The History of Protestantism – Volume Third – Book Twentieth – Protestantism in Hungary and Transylvania

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A Voice from the Philadelphian Church Age by Rev. James Aitken Wylie, LL.D.

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PROTESTANTISM IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA.

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CROSSING the frontier of Bohemia, we enter those far-extending plains which, covered with corn and the vine, watered by the Danube, the Theiss, and other great rivers, and enclosed by the majestic chain of the Carpathians, constitute the Upper and Lower Hungary. Invaded by the Romans before the Christian era, this rich and magnificent territory passed under a succession of conquerors, and was occupied by various peoples, till finally, in the ninth century, the Magyars from Asia took possession of it. The well-known missionaries, Cyrillus and Methodius, arriving soon after this, found the inhabitants worshipping Mars, and summoning their tribes to the battle-field by sending round a sword. In the tenth century, the beams of a purer faith began to shine through the pagan darkness that covered them. The altars of the god of war were forsaken for those, of the "Prince of Peace," and this warlike people, which had been wont to carry back captives and blood-stained booty from their plundering excursions into Germany and France, now began to practice the husbandry and cultivate the arts of Western Europe. The Christianity of those days did not go deep into either the individual or the national heart; it was a rite rather than a life; there were 150 "holy places" in Hungary, but very few holy lives; miracles were as common as virtues were rare; and soon the moral condition of the nation under the Roman was as deplorable as it had been under the pagan worship. Hungary was in this state, when. it was suddenly and deeply startled by the echoes from Luther's hammer on the church door at Wittemberg. To a people sunk in physical oppression and spiritual misery, the sounds appeared like those of the silver trumpet on the day of Jubilee.

Perhaps in no country of Europe were the doctrines of the Reformation so instantaneously and so widely diffused as in Hungary. Many causes contributed to this. The spread of the doctrines of Huss in that country a century previous, the

number of German settlers in Hungarian towns, the introduction of Luther's tracts and hymns by the German soldiers, who came to fight in the Hungarian armies against the Turk, the free civil constitution of the kingdom – all helped to prepare the soil for the reception of the Reformation. Priests in different parts of the land, who had groaned under the yoke of the hierarchy, appeared all at once as preachers of the Reformed faith. "The Living Word, coming from hearts warmed by conviction, produced a wondrous effect, and in a short time whole parishes, villages, and towns – yes, perhaps the half of Hungary, declared for the Reformation."[1]

In 1523 we find Grynaeus and Viezheim both in the Academy of Ofen (Buda-Pesth), in Hungary, teaching the doctrines of Luther. Two years afterwards we find them in exile – the former in Basle, teaching philosophy; and the latter at Wittemberg, as professor of Greek. John Henkel, the friend of Erasmus, and the chaplain of Queen Mary – the sister of Charles V, and wife of Louis II – was a friend of the Gospel, and he won over the queen to the same side. We have already met her at the Diet at Augsburg, and seen her using her influence with her brother, the emperor, in behalf of the Protestants. She always carried about with her a Latin New Testament, which was afterwards found to be full of annotations in her own handwriting. In several of the free cities, and among the Saxons of Transylvania, the reception given to the Reformed doctrines was instant and cordial. Merchants and hawkers brought the writings of Luther to Hermanstadt. The effect which their perusal produced was greatly deepened by the arrival of two monks from Silesia, converts of Luther, who, joined by a third, John Surdaster, preached, sometimes in the open air, at other times in the Elizabethan church, to great crowds of citizens, including the members of the town council. After dismissing their congregations they held catechizings in the public squares and market-places.

Thus was the fire kindled in the heart of the mountains of Transylvania. Many of the citizens began to scoff at the Popish ceremonies. “Do our priests suppose God to be blind,” said they, when they saw the magnificent procession of Corpus Christi sweeping past, “seeing they light candles to him at midday?” Others declared that the singing of the “hours” to Our Lady in the cathedral was folly, for the Lord had taught them to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven.” The priests were occasionally ridiculed while occupied in the performance of their worship; some of them were turned out of office, and Protestant preachers put in their room; and others, when they came to gather in their tithes, were sent away without their “ducks and geese.” This cannot be justified; but surely it in becomes Rome, in presence of her countless crimes, to be the first to cast a stone at these offenders.

Rome saw the thunder-cloud gathering above her, and she made haste to dispel it before it should burst. At the instigation of the Papal legate, Cajetan, Louis II. issued the terrible edict of 1523, which ran as follows: — “All Lutherans, and those who favor them, as well as all adherents to their sect, shall]have their property confiscated, and themselves be punished with death, as heretics, and foes of the most holy Virgin Mary.”

A commission was next appointed to search for Lutheran books in the Transylvanian mountains and the Hungarian towns, and to burn hem. Many an auto-da-fe of heretical volumes blazed in the public squares; but these spectacles did not stop the progress of heresy. “Hermanstadt became a second Wittemberg. The Catholic ministers themselves confessed that the new doctrine was not more powerful in the town where Luther resided.”[2] It was next resolved to burn, not Lutheran books merely, but Lutherans themselves. So did the Diet of 1525 command: — “All Lutherans shall be rooted out of the land; and wherever they are found, either by clergymen or laymen, they may be seized and burned.”[3] These two decrees appeared only

to inflame the courage of those whom they so terribly menaced. The heresy, over which the naked sword was now suspended, spread all the faster. Young men began to resort to Wittemberg, and returned thence in a few years to preach the Gospel in their native land. Meanwhile the king and the priests, who had bent the bow and were about to let fly the arrow, found other matters to occupy them than the execution of Lutherans.

It was the Turk who suddenly stepped forward to save Protestantism in Hungary, though he was all unaware of the service which he performed. Soliman the Magnificent, setting out from Constantinople on the 23rd of April, 1526, at the head of a mighty army, which, receiving accessions as it marched onward, was swollen at last to 300,000 Turks, was coming nearer and nearer Hungary, like the "wasting levin." The land now shook with terror. King Louis was without money and without soldiers. The nobility were divided into factions; the priests thought only of pursuing the Protestants; and the common people, deprived of their laws and their liberty, were without spirit and without patriotism. Zapolya, the lord of seventy-two castles, and by far the most powerful grandee in the country, sat still, expecting if the king were overthrown to be called to mount the vacant throne. Meanwhile the terrible Turk was approaching, and demanding of Louis that he should pay him tribute, under the threat of planting the Crescent on all the churches of Hungary, and slaughtering him and his grandees like "fat oxen."

The edict of death passed against the Protestants still remained in force, and the monks, in the face of the black tempest that was rising in the east, were stirring up the people to have the Lutherans put to death. The powerful and patriotic Count Pemflinger had received a message from the king, commanding him to put in execution his cruel edicts against the heretics, threatening him with his severest displeasure if he should refuse, and promising him great

rewards if he obeyed. The count shuddered to execute these horrible commands, nor could he stand silently by and see others execute them. He set out to tell the king that if, instead of permitting his Protestant subjects to defend their country on the battle- field, he should drag them to the stake and burn them, he would bring down the wrath of Heaven upon himself and his kingdom. On the road to Buda, where the king resided, Pemflinger was met by terrible news.

While the count was exerting himself to shield the Protestants, King Louis had set out to stop the advance of the powerful Soliman. On the 29th of August his little army of 27,000 met the multitudinous hordes of Turkey at Mohacz, on the Danube. Soliman's force was fifteen times greater than that of the king. Louis gave the command of his army to the Archbishop of Cologne – an ex-Franciscan monk, more familiar with the sword than the chaplet, and who had won some glory in the art of war. When the king put on his armor: on the morning of the battle he was observed to be deadly pale. All foresaw the issue. "Here go twenty-seven thousand Hungarians," exclaimed Bishop Perenyi, as the host defiled past him, "into the kingdom of heaven, as martyrs for the faith." He consoled himself with the hope that the chancellor would survive to see to their canonization by the Pope.[4]

The issue was even more terrible than the worst anticipations of it. By evening the plain of Mohacz was covered with the Hungarian dead, piled up in gory heaps. Twenty-eight princes, five hundred nobles, seven bishops, and twenty thousand warriors lay cold in death. Escaping from the scene of carnage, the king and the Papal legate sought safety in flight. Louis had to cross a black pool which lay in his course; his horse bore him through it, but in climbing the opposite bank the steed fell backward, crushing the monarch, and giving him burial in the marsh. The Papal nuncio, like the ancient seer from the mountains of Aram, was taken and slam. Having trampled down the king and his army, the victorious

Soliman held on his way into Hungary, and slaughtered 200,000 of its inhabitants.

This calamity, which thrilled all Europe, brought rest to the Protestants. Two candidates now contested the scepter of Hungary — John Zapolya, the unpatriotic grandee who saw his king march to death, but sat still in his castle, and the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. Both caused themselves to be crowned, and hence arose a civil war, which, complicated with occasional appearances of Soliman upon the scene, occupied the two rivals for years, and left them no leisure to carry out the persecuting edicts. In the midst of these troubles Protestantism made rapid progress. Peter Perenyi, a powerful noble, embraced the Gospel, with his two sons. Many other magnates followed his example, and-settled Protestant ministers upon their domains, built churches, planted schools, and sent their sons to study at Wittemberg. The greater number of the towns of Hungary embraced the Reformation.

At this time (1531) a remarkable man returned from Wittemberg, where he had enjoyed the intimacy, as well as the public instructions, of Luther and Melancthon. Matthias Devay was the descendant of an ancient Hungarian family, and having attained at Wittemberg to a remarkably clear and comprehensive knowledge of the Gospel, he began to preach it to his countrymen. He commenced his ministry at Buda, which, connected by a bridge with Pesth, gave him access to the population of both cities. Only the year before (1530) the Augsburg Confession had been read by the Lutheran princes in presence of Ferdinand of Austria, and many Hungarian nobles;[5] and Devay began his ministry at a favorable moment. Other preachers, trained like Devay at Wittemberg, were laboring in the surrounding districts, and nobles and whole villages were embracing the Gospel. Many of the priests were separating themselves from Rome. The Bishops of Neutra and Wesprim laid aside rochet and mitre to preach the Gospel.[6] Those who had bowed before the idol, rose up to cast it down.

Devay, anxious to diffuse the light in other parts, removed to Upper Hungary; but soon his eloquence and success drew upon him the wrath of the priests. He was thrown into prison at Vienna, and ultimately was brought before Dr. Faber, then bishop of that city, but he pleaded his cause in a manner so admirable that the court dared not condemn him. On his release he returned to Buda, and again commenced preaching. The commotion in the capital of Hungary was renewed, and the wrath of the priests grew hotter than ever. They accused him to John Zapolya, whose sway was owned in this part of the kingdom, and the Reformer was thrown into prison. It happened that in the same prison was a blacksmith, who in the shoeing had lamed the king's favorite horse, and the passionate Zapolya had sworn that if the horse died the blacksmith should pay the forfeit of his life. Trembling from fear of death, the evangelist had pity upon him, and explained to him the way of salvation. As the Philippian gaoler at the hearing of Paul, so the blacksmith in the prison of Buda believed, and joy took the place of terror. The horse recovered, and the king, appeased, sent an order to release the blacksmith. But the man would not leave his prison. "My fellow-sufferer," said he, "has made me a partaker with him in his faith, and I will be a partaker with him in his death." The magnanimity of the blacksmith so touched the king that he commanded both to be set at liberty.[7]

The powerful Count Nadasdy, whose love of learning made him the friend of scholars, and his devotion to the Gospel the protector of evangelists, invited Devay to come and rest awhile in his Castle of Satvar. In the library of the count the evangelist set to work and composed several polemical pieces, lie had no printing-press at his command. This placed him at disadvantage, for his enemies replied in print while his own writings slumbered in manuscript. He went to Wittemberg in search of a printer.

