

Boleslav II died in 999, and with him for a time also the greatness of his country, which rapidly declined during the rule of his successors.

### CHAPTER III

THE BOHEMIAN PRINCES FROM THE DEATH OF BOLESLAV II TO THE ACCESSION OF PŘEMYSL OTTOKAR I (999-1197)

THE great Bohemian Empire of Boleslav II, like most Slavonic States at that and even later periods, was not destined to be of long duration. As after the death of Vratislav I of Bohemia and Svatopluk of Moravia, dissensions in the reigning family were the first cause of the decline of the country. Boleslav II had three sons—Boleslav III, who succeeded him, Jaromir, and Ulrich.

Boleslav III is described as being cruel, avaricious, and distrustful. An old chronicler<sup>1</sup> tells us that he "*vice basilisci noxii regnans populum ineffabiliter constrinxit.*" The dissensions between Boleslav and his brothers appear to have begun immediately after their father's decease; and in the very year of the death of Boleslav II (999) the Polish Prince Boleslav, surnamed Chrobri (the Brave), son of the Bohemian Princess Dubravka, invaded the territories of his brother-in-law. Boleslav (the Brave), first attacked and stormed Cracow; the Bohemian garrison of which town was slaughtered after a brave defence. We are told that in the almost incredibly short period of one year Boleslav the Brave also conquered Moravia, Silesia, and the whole dominion over which Boleslav II had reigned, with the exception of Bohemia itself. Poland now for a time took the place of Bohemia as the great West-Slav power.

Boleslav III, entirely occupied by the internal divisions of Bohemia, seems to have made little or no effort to defend the dominion to which he had succeeded. Having driven his two brothers out of Bohemia, he hoped now to reign uncontestedly; but the Bohemian nobles and people, to whom his tyranny and cruelty had become intolerable, called to the throne the Polish Prince Vladivoj, a brother of Boleslav the Brave, and son of the Bohemian Princess

<sup>1</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg, quoted by Palacký.

Dubravka. Boleslav III was obliged to fly from Bohemia, and after wandering through Germany at last sought refuge with his former enemy, Boleslav the Brave of Poland. In the meantime Vladivoj, finding that the dynasty of Přemysl, whose claims in consequence of the crimes of Boleslav III now reverted to his brothers Jaromir and Ulrich, had still many adherents, endeavoured to strengthen his hold on Bohemia by German aid.

He therefore appeared at the court of the German King Henry II at Regensburg, and not only consented to the payment of the tribute which had already been extorted from several Bohemian princes, but also became a vassal of the German monarch under the (German) title of duke. Vladivoj only ruled Bohemia a few months, and died in the year 1003. The Bohemians now recalled Jaromir and his brother, and chose the former for their prince; but his reign also was only of a few months' duration. His brother, Boleslav III, who had fled to Poland, now returned to Bohemia, under the protection of the Polish Prince Boleslav the Brave. Boleslav III had hardly reassumed the government of the country when he attempted to revenge himself on those who had formerly caused his downfall. By his order many of the nobles were murdered at a banquet, and the Bohemians again revolted against the tyrant.

Called in by the Bohemians themselves, Boleslav the Brave again entered their country, and after having caused his brother-in-law to be blinded and imprisoned in Poland, he himself assumed the government of Bohemia. We are told that he meditated making Prague the capital of his vast dominions, and that he preferred Bohemia to his more eastern possessions.

The great power of Boleslav the Brave soon became obnoxious to the Germans, who always considered the existence of a strong Slav power on their frontier as a danger. The German King Henry II sent envoys to Boleslav the Brave, requiring him to acknowledge himself a vassal of the German Empire in respect of the newly-conquered Bohemia. Boleslav refused this proposal, and war with Germany broke out (1004). The princes of the house of Přemysl, Jaromir and Ulrich, entered Bohemia as allies of the Germans, and with the aid of sympathizers in the town succeeded in capturing Prague by surprise, and expelling the Poles from it, even before the Germans had

arrived before the city. With German aid the Poles were driven out of Bohemia, and Jaromir ascended the throne with the sanction of the German king, probably—though this is not positively mentioned—under the condition of paying the former tribute. The Bohemians continued the war against Poland as allies of the German king up to the year 1013, when Henry II made peace with Boleslav the Brave. By this treaty Boleslav was to retain all his conquests, with the exception of Bohemia, that country being thus reduced to its narrowest limits, its natural frontier.

