crown of chivalry has fallen to-day; never was any one equal to this King of Bohemia."[1] King Edward and the Black Prince were present when the last religious rites were performed over the dead king of Bohemia, and they caused his corpse to be delivered for burial to his son Charles. King Charles had himself fought heroically by the side of his father; and after he had been severely wounded, the few remaining Bohemian knights, "fearful of losing both their kings,"[2] forced him to leave the battle-field.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES IV TO THE CORONATION OF KING SIGISMUND (1346–1420)

THE accession of Charles IV to the throne of Bohemia marks the beginning of a new period in the history of the country. His reign differed as widely from that of his father as did the personal character of the two princes. Whereas King John was vacillating and uncertain in his policy, his son Charles appears to have set before him clearly the nature of the problems with which he was to deal. While John was frequently absent from his country, Charles was ever ready and anxious to pursue its true interests. In the reign of the father Bohemia's influence in European affairs remained stationary, if it did not actually decline. But Charles not only raised it to a position it had never before attained, but sought out every means of improving its internal condition. It is true that the general political condition of Europe was more favourable to Charles's policy than it had been to his father's. The German princes had never allowed Bohemia fair play; this impediment to the progress of Bohemia ceased now that Charles, King of Bohemia, himself became German Emperor.

Professor Freeman has given it as his opinion that while Charles made a good King of Bohemia, he "sadly lowered" the empire both in Germany and in Italy. It would not be easy to prove in what way Charles "sadly lowered" the empire. It is at any rate certain that he was one of the best kings and truest patriots of Bohemia.

As mentioned in the last chapter, Charles left the battle-field of Crécy accompanied only by a few knights. He at

[1] Beneš de Weitmil. [2] Beneš de Weitmil.

first retired to the monastery of Ourschamp near Nyon to nurse the wounds he had received. Charles then returned to Bohemia, and was preparing an invasion of Bavaria when the sudden death of King Louis (1347) freed him from his most dangerous enemy.

The party in Germany opposed to Charles did not, however, despair of raising up another rival king. Although King Edward III of England had already recognized the right of King Charles to the German throne, it was on him that the choice of the enemies of Charles first fell, as his victory at Crécy had made his name prominent throughout Europe.

King Charles sent William, Margrave of Juliers (Jülich), as envoy to the King of England, with the mission of dissuading him from accepting the German crown. This mission proved successful, and Edward (1348) refused the crown that was offered to him, and even concluded a treaty of alliance with King Charles.

Unable to find any prince who was willing to oppose Charles as King of the Germans, his enemies now chose Count Günther of Schwarzburg as king, a noble who was almost without territorial possessions, but who had enriched himself as a soldier of fortune. Count Günther's death in the following year (1343) for a time put an end to civil war in Germany, and we are told that King Charles, as a proof that he bore him no malice, was himself present at the funeral of the Count of Schwarzburg. The troubles caused about this time by the appearance of the "False Valdemar" in Bradenburg, and the part King Charles took in them, belong to German rather than to Bohemian history, and it will be of more interest to notice the various measures by which Charles strove to improve the social and political condition of Bohemia.

During the past reigns, particularly that of King John, the great nobles had profited by the constant financial difficulties of their sovereigns for the purpose of acquiring almost all the Crown lands which they held as securities for various—mostly very small—loans which they had made to their kings. Charles had already, as regent during his father's lifetime, succeeded in redeeming a great number of the pledged lands and castles, and during his reign he entirely carried out his design of liberating the Bohemian crown from a position of humiliating dependency. One of

the first measures of Charles consisted in the re-establishment of a regular administration of the law. During the reign of King John the former law-courts had, in consequence of the anarchical state of the country, almost entirely ceased to exist. Charles now divided the whole country into thirteen districts for the administration of justice, and he established a court of justice in the central town of each of these districts.

He also created, or perhaps re-established, a High Court of Law at Prague. In all these courts of law the Bohemian language was to be exclusively used. What has more than anything else endeared the memory of Charles to the Bohemian people is the favour he always showed to the national language, to which the Bohemians have at all times been devotedly attached. During the period from the reign of Přemysl Ottokar I to that of King John (1192–1346), the Bohemian language was several times near sharing the fate of the Slav dialects of Northern Germany. The greater development of the Bohemian language, which at that time already possessed a literature of its own, and the influence of the Bohemian nobles, who from hostility to the German settlers soon again began to use their native tongue, preserved it from that fate. It was by the influence of Charles alone that Bohemian again became the language of the court, and he himself—though he used the Latin language for his writings[1]—soon spoke the language of his country fluently. It is said that on his first return from France (where he was educated), his earliest thought was to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Bohemian tongue. One of the consequences of Charles's predilection for the Bohemian language was that, though maintaining the privileges conferred by his predecessors on the German colonists, he yet secured equality for the Bohemian language in the towns that were mainly inhabited by Germans. Charles decreed that at the assemblies of the town magistrates the speakers should, according to their own choice, use either the Bohemian or the German language, that no one speaking German only should be

[1] The very interesting Latin autobiography of Charles IV, *Commentarius de Vita Caroli Bohemiae Regis ab ipso Carolo conscriptus*, has been preserved, and is printed in *Freherus Rerum Bohemiarum Antiqui Scriptores*. It unfortunately relates only to a small part of the patriot king's life.

appointed as judge, and that all German parents should be called on to have their children taught the Bohemian language.

It seems that Charles not only favoured the national language, but that he, with the political insight which was his characteristic, also realized the connection of the language and people of Bohemia with the other Slav races, an idea which is generally known under the foolish and incorrect denomination of Panslavism, and is usually supposed to be of modern origin. Charles showed his knowledge of the connection of the Slav races by the foundation of a Benedictine monastery in Prague, which was to revive the traditions of the former monastery of St. Prokop on the Sazava.[1] For the monks of this convent Charles obtained the Pope's permission to use the Slavonic tongue for all ecclesiastical functions, and to make use of the Cyrillic alphabet.[2] This scheme seems, next to the foundation of the University of Prague, to have been one of King Charles's favourite plans, and in spite of the many difficulties at the beginning of his reign he was able, in the year 1347, to assemble numerous monks from Croatia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia in the new monastery.

The great interest which Charles—who was less inclined than any man to pursue merely imaginative aims—showed for this foundation has attracted the attention of Bohemian historians. Palacký believes that the plan of uniting the Eastern with the Western Church, which then, as at so many other periods of history, was being discussed, may have been one of King Charles's motives, apart from his

[1] See Chapter III.

[2] The foundation of this convent is of some importance with regard to the controversy as to the origin of the Hussite movement. The almost general opinion of Russian authorities is in favour of considering that movement as one caused by the desire of the Bohemians to return to the Eastern Church, from which their country had first received the Christian faith. In his letter to Pope Clement VI, in which he requests the Pope's consent to the establishment of the Slavonic ritual in the new monastery, Charles says that "there are many dissidents and unbelieving people who, when the gospel is explained and preached to them in Latin, will not understand, and that they might (thus) perhaps be directed to the Christian faith" (Professor Kalousek, in the *Casopis Musea Ceskeho* (Journal of the Bohemian Museum) for 1882). Professor Kalousek thinks that these words—though their meaning seems very clear—contain a "pia fraus" on the part of King Charles.

wish to obtain an alliance with the then powerful Servian princes against the ever-menacing Turkish Empire.[1]

In 1348 Charles assembled the Estates of Bohemia at Prague, and in his capacity as King of the Germans confirmed all the privileges which former kings had conferred on the country, but which, specially since the end of the reign of Přemysl Ottokar II, had been in abeyance. The right of the Estates to choose their king was again affirmed, but with the qualification that it should only come into force in the case of the extinction of the royal family, which meanwhile was to succeed to the throne according to the rule of primogeniture. By further enactment Charles defined the position of Moravia—then governed by the king's brother, John Henry—with reference to Bohemia, and also decreed that Silesia and Upper Lusatia should henceforth form parts of the lands of the Bohemian crown.

At this Diet King Charles also announced his intention of founding a university at Prague. It is characteristic of his interest in this, his favourite creation, that he had, shortly after the battle of Crécy—even before his return to Bohemia—written to the Pope asking his consent to the foundation of the new university, a consent that was readily granted. A not very well authenticated report tells us that Charles had as a youth studied at the University of Paris, but it is more probable that during his first stay in Italy he had acquired a love of learning, at that time very unusual among the princes and nobles of Northern Europe. The king himself superintended the organization of the university, which was destined soon to acquire a world-wide reputation as the centre of the Hussite movement. In his invitation to the scholars of all countries to frequent the new university, Charles assured to them all the privileges and the immunities which the students of Paris and Bologna enjoyed. Charles appointed the Archbishop of Prague, Ernest of Pardubic, as first chancellor of his new university, and divided it (according to the system still prevalent in Germany) into four "faculties," the theological,

[1] Palacký quotes a letter which Charles wrote to Stephan Dusan, then ruler of Servia, in which he alludes to their common nationality; "De Vobis . . . quem Nobis regiae dignitatis honor fraternali dilectione parificat et ejusdem nobilis Slavici idiomatis participatio facit esse communem cum ejusdem generosae linguae sublimitas nos felicibus, auctore domino, et gratis auspiciis parturiverit."

the juridical, the medical, and the philosophical one. The university was also divided—according to the nationality of the students—into "nations," of which the Bohemian "nation" also included the students from Moravia, Hungary, and the southern Slav lands. The Bavarian "nation," besides the inhabitants of that country, also comprised the Austrians, Swabians, Franconians, and inhabitants of the Rhine-lands, whilst the Polish "nation" was composed—besides the Poles—of Silesians, Russians, and Lithuanians. The fourth, the Saxon "nation," contained, besides the Saxon students, also those from Meissen and Thuringia, as well as those from Denmark and Sweden.

It was undoubtedly in connection with this foundation[1] that King Charles decided on enlarging the town of Prague by building the "new town" (Nové Město) between the Vyšehrad hill and the banks of the Vltava.[2]

Among the many efforts of King Charles to increase the prosperity of Bohemia, we must not omit the protection he afforded to the commerce of the country. "Every one of the treaties of peace and conventions he made, as a rule, contained stipulations in favour of the Bohemian merchants."[3] Some of the dispositions he made appear strange from the point of view of modern national economy, but were no doubt adapted to the times. Among other similar regulations, Charles decreed that all foreign merchants who crossed the Bohemian frontier should be compelled to come to Prague, and there for a time exhibit their goods for sale. Foreign merchants were further forbidden to transact any business, especially banking business, among themselves, but were only to do so through the medium of a Bohemian merchant.

Two institutions created by King Charles, which still bear his name, date from about this time. In the year 1348 Charles began to build a large fortified castle in a very strong, indeed at that time impregnable, situation on the summit of a steep rock to the west of, and not far from, the city of Prague. This castle, to which Charles gave the name of Karlstein, was intended to be a safe depository for the Crown jewels and treasures of the Bohemian kings, as well as the State archives of the country. It could also

[1] The number of students during the lifetime of King Charles already amounted to between five and seven thousand.

[2] In German Moldan.

[3] Palacký.

serve as a stronghold to which the members of the royal family could retire in time of danger. Charles appointed two burgraves, one chosen from among the nobles and the other from the knights, as governors of the Karlstein, and these burgraves—who were considered not only as Court but also as State officials—afterwards ranked among the most important dignities of Bohemia.

Another very different foundation has also retained the name of Charles; it is the now well-known watering-place of Karlsbad. The legend tells us that when the king was pursuing a stag he was surprised to hear one of his hounds suddenly howl, and that he then noticed that the animal had been badly scalded while crossing a stream. He is said to have caused the water of this stream to be medically examined, and its salutary effects thus became known. It seems probable that the existence of these hot springs was locally known before the time of King Charles, but it was undoubtedly due to him that their fame spread. Charles built himself a castle near these springs which he called Karlsbad, a name that soon extended to the few dwellings then standing near the spot.

While endeavouring to secure order and prosperity to Bohemia, Charles also successfully essayed to extend the frontiers of the country. German authors have indeed, not without truth, often accused him of preferring Bohemia to their own land. Early in his reign the king acquired by purchase twenty towns and castles in the Upper Palatine, thus—for the time—extending the Bohemian frontier nearly to the gates of Nuremberg. Towards the end of the year 1354 Charles undertook the expedition to Rome which had become almost obligatory for the German kings. He first proceeded to Milan, where he was crowned with the iron crown of the Lombard kings, and then continued his journey to Rome, where his coronation as Emperor took place, two cardinals sent from Avignon by Innocent VI acting as the Pope's substitutes. On his return north the new Emperor, while at Pisa, was attacked by one of the factions then disputing for the domination of the town,[1] and only saved by the bravery of his body-guard. After having

[1] Beneš de Weitmil (*Chronicon*, lib. iv) calls them "fraude diabolica pleni et in omni malitia experti." Weitmil's account of the events at Pisa agrees with the Italian account contained in the chronicle of the Villani.

defeated and punished the aggressors, Charles left Italy, and arrived at Prague on August 15 (1355).

During the king's absence from Bohemia order had been much disturbed by bands of robbers, who rendered the high-roads unsafe. Charles took immediate steps to restore security to his country, and—shortly after his return from Italy—he besieged Žampach, a castle situated on the summit of a steep hill belonging to John of Smoyno, the leader of the most numerous of these bands of robbers. John of Smoyno, who from his habit of always appearing in full armour was known as "Pancíř" (the man in armour), had formerly served in the king's army, and had been knighted by him for his bravery, and presented with a golden chain. Žampach was taken after a siege of some duration, the castle destroyed, and the "Pancíř" hanged by order of the king. Charles is said to have himself thrown the rope round his neck, telling him "that it was not only golden chains that he had in his gift." Several other strongholds of robbers in the same district (that of Králové Hradec), which had been the most disturbed part of the country, were subsequently destroyed when the king returned to Prague to assemble the Estates at a Diet. We are specially told that the Estates, not only of Bohemia, but also those of Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia, were convoked.

Charles proposed to the Estates the adoption of a code of laws founded on those of Rome, but this proposal, as being in many ways contrary to the old legal traditions of Bohemia, was very unfavourably received. Charles, with his usual prudence, very soon gave up these intended changes. He succeeded, however, in obtaining the consent of the Estates to several other legal dispositions, particularly to those which guaranteed to the peasants the right of appealing to the royal law-courts against their territorial lords. The necessity of this enactment proves that attempts had already been made to introduce into Bohemia the system of servitude which had long prevailed in Germany, though serfs were entirely unknown to the original—Slavonic—constitution of Bohemia.