Truly refreshed was he by seeing once more in the flesh his

old instructors, Luther and Melancthon, and they were not less so by hearing the joyful news from Hungary. He passed on to Basle, and among its learned and munificent printers, he found the means of issuing some of his works. He returned again to Buda, in the end of 1537, and found his former patron, Nadasdy, occupied in the reformation of the old schools, and the erection of new ones. The Reformer asked Nadasdy for a printing-press. The request was at once conceded, and the press was set up by the side of one of the schools. It was the first printing-press in Hungary, and the work which Devay now issued from it – a book for children, in which he taught at once the rudiments of the language and the rudiments of the Gospel – was the first ever printed in the language of the country.

From these more private, but fundamental and necessary labors, Devay turned to put his hand once more to the work of public evangelization. He preached indefatigably in the district between the right bank of the Danube and Lake Balaton. Meanwhile his former field of labor the Upper Hungary, was not neglected. This post was energetically filled by Stephen Szantai, a zealous and learned preacher. His success was great, and the bishops denounced Szantai, as they had formerly done Devay, to the king, demanding that he should be arrested and put to death. Ferdinand, ever since his return from Augsburg, where he had listened to the famous Confession, had been less hostile to the new doctrines; and he replied, to the dismay of the bishops, that he would condemn no man without a hearing, and that he wished to hold a public discussion on the disputed points. The prelates looked around for one competent to maintain their cause against Szantai, and fixed on a certain monk:, Gregory of Grosswardein, who had some reputation as a controversialist. The king having appointed two umpires, who he thought would act an enlightened and impartial part, the conference took place (1538) at Schasburg.

It lasted several days, and when it was over the two umpires

presented themselves before the king, to give in their report. “Sire,” they said, “we are in a great strait. All that Szantai has said, he has proved from Holy Scripture, but the monks have produced nothing but fables. Nevertheless, if we decide in favor of Szantai, we shall be held to be the enemies of religion; and if we decide in favor of the monks, we shall be condemned by our own consciences. We crave your Majesty’s protection in this difficulty!” The king promised to do his utmost for them, and dismissed them.[8]

The king was quite as embarrassed as the umpires. In truth, the only parties who saw their way were the priests, and they saw it very clearly. On the afternoon of that same day, the prelates and monks demanded an audience of Ferdinand. On being admitted to the presence, the Bishop of Grosswardein, acting as spokesman, said: “Sire, we are the shepherds of the flock, and it behooves us to guard from wolves the sheep committed to our care. For this reason we demanded that this heretic should be brought here and burned, as a warning to those who speak and write against the Church. Instead of this, your Majesty has granted to this wretched man a public conference, and afforded opportunity to others to suck in his poison. What need of such discussions? has not the Church long since pronounced on all matters of faith, and has she not condemned all such miserable heretics? Assuredly our Holy Father, the Pope, will not be pleased by what you have done.”

The king replied, with dignity, “I will put no man to death till he has been proved guilty of a capital crime.”

“Is it not enough,” cried Startitus, Bishop of Stuhlweissenburg, “that he declares the mass to be an invention of the devil, and would give the cup to the laity, which Christ meant only for priests? Do not these opinions deserve death?”

“Tell me, my lord bishop,” said the king, “is the Greek Church a true Church?” The bishop replied in the affirmative. “Very

well," continued Ferdinand, "the Greeks have not the mass: cannot we also do without it? The Greeks take the Communion in both kinds, as Chrysostom and Cyril taught them to do: may not we do the same?" The bishops were silent. "I do not defend Szantai," added Ferdinand, "his cause shall be examined; I cannot punish an innocent man."

"If your Majesty do not grant our request," said the Bishop of Grosswardein, "we shall find other remedies to free us from this vulture." The bishops left the royal presence in great wrath.

The king passed some anxious hours. At nine o'clock at night he gave an audience, in presence of two councilors, to Szantai, who was introduced by the Burgomaster of Kaschau. "What really is, then, the doctrine that you teach?" inquired the king. The evangelist gave a plain and clear exposition of his doctrine, which he said was not his own, but that of Christ and his apostles, as recorded in the Scriptures of truth. The king had heard a similar doctrine at Augsburg. Had not his confessor too, when dying, acknowledged that he had not led him in the right path, and that it was the truth which Luther taught? Ferdinand was visibly disturbed for some moments. At last he burst out, "O my dear Stephen! if we follow this doctrine, I greatly fear that some calamity will befall both of us. Let us commit the matter to God. But, my friend, do not tarry in my dominions. If you remain here the princes will deliver you up to death; and should I attempt to save you, I would but expose myself to danger. Sell what thou hast, and go; depart into Transylvania, where you will have liberty to profess the truth."[9]

Having given the evangelist some presents towards the expenses of his journey, the king turned to the Burgomaster of Kaschau, and desired him to take Szantai away secretly by night, and to conduct him in safety to his own people.

In this transaction all the parties paint their own

characters. We can read the fidelity and courage of the humble evangelist, we see the overgrown insolence of the bishops, and not less conspicuous is the weakness of Ferdinand. Of kindly disposition, and aiming at being upright as a king, Ferdinand I. nevertheless, on the great question that was moving the world, was unable to pursue any but an inconsistent and wavering course.

Ever since the day of Augsburg he had halted between Wittemberg and Rome. He was not, however, without some direction in the matter, for something within him told him that truth was at Wittemberg; but on the side of Rome he saw two lofty personages – the Pope, and his brother the Emperor Charles – and he never could make up his mind to break with that august companionship, and join himself to the humble society of Reformers and evangelists. Of double mind, he was unstable in all his ways.

CHAPTER 2Back to Top PROTESTANTISM FLOURISHES IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA.

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ONE very remarkable characteristic of the progress of Protestantism in Hungary, was its silence and its steadiness. No one heard the fall of the Roman hierarchy: there was no crash as in other countries, and yet it was overthrown. The

process of its removal was a dissolution rather than a destruction. The uprising of the new fabric was attended with as little noise as the falling of the old: the Bible, the pulpit, and the school did their work; the light waxed clearer every hour, the waters flowed wider around every day, and ere men were aware, the new verdure covered all the land.

Young evangelists, full. of knowledge and faith, returned from the Protestant schools in Germany and Switzerland, and began to publish the Gospel. Some labored among the mountains of Transylvania, others evangelized on the plains and amid the towns of Hungary; and from the foot of the Carpathians to the borders of Turkey and the confines of Germany, the seeds of truth and life were being scattered. As Luther, and Zwingle, and Calvin had been the teachers of these men, they in their turn became the instructors of the curates and priests, who lacked the opportunity or the will to visit foreign lands and learn Divine knowledge from those who had drawn it from its original fountains. In proportion as they discovered the way of life, did they begin to make it known to their flocks, and thus whole parishes and districts gradually and quietly passed over to Protestantism, carrying with them church, and parsonage, and school. In some instances where the people had become Protestant, but the pastor continued to be Popish, the congregation patiently waited till his death, and then called a preacher of the Word of God.

Three things at this time contributed to the progress of Protestant truth in Hungary. The first was the conference at Schasburg. The news spread through the country that the priests had been unable to maintain their cause before the evangelist Szantai, and that the king had stood by the preacher. After this many began to search into the truth of the new doctrines, who had hitherto deemed inquiry a crime. The second favorable circumstance was the publication, in 1541, of an edition of the New Testament in the Hungarian language. This was the work of John Sylvester, assisted by

Count Nadasdy, to whom Melancthon had given Sylvester a letter of recommendation. The Epistles of Paul had been published in the Hungarian vernacular, at Cracow, in 1533, [1] but now the whole New Testament was placed within reach of the people. The third thing that favored the Reformation was the division of the country under two rival sovereigns. This was a calamity to the kingdom, but a shield to its Protestantism. Neither Ferdinand I. nor John Zapolya dared offend their great Protestant nobles, and so their persecuting edicts remained a dead letter.

It seemed at this moment as if the breach were about to be closed, and the land placed under one sovereign, whose arm, now greatly more powerful, would perchance be stretched out to crush the Gospel. In the same year in which the conference was held at Schasburg, it was arranged by treaty between the two kings that each should continue to sway his scepter over the States at that moment subject to him; but on the death of John Zapolya, without male issue, Hungary and Transylvania should revert to Ferdinand I. When the treaty was framed Zapolya had no child. Soon thereafter he married the daughter of the King of Poland, and next year, as he lay on his death-bed, word was brought him that his queen had borne him a son. Appointing the Bishop of Grosswardein and Count Petrovich the guardians of his new-born child, Zapolya solemnly charged them not to deliver up the land to Ferdinand. This legacy, which was in flagrant violation of the treaty, was equally terrible to his son and to Hungary.

The widow, not less ambitious than her deceased husband, caused her son to be proclaimed King of Hungary. Feeling herself unable to contend in arms with Ferdinand I, she placed the young prince under the protection of Soliman, whose aid she craved. This led to the reappearance of the Turkish army in Hungary. The country endured, in consequence, manifold calamities; many of the Protestant pastors fled, and the evangelization was stopped. But these disorders lasted only

for a little while. The Turks were wholly indifferent to the doctrinal controversies between the Protestants and the Papists. In truth, had they been disposed to draw the sword of persecution, it would have been against the Romanists, whose temples, filled with idols, were specially abhorrent to them. The consequence was that the evangelizing agencies were speedily resumed. The pastors returned, the Hungarian New Testament of Sylvester was being circulated through the land, the progress of Protestantism in Hungary became greater, at least more obvious, than ever, and under the reign of Islam the Gospel had greater quietness in Hungary, and flourished more than perhaps would have been the case had the kingdom been governed solely by the House of Austria.

A more disturbing conflict arose in the Protestant Church of Hungary itself. A visit which Devay, its chief Reformer, made at this time to Switzerland, led him to change his views on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On his return he let his change of opinion, which was in the direction of Zwingle, or rather of Calvin, be known, to the scandal of some of his brethren, who having drawn their theology from Wittemberg, were naturally of Luther's opinions. A flame was being kindled.[2] No greater calamity befell the Reformation than this division of its disciples into Reformed and Lutheran. There was enough of unity in essential truth on the question of the Eucharist to keep them separate from Rome, and enough, we submit, to prevent them remaining separate from one another.

Both repudiated the idea that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a sacrifice, or that the elements were transubstantiated, or that they were to be adored; and both held that the benefit came through the working of the Spirit, and the faith of the recipient. The great essentials of the Sacrament were here, and it was not in the least necessary to salvation that one should either believe or deny Luther's superadded idea, which he never could clearly explain, of

consubstantiation. The division, therefore, was without any sufficient ground, and was productive of manifold evils in Hungary, as in all the countries of the Reformation.

