From a Terrace in Prague



F. W. Bain

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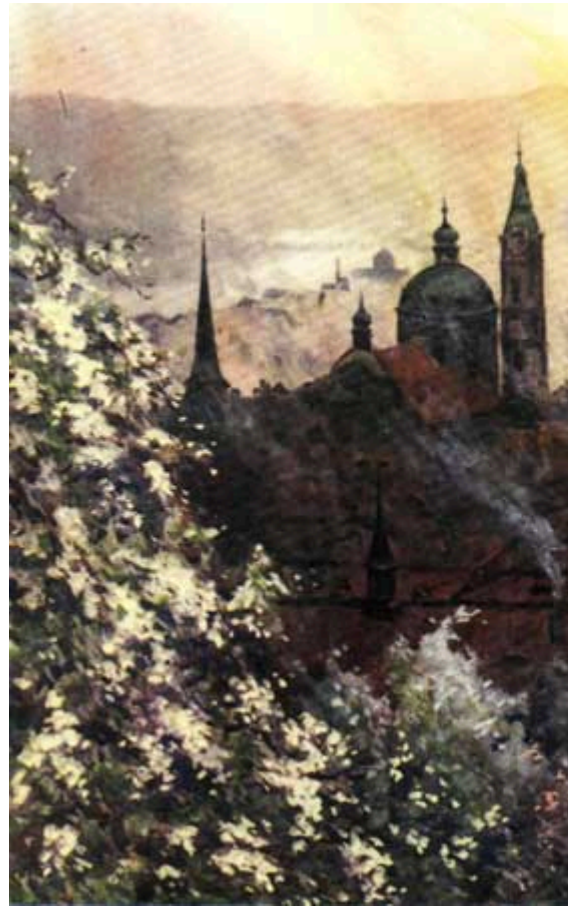
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THE

FROM A TERRACE

IN PRAGUE

BY

Lieut.-Col. B. GRANVILLE BAKER, D.S.O., F.R.G.S.

WITH 36 ILLUSTRATIONS AND ONE MAP

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**THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED TO
A WISE AND GENTLE LADY WHO
LOOKS OUT UPON LIFE
FROM A TERRACE**

PREFACE

There are many excuses for the writing of books, and sometimes there may even be sufficient reason. I offer no excuses, but will give what reasons I have for committing to paper these my reflections or meditations inspired by the sight of a fine old capital city as seen from a Terrace in Prague.

The first reason I wish to give may be altruistic, namely, that finding so many of my race quite ignorant of Prague and all that city stands for right down the ages, I feel compelled to add my mite to what has already been written about the subject.

My second reason, a strong one with me, arises out of my inability to enjoy things of beauty and interest without letting my friends know about them. This may be a weak and selfish reason, but there it is.

The third reason rests on my intense desire that you should come out here, to Prague, even to the terrace of my choice, and look at the scene through my eyes while I would endeavour to see it through yours. This, I admit, is undiluted selfishness on my part.

While awaiting you, I am preparing, by means of this work, to introduce you to a goodly throng of those who know or knew this city and loved it well. Perhaps they may admit me to their round table as the last to arrive, and the least. In any case, I owe them a debt of gratitude for their help in becoming acquainted with Prague and the deeper meaning of this glorious city. There are many such kindly helpers: there was Cosmas Pragensis the chronicler, Palacky the historian, there was Count Lützow, whose works on Prague, as on his native country, are inspired by intense love of them, and illumined by transparent honesty. There are others still among us and doing useful work. A walk with Dr. Jeřabek in

the gardens of Waldstein's palace, a talk with Professor Škola, and many other good friends of mine in Prague, have made a pleasure of this work I have undertaken. Out of sheer joy in the things I have seen and heard, and the kindly spirit that informed those who helped me, have I written and illustrated this book *From a Terrace in Prague*.

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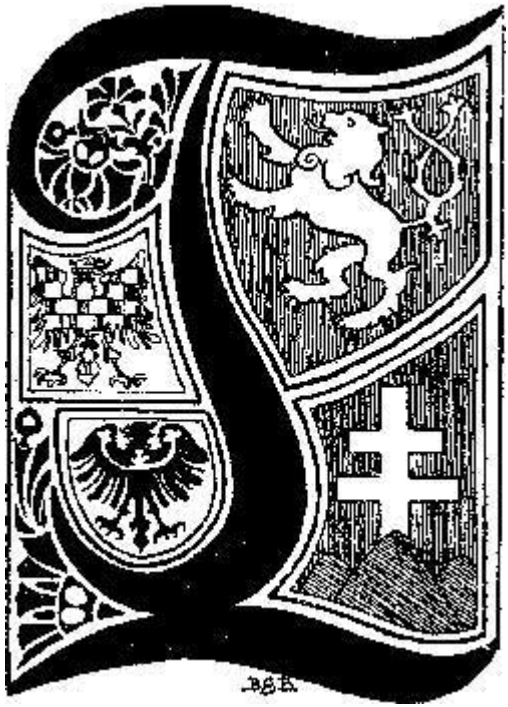
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CHAPTER I

Refers in a general way to several great and historic cities of this earth. Indicates the routes by which Prague may be reached by the traveller from the West, tells a wayside

story or two and mentions several very great people, also others of a less degree. Digresses seriously from the purpose of the whole book by raking up the author's personal recollections of people that lived and events that happened right away back in the last century, and far away in the East.

The author then formally introduces a friend, the ancient and venerable City of Prague.



HE Psalmist once declared in a burst of enthusiasm, no doubt justified, that "Jerusalem is a city that is at unity in itself." This remark applies with equal right to other great historic cities, as who can deny it that

has stood in the "Place de l'Opéra" and felt that Paris is indeed at unity in itself?... Or who that has looked upon Constantinople rising out of the pearly depths of the Sea of Marmora will fail to realize that the city of Constantine, despite its many vicissitudes, was indeed a united whole fulfilling its sometime tragic destiny in the history of mankind?

Lisbon, mirrored in the broad waters of the Tagus, is another such city, and so, in yet more marked degree, is Prague. The Psalmist, in poetic exuberance, may appear to have overstated the case, allowance must be made for him, but in the main he was right. The city of Zion had grown up at the feet of the temple of David, and its massive strength impressed the poet who overlooked the bickerings, the quarrels, of the "dwellers therein"; he knew his city was the centre of his race, for "thither the tribes go up," and he took in only the big enduring things; he held the key to the soul of the city.

Let us, then, approach the city of Prague in the right manner, prepared to enter into the spirit of the place, to realize what it stands for, what it has always stood for since those dim days when legend and history entwined.

It is said that "all roads lead to Rome"; as many lead to Prague, as a glance at the map will show. There are first of all those oldest of roads—the waterways —along which moved wandering tribes in quest of betterment and adventure. Two of these waterways meet just above Prague, the Vltava and Berounka; they open out from the wooded heights of the Bohemian Forest, the former river leading up towards a pass in those heights over which you descend to the Danube near Linz, the latter showing

the way into the heart of Bohemia from the west from Bavaria. It was by the latter route probably that the Boievari, a Celtic tribe, made their way after a short stay in Bohemia, to settle in the land that is called after them, Bavaria.

Bavarians, who had become thoroughly Germanized, and many other Teutons, frequently found their way into Bohemia by this route, notably in the fifteenth century, when a vast unwieldy army called up by Rome and led by an English Cardinal, tried conclusions with a nation in arms inspired by religious fervour and led by Žiška the Hussite, and was beaten ignominiously.

All along this route are landmarks of a history which tells of the attraction that Prague exercised on the rulers and people of neighbouring countries.

So Eger and Pilsen tell of the horrors of the War of Thirty Years, for which a Bohemian nobleman was largely responsible. Of him and his doings more hereafter. Eger, by the way is now called Cheb, a guttural *Ch* which is a difficult sound to begin a word with, but you have got to do it if you wish to be considered up to date. The Czech language is difficult to pronounce, a fact of which the Czechs seem rather proud. Pilsen, which is known to us chiefly (and rightly) for its good beer, is now spelt Plzen; this, however, makes little difference to the pronunciation, and happily none at all to the quality of the beer. The Czechs are just a bit sparing of vowels; they prefer a good fat cluster of consonants, as, for instance, in Vltava, Brno, and other such pretty names, but then you simply insert an indefinite sound here and there between the spiky consonants, and all is well; anyone who knows

Hindustani or Arabic will find it quite easy. After all, if the Czechs prefer their language that way it is their concern, as long as they do not expect the world outside Bohemia to learn it.



View larger image

Another fine broad road leading to Prague is the Elbe, into which flows the Vltava, some thirty miles north of the capital. No doubt the Elbe was the road by which the Slavonic tribes poured into present-day Germany what time all Central Europe was swarming with migrant peoples moving westward under pressure from the East.

That a great part of Germany as we know it now was formerly inhabited by Slavs seems beyond doubt; such names as Berlin, Stettin, Strelitz, Rostock, have a distinct Slavonic ring.

Remains of primitive Slavonic culture have been dug up on the islands in the Baltic Sea and even as far west as Hanover; remains of an identical culture have been found as far east as the Volga, so the Slavs have been widely spread out over Europe in earliest days. The expansion of Slavs so far to westward may have been due to the fact that Wittekind, King of the Saxons, called Slavonic tribes to his aid against the Franks.

Charlemagne and his Franks must have been rather a nuisance to their neighbours. Charles had a mission in life, and people thus afflicted are apt to be tiresome. We are taught to number him among the truly great and good men, but he lived and laboured long ago; moreover, we are not a cheery lot of heathen living happy and unwashed in the depths of primeval forests, so our judgment is warped. As to Charles's goodness, I heard some story about his offering to marry an Empress of the East while his first wife was still alive, not, it appears, from any ardent devotion to the lady—I do not believe he ever met her—but simply from the sordid motive of adding another empire to his business. However, I am no scandal-monger, and all the parties concerned have been dead some time.

Charles must have been rather a prig. He was evidently, immensely pleased with his own little bit of book-learning; he even insisted on talking and writing Latin—pure "swank"—whereas his family would surely have preferred their native Frankish. Worse still, Charles had an obsession, that of a Holy Roman Empire, with himself as head and the Pope as an "also ran," and this obsession led to endless trouble—trouble which is not over yet. Charles also had no sense of humour, or he would have made

friends with the Slavs instead of fighting them. Men with a "mission in life" rarely have the "saving gift," and so they cause endless trouble; Charles did.

He hammered the Saxons into Christianity: they were Teutons and could stand it. He tried the same on the Slavs, but force was not the right method in their case. Charles could not see this, and went on killing Slavs, handing over their property to Teuton knights. This method, and especially its results, appealed strongly to Charles's successor, who continued to hack the way of Christianity through Slavonic tribes until eventually the latter were completely subjugated in all the German-speaking countries of to-day. It took a long time to do this, for there is a deal of resilience in the Slav, and his soul remains his own even under much persecution. The Slavs were heavily handicapped too; they were broken up into numerous little tribes and clans, and seldom became united under the leadership of a strong man of their own race. They had no spiritual head who would take responsibility for any crime as long as it was atoned for by a corresponding number of heathen converted or killed. The pagan Slav would not just push his bit of piety on to the priest before dashing into the fray; he had to propitiate various jealous deities in person, not by proxy. This must have been anxious work and a waste of time to boot. Then again, both sides were capable and frequently guilty of abominable treachery, with the difference that the Christian Teuton betrayed his enemy only, which was counted unto him for righteousness, whereas the Slav was inclined to sell his own cause, only to be "let down" by the Teuton in the end. The Slavs were also prone to fight among themselves in their spare time; there has been no marked improvement on either side for the last ten centuries or so; however,

the history of other nations and races tends to prove that neither Slav nor Teuton are unique in this respect.

Anyway, the "Holy Roman Empire," describing itself as of German nationality, spread out over Central Europe, absorbing one Slavonic tribe after another until there remained as the most western of them only the Czechs of Bohemia as a coherent body, their national life centred on Prague.

However, we are still on the way to Prague up the valley of the Elbe, an interesting route, as it takes you by Dresden, rich in art treasures and still renowned for its music.

The best time of year to travel by this route is the season when the fruit trees are in blossom. Then the valley of the Elbe is a mass of white and pale green set against a background of yellow sandstone rocks and the sombre greens and purples of pine forests. It is not so very long ago since this district of Saxony formed part of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and many names familiar to travellers in these parts recall memories of Slavonic inhabitants—Blasewitz, Loschwitz, Pilnitz, whither the royal family of Wettin, another Slavonic name, was wont to retire for the summer months. The Wettins have now retired from business as monarchs, and their former subjects are following the prevailing fashion of submission to democratic rule tempered by an occasional diversion in the form of an attempted local counter-revolution. These movements are generally innocuous; they sometimes add to the gaiety of nations by the sheer imbecility of their

inception and attempted execution, and they appear to be welcome rather than otherwise, as a means of distracting public attention from the universal muddle and general misguidance of European affairs, to those who consider themselves called upon and qualified to set those affairs right.

You may also approach Prague via Vienna; in former days you were encouraged by Austrian propaganda to do so, and this in order to emphasize the fact that you were expected to regard Prague as a quaint little provincial town lying on the road to nowhere in particular. The hand of the Habsburg lay heavy on Prague, and all the glory of great possessions had to be concentrated on Vienna.

We are still on the road to Prague, which has come into its own at last, whereas the glory of Vienna has departed. You wind up to the Bohemian Forest through lovely scenery, where the grey ramparts of Eggenburg look out over the blue distances, across the uplands of Bohemia, passing Tabor dreaming yet of stirring days of religious strife, its towers mirrored in the waters of Jordan, and onward till a wide curve brings the first sight of the towers and spires of "Zlata Praha," Golden Prague.

The usual travelling Westerner prefers the shortest and most convenient route to Prague, namely, via Paris. You may get right through from London to Prague in thirty-six hours if you just skirt round Paris by the *ceinture*, but a right-minded wayfarer, who should never hurry, will not miss an opportunity of taking the tonic of a few days in the "Ville Lumière." If he be a true wayfarer—that means not only an

enterprising traveller but also given to contemplation —he will bestow some thought on the geographical position respectively of Paris and his destination, Prague, which should help him to enter into the spirit of those two cities; but of this more hereafter.

When the wayfarer does tear himself away from Paris he should travel by the *train de luxe*, which lands him, without the trouble of changing, in Prague at a reasonably early hour of the evening. This route is interesting in itself, as it leads through many notable places, Château Thierry, with its grim reminders of the Great War, Nancy, and Strasbourg restored to France. Then on to Stuttgart, the capital of a small but healthy German Republic, formerly the Kingdom of Würtemberg; there has been no exaggerated display of republican fervour here in this clean and proper capital, and a crown still tops the coat of arms of a line of rulers, on the former royal palace. You cross the fertile country of Franconia, a wide curve gives you a fine view of Nuremberg, and then you ascend towards the pass that divides the Ore Mountains from the Bohemian Forest. There are quaint old towns growing out of crumbling battlements perched on rocks, towns of soft-sounding South German names breathing history of long ago. There is, for instance, Waiblingen, a very ordinary-looking wayside station, yet what memories does that name recall! Memories of Hohenstaufen Emperors, Fredericks and Conrads, down to the last and luckless Conradin, memories of faction fights between the city republics of Italy, within the walls of those cities, between Guelph and Ghibelline, Welf and Waiblingen. This country Bavaria was also at one time the home of the Welfs; they were a strong, determined race, and spent much time and energy in vigorous opposition to Holy Roman Emperors,

possibly as men of common sense they considered the whole prevailing idea of empire rather nonsensical; they were eventually banished to the country about Hanover and Brunswick, where they flourished by virtue of their forceful character—and we Britons have reason to be grateful that it was so.

We move along to Eger or Cheb, where we find a last reminder of the Hohenstaufen in the ruins of a castle and a round two-storied chapel built by Frederick Barbarossa.

During the summer season a through coach from Paris is detached at Eger, whence it is taken to Carlsbad, whither go those who have occasion to repent them of the evil they have wrought in themselves by self-indulgence; there they fast and prepare for the next season of overeating, among peculiarly beautiful surroundings.

From Eger onwards we pass out of the zone of German predominance and into the ancient land of Bohemia, over wooded heights and broad fertile fields, past Marienbad, beloved of our King Edward, and where are also many who love his memory, past Pilsen, and winding along a clear river, the Berounka, its banks crowned here and there by castles and chapels, each with a story all its own yet part of the life of the people of Bohemia, until a sharp curve brings you to the meeting of the waters of Berounka and Vltava within hail of Prague.

You should travel to Prague when the days are long, so you will be rewarded by a very fair view as the train crosses the placid River Vltava. Out of a shadowy mass of grey houses with tiled roofs, divided by the glittering, winding river, rises the Castle of Prague, a massive building crowned by a

church of which the soaring spires, pinnacles, and flying buttresses *s'accusent* against the western sky. The train then plunges you into a tunnel, a long tunnel taken slowly, where you may reflect on the vision you have seen, the vision of another city "that is at unity in itself."

You have had your first glimpse of Prague, and it was beautiful, so you set about endeavouring to enter into the spirit of the place, to absorb its atmosphere and to study its character. For every ancient city that has stood up against adversity and overcome it has a very definite character of its own. And it is a mysterious, wonderful thing this character, this *cachet* of a great city; the charm of Paris or the grandeur of London, the glittering stillness of Venice or the insistent glory of eternal Rome.

The character of a city, as is that of man, is formed by experience, chiefly adverse, and is made evident by the work the city has done for humanity, its creator and its care. From the study of a city's character may you look into its future and presage whether it be likely to achieve success or doomed to failure. For there have been failures among cities as among men, some pathetic owing to inherent weakness, others as a consequence of their own misdeeds.

Contrast Constantinople with Eternal Rome. Constantinople, with its pathetic remains of greatness, failed to remain "at unity in itself"; ancient Byzantium the "Guardian of the Gate" against the invading Oriental, lived to see its churches turned into mosques, below which lie, broken and untended, the porphyry monuments of Paleologue and

Cantacuzene.

What of things beautiful was spared wandered to Rome, whence from the crumbling remnants of an old civilization came the light of the Renaissance that spread over Western Europe.

Most pathetic of all cities that have failed is Amarapura, not so long ago the capital of Burma, and a flourishing city on the banks of the Irrawaddy, placed indeed in the most appropriate position for its former purpose.

But a new King came who was not content with the capital of his fathers, so he ordered its removal. A sycophantic priesthood was loud in prophecies of the great future of the new capital to be built some few miles away, but Mandalay is this day the provincial centre of the government of a race alien to those who founded the city; the race of Kings, the last scion of which abandoned the city of his fathers, is all but extinct, and Amarapura has returned to the jungle from which it rose.

Now this, I admit, appears to have nothing to do with the city of Prague; it is indeed a far stretch of vision from "a Terrace in Prague" to the banks of the Irrawaddy.

Nevertheless, memories of far-off days in Burma came surging up one day as I sat on my terrace reading a newspaper printed and published in the city that lay shrouded in historic mist below. The paper brought news of an old acquaintance, not exactly a close, not even a bowing acquaintance, for we were generally kept apart by force of circumstances (which he might have controlled) at a distance of about a rifle-shot. This acquaintance was

one Wun Thu, a son of Thebaw, last of the Burman Kings.

Wun Thu objected strongly to British rule, and emphasized his objection by making trouble with his bands of patriots, whom we called dacoits, robbers.

Even my peaceable occupation of surveying the land met with obstruction on the part of Wun Thu, and led to a frequent exchange of perfectly harmless rifle-shots. And here in Prague, looking down over my newspaper from the terrace of my choice, I seemed to see the spires of the city mass closer together and take on the form of giant jungle trees, the broad Vltava to shrink to the narrow silver thread of a mountain stream at the crossing of which Wun Thu's sporting warriors had levelled their blunderbusses lashed to trees and warranted harmless to all but the men behind them; the paper told of another rising led by Wun Thu. Wun Thu had lain "doggo" for many years—at least he had done nothing to attract the attention of Central Europe—yet here he was, a man of my age and on the downward slope, following the post-war instinct of making trouble—for himself chiefly, as his attempt failed. I feel sorry for my old acquaintance; like so many of us of a former generation, he no longer fits into the picture; he is probably too honest to succeed under present-day conditions. However, Wun Thu has been banished to Ceylon, and I am still writing about Prague. Even in this I am last and, I willingly admit, least of a goodly company.

First in time of this goodly company is Cosmas of Prague, who wrote his chronicles early in the twelfth century. There are yet earlier German chronicles which make mention of the Bohemians, but the city

of Prague was not in the days in which they were written. Those German chronicles suggest that the Bohemians who came into their land some time in the sixth century were at one time tributary to the Avari, an Asiatic tribe which had taken possession of the greater part of present-day Hungary, and were rather a nuisance to Western Europe.

It will be remembered that Charlemagne had forceful argument with these Avari; it had something to do with that worthy's trip to visit the Empress of the East; there was a squabble about fares, river dues and such matters. However, this is *vieux jeu*, and has nothing to do with Prague. The Avari were devoted to the time-honoured practice of robbing and ravishing their neighbours, among them the Bohemians. These latter seem to have borrowed one Samo the Frank, a strong man, from one of the northern Slavonic tribes, and as he proved a success, invited him to be King over them.

Samo accepted the invitation, and is said to have founded the first great Slavonic State with Bohemia as nucleus and a strong castle at Vyšehrad, of which we shall have more to tell hereafter. The neighbouring Franks became uneasy at Samo's increasing importance, and under Dagobert, their King, invaded Bohemia, to be badly beaten at Wogastisburg, which, according to Count Lützow, was near the present town of Cheb. Samo extended his territory after this victory, and appears to have lived till about the middle of the seventh century.

There ensues a complete lapse in the chronicling of the history of Bohemia until Cosmas took up the tale.

Having no historical records of events since the days of Samo, he drew upon a rich store of legend which,

coloured by his lively imagination, forms a glowing and vivid background to the story of this interesting and attractive branch of the great Slavonic race, I am not competing with Cosmas. Bohemia has produced many chroniclers and historians since his day, men whose soul was filled with pride and love of race, whose mind was bent on giving to the world truthfully recorded history, men whose imagination nurtured on lovely legends, on great traditions amid the beauties of one of Europe's fairest countries, found expression in works of lasting worth: I need only mention such names as Palacky, Tomek, and Lützow among many.

Of strangers who have been charmed to pertinent utterance by the glory and beauty of Prague there is an imposing array. In the fifteenth century Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, came this way, and described Prague as the "Queen of Towns." Then Goethe, whose glowing pen could add colour to the vibrant beauty of Italian landscape, writes of Prague as "der Mauerkrone der Erde kostbarste Stein." We will interpret this, as it is no longer the fashion to understand German, especially in Prague: "the most precious jewel in the mural crown of this earth." Another German, Alexander von Humboldt, gives to Prague fourth place among the world's "cities beautiful."

Rodin considered Prague as the "Rome of the North," a comparison that seems rather trite at first, but those who feel the meaning of this city will understand and appreciate the French sculptor's judgment. Prague has, at least superficially, one quality in common with Rome; in your wanderings in either city you may come suddenly upon something of beauty so stupendous as to take your

breath away.

Other French visitors of importance show a tendency to dwell upon the character of the Bohemians in general rather than on the beauty of their capital. With keen perception they draw the deeper meaning from out the stones of Prague; thus in the fifties of the last century writes Viollet-le-Duc, "Prague est une capitale dans laquelle on sent la puissance d'un grand peuple," and Massieu de Clerval is yet more emphatic: "si un pays peut se vanter d'une nationalité indestructible c'est à coup sûr la Bohème.—Une nation qui a passé par de pareilles epreuves ne perira, elle a vaincu la mort."

We must not overlook yet another visitor to Prague whose outlook was practical rather than romantic, Ibrahim Ibn Jacub. This Jewish trader from Arabia travelled in Bohemia some time in the tenth century, and was much struck with Prague, "a great commercial town of stone-built houses."

So we who would add a belated word of tribute to the glory of Prague the Golden find ourselves indeed in goodly company. Moreover, we live in the present, and have, as far as this book is concerned, only just arrived in Prague.

The morning sun that tips the pinnacles of the Castle of Prague with gold, that dispels the purple shadows in which the city lies shrouded, and calls forth sparkling facets on the broad river, dissipates our dreams of cities that have failed and perished. It summons us to study this ancient city, old yet ever young. Beautiful, too, in all the varying glints of light upon the spires and turrets of its hundred towers, when the morning breeze comes down-stream and rustles in the trees that deck the islands, to the

golden glory of the sunset behind the purple masses of the castle. Then a short star-lit night while Prague rests in dreams of former greatness to gain strength to face its high duties of the morrow.

Indeed, Prague is an ancient city, yet young and active and wonderfully beautiful in all its aspects.

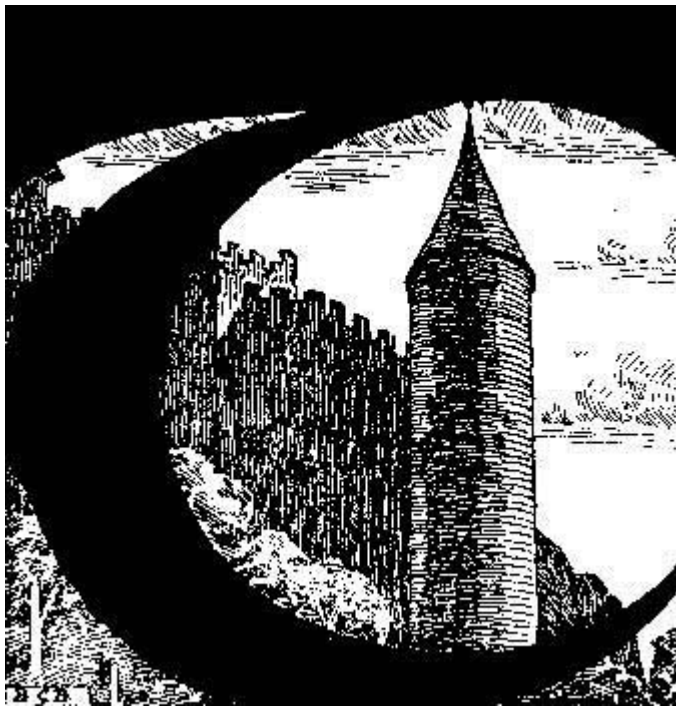
It is not my intention to conduct you round Prague, to introduce to you one by one the many features of the city, and tell you all there is to know about them. This for two excellent reasons: one, that I am far from having got to the end of such knowledge myself, the other that you may be induced to come here and find out for yourself how much of interest and of beauty lies open before you.

As in introducing a friend, I mean to state only a few salient points, to give you a hint of the city's story here and there as told by ancient buildings, as shown in public haunts or quiet nooks, hoping that in your turn you may make a friend of this venerable, this beautiful Prague.

CHAPTER II

Discusses the question of guides and guide-books, and tries to explain the author's method, or lack of it, when making himself acquainted with places of interest. Contains also remarks on terraces, which are expected

to edify. There is a good deal about the weather of Prague, about the gardens at different seasons, also an account of merrymaking in bygone days, and some reflections, in the same spirit, on present-day rejoicings.



HERE are various ways of becoming acquainted with an interesting city. Some people invest in a guide-book before starting out on the journey, others do not rest until they have bought one or more on arriving at their destination. You may notice these people studying the book on the boat perhaps, certainly in the train; they even let the book interfere

with the proper attention that is due to meals; and allow me to remark here that the wagon-lit people are very sound on the question of food.

These people are slaves to the guide-book; they leave it not, day or night, and the more methodical they are in conforming to the cramped spirit of the book, the less do they discover things by themselves. No guide-book ever can initiate you into the atmosphere of a city like Prague.

The sight of the guide-book slave "doing" an ancient and glorious city always fills me with sorrow, sometimes, indeed, with annoyance. These slaves frequently hunt in couples, male and female, sometimes with progeny at heel, and it is generally the male who discovers things—in the guide-book—and then drags the rest of his outfit in search of his discovery. As this is usually done at a reckless pace, the performance is apt to upset the repose of the inhabitants whose perambulations of their native place are in marked contrast to the silent, ruthless hurry in the streets of our large towns. The good burghers of foreign towns seem to have plenty of their own and other people's time to spare; they also possess the gift of unlimited conversational powers. I have known many a pleasant chat rudely interrupted by a group of British or American travellers who, with nose well inside a book, blue or red but obviously "guide," push their way, ruthless as Juggernaut, through bunches of inoffensive natives. There is one consolation: those slaves of the guide-book frequently miss the prettiest bits, just because they are looking into the book instead of around them.

Ask such as they about the atmosphere of some old-

world haunt, and you will probably hear complaints about the food or the service.

Some tourists aggravate their position by hiring a guide. Every city of any historic importance breeds a class of mortals that are born guides; they have come to belong to the "staffage" of picturesque surroundings; and in this respect Prague is happily yet unspoilt. The born guide, when young, is generally to be found running after you barefooted, clamouring for coppers or cigarettes. His picturesqueness is due to the fact that he does not disclose the incipient traits of villainy in his face by washing it. The adult of the species does wash his face sometimes, but he has no other virtues. The species "guide" is found in its perfection in Southern Europe. Some day I must write a book on "Guides I have Spurned"; there were many, and I have had to acquire a cursory acquaintance with several foreign languages in order to deal adequately with the spurning action which is chiefly vocal and invective. For the present I can only remember one of the many spurned ones. He had been following me about all over the ruins of a Moorish castle, and finally, breathless, came up with me by a little pile of stones leaning, with some faint attempt at symmetry, against a wall. In gusts a garlic-charged voice explained, "Zat modern. Zat rabbit-'ouse!" In his case the spurning could be done quite conveniently in English.

We cannot all afford to be original. I lay no claim to that quality for myself; my method of making the acquaintance of such an interesting old city as Prague may be that of thousands of other wayfarers. However this may be, I propose to explain my method, not necessarily in order to induce others to

adopt it, but rather because it explains the title of this work. I look upon cities, landscapes, in fact upon life in general, from a terrace—not over or through the leaves of a guide-book.

There is a deal more interest in a terrace, and you can always find one if you really want to do so, than the casual passer-by is inclined to realize. It is easy to reconstruct the scene of building up the first terrace. Some fairly primitive man had emancipated himself from the old-fashioned ancestral habit of just letting the rain wash away the hillside, and with it the family's prospects of green food for the season. Squatting outside his cave he had done some hard thinking which, transmitted into action, had led him to build up a wall here and there on the hillside, a wall of clumsy stones kept in place by stakes hammered into the ground, yet a wall, indeed a terrace, and an advance upon the methods of his neighbours whose struggles he could watch from the surer footing he himself had gained—a terrace and a point of view.

It is not suggested that the wayfarer on arriving in a strange city should make a bee-line for the nearest terrace.

There are terraces and terraces, each one with its own definable point of view, and it is this quality which should influence the traveller's choice. Prague offers considerable variety in terraces suitable to every conceivable outlook on life. You may choose a terrace that looks out over the factory quarter of Prague, over grimy Smichov for instance, and make notes on the growing industrial prosperity of the city. You will probably be smoked out of your position, for a cheap and nasty variety of brown coal is used

by local industries. If you belong to the eclectic you may be privileged to look down on Prague from a terrace with a background of diplomacy, and find the outlook somewhat limited.

Again, there are terraces where you can get beer and other refreshment. Such terraces are generally so contrived as to give you an outlook too varied to allow of concentration on the essentials of the city; the background to these terraces is generally some little building where the waiter lurks for orders. But there are other, real terraces to be found by those who search diligently and know how to discriminate, terraces with a background that has grown up with the city, that strikes no foreign note in that harmony of form and colour, of clustering red-tiled roofs surmounted by domes, towers and spires, which is Prague. Such a terrace is that from which I write. It is a real terrace, serving its original purpose in supporting a garden on a hillside. A garden carefully, fondly tended by generations of those who lived useful lives and looked out over the city from this point of view.

It is old, very old, this terrace, and it has witnessed many terrible scenes, fire and slaughter and religious strife, but it has also seen more that is ennobling and inspiring. In its strength this terrace has supported those who passed their days upon it, imbuing them, and those who live there yet, with the serenity that comes of a faith built on a sure foundation. This terrace is a bridge to the "Abiding City." It is not my intention to disclose the locality of this terrace; let every man find one to suit his own particular outlook.

Having found your terrace, settle down to a serious

contemplation of your surroundings and of the outlook before you; absorb as much as you can of the atmosphere of the place, let it sink into you. For this purpose a guide-book is not only useless, it is a let and a hindrance. After all, what does a guide-book tell you? Either it recites dry facts in an utterly soulless voice, or else, if it make any pretence at *belles-lettres*, as some of them painfully do, it goes off into sentiment and rapture before you have decided whether these be suited to the occasion. Anyway, a guide-book is the expression of some one else's opinion or experience, and as such is harmful to the soul as likely to exert undue influence.

From your terrace you take in a more or less comprehensive view of the city and its surroundings, and also form some conception of its inner meaning. Then descend from your terrace and wander at random about the streets, choosing as the more appropriate time the long twilight of a summer morning which brings the cruder modern aspect of the place into harmony with the fundamental values. Then, before she awakens to the stir and activity of everyday life, old Prague will speak to you of herself and take you into her confidence; she will tell you some startling stories, for she has a lurid past, has the city of Prague.

I do not know what was Rodin's method of appreciating Prague, but can easily imagine him looking out over the city from the terrace of his choice, looking out over Prague and recalling memories of Rome as seen from the Pincio. There are certain obvious points of resemblance. First there are several hills on which Prague is built; they are said to be seven in number, as in the case of the Eternal City. Personally I can only make out five hills, and I

have counted them carefully. It seems to be the right thing in cities of venerable antiquity to claim seven hills; to me this seems a mixture of superstition and snobbery. Prague can well afford to be original and rest content with standing on five hills. This, by the way, does not include all the suburbs which have lately been added in order to make up Greater Prague; the innovation is much too recent, and no "Terrace in Prague" can embrace a view of all the latest additions to the urban district.

Further superficial points of resemblance to Rome are the towers and cupolas that rise above a sea of houses, and the winding river; to find yet more would be a serious strain on the imagination. But there is a deeper resemblance, and this perchance is what Rodin meant when he described Prague as "the Rome of the North." I say "perchance," because Rodin never gave any closer reason for the comparison he drew, so I can only give my own personal impression of what he may have meant. There are, to my thinking, two distinct Romes as there are two distinct Pragues. The old original Rome seems to me fundamentally, gloriously, and, indeed, unblushingly pagan. All the top-hamper even of such beauty as Michel Angelo conceived does not alter this my impression. Churches arisen out of an Emperor's bath, or resting on some pagan shrine, are superimposed on Rome. Rome and all that Rome stands for down the ages is that glorious mass of ruins which cluster about the Capitoline Hill or come upon you in unexpected places. And so it is with Prague; Prague—the real Prague—is to be found in the graceful and enduring monuments erected by Kings of Bohemia in the Middle Ages; Prague of the Luxemburg monarchs, with echoes, faint yet insistent, of remoter legendary times. Over this

ancient Prague rise structures of an alien nature, *baroque* creations of the Jesuits, in spirit foreign to all that the capital of Bohemia stands for. Indeed, most of these buildings are imposing; some are beautiful, but despite the mellowing influence of time it seems as if they had not been completely merged into the soul of the city; they do not express its inner meaning unreservedly. And modern Prague is built up among and about the gracious relics of past ages; at first it appears detached, as it were hesitant between the serenity of a former golden age, the forcefulness of the Jesuit era and the vigour of modernity, but at heart it is one with the Prague of many centuries, is "at unity in itself" by virtue of reverence for noble tradition and hope for a glorious future.

"Thither the tribes go up"; indeed, they have been swarming in since Prague came into her own some few years ago and became the capital of a free and independent republic. In former years, when Prague was still accounted a small provincial town of somnolent habits, there were only two or three hotels that counted at all as accommodation for foreigners; now there are many yet inadequate to the number of visitors. As to those that are drawn to Prague, their numbers may be accounted for by the fact that most of them are native Bohemians who have business in the capital as the seat of government and also as a commercial, industrial and intellectual centre; these latter qualities attract an ever swelling stream of foreigners. To account for this I will draw a comparison all my own between Prague and Paris.

The true Parisian will probably shrug his shoulders at any idea of comparing his city with Prague; but as

he is above all a logically minded, reasoning sort of person and, moreover, courteous, he will listen to my argument, and even should he not agree, is generous enough to join me in the happy auguries for Prague which my comparison suggests.

Take a map showing the physical features of France and you will find that the capital of the country could be nowhere else but exactly on the spot where Paris stands in a fertile plain where meet a number of waterways—Seine and Marne just above the city, Oise some little way down. By these waterways and by high roads that came after, a constant stream of peoples has been swirling into France and mingling in the basin of Paris. Among these were Latins from the south coming up the valley of the Rhône and Saône, over the heights and down the Yonne to the valley of the Seine. Then came Franks through the gap of Belfort and over the hills by Nancy, down to the Marne and the Aube; Celts and Flemings from the north, and Norsemen from the west, all met and mingled with the native Gauls and eventually became Parisians. Environment acted its part, and so did the forces of Nature. The soil of the basin of Paris is fruitful, the climate equable, but neither encourage idlers; both demand a toll of strenuous labour, yet not so trying to man's strength as to leave him exhausted at the end of the day's work; he may recreate himself and bring his mind to bear on the result of his handiwork.

This made him critical, and the constant flow of foreigners brought him new ideas to test by the light of his own experience, and so Paris became, as it were, a crucible in which theories of life were tested and rendered by science into practical form.

Only the best is good enough for Paris, and this will remain the case until the disintegration of our planet; no invading hosts, be they never so numerous, nor the most fiendish inventions in modern chemistry, can alter this fact, they may beat down the superficial Paris, they cannot destroy its spirit.

To a lesser degree this is also true of Prague. As we have already seen, its geographical position marks it out as a centre where meet roads coming from all directions. This fact was not discovered at such an early period as that in which Paris arose out of the river swamps. Possibly this was due to the westward tendency of migratory races during the first centuries of our era when Teutonic tribes and Celts passed over Bohemia under pressure from the east. It is strange that the Romans did not discover the geographical advantages of the site on which Prague was founded. Roman influence began to make itself felt early in the first century of the Christian era in these parts, but the trade route which connected the Danube with the Baltic shore passed eastward of Prague, it seems via the valley of the Morava and the "Gate of Bohemia" at Nachod, through Breslau and Stettin, both, by the way, former Slavonic settlements. There are not many traces of Roman culture, and what there are seem to have been imposed on the inhabitants themselves rather than left behind by the Romans. Even Marcus Aurelius, who wrote about most things under the sun, has little to say of the country north of his stronghold at the confluence of the Danube and Morava. It was not till several centuries after the Roman Empire's glory had departed that Prague became a place of importance, and this was largely due to the Luxemburg Kings, whose introduction of French culture made of the city a centre of attraction on the

eastern marches of Europe. How and why Prague lost in importance may be gathered from its history; whether it will again gain and hold the prominent position to which it is entitled by its situation must depend entirely on the people of old Bohemia and the other countries which compose the new Czecho-Slovak Republic in general and the citizens of Prague in particular; the fortunes of their country and capital are in their own hands to make or mar. They have many points in their favour: first, a central position in a country endowed with great riches; then a sturdy, hardworking and law-abiding population; and finally a climate that neither encourages idleness nor puts too severe a strain upon man's power of endurance.

The people of Prague have their theories about the climate of their country; they maintain that it is governed by certain rules that are made to apply to Central Europe generally. Thus they will tell you that the winter is severe, that ice and snow keep the country bound for several months at a time, that spring comes swiftly but gently with the melting of the snow and the gradual breaking up of the ice-floes on the river, that then a fine summer follows, a summer hot indeed but tempered by cool breezes from the north and showers from south and west; then through a glorious autumn all russet and gold on a background of hazy blue mountains, back to a winter as in the Christmas carol about Good King Wenceslaus. All this is theory; in reality the weather here, as elsewhere, is not to be trusted, though, indeed, it is not as fickle as that of our own dear country. Still, the people cling to their theory about the climate of the country, and if perchance the theory does not fit, there is always an "oldest inhabitant" handy to declare the weather quite

exceptional. Why is it that the oldest inhabitant is invariably the greatest local liar? Is it simply a matter of long life and ripe experience?

Whatever the climate may be, whatever vagaries the weather may indulge in, the view from my terrace is always lovely, its subtle beauty ever new. If I were called upon to say which season shows ancient Prague at her best, I would say the spring time. Then the orchards on the slopes are arrayed in virgin white of pear and cherry blossom, with here and there a blush from apple-trees and a faint glimmer of delicate green against cool grey of stone walls showing among the purples of trunks and branches warming into new life under the fitful rays of April sunshine. The sunshine draws out colour from soaring spires or copper domes of churches and from the quaint towers and pinnacles of old Prague's former defences against enemies that came like storm clouds from out of the west or over the giant mountains to northward. A passing cloud throws into the shade the middle ground of grouped and red-tiled roofs overtopped by some stately church, and the terraced gardens that descend into the harmonies of deep reds and greyish purples which is the dominant note in the colour scheme of the "Mala Strana," the small side of Prague on the left bank of the river. Far beyond are the encircling heights—some wooded, others under cultivation; cloud shadows pass over them like ghosts of the tragic events that made up the history of Bohemia and its capital. But the sunshine wins over the clouds and draws out the strength and glory of Golden Prague.

Summer and autumn bring fulfilment of spring's promise of plenty, with fruit in abundance. Autumn lingers in red and yellow motley, stoutly resisting

winter's attack until boisterous winds from east and north send the last leaves shivering to the ground and spread out the city's winter garb. Then Prague assumes a severer aspect; reds and warm greys have vanished, castle, churches, palaces stand out in marked relief, their features accentuated by piled-up snow on roof and gallery and flying buttress. And seen from my terrace, Prague under snow is very beautiful.

The winter had been erratic; spells of intense cold when ice-floes piled up about the piers of the bridges, and even gave rise to anxiety concerning the safety of those structures; then mild winds from the south driving the smoke of the Smichov factories across Castle Hill. This, too, has its beauties when reluctant rays of the setting sun try to dispel it and cloak the Hradčany in a shroud of purple mist.

Winter lingered on into the beginning of the week of Resurrection. On Tuesday in Holy Week wild gusts from the north drove powdered snow in scurries across the uplands through the broad streets and into narrow alleys, where it lingered during two breathless days until with Good Friday came glorious sunshine, dispelling the last traces of winter storms.

As if to attune themselves to the change from winter's bondage to generous life, from the season of Lent to the Day of Resurrection, the people of Prague, as is their wont, called music to their aid. On Palm Sunday, as the last light of a grey day faded away, the church dedicated to Saint Henry, standing austerely apart from the traffic of the streets, was filled with the sweet sadness of Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater." From the organ-loft came the soul-searching harmony of two voices, a pure white soprano and a

rich vibrant contralto, which spread about the lofty building, penetrated to the secluded corners where the scent of incense lingers, and then seemed to lose itself in the shadowy arches of the roof, merging, as it were, into the memories of centuries of prayer and praise.

There was that feeling of impending relief from pain, then as of a healing touch when glorious sunshine ushered in Easter Sunday. Larks poured out their soul into a cloudless sky over the battlefield of the White Mountain, the pale green of larches showed up bravely among the riot of live purple and crimson and the flashing trunks of birches, over the wall that confines the park of the Star. The Star itself, that singular monument, a former hunting-box of Bohemian Kings and built in the shape of a six-pointed star, is undergoing renaissance: it is being arranged as a museum for the Czecho-Slovak legionaries. The little brook that makes such a long detour on its way to join the Vltava, passing through the rocky gorge and the winding valley of the Sharka, was very emphatic on the subject of spring's arrival, and its voice must have penetrated to secluded nooks and crannies, rousing sluggard forms of life from winter sleep. Spring was asserting itself with all the glorious certainty of youth, and was calling aloud to all and sundry to come out and witness a brave display in the many gardens of Prague.