Even their great misfortunes did not induce the princes of the house of Přemysl to desist from their family quarrels. About this time Ulrich revolted against Jaromir; and both brothers appealing to the German king, Henry II, for reasons which are not stated by the chroniclers, awarded the crown to Ulrich. He also caused Jaromir, who had sought refuge with him, to be delivered over to his brother, by whose orders he was imprisoned in the castle of Lysa.

The only two remaining princes of the house of Přemysl<sup>1</sup> having no descendants, it seemed at this period probable that Libussa's prophecy would prove untrue; but the old chroniclers tell us that the extinction of the race of Přemysl was averted by a romantic incident. When Prince Ulrich—whose wife was childless—was returning from a hunting expedition to his castle of Postelberg, he rode through the village of Peruc, and saw a young and beautiful maiden who was washing linen at a fountain.<sup>2</sup> Ulrich immediately became violently enamoured with this maiden, whose name was Božena, and he married her.<sup>3</sup> She became the mother of the brave and handsome Břetislav, the restorer of the greatness of Bohemia.

The power of Poland, which country had for some time taken the place of Bohemia as the most powerful West-Slav State, did not outlast the life of Boleslav the Brave. After his death (1025) dissensions broke out among his sons, and both Hungary and Bohemia became involved in these intestine dissensions. Ulrich sent an army under his brave son Břetislav into Moravia, which the Bohemians always

<sup>1</sup> Boleslav III had died in prison in Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Božena's fountain is still shown at Peruc.

<sup>3</sup> The old chroniclers insist on this marriage to vindicate the legitimacy of Břetislav, and there is no doubt that polygamy lingered in Bohemia some time after the Christian faith had been accepted.

considered a dependency of their crown, but which at that time was also claimed by the Hungarian King Stephen. Břetislav succeeded in defeating the Hungarians; and war was ended in 1031 by a treaty which divided the ancient Moravian lands. The country now known as Moravia returned to Bohemia, whilst the other former Moravian lands (now the Slav districts of Northern Hungary) fell to the Hungarian king. The line of boundary then agreed upon has remained the frontier between Moravia and Hungary up to the present day. Ulrich appointed his son Břetislav ruler of Moravia under his own supremacy, and this position has since then often been held by the heir of the Bohemian crown.

Unfortunately, Ulrich soon became jealous of his son and drove him from Moravia. Břetislav, who had also incurred his father's displeasure by taking the part of his uncle Jaromir (whom Ulrich had released from the castle of Lysa and who claimed to share the sovereignty with his brother), fled to the court of the German Emperor Conrad. The Germans, ever glad of an opportunity for interfering in the affairs of Bohemia, supported the claims of Jaromir and Břetislav, and invaded the country, into which they were summoned by some claimants to the Bohemian throne. Ulrich's death at this time (1037), however, secured the crown to Břetislav, in whose favour Jaromir also renounced all claims.

Břetislav I, whom Palacký calls the restorer of Bohemia, strengthened his country both by conquests and by re-establishing internal order. One of the chief causes that defeated Břetislav's plans (and undoubtedly these plans aimed at nothing less than the formation of a great West-slav empire) was the accession about this time of Henry III of Franconia, one of the most powerful sovereigns Germany ever possessed.<sup>1</sup> Poland, at the time of the accession of Břetislav I, was in a state of complete anarchy, and he seized on this opportunity to attempt the conquest of that country. Břetislav successfully overran Silesia and subsequently the western districts of Poland, where the town of Cracow was taken by storm. The victorious Bohemian army then marched further into Poland and captured

<sup>1</sup> Palacký notices that the most enterprising princes of ancient Bohemia, Boleslav I and Břetislav I, were contemporaries and adversaries of Germany's two greatest emperors, Otho I and Henry III.

