

sulted in something far more serious than the actual smashing of the windows of the officers' Casino, had not the vigilance of the Austrian garrison on Hradschin and through the town held the situation in firm control. Hus, the heretic, was forgotten, not so the Czechish patriot.

It would be idle to speculate upon the future, and I shall leave that to a future, or present, Libusha, but this much is certain, Czech and German must find some formula to reconcile their differences. Would the Czech have been happier in a Pan-Slavic, that is Pan-Muscovite Russian federation? When we consider the wonderful development of the literature and life of small peoples as illustrated by free, little Norway, the question occurs, would larger, richer Bohemia be willing to be only a satellite of her big neighbor, or would she prefer her independence? The future must find some way of giving the little states the fullest means of self-expression while allowing that same right in others. Suppose the idea of Thomas Jefferson were the solution of the European problem: a federation of republics, each with the fullest amount of liberty consonant with the safety and best interests of the whole?

## BOHEMIAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY EMIL REACH.

WHAT a tiny spot on the map it is, this "kingdom" of Bohemia! Georgia is almost three times as large, and Texas thirteen times. Yet writers of legend and history have much to say about it, having filled page after page with its life and ambition and turmoil; and just now we hear the Slav of Prague blend his protest against Teuton domination with the shrieks of other nations above the deafening clash of battle.

And when was it that Slav and Teuton first met in Bohemia and threw their hats into the ring to wrestle in the fever heat of centuries? The answer is not quite simple. While it is averred in the fourth volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (p. 123) that "recent archeological research has proved the existence of Slavic inhabitants in Bohemia as far back as the beginning of the Christian era," we read in the seventh volume (p. 723) that Czech scholars "by craniological studies and a thorough examination of the fields where the dead were burned... have arrived at the conclusion that parts of the country were inhabited by Czechs, or at least by

Slavs, long before the Christian era, perhaps about the year 500 B. C."

But according to written tradition the country up to the year 12 or 8. B. C. was inhabited by the Celtic tribe of the Boii, from whose capital Boiohemum the country takes its name. The Boii were conquered by the Germanic tribe of the Marcomanni, followed by other Germanic tribes, until in the fifth century according to some, and toward the end of the sixth according to others, the Czechs forcibly took possession of the country.

We recall this fact that the Germans are no less at home in Bohemia than the Czechs, because the former are opposed to Bohemian independence just as the Ulsterites are opposed to Irish independence. The Czechs hope that the boundaries of their independent state will be so drawn as to include Moravia and Silesia. In 1910 37 % of the population of Bohemia were German, of Moravia 27.6 %, and of Silesia 43.9 %. The Germans predominate in a number of towns; for example, they are 66 % in Brünn, which is the capital and by far the largest place in Moravia.

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It was ninety-four years before the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, at a time in which religious strife sweeping through Europe almost monopolized the political stage, that the crown of Bohemia was given to a Hapsburg and the kingdom joined with that of Austria. And with the exception of one year these two crowns have ever since remained united; and ever since the Slav element of Bohemia has harbored the wish and hope for independence; and ever since, and even centuries before that time, the Czech child has been taught to hate the Austrian and the German. What a heritage of hate! Who will expect anything but dissatisfaction to grow on such soil?

When the American, after hastily partaking of his ration of political food doled out by the daily papers, thinks or talks about Bohemia, whose cause as stated by the Czechish patriots he is inclined to espouse, he generally fails to take into consideration the well-known and weighty circumstance that distances in Europe are short; he does not easily realize how closely the capital city of Prague is crowded in between the great military and commercial centers of the German nation—a blade of barley in a field of wheat. There is Vienna only one hundred and fifty miles to the south-east; Berlin, one hundred and eighty-six miles to the north; while the beautiful capital of Saxony with over half a million inhabitants is

separated only by seventy-five miles of rail; and long before entering Dresden the train carries the traveler through German-speaking and German-feeling territory.

Let us for a moment imagine that Albany, N. Y., and its surrounding counties extending southwestward into Pennsylvania were to form an independent state with a population hostile to New York City in the south and to Buffalo and Rochester in the north. All traffic between the northern and southern portion of New York state would then have to reckon with the customs-tariffs, railway- and river-tariffs, and postal regulations of that unfriendly kingdom or republic in time of peace; and in time of war with a third country the unfriendly commonwealth would have to be carefully watched, while the cooperative and prompt mobilization of the troops of Buffalo and New York would be impeded to a degree that would imply gravest danger. We may safely venture to assert that the people of New York state would never tolerate such an independent state of Albany to exist in their midst, and what we would not want for ourselves, we should hardly desire for others.