In the same year (1355) Charles, after the termination of the Diet of Prague, proceeded to Nuremberg, where an assembly of the Electors and princes of Germany took place. The deliberations which took place here, and which were continued the following year at the Diet of Metz

(1356), resulted in the publication of the celebrated Golden Bull, in which the Emperor Charles attempted to codify the regulations concerning the election of the kings of Germany. The Golden Bull belongs rather to German than to Bohemian history, but it may be noted that it contains a reaffirmation of all the privileges formerly granted to the lands of the Bohemian, and that it contained a special paragraph which decreed that the sons of the Electors and other German princes were to learn the Bohemian language, as it was a language respected in the Empire and useful to them.[1]

The Golden Bull was not favourably received by the Holy See, as its regulations concerning the election of the German kings tacitly ignored certain undefined claims to influence these elections which the Popes had several times raised. The friendship between Emperor and Pope decreased for a time, and the latter even favoured the plan of certain German princes to depose the Emperor Charles.

The Emperor, though he has always by German historians been accused of undue subserviency to the Holy See, showed great firmness on this occasion. At an Imperial Diet, which assembled at Maintz in 1357, the Emperor very strongly opposed the demand of the papal legate who was present, that a tithe should be collected from the German clergy for the benefit of the papal court. Charles called on the bishops to pay greater attention to the morals and conduct of their clergy, and even threatened to seize the ecclesiastical revenues should they not be more worthily employed. Though the momentary estrangement between Pope and Emperor may have been one of the motives of the energetic language which Charles used, there is no doubt that the Emperor, a man of earnest and unaffected piety, seriously desired to reform the habits and morals of the clergy.

At no time, indeed, was such a reformation more necessary. Warfare, tournaments, hunting, and gambling were widely spread among the clergy, and immorality was almost universal, the law of celibacy having fallen into complete neglect.[2] This degraded condition of the clergy produced

[1] Tomek.

[2] Baron Helfert, *Hus und Hieronymus*, p. 18, says that the immorality of the clergy was then so great that some parishes even considered it desirable that their priests should live in concubinage, "hoc modo proprias uxores tutiores ab insidiis existimantes." This cannot be considered as a party statement, as Baron Helfert's book is written from a strongly Catholic point of view.

an agitation during Charles's reign which was to develop, under that of his son, into the Hussite movement, when Bohemia for a time attracted the attention of all Europe.

The movement in Bohemia in favour of Church reform was originally free from all hostility to the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. The earliest leaders were among "the truest and most obedient sons of the Church."[1] As the two earliest of these reformers, Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměříže,[2] died before the Emperor Charles, it will be as well to mention them here. Conrad Waldhauser, a German by birth, was summoned to Prague by the Emperor Charles in consequence of the great reputation as a preacher which he had acquired in Austria, his original home. In his sermons at Prague he at first inveighed against the immorality and extravagance of the citizens, and the result of his preaching was most extraordinary. The women of Prague left off wearing jewels and costly dresses, and many of the greatest sinners in the town did public penance. Conrad then began attacking the corruption of the clergy, particularly of the mendicant friars. He was denounced both by the Dominican and Augustine monks, but the Emperor continued his protection to him, as is proved by the fact that he appointed him to the most important parish in Prague. Waldhauser therefore remained unmolested by the priests up to his death in the year 1369.

Milič of Kroměříže, who is also generally considered one of the precursors of Hus, was a canon of the cathedral of Prague, and for some time held the office of vice-chancellor at the court of Prague. Most Bohemian historians agree in attributing the Emperor's attitude at the Diet of Maintz largely to the influence of Milič. In 1363 he suddenly renounced all his dignities, intending in future to live in complete poverty, and for the one purpose of preaching the gospel. As Milič—a Moravian by birth—spoke the language of the country, his preaching attracted more attention, and had a wider influence on the people, than that of Waldhauser.

On the other hand, he seems to have provoked greater enmity on the part of the monks, whose views he very openly exposed. They were therefore only too glad when

[1] Baron Helfert, *Hus und Hieronymus*, p. 18.

[2] In German Kremsier.

Milič fell into what were considered errors of dogma. The great corruption of the times appears to have inspired him with the idea that the end of the world was near, and he gave publicity to his views in a pamphlet entitled *Libellus de Antichristo.* Milič started to Rome to defend himself, and was imprisoned there during the absence of Pope Urban. After the Pope's arrival in Rome an interview between him and Milič took place, and the Pontiff, evidently recognizing the purity of his intentions, ordered him to be set at liberty. It has, however, been noted that Milič henceforth laid less stress on his peculiar views concerning the Antichrist, though he never formally withdrew them; his zeal for the reform of the Church became even greater than before.

Milič returned to Prague immediately after his liberation, and was received with great rejoicing by the people, if not by the mendicant friars, who had considered his condemnation to death as certain.[1] Milič now resumed his preaching, and though advanced in years acquired the knowledge of the German language so as to be able to preach to the German inhabitants of Prague also. The old enmity of the mendicant friars against the saintly priest never seems to have grown less, and they—despairing of harming him in Bohemia, where the protection of Charles ensured his safety—again denounced him to the Papal See. Milič again appealed to the Pope, and repaired to the papal court at Avignon, where he died (1374), before his case had been judged by the ecclesiastical tribunal. Besides Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměříže, Matthew of Janow, a disciple of Milič, and Thomas of Štitný[2] are also generally counted among the precursors of Hus.

It is probable that these dissensions, the first beginning of a movement that was to become of world-wide importance, did not attract much attention at the time, and were considered of hardly greater importance than the controversies between the different religious orders, which were so

[1] "Cum vero Pragam"—Milič and his companion—"venissent quasi nova lux omnibus Christi fidelibus orta fuisset, ita gaudebant quia per viros religiosos mendicantes saepe in eorum praedicationibus audiebant ubi dicebatur: Carissimi ecce jam Milicius cremabitur" (from the life of Milič contained in the learned Jesuit Balbinus's *Miscellanea Historica Regni Bohemiae*, vol. iv).

[2] For Thomas of Štitný see my *History of Bohemian Literature*, pp. 63-79 (2nd ed.).

frequent at that time. The estrangement between Charles and the Papal See was not of long duration, but the Emperor always maintained his opinion as to the necessity of Church reform.

Shortly after his reconciliation with the Pope, the Emperor, who had for some time been at war with Duke Rudolph IV of Austria and Louis, King of Hungary, concluded a treaty (1364) with the former prince by which the succession to the Bohemian crown was—in the case of the extinction of the reigning family—assured to the house of Austria, whilst the Austrian duke assured the succession to his lands to the Bohemian kings should the dynasty of Habsburg become extinct. As a similar treaty had already been concluded between the King of Hungary and the Duke of Austria, Hungary was included in this agreement, which may be considered as the origin of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as it exists at the present day.

In the following year (1365) Charles proceeded on a journey to Avignon to visit Pope Urban V. The purpose of this visit is unknown, but it is probable that the Emperor again wished to attract the Pope's attention to the question of Church reform, and to what seemed to the Emperor directly connected with this question, the transfer of the papal court from Avignon to Rome. This appears for a long time to have been a change on which the Emperor had set his whole heart, and he was undoubtedly influenced by a serious concern for the welfare of the Church. It was for this purpose that Charles had at one time attempted to obtain the papal throne for Ernest of Pardubic, Archbishop of Prague, who would probably have willingly acceded to the wishes of the King of Bohemia, by restoring the seat of papacy to Rome.

A great majority of the cardinals, particularly those who were of French nationality, strongly opposed the transfer of the papal court, as they did not wish to leave their own country, and were also influenced by the state of insecurity prevalent in Italy at that time.

From Avignon Charles made a short excursion to Arles, to be crowned there as King of Arles,[1] a former dependency

[1] "The kingdom of Burgundy or Arles (*regnum Burgundiae, regnum Arelatense*) included Provence, Dauphiné, Savoy, the country between the Saone and the Jura, and a considerable part of what is now Switzerland. On the death of its last independent king, Rudolph, in 1002,

of the Empire, but of which the greatest part had already been absorbed in the kingdom of France.

The Emperor's visit to the Pope, though only of ten days' duration, was, on the whole, successful, as he had obtained the Pope's promise to transfer the Holy See to Rome as soon as Charles should be able to enter Italy with an army, and protect the Pope against his enemies in that country.

On his return to Germany, Charles found that country so disturbed by internal dissensions, that he was not immediately able to fulfil his promise to the Pope. It was only in the year 1368 that Charles undertook a new expedition to Italy, where he first forced Bernabo de' Visconti, Lord of Milan, to sue for peace, and then marched to Rome to visit Pope Urban V, who had already arrived there the year before. Charles remained in Italy more than a year, but was recalled by threatening news from the East. King Louis of Hungary and King Casimir of Poland had entered into an alliance for the purpose of limiting what to them seemed the undue aggrandizement of the house of Luxemburg. They particularly wished to prevent the absorption of Brandenburg in the already extensive hereditary dominions of the Emperor Charles.

Margrave Otho of Brandenburg, son of the former German Emperor Louis and husband of Catherine, daughter of the Emperor Charles, had ceded the succession to his margravate to his father-in-law, mainly on account of loans he had received from him. Otho, principally through the advice of King Louis of Hungary, now attempted to deny the validity of this engagement, and declared his nephew Frederick (son of his brother Stephen, Duke of Bavaria) his heir. Charles considered this violation of his pledge as a cause of war, and invaded Brandenburg (1371). After some fighting, Margrave Otho was obliged to submit, as he was insufficiently aided by the King of Hungary, and the death of King Casimir of Poland at this time frustrated all hope of help from that country. An agreement was arrived at (1373) through the mediation of the Pope—now Gregory XI. Otho renounced all his claims on Brandenburg, even during his lifetime, on payment of a large sum of money, and on the condition that the Emperor should

it came into the hands of the Emperor Conrad II, and henceforward formed a part of the Empire. As early as the thirteenth century parts of it fell into the hands of France" (Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*).

cede certain castles in the Upper Palatinate to him. According to the wishes of the Estates of Brandenburg, that country was incorporated with the lands of the Bohemian crown, and thus became an object of more direct interest to Charles.

By the annexation of Silesia, Lusatia, and Brandenburg, the Bohemian kingdom had in itself become one of the great European Powers, particularly as Charles had also obtained possession of territories in Germany. Large though isolated districts in the present kingdoms of Bavaria and Saxony had become either domains of the sovereign of Bohemia, or fiefs of the Bohemian crown, forming what Palacký calls "Bohemian islands" in Germany. It seems very probable that Charles planned the reconstruction of the German Empire under the house of Luxemburg, and with Bohemia as its centre. This plan, "had it succeeded, would have transformed Germany into a monarchy such as France was; but it would undoubtedly have resulted in the dissolution of the Bohemian nationality as such."[1]

It was certainly in view of these ambitious plans that Charles, at the price of great sacrifices, induced the German princes, during his lifetime, to proclaim his son Venceslas as his successor (1376).

Charles died two years later (1378), at the age of sixty-two, at a moment when his death was an even more irreparable loss to Bohemia than it would have been at any other time.

The death of Pope Gregory XI in the same year (1378) marks the beginning of the great schism in the Western Church which tended largely to give a revolutionary turn to the movement in favour of Church reform already existing in Bohemia. If such conjectures were not in themselves futile, it would be interesting to speculate on the results had Charles—not then a very old man—lived to a greater age. As a man of acknowledged piety and learning,[2] faithful to the dogmas of the Catholic Church, and yet thoroughly convinced of the necessity of the reform of that Church, it is probable that the part he would have played would have differed much from that of his son and successor.

Charles, German Emperor and King of Bohemia, has been very differently judged by the historians of the two

[1] Palacký.

[2] Palacký calls him the most learned sovereign of his age.

countries. I. has been attempted in these notes to give some idea—as far as a limited space allows—of the policy by which Charles strove, and successfully strove, to raise Bohemia to the rank of one of the great Powers of Europe, and at the same time to secure for it a degree of prosperity the country had never enjoyed before.

On the other hand, Charles has been very severely criticized by the German historians. The title of "Pfaffenkaiser" (Emperor of the priests), which they usually give him, is entirely unmerited, in so far as it implies undue subserviency to the Papal See.[1] The Golden Bull, which very seriously curtailed the rights of the Popes as to the elections of the kings of the Germans, the attitude of Charles at the Diet of Maintz, the protection he afforded to priests—such as Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměříže—who were accused of heresy, sufficiently prove that Charles was no bigot. That his disposition was truly and unaffectedly religious is indeed clearly shown by his policy, as well as by his own autobiography. Though he was undoubtedly a sincere friend of the Bohemian nation it is impossible to agree with the often-quoted appreciation of the Emperor Maximilian, who called his illustrious predecessor the "father of Bohemia but the stepfather of the Holy Roman Empire."

Venceslas, son of Charles by his third wife, Anna of Schweidnitz, was only seventeen years of age when he succeeded his father. The Emperor's joy at again having a male heir[2] was perhaps one of the causes of the excessive fondness he showed for his son,[3] of which he gave a proof by causing him, when only two years of age, to be crowned as King of Bohemia. Charles, as already mentioned, also secured the succession to the German throne to his eldest son. Of the two other sons whom Charles left, the one, Sigismund, inherited Brandenburg, the other, John, a part of Lusatia. Charles's brother, John Henry, had died three years before him, and had been succeeded by his eldest son

[1] It is curious to find these appreciations of German authors—largely founded on national antipathies—repeated by such modern English writers as Carlyle and Mr. J. R. Green.

[2] A son of Charles by his second wife, Anna of the Palatinate, also called Venceslas, was born in 1350, but died in 1351.

[3] Palacký tells us that Charles, anxious to obtain as tutor for his son the most learned man of his age, offered that post to Petrarch, who, however, declined it.

Jodocus—or Jobst. Of the other sons of John Henry, one, Prokop, who played a somewhat important part in the troubles that soon broke out in Bohemia, inherited lands in Moravia, while the other became Bishop of Litomyšl, and afterwards Patriarch of Aquileja.

In the beginning of his reign Venceslas, still surrounded by the old, experienced councillors of his father, gave proof of the best intentions for the welfare of his country. He attempted to rule the country on the same principles as Charles, and also endeavoured to suppress the schism in the Western Church, then the all-important matter of interest in the whole of Europe. The schism began almost simultaneously with the accession of Venceslas, and its influence on the religious disputes of Bohemia can hardly be overrated. The practice adopted by the rival claimants to the papal throne of excommunicating each other, and of employing the most terrible threats known to mediaeval theology against the adherents of their rival, brought these weapons of ecclesiastical warfare into discredit, and undermined the authority of the Church, which had been already weakened by the attacks of Waldhauser and Milič on the immorality of the clergy.