From this time dates the formation of two Protestant Churches in Hungary – the Reformed and the Lutheran. In 1545 a synod was held in the town of Erdoed, Comitat of Szmathmar, in the north of Transylvania. It consisted of twenty-nine ministers who were attached to the Helvetian Confession, and who met under the protection of the powerful magnate Caspar Dragfy. They confessed their faith in twelve articles, of which the headings only are known to us. The titles were – Of God; The Redeemer; Justification of the Sinner before God; Faith; Good Works; The Sacraments; Confession of Sin; Christian Liberty; The Head of the Church; Church Government; The Necessity of Separating from Rome.[3] To this statement of their views they added, in conclusion, that in other matters they agreed with the Augsburg Confession.

In the following year (1546)five towns of Upper Hungary convened at Eperies for the purpose of drawing up a Confession of their faith. They drafted sixteen articles, the doctrine of which was substantially that of the Augsburg Confession. This document became famous in Hungary as the Pentapolitan, or Confession of the Five Cities. The synod added to their Confession several regulations with the view of guarding the soundness of the ministers, and the morals of the members of the Church. A pastor who should teach doctrine contrary to that set forth in the Pentapolitan was to be deposed from office; no one was to be admitted to the Communion-table without examination; and in order to render the exercise of church discipline, especially excommunication, the less necessary, the magistrate was exhorted to be vigilant in the repression of vice, and the punishment of crime.

We now see two Protestant communions on the soil of Hungary, but the separation between them was, as yet, more in name than in reality. They felt and acted toward one another as if still

members of the same Church, though differing in their views on the one question of the Eucharist, and not till an after-period did the breach widen and heats arise. This epoch is, too, that of the formal separation of the Protestants of Hungary from the Church of Rome. Up to this time their clergy had been ordained by the Popish bishop of the diocese, or appointed by the professors at the German universities; but now the Hungarian Protestants themselves chose superintendents, by whom their ministers were ordained, and they convoked assemblies from time to time for the regulation of all matters appertaining to their Church.[4]

The progress of Protestantism in Transylvania was henceforward rapid indeed. The Diet of 1553 declared by a majority of votes in favor of the Reformation. One consequence of this was that the neighboring free city of Huns, at that time an important fortress, became entirely Protestant, and in the following year (1554) the last Popish priest left; the town, as a shepherd who had no flock. The Palatine,[5] Thomas Nadasdy, and others of nearly as exalted a rank, were among the accessions to Protestantism at this time. Nor must we omit to mention the impulse given to the movement by the conversion of the powerful and learned bishop, Francis Thurzo, from the Church of Rome; nor the yet greater aid contributed by Francis Cis, or Szegedin, who was equally great as a theologian and as all orator. His activity and success drew upon him the wrath of the Romanists, and after being set upon and nearly beaten to death by an officer of the Bishop of Grosswardein's body-guard, he was driven out of the country. This great preacher was recalled, however, by Count Peter Petrovich, a zealous friend of the Reformation, who now governed Transylvania in the name of the young son of King Zapolya. Petrovich, wielding for the time the supreme power in Transylvania, took steps for completing its Reformation, and in the prosecution of this great object he found Szegedin a most efficient ally. The preacher proclaimed the faith, and the governor removed all hindrances to the reception and profession of it. Petrovich

took away all the images from the churches, converted the monasteries into schools, removed the Popish priests from their parishes, coined the gold and silver vessels into money, appropriated the Church property in the name of the State, and secured three-fourths of it for the salaries of the Protestant clergy. Thus was the whole of Transylvania, with the consent and co-operation of the people, freed from the jurisdiction of the Romish hierarchy,[6] and the vast majority of its inhabitants passed over to the Protestant Confessions.

There came a momentary turning of the tide. In 1557 the reforming Count Petrovich was obliged to give way to Stephen Losonczy. The latter, a mere man of war, and knowing only enough of the Gospel to fear it as a cause of disturbance, drove away all its preachers. Not only was the eloquent and energetic Szegedin sent into exile, but all his colleagues were banished from the country along with him. The sequel was not a little remarkable. Scarcely had the ministers quitted the soil of Transylvania, when the Turks burst across its frontier. They marched on Temeswar, besieged and took the fortress, and slaughtered all the occupants, including the unhappy Losonczy himself. The ministers would probably have perished with the rest, had not the governor, with the intent of ruining them, forced them beforehand into a place of safety.[7]

Again the Protestants found the scepter of the Turks lighter than the rod of the Papists. The pashas were besieged by solicitations and bribes to put the preachers to death, or at least to banish them; but their Turkish rulers, more just than their Christian opponents, refused to condemn till first they had made inquiry; and a short interrogation commonly sufficed to make patent the fact that, while the Romanists worshipped by images, the Protestants bowed to God alone. This was enough for the Mussulman governor. Without seeking to go deeper into the points of difference, he straightway gave orders that no hindrance should be offered to the preaching of that Gospel

which the great Mufti of Wittemberg had discovered; and thus, in all the Transylvanian towns and plains under the Moslem, the Protestant faith continued to spread.

Scarcely less gratifying was the progress of the truth in those portions of Hungary which were under the sway of Ferdinand I. In Komorn, on the angle formed by the junction of the Wang with the Danube, we find Michael Szataray and Anthony Plattner preaching the Gospel with diligence, and laying the foundation of what was afterwards the great and flourishing Church of the Helvetian Confession. In the free city of Tyrnau, to the north of Komorn, where Simon Grynaeus and the Reformer Devay had scattered the seed, the writings of the Reformers were employed to water it, and the majority of the citizens embraced the Protestant faith in its Lutheran form. In the mining towns of the mountainous districts the Gospel flourished greatly. These towns were held as the private property of the Protestant Queen Mary, the widow of Louis II, who had perished at the battle of Mohacz, and while under her rule the Gospel and its preachers enjoyed perfect security. But the queen transferred the cities to her brother Ferdinand, and the priests thought that they now saw how they could reach their heretical inhabitants. Repairing to Ferdinand, they represented these towns as hotbeds of sectarianism and sedition, which he would do well to suppress. The accusation kindled the zeal of the Protestants; they sent as their defense, to the monarch, a copy of their Confession (Pentapolitana), of which we have spoken above. Ferdinand found it the echo of that to which he had listened with so much interest at Augsburg twenty years before, and he commanded that those whose faith this Confession expressed should not be molested.[8]

Everywhere we find the greatest ferment and activity prevailing. We see town councils inviting preachers to come and labor in the cities under their jurisdiction, and opening the churches for their use. School-houses are rising, and

wealthy burgomasters are giving their gardens in free grant for sites. We see monks throwing off the cloak and betaking themselves, some to the pulpit, others to the school, and others to handicrafts. We find archbishops launching fulminatory letters, which meet with no response save in their own idle reverberations. The images are vanishing from the churches; the tapers are being extinguished at the altar; the priest departs, for there is no flock; processions cease from the streets and highways; the begging friar forgets to make his round; the pilgrim comes no more to his favorite shrine; relies have lost their power; and the evening air is no longer vexed by the clang of convent bells, thickly planted all over the land.

"Alas! alas!" cry monk and nun, their occupation being gone, "the glory is departed."

"Only three families of the magnates adhered still to the Pope. The nobility were nearly all Reformed, and the people were, nearly thirty to one, attached to the new doctrine."[9]
CHAPTER 3Back to Top FERDINAND II AND THE ERA OF PERSECUTION.

The Reformation of Hungary not Perfected – Defects – Intestine War – "Formula of Concord" – The Jesuits – Their Show of Humility – Come to Tyrnau – Settle in Raab – Ferdinand II Educated by the Jesuits – His Devotion to Mary – His Vow – His Mission – A Century of Protestantism – Tragedies – Ferdinand II hopes to Extinguish Protestantism – Stephen Bethlen – Diet of Neusohl – Decrees Toleration – War between Bethlen and Ferdinand II – Bethlen Declines the Crown of Hungary – Renews the War – Peace – Bethlen's Sudden Death – Plan for Extirpating Protestantism – Its Execution Postponed – Ferdinand's Death.

As the morning spreads light, and the spring verdure over the earth, so Protestantism, with its soft breath, was diffusing light and warmth over the torpid fields of Hungary. Nevertheless the crown was not put upon the Reformation of

that land. The vast majority of the population, it is true, had embraced Protestantism, but they failed to reach the goal of a united and thoroughly organized Protestant Church. Short of this, the Hungarian Protestants were hardly in a condition to resist the terrible shocks to which they were about to be exposed. The Latin nations have ever shown a superior genius in organizing – a talent which they have received from Old Rome – and this is one reason, doubtless, why the Protestant Churches of Latin Christendom were more perfect in their autonomy than those of Saxon Christendom. The moment we cross the Rhine and enter among Teutonic peoples, we find the Protestants less firmly marshaled, and their Churches less vigorously governed, than in Western Europe. The Protestant Church of Hungary had a government – she was ruled by superintendents, seniors, pastors, and deacons – but the vigor and efficiency of this government rested mainly with one man; there was no machinery for rallying promptly the whole force of the body on great emergencies; and so when Rome had had time to construct her opposition and bring it into play, first individual congregations and pastors, and ultimately the whole Church, succumbed to the fire of her artillery.

Another defect cleaving to the Hungarian Church was the want of a clear, definite, and formal line of separation from the Romish Church. The hierarchy of Rome was still in the land; the bishops claimed their dues from the Protestant pastors, and in most cases received them, and occasional efforts on the part of Romish dignitaries to exercise jurisdiction over the Protestants were tamely submitted to. This state of matters was owing partly to causes beyond the control of the Protestants, and partly to the quiet and easy manner in which the Reformation had diffused itself over the country. There had been no convulsion, no period of national agony to wrench the Hungarians, as a people, from the communion of Rome, and to teach them the wisdom, not only of standing apart, but of putting their Church into a posture of defense against the tempests which might arise in the future. The mariner who has

never sailed save on calm seas, is apt to leave matters negligently arranged on board, and to pay the penalty of his carelessness when at last the horizon blackens, and his bark becomes the sport of the mountainous billows.

It was a yet greater calamity that a bitter intestine war was. weakening the strength and destroying the unity of the Hungarian Church. In its early days, the Lutherans and Calvinists had dwelt together in peace; but soon the concord was broken, not again to be restored. The tolerant Ferdinand I had gone to the grave: he had been followed first on the throne, and next to the tomb, by his son Maximilian II, the only real friend the Protestants ever had among the kings of the Hapsburg line: and now the throne was filled by the gloomy and melancholy Rudolph II. Engrossed, as we have seen, in the stark studies of astrology and alchemy, he left the government of his kingdom to the Jesuits. The sky was darkening all round with gathering storms. At Vienna, in Styria, and in other provinces, Cardinal Hosius and the Jesuits were initiating the persecution, in the banishment of pastors and the closing of churches. But, as though the violence which had begun to desolate neighboring churches were to be restrained from approaching them, the Hungarians continued to convoke synod after synod, and discuss questions that could only stir up strife. In 1577 the famous “Formula of Concord” was drafted and published, in the hope that a general concurrence in it would end the war, and bring in a lasting peace.

