



"LA BELLE AU BOIS DORMANT"

VALDEMAR LANGLET

ON HORSEBACK  
THROUGH HUNGARY

*Abridged and translated from the Swedish by*  
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WITH 58 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## ON HORSEBACK THROUGH HUNGARY

### ON HORSEBACK

**W**HY on horseback? There are motor-cars and comfortable trains in Hungary — and luxurious steamers on the blue Danube. A horse! Who mounts a horse nowadays except for a little morning ride or a fox hunt? Who has anything to do with horses in this civilized, matter-of-fact, unromantic, bustling life of ours? — perhaps only the Hussars, a species which seems to be disappearing little by little from the face of the earth. Oh, I, too, was in Arcady once — in the Nineties — a gay member of the Second Royal Swedish Horse Guards, which ceased to exist as being superfluous after the so-called world peace.

"Old loves are best", the saying goes. But, as a matter of fact, I did it not only because I had once done a long-distance ride across half Russia and now, after many years, wished to repeat this experiment in the country of the Magyars, not only because riding is such a thrilling sport that you cannot find a match for it, except, perhaps, in "gliding", but because I had a much more serious aim in view. A long-distance ride in the saddle is the

best way of becoming thoroughly acquainted with a foreign country. From the air you only catch a bird's-eye view, a fleeting glimpse of the landscape. On the other hand, trains, and motor-cars on the road, rush too quickly past the picturesque country. As for shanks's pony, it is rather a slow means of locomotion.

The motor-car rushes past the landscape and the landscape rushes past the motor-car. One does not see anything, one gets a headache from the speed at which one travels through the air, and one tires of sitting still. Besides this, no man opens his door with a welcome for railway or motor-car passengers, if they have not been previously invited.

A wandering horseman, however, is offered both stable and bedroom wherever he arrives; he is invited to table by Barons, townspeople, farmers and peasants. If needs be he can tie up his steed to a wayside post or a tree, and lie down to take a nap with his saddle as a bolster and with the blue sky for a cover. Oh, how gorgeous and romantic it is! Yet it is still more romantic in the golden dusk of a fine summer night to lie down on the soft green grass near the wall of some ancient country church, flooded with silver moonlight, and to drowse in sweet reverie, while one's indolent eyes roam over the fantastic shadows and figures formed by the century-old church-yard walls.

The saddle is a splendid vantage-point from which to survey the landscape; one has the sensation of being exalted, distinguished, one feels the well-known superiority of a horseman to a pedestrian (a harking back to our ancestors' medieval conceit!), and the riding-breeches, the whip and the boots give one the impression of being

stalwart and manly, much more than do one's trousers and rubber-soled shoes.

And the horse, too, is a good comrade. He will not talk to you, nor pester you with foolish questions like an ill-chosen travelling companion, when you want only peace and quiet, all to yourself. The horse is silent and he obeys you. To make him behave himself you may bribe him in advance with fodder, which the above-mentioned talkative companion, however, would certainly fail to appreciate.

" Many people say that you can make but very slow headway on horseback," an officer of Hussars once told me, " an opinion which I do not share. Why! in the morning you catch sight of blue hills and mountains in the distance, and before night closes in you have reached them."

And he was perfectly right. From the plain I caught sight of the blue mountains in the distance, and by evening I was there. I slept in a farm-house, and saw the distant tower of a town or village on the horizon when we mounted our horses. By lunch-time we were invited to the burgomaster's table, or were the guests of the town doctor or the priest. Or again, we might put up at some small country hotel or at an inn. The simple food we can get there is a pleasant change after the elaborate meals we are offered at " swell places ", or even the Hungarian town meals, which are inclined to be rich and highly flavoured.

It is curious to observe how the highway unfolds itself when one is trudging or riding along it. One cannot tell in advance, as one proceeds, what it will look like at a fresh turning. It is a real adventure, as one slowly

approaches, to see how a town or village, with its towers and house-tops, gradually looms up on the near horizon. The lush green meadows in the distance are divided by a tremendously long street, which is the main street of a Hungarian village and the continuation of the highroad; it leads straight through the whole place. Here the road is bordered by long alleys of acacia trees and low cottages with thatched roofs, or whitewashed, gabled, tiled houses. In front of these, bent-shouldered gammers are sitting on narrow, wooden benches. Out from the flower-decked windows pretty peasant girls, whom one has never seen before nor perhaps will have the chance of seeing again, are peeping curiously. Outside the doors old men, with pipes in their mouths, are loitering and discussing things that have happened or are about to happen — for there is no telephone in such villages; it is a luxury even for the well-to-do.

Soon we reach a somewhat more distinguished part, the main square, or market-place. A lively commerce is going on there in all the fruits of the South — apricots, peaches, grapes, tomatoes and, of course, *paprika*. From the centre of the little town one catches sight of the tops of three towers which seem to eye one another with a lofty pride, one having a cross on its pinnacle — this is the Catholic church — the other bearing a star — this is the Calvinists' property — and the third, with the characteristic sign of the cock, can only be a Lutheran church. Not far from these pinnacles one sees also the top of what appears to be a big square building with ponderous ornamentation — if one is not mistaken, the Jewish synagogue. Or is it perhaps the theatre of this small town? Who could say at such a distance?

In all probability neither you nor I have seen this little place before or heard its name. It would be somewhat difficult to find even on an ordinary map. The name never figures in cross-word puzzles, from the solutions of which one learns nowadays so much geography and history. Its existence has up till now been absolutely unknown and immaterial to us. Yet the place turns out to be a little gem of its kind. It is full of the funniest old Baroque buildings. On top of a little hill we can still see the ruins of what seems to be an old castle or fortress; in one of the streets there is an ancient Gothic chapel, although such remains are rare in this country which the Turks ravaged about A.D. 1500. We may also come across a small local museum packed with Roman vases and Celtic urns which had lain hidden in the earth for some two thousand years; in short all sorts of the most valuable historical souvenirs which, had we followed the regular itinerary and not our fancy, would have been denied us.

Let us imagine that we have discovered a small country town like this, without knowing — yet where we shall put up for the night, though dusk is falling when we start to consider this question. The horse longs for stable and fodder, the rider craves for food and a bed. Well, let us set our minds at rest about our nocturnal accommodation. Both outside and in the village itself, or the town, we can find a small *kocsma* (pronounced cawchma), a pub or inn with several guest-rooms to let, in every street. We may also find a real hotel, if it is a town, a *szálló* (sarlow), probably called " Central " or " Magyarország " (Madyar-orsarg), or " To the Hungarian King ". For we must bear in mind that

Hungary is a Kingdom without a King, since the late Karl IV died in exile *in* Funchal. The small town may also boast a *Nagy Kávéház*, " Grand Café ", with the usual Continental marble-topped tables, velvet settees, cushioned chairs and gilt ornaments, where the so-called *elite* of the place spend their leisure hours, reading newspapers and drinking black coffee or golden Magyar wine. If we are lucky, we may even meet the Burgomaster there. He will welcome us with as much warmth as if we were not foreigners and strangers to his town, but old friends who had been lost and found again. A Hungarian *polgármester* (pollgarmeshtaire) holds a quite special position in his town. He is a petty local prince, who rules the town with all the prerogatives of an administrator. He will be quite willing to show a foreign horseman and his escort all over his little kingdom.

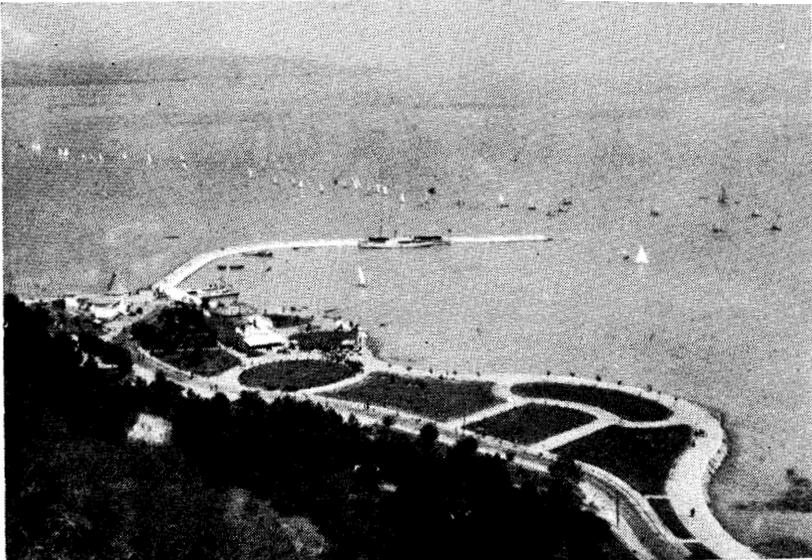
In small peasant villages which have no burgomasters, we may perhaps be the guests of the *biró* (beerow) or *főjegyző* (föyedyzö). The former is a peasant, the latter a gentleman, but both have considerable authority. The *biró* is a foreman of the farmers, alderman, a justice of the peace, in other words a petty constable or a kind of magistrate with limited powers of jurisdiction within the confines of his parish, elected by the community for a limited official period. Being a man of scant erudition, he is dependent on the *főjegyző* (the chief notary, if we try to translate the title literally). *The főjegyző* is the town or parish clerk with an extended sphere of action, who attests deeds, etc., and is elected for life. He governs the place, as it were, and resides in the *községháza* (kösshayg-harza), the parish or town hall. If we call on him during early office hours, we can be



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sure of an invitation to lunch at his house opposite the town hall. The sturdy little *főjegyzőné*, Mrs. Chief Notary, is quite accustomed to receiving strangers. If we meet him in the evening, he will see to it that we get a fine dinner, with first-class Hungarian wine. He will help us to spend the night in an unforgettable way, especially if we produce a letter of recommendation. In any case, the Scandinavians and English enjoy a remarkably good reputation in Hungary.

Thus we may find shelter for the night with the town clerk, the *biró*, a farmer, the police constable, the priest, the clergyman, or the miller; or even with a viticulturist, or a General, possibly both identified in the same person. One evening we sit up with the *biró* in a little village inn and discuss the possibilities of the vintage or crop with the farmers, while we empty one glass after the other until our heads begin to reel. Next day we may carry on a conversation in Latin with the learned men of the village, while playing skittles with the notary, the doctor and the priest. If we but slightly modify our pronunciation, we can get on very well with Latin in educated Hungarian circles; a hundred years ago Latin was the official language of the Diet. (Esperanto is also widespread in Hungary. I made use of it in the street, at my barber's, on trains and even among the working-classes. I know of a young Hungarian who, without knowing Swedish, has been employed as an Esperanto teacher in Sweden, and of a young Hungarian girl who does likewise in Denmark.)

The priest speaks the best Latin in our little village. He is a jovial fellow, with rosy cheeks and is slightly corpulent. He is very fond of the fine native wine with which, by adding soda-water, he prepares a real Hungarian

*fröccs* or *spriccer* (shpritsaire); Hungarians very often do this. When he takes the ball in hand to aim at the skittles, his long priest's frock nutters in the wind.

Little did I dream of a Latin conversation with a priest on a skittles-alley until the incident actually occurred there, as the worthy priest did not speak any language but Latin beyond his own mother tongue, and at the time I did not understand Hungarian.

So luck leads us from one place to another as we ride the long, winding highroad. Now we are heading for a new, unknown town.

On approaching the outskirts we are given a glimpse of a picturesque swine-herd. His mates are two small curly-haired sheep dogs, the famous *pulis*; they watch over the whole herd of pigs. On our left, a flock of white geese rushes out from the fields with an ear-splitting cackling and crosses the road in front of us, angry at having been disturbed by the sound of our horses' hoofs.

" Where is the *kastély*, the Manor House? " we enquire at random. In every Hungarian village there is a Manor House, a mansion, whose owner willingly opens his gates to a traveller from foreign lands. The swine-herd points out a little grove in the distance, surrounded by lilac bushes. He saw the Count half an hour ago driving in with his coach, and the Countess was holding the reins!

Soon we are installed; the horses are in the stable and we ourselves in the dining-room of some great or lesser magnate, surrounded by his children, with their English and German tutors, and the whole large family. White-gloved lackeys bring in the dishes on silver trays and serve them on to a polished mahogany table, laid with small round lace serviettes in accordance with the

latest fashion. The dishes are exquisite, the cigars splendid, the conversation polished and animated — English, French, or German, just as you please. The guest-room is charming, with modern furniture, fine pictures and a separate bath-room. The mansion is surrounded by a huge park, with all the wonders of modern gardening: swan ponds, hot-houses, etc. The grove is full of pheasant, peacocks and deer, and the stables of thoroughbreds. We live like kings for a day regardless of the fact that to-morrow a mere straw mattress may be our bed, pea-soup with pork our dinner, and the only toilet facilities the garden well.

Shall we put up for the night at the house of this good old farmer, who is sitting outside his cottage in the main street, peacefully smoking a pipe? He wears long black boots and a black waistcoat with silver buttons.

" *Jo napot kívánok!* (Yow nawpot keevarnok!) — I wish you a good day" — we are supposed to begin thus on such occasions and then ask politely whether he can offer accommodation. He gets up from the little bench, touches the broad brim of his hat with the first finger of his right hand, and takes the pipe out of his mouth. Why, of course, just step inside, gentlemen! He does not talk unnecessarily, but what he does say he really means. Inside the house a little old woman welcomes us and turns the whole place upside down to offer us all she has got. For supper we get *nudli-leves*, a sort of spaghetti-soup, stewed beans in rich sour sauce, cooked pork with much paprika, and to finish up, a big, juicy water-melon, delicious and ice-cold. We drink golden wine and plum brandy and keep on chatting about Auld Lang Syne and times to come, about Great Hungary and

Small Dismembered Hungary, about the Government and the elections, about the crop and the rain which does not want to fall. Thank goodness for that, thinks the rider to himself, but he does not, of course, say this aloud. And when in the morning one thanks them for their kindness and wants to pay, they waive the question aside with a firm "no," and the saying: "God speed the guest!"

Thus the days pass one by one, until they lengthen into weeks and months, and the landscape changes like the little pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope. In the album of memory the different pictures become merged one after the other, each with its own special importance and interest. Hundreds of miles lie before us — but very soon they will fall back behind our horses' hoofs, and we shall be on the look-out for more thrills and more unknown views and experiences.

How many miles can one cover under a glaring summer sun? It depends entirely on the horse and his rider. If we mount at six in the morning and take some intermediate rest, we can make 15 to 20 miles by eleven o'clock, when we have to stop because of the heat. By getting up at sunrise, and profiting by the cooler hours of the afternoon too, we can easily put behind us 25 to 30 or 40 miles a day, but it is just as well to take 30 as a maximum. With the two indispensable rest days per week, we can cover about 650 miles a month. It is not a long-distance ride; some would call it making ground slowly, but I know the speed is just right.

Hungary has quite a number of splendid motor-roads, surfaced with cement or asphalt. They are as smooth as a dance-room floor, and very good for motorists, but awful

for the horseman, who wishes his horse had india-rubber hoofs instead of iron shoes. Fortunately, the number of these first-class roads is not overwhelming, and there is always a narrow path bordering the highroad on both sides. Then there are the " carriage paths " — the peasants' roads. Their surface is bare earth, covered with deep mud in winter and on rainy days. But in the summer all village drivers use them to spare tyres and horse-shoes, and apart from this they are lined with acacias, so that even on the hottest summer day one can drive in the shade. It is only natural that I was the man who most appreciated these side-paths, for, in burning daylight, I could ride along them for scores of miles in the shade.

How different it would have been if I had happened to be in a motor-car or in the sultry heat of a railway carriage! One does not *get* a tyre puncture, one does not experience a railway accident, but one can witness the most edifying and amusing incidents on the way. The remarks on the subject of Frederick Book, the great Swedish author and traveller, are quite true. When travelling through Hungary in a motor-car, he had some engine trouble, and had to linger in a small Hungarian peasant village. " I saw and learnt on this occasion much more of real Hungarian country life than in many weeks in the car ", was what he told me when we met in Budapest.

For my part, I became well enough acquainted with Hungarian rural life on my 800-mile ride first to the west and then to the east of Hungary, taking Budapest as a starting point. It was a fine open-air life, this long-distance ride of mine, past flowery plains and wild woodland, singing skylarks, cooing village doves, and richly laden fruit-trees under a wonderful summer sun that made

the landscape look as it might have done on the Day of Creation. No, I would not change my Rosinante for a motor-car of the finest make.

But how can one procure a saddle-horse in a foreign country, you may ask. Borrow one? Thou shalt not borrow a horse, a dog or a wife, as the Hungarian saying goes. Buy one? Nowhere is there a greater chance of being duped than at a horse-fair. Many a horse has hidden defects, he may buck, be vicious or broken-winded, and all these defects are not always discovered until it is too late. Luckily for me I was not obliged to borrow or buy a horse this time. That kind Consul-General in Budapest, Dr. von Bayer-Krucsay, arranged this with the kindly disposed Hungarian authorities, so that four Army horses were placed at our disposal: two for me and my riding companion and two others which drew a small cart with fodder and packs. They cost neither me nor the State anything, for the horses had now the privilege of ambling along grassy paths in the open air instead of idling away their tedious equestrian career in the State stables.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza on a long-distance ride! And in the cart — a Dulcinea? Oh, no! Two soldiers whose names were Joseph. Most Hungarian boys are Josephs in memory of a — strange to relate — very popular Hapsburg Archduke who was once the *Nádor*, the Count Palatine of the nation. To make a distinction between the two soldiers, we dubbed them Hussar-Jóska (pet-name for Joseph) and Gunner-Jóska, after the military branch they represented.

" Sancho Panza " was a Doctor of Philosophy and his name was Martin Vörös, of Cegléd on the Great Hungarian Plain. He had been to Sweden and knew Swedish; at

the time he was a lecturer in Swedish at the University of Pécs. Our journey ended with the firm decision that in the immediate future we should do more long-distance rides — to Paris, Moscow or Constantinople, possibly to Baghdad, Teheran or Calcutta or anywhere in the world but always on horseback and always together.

On our first trip my horse was a mare, belonging to the distinguished 1st Hungarian Regiment of Hussars, but she turned out to be a sly and weak-kneed animal. On our second ride to the East, I got another from the Horse Artillery. He was a stallion and his name was Hidalgo; I forgot the mare's name on purpose because of the scurvy tricks she used to play me. One day on a green hill near Lake Balaton, she just dropped on to her knees, without any preliminary warning, and the big, stiff cavalry saddle nearly made a wreck of my sensitive part. Again, a few days later, she knelt down with lightning rapidity and I was flung out of the saddle on to all-fours. The bruises soon healed, but when, later on, a true-born Calvinist stable-boy saw the bruises on the mare's knees, he said:

" You seem to have a Catholic mare, sir, as far as I can see! "

From this moment onwards I made up my mind to forgo any unexpected obeisance on my horse's part. But it cost me such a tense effort that I nearly fell into a coma in the saddle, staring the wily creature between the ears for days at a time.

Hidalgo was of a different nature, and was much more amenable — in fact, quite a docile horse. When we parted at the end of the long ride, I handed him over to the groom in tip-top condition, and ever since he has held

in my memory a place of honour among my good horses, "Norra Roslags 58" of my service and "Cossack", the never-to-be-forgotten comrade of my Russian long-distance ride in the year of Our Lord 1897.

Our departure was dignified. Three men abreast: Don Quixote in the middle, on his right Sancho Panza, on his left a stout lieutenant of Hussars who volunteered to escort the little troop and whose previous services I highly appreciated — and in the rearguard the two " Jóska " on the waggon.

Thus it was that we set out on horseback — through Hungary.

## THROUGH HUNGARY

### DUNÁNTÚL

**G**REAT HUNGARY of pre-War days had more than twenty million inhabitants and was nearly as large as Sweden. In Little Hungary of to-day there live about eight million people, roughly the population of London. Hungary has been dismembered to almost one-fourth of its thousand-year-old territory.

The mutilated remnant, which the gentlemen who sat round the baize-topped table after the World War left to the Hungarian people, is inhabited exclusively by Magyars, which is the Hungarian word for their race. And the country is now practically so small that an 800-mile ride can give one a very good idea of its fauna, flora, population and conditions in general. Of course, we cannot see everything in the strict sense of the word. But has anybody ever seen everything, even in his native land? Many fine landscapes and interesting towns were beyond my reach, but I had previously seen one part of it years ago, and I intended to visit the rest later on by new routes.

The world-famous Greek military commander of classical times, whose " Anabasis " is used as a school textbook even to-day, has often been mildly ridiculed for his diary-like description of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand:

" From there we marched . . . parasangs (a Persian measure of length, nearly four English miles) to the town X that lies at the river Y and is inhabited by N.N. men. From there we marched, etc., etc." Notwithstanding my admiration for Xenophon's concise style, I do not wish to imitate it by describing " how the road went ", so that the reader may be able to follow the route with his finger on the map. I shall take a jump here and there as in a steeplechase, and will describe only things which are unknown in the North. Subjects which demand special and closer study will be dealt with later on. In the following chapters you will find my immediate observations, which can be divided in the same way as the wasp of the classical explanation of a diagram in a natural history book. " Seen from above it can be divided into three parts. . . ."

The first part will deal with our ride through Dunántúl. This is the Hungarian name for what geographically might be called Transdanubia, viz. the portion of land lying beyond the Danube, calculated from Pest. This part is rich in historical monuments; it comprises the cool, hilly area of the huge Bakony forest, and the wonderful Lake Balaton, the " Hungarian Sea ". The second part of the country is hilly highlands bordering Czechoslovakia, the southern range of the mighty Carpathian mountains, which were allotted to the Czechs by the Trianon Treaty. It is heavily timbered with beech-woods, amongst which lie many famous vineyards. The third part of the country is the largest, the Alföld, the great Hungarian plain, the vast lowland, which extends eastwards and southwards as far as the limited frontiers of the country, and even beyond them.

Let us then make first of all for the Dunántúl.

We started out from the *Eötvös-kollégium*, a first-class college for students and famous professors, amongst whom I have been offered a place as a relatively ancient university student and a newly created and quite unknown lecturer. The kindly Director of the Institute, Professor Gombocz, who speaks a dozen languages, bade us farewell in Finnish: "*Mat kan alku Jumaian nimessa!*"

So we set out " in the name of God ". As guardian angel the aforementioned Hussar lieutenant came with us. His first assistance was chaperoning us safely out of the hubbub of the Capital to the open country's winding highroad, where peace, green meadows, blue sky and balmy air surrounded us.

The shortest road to the south follows the right bank of the Danube, through a couple of little towns inhabited by German colonists. One of them is called Budaörs, which signifies " Outpost of Buda ". The whole town speaks " schwäbisch ", Swabian, a German dialect which is very difficult to understand. They brought it with them from south-west Germany some hundreds of years ago, when the Turks left Hungary in 1686, after a hundred and fifty years' occupation. Since that time these Germans have settled here, felt themselves quite at their ease, and kept their native tongue. They have been promised freedom in every respect. Even now they have German schools and German magistrates. The older folks still know only German, but the younger generation is bi-lingual.

At the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1919 it was stated that pre-War Hungary had oppressed national minorities. Had this been so, how could these isolated groups of

foreign-tongued minorities still exist in the very heart of the country, without having been assimilated long ago? I do not believe this tale. Alongside the Danube, to the south and west of the Capital, there are even now Serbian villages in original Hungarian surroundings, and Slovak towns with their own churches and schools. This does not by any means point to a rigorous national intolerance.

Little Budaörs had a festive appearance when we drew in. There happened to be a big funeral taking place and the whole town was clad in ceremonial attire. The men wear black suits, trousers tucked into long black boots, and deep-blue pinafores that reach to their feet. The women wear the same sort of pinafore as part of their festive apparel. This consists of a large silk shawl, and a tight bodice. The shawl encircles the high coiffure *a l'espagnole* while the bodice has long sleeves which put one in mind of the Biedermeier period, as do the crinoline frocks, too. The woollen stockings sport all the colours of the rainbow, although, considering the occasion, dark predominates. I am told that underneath the outer motley-coloured skirt there are about a dozen white skirts, an ostentatious intimation to the outside world that their owner has a well-stocked trousseau.

Budaörs has about 7000 inhabitants, and there are at least a hundred similar large German towns in the country; otherwise the German-speaking minority forms only an insignificant part of the population. In present-day Hungary there live about half a million people whose native tongue is German, but their number gradually decreases, as they become merged with the Hungarian population. Fifteen years ago the sum-total of Buda-

pest's German inhabitants comprised one-third of its population, now it is no more than four per cent.

Talking to a young peasant boy out in the street, I learn from him that " father and mother at home can only speak Swabian, but we younger fellows can read and write Hungarian just as well as the natives". As a matter of fact the name " schwäbisch " or Swabian is an anomaly, for only a small percentage of the Germans in Hungary hail from Swabia, i.e. Wurtemberg; most of them are of Frankish origin, or hail from Hanover, Bavaria, Bohemia and the Austrian Tyrol. The Germans living in the middle of the old Hungarian Transylvania, now a part of New Roumania, have a better right to the name of Saxon (as they call themselves) for they actually immigrated from Saxony about seven hundred years ago.

Before evening we halted at another small town, Budafok, which signifies " Cape of Buda". The land juts into the river in a peninsular, forming a little limestone hill. The poor of the village have made dug-outs in its side, and live there in comfortable little rooms, rent free, for Nature is their landlord.

There are also other localities dug out of the face of the white cliff. What can dwell in that huge castle-like facade which is nicely framed by the cliff-side? The answer is " WINE ". The State runs a school here for " cellarmen ", or cellarmasters in the true meaning of the Hungarian word, who are taught the art of tending, handling and judging stored wines. A vast stock of " merchandise ", comprising innumerable large and small oak barrels and casks serves as teaching, illustrative and tasting material. This underground cellar dug out of the cliff is as big as a whole village with numerous under-

ground tunnels, main streets and turnings, and the huge casks ranged alongside the paths look like little cottages.

Here one can walk for hours without growing tired, for at every halting-place an invigorating cordial can be drawn from the noble juice of the grape: golden Tokay, ruby-red *bikavér* (beekavayr), " Bull's Blood " from Eger (Egairé) in the north, Burgundy from the southern Villány, white and slightly acid *badacsonyi* (bodochonyi) from Lake Balaton's blue-red rocky slopes.

There is room enough here for a million pints, and most of the barrels are full. Still, business is very slack nowadays, although the price is low and the quality high. Apart from the huge oak casks in the electrically lit cellar-town, there are also vast cement tanks containing hundreds of gallons of must for the fermenting period. It is, however, very dangerous to stay down here for long, not on account of the must, but because of the delicious Hungarian wine, especially as we have still a good few hours in the saddle ahead of us. Well, then, let us mount our steeds!

Late in the evening, after some random rides of reconnaissance on unknown fields, we are taken in for the night by a charming widowed Countess, whose two sons tend her lands and her daughters the vast gardens in which fig trees are grown; fig trees rarely thrive in these latitudes. It is here that we first get an inkling of real Hungarian hospitality. One feels at home as soon as the threshold is crossed.

On the following morning the carriage is spanned and we are driven to the fields to see the crops. The harvest is done by scythe, though the land covers an area of 14,000 acres! I venture to put a question to the Countess:

" Don't you use machines on your estate? "

" No," she answers, " in that case there would be no work for our farmers and peasants, and you could not expect them to sweat and labour so that we earn more, or to put it more correctly, so that we lose less. That's why the harvest continues in the old way."

We alight from the carriage and say good-morning to the long lines of toiling farmers, mowing the oats with glittering scythes, whilst young girls and older women follow in the footsteps of the men to pick up and bind the golden sheaves. The winter crop was much better, but to their great disappointment, the price of wheat dropped to a fantastically low figure. Oats fetched a little more than wheat, but even so the farmers could sell only at a loss or not at all. The State thought it necessary to intervene by granting sale-prizes in the form of so-called *boletta* policies to all wheat-growers, for which the buyers naturally had to pay!

The world crisis, the economic havoc wrought by the Peace Treaties, American mass production and Russian dumping made the situation in this most fertile country simply desperate. With low incomes and high interest — 15 per cent and more — you cannot pay daily wages to the peasants. As it is, they get about a shilling a day; just work it out for yourselves! And since the landowner or the farmer has nothing left for himself after he has paid out these scanty wages, he cannot afford to buy industrial goods, without which no agriculture can exist. The inevitable result is stagnation, unemployment, general disquiet and local disorders. Though Hungary has had her share of Communism, perhaps more than any nation in Europe, except Russia, no one can foretell what

will happen if — on account of the mutilation wrought by the Trianon Peace Treaty — this agricultural country is reduced to such a state of penury.

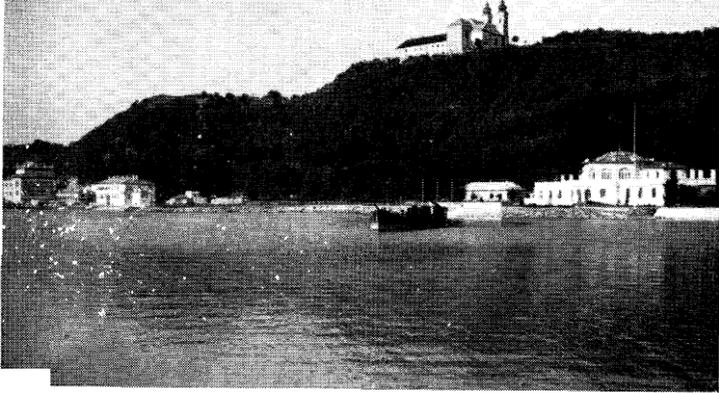
On the same day we had a chance of seeing the big farm of another Count's domain. He is the owner of a very stately mansion in the middle of a wonderful park, where pheasant-fledglings scurry around us and fountains shoot their crystal jets of water towards the blue sky. Such vast estates still exist in the country. Forty to sixty thousand acres are not at all rare; there are even some amounting to 400,000 acres or more!

Our new Count, who is of the ancient nobility and plays a certain political role as well, prefers to be on his estate busy with agriculture. He is tall, has a stately carriage and can drive his coach like a born coachman. In his stables and cow-houses, as big as churches, a positive herd of horses and cows are chewing their fodder, while at the bottom of the huge pigsties fat pigs are weltering in weal, never dreaming that on the following morning they may be carted towards Budapest or Vienna, to disappear in the slaughter-houses of those metropoli.

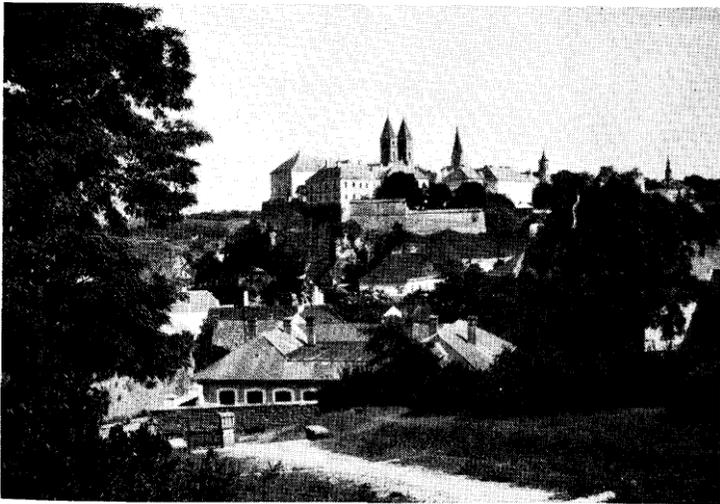
" Look at this soup here," the Count says, stirring the swill in the big cement tanks with a long pole. " Don't imagine that this costs nothing. But we must make sacrifices if we want our business to pay. It does not pay very much nowadays. Some day the Austrians may close their frontiers to foreign goods, and — there you are! All these sacrifices and investments will have been in vain!

As a matter of fact, this actually happened some few months later.

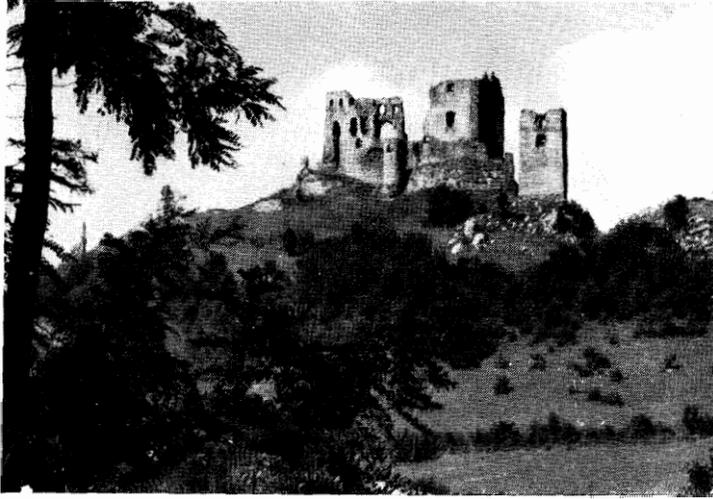
We later inspect the wine-houses, cellars, hen-houses



THE TIHANY CONVENT WHERE THE LAST KING OF HUNGARY  
WAS PRISONER



THE CASTLE OF VESZPRÉM, ANCIENT SEAT OF THE HUNGARIAN  
KING



THE RUINS OF THE OLD CASTLE OF CSESZNEK



THE CONVENT OF PANNONHALMA, STRONGHOLD OF HUNGARIAN  
CATHOLICISM

and all the modern equipment of this up-to-date estate. The Count at home is a highly erudite man of the world, with literary and artistic leanings, and he shows me with pride his valuable library and museum and the antique furniture of his innumerable rooms. But out here on his land, surrounded by his animals and farm implements, he appears to be an agricultural expert and economist who knows best how to make both ends meet. His farmers are the last people he feels ought to suffer. That's why they elected him M.P. for their district.

In a little shed I catch sight of two ancient "locomobiles", steam-engines used to draw the various agricultural machines. I venture again to ask him whether it would not be more expeditious to use oil tractors?

"Quite," he says pensively, "but I and my many friends stick to these obsolete, shabby steam-engines. We have got no oil-fields in this country, and where the expensive foreign oil flows in, there our money flows out. The Peace Treaty allotted all our silver, gold and lead mines and oil-fields to our late enemies. A few big collieries still have been left to us, so that we have plenty of coal at a reasonable price, though of a quality far inferior to most foreign coal. Apart from that, steam engines do not need the constant care and careful adjustment of oil tractors. On our vast, flat lowlands these old locomobiles do very well."

He meditates for a while, then continues to explain:

"In summer you can see ploughs and harrows drawn by steam-engines by means of long steel ropes. When the plough reaches the far end of the field, a simple pressure <sup>°</sup>i a lever suffices to turn the plough-shares in the opposite direction, so that they can then work backwards as well."

Riding on southwards, we catch sight of the vast, shining mirror of Lake Balaton, nine miles in length and one mile broad. Along its shores lie a host of towns, villages and world-famous lake-side resorts. The left shore of the lake is regular and smooth, and has the finest sandy-beach in the world; the right shore is hilly and rugged, and almost borders the famous Bakony forest, that hilly woodland, a forerunner of the Alps, crossing the Austrian frontier.

Lake Balaton is a paradise for sea-lovers and a haunt of aquatic sports. The lake is bright blue and the sky is deep blue. Siófok (Sheeowfok), a well-known spa, has a velvety beach and the water is so shallow that one can wade out for hundreds of yards. Children play in the warm water as though it were a gigantic bath-tub; swimmers walk along the piers to the diving-boards where there is sufficient depth even for the pleasure-steamers. As a matter of fact the Balaton is generally not much deeper than 10 feet, just the right depth for swimmers. For oarsmen and yachtsmen a magnificent pier and a harbour have been built at Siófok. On the beach there are thousands of cabins and huts, added to which is an establishment for medicinal baths. The town has gorgeous parks with flower-beds of exhibition standards, delicious yet cheap fruits, and first-rate meals at the best hotels of the place at relatively moderate prices. The setting sun, viewed from the promenade, offers a magnificent sight; the lake is so wide here that one cannot see its southern shore. That is why the Balaton is frequently called " The Hungarian Sea ". At night, the chaste huntress of the moon hovers over the waters, gently rippling the surface in silver, fantastic shadows play among the tall trees, and

the Northern beach now looks just like a fairy landscape. Without a doubt, Siófok is a most suitable place for lovers!

Lake Balaton is really beautiful. It is a pity that most foreign visitors do not discover it, in fact very seldom do they make a trip down to its shores. On the map they see a blue patch that is called Lake Balaton, or *Plattensee* in German, but the name itself does not breathe any romance and, as a rule, they fail to visit it, although it is only a couple of hours distant from the capital by train. The train goes all round the Lake, so that one can choose at will from the many resorts: Siófok, Balatonfüred, Balatonföldvár, Balatonzamárdi.

In winter the whole lake is frozen and as smooth as a mirror. It is the best skating-rink in the world. The villagers and townspeople near the lakeside go in for a very funny winter sport, the *fakutya* — " wooden dog," a small sleigh propelled by iron ski-sticks. The fishermen cut holes in the ice and catch masses of *Jogas*, the renowned Balaton type of perch.

Then, one day, a *rianás* (reeanarsh) may take place. The ice is gradually warmed by the sun, it expands and cracks. The lake sings just like the famous statues of Memnon in Egypt, and booming, cracking sounds like cannon-shots fill the air. Sudden crevasses, miles long, appear on the ice, and if people walking on the lake are not wide-awake they may be lost.

" He who is afraid, should walk around the sea " was King Ring's advice to Frithjof. Now it is summer, and there is no Royal causeway, nor any passage through the lake, yet we are sitting on its surface with horses, soldiers, car and all. Are we trying to wade through the shallow

part of the water? Oh, no! Ten feet is a depth to be considered. But there is a steam ferry plying between the banks of the lake, and soon we are taken over to the Cape of *Tihany* (Teehagn), a hilly promontory on the other side.

High up on top of the hill, as we let our horses climb the winding path slowly, we catch a glimpse of a Baroque church and an old monastery, from which we get a wonderful view of the landscape and later of the lake below.

Here in the monastery once sat the last Emperor of the Hapsburgs — Charles IV of Hungary — imprisoned like a bird in a cage after his unfortunate *coup diktat* when, in 1919, he tried to retrieve his lost Hungarian crown. It was from here that the English took him, like a late-born little Napoleon, over the Danube and the Mediterranean to his St. Helena — Madeira.

Our way continues westwards, northward from the lake, amid large vineyards and little white towns surrounded by basalt rocks.

" Where shall we put up for the night? " I turn to my travelling companion. " No Counts this time. They are very nice, cultured people, but aren't there simpler folk in the country? I have a good mind to put up at some farmer's house."

Well, it was at an old retired General's, who was neither a Baron nor a great landowner. He was an Excellency, though, as are all Generals in this country together with their wives, but this means little to a man who has his living to get.

" But. I want to see farmers, peasants. Where on earth can we find one? "

" Everywhere. The General, for one, is a simple farmer now."

Although this was not exactly the case, he turned out to be a winegrower and a farmer, with white whiskers, grey hair and a sunburnt face. We slept in hundred-year-old wooden beds, our meals were served without liveried lackeys standing behind us. It was a regular, simple Hungarian lunch with rich soups and sauces, much paprika and more wine. If one has a stout stomach of gutta-percha, which baulks at nothing, one does not object to these courses.

" Is wine-growing a good business? " I ask the General after the meal, on our way to see the farm.

His childish old man's eyes cast me an astonished glance, and his big, booming ex-military commander's voice makes my ear-drums throb. I have stepped on a tender corn!

" A *good* business, you say, my friend? It's worse than hell! One doesn't get anything for all one's trouble. I toil here in the vineyard from early morning till late at night. There is no question of a little afternoon nap either. And I have the best of soil here on my plantation, the noblest kind of grapes, the best vintage you can have, plenty of wine in the cellars, as much as you want. . . . Soon we will go down and sample them. But to sell wine? The devil you can! Eight *fillers* is the price per pint. . . . What is that in your currency? Well, I don't know, but I know that it is less than one English penny. If it is not of the best brand, they don't give even so much a pint. Well, it costs me more to get the wine out of the grapes, you can take it from me. Would you not buy Hungarian wine up yonder in your cold, northern

country? What do you say? . . . By the way, what do you pay there for a pint? "

I tell him we pay ten times as much for a bottle of inferior Spanish wine, and that we also have really good wines, only these are too expensive for the great middle-class.

" Good gracious! Isn't that strange? But, tell me, you must at least have good beer? "

" Yes. But it tastes rather morbid. Oh, your *Szent János Sör!* Your *Szent István Porter Sör!* . . ."

And, while we are descending the steps that lead to his cellar, I try to bring home to him the huge difference between ours and the Hungarian beer.

" Do you press the wine mechanically or do you have it trampled? " I ask, trying to be non-committal.

The General's sudden burst of laughter echoes against the cellar walls.

" Are you afraid of the sweat of my pressers' feet? You finicky, pedantic man! Do you think the wine you have just drunk will turn in your tummy? No, sir, unfortunately we have to press the grapes here in a mechanical way, as is generally done nowadays in this country. I say *unfortunately* because trampling with feet makes all the difference to the wine. It is much better, more highly flavoured, for the fibre and seeds are not ground by the machine, a procedure that gives the wine a bitter taste. But apart from this, trampling the wine is as ancient a custom as the history of the wine itself, and all dust and imaginary dirt is sterilized during fermentation. The grapes themselves are always covered with a slight coat of dust or cobwebs, which all disappear during

fermentation, and the wine is as clear as a maiden's eyes. Have a look at this, for example! "

He knocks the bung out of a small cask and introduces a curious, still-shaped glass instrument, at least a yard long, the so-called *lopó*, or " liquor thief ", through which, in one single sip, he pumps out the wine automatically. He lets out a glassful into a tumbler standing on the top of the shelf, and holds it up to the light. The rich, yellow wine shines like gold.

" Taste that now! " he calls out with obvious pride. " This wine is of my favourite vintage, but it will never be served at table, for womenfolk know nothing about wine, and I don't want to waste it on the profane. However, every time I receive a masculine caller, we go down to the cellar and have a sip of it by candle-light. Well, now, what do you think about it, eh? "

" It is really something extra special. It's marvellous! And you can't sell *this* wine, may I ask? "

" Aw, I don't want to sell *this particular* wine, not even for gold. But all my other wines are nearly as good as this, and far superior to the ordinary foreign quality, yet no one buys them. It all goes to the dogs. Do you know what a friend of mine did? He announced in the village that whoever brought him a few eggs, a couple of chickens, a duckling or a pound of flour, would be allowed to drink as much as he liked in his cellar. Well, it turned out to be a good piece of business in the end, for who on earth could drink more than a few pints of this cheap wine? . . . Now you know what it is to be a wine-grower in these parts! The high interest demanded by the Banks eats up everything. And one can't get a loan from private individuals. They are on the look out for mort-

gages. But has the largest land any value when everybody knows that it doesn't produce any money? Do you want to buy my vineyard? I would sell it for a song, if it were not for one circumstance. You might rightly ask what I live on if I have nothing but losses. Ha, ha! I sell stone, stone for buildings and pavements and road constructions! I happen to have a pit in those purple cliffs at the end of my vineyard. And since God made the hill high and put the lake low, the lorries slide down laden and come back empty. And there are cargo-steamers, too, on the lake, so that all this results in good business. Do you see? If I had not got bread for stones, I should have long ago gone to the dogs myself. Agriculture, as you have had an opportunity of seeing for yourself, takes away more than it can give. America and Russia dictate the prices. And we cannot compete with their mass production. . . ."

Why not? I ask myself. It would be no good discussing this matter with this jovial old fellow of bygone times. But that the splendid Hungarian wine should find a market abroad, this ought to be discussed with the "big noises" of importation and exportation in Warsaw, Stockholm, London and at Budapest! Why do they fail to see good business here? Probably because they know nothing of Hungarian wine and its absurd prices.

Behind Lake Balaton's beautiful vineyards the mysterious darkness of the Bakony forest, haunted by shades of fierce warriors and robbers, captures the traveller's imagination. On a moonlight night the century-old trees all around give one the weird impression of being in the neighbourhood of *betyárs* and *pernehajders* hiding at

crossings in the forest to waylay unsuspecting travellers and wanderers. Perhaps that big black oak there before us hides a sturdy horseman of the Dick Turpin type, who robs the purses of the rich to give their contents to the poor. Well, I should not be afraid of him even if I were riding here in olden times. Hussar-Jóska tells me of their methods, while, dismounting, we lead our horses up a hill.

*Betyár* is an ancient Hungarian word which the Magyars brought with them from their Asiatic home. It can be related to the Persian word *bachtyar* which has the same meaning — a robber. Now the word is only used jokingly, but a few generations ago it meant a mounted robber of the Rinaldo type, whose favourite dwelling-place was the Bakony thicket. The *betyárs* were no common highwaymen; they were " noble " robbers who had their own code, *betyárbecsület'*; the " robber's honour ". This meant that they were not allowed to rob the poor or to kill the weak. If a landowner made an agreement with the head of a robber-gang to pay him so much toll, a kind of tax for being left in peace and protected against enemy gangs, he could sleep peacefully in his bed.

The word *pernehajder* (from the German *Bärenhäuter*) originally signified a herdsman wearing a big black sheepskin coat, who was in charge of the flocks and responsible for the number of the stock. Quite naturally they always made a few sheep disappear periodically. They even made a sort of compromise among themselves. When the time for checking the flocks came and they were some animals short, they asked their neighbouring colleagues to eke out their " shortage" from among the sheep entrusted to their care, and such requests were righteously

fulfilled by every *pernehajder*. So it could occur, as Hussar-Jóska told me, that one day a landowner summoned his " chief *pernehajder* ", and said:

" To-morrow morning we must count the sheep",  
" 'cause I want to know the entire number."

" No, *tekintetes ur*, it won't do, not for the time being anyhow. We have eighteen beasts with the neighbour's flock at present."

" Say, what on earth are you driving at? "

" Well, master, you know, there is an unexpected muster over there to-day, and I had to lend those animals to my comrade. And we must wait until after the revision, or he will get it in the neck. ..."

In olden days the Latin colleges of Hungary used to send out their alumni to various villages and towns in the neighbourhood during the vacations, in order to give them a chance of practising preaching from the pulpits of small churches. Of course, they were then the guests of the village and also drew a little pay. Well, there is an old tale about a youth, who on his way through the Bakony forest suddenly found himself surrounded by a number of armed *betyárs*. Small wonder that his heart sank into his boots right away. However, the robber chief took him paternally by the collar and only said:

" You have arrived just in time, my young stripling. Now you shall preach to us, the devil take ye, as if you were a real priest. It's a damned long time since we last heard a sermon, my son. You will not preach for nothing, do you hear? "

The boy did his bit; he availed himself of the sermon he had crammed at school, and the robbers listened to him

more devoutly than most people in church. Rough voices began to sing long-forgotten psalms. The Lord's Prayer and the Blessing terminated the service.