After the death of Pope Gregory XI (1378) the cardinals had elected as Pope Bartolomeo Prignani, Archbishop of Bari, who assumed the title of Urban VI; but some of their numbers, probably influenced by the French court, which desired the return of the Popes to Avignon, disputed the validity of the election of Urban VI, as having been forced on the cardinals by the menacing attitude of the Roman people. They assembled at Fondi, in the kingdom of Naples, and chose as Pope Cardinal Robert of Geneva, who assumed the name of Clement VII. The Emperor Charles had, during the last months of his life, warmly defended the validity of the election of Pope Urban,[1] and Venceslas at first endeavoured to continue his father's policy. At the Imperial Diet which assembled at Frankfort in 1379, Venceslas induced the German princes to recognize Urban VI as legitimate Pope, and to renounce all connection with "Robert of Geneva, the so-called Pope Clement VII."

[1] Palacký tells us that Charles, in the last months of his life, wrote letters to the dissenting cardinals urging them to recognize Pope Urban, and that he also wrote to Queen Joan of Naples, entreating her to afford no aid to the cardinals who were then assembled in Neapolitan territory.

It was even declared that in case of the death of Venceslas nobody should be chosen as his successor who had not previously declared that he recognized Urban VI as the legitimate head of the Church.

The able counsel of the old ministers of the Emperor Charles, on whose advice he had attempted to restore unity to the Church, and who had guided him at first in the government of Bohemia,[1] soon began to fail the king, and he gradually fell under other and very different influences. Venceslas more and more incurred the enmity of the higher nobility and of the great State officials by the favour he showed to persons of lower rank, knights and citizens, on whom he even—to the great indignation of the nobles—conferred court dignities. The very scanty records we have of the earlier part of the reign of Venceslas contain repeated —probably not unfounded—complaints of the increasing laziness and drunkenness of the king, whose character seems gradually to have deteriorated.

The friendship between France and Bohemia, which had become less intimate during the last years of the reign of Charles, ceased entirely in consequence of the support given by Venceslas to Pope Urban VI. Shortly after, and to a certain extent in consequence of this event, a family alliance between the houses of Plantagenet and Luxemburg took place. As the King of France supported the claims of Pope Clement VII, Venceslas hoped to secure for Urban the adherence of England, then the perpetual adversary of France. He addressed a letter to Richard II, informing him that he and the German princes, including his brother Sigismund, recognized Urban VI as the legitimate Pope, and intended to support him. The King of England evidently agreed with the views of Venceslas, for he forwarded a copy of this letter to Peter, King of Arragon, exhorting him also to recognize Pope Urban. The agreement between the two sovereigns as to the then all-important question of the legitimate succession to the papal throne was shortly followed by a treaty by which the two royal families became connected.[2] Through the envoys of the

[1] "At least during the first fifteen years of the reign of Venceslas public order and tranquillity were as secure (in Bohemia) as during the reign of his father" (Tomek).

[2] Want of space renders it impossible to enter into details as to the matrimonial negotiations.

two sovereigns, a marriage between King Richard and Anne, daughter of the late Emperor Charles and sister of King Venceslas, was arranged. A treaty was at the same time concluded, by which both sovereigns again pledged themselves to recognize Pope Urban and his legitimate successors. It was further stipulated that the subjects of King Richard should be allowed to come to the (German) empire and Venceslas's own lands for purposes of trade, and remain there without hindrance. No reciprocity was granted with regard to the Bohemian and German merchants. "The munificent bridegroom granted his future brother-in-law a loan of 20,000 golden gulders, for which no guarantee was claimed. The deed, which was signed by the envoys, provided that the claim on the money lent to King Venceslas should be invalid from the moment that Princess Anne arrived in England or at Calais. It is therefore not surprising that the people of England should have said that Venceslas had sold them his sister—particularly as King Richard also promised Venceslas to pay the sum of 80,000 golden guidens to him within a fortnight of the arrival of Princess Anne in English territory."[1] On December 13, 1381, the Bohemian princess landed at Dover, and we are told that she brought with her a copy of the Bible written in Latin, Bohemian, and German. There seems to be no doubt that the Bohemian princess kept up a correspondence with her country, so that it is possible, though not probable, that she—according to the general supposition—contributed to making the teaching of Wycliffe known in Bohemia.

The ever-increasing hostility in Bohemia against the clergy, particularly its higher orders, at that time extended to the king also, and to the favourites who surrounded him. One of these, John Čuch of Zasada, who held the office of Court Marshal, became involved in a quarrel with John Jenstein, now Archbishop of Prague, for a very paltry cause.[2] The king energetically took the part of his favourite, and caused the archbishop, who had attempted to secure his claim by force, to be imprisoned in the

[1] Dr. Höfler, *Anna von Luxemburg, Königin von England.*

[2] The archbishop accused Zasada of having constructed a weir on the river Elbe near the lands of the archbishop, and caused the weir to be forcibly removed by his retainers. In the struggle which ensued fire-arms are said to have been used for the first time in Bohemia.

fortress of Karlstein; he even permitted Zasada to revenge himself on the archbishop by plundering the archiepiscopal lands. This quarrel was finally made up, but the feeling at court against the archbishop became even more bitter than before. John of Jenstein certainly did not assume a conciliatory attitude. At a moment when the anti-clerical feeling was so strong in Bohemia, and when the Church was weakened by its division, he attempted to enforce claims that would have been challenged even in quieter times. The question as to the limits of temporal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction at that period caused great difficulties, as persons enjoying clerical immunities often committed the greatest excesses. In the year 1392 the archbishop excommunicated the king's vice-chamberlain, because he had ordered several students of theology—who had, however, not yet been consecrated as priests—to be arrested, and two of them to be executed. The vice-chamberlain had taken this action with the full approval of the king. The archbishop did not deny the justice of the punishment, but he complained of the infringement of the ecclesiastical immunities.

The excommunication of one of his officials for actions done with the knowledge and approval of the king violently irritated him, and another incident that occurred shortly afterwards raised the fury of the irascible king to the highest pitch. He had planned the foundation of a new bishopric in Bohemia, probably by the advice of the ecclesiastics at his court, who coveted the new appointment. Venceslas only waited for the death of the Abbot Raček of Kladrau to suppress that convent and endow the new bishopric with its revenues. No opposition was to be feared from Pope Boniface IX,[1] with whom the king was on terms of friendship. The archbishop, however, frustrated the plans of Venceslas by sending to Kladrau his vicar-general, John of Pomuk, who induced the monks, immediately after the death of Raček, to choose a new abbot, whose election Pomuk, in the name of the archbishop, immediately confirmed.

The king's fury now knew no bounds. The court officials very imprudently arranged a meeting between Venceslas and the archbishop. On seeing the latter the king was quite unable to control his fury. He ordered John of

[1] Boniface IX had succeeded Urban VI in 1389. In 1394 Benedict XIII succeeded Clement VII as anti-Pope at Avignon.

Jenstein and the ecclesiastics who accompanied him to be immediately arrested. The archbishop escaped by the protection of his armed retinue, but the four ecclesiastics who were with him, and among whom was John of Pomuk, were thrown into prison and put on the rack by order of the king. Venceslas insisted that they should give a written promise to abandon the archbishop, and act in future according to the king's wishes. Three of them immediately submitted to the demands of Venceslas, but John of Pomuk refused to do so, and was so cruelly tortured that his death became certain, whereupon he was thrown into the river Vltava.[1]

The archbishop meanwhile fled to the court of Pope Boniface at Rome, but he received little encouragement from him. The schism in the Western Church made it impossible for the Pope to risk alienating the friendship of the German king, the most important of his adherents among the reigning princes. Finding no support in Rome, John of Jenstein returned to Bohemia, and soon after voluntarily renounced his position as Archbishop of Prague (1393).

Venceslas had, on the whole, been successful in reducing the clergy of Bohemia to obedience, but he now found himself confronted by a confederation of the Bohemian nobles, which became known as the "League of the Lords," and to which many of his nearest relations adhered—some secretly, some openly. The leaders of the confederacy were Henry, Lord of Rosenberg, and the king's cousin, Jocodus of Moravia. Albert III, Duke of Austria, and William, Margrave of Meissen, also joined the league. Venceslas's brother Sigismund, King of Hungary,[2] appears to have played a double game. While assuring Venceslas of his friendship, he was all along in complete understanding with the league.

The nobles who belonged to the league accused the king of various misdeeds, but their main purpose was undoubtedly

[1] The legend of St. John of Nepomuk derives its origin from this occurrence. At the time of the canonization of St. John Bohemian history was only known in Western Europe through the utterly unreliable chronicle of Hajek of Libočan.

[2] Sigismund had (1385) married Mary, daughter of King Louis of Hungary, and had (1387) been crowned as King of Hungary. The expenses he incurred in maintaining his position in that country forced him to sell Brandebourg (1388) to his cousin, Margrave Jodocus of Moravia.

to restrict his rights as to the appointments to the great State and court offices. They therefore demanded a promise from the king that he would in future govern according to the advice of State officials, whom he was to choose among the higher nobility: on his refusal they attacked him in his castle of Beraun, and conducted him to Prague as a prisoner. The lords of the league then declared Jodocus of Moravia "starosta" (dictator).[1]

Venceslas contrived to communicate secretly with his brother John, Duke of Görlitz (in Lusatia), and succeeded in obtaining aid from him. The people of Bohemia, who had no cause to complain of Venceslas, even took up arms in his favour, so that when Duke John arrived at Prague he was amicably received by the citizens. Further help arrived from Margrave Prokop, who had long been at enmity with his brother Jodocus, and Venceslas was also supported by several of the German princes, who were indignant at the imprisonment of the King of the Germans. The lords of the league were, at the time, unable to oppose such numerous adversaries, and though they at first obliged Venceslas to follow them as a prisoner, they soon saw the necessity of conditionally restoring him to freedom. The only condition demanded appears to have been a complete amnesty for the lords of the league, which was guaranteed by Duke John in the name of his brother, who refused to enter into any negotiations till he had recovered his liberty. Almost immediately after his liberation Venceslas endeavoured to make preparations for renewed warfare against the league of the lords, but his efforts to form a party were entirely unsuccessful. After the death of Duke John (1396) the king was obliged to ask his brother Sigismund, King of Hungary, and even Margrave Jodocus, to mediate between him and the nobles of Bohemia.

The agreement which, through the mediation of King Sigismund, was now obtained, corresponded entirely to the wishes of the league. Venceslas undertook to appoint members of that league to all the important State offices. The head of the league, Henry, Lord of Rosenberg, became burgrave, and Margrave Jodocus remained at Prague practically usurping the regal powers. Irritated by the

[1] This title, derived from the earliest times of Bohemian history, ensured to its bearer almost unlimited power, so that the authority of Venceslas became purely nominal.

overbearing attitude of Jodocus, Venceslas shortly afterwards banished him from Bohemia, and on his departure for Germany left the Margrave Prokop—now for some time his most trusted councillor—as his representative in Bohemia.

The presence of Venceslas was at that moment very necessary in Germany. The want of firmness he had lately shown in the administration of his hereditary lands had encouraged his enemies in Germany, at whose head was the ambitious Elector Palatine Ruprecht. He summoned a Diet of the Empire to Frankfort (1398), but this step was taken too late to disarm his enemies, who were already planning his deposition. From Germany King Venceslas proceeded to France to consult with King Charles VI as to the means of ending the papal schism. The two sovereigns decided that both Popes should abdicate, and that the united assembly of the cardinals should elect a new Pope.

This settlement was naturally displeasing to Pope Boniface, and when Venceslas informed him of his wish that he should abdicate, he became an enemy of the king, and consequently a supporter of the Elector Palatine. Countenanced by Boniface, the three ecclesiastical Electors deposed Venceslas (1400), accusing him of neglecting the affairs of the Empire and alienating lands belonging to it,[1] and in his place chose Rupert, Elector Palatine, as King of the Germans. Encouraged by Rupert, the lords of the league had in 1399 again taken up arms against their king.

A new internal struggle began in Bohemia, of which we have very scanty record, but in which the Confederates on the whole had the advantage. Venceslas was again obliged to come to terms with his enemies, and to appoint a council from among the principal nobles of the country, a point that had always been the principal object of the league of the lords. The new Archbishop of Prague, Wilfram of Skvorec, and Henry, Lord of Rosenberg, were to hold the principal offices of State. Venceslas about this time succeeded in detaching Margrave Jodocus from the Confederacy by giving up Lusatia to him for his lifetime.

King Sigismund of Hungary had not been able to interfere during the new troubles, as he had at that time been

[1] This referred to the fact that Venceslas had conferred the title of Duke of Milan on John Galeazzo de' Visconti without consulting the Electors.

imprisoned by the rebellious Hungarian nobles, who behaved towards him very much in the same way as the Bohemian lords had formerly done to Venceslas. King Venceslas was much grieved by the imprisonment of his brother, whom he believed to be his friend, and it was principally through his efforts and financial sacrifices that Sigismund at last regained his liberty.

Foolishly relying on the gratitude of his younger brother, Venceslas hoped to be able with his help to throw off the mastership of the State officials, whom he had been obliged to appoint, and who had practically annulled the power of the Crown. Venceslas invited Sigismund to Bohemia as soon as he had regained his liberty, and associated him as co-regent in the government of the country. He wished his brother to accompany him to Italy, intending at last to journey to Rome for his coronation. Sigismund abused the confidence of his credulous brother in the most infamous way. During the journey he seized Venceslas as a prisoner, and by his own authority appointed Bishop John of Litomyšl Governor of Bohemia, intending to deprive Venceslas entirely of his sovereignty over that country. Margrave Prokop, whom Venceslas had again appointed regent, was imprisoned by order of Sigismund. As an insurrection against the unconstitutional rule of Bishop John broke out almost immediately, Sigismund hastened back to Bohemia, leaving Venceslas as a prisoner in the custody of his ally, the Duke of Austria. Sigismund was on the point of opening hostilities against the Bohemian towns that adhered to King Venceslas, when an insurrection in Hungary recalled him to that country, and for the time freed Bohemia of his presence.

