



TOWN HALL, PRESBURG, HUNGARY.

Protestant churches in the city ; with eight Jewish synagogues ; and those who care to penetrate through the narrow streets to the Jews' quarter, on the river-side, a little way below the old bridge, will find, among the sounds and smells of a swarming population, not a little that is curious and interesting. It is said that the Jews established themselves here before the destruction of Jerusalem as slave-dealers, buying, selling, and exchanging the captives taken by the pagans in war."

Here I visited what is said to be the oldest synagogue in Europe. It is a dark and gloomy pile begrimed with the smoke and dust of ages, sunk to the windows in the earth. A little group of the worshippers were chanting the old Psalms which have come down the centuries for well-nigh three thousand years. The adjacent Jewish burying-ground contained thousands of grey, time-worn, moss-grown stones, bearing He-

brew inscriptions, some with the symbols of their tribes, as a pitcher for the tribe of Levi. But they are now all overgrown and interwoven with creeping plants, alders, and briars. The scene recalls Longfellow's touching poem :

" And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

" They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire ;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

" All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,



ST. MICHAEL'S STREET, PRESBURG.