

CHAPTER III.

Prague.—Sitting of the Diet of Bohemia.—Nobility of Bohemia.—Private Theatre of Count Claru Gallas.—Musical Conservatorium.—Technical Institution.—Museum.—University.—The System of Education in the Austrian Empire—its consequence.—Secret Police.

THE view of Prague, from the road of Toplitz,¹⁰ is imposing; you descend into a valley extending for five miles, and amphitheatrically rising towards the west: it terminates in a ridge, which runs obliquely the breadth of the whole city. On this ridge stands the imperial castle, an immense front of colossal buildings, seen at the distance of ten miles. You pass through an indifferent suburb, a half-ruined gate, and enter a street scented by numerous kitchens in the front of the houses. It terminates in a Gothic tower, which separates the city from the new town, Neustadt, laid out by

Charles IV. Before this tower two streets diverge, from 150 to 200 feet wide. This part of the town is by far the most regular; it consists almost entirely of noblemen's palaces, and some excellent hotels, among which the Schwarze Ross (black horse) holds the first rank. You thence pass, in the company of your cicerone, a hanger-on at the said hotel, (and, by-the-by, your spy,) through the gate of the before-mentioned tower, a relic of Charles IV. and a street whose buildings bespeak the sixteenth, and its irregular dimensions the twelfth century: it runs out into the great market-place of the ancient city. The city-house, a venerable-looking building of the thirteenth century, before whose portal many a noble head has fallen a victim to ill-planned revolutions against the House of Austria; the stately and ancient architecture of the houses in general, and especially the Gothic church of the Tein, deserve attention. It has two steeples, 200 feet high, one of which, however, lost its turreted slate roof by a stroke of lightning, and has been replaced by a very poor shingle roof, to guard this noble monument of Gothic architecture on each side. The lower part of the church itself is entirely hidden by a row of houses through which you enter the

church: its interior exhibits a striking resemblance to the cathedral of Nôtre Dame in Paris. Among the monuments, that of Tycho Brahe is conspicuous. Through a labyrinth of crooked, narrow streets, which show rather too plainly, that the founder of this renowned city, the Duke Premist, was any thing but a mathematician, you come to the mansion of Count Claru 11m Gallas, the noblest palace in Prague. It was built by one of his ancestors, after a plan drawn by Michael Angelo, and consists of a centre and two wings. The two main entrances are guarded by four caryatides, on which the balconies rest. The parapets are decorated with statues of a workmanship rather above mediocrity. Architecture, sculpture, every thing combines to make it one of the most superb palaces of the nobility. A street more irregular, if possible, than the former, runs along the ci-devant college of the Jesuits, which contains not less than two large churches and five chapels. Through the gate of a second beautiful tower, from which the students of Prague resisted successfully the invading Swedes in 1648, you enter the bridge, which is disfigured by twenty-eight stands of coarsely executed statues. A third gate receives you, which unites two

Gothic towers, which protect the bridge from this side. The small town commences here, built on an ascent which leads across the main place, divided into two parts by a second college of the Jesuits, little inferior to the former in size. It is the seat of the 'Tribunal of Appeal, of the Court of Justice for the nobility, and of several other offices. A range of magnificent palaces issues from this square ; and a turn to your right, places you before the imperial castle. It consists of two colossal wings connected by a centre. The southern wing runs along the before-mentioned ridge, and forms a straight line, at least a thousand yards long, with the chapter of the Nobles Dames, and the palace of Prince Lobkowitz: The chief front looks toward the West. Three gates open to it, decorated with the emblems of Austria and Bohemia. From the open hall in the centre, two flights of stairs lead to the imperial apartments. We passed a noble staircase, the first, second, and third guard-room, and entered the audience-chamber. The rooms are lofty, painted, and hung with Flemish pictures; but with the exception of a huge couch of state, with a corresponding tester, cushions, and matrasses, of red damask, there is not the least furniture. Through

a corridor, on the left side of which is the Imperial chapel, we passed to the Bohemian saloon, where the Diet of the kingdom was then sitting : it was on the 15th of August. The avenues to the Imperial castle, the court-yards, and the staircase which leads into the sitting chamber, were lined with the (Bohmischen Saal) national guards. The saloon is a square chamber with two entrances. Opposite the one through which the members of the Diet enter, a platform is raised, on which a chair is placed, the whole surmounted by a canopy, which was elevated ; the Supreme Burggrave, as President of the Diet, being only a count by birth : had he been a prince, it would have been lowered. When the Imperial Commissaries entered, the whole assembly rose. The Supreme Burggrave, standing under the canopy, descended the three steps, and complimented them ; after which the members of the Diet took their seats. To the right hand sat the Archbishop, as Primate of the kingdom, covered with his pallium, and decorated with the insignia of an Imperial order ; next to him, three bishops in their purple robes ; the abbots, in black or white silk gowns, with gold chains and crosses. The benches in front of the

