

The Czechs of Cleveland

By

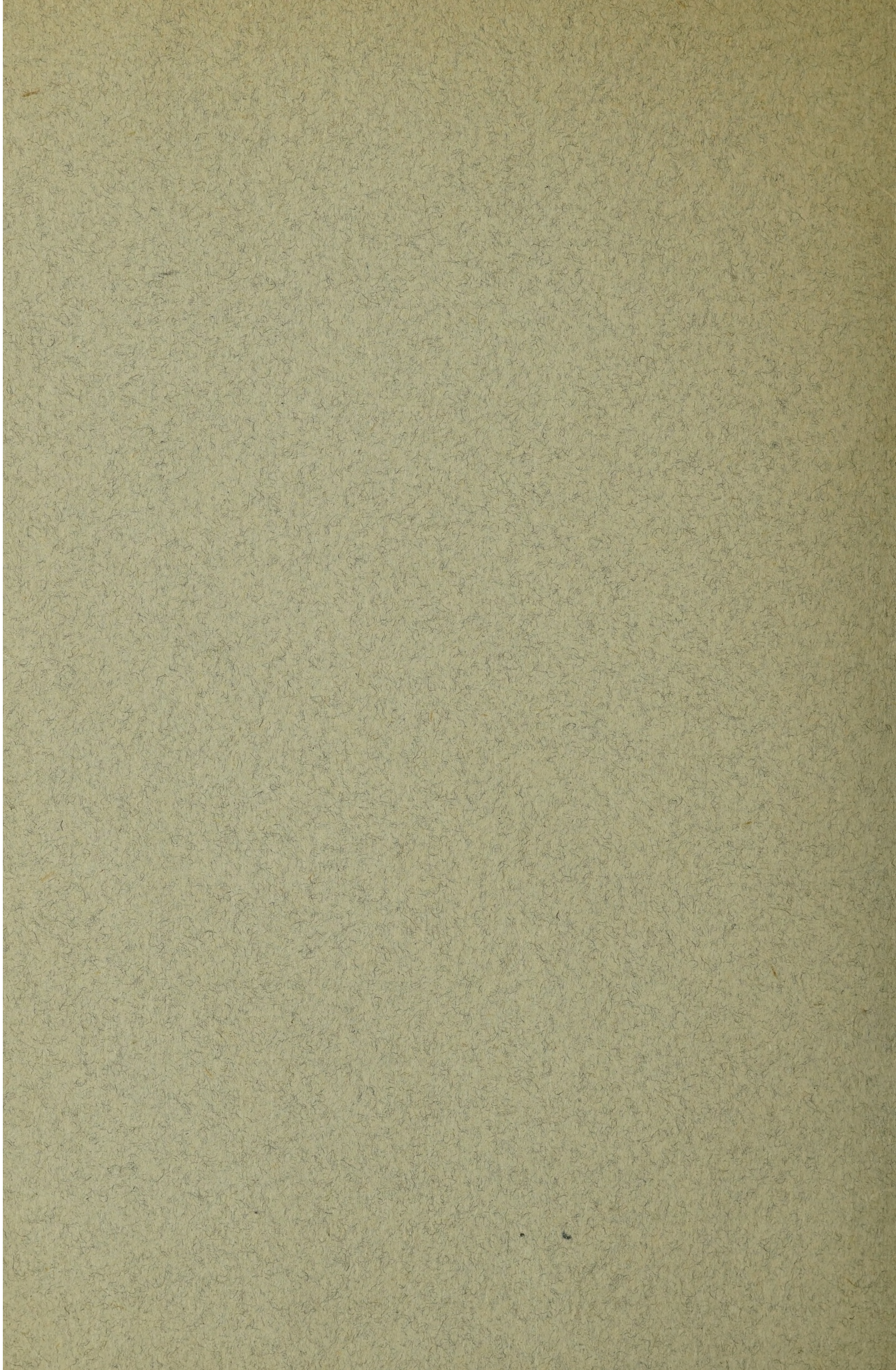
ELEANOR E. LEDBETTER

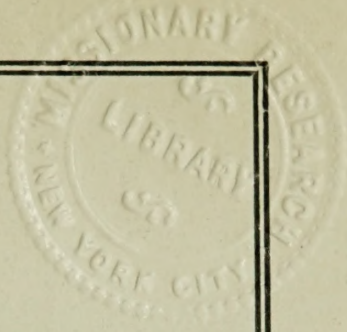
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Mayor's Advisory War Committee
Cleveland, 1919





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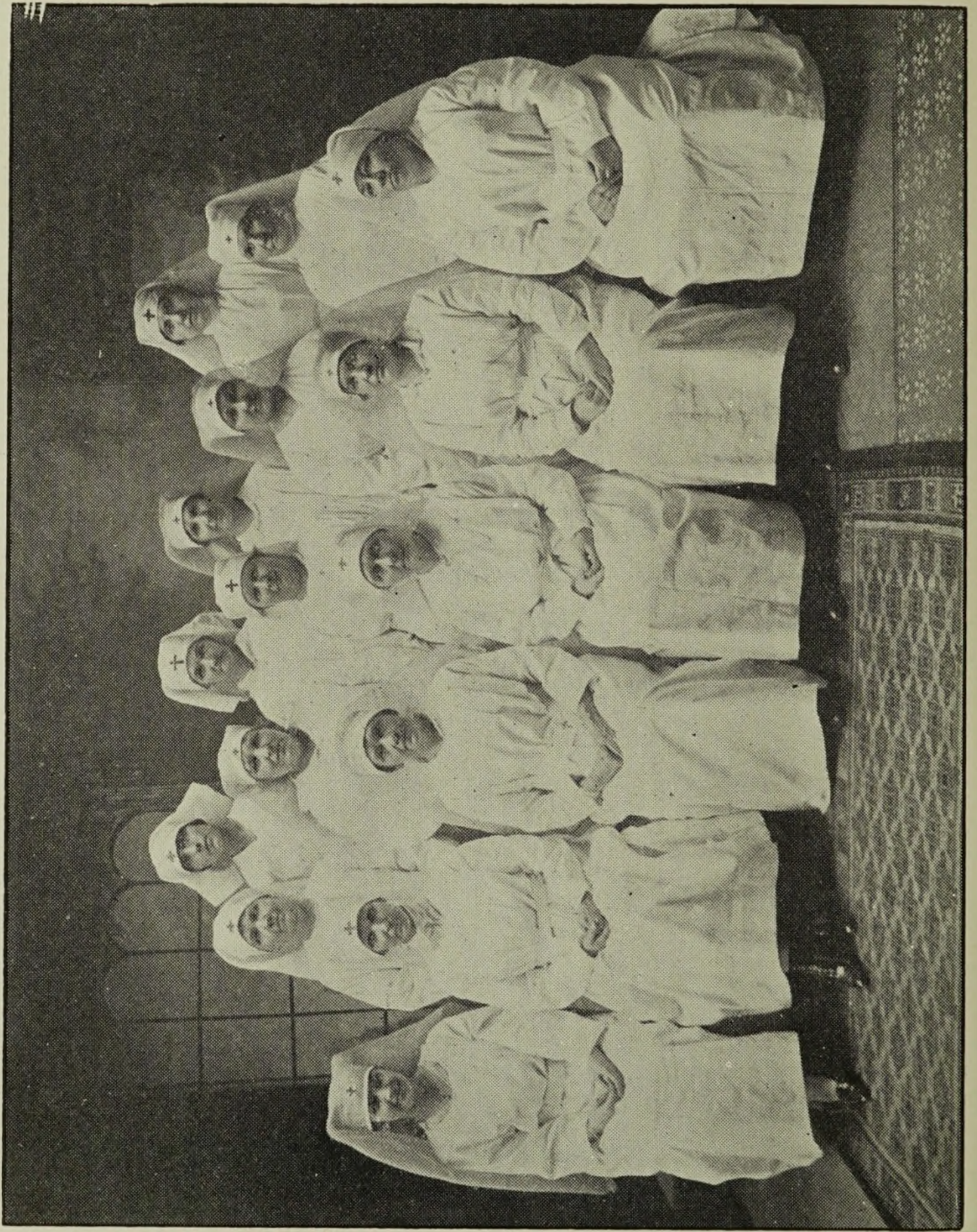
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E. E. LEDBETTER
Cleveland, Ohio

TO
ALL MY CZECH FRIENDS
ESPECIALLY
THOSE WHO USE
THE BROADWAY LIBRARY

—*The Author*



Bohemian Red Cross.

Foreword

This pamphlet is intended as a method of Americanizing the American. Those who have had long experience in the work of Americanization testify that if Americans in general would more readily recognize the value of what the immigrant brings to us it would be much easier to teach that immigrant the culture of America. Sympathy begets sympathy and a generous appreciation of the value of the newcomer is the best way to make him feel at home. And so in order to give to the native born citizens of Cleveland a knowledge of their foreign born neighbors a series of booklets has been prepared and published. This is the sixth of the series.

The Czechs (more commonly known as Bohemians) constitute one of the largest and oldest groups of immigrants which has made Cleveland its home. More than a generation ago the Czechs started to settle in Cleveland and in the course of time have become a permanent and more stable element in the life of the city. The following pages describe how the Czechs first settled in the Croton Street section of the East Side when that marked the extreme limit of urban life and with the growth of the city moved steadily east and south. Bohemians have been leaders in the development of the great city in which they they found homes. Men and women of Bohemian birth have found their way into places of distinction in all of the varied activities of the city.

Only within the past three years, however, have Americans been brought to the realization of the splendid background of the Bohemian immigrant. The land of the Czechs, beautiful and productive beyond measure, has like Ireland been a place where liberty became the passionate quest of a people. Before the American Revolution the Czechs had fought without success for the right to govern themselves. That fight bore no fruit at home until that splendid event of the recent war, the signing of the Czecho-Slovak Declaration of Independence in our own Independence Hall in Philadelphia. And so the Czechs of Cleveland even before they left their native land were united with America in that aspiration for the right of self-expression which after all is the best and most precious American heritage. As Americans, the Czechs have been worthy of all the opportunities which they found in their adopted home. Their story should make every American a better and more generous citizen.

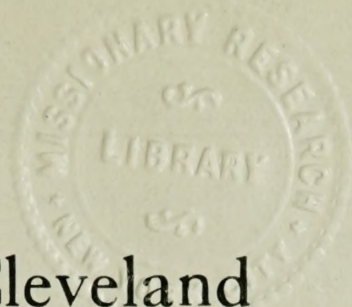
RAYMOND MOLEY,
Chairman of the Cleveland Americanization Committee.

Bohemian National Hymn

Where is my home?
Where is my home?
In the meadows waters gleaming
On the hillside pine woods dreaming
Orchards shine with blossoms bright,
Earthly paradise to sight.
That's the small but lovely country
Fair Bohemia is my home,
Fair Bohemia is my home!

Where is my home?
Where is my home?
If you know heaven giving,
Where the gentlest souls are living
Loving hearts with gifted mind,
And a strength that rocks can grind,
That's the glory crowned nation,
Where the Czechs are is my home,
Where the Czechs are is my home!

—Josef Kajetan Tyl.



The Czechs of Cleveland

CLEVELAND is one of the largest Czech cities in the world. The national capital, Prague, of course comes first in numbers as in importance, the Austrian capital Vienna is second, the American Chicago is third, and Cleveland is fourth. For some years the relative positions of Cleveland and New York were uncertain, but since 1910 Cleveland has had unquestionably the larger number. Its important position in this respect was humorously indicated by a squib in the "Camp Sherman Gazette" last year, which stated, "There is no truth in the rumor that the capital of the Czechoslovak Republic will be removed from Prague to the neighborhood of Broadway and E. 55th streets, Cleveland".

The Czechs have always been known in this country by the English designation Bohemian, and it is only with the rise of their own state that the native name has become generally known in the English speaking world. Unfortunately this has to be transliterated, as the Bohemian language contains several characters not existing in English, among them the letter *c*. This is pronounced like the English *ch* and is now being generally written *cz*, which unfortunately offers no suggestion as to pronunciation to the English reader. The native name of Bohemia is *Cechy*, the people are *Cechs*, and the descriptive adjective is *Cesky*,—all pronounced as if beginning with *ch*.

The racial term Czech includes not only the inhabitants of Bohemia, but also those of the sister states Moravia and Silesia, which now form part of the Czechoslovak Republic. Cleveland Czechs have come from all three of these states.

There have been some Czechs in America from the very earliest times. The presidency of Harvard College was offered by Governor Winthrop to the great Czech educator, Jan Amos Komensky, better known by the Latinized name Comenius; but Cotton Mather tells us that "the solicitations of the Swedish ambassador diverting him another way, that incomparable Moravian became not an American."