Shortly afterwards (1403) Venceslas succeeded in escaping from Vienna, where he had been imprisoned by the Duke of Austria, and he speedily returned to Bohemia. He was this time cordially received, even by his former enemies, whom the outrageous extortions of Sigismund had alienated. The league of the lords was voluntarily dissolved, and Venceslas again became undisputed ruler of Bohemia.

The movement in favour of religious reform, which commenced during the reign of King Charles IV, had constantly increased in the ten years during which the struggle between Venceslas and the Bohemian nobles had lasted. Waldhauser and Milič had died before the accession of Venceslas;

but Matthew of Janow had gone a step further than his predecessors, as—besides inveighing against the notorious immorality of the clergy—he also attacked several dogmas of the Church. He was indeed persuaded to withdraw his heretical statements, but this in no way impeded the growth of the movement, which, through the agency of John Hus, was soon to become of world-wide importance.

It has often been asked why the general degradation of the clergy and the scandal caused by the schism, seeing how common they were to the whole Western Church, should have aroused in Bohemia a wider movement than in any other country. One of these reasons is generally supposed to be the influence of Wycliffe in Bohemia, and it is certain that his writings were more studied at the University of Prague than in many places nearer England, and that several of his doctrines were defended by Hus. The influence of Queen Anne of England has also been put forward as facilitating knowledge in Bohemia of occurrences in England, and from the queen's pious disposition it is not unlikely that the correspondence she carried on with relations and friends in Bohemia contained allusions to theological matters. The fact of the possession by the queen of a Bible in the vulgar tongue (a fact already mentioned), has been made an excuse for many suppositions, but there is no direct evidence that the queen favoured any movement for Church reform either in England or in Bohemia.

If the writings of Wycliffe attracted more attention in Bohemia than elsewhere, it is because the soil was already prepared for religious changes. The movement against the Roman Church was, on the whole, an indigenous one, and was to a great extent caused by the national differences between Germans and Bohemians.

The Bohemian language, which had been neglected at court and in the towns during the reigns of the last Přemyslides, had increased in importance under Charles, and still more under Venceslas. The principal causes of this change date from the reign of King Charles; they were the creation of the Archbishopric of Prague, by which Bohemia was detached from the German Archbishopric of Maintz, and the foundation of the "new town" of Prague in which—contrary to the customs of the older town—the Bohemian language was used for the purpose of administration and

justice. A further step in the same direction was the decision of Venceslas that all decrees of the court and the Government, for which hitherto either the German or the Latin tongue had been employed, should henceforth be published in Bohemian. We also find at this period an increasing movement among the Bohemian clergy in favour of preaching in the native language, even in the towns; and it is probable that the example of Milič of Kroměříže, whose sermons had so deeply stirred the people, contributed largely to induce the clergy to use the native language for their sermons.

The national party, as soon as it had gathered strength, began to view with displeasure the condition of the Prague University, the great intellectual centre of the country. The management of the university, and therefore the right to confer the numerous dignities, professorships, and prebends which were in its gift, was entirely in German hands. It has already been mentioned that the university was divided into four "nations"; and as the Polish "nation," particularly after the foundation of the University of Cracow, was largely composed of Germans from Silesia and Pomerania, the Slav Bohemians found themselves in a permanent minority in their own country; this was considered particularly unfair, as the university had been founded and endowed at the expense of Bohemia. A movement against the predominance of the Germans began as early as 1385, when the Bohemians specially attacked the appointment of foreigners to the offices of the university. The Archbishop of Prague, to whom both parties appealed, decided in favour of the Bohemians, declaring that preference should be given to them, and that Germans should in future hold the offices of the university only in the absence of a fit Bohemian candidate. The Germans appealed to the Pope, and a compromise was at last obtained, according to which five of the great university dignities were always to be held by Bohemians, whilst the sixth one should alternate in the sequence that after two consecutive German occupants one Bohemian should always follow. This compromise only postponed temporarily the national struggle at the university, and it was inevitable that when a leader appeared in whom both the religious and the national tendencies of the country were personified, an outbreak must occur.

Such a leader was found in John Hus. Before giving

what, for want of space, must be a very short sketch of his career,[1] it will be well to mention one of the theories as to the origin of the Hussite movement. It is connected with the now uncontested fact that the struggle between the German and the Slav race was the principal cause of that movement.

It has been said by Bohemian writers since the seventeenth century, and it has recently been re-affirmed, especially by Russian historians, that the Hussite movement was not caused by a desire for Church reform, as were the other movements that subsequently took place in the Western world, but that it was rather a movement in favour of joining the Eastern Church; and that "Hus himself was of the orthodox Church (pravoslaw) in his views, his actions, and his endeavours."[2]

The Eastern origin of Christianity in Bohemia, the existence from remote times of the monastery of St. Prokop on the Sazava, which celebrated the services of the Church in the Slav language, the revival of the traditions of that monastery by the foundation of a Slavonic Benedictine convent by Charles IV, the fact that the celibacy of the clergy and the administration of the Communion to laymen in one kind only were introduced into Bohemia far later than into other lands subject to the Western Church, are the principal points in favour of this theory.

The positive statement of Palacký[3]—the standard authority on Bohemian history up to 1526—that in spite of all

[1] For a full account of the career of Hus, I must refer my readers to my *Life and Times of Master John Hus.*

[2] Professor Kalousek, in a very remarkable article on "Russian Researches on the Causes and Objects of the Hussite Movement," published in the *Journal of the Bohemian Museum* for 1882. The learned professor is strongly opposed to this theory, which it would perhaps be hardly necessary to notice were it not that its very general acceptation in Russia gives it a certain importance. In the article mentioned above, Professor Kalousek says (quoting from a recent Russian writer), that the theory of the Greek "orthodox" origin and tendency of the "Hussite movement has, in Russia, been introduced into the school-books as an uncontested fact; it is maintained by people otherwise of the most divergent opinions; we hear of it from theologians and publicists on the most varied occasions, at Hus's jubilee, and at the foundation of the Greek Church at Prague, at the Slav Congress at Moscow (1867), and on the occasion of the Old-Catholic movement in Germany; everywhere they remind us of the 'orthodox' tendencies of the Bohemians."

[3] Palacký, *Böhmische Geschichte*, vol. iii. bk. vi. chap. iii.

researches among contemporary records he was unable to discover any trace whatever of Greco-Slavonic religious traditions at the period we refer to, may be considered as decisive.

It is possible that the religious and national aspirations of Bohemia would not have had the world-wide importance which they attained had it not been for John Hus, who is undoubtedly the most prominent representative of the Czecho-Slavic race in the the world's story.

John Hus was born at Husinec in Southern Bohemia, of parents who, though of humble birth, appear to have been in comparatively affluent circumstances. The date of his birth is uncertain; the most recent writers place it between 1373 and 1375. He studied at the University of Prague, at which he obtained the rank of "Magister" (M.A.) in 1396. He became Dean of the faculty of Philosophy in 1401, and Rector of the university, for the first time, in 1402. His marvellous eloquence as a preacher from the first attracted attention, and it does not seem to have impeded his career that, about the year 1399, he was already accused by some of his colleagues of maintaining doctrines contained in the writings of Wycliffe which the Council of Blackfriars had already condemned. These accusations also in no way prevented his gaining great favour both with the people and with the court; and Queen Sophia, wife of Venceslas, about this time appointed him her confessor. A large part of the nobility and particularly the courtiers and favourites of Venceslas, then openly supported Hus. "Among the Bohemian laymen of the highest rank there were enlightened men who were thoroughly interested in the spiritual requirements of their age; others also who had from old entertained a feeling of envy towards the superior ecclesiastics because of their wealth and immunities, and viewed with favour the hostile movement against them among the lower clergy and the people. The courtiers of Venceslas almost all belonged to one or the other division of the furtherers of the movement which strove to obtain Church reform."[1]

The estrangement of the king from Pope Boniface naturally embittered the courtiers against the higher clergy, who had maintained their allegiance to Boniface; though Sigismund, while ruling Bohemia during his brother's

[1] Tomek.

captivity, had attempted to detach the country from its allegiance to that Pope. Sigismund had (1403) instructed the Bohemian clergy not to obey any orders received from Boniface, who had previously called on the German princes to dethrone the house of Luxemburg, and to recognize the Elector Palatine as king. It may be added that Boniface, not having the whole revenue of the Church at his disposal, had aroused great indignation by exacting enormous sums for his confirmation of bishops and archbishops, and had even established a rule that the benefices in his gift, when vacant, or even when a vacancy was expected, should be publicly sold to the highest bidder.

It will thus be seen that the Hussite movement was at first favoured by the queen and court, and was then by no means the democratic movement which it afterwards became.

There was only one element in Bohemia that was from the very first hostile to the new movement, and that was the German party, both in the towns and at the university. The doctrines of Wycliffe had been freely expounded at the university in 1402, during which year Hus was Rector, and several of his friends, also belonging to the Bohemian "nation," held high appointments there. The German members of the university, both from national and from religious motives, opposed these doctrines, and when Walter Harasser of the Bavarian "nation" was Rector in the following year he convoked a general meeting of the university, which declared that forty-five articles taken from the writings of Wycliffe contained heresies, and forbade all members of the university to circulate them. Hus and the Bohemian "nation" protested against the decision, as they maintained—not without some truth—that the articles that had been read out were falsified, and did not convey Wycliffe's meaning. This debate was the first public manifestation of the reform movement. The Bohemians were greatly incensed at having been outvoted by the Germans,[2] and neither this decision, nor the subsequent prohibition addressed by the archbishop to the clergy of preaching the doctrine contained in the forty-five articles, interrupted the reform movement to any great extent. In 1408 the forty-

[1] Tomek.

[2] The compromise of 1385 had made no change in the system that all important votes at the university were taken by "nations," a system that left the Bohemians in a permanent minority of three to one.

five articles were again brought before the university, or rather before the forum of the Bohemian "nation," in which alone these doctrines had found adherents. The articles were again condemned, but with the limitation "that no member of the Bohemian 'nation' was to defend these articles in their false, erroneous, or heretical sense." As Palacký remarks, this restriction rendered the whole prohibition illusory.

During all this period the still-protracted schism in the Church reacted on the religious struggle in Bohemia. As both the Roman Pope, Gregory XII, and the Avignon Pope, Benedict XIII,[1] refused to renounce their claim to be considered the rightful Pontiff, the cardinals of both parties had—supported by the kings of Germany and France—decided that a Council should settle the question, and that in the meantime neither of the two claimants should be recognized as head of the Church.

Venceslas immediately attempted to enforce this decision in his hereditary lands, and on the refusal of the Archbishop of Prague to renounce his allegiance to Gregory XII he deferred the matter to the Prague University, a step entirely in conformance with the ideas of the time. Another general assembly of the members of the university now took place (1408), under the presidency of the Rector, Henry of Baltenhagen, a German. By the votes of the three German "nations," which overruled the Bohemian suffrages, it was decided that the university should continue to recognize Gregory XII as head of the Church.

Venceslas, who was then residing at Kutna Hora, summoned there representatives of both parties at the university, wishing to consult them on the subject of the deposition of Pope Gregory. The German deputation, headed by the Rector, Baltenhagen, was first received by the king. Baltenhagen cunningly avoided alluding to the subject on which his opinion had been asked, and drew the king's attention to the prevalence of "Wycliffism" in Prague. He declared that the good fame of Bohemia as a country free from heresy was imperilled. This was a point on which Venceslas felt very strongly. When, therefore, Hus and Jerome, as leaders of the Bohemian deputation, appeared

[1] Pope Boniface IX died in 1404, and was succeeded by Innocent VII, and then (1406) by Gregory XII. Benedict XIII had (1394) succeeded Clement VII as anti-Pope at Avignon.

before him, he received them very ungraciously. He accused them of fomenting disorders, and threatened them with death at the stake. Baltenhagen and the other Germans left Kutna Hora, assured that all their privileges at the university would be maintained.

The ever-vacillating king, in this instance, was again fated not to adhere to his first decision. Through the influence of those among his courtiers who favoured the national movement and the cause of reform, Venceslas was soon persuaded to accede to the wishes of the Bohemian party at the university, and to change the system of voting. He therefore published in January 1409 the famed "decree of Kutna Hora."[1] This decree ordained that the Bohemian "nation" should henceforth have three votes, and the combined foreign "nations" only one vote, both in the general deliberations of the university and in those of the separate faculties. The first result of this innovation was that the university, according to the wishes of the king, now decreed that Pope Gregory should no longer be recognized in Bohemia, and the clergy of the country should abide by the decision of the Council. Another more important consequence of the king's decision was that the German professors and students, considering themselves injured in their rights, left Prague to the number of about five thousand (1409).[2] Only the German members of the Polish "nation" joined in the emigration; those who were of the Slav race remained, and became part of the Bohemian "nation," with which their sympathies had been enlisted during the previous struggle. Hus, now the recognized leader of the national party, was elected Rector (1409), though he had served in that capacity only a few years before.

The reform movement naturally gathered increased strength from its success, and the university, formerly its opponent, now took the lead in furthering this movement, of which it henceforth became the centre. On the other hand, many of the patriotic nobles and other sympathizers with the claims of the Bohemian nationalists had little interest in theological details, or animosity against the

[1] A full account of the decree of Kutna Hora will be found in my *Life and Times of Master J. Hus*, p. 105.

[2] This seems to be the most probable number, though a contemporary Bohemian writer tells us that 20,000 German members of the university left Prague.

Church of Rome. These, considering that the object of the national party had been attained, gradually abandoned the party led by Hus; for not only had the university—the great centre of political life in Bohemia—fallen into the hands of the nationalists, but they shortly afterwards also obtained the municipal control over many towns.

The hopes that the Council then assembled at Pisa would undertake Church reform (hopes that at that moment were entertained by many fervent adherents of the Church of Rome) proved futile. The Council may indeed be said to have rendered the situation of the Western Church even more difficult than it had been before. The Council (1409) deposed both Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, and chose Alexander V as Pope,[1] but as the two other Popes, Gregory and Benedict, continued to be recognized in some countries, there were for a time three popes simultaneously. It is curious to note that at the same period, on the death of Rupert of the Palatinate (1401), some of the German Electors chose King Sigismund of Hungary, and others his cousin Jodocus, the Margrave of Moravia, as German king. Venceslas (as has been previously mentioned) having also claimed that title, the German kingdom had three kings at the same moment as the Roman Church had three popes. Jodocus died (1411) only three months after his election, and Venceslas and Sigismund now came to an agreement. The terms are not exactly known, as contemporary writers, entirely occupied with the ecclesiastical strife then raging in Bohemia, give little information on other matters. Venceslas, ever too confident in his treacherous younger brother, not only consented to the election of his brother as German king, but even assured him his own vote. Sigismund, on the other hand, promised to favour in every way his brother's election as Roman Emperor. Sigismund was soon afterwards, and this time unanimously, chosen as king by the German Electors (1411).