canopy were occupied by the lords of the kingdom; the second order dressed in their national costume—a red coat, richly embroidered with silver, epaulettes of the same, white breeches, silk stockings, and a three-cornered hat with bullions. Many of them bore orders; almost all the insignia of an Imperial chamberlain—a golden key. The knights occupied the benches on the left, and were dressed in the same manner. The representatives of the cities were in black. The Supreme Burggrave addressed at first the Prince Archbishop and the spiritual lords, in the Bohemian language; then the temporal lords of the kingdom, princes, counts, and barons; afterwards the knights (*Ritterstand*); and last, the representatives of the cities. Then, complimentary addresses being over, one of the secretaries read the Imperial proposition respecting the taxes to be laid upon the kingdom for the ensuing year. They were received in silence with a low bow. The Supreme Burggrave asked finally, whether any of the members had to propose matters respecting the good of the kingdom. A deep silence reigned throughout the splendid assembly: at last, the Burggrave thanked them in the name of their august sovereign for their ready attendance, and the assembly broke up.

This pageant is the remains of the constitution which Bohemia enjoyed for more than 300 years: its form is still the same, but the spirit is gone. Regularly there are two Diets held every year: Postulate and Extraordinary Diets. For both, the Imperial invitation is issued to the different members, viz. the prelates of the kingdom as the first order, composed of the Archbishop of Prague, the Bishops of Leitmeritz, Koniggratz, Budweis, with several abbots. The second are the lords possessed of domains whose number may amount to a hundred. The knights possessed of domains constitute the third class. The fourth are the four cities, Prague, Budweis, Pitzzen, and Koniggratz, whose citizens have the right to buy or possess domains, and the privilege of being represented by their burgomasters and aldermen. Two commissaries from among the lords and knights, are chosen by the Emperor to represent him. They are brought in the state-carriage and six of the Supreme Burggrave to the sitting chamber. The real power of the States is now limited to the repartition of the taxes, and a certain jurisdiction which they still exercise through a committee of eight members chosen from among the

four orders, and confirmed by the Emperor. The Austrian monarchs thought it necessary to spare the feelings of a nobility and a nation, which cling with cherishing fondness to their ancient liberty, or rather national existence : for, it is but fair to state, that the condition of the peasantry has been improved, especially since the times of Joseph. The real constitutional liberty before rested entirely in the hands of the nobility, of whose power we may form an idea from the strange privileges which they enjoyed, and one of which was, that every lord was entitled to the virginity of his domain ; every new-married peasant having been obliged to carry his bride at a certain hour before the door of his lord, and to fetch her home again the next morning. But even for these improvements of their condition, the Bohemian peasant is but little obliged to the sovereigns, who deprived him of his national existence. The difference between the Bohemians and Germans, in this respect, is striking. While the latter, a few attorneys and politicians excepted, will scarcely take any interest in their assemblies, and consider them, what they in their present state really are, rather a nuisance,—the former will ask,

with a curiosity bordering on anguish, "What has been decided in the Diet?" and turn pale and downcast when they hear of nothing but taxes.

What a powerful thing national feeling is, we may learn by the contrast existing between the Bohemians, Poles, and even Hungarians. Their looks speak. Their mournful countenances, when they hear the name of a free country pronounced; their clenching of the teeth when they hear of Great Britain's free sons; and their inexpressible sadness when their own country is mentioned, the battles they had to fight for a strange cause, the armies they have to recruit and to pay, for their own oppression, and for the sceptre of a family who are strangers to them and their interest, though for centuries their masters,—and who, in their imbecility, see only the means of keeping them in subjection, and crippling their national resources. An intuitive national feeling and hatred towards foreigners, especially Germans, are among the characteristic features of the Slavonian nations.