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Bohemia was in point of culture one of the most advanced nations in Europe. Her university of Prague was thronged by students from all over Europe, its professors were known to the world. But even then the struggle against Teutonic domination was an intense one, and by the end of the Thirty Years' War, culture had succumbed to force, and the Bohemian people were crushed under the heel of the Hapsburg dynasty. The national leaders were all either executed or exiled, their rich and abundant literature was utterly destroyed, and the remnant of the people who were left for long years had not force enough to offer effective resistance to encroachment and suppression. The Bohemian soul, however, was never touched, and by the beginning of the 19th century sufficient force had accumulated to wring many concessions from the Austrian government, among them the acknowledgement of the Bohemian language and permission for the establishment of schools and the extension of educational opportunity. As a result of this fight for education, and of the opportunities thus wrested

from a hostile government, the Bohemians have been for years one of the two or three best educated races in Europe; and among those coming to America the percentage of illiteracy is only one and a half,—less than that among the native born of any state in the Union, even those with compulsory education laws.

First Immigration.

After the failure of the Revolutionary movement of 1848, some Czech leaders were compelled to flee the country, and others, despairing of the future under the House of Hapsburg, were disposed to give up the seemingly hopeless struggle. These were the pioneers of the Czech emigration to America. From 1850 to 1870, most of them came with the idea of taking up land and developing homesteads in Nebraska, Iowa, and Wisconsin. The journey in those days was a long and tiresome one, and Cleveland was a convenient resting place on the way. Some who stopped only to rest, found it good to stay; in 1850 there were three families here, in 1860 there were fifteen, and in 1869 the number had grown to 696 families, including 3252 persons. Thus the Czech immigration was from the first an immigration by families.

Its industrial value may be judged by a selection from some statistics regarding the 3252 Czechs here in 1869. This number included 1949 men and their occupations were as follows: masons, 76; carpenters, 72; tailors, 56; shoemakers, 44; coopers, 39; locksmiths, 25; blacksmiths, 19; merchants, 15; professional musicians, 13, besides many others who had music as a side-line; harness makers, 9; weavers, 9; stonecutters, 8; wheelrights, 7; tanners, 6; tinsmiths, 6; bakers, 5; painters, 5; booksellers, 2; printers, 1; clockmaker, 1; while 90 men and 50 women were employed on nearby farms.

Location in Cleveland.

It is hard now to imagine what Cleveland was like in the 60's and early 70's, when everything east of East 30th street was farm land. A history of the location and growth of the Czech settlements in Cleveland is actually a history of the growth of the city. In the first years of the Czechs in Cleveland, they lived in the old district of Hill, Cross, and Commercial streets, but as soon as they had become assured of the means of subsistence, they began to reach toward their natural rural environment. The Czechs love the country. It is a saying among them here that when out early in the morning for a walk, for mushrooms, for a swim in the lake, or for fishing, you can speak in Bohemian to whomever you meet and he will answer.

It follows that the Czechs never live in congested districts if they can help it. On the contrary they are always to be found on the edge of the city, where town and country meet; when the city follows, they move on. The older Czech still loves his own fenced-in yard, where he can have a vegetable garden, some bright colored flowers, and a few ducks or geese. In settlements on the outskirts of the city, flocks of geese still roam vacant allotments and hiss viciously at the timid American.

As early as 1853, J. Capek and J. Doubrava bought farms and became the pioneer Bohemian farmers of the county. Their fellow countrymen built up two sections on what was then the outskirts of the city. The first was "Brooklyn," a term at that time applied quite loosely to the west bank of the river south of Ohio City. Land there was cheaper than in Cleveland, and

from the very beginning there were some Czech families there. One of the pioneer women of that district is reported as saying that at first the Americans looked at them as if they were some strange kind of animal. They could not understand why this was so, but later learned that it was because of their strange dress, particularly the shawls on their heads. When they learned the reason, they began to dress like Americans.

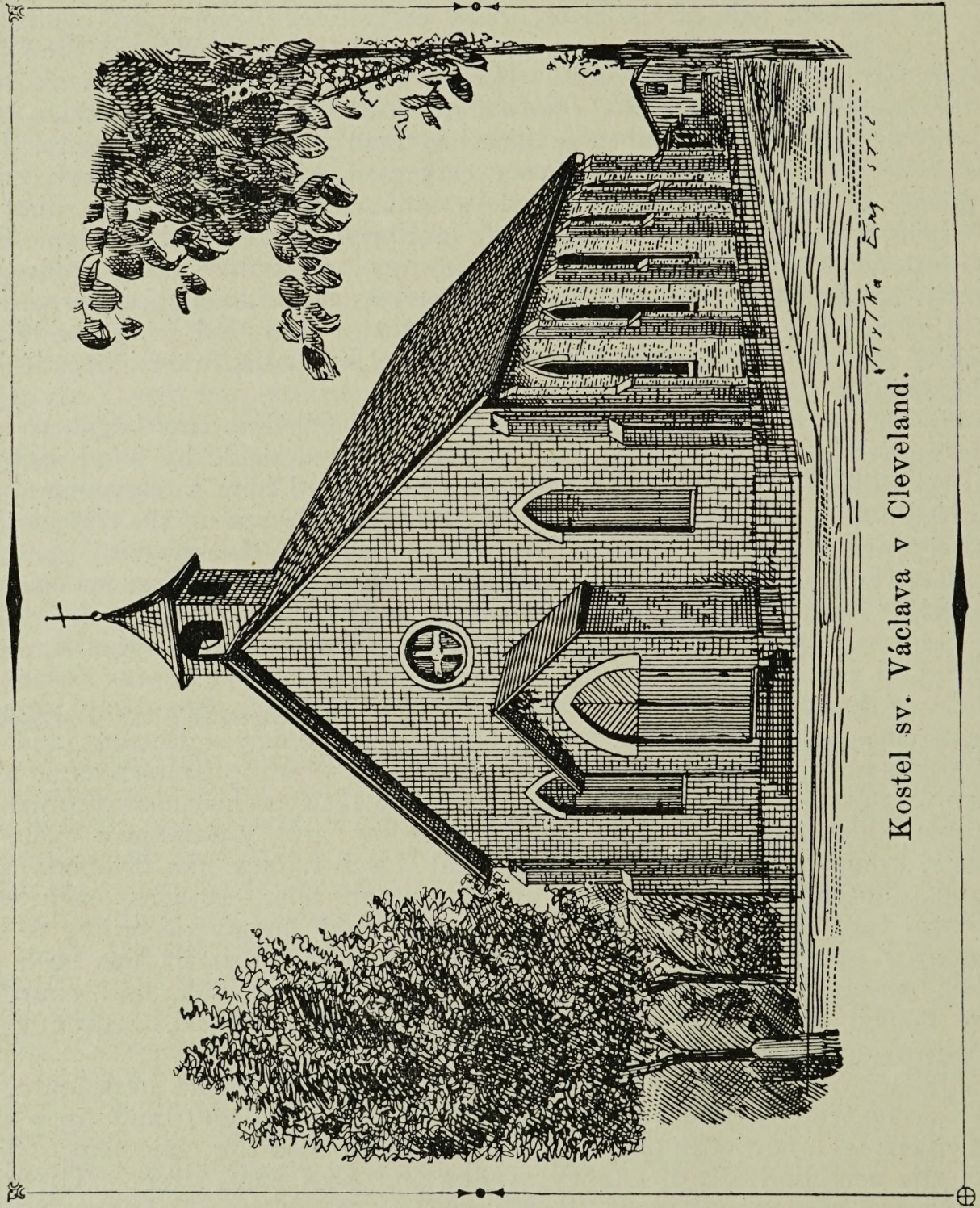
On the east side of the river, many early Czech immigrants were employed as laborers on farms, and immediately began to buy from their employers plots for their own homes. Harvey Rice employed many on his farm in the neighborhood of what became Croton Street, and he sold them land on very easy terms, in some cases allowing them to work out the price. This was the beginning of the Croton street settlement, which was the Czech center of Cleveland from 1870 until the development of the Broadway district. Life here, we are told, was always gayer and brighter than in Brooklyn. The general merchandise store, steamship agency and public utility office, of Martin Krejci, at Croton and East 37th streets, was famous for the variety and multiplicity of its contents. A long flight of stairs led down the hill in front of this store, and many a new immigrant spent his first night in Cleveland sitting on those steps.

In the latter part of the 70's the Standard Oil Company began to employ many Czechs. In those days barrels were all made by hand and the natural skill of the Czechs as hand workers found here a convenient and profitable field of employment. Almost every Czech man in the city at that period spent some time "making barrels for John D. Rockefeller."

Convenience of access to this factory furnished the first motive for removal from Croton street across Kingsbury Run. In 1878 the farms along the south side of the Run were parceled into lots, and the district in the neighborhood of Trumbull and East 37th streets became a residence district known as "na vrsku" (on the hill). Broadway, already in existence as a county road, formed the axis of the new settlement, and the development of the whole district from East 37th street to Union avenue took place very quickly and the 24th ward (now the 13th) a chronicler informs us, became "like a city of Bohemia." Meadow and woods gave place to streets, some of which still retain typical Czech names like Svoboda and Praha. These streets were built up with small, neat cottages, each with its own yard and garden, very comfortable and homey according to the standards of the time. For almost 40 years this district has been the Czech center of Cleveland. Stores, banks, national hall, and churches have helped to concentrate interest in this neighborhood, centering at Broadway and East 55th streets.

The city, crowding on Croton street, made that district undesirable to the Czechs who were left there, and many moved out and built up a new settlement on a new edge of the city, which they called the "east side." This is in the neighborhood of Quincy avenue and East 82nd street. The west side Czechs also moved from "Brooklyn" to "Cuba," west of the creek at West 41st street, where their principal residence district is now on West 41st and neighboring streets, between Clark avenue and Dennison avenue.

Great changes have taken place in all these districts in the last ten years. Business follows the Czech in Cleveland, and each of these centers is feeling its pressure. This is greatest in the Broadway district, which is now a wedge between two great arteries of the steel industry. Heavy smoke and



Kostel sv. Václava v Cleveland.

The First Czech Church.

noxious fumes are fast killing the trees and will soon make gardens impossible. The houses that were neat and bright have become dingy and ugly, the gullies offer no more mushrooms, the nature lover has nothing left to enjoy, and another removal is in full tide. Similar conditions are approaching also on Quincy Avenue.

It is characteristic of the Czechs in America always to build for themselves. They have never followed in an old neighborhood, but have always built anew, and they are doing it now. The whole south-eastern part of the city is being built up by them. The additions known locally as Corlett, Newburgh City and Mt. Pleasant are very largely the homes of Czechs, as is also a considerable district out Buckeye road, and the Washington Park district, which is not yet in the city. The county highways to Bedford, to Brecksville, to Warrensville and to Chagrin Falls are lined with the homes of Czechs whose business interests are still in the city. These new houses are the equal of those in any middle class section of the city, and it is the testimony of salesmen that the Czech never scrimps in the equipment of his home. On the contrary, he usually takes his wife with him to choose fittings and furnishings, and makes the first consideration, not the price, but that "the missus" shall be suited.

At the first the building of a home must have been very difficult for these immigrants, who often worked for as little as seventy-five cents a day. But they were fortunate in having so many skilled trades represented among their numbers. The mason helped the carpenter, and the carpenter helped the mason in exchange and cooperation took place among them as among the earlier American pioneers. The ownership of a home was one of the things the Czech had come to America for, and a home he would have.

Savings and Loan Associations.

Since 1896 the native thrift and foresight have found a helpful vehicle in savings and loan associations, which are incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio. The very names of these organizations are suggestive: "Vcela," (the bee); "Mravenec," (the ant); "Oul" (the hive).

Vcela, the oldest of these, was incorporated in March, 1896, and in twenty years had loaned over \$10,000,000 on Cleveland real estate. Its present capital is \$2,000,000, and it has \$1,000,000 outstanding in loans. Its office is at 5733 Broadway, and it is beginning the erection of a fine office building at the corner of Broadway and Portage avenues.

