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The upper Rhine

the scenery of its banks and the manners of its people

Mayence to the lake of Constance

Mayhew, Henry

London, 1858

Interpolated Rhenish Scenes-The "Concilium's Saal" at Constanz

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Interpolated Rhenish Scenes.

(16.)

THE CONCILIUM'S SAAL AT CONSTANZ.

The diocese of Constanz, in the "good old" Papal times, numbered, besides its cathedral, 22 collegiate churches, 350 monasteries, including 49 abbeys, and more than 2000 parishes. During the reign of the Emperor Sigismund it boasted 17,000 priests, and its bishop was lord of more than 100 castles and villages, besides being Sovereign-Governor of Constanz, Baron of the Island of Reichenau, Director of the Circle of Suabia, and Prince of the Empire—and having his chancellors, ministers, and guards, in true monarchical style.

The famous Council held in this city, in the years 1414–18, is said to have been attended by no less than a hundred thousand strangers, bringing with them as many as 30,000 horses. The Diet was composed of deputies, civil and ecclesiastic, from all parts of Christendom, and included, besides princes, 30 cardinals, 20 archbishops, 150 bishops, 4 patriarchs, 200 professors of universities and doctors of theology—together with a multitude of ambassadors, inferior prelates, abbots, friars, &c.

Indeed, the concourse of ecclesiastics and others flocking from all parts of Christendom to the Council was such, that not only were the houses in the town crowded to the attics with lodgers, but booths had to be erected in the streets, while thousands of pilgrims remained encamped in the fields without the walls. Religious processions, representations of miracles, and entertainments of every description, hourly followed each other; and thousands of individuals were employed solely in transporting thither the choicest delicacies of Europe for the maintenance of the assembled nobles and clergy.

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At this period Constanz itself contained some 40,000 inhabitants; its cloth manufactures were the most celebrated throughout Europe, and its wealth the envy of all Germany. The session of the Council, however, attracted towards the town such an enormous host of strangers, that its working population and artisans were obliged to quit the city on account of the dearness of provisions and lodgings. The emigrants retired to the Canton of St. Gall, where they settled, and since that period Constanz has never regained its ancient prosperity.

The Council had for its main object the vindication of the authority of the General Councils, to which the Roman Pontiff was declared to be amenable; or, in other words, it sought, first, to put an end to the schism of the three Anti-Popes who then divided the Romish Church, viz. Gregory XII., who had been elected during the minor schism in the East, while Benedict XIII. (the Anti-Pope of Avignon) yet lived—and the infamous John XXIII., who had been chosen during the "greater schism" which followed. The second object of the Council was to consider and report on the doctrines of the "arch-heretic," John Huss.

Indeed, the Diet professed to have but one single end in view—the remedying of the abuses of the Church. Accordingly, it commenced its proceedings with a declaration that a Council of the heads of the Church obtained, through divine right, supreme authority in all matters of religion—even superior to that of the Pope. Its next step, therefore, was to depose the existing Popes, and to elect Martin V. in their stead.

The crowning act of the Council, however,—an act which casts everlasting odium on its members—was the treacherous imprisonment and subsequent burning of John Huss, even though his protection had been guaranteed by the warrant of

"safe-conduct" granted him by the President of the Assembly —the Emperor Sigismund himself.

This John Huss was a Bohemian, and had assumed, as was usual in those days, the name of his native village, Hussinecz, which signified "goose." Born of humble parents on the 6th of July, 1373 (for, say the Chronicles of Constanz, he was "43, and not a day," at the time of his martyrdom), John Huss was indebted for his education to the bounty of one of the nobles of Bohemia. During his studentship at the New University of Prague he carried off many honours; and having been ordained priest in 1400, he was made minister to Bethlehem chapel in the Bohemian capital, and the year after elected Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, being ultimately installed as Rector of the University. The Queen of Bohemia, too, appointed him her confessor, and he was even favoured by the King Wenceslas (Wenzels) himself.

But Wycliffe—"the Morning Star of the Reformation," as he has been styled—only a few years prior to the birth of Huss, had published his essay *On the Truth and Meaning of Scripture*, in which he advocated the principle of "Gospel liberty," or the right of private judgment; whilst in his tract, *On the Schism of the Popes*, he had not only denounced the Papal tyranny, as well as the idle and vicious lives of the clergy, but condemned the abuse of her temporalities by the Church. Moreover, in 1381, Wycliffe had published the twelve theses against "transubstantiation," which the Archbishop of Canterbury had declared to be dangerous and heretical.

