

will be glad *for us*, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Yea, in regions, which prophetic ken could never discern, far beyond even the fabled Atlantis, the Islands of the Blessed, shall streams break out and waters in the desert. Over those wide and beautiful vallies, no lion shall be found, no ravenous beast shall walk there, but from their peaceful and happy bosom, the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy on their heads.

ARTICLE III.

TRIAL AND MARTYRDOM OF JEROME OF PRAGUE.

A Letter from Poggio Bracciolini to his friend Leonardo Aretino, giving an account of the trial and martyrdom of Jerome of Prague.

Translated by Rev. Oliver A. Taylor, Manchester, Mass.

INTRODUCTION.

MILNER in his Church History, giving an account of the trial and martyrdom of Jerome of Prague, remarks that "Poggius, a celebrated Florentine, who had been the secretary of John XXIII, and was present at these scenes, has left the most unequivocal testimony to the abilities, fortitude and eloquence of Jerome." This testimony is contained in a letter of Poggio to his friend Aretino; and here follows. I became interested in it, several years since, while engaged in literary labors; and supposing others might also find it equally interesting, have here attempted to give it in an English dress. It is to be found in the "Historia et Mon. Joannis Hus atque Hieronymi Pragensis," Ed. Norimb. 1715, Tom. II. p. 532. It derives its value, not so much from the fullness of the account, as the fact that, while it was written by an adversary and may be relied on as true, it gives us a glowing description of the manner in which this holy martyr, through the grace which God conferred upon him, was enabled to stand up bold before his enemies, and faithfully to hold out to the end. In order to be fully appreciated, it should be read in connection with some account of the trials and sufferings of Jerome, drawn out more at large, either that of Milner, or else the one to be found in Fox's Book of Martyrs, in some of its forms.

It may, however, be premised, in this place, that Jerome was not only a man of great natural abilities, but that he had been honored as among the most learned men of his age. He received his first impulse as a reformer, it should seem, from reading the works of Wickliffe, while at Oxford, about the close of the 14th century; soon after which he returned to his native place, and connected himself with John Huss and his associates, in earnest efforts for restraining the despotism of the papal court, and reforming the licentiousness of the clergy. Of an ardent temperament and a bold, independent address which did not often stoop to conciliate, he soon became suspected of heresy; and upon his removal to Vienna, he was thrown into prison, on account of his opinions,—a confinement from which he was delivered, in consequence of the solicitation of the university of Prague. As soon as he heard, in the year 1415, that his friend John Huss was at Constance ready to appear before the council, he pathetically exhorted him to maintain a firm and unyielding temper in his great trial, and strenuously insist upon the necessity of a reformation among the clergy, assuring him, at the same time, that, if he should receive information that his adversaries were likely to overpower him, he would immediately repair to Constance, to aid him in his defence. Having privately visited Constance, and in vain made the attempt, he set out on his return to Bohemia. On this journey at the village of the Black Forest he accidentally fell in with some priests, to whom, in a warm and unguarded conversation he denounced the council of Constance, as “the school of the devil and a synagogue of iniquity.” This language being carried to the ears of the magistrates, he was arrested and delivered into the hands of the duke of Sultzbach, who was ordered to send him to Constance. On his way thither, he was met by the elector-palatine, who conducted him in triumph to the town, himself riding on horseback, with a numerous retinue; leading Jerome after him, in fetters, by a long chain. As soon as he was brought before the council, the clamor against him became loud and tumultuous,—John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, one of the most learned men of his time, taking an active part, and the rectors of the universities of Cologne and Heidelberg concurring therein; while Jerome had no opportunity to reply. A thousand voices burst out from every quarter, “Away with him! Burn him! Burn him.” After an interval of about half an hour, the tumult having partly subsided, Jerome availed himself of a momentary pause, and looking round

