consisted of twenty-two, or according to another list thirty, experts in law and theology, and among them were the Chancellor, Jean Gerson, and two notable friars, one of whom is believed to have been the writer of the great chronicle of St. Denys. They were received in Constance with much delight, and on the morning after

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their arrival they had an interview with the Pope who complimented them on their vigilance in crushing heresy, and informed them that he had already tendered his resignation in full consistory, producing the schedule to that effect. On the same afternoon they were introduced to Sigismund who welcomed them in a Latin speech. Next day they visited the German nation, where Sigismund exhorted them to support his policy; to which they replied that they would do all that was right and reasonable for they were certainly in favour of the policy of cession, and they hoped that Sigismund himself would not alter his "glorious mind". On February 28th they were present at a great meeting in the Grey Friars and advocated cession, whereupon a schedule was drawn up which was first read to the Pope privately and then presented to him at the palace in the presence of Sigismund a little before mid-day on the 1st of March. With a calm and joyous face he agreed to issue it officially, while Sigismund and the prelates who were with him shed tears of delight, and when the King announced the good news to the assembled nations he added that whereas before he would not have mounted his horse to save the Pope he was ready now to face even death in his cause.

On the next day the second public session of the Council was solemnly held in the Cathedral. The Pope celebrated Mass and then took his seat in front of the high altar. The Patriarch of Antioch read out the schedule announcing his determination to

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resign, at which he bent one knee and laid a finger on his breast. The Duke of Saxony unsheathed the imperial sword, King Sigismund removed his crown and kneeled and kissed his foot in gratitude, the Patriarch did the same in the name of the Council, and the singers sang "Te Deum," but there were more in the church who wept than sang. For three hours the bells rang out the news and all Constance was intoxicated with inexpressible joy. A bull was issued giving formal effect to the schedule, and on the next day the Pope presented Sigismund with a golden rose which he carried through the streets with his minstrelsy before laying it on the altar of Our Lady in the Cathedral.

But at the very moment when he seemed to have his hand upon the prize Sigismund found himself overmatched in handling three practised intriguers, each believing that he acted in the interest of the One Universal Church of God. Pope John had, as we have seen, used all his arts and wiles to stop the Council from meeting altogether, and when at length he was forced to give way he started for Constance with dire foreboding. He had been warned not to go. "But what can I do?" he said, "Fate takes me there." He felt that he was on his trial and knew that the Council would be against him; he did not want to be reformed and no sooner had he come than he wished to get away. He looked upon the place as a trap, and in any case he did not mean to stay more than a few months, and if the air did not suit

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him he would take up his quarters in some other place in the neighbourhood and soon be back in Bologna. Time did not wear down his mistrust and it could have been no surprise to many in Constance when in the midst of the universal joy the lute was suddenly rifted and the dance turned into mourning.

In the middle of February the Archbishop of Mayence had left the town to throw off religion for a time and spend a few days of relaxation at the baths in the Aargau, as he found the air of Constance did not agree with him. He had previously given an undertaking to Sigismund that he would return when required, but the semi-secrecy of his departure and the excuse about the insanitary air caused a general feeling of uneasiness, and many said that the lame dog only limped when it suited him and that he never meant to come back to Constance at all. And now it began to be reported that Pope John also found the air unhealthy and wanted to leave too. Upon this the King gave orders that the gates and walls and the lake should be watched day and night, and a sharp eye was constantly kept on the Pope's movements even in his bedroom. A messenger sent by him to Bologna was turned back, and when the Cardinal of St. Angelo proposed to start for Italy on March 14th he found the gates closed against him, as orders had been given that no clerk of any kind should pass out all that day. The Pope was indignant and summoned the burgomaster and skevins, and in presence of the Duke of Austria expressed his amazement that his

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liberty had been thus tampered with. He reminded them that before he had consented to come to their city at all they had bound themselves to defend him in freedom to stay or leave without hindrance, and he then had Sigismund's safe-conduct for him read aloud and the German text explained, adding that he did not like Constance and that he would have the Council transferred to some better and safer place. The burgomaster replied that he was acting under orders from the King and that the gates were closed to prevent the Council breaking up, but as to the Pope's personal safety the town council would protect him against all the world, even if they had to eat their own children.

In the meantime the nations had been called together in the cathedral and a deputation from them went across to the palace to say that it would never do for Sigismund to go to Nice like a courier all by himself without a mandate. Here was the time getting on and Benedict's envoys were quite ready to start, and they begged that a bull might be drawn up with all speed giving detailed particulars of the schedule of cession, and that in the meantime no cardinal should be allowed to leave the city except in extreme cases of sickness or poverty, of the urgency of which the Council should itself be the judge. The Pope promised a speedy reply and then Sigismund himself came in with many princes and lords and protested that he had never broken faith in regard to any safe-conduct, but that it was by the advice of some members

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of the Council that a watch had been set upon the gates. He was followed by his henchmen, the Archbishop of Riga and the Bishop of Salisbury, who admitted that they had advised the watches, and then there were some "hard and rough" words. The Pope fired up at the notion that such arrangements should be made without his knowledge, and Bishop Hallum told him to his face that the Council was above him. Thereupon the Pope called the bishop a heretic, to which Hallum retorted that the Pope himself ought to be burnt, and that if he did not give up simony and mend his morals the English would soon subtract their obedience.

On March 16th the Pope gave his promised reply. He did not mean the Council to be dissolved till the schism was ended, but it was a question whether it should not be transferred to some other town; and as to the meeting at Nice perhaps he might go there himself, but in any case he would not depute any one to act for him and in the meantime he altogether declined to issue any further bulls about his proposed renunciation. The next day the German and English nations met at the Grey Friars and decided that Constance must remain the meeting-place of the Council, for a Pope on the tramp might change his mind and besides there might be collusion between the claimants, and if they ever did meet there would certainly be dissensions as to who should give way first. This action of the two nations exasperated the Pope still more, and he began to prepare for a rapid flight.

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On March 18th the French nation met in the church of the Black Friars, and five cardinals were present, endeavouring to get the voting done by provinces, but no decision was come to, and after much hissing and hooting and threatening and quarrelling the sitting was adjourned in confusion. Next day Sigismund was up before sunrise and went to the Black Friars with such a crowd of dukes, marquises, barons and other supporters that the whole building was packed, and many prelates had to be displaced to make room for them. The King asked that a deputation from the German and English nations might be heard, as he said that out of 300 members of the French nation 200 were his subjects and only a minority were Frenchmen proper. At this there was a huge jar of words. Cardinal Adimari stood up to Sigismund and told him that though he was the Church's protector he was not her master. "No," said Sigismund promptly, "nor is any living man but God only!" and the retort was put to his credit as another proof of his dialectical skill. The French likewise objected to this interference with their rights. They were willing to allow Sigismund to remain personally, but they refused to deliberate in presence of his councillors. At this the King was furious, and he retired to the cloister saying: "Now we shall see who is against my honour and who is on the side of union and loyal to the Empire". Cardinal D'Ailli and several others then indignantly withdrew, and the remainder muttered that the King's words savoured

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of compulsion and that discussion could no longer be free. Presently, however, the King calmed down and sent in a message that he had spoken under excitement, upon which the feelings of the French were mollified and they decided that the meeting-place of the Council must on no account be changed until reforms in the Church had been carried out and errors in the faith eradicated. They further agreed that messengers must be sent at once to Gregory and Benedict, and that if Sigismund was going to Nice some representatives of the Council should go with him.

Meanwhile the Pope was pressing on his preparations for departure. His baggage was got together in the utmost secrecy, not even the courtiers or cardinals being aware of his plans. But a man who had caught sight of some of the packages secretly stowed away, came and told the nations that the Pope was making ready for flight, either in the guise of a monk or a labourer or even to be carried out in a tub. This rumour was circulating on March 19th when the angry meeting was held at the Black Friars, and a strict watch was ordered to stop the escape and to be on the lookout for a surprise. On the following day Sigismund visited the Pope and found him lying on a couch and complaining that the air of the place did not suit him. Speaking with all customary respect the King begged him at any rate not to leave Constance secretly, but if he wished to start in open daylight for any neighbouring town that was more to his

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mind he would be ready to go with him himself. The Pope appeared quite satisfied ; he expressed the fullest confidence in Sigismund, adding that he could not get away even if he would as he was lame in one foot, and with that he began to hobble about the room with a stick. He then gave a promise that he would not leave Constance till the Council was dissolved, but as he held that the mere fact of his departure would in itself dissolve the Council he was able to hoodwink his enemy once again. He knew indeed where to turn for a better escort, and had already arranged his plans with Duke Frederick of Austria. After leaving the palace Sigismund sent for the duke and taxed him with having a secret understanding with the Pope. "Don't do it!" he said, and the duke assured him that he had never thought of such a thing.

That very day a great tournament was held on the flat land, known as "The Paradise" or "The Inner Field," that lay between the western wall and the river bank, at which the Duke of Austria tilted for fifty gold rings against Queen Barbara's brother. Towards nightfall, when the crowds were busy, Pope John passed out unobserved through the Swiss gate, wrapped in a grey cloak and cap and disguised as a groom. He rode through the crowd on a small horse, with a crossbow slung at his saddle and accompanied by two attendants. Once outside the gates he was soon joined by the Duke of Austria, to whom the news had been whispered through his tilting helm.

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A boat was ready at Ermatingen on the south shore of the Unter See, and after a short drink at the house of the parish priest there they put across swiftly at two o'clock in the morning to Stein on the opposite bank. Here they mounted horses and at sunrise rode into Schaffhausen, where for the moment they were safe within the duke's dominions.

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LECTURE IV.

DEPOSITION.

AT daybreak on St. Benet's Day (March 21st, 1415) the news of the Pope's flight had spread and all Constance awoke in wild alarm. King Sigismund and Duke Louis of Bavaria were early up and rode through the streets to visit the cardinals in the Apostolic Palace and the nations at the Grey Friars, and to reassure the changers and the working folk at their stalls. They were accompanied by trumpeters and a herald who proclaimed that no one need be alarmed, that the Council was now really safer than ever before, that victuals were cheaper, and that all might come and go just as they pleased. Acting on this hint, seventeen papal secretaries together with seventy scribes and their servants, 145 of the Pope's grooms and other attendants, left Constance with his horses and personal belongings while the crowds shouted: "Long live the King!" Thus confidence returned to quaking hearts; booths went up again in the market-place, and henceforward all eyes were turned to Sigismund as the sole guarantee that the Council should proceed. Heart and soul he threw himself into the fray, vowing that as long as the Council lasted he would stand by

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it and protect it at the risk of his life and all that he had, even though all France and Italy should be against him and the Duke of Austria's armies were like the sand on the sea-shore. From this time onward he spared no labour and no expense, but worked unceasingly with a single eye to the Church's good, and earned unstinted praise on every hand.

As soon as the fugitive Pope arrived at Schaffhausen, even before he had time to take refreshment, he wrote off three letters with his own hand. The first was addressed to the Council, assuring them that he was safe where he was and meant to keep all his promises, but that he must be sure of his freedom first. In the second he told the cardinals that he had been forced to take his present step because he was afraid of Sigismund, and in the third he informed Sigismund himself that, by the grace of God, he was now free and in a nicer climate, and that the Duke of Austria knew nothing at all about his escape—which everybody knew to be a downright falsehood. Indeed there is little doubt that the prevaricating Pope would have played a far stronger card if he had openly denounced Sigismund forthwith, whereby he might at least have divided the College of Cardinals, though it is very doubtful whether he could have really hoped for a final success.

Straightway the nations sent a deputation to the cardinals to confer with them as to what should be done in the emergency. The King accompanied the deputation, who brought back word that the cardinals

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could not understand the motive for this unexpected move on the part of the Pope, and hoped that whatever steps were taken in consequence of it there might, at any rate, be absolute harmony between the nations and themselves. If the Pope's departure should turn out to be a hindrance to their efforts after unity and reform they would simply dismiss him and go on without him. Meantime they would send two of his own bishops to ask his intentions, and on their return three cardinals would open formal communications with him. For the moment, however, they deprecated any hasty step, expressed their grateful thanks to the King for his promise of continued protection, and hoped that in the future all might be done in friendliness and charity.

In accordance with this arrangement they selected three of their number who proceeded to Schaffhausen on March 22nd, where they had an interview with the Pope and set forth the views of their colleagues with perfect plainness, and when they returned to Constance on the 25th they brought back with them a letter from Pope John in which he agreed to make the whole College of Cardinals his proctors for carrying out his promised resignation, on the understanding that they should select for the purpose three of their number, together with a bishop from each of the four nations; that he himself should remain for a few weeks at Schaffhausen with liberty to communicate freely with Constance as he liked, and that in the meantime the work of the Council should go forward peaceably,

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and the Duke of Austria should abstain from any acts of violence. These particulars were to be communicated to Sigismund, "his most dear son in Christ," whom he still loved "just the same as ever".

But all this surface friendliness might well have been spared, for two days before he had had a paper fastened to the cathedral doors in Constance in which he summoned all the members of the Curia to join him within six days under pain of excommunication, while at the same time he wrote violent letters to the Kings of France and Poland, the Dukes of Berri and Burgundy and the University of Paris, saying that he had only left Constance in order to be able to repair to Nice and carry out his promised cession, and asking for the help of their strong arms against malignant persecutors whose rage was backed by powerful support. He professed to single out no one by name, though he could not refrain from laying the chief blame upon King Sigismund, the Patriarch of Antioch, and Bishop Hallum of Salisbury who was popularly known as Mars. These, he said, had put their lusts before their reason, and looking only to their own advantage had worked the voting in the nations by means of threats and brawls, and plotted disreputably against his liberty by methods which he would rather not describe.

But this duplicity soon got known at Constance, where it was treated as so much bluff and bounce. The hireling had not fled from the wolf but had turned into a wolf himself, and was now trying to rend and

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insult the flock. But the Council was not blind. They had eyes both behind and before that looked at facts, not words, and they had not come together with all these journeys and all this expense to be hoodwinked in this fashion. During the absence of the envoys at Schaffhausen the French approached Gerson and requested him to deliver an address to their nation, which he did on March 23rd, maintaining that the Church as represented by the Council was above the Pope, and that if he would not obey her she could give him a writing of divorcement and treat him as a heathen man and a publican.