Gnesen, the former capital of the country. The body of St. Adalbert, the former Bishop of Prague (who had suffered martyrdom near Gnesen and was interred there), was carried away to Prague by the victorious Bohemians (1039).

Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Poland now being united under one ruler, the idea of a West-Slav empire seemed on the point of being realized; but this time also Germany stepped in to prevent the formation of a powerful Slav State on her borders. Queen Richsa of Poland, who governed that country for her infant son, appealed to the German Emperor Henry III for aid, which was immediately granted. In the following year (1040) two German armies attacked Bohemia.

The one commanded by the Emperor himself attempted to enter the country from Bavaria, but was signally defeated in a great battle which was fought in the defiles of the Sumava (Bohemian forest), the woody mountains that then, as now, form the frontier between Bavaria and Bohemia. In consequence of this defeat the other German army, which had entered Bohemia by the Krušné Hory (Ore Mountains), by order of the Emperor also retired into Germany.

The Germans were, however, not long in seeking revenge, and again attacked Bohemia in the following year (1041). The western army, again commanded by the Emperor, succeeded this time—guided by a German hermit—in crossing the passes of the Sumava. The other German army entered Bohemia through the Krušné Hory almost without resistance, through the treachery of the leader of the Moravian troops, to whom Břetislav had entrusted the defence of that part of the frontier. When the victorious German armies had arrived before Prague, Břetislav was obliged to conclude peace on very unfavourable conditions. He submitted to paying tribute to Germany, and was obliged to give up all his conquests in Poland. Only Moravia and a small part of Silesia remained with Bohemia.

The later years of Břetislav I were peaceful, and from the scanty records of his reign it appears that he exerted himself to restore order and prosperity to a country that had suffered so much from civil and foreign wars. Břetislav also established a regular order of succession to the throne, to obviate the constant struggles among the members of the reigning family (1054). With the consent of the nobles he

decreed that the oldest member of the house of Přemysl was alone to be sovereign ruler of Bohemia, which was always to remain undivided. The younger princes of the reigning family were to receive lands in Moravia, which they were to rule under the supremacy of the head of the Přemyslide dynasty.

Břetislav I died in 1055, and left five sons, the eldest of whom, Spytihněv, who had been ruler of Moravia during his father's lifetime, succeeded him. Spytihněv only reigned six years, and was succeeded by his eldest brother Vratislav (1061);<sup>1</sup> whilst the government of Moravia was—under the supremacy of Vratislav—divided between two of the younger brothers, Conrad and Otho; the former of whom was to reside at Brunn, the latter at Olmütz.

Bohemia having long been to a certain though limited extent dependent on the powerful German Empire, it was inevitable that the country should become involved in the internal troubles which at that time broke out in Germany. A great number of German princes had taken the part of Gregory VII in that struggle with Henry IV—who had in the meantime succeeded his father—which is known in history as the “struggle for investitures.” Vratislav sided with the Emperor, and successfully availed himself of the opportunity which the dissensions in Germany afforded for the purpose of strengthening the independence and increasing the power of Bohemia. The Bohemian troops took part as allies of the German Emperor in the many battles that he fought against the Saxons and other supporters of the Pope; and we are specially told that Henry IV's great victory at Hohenburg on the Unstrutt (1075) was largely due to his Bohemian allies. We also read that three hundred Bohemian warriors formed part of the Emperor's army which attacked Rome (1081), and that their leader, Wiprecht of Groitsch, was one of the first to scale the walls of the Leonine city. The chroniclers also tell us that the bravery of the Bohemians was so great, that only nine of the three hundred returned to their native land.