upon the assembly with a noble air, cried out aloud, "Since nothing can satisfy you but my blood, God's will be done." From the assembly he was carried into a dungeon, and placed in one of its cells under a guard. While here, a certain Bohemian, having found out where he was, ran up to the window and addressed him aloud in these words, "Be of good courage, Jerome; and remain steadfast,—never fearing to die for the sake of that truth, in defence of which thou hast said so many things, when thou wert in the enjoyment of freedom." "I give thee thanks, brother," replied the intrepid prisoner, directing his eyes to the window from which the voice proceeded, "for thy kind office in deigning to comfort an abject man. That I fear not death, you know; as in times past we have often conversed together on that subject; but now the time has come to try the thing itself, which is the hardest part of the matter." The Bohemian who thus spoke, was Maddonwitz,¹ who had rendered services to Huss. The guard became alarmed at his voice, and immediately drove him away from the windows. In like manner, a person named Vitus, one of the family of John de Chlum, was seized and severely reprimanded for addressing Jerome in a friendly salutation. These incidents were made a pretence for a more severe treatment of Jerome; for he was immediately conveyed to a strong tower, where, with his hands tied behind his neck, and his feet confined in the stocks, so that he could not lie down, he was kept for many days on bread and water. These severities were inflicted with the design of forcing him to a recantation; and the illness which they occasioned, afforded a favorable opportunity for pressing him with arguments to this effect. Still he remained immovable. In the meantime Huss was burnt, when another similar attempt was made with no better success. However, though he was not to be subdued by the simple fear of death; imprisonment, chains, hunger, sickness, and even torture, through a succession of many months, united with strong importunities, became too great a trial for human nature to bear. Three times was he brought before his council and carried back to his dungeon before his enemies could prevail against him. At length he began to waver; and, on the 23d of September, a fatal day, on which he ever afterwards reflected with the deepest sorrow, he signed a written recantation of all the opinions he had maintained, in such words as the council had dictated,

¹ So Rees. He is called Peter in another account before me.

denouncing therein Wickliffe and Huss as heretics, expressing his entire consent to the death of the latter, and declaring himself, in every article, a firm believer in all the tenets of the Romish church; while he called down the vengeance of the council and of eternal fire on his head, should he ever swerve from this recantation.

Having thus acted against his conscience, he retired from the council with a heavy heart. His chains, indeed, were taken away, but the load was transferred from his body to his mind. Vain were the caresses of those about him; they only mocked his sorrow. Being returned to his prison again, it became indeed a gloomier place than ever before, notwithstanding his greater freedom. The anguish of his own thoughts made it such. Paletz and Du Cassis,¹ the chief managers against him, soon perceived this change; and they determined to bring him to a new trial. Several persons, however, and particularly the cardinals of Cambray and Florence, objected; but their endeavors were ineffectual; a torrent of zeal and bigotry bore down all opposition; and even the learned Gerson again disgraced himself by joining in the tumultuous clamor,—with great indecency, employing his pen as well as his tongue, upon this occasion. This kind of agitation continued for about half a year, before Jerome was again called before the council; some of the preachers, in the meantime, making a great show of reforming the church, and preaching against some of the vices of the clergy, while they acknowledged and extolled the purity and power of the pope. At length, they actually proceeded to examine Jerome again on the same articles on which he had previously been tried, others having been collected together against him in Bohemia, by certain Carmelite friars, who made themselves very active in the case, and now for the first time, brought them forward, until the whole number amounted to 107. Then it was that this great man, whom a long series of affliction and cruel persecution, and, above all, the consciousness of his late prevarication had brought to the lowest distress, began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius and eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages. He refused to make any reply in his prison, demanding a public audience, before which, he said he wished to express his final thoughts. At length, on the 25th of May, A. D. 1416, he was again brought be-

¹ So Rees. In Latin, Michael de Caussis.

fore the council, in the great cathedral church;¹ and here it is, that the following account of Poggio begins.

It may here be further added, that both Poggio and Aretino were natives of the Florentine republic; and, not only intimate friends, but eminent among the revivers of literature in Italy, during the 14th and 15th centuries. Both of them were members of the Catholic church, and enjoyed excellent opportunities for becoming acquainted with the secret springs of its action. Poggio himself was born in 1380; and after having held the office of apostolic secretary under several pontiffs, and published a great variety of works, some of them quite popular in their day, died at last, chancellor of Florence, in 1459. There are two other accounts of this trial, more at large, in the works of Huss, the one called "Narratio de M. Hieronymo Pragensi;" and the other, "Alia de eodem Narratio," from which, in connection with Rees and Milner, the preceding particulars, with a few notes, have been chiefly drawn.—Tr.