On March 26th the third public session of the Council was held. Cardinal D'Ailli preached and Sigismund was present supported by Zabarella, and a critical day for the Church began. In obedience to the Pope's summons nine of the cardinals had slipped away to Schaffhausen, and of the seven who now remained several were absent on account of sickness or diplomatic caution. This, however, did not prevent the passing of a strong resolution which declared that the Council had been canonically called and must not be dissolved until the schism was ended ; that it must not be transferred elsewhere without its own consent, and that no members should be allowed to leave before its work was done. This decision was duly communicated to the absent Pope by the same three cardinals who had previously been deputed to negotiate with him, and on their return to Constance on March 28th there was a great gathering to meet them at the

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Apostolic Palace. They reported that they had good news. The Pope meant well to the Council and would agree to all its reasonable wishes. But there was a sore feeling about, and the good news seemed very like poison. If the Pope meant well why had he required all his retainers and dependants to leave Constance? His promises were nothing but mockery and lies, and he ought to be charged with schism for trying to break up the Council, and so there were violent "altercations" between the cardinals and the nations and the whole room called out "Session! Session!" Subsequently the cardinals offered further explanations which Sigismund undertook to present; but while they were under discussion news came in that the Pope had started off again and was slipping still farther out of reach.

For Duke Frederick's proffered protection was beginning to look like a broken reed; Schaffhausen was threatened with attack and it was already deemed prudent that Pope John should get away. Accordingly, after washing the paupers' feet and distributing coats and shoes on Holy Thursday with the usual ceremonial, he got on board a fishing-boat below the falls on Good Friday morning and sailed down the Rhine to Laufenburg, accompanied by the Duke of Austria and a few attendants. Not a single cardinal would venture with him, for they saw that if Sigismund should carry out his threats the duke would keep his hold upon them to cover any losses that might befall him in the coming struggle. Moreover it was

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already clear that it was only for the plunder that the class had kept at their master's heels so far, and when the honey failed the flies did not care to buzz on for nothing.

But the Pope was only allowed a short stay in one place. After spending a few days at the sign of the Peacock he was hurried out of Laufenburg in disguise amidst a deluge of rain, and moved in secrecy for two nights through the woods and mountains of the Black Forest. He slept at Todtnau on April 8th, and at noon on the following day reached Freiburg, where he stayed at the Black Friars, a prisoner in all but name.

News of the flight from Schaffhausen was not long in reaching Constance, where the fourth session of the Council had been fixed for Easter Eve. But before the formal business began in the cathedral the cardinals and the nations assembled in the palace at seven o'clock, and their meeting was again very far from harmonious. The utter isolation of John was regarded as evidence of the finger of God, and all further parleying with him was henceforward at an end. But on the other hand Sigismund was violently enraged against Duke Frederick, and was gathering together large bodies of troops to attack his possessions. Many of these troops were already encamped in the fields outside the town, and a ruinous rise in the cost of living seemed startlingly near. The cardinals and the French accordingly pressed Sigismund not to make war on the duke lest all possibility of

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union for the Church should thereby be frustrated. But he was obstinately determined to crush his enemy now that he had the chance, though he offered to respect any town in the duke's dominions that the Pope might choose to occupy, and to guarantee the security of all who wished to approach him there, provided that he on his side would undertake not to leave it. And so there were more "altercations" before the public business began.

The attendance at this fourth session was but small. Sigismund was there and the envoys of the Powers, together with nine cardinals, including Zabarella, but D'Ailli purposely stayed away. The bishops were seated, coped and mitred, in the choir, when Cardinals Fillastre and Zabarella and the King stepped into one of the side chapels for a final talk, and then began the business which has been called "the most interesting event in the whole dogmatic history of the Christian Church". Cardinal Orsini presided, and under the lead of Zabarella it was proposed that the Council should declare itself to be supreme above the Pope; that any excommunications that he might launch against it were void; that each nation should elect three representatives to deal with applications for withdrawal from Constance, and that no new cardinals should be recognised until the Council's work was done. This view had been already strenuously urged by Gerson and his colleagues speaking in the name of the University of Paris, which had syllogised out a logical case to prove that many men

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had been saved without a Pope ; that the gates of hell had often prevailed against Popes, but never against the Church ; that the Church was better, wiser and worthier than any Pope and as such could judge, correct or even depose him just as you might pluck a sword out of the hand of a madman. Joseph, it was said, was set to guard his master's wife, not to debauch her, and the Pope was not there to divide but to unite, to build up and not to pull down. The Council was now the hope of the whole Catholic world, and the sheep ought not to be scattered simply because the shepherd was away. Others on the other hand found weighty arguments for maintaining that the Pope was independent of cardinals, councils and everybody, and that no one but God could judge him, even if he were dragging souls to hell in crowds. Between these contending views there was too much divergence to justify an immediate decision, and the question was postponed until the fifth session which would be held at the end of Easter week. The interval was taken up with disputes between the cardinals and the nations, some of the French going so far as to say that no Pope or cardinal ought to take any part at all in the Council, which had been called for the express purpose of reforming them all, and that the cardinals ought to have been more distinctly excluded, because they had scandalised the whole Church by electing John as Pope, knowing him beforehand to have been what he was. Thus there seemed nothing but a deadlock

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ahead, but through the intervention of Sigismund it was agreed to gloss over difficulties and to hold the session as arranged in order to avoid a graver scandal.

Accordingly the Council sat for the fifth time on April 6th, with Cardinal Orsini again presiding. Only seven cardinals attended. D'Ailli and three others, though known to be near at hand, were again conspicuous by their absence, and the rest were biding their time at Schaffhausen in the belief that without the Pope the Council would be *nil*. Zabarella was present but preferred not to father the articles that had been postponed from the previous sitting, so they were taken over and read out by the newly elected Bishop of Posen, who explained that they had been discussed and adopted by the four nations, with the significant addition that Pope John's departure was held to be prejudicial to the good of the Church, and that if he did not return within a given time he might be deposed and judged as a schismatic. After the resolutions had been passed Sigismund rose and offered to write to the Pope, or even to go himself and bring him back, whether he would or no, for he had reason to believe that he could not now return even if he would. It was subsequently agreed to allow him to remain a cardinal after he had resigned, and to have the county of Venice for his maintenance, together with 300,000 florins per annum secured upon the tithes of Venice, Florence and Genoa, though it was not long before doubts began to arise as to the possibility of collecting such an enormous sum. Two days

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after the sitting had closed Sigismund put forth an order cancelling all safe-conducts that had been issued in Constance in order to check departures, and on the same day a paper was fastened to the doors of the Apostolic Palace lauding him for his courage in strengthening the Council, and fiercely attacking the cardinals for their craftiness in devising delays in order to wear it out until it died of toil and cost and weariness, Zabarella being specially made the object of attack for mutilating documents that had been passed officially at open sittings. "Come out from among them," cried the author, "for they knew what they were about when they chose as Pope this tyrant, murderer and simoniac, who has set up the tables of the money-changers in Christ's temple and sold every dignity and office in the Church like pigs in the market! Let not the Council be seduced by their cunning promises! Be men and fight the old serpent! and if in Constance ye be constant ye shall see the help of the Lord upon you and hereafter receive everlasting life!"

The sixth session opened on April 17th. The absent cardinals finding that the kitchen was not good at Schaffhausen were beginning to filter back with excuses, but very few were in their places yet. Four delegates of the nations (the English being represented by Bishop Caterick) then mounted the rostrum and read out the following decision. Taking the absent Pope at his word each of the nations had nominated four proctors to carry out his resignation for him,

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the English four being Bishops Bubwith, Caterick and Hallum and Abbot Spofforth. These again had deputed Cardinals Fillastre and Zabarella with two representatives of each nation to interview the Pope, requiring him to ratify the above nominations and either to return to Constance or conduct negotiations from some other imperial town such as Ulm, Ravensburg or Basle, but he must make his choice within two days and be there in ten more, otherwise he would be proceeded against as a schismatic. The envoys themselves were only allowed twelve days to go and return, and they were strictly forbidden to have any private interviews, but required always to transact their business collectively in a body. They started on their journey on April 19th, and while they were away a sermon was preached in the cathedral by Gerson, who undertook the duty at short notice as a substitute for an *emeritus* doctor who had failed at the last moment owing to a hoarse throat. The great Frenchman preached about the efficacy of prayer, especially if many persons joined in a praying procession, and most of all if it were offered on behalf of the united Church. The sermon is florid and crowded with imagery, but it contains no local touches, and on its completion a vast procession passed across the bridge to Petershausen, praying that the messengers might come back with joy bringing sheaves of blessed answers with them. But, as we shall see, the sheaves of blessed answers were far from corresponding to these high expectations.

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When the envoys reached Breisach on the evening of April 23rd, they found that Pope John was staying there, and they sent three times to try and get an interview. But he gave a rough reply to their request, accompanied by a very unseemly gesture, saying that he was ill in bed, though the ushers said they did not know whether he had not actually left as they had not looked into his room. Then he made a difficulty about admitting the whole of them, though he did not mind seeing the two cardinals by themselves. But the cardinals said that could not be, so the whole party managed to secure an interview on the morrow, at which after "many words" the Pope promised everything and agreed to start with them for Constance on the next day as soon as he had had his breakfast. With this they went back to their lodgings and slept in peace. But before the sun was up Pope John had put on a peasant's dress, dropped down from the castle by a ladder with one attendant and got to the bridge before the gate was open. The captain warned him that the road was not safe, and advised him to try another way, which he did, but found the gate there also closed. Here he was recognised by two large Germans who called out that the Pope was trying to be off, and he had to step into a grange and shut himself in amid the gibes of a gaping crowd of men and women until the town gate was opened and he was able to pass out. A bowshot outside the town he waited for some forty armed followers, who went with him along the river bank up to Neuenburg.

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But the garrison of Basle threatened to batter down the place and carry him off, so the captain told him that he had better go back to Breisach. No! said the Pope, let them rather put him over the river to Münster in the Vosges, whither the Duke of Burgundy had sent 2,000 troops to receive him and take him on to Avignon; and when the captain represented the danger he would run, being a fat man however much they might disguise him, he said that he did not care as he had often been among soldiers before. But the sun had now set and there was nothing else for it; so at 8 o'clock in the evening they dressed him in a white smock, threw a black cloak over him, set him on a little black horse and sent him back to Breisach, which he reached after midnight, only gaining admittance after an hour and a half spent in passing from gate to gate, and scrambling over rocks and stones.

Meantime the Council's envoys were dumbfounded at the news of the escape. Finding themselves fooled again they determined to return at once to Constance, but meeting at Freiburg with Duke Louis of Ingolstadt, who was acting as a go-between for Sigismund with the Duke of Austria, they were induced to send two of their number with him back to Breisach to see what could be done. By means of this pressure they got the Pope to Freiburg, where he was received by a threatening crowd, the women weeping and tearing their hair, for they expected that Sigismund's army would besiege the place as soon as they knew that he

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was in it. For three days the envoys talked with him and showed him the risks that he ran, until at length, on April 27th, he promised to do everything that they wanted. On the 29th he issued a bull in which he again declared that he was ready to resign, but over and above the old conditions as to his rivals resigning first he now required an assurance from the Council as to his personal liberty and future maintenance. But his insincerity was incurable, for before long he made a last despairing attempt to escape, though after three hours' search he was found half-dressed in a cellar before his intended disguise could be completed. After this *fiasco* he was strictly watched night and day. In some quarters it is true he had his money value yet, for it was reported that an Italian changer had offered 300,000 florins for him even as he was.

But all hope of solid support from any responsible quarter had now to be abandoned, and his prospects for the future were for ever overcast. In England a large sum of money had been gathered for him in the usual way and placed in a hutch in St. Paul's till his collectors should arrive, but when his fall was known the locks were broken open and the money "spent in better use". The letters that he had sent from Schaffhausen to the King of France had been carried by the Cardinal of St. Angelo, but the messenger had been captured and detained in Savoy. The University of Paris wrote to him disapproving of his flight and pressing for his immediate return to

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Constance, while they assured the members of the Council that the King of France supported them and urged them to act firmly as men of one mind; and the University of Vienna decided to follow in the footsteps of their "mother" in Paris. His representatives had been kindly received by the Duke of Burgundy, who at first promised protection to him in his flight, but when envoys from Sigismund and the Council also arrived at Dijon and stated the true facts as to his [illegible]giversations the duke decided to throw him over, and wrote a letter to the French nation at Constance in which he declared that he would countenance no opposition to the wishes of the Council and that all statements to the contrary were false; that some persons of great dignity at Constance were trying to fasten a charge of heresy upon him, but that though he was no theologian and quite unversed in the subtleties of the schools, he was ready to shed his last drop of blood in defence of the Catholic faith.

But the greatest blow had fallen upon the fortunes of the Pope by the helpless breakdown of his former friend and instigator the Duke of Austria. Whatever may have been his purpose in planning the escape from Constance Duke Frederick had seriously miscalculated his chances in a single-handed struggle against the Empire and the Church. In the first outbreak of his rage Sigismund proclaimed him under the ban, and posted notices on the cathedral doors summoning him to his presence and calling

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upon all his towns and vassals to renounce their fealty and allegiance. From the outset he had refused to accept his fiefs from the King's hands and he was now proscribed as a traitor, all his honours and lands were forfeited, the Council put him under the curse of Judas and 400 of his vassal lords defied him. Forty thousand troops were soon collected and Duke Louis of Bavaria was despatched to attack his possessions in Alsace, where Thann, Ensisheim, Altkirch and Heiligkreuz soon gave up the game.

But his weakest spot was in his Swiss possessions, where his hold was ever weakening with the growing strength of the great confederated towns. It was true that they had just concluded a fifty years' peace with him and were loth to break it, but the Council dispelled their scruples by telling them that such a course would be quite Christian and right, as the duke was now the Church's enemy, and to keep faith with him was therefore out of the question. So when the Burgrave Frederic of Nürnberg overran the Thurgau, and handed it over to Constance, the Swiss confederates were let loose without remorse against their old enemy, and troops poured out from Bern, Lucerne, Schwyz, Thun, Zürich and Zug, with siege trains to capture any place they could. One by one the duke's towns and fortresses gave in. Seventeen of them fell in as many days, and the whole of the Thurgau, Aargau, Arlberg and Alsace was soon lost to the House of Austria for ever. Henceforward their late possessor was known as Frederick

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Empty-Purse, and by April 19th it was understood in Constance that he was making overtures for peace.

Sigismund in the meantime had been out to Radolfzell to receive the submission of some of the duke's Swabian towns, and on his return he was welcomed with florid speeches amidst a crowd of 10,000 people assembled on the bridge, which it was feared would break down beneath their excessive weight. Negotiations then proceeded with the repentant Duke of Austria, and it was not long before he agreed to throw himself altogether on the King's mercy. Sigismund required that he should first make his peace with the Council and bring the Pope back or his lands would be forfeited for ever. He agreed to put Freiburg at once into the King's hands, and he himself entered Constance on April 30th.