What was that Formula? It made the subscriber profess his belief in the ubiquity of Christ’s human nature. So far from healing the breach, this “Formula of Concord” became the instrument of a wider division.[1] The war raged more furiously than ever, and the Protestants, alas! intent on their conflict with one another, hoard not the mustering of the battalions who were preparing to restore peace by treading both Lutheran and Calvinist into the dust.

These various evils opened the door for the entrance of a

greater, by which the Protestantism of Hungary was ultimately crushed out. That greater evil was the Jesuits, “the troops of Hades,” as they are styled by a writer who is not a Protestant.[2] With quiet foot, and down-east eyes, the Jesuits glided into Hungary. In a voice lowered to the softest tones, they announced their mission, in terms as beneficent as the means by which it was to be accomplished were gentle. As the nurse deals with her child – coaxing it, by promises which she has no intention to fulfil, to part with some deadly weapon which it has grasped – so the Jesuits were to coax, gently and tenderly, the Hungarians to abandon that heresy to which they clung so closely, but which was destroying their souls. We have already seen that when these pious men first came to Vienna, so far were they, in outward show, from seeking riches or power, that they did not care to set up house for themselves, but were content to share the lodgings of the Dominicans. Their rare merit, however, could not be hid, and soon these unambitious men were seen at court. The emperor ere long was kneeling at the feet of their chief, Father Bobadilla. They first entered Hungary in 1561. Four priests and a lay brother settled in the town of Tyrnau, where they began to build a college, but before their edifice was finished a fire broke out in the city, and laid their not yet completed fabric in ashes, along with the neighboring dwellings. Their general, Father Borgia, not having money to rebuild what the flames had consumed, or not caring to expend his treasures in this restoration, interpreted the catastrophe into an intimation that it was not the will of Heaven that they should plant themselves in Tyrnau, and the confraternity, to the great joy of the citizens, left the place.

Thirteen years elapsed before a Jesuit was again seen on the soil of Hungary. In 1579 the Bishop of Raab imported a single brother from Vienna, whose eloquence as a preacher made so many conversions that the way was paved, though not till after seven years, for the establishment of a larger number of this sinister community. The rebellion of Stephen Botskay, the

dethronement of Rudolph II, the accession of his brother Matthias – mainly by the arms of the Protestants – restrained the action of the Jesuits for some years, and delayed the bursting of the storm that was slowly gathering over the Protestant Church. But at last Ferdinand II, "the Tiberius of Christianity," as he has been styled, mounted the throne, and now it was that the evil days began to come to the Protestant Churches of the empire, and especially to the Protestant Church of Hungary.

Ferdinand II was the son of the Archduke Charles, and grandson of Ferdinand I. After the death of his father, he was sent in 1590 to Ingolstadt, to be educated by the Jesuits. These cunning artificers of human tools succeeded in making him one of the most pliant that even their hands ever wielded, as his whole after-life proved. From Ingolstadt, Ferdinand returned to his patrimonial estates in Styria and Carinthia, with the firm resolve, whatever it might cost himself or others, that foot of Protestant should not defile the territories that called him master. He would rather that his estates should become the abode of wolves and foxes than be the dwelling of heretics. Soon thereafter he set out on a pilgrimage to Loretto, to invoke the protection of the "Queen of Heaven," visiting Rome by the way to receive grace from the "Holy Father," to enable him to fulfill his vow of thoroughly purging his dominions. In his fortieth year (1517) he made a pilgrimage to a similar shrine; and as he lay prostrate before the image of Mary, a violent storm came on, the lightening flashed and the thunders rolled, but above the roar of the elements Ferdinand heard, distinct and clear, a voice saying to him, "Ferdinand, I will not leave thee." Whose voice could it be but Mary's? He rose from the earth with a double consecration upon him. This, however, did not hinder his subscribing, on the day of his coronation as King of Bohemia (16th March, 1618), the article which promised full protection to the Protestant Church, adding that "he would sooner lose his life than break his word" – a gratifying proof, as his

former preceptors doubtless regarded it, that he had not forgotten the lessons they had taught him at Ingolstadt.

On his return from the Diet at Frankfort (1619), clothed with the mantle of the Caesars, he held himself as elected in the sight of Christendom to do battle for the Church. What did the imperial diadem, so suddenly placed on his brow, import, if not this, that Heaven called him to the sublime mission of restoring the empire to the pure orthodoxy of early days, and its twin-institute, the Pontifical chair, to its former peerless splendor?

Protestantism had fulfilled its century; for it was rather more than a hundred years since Luther's hammer had summoned from the abyss, as Ferdinand deemed, this terrible disturber of the world – this scourge of Rome, and terror of kings – which no sword seemed able to slay. Charles V had staked empire and fame against it; but the result was that he had to hide his defeat in a monastery. A life of toil had he undergone for Rome, and received as recompense – oh! dazzling reward – a monk's cowl. Philip II had long battled with it, but worn out he at last laid him down in the little closet that looks into the cathedral-church of the Escorial, and amid a heap of vermin, which issued from his own body, he gave up the ghost. Leaving these puissant monarchs to rot in their marble sepulchres, Protestantism starts afresh on its great career. It enters the dark cloud of the St. Bartholomew, but soon it emerges on the other side, its garments dripping, but its life intact. It is next seen holding its path amid the swimming scaffolds and the blazing stakes of the Netherlands. The cords with which its enemies would bind it are but as green withes upon its arm. But now its enemies fondly think that they see its latter end drawing nigh.

From the harbors of Spain rides forth galley after galley in proud array, the "invincible Armada," to chase from off the earth that terrible thing which has so long troubled the nations and their monarchs. But, lo! it is the Armada itself

that has to flee. Careering specter-like, it passes between the Protestant shores of England on the one hand, and Holland on the other, hastening before the furious winds to hide itself in the darkness of the Pole.

Such are the tragedies of the first century of Protestantism. No one has been able to weave a chain so strong as to hold it fast; but now Ferdinand believes that he has discovered the secret of its strength, and can speak the "hitherto, but no farther." The Jesuits have furnished him with weapons which none of his predecessors knew, to combat this terrible foe, and long before Protestantism shall have completed the second century of its existence, he will have set bounds to its ravages. The nations will return to their obedience, kings will sleep in peace, and Rome will sway her scepter over a subjugated Christendom.

We have already seen after what terrible fashion he inaugurated his attempt. The first act was the scaffold at Prague, on which twenty-seven magnates, the first men of the land, and some of them the most illustrious of the age, poured out their blood. This terrible day was followed by fifteen terrible years, during which judicial murders, secret torturings, banishments, and oppressions of all kinds were wearing out the Protestants of Bohemia, till at last, as we have seen, the nation and its Protestantism sank together. But in the other provinces of his dominions Ferdinand did not find the work so easy. In Austria proper, the States refused to submit. The Hungarians felt that the circle around their religious and civil rights was being drawn tighter every day. The Jesuits had returned. Something like the Spanish Inquisition had been set up at Tyrnau. The Romish magnates were carrying it with a high hand. Count Stephen Pallfy of Schutt-Somerain erected a gallows, declaring that he would hang on it all Protestant clergymen called to churches in Schutt without his leave. In this state of matters, the Prince of Transylvania, Gabriel Bethlen, a zealous Protestant, and a

general of equal bravery and skill, took up m-ms. In the end of 1619 he took the towns of Kaschau and Presburg. In the castle of the latter place he found the crown of Hungary, with the state jewels; and had he worn them as king, as at an after-stage of his career he was urged to do, the destinies of Hungary might have been happier.

Passing on in his victorious career toward the southeast, Bethlen received the submission of the town and castle of Oldenburg. He finally arrived at Gratz, and here a truce was agreed on between him and Ferdinand. In the following year (1620) a Diet was held at Neusohl. On the motion of the Palatine Thurzo, the Diet unanimously resolved to proclaim Bethlen King of Hungary. He declined the crown; mad the earnest entreaties of the Diet, seconded by the exhortations of his own chaplain, were powerless to induce him to alter his resolution. At this Diet important measures were adopted for the peace of Hungary. Toleration was enacted for all creeds and confessions; tithes and first-fruits were to fall to the Roman and Protestant clergy alike; three Popish bishops were recognized as sufficient for the country: one at Erlau for Upper Hungary; a second at Neutra, for Hungary on this side the Danube; and a third at Raab, beyond the river.

The Jesuits were banished; and it was resolved to complete the organization of the Protestant Church in those districts where it had been left unfinished. The Protestants now breathed freely. They thought that they had, as the infallible guarantees of their rights, the victorious sword of the Prince Bethlen, and the upright administration of the Palatine Thurzo, and that they were justified in believing that an era of settled peace had opened upon them.[3]

Their prosperity was short-lived. First the Protestant Palatine, Count Thurzo, died suddenly; and the popular suspicion attributed his death to poison. Next; came the cry of the franc horrors which had opened in Bohemia. Prince Bethlen again grasped the sword, and his bravery and

patriotism extorted a new peace from the persecutor, which was arranged at Nikolsburg in 1621. On this occasion Bethlen delivered up to Ferdinand the crown of Hungary, which had remained till now in his possession. The jewel which Bethlen had declined to wear passed to the head of the spouse of Ferdinand, who was now crowned Queen of Hungary.

Scarcely had the joy-bells ceased to ring for the peace of Nikolsburg, when crowds of wretched creatures, fleeing from the renewed horrors in Bohemia, crossed the frontier. Their cries of wrong, and their miserable appearance, excited at once compassion and indignation. Bethlen reproached the king for this flagrant infraction of the peace, before the ink in which it was signed was dry; but finding that while the king's ear was open to the Jesuits it was closed to himself, he again girded on the sword, and took the field at the head of a powerful army. He was marching on Vienna when the new Palatine was sent to stop him with renewed offers of peace. The terms were a third time accepted by the Prince of Transylvania. They seemed as satisfactory, and were destined to be as fruitless, as on the two former occasions. Had Bethlen cherished that "distrust of tyrants" which Demosthenes preached, and William the Silent practiced, he would have turned the achievements of his sword to better account for his countrymen. There was no amount of suspicion which would not have been justified by the character of the man he was transacting with, and the councilors who surrounded him. Nor were the signs on the social horizon such as foreboded a lengthened tranquillity.

The Jesuits were multiplying their hives, and beginning to swarm like wasps. Flourishing gymnasiums were being converted into cow-houses. Parsonages were unreeled, and if the incumbent did not take the hint, he and his family were carted out of the district. Protestant congregations would assemble on a Sunday morning to find the door and windows of their church smashed, or the fabric itself razed to the ground. These were isolated eases, but they gave sure prognostication

of greater oppressions whenever it would be in the power of the enemy to inflict them.