" Well done, my boy! " exclaimed the robber chief. " Now you will get your reward. Give him six yards of cloth for a winter suit of the best foreign make. But we don't reckon by the town dealer's tricky yard, mind ye! One yard stretches as far as that tree! " And he pointed to a big oak at a stone's throw from the place where they were standing.

One can well imagine what a load the lad had to carry on his back, glad to be rid of this adventure with such a profitable result.

The Bakony jungle spreads like a cupola over the Dunántúl. It is one of the greatest forests Hungary had the luck to keep after the War. My riding companion, a true son of the Great Hungarian plain, confessed to me that he had never seen such big hills — as a matter of fact no hill in the Bakony is higher than 800 feet or so.

The landscape is beautiful; green valleys and hillsides covered with beeches roll away to the horizons. It is a real hunter's paradise — full of deer, hart and wild boar. No hunter's horn, however, disturbs the placid air, neither have we guns; my friend carries a small pistol, but Heaven alone knows why he took it along with him. So far it has not been drawn from its holster.

We do not meet any robbers; we are many years too late for them. Their heyday is long past, when they, too, had a paradise in the Bakony.

Once upon a time the cradle of the Hungarian kingdom

was here. Here it was that their first Christian king, St. Stephen, reigned, their first Christian temple was erected; here their first capitals and feudal castles were built. The towns in this part of the country still browse as if unheeded of long years of progress. Take, for instance, a little town, Veszprém. It does not figure in our geography books. We arrive here and know nothing about the place, except that it has military barracks where our horses can be stabled. But once we are there it turns out to be such a gem of architecture that my comrade could hardly drag me away from the place when we had to set out on our way again.

Near the barracks there is a quaint church of purple-coloured basalt, built in neo-Gothic style. There is also a public park, a museum and a wonderful Bishop's garden, open to the public, and many buildings in fantastic styles dating from time immemorial up to the present century. An hotel, a coffee-house and a theatre supply the demands of modern civilization.

But that does not interest us in our present mood. Round the corner our excitement begins! From my vantage-point I catch sight of a little square which looks like a scene from the Middle Ages. A little street winds its way up to a market-place surrounded by beautiful Renaissance and Baroque houses. Behind all this, there is a hill, " Castle Hill ", crowned by an ancient tower. There is not much left of the castle itself, but if we climb up to the tower, we get a view that reveals all the touching quaintness of a little fairy town. Groups of ancient houses, a rivulet shining through the beautiful groves, the whole landscape surrounded by the gorgeous Bakony woodlands. A dozen roads wind their way out of the town, indication

of the fact that the place has been a centre of culture and civilization for ages past.

The vanished royal castle was built by King St. Stephen 900 years ago. Within the vast open precincts his wife, Gizella of Bavaria, set up a small cathedral and a chapel which can still be seen in all its Romanesque simplicity. Up on the hill, there are monasteries, churches, and chapels. Monks clad in trailing black or brown robes walk about the streets, stopping every now and then to talk to a passing colleague.

On the Szentháromságtér, the Square of the Holy Trinity, there is a wonderful little Roman cathedral constructed in washed grey limestone. It is a happy reconstruction of Queen Gizella's original Roman temple. It was burnt to the ground, rebuilt in Gothic style, devastated again by the Turks, and then built up by a Bishop in the Baroque period. Now it has regained its original form. It is of clear-cut lines and noble proportions, although it lacks the patina of past centuries. The interior fulfils all expectations; Queen Gizella's own church must have looked just the same from the inside as well.

The Bishop's Castle and both monasteries seem to be rooted to the foot of the cliff. The first has a huge loggia, facing the episcopal gardens, and the Prelate should be a poet and a painter to appreciate fully this view; apparently he is neither.

I could have walked for days and days about the streets of Veszprém, half dreaming with the beauty of it all. I could have forgotten the present and just wandered on and on, under a spell, right into the glorious past of this country. In the town's small museum, apart from the

biological and ethnographical collections, there is a sample-collection of the products of the china factory at Herend nearby. It produces china which can vie with the foremost *obi et s d'art* of the world's best porcelain works. Also, though we were well aware of the fact that the Romans had flourishing colonies in Transdanubia, which they called Pannónia, we had not the faintest notion that so much of their work, their tools, articles and buildings were still hidden under the earth. Excavations which have materialized through the devotion of the Museum's director, Dr. Réh, have brought to light the most exquisite mosaics, paintings, vases, bronzes, a very nice little Apollo and other statuettes of Roman times. Nobody knows the extent of the treasure which is hidden in the soil of Dunántúl.

We penetrate again into the shadowy groves of the Bakony forest. We proceed along a deep ravine, at the end of which we catch sight of a little railway engine drawing an endless chain of trolleys. Mine-hands are working at the foot of the hill, loading the wagons with boulder-clay. The deep blue evening sky and the tops of the tall trees gilded by the rays of the setting sun, the Lilliputian locomotive with its toy train and the red clay piled up on the lorries, form a curious colour-symphony. As a matter of fact, this is a primitive Bauxite pit which, with modern methods of exploitation, would yield aluminium on a large scale. And this would be of great value in Hungary, which has been deprived of all her ore mines. But another kind of metal would be needed for this purpose — money!

Behind this primitive mine, an idyllic landscape opens

out, which I wish to call *Clara Vallis*, the " Valley of Light." It seems as though all the glare of the setting sun had concentrated in this little valley of deep green foliage, with huge walnut trees, pyramid-shaped poplars and a silvery creek singing merrily through it. The distant peal of evening bells from the neighbouring town is heard as distinctly as if they rung in one's ears. Deep and light-blue ridges intertwine on the horizon, and the dusk lends a glimmer to the scene. The whole country looks like a Florentine Arno-landscape. A piece of Italy in the dark Bakony forest? I try to look up the name of the little place whose stylish houses loom up on my right. Olaszfalu, " Italian village." God knows why, but it seems to be an answer to the involuntary question in my mind.

Shortly before evening, among grazing sheep, hens and cackling geese, we ride into the main street of Zirc nearby. Who would have guessed that this god-forsaken place could be such a treasure-house of ornamental beauty? The interior of the large cathedral, although somewhat disfigured from outside, is an impressive proof of the mastery with which late Baroque interiors were constructed. The last rays of the setting sun filter through the stained-glass window of the aisle and fall upon the main altar, while high up in the choir dark shadows cover the prelates' chairs. One cannot escape the spell of this church, and it was with deep awe and instinctive devotion that I stood there in silent prayer.

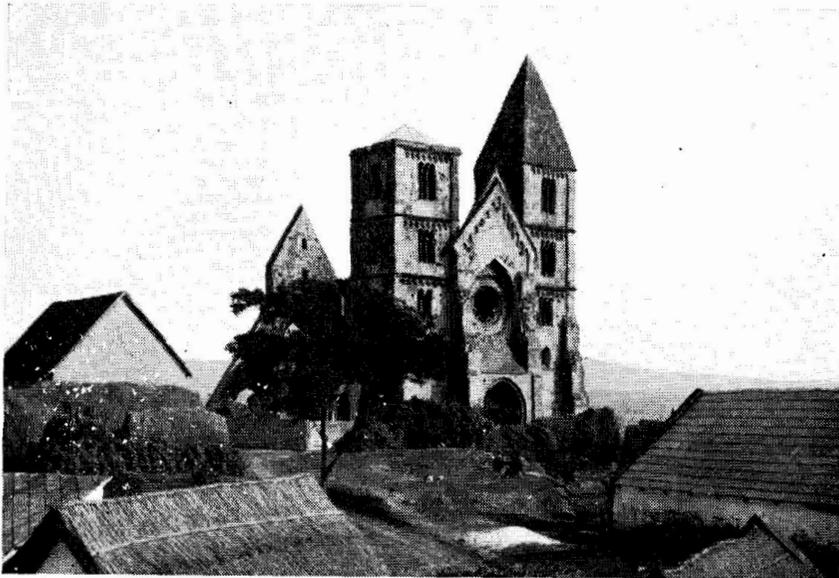
The whole cathedral is only a chapel of prayer for the Bishop's Castle and the Cistercian monastery nearby. Its foundation goes back to the time of King Bela III, roughly the period at which Eric fought the heathen up in our North.

And all this pomp lies hidden in a little third-rate peasant town deep in the heart of the Bakony forest! It is like coming across Stockholm's Great Church in Malmköping, or Westminster Abbey in Slinfold, Sussex.

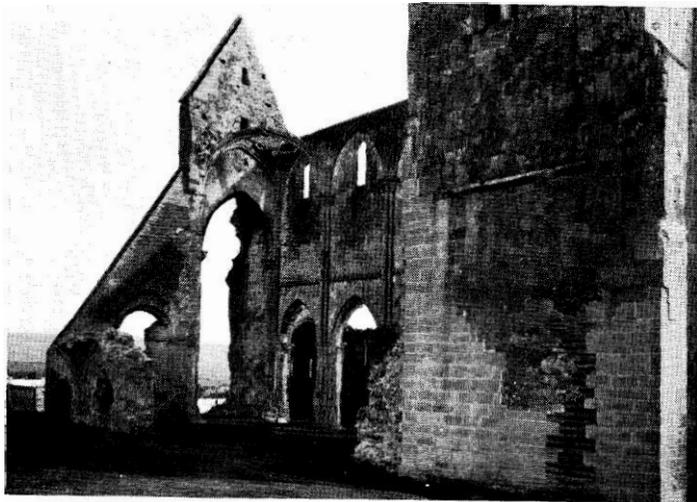
In its small hotel-inn we get a room with one window and much discomfort. But the wine is a match for a good Sauterne.

One week was already over, and we had two hundred miles behind us, so that it was high time to indulge in a couple of days' absolute rest. I wanted to put up at an old robber's nest which was quite near the high road: *Csesznek* (Chesnek), a tumble-down, ruined castle which seemed to have grown out of the limestone hill by itself. I climb up, leading my horse by the bridle, and am rewarded for my trouble by the splendid view from the top of the castle.

We had set out from Zirc at sunrise, when the church bells were just pealing for morning Mass. We had already a whole day's march behind us, and longed for night quarters. But the ruined castle of *Csesznek* proved far from suitable for that purpose. Many centuries ago it had been partially burnt by the enemy, had no roof, and gave little shelter from the rain. How different it would have been, had we arrived only in the Middle Ages! Hussar-Jóska would have given a bugle-blast, the drawbridge would have been lowered, and we ourselves led before the lord of the castle. Surely, he would have offered us a boar from his forests for dinner, cooked and served on a huge tray. However, there was no hope of such a warm reception, and we had to ride on in the hope of more suitable quarters. So it chanced that we reached two small places,



THE WONDERFUL CATHEDRAL OF ZSAMBÉK WHICH IS TO  
BE RESTORED



OUR AIRY BEDROOM IN TEE RUIN



RUSTIC DANCE



LEVENTE-BOYS OF HUNGARY IN FESTIVAL COSTUMES

Bakonymagyarszentkirály and Bakonynémet-szentkirály — just think how much time on their hands the people hereabouts must have! Both villages in the Bakony forest are called after King St. Stephen. " *Szent király* " signifies " Holy King." " Magyar " is Hungarian, and " Német " German. As a matter of fact, the houses of the old German settlement are also built in the Hungarian fashion: long, low-roofed buildings, with white-washed walls, and cross-shaped gables facing the main street.

We soon leave the villages of the Holy King behind, and are again given accommodation for the night by a Count in the neighbourhood. No small Hungarian town or village can be imagined without its own count. The lord of the castle is a gentleman of the ancient nobility, very jovial, and has the nicest park and a lovely home. His farm manager is a young man with an opera singer's voice and poetic leanings, but he understands his own line as well. Honour and homage to such farm managers!

We turn to the west and head for Pannonhalma, the Mecca of Hungarian Catholicism. There we can see the greatest and most famous Benedictine monastery of the country, high up on a hill, and surrounded by green slopes covered with vines. A handsome young monk shows us the big " Empire " library with all its valuable treasures, the restored Gothic cathedral of the monastery and the sumptuous refectory in Baroque style. When mention is made of the renowned monastery cellars, he only answers: "I am sorry, but I am not at home in those parts." I do not press the point, but thank him for his kindness in having shown us over the place, and walk

out with my travelling companion to the southern park of the monastery, an ideal spot for sun-bathing. There you can roam for hours in utter solitude, for the monks apparently do not care much about it, and the hundreds of black-gowned seminarists have no time for walking. A new batch of would-be novices had just arrived.

The Benedictines have claimed the right to run schools of their own at various places in the country, where they not only accept ordinary pupils, but also train teachers and professors, who are greatly appreciated all over Hungary. They do not merely give instruction, but tend the souls and form the characters of their pupils at the same time.

Much has been said in Hungary about a possible secularization; but it would have to be a more thorough and efficient one than that undertaken a century and a half ago by the Hapsburg Joseph II, of unsavoury memory, on the Hungarian throne. Such secularization ought really to be wholesome here, because the riches and treasures of the Catholic Church are a more or less dead investment for a country struggling with economic difficulties. The division of lands ought to be more just and proportionate in Hungary, if she wants to avoid a new collapse like the ill-fated Bolshevik revolution of 1919.

But there are two sides to every question, and one must bear in mind that secularization might be to the detriment of the State in some cases, if it were applied indiscriminately. There are rich livings which serve only to maintain pompous bishoprics; on the other hand, it would be very foolish to withdraw the economic ground from the monastic orders — the Benedictines, Piarists, the Fratres Misericordiani, and the feminine orders such as the Heart of Jesus, the Saviour's daughters, the English Sisters, and

so on — all of which maintain school and hospitals, and perform other useful social services as well.

On the hill where the monastery now stands, were once the camps of the Goths, Huns, and Avars. Frankish kings reigned here, Hungarian kings and queens held royal house. Turkish pashas ruled the whole Dunántúl with an iron rod. Now the Church reigns. In peace and quiet. For how long, I do not care to prophesy.

The Abbey itself dates back to the time of the Carolingians. It was burnt to the ground more than once and rebuilt, and its final restoration began in the reign of Maria Theresa, but was never carried out according to the vast original plan. Nobody is more sorry than I am to skim over such a unique sight as the interior of the monastery, but time presses. We must remount; Pannonhalma must not monopolize all our attention! As it is, we begin to feel a bit stifled in this priestly atmosphere, and apart from this we have to hurry up and return to the capital in order to be able to set out for the East, on our second joy-ride.

Anyhow, there is much more to see here in the Dunántúl. There is Sopron, a nice town, which was returned to Hungary by the plebiscite after the Peace Treaty had allotted it to Austria. That is why the Magyars now call it " *Urbs Fidelissima* " in Latin, which means: " The Most Faithful Town." Another little town, Szombathely, has become famous through the *coup d'etat* of the late Karl IV and Queen Zita when they wanted to fly from there to Budapest and reinstate themselves on the Hungarian throne. The adventure ended with a military struggle near Budapest, after which the ex-royal couple had to leave the country as exiles in the way mentioned

at the beginning of this chapter. Unfortunately, we have no time for these very interesting towns.

On our way back to the capital we arrive at a place by the name of Csurgó (Choorgow). It may sound funny, but its official name is Székesfehérvárcsurgo, and one is inclined to think that its owner must have plenty of leisure if often he has to tell people where he lives. As a matter of fact, he is anything but a time-millionaire, though he might justly be called a millionaire in the true sense of the word. He is the owner of a huge estate, and naturally a Count. In the village there are three churches, Protestant, Catholic and Lutheran. The Count lives in a big mansion situated in a lovely park. He is a most hospitable man, and his house is full of *objets d'art* and family portraits; he has a splendid guest-room with bath and other amenities. Two valets attended me and two lackeys waited at table.

For dessert we ate maize cooked in the ear, a Hungarian speciality, which has an exceedingly good flavour.

" Have you ever eaten anything like this? " asks the Countess who speaks French like a Parisian.

" Oh, yes, this is not the first time I have eaten *kukorica* (coocoritsa)."

" You know it is just in season, but don't for Heaven's sake stick your fork into it, you must hold it at both ends with your two hands and bite. That is the old and only possible way of enjoying our *kukorica*."

Well, I did not put myself out on their account, and chewed eagerly, meditating meanwhile on the fact that cooked ears of maize are the only thing in the world which Hungarian counts, aristocrats, farmers, peasants

and even beggars democratically share. Apart from this, they are miles apart, in this country in which material wealth is so unevenly divided.

The park is lovely. Century-old trees, flower-beds, groves and fountains, just like any other Hungarian count's wonderful garden. Deer stalk in the thickets, and one can see pheasants and swans as well. The Countess has a rose-garden and a huge orchard with hundreds of fine peach trees of various kinds richly laden with fragrant, golden fruit. She never quite investigated the extent and bounty of this huge orchard, and even now she turns to me with a childish face:

" Are the peaches ripe already? I did not realize it. Now we can have them served after dinner. I think you will prefer them to the inevitable water-melons, with which one is practically swamped in late summer."

The Countess was not quite right in this. We used to stop frequently at the roadside where we could see water-melon plantations, buy a few big, juicy fruits for a few farthings, and sit down on the grass to cut and eat them with our scout knives.

The Countess does not know either that peaches, eaten with a knife and fork, do not taste half so delicious as when one can bite into them, unseen and free from any convention. The Countess taught me how to eat maize without a knife and fork; now I should like to show her the same trick with peaches. . . .

In the stable, among many fine animals, I see four *Lipitzaners*, with slender legs and small hoofs.

" Are they Arab steeds? " I ask the Count.

" No, they hail from Spain, but they've been bred

in Austria for a long time, though it's most probable that the Moors brought them into Spain, so that they still have Arab blood in their veins. Talking of Spaniards," he continued with a deprecatory smile, " this Alfonso was a very fortunate fellow, who though he lost his throne was not stripped of his private fortune, whereas my never-to-be-forgotten King, Karl IV, who was forced to leave his country, and, because of the threats of our enemies, could never return, went to exile almost penniless."

" Will young Otto ever become King? He came of age long ago, and Hungary has no king on her throne. The Crown of St. Stephen has no bearer."

" Perhaps; I hope so," answers the Count, who was one of the most trusty servants of the late King Karl. " At any rate it will take a long time yet. The question is not topical just at present. Admiral Horthy, the Regent, is highly respected and loved by the people, and he will hold his place like a helmsman at the wheel. But don't you think it ridiculous that a nation should be so crippled that the natural energies, the will for good and the contributions towards peace and progress are foredoomed to failure by grave restrictions on enterprise? Were not the post-war changes in the map of Europe made to give people freedom of thought and action? They have deprived us not only of two-thirds of our kingdom, but also of the natural right to choose our form of government ourselves. Have you ever heard a more hated name in our language than — TRIANON? Trianon, where our humiliating Peace Treaty was signed."

Indeed, I never heard in Hungary a more detested word. On the other hand, I have met no word more frequently in the Hungarian language, in general conver-

sation, politics, in the street, in economic, social and theatrical circles, in fact in every corner of Hungary, than — REVISION!

In an open square of the village, outside the Count's park, there stands a monument, ordered by him and raised by the people. A mighty stone pyramid stands on top of a green hill, surrounded by stone pillars and chains. The pyramid is adorned with a metal shield, an emblem of the lost provinces, while upon its four sides are engraved the names of the soldiers of the place who fell on the battle-field. There is also a strophe from a very famous poem by Hungary's greatest bard:

"It cannot be that so many hearts  
Have shed their blood in vain!"

A whole nation stands behind these lines. It cannot be that so many heroes died in vain for their Fatherland. A change must come. They believe firmly in the future.

A communal vote was being taken in the Town Hall, presided over by the *biro*. At the closing ceremony, when everybody was standing, he read aloud the new Hungarian Creed, which concludes every meeting, which every child learns at the same time as the Lord's Prayer, which can be read in every tramcar, on the walls of every school and military barrack, and even in the homes of the townspeople. It runs as follows:

"I believe in One God,  
I believe in my Country,  
I believe in a Justice eternal and divine,  
I believe in the resurrection of Hungary!"

In the evening we are taken out in the Count's coach drawn by those splendid *Lipitzauers*. The coachman looks as stately as his steeds, wearing the Hungarian coach-

men's livery — a Hussar dolman with silver buttons, a round black hat with two fluttering sailor ribbons, and long riding boots whose shine shames the sun. We drive to the castle ruins nearby, descend from the coach and take a long walk over a hill that offers lovely views of the woodlands.

On the following day we are taken in a car to Székesfehérvár (Saykesh-fehayrvar), whose old Latin name was *Alba regia*, i.e. Royal White Town. This town, which is situated midway between Budapest and Lake Balaton, has played an important part in Hungary's history. Here dwelt the first kings of the country, and for centuries the town remained the centre of the Royal power of the House of the Arpads. Here its kings were crowned, and Diets held until the catastrophe at Mohács (Mawharch) in 1526, when the Hungarians' defeat at the hands of the Turkish hordes opened all roads to the country to the latter. The castle of Székesfehérvár bid defiance for many years to the Ottoman armies, until, in 1543, it fell and was not relieved for a century and a half. And little was left of its ancient glory.

Not one stone remains of the famous Cathedral which St. Stephen, Hungary's first King, built here and in whose crypt he himself and fourteen successive monarchs rest. It is known, though, that it was built in the style of Rome's ancient Christian basilicas and adorned with valuable mosaics like those still to be seen at Ravenna, in Italy. The Cathedral stood undamaged until the reign of Louis the Great, about the end of the fourteenth century, when it was rebuilt in Gothic architecture. In 1601 the Turks blew it up, and only a few pillars and pieces of

wall-ornamentation, now in the museum of the town, remain to show the ancient glory of this magnificent cathedral.

The Royal Castle, too, has completely disappeared; even its site cannot be traced. Tradition claims that the King's only son, the young Prince Imre (or Emerich), was born and lived in this town. He is one of the most charming characters in Hungarian history, lived a chaste life ("The Prince of the Lilies") and died in his prime. Even now he is referred to as *Szent Imre* (St. Emerich). His mortal remains, buried with those of his illustrious father, disappeared with the basilica itself. Only one precious relic remained of St. Stephen, his embalmed right hand, which is now housed in the chapel of the Royal Palace in Budapest, and every year, on the twentieth of August, St. Stephen's Day, is carried about the city in festive procession.

After the Ottomans had been forced out of the country at the end of the seventeenth century, the bishops and monks set up a host of new buildings, which give the town its characteristic aspect. On the ancient site of the Cathedral, which is now being scientifically investigated, there once stood a huge episcopal palace, while the site of the Royal Castle is now covered by a Franciscan monastery.

The two-century-old town hall of Székesfehérvár is a noble Baroque building; the Bishop's Dome and the Seminarists' Church contain splendid frescoes and early rococo altar pieces. Only one little Gothic chapel has escaped the ravages of the Turks.

Of all old buildings the interior of the Cistercian monastery and its church is the most beautiful. The

staircases and the refectory are adorned with marvellous stucco work, the vestry has carved walls and exquisite rococo wood-sculpture done by an unknown friar of the Order in the year 1760.

Almost without exception, the streets of the town bear the names of ancient kings, bards, statesmen and other historical celebrities. We turn a corner and stand before a monumental fountain, guarded by statues of four of St. Stephen's bishops; we open a gate, and see a garden interior that has remained undisturbed for centuries; again we may catch sight of a carved facade, and as we walk away this exquisite form remains indelibly stamped on our minds.

Our pilgrimage through Székesfehérvár in the Count's luxurious car came to an end, and my Hidalgo, too, had by this time eaten his fill of the Count's good oats.

" Can we at last put up at a farmer's for to-night? " I say to my partner next morning as we mount.

" Wait until we get on the *Alföld*, and you will have plenty of opportunity to indulge in rustic quarters. To-night we shall sleep in a church."

Strange to say, we actually did. Zsámbék was the name of that lovely little place, just a day's ride from the capital. It is inhabited by German colonists, who were invited to the country to build up the devastated villages after the Turks' domination.

High up on the hill lie the picturesque ruins of a twelfth-century Roman cathedral, burnt down by the Ottomans in 1500, and never rebuilt. Round the tumble-down tower we find a grass-covered square, and let our horses graze on it. The jolly good Hussar-*Jóska*, who is

preparing a place for sleeping, shows me a skull and some odd human bones which he has just lifted out of the soil. *Gunner-Jóska* makes up our beds on the stone floor of the church, and being an expert in camping, he can make it look very alluring. Before bedtime, however, we walk up a decrepit spiral staircase to the top of the tower to have a last look at the beautiful landscape.

" *Nagyon, nagyon szép!* " (Nawdyon, nawdyon sape.) It is very, very nice! I hear *Jóska's* involuntary ejaculation, though I do not know him as a man who indulges in spoken reverie.

Supper is prepared, and we eat silently, without being able to take our eyes off the sleeping landscape; over there the dark silhouette of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, around us the stern, silent ruins, and above us, the starlit sky.

I sleep like a good child on the soft hay-mattress laid by the soldiers underneath a pillar of the ancient church ruins.

At two o'clock I hear the horses neigh and stamp. We are up, and packing. The moon shines high in the sky, the stars are paler, and the church towers look silvery with pitch-black shadows. Into the saddle and away! By breakfast time we should be in Hungary's beautiful capital. The road gleams white in the moonlight between the dark green fields, the dawn sky turns golden, rosy and purple, the sun rises on the horizon and life stirs in the villages. . . .

A few hours later our little cavalcade marches into Budapest along the " Way of the Blessed Virgin Mary ", and comes to a halt in front of the gates of the Eötvös College. Our tour in the *Dunántúl*, the first part of our ride through Hungary, is at an end.

## THE MOUNTAINS

A little public meeting had gathered in the yard of the artillery barracks when we rode out again from Budapest. The grey-haired, stout Colonel gave his last orders, his officers saw that everything was as it should be, Hidalgo was already prancing, and *Hussar-Jóska* cracked his whip as he took his seat in the cart. The Telegraphic News Agency interviewed us, a camera-man shot a film of our start, and a kind Swedish lady (a great benefactress of the poor Hungarian children during the War) who happened to be travelling in the country, gave me a four-leaved clover for luck. It brought us luck just as did Professor Gombocz's Finnish godspeed on our first trip. Everything was really all right, and when the little party returned, the old Don Quixote looked ten years younger, according to his kind-hearted friends of the fair sex. Advice to the reader, especially to elderly gentlemen: Don't travel in hot, dusty railway carriages; stay out in the open air and see the country from horseback. Then you, too, will be ten years younger when you return. We, at least, put on weight and came back healthier than ever.

I was given an old-fashioned military saddle, like the one my Hidalgo usually carried on his everyday service. The kind Colonel offered me English saddles, too, but experience has taught me enough to know that though the English saddle may be very comfortable and elastic for a little morning ride, it is unsuitable for a long-distance trip. Of all saddles in the world the Cossack

saddle is the best, as I know from youthful experience. It has a funny shape; a wooden foundation with high pommels and a stuffed leather-cushion between. It is very comfortable, and if I had known in advance that I should have a chance of doing such a long-distance ride through the country of the Magyars, I should have had my old Cossack saddle sent to me from home.

Leaving a big city is not as easy as entering it. If one approaches it from the highroad, one simply has to ride on, but heading away from the city one is easily lost among a maze of streets. Had we not been accompanied by a gallant artillery officer we might have roamed around the blocks of houses till nightfall. But soon, fortunately, the last buildings of the suburbs were behind us.

The Lieutenant bade us farewell, and we rode on to meet new adventures. The soldiers with the wagon went by another route, so that we were riding alone over a vast, sandy field, which is called *Rákos* (Rar-cosh), situated north of the capital on the left bank of the Danube. In the country's childhood, long ago, the Diets were held here, and Mathias Corvinus, the world-famed ruler of the Magyars, elected King of Hungary.

We trotted along the broad road beside which fields of melons, tomatoes and other fruits were spread out. When we reached the toll-gate — for the mediasval town toll frontiers still exist here — we saw the Customs officers examine the peasant carts driving to Budapest. This is why the price of wine and fruit is nearly double in the towns. But such anachronisms " happen in the best families," even an ancient, cultured country like France

knows them. Not to mention the Balkan States, on the market-places of which every market-woman or stallholder has to pay a certain amount of tithe for her place.

Some time later we arrive at a big forest and a place called Fóth. On one side of the road there is a castle and on the other a church. It is a new building, in some English style, and amidst the small, white farmers' houses it looks like some grotesque goose with her ducklings.

We ride on alongside the highroad, across desolate meadows and fields, where for hours at a time we cannot see a living soul or even a hut. It is strange how the peasants and farmers like to live so close together in big " church villages", while, before reaching the next village, one travels across vast, unpopulated lands. We pass a level crossing, and the watchman's hut is the only inhabited place we have seen for hours. The sky hangs scarlet in the north-west, with thick blue-black, purple-fringed clouds; night is near. Darkness falls quickly in these latitudes and it is pitch-dark when we turn into a broad village street and put up at the nearest inn.

We do not have much of a rest. We are up before sunrise and start riding southwards towards the light. The air is still fresh, but after eleven o'clock the heat will be over 90<sup>0</sup> Fahrenheit in the shade. By that time, however, we always reach a town or village, which we have previously looked up on the map.

This time it is a " Count " village again. The Count has gone out in his coach, but will return in half an hour. This gives me time to shave at the cow-house well with the aid of a tiny hand-mirror.

" What manners! " my travelling companion exclaims, " Imagine the Countess driving this way and seeing you!

" I shall at least be neatly shaven, not like you, old Martin, with your thirty-six-hour black stubbly beard! "

The Count comes home in due course, and we walk into the mansion with our dusty riding-boots as though it were the most natural thing in the world. The Count is a man of the old school, of Emperor Franz Josef's time, wearing whiskers, riding-breeches and yellow boots. As he strides through the garden, he exclaims in his military commander's voice:

" I wore these things once upon a time when I was an officer of Hussars, and I shall wear them till my dying day! "

The Countess is a real housewife, a model mother and a true spouse. You rarely meet such sweet and well-educated children anywhere as those of the Hungarian upper classes. Both the elder Béla and the little János were first-rate chaps. In the winter they were always sent to a Jesuit college near the Danube which their father used to attend in his day.

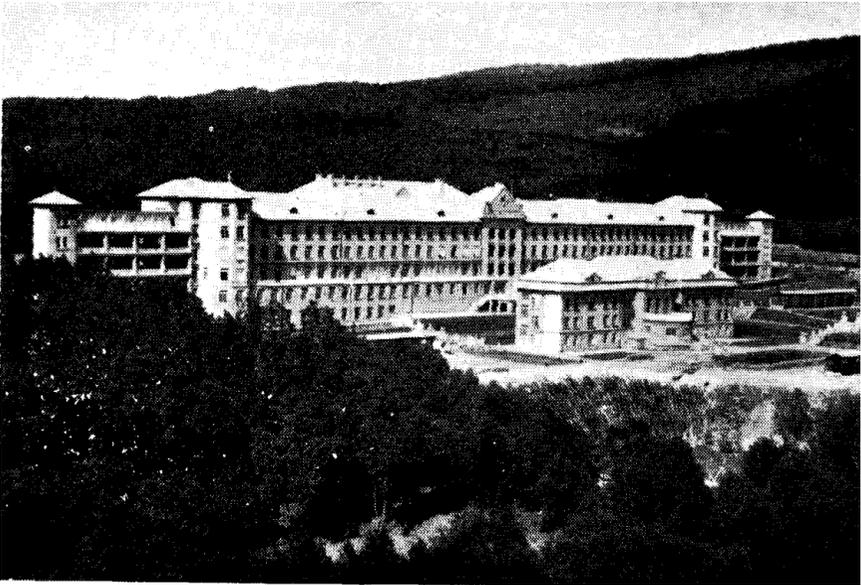
The young people in this country have exceedingly good manners. They kiss the hands of ladies and even of older gentlemen. When addressed while sitting, they stand up to answer; they are attentive, thoughtful, courteous, affable and taciturn. The boys, almost without exception, can ride and swim and very often ski and skate, though the winter is not so long as in northern countries. It may be that their efficiency in all kinds of sport is based on the *Levente* movement, a sort of " young men's organization " which has spread over the whole

country. It is compulsory for every young man from the age of fourteen to twenty to be a member of it, providing he is not already *cserkész* (chair-case), that is to say, a boy scout. No one is allowed to escape this obligatory "service"; they all get their training from fourteen to twenty years of age, and I was given to understand that 80 per cent at least of the boys are members. The boy scouts are more numerous *per capita* in towns and big cities, but only one-third of the Hungarian population live in towns.

There is no conscription in Hungary; the Peace Treaty forbade the old system of compulsory military service. Hungary has only been allowed to have a recruited army 35,000 strong as a maximum, including municipal police and *gendarmierie*', totalling about 12,000 men. As the time to be spent in regular service is twelve years, only a small part of the population can get military training. That is why the youths are trained for six successive years in the *Levente* movement. Every foreign visitor remarks on the discipline and military bearing of Hungarian boys, and if one day it comes to defending their country — and Hungarians are convinced that sooner or later this will be the case — they will make tip-top soldiers.

*Levente* is an ancient Hungarian word whose original meaning is "sword" and "knight", or perhaps a page, a noble youth, who waits to be dubbed a knight and "gain his spurs." One of the sons of the chieftain, Árpád, who occupied the country a thousand years ago with his warriors, was also called *Levente*.

We are sitting on the veranda, looking out over a



CONSUMPTIVES ARE WELL CARED FOR AT MÁTRAHÁZA



THE MAGNIFICENT CATHEDRAL OF EGER IN EMPIRE STYLE



THE LAST TURKISH MINARET IN HUNGARY IS TO BE FOUND  
AT EGER



THE EYE OF THE WOODS

lovely park, among whose varied trees I recognize one well-known Swedish birch. The shade of a huge lime tree covers at least half the verandah.

" They think that I should have this tree cut ", soliloquizes the old Count. " But I would never do it. Up in this lime my poor mother had a wooden platform built, where she used to sit and sew as a girl. . . . It was not yesterday, you know. . . ."

" We like to sit there, too." says the little János, " though we do not sew, of course, but read. . . ." He blushes slightly at his temerity in interrupting the grown-ups' conversation.

Béla will take over the management of the estate as soon as he leaves school. He is well known and loved by the farm hands. But who knows what fate awaits the owner of this vast estate in the near future?

" It is hardly a pleasure to be an economist nowadays in Hungary," says his dad, " but he is keen to be one, so I let him have his own way. . . ."

Tradition is strictly observed. In the big, old-fashioned dining-room we are served by silent valets, who push the chairs under us as we take our seats. Solid silver knives, forks and spoons, rare porcelain and thick damask on the table. Everything just as it should be in the home of a Hungarian magnate.

But how long will things go on undisturbed in this agricultural and wine-growing country whose people cannot sell their products? Trianon-Hungary has no raw materials which could be refined for exportation; nearly everything, except food, has to be imported from abroad. The old Danube Monarchy had perfect unity: it had everything, raw materials, food-stuffs and a well-

developed industry, but its " succession-States " are now economically paralysed, and are not big enough to make themselves felt politically. Three of them, Hungary's next neighbours, have united to form the so-called Little Entente, in order to maintain the deplorable state of affairs created by the Peace Treaties of Trianon, Saint-Germain and Neuilly, that is to say to checkmate Hungary, prevent the Austro-German *Anschluss* and the Hapsburgs' ascension to the Throne.

A hundred years ago, a Bohemian statesman, Palacky, said that if there were no Danube Monarchy, it ought to be created. Later, a great French geographer, Elisée Reclus, described the Danube basin as a supremely ideal unity from an economical and political point of view. The re-establishment of this unity through a " Danube Confederation" would be just as natural economically as it is politically impossible. It is brewing already even in the neighbouring States which won the War, though Hungary is still quiet. The Hungarian peasant eats his daily bread, bacon and *paprika*, or his *gulyás*, which he earns by the sweat of his brow, and sleeps on a hay-mattress without grumbling. He has a stoical nature. But, by Heaven, how long will this last? Many remember Scipio's famous saying about ancient Rome:

" Once the day will come when the Holy Ilion falls."

When I was young and the world was wide and everything different from present-day conditions, one could climb higher mountains in pre-War Hungary than is the Snowdon summit. I came at that time from Poland to Budapest, and had the opportunity of mountaineering

among the wild peaks of the "High Tátra". There I could find icy glaciers and frozen tarns in the height of summer.

You cannot do such trips now in Trianon-Hungary; she has been deprived of all her important mountains. The chain of the ancient Hungarian Carpathians now forms a frontier between Czechoslovakia and Poland, The Carpathian mountains encircled almost the whole of pre-War Hungary and gave her frontiers made by Mother Nature. Now Hungary has no natural frontiers at all. The Danube cannot be considered as one. Magyars live everywhere in the ceded parts of the country, even among the wild Carpathians, near the Polish border, and these parts are now "abroad" for all Hungarians.

Tátra was the largest tract of Alpine land in the northern part of pre-War Hungary, Fáttra was the second and Mátra the third. The first two have been allotted to Czechoslovakia; alone Mátra, the smallest section, has been left to Hungary.

The Matra is not a proper mountain, it has no snowy peaks, yawning abysses and heaven-storming cliffs. It is only a forest-clad ridge, whose dark blue silhouette rises at the end of the plain. In pre-historic times its peaks housed volcanoes, now long extinct, and are at present covered with woods. To the east we see another ridge of high hills, the *Bükk*, "Beech-mountain", of limestone, covered with beautiful and stately beech-woods. Its continuation is a group of bare, smaller hills, the extinct craters of Tokaj-hegyalja, on whose sun-kissed slopes the world-famous Tokay wine is cultivated.

At the foot of the Mátra, surrounded by mighty vineyards, lies a town called Gyöngyös (Dyöndyösh).

Written as it is, it looks more formidable than it sounds. It signifies something like "The pearly one". And it really looks like a big, white pearl set in green velvet. We arrive just in time to see the wine-harvest, not the ordinary one, but the first harvest of the choicest types of grape destined for export. The neatly assorted bunches, packed in baskets containing about ten pounds each, are bought by the local merchants and despatched to Poland, Germany, England, etc. This is still a good business, and may bring in millions after a good crop.

In Gyöngyös there is also a big "co-operative wine cellar", which is shown to us with a mixture of pride and sorrow. In its underground rooms and passages about one million two hundred thousand gallons of wine are stored, but the growers are afraid of the coming wine-harvest, for there will be no room for the new wine, as the old stock is yet unsold. It is the old story — the drop in price which makes wine cheaper than milk in this country. Not to speak of the excellent beer, which is even more expensive than wine. Exportation? Yes, but no one buys Hungarian wine abroad (apart from a Tokay which frequently has not even seen the Tokay vineyards and is doctored abroad according to "prescriptions") for the simple reason that nobody knows how exceedingly good and cheap Hungarian wine is.

Apart from the grapes and the wine, the greatest celebrity in Gyöngyös is the Burgomaster. He is monarch, as it were, of the place, and nobody dares nor would utter a word against him. For everybody there knows how clever he is. A good many years ago the whole town was burnt down, as there was no water with which to quench the flames. But just as Moses smote

the rock with his rod, the Mayor, too, stuck his stick into the soil and said: " there must be water here! " He had two Artesian wells bored. They were stylishly supplied with magnificent electrical plant; the engine-houses looked like state-rooms, whose windows overlook lovely parks, for the Mayor was not only a practical man, but an aesthete as well. There was water and in plenty, too, so that apart from a nice fire-station, he had a magnificent open-air bath made with artificial sandy beaches, gymnastic apparatus and all sorts of amenities. All my homage to such a Mayor!

But this is not everything. He also saw to the canalization of the town, had a new villa district constructed and a mountain-railway up the Matra, with a comfortable rest-house at the top, where rich people and poor boy scouts can take their ease. There is also a sanatorium for consumptives, which more closely resembles a dream-castle than an institution. Surrounded by woody hills and flower-gardens, it is so marvellously situated that one is almost tempted to become consumptive just to be allowed to live there!

The Mayor also had a first-class motor road built over the mountain pass to a famous watering-place, Párád. As we passed, there was a fair on, and the atmosphere was highly festive. The villagers wore their local national costume, girls in white frocks, embroidered bodices and golden caps which glittered in the sunshine like steel helmets. " We are women, not girls ", one of them said, when I accosted her, " the girls do not wear golden caps, only *párta*, a silken kerchief adorned with pearls." (Hence the Hungarian expression: " She remained in *párta* ", that is, unmarried.)

One of the women even wore an embroidered silken shawl over her head, such as old peasant women have in this country, and she told me that she cannot wear the golden cap, because she is already a mother of three children. So many peoples, so many customs.

Our next halting-place is Eger (Egair), a name derived from *eger-fa*, alder tree, probably because the place was surrounded by alder trees when it was founded. As a matter of fact, this town already existed when the Hungarians occupied their country about A.D. 900. A huge ornamental sarcophagus, containing the thousand-year-old bones of the first conquerors, can still be seen in Eger.

Otherwise Eger is an historical shrine of the Hungarian people. Here the first bishopric of the country was founded as far back as about 1050, and a huge fortress with a maze of underground passages built. Here fierce battles took place during many centuries. The entire hill, on top of which the castle is built, is honeycombed by these subterranean tunnels, which have been partially excavated and made accessible to the public in our day. Legend claims that some of the tunnels were a mile long and ended up somewhere in the surrounding forests. Future excavations will show whether these old rumours are founded on fact. Anyhow, the ruins of this thousand-year-old fortress which have already been uncovered are, perhaps, unique of their kind in the world. The strength and massiveness of this fort can best be imagined when one learns that seventy powerful mines were required to blow it up. Out of the stones "gained" in this way,

all the monumental buildings dating from 1700 onwards were constructed. There is a big " Empire " dome in Eger — a bastard of Greek temple, Roman basilica and Christian church — which, in my opinion, can hardly justify the total destruction of the ruins; it is nice to look at, and stately, too, but somewhat exaggerated. Not to mention the fact that on one side of the fortress hill there is a railway track and on the other military barracks, which greatly detract from the romantic charm of the landscape.

This old fortress has witnessed much bloodshed and many fierce battles. About 1250 the Tartar hordes devastated Hungary, razed her buildings to the ground, and wiped out all culture and primitive civilization. In the sixteenth century the stronghold of Eger faced the siege of a hundred thousand Turks. István Dobó, with his small troupe of defenders, heroically withstood their onslaught, and the brave women of Eger made their names immortal in Hungary's history by their manlike courage. They helped the defenders by pouring molten lead, boiling water, burning pitch and embers upon the besiegers, who, in that century, were a menace not only to Hungary, but to Western civilization as well.

For half a century the old fortress remained unscathed, until at last treason delivered it into the hands of the Turks. However, no trace of their hundred-year reign has come down to this day, except a slender Turkish minaret, which can still be seen in Eger. The golden age of Eger began about 1700, a great date for the Hungarians, when the Turks were driven out of the country. Mighty, art-loving Princes had everything rebuilt in the town, in baroque, rococo and finally in Empire style, the best architects, painters and sculptors of the

country being invited to embellish the bishopric with their art. Churches, monasteries, convents, schools, libraries and public baths were erected, and the large French park of Eger can still serve as a model for flower-gardens.

The Greek-Oriental church has the most beautiful baroque tower. In its churchyard, greatly to my surprise, I discovered tombstones with ancient Greek inscriptions. My second surprise, was that divine service was held in ancient Greek, though the parishioners could be counted on one's fingers. When I asked how it came about that souvenirs of a Greek dwelling-place can be found in this North Hungarian town, I was told that in past centuries Greek merchants came to Hungary from their native country and from the Levant, because the Magyars were not good at commerce, and the Greeks were clever business men. They played the same part in agricultural Hungary as the Jews in other European countries.

Deep in the heart of the Bükk mountains stands a castle, hidden in the deep forest, like that of the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy-tale. A wonderful lake lies in the valley, surrounded by high, wooded hills. The forest sleeps, as if it were under a spell. One could roam about here for hours and hours at a time without seeing the handiwork of man. But when we reach the bend in the highroad along the little lake, we catch sight of a fairy castle with towers and pinnacles, terraces and balconies and " hanging gardens " where every flower-bed spreads out in pink, red, lilac, blue, white and gold. Underneath the Palace there is a stalactite cave dedicated to Saint Anne,

and in the green slope of the hill above the Palace another one bearing the name of St. Stephen. The caves are fitted with certain clever devices to make them look like fairyland — electric lighting effects, which illuminate the huge vaults in gold, silver and pink. White alabaster, red marble, a whole drapery of coloured stalactites and stalagmites transform this underground world into a fantastic dreamland.

The Castle-Palace itself is a luxurious hotel *hors concours*, and has only one fault — its upkeep costs the State much more than its income. It contains huge, pompous halls, public rooms, etc., but also accommodation for visitors of lesser means, tourists, hikers, and so on.

A natural park surrounds the entire chateau- — the whole of Bükk mountain has this character. Deep in the valley there is a beautiful colony of stately villas, cottages, serpentines, sports grounds — in short Lillafüred is a paradise for those who seek rest or recreation. When I was there there was not a vacant room, and it is better to put up at the hotel in spring or autumn, when the rooms are much less expensive.

How can one get there to avoid a long, long ride day after day? You can reach it in a few hours' run by rail from Budapest, or drive in a car along the most modern motor roads. And you can also fly, for there is a small landing ground in the forest. I, for my part, preferred to come here astride my Hidalgo.

A long, winding path leads onward through the forest. Two horsemen are riding along in silence. A wagon follows them, its wheels cutting deep ruts in the virgin grass. Greensward and leaf are drenched with sunlight;

a vast clearing, like a real meadow, gleams in wonderful colours before us. A little, bare-footed goose-girl, with a two-year-old on her left hand, and a whip in her right, has just turned out from a side-path with her flock of white geese. A sly-looking, shaggy dog trots behind them. It may have been white once upon a time, but now it is unbelievably dirty, and its drowsy little blood-shot eyes look really ghastly. *Komondor* is the name of this famous breed of Hungarian watchdog, whereas the *puli* (pulley) is a little black dog, cleverer than most dogs on earth, which does duty as general aide-de-camp to the swineherd. It is said that both breeds were introduced into the country by Árpád and his warriors from Asia, more than a thousand years ago.