The works of the English Reformer had been carried by a Bohemian into his native country, and created a deep impression on the minds of many of the teachers in the University of Prague. Huss was among the first to embrace the

opinions propounded in them, and he made a vow after reading them, that he would disseminate their truth as far as his strength would allow him. He accordingly proceeded not only to translate the books into the language of the country, but to promulgate the doctrines contained in them, both in his philosophical theses and in his discourses from the pulpit—at once teaching and preaching that the Pope was Antichrist, and denouncing the vices of the Romish Church and clergy with a vehemence worthy of Wycliffe himself.

Numerous partisans collected themselves round about the heterodox professor, and adopted the name of "Hussites"—their principal tenets being a denunciation of the authority of the Pope, the futility of indulgences and excommunication, and the profanity of purgatory and the worship of the Virgin and the Saints; but above all, insisting upon the administration of the Sacrament with the cup as well as the wafer—a doctrine which gave to the sect the name also of "Cup-ites," or "Callixtenes;" for such was their zeal for this particular principle, that they had the sign of the cup painted in their chapels, in their houses, and on their banners.

For a time the patronage of the Queen Sophia of Bohemia protected Huss, if not from molestation, at least from personal injury. But his intrepidity at length provoked the anger of the Archbishop of Prague and many of the Bohemian clergy, so that the prelate ordered the translations of Wycliffe to be burnt; whereupon upwards of 200 volumes, magnificently adorned (such was the estimation in which the English Reformer was held (were committed, we are told, to the flames, while Huss himself was suspended from his office as a priest, and forced to resign the Rectorship of the University.

He still, however, continued to preach, with even greater vehemence than before, against the Pope as Antichrist—against transubstantiation, as a vain conceit—and against

prayers for the dead and purgatory, as devices merely to fill the coffers of the Church.

Huss was at length, in 1410, summoned by Pope Alexander V. to appear in person at Bologna, and answer the charges raised against him by the Archbishop of Prague. But he who had taught that the Pope had no more authority than any other priest, and that the Papal rule was an odious tyranny, displayed of course no great alacrity in obeying the mandate; so that he was ere long declared to be excommunicated through contumacy, and the Cardinal Otto von Colonna gave orders that no mass nor any holy ceremony was to be performed in Prague as long as Huss remained in the town.

Hereupon frequent tumults—often attended with bloodshed—disturbed the streets of Prague; for the Hussites declared that their ministers had a right to celebrate the mass, whilst the Archbishop, on the other hand, called upon the authorities of the town for the execution of the Papal bull.

Not long after this, the Pope had ordered that a crusade should be instituted against Ladislaus, King of Naples, and the command afforded Huss another opportunity for assailing the Papal power. Accordingly, on the 24th August, 1413, he affixed to the gates of the University and the churches of Prague a challenge to all the doctors, who upheld the Pope's authority, to meet him and discuss the Papal claims to obedience and respect. But though no disputation ensued, the challenge led, as usual, to increased rivalry between the contending parties.

The day after the notice had been affixed to the church doors the populace rose against the Papal preachers, and maltreated a considerable number of them; whilst some of the Hussites, on hearing their tenets perverted by the Romish clergy, stood up in the church and gave the preachers the lie direct, and others rose in the midst of the

mass and denounced the Pope as the scarlet lady of Babylon.

The senate then gave orders for the arrest of three of these offenders, whereupon Huss, at the head of 2000 men, hastened to demand their liberation; but though he was assured that the magistrates had no intention of treating the prisoners with any severity, they were, every one of them, beheaded the same night in prison.

This naturally increased the bitterness of feeling among the dissidents, so that perpetual broils and riots raged in the Bohemian capital; for as the Hussites grew in number they grew also in boldness.

Bull after bull was fulminated, but with no effect; and at last Pope John XXIII. wrote an urgent letter to Wenceslas V. of Bohemia, beseeching him to extirpate a heresy that threatened the stability of the civil as well as the ecclesiastic institutions. Wenceslas, however (for Huss had still great influence over the mind of the Queen), paid no attention to the letter.

It was therefore considered necessary to repress the teachings of Huss and his followers with a strong hand, and it being evident that King Wenceslas was either unwilling or afraid to do so, his brother, the Emperor Sigismund, took the matter in hand, and summoned John Huss to surrender himself at the forthcoming Council of Constanz—there to explain and defend his doctrines.

The Reformer regarded the approach of the General Council with interest, believing that the assembly would lead to the reform of the discipline, if not the doctrines, of the Church; and therefore cheerfully prepared to conform to the summons.