This latter peace was agreed on in 1628 at Presburg; and Prince Bethlen bound himself never again to take up arms against the House of Hapsburg, on condition of religious liberty being guaranteed. The Thirty Years' War, which will engage our attention a little further on, had by this time broken out. The progress of that great struggle had brought Ferdinand's throne itself into peril, and this made him all the readier to hold out the hand of peace to his victorious vassal. But Ferdinand's promise was forgotten as soon as made, and next year Prince Bethlen is said to have been secretly preparing for war when he was attacked with indisposition. Ferdinand, professing to show him kindness, sent him a physician chosen by the Jesuits. The noble-minded prince suspected no evil, though he daily grew worse. "The hero who had taken part in thirty-two battles without receiving a wound," says Michiels, "soon died from the attentions paid him."[4]

Three years before this (1626) the plan to be pursued in trampling out Protestantism in all the provinces of the empire had been discussed and determined upon at Vienna, but circumstances too strong for Ferdinand and his Jesuits compelled them to postpone from time to time the initiation of the project. Towards the close of 1626 a small council assembled in the palace of the Austrian prime minister Eggenberg, whom colic and gout confined to his cabinet. At the table, besides Ferdinand II, were the ambassador of Spain, the envoy of Florence, the privy councilor Harrack, the gloomy Wallenstein, and one or two others. Count Agnate, the Spanish ambassador, rose and announced that his master had authorized him to offer 40,000 chosen men for forty years in order to the suppression of heresy, root and branch, in Hungary. He further recommended that foreign governors should be set over the Hungarians, who should impose upon them new laws, vex and

oppress them in a thousand different ways, and so goad them into revolt. The troops would then come in and put down the rising with the strong hand, mercilessly inflicting a general slaughter, and afterwards taking off at leisure the heads of the chief persons. In this way the spirit of the haughty and warlike Magyars would be broken, and all resistance would be at an end. The proposal seemed good in the eyes of the king and his councilors, and it was resolved to essay a beginning of the business on occasion of the approaching great fair at Sintau-on-the-Waag.[5] The saturnalia of slaughter were to open thus: disguised emissaries were to proceed to the fair, mingle with the crowd, pick quarrels with the peasants, and manage to create a tumult. Wallenstein and his troops, drawn up in. readiness, were then to rush upon the multitude, sword in hand, and cut down all above twelve years of age. It was calculated that the melee would extend from village to town, till the bulk of the able-bodied population, including all likely to lead in a rebellion, were exterminated. A terrible program truly! but second thoughts convinced its authors that the hour had not yet arrived for attempting its execution. Bethlen still lived, and the brave leader was not likely to sit still while his countrymen were being butchered like sheep.

Ferdinand, occupied in a mortal struggle with the north of Europe and France, had discernment enough, blinded though he was by the Jesuits, to see that it would be madness at this moment to add to the number of his enemies by throwing down the gage of battle to the Hungarians. The Jesuits must therefore wait. But no sooner was Prince Bethlen laid in the grave than persecution was renewed. But more lamentable by far than the vexations and sufferings to which the Protestant pastors and their flocks were now subjected, were the numerous defections that began to take place among the nobles from the cause of the Reformation. What from fear, what from the hope of preferment, or from dislike to the Protestant doctrine, a stream of conversions began to flow steadily in the direction

of Rome, and the number of the supporters of Protestantism among the Hungarian magnates was daily diminishing. So did things continue until the year 1637. On the 17th of February of that year Ferdinand II died.

“In Magdeburg,” say the authors of the History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, “were twenty-six thousand, corpses of men, women, and children, who had perished under the hand of his general, Tilly, with his hordes of Croatian military. Bohemia, Moravia, and a great part of Hungary were miserably oppressed, and morality itself almost banished, by the manner in which the war had been conducted. And what had he gained’. A few stone churches and schools stolen from the Lutherans and Calvinists; a hundred thousand converts brought over to the Church of Rome by the unapostolical means of sword, prison, fine, or bribery; and a depopulation of his monarchy amounting to more than a million of human beings.”[6]
CHAPTER 4Back to Top LEOPOLD I. AND THE JESUITS.

Ferdinand III — Persecution — The Pastor of Neustadt — Insurrection of Rakotzy — Peace of Linz — Leopold I — His Training — Devotion to the Jesuits — The Golden Age of the Jesuits — Plan of Persecution begins to be Acted on — Hungary Occupied by Austrian Soldiers — Prince Lobkowitz — Bishop Szeleptsenyi — Two Monsters — Diet of Presburg — Petition of the Protestants — Their Complaints — Robbed of their Churches and Schools — Their Pastors and Schoolmasters Banished — Enforced Perversion of the Inhabitants — Count Francis Nadasdy — A Message from the Fire — Protestants Forbidden the Rights of Citizenship — Their Petitions to the King Neglected.

GREAT hopes were entertained by the Protestants of was reputed a lover of learning, and it was expected Ferdinand’s son and successor, Ferdinand III. He that he would pursue a wise and liberal policy.

These expectations were realized only in part. His reign opened with the appointment of two perverts from the

Protestant faith the one to the palatinate, and the other to the Popish See of Erlau. These were the two posts of greatest influence, civil and ecclesiastical, in Hungary, and the persons now filling them owed their elevation to the Jesuits, and were not likely to be other than subservient to their patrons. The Protestants had been weakened by the secession of thirty magnates to Rome, and of the nobles who still remained on their side many had become lukewarm in the cause of the Reformation. Persecution took a stride in advance. The powerful Romish party utterly disregarded all promises and compacts. The king was unable in many instances to give effect to his own edicts.

The churches, schools, and manses in many places were taken possession of, and the pastors and schoolmasters driven away. The Prebend of Neustadt-on-the-Waag, for instance, was forcibly seized by Count Hommono, with all its heritages and fruits. The superintendent, being an old man, was put in a chair, and carried out by the soldiers. But here a difficulty arose. The unhoused minister was unable to walk, and the soldiers were unwilling to transport their burden to a greater distance.

What was to be done? They took up the aged man, carried him back, and set him down once more at his own hearth, consoling themselves that he had not long to live. All the property and dues, however, appertaining to the church, which comprehended several villages with their mills, the tenth and sixteenth of the grain grown on the lands, and a tenth of all the fowls, were retained by the count. Hommono’s example was followed by other nobles, who freely made a spoil of the Protestant property on their estates, and left it to the owners to utter complaints to which no attention was paid.

From the same quarter from which their fathers had so often obtained help in the time of their sore need, came a deliverer to the Protestants. Prince George Rakotzy of Transylvania, unable longer to witness in silence these cruel outrages upon

his brethren in the faith, proclaimed war against Ferdinand III in 1644. He was aided by the Swedes, whose armies were then in the field, engaged in the Thirty Years' War. The short but bloody campaign that ensued between Rakotzy and Ferdinand ended with the Peace of Linz, which gave toleration to the Protestants of Hungary, and brought back great part of the property of which they had been violently dispossessed.[1] There remained, however, 300 churches of which they had been despoiled, and which nothing could induce the Romanists to give up.

Four years afterwards (1648) came the Peace of Westphalia. This famous arrangement ended the Thirty Years' War, and gave the Protestants of Germany, and of Western Europe generally, the guarantee of public law for their civil and religious rights. Unhappily, the Austrian Empire did not share in the benefits flowing from that peace. The Protestants whose misfortune it was to live under the House of Hapsburg were left to the tender mercies of their rulers, who suffered themselves to be entirely led by the Jesuits; and now to the Reformed Church of Hungary there came a bitterer cup than any she had yet drunk of, and we have to record a sadder tale, though it must be briefly told, than we have yet had to recount of the sufferings of that unhappy Church and nation.

In 1656, Ferdinand III died in the flower of his age, and was succeeded by his second son, Leopold I, then a youth of seventeen. Destined by his father to be Bishop of Passau, Leopold, till his brothers death, had been educated for the Church. He had as preceptor the Jesuit Neidhard, who, eventually returning to his native Spain, there became Grand Inquisitor. Leopold was fitter for the confessor's box than for the throne. While yet a lad his delight was to brush the dust from the images of the saints, and to deck out mimic altars. In him the Jesuits had a king after their own heart.

Every morning he heard three masses, one after the other, remaining all the while on his knees, without once lifting his

eyes. On fete-days he insisted on all the ambassadors at his court being present at these services, and those who were not so young, or whose devotion was not so ardent as his own, were in danger of succumbing under so lengthened a performance, and were tempted to evade the infliction by soliciting employment at the court of some sovereign less pious than Leopold. The approach of Lent was a terror to the courtiers, for some eighty offices had to be gone through during that holy season. The emperor held monk and priest in all reverence. Did one with a shorn crown approach him, the pious king humbly doffed his hat. and held out his hand to be kissed. Phlegmatic as a Mussulman, and an equally firm believer in fate, he was on no occasion either sad or elate, but submitted to events which he construed as omens. On one occasion, when sitting down to dinner, the lightning entered the apartment. Leopold coldly said, “As Heaven calls us not to eat, but to fast and pray, remove the dishes.” So saying he retired to his chapel, his suite following him with what grace they could.

His appearance was as unkingly as it is possible to imagine. Diminutive in stature, his lower jaw protruding horribly, his little bald head enveloped in an immense peruke, surmounted by a hat shaded with a black feather, his person wrapped in a Spanish cloak, his feet thrust into red shoes, and his thin tottering legs encased in stockings of the same color,[2] “as if,” says Michiels, “he had been walking up to the knees in blood,” he looked more like one of those uncouth figures which are seen in booths than the living head of the Holy Roman Empire.

He had a rooted aversion to business, and the Jesuits relieved him of that burden. He signed without reading the papers brought him. Music, the theater, the gambling-table, the turning-lathe, alchemy, and divination furnished him by turns with occupation and amusement. Sooth-sayers and miracle-mongers had never long to wait for an audience: it was only Protestants who found the palace-gates strait. Oftener than

once a notice was found affixed to the doors of the palace, bearing the words, “Leopolde, sis Caesar et non Jesuita” (Leopold, be an Emperor and not a Jesuit).[3]

A puppet on the throne, the Jesuits were the masters of the kingdom. It was their golden age in Austria, and they were resolved not to let slip the opportunity it offered. The odious project drawn up thirty years ago still remained a dead letter, but the hour for putting it in execution had at last arrived. But they would not startle men by a too sudden zeal; they would not set up the gallows at once; petty vexations and subtle seductions would gain over the weaker spirits, and the axe and the cord would be held in reserve for the more obstinate. Austrian soldiers were distributed in the forts, the cities, and the provinces of Hungary. This military occupation by foreign troops was in violation of Hungarian charters, but the Turk served as a convenient pretext for this treachery. “You are unable,” said Leopold’s ministers, “to repel the Mussulman, who is always hovering on your border and breaking into your country; we shall assist you.” It mattered little, however, to keep out the Turk while the Jesuit was allowed to enter; the troops were no sooner introduced than they began to pillage :and oppress those they had come to pro-feet, and the Hungarians soon discovered that what the Court of Vienna sought was not to defend them from the fanatical Moslem, but to subjugate them to the equally fanatical Jesuit.

When a great crime is to be done it is often seen that a fitting tool for its execution turns up at the fight moment. So was it now. The Jesuits found, not one, but two men every way qualified for the atrocious business on which they were embarking. The first was Prince Lobkowitz, owner of an immense fortune, which his father had amassed in the Thirty Years’ War. He was a proud, tyrannical, pitiless man, and being entirely devoted to the Jesuits, he was to Hungary what Lichtenstein had been to Bohemia. At the same time that this ferocious man stood up at the head of the army, a man of

similar character appeared in the Church. The See of Gran became vacant, and the Government promoted to it an ardent adversary of the Reformed faith, named Szeleptsenyi. This barbarous name might have been held as indicative of the barbarous nature of the man it designated.