" *Dicsértessék a Jézus Krisztus!* " (Deechayr-teshake aw Yayzoosh Chreestoosh!), says the little girl, and makes a curtsey. " Praised be the name of Jesus Christ! " and like true Christians we all answer: " *Mindörörökké, amen!*" (Meendörökkay, armen), for ever and ever, amen! After greeting each other in this century-old way, the lassie calls out to the big dog to help the little *puli* to drive the flock out of the road, and, by most ingenious manoeuvring, this is done in a jiffy.

The master of the dogs, the *kanász* (cawnars), swineherd, is meanwhile sitting in the shade of a huge tree, peacefully eating his bread and bacon with *paprika*. He holds the bacon between the first finger and thumb of his left hand, and kneads the bread in his palm with the other fingers. In his right hand he holds a big scout knife, and cuts vertical slices from the hard, black rind of the bacon with astounding skill. He cuts much thicker

slices of the bread, and, harpooning both pieces neatly, pops them into his mouth. No fear of cutting his lips! Century-old practice has taught the simple peasant this ancient Hungarian way of eating his favourite food. He takes a piece of green *paprika* seasoned with salt from the square-shaped, embroidered wallet which he wears slung round his shoulders. The water-bottle is dug into the soil to keep it fresh. There is also a home-made flute in the wallet. . . .

We ride out of the forest again, and pass a vineyard in which an old man and his wife are busily plucking big bunches of grapes from the richly laden vines. The enlaced foliage over our heads gives us a feeling of constraint; we trot on towards the white village which we can already see by the river. Tall, pyramid-like poplars, the " Hungarian cypresses ", border its banks. Soon we reach the first houses, and a young man leaning against a tree hails us with a " *Jó napot kívánok!* " He wears the everyday national costume of the Hungarian peasant: a round, broad-brimmed hat, a short, black waistcoat with silver buttons from under which incredibly wide, white sleeves are dangling, and the usual copious trousers of white linen (because of the heat), which require at least ten yards in the making.

" Is this the right way to Miskolc? "

" You're right, sir! Take the next turning to the right, follow the street and the hill-side, keep straight on through the forest, cross the river, and after passing a large church you can be sure that you have arrived there."

We thank him for the detailed information, and continue on our way.

" *Isten áldja meg!* " (Eeshten arid yaw meg!) — God bless you!

Still it is impossible to reach the town that day. We enquire once more about a *kastély* as soon as we approach the next village. Surely a village without a lordly mansion cannot exist!

" Yes, the Baroness is at home," we are told, and we ride up to the *kuria*, the mansion, which is situated on a hill surrounded by trees. There we make a halt under the chestnut trees encircling the servants' farm, and meet the Baroness, who just happens to be descending the steps of the back entrance.

" Her Ladyship " still bears the unmistakable traces of former beauty.

" Of course I am at your disposal; it will give me the greatest pleasure," she says with a smile. " I have stables enough for a regiment. The soldiers can stay here in the farm buildings, and you will naturally come up to our guest rooms. We dine at eight."

It is truly remarkable how easily and quickly one makes friends in this country, and how well one is received, especially when travelling on horseback, as we were. The Hungarians are great horse lovers, and were once an " equestrian nation ". Horsemen are always treated with appreciation and a certain degree of respect. If you were a motorist, you could not put up at strange people's houses. But I am already sitting in the spacious drawing-room, listening to the Baroness' tragic story. It is a not unusual tale. Cards, bankruptcy, suicide. Ever since then the widow has managed the estate. A strong woman!

But it is time to retire. What time do we want breakfast? It is advisable to get up betimes if we want to ride

on in the cool morning air — " that is to say, if we don't disturb you. . . ."

" It does not matter," she says. " I, too, am accustomed to getting up at five every morning to go to early Mass. That sounds rather old-fashioned, doesn't it? " she adds with a smile. " But you cannot live without an anchor. I have two: my faith and my work."

When we take our leave the next morning, she writes the following saying in our album with her firm, white hands:

" *Wenn Menschen von einander gehen> so sagen sie Auf Wiedersehen. Das wünsche ich innig.*" A firm handshake and we are in the saddle. Looking up at us with a girlish smile, she says:

" Don't forget to watch my horses at to-morrow's races in Miskolc! They are bred on the estate and are such favourites."

The estate! How much this short word contains! Why does a woman in her prime stay here in this God-forsaken part of the country, near a small village, and worry about the uncertain profit from her land, when she could sell up and go to live in a most modern flat in the capital and live on the interest her money yields? Because of the " estate ". It must not be neglected, the earth must give its tribute, and the peasants and farm-hands must draw their daily bread from it. What would happen if it were sold for good? This is why she clings to it. For other people's sake. O, women of long bygone times, ladies of romantic castles, Mothers of the people, you have not altogether disappeared!

In Miskolc (Mishcolts) we are taken in by the Garrison

of Hussars, and attend the trotting races in the company of the officers. There is a big race-course outside the town, surrounded by vineyards. The River Sajo (Shaw-yow) flows across the large plain in an easterly direction. The spectators are elegant and the horses fine. One-horse sulkies and two-spanned hunting-carts are entered; it is really a pleasing sight. A ladies' race winds up the festivities, and a humorous incident occurs. A young Eve drives round the course at a mad speed, and a little girl among the spectators suddenly jumps up on to the bench, and calls out: " Gee, that's Mummy "! There is a roar of cheering and applause. We join in, and hail the young mother when she crosses the barriers and takes her little daughter in her arms.

We also have the pleasure of congratulating the Baroness on the success of her horses. Her noble animals carried away the palm.

Next day we went to a polo match and a race in which the finest steeds competed. When I congratulated a newly acquired friend, the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Hussars, he smiled amicably and replied:

" Why, you Swedes are the best military riders. You always do marvellously at contests. I once saw even your young Crown Prince, I mean your hereditary Prince Gustavus Adolphus, who will one day be your King — ride with our artillery in Budapest like a cowboy. A very charming young man! "

At yet another place in Miskolc I was reminded of my native country. There is a big iron foundry owned by the State in Diósgyőr, near the place at which the high-

road turns off towards the Sleeping Fairy Castle of Lillafüred. I am told there by an engineer that ore is also brought from Sweden.

" Yes, sir, we have no ore, since the Peace Treaty of Trianon gave all our mines to our enemies. We cannot work now on a large scale in the foundry as we used to do. You may easily imagine that we cannot afford to employ even half the former number of hands now that we are obliged to buy foreign ore. But the foundry still struggles on, for work we must, even under the most cramped and miserable conditions. Look at that screw-axe, for example. It will go to India, in competition with England, Germany, and Sweden, the chief exporters. There is no better proof of the efficiency of our goods than that. We also manufacture machine accessories for the big State machine factory in Budapest, which chiefly manufactures railway carriages. These have a good name, and are exported to several foreign countries. The factory is now busy for the electrification of the State railways."

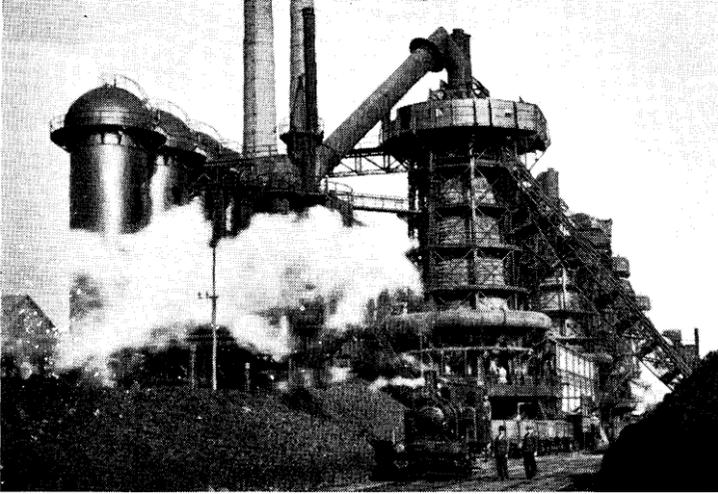
From the iron foundry, we steered our course through the extensive residential quarter, laid out with beautiful gardens, towards one of the lovely Bükk valleys, where we catch sight of four Lilliputian railways which carry tree trunks and coal down to the plain. On the verge of the forest we see a ruined fortress, flanked by four massive towers. In its day it was the Royal hunting-lodge of Louis the Great, during whose reign Hungary was one of the most powerful countries in Europe. Many a fine boar from the acorn forests up in the Bükk has been roasted here on a spit by the King's cooks. Then came the time when the Turks flooded the whole country and set the fortress-like lodge on fire. But about a hundred

years elapsed before the building fell into ruins; and so it remains to this day. Even with its crumbling walls and towers, it is, amidst twentieth-century creations, a striking relic of days long past.

Miskolc has also other monuments which have been less changed by time. The Turks left no mosques in these parts, but the Jews have two ancient synagogues in the town, which bear witness to the fact that many of the inhabitants of the place were formerly of the Semitic race. The main highroad by which they entered the country from the north passed through Miskolc. The Catholics have two big churches, a Franciscan monastery, and quite a number of lesser places of worship. Both Lutherans and Calvinists have their own churches, with similar bare, whitewashed walls. An old-fashioned Calvinist church, one of the most ancient in the country, inherited from Catholic times, is a little pearl of early Gothic architecture. And it is situated on a highly picturesque ridge of the *Avas* hill, from the top of which we have a delightful view over the town, and its surroundings.

The so-called Greek Catholics, a denomination between the Greek Oriental and the Roman Catholic Church, have their own newly constructed Episcopal church. The whole building has the appearance of an architectural bastard between the Patriarchal and Papal styles; one really cannot tell at a casual glance.

For my part, I like to while away my time in a Greek-Oriental or "Byzantine" Orthodox Church, whose pointed Baroque steeple rises from a little grove in the middle of the town. I feel quite at peace there, because nobody ever goes to the place. I see tombstones bearing Greek inscriptions in the churchyard, and amuse myself



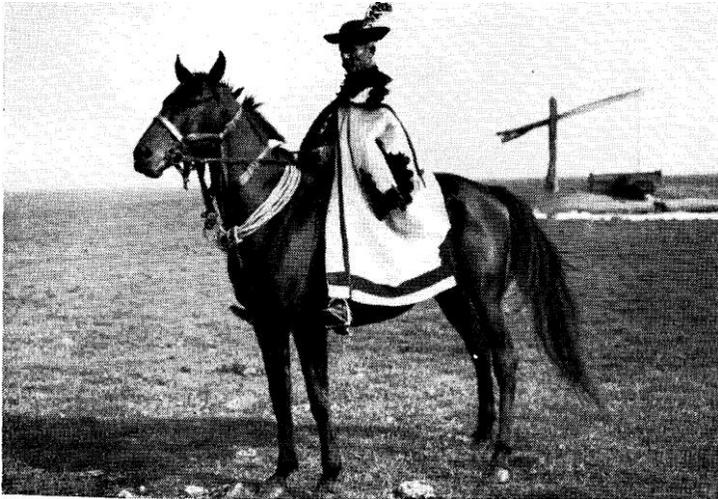
THE IRON WORKS OF DIÓSGYŐR



THE RUINS OF KING LOUIS' HUNTING-SEAT



THE KING OF THE PUSZTA AND HIS SUBJECTS



A CZIKOS IN ALL HIS SPLENDOUR

deciphering them. The interior of the church has extraordinarily fine panelling and woodwork; time has lent its gilt a majestic patina. The high altar-screen, the Ikonostas, which reaches to the ceiling, is particularly fine, with its pageantry of gaily coloured sacred images, set in a gorgeous frame. It serves to separate the congregation from the Holy of Holies. The exquisite mahogany panelling along the walls is also a masterpiece of wood-craftsmanship.

All this beauty is a heritage from Byzantine merchants who came here a few centuries ago to serve God and Mammon — particularly Mammon. They became rich, left fortunes to their church and received in exchange handsome tombstones with Greek inscriptions and sculpture. Greek sculptors carved the fine marble blocks. Greek priests held Mass for the salvation of the souls of the departed, in the language of their fathers. And even now, I, faithless son of our time, listen to ancient prayers read from ancient books in the ancient tongue, just as it was spoken nearly two thousand years ago in the first Christian assemblies.

As we ride out from Miskolc on a late summer morning there are four of us. The Lieutenant-Colonel of the Hussars and his son, a young lieutenant in Reserve, accompany us. They will show us the way leading to the vast battlefield where Batu-Khan's Mongol hordes met the defenders of Christianity in the fateful year 1241, during the reign of King Bela IV of Hungary, when the Asiatics flooded Europe and soaked its soil in blood. Theirs were the two mightiest armies that met in this

part of the world at the time. Had the Hungarians retreated, not only Hungary but other European lands reaching to the Atlantic would have been laid open to Tartar devastation.

Our little cavalcade rides up to the top of a hill, from which we see the conic crest of the Tokay mountain silhouetted against the sky like some phantom hovering over the plain, luring us with its famous name and a mysterious power of attraction. " In the evening you will be there ", says the Colonel, as he bids us farewell. " And a jolly long ride, too! " I am involuntarily reminded of the gallant lieutenant who once said to me: " You see the mountains in the blue distance in the morning, and you will reach them before nightfall! "

We cross the rivers Sajó and Hernád which both pour their waters into the Tisza. King Bela's army was hemmed in and beaten just at the angle between them — a defeat which had a remarkable effect on Hungary's history. But the enemy armies also suffered grave losses, and Batu-Khan finally abandoned the idea of pressing on into the heart of Europe.

Now innumerable and endless rows of juicy tobacco-plants grow on the meadow once soaked in blood, and a peculiarly strong odour, reminiscent of dung, emanates from them. The leaves are plucked by hand and hung in an airy barn, then dried, sorted into bundles and carefully counted. It is a hard job, but, as a Jewish tobacco planter has just said to me: " It is worth while, because the soil is free from stones, and rich." The only drawback to tobacco planting is that it is strictly limited by the State.

We reach a little watering-place where sulphur-springs

gush forth from a small basin in the centre of the establishment. The neighbouring hills are a continuation of the extinct Tokay volcano which accounts for the hot springs.

It is a lovely little spot, and there are many others like it in Hungary, provided with a complete hydropathic establishment and other amenities. The "cure" is not expensive either, five pengős a day — which corresponds roughly to four shillings — everything included. For this sum one gets all one requires: a nice room, medical attendance, and baths, but as it is only a small watering-place, there is no scope for dancing and other such amusements, which probably explains why people do not flock to these places.

We stop at Tállya and see in the distance the Vesuvius-like Tokay, blest with Hungary's Lacrimal Christi. But no smoke rises from its blue peak, and instead of the Neapolitan sea, a billowy stretch of green meadowland and golden cornfields surround it. Noble vineyards climb half-way up the slopes of this prehistoric volcanic mountain, while at the crest there is a little wood.

We have a very pleasant stay at Tállya. The family which takes us in welcomes us with true Hungarian hospitality. Beneath the cellar-vaults, in which Francis Rákóczi II, the hero of the liberation of Hungary, once took refuge for weeks on end from the Austrian troops, the family host offers us a taste of real Tokay nectar. He tells us of subterranean passages, which formerly led from the cellars to the neighbouring villages, castles and churches. These were the outcome of times of oppression and want, when a speedy and unseen escape saved the

life of many a valiant man. It was beneath these walls that Prince Rákóczi spent the night; here we can see his fire-place, and the little larder where his faithful supporters hid food for him.

The soil we are treading is sacred in Hungarian history. Kossuth, this " new Rákóczi " of the nineteenth century, the founder of Hungarian independence, first saw the light of day in a small neighbouring village called Monok, where his cottage can still be seen. He was baptized in the Reformed Church of Tállya.

At night a festival is held in which all the farmers in the neighbourhood participate. The peasants shell freshly picked peas for drying. It is a tedious task, and the peasant girls prefer to meet in the farmyard of some specified farm and sit in a circle around the mound of peas, which they shell into baskets balanced on their knees. It is considered unseemly for boys to take part in this woman's job, so they amuse themselves in other ways. They line up in front of the girls and sing folk-songs. There are a few among them wearing *Levente* caps; they are members of the organization to which I have already referred. When I ask them to sing the almost century-old song about Louis Kossuth for me, there is a great stir among them; the girls put down their work and rise to their feet, and in full-throated unison the song about the national hero, who needed fresh regiments and summoned every man to rally to the flag and defend his country, swells on the air.

"Kossuth Lajos azt üzente  
 Elfogyott a regimentje. . . .  
 Ha még egyszer azt üzeni,  
 Mindnyájunknak el kell menni:  
 Éljen a magyar szabadság,  
 Éljen a haza!"

The round, white moon is already high in the soft night sky, and as soon as the great mounds of peas have disappeared, the violins strike up a fiery *csárdás* to the accompaniment of cymbals. A dark-haired peasant girl steps out of the ranks, and simply holds out her hand to me, inviting me to dance. And since no true Swede can say "no" to a lady, I fling myself heart and soul into the dance. It is at least thirty years from that day at Tisza-Polgár when I last whirled in a wild *csárdás*. But to-night is irresistible. I am swayed by the wonderful rhythm of the music. There is no need to learn a country *csárdás* like this; it dances itself. One has only to clasp the girl firmly round the waist, and then glide over the hard-trodden floor, and swing round giddily as long as the speed of the cymbal sticks keeps time with the beating of our hearts. The moon peeps down somewhat coldly and cynically when the old Don Quixote dances *csárdás* with Dulcinea. But he doesn't care, for the dance finishes amid applause, and Don Quixote is shouldered three times by the enthusiastic dancers.

Meanwhile Sancho Panza is seated in a respectable house courting a beautiful *Donna*, as he considers himself too proud to mix with the dancing village girls. He has just been serenaded by some of his former pupils, for at one time he was a teacher in Tállya, and not for all the world would he condescend to such rustic entertainment.

It is the eve of our last day at Tokaj Hegyalja. Tomorrow we shall mount our horses again, and set our course from the Hungarian Vesuvius straight towards the Great Hungarian Plain.

## ALFÖLD

When my travelling companion speaks of the Alföld, his eyes take on the same dreamy expression as I have noticed on small girls' faces when they are contemplating creamy cakes. As far as he is concerned, this cannot be entirely attributed to the fact that he is a Hungarian, but that he is a true-born Alföld Magyar, a son of the Lowlands, brought up on the Great Hungarian Plain. With Petőfi, the greatest of Hungarian bards, he professes:

Whence the influence strange, O ye Carpathian mountains,  
 Wild romantic forests, where the fir trees, moving,  
 Bring to me the sense of beauty and of grandeur,  
 But no thought nor dreams of longing or of loving?

But the broad, flat plains, extended in the distance,  
 Wide in their expanse, and level as the ocean  
 When on these I look, like a liberated eagle,  
 All my soul is moved with magical emotion.

Nagy Alföld, the great Hungarian Plain, extends like a green sea eastwards from the Danube on both sides of its tributary, the Tisza, as far as to the Transylvanian highlands, where Great Roumania's new frontiers begin.

North, south, east and west, the Nagy Alföld is surrounded by mountain ranges, few of which still belong to Hungary; the Peace Treaty allotted them to the neighbouring countries, whose territories were considerably augmented. Here on the Alföld, there are neither hills, woods, nor lakes; only fields and meadows, which are watered by the Duna (Danube) and the Tisza (Tissaw) and its tributaries. This vast steppe-like territory, which covers the lion's share of present-day Hungary, was

overrun by Ottoman hordes at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and remained under their rule for a couple of hundred of years. It is remarkable how few traces of this foreign occupation remain on the Alföld. There are no mosques, minarets or strongholds, not even a bridge or a road constructed by the conquerors. At the time of the Turkish invasion, the inhabitants of the Alföld lived herded together in big towns, so that they might more easily withstand the attacks of the enemy. From the year 1700 onwards, when the Turks were driven out of the country, and the far-reaching Alföld lay wasted, the Government undertook a vast campaign of colonization. It was thus that the little farmsteads (*tanyák*) came into being. They are dotted about all over the plain like distant green patches. The reason for the existence of these scattered farmsteads was that the towns lay so far away from each other that their inhabitants had to cover enormous stretches of plain to reach their lands. In time they built small cottages on their land in which they could pass the night before returning to their towns. Later these cottages were improved and enlarged, and thus the *tanyák* developed into farms.

This obviously does not apply to the whole Alföld. It is so large that it offered many good opportunities for building farms and starting settlements. In any case it is only here that we can find isolated settlements, each peasant having his own farm (this is so termed the *tanya-system*), whereas everywhere else in the country, in large and small villages, aggregate settlements prevail almost without exception.

Almost every variety of plant which can be found in Europe is grown on the fertile ground of the Alföld.

All sorts of corn, chiefly maize and wheat, are grown; all horticultural plants, especially melons, water-melons, cucumbers, pumpkins and *paprika*; all kinds of fruit trees, principally plum, apricot, and peach trees, including, of course, vines; and the so-termed technical plants like sunflowers, hemp, flax, tobacco and sugar-beet, flourish too. Plants for fodder, such as oats, luzern, clover, and beet can also be found everywhere, but, as far as I could see, none of the timothy-grass which is so common in the north. The Hungarian substitute for this is a certain kind of mixed maize, *csalamádé*, which they give their cattle for fodder. Potatoes, although of a rather inferior quality, are also cultivated on the Alföld. Tisza River winds its way across a plain from whose earth man is supplied with all sorts of food and plenty of raw material for clothes.

High up in the north-east, among the wild rocks of the Carpathians, now Czechoslovak territory, the great Tisza rises as a merry little rivulet, joins with other streams, and winds its meandering way through the whole of Hungary, as though the south alone could be its goal. In the centre of the country, it is as broad as the Thames in London, and although it flows slowly, it still continues to flow, as the Hungarian proverb says. Poor Tisza, this "All-Magyar" river, would never have dreamed that, after flowing through the town of Szeged in the south, it would unite with the Danube a few miles farther away on Serbian territory. However, its further fate does not interest us for the moment. Just like the Danube, the Tisza amuses itself with tremendous floods nearly every spring, and every rainy summer. The flooded area formerly comprised the entire course of the River Tisza

through the Alföld. However, by means of canalization and dams, initiated by Count István Széchenyi, the floods have decreased year by year and the danger averted. The last great flood, which nearly submerged the town of Szeged, took place about fifty years ago.

As I have already said, we drew out of Tokaj on a sunny late summer morning. The expanse of green and gold meadows lay spread out before us in a vast patchwork. Our objective was the town of Debrecen, situated on the verge of the famous prairie: Hortobágy.

We had been riding for some hours when thick greyish white clouds began to gather in the sky. The sun was fierce. The fields of golden wheat rippled in the little breezes and the leaves of the tobacco plants looked like melted jade; the shoulder-high maize extended, in all shades of green and yellow, over boundless fields, and the alleys of acacias wound across the meadows like regiments of soldiers, while the plum trees were laden with purple fruit. The sunflowers turned their yellow faces towards the sun from the height of their ten-foot stems; gigantic yellowish white pumpkins and sea-green water melons lay scattered around as though by mistake.

A friendly *főjegyző* (village notary) had telephoned the news of our probable arrival to the nearest village, which was called Hajdúböszörmény. I don't know what this long name means, but I know of another one in the Alföld whose name is Hódmezővásárhely, which means " Beaver-meadow-market-place", though it is usually only referred to as Vásárhely, that is to say " market-place ".

So we were expected and were made heartily welcome.

A little deputation of amiable gentlemen in festive costumes were waiting in front of the town hall to do us honour. A positive giant of a man, with an incredibly long black beard, who introduced himself as the town doctor, stood in the foreground, and made a very nice little speech. He had just returned from a trip to Stockholm, and begged to be allowed to invite the wandering Swede to his house. We stepped into a waiting motor-car, and were driven to his fine home, where a Swedish-Hungarian pact was sealed with a delicious lunch and exquisite wine.

Our friend was of the Lutheran faith, and had been born in Siebenburgen, Transylvania, whose Prince, Gabor Bethlen, was the ally of Gustavus Adolphus during the Thirty Years' War. It turned out that the Doctor's birthplace was Brassó, in the eastern part of Hungary which now belongs to Roumania, the very town in which my venerable great-uncle " Philip Freyherr von Langlet, der Rom. Kayserl. und Cathol. Königl. May:t General Feldt-Marschall Leutenant " was both — Military Commander and a Hungarian Baron. Abraham, the less adventurous brother of this late lamented uncle of mine, stayed at home in Sweden and occupied himself with the dyeing of woollen cloths. So there were points of contact between us, and when I learnt that the Doctor's wife happened to be a specialist in dyeing peasant stuff's, we simply fell on each other's necks and swore eternal fidelity.

As true Hungarian citizens, the Doctor and his wife were driven away from their native town by the Roumanians. " May you love my country as much as I love your beautiful capital," the Doctor wrote in my album.

" I hope to see you again in Great Hungary," added his wife.

Another young Hungarian lady, who had been permitted to remain in a part of the country which had been taken from Hungary, and somehow managed to live on with her family in her native town, now allotted to Roumania, and whom we met on the Alföld during a visit to her relatives, did not even dare to write her name in our album; she feared reprisals on the part of the Roumanian authorities. She lived only in the hope that the territories would one day be returned. As we were about to mount, she came up to one of the soldiers, and, taking the bridle of his horse in her hand, she said: " When will you come to us? When can we expect you? When will you draw into our town with flags flying and drums beating? When . . . When? . . ."

The corporal of the Hussars, who understood her perfectly, saluted and said:

" Have a little patience, Madam. We shall come . . . we shall come when the time is ripe! "

The evening of the first day on the Alföld draws nigh. The beautiful top of the Tokay volcano is glimmering behind us in a gradually darkening colour. Little by little it sinks down behind the horizon until we can only see its peak. Then suddenly a wreath of dark clouds hides it from our eyes. They darken and mass, until only their rim is lighted by the last rays of the sun. Now they are pierced by a flash of lightning, there is a clap of thunder and a hurricane bursts. A few minutes later we are drenched as though the flood-gates of Heaven

had opened. This is the first and last rain-storm we encounter during the whole of our journey.

Those who have never witnessed a southern storm on the steppe or at sea, have little idea of its violence. The lightning rends the skies asunder, as though the whole world were breaking up; then follows the deafening thunder-claps sustained by their echoing artillery as if Thor and a cavalcade of Vikings were racing across the sky in their chariots. A shower of hail-stones as big as walnuts may fall, and wreak havoc on the vineyards and wheat-fields.

We dried our clothes, and spent the night with a Calvinist detective in another town, the name of which also begins with *Hajdu*, as many other places in this district of the ancient Heyducks. Similarly, nearly all the towns and villages bordering the Tisza have the syllable *Tisza* at the beginning of their names. For example, the town which we have just passed through is called Tiszalök.

Our host hardly looks like a genuine Sherlock Holmes. As he is well known by all the inhabitants of the little town, it would not be worth while his trying a disguise. He tells us in an entertaining manner about his professional experiences. His wife is Viennese; with her Catholic persuasion and German mother-tongue, she must be somewhat lonely in this corner of the Alföld where the population consists almost exclusively of Calvinist Magyars. Next morning our host shows us his garden, which, on account of the extraordinarily rich soil, is full of the most varied plants.

" How deep actually is the top-soil? "

" Nobody knows — we dug a well twenty to twenty-five feet deep and the soil was the same all the way through.

The roots go down to an astonishing depth; they search for moisture in the soil, as months and months will elapse before a drop of rain reaches them. Do you know that in these parts the seed can work its way down to a depth of three feet? The vine roots may go down six to nine feet! Otherwise everything would dry-up and wither during the period of dry heat between the spring and late summer showers."

During the next afternoon we drew rein at a farmhouse.

" May we water our horses at your place? " we ask the farmer, who is a middle-aged man with bushy whiskers, such as are still worn by peasants in this part of the country.

" With pleasure, sir. Put the horses in the shade in the garden, and be pleased to step inside."

His wife comes out, too, and greets us.

" I don't know whether you will like our plain Hungarian fare, but as my man and I are just about to begin our meal, I hope you will join us."

We go in by way of the kitchen, and enter the sparely-furnished white-washed room.

The table is laid with a check cloth. We are given broth with lumps of meat in it, then green peas stewed in sour sauce, which is the common summer fare of Hungarian peasants, and, to wind up, a huge water melon. Could one wish for anything better? Is this really a poor country, as is alleged? Oh, yes, but only for the time being. The peasants here are just as proud as magnates. Even though they are poor they like to have good meals, a cosy little room and garden and a few horses or cows in the stables.

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They don't worry about the rest and are content with their lot.

It is evening when we approach Debrecen, which is the second largest town in present-day Hungary, and which likes to call itself the " Calvinists' Rome."

It is the centre of the Hungarian Calvinists and the most distinguished bishopric: the biggest church and the richest congregation are to be found there. The disciples of Calvinism have not congregated in such numbers anywhere else in the world, and there is no larger town in Europe, apart perhaps from Geneva, which is as thoroughly Calvinist as Debrecen. Although Protestants comprise only one-third of Hungary's population, their political and cultural influence is more important than this ratio would seem to demand.

Thirty years ago, when I was in Debrecen, it seemed a large provincial town with long, broad, muddy streets. I saw wandering geese and bleating sheep among the low, gabled houses, just like those which could be seen in any Hungarian peasant village. I met shepherds from the *puszta* (poostaw) — the vast green prairie; they wore big, sheepskin mantles, or wide, white felt capes, the *szűr*, wonderfully embroidered in red, green, brown, and blue. Country cavaliers with big moustaches, long riding-boots, and tight-fitting Hussar breeches, were quite commonplace. They courted country Dulcineas in the picturesque national costume, with embroidered skirts, red velvet bodices, and glossy, tight-fitting coiffures.

As I sit in the saddle, I wonder whether the Great Forest, the Nagy Erdő, in which one could wander for

hours and hours without coming across a living soul, has changed. I am also anxious to see the huge Reformed Church of Debrecen, a monstrous building in a mixture of Baroque and Empire styles, which, thirty years ago, was in curious contrast to the simple, sandy market square of the town. I can already espy its two tall towers, which can be seen long before entering Debrecen.

No, I really hardly recognize the place! Either I have aged very much, or the town has been rejuvenated. Here, in the main street, I catch sight of an enormous, super-modern hotel, the Golden Bull, or *Arany Bika*; the streets and pavements are asphalted as smoothly as a mirror; I see impressive trams and luxurious motor-cars, big stores and smartly-clad passers-by. The Calvinists' Cathedral also remains unchanged, but instead of the sandy square flanking it, there is now a fine park, with well-tended lawns, gay flower-beds and a stately statue of Louis Kossuth. Behind the Cathedral lies a huge Episcopal Palace, in which Bishop Balthazar, the well-beloved leader of the Calvinists, has his residence. Near the Palace, I see a brand-new Museum standing in the middle of another fine park. It is called Déri-Muzeum, after its founder, and contains systematically arranged collections of local archaeological, historical and ethnographical specimens as well as very valuable *objets a'art*. The kind keeper sacrifices a whole working day to show us all the rooms, among others the ultra-modern lecture-hall, and, last but not least, their greatest treasure, Munkácsy's gigantic picture: "Christ before Pilate."

Like the Sixtine Madonna in Dresden, and the Venus of Milo in the Louvre, this world-famous masterpiece also has its own sacred room. Mihály Munkácsy was one of the

greatest Hungarian painters, and his many fine pictures assure him of a place in the galaxy of artists of the whole world.

In connection with the Deri-Museum, I must mention an interesting historical fact. Walking along the Széchenyi Street one day, I happened to notice a tablet, bearing the following Hungarian inscription, inserted in the wall of an old house:

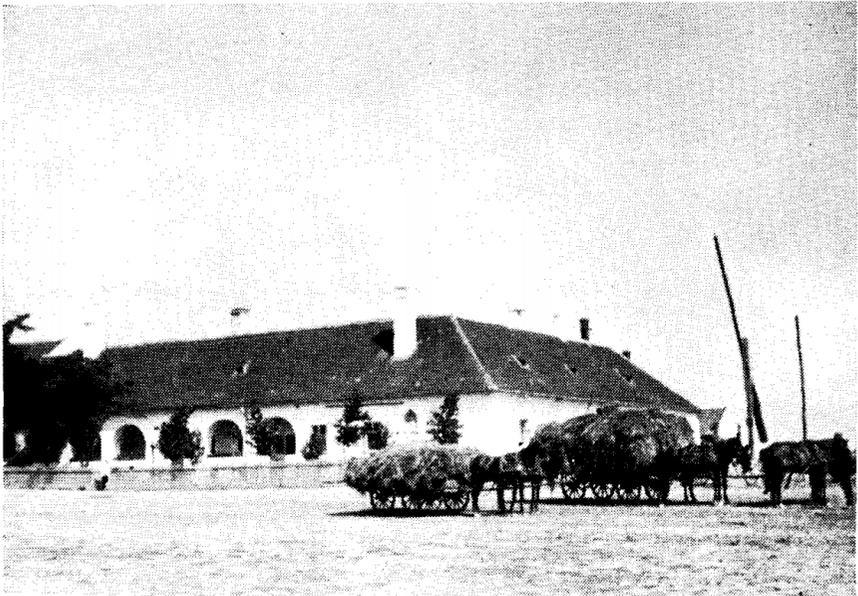
*"Itt szállott meg XII. Karoly svéd király 1714. nov. 15. Emelte a svéd nemzet iránt érzett hálából és tisztelet böla debreceni mens a academic a."*

" Here it was that Charles XII, King of Sweden, put up for the night on the 15th November, 1714. Erected by the College of Debrecen, in token of its deep gratitude and homage to the Swedish nation."

Behind the Cathedral, we can still see the ancient Reformed College, which now contains only three Faculties, for the Faculty of Medicine was transferred to the heart of the Great Forest about twenty years ago, and is a marvel of its kind. The road to it passes through a beautiful residential district with a fine War Memorial. Before arriving at the famous clinics at the end of this road, we come across a marvellous open-air bath, situated in the very middle of the forest, consisting of four large cemented basins, each a hundred yards square. The recently exploited hot springs at the other end of Debrecen supply the water which is conducted to the bath in the Great Forest by underground pipes. The temperature of the water varies in the different basins, and therefore meets the requirements of both swimmers and visitors in general,



THE FAMOUS BRIDGE AT HORTOBÁGY





THE GREAT CHURCH DEBRECEN — CENTRE OF HUNGARIAN  
CALVINIST.



THE FORMER MOSQUE OF PÉCZ, TRANSFORMED INTO A  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

who frequently come from abroad in search of the beneficial medical effect of these baths. Deep in the forest, quite near to this bath, is situated the ancient college's Faculty of Medicine, built on the cottage system, and furnished with all the latest technical devices and facilities.

Although its construction was undertaken just before the outbreak of the World War, it was completed down to the minutest detail of its incredibly far-reaching plan in the face of tremendous difficulties. There are special clinics and laboratories for all types of diseases, and for all diagnostic and therapeutic methods. Administrative buildings, lecture halls, luxurious cottages for the professors, assistants and nurses and other staff: a students' hostel, all-glass rest-rooms, endless alleys cut out of the century-old forest, huge plantations, flower-beds upon flower-beds, fountains and the song of birds. This gigantic sylvan hospital has a separate waterwork, as well as its own electric and steam plant, to which coal is carried on the special railway lines of this university town, as it is frequently called. A speciality of the place is the big central kitchen, from which the meals are despatched on little trolleys along a maze of underground tunnels for distribution in the various departments. A similar network of subterranean tunnels, also electrically-lit and white enamelled, serves for the transport of the sick to the various wards. These passages under the hospital spread for miles in various directions.

One does not know what to admire most, the technical perfection of the whole foundation, which must have demanded the closest collaboration of engineers and physicians, or the ingenious idea of placing the whole in the midst of a hundred-year-old forest transformed into an

enchanted garden. Who conceived the idea, and who succeeded in carrying out such a remarkable enterprise? Such a plan cannot be put into execution by a committee consisting of many members. It could only have been born in the brain of one man, and one man alone.

"And so it actually happened ", people tell me, when I question them about it. " Stephen Tisza, one of our greatest and most misunderstood politicians, Prime Minister of Hungary during the War, planned it. There is his statue! "

A bronze statue stands in front of the central facade, the only inscription on its base is *Tisza István*. Nothing more. Everybody knows who he was. Proud, strong, solitary, and full of love towards his country and his difficult vocation.

"And this is the man ", says a simple mechanic, employed in the electrical factory of the hospital, " who was shot down by four villains before the very eyes of his wife, on an autumn evening in Budapest in 1918, when everything was topsy-turvy."

I know about it from reading his life-story by Francis Herczeg. Count Stephen Tisza had a life full of struggle and strife in trying to carry out his great social and humanitarian ideals, and met his tragic fate like a knight without fear and without reproach. Misunderstood as he was during his lifetime, many people hated this nobleman of unbending resolution and sheer will-power, who was every inch a gentleman. And I am no longer astonished at the monumental achievement before me when I learn that it is his work.

Why doesn't the world know about this beautiful modern medical settlement; why have people never

thought of the possibility of holding an international medical congress there?

When I mention these matters to a medical man, he smiles and says: " Of course we should welcome a medical congress here, but perhaps our foreign colleagues do not want it. They feel themselves much more at home in big capitals. Don't forget that at such congresses, work is not always the sole objective. . . ."

This may be so. Yet I think that it would be difficult to find a lovelier or more appropriate setting for a universal meeting of those who fight humanity's cause against suffering and disease.

Early the next morning we sallied forth for a two days' ride over the *puszta* this vast sea of green grass.

Our horses cross, at a brisk trot, the last fields separating Debrecen from the free green steppe. Here, with the exception of its very heart, the Hortobágy, the soil knows neither plough nor seed, neither houses nor men. Involuntarily my thoughts turn to the past thirty years or so — a mere trifle on Time's great dial — when I last visited Nagy-Hortobágy.

Life was very merry then. *Magyarország* (" Hungarian Country ") was still great and mighty, rich and proud and full of happiness. We danced *csárdás* with black-eyed, dark-haired peasant girls at the inn of Tisza-Polgár. We used to sit round the camp-fire of one of the *puszta* 's many herdsmen, the *csikós*, *gulyás* or *kanász* (cheecosh, gooyarsh, cawnars), listening to their adventurous yarns about bygone times, while the flames gleamed on the moon-white herbiage of the prairie grass.

Wonderful is the prairie grass, of which a bouquet

adorns every Hungarian farm-house, and a wonderful name it has, too, *árvalányhaj* " Hair of the orphan girl." The following legend about its origin is told: " Once upon a time there were two Princesses, one dark and one fair, who lost their parents. The fair-haired girl was the nicer of the two, the dark-haired one was ugly and jealous. One day a suitor, in the person of a handsome prince, arrived. The wicked, dark-haired sister cut off her sister's golden locks while she was asleep, and threw them out of the window. But the wind saw it, and carried the poor girl's hair away to the steppe. There it took root, and became the most beautiful grass imaginable. The Prince married the dark-haired Princess and inherited her whole Kingdom. The fair Princess went to Heaven, and ever since her fine hair adorns God's green earth."

I took part in a hunt, with greyhounds, over the boundless stretch of grass, on which field rats scuttled into their holes, rabbits ran for their lives, and wild herds of black, brown and piebald horses were grazing. The wide plain was as smooth as a frozen lake, with a few acacia groves scattered here and there, and picturesque steppe-wells, whose pole-pumps broke the line of the horizon.

In the white moonlight I plucked masses of still whiter mushrooms, as big as cauliflowers, which grew near the bends of the little winding stream, the Hortobágy. I slept in the Nagy-Hortobágy's famous *csárda* (chardaw), that huge, vaulted, century-old inn, round whose huge well the flocks of geese used to gather every evening at six o'clock sharp when they returned from their day's wanderings on the steppe.

Old Hortobágy! Shall I see thee again after so many

years? We are already galloping over the steppe itself; the grass seems to be terribly scorched by the late summer sun. "Hidalgo" flies over the soft meadow-land, and leaps high over little rivulets without asking his rider's permission. Flights of birds, great and small, black, white and grey, wheel above our heads. There is not a soul in sight as far as the eye can see, not a bush or a tree, except the little oases of acacias, scattered far and wide, which look like blue islands in a great sea.

With a few brisk leaps, Hidalgo reaches the top of a low hill, from which Don Quixote, perched high in the saddle, surveys the western horizon with an eagle eye for prey, just like Árpád a thousand years ago. But on the *puszta* there are no windmills! In their stead he catches sight of the inn of Hortobágy, surrounded by an acacia grove. He tightens his reins, and gallops towards it to be there before nightfall. God knows where Ibolyka, the fat inn-keeper's beautiful daughter, with whom he once danced *csárdás* to the merry music of gipsy cymbals and violins, is now. He is told that she married, moved into the town, and has children and grandchildren. God bless her and her progeny!

Everything fades with passing time, but the *csárda*, with its massive white walls, long narrow veranda, and mossy-tiled roof, remains. But it has been transformed into a "Tourist-Hotel", and is now a cross between an inn and a modern hotel. The huge historic well on the Hortobágy river also remains, but it has been cemented over, and this unfortunately robbed it of its charming century-old patina. Why must people meddle with beautiful old things?

Where are the proud horses I used to see herding over

the vast prairie? Where are the thousands of sheep which used to wander here, guarded by stalwart shepherds clad in picturesque sheepskin shepherd mantles, or the beautifully embroidered felt *sziirs*? Where are the well-armed *pandurs*, these highly-respected guardians of the peace of the prairie, wearing cock-feathers in their black hats, just like the Italian bersaglieri?

Nightfall finds me leaning against the side of the old well, looking wistfully over the wide expanse of land. And — what sacrilege — I catch sight of a little train against the horizon rattling towards Nagy-Hortobágy. I don't want to see it, and close my ears to the sound of the whistle.

But look! Along comes a flock of white birds, waddling gently on their way, cackling as they go. They are the geese, the friends of the days of my youth, returning on the stroke just as they used to do. . . . And, there on the horizon, a herd of wild horses, with the stately *csikós* in their wake, surging from the twilight. And my heart leaps in the knowledge that the romance of the prairie has not faded. Have you ever heard of the Hungarian *csikóses*, these dare-devil herdsmen of the Hortobágy prairie, who ride their horses bare-backed, and can lasso the wildest horse in a stampeding herd with one swing of the rope? The white geese are already cackling on the way home across the bridge, and I almost hear them say: "So you are here again. Does not everything look as it did, geese, horses, and *csikós*? Things may have changed a bit, but we are still here. The sun sets as it usually does at this hour, the clouds are dark-blue, gold and rosy, and the steppe is dark green. What do things look like out in

the great world? Nothing has changed here on the *puszta* where we graze for all time. Will you not stay up at night to see the moonlit *puszta*? Will you not wait for the noonday *délibáb*?<sup>1</sup> Now, fare thee well, and be up betimes to see the glory of the steppe."

I stayed up, for neither could nor would I sleep. I tried to turn in, but when I heard the gipsies playing jazz music in the *csárda* I couldn't bear it any longer. Apart from that, there were only townspeople and foreign tourists staying there, nor was the host the fat, jovial old fellow of my time. And he hadn't a daughter called Ibolyka! I go out under the light of the moon to the distant house of the Administrator of the *puszta*. It is quite an adventure to reach it across the prairie, for the big watch-dogs are very fierce and do not trifle with strangers.

Soon I am seated inside the house, in the company of a dozen other guests. It is the *puszta-station* of Debrecen, with its administrative staff of clerks, veterinary surgeons, dairy-farmers, etc., who supervise the fifty-thousand odd quadrupeds grazing on the prairie. At three o'clock in the morning I will take leave of the company, now in high spirits; I am cordially invited to stay on and not to go "so soon." But by five o'clock my mind is made up and I walk out with an artist who wants to paint, for the hundredth time, the sunrise on the *puszta*.

Oh, you foolish tourists, sound asleep inside the *csárda*, why don't you come out to see this marvel of marvels! The moonlight gradually fades, the stars grow dim, and the sun rises. Nowhere in the world can sunrise be more beautiful than here on this sea-like prairie, at the magic

<sup>1</sup> The famous mirage of the Hortobágy prairie.

moment at which the pink spears of dawn are fighting the silver arrows of the moonlit night. All this I saw on the Hortobágy because I followed the advice of the clever geese. ...

After leaving the Hortobágy we put up at various farmers' houses. On tired horses we ride into a little village at dusk, and approach a little house, from whose windows light filters into the darkness. As a rule the peasants go early to bed, for they have to get up about four o'clock, particularly at harvest time, when they rise in the small hours of the morning. These people happen to be still awake.

"Night quarters? With pleasure. You have got four horses? Well, we can stable two with the neighbour. Tired, I dare say. Just step inside."

We enter the kitchen. The first thing I notice is a huge, white, furnace-like oven, similar to the one I saw in Debrecen Museum. This is the winter stove of the Hungarian peasants, which gives sufficient heat against the furious winter storms which every year sweep over the Alföld. There is also a small open fireplace for cooking, over which hang pots and pans and other cooking utensils. Everything looks beautifully tidy. A motley assortment of rustic crockery is ranged on the painted shelves running along the wall. On the table stands a bowl of tomatoes and green, yellow and red *paprika*. A Hungarian peasant kitchen is a veritable riot of colour. On the floor lie big green water-melons, and oblong yellow sweet canteloupes. On the shelves are ranged rows of preserved fruit in military array; beans, green peas, pears, plums, apples,

baskets of grapes and flasks of wine underneath — worthy of a painter's brush. A pair of ducklings are prepared for us. We had an excellent soup made from cauliflower and potatoes; the ducklings are served with rice and good bread which has been sliced from a loaf as big as a wash-tub. We make a hearty meal of the highly-flavoured food, and join with our host in draining more than one glass of the brownish-yellow wine. There is no red wine on the Alföld; why, no one can tell.

At last we go to bed, and although the beds are unpretentious and lumpy, they are spotlessly fresh and clean. We are soon deep in sweet slumbers.

Next morning we espy a leafy grove, which gives us shelter and coolness during the short time we rest there. It consists of tall poplars and willows, and as one of the lazy little tributaries of the Tisza passes nearby, its rich soil is covered with lush grass. On the soft, wide green meadow fringing the grove oxen of the breed we know from the *puszta* are grazing. The scientific name of this breed, which is the oldest in Europe, is *bos primi genius*. For haulage, practical agriculturalists consider them to be the best and cheapest tractors imaginable. We also see a few thoroughbred Swiss cattle in the distance, a sure sign that there must be some large estate nearby, as the inhabitants of the Alföld do not keep thoroughbred animals. A picturesque cowboy — *gulyás* (gooyarsh) — with his dogs and lads, guards the herd. A mansion-like building looms up on the horizon and soon we reach a little village with two churches. Who can be the lord of the Manor? We are to find out in a few moments.

Two gendarmes wearing khaki, like soldiers, hail us in the main street. They wear black bowlers, like steel-helmets, adorned with cock-feathers. Sabres, bayonets, rifles ready cocked — they are well-armed fellows. With an air of great determination, they come up to our little caravan, halt, and ask us what is our business.

