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PRAGUE.

A GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE TOWN.

BY *J. MOSCHELES*, PRAGUE.

Only a few months ago Prague was promoted from a rather large provincial town to the position of a European capital, thus naturally becoming a centre of wider interest. We hope therefore that the following lines describing the geographical position and development of Prague and the various influences which have created the town of to-day will not be thought unwelcome.

The origin and development of towns depend on two conditions which may well be distinguished, though they are not sharply separated from each other. The first and decisive factor is given by the geographical position, for it is a matter of course that settlers always look for the best of all possible places within a larger circuit for the lo **New Series Volume 49 Number 195 August 1998** h a settlement into a town, and especially into a capital, nowever, is strongly influenced by historical and political reasons.

In the development of the old European towns that take their origin not from Roman strongholds, but from some prehistoric dwelling-place, three phases may readily be distinguished. First of all, and already in prehistoric times, we have the location of a settlement which at the outset was not distinguished at all from the other neighbouring dwelling-places originated about the same time. They all have in common that they are as far as possible adapted to the nature of the land and the wants of their people, and that at first each forms a separate community often hostile to all others. Later on more powerful chieftains subdue the neighbouring weaker communities and choose for their residence the settlement nearest to the centre of their dominion. Their residence therefore develops out of their original native place only in the case that their land-acquisition is nearly concentrical with it. Only in genuine colonial districts did towns not arise in the centre of the dominion but on its frontier, to defend the position secured against predatory attacks. An example of such towns is Vienna, founded against the Hungarians, and later on during the Turkish wars protecting the middle and western parts of Europe from invasions out of the east.

During the second or historical period the power over an always enlarging dominion is concentrated more and more in the hand of the most energetic ducal family, whose residence thus gains in importance. Finally its size is wholly determined

by the power of its ruler not only in his own dominion but with regard to the whole civilized world. Now the residence is not shifted to another place, even when, by the acquisition of new territories, its position becomes ex-central with regard to the whole of the dominion. Tradition connects the ruler more and more with the residence of his ancestors; here he must be crowned in order to be acknowledged by the people, and the conquest of the capital is for a long time synonymous with the subjugation of the country.

The third and last phase in the development of towns bears the stamp of the commerce of the world. The geographical conditions of intercourse and trade, but also the degree of culture attained by the people, are now almost the only things decisive for the importance of the town. Along the chief trunk-lines there flourish new towns, where previously only small villages were to be found, while the centres of the historical phase, owing to their out-of-the-way position, are often only connected by branch lines with the traffic of the world, so keeping behind in their growth. Secondly in quite recent times national movements occasionally influence the growth of towns, as just in the case of Prague.

The course of development of towns here stated may well be studied in the example of Prague. The site of Prague, as proved by remains, was first inhabited in palaeolithic times; but the primitive camps of a quite uncivilized people of hunters and gatherers of wild growing fruits are wholly independent of geographical or political factors. It is only in neolithic times, that a sedentary population is first to be found in Bohemia. At that time domestic animals and a primitive kind of farming were no longer unknown to its inhabitants, so that these had become dependent on soil, climate and vegetation in choosing the site of their settlements.

Bohemia was then covered by a dense forest, similar to that described by Tacitus in his "Germania,.". Only on the flat, low-lying valleys of the Elbe, Eger and lower Moldau, where even to-day a sort of steppe-climate prevails, vegetation was less close and admitted an easier cultivation of the ground, while the fertile marl here composing the soil, together with a mild climate, secured a copious harvest. Here, then, just as to-day, were the corn-counties of Bohemia. The settlers therefore chose this neighbourhood, erecting their dwelling-places on hardly accessible heights which in the many feuds and attacks of those days were easily to be defended. Remains of such settlements, the number of which during the following centuries was steadily increasing, have frequently been discovered, showing by their distribution clearly a preference for the afore-named districts. In their neighbourhood often valley-settlements are to be found, the inhabitants of which could easily take refuge in the strongholds on the heights. The situation of all these dwelling-places, therefore, is determined by geographical and economic reasons.

Such prehistoric mountain-settlements are also represented in the three ancient

Fig 1. Map of the vicinity of Prague (1:75,000).

Boundary of the geographical dwelling-place Prague.

