

CHAPTER IV.

Tour from Prague through Moravia and Austria.—The Empire of Great Moravia, Austria.—Vineyards.—Villages.—Inhabitants, their condition.—Churchwakes.—Austrian Abbeys.—Hierarchy.—Pliability of the Clergy.—Rodolph of Hapsburg and his successors.

THE road from Prague through Moravia and Austria boasts very little interest. A well-cultivated country, a village, or a small town every five or ten miles, with a dirty tavern, and still dirtier bed-rooms, and some country residences of noblemen, inferior, however, to those between Prague and Toplitz, are the only cursory objects. Thirty-five miles from Prague, the heights of Collin present themselves, where Frederic the Great lost a battle and the glory of invincibility. We passed ten miles farther through Czaslau, and about

In
 eighty-five miles south from Prague, over the frontiers of Bohemia, marked by a pyramid with a lion carved in relief, facing Bohemia, and an erect eagle turned towards Moravia. Of the powerful empire of Great Moravia, whose kings swayed a territory stretching from the Danube to the Gulph of Finland, the name only remains. The last king of this monarchy, Zwertibold, was vanquished by the German Emperor Arnulph, his monarchy divided, and part of it annexed to Bohemia, under the name of Moravia. The unhappy monarch himself was obliged to exchange his sceptre for the staff; and his very residence, Wellehrad, was turned into a monastery, of which he became the first abbot. Though Moravia has been separated from Bohemia since its acquisition by Austria, and erected into a distinct government, yet its manners, language, and dress, all bespeak a people intimately blended with the Bohemians. The state of the peasantry, and of the nobility, is entirely the same with those of Bohemia; there is, as in this kingdom, a Diet enjoying the same form, the same privileges, and equally devoid of substance. The first place which we entered is Fylau, a handsome town, with 10,000 inhabitants, and extensive wool manufactures. The country round Fylau is cold and dreary: forty-five

Fylau
Fylau

Zuayra
miles south is Zuayra, the last point where the Bohemian language is spoken. There is something tenacious in this people which exceeds belief. The northern suburbs of this town keep still to their Bohemian tongue, as they did three hundred years ago; while in the southern part, I was told that scarcely a person could be found to understand it. In the same proportion the character of the people changes. Not a trace is to be found of the dark gloomy character of the Bohemian, approaching to misanthropy. There is no transition, no blending between the two nations; they are separated like Germans and French, and a union of three hundred years cannot stifle this antipathy, nor bring them to forget the nicknames with which they honour each other.

Zuayra
The distance from Zuayra to Vienna is thirty miles on the Imperial road. The more interesting road is, however, through Ratz, Kremsk, and Potten. We took the latter. The country from Zuayra westward is almost an uninterrupted vineyard, softly rising and descending on the eminences, and now and then interrupted by an orchard or by wheat-fields in the lower grounds. There is a calm, an hilarity spread over the whole, which is reflected

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in the laughing countenances of the lads and maids employed in stripping the vines of their superfluous branches and leaves, to hasten the ripening of the grapes. Many as we met, all of them offered us grapes. As the forerunners of the villages are always the same wine-cellars, at the distance of fifty yards. They are dug into the ground, and generally vaulted. The entrance to them is through a stone building, containing the wine-press, and a room or two for the entertainment of the proprietor and wine-buyers. Waggon's loading for Vienna, Bohemia, or Moravia, are waiting before the doors, and, as this trade cannot be carried on without frequent libations, we were sure of being invited at every such stand to share in them. These cellars, from forty to fifty in number, are each overshadowed by walnut trees, which guard the entrance; two banks and a table are commonly raised under them. The villages themselves bespeak a serenity and a wealth which you will not find elsewhere throughout the Continent. A brook is a necessary ingredient to an Austrian village; its banks are lined with willows, horse-chesnuts, and walnuts. At some distance the houses run down in long rows. A thatched roof is as great a rarity as a tavern. The inhabitants being culti-

vators of the grape, prefer to take a glass, or rather a flaggon, at home. The houses are from one to two stories high, covered with tiles, and provided with green shutters. On both sides, before the house, are small gardens with green or yellow painted railings, through which the passage to the house-door is left open. You enter through a wicket which is in the large door. The first room is the visit-room; it is generally painted, and furnished with an elegant stove, two bureaus, half a dozen chairs, and a sofa. In the midst is a large table covered with a Tyrolian carpet, on which two flaggons and a number of tumblers are placed. The other rooms are furnished in a less sumptuous, but clean and substantial manner. Round the green stove, and the white shining walls, runs a row of open benches; round the ceiling, large wine glasses are seen hanging, in which the journeymen receive their daily portion of wine. Some pictures of saints, or an engraving of Maria Theresa, Joseph, or Francis, decorate the walls. This latter is indeed their prototype in every thing. They consider him exactly in the light of a father, or rather a guardian, whom they may approach at any time, and to whom they submit in

every thing. Their characters tally so exactly with that of the Emperor, that from this affinity of thinking there cannot but exist the greatest harmony between the Austrian and his Emperor.