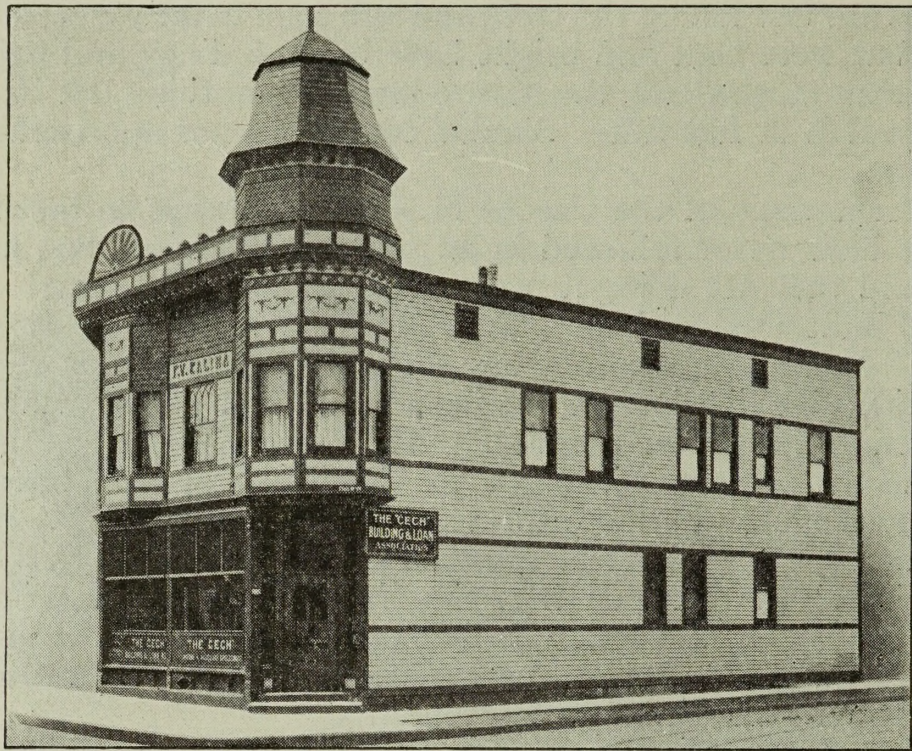
Mravenec was started a year later on the west side, and in 1918 changed its significant Czech name to the "Federal Savings and Loan association." Its office is in the Bohemian Sokol Hall at 4310 Clark avenue, and its present capital is about \$1,150,000.

The Cech Savings and Loan association is located at 3132 West 41st street. It was organized in 1907, and has capital to the extent of \$700,000.

The East End Building and Loan association, organized in 1911, with capital of half a million dollars, is at 8506 Quincy avenue.

The Atlas, at 5454 Broadway, organized in 1915 has outstripped most of the older ones and now has \$1,750,000 as capital.

Other younger organizations are: The Progress Building, Savings and Loan Company, 4963 Broadway; "Oul" Building and Loan Association, 5638 Broadway; Capital Savings Building & Loan Association, 5209 Fleet avenue, with a branch on Buckeye road; Hospodar Savings and Loan Association,



Typical Business Building.

12608 Miles avenue; Quincy Savings and Loan Association, Quincy avenue at East 89th Street.

All these encourage thrift and teach the value of small savings by the same methods which the government adopted for the sale of thrift stamps. Twice a year Vcela places on the market a block of shares. The subscriber pays fifty cents a week per share, and at the end of six years is owner of a \$200 dollar share, which he may either draw or leave on deposit at five per cent interest.

The builder of a new home can get a construction loan up to three-fourths of the value of the property under way, and these loans are paid off by monthly payments which take care of the interest and constantly reduce the principal. Thus the workman is assisted to finance the building of his home, and it would require an extraordinary run of bad luck to keep a Czech from completing his payments.

The savings and loan associations have by no means a monopoly of Czech savings and investments. The Broadway Savings and Trust Company, one of the strongest banks in the city, is built largely upon the patronage of the Czechs. The Columbia Savings and Loan Company, also at Broadway and East 55th street, with a branch at 4828 Fleet avenue, also deals chiefly with Bohemians. On the west side the Clark avenue Savings Bank may be considered a Bohemian bank, while the Society for Savings and other down town banks carry many Czech savings accounts. The day after payday in a Czech neighborhood sees a constant procession of depositors with passbooks and hard times seldom find the Czech without an account to draw on.

Newspapers.

Among the occupations of the Czechs listed in Cleveland in 1869, there was one printer. We are not informed whether he had opportunity to work at his trade at that time, but he undoubtedly did in 1871, when the newspaper "Pokrok" (Progress) was brought here from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and es-

tablished at 104 Croton street. Its successive editors in Cleveland were men of the widest reputation; F. J. Zdrubek, J. V. Capek, and Vaclav Snajdr. In 1878 Mr. Snajdr merged "Pokrok" and "Dennice Noveveku" (Star of the New Era) under the name of the latter, and continued to edit it until 1915. In 1911 "Svet" (The World) was started as a daily paper under the same management in an excellent new building at 4514 Broadway. "Dennice Noveveku" was continued as a weekly until 1915, when it was entirely absorbed in "Svet." This chain of newspapers has always represented the free-thinking element among the Czechs.

Since the founding of the first paper "Pokrok," forty other periodical publications in the Bohemian language have seen the light in Cleveland. Some of these have been the organs of various societies or institutions, some have been parish papers, and some excellent newspapers of general appeal. Their careers have varied in length from a few issues to nearly twenty years. The first attempt at a daily paper was made in 1888 by J. V. Lunak, with "Ceske Noviny" (Czech News), but the time was not yet ripe for a daily, and Mr. Lunak suffered considerable loss in his venture. Later "Volnost" (Freedom), which had been founded in 1880 by Edward Veverka and Charles and Edward Vopalecky, developed from a tri-weekly into a daily. This paper was published without a break from 1880 to 1908.

At the present time there are three Bohemian newspapers of importance published in this city, besides several smaller publications of limited interest. There are two dailies, "Svet," already mentioned, and the "American", which is published at 5377-79 Broadway by F. J. Svoboda, who founded it in 1899. Both are good papers, well edited and illustrated, and are widely read, the "American" being favored by the adherents of the Catholic faith.

"Americke Delnicke Listy" (American Workman's News), published at 4032 Broadway, was founded in 1909, and is the organ of the Bohemian branch of the Socialist party in America. It was in a considerable degree due to the influence of the editor, Joseph Martinek, that this branch of the party rejected the St. Louis platform. Mr. Martinek, who in 1917 spent some months in Russia as a representative of the Bohemian National Alliance, came back decidedly of the opinion that the Bolsheviki are not true socialists, and that the Socialist party in America should not identify its cause with theirs.

A distinctive custom of the Czech people in America is that of expressing congratulations or condolences through the medium of paid advertisements in the newspapers. A very popular couple will be congratulated on their marriage perhaps to the extent of a page of congratulatory notices. The usual form is two columns wide and about four inches deep, enclosed in a "box", but special fervor or social standing may be expressed by increasing the size of type and box, and including a verse of poetry.

Other advertisements are those of the entertainments of societies and lodges. During the summer picnics to country farms and groves are the principal thing, but from October to June musical and dramatic entertainments hold the field. A single issue of a paper has contained announcements of fifteen different dramatic performances to be staged within a space of two weeks in the various Czech centers of the city.

The general character of the Bohemian newspapers of Cleveland is excellent. They co-operate in all public movements and their devotion to the cause of freedom is a passionate one. During the war, they gave whole

pages of advertising free to the government,—as the English papers did not—and their support of every good cause is always wholehearted. They specialize, of course, in news from the home land, and through underground channels were often able to reveal Austrian conditions which were never officially acknowledged. In the establishment of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, their influence has been incalculable.

Important as is the present position of these papers, there can be no doubt that their future as Bohemian publications is distinctly limited. They are read by the old people and the newcomers. Of the young people who have grown up in this country, there are comparatively few who read Bohemian at all, and, without immigration, the clientele of these papers must necessarily decrease. Even among the older people, there are few who do not have a workable knowledge of English, but they cling to the news in Czech, because thus only are they sure of complete and perfect understanding. They can get the gist of a news item in English, but to read it in their own tongue, gives them assurance as to details and significance.

First Organization.

The first organization of Czechs in Cleveland was formed in May, 1862, as a branch of "Slovanska Lipa" (the Slavonic lime-tree), The lime-tree is the national tree of Bohemia, and this name was in Austria a subtle designation of race. On November 16, 1863, this little group of poor immigrants demonstrated their devotion to dramatic art by a performance which they staged in the fire-engine house on East 22nd street. This first performance was followed by others, and funds were accumulated for a community hall which in 1871 was built at the corner of Croton avenue and East 40th street, and named "Slovanska Lipa." It is still in use for its original purpose, although it has passed into private ownership, and it is not now so popular as the newer and larger halls, which are more centrally located.

Dramatic Organizations.

Specialization developed early in "Slovanska Lipa," and "Perun" was organized as its dramatic branch in 1866. Later this society broke away from the parent organization and built "Perun Hall," also on Croton street. This hall is now a store room of the city fire department.

From that early time until the present there has been no intermission in the regular presentation of dramatic performances by Czech amateurs, although their number was very much reduced by the absence of all the young men during the great war.

The dramatic society "Tyl," founded in 1881, is named for the great Czech playwright, Josef Tyl, who introduced into one of his dramas the song "Where is my home," (see page 5) which has been adopted as the national hymn. The society "Tyl" has 60 members who take its purpose very seriously and produce a drama every month from October to May.

Almost every organization has its dramatic branch,—churches, lodges, sokols, and even the Bohemian Red Cross. The Czech language schools also drill the children in the drama, thus ensuring a degree of familiar use of correct language. The play "Krakonos," acted by the children of the Mt. Pleasant center in March, 1919, may be described as a type of these plays:

Krakonos is a hermit, having an enchanted garden, cultivated under his direction by dwarves, elves and crickets, who after the fashion of the stage do considerable dancing in intervals of hoeing and spading. In the second scene is shown the home of a poor

widow, Mrs. Musil, who is destitute and ill. Her three children, of whom the eldest is Marenka, are hungry and in tears. A kind neighbor, who is also poor, brings in a loaf of bread, which is all she has to offer. There is talk of a magic flower in the garden of Krakonos which would cure the mother. Marenka slips out to find the garden and the flower. As she goes through the dark forest, she is hindered on every hand by the dwarves, elves, fairies and crickets and finally by a very dreadful witch. She is fearfully frightened but persists, and finally reaches the garden, but then does not know which flower is the magic one. Some are red, some are yellow, of pure gold, and in the center is one beautiful white flower. Krakonos appears while she is looking about; he is very tall and frightful, and in a terrible voice accuses her of trying to steal his gold. She tremblingly explains her real purpose, and he, not believing her, tells her that the white flower will cure her mother, but that the one who plucks it will die. Marenka plucks the flower, and is struck by lightning. Krakonos, horrified at the result of his threat, visits the home of the widow, places the white flowers on her breast, and scatters the golden flowers over the two children who are asleep on the bare floor. The mother begins to awaken, and rises recovered. The children waken, and exclaim at the shower of gold which had fallen upon them. A neighbor brings the dreadful news of Marenka's death, and soon two wood-cutters come in, carrying her body on a stretcher. The cottage is full of sorrow borne with courage and fortitude by the mother. Marenka's little form is composed for her burial, and the children gather up the white flowers and place them in her arms for adornment. To the surprise of all, the flowers restore her, even as they had restored the mother; the gold makes the future look fairer, and the final tableau indicates the happiness which comes from family love and unselfish devotion.