- I. Old Town. II. New Town. III. Little Quarter. IV. Hradshin. V. Josef's Town. VI. Vishehrad.
VII. Holeshovitz-Bubna. VIII. Lieben. K. = Karolinenthal. W. = Weinberge. Ž. = Žižkow.
S. = Smichow.
C. = Cottage Quarters.

castles of Prague, one of which — Dřwín — had already fallen into ruins about the year 1000 A. D., in the time of Cosmas, the eldest chronicler of Bohemia. Whether Vishehrad or Hradshin is the older of the two remaining castles of Prague cannot be decided. It is probable that both were already inhabited by the Celts, the first known tribe living in Bohemia. Certainly the Marcomans, successors of the former and a German tribe, had a sanctuary on the Hradshin, dedicated either to Zizi, goddess of death, or Zio, god of war; for in the time of Cosmas a hillock in the middle of the castle of Hradshin was still called Zizi. It is just possible that the chieftain of the Marcomans, Marbod, had his residence in this place. At least some maps from the beginning of the 17th century denote Prague as “quondam etiam Marobundua a conditore dicta”. Both Hradshin and Vishehrad lie on terraces of the Moldau some 45 m above the river, sloping down steeply to the valley-bottom and almost wholly isolated by small tributary brooks. Strangely enough the large valley of the Moldau at Prague is utterly devoid of prehistoric settlements, while in the small valleys of some brooks such valley-settlements may be found. It is probable that the flat valley-bottom of the Moldau, threatened by inundations, was shunned by the earlier settlers.

From all other dwelling-places the settlements in the precincts of Prague were distinguished by their central position in the heart of the Bohemian basin, once walled in by an inaccessible, mostly mountainous frontier-forest. All other advantages — such as a sheltered position on isolated heights, the neighbourhood of a large, though originally not navigable river, the fertile soil and mild climate — they had in common with many another just as much or still more favoured settlement of Bohemia.

In those far-off days Bohemia lay wholly off the routes of traffic. It was hermetically shut off from the outer world by its mountainous borderlands, which only to the south-east in the Bohemio-Moravian Heights were at all easily to be surmounted. No other highroad would lead the merchant out of Bohemia, and the great insecurity in that country seems not to have attracted him to make use of the difficult bridle-paths crossing the frontier-forests for the transportation of his costly goods. So it is not to be wondered at that the map of the world by Ptolemy still shows the two chief trunk-roads from north to south eluding Bohemia, their connection being effected in the south by roads along the valley of the Danube, in the north by side-trunks crossing the flat-lands of northern Germany. The ancient trunk-road, known as the “amber-street”, went from Carnuntum on the Danube along the river March through Moravia northward to the river Oder, crossing the continental divide at the pass of Weisskirchen. The second trunk-line left the Danube near Linz and led across the river Main to the valley of the Elbe in Saxonia. Bohemia was then only to be reached by blind alleys not unknown to the enterprising Roman merchant. So one path left the

amber-street in the valley of the March, leading into the eastern part of Bohemia across the Bohemio-Moravian Heights. A similar path connected Linz with Marobundua using the tectonic depression of Freistadt between the southern end of the Böhmerwald and the granite fault-block of Freiwald farther east. So in those days only one small path went up to Prague, and that only in the case that its site is really identical with that of Marobundua, which is still to be proved.

Already in the, 6th — or, according to some authors, during the 8th — century the Slaves had come to Bohemia; but of their immigration and the foundation of their

Fig. 2. View of the Hradshin from the right bank of the Moldau.

states only vague traditions have come down to us. According to Cosmas, the original seat of the Chakes, forming one of these Slavish tribes, was the district on both sides of the middle Moldau. The immigration of the Slaves was effected according to their fashion under the guidance of a duke, to which position the chieftain — župan — of the mightiest tribe was elected. He naturally chose for himself and his tribe one of the best dwelling-places in the new country; but it must be stated that the site of Prague, in the heart of the Bohemian basin, cannot have numbered many special advantages. No central organisation whatever existed; and with the settling of the various tribes the duke lost his supremacy over them, his realm being again, as in the time before the migration of the tribes, confined to his own tribe.

