
PREFACE.

IT has been the object of the author, in the following work, to lay before his readers the information he has collected respecting the state of a country but little examined by Englishmen, because placed beyond the usual circuit of the traveller's observation. Amongst the labourers who have hitherto gathered in the same field, Townson has, undoubtedly, been the most industrious; and his merits have been acknowledged for a period of twenty years. That Hungary has shared less than most other European states, in the rapid events to which the arms and the ambition of modern times have given rise, is true; she has had her eventful days; she has experienced her

years of splendour, and her centuries of oppression ; she has felt the devastations of war, while other countries saw them but afar off ; and it has at length been her lot to remain comparatively tranquil, whilst other countries were convulsed. Modern events have, however, wrought changes in her condition, and the patriotism of her nobles is producing an extensive, though gradual, improvement in her internal prosperity. The silent changes of a season of tranquillity, no less than the alterations which rapidly follow each other during periods of public commotion, are objects of research to the Historian and to the Political Economist ; and it is the humble duty of the Traveller to collect, under all the varieties of circumstance, such materials as may supply a groundwork for connected history, and for general deduction. Correct observation and faithful statement are the cardinal virtues on which his character must depend ; and if in these simple merits the following work should not be found wanting, the object of its author's ambition will be fulfilled.

The reader who seeks for elaborate political disquisition, or the amusement derived from private anecdote, will be disappointed. The work contains little more than the plain statement of the objects which were seen ; and where it was thought

necessary to go beyond the sphere of personal observation, German authorities, of established merit, have been relied upon. This is more particularly the case with regard to all statistical accounts, where the assistance of the valuable works of Schwartner and of Bisenger, and of some recent periodical publications, cannot be too fully acknowledged.

It was, at one time, intended to subjoin a sketch of the literature of the country; but, upon this interesting subject, it is not possible to write with a hasty pen; and the materials, which were still but imperfectly collected, had already shewn themselves too extensive to be compressed within the short limits of a chapter. It was not without great reluctance that the author relinquished this object, being sensible that the true spirit and condition of a nation can never be appreciated, without some insight into the progress of its intellectual culture. He trusts, however, that the design which is deferred, will not be forgotten, and anticipates with much pleasure, those hours in which he may pursue his labours upon the subject, with a view of presenting them in a more acceptable form to the public. With this intention firmly on his mind, he has not thought it necessary to suppress the promises, which occur more than once in the

present volume ; and, although they no longer refer to pages within its own limits, he ventures to hope that they will be accomplished.

Of the mode in which his performance has been executed, it is not for the author to speak at large ; and, whatever anxiety he may experience in submitting himself to the public, he feels, that he approaches them in a form which gives him no right to demand more than justice, or to solicit more than candour. If there be any point which appears to him peculiarly open to criticism, it is the minuteness of detail with which he has sometimes treated matters connected with rural economy. This, however, has been done, with the wish of introducing the reader, as much as possible, to a knowledge of the actual state of a truly agricultural people ; and they, to whom the condition of eight million of their fellow-creatures is a matter of any interest, will not shrink from the perusal of a work, because they perceive it to contain a few minute details. The arrangement is subject to those imperfections which generally arise where the form of Journal has been adopted ; but an Index is supplied, with the intention of remedying this inconvenience.

The first two chapters cannot be considered as immediately connected with the main subject of

the work ; yet, viewing Vienna as the capital of the great monarchy to which Hungary is closely attached, and remembering the interest of the period which here passes under a hasty review, the propriety of introducing these chapters will not, it is hoped, be disputed.

The Appendix is composed of several independent articles, serving to illustrate various points occurring in the text, and some of them, in conjunction with observations in other parts of the work, will assist in conveying information on the statistics of the whole Austrian empire. To one valuable communication (in the Appendix) the author particularly claims attention. It was written by a friend during a residence in Spain in 1816-17, and although it speaks of a tribe of people inhabiting that peninsula, is strictly connected with the history of a curious part of the Hungarian population ; a tribe which, under the various appellations of Bohemien, Zigeuner, Cygany, Tschingenes, Gitano, or Gypsey, has sprinkled itself over the whole face of Europe. The attention of the author had been formerly called to this subject, by perusing the elaborate dissertation of Grellman, which appeared at Gottingen in the year 1783. When he found himself surrounded by these people in Hungary, he was naturally led

to inquire into their habits and condition. After his return, he was proceeding to investigate their fate in this country, when the appearance of the work of Hoyland, by shewing that the inquiry had already fallen into more efficient hands, put a stop to his pursuits, and, since that time, several periodical publications have furnished more of those scattered notices, from which we may hope, at some time, to collect satisfactorily the history of this extraordinary race. The author, from the observations of his friend in Spain, and from his own observations in Hungary, offers his contribution to the common stock.

With respect to the maps which accompany this volume, it may with confidence be asserted, that they are derived from the most authentic sources; and that, whatever may be the inaccuracies, inseparable from the want of complete and connected trigonometrical surveys, they will be found fully adequate to all the practical purposes, both of the traveller and of the reader. It has been deemed right, in both of these maps, to introduce much more than the country actually visited, because observations are constantly occurring, which embrace not only the whole of Hungary, but of Transylvania, and the military frontier.

To acknowledge the favours which have been

received in the progress of this volume, and during the period to which it refers, would be to comment upon every page, and to relate again the proceedings of each separate day; the author must, therefore, content himself with a general acknowledgment, the sincerity of which they who know him best will best appreciate.

In one instance, which occurs in page 444, the author has detected a fact so imperfectly stated, as to leave an unfavourable impression respecting a body of his own countrymen, for whom he feels a most unfeigned esteem. In that passage, a remark is casually introduced, in reference to the jail of Bristol; and after describing its former condition, he has omitted to add, that the citizens, long sensible of its glaring imperfections, have united their exertions to remove an evil so repugnant to every feeling of humanity; and that considerable progress has been already made in the erection of a spacious jail, for criminals and debtors, on a plan in which perfect security is made consistent with every attention to the health and reformation of the prisoners. Should the good example, now general in this country, be instrumental in leading the great Hungarian proprietors to adopt improvements, suitable to their peculiar situation, England will have fresh reason to rejoice

in its humane endeavours; and the Author of the present volume will feel some satisfaction, if he should have exercised but a remote influence in forwarding this important object.

London, March 1818.