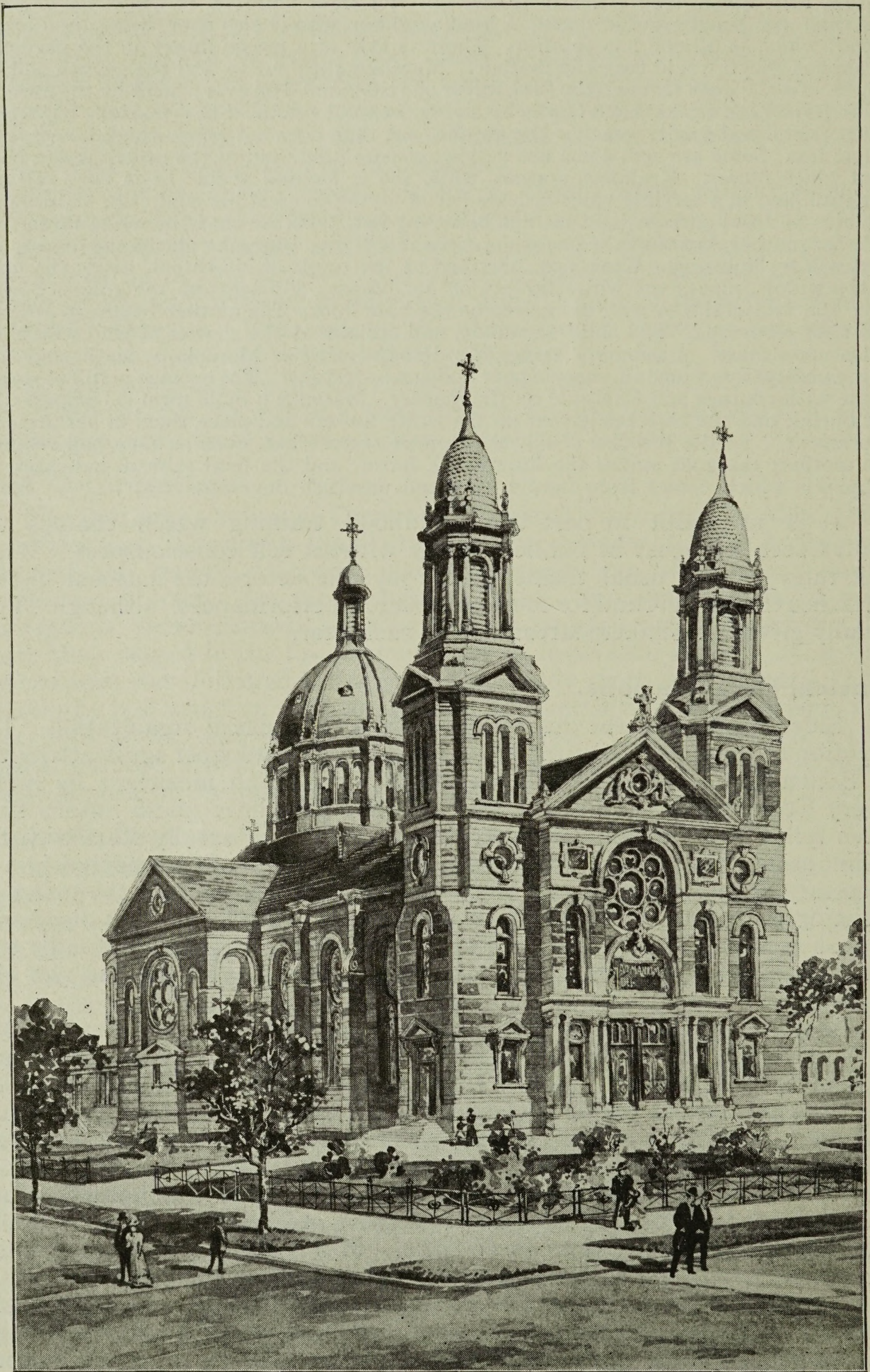
It is no doubt in part this childhood training which enables the adult Czech to appear in public entirely without self consciousness. While folk tales are the usual themes of the juvenile actors, the national history furnishes the background for most of the adult performances, although "Tyl" usually gives one Shakespearean drama each year.

Musical Organizations.

Side by side with the dramatic society is the musical organization. The devotion of the Czech to music is well known. A newspaper squib attributed to Bohemian men a double life,—tailors by day and musicians by night. Every Czech child takes music lessons: little girls have piano lessons first, often followed by some other instrument, while boys usually start with the violin, and often take up wind instruments also. This is considered just as necessary as any other part of their education, and it is often the means of assisting their way through college and professional schools. Its disadvantages as such an aid were indicated by a would-be athlete, who said sadly that the student who depends upon music to help him financially, can not play baseball.

Most of the orchestras of the city are made up largely of Czechs. Mr. C. V. Rychlik, one of the best known violinists of the city, comes from a prominent Czech family. Vincent Charvat was one of the best local cornetists and Edward Krejsa excels as a pianist and as a conductor. The Hruby orchestra, consisting of the talented members of a single family, for years toured the country with great appreciation. The Hruby Conservatory of music, at 5415 Broadway, is an important center of musical instruction, and there are many other Czech teachers of great ability. The Machan family also have much more than local fame. Miss Clarice Balas is now on a concert tour, and John Zamecnik is a widely known composer.

The musical society "Lumir" has maintained its existence continuously from 1867 until the present, and has combined forces with "Hlahol," a younger organization. These choral societies produce each season an opera by some distinguished Czech composer. The most ambitious is Smetana's "Bartered



St. Prokop's Church.

Bride," which has been given several times with the assistance of other choral societies. The 1919 performance was "Hubicka" (The Kiss) by the same composer. The scene of this opera is laid in the mountains of Slovensko, and peasant customs and mountain brigands share in the action. The music was very well rendered, the acting was excellent, and the performance as a whole was fully equal to many seen on the professional stage. The Cleveland music lover should make a point of seeing the annual performance of Lumir-Hlahol.

These dramatic and musical performances are always reviewed critically by the Czech press, who demand a high level of excellence.

Religious Situation.

The religious situation among the Czechs has brought them more notoriety than any other feature of their life in this country, and has been the occasion of much criticism and misunderstanding. It is absurd to think of the compatriots of Huss and of Jerome of Prague as irreligious, but to understand their religious life here it is necessary to review their past history.

Religious Background.

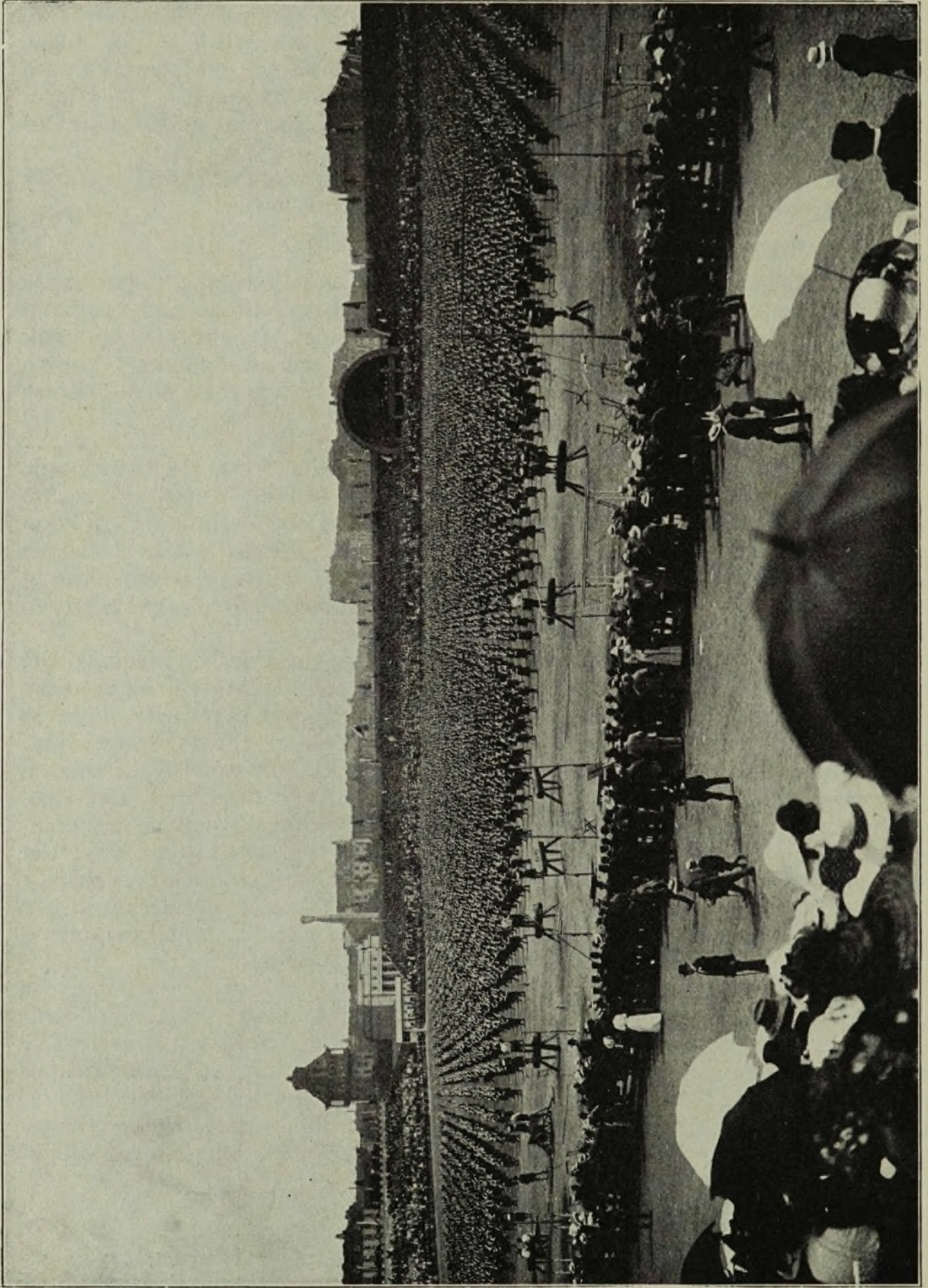
The Christian religion was brought to Bohemia from Constantinople by the apostles Cyril and Methodius, with whom worship found expression through the Slavonic liturgy. This was used with the permission of Pope John VIII in the Czechoslovak country until the middle of the eleventh century, when the Latin liturgy, as generally used in the western church, was substituted for it. A recent petition to the Pope has requested a return to the Slavonic liturgy.

The first of the great religious reformers was the English Wycliffe; the second was Bohemia's "learned doctor," Jan Hus, (John Huss), who was burned as a heretic in 1415. His body perished at the stake, but his spirit will never cease to inspire the Bohemian people. He stands to them for freedom, whether from clericalism and ecclesiastical domination, or for political freedom, or for freedom from German influence; for the spirit of the Czech language, which he made the vehicle of a great literature; for democracy, since "the communion of the cup" was the religious expression of democracy, and since he represented the people rather than the priestly class; for freedom of speech, for which he died; and finally as the incarnation of resistance to oppression, whatever its source. It is because he stands for all these things that his name is borne by Czech societies of every shade of religious belief.

For almost two hundred years Bohemia was a Protestant country, the first in Europe. Assailed on every side by the German race, its political downfall in 1620 was followed by the complete extirpation of Protestantism. The nation of over four million people was reduced to a mere eight hundred thousand, and by will of the emperor all were Roman Catholics. Until 1870 no other religion was tolerated in Bohemia. Then freedom was permitted to certain reformed groups, but not to the Bohemian Brethren, the descendants of the Hussites.

Religion in America.

This background shows the inherited preparation for religious revolt existing among the Czechs when they came to this country. They were almost all Catholics, but the possibility of being whatever they liked was stimulating. Some of the early clergy failed to appreciate this, and employed the same arbi-



Scene from the 1912 Festival.

trary methods of control which they had been accustomed to use in the old country. In Cleveland, the first break came through the opposition of the priest to a fraternal organization. This organization, the Cecho-Slavonic Benevolent Association, seems to have been quite harmless in original intention, having as its object mutual assistance and fraternal insurance. Its members felt that the priest opposed it because he could not dominate it. The priest said that it taught ideas subversive of faith and morality. Recrimination grew fierce and bitter, and nothing was too bad for either to say about the other.