I doubt whether any other town in Europe is so well equipped with gardens as is Prague for its size. Chiefest among these is the Stromovka, on the northern slope of the Letna Hill. Your best approach is from the direction of the castle by a broad and shady avenue which leads you first down, then up

again to a little plateau where stands a building called Zámek. This building is said to be an old hunting-box of Bohemian royalty: it certainly tries its best to look ancient, but fails to convince you. Then by shady winding ways down the slope to a broad valley deep in verdure. A little stream, which broadens into a lake, keeps up the necessary moisture, and the grass and the weeping willows in their loveliness offer it their silent thanks. The trees on the northern slope grow high: they had to do so to meet the sunshine.

There are broad, shady drives and rides, and many seats, also two restaurants, with at least one band playing heartily of an afternoon. But the beauty spot in all this loveliness is right in the centre—a rose-garden. It is no use trying to describe this rose-garden; only a poet could do that, so all I say is, Come and see for yourself.

Other public gardens I would mention, at least the larger ones—Kinský, Nebozízek, Riegrovy—but there are a number of others, smaller ones, with shady nooks and plenty of seats. These gardens are dispersed about the town in its workaday quarters; at midday—in fact, at any time of day—you may see the workers enjoying a rest and also whatever kindly fruits of the earth happen to be in season—in July your path is paved with cherry-stones.

There are rows of trees along many of the streets; there are many private gardens of palace, hospital, monastery or convent, adding the freshness of their verdure to the beauty of Prague.

No wonder, then, that with so much loveliness about them the people of Prague should be gay and intent on enjoying life amid such surroundings. On a

Sunday or feast-day you have music all round you. Look over the holiday city from your terrace, you will see happy well-dressed crowds moving to one or other place whence rise the strains of music. From one side you hear the solemn notes of the fanfarade from Libuša; a little farther away a very cheery brass band is stirring its audience with a rattling march—impossible to keep your feet still; then while the brass band pauses for breath and beer the insistent cadence of a dreamy valse floats up to meet you.

Finest of all was Stromovka. Here weeping willows trailed their weeds of daintiest green; here vigorous chestnut buds threw out their strong scent; here osier-beds were a living tangle of gold and crimson reflected brokenly in the lake where frogs made merry, the frogs being about the only wild animals left in the Stromovka. Things were very different in this park when it was known as the Thiergarten, Hortus Ferarum, as long ago as the days of King John, the knight-errant ruler of Bohemia. It appears that bison, "aurochs," were kept here, and it is recorded that the sole surviving specimen died in 1566, which fact Archduke Ferdinand, the Kaiser's lieutenant, reported to Emperor Maximilian; he was thereupon ordered to ask the Duke of Prussia to oblige with a new couple of bison.

The Stromovka was at one time described as "where the ox preaches on a sack of straw," which description was probably meant to be humorous. The connection comes about by the fact that the tailors of the town held their revels in the Thiergarten every Tuesday in Easter week, and it seems that a sack of straw was necessary to their happiness. This sack, of the finest white linen, was sewn up with great neatness and adorned with bows of ribbon, red, blue,

yellow, green and white, by the apprentices. The sack was further decorated with a design representing a lass and a lad.

There seems to have been no particular object for the sack, as it was only fastened to a pole round which danced young men and maidens. As the gay Czechs of the present day are ready to dance without any such fortuitous aid, it may be presumed that there was some meaning in the idea of carrying a sack about and then dancing round it; but the chronicler does not mention this point—he probably missed it.

Not to be outdone by the tailors, the cobblers of Prague had their day on the Wednesday after Easter, and went for their diversion in an opposite direction, namely, to Nusle, which lies tucked away behind Vyšehrad. The cobblers' feast-day was called "Fidlovatchka," which has a cheery ring, and tradition gives the following origin: The cobblers' guild had built a pair of boots, a most excellent pair of boots, for Emperor Joseph, who himself had learnt their craft. Every cobbler's apprentice in Prague had contributed of his labour to this pair of boots. In token of gratitude the Emperor had given to the guild a little tree, silver-plated, on which were displayed specimens, also in silver, of all the implements used in the cobbler's handicraft. This imperial present was displayed at the cobblers' guildhall and held in high honour.

Now as it happened the cobblers' apprentices seem to have been afflicted more than those of other guilds by the complaint called by the Germans "Blue Monday," which being interpreted meaneth "the morning after the night before." It was of necessity observed as a holiday. Masters insisted on abolishing

this holiday, apprentices insisted on its retention. The latter removed the silver-plated tree from its sanctuary and carried it, to the strains of music and with much vociferation, to a mill, now no longer, at Nusle, at which place the adventure had been planned.

Not a single apprentice was to be found in Prague: needless to say, they had the enthusiastic support and inspiring company of all the cobblers' errand-boys.

The apprentices kept up the feast for several days until their funds were exhausted; they then stripped the imperial tree of its ornaments and sold them. When they had arrived at the stage known as *au sec* they passed the time in fighting. Eventually a deputation of masters came out, a conference was held, the "Blue Monday" feast was reinstituted, and the apprentices returned to Prague, carrying, in place of the imperial tree, a maypole—premature, no doubt, but it probably best expressed their feelings.

The very learned will tell us that the maypole custom of the Prague cobblers dates back to much remoter times than those of Emperor Joseph, and may draw attention to the habit prevalent in Saxony and other neighbouring countries with an originally strongly Slav population of displaying a birch-tree at the beginning of May. The learned will then dive down into Slavonic mythology, which process to the dilettante in such matters, is like "going in off the deep end"—you never know when or where you may come up again.

At any rate, it appears that the cobblers' apprentices chose to call their maypole "Fidlovatchka," and that they carried it about on their feast-day, the

Wednesday after Easter. Tradition has it that they all smoked in turn, from a giant pipe capable of holding two pounds of tobacco. Here a fastidious chronicler draws the curtain.

The habit of the Prague apprentices in the matter of keeping the feast remains much the same to-day; moreover, it is not their exclusive right or privilege. I know few other places in the world where people are more ready to make merry on the least provocation. I do not know why this is, nor have I analysed the Czech disposition towards festivities; I do know that it is contagious. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the Church of Rome encouraged the converted Hussites to keep things merry and bright on every available saint's day so as to deaden all recollection of Hus's martyrdom, but this is a deeper matter which we will discuss later. The fact is that the Czech is by nature gay and cheerful and an expert merrymaker, as who would not be in a country like Bohemia, with its grand natural beauties, its wealth of music and poetry—and its beer?

The Government has recently abolished all holidays but a few of the very obvious ones, such as New Year's Day, Good Friday, and May Day. I do not think that this paternal decree will make the least difference to the cheery Czech; in fact, only a day or so after the decree was passed into law the event was celebrated by a very hearty tribute, lasting two days, to a national saint, followed by a day's strike organized by those who protest against all such obsolete notions as saints' days. Everyone was satisfied; everyone's opinion had been freely expressed, and everyone had enjoyed three holidays in one week, thus, by the way, exceeding the allowance for the whole year. Oh yes! the Czechs

know what they are about when it comes to merrymaking.

Such a day of merriment is March 7th, very much of a feast-day indeed—the birthday of President Masaryk. Were I a Czech or Slovak, I should celebrate right heartily at least once a week the birthday of the present President, for he is one of the few great men among the swarm that arrived at the top as a result of the World War.

CHAPTER III

Deals in order of seniority with two of the hills on which Prague stands. First in order, Vyšehrad, with its memories of Libuša and her supernatural gift. Refers also to one Přemysl, Libuša's chosen consort, and the long line of rulers his descendants. Tells of how the foundations of the Hradšany were laid according to Libuš's instructions. Tries to describe the Hradšany as seen to-day, inadequately be it admitted, but illustrations are added in order to help the reader's comprehension of this crowning glory of Prague. Tells a story or two about sentries, one of which at least is intended to thrill. There is also mention of one Czech, of his discovery of the hill Řip. This chapter shows also how by degrees the descendants of Přemysl emerged from the mist of legend

with the dawn of Christianity over these Slavonic tribes.

Duke Mnata and his wife Strzezislava flit across the stage. Then we linger on Bořivoj and note that German influence begins to make itself felt. St. Methodius is also mentioned, as is one Svatopluk, Prince of Moravia. Finally we arrive at properly authenticated Princes of Bohemia, each labelled and dated correctly, St. Wenceslaus and his brother Boleslav. Mentions also a saintly lady Ludmilla and her daughter-in-law Dragomira in vivid contrast. Family dissensions among the Přemysls which lead to such unpleasant happenings as the murder of St. Ludmilla and the consequent banishment of Dragomira by her son Wenceslaus, of whom there is so much to relate that he is worthy to open a fresh chapter.



ET us lift up our eyes unto the hills, the hills on which stands Prague, and if help do not come at once we may at least hope for inspiration; the beauty of the scene alone assures us. Look out from your terrace of a morning, a cloudless morning of early summer, and gainsay it if you can. The town is extending considerably, growing up the distant slopes on the far side of the river and trickling down into the little valleys, but the general outline of Prague is much the same as it has been for centuries; the eternal hills may be scarred and patched by us who have here no "abiding city," but they remain.

I have already mentioned the hills on which Prague was built, and had decided that they are five in

number, not seven as is popularly alleged. I have counted those hills several times over, and make their number five, and quite sufficient too; another two hills would mar the composition. At the risk of repeating myself, I maintain that Prague can well afford to be original and forgo any imitation of other cities by insisting on standing on seven hills; a truly great city should not descend to servile flattery. Paris, for example, undoubtedly a great city, is quite content to stand on two hills, Montmartre and Montparnasse, the latter quite worn flat by the levelling tendencies of modern times.

It is now time that we delved down into the history of Bohemia, and in this we gain inspiration from the hills of Prague, the works of man that crown them and the traditions, legends, shreds of history that cling to them. Of these hills that of Vyšehrad is entitled to hold seniority in the history of Prague. It takes a place somewhat akin to that held by the Capitoline Hill of Rome. It was from here that the city started, though this hill has little left of former grandeur and shows nothing to compare with Rome's monuments to a glorious past. A crumbling block of masonry, the story of which is quite unknown, a round chapel dating from the days when Christianity was young among the Slavs and still found ready martyrs in its cause even among princes, and an *enceinte* of brick fortifications, stone-faced and in Vauban's best style, battered by Frederick the Great's guns, are all that Vyšehrad has to show by way of relics of a stormy past.

Vyšehrad is about the first striking view you obtain of Prague as the *train de luxe* brings you round a bend before crossing the railway bridge over the Vltava. Travellers seeing Prague for the first time are

apt to mistake this hill of Vyšehrad for the castle. I did so myself; my delight, therefore, at the first sight of Prague's crowning glory, the Hradšany, was all the greater.

Seen against the evening sky, Vyšehrad looks very imposing; it is at its best by winter twilight, when the heavy mass is dully reflected on the surface of the frozen river. Then you may gain some idea of what this rugged promontory stands for in the life-history of a race that has passed through great tribulation. Two Gothic spires point to the skies, rising from a church which, despite its newness, seems more in accord with the spirit of Prague than do the copper domes of Jesuit structures; but then this church is built on foundations so ancient as to defy investigation by the most assiduous chroniclers. No doubt those spires are right enough in their way, but they are almost painfully modern and unromantic compared to a square bit of crumbling masonry that clings limpet-like to the crags of Vyšehrad overhanging the river at the feet of the twin church towers. For here, according to legend, is the cradle of the city of Prague. In popular parlance this bit of masonry is called Libuša's bath, and hereby hangs a tale to introduce which we must hark back some fourteen centuries.

Some time in the sixth century—nobody seems to know exactly or to care much when it was—one Czech or Czechus was wandering about this land of Bohemia with a party of friends and relatives, probably a whole tribe of them. Czech seems to have had the country to himself; if he had met any

strangers there would have been a fight, and we should have heard about it. It may therefore be assumed that the former occupants, probably lodgers only, had moved on. There was much movement going on in those early centuries of the Christian era, the main tendency being from north-east to south-west, from cold, damp and short-commons to warmth and plenty. Now we have sufficient reason to believe that Thuringians and Rugians abode for a while in Bohemia and parts of Bavaria, and Lombards in Moravia, and that these gentry, hearing of loot to be had in plenty farther south, left their temporary homes, crossed the Danube and made themselves unpopular elsewhere, leaving the lands of Bohemia and Moravia to anyone who cared to take them. This happened some time about the middle of the sixth century, which gives us something more definite to go upon as to Czech's place in time. Anyway, there were Czech, his friends and relations wandering at their own sweet pleasure over the rolling wood-clad landscape of Bohemia. On this excursion Czech espied from afar a peculiar shaped hill (not one of the hills of Prague) to which he promptly gave the appropriate name of Řip. Now this innocent-looking word is, by virtue of the sign placed over the R, pronounced in a peculiar manner; between the initial consonant and the "i" you should insert a sound somewhat like that of the French "j" as in "jamais," for instance. Heaven and the Czechs only know what meaning you would convey did you neglect this euphonious concatenation of consonants and simply say "rip"—probably something to cover the young person with confusion; but rightly pronounced, and with due regard to the soft but insistent sibilant, this mixture of sounds means—toadstool. It is all so simple when once you know:

Řip = toadstool,—and there you are. The description tallies too: the hill of Řip does look like a toadstool; I have seen it myself, and am prepared to support Czech's statement on oath. Anyway, Řip stands there still, much the same as when Czech discovered it, but for a chapel dedicated to St. George on its summit, the result of some one else's piety.

You can see Řip for miles round, as it has chosen a fairly level plain out of which to arise much like a mushroom on the lawn after a rainy night. No wonder, then, that Czech made straight for Řip, climbed to the top, looked around him, approved of what he saw, and decided to stay. He did, so did his friends and relatives and those that came after them, and no power on earth was able to shift them. The descendants of Czech are there still. One of these told me that the best and sturdiest type of Czech is bred round about Řip; he was born thereabouts himself, and should know. I am prepared to believe it anyway, as my friend is certainly of the best and sturdiest type of Czech.

That much for Czech and his descendants; we must now skip a century or two which even Cosmas of Prague was unable to fill out with legend, and return to the lady whose bath I have already referred to. Not that I believe the ruined bits of wall to have contained a lady's bathroom; I have tried to imagine Libuša using the place for the morning tub, and have failed to conjure up any picture that would carry conviction. However, I do not wish to prejudice the case; come out to Prague and judge for yourself.

Libuša was one of three sisters, daughters of Krok, Prince of Bohemia, or at least some part of it, for frontiers in those very early days were even more

elastic than those drawn by International Commissions. Anyway, there was Krok lording it over as much of Bohemia as he could control, from his fastness of Vyšehrad. Of Libuša's sisters, Kazi and Teta, nothing but their names is known even in legend; they passed into oblivion on Krok's demise, for he ordained that Libuša, his youngest daughter, should succeed him. Libuša, according to legend, was a model of all the virtues, and as in those days there was no ever-ready Press lurking to pounce on historical inaccuracies, we may accept the statement of kindly Saga.

Libuša had a rare gift, one which proved uncomfortable to other ladies of legend similarly endowed, uncomfortable both to themselves and their belongings, the gift of prophecy. She foretold the future greatness of Prague, and undoubtedly spotted a winner. This was not the only occasion either, for she did herself a good turn too by means of her supernatural power. As it happened, despite her possession of all the virtues, she had trouble with her subjects, who declared themselves weary of petticoat government and urged her to look round for a husband. She did, calling to aid her uncanny gift. The discussion with her subjects probably took place in the open, high up on Vyšehrad. Libuša, with that far-away gaze proper to all soothsaying, pointed out over the distant hills, saying, "Behind those hills is a small river called Belna, and on its bank a farm named Stadic. Near that farm is a field, and in that field your future ruler is ploughing with two spotted oxen. His name is Přemysl, and his descendants will rule over you for ever. Take my horse and follow it; you will be led to the place."

The lady was not quite correct about Přemysl and his

descendants—they have ceased to rule over the Czechs, and are now replaced by a sovereign people; but she certainly was right in her description of her future husband and his surroundings. The search party, following Libuša's horse, found Přemysl busy at his plough, roped him in and brought him to their Princess. Legend again asserts that Přemysl made a first-class husband and ruler (he probably did exactly as his wife told him) and his descendants reigned with varying fortunes, until the first years of the fourteenth century—a very good innings for the lineage of Přemysl, the sturdy farmer, and that far-seeing lady Libuša, his wife. During those centuries the Czechs had consolidated into an important kingdom; from a misty chaos of heathen Slavonic tribes had grown a people brave and generous, with a culture all its own, and above all with a surpassing gift of expressing itself in music.

It must not be supposed that Libuša rested content with being wife to Přemysl, just keeping house, mending clothes and minding the babies. She continued her activities as directress of her people's fortunes, and is made responsible, among other matters, for choosing the site of the Hradšany, the Castle of Prague, and this is what the chronicler has to say about it.

One day as Libuša looked out from her fastness over the river towards the wooded heights to northward, she was moved by the gift of prophecy to which she was addicted when deeply stirred.

Her own abode, built by her father, hung upon that rocky crag called Vyšehrad, and was probably by no means roomy; Krok, her father, had no doubt found it a convenient spot, being somewhat difficult of

access in those days to armed visitors, who were likely to prove a disturbing element. The ancient Slav preferred to build in secluded spots, on heights amid forests for choice, there was so much to guard against in those dark ages, so the wooded heights that Libuša looked out upon must have appealed to her strongly. Anyway, she decided to act, prefacing action by some quite useful sooth-saying. According to the chronicler Cosmas of Prague, who lived three or four centuries after Libuša had passed away, the following impressive scene was enacted: Libuša, standing on a high rock on the Vyšehrad in presence of her husband Přemysl and the elders of the people, incited by the spirit of prophecy, uttered this prediction: "I see a town, the glory of which will reach the stars. There is a spot in the forest, thirty stades from this village which the River Vltava encircles, and which to the north the stream Brusnice secures by its deep valley; and to the south a hill, which from its rocks takes the name Petřin, towers above it. When you have reached this spot you will find a man in the midst of the forest, who is working at a door-sill for a house; even mighty lords bend before a low door. From this you shall call the town which you will build there 'Praha.'" The elders did as they were bid, and so Prague arose. The Czech name is Praha, the derivation possibly from *prah* = door.

The Hradšany Hill was thus by Princess Libuša indicated as the pinnacle on which should rest for ever the glory of Prague and of Bohemia. Glory is a doubtful gift and costly, and the history of Prague shows clearly that this is true. No doubt work was started at once on a castle to crown the hill. Libuša probably saw to it that there was no time wasted. This would be some time about the middle of the eighth century, but history, as handed down from

those days, is wrapped about with mystery and legend from the obscurity of which events gradually detached themselves. It was not till Christianity had got a firm hold of the Czech people that any half-way reliable records were kept.

We will take it for granted that it was Libuša who, with the seer's eye penetrating the future, laid the foundations of that right royal pile, Prague's crown of glory, the Hradšany. We have the authority of Cosmas for this; also Smetana composed an opera all about Libuša, so all our doubts are dispelled. We have noticed the site, and that it is admirably adapted to defence, a rocky eminence rising like a promontory above the broad Vltava, its steep sides falling down to the river on the eastern side, and to deep-cut valleys to north and south. The position offers a wide view over the rolling plains to westward. It was from this side chiefly that the attackers came—Germans in the cause of the Holy Roman Empire, mercenaries of many nations that swelled the imperial hosts arrayed against Protestant Bohemia, marauding armies of Swedes, all these surged up against the walls and towers of Prague's Royal Castle. They broke and passed away like the fleeting cloud shadows you may watch floating across the fields and wooded slopes of Jilové, Černy Kostelec and Zbraslav to the blue hills of Hradešin beyond. But the castle still stands a sentinel over ancient Prague.

It must have been a pleasant post, that of sentry upon a look-out tower of the Castle of Prague. What with the ever-changing beauty of the landscape and the chance of noticing a hostile force approaching with colours flying and spear-heads a-glitter in the sun, with, moreover, a prospect of a fight, a sentry's

life should have been a happy one. It would be expected of the sentry that he should not be so held by the fascination of the scene as to omit to report any unusual occurrence. I have known such a thing happen even to an otherwise well-regulated sentry. It was in Mandalay where from a wooden tower in the middle of Fort Dufferin a sentry held watch and ward over the town. One bright afternoon the town caught fire. The sentry was so much impressed by the grandeur of the scene that he quite forgot to report the matter, and a large part of the town was utterly destroyed. That man might have been qualified as an artist, an author or a poet; as a sentry he was disappointing.

There are no records of sentry yarns dating back to the really exciting times in the history of the Hradšany; I have discovered only one, and that of a comparatively recent date. The event narrated happened in the autumn of 1753 at 11 p.m. The sentry was a grenadier; please note the accuracy of detail which should dispel any doubt as to the truth of the story—the grenadier touch is especially convincing. This grenadier, it would seem, was posted in the inner court of the castle, probably at the entrance to what is now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Propaganda (places of that kind want a deal of watching). The grenadier was probably as bored as any sentry can be up till midnight sharp, when things began to happen. First of all, the dark mass of the cathedral was suddenly brilliantly illuminated from within. Then from that little side entrance to the cathedral emerged a tall figure all in white. The sentry challenged, as a sentry should. No use. The tall figure strode up to the sentry, halted before him, cast a handful of corn at his feet and stalked back the way it came. Lights out!... The next

night at the same hour the programme was repeated before a new sentry, also a grenadier: the former one had probably reported himself sick. On the second night the apparition cast down a handful of silver coin. The grenadier left them all lying on the ground —this is the only part of the story that strikes me as weak. On the third night, the military being represented as before, the tall figure reappeared with commendable punctuality. On this occasion the management had arranged a display of moonlight in order to show up the pallid features, blood-stained clouts and other accessories suitable to a first-class apparition. Moreover, this being positively its last appearance in public, the tall figure spake: "1754 rich harvest, 1755 gold in plenty, 1756 blood in streams." And so it happened. In the year 1754 there was a record harvest in Bohemia, the year 1755 brought considerable wealth into the country (the handful of silver was probably something on account), and in 1756 the Seven Years' War broke out. So the story must be true, all except that little bit about the grenadier leaving all the silver lying on the ground.

We were really still watching the Hradšany grow out of Libuša's prophecy. The chronicler left it to others to find out where the building stood for which the man in the forest was carpentering the door-sill as described by Libuša. That great lady simply said that the work was going on in the forest which surely extended down to the river-bank in those days. This may have encouraged the belief that the first house, built by Libuša herself, of course, stood somewhere below the Castle Hill—it is said on the site of the old

posting house, but some one obliterated all trace of it by erecting a church, dedicated to St. Procopius, above it, no doubt as part of the business of stamping out paganism. The Church of St. Procopius is no longer in evidence, and as there have been further additions and improvements to the quarter of Prague in question since the eighth century, it is now quite impossible, even to the liveliest imagination, to fix upon the spot where stood that first house. It does not matter very much either. The Hradšany itself is easily the most imposing and interesting sight which Prague has to offer.

The massive strength of the castle, the Hradšany, holds your gaze from whatever quarter of Prague you may happen to look out. The castle, as we know, has a hill to itself, up the sides of which rise clustering palaces, churches, convents and monasteries, buildings of grey stone and red-tiled roofs, standing amidst terraced gardens. In spring this ancient quarter decks itself with glorious apparel of white of cherry, pear and plum, with here and there the delicate pink of almond blossom; in winter, when the snow lies "smooth and crisp and even," the scene is changed into a fairy network as of delicate lace on a foundation of grey and purple; in all seasons it is beautiful.



THE "CHARLES

The first sight of the Hradšany conveys an impression of sheer strength, much as does Gibraltar; it also suggests a lion couchant but watchful and strong to protect the city at its feet; this effect is particularly noticeable from the Fürstenberg garden. The beauty of this massive pile grows upon you gradually as you see it under the ever-varying atmospheric conditions of Prague. By all the canons of art the long straight lines of the Hradšany should

be unlovely. The towers which broke those lines no longer stand out boldly as shown in old prints and engravings, at least on the townward side of the castle. They have been gradually merged into the general mass of the building as time and progress brought greater demands for living room and lessened the need of defensive measures. The straight outlines are still broken here and there by some trace of the ancient building showing through, a mullioned window, an old stack of chimneys, but on the whole, the mass by itself is heavy and uniform. Nevertheless, the general effect is splendid, whether you see this stately pile standing out strong and massive above the mist from the river or rising in tiers out of dimmed silvery greys against an evening sky all gold and emerald, or flushed with sunset scarlet. The crown of all this terraced glory is the great cathedral. A square massive tower stands up out of the body of the church. A purist may find fault with the mixture of styles this tower incorporates. The bulk of its structure is Gothic; at the base of the superstructure appears a nondescript medley of styles (nondescript at least in the eyes of a dilettante) out of which arises a concern of domes and cupolas one above the other, supported at each corner by little pinnacles crowned with onion-shaped tops. The copper coating of these domes and cupolas gives a distinctive touch of colour to the whole edifice of warm grey stone; this note of green you will find repeated elsewhere on the churches and other buildings of Prague, a piquant note but alien to the spirit of Prague both ancient and modern. There has been talk of removing the superstructure from the main tower of the cathedral and replacing it by a Gothic spire such as adorn the towers that flank the west front of the building, spires that gleam like

lacework when standing out sunlit against dark banks of cloud. It were best to leave the superstructure of the main tower as it is; it marks an epoch and serves as reminder of a tyranny now overpast. The highest point of the main tower is not adorned with a usual emblem of our faith, a cross or a cock, but flaunts instead the "Lion of Bohemia" in all his rampant pride of a double tail. I shall have more to say about this wonderful heraldic animal on some future occasion; it is significant that this crest swings over the sacred fane where rest the remains of St. Wenceslaus, over the cradle of Bohemia's religious life.



You will remember Libuša's vision of an endless

succession of little Přemysls. She overrated Přemysl a bit as a good wife should, for the Přemysl dynasty ended abruptly with the murder of Wenceslaus III in 1306 at the hand of some unknown assassins at Olomouc, by the Germans called Olmütz. Nevertheless, the family had had a good long spell of life and plenty to keep them busy during those six or seven centuries; it produced some very fine rulers; all honour to old farmer Přemysl. The first eleven scions of that line are very faint figures; they are not even dated; only a few of them show more than a shadowy outline in the mist of legend and dawning history. Of these early rulers there is echo of one Mnata, who is said to have built the first stone house on the Hradšany for his wife Strzezislava. I wonder what he called her for short? Strz sounds a bit abrupt, Slava is too general among Slavonic people: perhaps he called her Cissie. Strzezislava is certainly too rich for ordinary household use. Cosmas passes by this point in silence, which is a pity; it is just those intimate little touches that foster pleasant social relations and justify the chronicler's attitude of omniscience; our illustrated Press has reached perfection in that line. Mnata and Strzezislava flit across the stage and pass into oblivion without the benefit of gramophone and cinema. Then emerges one Bořivoj, first of that name, who stands out more distinctly against the background of misty legend, probably by reason of his having embraced Christianity; he also embraced a lady, Ludmilla, who became his wife and one of Bohemia's moat popular saints and patrons. It happened that Bořivoj had occasion to ask his neighbour Svatopluk, Prince of Moravia, for protection, and then he became acquainted with that energetic missionary, St. Methodius. Unhappily we have no precise

information concerning date and place of this picturesque event. The chronicler has done his best by giving the following story to fill up the blank. He narrates that Bořivoj was not allowed to sit at table with Svatopluk, but was given a low stool apart, as being unfit to associate with Christian company. This is what the Christian chronicler says, and he made it his business to bear testimony on all occasions. It is, however, quite conceivable that Bořivoj's manners were not up to refined Moravian form. Anyway, Bořivoj allowed himself to be converted, and as there is no mention of his table manners we may assume that he reached the required standard.

After all, manners are a matter of relativity, and not so long ago, somewhere about 1700, the Austrian Court found it necessary to issue a handbook thereon, in which guests bidden to the imperial banquets were requested not to throw their chicken bones under the table, it made so much extra work for the servants. There is quite a modern touch about this.

With all the fervour of a convert, Bořivoj set about the salvation of his people from heathen darkness. I have sought diligently for some records of the beliefs held by this branch of the Slavonic race. There is no evidence of any deities of strong if unpleasant personality, such as that obstinate, one-eyed Wotan, or that destructive bully Thor, whose brutality coloured German mentality down to most recent days, and seems to do so still. Neither seem those Slavs to have been subject to visitations in their homes by such doubtful characters as Hermes, nor was their sense of propriety outraged by the "carryings on" of Zeus. No doubt they had some benign deity, and also a malignant, jealous one, no

western creed is complete without the latter at least, if only for the benefit of the priests, but they have left no trace on a people that has suffered so much from the wickedness and stupidity of their human oppressors. The western Slavs in general and the sons of Czech in particular, had their flights of fairies, sprites, pixies and other lovable immortals. They are here still; even I, a stranger, claim to have heard them in "den heiteren Regionen, wo die reinen Formen wohnen," on the sun-kissed snow of the mountains, in the whispering voices of the forest and the song of the burn in the glen. A sight of these benign beings has been denied me—for this I make the heavy cuisine of Bohemia responsible; but their spirit lives on and informs the sons of Czech in the realm of the spirit, in art and poetry, above all in music.

Bořivoj plunged into Christianity with enthusiasm; he is known to have built a church at Levy Hradec, and is said to have laid the foundations of another on the Castle Hill. It appears, however, that the pace he set was rather too hot for his people; they raised a deal of trouble, and Bořivoj had to call in the German King Arnulf to help in restoring order. This step did not bring unmixed blessings; it gave the Germans an excuse for interfering in Bohemian affairs. Now Arnulf was a Carolingian, of bastard blood indeed, but nevertheless under the "Holy Roman Empire" obsession, and therefore convinced of the German right to round up all Christian countries into that Empire. In this action of Bořivoj we see the first instalment of the endless trouble caused by the obsession which originated with Charlemagne as mentioned in the first chapter. Moreover, this German intervention gave to the inhabitants of Bohemia their first experience of

religious dissension. Their first contact with Christianity brought them the choice of rival liturgies, the Latin as favoured by the Germans with their "Holy Roman" idea, and the Slavonic which St. Methodius had introduced. So Christianity in Bohemia began with an exhibition of divergent religious views, which may account for a good deal of the suffering brought upon this country for its own salvation and its neighbours' benefit.

Bořivoj's successors, Spytihnev I and Vratislav I, were kept so busy guarding their country against Magyar inroads that it seems they had no time to worry about religious differences. Neighbour Svatopluk's extensive empire had fallen to pieces owing to the quarrels of his sons and under Magyar aggression; this gave Spytihnev the opportunity of freeing himself from the supremacy of Moravia which Bořivoj had accepted in return for assistance rendered him by Svatopluk and the Slavonic liturgy thrown into the bargain. This, again, brought the Germans nearer to Bohemia, as neither Spytihnev nor Vratislav were strong enough to stand alone. As politics and Church worked hand in hand in those days, the Germans imposed the Bishop of Ratisbon, and with him the Latin liturgy, on Bohemia, whereas such Slavs as had taken to Christianity at all were rather inclined to the other version. This must have caused a good deal of trouble, so it is not to be wondered at if the rulers of Bohemia recalled happier, simpler days. There came a certain reaction in the affairs of the Přemysl family. We have noted the saintly lady Ludmilla, wife of Bořivoj, the first Christian Prince of Bohemia. Ludmilla was very pious indeed; you will find frescoes illustrating her good deeds, adorning the walls of Karlov Tyn (Karlstein), a fine old castle of which I will tell you

more by and by. It is quite impossible to be so picturesquely good and pious as was Ludmilla, in these days of mail-orders, wholesale departments, banking accounts and cheque-books. There was another lady of the Přemysl family, and she, according to all accounts, was neither good nor pious. She was a reactionary, a thorough-paced pagan, and it was this lady who caused trouble in the household. The lady's name was Dragomira; she had married Bořivoj's second son, and had been left a widow with three sons. This did not have the usual soothing effect upon the lady. Dragomira, as regent during the minority of her sons, had revived paganism, and this brought her into conflict with the German King, Henry the Fowler. Pious Ludmilla, Dragomira's mother-in-law, was much upset about this conflict, for with all her good works she found time to take an active interest in foreign politics. Here were all the elements of a hearty family row; in addition, Dragomira's sons took different sides: Wenceslaus with his grandmother Ludmilla, Boleslav the younger with his pagan mother. The chronicler sides entirely with Ludmilla and Wenceslaus in his narrative of the domestic dissensions of the Přemysl family. He shows no sympathy for the other side, does not realize that Dragomira must have got very weary of her mother-in-law's piety and annoyed at that lady's interference in the education of her sons. There is a great deal to be said for Dragomira's point of view, and it is a pity that her remarks on the rival Christian liturgies, Latin and Slavonic, have not been handed down to us. Dragomira certainly carried matters too far when she strangled Ludmilla with her own veil one evening in chapel; she made the mistake of furnishing the other side with a first-class saint and royal martyr.

Wenceslaus, the pious elder son, was extremely annoyed at this open demonstration of family discord. Dragomira was sent into exile; her name was never mentioned again. The treatment meted out to his mother made of young Boleslav a more determined pagan than he was before; he sat up at night hatching heathen plots against brother Wenceslaus. Boleslav's reincarnation is probably to be found among international financiers of the present day. The result of his machinations must be told in a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Begins with the accession of Wenceslaus I, tells you how to pronounce his name correctly in Czech, and informs you of his piety and general saintliness. There is also mention of other saints as suitable company for Wenceslaus, and a short account of how that prince qualified for a halo himself. We note also the contrition of Brother Boleslav, who made a martyr of Wenceslaus, how Boleslav did a good deal of fighting, most successfully, and extended his dominions thereby. Also how Boleslav learnt to be neighbourly and wise in his choice of a wife for his neighbour who was promptly converted to Christianity. Of the son of Boleslav I and Dubravka, wife of Duke

Mieceslav I of Poland. How Boleslav II, called "the Pious," earned that epithet and started Prague with a bishop all to herself. Of churches and convents, and Milada, the pious sister of Boleslav II. Of the growing importance of Prague and how it was recognized and appreciated by Ibrahim Ibn Jacub and many of his race.



ITH the accession of Wenceslaus, first Přemysl prince of that name, Bohemia passes out of legend into ordered history; its rulers are henceforth properly labelled and dated. This is chiefly due to the spread of Christianity; priests and monks take up the tale of

kindly Saga, and keep careful record of events. These chroniclers were not as a rule unbiassed; I cannot see how they could have been otherwise, for not only did they undertake the task of compiling history, they were constantly making propaganda for their own ideals against the paganism which still had a considerable hold on the sons of Czech. I doubt whether any historian can be absolutely unbiassed; a warm-blooded man—and you must be that if you would record the doings of your fellow-men—is bound to feel sympathy with or dislike for one or other actors in the far-off pageant of history. I frankly admit myself biassed in favour of Brother Boleslav the hearty heathen, and somewhat bored by that saintly lady Ludmilla. A night out with Boleslav would have been more amusing, if less edifying, than a country walk with pious Wenceslaus, who would be sure to waste a good deal of time at wayside shrines; a picnic arranged by Dragomira and in that lady's company, would have been at least a material improvement on any little outing with Ludmilla, who would surely have discovered some reason for fasting on that particular day. But then I can afford a bias; am only making observations from "a Terrace in Prague."

Monkish chroniclers sang the praises of Prince Wenceslaus. My spelling of this name is incorrect, but it is more familiar to English eyes than any other, as our Christmas carol "puts it with a 'we.'" I do not suggest that this St. Wenceslaus is identical with the "Good King Wenceslaus" we sing about—in fact, I have discovered another ruler of that name who fits the part much better; but of this more anon. The correct version of this saintly prince's name is Vaclav, pronounced Vatslav. It is as well to get a proper grip of this word, as the show street in the

town is named Václavské Náměstí, which being interpreted meaneth Wenceslaus Place; the Germans call it Wenzel's Platz, but this designation is not popular at the moment. It is advisable to acquire the Czech version of the name, as the Václavské Náměstí is in the business and amusement quarter of the town. As to the pronunciation of Václavské Náměstí, it presents no particular difficulties, despite the profusion of accents (the Czechs are very liberal in this respect), they seem to make no noticeable difference with exception of the inverted circumflex, which makes "ye" out of plain "e." This is nothing to what the Czech language can do in the way of tongue-twisters.

The Václavské Náměstí rises gently towards another hill of Prague, Vinohrady. At the top of the rise, looking right down the broad avenue over the old town and beyond it to the Hradšany, is an equestrian statue of St. Wenceslaus. There are other likenesses of the Saint; a number of them adorn his chapel in the Cathedral of St. Vitus, and another statue stands near the castle entrance on the Hradšany, in the latter Wenceslaus is shown looking out over the city, his hand upraised in blessing, which is right and proper and quite what the city expects of him. The equestrian statue is the most recent portrait of the pious prince, and is really quite convincing. We know, or at least I am about to tell you, that Wenceslaus was a man of peace, he is therefore represented carrying a lance; the modern sense of propriety requires of a non-combatant that he should sit for his portrait armed. He need not introduce a bunch of bombs or a pot of poison gas into the composition, a sword will do. Wenceslaus brought his lance much as the up-to-date war-winner girds on a sword when he goes to be photographed. Swords

may also be worn at weddings, at funerals, also at christenings I believe; anyway, on all filmable occasions.

As far as I can discover, St. Wenceslaus only had one fight in his life, and then he got killed.

Now that we have arrived at the first of authentically dated rulers over Bohemia, Wenceslaus I, 928-935, we may as well take a look round the Europe of that time. We find first of all that the peoples were capable of getting into just as bad a mess as they are in to-day, and that without the aid of any new diplomacy, League of Nations and International Conferences. England was, so to speak, nowhere in those days; Englishmen did not wander about the Continent making observations from terraces, did not even launch missions and commissions on harmless and unsuspecting countries, in order to impress the inhabitants thereof with our wealth and our good taste in getting rid of it. England was very busy with the Scots, Welsh and Danes, who were also causing a deal of trouble to the broken-up remnants of Charlemagne's Empire. The ideal of the Holy Roman Empire still lived and inspired a host of adventurous Counts of the Marches and other bearers of German culture to inroads into territory inhabited by Slavonic races. The idea seemed to be that as each Slavonic tribe, principality or kingdom adopted Christianity it should come under German domination and be held in trust for Mother Church by German princes as long as the Papacy conformed to their conception of right and wrong. The Papacy itself seems to have had no definite ideas of right and wrong at the time, or at least did not put them into practice; had, in fact, become thoroughly corrupt and ineffective for good. Christendom was in a parlous

state, disunited and assailed by hosts of barbarians, Danes, Saracens, Hungarians. The latter had become especially dangerous to the Slavonic peoples. Before Arpad arrived at Pressburg (now called Bratislava, please) in 829, the territory inhabited by Slavonic tribes, mostly in principalities of varying size and importance, had extended with fluctuating frontiers, from Holstein south-eastward through Central Europe to the Adriatic and the Balkan range. Arpad drove a wedge into this Slavonic mass and broke it into two parts; Arpad's descendants still separate northern and southern Slavs. We have seen how the Empire of Moravia went down before the Magyars, and that the Bohemians, no longer able to count on support from that side, were forced to turn to Germany. The intrusion of the Magyars into Central Europe, by dividing the mass of Slavonic races, also weakened the influence of the Eastern Church among the Bohemians and forced those that were inclined towards Christianity into closer communion with Rome via Germanism. German priests were beginning to gain the ascendancy over those of the Eastern persuasion, they objected to services in the Vulgate, and as they knew no language but their own and only sufficient Latin for their clerical duties, their influence began to threaten the Slavonic genius of the Bohemians with extinction. This was undoubtedly their purpose, and it accounts for much of Bohemia's sufferings during the thousand years following the imposition of a German bishop on this country by the German King Arnulf to whom the immediate predecessors of St. Wenceslaus, Spytihnev and Vratislav had appealed for assistance.

Another social institution which was beginning to make its influence felt at the time under discussion was the feudal system. Hitherto, civilized Europe had

depended for offensive and defensive operations on large slow-moving armies of foot-folk; these were ineffective against marauding barbarians, Vikings in their sharp-prowed ships, or the light cavalry of Hungarian or Saracen. Moreover, the governmental system organized by Charlemagne had fallen to pieces, and there was no central power to order the movements of a large army. Luckily for the cause of Christendom and western civilization such as it was, the subordinates of Charles's successors hit upon the right tactics to employ against the invaders. The nominal subordinates, Counts of the Marches, burgraves, barons, took a very free hand in those days of decentralized authority and bad lines of communication. Based on impregnable strongholds, they met the swiftly moving hosts of marauders with equally mobile troops of mailed horsemen, raised, trained and paid by themselves, and bound to their feudal lords by the ties of discipline out of which grew the tradition of military servitude. It was these feudal lords and their mailed horsemen who saved Western Europe; they took their own reward out of the lands they saved and out of the neighbours whom they insisted on saving, till they eventually became an unmitigated nuisance from which Bohemia suffered as much as any other country. But for the moment we are concerned with the times of St. Wenceslaus and the first half of the tenth century.

It is a pity that no one had thought of holding an International Conference in the early days of the tenth century; there were a great many things to discuss, and a Conference would have added to the gaiety of nations. There was the question of those Northern Slavonic tribes who had steadfastly refused the blessings of Christianity as purveyed by the Teuton; of course, no one could foresee that the

Western Church's activities in those northern regions would eventually produce the modern Prussian. Then the Conference would have to decide whether or no Vikings, Hungarians and Saracens should be admitted to the comity of nations, and if not, how to start doing business with those people all the same. Then the place of the Conference would have to be decided; there was quite a fair choice of suitable localities. Paris was becoming popular, had already been discovered by people from over the seas—by the Vikings, who, in quest of souvenirs, on one occasion sacked the city, on another burnt it down. Aix-la-Chapelle had been popular for some centuries before the Vikings discovered the attractions of Paris; it had the waters to recommend it, and also memories of pious Charlemagne, on which members of the Conference might reflect when not engaged in feasting and providing the Press with fiction. Constantinople would also have been well suited to an International Conference in the tenth century. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus was rather a dull dog, but he kept a glittering court, and none but the most refined society is good enough for secretaries, bottlewashers and other numerous hangers-on of conferences. Kings and rulers would probably have attended the Conference in person, not being willing to afford the luxury of allowing a Prime Minister to neglect home affairs. It would have been a pretty gathering, Constantine Porphyrogenitus the bookworm probably as president, Æthelstan of England, Charles the Simple of France or as much as his neighbours allowed him, that doughty poacher Henry the Fowler, German King, and Pope Leo not on speaking terms with him, St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia trying to make peace with Henry, and a make-weight of German counts

and churchmen, possibly representatives of Vikings, Hungarians and Saracens. The proceedings would have been marked by a "certain liveliness," as we used to say at the front when the fur began to fly. The Conference would have differed from those of the present day, by leading to a definite result if only in the form of a handsome row of corpses; Counts of the Marches, Vikings and others would have attended to that. It would have been interesting to note how monkish reporters would clothe, or rather veil, their account of proceedings in suitable language.