It was only natural that the German Emperor should reward the Bohemian prince who had proved his friend when the greater part of Germany had deserted him. Henry awarded to Vratislav the lands of the Margrave of Austria, who had sided with the Pope; but though Vratislav

<sup>1</sup> II as prince, I as king of Bohemia.

defeated the Austrians in the great battle of *Maißberg* (1082) he did not succeed in permanently retaining their country. In 1086 the Emperor, as a further reward, granted Prince *Vratislav* the title of king, and presented him with a golden crown. The coronation of *Vratislav* at *Prague* is an event of great importance in Bohemian history, for the title of king was then for the first time borne by a ruler of that country. Henry, however, stipulated that the title of king should only be used by *Vratislav* himself, and should not be hereditary. It was settled, probably at the same time, that in consequence of the sums lent by *Vratislav* to the Emperor: the former tribute should no longer be paid by the Bohemian prince. They were, however, obliged to send three hundred soldiers as auxiliaries to the German kings on the occasion of their expeditions to Italy, which were undertaken for the purpose of being crowned at Rome by the Pope. Henceforth, down to the fifteenth century, this remained the only real charge and obligation by which Bohemia was permanently rendered dependent on the supremacy of the German Empire.<sup>1</sup>

The dissensions among the reigning family, so frequent in the history of Bohemia, did not cease under King *Vratislav*. We read of conflicts between him and his brothers, the rulers of *Moravia*, and a serious quarrel broke out in 1092 between the king and his eldest son, *Břetislav*. *Břetislav*, having been insulted by a courtier of his father named *Zderad*, caused him to be murdered, and fled to the Hungarian court, where he remained until his father died. *Vratislav* was killed by a fall when out hunting (1092), and was succeeded by his brother *Conrad*, as the family regulations made by *Břetislav* I awarded the throne to the eldest member of the house of *Přemysl*, not to the eldest son of the late reigning prince.

*Conrad* only lived eight months after his accession to the throne, and *Břetislav* II now became prince of Bohemia. We are told that he greatly exerted himself to extirpate paganism, which still lingered in the outlying districts of Bohemia; and that he forbade the pilgrimages which the heathen in Bohemia still undertook to the pagan sanctuary of *Arcona*,<sup>2</sup> their temples in Bohemia having been destroyed.

As a proof that the custom of holding religious services

<sup>1</sup> Palacky.

<sup>2</sup> On the island of *Rügen* in the Baltic Sea.

in the language of the country had not died out in Bohemia at this period, it is of interest to read that Břetislav II availed himself of dissensions among the Slavonic monks of the monastery of St. Prokop on the Sazava, for the purpose of driving them out of their convents and replacing them by Latin monks (1096). Břetislav II is greatly blamed by Bohemian historians for having changed the order of succession established by his grandfather, Břetislav I, by appointing his brother Bořivoj his successor, in opposition to the just claims of Ulrich, son of Conrad, then the eldest prince of the dynasty of Přemysl. Břetislav II was murdered shortly after this (1100), probably by the emissary of some nobles whom he had offended.

The wearisome dissensions in the reigning family of Bohemia began afresh immediately after Břetislav's death, but a detailed account of them can be of little interest to any but Bohemian readers. These dissensions were encouraged by the nobles of the land, who, at first mere officials appointed by the princes,<sup>1</sup> were now gradually assuming a more independent attitude. The foundations of the princely power, such as it had developed itself since the final overthrow of the former hereditary voyvodes, were undermined. The new nobles, aware of the advantages which dissensions in the reigning family afforded them, incited the Přemyslides one against the other as much as in them lay; caused wars between them; enriched themselves, and raised their own power to the prejudice of that of the prince.<sup>2</sup>

Bořivoj, according to the decision of his brother, ascended the throne, and at first successfully defended himself against Ulrich, son of Conrad, who considered himself the rightful heir to the throne. Bořivoj was, however, dethroned shortly afterwards by another cousin, Svatopluk, son of Otho, lord of Olmütz. His short reign is only a record of incessant struggles with the all-powerful nobles, by one of whom he was assassinated (1109), after having ruled Bohemia only two years.