In the afternoon of the following day the deputation returned from Breisach and it was clear that the fugitive Pope was totally abandoned by God, and had not a friend remaining. Thursday, May 2nd, was fixed for the seventh session of the Council, and before the proceedings began Sigismund met the envoys in the sacristy of the cathedral, where they related their adventures and produced the latest schedule in which John had offered his resignation. But the offer was only laughed at, and they did not pretend to defend it, and when they told about the attempt to cross into France Sigismund cried out: "Let him go! and if he gets to Avignon I'll drag him

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back by the hood with my own hand even from the palace on the hill!"

The session opened at nine o'clock and eleven cardinals were present, but they had been allowed very little notice of what was coming on and could only talk it over for form's sake in the sacristy. The chief business was to cite the Pope to appear within nine days. The decision was read out by four delegates from the nations, and the citation was straightway posted up on the city gates, and on the doors of the palace, the cathedral and St. Stephen's Church. On May 5th Duke Frederick came before Sigismund at the Grey Friars, where he went down on his knees and submitted himself wholly to his grace and favour, undertaking to remain himself as a hostage in Constance till Pope John should return, while Sigismund turned with a triumphant air to the assembled envoys from Florence, Genoa and Venice, saying: "Now you can see that I am a mighty prince above all other lords and cities!"

The nine days' grace allowed to the Pope would expire on May 11th, but two days before that date envoys again started for Freiburg; and as fat hens will not come to market by themselves but have to be carried with their feet tied, they were accompanied this time by 600 armed men under the command of the Burgrave of Nürnberg. The Pope received them all smiles, saying that there was nothing he desired more than to be back in Constance once again. But this could not stay the pending judgment, and at the

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ninth session held on May 13th, after Mass had been sung by Bishop Hallum, the proceedings began by a heated controversy as to who should go to the door and see if the Pope was there. Fifteen cardinals were present, but not one of them would do it, and so Bishop Bubwith and four others walked down the cathedral to the west door and called the Pope's name out three times, returning afterwards to their places to certify that he was nowhere about. A commission was then appointed to try his case, including Bishop Caterick and Abbot Spofforth, and a smaller one again, of which Bishop Hallum was a member, was deputed to pass judgment when the facts had been formally ascertained and reported.

The next day the fateful tenth session was held. After Zabarella had explained that all preliminaries were now formally complete, the President, speaking in the name of the Council, declared that Pope John by his wicked life and detestable ways had set an example of bad living to the world; that from his youth up he had been of evil disposition, irreverent, immodest, untruthful, disobedient to his parents, and addicted to every vice; that he had led Boniface IX. astray, had bought his way into the College of Cardinals, had cruelly misgoverned Bologna and poisoned Alexander V., and that even after he became Pope he had neglected Mass, Hours and fasts like a heathen, or that whenever he did celebrate he ran through the service like a sportsman or a soldier, and had often said that he believed neither in a resurrection nor in

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a world to come ; that in spite of solemn and frequent remonstrances his life was given up to fornication, sleep and animal pleasures, and that he was commonly known as the Devil Incarnate ; that he had sold clerical offices to laymen and children and put up every kind of benefice for a stated price, so that the whole Church was fouled with the taint of simony, filled with unworthy prelates, rent in every grade and scandalised beyond recovery, all of which charges had been proved by the testimony of many witnesses, including cardinals, archbishops, bishops and "great men". Wherefore the commissioners now pronounced him to be suspended from his papal office as a murderer, a sodomite, a simoniac and a heretic and that all Christians must henceforth withdraw their obedience from him. To this each of the nations recorded its solemn *Placet*, though John Hus was right when he guessed that if Jesus had been present and had said : " He that is without simony amongst you let him cast the first stone," all present must have left their seats and walked out of the church.

In the meantime the Pope had been brought down to Radolfzell on the Unter See, whither five cardinals were despatched to induce him if possible to accept the inevitable. They found him in an inn weeping bitterly and saying that he was very sorry for the past and that he begged the Council to have compassion on him. On May 19th other representatives went over and dismissed all his attendants except two, one of whom was his cook and both of

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whom had been with him since his student days in Bologna. The rest took their *congé* with loud outbursts of grief, as their master accused his counsellors of giving him bad advice and lamented that he had now nothing that he could call his own. On May 24th he signed a paper in which he agreed to submit to the decision of the Council, whereupon he was locked up and placed under a guard of 300 of Sigismund's Hungarian troops, and on the same day letters were sent out requiring papal collectors to act as under the authority of the Council and no longer in the name of the Pope.

On May 25th the Council held its eleventh sitting, at which the charges against the Pope were again publicly declared to have been proved, and on the day following five commissioners were appointed to interview him again. They presented themselves in his room at Radolfzell early in the morning on May 27th, where he received them standing while the charges were read aloud. Asked if he admitted them to be true, he pleaded that he had already offered his resignation for the sake of union, adding with a sorrowful look that he acknowledged that he had done wrong in leaving Constance, and that he now wished he had died rather than have so basely run away. As to the other charges he offered no defence, but accepted the judgment of the Council, which he said was most holy and could not go astray. They then gave him the chance of appearing before the Council on the next day to listen to his doom, but

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he preferred to stay where he was, and to lay down his biretta there. The commissioners then returned to Constance, and made their report to the nations the same afternoon, bringing with them also a letter written by the Pope to Sigismund, in which he appealed pitifully for mercy.

His conduct at this interview has been represented on the one hand as that of a saintly penitent, deserving of an immortal crown, while others have called him a whining supplicant who merely cried quarter when the knife was at his throat. But whichever be the favourite view to-day, it is certain that his tears made no impression on the feelings of his contemporaries. The Council held its twelfth session on May 29th, and pronounced the final deposition. The steel die in which his arms were cut was broken up, a leaden bull of his was formally defaced, and the Council declared that no fresh election should take place without its express consent. The next day the whole town was *en fête* with the Corpus Christi procession, and on the morrow the momentous decision was announced to the fallen Pope at Radolfzell. He received the news with thankfulness and after two hours' reflection laid his hand upon his breast and signified his assent. All papal arms, robes and emblems were removed from his dwelling, and on June 3rd he was transferred to Gottlieben, where for a day or two perhaps he had John Hus as a fellow-prisoner under the same roof. Here he would be within easier reach and under stricter guard, his letters were all

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intercepted and the Council could point with triumph to a very God on earth whom they had bound in prison! In the following month when Sigismund left Constance, the ex-Pope was entrusted to the care of Duke Louis of Bavaria, who removed him to his castle at Heidelberg and after three years to Mannheim. During all this time he was treated with respectful kindness, his prison was roomy and pleasant, he had two chaplains to say the offices for him and some nobles to wait upon him at table, though as they knew nothing but German he could only communicate with them by nods and signs. After a futile attempt to escape, he ultimately recovered his liberty by paying 30,000 crowns to Duke Louis, was reconciled to his successor, made Cardinal of Frascati in June, 1419, and died at Florence on the 22nd of December in the same year.

I cannot find that in his lifetime he had a single defender, and the case was so bad against him that in the next generation it used to be said that if the Council had not put him on his trial God would have certainly done so Himself. In course of time, however, it began to be asserted that though his moral character was very far from what a Pope's should be, yet he showed great skill and talent when regarded as a man of the world, and especially in having justice done on malefactors during his nine years' government of Bologna. But some better defence than this is obviously wanted if the character of a Pope is to be rescued from charges of "perfect worthlessness" and

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"indescribable depravity"; and accordingly it has been urged that slanderous tongues have a tendency to exaggerate a man's defects when he is down, and we are bidden to remember that he had been a soldier before he was a Pope, and that if he had a habit of lying in bed all day and keeping awake all night it was really acquired when he was a pirate in his earlier life, in connection with which habit there was a story that when he was tired with reading at night, and had to get through his Hours with a luke-warm conscience, instead of following the Roman ordinal he would call out to one of his chaplains in his broad Neapolitan dialect: "Fetch me a saint to read about and look sharp in a hundred devils' name!" Some apologists cannot believe that any Council would have used such hard words about an opponent after he had submitted, and think therefore that the official documents can only represent the revengeful feelings of some individuals who made improper use of the Council's name to circulate mere private abuse, while others again, though thinking that it was "perhaps a mistake" to publish the scandalous details of his evil life, are nevertheless not much concerned about his moral character, because they regard him as an anti-pope, yet they derive some satisfaction from reflecting that at least no dogmatic heresy was ever proved against him. And when every other defence has been abandoned there are those who put in a plea in extenuation of his crimes that he was not worse than others of his age. And certainly his age must

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have been bad enough to have tolerated such a Vicar of Christ for a single day, for it is clear beyond the possibility of dispute that his frightful character was well known before his election, and that, although he was frequently expostulated with, he never mended after.

Thus was removed one of the three main obstacles to the union of the long-disunited Church, and the way was made clearer for dealing with the remaining two. On May 30th Sigismund announced to the nations that he had received an autograph letter from King Ferdinand of Aragon, declaring his readiness to work for the union of the Church from the point of view of Benedict, and on the same day news came in that Carlo di Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, might soon be expected with overtures on the part of the well-meaning but deserted ex-Pope Gregory. Malatesta had long been his one faithful protector, and at a meeting with Sigismund at Piacenza in the winter of 1413 had held out hopes that he would be able to induce his *protégé* to appear before the Council in person. In this hope it is true he failed, and the restrictions attached by Gregory to his first mandate were considered so unsatisfactory that his partisan, Duke Louis of Bavaria, despatched a messenger to Rimini explaining that fuller powers must be issued if any solid result was to be attained. The messenger was back in Constance by March 10th, but even before that date no doubt was felt that Gregory would ultimately resign, and the Council had already made

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up their minds that this difficulty would certainly clear itself away. On March 13th Gregory issued a bull authorising Malatesta to act for him, and soon afterwards the envoy started from Rimini on his journey. He reached Constance on the 15th of June, accompanied by 250 horsemen with twelve sumpter mules.

It was during his stay that he was one day taking breakfast with Sigismund and many of the great German lords, who were bragging of their thousands upon thousands of horses, when the King turned to him and asked him how many horses Italy had. "Perhaps from 32,000 to 40,000," was the reply. "Then why are you Italians so conceited," said Sigismund, "seeing that your people are only the dregs of the earth?" "Because," said Malatesta who had a ready wit, "we once conquered the whole lot of you together," and the guests looked at each other and promptly turned the subject.

The day after his arrival Malatesta made a speech at the Austin Friars, in which he said that though Gregory still refused to recognise the Council, yet he had sent him to negotiate with King Sigismund in his name in order to bring about peace in the Church. On the following day he was received by Sigismund and showed his credentials. Some days were then spent in conferring with the nations, to whom he explained that he had been authorised by Gregory to renounce all his claims to the Papacy if the Council should decide that such a course was necessary.

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Nevertheless there were still difficulties, for Malatesta wished the formal withdrawal of Gregory to be postponed till he had seen what Benedict was going to do, and the cardinals wanted all details as to the future to be arranged by the Council itself. But Sigismund showed his usual zeal and urgency and the obstacles forthwith vanished away.

But midsummer was already upon them. The heat was oppressive and business was suspended for the great annual ride or St. John's Watch on Midsummer Eve. At two o'clock in the morning on June 23rd Sigismund went out to Ueberlingen, whither Queen Barbara and several of her ladies had already preceded him. He had previously given orders that no one was to leave Constance in the meantime without a written permit from the burgomaster certifying that the bearer had satisfied the claims of all his creditors. At Ueberlingen such business as was absolutely urgent was transacted during the hours of daylight and the summer nights were given up to dancing in the open air. The festivities were prolonged till June 28th, when the whole party returned to Constance for more serious work.

So there was a large attendance when the Council held its fourteenth session on Thursday, July 4th. Sigismund himself presided with Dominici and Malatesta seated at his side. The former rose and spoke shortly but eloquently on the words of St. Peter: "Be ye all of one mind in prayer," and one of the representatives of Cologne University then started a

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sermon, but the heat was so great and the church so thronged that he was not able to finish it. Then a bull of Gregory's was produced in which he convoked and approved the Council with all its subsequent transactions, and after this large diplomatic fiction had been swallowed in silence it was agreed that there should be unity and fusion between the cardinals of Gregory's obedience and those of John's, that the Pope should be considered as the head of the Council, but that Sigismund's name alone should appear as president until one Pope should have been finally accepted by all.

Here then was the very opportunity that Gregory had long waited for. He had raised no objection to the Council being convoked by Sigismund, but he would not agree that John should preside, and now that the two walls had come together with the King as the head-stone of the corner his resignation was forthwith proclaimed. Dominici received the kiss of peace and took his seat as a legally appointed member of the Sacred College. Five other cardinals who had been irregularly nominated were likewise now formally recognised. Gregory himself was to be henceforward Cardinal of Frascati, and the Marches of Ancona were assigned to him for his maintenance as long as he lived, together with the administration of the vacant see of Recanati, where he died on October 19th, 1417, and where his monument may be seen in the cathedral to this day.

As soon as it was announced that Gregory had

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"buried his synagogue," the bells rang out in Constance and all the partisans of union rejoiced with exceeding joy. The hosts of heaven danced; the devils trembled; the past was to be forgotten; all curses would be revoked; and the Church would make a fresh start with a clean sheet, only instead of three Popes and a tri-vided faith she had no longer any visible Head at all, while her pilot was about to depart on a distant voyage leaving her to the care of an infallible Council which had just awakened to the discovery that they had been worshipping a mole and that the man whose feet they had lately kissed as their Most Holy Father was a rogue and a liar, who had run away from his post with shame and dishonour and whose record was so bad that contemporary chroniclers would not pollute their pages with describing it for fear of imperilling their readers' souls.

And now that the difficulties were so far cleared away, the time seemed ripe for Sigismund to make his promised journey to Nice, the date for which was already overdue. For although John and Gregory were considered safe, there could be no peace in the Church so long as "the moon" (De Luna, *i.e.*, Benedict) endured. On July 11th the Council appointed fourteen proctors to accompany the King and represent them at the coming negotiations with Benedict, two Englishmen (*viz.*, John Wells and Hugh Holbach) being included in the list. No representatives were to be allowed to leave Constance till the King's re-

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turn, except with special permission which could only be obtained from four specially authorised bishops (among them being Bishop Hallum), and arrangements were made for relieving the necessities of any needy cardinals or bishops who might find themselves unable to bear the strain of a prolonged stay.