" Good morning, sentry. Are we going to be arrested for loitering? "

" Your papers, sir. "

" Oh, what's the idea? What have we done? "

"I am very sorry, sir," answers the sergeant of the gendarmes, " but you must follow us. "

"But why, in the name of God? We are peaceful travellers, and you can look at my papers just as well here. "

" Yes, your papers are quite in order, sir, but still I must beg you to come to the gendarmerie with us. "

There was nothing to do but to follow him. Shortly afterwards, I was being enlightened as to the cause of this unusual fuss. The big manor we had seen from the distance, turned out to be the summer residence, *Kenderes* by name, of Admiral Horthy, the Regent of Hungary.

I express to the officer of the gendarmes my surprise at this peculiar supervision. It seems hardly likely that anyone approaching *Kenderes* with dastardly plans against the Regent would come on horseback, in broad daylight, followed by two soldiers on wagons.

" You are perfectly right, sir," he replies, " but we cannot be too careful where the person of the Governor is concerned. You never know, you never can tell, in these days. . . . "

While my companion smokes a cigarette with the friendly officer of the gendarmes I walk to the grocery shop to buy grapes. Glancing up suddenly, I see a man running towards me. What the dickens is the matter now? Have I done anything wrong, or do they still want to arrest me? No, he is a civilian, and smiles as he approaches me. Breathlessly he calls out to me in English, with an American accent:

" Pardon me! I lived in the States for seventeen years and met many Swedes over there! When I heard that there was a Swede here, I could not help running after you. . . ."

He said he could not bear to miss the opportunity of shaking a Swede by the hand in this God-forsaken little village. He liked the Swedish nation, although he himself had never visited Sweden, but after his American experiences he had come to the conclusion: " Every Swede is a good man, every one, a very good man! "

We shook hands again and parted like brothers. I told him about my " journey ", and he told us about his place. It is only natural that I returned his compliment with these parting words:

" *Minden magyar jó ember, mind nagyon jó ember!*"

The interpretation of this sentence is left to my readers' ingenuity!

Neither the Regent himself nor any of the members of his family were at home, so there was no question of visiting him. The Admiral has the reputation of being an able agriculturalist, who is not averse to adopting modern methods. His Excellency is also a first-class horseman, in spite of the century-old adage that " mounted sailors are

God's disgrace." Later on, in Budapest, I had the honour of making the acquaintance of both the Regent and his wife, who is as beautiful and distinguished as she is capable and kind-hearted, a real guardian-angel to the poor and unemployed of the country. Every year she organizes various successful charity appeals. She has one special hobby, common to most Hungarian ladies of the nobility — the personal care of a large and beautiful flower-garden.

In the afternoon, as we took our leave of our English-speaking " Swedophile " friend and the severe guardian of the country's peace, who watches so carefully over the person of the Regent, all the members of the gendarmerie were lined up to see our departure. The chief of police bade us farewell, while his subordinates stood to attention.

The River Tisza seems to wind and rewind a thousand times. I have not counted these bends. The river-bed has been dredged and there is a " fairway " now through the once meandering stream; this current ignores the broad, still pools and the margin of reeds, the haunt of water-fowl. The reeds are cut every winter; they make admirable material for thatching roofs. The semicircular bends of the river are often called " *Holt Tisza* " (dead Tisza) in Hungarian. Of course this does not actually mean that the water is stagnant; it is a rich breeding-ground for different kinds of birds and fowls. The main stream of the river, fed by many tributaries and bubbling wells, flows on towards the Black Sea in lazy majesty.

The Alföld has no lakes in the strict sense of the word.

But the crooked, winding course of its rivers gives the Magyars every opportunity to indulge in rowing, bathing and swimming, and they actually occupy a prominent position in the world in most water sports. In Budapest alone, through which the mighty Danube flows, there are about ten thousand boat-houses, a high figure even for a capital. Almost every Hungarian can swim, and they often carry off the first prizes at international competitions. When the Swedish boys played water-polo against a Hungarian team in Budapest, the Hungarians scored goal after goal.

" Aren't you upset at such a thorough beating? " I asked the Swedes after the match.

" On the contrary! " they replied. " We are glad to have scored even one goal against the world's finest team. As a matter of fact we were firmly convinced that we should not be able to score at all! "

Out on the Alföld, not only boys, but also girls, are very skilful swimmers. At every bend in the Tisza they fix up diving-boards, and indulge in aquatic sports as though they were champions themselves, with somersaults in the air and high dives of which I do not even know the names.

Almost in the middle of the Alföld lies Szolnok, which, like most Hungarian towns, possesses a magnificent swimming-pool in the River Tisza. Apart from this, it is a large ordinary town, with churches, banks, cinemas and administrative buildings. Huge earthen dams against floods stretch along both banks of the river. Tall poplars crown the banks, and cattle graze on the flanking green of the grass.

We follow the direction of the dam, and then turn to the left, towards a little farm-yard situated alongside the

" Dead Tisza "; soon the town's church steeples and the heavy iron bridge over the Tisza are scarcely visible. We want to spend the night and rest a few days at the little farm-yard. Everything depends on the manner of our welcome.

It turns out to be an ordinary Alföld farm-yard, a *tanya*, standing solitary on a great stretch of flat country. No peasants live there, but townspeople who like to make a stay there every summer. In the town they have a sumptuous, beautifully furnished flat, they are well-to-do people, but here, on the bank of the Tisza, they live the life of farmers. The walls of the cottage are white-washed, just like those of any other peasant hut; the floor is hard-trodden earth, and their domestic appointments simple. Everything in a Hungarian peasant cottage is built for the sake of coolness. Here, too, we find tiny, square windows, and the room is as cool as a cellar. Anyone who has ever experienced the heat of the Magyar plain will appreciate the intentions of the primitive Alföld architects. You have only to step out of the cool rooms to find heat and glaring sunshine in plenty.

It is said that the great prairie is monotonous. It may be. Possibly a son of the forests, mountains and seas would not feel quite at home here. But the lowland farmer, like his ancestors, loves his steppe.

It is not impoverished in the things that matter. The soil produces such quantities of good food that even the poorest peasant need not go hungry. He talks a lot about War days, bad crops, and poverty. Well, I did not see much of the latter on my ride through the Great Hungarian Plain. Day labourers and workmen get their wages in grain, irrespective of its price. Potatoes, maize,

cucumbers, tomatoes and melons flourish in this blessed black soil. The peasant needs no more than a small patch of land; it will give him all he requires.

The plain is vast, and seems to be boundless. And its very spaciousness is beautiful. One feels so small beneath the huge vault of the blue sky, as though one were alone on the high seas. Wherever you turn, apart from small clumps of trees, groves and solitary farm-yards dotted about, there is only the distant line of the horizon. Cramped surroundings easily create narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness. Well, the Hungarian has as broad a nature as his steppe.

Still, the most attractive characteristic of the prairie is its colouring, earth, sky, clouds, sunrise, sunset and moonshine over the immense stretch of land. The simplicity of outline leaves a stronger impression of the variety of colours.

There are people who are insensible to the charm of the prairie. But let us hear what Petőfi, the great bard of the *puszta* says about its secret.

"Let no one say our *puszta* is not wondr'ous,  
 Oh, it has indeed its own beauty!  
 But as a fair veiled maiden, it shows not its face  
 To unknown, scrutinizing strangers.  
 But when, before good friends, the veil falls down,  
 The Steppe stands there like a maiden,  
 Radiant in beauty, as a Fairy of the Sagas,  
 Fair and proud and glorious."

Petőfi was right. One must come here as a good friend, with open eyes and a humble heart. For the beauty of the prairie will be hidden from him who fails to do so.

After a short rest we go for a walk to the nearby open-air baths at a bend of the " Dead Tisza ". To reach

them we have to pass close to the sweeping reedy bend, which is full of cackling wild-ducks, whose mocking cries irritate my friend to such an extent that he draws his little Browning out of the holster and prepares for a chase.

But the families of ducks in the thick green bulrushes have already noticed us and are cackling a plan of campaign, which they carry out with the utmost precision. Scarcely has my friend sighted and cracked his gun at the first dare-devil spy when this one soars unscathed into the air with a mocking cry. Whereupon the whole batch of old folks with their ducklings disappear into the depths of the rushes. Sancho Panza bows his head in grief and gives up his " wild-duck chase ".

We consoled ourselves for the disappointing hunt in the " strand-baths ", and indulged in swimming and diving in the company of the merry water-nymphs of the place, who not only outstripped old Don Quixote — invariably making a bee-line for the nearest resting-place — but stalwart young Sancho Panza as well.

On the other side of the swimming-pool I came across a little vegetable garden, set up by Bulgarian " summer immigrants ". They have no houses, but live in huts on their gardens. Bulgarians are here renowned as the best vegetable gardeners, who successfully compete with Hungarian farmers. Their gardens are drained on some special system invented by themselves, which provides the soil with constant and adequate moisture. Apart from this, they devote themselves to their gardens, heart and soul, labouring from the small hours of the morning until late at night.

I accost a grey-bearded old man in my smattering of mixed Russian and Serbian, and — wonderful to relate —



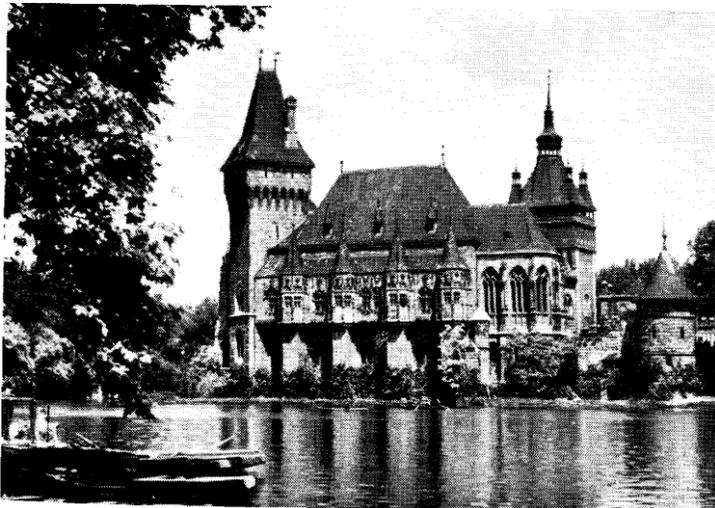
THE MILLENIUM MONUMENT



THE HOLY CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN IN THE ANNUAL  
PROCESSION



THE HUNYADI STATUE NEAR THE  
CORONATION CHURCH



THE EXCELLENT COPY OF THE HUNYADI CASTLE IN THE  
BUDAPEST TOWN PARK

we understand each other! It is just as one can make oneself understood in Norway with a mixture of Swedish and Danish.

" Is it really worth while bringing your whole household here every summer all that way from the Balkans? Doesn't the fare eat up all the profits? "

" Ah, no, sir," he answers, smiling, " we earn much more here than at home. We do indeed toil from morning till night, but it pays, it really does pay. ..."

Later on I learn from my hosts that the Bulgarians take home at least £70 profit every winter. All honour to such gardeners who thrive at a time when all farmers complain of their lot.

Our kind-hearted hosts treat us to a delicious dinner, and their lively daughters, who stole the swimming championship from our wretched selves, now prove themselves to be first-class housewives, and regale us with the choicest Hungarian dishes.

Next morning we are again in the saddle, and follow the famous high road leading from Debrecen, through Szolnok, to the capital. It is twice as broad as the ordinary motor roads, and is made of a composition of cement or asphalt. The construction of one mile of this road costs the State about 1,500 pengős, about one hundred pounds. Small wonder that it is one of the best motor roads in Europe. We, unfortunately, as horsemen, have a hard time on this fine road, not only because of the cart-track we were obliged to follow, but also on account of the numerous motor-cars and motor-cycles which kept on hurtling past us. Hungarians are, as a rule, very thoughtful drivers, and slow down as soon as they see a horseman or a cart,

but since this road is also the route to the far Orient, we had occasional glimpses of a few phantom-like automobiles which tore past us regardless of my Hidalgo, who was constantly curvetting on the very verge of the ditch.

Still, the number of never-ending miles lessened gradually. The distance separating us from the capital diminished day by day with disturbing rapidity. The green sea of the Alföld will in a couple of days be behind us, and this means the end of our golden freedom. The two months on horseback through Hungary will soon come to an end, lingering only as a memory. . . .

But they are not quite at an end yet. Once more the vast stretches of the Alföld appear before us, and, for the last time, heaven and earth embrace in the passionate kiss of *the puszta*. We are heading for the Danube, and arrive at Cegléd, the last lowland town.

Strange to say, Cegléd bears the stamp of Scandinavia. Its Lutheran clergyman studied in Sweden, and speaks the language fluently. My riding companion, Dr. Vörös, also hails from Cegléd, and there are two other gentlemen in the place who speak Swedish and have an extensive Swedish library. In the church we met a Norwegian couple, and I heard of a Danish lady living there, married to a Hungarian.

Quite near to the big Lutheran Church is the Calvinist Church where Lajos Kossuth, in 1848, unfolded the banner of the national assembly against Hapsburg oppression. This is why Cegléd is a sacred place for all Hungarians. The town also possesses a Kossuth-Museum, in which one can follow the life of this hero of the nation from the cradle to the grave. The Garibaldi of the Hungarians, just like the Italian, has become almost a legendary figure,

whose name and deeds are immortalized in traditional songs and sagas.

The Museum also owns a collection of valuable excavated objects, such as clay vases, bronze and gold ornaments, etc., found in the neighbourhood, some of which are at least three thousand years old. As I pick up one of the heavy clay vases, I think of the multitude of tribes which have trodden the blood-soaked soil of this plain in past centuries: Illyrians, Dacians, later Romans, then Franks and other Germanic tribes, Asiatic Huns, Avars and Alans, Gepids, eastern and western Goths, Slovaks, Croatians and Serbians, then the Magyars, who hailed from the East, Yazygs, Cumanians, Tartars, Turks, Roumanians, not to mention Jews and gipsies. What a strange trick of Fate that the Magyar people, of all those from the Ural ranges, proved to be the only constructive nation, building a model State which has existed for over a thousand years. But this cannot be a mere trick of Fate, the coercive " force of circumstances " and conditions: this people must possess certain inborn qualities and traits of character which make such a development possible.

One morning during our stay at Cegléd we breakfast at the local military garrison, where our two soldiers and four horses had been offered night quarters. The Major calls a parade for us and shows us over the various buildings of the garrison. If these barracks merely represent the usual amenities offered to Hungarian soldiers, as they are stated to do, I can safely say that many of their foreign comrades might well be jealous of them. They live in large, clean, airy rooms with fine comfortable beds. Each man

has a locked wardrobe, which can be used as a writing-desk, in the modern style; there is a whole library ranged on the shelves, with each book neatly covered in blue paper. At the head of each bed lies a pillow in a nicely embroidered snow-white pillow-case.

" Surely, Major, the State doesn't provide your boys with all these fine things? "

" Oh, no, it certainly does not," he answers with a smile, " but they are allowed to make themselves as comfortable as they can, and so it happens that if one of them brings from home an article like a blanket, book or handkerchief, the mothers, sisters or fiancées of the others do not want to be outdone. A fine competitive spirit ensues and our accommodation is consequently gradually perfected. But come and see the dining-room! "

I had expected to see long rows of wooden tables with tin plates and enamel saucepans, instead of which I saw china crockery on white damask tablecloths, ornamented with flowers.

" I never saw such barracks, Major — and shall probably never see anything like them in any country. But do, at least, console me by confessing that the flowers can be put down to the fact that it is Sunday to-day ..."

" Perhaps it is," the Major smiled, " on week-days it does not always look so festive. But, in my opinion, not only civilians, but soldiers, too, feel better and work with more gusto if they are nicely and comfortably housed. And the barracks are the soldiers' home as long as they are in the service . . ."

Next morning, when setting out on the last lap towards

Budapest, a whole cavalcade rode out of the barracks. A dozen young officers, who had decided to accompany us on the first few miles of our journey, rode up in the rear. After them came the waggon, with the two faithful Jóskas sitting on it. Never before did I ride so proudly as on that fine September morning on the Alföld, nor probably shall I ever again. It was indeed from our hearts that we called out at parting " *Éljen Magyarország*", followed by three Swedish cheers for the town on the lowlands where we had met with so much kindness and sworn a Hungarian-Swedish alliance.

While Hidalgo, at a quiet, rhythmical trot, followed the high road through cool, wooded country, which, westward from the town, suddenly breaks the prairie-like character of the lowlands, I turned over in my mind memories of the last night I had spent in friendly circles.

There was the dark-haired young man, erstwhile a monk in Italy, who, for twelve years, had fought against an unquenchable love and sought oblivion as a missionary on the other side of the globe — only to break his vows one day, leave the order, and return to his present wife, the good Hungarian Ilonka. They received me like a brother. The Catholic Church probably maintains that the monk's soul will be consumed by hell-fire on account of the marriage, but I, for my part, think that St. Peter will fling wide the gates of Heaven for this couple, for if there is no place for such good people up above, we are not anxious to go there either.

Then there was the violin virtuoso, with a black beard, a gigantic body and a child's soul. "*Manó bácsi*" — Uncle Emmanuel — was his name, and his violin sang of its own accord when he drew the bow across the strings.

Instead of putting a poem in my album, he wrote a musical score, which was born of the spell of the moment.

There was his funny little colleague, Uncle Doli, a grammar-school teacher, who seemed to me to be composed entirely of dance, wine, anecdotes and goodwill, until I read the lines he had written secretly in my album when he was hidden away in a corner of the room. They were as follows:

"Nem sírok én, könnyemet sem ejtem,  
Csak orcámat két kezembe rejtem.  
Akármerre járok  
Mindig arra várok  
Mikor fogjuk visszavenni Nagymagyarországot."

"I do not weep, I do not shed a tear,  
I wring my hands in secrecy — and pray  
That our Great Hungary Restored be near  
Brought back to us before my dying day."

We drink the Alföld wine and dance *csárdás*. Out in the farm-yard, a pig is roasted on a spit. Later on we are seated at table, eating delicious pork and blood-red *paprika* washed down by sour Alföld wine. The hours fly, as I should be ungracious if, until the east is brightened by the rising sun, the party was broken up on my account. A tearful farewell, many hugs and kisses, the brougham drives up, the *hejduc* clad in national costume, salutes with his whip, and away we go towards the garrison, where a good breakfast awaits us. Soon we are in the saddle again, and, accompanied by the officers, our little cavalcade draws out of the town.

Just to think that even in our sober, cut-and-dried, mechanized age, such romantic happenings are possible! They are only possible in Hungary, in *Magyarországa* where warmth of heart and love of tradition can give rise

to unusual situations and atmospheres which are quite impossible anywhere else in the wide world.

It is the last day, or, more precisely, the last evening, for to-morrow our horses' hoofs will inexorably clatter over the pavements of Budapest, after accomplishing an eight-hundred mile ride through Hungary during those two months. Hills, green woods, lovely glades, acacia alleys, rich fields covered with water-melons and yellowish-white pumpkins scattered among the tall sunflowers — then a new village whose houses are painted near the ground with stripes of blue and yellow, and are inhabited by Swabians; these colours must be a relic from their old home in Germany.

The cool, hay-scented air of the late summer morning smells like golden Hungarian muscatel, and the well-rested horses pull against the bit when we try to hold them back from trotting along the white cemented main road, at whose end the first church steeple of the next town appears against the sky-line.

At nightfall we reach an estate, whose owner just happens to drive up in his smart brougham. He is a Jewish gentleman, who graciously allows us to put our horses in his stables for the night, but, much to our surprise, seems to take no interest in our further welfare. Well, what's the odds?

The stable is a huge stone building, as high as a church. Only one side of it is occupied by horse-boxes, the other is filled with freshly-mown golden hay which has just been gathered from the fields. While the boys tend the animals, we enter a peasant's cottage and boil our tea, and also get

the most marvellous grapes for a few pence. We take a seat on the wooden benches and devour our simple supper, a meal fit for a king. We chat to the old peasants in the room about the crop and hard times. As a rule the poor in Hungary do not grumble — it is foreign to their mentality; but still, it is not difficult to imagine, with a room full of children, what a struggle for existence they must have.

While I was chatting to the worthy peasants, Hussar-*Jóska* had prepared a bed for me in the hay of the stable, using horse blankets for bedding and the saddles for pillows. I must confess that I felt most comfortable on this improvised bed, and assured *Jóska* that I should sleep just as well as in the mahogany beds of the various counts. *Jóska* merely jumped to attention, and beamed down upon me with a grateful smile.

I slept like a log and didn't regain consciousness until I was awakened by my soldiers to a rainy day. Our mounts were given fodder and water, while we ourselves warmed coffee on a spirit-stove and consumed a light breakfast consisting of bread and grapes. Then we performed our ablutions at the well of the stable-yard, and packed up everything in readiness for the last lap. We mounted and rode ahead.

The heavens wept and we were overcome by a mood of depression. Luckily for us the sun broke through the clouds later, and we saw the first steeples of Budapest situated on a little hill this side of the Danube. Soon we were there, that is to say on the outskirts of the capital at the tramway terminus, which is some miles from the centre of the city.

There at the tram stop, two good companions dismounted, wet, dirty, tired and unshaven after their romantic night in the hay of the stable. I am glad to have to confess that the return was very unpretentious, devoid of films, Press representatives, photographers and interviews, somewhat disappointingly bald as compared with the grand send-off a month before. My heart was full of sorrow and grief at the thought that everything was over now, but at the same time it cherished beautiful and unperishable memories. My excellent friend Hidalgo! little did you dream, when you last munched the lump of sugar from old Don Quixote's hand, that this meant farewell for ever! No tears stood in your big, clear, gleaming eyes, and your silken muzzle was fine and dry as usual; you only reached out for a lump of sugar that was not. But your master felt something wet under his eyelashes, and had to blow his nose hard when *Hussar-Jóska* mounted you in his stead, and trotted away, leading the other horse by the bridle, while *Gunner-Jóska* cracked the whip and drove away over the cobbles with the baggage. And we — we boarded the tram: " a through ticket " — " twenty-four fillers " ! — " yes, thank you ", with a deep sigh. . . .

Is, then, everything irretrievably over? Am I for coming days and years — as many as Fate cares to send me — to be chained to the desk like a slave? Shall I never again see the blue mountains and the green prairie, never hear the gipsy violins weep and laugh and sing like larks in the village inns, never again dance *csárdás* until my breath fails, never again gallop across sun-kissed meadows, along shady alleys, pluck grapes from beautiful vineyards, sit with counts or peasants according to chance, listen to

the chatter of old country gentlemen or the ringing laughter of Hungary's beautiful daughters?

Well, what do I care? All that is most beautiful in life is only given to us once, and only he who writes it down in golden letters in the book of memory can live it a second time.

Grey is the summer sky and tears fall from it. But — *après la pluie, le soleil!* When the sun breaks through again, the air becomes clear, warm and fragrant, and our faith in the future revives with its warmth. The flowers will blossom again, and who knows what secrets their chalices will hide? There may be some pleasant surprises in store for me, and even more for you, young brother Martin! But may it apply particularly to this country and its people, whom I have learned to love so much, and who have suffered so bitterly and lost so much, more undeservedly perhaps than any other nation in Europe, but who do not allow themselves to be crushed, and, with tenacity, believe in their future.

## THE MAGYARS

WHEN one is in a foreign country it is only natural to want to find out what people live in it. As a rule this is easily discovered: in Germany, Germans; *in* France, the French; and so on. In Hungary live Magyars, and they call their country *Magyarország* (the land of the Magyars).

Magyars formed the majority of the population of pre-War Hungary, with its twenty-one million inhabitants. The remainder was made up of various national minorities, Germans everywhere, Roumanians in the East, Slovaks and Ruthenians in the North, Croatians and Serbians in the South. The amputation of Trianon reduced Hungary to one-third of its pre-War territory and to only eight or nine million inhabitants. The foreign element thereby decreased to about one-tenth of its original proportions.

Hungary would now be a really national State if a good third of the population had not been torn away from the country by the Peace Treaty. This part of it now live outside the frontiers of Hungary on the old territory allotted to the neighbouring States, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Roumania and Austria. Such was the Trianon justice.

The Hungarian nation belongs neither to the Roman nor Slav races. Nor does it descend from the Celts, who, in prehistoric times, possessed the greater part of the

continent but are now only to be found in the extreme west. The Hungarians, like the Finns, immigrated from the East, and, with a few minor tribes which remained near the Volga and Ural ranges, belong to the Finno-Ugrian race. There was also a slight Turkish element both in their blood and language, as the Turks were their neighbours in ancient times.

Like other peoples and tribes, the Hungarians came from Asia, this huge cradle of most European peoples. Between the Finns in the north and the Turks in the south, it is believed that a small number of tribes which called themselves *Ugor*, Ugrians, lived in the region of the Ural mountains. The Finns came first to Europe, then the Magyars, and finally the Turks, who have now left Europe again. The Finno-Ugrian peoples and the Turanian tribes, including the Turks, may be an original link between the Indo-European and the Asiatic-Mongolian races, although they stand much nearer to the Indo-Europeans. Neither the Finns, the Turks, nor the Hungarians can be said to be of the Mongoloid race, as is, by the way, erroneously stated in the *Oxford Dictionary*.

The *Ugors*, or Ugrians, were nomads, like the Lapps and Samoyeds, for example, in the north, and the Arabs in the south. One of the Ugor tribes, which called itself *Magyar*, decided a couple of thousand years ago to set off with its families, and cattle on the look-out for new adventures and new dwelling-places, as did the Huns and Avars before them, and the Turks after them. Driven by their natural wanderlust and rumours of the treasures of Europe, they wandered farther on. As they had no permanent homes and built no houses, it was simple for them to change from one country to another, as all other nomad peoples

before them had done. Like their predecessors, the Huns, they made a slow progression, lasting perhaps a thousand years, across the Volga and the south Russian steppes. Crossing the Carpathians, they reached the vast, fertile Pannonian plain between the Danube and the Tisza.

When they arrived there they fell in with a great conglomeration of peoples — the remains of the Celtic aborigines, Roman colonists, the Gothic and Slav tribes which had arrived during the great European migration of peoples, and the Magyars' closest cousins the Huns and Avars, perhaps also a small number of German settlers. About A.D. 800, Charlemagne, the great builder of states, extended the borders of his mighty Frankish Empire as far as the present Hungarian Dunántúl (Transdanubia), then called Pannónia, which he conquered some time later. The territory of present-day Austria and Czechoslovakia was already occupied by " Frankish" (viz. German) duchies, castles and towns, which bid defiance to the onslaughts of the Magyars, who finally had to abandon their plan to proceed into Bavaria. About the year 892 they returned to the land which they had first seen, and into which they had stormed over the Carpathians.

They came from legendary Lebedia (The Land of the Swans), bordered by the Russian rivers Don, Dnyepr, and Dnyester. They were led by the son of one of the Ugrian princes whose wife had had a curious dream: out of her womb flowed a wide river which rolled on through many, many lands without meeting any obstacles. When she gave birth to a son, the fortune-tellers prophesied that the boy would one day lead his people far away to find a better country. The child was named *Almos* (The Dream Boy), and Fate decreed that he, leading his people, should

gaze upon the Promised Land, from the Verecke Pass on top of the Carpathians, like Moses from Mount Nebo, that was to be their heritage. But, like Moses again, he did not live to set foot on its soil.

In collaboration with seven other chieftains, his son Árpád succeeded in conquering the land as far as the Danube. He held a *szér*, a sort of primitive Diet which took place on the bank of the Tisza, near to the present-day town Szeged, and was elected Prince. It was this Árpád who laid the foundation of the new country and established its first dynasty. In all probability this occurred about the year 896. Taking this year as a starting-point, the thousand-year-old existence of the Kingdom of Hungary was feted in a most lavish fashion in 1896. From this time dates the Budapest City Park *Városliget* (Varoshligget), and the imposing Millennial Monument, a mighty colonnade surrounded by the mounted equestrian statues in bronze of the seven chieftains: Árpád, Előd, Kund, Ond, Tas, Huba and Tuhutum. Statues of the fourteen most important Regents of the Kingdom are placed in a semicircle in the colonnade. After the War, the grave of the Unknown Soldier was laid in front of the Millennial Monument, and it is around this huge granite memorial that all national festivities are now held.

At this juncture we might rightly ask why we and other people call the Magyars *Hungarians*, *ungrare*, *hongrois*, *ungarisch*, *ungherese*, *hungaros*, and so on? The Greek chroniclers of official records at the time of Byzantium — the Istanbul of to-day — referred to the newcomers as *uggroi*. The double " g " was pronounced nasally, like

" ng ", and since the word was also pronounced with a slight aspiration of the beginning vowel, it was written in Latin like *hungari*. From this are derived the Italian *Ungheria*, the French *Hongrie*, and the English *Hungary*. The Germans and Scandinavians retained the form *Ungarn*, *Ungern*, in the Slav languages the *U* was converted into a *V*, so that the name became *Vengria*. The Magyars, however, have kept their own tribal name, and every nation in Europe ought properly to call them by it, especially if reference is made to the race or the language.

They were by no means uncultured barbarians when they settled down in their new Danubian country. The many borrowed words in their language are witness to the fact that they had learnt many things from the various Slav and Turkish peoples with whom they had come into contact in the course of their wanderings. Had they not been a relatively highly cultured people at the time of their occupation of Pannónia, they would have been incapable of forming an organized State which has lasted for more than a thousand years. Nevertheless, they were a martial, untamed race with bellicose ambitions. They were the " mounted Vikings" of Central Europe, and as the coastal peoples prayed God in those past centuries to " spare them from the Norsemen's ravaging" those of Central Europe added an extra clause to their prayers, which ran as follows: "*Dí sagittis Hungarorum Hóéra nos, Domine!*" (Deliver us, O Lord, from the Hungarians' arrows!)

One thing, however, is certain: the Magyars, just like the sea-faring Viking forebears of the Scandinavian peoples, had a marvellous capacity for building states. Surrounded by foreign races and populations, they were able to form

a great State which has survived for ten centuries, which was among the greatest empires in Europe, and which, though often oppressed and put in shackles, has always risen from its ashes like a victorious Phoenix. Even now, sore pressed as it is, it looks to the future with implicit faith.

The Hungarian Kingdom is contemporary with the Swedish and Russian Kingdoms, and considerably older than many European countries. It naturally took some time for a perfectly administered State to be organized and firmly established. It must have been as far back as 1000 that one of Arpad's progeny, *Vajk* (Vawyk), allowed himself to be christened with the name *István* (Stephen) and received the title of King. The territory west of the Danube — Transdanubia, or *Dunántúl* in Hungarian — was attached to Hungary, as well as Southern Transylvania, whose Magyar name is *Erdély* (Airday), "The Land of the Forests."

Stephen married the Bavarian Princess Gizella, and invited Catholic priests and noblemen to his country. One of the Catholic missionaries was called Gerald, in Hungarian *Gellért*, and during the King's absence some Magyar noblemen, who bore Stephen a grudge for his conversion to the new faith, had Bishop Gerald executed. They had him bound to a dog-cart and pushed down from the top of the mountain overlooking the Danube. Ever since this day the mountain has been called "Gellért Hill," and a huge colonnade and a gigantic bronze statue of Bishop Gellért adorn it. As a continuation of the Elizabeth bridge it forms a very stately view, especially when lit at night by concealed searchlights. The ill-fated



ST. LADISLAUS

THE STATUE OF ST. GELLÉRT.  
THE ROYAL CASTLE IN  
THE BACKGROUND



ALMOST EVERY TOWN HAS  
A KOSSUTH STATUE



A PEASANT COAT



NATIONAL COSTUMES

Bishop was canonized, and not only the mountain, but also the most luxurious hotel and Turkish bath of Budapest, situated at the foot of Szent Gellért Hegy, bear his name to this day. On the slopes of this same Gellért Hill a huge natural grotto was transformed into a beautiful rock chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Hungary's Patron Saint.

Was it due only to chance or to statesmanlike wisdom that King Stephen introduced Christianity into Hungary in its Western Roman form? The two churches had already become separated at that time, and his choice might just as easily have fallen upon Eastern Christianity, which ruled in Russia and the Balkan peninsula. At any rate, this choice proved to be of vital importance not only to the Magyars, but to the whole of Europe as well. In this way the Hungarians were drawn into the sphere of Western civilization, of which for centuries they remained the defenders and the farthest outpost. This dangerous position has in the course of time cost them much suffering. On the other hand, by being the allies of the West, their country lived through a period of spiritual and material well-being which would certainly have been denied them had they been bound up with the East.

Stephen might have remained an insignificant vassal of the immense Holy Roman Empire, but he preferred to turn directly to the Pope, who bestowed him the title of "Apostolic King" of Hungary. (Hence the double cross on the country's shield.) He also received from the Pope, "St. Stephen's golden crown", which has played such an important part in Hungary's history. This marvellous relic is to this day the most sacred symbol

of the Hungarian nation, for the Sacred Crown is supposed to rule over the whole country and to embody all the rights of the King. On top of it we can see a golden cross, which is slightly bent. There is a legend about the crooked position of the cross which dates back to 1301, when the Royal House of Árpád came to an end with the death of Andrew III. One of the foreign pretenders to the throne succeeded in stealing St. Stephen's crown. It had to be packed up as small as possible and hidden inside a waggon. It was in this way that the cross was slightly bent, and, even after its retrieval, considered too sacred to be entrusted to the hands of a goldsmith for adjustment. So the cross remained up to our days.

Stephen was canonized after his death and named *Szent Király*, "Holy King." His son, the ascetic Imre, was also canonized, as also was Bishop Gellért. The Magyars are ruled by tradition more than most nations, and consequently one meets these three names, "Szent István, Szent Imre and Szent Gellért," at every street corner. Monuments, streets, parks, public buildings, associations, clubs, baths, etc., are frequently called by these names. A huge picture of St. Stephen occupies the place of the main altar in the largest church in Budapest — the Crucified One has to be content with a humble side aisle!

A member of the House of Árpád, Lázló, called the Saint, won such great repute in Europe that he was offered the leadership of the first Crusade, but he was wise enough to refuse it. Könyves Kálmán, or Coloman the Booklover, was renowned for his great wisdom and kindness of heart. To him is attributed the following saying:

" *De strigis qua non sunt, nulla questio fiat.*" (Let there be no question of witches, who do not exist.) He made this statement, and accordingly forbade the burning of witches in his country, at a time when all Europe believed in sorcery and witchcraft.

Béla III reigned about the end of the twelfth century, drew up a legal code in writing and was a really great King, who held his people in curb. He was reputed to be the wealthiest monarch in Europe at his time, having a yearly income of many millions in gold. He committed the same blunder as the Swedish Gustav Vasa, 350 years later, of presenting his sons with duchies, and thus having to spend his last days settling their contentions.

One of them, Endre II, organized a crusade to the Holy Land, and had himself crowned " King of Jerusalem ", which cost him not his crown, but his Royal Consort (who was killed by rebellious nobles during his absence) and his absolute royal power. Thus it was that the " Golden Bull ", Hungary's *Magna Charta* came into existence in the year 1222, only seven years after the famous English model charter.

A few decades later in the reign of Béla IV a great misfortune happened, a Tartar invasion, when the Magyars for the first — but not the last — time withstood a Mohammedan attack in defence of Christian Europe. As it happened, they suffered a crushing defeat, — to which I have already referred, — and their country was overrun and ravaged by Batu Khan's hordes. But the West was saved. Nearly all Hungarian towns were devastated, and the whole territory east of the Danube became completely depopulated. But the country rose from the ashes with

remarkable rapidity. King Béla caused castles, fortresses and towns to be built, invited settlers into the country, organized a mail-clad cavalry force, and set the whole defensive organization of the State on an entirely new basis.

He acted wisely in doing so, for scarcely had the rear-guards of the Tartar hordes left the country and returned to the Volga, when Hungary was threatened by the danger of invasion by the Czechs. After the sad end of the Hohenstaufens, King Ottokár of Bohemia, who had extended his country as far as the Adriatic Sea, aspired to the German crown. He also wanted to conquer northern Hungary, but was defeated by the Magyars and killed in battle. It was the newly elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Rudolph of Hapsburg, who " skimmed the milk ", and monopolized all the profits and advantages of the new situation. From this time onwards the might of the Hapsburgs continued to increase in the valley of the Danube during many centuries, and played an ominous and sanguinary part in the history of the Magyars up to quite recent times.

However, the Hungarian national Kingdom continued to thrive for three and a half centuries, attaining to the zenith of its glory when came the second great catastrophe of the Turkish invasion.

The last half-century of the reign of the Árpád princes was a very melancholy epoch in Hungary's history. These last descendants of the House of Árpád were weak and powerless Regents who were obliged to give the real power into the hands of the Knights. These, led by the *nádor* the Elector Palatine, upheld the national spirit but oppressed the peasantry and held the King for a fool.

However, during that prosperous period of Hungary, which lasted for three hundred years, the mighty and able descendants of Árpád had forged the " wild mounted Vikings ", those nomads of the steppes, into one powerful nation equalling in rank France and Poland, the two most firmly established countries of the time. The country's territory was already as extensive as that of pre-War Hungary.

When the last scion of the House of Árpád, which ruled for three centuries, died in the year 1301, St. Stephen's crown fell into the hands of a great warrior, an Italian Prince of the Neapolitan House of Anjou, Charles Robert, who, descended from the House of Árpád on his mother's side, was married to a Hungarian princess. Then began the glorious period of Hungary's history during which the Magyar people came to play an important part in the history of Europe. Charles Robert's son, Louis the Great (in Hungarian, *Nagy Lajos*), extended the frontiers of his country far and wide. He was even crowned King of the Poles, and thereby his power was greater than that of any other king in the whole of Eastern Europe up to the time of Peter the Great. Hungary was washed by three seas, the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea.

Unfortunately it was just at this period that the innumerable battles began against the Turks, which lasted for more than three centuries. In the middle of the fourteenth century, after the conquest of Constantinople, the Turks began to cast their eyes upon Hungary. King Louis was busily engaged in a war against Venice and

could not withstand the Ottomans on the Balkan peninsula. Apart from this fact, people did not at the time realize what a Turkish invasion would mean to Europe. Nor could the Magyars then fancy the consequences of the fact that Greek-Catholic Slavs would flee into Hungary to escape Turkish attacks and settle there with their religion and language. Even after the Turkish invasion they were allowed to remain in the country and prosper as best they could. By the irony of Fate, this southern part of Hungary, which their ancestors had visited in the capacity of guests, should actually be allotted to the progeny of these Slav new-comers by the Peace Treaty of Trianon.

French and Italian cultural influences were soon followed by a German, which, apart from a short interruption during the Renaissance, reigned supremely in Hungary until the World War. King Louis' daughter, Maria, managed to secure the crown for her husband, Prince Sigismund of Luxembourg, who later became King of Bohemia and sovereign of the Holy Roman Empire. For half a century his huge empire remained at the height of its glory in Europe, but he failed to see the imminent danger which menaced the peoples of Europe from the South. The German crown also brought many responsibilities and cares, so that Sigismund had no time to bother about Hungary or to check the incursions of the Turks.

With the aid of the Pope, a crusaders' army was collected, but it suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Turks on the territory of present-day Roumania, and this led to the abandonment of all the Hungarian frontier strongholds. Now that the way lay open, the

Turks would have immediately invaded the country, had it not been for a brave warrior of fabulous strength, János Hunyadi, whose name is haloed with glory in the history of Hungary. He defended the southern frontiers with so much skill that he actually advanced into the new Turkish territory as far as to Sofia, where the Sultan offered him very favourable terms of peace.

He would have been ready to accept these, but Wladislaw, the young King of Poland, who had obtained the Hungarian crown by election, forced him to push on as far as Varna, on the Black Sea. There a mighty battle took place, which they would have won easily but for one unexpected circumstance. The young King fell in the battle and his army was almost disbanded; Hunyadi had great difficulty saving his men and leading them to safety. Then he was elected Regent during the minority of the heir to the throne, and he afterwards accomplished many daring exploits and fought many glorious battles. One of his greatest feats was the recapture of the fortress of Belgrade, which had been occupied by the Turks after the defeat at Varna. He was assisted in all his efforts by a valiant Italian monk, Giovanni Capistrano, whom the Pope had sent with 5000 golden ducats, and who was successful in raising the southern peasants to fight in Hunyadi's army.

So great was the joy in the whole of Christian Europe, and so great the Pope's relief and elation over Hunyadi's vanquishing of the Turks (1456) and their banishment from the Continent, that he ordered all the church-bells in Christendom to be rung every day at noon in memory of this victory over the pagans. I wonder how many Catholics nowadays/as they hurry home to lunch at the

sound of the noon-time bells, realize that it was the Pope's edict to commemorate the above event which inaugurated this custom!

There is an imposing statue of John Hunyadi among the Royal figures adorning the colonnaded crescent of the famous Millennial Memorial, and a special statue at the entrance to the picturesque "Fisher's Bastion" up on the hill in Buda. A statue has also been erected, between the War Museum and the old garrison church on the hill, to his fellow-warrior, Fra Capistrano, in Hungarian, *Kapisztrán János*. The Garrison Church was the only one in which the Turks allowed a Christian service to be celebrated during the time of their occupation. Fra Capistrano, like many other Hungarian heroes, was later canonized.

John Hunyadi left two sons, one of whom, László, was beheaded for security's sake by the great lords who surrounded the puppet king they had chosen, the name of which was likewise László. The younger son, *Mátyás*, whom the friends of the Hunyadi family had smuggled out of the country and hidden at the court of the Bohemian King at Prague, returned after King László's sudden death — he, too, was killed, probably poisoned by his enemies — and secured the throne with the support of powerful friends.

*Mátyás* Hunyadi, who is known in history by the name of Matthias Corvinus — because he bore a raven (*corvus*) on his shield — is justly called the last great King of Hungary. Shortly after his accession, he succeeded in crushing the domineering and despotic

barons, created a new aristocracy and made himself tremendously popular with the people. He reorganized methods of warfare and branched out on a bold new home and foreign policy. He held the peasantry at bay, while allowing them to enjoy all sorts of privileges and assuring them protection against their liege lords. This is why he was called *Mátyás az Igazságos*, Matthew the Just, by the people. His reputation for righteousness gave birth to a proverb which is frequently quoted even in our days: "*Meghalt Mátyás király, oda az igazság.*" (King Matthew is dead, and justice away.)

There are many legends telling us how he used to roam about the countryside in disguise, like the famous Caliph Harun-al-Rashid, listening to the simple peasants' conversation about him and the state of the country. In 1485, when he captured Vienna, it was he himself, disguised as a blacksmith's apprentice, who entered the gates of the city prior to the attack, rolling a big wheel before him. He spied out the inside of the fort, and when he came out again, dirty and shabby as he was, one of the soldiers at the gate kicked him and said: "If thou wert not as dirty as thou art, thou fool, I should take thee for King Matthew himself, judging by the length of thy nose!" Actually the King was a small man and far from handsome, and one of his chief attributes was a huge aquiline nose, well known throughout Europe in those days.

Mátyás' Court became the meeting-place of the wise men and artists of the period. His new Palace at Buda contained one of the most valuable collections of manuscripts — known to the world as the famous *Corvina* — illuminated by the foremost Italian artists. Mathias Corvinus was in every way a Renaissance king, and

Hungary under him was as mighty as contemporary France during the reign of Louis XL

Unfortunately, like most of the great men in history, he was cursed with an unworthy wife. Beatrice d'Este, a very worldly woman like many of the Italian princesses of the Renaissance period, did not bear him an heir.

His successor was Wladislaw, a weak king, whose most salient feature was a long black beard: the barons wanted to elect a king whose beard they could hold in their hands! History dubbed him *Dobre László* (King All Right), for he used to nod and repeat " all right, all right " indefinitely. The wide realm built up by King Matthew gradually dwindled, and fell a prey to the grasping nobles.

In 1514 the sovereign rights of the nobility were drawn up in the famous three-volume code *Tripartitum*, and the peasantry was consequently placed in an intolerable position. After the peasants' rising, which was quelled with considerable bloodshed, the peasants were definitely deprived of all their rights, and became serfs who had not even the right to choose their own dwelling-places. They were *glebce adscript* bound to the soil. After King Matthew's death, there was really no question of royal authority, for all the power was divided among the quarrelling nobles, and a few years later Hungary found herself under foreign yoke.

It was at Mohács (Mawharch), near the present southern frontier, that the Hungarian people met their fate, and the year 1526 was for them the beginning of Turkish rule which lasted for a century and a half. Louis II (in Hungarian *Lajos*), the last weak king of Great Hungary,

fell while leading his small and ill-equipped army at the battle. The way lay open to his adversary, Soliman the Great, who commanded his victorious army to advance right into the centre of the country and formed a long wedge separating the western and eastern counties. Finally the capital Buda (for Pest did not exist at the time), on the west bank of the Danube, also fell into the hands of the Turks. For a hundred and fifty years Buda was the seat of Turkish *pashas* who transformed all the Christian churches into Mosques.

What was left of the country was thus split into two parts, consisting of a narrow strip of land in the north and east, and the mountainous Erdély (Transylvania) in the south-east. Each part had its own king — for Louis II left no heir to the throne — and the two did their best to undermine each other's power, and secretly negotiated with the Turks both to their own detriment and to that of the country. Meanwhile the ruler of Transylvania, János Zápolya, had died in 1538, but the King of the northern territory, the Hapsburg Emperor, Ferdinand I, was incapable of reuniting the two parts.

Three long centuries followed during which Hungary was ruled by the court of Vienna, by foreign princes. The fact that the national spirit lived on and even thrived was due to such mighty princes of Transylvania as Báthori, Bethlen, Bocskai and Rákóczi, whose names were known all over Europe at that time. They were defenders of the Protestant cause — in Transylvania religious liberty was proclaimed as early as 1568. By clever diplomacy they also managed to keep the Turks away from their territory.

The situation developed very differently in " Royal "

Hungary, where people lived in a state of continuous strife and skirmishes with the Turks. Here the frontiers were movable, and varied according to the fortunes of war. Entire towns were devastated by the Turks or the Royal mercenaries, who often received no pay and were consequently obliged to raise funds as best they could. All the territory east of the Danube and a huge part of Transdanubia fell into the hands of the Turks.

Turkish rule had been extended over the greater part of Hungary, and the ancient civilization was practically wiped out there. It is, however, remarkable that the Turks left so few traces of their domination; only a few mosques, wells and Turkish baths remained. They must have felt that they were guests in a foreign country, although they rather overstayed their welcome — nearly a couple of centuries, to be exact.

