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Hungarian Heritage



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Hungarian Heritage (HU ISSN 1585–9924) presents an overall picture of the traditional culture of Hungary and the Hungarian folklore revival. It features original articles on folk literature, folk music, and folk dance (with special focus on the Hungarian *táncház* movement), and also deals with folk mythology, rituals, customs and games, and traditional arts, crafts, and architecture. Book reviews, and a critical look at some topical exhibitions, films, videos and sound recordings form a part of every issue, as do reports on the late folk dance and music festivals, folk dance and music camps and folk craft fairs. The journal also provides practical and up-to-date information on coming events (festivals, fairs, exhibitions, etc.), and new audio releases.

Hungarian Heritage covers the traditional culture of Magyars living within and outside the borders of present-day Hungary, as well as the culture of Hungary's non-Magyar ethnic minorities.

The table of contents for each issue, along with abstracts of the articles and examples of the music discussed, can be seen on the Internet at **www.folkline.hu**.

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Hungarian Heritage

19th-Century Hungary in the Western Eye

Volume 9

2008

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Editor's Preface

Hungarian as the Other Hungaria in/et Europa

It is always interesting to see ourselves through the eyes of other nations and other cultures. The gaze of the other always spies things that we ourselves, immersed in our own culture, are unable to discern. Who is the "Hungarian," as others might characterize him? In this edition of *Hungarian Heritage* we resolved to use a few revealing excerpts from less broadly familiar accounts by travelers through the region to see ourselves as we appear in the mirror of descriptions by foreign wayfarers.

We choose texts from among the writings of more than a dozen authors, among them English, Irish, and Scottish, in which the voyagers recount their adventures and impressions as they voyaged across the landscapes and through the townships and cities of 19th century Hungary. There were those who traveled down the Danube by boat (W. Beattie), while others went by coach or even on foot (N. Burton). Some offer descriptions of the upper levels of society at the time, because it was primarily with members of these classes that they met (for example the account by J. Paget entitled *Hungary and Transylvania*), while others write instead of the lives of the lower social strata, the world of shepherds and tradesmen.

Naturally in the rush of travel a foreigner can capture only a snapshot of another nation or folk. In our case, this other is the Hungarian. And naturally these writings are not free of stereotypes and oversimplifications. One such oft recurring

motif is mention of the *puszta*, or plainland, as a characteristic landscape in Hungary. Among the stereotypes the authors often mention Hungarian hospitality, fine food (with Hungarian paprika), and fine wines (R. B. Mansfield), including *aszú*, the famous sweet white wine of the Tokaj region. Naturally they also make mention of the baths and the beauty of the women (in whose countenances they contend to discern decidedly eastern lineaments). Among the various ethnic groups they mention the Roma the most frequently, and of the occupations they write most often of the dashing hussars (Ch. L. Brace) and the dangerous highwaymen, including Jóska Sobri, who is referred to by name as the Hungarian Robin Hood.

One of the female authors (there are two in the collection) writes of the National Museum, at the time recently founded and constructed (Julia Pardoe). Several of the wayfarers note the peculiar nature of the Hungarian language and observe how distinctive it is from other European languages (Ch. L. Brace, M. J. Quin), as well as mentioning how members of the nobility use Latin in their homes, which in the 19th century was still taught in grammar schools.

The authors frequently make mention of historical figures as well in their accounts (such as Attila the Hun, King Mátyás, and the Ottoman Turks). Several of them note in this context the love of freedom among the Hungarians, their national pride, and their yearning for independence. They observe that the love of homeland is a strong sentiment indeed, one that should be understood as

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

patriotism rather than chauvinism. In most cases these descriptions are an apt tool with which to contest cultural prejudice.

Margareth Mackey and John Shaw were of great assistance to me in the initial collection of materials in Edinburgh. I had the pleasure of enjoying their hospitality while I searched the fine library there for the writings of these wayfarers.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to our two guest editors, Béla Mázi and Gábor Tóth, without whom this volume could never have come into being. Their profound erudition greatly enriched the selection. I also thank them for the selection of illustrations, which gives a general picture of the

cities and townships of 19th century Hungary and the raiment and garb of the times.

One could compile another volume comprised of the jottings of the earliest travelers through Hungary, say those of the 16th and 17th centuries, and indeed the reminiscences and accounts of visitors to the region in the 20th century would no doubt offer ample material for yet another volume. Perhaps in the coming years we will devote one or perhaps more editions of *Hungarian Heritage* to these writings, for it remains our goal to familiarize as wide a public as possible with the historical roots of Hungarian intangible cultural heritage, and the accounts of foreign travelers to the region are eminently suited to this aim.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Puest Editor's Note

The main principle of selection was to help the contemporary reader gather some basic impressions about the interests of those venturing to come to Hungary in a period of political and social turmoil. We tried to do our best to cover as many aspects of 19th century Hungarian life as possible. Although an effort has been made to avoid overlappings and repetitions, some of these were included deliberately with the intention of providing the reader with some examples of how different people saw the same facets of everyday life in Hungary.

The overwhelming majority of the accounts were penned by subjects of the British crown, with one text by an American citizen and another one by the German author of a book popular at the time. We decided to publish the texts without making an effort to unify the spellings of the individual authors or to expand the easily decipherable abbreviations they use in their respective accounts. By opting for this procedure, we hope to provide the reader with sources that can be quoted without recourse to the originals. To facilitate reference, the original page numbers have been inserted in square brackets into the texts themselves and the full bibliographical data of the works reproduced here will be found at the end of each selection.

Misspelled or misunderstood Hungarian words will be easily rectified with the help of the footnotes and the *List of Geographical Names* preceding the *Gazetteer*. The notes are restricted to provide the reader with basic information and are not intended to be exhaustive.

The drawings and steel-plates reproduced were first published in *Bilder-Album aus Ungarn: Taschenbuch*

mit 18 Stahlstichen nach Zeichnungen von N. v. Barabás (Leipzig: G. A. Haendel, n.d.), pp. 4–5 [50], 36–37 [52], 56–57 [26], Richard Bright, *Travels from Vienna through Lower Hungary; With Some Remarks on the State of Vienna during the Congress, in the Year 1814* (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1818), facing title page [82], pp. 192–93 [87], 280–81 [44], *Magyarország és Erdély eredeti képekben*, text by János Hunfalvy, drawings by Lajos Rohbock, 3 vols. (Darmstadt: G. G. Lange, 1856–64), vol. 1 (1856), pp. 68–69 [58], 74–75 [72], 82–83 [28], 124–25 [93], 204–5 [18], 212–13 [56], 222–23 [17], 270–71 [51], vol. 2 (1860), pp. 48–49 [55], 182–83 [19], 196–97 [20], 216–17 [46], 296–97 [13], 310–11 [25], 314–15 [36], 340–41 [34], 342–43 [22], 386–87 [81], vol. 3 (1864), pp. 62–63 [65], 128–29 [76], and *Panorama der Oesterreichischen Monarchie oder malerisch-romantisches Denkbuch* (Pest and Leipzig: G. A. Hartleben, 1839), vol. 1, pp. 230–31 [89], 260–61 [57], 296–97 [33], 296–97 [37]. The numerals in brackets indicate the corresponding page here.

We are grateful to Prof. Gábor Náray-Szabó (Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) for permission to reproduce material from the Library's stock. We thank Thomas Cooper for his editorial assistance and suggestions, Dr. Róbert Hermann (Institute of Military History), for information on August von Heydte, Diana Bakó (Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and Dr. Tamás Sajó (studiolum.com) for producing the typescript, and Klára Láng (Microforms and Photo Laboratory, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) for the scans and photos.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

The *Signor Inspettore* was fortunately at home, and greeted us with the pleasant smile and ready courtesy which one invariably meets with in the people of this land. We were, however, once more doomed to failure. He knew everything apparently but that which we had come to learn; he certainly did *not* know the way to Pest, but bidding us wait, he retired to an inner chamber, whence he soon returned bearing under his arm an enormous map, his radiant countenance proclaiming that he had at last solved the difficulty.

“Perdono, Signore! I have ascertained. You must go hence to Nabrisina. There you will have to wait two hours, when another train will take you on through Cormöns to the Hungarian frontier.” And by the way he spoke of Cormöns one would have supposed it to be the extreme limits of civilisation.

“Not many strangers travel this way to Hungary,” added he.

“But do not *your* people sometimes travel?” we inquired.

“Ma no!” was the reply, given in that sharp, incisive tone in which every Italian pronounces that latter monosyllable. “We do not often travel, and to Hungary never. *Basta!* the climate of Hungary *e una clima da Diavolo*,” adding with a shrug of the shoulders—the full significance of which we duly appreciated—*“Perdono, Signore!* Only the *English* go there.”

Mazuchelli, *Magyarland*, vol. 1, pp. 11–12.

A Solitary Nymph

ROBERT TOWNSON

[252] In the afternoon I went to the hot-baths, which are about four or five miles from the town.¹ Some of these are only covered by a shed, others are quite open. Here I saw the strangest sight sure mortal ever beheld. At Gross Wardein begins the district of Hungary inhabited by the Wallachians,²

as may be seen in the map,³ and many [253] of the lower orders of the inhabitants of this town are of this nation, which is a member of the Greek church, and follows the old style. This, therefore, was the Pentecost of the Wallachians; and a swarm of them was come here to enjoy the pleasures and



The bishop's palace at Nagyvárád

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

advantages of the baths, so that most of them were full, and presented really a sight which my pen is no way capable of describing. All ages and sexes, with skins of all hues, and with features of all expressions, were washing their hides in these cleansing waters. [...]

Some of these good women had their little children in their arms. I noticed two or three young *Ziguiners*⁴ amongst them; these, though so young, were as dark as Mulattoes: no doubt with this colour they came into the world. But this was not all I saw: this odious sight only served to set off to greater advantage a solitary nymph in another bath; and now you have cause, reader, to envy my good fortune. For here alone, and only under the grey canopy of heaven, “whilst evening drew her crimson curtains round,” [254] and the serenity of the air and the melody of the neighbouring woods awakened sweet sensibility, friend to our pleasures, but often enemy, alas! to our peace; separate from the vulgar throng and all alone, as if conscious of her superior beauty, the loveliest girl sure Nature ever formed lay quite exposed, reclining in a shallow bath in the very attitude of desire. A thin short petticoat, which the tepid water wrapped close about her limbs, or else wantonly spread wide abroad, as if, proud of its beauteous guest, it was eager to shew her delicate shape, or else expose all her charms, was the only covering she had on. Youth, the youthfulness of eighteen years, sparkled in her eyes and glowed in her lovely countenance; and her heaving bosom and swelling breasts announced that she had reached that happy period of life, at which kind Nature having invested her fair offspring with their brightest charms, warms them with love, and teaches them to exult in being loved. She suffered my enamoured gaze, and smiled; and by her melting looks expressed she felt the presence of the God of Love and her own frailty. [...]

[256] In 1785 they rebelled in Transylvania, and with great cruelty murdered many of the nobility.⁵ Their priests, whom they call *Popes*, are uncommonly brutish, and it is calculated that in twenty

executions there is always a *Pope*.⁶ Now, or till within a few years, the most frightful punishments were inflicted upon them, flaying, empaling, &c. &c. But the most shocking punishments I have read of, were those which were inflicted on the leaders of the peasants’ war in the beginning of the sixteenth century in the Banat. They are too [257] frightful to detail. The chief,⁷ as king, was set upon a red hot iron throne, and an iron crown was put on his head, and a sceptre of the same in his hand, both red hot. In this state, half roasted, nine of his principal accomplices, nearly starved to death with hunger, were let loose upon him, with threats of instant death, if they did not fly upon and eat their pretended king. Six obeyed, and fell upon him and ate him. Three others who would not, were immediately cut to pieces. Yet under all this torment the unfortunate man never murmured!! [...]

[258] I only passed the night at gloomy Debretzin, and then pushed on to Tokay, which I reached about four in the afternoon. I passed through the district of the Haydukes: six or seven towns, with two-and-twenty thousand inhabitants, form this district. They are the descendants of some troops which, in the beginning of the last century, at the termination of a war, were settled here, and received lands on condition of rendering military service. They have their own magistrates, and are not under the government of the county. Judging from externals, they are not more opulent than their neighbours. From Debretzin to Tokay the country is quite flat, being part of the great plain: it grows a good deal of corn and Indian wheat, but it is chiefly pasture land.

By the road-side I found a large party of zigeuners. How admirably they are pourtrayed by Cowper⁸ in these lines: [259]

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O’ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
 Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloined
 From his accustomed perch. Hard-saring race!
 They pic their fuel out of every hedge,
 Which kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
 Their fluttering rags, and shows a fawny skin,
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.

Hungary may be considered as the seat of this people. They are here very numerous, and lead the same vagabond life they do in other countries. Several of the later Hungarian sovereigns have endeavoured to render them sedentary, but with not much success; they still stroll about the country as tinkers and musicians, but are not seen in such hordes as formerly. It is but a few years ago (I think under Joseph II.⁹) that about a score of them were condemned and executed in the Great Hontor¹⁰ county for being – *Anthropophagists*; but, when it was too late, it was *suspected* that their Judges had been too hasty in their condemnation. They were not seen in Hungary before 1418.

Source

Travels in Hungary, with a Short Account of Vienna in the Year 1793 (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1797).

Robert Townson (1763–1827) was a scholar, scientist, settler, and member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. As a professor at the University of Göttingen, Germany, he made extensive tours to France, Austria and Hungary. The account of his 1793 visit to Hungary was published four years later and was translated into French in 1798. Works written by him in those years include *Observationes physiologicae de amphibiis* (Göttingen, 1794), *The Philosophy of Mineralogy* (London, 1798), and *Tracts and Observations in Natural History and Physiology* (London, 1799).

Note

- ¹ Félixfürdő, located at a distance of 8 kms from Nagyvárad, is part of Váradszentmárton today. At the time of Townson's visit the baths belonged to the Premonstratensian Order.
- ² Between the end of the 17th century and 1867, Transylvania, a territory in which there were numerically significant Romanian-speaking communities, was a separate administrative unit within the Habsburg Empire. To the south of Transylvania lies the province of Wallachia or, as it is known today, Oltenia. The term *Wallachian* was not infrequently used to refer to Romanian speakers.
- ³ Townson's map is not reproduced here. Instead the reader is referred to the map by Zsuzsa Draskovits on the verso and recto of the front and back cover, respectively.
- ⁴ Correctly: *Zigeuners* (German for Gypsy).
- ⁵ Reference to the revolt of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan in Transylvania in 1784–85.
- ⁶ Both *pope*, an orthodox priest, and *Pope*, the bishop of Rome, derive from the Greek *papas*, the diminutive of father.
- ⁷ Reference to the peasants' revolt of 1514, led by György Dózsa, who was tortured and executed.
- ⁸ William Cowper (1731–1800) was a popular English pre-romantic poet. The quotation is from his *The Task: A Poem in Six Books* (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1785), Book I, *The Sofa*, lines 557–569.
- ⁹ Joseph II (1741–1790), Holy Roman Emperor, ruler of the Habsburg lands between 1780–1790.
- ¹⁰ Hont county in historical northern Hungary. The reference is to the 150 Gypsies, 41 (or 42 or 45) of whom, after confessions extracted under torture, were executed for crimes including cannibalism in 1782. For a short account, see Angus M. Fraser, *The Gypsies*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), pp. 194–195.



For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Wood and Rock, Vineyards and Cornfields

WILLIAM HUNTER

[226] The ordinary dress of the burghers and the higher class of peasantry, in this part of the country, consist of a light blue jacket and pantaloons, and huzzar¹ boots with tassels and spurs. The jacket is edged with fur, and both jacket and pantaloons are embroidered down the seams. The poorer class is obliged to be satisfied with a short shirt and trowsers of coarse linen, the fabric of the country. As the weather grows cooler, they throw a rough blanket across their shoulders, and, in winter, clothe themselves with a sheep-skin garment, which reaches down to their heels, and which, according to the temperature of the atmosphere, they wear with the wool or skin next them. At night they convert it into a bed. They are tall, stout, and straight grown, but have heavy countenances, and their long black greasy hair [227] and huge whiskers give them the appearance of savages. The men wear round felt hats with broad rims and shallow crowns, and both men and women go without shoes and stockings. The women, who are not by any means so well-looking as the men, are kept in a state of slavish subordination, and are not only employed in domestic drudgery but in the laborious parts of agriculture, such as, digging, planting, and following the plough. [...]

[234] On our arrival at the town of Vissegrade, we stopped at the house of one of the count's acquaintance, who received us with the greatest civility, and insisted on our remaining to dine with him. Whilst dinner was preparing, I went, attended by a guide, to see the castle. It was, for some centuries, a favourite summer residence of the Hungarian kings, and is now one of the most remarkable ruins in the country. Charles I.² who resided here almost entirely, enlarged

it, and fitted it up in a style of magnificence that was the wonder and [235] envy of his contemporaries. [...] The gardens, in those times, corresponded with the splendour of the castle. They were adorned with pleasure houses and statues and fountains of marble; and the park was stocked with every species of game. Among its many illustrious tenants was Mathias Corvinus³, a king whose memory is, to this day, held, and deservedly so, in pious veneration by the Hungarians, and who may be justly ranked among the benefactors of mankind. He was a protector and encourager of letters, at a period when the realms of genius and science were nearly obscured; and, had it not been [236] for the glorious efforts, and fostering care, of a few such men, the sacred spark might have been completely extinguished. He used frequently to retire to this spot, to relieve himself from the weight of public affairs, and indulge in the pleasures of the chase. After the death of Lewis II.⁴ it was besieged and taken by the Turks, and the numerous misfortunes which afterwards befell it, at last reduced it to its present forlorn condition. It is still majestic in its ruins from its towering height, captivating from the romantic beauty of the scenery which surrounds it, and highly interesting from its past celebrity. The ascent is rugged and steep, and the path to this once noted resort of gaiety and pomp, is now so overgrown with briars and weeds, that, without a guide, it would be impossible to find one's way. How expressive are these changes of the reverses of human life, and I never witness them without being convinced of the frail reliance we ought to place on the duration of present enjoyment. About half way up, there is [237] a round stone structure

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Nagymaros and the fortress of Visegrád

called Salomon's Tower, from that king having been imprisoned there for eighteen months by his rival Ladislaus. The ruins of the castle are considerable, but none of the apartments remain entire, and it is falling fast to decay. The Hungarians, indeed, have given themselves but little pains to preserve, or elucidate, the antiquities of their country, nor, as far as I can learn, has any engraving ever been published of this very remarkable and interesting spot. The views from it are, in a high degree, beautiful and romantic. The windings of the Danube, the boldness and inequalities of the opposite shore, the pleasing mixture of wood and rock, vineyards and cornfields, bounded by distant hills, contribute to form a rich, a varied, and an enchanting landscape. [...]

[239] A few miles farther on we came to Watzen, which is a considerable place, and remarkable for containing the handsomest cathedral in Hungary. It was constructed by the above mentioned cardinal,⁵ who was a great benefactor of the town, and, by his numerous acts of munificence, contributed to efface the remembrance of its past misfortunes, and to lay the foundations of its present flourishing state. Watzen contains about eight thousand inhabitants, chiefly Germans and Greeks, who are engaged in various branches of commerce, particularly cattle and wine; and it is distinguished for its schools, and other public institutions. [...]

[240] A few miles before we got to Buda, we crossed the plain of Rakosch where the kings of Hungary were formerly elected, and where upwards of ninety

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Vác

thousand armed horsemen, constituting the nobility of the country, have frequently assembled to execute that solemn right. This celebrated spot I have already noticed, but I viewed it a second time with additional interest. I felt, whilst I was beholding it, a mingled emotion of veneration and terroure: [241] veneration for that awful exercise of power which a people administers, when they place an equal on a throne; and terroure at the recollection of those violent heats and animosities of faction which such an exercise of power must inevitably create. A crown is, indeed, too great a prize to contend for; and nothing can prove more decisively the radical defects of an elective monarchy, than the scenes of bloodshed and confusion which that form of government, wherever it has prevailed, has uniformly produced. Every competition throws the kingdom into a convulsion, compared with which, no advantages to which it lays claim, can possibly

make amends. Even supposing, what in a populous and extensive country can never be the case, that personal qualifications were the cause of elevation; yet it is not possible for the virtues of any one man to repair those mischiefs, which were occasioned by the very act that raised him to this office. And, if they could be repaired; at his death, the same factions [242] must revive; the same risks must be encountered; the same divisions must prevail. This, in fact, is one palpable reason why, in elective monarchies, learning, civilization, and the arts, have never made a rapid progress. Whilst the other countries of Europe, acknowledging hereditary right, were improving in every branch of polite and elegant literature, we find Hungary and Poland laid waste by civil discord, groaning under the yoke of feudal despotism, and delivered up as a prey to the passions of men, who were continually sacrificing public advantage to private ambition. [...]

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Eger

[248] Erlau is of considerable extent, and charmingly situated in a fruitful valley, surrounded with hills, which are covered with vineyards. A small river, near the banks of which are warm baths, runs through it, and divides it into two counties. It contains near twenty thousand inhabitants, many of whom are Greeks who keep shops and warehouses, and, as a reward for the services of their forefathers in driving away the Turks, enjoy particular privileges. It is celebrated for being the seat of an university⁶; one of the richest bishopricks in the kingdom; and for the red [249] wine that is grown in the vicinity, which is highly esteemed for its flavour, and has an extensive and ready sale over every part of the emperor's dominions.

The university forms one side of the large square of the town, and, having been a few years back repaired and beautified, makes a splendid appear-

ance. The cieling of the hall which contains the library, is elegantly painted, and the observatory is provided with a fine collection of instruments; but the number of students has lately declined, and the professors have many idle hours on their hands.

The revenues of the see amount to the enormous sum of 200,000 florins, or 20,000 £ . sterling, but it has been, for several years, without a representative; and, as the king has the privilege, during war, of applying, to the defrayment of his military expences, all church revenues that may fail during its continuation, a successor to the late prelate is not likely to be soon appointed. The bishops in former times resided in the castle, which stands on the summit of a steep and lofty rock, and has, in the course [250] of its history, been many times attacked, defended, and subdued. The present palace has no very stately appearance; but the gardens,

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Diosgyőr

before they were neglected, must have been remarkably pleasant. [...]

[252] Mischkolz is a small neat town, pleasantly situated between two hills, and encircled with woods, vineyards, and fruitful meadows. The inhabitants, who are mostly Hungarians, are engaged in the cultivation of [253] their vines and orchards, and the chief business of the women is spinning. Several antient families are established here. The climate is good, the air pure and healthy, and provisions cheap; but what this town is most remarkable for, is the number and depth of its wine cellars, which are cut out of the solid rock. I only stopped here to change horses, and proceeded to Diosgyor, a village a few miles distant. I drove immediately to the house of the prefect, who received me with the

greatest civility, and insisted on my remaining with him for the night. Being desirous of seeing as much as I could of the place before it grew dark, shortly after my arrival, he and one of his son's accompanied me, on foot, about the town and its environs.

Diosgyor is of small extent, but its situation is in a high degree beautiful and romantic. It stands in a valley enclosed by hills, which are covered with vineyards and woods. Orchards, very productive in fruit, adjoin the houses, and [254] a stream, abounding in trout, runs through the town. One of the greatest curiosities is a fine ruin called Maria's castle.⁷ [...]

At a short distance from the castle, there is another curiosity, known by the name of the Long Cellar; an appellation it well deserves, as, on exploring it a few years back, when it was discovered, it was found

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

to communicate with Erlau, which is at the distance of six German miles. [...]

[259] Leaving Diosgyor, as I advanced towards Szikszó, the country became very hilly, and on every side was covered with vineyards. The town, which is small, stands on a fertile plain, enriched with grain, vines, and fruit-trees. Shortly after leaving it, I had a fine view of the mountain of Tokay, so celebrated for the wine which bears its name, and of which every one has heard, and wishes to taste. It rises to a considerable height in the form of a cone; and a few acres of it, or of some other favourite hill in the neighbourhood, is a valuable possession. The greatest part of the Tokay wine does not grow immediately in the vicinity of the town, but round several villages which are scattered to the north of it, to the distance of twenty [260] miles. It is only, however, on confined spots that the most precious is produced; and, from the small quantity that is made, it fetches an exorbitant price, even in the country. As the great object, to secure a good harvest, is to let the grape hang till it is half-dried, the vintage seldom takes place till the middle or latter end of October; and, if the weather be favourable, is even deferred till November. Success, however, is very precarious, and, if rain or a hard frost suddenly set in, almost every thing is lost. When the season continues open, many grapes of every bunch shrivel, and are allowed to remain on the stalk till they become a perfect sweetmeat. These are carefully picked off,

and pressed apart; and, in proportion as the syrup that comes from them is mixed with the juice of the remainder, depends the flavour and value of the wine. The best is rich and oily, of considerable strength, and, when new, very sweet; but after it has been kept for forty or fifty years, it loses that quality in a great degree, and becomes, [261] though still luscious, an exquisite, wine. [...]⁸

Source

Travels through France, Turkey, and Hungary, to Vienna, in 1792. To Which are Added, Several Tours in Hungary, in 1799 and 1800. In a Series of Letters to his Sister in England, 3rd edn. (London: J. White, 1803), vol. 2.

Note

- ¹ Hussars, or members of the Hungarian cavalry.
- ² Charles I, also known as Charles Robert of Anjou, was king of Hungary between 1307–42.
- ³ Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary between 1458–90.
- ⁴ Louis II. Jagiellon, king of Hungary between 1516–26. He was killed in the Battle of Mohács on August 29, 1526.
- ⁵ Christian Anton von Migazzi (1714–1803), bishop of Vác, later archbishop of Vienna.
- ⁶ The *Collegium Juridicum Foglarianum* of the Archbishopric of Eger, founded in 1741.
- ⁷ Mary of Anjou, queen of Hungary between 1382–95.
- ⁸ Aszú is known throughout the English-speaking world as Tokay.

William Hunter was a barrister-at-law according to the catalog of the British Library. Nothing more is known about him.



Hospitality and Abundance

RICHARD BRIGHT

[213] It is a very general cause of complaint and regret amongst the Hungarians, that their language has been more than neglected; they say it has been discouraged by the Austrian government, and they are thankful to the Palatine¹ who has countenanced the establishment of their national theatre. This is a feeling natural and honourable; it must, however, be confessed, that the Hungarian tongue is local, and, in its application, perhaps more partial than that of any other country. The mixture of languages in Hungary itself is so great, that scarcely one third of the inhabitants speak the Hungarian; and thus, every one who hopes to travel beyond the village in which he was born, is compelled to learn some other language or dialect. Hence probably it is that Latin has been retained as a common

medium of communication.² All the older writings are in this language, and, at the present moment, Hungary presents in miniature the picture of the whole continent of Europe, before, each country, to the great benefit of works of imagination, and to the unspeakable advantage of national spirit and improvement, adopted its own language, as best suited to convey its own associations and feelings. [...]

[446] The hospitality of the Graf's³ supper-table, and the interest of his conversation, soon dispelled the remembrance of our perils. It may be truly said, that the character of these meals was hospitality and abundance, without unnecessary or irksome parade. The Graf was always, both at table and in his excursions in the carriage, attended by two young men, dressed as Hussars without arms; and, besides these, three or four servants, out of livery, generally served at the table. The conversation was always instructive, full of good temper, and enlarged views on the part of my host. Before we parted in the even-[447]ing, he planned another excursion for me on the following day, when I was put under the guidance of Dr Gerrard, the family-physician, a man of extensive learning, and acquainted with no less than eleven languages, to visit the warm-baths in the neighbourhood, which are at the distance



Keszthely

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

of about two miles, near the source of the river Heviz. As a bathing place, it is little worthy of mention, and is evidently fitted up by the Graf only for the lower class of people, who come there during the summer, and find a surgeon on the spot ready to administer their favourite remedy of scarification or cupping. The only dwelling is a miserable house, converted into an inn during the summer, and affording very mean accommodation. As a hot-spring, however, it is curious, from the quantity of heated sulphureous water which it discharges in the middle of a low and marshy plain, in which it has formed a pond. This covers a space of not much less than two acres, and the water which runs from it, turns in its course two or three mills. I cannot speak exactly to its temperature, but it is very considerable, even in the canal by which it discharges itself. The water emits a strong sulphureous vapour, and is of a bluish colour. The *Nymphaea alba* was in fine bloom, and a multitude of a species of *cyprinus* were playing about, appearing greatly to enjoy the warmth of the water.⁴

Source

Travels from Vienna through Lower Hungary; With Some Remarks on the State of Vienna during the Congress, in the Year 1814 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1818).

Notes

¹ Archduke Joseph of Habsburg (1776–1847), palatine of Hungary (1796–1847).

² Latin was the official language in Hungary until 1844.

³ Count György Festetich (I.) of Keszthely (1755–1819), founder of the first agricultural school in Hungary, called the *Georgicon*.

⁴ *Nymphaea alba*, also known as the *European White Waterlily*. Dr. Bright was the first to describe the species found in the natural thermal lake of Hévíz.