After Svatopluk's death there were three parties in Bohemia—one favouring the reinstatement of Bořivoj, whilst another recognized Otho of Olmütz, brother of Svatopluk, as sovereign. A third party, which ultimately proved successful, supported Bořivoj's brother, Vladislav.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> Tomek.



The rival competitors—as usual—appealed to the German Emperor (then Henry V), who, though he appears to have lured them all with promises, finally awarded the throne to Vladislav. Civil war continued till Henry V, called in by Vladislav, entered Bohemia. Bořivoj was made a prisoner, and, by order of the German Emperor, imprisoned in a castle on the Rhine; whilst Otho was confined by his cousin in the castle of Pürglitz in Bohemia. Bořivoj's adherents continued the civil war; and Soběslav, a brother of Vladislav and Boleslav, became their leader. Soběslav obtained aid from the Polish King Boleslav, who, entering Bohemia, defeated Vladislav in a battle which was fought at the foot of the Krkonoše or Giant mountains.

A compromise was then arrived at (1111), by which at least temporary tranquillity was restored to Bohemia. Vladislav remained sovereign, whilst certain districts, both in Bohemia and in Moravia, were allotted to Bořivoj and Soběslav—and probably also to Otho—which they were to rule under the supremacy of Vladislav.

Vladislav died in 1125, and a few days before his death declared his brother Soběslav his successor. As usual, the discarded claimant to the throne, Otho, applied for German aid, and the Emperor Lothair, who in this year (1125) succeeded Henry V, also followed the example of his predecessors, and took up Otho's cause. Lothair seized this opportunity for reaffirming certain claims of supremacy which the German sovereigns had always maintained, but which the Bohemians had always refused to recognize. He declared that no prince had a right to ascend the Bohemian throne before having received that country as a fief from the rulers of Germany. Soběslav refused to recognize these claims, and in spite of the intestine divisions he seems to have been supported by his countrymen. In a very short time he collected a large army, with which he defeated (at Kulm, near Teplitz) the German troops of Lothair, that had crossed the Giant Mountains. Lothair himself, and the remnants of the German army, were entirely surrounded by the Bohemians. An interview then took place between Lothair and Soběslav, when the latter declared that though always ready to maintain the former agreement between Henry IV and King Vratislav,<sup>1</sup> he could not consent to any further limitation to the indepen-

<sup>1</sup> See page 30.

dence of Bohemia. Lothair consented to these terms, and from this time peace between Germany and Bohemia remained undisturbed for some years.

As a proof of this we read that Conrad III, Lothair's successor, conferr'd on Soběslav the title of hereditary cup-bearer of the Empire, thus granting him a certain influence on the election of the German kings. "Bohemia, which hitherto had only had certain obligations towards its powerful neighbour the German Empire, henceforth also enjoyed certain rights with regard to Germany."<sup>1</sup>

Soběslav seems, on the whole, to have been successful in suppressing the intestine dissensions which constantly broke out afresh, particularly now that the members of the Přemysl dynasty had become very numerous. At a Diet which assembled at Sadska in 1138, he obtained the consent of the nobles to a change in the order of succession, by which his eldest son Vladislav was declared heir to the throne.

Soběslav died two years afterwards (1140). On his death the nobles, who had only consented to the succession of his son from dread of the father, elected Vladislav II,<sup>2</sup> son of Vladislav I and nephew of Soběslav, as their prince.

Vladislav II had probably been elected in the place of his cousin because the nobles hoped to find him more amenable to their wishes; but, relying on the German alliance which he maintained, he soon attempted to rule as an autocrat. An insurrection broke out only two years after the beginning of his reign, and the malcontents, among whom was Vladislav, son of Soběslav, now proclaimed another member of the Přemysl dynasty, Conrad of Znoymo,<sup>3</sup> as their prince.

Vladislav, though at first defeated by the insurgents, finally—with the aid of the German Emperor Conrad—succeeded in re-establishing his sovereign rights over the whole of Bohemia and Moravia (1143).