On the accession of Wenceslaus I the relations between his house and the German King were strained. This, we have seen, was due to Dragomira's anti-German foreign policy. Wenceslaus, however, as we know, had occasion to send his mother into exile; she cannot have gone very far, as according to popular belief the earth swallowed her up before she had had time to get clear of the Castle Hill. Later generations put up a chapel over the spot where Dragomira vanished; I consider this conduct lacking in tact.

Anyway, Wenceslaus had to face a guileful, determined and quite unscrupulous adversary, who had even called at Prague with an army; so, being a man of peace, he came to terms with King Henry for a slight consideration, namely, an annual tribute of six hundred silver marks and one hundred and twenty head of cattle. This warded off trouble from the west, but there remained the danger of barbarian invasion from the east and there was every reason for erecting strongholds in Bohemia as in other countries of Europe. I have found no trace of any such work by Wenceslaus. He surely must have done

something towards strengthening the Hradšany, Hrad S. Vaclav or something like that, as it seems to have been called at the time. Wenceslaus had built a chapel here in which to house the relic of St. Vitus; I cannot imagine him leaving such a treasure quite unprotected. This precious relic, namely, the arm of St. Vitus, had been presented to Wenceslaus by King Henry which was handsome of him, as he only got a trifling annual contribution of money and cattle out of Bohemia, whereas that country was started off with something of sufficient value to account for that noble fane the Cathedral of St. Vitus. Bohemia did very well in the way of saints and sacred relics; some of her kings were enthusiastic collectors, and we remember that Christianity among the Czechs started with a royal martyr, the saintly Ludmilla, who was shortly to be joined by another, as you will be told later on in this chapter.

We are still trying to find out what Wenceslaus did for his capital and country besides collecting odds and ends of saints and building a chapel here and there, and regretfully state that little record of anything but his piety is handed down to us. Piety, it seems, was no more compatible with statecraft in the early days of Christendom than it is to-day, and as Wenceslaus took the pious line, he gave way too much to the German menace, thus laying up a store of trouble for his successors and the sons of Czech which lasted well up to the present and does not appear to be exhausted yet. In the meantime Wenceslaus, evidently well pleased with himself, continued to set his people a godly ensample. I should like to know whether they appreciated him to the same extent as did some members of his family, Boleslav for instance, who helped Wenceslaus to a crown of celestial glory by the simple process of

hitting him over the head. I am rather inclined to think that the piety of Wenceslaus interfered with some of the innocent amusements of his people, among whom paganism was not quite dead yet, as subsequent events show. There was an interesting burial ground lying on the route which Wenceslaus would follow when going from the Hradšany to Vyšehrad, which remained the seat of government for several generations of Přemysls after the pious prince's demise.... This burial ground, a very extensive one, is now covered by the Church of Emaus and its monastic buildings; you can see those twin towers, dark ochre in colour and topped by characteristic steeple and pinnacles, rising from among fruit-trees and red-tiled roofs. Na Morani was the name of this burial ground, after Morana, the goddess of death. It was the correct thing in pagan society to make pilgrimages to this place in spring: a pleasant afternoon in a cemetery was a pastime as popular then as it appears to be to-day. The *cachet* of Na Morani had been rather spoilt by the erection of a little church some time in the ninth century, perhaps by Wenceslaus himself. Anyway, the pious prince found this church a convenient half-way house between Vyšehrad and Hradšany, and he was wont to put up a prayer or two here before going on to drop a tear on the Hradšany relics. The little church was dedicated to Cosmas (not the chronicler) and Damian, saints of the third and fourth centuries. It is not known why these gentlemen clubbed together to have a day to themselves, but this need not act as deterrent to anyone who wishes to observe their day. Wherever pilgrims visit, there you will find settlements growing up, beginning with booths and shanties of those who sell appropriate commodities, candles, wreaths and such-like. The traffic in these

articles continues; it was only last Palm Sunday that I was offered a variety of wreaths to choose from, small wreaths of snowdrops and fir twigs, to be worn on the wrist, to be blessed by the priest and then to be left lying about the sitting-room until fit for the dustbin. I resisted all temptation to deck myself with snowdrops and fir twigs; their subdued tones do not match my aura.

It seems to me that Wenceslaus did nothing in particular for his people; he concentrated on his part as royal saint and martyr, and was already posing for the statues of himself and the frescoes depicting his good deeds, which later ages produced. There was little to show for all this prince's good intentions. Pious, indeed, was Wenceslaus; he spent a great part of the night in prayer when he should have been recuperating for strenuous work on the following day: there was plenty to do for a country threatened on the one hand by marauding Magyars, on the other by insidious German influence. "He was in the habit of himself cutting off the wheat and grapes that the priests required to prepare the holy wafers and the wine for the sacrament"—I quote Count Lützow, but his conception of political economy allowed him to pay a large tribute in exchange for German interference and the remains of a saint. He lavished money on the Church, whereas strongholds were required in defence of Christendom, and finally he adopted the tonsure. This struck home to the family and made Boleslav's cup of bitterness o'erflow; he plotted more persistently than ever against Wenceslaus. Another habit of the pious Prince was that of attending Church dedication festivals and their anniversaries, in every part of his dominion. The Church feast of Cosmas and Damian, much patronized by Wenceslaus at a little town called

Boleslav, was due on September 28th. Wenceslaus was invited to attend this function by Brother Boleslav, who resided there. Boleslav, by this time very weary of his pious brother, sat up with a few friends of his own way of thinking, waylaid Wenceslaus, and killed him. This happened in 935, and the 28th of September is still kept sacred to the memory of St. Wenceslaus by those who feel inclined that way.

My sympathy with Boleslav does not blind me to the fact that he did wrong in killing his brother. I am glad to report that Boleslav showed signs of contrition. The town of Boleslav henceforth became distasteful to him, so he quitted it and raised another of the same name. Stara (Old) Boleslav, where Wenceslaus gained his degree of martyrdom, is a sedate little town near the banks of the Labe (known as Elbe in Germany) dozing among orchards and lush meadows and o'ershadowed by tall elm-trees. It is by no means a suitable setting for a sensational fratricide; I have been to see the place for myself and consider that the Wenceslaus-Boleslav, drama requires a different scenario. The newer town, Young Boleslav (Jung Bunzlau in German) is much better suited to the film; it stands up high on a rock and looks a likely habitation for an expert in assassination such as was Boleslav, brother of Wenceslaus.

Despite all Boleslav's efforts, popular opinion has it that Wenceslaus is not dead, but fast asleep inside a mountain, making up for nights spent in prayer no doubt. I do not believe this report.



Boleslav succeeded Wenceslaus as first Bohemian Prince of that name. His was a long and eventful reign, from 936 to 967, long at least for those days when rulers were apt to be removed abruptly. None knew this better than Boleslav himself. Monkish

chroniclers have little good to say of Boleslav I—allegedly on account of that little affair at Stara Boleslav and of Boleslav's persistent paganism; actually, I imagine, on account of the anti-German attitude he adopted at the outset of his reign. Boleslav ruled with a firm hand; he subdued a number of Bohemian nobles who had allied themselves with the national enemy the German, before he resumed the conflict with Henry the Fowler which his mother had started. Henry, no doubt, was quite ready to quarrel, using the murder of his ally as a pretext, but he died before he had had time to settle down in the saddle, and left his son Otto to carry on. Now Otto, first German Emperor of that name, was a strong man, and is called Great on account of his success in reviving the Holy Roman Empire. Boleslav was a strong man too: Palacky, the famous Bohemian historian, describes him as "one of the most powerful monarchs that ever occupied the Bohemian throne." He succeeded in defending his country from the armies that Otto launched against it, and even the invasion of 950, led by the Emperor himself, brought no decisive victory for the Germans. Boleslav seems to have considered it futile to continue quarrelling with his western neighbour, especially as the usual trouble continued in the east, in which direction the Prince proposed to extend his dominions. By 955 we find Germans and Bohemians allied against the Magyars, who had acquired a habit of ravaging Western Europe once a year. They met their match on the Lechfeld, near Augsburg, and were utterly defeated in one of the most sanguinary and decisive battles fought during the Middle Ages. According to Count Lützow it appears that a Bohemian contingent of a thousand men formed part of the victorious army. Boleslav himself, with the

greater part of his troops, remained to guard the frontiers of his country. The defeated Magyars suffered another defeat at the hands of Boleslav on their retreat through Bohemia, and their leader, Lehel, was taken prisoner. With peace and friendliness on his western front and his eastern enemy thoroughly beaten, Boleslav was in a position to carry out his ambitious plans. He freed Moravia from the Magyars and united it to Bohemia, and he is said to have conquered a considerable part of the country between the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube; probably Slovakia of to-day. By his conquests Boleslav became a near neighbour of Poland and managed to come to a good understanding with Duke Mieceslav I, ruler of that country, by giving that prince his daughter Dubravka in marriage, which would no doubt be considered a friendly act. Dubravka succeeded in converting her husband and his yet heathen people to Christianity. Mieceslav must have taken to it very strongly, for between them he and Dubravka produced a pious son and heir who was to become known as Boleslav the Brave.

Boleslav II of Bohemia, called "the Pious," enjoyed an even longer reign than his father did, from 967 to 999, which is one of those easy dates to remember. Monkish chroniclers seem to have ascribed a good deal of the work done by Boleslav I to his son, probably on account of the former's lack of piety in his early days and the latter's exuberance in that line. Certain it is that Boleslav II was ruler over larger dominions than had ever been held by any Prince or King of Bohemia. Besides Bohemia itself the power of Boleslav II extended over Moravia, present-day Slovakia, a great part of Silesia, including Breslau, districts of Poland nearly up to the town of Lemberg,

with a frontier touching that of the Russian rulers of Kiev. The Bohemian nobles who had troubled his father were entirely suppressed by Boleslav II, who appointed burgraves called "zŭpans," over the various districts into which his territories were divided, and the central authority became absolute.

It is not certain whether Vyšehrad was still the actual seat of government or whether the Hradšany had taken its place. Certain it is that the Hradšany had grown in importance chiefly in the religious life of the nation. The foundations laid by St. Wenceslaus were extended. It appears that the Church of St. George on the Hradšany dates back to this early period; you can see its two rather stunted white steeples standing out over the complex of buildings near the eastern point of the Castle Hill before it dips down towards the Vltava. The earliest church on this point is attributed to Vratislav, uncle of St. Wenceslaus, but this sounds rather doubtful. Boleslav II, however, is known to have founded a convent here, probably the oldest in Bohemia, and he installed his sister Milada as first abbess. St. Ludmilla was also buried here, so the Hradšany was increasing in sanctity. Boleslav II is also responsible for providing Prague with her first bishop. We have seen that Henry the Fowler had incorporated Bohemia into the bishopric of Ratisbon; this was before that country could be considered as Christian, with right, as we have noticed the lapse after the demise of St. Wenceslaus. Boleslav II, however, was in a position to point to a much improved state of affairs, and so Otto I consented to the formation of a separate bishopric of Prague. The Pope consented likewise, under the express condition that the connection with the old Moravian archbishopric should be broken, and that the Latin liturgy only should be used. The

German connection was further strengthened by placing Bohemia under the supremacy of the Archbishop of Maintz; Thietmar, a German, became the first Bishop of Prague. This worthy was succeeded after a few years by a native of Bohemia, Adalbert, who finally established Christianity in the country. He had a hard task, as many heathen customs, such as polygamy, were difficult to extirpate; there are even in this day very few churches dedicated to St. Anthony, a saint who does not seem to interest or convince the Bohemians. Adalbert carried his ideals farther afield, to the country of the heathen Prussians, who killed him for trespassing on ground dedicated to one of their deities. Adalbert became the third saint and martyr of Bohemian origin, and was adopted by the Poles as patron saint.

Though there are no buildings other than those on the Hradšany mentioned by the chroniclers, we may assume that a township was growing up by the river at the feet of the Castle Hill. We have the testimony of Ibrahim Ibn Jacub, who speaks of Prague as "a great commercial town of stone-built houses." Ibrahim's visit must have taken place in the reign of Boleslav II. I conclude that he was talking of a town on the left bank of the Vltava, because others of his race who came here in that Prince's day are said to have been allowed to found a school in the Mala Strana quarter. Some fifty years later yet more Jews came to Prague bringing presents for the ruler, Prince Vratislav, and Bishop Gebhard. They were allowed to build twelve little houses on the outskirts of the town, which would be somewhere about the Harrachove. These Jews promised to be of good behaviour and to pay double taxes, but in three months their numbers had increased to seven

hundred, so half of them were ordered to go out over the river to where the old town now stands; another Jewish settlement was established there. The advent of these visitors is proof positive that Prague was becoming not only habitable but also a place of importance.

CHAPTER V

In which good and bad rulers of Bohemia make or mar the fortunes of the country, the points being chiefly in favour of the good rulers, despite the constant intrigues, quarrels and general misconduct of the Přemysls.

Of the harm done by Boleslav III, of the sons of Dubravka the Bohemian Princess, Boleslav the Brave and Vladivoj. Of a somewhat tiresome trio of brothers and how the line of Přemysl nearly died out. The romantic story of Ulrich and Božena the village maiden, and of their stout-hearted son Břetislav, who reigned from 1037 to 1055 and greatly restored the prestige of his country during those years. How St. Adalbert was recovered from Poland, and a few appropriate remarks on the subject. Of the buildings and other matters of interest which date from the tenth and eleventh centuries and are to be seen in Prague. Of the bridge built by Judith, Queen of Vladislav II, in 1167. Of some churches in Prague and the round chapels. Of Vratislav, first King of Bohemia, and his fights for the Empire. Of Břetislav II, and how he greatly exerted himself to extirpate paganism, forbidding pilgrimages to the shrines of heathen deities at Arkona on the Island of Rügen, Of Soběslav, who became hereditary cup-bearer of the Empire. Of Vladislav II, contemporary and ally of Frederick Barbarossa. Vladislav's crusade and campaigns in Italy. Vladislav founder of the monastery called Mount Zion at Strahov. About Strahov and the beauty and interest

thereof.



OLESLAV II had left dominions more extensive than any Slavonic State before or since could boast of; moreover, he left the name of Přemysl in high repute for piety and ability. Boleslav III, his son, undid all the good his predecessors had brought to their dominions and their reputation; in fact, within a few years of his accession he found himself stripped of all his belongings save Bohemia, and his hold on even that country was under dispute at times. It appears that Boleslav III was constitutionally unable to agree with anyone; contemporary chroniclers describe this Prince as cruel, avaricious and distrustful. The sons

of Czech have always had a strong objection to paying for what they do not want, and that is what Boleslav was always expecting of them. He became so unpopular among his own people, who were called upon to finance him in his troubles with his brothers, that they invited their Duke's cousin, Prince Vladivoj, brother of Boleslav the Brave of Poland, to intervene. Vladivoj died young, so his brother took charge of all that had been the Bohemian realm, and incorporated it with his own; Boleslav of Poland, it is said, even contemplated making Prague the capital of his Empire. There is no trace of anything he did for the city, so we must assume that he did not carry out his intention: he was probably prevented by the inevitable friction with the Germans, who always found some excuse for putting down any attempt at founding a strong Slavonic Empire. In this instance King Henry II intervened on behalf of Boleslav III, who had stooped to becoming a vassal of the German King, with the title of Duke. After the usual fighting, Boleslav III was restored to his country for a short period in which he distinguished himself by wholesale assassination of his opponents. He eventually died in Poland as prisoner of Boleslav the Brave. Meanwhile, what with his cantankerous brothers, with Polish ambitions and German ill-will, Bohemia was having a sorry time.

In all this unseemly wrangling among the members of the Přemysl family I find only one bright spot of human interest, and that is the little affair of Ulrich and Božena. All three brothers, Boleslav III, Jaromir and Ulrich, the last surviving Přemysls, were childless, and, failing heirs, their inheritance would pass to Poland, to the children of Dubravka. A Přemysl successor was wanted; Ulrich and Božena provided one. It is undoubtedly true that Ulrich was

already married when he encountered Božena, the beautiful village maiden, while she was washing the family linen at the village pump. It was a picturesque event, this meeting of the young prince and the village maiden, and has been satisfactorily illustrated by a patriotic Bohemian painter. You will find highly coloured reproductions of that artist's work in a shop window on the Narodni Třida, all illustrating events in the history of the Přemysl family, and when you see what Božena looked like you will not blame Ulrich. Anyway, Ulrich married Božena. How he managed this without causing complications is not our affair; the ancient chroniclers were satisfied; they insist on the legality of this union, and as we know them to have been very particular in such matters, it is not for us to discuss the point. You must also remember that Christianity was yet young among the Czechs and that they had been strongly addicted to the amiable habit of polygamy. You may also gather what was the attitude of Bohemian chroniclers from the remark which Dalimil, the contemporary of Ulrich, puts into the latter's mouth: "Rather would I entrust myself to a Bohemian peasant girl than that I should take a German queen for my wife. Every heart clings to its own nation; therefore would a German woman less favour my language. A German woman will have German servants; German will she teach my children." From this remark you will understand that the Bohemians thoroughly appreciated their neighbours.

Ulrich reverted to type, and once again the stout peasant stock of Czech came to the rescue of a fading dynasty; the son of Ulrich and Božena, Břetislav I, was destined to restore the house of Přemysl to a position more in keeping with its great traditions. Before succeeding his father, Břetislav was given an

opportunity of proving what good stock he came from. Boleslav of Poland had died, his sons quarrelled over their heritage, and their dissensions gave the neighbours an excuse for interfering. One of these neighbours was King Stephen of Hungary, afterwards called "the Saint." He had only recently been converted from paganism, but he took part in this Polish dispute just as if he had been a ripe old Christian monarch of some standing. Stephen had the happy thought of taking Moravia for himself, no doubt in pious memory of his ancestor who first stole it. The same idea occurred to Ulrich of Bohemia, who sent young Břetislav into Moravia, where the latter defeated the Magyars rather badly; Moravia thereupon was added to Bohemia, whereas Slovakia remained with Hungary.

Břetislav failed to realize his ideal of forming a strong national Slavonic State, independent of German rule—he had too strong an Emperor against him, Henry III; but he certainly restored Bohemia and the Přemysl dynasty to a position of some importance in Europe. He was, however, unable to shake off the German grasp of his country; German armies had arrived before Prague and threatened that city with destruction, so Břetislav submitted to the inevitable, paid tribute to the Emperor and spent the last and peaceful years of his reign in restoring order and prosperity to his country. The city of Prague benefited by the bravery of Břetislav, for as a result of that Prince's successful campaign against the Poles the body of St. Adalbert, whom you have met before as Bishop of Prague, was captured by the Bohemians and restored to their capital. There was, I believe, some trouble about this operation of Břetislav. The ruler and people of Poland had appointed Adalbert as their patron saint; he had been

killed in their country, had been buried there some time, and had even a cathedral to himself at Gnesen. The Pope launched a bull or two at Břetislav over this business. I do not know whether any of them took effect. The Bohemians were ordered to return Adalbert to the Poles, but I do not know that they did so, neither have I seen him lying about in Prague, probably because I have not looked for him. Adalbert is the patron saint of Emaus in Prague among many other churches in Bohemia, but no doubt he can find time to patronize Poland as well. Anyway, I do not anticipate any strained relations between the Republics of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on this account; both countries are more interested in a yet older fossilized form of creation—coal to wit.

With the best will in the world it is difficult to rise to any enthusiasm over the majority of Bohemia's rulers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There seems to have been nothing of beauty or interest in individual Přemysls to break the monotony of endless quarrels between brother claimants to the throne and appeals of unsuccessful rivals to their German neighbour, whose decision would be entirely guided by the desire for a further weakening of Bohemia. Prague has little to show in the way of architectural interest dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but what there is is good. I doubt whether any other city in Europe has much to show of that period of transition from Romanesque to Gothic: whatever there was has generally been pulled down or built over when the great flood of Gothic poured over Europe some century or so later. But if there is little to see in Prague which can be clearly traced to the two centuries under discussion, it is of interest in showing the expansion of the town since Libuša's

prophecy concerning it. The Hradšany came in for some attention. Another church, dedicated to All Saints and built up very near the Basilica of St. George, dates back to the eleventh century. There are, or were till recently, distinct traces of work dating from that century to be found in the Karmelitska Ulice, that thoroughfare which leads from the Malo Stranské Náměsti towards Smichov. We have already noted that the Jews had settled in this part of Prague towards the end of the tenth century and that some of them had been ordered across the river to another settlement of their kind, so there must have been good steady business to be done in Prague. I have often wondered how and where people crossed the Vltava previous to 1167 when Judith, Queen of Vladislav II, built a bridge very near the site of the present Charles Bridge. Judith's bridge was eventually carried away by floods, but the Mala Strana bridgehead tower remains; you see it with its squat tower and broad chisel-shaped steeple, rising up beside the more graceful and ornate tower of the present bridge, which was new in the early years of the fourteenth century. The stout tower built by Judith is a very interesting study of architecture; it has had a long life of usefulness, having been used for many years as a lock-up for the froward youth of the neighbourhood, and it is still inhabited. This sturdy remnant of Judith's bridge, which you can see from my terrace, is the only trace I have found of means of communication between the two banks of the river. There must have been considerable traffic, as we know, for instance, how St. Wenceslaus was in the habit of going to and fro between Hradšany and Vyšehrad. The river was probably fordable in several places, but it is rather a treacherous stream with a

swift current and an uncertain bottom; some Hungarian troops attempted to cross it by a ford on a certain memorable occasion, and were swept away to perdition. Yet even before Judith's time there must have been need of a bridge. The town and various settlements around it were growing up, as is proved by the number of churches which were considered necessary or appropriate. The Hradšany was very well off in that respect. Then there was the Church of St. Cosmas and Damian, where you now see the towers of Emaus, and in the twelfth century, if not at the end of the eleventh, the foundations of the Tyn Church were laid. This period also has left three quaint little Romanesque chapels in various parts of Prague. They are very well preserved, these little round chapels, and the fact that they are pretty far apart suggests the extent to which Prague had expanded by the end of the twelfth century. There is one of these chapels dedicated to St. Martin, on Vyšehrad, another to St. Longinus, rather difficult to find, some half-mile north-east of Emaus; and a third, the oldest of all, the Chapel of the Holy Cross, stands near the old Town Tower of the Charles Bridge. There is also a seventeenth-century *baroque* imitation of these Romanesque chapels under the riverside slope of the Letna Hill, which is not worth troubling about.

While Christianity was striking its roots yet deeper into the soil of Bohemia, the rulers of that country were being drawn into the quarrel between the spiritual and the would-be temporal head of the Church; the "Investiture Strife" gave Vratislav, son of Břetislav I, an opportunity of strengthening his independence and increasing the importance of his country. He took sides with Emperor Henry IV against one of the strongest of the Popes, Gregory

VII. The Emperor's Bohemian allies took part in many of that monarch's battles, chiefly against the Saxons, who appear to have been hereditary enemies of the sons of Czech, and the victory at Hohenburg on the Unstrutt in 1075 is attributed to the bravery of the Bohemian troops. Six years later Bohemian troops helped Henry IV in his attack on Rome, and their leader, Wiprecht of Groitch, was one of the first to scale the walls of the Eternal City. The Czechs have always been good hearty fighters, and of the three hundred who set out to help the Emperor against Rome only nine returned home to Bohemia. The Germans, even in those early days, were thorough utilitarians.


ST. MAR
VYŠEHRA



As reward for his many and great services Henry IV promoted Vratislav to the rank of King. It appears to have been, as it were, brevet-rank only; it was not hereditary. Nevertheless it was a great day for Prague when the ruler of Bohemia was crowned with the golden diadem, presented by the Emperor himself. There was no doubt that King Vratislav had earned the distinction—he had done well by himself, by his country and by his ally the Emperor—so no doubt the Basilica Church of St. George on the Hradšany and its congregation did all honour to the crowning of Bohemia's first King. It is also interesting to note that Vratislav had "contributed to the party funds"; he had lent money to the Emperor. This should strike a homely, familiar note among us.

The frescoes in St. George's Church probably date from the time of King Vratislav; there was a distinct revival of love for things beautiful in those days when the peoples were beginning to see the light that was rising, gently but persistently, over the subsiding chaos that had claimed Europe for the past three centuries and more. True, the world was still a confused and worrying sort of place to live in; apart from the soul-sickening public quarrels between Rome and the Empire, there was a good deal of private enterprise in that line between all manner of petty potentates. Nevertheless there was some improvement to be noted, first in the tendency of fostering national feeling in place of a confused cosmopolitanism, secondly by the effects of the Cluny movement in its endeavour to reform the Church. The tendency of the time expressed itself in beautiful illuminated manuscripts, and Prague is lucky in the possession of many such. It is probable that Duke Břetislav II, grandson of the first prince of

that name, encouraged the expression of his people's religious and national sentiments, in those illuminated manuscripts of the Bible, of Missals, and the "Cantionales," those works so beautiful in design, so loyal and sincere of execution, their colours as fresh as when the artist's hand withdrew reluctantly from the finishing touch.

Břetislav II had had a misfortune in his youth; he had caused a courtier of the name of Zderad to be murdered. Zderad had insulted the young Prince; what with that and the courtier's unpronounceable name it is no wonder that Břetislav was roused to act indiscreetly. He found it advisable to spend some years abroad after this little affair, and only returned home when his father's neck was broken out hunting. Břetislav took up the anti-pagan line very strongly. It seems strange, but there was still a certain amount of paganism lurking in secret places in Bohemia. It was not safe to indulge in heathen rites at home, but there were places abroad where it was still possible. One of these places is still a fashionable holiday resort, the Island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea. Here there was a temple at Arkona, to Svantovit, the god of air and light, besides a local and household deity president over all Rügen, called Rugevit. I can quite imagine a couple of Czech householders, law-abiding and good church-goers, conspiring to get away from the family for a bit and take a trip to Rügen, just for a flutter with the old gods. What with the secrecy required, as both Ruler and Church forbade the practice of worshipping Slavonic deities, the practice must have been quite as exciting as *petits chevaux*.

Whether it was this interference with the Rügen pilgrims or his action in stamping out the custom of holding religious services in the language of the

country, Břetislav II was not popular; he was eventually murdered by some of his nobles. The successors of Břetislav seem to have been cantankerous and inefficient; it is wearisome to read of those hopeless people throwing away the fruits of good work done by such stout fellows as Břetislav I or even the hearty heathen Boleslav. In all this distressing muddle of brothers, cousins, etc., fighting, getting beaten and running off to the German Emperor to howl to him about it, there are occasional bright spots. So for instance, one Soběslav, who came to the throne in 1125, and found things in the usual mess, with half the country against him; nevertheless he managed to beat Emperor Lothair most heartily. Lothair had crossed the Giant Mountains in order to support the claims of some other Přemysl, had met Soběslav's hastily gathered army at Kulm, near Teplitz, and had been handsomely beaten. Not only that, but Lothair and the remnants of his army were surrounded, and it was up to the Bohemian Prince to impose terms this time. Soběslav was thus able to improve the status of Bohemia considerably, and he added to his country's dignity by receiving the high office of hereditary cup-bearer of the Empire, from Conrad III, Lothair's successor. Cupbearer in perpetuam to an Empire sounds very important and suggests great possibilities of influencing people. As a matter of fact the office gave Bohemia certain rights within the Empire which went some way to balance the obligations; nevertheless German ties were fastened yet more securely on the sons of Czech.

Soběslav was succeeded by his nephew Vladislav, another Přemysl to rise to royal rank. This Prince passed through the usual troubles before securing the throne to himself, and was perforce driven to invoke

the German Emperor Conrad in order to establish his sovereign rights over the whole of Bohemia and Moravia. The reign of Vladislav I (as King) is relieved by a certain picturesqueness, by a touch of romance, from the usual sordid course of events in the life of the Přemysl dynasty with its rivalries, treachery, conspiracies and other social amenities of the time. There is even something picturesque in the fact that the Pope had felt obliged to send Cardinal Guido with a special mission to establish order among the Bohemian clergy. These amiable gentlemen would persist in entering the bonds of matrimony; if Bohemian ladies were as attractive then as they are to-day, I feel the sincerest sympathy with those gallant priests. It is easy to imagine what trouble arose when Cardinal Guido insisted that all married priests should either separate from their wives or renounce their dignities, and there were some clerics of the highest rank, among them a couple of deans, who were called upon to this act of renunciation. The immediate result of the Pope's interference was that the Bohemians chased his legate from Prague to Eger, where the latter succumbed to his injuries. This was certainly a picturesque incident, but it was not appreciated by the Papacy, which was hotly in favour of Cluniac principles. There were other picturesque events pending which forced a compromise even on Rome; the second crusade, much encouraged by Cluny, was in course of preparation, and as all Christian countries of Europe were expected to take part, the time was not propitious for bringing pressure to bear on Bohemia's ruler. He had not arrived at royal dignity when the Guido episode took place; it was within the first year of his reign. The royal crown was bestowed on Vladislav a few years later by another romantic

personage, Frederick Barbarossa, in consideration of Bohemian assistance against the Emperor's enemies in Northern Italy. Vladislav marched an army of ten thousand men from Bohemia, took part in the siege of Milan, and himself killed Dacio, one of the leaders of the Milanese.

I doubt whether Vladislav is entitled to an effigy with feet crossed, as his part in the second crusade was not remarkable. He took his troops to Asia, left them there under the charge of King Louis VII of France, and returned to his own country via Constantinople, where he indulged in a little intriguing with the Greek Emperor Emanuel. This seems to have given the flamboyant Greeks the impression that Bohemia's King had become a vassal of their Emperor; they were disillusioned some years later when Vladislav assisted Stephen III on to the throne of Hungary against the Emperor Emanuel's choice.

It is all very fine and thrilling to read about picturesque princes, romantic rulers, and we shall hear of several in the history of Prague, but they are not necessarily an asset to a country that wishes to develop in peace and consolidate within its own boundaries. It is difficult to see what good Vladislav did by his trip to Asia with the crusaders; he left his troops in charge of a foreigner and created a distinctly wrong impression on another people while on his way home. Again, he was romantically brave in Italy at the head of a Bohemian army which was much in excess of the numbers required of him by his agreement with Barbarossa. Of this large army very few returned to their native country. There is, however, one deed by which Vladislav becomes entitled to undying merit: he founded the Monastery

of Strahov.

Where the strip of land which connects the Hradšany Hill with that of Petřin, mentioned in Libuša's forecast, dips a bit before rising again, there Vladislav laid the foundations of Strahov. This happened in 1140, what time Vladislav was beset by enemies of his own house, who disputed his right to the throne; he was even assailed in his capital, Prague, by another Přemysl, Conrad of Znoymo. Nevertheless the walls of Strahov Monastery rose over the terraced valley that dips down into Prague between Petřin and Castle Hill. The good monks of Strahov, illumined by the light that spread from Cluny, soon made of their house a home of learning and piety, a haunt of peace where weary souls found rest from strife and turmoil; Mount Zion, the people called this sacred spot, and the name still clings to it despite the many vicissitudes through which it has passed. It must have been a-building when the enemies of Vladislav attacked the city, it was destroyed when the Hussite wars broke out over Bohemia, and it suffered at the hands of the Swedes during the War of Thirty Years. But the good work that Vladislav the King had started on Mount Zion of Strahov was not allowed to perish; the monastery re-arose from its ashes after each visitation, with renewed strength, arose to look out over Prague from its terraced height. While looking out over the city with the eye of a friend full of loving understanding, the congregation on Mount Zion pursued the even tenor of its way, collecting treasures for the benefit of future generations. The library, a wonderful sight and soothing after the turmoil in the streets of Prague, contains many of those collected treasures, instruments used by the astronomer Tycho de Brahe, the works of Racusani the philosopher, a gift of Sir

Thomas Saville to Hajek the sixteenth-century biologist, astronomer, professor of Prague University, who had studied in Milan and Bologna and had visited England in 1589. Then there are the poetical works of Elizabeth Weston of a noble English family, who had made her home in Prague and died here in 1612. A very learned lady this, but, it would seem, unhappy. You may see her tomb in St. Thomas's Church in Mala Strana, just beyond that imposing Jesuit Church of St. Nicholas, on it the following inscription:—

D. O. M. S. B. M.

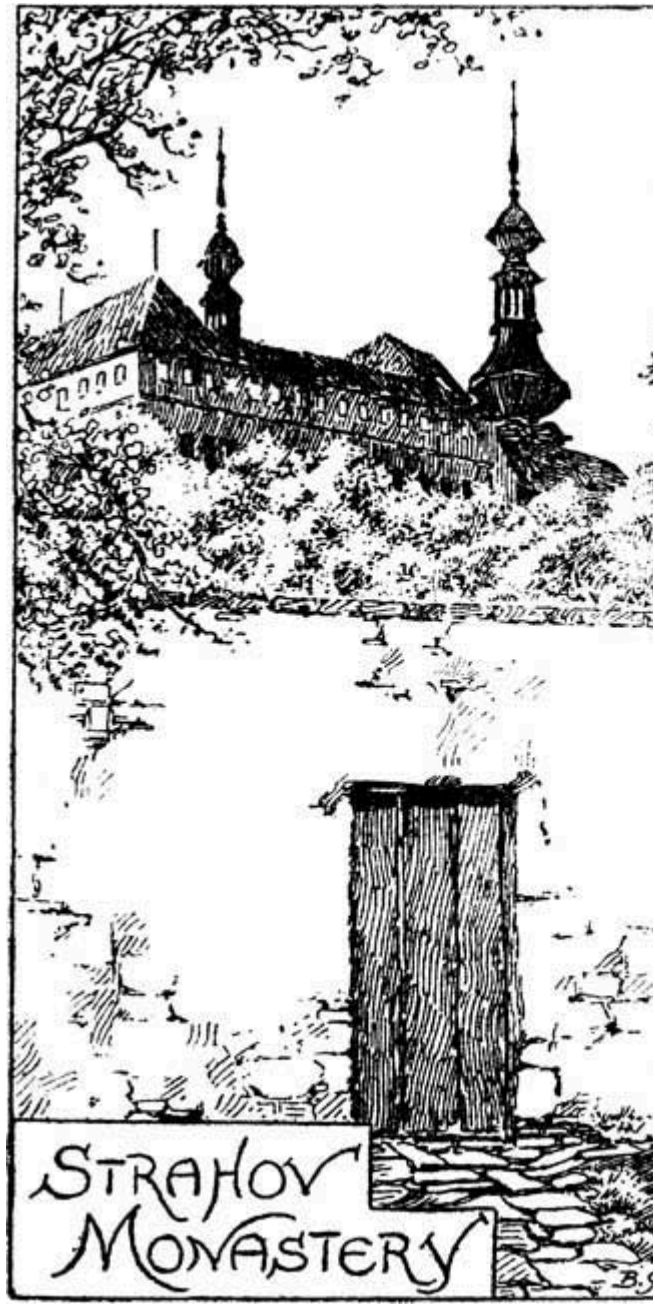
Elisabethae Joannae Westonae

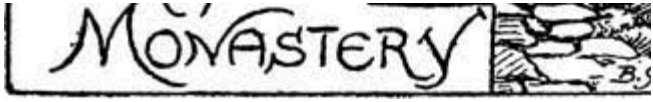
Nobilitate patriae Britanniae,
Seculi nostri Sulpitiae,
Cui nomen dant litterae illibati

Minervae floris
Suadae decoris
Musarum delicii
Foeminarum exempli.

Strahov Monastery has, I hope, passed through its vicissitudes and has entered at last into an existence of undisturbed usefulness. Of its earliest appearance there are neither record nor any traces left; the storms that passed over Bohemia have obliterated any outward sign of the Mount Zion which Vladislav founded and whither generations of the pious sons of Czech went up to find peace. One of the first of these was Vladislav himself; weary of war and worn out by internal dissensions, he abdicated and retired to Strahov to end his days.

Strahov was entirely rebuilt in the seventeenth century, and has withstood the enemies of Bohemia from without and within, taking no irreparable harm from the open attack of Frederick of Prussia in the eighteenth century or the covert attack of those hostile to the faith it has stood for down the ages. The quaintly shaped spires of St. Mary's Church with its three aisles, its glorious organ the largest in all Bohemia, stand out in bold relief amidst the terraced garden and orchards tended with fond care. The belfry is silent, its bells were sacrificed to the cause of the Habsburgs in the Great War; you may see plaster casts of them in the library. Here you may feast your eye on gloriously illuminated manuscripts and wonder at the ingenious inventions of one or other good brother who sojourned here a while on his way to the "Abiding City." There is, for instance, a model of the first lightning-conductor. Country folk, when they first saw it, crossed themselves, thinking this the work of the devil. The visitors' book in the library shows signatures of men famous in history, among them our Nelson, who, in company of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, visited Strahov on September 29, 1800. The strict rules of the congregation of Premonstratensians allow ladies to visit only the library, which is approached from the outer courtyard; the picture gallery is unfortunately closed to them, a small collection but of value, its gem is Dürer's "Rosary Feast."


STRAHOV
MONASTERY



So stands Strahov, Mount Zion, between the Castle Hill and Petřin looking out over Prague from its terraced gardens and its bower of fruit-trees. It is always beautiful, this haunt of old-world peace, whether the garden and the orchard be all a mass of blossom creamy white in the sunshine, pale purples in the shadows, in the shade of midsummer foliage when Golden Prague below glitters in the midday heat, or in autumn when the valley is all a blaze of gold and russet, and the distant hills stand out in strong blue masses. Winter also brings fascination. Strahov, its many windows severely closed and reflecting a sullen sky, seems to stand out more austerely from among the gaunt tree-trunks, their grey and sombre outlines broken by a fantasia of gnarled and twisted branches glittering under snow. But within those walls, in the high altar's mysterious depth, in the long bare corridors and tiny cells where useful work continues as it has done for centuries, there is the "peace that passeth understanding."

CHAPTER VI

Deals in succession with five Kings of the House of Přemysl, Ottokar I, Wenceslaus I, Ottokar II, Wenceslaus II and III, with whom the male line of this famous dynasty became extinct. This chapter also touches on the story of the Jews of Prague and tells about

one Dalibor who provided a hero for Smetana's opera of that name. Mentions buildings and improvements undertaken by the Kings above named; tells of their troubles and trials, and how for a time they overcame them. Introduces the first Habsburg to Bohemia and makes mention of other visitors to Prague.



N the death of Vladislav II, in fact on his retirement to the cloistered peace of Strahov, it became evident that there were too many Přemysls about in Bohemia to make for that country's peace and contentment.

These worthies were constantly falling over each other in the scramble for the throne, and their disunited efforts resulted in ten changes in the person of the sovereign over a period of twenty-four years. This filled Bohemia's German neighbours with unholy joy and brought the distracted country more and more under Teuton domination, so much so that Frederick Barbarossa thought fit to summon one or other pretender and a bunch of obstreperous Bohemian nobles to appear before him at the Imperial Court at Ratisbon, in order that he might exercise the right he had assumed of settling the affairs of the Přemysl dynasty. By way of a picturesque touch to the proceedings, Barbarossa is said to have arranged for a suitable display of executioners' axes at the meeting. Nevertheless this pretty imperial conceit settled no affairs one way or another, and it was not until Přemysl Ottokar became undisputed ruler of Bohemia, and eventually of Moravia as well, that order of a sort was restored. Death had also been busy among members of the Přemysl family and had brought considerable relief to the distracted country.

By the time Ottokar I had settled himself firmly on the throne he found that the confused, almost anarchic, state which Germany had drifted into could mean many advantages to Bohemia, if the situation were properly handled. The House of Hohenstaufen began to go downhill after the death of Henry VI, and we find a lusty Welf, Otto, clamouring for the imperial diadem, assisted by a number of German Electors. This gave the ruler of Bohemia his opportunity, and Ottokar took it. His son Wenceslaus I and grandson Ottokar II followed the same line of policy, a purely dynastic one. They took sides with one or other of the rivals for the crown of the Holy

Roman Empire, changing as considerations of domestic interests required, and making skilful use of the perennial quarrel between Empire and Papacy over the Investitures. While the Hohenstaufens were trickling out until the luckless Conradin lost his head at Naples, while fierce Welfs like Otto of Brunswick wrecked themselves on the rock of papal insistence, Bohemia's rulers were profiting. Ottokar I seems to have been particularly astute in this line of business. He supported two rival Emperors in turn and got something useful out of both, he upheld the cause of Pope Innocent III against one or other imperial rival and induced that pontiff to recognize the Přemysl's title to royalty. Ottokar even found himself sufficiently strong to try a throw with the Pope himself on the vexed subject of Investiture, simply by way of a little private sport on his own account and not as part of the general European brawl. It happened that Andrew, Bishop of Prague, was one of those didactic prelates who insisted on all the little things the Papacy was out for—immunity for his clerics from the temporal law-courts, from taxes, and so on. Above all, Andrew was strong on the right of conferring ecclesiatical office, albeit he had himself accepted investiture at the hands of Ottokar. This led to quite a hearty quarrel in which Andrew got the worst of it; he had to seek refuge in Rome, whence he let off all the customary fulminations, declaring Bohemia to be under interdict and so on. Nobody in Bohemia took the least notice of Andrew's little efforts; Church and people went solidly with their King on this occasion, and carried on their devotional exercises as before.

We have to thank Ottokar for several picturesque flashes which brighten up the gloomy picture of this period. So for instance, he took a trip to Maintz,

where he was solemnly crowned as King. No doubt Prague would have been a more suitable setting for this function, but Ottokar had so timed his arrangements as to come in for a double event, for Philip of Suabia with assistance from Bohemia's ruler, secured the German crown at the same time. Then again this thoughtful Přemysl Ottokar provided Bohemia with yet another patron saint of the blood royal, and not by the old-fashioned family method of killing a relative. Ottokar had married Constance of Hungary, and it was their daughter Agnes who next joined the distinguished and hallowed company of Ludmilla and Wenceslaus. Agnes, educated by St. Hedwig, early distinguished herself by refusing to marry Emperor Frederick II. She decided to become a bride of heaven instead, founded the Order of Clarissa, entered it herself and eventually died as abbess in the odour of sanctity. Frederick consoled himself with one wife after another (a wife seems to have lasted no time in those days), his third and last being Isabella, daughter of King John of England, whose son, Richard of Cornwall, also comes into the story a little farther on in this chapter. St. Agnes was held in great reverence by the citizens of Brüx, is still so held, I hope, for she did them a good turn in 1424. The Pragers had been indulging in a feud with the Brüxers, and had taken a bad beating on one occasion. The former prepared a surprise attack and marched on Brüx hoping to take it by a midnight assault. St. Agnes happened to be watching while the fat burghers slept; she roused them from slumber, drove them to the walls and aided them in beating off the attacking Pragers, Then the Brüxers went to sleep again. It is also pleasant to reflect that Agnes's refusal to marry Frederick did not mar the excellent relations that sprang up between that monarch and

Ottokar whenever the latter happened to want something out of the former. It is true that Ottokar had changed about a good deal between one rival emperor and another, but he remained loyal to Frederick in the end, and the latter outlived him by some thirty years. The relations between the two must have been quite pleasant and comfortable, as you may judge from the concessions made by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to Bohemia's King. A pretty and tactful compliment it was on the part of Frederick to allow Ottokar's heralds, when preceding their royal master to the Imperial Diet, to carry lighted torches on poles before him, and this to signify that the Bohemian excursionists were at liberty to burn down anything they had a mind to. It is these little considerations that have ever played such an important though unrecognized part in the diplomatic relations between nations. The Bohemians are still quite nice about accepting little acts of kindness and consideration from anybody.