On July 15th the Council held its seventeenth session, at which Sigismund was present "in his everyday dress". At the word he kneeled bareheaded before the high altar, while the Council prayed that God would take care of the most serene and most Christian prince on his journey and bring him safely back. For Duke Frederick of Austria had let out the fact that a plot was hatching between the Duke of Burgundy and the Count of Savoy to kill him on his way, though Sigismund had publicly declared that he could not believe such a thing to be possible, and the Duke of Burgundy had denied that such a plot had ever existed, and called the Duke of Ingolstadt a firebrand and a coward for not daring to attack him to his face while abusing him like a callet behind his back. Processions were accordingly ordered for every Sunday while the King was away, excommunication was pronounced against all who should impede him on the road, and Gerson preached a send-off sermon in which he prayed that the angels would bear him up in their hands lest at any time he should dash his foot against a stone. The duty of protecting the Council during his absence was entrusted to Duke Louis of Bavaria, to whom the Burgomaster and the

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Town Council had already sworn promises of assistance on the previous day. At two o'clock in the afternoon of July 18th Sigismund met fifteen of the cardinals and several bishops in the Black Friars, where the kiss of peace was ceremoniously exchanged, and on the following day he took his departure from Constance, attended by 4,000 mounted men, in the expectation that the union of the Church would now be finally completed before four months were out.

No sooner had he left than a letter was posted on the church doors, purporting to have come from the Holy Ghost, informing the Council that they must take care of themselves as best they could for the present, as He had important business to attend to elsewhere.

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LECTURE V.

JOHN HUS.—TRIAL.

WHEN the Council had been originally summoned, it was understood that its attention would be directed to three main topics, and from its earliest meeting the air at Constance had re-echoed with the three great catchwords of Peace, Faith and Virtue. Peace was now in a fair way of being assured. Virtue, though regarded even by Sigismund as the chief purpose for which the Council had been called, had been by consent postponed, for he knew that they would have to begin, as he said, not with the *Minorites*, but with the *Majorites*, otherwise it would only be a case of the big thieves hanging the little thieves, while Peter's stomach could only be really purged by getting the twenty-three cardinals, 300 archbishops and bishops, and the same number of curials, and dropping them all together for three days into the Rhine. But under the remaining head, before Sigismund started on his journey west, Faith had already received her official prop at the stake of John Hus the heretic.

In 1412 the clergy at Prague had appealed to Pope John to protect their flocks from the ravage of

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the wolf, and Hus was excommunicated and forced to fly from the capital. But though separated from his friends in Prague he never ceased to send them "some little words," calling upon them to fear no excommunication but that of God only, for no other could really do them any harm. His energies in the meantime were all wide awake. In the following year he wrote his book on the Church, and his bark against Indulgences was heard through all Bohemia, Moravia, Poland and Hungary. In the same year the theological faculty of the University of Prague condemned Wycliffe's forty-five articles, pronouncing all who held them to be dishonourers of the Church and enemies of the kingdom of Bohemia. These decisions were posted up in Prague in the Czech language, but many even among the clergy said that the condemnation was unjust and would not admit that Popes and cardinals were judges of Catholic truth, but that the Scriptures were the real standard, while Queen Sophia pleaded for her "faithful, devoted and beloved chaplain" and the Bethlehem Chapel where she had often listened to the word of God.

It is no wonder therefore that the friends of Hus would not be silenced. They sang songs in the streets, jeering at the King and the skevins; they shouted out that simony, luxury and avarice were the real cause of dissension amongst the clergy, that Hus had been unjustly driven out, and that the interdict was that of the Devil against Christ and ought not to be enforced against them if they allowed their Bethlehem preacher

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to come back. Riots were frequent; priests were attacked, churches plundered and many persons killed. Wenzel wished heartily that these disputes should cease, and Pope John wrote to Sigismund exhorting him to root out the heresies that were distracting the fair kingdom over which he would be one day called upon to rule, while Gerson sent a letter on behalf of the University of Paris to the Archbishop of Prague, urging him to stamp out Wycliffry with fire and sword and not to waste time over cumbrous argumentation.

In the summer of 1414 Hus was at the castle of Krakowicz, a little to the west of Prague, whence he paid occasional visits to the city. None ventured to molest him, for, in addition to his powerful friends at court and some learned scholars in the university, he had on his side the cobblers, tailors, websters, skinners and other "vulgar mechanics" of both sexes, whom he found to be stronger champions of the Truth than the doctors of sacred letters. On August 26th, 1414, he drew up a document and fixed it upon the door of the cathedral at Prague, stating that he was ready to appear before the new archbishop at a coming convocation in the Grey Friars to give a reason for the faith that was in him and to meet any who should charge him with heresy face to face. No one appeared against him and the inquisitor, Nicholas, Bishop of Nazareth, accordingly gave him a clean sheet, certifying that after having talked with him, supped with him and heard him preach, he had found in him no trace of heresy at all.

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But long ere this Sigismund, as heir presumptive to the throne of Bohemia, with a view to finding some remedy for the dangerous passions that were threatening his future kingdom, had resolved to allay them if possible by diplomatic means, and with this purpose had sent two Bohemian nobles from Lombardy to sound Hus as to his willingness to come to Constance and make a public statement of his faith before his accusers, offering him a safe-conduct and imperial protection that he might defend his opinions before the Council when it met, and adding a personal promise to the Lord of Krakowicz that he should return in safety to Bohemia after his views had been heard. The two Bohemian envoys were Wenzel of Duba and John of Chlum, and when they brought their message Hus accepted the offer gladly. They subsequently had an interview with Sigismund at Friuli in the spring of 1413, and brought back word that the profession of faith should be made only after Sigismund had himself arrived at Constance.

When Hus had made up his mind to appear before the Council he published his decision both in Czech and Latin on the church doors at Prague. From his boyhood he had made it a rule gladly to give up an old belief whenever he found a better, and on August 30th, 1414, he wrote a letter to Sigismund with his own hand in which he said that he had never hitherto done anything in secret but always publicly in presence of all, that he would not fear to confess Christ and if need be to die for his most true Lord, that his only

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wish was to bring both clergy and people to imitate Him and that for this he had incurred the hatred of those whose lives were not as Christ's. They had cited him and summoned him but had failed to meet him, and he now thanked his protector for his kind remembrance, expressed himself as very grateful for this chance of publicly making profession of his faith before the assembled Council, and asked for a safe-conduct, adding that he was willing to submit to the punishment if heresy should be proved against him. His letter was received by Sigismund at Rothenburg on October 7th, and on the following day a reply was sent to him promising the necessary safe-conduct in order "that he might make his journey to the Council in greater security" and in the hope that the fair fame of Bohemia might be cleared of suspicion in the eyes of the nations of the world. Accordingly on October 18th the famous safe-conduct was issued for him at Spires, whereby Sigismund took him under the protection of the Empire, and called upon all rulers of the parts through which he journeyed to render him the usual assistance in going, staying and returning. The news soon spread throughout Bohemia and Moravia, but even before the safe-conduct was made out the traveller was already well on his way.

Before Hus left Prague many friends had told him to beware of Sigismund and his safe-conduct, for he would certainly deliver him up to his enemies, and a poor Polish cobbler, while shaking him by the hand and warning him that he would never come back,

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said that he must look for his reward to the King of Heaven and not to the King of Hungary. He had often before said that he expected martyrdom and in one of his earliest letters, written to the friends whom he had left behind, he told them that he might never see them again for he was going into the midst of enemies, most of them of his own household, where he would have bishops, masters, princes and clergy all against him. But he trusted in his wise and mighty Saviour even though he should be called upon to suffer temptation, reviling, imprisonment and death. With such forebodings in his heart he wrote a letter to a young follower called Master Martin with an injunction that it should not be opened till he was sure that he was dead. In this he warned him against being fond of finery in clothes, as he himself had once been, and cautioned him to avoid the company of women and especially to be on his guard when they came to him for confession. If he should ever get a cure let him not have a young woman as his cook, and not spend his money in feasting. For himself he lamented that in the days of his own youth before he was ordained he had often wasted his time in playing chess, but for this and countless other faults he commits himself to the Lord. He then begs his friend to accept a grey cloak as a memento, and if he was not satisfied with the colour he might give it away to anyone he liked. He left him also a white one to give to his parish priest, and he bequeathed another fur gown and a schock

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of groschen to a scholar named George because he had served him well.

Hus set out from Prague on October 11th, 1414, accompanied by Wenzel of Duba, Henry of Lacembok, John of Chlum, who went as one of the representatives of Prague University, and his secretary, Peter of Mladenowicz, who kept a full record of the scenes through which Hus now passed, and preserved the great series of letters (many of them addressed to John of Chlum) which cast so priceless a flood of light on the last months of the master's life.

The party consisted of thirty mounted men and two carts, in one of which Hus sat with his books and his chaplain. He was clad in his priest's dress; his head was bare and he wore no bright-coloured hood. At Beraun they were met by the parish priest who took them to a tavern where they drank a big beaker of wine together. As they passed through the towns and villages Hus cried out who he was in a loud voice and posted up notices in Latin and German, giving copies of them to the host when they stayed for the night, or fastening them on the mill wherever there was one. After crossing the Böhmerwald they were well received by the Germans at Neustadt and Weiden. Entering an inn at Sulzbach they found the town officials seated round the stove. Hus made himself known as the man about whom they had probably heard a good deal that was dreadful, but they all had a talk together and parted on the best of terms, in spite of sinister rumours spread

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by a bishop who had preceded them on their route, telling everybody that John Hus was coming chained in a cart, and that they must beware of him for he had a dangerous power of reading men's thoughts. This made the people turn out in crowds everywhere as if there was really something to see, but they invariably took kindly to the travellers and everywhere gave them a ready hearing. Thus they passed on through Hersbruck, stayed a night at Lauf and reached Nürnberg in the morning of October 19th.

The market folks had already reported their approach and the people were all in the streets, curious to see which was Master Hus. The chaplain of St. Laurence' Church wrote to request an interview, and while the strangers were still at breakfast the magistrates sent to ask if they might see Hus privately. But he declined to talk in private. He must speak, he said, in presence of all or none. So they accepted his terms and he talked on till evening. He was confronted by a Carthusian doctor and by the priest of St. Sebald's, but he was able to report that the townspeople were pleased and that he had not made a single enemy. At Nürnberg he heard that Sigismund was on the Rhine, and as he did not wish to travel sixty miles off his road for the sake of the promised safe-conduct, he decided to make straight south for Constance without further delay, though, as events developed, all who had any regard for fair play said that he would have done better to wait at Nürnberg till Sigismund himself had arrived. So they moved on

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through Ravensburg and Biberach (where the people were so struck with the ready tongue of John of Chlum that they thought he must be a doctor in theology), and entered Constance on Saturday, November 3rd, where Hus took up a lodging at the house of a widow named Faith who kept a bakery with the sign of the White Pigeon in St. Paulsgasse, just as you enter the city by the Schnetzthor, and from this lodging he never once ventured out until the day of his arrest.

Thus far he had been entirely unmolested, but he soon found that the Bohemian and Moravian clergy had not only been keen in poisoning men's minds against him as he travelled on the road, but had seen to it that he should be narrowly watched as soon as he reached his journey's end. Chief among these was Michael of Deutschbrod (generally known as Michael de Causis or "Process-Michael" from his appointment as a proctor in heresy cases), parish priest of the church of St. Adalbert in the Tawery in the New Town at Prague, who boasted that he would bear witness against his own father if he were against the Faith, and Stephen Palecz who had before been an intimate friend of Hus, but had violently opposed him since his action on the question of Indulgences. Palecz had made extracts from Hus' book *On the Church*, and with these had approached the Dominicans at Constance as experienced heresy-hunters and paid daily visits to cardinals, archbishops and others high in authority, urging that the writer should be promptly seized and brought to trial.

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On the day after Hus' arrival a process was posted on the cathedral door by Michael de Causis against him as suspect of heresy, to which he replied by putting up a written challenge to any of his opponents to meet him in argument, while Chlum and Lacembok went straightway to the Pope and obtained from him an assurance that in spite of the non-arrival of the safe-conduct nothing should be done by force, and that Hus should be safe from violence in Constance even though he had killed Pope John's own brother. Lacembok then set out to meet Sigismund, urging Hus in the meantime to take no steps in reference to the process till the King should come in, and to keep a good horse ready as he might have to ride out presently himself.

From the day of his arrival Hus had said Mass in Widow Faith's house, at which some of the neighbours attended in spite of an order from the Bishop of Constance calling upon them to desist. On November 6th Hus wrote that he had many powerful enemies at Constance, but that he cared not, for the greater the fight the greater the victory. Already the Pope had shown himself willing for compromise and approaches had been made to get him to submit quietly, but this he took as a sign of fear, looking forward as he did to the chance of publicly defending his position on the arrival of Sigismund. On November 9th the Bishop of Constance accompanied by a papal auditor called upon him with an intimation that the Pope was willing to suspend the interdict and allow him

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to attend any of the churches, provided that he did not appear at the great official Masses. But Hus would hear of no such terms. The goose was not cooked yet and did not mean to be, for goose was not eaten that Martinmas Eve, and he preferred to stay where he was.

The news of this negotiation was received with great indignation by the cardinals. Here was a man excommunicated by the Church living quietly at Constance under the favour of Sigismund and so secure in the affections of his fellow-countrymen that it was becoming positively dangerous to speak against him for fear of fisticuffs and the Bohemian appeal to the stick. Every day he was going through his offices, and it was even believed that he was to be allowed to preach in the cathedral on the following Sunday, and that many persons had been offered a ducat each to come and hear him inveigh against bad priests who were ruining their flocks with their garish glitter and stagey dress, their spurs and saddles and golden bridles, their horses' halters better decked than the church's altars, their groaning platters, bursting larders, brimming presses, crammed pouches, jars of pigment, feasting, drinking, harps, pipes and gitterns, busy only with emptying men's pockets instead of rooting out their sins.

On November 16th Hus wrote to his friends in Bohemia, exhorting them to be prepared for stripes and bonds and even death for the sake of Truth, and to pray that God would grant him wisdom, patience

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and humility, with strength to persevere. And much he would now need these virtues, for this was the last letter he wrote while still at large. Three weeks had elapsed since his arrival in Constance, and attention had been attracted to a certain hay-cart that kept passing in and out of the town. The first time or two the load was covered with a cloth, but at the third journey no covering was used, and a rumour spread that Hus had got away under the cloth before it was removed. This is the statement of Peter of Mladenowicz, who asserts that the rumour was afterwards proved to be altogether untrue. Another account represented that Hus was actually in the cart provided with a flask of wine and a white loaf when his friends Chlum and Lacembok ran and told the burgomaster, and that Lacembok then stopped the cart and charged Hus with having broken his safe-conduct, afterwards taking him to the Apostolic Palace himself for examination.