Unscrupulous, merciless, savage, this Szeleptsenyi was a worthy coadjutor of the ferocious Lobkowitz. As men shudder when they behold nature producing monsters, or the heavens teeming with ill-omened conjunctions, so did the Hungarians tremble when they saw these two terrible men appear together, the one in the civil and the other in the ecclesiastical firmament of Austria. We shall meet them afterwards. Their vehemence would have vented itself at once, and brought on a crisis, but the firm hand of the Jesuits, who held them in leading-strings, checked their impetuosity, and taught them to make a beginning with something like moderation.

In 1562 a Diet was held at Presburg, and the petition which the Hungarians presented to it enables us to trace the progress of the persecution during the thirteen previous years. During that term the disciples of the Gospel in Hungary had been deprived by force of numerous churches, and of a great amount of property. These acts of spoliation, in open violation of the law, which professed to grant them freedom of worship, extended over seventeen counties, and fifty-three magnates, prelates, and landowners were concerned in the perpetration of them. Within the three past years they had been robbed of not fewer than forty churches;[4] and when they complained, instead of finding redress, the deputy-lieutenants only contrived to terrify and weary them.

To be robbed of their property was only the least of the evils they were called to suffer; their consciences had been outraged; dragoons were sent to convert them to the Roman faith. The superior judge, Count Francis Nadasdy, harassed them in innumerable ways. On one occasion he sent a party of soldiers to a village, with orders to convert every man in it

from the Protestant faith. The inhabitants fled on the approach of the military, and a chase ensued. Overtaken, the entire crowd of fugitives were summarily transferred into the Roman fold. On another occasion the same count sent a servant with an armed force to the village of Szill, to demand the keys of the church. They were given up at his summons, and some days after, the bell began tolling. The parishioners, thinking that worship was about to be celebrated, assembled in the church, and sat waiting the entrance of the pastor. In a few minutes a priest appeared, attired in canonicals, and carrying the requisites for mass, which he straightway began to read, and the whole assembly, in spite of their tears and protestations, were compelled to receive the Communion in its Popish form.

The active zeal of Nadasdy suggested to him numerous expedients for converting men to the Roman faith; some of them were very extraordinary, and far from pleasant to those who were the subjects of them. The Protestants who lived in Burgois were accustomed to go to church in the neighboring town of Nemesker. The count thought that he would put a stop to a practice that displeased him. He gave orders to the keeper of his forests to lie in wait, with his assistants, for the Protestants on their way back. The worshippers on their return from church were seized, stripped of their clothes, and sent home in a state of perfect nudity. Upon another occasion, having extruded Pastor Stephen Pilarick, of Beczko, he seized all his books, and transporting them to his castle, burned them on the hall-floor.

The Bible was reserved for a special auto-da-fe. It was put upon a spit and turned round before the fire, the count and his suite standing by and watching the process of its slow combustion. A sudden gust of wind swept into the apartment, stripped off a number of the half-burned leaves and, swirling them through the hall, deposited one of them upon the count’s breast. Baron Ladislaus Revay caught at it, but the count

anticipating him took possession of it, and began to read. The words were those in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of ore: God shall stand for ever.” The Count Nadasdy, turning pale, immediately retired.[5] Not fewer than 200 Protestant Churches, on his estates, did he contrive to ruin, either partially or wholly. “For these feats,” say the historians of the Protestant Church of Hungary, “he became the darling of the Jesuits at the Court of Vienna.”[6]

His good deeds, however, were not remembered by the Fathers in the hour of his calamity. When shortly after the count was drawn into insurrection, and condemned to die, they left him to mount the scaffold. Before laying his head on the block, he said, “The Lord is just in all his ways.” These words the Jesuits interpreted into an acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; but the Protestants saw in them, with more probability, an expression of sorrow for forsaking the faith of his youth.[7]

In Eisenberg county, Count George Erdody turned the Pastor of Wippendorf out of doors in the depth of winter, and threw his furniture on the street. All the Protestants on his estates were ordered to return to the Church of Rome, under penalty of banishment, with only four florins for their journey. When this threat failed, the rude Wallachian soldiery were billeted upon them; and such as still proved obdurate were thrown into the dungeons of his castle, and kept there until, worn out by cold and hunger and darkness, they at last yielded.

The Jesuits finding that their plan, though it emitted neither flame nor blood, was effectual enough to make consciences bow, resolved to persevere with it. In Neusiedel, in the county of the Wieselburg, there went forth an order from the landlords, John and George Lippay, commanding all the Protestants to worship in the Popish church, and imposing a fine of forty florins for every case of absence. No Protestant widow was permitted to marry. At no Protestant funeral dare psalm or

hymn be sung. No Protestant could fill any public office; and if already in such he was to be extruded. Foot of Protestant pastor must not enter the gates of the now orthodox Neusiedel, and if he chose to disregard this prohibition, he was to pay the penalty of his presumption with his life.

The corporate trades of Raab and other towns declared it indispensable to enrolment in a guild, or the exercise of a craft, that the applicant should profess the Romish faith. No Protestant could make a coat, or weave a yard of cloth, or fabricate a pair of shoes, or mould a vessel of clay, or wield the hammer of the armorer or execute the commonest piece of carpenter’s work.

Jealous over the orthodoxy of their lands, and desirous of preserving them from all taint of heresy, the bishops drove into banishment their Protestant tenantry. Nuns were very careful that neither should Protestant plough turn their soils, nor Protestant psalm be sung on their estates; the great magnates showed themselves equally valiant for the Romish faith.

They banished air Protestants from their territorial fiefs; they threw the Protestant population of entire villages into prison, loaded them with chains, and kept them in dark and filthy cells till, worn with sickness and broken in spirit, they abjured their faith. Many churches were razed to the ground; others were appropriated to the Romish worship. While Divine service was being celebrated in the Church of Mishdorf, the soldiers broke into it with drawn swords, and barricading the door, made a priest sing mass. This sufficed to make the congregation “Catholic.” Mass had been said in their presence, and both people and church henceforth belonged to Rome. If a Jesuit thought the manse of a Protestant pastor better than his own, he had only to throw the incumbent into the street and take possession of the coveted dwelling. It mattered not if the minister was old, or sick, or dying, he and his family were carted across the boundary of the county and left to

shift for themselves. Similar acts of cruelty were being enacted in Transylvania, and in those parts of Hungary connected with the Reformed Church, which under Rakotzy had enjoyed some glorious days.

The petition of the Protestants specified the acts, named the authors of them, supported each averment with proof, and pleaded the law which enacted toleration, and threatened with punishment such outrages as those of which they complained. They approached the throne with this complaint through the Protestant members of the Diet of 1662. Believing the king to be ignorant of these oppressions, they did not doubt that Leopold would at once grant them redress.

After waiting a week, the royal reply was communicated to the complainants through the prime minister, Prince Portia. It admonished them not to annoy his Majesty with such complaints, and reminded them that the law had arranged all religious matters, and assigned to each transgression its proper punishment.

The hearts of the Protestants sank within them when they read this reply, which reflected even more disgrace on the throne than it inflicted injustice on them. Nevertheless they again presented themselves, through their deputies, in the royal presence. They complained that the law was being every day flagrantly violated, that of the men notoriously guilty of these illegal acts not one had been punished; and that even were sentence given against any such, they despaired of seeing it executed. Their hope was in the king alone. This time they waited longer for an answer, and when at last it came it was even more cold and cruel than the first. Six times did the cry of the Protestants ascend before the throne of their sovereign. Six times were they answered by a voice as inexorably stern as fate. They could no longer hide from themselves that their king was their enemy.

On the 4th of July, 1662, the Palatine Vesselenyi, president

of the Diet, handed the paper containing the king's answer to the Protestant deputies, and accompanied it with these words: "I had rather that the funeral-knell had tolled over me than live to see this day; may the day and the hour be covered with eternal darkness."[8] There is a Power that keeps a reckoning with thrones and nations, and notes down in silence the days on which great crimes are done, and stamps them in after-ages with a brand of reprobation, by making them the eras of great calamities. Two centuries after Vesselenyi's words were uttered, the day and hour were darkened to Austria. On the 4th of July, 1866, the fatal field of Koniggratz was stricken, and on that day of slaughter and blood Austria descended from her rank as the first of the German Powers.

CHAPTER 5Back to Top BANISHMENT OF PASTORS AND DESOLATION OF THE CHURCH OF HUNGARY.

Popish Nobles demand Withdrawal of the Foreign Troops – Refusal of the King-Projected Insurrection – Their Message to the Vizier – Their Plot Discovered – Mysterious Deaths of Vesselenyi and Zriny – Attempt to Poison the King – The Alchemist Borri – Introduced to the King – Effects his Cure – Insurrection Suppressed – New Storm on Protestants – Raid of Szeleptsenyi – Destruction of Churches, etc. – Martyrdom of Drabicius -Abolition of the Ancient Charters – Banishment of the Pastors – Thirty-three Ministers Tried, and Resign their Charges – Four Hundred Ministers Condemned – Resolved to Kill, not their Bodies, but their Characters – Their Treatment in Prison – Banishment to the Galleys – Sufferings on their Journey – Efforts for their Release – Delivered from the Galleys by Admiral de Ruyter – Desolation of Hungarian Church.

THE troops billeted on Hungary were intended to oppress the Protestants, but that did not hinder their being almost as great an oppression to the Romanists. The soldiers, in their daily pillagings and acts of violence, were at little pains to distinguish between the professors of a heretical and the adherents of an immaculate creed, and were as ready, on many

occasions, to appropriate the property and spill the blood of the Papist as of the Protestant.

The magnates who belonged to the Romish faith, seeing the country consuming in the slow fire of a military occupation, petitioned the Government for the withdrawal of the troops. But the court of Vienna was in no humor to listen to the request.

The Jesuits, who inspired the royal policy, were not displeased to see those haughty Magyars compelled to hold their heads a little less high, and that province weakened in the soil of which the seeds of heresy had been so plentifully scattered. The courtiers openly said, “How gaily do these Hungarian nobles strut about with their heron’s plumes waving in their caps, and their silken pelisses clasped with gold and silver! We shall teach them less lofty looks. We shall replace their heron’s plume with a feather from the wing of a humbler bird; and instead of a pelisse, we shall make them content with a plain Bohemian coat with leaden buttons.” Not only were the German troops not withdrawn, but a disgraceful peace was made with the Turks, and new subsidies were demanded for building new forts and paying more soldiers. When this was seen, the wrath of the Hungarian magnates knew no bounds. They held a secret assembly at Neusohl, and deliberated on their course of action. They resolved on the bold step of raising new levies, throwing off the yoke of the Emperor Leopold, and placing themselves under the suzerainty of the sultan, Mohammed IV. The leaders in this projected insurrection were the Palatine Vesselenyi, Count Francis Nadasdy, and others, all bitter per-securers of the Protestants. In the circumstances in which these magnates had placed themselves with their countrymen, their scheme of conspiracy was rash to infatuation. Had they unfurled their standard a few years earlier, Protestant Hungary would have rallied round it: city and village would have poured out soldiers in thousands to combat for their religion and liberty. But it was otherwise

now. The flower of the Hungarian nation were pining in prisons, or wandering in exile. The very men who would have fought their battles, these nobles had driven away; and now they were doomed to learn, by the disasters that awaited them, what an egregious error they had committed in the persecution of their Protestant countrymen. From the first day their enterprise had to contend with adverse fortune.