Accordingly, having first affixed upon the palace and church doors of Prague a notice that he was going to Constanz to render account of the reform he had proposed in

the Church, he took his departure for that city, accompanied by his faithful friend, the Knight John of Chlum, and a few followers.

A thousand partisans wished to escort him, but Huss desired to go alone with John of Chlum and some 30 adherents; and having received a warrant of "safe-conduct," the little cavalcade left Prague for Constanz early in October, 1414.

In a letter that Huss wrote from Nürnberg during the journey, he says that he rode all the way with his head uncovered, and with free and open countenance, according to the ancient custom, to show that he felt himself secure; and that the innkeepers on the road treated him with great respect, and brought out large cans of wine wherever they halted; for which kindness he gave them a copy of the Ten Commandments printed in German, and nearly all stuck them over their doors.

The Emperor Sigismund had decided that the solemn opening of the Council should take place on the day of All-Saints, nevertheless, the inaugural mass was not celebrated until the 16th November—the Pope, John XXIII. (who had come to Constanz to join in the Council), presiding at the first sitting, and the Emperor Sigismund taking part in the high mass on Christmas eve that was celebrated in the Cathedral by the Pope himself.

The second session did not occur until the second day of March, 1415, when Pope John announced that he would renounce the tiara if Gregory and Benedict would consent to do so the same. But, to avoid a more formal abdication of the Papal throne—the Council having constrained him to make the promise of renunciation—John fled in the night, under the protection of the Duke of Tyrol, to the castle of Unnoth

at Schaffhausen. He was pursued, however, dragged from his retreat, and forcibly brought back to the Council; when he was thrown into prison at Gottlieben (being immured there but two cells off from Huss), and finally dispossessed of the Pontificate at its 12th sitting, on the 29th May.

Two days afterwards, John made a voluntary abdication, and Gregory also submitted to be deposed; his ambassador, Charles Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, consenting to the proceeding. Benedict alone refused to abandon the throne, to which he insisted he had been rightfully elected.

The trial of Huss did not take place till the 5th of June, 1415—seven months after the opening of the Council. We can read the sequel of the Reformer's touching history, from his advent to his death, in the very stones of Constanz.

Huss had arrived at Constanz on Nov. 3, full of hope and courage; and two doors from the *Schnetz-Thor* (Carved Gate) is still to be seen the house in which he and Von Chlum sojourned till Nov. 28, when he was seized and cast into prison. The house in those days went by the sign of "*zur Taube*," and was kept by one Frau Fides Pfisterin. Here he paid 1*s.* a week for his bed and room, which in one of his letters he complains of, as being exorbitantly dear.

The dwelling is still standing, and has somewhat the appearance of a small country inn, with a pedimented attic projecting from the tiles—being but two storeys high, and fitted with one "long-light" of a window to each floor. Here the timbers are showing through the dirty plastered walls; and on the shutter of the ground-floor there is a rude inscription, over a pair of painted pistols, giving the present tenant's name, with the addition of his vocation—"gunsmith and armourer," while you can hear the sharp grating of the mechanic's file at work within. Beside the first-floor window is a small bas-relief bust

of Huss, roughly sculptured in stone, with the date of 1415 cut underneath it. The figure is represented with a kind of Inquisition cap on the head and a cropped beard. The features, however, give no sign of the character of the man.

"There are many *Pariser* and *Italianer* (Frenchmen and Italians) here," says Huss, in a letter to his friends in Bohemia shortly after his arrival; "but not many Archbishops or Bishops," he adds, "though the Cardinals are plentiful enough, and often to be seen in the streets riding on their mules." He expresses fear, too, that owing to the dearness of things—horses fetching, he says, as much as 14*s.* each in Constanz—that he will not have money enough to keep him till the assembling of the Council.

But the "heretic" had little cause for alarm about his expenses; for in less than a month he was seized and thrown into jail, despite the Emperor's warrant of safe-conduct.

Indeed, no sooner had he set foot in Constanz, than he found the Pope and fathers all hostile to him; for never had any man so many opponents, even though his purity of morals was such as none could assail. The very day after his arrival, Michel de Causis, the agent of the Cardinal Colonna, affixed a notice to the Cathedral doors, denouncing him as a dangerous heretic, and warning all good Christians against holding communion with him. Further, he says in one of his letters that on the day of High Mass, though all the ministers had a place set aside for them, they would not grant *him* one.