This story undoubtedly comes to us on the authority of a contemporary, Ulrich Richental, who was in Constance at the time and on this ground might claim to be of equal authority with that of Mladenowicz, though it was not written down till about twenty years after the event. But the two are so absolutely contradictory that both cannot be true at once, and it therefore becomes necessary to choose between them; and apart from the fact that Richental dates the supposed attempt to escape on March 3rd, after Hus had been more than three months in prison, his imputation of

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treachery to Chlum and Lacembok is so entirely inconsistent with their subsequent loyalty to their friend, that I have no hesitation in joining the very large number of modern writers who have altogether rejected the account, which I believe to be merely one of the many attempts to rebut the charge of perfidy in the matter of the safe-conduct, though had it been true, there can be no question that it would have been worked in by every defender of Sigismund and the Council at the time.

On November 28th the town gates were closed, Hus' lodgings were surrounded with armed men, and the burgomaster and two bishops then entered and requested that he would come across and make his statement before the cardinals as they wished to avoid a disturbance in the city. After some time he consented, bade farewell to Widow Faith, mounted a small horse and rode over with them to the palace, a vast crowd estimated at 12,000 persons turning out into the streets to catch a glimpse of the man whom all had so long been talking about. After a short audience the cardinals withdrew and Hus found himself surrounded by a guard and forbidden to return. When they met again after dinner to decide what should be done with him, Stephen Palecz and Michael de Causis urged that he was already formally condemned as a heretic, and exclaimed with delight as they stood by the fire: "Ha! ha! we have got him now and he shall not get away till he has paid the uttermost farthing!" while some, like the Eng-

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lishman Thomas Polton, pressed for his immediate execution out of hand.

That same afternoon John of Chlum had an audience with the Pope, who asked if Hus had a safe-conduct from Sigismund. To which Chlum replied: "Most Holy Father, you know that he has"; but no one asked him to produce it, although he had had it in his possession for more than three weeks. The Pope protested that the seizure was none of his doing. The cardinals had done it and he had only to undertake the custody of the accused as soon as he had been delivered up. Two days later Chlum made a further complaint to the Pope and read the safe-conduct aloud to a number of bishops, knights and nobles.

In the meantime Hus had been removed to the house of one of the cathedral priests, where he remained for eight days until a proper place could be made ready for his detention. Workmen were at once sent to repair and strengthen the prison in the Black Friars' Monastery on the island near the bridge at the outflow of the lake. Bolts, locks and irons were fitted for his reception, six beds were hired for his gaolers, and as there was no fire in the place a stove was afterwards fixed up for the comfort of the latter, the money being all provided from the Papal Registry. To this dismal place Hus was transferred on December 6th, and here he was kept a close prisoner for more than three months, chained in a dark cell, being from time to time examined by some of the keenest theologians in Christendom acting under the authority of the

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Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishops of Lübeck and Civita Castellana, who had been commissioned to report upon his sayings, doings, preachings and writings and his life in general. During these months he was allowed occasional visits from a few of his Bohemian and Polish friends, by which means and through the connivance of his gaolers when bringing and removing his food he was enabled to pass letters secretly in and out, so that he got to know the progress of his case and some of the events that were happening in the outer world. As a consequence of this we still have wonderful first-hand glimpses into his sad prison life, in which he buoyed himself up with a hopeful trust in the God of Truth and urged his friends to constancy.

The cell in which his time was now passed was close to some stagnant water fouled with sewage, and as he had been previously suffering from an internal complaint, this, together with the meagre diet and the want of warmth, brought on a vomit and a fever and for a time they thought that he would die. But the Pope's physicians came and administered clysters and his life was saved. On January 19th he wrote that he had been very ill, but that God had raised him up again, though, as he afterwards grimly said, he would be better still when he was dead, but whether God would deign to take him to Himself or restore him to his friends he knew not—only God's Holy Will be done!—and he begged them to send him a Bible, a little penner, some pens and ink and another shirt.

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Amongst the books that he had brought to Constance was a Bible and a copy of the *Sentences*, but these had been removed and he now applied himself without books to frame replies to the long list of articles charged against him. His friends had urged him not to worry, but he spent whole nights in writing, and during this time he composed several tracts on such subjects as the Body of Christ, Marriage, Sin, Repentance and the Love of God. At other times when he had leisure he would while away the hours writing Latin or Czech verses, and we have still some very structureless rhyming hexameters in which he feels sure that the Lord could bring "the goose" out of prison if He would, as He had before done with Jonah, Daniel, Peter, Susannah and the Three Children. Or in a lighter little poem written to a Bohemian friend, in which he left him a bag and a horse-cloth, he asked him to think of the donor whenever he tasted cheese. At times he had a spell of dreams in which he saw serpents with faces in their tails, but none of them had power to bite him. He dreamed of the Pope's flight before it happened, of the capture of Jerome and of the different prisons to which he would himself be moved, and early in March he had a dream that all the pictures he had placed on the walls of the Bethlehem Chapel were destroyed, but that other painters came and put up better ones and the crowds were delighted and said: "Now let the bishops and priests come and rub these out!" and he laughed so much that it woke him up. He took this to mean

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that the picture of Christ which he had written on the hearts of his people at Bethlehem might be effaced, but that better preachers than he would restore it and he would rise again to feel joy in their labours.

Sigismund in the meantime had arrived and found the town in a ferment over the question of the safe-conduct. As soon as Hus had been seized his friends had sent to lodge a complaint with the King, and when the news was known in Bohemia and Moravia all classes, princes and barons, rich and poor, protested loudly and despatched remonstrances to Constance that the Most Holy Father should have so acted against law and right and the King's letter of protection. As soon as Sigismund heard of the outrage he sent a peremptory message to the Pope and the cardinals that their prisoner must be allowed his liberty, but the mandate was disregarded and on the very Christmas Eve on which the King arrived in Constance John of Chlum had posted a notice on the cathedral doors charging the cardinals with having seized Hus in defiance of the safe-conduct—a thing which they would not have dared to do had Sigismund been near at hand; and now that he was coming any one could see that his promised protection was being laughed at and treated with contempt. On New Year's Day a deputation from the Council met the King in the Rathhaus, where Cardinal D'Ailli represented that it was not safe for any one to say a word against Hus for fear of violence, to which Sigismund graciously replied that the question of Hus and all

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such minor matters must not be allowed to interfere with the larger question of Church reform. But this shifting did not lay the ghost, for on January 17th the envoys from Cologne reported that on that very day a violent disturbance had arisen about the safe-conduct, and on January 19th Hus begged his friends to speak again to Sigismund, at whose express wish he had come to Constance under a promise that he should return again in safety to his own land. He urged them therefore now to interfere and secure his release from prison that he might make his defence in public, though he had reason to think that this favour would cost him 2,000 ducats, as the commissioners affected to believe that he had 70,000 florins stowed away somewhere in a gown.

All through the month of January the Bohemian and Moravian lords had pressed Sigismund to have Hus released, or his reputation would be seriously endangered, and he so far countenanced their petition as to promise that the accused should certainly be heard after the more pressing question of union had been got out of the way, and if he failed to submit to the Council he would see that he was sent back in safety to Bohemia to be judged by King Wenzel and the clergy there. But though it was generally known that he would gladly have helped the captive and had actually uttered threats about smashing in the prison doors, and though as he afterwards said he was heart-broken about the case and so mad that he frequently left the meetings at which it was discussed in a rage,

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and never ceased to regret that Hus had been so foolish as to travel to Constance before he himself got there, for if he had waited things might have gone very differently, yet he found the opposition on all hands too strong for him. The nations acting under the lead of Gerson warned him that error unresisted was error approved; the theologians reasoned from the canon law that he had overstepped his powers in granting protection to a heretic at all, that he had no right to put himself above God and that therefore the safe-conduct could not be valid; all pious churchmen prayed that he might not give way to the "subtleties and lies" of the Wycliffists; while Ferdinand, King of Aragon, wrote expressing his amazement that Hus was still allowed to live. He quoted from the Old and New Testament and argued that there *could* be no breach of faith with a man who had himself broken faith with God. No matter what safe-conduct had been granted to him, "Don't let him have a public hearing," he wrote, "but kill him straight off, for God has found him guilty!" So Sigismund lent an ear first to one side and then to the other, and though he did sometimes pretend to be influenced so far as to intercede for the prisoner, yet he ended by doing nothing at all for fear the Council might break up.

Early in March the hopes of Hus' friends went up on the arrival of the Bishop of Nazareth, who had certified him free from heresy as inquisitor at Prague in the previous year, and had now come on behalf of Wenzel and his Queen to secure his release if possible.

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As soon as the bishop arrived he was pressed to give his evidence, but he sought to be excused. Then they brought him before Cardinal D'Ailli as the leader in matters affecting the Faith, who got from him an admission that Wenzel gave no support to Wycliffry but had only sent Hus to Constance in order to purge Bohemia from infamy. The statement gave the keenest satisfaction to the clericals. For though there was nothing new in it, yet the fact that Wenzel had so far sent no representatives to the Council left him and his Queen under a heavy cloud of suspicion, and very few ventured to speak a good word for him. And so from the orthodox point of view the emissary of Satan was transformed into an Angel of Light, and "Bishop With-the-Devil," as he was called from having ate and supped with Hus before giving him his certificate, had to slip away home in disguise in order to escape from the rage of the baffled Hussites.

During these weeks of vacillation Hus had been buoyed up by the expectation of a coming hearing, and he begged that when his statement had been heard he might not be put back into prison again. But all these hopes were soon dashed. For though many visited him to question and examine him, yet the King sent him no word of assurance; he began to see that he might be sentenced before any sign of protection was uttered on his behalf, and he could only pray that God would put it into the heart of Sigismund to range himself and the princes on the side of Truth. Even the promise that he should be

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removed to a less noisome prison appears to have been forgotten. For though there are some contradictory statements as to a transfer to the Grey Friars on January 8th or March 3rd, yet it is clear, from the strict precautions that were afterwards taken at his actual removal when it did come, that he must have remained at the Black Friars till after the flight of Pope John. Visit after visit was made to him in his prison by experts in theology, and fifty or sixty doctors in all are said to have tried to convince him, some of them going so far as to advise him to say that he had only one eye if the Council wished him to say so. At the end of January, 1415, one of these experts announced that Hus' replies to the charges laid against him had been submitted to Cardinal D'Ailli who deputed several masters to report upon them. These pressed the prisoner with all courtesy to allow his case to be argued for him by twelve selected theologians, but he answered that he would commit his cause to none but God, and that he had chosen the Lord Jesus as his Advocate and Protector who would one day be their Judge.

In the panic that followed on the flight of the Pope some of Hus' guards fled from the city, those who remained were not to be relied upon, and there was a a fear lest in the prevailing confusion he should be rescued by his friends. But the keys of the prison were promptly handed over to Sigismund, who accepted the responsibility for his custody and made no effort for his release. On March 24th he wrote begging

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the Bohemian lords if they loved their unhappy goose to approach Sigismund and ask him either to release him or send some of his own men to guard him where he was. So long as the Pope had remained in Constance payments varying from ten to twelve florins per week were regularly made by his registrar for meat and drink for Hus and his gaolers, the latest amount being entered on March 5th. But when the Pope and the gaolers fled the friars undertook no responsibility on Hus' behalf, and he was left entirely without food and feared that he might be removed at any time.

And, indeed, on that very night (March 24th) a boat was brought round to the Black Friars into which he was placed in his chains. He was then rowed round in the darkness to the Unter See under a guard of 170 armed men and lodged in the Bishop of Constance' castle at Gottlieben. Here he was shut up in a room in one of the towers, in which he was allowed to walk about with his chains on, though at night he was handcuffed and fastened to the wall. At Gottlieben he was even more isolated than before, and he cried out in the bitterness of his despair that he would rather be burned alive than stealthily stifled in a cell where all would forget him as out of sight and out of mind. He had been spitting blood and his old complaint had again been plaguing him, but he took this as a sign of God's love for him, and he still had hopes that God who had brought back Lazarus and Jonah from the dead would yet deliver

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him out of his enemies' hands, and in the meantime he would cleave to the Truth with the help of the saints—even unto death.

On April 6th the Council appointed Cardinals D'Ailli and Fillastre, together with several doctors of theology and canon law, to inquire into his case, the representative of the English being William Gorach or Grach, who, I believe, was Principal of Hart Hall at Oxford in 1425 and Vice-Chancellor of this university in 1439. Further appointments followed on April 17th, and the commissioners were wishful to proceed to a definite sentence forthwith, but the absence of the Pope presented a technical difficulty and D'Ailli was shy of granting a process on the ground that the question was one for the lawyers, and so the deadlock continued in a cloud of words.

But if Hus was for the moment shelved, yet a distinct step was taken when the Council held its eighth session on the 4th of May, to pronounce upon the opinions of John Wycliffe. The matter had been in the hands of experts during the previous winter, but little progress had been made owing to the passionate disputes that had raged round the greater battle of voting by heads or nations. In February, 1415, the question had come up again and a resolution was drafted for acceptance, but it was again postponed till the difficulty as to the Pope's cession should be settled. The Council now formally condemned over again Wycliffe's 45 and 260 heretical articles, and decreed that his bones should be exhumed and cast

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out, provided that they could be properly identified and separated from those of Christian men buried near. Every one agreed with perfect readiness, the spokesman for the English nation being Abbot Spofforth of York.

On May 13th some Bohemian and Polish nobles presented a strong remonstrance to the nations in which they set forth that Hus had come to Constance under safe-conduct from the King, but that before either the King himself or the envoys of any kings, princes or universities had arrived he had been seized and imprisoned, and no opportunity had yet been given him to defend himself; that he had been already kept for months in chains and with insufficient food; that Sigismund had pressed very urgently that he might be allowed to defend his cause in public, but so far without effect; that they themselves were being severely taken to task by their own people for remissness in not interfering long ago, and that the blame for any disturbances that might arise would probably fall on their shoulders. And they further complained that stories were afloat to the effect that in their country cobblers were administering the sacraments and hearing confessions, while the consecrated wine was being carried in bottles to private houses to be drunk in the evening at disorderly suppers. Some of the audience were for postponing any reply, but the Bishop of Leitomischl, John of Bucka, the Man of Iron, who had taken up not only the shield but the arms of Faith, insisted that the matter should be

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settled without delay, for he was certain that the rumours referred to were true. He knew for a fact that a woman had snatched the Host from the hands of a priest and communicated herself, saying that a good layman was better able to consecrate and absolve than a bad priest, and though he had as yet no proof that cobblers heard confessions, still he felt sure that they would soon if these practices were not promptly stopped. So on May 16th a reply was formulated in the name of the Council that Hus had no right to rely upon the safe-conduct, seeing that it had not reached him as they said till he had been a fortnight in prison. They expressed amazement at the statement that Hus had not been heard. He *had* been heard through his representatives at Rome four years before, and been condemned and excommunicated, and yet had dared to come there and wanted to preach. To this John of Chlum replied with a flat denial, which was read out by Mladenowicz in the Refectory of the Grey Friars. The safe-conduct he said was received long before Hus was seized and they had produced it two days later. It was no answer to say that he had been already judged a heretic, for the Council of Pisa had pronounced both Gregory and Benedict to be heretics and yet their case was being generously considered, and for their own countryman the Bohemians now asked no more and would be satisfied with nothing less.