They sent a messenger to the grand vizier to solicit assistance. They knew not that a spy in the vizier's suite was listening to all they said, and would hasten to report what he had heard to the court at Vienna. This was enough. "Like a night-bird, hidden in the darkness," Prince Lobkowitz, having penetrated their secret, henceforth kept an eye on the conspirators.[1] If he did not nip the rebellion in the bud, it was because he wished to give it a little time to ripen, in order that it might conduct its authors to the scaffold. Its chiefs now began to be taken off mysteriously. The Palatine Vesselenyi was suddenly attacked with fever, and died in his castle in the heart of the Carpathians.

He was soon followed to the grave by another powerful]leader of the projected rebellion, Nicholas Zriny, Ban of the Croats. The Ban was found covered with wounds, in a forest near his own residence, and[the report was given forth that he had been torn by a wild boar, but the discovery of a bullet in his head upset the story. The suspicions awakened by these mysterious deaths were deepened by a tragic occurrence now in progress in the palace of Vienna. Leopold fell ill: his disease baffled his physicians; novenas, paternesters, and relics were powerless to arrest his malady, and it began to be suspected that a secret poison was undermining the emperor's strength. While the king was rapidly approaching the grave, the celebrated alchemist, tilt Chevalier Francis Borri, of Milan, who had been proscribed by Rome, was seized by the Papal nuncio in Moravia, and brought to Vienna. The king, who was himself addicted to the study of alchemy, hearing Borri was in

his capital, commanded his attendance. The chevalier was introduced after night-fall. Indescribably gloomy was the chamber of the royal patient: the candles looked as if they burned in a tomb; the atmosphere was mephitic; the king's face wore the ghastliness of the grave; his sallow skin and sunken cheeks, with the thirst which nothing could assuage, gave indubitable signs that some unknown poison was at work upon him. The chemist paused and looked round the room.

He marked the red flame of the tapers the white vapor which, they emitted, and the deposit they had formed on the ceiling. "You are breathing a poisoned air," said he to the king. The patient's apartment was changed, other candles were brought, and from that hour the king began to recover. When the lights were analyzed it was found that the wick had been steeped in a strong solution of arsenic. It is hard to imagine what motive the Jesuits could have for seeking to take off a monarch so obsequious to them, and the affair still remains one of the mysteries of history.

The man who had saved the king's life had earned, one would think, his own liberty. But nothing in those days could atone for heresy, or even the suspicion of it. Borri, having completed the monarch's cure, was given back to the Papal nuncio, who claimed hint as his prisoner, carried him to Rome, and threw him into the dungeons of St. Angelo, where, after languishing fifteen years, he died. The procurator of the Jesuits was also made to disappear so as never to be heard of more. The king would not have dared, even in thought, to have suspected the Fathers, much less to have openly accused them. But whoever were the authors of this attempt, it was upon the Hungarians that its punishment was made to fall, for Leopold being led to believe that his Protestant subjects had been seeking to compass his death, fear and dread of them were now added to his former hatred. From this hour, the work of crushing the conspirators was pushed forward with vigore: Troops were marched on Hungary from all sides: the insurgents

were overwhelmed by numbers, and the chiefs were arrested before they had time to take the field. The papers seized were of a nature to comprise half Hungary. Lobkowitz reveled in the thought of the many heads that would have to be taken off, and not less delighted was he at the prospect of the rich estates that would have to be confiscated.

About 300 nobles were apprehended and thrown into dungeons. The leaders were brought to trial, and finally executed. The magnates who thus perished on the scaffold were nearly all Romanists, and had been the most furious persecutors of the Protestant Church of their native land; but their deaths only opened wider the door for the Austrian Government to come in and crush Hungarian Protestantism.

Hardly had the scaffolds of the magnates been taken down when the storm burst afresh (1671) upon the Protestants of Hungary. The Archbishop of Gran – the ecclesiastic with the barbarous name Szeleptsenyi – accompanied by other bishops, and attended by a large following of Jesuits and dragoons, passed, like a desolating tempest, over the land, seizing churches and schools, breaking open their doors, re-consecrating them, painting red crosses upon their pillars, installing the priests in the manses and livings, banishing pastors and teachers, and if the least opposition was offered to these tyrannical proceedings, those from whom it came were east into prison, and sometimes hanged or impaled alive.

Cities and counties which the activity of Archbishop Szeleptsenyi, vast as it was, failed to overtake, were visited by other bishops, attended by a body of wild Croats. Colleges were dismantled, and the students dispersed: in the royal cities all Protestant councilors were deposed, and Papists appointed in their room; the citizens were disarmed, the walls of towns leveled, the pastors prohibited, under pain of death, performing any official act; and whenever this violence was met by the least resistance, it was made a pretext for hanging, or breaking on the wheel, or otherwise maltreating

and murdering the Protestant citizens.[2]

One of the most painful of these many tragic scenes, was the execution of an old disciple of eighty-four. Nicholas Drabik, or Drabicius, was a native of Moravia, and one of the United Brethren. Altogether unlettered, he knew only the Bohemian tongue. He had fled from the persecution in Moravia in 1629, and had since earned a scanty living by dealing in woolen goods. He had cheered his age and poverty with the hope of returning one day to his native land. He published a book, entitled Light out of Darkness, which seems to have been another "Prophet's Roll," every page of it being laden with lamentations and woes, and with prophecies of evil against "the cruel and perjured" House of Austria, which he designated the House of Ahab. Against Papists in general he foretold a speedy and utter desolation.[3]

The old man was put into a cart and brought to Presburg, where Szeleptsenyi had opened his court. Unable, through infirmity of body, to stand, Drabicius was permitted to sit on the floor. If the judge was lacking in dignity, the prisoner was nearly as much so in respect; but it was hard to feel reverence for such a tribunal. The interrogatives and replies give us a glimpse into the age and the court.

"Are you the false prophet?" asked the archbishop. – "I am not," replied Drabicius.

"Are you the author of the book Light out of Darkness?" – "I am," said the prisoner.

"By whose orders and for what purpose did you write that book?" asked Szeleptsenyi. – "At the command of the Holy Spirit," answered Drabicius.

"You lie," said the archbishop; "the book is from the devil." – " In this you lie," rejoined the prisoner, with the air of one who had no care of consequences.

“What is your belief?” asked the judge. — The prisoner in reply repeated the whole Athanasian Creed; then, addressing Szeleptsenyi, he asked him, “What do you believe?”

“I believe all that,” replied the archbishop, “and a great deal more which is also necessary.” — “You don’t believe any such thing,” said Drabicius; “you believe in your cows, and horses, and estates.”

Sentence was now pronounced. His right hand was to be cut off. His tongue was to be taken out and nailed to a post. He was to be beheaded; and his book, together with his body, was to be burned in the market-place. All this was to be done upon him on the 16th of July, 1671.

The Jesuits now came round him. One of them wormed himself into his confidence, mainly by the promise that if he would abjure his Protestantism he would be set at liberty, and carried back to his native Moravia, there to die in peace. He who had been invincible before the terrible Szeleptsenyi was vanquished by the soft arts of the Jesuits. Left of God for a moment, he gave his adherence to the Roman creed. When he saw he had been deceived, he was filled with horror at his vile and cowardly act, and exclaimed that he would die in the faith in which he had lived. When the day came Drabicius endured with firmness his horrible sentence.

The extirpation of Protestantism in Hungary was proceeding at a rapid rate, but not sufficiently rapid to satisfy the vast desires of Szeleptsenyi and his coadjutors. The king, at a single stroke, had abolished all the ancient charters of the kingdom, declaring that henceforth but one law, his own good pleasure, should rule in Hungary. Over the now extinct charters, and the slaughtered bodies of the magnates, the Jesuits had marched in, and were appropriating churches by the score, banishing pastors by the dozen, dismantling towns, plundering, hanging, and impaling. But one great comprehensive measure was yet needed to consummate the work. That measure

was the banishment of all the pastors and teachers from the kingdom. This was now resolved on; but it was judged wise to begin with a small number, and if the government were successful with these, it would next proceed to its ulterior and final measure.

The Archbishop of Gran summoned (25th September, 1673), before his vice-regal court in Presburg, thirty-three of the Protestant pastors from Lower Hungary. They obeyed the citation, although they viewed themselves as in no way bound, by the laws of the land, to submit to a spiritual court, and especially one composed of judges all of whom were their deadly enemies. Besides a number of paltry and ridiculous charges, the indictment laid at their door the whole guilt of the late rebellion, which notoriously had been contrived and carried out by the Popish magnates.

To be placed at such a bar was but the inevitable prelude to being found guilty and condemned. The awards of torture, beheading, and banishment were distributed among the thirty-three pastors. But their persecutors, instead of carrying out the sentences, judged that their perversion would serve their ends better than their execution, and that it was subtler policy to present Protestantism as a cowardly rather than as an heroic thing.

After manifold annoyances and cajolerys, one minister apostatized to Rome, the rest signed a partial confession of guilt and had their lives spared. But their act covered them with disgrace in the eyes of their flocks, and their cowardice tended greatly to weaken and demoralize their brethren throughout Hungary, to whom the attentions of the Jesuits were next directed.

A second summons was issued by the Archbishop of Gran on the 16th of January, 1674. Szeleptsenyi was getting old, and was in haste to finish his work, “as if,” say the chroniclers, “the words of our Lord at the Last Supper had been addressed

to him – 'What thou doest, do quickly.'" The archbishop had spread his net wide indeed this time. All the Protestant clergy of Hungary, even those in the provinces subject to the Sultan, had he cited to his bar. The old charge was foisted up – file rebellion, namely, for which the Popish nobles had already been condemned and executed. If these pastors and schoolmasters were indeed the authors of the insurrection, the proof would have been easy, for the thing had not been done in a corner; but nothing was adduced in support of the charge that deserved the name of proof. But if the evidence was light, not so was the judgment. The tribunal pronounced for doom beheading, confiscation, infamy, and outlawry.

The number on whom this condemnation fell was about 400. Again the counsel of the Jesuits was to kill their character and spare their lives, and in this way to inflict the deadliest wound on the cause which these men represented. To shed their blood was but to sow the seed of new confessors, whereas as dishonored men, or even as silent men, they might be left with perfect safety to live in their native land. This advice was again approved, and every art was set to work to seduce them. Three courses were open to the Protestant ministers. They might voluntarily exile themselves: this would so far answer the ends of their persecutors, inasmuch as it would remove them from the country. Or, they might resign their office, and remain in Hungary: this would make them equally dead to the Protestant Church, and would disgrace them in the eyes of their people. Or, retaining their office, they might remain and seize every opportunity of preaching to their former flocks, in spite of the sentence of death suspended above their heads. Of these 400, or thereabouts, 236 ministers signed their resignation, and although they acquired thereby a right to remain in Hungary, the majority went into exile.[4] The rest, thinking it not the part of faithful shepherds to flee, neither resigned their office nor withdrew into banishment, but remained in spite of many threatenings and much ill-usage. To the tyranny of the Government the pastors

opposed an attitude of passive resistance.