Richard Bright (1789–1858) was an English physician and early pioneer of nephrology. He had a special affection for Hungary and in 1815 he lived in Festetich Castle in Keszthely, where there is a large plaque: “To the memory of the English physician, scientist, and traveler who was one of the pioneers in the accurate description of Lake Balaton.” In 1833 he was elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His works include *Address at the Commencement of a Course of Lecturers on the Practice of Medicine* (London, 1832), *Clinical Memoirs on Abdominal Tumours* (London, 1860), and studies in the *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*.



A Certain Wildness in Their Looks

ROBERT WALSH

[331] Our way next day was still along the banks of the Marosch, on a narrow road that skirts the river on the flank of a range of hills. About nine, we arrived at Zaam, a village close on the water. Here we were stopped, to know if we had any salt. We had entered the confines of Hungary, beyond which the transportation of this article is strictly prohibited. The examination, however, was not very minute, as they took our words as a sufficient assurance. [...]

[333] At one we came to the village of Saboraz,¹ and stopped before the gate of an Hungarian nobleman. The house and demesne were exactly like those of an English gentleman, and adjoining to it a church with a red spire. The house and church were fresh painted and whitewashed, with a smooth lawn, and well kept gravel walks, having the air of neatness and elegance, which characterize the seats in England. While we and our horses were breakfasting together in our usual way, in front of this English prospect, the proprietor of the chateau issued from the gate. He was a large, portly man, with an erect proud countenance, and wrapped in a rich pelisse of fur. We saluted him in passing, by touching our hats, which he returned in a very haughty and disdainful manner; convincing us we were no longer among the Saxon peasantry, where a general mediocrity of circumstances makes every man look upon his neighbour with equal respect. [...]

[337] Beyond this was the town of Radna, where we arrived at twelve o'clock, and stopped to dine. While dinner was preparing, we went to see a celebrated convent of Franciscans, situated on an

eminence near the town. The church of this convent is very famous, all over Hungary, for a picture of the Virgin, which from the earliest ages worked stupendous miracles, and is visited by pilgrims from all parts. It is attached to the convent; and, with its spires, forms a noble object on the hill that overlooks the town, and is dedicated to St. Mary of Radna. We ascended to it [338] by long flights of stone steps; and when we entered, a brother of the order, exceedingly ignorant and talkative, attended us through the edifice. All the walls of the galleries and corridors of the convent, through which we passed, were covered with pictures, from one end to the other, and from the floor to the ceiling. These pictures were generally about a foot square, and were presented to the convent by persons who had been cured of any disease, or preserved from any calamity, by the intervention of the Lady of Radna. They represented the incident, and were marked *ex voto*; and, in fact, were the *votivae tabellae* of the Romans. One depicted a carriage upsetting, and the people crushed under the wheels; another, a boat sinking in a river, and the passengers in the act of being drowned; in a third, horses were throwing their riders, who were dragged along by the bridle or stirrups; a fourth was a sick bed-chamber, and the family weeping and praying round it. In all these the Lady appeared in the sky, in a corner of the picture; and stretching out her hand, saved the victims of accident or disease. But by far the greater number of these pictures represented people vomiting blood, from whence we concluded it was a common disorder in this place; and we were

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



The cloister at Máriaradna

told, on inquiry, that it was so, though from [339] what cause could not be known. The chapel is spacious and elegant, with a fine organ. The roof was painted with the Assumption of the Virgin, who was trampling the crescent under her feet in her ascent. Compartments in the wall represented different actions in the life of St. Francis, by a German artist of Pest; and the rest, like those of the gallery, were covered with *votivae tabellae*. But that which attracted most attention, was the picture of the Virgin herself which had worked all the miracles, and was hanging over the High Altar. It was a paltry painting, about two feet square, representing a female encircled with a large gilt crown, holding out an infant decorated with another. It was blackened, apparently, with smoke; and when we inquired the

cause, our conductor told us that the infidel Turks had cast it into the fire, where, to their confusion, it remained unconsumed; and walked out uninjured, except by the smoke, which it retained as an irrefragable proof of the miracle ever after. This is a source of great revenue to the convent. [...]

[342] In the evening we arrived at the edge of the great Steppe of Hungary, which extends from hence, in one vast level plain, without any variation, as far as the walls of Pest. When we entered on this plain, we soon wandered from the right path, and got entangled in sand flats and swamps: it became pitch dark; and as it seemed impossible to extricate ourselves, and regain the road, where [343] we had lost all clue to guide us, we had no other prospect but of remaining till morning in our waggon, in

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Horse-drawn carriage

this dismal place; and prepared ourselves to keep watch and watch all night, in turn, while the rest slept; as the people of this district are a race of Tartars, and retain all the propensities of their tribe, of which robbery is the principal – particularly the robbery of horses. [...]

[346] [T]hough the villages sometimes consisted of three or four hundred houses, they were all built with the same dull uniformity – a long building like a cow-house, – a pit to catch the rain-water before each door; and not a tree, or a shrub, or a flower, indicated that the inhabitants had a taste or inclination for anything beyond the bare necessities of animal life. The men and women were clothed in sheep skins, and accompanied by fierce shaggy dogs as wild as themselves: in fact, they seemed as

dull and stupid as the cattle they attended; and, like them, did not appear to have a wish or a thought beyond their condition. Surprised at the contrast we now saw, between this dull and barbarous race and the active and intelligent peasants we had just left, we inquired into the cause; and a cause was assigned, which fully accounted for the effect. These villages, we learned, were the property of noblemen, who retained all the rights of feudal Barons. Their tenantry were Serfs, or slaves of the soil, and, like the cattle, were the moveable property of the Lord. [...]

[347] The inhabitants are exclusively Catholics, but there is neither a school nor a visible church in any of the villages. Indeed, though they have a local habitation, they are little different from the erratic

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

tribes that formerly wandered over these plains, except that they are [348] not so free. Their villages are but temporary abodes; when the soil is worked out, it is abandoned till it again recovers itself, and the necessary parts of the cabanes are removed to another place, with as much facility as the materials of the tents of the ancient Scythians. Hence it was, that all those villages through which we passed had the appearance of recency, as if they were just planted, and the houses looked as new as if they had just been built. [...]

[351] The Kreish, called in German maps the Köros, has two different branches, - one called Swartze Köros, or the Black River - the other Weisse Köros, [352] or the White: they both unite, and fall into the Teisse, a considerable way above the Marosch. It winds here, with many inflections, through sandy plains clothed in short herbage like Salisbury Plain, and, like it, is covered with sheep. We were told they were of the Merino bred lately brought into this country, apparently so well adapted for their pasture. They had straight horns, twisted in a spiral form, and were guarded by a rude race of shepherds, dressed in their skins, with dogs equally fierce and shaggy. I had been warned against trusting myself with these dogs; but forgetting the caution, I was wandering over the plains, collecting plants, while the waggon was slowly dragged along the sandy road, when I heard a cry like that of a pack of hounds: I soon saw that the dogs of several flocks had united, when they saw me at a distance by myself, and, with horrible yells, were making towards me. Had I been a little further from help, I should certainly have suffered the fate of Actaeon; but the shepherds and the drivers of the waggon, alarmed by the opening yells of this fierce pack, immediately ran towards me, and the dogs were stopped before they reached me. On this immense plain were scattered, we were told, 400,000 of these sheep, which we saw in every direction. [...]

[358] About nine we arrived at Mieresch, inhabited principally by Serfs, and forming a strong contrast to the village we had left; yet far superior

to those of the same description on the other side of the Teiss. Here, for the first time, we saw those large horizontal wheels which work mills and other machines: at each side of the streets, as we passed along, were large circular sheds, open at the sides, supported on posts, and covered by a conical roof. Under each of these was revolving an immense horizontal wheel, of one hundred feet in diameter. The moving power was a single horse; and the lever was so long, and the wheel so well balanced, that the whole machine was turned with perfect ease, and the process went on without noise of friction. The wheel was not more than three feet from the ground, and the horse attached to its periphery. These low wheels with long radii, and broad wheels with long axes, are of immense use in this flat country, where we never met with an overshot water-mill, or a wind-mill. Another circumstance, also, began now to mark the villages. In the open market-place stood a statue on a pedestal, clad in a shaggy robe, and in the attitude of St. John [359] in the wilderness. This, however, was not St. John the Baptist, as I had supposed; but St. John Nepomucene, - a saint held, in the Austrian dominions, in much higher estimation. He was a native of Nepomuca, on the river Mulda, in Bohemia; and for refusing to reveal the secrets of confession to Wincelas, King of the Romans, in 1378, he was cast into the river, where he perished; hence he was made the Patron of Rivers, and his statue is set up, not only on every bridge, but in every town where there is neither bridge nor river. [...]

[365] The town of Buda stands on the high and abrupt banks of the Danube, opposite to Pest. The country assumes a totally different character on this side of the river; rising into high hills and rocky eminences, on one of which is built the city of Buda, or Offen. We entered it from Pest, by a bridge of sixty-three large boats across the river, here five hundred and thirty paces wide. [...]

[366] Buda was originally called Sicambri, from a people of that name, whom Antoninus Pius and Severus established here as a garrison, to keep in



Buda Castle and Krisztinaváros

check other Barbarians. A district below the town is still shown as their city – having some ruins and an aqueduct, from whence a subterranean passage leads to the citadel above. The name of Buda is derived from Buda, a brother of Attila, in the fifth century.² It is by the Germans called Offen, or Upper, alluding to its high situation, and so it is always designated in German maps. It had been the residence of the native Kings of Hungary, which, when the Turks obtained possession of it, was transferred to Presburg. [...]

[367] Among the establishments most striking, are its library and its baths. The first was formed by the justly celebrated Hungarian King, Matthias Corvinus. He employed three hundred transcribers in Italy, to make transcripts of the best authors, for

his library. He also purchased the best editions of all the classics, and works most celebrated in his time, both in Italy and Constantinople; and then deposited 50,000 volumes in a tower at Buda, where he kept thirty amanuenses, at a fixed salary, continually augmenting them. When Buda was taken by the Turks, it was supposed to possess the finest library in Europe ... [...]

[368] Its baths are also justly celebrated; and in this respect, and in this only, the Turks were not destroyers. Addicted, themselves, to the use of the hot baths, they prized the hot springs of Buda above all its possessions. The finest edifices of the kind, perhaps, in the world, I saw at Brusa, the former Asiatic capital of the Turks; and those of Buda they formed on their model. They excavated

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

the rock from which the springs issue; then raising an edifice of marble over them, they covered them with lead, and they yet remain as models of Turkish luxury. [...]

[369] We here met a promiscuous mixture of Austrians and Hungarians together, and remarked the striking contrast visible in their persons. The Austrians were, in general, of low stature, sturdy limbs, broad chests; and so remarkably thick about the neck and shoulders, that they seemed hump-backed, and indeed many of them were really so. They had large heads, broad faces, and coarse but good-natured countenances. The Hungarians, on the contrary, were tall and slender, with narrow shoulders, thin necks, and slight limbs, with an upright gait. Their heads were small, their features sallow, with [370] dark eyes, and a certain wildness in their looks, as if they had not entirely divested themselves of the character of their Tartarian or Scythian ancestors.

Source

Narrative of a Journey from Constantinople to England (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1828).

Notes

¹ Unidentifiable place name.

² This story of Attila and Buda, two brothers who are brought to quarrel over their father's kingdom, is part of Hungarian folklore and mythology. Attila slays his brother, but then regrets it, fearing his sons will turn on one another after his death.

Robert Walsh (1772–1852) was a clergyman and author. A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, he was chaplain to the British Embassy at Constantinople. From 1821–1824 he traveled extensively throughout Turkey and in Asia. After brief stays at St. Petersburg, Russia, and Rio de Janeiro, he returned to Ireland. His books include *Notices of Brazil in 1828–29* (London, 1830), *Residence at Constantinople during the Greek and Turkish Revolutions* (London, 1836), and *Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor* (London, 1839).



A Large and Merry Party

MICHAEL J. QUIN

[22] We sat down a large and merry party to the table. I must honestly confess that I enjoy a good dinner at all times, and in all places, but I fancy that I entertain a particular relish for the performance of my duties in that way on board a steam-boat. The air, the exercise, the novelty of the scene, the emulation kindled amongst a number of candidates for a participation in the [23] spoil, and, perhaps, above all, the savoury odours of soups and stews, which mingle beforehand with the atmosphere of the deck, conspire to whet the appetite to a degree of keenness altogether unknown on *terra firma*.¹

We commenced operations with rice soup, which was followed of course by *bouilli*²; next came sundry dishes of roast fowl, and of fowl cooked as giblets, and well cooked too. By way of relaxation, we were then invited to admit a layer of bread pudding upon the said fowls, with a view to prevent them from finding fault with what was to come after – a prudent measure; the dinner was closed by capon, served up with plums in their own syrup for sauce. Upon the whole, notwithstanding the monotony of the entertainment, it went off, as the theatrical critics say, with *éclat*. We were not, however, fortunate in our wine: it was pale and sour, a degree or two beneath small beer. Hungary produces some of the most exquisite wines in Europe, but I must say that I never had the felicity to meet with them. Those which are found in ordinary use are truly detestable.

[24] As I was altogether unacquainted with the Hungarian language, and my Hungarian friends [25] knew no other except Latin, I was obliged to turn out from the recesses of my memory, all

that still remained there of Lilly and Erasmus³, in order to answer the questions that were put to me. We were consequently all speedily arranged upon a footing of agreeable intercourse, the ladies and myself only excepted, for very much to my chagrin, they spoke no dialect save their own Hungarian. Even the little elegant countess was ignorant of French and Italian; but I afterwards found that the education of the fair sex in Hungary, had been hitherto, at least, wholly neglected.

I was much pleased with my new companions. They exhibited towards each other, and towards myself, so much good nature, they were so frank in their discourse, so cheerful, so full of anecdote, so easily provoked to laughter, in which they indulged with all the heartiness of children, that I felt the greatest interest in poring over this new page of the volume of society. Even when I did not understand the language in which their conversation was carried on, I could collect its general meaning from the tone, the look, the animated gestures by which it was accompanied. [...]

[35] Finding my companions at supper I was very glad to join them. They were in the midst of Hungarian politics, two of them being deputies on their way home from the diet. I have seldom met a more engaging person than the Count P—, who appeared to have taken an active part in the business of the legislature. He was inexhaustible in anecdotes about his fellow-deputies, and the mode in which the national affairs were carried on. Eloquent, [36] cheerful, offhand, and thoroughly conversant with human nature, he often placed the most serious

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

things in a ridiculous point of view, which kept the table in roars of laughter. His features beamed with benevolence, and I was not surprised afterwards to learn, that in his own county of Presburg, where he has ample possessions, he is universally beloved. He had frequently the goodness to explain to me in Latin the political parts of his conversation. He said that the diet was the mere image of what is ought to be according to the ancient constitution of the country. Many of the deputies were determined on eventually effecting a reform, but from motives of personal respect for the then reigning emperor, they would take no steps during his lifetime. Under a new sovereign, however, they would certainly insist upon the restoration of the Hungarian constitution. I had more than once occasion to remark, that politics were by no means forbidden topics in this country: they are in fact as freely spoken of as in France or England. No notice is ever taken by the authorities of this liberty of speech; I have heard even the authorities themselves discuss public questions without the slightest reserve. The freedom thus generally enjoyed [37] must be founded not only on custom, which cannot be changed, but upon a sense of inherent strength with which it might be dangerous to tamper. [...]

[40] Though the Hungarians call Mohacs a town I should rather say that it is a large village, built with the most rustic simplicity. The houses generally consist of mud walls, roofed with long reeds, each being surrounded by a high wicker fence, which encloses a considerable space of ground, including a farm-yard, a well, with the primitive lever for raising the bucket, and sometimes a gar-

den. Rows of these detached houses form several irregular streets, which are planted with shady trees, on each side. Cocks were crowing in all directions, otherwise one would scarcely have thought that the place had been [41] inhabited, such was the silence that prevailed. Even the dogs were mute, sleeping, perhaps, through the noonday heat. The gable ends of the cottages generally faced the street, the roof being carried a foot or two beyond the walls, on which, or upon the window-sills, were strung in the sun, quantities of a rich-looking green and ruby fruit, here called the golden apple, and resembling our girkin in form. It is preserved for pickling, is full of seeds, and even before being pickled is not disagreeable to the taste. I tried to get into the two churches which belong to the village, but they were locked. Their external appearance was decent.

Source

A Steam Voyage Down the Danube. With Sketches of Hungary, Wallachia, Servia, and Turkey, &c., 2nd edn. rev. and corr., 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), vol. 1.

Note

¹ *Terra firma*, i.e. firm ground.

² Boiled or stewed meat.

³ William Lilye (1468–1522) was an English classical grammarian. With John Colet (1467–1519) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) he co-wrote a Latin grammar, commonly known as the *Accidence* (1513).

Michael Joseph Quin (1796–1843) was an Irish author, journalist and editor. He is known as the originator of the *Dublin Review*, the leading Catholic periodical in the British Isles in his time. Travels in Hungary, Wallachia, Serbia, and Turkey furnished him with material for his book in 1835, called *A Steam Voyage Down the Danube*, which was so successful that it was translated into French and German.

The Chateau of the Magnate, the Hut of the Peasant

EDMUND SPENCER

[21] As I happened to be at Pest during the great spring fair and the races,¹ I was not only provided with ample materials for amusement, but an opportunity of seeing the motley population of natives and strangers, which are usually attracted on this and similar occasion; for, though the Magyars, who have given their name to Hungary, are the greatest landed proprietors, and hold the reins of government, yet they are inferior in numerical force to the Sclavonians (or Totoks),² the original inhabitants. These are divided into at least half a dozen separate tribes, each speaking a different patois; and if to them we add the colonies of Germans, Wallachians, Greeks, Armenians, French, Italians, Jews, and Gipsies, speaking their own languages and retaining their [22] national manners, customs, and religion, we may term Hungary a miniature picture of Europe.

My first lounge was through the fair, which afforded as many groupes for the painter, as for the observer of life and manners; the Babel-like confusion of tongues was endless, and the costume and appearance of the motley tribes could not have been equalled in variety by any other fair in Europe, or even by the most entertaining maskers that ever trod the Piazza San Marco, or the Corso at Rome, because here each performed his natural character. The most prominent figures in the group were ever the proud Magyars, particularly those just arrived from the provinces. The dress of some of these noblemen was indeed singular, consisting of a tight sheep-skin coat, or mantle,³ the woolly side inwards; while the other was gaudily embroidered all over with the gayest flowers of the parterre, in coloured silk, among which the tulip was ever the

most prominent. Those whose wealth permitted it, were to be seen habited in their half-military, half-civil costume ... [...]

[23] Bread, cakes, cheeses, vegetables, &c. were heaped on high in the streets, with the owners of [24] each separate pile squatted in the midst. The savoury odour of multiplied stalls of frying sausages attracted some gourmands; whilst others feasted on the lighter refreshments of pastry, which the accomplished *cuisiniers* were preparing for their gratification.

But the popular viand was evidently the crayfish, which all ranks, however otherwise engaged, were incessantly consuming; nor did they in this manifest any deficiency in *goût*, as the flavour of the little dainties was really excellent, and I have rarely seen them exceeded in size. Indeed, to thread the mazes of this great Hungarian fair, so as to obtain a view of its rarities, was an undertaking of no little difficulty, on account of the immense pyramids of wool, hides, tobacco, and other raw materials, which ever stood in the way ... [...]

[26] A vast concourse of people had assembled to witness them; and as the weather was exceedingly fine, I enjoyed not a little the novel spectacle of thousands of cavaliers galloping over the field; and I knew not how sufficiently to admire the accomplished Hungarian equestrian, who in his [27] splendid hussar uniform, firm in the saddle, and light and elastic in action, seemed as if formed to guide the spirited animal that carried him; and so appropriate were they to each other, that the beauty of each appeared destroyed when separated.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Pest

We had, besides, every species of vehicle, from the elegant barouche of the magnat, down to the primitive car of the peasants, not unlike in form to the *arabat* of the Nogay Tartars; and to describe the motley tribes of spectators, would only be to repeat what I have already said when giving you an account of the fair.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, we returned to Pest to partake of a public dinner at the casino of nobles,⁴ where, if it had not been for the difference in the language, and the Asiatic countenances of the guests, I might have concluded I was at an English public dinner; the cooking, attendants, toasts, speeches, cheering, every thing being completely in the English style. Indeed, of all the foreigners among whom I have mixed, there are none who assimilate themselves more closely to our national manners and customs than the Hungarian magnats, nor any who receive a Briton with more cordiality: our language is universally spoken, our literature is generally studied, and I found our best publications in the library of the casino, and on the tables of every nobleman I visited. [...]

[31] The Magyar may also be known not less by his customs and manners, than by the form of the towns [32] and villages he inhabits. He is fond of spacious streets, houses, and rooms: the interior, however, is never crowded with furniture, for the peasant is abundantly contented if he can procure a table and a couple of benches, which serve as seats by day, and beds by night. True to the Nomaden life of his Asiatic ancestors, he is always to be found on the vast and fruitful plains of this extensive country, preferring the rich pastures, where his flocks and herds may roam at pleasure, and where he himself may indulge in the sports of the field, to agriculture. He therefore leaves the more laborious employment of raising grain, as unworthy a free son of the forest, to the Sclavonian, German, and Wallachian boors.

The Arab of the desert never practised the virtue of hospitality with more unbounded liberality than the Magyar. The stranger is ever sure to find a cordial welcome, not only in the chateau of the magnat, but in the hut of the peasants. Their character is also distinguished for bravery, sincerity,

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



The Benedictine abbey at Tihany

and open-heartedness, and their manners for a sort of straight-forward bluntness, indicating a greater love of truth than courtesy. Strongly attached to liberty, they are impatient of control, and submit with a bad grace to any new laws which may tend to encroach, even in the slightest degree, upon their national [33] independence; consequently, the *well-ordered* Austria, with all its complicated government machinery, has never been able to impose upon them the yoke of passports, and a hundred other vexatious ordinances; hence the traveller, who has once passed the frontier, may journey throughout the whole of Hungary without the slightest interruption. The Magyar is also so patriotic, that he not only tells you, but firmly believes, that his country is the freest and greatest in the world. [...]

[36] In order to explain the presence of this overwhelming proportion of noble families, we must refer to the precarious situation of the house of Habsburg during the reign of Maria Theresa; who, desirous of encouraging the bravery of the Hungarians, gave a

patent of nobility to every man who had killed his enemy in battle. This being hereditary in the whole of the children, we find, as a consequence, that almost every second man we meet is a noble.⁵ Several of the wealthy magnats have established the law of primogeniture in their families, by which means their rank and influence are properly supported: but unfortunately this practice is not general, the estate being usually divided in equal proportions among the children;⁶ hence the swarms of pauper nobles, at once proud, indolent, ignorant, and rapacious, whose crimes fearfully swell the catalogue of offences against law and morality. [...]

[37] But to return to the privileges of the nobility. I understand that a measure will be introduced next year to the diet, for the purpose of abrogating their right to be exclusively the proprietors of land, and which my friends informed me will be warmly supported by all the enlightened patricians of Hungary. Should this pass into a law, it will certainly have the effect of encouraging the rich mercantile classes and

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

foreigners to purchase landed property, and of giving an impetus to agriculture and commerce. The education of the inferior nobility and peasants also, if persisted in, will, it is to be hoped, have the effect of rendering the eradication of whatever diseases may exist in the body politic practicable, without the interposition of violent remedies. [...]

[39] The most popular pilgrimate in the environs of the bath, is to the romantic islet Tihany, in the Balaton lake, containing a pretty little village, and a monastery belonging to a community of monks. The whole of their little territory, about three leagues in circumference, is completely surrounded by a chain of rocks, where they have their own forests, pastures, corn-fields, and vineyards. It was formerly strongly fortified, and the remains of the walls, castle, and watch-tower still exist; but the most interesting objects in the little fairy island, are the caverns which the monks of the middle ages ingeniously constructed, for the purpose of protecting themselves and their property against the frequent devastations of the Turks.

The Balaton lake, termed, on account of its length (upwards of twenty leagues) the Sea of Hungary, deserves a visit from the traveller, were it for nothing else than to feast upon the rare and delicious fish called the *fogas* (a species of *perca lucioperca*) which, I believe, is only found in this lake, and frequently weigh as much as twenty pounds. [...]

[41] In some parts of the lake the banks are composed of curious fossil shells, among which there is one called by the peasants “goats’-feet”. This appellation owes its origin to an old legend of Hungary, to the effect that her great king and patron, St. Stephen,⁷ at one time a fugitive, wandered along

the banks of the lake; and being entirely destitute of resources, applied to a rich landed proprietor in the vicinity for hospitality, who inhumanly drove him from his door. The saint, violently incensed, cursed the churlish landholder, and all that belonged to him; when immediately pestilence swept away his cattle, fire consumed his houses, disease destroyed his family, and a dreadful hurricane hurled his numerous flocks of goats from the steep sides of the rocks into the lake: and that this wonderful legend should not want confirmation, their petrified hoofs are constantly being thrown up in the form of shells! [...]

Source

Travels in Circassia, Krim Tartary, &c. Including a Steam Voyage Down the Danube, from Vienna to Constantinople and Round the Black Sea, in 1836, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), vol. 1.

Notes

¹ The Pest spring fairs were held around St. Joseph’s Day (March 19).

² Correctly: *tótok* (plural of *tót*, i.e. Slovak).

³ The Hungarian word *mente*, mantle, derives from the German word *Mantel*.

⁴ The *Nemzeti Casino* (National Club), founded by Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860) in 1827, was a forum for the patriotic Hungarian nobility.

⁵ The author exaggerates. Only 5% of the total population of Hungary belonged to the nobility in the first half of the 19th century.

⁶ The reason why primogeniture always remained an exception to the rule in the Hungarian legal system is that it was bound to royal or imperial concession, which was never easy to procure.

⁷ St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary (1001–38).

Edmund Spencer was a British captain. Nothing more is known about him.

Handsome Streets, Fine Churches

NATHANAEL BURTON

[310] I was surprised to find the Arabic name for tobacco (dhuhaune) in common use in Hungary, whereas, in Turkey it is tututne, and in Wallachia tabak, though these countries are comparatively nearer where the Arabic language is spoken: how it found its way into Transylvania and Hungary I cannot imagine.

The season was so fine that I frequently slept in the small stacks of corn in the harvest fields; sometimes a shed received me; these stukes of corn were of a cruciform shape, so that I fitted nicely in one of [311] the recesses, drawing some of the sheaves over me, and with my quilt wrapped round me, escaped the night dew; I made use of this description of lodging, that with the greater facility I might



Temesvár

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Pest

resume my journey, and especially as I sometimes spent a sleepless night in the houses of entertainment, and considered it, in such cases, a loss of time, when I might be moving forward. [...]

[312] That part of Hungary through which my route lay was very level, the soil deep and sandy, which suited best my sandal-shod feet; the villages are all of the same form, consisting of a broad street, with trees planted on each side, the church generally situated in the middle of one side of the street; except in the larger towns they are all comparatively modern structures. The villagers have one common herdsman, who by the sound of his horn collects all their cattle, and tends them in the vicinity of the town, and in the evening brings them back again.

On the 5th of August I entered Temmeshwaur, in which there is an extensive and handsome market square; the tiled roofs of some of the churches are fancifully arranged so as to represent chalices, crosses, and letters; fruits were in great abundance, especially pears and plums. In the larger towns of

Hungary a group of black marble sculpture occupies the [313] centre of the great area or market-place, representing some great event connected with the history of their country, or the apotheosis of a saint – they appeared to me to be boldly executed.

Some of the peasants wear a sheep-skin cloak, shaped like a cope, (the wool only remaining on the border) adorned with round patches of red, few and far between; a black lamb or kid-skin, spread in its natural state, forms a cape, and lies on the back between the shoulders; when pacing slowly through the broad street of their villages, they have the appearance of grave senators. Throughout the country they were busily employed bringing home the harvest, which was most abundant. The Indian corn was not yet ripe.

As I entered a village on the 7th of August, I saw two hussars, and two servants in black, with black skin caps, and hessian boots, standing by their horses, as if waiting the arrival of some person of consequence; presently the bells of the parish

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

church began to peal, two carriages drove in, and a low-sized, fat man, stepped out, with a small red skullcap, and a blue silk tassel on his head; this personage I understood to be the bishop of Presburg, who I suppose is a cardinal¹ ... [...]

[314] The wine of Hungary is superior to any I had yet tasted – some of it red and full-bodied; melons are here very cheap, one can be had for a penny of our money; but flesh-meat, to which Englishmen are so accustomed, is dealt out with a sparing hand; it appeared to me, as if the giving it was a great favour, even though you paid for it; “nix fleish”, no meat, was most frequently the answer. German, Romanisti, Hungarian, and Latinish, are the languages used in Hungary; it struck me that the German and Romanisti or Wallachian were more generally spoken than the Hungarian itself.² [...]