Poggio's account of the Trial and Martyrdom of Jerome of Prague.

From the baths,² when I had been there some time, I wrote a letter to our Nicholas, which I suppose you will read. Having thence returned to Constance,—soon afterwards the cause of Jerome, publicly arraigned as an heretic, was taken up. Of this cause, in part for the graveness of the matter, but more particularly in consideration of the learning and eloquence of the man, I have resolved to give you some account. I confess that I have never seen any one, who, in pleading, especially in a capital offence, approached nearer the eloquence of the ancients, whom we so greatly admire. It was so amazing to see with what fluency of language, what force of expression, what arguments, what looks and tones of voice, with what eloquence, he answered his adversaries and finally closed his defence. It was impossible not to feel grieved, that so noble, so transcendent a genius had turned aside to heretical studies, if indeed the charges brought against him are true. This, however, in a cause of such magnitude, is not for me to determine. I acquiesce in the opin-

¹ Ad majorem ecclesiam cathedralem.

² The baths here referred to, were those of Baden, to which Poggio made an excursion in the spring of 1416.

ions of those who are regarded as wise. Nor must you suppose that I report to you the trial as orators do, entering into each particular. This would be a long task, and require many days. I shall touch only upon some remarkable passages, which will enable you to obtain a clear view of the genius and attainments of the man.

As many things had been collected together against this Jerome, by which to prove him guilty, and these things had been affirmed by witnesses, it was at length determined that he should publicly reply to each thing that had been objected against him. Having been brought forth into the assembly and had commands laid on him to this effect, he for a long time refused, asserting "that they ought to permit him to defend his own course, before he replied to the maledictions of his enemies. He ought to be heard," he affirmed, "in his own defence, and then he should come naturally to reply to the wicked things which his opponents had heaped together against him."

When he found himself denied this condition, he arose in the midst of the assembly and said :

"What iniquity is this! For three hundred and forty days have I lain in your most rigorous prisons, in dirt, in nastiness, in dung, in fetters, in want of all things, and yet to my enemies and slanderers you have allowed the fullest scope of accusation, while to me you deny the least opportunity of defence! Not for a single hour will you hear me. To them the ears of every one of you have been open all this time, and you have allowed yourselves to be persuaded that I am a heretic, an enemy of the faith, and a persecutor of the priesthood; but to me no opportunity can be given of making a defence. You have adjudged me a wicked man in your minds, before it was possible for you to find out what I was. Were you gods, of perpetual duration,—but you are not! You are men,—and mortal, liable to err, exposed to fall,—and may be blinded, deceived, seduced. You sit here as the lights of the world, and are called the wise men of the earth. So much the more does it become you to beware lest you do any thing rashly or against the demands of justice. For myself, indeed, poor caitiff that I am, whose life is now at stake,—a mortal at the best,—I speak not these things; but it seems to me unworthy of wisdom, that so many men, should determine any thing against me, contrary to equity, which might prove injurious, not so much in this particular case, as by the dangerous precedent it would furnish."

These and many other things he spoke with great eloquence,—his discourse being interrupted, as he proceeded, by numerous murmurs and groans. At length it was decreed that he should first reply to the charges brought against him; when such permission to speak would be given as might seem best. Accordingly the heads of his accusation were each one read over from the pulpit and then confirmed by testimony, when he was asked whether he had anything to object. It is incredible with what shrewdness he replied, with what arguments he defended himself. He brought forward nothing at any time, unworthy a good man; so that if the sentiments of his faith corresponded to what he professed in words, there was not only no just cause of death to be found in him, but not even an occasion of the least offence. He pronounced all the crimes alleged against him false, the fictions alone of his adversaries.