On the morning of the 28th November he was cited to appear before the Cardinals, and though he then told them he had no desire to dispute with them, but merely wished to prove the truth of his doctrines, and have them introduced into the Church, he was in the evening arrested under the Cardinals' warrant, and shut up in one of the monkish dungeons of the town.

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In the *Dominicanner Insel* (the Island of the Dominican Monastery), which is merely a few acres of land, insulated by a broad ditch from the adjoining shore (*vide* the map of Old Constanz given at page 403, where the Cloister is shown on the right, and the Hafen—with the old Council-chamber at the end—on the left, jutting out into the water), there may be seen the remains of the "Inquisition prison," in which Huss was confined, after his removal from the house near the *Schnetz-Thor*.

This island is still partly walled in, and behind the crowd of trees you can just see the empty lancet-windows of the huge chapel-like monastery itself, with long strips of newly-dyed scarlet calico suspended from the roof; for it is now the *Röthe Fabrik* (red kerchief manufactory) of M. Macaire.

Crossing the little wooden-bridge which reaches from the *Ober-Mauer* (Outer Wall) to the island, and passing through an old round-arched gateway, we came to the courtyard, where on one side is the *Comptoir* of the factory, with a small retinue of clerks at work within. Here we enter to ask permission to see the old dungeon—a favour which is invariably granted; whereupon a clerk accompanies us along a range of low cloisters, the walls of which are still decorated with old frescoes, though the colours are half faded out of the plaster. Thus we come to the chapel of the monastery itself, which is now a mere shell, with unglazed windows and bare walls, and the whole length filled with long red and white kerchief-pieces dangling from the rafters above, while the ground is littered with large casks and carboys.

Hence we pass on to the garden, the green grass of which, too, is striped red with handkerchief-pieces, and so reach the front of the buildings facing the lake. Here are seen the remains of an old rondel at one end of the building, and the guide, drawing our attention to some broken bond-stones

projecting from the rondel-wall, tells us that Huss's dungeon formerly stood there, but was taken down some few years ago to make room for the works.

After this we are conducted to a crypt-like sacristy, with the ceiling groined and still painted cathedral-fashion; and here the altar-like niche is found to be filled with small barrels and chemical bottles, instead of the "*Monstrans*" and gilt candlesticks of old, whilst the air is pungent with the fumes of nitric acid rather than incense.

We are now shown a heavy block of stone, about 18 inches square, having an iron ring fixed in its centre. To this ring was John Huss chained.

The attendant chips off a small splinter of the relic, bows as he presents you with the memorial, and the show is finished.

Huss was kept in prison from the end of November, 1414, to the middle of the next year, without a trial. At first, while in his dungeon, he was treated with some little lenience, but the cardinals at length gave orders that no indulgence should be shown him, and the poor martyr began to sicken with the severity of his confinement.

Worn out with suspense he demanded a public trial, and offered to retract if he should be convinced of error; and at last a hearing was voted, and the accusations registered against him.

Seven long months had been occupied in formulating and examining the principles contained in his works; four cardinals, two generals of the monastic orders, and six doctors, had been intrusted with the examination of them. Two bishops had been sent expressly into Bohemia to inquire into and report upon the doctrines which he had preached and professed. Commissioners, moreover, had been appointed to receive the depositions of witnesses and to analyse the pro-

positions extracted from his writings. In a word, what was proposed to be a simple conference, now assumed the aspect of a trial and grave proceeding. A copy of the charges was furnished him, but, as usual at such proceedings, he was denied an advocate.

Now let us proceed to inspect the old *Concilium's Saal*, where the great ecclesiastical Diet, before which John Huss was arraigned, held its sittings.

The steel engraving represents the end of the building next the *Ober-Mauer*, along which we have to pass on our way to and from the old Dominican Kloster.

Let us cross the little bridge leading to the harbour, at the end of which the Saal stands, and so obtain a nearer view of the building. You perceive it gives you the notion, as we said, of an old Swiss barn; the steep and almost pyramidal roof is set with kind of pigeon-house-like attics at the corners, and immediately beneath the eaves, there hangs a deep valance, as it were, of old brown wood, and which indeed constitutes the main peculiarity of the building.

As we stroll round the walls we find at the back a board inscribed, for the guidance of sight-seers, with the following notice in two languages:—"*Auf diesen Concilium's Saal ist der Eingang vornen*" (the entrance to the Concilium's Saal is at the front).