The failure of the Council of Pisa to achieve or even to attempt any reform of the Church, undoubtedly encouraged the higher clergy of Bohemia to oppose more energetically than before the reform movement in their own country. Zbyněk Zajic of Hasenburg, archbishop of Prague, had not at first been hostile to the movement in favour of

[1] He was succeeded in the following year by John XXIII.

Church reform. He soon noticed the piety and eloquence of the young priest, John Hus. He even appointed him preacher to the synod, and entrusted him with important missions. It was only gradually that Hus lost the favour of his ecclesiastical superiors, and only from the end of the year 1408 did the Church of Rome consider him as an open enemy. After having obtained the consent of the pope, Zbyněk decided to strike a decisive blow against the Hussite party. He issued a decree ordering that all writings of Wycliffe, wherever they were found, should be burnt; and he prohibited all preaching except in parish or college churches, or in convents. This was directly aimed at Hus, who generally preached in the so-called Bethlehem Chapel, which was a private foundation. Disregarding the appeal that Hus had addressed to Pope John XXIII, the archbishop soon afterwards excommunicated Hus for continuing to preach. At the same time a large number of manuscripts containing Wycliffe's writings were publicly burnt at Prague by order of the archbishop. Venceslas may at this time be considered as still siding with the national party—probably in consequence of the influence of Queen Sophia, who remained warmly attached to Hus. He ordered the archbishop to indemnify the owners of the manuscripts which had been destroyed, some of which were of great value, and seized on part of the revenues of the archbishop and of other higher ecclesiastics. He also wrote to the Pope in favour of Hus, and when the latter was summoned to Rome, Queen Sophia[1] addressed a menacing letter to the cardinals, warning them "that if the Holy College did not find means to arrange this matter, the king and the Bohemian lords would soon see their way to settling it according to their views." Both the king and the national party at court indeed still maintained that Hus had uttered no heresy, and that it was his German accusers who dis-

[1] Baron Helfert, writing strongly from the papal point of view, severely blames Queen Sophia, and pronounces a general and rather severe judgment on the female sex: "Women have with rare exceptions, noted in history, no tact, no independent judgment as to how public affairs should be conducted. . . . In politics, as in household matters, they are led more by sentiment than by sense. If a man is at their side . . . they are attracted by his political views, and generally go further than he does" (Helfert, *Hus und Hieronymus*). Of course the supposed influence of Hus over Queen Sophia, whose confessor he was, is alluded to.

turbed the quiet of the country. The king's letter to the Pope was at first without result, and the Archbishop of Prague, indignant at the loss of part of his revenues, placed the town of Prague under an interdict, thus prohibiting all religious ceremonies.

At this time occurred one of the many temporary and insincere reconciliations between Venceslas and his brother Sigismund, and there appeared to be some hope of a peaceful ending of the ecclesiastical conflict in Bohemia. Pope John temporarily suspended the proceedings which the Roman courts had already begun against Hus; and Sigismund, during a visit to his brother at Prague, induced the archbishop to remove the interdict from the town, and even to use his influence in favour of the suppression of the proceedings against Hus in the Roman ecclesiastical courts. The hopes of those who wished to end the ecclesiastical strife in Bohemia were raised by the death of Archbishop Zbyněk, and by the choice of Magister Albik as his successor. Albik had long been physician to the king, whose thorough confidence he enjoyed. This was undoubtedly the principal cause of his election; though it is unfortunately probable that he—as was then so frequently the case—made use of bribery to obtain the pope's consent to his election. Magister Albik, then already an elderly man, was only known as one of the first medical men of his age; although in his youth he had been admitted to the lowest of minor orders, that of acolyte, he had been married, but was now a widower.

Albik is described by all contemporary writers as a man of conciliatory disposition, and the intimate relations he enjoyed with the king render it certain that his purpose was the appeasement of Bohemia. It was natural to hope that the election of Albik, an elderly, conciliatory, opulent man, would at least cause a respite in the theological strife that agitated Bohemia.

Events in distant Italy, however, brought on a crisis which was more serious than any of the former disturbances in Bohemia. Ladislas, King of Naples, still supported the cause of Pope Gregory, and war consequently broke out between the king and Pope John. The latter proclaimed a crusade against Ladislas, and promised indulgences to all those who by contributions of money would aid him in the equipment of his army. Preachers sent by the Pope arrived

at Prague (1412). Preceded by drummers they entered the city, and established themselves in the market-place. They called on all passers-by to contribute money or goods in exchange for indulgences. The sale of indulgences had been one of the abuses which the Bohemian Church-reformers had from the first most strenuously opposed. Hus, in his Bethlehem Chapel, spoke strongly against the granting of these indulgences, which he said were given to aid in the slaughter of the soldiers of Ladislas, who could but obey their king. At the same time he disclaimed all intention of taking sides in the quarrel between the two Popes.

Hus also succeeded—contrary to the wishes of the archbishop—in bringing the question of the indulgences before the university. A very stormy meeting of the professors, magisters, and students took place under the presidency of the Rector of the university. Hus and Magister Jerome of Prague violently inveighed against the sale of indulgences, which they declared to be unchristian. The fiery eloquence of Jerome appealed to the younger students even more than that of Hus, and at the end of the disputation they conducted him home in triumph.

Jerome of Prague—who had led a wandering life, visiting among other places Oxford, where he had copied some of Wycliffe's writings—had first become known in Bohemia by a speech he made (1410) in favour of Wycliffe's doctrines. He had then left Bohemia, and had now only just returned to that country, which he again quitted shortly afterwards. It may here be noticed that the influence of Jerome on the religious movement in Bohemia, from which country he was often absent, has been greatly over-rated. His visits to many countries and courts, and the eloquent letter in which Poggio Bracciolini described his death,[1] attracted the attention of all Europe to him at a period when the political condition of Austria and Bohemia rendered inquiry into the details of the Hussite movement an impossibility.

The echo of the stormy debates at the university still further excited the people of Prague, already much moved by the sermons of Hus in the Bethlehem Chapel. To prevent disturbances, the magistrates of Prague, by order of Venceslas, issued a decree forbidding any one under penalty of death to discuss the papal decrees publicly; this,

[1] See later.

of course, specially referred to the sale of indulgences. In accordance with this decree, three young men who ventured to interfere with the vendors of the indulgences were seized and publicly executed. A band of students obtained possession of the corpses, and singing the Church hymn "Isti sunt sancti" carried them for burial to the Bethlehem Chapel. This incident marks an important date in the Hussite movement, which now for the first time assumed a revolutionary character. The Pope replied to these attacks on the authority of the Church by renewing in severer terms the decree of excommunication against Hus: all true Christians were forbidden to have any intercourse with him, food and drink were to be supplied to him only under pain of excommunication; all religious services were to be suspended in every town which he entered; finally, Christian burial was to be refused him, and the Bethlehem Chapel was to be destroyed. The Germans, obeying the orders of the Pope, attempted forcibly to take possession of the chapel, but were repulsed by the adherents of Hus.

The king, being still anxious to reconcile the contending parties, begged Hus temporarily to leave Prague, and he immediately obeyed the request of Venceslas. The king promised to endeavour during his absence to put an end to the conflict, so that his exile might not be of long duration.

Archbishop Albik, finding that his conciliatory attitude had only resulted in raising up enemies against him among both the contending parties, now resigned his office. He was succeeded by Conrad of Vechta, formerly Bishop of Olomouc. The new archbishop, on the suggestion of the king, convoked a synod of the clergy (1413), but its deliberations had no satisfactory results, as the reform party still maintained that changes in the government of the Church could alone restore order; while the supporters of the Pope declared that the suppression of all resistance to ecclesiastical authority was the only measure required to obtain peace. A special commission was now appointed by the king, before which the more prominent divines of both parties were summoned to appear. Still the adherents of Hus, on the whole, maintained a conciliatory attitude, while the partisans of the Pope practically declined any sort of compromise with men whom they considered as heretics. King Venceslas, whose honesty of purpose it

is impossible to deny, and who evidently wished to ignore the details of theological strife and to restore peace to his kingdom at any price, was greatly incensed by the attitude of the ecclesiastics of the papal party. Four of them—among whom was Stephen of Palec, afterwards Hus's chief accuser at the Council of Constance—were exiled from Bohemia by order of the king.

Hus, on leaving Prague, had retired to the castle of Kozi Hradek, belonging to one of his adherents, Lord John of Austi, and which was situated near the spot where the town of Tabor was shortly to spring up. Both while staying there, and during his stay at the castle of Krakovec, the seat of Lord Henry of Lazan, one of the king's courtiers, who also belonged to the reform party, Hus continued his preaching: it often took place in the open fields, and the neighbouring peasantry flocked to it in large numbers. Many of his writings, both Latin and Bohemian, date from this period, and it is noticeable that he now, more strongly than before, affirmed that the Bible was the only true source of Christian belief. This position necessarily incensed the adherents of the papal authority more than almost any other could have done.

King Sigismund had meanwhile repaired to Italy, where, during an interview with Pope John at Lodi (1413),[1] he obtained the Pontiff's unwilling consent to summon a General Council of the Church at Constance. King Venceslas believed that the Council would afford him the best means to put an end to the religious dissensions in his kingdom, and Sigismund, with his brother's approval, summoned Hus to appear before the Council of Constance. He also assured him of such ample protection as that he should "come unmolested to Constance, there have free right of audience, and should he not submit to the decision of the Council, he should return unharmed.[2] Hus there-

[1] Richenthal, in his entertaining though unreliable *Chronik des Constanzer Concils*, tells us that the Pope, even after he had consented to proceed to Constance, expressed great displeasure during the journey. His imprecations and curses terrified the pious peasants who flocked to see him. When he was crossing the Arlberg, his carriage was overturned. He then said: "Here I lie in the name of the devil." When in sight of Constance he exclaimed, "Sic capiuntur vulpes."

[2] These important words are quoted from Professor Tomek, who may be thought one of the first Bohemian authorities on this period. The arguments of Bohemian and German writers as to the exact

fore received a letter of safe-conduct from Sigismund, and Venceslas appointed three Bohemian nobles who were to accompany and assist him on the road. Hus started on his fatal journey to Constance in October (1414). He was to meet there most of his Bohemian adversaries, Stephen of Palec, who had been exiled by King Venceslas, several of the former German magisters of the University of Prague (who wished the fact that his influence on the king had contributed to bring about the secession of the German students to be included in the act of accusation), and above all John—surnamed "the Iron"—Bishop of Litomyšl, perhaps the most violent of all the enemies of Church reform. The latter, before starting for Constance, had caused a collection to be made in his diocese to aid him in his defence of the existing system of Church government.

Principally through the influence of the "Iron" Bishop of Litomyšl, Hus was imprisoned almost immediately after his arrival at Constance. Sigismund only made his entry into the town somewhat later on Christmas Eve (1414), when the Bohemian lords immediately complained to him of the imprisonment of their countryman. The king was thoroughly aware that violent measures against Hus would produce troubles, perhaps even a revolution in Bohemia, but his sympathies were entirely on the side of the Roman Church. The well-known remarks he afterwards made to several of the cardinals, advising them to have Hus burnt if he did not retract, and warning them not to trust him even if he did so,[1] sufficiently prove this. A feeble protest was therefore the only effort he made in favour of Hus, and this was ignored by the council.[2] When Pope John XXIII,

meaning of Sigismund's letter of safe-conduct, and the degree of security which it insured, would alone fill a large volume. Baron Helfert, who may be considered as holding a brief for King Sigismund, asserts that the king's letter only assured the safe arrival of Hus at Constance, though Hus started on his journey long before receiving it! It will seem to many that Baron Helfert's clever book rather proves that King Sigismund was thoroughly aware of the disastrous consequences which violent measures against Hus would produce in Bohemia, and showed more foresight than the members of the Council, than that he was more scrupulous in dealing with a "declared heretic" than they were.

[1] Palacký.

[2] For a full account of the trial and death of Hus, see my *Life and Times of Master John Hus.*

after his destitution by the council, secretly left Constance on March 20, 1415, Hus became the prisoner of Sigismund, who had full power to set him free. The Emperor, however, instead of doing so placed Hus in the custody of the Bishop of Constance, who imprisoned him in his castle of Gottlieben. He was here treated with far greater cruelty than at Constance. The frequent steps taken by the Bohemian nobles then present at Constance to obtain the liberation of Hus were also ineffectual. Yet they had at least that result, that the forms of justice were to a certain extent observed, and that Hus was not condemned entirely without trial. Hus, who had been conducted back to Constance early in June, first appeared before the Council on June 5. His trial continued on June 7 and 8. He was, however, never allowed freely to express his views and was treated with great unfairness and brutality. Many of the accusations were utterly absurd,[1] but others, for instance, that he rejected papal authority and recognized that of the Holy Scriptures only, he himself admitted. He wished to argue this and other propositions, but the Council refused him permission to do so, and insisted on a complete and general retractation of all the heretical doctrines which had been attributed to him. This he refused, preferring to die rather than retract with his lips opinions that he held in his heart.

After June 8, some time was allowed to elapse, as attempts were still made to induce Hus to retract his opinions. When this appeared impossible he was on July 6 brought before the Council and for the last time called on to recant. On his refusal the Council immediately declared him a recusant heretic. This, according to the barbarous laws of the time, entailed death by burning. Hus was given over to the magistrates of Constance, who caused him to be led directly from the cathedral, where the Council held its sittings, to a meadow half-a-mile from the city walls. The cruel sentence was then immediately carried out. When the fire had already been kindled and Hus was surrounded by the flames, his loud prayers could still be heard. His sufferings happily did not last long, as a strong gust of wind suddenly blew the smoke in his face, and he

[1] For instance, that Hus had denied that there were only three Persons in the Godhead, and maintained that there was a fourth, namely, John Hus.

was suffocated. His ashes were thrown into the Rhine, to prevent the Bohemians from carrying away any relics of him to their country.

The career of Hus has almost always been discussed from the point of view of theological controversy; whilst many have extolled him as a martyr, others have described him—as did the Council of Constance—as a "recusant heretic." His sincere piety, his conviction of the truth of his opinions, which he was ready to maintain at the cost of his life, his perfect disinterestedness in one of the most corrupt periods of history, and the personal purity of his life, no impartial student of those times can deny.