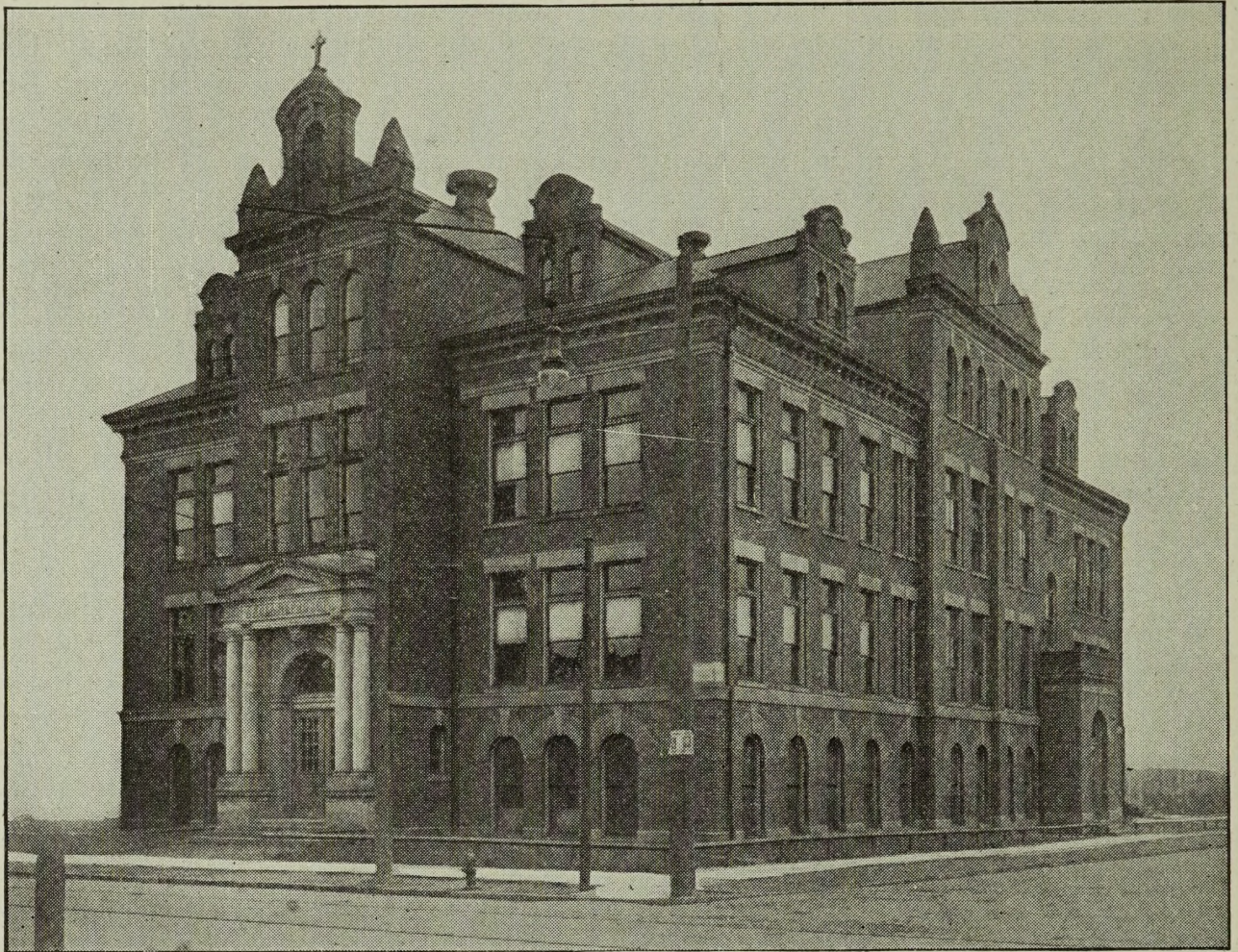
Just at this time Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" was translated into Bohemian, and became the weapon of the liberal party. Robert E. Ingersoll, then in the height of his personal power, became to them the 19th century apostle of religious freedom, and the pendulum of religious faith swung to the furthest extreme of complete denial of all creeds and of every religious form. The Czechs of America were divided into two camps, those who remained faithful to the church, and those who professed an absolute denial of all religion. This denial became a religion in itself. Persecution was enjoyed as the natural corollary of progressive thought. and the free thinking organizations by the end of the 80's included fully half of the Czechs of Cleveland.

Any movement of protest loses impetus when resistance ceases, and the zeal of the free thinking movement could not be passed on in its first fervor from the founders to their successors, who had never personally known the need for protest. Many of the second generation have grown up into what their parents call "the American indifference," while others have found a balance of the pendulum in the Protestant churches.

The present religious situation of the Czechs in Cleveland then has three aspects: there are those who have remained consistently loyal to the Roman Catholic church; these are about half the total number; there are the positive free thinkers, whose number is steadily diminishing; the third group is the Protestants, among whom the young people are joining the English-speaking congregations of the city and entirely ceasing to be identified as Czechs. A fourth group might be made of the young people who are entirely indifferent to religion.

The First Church in Cleveland.

The first Czech priest in Cleveland was the Rev. Antonin Krasny, who came to the city in 1857, after eight years in an Austrian prison because of his part in the Revolution of 1848. In prison he had contracted an illness from which he never afterwards was free, and which was the cause of his death in 1870. His sufferings in his country's cause undoubtedly furnished a favorable atmosphere among his countrymen here, and he was very much liked. As pastor of St. Joseph's German church on Woodland avenue, he ministered also to the Czechs of the city. In 1863 they organized within St. Joseph's church the society of St. John Nepomucene, which was the nucleus of the first Czech church. This church was founded in 1867 and named St. Vaclav's after the first Christian king of Bohemia, who reigned from 928 to 936 and was afterwards canonized. Later the official name of the church was changed to the Latinized form St. Wenceslas. The first church building, erected in the fall of 1867, at the corner of Arch and Burwell streets, was with great effort completed before Christmas, and the first service actually took place on Dec. 22. A rectory and school building were added two years later, and from this center initiative was furnished for the establishment of the other early Czech



St. Prokop's School.

parishes. In 1886, St. Wenceslas church followed its congregation to the Broadway neighborhood, and erected a beautiful new church at the corner of Broadway and East 37th streets. Since then both churches have been maintained for service, the rectory remaining at 2666 East 35th Place.

The old school building on Burwell avenue is used by the higher grades, while the younger children attend school in a building next the new church, which building also houses the teachers, who are Sisters of St. Joseph. The school at present has about 400 pupils.

Rev. Antonin Hynek, who came to this parish in 1873, spent a long life in its care, remaining in charge until his death in 1917. During his last years, however, his ill health placed most of the duties of the parish upon his assistant Rev. Joseph W. Koudelka, who has since been appointed pastor. Father Koudelka is a nephew of Bishop Koudelka. The present situation of St. Wenceslas is a difficult one, since it is the problem of a changing neighborhood. The prosperous and progressive parishioners have all moved farther out, and the district is becoming one of a very mixed population, in which the Czech will not long predominate.

St. Prokop's Church.

The second Czech parish in the city was founded in 1874 on the west side. It was named for St. Prokop, who was one of the early pupils of SS. Cyril and Methodius, and was the founder of a religious order adapted especially to the needs of the Slav race. The first pastor was the Rev. Joseph M. Koudelka,

now bishop of Wisconsin, who is the only Czech yet raised to a bishopric in the Roman Catholic church in this country. The present pastor is the Rev. Peter M. Cerveny, who has been in charge of the parish since 1901 and has superintended the erection of most of the buildings now in use. St. Prokop's church is at the corner of West 41st street and Trent avenue, and the parish buildings extend through to Newark avenue, and constitute one of the most complete church plants in the city.

The church itself is a fine large edifice, the interior decorations of which were all specially designed. The baptistry is of black Russian marble, and the stations of the cross are excellent statuary groups. Within the chancel are replicas of two miraculous statues on the Holy Mountain (Svata Hora) in Bohemia. They are known as "The Virgin of Prague" and "The Infant of Prague" and many pilgrimages are made to the originals. These copies are exact duplicates of the figures, embroidered robes, and hand-wrought golden crowns set with jewels, and when ready for Cleveland they were touched to the miraculous originals.

St. Prokop's is a really beautiful church, the finest of the Czech churches in the city. Its service flag bears 176 stars, of which six are now in gold. The names of these six young men are recorded on a memorial tablet. To accommodate the large congregation, four sermons are preached every Sunday, one of which is always in English.

The parochial school building is also up to the standard of the very best in school buildings. Ample space, well lighted and clean hallways, and well equipped school rooms put it in a different class from most parochial schools buildings. There is a kindergarten, the only one in a Catholic school in Cleveland; among Bohemian parochial schools there is only one other, which is in Chicago. Besides the kindergarten and the eight grades, two years of commercial work are given. A special teacher of music gives vocal and instrumental lessons to classes and individuals. The teachers belong to the Sisters of Notre Dame; they have in their charge 800 pupils.

In the building is a library of both English and Bohemian books, especially strong in Czech folk-lore; there is also a well equipped gymnasium, and provision for basket ball, indoor baseball, and similar sports; the gymnasium furnishes also an excellent dancing floor for social nights.

On the ground floor is the theater, with a stage large enough to mass three hundred children upon it and with several sets of good scenery. Dramatic performances are given here regularly by the parish dramatic society named for the Czech poet, Boleslav Jablonsky.

On Newark avenue is the club house, into which the old church was altered. The ground floor is divided into lodge rooms; the upper floor is a recreation hall. Three tables offer opportunity for billiards and pool and a second room is equipped for table games. A small stage is convenient for boxing exhibitions and other entertainments. While these rooms are used chiefly by men, "ladies' nights" keep the place from becoming exclusively masculine.

The parish property includes also a handsome rectory, harmonizing in architecture with church and school; two houses connected by a covered passage for the teachers; a house for the janitor; and a separate heating plant. A monthly parish paper is called "Mesicni Viestnik" (The Monthly Messenger).

Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

When the Czechs began to move out Broadway, Father Hynek bought land at Hamm avenue and East 54th street where the parish of Our Lady of



Our Lady of Lourdes School and Church.

Lourdes was established in 1883, with Rev. Stephen Furdek as its pastor. Father Furdek was a Slovak and a national leader in Slovak affairs, while remaining all his life the pastor of this Czech parish. All classes of people pronounce upon him the ideal obituary, "He was a very good man." Our Lady of Lourdes grew to a commanding position under his care, and is still the largest Bohemian parish in the city, having a membership of about six thousand persons. The parochial school has a registration of 900 pupils who are taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

The parish organization of our Lady of Lourdes is very extensive. There are forty-five societies, several of which are uniformed organizations whose appearance adds color to the parish celebrations. Among them are the Knights of Columbus, the Cadets of St. Alexander, the Hunters of St. George, the Catholic Foresters, and the parish Sokol organization. The musical and dramatic society, "Antonin Dvorak", named for the great Czech composer, has a membership of 300 persons, and a second one is called the "Vaclav Benes Trebiszky Society," after the popular Czech novelist. These societies present dramas in the parish hall at frequent intervals. A parish paper "Farnik" (the Parishioner) is published semi-monthly and is of newspaper size.

A number of Cleveland priests now holding important charges have served their apprenticeship as assistants at Our Lady of Lourdes. Among them are Rev. V. J. Horak, pastor of St. Martin's Slovak church; Rev. J. W. Becka, of St. Adalbert's Bohemian parish; and the Rev. V. A. Chaloupka, of the Slovak parish of St. Mary of the Nativity. The present assistant, Rev. C. W. Dik, has carried the entire responsibility of the parish during considerable intervals in the last five years; first during the illness of Father Furdek and the interim before the appointment of his successor, Rev. Oldrich Zlamal, and lately during the absence of Father Zlamal in the nationalistic work which has resulted so splendidly.

The essential unity of the Czechoslovak state is shown in the history of this Czech parish and its two pastors: Father Furdek, a Slovak, whose great interest outside his parish was the welfare and improvement of the Slovak race; and Father Zlamal, a Moravian, previously pastor of a Slovak parish, whose patriotic services have greatly contributed to the success of the Czechoslovak cause.

Until the war, a great gulf yawned between Catholic and free thinking Czechs. Father Zlamal was a strong factor among the wise leaders who bridged the chasm so that all might work together for the common cause. He spent much time during the years 1917 and 1918 making addresses and otherwise working for the cause in this country, and during the period from February to September, 1919, as a chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, he carried the message of American sympathy and support to the people of Bohemia. Father Zlamal and Monsignor Bouska, of Tabor, South Dakota, were commissioned by the Holy See to explain to the people of the new republic the American plan of the separation of church and state. In pursuit of this mission Father Zlamal traveled through the country addressing Czecho-Slovaks of every faith, and so helped to prepare public sentiment for the present Commission on the Separation of Church and State. His return in September was celebrated by an enthusiastic reception on the part of his parishioners, to many of whom he brought direct word from their relatives whom he had seen and talked with in the old country.

St. Adalbert's Church.

St. Adalbert's church was formed in "East Cleveland" in 1882, and was originally called St. Vojtech, which is the Czech form of the same name. It is situated at 2347 East 83rd street, between Quincy and Central avenues. When the new church was completed recently, the old one was converted into a gymnasium, where a systematic athletic program is carried out. The bell of the new church rings the sweeter, because it was specially made in Bohemia. The parochial school is taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame, and has about 300 pupils. The parish paper is "Mesicni Prehled" (Monthly Review).

Church of St. John Nepomucene.

The parish of St. John Nepomucene is an outgrowth of "Our Lady of Lourdes" parish. It was founded in 1902, and has had as its pastor since its formation the Rev. F. J. Hroch. A large new church of good architectural design has just been completed at Fleet avenue and East 50th street and the old church has been altered into school rooms. A handsome rectory on Independence road, and a building with school rooms on the ground floor and residence space for teachers on the second floor complete the present group of buildings. There are 650 children in the school, and the teachers are Sisters of St. Dominic.

Holy Family Church.