On reaching the said entrance we perceive another polyglot notice over the arched doorway, running as follows:—

CONCILIUM'S SAAL.
SAMLUNG GESCHICHTLICHER DENKWÜRDIGKEITER.

And beneath this is painted an English translation in the following words, "*Gallery of Remarkables Antiquities.*"

A narrow staircase leads to the long loft, or bare barn-like chamber, in which the Council formerly held its sittings. At that time the building was comparatively new, having been erected only 26 years before the session of the Diet; though even now it has but few marks of age about it. Along the chamber is ranged a series of square oaken pillars, or rather posts, and these are marked with numbers for the merchants who now assemble here three times a-year, for the sale of cloth manufactured in Switzerland and Wirtemburg. The chamber below is still devoted to the purposes of a *Kaufhaus* (Exchange).

The old Council-chamber, denuded and desolate as it now appears, reminds one of the bare deck of an immense man-of-war laid up in ordinary.

Here it was that Huss, on the 5th of June, in the presence of the Emperor and the assembled cardinals, bishops, kings, princes, nobles, and priests of Christendom, was shown his printed works, and on his admitting them to have been written by him, the principles deduced from them were read over to him.

Of these, some he qualified, so as to remove their obnoxious spirit; others he evaded; and a few he denied; whereupon the Emperor Sigismund and the Archbishop of Cambray exhorted him to submit unconditionally to the Church. Huss again assured them that he had come there with that design, if it could be proved to him that he was wrong.

On the following day, thirty-nine propositions drawn up from his works were submitted to him, the priests and monks screaming at him the while, "like the Jews at Jesus," to use Huss's own words—while many cried aloud, "Burn his works! burn them!"

Repeated and urgent were the efforts now made by the Emperor and nobles, the Pope and cardinals, to induce

him to recant; but, in obedience to the voice within him, the steadfast Bohemian would not gainsay his honest belief. When, therefore, the assembly found him so resolute, they began to threaten him with the utmost vengeance of the law, ecclesiastical and civil.

At the third hearing, the Emperor Sigismund said to him, as a last appeal, "John Huss, you have two courses still open to you: either to retract all your heresies and throw yourself on the mercy of the Council, or else to abide stubbornly by your doctrines; in which case we shall know how to deal with you; and rather than let such a heretic live," he added emphatically, while utterly ignoring his written pledge of protection, "I would light your stake myself."

Hereupon the Bishop of Poland roared out, "We know well what to do with miscreants."

But the undaunted Reformer calmly awaited the doom he now plainly saw before him. He could not recant, and knew, therefore, that he could not escape.

At the 15th sitting of the Council, the doctrines of John Huss were formally condemned as "gross and damnable heresies," 250 prelates taking part in the memorable decree.

Let us, however, continue our historical search among the antiquities of the town.

At the end of the Concilium's Saal there is a partition, with a door leading to "The Gallery of Remarkables Antiquities" within. On opening this we find ourselves in a kind of small Tussaud's exhibition, with a sprinkling of old pots, china, coins, and noseless busts, that give it somewhat the character of a miniature museum.

The first objects here that strike the sight are three dressed figures the size of life, ranged under a rude canopy, and standing on a small raised platform. The figures are so-

called models of John Huss, Jerome of Prague, (his faithful friend and fellow-sufferer,) and Father Cölestin—the latter being the Dominican friar who was the principal opponent of Huss at the Council.

These figures are far more ludicrous than solemn, being as unnatural as tailors' dummies, and the faces carved about as artistically as barbers' blocks. They are indeed but mere "Guys," that seem to be fit for a bonfire rather than serving to impress one with the terror of the stake. The monk is habited in a "frock" of coarse blue flannel, whilst Huss and Jerome of Prague are dressed in kind of black bathing-gown-like gaberdines, and wear Inquisition-like caps; each of the figures being in the uncomfortable attitude of toppling over.

On the same platform are exhibited the "*trône et fauteuil de l'Empereur Sigismund*," which is merely a rude square old arm-chair, that was once gilt perhaps, and covered with blue velvet—small strips of which are still clinging to the seat. Not many feet from this, again, stands the throne and fauteuil of Pope Martin V., and this is in shape like a pair of calipers, but has now merely a bundle of horse-hair protruding through the ragged velvet seat.