And indeed it was getting daily more and more evident to all that this brutal treatment of the

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prisoner was bringing a storm of indignation about Sigismund's own ears. On May 12th 250 Bohemian and Moravian nobles had met at Prague and affixed their seals to a warning memorandum addressed to their future sovereign, calling upon him to use his power, as he easily could do, to protect Hus from further imprisonment, grant him a public hearing and send him back to Bohemia as he had promised. But before this remonstrance could be received the public hearing was over and the victim had been condemned.

On Whitsunday, May 19th, Hus was visited in his prison by D'Ailli and eight deputies from the nations, and it was believed that he would be judged on the following Wednesday. Soon afterwards he received an intimation that the charges against him would be condensed, and that he would soon be publicly heard in his own defence. For months he had been longing to reply to the "bagful of lies" that Gerson and the Parisians had been bringing against him, and he now expressed his delight that all Christendom would hear his latest words. In the beginning of June he was brought in chains from Gottlieben and lodged in a tower adjoining the Grey Friars at Constance, and on June 5th a vast gathering of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, abbots and nearly all the theologians who were at the Council assembled in the Grey Friars' refectory, and the evidence of witnesses was read over, together with several extracts from Hus' book *On the Church*. The witnesses had deposed to having

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heard him say, either in preaching in the Bethlehem Chapel or speaking in private houses, or having heard others say that they had heard him say:—that the material bread remained after consecration though God was in the bread, like a man in a coat or a soul in a body; that if the consecrating priest was in a state of grace the bread became Christ's Body, but that if the priest was bound in mortal sin nothing at all happened to the bread and the priest had no power to release the penitent; that St. Gregory's words were to be treated as you would treat the poetry of a troubadour; that many of the clergy were rampant bulls; that Wycliffe was a good Christian and a Catholic, and that he would not desert his teachings for the Bethlehem Chapel full of gold. They asserted also that he had made bad blood between the Bohemians and the Germans by saying that the former were worse off than snakes or dogs, for dogs would fight if any one stole the straw on which they lay, while his countrymen let the Germans take all their good things and were dumb, not daring to bark; that he had called Boniface IX. a heretic, and maintained that men could be saved without any Pope and that no one could be excommunicated except by God Himself, especially if it was for refusing to pay up money. On the strength of these statements, which had really all been threshed out in Prague the year before and declared by the inquisitor to be insufficient to support a charge of heresy, they were preparing to proceed to judge him

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unheard, when some of his friends hurried off to Sigismund and secured his intervention in so far that matters were not allowed to be so summarily settled. Hus was accordingly brought in and called upon to answer to the depositions *seriatim*. But when his book upon the Church was mentioned they cried out: "Burn it!" if he attempted an explanation he was met with mocking shouts of, "Stop your sophistry and say Yes or No!" and when he would not answer they said: "Now you are silent—that means consent". Then the sitting was adjourned for two days, and as he passed out he smiled and told his friends not to be afraid, and they watched him mount his prison stairs stretching out one hand as if in the act of blessing.

Back in his cell again he wrote them a hopeful letter, for God had given him a stout heart, though all but two of the priests present had been against him. He had certainly expected to find more self-control and dignity in the meeting, but he still looked forward to his second hearing, when those who now shouted would be put to silence.

The second hearing was fixed for June 7th, and on that day the Grey Friars' Monastery was surrounded by the town guard armed with swords, crossbows, spears and axes. The members assembled at an early hour, and while the Mass was proceeding the sun was eclipsed and a panic fell on all, the friends of Hus feeling that the sun of justice was darkened in the hearts of his judges who were thirsting for his death. At eight o'clock the accused was brought

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into the refectory and soon afterwards Sigismund entered with Chlum, Duba and Mladenowicz, and listened to a long tangle of scholastic subtleties as the heretic was questioned by Cardinal D'Ailli, Master Stokes and Bishop Hallum. Then Zabarella asked how he could get over the evidence of all these witnesses that had been brought against him; but he answered that it did him no harm so long as God and his own conscience witnessed on his side. "But," said D'Ailli, "we cannot go by your conscience when we have such evidence against you as that of Gerson, the greatest doctor in all Christendom;" and when they taxed him with saying that he would like his soul to be with Wycliffe's, and he replied that he had only expressed a *wish*, for he did not know where Wycliffe's soul really was, there was much wagging of heads and a loud outburst of scornful laughter, which was repeated when they had charged him with appealing to Christ without first getting permission and he told them that he knew of no fairer or more effectual appeal. Then Sigismund commanded silence, and D'Ailli took the accused man over, testifying that when he was examined at the Apostolic Palace he had said that he came to Constance of his own accord and that otherwise neither Wenzel nor Sigismund could have made him come. To which Hus replied that it was perfectly correct, for there were many nobles in Bohemia who would have let him stay in their castles, and nobody could have forced him out. "Such effrontery!" cried the cardinal, his

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face reddening with anger; upon which Chlum stood up before the court and said: "It is quite true. I am myself only a poor knight in my own country, but I would have kept him for years whoever said me nay, and there are numbers of great nobles in Bohemia who would have done the same —even in defiance of two Kings."

Throughout the long seven months of his imprisonment Hus had never lost hope that Sigismund would after all stand up for him. He had often begged that he might see his protector if only for once, and that he might be placed near him when he made his defence, while on the very day before he came up for his second audience he had expressed a hope that Sigismund might be present to hear with his own ears the words that the Saviour would put into his mouth. And now at length the King spoke out. He had heard it said that he had first granted the safe-conduct fifteen days after Hus had been imprisoned, but he was prepared to prove that he had issued it before he left Prague with orders that none should injure him while on his way, and that he should have a public hearing when he arrived, though there were some who denied that he had any right even to promise so much as that in the case of a man suspected of heresy. Be that however as it might, the accused had certainly had his promised hearing, and he advised him now to submit to his judges, for if he did not the Council would know how to deal with him. For his own part he would have nothing to

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do with protecting a heretic, though not so many months before he had given a written assurance to Pope Gregory that if the Council should pronounce him or any of his followers to be heretics he would protect them and guarantee their safe return. "But now," said Sigismund, "so long as one heretic remains I am ready to light the fire myself, and burn him with my own hand." "I thank your majesty," said Hus, "for the safe-conduct that you have deigned to grant me, but I came here of my own free will to learn in what respect I have gone astray, and humbly to accept correction." Whereupon it was agreed that he should have a brief summary in writing of the charges that he had to reply to; the sitting closed and Hus was put back in his cell.

On the next day, Saturday, June 8th, the refectory of the Grey Friars was again crowded. King Sigismund presided, and Hus was brought in pale and worn, for he had passed a sleepless night, his teeth chattered and his head ached, and another fever seemed to have taken hold of him. He was first called upon to own to the correctness of certain extracts from his books, and when these did not exactly correspond D'Ailli read out from the originals to show that the text was even more dangerous than the extracts. Here and there the audience broke in with mocking laughter, and when they came to a point in which Hus was charged with saying that no heretic ought to be punished with death, but with spiritual censures only, and he quoted the text: "He

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that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin," the whole room echoed with vociferous shouting.

At this part of the examination King Sigismund stood talking with Duke Louis of Bavaria at one of the windows, and just as he said that Hus was the greatest of heretics Hus was defending his statement that a Pope in mortal sin was no Pope at all by the example of Samuel, who declared Saul to be no longer king because he had spared Agag. Thereupon some one shouted out: "Tell the King that he is attacking *him* now!" Sigismund then turned to listen and said sententiously: "John Hus, no man living is without sin!" and then D'Ailli and Palecz argued that neither Pope nor King could be deposed, for their offices were too sacred. "Then why have you just deposed a Pope?" said Hus; "and yet Christ has not ceased to guide the Church though she has no head now, and may not have for two years or more." To which Sigismund replied that John XXIII. was still a real Pope, though he had been deprived of his office for his notorious evil-doing. Then followed shouts and tumult, and Sigismund called upon him to submit to the Council's grace and the sooner the better. But he only answered: "I stand before the bar of God who will judge both you and me justly according to our deserts". The Archbishop of Riga then took him into his charge, and as he passed out between files of armed men John of Chlum saluted him and he was greatly touched that he had still one friend who was not ashamed to reach out a

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lonely hand to the poor chained heretic, whom all others howled at, rejected and despised.

When the sad procession had disappeared from the hall Sigismund proceeded to address the Court. He told them that it was evident that a hundredth part of the charges that had been proved would be sufficient to ensure a condemnation, that it would not do to accept an offer of submission, for Hus would then go back to his own land and scatter more errors of which the last would be worse than the first. Let him then not return, but let them write to the Kings of Bohemia and Poland that the bishops should punish all who held these errors and have them plucked up root and branch. "When I was a boy," he went on to say, "I remember the first start of this sect and see what it is now! But we shall make an end of the master in a single day. I shall then have to go away; but when I get back we will take up with that other man—his pupil—what's his name?" and they called out, "Jerome!" "Yes, Jerome," said Sigismund, and they all broke up in delight, Michael de Causis saying to the gaolers: "Now, by God's grace, we shall soon burn this heretic who has cost me so many florins," for 3,000 florins had already been supplied by the orthodox in Bohemia to have the case carried even so far.

And dearly indeed did they pay for getting their cake thus fired. For at the next session of the Council, held on June 15th, was passed the Article of the Faith which deluged Bohemia with blood.

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Stirred by the preaching of some of Hus' followers in Prague, the people there were passionately claiming the right to partake of the consecrated wine and not to be restricted to communion in the bread alone, and one of these bold preachers who had made his way to Constance had been seized and pronounced to be even worse than Hus himself. Flushed with their progress against heresy, the Council now canonically declared that though it was true that Christ had originally instituted the Eucharist *after* supper, and given both the bread and wine to all at table alike, yet the wine must not now be drunk by any layman and the bread must only be received fasting, because this had been an established custom and that to say otherwise was heresy. Upon both these points the Council was unanimous, the *placet* on behalf of the English nation being pronounced by Bishop Ragget of Cork.

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LECTURE VI.

JOHN HUS.—DEATH.

JOHN HUS was now standing in his chains upon the very verge of life and waiting hourly to be burnt. Unlike so many other martyrs who have passed to their death in obscurity or yielded at the last for love of dear life, the facts of his last days are clearly known to us either from the Council records or from his own letters, in which he prayed that God who had suffered death and shame and spitting for him would give him of His spirit to stand for Truth although his flesh was weak. He had learnt not to put his trust in princes, and though he thanked Sigismund for any good that he had done him, he now knew that his word savoured not of Truth, for he had condemned him even before his enemies had spoken, and he could no more trust his promise of another hearing than he could his safe-conduct. No friends were now admitted to see him, not even the gaolers' wives being allowed within the prison walls. He was approached however in his cell by many deputations from the Council who tried to coax or threaten him into submission. But he stood out now as he had done before, praying that God would keep him con-

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stant even unto death. Once he received a separate visit from his former friend Stephen Palecz, when with tears in his eyes Hus begged pardon for having called him a forger, and Palecz wept to find that his pleading was of no avail. A form of recantation was submitted to him by a friendly hand, but he answered: Why should he, the priest of the New Law, go back from Truth and sin against God for fear of the death-pain which was but for a moment? and when they urged that the sin would not be his, but theirs who pressed this recantation upon him, he replied that he would rather have a millstone hung round his neck and be cast into the deep sea than give offence to those to whom he had once preached the Truth.

On June 10th he wrote what he believed would be his last message to the scriveners, doctors, tailors, cobblers and all other Bethlehemite friends of Truth in Prague. In this he begged them—rich and poor alike—to love that Divine Truth that he had preached to them, to pray to God to forgive him if there had been aught amiss in his words or deeds, to follow and respect those priests who lived an honest life, but beware of wicked priests as they would of ravening wolves; to help the poor and govern justly; citizens to be upright in trade; workers to be trusty in their craft; servants to be loyal; masters to teach their pupils to God's honour and the profit of the town, and students to study for the common good of all. Especially he commended to them his few faith-

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ful friends, Chlum, Duba and other lords of Bohemia, Moravia and Poland, who had been to him as angels sent from God and had stood by him when the whole Council had shouted him down, and to pray for those of his countrymen who had been his bitterest enemies, for Sigismund and for Wenzel and his Queen, that God would grant them His favour both here and in eternal bliss hereafter. How good God had been to him they would only know when they should meet again in Him. Of Jerome, his dear comrade, he could hear nothing except that he was in a cruel prison, expecting death for the Faith that he had always stoutly upheld, and with his last words he begged them to guard their sacred shrine of Bethlehem though he knew that God would Himself shield it against Satan's rage and prosper it through other and worthier hands than his.

His last remaining letters, written a very few days before his martyrdom, show him praying for a brave heart and a ready spirit, that he might face death with joy and patience, firmly trusting that Jesus whom he had followed would grant him the Crown of Life. They had ordered his books to be burnt, but he called upon his friends in Prague not to give them up, for the Council would not travel from Constance to Bohemia, and before they could wrench all his books away many of its members would be dead or scattered over the world, like the storks and the butterflies, and when the winter came they would have time to reflect on their summer's work which would last no longer

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than a spider's web. For he trusted that God would raise up others after him stronger than he, who would expose the wickedness and simony that he knew were everywhere to be found.

Even as late as June 26th, when he thought he would be taken out and burnt the next day, he had not given up hope that God would intervene to save him. Still the death-summons did not come and he believed that God was giving him more time to reflect on the tortures that His martyred saints had endured of old. On June 27th he wrote two farewell letters, one to his old university at Prague, assuring them that he had not retracted one item of his faith, and the other to his constant friends, Chlum and Duba, in which he charged them to trust no more in princes, for Sigismund (God pardon him!) had done all by craft, but in that God who never deceives a man with a safe-conduct. His very latest letters of all were written on June 29th, and in these the Council is still the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse, a gathering of greedy, proud and impious men, but he welcomes the coming torment as a cleansing of his sin and a passage to a crown of eternal glory and inexpressible joy. He urges his Bohemian friends to see to it that good priests shall not be put down, that all shall stand firm in God's truth, and having nothing else that he could call his own, he leaves his furred cloak to Peter Mladenowicz to keep in memory of him.