Curiously enough, they made no real effort to force their Mohammedan faith upon the population. Unlike the Balkan States, in which, even in our days, a few million Mohammedans of Slav or Albanian origin live, there is no Moslem population in Hungary. Apart from a certain number of Christian churches which were converted into Mosques, the Turks allowed the people of the country to attain salvation in their own way. The essential thing was to extract money from them. The Sultan in Stambul must have money; the great Pasha in Budapest too. Each and every Aga and Effendi strove to wring the biggest possible sums out of the population so that something should be left for them after they had "stopped the mouths" of their superiors. Turkish civil servants at the time spared no pains to make their jobs as lucrative as possible.

The Reformation coincides with the period of Turkish

rule in Hungary. The doctrines of Luther, and above all Calvin, primarily rooted themselves in Transylvania — where the Pope's influence could not penetrate — and on the Turkish territory of the Great Hungarian Plain, where the religious quarrels of the population did not interest the Mohammedan pashas. The new religion also spread in " Royal Hungary " while its rulers were not sitting tight in the saddle. In fact the whole of Hungary narrowly missed becoming a purely Protestant country. Even now about one-third of its population is non-Catholic.

The fact that the Reformation did not extend its influence with even greater force was due to the so-called anti-Reformation, which was set in motion by the bigoted Hapsburgs who succeeded to the throne in Vienna. Headed by the Jesuits, the Catholic Church made a determined attack on " heresy". Persecutions, confiscations of property and the closing of Protestant churches reached their height when the arch-Catholic, Ferdinand II, the adversary of Gustavus Adolphus, succeeded in uprooting the new doctrine from his territory and reinstating Catholicism in all its ancient glory.

This naturally led to a fierce reaction on the part of the oppressed Magyars, and the Transylvanian princes rose up against the western Royalists. The war ended by the crushing defeat of the Transylvanian champions of liberty and of the Protestant cause. The Hapsburgs were again triumphant, and there was no possibility of reconciliation between them and the Hungarians. It is true that guerilla warfare continued for some time, thanks to the Kurucz insurgents who fought under Francis Rákóczy and Emerich Thököly against the

Austrian Imperialists, but they were gradually defeated by the well-equipped Imperial troops.

Hapsburg rule had already spread all over the country when Leopold I, aided by the most eminent warriors of the century, succeeded in driving the Turks out of Hungary at long last. In the year 1686, Prince Charles of Lorraine recaptured Buda, the Marquis Louis of Baden advanced far into the Balkans, whilst Prince Eugen of Savoy, the most renowned soldier of them all, scored a final victory over the Ottoman army at Zenta. In 1717 Belgrade also capitulated, and the Turks were finally banished from the country by the Peace of Posharevatz.

The King's power in the whole of Hungary naturally increased with each fresh victory. The Golden Bull, and with it the rights of the " estates of the realm ", was annulled by a stroke of the pen, and the Holy Crown of St. Stephen became incorporated into the House of Hapsburg. Ferenc II, Rákóczy, the most valiant and beloved champion of Magyar freedom and the last Prince of Transylvania, was forced to flee from his country and died later in exile in Turkey. By the so-called " Pragmatic Sanction " Hungary became an " indivisible unit " of the Austrian hereditary territory. Although a certain measure of internal autonomy was accorded to Hungary, it had to say farewell to its independence and freedom. The whole country was ruled from the Chancellery of the Royal Court in Vienna. The male inhabitants of Hungary were forced to join Austrian regiments and to shed their blood for Austria's cause on foreign battlefields. The sons of the higher classes went to serve in Vienna and followed the Austrian

military career. Hungary was made a province of the German Empire.

Nevertheless, Hungarians were loyal supporters of Maria Theresa. She was young and beautiful, and had been crowned with the crown of St. Stephen, which has ever been sacred in the eyes of all Hungarians. During the wars with Frederick the Great, when she appealed to the estates of the realm as a last resort, the Magyar nobles drew their swords and cried in unison: "*Vitam et sanguinem pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa*" (" Our life and blood for our Queen Maria Theresa 1 ") Latin was at that time the official language of the Hungarian magnates and lords.

With time, however, sympathies became alienated. Like all her Hapsburg predecessors, the Queen became bigoted as she grew older. Protestants were again persecuted, the Diet was not convoked, and an intensive colonization campaign was started with the hidden purpose of weakening the Magyar element by inviting Slav and German settlers to the country. These immigrants have actually remained on Magyar territory up to the present day, and at the time of the signing of the Trianon peace treaty, were' used as an extremely handy excuse for tearing Hungary to pieces.

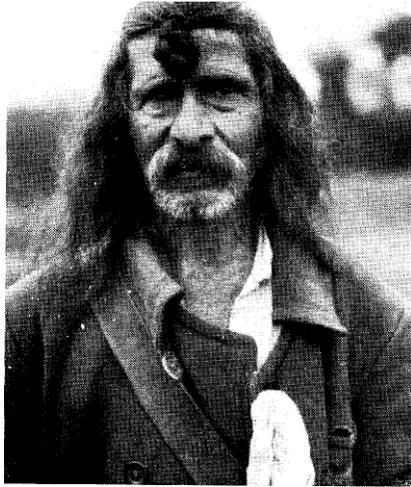
Joseph II, the son and successor of the great Queen, refused to be crowned with St. Stephen's crown, and had it transported to Vienna as " part of the Hapsburg jewels ". He followed an anti-Magyar policy, favoured all nationalities to the detriment of the Hungarians, and even commanded that German should be the official language of the country. He also introduced all sorts of innovations from abroad, but these proved to be quite

unsuited to the actual state of the country, and had to be abolished later. Greatly to the relief of all Magyars, he passed away in the year 1790. He was the only uncrowned sovereign in Hungarian history apart from the regents, John Hunyadi and Admiral Horthy, in our day.

The nineteenth century, which opened under the sword of the Napoleonic wars, in no way improved the fate of the Magyars, although they faithfully fulfilled their duties towards their Hapsburg rulers. The whole nation was weak and exhausted by the century-long struggles against the Turks and Hapsburgs. Hungary was cut off from the Adriatic Sea; Hungarian towns, commerce and industry were in the hands of the German immigrants; the Magyar tongue became a peasant language, for the gentry spoke either German or Latin.

The fact that the Hungarian nation was nevertheless able to rise from its state of oppression and humiliation and once more live through a great period of glory and prosperity — until the World War put an end *to* it — was due chiefly to two causes. The first was the sudden blaze of nationalistic ideas and the desire for independence sweeping through all Europe; the second was the appearance of several great and wise men who assumed the leading positions in the country. Petőfi, Arany and Vörösmárthy, the great bards of freedom, and Széchenyi, Kossuth and Deák, the great politicians, have made their names eternally famous in the history of Hungary.

Count Stephen Széchenyi was correctly named " the greatest Hungarian ". Few countries can boast of a



AN OLD LONG-HAIRED GIPSY



THE HOUSING PROBLEM IS EASILY SOLVED BY THE GIPSIES



A GIPSYWOMAN PREPARING DINNER



THE GIPSIES DO NOT CARE VERY MUCH FOR CLOTHES

patriot whose wisdom, munificence, self-sacrifice and flaming patriotism has served his country's cause so well. Fate endowed him with material wealth too, and he was one of the richest men of the country. He was also highly cultured and eager to adopt the best foreign innovations.

He surprised the Hungarian Diet by delivering his speeches in the native Magyar tongue, instead of in Latin, as was customary at the time. In 1825, when he took up an active political career, he proposed to the Diet that a Hungarian Academy of Sciences, at which the native language, literature and poetry could be cultivated, should be founded. Since the State budget was insufficient for this purpose, he offered his annual income, about 60,000 guldens (roughly £5200) to start a fund for the building. When he was asked what he intended to live on in the meantime, his answer was typically Hungarian, " I presume I have some friends! " Indeed, his example was soon followed by many other magnates, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences came into being. It still stands, near the Danube embankment, a huge Renaissance building, flanked by the statue of its founder.

It is astonishing to think of all the things this man created. From him originated the idea of the famous *Lánchíd* the Larntzheed Suspension Bridge, built by the English engineer Adam Clark. (The Square nearby is called " Square Adam Clark " to this day.) This was the first bridge to unite Buda and Pest, the twin cities situated on the two banks of the river. The ingenious scheme of forming a capital by the reunion of the two towns was also one of Count Széchenyi's ideas.

He improved the beds of the Danube and the Tisza, which used, periodically, to flood the most fertile areas near their banks. He also caused the rocky and irregular rapids of the southern Danube near the *Vaskapu* (The Iron Gate) to be dredged so that they became navigable for rafts and boats sailing towards the Black Sea. He revived the country's dying agriculture and commerce; and greatly improved the means of communication in country districts. He called to life dormant, or perhaps non-existent, civic virtues and loyalties, and thereby attacked the powerful and privileged position occupied by the domineering magnates.

Széchenyi was a Hungarian nationalist who nevertheless realized the dangers of a one-sided Magyar policy which wanted to break with the hated Austrians at any price, regardless of consequences. He tried to crush the seeds of rebellion, but all his efforts were but oil to the fire, and he could not hold in check dark powers which were stronger than he.

The sudden outbreak of the great war of Hungarian independence was like a typhoon after a dead calm. Louis Kossuth, the great politician and champion of liberty, led the insurgent Hungarians. Széchenyi's policy had been to keep peace with the Hapsburgs until the nation should be united and prosperous; freedom would follow of its own accord. Kossuth, on the other hand, wanted freedom first, and the blessings of civilization afterwards.

The year 1848, when Europe seethed with the spirit of revolution in the name of liberty, was propitious for

the Magyars, and after the Court in Vienna had been considerably shaken by a rebellion, the former succeeded in gaining autonomy for their country. The Austrians, however, did not leave the matter at that, but incited the Croatians, led by General Jellachich, to rebel and attack the Hungarians. They managed, however, to raise a national army and fought many victorious battles against the Austrian troops. The flame of patriotism was fanned by Kossuth and General Görgey on the Alföld, while Bern, in Transylvania, operated successfully against the Imperialists. In 1849, however, the Hungarians committed the fatal blunder of declaring the total independence of Hungary and the dethronement of the Hapsburgs, whereupon young Franz Josef begged help from the Russian Czar Nicholas. Who could have withstood the storming hordes of the huge Russian Empire? In order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, General Görgey was obliged to capitulate at Világos.

Hungary's cause was doomed, and the reprisals taken by the Viennese Court were merciless. The Prime Minister of the newly-created Hungarian Government, Count Batthyány, together with other devout patriots, was executed in Budapest, while thirteen generals of the insurgents' army, " the thirteen martyrs of Arad ", were hanged. Kossuth fled to Turkey, and later visited England and America to try to arouse interest in Hungary's cause. He was much feted in both countries — there is a commemorative tablet of his landing at Newcastle-upon-Tyne — but although both the British and Americans were touched at the sad fate of oppressed Hungary, Kossuth was unable to achieve anything definite on his country's

behalf. He spent his remaining days in Torino in Italy, in voluntary exile. He died in 1894, and his mortal remains were transported to Hungary with much ceremonial. An enormous and sumptuous tomb was built for him in Budapest's finest cemetery. There are statues of him in every Hungarian town, and his deeds and fame as the great national hero live on.

Thus the Hungarian War of Liberty was stifled with bloodshed. The following decade was characterized by the adoption of a violently oppressive policy by Austria. The Magyars once again had to live like slaves in occupied territory. The censors and the vast network spread by the Austrian intelligence service watched over their actions and words. The Croatians, however, remained unrewarded for their services in double-crossing the Hungarians. They had also to renounce the autonomy they had won at the price of so much bloodshed.

It was at this moment that the third great man of Hungarian history appeared on the scene. Francis Deák was his name. If Kossuth can be compared to Garibaldi, Deák might be called Hungary's Cavour. He was a man who could see into the future and weigh things according to their merits. He never approved of Kossuth's violence, for he was extremely circumspect. Aided by Széchenyi as long as this noble man was sane — the "greatest Hungarian" ended his life in a lunatic asylum, for the fate of his country had strained his nerves to breaking-point — Deák cleverly attacked the absolutist Austrian policy. And since Austria was caught up in

military and other political complications at the time, the Emperor thought it wise to accord a little mom autonomy to his " hereditary provinces ". But this did not, of course, entail the recognition of Hungary's complete independence. Deák, as leader of the Hungarians, flatly refused to accept such humiliating conditions. The Hungarians would rather die than submit. The consequence of all this was naturally fresh reprisals, Imperial troops, court martials, and an Austrian Governor-General in Budapest. Salvation came through fresh disturbances in Austria. Deák meanwhile bided his time and, foreseeing the future, prepared his famous " Easter articles ", which appeared in the Viennese Press in 1866. He proclaimed that reconciliation between the two States was possible: the oppression of Hungary was a very short-sighted policy, because by according autonomy to Hungary, the collaboration of the two countries for the common weal might easily have been assured.

Settlement came the following year when the Austrians were defeated by the Prussians at Könningrätz. In the desperate position in which he found himself, the Emperor understood that the best policy with regard to Hungary would be the creation of a dual constitution within which each of the two countries should keep its autonomy. Thus it came about, and the Emperor was able to save the situation in Bohemia with the assistance of the Hungarian troops. Transylvania was reunited to Hungary, the Croats were granted some form of local autonomy, the Emperor Franz Josef, with his consort Queen Elizabeth, was crowned King of Hungary in 1869, amidst great rejoicings. This lasting reconciliation was

the work of Francis Deák, who rightly deserved the name of " the wisest Hungarian ".

Deák had not built on sand. The foundations of the country laid by Széchenyi were cleverly strengthened by his hands until the whole building stood as firm and enduring as a beautiful castle. It would have remained so for many generations, perhaps for ever, if the World War had not razed it to the ground again.

From the time of the " Ausgleich" onwards, the history of the Hungarian nation was exceedingly progressive and hopeful. At the time of the millenary festivities in 1896, and during the twenty odd years that elapsed until the outbreak of the World War, Hungary was a great and happy country. It soon assumed a privileged position in the dual constitution. Notwithstanding the apparent prosperity and peace, strange undercurrents were brewing in this great empire even prior to the Great War.

The havoc wrought on Hungarian territory by the Peace of Trianon, was preceded by another upheaval of unsavoury memory — Communism. The disbanding of the starving, defeated soldiers, who had to find their own way home on foot after years at the front, served perfectly the purpose of the short-lived, weak Republican regime of Count Michael Károly, and afforded an opportunity for the arch-adventurer Béla Kun to infect the country with Bolshevism. The effects of this, apart from a series of atrocities and other damage done to the country, were

far-reaching and disastrous. There was no one to defend Hungary's interests at the drawing-up of the peace treaty; in these circumstances, the clauses directed in settlement were disproportionately severe.

When the fateful shot was fired at Sarejevo, Hungary was both important and powerful. From the intellectual and from the industrial point of view, too, her civilization was advanced. The dream of the Fathers of the Nation became a reality and the hopes of Széchenyi, Kossuth and Deák at last fulfilled. Hungary had attained her rightful place with the hierarchy of great nations. Art, literature, and science thrived, while the fertile soil of the country yielded even greater riches, although the small farmers were still a proletariat.

Budapest, " The Queen of the Danube ", became a metropolis, possessing all the amenities of a centre of culture and social brilliance. Hungary was a country blessed with Nature's beauties; she had her Great Plain, picturesque highlands in Transylvania which could vie with Swiss mountain scenery, ample gold, silver and platinum mines, and a fine port on the Adriatic — Fiume. Then came the Great Catastrophe, which ended with unjust penalization of a country innocent of any belligerent feelings at the outset. Let it be said to her honour that, in spite of this martyrdom, Hungary has not lost faith in the future. He who has roamed about the country of the Magyars has to bow his head in recognition of this faith, tenderly cherished by rich and poor, influential and insignificant, that the future will compensate for the dark present.

These children of the great Steppes wandered hither

a thousand years ago, to found, like the Pilgrim Fathers, a nation. And now after centuries of national life made great by sweat and blood, only the Great Plain remains to them, a small but beautiful consolation for their ancient and beautiful country.

## THE LANGUAGE

IT is desirable that people who roam about in a foreign country should be able to say at least " good day " in the language of that country.

Now, I wonder, can a Swede or an Englishman learn the Magyar language? There are some who achieve it, but they can be counted on the fingers of one's two hands. I have read about an American who was reputed to have mastered thirty-two languages, but was defeated by the thirty-third, Hungarian. It is said that the Hungarians themselves have no idea how difficult their language is. Foreigners who tried to learn it with the intention to translate Hungarian novels can tell you all about that. As a matter of fact, it is so difficult, that one sometimes wonders whether they understand it themselves!

At the beginning, it seems simple enough, for Magyar is written in Latin characters and the pronunciation can be learnt in no time. Once we know that *cs* is pronounced like *ch*, *a* like *ar*, *e* like *ay*, *ö* like the German *ö*, *s* like *sh*, *sz* like *j-*, *zs* like *s* in *pleasure*, *c* like *ts*, *g* like *g*, *gy* like the sound in *due* (*dy*), *ty* like that in " tube " (*ty*), *ny* like *gn* in French, *o* like *o*, *ó* like *ow*, *ü* like the German *ü*, *j* like *y*, *e* like *at* in " hair ", *a* like *a* in " all " — we can read and pronounce Hungarian tolerably well.

Nor is it difficult for an English visitor to find out that *taxi* is *taxi*; *kávéház*, coffee-house; *templom*, temple;

*finom*, fine; and as for *patika* this is a simple anagram of the word "apothecary".

You need not bother about the articles either; just as in English, the article remains unchanged in Hungarian. The definite article is *a* before consonants, *az* before vowels, e.g. " *a ló*", the horse; " *az alma*", the apple.

With this, however, we have exhausted the " easiness " of the language. The greatest difficulty of Magyar is that it totally lacks words of foreign origin. Most European languages are full of Latin or Germanic loan words, but Hungarians have interpreted all these terms in their own ancient words. *Tdviró*, for example, which is their word for " telegraph ", literally signifies " far-writer ". *Villany* means electricity. The expression " atmospheric conditions ", which can be traced in half a dozen European languages in the following recognizable forms, *conditions atmosphériques*, *condizioni atmosferic/ie*, *condiciones atmosfericas*, *condicioes atmosferic'ais*, *atmosphärische Konditionen*, etc., etc., sounds in Hungarian like " *légköri viszonyok* ".

The Hungarian tongue belongs to the Finno-Ugrian agglutinative languages, and is not related to any other European language but Finnish. The relation between them, however, is confined to roots of words and the general construction of the language, for no Finn could understand Hungarian nor a Hungarian Finnish.

Since, a few thousand years ago, the Magyars in their ancient Asiatic home lived a nomadic life of hunting, fishing and cattle-breeding, their language lacked an agricultural dictionary. They borrowed words from the Slav tribes living in their newly-conquered country. As

is only natural, a good few hundred words were borrowed from the Turkish language during the Turkish military occupation. There are also a few Latin and German words, but the foreign element in Magyar does not amount even to 10 per cent of the whole.

The third difficulty that a foreigner experiences with the Magyar language, is that, being an agglutinative language, it has no prepositions, but postpositions, and the declension of nouns and the conjugation of verbs is perhaps even more difficult than in Arabic. " *-ban* ", for example, covers the English preposition " in ". " *Ház* " means " house ". In the house is expressed by " *a házban* ". The Hungarian has a curious way of attaching prepositions and suffixes to the tail of the word, and the accumulation of these is often as long, or even longer, than the word itself. Owing to the elasticity of the language, whole sentences can be couched in one or two well-chosen words.

For instance, the sentence, " *While I was busy with my children* " (seven words in all), can be expressed in Hungarian by " *Gyermekeimmel foglalkozván* ". But wait, that is practically nothing.

" *Darling* " is *drága*. " *My darling* " is *drágám*. (Genitive, etc., cases are expressed by adfixes.) " I love " is *szeretek*. " I loved you " is *szerettelek*. " Can " and " must " are also expressed by suffixes inserted into the middle of the verb. So that if I want to pay a girl some nice compliment about what " might have been " between us, for example, " *Darling, I might have loved you for years*", I simply say, " *Drágám, évekig szerethettelek volna!* "

Another amusing example. " *Injustice* " is *igazság-*

*talanság.* " On account of his injustice " is " *Igazságtalanságáért*"

Now let us consider the words which can be heard at every street-corner. *Kérem* — please; *tessék* — if you please, will you be so kind; *köszönöm* — thank you; *jó napot kívánok* — good morning, good day; *a viszontlátásra* — so long; *kezét csókolom* — I kiss your hand.

Funny? They not only say this, but do it as well. In social life a man is expected to kiss a lady's hand every time he meets her. No young man is allowed to greet a girl of his standing with a simple " good day ", as in all other European countries — he has to say *kezét csókolom*, I kiss your hand. A sixty-year-old gentleman, too, greets a lassie of fourteen with *kezét csókolom*. When a gallant old Hungarian colonel was questioned about this curious custom by a foreign friend of his, who said he considered it a bit ridiculous, the old colonel answered as follows: " Know my friend, that, I, for my part, say \* kiss your hand ' even to a newly-born baby if it is a girl. Girls are highly respected in Hungary, and this form of greeting is their privilege."

Well, I do not want to bore my readers any longer with the ins and outs of the Magyar language. I only wanted to give a concise philological answer to the question as to whether a foreigner can learn Hungarian thoroughly. I am a Swede, and I have to confess that it is beyond me. But this does not prevent me from studying it with renewed enthusiasm. While there is life, there is hope. . . .

To do justice to the Hungarian language, which is so full of rich nuances and possesses such a fine and extensive literature, I must tell my readers of a story I

heard from my Hungarian friends the other day. Quite recently, a young Hungarian was introduced to five Hungarian ladies in Budapest, and chatted with them until late into the night. He addressed himself particularly to a charming young woman with fair hair, who seemed to possess the gift of the gab. After he left, he got the surprise of his life. The glib-tongued young Hungarian lady, Mrs. Bodnár, turned out to be a true-born Scottish girl, the wife of a Hungarian schoolmaster. My friend, who is a great philologue, said that he only really believed she was Scotch when he later heard her talking English with an unmistakable highland accent. She had learned Hungarian in a year, had picked it up from her husband.

It is beyond the scope of this book to comment on Hungarian literature at any length, but as it is one of the finest in all Europe I cannot refrain from saying a few words about it and giving a selection of Hungarian poems, English translations, of which I happen to have come across recently.

Hungary's greatest poet was Alexander Petőfi, the bard of the War of Liberty in Kossuth's time. His large book of poems can be found in every Hungarian household. The great classical novelist Maurus Jokai — whose hundred odd novels are always topical — lived at the same period. Most of his books have been translated into the leading European languages. The poets John Vorösmárthy and Michael Arany and Madách lived in Jokai's day. Herczeg, Szabolcska, Bársony, Reviczky, Kozma, Mora, Zilahy, Mikszáth, Molnár are the outstanding names in contemporary literature. The greatest modern

Magyar lyrical poet is Andrew Ady, who died in the prime of life, and Dezső Kosztolányi. I shall now give my readers a few specimens of Hungarian poetry which happen to be accessible in the English language.

### ONLY ONE THOUGHT . . .

BY ALEXANDER PETŐFI (1848).

ONE thought torments me sorely — 'tis that I,  
 Pillowed on a soft bed of down, may die —  
 Fade slowly, like a flower, and pass away  
 Under the gentle pressure of decay.  
 Paling as pales a fading, flickering light  
 In the dark, lonesome solitude of night.  
 O God! let not my Magyar name  
 Be linked with such a death of shame;  
 No! rather let it be  
 A lightning-struck, uprooted tree —  
 A rock, which torn from mountain-brow,  
 Comes rattling, thundering down below.  
 Where every fettered race tired with their chains,  
 Muster their ranks and seek the battle plains;  
 And with red flushes the red flag unfold,  
 The sacred signal there inscribed in gold —  
 " For the world's liberty! "  
 And, far and wide, the summons to be free  
 Fills east and west, — and to the glorious fight  
 Heroes press forward, battling for the right:  
 There will I die!  
 There, drowned in mine own heart's-blood, lie, —  
 Poured out so willingly; th' expiring voice  
 Even in its own extinction shall rejoice.  
 While the sword's clashing, and the trumpet's sound,  
 And rifles and artillery thunder round;  
 Then may the trampling horse  
 Gallop upon my corpse,  
 When o'er the battle-field the warriors fly.  
 There let me rest till glorious victory  
 Shall crown the right — my bones upgathered be  
 At the sublime interment of the free!

When million voices shout their elegy  
 Under the unfurled banners waving high;  
 On the gigantic grave which covers all  
 The heroes, who for freedom fall,  
 And welcome death because they die for thee —  
 All holy! world-delivering liberty!  
 (JOHN BOWRING.)

## MOTTO

BY ALEXANDER PETŐFI.

ALL other things above  
 Are liberty and love;  
 Life would I gladly tender  
 For love: yet joyfully  
 Would love itself surrender  
 For liberty!

(JOHN BOWRING.)

## HUNGARIAN PLAINS

BY ALEXANDER PETŐFI.

WHENCE the influence strange, O ye Carpathian mountains,  
 Wild romantic forests, where the fir trees, moving,  
 Bring to me the sense of beauty and of grandeur,  
 But no thought nor dreams of longing or of loving?

But the broad, flat plains, 'extended in the distance,  
 Wide in their expanse, and level as the ocean;  
 When on these I look, like an enfranchised eagle,  
 All my soul is moved with magical emotion.

Bear me upwards then — high, high above earth's bosom,  
 To the realms where roll the clouds in their careering,  
 Let me at my feet behold the mighty Danube,  
 Towards the laughing Theiss with steps majestic steering.

'Neath the *Délibáb*, see the outstretched Kumania,  
 Covered with its herds under the roof of heaven;  
 How they track their course onward in steady silence,  
 Towards the running stream to slack their thirsts at even.

Now I hear the rush, the galloping of the horses }  
 Rattling of the hoofs I hear, and nostrils snorting;  
 Cracking of whips, and shouting of the *Csikós*;  
 Laughs and merry songs, and echoes of the sporting.

In the cottage meadows, rocked by gentle zephyrs,  
 Roll the golden corn-waves o'er their crests ascending;  
 Forests tower aloft, while hang on trees prolific  
 Fruits like rubies red, with leaves of emerald blending.

Hither come the flocks of wild geese from the marshes,  
 When the dying light portends the evening's gloaming;  
 Midst the reeds they hear the startled breezes rustling,  
 And, alarmed, take flight towards the high heaven roaming.

On the *Puszta's* waste, close to a ruined cottage,  
 With fallen chimney, stands the *Csárda* — lonely dwelling,  
 There the *Betydrs* meet, from many markets gathered,  
 There their songs are singing, there their tales are telling.

In the Linden wood, adjacent to the *Csárda*,  
 Built upon the sands of melon tinge, is nested  
 The tower-falcon, screaming shrill, but never  
 In his deep recess by truant lads molested.

" Orphan-maiden-hair " in those retreats is growing,  
 And the thistles blue their spiky heads are waving,  
 Sheltered at whose foot repose the scattered acorns,  
 Which the dews of morn and dews of night are laving.

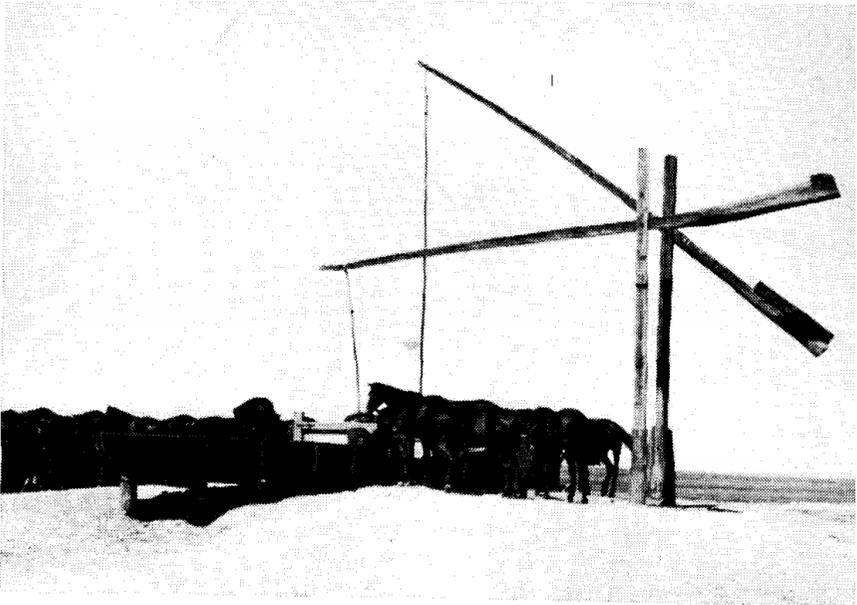
Far away where heaven the fettered earth has girded  
 Fruit trees, with their wealth, the distant landscape cover;  
 While we dimly trace a pale and misty column —  
 'Tis the village spire the green fields towering over.

All is charming — all — at least, to me 'tis charming;  
 On the flat land born and bred — I well may love it;  
 'Neath its sod let me repose in peace and silence,  
 When my corpse is wrapt in funeral shroud above it.

(JOHN BOWRING.)



SUMMER EVENING ON THE GREAT  
PLAIN



THE WELL OF THE PUSZTA



THREE GENERATIONS IN THE



THE RICH FARM IS PROUD OF ITS "AMBITUS"

## A LONGING

BY ALEXANDER PETŐFI.

THE lindens are scattering their fragrance like clover,  
 While the gay flowers bloom in the garden below;  
 A fawn-coloured mist spreads its canopy over  
 The earth, and the mountains are covered with snow.

On the bosom of youth summer's brightness is glowing,  
 And the birds and the blossoms abundantly spread;  
 But the dews and the darkness my path are overflowing,  
 And the dead leaves of autumn are dropt on my head.

For so our lives fade, like the bud and the blossom \$  
 But come to me sweet one! in gentleness come!  
 And lay thy dear head on my welcoming bosom,  
 The head which to-morrow may bend o'er my tomb.

Dost answer? " Not so! be my fate to precede thee,  
 Come thou to my cerements and bathe them with tears;  
 But let not *some young* laughing maiden mislead thee,  
 And say that my love was less tender than hers."

The veil of the widow — O take it and bind it,  
 A banner of victory, over the cross  
 On my breast — I shall rise from the death-world and find it,  
 A kerchief to dry up the tears which my loss

Has drawn from my eyelids — but never! O never  
 One thought of oblivion my spirit shall grieve;  
 My love will be with thee for ever and ever,  
 And live while eternity's cycles shall live.

(JOHN BOWRING.)

## THE GREAT CASHIER

BY ENDRE ADY.

' COME here! " the Great Cashier said unto me —  
 And heaps of gold before me fell:  
 Come now, thou damned, impatient man,  
 I'll pay thee well.

" Scarce wast thou born to this our world,  
Life gave thee pains. Here is the price:  
A few gold coins for the early kisses,  
For youthful vice.

" Thine eyes, thy spine, are lame already?  
Thy head swims and the dream escapes thee?  
I will change thee all this to gold —  
There now! Face me!

" Here are the wages for thy hot tears,  
The blood-money for being born  
A poor Hungarian. Take thy reward for  
All thou hast worn.

" Thou hast believed that thou wilt earn  
Heavenly wages. Now take this flood  
Of gold and silver for thy pains, thy hopes,  
For thy heart's blood."

" Get out! " the Great Cashier then said,  
(I was struck dumb and could not fly);  
" We are quits now, thou ragged beggar,  
And thou shalt die."

(BARNA BALOGH.)

## LOVE SONG

BY MIHÁLY BABITS.

I LOVE your eyes, the unfathomable deep-grey lake of your face  
beneath the white glacier of your forehead; and the Springtime gaze  
of your bright eyes which make me forget that snow-topped glacier.  
I love and I sing my love of those eyes' wondrous azure.

Bottomless, blue lakes they are and mythical mirrors of metal,  
Looking into their depths, you will turn giddy and fall like a petal.  
Lakes of metallic; lustre where dwell the spirits of gems, what hides  
there  
in ye, and which metal's spirit possesses so fine a glare?

In the deep blue-grey of your eyes, these lakes of the good elves,  
I hear the silvery tinkling of so many wonderful bluebells.  
No one can hear them, no one can see the precious stones sparkling,  
he only who loves you as dearly, as much as I do, my darling!

(BARNA BALOGH.)

## HE WHO DIED TO-DAY

BY DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI

HE who died to-day,  
 only an hour ago,  
 seems to me to be as old as the soldiers  
 of Alexander the Great, or of Caesar.  
 In his ears there is silence,  
 in his mouth dust and dumbness.  
 When old friends in old rooms  
 mention his name,  
 I try to recall him with a dull  
 and heavy head.  
 But I understand him no more,  
 he is an utter stranger to me.  
 And I cover him up with the mile-long  
 flag of Oblivion,  
 with wretched indifference, with silence,  
 for in vain I should try to reach him,  
 he is far away,  
 far away in the Past just like the soldiers  
 of Alexander the Great, or of Caesar.

(BARNA BALOGH.)

## THE MASKED KNIGHT

BY ÁRPÁD TÓTH.

AM I a bad, unresting knight-errant?  
 Forgive me, Dear. If it were in my power,  
 I would give you the treasures of the world  
 Still at this hour.

I would give you palms, castles and dances,  
 All the violets of the Azure Coast,  
 Or, at the least, the utmost happiness  
 Of hearts disclosed.

Alas! my happiness is as unattainable  
 As if I were reaching for the moon.  
 I feel that the mock-fights of this life  
 Will kill me soon.

Because we live the days of Antichrist,  
 The sinful gold, the greedy gold is Might!  
 And only heartless and cruel men can reach  
 The heaven's height.

I am struggling beneath, but no one sees  
 My sufferings, my sobbing soul, my fear:  
 Yet still I feel our Spring is sure to come —  
 Be patient, Dear.

Be patient, and remain yet, while you may,  
 My only haven, refuge, my sole love . . .  
 There is a black mask on my face, but now  
 I tear it off!

But it may be that when, for e'er united,  
 I lay upon your knees my aching head,  
 The ugly mask will come off by the tears  
 Which I shall shed.

(BARNA BALOGH.)

I WAITED FOR YOU ONE YEAR . . .

**BY ZOLTÁN NADÁNYI.**

I WAITED for you one year;  
 Where have you been for one year?  
 I stood in the same place,  
 Waiting for you, my dear.  
 I only stood still, looking  
 Neither to left nor right,  
 Only to where I expected  
 Your coming, dearest heart.

A thorn was in my hand —  
 Yet it grew not weaker;  
 A thorn was in my heart —  
 I thrust it in e'en deeper.  
 I touched no food, no drink,  
 I only stood there, dazed;  
 I did not even sleep,  
 I only stood and gazed.

They had brought me letters —  
I could not grasp their meaning;  
When someone spoke to me,  
I thought that I was dreaming.  
Once a blossoming bough  
Cut me full in the face:  
That was what I had seen  
Of Spring and the sun's bright rays.

Of the Summer and Autumn  
I saw not even so much,  
For all the Spring and Summer  
I stood upon my watch.  
I only stood still, looking  
Neither to left nor right,  
Only to where I expected  
Your coming, dearest heart!  
(BARNA BALOGH.)

## IBOLYKA

IN my youthful days when, like Ulysses, I roamed about the world and knew many peoples and towns, I formed the impression that the prettiest women in the world lived in Cracow and Agram. As so often happens, the world seems to grow uglier with passing time. Thus, the sweetest memories left to me in old age are those of Polish and Croatian girls, for they formed part of my youth. And what can be more beautiful and powerful than youth? *E longinquo major reverentia* — respect increases with distance, said the ancient Romans.

When I visited these two towns in later years for a second time, I found that many things had changed. A new crop had sprung from the blood seeds of the World War. Austrian Cracow became Polish Krakow, and Croatian Agram, Yugoslav Zagreb. All the pretty girls had gone! Perhaps they had married, produced children, and retained but the merest traces of their former beauty. And their young daughters, bare-armed and Eton-cropped, strolling in the parks dressed in short frocks! What a disillusionment! We old gentlemen are all agreed that the girls of to-day are not half as attractive as their mothers were. But this is an old story, and will probably hold good for ever. Horace said that every generation is worse than the previous one. Heavens,

what beautiful women there must have been in the good old days of two thousand years ago!

Between Polish Cracow and Yugoslav Zagreb lies a tiny country — Hungary, with its huge capital, Budapest. There it was that in my youthful days I saw Ibolyka (Eeboykaw) and was captivated by her beauty.

So Ibolyka remains for me the sweetest memory connected with the Hungarian capital. By some queer coincidence, the first Hungarian girl I met in a foreign land was called Ibolyka too. White clad, violin in hand, she conjured up for me fair, cherished dreams of bygone days, of past happiness, of Ibolyka the First.

*Ibolyka* means " Violet ", and there are very many flowers and sweet violets in Hungary! But not every pretty girl is called Ibolyka, only 15 per cent. The remaining 85 per cent are named Anna, Mária, Eva, Erzsébet, Margit, or Aranka, which means " Little Golden One ".

For some mysterious reason, the majority of Hungarian girls are called *Ilona*, which is the Magyar version of Helen. But *Ilona* is only used festively; they prefer to call themselves *Ilonka*, *Ilka* or *lea* (pet-names for *Ilona*). Most of my feminine acquaintances in Hungary are *Ilonkas*, which is very convenient for me, for I can address them simply as *Ilonka*, if they are unmarried. It would be very clumsy to use the form Miss So-and-so in Hungarian. If a girl's name is Aranka Lánczky, for example, and you want to address her, you only say Lánczky *kisasszony* (the word for Miss) if you are being very official. On the other hand, a married woman is

always addressed as *nagyságos asszony*, the equivalent for Madam.

Another complication is the addressing of letters. If a young woman is called Mrs. Alexander Miller, which being interpreted in Hungarian is Molnár Sándor-né (-né being the affix for Mrs.), an envelope addressed to her will run: *Nagyságos Molnár Sándorné úrasszonynak*. Translated word for word, it means "Honourable Miller Alexander Madam To".

But let us return to our starting-point; what does Ibolyka look like? Oh, I clean forgot to mention that for me all Hungarian girls are Ibolykas, though I really could not say why. The first Magyar girl I saw when I was young, very young, was an Ibolyka. And the impressions of youth are ineffaceable, are they not? Ibolyka, as a rule, is extremely pretty. Above all, she has beautifully arched eyebrows. And if anybody should tell me that, thanks to tweezers and indían ink, every girl can have eyebrows like that nowadays, allow me to reply that both Ibolyka's mother and grandmother, judging from the old family portraits on the wall, had the same arched brows at the same age. Doesn't Ibolyka make herself up? Of course she does, just like all the other girls in the world, and often with the same stupid exaggeration, which only detracts from her natural charm.

The Ibolykas are, as a rule, dark-haired, but at least 30 per cent of them are fair. Some years ago, an Ibolyita won the world's Beauty Competition. Her good figure can be attributed to the practice of all kinds of sport and particularly tennis. Perhaps nowhere in the world are there so many tennis courts and swimming-pools as

in Hungary. Although Hungary has no sea, apart from the huge Balaton Lake, every town has its own luxurious artificial beach and swimming-pool, with all sorts of recreations. That is why there are so many swimming champions among the Ibolykas.

So Ibolyka can swim, but very often she can ride, skate, ski and fence as well. But, above all, she can embroider, cook and look after a house. She does not bother about tinned food and preserves, for she can prepare at least forty varieties of soups and sauces, not to mention all sorts of pastries.

Ibolyka can sing too, and very often plays the piano or the violin. Hungarian songs and folk-tunes are truly marvellous, full of wistfulness and Oriental flourishes. The Magyars must have brought them with them from the Asiatic steppe. The most melancholy tune suddenly breaks into a wild *csárdás*, and the singer's whole face lights up as he sings it. And you ought to see a Magyar enjoying himself!

There is no other nation in the world that can carouse as they do. They have a special word for " a-small-band-of-friends-meeting-in-a-cafe-or-an-inn-to-drink-wine-until-dawn-and-sing-to-the-cigany-music " which is simply "*mulatni*". "*Sirva vigad a magyar*", the saying goes, " The Magyar revels in weeping ". And this is true. They sing the saddest tunes, and then, as the music changes, suddenly spring up and dance in front of the Cigány, yelling out the story of the *csárdás* tune. This, of course, only refers to men when they are on the spree, and in no way concerns our gentle Ibolyka.

And, Lord, how she can dance! No girl in the world could vie with her when she dances. Of course she

knows the fox-trot, tango, waltz and all the latest dances, but she is really at her best in the national dance, the fiery *csárdás* (charr-darsh). The members of the Cigány band play with quivering fingers and glowing eyes. And Ibolyka dances as though she were born to the tune. The *csárdás* may sound like a gentle minuet, until all of a sudden, the music grows wild and rattles like a tarantelle. It has no fixed tempo, and can be played in any time. It is the leader of the Cigány band who decides the matter, and modulates the beat like April weather or the waves on a stormy sea.

She is, perhaps, most beautiful when she smiles. She has a very special smile, which I have seen only on Hungarian lips. If anybody asked me to characterize the Magyar race as briefly as possible, I should say: " Watch them smile! " Germans laugh thunderously, French and Italians with a ringing echo, the English earnestly, Russians wistfully, and many other nations only giggle. The Hungarian smiles. His smile glides like sunshine over a calm sea, and suddenly lights up his whole countenance, mouth, eyes, cheeks and forehead. You can find this wonderful smile, this half-laughter in people of all classes of society — high officials, simple policemen, bishops, and churchwardens, shop assistants, labourers, cashiers, young striplings, and old gentlemen, lassies and grandmothers. What is more, a public official will also smile at you in this way, and push a large box of cigarettes before you which he always keeps handy on his table. But Ibolyka can smile more beautifully than anyone.

Magyar women foster the national spirit, and teach their children the Hungarian Creed, which they

have to repeat every night after the Lord's Prayer. It is also recited before school begins, at public meetings, etc. The following touching little strophe was also written by an Ibolyka, Mrs. Elemér Papp-Váry. We have already heard it, but I write it here again, for now we can all read Hungarian, can't we?

*"Hiszek egy Istenben, hiszek egy hazában.*

*Hiszek egy isteni örök igazságban:*

*Hiszek Magyarország feltámadásában. Ámen!"*

Is Ibolyka also a politician? Not in the sense in which we understand the word. She does not take part in the political discussions of men, nor lecture on the subject. When she reaches the age of thirty, she is given the vote, but she does not attach much importance to it. She may be elected an M.P., but actually there is only one woman member in the present-day Hungarian Parliament. Politics is a man's business, let them make a mess of it themselves, thinks Ibolyka. And, if we may say so, we agree with her.

But she loves her country, even if she does not talk about it. In her warm little heart live eternal hope and faith, and her white hand, which is so clever with the knitting needles, can also give a firm handshake, when, with a faint suspicion of tears in her big black eyes, she bids us farewell with a "*Viszontlátásra Nagy-Magyarországon!*" What does she mean by this? It sounds so nice, much better than it looks in print, and means that she hopes we shall meet again in Great Hungary, in the restituted, resurrected pre-War Hungary of old.

Little Ibolyka, I am afraid you are asking too much,

and your hopes cannot be fulfilled for a long time to come. But it would need a heart of iron to be insensible to such tremendous faith and hope. Faith without deeds is dead, says the Bible, and this is true. But without faith there can be no deeds.

## THE VILLAGE

**W**HEN the Swedish peasant or farmer gets up in the morning and looks out of his window, he can survey his whole land at a glance, for his cottage stands alone in the middle of it. In eastern and southern Europe, however, the peasant only sees his land, if he has any, when he goes out to plough or to the harvest. He does not live on his land, but in a "village", surrounded by his fellow-farmers.

The Hungarian village is a little town, and many towns look like large villages; the distinction between them depends chiefly on size and form of administration. It is thus in the whole of south-eastern Europe. There are hundreds of villages which exactly resemble each other; long, low, white-washed houses with high gables facing the street, thatched roofs and pillared verandas.

The long, broad main street is invariably bordered by alleys of green acacia trees, which are ornamented with fragrant white flowers in the spring. The village street, or rather road, is not only incredibly broad, but long as well. In fact it often melts into the highroad. Thus it happens that there is only one street in the village, the high-road, and all the houses are ranged along both sides of it. The explanation of this is simple; all the villagers wanted to live as near the high-road as possible, so the houses were built in a unilateral direction, one after another.

Ditches, spanned by narrow wooden bridges leading to the doorways of the houses, run along each side of the main road. In front of each gable-house, close to the wall, stands a wooden bench, on which old men and women usually sit of an evening and indulge in lively conversation.

The village is, as a rule, very quiet, apart from the cackling of ducks, hens and geese, which usually strut pompously down the very middle of the main street on their way to the meadows. They are not as talkative as the ducks, who find a pool for themselves somewhere near the houses. The geese do not discuss higher politics until they reach the green meadow, from which they march home every night at six or seven sharp as though they had watches hidden under their wings.

A herd of dirty, shabby pigs suddenly comes rushing down the main street, with a cacophony of grunts — or a flock of sheep with their shepherd; the *juhász* (yoohars), who may be mounted, but only on a donkey, for the horse is the ranchmen's *csikós* (cheecowsh), prerogative. The swineherd is called *kanász* (cawnars), he is the "General of the pigs", and his aide-de-camp is the little sheep dog.

Hens and innumerable chickens scurry around one's feet as one crosses the road. And it is quite a difficult job to cross the road at all when the weather is rainy, for then it is almost one solid mass of mud. Even the narrow gangways alongside the houses are almost impracticable, and one has to walk along *ajal mellett* (close to the wall) in order to get any further. When we reach a place where big stones are placed side by side across the road, we try to get over in goat-like jumps. We may be greeted

with a jovial " *Adjon Isten!* " (Oddyon Eeshten!) God give! (a good day), for every good villager greets a *nadrágos ember* (a man in breeches) from the town. He is bound to be a gentleman.

Better-class people are very rare in the villages. Apart from the owner of the estate, there may be a priest, a sacristan, a notary and his clerks, a doctor and a chemist. And, of course, the farm-manager of the big estate, called *gazdatiszt* " agricultural officer ".

The farmers meet at their village club, the *Kaszinó*. In winter they play cards (*kalabriász, tarok* or *huszonegy* — vingt-et-un), and skittles in the summer. It is impossible to imagine a Hungarian village without a skittle-alley. Coming out of the *Kaszinó*, you may meet a long file of schoolchildren, led by their teacher, and they will greet you with a lengthy " *di-csér-tes-sék a Je-zus Krisz-tus*" (Praised be Jesus Christ). This is the ancient form of greeting in Catholic villages, and the correct reply is " *Mindörökké, ámen I* " (For ever and ever, Amen).