We had passed a dozen of these beautiful villages, each vying with one another in elegance and beauty, and were just going to enter the last, which lay on the road to the small but beautiful town of Rotz, where we intended to stay ; when, as we lagged after our carriage, an elderly farmer plodding behind us for a while, at last took heart to speak and ask us whither we were bound. Being satisfied on the point, he forced us almost to spend a night under his roof. We had hardly entered the house, when the landlady came with two flaggons, one filled with wine, the other with water, to drink the welcome. The time till supper was spent, according to the fashion of the country, in drinking and talking.

Our landlord, an honest and wealthy wine cultivator of Rotzbach, had a lawsuit against the lord of the domain, respecting a ward, to whom the former was guardian. Determined not to have

the suit procrastinated, he went forthwith to see the Emperor Francis. He was of course received, and stated his case. "Have you got the cognizance?" demanded the Emperor.—"Yes, I have," replied the farmer.—"Then I will tell you what," resumed the Emperor; "you had better go to the Aulic Counsellor S——z, and let him see it."—"But would it not be better," said the frank Austrian, "if your Majesty would command M. Schwarzin to do it?"—"No, my child," said the Emperor, "you don't understand; that business must have its way; I cannot do any thing beforehand; go, go, and you will hear what he says, and then come and tell me." He went accordingly to the Counsellor S——z, who answered, that he could not do any thing before matters were brought to him in the regular course of business. Again he returned to the Emperor, who with the same patience exhorted him to wait, and that he would himself take care and expedite it. The farmer then returned home, and in six weeks his law-suit was decided in his favour.

The Austrian farmer is a kind-hearted, good-humoured being, with a great deal of openness and

honesty; which latter two qualities, however, are said to have lost their former value, by the state bankruptcies, the examples of bad faith given them by their Emperor, and the secret police. He is more wealthy than his Bohemian or Polish fellow-subjects, and is in fact a freeholder, as bockage and menial offices have been redeemed throughout Austria from the noblemen, with the connivance of the Government, by a certain sum of money. Nothing exceeds his hospitality; and whoever comes is not only welcome, but almost killed with kindness. The Germans are noted for their insatiable thirst. In Austria, the number of emptied flaggons is astonishing; but notwithstanding a true Austrian farmer, as we often convinced ourselves, will wash down a sort of pig-meat, with horse radish, with one, or even two flaggons, holding two gallons of wine, he is seldom seen drunk. Custom, and the quality of the wine itself, which is of a light sort, similar to the Rhenish wine, only rather more acid, explain this. In order to keep themselves in constant appetite, they advance with every flaggon they take, from the inferior to the better sorts; as there are thousands who have a stock of more than 1000 hogsheads in their cellars, from the year 1811, down

to 1826. They complain sadly of the French, who emptied their cellars from the vintages of 1783 and 1794; and as it is the highest gratification of their pride to show their wealth in this manner, one may easily imagine the quantity of wine consumed during their fêtes. The principal one is the churchwake.

Nothing can exceed the jollity and gaiety of a churchwake in Austria Proper. They are kept every year, on two successive Sundays, in every village. The preparations for the fête are made the week preceding it, by the united efforts of the young single men. The largest tree from the next forest is chosen, stripped of its bark, planed, and surmounted with the crown of a fir-tree, bearing the emblems of country life; apples, bottles filled with wine, ribbons, and garlands. This tree is raised in the centre of a pavilion, or rather a bower, covered with branches, and hung over with festoons of every colour. Each farmer invites his friends of the neighbouring villages. After grand mass is over, the dinner is served, consisting of at least twenty different dishes. At three o'clock, after the second divine service, the lads make their appearance, dressed very elegantly, and re-

pair in a body to the different farm-houses where the maidens are. These are conducted in procession to the dancing-place, the before-mentioned bower. The orchestra consists of an exquisite band of from ten to fifteen musicians, who regularly attend these festivals. Among their instruments are two lyres, but no violin, which give to the music an exquisite air of country life. There is nothing which equals the waltzes of these people. The most prejudiced enemy to this dance cannot help being delighted with the simplicity and true charm which these dancers display in every turn, without having ever been under the modelling hand and snuffing command of a French dancing-master. One might look for hours with interest at the hearty delight with which they enjoy this ancient fête. If distinguished persons are present, they are requested to open the ball, a thing which is always complied with. At sunset lamps are lighted, and the dance continues until eleven o'clock. The maidens are again conducted home in the same manner, and each is delivered into the hands of her parents. It was at the castle and domain of G——k, the property of C——t F——s, where we witnessed one of these fêtes. The family of the Count had partaken for half an hour

in the popular rejoicing. For this honour the young people brought them a serenade.