But the end was evidently not far off. Sigismund had declared that he must have the matter done with

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before starting on his journey, and on the 1st of July the prisoner was visited by the Archbishops of Riga and Ragusa, who once more vainly tried to extract a recantation, and on July 5th, which was to be the last day of his life, he was again interrogated by Cardinals D'Ailli and Zabarella, the Patriarch of Antioch and five bishops, including Bubwith and Hallum, but he answered that he would rather be burnt a thousand times than give offence to those whom he had taught. A confessor had been already sent to him and he had made his last shrift, but in the evening of the same day Sigismund made a final effort to save him. He sent to him Duke Louis of Bavaria, accompanied by his staunch friends Chlum, Duba and Lacembok, to see if a last trying interview would break down his resolution—but in vain.

At six o'clock in the morning of Saturday, July 6th, Hus was taken from his prison to the cathedral where he was kept waiting at the door until Mass was over. He was then brought in and placed in the middle of the church. Beside him was a table on which they had placed a set of sacramental vestments, and after he had kneeled for a short time in prayer, he was told to mount and stand upon it in full view of Sigismund and the whole assembled Council. Then the Cardinal of S. Pudenziana preached a "short, compendious and laudable" sermon, in which he dwelt on Sigismund's duty in destroying the "body of sin" and worked up the old metaphors about the rotten flesh and the scabbed sheep and the little spark that spreads into a

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big flame. The worse the poison, the swifter should be the cautery, and what more holy task or more pleasing to God than to root out heresy, which is robbing churches, crushing cities and slaying Christian men? God help the ship that is being run on rocks by pirates! Here was the glorious triumph, the eternal crown reserved for Sigismund, to whom God had given the wisdom of Divine Truth, that he might smite this obstinate heretic with the imperial sword and receive the praise of babes and sucklings and the blessing of Jesus Christ for ever.

Four representatives of the nations, of whom the Bishop of Cork was one, then mounted the rostrum and read out the sentence of the Council, after first warning the assembly that any noise or clapping of hands or stamping of feet would be punished with excommunication and two months' imprisonment. It was then declared that certain articles, which had been preached by Hus in Bohemia and elsewhere, were heretical and that the books containing them must be burnt. Some of these articles were then read out, and the rest were taken as read. They contain the old familiar tangle about accident without subject, future for present, entities, liberty and necessity, and all the fine-spun cobwebs of Wycliffry, that no wit of man has ever been able to grasp either then or since, besides the downright attacks upon tithes, endowments, priests in mortal sin, and the Pope as Antichrist.

When the first of the charges was read out, Hus begged leave to speak, but the beadles were ordered

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to silence him, and at the close he was formally declared to be a heretic and subjected to public degradation from the priesthood. For this purpose they robed him in an alb, stole and chasuble, put a chalice in his hand and then solemnly removed it and stripped off the vestments one by one in presence of the whole assembly. The degradation was performed by six bishops including the Bishop of Bangor; but Hus told them, with a sly look towards Sigismund, that he would rather it had been done by some of Pilate's knights. Before they began to strip him, he had cried out in a loud voice that he had three reasons for refusing to recant. He feared to offend God, to perjure himself, and to harm the people to whom he had preached, and when they came to spoil his tonsure, and paused to discuss whether they should use a razor or have it all cut off with a clip like a sorcerer's, he turned to Sigismund and said: "These bishops cannot agree even over such a blasphemy as this!" They next committed his soul to the Devil, placed on his head a tall crown of white paper with three black, clawing demons and the word "Heresiarch" painted on it, and the work of the Church was done. Sigismund then turned to Duke Louis of Bavaria, as the sword-bearer, saying, "Go and take him!" and the duke handed him over to the town catchpolls, who took off his black cloth gown and jacket, stripped him of his shoes and stockings, and removed his girdle with two knives hanging in a sheath and a leathern satchel in which he kept his money.

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It was now nearly eleven o'clock and almost the whole city was in the streets as the victim passed out from the church, unbound and barefoot, and walked to the place of torment with a warder on either side, and followed by Duke Louis, who rode with an escort of 1,000 (or according to another account 3,000) armed men. In the adjoining churchyard the crowd was watching the burning of his books, and he told them not to believe the stories about errors contained in them. Many weeping friends were posted at the city gate, but the vast throng that followed was not allowed to pass the drawbridge lest it should break beneath their weight. The group of tipstaffs then led him on past some sheep-cotes to the marshy ground which lay beyond the western wall till they came to the fields stretching along the south side of the Zürich road, a little beyond the spot where the Capuchin monastery afterwards stood. This was the public execution-ground known as the Devil's Place and formed a part of the open space called Paradise from the fertility of the surrounding gardens. Here three carts piled with straw and faggots were awaiting them, and when they halted at the spot the doomed man shed tears, then kneeled for a while and prayed. As he bowed his head the paper crown fell off and the bystanders saw him smile when some one cried out to put it on again the wrong way up. Then the executioner tied his hands behind his back and fastened him to an upright stake which had been driven into the ground just over the spot where the

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body of a worn-out old mule belonging to one of the cardinals had been lately buried.

At first they placed the victim with his face towards the East, but the crowd shouted to have him turned the other way. This done they laid two faggots beneath his feet, wound a sooty pot-hook chain about his neck, cleared a wide ring around him and paused for one last effort while the chronicler Ulrich Richental called a priest who offered to confess him, but he only said: "There is no need. I have no mortal sin." Then Duke Louis approached to see if he would recant at the last moment, to which he answered: "God is my witness that I have but preached and written to restrain men from sin, and in the truth of that Gospel I will gladly die". Thereupon he would have addressed the crowd in German but the duke gave the word to stop him, and while they piled the straw and wood about him up to the chin and poured pitch upon it he sang: "Have pity on me, Christ, Thou Son of the Living God!" When the fire was lit he shrieked and writhed, and as the wind blew the flames in his face they saw him move his lips and bow his head, and ere his friends could say three hurried Paternosters he "died in the Lord".

As the flames flickered down, the beadles knocked over the stake with the charred body still dangling by the neck, heaped on more wood, poked up the bones with sticks, broke in the skull, ran a sharp stake through the heart and set the whole ablaze again amidst a sickening smell from the carcase of the buried

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mule, as the ground cracked and lifted under the scorching heat. Duke Louis then told them to throw in the shoes and jacket which would otherwise have been the executioner's perquisite, lest the Bohemians should get possession of them and keep them as relics, and when the second fire had died out the jumbled embers were thrown into a barrow together with some shovelfuls of earth and tipped into the Rhine.

So they spitted and roasted the poor goose, and the guests for whom they served him up rejoiced with what they believed to be a lasting joy. But the bird was only burnt, not crushed. The Rhine was too small to quench his ashes and his death-note swelled on from a harsh, homely cackle till it rose to the wild music of a white swan which forced both Church and world to listen lief or loth, and one of Sigismund's successors was constrained to say that they had done a good man wrong. Our countryman, Abbot Spofforth, was certainly present on the ground, but beyond the fact that he often used to speak of it on his return to England we have no record of what he thought or said. To the few devoted friends who watched the frightful scene the memory of "the martyr" grew daily brighter as of the Friend of God, the Victor Champion of Gospel Truth, the Hercules who had overcome the world, the comrade who had fought a hero's fight for Jesus' cause, the leader who had breathed the virtues of the saints and taught his fellows how to die, the master who had mounted like Elijah in the flames and whose soul the Lord had

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joined with the ranks of Heaven crowned with an everlasting crown. But though there were here and there some signs of compassion in the crowd, yet there is little evidence of any real protest from those who saw him march to the fire like one who is walking to a feast. His purity of life extorted praise from those to whom his creed was an abomination, but his claim that death was not Christ's punishment for heresy found no echo there at all. It is certain that no twinge of remorse ever reached the official clerical mind, and when visitors to the cathedral at Constance are shown the tomb of an English bishop who is said to have died of grief over the fate of Hus they may be sure that it was really something quite different that brought that bishop to his end. Even the saintly Gerson, the "most Christian doctor," whose praise was then and is now on everybody's lips, and who had urged that heresy must be stamped out with fire and sword, now pronounced Hus' death to be fortunate and fruitful; and three weeks after the brutal inhumanities of July 6th the Council formally recorded its belief that nothing could have been more pleasing to God, or more acceptable to all Christian people. To them Hus and Jerome were the vilest, the wickedest and the most dangerous of men, and the sight that Constance had just witnessed was nothing but a riddance of depravity. As to Hus, he was a dragon to be slain, a wicked turncoat, a brazen, lying scoundrel, who was making fools of his countrymen, flinging poison into the wells of God's know-

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ledge and bringing the whole world into doubt and jeopardy. But the good Council had found him out and given him the punishment he so richly deserved, not only in this big blazing heat, but in the flames of Hell for evermore. To the average citizen who had heard of plundered churches and street rioting in Prague, and had been told that Hus had called himself the Fourth Person in the Trinity, and had started a new Lord's Prayer and a new Faith, in which people were to have all their wives in common, the man seemed a stupid, babbling fool, a viper who had been suffered to live too long and whom God had now quite properly removed. All felt satisfied that the devils had got him with Dives in Hell, and the man in the street was most impressed with the filthy stench from the carcase of the rotting mule.

Time did not clear the air nor mellow the judgment, and since the day on which Hus died a turbid stream of controversy has never ceased to flow around the drama of his dreadful fate. It was not till 100 years later that Martin Luther hit upon a volume of his sermons in the library at Erfurt, and found out that he and his fellows had really all along been Hussites though they had never known it, and that their gospel had been purchased for them by Hus and Jerome with their blood. Hence he was led on to proclaim that, if Hus was a heretic, there was no true Christian on the face of this earth, and that in burning him the Council had publicly condemned the Gospel of Christ. From that day forth the story

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of Constance was again in everybody's mouth and became the battle-ground of the fiercest theological rancour. Luther was answered by Dobneck, who, without wishing to show any personal ill-feeling towards a man who had been a century dead, nevertheless produced a number of reasons for maintaining that Hus was a slippery snake, worse than any Turk, Jew, Tartar, Sodomite or other pagan, with special inclusion of Cain, Herod, Thyestes, the Læstrygonians, Cyclops and some peculiarly depraved types of Persians who were steeped in incest and parricide.

Thus was built up throughout Europe a bulky, barren bibliography of alternate encomium and abuse, and it took nearly 200 years more before attention was forced to the repulsive fact that the Church had dealt leniently with an orthodox Pope of scandalous life, and hardened herself into savage cruelty towards a misbeliever whose moral life was beyond all shadow of reproach. Nor is the controversy dead yet, for while this present century has produced many Catholic writers who have recognised that no impostor could have died as Hus died, yet with all their admiration for his courage, he is still to them nothing but a martyr to the cause of disobedience and lies. Even Art has not escaped the taint, and the flames of Constance still import the storm of passion into a domain that should be sacred to neutrality.

But from the heat of controversy two points have emerged which have been very differently dealt with, according to the religious standpoint of the critic, and

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each of these may well deserve a short examination here.

It has become evident from a closer study of Hus' tracts and letters that though he was confessedly troublesome on the question of Indulgences and the Lay Cup, upon which there was still much diversity of opinion, even the University of Oxford protesting against the former as making men prone to sin and slow to repent, yet on such essentials of Catholic doctrine as Confession, Absolution, the Invocation of Saints, Purgatory and the Mass Hus and Luther were poles asunder. In the sixteenth century the Hussite regarded the Lutheran as a heretic, and time after time in the lengthy controversy has Catholic twitted Evangelical with inconsistency in claiming Hus as a Protestant. But after all this is a question more of theology than of history and we may safely accord to Hus the oft-repeated title of a "Reformer before the Reformation".

But if doubts have arisen even in the minds of Roman Catholics as to whether Hus was not really sound in essential doctrine, as he himself always maintained that he was, it is of interest to inquire why he was officially condemned.

To this question various answers have been supplied, all of which were grouped under three main heads by a Church historian in the early part of the eighteenth century, *viz.*:—

1. Because he had helped to drive the Germans from the university at Prague.

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This point has been much laboured by some modern writers, but it receives little countenance from a perusal of the documents of the time. Certainly his most vehement opponents were not Germans but Bohemians and English, and there is no evidence that the decision of the Council was influenced by national pique at all.

2. Because he showed up the vices of the clergy and called for a general reform.

But in this he was only doing what scores of zealous preachers did, who laid a very pungent finger on the sore to the complete satisfaction of most laymen, and all parties were agreed that if the Council was to do any good it must be through the channel of Church reform.

3. Because he was a Realist in philosophy while his antagonists, Gerson, D'Ailli and many of the German and Prague doctors, were Nominalists.

But though these abstract questions certainly stirred the usual amount of school-hate, which doubtless played some part in securing his condemnation, yet the charge-sheet against every heretic was always overloaded with many such minor issues, while the pressure was mainly concentrated on a few. In the case of Hus they picked out thirty-nine extracts from his writings, but metaphysics and academic subtleties did not fill the forefront of the attack.

Further it is said that Hus was politically dangerous in Bohemia.

But had the question been mainly one of Bohemian

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politics it could not have aroused the solid interest of all the nations at Constance, nor moved the whole College of Cardinals and stirred the representatives of every section of the Universal Western Church.

And so we come to the final reason assigned, *viz.*, that Hus resisted the discipline of the Church, and could not therefore with prudence be allowed to live. And herein, as I believe, lies the kernel of the whole matter. The teachings of Wycliffe were directed to bring both Church and Pope into contempt, and the goose's song was naught but Wycliffry. Hus like Oldcastle had attempted to carry out Wycliffry into practice and both were wrecked in matching themselves against the strong man in possession. A perusal of the official records can lead us to no other conclusion. While waiting his trial Hus was spoken of as "imprisoned on account of the errors of John Wycliffe"; when the day for his hearing drew near he was told that he would be charged with:—

(*a*) Obstructing the preaching of the crusade against Ladislas;

(*b*) Continuing to officiate as a priest after sentence of excommunication had been passed upon him;

(*c*) Appealing from the Pope to God;

and when they degraded him from the priesthood, it was because he was "scandalous, seditious and dangerous to the Church of God".

