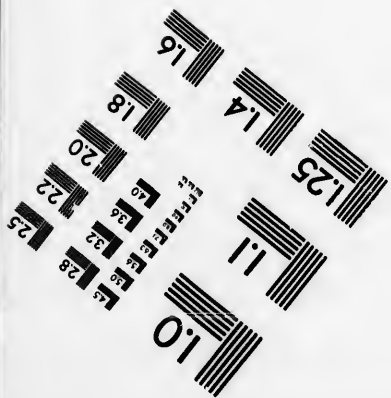
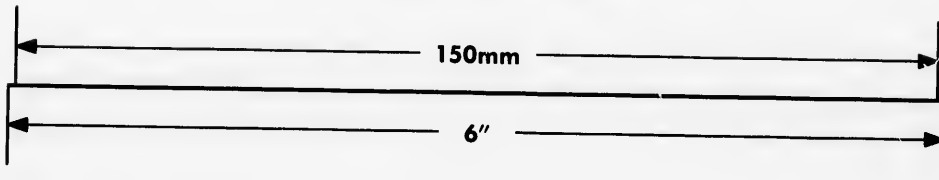
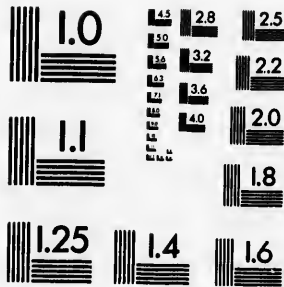
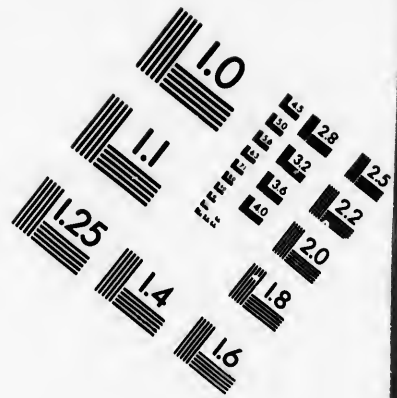
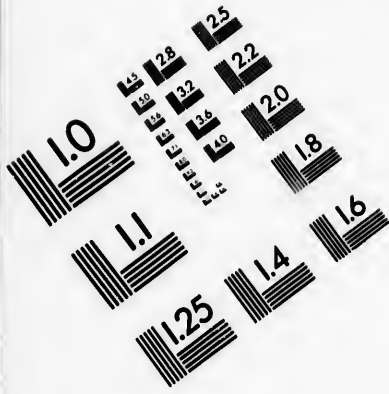


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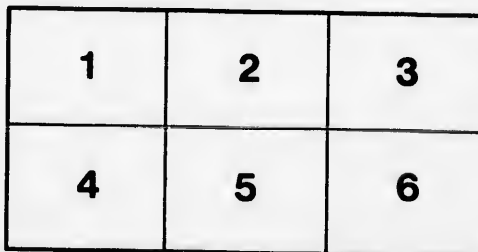
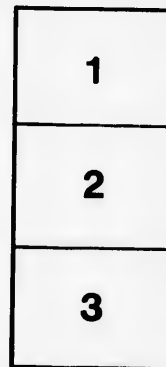
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A TREATISE
ON
OECUMENICAL COUNCILS:
THEIR
HISTORY AND RESULTS.

REPRINTED FROM HARPER'S MONTHLY.

TORONTO:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY E. T. BROMFIELD & CO.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The accompanying treatise appeared in the December number of Harper's Monthly Magazine, and is evidently the production of an erudite and accomplished writer. It has been thought that its republication in this form would be peculiarly opportune and acceptable to the public at the present moment, when the attention of Christendom is especially directed towards the subject of Ecclesiastical Councils, and when every possible light derivable from the history of such matters cannot fail to be welcome not only to the theological student but to the general reader.

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ŒCUMENICAL COUNCILS.

At the splendid city of Nicæa in Bithynia, in the year 325, assembled the first of those great Œcumenical Councils whose decrees have so often controlled the destiny of Christianity and mankind. It was an occasion of triumph and fond congratulation, for the Christian church had just risen up from a period of unexampled humiliation and suffering to rule over the Roman world. For nearly three centuries since the death of their Divine Head his pious disciples had toiled in purity and love, persecuted or scorned by the dominant pagans, for the conversion of the human race; and the humble but persistent missionaries had sealed with innumerable martyrdoms and ceaseless woes the final triumph of their faith. Yet never in all its early history had the Christian church seemed so near its perfect extinction as in the universal persecution of Diocletian and his Cæsars, when the pagan rulers could boast with an appearance of truth that they had extirpated the hated sect with fire and sword. In the year 304, except in Gaul, every Christian temple lay in ruins, and terrified worshippers no longer ventured to meet in their sacred assemblies; the holy books had been burned, the church property confiscated by the pagan magistrates, the church members had perished in fearful tortures, or fled for safety to the savage wilderness; and throughout all the Roman world no man dared openly to call himself a Christian.

Gradually, with the slow prevalence of Constantine the Great, as his victorious legions passed steadily onward from Gaul to Italy, and from Italy to Syria, the maimed and bleeding victims of persecution came out from their hiding-places, and bishops and people, purified by suffering, celebrated once more their holy rites in renewed simplicity and faith. Yet it was not until the year preceding the first Œcumenical Council that the Eastern Christians had ceased to be roasted over slow fires, lacerated with iron hooks, or mutilated with fearful tortures; and Lactantius, a contemporary, could point to the ruins of a city in Phrygia whose whole population had been burned to ashes because they refused to sacrifice to Jupiter and Juno. And now, by a strange and sudden revolution, the martyr bishops and presbyters had been summoned from their distant retreats in the monasteries of the Thebaid or the sands of Arabia, from Africa or Gaul, to cross the dangerous seas, the inclement mountains, and to meet in a general synod at Nicæa, to legis-

late for the Christian world. We may well conceive the joy and triumph of these holy fathers as they heard the glad news of the final victory of the faith, and hastened in long and painful journeys to unite in fond congratulations in their solemn assembly; as they looked for the first time upon each other's faces and saw the wounds inflicted by the persecutor's hand; as they gazed on the blinded eyes, the torn members, the emaciated frames; as they encountered at every step men whose fame for piety, genius, and learning was renowned from Antioch to Cordova; or studied with grateful interest the form and features of the imperial catechumen, who, although the lowest in rank of all the church dignitaries, had made Christianity the ruling faith from Britain to the Arabian Sea.

THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

Nice or Nicœa, a fair and populous Greek city of Asia Minor, had been appointed by Constantine as the place of meeting for the council, probably because the fine roads that centred from various directions in its market-place offered an easy access to the pilgrims of the East. The city stood—its ruins still stand—on the shores of Lake Aseania, not far from the Mediterranean Sea, and on the plains of Troy; it had been adorned with fine buildings by the kings of Bithynia, and enriched by the Roman emperors; in later ages it was shaken by a great earthquake, just after the council had dissolved; it became the prey successively of the Saracen, the Turk, and the Crusaders; and when a modern traveller visited its site to gaze on the scene where Athanasius had ravished pious ears by his youthful eloquence, and where Constantine had assembled the Christian world, he found only a waste of ruins in the midst of the ancient walls. The lake was still there; the fragments of aqueducts, theatres, temples. A village of a few hundred houses, supported chiefly by the culture of the mulberry-tree, sheltered beneath its ruined walls; and an ill-built Greek church, of crumbling brick-work and modern architecture, was pointed out to the traveller as the place where had met, nearly fifteen centuries before, the Council of Nice.

The bishops, in number three hundred and eighteen, together with many priests and other officials, assembled promptly at the call of the Emperor, and in June, 325, met in a basilica or public hall in the centre of the city. Few particulars are preserved of the proceedings of the great council, and we are forced to gather from the allusions of the historians a general conception of its character. Yet we know that it was the purest, the wisest, as well as the first, of all the sacred synods; that its members, tested in affliction and humbled by persecution, preserved much of the grace and gentleness of the Apostolic age; that no fierce anathemas, like those that fell from the lips of the papal bishops of Trent or Constance, defiled those of Hosius or Eusebius; that the pagan doctrine of persecution had

not yet been introduced, together with the pagan ritual, into the Christian church; that no vain superstitions were inculcated; and no cruel deeds enjoined; that no Huss or Jerome of Prague died at the stake to gratify the hate of a dominant sect, and that no Luther or Calvin was shut out by the dread of a similar fate from sharing in the earliest council of the Christian world. The proceedings went on with dignity and moderation, and men of various shades of opinion, but of equal purity of life, were heard with attention and respect; the rules of the Roman Senate were probably imitated in the Christian assembly; the Emperor opened the council in a speech inculcating moderation, and an era of benevolence and love seemed about to open upon the triumphant church.

In the town hall at Nice, seated probably upon rows of benches that ran around the room, were seen the representative Christians of an age of comparative purity, and the first meeting of these holy men must have formed a scene of touching interest. The martyrs who had scarcely escaped with life from the tortures of the pagans stood in the first rank in the veneration of the assembly; and when Paphnutius, a bishop of the Thebaid, entered the hall, dragging a disabled limb which had been severed while he worked in the mines, and turned upon the by-standers his sightless eye—or when Paul, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, raised in blessing his hand maimed by the fire, a thrill of sympathy and love stirred the throng as they gazed on the consecrated wounds. The solitaries, whose strange austerities had filled the Christian world with wonder, attracted an equal attention. From the desert borders of Persia and Mesopotamia, where he had lived for years on vegetables and wild fruits, came James of Nisibis, the modern Baptist, who was known by his raiment of goats' or camels' hair; and near him was the bishop of Heraclea, a faithful follower of the ascetic Anthony, the author of the monastic rule. There, too, was the gentle Spiridion, the shepherd-bishop of Cyprus, who still kept his flock after he had won a diocese, and who, when robbers came to steal his sheep, said, "Why did you not take the trouble to ask for them, and I would have given them to you?" And there was the tender-hearted St. Nicholas, the friend of little children, whose name is still a symbol of joy to those he loved. There, too, were men of rare genius and learning, who had studied in the famous schools of Athens or Alexandria, whose writings and whose eloquence had aroused the bitterest hatred of the pagans, and who were believed by their contemporaries to have rivaled and outdone the highest efforts of the heathen mind. Chief among these men of intellect was the young presbyter Athanasius, and it was to him that the Council of Nice was to owe its most important influence on mankind. The enthusiasm of Athanasius was tempered by the prudence of Hosius, the Trinitarian bishop of Cordova, and by the somewhat latitudinarian liberality of Eusebius of Cæsarea; and these

two able men, both close friends of the Emperor Constantine, probably guided the council to moderation and peace. Sylvester, bishop of Rome, too feeble to bear the fatigues of the journey, sent two priests to represent him in the synod. Eight bishops of renown from the West sat with their Eastern brethren, and in the crowded assembly were noticed a Persian and a Goth, the representatives of the barbarians. A strange diversity of language and accent prevailed in the various deputations, and a day of Pentecost seemed once more to dawn upon the church. In the upper end of the hall, after all had taken their places, a golden chair was seen below the seats of the bishops, which was still vacant. At length a man of a tall and noble figure entered. His head was modestly bent to the ground; his countenance must have borne traces of contrition and woe. He advanced slowly up the hall, between the assembled bishops, and having obtained their permission, seated himself in the golden chair. It was Constantine, the head of the church.