[317] I arrived at Pesth, the capital of Hungary,³ on the evening of the 20th of August, and did not know what place I was entering till I found myself amidst some handsome streets, fine churches, and public buildings, and had even inquired how far I was from it. In a glass, at one of the shops, I had an opportunity of viewing myself, and turned away in horror. “*Quantum mutatus ab illo.*”⁴ My appearance was that of a wild man of the woods – it was neither Jewish, Turkish, nor [318] Christian. I had seldom fit opportunities of making my toilette. I was hirsute in the extreme-sleeping in all sorts of places, snatching irregular meals, and, above all, without proper changes of raiment.

I remained but one night at Pesth, and lay under some trees on the banks of the Danube, as it was impossible to obtain a lodging in the birtzhouses⁵ without a certificate from the police; and I did not

wish to attract their notice, as they had let me alone hitherto. In the country parts there is never any objection: I, therefore, seldom remained in the large towns when I could avoid it. Pesth is a fine place, and remarkably clean. It is quite a European city, but has since suffered much from the overflowing of the Danube, which is here of considerable breadth. There is a long wooden bridge across it that is very much thronged by passengers. The opposite side presents a most romantic view – heights, crowned with terraces and handsome houses, interspersed with woods and lawns. It was the first place that, as a city, I was satisfied with since my departure from Constantinople. [...]

Source

Narrative of a Voyage from Liverpool to Alexandria, Touching at the Island of Malta, and from Thence to Beirout in Syria; with a Journey to Jerusalem, Voyage from Jaffa to Cyprus and Constantinople, and a Pedestrian Journey from Constantinople, through Turkey, Wallachia, Hungary, and Prussia, to the Town of Hamburgh, in the Years 1836–37 (Dublin: John Yates, 1838). [Original footnotes omitted.]

Notes

¹ The author confuses Esztergom, whose archbishop was a cardinal, with Presburg (Pozsony).

² This is highly unlikely, given that about 50% of the total population of Hungary was ethnic Hungarian at the time.

³ The capital of Hungary was Pozsony, although Pest was undoubtedly the biggest town at the time.

⁴ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid*, II,274: “How changed from what he once was.”

⁵ Perhaps a *Bierhaus* (beer house)?

Nathanael Burton Nothing can be known about him.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

A Hungarian is Almost Necessarily an Accomplished Linguist

CH. B. ELLIOTT

[46] The steamer was crowded to excess, insomuch that it was no easy task to walk the deck. A hundred and sixty passengers, with boxes and packages innumerable, covered the poop, exhibiting a singular variety of costume and character. The majority were Hungarian nobles whom the diet had brought to Presburg. Among these were several intelligent, polite, and communicative men, who afforded a pleasing specimen of national character. Their conversation was carried on, as we had been led to expect, in Latin; and it was highly interesting to listen for the first time to that classic language employed as a living tongue. It sounds, so intimately associated with early days, seemed to place us once again in communion with authors familiar in our schools; while in the plain, honest, unsophisticated manners of our companions, fancy could almost trace something of those primitive characters which exercised the pens of the Roman satirist and comedian. This effect can never be produced by Italian, even when heard in Rome, nor by the polished, but less sincere, courtesies of the nobles of Italy. It is probable that the Hungarian, which resembles the Scotch, pronunciation of [47] Latin does not differ very much from the ancient ... [...]

A Hungarian is almost necessarily an accomplished linguist, and here every well educated man speaks six or seven tongues with facility: he must learn Sclavonian as the language of the peasantry; Latin, as that of the middle and [48] upper classes; and French, as that of universal Europe: being the subject of a German emperor, he must speak the language of his ruler; while circumstances bring

him into perpetual contact with Polish, Italian, and Wallachian.

As we sailed down the stream at an even rate of ten miles an hour, the native gentlemen pointed out every object of note in our route, furnishing the name and history of each successive locality. Through the charm of conversational interest cannot be transferred the paper, the facts can be recorded, and thus consigned to a guardianship more faithful than that of memory. [...]

[81] While halting at Tolna, a group of Hungarian peasants assembled round us. Their coats and trousers were made of coarse blanketing; the former thrown loosely over them and reaching nearly to the knee, with enormous pockets on each side. A broad-brimmed hat, or sometimes a brimless one, covered the long dark hair which hung about their swarthy faces either in lank locks or matted plaits. The children wore very little clothes, and squatted on their heels, after the Turkish fashion.

Tolna is famous for the production of the finest tobacco. This plant is said to have been introduced into the country in 1576; yet, though now considered as one of the necessities of life, its growth and use were prohibited till the beginning of the eighteenth century. The present annual consumption of tobacco and snuff in the Austrian dominions is almost incredible; being, as is said, at the rate of 60,000 cwt. of tobacco and 8,000 cwt. of snuff. [...]

[87] With the gipsies collected about the boat at Mohacs were a few Hungarian and Slavian peasants, and some Ratze. This is a term given in Hungary, by way of reproach, to the disciples of

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

the Greek church; and emphatically to those congregating in the eastern part of Slavonia, which has acquired the name of Ratza. In German and Hungarian it signifies *a rat*;¹ and possibly, having been first applied to some individual who forsook the Romish for the Greek heresy, it has now been extended to include all Greek Christians. If this conjecture be correct, the fact is curious, when regarded with reference to the application of the word *rat* to a political renegade in our own country. When a Greek becomes a Roman Catholic he is called Ruthen, a name derived from the Rutheni, the early inhabitants of the provinces of Beregh and Marmaros, who were the first in Hungary to acknowledge [88] the pope.

Source

Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey,
2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), vol. 1.

Note

- ¹ The word *rác* (German *Ratze*), which derives from the medieval name of Raška (Latin *Rascia*), a territory on both banks of the Danube and Tisza rivers, has nothing to do with rodents. As late as the mid 19th century the Serbs regarded the name insulting, however.

Charles Boileau Elliott (1803–1875) was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society. He was educated at Harrow and Queen's College, Cambridge. He was vicar of Godalming, Surrey, between 1833 and 1838, and rector of Tattingstone near Ipswich from 1838 until his death. He was the author of *Letters from the North of Europe ...* (London, 1832).



For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Sobri, Our Hungarian Robin Hood

G. R. GLEIG

[94] Then followed the pipe, without which neither German nor Hungarian could exist, and we were ready for our excursion.

"You asked me a question respecting banditti," said my companion, as we sat together on the rough hay couch which filled up the further extremity of the wagon. "Have you ever heard of our Hungarian Robin Hood, Sobri,¹ with whose exploits all the empire rang not long ago?"

I answered in the affirmative, but added, as the truth required, that my acquaintance with the bandit's history was very vague.

"Well then, if you please, I will give you an outline of the tradition which passes current for fact all over the country; and the tale will probably interest you the more, that it represents the man himself, as in some sort a brigand upon principle. There has never been a time when Hungary could be said to be free from banditti. The great extent of its plains, its enormous forests, and the scantiness of the population, all contribute to render concealment easy; and so destitute are our peasants [95] of the means of subsistence throughout the slack season of the year, that they are often driven, as a resource against starvation, to plunder. Almost all the fellows whom you see keeping pigs and cattle on the commons, become robbers as soon as winter sets in, and even now, I don't think that it would be prudent in any person, not in uniform, to join himself to their company. But that has nothing to do with my story.

"Sobri, who acted his part upon the stage so recently as twelve months ago, was, as my authorities declare, by birth a peasant. His father, however, who

had contrived to accumulate some little property, was ambitious of rearing him to the ministry in the Reformed church; and, after giving him as good a school education as circumstances would allow, he sent him to Pesth for the purpose of qualifying him for orders. But the more Sobri studied, the deeper was the chagrin which he experienced while contemplating his own degraded state, and that of his family. It is whispered, that the noble under whom they lived was apt to stretch his power to the utmost. But, however this may be, it is very certain that Sobri went to college a bitter enemy to the feudal institutions of his country [96], and that he soon began to inculcate his peculiar views upon the young men with whom he principally associated.

"From the utterance of complaints, these young enthusiasts proceeded, by degrees, to concert schemes of reform. They must regenerate their country; and as it was vain to think of operating on the patriotism of the rich or the reasoning faculties of the poor, they must appeal to the fears of the former class and the gratitude of the latter. They would go forth, and fight the battle of equal rights against all who should resist them. And forth they went, not to lift the standard of revolt and to rally round it men imbued with the same spirit which animated themselves, – for they knew that such were rare in Hungary, where the serf, hating his bondage, is yet incapable of making any serious effort to break the chain, – but to earn a livelihood for themselves by the sword; to rob the rich as often as an opportunity offered, and to minister, out of the abundance which they might thus acquire,

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

to the necessities of the poor. In any other quarter of civilized Europe, such a device must have ended in the speedy destruction of the contrivers. In Hungary it fully answered its purposes; and its authors for some years prowled [97] about, at once the terror and the admiration of the districts through which they roved.

“There is no end to the tales of Sobri’s gallantry, Sobri’s skill, Sobri’s disinterestedness, and Sobri’s humanity. The women all assert, that he was the handsomest man that ever was seen; and his age was precisely what it ought always to be in a romantic brigand. When he first took the field, he was about two-and-twenty; when he died, for he fell at last, he had not completed his twenty-ninth year. His band, likewise, was trusty, and obedient, and devoted. It is represented as varying from about an hundred and fifty to fifty men; and like the band of our own bold outlaw in Sherwood, it had the faculty of ubiquity. People heard of Sobri’s followers having robbed some castle, or waylaid some rich traveller, near Pesth; and next day some similar exploit was performed in the vicinity of Presburg. But it is time to enter into detail. [...]

[103] “Such was one tale, illustrative of the coolness and talent of that remarkable brigand. Another I may venture to give, as exhibiting both the sort of control which he was accustomed to exercise over his own people, and the degree of terror in which his name was held by the constituted authorities.

“It happened, once upon a time, that a travelling mechanic,” – (one of that class of persons of whom I have elsewhere spoken, as traversing Germany with their wares, and who follow the same practice in Hungary,) – “was pounced upon while skirting a wood, and robbed of all his little property. The men who plundered him, took away likewise his pass-book, – in other words, the certificate as to character which he had received at the police-office, and without exhibiting which, duly viséed from his last station, he was liable, on entering any town, to be arrested and cast into prison. The loss of his goods affected him very much, but the loss of this

document was even more serious. The first might be replaced, the last could not; and he wept bitterly at the thought of the probable consequences to his person and his [104] liberty. He was thus mourning his evil fate, when a cavalier, well mounted and handsomely dressed, met him. What was the matter? why did he shed tears? The poor fellow explained the nature of his misfortune, and the cavalier seemed affected by it. ‘Do you think that you should know the men who robbed you, if you were to see them again?’ demanded the stranger. ‘I have no doubt of that fact,’ was the reply. ‘Will you, then, come back with me? We will try to discover them, and make them restore your property.’ The poor mechanic, who believed that he had seen quite enough of such acquaintances, protested against the proposed plan, and entreated his generous champion to recollect the risks to which he would himself be exposed. ‘Oh, never you mind all that,’ replied the cavalier, ‘that is my concern, not your’s. Only come back with me, and I have no doubt we shall recover your effects.’

“They turned back, accordingly, and the stranger having been informed of the exact spot where the robbery was perpetrated, stopped there, and whistled thrice. Two men came immediately from the thicket, whom the traveller recognised as his tormentors. ‘How could you,’ cried the stranger, ‘so far forget yourselves, as to rob a poor fellow like this? [105] Are we become common thieves? shall we take from them who more require that we should give?’ He whistled again, and more people arrived, whom he commanded to seize and flog the perpetrators of the vile deed. This done, he caused them to disgorge their ill-gotten booty, and adding something considerable to it from his own purse, he restored all, the pass-book included, to the mechanic. ‘Now go,’ said he, addressing himself to the astonished traveller, ‘go and tell wherever you arrive, how it is that Sobri deals with his men, when they forget what is due to his orders, and their own character.’

“The astonished mechanic did not know what to make of the extraordinary adventures that had befall-

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

en him. He accepted Sobri's bounty, and repaired, with a glad heart, to the nearest town, where, in the exuberance of an overflowing spirit, he spoke, in the coffee-room of the inn, concerning the occurrences of the day. The authorities heard of it, and he was commanded to appear before them. 'You have seen Sobri?' was the substance of their address to him, 'and you will know him again? He is the terror of this neighbourhood. We offer you a reward of an hundred ducats if you will direct our officers where to find him.' [106] The poor fellow was taken all aback. One hundred ducats would have been a fortune to him, but then he could not bear the thought of betraying his benefactor, and he told the magistrates that though he should certainly know the brigand again, he was entirely ignorant of his haunts.

"That may or may not be," answered they; 'but we have certain information that he is at this moment prowling about the town or its outskirts, and if you refuse to assist us in apprehending him, we will commit you to prison as a participator in his crimes.' The magistrates in Hungary have a strange notion of law and justice, and these would have certainly kept their word; but the youth, who knew this, dissembled with them. 'Well, then, as I must seek a home elsewhere, when this deed shall have been done,' said he, 'you must make the reward more than an hundred ducats.' They did not object to this, and promised him one hundred and fifty.

"From the presence of the authorities the mechanic went forth, an alarmed and anxious man. Instead of wandering through the streets, he withdrew at

once beyond the limits of the town, and was walking on, the reverse of joyously, when a person met him, whom he would [107] have passed. 'What!' demanded the stranger, 'don't you know me? Have you already forgotten the cavalier who recovered for you your property?'

"No," replied the poor fellow, 'I knew you the instant you appeared; but I was willing to make as if I knew you not, for there is a price on your head.'

"I am aware of that," answered Sobri, 'and it is in order to obtain that price for you, that I am here. Go back immediately to the authorities; tell them where you have seen me, and say that I am sure to be in the same place at the same hour to-morrow. You need not add, unless you please, that I shall come attended by fifty of my men. Whether they give you the reward or not, they will not venture to seek me. Come you, however, and I will show you that Sobri knows as well how to reward good faith in a stranger, as how to punish bad faith among his own people.'

Source

Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary, Visited in 1837, 3 vols. (London: John W. Parker, 1839), vol. 3.

Note

- ¹ József Pap (1810–1837), also known as "Jóska Sobri", was a highwayman in the western part of Hungary.

George Robert Gleig (1796–1888) was a Scottish soldier and military writer. He took part in the Napoleonic wars and fought in five battles in the United States. After completing his studies at Oxford, he took holy orders. Gleig was Chaplain-General of the Forces from 1844 to 1875. From 1846 to 1857 he was Inspector-General of Military Schools. He was a frequent contributor to reviews and magazines, especially *Blackwood's Magazine*, in which his best-known novel, *The Subaltern*, appeared in installments. He was also the author of *Lives of Warren Hastings*, *Robert Clive*, *Wellington*, *Military Commanders*, *Chelsea Pensioners*, and other works.

The Horrors of the 15th

JULIA PARDOE



Buda Castle and a part of Pest

[9] From the 14th to the 15th the water continued sullenly and steadily to increase, spreading wider and wider, sapping and overthrowing dwellings, and drowning their panic-stricken inhabitants. But the day of horror – the acmè of misery – was the 15th itself. Pesth will probably never number in her annals so dark a day again – she might perhaps not be enabled to survive such another; – the mad

river, as that day dawned, rioted in ruin; and many looked upwards to the clear cold sky, and marvelled whether the Almighty promise was forgotten! [...]

[11] To attempt a description of the horrors of the 15th would be a vain as well as an ungraceful task; but nothing tended so utterly to bring them to a climax as the fall of the extensive Derra palace in the New Market-place. In vain did men murmur

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

to each other that the building had been defective in its construction, and unsound in its foundations: their misery was deeper than the cheat which they sought to put upon themselves; and from that moment those who yet enjoyed the shelter of a roof looked on their tem-[12]porary asylum with suspicion, and a general fear grew among the multitude that the whole city was crumbling about them.

Horror accumulated upon horror; the young and the fragile, unaccustomed to exposure in drenched and clinging garments, to the bleak wind of that chilly season, began to droop and sicken. Even amid the terrors which surrounded them, fathers of families who sat silently among their quailing children remembered that they had suddenly become beggars; and they glanced from their wretched offspring to the leaping and foaming waters about them, and listened to the crash of the falling houses which burst at intervals upon their ears, till they began to smile vaguely and fearfully, and to muse the wild musings of madness.

One miserable man – a merchant in prosperous circumstances – was seen early in the morning of that memorable day, standing with folded arms and gloomy brow, gazing upon the wreck of what had so lately been his happy and comfortable home. The roof had fallen in, for the foundation had failed; and one of the side walls having given [13] way beneath the pressure, a section of the house was laid bare, and the waters were rioting and brawling over his ruined property. The hour of noon arrived, and still there stood the sufferer, stern, and silent, and motionless: twilight fell, but he stirred not from his watch; nor was it until the increasing darkness hid from his view the spectacle of his worldly overthrow, that he started from his seeming reverie, and laughed, and shouted, and clapped his hands in wild and savage glee! Nero jested upon the flames which were consuming Rome, because they worked out his revenge – the maniac merchant gambolled, and mowed, and mocked the lashing waters that had beggared him – nor knew amid his frenzy, that he was making merry over the ruins of his own reason!

The 15th of March was, however, sufficiently terrible to the most sane and collected; and it is questionable whether the poor victims of temporary hallucination, shocking as it was to contemplate their wretchedness, did not escape much real suffering. All was misery, desolation, and despair ... [...]

[205] Having passed this mile of deep sand, through which our horses laboured until they were covered with foam, we arrived at the Ludovicia; an immense quadrangular block of building, having an interior octagonal court, surrounded by stretches of noble windows, separated by pilasters, with bold capitals, of which the centres were formed by knights in armour.

This edifice was originally designed as a military college for the young Hungarian nobility; and was erected by a vote from the Diet, assisted by a donation from Queen Ludovica, the consort of Francis II., who on the occasion of her coronation as Sovereign of Hungary, when it is the custom of the nation to present a sum of money as a coronation gift, out of the £25,000 given, remitted 50,000 florins (£5000) as her contribution towards the completion of the college ... [...]

[206] So far, all went well; the building was erected; and although it is by no means handsome in its exterior, being a solid square totally devoid of ornament, it is nevertheless imposing from its extreme size, and the interior arrangements are faultless; the corridors are well lighted and spacious, the apartments of magnificent dimensions, and the staircases of red marble almost regal.

Thus much being accomplished, a patriotic individual of large fortune, Count Butler¹, volunteered a further donation of £5000 on condition that the whole education of the students should be carried on in the Hungarian language; and many of the Magnates came forward with large sums on the same understanding; while the Diet, anxious to further the work, voted 400,000 silver [207] florins for the immediate necessities of the establishment, which was to be opened within a few months.



Szomolnok

The Government, however, at once opposed the wishes of the nation, and declared that the studies of the noble cadets should be pursued in German; an interference which so roused the indignation of the Hungarians, that the Magnates withheld their donations, and the Diet struck the deathblow of the institution by rescinding its princely vote, with the declaration that it would never lend its aid towards metamorphosing the young nobility of Hungary into German officers. [...]

[209] The National Museum was founded by the late Count Francis Szechényi,² who in 1802, presented to the country his fine library, and noble collection of Hungarian coins. His example was followed by several of his fellow Magnates; and the impetus once given, the collection was rapidly increased by donations from all parts of the king-

dom. The land necessary for the erection of the Museum was also contributed; and the building was commenced, when the frightful inundation of 1838 overthrew for the moment all the arrangements of the authorities.

Many of the articles were injured, and others entirely destroyed by that fearful visitation; but, nevertheless, brief as the period of its existence had been, the Museum of Pesth is well worthy of a second visit, though the first may have extended to many hours' duration.

One large apartment had been appropriated to the minerals: and although numerically the collection cannot for an instant compete with that of Vienna, there are decidedly a few specimens in [210] the cabinets perfectly unrivalled. The opals are magnificent, and the amethysts and chalcedony

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

the finest I ever saw. Masses of native gold from Kremnitz; pure silver from Selmecz; copper from Schmölnitz; coal from Orovitza and Fünfkirchen; and rock-salt from Transylvania, are among the many national productions in the mineralogical room; the marbles are also very beautiful and extremely various. The animals and birds contained in the next section of the Museum are all indigenuous, like the minerals ... [...]

Source

The City of the Magyar, or Hungary and Her Institutions in 1839–40, 3 vols. (London: G. Virtue, 1840), vol. 2.

Notes

- ¹ Count János Buttler (?–1845), the main character of Kálmán Mikszáth's (1847–1910) novel, *Különös házasság* [A Strange Marriage] (1900).
- ² Count Ferenc Széchenyi (1754–1820), István Széchenyi's father.

Julia Pardoe (1806–1862) was an English poet, novelist, historian and traveler. She is the author of more than two dozen books. To modern readers she is probably best known for her books on her travels in Turkey, which are some of the earliest works by a woman on this area. In 1836 she traveled to Constantinople with her father, Major Thomas Pardoe. This voyage inspired her book *The City of the Sultan* (1836). Later she collaborated with the artist William Henry Bartlett to produce *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* (1839), an illustrated account of Constantinople.



The Clangour of Musicians

J. G. KOHL

[210] In all songs in which the praises of the sparkling goblet, or the jovial bowl would be heard among us, those of the *tshuttora* resound in Hungary. These vessels were made in the earliest times exactly as they are now, and there is little doubt that the nomadic tribes who wandered first into Hungary came with the *tshuttora*¹ round their necks.

Among the clay vessels was also one used for baking a sort of paste, the *tarhonya*, an indispensable article in the steppes of Hungary. It is composed of meal and sour milk, which is completely dried and baked over the fire, and then rubbed to powder. In this state it can be kept good a whole summer, nay, sometimes two or three years, and is a very useful article to shepherds, herdsman, and others who lead a lonely life, especially as they are apt to live far too much on animal food and fat. A good handful of this farinaceous preparation, thrown over their dish of pork, tends, it is said, to preserve them from a disease very prevalent here, called "*tshomor*",² and which is supposed to be occasioned by eating too much fleshmeat. [...]

[212] At the entrance of the market was planted a cohort of dealers in Paprika, who had sacks full of this red pepper, so violently pungent, that a little on the point of a knife was enough, to our taste, to spoil a dish, but of which astonishing quantities are eaten by the natives. In the hotels, all sorts of Paprika dishes are brought – Paprika beef, Paprika bacon, Paprika fish, etc.; – but among the common people the Paprika is so universally understood, that it is seldom mentioned. One might think that every thing in Hungary grew seasoned with Paprika, bread being the only exception. [...]

[213] It was at this fair I first heard the celebrated Hungarian gipsy music, in a large dancing-booth, where *déjeuners*, *diners*, and *thés dansants* were going on the whole day. The company was wholly composed of peasants; and the narrowness of the space in which they moved, was compensated amply by their zealous endeavours to make the most of it. They lifted up, swung round, let go, and caught up again, their fair ladies, in a most vigorous and praiseworthy style; and the noise of stamping equalled that of a hundred threshing-machines. The heat was overpowering, and the dust suffocating; for, besides what was raised by the toils of the dancers, clouds came in at the open doors and windows, from the fair outside, where herds of cattle were moving in all directions; and the sensations occasioned by heat and dust were not diminished by the clangour of the gipsy musicians, with their trumpets and cymbals. [...] The Germans in general play none but German, French, or Italian music; but the gipsies the true national compositions of Hungary, which breathe a peculiar spirit, and are distinguished by certain original turns and phrases, which I never remember to have heard anywhere else. There is, however, a strong resemblance between all these Hungarian gipsy melodies, and it is easy for any one who has heard one of them, to recognise others. Among the Tatars, also, at least among those of the Crimea, the gipsies are the usual musicians; I had often heard them there, but could not recollect enough of their music to know whether it resembled what I heard in Hungary.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

I could easily understand the partiality manifested by the people generally for this music, for there is something in its character so wild and impassioned – it has tones of such deep melancholy, such heart-piercing grief, and wild despair, that one is involuntarily carried away by it; and although, on the whole, the performance of the gipsies is rude and wild, many of them manifest so much of real musical inspiration, as may well make amends for their deficiencies in scientific culture. There are several gipsy bands which are celebrated throughout Hungary, and some of the patriotic journals even cite with rapture some performers of the last century. Anecdotes also often seen in these papers tending to exalt these gipsy favourites above their more renowned brethren of the divine art. Thus, for instance, we are told of some pieces of Beethoven having been performed on a certain occasion, and received with immense applause, when some gipsy musicians entering, and playing some simple “Magyar Notas”,³ the whole assembly was silent, and melted into tears. Even the German performers are sometimes compelled to learn some of these “Magyar Notas”, with which they will often conclude, in order to leave a favourable impression on the minds of their audience, and “*Egy Magyar Nótát*”, (Now play us something Hungarian) is a common request at the close of more elaborate foreign compositions. There is, however, much monotony in this, as in all other national music, and the more cultivated even of native auditors are glad, after a while, to return to the greater variety and intellectual richness of our German compositions. [...]

[341] Szegedin is one of the most patriotic cities of Hungary, far more so than Pesth. Indeed it is often happens that provincial towns exceed the capital of the country in patriotism; besides, it has been often observed that the Slovaks and Servians converted to Magyarism, go further in their Magyarmania than the original Magyars themselves.

I spent the evening at the Szegedin club, in very entertaining mixed society. Throughout my journey in Hungary I always greatly enjoyed these clubs, which are now established in all the principal

towns of Hungary, and I often anticipated during the whole day the pleasures of the evening’s social meeting. Our conversation at these meetings turned usually on politics, and mostly on German politics. The Hungarians watch the proceedings of the German as we do those of the French and English. They take a lively interest in the proceedings of our constitutional states; receive with indignation the tidings of any unconstitutional or arbitrary movement on the part of a German government, and manifest the warmest admiration and sympathy when they perceive any evidence of high-spirited and independent patriotism in the people of a German state. I found all the Magyars full of admiration and delight at the noble bearing of the Hanoverians, and many a distinguished and warm-hearted Hungarian commissioned to carry back with me to Hanover the assurance of his hearty sympathy, and cordial admiration to Rumann⁴ and his noble associates. If Rumann were ever to come to Hungary he would be welcomed with the same universal respect and esteem which greeted Lafayette in America – but *certain other people who shall be nameless*, had better keep away from Hungary. [...]

[343] The herdsman and drivers of the *Pusten* are all extremely hospitable in their way, and will rob their neighbours without hesitation to entertain a guest. An Hungarian gentleman told us, how, stopping once at a lonely Sallash⁵ in the Puste, he found there was nothing whatever to eat in the house. “That is no matter, I’ll manage”, said a little lad twelve years of age. The boy went out, and in a little while the traveller heard a sheep bleating, then a fire blazing, and finally a joint of meat crackling and hissing before the fire. This little urchin had stolen a sheep, killed it, lighted a fire, and roasted the mutton for the stranger’s entertainment. The fact is, that sheep and oxen are looked on in this part of the world almost in the light of *feri naturae*.⁶ [...]

[344] These people are very superstitious, and, probably, like all uncultivated races, they are firm believers in the power of the evil eye. They have



Horse-herder

many other ways of enchanting their enemies; for instance they write certain evil words on a little piece of paper, twist it up into a ball covered with cotton and throw it in their enemy's path; if he treads upon it, they confidently expect that the evil wish will be fulfilled. On this account, the Hungarians take a great care to avoid treading upon any thing that lies in their path. Another favourite superstition of theirs, is a firm belief in the power of exciting love through the agency of sorcery. The process consists in boiling certain herbs by moonlight, at certain hour, and immediately walling up the hot scum in the fire hearth. The name of the person whom it is wished to inspire with love must be solemnly pronounced over the operation, after which he or she so *ensorcelé*⁷ will be filled with an irresistible desire to share the said hearth with its possessor.

It is singular how many superstitions are common to all times and nations. Some incantations will be

found in practice in the most distant parts of the earth, in precisely the same forms, often to the very same cabalistical words. This is often the case where it is as difficult to believe in a common psychological origin, as in an historical transmission from the one nation to the other.

The belief in witches has been prevalent even among the higher classes of Hungarians till very lately. There is an island on the Theiss, near Szegedin, upon which a lady of high rank, after a regular trial, was burnt as a witch, in 1746.⁸ This is, however, the less to be wondered at when we remember that in Holland, so late as the beginning of this century, a woman was drowned as a witch by some peasants. The general gathering place of Hungarian witches, bears the same name as that of Germany. It is the Blocksberg near Buda.

The weddings and funerals of Hungarian peasants, are conducted with the same stiffness, formality, and ceremonious etiquette, as those of a Spanish court. My ecclesiastical travelling-companion whiled away the tiresome journey over the dreary *Puste* for me, by relating the following particulars of an Hungarian peasant's wedding.

When a young peasant takes a fancy to a girl, either for her beauty, or her other good qualities, or perhaps from some prudential consideration, he imparts his wishes in the first place to some friends, whose duty it is to present themselves before the lady, and acquaint her with the amorous desires of their friend Andresh, Yanosh, or Petrushka.⁹ It is customary always to make this visit at twilight. The lady will, of course, not hear of it at first; she declares that she will never marry, and least of all this same unlucky Andresh, Yanosh, or Petrushka. This declaration is a matter of course and means nothing. The suitors must repeat their twilight visits, and use all their persuasive eloquence, to which the lady gradually yields, and at last declares that if they will have it so, so the lover may present himself, and try his own powers of persuasion.