The Parish choirmaster or organist, called *Kántor*, is also the poet of the village. He improvises verses for weddings, and preaches at burials. It is he who delivers the fine *búcsúztató* (farewell speeches) and sings the funeral songs.

When a funeral takes place, the bier is carried by the relatives or friends of the deceased, while the villagers carry the church banners and the images of the Saints at the head of the procession. Both the big bell and the small bell of the church are tolled. When he hears the knell, the choirmaster generally knows in advance for whom it is intended and immediately " sizes up " the financial position of the relatives. He soon decides how much the

departed is worth and consequently whether he will deliver a long speech, for a large fee, or a short one, for a trifle.

The two big church bells are also rung when a fire breaks out, and at noon, in commemoration of Hunyadi's victory over the Turks in 1456, whereas the little bell only is rung for evensong, the angelus. When hearing the sound of the bell, every labourer on the fields stops work, and, taking off his hat, murmurs a short prayer. The labourers gather in groups, shouldering their scythes, spades and hoes, and walk home from the fields singing as they go.

At one end of the village lies the *kastély'*, the " castle " or manor-house. Nearly all the inhabitants of the village who have no lands of their own, work as labourers on the big estate. But they may also, particularly in summer-time, wander farther afield to distant villages, wherever they can find work, and bank small amounts of money for the winter. Most of the villagers possess only a cottage, with a patch of garden in front, where potatoes, cabbages, maize, etc., are grown.

The little shops are to be found in the heart of the village, and there too is the communal well, for those who have no wells of their own in their courtyards. The *községháza* (parish hall) is also situated in the main square. The head of the parish is the notary, the *jegyző*, and under him stands the " village judge " (or petty constable) with his assistant the *kisbíró* (little *biro*). The gendarmes, members of a most efficient country police force, have barracks in almost every village, and are under the orders of the *jegyző*.

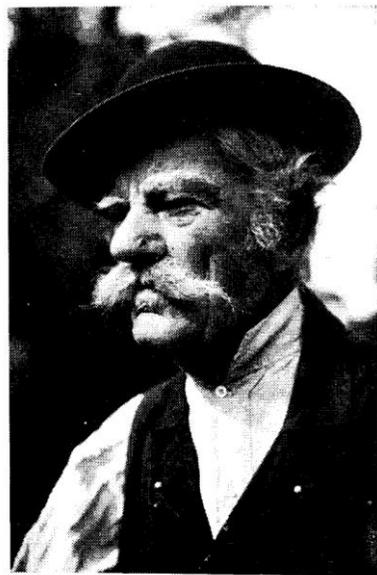
The churches, Catholic, Calvinist or Lutheran, are



A BRIDE WITH PERHAPS MORE  
DETERMINATION THAN BEAUTY



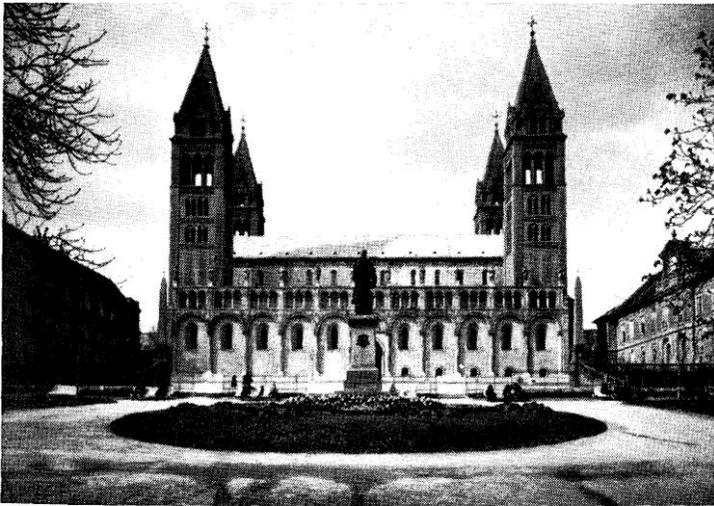
PEASANT NOBILITY



HUNGARIAN PEASANT AND  
WINEGROWER



A TANYA ON THE LOWLANDS, FORMERLY SUMMER COTTAGE



THE ROMANCE CATHEDRAL OF PÉCZ

also situated in the centre of the village, and there may be a shabby synagogue somewhere on the outskirts of the place, for there are usually quite a number of Jews in every village. They run the shops and the little inns. The Magyar likes to sit in an inn only as a guest.

On Sundays the young men of the village usually foregather around the parish hall or the church door, waiting for the service to end as they are dressed in festive attire and want the crowds to see how fine they look. There they stand, smoking pipes or cigarettes, spitting reflectively from time to time just to show that they are grown-ups who can indulge in pipe-smoking and the discussion of politics.

They are not only waiting for the girls to come out of church, they are also expecting the arrival of the *kisbíró*. This worthy is dressed in Hey duck's uniform, with a big drum strapped round his waist. When he reaches the market-place, he clears his throat, and with a little preliminary drumming, cries out " *Adatik tudtára mindenkinek. . . .*" " Hereby it is made public . . . that the neighbour's pig has been stolen, that Jack Robinson's house is to be sold, that a circus is about to arrive in the village ", or similar items of interest. The *kisbíró* is highly respected by the peasants, rather like the Sergeant in the Foreign Legion; he commands greater respect than the officer himself. This is why the mere *kisbíró* (bailiff) usually refers to his superior with a sort of kindly condescension.

The *bíró* (petty judge) is usually a wealthy peasant-farmer, earnest and wrapped in thought, who carries himself with great dignity and likes to go about in national costume. His job is that of a justice of the peace, who

judges petty quarrels and minor offences and inflicts fines.

Most of the quarrels arise in the inns, the *kocsma*. The proprietor — probably called Nathan, Itzig, red Moses, or simply "the Jew" — enjoys unlimited freedom of action, and is only hampered by one police regulation, which is that alcoholic drinks must not be served to anyone under eighteen years of age. He can open or shut his house when he pleases, and very often keeps it open until the small hours of the morning if there is any hope of customers continuing to turn up. It is remarkable that there are few brawls in Hungarian inns. The Hungarian can drink two pints of wine at a draught, without turning a hair, and remain stone cold sober. As a rule he mixes his wine with soda-water, and chats peacefully to his friends. That is why I have seen only one drunken man during three years in Hungary.

It was only in the olden days — at wine-harvest festivals, etc. — that the young lads, probably for the sake of some girl, split each other's heads with the Hungarian *Jokos*, a small fancy axe with a long blade, which they probably brought with them from Asia.

But nowadays there are no brawls in Hungary, although there are more inns than churches in every village. The villagers indulge in peaceable drinking, even when the gipsies (*Cigány s*, pronounce — Tseegarn), with their violins, cymbals and violoncellos, drop in to play a *csárdás*, which makes one itch to jump up and dance.

The Magyar can both dance and sing as but few people can. But he leaves the music to the gipsies who, for their part, also play like nobody else. The gipsy is a virtuoso both on the violin and with the cymbals. As a rule he

cannot read a musical score, but give him a melody, and he immediately improvises a whole violin concerto out of it. He says he is a *fejnaturalista*, a "head-naturalist". The interpretation of this curious expression is left to the reader's ingenuity. I once heard a gipsy band playing Swedish folk tunes, Peer Gynt, and so on, without having the slightest idea what they were playing.

The night belongs to the Cigány, and he makes the most of it in a Hungarian *kocsma* or *csárda* (wayside inn). The violin sings, laughs and weeps, while the cymbals hum like a big bee, only to thunder like a hurricane the next instant. The wind of the steppe sighs in the four strings of the violin, and may suddenly turn into the high-pitched merry singing of a lark wheeling above the green acacias, to the whine of the blizzard across the plain in winter, or to the warbling of nightingales in a grove at dusk. The strings may tell a story of joy, laughter, happiness, a merry wedding, or the burial of a poor little grey-haired woman who was once your mother. . . . And the Hungarian listening to the melody, really weeps on such occasions — only to jump up the next instant, when the gipsy's magic wand conjures a wild *csárdás* out of the violin, and, clicking the heels of his boots, gyrate like a born ballet dancer.

The gipsies, Zigeuners, or Cigánys in Hungarian, are an indispensable element of Hungarian village life. Without their assistance, the Magyar villagers could not "hibernate" so agreeably in the winter when there is no work to be done. Life flows merrily in a village or town in which all the inns and cafes are supplied with Cigány bands.

There are about a hundred thousand gipsies in the country, half of whom are educated musicians having

more or less fixed domiciles; the other half are vagabonds, living a nomadic life, wandering from village to village. They live by basket-making, fortune-telling, etc. Among the musicians there are long dynasties of violin virtuosos. They are a class of pariahs; their complexions vary from dark brown to almost olive-green, but their eyes are black and shine with all sorts of passions — money, love, but chiefly music.

The gipsies have always been a wandering race (called by themselves *Romany*) of Hindu origin, and they speak a corrupted form of Hindu. Thousands of years ago they must have come from India and Egypt, and that is why they are jokingly called, in Hungarian, " *faraóivadék* " (progeny of Pharaoh). One thing, however, is certain; their second home was Roumania, whence their own name *Romany*.

These dark-haired fellows do not like to strain their frail physique by manual labour, but they can play like angels. Music is born in them. Amidst the hubbub of the capital and the crowds of passers-by, I have often met a little ragamuffin gipsy, with a battered violin tucked away under his arm, who comes up to me, or someone else, not to beg, as one might think, but to play a tune or two to the " gentleman ". As a rule he is bare-headed and bare-footed. While he plays, his little soul is transported to another world, and he forgets completely where he is standing. He does not mind whether the gentleman in question goes on his way without giving him a tip. What does he care for such things, when, borne on the wings of his music, he soars high above the city and listens only to his inner inspiration? Once he has begun to play, he takes no heed of the coppers: of what use are they to him

who feels himself as rich as a king — for a few fleeting moments?

As for the nomad gipsies, they wander from town to town, living in their waggons or under canvas, and Heaven only knows what they do actually live on. The women are clad in multi-coloured rags and shawls which remind one of the way Hindu women dress themselves. In appearance and clothing they are just caricatures of their thoroughbred Indian relatives. Gipsy women, almost without exception, smoke a pipe or chew tobacco.

The general characteristics of this people are best expressed by the Hungarian term "*cigánykodn't*", which means "to behave like a Cigány", that is to say, to lie and to beat about the bush when you are caught red-handed. There is another amusing saying concerning them: "*Nem szokta a cigány a szántást*", which means that "the gipsy is not used to ploughing" (to work). And this is perfectly true.

There is a Hapsburg Archduke in Hungary, an expert in social economy and ethnography, who, some years ago, made up his mind to take up the Cigánys' cause. He actually became so much interested in the subject that he took the trouble to learn their language, and published various Gipsy Grammars and Dictionaries. He also decided to put an end to the vagabond life of the poor gipsies, and to form settlements for them, where they could work, till the land, or take up some industrial employment. He spent a fortune on his Model Gipsy Settlement and Modern Gipsy Villages, and settled hosts of Cigánys in them. Their cottages, furniture, utensils, etc., were waiting in readiness for them.

Well, the gipsies settled down to village life and worked

hard in the fields as long as the Archduke's overseer was present. In a few months' time he took leave to visit the Archduke's residence and fetch him to inspect the settlement. When the two returned together, they had the surprise of their lives. All the gipsies had vanished into thin air; the whole village was deserted. And not only had the gipsies departed, but they had also cleared the settlement of all movable fittings.

But let us return to the Hungarian village, and see what it looks like from the outside and from within. It is, as a rule, picturesque and clean enough. The cottages are almost all surrounded by fences, hedges, or iron or cemented railings. In the courtyard is a shed, a pigsty, cow-houses and a huge pyramid of dung, which is collected for fertilizing purposes. Cocks, hens, chickens and ducks scurry to and fro; as for the geese, they march forth every morning and return from the meadows in the evening with unfailing punctuality. The only thing I could not understand about the hens is that they may lay their eggs wherever they please, and the farmer goes around every morning searching for them. Perhaps this is why the eggs are so small and the chickens so numerous. The cows, too, go out every morning to the pastures and return in herds at dusk. It is a remarkable sight to watch them walking home along the high road. Every now and then one cow turns into a side street and finds its own home. They all recognize the house to which they belong, and stand hesitatingly in front of the fence only if some alteration has been made to the house during the day. Hence the Hungarian saying: "*Bdmul, mint a borju az uj kapura*" " He gapes like a calf at new gates ".

I have already described the long, low, thatched cot-

tages, with their gables towards the street. The long wall facing the courtyard is flanked by a narrow veranda supported by wooden pillars. Frequently this piece of wall, and the pillars themselves, are neatly painted. The *motif* is usually the tulip, the national flower of Hungary, which they say they brought with them from Asia over a thousand years ago. As a matter of fact, it was the Turks who brought it from its ancient Persian home at the time of their migration.

The open veranda, the *tornác* (tornarts), is the most characteristic feature of the Hungarian village house. It gives shelter from the heat and the heavy summer rains, and is open and airy. In summer the whole family life takes place there. The children play and the women work and lay the table for meals.

The floor of the veranda is often of red brick, whereas that of the rooms is usually mere trampled earth. This probably accounts for the spreading of consumption among the peasants. There are no cellars underneath the earthen floors and the subterranean water often filters to the surface, making the rooms damp and unhealthy. No wonder the bacilli of tuberculosis revel in it.

It is extraordinary how southerners fear sunshine. They keep their doors tight shut during the summer and do not allow the tiniest ray of sun to enter their houses. And as the windows are conspicuously small and the walls thick, it is no wonder that an atmosphere of medieval gloom reigns in the rooms.

The whole house consists of two rooms and a kitchen, placed centrally. The peasants sleep in one room, and the other so-called *tiszta szoba* (neat room) is used only on Sundays and festive occasions, and its bed is occupied only

when an honoured guest appears. The bed in this room is man-high and is covered with beautifully embroidered pillows and eiderdowns.

On the wall of this spare room, among the sacred images, there may be a portrait of the much-feared Franz Josef, of Admiral Horthy, or of young Archduke Otto. I have frequently seen also a nicely framed picture of a mounted Hussar. The Hussar's head is cut out and replaced, often unsymmetrically, by that of the landlord, and completed with the inscription:

*Souvenir of my military service.*

This room contains also a big, carved chest filled with the "trousseau" of the lady of the house or her daughter. The bigger the chest, the greater the respect the villagers feel for the *eladó* girl. *Eladó* means "to be sold", but is used here, of course, in a figurative sense, referring to the eligibility of the daughter of the house.

The kitchen is not only gloomy, but dark. A little light filters in under the door. The greater part of the kitchen is filled by the huge white-washed oven, the *kemence* (kementse) in which the housewife occasionally bakes great white loaves like mill-stones. In the summer a big bread-oven standing somewhere in the court-yard is used for this purpose. There is also a hearth, called *túzhely* or *spor/ierd*, in the kitchen for general cooking purposes. Various blue-enamelled saucepans and jars are ranged along the wall, and there are prettily coloured china plates neatly arranged on shelves.

Near the gate of the court-yard, there is generally a little flower garden surrounded by fruit trees, acacias or the like. Rhododendrons are particularly in favour in

Magyar villages. They are not cultivated in flower-pots, as in the window-boxes of Swedish farmers. They grow to shoulder-height and make the whole court-yard fragrant. The rhododendrons and acacias lend a decidedly picturesque beauty to Hungarian villages.

Another feature which may probably strike the foreigner are the pyramid-like heaps of maize (*góre*) which are to be seen in every village court-yard. Maize is one of the most important cereals, and is widely cultivated. The peasants call it *tengeri* (sea-corn), *török buza* (Turkish wheat) or simply *kukorica*. The dried ears of maize are heaped up in piles for the winter. They make the best fodder for pigs, hens, and, cooked whole as described in the first chapters of this book, are a delicacy for peasant and count alike. In the towns, too, street vendors sell popcorn at every corner.

There are no springs on the Great Hungarian Plain, so the population has to be satisfied with subterranean water from wells. In some villages, attempts have been made to bore Artesian wells, but these are too expensive for the majority of communities. Mechanical pumps also are rare; the wells are mostly open, surrounded by a box-like wooden fence with a primitive winch to draw up the pail of water, or the characteristic "sweep". These big wells with sweeps are to be seen everywhere on the *puszta* and also in most of the villages. Arany, the famous Hungarian poet, found striking metaphors to describe these wells: "They look like giant mosquitoes, with their long, thin arms turned upwards and their suction pipes sunk deep into the soil, sucking the blood of Mother Earth".

Water shortage can be very serious on the lowlands.

The sun-baked *puszta* gives no water, the primitive wells may become dried up and drought may cause enormous damage to the crops. But this is nothing as compared with the summer downpours, when the egg-shaped hailstones often ruin a whole year's seed. It is not a special favour of Fortune to be born a Hungarian peasant! The dryness of the plains is also due to the fact that they are not drained. Apart from the fields of the Bulgarian gardeners, which are perfectly watered, and yield three or four times as much as the land belonging to the Hungarian peasants, irrigation schemes are but few and far between in this country. It is really surprising that the Hungarian farmers do not irrigate their land.

To carry out an extensive scheme would cost a considerable sum of money, however, and Hungary is a poor country, in which agricultural products fetch the lowest possible prices. A vast foreign loan followed by a well-organized irrigation scheme could attain two objects — the conquest of unemployment and the full exploitation of the rich Hungarian soil. The peasant and the small farmer could then earn enough money to lead a comparatively comfortable existence.

All that I have said about the Hungarian village must only be regarded as a general statement, for there are naturally exceptions. In Transdanubia (Dunántúl), for example, the houses are not built along the highroad, but in groups, as in any other village in the world. The style of architecture of the houses is also somewhat different, though the ancient Hungarian style still prevails. Trianon-Hungary is a small country, but it is not particularly homogeneous.

Apart from all this, Hungary is now a country in a state

of fermentation in which many old things must disappear to give way to new tendencies. This implies that 20 per cent, at least, of the villages, particularly the modern settlements, have houses built in the latest style, with wooden or parquet floors and slate roofs. The ancient Hungarian villages with their oblong white-washed houses may develop into modern bungalows in the space of a few decades, but, for the time being, they stand just as they did centuries ago.

Agrarian reform would be most welcome in Hungary, and is, in fact, the only solution of the present plight of the country. Some ten years ago the State coffers were filled by foreign loans, but the money was ill-spent. A Minister of Agriculture whose name was Szabó, and who came of peasant stock, advocated numerous land reforms, but he died before he had taken any concrete steps in the matter. He got a statue, but his followers did not put his ideas into execution. There is, however, a Hapsburg Archduke in Hungary, Albrecht, who thought out a scheme to make landowners of the poor landless peasants. This is the only way to save the country from another Bolshevich outburst, for nowhere in the world are there so many landless farmers as in Hungary. The country has already lived through a Communist experiment and repudiated it. But it has not yet lived through the " penetration " of sound democracy. Unhealthy democracy may cause another reaction, and an even more violent one than that of 1919. Unless something is done very soon. . . .

In Czarist Russia there was a man, Stolypin, who foresaw the future and wanted to carry out improvements. He was shot by the nihilists. In Royal Hungary there was a man, Count Stephen Tisza, who could have enforced

agrarian reforms if he had been alive. He was shot by the revolutionaries. Human beings often have a very curious habit of killing the most valuable elements in Society.

The Hungarian society is, in general, aristocratic. There are too many Counts, Barons, Bishops, Prelates and rich Jewish bankers and too few independent farmers with small properties, and a vast majority of landless, penniless peasants.

The aristocracy, and all those who have the right to the title "*méltóságos*" (Right Honourable), must soon come to their senses or it will be too late. Who are these aristocrats? Let us look at them in their homes.

## ARISTOCRATS

A MAN begins at the rank of Baron, somebody once told me. I do not know who it was, possibly a Hungarian magnate. Or it may have been the high-born Austrian lady who maintained that " the Balkans begin at the Vienna East Station ".

Up to the middle of the last century, Hungary's population could be divided into four classes: Magnates (Princes, Counts, Barons); the simpler noblemen, called even in Hungary by the English name *gentry*; town dwellers, consisting chiefly of German settlers and Jews; and finally, peasants.

There were two houses, the House of Commons, comprising the civic elements, and the House of Magnates, reserved for the aristocracy. Leading positions in the Government were occupied by Counts and Barons.

Let us consider the position to-day.

The revolution which followed the World War was led by one of the most distinguished and richest magnates in the country, Count Michael Károlyi. Like Kerenski in Russia, he could not control the huge waves he had caused to rise, and had to cede the leadership to the Communists. Béla Kun became Hungary's notorious, but less successful, Lenin, who displayed an extraordinary amount of brutality during his fleeting reign of four or five months. The counter-revolution was raised by aristocrats in south Hungary. Its political leader was Count Stephen Bethlen,

who later became Hungary's Prime Minister and held office for ten whole years. Its military leader was Admiral Horthy, of Szeged, who has been Regent of Hungary for the last fifteen years. Whereas the Red Government in Budapest consisted chiefly of Jewish lawyers, the members of the White Government were aristocrats. Among them were Count Julius Károlyi, a relative of the aforementioned renegade Count, and Julius Gömbös (the present-day Prime Minister) at that time a young Captain at General Headquarters.

After the restoration in 1919, when the Bolsheviks were driven out of the country and those who resisted were shot or hanged, the nobility again began to play an important part in the nation's politics. It would be idle to deny the services they have rendered the country, but only a blind man would fail to see their faults. Tradition is highly necessary and the Hungarian aristocracy has fully upheld it. But a modern State cannot be maintained solely on tradition and nobility.

The remarkable influence which these two conceptions still exercise on present-day Hungary is due, in my opinion, to three factors; the undeveloped condition of the lower classes, the lack of homogeneity of the middle class, and the folly of the aristocracy.

Count Stephen Bethlen, who retired in the summer of 3 was one of Europe's foremost Prime Ministers; had he been an untalented statesman, he would not have been able to exercise such considerable power for a period of ten years and be so hated as he now is. Such hatred is only the privilege of the great. As a statesman, he was neither a genius nor a Mussolini, but proved himself to be

a clever and wily politician. His greatest achievement was the realization of a *rapprochement* between his country and England, France and Italy.

He succeeded in raising an important State loan, and was thereby able to stabilize the Hungarian currency. He also managed to keep perfect order in the country, which was no easy task after the stormy period following the signing of the Peace Treaties.

Count Julius Károlyi, who assumed the office of Prime Minister in 1931, was also a member of the old nobility. He was an elderly gentleman with a white beard, horn-rimmed spectacles and a kind heart. He had no startling imagination, but was respected by everybody, although he continued with Bethlen's policy. Poor old Count Károlyi could not extricate the country from its financial chaos, so he tried to "economize", but it did not work, and he had to go. Anyhow he did his best, and his whole *régime* can best be summed up by a wistful saying of his which became notorious: "We are lucky to have been able to keep our heads above water".

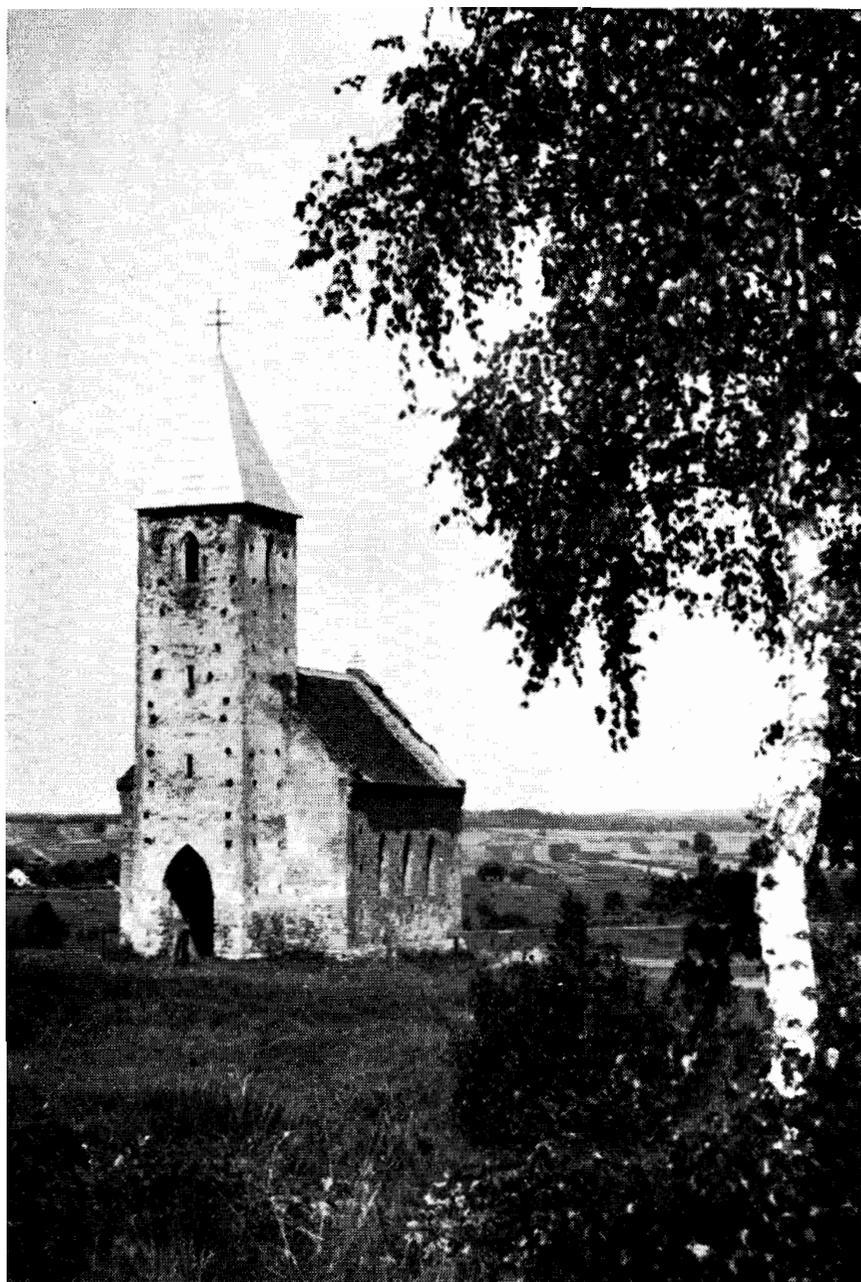
Many of the Ministers of the past few years came from the aristocracy. They were men of routine, without great gifts, but these are hardly necessary in a minister's post. Axel Oxenstierna once said: "If you only knew, my son, with what a small amount of brain this world is being ruled". But this probably applies to normal conditions. Unfortunately times were abnormal, and the Hungarian aristocrats failed to realize the fact.

No one can tell whether clear-headed Bethlen also failed to understand the strained times through which his country was passing. His unexpected resignation, how-

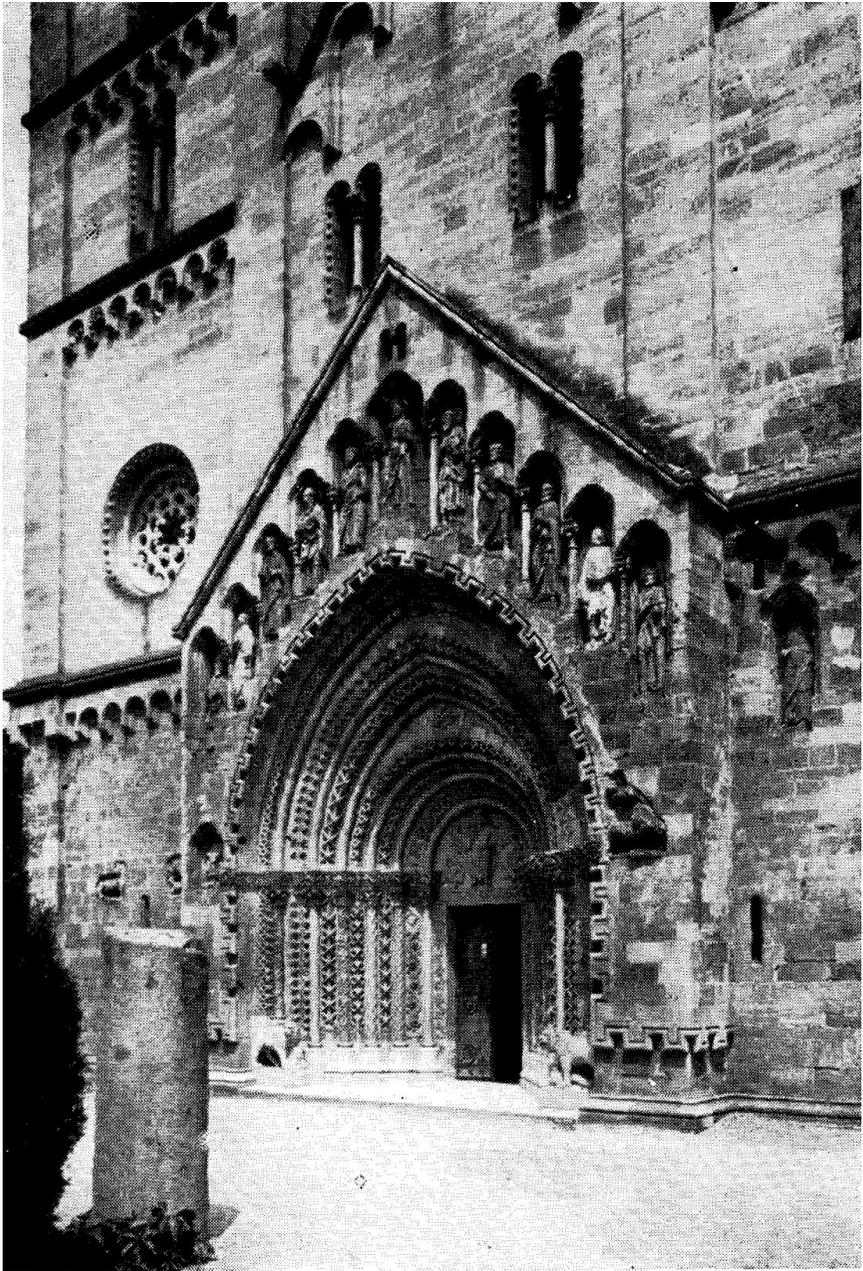
ever, was proof of his inability to bring the ship of State safely into port. Count Julius Károlyi was lacking in self-confidence, too, for in 1932 he left the "conning-tower" in the hands of a non-aristocrat, a man belonging to the middle-class nobility, or "gentry". Since 1932 Julius Gömbös has been Prime Minister, and counts and barons have been excluded from important posts. This sturdy, thick-set staff captain has had a brilliant career. At one time he was an adversary of Bethlen and the leader of an Association of Front Warriors, an organization combining the elements of Italian Fascism and German Hitlerism, and was later elected an M.P. Count Bethlen appreciated his talents and understood how to make him harmless by nominating him War Minister, much to everybody's surprise.

When Károlyi resigned, the power fell into General Gömbös\* hands, and he assumed it full of enthusiasm and promises. In his ninety-six "points" he promised the country "Heaven and Earth", and chose talented middle-class people to act as his ministers. Even now he reigns almost as a monarch. The members of the nobility seem to have been ousted from the political field for the time being.

At this juncture, a member of the aristocracy, also called Count Károlyi, a landowner, banker and business man in one, issued a brochure which might justly be entitled: "Mene tekel. . . ." In it he proclaimed that under the present Government and *regime*, the country was heading towards another outburst of Communism. He also suggested various indispensable remedies for the reigning state of affairs, including democratization of Society, the division of land in accordance with sound agrarian reform,



THE CHURCH AND THE BIRCH



THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE ABBEY CHURCH OF JAK

and the secularization of the vast ecclesiastical estates. He also recommended thorough reform in the administration and legislation of the country.

Count Imre Károlyi's proposed reforms were somewhat drastic, but surely this is inevitable when Society is sick. Forest fires can only be checked by counter-fires. The best way to prevent the spreading of Bolshevism is to raise the standard of living of the masses. Aristocracy must give way to democracy.

Of course Count Károlyi's brochure was ferociously attacked. The aristocrats who had ruled the country in an autocratic manner for centuries were loathe to realize that they were sitting on top of a volcano.

Most of the aristocrats say: " Thank goodness for universal suffrage. Otherwise both Houses of Parliament would be full of Communists and Jews, and we have had enough of them. As for that aristocrat banker with his brochure, he is only preparing the way for a fresh outbreak of Bolshevism. We have already had one Bolshevik Count in the family. He would do better to sweep his own hearth. Why does his bank only pay four per cent on deposit accounts and take fourteen for loans? He is in the hands of the Jews, etc."

These people do not seem to have grasped the old Biblical simile that " one cannot hide the town that lieth on the mountain-side ". For if there are so many Bolsheviks and Jews in the country that they can gain a majority at a secret ballot, then the present capitalist *régime* is not worth a halfpenny. His Excellency, Gömbös, has proclaimed that he is prepared to regard both labourers and Jews as his brothers as long as they show nationalist sympathies. I, for my part, do not think that

the Hungarian aristocracy would endorse this statement. As regards the first category mentioned by Hungary's Premier, I do not think that labourers and workmen who do not possess anything can be nationally-minded. We shall hear all about the second category in the next chapter.

It might be interesting to say a few words about the relationship between the aristocracy and the Jews at this juncture. An aristocrat is invariably a pronounced anti-Semite, whether he belongs to the lesser or greater nobility. He often has a so-called " family Jew ", however, who lends him money at forty per cent. But there are also aristocrats who are themselves of Jewish origin, and they are just as proud of their rank as any born nobleman. There are many barons among them, but they never attain the rank of count. They are, as a rule, anti-Semites themselves, and more Royalist than the King. Their susceptibilities and the polish of their bearing can be extreme. A Jewish Baroness once went into mourning for six months because a distant member of the Royal Family happened to give birth to a stillborn child!

Jewish barons are invariably engaged in some sort of business — either banking or manufacturing. They frequently become landowners in the space of one generation, and they know how to make money out of their estates much better than the Hungarians. Many a time during my ride through Hungary did I come across a manor-house, *kastély* or *kurta* with a Jewish owner. He had probably begun life as a farm-manager, and had run the place so successfully that he suddenly found himself its proprietor. It may, however, happen that although Poppa

Isaac used his time profitably and thrived, his son or grandson — now baptized, of course — spends all his time apeing the genuine aristocrats and squanders away the whole of his fortune. While the going is good, however, young Jacob may carve a brilliant career for himself, and even become Minister of Finance.

The House of Magnates, which was formerly a real Assembly of Magnates, has now given place to a much simpler Upper House, which includes a sprinkling of civic elements. A certain portion of its members are nominated for life by the Regent, another portion get in on account of the professions they represent while the remainder are elected. The Magnates occupy only thirty-six seats in the modern Senate; the churches, including the Jews, are each represented by one Bishop or other dignitary of equivalent rank. The various social callings, such as teaching, medicine, commerce, agriculture, law, labour unions, etc., are also represented. This modern Upper House is nothing but the representation of expert interests, and is, as far as I know, the only one of its kind in Europe. It successfully counter-balances the tendencies of the Lower House, or Chamber of Deputies.

Men over twenty-four and women over thirty have the right to vote. People holding University degrees have the right to vote irrespective of age; those not possessing a secondary school education are excluded from suffrage with the exception of independent women and mothers having at least three legitimate children. Somewhat complicated, but quite an interesting system! The Lower House has 245 members; the Upper House 250.

Thus the Hungarian Government is officially demo-

cratic and parliamentary. The present Cabinet does not fail to emphasize its national-democratic character, although Society, taken as a whole, retains its aristocratic nature. A Magyar is a born " aristocrat ", a statement which applies to both the aristocrat and the peasant. I am not referring to the impoverished landless labourers, but to the peasants who have small holdings of land. A Hungarian peasant who has a little land considers himself the equal of any born aristocrat. Here is a good story on the subject.

A smart gentleman wearing a dazzling uniform arrives at a country station. The train has not yet come in. A peasant is sitting on a bench on the platform, smoking a pipe and indulging in the pastime of spitting methodically and regularly between his boots. (Please excuse the digression, but I must mention the fact that there are peasant lads on the Alföld who have made such a fine art of this sport that they can spit out their own monograms or the Holy Crown of St. Stephen with the cross on top!)

The Archduke — for the smart gentleman is none other than a worthy member of the Hapsburgs — wants to become acquainted with the inhabitants of the place in order to strengthen the popularity of the ruling House. He goes up to the peasant and addresses him in broken Hungarian. " What is this station called?" says the Archduke. Without looking up, the peasant answers: " Cold? It's summer now and as hot as hell." Then he spits and scores a bull's-eye again. The Archduke finally succeeds in explaining that he wants to find out the name of the village. " It ain't no village, it's a town ", is the answer, accompanied by a determined spit.

In order to prove to the peasant that he is nevertheless

well-informed about the place, the Archduke asks another question. " What number of living men be in town? " He receives the following brief reply, again accompanied by a well-directed spit between the two shining riding-boots: " All them what ain't dead. " The peasant doesn't even raise his eyes. Wroth and desperate that he cannot come to an understanding with this yokel who is apparently not aware of the fact that he is speaking to a member of the Royal House, the Archduke exclaims, purple with rage: " You don't know who I am, you don't recognize Archduke Albrecht, Commander of the Infantry? I am he! " For the first time the peasant looks up with a pitying expression, and stroking his long moustache, replies: "I can't help that either! "

This native pride and insolence remain in them all their lives. There was once upon a time a little peasant boy who became a priest, and prospered so exceedingly that he became *Hercegprímás* (Prince Primate) and Archbishop of Esztergom. This is not only the highest ecclesiastical post in the country, but also confers the privilege of representing all the people in the diocese at the Diet. At the time of the millenary Exhibition in Budapest in 1896, it happened that the Viennese Court committed the blunder of sending an invitation to that dignitary asking him to honour His Majesty with his presence at the opening ceremony. There came no answer from the Cardinal. The Monarch grew angry — Franz Josef was a great stickler for etiquette — so a special messenger was sent to His Eminence to reprimand him and obtain his obedient answer. But the Prince Primate, formerly a mere peasant boy, gave the messenger the following reply: " I

never heard of the guests inviting the host. I am the host in this place, and the King can but be my guest and that of the Hungarian people."

The Magyars are a master-people, warriors and horsemen from time immemorial, born, as it were, in the saddle. There was once a Count in Budapest whose Empire Palace, opposite the Royal Castle, is now the residence and offices of the Prime Minister. It is beautifully situated. No wonder that it was so painful for Count Bethlen to leave his post! Count Maurice Sándor, whom the whole country simply dubbed Maurice, was its original owner. He had another name, too, the " Devil's rider ", and Lehar, the great Hungarian composer, wrote an operetta about him with this title some few years ago.

His exploits were extraordinary and varied. He drove his six-horse coach himself, standing astride the last pair of horses, while his secretary followed in a four-horse wagon carrying the luggage. Thus they spent their weekends, tearing through villages and towns, killing ducks, dogs, cats and hens as they went.

On one occasion, when Count Sándor was invited to a ball at the Court, he arrived on horseback. He had ridden across the Suspension Bridge and up the flights of steps leading to the Royal Castle. Upon arrival there, he removed his mount's golden horseshoes so that they should not damage the rich carpets, and threw them to the usher with his gloves. When the Chamberlain came rushing up to enquire about the cause of the disturbance, the Count haughtily informed him that the invitation card had been marked " full gala uniform ", and that when a Hungarian magnate is invited to meet his Sovereign, his horse also

forms part of his festive attire. Thus he rode into the ball-room, and invited the most beautiful lady in the room to dance a minuet with him. The servants had to lead away the horse as best they could. . . .

This same gentleman had estates up in Slovakia, and often wore simple peasant's costume — wide white linen trousers and a black waistcoat with silver buttons. A story is also told of how he made a wager with his father-in-law, Prince Metternich, in Vienna. He maintained that Metternich's police *heyduch* were such rogues that they threw into prison honest men who had not transgressed against the law even in the smallest degree. That same evening a dirty Slovak peasant, clad in national costume and sandals, entered the most elegant restaurant in Vienna. The waiters rushed up to him and bundled him into a small room near the kitchens. He ordered a glass of beer and was served with it. When it came to paying, he produced a wad of thousand-gulden notes from his trouser pocket, and, licking his thumb, gave one of them to the waiter, who, after gaping in astonishment for a few seconds, hurried to the head waiter with the story. He immediately called up the police and asked them to arrest this individual, who was probably a fugitive highwayman or robber. When the police arrived and asked the man what his name was, he quietly replied: " I am Count Maurice Sándor." Naturally he was straightway put into prison.

He had told Metternich that he had better make enquiries at the head police station if he had not reached home by midnight. When he did not arrive the Chancellor of the Reich became uneasy, and sent a messenger to the Chief of Police to enquire whether he knew any-

thing of the Count's whereabouts. " No, certainly not, but there is a madman here, a Slovakian peasant, who answers all questions with \* I am Count Sándor. Send word to my father-in-law, Prince Metternich \ Of course it is useless to inform Your Highness of such wild statements. . . ."

The Prince, however, became increasingly anxious, ordered his coach, and drove to the police station in person. " Now you see, father, that I was right ", said Sándor. " I have not committed the slightest offence. I only ordered a glass of beer, and paid for it with a thousand-gulden note as I had no coppers. The clothes are the ones I occasionally wear in my own country. When the judge enquired who I was, I gave him my true name, but he didn't believe me, and had me thrown into prison. You can see for yourself that I am sober. But your *hey ducks* arrest honest folk without any reason. . . . Well, have I won the bet? What do you think? "

All this was in the good old days. There are not so many thousand-gulden notes about now, nor such eccentric and jocular magnates. They appear at balls in tails and white ties, not on horseback or wearing magnificent costumes, which may, however, be worn by any nobleman who can afford to buy them. This costume is very knightly, and consists of satin breeches, long riding-boots and a half-length dolman with richly embroidered slashed sleeves, the so-called Zrinyi-coat. It is made of velvet, black, brown, emerald, light blue, dark blue, light grey or purple at will. The outfit is completed by a long hussar-dolma fastened across the chest by a chain. The boots can be black, yellow or red. Other accessories are a curved

sword in a gem-studded sheath, and a four-cornered fur cap adorned with white egret feathers.

These dignified and highly valuable national costumes are still worn on rare festive occasions. I have seen them only twice, but one can always be sure of seeing them on August 20th, the festival of the great St. Stephen.

We are no longer living in the days of the olden Knights, but the fact that these picturesque medieval costumes do not seem an anachronism in present-day Hungary, any more than they would in England, can be attributed to the general atmosphere of the country and to the veneration of the glamour and pageantry of Auld Lang Syne.

Although the financial position of the majority of Hungarian aristocrats is somewhat strained nowadays, there are still a few magnates, such as the Dukes Eszterhazy and Festetich, who could vie with England's wealthiest lords.

But the greater part of the Hungarian barons, counts, and marquesses possess very little land nowadays. According to statistics, 85 per cent of the former vast estates which were left to Hungary after the Peace Treaty, now belong to Jews. One might enquire how this came about. I have already commented on one of the main causes of it.

About thirty years ago, Jewish lessees settled in various parts of the country. To-day they not only own the manor-houses, but the land adjoining them as well. A second cause was that the magnate needed money. The 'family Jew', who probably entered the village originally with a cart selling rags and bones, went up to the Count and offered to advance him money on mortgage. Subse-

quently the items were entered in the land register, until his bills became piled up to the ceiling. Finally the magnate found himself with nothing but his ancient name, a moth-eaten knightly costume and two empty hands. The Jew has now become a landowner, cultivating sugar-beet, tobacco and other profitable crops. For his money he may also be dubbed a baron, and acquire a fine-sounding name ending in -y or -yi.

The Hungarian noble is every inch a man of the world. He usually speaks at least two or three foreign languages. He is well-read and much travelled. He obtains his education in one of the foremost monastic colleges. His greatest fault is probably that he still draws a sharp distinction between himself and " other people " who do not belong to " Society ". This state of mind is an anachronism in our time, when democracy prevails in almost every country and an upheaval of the higher and lower strata of Society has gradually wiped out social distinctions.

The ancient Hungarian aristocracy is doomed to disappear, like many of the centuries-old traditions, and probably nobody will shed a tear at its departure. As for the young aristocrats who no longer own vast estates, they have to take up civil careers and become physicians, engineers, diplomats, solicitors, priests or soldiers. Their new life is organized with the idea of earning money, and they cease to be gentlemen of independent means. When we see the big dairies in Budapest sporting aristocratic shields, and find counts and barons on the staff of banks and factories, we think regretfully of the disappearance of a class whose members had sufficient leisure and means to do something not only for their own profit, but for the

general good as well. This quality has stamped Hungarian life, just as it was the great strength of the English form of government. The new generation which has to earn its living has no time to think of public welfare; it can only concentrate on its own profit and advantage.

This is a great pity. Both from an intellectual and a traditional standpoint, the Hungarian aristocracy realized even better than its brothers in foreign lands, all that a country expects of a nobleman. In spite of their polished charm and fascination, I am still inclined to believe that the Hungarian aristocrats hail from the great chieftains of the steppe of Árpád's time, and that it is from them that they have drawn their magnanimity.

Let us hope that the Hungarian aristocrats will at last hear the call of the times, and turn their ancient energy and inherent capacities to new works. Let us hope that a new Count Széchenyi will arise from their ranks, who will understand how to divert this energy into the only possible channel, that of democracy. This is the way to avoid another revolution.

Referring to " agrarian reform ", I must mention a special branch of the aristocracy which exists only in Hungary. After the War someone proposed that individuals who had distinguished themselves at the front should receive a greater reward from the country than mere medals and decorations. Thus it came about that a new aristocracy was created, the *vitézek* or " heroes ". The first privilege of this new class was the wearing of the country's shield on the left-hand lapel of any suit, from night-shirts to evening dress. Over and above this, a " hero " has the right to attach the prefix *vitész* to his

name. These heroes, who are drawn from all ranks of society, are highly respected everywhere. Finally, every *vitéz* has the right to a plot of land, which varies in size according to his merits. This land, just like entailed property, is inherited by the first-born son. There are officers of high rank who have become owners of vast estates in this way, and simple soldiers who have received a few acres of stony ground and no money to buy implements with which to cultivate it. However, there were many *vitézek* who obtained fertile lands, and were able to live fairly well.