CONSTANTINE.

A tragic interest must ever hang over the career of the first Christian emperor, whose private griefs seem to have more than counterbalanced the uninterrupted successes of his public life. In his youth Constantine had married Minervina, a maiden of obscure origin and low rank, but who to her devoted and constant lover seemed no doubt the first and fairest of women. Their only son, Crispus, educated by the learned and pious Lactantius, grew up an amiable, exemplary young man, and fought bravely by his father's side in the battle that made Constantine the master of the world. But now Constantine had married a second time, for ambition rather than love, Fausta, the daughter of the cruel Emperor Maximian; and his high-born wife, who had three sons, looked with jealousy upon the rising virtues and renown of the amiable Crispus. She taught her husband to believe that his eldest son had conspired against his life and his crown. Already, when Constantine summoned the council at Nice, his mind was tortured by suspicion of one whom he probably loved with strong affection. He had perhaps resolved upon the death of Crispus; and he felt with shame, if not contrition, his unworthiness as he entered the Christian assembly. Soon after the dissolution of the council the tragedy of the palace began (326) by the execution of Crispus, by the orders of his father, together with his young cousin, Licinius, the son of Constantine's sister, and a large number of their friends. The guilty arts of Fausta, however, according to Greek historians, were soon discovered and revealed to the Emperor by his Christian mother, Helena. He was filled with a boundless remorse. The wretched Empress was put to death; and the close of Constantine's life was passed in a vain effort to obtain the forgiveness of his own conscience and of Heaven.

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But when Constantine entered the Council of Nice his life was still comparatively spotless. He was believed to have inherited all the virtues of his excellent father and his pious mother. To the simple and holy men who now looked upon their preserver as he modestly sought instead of commanding their attention, he must have seemed, in his humility and grandeur, half divine. But lately his single arm had rescued them from the jaws of a horrible death. He had saved the church from its sorrows, and published the Gospel to mankind. He was the most powerful monarch the world had ever known, and his empire spread from the Grampian Hills to the edge of the Atlas, from the Atlantic to the Caspian Sea. He was the invincible conqueror, the hero of his age; but now monks and solitaries heard him profess himself their inferior, a modest catechumen, and urge upon his Christian brethren harmony and union. A miracle, too—the most direct inference from above since the conversion of St. Paul—had thrown around Constantine a mysterious charm; and probably few among the assembled bishops but had heard of the cross of light that had outshone the sun at noon-day, of the inscription in the skies, and of the perpetual victory promised to their imperial head. When, therefore, Constantine, addressed the council, he was heard with awe and fond attention. His Christian sentiments controlled the assembly, and he decided, perhaps, against his own convictions, the opinions of future ages.

HERESY IN THE CHURCH.

The council had been summoned by the Emperor to determine the doctrine of the church. Heresy was already abundant and prolific. The opinions of Christians seemed to vary according to their origin or nationality. But the acute and active intellect of the Greeks, ever busy with the deeper inquiries of philosophy and eager for novelty, had poured forth a profusion of strange speculations which alarmed or embarrassed the duller Latins. Rome, cold and unimaginative, had been long accustomed to receive its abstract doctrines from the East, but it seemed quite time these principles of faith should be accurately defined. Heresies of the wildest extravagance were widely popular. The Gnostics, or the superior minds, had covered the plain outline of the Scriptures with Platonic commentaries; the theory of eons and of an eternal wisdom seemed about to supplant the teachings of Paul. Among the wildest of the early sectaries were the Ophites or snake-worshippers, who adored the eternal wisdom as incarnate in the form of a snake; and who, at the celebration of the sacred table, suffered a serpent to crawl over the elements, and to be devoutly kissed by the superstitious Christians. The Sethites adored Seth as the Messiah; the Cainites celebrated Judas Iscariot as the prince of the Apostles; Manes introduced from the fire-worship of the Persians

a theory of the conflict of light and darkness, in which Christ contended as the Lord of Light against the demons of the night; and Montanus boldly declared that he was superior in morality to Christ the Messiah and his Apostles, and was vigorously sustained by the austere Tertullian. Yet these vain fancies might have been suffered to die in neglect; it was a still more vital controversy that called forth the assembly at Nice. This was no less than the nature of the Deity. What did the Scriptures tell us of that Divine Being who was the author of Christianity, and on whom for endless ages the destiny of the church was to rest? The Christian world was divided into two fiercely contending parties. On the one side stood Rome, Alexandria and the West; on the other Arius, many of the Eastern bishops, and perhaps Constantine himself. It is plain, therefore, that the Emperor was sincere in his profession of humility and submission, since he suffered the council to determine the controversy uninfluenced by superior power.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

A striking simplicity marked the proceedings of the first council. Hosius, bishop of Cordova, presided, the only representative of Spain, Gaul and Britain. A prelate opened the meeting with a short address, a hymn was sung, then Constantine delivered his well-timed speech on harmony, and the general debate began. It was conducted always with vigor, sometimes with rude asperity; but when the war of recrimination rose too high, the Emperor, who seems to have attended the sittings regularly, would interpose and calm the strife by soothing words. The question of clerical marriages was discussed, and it was determined, by the arguments of Paphnutius, the Egyptian ascetic, that the lower orders should be allowed to marry. The jurisdiction of the bishops was defined; all were allowed to be equal; but Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, the chief cities of the empire before Constantinople was built, held each a certain supremacy. The primacy of St. Peter was never mentioned; the worship of Mary, Queen of Heaven, was yet unknown; but the earlier form of the Nicene Creed was determined, and Arius was condemned. Twenty canons were passed by the council, many of which were soon neglected and forgotten; and when, after sitting for two months, the assembly separated, every one felt that the genius and eloquence of Athanasius had controlled both Emperor and church.

Before parting from his Christian brothers—his “beloved,” as he was accustomed to call them—Constantine entertained the council at a splendid banquet, and spread before them the richest wines and the rarest viands of the East. The unlettered soldier probably shone better in his costly entertainment than in debate, where his indifferent Latin and broken Greek must have

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awakened a smile on the grave faces of his learned brothers. Here he could flatter and caress with easy familiarity; he was a pleasant companion and a winning host; but we are not told whether he was able to persuade James of Nisibis to taste his rare dainties, or to entice the anchorites of Egypt to his costly wine. The bishops and their followers left Nicæa charmed with the courtesy and liberality of their master. He had paid all their expenses, and maintained them with elegance at Nicæa, had condescended to call them brothers, and had sent them home by the public conveyances to spread every where the glad news that an era of peace and union awaited the triumphant church.

CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHURCH.

Happy delusion! But it was rudely disappointed. From Constantine himself came the fatal blow that filled all Christendom with a perpetual unrest. It was the Emperor who corrupted the church he had seemed to save. Soon after the council that dark shadow fell upon Constantine's life which was noticed by pagan and Christian observers, and he was pointed out by men as a parricide whose sin was inexpiable. The pagan Zosinus represents him as asking the priests of the ancient faith whether his offence could ever be atoned for by their lustrations, and to have been told that for him there was no hope; but that the Christians allured him to their communion by a promise of ample forgiveness. Yet from this period the mind of the great Emperor grew clouded, and the fearful shock of his lost happiness seems to have deadened his once vigorous faculties. He became a tyrant, made and unmade bishops at will, and persecuted all those who had opposed the doctrines of Arius. The church became a state establishment, and all the ills that flow from that unnatural union fell upon the hapless Christians. Pride, luxury, and license distinguished the haughty bishops, who ruled like princes over their vast domains, and who imitated the Emperor in persecuting, with relentless vigor, all who differed from them in faith. Bishop excommunicated bishop, and fatal anathemas, too dreadful to fall from the lips of feeble and dying men, were the common weapon of religious controversy. They pretended to the right of consigning to eternal woe the souls of the hapless dissidents. They brought bloodshed and murder into the controversies of the church. Formalism succeeded a living faith, and religion fled from her high station among the rulers of Christendom to find shelter in her native scenes among the suffering and the poor. There we may trust she survived, during this mournful period, the light of the peasant's cottage or the anchorite's cell.

Never again did the higher orders of Christendom regain the respect of mankind. Constantine himself, clothed in Oriental splendor, with painted cheeks, false hair, and a feeble show, seems

to have sought oblivion for his crime in reckless dissipation. He became cruel, morose, suspicious. He was always fond of religious disputation, and his courtly and effeminative bishops seem to have yielded to his idle whim. At length he died (33) having been baptized not long before for the expiation of his sins, and was succeeded by his three worthless sons. A period of fierce religious controversy now prevailed for many years, of which the resolute hero, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was the author and the victim. In 326 Athanasius became the Patriarch of that gay, splendid, and powerful city, the Paris of the East, and ruled at times with a vigor that awed the Arian Emperor at Constantinople, but oftener was a persecuted exile, hidden in Gaul or in the rocks and sands of Egypt. The fire of genius survived in this remarkable man the pains of age and the humiliation of exile. He never ceased to write, to preach, and to argue with unabated power. Constantius became sole Emperor, and the chief aim of his corrupt reign seems to have been to destroy the influence and the opinions of the greatest of polemics. The whole Christian world seemed united against Athanasius. The bishop of Rome, Liberius, and even the pious Hosius, joined with the imperial faction in renouncing the doctrine of the Nicene Council; yet Athanasius, sheltered in the wilds of Egypt, maintained the unequal strife, and may be safely said to have moulded by his vigorous resistance the opinions of all succeeding ages. But the period of Athanasius was one upon which neither party could look with satisfaction. The principles of Christianity were forgotten in the memorable struggle. Both factions became bitter persecutors, blood-thirsty and tyrannical. Even Athanasius condescended to duplicity in his argument and cruelty in his conduct; the most orthodox of bishops may be convicted of pious frauds or brutal violence; and the meek and lowly Christians of that unhappy age probably gazed with wonder and shame on the crimes and follies of their superiors.

THE SECOND COUNCIL—GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

The second Œcumenical Council met in the year 381, at Constantinople, under the reign of Theodosius the Great. The story of the famous synod has lately been told by M. De Broglie, a moderate Romanist, and the grand-son of the gifted De Stael. His narrative is trust-worthy, although uncritical; and his honest picture of the stormy sessions of the great Constantinopolitan Council shows how corrupt, even in his guarded opinion, had become the exterior organization of the church. A similar account is given by the other authorities. Happily, the people were always better and wiser than their rulers. The true church lived among the humble and the poor. The Cathari or early Protestants, the Waldenses, and the Albigenses indicate that moral purity was never wholly extinct, and that the industry, probity, and progress

inculcated by St. Paul still shed peace and hope over the homes of the lowly. There was one eminent intellect, too, of that corrupt age, educated among the highest ranks of the clergy, who has painted with no gentle touch the harsher lineaments of the second council. Gregory Nazianzen repeats in his letters, sermons, and autobiographical poems what was the popular conception of the rulers of the church. Gregory was the son of the bishop of Nazianzus. His youth had been spent in study and learned ease. He was himself already the titular bishop of Sasima, but he had contented himself with assisting his father in his rustic diocese, and shrank from public life with awkward modesty. His wonderful eloquence and vigorous powers seem, however, to have become widely known, when a new field was suddenly opened to him for their practical employment, which his conscience would not permit him to decline. The magnificent city of Constantinople had, ever since its foundation, been in the hands of Arian prelates, and its crowded churches refused to accept the canons of the Council of Nice. — But an orthodox emperor, the rough and honest Spanish soldier, Theodosius, was now on the Roman throne; and a small band of faithful Athanasians at Constantinople thought this a favorable moment for attempting the conversion of the imperial city. They looked over the Christian world for a suitable pastor. They might have selected Basil the Great, but his age and infirmities prevented him from leaving his Eastern see; they sent, therefore, to claim the services of Gregory, as the next most eminent of the Oriental divines.