When that part of his indictment was read in which he is accused of being "a defamer of the papal dignity, an opposer of the Roman pontiff, an enemy of the cardinals, a persecutor of the prelates and clergy, and a despiser of the Christian religion," he arose, and with outstretched hands and with lamenting tones, exclaimed: "Whither now, conscript Fathers, shall I turn myself? Whose aid can I implore? Whom supplicate, whom entreat for help? Shall I turn to you? Your minds have been fatally alienated from me by my persecutors, when they pronounced me an enemy of all mankind, even of those by whom I am to be judged. They supposed, should the accusations which they had conjured up against me, seem trivial,—you would, by your decisions, not fail to crush the common enemy and opposer of all,—such as I had been held up to view, in their false representations. If, therefore, you rely upon their words there is no longer any ground for me to hope."

Some of them he wrung hard by the sallies of his wit; while others he overwhelmed with biting sarcasms; and from many, even in the midst of sadness, he forced frequent smiles, by the ridicule which he heaped upon their accusations.

When asked what he thought of the sacrament, he replied: "At first it is bread; afterwards, the true body of Christ," and so on, according to the faith. Some one then remarking, "it is reported that you have said it remains bread after the consecration," he replied: "with the baker it remains bread."¹ To one of the

¹ Some one then said to him, Jerome, "There is a very general report that

Dominicans or preaching friars, inveighing bitterly against him, he said: "Hold thy tongue, thou hypocrite." To another, taking an oath against him, by his conscience, he said, "This is the secur-est way of deceiving." One of the chief of his adversaries, he never addressed, except to call him a *dog* or an *ass*. As the trial could not be brought to a close in one day, on account of the number and weight of the accusations alleged against him, it was postponed to the third. On this day, after the heads of the several accusations had been read over, and established by numerous witnesses, he arose and said: "Since you have given such careful attention to my adversaries, it is proper also that you should lend an impartial ear to me." Much noisy opposition was made to his request; but at length, notwithstanding, he received liberty of speech.

He began with earnestly entreating God for grace so to govern his heart and lips that he might advance nothing but what should conduce to the benefit and salvation of his soul. He thus proceeded to say, "I am not ignorant, reverend doctors, that many most excellent men have suffered things unworthy their virtues, overwhelmed by false witnesses, and altogether iniquitously condemned." In confirmation of this, he began with instancing Socrates as one who had been unjustly condemned by his countrymen, and refused to make his escape from prison and death, those terrors of the human family, even when it was in his power to do so; and then he adduced the captivity of Plato; the flight of Anaxagoras; and the torments of Zeno, relating also many other cases of such unjust condemnations, from among the gentiles, as the exile of Rupilius, the unworthy death of Boethius and others, as Boethius himself has recorded them.

Having done this, he passed on to examples from among the Hebrews. And first he said that Moses, that liberator and law-giver of the Jews, was often calumniated by his own people and represented as a contemner and seducer of the nation. He then told how Joseph, sold by his brethren through envy, was after-

you consider it as bread upon the altar, and hold to this belief; to which he pleasantly replied, "I believe indeed that it is bread with the baker, but not in the sacrament of the altar." "Aha," rejoined one of the preaching friars; "so then you trifle with that which no one calls in question." This petulance Jerome put down, by saying, "Hold thy tongue, monk, thou hypocrite," which he did accordingly. Another one crying out in a stentorian voice, "I swear by conscience, that what thou deniest is true," he replied, "so ho, thus to swear by conscience is the secur-est way of deceiving." Thus in one way or another, were all compelled to be silent.—"*Narratio alia*," etc.

wards thrown into prison on account of a suspicion of having committed adultery; and went on to say that, in addition to these, Isaiah, Daniel, and nearly all the prophets, had been treated as despisers of God, as full of seditious purposes; and had been encompassed on all sides with iniquitous opinions. Here also he added the false sentence which had been pronounced against Susanna; and spoke also of many others, who notwithstanding they had stood forth as the holiest of men, fell victims at last to unjust decisions. Then adverting to John the Baptist, and to our Saviour, he said, "that they were condemned by false witnesses, is a thing manifest to all." He then brought forward the case of Stephen slain by the college of priests; and showed how all the apostles had been condemned to death, not as good men, but as those who excited the people to sedition, treated God with contempt, and were constantly engaged in wicked works. "That one priest," said he, "should be condemned by another unjustly, is an abomination;" and he taught that this had been done by a council of priests, in a most iniquitous manner; he showed that even this very thing had happened. These things he discoursed with elegance—the attention of all who heard him being greatly excited.