The next attempt of their persecutors was to terrify them.[5] They were divided into small parties, put into carts, and distributed amongst the various fortresses and goals of the country, the darkest and filthiest cells being selected for their imprisonment. Every method that could be devised was taken to annoy and torment them. They were treated worse than the greatest criminals in the gaols into which they were cast. They were fed on coarse bread and water. They were loaded with chains; nor was any respect had, in this particular, to difference of strength or of age – the irons of the old being just as heavy as those of the young and the able-bodied.

The most disgusting offices of the prison they were obliged to perform. In winter, during the intense frosts,[6] they were required to clear away with their naked hands the ice and snow. To see their friends, or to receive the smallest assistance from any one in alleviation of their sufferings, was a solace strictly denied them. To unite together in singing a psalm, or in offering a prayer, was absolutely forbidden. Some of them were shut up with thieves and murderers, and not only had they to endure their mockeries when they bent the knee to pray, but they were compelled to listen to their foul and often blasphemous talk. Their sufferings grew at last to such a pitch that they most earnestly wished that their persecutors would lead them forth to a scaffold or to a stake. But the Jesuits had doomed them to a more cruel because a more lingering martyrdom. Seeing their emaciation and despondency, their enemies redoubled their efforts to induce them to abjure. Not a few of them, unable longer to endure their torments, yielded, and renounced their faith, but others continued to bear up under their frightful sufferings.

On the 18th of March, 1675, a little troop of emaciated beings was seen to issue from a secret gateway of the fortress of Komorn. An escort of 400 horsemen and as many foot closed

round them and led them away. This sorrowful band was composed of the confessors who had remained faithful, and were now beginning their journey to the galleys of Naples. They were conducted by a circuitous route through Moravia to Leopoldstadt, where their brethren, who had been shut up in that fortress, were brought out to join. them in the same doleful pilgrimage. They embraced each other and wept.

This remnant of the once numerous clergy of the Protestant Church of Hungary now began their march from the dungeons of their own land to the galleys of a foreign shore. They walked two and two, the right foot of the one chained to the left ankle of the other. Their daily provision was a quarter of a pound of biscuit, a glass of water, and at times a small piece of cheese. They slept in stables at night. At last they arrived at Trieste. Here the buttons were cut off their coats, their beards shaved off, their heads dipped close, and altogether they were so metamorphosed that they could not recognize one another save by the voice.[7]

So exhausted were they from insufficiency of food, and heavy irons, that four of the number died in prison at Trieste, two others died afterwards on the road, and many fell sick. On the journey to Naples, one of the survivors, Gregory Hely, became unfit to walk, and was mounted on an ass. Unable through weakness to keep his seat, he fell to the ground and died on the spot. The escort did not halt, they dug no Gave: leaving him lying unburied on the road, they held on their way. Three succeeded in making their escape, and be one of these, George Lanyi, who afterwards wrote a narrative of his own and his companions' sufferings, we are indebted for our knowledge of the particulars of their journey.

Of the forty-one who had set out from Leopoldstadt, dragging their chains, and superfluously guarded by 800 men-at-arms, only thirty entered the gates of Naples. This was the end of their journey, but not of their misery. Sold to the galley-masters for fifty Spanish piastres a-piece, they were taken on

board their several boats, chained to the bench, and, in company with the malefactors and convicts with which the Neapolitan capital abounds, they were compelled to work at the our, exposed to the burning sun by day, and the bitter winds which, descending from the frozen summits of the Apennines, often sweep over the bay when the sun is below the horizon.

Another little band of eighteen, gleaned from the gaols of Sarvar, Kupuvar, and Eberhard, began their journey to the galleys of Naples on the 1st of July of the same year. To recount their sufferings by the way would be to rehearse the same unspeakably doleful tale we have already told. The sun, the air, the mountains, what were they to men who only longed for death? Their eyes grew dark, their teeth fell out, and though still alive, their bodies were decaying. On the road, ten of these miserable men, succumbing to their load of woe, and not well knowing what they did, yielded to the entreaties of their guard, and professed to embrace the faith of Rome. Three died on the way, and their fellow-sufferers being permitted to scoop out a grave, they were laid in it, and the 88th Psalm was sung over their lonely resting-place.

Meanwhile, the story of their sufferings was spreading over Europe. Princes and statesmen, touched by their melancholy fate, had begun to take an interest in them, and were exerting themselves to obtain their release.[8] Representations were made in their behalf to the Imperial Court at Vienna, and also to the Government of Naples. These appeals were met with explanations, excuses, and delays. The Hungarian pastern still continued fix their chains. The hopes of their deliverance were becoming faint when, on the 12th of December, the Dutch fleet sailed into the Bay of Naples. The vice-admiral, John de Staen, stepped on shore, and waiting on the crown-regent with the proof of the innocence of the prisoners in his hand, he begged their release. He was told that they would be set at liberty in three days. Overjoyed, the vice-admiral sent to the galleys to announce to the captives their approaching

discharge, and then set sail for Sicily, whither he was called by the war with France. The Dutch fleet being gone, the promise of the crown-regent was forgotten. The third day came and went, and the prisoners were still sighing in their fetters; but there was One who heard their groans, and had numbered and finished the days of their captivity.

Again the Dutch ships were seen in the offing. Ploughing the bay, and sweeping past Capri, the fleet held on its course till it cast anchor before the city, and lay with its guns looking at the castle and palace of St. Elmo. It was Admiral de Ruyter himself. He had been commanded by the States-General of Holland to take up the case of the prisoners. De Ruyter sent the Dutch ambassador to tell the king why he was now in Neapolitan waters. The king quickly comprehended the admiral's message, and made haste to renew the promise that the Hungarian prisoners should be given up; and again the good news was published in the galleys. But liberty's cup was to be dashed from the lips of the poor prisoners yet again. The urgency of affairs called the admiral instantly to weigh anchor and set sail, and with the retreating forms of his ships the fetters clasped themselves once more round the limbs of the captives. But De Ruyter had not gone far when he was met by orders to delay his departure from Naples. Putting about helm he sailed up the bay, and finding how matters stood with the prisoners, and not troubling himself to wait a second time on the Neapolitan authorities, he sent his officers aboard the galleys, with instructions to set free the prisoners; and the pastors, like men who walk in their sleep, arose and followed their liberators. On the 11th of February, 1676, they quitted the galleys, singing the 46th, the 114th, and the 125th Psalms.

"Putting their lives in their hands, there were a few pastors who either had not been summoned to Presburg, or who had not gone; and in lonely glens, in woods and mountains wild, in ruined castles and morasses inaccessible except to the

initiated, these men resided and preached the Gospel to the faithful who were scattered over the land. From the dark cavern, scantily lighted, arose the, psalm of praise sung to those wild melodies which to this day thrill the heart of the worshipper. From lips pale and trembling with disease, arising from a life spent in constant fear and danger, the consolations of the Gospel were proclaimed to the dying. The Lord's Supper was administered; fathers held up their infants to be devoted in baptism to Him for whom they themselves were willing to lay down their lives; and amid the tears which oppression wrung from them, they joined their hands and looked up to Him who bottles up the tears, and looked forward to a better land beyond the grave."[9]

During the subsequent reigns of Joseph I, Charles VI, Maria Theresa, and Joseph II, down to 1800, the Protestant Church of Hungary continued to drag out a struggling existence. Brief intervals of toleration came to vary her long and dark night of persecution. The ceaseless object of attack on the part of the Jesuits, her privileges continued to be curtailed, her numbers to decrease, and her spiritual life and power to decay, till at last the name of Protestant almost perished from the land.

FOOTNOTES

VOLUME THIRD

BOOK TWENTIETH

VOLUME THIRD- BOOK TWENTIETH- CHAPTER 1
[1] History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, compiled from original and authentic Documents. Translated by the Reverend Dr. Craig, Hamburg; with Preface by Dr. Merle D'Aubigne. Page 33. Lond., 1854.
[2] Secret History of the Austrian Government, compiled from Official Documents, by Alfred Michiels. Page 91. Lond., 1859.
[3] Baronius, Annal., art. 4, ann. 1525.

[4] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 40.
[5] See ante, vol. 1., book 10., chap. 23.
[6] Michiels, Secret Hist., p. 92.
[7] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, pp. 50, 51.
[8] The Spanish Hunt, a rare book, gives a full account of this discussion. See also Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, pp. 53-57.
[9] The Spanish Hunt.

VOLUME THIRD- BOOK TWENTIETH- CHAPTER 2
[1] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 51.
[2] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 60.
[3] Lampe, lib. 2., anno 1545, p. 93; Traj. Rhen., 1728. Ribini, Memorabilia, p. 67.
[4] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 67.
[5] The Palatine was the officer appointed by the Diet to execute its decrees when not in session. He was for the time chief administrator.
[6] Hist. Prot. Ch. in Hungary, p. 69. Lampe, lib. 2., p. 99.
[7] Scaricaus, Vita Szegedini. — Hist Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 64.
[8] Ribini, Memorabilia, 1., p. 78. Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, pp. 65, 66.
[9] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 73.

VOLUME THIRD- BOOK TWENTIETH- CHAPTER 3
[1] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, chap. 16, pp. 100, 101.
[2] Alfred Michiels.
[3] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, chap. 4, pp. 140, 142.
[4] Veshe, Geschichte des Oesterreichischen Hofes, vol 4., p. 71. Michiels, Secret Hist., p. 104.
[5] For text of the ambassador's speech see Cornelius, Historia Hungarica; and Maelath, Geschichte der Magyren, vol. 5., p. 161. Michiels, Secret Hist., p. 102.
[6] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, chap. 6, p. 150.

VOLUME THIRD- BOOK TWENTIETH- CHAPTER 4
[1] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria et

Transylvania, anno. 1664, pp. 392, 393.
[2] Carlyle calls him "The solemn little Herr in red stockings." (History of Frederick the Great, People's Ed., vol. 2., p. 67.)
[3] Michiels, Secret Hist., p. 107.
[4] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria et Transylvania, p. 427.
[5] Mica Bury MS., apud Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, pp. 174, 175.
[6] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, pp. 172, 173.
[7] Joann. Bethlen Con. Ejus Aetatis 1670.
[8] Fessler, vol. 9., p. 110 — apud Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 178.

VOLUME THIRD- BOOK TWENTIETH- CHAPTER 5
[1] Michiels, Secret Hist., p. 115.
[2] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria et Transylvania, p. 427; Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1728. — A full account of these transactions will be found in a work by Stephen Pilarik, entitled Curru Jehovae Mirabili. See also Fesseler, vol. 9., pp. 223, 228; as also Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, chap. 11.
[3] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria et Transylvania, pp. 444, 445. — The book translated out of the original Bohemian into Latin, by John Amos Comenius, was published at Amsterdam, 1665, under the title, Lux e Tenebris novis radiis aucta.
[4] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 207.
[5] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria, etc., p. 445.
[6] A Hungarian winter is often from 40 degrees to 60 degrees F. below the freezing-point.
[7] George Lanyi, Captivitas Papistica — apud Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, p. 213.
[8] Frid. Adolph. Lampe, Hist. Eccles. Reform. in Hungaria, etc., lib. 2., ann. 1676.
[9] Hist. Prot. Church in Hungary, chap. 15, p. 220.