All this is so plain as to render well-nigh superfluous any further reply to those who are continually advocating the doctrine about "the consent of the governed" and the right of populations to "self-determination." To be sure, without weighty and just purpose no people should be forced under a sovereignty under which it does not desire to live. Would we, however, permit those who inhabit the Panama Canal Zone to change their allegiance according to their own sweet will? Or was Lincoln wrong in his attitude toward the South? And how about the patent disinclination among the statesmen of the Entente Allies to favor plebiscites for the settlement of the vexed problems of Ireland and of Alsace-Lorraine? Whatever might be the proper solutions of these two problems, one fact remains indisputable: namely, that all the world over practical statesmen have a very limited confidence in the ability of populations to decide for themselves.

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But the Slavs of Bohemia claim to be oppressed. The present writer has no precise knowledge of what happened there during the war; the distance is great, the reports are meagre and unreliable. A residence of many years in Prague has, however, matured in him the conviction that Austria has not oppressed the Slav during the decades immediately preceding the terrible bloodshed. Of course, in a country where passions of rival nations attain the temperature

of liquid iron, no one can reasonably expect nearly so much democracy as in other countries in which conditions are normal. But when I say that the Czechs have not been oppressed during the period preceding the war, I simply mean that the government of Vienna has honestly striven to stand as a fair-minded and even-handed arbiter between Czech and German, and that no legislation whatever has been enacted with the purpose of dwarfing the development of the Czech nation in any way or needlessly to offend Slav sensibilities.

The fact that the Czechs are dissatisfied proves nothing. Our South had also been dissatisfied for a long time without being treated unjustly. The Viennese government does not allow the Czech to denationalize the German inhabitants just as fast as he would like to do it, and it spends Bohemian tax money in other provinces of Austria that are less wealthy than Bohemia and could not well get along if dependent exclusively on their own resources. It is my opinion that this policy of the Austrian government is right and just, however wrong it may appear to the Czech.

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By far most of the quarrels between Teuton and Slav in the Hapsburg monarchy turn about the cultivation and use of their respective languages. There is above all the eternal complaint that the elementary schools are being used for the purposes of Germanization.

The *Statesman's Yearbook* for 1916 records Austrian population figures from the census of 1910 and Austrian school statistics of 1912. The German population of Austria is given as 9,950,268, the Czech population as 6,435,983; while the language of instruction was German in 8508 elementary schools, and Czech in 5367 elementary schools. Surely, if the Austrian government made efforts to denationalize the Czech element, if it did not compel the German municipalities of Bohemia and Moravia to maintain schools for the Czech minorities, these figures would be very different, as many Czech parents, in spite of all the Czech schools within their reach, insist on sending their children to German schools.

*And why do they insist?* Simply because the German language is needed by most men or women who have to make a living in that corner of the globe. In the stores of the principal streets of Prague, now an overwhelmingly Czechish city, every clerk has to know German. This knowledge is forced upon him by the power of circumstance; namely, by the circumstance that if you travel from

any point in Bohemia or Moravia either north or south for a couple of hours on a fast train you are sure to get into a town or county where German is spoken more than Czech or at least as much.

And that explains also why Czech students are constantly crowding into the University of Vienna, although they have a university of their own in Prague. Naturally enough the University of Vienna is the foremost of the Austrian Empire, and the Czech student has to know German anyhow, no matter where he studies; he can not get along in life without the hated tongue of his rival.

He shouts at the top of his voice that all languages are of the same value, that none is superior to his own; he considers a German street sign in a Czech town to be an insult to all right-minded citizens; he refuses to understand why German is the language of debate in the federal parliament of Austria and shudders with anguish at the thought that German is also the language of command in the army barracks of Prague or other Bohemian cities. The bottom of his heart is the color of a canary bird, as is said, being saturated with envy, and confluent envy and pride are fed from memories of shameful wrongs endured by his nation in past centuries.

The result is a succession of riot and revolution, necessitating restrictions of freedom, measures which form a basis for new grievances. And thus the vicious circle never ends, just as in Ireland.