Přemysl Ottokar I had reigned for twenty-eight years when his son Wenceslaus, first King of that name, succeeded him, and, strange to say, practically without opposition. By this time Bohemia had risen to a position of importance in the councils of Europe not only by the skilful, not to say artful, policy of its rulers, but also owing to the growing prosperity of the country which was reflected in the life of Prague its capital.

Prague consisted of three distinct settlements each apparently under separate administration. There was the old original settlement on Vyšehrad which seems to have been under the sway of the abbot presiding over the monastic institutions on that hill. Then there was Libuša's foundation on the Hradšany and

extending down to the river, probably under the rule of the King's lieutenant or burgrave, and finally the Old Town on the right bank with its own municipal institutions. These three parts of Prague were separately walled in, but little remains of any architectural work earlier in date than the Kings of Bohemia of whom this Wenceslaus is generally counted as the first though his father's royal rank had been recognized by the Pope and at least two emperors.

By the time Wenceslaus I came to the throne, the changes were in full swing which were to lead up to the golden age of Prague a century or so later. We have already noticed a tendency of German immigrants towards Prague and other cities of Bohemia. The Germans, mostly tradesmen and artisans, came with the civic instinct well developed, whereas the sons of Czech were, and still are, more of the fields and forests and the free life without walls. The Germans, bringing with them the appreciation of walled security, were responsible in great measure for the fortified cities of Bohemia and Moravia. It cannot be said of the later Přemysl rulers preceding the Kings of Bohemia that they were inspired by the founder's ardour. Then again the Bohemian nobility had risen to a strong sense of its own importance encouraged by the lamentable dissensions in the reigning house, and not uninfluenced by an infusion of German blood; they also had taken to walling themselves in on convenient hill-tops. As these nobles were become increasingly troublesome, it is not surprising that Přemysl rulers induced more and more Germans to settle in the cities of Bohemia and Moravia, thus starting a steady-going middle class which might be expected to pay for peace and protection and which

when walled in was conveniently in hand for the tax-collector's operations. That this scheme was beginning to succeed even in the early days of the twelfth century is proved by the fact that Jews were flocking to Prague in ever increasing numbers, so there must have been business doing in the capital and other cities of the land, under conditions of reasonable security. It may be taken for granted that improvements and additions to the defences of Prague, the decoration of the town by stately churches and other monuments, however much directed by the sovereign, were paid for by the burghers.

The story of the Jews in Prague makes very interesting reading; it is, however, beyond the scope of this work to give more than an indication of the part that the Children of Israel took in the development of the city. You will remember that a travelling commercial gentleman of Semitic origin, one Ibrahim Ibn Jacub, had visited Prague in the tenth century and had noted the place with approval. As far as I can make out he makes no reference to a colony of his co-religionists already in existence here, so the story that Jews settled here before the destruction of Jerusalem seems little likely. It was, indeed, averred by the Jews of Prague that they had their settlement here long before Libuša launched her prophecies, before the birth of Christ in fact, so that they at least might be considered guiltless of the Divine Tragedy on Golgotha. Their legend calls the place Buiarnum, which suggests some acquaintance with the Celtic tribe that rested for a while in Bohemia, gave its name to the country and then wandered to Bavaria, where it repeated the performance. I find this legend of the Jews difficult to believe despite my earnest endeavour to find

something of truth in Saga's ebullitions. How, for instance, is it possible that the gifted lady Libuša did not discover the advantages of a Jewish colony and that she omitted to prophesy a contribution out of the sons of Israel towards her new foundation? No, if there had been any Jews within signing distance of this city when it arose, Praha would have started with a mortgage on her, and the entertainment tax would probably be double what it is this day.

You may take it as a general principle that every country has the Jews it deserves. If you oppress them, trample them in the mud as was customary in pre-war Russia, they will turn and rend you when their turn comes round; this is happening in Russia at present. If you despoil a Jew by violence, he will do the same to you by guile, and you may or may not be left with your full complement of cuticle. If you treat the Jew as one entitled to equal rights with equal responsibilities, you will find him an excellent citizen.

As elsewhere in the Europe of the Middle Ages, the Children of Israel in Prague were confined to certain quarters of the town. We have heard how a number of them were ordered to leave the Hradsšany side of the river and settle in the Old Town. The quarter allotted to the Jews was in that part of the Old Town known as Josefov, and the Old Ghetto stood approximately in that complex of narrow streets between the river at the Rudolfinum Bridge and the broad thoroughfare Mikulašska Třida. I could point out the place from my terrace if I were minded to give its locality away and to depart from my principle of making every man choose his own point of view.

The life of the Ghetto centred round the old Jewish Town Hall, with its quaint, indeed rather unsightly, tower on which is a clock that you are expected to treat as one of the sights of the place. On the face of this clock the numbers are marked by Hebrew letters and the hands of this clock move from right to left. The fact that the Jews had a Town Hall to themselves in ancient Prague is significant; it stood for the semi-autonomous constitution of the Jewish community which was subject to the sovereign as a corporate body with its own municipal institutions and responsibilities. This peculiar segregation of the Jewish community as an *imperium in imperio*, apart in matters of local administration as in matters of religion, from their fellow-citizens, must have done a great deal towards forming the character of its members, and the result has been of advantage to the city of Prague in times of stress.

Close by the Jewish Town Hall stands another yet more ancient landmark of cultural history, the "Staronová Škola", or Old New School. Close by the side of that broad thoroughfare the Mikulasška Třida, with the electric trams clanging along it, stands this strange temple. Dr. Jeřabek, in his excellent booklet on *Beautiful Old Prague* likens this ancient building to a gigantic hand of Aaron held up in blessing over the Ghetto; I think you will agree with me that this is a very happy simile. Built in the severe style of transition from Romanesque to Gothic, of massive stone walls heavily buttressed, with steep red-tiled sloping roof, blackened with age and the grime of the walled-in Ghetto, this temple served not only as a place of worship for the sons of Israel, but also as a casket for the remains of a yet older one said to date back to the sixth century and probably the oldest temple on the Continent of Europe. The present fane

itself is of venerable age and aspect; its building fell into the reign of King Wenceslaus I and Ottokar II, and took ten years, from 1250 to 1260. Men only are allowed to worship in the inner temple, dingy and dark; whatever light penetrates through the narrow windows calls forth reluctant glints from the many brass candelabra, work of long centuries ago. Women may look on from an outer court through glazed openings that look like gun-embrasures.

The Jews required strong defences in the dark days of the Middle Ages; their Ghetto was shut off from the rest of the city by heavy iron gates, but even these proved of no avail when once the mob got loose and undertook a raid. On several occasions organized massacres took toll of the "Children of the Ghetto," who on other occasions were banished, bag and baggage, from Prague and driven out into the country. Though now and again they suffered intolerably, yet were they on the whole better treated than in many other parts of Europe, were allowed to develop along their own lines, and produced many men of mark and learning, and women of distinction, among the latter one who was raised to the nobility by a Habsburg Emperor and King of Bohemia, Bas-Schevi called "of Treunberg." Among the prominent men whose light shone out beyond the Ghetto of Prague, I may mention the poet-Rabbi Abigdor Caro, the bibliophile Rabbi Oppenheim whose library is now in Oxford, then the chronicler and mathematician David Gans, a friend of Keppler and Tycho de Brahe, and Solomon de Medigo de Candia the pupil of Galileo Galilei.



Tall modern houses look down upon the smoke-

blackened temple; the Ghetto gates have fallen long ago, and nothing remains of its former crowded dwelling-places but a quaint ramshackle old house of Oriental aspect, and the old cemetery, Beth-Chaim, "the House of Life," as the Jews call it. This is no doubt the oldest existing and still preserved Jewish cemetery in Europe. Here tombstones stand closely crowded together, or lean one against the other under the thickets of ancient elder-bushes; glints of sunlight flicker through the dense foliage over graven sign of stag, of vine or flower, or the hand upraised in benediction of some son of Aaron, light up Hebrew script in its severely decorative characters, inscriptions half effaced but not forgotten, for careful record has been kept. This old burial ground seems far removed from Central Europe, yet it is intimately connected with the story of Prague. Though old landmarks are vanishing, yet a mist of legend hangs close over this strange, alien part of the city, legends of cabalists, reputed sorcerers like Aaron Spira or the more famous Rabbi Jehuda ben Bezalel Loew. The latter is supposed to have been in league with the Powers of Darkness which bestowed on him superhuman gifts. This Rabbi is said to have created an Homunculus which became so troublesome that it had to be incarcerated. The spot chosen as prison for this evil being was high up in the wall of the temple. A row of iron clamps leads up to a small door on the outside wall facing the Mikulašska Třida, leads up to where Homunculus is still believed to be in durance.

Prague got better Jews than it deserved, for they showed great loyalty to the city of their adoption, and, despite persecution, even took an active part in the defence of the town. This happened towards the end of the Thirty Years' War, when the Swedes were

making this part of Europe unsafe. The Swedes broke into Prague by the Strahov Gate and attempted to seize the Old Town. They had almost succeeded, for the usual precautions against surprise had been neglected, but luckily the students, butchers and Jews of Prague managed to rally to the defence. After fierce fighting on the Charles Bridge, the Swedes had to abandon their attempt on the Old Town and retired altogether. On this occasion the Jews showed not only public spirit but commendable bravery, and were rewarded by the Emperor with a banner, a mighty imposing affair with ten poles, as it takes ten men to carry it; you may see this interesting trophy in the old temple still.

The Jews of Prague have continued to do good work not only for and in the city of their adoption, but well beyond its confines, both in public utility work and in science. It is especially in the science of healing that the Jews of Prague have risen to eminence, not only by reason of their depth of learning and their unremitting labour, but also by the generosity and impartiality which actuates them in their dealings with sufferers. I myself have personal knowledge of such instances, and I speak of people as I find them.

No doubt some of the Jews joined in the picturesque cry which did so much to cheer up our Christian enemies of the Central Powers, "Gott strafe England!" but I cannot quite imagine any responsible son of Israel doing so with Christian fervour; the "jealous God" of the Hebrews, having reserved to Himself the right of vengeance, would be sure to resent any instructions from "the sheep of His pasture" as to how a case of the kind should be dealt with. Moreover, the punishment of England may safely be left in the

hands of her politicians, who are also in one sense or another "Chosen People."

When rewarding those who distinguished themselves in the defence of Prague against the Swedes, the Emperor also remembered the butchers of the town. These stout fellows brought to their guild, as tokens of imperial gratitude and goodwill, the permission to bear as cognizance the White Lion of Bohemia clutching an axe; a very rampant lion reinforced by a double tail—in fact "some lion," more power to him!

Of Wenceslaus II there is not much to relate in regard to lasting monuments of his reign in the capital of his kingdom. He was kept thoroughly busy with the quarrels between Pope and Emperor, taking sides as best suited his country's interests, making for safety as a rule. He also found time for a private quarrel with Leopold, Duke of Austria, but he also took that ruler's part against the Emperor Frederick II as occasion served. While Central Europe and the Holy Roman Empire was thus disporting itself, a diversion was caused by a particularly noxious swarm of Tartars which had broken loose from somewhere in Asia, probably from the region of Lake Baikal. They swept over Russia, swamping the domains of the disunited princes of that country, defeated Poles and Silesians at Liegnitz, and generally set up a healthy scare in disordered Europe. Wenceslaus rose to the occasion like a good stout Přemysl. He fortified the passes leading into Bohemia from Silesia, and there his sturdy soldiery defeated the Tartars, who turned off towards Moravia, Hungary and Austria, and vanished again

from Europe as quickly as they had come. Thereupon Pope and Emperor, Bohemian King and Austrian Duke, and all the smaller fry, resumed their fighting of each other, launching bulls and banns and such-like amenities into space on the chance of some one or other being affected thereby. The Bohemian nobility thought fit to add to the gaiety of nations by starting an insurrection against Wenceslaus, a movement led, according to time-honoured custom, by the King's son Ottokar, who had been entrusted with the government of Moravia. This Ottokar eventually ascended the throne of Bohemia as second King of that name, and became one of the most notable rulers of his time and race.

The early days of Ottokar II are noteworthy on account of the close connection established between Bohemia and Austria which led to endless complications and eventual disaster for the former country. Ottokar thought fit to marry Adela, sister of Duke Frederick of Austria, Frederick the Warlike, the last of the long line of Babenberg. The lady was forty-six, Ottokar twenty-five, but that does not matter when there is a chance of inheriting something. Ottokar was elected Duke by the Estates of Austria, and endeavoured to incorporate Styria into his dominions. In this he met with opposition from Bela, King of Hungary, with whom he came to an agreement after the usual fighting. Thereupon Ottokar turned his attention to the heathen Prussians, who were supposed to be getting ripe for conversion to Christianity. He defeated them in several battles, which made his task much easier, and founded a strong city, named Königsberg after him, to keep the Prussians from back-sliding.

It is interesting to note that Ottokar's policy brought

him into a certain degree of contact with England. The Holy Roman Empire was making very heavy weather at the time, the German Electors being thoroughly at variance amongst themselves, and so it came about that after a period of intense anarchy euphemistically called the "Interregnum," two rivals were put up of whom neither could be said to have occupied the throne. These rivals were both foreigners to Germany, one being a Spaniard, the other Richard of Cornwall, second son of King John of England. Ottokar thought fit to support Richard, who in return did little things to oblige Ottokar, such as investing him with other people's lands and fiefs, and all went well for a while. Ottokar had extended his dominions considerably, had brought a number of smaller States, some of them German, under his sway and virtually controlled all Central Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic Seas. He had beaten the Hungarian King Bela and his friends, Daniel Romanovic the King of Russia and Prince of Kiev, a Prince of Cracow and odd assortments of Serbs, Bulgars, and Wallachians, most handsomely at Kressenbrunn on the plains of the River March.

Ottokar's political conception of the part which Bohemia should play in Central Europe is particularly interesting. By conquest, alliances and understandings with his neighbours he had acquired a preponderating influence in the councils of Europe. The power he had concentrated round the Slavonic nucleus of his native country lay almost entirely in German-speaking districts, so that a situation arose in which Count Lützov finds some analogy between the policy of this Přemysl Ottokar and that pursued by the Austrian Government from 1815, when the Habsburgs finally abandoned the notion of a Holy Roman Empire, to 1864 and 1866, when Prussia took

the first decisive step towards reviving the same idea under the title *Deutsches Reich*. There is a good deal in Count Lützov's contention, and this subject might well be taken up by some leisured student of history. It seems to me that the history of Central Europe shows several instances of attempted breaks from tradition and striving after a more lasting political re-grouping such as Ottokar seemed to have aimed at; I hope to return to this subject later, though I may only touch the fringe of it.

Ottokar's plans were completely upset, first by the death of his obliging friend Richard of Cornwall, next by events attending and arising out of the choice of a new Emperor by the German Electors. Ottokar being a Slav, and a very powerful one at that, was heartily hated by all German Princes, so they, being in a majority, disallowed Ottokar's right to vote at all, and elected as Emperor one Rudolph Count of Habsburg. History of this time was recorded by Germans chiefly, and they have spared no trouble to blacken Ottokar's character, by which process Rudolph of Habsburg is made to stand out as a light shining in the darkness. In Germanic eyes Ottokar's fault was that of being a Slav, successful and of great ability. I cannot agree with the German chronicler's estimate of Rudolph. We are expected to accept him as a modest sort of backwoods peer, the kind that wears flannel next its skin and keeps its small estates unencumbered. We have also a pretty picture in verse of this Rudolph. He is described as meeting a priest carrying the Host, on the bank of a foaming mountain torrent somewhere among the Alps where the ruins of the Habsburg still show against the sky like an abandoned hawk's nest; the name probably derives from Habichts Burg, Hawk's Castle. Rudolph dismounted, placed the priest on his horse and

humbly, cap in hand, led it across the stream. Years after this picturesque event the priest, carefully disguised, attended the Council of Electors and at the psychological moment, produced his harp, burst into song on the subject of Rudolph, and so swayed the Electors that they offered the German crown to that modest and retiring Habsburg. I cannot believe this story of the priest among the Electors, and my disbelief is based on experience of elective bodies. Can you imagine the Parish Council, in the throes of electing a suitable person to keep the village pump in order, being confronted by a mysterious stranger who suddenly interrupts the proceedings by singing the praises of "good old Jarge" to the accompaniment of an accordion? No, there is something wrong about that election story; I believe Rudolph was a schemer, and the whole affair cut and dried before he stood for election at all. Certain it is that Rudolph, supported by all Germany, attacked Ottokar; this was the first rencontre between Bohemia and the House of Habsburg, and it ended in disaster for the former. Ottokar was deprived of all the lands he had acquired, betrayed by his own nobles, and finally killed in battle near the scene of his victory over the Hungarians.

Despite the troublous times of the two Ottokars and of Wenceslaus I, the city of Prague, or rather the communities composing it, had expanded into a place of considerable extent and importance, and was already spoken of as the City of many Towers. The three above-mentioned sovereigns, as also Wenceslaus II, son and successor of Ottokar II, had found time and means to do a considerable amount of building of which some traces are still evident. We have already noted that Wenceslaus I girt the Old Town around with walls, likewise the hill of

Vyšehrad, and he took the strengthening of the Hradšany in hand. This latter job was completed for the time being by Ottokar II, who caused those imposing-looking towers on the north front of the castle to be built. These towers are named respectively Black Tower, White Tower, and Daliborka, by which latter hangs a tale which I will relate to you by and by. Some of the authorities I have consulted differ as to the actual date of these towers, and are inclined to place the building of Daliborka in the fourteenth century, probably into the period when Charles IV found the royal castle to be badly in need of repair and set about the work forthwith. It is certain, however, that both the Wenceslaus and Ottokars interested themselves in strengthening the fortifications of Prague, and are not likely to have neglected the Hradšany, which stronghold was furnished with a permanent garrison of ten knights and three hundred men-at-arms. The north side of the castle has preserved the mediæval appearance which has been improved away on the other sides, chiefly by fatuous Habsburger in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the north side overhanging the deep-cut Stags' Moat shows you the formidable nature of this fortress with its stout towers rising up over the tops of tall trees that struggle up out of the valley mentioned by Libuša, for a glimpse of the sun.

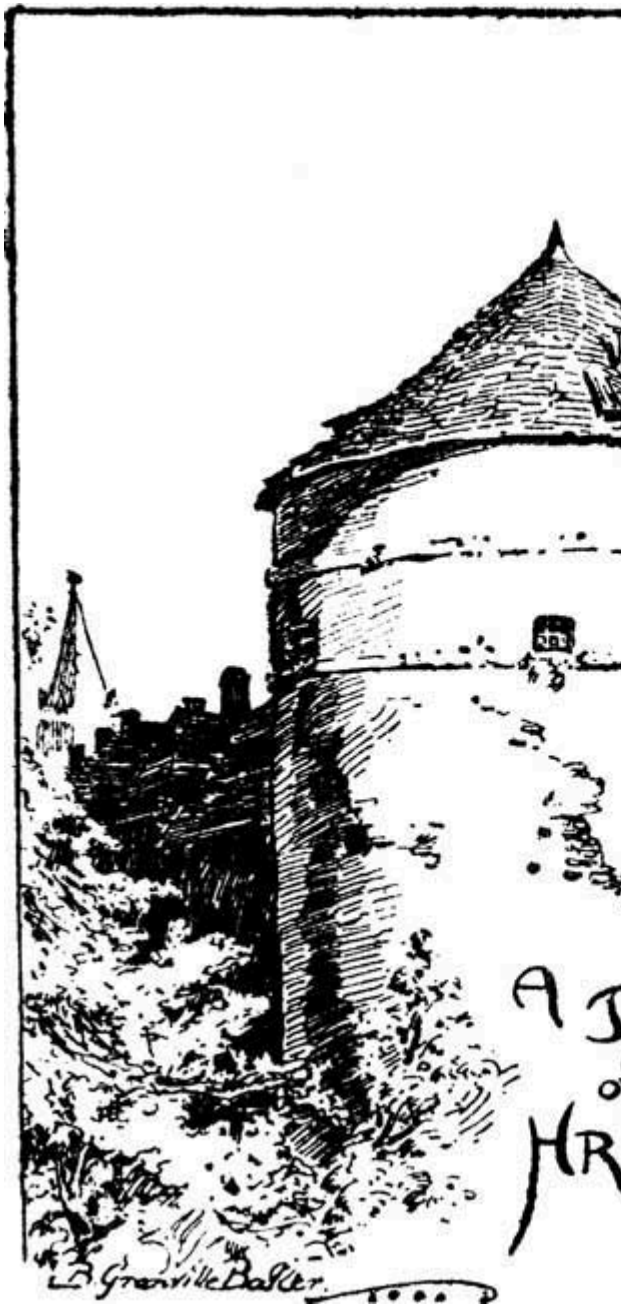
The towers of the Hradšany were suitably fitted out as dungeons, with the latest thing in trap-doors warranted to give the visitor a sudden and complete change of air. One of these towers soon found a lodger, one Dalibor after whom the tower was named for ever after. There is an opera all about Dalibor composed by Smetana; the music is very beautiful, but as the singing is all in Czech, I have not quite got

the hang of the story, so will give as nearly as I can and by the aid of my own imagination, what happened to Dalibor.

Dalibor, it appears, was a Bohemian knight with views in advance of his time: he was a socialist. One day he assembled his friends, relatives and retainers in the castle yard and appeared among them armed and on horseback. He dismounted and commenced proceedings by scraping off his shield the heraldic emblems with which it was charged. Lions and bears, rampant, couchant, gardant, and other fauna in becoming attitudes, bends, bars, engrailed, dancetty, raguly, gules, azure, argent or otherwise—all these things of beauty vanished from Dalibor's scutcheon while the assembled multitude wondered "What next?" Thereupon Dalibor held forth, in impressive manner and impassioned tones, on the iniquity of the system, the inequality of condition, under which they were all forced to exist. Having made his assembled fellow-men his equals by removing the aforesaid heraldic devices, he would further show his sense of equality by leading them in person and on foot to real freedom; so said Dalibor. Thereupon the multitude, at Dalibor's heels, set off down the hill and started spreading equality all around them. Their method was quite simple, indeed it lacked originality: they just helped themselves to the goods of those who happened to live by the way. Those who failed to rise to this lofty conception of Dalibor and his comrades were knocked on the head—also quite a simple and homely method of appeal; and so this happy band of pilgrims left behind them a dead-level of equality. These their efforts at social regeneration, their illustration of economic principles, were not appreciated. Dalibor was captured and invited to take up his residence

beneath the trap-door of the tower that was henceforth to be known by his name.

As soon as he was safely housed, Rumour, the mother of Legend, got busy about him. Folk began to whisper to each other the news that wonderful music was heard proceeding from out of the stern walls of Dalibor's prison; the sound of a violin was heard by the many who were attracted to the spot by Rumour. No doubt Dalibor learnt to play the violin: the Czech is so intensely musical that he will master any instrument before he has got the hang of the grammar of his own language, the fiddle is so much easier. The strange thing is that the musical performance continued long after Dalibor's death—here Legend steps in with the assertion that an angel, a fairy, or at least some sort of supernatural being, is continuing Dalibor's programme.


Granville Baker



There were many other visitors to Daliborka, and in course of time the lower stratum of the tower filled up with human relics. As the defunct visitors were mostly Czechs, and therefore full of music, I should think that they could form at least a string quartette —it only requires a little enterprise and a good strong medium. I make a present of this suggestion to the Prague Society for Psychical Research, if there be one.

Prague must have been a fair city in those days when Ottokar II rode out of the gate to meet Rudolph of Habsburg. Although the ban of the Empire and the interdict of the Church were upon their King, the people of Prague, clergy and laymen, accompanied him to the city gate with prayers and tears. When news of his death came to Prague the bells of one hundred churches tolled out on that 26th of August, the Feast of St. Rufus, a day destined to be of ill-omen to Bohemia's Kings.

The shadow of the hand of Habsburg hung darkly over the southern frontiers of Bohemia. Rudolph, the first Habsburg Emperor, began the famous tactics of his house, gaining power by matrimonial alliances. His son Rudolph was to marry Agnes, daughter of Ottokar II, whose son Wenceslaus II was to marry Gutta, the Emperor's daughter.

Wenceslaus II was a minor when he succeeded his father, and suffered considerably under his guardian and cousin Otto of Brandenburg, who, in pursuit of an all-German policy, even imprisoned the young King. Anarchy reigned in Bohemia when young

Wenceslaus, at the age of twelve, nominally assumed the reins of government. The actual ruler of the country, however, was Zavis of Falckenstein, an able man but of doubtful morality; there was some unsavoury story concerning him and Ottokar's widow Kunhuta, whom Zavis eventually married. Then again the young King had Zavis done to death in treacherous manner, while the condition of Bohemia as an ordered State went from bad to worse. Strange to relate, the country flourished economically—became, indeed, very prosperous—the increase of wealth being largely due to the fact that workings on the silver mines at Kutna Hora had been resumed. Towards the end of the reign of this Wenceslaus, whose rule was mild, matters improved somewhat. Bohemia became a sort of city of refuge, and neighbouring States, Hungary and Poland, being in a worse state of anarchy than any others, invited King Wenceslaus to reign over them. Bohemia and Poland thus became united for a while under one ruler, Wenceslaus, who had himself crowned King of the latter country at Gnesen. Hungary was given in charge of the King's son Wenceslaus, who was crowned as King of that country and resided some time at Ofen. Wenceslaus had taken a Polish Princess to wife after the death of Gutta, and had thus reinforced his connection with a Slavonic neighbour, but Germanism was in the ascendant in Bohemia and the hand of Habsburg was stretched out over it. It was yet some centuries before the power of the Habsburg should become absolute in the lands of the Přemysl dynasty, but that family's light was nearing extinction. Whether good or bad, the rulers who sprang from the soil, from the peasant stock of Libuša's choosing, had been of the people and had on the whole served their people's interests. With

Wenceslaus III murdered by an unknown assassin while on his way to Poland, the male line of the Přemysl dynasty died out. It continued in the indirect line by the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of Wenceslaus II, with Rudolph, a grandson of the Habsburg who dealt the death-blow to Bohemia's native rulers.

Whether for good or evil, alien influence was working strongly in Bohemia, and notably in Prague. Ottokar II had encouraged it as part of his policy towards keeping in check his turbulent nobles and towards raising up a reliable middle class. His nobles aided towards his downfall by their treachery, and the middle class of Prague, though loyal to the Crown, was alive chiefly to its own interests. Perhaps that foreign influence was weaving its spell over the burghers of Prague, a spell to which the Slav is somewhat susceptible.

During the reign of the last Přemysl sovereigns Prague offered the spectacle of a rich and prosperous city, but its brightness was rather that of lights round the bier of some illustrious dead. Many foreigners found themselves attracted to the capital of Bohemia during this period, among them some ardent souls who were to be found doing good, according to their lights, in other cities of Europe, namely, Irish monks. It is of interest to us to note that these monks were frequently called Scots: you will find traces of them under that designation in the Schotten Kirche at Ratisbon and the Schotten Ring in Vienna. In Prague they were recognized as Irish, and their name lives on in the Hybernska Ulice in the Old Town. A church, with an altar dedicated to St. Patrick, arose at the corner of that street by the cross-roads, under the hands of Irish monks; a church now used for

secular purposes, and built over the original edifice, stands there still. Amidst all the turmoil of this busy centre of the city you may still in those small hours of the morning when the traffic dies down for a while pick up an echo or two of the voices of those zealous Irishmen, but you must listen with all your soul, for those sounds are very elusive. Again, looking out over the city from my terrace I notice a copper dome just across the Charles Bridge, a dome flanked by high towers, and all bearing the unmistakable mark of Jesuit architecture. Yet that building, now used as part of the University, recalls memories of pious souls who came to Prague at the invitation of Přemysl Ottokar II. These were the Knights Crucifer, or the Cruciferous Knights as the guide-book prefers to call them. Their Order, the members of which always carried a cross in the left hand, was founded by St. Cletus; their work was to tend the sick and offer hospitality to pilgrims. The Order went down on the death of the founder and sought refuge in Palestine, where St. Cyriak discovered it, reformed it, and eventually brought it to Rome. This is said to have happened in the latter half of the fourth century, but I should think the date extremely uncertain; nor does it matter much. The Order received new rules in the twelfth century from Pope Alexander III, who, being on good terms with Ottakar II at the time, allowed the Order to be transplanted to Prague. I do not in the least know what the good knights did all those years between their installation at Prague in 1256 and the dissolution of their Order in 1783. Anyone who wants to know may no doubt find records of their doings, which were probably concerned with adding up quarterings and deciding questions of etiquette. Still their name, Knights Crucifex, lingers round one

of the most picturesque corners of Prague, under the shadow of a stately Gothic tower which silently but insistently claims reverence above the *baroque* structures of a later non-Bohemian age. It is just at this spot, with its lingering memories of Queen Judith, of Přemysl Ottokar and a yet greater King of Bohemia of whom I shall tell you shortly, that you realize how Prague is that Golden City of the days of glorious Gothic and the Renaissance, and not of the *baroque* superimposed by the Jesuits after Bohemia's glory had departed on the gentle slopes of the White Mountain.

CHAPTER VII

Introduces a picturesque character, King John of Bohemia, Count of Luxemburg, whose final exploit and end should be familiarly known by every Englishman. This chapter tells of the many chivalrous adventures undertaken by this monarch, of how little good and how much harm he did to his country. There is also mention of an English King, of the Black Prince, and of many other more or less famous persons, who have gone to swell the gorgeous pageant of those who all down the ages have worked weal or woe to Bohemia and its capital, Prague. Of John Henry of Carinthia and his interesting spouse, Margaret

Maultasche, of the usual German machinations against any peace or contentment in Bohemia, of Popes and anti-Popes, you will hear in this chapter; and finally you will make the acquaintance of one of Bohemia's greatest rulers, Charles, first Bohemian King and fourth Roman Emperor of that name. You may gain some idea of the difficulties Charles had to overcome, and will begin to realize what he, the great founder, did for his country and its capital.



PRAGUE was in holiday vein, happy and optimistic,

its prevailing mood, on that day in 1311 when John, Count of Luxemburg, and Elizabeth, daughter of Wenceslaus II, were crowned. No doubt the ceremony took place on the Hradšany, and the steep approaches to the Castle Hill would be thronged with cheerful merrymakers; I wonder whether the Bohemians of those days said "*Na zdar*!" as frequently as they do to-day!

The Pragers had every reason to be happy and hopeful, for no change could bring about a worse state of affairs than that which had characterized the five years between the death of the last male Přemysl and the elevation of the first Luxemburg to the throne of Bohemia. That period was a sort of interregnum which was filled up with civil war, with murders among relatives, and was bringing Bohemia to the verge of anarchy.

The troubles of the time were largely caused by the newly arrived House of Habsburg, and the state of the Empire at that period reflects German mentality. The seven German Electors had been careful to go outside their own charmed circle for a King, and one who would carry out their wishes. They therefore picked out what we may call a second-class magnate as likely to be amenable. They met with disappointment. Rudolph was out for himself. His victory over Přemysl Ottokar II was welcomed by the Germans, who could never see a neighbour, especially a Slav, growing in importance, without showing signs of consuming jealousy. To break down the power of Ottokar the Bohemian was a meritorious act. To acquire for private and family use some of that King's finest possessions, Upper and Lower Austria, was not appreciated by the Electors. Therefore when Rudolph died the Electors turned

down his son Albrecht, who put up for the imperial crown, and elected Adolph of Nassau instead. Adolph also tried to make something out of the post of Emperor, so the Electors threw him over, and he was shortly afterwards killed in battle. Albrecht of Habsburg then came to the throne, and taking up the family policy of profitable matrimonial alliances, married his son Rudolph to the widow of the Přemysl Wenceslaus II, Elizabeth, whom we have already met. I am rather sorry for this Elizabeth. Whether she liked her second husband or not, it must have been uncomfortable to find him becoming more and more unpopular among the people, who in any case had not expressed undue enthusiasm over his accession to their throne. He was chiefly unpopular on account of his meanness; the Bohemians, though thrifty almost to the verge of parsimony among themselves, do not like that trait in a foreigner, especially one who comes to cut some sort of figure as King or what-not amongst them. However, Rudolph died before a year of sovereignty was out, leaving that poor lady Elizabeth a widow for the second time, and under even more trying conditions. Despite all Habsburg precautions towards settling the crown of Bohemia on their own house, the nobles of the country proceeded to assemble a Diet at Prague in order to elect a new King. Elizabeth had to attend that function, and must have had a lurid time of it; the nobles raised no end of a storm, according to the Bohemian historian Palacky. There was one Tobias of Bechyn leading the case for the introduction of another foreigner as ruler, the opposition calling on him not to favour the claims of foreigners, possibly enemies, to rule over Bohemia, whereupon Tobias shouted: "If you wish at any price to obtain a native Prince, go to Stadic, among the peasants; there you

will perhaps find a relation of the extinct royal family; bring him here and seat him on the throne of your country." Thereupon ensued pandemonium. One Ulrich of Lichtenburg slew Tobias forthwith, and several other nobles were killed in the fray before the Diet settled down to the conclusion that Henry, Duke of Carinthia, should be called in to rule over Bohemia. Henry was supposed to be popular chiefly because he had married a Přemysl, as we have already reported—Ann, daughter of Wenceslaus II; anyway, Prague received the couple with acclamations. Albrecht of Habsburg objected, as he had fixed on his son Frederick as heir to the Bohemian lands. There were the usual troubles: Albrecht's troops invaded Bohemia and Moravia, and some of them continued to hold a few frontier towns even after Albrecht had been killed by his nephew John and the Electors had gone elsewhere in search of an Emperor.

With characteristic distrust of each other or of any German of first-rate importance, the Electors went to the second-class magnates again, and this time their choice fell on Henry, Count of Luxemburg. Carlyle derives this name of Luxemburg via Luzzenburg from Lützelburg, which he translates into Littleborough. Carlyle is very pleased with this derivation, and uses it to "point a moral and adorn a tale." In all humility I differ from Carlyle in this derivation, my only excuse being that I happen to know the dialect as spoken round about Luxemburg and among the Eiffel people, sufficiently well, and that in their vernacular there is no such word as could be distorted from Lützel-via Luzzen-into Luxem-and then mean "little." It is really refreshing to be able to differ thoroughly, heartily, unreservedly, with a philosopher of old-established authority.

Carlyle likes to point out that this insignificant little dynasty of Luxemburg produced some great men as Emperors. He is quite right there too; but so also did Habsburg. As to the Luxemburgers, it must be borne in mind that though of German origin they were French by sentiment and upbringing—I quote Dr. Seton Watson from memory.

German origin, a phrase that has been very freely used of late years, is a somewhat elastic term, and frequently implies a mental rather than a racial qualification. Of the old original Teutons, the Germans of yore, there are few representatives left over—you may find some in Frisia and about the Porta Westphalica, on the east coast of Yorkshire, too, perhaps; the all-Germans, the *Allemanni*, as I believe they called themselves at one time, have seldom, if ever, formed a clearly defined political entity. The Franks in the early days of the Merovingians, by no means an estimable people, were probably purely Teuton; they separated more and more from their less civilized race-kindred, and by the time the Frankish Empire had reached its zenith its people had absorbed a good deal of other blood, which mixture crystallized into the French nation and soon broke away from any racial relations with the Teutons. Then the arch-enemies of the Franks, the Saxons, mixed freely with Slavonic races which extended well into the Hanover country and all over Mecklenburg at one time, so that those who are now called Saxons are, next to the Prussians, more thoroughly mixed with Slavs than any other Germans. The Bavarians, again, must have in them a good deal of the persistent Celtic element which they inherited from the Boievari who at one time left Bohemia for Bavaria. The amusing thing is that those who most loudly declaim on the subject of

Deutschland über Alles are the most thoroughly mixed of the lot. It is idle to speculate on what would have become of German imperial conceits if the German race and its admixtures, like that of our islands, had been isolated from its neighbours by water instead of being constantly exposed to inroads from all sides, and consequently moved to follow up any success at arms into a neighbour's country. It seems as if a permanent Germanic Empire—material, not only sentimental—were never destined to a long and prosperous existence. These speculations, however, are best left to the historian, and we will return to the city of Prague.

We have seen John of Luxemburg and his wife Elizabeth happily crowned on the Hradšany at Prague and the city relieved by this event from the prospect of prolonged internal disorder. Henry of Carinthia, who succeeded Rudolph, had not proved satisfactory. He also had taken the precaution of marrying a Přemysl, was in fact John's brother-in-law, but he failed to maintain the popularity which he enjoyed when called to the throne, and was eventually chased out of Bohemia to make room for John. Now John was heavily handicapped and did little to remove his disabilities, in fact he rather aggravated them. He was only fourteen when he found himself a King and a married man. His father, a shrewd and enterprising monarch, died before John had really become acquainted with his capital, and so there was no unbiassed adviser to whom the young ruler could turn. John did not live on the best of terms with his mother-in-law, who from the dower-house at Kralove Hradec, called by the Germans Königgratz, interfered a good deal in the affairs of state; the trouble is said to have arisen originally between the two Elizabeths, mother and

daughter, and even led to some fighting in which the city of Prague took an active part. By temperament John was not equal to his task; he was, it appears, thoroughly unpractical and entirely embued with all sorts of romantic notions. Those who watched John's doings from afar, and were not immediately affected by their results, could afford to approve of him and call him *corona militiæ* as did King Edward III of England. John was what may be called the "soul of chivalry," in his opinion Paris was the most chivalrous city in the world, and that is probably why he felt called upon to roam Europe as a knight-errant instead of looking after his wife and her relatives, and incidentally his Kingdom of Bohemia. According to Count Lützow, John intended to re-establish the Round Table of King Arthur, and to this end he invited all the most celebrated knights of Europe to a tournament at Prague; "nobody responded to the call." So John went abroad for his amusement and found it in plenty. To begin with, there was always something doing in his line between rival German Kings and Emperors, so we find him helping Louis, Duke of Bavaria, at Wittelsbach, to victory over the Habsburger Frederick at Mühldorf. Expeditions to Hungary, Italy, France and against the heathen Lithuanians all helped to pass away John's time pleasurably and unprofitably; as Palacky says: "It would be necessary to write the history of all Europe if we attempted to describe all the feuds into which King John entered with chivalrous bravery, but also with frivolity. It then became a proverb, that 'nothing can be done without the help of God and of the King of Bohemia.'"

John proved an expensive luxury to Bohemia, and he reigned for thirty-six years, so his country, although

rich, yet peopled by a canny and thrifty population, must have been thankful when at last he was knocked on the head at Crecy. The story is well known to us all, so we need not linger on it. John bequeathed his motto to the Black Prince, who could well afford to pay a graceful compliment by accepting it; after all, not he, but Bohemia, had to pay for John's fun. John kept the mint of his country busy striking ducats, a coin of his own conception, a very good and full-weight coin too, but he probably took most of the ducats abroad for his various diversions; there are, however, a few left in the museum of Prague, I believe. John had quaint ways of raising money; one of them must have led to a great deal of inconvenience to the citizens of Prague, who on Sundays and holidays were wont to make excursions into the country. No one was allowed a drink within a certain radius of the capital; this was all very fine for the publicans of Prague, who no doubt had come to a suitable arrangement with the King, but it fills me with sorrow to reflect on the streams of excursionists and travellers doing the last lap home on a hot summer's day.

There is nothing of beauty in the panorama of Prague as seen from my terrace, which I can ascribe to Bohemia's chivalrous and eccentric King. He was too busy spending his country's wealth in trying to settle other people's quarrels, and raising others of his own, to think of beautifying his capital. Nevertheless I could point out to you traces of beautiful work for which John may indirectly derive some credit. This enterprising monarch had, as I have already mentioned, found occasion to go fighting about in Italy. He was induced thereto by the usual picturesque lack of sufficient reason just at the moment when he was attempting something

useful. John's predecessor on the throne, Henry of Carinthia, with whom he had become reconciled, had no male heirs, so Bohemia's King called on Henry at Innsbruck in order to arrange a marriage between the former's second son John Henry and the latter's daughter Margaret, known in German history as Maultasche, of whom Carlyle speaks so unkindly. While at Innsbruck, John was invited by the Lombard town of Brescia to assist it against the Lord of Verona, Mastino della Scala. King John at once dropped the useful business, dashed in amongst the squabbling Italians and won a number of victories which gave him possession of a fair slice of Italy. He proved quite incapable of holding it, and his gains rapidly melted away like snow on the sunny southern slopes of those mountains that shut off the smiling plains of Venetia against the barbarous north. Here John's eldest son Charles comes upon the scene, and this is perhaps the only real good that ever came out of the first Luxemburg ruler of Bohemia, namely, an heir who should live to set up a Golden Prague as fitting capital to a happy and prosperous country.

Charles had had an unhappy childhood between his grandmother, the unfortunate widow Elizabeth, a somewhat uneven-tempered mother, and an erratic and unreasonable father. The unhappy lad had even been imprisoned by his father on suspicion of being concerned in a conspiracy with his mother to dethrone John. Charles must have been about five years at the time, for he was only seven when, a few years after his release, King John took him to the French Court for his education. Here Charles acquired his love of learning, his refined sense of beauty and steadfastness of purpose, all of which he devoted without stint to his country, and to him is

chiefly due the glorious composition of the towers and steeples which rise up out of mysterious old Prague. Charles, and through him Prague, benefited by John's Italian venture, in that the gracious spirit of the Renaissance came to Bohemia out of his father's chivalrous exploits. Moreover, Charles, though only seventeen years of age, was thus given an opportunity of proving his metal in the field; he won several victories which, however, were fruitless, and above all learnt the art of governing. So when John and he left Italy, under pressure from the natives, Charles was competent to represent his father at home, while the latter went off on his knight-errantry.

As may be easily imagined, the people of Bohemia, and notably the burghers of Prague, had become discontented under the exactions imposed upon them by their extravagant King and were not inclined to look kindly upon a Luxemburg successor. Prague, like other continental cities, had become aware of its importance, and was quite prepared to resort to arms in order to emphasize its opinion. The city had already taken to arms in support of their native Queen Elizabeth against her stranger husband John, so Charles had no easy time at first. However, he had the qualities his father lacked, complete self-possession and steadfastness of purpose; moreover, unlike his father, he was in thorough sympathy with his people, which John never was, and spoke their language well, which feat, it appears, John never attempted. Father and son seldom agreed on any subject; probably John considered Charles no sportsman, and told him so frequently. I cannot imagine John's conversation as anything but *ad hominem*, and his jokes as weighty as a kick from a troop-horse, and as pleasant. With a little thinking

you can find another, quite recent monarch, who takes after John of Luxemburg in some respects, though he failed to achieve such a picturesque ending. And the occasion of John's chivalrous exit arose out of his second marriage. It really makes a pretty picture if you try to figure to yourself John and his son Charles setting out together for Paris both with the intention of marrying a French Princess, for John, undeniably brave, was braced up for this second venture. John married Beatrice of Bourbon, Charles Blanche of Valois; if I know anything of John, he probably stayed in Paris, whereas Charles would hurry back to Prague to continue his programme of improvements. Amongst these improvements is one directly inspired by Blanche, his "snow-white" bride, which you may see to this day. I could just point it out to you, the Church of "St. Mary of the Snow," but it is difficult to pick out among the sea of roofs. Although it is the tallest church in Prague, it no longer has steeple or spire pointing to the sky; whatever of the kind there was disappeared during some street-fighting or other which frequently took place around this church. If you follow the Narodni Třida straight along from the river towards the Vaclavské Naměsti you will see "St. Mary's of the Snow" on the right, tucked away behind some quaint old buildings formerly the Carmelite Monastery founded by Charles.