The Poles, under the Austrian dominion, will readily acknowledge that their condition is

far better than that of their countrymen who are under the sway of Russia. But the idea of being governed by foreigners and strangers, is alone sufficient to drive them mad; and they rose up in arms against Austria during the disastrous war of 1809, choosing rather to submit to the still more tyrannical sceptre of Russia, their brother nation, than to Austria. After the session was over, we visited the Bohemian chamber; the same where, in the year 1618, the Imperial commissaries, Count Slawato and Martiniz, were thrown out of the windows, by the adherents of Frederick the Palatine. This summary manner of showing their patriotism failed, however, of the expected success, and the Imperial commissaries in a fall of nearly eighty yards, escaped without breaking their necks, through the intervention of a dung-hill.

From the third court-yard, we entered the Cathedral of St. Vitur, situated in the centre of the Imperial castle, with its appendages the chapter of the Noble Dames, and the palace of the Prince Lobkowitz. Its size is moderate, but its decorations are so beautiful, its pointed columns and

arches so noble, and its sculptured beauties so superior to those of other Gothic monuments, that one cannot help forming a high idea of the state of Bohemia, when under its own kings. It is not the most beautiful, but certainly the prettiest Gothic church on the Continent; begun and finished under Charles IV. His tomb is close to the main entrance. Two marble figures, representing him and his Imperial consort, are stretched upon the mausoleum, their hands crossed, their heads crowned, at their feet the emblem of the kingdom, an erect lion with a double tail. Farther up are the monuments of the Emperors, Mathias and Rodolph, the last kings of Bohemia who resided in Prague. In the right aisle is the shrine of one of the patrons of the kingdom, St. John de Nepomuch, confessor to the consort of Wenceslaus, the cruel son of Charles IV. This monarch, in a fit of drunkenness and jealousy, caused John to be thrown from the bridge into the Moldeva, because he pertinaciously refused to reveal the confession of the queen. Of course he was canonized, and his tongue is there shown to the pious believer, fresh and well preserved, for more than 300 years. The quantity of silver and gold on his

shrine amounts to 4000*l*. When the rumour of its being doomed to the same fate as the rest of the treasures of the churches, spread over the country, thousands of Bohemians left their homes to bid farewell to their national property. The gloomy and menacing silence of the pilgrims saved this treasure. The Government thought it prudent to spare the feelings of an oppressed people, and the order was revoked. On the same side is the Imperial lodge, and the chapel of St. Wenceslaw, the first Christian duke who paid for his piety with his life. He was murdered by his brother, Boleslaus, at the instigation of his mother, Drohomira.

The square, which extends in front of the Imperial castle, is lined with several palaces, among which those of the Duke of Reichstadt and of the Archbishop, are conspicuous; the former was the residence of the Emperor Alexander, and the latter of the King of Prussia, during the Congress at Prague.

The view from the terrace of the castle over the whole extensive city, with its numberless

churches, towers, and palaces, its bridge stained with the hue of age, the wide river with its beautiful islands and parks, is a noble sight. It is the true picture of a once powerful hierarchy, and still wealthy nobility, struggling with the impending decay of their own power, and of their country. There are about forty ancient Bohemian families, who may be said to constitute the leading aristocracy of the kingdom: their estates amount to nearly two-thirds of the landed property, including their peasants. The most distinguished among them are the families of the Princes Lobkowitz, Schwarzenberg, Ruisky; the Counts Haw, Clow, Chortiniz, Schleck, Chotiek, Wrano, Wrtbz, Kollowrat, Ezurin, Waldstein, Sternberg, and Nostiz. These are considered as Bohemian families; whereas the Princes Lichtenstein, Ditsichstein, Colloredo, Mansfield, Auer-sperg, Windischgratz, Clary, Kaunitz, Salm, Thurn, are reckoned among the German families, though they are possessed of large estates in the kingdom. Most of their possessions are donations of the Austrian Emperor, who, by these amalgamating means, desired to break the spirit of the national nobility, and succeeded in his wishes. The former took an active part in the fatal war of

1809. They raised battalions from among their subjects, and many also equipped them and put themselves at their head. The great sums which they were to take up, the subsequent wars of 1813 and of 1814, the increasing taxes even after these wars, the natural consequences of a bad financial management of an expensive Prime Minister, a secret policy and high standing in the political sphere, contributed not a little to damp their spirits.