The castle of G——k is situated on one of the romantic cliffs of the Danube, twenty-five miles above the dreaded (Lanenstande,) commanding on one side the mighty river, and on the other the beautiful valley with its village. The rocky ground between this and the castle is occupied by a park, from whose clumps of oaks and birches you see peeping out rocks overgrown with moss, which invest the scenery with an inexpressible air of romantic beauty. It was in this park, in the midst of precipices and natural grottoes, the youths and musicians performed the serenade. Of the pieces sung and played, there was none more charming than the beautiful Tyrolese air, “Wenn ich morgens frii aufstehe,” sung by about forty young men, scattered all over the park. The manly voices of the singers, re-echoing from the surrounding cliffs and mountains, the numerous lights, and the grandeur of the scenery, all contributed to make it one of the most delicious enjoyments. It is singular that this people, certainly one of the best and most kind-hearted on the face of the earth, though endowed with a rather strong

penchant towards that sort of sensuality which delights in eating and drinking, is so generally hated. There are, however, two reasons: one is their blind obedience towards their sovereign, which makes them, as soon as they become connected in any way with the Government, exceed even their instructions, in order to please their sovereign. They are detested neither for their vices, nor for the wrongs they have inflicted, but for the awkward and stolid manner in which they execute the orders of their masters. Again, the Austrian has not the least national pride, nor any of the virtues which spring from this feature. This very circumstance, so excellent in keeping together the ties of the different twenty races and nations who compose the Austrian Empire, and making them less sensible of the prerogative which the Austrian enjoys, has on the other hand caused that contempt towards a people which has so few shining qualities. Almost any nation would think it a disgrace to submit to an Austrian whose plain manners and unseasonable familiarity make him an object of scorn, even when victorious in a foreign province.

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From St. Poten, an ancient town, with an episcopal see, the country towards Vienna assumes a

grand aspect. Thousands of isolated farms, buried, as it were, under forests of fruit-trees, cover the valleys, while the hills are clad with the most luxuriant vines. On the left you have the lordly Danube, with its mountains overgrown with forests; to the right the lofty mountains of Styria. Several abbeys here attract your attention, and give a great idea of the wealth of the Austrian clergy. We visited the most celebrated of them, Loemsmunster and Klosterneuburg. The first is rather an accumulation of palaces, built in the demi-Italian demi-French style. The abbey is obliged to keep a seminary for the education of the youth; the library, gallery of paintings, and the apartments of the abbot and the Imperial family, are in the first style. The most interesting is Klosterneuburg, about seven miles above Vienna, on the left bank of the Danube, in a most delightful situation. This magnificent abbey consists of the church in the centre, and two wings connected with it by galleries. The one is destined for the Imperial family, the other for the abbot. Behind the palace of the abbot is the convent of the monks. The depth of this edifice corresponds exactly with its height; its cellars are three stories deep, the third and last

Vienna

under the Danube. We saw a waggon and six, loaded with barrels, entering and turning in this immense cavity.

The quantity of wine here stored is not less than 20,000 pipes, raised in part from their own vineyards, and from tithes; which latter, as the librarian informed us, amounted to 10,000 pipes, a revenue of about 10,000 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. They are, however, allowed but a small part of this income; and though they have the management of their economical affairs, yet they have to render an annual account to the Government, and to refund the surplus of this allowance. This allowance is, for the abbot 2000 florins; for each monk 300. Their number is limited, too, and they are bound either to apply to the instruction of youth, or to pastoral offices, for lifetime. They elect their abbot in the presence of the Imperial Commissaries, who invest him after the election with the ring, the symbol of his temporal power. He is subject, in his spiritual jurisdiction, to the bishop of the diocese; in his temporal affairs to the Government. There are now comparatively but few abbeys in Austria, and these are throughout regulated on the same footing; those whose in-

habitants led a more contemplative life having been abolished by the Emperor Joseph, and their estates added to the religious fund, from which the curates and the secular clergy are salaried. The bishops are nominated by the Emperor, without whose permission no bull of the Pope can be published. They are not only subject to the Provincial Governments, but even to the captains of the districts in whose territories their dioceses are situated. The divine service in extraordinary cases is regulated by the Government, as *Te Deums*, processions, &c. The permission of the Captain of the Circle, and if in the capital, that of the Governor, is required. The education of the theologians, although in the hands of the bishops, is controlled by Imperial Commissaries. The clergy of the Austrian Empire is thus really stripped of any injurious power, more effectually than in any other country. Compared to the authority which the Emperor of Austria exercises over his archbishops, bishops, and the whole train of these dignitaries, the rights of the Gallican church and of the King of France are only trifles. The means by which the reforms of the Emperor Joseph were carried on consisted merely in a title.

