

**ADVENTURES OF BARON  
WENCESLAS WRATISLAW  
OF MITROWITZ**

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Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz by A. H. Wratislav

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**A. H. WRATISLAV**

**ADVENTURES OF BARON  
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ADVENTURES OF  
BARON WENCESLAS WRATISLAW  
OF MITROWITZ.

WHAT HE SAW IN THE TURKISH METROPOLIS, CONSTANTINOPLE;  
EXPERIENCED IN HIS CAPTIVITY; AND AFTER HIS  
HAPPY RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY,  
COMMITTED TO WRITING IN THE YEAR OF  
OUR LORD 1599.

LITERALLY TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BOHEMIAN

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## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE work to which I have come forward to ask the attention of the British public was written as long ago as 1599, and was then intended, apparently, only for private circulation. It was written in the Bohemian or Czesko-Slavonic language, by one who was perfect master of it, and the book itself is described by Jungmann, in his *Historie Literatury Czeské*, in the following words:—“The author relates his journey, and much about the manners and customs of the Turks in a natural, vigorous, pure, and manly style.” It remained in manuscript till 1777, when it was published by Pelzel at Prague, and a second edition was published by Kramerius in 1807. I have made my translation from the latter edition, and it will be found to differ very widely from the German translation of 1783, in which the translator, for instance, introduces a violent tirade against the celibacy of the clergy, not one word of which is in the printed Bohemian edition, which I possess; omits the pathetic and deeply pious peroration of the whole; and actually makes Mount Olivet, instead of Mount Olympus, visible from Constantinople. The work is divided into four



books, the first of which treats of the journey to, the second the residence at, Constantinople, the third gives an account of the captivity of the author and his companions, and the fourth of their deliverance and return. It is rarely that a mere boy has gone through so much for the sake of his religion, and still more rarely does it occur that so great a sufferer is able to give so clear and graphic an account of his own misfortunes, and those of others. The first book appears to have been taken from a journal actually sent home to the writer's family, and afterwards interspersed with anecdotes and digressions on Turkish life and manners; the rest were manifestly written from a very vivid, and often very painful, recollection of the scenes which they describe. It will, perhaps, be some additional recommendation to Baron Wratislaw's work to mention, at the outset, that the ambassadors of Queen Elizabeth of England, and Henry IV. of France, whose names I find, from Von Hammer, to have been respectively Edward Burton, and M. de Brèves, took a prominent part in the liberation of the captives; and that it was to the Christian friendship of the former that they were indebted for their eventual escape through Hungary. An account of the embassy was also written in German by the apothecary, Frederic Seidel, but I have been unable to obtain a copy of it.

The Czesko-Slavonic or Bohemian language is spoken by the race inhabiting Bohemia watered by the Elbe, or *Labe*, and the Moldau, or *Vltava*; Moravia, watered by the March, or *Morava*; and Slovakia, or the district of the Slovaks, in the north of Hungary. It is altogether spoken by about eight millions of people. It differs from the Polish in not having retained the nasal sounds of *a* and *e*, which connect the objective case feminine, in Polish, with the *am* and *em* of the Latin accusative. In Polish, also, the

accent falls almost invariably on the penultimate; in Bohemian on the first syllable of every word. Bohemian is connected with Greek by possessing prosodiocal quantity, *i. e.* long and short vowels, independently of accent—a peculiarity which has been lost by every Slavonic dialect except the Servian, and in that it is said to be far less distinct than in the Bohemian. All the Slavonic dialects agree in retaining the *locative* case, which appears occasionally in Greek, and in Latin is found only in the names of places, and in some few other words, as *humi, domi, ruri*. They also agree in a use of the instrumental case almost exactly corresponding to that which is commonly called the *dativus propositi*, but which would be far more properly designated the *idiomatic dative of the predicate* in Latin, being simply an occasional artifice to distinguish the predicate from the subject, when both are substantives, in the absence of an article, of which the uncorrupted Slavonic dialects are equally destitute with the Latin and early Greek.

The early history of Bohemia is very mythological, and has been well treated, for the first time, in a philosophical spirit, by the historian Francis Palacky. During great part of the ninth century Moravia was the seat of government of a powerful kingdom, whose prince, Moymir, became a Christian. In 844 fourteen Bohemian *Lechs*, or lords, determined to embrace Christianity, betook themselves to King Louis the German at Ratisbon, and were solemnly baptized on the 1st of January, 845. But the principal glory of the conversion of the Slavonians belongs to Cyrillus and Methodius, the sons of the patrician Leo of Thessalonica, a town then inhabited by a half Greek, half Slavonic population. Rastislaw of Moravia heard of the conversion of the Bulgarian monarch, Boris, by the younger of the two brothers, Methodius, and sent, in 862, an embassy to

the Emperor Michael of Constantinople to request the presence of Slavonic Christian teachers, as the German priests were unable to instruct his people in their own language. Cyrilus and Methodius came themselves in answer to this petition. After four years and a-half of activity in Moravia, the brothers visited, and were well received by, Pope Adrian II. at Rome. Cyrilus, the inventor of the so-called Cyrillic alphabet, on which the modern Russian is founded, died at Rome in 868, but his brother Methodius was appointed by the Pope to the dignity of archbishop in Moravia and Pannonia.

In 871 the Duke of Bohemia, Borzivoj, and his wife Ludmilla, the latter of whom has a statue and chapel, as a saint, in the cathedral at Prague, were baptized. The Slavonic and Latin liturgies appear to have both been in use in Bohemia from the earliest times. Borzivoj was succeeded by Spitiuhnew I, and he by his brother Wratislaw I, whose wife, Drahomira, could never be converted to Christianity. After the death of Wratislaw, Drahomira had her mother-in-law, Ludmilla, murdered, and excited her younger son, Boleslaw, to murder his Christian brother Wenceslaw in 936. Boleslaw the Cruel was a successful ruler and warrior, and left the crown to his son, Boleslaw II, surnamed the Pious, in whose reign the first monasteries were founded in Bohemia (967-999). Under the sons of Boleslaw II, Bohemia was conquered by Boleslaw the Brave, of Poland, who was afterwards expelled, and the old native dynasty of the Przemyslides replaced on the throne. The power of Bohemia was restored by Bretislaw I, who was followed by Spitiuhnew II, whose brother and successor, Wratislaw II, obtained a royal crown from the Emperor Henry IV. and the Pope in 1086. Under Wratislaw's successor, Bretislaw II, the Slavonic ritual, which had long been upheld by