The lover's first visit is a very important step towards marriage, and is the stiffest and most

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

embarrassing scene possible. The relations are all present, and present the young girl to him, who from this time forward calls him her *Volageny*,¹⁰ or bridegroom. It is etiquette for the bride to be extremely timid, shy, and bashful, during this visit. She has in the [345] mean time embroidered a fine handkerchief, which she holds in her hand, till she can take courage to present it to him. This presentation of the handkerchief is the token of the bride's consent, and constitutes a regular engagement. The bridegroom places it in his bosom, but in such a way that a large portion of it may hang out ostentatiously, which it continues to do on every festive occasion in token of victory.

Many other visits follow, all of the same stiff and ceremonious nature, and all marked by various gifts, until the wedding-day. After the ceremony, the bride and bridegroom each return to their own houses to entertain separate parties of guests. After this has continued for some time, the bridegroom sends to the bride's house, inviting her and her guests to come and join him. She at first refuses to come. He sends a second time and she promises to come, but does not do so. It is not till the third invitation, that she leaves her paternal home, and enters that of her husband. Here a great feast is held, of wine, white bread, meat, fish, brawn, porridge, *Belesh*¹¹ (a kind of cake made of twenty thin flakes of dough with slices of apple between), and other favourite Hungarian dishes. Etiquette, however, forbids the sad and timid bride to taste any of these dishes; if she were to do so, the whole Puste would be scandalized.

The wedding feast ended, one of the most important of the marriage ceremonies, the "binding of the head", follows. The bride's hair, which, until now, she has worn loose and hanging down, is gathered up into a very elaborate knot, and the plaits are smoothly laid round her head, after which the head-



Welcoming the bride

cloth, worn by matrons, is carefully folded upon it. This done, the friends of the bride go round, taking a washhand-basin, in which each washes his hands or affects to do so, and at the same time drops a small piece of money into the water. With this the day's ceremonies conclude. The next morning a grand breakfast concludes the whole wedding ceremonial.

It is customary at Hungarian funerals, for the sexton to make a long speech in the name of the deceased, taking leave of his relatives, and expressing all the might be supposed to feel on leaving them. This funeral oration the Hungarians call the *Butsusztato*,¹² and they are very particular to have it of good quality, and well delivered. [...]

[348] The Haiducks¹³ who, as before said, are of Magyar origin, and the Kumanes,¹⁴ probably a kindred race, are now in speech, costume, and manners, completely *Magyarized*. This is the case, also, with reference to their religion; and although they remained heathens longer than any other part of the population, they, as well as the Hungarians, took a zealous part at the time of the reformation. The Haiducks and the people of Great Kumania, are nearly all protestants; the Yazyges,¹⁵ nearly all



Onion seller

catholics; the inhabitants of Lesser Kumania are divided pretty equally between the two religions.

Nevertheless, pure Magyars, as they are all esteemed, there exist, I think, many differences, though they are little heeded. That their free constitution, and the warlike spirit yet alive among them, must call forth such differences, may be *à priori* understood. That they have had this effect was made evident at the time of the last recruitment in the year 1840. In other parts of Hungary the recruits, although chosen by lot, were occasionally brought to their colours by force. The Kumanes (those of Lesser Kumania at least) took up the matter in a more soldierlike spirit. All the male population, capable of bearing arms, were called together, and assembled with drums and military music, on

the market-place of Felegyhaz. Here a table was placed, at which their captains, with their secretaries, presided. Near at hand uniforms, with shakos¹⁶ and arms, were displayed; all who felt a desire for martial glory came forward of their own accord, and had their names inscribed. A uniform was then fitted on, and the new candidate for military honours marched off, fully equipped. In this manner their whole contingent was furnished. [...]

[364] I requested my obliging young hostesses to sing me another song, which they immediately did. As I am not able to render this in a good metrical form, I translate it literally. The title is

*Menet a Kedvescher.*¹⁷

(The Ride to the Beloved One by the Platten Lake.¹⁸)

1. On the dry earth falls the hoar frost. Eat not, dear horse, it might give thee pain. Dearest, I will buy thee a silken bridle and a velvet saddle, so thou bear me to my delight.
2. Hard roll the clods under thy feet. Dear horse, heed well thy feet; fly with me to my heart's dear Rose, for away from her my soul pines in deep sorrow.
3. See the moon begins to shine brightly; so pure it never before appeared. O shed thy beams on me, that I may not lose myself in the darkness.
4. See the Balaton glances brightly before us. Thou sparkling lake, thou wilt not pour thy waters over the land, and bar my path. O beautiful Balaton, shed not thy waters o'er my path. See, I should bring my poor horse in danger.
5. Hold my good steed, we are at our goal. Look there, a light glimmers feebly through her window. See, there sits a young brown maiden slumbering. What ho! my sweet girl, slumber not, thy lover waits without.

"You must know", said my kind and song-loving *Ingrin*, "that the Platten See, in some places really overflows its banks, and makes the road often

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

impassable; and moreover our Hungarian youths have the custom of modestly visiting their mistresses at their windows, and there conversing with them.”

I told them that Shakspeare [!] had chosen the same situation for his two lovers in “Romeo and Juliet.” In the fourth verse, I added, there was a particular delicacy in the rider’s petitioning the lake, not for himself, but for his horse; and I was pleased with the fancy of trying to make the [365] animal believe grazing would be hurtful to him, and with the flattering promise of a velvet saddle and silken bridle.

“Note also the dark maiden,” said the singer, “the Hungarians love nothing but brown or black hair. Fair girls do not please, and the poor, pale, light hair seems downright ugly to them. You will never hear the charms of a blonde extolled in an Hungarian, as you do in so many a German song.” [...]

Source

Austria. Vienna, Prague, Hungary, Bohemia, and the Danube; Galicia, Styria, Moravia, Bukovina, and the Military Frontier (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843).

Notes

- ¹ A *csutora* is a wooden wine flask.
- ² *Csőmör*, i.e. nausea, loathing.
- ³ *Magyar nóta*: the Hungarian expression can mean both folk songs and popular songs.
- ⁴ Rudolph Wilhelm Philipp Rumann (1784–1857) was a politi-

cian in the Kingdom of Hanover, Germany, and *Stadtdirektor* (urban director) of the city of Hanover (1824–43).

- ⁵ The early lodgings (*szállás*) of the Great Plain were temporary structures built on the outskirts of settlements to which they belonged. From the end of the 18th century the earlier name *szállás* fell out of use, except in the southern part of the linguistic territory, and was replaced by *tanya* (farmstead), originally a word used by fishermen for their abodes.
- ⁶ The legal term designates, among other things, vagrant and/or fugitive animals presumed to be *res communis omnium*, or public estate, and therefore the property of the occupant.
- ⁷ Bewitched or spell-bound.
- ⁸ The reference is to the last witch trial in Hungary.
- ⁹ András and János are common Hungarian surnames, whereas Petruska is a Slavonic nickname for Péter (Peter).
- ¹⁰ Correctly: *vőlegény*.
- ¹¹ *Béles* is a soft sweet sponge cake.
- ¹² *Búcsúztató*: farewell or valedictory.
- ¹³ The *hajdú* were mercenary foot-soldiers who appeared in the middle of the 16th century in Hungarian history. They gained their name from their occupation: *hajdú* meaning herdsman, driver, and *hajt* meaning to drive.
- ¹⁴ The Cumans were a nomadic Turkic people. Some of their groups settled in Hungary and maintained their own self-government in a territory that bore their name, Kunság, which survived until the 19th century. There, the name of the Cumans (*kun*) is still preserved in county names such as Bács-Kiskun and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and town names such as Kiskunhalas and Kunszentmiklós.
- ¹⁵ The lazygs or Jassic (*jász*) are a Hungarian ethnic group of Ossetic origin. They settled in Hungary during the 13th century and populate the Jászság region in the northwestern part of present-day Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County.
- ¹⁶ *Csákó*: shako.
- ¹⁷ Correctly: *Menet a kedveshez*.
- ¹⁸ Lake Balaton is referred to in German as the Plattensee, or “flat lake.”

Johann Georg Kohl (1808–1878) was a German travel writer and geographer. His main scientific work, *Der Verkehr und die Ansiedlungen der Menschen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der Gestalt der Erdoberfläche* [The Transport and the Settlements of the People in Their Dependence on the Shape of the Earth’s Surface] (1841, 1850) is regarded as the founding document of modern transport and urban geography. Using Moscow as an example, he formulated a mathematical theory for the development of spherical cities and how eventually these cities would develop skyscrapers and underground shopping centers. Also fundamental to theoretical geography was his *Die geographische Lage der Hauptstädte Europas* [The Geographical Location of the Capitals of Europe] (1874).

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The Capital of an Empire

WILLIAM BEATTIE

[166] Presburg, till the close of the last century the capital of Hungary, had undergone few changes in size or features, but remained in much the same condition as that described by most of our old travellers on the Danube: nor indeed have the events of the last half century materially affected either the architectural appearance or civic population of Presburg. The former is by no means striking; but in the latter there is much, notwithstanding the Austrian frontier, to excite a pleasing conviction in the tourist's mind that he is in Hungary. The town occupies a spacious and beautiful plain, and is surrounded by fortifications, consisting of a wall and ditch. The suburbs are built, for the most part, on an eminence, and on a rather steep and commanding hill stands the royal citadel, or palace, of a quadrangular form, with a [167] strong tower at each corner. Originally it was richly ornamented internally with paintings by eminent masters, illustrating the life and character of Ferdinand II.; and in every subject selected for the canvass, was seen an exact resemblance of the emperor's face. In one of the towers were kept the ancient crown and regalia of Hungary: the entrance to the citadel was through three iron doors; and between the two first of these were posted the guards, who could then see every one who approached the royal entrance. [...]

[169] In the Cathedral of Presburg, a Gothic structure of great antiquity, the Kings of Hungary are crowned with much solemnity. The new king is then conducted on horseback to an artificial mound on the left bank of the Danube; and there, ascending the eminence, and drawing the sword of

St. Stephen,¹ he makes the sign of the cross – east, west, north, and south – thereby pledging himself to defend his faithful subjects, at whatever point danger may threaten. The Hungarian Diet, so familiar to every reader, consists of “four states or orders, namely, the bishops and abbots; secondly, the magistrates or great nobles, who are called magnates; thirdly, the knights; and finally, the free citizens. Of this assemblage the two former orders appear in person, and constitute what is called a magnate-table; but the two latter, which form what is called the state-table appear by their representatives. The understanding is that they are to assemble every third year, but this depends upon the royal pleasure.” Until within the last few years, all parliamentary debates were generally conducted in Latin; but the more natural language now introduced is the Hungarian, into which several of our most approved English classics have been lately translated, and which is now cultivated with success by the mass of the people, and by native writers of genius and distinction. This form of national assembly has existed upwards of seven centuries. [...]

[174] The next place of more than common interest, is the Kronflecken, or royal borough of Wissegrad, which was formerly one of the largest and most flourishing towns in Hungary. The ruined castle which crests the lofty hill overlooking the Danube, was once a favourite summer residence of the old Magyar kings, who had magnificent gardens here, and took their pleasure on those vine-clad heights of the Danube in right sovereign style. But like all royal palaces of that day it contained also a prison; and here, at the

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Pozsony

beginning of the twelfth century, King Salomon was held, like another Coeur-de-Lion, in durance-vile by his 'affectionate cousin' Ladislaus.² – The tower, seen on the left of the accompanying wood-cut, was the fastness to which the royal captive was consigned, and is still a lofty and substantial prison, with an outlook to the river, which must have been very refreshing to the captive monarch, as he felt the cool free air on his fevered cheek, and meditated some new plan for escape. The sovereign, who is said to have expended most money on the castle, and who spent most time within its walls, was Matthias Corvinus, whose style of living, and the taste he displayed in its embellishment, were the theme of constant admiration among the ambassadors and strangers who frequented his court. But at the invasion of the Turks, under Sultan Solymán,³ the royal Castle of Wissegrad, was doomed to plunder; and being afterwards dismantled in its works of defence and defaced in all its embellishments

by the Emperor Leopold,⁴ it has continued from that day to be a deserted and crumbling ruin – a monument of that destiny which, sooner or later, throws prostrate the loftiest works of man; or, in seeming derision of his pride, invests them with a mantle of noxious weeds. But in the present instance, the fortress would have presented a noble front for many generations to come, had not the security of the empire demanded the sacrifice, and rendered its destruction as necessary, perhaps, as its first erection. But whatever regret may intrude itself into his thoughts, as the traveller now casts his eye over its stately ruins, it will be infinitely lessened when he reflects that, in proportion as these frowning citadels have been diminished, the peace and prosperity of the country have increased; and that, upon the whole, these ramparts look quite as picturesque when fringed with trees and weeds, as when they bristled with cannon, and echoed to the tramp of armed warriors.

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Visegrád

[176] Buda, or Ofen, the old Hauptstadt, or capital of Lower Hungary, presents itself to the stranger under a very interesting and novel aspect. It differs greatly in many respects from the other cities, which he may have visited in his descent of the Danube, and exhibits, both in its outward appearance and internal arrangements, much that is strictly oriental in character and association. The population, according to the last return, amounted to twenty-nine thousand. It is the residence of the Prince Palatine, or Viceroy,⁵ the seat of the Supreme Courts of Hungary, of the civil and military tribunals, the head-quarters of the army, the residence of the Governor-general, and of several others holding the principal offices in the state. It has also two bishops of the Greek church; an archigymnasium, the university library,

an observatory, an arsenal, and a large theatre. The town is divided into six departments; namely, the upper town, or fortress, and the lower town; then into four suburbs, consisting of the Landstrasse, Neustift, Raitzenstadt, and Christina-Stadt. The sulphur-baths of Ofen have maintained their reputation during the lapse of many ages; while the vineyards crowning the adjoining promontory – the Eugenischen Vorgebirge⁶ – produce that well-flavoured red wine, which among numerous [177] others for which Hungary is so celebrated, holds a distinguished place as the ‘Ofnerwein.’ On the Festungsberge, or Hill of the Fortress, stands the royal Schloss, the Prince Palatine’s residence.

In the chapel attached to the palace are preserved the ancient regalia of Hungary; namely, the crown, ball and sceptre, mantle, gloves, shoes, and swords

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Buda

of St. Stephen, with a silver crosier – relics which are guarded with extreme vigilance – for it was long believed that with their safe custody the prosperity of the kingdom was indissolubly connected. The approach to the Palatine Palace is very precipitous, the height on which it is built being inferior only to that of the Blocksberg, the highest rock near Buda. The road is truly regal, being of great width, well planted with chestnut-trees, and admirably kept; and while on the right hand the noble timber of the palace-garden is perceptible above the ancient and war-battered wall, you look from the left across an extensive vineyard, upon a wide stretch of the time-honoured city of Buda, rising amphitheatrically against the side of the Blocksberg, and stretching far away over the valley. [...]

[180] The old Turkish bath, already alluded to, is well deserving of a visit – for of all the strange scenes to be met with, between Ulm and Sulina,⁷ this presents one of the strangest. At your first entrance you are apt to start back, or at least to advance with a

very hesitating step – for the first impression on your mind is that you are about to plunge into the water, and it is some time before you can distinguish the lip of the bath from the surrounding pavement, which is moist and slippery with the vapour. But as soon as the eye is accustomed, and can accommodate itself to the gloom, a huge basin is observable in the centre of the apartment, surrounded by Turkish arches, with a dome overhead, and one or two orifices to admit the light. In this steaming basin, or reservoir, groups of both sexes – the “fair and the false,” as one of their own number expressed it – were luxuriously indulging in the pleasures of hot water – screaming, hallooing, pushing, jostling, jumping on one another’s shoulders, and making the old arches re-echo to their boisterous mirth. In the mean time, a coterie of old crones, encircling the fount, where the hot liquid sulphur gushes out to supply the bath, were diligently presenting their half-bald sconces, and long gray matted hair, to the purifying influence of the warm cascade – fondly hoping, as we imagined, that each successive *jet-d’eau*⁸

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



Pest

would sweep off some little colony of intruders. Looking round us we observed that those who had already undergone the steaming process were reposing themselves on the smooth, cool, marble floor; cracking their jokes upon those who were still in the ordeal, extolling the virtues of the water, or breaking forth, with a sort of cracked melody, into snatches of some old Hungarian song. [...]

Pesth. This city, like the new town of Edinburgh, is of modern date, and nothing can be more striking than the contrast it presents to that of Buda, whose antiquated [181] features, and primitive character we have just attempted to sketch. Connected with the old capital by a magnificent suspension-bridge – by far the finest object on the Danube – Pesth, in style and appearance, has a very imposing aspect; and although it does not carry the mind back beyond a century, it certainly presents to the eye one of the most splendid creations of modern enterprise. It combines in its public buildings some of the best specimens of Italian architecture; and, in its spacious well-built rectilinear streets, presents

models of excellent design, which the founders of modern cities would do well to study and imitate. The quay bordering the Danube for upwards of a mile is unique; the public offices, churches, and private houses, which front that scene of bustle and commercial activity, are all on a scale befitting the capital of an empire; while their position, on the verge of a magnificent river, gives admirable effect to the whole, and leaves an impression never to be effaced. It would be difficult to imagine a scene, the result of human genius and industry, more extraordinary than the city of Pesth; but the effect is doubly striking when viewed from the heights of Buda, or more particularly the Blocksberg – the natural watch-tower of the place. The foundation of this city, the new Buda, dates from no remoter period than the reign of Maria Theresa⁹ and her son, the Emperor Joseph,¹⁰ whose short life and reign were devoted to the welfare of his subjects – to the reformation of abuses – the strict administration of the laws – and to the liberal encouragement of the arts and sciences. In looking at Pesth, as the result of

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

his patronage, we may use the well-known epitaph, so concisely applied to one of our own great men – ‘*Monumentum si quaeris, circumspice!*’¹¹ [...]

[189] The Blocksberg, of which the best view is from the quay opposite, forms a very imposing and colossal feature in the front of Pesth. It is crowned by a fortress with an observatory, for the use of the university, and projects in several distinct promontories towards the river – here rugged and precipitous, there broken into fissures and ravines, and here again carpeted with fresh verdure and fringed with lichen and low shrubbery. At its base it is girdled with houses – part of Ofen, and closely bordering the Danube, which at this point, according to Meyer,¹² is upwards of four hundred yards in breadth. But if the view *of* the Blocksberg itself be a striking object from the quay, the view *from* the Blocksberg is doubly so. [...] Behind the hill, and indeed wheresoever the spectator turns his eyes, extensive vineyards mantle the acclivities, interrupted here and there by wide fields of corn, and variegated with pastures, orchards, and gardens. It was from the precipitous margin of this rock that Attila, according to tradition, hurled his offending brother into the Danube.¹³ How glad would his friends the Roman people have been, had they caught him in the Forum, to have made a similar experiment with Attila, from the Tarpeian Rock. Here also St. Gerard¹⁴ is said to have planted the first seeds of Christianity in Hungary, and to have suffered martyrdom in the cause. The people still call the hill by his name; but the sanctity of the spot, according to [190] their authority, has not protected it from being an occasional rendezvous for civil spirits! During the inundation, for example, the summit was crowded with these unhallowed visitors; and such was their mirth and revelry, whilst from this commanding point they looked down on the perishing city, that peals of fiendish laughter bore testimony to the pleasure which the destruction of our race afforded them. Afterwards too – although we do not vouch for the truth of so weighty a charge – it appeared that various astronomical instruments

belonging to the observatory had been turned to diabolical purposes; for the first visitor who made use of the glasses after their fiendish appropriation, could see neither moon nor stars as heretofore; but in place thereof, he beheld a dance of witches, with Prince Beelzebub at their head – and what was unspeakably worse, with a near and dear earthly relative of his own, acting as a chief partner to his Satanic Majesty. Frantic at the sight, he shouted out “Holy St. Gerard! is that my own wife Adelheide!” No reply – but down dropped the glass from his hand, and, happily for the sight of others, was broken in pieces – He rushed home; and there, at his own hearth, sat his weird-wife, rocking her baby in its cradle. But, as he very shrewdly observed, she was greatly flurried and disconcerted. He was fortunately a learned man, and having read that edifying author, ‘Adolphus Scribonius de Purgatione Sagarum, &c.,’¹⁵ he remembered that this philosopher lays it down as an indisputable fact, that witches weigh infinitely less than other persons – for, says he, “the devil is a spirit and a subtle being, and penetrateth so thoroughly the bodies of his votaries, as to make them quite rare and light.” Now, this thought no sooner struck our hero, than he resolved to try the test, and seizing his witch wife with both arms, he threw her up almost to the ceiling – and might indeed, as it turned out, have done so with his three fingers – for in fact, with all her apparent bulk, she did not weight four ounces! Now, if any philosopher ever had just cause to run mad, Herr Reisenschloss undoubtedly had. To the glory of his favourite author his experiment, indeed, had been perfectly successful – but when he looked at his wife, at the cradle, and his household gods! – (and we need not weaken the picture by dwelling upon it,) – he became quite frantic, darted out the house, and confusedly relating the frightful story to a sympathizing friend, found refuge in the wards of a public hospital. It has now, in consequence, become a favourite maxim in the neighbourhood of the Blocksberg, that husbands should never consult the stars too narrowly on “St. Gerard’s eve;” and

if there be any of our readers so incredulous as to doubt the veracity of the above, we can only resent it by commiserating their scepticism. [...]

[191] Processions in Hungary, formed of a numerous concourse of pilgrims, are of frequent occurrence and highly picturesque. The dress of the peasants here consists in general of a sheep-skin cloak, a broad blanket-like coat, and a round felt hat. They are often remarkable for a fine, but vacant countenance – a classic cast of features, but inanimate, and marked with a dreamy listlessness. Some of them seem burnt almost black, like Asiatics, crouching in corners, and when not employed, sleeping, like the Lazaroni¹⁶ at Naples, on the quay. These form the chief constituency of pilgrimages; and when carrying crosses, banners, and effigies of saints, and chanting lugubrious anthems in their praise, these peasant devotees are to be seen in all their glory. Such is one of the processions here represented; behind is seen the old bridge of boats, over which a long train of pilgrims is passing. [...]

Source

The Danube. Illustrated in a Series of Views Taken Expressly for this Work by W. H. Bartlett (London and New York: Virtue & Co., [1844]). [Original footnotes omitted.]

William Beattie (1793–1875) was a Scottish physician, author and historian. In 1812–17 he studied medicine at Edinburgh University, where he took his M.D. degree in 1818. Afterwards he was a physician in Cumberland, Dover, etc. In 1823–24 he spent two years traveling and studying in Italy, Switzerland and on the Rhine. In 1822, 1825, and 1826 he traveled on the Continent with the Duke of Clarence (later King William IV). In the 1830s he published a series of descriptive and historical works, illustrated by his friend and traveling companion William Henry Bartlett (cf. p. 47, above) on Switzerland, Scotland, the castles and abbeys of England, and the Danube. Some of his works were translated into German and French. He was foreign secretary of the British Archeological Society, fellow of the Ethnological Society, as well as member of the Historical Institute and of the Institut d’Afrique, Paris.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Notes

- ¹ For St. Stephen, see above, p. 35, note 7.
- ² St. Ladislaus I, king of Hungary (1077–95). The implied reference is to Richard I, the Lionheart, king of England (1189–99), who was held captive by Leopold V, duke of Austria, at Dürnstein in 1192–94.
- ³ Suleiman I, the Magnificent (1520–66), the longest-reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire.
- ⁴ Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (1658–1705) and king of Hungary (1655–1705).
- ⁵ There were no viceroys in Hungary; rather, the palatine functioned as a governor at this time.
- ⁶ Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) had landed property at Budafok. The *Eugenische Vorgebirge*, or Eugenic foothills, got their name after him.
- ⁷ The two towns represent the river-head and delta of the Danube, respectively.
- ⁸ Water stroke.
- ⁹ Maria Theresa of Austria, Holy Roman Empress and queen regnant of Hungary (1740–80).
- ¹⁰ For Emperor Joseph II, see above, p. 15, note 9.
- ¹¹ “If you seek a monument, look around you.” An oblique reference to the inscription above Christopher Wren’s tomb in St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, which reads *Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice* [Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you].
- ¹² The *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon*?
- ¹³ This is another reference to the story of Attila and Buda. See above, p. 29, note 2.
- ¹⁴ St. Gerard Sagredo (c. 980–1046), one of the patron saints of Hungary.
- ¹⁵ Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius was a 16th-century witch-theoretician. The reference is to his *Epistola de Purgatione Sagarum super aquam frigidam Projectarum* (Frankfurt: K. Grothe, 1583).
- ¹⁶ The Italian term is derived from the name of the New Testament character Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers. It was used as a generic term for the lower classes in Naples.

Hospitality in the Hungarian

JOHN PALGRAVE SIMPSON

[96] Hospitality in the Hungarian is far more than a national habit or custom; it is a faith – it is a religion. He who should not serve its worship to the last sacrifice of offering, would be deemed a traitor to that faith, a vile unnatural, as unnational, heretic, a blasphemer. Let me not be told that the Hungarian gentleman finds his pleasure and his interest in giving a welcome to the rare foreigner, who may communicate information, or relieve the monotony of a country residence. He may find in it his pleasure and his interest, may be; but that he would consider his reward, and not his aim. The hospitality is as frank, and free, and spontaneous, as it is warm. Would that all religion in the country – the religion to God, and not to man – were as scrupulously and devoutly exercised! Nor is it among the upper and well-being classes alone that these rites of hospitality are so scrupulously performed. [...]

[97] Again, I must repeat it, hospitality is the Hungarian's national faith; and the Hungarian homestead is the temple of the goddess.

During the miseries of the Polish insurrection and defeat,¹ how many of the fugitive insurgents found a shelter beneath the roof of the Hungarian noblemen, not for days or weeks, or even months, but, in many cases, even years. Like all religions, [98] the religion has been abused by those who have profited of the sacrifices made at the altar. In other instances, perhaps, also, zeal will perchance outrun discretion; and when you are even pressed for time, and declare that you can no longer linger beneath the hospitable roof, you may find that the wheels have been taken off your carriage, and hidden where it would be a

vain task to seek them. But these abuses or these venial errors do not mar the truth; and the truth *is*. My welcome then, beneath the roof I entered, might have been as genuine and ready, had I been an utter stranger, but it was the double welcome of the stranger and the friend. [...]

[123] How picturesque is their² loose white attire, only fastened by a leathern girdle about their waists! how paintable the group their natural instinct forms! No artist could have grouped them better than their instinctive sense of the picturesque has grouped them, like true Hungarians as they are; and I know no people who have this instinct so strong. I have already told you that they will offer you a seat at their board; and although the seat be hard, yet good-will would make you forget its hardness; and I can answer for the savoury quality of their mess, in spite of its being cooked by such rude hands. How sonorously, and with what a pleasant, although earnest, accent roll the words "Jesus Christ be praised!" from their mouths. This is the common Hungarian greeting with which every peasant in Hungary will accost you, or, at all events, in only slight variations, with other ejaculations as pious, as, in another country, the passing countryman might, or might not, bid you "Good day." The little boys and girls will sing it out to you with a peculiar chaunting tone.

A little further on we stumble upon another picture. A great flat-bottomed boat lies near the [124] shore, and is being loaded with wood: around it are assembled a crowd of wild-looking men and boys, with their fringed *gatya*, or full white drawers, tucked up fare

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

above their knees, to enable them to wade into the water. These picturesque figures, with their expressive swarthy faces, are either employed in pushing out the boat further and further into the stream, as its weight becomes greater with the accumulating pile of wood, with all the force of their brawny well-formed arms and legs – their fine figures never wanting in grace, as long as they are true Hungarians ... [...]

[129] I should say also that the position of the country noble was much the same – I speak of the position in society only, not as to wealth or fortune – as that of our country gentry of the present day, did not the privileges of the lesser noble, excepting the seat in the upper chamber of the diet, give him the same rank, the same claims, the same influence, *i.e.* according to his sphere of action, with the first magistrate of the land, and did not also, in most instances, the education of the Hungarian, and his acquirement of never less than three or four languages, bestow on him a more general fund of information, more widely extended ideas about other countries, and a greater insight into the affairs of the world in general, than are to be found in our own country. The intimate knowledge which I have found here respecting England, its constitution, and even its society and manners in very minor particulars, has sometimes seemed to me perfectly marvellous, considering generally the tenor of these nobles' lives. [...]