Where Čech, the traditional duke of the immigrating, Slavish tribes settled down is unknown. But there is a tradition that the home of his successor, the mighty Chakish chieftain Krok, was situated on the Vishehrad. His dominion is said to have dissolved after his death. It was divided amongst his three daughters, of whom Libusha in alliance with Přemysl of Staditz, the chieftain of the tribe dwelling beyond the north-western frontier of her dominion, soon regained the sole command. Whether Libusha's alliance with Přemysl was effected of her own free will, or whether she was forced by him to conclude it, can no longer be decided. But it is very probable that traditions are right in ascribing to Přemysl and Libusha the transference of their residence from the Vishehrad to the Hradshin, inasmuch as that place had a more central position in their united dominions. Their chief merit seems to have been a first regulation of the Moldau. The Bohemian geologist Krejčí was the first to point out that the name of Prague, derived from the ancient Slavish word "práh", meaning sill or threshold, was chosen with a view to some small rapids which the Moldau originally formed in crossing some hard quartzitic banks which cross its valley within the precincts of Prague. We suppose that by piercing this rock-bar Libusha lessened the danger of inundations for the valley-bottom, so making it suitable for colonization and in this way becoming in truth the foundress of the low-lying quarters of the town. Tradition ascribes the foundation of the town to Libusha, asserting that the name of Prague was given to it because she met on the place chosen for the new town two labourers, who were cutting a tree to make a threshold.

Přemysl of Staditz was the first Slavish chieftain, who deliberately chose Prague for his residence as being the centre of his enlarged dominion, and from here as time went on his successors subdued the whole of Bohemia. Its central position brought it about that, although the range of political power was increasing, the capital had not to be shifted. Owing to political factors the settlement was gaining in influence, concentrating the roads, though being by no means a natural centre of traffic.

Favourable factors for the development of the town, besides its central position, were its protected situation, lying, as it does, between two rather narrow gorges of the Moldau, while that river has eroded between them a wide flat valley, which at its bottom as well as on its in part gently inclined slopes offered ample possibilities for the town to spread out.

Historical dates for Bohemia are only obtainable after the 10th century. Prague was then a relatively large settlement with two castles — the residence on the Hradshin and the castle of Vishehrad — and numerous little places, villages and markets on both sides of the river. In those days it experienced a great rise as a centre of traffic and commerce especially for the roads leading up to it from the south, for a livelier intercourse with Bohemia is only then setting in. Above

all other reasons the destruction of the "Great-Moravian Realm" by the Hungarians in 906, which caused the amber-street to be deserted, diverted the transit-trade to the west to Bohemian territory. So by historical events traffic was then shown its ways, which for the most part were kept up even to our days, when the necessity which inaugurated them no longer existed. The project of a canal from the Danube to the Oder would be a profit to Moravia, for it would revive the traffic in the direction of the old amber-street; but up till now it has been successfully checked by Bohemia, as it would cause a great loss to Prague, which, even as it is, lies a little aside of the main lines.

The westward shifting of roads in the 10th century would probably not have caused a "foundation" of Prague, if the latter had not already by the energy of its rulers become an important place of residence. By nature the valleys of the Elbe and Eger are pointed out as the guiding-lines of traffic in Bohemia. It is quite characteristic that it is on the banks of the Eger, and not near the capital, that remains of the Bronze Age have been found. From the Eger the natural path leads along the steep northern and western slope of the Kaiserwald-plateau, then over the granitic plain of Sandau-Marienbad into the coal-basin of Pilsen, and thence to the middle and southern parts of Bohemia. But the network of roads spreading since the 10th century over Bohemia did not follow these natural lines; on the contrary, it was shaped under the influence of the capital, and the transit-trade made use of such roads as already previously had begun to connect the Bohemian residential centre with the neighbouring countries.

Exceedingly good, though wholly marginal, is the situation of Prague for the roads coming up to it from the south. In the highlands of crystalline rock in southern Bohemia rivers have eroded narrow, steep-sided gorges, shunned always by the traffic, while the roads follow the trend of the rivers high up over the valley-bottoms on the peneplain truncating the crystalline rocks. All these rivers are tributary to the Moldau, discharging acute-angularly near Prague, so that the interfluves end here. At the same time the crystalline rocks are here replaced by Palaeozoic strata ranging from the pre-Cambrian to the middle Devonian and made well known by the celebrated studies of Barrande. These strata are much disturbed, folding, faulting and overthrusts having occurred towards the end of Palaeozoic times. The mountains so formed were then reduced to a peneplain, the latter after renewed uplift being deeply dissected. At the site of Prague the Moldau met with weak Ordovician shales, easily to be eroded, and so, seconded perhaps by the disturbed and weakened zone of a meridional fault-line, has been able to clear out a rather large basin. Here the river divides into several branches, while at the same time its depth decreases. Shallow places made it here easy to cross the river, while terraces and the gently inclined slopes of the meander-spurs help in the descent from the peneplain to the valley-bottom, their difference

being about 200 m. As regards the southern half of Bohemia, therefore, Prague has, a very good geographical position at the head of a road-fan; and by the aforesaid deflection of traffic to the west it became a ford of the highest importance.