Bohemia is, without doubt, the most oppressed and least favoured of all the provinces and kingdoms of the Austrian empire. Though Bohemia, with its appendage, Moravia, has not more than five millions of inhabitants, the sixth part of the population of the Austrian empire, yet these two provinces bear not less than a third of the whole expenses and contributions, and furnish more troops than the kingdom of Hungary with ten millions of inhabitants. What adds to the mortification of this people, is the indifference shown to their interest. Its principal river, the Elbe, flowing through the finest part of the kingdom, it was thought proper to insure to the inhabitants the export of their produce to Hamburg. The treaty of na-

vigation, as concluded by the Austrian envoy, the favourite of Metternich, now president of the German Diet at Frankfort, bears evident marks of being dictated by a policy which is afraid of seeing this people in contact with the Germans. Of course, Metternich and the present system is not looked upon in the most favourable light by the national nobility, and they are in silent opposition to his measures.

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We visited, the day after our arrival, the private theatre of Count Claru Gallas, a nobleman who, for his patriotic feeling and his incessant exertions to counterpoise the dead weight of despotism, deserves universal praise. The night's performance was Schiller's Maria Stuart. I was particularly struck with the part acted by the Countess Schliel, as Queen Elizabeth; and Mrs. Siddons herself would have acknowledged her *dilettante* rival an incomparable representative of this proud and selfish prude, yet still great character. This, however, was but a faint prelude to Goethe's Torquato Tasso, performed a week later, the inimitable picture of high life. It is almost impossible to draw the line of demarca-

tion closer, to paint the delicate *nuances* of a love checked by courtly haughtiness and sneering contempt, which the prince of German poets draws so masterly in Tasso, far better than Prince Thun Tanis, and Count Thun. They moved in their own sphere, and their play was natural. It looks strange to see noblemen and ladies on the boards, and in the *cothurnus*; but they are forced into this monopoly. Though the public theatre was built at their own expense and supported in a way suitable to the resources of a moderate kingdom, yet the Emperor, afraid lest his subjects should grow wanton from the intellectual enjoyments of classic or liberal works, ordered not only their mutilation, but most of Schiller's works, which are even performed on the Vienna stage, to be here entirely prohibited; they are less trusted than the Austrians. The nobility themselves perform in this private theatre, and none but noblemen of their rank, or strangers who are introduced into their circles, are admitted.

The public opera is still above mediocrity, its orchestra unrivalled. The Bohemians have a sin-

gularly fine ear for instrumental music, and perform *con amore*. When Mozart had composed his *chef-d'œuvre*, Don Giovanni, he hastened to Prague to lay his work before a public, which, as he expressed himself, was alone capable of giving a correct opinion of the merits of his production. It was accordingly performed through three successive nights. The enthusiasm increased with every performance. When he returned to Vienna, this masterpiece met there with a cold reception; the Emperor Joseph was present during the performance. Mozart was called before the monarch:—"Mozart," said the monarch, "your music would do very well, but there are too many notes in it!"—"Just as many," replied the offended artist, "as there ought to be!" (7)

The Bohemian nobility have, with a proper sense of the musical bias of their countrymen, established an institution, which furnishes not only first-rate *virtuosos* for their own chapels, but for which Europe in general ought to be grateful. Sixty pupils, twenty of whom are females, are instructed in the different branches of instrumental and vocal music by twelve teachers, who are salaried by the nobility. Of

the great musical talents which have been fostered in this conservatorium, we name only Madame Sontag.

The Technical Academy, equally called into existence by the nobility, and supported entirely by them, was our next visit: its director is the Chevalier Gerstner, a gentleman whose mathematical eminence is respected throughout Europe. The furnaces of Genitz, and Horshowitz, and Purglitz, the road to Carlsbad, and several other buildings, are his works. ⁽⁸⁾ He has under him four professors. The number of pupils amounts to 150. They are here taught mathematics in all its branches. The Museum of Prague is an interesting collection of Bohemian and Slavonian antiquity. Besides manuscripts, works of sculpture and of the pencil, there are offensive and defensive weapons, bucklers, swords of an immense size, one of the shoes of Premist, the first Duke of Bohemia, the Fauna of this country, with a number of other curiosities. The saloon, where the works of the ancient Bohemian literature are deposited, is the most interesting. They had in the fourteenth century their historians, civilians, lawyers, divines, and poets, of