[131] I will mention only the celebrated *académicien*, who gravely assured me that the Hungarian lower classes were all serfs and slaves – he looked upon me as an immense ignoramus when I ventured to insinuate the contrary, and was not to be beaten out of his conviction – and as politely contradicted me when I spoke of the Hungarian language as a language apart, by telling me that I knew nothing of the matter, and that it was a *patois* of the German. I will instance only the learned old gentleman, a statesman in his way, who spoke of the sympathy between the Hungarians and French, evinced by their fighting under one banner in the wars of the French empire! I will refer you only to the marvellous stories, confounding together all

customs, legends, names, places, and nations, in which French novelists indulge, with such a rare exuberance of imagination, when they “have a call” to lay their scene in Hungary. [...]

[133] Let it be said, *en passant*, indolence is the main characteristic of the Hungarian peasant – not the indolence of laziness, but the indolence of a careless enjoyment of the *dolce far niente*,³ perfectly Lazzaronian⁴ in its character. It is an indolence derived from the oriental origin of the Magyar race, and singularly combined with an energy of character and activity of mind – thus, in the seeming contradiction of such strange compounds, giving a very peculiar stamp to the Hungarian character, and, joined to the natural grace, and lofty, but yet never insolent, bearing of the Hungarian peasants, bestowing upon them the air of so many gentlemen at their ease, and proud of their position in society. [...]

[134] Generally speaking, when the Magyar peasants has enough to eat and drink, like the Lazzarone, he cannot be induced to work more than the tenure of his little piece of land enjoins him to work for the lord of the estate; and it is only when his actual bodily resources fail him, that he will condescend to quit his Italian *dolce far niente* and his oriental opiate state of dreaming, to seek employment, that may replenish his store of meat, bread, wine and tobacco.

[140] I spoke but of the domestic table, – the *gulyás-hús* or the *halász-lév*⁵ of national Hungarian concoction, to the tasteless *fricandeaus* and halfdone *cotlettes* and *petits pots de crème à la fleur d'orange* of French family life. He evidently thought me a moon-struck maniac, shrugged his shoulders, turned away muttering something about “*ces originaux d'Anglais!*” and never condescended to come in my neighbourhood during the rest of that day's voyage. Poor man! I feared, although perhaps very unnecessarily, – for upon a point on which his French vanity was concerned, nothing would ever have convinced him, – that he had never during his stay in Hungary eaten otherwise than in some of Pest's worst German *restaurants*.

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

You must not, however, expect from me, who eschew so entirely all knowledge or initiation into causes of effects, any distinct information as to the culinary mysteries of an Hungarian table. The cookery, in general, has all the solidity and nourishing qualities of our excellent English kitchens, with a far greater admixture of art and savouriness in the preparation. The native red pepper, (*paprika*), ground from the capsicum pods, grown in such abundance in Hun-[141]gary, forms a notable ingredient in most of the dishes of fish and fowl, as well as flesh. Cream is also most liberally bestowed in savoury dishes, and, to my poor taste, – for you know that I am no epicure, and a most unworthy “swine” before “the pearls” of cookery – adds greatly to their excellence. The puddings, both savoury and sweet, and other rich dishes in all their varieties, are also of a fantasy perfectly peculiar to the country; and the secret of their admirable combinations might puzzle many an Ude.

The Hungarian wines are genial and often strong; and, just as Hungary contains the productions of all other parts of Europe in its own, so do its wines, in all their various qualities, find a resemblance in the many varied vintages of France, or Germany, or Spain. But, then, I am a waterdrinker, although no disciple of Father Matthew; and I am little expert in appreciating them, much less in discoursing on them. You see how little able I am to enter into the merits of the Hungarian *cuisine* or table, so you must take or not take my praise for granted; and, if you believe it not, leave me in my firm conviction that the Hungarian cookery is the best in the world,

uniting all the advantages of those of other nations with an excellence of novel combinations perfectly peculiar to the country, and not to be met with elsewhere. [...]

[147] The card-tables are surrounded; chalk is provided to mark on boards the progress of the games; the gentlemen are quickly absorbed in the deep arts, unknown to me, of *preference* or *taroc*.⁶ The play is higher than might have been supposed from the fortunes of the players; but then this latter failing is so much in accordance with the ardent temperament of the Hungarian, and winnings or losses are equally sustained with so much gaiety and good-will, and, in fact, the scene is so animated, that I am weak enough not to know how to find fault with it. [...]

Source

Letters from the Danube. By the Author of “Gisella”, “Second Love”, etc., 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), vol. 1.

Notes

¹ The reference is to the November Uprising, or Cadet Revolution (1830–31), an armed rebellion against the rule of the Russian Empire in Poland and Lithuania.

² The fishermen mentioned in the omitted passage.

³ Carefree idleness.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 60, note 16.

⁵ *Gulyásbús*, Hungarian goulash meat, and *halászlé*, fish soup.

⁶ Popular card games. *Preference* or *preferans* was known in Hungary as *preferánsz*.

John Palgrave Simpson (1807–1887) was a dramatist and novelist. He was educated by private tutors and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. in 1829 and M.A. in 1832. When he completed his studies, his parents encouraged him to enter the priesthood; instead, for the next fifteen years he traveled on the Continent and mainly lived in Germany. Between 1850 and 1885 he wrote more than fifty pieces in a variety of genres, including dramas, comedies, and operas. In addition to his considerable dramatic output, he also published novels, travel books and journalistic commentaries. Simpson served as secretary of the Dramatic Authors’ Society from 1868 to 1883.

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Magyarism without the German Dress

A. A. PATON

[22] The Theiss although a tributary of the Danube, presents a complete contrast to the main stream. Here we find the Magyarism without the German dress of material civilisation in which she is enrobed at Pesth; and yet, beneath this uncouth native undress, the heart beats warmly, and is in the right place. There is ignorance, filth, and barbarism allied to generosity, bravery, and sincerity. Szolnok, a place of 12,000 inhabitants, is situated on the Theiss, the second navigable river of Hungary, and at the terminus that connects Pesth with the Theiss: one might therefore suppose it to have some appearance of a town; but it looks exactly like a large Turkish village in Bulgaria, minus the bazaar.

It has been well remarked, that the German likes [23] narrow streets and wide trowsers; and the Magyar, wide streets and tight breeches; and one sees it verified the moment one enters Szolnok. The railway station in which we arrive is large and civilised-looking, but the moment we quit it, and look for the town, we see it nowhere, but follow the truck that carries our luggage for about a mile, through wide-scattered cottages and farm-yards, until we arrive at such an inn as almost frightens us back to Pesth again; the rooms being all on the ground floor, and surrounding a large court-yard, which is a dungpuddle. [...]

[24] I find the Magyar character to have a great resemblance to that of the Turks who followed them out of Central Asia. They are generous to profusion; they are naturally very courageous; and, like all foreigners that enjoy a supremacy, through the valour of their forefathers, much more sincere

than the Servians or the Wallachians. Their defects are also the Asiatic defects—pride and indolence. The Magyar [25] is uncivilised because he feels no desire to be better; he is on perfectly good terms with himself; he has no internal desire to labour, to improve, to take pains, and to persevere until he arrives at a great future result. Even if the common Magyar go to Pesth, or Vienna, you find him a waiter in a tavern, a barber, or any light sauntering employment, but rarely in a trade that requires severe labour or long apprenticeship. If he stay at home, and devote himself to agriculture, he is equally remarkable for a spirit of antique, incurable Asiatic indolence. [...]

[158] The Szekler is to the Magyar what the Circassian is to the Turk, the Swiss to the German. Brave and hardy in physical constitution, the Szekler is the inhabitant of the mountain region that approximates to the mouths of the Danube, and the streams from which water a considerable portion of the principality of Moldavia; and as Udvarhely and Marosvasarhely, are towns of which many readers have never heard, I hope they do not consider me as losing my time on subordinate places, when taking a look at the permanent garrison of the great bastion of forests and precipices that just out into that part of the Ottoman Empire which adjoins Southern Russia. I had heard many rumours of robbers and dangers when in Herrmannstadt, and was advised to let the Szekler-land alone, but no accident of an adventurous description occurred to me in the course of my tour, and after the war¹ there [159] seemed a general disposition for a sleepy tranquillity. Much is no doubt owing to the exertions of

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Nagyszeben

Baron Heydte,² a man of popular and conciliatory manners, who speaks the language fluently, and proved himself a gallant soldier during the war.

The origin of the Szekler nation is involved in a dark obscurity; some writers maintaining, that they are the true descendants of the Huns of Attila, who, after overrunning the Roman Empire, permanently settled in the romantic vales of Dacia Transylvania. If such be their origin, habit has considerably altered their character from that of a nomade race, that encamps on the steppes, or *pusztas*, as attempts were made during the revolutionary crisis to transplant this dense compact population to parts of Hungary, such as the Bacska, where the Magyar population is largely mingled with Servians and Germans; but the question always was, "Has the Bacska mountains? Has the Bacska forests? If not, it has no charms for us." Certain it is, that they preceded the Magyars, by probably a century; and although having a dif-

ferent dialect of the same language, now speak the Magyar in the same manner as the inhabitants of Hungary, but with a slight singing twang. [...]

[166] The Szekler Protestants are all either Calvinistic or Unitarian, and are, as far as I could learn, without Lutherans; and as the Saxons are almost all of this confession, Lutheranism is denominated by the Szekler, *Szas walas*,³ or Saxon religion; and Luther is to this day regarded by the whole Saxon race in Transylvania with a sympathy, veneration, and affection, which three centuries have scarcely cooled.

[167] On this line of road I saw the celebrated field of Egyegfalva, on which the national assemblies of the Szeklers are held, and which is a plain, situated between the road and a hill. Here was held, in 1506, the National Assembly, in which, after a revolt caused by the levying of the sixth ox throughout the realm on the birth of an heir to the crown, according to ancient custom, the Szekler nation renewed its fealty to the sovereign. There in 1848, on the 16th of October, 60,000 Szeklers assembled to resist the Daco-Roman insurrection. The meeting in question [168] was harangued by Berzentzy,⁴ a fiery agitator of great eloquence, and as an instance of the phrenzy of the occasion. I may mention that a platform forty feet high had been erected, and that a man standing on it cried out, "I will throw myself from the platform, and if I am killed the Magyar cause is lost, but if I escape alive the Magyars and Szeklers will gain the day." On this he leaped from the scaffold and was not killed, and having been cured of his fractures is, I believe, still alive. [...]

[268] The people of Debretzin, therefore, moved my commiseration, as much as those who plunged them into these misfortunes excited my indignation. They complained most loudly and bitterly of their losses, by the plunder of the Cossacks,⁵ and described to me the ingenuity that these wild horsemen exercised in getting at their valuables. Every part of a barn and cellar were poked with their lances, to see if the earth were soft, and if sil-

ver spoons or other valuables were hid. They seized every horse in the town they could find in private stables, but were always ready to sell them again for thirty per cent of their value. Often, however, a proprietor had to buy his horse twice over. Even General —, the most polite, friendly man possible, who shook everybody by the hand, kissed acquaintances of two days' standing with the warmth of old friendship, stood cool and unmoved himself under the hottest cannonade but offered peppermint-drops to those who had caught cold in a draught of air, and was a perfect master of minor courtesies; made requisitions of wood, and other necessities, for his corps, which he sold again next day, and the proceeds of which, we may rest assured, did not go into the exchequer of the Autocrat. I must, however, make an honourable exception of General Prince Bebutoff,⁶ who nobly [269] spurned at all opportunities of peculation or plunder, and when he left the house in which he was quartered, told his landlord to examine the apartments, and see if the smallest article was missing.

Thousands of families in Debretzin had relations killed or wounded; and however much the ultra-Magyar aberration was inconsistent with either the universally recognised principles of law, or with a true and just conception of civil liberty, I was perpetually reminded, in the most painful manner, of how small a number of persons could be delib-

erately considered responsible for their immense sufferings. At a dinner given by the principal lawyer in the town, I met the principal physician in the place, Doctor K—. He had two brothers in the Austrian army, who served with distinction in the first campaign under Radetzky.⁷ [...]

Source

The Goth and the Hun; or, Transylvania, Debreczin, Pesth, and Vienna, in 1850 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851).

Notes

- ¹ Reference to the 1848–49 War of Independence in Hungary.
- ² Baron August von Heydte (1809–1880) was a professional soldier. In 1848–49 he served as a major of the light cavalry in the Transylvanian army of the Habsburg imperial troops.
- ³ Correctly: *szász vallás*.
- ⁴ László Berzenczey (1820–1884), politician and traveler. He was the initiator of the 1848 national assembly that led to the organization of an independent Székely armed force.
- ⁵ Czar Nicholas I of Russia's armies invaded Hungary in 1849.
- ⁶ Vasilii Osipovich Bebutov (1791–1858), a descendant of the Georgian-Armenian noble family of the Bebutashvili, was a Russian general.
- ⁷ Joseph Radetzky von Radetz (1766–1858), Austrian general.

Andrew Archibald Paton (1811–1874) was an author and diplomatist. At the age of 20 he was traveling in Eastern Europe, also in Syria and Egypt. In 1839–40 he acted as private secretary in Egypt and was afterwards attached to the political department of the British staff in Syria. In 1846 he was unofficially employed by Sir Robert Gordon, ambassador at Vienna, to examine and report upon the ports belonging to Austria in the Adriatic. In 1858 he became vice-consul at Missolonghi in Greece, and was in 1862 appointed consul at Ragusa and at Bocca di Cattaro. His books include *The Modern Syrians ...* (London, 1844), *Servia, Youngest Member of the European Family ...* (London, 1845), *Highlands and Islands of the Adriatic ...* (London, 1849), and *The Bulgarian, the Turk, and the German* (London, 1855).

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A People of Nature

CH. L. BRACE

[70] Hungarian population; and a very different people they are from any I have ever seen. We should not call them very highly cultivated, but one sees at once there is a remarkably quick, practical intelligence in them, which promises as much for the nation as a more elaborate education. They come before you at once as a “people of nature”—as men bred up in a generous, vigorous, natural life without the tricks of civilization, but with a courtesy, a dignity, and hospitality which one might imagine the old oriental patriarchs would have shown in their day.

At the house of the gentleman where I am visiting, friends come in, take a bed in the large ground-floor room, and spend the night, apparently without the least ceremony. The tables are heaped to overflowing at every meal, and people seem to enter and join in the party without any kind of invitation, as if the gentleman kept “open house.” Wherever we visit, it appears almost to be thought an unfriendliness in us if we do not drink of the delicious wines they bring out to us, and I can only escape by pleading the poverty of our country in wines, and not being in the habit of drinking much.

Besides this generous hospitality, one is struck at once with a certain heartiness and manliness in almost every one. They all speak of Hungary, and with the deepest feeling—but no one whines. Every one seems gloomy at the misfortune and oppression through their beloved land—but no one is at all crushed in spirit. If this be a specimen of the nation, they are not in the least broken by their defeat. [...]

[71] Their whole proportions are exceeding well set off the Hungarian costume, which many of them still wear in part, though it is contrary to law to do so. This,

as one sees it still in Hungary among the gentlemen, is a tight-fitting, half-military frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, and breeches fitting close to the leg, with high polished boots and spurs. The cloak (*dolmány*) which used to be the most graceful part of the dress, as it was handsomely embroidered, and hung from one shoulder by a tasselled cord, is altogether forbidden. However, the costume, as it is worn now, is remarkably tasteful. Add to all this, fine-cut, regular features, jet-black hair usually, and flowing beard and carefully trained moustache, and you have among these men as fine specimens of manly beauty as can be seen in the world. [...]

[82] In the midst of every herd is usually one tall Bauer (peasant) with a huge sheep-skin hanging like a cloak of wool about him, serving him at once for cloak, and bed, and house, through all seasons.

Two or three of the Hungarian white dogs are his only companions: and he lives this solitary life, on the grand prairies, in the midst of his herds, a great part of the year. Some of these cattle-drivers, or *Csikos*, as they call them, are very original, singular characters; and of the most remarkable, those near Debreczin, I shall have more to say hereafter. They are a free, indomitable set of men, and with the tinge of wild, poetic feeling, which marks all the Hungarian peasantry. The voice which thrilled to every corner of the land in 1848, reached even them. They came, in their rough skins, from the wild life of the *Pusztas*, to hear Kossuth¹ speak of freedom, of human brotherhood, of the wrongs and dangers of Hungary. The passionate eloquence of the Reformer, as he spoke of these great themes; his solemn appeal to Him whom they, it is said, worship with a reverence we can hardly understand, seemed to these sons of the

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

desert to come from one more than man. They followed him as a prophet. No weapons could be given many of them, and they fought with their lassoes and whips. And as long as a blow could be struck for Hungary, these faithful, sturdy herdsmen gave their blood and their toil for the good cause. When, at last, nothing more could be done, they went back to their solitary life on the Puszta again—believing, it is said, most firmly, that their beloved Kossuth will soon return, from those great plains of Asia whence they themselves sprung, with immense hordes of their brethren, the Huns, to drive the Austrian conqueror again from Hungary! [...]

[83] The Hungarians are a nation of riders. The boy is on a horse almost as soon as he can walk. The Bauer himself looks, in his Sunday dress, as if he remembered his origin, and were more of a cavalier than a peasant. The pointed hat with the long stork's feather, the neat short jacket and high boots with rattling spurs, are the invariable peasant's festive dress, even when he goes to a dance. The cavalry of Hungary is said to be unequalled, and the perfect familiarity of the Hungarian hussar with his horse, and with every mode of fighting from horseback, give him an immense advantage. In the last war the full charge was often made by the Hussars, with the sabre in one hand, a pistol in the [84] other, the bridle in their teeth, and their head crouched down behind the horse's head. The Hungarian regiments of Hussars were considered the best in the Austrian army; and the Imperial cavalry, famous as it is, nearly always went down before their tremendous charge, during the war of Independence. However, it must be acknowledged, that in modern warfare, the cavalry are not, by any means, the most important force of an army. [...]

[103] As we walked up to the house, talking of various matters, and as the Bauer constantly stopped my friend to get his advice or opinion, I could not but think how very pleasant the situation of a country gentleman in Hungary was. He is more like a patriarch among his family, than a landlord. His property is invested a great deal in immense herds of cattle, or in large grain fields which the peasants farm, and for the labour on which they pay themselves by taking a certain portion of the crops. There is a very little vexation of gathering rent,

and the trouble of selling enough to live comfortably by, is very slight indeed, as the buyers always come to the farmers in Hungary. It is a generous, free life, only a little a dangerous to poor human nature. It may make a man a gentleman, but it is a little liable also to make him a drone. After reaching the house, we found, with appetites well freshened by the walk, a hearty Hungarian dinner set out for us; and our hostess, knowing my hobby at present for seeing the Hungarian habits, had prepared some of the peculiar dishes of the country for us. It ought to be mentioned here, that the Hungarians, though they have a great variety of dishes, are by no means gross eaters. Indeed, any one blessed with the Anglo-Saxon capabilities of consuming roast beef [104] and plum-pudding, is quite put to shame by their modest performances at table. The dinner hour is usually one o'clock, and the meal commences always with soup. As a relish for this dish, there are commonly little round balls of dough filled with hashed meat, floating in it. After this comes the boiled beef eaten alone, without vegetables. On the present occasion the next dishes were the choice fish of the Theiss, the river most celebrated in Hungary for its fish. They were, a sturgeon—a small species, about a foot long; boiled and stewed carp, a fish as large as the American river carp, but with much finer flavour. Both made very choice dishes, but they are said to be not at all healthy for strangers, causing frequently what is called the Theiss fever. At this point of the meal the wines were passed—the light white wine of the country; the pure light red wine of Ofen, one of the most wholesome wines of the world—and with them were passed around also, and most eagerly drunk, various extremely disagreeable mineral waters: the waters from the iron springs in the Northern Carpathians, and from various sulphur springs—most of them having the odour of water from a very bad pump, and peculiarly calculated to spoil the taste of any drink they might be mingled with. The drinking of these medicinal waters with wine is the universal custom on jovial occasions in Hungary; and seems to be considered as a sort of continual medicine, or preventive of all the evils from good living. It will perhaps account for the very little injury done to either their morals or health, by their

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constant wine-drinking. The next course was a stew of extremely small chickens (händel) prepared in red pepper, in a way which is somewhat exciting to a stranger's palate who is not accustomed to this peculiarity of the Hungarian [105] cooking. In fact, the whole population, from Bauer to Magnate, make the most constant use in every possible way of red pepper, in every dish which can admit it.

Next followed a dish of small larks broiled, and then a genuine pudding of the country, such as is eaten in every cottage and castle of the land, consisting of small strips of dough, worked up in such a way that they look like little bits of leather, and crisped, and eaten with sugar, not an unpalatable pudding, notwithstanding its leathery appearance. After this came the roast meats and salad; and, as I have often seen, though not here, little round preparations of sour-kraut, containing a piece of meat in the centre. Another variety from their innumerable Hungarian wines, was now brought in—the Schomlauer, a white wine, considered by English, though not by Hungarians, the best, as it is not so sweet as their most celebrated wines. Closing the solid dishes, was a huge platter-full, set out with pride by the hostess, of genuine “Yankee fritters,” just smoking from the frying-pan, and eaten in true New England style, with sugar for sauce. I could not but smile at this imitation of our home dishes. [...]

[218] *May*, 1851.—I have been taking a long walk through the various parts of Debreczin, and calling upon various acquaintances. Observed a poor Honved,² with his leg gone, standing by the Rathshaus.³ He did not ask for anything, but no one passed him without giving him a trifle. It is not often that a Honved will beg. My attention was drawn to a young man, whom we met. He was the son of the keeper of the famous crown of St. Stephen,⁴ so mysteriously saved from the Austrians in the last war. Most suppose this keeper knows where it is still, though all agreed he would rot in prison (he is in the Neugebäude⁵) twenty years before the Austrians would get a word from him.

I was quite amused at Mr. T.'s, where they speak German, to hear one of the children call another, in a great spite, “you little Schwarzgeld!”⁶ i. e. “black and yel-

low,” the Austrian colours, which have come to be the last term of reproach in Hungary. The common talk today is that the young Countess Teleki⁷ had been arrested on some frivolous charge. All seemed to feel uneasy that one so young and patriotic, and so high in rank, could be entangled by this Inquisition. Her own carriage and footmen had been graciously allowed her, it was said, in crossing to the fortress with the dragoons.

I was surprised through the whole country, to find how generally foreign language and English, or at least the English literature, were known by the higher classes. All the more intelligent families converse [219] readily in French and German; and in Pesth, there seemed more who spoke English among my acquaintances than in any other continental city I had visited. The Hungarian German, however, is always easily recognized by its accent. English, particularly since these late events, is more and more studied, and German is avoided wherever possible, as all associate it so indelibly with what is Austrian. The diplomatic and State language, however, fastened now over Croat and Magyar, Slavonian and Wallach, is German; and the old strife of languages quiets itself now under one common foreign tongue.

The Magyar must have a natural aptitude for learning languages, and his circumstances have much quickened this. No gentleman could really succeed in political life twenty years ago, without knowing at least four languages. The debates of the Parliament were all held in Latin. All communications with the Austrian Government, and in fact with foreigners, were in German. The lower classes must be addressed in Slavonian, and of course Magyar must be known as his own tongue. With such a foundation, made constantly familiar from childhood, all the languages of Western and Eastern Europe could be learned without difficulty. I have seen a common private soldier among the Wallachs speak six languages well. The language in Europe most similar in intonation to the Magyar seems the French; and accordingly the Hungarians learn the difficult French sounds with great ease. The French nasal sound is quite common: as, for instance, on the *n* in Honved. I do not profess to speak learnedly on this matter, but from what little

opportunity I had of examining the structure of this language, it seemed remarkably flexible, and capable of high development. The arrangement of suffixes and pre-[220] fixes, and some other peculiarities, reminded me constantly of the Hebrew. The philologists say that it has no affinity with any European tongue, and bears a relationship only to the Turkish and Finnish.

Something very characteristic of the Hungarian character struck me to-day. A gentleman wanted to trust some little business to a Bauer, and was questioning him as to whether he would be faithful. The peasant drew himself up, and only gave for answer, "Magyar ember!"—"I am a Hungarian!" It is currently reported in Hungary that in the beginning of the war, a proposition was made to Kossuth, in case the Austrians should refuse to recognize the new Hungarian bank-notes, to issue an immense quantity of Austrian notes, for which he had every means in presses and stamps, and thus swamp the treasury. All the reply he gave, was the simple "Magyar ember!" I have often noticed it used in this way. To me these little expressions of national feeling always show much of the prominent national traits.

I suppose an Englishman would say "he was no Englishman" to strike a man when he was down, or to let a strong man beat a weak one. An American would call himself "no genuine Yankee" ever to

give up what there was the slightest chance of his accomplishing, or ever to let himself be outwitted by any created shrewdness. The Hungarian expression seems to be used more nobly.

Source

Hungary in 1851 (London: Richard Bentley, 1852).

Notes

- ¹ Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894) was a Hungarian lawyer, politician and regent-president of Hungary in 1849 during a brief period of independence at the height of the 1848-49 revolution.
- ² *Honvéd*, or home defender, soldier in the Hungarian army in 1848-1849.
- ³ Correctly: *Rathaus* (city hall)
- ⁴ For St. Stephen, see above, p. 35, note 7.
- ⁵ The *Neugebäude*, or New Edifice, was a garrison of the Austrian troops stationed in Pest. In 1849-50 it functioned as a prison in which many a Hungarian revolutionary was executed, among them Count Lajos Batthyány (1807-1849), prime minister of Hungary in 1848.
- ⁶ Correctly: *Schwarzgelb*; *Schwarzgeld* would mean "black money." *Schwarzgelb* was commonly used in Hungary for the Austrians.
- ⁷ Countess Blanka Teleki (1806-1862).

Charles Loring Brace (1826-1890) was a minister, evangelical reformer and early social work pioneer. He studied theology at Yale and at Union Theological Seminary in New York, from which he graduated in 1849. In 1850 he made a pedestrian journey in Great Britain and Ireland, also visiting the Rhine, Belgium, and Paris. He visited Hungary in 1851, and was the first American to visit the interior of the country. While in Nagyvárad, he was arrested on suspicion of being a secret agent of the Hungarian revolutionists in America, imprisoned in the fortress of Nagyvárad, and tried in twelve sessions before a court martial. He managed to communicate the fact of his arrest to Charles J. McCurdy, United States *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna, who instituted vigorous efforts for his release and, after a bitter diplomatic correspondence with the Austrian authorities, he was discharged with an apology, after an imprisonment of a month. In 1853 he and others formed the Children's Aid Society. From that time he devoted the greater part of his efforts to writing for the journals, delivering public addresses and managing his organization. In 1872 he was a delegate to the international prison convention in London and afterward revisited Hungary and Transylvania, where he was received with marked attention. His books, which have nearly all been reprinted in England, include *Home Life in Germany* (New York, 1853), *Races of the Old World: A Manual of Ethnology* (London, 1863), *The New West* (New York, 1869), *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work among Them* (New York, 1872) and *Free Trade as Promoting Peace and Good Will among Men* (New York, 1879).

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A Paradise for Philologists

R. B. MANSFIELD

[197] The magnificent suspension bridge¹ which connects Pesth with Ofen is twelve hundred and twenty-seven feet in length, and, as is well-known, was the work of an English architect, the late Mr. Tierney Clerk,² who also built Hammersmith Bridge. It was commenced in 1840, and finished in 1848; and the first time it was opened was for the retreat of the Hungarian army. The Austrians afterwards endeavoured to blow it up, but providentially failed; and the engineer officer who directed the attempt was himself destroyed by the explosion. In the time of the old boat bridge, only the shabbily-dressed had to pay too – as in Hungary the nobles used to be free from all taxes whatever; but when this bridge was built, it was determined that for the future all should pay alike. It is said, that some [198] of the high Tories decline, on principle, to cross the new bridge under these circumstances. [...]

[199] The wines of Hungary are much superior to those of Austria. A peculiar sort is made, called 'Ausbruch';³ the best are the well known Tokay Menescher, Ruster, and Ofener; the method of preparing it is peculiar, and not generally known. The best grapes are allowed to hang on the trees till they are almost dry like raisins; they are then gathered, and some good wine is poured on them, and after being pressed, the juice is allowed to ferment; this is the first Ausbruch: the grapes are sometimes subjected to a second and a third similar process, the produce of which is of course inferior. In indifferent years, when there are not sufficient good grapes in a vineyard to make it worth while to the proprietor [200] to make Ausbruch himself, he reserves them for some other

wine manufacturer, who has given out that he intends to make it. On these occasions, the price of a cask of the dry grapes has been known to fetch as much as £15. The meaning of the word 'Ausbruch' is perhaps derived from the fact that the grapes from which this wine is made are 'picked out' from the others. [...]

[202] The Hungarian nobles are certainly the most extraordinary linguists it has ever been my lot to meet; they could all speak Hungarian, Latin, German, and French; most of them in addition to these, Italian, English, and some other dialect of the country, such as Wallachian, Slovak, or Servian.