The relation of Prague to the northern parts of Bohemia, however, is far from satisfactory. The traffic of passengers and goods follows the more direct way along or on the Elbe and it is more than doubtful whether a canalization of the Moldau would cause Prague to become the chief staple of Bohemia, as the latitude of this town marks about the southern boundary of all larger Bohemian industries with the single exception of Pilsen. For the other parts of the Chakoslovakian Republic Prague has not the slightest geographical qualifications for ever becoming the commercial centre. For this position Brünn, the capital of Moravia, seems to be pointed out.

It may be not without interest to insert here some remarks upon the natural unity of the Bohemian basin centred in Prague, though we should have liked first to hear the opinion of the great geopsychologist Kjellén. One glance at the map shows that Bohemia is a hydrographical unity, being drained, with quite small exceptions, by the upper Elbe. But the character of a regular basin is by no means represented in our country. A hypsometrical map shows clearly that to the west and north-west two highlands, separated by a broad lowland, hem it in. The outer wall — considered alone when speaking of the Bohemian basin — is represented by the northern part of the Böhmerwald and known as Oberpfälzer Wald, then the Fichtel-, Erz-, Elbesandstein- and Lausitzer Gebirge. They are not truly mountainous, being only fault-blocks of an old peneplain which by recent uplifts have attained altitudes varying between 500 and 1000 m. With the exception of the Cretaceous Elbesandsteingebirge, they are composed of crystalline rocks, granite and gneiss, which by their red colouring make the outer mountain-wall more conspicuous on geological maps than the inner one. This latter, built up of old crystalline rocks, tertiary volcanic masses, strata of the Permocarbonian and Cretaceous period, attains the same heights; it is divided into the Kaiserwald, the volcanic mountains of Duppau, the Žbanwald and the volcanic Mittelgebirge. They also represent an uplifted peneplain, with the exception of such districts where volcanism was still active in quaternary times. They are fault-blocks, their steep slope facing sometimes to the north-west, sometimes towards south-east. But the country beyond the steep slope had, and has, no geographical connection with the Bohemian basin, in which Prague no longer occupies the geometrical centre. Prague thus represents the centre of a political unity — formerly the Kingdom of Bohemia — but not of a geographical one, just as was the case of Vienna with regard to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The land acquisitions of the earlier Bohemian dukes seem therefore to have had the tendency of always keeping their residence in the centre of their realm; the site of the town in our

case is not determined by the geographical possibilities of the country, but itself influences the growth, the form and the frontiers of the realm.

Systematically the rulers of Bohemia furthered the growth of Prague as the central point from which their might was spreading. All its rulers endeavoured assiduously, and often not without violence, to enlarge and embellish their capital, as far as the wars and troubles of their time made this possible. Originally the Bohemian peasant was free; with time he had become a bondsman of a few

TAB. I. *Climatic table of Prague* ($\varphi=50^{\circ} 5'$, $\lambda=14^{\circ} 25'$, alt.=197.2 m).

	Temperature			Downpour		Number of ... days					Thunderstorms
	mean (1851—1910)	mean max. (1871—1910)	mean min. (1871—1910)	mm (1841—1910)	days (1841—1910)	clear	foggy	dull	calm	stormy	
January	— 1.3	7.0	— 13.4	22	12.4	0.9	16.5	10.0	3.0	2.0	0.1
February	0.6	8.3	— 11.5	21	11.3	1.5	14.3	9.9	2.9	2.2	0.1
March	3.9	15.2	— 6.2	28	13.2	1.6	13.0	4.9	3.1	1.5	0.1
April	8.6	21.8	— 0.3	39	12.3	2.5	10.0	3.1	3.8	0.6	0.9
May	13.9	28.3	4.1	60	13.3	1.6	6.9	2.5	4.9	0.4	2.9
June	17.5	31.2	9.5	70	13.9	1.2	6.4	1.4	4.4	0.3	3.8
July	19.0	31.4	12.6	65	14.1	1.7	6.5	1.4	5.1	0.5	4.3
August	18.4	31.2	10.5	57	12.4	2.6	8.9	1.2	5.6	0.1	3.0
September	14.7	25.9	6.1	42	10.8	3.4	12.2	1.4	5.9	0.8	1.1
October	9.4	22.1	1.2	31	11.2	2.2	17.3	5.1	5.8	0.8	0.1
November	3.2	11.7	— 4.9	30	11.8	0.7	16.5	12.2	3.9	1.4	< 0.1
December	— 0.3	10.4	— 12.3	24	13.0	1.5	15.3	5.6	3.4	1.9	< 0.1
Year	9.0	32.6	— 15.9	489	149.7	21.4	143.8	65.7	51.8	12.5	16.4