In Bohemia, whose inhabitants instinctively saw in Hus the greatest man of their race, he was from the first revered. Hus the Bohemian patriot is loved even by many of his countrymen who are devoted adherents of the church of Rome. The national church of Bohemia from its beginning conferred on Hus—as will be mentioned presently—the well-deserved name of a martyr.

Before referring to the momentous consequences which the death of Hus entailed on Bohemia, we must notice the end of Jerome of Prague, who, prior to the time when researches concerning the Hussite movement had become possible in Bohemia, was generally placed at the side of Hus as the most prominent of his disciples.

No greater contrast can be imagined than the lives of Hus and of Jerome. Whilst Hus had hardly ever left Bohemia before his fatal journey to Constance, Jerome had visited Palestine and many European countries, and had been received at various courts, where his learning and his attractive manners had gained him many friends. Jerome had, however, several times been imprisoned for uttering heretical opinions, and after a journey to Constance, where he had visited Hus, he was arrested near that town while on his way back to Bohemia and thrown into prison. His trial lasted some time, and he at one time—probably from physical fear—recanted those opinions which the Council considered to be heretical. He later again affirmed these opinions and was thereupon condemned to death and burnt (May 30, 1416).

The description of the trial and execution of Jerome given by the papal legate Poggio Bracciolini is well known; and is intensely interesting, as representing the views of an

Italian humanist,[1] who in spite of his official position could have had but little interest in the subtilities of the theological discussions of his age. Poggio Bracciolini tells us that "none of the Stoics with so constant and brave a soul endured death, which indeed he (Jerome) rather seemed to long for . . . Mutius did not allow his hand to be burnt with more brave a mind than this man his whole body. Socrates did not drink the poison as willingly as this man submitted himself to the flames."[2]

After Hus's departure from Bohemia, the movement against papacy in that country by no means declined, but rather assumed greater dimensions. Towards the end of the year 1414, one of the most prominent magisters of the University of Prague, Jacobellus of Stříbro, first publicly preached the doctrine that, according to Scripture, the sacrament should be received in both kinds by laymen as well as by priests. Jacobellus and his friends at this time also began to dispense communion in the two kinds. This was first done at Prague in the churches of St. Michael, St. Martin-in-the-Wall, and the Bethlehem chapel. This practice — concerning which Hus was consulted, and to which he gave his approval—soon became the characteristic article of faith to which all the friends of Church reform in Bohemia adhered. The chalice indeed became their emblem, and the nobles opposed to the Pope were known as the lords "sub utraque," whence was derived the word utraquist, which, till the suppression of religious freedom in Bohemia after the battle of the White Mountain (1620), designated one of the parties in the country.

1 "The independence of mind with which this learned member of the papal curia (Poggio Bracciolini) dared to admire the heroism of . . . (Jerome) and proclaim him worthy of immortality is truly remarkable. But what was it he admired in him? Not the martyr, not the reformer—on the contrary, he asserts that if Jerome had indeed said anything against the Catholic faith he would have deserved his punishment. What he admired in him was the courage of a Cato or a Mutius Scaevola; he extolled his clear, sweet, and sonorous voice, the nobility of his gestures, so well adapted either to express indignation or excite compassion; the eloquence and learning with which at the foot of the pile he quoted Socrates, Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Fathers" (Prof. Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*).

2 *Poggii Florentini de Hieronymi Heretici Supplicio Narratio Lionardo Aretino* (first [?] printed by Von der Hardt, *Magnum Concilium Oecumenicum*; then with the *Historia Bohemica* of Aenaeas Sylvius in *Freherus Scriptores Rerum Bohemicarum*, and elsewhere).

It is almost unnecessary to state that when the news of the execution of Hus reached Bohemia the greatest excitement prevailed in the country. All the priests at Prague who were opposed to Hus and his teaching were expelled from their parishes, and in the country also the lords of the reform-party appointed Hussite priests to the livings that were in their gift, expelling the former Romanist occupants. Bishop John of Litomyšl, the most important among the adversaries of Hus, who was accused of having at the Council incited foreigners to hatred and contempt against his country, also severely felt the results of the national movement. His vast estates were forcibly seized by the neighbouring nobles, so that he was—as Palacký says—for the first time relieved from all cares with regard to temporal possessions.

King Venceslas showed great displeasure when he was informed of the death of Hus. Queen Sophia also made no secret of her indignation at the treacherous cruelty with which her confessor had been treated. The nobles and knights of Bohemia assembled without delay at Prague (September 2, 1415), to deliberate on the perilous situation of the country, and they were joined by a large number of Moravian nobles. The result of their deliberations was a protest against the execution of Hus couched in the strongest terms,[1] which was forwarded to the Council of Constance. It was immediately signed by ninety-nine nobles and knights, and was afterwards sent to many sympathizers who had not been able to be present, so that it finally bore the signatures or seals of four hundred and fifty-two lords and knights. In this protest the Bohemians declared that the Council had unjustly executed Hus, "a good, just and catholic man who consistently loathed all errors and heresies." They further complained that some traitors had unjustly accused the Bohemians of being heretics. This letter caused great indignation among the

[1] This document has often been printed under the name of *Protestatio Bohemorum*. The edition published by Dr. Löder, and printed at Leipzig in 1712, contains the notice that Dr. Löder had copied it at Oxford from an English manuscript entitled: "A true Copy of the Bohemian Protestation against the Council of Constance for burning of John Hus and Hieronymus Prage Contrare to their safe conduct they had given. Given to the university library of Oxfort, Dec. 2, 1695, by Mr. Anderson, Keeper of the publick Library at Edinburgk." I have retained Dr. Löder's spelling.

members of the Council, and their indignation became yet greater when the news reached Constance that most of the nobles and knights had, a few days after their first protest, united in a solemn covenant for mutual defence. They pledged themselves to defend the liberty of preaching the word of God on their estates; to accept no orders from the Council; to obey the future Pope and the bishops of Bohemia, but only should their commands not be in contradiction with the Scriptures; and in the meanwhile to recognize the University of Prague as the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine. They finally pledged themselves to act in common during the duration of the covenant, which, it was agreed, was for the present to be of six years. King Venceslas himself was invited to join the covenant and to become its head; but he declined to do so, probably out of fear of his brother Sigismund. The lords who favoured the papal party, few in number, but among whom were some of the most powerful nobles, now also united in a league, and pledged themselves to continue obedient to the universal Church and to the Council.

The answer of the Council to the declaration of the nobles was a very firm one, and contained nothing conducive to appeasing the excited Bohemians. Jacobellus of Stříbro and the priests who shared his views, as well as the four hundred and fifty-two Bohemian knights and nobles who had signed the protest, were summoned to appear for judgment before the Council. It was with difficulty that King Sigismund prevented the Council from beginning proceedings for heresy against King Venceslas and his consort.[1]

These decrees were entirely ineffective as regards Bohemia, the greater part of that country having, for the time being, entirely renounced the allegiance of the Roman Church. Though the archbishop renewed the interdict over Prague, his own vicar-general, Herman, was induced by the supreme burgrave Čeněk, Lord of Wartenberg, to consecrate a number of new priests without previously requiring from them the promise that they would not distribute the sacrament in

[1] The act of accusation against Queen Sophia, which had already been prepared, accused her of having confirmed Hus and other heretics in their obstinacy; of having treated the papal decrees with open contempt; and of having expelled the Romanist priests from her private estates, replacing them by Hussites.

both kinds to laymen—a promise always enacted by the Roman Church.

The University of Prague, accepting the important position the nobles had conferred on it, declared (1417) that communion in both kinds was necessary to the salvation of the soul, and it shortly afterwards proclaimed Hus a holy martyr for the faith of Christ, and decreed that July 6, the day of his martyrdom, should be consecrated to his memory.[1] The party of reform, which now had its centre in the university, favoured by the king and queen, and supported by the larger part of the nobility together with the great majority of the people, was in a very favourable position, particularly as for the present no immediate danger of foreign intervention was to be apprehended.

Unfortunately for Bohemia, differences of opinion soon began to spring up among those who supported the cause of Church reform. A considerable party gradually formed itself in Bohemia, which, in direct antagonism to the University of Prague (now the recognized theological centre of the country), professed doctrines that went far beyond anything the earlier reformers had asserted. This advanced party rejected the mass and all the sacraments, except baptism and communion, the doctrine of the existence of purgatory, and many of the rules and regulations of the Church. Its adherents maintained that the Holy Bible was the sole authority in all matters of religious belief. This party—destined afterwards to become celebrated under the name of the Taborites—had its centre in the little town of Austi or Usti on the river Lužnic, near the spot where the town of Tabor was soon to arise. The University of Prague from the first opposed the tenets of these more advanced reformers, and several times (1417 and 1418) issued decrees informing the faithful that the Christian doctrine was contained, not only in the Bible, but also in the traditions of the Church, which were only to be rejected when manifestly in contradiction to Scripture. These differences gradually became more accentuated, and the dissentient parties received

[1] In the earliest printed Bohemian almanacks, some of which are preserved in the National Museum at Prague, the 6th of July is called the Day of Commemoration of Master John Hus. It was long kept as a holiday, and in 1592 the Roman Catholic Abbot of Emaus (at Prague) was attacked by the people and threatened with death because he had let some of his labourers work in his vineyards on the 6th of July.

separate denominations; the moderate, or, as Palacký calls it, the aristocratic party, becoming known as the Calixtines or Praguers, the town and university of Prague being their centre; while the more advanced or democratic party received the name of the Taborites, from that of the new town which was founded near Austi. These local denominations must, as Palacký tells us, not be taken too literally. Prague contained many Taborites, and Austi counted some supporters of the Calixtine party among its inhabitants.

The people of Bohemia had, by this time, so entirely dissociated itself from the doings of the Council of Constance, that—writing of Bohemia only—it is scarcely necessary to notice its further deliberations. The Council had successively deposed John XXIII, Gregory XII, and Benedict XIII, and elected Martin V, who became undisputed Pope. The question of Church reform, which the Council had at first undertaken to discuss, was entirely discarded, and the Council was soon (1418) closed by Pope Martin V.

Before leaving Constance the Pope confirmed all the former decrees of the Council against the Bohemians. He declared all those who still maintained the doctrines, which the Council had condemned, to be heretics. He further exhorted Sigismund to use his influence on his brother Venceslas, to compel him to extirpate heresy in his dominions, and he seems at this moment already to have meditated a crusade against Bohemia.

That country now found itself entirely isolated in Europe, while the larger part of it—for the Germans in Bohemia had always upheld the cause of Rome—was in antagonism with the whole Western world. The separation of Bohemia from Rome may be said to have lasted over two hundred years, though the position of the country became a different one after the rise of Protestantism in Germany.

Sigismund was not long in obeying the Pope's command. In the concluding year of the Council of Constance (1418) he addressed a letter, or rather a public manifesto—for it was widely circulated in Bohemia—to his brother, reminding him of his reiterated promises to allow no heresies in his dominions, in consequence of which promises Sigismund had prevented the intended excommunication of Venceslas. He further warned him of the severe measures and the crusade which were under contemplation to reduce Bohemia to the papal authority; and ended by declaring that should

Venceslas not endeavour to extirpate in his kingdom all opinions contrary to Rome, he would no longer consider him as his brother.

It would have required a firmer mind than that of Venceslas not to have been greatly agitated by the menaces contained in this letter of his younger brother. His position appeared to him a hopeless one should he have to encounter the whole force of Europe in a crusade (a word that only lost its terror during the subsequent Hussite wars), for not only did his rule extend over a comparatively limited territory, but it was further weakened by the German element in the towns, which always furthered foreign intervention, and by the seditious attitude of the extreme adversaries of papacy.

It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that Venceslas decided to comply with the wishes of his younger brother, and to attempt, as far as lay in his power, to restrain the anti-papal movement in Bohemia. He issued a decree ordaining that all priests, both in Prague and in the country, who had been expelled from their parishes because they refused to administer the sacrament in both kinds, should be allowed to return and resume their functions. This measure, as was inevitable in consequence of the excited condition of Bohemia, caused great disorder. Venceslas had, however, permitted that the use of three churches in the city of Prague should be granted to those who received the communion in both kinds, and the inhabitants of the country districts, deserting the parish churches when they were again under the direction of the papal clergy, assembled on the hills or in other secluded spots, to which they gave biblical names, such as Tabor, Oreb, the Mount of Olives, and others. Here the religious services were held in the Bohemian language, and communion administered in both kinds by the Hussite priests.

The fact that religious service, according to the rites then accepted by a large majority of the inhabitants of Prague, was limited to three churches in the town, appeared unfair to the townsmen, and Nicholas of Hus,[1] one of the courtiers of King Venceslas, but a firm adherent of the Calixtine party, became their leader. When Nicholas was marching through the streets of Prague at the head of a band

[1] The similarity of names led many of the older writers on Bohemian history to the quite erroneous supposition that he was a relation of John Hus.

of Calixtines, he accidentally met the king, to whom he addressed an earnest petition entreating him to cause a larger number of churches to be allotted to those who communicated in both kinds. Venceslas was very indignant at this attempt to extort concessions from him, and ordered Nicholas of Hus to leave Prague.

Nicholas retired to Austi, where a large number of the more advanced Church-reformers and many priests, who had been driven from their parishes by the decree of Venceslas, flocked to him. On a hill near Austi, probably on the site of the present town of Tabor, a large assembly took place (July 22, 1419), at which more than 42,000 people, men and women and children from all parts of Bohemia, and even from Moravia, were present. Even Roman Catholic writers describe this first great meeting of the Taborites as a most imposing event. From all directions bands of Taborites marched to the trysting-place, priests carrying the sacrament heading the procession. They were enthusiastically received by those already assembled on the hill, and welcomed as "brothers" and "sisters." The whole day was spent in prayers, in confession and communion, the strictest order being maintained. There is, however, little doubt that Nicholas of Hus availed himself of this opportunity to deliberate with the leaders of the assembled multitude as to the steps they were to take to defend their faith against the authorities at Prague. It is certain that at the court of Venceslas the design of seizing the Bohemian crown with the aid of the more advanced religious reformers was seriously attributed to Nicholas of Hus.

Trouble nearer home was destined to put an end to the life of King Venceslas before the plans of Nicholas had arrived at any sort of maturity. On July 30, 1419, when a procession of Calixtines, led by the priest John of Želivo who (as had now become the custom) carried the holy Sacrament, marched through the streets of Prague, a stone was thrown at priest John from one of the windows of the town-hall of the Nové Město (new town). The exasperated people, led by one of the king's courtiers, John Žižka of Trocnov, stormed the town-hall, and the burgomaster and several of the town-councillors were thrown from the windows, those of them who survived the fall being killed by the crowd in the market-place below.