The Church of the Holy Family was built some years ago as a small chapel at East 131st street and Chapelside avenue, and was maintained as a chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes. It has now grown into a separate parish, and a fine church building is projected, to care for the needs of one of the most rapidly growing parts of the city.

Protestant Churches.

The Protestant Bohemian churches make a comparatively small showing, and it is probable that their special mission is nearly fulfilled. They are as follows: Cyril Congregational church, at West 43rd street and Cyril avenue, Rev. John Musil, pastor; Emanuel Congregational Church, 2373 East 82nd st.; Mizpah Congregational Church, East 59th street, near Fleet avenue, Rev. Philip Reitingner, pastor; Broadway Methodist Episcopal Church, Broadway and Gallup avenues, Rev. E. E. Pierce, pastor, Rev. V. J. Louzecky, Bohemian pastor.

The original members of these churches were the comparatively small number of Czechs who, on leaving the Roman Catholic Church, did not swing to the free thinking extreme and the equally small number of Protestant immigrants. Their organizations are losing power simply because their second generation are completely absorbed into American life and English speaking churches. The system of the Roman Catholic church promotes solidarity of races, the young people being held to the parish allegiance of their parents. As the older people disappear from the congregations the churches will necessarily come to be entirely English speaking, but the change comes slowly. Among the Protestants, on the contrary, no effort is made to hold the second generation to the Bohemian language, and their young people choose their church affiliations out of the whole range of city opportunities.

All these churches do work which is interesting and vital, and their organization is very dear to the older members of their congregations, to

whom Protestantism is not only a religion, but also an expression of freedom. Mizpah, which was planned as a Polish mission, but developed into a Bohemian one, has been self-supporting from the start, and it has the largest group of active young members. It is therefore quite probable that it may develop into a strong American church.

The Broadway Methodist Episcopal is, doing the largest work at present, and this is possible because it maintains its Bohemian organization only as supplementary to its English. Its Sunday school has long been an important influence in the community, and within the last few years a large program of community service has been undertaken. The new church on Broadway, opposite Magnet avenue, now nearing completion, will afford enlarged opportunities, and it is planned to retain the old building as a center for social activities. The work is social in the broadest sense, and every effort is made to avoid even the suspicion of proselyting.

National Halls

Among the Czechs of liberal thought, the national halls supply centers corresponding in a way to the church centers of the religiously loyal, and it must be admitted that the national halls offer more attractions on the social side than most of the churches. They are genuine social centers, and they thrive because they are the expression by the people themselves of their own definite social desires.

The largest and most important of these halls is the Bohemian National Hall at 4939 Broadway, and its organization may be described as typical of them all. It is owned by the community, having been erected in 1889 by personal gifts, money raised by bazaars and the like, and by contributions which took the form of shares of stock on the part of various organizations officially combining in the efforts for the building. These shares have been gradually paid off from the income of the building, until now, of the thirty-four societies having stock, none has more than \$100. These societies include twelve chapters of C. S. P. S. and nine chapters of women's beneficiary organizations, the other thirteen societies having varied aims and purposes. The management rests in a board called the Patronat, consisting on two delegates from each of these societies. The Patronat annually elect from their own number a board of thirteen directors who are responsible for the management of the building during their term of office. Joseph Frcka, as president of the board of directors, is a hard-working executive officer. Seventy-three societies meet here regularly, some as often as once a week, others only once a month. The property is now worth about \$80,000. It consists of a large brick building, with stores on the front of the ground floor. Between these stores is a broad entrance to the hall proper. On the ground floor are the ticket stand, several large committee rooms, and a small theatre, designed especially for children's entertainments. This room is also used for athletic work. Living quarters for the janitor ensure his continual presence. On the second floor is the large theatre, which with the balcony will seat 1000 persons. Check rooms, retiring rooms, refreshment room, dressing rooms for actors, and the stage, occupy the rest of the floor. The drop curtain is a view of one of the bridges of "Golden Prague" with the Hradcany in the background, and there are many sets of scenery. The third and fourth floors are divided into lodge rooms, and the numerous group photographs on the walls furnish material for a history of their respective organizations.

Almost every room has a portrait of John Huss, and of Zizka, and also a portrait of the patriot or writer, for whom the individual lodge is named. Portraits of Fugner and Tyrs and trophies of contests won, adorn the walls of the room used by the Sokols.

In the lobby a large, hand-carved frame contains mementoes from the graves of Bohemia's great,—composers, musicians, poets, patriots and novelists are all represented by this collection, made in Bohemia by Joseph Stibr and framed in Cleveland by Alois Klimes.

An addition to the original building contains four school rooms for the use of the Czech language schools, concerning which mention will be made later.

The next largest hall is the Bohemian Sokol Hall at 4314 Clark avenue, which is a center for the West Side. This hall was purchased from the Hungarians. A "garden" furnishes a place for summer gatherings, with a pavilion for dancing and other entertainment.

The Bohemian American Hall, (Ceska America Sin) at 8802 Quincy avenue is a rallying place for its neighborhood. It was built in 1910 by the combined efforts of eleven organizations, and every inch of the space is fully used. There are school rooms and lodge rooms, all having on their walls portraits of the national heroes, Huss and Zizka, while the main part of the building is the large hall which is also used as a gymnasium and as a dance hall. The stage is well proportioned with good dressing rooms, and the drop curtain depicts the castle of Probulov in southern Bohemia.

Jan Amos Komensky Hall, at East 131st street and Lambert avenue is named for the great educator of whom all Czechs are justly proud. It furnishes an important contribution to the neighborhood life of a young community where no other organization is attempting social activities. Six societies were in its original Patronat, and its equipment and management is distinctly high class. One set of scenery cost \$700, and the curtain is a picture of Hradcany castle, in which, it is proudly stated, President Masaryk now has his official residence. There are two school rooms, attended on Saturdays and Sundays by 200 children, who are graded into four classes.

The "Ceska Spolkova Sin" (Bohemian Lodge Hall,) at 11306 Buckeye road is the youngest of these community halls; it was erected in 1916, and the present building is regarded as the nucleus to which additions will be made as soon as war conditions are fully past. It consists now of one large hall which undergoes frequent transformations. An adjustable stage makes it a theatre; adjustable desks make it a school room; athletic apparatus, in turn, converts it into a gymnasium; simple furniture makes it into a lodge hall, while the removal of all furniture makes the final transformation into a ball room.

All these halls are equipped with kitchens and refreshment rooms, and are the scenes of frequent community dances. The dramatic performance is invariably followed by a dance, the chairs being removed and the floor cleared with lightning rapidity. These dances are conducted in such a way as to furnish wholesome pleasure to the young people. They are in no sense promiscuous affairs, the supervision being very close. In many cases all guests are registered by name. Since the attendance is that of a homogeneous social group, the individual guests are almost always known either by family or by personal reputation, to the management, and the possibility of undesirable associations is reduced to a minimum.



Bohemian National Hall.

Thus, through schools, gymnasiums, lodges, musical and dramatic performances, receptions and dances, these halls furnish social life and a variety of interests for every age in their community.

Czech Language Schools

The schools are under the direction of the "Bohemian Free Thinkers School Organization," whose headquarters is in Chicago.

The Czech loves his native language, which was, during the centuries of Austrian oppression, his only means of national assertion. Now he wishes his children to retain this tie to the past, and it is only through special effort that they have any chance to do so, since English is their ordinary language. These schools have therefore a decidedly cultural value, since they add to the child's equipment knowledge of a second language, and through that language access to the treasures of history and literature which are legitimately

their own by right of inheritance. The dramatic entertainments given by the children are designed to familiarize them with the use of correct Bohemian. They use text books compiled by Vojta Benes, a brother of the present minister of foreign affairs in Czecho-Slovakia, and the five local schools secure a co-ordination of effort through the "Association of Bohemian Freethinking Schools," consisting of the eighteen teachers and an equal number of representatives from the supporting societies.

■ The Catholic children have hitherto had instruction in the Czech language in connection with the religious instruction in the parochial schools, but in recent years the number of teachers qualified for this instruction has become so small that this is now by no means universal.

It is unfortunately true that in spite of all effort on the part of parents and teachers, comparatively few young people are growing up to read the Czech language. Many speak it because of the presence in the home of grandparents who have never learned English, but they throw away their opportunity to know its fine literature and associations.

The Sokols.

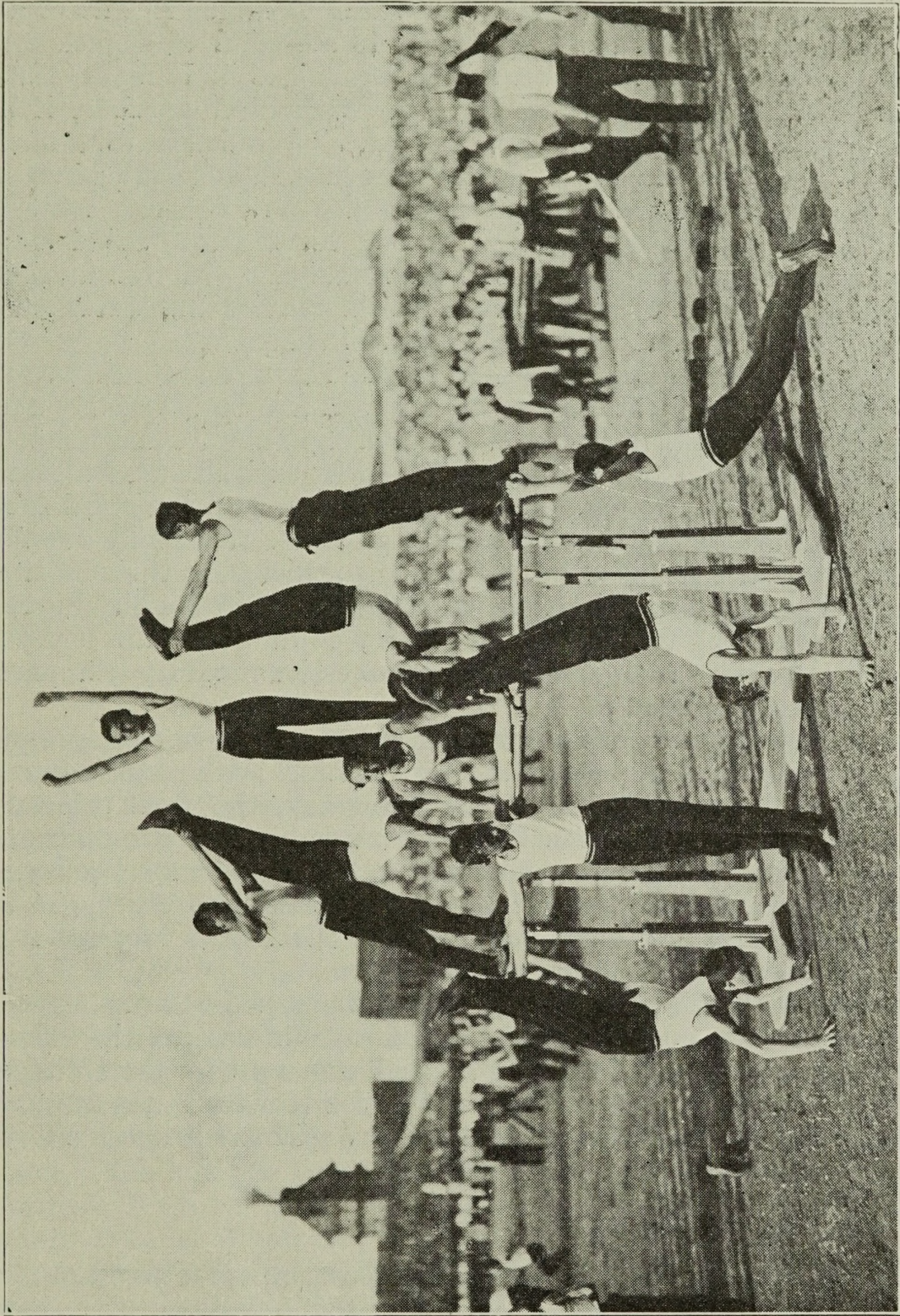
Gymnastic work stands with music and the drama as among the things without which the Czech cannot live. Gymnasiums have been mentioned as part of the equipment of churches and national halls. A large proportion of the athletic groups using these gymnasiums are branches of the great Sokol organization, which, founded in Prague in 1862, has spread throughout the Slav world.

"Sokol" means falcon. This bird is native to Bohemia, and is conspicuous there for its strength, freedom, and swiftness. The costume of the Sokol societies is characterized by a falcon's feather in the cap.