It would seem that Charles, when in doubt, either built a new church or restored an old one. There was a good deal to do in Prague in the latter line of business especially, and Charles, with the real founder's zeal, set about putting his capital in order. He was rather handicapped by an expensive father, who, however, had no particular objection to repairing religious institutions, his trouble being that

he generally had no money left for constructive work after he had been round dealing out destruction, impelled thereto by his chivalrous conceit. I can quite imagine John as a man subconsciously religious and intermittently pious, so, for instance, he would probably invoke all the saints he could think of, to aid him in some warlike enterprise, then dash into the fray forgetting all about the saints; one does. He might perchance remember one or other of those he had invoked, after the fun was over, and stand them a candle or so, if he could borrow the money for this gift from his loyal subjects. I know of one case at least where John bestowed largess upon a deserving institution. This happened in 1342, six years before Bohemia's adventurous King had died in the King of England's tent on the battlefield of Crecy. The object of the monarch's generosity was the monastery of Emaus. John, though always jealous of his son's popularity, had handed a considerable share of the government of Bohemia and Moravia to the latter and probably let Charles carry on as long as he, John, was not bothered with domestic details, and always could touch a bit for any tempting military expedition that offered. Emaus seems to have been a favourite enterprise of Charles. You remember that I have pointed out the place to you; I can just see it from the terrace with its twin towers of raw sienna tone. I also told you about the heathen burial ground, Na Morani, about the Church of St. Cosmas and Damian, and how St. Wenceslaus worshipped at their shrine. King Charles seems to have acquired the same general regard for those two saints, and this may have decided him to found a monastery on the rocky eminence whereon Emaus has withstood many vicissitudes during the stormy course of several centuries of Bohemia's history. Charles must have

conceived the plan of founding this monastery some time before the middle of the fourteenth century, for we find the following entry in its chronicles which speaks of John and Charles, and in a Latin quaintly picturesque and careless: "Nos Johannes dei gracia Boemie rex ac Lucemburgensis comes et Karolus eius primogenitus marchio Morawie." It would not be easy to get any more mistakes of grammar and spelling into this sentence. So John had made a donation to the new foundation—out of some one else's pocket; the butchers of Prague were privileged to pay for the King's generosity.

Charles was of a careful, saving disposition; he also raised funds out of other people's purses for his good works. So we find again among the records of Emaus that he called upon the butchers to find the necessary money; the meatstalls of the Mala Strana were privileged to find a revenue of sixteen Bohemian silver groschen, a coin dating from the days of Wenceslaus II, towards the new foundation. The different taxes and excise duties were also made to contribute, a tithe of the wine tax, some appropriate sums from bridge and water tolls; besides these sources of revenue Charles endowed Emaus with landed property, farms and fields and vineyards. Begun in the reign of John, the building and institution of this new monastery was not completed until 1372, when Charles had for many years been in a position to describe himself as "Carolus Dei gratiae Rom. rex, semper augustus et Boemiae rex." Monday after Easter 1372 was the great day on which the Church and monastery were solemnly consecrated and dedicated to Saints Hieronymus, Adalbert, Procop, Cyril and Methodius, but as the consecration gospel told the moving story of the Risen Saviour walking with two disciples, who

knew Him not, towards Emaus, the name of that place clung to church and monastery ever after. Though Emaus started out under such very august patronage, it had to put up with many vicissitudes, among the minor ones being acts of trangression on its grounds by neighbours; so, for instance, we hear of one good man Odelenus, who would dig under the monastery wall to the endangering of the same, and as the stout burgher would not desist nor fill up the excavations he had made, he was excommunicated with all due solemnity.

It is said that Charles intended Emaus solely for the benefit of those who still held to the Slavonic liturgy, from the very outset. But I find that Charles did not approach the Pope on this subject and get his sanction for the Archbishop of Prague to grant the Benedictine monks of Emaus licence to perform the Slavonic ritual, until the papacy of Clement VI. I gather that he had waited until he could find an amenable pontiff; what is more, Clement VI as anti-Pope, probably did not cut much ice even had he been addicted to that practice. It was undoubtedly due to the fact that the Slavonic liturgy was still in force that Emaus escaped destruction at the hands of the Hussites, as the monks were Utraquists and remained of that persuasion until the last Slavonic abbot, Adam Benedict Bawarowsky, with two surviving monks, was turned out to make room for Spanish Benedictines from Montserrat under their abbot, Benedict di Pennabosa y Mondragon. These Spaniards were inducted by Emperor Ferdinand III, King of Bohemia, himself.

Of those early, ardent days in the annals of Emaus there is but little left to recall Charles and his works. The library of the Benedictines was destroyed by fire;

only two works were saved, the "Emaus-Reimser Evangelium" and the "Registrum Literarum monasterii Slavorum." The frescoes which adorn the cloisters seem as fresh to-day as when the Italian masters, brought to Prague by Charles, stood aside to let the monarch see the finished work, and that was several years before the consecration festival. The interior of the church is beautiful, its slender Gothic columns vanishing into the hallowed shadows of the roof. The "plain song" of the remaining monks still rings with the fervour of simple, steadfast faith. The main building of the monastery is now an academy of music where the rising generation is being taught to appreciate the latest eccentricities of modern music.

Charles IV, first Bohemian King of that name, ruled from 1346 to 1378, so the building of Emaus covered pretty nearly all the years of his reign and in fact went back to the unhappy times before he ascended the throne. His father was evidently a difficult person to live with; not only his extravagance and erratic habits, but also a thoroughly unjustified suspicion of his elder son, must have caused the latter a great deal of misery. Instead of following the precedent of the Přemysls in dynastic disputes, Charles wisely abstained from open opposition to John, although the people's affection had been transferred from father to son. Added to this there were the usual troubles caused by the German Princes. John had never even been "placed" in the running for the imperial crown; goodness knows what would have happened if the weal of the Holy Roman Empire had depended on him. Louis of Wittelsbach, who contested the imperial throne with Frederick the Fair of Austria, and had beaten the latter handsomely at Muehldorf, was nevertheless none too safely seated,

and became involved in the unending squabbles with the Papacy, aggravated in his case by the removal of the Pope to Avignon. John, of course, sided against Louis and with the Pope, so Louis joined with the German Princes in trying to deprive John Henry of the Tyrol and Carinthia, which the latter considered his property on marrying Margaret Maultasche; he was lucky enough to retain possession of the Tyrol while the Austrian Dukes kept Carinthia. That little matter settled, John went off and fought the Lithuanians again—he called it a crusade—and came home from that campaign without the sight of one eye, which he had lost through illness, a loss which soon led to complete blindness but not to any disinclination to go out anywhere and fight anyone. Father John must have been a considerable nuisance in the family. In the meantime Margaret added her mite to the general gaiety of nations by falling in love with Louis of Brandenburg, the handsome son of Emperor Louis; she counterbalanced this by a violent hatred of her husband, the unlucky John Henry. So Charles had his hands full, and he seems to have been the only level-headed member of the family. With all these troubles about him he nevertheless continued to manage the affairs of Bohemia and Moravia, to straighten out the finances of the Kingdom while finding sufficient pocket-money for his father's hobby of serving any other cause but his own, and also to soothe the ruffled feelings of John Henry and keep some of that Prince's property for the House of Luxemburg. It was during this hectic time that Charles managed to get the Pope to raise the Bishop of Prague to the rank of Archbishop, an important step, as it set the new Archbishopric free from that of Maintz and thus gave it an opportunity of developing on its own rather than on German

lines. Count Lützow points out the absurdity of the situation caused by keeping the Bishopric of Prague under the Archbishop of Maintz as follows: "It is curious to read that Charles was obliged to declare on his oath that the language of Bohemia was a Slavonic one, entirely different from the German language; that the distance from Prague to Maintz was of about twelve day-journeys; and that the road lay through other dioceses."

This concession on the part of the Pope was probably the result of the visit John and Charles paid to the pontiff at Avignon; it had as corollary that in future the Kings of Bohemia should be crowned by the Archbishop of Prague. The first Archbishop of the new See was a Czech and a strong man—Ernest of Pardubic. Another result of the trip which father and son took to Avignon together seems to have been a more complete reconciliation between the two.

We may linger for a while longer on that pathetic figure, the blind King of Bohemia, before his exciting but futile career closes on the field of Crecy. First we see him taking part in the solemn ceremony of installing the new Archbishop; this would have taken place at the Cathedral Church of St. Vitus on the Hradšany, amid surroundings bearing strong evidence of the harm John's reign had brought on Bohemia, and on Prague in particular, for we read that Charles found the castle, and probably the church as well, in a state nearly approaching ruin from neglect. Here again he had work to hand, and did it nobly; of this more later on. After Ernest of Pardubic had been safely installed, King John started off on another crusade against the heathen Lithuanians, probably as payment for the concessions on the part of the Pope. No sooner was John

thoroughly engaged with his northern enemies than the German Louis stirred up Hungary and Poland, and several others, against him. John hurriedly returned home, beating Casimir of Poland and a Hungarian army on the way, made some sort of an alliance with other enemies of his, and eventually, with the aid of the Pope and five German Electors, got Louis chased from the throne and his son Charles elected as German King instead. All this happened in the early months of 1346. Meanwhile, by July of that year, on the day following Charles's election, King Edward III of England and the Black Prince had landed on the coast of France, and were setting out through Normandy for Paris. On August 26th, St. Rufus Day again, the anniversary of the death of Přemysl Ottokar II, John, King of Bohemia, brave, chivalrous and utterly misguided, died in the tent of a knightly enemy, leaving him as device the appropriate motto "*Ich dien!*"

Indeed, John had served every interest but his own; and Charles his son, elected Emperor as fourth of that name, and first as King of Bohemia, took into his own firm hands the tangled coils of Central European affairs, making as centre of his activities his own city of Prague.

CHAPTER VIII

Deals with Charles IV, Roman Emperor, King of the Germans, first Bohemian King of that

name, and Father of his country. Charles as a warrior and the part he took at Crecy. Some remarks about Crecy. Friendly relations between Charles and Edward III of England, who at Charles's suggestion declines the imperial crown. Charles concerns himself with the welfare of his people. He builds and restores churches. A short story about St. Wenceslaus, and a description of the chapel dedicated to him. Of "St. Mary under the Chain" and the house of the Knights of Malta. Of George Podiebrad, of Frederick the Winter King and his wife Elizabeth. A word or two about the Hussites and the host of crusaders that came out of the West and were defeated by Žiška. A pageant of those whose life and work was connected with the Cathedral of St. Vitus. Charles and Church Reform, and of a Pope who was himself in need of reform. St. Henry and Kunigunde his wife, and the church dedicated to them. Frederick II of Prussia and the church which Charles had built and consecrated to the Virgin and St. Charles. St. Stephen's Church. Some remarks on the saints who are patrons of Bohemia or in one way or another interested in that country. A passing reference to London's patron saint Erkenwald and some remarks about a students' feast-day.



ESPITE his undoubted gallantry in battle, Charles, as a warrior, was overshadowed by his picturesque sire; moreover, he shone more brightly as a man of peace, as scholar, as founder and builder, even as author; in the latter capacity he has left behind a remarkable work, his autobiography, written in Latin: "Commentarius de Vita Caroli Bohemiae Regis ab ipso Carolo conscriptus." Yet, had he done nothing else, his military achievements would probably have brought him lasting renown. As we have seen, he acquitted himself well, when quite a young man, in his father's campaigns in Italy. He took part with conspicuous gallantry in the Battle of Crecy. I gather that it was his advice not to attack with tired troops,

but he was overruled; not but what the result might have been the same had the French agreed to wait another day. It was the Bohemian cavalry that had already distinguished itself by preventing the passage by the English Army of the bridge of St. Remy, and it was not their fault that the ford of Blanche-Taque was insufficiently guarded and thus left open a crossing over the Somme. Many of us know that country about Abbeville well, the lush meadows and clumps of trees not so unlike our own river scenery. Some of us may even have recalled memories out of school of that battle fought out in so small a space compared to the "shows" to which we had become used. While out of the line in that neighbourhood I myself met the direct descendant of French warriors who fought at Crecy, the mayor of a small village. I happened to refer lightly to that page of long-ago history, but the mayor corrected me—it had indeed been a most serious affair; he had lost thirteen ancestors on that occasion, and the family had not recovered to this day. As a social function the Battle of Crecy was certainly an important affair; many of the best people in Europe were represented there, four kings among others, and a brave show of nobles many of whom indeed, did not recover.

John and Charles had undertaken this trip to France together no doubt drawn by their relationship to the French royal family, and Charles had fought valiantly by his father's side until forced to withdraw by his nobles, who, according to Beneš de Weitmil, were "fearful of losing both their Kings."

One would think that this the first introduction to the English of Bohemia's King would not make for cordial relations; as a matter of fact, it led to an alliance between Charles and Edward III arising out

of circumstances which prove both these monarchs to have been wise men. England had risen considerably in the estimation of continental Europe in consequence of this victory, and an attempt was made, perhaps the first in history—for you cannot take Richard of Cornwall seriously—to draw our country into the sea of troubles that raged as usual in the Holy Roman Empire. There was, of course, a section of German nobles who opposed Charles and who on the death of King Louis offered the imperial crown to the victor of Crecy. Edward III was wise enough to decline, influenced, it is said, by a mission which Charles had sent to England; what is more, a treaty of alliance was arranged between these two countries, and this, to my thinking, had far-reaching effects on their future relations, intermittent but extending over several centuries.

Charles had to rest awhile in France before returning to his country in order to recover from his wounds received at Crecy. I wonder whether he tried the waters of Carlsbad on his return home. Charles had been led to discover the healing qualities of Carlsbad water when out hunting one day among the lovely wood-clad heights just inside the frontier of Bohemia. The legend is that Charles heard one of his hounds yelping in pain, and discovered that the poor beast had plunged into a spring of hot water. Charles had the water analysed (which sounds very up to date), and being informed of its healing qualities, built himself a castle on the spot round which grew up that charming health resort Carlsbad.

The history of Charles IV as German King and Roman Emperor is consequently also that of the Holy Roman Empire, but would lead us much too afar afield from Prague, where this excellent monarch resided by

preference. He had grand schemes for improving the state of the country and its capital, which he carried out systematically. He must have begrudged the time he was obliged to spend in travelling abroad in various imperial interests, when there was so much to claim his attention at home. He certainly never went abroad for pleasure, for his trips to Italy and Burgundy, undertaken at different times, were matters of duty. It was the correct thing for an Emperor to be crowned at Rome, and Charles was always strictly correct. On the way to Rome it was obviously the right thing to call at Milan for the iron crown of the Lombard Kings, which was also an imperial perquisite. Then on another occasion Charles called at Arles to receive the crown of the Kingdom of Burgundy, which country formed part of the Empire. Charles had some business to transact with the Pope at Avignon near by, business connected with Church Reform, which movement was gaining in strength in Bohemia and which caused that country much suffering for conscience' sake. These journeys were episodes in the life of the Emperor; the work of the King of Bohemia lay in and about his capital, ancient Prague. From my terrace I will point out to you some of the glorious monuments raised by that Founder King.

Charles's first concern seems to have been for his people's spiritual welfare: from all accounts some attention to this side of the national life of Bohemia was sorely needed. The first and most obvious duty was to set about the restoration of the Royal Castle, the Hradšany, with its venerable cathedral. Both castle and cathedral were inadequate to the high mission of Prague as a royal and imperial residence. The castle had been repaired fitfully by one king or another as we have seen, and had been provided

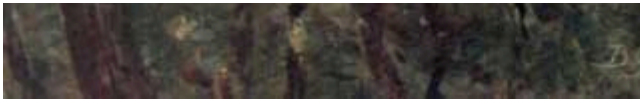
with strong towers chiefly used as dungeons, and had been allowed to fall into disrepair by the impecunious and extravagant John. The cathedral was probably in not much better case. We have seen glimpses of that sacred fane with its memories of royal saints and martyrs, how St. Wenceslaus built the first church on the site of the present one, as a casket to hold that precious relic the arm of St. Vitus, given him by Henry the Fowler. The words of the chronicler will give you some idea of this first church: "Ecclesiam Sancti Viti quam Sanctus Wenceslaus construxerat ad similitudinem Romanae ecclesiae rotundam." This building was yet unfinished when Wenceslaus was martyred. The body of the saint was conveyed from Stara Boleslav to St. Vitus for burial, and this was not allowed to pass without a miraculous manifestation. The old wooden bridge, connecting the right bank of the Vltava with the Mala Strana, had been partly destroyed by floods; nevertheless the bearers passed over the half-ruined bridge as if they had no burden to carry at all. This was very wonderful, and redounded greatly to the saint's growing reputation, which was enhanced a little farther along the route to be traversed. As the procession passed the town-hall prison its inmates, clutching the bars, cried out for mercy; the bearers were forced to halt, and found themselves quite unable to proceed until all the captives had been released. Now this was very beautiful, and it happened long ago.

Prince Spytihnev II, also a pious soul, considered the church built by Wenceslaus too small for his religious requirements; he had it demolished, and another one, also in the Romanesque style, erected in its place. The church that Spytihnev built was also destroyed to make way for the present edifice, which

in its inception is due to Charles. It must have been about the time when Charles joined his father at Luxemburg, in 1344, that the former interviewed the master-builder Matthew of Arras, to discuss plans for the reconstruction of Prague's Cathedral Church. John and Charles, as we have seen, then went on together to visit the Pope at Avignon. It seems to have been on this occasion that Prague was raised to the dignity of an archbishopric, and Charles wished to build a temple worthy of the high dignity to which in matters spiritual, as temporal, his country had arisen; and so under the hand of skilled craftsmen, from out the ruins of earlier shrines, rose that crowning glory of Golden Prague, the Cathedral of St. Vitus. This great temple was many years a-building, and is not completed yet. Great men devoted their labours to this glorious fane: Peter Parler and his son John, Beneš of Loun and others were among the master-builders, while many artists, goldsmiths and other craftsmen famous in their day contributed to the decoration of "the Father's House." Great men lie buried under its shadowy arches, and their memory lives on in sculpture, in paintings and wonders of wrought iron. In a chapel dedicated to St. Wenceslaus rests that princely martyr; you may see his epitaph and the shirt of mail he wore. In the bronze gates of this chapel you are shown a ring to which the saint is said to have clung when his murderers hacked him down. The walls of the chapels are inlaid with the precious stones of Bohemia—jasper and achates, chalcedon, amethyst and carneol—and are adorned with frescoes illustrating incidents in the life of the saint, most of them dating from the reign of Charles; the scene of his martyrdom is from the brush of Lucas Cranach. The candelabra and statue of St. Wenceslaus are

attributed to Peter Fischer. King Charles, the founder, father of his country, lies buried here with his four wives, so do other Kings of Bohemia, Ladislas Posthumus, George Podiebrad, Ferdinand I and Maximilian.





THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. VITUS

Looking out over my terrace to where the Cathedral of St. Vitus points its tapering spires towards high heaven, a misty pageant seems to pass beneath it. Following rapidly on the golden peace of Charles come the troublous days of religious strife, for with his son began the Hussite wars which left Bohemia desolate and a prey to the eagles of Habsburg. Angry flames rising up out the township below the Hradšany cast clouds of smoke over the cathedral what time the Hussites failed to capture the Royal Castle and in their zeal for reform set fire to various quarters of the Mala Strana. The Bishop's Palace, which stood near the left bank bridgehead, was utterly destroyed, the glorious Church of "St. Mary under the Chain," and with it the home of the Knights of Malta, suffered the same fate. Of St. Mary's Church there remain the chancel and two stout towers; I can see them from my embowered terrace, the blunt red roofs rising above a glorious riot of fruit blossom. The pageant moves on, giving a flash here and there of some one who stood up above his fellows like George Podiebrad, or the strong men who precipitated the Thirty Years' War. Then follows a fleeting vision of a stranger King, a German Protestant with his wife Elizabeth, daughter of "douce Jamie." A short reign this of Frederick Count Palatine, the "Winter King." We see him enter by the Strahov Gate to be crowned at St. Vitus on November 4, 1619. We may imagine the indignation of his people at Frederick's Calvinist divines who wished to remove the altar and paintings from the cathedral. We see Frederick a year later, again entering the city by the Strahov Gate, fleeing in hot haste from the stricken field of the White Mountain where Bohemia's freedom went under before the foreign

mercenaries of the Emperor. Not for the first time either that the troops of Western Europe had marched on Prague to conquer it in the name of religion. Shortly after the burning of "St. Mary under the Chain" the Pope called upon Western Europe to undertake a crusade against the Hussites. A contemporary chronicler, Lawrence of Brežova, gives us a list of the nationalities represented in this host of crusaders raised by Sigismund, King of Bohemia, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and led by an English Cardinal. According to Lawrence there were Bavarians, Saxons, Austrians, Frenchmen, men of Brabant and Dutchmen, Switzers, Lusatians and Spaniards, a compact body of English, and soldiers of many other nationalities; their number is estimated at between one hundred thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand. Sigismund entered the Castle of Prague and his motley forces encamped around the town, but "the Empire's mismanaged feudal levy was no match for an infuriated people which stood shoulder to shoulder in the service of the same inspiring idea." I quote from *Europe in the Middle Age*, by Thatcher and Schwill. Moreover, the Hussites were led and inspired by one of the greatest military leaders of all ages, John Žiška. This is not the place to tell of the doings of those Hussite armies and their exploits, and how they kept all Europe at bay so that every Bohemian might feel secure in the faith that was in him. Right away in the hazy background of hills against which stand up the towers and spires of Prague you may see an incline sloping down towards the river and to northward. This incline is now all built over, and this quarter of the town is called Žiškov in memory of the great Hussite who held this hill against repeated attacks until he was in a position to go over to the offensive. Dissensions had

broken out among the crusaders, the imperial armies melted away and left Sigismund to face his people alone. He came to some agreement with the leaders of the opposition and was even solemnly crowned at St. Vitus; but the battle on Žiška's hill marked the beginning of the Hussite wars.

With the defeat of the Bohemian army on the White Mountain ends the story of St. Vitus as the cathedral of a free country. The building was resumed after the Thirty Years' War came to an end, and other kings were crowned in the church that had known the glory of Charles IV and George Podiebrad; but those who came after were aliens to Bohemia, neither came they to that country intent only on its interests; a succession of Habsburgs passes by in pageant, to receive the crown of Bohemia as one among many distinctions to which their house was heir. Ferdinand III and Leopold I pass by, and Leopold's second son Charles VI second as King of Bohemia, last male representative of the House of Habsburg, who was succeeded by his daughter Maria Theresia. Troubles began again as in the days when the Přemysl dynasty died out, and the German Electors decided to choose a new Emperor. The choice fell on Charles of Bavaria, so old St. Vitus saw again a coronation pageant and one which much resembled that of Frederick the Winter King. Charles of Bavaria was crowned at Prague with all the usual pomp and ceremony; he then left Bohemia never to return. Officially this Charles' coronation seems to count for nothing in the history of Austria into which that of Bohemia was merged. Bohemia became for years a pawn in the stern game between Maria Theresia and Frederick of Prussia, and St. Vitus suffered damage from the latter's guns; the glory of Golden Prague

had departed and the stately cathedral looked down for nearly three centuries on a city that had been put aside, out of the way of the world's commerce and its great affairs, to dream of the days when Charles IV was King and Bohemia the land of a free and prosperous people.

We were really still in the days of Charles IV when it occurred to me to sketch out a special pageant for the Cathedral Church of St. Vitus. Charles, as I have said before, was particularly interested in churches, was altogether a good, pious soul, and never missed an opportunity of bearing testimony to his faith by deeds as well as words. This does not mean that he submitted his judgment, even in things spiritual, entirely to the ruling of the Church; on the contrary, he found that there was more need of reform among the clergy of his land than of churches. He did not hesitate, either, to point out to the Pope what reforms were needed, and, moreover, took his part in improving matters, with his usual energy and thoroughness. Indeed, according to all accounts, the Bohemian clergy were sorely in need of the curb: they allowed their sporting proclivities to run to excess in such pastimes as warfare, tournaments, hunting and gambling, and the law of celibacy had fallen into complete disuse. I have already noted that the St. Anthony of one particular kind of temptation (I forget whether he was of Padua or elsewhere) was not as popular in Bohemia as were many other saints. After all, the clergy of Bohemia were probably no worse than that of other countries, and Rome was not of much use as a "godly ensample"; there is, for instance, that little story told by Richenthal in his

chronicle about one of the Popes travelling across the Alps to some council or other. This pontiff, it appears, "clothed himself with curses as with a garment" and his horrible imprecations filled with terror the souls of the pious peasants who flocked to see him. So when by some accident the carriage of His Holiness was upset and himself pitched into the road he exclaimed: "Here I lie in the name of the devil." This sounds a bit feeble, and I could probably do better myself under similar provocation; but such language at all is very shocking in a clergyman. It is chiefly German historians who complain of Charles as being priest-ridden, and also of neglecting the affairs of the Empire while concentrating too much on Bohemia. This is a matter for historians to wrangle about; personally I consider that by his Golden Bull, which very much restricted the power of the Popes to interfere with the election of Kings of the Germans, and in the protection he extended to priests accused of heresy for their ardour on reform, Charles proved himself a strong man, free from undue outside influence, and no bigot. But we are concerned with what Charles did for Prague, and will take a look round the churches which meant so much to him, many of which he built or restored himself. One of these appeals to me particularly; I cannot say why exactly, perhaps because I heard some glorious music there, one grey evening in Lent. St. Henry's has long been famous for its Musical Society. I have mentioned this church before; it is dedicated to St. Henry and his wife Kunigunde. It is interesting and unusual to find a married saint; in fact, as in this case, a couple of them. The portraits of these two may be seen in the chancel of St. Henry's Church, but it was too dark for me to distinguish anything on the occasion of my visits there; moreover, I was

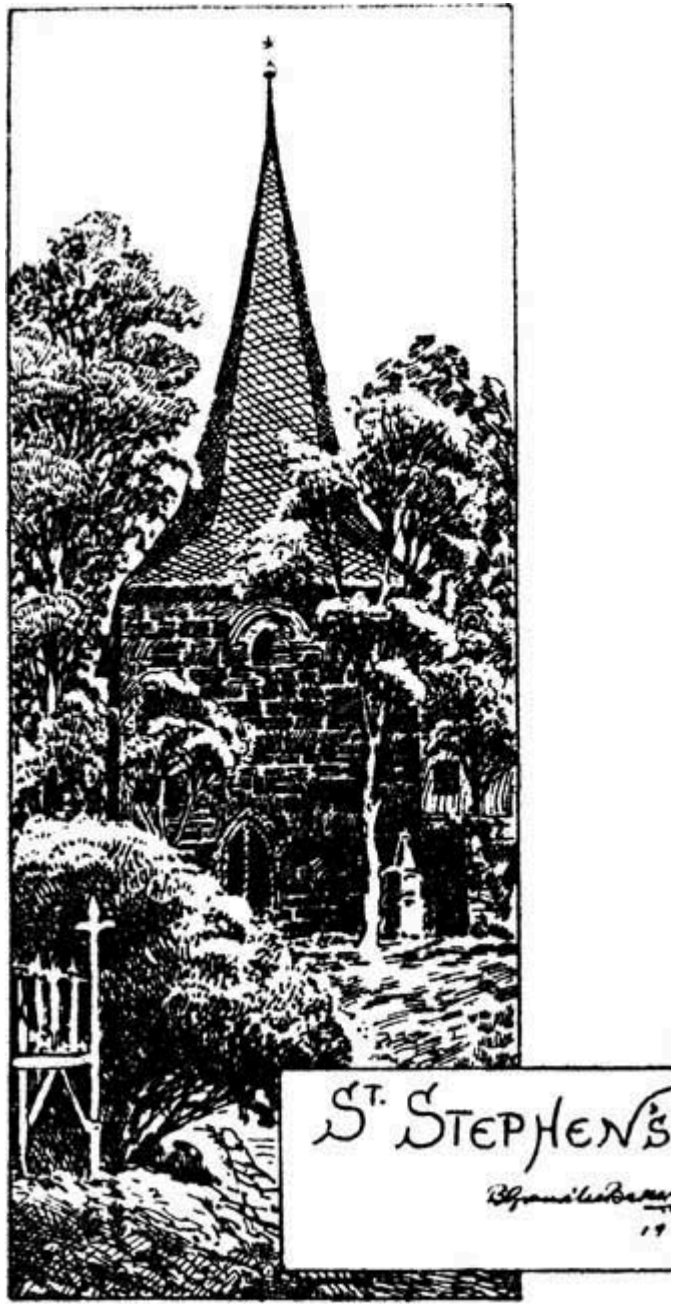
sufficiently impressed with the shapely Gothic pillars, the work of Charles IV's craftsmen, which rose over the dilapidations of a much earlier building. Charles lost no time about the restoration of St. Henry's, as he seems to have begun it in 1348 and it was finished two years later. This church stands back from the rushing traffic of the Henry Street—Jindřišska Ulice, to give it its Czech name; the campanile of St. Henry's, a graceful tower with characteristic turrets and saddle-roof, is set apart and looks down the broad thoroughfare. This campanile is of more recent times than the church: it dates from the early days of Vladislav II, about the end of the fifteenth century. A sixteenth-century bell hangs in the campanile of St. Henry's Church; its inscription recalls the famous lines of Schiller's *Die Glocke*: "En ego campana, nunquam pronuntio vana, Ignam, vel festum, bellum, vel funus honestum." About the time of the restoration of St. Henry's, since much rebuilt outside, Charles set about building another church on the rising ground north-east of Vyšehrad; it is quaint rather than beautiful. You may note this church by its squat appearance, a broad cupola flanked by a couple of more slender ones, and the whole group is generally concealed by scaffolding. This church has had as hard a time as any of those in Prague. King Charles built it in 1350 and intended it to remind him of the cathedral at Aachen where Charlemagne is buried. There certainly is a good deal of resemblance still within this church dedicated appropriately to the Virgin and St. Charles, for the original outlines remain, as also the crypt below. But this church has suffered heavily both at the hands of wilful destroyers and of the restorer. Matthew of Arras was the architect. I wonder whether he would recognize his work to-day, so much has happened to

it since he completed it. Consecrated in 1377 and given over to the monks of the Augustine Order, church and monastery were thoroughly destroyed by the Hussites less than a century later. The church was rebuilt in 1498, seriously damaged in 1611, and left in a state of disrepair for forty years. It had not long been restored for the second time, when Frederick II of Prussia made a target of it in his siege of Prague. Some eight hundred hot shot are said to have struck this church and set it on fire more than fifty times: quite good shooting but bad manners. No wonder, then, that this Church of the Virgin and St. Charles has lost its pristine beauty; yet it has an attraction of its own to those who sympathize with its misfortunes, and there are still some quaint old corners of the Hermitage attached to the edifice, built by Dienzenhofer, for those who like *baroque*.

We have noted Charles's interest in his cathedral on the Hradšany; he also paid a delicate compliment to the Lady Abbess of the convent attached to St. George's Church within the castle precincts. You will remember how Boleslav II, of pious memory, founded this convent and that his sister Milada was the first abbess. Charles raised that lady's successors to princely rank and gave them the right to place the crown on the head of the King at his coronation.

There are several other churches which have survived the chances and changes of centuries, among these one which appeals to me on account of its modesty. This church is tucked away among a congerie of respectable elderly buildings that cluster to eastward of the Stepanska Ulice, one of the thoroughfares that link up the higher lying part of the Nové Město, the New Town, with the Václavské Náměsti. This church has indeed a somewhat

neglected look: its quaint pointed steeple rises almost apologetically above some scrubby trees, and hardly ventures to o'ertop the grimy houses, that close it round. Nevertheless this ancient church should have reason to hold high its head, for Bohemia's great King and Father built it and dedicated it to a carefully selected saint, to wit St. Stephen. St. Stephen's Church shows pleasant traces of the gracious spirit which informed the master mind in those golden days of Charles IV. Moreover, St. Stephen's Church has kept the best of exclusive company during the six centuries of its existence, for close by, separated only by a narrow lane, stands one of Prague's oldest temples, the romanesque chapel of St. Longinus which from its memories harking back to the first Přeysl King, Vladislav, probably looks upon its neighbour as a mere child.


ST. STEPHEN'S



You will have noticed how many and varied are the names of saints mentioned in these my reflections from "a Terrace in Prague." I do not profess deep knowledge of saints, and do not as a rule venture on the hallowed ground where saints disport themselves. Nevertheless, while dealing with the city of Prague in particular or the Bohemian people in general, and endeavouring to become acquainted with them, you are faced with the fact that there is in this country a strong and no doubt commendable attraction towards saints of all possible varieties, and, let us hope, a favourable reaction on the part of the latter. I do not suggest that a saints' day merely means a holiday.

To begin with, the Bohemians, on taking to Christianity at all, started with some very fine vintage saints of their own growing. You have heard all about them: Ludmilla, Wenceslaus, Milada, Adalbert. These estimable people were, after all, following the precepts of those who had brought the "Glad Tidings" to Bohemia, and therefore were entitled to high consideration and respect. We have met some of these most worthy people. There were the brothers Constantine (better known as Cyril) and Methodius, who did much missionary work in Central Europe, especially among those of their own, the Slavonic race, for these two were citizens of Solun (Salonika), where pure Slavonic was spoken in the ninth century. As Slavs these two missionaries were disliked by the Germans, but both Popes Adrian I and John VIII approved of them; we have heard how Methodius converted that stubborn pagan Prince Bořivoj. Another couple of saints whom I have mentioned before, Cosmas and Damian, have always been most popular in Bohemia. They came from the

West, or at least their reputation did, for they had been martyred in the third or fourth century, before Czech and his merry men had arrived at Řip, before the Slavs had appeared in Europe in fact. Pope Felix III held these two gentlemen in high esteem, had dedicated a church to them in Rome, and his successors had no doubt recommended this worthy couple to the Bohemians when the latter began to ask for spiritual patronage. Cosmas and Damian, the oldest patron saints of Bohemian Christendom, became very popular, and many churches were dedicated to them; in fact, as we have seen, it was zeal in their cause that brought about the martyrdom of St. Wenceslaus. I believe these two, Cosmas and Damian, were precursors of that excellent body of medical missionaries who wisely get at a man's soul by healing his body. There must be something in my theory about Cosmas and Damian, as the medical faculty of Prague University put up a sculptured group supposed to represent these two saints, on the Charles Bridge, early in the eighteenth century. As portraiture this group is not convincing.

The leading patron saint of Prague seems to be St. Vitus; at least in the great cathedral dedicated to him he dominates not only the city but also his co-patron saints of this most famous of all the city's many churches. You will remember that in course of a friendly exchange of concessions between St. Wenceslaus and King Henry the Fowler the latter presented Bohemia's ruler with an arm of St. Vitus. I do not quite understand how St. Vitus came to hold such high importance in Bohemia. He was born in Sicily of pagan parents, poor perhaps, possibly honest, about the beginning of the fourth century. Two Christians, Modestus and Crescentia, taught young Vitus and converted him without his father's

knowledge. There was nothing unusual in this. Vitus was martyred in Rome, an experience which might happen to any Christian in those days, and we hear no more about him until he appears as patron saint of a church founded about the middle of the ninth century on the Island of Rügen, by the monks of Corvey in Saxony. These monks had by some means or other got hold of the relics of St. Vitus; perhaps they parted with a bit to King Henry the Fowler, who then handed it on to Wenceslaus. The Slavonic islanders of Rügen relapsed into paganism but kept green the memory of St. Vitus, whom they worshipped as a god.

Whereas St. Wenceslaus secured only an arm of St. Vitus, King Charles acquired the rest of his body. St. Wenceslaus was, I fear, caught napping on several occasions. He is not dead, according to popular tradition, but sleeps inside a mountain, and sleeps soundly too, for he seems to have missed the resurrection of his people. By way of useful information I may tell you that the shrine of St. Wenceslaus is sanctuary for murderers, but I cannot say whether this custom still obtains under the constitution of the new Czecho-Slovak Republic.

King Charles arranged a great festival when the remains of St. Vitus reached the cathedral dedicated to him. With his own hands Charles placed a crown of gold upon the saintly head, or, as one old chronicler puts it with unexpected humour, upon the head of one or other St. Vitus. Charles was peculiarly expert in the matter of relics and a zealous collector, which shows his constant concern for his people's welfare, not only spiritual but physical as well. So, for instance, did that pious monarch cause the remains of St. Sigismund to be conveyed to Prague.

St. Sigismund was a good sound sixth-century saint of France who in the days of Gregory of Tours had frequently been invoked to ward off fever; his remains would therefore be a useful asset as complement to the limited knowledge of the art of healing in those days. Not that I attach much importance to the opinion of Gregory of Tours. You may remember that he admired one Chlodovech, King of all the Franks, who outdid any other Teuton founder of kingdoms by his record of crime, of murder and treachery, and generally speaking he had a tough lot to compete against. Londoners have probably forgotten that they also have a famous febrifuge in their city's patron saint, St. Erkenwald, to whose shrine came many pilgrims for relief from pain. Modern pilgrims to London come in their thousands to watch football matches—there is little of healing in this. Other relics collected by Charles were the spear, a bit of the cross and a nail, and the tablecloth used at the Last Supper. All these precious relics, together with the crown jewels, were kept in a strong castle built by Charles for the purpose. You may catch a glimpse of this castle, Karlov Tyn, Karlstein, as you pass down the valley of the winding Berounka of a summer's evening, coming to Prague from Paris via Cheb. A day was set apart for the Feast of Relics, the *Allatio Reliquiarum*. On this day the relics were conveyed to the cathedral and exhibited to the people, and Charles had arranged that all who attended this solemn function should be granted indulgence. I take it there was no work done that day in Prague; as it happens this feast coincided with that set apart for several saints, Macarius and Abel, besides being the octave of St. Stephen, a further reason for holiday-making.

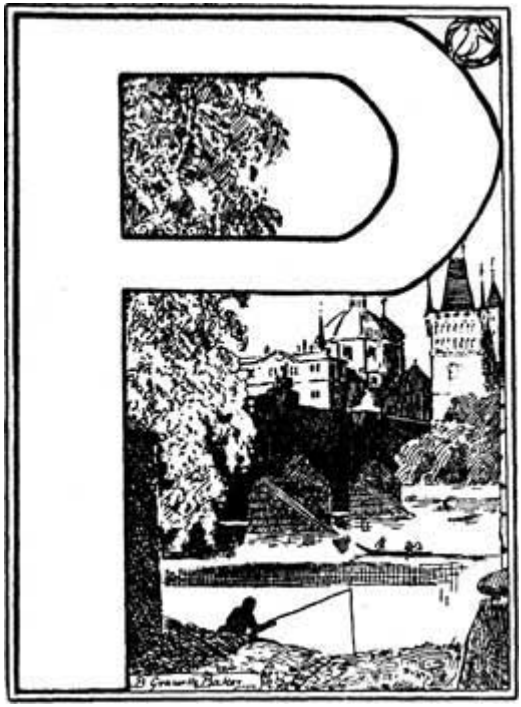
Talking of holidays in Prague, I came across one such

fixed for August 9th, and seriously described by a sound old writer on the manners and customs of Bohemia. This feast was observed, I cannot say religiously, but with great enthusiasm, by the students of the University. It was called quite simply *Beano*. This will sound familiar to you, and you will probably pronounce it as if derived from the bean, the common or garden bean and the feast thereof. Not so. This *Beano* should be pronounced with due stress on each particular vowel, as if it were an Italian word; indeed, it is derived from the Latin. Attempts have been made to trace this word to early French influence at Prague University, and to derive it from *bec-jaune*, pronounced with a certain abandon. This, again, is wrong. *Beano* is, or was, the great day on which the new students, the "freshers," were initiated into the mysteries of scholastic life with all manner of weird ceremony and horrible observances. There was used much, indeed undue, emphasis, said some, in order to impress upon the youngsters that a serious change of life was upon them, for, quoth the elders: "Beanus est animal nesciens vitam studiosorum."

CHAPTER IX

Showing how Prague grew and added beautiful buildings to its glory under the rule of Charles, the Father of his Country. Tells also of Charles's troubles, and introduces his

son Wenceslaus. Shows why this son should be considered as the "Good King Wenceslaus" of our Christmas carol. Makes mention also of Sister Anne and her husband, Richard II of England. Tells about Susanna and the King. Introduces well-known names of those who pass in filmy pageant across the old historic Charles Bridge—John Nepomuk, John Hus, and others. Gives a fleeting vision of another native King, a great man, and of other rulers who had their day and passed on. Talks at some length of the river of Prague, the Vltava, and gives some of its reflections. Leads up from earliest aquatic habits of the Slavonic inhabitants to those of the present day, and is, though a long chapter, by no means a dull one.



RAGUE, as you may imagine, had grown, despite the troubles it had passed through, both in importance and in extent. When Charles IV came to the throne, the city still consisted of three parts as before; during his reign a new town was added, and this was made necessary by the rise of the University which Charles had founded. Charles must have been considering the idea of creating a seat of learning in Prague before he accompanied his father to Crecy, for we find him writing to the Pope on the subject while he was yet recovering from his wounds and before he returned to Bohemia. It was at a Diet held at Prague in 1348 that Charles announced his intention of founding a University, and he set about it with his customary

energy. The King himself took in hand the organization of this his new foundation, ably assisted by the Archbishop, Ernest of Pardubic, as Chancellor. Students of many countries, many nations, flocked to Prague, evidence of the fact of the city's central position in Europe, and soon the new University ranked with those older institutions—the only ones of the kind in Europe—Bologna, Paris and Oxford. The number of students increased rapidly: by the end of Charles's reign there were some six or seven thousand of them. The trouble was to accommodate them all. The professors held lectures in their own apartments, in monasteries if they happened to belong to one or other of the many congregations in Prague, and theology courses were held in the Cathedral. This was well enough at first, but even then there was no provision for the students' lodgings. They could not live in colleges, as there were none; in fact, the only university buildings in existence, which probably served various ceremonial occasions, was a congeries of buildings called the Carolinum, after its founder. These buildings stood in the Old Town, and there were probably others used for university purposes dotted about the town, as is the case to-day. Still, the students remain unhoused. There must have been a good many houses without the walls of the Old Town and Vyšehrad, the ancient borough, and I take it that Charles collected all these houses under one administration of its own, walled the place in securely and called it Nové Město, New Town, quite simply. Charles laid the foundation-stone of the New Town in the same year as that in which he started the University, fitted the former out with various necessaries, a town-hall, a church or two, perhaps St. Stephen's, and so provided more housing room for the good people of Prague and

their guests the students.



All went very well, no doubt, for several years, when a calamity befell the city of Prague: the old bridge, built at her own expense by Queen Judith, the only link between Prague on the right bank and the Mala

Strana, was damaged beyond repair by winter's floods. Charles, as usual, rose to the occasion: he built a new one, again laying a foundation with his own royal hand, and this happened in 1358—on July 9th, to be strictly accurate. I do not propose to describe the Charles Bridge to you, as I am supplying an illustration showing it, but I wish to remark here that Charles is not guilty of the groups of statuary which distinguish this bridge from others in the world. The only bit of statuary anywhere near the Charles Bridge which dates from his period stands near the Mala Strana end of it on the upstream side. This is the sculptured figure of a knight in armour, bearing the coat of arms of the Old Town and holding aloft his drawn sword. Dr. Jeřabek calls this figure "Bruncvik," others call it "Roland"; it was probably put up to inform passers-by that they had better pay their toll quietly or there would be trouble.