As we here first meet with John Žižka of Trocnov, to whom it was undoubtedly due that the Hussite movement did not collapse at once, and that Bohemia was enabled to resist the whole of Europe in arms against her, it will be well shortly to notice the early life of the great warrior.[1]

John Žižka was born about the year 1378, probably at Trocnov, a small estate in Southern Bohemia, which was the seat of his family. Hardly anything is known of his early youth except that he was engaged in hereditary feuds with the Lords of Rosenberg, then the most powerful nobles in Southern Bohemia. About the year 1412 he became attached to the royal court, in all probability as chamberlain of Queen Sophia; he had at that time already lost the use of one eye, probably fighting for the king against the Bohemian nobles, in one of the many contests which occupied so large a part of the earlier years of the reign of King Venceslas. Žižka only followed the example of the great majority of the courtiers of Venceslas in joining the party of reform, of which he immediately became (and continued to be until his death) a thorough and disinterested supporter. His previous knowledge and experience of warfare at once designated him as the natural leader of a party which was directed by priests, and which consisted mostly of peasants, small landowners, and townsmen, entirely unused to the system of warfare that was practised in those days.

Žižka, who undoubtedly was the greatest military genius of his age,[2] immediately saw the difficulty of opposing his forces, consisting almost entirely of infantry, to the attack of heavily-armed horsemen. A flail mounted with iron, a club, or a short spear were the arms with which the peasants and citizens were in the habit of fighting, and with such men

[1] The standard authority regarding Žižka is now Professor Tomek, whose *Jan Žižka* was published (in Bohemian) in 1879. The learned professor has since published some additions to this biography in the *Časopis Musea Českeho* for 1892. The history of the great Bohemian warrior had formerly been completely obscured by legends and more or less absurd inventions. Palacký makes the interesting remark that, of those who wrote of Žižka before circumstances permitted serious study of the period of the Hussite wars, only George Sand, with singular intuition, grasped some of the traits of the character of Žižka in her short work entitled *Jean Zyska*, though her only authority was Lenfant's *Guerre des Hussites*.

[2] Palacký, with but slight exaggeration, calls him the originator of modern tactics.

and such weapons he was now to prepare to encounter the chivalry of Europe.

The hradba vozová (wagon-fort or lager of wagons),[1] if not absolutely Žižka's invention became, entirely through him, a serious feature in Bohemian warfare. From the scanty and contradictory accounts that have reached us it appears that the wagons or chariots of the Bohemian armies were linked together by strong iron chains, and were used not only for defence, but also for offensive movements. All the warriors, except the few horsemen as well as the women and children who accompanied the armies, found shelter in these wagons, which in time of battle were generally formed in four lines or columns. The wagons were covered with steel or iron—iron-clad, to use a modern term—and the best marksmen were placed next to the driver of each of them. In case of defeat, the wagons formed what was practically a fortified entrenchment. When an offensive movement was undertaken, the drivers of the wagons at one end of the line of battle attempted to outflank the enemy, and after Žižka's men had become accustomed to warfare, often succeeded in doing so. It may be noticed that the wide plains of Bohemia, which then—as now—were little intersected by ditches or fences, offered every advantage to this novel system of warfare. Žižka also seems to have given his attention to fire-arms, as the picked marksmen whom he placed next to the drivers of the wagons soon became the terror of the Germans, through the precision of their fire, whilst the few and unwieldy field-pieces which accompanied the Bohemian armies were yet far superior to anything the Germans and other enemies could then bring to battle against them. It cannot be denied that the success of Žižka, in creating out of a crowd of townsmen, small farmers, and farm-labourers an almost invincible army, at the head of which he defeated the bravest knights and warriors of Europe, is almost unique in history. It is perhaps fantastic to suggest some resemblance between Oliver

[1] Since writing the above I have had the opportunity of reading Mr. Hereford B. George's interesting work entitled, *Battles of English History*. I here find that at the "Battle of the Herrings" (1429) Sir John Fastolf, who commanded the English troops, "formed his wagons in square, within which extemporized fort his men stood on the defensive." Mr. George very truly remarks that "the lager, which is a feature now well known of African warfare, is the same thing in principle."

Cromwell and the one-eyed leader of the Bohemian people,[1] though Žižka's piety and simplicity, his sincerity for what he considered the welfare of his country, his unbending sternness towards those whom he considered as God's enemies, have a strong element of the Puritan about them.

It is certain that Žižka felt more keenly than most Bohemians the news of the death (or, as he no doubt regarded it, the murder) of Hus.[2] It is said that King Venceslas, noticing one day at court that Žižka seemed melancholy and absorbed in thought, asked him the cause of his depression. Žižka answered: "How can I be gay when our trusted leaders and the faithful teachers of the law of the Lord are, by the order of infidel priests, undeservedly and unjustly condemned to the flames?" The king answered: "Dear John, what can we say to that? Can we alter that? If you know of any way to do so, right it yourself. We shall be pleased." Žižka took the king at his word, and said with his permission he would do so.[3]

If this report as to his momentary feelings is correct—of which there is no doubt—Venceslas did not long remain in the same frame of mind. When the news of the défenestration of the burgomaster and of other officials of the new town of Prague reached the king at the neighbouring castle of Kunuratic, his fury was so great that he was seized with a slight apoplectic attack.

He now wrote to King Sigismund inviting him to come to Bohemia to aid him in maintaining the royal authority; but before his brother could arrive, a renewed fit of apoplexy put an end to the life of King Venceslas (August 16, 1419). Little need be said as to this Bohemian king. The uncertainty of purpose which was the most characteristic feature of his character is evident even from this slight notice of his life. His intentions were generally good, and he was by no means as devoid of intelligence as has often been stated by his detractors. In the last years of his life his

[1] When first writing this, I was quite unaware of the fact that the late Bishop Creighton had some time previously compared Žižka to Oliver Cromwell.

[2] The tale that Žižka, standing beneath the oak-tree under which he had been born, swore eternal vengeance to the murderers of Hus, is merely a legend. It has furnished the Austrian poet Lenau with the subject of one of the finest scenes of his *Bilder aus dem Hussitenkriege*.

[3] Tomek, *Jan Žižka*.

consort Queen Sophia acquired a very favourable influence over him.

It is certain that he oppressed Bohemia with taxation less than many other sovereigns, and therefore was popular with the people during his whole life.

The news of the death of the king caused renewed disturbances at Prague. The churches and convents which were in the hands of the Romanist clergy were attacked, and the priests and monks driven out of them. A great part of the higher clergy, and most of the German inhabitants, who were almost all opposed to the national or reform party, now fled from Prague. Disturbances also broke out in all the towns where the population was Bohemian, specially at Králove Hradec, Laun, and Pisek. These troubles rendered necessary the presence of Sigismund, over whose religious views great uncertainty at first prevailed. Nobles of both parties assembled at Prague, and begged King Sigismund, as heir to the throne, to proceed to Bohemia as soon as possible. A petition was also signed begging the king to grant to the Estates and to the people permission to continue to receive the communion in both kinds. The king was further requested to use his influence with the Pope to induce him to revoke the interdict, and to grant the Bohemians liberty to receive the sacrament in that manner in which their consciences required them to do so. Sigismund gave an evasive answer, merely saying that he would rule as did his father, Charles IV, whose memory he knew to be very popular in the land. His appointment of Queen Sophia as regent, and of Čeněk of Wartenberg as her first counsellor, were, however, considered conciliatory. Queen Sophia's Hussite sympathies were well known, whilst Čeněk was then considered a utraquist, though it is not easy to know what were the real opinions of a man who changed sides twice within a year. The nobles of the utraquist or Calixtine party were therefore for the present in favour of a peaceful policy, hoping that when Sigismund arrived in Bohemia he would see the necessity of tolerance towards a party to which the large majority of the nobles and knights belonged, as also the town population—with the exception of the Germanized citizens of some towns—and almost the whole of the peasantry.

The more advanced reformers judged the intentions of Sigismund differently, and, as events proved, more correctly.

The meetings of the adherents of the extreme party, the first of which, held near Austi, has already been mentioned, still continued; the movement soon spread all over Bohemia and parts of Moravia; and the endeavours even of the utraquist nobles to calm the people were ineffectual. These meetings took the place of the pilgrimages to which the Bohemian peasants had been accustomed, and they flocked to them from all parts of the country, deserting home and hearth. A sort of religious mania, which the contemporary writers ascribed to a peculiar collocation of the stars, seized on the people of Bohemia. It is, on the other hand, more than probable that Žižka of Trocnov, Nicholas of Hus, and the other leaders, who were already certain that they would shortly have to resist the armed forces of Sigismund, viewed with favour these meetings, which kept their men in touch with each other, and prevented their dispersing.

At a meeting held near Prague on the day of St. Venceslas (September 28), the Taborites decided to hold their next assembly in Prague itself, and fixed its date for November 10. Though the great mass of the enthusiasts this time also spent the days in prayers and devotion, there is little doubt that the leaders held a serious consultation, and on that day decided to obtain possession of Prague.

Queen Sophia was probably informed of their intentions. She obtained aid from several of the utraquist lords, and also assembled a large body of German mercenaries. Doubtless, in consequence of the arrival of these mercenaries, the people of Prague rose up in arms (October 25) and obtained possession of the old castle on the Vyšehrad, the most ancient seat of the Bohemian sovereigns, possibly with the connivance of the soldiers of the former bodyguard of King Venceslas, who were quartered there. Meanwhile, some days before November 10, armed bands of Taborites began to arrive in Prague from every direction. The citizens of Prague, encouraged by their first success and by the arrival of the Taborites, now led by Žižka and Nicholas of Hus, began further hostilities against the troops of Queen Sophia. They attacked the quarter known as the "Malá Strana," near which the royal palace of the Hradčany is situated. The attacking party were received with discharges of artillery, then still a great novelty in Bohemia, and very bloody street-fighting ensued (November 4, 1419). "It was a night of fear and terror, sorrow and lamentation,

only to be compared to the day of the last judgment."[1] The citizens of Prague were, on the whole, successful, but they failed to obtain possession of the royal castle of the Hradčany, from which, when it was first attacked, Queen Sophia had fled. The situation of the town, however, remained a perilous one. Čeněk of Wartenberg, who in the absence of Queen Sophia had assumed the entire government of the country, requested and received aid from numerous knights and nobles, and the German towns of Bohemia also sent large forces to his aid.

A large part of the "small quarter" of Prague, and many buildings in other parts of the town, had been burnt down, and the citizens were anxious to obtain at least temporary tranquillity. An armistice was therefore concluded (November 13, 1419) without much difficulty. The utraquist nobles promised to unite with the Praguers in defending the right of communion in both kinds, while the Praguers again gave up the castle of Vyšehrad to Queen Sophia. Žižka, who disapproved even of this temporary compromise, left Prague with his followers and marched to Pilsen, where at that time a considerable part of the population was in favour of the Taborite cause.

On hearing of the disturbances in Bohemia King Sigismund, who was then in Hungary, abandoned his intended campaign against the Turks, and hastened to Moravia. Shortly after his arrival at Brno (December 1419) Queen Sophia met him there, together with many nobles—both of the utraquist and of the Romanist party—and envoys of the town of Prague. King Sigismund again gave evasive answers to the many questions as to his religious policy which were addressed to him. He declared that he reserved his decision till he should have arrived at Prague. He requested the lords of the utraquist party to refrain meanwhile from all attempts to coerce those of their dependents who were of the Romanist party. He also requested the envoys of the town of Prague to cause all the street fortifications which had been erected there during the recent disturbances to be removed. Queen Sophia now resigned the functions of regent, which she had only exercised during the last few troublous months, and King Sigismund, for the present, entrusted Čeněk of Wartenberg with the government of Bohemia.

[1] Palacký, quoting from a contemporary writer.

King Sigismund did not, as had been expected, immediately repair to Prague, where he should have been crowned as king, according to the institutions of the country, but travelled to Silesia (about January 1420). There is little doubt that he did not wish to enter Bohemia before he had collected sufficient forces to become absolute master of the land, and thus be able to rule it according to the Pope's desire, suppressing all opinions and practices contrary to the doctrines of Rome.

Quiet returned to Prague for the moment. The fortifications and barricades were removed, and many Germans and other adherents of Rome returned to the city. That party, relying on the support of Sigismund, now assumed a more aggressive attitude, and began to persecute its opponents. In several towns the utraquists were attacked, but the miners of Kutna Hora, mostly Germans and fanatical adherents of Rome, surpassed all others in cruelty. They seized all utraquists in and near the town, and threw them alive into one of the deepest shafts of the silver mines, which in mockery they called Tabor. We are told that their leaders had at first caused the utraquists to be decapitated, but that the executioners refused to continue their work, so numerous were those who were condemned to death. In the course of a few months about 1600 prisoners were thrown into the pit of Kutna Hora.

Meanwhile Žižka, who had disapproved of the truce which the Praguers had concluded with King Sigismund, had marched to Plzeň,[1] which town he seems at first to have intended to make the stronghold of his party. In the southern parts of Bohemia some of Žižka's adherents, led by a bell-founder named Hromadka, had surprised and stormed the small town of Austi (February 21, 1420). Not finding the situation of the town sufficiently strong, they removed to a position about an hour from Austi, where a castle named Hradiště was situated in a very commanding position. They immediately began to fortify the land round this castle, and a town quickly sprung up to which they gave the biblical name of Tabor. Hromadka informed Žižka of this, asking him to send aid to Tabor, as he expected shortly to be attacked. Žižka willingly consented, perhaps already intending to make the new town the stronghold of his party. His position at Pilsen had become critical; he

[1] In German "Pilsen."

was besieged by a large army of the adherents of King Sigismund, while the Romanist inhabitants of the town were strongly hostile, and even his own soldiers were losing confidence. Žižka was therefore glad to be able to come to terms with Venceslas of Duba, the commander of the besieging forces. A treaty was concluded through the intervention of the citizens of Prague, by which Žižka surrendered Pilsen on condition that the right of receiving the communion in both kinds should be retained in the town, and that he and his followers should be allowed to march to Tabor without hindrance. The Roman Catholic inhabitants alone remained in the town, and Pilsen henceforth became the great stronghold of the papal party in Bohemia.