The founders of the organization were Dr. Miroslav Tyrs and Jindrich Fuegner, two young men of vision, who saw in physical education a means of developing in the Czech nation firmness, self-consciousness, and racial pride. The Austrian government, which looked with suspicion on every kind of public gathering, did not at the beginning scent danger in this union of men for the sole ostensible purpose of gymnastic training and systematic physical development, and the organization spread like wildfire. Subsequent persecution only gave tenacity to the adherents of the movement whose aim is summarized as the effort to produce "brave, courageous young men, strong and orderly men in line."

A sound mind in a sound body, inspired by patriotism and the spirit of brotherhood, is the aim of the Sokol. Physical and moral perfection, patriotism, democracy and progress are the definite aims. A system of gymnastics worked out by the founder, Tyrs, is the basis of all the physical training.

Classes for girls and women, and for children grouped according to age, extend the benefits of this training. In 1912 a great tournament took place in Prague, in which 13,000 persons were on the field at one time in perfect alignment. It is probable that no meet of equal size and perfection of work was ever held in the world before. The next great festival will take place, not in an Austrian Bohemia, but in the free Czechoslovak Republic, in whose establishment the Sokols justly claim a large share. About thirty Cleveland Czechs attended the 1912 festival, going on a special ship which flew the Czech flag. On the voyage, Mr. Frank J. Svoboda, of the daily American,



Field Day Exhibition.

published a chronicle "Cech na Oceanu" (The Bohemian on the Ocean) whose eight numbers furnish an interesting record of the trip.

As gymnastics provide for the sound body, so the Sokol desire for a sound mind seeks its goal through dramatic and musical training, lectures on educational subjects and the establishment of libraries.

In Cleveland "Sokol Cech" was founded in 1879; it owns its own hall at 4820 Wendell avenue, and has at present 148 men and 46 women members. "Sokol Nova Vlast" (the new Fatherland) organized in January, 1893, gives the name to the Bohemian Sokol Hall on Clark avenue, where it has 133 men and 95 women members; "Sokol Cleveland," founded in 1895, having 172 men and 122 women members, has built its own hall at 8932 Quincy avenue.

"Sokol Tyrs," founded in 1906, meets at 11110 Buckeye road with 54 men and 60 women members, while the youngest society, "Sokol Havlicek," meets in the Bohemian National Hall on Broadway with 132 men and 105 women members. This Sokol is named for the patriot and statesman, Karel Havlicek, who died a martyr to the freedom of the press.

All the Sokols conduct gymnastic classes in groups according to age and sex. Sokol Cleveland, for example, has one class for young boys; one for little girls; another for girls from 10 to 15 years of age; one for men; and one for women. Exhibitions of Sokol work are given by each branch at least once a year. This annual "home day" is a very pleasant occasion. All the family from the grandparents to the tiny children go to see the family member take part. An orchestra furnishes music and the athletes do their most spectacular feats. The girls wear short skirts of navy blue, and white blouses with red ties; the men, long trousers of blue jersey cloth, and white jerseys edged at neck and arms with red,—a costume of excessive modesty compared with that of our college athletes.

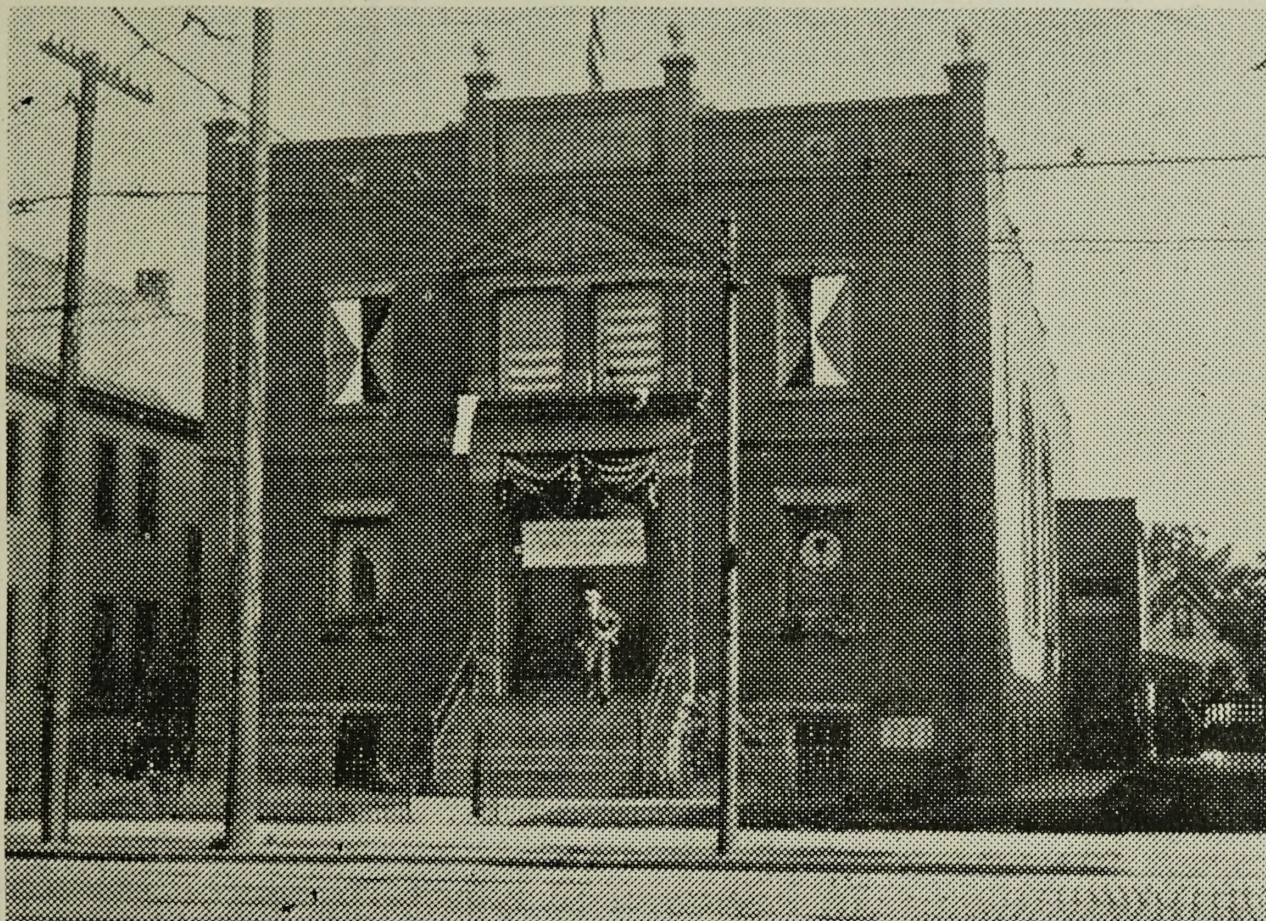
Exercises on the horizontal bar, parallel bars, the horses, jumping and calisthenics constitute the program, terminating with really fine "living pictures." At Sokol Cleveland's last home-day, the final tableau was a living pyramid reaching to the ceiling—a remarkable exhibition for amateurs.

An Instructors' branch, meeting monthly, secures uniformity of effort, and an annual field day brings all local Sokols together in a brilliant spectacle. Cleveland Sokols exhibit a proud collection of trophies from general conventions of the American organization.

Throughout the United States, the Sokols rushed to arms at the beginning of the war, and quickly demonstrated in military life, the value of the Sokol training. In Cleveland, four who could not wait for the United States, enlisted in the Canadian army; 74 served in the United States army; and 24, classed as "enemy aliens" fought in the Czecho-Slovak army in France.

Fraternal Organizations.

Allusion has been made to the fraternal societies. These are a striking feature of all Slav life in America, and the system originated with the Czechs, who were the first of the Slav immigrants. In 1854 the Czecho-Slavonic Benevolent Society was founded in St. Louis. The Czech name is Cesko-Slovansky Podporujici Spolek, which is usually shortened to the initials "C. S. P. S." and pronounced "Chesspass." The motto of the organization is "Harmony, Equality, Brotherhood," and the practical expression of this motto is through its organization as a mutual benefit association. Most of



Sokol Cleveland Hall.

the early members served in the Union army during the Civil War, and many benefits were paid to the dependents of men who died upon the battlefield.

The first Cleveland branch was "Svornost" (Harmony,) founded in 1870 as the third branch of the national organization. There are now 23 C. S. P. S. lodges in Cleveland, all of them bearing interesting and distinctive names, most of which refer in some way to the national history. Zizka, the great military genius of Bohemia, whose army of peasants and mechanics, with iron flails and wooden clubs, defeated the mail-clad knights of Europe, is memorialized by three lodges, named respectively, Zizka, "Zizkuv Tabor" (the Camp of Zizka) and "Zizkuv Mec" (the Sword of Zizka) Peter Chelcicky, the Czech Tolstoi, Machar the Poet, and Jan Kollar, poet and patriot, are others whose names are borne by Cleveland lodges.

The location of the Supreme Lodge is determined by each quadrennial convention. The last one sent it to Cleveland, where offices are occupied in the Bohemian National Hall. The supreme president is Karel Bernreiter, 8719 Quincy avenue, secretary, J. V. Lunak, and treasurer, C. O. Dolezal.

The total membership is 23,262, and "Organ Bratrstva" is the official bulletin.

Under the Supreme lodge are eleven Grand Lodges, Cleveland being the seat of the Ohio Grand Lodge, whose president is James Honcik, of East 116th street, secretary, Alfred Huml, 3410 East 52nd street. Included in this Grand Lodge are 31 individual lodges, having 3472 members.

Another large organization of national scope is the "Bratrská Jednota" (Fraternal Union), which was founded in Cleveland in 1885, and a third is "Jednota Taboritu," which includes both men and women in separate lodges.

Similar women's societies are the "Sesterska Podporujici Jednota" (Benevolent Sisterhood Union), and the "Jednota Ceskych Dam" (Union of Czech women) which was organized in Cleveland in 1870. These are usually spoken of by their initials. "J. C. D." has in the United States 144 branches, and about 23,000 members; of these 21 branches, with a membership of between 2,000 and 3,000 are in Cleveland. Mrs. K. Huspaska, 4236 East 128th street, is president of the Grand Lodge of the State of Ohio, Mrs. Anna Baloun, 4315 Trowbridge avenue, secretary. Mrs. Caroline Rychlik, who was one of the organizers and has always been a very active member is affectionately called "the mother of the Bohemian lodges." "S. P. J." has 72 branches with over 15,000 members, 22 branches and more than one-fifth of the members being in Cleveland.

Other women's societies are the "Jednota Cesky Vlastenek" (United Bohemian Women Patriots) and the local society "Vlasta," which was the first of the ladies' lodges and celebrates its fiftieth anniversary on Feb. 1st, 1920.

Catholic organizations are the "First Czech Roman Catholic Union", of which the Supreme President is Vincent Kolda, 4352 Martin avenue, and the secretary is F. J. Adam, 1436 West 18th street, Chicago. The sister society of Czech Roman Catholic Ladies has among its officers two Cleveland women: Mrs. Karolina Tuhacek and Mrs. Marie Kapl.

The "Czech Roman Catholic Benefit Society of St. John Nepomucene" is a state organization, having Frankisek Vodrazka, 2477 East 89th street as president, and Frantisek Jarousek, 3423 East 54th street, as secretary.

A local organization is the Union of Czech Roman Catholic women of Cleveland, of which the president is Mrs. A. Hlavin, 13022 Miles avenue, and the secretary is Mrs. Marie Ineman, 5652 Hamlet avenue.

Other Lodges.

A fraternal organization of a more familiar type is Palacky Lodge, No. 317 of the Knights of Pythias, which was organized in 1889, and now with 750 members is the largest K. P. lodge in Ohio. Its name is in honor of the great historian, who is fondly called "Father Palacky." Lodge Prokop the Great, No. 708 Independent Order of Odd Fellows, is named for that Prokop upon whom fell Zizka's mantle in Bohemia's 17th century struggle for liberty.

Business Associations.

The Mt. Pleasant Improvement Club, Frank Mares, president, is devoted to the development, improvement, and commercial interests of that district. Similarly the Buckeye Road Improvement Club seeks the interests of its neighborhood. Its president is Joseph Skalnicky, 11414 Parkview avenue.

Outdoor Clubs.

Sport clubs are a natural development of the Czech fondness for outdoor life and recreation. The Czech Sport Club has as its president James Kadlec, 4927 Broadway. The Karlina Hunting Club bears the name by which the Fleet avenue Bohemian settlement is known among the Czechs. The Ohio Fishing Club meets in the National Hall on Broadway, where it plans outings and swaps fish stories. The Rabbit Breeders' Club attempts to reduce the high cost of meat by furnishing a home grown variety.