whom we know little or nothing, and who might spread over this dark age a light of which we never dreamed. But they are chained down : their publication is prohibited, and as they are mostly writers in the Bohemian language, they may be considered as dead treasures. Among the Bohemian painters, Raphael, Mengs, Siretta, and Brandt, rank high. A Salvator and a Joseph by Siretta, are particularly remarkable for their colouring and truth of expression. There is a Saviour by Brandt painted with the finger. Seen closely, this picture presents a chaos of colours laid on finger-thick, not unlike the daubing of a child. From a distance of six yards, however, it melts into one of the divinest and noblest ideals of Our Lord. The liberality with which the nobility founded this monument of national arts and sciences, and contributed towards it from their own galleries, armories, and libraries, shows plainly that national feeling and honour are far from being extinct. They collected with great expense, since the foundation of this museum in 1818, the remains of past grandeur from the remotest corners of Europe, from Sweden and Russia; and though they are not yet allowed to make any use of them, still

they seem to look forward to a more favourable period.

Of the 30,000 students who are said to have crowded, in the times of Charles the Fourth and his successors, the saloons of the renowned university at Prague, but 1000 remain. ⁽⁹⁾ These are trained according to the pleasure of his Imperial Majesty, as expressed when the professors were admitted into his Imperial presence, in 1825. "I will have my subjects learn all those things that are useful in common life, and likely to keep them attached to our person and to their religion. I don't want teachers who fill the heads of my students with that nonsense which turns the brains of so many youths in our days." The only scientific branch allowed a free range is medicine. The others, in 1822, received a warning which will cut off all redundant study during the Emperor's life. Of the members of this university, the Professor of Philosophy Bolpano was universally admitted to be one of the very first. Several works which he published, showed him to be a very liberal and eminent thinker. This gentleman was suddenly arrested, his writings seized, himself placed before

12

an ecclesiastical tribunal, at the head of which was the archbishop, to answer the charge of heterodoxy. The poor archbishop, a good, kind-hearted, simple old man, universally beloved, was, one may suppose, not a little puzzled to manage this dogmatical trial, out of whose labyrinth of nonsense the Pope, with all his infallibility, would not have extricated himself: he succeeded, however, in clearing the doctor of the crime of heterodoxy; but all his endeavours, together with those of the nobility, to obtain his re-admission to the philosophical chair were unsuccessful. "Let me alone," said the Emperor, when the P——ss L——y interceded on his behalf. "He has dangerous, extravagant principles." One of his disciples, a director of the theological seminary in Leitmeritz, went a step farther, and asserted, as was said, in one of his lectures, that those doctrines, which are incompatible with human reason, cannot be founded on divine precepts. This daring speech resounded in Vienna, and a few weeks afterwards the confessor of his Majesty, M. Friut, arrived with two commissaries from Vienna, arrested the poor director, and carried him under escort to Vienna, where he was imprisoned with the Ligorians. The bishop, under whose eyes this *ne plus ultra* of infidelity took

place, was deprived of his see, and sent into a capuchin monastery. These three examples have proved effectual in curing the spirit of the Bohemian literati, and they are now plodding on according to the manner prescribed.

As the system of studies, as it is called, is throughout the Austrian empire the same, it may not be superfluous to give a succinct idea of it. There are, besides the university, three Lyceums, or colleges, and twenty-five Gymnasiums, or Latin schools, in Bohemia. The university has, besides, a rector magnificus, whose office however is a mere title, and who is chosen annually with four directors, two of which, the directors of philosophy and of divinity, are clergymen. The director of the Gymnasiums and of the Lyceums, is also a priest. They are under the control of a counsellor of the Government, to whom they make their reports. The elementary schools are equally under the supreme direction of a clergyman, who is in the same manner answerable to the Government.⁽¹⁰⁾ Private teaching is not allowed. The youth, after having run through the elementary schools, passes into the Latin schools, or Gymnasiums; in which he is instructed for the

ensuing four years, in the Latin language and in religion; the two following years he reads extracts from Latin authors, and the elements of the Greek language; two hours in the week are allotted to religion, mathematics, geography, and history. Each Gymnasium has one prefect, six professors, and a teacher of religion. In six years the youth has completed his gymnastic studies, and is advanced to the university. There he hears, for the first year, extracts of philosophy, religion, history, mathematics, the elements of the Greek language; again, in the second year, the same, with the exception of mathematics, for which physic and astronomy are substituted. In the third year, he reads the history of the German Empire, and æsthetics. The students are not allowed to choose for themselves; the professors or lecturers are all obliged to pursue the same course. These three years being passed, the youth chooses either law, divinity, or medicine. In the former two courses, he continues his studies four, in the latter five years. The whole course of studies takes thus thirteen, and in medicine, fourteen years. The school-books for all these different classes, except medicine, are compiled in Vienna, under the superintendence of the Aulic commission of studies.