Žižka set out for Tabor with only four hundred warriors, twelve equipped wagons, and nine horsemen. A large number of women and children accompanied the expedition. On their way they were attacked, near the village of Sudoměř, by Catholic bands who were marching to reinforce the army before Pilsen, and who did not consider themselves bound by the truce concluded with Žižka. The enemies consisted of two thousand horsemen, all wearing heavy armour, and who were consequently known as the "iron men." Žižka, as soon as he saw that there was no hope of evading the unequal combat, drew up his little army near one of the fish-ponds that are very numerous in that part of Bohemia, in a position in which one of his flanks was protected by a steep dyke. The war-chariots were drawn up in a line that faced the foe, and the enemy were obliged to dismount to attack Žižka's position. He is said to have ordered the Taborite women to spread out their long veils on the ground, hoping that the heavy spurs of the enemy's dismounted horsemen would catch in them. The Taborites defended themselves with desperate courage, and though a few were made prisoners, they succeeded in beating off the attacking forces. The skirmish, which was very bloody, lasted till sunset, when the Catholics retired. Darkness set in earlier than usual at that time of the year, and the pious Taborites thought that God had ordained this for their protection. The skirmish at Sudoměř (March 25, 1420) was the first fight in the open field during the Hussite wars, and it established Žižka's reputation as a leader. Žižka and his band encamped on the battle-field

in sign of victory, and continued their march next day without further attack. When they arrived near Tabor they were met by a large number of "brethren" who were marching to their aid, and these conducted Žižka into the new stronghold with great honours and rejoicings.[1]

Tabor now became the stronghold and centre of all those who most energetically opposed the government of King Sigismund. Townsmen, peasants, and even nobles from all parts of Bohemia flocked to the new town, in which no differences of rank were recognized, and, following the example of the primitive Christians, all were "brothers and sisters." All the advanced opponents of Rome among the clergy also assembled at Tabor, where, besides establishing communion in both kinds, they organized religious services which in many ways differed from the customs of the Church of Rome. All vestments were prohibited, the priests officiating in ordinary clothes. The use of Latin in Church services was also abolished, and was replaced by the Bohemian language.

The accounts we possess as to the internal constitution of the community of Tabor are unfortunately both insufficient and contradictory. The organization was undoubtedly a military one, and almost immediately after Žižka's arrival at Tabor four captains ("heytmane" in Bohemian) were chosen, of whom he, of course, was one. We also find the name of Nicholas of Hus among the first captains of the Taborites. Besides the military leaders, the most prominent and popular among the clergy exercised a great, though ill-defined, influence over the community of Tabor.

Žižka, immediately after his arrival at Tabor, undertook a thorough military organization of his followers, most of whom had no previous military training, and were merely religious enthusiasts. From among them he soon formed an almost invincible army. Several small but invariably successful raids against the neighbouring lords of the Catholic party soon gave them greater self-confidence.

Žižka had indeed no time to lose if he hoped successfully

[1] I am principally indebted for these notes on the foundation of Tabor and the skirmish of Sudoměř to Professor Tomek's *Life of Žižka*, the most graphic and accurate account of the campaigns of the great Hussite leader. I much regret that want of space will not allow me to borrow more largely from this interesting work, written in what is in Western Europe practically an "unknown tongue."

to resist the onslaught of King Sigismund. In accordance with the king, Pope Martin V had, on March 1, 1420, proclaimed a crusade against Bohemia, calling the whole Christian world to arms against that nation, and promising the usual indulgences. A great number of German princes joined Sigismund at Breslau to concert as to the coming campaign, and volunteers from almost every country of Europe rallied round the standard of the cross.

When the news of the intended crusade reached Bohemia indignation was general. For a time even the most moderate utraquists were prepared to resist the attacks of King Sigismund. The terms of crusade, which, it was said, should only have been employed in warfare against pagans or Mahomedans, and which stigmatized the whole country as heretical, incensed every Bohemian against Sigismund, to whose influence the decree was attributed. The highest official of the land, Čeněk of Wartenberg, had been present at the deliberations of Breslau, but now thoroughly aware of the feelings of the court of Sigismund, he decided "as a Bohemian and a Hussite" to throw in his cause with that of his country. He concluded an alliance with the Praguers, and issued a proclamation to the country in the name of the whole utraquist nobility. This document warned all Bohemians and Moravians against obeying any orders of Sigismund, King of Germany and Hungary, who was the enemy of the Bohemian nation, and who had not been crowned king (of Bohemia).

The consequences of this proclamation probably went far beyond the expectations of Wartenberg. The whole people of Bohemia rose in arms, and in many places vented their rage on the papal clergy. Large numbers of churches and convents in all parts of Bohemia were plundered and burnt, and in retribution of the cruelties of the Catholics at Kutna Hora and elsewhere, several Catholic priests and monks suffered the same death as Hus.

Sigismund, whose allies were slowly moving onward from all countries, had meanwhile entered Bohemia from Silesia, and captured the town of Králove Hradec without much resistance. From there he marched to Kutna Hora, where the German inhabitants had already proved themselves zealous adherents of the papal cause.

The cruelties practised on Catholic priests, and the barbarous destruction of churches and convents, which

contained most of the finest art treasures of Bohemia, caused great displeasure to the more moderate opponents of the papal cause. When Sigismund, therefore, sent envoys to Prague to treat for a truce in view of a pacification of the country, he found a willing hearing with Čeněk of Wartenberg. Čeněk, deserting the party he had so recently joined, concluded a private, and at first secret, treaty with the king. On the conditions of an amnesty for himself and for his children, and the guarantee of freedom to all the tenants on his estates to continue to receive communion in both kinds, he abandoned the cause of the Praguers, and even admitted the king's troops into the royal castle on the Hradčany. The first result of this step was a renewal of the street-fighting at Prague, as the citizens attempted to storm the castle, but were repulsed by the troops of Čeněk. An attack the Praguers made on the Vyšehrad castle was also repulsed by the garrison which held it for King Sigismund. During these repeated struggles in the streets a large part of the "small quarter" (Malá Strana) of Prague, and of that part of the "new town" which lies at the foot of the Vyšehrad were burnt.

These events inspired the citizens with a desire for peace, and they decided to send envoys to Sigismund. The king, who was then at Kutna Hora in the midst of a population entirely devoted to the papal cause, not improbably, judging the general feeling by his immediate surroundings, over-rated the strength of that party. He received the deputies of Prague very haughtily, and again ordered them to remove all the street barricades, and to deliver up all their arms to his troops in the castles of Hradčany and Vyšehrad. It was only after every show of resistance had ceased that the king was prepared to let the citizens know what degree of mercy would be shown them.

This demand of unconditional surrender could not even be considered by the envoys of Prague, who were indeed among the most moderate adherents of the utraquist party, but who had at home to fear the opposition of a large part of the townsmen, headed by many of the priests, and these had from the first declared all hopes of an agreement with Sigismund to be futile. War to death became the watchword, and the Praguers applied for aid to all the nobles and towns who had not already submitted to Sigismund. Their most important decision, however, was to sink all difference

of opinion in view of the common enemy, and to seek for help from Tabor. Messengers were sent from Prague to Tabor entreating the Taborites, "if they wished verily to obey the law of God, to march to their aid without delay, and with the largest force they could muster."

At Tabor, thanks to Žižka's foresight, every one was ready. Probably on the very day the message arrived, 9000 warriors, accompanied by a large number of priests, women, and children, set forth and soon arrived at Prague after they had defeated some of the royal troops, who, at Poric on the River Sazava, had attempted to intercept their passage. Almost at the same time a thousand horsemen, led by the utraquist knights Bradatý and Obrovec, also came to aid in the defence of the menaced capital.

Sigismund had at first intended to march immediately from Kuttenberg to Prague, where the castles of Hradčany and Vyšehrad were still in the hands of his adherents. Probably informed of the strength of the forces now assembling in the town, he changed his intentions and decided to await the arrival of the whole force of the crusaders. By the end of June (1420) most of them had arrived in Bohemia. They were led by the Elector Palatine, the Archbishop-Electors of Maintz, Trier, and Cologne, Frederick of Hohenzollern (who had just become Elector of Brandenburg, which Sigismund had mortgaged to him), Duke Albert of Austria, Sigismund's son-in-law, and other German princes. The crusaders comprised men of almost every country in Europe,[1] and their number is estimated between 100,000 and 150,000. If we believe Aeneas Sylvius, the horsemen alone were 70,000 in number; in that case the higher figure probably more exactly indicates the full strength of the crusading army.

On June 30, 1420, Sigismund entered the castle of Prague, on the Hradčany, and the enormous forces of the crusaders encamped round the town. Žižka had before their arrival occupied and fortified the steep hill to the east

[1] The contemporary chronicler, Lawrence of Brežova, not without pride names among those who then attacked his country: Bohemians (of course Romanists), Moravians, Hungarians and Croatians, Dalmatians and Bulgarians, Wallachians and Sicilians, Cini (*sic*) and Jasi (*sic*) Slavonians, Servians, Ruthenians, Styrians, men of Meisens, Bavarians, Saxons, Austrians, Franks, Frenchmen, Englishmen, men of Brabant, Westphalians, Dutchmen, Switzers, Lusatians, Suabians, Carinthians, men of Aragon, Spaniards, Poles, Germans from the Rhine, and many others.

of Prague, then known as the Vitkov, but which since those times, and up to the present day, bears the name of Žižka's Hill. The invaders did not immediately begin their attack, and it was only on July 14 that Sigismund made a determined attempt on Prague. The attack was made in three directions: from the castles on the Hradčany and on the Vyšehrad, the districts of the town nearest to those castles—the Malá Strana and the Nové Město—were attacked, while a third attack was made on the Vitkov hill, the key of the position of the defenders, who depended on its possession for maintaining their communications with the country. This hill was defended by Žižka and his Taborites, who resisted the attack of the Germans[1] with desperate courage. Even the Taborite women assisted in the defence of the very primitive fortifications Žižka had hastily erected. When the Taborites were for a time driven back, one of these women refused to retreat, saying that a true Christian should never give way to Antichrist, whereupon she was immediately killed by the Germans. The bravery of Žižka, who himself fought in the front rank, at last drove the Germans down the hill. Great numbers of them were killed or driven into the river Vltava by the Bohemians who pursued them.

Žižka did not himself think that his victory would prove decisive, for he immediately began to strengthen the fortifications which had hurriedly been erected on the spot formerly known as the Vitkov, but which since that great victory has been called Žižka's Hill.

Fortunately for the Bohemians, dissensions had broken out among their enemies. The Germans strongly distrusted the Bohemian troops of Sigismund. The utraquist lords in the king's army, on the other hand, felt some sympathy for the defenders of Prague, and were indignant against the Germans, who, thwarted in their attempt on Prague, scoured all the neighbouring country, burning as heretics all Bohemians, without distinction, whom they could seize.

The utraquist lords, therefore, attempted to mediate between the king and the citizens of Prague, with whom they thought an agreement more feasible than with the fanatical Taborites. The Praguers, however, refused to enter into separate negotiations. It was therefore decided

[1] They were horsemen from Meissen and Thuringia, about 9000 in number.

that an instrument should be drawn up, formulating every point on which all Bohemians who adhered to the communion in both kinds agreed. Deliberations took place between the Praguers, the Taborites, and the other defenders of Prague.

The principal points of the belief of the utraquists of all shades, the recognition of which they considered an indispensable preliminary to all negotiations for peace, were expressed by the theologians of the University of Prague in four articles.[1]

These articles, as Palacký says, openly proclaimed the opinions of the Bohemian nation, and became the basis of all subsequent attempts of reconciliation between Bohemia and the Western Church. They became widely known under the name of the Articles of Prague. The articles declared—

I. The word of God shall in the Kingdom of Bohemia be freely and without impediment proclaimed and preached by Christian priests.

II. The sacrament of the body and blood of God shall in the two kinds, that is in bread and wine, be freely administered to all faithful Christians according to the order and teaching of our Saviour.

III. The priests and monks, according to secular law, possess great worldly wealth in opposition to the teaching of Christ. Of this wealth they shall be deprived.

IV. All mortal sins, particularly those that are public, as well as all disorders opposed to God's law, shall in all classes be suppressed by those whose office it is to do so. All evil and untruthful rumours[2] shall be suppressed for the good of the commonwealth, the kingdom, and the nation.

These articles were undeniably in accord with the wants of the age and formed the basis of a possible agreement. The utraquist nobles who, though they were on the king's side, yet warmly approved of the four articles, unsuccessfully attempted to obtain their acceptance by the papal legate.

[1] It is probable that deliberation on this subject took place some time before, and that a draft of the articles had been made as early as in 1417 (see my *Life and Times of Master John Hus*, pp. 343-344).

[2] This principally referred to the statement frequently made by the Germans that Bohemia was a heretical country.

The dissentions in Sigismund's camp became intensified by the failure of the negotiations. Open warfare between the so-called allies seemed more than probable. Sigismund therefore decided to abandon the siege of Prague, and to dismiss his German allies, whose arrival—in consequence of the old hatred between the two races—had had as principal result the diminution of the already scanty number of the king's adherents in Bohemia. Before leaving Prague, Sigismund caused himself to be crowned King of Bohemia in the cathedral of St. Vitus.[1] The ceremony of the coronation of their kings has, with the Bohemians, as with the Hungarians, always been surrounded by a peculiar sanctity; by submitting to it, Sigismund hoped to strengthen his claim to the Bohemian throne. It was, however, noticed that neither representatives of the towns of Prague nor the holders of many of the great offices of state were present.

On August 2, 1420, the king left the neighbourhood of Prague and retired to Kuttenberg. The crusaders dispersed to their various countries.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE CORONATION OF KING SIGISMUND TO THE DEATH OF KING LOUIS AT MOHÁČ (1420–1526)

THE skirmish at Sudoměř and the battle at Žižka's Hill mark the beginning of the Hussite wars.

The period from the battle on Žižka's Hill (1420) to that at Lipany (1434), which decided the fate of the Taborite party, is the most eventful one in Bohemian history. The renewed crusades against Bohemia; incessant local warfare between the utraquist nobles and townsfolk, and those who were on the side of Rome; occasional warfare among the utraquists themselves, when the Taborites and Praguers fell out with each other; the rise and fall of Tabor; the temporary hegemony of the city of Prague over a large part of Bohemia; the attempt to re-establish monarchy under a Polish dynasty, are only some of the events and movements crowded into these few years. The intellectual activity of the people (manifested where, under the given conditions, it could alone manifest itself, namely in the field of theolo-

[1] The cathedral is situated close to the castle on the Hradčin, which was held by the royal forces.