Social Clubs.

"Damska Beseda," which means "Ladies' Party," is the name of groups that meet socially at the homes of their members in five different parts of the city; while the "Ceska Narodna Beseda" is a social club of men, owning a club house at 5334 Broadway.

The Bohemian Old Settlers' association is another social organization which affords great pleasure to its members. Kamil Wiesenberger is president, and this organization with the co-operation of many others, is interested actively in the effort to establish a "Bohemian Old People's Home." This effort was in obedience during the war, but is now being actively resumed.

Education.

In the matter of education, the Czech utilizes every opportunity for himself and tries to gain for his children more than he has had. Girls are considered quite as fit as boys for education, and the roster of the various high schools, particularly South, Lincoln, East Technical, and the High School of Commerce show very large proportion of Czech names. Many of the girls go to Normal school, and become teachers, the class of 1919 containing a large number of Czech names. A good proportion also go to college, and many young men take up the professions of law, medicine, and dentistry.

Dr. Joseph Sykora, who was graduated from the Cleveland Medical College and began practice in 1875, was the first Bohemian doctor. For many years he drove a yellow horse, which became familiar to all Czech Cleveland, and it was a common saying that as soon as the yellow horse appeared upon the street, the patient began to recover.

Joseph Jicha, a Cleveland young man of Czech parentage won the first prize at the Cleveland School of Art in 1919, and the second honors went to a Bohemian girl, Helen Srp, of Bedford.

During the last two winters, the Bohemian-Russian club consisting of about 50 persons, has met twice a week with a Russian teacher to study the Russian language. Their object is three fold; first cultural; second, to prepare themselves to further trade relations with Russia; and third, to assist in the development of fellowship throughout the Slav race.

The Broadway Library.

The love of books is a natural accompaniment of intelligence and education, therefore it is not surprising that as early as 1895, the Czechs of Cleveland requested the addition of Bohemian books to the public library. This request was granted soon after, and ever since Czech literature has been given place and consideration. When the present system of branch libraries was in its infancy, the Czechs of the Broadway district presented a petition, which resulted in the erection in 1906 of the Broadway Branch Library at Broadway and East 55th streets. The overwhelming nature of the first demands upon it are a permanent tradition in the library organization. Not a book was left in the childrens' room at the end of the first day, and Bohemian books had to be purchased as emergency orders wherever they could be found, in order to satisfy what seemed to be an insatiable demand. After the first rush was over, a collection of 4,000 volumes was found to be adequate to the needs in the Bohemian language, the books being read most by the old people and the newcomers. The Broadway library has 11,000 active borrowers, of whom about sixty-five per cent are either Czech or of Czech



The Children's Room in the Broadway Library

parentage, and its total circulation has gone up to 196,000 volumes in a year, with a daily reading room attendance, during the winter months, of over one thousand.

Other libraries in Czech centers are the Quincy Branch at Quincy avenue and East 79th street, and the Clark avenue Branch at 4620 Clark avenue, the Milford School Branch and the Rice School Branch. Many other library agencies circulate some Bohemian books, the total for the library system having been 44,423 in 1914. Since that time, owing to the lack of new titles and replacements on account of the war, there has been a slight drop in the Bohemian circulation, but every day now people ask if any new books have yet been received.

Americanization.

The Czech who comes to America comes with the determination to adjust himself to American conditions just as soon as possible and he knows what to expect better than the immigrants of races newer to this country. In Cleveland he seeks out the classes for beginners in English and soon, if he has any kind of a teacher, masters enough of the language for practical purposes at least. He brought his family with him when he came, burning all bridges behind him, and he buys a home at the earliest possible moment and identifies himself also as an American citizen. Some of the first names in the first record book of the Naturalization Office of the Federal Court are Czech names, those of the pioneers of the early 50's, who set the example since followed almost universally.

Politics.

The Czechs are however not politicians, and do not seek place nor political preferment. They are independent voters; a majority are probably democrats, but they split the ticket or vote independently whenever the character of the issues or the personality of the candidate makes an appeal to them. Thus the 13th ward, typically Czech, in 1917 went democratic for councilman and president, and republican for mayor. This is quite typical, the newspapers also being independent in politics. Cleveland Czechs holding public offices at present are the Hon. John J. Babka, Member of Congress, A. F. Sprosty, Director of Public Safety, and Councilmen Kadlecek of the 13th ward, Zmunt of the 7th, and Soika of the 16th. A. W. Chaloupka is assistant county prosecutor, and Rev. John Prucha has rendered in the City Immigration Bureau services of the greatest value.

There has always been an element of socialism among the Czechs, but it is socialism of the constructive type which is organizing the Czecho-Slovak Republic. There are nine branches of the Bohemian Socialist party in Cleveland at present. Several of these are quite as much social as political in their activities, having musical and dramatic branches. The Czech socialists of Cleveland are to a large extent immigrants of the last ten or fifteen years, the older residents tending toward conservatism.

Occupations.

In occupation the Bohemian of Cleveland is in general the skilled workman. There are many tailors, although not so large a proportion as formerly, many of the women also working in the garment trades. There are many skilled workers in shops and trades of every kind. Two unions of carpenters and one of bakers, and an "Educational Club of Czech Foundrymen" compose the list of labor unions which are distinguished as Czech, but of course the large number belong to unions in which there is no distinction of nationality.

The streets of Czech neighborhoods are lined with good stores where every class of merchandise is handled. Bakeries are numerous, since Czech baked goods are distinctive and too good to be given up. Music stores are also conspicuous, as no people in the city buy more musical instruments than the Czechs.

Manufacturing.

Small manufacturing concerns, employing from ten to twenty men, are characteristic of the Czechs in Cleveland, the only large concern being the Vlcek Tool Company at 10709 Quincy avenue, now moving to a new plant at 8701 Mt. Auburn avenue.

This concern is an exhibition of Czech industry, business sagacity, and ability. Mr. Frank J. Vlcek, the owner, came to this country an immigrant lad of eighteen, equipped only with his trade, that of blacksmith, to which he had added training in surgical instrument making. In 1893 he had a blacksmith shop on Central avenue, small enough to be moved on a wagon when removal became expedient. From that humble beginning he has developed the largest business in the country in tools; eighty-five per cent of the automobiles of the United States are equipped with Vlcek tool-kits. Four hundred men are employed, with improvements planned which will enroll a force of 600 within another year. The new plant, into which the shops will be entirely removed by the end of 1919, represents an investment of \$500,000, with a second part of equal

size to follow immediately. Czecho-Slovaks find pleasure in working for their countryman, and about three-fourths of the present force are of that race. Mr. Vlcek is ambitious to see all his employees advance, and, regarding mastery of the English language as essential to this, he has classes in English in the factory and throws all his personal influence in favor of education and progress. The famous "Message to Garcia" was translated into Bohemian at Mr. Vlcek's expense, and by him distributed to his men.

The Forest City Brewery is a Czech concern, the Bohemians being famous as brewers. The American saloon is a feature of the Americanization of the Czechs which has been greatly to their disadvantage. In the old country the "hosпода" was a social place where a man went in the evening, often with his family, sat at a table with a table cloth, his friends at the next table, drank a glass or two of beer, listened to the music, looked at the new journals, and went home rested and refreshed. In America, where drinks are taken standing and without the social adjuncts, the tendency becomes of course to drink too much and to use stronger drinks. The saloonkeeper who knows the old country customs, adopts the American first because it is the style in this country, and then because he finds that he can make more money. While there is much regret for the good Bohemian beer, there is no good Czech who regrets the departure of the American saloon.

Cleveland Czechs and the War.

To give any adequate account of the part of Cleveland Czechs in the great war would require a volume in itself. The break up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was achieved by the Czechs within the kingdom, and they had courage to stake all on the throw because they were supported by the Czechs in America, of whom the Cleveland Czechs are an important part. The Czecho-Slovak army in Russia was financed by American Czechs, Cleveland alone having contributed a quarter of a million dollars to the cause. Ven Svarc and Joseph Martinek of this city spent the year 1917 in Russia, and Mr. Martinek is now in Siberia, where his mission is to carry news and comfort to the Czecho-Slovak army, who, without opportunity of returning home after a year of peace are in danger of feeling themselves deserted and abandoned by the Allies to whom they brought success.

Three hundred and fifty men went from Cleveland to join the Czecho-Slovak army in France. The following is an incomplete list of the Cleveland Czechs who, in the Czecho-Slovak and in the United States armies, received decorations for valor:

Joseph Andel.....	3459 East 114th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Frank Cihan.....	13006 Kinsman Ave.....	Croix d'guerre
August Habart.....		Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Prokop Hlavaty.....		U. S. distinguished service medal.
Anton Hobl.....		Czecho-Slovak decoration.
John Horak.....	3725 East 50th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Joseph Hrbek.....	5011 Hamm Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Louis Kalus.....	13003 Union Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
James Kerka.....	3251 West 38th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Lada Kiml.....	5404 Magnet Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
		and Croix d'guerre

T H E C Z E C H S O F C L E V E L A N D

Frank Opatrny.....	7512 Union Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Emanuel Pekarek.....	3164 West 50th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Frank Prokop.....	3061 West 56th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
James Sebek.....	3323 West 59th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
James Sedlacek.....	3261 East 49th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration and Croix d'guerre.
Anton L. Shebanek....	7217 Ivy Ave.....	Croix d'guerre
Joseph Svrk.....	Reno Ave.....	Croix d'guerre and Czecho-Slovak decoration.
John Tyma.....	5114 Hamm Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Joseph Urban.....	13003 Union Ave.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.
Anton Verkner.....		U. S. distinguished service medal
Anton Vojncek.....	3338 West 145th St.....	Czecho-Slovak decoration.

Nearly half of those who went from Cleveland into the Czecho-Slovak army are now in Prague, and may perhaps remain there. Those who have returned are very anxious to have restored their previous status as applicants for citizenship, and a petition to this effect has been sent to Congress. In this petition they speak of American citizenship that "which every man holds dearest" and beg its restoration.

The various political activities of the Czechs in this country were coordinated for war purposes through the Bohemian National Alliance, whose headquarters are at 3734 West 26th street, Chicago, and the National Alliance of Bohemian Catholics, 3207 West 22nd street, Chicago.

Karel Bernreiter, Joseph Martinek, and Rev. Oldrich Zlamal, of Cleveland, are members of the Council of the American Czecho-Slovak Board, which is the executive body of Czech and Slovak organizations in America.

The Czecho-slovak Review, a monthly periodical under the editorship of J. F. Smetanka, is published in English for the purpose of acquainting Americans with the Czecho-Slovak situation in general. It is an able publication, well illustrated, containing in each number a great amount of information not hitherto available in English. It is temperate in tone and broad in its outlook, and should have the widest reading among all persons wishing correct information on the affairs of Central Europe.

A book on "The Czechs in America," by Thomas Capek, announced for October publication, will also furnish interesting and valuable information. Mr. Capek is a scholar, a bibliographer, and a man of affairs and is the only person who has yet written extensively in English, with an inside knowledge of Czecho-Slovak affairs.



Antonin Dvorak Dramatic Society.

Authorities Consulted

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An illustrated history of Bohemians in Cleveland, prepared for the Prague Ethnological Exposition of 1895, and published by the Volnost press in Cleveland. 192 pp.

"Kratke Dejiny a seznam Cesko-Katolickych osad ve Spoj. Statech Americkych."

A register and brief history of Bohemian Catholic colonies in the U. S. in honor of the 25th jubilee of Very Rev. Joseph Hessoun, by Rev. P. A. P. Houst. St. Louis, 1890, 552 pp.

"Dejiny Cechuv Americkych," by Jan Habenicht.

A condensed history of American Bohemian life, pub. by the "Hlas" press in St. Louis, about 1894.

"Padesat let Ceskeho Tisku v Americe," by Thomas Capek.

Fifty years of the Bohemian press in America; a bibliography, with historical notes, of Bohemian periodical publications in the United States from 1860 to 1911; pub. in New York, 1911. 269 pp.

These four are in Bohemian.

"Czechoslovak Review"; a monthly periodical published at 2324 South Central Park Avenue, Chicago, beginning in 1917.

"Bohemian (Cech) Bibliography; a finding list of writings in English relating to Bohemia and the Cechs," by Thomas Capek and Anna Vostrovsky Capek.

A valuable illustrated and annotated bibliography, published by Fleming H. Revell Co. in New York in 1918. 256 pp.

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Other Publications of the Committee

Americanization of Cleveland.
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