As the entire merits of the case were inherent in the testimony, he showed, in various ways, "that no confidence was to be placed in the witnesses;" and especially so, since everything they uttered, had proceeded, not from the truth, but from malevolence, envy and hatred. He thus gave such an explication of the "causes of this hatred," as came but little short of persuasion. They seemed so probable, that, (the cause of the confidence excepted,) but little reliance could be placed on their testimony. The minds of all were greatly moved in his behalf and strongly inclined to mercy; especially as he proceeded to tell them that he had "come to the council of his own free will," in order to clear up his character; and laid open before them his course of life and his studies, all which had been filled up with duties and adorned with virtue;—declaring at the same time, that "it was a custom among the most learned and the holiest of the ancients, so to manage their difference of opinion in matters of faith," as not only not to employ it for the destruction of the faith itself, but even to make use of it as the means of discovering the truth; while he quoted "Augustine and Jerome" as instances of those who had thus disagreed,—the one holding opinions not only dif-

ferent from, but even contrary to the other; and that too, without incurring even so much as the suspicion of heresy.

All were expecting he would clear up his character at once, by retracting the things which had been objected against him, and asking pardon for his errors; but, instead of this, he asserted that "he had not erred;" and showed that he had not the "least disposition to retract the false crimes which others had laid to his charge." At length, launching out in praise of John Huss who had been condemned to the fire, he pronounced him a good, just, and holy man, altogether unworthy of such a death,—adding that he was also prepared to undergo, with fortitude and constancy, any punishment whatsoever, yielding himself up to his enemies and the impudent lying witnesses, "who would, at length, have to give an account of all they had uttered, before God, whom they could not possibly deceive." Great was the grief of all that stood around him. There was a universal desire among them to save so noble a personage, could his own consent be obtained. Persevering, however, in his opinions, he seemed voluntarily to seek death; and, continuing his praise of John Huss, he declared that man had never conceived any hostility to the church of God; but that it was to the abuses of the clergy, and the pride, pageantry and insolence of her prelates alone he felt opposed; for, since the patrimony of the church was due, in the first place, to her poor; then to her guests; and finally to her own workshops; it seemed to that good man, a shameful thing, to have it expended upon courtezans and in banquets; for the sustenance of horses and dogs, the adornment of garments and other things unworthy the religion of Christ.¹

Most exalted was the genius of which he showed himself pos-

¹ "He then extolled the character and piety of John Huss, asserting that he had known him from his youth; and that he had neither been a fornicator, nor a drinker, nor otherwise addicted to crime; but a chaste and sober, as well as upright and just preacher of the holy gospel; adding, that his faith was the same catholic faith as was that of Wickliffe and Huss; and that he held and would hold, firmly and irrevocably, even to death, to the same opinions against the abuses, enormities and pageantry of the prelates; while he averred that, of all his sins, none had ever occasioned him such remorse of conscience as the one which he had committed in that pestilential cathedral, when, in his recantation, he had unjustly spoken against that good and holy man and his doctrines, and especially when he had assented to his condemnation; and, in conclusion, he solemnly declared, that he entirely revoked the recantation, which through pusillanimity of mind and fear of death, had been made by him in the aforesaid accursed place."—*Narration*, etc.

sessed! Often was he interrupted in his discourse by various noises; and greatly vexed by those who carped at his opinions; yet he left none of them untouched, but equally avenging himself upon all, he either covered them with confusion, or else compelled them to hold their peace. A murmur arising against him, he paused for a moment; and then, having admonished the crowd, proceeded with his defence,—praying and beseeching them to suffer one to speak whom they would soon hear no more. At none of the noise and commotion around him did he tremble, or lose, for a single instant, the firmness and the intrepidity of his mind.