The Emperors of Austria, in their capacity as Kings of Hungary, are born legates of the Roman See. Of the privileges annexed to this dignity, they availed themselves so effectually, that the counsellor of the state for the religious department in Austria, M. Lorenz, has indeed more power than the archbishops and bishops,* with the Pope of Rome altogether. The hierarchical management of Austria, and its canonical laws, deserve serious attention and deep study on the part of every statesman. The manner in which the power of the clergy is controlled deserves the highest praise.

As an instance of condescension in the Roman Nuncio, in a country where, notwithstanding a seeming compliance with its head, his Holiness the Pope exercises no authority at all, I may mention the recent conversion of Baron Kuorn, Counsellor to the Court. A matrimonial affair brought him over to the Catholic faith. As he was a character of distinction, and rather of a philosophical and sceptical turn of mind, his apostacy from Protestantism was looked upon by the Catholic clergy as a triumph, and the Roman Nuncio con-

* See Richberger.

descended so far as to sign certain exceptions, which the Baron made before he entered the bosom of the Catholic church. The first was, Baron Kuorn could not invoke the saints—left to his own discretion. II. His belief in purgatory—he might do as he pleased. III. Baron Kuorn could not hear every day a mass—he would not have an objection to hear one on a Sunday. IV. He could not confess himself: at least he would please, if possible, to do it once a year. The agreement was signed; the Baron went over, and married his bride.

We approached now, on the road from Klosterneuburg, the famous residence of the Austrian dynasty, alternately the head-quarters of Roman legions, of German Margraves, and of an Imperial Court. Vienna, with its ramparts, which seem to guard the city, and its vast suburbs which surround it at the distance of six hundred yards, is not unlike the Austrian Empire, whose vast kingdom and provinces surround the small Archdukedom of Austria Proper. Its very palaces, its intricate mazes, and its crooked, narrow, and winding streets, bear the character of tameness, and of that shifting policy for which the reigning

family is so justly notorious, far more than that of the different nations whose head this capital has become. This Imperial family is a true specimen how often the greatest events are the offspring of small accidental causes. A Count of Switzerland meets, during one of his sporting excursions, a poor priest on his way to administer the sacrament to a dying parishioner. His progress is arrested by a brook, just at the moment when the Count with his retinue arrives. Respectfully he offers his own horse to the priest, humbly it is accepted, and the next day returned. "God forbid!" exclaims the Count to the messenger, "I should ride a horse again which carried my saviour: I bestow it on the church and the priest." This poor priest becomes the chaplain and the confidant of the Prince Elector of Mentz, and his influence prevails on the first spiritual Prince of Germany, to propose the pious horse-lender to the assembled electors of this Empire. As his military prowess promised to be useful at a time when Germany was infested by numberless petty waylaying knights, and his want of power gave no reason for jealousy, he was accepted, and thus Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg, became the first though least powerful monarch of Christendom.

Though a wealthy Count, he was a poor Prince ; he had, however, a treasure in his daughters, which he disposed of in that prudent way which enabled him with the assistance of his princely sons in law, to deprive Ottocar, the King of Bohemia, of Austria. This dukedom had been seized, after the decease of the last Duke of the house of Babensberg, by Ottocar, and was in vain re-demanded by Rudolph. Ottocar was twice defeated ; and his death on the field of battle secured the family of Hapsburg in that first possession, the Archdukedom of Austria. His successors pursued the same prudent and marrying way, and acquired by these means the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary, a number of smaller provinces, and finally the vast Spanish monarchy, till Charles the Fifth, the most powerful monarch of Europe, dared to aspire, three hundred years afterwards, to universal monarchy. Without a distinguished character, without even the love of those nations, and in spite of continual revolts, this family not only extricated itself from imminent dangers, but rose from its frequent downfalls more powerful than before. While we see the foundations of other empires shaken where sovereign and people are intimately blended, and

liberal ideas are spreading every day, there is in this vast monarchy, till the present time, scarcely a movement perceptible towards emancipation, which none of the nations under this government seem to require. Where the greatest genius would have failed, the monarchs of Austria have succeeded by the very want of genius; and by merely resorting to such common means as lie nearer to the level of common understandings, are neither visionary nor fantastic, and therefore seldom fail in their intended success.