Little did Gregory foresee the cares and woes, the shame and disappointment that lay hidden in his future! Reluctantly he accepted the invitation, and left his rustic home to enter the luxurious capital. He was already prematurely old and infirm. His head was bald, except for a few gray hairs; his figure was bent with age, his appearance insignificant. His manner was modest and timid, and no careless observer would have discovered in the rustic old man the most splendid and successful orator of his age. When Gregory arrived in the city he found not one of its numerous churches open to him. Its whole population was hostile, and nobles, artisans, monks, and nuns were prepared to argue the rarest questions in theology with eager volubility. Constantinople, in 380, rang with religious controversy. The feasts, the baths, the Hippodrome, and the most licentious resorts resounded with sacred names and thoughts. If a shop-keeper was asked the cost of a piece of silk, he would reply by a disquisition on ungenerated being; if a stranger inquired at a baker's the price of bread, he was told "the Son is subordinate to the Father." Into this disputatious population Gregory threw himself boldly. His orthodox friends had no church to offer him, but they provided a large hall or basilica; an altar was raised at one end; a gallery for women separated them from the men; choristers and deacons attended; and Gregory,

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full of hope, named his modest chapel Anastasia, the Church of the Resurrection.

His success was indeed unbounded. The building was always crowded, the crush at the entrance often terrific; the rails of the chancel were sometimes broken down; and often the crowded congregation broke forth in loud congratulatory cheers as they were touched or startled by the eloquent divine. Insensibly Gregory's vanity was enflamed and gratified by his wide popularity. Standing on his bishop's throne in the eastern end of his Anastasia, the church brilliantly lighted, his presbyters and deacons in white robes around him, a crowded congregation listening with upturned eyes below, now fixed in deepest silence and now breaking in loud applause, Gregory enjoyed a transient triumph, upon which he was fond of dwelling in his later years, when, in the obscurity of Nazianzus, he composed his own poetical memoirs. Yet he was never safe from the malice of his foes. More than once a riotous mob of ferocious monks and nuns, of drunken artisans and hungry beggars, broke into the Anastasia, disturbed its worshippers and the preacher, wounded the neophytes and priests, and were allowed by the Arian police to escape unharmed; and it was only when Theodosius himself entered the city that the labor of conversion was attended with success.

Theodosius was no hesitating missionary. He called before him Demophilus, the Arian bishop, and ordered him to recant his errors or resign. The honest bishop at once gave up his office. The see was now vacant. A wild Egyptian fanatic or impostor, Maximus, had already bribed the people to elect him their bishop; but the next day they had repented of their folly, and resolved to force Gregory into the vacant see. They dragged him in their arms to the episcopal chair. He struggled to escape, he refused to sit down, the women wept, the children cried out in their mothers' arms, and at last Gregory consented to be their bishop. Maximus, however, still claimed the see. Demophilus had not yet been deposed, when Damasus, the bishop of Rome, advised Theodosius to summon the Second General Council. But the affair of the bishopric the soldier-emperor resolved to decide in his own way. He deposed Demophilus, expelled Maximus, and amidst the general lamentation of the Arian city, on a clouded day in November, carried the pale and trembling Gregory to the Church of the Apostles, where Constantine and his successors lay entombed, and proclaimed him bishop. Just then, it is said, the wintry clouds parted and a bright sunbeam covered Gregory's bare head with glory. The crowded congregation accepted the omen, and cried out, "Long live our bishop Gregory."

COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE DESCRIBED.

To confirm or annul Gregory's election, and to correct the

creed of the day, were the objects for which the Second General Council assembled. If we may trust Gregory's account of it, which he wrote in the obscure but not tranquil retirement of Nazianzus, we must conclude that it could scarcely compare favorably in moral excellence with that of Nice. A canonized saint, he rails against the bishops of his age. All the gluttons, villians, and false-swearers of the empire, he exclaims, had been convoked in the council. The bishops were low-born and illiterate peasants, blacksmiths, deserters from the army, or reeking from the holds of ships; and when in the midst of his vituperation the elegant Gregory remembered that of the same class of humble and unlearned men were the authors of his faith: "Yes," he cried, "they were true apostles; but these are time-servers and flatterers of the great, long-bearded hypocrites, and pretended devotees, who have neither intellect nor faith." Of œcumenical councils the priestly satirist had but an indifferent opinion. Councils and congresses, he said, were the cause of many evils. "I will not sit in one of those councils of geese and cranes," he exclaimed. "I fly from every meeting of bishops; for I never saw a good end to any, but rather an increase to evils." It is indeed difficult to see how the canonized Gregory, had he attended the synods of Trent or Constantine, could have escaped the fate of Huss or Jerome. Yet in the Second Council were gathered several eminent and excellent men. Among them were Gregory of Nyssa, a high authority in the church, and the worthy brother of Basil the Great; Melitius, the gentle bishop of Antioch, who presided at the council at the Emperor's request; Cyril, the aged bishop of Jerusalem; and many others who scarcely deserved the bitter taunts of Gregory. But Melitius died soon after the opening of the council, and Gregory, who had been confirmed in his bishopric, presided as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was at the summit of his glory; his fall drew near. His vigorous honesty, his bitter denunciation, had made him many enemies, and it was suddenly discovered that there was a fatal flaw in his election. By an obsolete canon of the Nicene Council, which had been constantly violated ever since its passage, no bishop could be translated from one see to another; and Gregory was already the bishop of Sasima. The objection was made; the jealous council condemned their greatest orator; and the indignant bishop, deprived of his see, a disgraced and fallen churchman, was sent back to the repose of Nazianzus. Theodosius lamented his loss, but refused to interfere in the clerical dispute. A few friends shared in Gregory's indignation. In his rural retirement he wrote those sharp diatribes on the Eastern bishops which introduce us to the clerical life of Constantinople, as those of his friend Jerome depict the vices and follies of Rome. Both capitals seem to have been equally tainted and impure.

The council now wanted a head, and Theodosius at once ap-

pointed Nectarius, a magistrate of the city, to the holy office of Patriarch of Constantinople. If Gregory had been ineligible, his successor was still more so. He had never been baptized, was not even a Christian, and his morals were not such as to fit him for the apostolic place. But the Emperor insisted, the bishop was baptized, and his vices were hidden in the splendor of his patriarchal court. He presided at the council, which now hastened to finish its sittings. The real influence of the Council of Constantinople on the opinions of the Church was not important; its decisions were rejected at Rome and neglected by its contemporaries. The "Creed of Constantinople," which has been erroneously ascribed to it, was probably the work of Epiphanius or Gregory of Nyssa. The council condemned a vast number of heresies; it raised the see of Constantinople to the second rank in Christendom, next to Rome, and suggested the principle that the dignity of the Patriarch was to be determined by the importance of the city over which he ruled. Constantinople was now second only to Rome, and, as the latter declined in power, we find the bishop of the Eastern capital first claiming an equality with the ancient see, and then, finally, seeking to subject the barbarous West to his own authority by declaring himself the universal bishop. The Emperor, Theodosius, whose vigor had controlled most of the proceedings of the council, now, as head of the church, affirmed its authority by an imperial decree. The "one and fifty fathers," as they have been called, left Constantinople in the hot days of July, 381, for their various homes. The war of controversy had ceased; but the fierce disputes, the bitter invectives, the unchristian violence, and the infamous morals of many of the members of the Second Council are preserved to us by the unsparing satires of the honest but vindictive Gregory of Nazianzus.

INNER LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

It might seem to the Christian or the man of thought a matter of little consequence what the corrupt priests and bishops of this distant period said or imagined of their own prerogatives and powers; and no subtlety of argument can convert into a successor of the Apostles the fierce and blood-thirsty Damasus, bishop of Rome, the dissolute Patriarch of Constantinople, or the ambitious or unprincipled prelates of Antioch and Alexandria; but it may be safely said that each asserted a perfect independence of the other, and that the bishop of Rome as yet held no general control in the exterior church. The wars and rivalries of the ambitious prelates, indeed, might almost convince us that Christian virtue had wholly died out, did not various casual notices of the historians of the time direct us to a different conclusion. The pagan, Ammianus Marcellinus, in his scornful picture of the luxury and vices of the clergy of Rome, points to a pleasing contrast in the

conduct of the rural priests. They, at least, lived in a purity and simplicity worthy of the best days of the church; they, perhaps, with their rustic congregations, were the true successors of the Apostles. Gregory of Nazianzus and Jerome confirm and illustrate his narrative. The church still lived among the people; and while angry bishops raged in stormy councils, or hurled anathemas against each other in haughty supremacy, the good Samaritan still softened the hearts of humble Christians; the cup of cold water was still given to the weary and the sad; the merciful and the meek of every land were still united in a saintly and eternal brotherhood. Christian morality began to assert a wonderful power; the people every where grew purer and better. The barbarous gladiatorial shows were abolished; licentious spectacles no longer pleased; the vices of paganism disappeared; the sacred bond of marriage was observed; slavery, which had destroyed the Roman Republic, was tending to its decay; and some future historian of the church, neglecting the strife of bishops and councils, may be able to trace a clear succession of apostolic virtue from the days of Gregory and Jerome to those of Wycliffe, Huss and Luther.

STRUGGLES FOR SUPREMACY.

The third and fourth Œcumenical Councils grew out of a fierce struggle for supremacy between the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Constantinople. Cyril of Alexandria, violent, ambitious, and unscrupulous, ruled over a wide and prosperous patriarchate. The city of Alexandria, in the decline of the Roman empire, was still (431) the centre of letters and of trade. Rome had been ravaged and desolated by the Goth and the Vandal, and was fast sinking into a new barbarism; Constantinople, under its feeble emperors, trembled at each movement of the savage tenants of the European wilderness; but Alexandria was untouched by the barbarian, and its gifted bishop reigned supreme over the swarming population of the Egyptian diocese. He had resolved to crush Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. It was the famous Nestorian controversy which gave rise to a Christian sect that still exists in its ancient seats. Nestorius refused to apply to the Virgin Mary the name of "Mother of God." Cyril denounced him with bitter malignity, and began a holy war which he had resolved should end in the destruction of his powerful rival. Between the two hostile Patriarchs, indeed, there seems to have been little difference in character or in Christian moderation, and Nestorius had persecuted with unsparing hand the hapless dissidents within his see. But he had scarcely equalled the vindictive cruelty of Cyril. Alexandria had already witnessed, under the rule of its intolerant master, a severe persecution of the gentle Novatians, whose simple piety seems to have attracted the bitter hatred of the ambitious prelates of the age; and Cyril himself led a throng of fanatics to the

plunder and destruction of the harmless and wealthy Jews. Forty thousand of the unhappy Israelites were banished from the city they had enriched; and when Orestes, the Roman prefect, complained of the persecuting bishop to the Emperor, a mob of monks assailed him in the street, and one of them, Ammonius, struck him on the head with a stone. The people drove off the monks, and Orestes ordered Ammonius to be put to torture. He died but, Cyril buried him with holy honors, and enrolled his name among the band of martyrs. Sober Christians, says Socrates, condemned Cyril's conduct, but a still deeper disgrace soon fell upon the Alexandrian church from the rivalry of Cyril and Orestes. The fair Hypatia, the daughter of the philosopher Theron, had won the respect as well as the admiration of Alexandria by her beauty, her eloquence and her modest life. With rare clearness and force she explained before splendid audiences the pure doctrines of Plato, and proved, by her refined and graceful oratory, that the gift of genius might be found in either sex. She was the rival of Cyril in eloquence, and the friend of his enemy Orestes, and her dreadful doom awoke the sympathy of Christians as well as pagans. The fierce and bigotted followers of Cyril dragged her from her carriage as she was returning to her home, tore her body to pieces, and burned her mangled limbs; and it was believed, even by Christian historians, that the jealous Patriarch was not altogether innocent of a share in the doom of his gentle and accomplished rival.