All this is only Wycliffry in action, and when the Council had condemned the English master the death of his Bohemian disciple was bound to follow as a

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matter of course. As Balzac said, he had "put his hand into the dish unasked"; they threatened to burn him if he did not take it out, but he preferred to burn rather than admit that he was wrong. To say that he brought his death upon himself by his obstinacy is surely beside the mark, for herein lies the grandeur of every martyr's courage, and Hus' heroism in death has forced even his opponents to admit that his obstinacy was based upon deep and genuine conviction.

Of far more interest historically is the vexed question of Sigismund's alleged breach of faith, and on this thorny point later writers have attempted different lines of defence.

In the first place, it has been urged that as Hus left Prague before the safe-conduct was issued and arrived in Constance before it was received, the safe-conduct of October 18th did not apply, and that consequently he had no safe-conduct at all. To meet this difficulty the other side had recourse to various devices. Being staggered at Hus' own statement that he came to Constance "*without* a safe-conduct," they either altered "*without*" into "*with*," or when this did not seem quite consistent with the date, the date got altered to October 8th, or if Hus' words were to stand it was urged that he must have meant "without a safe-conduct *from the Pope*". But the real answer is on the face of it. Hus *did* come to Constance, as he said, literally *without* a safe-conduct; but the safe-conduct was actually issued while he was

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on his way; he received it a few days after his arrival; it was never repudiated or withdrawn, and neither Sigismund himself nor any one else in Constance ever denied that it had been validly issued or shirked the consequent responsibility.

But when these facts have been firmly established we are still confronted with several other propositions upon which the defenders of Sigismund and the Council have endeavoured to rely. It has been urged that the safe-conduct merely guaranteed security *on the road* and not in Constance itself, and that when Hus had finished his journey thither the obligation was at an end. But the words of the document expressly granted protection not only for his journey but for his stay and his return, and although it is true that these or similar words usually formed part of the ordinary phrasing of all passports and safe-conducts, yet those who argue thus have overlooked the fact that, apart from the personal promise given by Sigismund to the friends of Hus, Constance itself was expressly chosen as the meeting-place for the Council because it was an imperial city, where the King could guarantee full protection to all comers *during their stay*, and that in wording this particular safe-conduct he had expressly taken Hus under the protection of the Empire. Moreover it is certain that the Council itself never adopted the mere passport theory, for when Sigismund wanted to drive out a Milanese envoy who had come with an authorised safe-conduct, the cardinals withstood him and

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insisted that all who came so protected were to be considered as privileged, not only to come and go, but to speak and act with perfect fearlessness during the whole time that they were there.

But granting this fact, the battleground was changed yet again, and it was sought to prove that the safe-conduct was conditional and that the conditions under which it had been issued had not been fulfilled. To cover this ground a theory was started in the seventeenth century that the safe-conduct was issued "without prejudice to Justice and the orthodox Faith," and as no such saving clause is to be found in Sigismund's document it was assumed that there must have been another safe-conduct, issued perhaps by the magistrates of Constance, making the protection contingent upon Hus clearing himself from the charge of heresy. But although those who pinned their faith to this belief considered that it was "as clear as the day," not a particle of evidence has ever been produced to warrant it, and it may well be dismissed as "idle guessing," while a theory that there were three kinds of safe-conducts, and that Sigismund's was one that ought to have been violated, could only commend itself to the palate of the polemical theologian and did not indeed long hold the field.

But when all these fancies have been tried and rejected and the fact remains that Sigismund did grant Hus an unconditional protection for his journey, his stay and his return, we reach at length the last

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line of defence and the reasoning is altogether changed again.

It has been confidently argued that Hus was himself the first to break faith, and that he forfeited his claim to protection by trying to run away. But as the story of his supposed flight is proved to be fictitious, all arguments based upon it must necessarily fall to the ground ; and even if it had been true, it is certain that no one at the time availed himself of it to justify the violation.

Or it is sometimes said that Hus had broken faith by celebrating Mass in defiance of the Pope's excommunication. But the obvious answer is that he had defied the excommunication from the first, and that the safe-conduct was issued long after the defiance had been patent to the whole Christian world.

Others have insisted that no wrong was done by Sigismund because Hus made no formal complaint of breach of faith when actually before his judges. But it is admitted that his Bohemian friends frequently did, and we have only to read Hus' own letters to see how bitterly he himself complained of Sigismund's treachery.

And even when all this was admitted to the full we used to be told that his complaints were either baseless, as the accused must not be believed before the judge, nor the heresiarch before the Catholic Emperor, or illogical, because he came prepared for death and distrusted Sigismund's word from the outset.

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Again it is said, that like Baal's prophets with Elijah, Hus deserved death by the law of retaliation, for he had staked his life in his challenge that he would prove his case, and had been beaten in the game. But this is to beg the whole question, for he never admitted that he had lost.

Such arguments have long been in the air and have done alternate duty any time these last 300 years, since Luther championed the martyr's cause and worked the drama up to blacken the name both of the Council and the King; and over and above these ingenious sophistries there are charges resting on mere malice and personal abuse, as that Hus was not the man to reform the Church, because before Beelzebub can drive out Satan he must first reform himself. But as no one has ever seriously impugned his moral character this argument seems to imply that the real reformer must hold his hand until he is pronounced to be acceptable to those whom he has set himself to reform.

But the only safe ground in examining the question is to set aside the after-thoughts of later controversialists, and to see what answer the "perjured King" himself made when the infuriated Bohemians charged him with entrapping their innocent sheep into the midst of ravening wolves.

It is certain that Hus himself understood that his personal safety had been guaranteed before he arrived in Constance and that Sigismund accepted full responsibility for it, for when he heard of the arrest he

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sent peremptory orders that the prisoner must be at once set free. So that it will not do to brush aside the charge of breach of faith against him as "a wholly groundless invention of party hatred". But when the Churchmen told him that he had gone beyond his powers in granting any protection at all to a heretic and warned him that he would commit sin if he put his sickle into the Church's corn, he wavered lest the Council should break up and all his cherished plans be wrecked. He pointed, it is true, to his own pledged word, but they told him that he need not argue that, as the Council was above him and the Council had not pledged itself at all. Whereupon he left his *protégé* to their mercy, insisting only that he must at least have his way as regarded his promise of a public hearing. This done, he washed his hands of the business, and when the pamphleteers lampooned him, to his lasting shame, he pocketed the infamy like a giddy girl and left it to the Church to vindicate his honour if they would.

And the Church was not slow to undertake the task. For before Hus had been three months dead the Council passed an official declaration that according to all law, natural, human and divine, no safe-conduct or promise is to be kept if the keeping of it is prejudicial to the Catholic Faith or the Church's jurisdiction, and that every man was a supporter of heresy who should henceforth say that Sigismund had done anything but what was right and suited to his kingly majesty.

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When the dangerous possibilities of this immoral doctrine began to dawn upon the Christian world many later writers spent infinite pains to prove either that the passage is spurious, or that it was a mere protest against encroachment upon the Church's jurisdiction, or that whatever its origin it did not mean what it said. But the passage is contained in a manuscript which is justly regarded as of exceptional authority, whose author was himself present at the Council, and there is every ground for believing that it is a faithful reflex of the official mind of the mediæval Church in the day of her short-lived triumph over the arch-heretic of Bohemia.

And now after centuries of heated disputation the old methods of attack and defence seem to be growing stale and out of vogue. Research has placed within our reach the means of picturing the man as he really was, with all his greatness and his littleness; the old weak methods of defence have been one by one discarded, and the story has been ingeniously transformed until it has been considered safe to place it in the hands of children in a cheap and palatable form.

In this latter-day dress the Council is exonerated from any blame, because they acted legally throughout, or if they did break the law it was really *in favour of* the accused by allowing him to be publicly questioned while ordinary heresy cases were heard *in camerâ* only. If the Pope said that Hus should be quite safe in Constance that was his affair, and the Council

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could not be officially bound by it. King Sigismund was certainly wrong in pledging himself to grant a protection which he was of course unable to carry out, and if Hus said that he gave a personal promise that he should return in any case to Bohemia, Hus must have told a lie. He may not have really tried to escape in a cart, but at any rate the cardinals believed that he wanted to, and were therefore quite right in coaxing him over and locking him up. It is true that Sigismund was angry at first, but less than a week sufficed to pacify him when he heard that Hus was going to be charged with heresy. It was certainly a violation of the imperial protection to imprison him, but then the prison in which he was lodged was really quite a comfortable place where he could write books and letters and chat with his gaolers, while as to the sewage, that must be an exaggeration, and if he fell ill it must have been due to mental excitement combined with want of exercise. He never complained about his treatment, being certain that he would easily be able to convince the Council and everybody else that he was in the right. The Church never recommended breach of faith with a heretic, but quite the opposite, for the decree which is the foundation of this odious charge is merely a declaration that if a safe-conduct has been issued which contravenes the jurisdiction of the Church, the prince who issues it is bound to do everything in his power to see that it is carried out, while the document in which it is declared that human and divine law require that such a safe-

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conduct ought to be broken must be a forgery, or at best a rough draft of a proposed declaration which never actually received official sanction.

And yet, after all, there seems to be an uneasy feeling that there is something faulty somewhere in this otherwise neat presentment, for we are still called upon invariably to remember that the action of the Council is not to be judged by the standard of the present day. So be it! and let the warning count for what it is worth with those who need it. But it should not be forgotten that judgment was pronounced by those who lived amidst the events and they at least may be believed to have understood them as they should. The churchmen saw no need for any apologetic excuses to explain away their cruelty, while all Bohemia, except the clericals, was stirred to a pitch of rage which found its vent in a long and desperate and bloody war against their King whom they regarded as dishonoured because he broke his word at the bidding of the Church, and delivered over to the flames the man whom he had pledged himself to shield with all the power of the Empire.

But the arguments of all modern defenders of the Council will be found to be based upon the supposition that the indefeasible right of the Church to do what she pleased with a heretic was at that time universally and unanimously recognised. Yet if this were so, it is incredible that Sigismund should have required to be instructed as to his real position before he

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accepted it, and the dilemma from his point of view will work out somehow thus :—

If he granted the protection of the Empire in ignorance of his actual powers there must have been a large number of others besides himself who were in similar ignorance also, so that the real right of the Church had yet to be definitely established, and the fact that the phrase "*salvâ justitiâ*" is in the form of protection offered to Jerome, but not in that granted to Hus, indicates that the necessity for greater accuracy of definition had been forced to the front during the few months which intervened between the issue of the two.

But if Sigismund promised his protection in full knowledge that it might be nullified by the Church, we can only see in this a direct challenge to a conflict of authorities into which he deliberately entered and from which he emerged with dishonour and defeat.

Those writers, therefore, in my opinion, have best gauged the essence of the story of John Hus who see in it a struggle for supremacy between the right of the State to protect freedom of thought and the right of the Church to repress the heretic, resulting in an unconditional surrender of the former; and I am altogether at one with a modern writer who concludes the most convincing defence of Sigismund and the Council that I have yet read with an admission that Sigismund undoubtedly had the *power* to protect Hus, as John of Gaunt had protected Wycliffe, if he

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had cared to use it, and that it would have been worthier of a king to stretch his power to the utmost limit of possibility to rescue the man who had trusted in him, rather than leave him to his fate when he found that he could not work him to suit his own ambitious ends.

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L'ENVOI.

In bringing this course of lectures to a close I may perhaps be allowed to finish with a personal note. So far as I am able to judge, the reason why the University of Oxford has done me the honour to invite me to deliver the course is probably due to the fact that I have spent a great many years of what some would call hard labour in producing one solitary historical book. While many critics have dealt leniently with it, to others it has proved a source of exasperation on account of its over-minuteness and its want of literary style. Both are grave faults in any author who wishes to command popularity, and I can only defend myself by saying that the book in question was purely the work of an amateur, written with the sole aim of securing thoroughness so far as it lay in my power, and that I have to that extent respected my public that I have striven to supply it, not with pleasure—but with food.

To begin with the second charge, the want of style There is no doubt that Literature is Art and Art is Selection, and that the writer who cannot select with nicety is neither an artist nor a *littérateur*. Yet I am consoled with the knowledge that your great constitu-

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tional historian, Bishop Stubbs, once said of his own work that the useful part of it was hard reading and the readable part "trifling," which would soon "go the way of all fireworks". But after all, the style, the art that carries all by storm and wins along the whole line is a God-given gift. Those who have it cannot fail to make it felt, while those who have it not would do well to make no effort to affect it, remembering that even a De Rougemont may be found out at last, for all his gift of imagination. So in the matter of style I can only feel that it must just be left as it is. That which we are, we are, and there is no use in trying to be anything else.

But on the other horn—of over-minuteness—I am prepared to make a momentary stand. *Over*-anything is of course a fault and *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* is a rule beyond reproach. But minuteness, if not *over*-minute, is not a malady from which history-writing has suffered in the past, and I am pleased to think that with all its drawbacks its day is only just beginning. As knowledge grows, the *Weltgeschichte* and *Histoire Universelle* become more and more impossible. The effort that was once put forth to range over a continent is now barely sufficient to master the biography of a single home. We all know the old methods of the eighteenth century: character sketches and fancy portraits, Thucydidean in scope and drawn to display the wordy skill of the draughtsman; lofty and often contradictory generalisations, all based upon the same meagre stock of knowledge; a modicum of well-worn

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facts tricked out in varying degrees of picturesqueness. Indeed, after many years of minute reading I am almost constrained to say that I know nothing sadder in literature than the way in which old fictions are repeated by favourite authors without any attempt at verification from original sources.

But whether we like it or not we have certainly now passed into what has been called "the documentary age" which was recently forecast as "destined to develop learning at the expense of writing and to make history independent of historians," and [shall I add] lectur*ees* independent of lectur*ers*. This may not be a cheering outlook, but it should be remembered that to our forefathers Rymer's *Fœdera* was a revelation; yet it put fresh life into the treatment of the whole field of English history, and did not in the end destroy the delight of students any more than the discovery of the Assyrian bricks or the Moabite stone, and if we test and prove and spare no pains in reverence for our subject there should be no fear for the result, either in regard to the enjoyment of the student or the progress of the study.

The Oxford Historical Society was once bravely told that "dulness is dreadful," but that "there are worse things than dulness—worse if that which professes to be history is no history at all". And therefore it is something to know from recent pronouncements on the future of historical inquiry that henceforward our backs are to be ruthlessly turned on the old barren generalisations, and that we are to look on no detail

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as trivial which tends to supplement our scanty knowledge of the past.

So if the method of the minute researcher does not yet commend itself as too quixotic to be practicable, he must just be content to take a lowly place for the present, consoled with the knowledge that he sometimes catches out the high-flyer and obtains occasional recognition in some quarter where he least expected it.

C'EST TOUT.

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