This "aristocracy" originally consisted of 12,000 members, but this figure has been considerably increased of late. The land for these *vitézek* was purchased with State funds from the big landowners, and not on the system favoured by the countries belonging to the " Little Entente", which simply confiscated the lands of the former Hungarian owners on the ground of their having belonged to " their former enemies ". In Hungary only the estates of the renegade Count Michael Károlyi were seized by the State, and rightly too.

All things considered, we may safely say that the aristocracy, in its various forms and manifestations, still plays a social, if not a political or an economic, part in Hungary. If we want to sum up this society in one word, that word will be *plutocracy*. Influence is determined by fortune; wealth. A talent for profiteering to the detriment of the State and the general public and a determination to accumulate riches in any possible way is now the best method of obtaining influence and power in Hungary. It is the Jews who primarily possess such capacities and I

have not yet met one single Magyar, aristocrat or non-aristocrat, who did not blame the Jews for all the trouble in the country.

Let us now look at that most important element in Hungarian society.

## JEWS

**H**UNGARY has long been in a state of crisis. The fact that the once rich Danube countries are so poor is due, amongst other reasons, to the World War, to the bungled Peace Treaties and, last but not least, to the Jews, who grab everything.

" We were drawn into the World War entirely against our will ", say the Hungarians. This I believe to be the truth because it was in Vienna, Belgrade, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Paris and London that the War, reluctantly or otherwise, was " fixed up ". " At the Peace Treaty of Trianon they treated us like criminals and punished an innocent and suffering people more severely than any other nation in Europe. Then, into the bargain, we allowed both the Jews of the country and the international Jews who have recently settled here to climb on to our shoulders. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1919 was engineered and led by Jews. Our banks, our trusts, and the majority of our best factories are directed by Jews. No wonder that they indirectly hold the whole State administration in their hands. We have to pay tremendous taxes not only to the State, but also to the agricultural cartels ruled by Jews and to the Jewish agents of international capitalism who reside in our country."

If we can accept the first two complaints without further comment, it is much more difficult to judge the last impartially. For if about 6 per cent of the country's

population consists of Semites, at least 94 per cent consists of anti-Semites. *All* the Bolshevik leaders in 1919 were not Jews, though many of them were. *All* the banks are not in Jewish hands, though possibly nine out of every ten are. The *entire* Press is not owned by Jews, but at least half of the newspapers which have the largest sale are edited by them.

The power of the Jews in Hungary is much greater than their percentage of the population would suggest; their influence is also intangible, for they like to work in the dark. They have Hungarian names and Christian shop signs; fully realizing the world animus shown towards their race, they gain a foothold as best they can.

If a Christian is asked what is the cause of the present unhealthy situation in Hungary, he may answer, " the Government ", which does not mean the present cabinet, but the former one; in a word, Count Bethlen. Others — and they are in a majority — answer " the Jews ". There is no other country in Europe, with the exception perhaps of Germany, where anti-Semitism is so openly expressed. If anyone is thinking of visiting a somewhat expensive health resort, he will invariably be warned not to do so as " it will be full of Jews".

People living in the country have nicknamed the capital " Judapest ", in view of the fact that it is the greatest Jewish city after New York. Its Israelite population numbers nearly a quarter of a million. " And the worst thing of all ", say the Hungarians, " is the fact that our Jews are not ghetto Jews ". There is no ghetto in Budapest, but Jewish shops, mixed with those of Christians, are scattered all over the city. Actually it is impossible to distinguish which shops belong to Jews, as the name of the

firm is frequently Hungarian. If one takes a walk in the most elegant quarter of Budapest during a Jewish holiday, one is surprised to find that every other shop has the shutters up. Moreover, the largest estates in the country, as well as the biggest commercial and industrial concerns, are controlled by Jews.

Is this to the country's detriment? Any man with an unbiased mind may give an affirmative answer to this question. It appears at first sight that the estates owned by Jews yield both better crops and a larger income than when they were in the Magnates' hands. But the fact that the Hungarian population groans under a Jewish yoke can scarcely be denied. The Christians are all agreed on this fact. Only very rarely do we meet a man holding different views on the subject. Fortunately I had an opportunity of meeting someone of this type, who, although anti-Semite himself, nevertheless maintained that Hungary could not exist without its Jews. Driving them out would only bring greater distress in its train: they are a necessary evil, and their commercial talents are an indispensable factor of the life of the country. They may be an ulcer on society, but the ulcer cannot be removed without endangering the patient's life. It was a severe judgment, but undoubtedly a true one.

The Magyar is only interested in money inasmuch as he likes the things that money will buy. Saving is not for him. But the Jew saves, and he who saves has. Nearly all the wealth of the country sleeps in his huge safes, and he will only lend it against high rates of interest. Theoretically the bank rate is fixed; big banks, again theoretically, grant loans at from 6 to 8 per cent. But in point of fact



"NAGY TEMPLON," THE GREEK CHURCH OF DEBRECEN



THE *ICONOSTAS* OF A GREEK CHURCH

no money is lent at such rates. Loans are only granted to those who can pay two-figure interest.

This is the cancer in Hungary's economic life. The high rate of interest is at the root of every business transaction: it prevents the agriculturalist from buying implements, the industrialist from modernizing his factory, and the merchant from replenishing his stock and giving credit. The consequence of all this is unemployment. Four-fifths of the manufacturing industries in Budapest are already ruined. To quote a striking example: in a village of a few thousand inhabitants, there are one thousand eight hundred workmen who have already been dismissed from Budapest factories, which means that nearly every family in the village has lost its bread-winner.

It is said the Jews are to blame. 'Why, you may ask, doesn't the Government do something to remedy the situation by undertaking public works, or by using its authority to reduce the rate of interest? The answer is tragically simple. The Government has to rely on the banks for money and therefore is itself in the hands of the big bankers. One needs hardly to ask who are the bankers — the Jews.

The Press, which in nearly every country gives expression to popular opinion, is muzzled. The biggest German newspaper in the capital is pronouncedly Jewish and at least a dozen of the important daily papers are subsidized by Jewish capital, even though their staffs are mixed. The majority of the leading publishing firms are directed by Jews.

It is true that as far as the educated classes are concerned, the majority of civil servants are pure Magyar. But at

least two-thirds of the members of the liberal professions, physicians, solicitors, etc. — there are three thousand-lawyers in Budapest alone, which is an enormous percentage in a town with a million inhabitants — are Jewish, although many of them have changed their names, for this only cost one "krone" in former Austro-Hungary. Though they are now prohibited from assuming historically famous names such as Rákóczi, Zrínyi or Széchenyi, many Jewish families adopted such names before the prohibition came into force. A Gentile friend of mine once told me that only five of the three hundred people living in Budapest who bore his ancient name really belonged to his own family. But we must also bear in mind that there are many Jews who have not been lucky enough to acquire such well-sounding names.

In olden times a Jew was not allowed to choose a new name, but had to accept the one allotted to him. When Joseph II, the representative of "enlightened despotism", commanded that every citizen should have a family name of his own instead of simply bearing his Christian name and his father's Christian name, what ingenuity the authorities must have needed to invent them wholesale! "Jákob fia Mózes", for example, received the grand name Mózes Silberstein, instead of "Moses son of Jacob", another was baptized Goldstein or Steingold. Names were also borrowed from the vegetable world, such as Rosenbaum, Rosenzweig, Apfelbaum, Blumenfeld, and so on. The whole range of colours was also exploited, Schwartz, Weiss, Gelb, Grün, Gold, Blau, Rot, etc. The animal kingdom from lamb to wolf was also exhausted. The names were German, because Hungary was ruled from Vienna at that time and the official language was German.

Quite a number of Jews changed their names, Black or White to the Hungarian equivalents Fekete or Fehér, with the obvious intention of concealing their Semitic origin. However they very rarely succeeded in attaining their purpose, although they gave their sons true Hungarian Christian names such as Árpád, István and János instead of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. . . .

In the very middle of this baptismal campaign, when the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds, as well as the range of colours, had been completely exhausted, the imaginative powers of the Town Clerk also failed. He was in an impish mood and decreed in a regal way and without any possibility of appeal, that certain dirty old Jews who happened to stand before him should from that day onwards and for evermore bear some fantastic name such as Nasentropf, Stinkfuss, Schmutznagel, or Schmalzfinger. That the descendants of these families have clung to their names, can only be explained by the filial piety of the orthodox Jew. " If this name was good enough for my father ", he says, " it is good enough for me too. "

Some Jewish names sound quite elegant, which must have cost their owners heavily. Though a good many were allotted names according to their literary or industrial merits, the majority had to buy their names. A title was comparatively cheap, but anyone who wanted to acquire the rank of baron had to pay a fat sum either into Party funds or to charities. Some of these titled families play a prominent part in the political and economic life of the country. One Jewish baron owns Hungary's largest sugar factory and its best-run dairies. Another was a great banker and Minister of Finance and a composer

besides — the richest Minister of Finance of all composers, and the most eminent composer of all Ministers of Finance.

From the Jewish point of view, the enmity between themselves and the Christians is primarily a question of religion, while for the Magyars it is chiefly one of race. They do not hate the Jews on account of their faith — on this point they are tolerant enough — but because of their blood and racial characteristics. Before the World War the Christians' antipathy was perhaps not so pronounced, but after the discovery of the Jewish army purveyors\* frauds — they provided the soldiers with paper-soled boots — and more especially after the wave of Communism which swept the country, it assumed a political character as well. The Hungarian Jews were accused, and possibly not without reason, of having subsidized the Communists.

When Bolshevik rule came to an end in Hungary, most of the Jews decided to change their family names. Some of them were so cute that they first became converted to the Lutheran religion and then to the Calvinistic or Catholic. Hungarians have a curious gift, which I might almost call a seventh sense, for spotting the most Gentile-looking Jews with Christian names. The afore-mentioned mass conversion took place so that a Jew who was questioned by someone in authority as to his religious denomination could answer " Catholic ". " Yes, but before? " " I was a Calvinist." And even if they said that they had formerly been Lutherans they were " located" nevertheless.

Another cause of the incompatibility of Magyar Jews

and Christians is that the Jews claim that they belong to the Magyar population, whereas the Gentiles consider them a foreign race. In their eyes, a Jew is always a Jew, even if he is baptized or is a baron. His blood is different, and so is his mentality. It is also said that the moral decadence which was noticeable in the country after the War was due to Jewish influence.

It is very difficult to form a fair opinion on these matters, but one thing is certain. The Jews, thanks to their talent for making money easily and their intellectual gifts, are invariably more successful than the Gentile population. Moreover, a poor Jew will always find help and pecuniary resources among his Israelite co-religionaries if he proves himself to be sufficiently industrious.

The large numbers of Jewish "intelligentsia" gave rise to the so-called *numerus clausus*, the "percentage clause" which was applied to the Universities of the country. In accordance with this decree only a certain number of Jews, varying in proportion to the percentage living in the country, are allowed to matriculate in the Universities. This decree was passed by the Government to protect the native population, as the well-to-do Jewish youth was flooding the Universities, which were already overcrowded by the educated young men who flocked to the capital from Hungary's lost territory. There was a grave danger of the educated classes of the country becoming gradually Judaized, a danger which naturally had the greatest political and social significance. At present the Hungarian Universities accept only a percentage of Jewish students which corresponds to their proportion in the total population of the country.

Naturally this did not prevent the young Jews from

completing their studies at foreign Universities. Nevertheless they cannot use their diplomas in Hungary, for all foreign degrees must undergo a *nostrification*, which entails fresh examinations and considerable "patronage". The *numerus clausus* has been in operation for the last ten years, and the Government believes that it will reduce the preponderance of Jewish intelligentsia in the liberal professions to reasonable proportions.

The restrictions of this "percentage clause" were not only directed against the onrush of Jews. We must bear in mind that the dismemberment of Hungary and the subsequent migration of middle-class people to the capital from the four lost provinces, accounts for the sad fact that there are numerous physicians and engineers in Budapest who have become taxi-drivers and municipal scavengers, and who are glad to get such jobs. It is small wonder that anti-Semitism is stronger in Hungary than in countries where there are proportionately fewer Jews. It is very difficult to incorporate them with the natives of the country, except when their percentage in the total population is low; then they fit in of their own accord. But wherever there is a colony of Jews, however small it may be, »they cling together and their racial consciousness is thereby increased.

There is a comic paper published in Budapest, called "*Ojság*", which is a Jewish-Hungarian corruption of the word "*Ujság*" (newspaper). It is full of Jewish anecdotes, and half of the Hungarians think that it is an anti-Semitic enterprise, whereas it is run by Jews. Humour is a blessed thing, and can build golden bridges across the gulfs that separate the different social castes. Most of the anecdotes have a witty reference to affairs of State, just to prove to

the general public that the Jewish element is indispensable in every country.

There is, for example, an anecdote about one Moses Mandelbaum who, after liquidating his business in a manner highly satisfactory to himself, goes to a wholesale merchant in the nearest village, a fellow-believer of his. He buys various articles at his shop, packs them into two suit-cases, and pays the man with a three months' bill of exchange. He is already in the street when Grün, the proprietor of the shop, rings up a business friend and makes a few enquiries as to Mandelbaum's solvency. He is told that Mandelbaum has just gone bankrupt. Half-crazed with shock he dashes after his customer, and, catching him at the station, demands either cash payment or the return of the goods. Moses talks and talks, until he finally succeeds in making a compromise with him.

" Well, what will you give me as well as your useless bills? " he asks Moses.

" Forty per cent. "

" No, you must give fifty, or I take the goods back! "

After some discussion, they come to an agreement.

" Well ", says Moses, taking back his bill and putting one suit-case into the hands of the astonished merchant. " Here is your fifty per cent and we are quits now. " And, bidding him farewell, he leaves him on the spot.

The best Jewish anecdotes I know are to be found in Hungary. They are something quite out of the ordinary, and throw new light on Jewish character and humour. I will quote a few of them here, at random, just as they come to my mind.

Kohn (Cohen) is walking along the street leading a little boy by the hand. Grün comes up to him and says:

" Vat a nice little boy you got, Mr. Kohn! His eyes, his mouth, his nose . . . everything is nice about him.... By the way, dear Mr. Kohn, couldn't you lend me ten Pengös?"

" I couldn't ", answers Kohn frigidly, " the child is from my wife's first marriage."

Mr. Stein, the hotel-proprietor, is sampling the first dinner produced by his new hotel cook.

" I say, where did you learn cooking? " he asks somewhat suspiciously.

" I was cook at an Officers' Mess during the War, sir. I was even wounded twice. . . . "

" Hm. . . I'm surprised you weren't shot."

Teacher (in the Synagogue school): " You can only extract simple things from each other. You can't, for instance, extract two apples from four pears, or two dogs from three horses."

Little Maurice: " Teacher, I know an exception! "

Teacher: "Well?"

Little Maurice: " You can extract ten pints of milk from a cow."

Business is the whole of a Jew's life. When, for example, the *Khevra kadisha* — an association which assists distressed Jews — needs funds, it resorts to the simple expedient of selling tickets to the congregation of the Synagogue on the occasion of great religious festivals. Since everybody likes to sit up in the front of the church, those benches are the most expensive seats. On such occasions no one can slip in unnoticed, not even with the honest intention of

having a talk with a business friend who is probably inside.

Cohen arrives at the Synagogue breathless. " Ticket? " says the Usher. " I don't want a ticket. I only want to have a few words with Philip Weiss and then come out again." " Aha, Cohen, you sly little fellow. I know you want to pray gratis."

At the time of the great Jewish festivals, the big synagogues are so over-crowded that supplementary services have to be held in other places — they used to take place in private houses sometimes, though this practice has lately been prohibited.

The orthodox Jews are the best upholders of their religious traditions. They eat no meat, and wear the traditional curled whiskers and long beard, though their costume is not so pronouncedly Jewish in Hungary as in the Slav countries. But these orthodox Jews are just as good business men as the so-called neologues, who do not observe so rigorously the rites prescribed in the Talmud. The latter are more or less Sionists who stress their racial rather than their religious character.

But both neologues and orthodox Jews rise to remarkable financial heights with extraordinary rapidity. The Hungarian Coal Trust is dominated by Jews. They fix the price of coal arbitrarily and are not satisfied with 40 per cent, but must make a profit of at least 1000 per cent. There was once an ambitious Minister of Commerce who set himself the task of weeding out these parasites of society, but unfortunately the Trust was too strong for him, and he had to resign. This is the best proof of the strength of the " Cartel-Jews " in Hungary. This

example, however, was not sufficient to scare the Minister of Commerce, who achieved a 10 per cent reduction on the price of coal last year. He did even more'. A powerful Jewish industrialist decided to close down his factory and dismiss two thousand workmen, on the pretext that the taxes were too burdensome for him, though, as a matter of fact, they were well within his means. The Minister promptly informed him that if the gates of his factory were not opened by the following morning, he would be deported. Work was resumed the next day.

The Jew likes to deal in money above everything. Though this is a somewhat risky business, it is easy and profitable, if only one knows how to count, calculate, and save. And the Jew does know. If a Jew opens a little banking concern, it is certain that he will prosper even under the most trying conditions and will keep out of the Bankruptcy Court. If a Hungarian does so, on the other hand, his little business is usually ruined in no time. A Jew lives within his income, however small it may be, whereas a Hungarian likes to live beyond his means. This is possibly the primary explanation of the great power of the Jews in Hungary.

When all is said and done, the anti-Semite bark of the Hungarian is worse than his bite. Those who decry the Jews most vehemently, nevertheless buy everything from their shops. There are so many Jewish shops, and their customers are so well served. Why do the Jewish newspapers have such a large sale? Obviously because the vast Christian majority living in the capital buys them and even uses them for advertising. It is said that all Jews cling together, but is this not rather a commendable

practice than an astonishing fact? Is it not the very-reason why the Jewish shops prosper while those of the Gentile are gradually being ruined? Why do the Christians not back up each other? If there is a Jewish shop a hundred yards from their doors, they will not take the trouble to walk further in order to be served by people of their own race.

Every Hungarian is convinced that the hands of the members of every government in his country are tied by Jewish bankers, and if a high official of State is successful, rumour immediately has it that " he gets a hundred thousand a year from the Jews ". And if this is really true, it is a pitiable state of affairs, for if the Government attempted to do anything of which the Jews did not approve, they would immediately stop credits both inside the country and on the foreign exchanges, which are also in their hands. The country would thus be prevented from raising a foreign loan, and this would mean the end of government, in a country like Hungary, where the tax-payers who pay up at the end of the time limit, have to be rewarded for doing so.

The only way in which the Christians could cope with the Jews would be to compete with them in industry, economy and perseverance, instead of hating them. The Christians have an objection to this too. They say: " We cannot compete with their cheek and pushing manners, which are inborn in them, and which we could never hope to acquire." One could argue for ever in this way, without any conclusion being reached.

It is, however, distinctly specious to blame the Jews for everything. What would the Germans say about the Hungarian situation? Hungary would have had some

justification for driving out the Jews at any cost, but she suffered them in silence, just as she bore the Austrian yoke for centuries and centuries. In Germany, however, where the power of the Jews was much less overwhelming than in Hungary, they were treated in a most summary manner.

In my opinion there is only one method of solving the Jewish question and eliminating the differences between them and the Christian population, and that is by assimilation. This is what has happened in Holland and Scandinavia, and also in such important countries as England and France. This process of assimilation is naturally much simpler in countries in which the Christian population is already divided into different denominations, so that the way to success is not barred by one compact, widely established faith. And while we are on the subject of religion, let us see how the Christian God fares in Hungary.

## GOD IN HUNGARY

**H**UNGARY is not wholly a Catholic country, as many think. The Lord has many tabernacles there, and is worshipped according to various rites. Before the War, Roman Catholics comprised half the population of the country, but the dismembered condition brought about by the Peace Treaty raised this percentage to two-thirds. Catholicism is the official religion of the country and the most widely followed, but other denominations are also recognized.

Actually Roman Catholics only form about 63 per cent of the total population, but if members of the Greek-Catholic Church are included, the percentage is raised to roughly two-thirds of the whole. The Greek-Orthodox Church, which did comprise one-seventh of the population of Great Hungary, has now become comparatively insignificant and contains a minimum of Serbs, Roumanians and Ruthenians, owing to the fact that the majority of the followers of this Church lived in the territory which Hungary was obliged to cede. The Protestants comprise 27 per cent of the population, of which the majority are Calvinists, whilst the Lutheran Church has half a million members — that is to say about 6 per cent. Unitarians can also be found with other Protestant Sects, such as Baptists and Methodists. The Salvation Army, too, has a considerable following, but they work very quietly. Let me say a few more words about Israel's children. Their sum-total is

just a hair's-breadth over 6 per cent, which is higher than their percentage in Great Hungary's population. There are no Mohammedans, for, strangely enough, the Turks did not force their religion on the native population during their occupation. If any Mohammedans are to be found, they are not Hungarians, but foreign immigrants from the south.

Unfortunately very few ancient Catholic churches remain in the country, as the majority of them were either transformed into mosques by the Turks or burned to the ground. However, in one of the ancient Gothic churches which stands high up on Buda Hill — the so-called Coronation or Matthew Church, also known as the Church of the Blessed Virgin — a very beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary can be seen, to which hangs an interesting story. It is a piece of Renaissance work in marble, which already stood in the church in 1440, in John Hunyadi's time. When the Turks occupied the capital a hundred years later, the Priests were fortunate in being able to wall up the niche containing the statue. It remained hidden for another century and a half, until, in 1686, the castle was recaptured from the Turks. A cannon-ball set fire to the Turks' powder-magazine, which exploded and damaged one of the church walls. As this collapsed, the statue appeared — intact! The Turks were greatly astonished, and it is probable that this apparition contributed largely to their defeat. When the Hungarians marched into the castle, they were greatly surprised to see the statue, and hailed the Blessed Virgin, now Hungary's patron saint, for having saved them.

The Coronation Church has lately been restored in it

original Gothic style, and is interesting both internally and externally. It was founded in the time of Louis the Great, about 1350, and was completed by Matthias Corvinus a hundred years later. Another century and it became a Turkish mosque. Its slender tower, bearing the arms of King Matthew, is a delicate tracery of dazzlingly white limestone. Divine service is held in this church on great national holidays. The equestrian statue of King Stephen stands in the square nearby, while the steep side of the hill is adorned by the arcades of the beautiful Fishers' Bastion, from whose white towers and parapets the finest view of Budapest can be obtained.

In spite of the Turkish devastation, there are still a few ancient churches scattered about Hungary, particularly the fine Gothic cathedral in Kassa, and the Church of the Jak Monastery near the Austrian frontier. A reproduction of its beautiful main door can be seen in the Budapest City Park opposite the Agricultural Museum, which is a facsimile of Hunyadi's medieval castle. In the first part of my book I referred to the attractive little Episcopal church in Veszprém and to the picturesque ruined church at Zsám-bék. The Cathedral of Pécs also deserves mention. It is situated close to the present southern frontier of the country. At one time it was used by the Turks as a granary and an Ottoman school, but has since undergone considerable restoration.

Renaissance styles and early Baroque are represented in Hungary only by modern reproductions. Nearly all the buildings dating from these periods were destroyed during the Turkish occupation. There are, however, a considerable number of buildings in late Baroque, which were

erected by the Jesuits during the eighteenth century. Outstandingly beautiful examples of them are the St. Anne Church on the Batthyány Square, and the University Church in Pest. A good many of the large churches in the country are built in Empire style. One of the biggest Empire cathedrals, to which I have already referred, is in Eger. Another is the cathedral of Vác, situated at a bend of the Danube near the Czech border. But the largest of them all lies farther upstream. It is the gigantic basilica at Esztergom, the seat of the highest ecclesiastic of the Catholic Church in Hungary, the Prince Primate. With its vast cupola and colonnades it dominates the whole landscape, symbolizing the power of this Prince of the Church. Museums containing most valuable treasures lie both in the church and in the Primate's Palace. The famous St. Stephen basilica of Budapest is of much later date. This extraordinarily sumptuous, richly decorated place of worship, which dominates the whole of Budapest, can be fully appreciated only when seen from the top of the Fishers' Bastion,

The Votive Church of Szeged, the youngest of all the large Hungarian churches, is situated on the southern bank of the Tisza. It was built in commemoration of the great Tisza flood, which devastated the whole town; it was consecrated in 1930. The style is a transitional Roman, contemporary to the English transitional Norman, and Gothic. The fine square in front of the church is eminently suitable for open-air performances, and is actually used for this purpose. The old city church, on the Pest side of the river, stands on a somewhat peculiar site slightly below street level.

Close to the cross-adorned church in any Hungarian

village, there is invariably an edifice bearing a star and another with a cock on top of it. The star is the sign of a Calvinist congregation, and the cock that of a Lutheran. The only explanation I have ever received of these customs is simply " that it has always been so ".

The followers of Calvin are, almost without exception, of pure Magyar origin, and live in the north-eastern part of the country. I have already commented on the causes of the great development of Protestantism in Hungary during the time of the Hapsburg oppression, when the Transylvanian Princes, such as Gabriel Bethlen and George Rákóczi, showed a preference for the new religion. Of course Calvinism has a considerable following even in the capital, where there are several beautiful Calvinist churches situated both in the city itself and on its outskirts. The Calvinist service consists of preaching, praying and extraordinarily energetic psalm-singing to the booming accompaniment of the organ. The churches are as bare and devoid of images as a Turkish mosque. Stained-glass windows or pictures of saints would be a sacrilege, and the walls are as plain and white as those of a hospital ward.

The largest and most prominent Protestant church in Hungary is not situated in Budapest itself, but in Debrecen, the second largest town in the country, and known as the Rome of the Calvinists. I have already mentioned the site of the Nagy-Templom — the great church — which lies in the centre of the town and dominates the main street. I was lucky enough to attend the Jubilee celebrations there, and to make the acquaintance of its influential Bishop Balthazar. Apart from the antipathy felt towards the Jews, the different congregations live peacefully side by

side, although it is amusing to note the nicknames which they have given each other.

The Catholics are jokingly called *pápista*, the Pope-worshippers, who say one thing and mean another; the Lutherans *lutyi* — sly, for it is said that they like to scratch their right ears with their left hands and answer neither yes nor no; the Calvinists *káломista*, a popular corruption of the word, also *vastagnyaku* — bull-necked. If they say no, as they usually do, it means no and nothing else. Their obstinacy may either be a relic of the times when they had to fight for their faith, or it may be a true Hungarian trait of character, like the famous *sisu* of the Finns.

Taken as a whole, the Calvinists have the purest Hungarian blood in their veins. Admiral Horthy, the Regent of Hungary, Count Stephen Bethlen, and General Gömbös, the present Premier, are all Protestants. Many say that they favour their own people, but I, for my part, share the view of the Lutheran clergyman of Cegléd that the preponderance of the Protestant element in present-day Hungary has a historical source, and may be accounted for by the spreading of Protestantism amongst the educated middle class. Individually the Magyar is neither pronouncedly religious nor irreligious, least of all anti-religious, like the Russians and many people in the Romance countries. Bigotry rarely occurs.

Over and above the three great Christian congregations in Hungary, there are two others, which formed 25 per cent of the population in Great Hungary, but which have been reduced to insignificant proportions by the Trianon treaty. The great Greek Orthodox Church, which ruled

the whole of Russia and is even now preponderant in the Balkan Peninsula, formerly had considerable influence in the southern and eastern parts of Hungary. But now only the small Serbian colony, a few Roumanians and Ruthanians, and a good many Russian refugees frequent its churches, apart from the descendants of the Greek merchants settled in the country. This Greek Orthodox Church, which regards Catholics as its renegade brothers, just as these regard the Protestants, claims to have retained the ritual of the ancient Christian congregations in its original form. That is why the pulpit and the organ are missing, and the only seats are a few benches ranged along the walls for the use of the infirm. The congregation remains standing during the whole service, which is confined to litanies, choral-singing and communion. The choir is separated from the body of the congregation by the *iconostas*, a huge screen, on which icons are hung. There are three doors in the screen, of which the middle one is known as the Royal Portal, and is only thrown open at the most sacred moment of the service to give the congregation a glimpse of the Holy of Holies.

The service is an endless celebration of Masses, and the priest parades in and out of the three doors of the *iconostas*, swinging an incense-burner before the images of the Saviour and in the direction of the kneeling congregation. He reads unintelligible texts aloud in the ancient Slavonic tongue of the Church, and may occasionally throw a few admonishments towards his flock. One needs to be born to this religion to be able to follow its ceremony with due respect.

The service may also be held in Greek. In the heart of

the capital, on one of its most imposing squares, stands a large Baroque building which also belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church. Service is held there every Sunday, and although the congregation is practically nil the atmosphere of the church is very restful. An invisible angelic choir sings ancient Greek Orthodox hymns for the benefit of the priest, the choir-boys and — myself. The service is read in ancient Greek and many of the tombstones in the churchyard bear inscriptions in ancient Greek characters. But who pays for the choir and the whole upkeep of the church? I am told that the neighbouring houses belong to the church, and that there are other funds at its disposal. Is this a luxury? Maybe, but the service is very picturesque and soothing to the few faithful who do happen to drop in.

As for the Greek Catholic Church, it apparently received this name because it is neither Greek nor Catholic. The adherents were originally members of the Greek Orthodox Church, and probably hoped to span the schism between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches by creating this new form of religion. The proclamation of the Russian Tsar as the head of the Greek Orthodox Church only widened the gulf between the two factions, for the Greek Catholics preferred to be under the Pope. At present they form a curious mixture of the elements of the two ancient churches.

Their first step was to abandon the ancient Greek and Slavonic ecclesiastical language and hold Divine Service in their own Mother tongue. Their priests, unlike those of the Greek Orthodox Church, do not wear long beards, but are clean shaven, like Catholic priests. They are obliged

to take the vow of celibacy only if they are unmarried at the time of their ordination. Thus a married man can become a priest, whereas a priest cannot become a married man.

The outward appearance of their churches is also a sign of their ambiguous character. They have kept the *iconostas* and the sanctuary, but otherwise the whole aspect of the interior is changed, and forms a curious compromise between a Catholic and a Greek Orthodox Church. Statues of those most Catholic Saints, Anthony and Francis, can be found in them. The Greek Catholics number a quarter of a million in present-day Hungary, and their home is in Miskolc in the north.

There are also a few so-called Unitarians in the country, who received their status and privileges in Transylvania. Their name derives from their denial of the Holy Trinity and their acceptance of the doctrine that God is one person. At present they are in no way prevented from believing what they like, although that was not always so. Much blood was shed in the past for the sake of a little Greek *iota*, by which the Homoousians were separated from the Homoioussians, who held the persons of the Trinity to be One, whereas the former held the contrary view that the Father and Son were part of the Godhead. Later, after the Church had conquered in many sanguinary fights the followers of Arius of Alexandria, who denied the consubstantiality of Christ, in the fourth century A.D., anyone who denied Christ's Godly nature ran the risk of being put to the torture.

About 1580, when liberty of worship was proclaimed in Transylvania, a priest called Ferenc David, after becoming Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist in quick succession, set

his compass in the direction of Arianism. He might have been a Socinian; at any rate he denied the whole Trinity and founded a new creed of his own which still exists in a few countries, including America.

David was perhaps slightly mad. He allowed his compass to swing too far in the direction of Sabbatarianism, which stands dangerously near to Judaism. He was thrown into prison to collect his senses. Even in Transylvania it was considered rather rash to deny Christ, and to head so openly towards Jewish doctrines. But, even now, there are a few Sabbatarians in Hungary.

Let us now peep into the Jewish synagogue. In a country town this is probably quite an imposing, theatre-like building, but in villages it is only a little house, distinguished by the hexagonal cross with which it is topped. Or it may even be a huge architectural masterpiece in a semi-Moorish style, possessing an ornate cloistered courtyard.

At the Jewish New Year festivities, I try to slip into the synagogue under the protection of a thick-set gentleman in colonel's uniform. " May one enter the church even though one is a *goyim*, an infidel unbeliever? " — " Please step inside ", says a young Jew, but is immediately dumb-founded at the impertinence of the ungrateful stranger who has removed his hat This is definitely an insult to the Deity of the Church — so on with the hat, and forward march!

The synagogue is crowded. All the women sit high up in the galleries, and are not allowed on the ground floor. I think this was the custom in the first Christian churches, and it is still observed by Christians in the Balkans.

The men, wearing their hats, sit on the benches down below. Occasionally they read prayers from shabby old books, and then turn to discuss business or the topics of the day with their neighbours. The atmosphere could hardly be described as devout. Those who want to show their great piety, wind big black, yellow, or golden scarves, " *dahles* ", round their necks. There are many who wear caftans, or curious coats which are symbolical of some exceptional form of piety.

The trim Rabbi, assisted by other gentlemen in black, stands in front of the altar reading in a sing-song voice, and occasionally succeeds in drowning the muttering of the congregation. On a small raised dais in the middle of the synagogue, somebody is busy with something, I can't guess what. The organ swells, people hush their chatter, and an invisible choir begins to sing one of those ancient psalms or songs, whose unearthly beauty seldom reached the ears of Christians. Six thousand years, at least, have passed, and here we still are, the Jews say. Are we not the chosen people of Jehovah who has watched over us for centuries and given us might over the whole earth Particularly here in Hungary, where we feel more at home every year. . . .

A very different fate has befallen the followers of Mohammed. Between 1500 and 1600 they ruled over one-third of Hungary, but were never able to establish themselves there or to keep what they had won. They were good soldiers, fine civil servants, landowners, and slave-drivers, but poor organizers. They could not toil or save as the Jews did. They could not build, but only destroy.

It is true that they erected a number of mosques and minarets, a few of which still remain intact. They look like huge exclamation marks silhouetted against the sky, following the invisible word " *Fuit!* " — it has been! Only one of the mosques built by them remains, and that has been transformed into a Christian church. There are also two Turkish baths in Budapest, built over hot springs, with golden crescents on their genuinely Turkish cupolas. Vestiges of the Turks' handiwork may also be found in country districts in the shape of open wells surrounded by big, flat stones. On the *Rózsadomb*», the Hill of the Roses, one of the finest residential quarters of Budapest, lies the tomb of the Turkish Saint *Gül Baba* (The Father of the Roses), which, even in our day, is a favourite pilgrimage not only for the small Mohammedan colony living in the city, but for Moslems all the world over.

God is worshipped in so many tabernacles in Hungary that He Himself may have some difficulty in keeping them all in mind. Let us consider the effect of the various churches on the physiognomy of the town. The Protestant and Greek Orthodox churches are always closed except when service is being held. The Catholic churches are open all day long, apart from a lunch interval from twelve to two, just like the shops.

Protestant churches, on the other hand, are open only on Sundays and holidays. It always seems to me that religion is much more part of a Catholic's life than it is of a Protestant's. Catholics fly to their churches whenever they have anything on their minds, or even when they have no troubles; so many opportunities of slipping into one of their places of worship are given them as they

walk along the streets. In Protestant churches, however, as a Catholic once remarked, God is only at home on Sunday, and even then one cannot talk to Him because the clergyman is holding forth all the time.

How many people there are who would like to retire to some quiet corner of a church during the daytime! The Pope forbids his followers to enter non-Catholic churches. He can set his mind at rest on that score! Even if they should be tempted to do so, opportunities for satisfying their curiosity are few and far between. On the other hand, I know many Protestants and Calvinists who enter Catholic churches without any qualms, for they know that they can offer up a prayer there in peace at any hour of the day. Obviously, if they are shut out of their own churches. . . .

As far as the priesthood is concerned, the Catholics can display undreamed of pomp on the occasion of religious festivals and national holidays. At Corpus Christi and on St. Stephen's Day (August 20th) processions are held both in the capital and in every country town. In the capital these processions are supplemented by military revues, and the picturesque robes of the high ecclesiastics vie with the uniforms of the State officials, while the magnates clad in knightly attire are an unforgettable sight. Military priests wear regular uniform down to the waist, and then robes — a somewhat amusing sight for unaccustomed eyes.

So many Catholic festivals are observed that one really cannot keep count of them all. Peter and Paul's Day in June, Assumption Day in August, the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary in September, and the usual Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas holidays are among the chief.

All Saints' Day is celebrated in a most charming way. The graves are adorned with bunches of chrysanthemums, and at night all the Catholic cemeteries in the country are lit up with candles. It is a very pretty custom, which might well be adopted in other countries, even by non-Catholics.

I have often wondered whether God, Elohim or Allah, whatever name He may be called by, takes pleasure in the pomp and pageantry of these festivals. One day when my companion and I were riding through the heart of the Bakony forest, we chanced upon a small village hidden by century-old trees. Dawn was breaking, and we heard the bell of a neighbouring church, whose roof was gilded by the first rays of the rising sun. We dismounted and entered the church, in which an old priest was praying for the simple and faithful. It was a comforting sight.

" Do you know ", said my companion, with a sad little smile, " the Lord may be much nearer to us here than in St. Stephen's basilica in Budapest, the Monastery of Pannonhalma, or even the Great Calvinist Church of Debrecen."

Maybe he was right. I cannot tell, but I am quite willing to believe him.

## BREAD AND WINE

**H**UNGARIAN households, both in town and country, rest upon four fundamental pillars — bread, wine, bacon and *paprika*.

If the mistress of the house has enough of these four commodities in her *spejz* (larder), she can easily provide for her household, particularly if she adds a few other ingredients to the above staple foods. And when the Hungarian peasant gets a reasonable price for the above-mentioned articles, he can live well, pay his taxes, buy industrial goods and so forth. Only thus do the wheels of the State run smoothly.

The fact that these wheels are creaking badly at the moment is due to various causes, of which the chief are the world economic crisis with its subsequent unemployment, and, in the case of Hungary, the mutilations wrought on its body by the Peace Treaty.

In the old Danube monarchy, Hungary was a rich country with splendid markets for its agricultural produce. Austria and Bohemia were its chief customers. But now things are quite different, although Hungary still produces first-rate corn and wine, feeds about three million pigs, and grows a tremendous amount of *paprika*, which is rich in vitamins.

The annual corn crop is about 3 million tons, of which two-thirds is wheat, which is naturally far more than the population can consume. The same remark applies

to the annual 88 million gallon wine yield, which works out at about four pints a week for every inhabitant in the country.

As the farmer gets 8 *fillér* (one penny) for two pounds of wheat, and the wine-grower twice as much for two pints of his wine, it is obvious that they cannot make any profit. It is true that the State tries to remedy matters by the so-called "Boletta-premiums", amounting to 2 *fillér* per pound, which the buyer has to pay as a surplus to the seller, but this scanty sum cannot make very much difference. The State also assists the viticulturist by paying 20 *fillér* per two pints for the wine supplies for the army, but what is this 2,200,000 gallons out of the 88 million gallons produced?

Sell it to foreign countries? Yes, but for some foolish and incomprehensible reason foreign countries do not want it. In any case the recent tariff-barriers prevent importation to those countries which might be potential buyers. Europe, which was at one time on the road to free trade, has relapsed into a medieval customs system.

How is a nation to live when it has nothing save unmarketable food and wine? By taking to manufacturing? But then the Peace Treaty has deprived Hungary of nine-tenths of its woods and its ore mines, not to mention its sources of gold, silver and oil. When the gentlemen round the baize table drew the new map of Hungary they did not consider how its people were to live in the future.

Balfour, when questioned about the outcome of the great Conference, is said to have answered with a melancholy smile: " We have divided the greater part of a

country we do not know among peoples of whom we know nothing."

One cannot eat gold, nor does an agriculturist live only on bread, even if he can wash it down with wine every blessed day.

The Hungarians have raised their yearly corn production almost to that of pre-War Hungary, but what use is this to them if they cannot get rid of their surplus stocks? The natural consequence is a slackening off in trade and agriculture. There is practically no money in the country. One even has difficulty in changing a *ttn-pengő* note. . . .

But let us leave this general economic problem and return to a closer study of bread and wine.

The soil of Hungary is extremely fertile, even though the *Bánát*, a rich-soiled strip of land lying between the southern banks of the Danube and the Tisza, had to be ceded to Yugoslavia. However, there are still vast wheat-fields on the Alföld, and Hungarian wheat is of the finest quality of any in Europe. The dry climate, the unparalleled fertility of the soil, and the country's perfected and modernized flour-mills account for the superior quality of Hungarian flour.

On the other hand, there are not so many different kinds of bread in Hungary as in other countries, but those which do exist are cheap and unique of their kind. There *fehér kenyér* (white bread), *barna kenyér* (brown bread), the favourite *felbarna* (half-brown) and the various types of *rozskenyér* (rye-bread). Hungarian rolls and croissants, *zsemlyék* and *kiflik*, are very much like those made in England, but they taste better.

In the morning many people eat delicious salted

croissants covered with caraway seeds, accompanied by a few glasses of the excellent Hungarian beer, which is a match for the best German brews.

Although wheat meal is not very extensively used in the preparation of bread, it is required for the cooking of an original Hungarian speciality, the different kinds of *tészta*, pastry and macaroni or spaghetti; they are usually home-made and appear in a tremendous variety of shapes and sizes, such as *gombóc* (dumplings, sometimes stuffed with plums), *csipetke* (small pieces of pastry usually served with soups), *galuska* (fingers of pastry used to dress steaks), and *nudli*, spaghetti-like pastry prepared with cream cheese, poppy seeds, and sugar, nuts, jam or cabbage.

There is also a huge choice in home-made cakes, which are quite delicious and lack the mass-production taste. It would be useless to enumerate them. My readers would do better to go to Hungary themselves to sample them and discover their queer names by glancing at a bill of fare. *Rétes* (a cake consisting of thinly-rolled layers of pastry stuffed with cherries, apples, cream cheese, etc.), *aranygaluska* and *palacsinta* (pancakes) may be mentioned as examples.

At all times and everywhere on earth, except in some barren regions where no wheat could be grown, bread has been mankind's most staple food. The Eskimos of Greenland, and the nomadic peoples of bygone ages would never have dreamt of praying " Give us this day our daily bread ". Their prayers were sent up for luck in hunting and fishing. To the land labourer on the

contrary, daily bread is as necessary as air. He could not live without it. Wine, however, has never become man's daily beverage, except in countries where the soil and climatic conditions make for viticulture on a large scale.

Bread has always been almost a holy food, and " to trample on it " is a deadly sin even in our days. When Christ took the bread and wine He blessed them both, and they became hallowed by this action. This is the view held by the Magyar peasant, who considers wine a sacred beverage.

This fact must be grasped if one wants to understand the importance of wine in the country of the Magyars. In northern countries wine is an intoxicating beverage, drunk only on festive occasions or when " on the spree ". But a Magyar would only smile at the idea that wine is an " intoxicating beverage ". He drinks wine, as a rule, mixed half and half with soda-water, and even when they are celebrating, Magyars very rarely get drunk. This may, of course, be attributed to the fact that their constitutions are accustomed to wine drinking.

Hungarian wine is usually light. The ordinary table wine, *asztalt bor*, which is almost without exception white or golden-white, does not contain more than 10 per cent of alcohol, and when usually diluted with soda-water it is no stronger than ale. Red wine is not so plentiful as white, as only one-tenth of the grapes cultivated in Hungary are of the red variety. *Egri Bikavér* (blood-red wine of Eger), *Villanyi* and *Burgundi* can vie with the finest French *vins supkrieurs*. All these are heavier wines than the French Bordeaux and can be classed better with the Burgundies. The *vin rouge*

*ordinaire* of the French corresponds to the excellent *Kadarka* and *Schiller*, Hungarian ordinary wines. In nine cases out of ten, people prefer to drink white table wine, contrary to the French who prefer red wine.

Madeira, port and sherry are seldom found in the country. Hungarian wine rarely contains more than 15 per cent of alcohol, and is not very suitable for quick intoxication. The quality of wine depends not only on the place of its growth, but also on the type of vine and the method of pressing the grapes. *Hárslevelű*, *Muskotály* and *Furmint* are particularly in favour. The *Badacsony* wine, occasionally exported under the French name *Auvergnas Gris*, is of French origin. From the " sand " vineyards of the town of *Kecskemét* hails the *Leányka* (Little Girl), which with its 14 per cent of alcohol is particularly suitable for elderly gentlemen. I, for one, am very fond of the golden-coloured *Fel teli ni*, which much resembles the French Sauternes.

It is really extraordinary that these highly exportable wines are not known abroad, as their superior quality and absurdly low price should constitute excellent business deals for any European wine-merchant. A two-pint bottle of the above-mentioned first-rate brands does not cost more than one *pengő* or *one-fifty* (a shilling, or one shilling and sixpence normally). The reason why Hungarian wines, which, in my opinion, rank among the best on the Continent, cannot be exported, is probably connected with the " higher policy " of the great international wine merchants, and heaven only knows what secret " premiums " are paid for the importation of certain " protected " brands. It is really a great pity that things should be so. Denmark and Switzerland have already

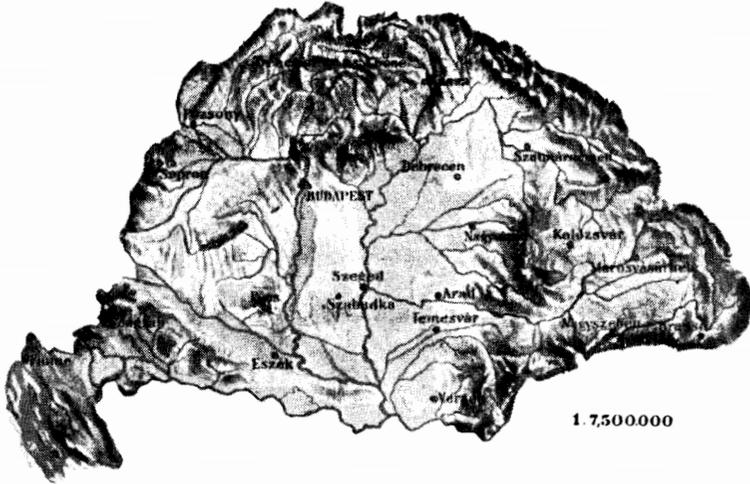


A FRIAR TEACHING HIS CLASS IN THE OPEN AIR

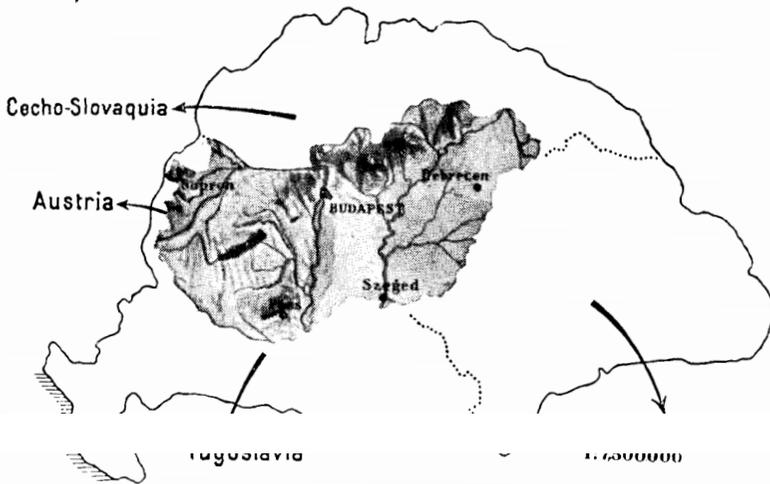


THE WINE HARVEST FESTIVAL

**The thousand-years-old undivided Hungary**



**and the treaty-monster of Trianon.**



" discovered " Hungarian wine, but many countries simply ignore its existence.