Admirable indeed was the proof he gave of a comprehensive and tenacious memory! For three hundred and forty days had he lain at the bottom of a dark and fetid tower, of the severity of which treatment he himself complained, asserting, that he did not groan, as it became a firm and good man not to do,—on account of the indignities which he suffered, but he was filled with amazement on account of the inhumanity exhibited towards him,—in a place in which he was neither permitted to read, nor even so much as to see,—to say nothing of that anxiety of mind, with which it was natural for him to be daily agitated,—enough of itself alone to put all recollection to flight; and yet even under these unfavorable circumstances, such was the number of the wisest and most learned men whom he adduced in favor of his opinions, as well as of ecclesiastical doctors whom he brought forward in confirmation of the sentiments to which he held, that it would have not only been enough, but more than enough, to occupy the whole of this time, had he enjoyed the greatest leisure and tranquillity, and been altogether given up to the studies of wisdom. His voice was sweet, open and sonorous,—marked with great dignity; and his manner oratorical,—fit either for exciting indignation, or moving to compassion; which, however, he neither asked for, nor desired to obtain. He stood undaunted and intrepid,—not merely contemning death, but coveting it,—so that you would have pronounced him another Cato. A man worthy to be held in eternal remembrance of the human family! If he maintained any opinion contrary to the institutes of the church, in that I praise him not. I admire his learning, his varied and extensive knowledge, his eloquence, his suavity of speech and the acuteness of his replies; but I fear lest all these things may have been conceded to him by nature only for his destruction.

In the end, there was allowed him the space of two days for

repentance. During this time, there came to him many of the most learned men, in order to draw him off from his opinions; and, among others, the cardinal of Florence visited him,—endeavoring to bring him over to the right way. As, however, he continued, pertinaciously to hold on to his errors, he was condemned by the council for heresy, and committed to the flames.¹ With a pleasant countenance and a gladsome look, he approached the closing scene. He neither shrank from the fire, nor trembled in view of its torment, or the mode of his death. No Stoic ever suffered death with that constancy of mind and fortitude with which he seems to have sought it.

Having arrived at the place of execution, he stripped himself of his garments. Then falling upon his knees in adoration, he embraced the stake to which he was afterwards bound,²—being

¹ On the last day of his life, when he was finally brought forth into the same cathedral church, to be condemned, he was again exhorted to recant what he had said in praise of Wickliffe and Huss; but he utterly refused, fearlessly re-affirming it all, with additions. "In the presence of God and this audience," said he, "I most solemnly affirm and declare that I believe in and hold to all the articles of faith, just as does the holy Catholic church herself; while at the same time I profess to you, that I ought to be condemned, because I did not refuse to give you my assent to the condemnation of those holy men just named, whom you have iniquitously condemned, because in some things they denounced the practices of your lives." The bishop of Lodi then preached a sermon from these words: "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart;" in which he exhorted the prisoner not to show himself incorrigible as he had hitherto done, and highly extolled the lenity and generosity with which he had been treated by the council. Nor did Jerome allow this to pass by in silence. Among other eloquent things which he uttered, turning to his judges, he said: "You will condemn me iniquitously and unjustly, and when I am dead, I shall leave remorse in your consciences and a dagger in your hearts; and soon, within a hundred years,—you will all have to answer me, in the presence of a Judge most high and perfectly just." After having been condemned, and delivered over to the civil power, he was attired as Huss had been, with a large long cap of paper, on which were painted devils, and thus led to execution. When it was brought to him, he threw down his own cap, in the midst of the prelates and took it, saying: "Our Lord, when about to suffer death for me a miserable sinner, had a crown of thorns put upon his head. Most gladly, instead thereof, will I, out of my love to him, wear such a cap as this." On his way from the cathedral to the place of execution, he repeated the apostles' creed, "credo in unum Deum," chanting it with a loud voice through the whole, as is done in the church, elevating at the same time, his eyes to heaven, and exhibiting great animation. He then chanted the whole of the litany; which being brought to a close just as they were going out of the city gate which leads to Gothleben (Gottlieben?) he chanted the words, "Felix namque ea sacra virgo, etc. (*Narratio, Milner, etc.*)