We read that in the same year the Pope sent Cardinal Guido as his legate to Bohemia, with the mission of re-establishing order among the Bohemian clergy, which had been greatly disturbed during the many civil wars. Cardinal

<sup>1</sup> Tomek.

<sup>2</sup> II as prince, I as king of Bohemia; this Vladislav must not be confounded with his cousin Vladislav, son of Soběslav.

<sup>3</sup> In German Znaym.

Guido was also instructed to affirm the regulations of the Roman Church with regard to the celibacy of the clergy, and he decreed that all married priests were either to separate from their wives, or to renounce their dignities.<sup>1</sup>

During the reign of Vladislav II the second crusade took place. The Bohemian prince took part in this crusade, the leaders of which were his ally the Emperor Conrad III, and King Louis VII, of France. Vladislav himself led the Bohemian forces to the East; but, discouraged by the unfavourable results of the campaign, he left his army in Asia, and, recommending his troops to the protection of the French king, returned to his country by way of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of the German Emperor Conrad III (1152), the relations between his successor Frederick I (Barbarossa) and Vladislav were at first somewhat strained. The German sovereign favoured the claims of several of the Přemysl princes who had appealed to him; and he occupied Upper Lusatia, which Vladislav, after the extinction of the line of local rulers, claimed as a fief of the Bohemian crown.

A settlement was soon arrived at, as Frederick Barbarossa at that time desired to collect a large army against Milan and the confederate towns of Northern Italy. By a treaty concluded in 1156 the German king ceded Upper Lusatia to the Bohemian prince, and also conferred the title of king on him and all his successors.

On the other hand, Vladislav promised to join the German army in its march to Italy with a large force, though the former treaties only obliged him to send three hundred auxiliaries. Vladislav assembled an army of ten thousand men; and we are told that this campaign, more than any previous one, spread the fame of the bravery of the Bohemians through the most distant lands. The Bohemian army took part in the siege of Milan, and

<sup>1</sup> It may be noticed as a proof of how frequent marriage at that time was among the Bohemian clergy, even of the highest rank, that we find Jurata provost of Prague, Peter dean of the cathedral of Prague, Hugo provost of Vyšehrad, Thomas dean of the cathedral of Olmütz, mentioned among the married ecclesiastics.

<sup>2</sup> Palacký tells us that while at Constantinople Vladislav concluded a treaty with the Greek Emperor Emanuel, and that he was henceforth by the Greeks considered as a vassal of their Emperor. Palacký gives us no details as to these mysterious negotiations.

Vladislav himself is said to have killed Dacio, one of the leaders of the Milanese, on the occasion of a sortie. After the capitulation of Milan, Vladislav II returned to his country, and arrived at Prague towards the end of the year 1158.

Not long after this (1164) Vladislav became involved in a war that had broken out in Hungary, between two rival claimants to that throne. In this war also Vladislav II was victorious; and he succeeded in establishing Stephen III, who had invoked his aid, on the throne, though the rival claimant had obtained aid from the Greek Emperor.

In 1173 Vladislav, tired out by his many wars, and perhaps still more by the internal dissensions which still continued, abdicated in favour of his eldest son Frederick, and retired to the monastery of Strahow near Prague.

The years following the abdication of Vladislav are noticeable because of the uninterrupted struggle for supremacy between numerous members of the dynasty of Přemysl, in twenty-four years no less than ten changes occurring in the person of the sovereign. As Palacký himself tells us that the genealogy of the family of Přemysl at this period is very obscure, it could be of no interest to attempt to decide the legitimacy of the claims of the various pretenders, or to give a detailed account of the feuds which ensued. It is of more interest to note that in consequence of these civil wars, the authority of Germany over Bohemia became far greater than before.