COUNCIL OF EPHEBUS.

Cyril denounced and anathematized Nestorius; Celestine, bishop of Rome, joined him in his war against the bishop of Constantinople, degraded Nestorius from his episcopal dignity, and asserted the divine honors of Mary as the mother of God. The feeble Emperor Theodosius the Younger, alarmed by the furious rage of his powerful prelates, but friendly to Nestorius, summoned an assembly of the Christian world to decide the nice distinction. Ephesus was chosen as a convenient place for the meeting of the Third Council, and in June, 431, the rival factions began to gather in the magnificent city of Diana, now destined to become renowned for the triumph of the holier Virgin. Yet, to the sincere Christians of this unhappy age, the conduct and character of the members of the Third Council could have brought only disappointment and shame. In vain the gentle Theodosius implored his patriarchs and bishops to exercise the common virtues of forbearance and of the self-respect; in vain he placed over them a guard of soldiers to insure an outward peace. The streets of the magnificent city were filled with riot and bloodshed; the rival factions fought for the honor of Mary or the supremacy of the hostile sees. Cyril, violent and resolute to rule, had come from Alexandria followed by a throng of bishops, priests, and a host of fanatics;

Nestorius relied for his safety on the protection of the imperial guard; but to neither could the Christian world attribute any one of the virtues enjoined by its holy faith. The Patriarch of Alexandria refused to wait for the coming of the Oriental bishops, and at once assembled a synod of his own adherents and proceeded to try and condemn his rival. Nestorius protested; the Emperor's legate, Candidian, who asked for a delay of four days, was driven with insult from the hostile assembly. The bishops delivered their opinions; Cyril presided; and at the close of a single day Nestorius was degraded, a convicted heretic; and the city of Ephesus resounded with songs of triumph over the fall of the enemy of Mary.

THE NOVATIANS.

It is painful, indeed, to contemplate the angry strife that rent the corrupt church of this early period, yet it is not difficult to discover its cause. The church, in its exterior form, had long been the instrument of the state; the bishops and patriarchs were the representatives of the vices and intrigues of the imperial court. They had become earthly princes, instead of messengers of heaven. Their pomp and luxury shocked and alienated the true believer, and they had long abandoned every one of the principles of charity and benevolence inculcated by the faith they professed. The unity of the church had been lost in the contentions of its chiefs, and even in Constantinople itself three rival bishops ruled over their separate adherents. The Cathari or Novatians, the Protestants of this corrupt period, departing from the established church, had retained their organization ever since the age of Constantine; the pure and spotless lives of their bishops, Agellus, Chrysanthus, or Paul, formed a pleasing contrast to the vices of Nectarius or Nestorius; and the modest virtues of the persecuted sect awakened the envy and the hatred of the orthodox bishops of Rome and Constantinople. The Novatians rejected the authority of the imperial Patriarch, but they observed the Nicene Creed. They lived holy lives in the midst of persecution and temptation. Chrysanthus, the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, distributed his private fortune among the poor, and his only salary was two loaves of bread on each Lord's day from the contributions of the faithful. The Novatian Albius was one of the most elegant and vigorous preachers of the day; the pious Paul was the friend of the prisoners and of the poor. An Arian bishop also presided at Constantinople, and in their sufferings his followers learned virtue and self-restraint. It was against these rival sects that Nestorius had first turned his persecuting rage. He envied the spotless fame, the general love that followed the gentle Novatian bishop Paul as he passed through the city to intercede for the prisoner or to relieve the sick; he destroyed the Arian churches; and he deserved, by his cruel intolerance, the fatal doom which Cyril had prepared for him at Ephesus.

But Cyril's triumph at the council seemed about to be turned into a defeat by the arrival of John, bishop of Antioch, and the Oriental bishops, who at once denied the validity of the condemnation of Nestorius. Two rival councils sat at the same time in the City of the Virgin, and the streets were again filled with riot and bloodshed by the contending factions. Churches were stormed and defended; the imperial guards fled before an angry mob; and for three months Cyril and Nestorius opposed each other with an almost equal prospect of success, and with all the weapons of corruption, violence and fraud. The Emperor Theodosius, the gentlest of rulers was at length enraged at the vindictive fury of the holy council. He sent the disorderly prelates to their homes, and recommended them to amend by their private virtues the injury and scandal they had inflicted on the church. But the malevolence of Cyril was insatiable. His intrigues and his bribes won over the courtiers of Constantinople; and Nestorius, the haughtiest of patriarchs except his rival, was sent into exile, and died a convicted heretic. His name and his doctrine still survive in a sect of Oriental Christians, who are perhaps the natural fruit of the persecuting spirit of Cyril and the intolerant rule of the famous Council of Ephesus.

COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON.

The heresy of Nestorius gave rise to the Fourth General Council, at Chalcedon, by exciting a speculation directly opposed to his own. Eutyches, an aged monk, the chief or abbot of the ascetic throng of Constantinople, and a faithful follower of Cyril, proposed, in opposition to the two natures of Christ asserted by the Nestorians, a theory of the perfect union of the spiritual nature with the human. He was shocked to find himself denounced as a heretic, yet he boldly maintained his opinion. Cyril was dead; his successor, Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, defended the theory of Eutyches. He was even more unscrupulous than his predecessor. His vices, his cruelty, and his ambition filled the Christian world with tumult. A synod met at Ephesus to decide the controversy. Dioscorus was present with a horde of monks, robbers, and assassins; the trembling bishops were forced by the violence of the Egyptians to adopt the opinion of Eutyches, and the "Robber Synod," as it was called, from the savage natures of its members, seemed to have fixed the rule of orthodoxy. But Leo the Great was now bishop of Rome, and the opponent of Attila did not fear the wild throngs of Egypt. A general council was summoned at his request, to meet, October, 451, at Chalcedon. Senators and nobles were mingled with the priestly throng to restrain their tumultuous impulses; in the magnificent church of St. Euphemia, on the shores of Thracian Bosphorus, five hundred bishops attended; the haughty Dioscorus was tried by his peers, and convicted of innumerable vices and crimes; he was deposed from his sacred

office, and the aspiring bishop of Rome rejoiced in the fall of his powerful rival. For the first time, perhaps, the Nicene Creed was chanted as we have it to-day; the Eutychian heresy was condemned in the person of its chief defender; and various canons were passed that served to define the usages of the church. Yet Leo's triumph was marred by a memorable incident. Among the regulations introduced by the council was one that raised the see of Constantinople to an equality, in some particulars at least, with that of Rome; it asserted that the dignity of the city determined that of its Patriarch, and openly expressed what had been implied at the Second Council. Leo rejected the canons with disdain; he asserted with rage and violence the primacy of Peter; but the incident is important as showing what was the opinion of this superstitious age as to the origin of the papal claims. Another result of the Council of Chalcedon was the creation of a sect, the Monophysites, who still retain the dogma condemned by the synod, and whose faith still lingers among the Copts and the Abyssinians. So powerless are councils to produce a general unity of belief!

FIFTH AND SIXTH GENERAL COUNCILS.

A bishop of Rome, Vigilius, lent his sanction to the Fifth Œcumenical Council, and its general character may be inferred from the life and conduct of its head. Vigilius was the creature and the victim of the corrupt women who ruled over the court of the feeble Justinian. He was accused of having caused the death of his predecessor, the gentle Silverius; of having killed his own nephew by incessant scourging; of being a notorious murderer, stained by countless crimes. He fled from Rome, pursued by the maledictions of its people. They threw volleys of stones after him as he left the city, and cried, "Evil thou hast done to us—evil attend thee wherever thou goest!" At Constantinople he met with still worse treatment. His vacillation or his insincerity displeased his corrupt patrons; he was dragged through the streets with a rope around his neck; was shut up in the common jail, and fed on bread and water; and at length the unlucky pontiff, having in vain sacrificed his conscience to the tyranny of Justinian, died a miserable outcast at Syracuse. The papal dignity had evidently sunk low in this degenerate age; and one cannot avoid contrasting the humble slave, Vigilius, with the haughty Gregories and Innocents who ruled over monarchs and nations, and who so barbarously avenged his fate. Justinian ruled alone at the Fifth Council (553), and Pope and bishops were the servile instruments of the vicious court. The last, the Sixth General Council, assembled in 680, at Constantinople. The Emperor or the Pope Agatho presided; a throng of bishops attended; a band of soldiers enforced good order; and a fierce anchorite of the Monothelite faith attempted to perform a miracle as a proof of the sanctity of his creed. But the

dead refused to come to life under his illusive spells; the Monothelistic doctrine was condemned by the united council; and the faith in the infallibility of the papacy was forever shattered by the condemnation of Pope Honorius as a heretic. If a Pope can be a heretic, how can he be infallible? If his inspiration can once fail, when can we ever be sure of his perfect truth? Or if Pope Honorius erred in becoming the patron of the Monothelite creed, may we not conclude that Pope Pius IX. is wrong in opposing free schools and a free press? The Sixth General Council offers a happy precedent for a general synod of the nineteenth century.

GROWTH OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM.

There now occurs in the course of history that solemn and instructive spectacle, the decline and death of the European intellect. Knowledge ceased to be powerful; the ignorant races subdued the intellectual; a brutal reign of violence followed; and truth, honor, probity, industry, and genius seemed to have fled forever from the nations of Europe, to find their home with the Saracen or the Turk. From the seventh to the twelfth century the Arabs were the only progressive race. In Europe, by a strange perversion of common reason, to labor was held dishonorable; to rob the laborer was held the privilege of noble birth. The feudal system was a not unskilful device to maintain a warrior caste at the cost of the laboring class; and the merchant, the scholar, the mechanic, and the inventor became serfs or villeins, whose scanty earnings were freely snatched from them to sustain the indolent license of their warrior lords. Industry died out, and with it fell its natural offspring—the intellect. The warrior caste could neither read nor write; the miserable serfs had no leisure for mental improvement; while priests, monks and bishops abandoned the study of classic literature, and when they could read, employed their idle hours in conning their breviaries or in spelling out miraculous legends of the saints. In this dark period grew up the monastic system, the worship of images and relics, the adoration of Mary, the supremacy of Rome.