The piles of the Charles Bridge nearest to the left bank of the river stand on a little island called Kampa. You cannot see much of this island from the bridge: I recommend you to go down the steps, under the bridge, and then look under the second arch, and you will see the view which I have sketched for you. It is not the view which you will find on the postcards illustrating this particular spot and calling it "Venice on the Vltava." In this the Pragers fall into the snobbish habit of going outside their own country for the sake of finding some inept comparison. I grant that they are not the only sinners in this respect; we may even have a "Venice in London," according to those who label the views on postcards, for all I know. I have, on postcards, met "Venice in Whatsisname" and elsewhere, wherever

there was sufficient sluggish water reflecting tall houses that have seen better days and conceal their dilapidations behind motley garments drying in a lazy breeze. But Prague need not descend to this; here is no "Venice in Prague," but simply a charming bit of an old town, a fascinating backwater where quaint old houses exchange reminiscences with their broken reflections in the water. This ought to be good enough for Prague, anyway.

So Charles threw this bridge across the water, a lasting, glorious monument to a father ever careful of his children's welfare, and its stout pillars and graceful arches bid fair to call up reflections for yet further centuries on the face of Bohemia's own river, the Vltava.

The River Vltava rises away down in the south among the mountains of the Bohemian Forest. It has its happy infancy in "green days in forest," leaping over rocks, playing with pebbles, and generally disporting itself until it comes out into the world and moves among men. Not empty handed either, for it carries the sound of the forest and the rhythm of running water to those that have their being on its banks; if you doubt it, come and hear Smetana's work at the National Theatre reflected in the waters of Prague. The Vltava arrives at Prague reinforced by its tributary, the Berounka, and flows almost due north until it meets the Castle Hill. Then it makes a bold sweep due east, turns north and west again, and so makes a peninsula of Castle Hill; then it resumes, with many windings, its northward course. Nothing could have been better arranged than this bold sweep encircling the Hradšany and the wooded slopes of Letna; it is this feature that adds so much interest to the attractive composition of Prague. This

must also have impressed that far-seeing lady, Libuša —it inspired her as it has inspired many people since.

The psychology of rivers has not been sufficiently studied. Most people just call a river blue, or golden or muddy, and pass on to other subjects. In reality every river of importance has a definite character all its own; so, for that matter, has every stream of running water, however insignificant it may seem. Our ancestors recognized the fact, but preferred to endow brooks and streams with a definite personality in the form of nymphs, pixies, or whatever they were called. The Cross has driven these harmless and pathetic little beings out of the world they lived in; only a few were allowed to linger, such as Isa, who till quite recently came ashore from the Danube between Passau and Vienna because she felt so lonely, poor dear! Then there is Undine, but she only appears on the operatic stage, and that but rarely. Under our present strenuous existence, where all is bent towards material success, there is no place for the sprites whose voices the ancients heard in the twilight silence. How could any properly constituted nymph play hide-and-seek with the moonbeams, or cast an eye upon a handsome boatman, from under the well-regulated bank of a river of to-day? As far as present-day mortals are concerned, any stream means water-power, any river means a waterway for commerce, and those thus engaged after the day's work turn away from river and stream without waiting to hear what they have to say when the din of industry dies down and the voice of the running water can be heard again.

There must be a certain and strong connection between a river and the people that live on its banks; one surely reacts upon the other, and in the process the character of both develops. Not only the sky, but the works of man, are reflected in rivers, have been so reflected since man began to work at all; so the character of a people must be influenced by rivers: witness the lazy reflections of the "Ponte Vecchio" in the golden Arno, the comfortable parks and lawns and country houses mirrored by the Thames until it gradually becomes busy, and very dirty, on its way to join the sea, with a sigh of relief after such a very strenuous "last lap."

The river at Prague is worthy of careful study, but whatever I may suggest as to its influence on the people of Prague, I still advise you to come here and judge for yourself. Remember, its name is "Vltava," out of which the Germans had made "Moldau," by which you have probably known it till now; but the map of Europe has been readjusted lately, names have changed back to their original version, and so the river at Prague has resumed definitely its Slavonic designation, which, though not given on any map, yet lived in the memory of the people.

An atmosphere of serenity seems to me to cling to the memory of Charles's reign, a sort of "world went very well then" feeling. Certainly Charles was doing his best, and his serenity and singleness of purpose were reflected in the soul of his people, as were the works of his hands reflected in the waters of the Vltava. Some historians credit Charles with deep and sinister designs, such as raising a vast Slav Empire to

counter the growing ascendancy of Germany. This seems rather nonsensical. Charles was a good King of Bohemia, albeit German by race and French by upbringing, and was doing his best for his country. He saw distinctly, as very few people only have seen before or since, that Bohemia and its capital, Prague, was admirably suited to form the centre of a large Empire; he therefore developed the resources of his country in order to fit it for the part it should play. Charles is also accused of Pan-Slavism, a wide and generally misinterpreted term; indeed, he spoke Czech well, unlike his father John, and encouraged literary effort in that language—it was his duty to do this, and not to force French or German on his people as he might have tried to do. Again, the fact of his having founded the Benedictine monastery at Emaus for the purpose of reviving the traditions of the former monastery of St. Prokop! To this end came monks from Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia, all Slavs who brought back to Bohemia the Cyrillac alphabet and the Slavonic liturgy. The Pope had granted express permission at the request of Charles, who had pointed out that it was of little use preaching to his people in Latin. The Pope had, indeed, stipulated that Emaus should be the only congregation to use Slavonic rites within the frontiers of Bohemia.


A. Granville Baker
TOWER of
NEW-TOWN-HALL.

Charles was probably the sort of man who would walk about on foot among his people, and I like to think of him crossing the bridge he built when going about his business, and there was plenty of that. First of all, the Royal Castle, where he seems to have resided, was badly in need of repair; at the same time there were several churches building on the right bank, and Charles would surely go to see how they were getting on. Then again, the New Town was growing up and being walled in, and the New Town Hall was in course of construction. This latter building is another pleasant monument to "the Father of his Country," as it rears its graceful saddle-roofed tower, with the characteristic pointed turrets, over the trees and flowering shrubs that make of the Charles Square such a delectable resting-place. Vyšehrad was also having its ancient defences repaired and strengthened, and the sides of the hill rising up out of the Old Town, Vinohrad, were being turned into vineyards and gardens by order of the King. Charles was also in the habit of attending learned discourses at the University, or of dropping in at lectures. Then there were many grave affairs of the State to keep him anxiously busy. I can almost see him, a stoutish, sturdy man of round and kindly countenance, passing across the bridge, reflecting deeply on many difficult questions. There were, for instance, the zealous preachers Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměříže, who were causing such a stir. These two worthies were holding forth in the churches against the luxury and immorality of the time, with such effect that well-known, great and gaudy sinners were moved to acts of public repentance and women to cast off their jewellery and to dress themselves in sober fashion. All this was very beautiful and edifying, but it was not likely to

last, and what with the ill-will of the Pope and the opposition of the monastic orders it took Charles all his tact and ability to steer a course among the rocks and rapids of imperial and Bohemian affairs. For all Charles's efforts the outlook was losing its air of serenity—was, in fact, becoming ominously cloudy towards the end of his reign. The papal conflict had brought about the Great Schism in the Western Church; this led to an aggravation of the Church Reform movement in Bohemia. In fact, the storm was rising which was to sweep over Bohemia, thence over all Central Europe, leaving it eventually broken and desolate, under the hand of Habsburg. At this moment, when a strong and steady hand was wanted more than ever, Charles died. He was only sixty-two, and might have been good for a few more years. However, he had prepared to meet events that might follow on his death, and had secured the succession to his son Wenceslaus, fourth and last Bohemian King of that name. Wenceslaus was the son of Anne of Schweidnitz, third wife of Charles; he had been crowned King of Bohemia at the age of two, his succession to the throne of Germany had been secured, so Wenceslaus, though only seventeen years old, started with the odds in his favour. There were plenty of troubles about which must have puzzled the young King considerably: rival Popes were hurling bans, bulls, excommunications, anathemas and such-like Church property at each other, and all the little dogs were barking at the heels of those precious pontiffs. Luckily young Wenceslaus could count upon a number of his father's old friends and councillors, and he started out trying to carry on his father's policy. He also took a line, a private one of his own, which was harmless enough at the outset, but became inconvenient as time went on.

Wenceslaus was all out for popularity among his people, especially among his Pragers. He would go about the city looking into minor matters of his people's welfare, so he would measure the mercer's cloth-yard and if it were not up to standard would crack the saucy knave's head therewith. He went among his people performing acts of charity; in fact, he generally disported himself right royally, if with an occasional lapse from discretion. Now this Wenceslaus drew the relations between England and Bohemia closer together. Wenceslaus had a sister Anne, who married our Richard II. Anne was surely a very dear lady—an expensive one, in fact—for Richard had to pay eighty thousand golden guldens to Wenceslaus within a fortnight of Anne's landing in England, and had also lent the genial Bohemian King a further sum of twenty thousand golden guldens, which went away to the *Ewigkeit*—at least England never saw them again.

Costly as was the bride of Richard II of England, I like to linger on her memory, feeling convinced that we all have benefited by the outlay. It is my firm opinion that we owe our grand old Christmas carol about "Good King Wenceslaus" to Anne of Bohemia directly. I have consulted various living Bohemian authorities on this subject. They had not even heard of our carol: I hummed the tune to them—it told them nothing. They tried to palm me off with St. Wenceslaus, but I declined him; he is not quite suitable as "theme" of a rollicking carol; besides, he gets plenty of attention in his own country. I grant that St. Wenceslaus was full of good works, all of the kind that looks well in frescoes, and in which everybody moves with feet in the first position, it was *de rigueur*. King Wenceslaus IV, also performed acts of kindness among his people, so the reference

in the carol to "flesh and wine" suits this merry monarch thoroughly: he would certainly have called for both these forms of sustenance. St. Wenceslaus might have forgotten the wine; King Wenceslaus would have thought of that at once; in fact, he was a firm believer in the French adage, "*l'alcool conserve*." Then we learn from the carol that the page found warmth in the footsteps of the King, and Wenceslaus was certainly "hot stuff," as you will agree when I have told you more about him. Moreover, what is more likely than that Anne should have told her new English friends all about that jolly, popular brother of hers? The tune and its quaint harmonization is surely from some time in the joyous fifteenth century; if it had to deal with St. Wenceslaus it would have to grunt about in Gregorian phrasing. No doubt Anne's ladies who accompanied her from Bohemia would invoke the patron saint from time to time, and English people, hearing a strange and difficult name, and thinking it impossible that several well-known men had borne it, would be likely enough to get saintly prince and jovial monarch thoroughly mixed up. Anyway, I am firmly convinced that the "Good King Wenceslaus" we sing about at Christmas is no other than the brother of Anne, German King, King of Bohemia, fourth of that name, and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

Meanwhile the River Vltava continued to reflect indifferently the doings of small and great, and among others those of Wenceslaus.

The laudable habit of bathing met with every encouragement from "Good King Wenceslaus," who was generally to be found ready to take part in any popular diversion. It was he who raised those humble but useful citizens, the keepers of bathing

establishments, to prominent rank among their fellows. And hereby hangs a tale.

King Wenceslaus did not always see eye to eye with the leaders among the people; there were misunderstandings and bickerings, and despite his popularity among the more jovial elements, he had enemies even in his own capital. On the occasion of one such unpleasantness his enemies had detained him at the Old Town Hall. The King, finding this very irksome, deliberated on some method of escaping, and had the happy thought of insisting on a bath. It was in the autumn of the year 1394; the weather was warm and the river close by. A few turns down the narrow winding street named after his father would bring Wenceslaus to the river, where, somewhat above the old town mill, was a bathing establishment. The name of the owner of these baths seems to have been lost to history. Not so that of his daughter Susanna. Now the name Susanna has appeared before in recorded history also in connection with bathing—a most irreproachable Susanna. We draw no parallel; we make no comparisons, especially as no elders enter immediately into this story; we merely state historic facts. Moreover, it was not Susanna who was taking the bath this time, it was the King, and Susanna seems merely to have been hovering about in a punt. Here was the monarch's opportunity. He persuaded Susanna to take him across the river. Thus he escaped from his enemies. Now there is no hint of an assignation, no suggestion that Susanna was an accessory before the fact, merely the chronicler's statement that the lady happened to be there and that she helped the King to escape.

As was only right, King Wenceslaus proved his

gratitude right royally. He began by breaking up the lady's bathing establishment as a preliminary to building a new and much more sumptuous one. Susanna's father seems to have been left out of the deal altogether by this time. The King then sent for Susanna, who appears to have been close at hand, namely, in the Royal Castle of Žebrac, where the solemn rite now to be related took place. After all, if you must break up a lady's home, the least you can do is to offer her suitable accommodation elsewhere. Susanna therefore appeared before the King, who solemnly invested her with a charter by virtue of which all those who followed the pursuit of keeping a bathing establishment should by their occupation be placed on a social level with the masters of other arts and crafts. They might, indeed, hold high their head among their fellows. It was expressly stated that no Jews, infidels, heretics, or lewd persons should be allowed to patronize bathing establishments; nor might they even enter into the dwelling-places of those who came under the new charter. Severe penalties were to be imposed on those who ventured to speak ill of the keeper of a bathing establishment; he might even lose his head for such temerity; anyway, his property would go to the senior member of the new guild.

Thus spake the King. Furthermore, he ordained that this worshipful guild which did so much towards encouraging cleanly habits should hold as its crest or cognizance within a garland argent and azure, a kingfisher proper. Some chroniclers suggest that the bird was a parrot, but this seems unlikely—parrots can be so indiscreet. Moreover, you may see for

yourself on the Old Town side of the tower of the Charles Bridge the bird within the garland, and will recognize it at once for a kingfisher.

Let us watch the pageant that crosses the bridge that Charles built. They pass in the serene atmosphere which, to my thinking, enveloped the city in the Golden Age of Charles "the Father of his Country." They hurry to and fro under the lurid light of civil war waged in the name of religion; they linger on the bridge looking to the sky and its reflections in the water, under the false light which precedes disaster, or move mournfully cast down by the lowering clouds of oppression, to revive when Prague came into her own again one crisp October morning in 1918.

Charles, it seems, lived in the Royal Castle a good deal. We may see him crossing the bridge he built, to look to the progress of the work he was engaged upon. Perchance he was deep in thought on high matters of State, on his Golden Bull which reaffirmed all the privileges granted to Bohemia. This Bull caused a coolness between him and the Pope, whose indefinite claims to interfere in German elections were certainly restricted by that engine. Around him the populace would be talking of the great preachers, Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměříže, whom the King protected in their fiery onslaught on the abuses in the Church and immorality of the children of their time. Charles may have thought all this very beautiful but unlikely to last. He saw clouds arising, and they closed over Bohemia when he died.

Of the works that Charles constructed for the beautifying of his capital, several are reflected in the waters of Vltava. There is, for instance, the

bridgehead tower on the Mala Strana side, a graceful monument to Charles's gracious days. You may notice on passing under the gateway from the bridge the figure of a witch carved in stone, complete with broom and general air of nocturnal enterprise. I often wonder as I pass by here whether this figure inspired Marion Crawford when he was casting about for a title to his novel which you may have read, *The Witch of Prague*. There lingers a strong, a powerfully attractive *allure* of old Prague, just about this quarter, at the left bank end of the Charles Bridge. There is a quaint old tower that dates from Queen Judith's time. I have already pointed it out to you, and told you that it was until fairly recently used as a lock-up. The battlement across the gateway used to bear indications of rough justice as executed in those days; it was frequently adorned with the heads of rebels, traitors or others who had become unpopular, as, for instance, one Bohemicky. It appears that Bohemicky was quite unable to get along with his fellow-citizens, so they had his head off and added to the collection over the gateway. This happened in 1517, when the nations had emerged out of the darkness of the Middle Age and were struggling along by the yet uncertain light of civil progress and religious reform.

The tower on the right bank end of the Charles Bridge bears every indication of dating from King Wenceslaus IV, as his device, the kingfisher, is found to figure in its decorative scheme. Between these two bridgeheads passes a good deal of the historic pageant of Old Prague. Wenceslaus IV played about here a good deal, it would appear. First of all we have that little affair with Susanna of the bathing-place. Then there was a story about one John Nepomuk which seems to have made less stir at the

time of the event narrated than its echo did some centuries later. John Nepomuk was a pious soul, as a priest should be, modest and seemly in his ways. He just comes in, as it were, in the background, of the squabbles that Wenceslaus and his Archbishop, John of Jenstein, constantly indulged in. Wenceslaus was all for reforming the Church before reforming himself. As to John Nepomuk, I am rather puzzled about him. The people of Bohemia, on the whole, seem to reverence him as a saint, one of the patrons of their country.

Some saints are a long time in coming to their own. The powers that decide such matters are very deliberate; they are "left at the post" even by such august institutions as Royal Commissions, Parish Councils and Leagues of Nations. We all know how long it took before Joan of Arc was duly canonized, yet her case was perfectly clear; she had her visions, she acted upon them, she also gave advice freely, and was eventually burnt at the stake; in fact, there can have been no doubt, from the very beginning of her career, but that she was the stuff that saints are made of. Another saint whose recognition was very tardy is St. John Nepomuk. He is probably quite unknown to England even to this day, notwithstanding the fact that he stood in close if somewhat uncomfortable relations to one who figures in an English carol, namely, this Good King Wenceslaus.

Now there is relativity in goodness, and this feature was strongly marked in the King of Bohemia of whom we sing at Christmas time. One absolute departure from goodness is reported of him, namely, that he caused his wife's father-confessor to be thrown into the river at Prague; and this man was

John Nepomuk.

The trouble arose out of curiosity, and perhaps jealousy. Wine had also a good deal to do with the business; the wine of Mělnik, both white and red, was probably as pleasant to the taste then as it is to-day, and Wenceslaus thought so too. His Queen Sophie was a very good wife indeed, so Wenceslaus, wondering what such a very dear and gentle lady could have to confess, inquired of John Nepomuk about this. I fear John was one of those exasperating persons who give the soft answer that makes one very wild. It had that effect on Wenceslaus; he went off into an ungovernable rage and had John dragged down to the river and thrown in. I believe John's tongue was torn out first. Anyway, this is the sort of picturesque addition that you expect. There is a statue to John Nepomuk on the Charles Bridge, there is a tablet to mark the spot where he was thrown in, and there is his shrine in the cathedral which Lützow, by the way, describes as of "barbaric splendour."

Now shortly after John Nepomuk's demise came yet another John, surnamed Hus, and as he likewise met with a violent death, and that under yet more picturesque conditions highly coloured by national sentiment, his memory survived, whereas John Nepomuk's was lost in oblivion. After all, John Nepomuk's trouble was more a personal one, a quarrel about a domestic affair, whereas John Hus went all the way to Constance to bear testimony to the faith held by his people, and was burnt there with all the pomp and ceremony which Church and State of those days could put up. As sequel to the martyrdom of John Hus came the wars waged by his Bohemian followers against all the might of the

Church of Rome and the Holy Roman Empire. It is, therefore, no wonder that his memory held popular sentiment for centuries, holds it still, though there are signs that John Nepomuk is creeping up again; and in this lie endless possibilities.

In the first place it is maintained by ardent nationalists, and therefore followers of John Hus, that John Nepomuk never existed at all, that he was simply invented by the Jesuits in their successful efforts to bring back to Rome the Protestant people of Bohemia whose army had been defeated in the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. John Nepomuk was raised, they maintain, in opposition to the real national hero and martyr John Hus; therefore the whole story of the former John's death is all invention, and the tablet on the bridge over which he went to martyrdom is a brazen misstatement of fact. The tablet is of bronze, anyway, and shows the saint floating serenely on the surface, his head surrounded by a halo of stars which flew upwards as his body struck the water. Although this serious event is said to have happened in 1383, it was not till nearly three centuries later that it was recalled to the memory of the Bohemian people, who were then encouraged to celebrate the 16th of May as the day set apart for St. John Nepomuk. So they celebrated—it takes little inducement to make a Bohemian celebrate anything. The festival included several attractive features, such as a religious service on the bridge itself, and also a display of fireworks in memory of the afore-mentioned bunch of stars. Such observances must have given great satisfaction to the saint, less so the habit of invoking his aid in times of drought. This surely is rather a delicate matter. Remember, John Nepomuk had been drowned; therefore to ask him to see to a further supply of

water seems hardly tactful—it is enough to send any ordinary saint off into a fit of hydrophobia. Anyway, John Nepomuk was duly canonized some three hundred and fifty years after his supposed immersion in the waters of Prague. Since then many churches have been dedicated to his saintly memory; many statues, depicting him with all the truthfulness inherent in the narrative of "the oldest inhabitant," adorn shrines by the wayside: he was apparently popular all over the country—in any case he brought the people at least one holiday. But the war affected the pleasant relations between a kindly saint and the people to whom he had been appointed for special duties by the far distant authorities of Holy Church. The spirit of nationalism tarnished the starry halo of one John, and sought illumination in the fierce glow that destroyed the other. John Nepomuk was relegated to the background where live the quiet souls whose beliefs are not affected by nationalism. John Hus was brought forward by national sentiment which had fiercely resented the suppression of this martyr's memorial celebrations, and for a time it seemed that John Hus would hold the field, that the spirit of the nation would return to his tenets and away from an alien spiritual authority.

Even a year ago John Nepomuk's day was observed only by those who perform their devotions in secret; this year we had vigil and feast kept at top form, pilgrimages from all parts of the country, processions through the streets headed by high dignitaries of the Church, and outward and visible signs of a sincere regard for a patron saint. There was some stimulating opposition too: a band of followers of the other John also demonstrated in favour of their man, whose day was not due for about a month or so. The police were out in force, but the opposition

amounted to little more than noise; there were plenty of bands and beer, and no one particularly wanted a row.

There is some significance in this revival of reverence for St. John Nepomuk. Owing to centuries of oppression the mind of the people of Bohemia has developed a strong "spirit of negation," "*der Geist der stets verneint*," as Goethe would say, to the detriment of constructive ability, so it may be that this spirit having failed to reconstruct a church of some sort, at least on national lines, is going under before the mightiest organization the world has ever known, the Church of Rome.

The Government's attitude was interesting, if not amusing, in the matter of keeping the feast. Officially there was no feast (except the daily socialistic feast of reason), unofficially anyone who wanted to drop a tear for John Nepomuk over the bridge was at liberty to leave his office for that purpose.

Swarms of country folk flocked into the city of Prague to give John Nepomuk his due—but there was also an agricultural exhibition going on at the time. The Government was keenly interested in this exhibition; the crowds who came in out of reverence for John Nepomuk went to the exhibition out of curiosity.

To the Government the late patron saint of Bohemia was of some economic value; what his spiritual value is time will tell. Holy Church can always afford to wait.

John Hus has just been mentioned. He passes before us in the pageant of the Charles Bridge. Wenceslaus IV knew this fervent soul who came up to Prague

from his humble home in Southern Bohemia, and arrived at his M.A. degree in 1396, eventually to become Rector of the University. It is possibly indirectly through Wenceslaus that Hus became acquainted with the writings and teachings of Wycliffe. Wenceslaus frequently corresponded on the subject of Church Reform, on the recognition of Urban VI as Pope, and other cognate matters, with his brother-in-law, Richard II of England, and no doubt sister Anne added a line to her husband's letters. Now Anne, we know, had already been deeply impressed by Wycliffe's teaching; his writings had been known and treasured in Prague for some time. John Hus had certainly studied them, and he was an ardent advocate of Church Reform. We also find that he had a friend in that long-suffering Queen Sophie, wife of Wenceslaus; he was even for a time her father-confessor. We see John Hus pass on his way through the storms of controversy to the pyre at which he perished by the faithlessness of an Emperor, Sigismund, younger brother of Wenceslaus, and also some time King of Bohemia. Then again we see the fire that destroyed John Hus's body at Constance reflected time and again, angrily, in the waters of the Vltava; the Hussites were out and, as we have seen, were destroying by fire. So we see the Bishop's palace in flames, the Church of "St. Mary under the Chain," and many of the old houses on the Mala Strana. The same fate, but not by the same agents, befell the old Gothic tower you see standing up above that quaint congerie of buildings below you as you look upstream at the Old Town end of the bridge. Here is the old water tower dating back through many vicissitudes to 1489, and below it are the buildings of the Old Town mill, which are also of venerable age.

Religious dissensions, strife and turmoil, marked the days when Sigismund reigned over Bohemia and also the Holy Roman Empire; there were at one time three rival Emperors, also three Popes, a state of affairs not conducive to the world's welfare; and Prague suffered accordingly. Strange scenes must have been reflected in the Vltava in those stormy times, as the pageant of the history of Prague crossed the Charles Bridge. One day, to the beating of drums, a bevy of priests came from afar; they made for the market-place and there sold indulgences. The Pragers, distracted by the dissensions that rent the country, took to arms repeatedly. Now and then a rift in the clouds would hold out promise of a serener atmosphere; after two Habsburgs, Albert and his posthumous son, Ladislaus, came a King of their own choosing, of their own race and faith, George Podiebrad. But much as the Pragers venerated this native King of theirs, he was able to bring them little lasting good, with all his grand efforts and laudable intentions. George Podiebrad, it appears, was fond of the river, like a good Bohemian, and would come down to bathe occasionally. To make a clean job of it, he used to get shaved at the same time, possibly hair-cut. One day as the barber held the King's chin and flourished his razor, the knight of the tongs asked his sovereign: "Who is now the most mighty man in this Kingdom of Bohemia?" "Surely thou art," quoth the King. When the shave was over the King demanded: "Who is now the mightiest man in this Kingdom of Bohemia?" "Surely thou art," quoth the barber, who was thereupon given striking evidence of his monarch's might, a couple of blows on the jaw, a kick or two in the ribs, and other marks of royal favour. No doubt a few halidoms, gramercies and other bits of furniture were set flying about at the

time. The barber was so overcome by these marks of royal favour that he died a few days after taking them. This was George Podiebrad in lighter mood; he had a serious side to him as well, as I may try to show you by and by.

There followed Vladislav, a Pole, and various Habsburgs as Kings of Bohemia, but I see little that the river cares to reflect, of their work or doings. Instead of reflections in the waters, I see them troubled, and anxiety on the face of Prague. There seems to have been a brightening up after the Bohemians had cleared the atmosphere by letting loose the War of Thirty Years. They had invited a foreign Protestant to be their King, and they hoped much from his wife. We have met these two before, Frederick of the Palatinate and Elizabeth, whom the Bohemians still insist on calling an Englishwoman, whereas everyone should know that anyone who has even a remote Scottish relative expects to be considered a Scot "for a' that." The river gives me just a glint of a reflection concerning Frederick and Elizabeth.

The good people of Prague live by the river, on the river, and in warm weather in the river. This has been the pleasant custom of the Pragers from time immemorial; it has not been appreciated by some of the visitors to Prague. So, for instance, this so-called English lady, Elizabeth, wife of him whom history nicknames the "Winter King," was shocked at the very liberal display of pink flesh one day when crossing the Charles Bridge. It was probably a sunny day, and many people of Prague were disporting themselves in the Vltava, as they do to-day. You may see them swimming about or in boatloads pulled by some enthusiastic if perspiring male member of the

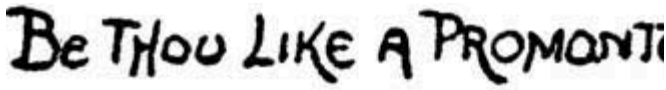
family; indeed, the results of Bohemia's excellent cuisine are much in evidence. It must be admitted that the same cuisine tends to develop a certain redundancy among those no longer in their first youth. Perhaps the sight of exuberant ladies, scantily clad and bulging over the gunwale of a frail craft, provoked the English Princess to a shocked utterance, the account of which, purposely garbled by the Jesuits, spread abroad like wildfire, and caused much unfavourable comment. The lady herself was subject to remark by the Pragers on account of her very *decolleté* dresses after the fashion set by the Court of her father, King James I of England, of whom it is said, by the way, that he was not over addicted to washing—the tips of his fingers were about the extent of his ablutions; so stone-throwing was out of place in this instance, as in all others. However, as we know, Elizabeth did not make a prolonged stay in Prague; her husband Frederick, by no means endowed with the physical courage of his son Rupert, the Prince Palatine, did a memorable "sprint" when he heard how the people of his adoption had been defeated. The people of Prague then had much more serious matters to concern themselves with than an English Princess's dresses. The troops of the Empire marched into Prague, adventurers of many nations swarmed into the city and settled there while Jesuits set about bringing back the citizens into the fold of the Roman Church by lighting bonfires with the works of the earnest divines who followed in the footsteps of John Hus and the reformers. They endeavoured by these means to stamp out any tendency to freedom of thought, religious and political, in the people of Bohemia. In this they failed.



While talking of the aquatic habits of the people of Prague, of Bohemia generally, I am reminded of accounts by Byzantine chroniclers, reporters and travellers who described Slavs they had met or heard of. This would be some time ago, say sixth or seventh century. These Slavs had a wonderful idea of lying in ambush—I cannot call it a military stratagem, it is so amphibious. They lay down in shallow pools, showing only the end of a blow-pipe to breathe through, and so waylaid the enemy. The Byzantines must have been up against the Czechs, who seem to me distinctly amphibious in summer-time. True, the stratagem described is no longer in use; it is too simple for modern times and methods; besides, I do not know many Bohemians of whom I could say that they are built for that manœuvre, that they would ever be able effectively to conceal their manly proportions in shallow pools. No, I do not think it could be done to-day. One *buirdly* body, whose

proportions were not easy to conceal, caught my eye one day as I was paddling about among a swarm of merry swimmers. He stood out among the crowd, a majestic figure. It was not his costume—simplicity itself—which attracted my attention, not his fiercely upturned moustache nor the red and white jockey cap that crowned his square-cut head. It was his massive stateliness as a whole. Surely he had taken guidance from Marcus Aurelius: "Be thou like a promontory"!

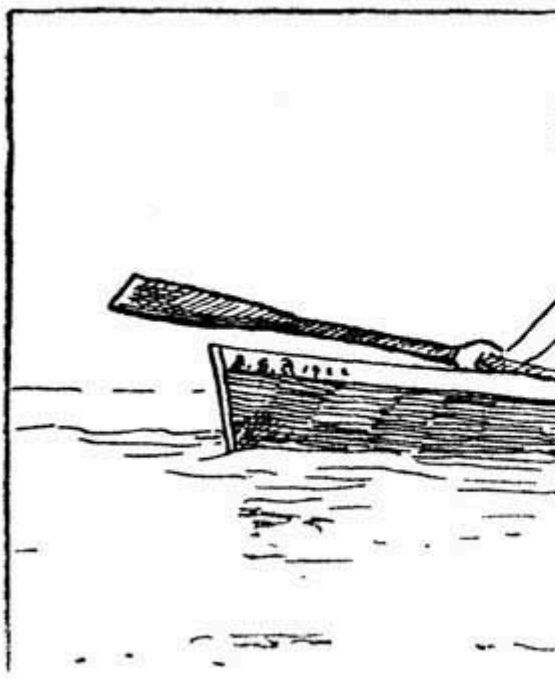

BE THOU LIKE A PROMONT



Be Thou Like A Promontory.

On sunny summer days all Prague seems to be on or in the river, and a very sensible and healthy way it is to spend the hot hours of the day—and it can be appreciably hot in Prague. As a rule you may reckon on long spells of fine weather throughout Bohemia, as the country is sheltered on the weather side by the high mountains which hold up the rain. So all Prague turns out to enjoy the river and the sunshine. During the summer months the inhabitants of Prague, a very white-skinned race, turn ripe brown in the parts exposed to the sun; and, as I suggested before, a considerable aggregate surface is thus exposed. In contrast to low-cut white frocks, brown necks recall sights familiar to Eastern travellers. I do not suggest that this detracts from the charm of the ladies of Prague, to which I pay ready tribute. And in winter the normal fairness of skin of the Aryan reasserts itself, while the charm remains—in fact, intensifies. It is singularly pleasant to watch the younger generation at play on or in the river. They are all good, strong swimmers, but their chief delight seems to lie in each one "paddling his, or her, own canoe." The river canoe is not quite the same as those which we derived from the Red Indians, though that kind of craft is also seen about. The popular canoe is a very small flat-bottomed concern with pointed stem and stern, is generally gaily painted and named appropriately "Water Bubble," "Fairy," or something equally ingenious. It looks easy when you see a lass gracefully paddling herself along with a double oar; it is anything but as easy as it looks. This class of canoe is a very unstable craft. I have tried to navigate one, and spent the whole time in the water —simply could not keep inside the tub. This I much regretted, for it must be thoroughly enjoyable to laze

about under the trees that overhang the river from one or other of the islands and listen to the band. You do not get half the enjoyment you should out of music when swimming around all the time, and it would not be appreciated if you appeared like Venus or Undine, from out of the foam as it were, among the customers of the "Restauration" on one or other of the islands—besides, you would not have your pocket-book, stuffed with notes, on your person just then.



CHAPTER X

Charles and the Housing Problem. The "carryings on" in the New Town, and more about "St. Mary of the Snow"; also about Rudolph II and some troublesome guests of his inviting, called the "Passauer." How Count Thurn chased the "Passauer" out of town. A word about the Salvation Army. How the centre of fashion shifted to the Old Town in the days of Wenceslaus IV, and we move with it down the Karlova Ulice, look at various matters of interest and listen to a story about a confectioner and his nocturnal visitors. The 21st of June in Prague and the Hus celebrations on the 6th of July. The Old Town Hall and the Church of Our Lady of Tyn. The "Powder Tower," night life in Prague, and a word on missionaries of long ago and of to-day. A good deal about concerts, theatres, opera and other recreations. A mention of Jungmann and Kalina, and the Slav Congress of 1848. A memory of barricades and street fighting. Something about Sokols.



HARLES, we have seen, had added a fourth quarter, the New Town, to his city of Prague, moved thereto by the acuteness of the "Housing Problem," which, by the way, is equally urgent to-day. Prague is again the capital of a free and flourishing State, and is again hard put to it to find room for all those who feel attracted to her. The New Town soon entered into the spirit of mediæval Prague, put on no airs, but just joined in any fray that happened to be going on. So New Town and Old were wont to meet in battle over some vexed question, generally of theology strongly mixed with politics, and a favourite cockpit was the ground in front of "St. Mary of the Snow." It was on one of those occasions that the steeple was brought down, together with a couple of monks who were hiding in it, and also the big bell Carolus; a gun was brought into action, and no doubt gave tone to the proceedings. This was in 1434; nearly two centuries

later some visitors generally alluded to as the "Passauer," plundered this church and monastery.

This visit of the "Passauer" was again due to that noxious mixture, religion plus politics. The Union of Protestant German Princes had been broken, and Ravaillac's dagger had killed Henri Quatre, spoiling his plans towards helping Protestantism, in which plans the French King had also included Bohemia. Just about this time the Habsburger King of Bohemia, Rudolph II, who must have been rather mad, was looking out for a successor. He loathed all his relatives with complete impartiality, save one, and that one was a cousin, Archduke Leopold, Bishop of Strassbourg and Passau. Leopold was one of those fighting prelates who send others to do the dirty work; in this case an army of his, some thirty thousand bandits led by a foreign *condottiere*, invaded Bohemia, burning and pillaging until they came to Prague. Rudolph had probably invited them, as the imperial garrison of the Hradšany admitted these "Passauer" to the Mala Strana. In Old Prague these marauders met with resistance, though here too preparations had been made towards their visit, as gunpowder and other warlike stores had been found in monasteries and houses of the Jesuits. The Estates of Bohemia hastily equipped Count Thurn, who soon got the better of Leopold's mercenaries, and chased them and the Jesuits out of the country. Fighting about this quarter of Prague—in fact, anywhere in the city—is now discouraged by an efficient police force, and the only warlike sounds I have ever heard proceeding from out the shadows of "St Mary of the Snow" came from the band of the Salvation Army. A very good band it is too, though the tunes it plays are not up to the native standard of music. Nevertheless the Salvation Army is not only

tolerated, but enjoys a certain amount of popularity; deservedly too, for that organization does a great deal of good rescue work. Jungmann's statue looks down thoughtfully upon this somewhat corybantic form of religious expression when on a Sunday afternoon the Salvation Army band is in full blast. Jungmann, who brought out the value of the Czech language, its poetic possibilities, by translating into it Milton's *Paradise Lost*, may wonder at this strange striving after "the Beauty of Holiness," which also comes from England. But probably he understands.

The New Town seems to have developed along a line of local politics all its own and at variance with that of its very close neighbours, Old Town, Vyšehrad and Mala Strana. Their local politicians did not lack initiative; no one can accuse them of that failing. I can recall one instance as example. During the days when the Protestants of Prague, in their religious ardour, had split up into at least two distinct and hostile parties, a procession of Utraquists, priests leading with the Host, passed by the New Town Hall. Some one threw a brick and hit a priest, thereupon the populace stormed the Town Hall and hurled Mayor and Corporation out of the window; those of the victims who still showed signs of life were dispatched with clubs—in fact, a clean-up of municipal authorities took place. Public spirited certainly, unconventional, you may say; but if the Bohemian is to have no power of imagination, who may?

In the days of Wenceslaus IV the fashionable centre of Prague seems to have been shifted from the impressive Hradšany side to the Old Town. The King himself preferred to live in close touch with his people; he wanted to see life—he certainly made it,

for Wenceslaus when young was quite "one of the lads of the village." Let us look up that good King's haunts. On crossing the Charles Bridge from the Mala Strana to the Old Town we keep straight along the Karlova Ulice—that is, as straight as you can along this narrow old street by which Charles must have made his way to the Carolinum. I have already pointed out to you the dome which surmounts the home of the Red Cross Knights, the Knights Crucifer, and told you that this building and the church that stands somewhat apart on your left, behind the statue of Charles IV, is the work of the Jesuits. We may go in by the wide gateway into this mass of buildings, the Clementinum, also part of the University, but this is guide-book business, and I prefer to take you my own way. So we go along the crooked street past a bunch of churches, one of which is the longest in Prague; you may see their bulbous towers from my terrace, or your own if you get the right point of view. These churches do not interest me particularly except for a lovely bit of wrought-iron railing belonging to the Italian Chapel, just where the street takes a slight twist. Here you have quaint old houses, with red-tiled roofs and dormer windows. One of them seems inclined to impede the progress of the traffic, and the street bends slightly away to the right to oblige this building. There are quaint ornamentations on the narrow side of this house facing us, human figures and wreaths, and in the centre of the design a star. This old house has a little story to tell. Long ago, possibly in the sixteenth century, it was an inn, or a lodging-house, was said to be haunted, so the great-grandson of the last innkeeper there gave up taking lodgers and became a confectioner. One winter's evening, probably in preparation for Christmas, this

confectioner was surveying the day's handiwork. He was particularly pleased with two little sugar figures he had fashioned; they represented a lady and her gallant in Spanish dress, each draped in the heavy folds of a cloak. He was interrupted by a knock at the door, and in came two figures, in Spanish dress, cloak and all, a lady and her cavalier. The only thing strange about them were their faces: they were like masks, beautiful indeed, but lifeless. However, the couple were quite amiable; they took the proffered seats, and the gallant spoke. "Have you, good master [gramercies, gadzooks, etc., according to taste], a couple of sugar figures in Spanish dress, each draped in a cloak?" "Zounds!" or something equally effective (in Czech, please) from the confectioner, "here is the very article!" The little figures gave satisfaction; the gallant purchased them with much fine gold, then proffered a request for a favour in return. "Granted," or words to that effect, from the confectioner. "As it happens," continued the gallant, "we have lost our heads, and would be much obliged if you would recover them for us. You see, we called here about a hundred years ago and were murdered in our beds, here in this house. It was your great-grandfather's doing; he was a bit peevish that evening. We had arrived with all our trunks, had searched the whole town for lodgings; every place was crowded. Some one advised us to call here. The old gentleman, after a deal of grumbling, showed us into a room, the first floor front. I feel sure he really never liked us; in fact, we were no sooner asleep than he came in and cut our heads off. He put our bodies in one of our trunks, the contents of which he kept as souvenirs; you know he was a great collector. He mislaid our heads, and we have suffered much inconvenience in consequence. The ones we are wearing now are not

real ones—wax, you know; quite good of their kind, but not what we have been used to. If you would be good enough to look around for those heads, put them in a coffin with our bodies and have our whole outfit decently buried, we should feel much relieved. By the way, our old trunks are somewhere about the premises still, down in the cellar; your great-grandfather was always keen on cold-storage—a collector should be." The confectioner promised to see to this little matter, the visitors tried to get up a smile of gratitude, and faded away. Right enough, after searching diligently amongst his ancestor's collection, the confectioner found the missing articles, carried out the instructions given him by his visitors, and never saw them again. They have left Prague for good and all, I gather.

It is well worth while to dive into the little narrow streets and alleys to right and left; here you come upon many reminders of ancient Prague. Look out especially for the quaint house-signs, some of which have not yet been swept away—signs of exquisite design and workmanship, a lily, a fish, keys or bunches of grapes. The Karlova Ulice eventually lands us in the little Old Town Square, where you will find a beautiful wrought-iron cage over a well, of sixteenth-century workmanship, and passing on we arrive at one of the most historic spots of Prague, the Staroměstké Náměsti, the Old Town Square, or Ring. In shape it is neither of these two, but that does not detract from the throbbing interest that clings to it.

There was something unusual in the atmosphere of

Prague when on the 21st of June the sun dispelled the river mist, penetrated the purple shadows of the quaint old streets, lit up the windows along the modern quays, and gave promise of a glorious day to those who hurried to their daily work. The unusual thing was an occasional streak of black in the general radiance. Above that quarter of the castle where the President's standard flies, a black flag floated on the morning breeze. The same black note was repeated at the Czech National Theatre, and elsewhere black banners waved out over the streets. This 21st of June was a day of mourning for the children of Prague; on that day they remembered the events of three centuries ago, events which robbed them of their rights as a sovereign people, and fixed them firmly, ruthlessly, under the yoke of Habsburg. It was the commemoration day for those who had made the supreme sacrifice for the faith that was in them. The battle of the White Mountain had been lost, and with it went the last remnant of those able to resist the encroaching Austrians and the band of adventurers who, under the cloak of religion, waged savage war in this fair country.

The cause of the trouble is far to seek. It arose from a characteristic of these Slavonic people which should endear them to us, namely, a very strong feeling of race and its responsibilities and a great tenacity when defending their political and religious liberty. It is particularly in the latter direction that the people of Bohemia and Moravia have been in close touch with English thought. They were among the first, perhaps the only people of the Continent, to embrace the tenets of Wycliffe, and they fought for their convictions during the weary vicissitudes of the Hussite wars. There were many Germans among those who took to the new religious thought;

Germans who had made their home in Bohemia and Moravia, and were among the most earnest workers for the country's welfare. But the *Drang nach Osten* of the Germans of the Holy Roman Empire under its semi-independent Princes and Electors, all intent on their own advancement, was a constant menace to the peaceful development of the Bohemian and Moravian people. They were not protected from invasion by the silver sea. Bohemia never had a sea-coast, despite the descriptive scenery in *Measure for Measure*. And here, I fear, is another shattered illusion. When Shakespeare spoke of Bohemia he meant Apulia, which at one time was named Bohemundia, after its King Bohemund. Bohemia has always been exposed to enemies from the west, who could pour in over the passes from Saxony or Bavaria. So the stout resistance of the Hussites was eventually broken, and the House of Habsburg, for some time elected Kings of Bohemia, encroached more and more on the chartered freedom of the country. A first definite act of imperial bad faith following on years of a policy inspired by malevolence and tempered by stupidity, brought matters to a climax. A heated scene in the Council Chamber of the Castle of Prague ended in what is described as the "Act of Defenestration." In plain English, the Emperor's lieutenants, who, by the way, happened to be a couple of Czech gentlemen bringing evidence of the sovereign's treachery, were thrown out of the window. A midden in the moat broke their fall; the officials fell soft, and got safely away. But this very distinct lack of appreciation of the Emperor's demands on the part of the Bohemian Estates let loose all the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, a conflict which, waged under the cloak of religion and with the blessings of Rome, set back

civilization in Central Europe for many generations. For the Czech inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia, as for those of Teuton origin who sympathized with the liberal movement of the time, the battle of the White Mountain and its tragic sequel on that 21st of June was the death-knell of their hopes.