Hungary is indeed a paradise for philologists. The German language prevails in certain districts of the west and south, and in parts of Transylvania, and is much spoken throughout the country, being often used by the shopkeepers and townsmen where the lower orders are Magyars or Slavonians. The true Hungarian, or Magyar, is spoken in the greater part of the plain in the centre of the kingdom, and the Wallachian in the east. Languages of the Slavonic family are spoken in the north and [203] south, extending into Russia on the one hand, and Turkey on the other; of these the principal are the Slovak, in the north-west, an uncultivated dialect of Bohemian; Rusniack (the language of South Russia) in the north-east; Croatian in the south-west; and Servian in the south-east. When we add to this that isolated colonies of Bulgarians, Albanians, French, and Italians still maintain their original languages; that the boundaries of the different tongues are rarely if ever sharply marked; that the common language formerly used in the Diet,⁴ and therefore familiar to all the educated

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The Chain Bridge

[204] men, is Latin; that the gentry in the Slavonian and Wallachian districts are frequently Magyars; and that Jews, Gipsies, Greeks, and Armenians (especially the two former) are to be met with in considerable numbers in most of the towns, some idea may be formed of the linguistic confusion that prevails. Even the passing traveller can soon distinguish the guttural German from the nasal French sounding Slovak, or the rattling polysyllabic Magyar. [...]

[207] We visited the National Theatre,⁵ where we appreciated the acting, which was very good, though we did not understand a word of what was said; the applause of the Magyars was vociferous. Székely,⁶ the celebrated Hungarian pianist, who was in London during the Great Exhibition, performed on the piano. We also went to the German Theatre,⁷ which was a very inferior affair, and the performance was carried on in the open [208] air. As it seemed likely to rain, the heroine came on with an umbrella, which she put up when the first drops began to fall. [...] But the chief attraction was the music of the Zigeuners. These gipsies are

the musicians of Hungary; they play on the violin, and an instru-[209]ment called 'the cymbals' (*Hungarice* Tzimbalom), not the brass dishes that we call by that name, but a kind of flat harp, shaped like a triangular box, with a number of wires running across it; it is played on with two little sticks tipped with leather. This national music is very peculiar and inspiriting, generally commencing with a slow-measured air, then darting off into a wild quick measure, and then again subsiding into a melancholy cadence. We had often heard these Zigeuners in the coffee houses at Pesth, when they would, if we came in with any of the Magyar nobles, come and stand round us, and play at us, and the excitement that it produced among our friends showed how deeply these national airs moved them; after some time they would spring eagerly from their seats, and going in among the musicians, would move about, stamping time to the measures, and giving them handfuls of money. We asked them why they did not dance, but they said that if they did the police would not allow the Zigeuners to play, and that they would then lose almost the last pleasure that was left to them. The Rakotzy⁸ March (the Hungarian Marseillaise) is forbidden to be played at all. On this day, when we were far away from the town, music was going on in [210] every direction, and dancing too: the dance is almost exactly similar to a Scotch reel, except that each couple start independently, – the gentleman with his arm round his partner's waist, as in a waltz, and occasionally emitting a yell as in the Highlands. We stood looking on for some time, but our Magyar friend could not stand that long, and presently seizing a bright eyed lassie by the waist, he plunged into the thickest of the fight.

Source

The Water Lily on the Danube: Being a Brief Account of the Perils of a Pair-Oar during a Voyage from Lambeth to Pesth. By the Author of the "Log of the Water Lily" and Illustrated by One of the Crew (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1853).

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Notes

- ¹ The Chain Bridge, the construction of which was initiated by Count István Széchenyi.
- ² Correctly: *Clark*. William Tierney Clark (1873–1852) was an English civil engineer and constructor of bridges.
- ³ The famous *tokaji aszú*, a sweet, topaz-colored wine.
- ⁴ *Original footnote*: Kohl, in his hundred days of travel in the Austrian dominions, gives an amusing Latin conversation which he heard in a billiard room, which I have given below, with the English, for the benefit of the unlearned.

‘Ibi incipiamus.’ ‘Now let us begin.’

‘Dignetur praecedere.’ ‘Have the goodness to play first.’

‘Dolendum est! si caeruleus huc venisset.’ ‘What a pity; if the blue ball had only come here.’

‘Fallit! fallit!’ ‘A miss! a miss!’

‘Nunc flavus recte ad manum mihi est.’ ‘Now I have the yellow all right.’

‘Bene! bene! nunc Hannibal ad portam.’ ‘Well played! Well played! now there’s the devil to pay.’

‘Fallit iterum! O si homo nunquam falleretur, esset invincibilis!’ ‘Another miss! O if man never was to fail he would be invincible.’

‘Reverende pater! Nunc tota positio difficilis est. Nil video, nisi caeruleum et rubrum percutere velles.’ ‘My game is a difficult one. I see nothing but a cannon off the blue and red.’

‘Ah! ah! subtiliter volui, et nil habeo.’ ‘Ah! Ah! my design was crafty, but I have got nothing by it.’

‘Bene! bene! nunc si adhuc illum feceris.’ ‘Good! good! now, if you can only manage this!’

‘Fecisti! finis ludi.’ ‘You have done it, the game is over.’

- ⁵ The theater was opened in 1837 as *Pesti Magyar Színház* [Hungarian Theater in Pest]. The name National Theater only came into use in 1840.

- ⁶ Imre Székely (1823–1887) was a pianist and composer. He lived in London in 1847–52.

- ⁷ The German Theater functioned between 1812–49. Its classicist style building could house 3500 people concurrently.

- ⁸ The origins of the march-song known as Rákóczi March are unclear. Tradition has it that it was a favorite march of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II, leader of the Hungarian uprising against the Habsburgs in 1703–11. Hector Berlioz used the music in his 1846 composition, *The Damnation of Faust*.

Robert Blachford Mansfield (1824–1908) was an author and sportsman. He was educated at Winchester College and at the University College, Oxford, from which he graduated in 1846. Admitted student at Lincoln’s Inn in 1845, he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple in 1849, but never practised seriously. The pioneer of English rowing on the rivers of Central Europe, he recorded his achievements in two books, which, first published anonymously, passed through many editions. He was one of the first Englishmen to take up golf.



They Seem a Good Deal to Resemble the Scotch

JOHN PAGET

[1: 241] The most amusing scene to an Englishman must be the races between the Csikósák¹ (horse keepers), who ride their own long-tailed steeds, without saddles, and in their own strange costumes – as wild a looking troop as that which first followed Attila over the plains of Europe. It was at first impossible [242] to make these men understand the disadvantage of heavy weights for jockeys; nor was it till after they had been repeatedly beaten, that they would confess that little boys could ride a race, and win it from full-grown men. The excellent riding of the Hungarians, for which their hussars have long been celebrated, is more particularly to be found among the Csikósák. The nobles, even the lower grades, so commonly make use of carriages rather than horses, that I scarcely think they can be good horsemen: but the Csikós is on horseback almost from his birth: indeed, I suspect he sometimes learns to ride before he can walk. I have seen the merest children without bridle or saddle – a string round the horse's nose supplied the place of the first, a bunda thrown across his back, the second, - galloping at full speed after a herd of unbroken colts, overtake and turn them, dash into the middle of [243] them, and select those they required, apparently without the slightest fear. [...]

[1: 245] The principal part of Buda stands on an isolated rock, which is still walled in; while the suburbs [246] cluster round its base, and extend more than a mile along the banks of the river. Behind the town range a long line of hills famous for their red wines. The Buda wines, of which perhaps the Adelsberger is the best, are very full-bodied, and

require to be kept several years before they are drunk; they resemble the Burgundy wines both in quality and flavour more than any other I know. These would probably be the best wines for the English market of any of those grown in Hungary. [...]

[1: 249] For one hundred and forty-five years did the Turks remain masters of Buda: yet almost the only evidences of their former dominion are some baths near the Danube, and the tomb of a saint; the former of which are still used by the Christians, and the latter is sometimes visited by a pious Moslem pilgrim. The Turkish baths, which are supplied by natural sulphur-springs, are small vaulted rooms, with steps leading down to the bottom, along which the bathers lie at different depths. If I might judge from my feelings merely, I should say that the steam which arises from these springs is much hotter than the water itself; for, though it was quite painful to support the heat of the steam, the water appeared only moderately warm.

It is not easy to imagine a more perfect contrast than is presented by the environs of Pest and Buda: the one a bare sandy plain; the other hill and valley, beautifully varied with rock and wood. Hitherto this romantic neighbourhood has been sadly neglected; but as the taste for the picturesque is extended, and the wealthy citizens of [250] Pest begin to desire the imaginary importance conferred by landed possessions, and the real luxury of country-houses, the hills of Buda will be as well covered with suburban villas and mimic castles as Richmond or Hampstead. At present, the taste for the picturesque is, perhaps, as little felt in Hungary

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as in almost any country in Europe. The negligence with which the position of a house is commonly chosen, the absence of gardens and parks, or, if present, the bad taste with which they are kept, are strong evidence of this deficiency. [...]

[2: 312] I have already said that the Szeklers were found by the Magyars in the country which they now occupy on their first entrance, and on account of similarity of language and origin, were granted favours refused to the original inhabitants of the country. They were allowed the full enjoyment of their freedom on condition of defending the eastern frontier.

Even from this early period the Szeklers claim to [313] have been all equal, all free, all noble; a privileged class and a servile class were alike unknown – the only difference among the richer of them being derived from the number of men each could bring into the field, – among the poorer, from the circumstance of their serving on horseback or on foot. Changes, however, have crept in amongst them in the lapse of so many centuries. The richer and more powerful have gradually introduced on their own estates the system in operation in the rest of Transylvania, and the peasant and the seigneur are now found in the Szekler-land as elsewhere. Titles too, and letters of nobility have been freely scattered through the country, and have gradually cast a slur on those who possess them not. Taxation also, and the forcible introduction of the border system, instead of the desultory service of former times, have made great changes in the position of the Szeklers. As almost all these changes, however, have been introduced without the consent of the people, and often by the employment of open force, they are still regarded as illegal by the Szeklers, who are consequently among the most discontented of any portion of the Transylvanians. It would be absurd in me to enter further into the question of their laws and institutions, for even the most learned among themselves, confess that there is so much confusion in them, that even they cannot make them out. This I know, that every Szekler

claims to be a noble born, and declares that if he had his right [314] he should neither pay taxes nor serve but when an insurrection of the whole nobility of the country took place. I know also that, in fact, there are among them Counts and Barons who call themselves magnates, nobles by letters patent, and free Szeklers without letters, besides borderers and peasants, and that the free Szeklers and nobles, who have not more than two peasants, pay taxes, just like the peasants, though in other respects they have rights like the nobles.

All these circumstances were not known to us when we set out on this expedition. Every Hungarian you speak to is sure to tell you that the Szeklers are all noble, and you consequently expect to find a whole nation with equal rights and privileges, among which freedom from seigneurial oppression, and from government taxation, are both alike included. This was the opinion we were led to form, and of course our curiosity was proportionately raised to observe their influence on the state of the people. It was only when we saw, how much matters seemed to be managed here as in other parts of the country, that we got to the real state of the case, and discovered that though the Szeklers may have been once all equal and noble, and though they still lay claim to all manner of rights and privileges, they have not in reality enjoyed them, for I know not how many centuries. [...]

[2: 315] We reached Maros Vásárhely, the capital of the Szekler-land, about twelve o'clock on the second morning, and proceeded at once to call on Professor Dosa,² a friend of Baron W—'s,³ our companion in this journey, who politely offered to show us the town. Although there is nothing very imposing in the wide streets and small houses of which Maros Vásárhely is mostly composed, it [316] is rather an important place, and, in winter, many of the gentry in the neighbourhood take up their residence within it. Moreover, both Protestants and Catholics have colleges here; the Protestant contains eight hundred, the Catholic three hundred scholars, and these institutions give something of a literary



The market and the Piarist cloister at Marosvásárhely

air to its society. Maros Vásárhely is also the seat of the highest legal tribunal in Transylvania, the Royal table, and it is in consequence the great law school of the country. Almost all the young nobles who desire to take any part in public business, as well as all the lawyers, after having finished the regular course of study, think it necessary, under the name of *Juraten*, to pass a year or two here in reading law and attending the court.

The great pride of the town is the fine library of the Telekis, founded by the Chancellor Teleki, and left to his family on the condition of its being always open to the public.⁴ It contains about eighty thousand volumes, which are placed in a very handsome building, and kept in excellent order. A reading-room is attached, which is always open, where books are supplied to any one who demands them. There are funds for its support, and the

family still continue to add to it as far as they are able. It is most rich in choice editions of the Latin and Greek classics. These works were the favourite studies of the Chancellor himself, who was a man of very extensive learning. What renders this the more remarkable is, the fact of his [317] having entirely acquired it after the age of twenty, and that too, during the little leisure afforded him from public business. Among the bibliographical curiosities pointed out to us, was an illuminated Latin Bible, which was said to be written on a vegetable leaf. The substance employed was certainly not papyrus; I should have taken it for very fine vellum. There was also a MS. copy of a work by Servetus,⁵ which we were told was unpublished, though, on turning over the fly-leaf, we found a quotation from an edition of the same work printed in London. There was a beautiful MS. of Tacitus from the library of

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

Mathias Corvinus, and splendidly bound, as indeed the whole of that library was. [...]

[2: 319] In pursuit of this plan, we followed the little Küküllő nearly to its source, along a very beautiful valley, highly cultivated, and, though naturally far from rich, bearing good crops. The Szeklers inhabit a mountainous country, and are consequently poor; but it was easy to see they are far more industrious than any of the Transylvanians we had before visited. From all I heard of their character, they seem a good deal to resemble the Scotch. The same pride and poverty, the same industry and enterprise, and if they are not belied, the same sharp regard to their own interests. They speak a dialect of the magyar, which differs but slightly from that used in other parts of the country, except in the peculiar sing-song intonation in which it is uttered. Like most mountaineers, they [320] are but little distinguished for polished and refined manners; even the wealthier are commonly remarkable for a greater rudeness in their bearing than is seen in other parts of the country. This is more than made up, however, by a greater degree of information, and by a firm adherence to their political principles. Like the Scotch, they seem to have advanced in education to an extraordinary degree, so that there are few villages without their schools, few of the humblest Szeklers who cannot read and write. They are of various religions, and each sect is said to be strongly attached to its own. The Unitarians are in greater proportion here than in any other part of the country; they have about one hundred churches in the Szekler-land. Excepting the Jews and Greeks, all religions enjoy equal rights.

We reached Szováta towards evening, and, as there was no possibility of lodging there for the night, we made the best haste we could to find a guide, and see what was to be seen before dark. This was no such easy matter, however; the cholera had just set in, and its first victim had been one of the chief men of the village. His funeral had taken place the day we arrived; and as it is a custom of the Szeklers to get especially drunk on these occasions,

to dissipate their grief, we found nearly the whole village as glorious in liquor as their [321] friend could be in sanctity. By some chance, one sober man was found at last, and we followed him beyond the village in the direction of a small green hill, which we could perceive at some distance. Judge of our surprise, as we drew nearer, to see before us a real rock of salt! Yes, our green hill was pure rock salt, when seen near, as white as snow, but covered at the top and in many places on the sides by a layer of clay, on which grass and trees grew abundantly.

[2: 329] A village, Homarod Almás, through which we passed, was one of the largest and most flourishing we had met with in Transylvania. The situation of this place one would have thought as healthy as possible; the country round it was fruitful and lovely as a garden, the inhabitants were evidently well off, and the houses large and airy, yet here the cholera was raging more fiercely than in any other place we had yet visited. The graveyard seemed to have been fresh ploughed up, so completely was it covered with new-made graves, and several were standing open for occupants already prepared to fill them.

As we left the village, we saw a mark of superstition which we should not have expected where education is said to be generally diffused. It was a small piece of coarse linen cloth cut into the shape of a pair of trowsers, and suspended over the middle of the road by a string attached to a tree on either side. The peasants believe that in the Cave of Almás which we were about to visit, two fairies are imprisoned in a state of nudity, and that they weep and wail their unhappy captivity without being able to escape. Their cries are said to be often heard, when the wind is high, proceeding from the dark valley of the Almás, and it is to the malice of these imprisoned fairies that the peasants attribute the visitation of the cholera. It appears that the received method of propitiating these gentry is to offer them clothing, and accordingly the trowsers at this end of the village, and a shirt exhibited in a similar manner at the other, were intended to appease them, let them come which road

they would. This was all I could learn of the matter from the steward, and I am still not very sure that it is correct, for he was much more anxious to assure me that he knew it was all nonsense and that he did not believe in such ignorant superstitions, than to satisfy my curiosity on the matter. [...]

[2: 339] We had still time to visit the military school for the education of the children of the Szekler infantry. The institution was founded by the late Emperor, and is supported partly by a royal grant, and partly by the Szeklers themselves. The regulation of it is entirely in the hands of Government. On the foundation, there are one hundred boys, from six to eighteen years of age, who are fed, clothed, and taught free of all expense. As these do not occupy all the room which exists, a few additional scholars are admitted on the payment of about sixteen shillings per month for the enjoyment of the same advantages as the others. The children, when they have finished their education, are drafted into the infantry, and often rise to the rank of officers. The course of education includes writing, reading, arithmetic, geography, mathematics, military drawing, and the German language, besides all the drilling and exercising, which belong to military training. We saw specimens of their writing and drawing, and I must say they were very creditable. They have a small library, mostly composed of amusing books for children, which [340] are lent out to the scholars, and they seem well selected for the purpose of giving them a taste for reading.

It is unfortunate that here, too, in an institution apparently so good, cause for complaint and mistrust against Government should exist. The Szeklers say the whole object of the school is to denationalize their children, and make them forget their native tongue. In fact, all the lessons are given in German, all the books are German, and the children are even obliged to speak German to each other. The national language is never heard within the walls of the national school. It is certain the poor Szeklers think themselves very ill-treated by the Government. Though submitting now pretty quietly to the Border

service, they object very strongly to some of the innovations it has brought with it. Many of the officers in the Border regiments are Germans, and of course can have no claim to the rights of Szekler nobility, yet Government has within these last few months claimed for them the right to appear and vote at the county-meetings; and very bitter is the feeling excited among the Szeklers in consequence. [...]

[2: 344] [T]he Büdös⁶ springs are a very fashionable bathing-place, – at least among the peasants. They come here in summer, build a hut of branches, line it with straw, and stocking it plentifully with provisions, remain here for a month or six weeks at a time. Without waiting to look further at the springs, we hastened to the cave.

In the face of a rock of magnesian limestone, there was an opening large enough to contain about a dozen persons, the floor of which slanted inwards and downwards from the mouth. A few years ago this cave was much larger, but a great portion of it was destroyed by an earthquake. About the sides of the lower part there was a thin yellow incrustation, which we found to be sulphur deposited from the gases which issue from crevices in the rock. As we got further into the cave we felt a sensation of tingling warmth, unlike anything I ever felt before, creeping as it were up by the body, higher [345] and higher in proportion as we descended lower. This extraordinary phenomenon is owing to the concentrated state of the carbonic acid gas (mixed with a very small proportion of sulphuretted hydrogen), which issues from an air-spring in the lower part of the cave, and fills it to a level with the mouth, whence it flows out as regular as water would do. The temperature was not higher in one part of the cave than in another, for in moving the hand from the upper part to the lower not the slightest difference could be at first perceived; but in a few seconds, as soon as the acid had power to penetrate the skin, the tingling warmth was felt. We descended till the gas reached the chin, when we could raise it in the hand to the lips and distinctly perceive its sour taste. It is commonly supposed

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

that the diluted carbonic acid gas produces death by entering the lungs and excluding all other air, but here it was impossible to respire it; the irritation produced on the glottis contracted it convulsively, and death would therefore occur almost immediately from strangulation. If any of it got into the eyes and nose, it made them smart severely. The peasants ascertain how far they can go with safety by striking their flints, and stopping when they no longer give sparks.

We remained for some time in the cave enjoying the sensation it produced exceedingly. As might be expected, so excellent an air-bath has not been neglected by the peasants of the neighbour-[346] hood, and hundreds repair hither to profit by it every year. The common manner of using it, is, to repair to the cave early in the morning, and remain for an hour or more, with the whole body subjected to the influence of the gas, till a profuse perspiration is produced, when they proceed to one of the cold baths we had observed as we came up. These baths are impregnated with the same gases as the air of the cavern, but contain apparently rather more sulphur. The cases for which the Bűdös is most celebrated, are those of chronic rheumatism, and complicated mercurial affections. So great is the carelessness of the peasants, that rarely a year passes without some

of them perishing in this cave. This season two such accidents had happened. The common name given to the cave is the “Murder-hole” (Gyilkoslyuk).

Source

Hungary and Transylvania; With Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political, and Economical, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1855).

Notes

- ¹ Correctly: *csikósok*.
- ² Elek Dósa (1803–1867), professor of law at the Marosvásárhely Law Academy of the Calvinist Church. From 1861 a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he was Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1867.
- ³ Baron Miklós Wesselényi, Jr. (1796–1850) was a politician-writer and a leading figure of the reformist opposition in the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony.
- ⁴ The Teleki Library, also known as *Bibliotheca Telekiana*, was founded by Count Sámuel Teleki (1739–1822), Chancellor of Transylvania, in Marosvásárhely in 1802. The historic public library and museum is still visited by thousands of scholars and tourists a year.
- ⁵ Michael Servetus (1511–1553) was an Aragonese theologian, cartographer, physician and humanist.
- ⁶ The Hungarian adjective means “stinking” or “stinky.”

John Paget (1808–1892) was an English physician. He settled down in Transylvania after his marriage with Polixena Wesselényi and lived there as a landowner. In 1848–49 he took part in the Hungarian War of Independence against the Habsburgs as an adjutant to General Josef Bem and informed the English public as a war correspondent. His two-volume work *Hungary and Transylvania* is commonly regarded as the best account of 19th-century Hungary.



Buda and Pest, Westminster and Lambeth

D. T. ANSTED

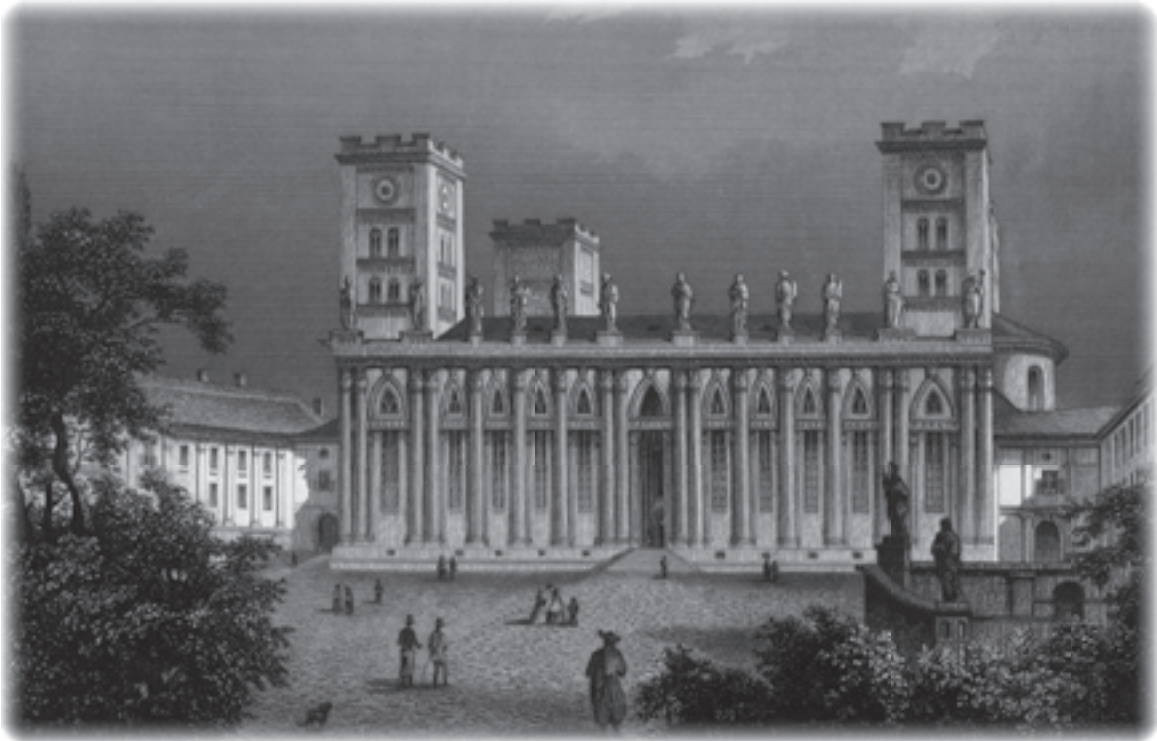
[181] The chief industry of Mohács is connected with the railway to Fünfkirchen and the shipment of the coal brought down from the mines. The greater part of this coal belongs to, and is required for the use of the steamers of the Danube Steam Navigation Company. The rest is sold to other steamers, or is [182] sent to a distance by water in barges. The coal is heaped on the river bank, when discharged from the trucks, and is there left exposed to the weather. It is certainly much better than its appearance would warrant one in supposing, and it had need be so, since all that is seen consists of dirty black dust, occasionally coated with alum or discoloured by sulphur. It is both removed from the trucks, and put on board in barrows, loaded and wheeled by a multitude of men, women, and girls, and in this way the whole industrial population seems occupied. It is a curious sight to watch them at work. A continuous stream of barrows, containing coal-dust, is seen passing along a narrow plank or across a barge to each ship. As soon as each barrow is emptied, the owner returns to the coal heap by another path with his or her empty barrow. At a certain point a man is stationed with an indefinite supply of tickets, and as each porter approaches he or she receives into a little pocket or bag, hanging to the dress, a check for the load carried. Nothing is said, and hardly the slightest pause is made, and back goes the empty barrow to be refilled and again accounted for as long and as frequently as the labourer pleases. The appearance is wonderfully like that one sees when a swarm of ants have discovered a treasure, which they are anxious to transfer rapidly to their store-houses. The most perfect order

prevails. Occasionally, a song is struck up for a short time, but for the most part not a word is uttered. The coal is shovelled into the barrow, run along to the ship, and brought back [183] again, as if the whole transfer were being conducted by machinery.

The railway to Fünfkirchen¹ crosses the alluvial plains of the Danube at right angles, and it is soon evident that this plain is not here so level as one at first imagines. It undulates, and before long rises considerably, as is seen by the railway cuttings. There is, however, good geological reason for this, and the cause is recognized on approaching the station of Villány, where a hard quartzite or sandstone rock rises like a wall out of the earth, till then covered entirely of tertiary and alluvial rock.

Villány is an interesting locality. On the slopes of the hill is grown a well-known and excellent red wine, and all around the cultivation is high, and the scenery picturesque. The flat appearance of the plains is entirely gone, and from this point onwards the country is pretty, and the outline varied. The distance of Villány from the Danube must be about twenty miles. There seemed a good deal of movement at the station, and many houses and small villages are near, in addition to the town itself. There is no want of passengers on these railways, and even the smallest and most out-of-the-way stations generally show some activity. One often wonders where the people come from, when on passing by rail through a country apparently without habitations, the train stops at a small roadside station to take up and set down passengers. It is, however, a fact that wherever

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



The cathedral of Pécs

railway communication is opened, passengers and goods will soon come to take advantage of it.

[184] I noticed at the Villány station indications of the importance of the district for the growth of wine, a number of casks lying ready to be carried down to Mohács for shipment, perhaps to Pesth or Vienna, or to some other place of large consumption. Even England is now receiving supplies from this quarter, and if the wines are kept long enough before drinking there can be no doubt that they will please the taste of those who know and appreciate purity of flavour. Without age, however, none of the Hungarian wines are agreeable, and it is to be feared they may receive a bad name, if forced on the market in a young state, and tasted without knowledge of their peculiar properties.

Beyond Villány the country is hilly, and the villages are larger and more frequented than near the

Danube. I noticed here, for the first time, though it is not peculiar to the district, a singular construction of the churches, derived, perhaps, from the time when Turkish taste prevailed in the country. Instead of consisting of a nave and choir—with transepts and aisles as additional members of the building, when anything more important than the simple parish church is required—we have here only a square building of considerable size, and a short choir beyond. Over the whole of the square, except the angles, rises a huge semicircular dome, which is generally painted of the deepest and brightest red, while from the remaining part rises a small clock-tower, square to some height, and terminating with a flattened sphere and small spire.

The distance from Mohács to Uszög, the last station [185] on the rail, is about thirty miles, and the station itself is about three miles from the town of

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer



The market at Bata

Fünfkirchen. The railway, which is chiefly a mineral line, runs on into the coal-field, which is distant a few miles to the northeast, among hills of somewhat greater elevation than those near the town. It is likely to be continued westwards, and will, at Kanisa, fall into the main line already constructed between Pesth and Trieste, passing the Platten See.² The country that will have to be traversed is wild, and at present not much inhabited; but the opening thus made cannot fail to be of great importance, and will enable the Fünfkirchen coal to reach the Adriatic, and compete with that now brought at great cost from England. It is understood that in its whole course the river Drave runs through rich and productive lands, which only require means of communication to insure their yielding very large results. The proposed railway will not, indeed, run

along the valley of the Drave, but will be parallel to it, and not very distant.