Heresies, indeed, had ceased to exist, except the greatest of them all, the papal assumption; and general councils were no longer held. A chain of circumstances had tended to make Rome the master of the intellect and the conscience of Europe. Its ancient rivals, the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, had sunk into feeble subjects of the followers of Mohammed. No Cyril any longer thundered his anathemas from amidst his swarming hosts of Egyptian monks and bishops; no vigorous opponents of the papal assumptions arose among the persecuted Christians of Syria and the East. A feeble Patriarch reigned at Constantinople, who faintly defied his Italian brother, and chanted an uninterpolated creed; but the whole Western world obeyed implicitly the

spiritual tyrant at Rome, and the pure faith and morality of the age were lost to sight, and were hidden perhaps in the cottages of the Vaudois and amidst the glens and defiles of the Pyrenees.

DANGEROUS ASPECTS OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM.

The monastic system had now assumed a strange and overwhelming importance. Rome ruled by its monasteries, and over every part of Europe a countless throng of these clerical fortresses had arisen, engrossing the richest lands, drawing in the young and ardent, cultivating the grossest superstition, and forming, from Monte Casino to Croyland or Melrose, the firmest defence of the papal rule. In the third century a Paul or an Anthony, the famous solitaries of Egypt, had begun the system by their example of a perfect seclusion from the world, and often the gentle hermits were the purest, if not the most useful of their race. A pale, slight, sickly, but impassioned and gifted missionary of the new practice, the austere, the bitter Jerome, had defended and propagated monasticism by his vigorous pen and his holy life. But Jerome at least taught his followers to labor with their hands, to dress plainly but neatly, to read, perhaps to think. A Benedict and Pope Gregory the Great helped to spread the system over the West. Its rules of austerity, seclusion, celibacy, and ignorance grew rigid and immovable, and the monastery became the model of the Roman church. Celibacy, which had been condemned by the gentle ascetic Paphnutius at the Council of Nice, who proclaimed marriage honorable, was now enforced upon every priest. The iron Hildebrand tore wives from their husbands, destroyed the happiness of countless families, and denounced the married clergy in every land: the priest was converted into a monk. The Roman church demanded a perfect submission from its servants. But the monastic system, which had seemed so harmless or so meritorious in its earlier adherents, began now to show its more dangerous aspect. Monasteries and nunneries filled the cities and the open country of Europe. They possessed half the arable land of England, and drew in the wealth of Germany and France. They grew rich by bequests and charities, lawsuits, forgeries, and fraud. The monks were noted for their avarice, indolence, license, and encroaching pride. They crushed literature, discouraged industry, despised the claims of labor, and no burden pressed more heavily upon the working men of the Middle Ages than the general prevalence of the monastic system. A selfish and useless isolation made the monks the prey of idle fancies and superstitious dreams. They sustained the worship of images against the common-sense of Leo and Charlemagne, asserted the claims of the Virgin, and defended the tyranny of the Pope. A monk invented the Spanish Inquisition; another founded that of Rome; one produced the massacre of St. Bartholomew; a

Jesuit drove the Huguenots from France; and scarcely one of those horrible persecutions and bloody wars that have made the name of Rome odious among nations but may be traced to the bitter and blind superstition engendered by the monkish rule.

CONVENTS AND NUNNERIES.

A still darker infamy surrounded the convents and the nunnery. Within their gloomy walls the abbot or superior reigned supreme; no person was permitted to hold intercourse with the monks and nuns; their nearest relatives were excluded forever from their sight; a severe discipline made them the slaves of the abbot or the confessor, and deeds of violence and crime, faintly whispered in the public ear, increased the unpopularity of the monastic system. At length in the sixteenth century, the mighty voice of Luther awakened attention to the growing enormity; nation after nation threw off the terrible superstition, broke up its monasteries, and drove their swarming population to useful labor. Italy has just expelled its monks, to turn the monasteries into alms-houses and public schools; Spain follows in its path; and it is possible that these dangerous prisons of the young and the fair may be permitted to exist in all their medieval enormity only on the free soil of America or on the streets of Cracow. It seems, indeed, unsafe that they should be suffered to multiply any where, unless placed under the constant supervision of the state.

MIDDLE AND DARK AGES.

From the seventh to the sixteenth century the monks ruled the world. The haughtiest and most hated of the Popes, a Hildebrand or an Innocent III., were monks, and every assembly of the papal bishops was controlled in its deliberations by the monkish rule. In a Seventh Council (746), whose œcumenicity might well be admitted, image worship was condemned, and images declared the instruments of Satan. The monks rebelled; the Pope led them against the Emperor and the church; a new council was assembled at Nice; and the indispensable idols were restored and defended in language that was adopted in the Council of Trent. Charlemagno dictated, he could not write, four books against the popular superstition, and the bishops of the East and the West seem to have sustained the imperial faith; yet the monks and the Pope were successful, after a conflict of a century. We have no space to notice the various papal councils of this dark period; the warrior caste of the Middle Ages submitted devoutly to the monkish rule; and a war of extermination was incessantly waged against that large body of enlightened and humble Christians who, under the name of Vaudois, Lollards, or Cathari, seem in every age to have preserved the pure traits of the Gospel faith. At length, however, a council

was held whose important results deserve a momentary attention. Pope Urban II., in 1095, assembled at Clermont and Placentia an immense host of priests, knights, nobles, and princes, and preached in glowing eloquence the duty of snatching the Holy Places from the control of the iconoclastic Saracens. Europe caught his superstitious ardor, and for more than two centuries poured forth its wealth of manly martial vigor in a wasteful frenzy on the plains of Syria. The Curtian gulf was never filled. The energy of nations, which, if directed to honest labor and practical improvement, might have civilized and cultivated the world, was squandered in obedience to the cruel suggestions of a monkish dreamer. The Cathari or dissenters wrote, spoke, or preached against the wild delusion; they asserted that the Christian had no right to kill even a Saracen, and that the true way of spreading the Gospel in the East was by the gentle persuasion of a holy life. Their remonstrances were answered by the rude denunciations of the papal preachers, by the whip, the torture, and the stake. War and bloodshed became the chief employment of the papal church and its martial adherents, and for two centuries the Popes maintained their place at the head of Christendom by exciting general massacres of the protestants of Provence or Piedmont, and by driving the young generations of Europe to the charnel-house of the East.

CRUSADE OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN.

One of the most startling effects of this monkish delusion was the Crusade of the little children. A band of fifty thousand children from Germany and France set out in 1212 to redeem the Holy Sepulchre. A peasant child of Vendome first assumed the cross in France, and soon an increasing throng of boys and girls gathered around him as he passed from Paris to the south, and with a touching simplicity declared that they meant to go to Jerusalem to deliver the sepulchre of the Saviour. Their parents and relations in vain endeavored to dissuade them; they escaped from their homes; they wandered away without money or means of subsistence; and they believed that a miracle would dry up the Mediterranean Sea and enable them to pass safely to the shores of Syria. At length a body of seven thousand of the French children reached Marseilles, and here they met with a strange and unlooked-for doom. At Marseilles were slave-traders who were accustomed to purchase or steal children in order to sell them to the Saracens. Two of these monsters, Ferrers and Porcus, engaged to take the young crusaders to the Holy Land without charge, and they set sail in seven ships for the East. Two of the vessels were sunk on the passage with all their passengers; the others arrived safely, and the unhappy children were sold by their betrayers in the slave-markets of Alexandria or Cairo. Other large bodies of children came from Germany across the Alps. Many perished from hunger,

heat and disease; a few were enabled to die on the sacred soil of Syria; and it is estimated that fifty thousand of the flower of European youth were lost in this most remarkable of the Crusades.

COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.

Constance, the scene of the next important council, stands on the shore of that lovely lake that feeds the romantic Rhine. It has long sunk into decay. In the last century the grass was growing in its principal street. Its air of desolation and decline formed a striking contrast to the busy Swiss towns on the neighboring lakes, and it still slumbers under the fatal influence of Catholic rule. The only noted spots in Constance are a dark dungeon, a few feet square, in which John Huss was confined, the rude Gothic hall where he was tried, the minster where he was condemned, the place where he was burned, the swift-flowing river into which his ashes were cast, and which his persecutors hoped would bear away all that remained of their illustrious victim into endless oblivion. Vain hope! Warriors and princes, priests, abbots, monks, conspired to blot from existence a single faint and feeble being, a child of poverty and toil. They burned his books; they cast his ashes into the Rhine. And to-day all Bohemia assembles to do honor to the names of Huss and his disciple Jerome, and to carry into execution the principles of freedom and progress they advocated four centuries ago.

The Council of Constance met in 1414. Three rival Popes were then contesting each other's claim to the papacy. Each Pope had his adherents, and for nearly forty years priests, rulers, and laity had lived in doubt as to the true successor of St. Peter. It was plain that there could not be three infallible potentates on the same throne; yet each pretender asserted his claim with equal vigor. Gregory, Benedict, and John launched anathemas against each other; and a generation lived and died uncertain whether it had not adored and obeyed an heretical Pope. John XXIII., in the opinion of his age one of the most abandoned of men, was persuaded or entrapped by the cardinals and the Emperor into summoning a general council; and Constance, on the borders of Switzerland and Germany, was selected as the place of meeting. The council met at a period of singular interest in history. Not only was the papacy divided between three Popes, but that strong and wide opposition to the papal and the monkish rule, which seems to have existed in every age, was now showing itself in unusual vigor. England was half converted to the doctrines of Wycliffe; Bohemia and its king shared the free opinions of Huss; the new literature of Italy was skeptical or indifferent; France and Germany were already shocked at the vices of the monks; while industry and commerce were rapidly introducing ideas of human equality that must finally destroy the supremacy of the

feudal lords. The warrior caste as well as the priestly was threatened by the religious reformers, and both united vigorously at the Council of Constance to crush the progress of revolution. They strove to rebuild and reanimate the established church, to intimidate the reformers, and to destroy forever the rising hopes of the people.

DECREES OF THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.

For the moment they succeeded. The Council of Constance was the most splendid gathering of priests and princes Europe had ever seen. The Emperor Sigismund attended its sittings, with all the German chiefs and prelates. The Pope, John XXIII., came, followed by a throng of Italian cardinals and bishops, hoping to control its proceedings. Almost every European sovereign was represented by an ambassador. The little city of Constance shone with the pomp of royal and noble retinues, with the red robes of cardinals, and the ermine and jewels of ecclesiastical princes; riot and license filled its streets; and the Council of Constance was noted for the corrupt morals of its members, and the shameless conduct of the prelates of the established church. Its sittings began November, 1414, and continued until April, 1418. Its proceedings were marked by a singular vigor. It deposed John XXIII. for his notorious vices and his alleged contumacy; removed Gregory and Benedict; and elected a new Pope, Martin V., who was finally acknowledged by all Europe as the successor of St Peter. It declared that the council was superior to the Pope, and heard with attention the eloquent sermon of Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, in which he defended the privileges of a united Christendom against the claims of the bishop of Rome. It provided that a general council should be summoned every five or seven years; and it strove to limit the rapacity of Rome by relieving the clergy from its exactions. In order to prevent the undue influence of the Italians, the council divided all its members into four nations or classes; each nation had a single vote, and a majority determined the result. These revolutionary movements have made the Council of Constance odious to the succeeding Popes. Its canons have been disregarded, its authority denied; and no devout Roman Catholic would now venture to assert what was plainly the opinion of the Roman church in the dawn of the fifteenth century, that the Pope is inferior to the council.