They are subject to such alterations as a new created counsellor of the court thinks fit to suggest, according to his own or his Emperor's notions. These school-books are the most barren and stupid extracts which ever left the printing press. The professors are bound, under penalty of losing their places, to adhere literally to these skeletons.

At Easter, and towards the close of August, the youth is examined: if his answers prove satisfactory, he is admitted at the beginning of the next year into a higher class; if otherwise, he is detained till he knows by heart his lesson, and then advanced. A young man who has gone through the academical course of these studies, knows a little of every thing, but on the whole nothing. He has regularly forgotten in the succeeding course, what he had learned by heart in the preceding. A free exercise of the mental powers, a literary range is absolutely impossible; nay, against the instructions of the professors. The youth, during the time of his studies, is watched with the closest attention. His professors are ex-officio spies. Six times in the year he has to confess himself to his teachers of religion!—His

predilections, inclinations, his good and bad qualities, every movement is observed and registered in their catalogues; one of which is sent to Vienna, the other to the Government, the third deposited in the school archives. This observation increases as the youth advances into the higher classes, and a strict vigilance is paid to his reading; trials are made with classic authors, his opinion is elicited about characters such as Brutus, Cato, and the account thereof faithfully inserted. If the youth applies to law, the scrutiny becomes still more vigorous, and his principles about the natural rights of man and of government are extorted under a thousand shapes and pretences.

The youth, having finished his academical course, whether he be a lawyer, or a divine, is entirely in the hands of the Government. His past life and conduct serve his superiors as a guide. Has he given the least cause of suspicion, shown the least *penchant* towards liberal ideas? then he may be sure that the higher his talents, the less his capacity to serve his Emperor, or to obtain a license as an attorney. Should he apply to the Government for a non-commissioned office, his immediate superiors become again his

watchmen. An unguarded word is sufficient not only to preclude his advancement, but to deprive him even of his station. He cannot expect indulgence or forbearance on the part of his superiors; it would be looked upon as a connivance, and if repeated, deprive them of their places.

There are, in every department among the counsellors or assessors, at least two spies, who correspond regularly with the President of the supreme Police at Vienna, or with the Emperor himself. Two months before my arrival, the most distinguished Counsellor of the Government expressed his opinion, in the sittings of this tribunal, which is headed by the Chief of the kingdom, the Supreme Burggrave, respecting a question about duties on imported produce. He availed himself of this opportunity to give a comprehensive and clear statement of the system in all its bearings, saying, that the present system was not in accordance with the state of manufactures. He was speaking this at the same time that his preferment to the supreme financial department, as Aulic Counsellor, wanted only the signature of the Emperor, after having been recommended by the financial department, and approved by the State

Council. What was the astonishment of this counsellor, when, eight days afterwards, the appointment of the youngest counsellor of the government arrived from Vienna, signed by the Emperor, who wrote with his own hand that a man who looked more at the spirit of the time, than at the expressed will of his monarch, could not be a fit subject for a counsellor of the court, and that his Majesty did not want reasoners, but faithful servants. There is no aulic counsellor of the Department of Justice, who would dare to ask his colleague of the financial branch respecting the measures of his department; it would be looked upon as a temptation, or as an interference with objects in which he has not, and should not take any concern, though it may be that, in a fortnight, he is appointed to the very committee or department, of the measures of which, to inform himself beforehand, would be considered as presumptuous and dangerous. When Count O'Donnel, Minister of Finances, died, the Emperor, then at Prague, looked round for a successor, and the then Supreme Burggrave, Count Wallis, was called before him. "Count," he was accosted, "I am going to reward you for your faithful services. O'Donnel is dead, I have designated you for his

successor.”—“Your Majesty,” replied the Count, “will most graciously condescend to consider that I am entirely ignorant in this department, as I have never paid the least attention to it.”—“That is what I want; never mind, you will learn it,” resumed the Emperor; “every one to his business. You were a faithful Supreme Burggrave, you will be a no less faithful Finance Minister.” The consequence was, as might be expected, a bankruptcy, which, in the financial history, will be recorded as disgraceful as the battle of Ulm, which was owing to nearly the same cause. These explanations will fully account for the painful ignorance, servility, and narrowness of conception of the Austrian officers, both civil and military. Out of a thousand secretaries, counsellors, and assessors, who have run through the whole course of studies, you will not find fifty who can give you an explanation of the financial state of the Empire. Out of a thousand Austrian captains, there will not be fifty who have the least idea of tactics, except those of the artillery and engineers. These gentlemen advance colonels, generals, field-marschals, lieutenants, not by dint of military prowess or knowledge, but according to the rule of seniority;