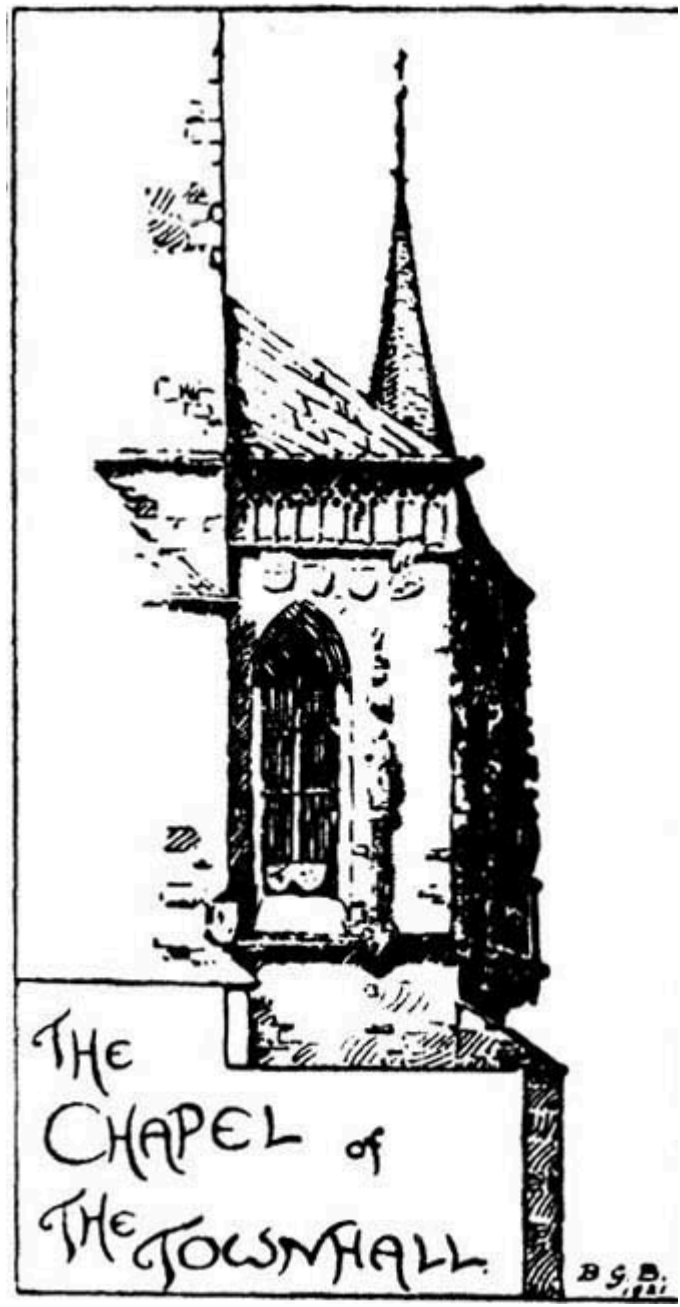
That there were Germans among the victims shows that it was not merely racial rivalry as between Slav and Teuton, and that there was one Roman Catholic among the number demonstrates that their protest was not directed solely against the power and presumption of an intolerant creed.

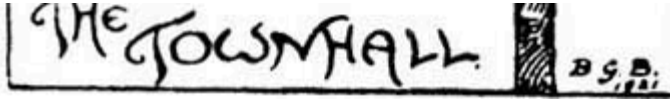


The beauty of the architectural composition grouped about the Town Hall was spoilt by the same black note that marked the 21st of June of this year of grace. A large tribune, draped in black, projected well out into the square from under the slender turret of the Town Hall Chapel. Escorted by alien mercenaries, the twenty-seven martyrs were led to execution; the dull, continuous rolling of drums accompanied the scene until the last victim had been disposed of. Strange to relate, the sword which was used by the one executioner was discovered some

forty-four years ago in an Edinburgh curiosity shop. On its basket hilt are graven the names of the Bohemian gentlemen who fell by it (three of the twenty-seven were hanged), and under those names the remark in the Czech language: "The last unhappy task, on 21st June 1621. G. M." The sword has returned to the country where the effects of its fell work are felt to this day.

This day, the anniversary, the sunlit square saw numbers of pious folk carrying wreaths to place them where white stones serve as constant reminder of those men who died in the courage of their convictions, both religious and political. It seems to be a peculiarly Slavonic trait, this recalling of sad events in their history. The Serbs still celebrate Vidovdan, the day of their disastrous defeat at Kossovo, where their chivalry, the finest in Eastern Europe, went under in a sea of blood.


THE
CHAPEL of
THE TOWNHALL



As a boy I was very strong on observing national and other holidays, but cannot recall any celebration of the Saxon defeat at Hastings; it never occurred to me: lack of imagination probably—and another festive occasion missed.

There is, however, something fine in this Slavonic conception of events worth commemorating; they may celebrate victories, but they also observe the anniversaries of great national disasters, "lest they forget."

In the broad space between the Town Hall and the Tyn Church stands an imposing group of statuary. Its centre figure of a simple and convincing dignity represents Master John Hus, the great precursor of those sons of Bohemia who died for their faith. The figure stands facing towards the Town Hall.

This group of statuary has only recently found its appropriate site here in the ancient centre of the city's life—formerly a column surmounted by the "Virgin" threw its slender shadow across the square.

Looking out over the city on the 6th of July the first sight that caught my eye was a display of bunting; flags flew everywhere, most of them the colours of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, red and white with a blue triangular insertion close up to the flagstaff. There is a correct heraldic method of describing this, but to most people, as to myself, it is barely intelligible, and hardly fits in with an everyday account of things seen from a terrace in the capital of a very modern republic, the constitution of which allows of no titles of nobility, and therefore has little use for heraldry.

Titles of nobility have been abolished, and he who under the old regime of Austria would style himself Count von Potts and Kettlehausen is now called plain Mr. Potts. Other titles, those that have been won by individual achievement and cannot be inherited, still remain in use to brighten our drab existence. Most common amongst these is "Doctor"; you may be a doctor of any or many more or less exact sciences; Professor seems to come next in quantity; again you may profess anything you like. This title is run rather close by Rad, or so it sounds at least, which seems to be the old German *Rath* slightly modified; of these also there is a great and glorious variety. You have Pan (Mister) President for the august being who presides over boards of financial, commercial or industrial enterprise; Pan Inspectors are also plentiful and in highly variegated form. In fact, there is quite an imposing array of titled dignitaries who as true republicans have risen by their own merits. As yet the "leprosy of decorations," as Dr. Seton Watson describes the outbreak of coloured ribbons on manly chests, its spread in inverse ratio to danger incurred, has not assumed undue proportions—but who knows? I must, however, get back to the 6th of July and tell you how the memory of John Hus is kept green.

A glance at the streets on that day shows you groups of wayfarers carrying wreaths, and they converge on the square outside the Old Town Hall where stands the monument to John Hus. The shop windows display portraits of the Czech national hero, which is also reproduced inset in wreaths, and this recalls to my mind the same day in 1918, when I first became aware of what Master John Hus stands for to this people of tenacious memory.

It was a day of pure Italian colour, that 6th of July, 1918, when I set out from among those lovely Colline Euganie towards the front among the Alps. First along broad, well-kept roads, through the plains of Veneto, where trellised vine hung heavy laden, past homesteads, villas of warm ochre hues or red, or pink, and all embowered in rich green foliage. Through the narrow winding streets of graceful Vicenza, across the arcaded market-place of old Verona, past the stately ruins of Montecchio, till the road reached the foothills of the Alps. Then up by hairpin turns, gaining an ever wider view of the vast plain lying in a morning haze beyond which you knew was Venice and the blue Adriatic, then down by winding ways into a valley. An outpost in Italian field-grey uniform, not men of the Italian type, but stocky, fair-haired and square-jawed, their collars decorated with red and white tabs. Every group displayed a wreath, within it an effigy of John Hus, for these soldiers were of the Czecho-Slovak Legion, and they were for the first time in their lives allowed to commemorate without let or hindrance the anniversary of their national hero's death. On this day five centuries ago John Hus had met death at the stake for holding to his religious convictions. Trusting in the word of an Emperor who had promised him a safe conduct back to his own country, John Hus had gone to Constance to defend his faith. Rome proved all-powerful, prevailed against the promise of an Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and John Hus perished, on his lips, they say, the words, "O Sancta Simplicitas!" But his memory lives, and most surely amongst those of simple faith.

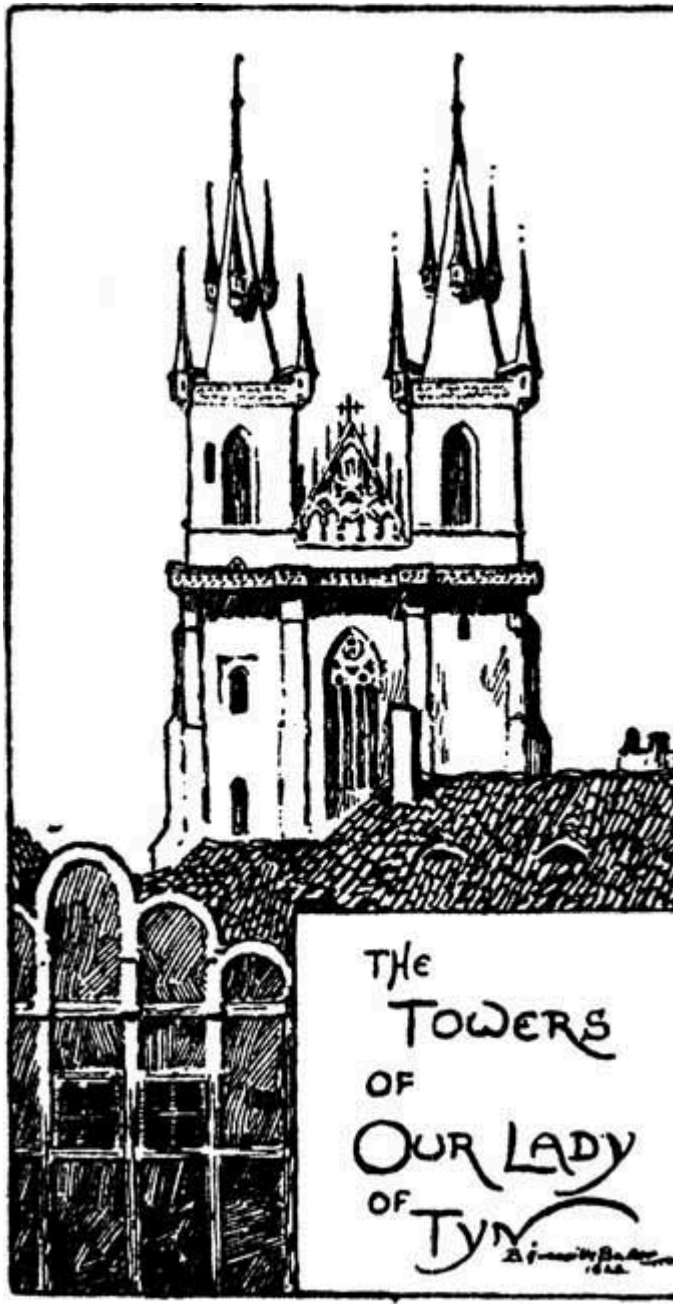
We do not observe the memory of those who suffered martyrdom for England's spiritual freedom; by the

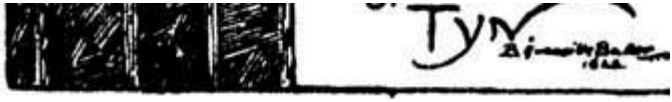
way, there is in Bohemia a church dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket.

I am describing the space between Town Hall and Cathedral as a square, which is as about as accurate as the German name "Altstädter Ring." The Czech name for it is easier to pronounce than most of their words. Czech is an immensely difficult language, and I still marvel at the clever inhabitants of the country who pronounce it with ease—even with great fluency. They can make jokes in it too, for the pleasant sound of laughter is often heard in this "City Beautiful." I have never tackled a Czech joke, but am quite prepared to give it credit for all the wit and humour required of a joke, and as long as somebody is happy over it all is well, and I smile with him.

Really there is something about this city which is smile-producing. It is difficult to analyse, and may be attributed to the sheer beauty of the place. And your smile may well go with a catch in your throat, for there is always pathos in great beauty, and nowhere more so than here in Prague. There is the delicate beauty of the Town Hall Chapel, and facing it the tall steeples of the Tyn Church, with clusters of quaint little pointed turrets, overtop a row of houses that seem to have set themselves down with the deliberate intention of blocking the west entrance. Now these houses are arcaded, and so are those on the south side of the square. You puzzle for a while and then recall Padua, Verona and other towns of Northern Italy; so now you know whence came the inspiration that set up arcades in a northern capital. You ask how and when this influence came to Prague, so I remind you of the relations that existed between Bohemia and Italy, and of which I have told you when discussing King John and his great son

Charles. Under the guidance of the latter, the Renaissance was not long in making its influence felt in Prague—in fact, in all Bohemia—and Italian architects who introduced the arcaded house added fresh beauties to the city. To the earlier period of Italian influence must be attributed a quaint arched house, the one at the corner of the Tynska Ulice. It seems to block the west entrance to the Church of Our Lady of Tyn. The old house dates back to the early days of the fourteenth century, at which period the Tyn Church, though founded in the eleventh century, was still a-building. I cannot blame the old houses for having squatted down in front of this church; they were probably under the impression that it would never be finished. They have at least left a vaulted alley-way leading to the somewhat insignificant west entrance. The Tyn Church, though not completed till fairly recently, has actually served as the principal church of the Old Town since 1310. Here the reformers, preachers that I have already mentioned, Conrad Waldhauser and Milič of Kroměřiže, drew large congregations by their fiery denunciations and their call to repentance. Our Lady of Tyn is to Prague what St. Paul's is to London in a certain degree; many celebrities are buried here, among them that strange character Tycho de Brahe, astronomer, logician, drunkard and duellist, the friend of Keppler and his own worst enemy.

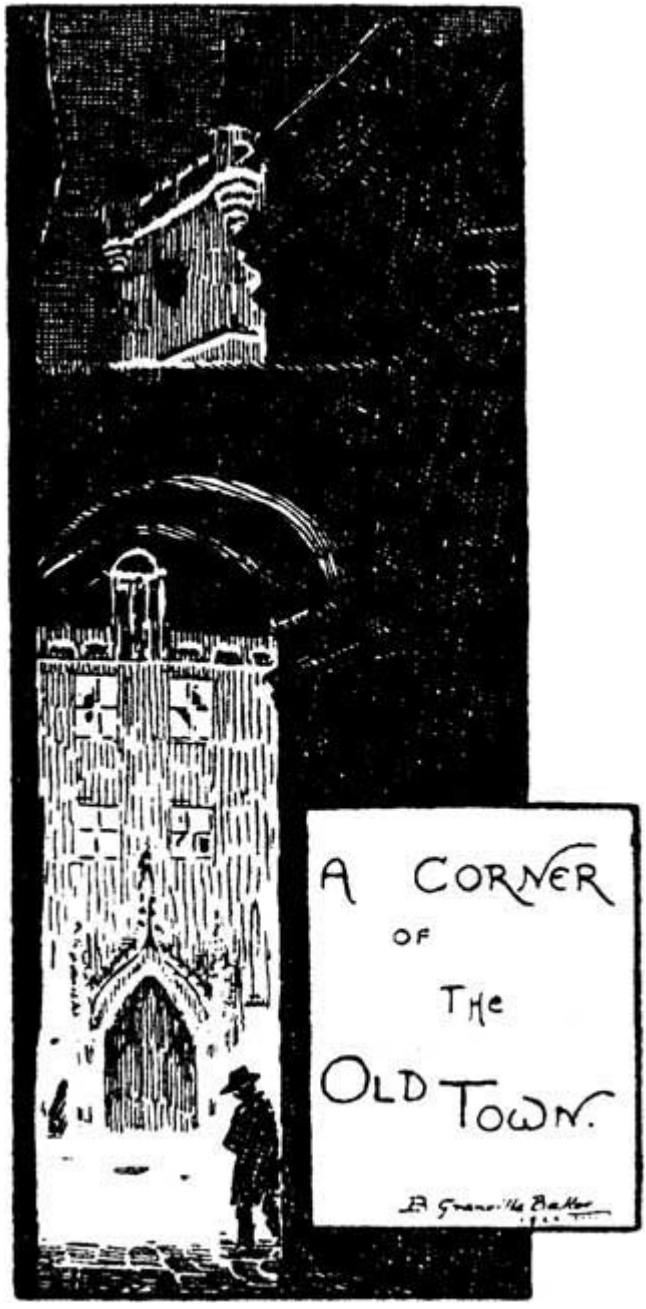

THE
TOWERS
OF
OUR LADY
OF
TYN



The show-entrance to the Tyn Church is a Gothic porch of rarest beauty; it is tucked away in the little alley on the north side, and generally closed. You are expected to enter by the south door.

A word of warning here: never try to be enterprising between midday and 2 p.m. in Prague, or for that matter anywhere else in the country, unless it be in search of food. At midday everything closes down—churches, museums, shops; they do not open again till the good people in charge of them have had sufficient time for an ample meal—two hours are considered sufficient. You will therefore find the cathedral closed to you until the vergers have dined. But in the meantime you will find the quaint conglomeration of buildings at the east end of the cathedral very attractive. These buildings originally served many purposes—cathedral close, market and custom house, and even at times as bear-garden or zoo. To my thinking, the outside of the cathedral is far more attractive than the inside, which suffers from over-decoration in the incongruous style peculiar to Continental churches. I shall not conduct you personally round the Church of Our Lady of Tyn.

Good King Wenceslaus, of whom we sing at Christmas-time, seems to have caused the chapel and tower of the Town Hall to be built, at least according to archæologists; the sign of a kingfisher within a wreath which appears here is taken to denote work done in his time. The master architect of those last decades of the fourteenth century was Peter Parler, who also did a good deal of work on the Tyn Church.


A CORNER
OF
THE
OLD TOWN.



The tower was added to the house of Welflin od Kamene, which was acquired in 1538, and some fifty years later the beautiful chapel, the Gothic projection of which looks out on to the scene of martyrdom of 1621. You will find two very interesting and lovely Sessions Rooms in this Town Hall. In one of these George Podiebrad, a native of Bohemia and of the country's faith, was elected and proclaimed King in 1458. To my thinking, the best time of day on which to come upon this old Town Hall is of an evening, say in late autumn; approach it by that quaint little alley, the Melantrichova, called so in honour of Melantrich, who was famous as printer and publisher in the latter half of the sixteenth century. While wandering about the narrow alleys, these quaint passages under the houses, a peculiar feature of Prague, you will pick up something of the old spirit of the city and repeople it with the shades of former inhabitants or visitors to suit your taste or knowledge of its history. There is, for instance, one visitor whom I can quite see roaming about in nocturnal Prague—Dr. Faust. Local legend prefers to call him Wilhelm instead of Heinrich, but that does not matter—he fits into the picture.

Sooth to say, I find about this old quarter of the city a certain atmosphere spiced with wickedness, not thoroughly bad, just enough to keep you amused. Look round for yourself o' nights, and you will probably find reason to agree with me. There is again, in this spicy atmosphere, a local—or shall we say native?—foundation with a markedly exotic top-dressing. For the foundation of this peculiar atmosphere I make Good King Wenceslaus responsible. I have already suggested that he was "hot stuff," and certainly, when he moved into the

palace that stood near the "Powder Tower," he made things merry and bright in the Old Town. A night out with Wenceslaus was a liberal education. Fundamentally his form of amusement was probably the same as you may enjoy to-day if you are inclined that way. An exotic touch is given to nocturnal diversions nowadays by American bars and "Palais de Danse" varying in degree of respectability; here the English language seems to predominate, in our version and that of our distant relatives across the Atlantic. The natives of the city do not frequent these haunts in any great numbers; they have their own amusements, but they look in occasionally, possibly as a mark of respect to the great allied nations, and their representatives, the bearers of western culture. The Bohemian when thinking of America recognizes only the United States of that continent. Many of them emigrate to that country; some return with their own rendering of the English language and a professed admiration for the country of their sometime sojourn, of its institutions and leading citizens. The Pragers have expressed this admiration by naming their finest railway station after President Wilson of the Lost Points, whereas their own President has to be content with a rather grubby old terminus.

It would be quite possible for me to enlarge upon the subject of night life in Prague, but discretion advises me not to do so; this is a side of Prague which you must find out for yourself. When after a good dinner you proceed to draw those furtive covers in the region between the Town Hall and the "Powder Tower," you may pick up the scent which, I maintain, hangs about there—that of rather spicy wickedness. I do not mean anything offensive in this; in fact, everything is conducted decently and in good order,

also with a certain geniality; the suggestion is rather that you might be mildly wicked if you wanted to be. However, though we have to live in this world we need not be of it.

For those who do not feel drawn towards the furtive corners of the town, there are many other opportunities of recreation. One of these was built by the city itself, and is called the Obecni Dum, which means Town House, I believe; anyway, when asking your way to it linger on the last word and pronounce it as if written "doom." This was built about the site of the palace where Wenceslaus IV held his revels, but it is informed of a more sober spirit. You come upon this building as you pass along the broad street, formerly the moat of the Old Town defences, until you arrive at the street-junction I have already mentioned. Here stands one of the most beautiful monuments to Prague's former glory, the "Powder Tower." When first you come upon this, rising serenely in all its ornate loveliness out of the roar and rattle of the traffic, the sight of it catches your breath. King Vladislav II caused it to be erected—one of the gates of the old city. An unhappy King this latter, I should say; at least his lot was cast in unhappy times. One of the last Slavs to occupy the throne of Bohemia—he was a Prince of Poland—Vladislav succeeded one of the most popular of Bohemian monarchs, George Podiebrad. The times in which Vladislav reigned were evil; the internal religious struggles of Bohemia had reached a desperate stage; all attempts to reunite the Utraquists with Rome had failed, and Alexander Borgia was Pope. The reign of this King, for all the glory of the monuments that commemorate it, seems as it were illumined by the false light that presages disaster. His son Louis was drowned while leaving the battlefield

of Moháč, which reduced the greater part of Hungary to a Turkish province, and anarchy held the lands of the Bohemian Crown until in 1526 Ferdinand of Habsburg bribed his way to the throne; one noble Bohemian is said to have accepted fifty thousand gulden for his kind offices.

The "Powder Tower" looks out directly at a somewhat shabby building opposite to it. I have mentioned it before as standing on the site of an early monastic institution founded by those Irish monks who did so much towards bringing Central Europe into the fold of the Church. They were, in fact, the only missionaries, these pilgrims from the Isle of Saints, who took up the task in the fifth and sixth centuries, wandering far afield, through the German forests, along the great rivers Danube and Main, to Italy and Switzerland, where St. Fridian at Lucca and St. Gall in the hills above the Bodensee are still held in pious memory. The Saxon monk Winfrith, better known as St. Boniface, also deserved well of the people of Central Europe, for it was his zeal and energy which assisted Charles the Great in his colonizing achievements. In our own times other missionaries of Anglo-Saxon race, or at least English-speaking, penetrated to the darkest recesses of the Continent, even to Bohemia. They started as soon as the war was over and Europe again a safe place to travel in. They took their toilsome way, by *train de luxe* and at Government expense, to such distant places as Prague and Vienna, even Buda-Pesth. They were of those who were indispensable while men were fighting, whose services could be spared when danger no longer threatened. They came deeply imbued with the importance of their mission, their commission, diplomatic, economic, hygienic, whatever it was. They came in scores, accompanied

by willing and well-paid workers, to bring relief to those who had suffered in the war. They bought up the scanty supplies of the countries to which they brought the blessing arising out of their own high rate of exchange. They came in their hundreds to spread the light of learning in matters hygienic to Prague, the old university town famous for its school of medicine. They taught the young the blessing of western guilds or associations, the young of a country which forged its weapon of social defence, the Sokol, some seventy years ago. They expect a deal of gratitude for all this; they are also entirely devoid of any sense of humour, or they would all go home and keep quiet.

Of real use to the good relations which have existed, intermittently perhaps, but never clouded by misunderstanding, was the mission of the English Singers who came to Prague. They sang to us in the large hall of the Obecni Dum, the building dedicated to the townsfolk's recreation. They sang us old-time motettes, madrigals, ballads, and we were taken back to our own country by the soothing harmonies of Weelkes. We saw Winchester Cathedral, its long nave and squat tower, standing in lush meadows in the shade of ancient elms, the College Gate, its pillars so artfully, invitingly rounded by William of Wykeham, drew us in again. We were stirred by William Byrd's "Praise our Lord, all ye Gentiles," and taken to Oxford by Gibbons's "What is our life? A play of passion. Our mirth? The music of division." Purcell recalled our gracious English landscape, and English life, "When Myra sings we seek the enchanting sound"; and Thomas Morley with "Now is the month of maying." Then there was rollicking Tom Bateson, of Dublin, with his alluring "Come follow me, fair nymphs!" And the Bohemian audience were loud in

generous applause.

You may well believe that a land which has given to the world Smetana, Dvořak, Ševček, and so many other famous musicians, will concentrate all that is good in music in Prague, its capital. There are two opera-houses to start with; one of them, the National Theatre, throws its reflections on the surface of the river at the end of the Narodni Třida; the German Theatre stands on the rising ground between the Museum at the top of the Václavské Naměsti and the Wilson Station. There are numerous concert-halls, and every restaurant of any repute has a good little orchestra of its own. Then there is a quaint old theatre down in the centre of the Old Town; you will find it standing comfortably among old red-roofed houses, between two open spaces, market-places bright with fruit and flowers in their season. It was in this theatre that Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was performed for the first time.

It is one of the most interesting parts of Prague, just around this old theatre, and among the crooked lanes and dark corners; it lets you in to the intimacy of the city if you set about your investigations in the right spirit. Alongside of this old theatre, the Mozarteum, divided only by a narrow alley, runs the front—I suppose it is the front—of the Carolinum, the collegiate buildings of Charles's foundation. There is little left outwardly of this building's former aspect, just one glorious Gothic projection which almost touches the balcony of the theatre. Within the Carolinum are spacious halls devoted to all manner of academic functions. In one of these halls I witnessed a scene which struck me with a sense of incongruity that I have not been able to explain to myself. The Indian poet and philosopher,

Rabindranath Thagore, was received here by the University of Prague. Learned professors read lengthy addresses of welcome in Czech, and to their own entire satisfaction; the Indian poet spoke in English and recited poetry in his own language, let us hope also to his own satisfaction. Thereupon Rabindranath Thagore, his hands folded meekly inside his wide sleeves, his head drooping and eyes half closed as becomes a poet of the tender kind, passed out from among us—to travel to Paris in an aeroplane. I do not know whether it was this latter event, or the expression of a philosophy so entirely at variance with my own, or perhaps the sound of the high-pitched plaintive voice, that gave me the sense of incongruity, but there it was undoubtedly.

In your wanderings about the Old Town you will come upon all manner of quaint corners, old houses with courtyard and balconies, churches of all sizes and dedicated to many saints, and among these one which to my thinking deserves particular interest. It is the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Wall, very old—how old I cannot tell you—much mutilated and disfigured by restorers whose heads should have gone into the decorative scheme over the gateway of the Mala Strana bridge-tower; but here in this church the Sacrament was first given in both forms, *sub utraque*.

There are many little backwaters in the Old Town; you may people them with the shades of all those who for centuries have toiled to restore Bohemia to her rightful place among the States of Europe. You may see flitting figures in the twilight, cloaked and obvious conspirators to your discerning eye. These men were probably among those marked down by the secret police as "patriots." Men who were

working for freedom of thought what time Jungmann and Kalina, another national poet, died, and twelve thousand of the people joined in the funeral procession as it passed the Town Hall where Arnold, Kalina's friend, was imprisoned. This was in 1847. Then the Slav Congress in 1848, and its stirring scenes, the meeting for Divine Service under the statue of St. Wenceslaus, the scuffle with a sentry caused by an *agent provocateur*, the charge of troops on an unarmed mob. Followed the erection of barricades, over a hundred in half an hour, and street fighting in various quarters of the city. Ruthless slaughter of citizens as at the Polytechnic School, where an attack by ten thousand troops with artillery was repulsed by seven hundred students of the Clementinum. Then the despair of the vanquished. But the spirit fostered by Bohemia's great men lived on; the people had their museum, containing books and records of their National Society, they had their associations, Sokols, and above all, their music. And so they waited, and not in idleness, for the better days which came to them out of the Great War.

The Sokol movement should interest you; it has taken a firm hold among Slavonic nations, and has in it something of the spirit of Freemasonry. Sokol means "falcon"—no doubt the original badge favoured by Slavonic societies. You will find the falcon, sometimes eagle, cropping up in various places. There is a distinguished Order, that of the White Eagle of Serbia, for instance; then the Poles also have started an Order with an eagle or a falcon in it—I am not acquainted with this Order. Members of Sokol societies wear an eagle's feather, or perhaps a falcon's, in the saucy little head-dress, somewhat like our old cavalry forage-cap, when in their becoming full dress. But Sokol means a great deal

more than this.

A year or so ago I witnessed a Sokol display on that flat-topped height called Letna; it is, as it were, an eastward prolongation of the Castle Hill. Here is a large recreation ground for the use of such bodies as Sokol societies. In the arena, before a large and appreciative but critical public, the Socialist Sokols gave their display of gymnastic exercises on the occasion I have in mind. It was a stirring sight: ten to twenty thousand young men and maidens went through their graceful movements in perfect unison to the strains of their national music. It must be borne in mind that those exercises have not only physical value but are useful memnonic training. There is much discipline bred of these exercises; the captain goes through the movements by himself, the team repeats them after him. Then again, the Sokol is, and has been from the beginning, a political union. Surely Socialists who submit themselves to this training, to such discipline, are a powerful asset to a young State that has got to make its mark in the world.

By the way, what is a Socialist? I take it that any man who has a flowerpot in his window, whereas his neighbour has none, is no Socialist. But this is, no doubt, a matter of taste or political conviction, I am not quite clear which.

CHAPTER XI

Tells of Emperor Sigismund, King of Bohemia, his rare and troubled visits to this country. Of an emigration from Prague University, and the founding of another at Leipzig. Of the two Habsburgs who followed Sigismund, and more about another great Bohemian already mentioned in this book, George Podiebrad. King George's Peace League. Of Vladislav of Poland as King of Bohemia; how he resided at the Hradšany and beautified it. We go with Vladislav along the route he follows to his coronation; we note many features by the way which Vladislav may or may not have seen, and discuss these features as we go along. Of the end of the Jagoilla dynasty on the throne of Bohemia when Vladislav's son Louis was drowned after the battle of Moháč. Of how Ferdinand of Austria married Anna, daughter of Vladislav, and became King of Bohemia. Of great doings in the Hall built by Vladislav on the Hradšany. Of the beautiful Belvedere which Ferdinand caused to be built for Anna, his Queen. Of other Habsburgs on the throne of Bohemia, particularly that lonely bachelor Rudolph II; of his hobbies and the guests and visitors he welcomed to the castle. Of King Matthias and the "Winter King," and how Bohemia's independence was lost on the battlefield of the White Mountain.



LET us return to our terrace, I to mine, you to yours if it gives you the right point of view, for we will now take the foreground into consideration, the Mala Strana and its "Crown of Glory," the Royal Castle, the Hradšany. We have watched Charles IV in his labours to beautify the capital of the land he loved, and among those labours was the restoration of the Hradšany. His son, however, found attraction elsewhere, and neglected the Royal Castle. Sigismund resided by preference at Kutna Hora whenever his imperial duties gave him time to visit Bohemia. This, his choice of residence, was probably dictated by the troubled times through which

Bohemia was passing. Prague was full of tumult and of fierce religious controversy. The Hussites, as we have seen, were out and bent to warfare in the cause they held sacred, and the King had no liking for their views or regard for their opinions. We have also noted the value of that Emperor's given word. In Kutna Hora Sigismund found himself surrounded by a strongly German population, zealous in the cause of Rome and the Empire, hostile to the freedom of thought for which Bohemia was fighting. Racial animosity between Slav and Teuton was running high; its immediate result had been the emigration of several thousand professors and students of German nationality to Leipzig, where a new university arose which was inclined to consider its Alma Mater, Prague, a stepmother.

Then followed the Habsburgs, Albert and his posthumous son Ladislas. Albert succeeded as Sigismund's son-in-law, and reigned for two troubled years of civil war in Bohemia, leaving a disrupted State to Ladislas, his unborn son. During the infancy of this child arose a strong man from out of Bohemia, who served Ladislas so faithfully that the young King on his deathbed sent for him to bid him farewell in touching terms. Then was this strong man, George Podiebrad, unanimously chosen King by the Estates.

George Podiebrad was a native of the country which called him to the throne by reason of his integrity and intelligence. He was also of the faith held by the majority of his subjects, the followers of Master John Hus. His lot was cast in troubled times. Bohemia had been ruled by a succession of monarchs of alien race, at first sympathetic but later unable to see eye to eye with their subjects on religious and other questions. In the time of trial, when the soul of the people

called out for guidance and support in the struggle for faith and freedom, those rulers were too much bound by the ties that held them to Western Europe as to champion Bohemia's cause whole-heartedly. They failed to understand that Central Europe was ripe for a new orientation, though there were sufficient indications to point out the way. Above all, a great danger threatened; the Turks were extending their conquests in Eastern Europe, the Byzantine Empire was going under before them, and the fall of Constantinople was imminent.

It was shortly before this latter event that George Podiebrad was called to the throne. He found his country distracted by internal dissensions, exhausted by the Hussite wars and threatened by powerful neighbours. His first task was to set his house in order; in this he achieved complete success, and soon found himself reigning over a strong, happy and united country. He next attended to his country's foreign relations, and succeeded in securing peace without his frontiers by means of a network of treaties. The King of Poland was won over by George Podiebrad's tact and ability, and Matthias Corvinus, King of a Hungary with fluctuating boundaries but including a deal of present-day Roumania, was also a ready ally of Bohemia's King. Within his immediate neighbourhood in Central Europe, George Podiebrad's wisdom and uprightness had brought him many requests to act as arbitrator or intermediary in disputes. His fame spread farther afield, his vision extended as he witnessed the growing importance of his country, and from these circumstances arose an ideal of a great Christian Peace League.

The state of Europe in the fifteenth century was not

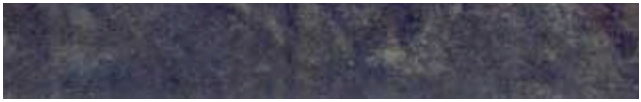
unlike that of the present day. There was strife, turmoil and dissension everywhere, a mighty power —that of Rome—opposing all free expression of opinion, an obsolete shibboleth called the Holy Roman Empire, and a ruthless enemy active in the East. In the midst of all this trouble George Podiebrad worked diligently at his League; he gained the adhesion of King Louis of France; Burgundy and Bavaria also joined, and Venice, remembering what good business could be made out of crusades, was also inclined to agree. England, it appears, was not particularly interested, at least is not mentioned in connection with this League. George Podiebrad endeavoured to win over the Holy Father, but in vain. Rome had turned a deaf ear even to the despairing cry of the Eastern Church.

The League was to hold its first council at Bâle, and subsequent ones in different countries. Its statutes are worth noting; they are drawn up on much the same lines as those of the present-day League of Nations.

When the plans of the League were sufficiently advanced to be put into effect it was found that the forces against it were too powerful. Rome would have none of it, and France, though friendly to the scheme, chiefly out of antagonism to Rome, held back in the end, leaving the King of Bohemia with none but his neighbour, Poland, to support him. That the League should have failed of its purpose is regrettable. It was a genial idea. That it originated in Central Europe and that it gained the adherence of nations farther removed from Western influence is of lasting importance, for it seems to have given a definite direction to a group of Central and Eastern European Powers. Perhaps this direction was

subconscious in King George's mind; he may have been actuated only by his desire for peaceful reconstruction behind a united front towards an eastern enemy. However this may be, the idea did not die with George Podiebrad, but has had two revivals, of which I hope to tell you something in time.





THE POWDER TOWER.

George Podiebrad died in 1471, after having ensured the succession to the throne of Bohemia of Vladislav, son of Casimir, King of Poland. King George's reason for going outside his country for a successor instead of finding one among his own sons was his concern for the safety of Bohemia, which, he seems to have considered, would have been endangered by a scion of his own family or nation under the conditions under which he was to leave his country. He was moved towards Poland by reason of the great plan he had formed far in advance of his age, namely, that of the League of Peace.

George Podiebrad, according to Lützow, has always remained, next to Charles IV, the sovereign whose memory the Bohemians treasure most. Bohemia's great historian, Palacky, gives to this King a place of honour among the rulers of his country which is only equalled by that assigned to the great Luxemburger. His last years were clouded by the increasing distressful state of Europe, by a painful illness, and by the faithlessness of his one-time friend and ally, Matthias of Hungary. This latter had broken with King George, and had carried war into the lands of the Bohemian Crown, and though defeated and driven out of Moravia, still held several towns in that country. This seems to have served Matthias Corvinus as a pretext for disputing the claim of Vladislav to the throne of Bohemia. There was also another claimant with a certain following, namely, Duke Albert of Saxony, but in the end the crown remained with Vladislav of Poland, who then made his way to Bohemia, and entered Prague on August 19, 1471.

I like to conjure up a picture of the reception given to Vladislav by the good people of Prague. Vladislav, coming from Poland, would probably enter by the gateway where now stands that beautiful "Powder Tower," built under his ægis; I have already pointed it out to you. There he would be received by all manner of "grave and reverend seigniors," among them, of course, the doctors of the University, who, I gather, presented Vladislav with a "neatly bound and printed copy of the Bible, so that he might read it and direct himself and his subjects according to the Will of God": thus writes the chronicler. The good citizens of Prague were evidently pleased to welcome Vladislav, so we can imagine him, three days after his entry into Prague, moving, amidst popular rejoicings, to the Hradšany for coronation. A glittering pageant, no doubt, as it moved along under the shadow of the Church of Our Lady of Tyn, past the Old Town Hall, where the man to whom he owed the throne, George Podiebrad, had been called to rule Bohemia. Then along the Karlova Ulice, under the tower built by Wenceslaus, and over the Charles Bridge up the steep slope of Castle Hill.

I cannot imagine that the aspect of the Mala Strana which Vladislav got while proceeding to his coronation was very different from that of to-day. The Bridge Street on the left bank was possibly narrower and ill-paved, but I am certain that the general aspect of arcaded houses was much the same as it is to-day. I cannot imagine the Mala Strana changing very much, nor will you when once you have seen it. Though many houses, palaces and churches have been rebuilt or added, I should say that the Mala Strana has always preserved a certain independence, a conservative aloofness, from other quarters of the capital. From little glimpses, from

snatches of conversation and chance remarks, I am inclined to the idea that the aborigines of the Mala Strana, while admitting the existence of other parts of Prague, such as the Old Town, yet do not consider them quite fit to associate with. There must be in the quaint little backwaters of Mala Strana a certain indigenous type which considers it bold and venturesome to cross the Charles Bridge, a proceeding smacking of foreign travel.

The block of buildings including the tall Church of St. Nicholas, which fills up the middle of that irregular place, the Mala Stranské Naměsti, or Place of the Small Side, would be new to Vladislav were he to repeat his progress to-day. There was a church—a very old one—on this spot, dating back to the thirteenth century; it is said that the martyrs of 1621 communicated here *in utraque* on the morning of their execution. The tall, imposing Church of St. Nicholas replaced the older edifice—a typical monument this of Jesuit pride of conquest over the fallen National Church of Bohemia. Seen from my terrace, the copper dome of St. Nicholas, its tall and slender campanile, stand up dominant over sleepy red-tiled roofs where linger memories of much earlier days. It is indeed a splendid building, this master-work of Ignatius and Kilian Dienzenhoffer. I must admit this, little as I admire *baroque* and for all my loathing of the spirit of triumphant intolerance and bigotry which informed the builders of this great monument to the enslavement of a nation's soul.

In former years, before the war, there stood here in the narrowest part of this place, a monument to another triumph over Bohemia's freedom, a monument to Field-Marshal Radecky, whose figure was supported by types of Austrian soldiery of his

time. This monument has been removed—destroyed, I believe, by the Pragers when they regained their freedom in October 1918. The removal of this monument leaves a blank, not a sentimental one, merely an artistic one, and has led to an unexpected and probably undesired effect. It has given undue prominence to a little building that stands some way up the place, a building of strict utility with no pretensions to architectural consideration, a building which now stands out exposed as it were, trying to hide its confusion under a mask of gaudy advertisement posters.

The singularly characteristic houses on the north side of this square, with their deep arcades, were probably rebuilt or renovated in the seventeenth century; they must be of considerable antiquity, for one of them, a corner house called "Montagu," has its place in history. The name, by the way, is not derived from the Italian, but from the simple German *Montag*, Monday; and it has by way of embellishment a Slavonic suffix. It was in this Montagu House that the discontented members of the Bohemian Estates were wont to meet in 1618, and here they hit upon the bright idea of throwing the two lieutenants, go-betweens or whatever they were, of their Habsburg ruler, out of a window. So here on this Mala Stranské Naměsti you may see the very spot from which the War of Thirty Years started.

This Mala Stranské Naměsti is divided into an upper and a lower part by the block of buildings I have already mentioned. The palaces all round here are probably different of aspect from the burgher houses which stood here before the *baroque* irruption of the seventeenth century, so Vladislav on his way to coronation would have been greeted by a homelier

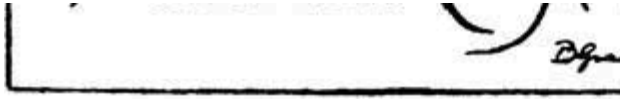
sight; neither could he have seen the plague memorial. The plague commemorated visited Prague in 1715; the man who committed this pyramid, dedicated to Holy Trinity, was one Giovanni Battista Alliprandi, an Italian architect, but not of the Renaissance spirit. This peculiar group of sculpture fails to impress me; the figures, of saints, I believe, are not convincing; they are seen holding emblems of piety, but only for decorative purposes, not as if they in the least knew what to do with them; one or other would have appeared much happier with a knife and fork.