noble families, these being the descendants of former chieftains. There did not exist native citizens, tradesmen and merchants. This was one motive for immigration. There were several others which caused the Bohemian kings to favour foreigners. First of all, the native population was not dense enough to cultivate the land and not skilled enough to make it as profitable as possible: the king could only gain by the taxes paid for the settlement by foreigners. At that time there were only villages, for the most part owned by the nobility and clergy. With foreign merchants the kings founded towns which were to be strongholds against the often rebellious nobility. It was Germans who during this period of immigration settled where to-day is the site of Prague. In the second half of the 11th century such merchants founded a settlement at what was called the Poritch on the right

bank of the Moldau, now forming a part of the "New Town" (Prague II), having obtained from King Wratislav II the privilege to choose themselves their judges and to live according to their own laws. Later privileges freed them from military service outside the walls of their town and from quarterings. Then a second settlement, the "Old Town" (Prague I) was founded by them and walled in. Except some native bondsmen and a few strangers, mostly from Italy, they were the only inhabitants of the young town arising on the right bank of the Moldau. About the same time the Jews had a settlement of their own at the outset under the castle of Vishehrad, then between the Old-Town and the river. This quarter (Prague V or Josef's Town) was later on walled in, and until a few decades ago remained the Jewry.

Prague owes two important enlargements to its kings Přemysl Ottokar II and Charles IV. During the second half of the 13th century the former founded the "Little Quarter" (Prague III) on the left bank of the Moldau by making it a settlement of German merchants, while Charles IV laid the foundation of the "New Town" (Prague II) and by the erection of a university in 1348 — the first one at which not Latin but a modern language, German, was spoken — farther promoted the welfare of his residential town. Thus during the Middle Ages Prague had become one of the principal towns of Europe, with a population of about 30,000 souls. It must be stated, however, that the "four towns of Prague" — namely the Old Town with the Jewry, the New Town, the Little Quarter and the Hradshin — were not united into one legal town until 1784.

But soon decay began. Under the dominion of the Luxembourgs the Bohemian kings had been at the same time emperors of the "Roman Empire of German Nation". But after having sold the dignity of a duke of Milan to Galeazzo Visconti, and having used also in other cases his power for mercenary purposes, Wenzel IV was dethroned in Germany in 1400. This was the beginning of decay, completed by the disastrous wars of the Hussites. The "Little Quarter" was then wholly destroyed and only rebuilt many decades afterwards. Since then Prague has never regained its old position as one of the first centres of Europe. The last national king of Bohemia died at the battle of Mohacs against the Turks in 1526, and according to family agreements his lands went to his brother-in-law Ferdinand I, Archduke of Austria. From that day up to October 28 1918 Bohemia formed a part of the Austrian realm. Prague thus lost its position as an independent seat of government. The Thirty Years' War completed the ruin of the population. The citizens became poor, though the town was embellished by the nobility and clergy with stately edifices now forming some of the chief sights of Prague.

New life came to Prague with the development of industry during the last few decades. Prague alone, as the one large town of Bohemia at the beginning of

this period, could be selected as a centre of industries, though lying neither within immediate neighbourhood of coal-mining nor on a navigable river. When once industries had been established here the people from the country-side flocked together, and the old settlement soon became too small to shelter its new inhabitants. New settlements quickly arose which, though for the most part up till now legally independent, form an integral part of the geographical dwelling-place Prague. After the annexation of Vishehrad (Prague VI) only the districts Holeshovitz-Bubna (Prague VII) and Lieben (Prague VIII) were incorporated in 1884 and 1901.