At one end of the exhibition-room there projects a small closet, about as big as a knife-house, representing "the prison wherein John Huss was kept for three months," and with an inscription on the wall to the following effect:—

"*The prison of John Huss, formerly upon the Isle of the Dominicans. The form and size (of the original) were the same, (the model being fitted up,) with the identical door, window, and some bricks, which formed part of the original floor, and on which are some letters supposed to have been cut by Huss himself. He was confined in it* 92 *days.*"

At the side of this again is a certificate from M. Macaire, saying that "on account of alterations in his premises he has

transferred the above-mentioned parts of the original dungeon to M. Castel, antiquarian of Constanz."

This dungeon is somewhat after the style of a ship's berth, and the original door is now merely an old worm-eaten thick wooden portal, with huge rusty iron hinges and bolts, and fitted with a little trap, through which the bread used to be handed in.

As the loquacious little watchmaker—who is the proprietor of the exhibition, and pursues his trade in one corner of the room during the absence of visitors—points out these things to you, he keeps brushing away at some watch-wheels that he holds in his hand, while he exclaims, in strong nasal German-French, "*Oh! ong a traité ce pauvre homme pire qu'un chieng!*"

Not far from the "model prison" is a wooden and battered life-size figure of Abraham kneeling, with a ram at his feet. This has the same square Inquisition cap on the head as the figure of Huss, and formerly formed part of the pulpit in the Cathedral. The populace, however, mistook the figure, on account of the cap, for the effigy of the "heretic" himself, and delighted to deface it by driving nails into its cheeks and eyes. It has now no nose, and the face is as if pitted with the small-pox from the heads of the tacks that have been hammered into the wood.

From the Council-chamber where the martyr was tried, let us now pass to the Cathedral where he was condemned.

The Constanz Münster is hardly to be reckoned handsome, after the eye has been pampered with the Doms at Strasburg and Freiburg. The open tower, which has been newly raised, is but a mere copy of the steeple of the latter edifice; while the spiral staircase, showing within the open stone tubes, are but duplicates of the turret columns of Strasburg. There

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is, however, a curious carved doorway at the principal entrance, that is rich as the screen to some choir.

In the interior the nave is supported by sixteen pillars, each of which is a single block, with solid Byzantine capitals. Near one of these, the custos points out to you the spot where the "heresiarch Huss" stood when sentence of death by burning was pronounced against him..

From his dungeon in the cloisters at the back of the Cathedral, Huss was led forth at six in the morning, on the 6th of July, 1415, and "was received," says Professor Eiselein, "by the Archbishop of Riga (to whose care, as keeper of the seals of the Council, Huss had latterly been entrusted), at St. Stephan's Kirche, in the *Platten Strasse* (this church, with its sharp steeple, may be seen nearly facing the Cathedral in the map given at page 403); after which he was conducted by the beadles to the front of the Dom, where, "being a heretic," he was obliged to wait outside the door till the mass was over.

Then the portals were thrown back, and he was taken by four bishops—the deputies of four national Churches—to the sixth pillar in the nave, where he was put to kneel on a huge slab of stone, with a pole supporting a priest's robes beside him. The Bishop, Jacob of Lodi, hereupon, as the Death-sentencer (*Galgen-pater*) of the Council, discoursed upon the words of Paul, "that the body of sin may be destroyed."

"Huss, however," the Bishop added, "had come to Constanz under the Emperor's warrant of safe-conduct;" and at the mention of the words the Reformer cast upon the Emperor, who sat there in his robe of state, such a withering look of rebuke that it made the royal liar grow crimson with shame.

Next, the Bishop of Concordia read a decree, in which sentence of excommunication, with two months' imprison-

ment, was pronounced against every man, whatever his dignity — were he emperor, king, cardinal, archbishop or bishop — who should presume, by speaking or moving, to testify either applause or disapprobation during the solemn act about to take place.

Hereupon the Procurator of the Council slowly rose from his seat, and demanded that the doctrines preached and taught by John Huss in the kingdom of Bohemia should be condemned as "heretical, seditious, captious, and offensive to pious ears."

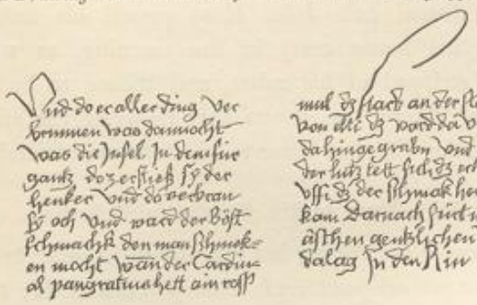
This part of the sentence having been formally carried out, Huss was once more exhorted to recant; and, he having once more refused, the Bishop of Concordia proceeded to pronounce two sentences: first, that his works should everywhere be committed to the flames; and secondly, that he himself should be degraded from the priesthood, by the Archbishop of Milan and six bishops, as one with whom the Church of Christ had no longer any concern: after which he was to be handed over to the secular authorities, to be dealt with according to the criminal law.