Vladislav's farther way would take him up that steep road that leads past Strahov out into the country. It was formerly called the Street of Spurs, I believe; it has since been named Nerudova Třida, after John Neruda, the father of Bohemian literature, who spent his early days here. This street has rather a reputation for mild-mannered men of letters and lights of learning, patrons of art and science. There was, for instance, Baron Brettfeld, who entertained young Mozart, da Ponte and Casanova. But all this happened well after the days of Vladislav of Poland, King of Bohemia, who wound up by the narrow streets of Prague's Mala Strana to his coronation on the Hradšany. The Royal Castle had not been regularly inhabited by royalty for nearly a century, and as Vladislav chose to make it his residence, he found much to do in putting the place in order. The part that still shows strong traces of Vladislav's work is beyond the view from my terrace. You may recognize it some way off by a number of heavily mullioned windows in contrast to the very plain setting of the endless rows of other windows all along the front of the castle buildings. This palatial part of the castle—it is that nearest to the cathedral

—was begun by Vladislav as soon as he had settled down to his kingship, and was finished in 1502. The chief feature of this building was a vast hall, which you may see still. It has suffered, of course, has been damaged by fire and also by restorers; just at present some archæologist is at work upon it, and he is, I believe, discovering all sorts of beauties in the decorative Gothic style peculiar to this King of Polish descent and exquisite taste. It seems to me that Gothic in Prague is of finer spiritual quality than the German variant, is of that noble sincerity of which you find many instances in France, in several examples in Portugal, and when it became decorated, never went into the excesses of the Manuelesque style such as you may see it in old Lusitania. Successive Habsburgs who followed on these Polish rulers of Bohemia, Vladislav and his son Louis, benefited by the magnificent work which these two scions of the Royal House of Jagoilla left to posterity. Louis, we know, was drowned just after the battle of Moháč, and the short-lived Polish dynasty made way definitely for Kings of the House of Habsburg. Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, having married Anna, daughter of Vladislav II, laid claim to the throne of Bohemia. He was not alone in this ambition; in fact, there was a greater number of aspirants to the vacant seat than there had ever been before—thirteen in all, among them Francis I of France. However, Ferdinand secured the throne, and reigned as King of Bohemia right royally it would seem. His coronation took place in the great hall built by Vladislav, and the solemn ceremony was followed by a tournament, also held in the same hall —a tournament on horseback, mind you, and ending up with a mêlée in which thirteen knights a-side took part. There was a banquet too, and the waiting was

done by squires on horseback. A great ball brought the festivities to an end. The great fire in Prague in 1541, which destroyed all the State documents, may have been the one which also did much damage to Vladislav's great hall, and Ferdinand's restoration of the same probably did something towards impairing its original beauty. We have reason, however, to be grateful to this Ferdinand, first of the name, for another building which graces the neighbourhood of the Hradšany. This is the Belvedere which stands at the far end of a lovely garden called the Chotkovy Sady. Ferdinand built this Belvedere for Anna, his Queen, with its airy loggias, its wrought architraves and long domed roof. It is one of the most beautiful works of early Renaissance spirit that I have ever seen. All honour to its architect, Giovanni di Spazzio.


THE HRADČANY
FROM THE
NEBOZIZEK GAR



Ferdinand I proved to be no such moody bigot as his brother Charles V, yet he was bent on stemming the tide of Protestantism, the floods of which flowed over from the Germany of Luther's way of thinking to mingle with the growing religious sects in Bohemia. This was not done without torture and bloodshed, so the Hradšany witnessed the sufferings, under the rack, of Augusta, the Bishop of the Unity of Bohemian Brethren, and the execution of several prominent citizens of Prague for defying royal authority in matters of conscience. Ferdinand, on the abdication of his father, succeeded him as Emperor, and left his son Maximilian to rule his turbulent Bohemian subjects. Maximilian stands out in history as a picturesque figure, but I cannot see that he did Bohemia any useful service. The fact that he had inherited the old dominions of the House of Habsburg, Upper and Lower Austria, and was also King of Hungary, kept him away from Bohemia a good deal. He called occasionally upon the Diet of this his richest possession for support against the Turks. The Diet thereupon called for religious freedom, and no interference with their spiritual affairs. The discussions that ensued seem to have led to no results. So we find one Habsburg after another on the throne of Bohemia, trying to coerce its people, and each one reducing the country to a state of greater discontent and disorder, until the crash came in 1618, when King Matthias had roused the Bohemian Estates to such a pitch of desperation that they proceeded to the act which precipitated the Thirty Years' War.

The Hradšany did not see much of Matthias, whereas his predecessor on the throne of Bohemia, Rudolph II, lived in the Royal Castle as a matter of habit. True

he was dethroned occasionally by his younger brother Matthias, and no doubt Rudolph as King was hopelessly ineffective. He was probably rather mad. Nevertheless, a certain amount of interest can be drawn out of this Habsburg's connection with Prague, and the Hradšany can show you some traces of his peculiarities. So, for instance, you will find a quaint little alley of tiny houses scooped out of the stout north wall of the castle to eastward of St. George's Church.

Rudolph was unmarried; perhaps it was this fact that enabled him to waste money on all sorts of hobbies instead of going to his office with his little black bag and behaving generally as a "weel tappit" husband and king would do. Rudolph's hobbies were alchemy and astronomy. The chief object of the former extremely inexact science seems to have been to make gold by the synthetic process. Any charlatan who came along with a declared conviction that he could produce gold was welcomed by the King. It was for these his guests that Rudolph prepared those tiny dwellings in the narrow alley called "The Alchemists" or the "Gold Makers." They are snug, those tiny dwellings, so small that you should be able to open your front door without getting out of bed; you look down out of the deep embrasure of your window on to the tree-tops in the "Stag's Moat." The height of the wall from your window to the ditch does not invite you to try a leap by way of escape, so Rudolph's alchemist guests had to produce something or suffer from the King's displeasure. This, for instance, happened to two gentlemen from the British Isles, Dr. John Dee and Mr. Kelly. Both these visitors were going to supply Rudolph with wonders of alchemy, gold in profusion. They failed to give satisfaction, and were imprisoned—another injustice

to Ireland! Did the fairy chorus that thrilled the listeners at the foot of Dalibor's strong dungeon chant that plaintive cry, "Has anyone here seen Kelly"?

Another of Rudolph's hobbies was astronomy, and he certainly assembled some eminent scientists in that line about him. Prominent among these lights of learning was one whom I have already mentioned, Tycho de Brahe. It appears that this turbulent scientist had made his own country, Denmark, too hot to hold him; he and his family were practically exiled from home, and in his wanderings Tycho turned to the Court of Prague, was kindly, generously entreated by King Rudolph, and no doubt did good work in return. You may see Tycho's effigy over his tomb in the Tyn Church; you may remark that his effigy shows little trace of a nose to his face. Tycho went without one for many years, as he lost his when young, in a duel. Keppler was also one of Rudolph's guests, a man of very different calibre, and certainly one of the most eminent astronomers of all times. There were, no doubt, any number of lesser lights in that line during those quaint old days when men turned to the starry heavens to learn the fate in store for them. Astronomy and alchemy were often mixed up together in those days, or rather astronomy seemed to get mixed up with one's daily life to such an extent that no princely household was complete without its pet astronomer. If things had gone a bit wrong of a morning, perhaps that "tired feeling" mixed with a touch of gout, and the evening had brought a domestic worry or two, you just walked round to your astronomer's for some indication concerning the future. After bumping about in dim religious gloom among stuffed crocodiles and such-like accessories to science of those days, you

discovered your astronomer deeply engaged in describing cabalistic figures on parchment; he would raise his eyes with a far-away look, as if no henchman had hurried round a few minutes earlier to say that "the old man was carrying on something awful," your astronomer would descend to earth for a space and then at his master's command reascend to get thoroughly mixed up with the stars.

To those days of the later sixteenth century we may trace all manner of quaint customs, beliefs and observances. People were getting thoroughly into the way of thinking for themselves instead of believing what they were told, and they started many ingenious conceits whereon to pin their faith or perhaps strengthen it. I do not know that those quaint conceits were particularly helpful; personally I could not derive comfort from a belief popular in Bohemia, that King David sits in the moon playing on the harp. My sympathy would go out too strongly for my own comfort, towards David evoking melody in such a lonely spot, far from all his lady friends; I might even imagine him sighing for Saul's hurtling javelin to break the monotony. To these days belongs also the institution of the rosary by Pope Gregory XII, in memory of the victory of Christendom at Lepanto in 1571. The rosary was indeed known as early as the eleventh century, but not in universal use.

While Rudolph was busy with his alchemy, astronomy, and, I am happy to say, with literature as well, he resided in the Hradšany most of his time, and so the Mala Strana enjoyed all the amenities of a Court, the "certain liveliness" that pertains thereto having shifted from the Old Town to the left bank of the river. I have sought vainly for something

interesting in the way of local colour, but can find nothing that even suggests the ingerence of a "fardingale" into the local history of Rudolph's reign. Instead of the gentler influence, I find only descriptions of swashbucklers, lackeys and bottlewashers, "ruffling" it in imitation of their masters. Here again we have indication of Italy's refining influence, a new invention which came rapidly into vogue, and unlike most of them, came to stay—the facciolette. What though the roystering pseudo-gallant had no shirt to which he might attach a fine collar, he must have his "facilet," as the chronicler spells it—in short, a handkerchief. Then again the tooth-pick came in for serious observation; it was considered an outward and visible sign of internal creature comfort, and was worn behind the ear when not in action. Tooth-pick practice is still going strong in Prague.

By way of attributing something good to Rudolph, I will make him responsible for a garden, said to have been very beautiful, which occupied some ground at the higher westward end of the "Stag's Moat." Here was a pleasance, where gallants and fair ladies disported themselves and watched the antics of wild animals. It was in this garden that Schiller placed the little drama he describes in *Der Handschuh*. Schiller gives the Spanish version of the story, where the gallant smacks the lady's face with the glove he had retrieved for her from among the lions, and then struts away for evermore. Romantic, but ill-tempered, whereas the local version here is that the gallant married the lady—perhaps she became insistent; anyway, a useful if commonplace ending.

I gave you an instance of Rudolph's statecraft in that little matter of the "Passauer," and am not inclined to

give you any more. His doings and those of his Habsburg successors brought so much suffering to Bohemia and Prague that I would rather be excused from giving any account of them. We have heard of Rudolph's brother Matthias, and how under him the strain put upon the people of Bohemia grew too severe, and how the Estates cut the Gordian Knot by throwing the King's lieutenants out of a window on the Hradšany. They happened to fall soft, on a midden, and got away unhurt. As a diplomatic action, this measure taken by the Estates lacked finesse, but it had one advantage over the usual diplomatic transactions in their devious course, that it was direct and final in its effect, namely, to precipitate a great devastating war, and to leave Bohemia hopelessly enchained for close on three centuries.

We have seen the "Winter King"[1] pass this way with his English wife, pause here to be crowned, and then after a short year's reign, fly from the country that trusted him when his army and the cause he was called upon to stand for went under in a sea of blood on the White Mountain. It is only about an hour on foot to the battlefield where the army of Protestant Bohemia, after retiring before the Imperialist host, made its final, fatal stand. After all, Frederick's short reign was only an interlude: the hand of the Habsburg had closed over Bohemia when Ferdinand I ascended its throne in 1526 by virtue of his marriage with Anna, and also, as I have said, by the free use of Austrian gold; and the victory won by Charles V at Mühlberg in 1547 had almost crushed the cause of Protestantism out of existence.

The battlefield where the independence of Bohemia was lost in November 1620 lies on a plateau, as

background to which stands a peculiar building. Surrounded by a park and overlooking undulating country stands the "Star." It is a former royal hunting-box, built several centuries before the battle and planned as a six-pointed star. It has no architectural beauty; it is in appearance a somewhat ungainly landmark and must have been pretty uncomfortable to live in, even for the less exacting royalties of the Middle Ages, but it stands on what, for the Bohemian, should be holy ground. The forces of the Holy Roman Empire, aided by Bavarians and Spaniards, were arrayed against the army of Frederick, the "Winter King," which stood for religious freedom. Perhaps the Protestant forces were not united, they were composed of Czechs, Moravians, Germans and Hungarians, perhaps that their King had left them somewhat hurriedly, at any rate the spirit of the old covenanters, Hus and Žiška, no longer informed the Bohemian Army. The first to break were the Hungarians, and the conduct of the others was not up to tradition; only a small force of Moravians under Count Šlik refused to yield. They took their stand against the wall of the Star Park, along which the dead at some places lay ten or twelve high, according to contemporary writers.

Then the Jesuit-ridden Habsburg entered Prague and laid his heavy hand on all Bohemia, almost to the undoing of its people. But it is a wonderful thing, that power of a strong race to survive treachery and oppression until the time comes when it can reassert itself.

There are many accounts of this battle, most of them obviously biassed, so, for instance, the Imperialists declare that victory was won in the space of an hour, whereas Bohemian historians say that the fighting

continued without a break from morning till late afternoon. The Imperialists ascribed their victory to the intervention of Our Lady. Some fifty years after their defeat the Bohemians erected a church and monastery to St. Mary on the White Mountain. You may see this church, looking somewhat dilapidated—I should say ashamed of itself—as it stands there a monument to the Bohemian nation's self-abasement.

We have witnessed the sequel to the defeat of Bohemia on the White Mountain, the execution of Bohemian nobles and other leaders on the open space between the Old Town Hall and the Church of Our Lady of Tyn. In the words of Gindely the historian: "These melancholy executions mark the end of the old and independent development of Bohemia. Members of the most prominent families of the Bohemian nobility, eminent citizens and learned men, in fact all the representatives of the culture of the land, ended here, and with them their cause. The destiny of the country was henceforth in the hands of foreigners, who had neither comprehension of nor sympathy with its former institutions."

[1] Frederick, Count of the Palatinate, was called the "Winter King," probably because he came to Prague one winter and left the next one.

CHAPTER XII

Is another long one, but the last of *A Terrace*

in Prague. It tells little about Kings of Bohemia, and more about Jesuits and the work they left behind to mark the influence they wielded. There are churches and statues of their erection, but you are left to decide for yourself whether you like those works or not. Several historic figures appear on the scene: Tilly, Waldstein, Königsmark the Swedish General, and his chaplain, Dr. Klee. Mention is also made of some Britons, among them one with the homely name of Brown, an honest soldier who lies buried here in Prague. A tale of a supernatural event. A further talk of the river and about excursions. Finally, an attempt at an epilogue.



OU will, I hope, agree with me that a man who sits upon a terrace and writes about the things he sees and what he thinks about them is entitled to bring his observations to a close whenever he considers it fit to do so. That point is now within reach. From the first I warned you that this is not a guide-book, and therefore not under the obligation of giving you a full and detailed catalogue of all the sights of Prague and how to see them. There is little more that I propose to tell you, it being my object to entice you out here to see for yourself. I will wait for you on my terrace, if you like, and while waiting will cast a final glance round the scene that has, I confess, acquired a strong hold of me.

The Hradšany, seen on a dull, chill day, always recalls to me what I have read about those days since the Bohemians lost their all on the White Mountain, until they broke free again only a few years ago. On dull days the long, plain, featureless walls of the Hradšany seem the very expression of life under the later Habsburg Kings of Bohemia. They were, on the whole, worthy, well-meaning sovereigns, their chief trouble being, it would seem, a hereditary incapacity for seeing any point of view but that to which their forbears, Jesuit-trained, and of limited outlook, had educated them. They were quite impervious to new ideas, very tenacious of old ones, and fully convinced of their own divine right. The Habsburg line of policy towards Bohemia was laid down by Ferdinand II—or shall I say for that monarch?—at the Te Deum sung in St. Stephen's Cathedral, at Vienna, to celebrate the victory of Rome over Bohemia's religious freedom. It would seem as if the King had moulded his policy on the text of the sermon preached by Brother Sabrinus, the Capuchin friar, on that occasion: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of

iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." In carrying out this policy the King of Bohemia was ably assisted by the Jesuits. This congregation had been introduced into Bohemia by a former Ferdinand whose acquaintance we have made; the Jesuits had therefore stores of useful local knowledge at their command when they set about complementing the material victory won on the White Mountain by a spiritual conquest. The first thing was to re-establish Roman ritual, and the church chosen for this act was St. Martin's-in-the-Wall, where, as I have told you, the Sacrament was first given in both kinds by Jacobelius in 1414. Then it was thought fit to remove the statue of King George Podiebrad from the west front of the Tyn Church. The effigy showed this national hero pointing with his drawn sword towards the chalice above his head, of which he had been such a valiant defender.

Then followed persecution, exile, imprisonment and corporal punishment, in addition to the turmoil and sufferings of the Thirty Years' War. Ferdinand's father-confessor was a Jesuit, Lamormain, and under the latter's guidance Bohemia was being brought back to the fold, while elsewhere in Europe men like Tilly and Waldstein, whom Schiller preferred to call Wallenstein, were taking their part in the Catholic Reformation, with striking results, the sack of cities and the devastation of whole countries.

After the Catholic Reformers had seen to it that the leaders of the movement towards religious liberty had been put away, they set about bringing the Bohemians back to Rome in their own ingenious way. We have seen that among other remedies against heresy they introduced, or perhaps re-

introduced, a national saint, John Nepomuk, had him canonized and an effigy of him set up on the Charles Bridge; this effigy was followed by many others, among them that of Loyola. Each pillar of the bridge that Charles built is crowned by the effigy of a saint or groups of saints, with most of whom, I regret to say, I am not acquainted. There are, however, some old friends—Saints Ludmilla, Wenceslaus, Cosmas and Damain, and Adalbert—who are intimately connected with the story of Prague. There is no denying the fact that these groups of statuary give a unique touch to the massive beauty of the Charles Bridge, but they do not appeal to me as works of art; this is probably due to my own shortcomings. To my thinking, the statue of St. George, which stands close by the south entrance to the cathedral on the Hradšany, is worth the whole collection on the Charles Bridge. This statue, the work of the brothers George and Martin of Aussenburk, was ordered expressly by Charles IV; it is an absolutely faithful representation of a knight's armour as worn in the fourteenth century. For the rest, the statuary on the bridge was not run up in the space of a few years; the work extended over about two centuries.

The first step taken towards an outward display of regained power was the destruction by the Jesuits of that old church which stood on the Malá Stranské Naměsti, in which, as I told you, the martyrs of 1621 partook of the Sacraments on their road to execution. The Church of St. Nicholas then reared its stately pile out of the medley of quaint old roofs and dormer windows immediately below my terrace. There were changes going on among those sleepy houses too, for the victory of the White Mountain and the Imperialist successes in the Thirty Years' War had brought to Bohemia a swarm of foreign adventurers,

officers in the Emperor's armies, who acquired the property of exiled Bohemian nobility and set about building palaces for themselves. They are interesting too, these palaces in Prague, and some of them have beautiful gardens, as those of Fürstenberg, Lobkovitz, Schoenborn and Waldstein. The latter palace has, indeed, more than ordinary interest on account of the strange man who built it.

Albrecht of Waldstein was a Bohemian noble of no very high degree, and belonged to a Protestant family. He seems to have had no great learning, but turned when he arrived at man's estate to the dark sciences, more especially astronomy, and from the study of this science he hoped to look behind the veil of the future and read his fortunes in the stars. He rose, no doubt on account of his ability, to high command, to a position of more real power than that of his imperial master. He amassed a vast fortune, and built himself a huge palace in Prague—from my terrace I could point to you its long line of roofs. To build his palace a number of smaller houses had to be pulled down, some twenty-three in all. Then Giovanni Marini, with his Italian and Dutch architects and landscape gardeners, set to work and built up this regal abode of gigantic proportions, a place as vast as Waldstein's ambition and dreams of power and conquest. For all he was of Protestant faith originally, Waldstein had as patron saint St. Wenceslaus, to whom he built a beautiful chapel in his palace. There are gardens and fountains, a Sala terrena, said to be the largest in Europe; there are magnolia-trees as old as the palace; there is a bower of black old yew-trees screening the space where this warrior-statesman received the ambassadors of kings who sought alliance with him. There is an uncanny air of desolation over all this vast demesne, an air of

unsatisfied ambition, of vain striving and infinite sadness of remorse. I can picture to myself Waldstein pacing along that alley of clipped trees, now overgrown, scheming and planning. I am sure he was one of those whose vision showed to them the endless possibilities of power wielded from Prague as capital of a great Central European State, that he was of one mind with George Podiebrad, Charles IV, Přemysl Ottokar II, Libuša, and I will even include that Frankish adventurer, Samo. But Waldstein had to reckon with a Habsburg Emperor, King of Bohemia. The negotiations that his generalissimo had undoubtedly been carrying on with the French and the Swedes had roused the suspicions of Emperor Ferdinand, so Albrecht of Waldstein, Duke of Friedland, was rendered harmless; he was murdered by his own officers one night at Cheb (Eger,) a place you passed through on your way from Paris to Prague.

There is a quaint old-world atmosphere that clings about the Mala Strana, in its narrow streets and under its red roofs and dormer windows, an atmosphere that suggests all sorts of good deeds done in a quiet sort of way, of simple piety and a general steady level of intellectual effort. In this, I am glad to report, some English people, or rather Britons, took part. I have already mentioned Elizabeth Weston and her epitaph in the church dedicated to St. Thomas. This church has also been restored by the Jesuits; it was probably high time, for it had been dedicated in 1316, and was occasionally the scene of a "certain liveliness" which is likely to make repairs necessary. Apart from Swedes who used to come round pillaging, this church seems to have had its private, as it were parochial, troubles, a serious one in 1510, for instance, when a fracas arose

one day during service between some Bohemians and some Hungarians. A fracas was always conducted with rapiers and daggers in those days, and must have been a picturesque, if inconvenient, event. It was all about a lady too, which sounds quite likely: it was said that she was not worth all the pother: this is the sort of thing some people would say. As a consequence of this fracas several Bohemians were executed for robbery with violence, which sheds a different light on the incident, but I do not think it matters much at this distance of time.

There was a monastery attached to St. Thomas's Church, or perhaps the other way about, and the monks had a fine library. When the Swedes, quite uninvited, called at Prague and occupied the Mala Strana in 1648, their commander, Königsmark, sent his chaplain, Master John Klee, to pick up the library of St. Thomas's: the Swedes were great collectors of books. Klee remained unmoved by all the entreaties of the good monks until one of them showed him some silver spoons. Klee began to waver; some one brought out a gilt cup; Klee fell, and left the good monks with their books, just carrying off the trifling tokens they had given him as souvenirs. A little kindness goes a long way.

In St. Thomas's there is also a painting ascribed to Rubens over the altar. It looks doubtful to me, but the light was bad, and I could form no opinion as to the picture's merit. Another painting in this church gave me a thrill, a Virgin and Child, both black! I hoped that at last I had discovered a picture I had heard so much of, "The Black Madonna"—a famous picture with a stirring history. There are said to have been several "Black Madonnas" in Bohemia at one time, and that of Stara Boleslav was the most

precious of them. St. Ludmilla herself had given this picture to her pious grandson Wenceslaus, who, as we know, was murdered at Stara Boleslav. Podiwin, the most trusty henchman of Wenceslaus, buried this treasure when his master was murdered. You could not well let it fall into the hands of Brother Boleslav, the hefty heathen; he would have been incapable of appreciating the beautiful legend of how the young mother, filled with anxiety on the flight into Egypt, prayed that she and her Child might be turned black while their exile lasted. The picture was found again in 1160 by a ploughman; the Saxons, on their raid into Bohemia in 1635, stole it, and Ferdinand II redeemed it and brought it back to Prague. It should be somewhere in this city. I will leave the search for it to you, when you pay your visit to Prague, which is surely inevitable now that you have read so far in this book.

A tall, very thin spire, that peers up near the mass of the Nicholas Church, reminds me of others of British race, who had their day in Prague and, I feel sure, contributed to its reputation for religion and piety. These were the *Englische Fräulein*, as the German chronicler calls them; this means English virgins or maidens—you cannot very well call them English misses—whose Order, founded by Clara Ward in the seventeenth century, was introduced into Prague in the eighteenth by a Princess Auersberg. I am not sure how these ladies passed their time, nor what their object was in life, but no doubt they maintained that state to which they considered themselves called, and this alone should be accounted unto them for righteousness in a gay town like Prague.

There is yet one other Briton of whom I must tell you in connection with the story of old Prague. His name

is Brown, and I met him, or rather his effigy, in Vienna many years ago. To give him all his style and title, or as much as I can recollect—Field-Marshal Count Brown, but for all that a good stout Briton. He happened to serve the Empress Maria Theresia, and served her well. When her arch-enemy, Frederick of Prussia, came this way, Brown was one of those who came out to meet him; was wounded and died of his wounds in Prague. Frederick of Prussia was obliged to raise the siege of Prague, according to popular opinion forced thereto by supernatural powers. It is said that one night, just after the battle of Prague, fought some five miles out, at a place called Stěrboholy, and while the siege of Prague was still in progress, the guard at one of the gates was surprised by a visitor. He appeared suddenly coming from the city on a black horse, dressed in ancient costume and wearing, mark you, a prince's cap. He demanded right of egress, the gate was opened, and the night-rider vanished into the darkness. The next day came news of the Austrian victory at Kolin, and everyone knew that one of Bohemia's ancient champions had decided the issue of that day. The pious generally ascribe the victory to St. Wenceslaus; if supernatural agency was at work, I am more inclined to attribute this ingerence to Brother Boleslav, the hearty heathen: it was more in his line.

Those dark days passed, and a century elapsed before the Prussians came pouring in again to disturb the *Pax Austriaca* which held Bohemia enveloped. They came as before, over the passes and through the Gate of Bohemia at that dear little town among the pine forests, Nachod. But all this is ancient history, is past and over, and the serene atmosphere of Good King Charles's gracious days is glowing over Prague again. Old Prague, the somnolent city of centuries after

Bohemia's freedom went, is regaining her place and rising to her high mission as capital of a free and independent State, the most promising of those that arose out of the ruins of the Habsburg dynasty's dominions. Old customs, no doubt, are vanishing: I have looked in vain for the bootmakers' Fidlovačka and the tailors' revels in Stromovka, the butchers' special form of annual rejoicing seems also to have fallen into desuetude. Like pious souls, as they undoubtedly are, the butchers of Prague choose an ancient and respectable church for their peculiar celebration, which, to my thinking, has a somewhat pagan savour; indeed, the profoundly learned trace the practice back to the days when Thor was worshipped in the gloomy forests of Central Europe. The church chosen by the butchers for their special ritualistic function was that dedicated to St. James, son of Zebedee. This church was originally one of the oldest in Prague; it stands in that close-packed quarter of the Old Town, near Our Lady of Tyn. The present edifice shows no traces of its earliest aspect when founded by the Order of Minorities in 1232; it has been damaged and restored until its present appearance was evolved, but it seems to have been loyally patronized by the Old Town butchers, whose bravery, we know, did much towards safeguarding the city both during the Hussite troubles and against the Swedes. Stout fellows, those old butchers of Prague; their holiday diversion, observed each 25th of July, was to dress up a goat, to carry it to the top of St. James's church-tower and throw it over into the street with "music and song," in which the goat probably joined until he arrived on the pavement below. Strenuous enjoyment on a hot summer's day, I should say, having been in personal contact with a goat myself on occasion, but I really cannot see

where the fun comes in. By the aid of a map you may discern the church-tower of St. James's, but you will no longer see the goat hurtling through space. One by one these dear old customs are dying out. Nevertheless, our Pragers still enjoy life, more than ever I should say, contrasting the city of to-day with that of some ten years ago. I have touched on some of the forms of amusement and recreation you may indulge in; you will also find a pleasant social life developing among the cheery and hospitable Pragers. And there is always the river, which among its many reflections, by the way, also includes those of a very modern and rather German-looking building which stands somewhat by itself among disconnected groups of old and new buildings, near that quaint old house by the Jewish Cemetery. The building I refer to is called the Rudolfinum, after one of the unhappiest of all the Habsburgs, and served originally as an academy of music. It still fills up with sound from time to time, though not necessarily with harmony; it is the Parliament of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.

The present tendency in Prague is to erect handsome modern buildings all along the right bank of the river: Government offices, Ministries chiefly, will occupy them. At present the different Ministries are housed in ancient palaces dotted about the city. Foreign Affairs are controlled (and very ably too) from the Hradšany, as is only right, and here are also the offices of the Presidency and the President's official residence. The Ministry of Commerce inhabits Waldstein's Palace, that of Finance the Palace of Clam-Galas, which is well worth seeing on account of its portico. But I fancy it will be some time before all the grand plans for reconstruction and bringing Prague up to the requirements of a capital city have

been carried out, and the silver river will be quite content to reflect the glorious monuments of the past for some little time longer. The river, no doubt, could tell us a deal about the chances and changes of the mortals that lived on its banks; we have seen it reflect so many events, joyous, tragic, even comic. On the whole it wears a thoroughly contented look on its shining countenance—the look of one who knows he is thoroughly appreciated. And knowing this, the river has put up with all manner of trammels which men call "regulation"; there are weirs and locks and all manner of improvements which not even Charles IV had thought of constructing for the good of his people. But then there are the islands left, and the Vltava's friends, the Pragers, come down to those islands of an evening and make music, which must reconcile the river to changed conditions. One island, that of Kampa, has already been pointed out to you; there are others. Of these, two count for our purpose, namely, of getting the best we can out of glorious old Prague. Of these two islands, one is named Žofin, which is derived from Sophie, possibly the wife of Good King Wenceslaus. Mind you, I am not at all certain about this; there is a large bathing establishment on this island, which not only recalls the cheery memory of Wenceslaus, but also that of Susanna; therefore to bring in the name of long-suffering Queen Sophie does not seem to me quite nice: what do you think? The next island is a larger one, almost in midstream, whereas Žofin keeps the right bank and has just enough space for a very pretty flower-garden, and a well-kept restaurant where you may enjoy good food and good music under the shade of the spreading chestnut-trees. The larger island is called Střelesky Ostrov, which means that it has something to do

with shooting. Indeed, in years of long ago, in the days of bows and arrows, and crossbow and bolt, when archery was compulsory, this island was the rendezvous of marksmen. Being a serious concern, archery, and subsequently all manner of shooting, was put under the spiritual charge of St. Sebastian. It is very sporting of this saint to have accepted this honorary office. Here again, on this island, you may dine and drink and listen to good music. You may also shoot at glass balls with an air-gun. *Ichabod*!

Wherever there is a good navigable river, there you have many occasions for excursions. Steamers of all sizes, painted in the national colours of Bohemia, white and red, ply up and down the Vltava. In fact, from Prague, now that all the locks are completed, you may travel down the Vltava to the Elbe and right away to New York by water if you will—change at Hamburg.

There are walks and excursions within easy reach of the centre of the city. You take a tram—it is quite worth it, and is comparatively easy on a Sunday afternoon to anyone who has played "forward" in a "rugger" team. When buying a tram-ticket always make a sound like "pshesses" at the conductor. He will not mind it in the least; in fact, he will take special pains about punching your ticket, which, by virtue of the strange noise you made, enables you to change into another tram. The tram takes you to the outskirts, where you may start walking or just sink into a beer-garden, according to your degree of physical fitness after the journey. You will be pleased to hear that the edict of King John anent no drinks

within two miles of the city has been withdrawn, so you may settle down in the Stromovka or the Kinsky Garden for the afternoon. This latter garden, by the way, is one of the most attractive features of Prague. One of the Kinskys sold it to the town, which makes the best use of it and keeps it in good order for the benefit of the public. You will also do well to visit that little château place which you will see on entering the garden. In it you will find a delectable collection of old Bohemian and Moravian costumes, furniture and household goods which will help you to realize how and why these people cling so tenaciously to all that pertains to their race.

Touching the Kinsky Garden is another one, also beautiful, called Nebozízek. These gardens are separated by a wall that descends from the top of the height down to the street below, the "Famine Wall" it is called, for a thoughtful King of Bohemia, Charles IV again, caused it to be built in order to provide work during a lean year some centuries ago. A gap in the Famine Wall, which you reach by shady winding ways, gives you a glorious and unexpected view of the Hradšany; the winding ways lead you up to the summit of the Petřin, as this height is called, where you may find an outlook tower, a church, a diorama showing a scene from the Thirty Years' War, and a beer-garden—so entertainment is provided for all tastes. There is a way down from the top of Petřin shaded by chestnut-trees, its stages marked by fourteen chapels, the Stations of the Cross, until it narrows in between garden walls over which you see Strahov and the Hradšany rising in graceful dignity out of a maze of red-tiled roofs and foliage.

Then you may wander on past Strahov and over open rolling country to the battlefield of the White

Mountain and to the Star, those places of tragic memory in the history of Bohemia. It is usual to speak slightingly of the immediate environment of Prague as being uninteresting and indeed unlovely; I protest strongly against this, and that because I have traversed the fields and lanes on foot, not dashing through the landscape in a motor-car, and therefore claim to have seen the scenery round about the capital. The citizens of Prague seem to be of my way of thinking, to judge by the numbers that set out on Sundays to the heights that encompass the town on its western side. The good people of Prague enjoy their Sunday beer in the Star Park Restaurant, and take their walks abroad among the pleasant valleys that run down to the river on its left bank. From the plateau of the White Mountain you may find your way into one of these pleasant valleys, that of the Šarka. You enter it by a narrow rocky gorge, and as it has a distinctly romantic look, legend has fastened on to it and echoes a tale of Bohemian Amazons led by a lady of the name of Šarka, who was discontented with the dominance of mere man. The legend is somewhat obscure, but as the Bohemians, like other people, prefer a happy ending to their stories (they have till recently known but few in their own history), we may take it that the Amazonian ladies arrived at the natural issue out of their troubles. Amongst these rocks is an open-air theatre where concerts are given; here one glorious Sunday afternoon in autumn I was once again privileged to hear Kubelik play.

The Šarka brook trips along gaily towards the Vltava under overhanging rocks, by wooded slopes and fresh meadows. It tries to be useful in driving the "Devil's Mill"; that sinister personage seems to have started quite a number of such concerns in Bohemia.

It is a pleasant little place, tucked away among rocks and trees, and its chief business appears to be the supplying of refreshments. Of the occasional rocks that jut out above the trees, one claims to be the jumping-off place of a Prague damsel who was tired of life; such places are pretty frequent in all scenery with any pretence to romance. Given a rocky eminence, you will always find that somebody or other has leapt therefrom and thus given it a name, the "Maiden's Leap" or the "Knight's Leap." It is obvious, for instance, that the Vyšehrad, the rocky eminence on which stood the first castle of Bohemia's rulers before ever Prague was built, should have a jumping-off story. A knight was imprisoned in the Vyšehrad Castle; he asked leave to ride round the castle, for change of air no doubt, when suddenly he wheeled about, put his horse at the river and leapt—of course he got safely away. Let us hope that the damsel of Prague who leapt into the Šarka Valley also fell soft and got away.

These little valleys that lead down to the river are all the more delightful as you seem to come upon them by surprise. The general aspect of the high ground above the river is that of a highly cultivated undulating country with prim and rather uninteresting-looking clusters of white-washed cottages gathered round the church-tower with its quaint bulbous top-hamper which, to my thinking, recalls the Dresden china *Zwiebel Muster* of one's youth, but is really supposed to be due to eastern influence. Again, from the river you see wooded slopes, cherry orchards and factory chimneys. But turning down towards the river you suddenly come upon a jolly little tinkling brook, falling over rocks that peep out of gorse bushes, winding about among lush meadows where geese chatter contentedly, and

seem so far remote from broad acres under waving corn that you get the "wind on the heath" all to yourself, and feel yet farther removed from smoking factories. And even these latter blend with the landscape in a manner which English factories can never acquire. They are tucked away in cosy little valleys, and even in large groups do not disturb the harmony of the landscape. They also seem an expression of the national character, steady and hardworking, yet capable of fitting in completely with the joyous beauty kindly Nature spreads all about.

Within easy reach of Prague, with its hundred towers, are many historic places, landmarks in the story of Bohemia. Foremost among these is the Castle of Karlov Týn. It stands on a rocky spur in a wooded valley, between four hills. You catch a sudden and fleeting glimpse of it as you approach Prague from Paris by the line that runs along the winding River Berounka. If you are blessed with the healthy curiosity of the traveller in foreign parts, you will insist on a closer inspection of this lordly castle. It looks new; this is the result of well-meant restoration undertaken some years ago; it is really of great and historic antiquity.

Charles IV, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and first Bohemian King of that name, began the building of this castle in 1348 as a fitting casket for the Crown jewels and the charter of the land he loved. During the reign of subsequent Kings of Bohemia, this castle, though it passed through many of the vicissitudes peculiar to mediæval history, kept up its traditional

importance in the land. It was besieged by the Hussites in 1422, and parts of it were burnt down and allowed to go to ruin. Over a century later it was restored, but suffered eclipse after the Thirty Years' War, was even in pawn for several years, and did not quite retrieve its fallen fortunes until after the *coup d'etat* of 1918. The deeds by which the two leading patron saints of Bohemia gained sanctity are set forth in quite well-preserved frescoes.


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While on the subject of castles—and you must forgive me for rambling,—I should like to tell you about another one that stands some little way farther up the valley of the Berounka, tucked away out of sight of the railway. The history of this Castle of Křivoklát dates yet farther back than that of Karlov Týn, for we read of its restoration in the twelfth century by Prince Vladislaus I, a scion of the House of Přemysl. Charles IV loved to live here, and restored the place for the first of his four wives, Blanche of Valois. Other guests more or less distinguished visited here, some of them involuntarily; these latter were generally lodged in the Huderka Tower suitably fitted with oubliettes. Among these guests were two already mentioned, a leading religious light, John Augusta, Bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, and another less certain light, Kelly, the Irish alchemist. "Irish alchemist" has rather a racy flavour; the idea of an Irishman engaged in such pursuit suggests endless ingenuous possibilities. With Kelly was also the Englishman, Dr. John Dee, who was in like condemnation. No doubt the two were a precious pair of rogues, but King Rudolph II had asked for trouble by encouraging alchemists from all over Europe to visit him in Prague. The present-day compeers of Dee and Kelly are no doubt the self-constituted experts on politics, finance, commerce and other questions which puzzle international commissions, conferences and such-like amenities of our times. Anyway, Dr. Dee and Mr. Kelly failed to give satisfaction, and so were incarcerated at Křivoklát. A charming place it must have been when the forests were denser and shy deer tripped down to the water's edge of an evening. Charming it is still with its haunting memories that seem to linger more fondly than at Karlov Týn,

perhaps because the modern renovator has not been so busy here. The quaint old corners still have an old-world, homely look which the renovator invariably destroys. Despite the trees that add deep shadows to the sombre masonry, you may yet call up visions of knights tilting in the uneven overgrown courtyard while fair ladies looked on from a balcony specially added for the purpose, and in such manner as to produce a very quaint effect of perspective. You may yet imagine yourself as one of a reverent crowd listening awestruck to bold utterance of religious truths from a Bohemian preacher in that beautiful pulpit of carved stone which still adorns the gateway that leads to the inner court. And if you have the gift of placing yourself back among those earnest seekers after truth who lived in and suffered for their faith, you will draw nearer to the real spirit of the sons of Bohemia.

And this reflection leads to yet another historic spot within easy reach of Prague, Tábor. This is a pleasant little town some two hours by rail from the capital. Seen from the railway as it stands on a gentle rise, its tall church-tower and red roofs reflected in the waters of a winding lake, it looks what it is now, a very peaceful spot. But if you go about its narrow streets you come upon many relics of the town's eventful past. It comes as a surprise to find that the side towards the south, towards Austria, descends precipitously to the River Losnice, a striking contrast to the placid lake which first greeted you. This lake was called Jordan, the city Tábor, by those who, following the teaching of Hus, ordered their lives and thoughts by Holy Writ. The Hussites under their leader Žižka, one of the ablest generals of all time, had decided to build them a city and fixed upon this site for the sake of its undoubted strategic value and

its capacity for defence.

Tábor, however, takes me rather too far afield; I mentioned it for the benefit of those who study archæology; these will find interesting instances of Bohemia's fifteenth-century architecture in this the stronghold of Žižka and the followers of Hus.

In these my reflections on things seen and noted from "a Terrace in Prague" I have endeavoured to arouse your interest in this grand old city. I have pointed out to you from the terrace of my choice monuments to a glorious past, to a glowing vital history of this the capital of an ancient realm. I leave it now to you to fill in the gaps I have left, either purposely—for I want you to come here and see for yourself—or inadvertently; and I have already admitted my limited knowledge of a great subject. So come out here and choose your point of view, and carry on the reflections I have started; there is endless scope. As Lützow says: "When throwing a stone through a window in Prague you throw with it a morsel of history." This is not meant to encourage stone-throwing, a practice that meets with little appreciation here. What is meant is that there is a vast field lying before you, as you look out over the city, a field which will render you good returns for any attempt you make to cultivate it. If your outlook be academic, at your feet lies one of Europe's oldest universities; if your interests turn to architecture, this little work alone should give you some idea of the wealth of material lying here to your hand. If you are one of those rare mortals who study history for the sake of applying its moral to the conduct of the

world's affairs, then you have here a deep well from which to draw inspiration. Look at those figures that rise above the heads of their fellows in the shadowy pageant of Bohemia's capital, at those whose vision carried well beyond the narrow frontiers of their country and the limitations of their age. Ottokar II and Charles IV, George Podiebrad and Waldstein, all these saw the inner meaning of Libuša's prophecy: "I see a grand city, the fame of which reaches to the skies."



Libuša's prophecy has been fulfilled, her forecast of Prague's place in the world has come true. In the days of Ottokar II, Prague held high place as a capital of a great State. Charles IV rescued this city that he loved, and made of it the rallying point of Central European culture. King George Podiebrad felt the high importance of this his native country's capital, and from it he wove his web of treaties and

agreements for the betterment of Central Europe by means of his League of Peace. Dark Waldstein had formed great and ambitious plans, possibly not so altruistic as those of his spiritual kinsmen, the great men mentioned above. You have seen how one after another these giants of Bohemia saw their plans brought to nought. Ottokar II succumbed to the first Habsburger that threw his shadow over Bohemia. The successors of Charles and George Podiebrad could not stand up against the forces of reaction that beat down Bohemia's efforts towards finding herself and taking her rightful place in the comity of nations. Of Waldstein's plans and ambitions there are only dark traces, obscure indications; he, a man of penetrating vision, must have realized the possibilities of his country, and must have been bent on securing for it the place it is entitled to. But he in his turn perished at the instigation of a Habsburger. And so we see the searching light of greatness light up the city from time to time, and in almost regular intervals of a century at a time; then came heavy banks of cloud to obscure the fair prospect. The clouds have rolled away again; again bright sunshine draws out the memories of Golden Prague and raises hopes of a glorious future. This time the fate of Prague and the land and people she stands for does not depend upon dynastic considerations nor the will or vision of one ruler or another. The destinies of Prague are in the hands of a sovereign people; it is theirs to make or mar them.

Here is matter for deep study, such as will in time justify prediction. Mark also well the signs of the times as you look out over Prague, and note whether the spirit of the great departed has not returned to inform the people of Bohemia and of the lands that make up the Succession State of the old Austrian

Empire, the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.

If I have succeeded in arousing your interest, my task is completed; it is then for you to take up the tale —"From a Terrace in Prague."

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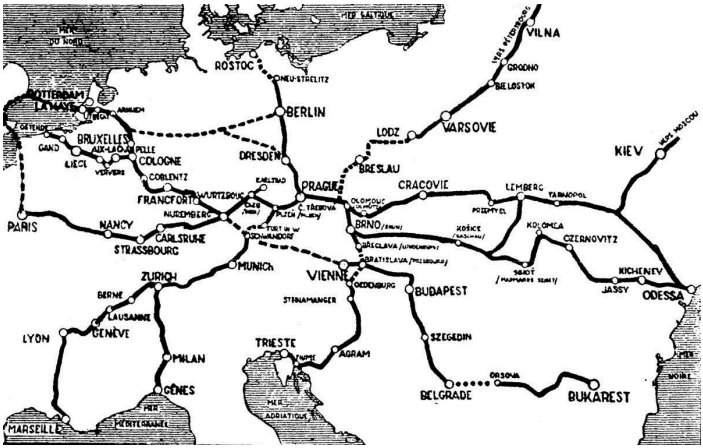
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