Comfortable omnibuses, of a peculiarly pleasant construction, not unlike a combination of coach and short omnibus, but with only a light tilt, useful in case of bad weather, convey the passengers from Uszög to Fünfkirchen, at a charge of about six pence. Other carriages were also waiting to be hired, and the number of passengers was considerable enough to fill several of them. The road to the town is paved, and in good condition; the fields are enclosed by hedges, and everywhere there are marks of intelligent cultivation. I was rather sur-[186]prised, at first, at the very modern appearance and style of everything in this neighbourhood; but the numerous tall chimneys spoke with sufficient clearness of the cause. The neighbouring coal has already produced a marvellous

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

result, and has given an air of wealth and prosperity which cannot be mistaken.

The town of Fünfkirchen, though I have been unable to find any account of it in guide books or descriptions of Hungary, is large, clean, well-built, flourishing, and wealthy. It is said to contain about 18,000 inhabitants, and has a considerable trade in various food products of the neighbourhood. Much excellent wine is grown on the surrounding hills, the country is covered with corn-fields, and there are various valuable crops obtained. The soil around is excellent, and the climate favourable.

There are several good streets, provided with shops of all kinds, both useful and ornamental; and I observed especially a number of jewellers. There are also several booksellers. I mention these as indicating the character of the people, and the extent to which they have taken advantage of their position, and the more so, as there seems no outlet to the place, and, except as connected with the railroad and adjacent coalfield, no reason why it should be better than other towns in Hungary. In the middle of the town is a large open market-place, or square, in which is one of the churches. It has a red dome, resembling that already alluded to. It has also a crypt under the [187] choir, which seems to be common enough in Hungary, as in Spanish churches of a certain period.

But the most interesting building in the town is another of the churches, of much more recent date, built at enormous expense, out of certain large special funds, set apart for the purpose, belonging to the very rich episcopate of Fünfkirchen. The style of this building is not only very peculiar, but rather original. To take advantage of the position of the ground, the principal facade of the church is the south side, which is of great length. The western extremity is comparatively little seen, and is poor; but the church stands sideways towards a group of large, ecclesiastical buildings, forming, with them, three sides of a noble square, open to the south. A grand entrance occupies the central part, and on each side are five principal windows,

somewhat Romanesque in form, but with Gothic tracery. Columns, with very singular, barbaresque capitals, occupy the spaces between the windows. Large statues surmount these, on the roof. On entering the church, the choir is on the right side, and the nave on the left. The choir is raised considerably, and beneath it is a large crypt chapel. The nave is plain. None of the windows are of coloured glass. The general effect of the interior is good, but the walls are not much ornamented. There are no apparent aisles in the nave, but two portions, one on the north and the other on the south side, that would have been aisles, are partitioned off, forming distinct chapels, not architecturally decorated. The walls are painted in fresco, to [188] resemble architectural detail. The choir is divided into three parts, the central part being richly ornamented with carved seats, over which rises, on each side, a high screen. The pulpit, reading-stand, and altar are all richly carved and constructed of ornamental marbles. The doorways and the pavement are also of marble; but the walls are whitewashed. There is a handsome and excellent choir organ, in addition to the great organ over the west door. There are many frescoes and pictures in the church, all modern, but well-painted and in good taste, though rather flat.

The west front has two high, square, battlemented towers, with Romanesque windows, high up. There are also false west lights. The general effect is poor.

There is an old church at that end of the town furthest from the railroad, which is now attached to a hospital and poor-house, but which is especially interesting as having been at one time used as a mosque. It is one of the few distinct reminiscences of Turkish sway in this part of Hungary. An elegant minaret, rising from a little court in front, is connected with a square enclosure covered with a dome, and is an exact repetition of the mosques at Belgrad and in the other Turkish towns on the Danube. There does not seem to be any other complete building of ancient date; but there are several walls, and some more perfect fragments, of which

no account can be given by the residents. These, no doubt, belong to the period of Turkish rule.

Among other signs of the flourishing condition of [189] Fünfkirchen may be reckoned the state of the hotels, of which there are several. One, in the principal square, or market-place, dedicated to the Rhinoceros, is on a large scale, and of long standing. It is laid out in a style of positive grandeur; but I was advised not to go there, as it was said to be indifferently managed and uncomfortable. It has a large coffee-house attached, and, as in Vienna and Paris, the pavement and road in front of the house are entrenched upon by chairs and orange-trees, converting it, in summer, into an additional and out-door symposium.

Another and a really excellent inn is situated conveniently enough in one of the principal streets, near the market-place. It is called "*Der Wilde Mann*" (The Savage), and there is a public garden with baths almost adjoining it. This hotel I can safely speak well of, for I have nowhere in Germany, or in the Austrian dominions, found better or more comfortable arrangements of all kinds. It is large, and is built round two sides of a court, generally crowded with vehicles. A handsome roofed corridor runs round the house, open towards the court-yard, and there the landlord and his friends sit reading their newspapers, and discussing Hungarian or German politics. A large *Speise-saal*, or dining-room, opens from the corner, and near it is a staircase to the principal bedroom floor. The other rooms on the basement are kitchens and servants' apartments. Above is a long series of bedrooms, all opening from a gallery above the corridor. The rooms [190] are fair-sized, well-furnished, perfectly clean, and well-appointed.

I am the more particular in alluding to the nature of the accommodation here, and in other places where I found it better than usual, because of the general impression prevailing as to the badness of the inns in Hungary. My own experience is certainly much more favourable than that of former travellers, and I am strongly inclined to believe

that a great improvement has taken place within a comparatively recent period. The inns are generally managed by Germans, and the German language is always sufficient for the traveller.

My object in visiting Fünfkirchen was to look at a coal-field in the neighbourhood, which has lately become of much interest, owing to the rapid increase in its development, and the circumstance of its coal superseding that of many of the other Danube-valley deposits.

After an hour's drive in one of the light carts of the country, I came into the coal district, easily recognized as well by the natural sections of coal seen by the roadside as by the high chimneys and pits passed from time to time. The country between the town and the mines is very pretty and well wooded, and, as most of the works have been commenced within the last ten years, there is none of the desolate appearance so common in districts that have been long subject to mining operations. I do not know a more beautiful specimen of woodland and valley scenery than is to be [191] seen on looking across to the opposite hills from the colony, close to the principal and central mining establishment; but I can fancy that something of the same kind, though on a rather larger scale, may have met the eye of a traveller, a century ago or less, who wandered from the spot where is now the railway-station at Stoke, across the country to Hanley, in the Staffordshire Potteries, in England. The nature of the wood may have been different, and perhaps, at the time I speak of, there was more cultivation in England than there is now in Central Hungary, but the general effect must have been the same. Few, now visiting the part of England I am alluding to, would fancy that it had once been so beautiful, and only persons accustomed to see young and rising mining districts, as well as those that have been long worked, are likely to recognize in the latter the elements of beauty they admire in the former.

The coal-field of Fünfkirchen is very small, but it is much larger than that of Oravicza. It has been ascertained to be about eight miles in extreme length,

For place names and regions, see the maps and the Gazetteer

and half a mile wide. It is terminated, naturally, to the north-east, by older and lower rocks cutting it off suddenly; but, towards the south-west, it is covered up by newer rocks, and may, perhaps, extend beyond the furthest known point. Like the Oravicza coal, it belongs to deposits of the age of the poor coals found at Whitby, in Yorkshire, and not to those worked at Newcastle and the other great coalmining districts of England. Like the Oravicza [192] deposits, also, it is much more inclined to the horizon than English coals generally are, but the beds all dip one way, and are not on a saddle as in the former case. There are several seams, but all are thin, and apparently very poor, though regarded as worth working. Such coals, if found in England or many other parts of the world, would certainly be set aside as worth little or nothing, for they are not only dirty-looking, but are full of sulphur (iron pyrites), and if left exposed to the weather they decompose, heat, and either burn by spontaneous combustion, or become coated with a kind of alum, resulting from double decomposition. They are neither good-looking, nor easily or cheaply worked, but they possess certain properties and qualities which give them great value. One of the chief of these is, that they become rapidly hardened when exposed to the action of fire. Thus, instead of falling through and becoming wasted when put on the surface of a furnace or hot fire, this dirty powder immediately cakes. Whatever the quantity may be that is thrown on, the inside becomes sheltered, and remains defended by the cake formed at the surface, till the whole is coked through. The coal, therefore, burns slowly, giving out great heat, and with little or no waste. This peculiarity is very important, and has rendered the mineral properties at Fünfkirchen much more valuable than they could otherwise have been.

There is a neighbouring coal-field larger than that just described, situated at Vasas (pronounced *Vaschasch*), [193] for which the sum of 600,000 thalers, (nearly a hundred thousand pounds sterling,) is said to have been lately paid. It is not yet in a position to be opened, but when the railway, already alluded to, is constructed, it will probably take a full share of

the business of the neighbourhood. The quality of the coal is said to be the same.

At Fünfkirchen, as at Oravicza, I fell in with public proceedings and rejoicings, but here the whole affair was popular. Arrangements had been made, on the day I happened to select for my visit, for a performance by the members of a singing society, to take place in the open air, in a natural park, close to the miners' colony. After making myself acquainted with the particulars of the coal-field, and when I had partaken of the hospitality of the director, I was much pleased to see the gathering of the neighbourhood on this occasion. The singing was in parts, and entirely by amateurs, chiefly the various persons employed in the mines. All the voices were male. The visitors included a large number from the neighbouring town. Dancing followed the singing, and was kept up to a moderately late hour. The whole affair was extremely pleasing, but it was painful to an Englishman to find Austrian bayonets brought into sight, and a guard considered necessary, on so simple an occasion.

The paucity of Hungarians among the persons engaged in the various mining operations, was again brought under my notice in this place. Out of a large [194] industrial population, settled for some years, and very flourishing, in a spot removed a long distance from any other than Magyar towns, there were hardly any native Hungarians to be found. Bohemia, Moravia, Wallachia, had all sent a multitude of common workmen; Saxony and Rhenish Prussia, with Bohemia, supplied almost all the instructed labour and intelligence. German was the language everywhere spoken, and all the business was transacted in its dialects. It would seem that neither Magyars nor Slaves will devote their energies to matters so sublunary as raising coals, or conveying them to market.

A large quantity of the Fünfkirchen coal is washed by a contrivance similar to that used in Belgium, and sometimes for inferior coals in England. It has been attempted, but hitherto with very imperfect success, to make the coal-dust into bricks, which

can bear carriage. Could this be done, the value of the coals would be greatly increased, especially when the railway is open to Kanisa. The quantity of coal taken out of the mines already open is somewhere about 80,000 tons per annum, and is rapidly increasing. The shafts are not yet very deep, and water is not troublesome underground. There is no reason to anticipate difficulty or exhaustion for a long time, and the other mines that may be opened are not likely to glut the market.

The railway at present runs into the very middle of the coal district, and the coal is run out of the mine into the trucks. It comes out very small and [195] very dirty, but becomes yet smaller and dirtier before it reaches Mohács, where being first shovelled out of the trucks and thrown on a pile exposed to the weather, and then shovelled into barrows and thrown down into the hold of a ship, it is reduced to the finest powder. I carefully examined a heap of several hundred tons without finding half-a-dozen coals as large as a cocoa-nut, and very few lumps were as large as a small apple. I have elsewhere explained how it is that, notwithstanding these drawbacks, the mineral is still so valuable. It should be added that several seams of ironstone are found near the beds of coal.

The extremely picturesque hills, among which and on whose sides the Fünfkirchen coal makes its appearance, have been already alluded to. They seem to continue with the same general character as an undulating, picturesque, richly-wooded country for a considerable distance, and they may be recognized at once in a geological as well as an ordinary map. They are, in fact, deposits brought into the place we find them by some upheaval, and have nothing to do with the rocks of the plain through which they have been forced, or which have been collected round their bases, when they stood up as islands in the tertiary sea. [...]

[197] The Danube between the mouth of the Drave and the neighbourhood of Pesth has been described already as running through a vast flat alluvial plain extending eastwards to the foot of the

Carpathians. The whole of this part of the river has a character and appearance quite distinct from its usual appearance elsewhere. Owing to the nature of the ground, it winds and twists much more, it embraces many more islands, and is more sluggish. About a hundred and fifty miles in a direct line from north to south, corresponds here to nearly double the distance to be traversed when the windings of the stream are included.

Through the plains thus crossed come the principal rivers that feed the parent stream, and it is here that the great agricultural wealth of Hungary may be [198] considered to culminate. Being now traversed along its whole length by the railway, some of the produce that was formerly carried by the Danube takes another course; but the result of railway communication has been to cause an increase in the traffic on the stream far greater than the amount of this loss, while a carrying trade has been opened for the railway, which bids fair to exceed anything of the kind in Europe. It may, then, be looked forward to as a certainty, that all possible means of conveyance will soon be called into requisition, and that some day this part of the country will be as much visited and travelled over for business purposes as other places with similar natural advantages which have been longer under cultivation.

The Danube, being a wide river, often deep, and constantly shifting its bed when not kept within it by human contrivances, is still very much in a state of nature, and the amount of steam navigation upon it, though not inconsiderable, does not seem yet to have interfered with the supply of fish. Many parts of this long reach between Pesth and the mouth of the Drave are crowded with these animals, though they are not even there so plentiful as in the river Theiss. Among the various species the varieties of sturgeon are the most important. They are caught in immense quantities and conveyed to market; but the larger kinds are not preferred for the table. In addition to the oil, and the roe, which is made into caviare, isinglass is obtained from them, and the [199] flesh is commonly eaten for food. On the

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Danube landscape

banks of the stream a considerable variety of birds congregate, and there are some rare species both of them and of quadrupeds; but the beaver, the most interesting of the rarer European quadrupeds, is more common above than below Vienna.

In some parts of the stream where it runs through the great plains attempts have been made, with great success, by cutting across the narrower necks of the Danube, to shorten the distance from place to place by diminishing the windings. The stream is quite rapid enough to ensure success in undertakings of this kind, for the moment a small cut is opened the water sweeps through and widens it with great velocity, and the current round the longer way being diminished, a deposit of mud is produced there which in time stops up the old channel entirely.

The islands of the Danube are frequently shifting, although some of the larger ones, covered with thick wood, are tolerably steady. Two of the

larger islands, one (St. André) about twenty miles, and another (Ratzköve)³ more than thirty miles in length, succeed one another with a short interval, the smaller one commencing a little above Pesth, and the other a little below it. Both are cultivated, and have several villages of considerable size. The larger island is passed on the east in proceeding from Mohács to Pesth. The small one is left to the west on going on towards Vienna.

But the great and most interesting feature of the [200] Danube, in this great sweep through the plains, is the almost infinite multitude of the smaller islands. These succeed each other so rapidly, and the river is often so wide that they reminded me of a coral archipelago I had seen on the south side of Cuba in the West Indies. They are all so green and so bright, so invariably of the same form and so nearly of the same shape; that the resemblance is startling. At one time they were almost as danger-

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ous, for the steamer was frequently grounded on or near them; but this source of delay in Danube navigation is now pretty nearly at an end.

Like the Rhine, the Danube in winter and spring is subject to sudden and heavy floods, the waters sometimes rising with extreme and dangerous rapidity. The cause of this has already been alluded to in speaking of the narrow gorge between the Carpathians, which is the only passage through which the accumulated waters of the stream can reach the Black Sea. When heavy rains fall on the mountains and plains, or when the winter snows melt rapidly, the whole of the flat country is subject to inundation, and great mischief may result. No one who considers the magnitude and number of its affluents, and the strict limits within which it is confined before emerging into its delta, can fail to understand the importance of this matter in the physical geography of the Danube.

The approach to Buda, marked by a multitude of little mills, worked by the action of the stream on undershot wheels, is strikingly beautiful, and no-[201]where, perhaps, is the advantage of mounting rather than descending the Danube better seen or more felt than at this point. Coming up from the great plain, the ground on the left hand, at first a low, alluvial cliff, gradually becomes higher, and a harder rock, a kind of limestone, takes its place. At Promontorium is a picturesque and well-placed country house, with a hill rising behind it, on which are vineyards. It is said that the habitations of the villagers are cut out of the rock, but at any rate the rock affords good cellerage, and there is a flourishing population dwelling in houses of the ordinary kind. Near this point the river bends, and the heights of Buda come first into view. They are fine and well situated, and behind them is a noble amphitheatre of much loftier hills at a considerable distance, embosoming the lower range, and greatly increasing the effect. It is this distant range of higher hills which one fails to appreciate in coming in sight of Buda from the north, for they have already been passed, and the city and its crowning fort are

merely seen standing out of the water with hardly any background, and little picturesque effect.

At first, on coming up stream, Buda only is seen, its citadel, the palace, and a few minarets on the top of the hill, and at the foot that part of the lower city looking towards the south. A high steep cliff rises abruptly from an angle of the river to a considerable height, and seems to stand almost alone, like a huge rock interrupting the navigation. Behind it is a richly-cultivated valley, opening to the river, quite close [202] to the foot of the rock. The rock is the celebrated Blocksberg, recognized at once by the observatory near the top. From its summit a magnificent view is obtained both above and below the city, and extending to the hill country beyond.

An outer circle of much loftier hills encloses the Blocksberg and the city of Buda. For a long distance the country houses and gardens of the wealthy inhabitants of Pesth may be seen winding up the valley, partly concealed by the trees, and occasionally showing their white fronts, overgrown with roses or other creeping plants. Behind them is a tolerably lofty range, from which the views of the surrounding country must no doubt be superb. Along the whole of the right bank of the Danube, from far above Pesth, into Wallachia, as I have already more than once remarked, the hills appear at intervals by no means distant, and if not always close to the present course of the stream, they are always much nearer that (the right) than the other (or left) bank. Near those points where the river makes a sudden turn, there is generally, as in this case, a sound geological reason for the change, and hard limestone has the same effect here that the quartz at Villány has between Mohács and Fünfkirchen. Spurs of the Carpathians approach the Danube near Pesth.

As the city is approached nearer, the scenery becomes more interesting, and before long the buildings of Pesth are seen behind those of Buda, apparently forming with it a single town. Presently the bridge⁴ [203] comes in sight, its noble span and great height fitly connecting the two cities. After this the towns are clearly separated, the low

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Buda and Pest

and poor part of Buda is past, and the much more modern and better-built, if less-picturesque, city of Pesth contrasts with it on the opposite side.

Buda and Pesth stand towards each other something in the relation of Westminster and Lambeth, if we suppose London and Southwark out of the way. There is, however, no resemblance between the towns in any respect. Buda is old, Turkish, and dirty, but abounding in interest. Its German name *Ofen* (a stove, whence our word *oven*) indicates one of its peculiarities, namely, a hot, stifling atmosphere, which is derived partly from position and partly from a multitude of hot springs bursting forth from the hill sides, and celebrated for the last two thousand years for their curative power. In former times the town must have been very inconvenient, as the strip of low land by the river is very narrow, and the hill rises abruptly almost from the

water. There is now a tunnel through this rock connected with a good carriage-road leading to the top, where there is a gigantic palace, no longer occupied by any royal person, but the residence of various officials. There is also a road going up along the side of the hill next the river, but this is much further round, and less convenient. The views from the road and from the summit are extremely fine, much more so than could be imagined by any one looking up from the river. They include a wide [204] stretch of country, looking across as far as the mountains near Nagyag. At one's feet, on the opposite side of the river, the city of Pesth stretches out its long lines of modern streets in various directions.

The houses in the upper part of the town, both near the Fortress and on the various roads that lead to it, are all good, and look comfortable enough. They offer a vivid contrast to the miserable spec-

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tacle presented in the lower part and on the slopes of the Blocksberg. These, however, are the parts of the town formerly inhabited exclusively by Servians or Jews, the Pariahs of Hungary.

Buda itself is a long straggling town, with straggling and very extensive suburbs, but without much that is specially interesting. Except the baths, everything belongs to that late unmeaning period of European history when there was little taste and when the fitness of things for their purpose was a matter regarded as of much less importance than their fitting a certain ideal classical standard. The Turkish wars that have so recently ceased in this part of Europe, have effectually prevented any memorial of antiquity from being preserved, but as the Turks could fully appreciate baths, they either left this part of the city arrangements as they were or improved them. There have been many Roman remains discovered and described from time to time.

The Blocksberg, with its circular fortress replacing an old watch tower, stands out in fine contrast to the opposite and lower hill, where the palace of the Arch-[205]duke,⁵ the churches, the theatres, and the other public buildings appear.

From the foot of the rock, below the Archducal palace, commences the beautiful suspension bridge, designed and executed by Mr. Tierney Clarke.⁶ This work was executed at great cost and under peculiar difficulties, for the Danube is here as wide as the Thames at London Bridge, and extremely deep on the side next Buda. Its bed also is alluvial, and not very well adapted to serve as the foundation of a pier. The river is subject to sudden and violent rushes of water, and a great volume of broken ice passes down in winter. Owing to the turn that takes place not far off up stream, and the islands that commence almost immediately below, this ice is particularly liable to be troublesome. The construction of the bridge took place at a time when iron coffer-dams and steam pile-driving machines were not in use, and thus great additional delay and expense were incurred. There are few more creditable works to be found on the Continent.

The proportions of the bridge are very noble, and the effect from whatever point it is seen is perfectly satisfactory. It now communicates directly by a convenient road with Buda, by means of a tunnel, only recently completed and also designed by Mr. Clarke, who, with his family, have been residents in Hungary since the completion of his great work.⁷ On the Pesth side, the bridge opens on a broad space a little beyond the centre of the town, but not inconveniently distant. There is still work to be done in completing the paving, [206] and finishing the buildings that are to give this square the effect it requires, but what is executed is satisfactory.

Pesth is built on the flat tongue of land opposite the rock of Buda. It is quite flat, and parts of it have been subject to serious inundation on the rise of the river in spring, but most of the streets are believed to be out of all danger at present. The town has an appearance of great newness, no old buildings, and, indeed, no antiquities of any kind forming part of it. It is for the most part well-built, though without much taste as far as the churches are concerned. The classical style prevails, and indeed this is generally the case in all modern buildings in Hungary. Pesth is not, however, really a modern town, having been in the Middle Ages the scene of numerous contests with the Turks, who lost and regained possession no less than five times within a very short period previous to 1686, when it was finally delivered into the hands of a Christian population. Since then, it has continued to grow, and has risen to great importance. It is regarded as the political and commercial capital of Hungary. Presburg, indeed, contests the honour, as in that city is the Cathedral in which the Kings of Hungary are crowned, but the Diet is now held in Pesth, and the more modern capital is assuming the lead in all matters. It grows rapidly both towards east and west. In the latter direction there are at present many open walks and drives in a green but uncultivated space of considerable extent, used as a Prater for public [207] promenades. Beyond this extremity of the town there is also a small wooded island, a favourite

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resort of the inhabitants in summer. Pesth already has a noble quay, wide and well-paved, adorned with some of the largest and best of the hotels and other houses, together with some public buildings facing the river. Landing places for the steamers, and ample accommodation for loading and unloading the ships that carry away or bring merchandise of various kinds, are to be found on this quay. From the quay, there are streets at right angles running up to the extremity of the town, and these again are intersected by large and handsome streets of shops parallel to the river and quay. The shops in Pesth are almost equal to those in Vienna, and there is an amount of movement quite equal to that of the Austrian capital, in proportion to the magnitude of the population. Hitherto, however, Pesth has not expanded into a very thickly peopled city, although the best part of the town, comparatively small as it is, is fully as large, if not larger in proportion to the poorer part, than is usual in capital cities.

Pesth is said to extend nearly two miles along the river bank, but the greater part of this is away from the best streets. On crossing the bridge from Buda the town to the left, though including some important buildings, is the least-fashionable portion. Here is, however, a gigantic barrack—an octagonal group of buildings enclosing a space said to be as large as Belgrave Square in London, and serving as a garrison for all arms.⁸ It is certainly capable of containing a [208] little army in case of need, and during the late political disturbances in 1848, received as prisoners almost all the principal inhabitants of Buda and Pesth. The pile of building, though not ornamental in an architectural sense, is very imposing from its dimensions, and from the very absence of any attempt at ornamentation. I did not enter it. Although once on the outside of the town it is now nearly in the centre, owing to the quantity of new buildings near and beyond it. It is as much as four storeys high and forms a remarkable feature standing up nearly detached, surrounded by public walks, but with busy streets around.

The hotels at Pesth are magnificent, and provided with all the luxuries that can be met with in other European capitals. Their charges also are not extravagant, although here, as in Vienna, house-rent seems dear, and the price charged for apartments is, therefore, rather high. It is the custom in this town as in Austria, to pay separately for every meal, and, indeed, for everything taken at the hotel in the way of food. It is a plan greatly to be recommended to strangers, as it simplifies accounts and enables one to know precisely the price of everything. There is no *table d'hôte*. This institution seems never to have reached Eastern Europe except by way of steamboat navigation. It is not easy to give any reason for the absence of so convenient a mode of obtaining a good meal at the smallest price. One can only say that it is a custom in some countries and not in others. I found the food [209] excellent and the wines not less so at the “Königen von England,”⁹ situated on the quay close to the landing-place of the steamer, and I had every reason to be satisfied. The other principal inns are also very well spoken of.

There are many coffee-houses in Pesth—many, indeed, in every street, for the Hungarians seem to delight in such resorts even more than the Parisians or Viennese. Some of these coffee-houses are extremely handsome and on a large scale; but all are well appointed and comfortable, and the coffee is excellent. The beer is not to be despised by lovers of that beverage.

The theatres of Pesth, though not handsome, are better-looking buildings and more prominent than the churches. They are numerous, large, and showy. The churches of all denominations are poor and unmeaning; but a synagogue¹⁰ has recently been built by the rich Jews which rivals that recently completed at Cologne. Both are among the finest specimens of architecture attempted by the Jews in modern times. Both are somewhat mosque-like and Oriental in their style, and the effect is good. The Pesth building appeared to me to be the larger of the two; but, being in a more open neighbourhood and better seen, I may have been

deceived. It is interesting to find the ancient people of Israel, after so many centuries of bad treatment and persecution, now presenting themselves to society in Europe as they really are; daring to enjoy before the eyes of the world the wealth they have accu-[210]mulated, and permitted to spend a part of it in improving and decorating the towns they select as their residences. Persecution has not made them poor, nor has it diminished their capacity for appreciating those branches of the fine arts peculiarly adapted to their Oriental natures. Noble synagogues in every great city in Europe would be valuable additions to the sacred buildings already erected in them. They would also be a fit return for the freedom of opinion permitted in modern times in religious matters.

One of the most remarkable of the public monuments of Pesth, is the National Museum,¹¹ a very large detached building, including several courts and standing in its own grounds. It contains public apartments adapted to the use of the Diet, or Hungarian Parliament, and a long series of rooms and galleries containing the national collections in all departments. The building was only commenced in 1838. It is now and has long been completed, so far as the exterior is concerned; but the fitting and the arranging the contents is not so far advanced. At present the Natural History Collections spread over many rooms, and are the most interesting. They include all departments and are nearly confined to Hungarian products. So large is the series already obtained of Hungarian Natural History, and so extremely rich in this respect is the country, owing to its singular variety of climate, its geographical position, and its historical and archaeological monuments, that one regrets to see foreign rarities or antiquities and other objects of interest [211] mixed up with the national specimens. It is to be hoped the time will come when all that is Hungarian will be kept strictly apart, and that the Hungarian series will be made much more complete than it is now.

Few people are aware how rich Hungary is in objects of Natural History. Including a large part

of the great valley of the Danube, and almost the whole of the Carpathian chain of mountains,—one of the loftiest and most important in Europe next to the Alps;—crossed by the greatest of the European streams, and including some of its largest feeders; separated from Africa by barriers easily passed by birds and even insects; almost connected with Asia; having an extreme, but not at all an unfavourable climate; possessing numerous swamps and morasses as well as lofty mountain-tops, lakes as well as rivers, and deserts as well as cultivated tracts; having every variety of level within limits of more than eight thousand feet:—it is difficult to imagine any animal or vegetable, capable of living at all in a temperate climate, that would not here flourish, if taken care of. Thus it is that in the museum we meet with a multitude of African birds of kinds not elsewhere known in Europe, a mixture of quadrupeds of the most singular and interesting nature; and, no doubt, somewhat later many other departments of Zoology will be similarly illustrated. The fishes, for example, include many kinds peculiar to the waters of this part of Europe; some gigantic in their proportions, others as remarkable for their minuteness; and some of the insects are very [212] singular. The collection of dried plants, many of them on a large scale and adapted to illustrate the economic value as well as the technical peculiarities of the various objects is not less interesting than the Zoology; and, among objects of this kind, the collection of woods should not be forgotten. These, indeed, are quite as remarkable for the completeness with which every important fact is shown as for the quaint taste in which the specimens are finished.