Accordingly, when he had been dressed in his sacerdotal robes, and the Communion cup placed in his hand, he was once again desired to retract, and on his repeated refusal the chalice was snatched from him by the Bishops, and his priest's garments torn from his back piece by piece; after which all traces of the tonsure were erased by cutting his hair in the form of a cross, and a tall paper cap, painted with devils and bearing the inscription — "HERESIARCHA," put on his head; and in this state he was led to the porch, so that he might see his "accursed" works burnt in the fire before his eyes.

This done, he was taken back to the Cathedral, where he was publicly expelled from the church, the Bishops uttering these words the while: — "The Church has hence-

forth nothing further to do with thee,—it gives thy body over to the law, and thy soul to the *devil*." Whereupon he was cursed as Judas, smitten on both cheeks, and finally cast with a thrust of the foot from the Cathedral doors, where the law officers waited to receive him.

JOHN HUSS ON HIS WAY TO THE STAKE.
(*From a Drawing in the Archives of the Counts von Königsegg, in Aulendorf.*)



Then the Emperor condemned him to be burnt, and he was immediately transferred to the charge of the Elector Palatine.

According to an old law, the executioner was entitled to everything that at the time of death might be upon the person of those suffering at his hands. It was, however, in this instance, ordered that Huss should be burnt with all his clothes on; and when the priests heard that he was really to suffer martyrdom at the stake, they raised such a yell of delight, and hooted so loudly at the poor Bohemian, that Sigismund was obliged to announce that all who should again be guilty of such misconduct should be forthwith ejected from the Cathedral.

Huss, however, during all the insults heaped upon him, behaved with the greatest fortitude and patience; and to the last moment of his life, indeed, put to shame the cruelties of his persecutors.

From the church we are led to the neighbouring cloisters, to see the martyr's last prison. This consists of a small cellar let into the wall at the end of the cloisters, the door being secured with peculiar old padlocks. Though there is little extraordinary about the place — for it is merely a dark damp vault, with a strong ratty smell pervading it — the mere sight of the dungeon stirs the soul with violent indignation.

In this dismal hole John Huss passed his last night, for he was led hence early in the morning, as we have said, to be stripped of his robes, and thence to be carried to the stake. Here, too, it was that he wrote the subjoined touching epistle — his last letter to his Bohemian friends: —

"John Huss to his Friends in Bohemia.

"*Allow me to use this my last opportunity in order to impress upon you that you can put trust in nothing in this world; therefore*

devote yourselves entirely to the service of God. I have good reason to warn you that you cannot depend on princes, nor on any other man, for there is no help in them. God alone remains true and steadfast. What He promises He assuredly performs. I resign myself wholly to His merciful promise, and trust devoutly to His grace. According as I have endeavoured to be His servant, even so have I no fear of His forsaking me. I hope much from the words of our gracious Saviour—'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things' (and, verily, my life is the smallest thing that I can offer Him, seeing that He gave it me Himself), 'I will make thee a ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' (*Matt. xxv.* 23.) *I shall soon exchange my long afflictions for eternal bliss and tranquillity. The God of peace and all Heaven support you. This is, beyond doubt, the last letter I shall ever write to you. I have cause to believe that I shall be called upon to-morrow to answer with my life the charges that have been raised against me. Still, even in this I comfort myself with the consolation of Jesus Christ; and I am not frightened of that which kills the body, since it cannot destroy the soul. Sigismund has dealt falsely in everything. God, however, forgive him. You have heard in how severe a strain he spoke against me. Farewell! Pray that you fall not into temptation. I look forward with joy to my death-day. Seek you to live so that you may die happily.* "*JOHN HUSS.*"

The last scene of all is the site of the martyrdom itself. This is now merely a large orchard, reached by the *Paradieser-Thor*, that leads to the road to Zurich. Passing the "*Caffé zum Gutle*" and the line of market-gardens bordering the road, we turn off into a field on the left.

Here, as we bend our steps towards the reverend spot, we hear the sharp grating of the whetstone, and shortly afterwards, as we approach the mower, the ear catches the

sound of the crisp cutting of the grass. The cottagers' children are out in the field, shouting and laughing as they toss the green blades into heaps, and the brown cattle are grazing peacefully under the trees, whilst the air is laden with the smell of new-made hay and the fumes of burning weeds from the neighbouring meadow.