² The post to which he was chained was hewn and ornamented into a ridi-

fast strained up to it naked; first, with wet cords and then a chain; when wood, not in small size, but large sticks, was heaped up around him as high as his breast,—layers of straw being interposed. When the torch was applied, he began to sing some hymn,¹ which the smoke and fire scarcely interrupted. Of the constancy of his mind, he gave the highest indication, in this,—that when the executioner was going to set the pile on fire behind his back, in order that he might not see it done, he cried out to him, saying, “come here and kindle it before my eyes; for had I been afraid of it, I should never have come to this place,—having had opportunity to escape.”²

In this way was consumed a man of excellence beyond belief. I saw his end, and looked on every part of the scene. Whether perfidy or pertinacity have done the work, certainly, out of the school of philosophy, you would have given a description of the man’s death. My narrative has been drawn out to considerable length, for neither did Mutius suffer his limb to be burnt with such unshrinking boldness as this man did his whole body; nor did Socrates himself drink the poison with such a readiness as he actually gave himself up to the flames; but of all this enough³

culous figure and likeness of John Huss; and the spot where he was burnt was the very same on which this martyr had suffered before him.

¹ While they were piling up the wood around him, he began to sing: “*Salva, festa dies, etc.*” Having finished this hymn, he repeated, as he had done before, with a loud voice, “*credo in unum Deum,*” chanting it through. He then turned to the people and addressing them in the German language, said, “My dear children, as you have now heard me sing, thus, and not otherwise, do I believe; and that is my creed. And now I am to suffer death, because I would not agree and act with the council in regard to John Huss, holding and maintaining with them that he was righteously and justly condemned,—which I could not do; as I had known him to be a true preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

² After the wood had been piled up around him nearly to the top of his head, all his garments were laid upon it. When the fire was beginning to burn, he repeated with a loud voice, “*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum;*” Ps. 31: 5. When the fire began to take hold of him with a raging heat, he was heard to say, in the common Bohemian tongue, “Lord God, Father omnipotent, have mercy on me, and pardon my sins;” adding soon after, “for thou knowest how sincerely I have loved thy truth.” His voice was then suffocated by the vehemence of the fire, and nothing further could be heard,—only there was a constant motion with his mouth and lips, as if he were intensely engaged in repeating something, and in prayer. The flames, having burnt all around him and consumed even his beard, were suddenly parted asunder by the intensity of the heat and the wind, leaving his body exposed to view, all covered with large blisters, a dreadful spectacle to behold.

³ When the body of Jerome had thus been consumed, all his miserable ef-

Forgive my verbosity, if I have been too long. The affair itself demanded a much more extended narration ; but I was unwilling to be too loquacious. Farewell, my dear Leonard. Written at Constance, May the thirtieth, the day on which this Jerome made expiation for his heresy. Continue to love me ; farewell.

ARTICLE IV.

NEW PLATONISM.

A translation of the 15th Book of Constant Du Polythéisme Romain.

THE last sect of which the history of ancient Philosophy makes mention, sought to satisfy the desire of the human mind for unity, without rejecting the reminiscences of Polytheism. It was the last effort of the human mind not to reject all that it had believed, while it attained at the same time what it had need of believing. This sect has been unfairly judged by the most opposite parties. The Christians have decried them as the defenders of Polytheism ; while the unbelievers of modern times, seeing in them enthusiasts and fanatics, have taken occasion from them to declaim against enthusiasm and fanaticism. We agree with Christians, that the New Platonists had the misfortune to defend some of the forms of a religion, not susceptible of being defended ; and with unbelievers, that they threw themselves into a system of exaltation and ecstasy which made them visionaries. But neither of the above parties has sufficiently examined how far the mistakes and excesses of this sect were the natural result of their situation and an inevitable error of the human mind, at a time when the absence of all belief had abandoned it to the agitation and pain of a religious sentiment condemned to vagueness, and blindly seeking a form in which it might rest. Both parties, who have judged it, have constantly considered this sect with reference to what existed before it, and not as the effect of a universal tendency towards something which was about to exist. It has been reproached with obstinately maintaining, by

facts,—his sleeping rugs, cloak, boots, cap, and other things,—were brought forth out of the prison, and committed to the fire ; after which the dust and ashes that remained were carried away in a cart and thrown into the Rhine.