JOHN HUSS:

Having ended the schism in the papal church, the Council of Constance next proceeded to crush heresy and reform. To the corrupt monks and priests of that barbarous age the chief of heretics was the pure and gentle Huss. A child of poverty, educated among the people, John Huss had come a poor scholar to the famous University of Prague. His mother brought him from his

native village to be matriculated, and on the road fell on her knees and recommended him to Heaven. Maintained by charity, he studied with ardor; his mind was fed with scholastic learning; he became a preacher vigorous and original; and in the Chapel of Bethlehem crowded congregations listened to the inspired lessons of the ardent priest. Huss had early formed a clear conception of a living Antichrist, a creature made up of blasphemy and hypocrisy, of corruption and crime; and of a pure and lovely form, the Church of the early age. To the one he gave all his love and confidence, to the other an undying hate. The Antichrist was Rome. The vices and stupid ignorance of the monks, the shameless license of the clergy, the insolent pride of the bishops, the rivalry of the contending Popes, convinced the ardent reformer that the established church had long ceased to be Christian. He inveighed in vigorous sermons and treatises against every form of corruption. He denounced the monks and the Popes, indulgences, crusades, and a thousand enormities. Jerome of Prague, who had lived at Oxford, brought him over the writings of Wycliffe, and the two friends studied and profited by the clear sense of the English reformer.

At length the poor charity scholar became the most eminent man of his time. His native land acknowledged his merit, and all Bohemia adopted the opinions of its gifted son. The king and queen were his warm friends, and the nobility and the commons caught the ardor of reform. Huss was made Rector of that great university, at that time the rival of those of Paris and Oxford, where he had won his education; and Prague became the centre of a strong impulse toward progress that was felt in every part of Europe. The doctrines and the Bible of Wycliffe were expounded at the only great seat of learning in Germany; England and Bohemia, united by friendly ties, seemed about to throw off the papal rule; the vigor of Huss, the genius of Jerome, had nearly anticipated the era of Luther. But it was too soon. The priestly caste and its ignorant instrument, the warrior caste, united to destroy the first elements of reformation, and the monks and bishops pursued Huss and his followers with their bitterest malignity. The archbishop of Prague denounced him as a heretic, the Pope excommunicated him; but Huss might still have escaped, supported by his sovereign, Wenceslaus, and the admiration of his countrymen, had he not been betrayed into the power of his foes. The Council of Constance met and summoned the reformer before its hostile tribunal. The chief vice of this infamous assembly was its shameless duplicity. The sentiment of honor, which we are sometimes told was the distinguishing mark of this age of chivalry, was plainly unknown to every one of the princes, knights, or priests who made up the splendid council. They deceived the Popes; they corrupted the feeble honesty of the Emperor Sigismund; they

openly adopted the rule that no faith was to be kept with heretics; they pledged the Roman church to a system of perpetual falsehood and deceit.

Huss was now in the full splendor of his renown. His name was illustrious throughout Europe, and his eminent talents and spotless life had made him the pride and oracle of Bohemia. He was nearly forty years of age. His appearance was fine, his countenance mild and engaging. His prominent features, his clear and well-cut profile, gave him an Oriental air. He wore his hair and beard carefully trimmed, and dressed in neat scholastic attire. In the society of fair women, kings and princes his manners had become polished, his carriage singularly attractive; and his natural gentleness and piety threw around him an irresistible charm. As Rector of the University of Prague he held a position in the eyes of the world not inferior to that of many princes and nobles; but in all his prosperity he had ever been noted for his humility and his kindly grace. He lived above the world, and knew none of its inferior impulses. Yet had he not been able to avoid making many enemies. He had offended bitterly the German students and professors at Prague, and they had withdrawn, in number about five thousand, to found the rival college at Leipsic. He was the chief of the metaphysical faction of the Realists; the Germans and the French were chiefly Nominalists; and in the fierce quarrels that raged between the two scholastic parties a hatred even to death often grew up between the opposing chiefs. The Rectors of the University of Paris, Gerson, and of Leipsic, John Hoffman, looked on their opponent at Prague as abominable and accursed; and the Nominalists afterwards boasted that the death of Huss was due to them alone. So brutal was the age that men killed each other for some shadowy difference in metaphysics!

Gerson was the chief theologian of the time, the new founder of the liberties of the Gallican church. Yet he took part in all the frauds of the Council of Constance, saw his illustrious fellow-rector perished in a horrible dungeon and die at the stake, and aided in his destruction. The Rector of the University of Leipsic also shared in the worst acts of the council. The crimes of nobles and priests were instigated by the most eminent Catholic scholars, and the principles of elevated churchmen were no more humane than had been those of their Gothic ancestors, or the barbarians of a Feejee island. To such men the mild purity of Huss and Jerome was a perpetual reproach. They could not endure their existence upon the same earth. They strove to extirpate them forever, and cast their ashes into the rapid Rhine.

Fearless of their enmity, and strong in his consciousness of innocence, sustained by the friendship of his king and his country, and, above all, provided with a safe-conduct from the Emperor

Sigismund, Huss set out from Prague in October to obey the summons of the council. As he passed through Germany he was met and welcomed by immense throngs of the people. He was received everywhere as the champion of human rights. Men came to gaze on him as a benefactor. Even the German ecclesiastics, it is said, saluted respectfully the arch-heretic. He passed safely through Nuremberg, attended by a guard of honor, and entered Constance almost in triumph. He evidently feared no danger. He even imprudently defended the doctrines of Wycliffe in the midst of angry monks and priests, and courted their malignity. The Pope, however, John XXIII., had sworn to protect him, the Emperor Sigismund was bound for his safety, and all Bohemia watched over the life of Huss. But the rule had been adopted that no faith was to be kept with heretics. Within a few days after his arrival Huss was seized, cast into the horrible dungeon of the Dominican convent, and fastened by a chain to the floor.

He was now in the toils of Antichrist, and was to feel all the extreme malice of the fearful being he had so often imagined or described. Its falsehood, its baseness, its savage and unsparing cruelty, he was now to realize, if never before. The Emperor Sigismund came to Constance soon after Huss's imprisonment, and remonstrated feebly against the violation of his safe-conduct; but the chiefs of the council soon convinced him that no faith should be kept with the heretic, and Huss was left to languish in his dungeon. Articles of accusation were drawn up against him; false witnesses were brought to convict him of crimes he had never committed; he was persecuted with incessant questions; and for more than six months the great orator and scholar pined in a dreadful confinement. At length, on the 6th of July, 1415, he was dragged from his dungeon and led out to condemnation and death.

The council assembled in that sombre and massive minster whose gloomy pile still frowns over the silent streets of Constance. The Emperor Sigismund presided, surrounded by his temporal and spiritual peers. A throng of cardinals, bishops, and priests assembled to take part in the proceedings, and to exult over the doom of one whose holy life seemed a perpetual reproach to their notorious profligacy and corruption. The church was filled in every part with eager spectators. It had been carefully arranged for that singular ceremonial with which the holy fathers intended to degrade their victim from his priesthood before they delivered him over to the secular power. In the midst rose a platform, on which were placed the robes and ornaments of a priest, and where Huss was to be robed and disrobed in presence of all the people. A solemn mass was performed, and while Emperor and priest bowed in adoration, their victim was kept waiting at the door under a guard of soldiers, lest his presence might desecrate the sacred rite. He was

then led in, pale, faint, and worn with a terrible imprisonment, and ascended the platform. Here he knelt in audible prayer, while the bishop of Lodi delivered a sermon on the enormity of heresy; and as the prelate finished his vindictive denunciation, he pointed to the feeble victim; he turned to the powerful Emperor and cried out, "Destroy this obstinate heretic!"

A perfect silence reigned throughout the immense assembly. Various proceedings followed. The charges against were read, but he was scarcely permitted to reply to them. He listened on his knees, his hands raised to heaven. Once he mentioned aloud his safe conduct that had been so shamefully violated, and his sad eyes upon the Emperor. A deep blush spread over Sigismund's face; he was strongly moved. It is said that long after, when, at the Diet of Worms, Charles V. was urged to violate Luther's safe-conduct, he replied, "I do not wish to blush like my predecessor Sigismund." Yet the anecdote can hardly be authentic, for Charles was never known to blush for any one of his dishonorable deeds. Sentence of degradation was next pronounced against Huss. The priests appointed for that duty at once approached him, put on him the priestly robes, and then took them off. They then placed on his head a paper crown, on which were painted three demons of frightful aspect, and on it was inscribed, "Chief of the Heretics." Huss said to them, "It is less painful than a crown of thorns." They mocked him with bitter raillery, and then led him away to execution.

He went from the church to the place of execution guarded by the officers of justice. Behind him came, in a long procession, the Emperor, the Prince Palatine, their courtiers, and eight hundred soldiers. A vast throng of people followed, who would not be turned back. As Huss passed the episcopal palace he saw that they were already burning his books, and smiled at the malice of his enemies. He was bound to the stake, and the wood piled up around him. Before the pile was lighted the Elector Palatine advanced and asked him to recant and save his life. He refused. He prayed, and all the multitude prayed with him. The fire was lighted: he raised his arms and eyes toward heaven, and as the flames ascended he was heard joyfully singing a hymn of praise. Higher, and higher rose his dying chant, until his voice mingled with the songs of angels above.

All that remained of John Huss, his ashes, his clothes, his furniture, were cast into the Rhine, lest his followers might preserve them as relics of the martyr. But the Bohemians afterward gathered the earth on which he suffered, and carried it away. His friend, Jerome of Prague, was burned the next year, by order of the Council of Constance. A scholar, a man of classic refinement and feeling, the learned Poggio, heard his eloquent defence before the Council, witnessed his happy martyrdom, and declared that

Jerome had revived in his genius and his philosophy the highest excellence of Greece and Rome: the modern pagan did not perceive how he had surpassed it. Bohemia has never ceased to lament and honor her gifted sons, and the world is just becoming deeply conscious of what it owes to Huss and Jerome of Prague, the forerunners of Luther.

COUNCIL OF BASLE.

In July, 1431, a council assembled at Basle, still more revolutionary in its character than that of Constance. The Pope, Eugenius IV., attempted to dissolve the council; the council deposed the Pope, and elected another in his place. A long controversy followed, and a new schism in the Roman church. Engenius summoned a council of his own adherents, and thus two Popes and two councils contended for the supremacy of the Christian world. But the quarrel was terminated by the triumph of the papal faction. At the Council of Basle was formed a temporary union between the Latin and Greek churches, which soon ended in their complete separation. The bold effort of this great council to control the papacy wholly failed, and from its dissolution Rome gained new strength. Each succeeding Pope enlarged his authority, defied public opinion, opposed every effort to reform the church, and threw the shield of his infallibility over the vices and disorders of the clergy. The monks again ruled mankind. The Dominicans invented the Spanish Inquisition, and persecuted heretics with subtle malice. Convents and nunneries became centres of corruption, and the favorite subject of the satires of Chaucer, of Rabelais, of Erasmus, or of Luther is the degraded and dissolute monk.

THE REFORMATION.