The lack of adequate preferential tariffs prevent the best of Hungarian wines from circulating freely in Europe, although they would be cheaper than many of the popular brands, even if a 100 per cent duty had to be paid on them when they crossed the frontier.

Actually, there is only one brand of Hungarian wine which has succeeded in breaking through the barriers of foreign indifference, and has even won international fame. This is, of course, the *Tokaji* (Tawkaryee), or *Tokay er*, in German, the " king of wines and the wine of kings ". This wine is grown on the volcanic slopes of Tokaj, and the area of the vast vineyards is limited by the State. Tokaj wine must not be sugared, strengthened with alcohol or adulterated with other wine. The *Tokaji Aszu* (Tokaji Dry) is the noblest brand of *Tokaji*. It is produced in quite a different way from other wines. The grapes are left on the vines to be dried by the sun and are not gathered until November or December. At harvest time the totally dried bunches are carefully gathered into *puttons* (a kind of wooden buckets in which grapes are carried), which has a hole and funnel at the bottom to allow the rich sugary juice to trickle out into another receptacle. This juice, which would take years to ferment, is kept and added to the must later on. The grapes in the *puttony* are then pressed, and the juice is blended with the must from the non-dry bunches. The *Tokaji Aszu* brand is marked " 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 *puttons* " Tokaji according to the number of *puttons* required to fill a 240-pint barrel.

Apart from the "king of wines", other good types are also grown in the neighbourhood of Tokaj, *Szamorodni* for example, which may contain from 13 to 17 per cent of alcohol, which is the brand generally sold by foreign wine merchants as genuine *Tokajt Aszú*.

The total area covered by the Tokaj vineyards is about 1,000 acres, though this is only an insignificant part of the whole wine-growing area of Hungary, which amounts to about 400,000 acres.

As regards grapes, the town of *Gyöngyös* in North Hungary exports a few million pounds annually. They have fine skins, and are in great demand all over Europe. However, on account of their fine skins, they are not very weather-proof or transport-proof and cannot be exported to great distances. For winter consumption, they cannot compete with the thick-skinned and well-packed Spanish grapes, which keep fresh three times as long, and are the sovereigns of exported grapes. In Hungary, the Land of Grapes, it is difficult to find one eatable bunch after Christmas, with the exception of those which have been hung up for winter consumption in the form of raisins.

The Hungarian could not exist without *Sacon*, but he need not be afraid of running short of supplies in a country which is capable of exporting a quarter of a million pigs a year.

The majority of the pigs in Hungary belong to the *mangalica* (possibly derived from Mongolian) breed, a thin, weedy sort of creature, with much longer legs than those of the well-fed, fat pigs known in Britain and most

other countries. Only on the great estates are such monsters to be found.

Butchers' shop windows are full of the various kinds of bacon, *paprika* bacon, lard and fat. Hungary is perhaps the only country in Europe in which bacon can be prepared to be eaten raw, and taste delicious. This Hungarian *paprika* bacon and *salami* sausage, which I have already mentioned, would be ideal for Arctic explorers. Apart from *szalonna* (bacon), *zsir* (lard) is the second principal necessity of every simple Hungarian household. Hungarians always use lard for cooking and frying. Butter is utilized for baking cakes.

The exportation of pigs brought the country an income of about 75 million *pengős* in 1929, the last normal year in Hungary. Even in these hard times, when the total exportation has shrunk to one-third of the normal figure, pigs comprise one-tenth of the whole.

*Paprika* is the most indispensable element of a Hungarian household after bacon and lard. It can be sweet and hot, and is used in the preparation of nearly all steaks; but *paprika* chicken and *gulyás* (gooyarsh) are the dishes prepared with *paprika* which are best known abroad. *Paprika* can also be eaten in its green state, when it tastes exceedingly good. The fruit itself — *Capsicum annum* is its Latin name — hails from America, spread to Spain some time in the Middle Ages — hence the name Spanish pepper — and was probably introduced into Hungary by the Turks about A.D. 1500. That is at least one good thing they left behind them! The brilliant acacias, which are such an indispensable and picturesque element of Hungarian landscapes, are also said to have been brought by the Turks.

Meanwhile *paprika* has developed into quite a world commodity. A Hungarian scientist, Professor Szent-Györgyi, of the University of Szeged, has made the important discovery that the fruit is very rich in vitamin C, and has arranged for mass-production of this vitamin from the rich stock of *paprika* grown in his country. Should he succeed Hungary would find herself in a most favourable position, as she is almost the only country in the world whose climate and soil are so suitable for the cultivation of *paprika*.

It would be very difficult to find a way for Hungary to emerge from her present economic chaos. Everybody knows that the injustices of the Trianon peace treaty are mainly responsible for the trouble, but every unbiassed man must also admit that the Peace Treaty alone cannot be blamed for the plight of the Hungarian farmers. The agrarian reform voted by the Government in 1920, has been carried out officially. But what was this "repartition of lands"? The owners of the vast estates were obliged to sell a fraction of their lands to the Government, which divided these between the *vitéz* heroes. But this again was not done impartially. I have already commented on the unequal repartition of land in Hungary, and now I should like to quote a slightly-modified form of a saying from our Tegnér for the benefit of the Magyar Government: "Hungary must be conquered again within the limits of Hungary." The present leader of the Hungarian Government has the power to bring this about, and if only His Excellency Gömbös would realize the great danger that lies in dallying, he might be the man to save his country.

The Magyars are very bad organizers; this fact

cannot be denied. The first step towards reform would be to reorganize production, break the power of the cartels, and above all, *give a little property, or at least a small plot of land to every jar mer*. This would go far in staving off another outbreak of Bolshevism.

There is enough land for everybody. All that is missing is the necessary capital for an " own your own house " or " own your own land " movement. But the Swedes were short of capital too, when they started doing this some forty years ago. Their methods could be applied to Hungary, and the Hungarians would also do well to study the Danes' example. Denmark has bread, butter, bacon and brandy. Hungary has bread, bacon, wine and *paprika*. I even think that Hungarian wine has a decided advantage over Danish brandy. It is true that the Danes have the sea, which probably gives them a wider outlook and a truer conception of the equality of mankind. But the Plain is a sort of sea, and could teach its children that real democracy can thrive without having to sacrifice in exchange the aristocracy of the soul.

## NAGYMAGYARORSZÁG

AT a flower show in Budapest where the most wonderful roses, carnations, and unknown white-petalled beauties were exhibited, the most gorgeous dahlia bore the name *Nagymagyarország* "Great Hungary".

The first and only Hungarian 'plane to fly over the Atlantic from New York to Budapest in record time was called "Justice for Hungary", in Hungarian *Igazságot Magyarországnak!* " These two words can also be seen on the maps of Hungary on school-walls, offices, military barracks, and even in private houses. The map shows pre-War Hungary, with the lost provinces coloured black. A blood-red line marks the present frontiers of the badly mutilated country.

I went to call on a friend one day, and while I was standing on the door-step waiting for someone to answer the bell, I saw a small bronze tablet under the name-plate with this same map of Hungary drawn on it and the inscription,

" *Nem! Nem! Soha!* " (No! No! Never!)

These little reminders can be seen in hundreds of thousands of places. " No, no, never! "

Never will the Hungarians agree to the horrible mutilation of their country, of *Nagymagyarország*, Great Hungary. Justice, *igazság*, must be done, they say, and

if there is such a thing as Divine justice, it will surely come to the aid of the Magyars one day.

Close to the stately Stock Exchange in Budapest, there is a large square with a lovely park in the middle of it. It is called *Szabadság-ter*, Liberty Square, and its soft green lawn and lovely flower-beds are a favourite haunt of the babies of the capital. In the middle of the park, embedded in a granite base, stands a tall flag-staff flying the national colours, red, white and green, hoisted at half-mast in token of the nation's deep sorrow. The flag has been flown thus for the last ten years. The base of the flag-staff is hollow, and contains clods of earth from the lost provinces, whose Magyar inhabitants long for the day of reunion. It also bears a gilt inscription with the words of Mussolini:

*" I trattati di pace non sono eterni! "*

And beside this, the title of Lord Rothermere's famous article:

*" Hungary's Place in the Sun."*

The Liberty Square was originally dedicated to the memory of the martyrs who were executed by the Austrians after the Hungarian Resurrection of 1848. Now it is dedicated to faith in a brighter future, and to the hope that justice will be done. In the northern part of the park in front of the flag-staff, four statues are placed in a semi-circle. Under the names *North, East, South* and *West*, figures representing old Hungarian warriors symbolize the emblems of ancient Hungarian unity. A foreigner once remarked on their appearance and wondered why they were made of simple cement. " Never

mind ", was the answer he received, " they are not meant to stand there to all eternity. The day we hoist the flag on top of the mast — all four statues will be removed! " When Hungary regains her place in the sun, as the English newspaper king put it, and when the Peace Treaties lose their validity, as Mussolini prophesied, Great Hungary will revive. . . .

Is this really possible and do people really believe that it will happen? Will the " justice " for which the Magyar, whatever religion he may profess, has been praying in the " Hungarian Creed " — sung and recited everywhere on every possible occasion for so many years — become a reality? And is it real justice for which they long? Are they united in this, have they strength and patience to wait? Or do they intend to take matters into their own hands as soon as an opportunity offers itself?

All these questions can be answered both in the affirmative and negative. The Magyars answer " Yes ". Their four neighbours, or at least three of them to the north, east and south, answer in the negative. These three states which together form the " Little Entente ", have taken an oath many a time not to give up one inch of the territory they gained from Hungary. And they will certainly not do so as long as there is peace and they manage to cling together.

To a foreigner who tries to be objective and judge according to his own opinion and conscience, the question is not so simple. After a thorough study of the situation and after due reflection, everyone will, of course, form an opinion of his own. As far as I am concerned, I will try to " cut out " the natural sympathy one feels for a country in which one has lived for three years.

Hungary comprised at least half of the Hapsburg dual monarchy, and covered an area of 325,000 square kilometres (about 220,000 square miles). Though somewhat smaller than Sweden, it had three times as many inhabitants. Of these, half (about 10 million) were pure Hungarians, and the rest were composed of a few million Roumanian settlers in Transylvania, Slavs between the Carpathians and the Danube, and about the same number of German colonists scattered about the country. There were, moreover, half a million Ruthenians in the north-east and an equal number of Serbs in the south, with three million Croatians, of the same race and language as the Serbs. According to the census of 1910, the sum total of the population was 21½ millions.

The ethnographical map of pre-War Hungary was consequently somewhat multi-coloured, but even so the country was the Hungarians' country, their millennial property, and all the other peoples were only guests: guests, who had been invited to the country as settlers in the Middle Ages, such as the Serbs who, after the Turkish invasion which drove them towards Hungary, settled there and were allowed to thrive. The hospitable nature of the Magyars proved their misfortune after the World War. All the national minorities were suddenly overcome by an urge for self-expression which could only be satisfied by returning to their own countries. Thus the Serbs and Croatians longed for Serbia. But, contrary to custom, in return for the hospitality shown to them, they took with them the lands of their host.

As for the Czechs who enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army, they rendered many a service to the Powers of the Entente by desertion and spying during the War. When

at last, after so many centuries, they were given a chance of reviving their old " Bohemian Empire ", they sent a petition to the victorious Entente powers to be allowed to absorb the Slovaks who lived in Northern Hungary. Paris, of course, answered in the affirmative. And the Slovaks, who had always loved their Hungarian hosts, and who had made a living by working on the vast Hungarian estates during the summer months, were not asked whether they would prefer to join Hungary rather than Bohemia. The richest gold and silver mines and the most wonderful Hungarian mountain scenery in the north, went to the Czechs, not to mention the finest Hungarian towns with a total Hungarian population amounting to at least half a million. The new Czech state was called Czechoslovakia, and the most curious thing of all is that it contains an even greater jumble of national minorities than did pre-War Hungary.

Again 60,000 square kilometres (about 40,000 square miles) of territory has been allotted to Serbia in the south, with a number of pure Hungarian towns and more than half a million thoroughbred Magyars, who have become separated from their country in this way. The worst damage of all, however, occurred in beautiful Transylvania, that wonderful mountainous country which belonged to the Hungarian princes in the fourteenth century, and one of the richest parts of pre-War Hungary. Not only the whole of Transylvania, but a considerable portion of the middle Hungarian counties, covering an area of 100,000 square kilometres (62,100 square miles), have been allotted to the Roumanians, who, shortly after the outbreak of the War, took up arms against their own allies, the Hungarians; 62,100 square miles of territory

rich in gold, silver, oil wells, collieries, and gigantic mountain forests, is really not a bad booty for the one-time Roumanian minority in Transylvania, which consisted chiefly of sandal-shod peasant farmers and mountain shepherds. And at this juncture we must not forget, as the gentlemen sitting round the baize-topped tables of the Peace Conferences did, that it is deep down in the south, in this very Transylvania, that one of the most ancient and purest Hungarian tribes, the *Székely* (Szeklers, Siculians), live, and has lived for a thousand years, before there was any trace of the Roumanian " guests ". There is also a large colony of Saxons in Transylvania who, together with two or three million thoroughbred Hungarians, are now under Roumanian rule.

It is undoubtedly the irony of fate that this peace, whose aim was the defence of the people's rights, has torn asunder a perfect geographical and economic unity, to create from it three unities, we might as well say " disunities ", with just as many national minorities. It is another irony of fate, that even the " good old comrades " of the Magyars, their one-time allies, the Austrians, got a strip of land from them, which is now called *Burgenland*. As this territory is alongside the Austrian border, it is only natural that the majority of its inhabitants were Austrian settlers. So the guests and comrades again took away a plot. This was the only territory in which the population of a town was asked to which nation it wished to belong, and, although the inhabitants of this Hungarian town of Sopron comprised a German-speaking majority, they quite unexpectedly voted for Hungary.

How the new frontiers were drawn is another story. Admittedly it was no easy task. But even so, monstrosities

which are unique in the history of Europe were created by the drawing of these border lines. The new and reinforced Little Entente states quite naturally forced their own *strategic* point of view on the Entente committee, to the detriment of badly dismembered Hungary. The old Austro-Hungarian network of railways was clipped all the way round by the new frontiers, which have created such anomalies that hundreds of thousands of pure Hungarians have been " cut out " at many places along the frontiers. In this way the purest Hungarian towns such as Temesvár, Arad, Nagy-Várad and Szatámr in the east, Kassa and Pozsony in the north, and Szabadka in the south were taken away from Hungary. And all these towns are of historical importance and sacred to all Hungarians.

To quote a few examples of the greatest monstrosities created by this " frontier-correction", it frequently happened that farms were cut asunder by the new border line, so that the rooms of the house were in one country, while the courtyard — and the well — were in another, or that the village church now belongs to one country and the school to another. Rivers were also divided in such a way that it became completely impossible for the dams to be supervised by the various countries whose crops depended on proper irrigation, not to mention a rivulet one could easily wade across and which was declared to be a " frontier river ".

Hungary has lost everything but its plain. All its forests, mines and waters, which are such an indispensable element of the industrial life of the country, now belong to the Little Entente. Apart from the fact that their means of livelihood was taken from many Hungarians

in this way, hundreds of thousands also flocked back to dismembered Hungary and created tremendous unemployment.

Fate, however, has shown herself ironical even in this case. Neither the Slovaks, who now form a part of Czechoslovakia, nor the Croatians, who belong to Serbia, are satisfied, and have already begun to quarrel among themselves. Nor does Roumania, with its disunited Ministers and bad currency, seem to have profited much by the acquisition of Transylvania, which is so full of riches. In view of the above-mentioned data, we are now in a position to understand the revisionist tendencies of the Hungarians. The question of what moral and material justification they possess naturally arises. We shall probably be able to imagine the Hungarian point of view more easily if we think for a moment what the English would feel like if they were deprived of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and East Anglia.

The majority of well-educated Hungarians who are interested in politics, as well as the landowners, farmers and peasants, would answer as follows: " We want to regain the whole of pre-War Hungary, with the exception, perhaps, of the land of the Croatians in the south, if they do not care to be rejoined to us. But, above all, we want to get back Transylvania with our own Szeklers, and the northern part of our country as far as the Carpathians, so that our land should be bordered by Poland as it was in the past. We also want free access to the sea, to the port of Fiume, which we formerly built at enormous cost " But they do not readily express this last wish — *n en parier jamais', y penser toujours* — for they do not want to offend Italy, which now holds Fiume. But in their

heart of hearts they are convinced that Mussolini will find some way of *giving* it back to his friends the Hungarians when the time is ripe.

There are two minorities in Hungary holding opposite views on this question. The Democrats, who are of the opinion that quarrels with their neighbours must be avoided, would be prepared to accept some slight correction of the present frontiers; the others are in favour of a South European United States, which was also Briand's cherished plan. The latter, however, implies a close *rapprochement* with Austria, and this, natural as it may seem, is impracticable for the time being.

After commenting on the desires of the Magyar nation, I may perhaps say a few words about the possible realization of them.

Hardly a man in the country would think of a war of revenge, though lunatics exist in every nation. But can a war break out of its own accord? There are people in Europe who maintain that this can happen — Russia against Roumania, Germany against Poland or France, Italy against France or Yugoslavia, etc. There is no doubt that a war of this kind is also the dream of some Hungarians, and it is equally certain, apart from the military restrictions imposed upon the country, that Hungary, like Germany, could defend her own interests or even take up the cudgels herself in case of necessity.

Most Magyars, however, trust in a natural victory of justice. " Our country has survived for the last thousand years ", a famous Hungarian journalist and senator said to me, " It will never perish, and we can afford to wait.

We are in no hurry, and do not want to do anything foolish. Time is working for us. The unnatural ' State-formations, surrounding us, cannot possibly prosper for long in their present circumstances. They are doomed to collapse one by one. And when the crop is ripe, we shall reap it."

It is an obvious corollary of the above facts that every symptom of disunion in the neighbouring countries is carefully recorded in Hungary. There is also a vast mutual system of spying, with very strict frontier control. The latter, of course, does not emanate from Hungary, which, under existing circumstances, has nothing worse to fear, but is directed against her. It is exceedingly difficult for her newspapers to circulate beyond the frontiers. Any Hungarian periodical which may happen to remain in the pocket of the unsuspecting traveller is confiscated and torn to pieces at the frontier.

Meanwhile people in Hungary are working hard to enlighten the great Powers on the subject of the injustices which have been committed against their country. Their thoughts are chiefly directed towards England, (for, apart from their old friend Lord Rothermere, they have many sympathizers in Parliament) and towards Italy, where their great well-wisher Mussolini reigns supreme. English or Italian visitors are always received with tremendous enthusiasm in the Hungarian capital.

Quite recently there was a noticeable *rapprochement* between Hungary and France, which Hungarians previously hated as the great patron of the Little Entente. But the changed attitude of the rising French generation

has not escaped the notice of the leading men in Hungary. They learnt that the tendencies of the revisionist movement had created a stir in French circles, and for this reason their revisionist propaganda is now directed particularly towards France. And they are quite right at the moment in turning their campaign of enlightenment in that direction, for, as a talented young Frenchman said last year when delivering a lecture in Budapest:

" All that the average individual, including many educated people, in France know about ' Trianon ' is that it is a palace outside Paris dating from the time of Marie Antoinette which is now a splendid place for excursions." In these days Hungary's cause is very much to the fore in every country, and this can be attributed to the fact that the great peoples in Europe are beginning to realize the plight of the Central European States as well as the fact that no real peace can be built up on the ruins of nations.

Whither will Trianon-Hungary, as a State, steer its course?

I have already commented on the Bethlen period, and that which followed it, which could be characterized by the attempt to " keep one's head above water ". Where is the present Government heading? Can one lift the veil of the future? It is dangerous to prophesy, so let us restrict ourselves to actual fact.

Hungary is at present a kingdom without a king. Since the winter of 1921, Admiral Horthy, the Regent, has resided in the Royal Palace. He is highly respected and very popular with the people. He is an old sea-faring



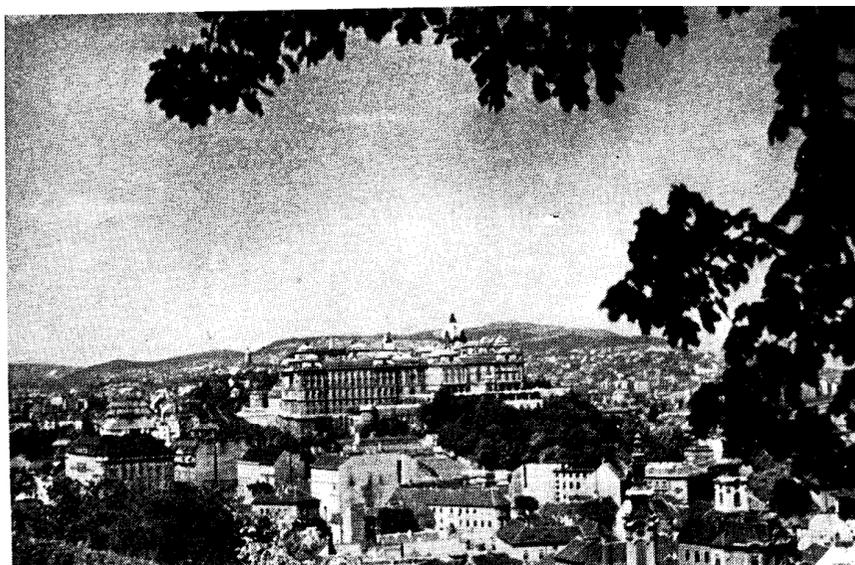
THE REGENT, ADMIRAL NICOLAS  
HORTHY DE NAGYBÁNYA



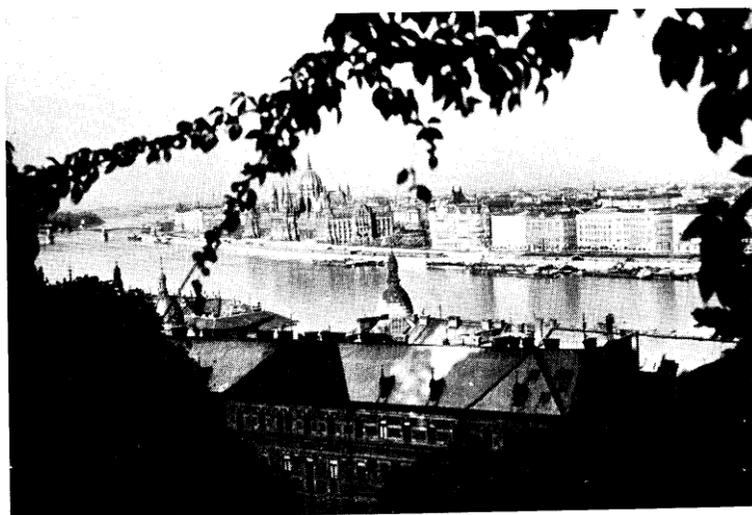
WILL HE EVER BECOME OTTO II,  
APOSTOLIC KING OF HUNGARY?



THE PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL  
JULIUS GÖMBÖS DE JÁFKA



THE ROYAL CASTLE AND THE HILLS OF BUDA



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT FROM BUDA

man, who " did his bit " during the War in the most brilliant fashion. The memory of his exploit in the Strait of Otranto at Christmas, 1916, when he was encircled by the enemy in the Bay of Cattaro and, with his little squadron, succeeded in sinking about thirty mixed French, English and Italian men-of-war of twice his own strength, still lives on. He himself was wounded and hurled overboard from the conning-tower of his flagship, but he was rescued by his men, and returned victorious. From Commodore he was raised to the rank of Admiral, and the following year became Commander-in-Chief of the whole Austro-Hungarian fleet — the first Hungarian to obtain this distinction.

And the last Hungarian as well. For the great dissolution soon came, followed by the mutiny of the sailors during the Communist outbreak, and Horthy had to return to Vienna. When the counter-revolution was organized in Szeged, he produced a whole army out of thin air, like a Hungarian Mannerheim. Immediately after the withdrawal of the Roumanians in 1919, Horthy re-established order in Budapest, and succeeded in driving back the Communists to the line of demarcation.

When Karl, King and Emperor, abdicated and fled, and the reorganization of the country after the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks began, there was no legitimate Regent to assume the power. Stefan Friedrich, who took the law into his own hands with a riding whip and a band of officers, did not succeed in solving the problem of how the country was to be governed.

It was his successor, Károly Huszár, once a school teacher and now director of the State Insurance Society, who succeeded in assembling a national Diet. Although

the monarchical form of government was chosen on this occasion, two questions still remained unsolved, namely whether the young Archduke Otto, the legitimate pretender to the throne should succeed, or whether an election should be held. The question was postponed indefinitely, and Admiral Horthy, who had won the respect of the whole country by his exploits, was named Regent. He assumed the power in 1920, and since that time has lived in the left wing of the Royal Palace, which faces Buda. He fulfills all the functions of a king, and only lacks the title. One wonders whether the most obvious solution of the problem would not be to confer the title upon him. But even if the nation wished it, all its efforts would be in vain, for the Regent himself would not hear of such a thing. He is only a regent and nothing more, and his beautiful silver-haired wife, who holds no official position in the State, though she could wear a queen's crown with consummate grace, is only called " Nagybányai Horthy Miklósné Ófőméltósága ", Her Excellency Nicolas Horthy de Nagybanya. She is considered to be the first lady of the land, and divides her time between charitable works and her beloved flowers.

I have met many heads of states, but I feel sure that a more gracious and amiable " princely pair " could not be found in all the Seven Kingdoms. If Hungary should happen to be a republic, Nicolas Horthy would undoubtedly be its president. He is mighty, clever and honourable, of stately appearance, and possessed of a wide and all-embracing knowledge. His handshake (a point of great importance) is that of a man, or rather a sailor. Moreover he has that godly gift, which some Briton said was fatally lacking in Mr. Gladstone's days — much to

Britain's great misfortune — humour. His steely grey eyes have that same attraction with which the Germans credited Bismarck and called *pupillarische Stärke*.

But Horthy will never be a king. Who then will be, everybody asks? Young Archduke Otto, who came of age years ago? This is the wish of the Royalists, who are particularly strong in Transdanubia. No, we want Archduke Joseph Franz, or Albrecht, says another group who swear by the free election of kings. We want a republic, say the Social Democrats, but they only say it within four walls, since it would be treason to express such an opinion. The question is not urgent, say intelligent and thinking people; for the time being we can put up with the present situation, as the question of royal rule would only complicate our already difficult position.

And this is the truth of the matter. For however the question might be solved, particularly if a king were chosen, grave difficulties with the neighbouring states would ensue. " When the crop is ripe ", says the Hungarians, " but not before ". Meanwhile young Otto may sojourn with his mother in his little castle in Belgium, and receive the telegrams and visits of homage of his fervent supporters. And when the question does become topical, most of the Magyars, even those who are not convinced Royalists, believe that " the Kingdom without a King " will then have King Otto I of the House of Hapsburg. *Qui vivra verra*.

The present policy of the Government, whatever one may think of it, is in sure hands and is not vindictive. Hungary's relations with its neighbours could hardly be described as hearty. (A Magyar once said to me: Czechs we hate, Roumanians we despise; for the Serbs

we have at least some respect as they were brave soldiers during the War, but we would really like to see them get it in the neck.") But if not cordial, their relations are at least gentlemanly. If these states approach Hungary in a reasonable manner, they always find a ready hearing, but usually they do just the opposite, for the Little Entente seems determined to oppress the Magyar minorities.

There has been much talk in the past of a potential Danubian Federation. Actually there is little reason to believe that the present Hungarian government is very much interested in this question. It seeks rather to form links between its country and the great powers, first Italy, then England, France and Germany. A *rap-prochement* with Austria, which is now in a state of dissolution, would perhaps have been more suitable some time ago than it could be at the present moment. Any further developments in this matter will depend chiefly on what course the Austrian government chooses to follow. If the *Anschluss* should really come to pass — and we might almost say that things are heading in that direction — Hungary would find herself in a new position which she could turn to her advantage for the realization of her " Greater Hungary " hopes. But should the opposite come about, the obvious course for the heads of State of the two one-time Danube monarchies to follow would be collaboration on a close political and economic basis. This would probably entail the intimate support of Italy over a certain period. And after this? Possibly Bethlen and the present Premier, General Gömbös, regard this collaboration as the first step towards something further — but what? They may know perfectly well, but on the other hand, they may not.

At this juncture allow me to quote a most interesting article which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of October 8th, 1934, and which, mysterious as it may appear, cast a true light on European politics for those who can read between the lines. It runs as follows:

" A remarkable exchange of telegrams between Signor Mussolini and General Gömbös, the Hungarian Premier, took place yesterday.

" In his speech at Milan on Saturday, Signor Mussolini, outlining Italian foreign policy, made the following statement:

*" If a real peace is possible', accompanied by justice', Italians will put olive branches in their guns, but otherwise their bayonets will be decorated with the laurel and oak-leaf of victory.*<sup>9</sup>

" Yesterday, states a Reuter message from Budapest, General Gömbös received the following telegram from Signor Mussolini:

*" It is my wish to inform you, at the end of my speech, while I was talking of peace, and the justice that should accompany it, I thought of and alluded to Hungary?*

" General Gömbös sent the following telegram to the Duce:

*" I am grateful your your telegram" "*

I, for my part, am of the opinion that the realization of the Hungarians' *Nagy-Magyar or szag* depends primarily on the outcome of the Austrian question. It would be useless to discuss here by which of the two methods Hungary could best attain her dreams. One thing, however, can be stated without fear of contradiction, and

that is that the *present* state of affairs in Hungary is intolerable. Politically, it may continue for some time to come. But if all the Danube States keep on heading for utter economic ruin in the way they are, the crash is bound to come. " And then our harvest time will be at hand ", say the Magyars while reciting their *Creed* about the resurrection of Hungary.

## THE QUEEN OF THE DANUBE

IT is spring, spring in February, and the golden sunlight pours in through my window which faces the Danube embankment. I have just bought the earliest snowdrops of the year, *hóvirág*, and a bunch of violets, *ibolya*. The weather is quite warm, and the numerous cafes are already making arrangements to put their chairs and tables out on the pavements. Lilacs are already in bud in the little grove in front of the *Vigadó*, the Budapest Redoute.

Spring has announced itself. The last ice-blocks floated down the Danube, the blue Danube — which as a matter of fact is not blue but yellowish brown — long ago. To-day the river's surface is as smooth as a mirror with silvery and black patches. Towards evening it will take on a deep blue, lilac or pink hue, and the dark mass of the *Gellért* mountain, soon to be covered with tender spring green, will be mirrored in the water. The citadel on top of the mountain is reminiscent of the sanguinary days of the past, when the Austrian garrison, at the time of the War of Liberty, was besieged by the brave Hungarian soldiers. In summer its ancient bastions are illuminated by flood-lights, and it looks just like a fairy castle.

It is strange to live in the very heart of a capital with a million inhabitants and only to see sky, water and

mountains from one's window. I do not know whether this is possible in any city but the Queen of the Danube. The peace and silence of the country reign in this quarter. The noise of the buses, trams and lorries in the streets only reaches one's ears like the distant droning of a bee.

It is very pleasant to live alone, far from people. One does not get unexpected visitors either, for most Hungarians — unless they are very intimate friends — do not invite each other to meet in their houses, but prefer to choose some café. I may have an appointment at the *Café Moderne* on Tuesday at 8 p.m., or, on Friday, in the *Belvárosi*, the *New York*, the *Ostende*, or one of the other innumerable and sumptuously fitted Budapest cafes, where, to the discreet music of the Cigány band, we can discuss business or private affairs, while sipping the delicious black coffee, or coffee with cream, called *kapuciner*.

I am not disturbed by the telephone either — whoever has a private telephone in this city, unless he is very wealthy or unless he is forced to have one for official use? The streets are full of public call boxes. The Queen of the Danube offers quiet and peace to all who want to bury themselves in her bosom and be far away from the hubbub of the outside world.

Long, broad streets, and roads not too busy with traffic. Airy, open squares, huge parks, fine plane trees and chestnut alleys. Both the long Danube embankments are bordered by asphalt promenades planted with old chestnut trees, whose big bunches of white flowers transform these marvellous alleys into a flowery pageant in May and June. As yet they are bare and empty, but in a few weeks' time the big almond tree in front of the Foreign Office will be clothed in beauty like a bride in

her white veil. I shall have to pay her a visit on March 15th, when spring makes her official entry into Hungary simultaneously with the foremost national holiday, in commemoration of the War of Liberty in 1848. All the town will then be hung with the red-white-green Magyar tricolour.

As a rule, official, religious and historical ceremonies, as well as diplomatic receptions and conferences, take place in the residential quarter high up on the mountain-side. The Royal Palace is up there too, where Regent Horthy lives awaiting the time when some king shall again drive in with his suite. But nobody can foretell the day and hour of that event. The Government buildings are also there — including the War Office and the War Museum — as well as the Coronation church and the Archduke Joseph's Palace. Hemming these in are all the old residential houses besides the other private houses which the German settlers built about 1700. This is the centre of Buda, and Buda is a different town from Pest.

For centuries this part of the town was not connected with Pest across the Danube. Then Count Stephen Széchenyi had the fine suspension bridge built, which is even now one of the stateliest bridges in the world. The other two bridges, the *Ferenc József* and the *Erzsébet* (Elizabeth), are also impressive. They are called after the late lamented Emperor Franz Josef and his wife, who was assassinated. The *Mar git-hid* (Margaret Bridge) joins the two banks of the Danube to the lovely Margaret Island. Including railway bridges, there are half a dozen connections between Buda and Pest.

The combined cities which are now never referred to otherwise than Budapest have 1,200,000 inhabitants.

Pest-side teems with business life, traffic, offices, big banks, hotels, railway stations, parks, promenades, museums, theatres, cafes and places of amusement. Here lie the imposing Houses of Parliament, a magnificent building in neo-Gothic style, the finest and stateliest in the whole of Europe; here also are the academies, universities, clinics, churches, the famous Zoological Gardens, the sports grounds and the *Városliget*, the City Park, containing the millenarian monument with its wide alleys. Pest also has its slums, but they lie rather outside the city.

This, then, is Pest, but what is Buda? Buda is an agglomeration of three or four small towns or districts. It spreads out like an extension of Pest beyond the Ferenc József Bridge and the Gellért Mountain. Far to the north lies O-Buda, Old Buda, while to the west the beech-covered ridge of the Buda Mountains overlooks the Danube at a height varying from 600 to 1000 feet. There is a funicular railway up to the Svábhegy, where are many restaurants and a wonderful view of the capital spread out below. But the loveliest sight of all can be obtained at the top of the look-out of the János-hegy. From here are seen the hills and valleys surrounding the city which add so much to its attractiveness. One should also go up to the top of Gellért Mountain, on the Buda side of the capital, and look down on the thousands of lights mirrored in the Danube. The Queen of the Danube is never disappointing.

The greatest charm of Buda lies in the fact of its being built on the slopes of the hill, and once one is up there, one seems to forget all about busy Pest down below. As though one was on the top deck of some gigantic aeroplane of the future, one seems to be hovering in mid-air,

while the silver ribbon of the Danube and housetops of Pest lie deep down below in peaceful sleep. . . . It is the very essence of romance to roam about the narrow streets of Buda, or to stand on the main square and watch the changing of the Guard.

Summer in Budapest. Corpus Christi Day, on which the greatest Catholic procession is held. The capital has already donned its summer garb; chestnuts, acacias and lilacs are all abloom in the parks. The nightingales sing all the night through in Buda and on Margaret Island, which is a real flower show with its entrancing groves and flower-beds. Purple and white lilacs, tamarisks and arm-thick rose trees with blooms varying in colour from white to deepest purple, grow in this little paradise.

The capital is not only full of flowers, but of delicious fruits as well. The markets alongside the embankments are laden with strawberries and cherries, golden apricots, gorgeous plums of all sorts, and melons in a whole variety of colours, all offered at ridiculously low prices.

But August 20th is *the* great festival of the capital. It is St. Stephen's Day, and the festivities connected with it last for a whole week. Hundreds of thousands of visitors from country districts as well as from abroad flock to Budapest to see the show. Masses are celebrated in every church, particularly in the Basilica, from which the picturesque procession emerges and proceeds slowly along the *Andrássy-út*, the Champs-Elysees of Budapest, towards the Millenarian Monument. The procession is headed by police, wearing tall steel helmets and gorgeous hussar dolmans, mounted on black steeds with scarlet horse-cloths. In the wake of the mounted police comes the priesthood, hundreds of priests dressed in motley-coloured

tunics; prelates in black with purple waist-bands, and the higher dignitaries of the Church with purple and red girdles. There parades the Prince Primate, once a poor cooper's apprentice, now the greatest ecclesiastical authority under the Pope. After him comes the Papal Nuncio, the representative of the Vatican. They wear ermine-bordered scarlet capes, with trains borne by pages.

The mummified hand of King St. Stephen, the most sacred relic of the Hungarians after the Holy Crown, is carried in a glass case underneath a velvet canopy, and is accompanied by the Crown Guards clad in scarlet capes, green tights and yellow top-boots. They also wear glittering silver helmets and carry long halberds. Then come the Archdukes, Counts, and Barons, all dressed in their medieval knights' costumes. In the midst of all this glittering pomp, the Regent wears his Austro-Hungarian admiral's uniform, according to his custom. The rear of the procession is brought up by more mounted police and members of the population drawn from all strata of society, who take part in the proceedings.

I succeeded in joining up with a group of black-coated gentlemen immediately behind the Regent's Guards. They looked at me very suspiciously at first, but soon forgot all about me in the sudden belief that I was a plain-clothes detective. I cannot help remembering the experience I had in the village where the Regent's summer residence stands, when we were told to dismount and submitted to a rigorous police examination! But that is by the way and I have already dwelt on the incident with a humorous relish. Here I merely join up with the procession and am only a few yards away from him. When I mentioned both these little incidents to the Regent later,

he answered with an amused expression in his grey eyes: " Yes, these things do happen. But still, you never can tell. ..."

Amidst cries of "*Eljen!*" the crowd forming the endless procession breaks up when it reaches the Millenarian Monument, in front of which stands the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The same evening (it was in 1930, when St. Stephen's Day coincided with the 900th centenary of Prince Imre, the saintly son of St. Stephen who died very young, and the festivities were unusually brilliant) I happened to approach the suspension bridge with the idea of crossing over to Buda. A crowd had already gathered and the police formed a cordon to prevent anybody from walking over the bridge. Again I noticed the courtesy of the Budapest police. A little old peasant woman wanted to cross, when a kind-hearted bobby smiled at her and led her gently to a safe place among the crowd. I went up to him and showed my police-card, but another constable smiled at me and gently explained that my journalist's pass was not valid on that occasion.

Yes, but why? I looked down at the river and understood. A wonderfully illuminated steamer was just passing under the bridge. It was like a fairy boat, lit with multi-coloured electric lamps, and before the mast, was fixed a model of St. Stephen's Crown lit by moving lights. It was an excursion boat filled with dignitaries of the Church, and the bridge was guarded to prevent anything from being thrown on to them from above. I have noticed on several occasions that the police are very attentive and take such precautions as sometimes seem ridiculous.

The citadel on the Gellért Mountain, the Fishers' Bastion with its fairy-like white walls and the Coronation Church, are lit from below by flood-lights. At 11 p.m. the entire population flocks to the Gellért Mountain, when the starry heavens above them are used as a back-cloth for a thrilling firework display.

Many say that St. Stephen's Day makes the greatest impression of any day on visitors to Budapest. I venture to maintain, however, that the Queen of the Danube is charming at any season. Spring arrives in the middle of March, and summer lasts until November. During the greater part of the intervening months one can bathe either in the Danube, on whose banks aquatic sports are much practised in summer, or in one of the many sumptuous open-air baths of the city. The Széchenyi open-air swimming pool in the City Park is a tremendous establishment, and there are scores of others like it, even if they are not as luxuriously fitted. Then there is the " artificial wave bath " at the Gellért Mountain, near the Gellért Hotel. It is surrounded by the loveliest gardens, planned in the form of an amphitheatre, and was the first bath of its kind in Europe. The artificial waves afford one the sensation of real surf bathing.

And then there are the innumerable hot and medicinal springs (between 58<sup>0</sup> and 103<sup>0</sup> Fahrenheit), which are so ancient that the Turks themselves exploited them. That is why the most perfect Turkish baths in the world are to be found in Budapest — real Turkish baths, luxuriously fitted, containing not only hot-air rooms and douches, but huge hot-water pools just as in the days of the Romans and Turks. Thermal sulphur baths and hydropathic establishments also abound. The city is a very Mecca of watering-

places! And there are luxurious hotels in the neighbourhood of every bath.

Budapest is a city of almost matchless charm and beauty and rejoices in a situation which is unrivalled in Europe. It is not, however, generally known that *Budapest is the greatest spa in the world*. It boasts of more than *eighty springs, nine thermal bathing establishments, one sulphate of magnesia water bath, and more than two hundred aperient water springs*. The immediate surroundings of the capital are veritable health resorts. Visitors, while seeking restoration of health, can, without effort or fatigue, find entertainment and diversion and enjoy the amenities of a big modern city. The various bath establishments are most conveniently situated in the different parts of the city and the patient in need of rest is assured of absolute quiet.

In addition to these establishments, there are excellent clinics and sanatoria. There is not another health resort in the world where such a body of famous medical men is to be found.

But Budapest is also the centre of Hungarian culture and science. Music and the arts have reached a high standard here. Cigány melodies filter out into the night from every café. Not only can one choose from among the greatest variety of curative baths under medical supervision, but also one can find recreation and amusement at every street-corner of this wonderful capital. And the winter offers just as many attractions as the summer. There are skating, tobogganing and skiing in the Buda Mountains.

Since nearly all the statements to be found in this book are based on fact and on my personal experience, let me

say that I have spent sufficient winters and summers in Budapest to be able to speak with authority. And since I started the book with a personal memory of my arrival in this city as a youth some forty years ago, let me close it with another recollection.

After an intermezzo in Death's waiting-room, I open my eyes. My Best Beloved is sitting by my bedside, holding my hand.

" It is the ninth day ", she says, " the crisis is over and you will recover! "

And her eyes are gleaming with joy.

I look around the room languidly. Yes, this is, or has been, the antechamber of Death. White bed-linen, pale, bearded faces in the beds. What do I myself look like I wonder. Where am I, and where have I been? On huge, rolling seas I was swept on and on towards the north until I arrived in a strange city, where I lived through curious adventures. Was it Sörmland or Stockholm?

My first conscious memories of the world which has again been revealed to me are a blur of white-robed doctors and nurses, who bustle round my bed giving me pills and sticking thermometers under my arm.

And now it is the ninth day, and I hear my darling whispering in my ear that I shall recover, while her hands stroke mine. And I know myself that I shall be well again.

The sunshine pours in through the big windows, and when they are thrown open I hear the birds twittering in the hospital grounds. On a little table stands a bunch of violets. A young man comes up to me and holds out his hand.

" *A viszontlátásra!* " " So long! " — he says to me and

to the other invalids, and reels out into the next room which is flooded with sunshine. Yes, the sun shines, and the birds are singing in the park out there in the wonderful life which has been given back to him. He is followed by twelve pairs of eyes from twelve beds as he passes through the glass swing-doors. And as he walks out into life again, I suddenly remember the words I gasped in my agony, while my beloved mopped my brow with her handkerchief:

" Leave me . . . let me die. I have seen Paradise! And you cannot imagine how wonderful it is! . . ."

I was nearer death's door than any of the other patients in the ward.

And now I, too, may return to life.

The days pass and it is spring again. The sun shining in through the open windows is much warmer than it was. My two doctors come and feel my pulse. Dr. Faust is the name of one of them. Dr. Wagner the other. They smile at me and say that I may be allowed to get up. Like a little child I shuffle a few steps, clutching the backs of chairs and the edges of beds, but soon sink back exhausted on to my bed again. But my steps grow firmer day by day.

Soon I can cover the area of the room many times. Ten, twenty, a hundred times! Friends come to visit me, I am allowed to play chess and to talk as much as I like. Every day, at four o'clock sharp, a motor-car draws up to the gate, and my Best Beloved comes up to meet the good fairy who watched over her while *she* watched over me. She is the nicest, loveliest, cleverest and best of all the Hungarian women I ever met. " The Baroness is com-

ing ", the two patients on either side of my bed warn me. One is a member of the Foreign Legion, who will never walk again, and for whom she managed to wring a life-pension from the French State; the other is an old War victim, suffering from a liver complaint, of whose miserable circumstances she reminded the Ministry of Pensions. And now the beautiful smile which is the special property of this people appears on the faces of all the patients in the ward.

Surrounded by love and kindness the stranded Swede slowly recovers. He learns to know another, most secret, aspect of the Hungarian soul. And he realizes that the " saddle-perspective " which he chose in order to be able to penetrate into the heart of this land and its people may have given him a wide vision, but the true insight which he sought was supplied by the " hospital perspective ". And he thanks Fate for having given him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the warmest hospitality on earth.

The day comes when the muscles regain their old strength and the body its erect carriage. The way to life lies ahead. The sunshine floods in through the big windows, and now it is he who goes from bed to bed and shakes hands with his old fellow-sufferers.

" *A viszontlátásra!* " he says to the soldier of the Foreign Legion, to the war invalid, to Dr. Faust and Dr. Wagner, to Sister Mary in the white robe, and to everybody. And now it is he who is followed by the anxious glances of eleven pairs of eyes as he walks out through the glass door with a firm step. He is no longer in the ante-chamber of Death, but in that of Life. The brakes of the motor-car downstairs squeak for the forty-second and last

time, and Ibolyka, most skilful woman driver and rider of the Danube capital, hurries upstairs to take him and his wife to their new home on the Danube Quay. And now he seems to hear the same melody of the great Swedish bard which he heard during his feverish dreams in the antechamber of Death.

Don Quixote sees the old Bacchus-priest swinging his thyrsus staff and chanting the hymn:

"Life! Thou wonderful, rich and blessed word. . . ."  
And he walks out to meet the Queen of the Danube.

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