At the end of the pathway stands a cotter's house; two chubby-cheeked children are playing in the sun upon the door-step, and the mother is spinning close beside them.

She quits her wheel and comes forth to point out to us the spot we are in quest of, saying, "*Johann Huss bei der dicker Baum auf der linkster Seid, gebrennt wur;*" and as she speaks the words she directs our attention to a leafless stump of a tree, not a hundred yards from her door.

The mower, who has been watching us since he noticed us go by, now joins the woman, and says he has lived hard by all his life, and that people cannot tell the precise site of the burning; they only know that Huss was executed somewhere in the field called the "*Brühl.*"

But let us follow worthier guides than rustic gossip.

"At ten o'clock of the 6th July, 1415—the same day as he had been publicly condemned in the Cathedral"—says the learned Professor Eiselein, "they led forth the martyr (whom nothing could shake, and who kept chanting hymns by the way) from the Cathedral porch, through the town-gates, towards the '*Brühl*'"*—as indicated by the dotted line in the subjoined wood-engraving.

* This word *Brühl* is thought by some to be a derivative of the French *brûler;* so that the present name of the field would have been given to it, not only subsequent to, but in consequence of, the martyrdom. A better origin for the title, however, is that which makes it a mere corruption of "*das Prügli*" —literally, the place of the *stake.*

THE CITY OF CONSTANZ IN THE TIME OF JOHN HUSS, A.D. 1415.

(The dotted line from the Cathedral to the field, just within the outer walls of the town, indicates the route by which the martyr was led to the stake.)

Immense crowds of people followed in the train — the "*Gewapnoten*" reckons the multitude at 3000 — so that the officials were obliged to wait at the city gates till the troops arrived and cleared the way for them.

They then marched on till they reached the *Kleine Brühl*, and here again, from the great crowd assembled, they were obliged to quit the direct path and lead the martyr round by "Reichman's Widen."

Still, however, the multitude pressed upon them, so that they were unable to pursue their way, and the procession finally stopped at a spot known by the name of "*Das Prügli.*"

Here they put down the fagots, and Huss fell on his knees and remained praying for a considerable time.

After this they led him to the Inner Brühl, not far from the outer gate leading to Gottlieben, and there making a ring, they placed Huss in the middle; when Ulrich of Richenthal approached him and inquired whether he wished to confess, as the chapel of St. Stephen was close at hand.

But Huss replied, that, having no great sin on his soul, he had no need of a confessor; whereupon the Elector, Duke Lüdwig von der Pfalz, ordered the executioner to do his duty.

Accordingly Huss was tied to the stake, with his face turned towards the west; and at this critical moment the Elector Palatine, with the Marshal of the Empire, approached, and for the last time renewed the exhortation that he would renounce his "heresies" and save his life. But the hero, for the hundredth time, would not listen to the entreaties, and declared his willingness to die for the truth.

The final resolve was no sooner uttered than the command was given to fire the fagots, and then Huss prayed aloud, as the flames curled about him, crying,—"*Jesu Christe! Fili Dei vivi, qui passus es pro nobis, miserere mei*—

miserere mei!" and continued repeating the supplication till the smoke choked his utterance and ultimately suffocated him.

The wind had blown the paper cap from his head, but the executioner seized it and thrust it in the fire, "so that nothing that belonged to him should escape the flames."

At eleven o'clock, on the 6th July, 1415, the body of the heroic John Huss was reduced to ashes. Even these, however, were not allowed to rest undisturbed, but were swept together, thrown in a cart, and cast into the Rhine,—the martyr being, as the chronicles say, "42 years and not a day"—the anniversary of his birth having been chosen as the date of his death.

"If the goose," said Huss, shortly before his death, and with a quaint play upon the meaning of his name, in prophetic allusion to the coming Reformation, "if the goose, which is only a peaceful bird, and whose flight is not high in the air, has been snared by the wicked, other birds, soaring more boldly, shall hereafter break through the toils — for instead of a feeble goose the truth shall send forth eagles and keen-eyed vultures."

Some few years back it was proposed to erect a monument to the memory of the first heroic Reformer of Germany, and large sums of money were collected, not only in the neighbourhood of his martyrdom, but from Bohemia in particular. But when permission was applied for to carry out the work, it was found that the Emperor of Austria had written to the Grand Duke of Baden requesting that he would put his veto upon such an undertaking, "*as it would be likely to bring the memory of the Emperor Sigismund into contempt.*" (!)