At length the Reformation came. The conscience of mankind, which had been apparently for ever suppressed with the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome, found a new expression in the commanding genius of Luther, and the intellect of Europe awoke at his powerful summons. He dissolved the spell of monkish delusion and tyranny. He consolidated into a powerful party that wide but disunited opposition which almost from the age of Constantine had looked with horror and shame upon the pride and corruption of the established church. The pure and the good of every land, the spiritual descendants of the Cathari, the Albigenses, the Vaudois, or the Wycliffites—the humble and gentle Christians of Bohemia, France, and even of Italy and Spain, now ventured to unite in a generous hope that the reign of Antichrist was over. Tradition and false miracles, the indulgences, the worship of images and saints, the idolatry of the mass, the horrors of the monastic system, seemed about to pass swiftly away before the voice of reason and of conscience; the pure faith and practice of the Gospel

seemed ready to descend again on man. In the year 1540 a general and peaceable reformation of the whole Christian world was possible. Already Spain itself was filled with Protestants, Italy was sighing for a purer faith, the Scriptures were studied, and reform demanded in Rome and Naples. France was eager for religious progress; the vigorous North was already purified and set free; and had some wise and gentle spirit controlled the papal councils, some pure Erasmus or a generous Pole, and from the Roman throne breathed peace and good-will to man, an age of unprecedented progress might have opened upon the world. The warrior caste which had so long preyed upon the people would have sunk into decay. The priestly caste would have lost its vices and its pride. The industrial classes, who in Spain, France, Italy and Germany, formed the chief part of the reformers, might have risen to control the state, and Europe would have been free.

COUNCIL OF TRENT.

The next, the last great papal council—the most mischievous of them all—came to destroy the rising hopes of mankind. It breathed war, not peace. It spread irreconcilable enmity among nations. It leagued the warriors and the priests in a deadly assault upon the working man. It declared war against the factory and the work-shop, the printing press and the school. It crushed the industry of Italy and Spain; it banished the frugal and thoughtful Huguenots from France; it strove in vain to make Holland a desolate waste, and to blight in its serpent folds the rising intellect of England; it aimed vain blows at the genius of Germany and the North; it held in bondage for three miserable centuries the mind of the decaying South. To the Council of Trent, by an easy deduction, may be traced the great war which Charles V. waged against his German subjects, and the disastrous crusades of his son Philip against the Netherlands and Queen Elizabeth; the wild rancor of the League and the Guises; the persecutions, worse than those of Diocletian, of Louis XIV.; the Thirty Years' War, in which Wallenstein and Tilly made half Germany a blood-stained wilderness; the fatal bigotry of Austria; the tyranny of Spain. It was a flame of discord, a harbinger of strife; and to the student of history no spectacle is more startling than that torrent of woe which descended upon mankind from the deliberations and the anathemas of a scanty gathering of bishops and Jesuits in the rocky heights of the Tyrol.

In 1542 the moment of hope had passed. The Pope, Paul III., decreed death to the heretic and the reformer. Loyola and the Jesuits ruled at Rome, and the doctrine of passive obedience became the single principle of the papal faith. The Inquisition was rapidly exterminating every trace of opposition to the hierarchy in Italy; a dead and dull submission reigned in Venice or in

Rome; and the papal missionaries, exulting in their success at home, trusted soon to carry the effective teaching of the Holy Office into the rebellious cities of Germany and the North. With what joy would they see Luther and Melancthon chained to the stake, like Huss and Jerome! How proudly should the papal legions sweep over the land of Zwingli and the home of Calvin! With such fond anticipations a league for the extirpation of heresy was formed between the Pope, Paul III., and the Emperor, Charles V. The decrees of the Council of Trent were to be enforced by the arms of the two contracting parties; the Protestants of Germany were to be the earliest victims of the alliance; and all who had apostatized from the ancient faith were to be compelled to return to the bosom of the Holy See. The meaning of this famous compact between the bishop of Rome and the Emperor can not be misunderstood. It was a project to crush freedom of thought and religious progress by wars and massacre, the rack and the stake; an effort to make the papal Inquisition universal.

If, as has been done by some modern historians and most of the Romish writers who have described the Council of Trent to the present age, we could separate it wholly from the history of its period, and look upon it merely as the gathering of a few bishops of more or less learning and piety anxious only to fix the faith of their church and to define the form of their belief, we might excuse its rash judgments, its imprudent conservatism, and the intolerance of its countless anathemas; we might submit with a smile to hear the doctrines of Luther and the Bible pronounced forever accursed, and to be commanded to pay a deep reverence to images under the penalty of excommunication; we might pardon the critical blindness, if not the want of taste, that placed the Book of Tobit on a level with the Gospel of St. John; we might remember only as examples of monkish superstition in the sixteenth century the attempt to chain the press, to promote the sale of indulgences, the strange theory of the mass, the feeble reasoning on the sacraments; and we could admit that under the irresistible influence of that impulse toward reform begun by the anathematized heretics, the council strove honestly to correct some of the errors of the Romish church. But unhappily for mankind, the Council of Trent had a far less innocent purpose. Its chief promoters were men who had already resolved on the destruction of its opponents. Every member of the synod knew that the principles it laid down, the practices it enjoined, were rejected and condemned by a large part of the Christian world; that they could only be enforced by fire and the sword; that they were about to be the occasion of a bitter war between the reformers and the papal faction; that every anathema uttered by the council would be written in letters of blood upon every Protestant land. Yet they proceeded calmly with their labors. They rejected every plan of compromise,

every sentiment of mercy. They refused to listen to the tolerant suggestions of the Gallican church. They obeyed every intimation of the Pope and the Jesuits; and they were plainly prepared to bind to the stake not some eloquent Jerome or spotless Huss alone, but whole nations and generations of reformers.

At Trent, among the snow-clad hills of the Tyrol, on the banks of the rapid Athesis, the papal legates and a few bishops assembled in December, 1545, and Cardinal Del Monte, afterward Pope Julius III., presided at its first session. A second was held in January, when only forty-three members attended. At the third, February 4, 1546, the Nicene Creed was recited with its modern additions. But with the fourth session, April 18, 1546, the business of the Council began by an authoritative determination of the foundations of the Roman faith; and it was decided, in a scanty assembly of forty-eight Italian, German and Spanish bishops, a few cardinals, and the papal legates, that the Scriptures and tradition, the Old Testament with the Apocryphal books, the New Testament, and the opinions of the fathers, were the equal and the only sources of religious knowledge. But it was carefully enjoined, at the same time, under severe penalties, that none but the church should define the meaning of the sacred writings. All private judgment was forbidden: and whoever ventured to think for himself was to be punished by the legal authorities. Upon this broad but unstable foundation the council now proceeded to erect that religious system which for three centuries has ruled at Rome. The Pope was supreme at Trent through his acute agents; and however vigorous the opposition might appear, every decision of the assembly was prepared at Rome, and was carried through the council by the controlling influence of the legates, the Jesuits, and the Italian bishops. It was Paul III., Loyola, and Caraffa who spoke in the name of the church.

TRANSFERENCE OF COUNCIL TO BOLOGNE.

The sessions continued until April, 1547, when, on the pretext that an epidemic disease was prevailing in Trent, the Pope issued a bull transferring the council to Bologne, within his own territories, where it would be more perfectly under his control. The legates and the papal party obeyed the mandate, but Charles V. ordered his German bishops to remain at Trent. The schism continued until Paul died, when his successor, Julius III., once more convened the assembly at Trent. It remained in session until April, 1552, when the success of Protestant arms in Germany and the brilliant exploits of the Elector Maurice drove the bishops in alarm from their dangerous locality. The council was prorogued or dissolved; and for ten years the doctrines of the papal church remained hidden in the bosom of Rome. They were years filled with remarkable events. The order of the Jesuits be-

came a great power in Europe, and its acute and unscrupulous members had instilled into the minds of princes and priests the doctrine of passive obedience to Rome, and of relentless war against heresy. Loyola guided the policy of the papal church. In France a war broke out between the Huguenots and their oppressors, of which the result was not to be determined for many years, but which finally united the French bishops in hostility to reform. A great triumph was achieved by the papal party in England, that was followed by a signal overthrow. Mary succeeded to the English throne, and as the wife of Philip II. gave back her realm, filled with the blood of the martyrs, to the papal see. But in 1558 Mary died childless, and Elizabeth, the representative of a Protestant nation, defied the anathemas of the Pope. Philip II. was now enforcing the decrees of the earlier Council of Trent on the unhappy Netherlands, and the Prince of Orange was about to found a new nation. Of the early reformers few survived. Luther and Melancthon slept side by side in the castle church at Wittenberg. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, apparently less fortunate, had died like Huss and Jerome. The aged Calvin and his faithful Beza still ruled and studied at Geneva—the last of that brilliant company who had formed the day-stars of the Reformation.

REASSEMBLING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

Pius IV., in January, 1562, enforced the reassembling of the Council of Trent. Loyola was dead, and the fierce Lainez ruled over the Jesuits. A new race of bishops filled the council. Its numbers enlarged; its intellectual character was respectable; but no brilliant Athanasius, no eloquent Gregory, appeared in the ranks of the papal prelates. It sat for nearly two years, and often its fierce debates and angry tumults revived the memories of Ephesus and Nice. The French faction, the Spanish, and the papal, contended with a violence that seemed at times to threaten the dissolution of the council and an irreparable schism in the disordered church. The Spaniards defended with vigor the Divine origin of the bishops against the claims of the papacy; the French suggested the superiority of the council to the Pope, demanded the cup for the laity, and even advocated the marriage of the clergy. A French ambassador, Du Ferrier, the Gregory of Trent, denounced with sharp satire the feeble superstition of the council, and declared it to be the author of the miseries of France; the corrupt and politic Cardinal Lorraine, at the head of the French delegation, in tumid speeches defended the Gallican policy. Yet, the papal party, led by Jesuits, the haughty Lainez, and the busy Salmeron, and sustained by the superior numbers of the Italian bishops, succeeded in nearly all their objects. They threw aside with contempt the whole Gallican policy; they taught perfect submission to the papal rule. Lainez, in the midst of an excited assembly, declared

that all who opposed the supremacy of the Pope in all things were Protestants in principle, and with haughty looks, almost denounced his adversaries as heretics. The contest raged for a time with fierce bitterness, and often the streets of Trent were filled with riot and bloodshed from the encounters of the retainers of the different factions. But at length the corrupt Cardinal Lorraine, a true Guise, went over to the papal side; the Spanish faction sank into silence; and one by one the most extravagant dogmas of the mediæval church were incorporated into the creed of the Romish clergy. From the heights of Tyrol the fierce Jesuits and monks threw down their gage of defiance and of hate to the whole Protestant world, and to every project of reform. They offered to the heretic submission to the Pope or death.

RESULTS OF THE SECOND COUNCIL OF TRENT.