while the others, plodding on in the same way, become counsellors of the court, of the state, and the managers of the household of the Emperor. Thus, while we see poor countries like Saxony and Prussia prospering, paying off their debts, and establishing a firm national credit; their armies, with a soldiery far inferior to the Austrian in discipline and military prowess, fighting their battles successfully: the Austrian Empire with its immense resources, is impoverished, every day more and more, through the ignorance of their financial men; and, owing to the same cause, their armies are beaten and captured like so many herds of cattle, through the supine idiotism of their commanders.

There are several omens which have induced his Imperial Majesty to direct his attention not only to his officers, whom he considers less as public servants than as his own, but to the inhabitants generally. In a country where the lower classes are servile and ignorant, the feeling of honour, of course, very precarious, it requires little pains for the agents of the police to induce servants to betray their masters. For every information the former carry to the police, they obtain one or two ducats.

During my stay, a merchant gave a dinner to several of his friends. The conversation turned on the new loan. Every one gave his opinion, which was unfavourable to the measure. Next day he was called before the Chief of the Police, to account for the language used at his party. The merchant pleaded his right to discuss public pecuniary affairs: but he was answered, that it was no business of his, as he was not a banker; and that a repetition of such disrespectful language would be punished with imprisonment!

The merchant returned home and instantly dismissed his servants, being convinced of their having betrayed him. He is again summoned to answer the cause of the dismissal of his servants. Again he pleads his right to do as he pleases; and the Director and Chief of the Police, an Imperial Counsellor of the Government, holding the rank of a Colonel, and a Knight of an Order, has the impudence to assure him upon his honour, that he did not get his information from the servants! It is impossible to form an adequate idea of the ramifications of this product of a bad public conscience. Every footman in a public-house is a salaried spy: there are spies paid to visit the taverns

and hotels, who take their dinners at the *table d'hôte*. Others will be seen in the Imperial library for the same purpose, or in the bookseller's shop, to inquire into the purchases made by the different persons. Of course, letters sent and received by the post, if the least suspicious, are opened; and so little pains are taken to conceal this violation of public faith, that the seal of the post-office is not seldom added to that of the writer. These odious measures are not executed with that *finesse* which characterises the French, nor with the military rudeness of the Prussian, but in that silly and despicable way of the Austrian, who, as he is the most awkward personage for this most infamous of all commissions, takes, notwithstanding, a sort of pride in being an Imperial instrument and a person of importance. One characteristic feature of this Government is particularly striking: its persecution turns less against foreigners than the people who communicate with them. They and their families are exposed to every sort of chicanery; and for this reason, it is almost impossible to associate, if we except noblemen, with the better classes, all of them dreading the crafty severity of their suspicious Government.

Without introduction into the circles of the nobility, it would be, indeed, impossible for a man of even the most moderate pretensions, to stay in this city for a week, every enjoyment being poisoned by the baneful influence of the secret police. The middle class of its inhabitants are a sober, well-informed, and respectable set, far above the sensuality of the Viennese; though the Government does not allow even those scanty means of public information which the latter possess. In Prague there is but one, and this the poorest newspaper imaginable, under the immediate control of the Supreme Burggrave. Another public paper in the Bohemian language had hardly made its appearance with the consent of the Government, when it was suppressed by an order from Vienna.

Taken in the whole, Prague is one of the most picturesque and noble cities on the Continent; far more interesting than Berlin, or any other capital of Germany. What, however, entitles this city to our attention, are the immense historical treasures which it possesses respecting the origin of their own and of their kindred nations, the Russians and Poles. An universal history, with-

out a peregrination to the shelves of ancient Marobudum, will certainly be, with respect to the Slavonian nations, but very imperfect. The line of demarcation which, notwithstanding an allegiance of three centuries to the House of Austria, still separates this people from the Austrians, is no way astonishing; and a Hampden, or, to speak in their own language, a Zisha, in the present gloom, would scarcely fail to find at least a million of adherents. 1K