The police-district Greater Prague, still comprises, besides these eight quarters twenty independent communities, forming a commercial and anthro-geo-graphical unity with 553,217 inhabitants according to the last census of 1910, of which only the smaller half were living in Prague itself. The dwelling-place of Greater Prague offers many points of geographical interest. The Moldau forms a wide meander within the precincts of Prague, which occupies not only the valley-bottom, low terraces and the gentle slope of spurs, but also higher terraces, forming large plateau-like areas on both sides of the river. According to the various curves of the river the buildings occupy sometimes all the room between the river and the higher terraces, sometimes they are divided by forest-clad steeper slopes, while in some places parks stretch down from the plateaus to the very banks of the river. The descent from the plateau to the river is in most cases steeper on the west, left side, than on the right side. Therefore the "Little Quarter" and the adjoining Smichow could only develop as a small strip along the Moldau. Only in side-valleys the buildings advance farther to the west as it is the case especially with Koshiř. Only one steep street and some stairs connect the Little Quarter with the Hradshin on the 45 m-terrace, the dwelling-place of the nobility with the royal residence of the Middle Ages. Where this terrace gently slopes down to the north-east the cottage-districts of Dejvitz and Bubentsh, at a lower level the industrial centre Holeshovitz-Bubna has been built up, while no buildings connect the Little-Quarter and Bubna at the valley-bottom. As a whole, the settlements on the western bank are used for the most part only for dwellings and not for industry, with the exception of Bubna, which is already somewhat detached off the bulk of the town. As in most towns of Europe, the West End, as the healthiest quarter, is predestined especially on higher grounds to become the dwelling-place of those employed in the City.

The larger part of Prague is situated east of the Moldau. In the valley-bottom at an elevation of about 180 m above the sea lie the Old, Josef's, the greater part of the New Town and »Karolinenthal«. The New Town is stretching up to a terrace-flat some 90 m above the river on which "Weinberge" (Vineyard) is situated, being the site where once vine was cultivated. From here Vershovitz descends to the bottom of a side-valley, containing the dwelling-places of Michle and Nusle,

while the interfluvium between this brook and the Moldau is occupied by Vishehrad and Pankratz. A continuous up-and-down is characteristic of the dwelling-place Prague. In side-valleys north of Weinberge, Žižkov and Lieben have developed. Many minor places lie on the banks of the Moldau and some of its small confluent, just as on the higher terraces. It is often difficult to distinguish whether geographically they belong already to the dwelling-place of Greater Prague or ought to be considered as part of the rural district, being always contaminated by industry and having thus partly lost their rural aspect without being bound by any very strong ties to the town. The accompanying map shows more clearly than any words could do the characteristic features of the town.

The settlements on the right bank of the Moldau are chiefly industrial quarters, only the Old Town and the adjoining parts of the New Town having developed some sort of a city-character. At the same time the site immediately on the river-bank enjoys the privileges of a West End, getting fresh air-currents from the Moldau; and as there are no docks, these buildings are chiefly used for dwelling houses. All the same the number of inhabitants is here steadily decreasing, while at the same time quickly rising in Greater Prague. The decrease is most marked in the former Jewry, where, in consequence of sanitary cleanness, only one third of the population of 1900 was still dwelling in 1910.

The modern regulations and «assanations» have destroyed many of the romantic beauties of Prague, but yet the crooked streets, old passages and harbours, the Gothic churches and palaces of the Renaissance, together with the beautiful site, make it one of the most interesting of towns. The preservation of these relics of old times as well as the picturesque change of valleys and hills have one drawback: they make communication exceedingly difficult. The tramway is obliged to make use of roundabout ways with a loss of time and energy, and the railway from the direction of Vienna traverses the «Weinberge» by a tunnel of more than one kilometer length, discharging directly into the railway-station at the boundary between the New Town and Weinberge.

Special mention must be made of the great «Ring», the central place of the Old-Town with the town-hall from the second half of the 14th century. The Old-Town is girded around by a range of streets, the principal part of which is called «Trench». These streets occupy the place where once a trench encircled the fortifications of the Old-Town, while one of the little streets leading hence into the interior of the Old-Town has preserved the characteristic name of «Bridge», marking the place of an old drawbridge. The site of fortifications around the New Town is now for the most part taken up by public parks, pleasantly and wholesomely breaking the monotonous masses of buildings. There is a sharp contrast between the irregularly built old parts of the town and the quadrangular street-net of the quite modern districts, especially of Holeshovitz-Bubna, Žižkow and Weinberge.

The best time for visiting Prague is the early autumn, when the weather shows itself at its best, as can be seen by the climatic table (p. 75). All the year round Prague is rather warm. The winter has mild but damp, dull and foggy weather, with frequent though feeble rainfalls and winds and occasional storms. Spring, especially in the beginning, is a somewhat fresh, rainy time with rather fresh, and for the most part rather cold, winds. The summer is too hot to be comfortable, while the air is rather oppressive. At the same time rains are frequent and copious, and there is scarcely a week without a thunderstorm. The autumn is warmer than the spring. Of all months September is the least cloudy and together with October can boast of the greatest number of quite clear calm days, while rains are very scarce.