Nothing was thought of but traditional observances; the usages of Rome were preferred to the plain teachings of the Scriptures. Images were declared sacred, when the whole Jewish and Christian theology had denounced their use; had commanded the soul to seek a direct and spiritual union with its God. The gentle lessons of the Sermon on the Mount were transformed into an endless series of anathemas that were full of bitter malevolence. The sacred feast of the disciples was converted into a pompous idolatry. For the Apostles the Council showed still less respect than for the lessons of their Master. Instead of the industry, temperance, and frugality inculcated by St. Paul, it advocated monkish indolence and priestly intolerance. It condemned the marriages of the clergy, when St. Peter himself, the fancied founder of the Romish church, had been a faithful husband, and in his missionary toils had been accompanied by his martyr wife; when St. Paul had instructed his pastors or presbyters to be prudent husbands and fathers, and strict in the education of their children; when even at the Council of Nice the monkish observance had been rejected at the request of an ascetic. The invocation of Mary and the saints, the worship of relics, transubstantiation, and intercession, the use of pompous robes and a pagan ritual, confession, indulgences, and endless modern observances, were enforced by dreadful anathemas, and he who ventured even to hesitate as to their propriety was abandoned to the care of the Holy Office. The use of the Scriptures by the laity was in effect forbidden; the prohibition was made total by succeeding Popes; and the instruction of the Apostle to the believer to search and try the grounds of his faith was treated with contempt by his pretended successors. Conscience and freedom of thought were to be wholly suppressed. On the question of the superiority of the Pope to the council, after long and violent debates, no open decision was made; but the matter was, in fact, determined by the reference of all the proceedings of the assembly to the revival of

the Pope. As the infallible head of the church he was empowered to reject or confirm every canon of the Council of Trent.

Winters and summers had passed over the Roman bishops for nearly eight years in their mountain fastness, as they groped amidst the endless controversies of the fathers and studied the acts of Chalcedon and Nice. We admit at least their perseverance and their weary toil. Trent and its environs do not seem to have been always an agreeable residence. In autumn the hot sun beat upon the narrow valley. In winter a deluge of snow or rain often poured down upon the little city, overflowed the rapid Athesis, and swept through the watery streets. Disease was often prevalent, and several eminent delegates died, and were buried with pompous funerals. The people of the mountains were rude, and not always respectful; the women were not attractive, and suffered from the goitre; while the wits of the Holy City, as well as of the Protestant countries, followed the council with sharp satires, and declared that its inspiration was brought in a carpet-bag from Rome. Elizabeth called it a popish conventicle. The keen and ready Protestant controversialists denounced it as a band of persecutors. The Pope was enraged at its turbulent discord; and all Europe longed for its dissolution. Meantime, far below surged on the wave of Reformation, and Germany, France, and the Netherlands resounded with the psalms of Marot and Beza; and the menacing voice of the enraged people often reached the ears of the drowsy prelates at Trent. The hardy North threw off the monkish rule, defaced its images, broke up the monasteries, and breathed only defiance to the cruel bigotry of the council. Mary of Scotland, in a piteous letter to the legates, lamented that her Calvinistic subjects would not suffer her to send bishops to the assembly of Antichrist. Germany had secured freedom of thought by the valor of Maurice and the treaty of Passau. Geneva, with its twenty-five thousand impoverished citizens, shone a beacon of light among its Swiss mountains and defied alike the hatred and covetousness of France, Savoy, and the Pope. The Huguenots were fighting in France for toleration, and the council sang a joyous *TE DEUM* over the ineffectual defeat of the Prince of Conde. It was time for the bishops to separate.

The proceedings were hurried to an end. Important matters of faith, affecting the destiny of immortal souls, were determined with imprudent haste. What could not be decided was referred to the Pope. A bishop of Nazianzum, whose dullness formed a bold contrast to the wit and pathos of the sainted Gregory, preached a farewell discourse in which he called upon mankind to adore the wisdom, the clemency, the Christian tolerance of the Council of Trent. A parting antiphonal was sung; the Cardinal of Lorraine, the corrupt and ambitious Guise, intoned the praises of the dissolute Charles V., the immoral Julius, the bigoted Pius, and all the

holy council, and pronounced them ever blessed. The bishops and cardinals responded with a loud concurrence. Once more the voice of Guise rang over the assembly, *Anathema cunctis hæreticis!* And all the bishops and cardinals poured forth an eager and malevolent response, *Anathema, anathema!* Meanwhile, in many a humble cottage in the neighboring valleys of Piedmont, the gentle Vaudois, the children of the early church, were singing Christian hymns to the good Saviour, and, accustomed to persecution, prayed for freedom to worship God. Scarcely did they hear the curse invoked upon them from the heights of Trent. Yet it was to ripen into long years of untold suffering. The poor and humble were to be torn in pieces, tossed from their native crags into dark ravines, cut with sharp knives, burned in raging fires by the mighty and the proud; and Milton, in a fierce poetic frenzy, was to cry aloud to Heaven:

"Avenge, O Lord! thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold."

Such was the Council of Trent; and History would be unfaithful to its sacred trust—the cause of truth and of human progress—did it not point with unerring accuracy to the countless woes that have fallen upon man from the dull bigotry of the papal bishops. They met at a moment when the European intellect was strongly excited by a new impulse toward the good and the true; when men longed for a holier life, a purer faith than had been in the possession of their fathers. They gave them instead war and bitter strife, the doctrine of persecution, the visions of the Middle Ages. It is sometimes said that a reaction in favor of the Roman church followed upon the Council of Trent, and that the reformers were driven back from their Southern conquests to their strongholds in the North. They lost, indeed, Bohemia and the south of Germany, the Netherlands and France. But neither of these triumphs of the council was an intellectual one; its doctrines were nowhere accepted unless enforced by powerful armies and the slow prevalence of the Holy Office. The followers of Huss were extirpated in Bohemia; the Vaudois were slaughtered on their mountains; Philip II. revived the medieval church on the ruins of Antwerp and Ghent; the decrees of the Council of Trent were only triumphant in France when Louis XIV. destroyed Port Royal, and banished, with terrible persecutions, the gifted Huguenots.

REBELLION OF THE INTELLECT AGAINST MONKISH TYRANNY.

For a brief period England was ruled by the earlier decisions of the famous council, and Mary enforced the faith in tradition by the fires of Smithfield. But not even the spectacle of Latimer, Ridley, or Hooper, perishing at the stake could convert a nation that preferred the teachings of the Scriptures to those of the fathers of Trent. England shook off the yoke of the schismatic council

with fierce abhorrence. Her vigorous intellect refused to submit to a monkish rule; and soon a Shakspeare, a Bacon, a Milton, and a Johnson, proved that no medieval foe to genius enslaved the fortunate land. Throughout all Northern Germany the free school met and baffled the theory of persecution. Colleges and universities succeeded to the monastery and the cathedral, and the land of Luther repelled the dogmas of the Council of Trent. The Latin races were less fortunate. For three centuries Italy and Spain have slumbered under the monkish rule. Every anathema of the unsparing council has been enforced upon their unhappy people; the press has been silenced, the intellect depraved; industry had nearly died out; the Inquisition lingered long after it had been partially suppressed in other lands; and swarms of monks and friars encouraged indolence and sapped the purity of nations. But within a few years even Italy and Spain have revolted against the decrees of the Tridentine Council. The people of the two most Catholic lands have destroyed the monastic system, established freedom of thought, of religion, and of the press, and have plainly made themselves liable to the severest anathemas chanted in the cathedral of Trent.

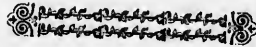
But while the people in every land have thus rebelled against monkish tyranny, the priests and the Pope, the only legal representatives of the Romish church, have proclaimed their unchangeable adherence to the decrees of their last great council. To them the free school and the free press are as odious as they were to Lainez and Del Monte. To them the monastery is as dear as it was to Gregory and Jerome. They still heap anathemas upon the married clergy; they refuse the cup to the laity; they bow to the graven image; of the duty of persecution for opinion's sake they speak as openly as in the days of Loyola, and they modestly suggest, with their historian, Pallavicino, that had the doctrines been more vigorously applied to Luther and Calvin, as well as to Jerome and Huss, the medieval church would yet have reigned triumphant in every land. They still assert the supreme authority of the Holy See, the boundless infallibility of the Pope. But, in reply to their extravagant assumptions, the surging waves of Reformation have swept over Europe, and at length the decrees of the Council of Trent are only received, in their full enormity, within the walls of the city of Rome. There a shadow of the Inquisition is still maintained; there the press and the school are still jealously watched; there no heretical assembly is permitted; there monks and monasteries abound; there the true Roman and patriot is shot down with the chassépot rifle; and the Supreme Pontiff, enthroned over an enraged and rebellious people, there summons his priestly legions to a final council of the papal church.

THE OECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF ROME.

It will meet under strange and disheartening auspices. Amidst the shadowy grandeur of decaying Rome, yet not far from the Forum, the birth-place of modern and ancient progress, where freedom was once on every tongue; surrounded by a populace eager to revive the institutions of Cicero, the faith of St. Paul; hemmed in by the rising liberties of new-born Italy, and trembling before the open hostility of every Italian patriot, and of Italy's heroic son; saved only from his generous rage by a foreign legion, and perhaps by transatlantic alms; a waif from the faded wreck of medieval tradition and a dying past, the Pope will hold counsel with his bishops. It may be hoped that the place, the time, the genius of the scene will enter into their deliberations; that the Pontiff, weary of his temporal rule, may willingly bestow upon Rome that liberty of speech and thought which it enjoyed in the days of Cato and Fabricius; that the Roman church, humble and repentant, may lament the woes it once inflicted upon Huss and Jerome, the simple Vaudois, and the reformers of every land; that it may seek absolution for its guilt from Christianity and from civilization by an open condemnation of the doctrine of persecution; that Pope and priests may awake from their barbaric dream of infallibility and priestly pride, and rise to the practical elevation of benevolence, holy charity, and love. In this way only can they atone for the long and cruel tyranny of the temporal power, the fatal influence of the spiritual.

But should the Pope and his council still continue to defy the conscience of mankind, and refuse to repent of their errors in the past; should they still maintain their selfish policy of sacrificing the welfare of nations to the interests of the Holy See; still teach persecution, and struggle for political power; should they strive to control the politics of France and England, the elections of New York, or the revolutions of Mexico; should they to maintain the power and infallibility of their church, seek to sow anarchy in republics and tyranny in monarchies, to plunge Europe once more in bloodshed and America in civil war—then will History summon its oecumenical council from the distant ages to overwhelm the feeble malice of Rome; then will the mighty shades of Huss and Jerome rise from the blue waters of the Rhine; then the countless martyrs who seem to have sprung up from their ashes around the shores of the beautiful river, will join in the sacred assembly; then the tortured Vaudois, the children of the early church, will awaken on their mountains, headless, eyeless, scarred by the persecutor's fire; then Dante shall aim once more his undying anathema against Rome, or Milton cry aloud to Heaven for vengeance; then will Luther and Melancthon, linked by a common sentiment, rise side by side from the churchyard of Wittenberg, and judgment will be given against unrepentant Rome.

We have thus imperfectly reviewed the story of the various councils. We might scarcely admit, with the saintly Gregory Nazianzen, that no good result can ever flow from an assembly of bishops. Nicea taught a lesson of comparative moderation. The genius and the honesty of the two Gregories relieved the dullness of the synod of Constantinople. Ephesus has become notorious for the vigorous orthodoxy of Cyril. Chalcedon was moderate and independent. Yet it is worthy of notice that the purest as well as the wisest of the sacred synods was the first; that its members, chastened in poverty and persecution, still retained something of the Apostolic dignity and grace; and that the Christian world, still free and self respecting, had not yet been forced to look with disappointment and shame upon the ambition and the vain pretensions of its spiritual chiefs.



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