Frederick was, almost immediately after his accession, driven from the throne by Soběslav (II), one of his rivals (1174). Soběslav maintained himself for some time with the aid of Frederick Barbarossa, who recognized him as Prince of Bohemia, though he decreed that the title of king should no longer be borne by the rulers of that country. The German Emperor, however, soon changed sides. Encouraged by him, Frederick returned to Bohemia (1178), and waged war against Soběslav up to the time of the latter's death (1180). Frederick, unfortunately, soon found a new rival in Conrad of Znomo, also a prince of the Přemysl dynasty. Frederick was again obliged to fly from Bohemia; and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa now summoned Conrad and the Bohemian nobles who adhered to him, to appear at the Imperial court at Regensburg, as he claimed the right to settle the dissensions in Bohemia.

Conrad and the Bohemian nobles obeyed the Imperial command, and thus tacitly admitted the claims of Frederick Barbarossa. The Emperor awarded Bohemia to Frederick, and Moravia to Conrad; and we are told, as a proof of the terrorism he exercised, that when the Bohemian prince and nobles appeared before him to hear his decision, he caused a large number of executioners' axes to be brought into the hall where he received them.

This settlement was not of long duration. Besides the two candidates already mentioned, the Přemysl princes Venceslas, Přemysl Ottokar, a brother of Frederick, Břetislav, and Vladislav, all claimed the throne about this time. Another prolonged struggle ensued, and it was only after the deaths of Frederick, Conrad, and Břetislav, and the renunciations of Venceslas and Vladislav, that Přemysl Ottokar became undisputed ruler of Bohemia (1197); the government of Moravia fell to Vladislav, with the title of margrave, and under the supremacy of Přemysl Ottokar.

The period in the history of Bohemia which ends with the accession of Přemysl Ottokar I is noticeable for two important facts—the rise of the power of the nobility, and the extension of German influence.

The constant struggle between the Přemyslides had very often obliged them to seek aid from the powerful nobles, who from having been government officials had gradually become territorial magnates, as they demanded and received large grants of land from the princes whose cause they favoured. These lands were usually granted as hereditary gifts, and their owners therefore became less dependent on the favour of the reigning prince, though they still desired to hold the great State appointments, and, indeed, soon began to consider themselves as having an exclusive claim on them. It is an interesting proof of the increasing importance of the nobility that some of the oldest noble families of Bohemia—a few of whom are still represented—are able to trace their origin up to this period; surnames, however, were not yet fixed.

The influence of Germany over Bohemia became greater at this period, both with reference to the external relations to that country and as regards the internal condition of Bohemia. Legally, the only bond which denoted the dependency of Bohemia on Germany was the obligation of sending three hundred soldiers to take part in the Italian expeditions of

the German kings ; but when, as at this period, Germany was strong and Bohemia weak, and divided against herself, the German kings claimed and exercised far greater rights ; they, in fact, claimed the power of nominating the sovereigns of Bohemia, or at least of confirming their election.

We have already read by what arguments Frederick Barbarossa persuaded the Bohemian nobles to accept his settlement of their differences ; and Henry VI is even said to have promised the crown of Bohemia to Přemysl Ottokar on payment of 6000 marks of silver.

While Bohemia thus became more dependent on Germany, the German element also acquired greater importance in the country itself. As early as the end of the eleventh century a small German settlement existed at Prague, which received certain privileges from Soběslav II ; the clergy was largely of German nationality, and perhaps from dislike to the custom of holding the religious services in the language of the country—a custom that for a long time partially continued in Bohemia—favoured the German element in every way. Another cause of the spread of the German language and nationality at this period was the circumstance that all the wives of the Bohemian princes, with the exception of the peasant-princess Božena, were of foreign, frequently of German, nationality. These princesses often brought German chaplains and other dependents in their suite, and the Bohemian nobles also acquired the German language, which became to a certain extent the language of the court ; the German princesses naturally taught their children their own language from earliest youth.

This feeling is strongly expressed by the contemporary chronicler Dalimil,<sup>1</sup> who makes the Bohemian prince Ulrich say—

“ 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.”

<sup>1</sup> See my *History of Bohemian Literature*, 2nd ed. pp. 29-35.