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As the Irish nationalists are decidedly opposed to the administrative separation of Ulster from the rest of their country, thus year after year have the Czech politicians, under display of an incredible amount of oratory, made obstinate opposition to the establishment of ethnographic frontiers within Bohemia. They have claimed that their country is a sacred historic unit, one and indivisible, now and forever. At the same time the establishment of ethnographic boundaries *outside* of their little kingdom, involving a partition *not of Bohemia (or Moravia) but of Austria*, would delight their hearts. Why is that so? Simply because they want to denationalize the German counties of Bohemia with all possible dispatch. Assisted by a high birth rate, they are seeking national expansion, hiding their intention under the ample folds of a cloak consisting of protestations concerning freedom and justice.

British pamphleteers and essayists have contrasted Ireland with Prussian Poland. They have not found it difficult to review the

admirable efforts Great Britain has made in the last thirty-five years to placate and uplift Ireland, and to wind up with a panegyric on Great Britain plus the customary damnation of Prussianism.

But British spokesmen seem *not* to be inclined to compare Ireland with Bohemia, and when clamoring for the partition of Austria they relegate their opposition to Irish independence to the most remote corner of their consciousness. We have to remember in this connection that the enactments of the Austrian Reichsrat and the Bohemian Landtag favorably compare (as far as such comparison is possible) with British legislation; and that under Austrian rule and protection the former kingdom of Libusha has risen to a state of development and strength as yet undreamt of in "John Bull's other island."

*The Saturday Review* (London) of September 11, 1897, and *The Engineer* (London) of September 25, 1914, have both been quoted in previous issues of *The Open Court*. It is obvious that the advantages they expect from the ruination of Germany would likewise result (if also in a less degree) from the partition of Austria, especially as the latter is a connecting link between Berlin and the East; and those who wish ill to Austria can point to the heterogeneity of her structure as convenient pretext.

Hence the cry that Austria has to go, that she must not appear on the *post bellum* map. Still we hope that on the contrary it will prove to be more than a mere conjecture and wish of an Austrian optimist, when a recent writer argues:

"Universal suffrage introduced [in Austria] in 1907 was intended among other things as a cooling application to the national fever heat. The socialists became the relatively strongest party of the first absolutely democratic parliament, but were unable to lay at once the nationalistic ghosts. But the process of healing will undoubtedly go rapidly, since sooner or later the class feeling will oust a hypernational sensitiveness, in order finally to make room for a sentiment embracing the whole state" (Rudolf Kommer in *The Open Court* for June 1917). For sound policy is not based on nationalistic sentiments that constantly have to be fed by press campaigns to be kept alive, nor on nationalistic pretensions that correspond to no actual need, nor on the fallacy that historic boundaries or ethnographic boundaries or any other boundaries insure infallibility to majorities. Sound policy is suggested by common sense on the strength of geographic environment; on the strength of past social and economic development and with due regard to the economic interest of all countries within the radius of

its influence; *sound policy means for small commonwealths co-operation with their neighbors and a fancied loss of independence, while for bigger countries it means a certain degree of centralization.* Such policy will be productive of maximum efficiency, of maximum wealth production, and of a minimum of international friction.

## HEBREW EDUCATION IN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY.

DURING THE PERIOD OF REACTION TO FOREIGN INFLUENCES.

BY FLETCHER H. SWIFT.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom."—Proverbs iv. 7.

"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."—Proverbs ix. 10.

"The law of Jehovah is perfect. . . . The precepts of Jehovah are right. . . . The judgments of Jehovah are true. . . . More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold."—Psalm xix. 7-10 (Extracts).

"There is no love such as the love of the Torah. The words of the Torah are as difficult to acquire as silken garments, and are lost as easily as linen ones."\*—*Babylonian Talmud, Tract Aboth of Rabbi Nathan*, 24.

WARNED by the oblivion which had overtaken the tribes of the northern kingdom, the religious leaders of subject Judah set about to save the people of the little kingdom from a similar fate. As the one-time hope of national and political independence and greatness waned a new hope arose, that of preserving the nation through preserving its religion. There was only one way of achieving this end, that was by universal education. Zeal for education was further fostered by three important beliefs: (1) the belief that national calamities were punishments visited upon the people because they had not been faithful to Yahweh and his laws;<sup>1</sup> (2) that

\* Or "as difficult to acquire as golden vessels and as easily destroyed as glass ones."

<sup>1</sup> This is the underlying philosophy of the book of Judges. See Judges iv. 1 and 2; vi. 1 and elsewhere.