At present, however, the geological collections, — including under this general title minerals, rocks, and fossils, — are both the most complete and the most interesting of all. Hungary, especially in that great basin enclosed on three sides by the Carpathian mountains and drained chiefly by the river Theiss, is wonderfully rich in the fossil remains of the large quadrupeds who inhabited Europe previous to the last great changes that converted Europe into a

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The National Museum in Pest

continent, altering its climate to correspond with the change in the level of land. At this early period elephants, rhinoceroses, and even hippopotami, ranged from Asia and Africa into what is now eastern Europe, and adapted themselves to the circumstances of the country. They met here gigantic bears and large feline animals, horses, and also that singular large-horned deer (*Cervus megaceros*), [213] whose proportions may be judged of from the Irish and Isle of Man specimens in all the principal museums of England, and by the restorations so ably effected in the Crystal Palace gardens, at Sydenham.

In the bed of the Theiss, and in the alluvial mud through which that river has at one time taken its course, are buried innumerable bones of these animals, which are frequently dug up in a state so absolutely perfect that they leave nothing to the

imagination. A very fine series of these bones is in the museum, and I observed that although not quite yet in order, owing to the illness of the Curator, additions were being made on a large scale. The remains of the *Dinotherium* and those of the *Cervus megaceros*, are especially interesting, being here associated with those of the mastodon and several species of elephant and rhinoceros. Although no human remains have yet been described from these localities, it is not unlikely that they will hereafter be obtained and help to decide the great questions now at issue with regard to the time of the first introduction of man upon the globe.

Besides the Natural History collections the museum is enriched by a large series of Roman and other antiquities, of mechanical contrivances and models, and of modern paintings by Hungarian artists. The

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antiquities are of various periods, and include some specimens of great interest.

Source

A Short Trip in Hungary and Transylvania in the Spring of 1862
(London: W. H. Allen, 1862).

Notes

¹ The Mohács–Pécs railroad was constructed for the Danube Steamboat Shipping Company in 1854–57. The Üszögpusztá railway station was used to transfer the coal mined at Pécs to the harbor of Mohács. The railroad was opened to passenger transport in 1859.

² The Pécs–Nagykanizsa railroad was opened to traffic seven

years after the author's visit, in 1869.

³ In fact, Ráckeve is a village on Csepel Island.

⁴ The Chain Bridge.

⁵ Buda Castle on top of the Castle Hill.

⁶ For Clark, see above, p. 73, note 2.

⁷ The author confuses William T. Clark (1783–1852), the English designer of the Chain Bridge, with Scotsman Adam Clark (1811–1866), who locally supervised the construction of the bridge. It was the latter who settled down in Buda and later designed the Castle Hill Tunnel at the Buda-side head of Chain Bridge.

⁸ See also above, p. 70, note 5.

⁹ Correctly: *Königin von England* (Queen of England).

¹⁰ The Great Synagogue in Dohány Street was built between 1854–59. It is the largest synagogue in Europe and the second largest in the world.

¹¹ The building of the Hungarian National Museum was constructed between 1837–47.

David Thomas Ansted (1814–1880) was an English geologist and author. He was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took his degree in 1836. He was professor of geology at King's College, London, and lecturer at Addiscombe and at the Civil Engineering College at Putney. He was a prolific author and some of his geological writings for a time kept their place as standard authorities. His works include *Geology ...* (London, 1844), *The Great Stone Book of Nature* (London, 1863) and several books of travel.



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Into the Backwoods of Europe

JAMES CREAGH

[9] Although the scenery on the Danube below Pesth cannot be compared to that on the Rhine between Drachenfels and Bingen, the voyage down the former is nevertheless much more interesting, because the very fanciful dresses, as well as the wild and martial aspect of the people on the banks, are a vast source of amusement to the traveller who has come here for the first time. The idlers who sauntered out of the neighbouring villages at which we stopped [10] were all dressed in jack-boots and embroidered pelisses; and the coachmen of the hackney carriages who came down to the steamer to look for a passenger were covered with fur and yellow braid like regular Hussars. Instead of a hat they wore a busby and feather.

A musician who came on board at one of the villages amused us for a long time with an instrument made of several wires fastened along a flat piece of wood, which, played with two drumsticks, produced the most exquisite tones, which “trilled in many a bout,” to the infinite delight of the Hungarians. Hungarian gentlemen generally think that they ought not to speak to an Englishman unless they have been introduced; and they are so convinced of the great value set by us on that ceremony, that one of them, whom I had known on very easy terms for three or four days, was not satisfied till he was formally presented to me at Pressburg by a person who knew us both.

My admiration for their national music broke the ice; and we were soon on that pleasant footing which made the journey very [11] entertaining. One young Madjiar, who was going to his country house

for the summer, supposed that I was a Republican, because I was travelling with an American; but when I told him that he was greatly mistaken in his estimate of my political character, he seemed vastly pleased, because he was quite convinced that the whole population of England only consisted of “*Lords, Tories, and Mob*”; and no arguments or explanations of mine could correct his impressions on that head, for he flattered himself that he knew something about English institutions, and held his peculiar notion as an article of faith, which I found it impossible to disturb.

The manners of the Hungarians appear very aristocratical. Several of the passengers who went on shore were met by wild retainers, who bent down and kissed their hands with extreme humility. This ceremony aroused the anger of Kentucky, who was filled with contempt for people who could either perform or submit to such degrading salutations ... [...]

[15] As we got farther down the river, the dresses of the people became more Eastern. The men wore long white sheepskin cloaks, covered all over with embroidery of a most elaborate nature; and the dark complexions of tall and well-made girls in gaudy bodices and petticoats, gave them, at a little distance, the appearance of Affghan maidens. [...]

[25] People’s ideas about beauty are relative, so we reconnoitered the establishment with great curiosity before taking it by storm. All the buildings in Mohacz have the appearance of out-houses, and the “beautiful hotel” was exactly like them. Poor Kentucky, although frequently assuring me

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on board the steamer that he had never spent a pleasanter day in [26] his life, was altogether of a different opinion with regard to the night, and he now lamented bitterly having lost so much time in coming into the backwoods of Europe. [...]

[33] Mohacz resembles more an Asiatic than an European town; and I remarked several girls in long yellow boots, like those worn by Turkish women.

Nothing can exceed the universal politeness of these people to strangers; and their honesty is equally remarkable. Men have frequently returned money which I gave them, saying that they were overpaid; for it is considered mean and unmanly to impose upon a stranger. [...]

[34] The inhabitants of Mohacz are not more enlightened in their belief. A small pillar, in one of the streets, supports a grotesque group of painted wooden figures. One is naked; the other is dressed

in light blue; and a dove nailed in the middle of a yellow wheel with a great many spokes, completes a monument only suitable to a Hindoo temple. After [35] examining this structure for some time, I should have come away sorely puzzled as to its meaning or object, if I had not noticed that it was marked in large letters underneath, "The Holy Trinity;" and that a few peasants, who passed by at the time, bent down on one knee and took their caps off. [...]

Source

Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah: A Journey through Hungary, Slavonia, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Montenegro, to the North of Albania, in the Summer of 1875, 2 vols. (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1876), vol. 1.

James Creagh (1836–1910) was an Irish captain and author. In 1851 he was a cadet in the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, Berkshire, then he served in the military. His published works include *A Scamper to Sebastopol and Jerusalem in 1867* (London, 1873), *Armenians, Koords, and Turks* (London, 1880) and *Sparks from Camp Fires: An Autobiography* (London, 1901).



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The Most Picturesque Features of the Scenery

N. E. MAZUCHELLI

[44] The word “Magyar” (pronounced Mad-yar), however, is of very ancient origin, and has baffled the wisest philological [45] heads to determine its precise meaning. It was supposed in the Middle Ages to have been derived from Magog, son of Japhet, the popular superstition of that period recognising in these “pitiless heathen,” as they were called, “the Gog and Magog who were to precede the approaching end of the world.” Modern historians, however, have attributed to it various other origins, the most recent affirming that the word signifies “confederate.” But whatever may be its derivation, Max Müller, by the unerring guide of language, has traced the original seat of this interesting people to the Ural mountains which stretch upwards to the Arctic ocean; and pointing out the close affinity the Magyar tongue bears to the idiom of the Finnish race spoken east of the Volga, declares that the Magyars form the fourth branch of the Finnish stock, viz. the Ugric; and in his ‘Science of Language’ he gives striking examples of the similarity and connection which exist in the grammatical structure of the Magyar and the Ugro-Finnish dialects, particularly in the conjugation of verbs, which have aptly been called the “bones and sinews” of a language; and there is little doubt that the Magyars are none other than the same race that, under a different name, were called in the fourth century “Ugrogs.”

Hungary – the “*beata Ungaria*” of Dante¹ – has been peopled since the beginning of the Christian era, as we have already seen, by three distinct and separate colonies of barbarians, whose birthplace

was in the regions of the frozen North. Here, led by Attila, the Huns established themselves between the third and fourth centuries, and hither a century or two later came the Avars, belonging to the same northern race, each destined to accomplish its rôle in the history of nations, to rise to its meridian and then decline, till finally [46] overwhelmed by other warlike barbarians similar to themselves. Lastly – though these have shared a better fate – came the Magyars, the great conquering army with Arpád at its head, in whom the Ugro-Finnish type once more reappeared in all its pristine energy, the same that is believed to have existed in the bands of Attila: a nomad people who, though also composed of savage hordes, became by their daring and warlike propensities the scourge of Aryan Christendom, and were destined not only to become a great empire and take their place amongst the civilised nations of Western Europe, but, by their arms raised against the enemies to its peace, to be in after-ages its surest bulwark of defence against Mahomedan aggression. [...]

[50] Watch now the long lines of rich warm colour as they gradually stretch across the darkling landscape! Here and there some darker object still, a clump of trees or gipsy encampment, stands out black against the paler colouring of the “off-scape”. What is that dark mass yonder? The clear atmosphere, aided by our field-glass, at once declares it to be a party of travellers bivouacking for the night, reminding one of an Eastern caravan.

What a statuesque group they make against the amber [51] sky, and what a subject for an artist! Men standing in their long fur-lined mantles,

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others crouched on the ground making a fire or unpacking provisions for their evening meal; by their side lie numerous gourds and leathern bottles, just such as Hagar carried in the wilderness: while the rich colouring of their garments mellowed in the dying light, and the long shadows thrown across the golden sward, assist in forming a most picturesque combination.

In these vast plains *csárdák* (inns) – a name no doubt derived from *csárdás*,² the national dance, which is performed more frequently perhaps in these little places of doubtful resort than anywhere else – are few and far between, but the Hungarians happily are by no means dependent on them for shelter. That wonderful garment the *bunda*, with which every man is provided, renders him invulnerable alike to heat and cold, forming as it does his house, his bed, his protection both from the scorching summer sun and from the intense frosts and bitter, cutting blasts that in winter scour [52] the region of the plains. During the latter season the fur is worn inside, the garment being reversed when the hot weather sets in. “My son, forget not thy bread in winter, nor thy *bunda* in summer,” is consequently a familiar and appropriate Magyar maxim. [...]

The Magyars have a perfect passion for this gipsy music, and there is nothing that appeals so powerfully to their emotions, whether of joy or sorrow. These singular musicians are as a rule well-taught, and can play almost any music, greatly preferring, however, their own compositions. [...]

[54] Wherever one goes, the *czigány* (gipsy) is sure to be seen. With his long cart, on which, huddled together, sit his wife and ragged children, he travels from village to village, his destination usually being one of the numerous fairs which take place annually in this country; and whether travelling along with his little worldly all, or encamped with his tent under the blue expanse of heaven, he forms one of the most picturesque features of the Alföld scenery. [...]

[56] It was somewhat alarming, however, to witness this little man’s belongings, and we began to wonder whether, amongst other strange things

of this strange country, it was the custom for the guide’s family likewise to accompany the traveller. The bundles and small luggage also, which not only the woman but both children carried in their arms, and the travel-stained appearance of their garments, showing they had come from a long distance, were likewise circumstances tending to strengthen our very natural supposition. But our minds were soon set at rest on this matter by András³ himself, who informed us that his wife had relations in the neighbourhood of Füred,⁴ with whom she purposed remaining with her children until his return.

András was a good-looking man, with a bright and intelligent countenance. He wore white *gatyá* (trousers) fringed at the edge, a braided hussar-jacket thrown across one shoulder, and a small round felt hat and feathers. On our asking him to what nationality he belonged, he drew [57] himself up proudly until he almost stood on tip-toe, and with a look expressive of triumph replied: “*En Magyar vagyok*” (“I am a Magyar”),⁵ and went on to inform us that he was the grandson of an unfortunate noble whose lands had been forfeited, but whose descent could be traced to the *honfoglalás*, as the conquest of the Hungarian fatherland by Arpád⁶ in the ninth century is called, – an event regarded by the Magyars in the same light as we ourselves view the Norman Conquest. At this juncture he was overcome by his emotions, but whether awakened by the remembrance of his defunct grandsire, or simply that of his own greatness it was hard to say.

Our guide’s wife was a head and shoulders taller than her lord and master, and could easily have carried him about like a baby had she been so minded. She was a fierce-looking woman with beetling brows, an appearance by no means lessened by her peculiar style of dress; for, besides her Turkish-looking head-gear, short skirts and top-boots, her sleeves were padded at the shoulders, which, by increasing the width of her already broad chest, imparted to her a mien truly Amazonian. [...]

[66] The ordinary travelling conveyance of Hungary is the *leiterwagen* or *szekér*, a long skel-

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eton cart, with sides like ladders, already described, which, from the convenient habit it has of accommodating itself to the manifold vicissitudes of Hungarian travel, and of wriggling and writhing itself into shape under circumstances that would utterly break up any English vehicle, together with the capacity it possesses of being dragged through quagmires that in this country bear the name of roads, is admirably adapted to its purpose. [...]

[75] Amongst the numerous myths which the fertile imagination of those pastoral nomads the ancient Magyars conjured up, dwelling on these vast steppes surrounded by rivers, trees and the ever-recurring phenomena of nature, not one is so poetical or so philosophical in its conception as *Déli-báb*, the “Fairy of the South,” and the ideal personification of a mirage.

How ingenious and at the same time suggestive is the parentage that is assigned to this national fairy of the Magyars! – “Daughter of old Pusztá of the Alföld” – her home; “Sister of Tenger” the sea – which form she most frequently represents. “Loved by Szél” – the wind, which, [76] fanning the quivering haze – the chief cause of the phenomenon – perpetually changes its aspect. [...]

We have nothing in prosaic England to compare with the poetical superstition *Déli-báb*; but the resemblance between some of our national fables concerning good and bad fairies and those of Hungary, which are of Finnish origin, is very striking. Not to mention Mermaids and others, [77] which until the middle of the last century were believed to inhabit the waters of the Theiss, there were sorcerers who were invariably accompanied by the conventional black cat; whilst Satan (*ördög*), whose particular personification in this case is supposed to be of Tartar or Persian origin, is always represented – though of ante-Christian era – with large ears and a long tail; his abode *Pokol*,⁷ where, amidst a host of numerous subjects, he dwells in heat and darkness.

We have passed the episcopal town of Veszprém, with its melancholy houses and grass-grown streets, passed its numerous vineyards, and once more, out

on the broad and silent plains, see at long intervals little sleepy farms lying half-hidden amongst the green recesses of Indian corn, and surrounded by a blaze of wild flowers.

At still longer distances we come to small villages, almost every one of which is called *Kis* or *Nagy-something*: adjectives signifying “little” and “great,” and which, when reversed, apply to villages far beyond our sight.

All, whether *Kis* and *Nagy*, are exceedingly alike. Each house has a white gable pierced with its one small window; beneath which, on a bench placed against the wall precisely in the same position as that of its next door neighbour, sit peaceful women and girls knitting and gossiping. These benches, with one of which each house is provided, are called by the appropriate appellation of *Szóhordók*, “word-bearers”. [...]

[106] I have long ago discarded my fur hat for a broad-brimmed one of white straw, but, notwithstanding this, strange to say, we are here, as at Gross Kanizsa on our former visit, mistaken for Russians – Julinka, the chambermaid, as she arranges our room, addressing us every now and again as *Muska* (Muskovite); and upon our informing her that we are *Angolok*, she elevates her eyebrows in astonishment.

At this juncture an old woman enters the room, who had evidently overheard the colloquy.

“*Angolok! Angolok!*” (English people! English people!) “*Ió Isten!*”⁸ she exclaimed, apostrophising the Magyar deity, as though we had told here we were visitants from some other planet, adding, after a pause, that she thought she had the priest read of the *Angolok* one Sunday in the Gospel. From which observation we augured that neither missionary nor “schoolmaster” was “abroad” at any rate in Székes Fővár.

The town which rejoices in the imposing appellation of Székes Fővár – what a language is the Magyar for accents! – is the capital of the *comitat*, or county, of the same name. It contains 23,000 inhabitants, was founded in the eleventh century by King Stephen I., and is interesting to the archaeologist from having been built on the site of

an old Roman city, said to have been the “Roman Floriana,” whatever *that* may be. [...]

[112] The term “Magyar-Miska” is applied to a man of the precise type of our English “Hodge.” But let no one look down upon the homely garb of a peasant in this country, for though he wear a sheepskin cloak, huge white linen trousers (*gatyá*), and a shirt that scarcely reaches to the waist – which part of the body is generally exposed to the elements – its wearer may be the owner of thousands of acres of Alföld soil. The dress of Bagi József⁹ – a man not so named on account of his *baggy* nether habiliments, but József Bagi, as [113] we should call him, the surname in Hungary being invariably placed before the Christian – is none other, although his income is not less than half a million florins a year. These *gatyá* are so full that they often consist of ten and sometimes fifteen yards of linen; and it is in this costume, together with the short jacket-like shirt with its voluminous sleeves, that Bagi József, the “Nabob of the Alföld,” as he is appropriately called, wanders over his vast domain. [...]

[116] The term “betyár,” which will often be met with in these pages, possesses a twofold meaning, and, whilst frequently applied to a brigand, is also a sobriquet used to denote a rustic who dresses himself gaily and endeavours to render himself attractive to the fair sex; in short, a *dandy*. He may generally be seen with his hat set jauntily on one side, in which is stuck a bunch of fresh flowers or plume of the beautiful flowering grass, which at a slight distance looks just like the tail of a bird of paradise. Just such a man is András, and, as we watch him in the square in front of us, it is easy to see that he is making a great impression on the Székes Főjevár belles.

It has evidently been noised abroad that English persons have arrived, and our dress betrays that we are they. As the promenaders make room on the uneven pavement to let us pass they regard us furtively, with much apparent interest, and from more than one we hear the whispered words, “*Bival Jankó*,” that

being the Hungarian’s euphonious appellation for that noblest of all animals, “John Bull.” [...]

[146] In their beauty the Magyar women have been said to resemble the Circassians. Of this I have had no opportunity of judging. But lest it should be thought I have exaggerated, let me quote the opinion of a gentleman (M. Tissot)¹⁰ on the subject: “Those who want to see the true type of feminine Magyar beauty should come here (*Margarethen Insel*), seat themselves in the shade, and watch the women who pass by. What strikes one first among the Hungarians is the extreme freshness, delicacy, and purity of the complexion, whether they be brunette or blonde. Their wavy hair, as in all women of this race, is superb; in their large Oriental eyes, shaded with long lashes, reverie mingles with passion; their lips are the colour of roses, and their teeth have the brightness of pearls... The figure is supple, the joints fine, and the feet arched and tiny. You recognise a Hun-[147]garian woman at once by her walk, so completely without affectation, so noble and full of ease. It is an indescribable stamp of aristocracy and of good manners, which makes the German women who live among them yellow with envy.” [...]

On the men of Hungary Nature has been less lavish in her gifts. They are tall, manly, and even stately in form, and handsome faces are very frequently observed, but they [148] are not the rule, as amongst the women. Now and then, amidst these fine and well-formed people, one is seen who recalls to mind their Tartar origin, and anthropologists are puzzled not a little to account for the change which these once pastoral nomads – the Magyars dwelling in their northern steppes – have undergone both in face and feature since they migrated southwards and became a settled and agricultural people. They affirm that the admixture of Slavonian and other blood which has taken place from time to time is inadequate to account for the complete change of type evinced not only in external characteristics, but even in cranial formation. For whereas the Lapps and Finns, who have been ascertained by philological research, no less than by the guidance of ethnology,

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to form with them a common stock, still retain their ancient physical characteristics, and are “short of stature and uncouth,” with “pyramidal” skulls – a type which is said to distinguish in a great degree all the pastoral races of the North – the stature of the Magyars of the present day is stalwart, and the cranium has acquired the “elliptical” form, that denotes the dwellers in Western and Southern Europe.

Source

“Magyarland;” Being the Narrative of Our Travels through the Highlands and Lowlands of Hungary. By a Fellow of the Carpathian Society, Author of ‘The Indian Alps’, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1881), vol. 1.

Notes

¹ Cf. *Paradiso* XIX, 142.

² In fact, *csárdás* is derived from *csárda*.

³ The chaperon.

⁴ Balatonfüred.

⁵ Correctly: *Én magyar vagyok*.

⁶ Correctly: *honfoglalás* and *Árpád*.

⁷ Hungarian for hell.

⁸ Correctly: *Angolok!* and *Jó Isten!* [Good God].

⁹ Correctly: *József*. Note that the Hungarian language uses the “eastern name order”, in which the family name comes first and the given name comes last.

¹⁰ Victor Tissot, *Unknown Hungary*, trans. A. Oswald Brodie (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1881), vol. 2, p. 244.

Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli (1832-1914) was a British traveler in the Himalayas and travel writer. She was born and brought up in England before marrying a British army chaplain, Francis Mazuchelli, whom she accompanied to India in 1858. For the next ten years they lived at a series of military bases in the central part of the country. In 1869 they were posted to Darjeeling, near India’s border with Nepal, and over the next three years they made extended forays into the Himalayan regions of northern Sikkim and eastern Nepal. The Mazuchellis returned to England in 1875, after nearly two decades in central and northern India. Her account of her travels in the Himalayas was published in 1876 as *The Indian Alps and How We Crossed Them*. A few years later she resumed her mountaineering exploits, this time venturing into the Carpathian Mountains of Central Europe, an experience she related in her book *Magyarland* (1881).



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Pazetteer

Alföld, Nagy-Alföld (Great Hungarian Plain): a flat, fertile steppeland broken up with flood-plain groves and swamps in the central part of the Carpathian Basin. The part of the plain between the Danube and the Tisza rivers is generally distinguished from the region east of the Tisza, called the Tiszántúl (*qq.v.*). Population density and the composition of the region's population have varied greatly over the centuries, and have been as much influenced by changes in its physical geography (due to irrigation and swamp drainage projects, for instance) as the vicissitudes of history. The Alföld is suited for grain farming and animal husbandry (with the *tanya*, an isolated farmstead, as the typical settlement type), as well as market gardening (fruit, grapes, root crops and leafy vegetables, onions, peppers, and tobacco are all grown).

Avas, Avasság located in the historical county of Szatmár, this basin at the foot of the Avas mountains opens to the Great Hungarian Plain. Today it belongs to Romania, and the majority of its inhabitants are Romanian.

Bakony the region in the central Dunántúl (*qq.v.*) named for the largest mountain range north of Lake Balaton. A closed, contiguous stretch, it was a piece of untouched nature until the late nineteenth century. Its population has preserved many archaic customs and mores to this day. Extensive animal husbandry is the typical form of agriculture, and the woods are good for berrying. In times past, the region was famed for its glass blowers, and its precision-instrument makers.

Balaton-felvidék the rolling uplands on the northern shore of Lake Balaton, including the south-facing slopes of the Bakony Mountains overlooking the lake. The area has always been densely populated by

a peasantry originally belonging to the lesser nobility, and boasts a highly developed folk culture. One of the country's historical wine-growing regions, it has a thriving wine industry.

Bácska the southern part of the region between the Danube and the Tisza, south of the line of Baja and Szeged. Except for its northern stretch, today it belongs to Serbia and Montenegro. The region has been inhabited by Hungarians since the conquest of the Magyars; in the Middle Ages it was a rich and densely populated area. Southern Slavonic ethnic groups fleeing from the Turks started to settle gradually in the fifteenth century. During the Turkish occupation the Hungarian population disappeared almost entirely from the region; later Hungarians were resettled in various waves from different regions. In the eighteenth century a large number of Germans moved to the area. During the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Bácska was merged with the neighboring regions and organized into an independent administrative unit, governed from Vienna. After 1918 the province of Voivodina (in Hungarian Vajdaság, *qq.v.*) was formed in the area annexed to the Serbian kingdom. Between the two world wars a large number of settlers arrived from the southern part of (the former) Yugoslavia. In order to replace them, the Hungarian government repopulated the region with Székelys from Bukovina in 1941. However, they escaped and moved to Transdanubia in 1944. After the Balkan wars of the 1990s, a strongly diminished Hungarian ethnic minority is still present in the region.

Bihar, Biharország characteristic region at the meeting of lowland and mountains at the eastern edge of the Tiszántúl region, in the valleys of the rivers Berettyó, Sebes-Körös, and Fekete-Körös; it

separates Transylvania from the Great Hungarian Plain. Today its larger, mostly mountainous part belongs to Romania, while its lowland region is part of Hungary. The lowland areas and river valleys have been inhabited by Hungarians since the Magyar Conquest. After the Turkish occupation the deserted areas were repopulated by Romanians. Extremely varied region both geographically and in terms of folk culture. Its triple axis is made up of the valleys of the rivers Berettyó, Sebes-Körös, and Fekete-Körös. The region located at the junction of the rivers is called Sárrét. In the north the Berettyó and Ér rivers surround the hills of Érmellék. A minor subregion called Hegyköz lies near Nagyvárad (Oradea), while another major subregion called Mezőség is located in the south, between Nagyvárad and Nagyszalonta (Salonta). Bihar has been a significant center throughout history due to its favorable location (along trade routes) and its large cities.

Bodrogköz a lowland region, formerly marshland, between the rivers Bodrog and Tisza in northeastern Hungary. Due to its geographical conditions and its isolation from traffic, its folk culture had been very archaic up to the twentieth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century, large groups of farmsteads developed. After the peace treaty of Trianon the northern part of the region was annexed to the former Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia).

Bukovina formerly a part of the Habsburg Empire, today a part of Romania, it once had a sizeable Hungarian population in the five villages—Fogadjisten, Istensegíts, Hadikfalva, Andrásfalva, and Józseffalva—settled by the few thousand Székelys who fled there from Transylvania in 1763–64 to avoid being drafted as border guards. In later centuries, the Székelys left Bukovina in successive waves of emigration, and settled in various places: along the Lower Danube (*aldunai székelyek*), in Bácska, in southwestern Hungary, in various parts of Transylvania, and in the United States and Canada. All these group are still referred to as “Bukovina Székelys”.

Csallóköz a distinct region of the Kisalföld (*qq.v.*), the largest island of the Danube lying on the northwestern borders of Hungary. It has a predominantly

Hungarian-speaking population; after the World War I, it became a part of what was then Czechoslovakia; today, it is a part of Slovakia. Characterized by state-of-the-art agricultural methods (in market gardening, wheat growing, and animal husbandry alike), and a peasantry who made the most of the proximity of the markets of Vienna and Bratislava, the region was known for its highly-developed middle-class peasant culture.

Dunántúl (Transdanubia): a major geographical region in the western half of Hungary lying to the south and west of the Danube, between the eastern reaches of the Alps and the Mura and Dráva rivers. Extraordinarily varied topographically, it is the most densely populated part of Hungary. The ethnic composition of the population reflects the population movements that have been a part of the region's checkered history. Its folk culture mirrors both an open-minded receptivity to the latest and the best, and a strong sense of tradition. Some of Hungary's chief cultural, religious and administrative centers have evolved in the Dunántúl, and are the nuclei of prosperous cities.

Erdély (Transylvania): a historic region in the southeastern part of the Carpathian Basin in what is today Romania, bounded by the Carpathian Mountains on the north and east, the Transylvanian Alps on the south, and the Bihar Mountains on the west. More and more of the region came to be inhabited by Magyars from the tenth century on; subsequently, Germans (Saxons) and Romanians also settled there. Transylvania was an independent administrative unit (a principality) several times throughout its history; it was a part of Hungary at various times, and, in the aftermath of the World War II, has finally become a part of Romania. Its complex ethnic composition had made it a point of intersection of various folk cultures (Hungarian, Romanian, and German), as well as composite of diverse socio-economic formations (demesnial villages, free rural communities enjoying various prerogatives, and free towns). As the periphery of Hungarian folk culture, Transylvania has preserved—in its material culture, folk motifs, folk tales, language and customs—a great many archaisms that are telling vestiges of its former role as the point where the East (the Balkans) met the West.

Fekete-Körös völgy the valley of the Fekete-Körös River in the western half of Transylvania, stretching to the Great Plain. The region's Hungarian population, though decimated by the Ottoman wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, survived as an ethnic enclave, and preserved intact its archaic folk culture and dialect.

Felső-Tiszavidék a region in the upper reaches of the Tisza River in northwestern Hungary, considered as unique for its distinctive form of folk architecture.

Felvidék (Upper Hungary; formerly called Felföld, or Felsőmagyarország): the mountainous northern part of historical Hungary, i.e., the northernmost part of the Hungarian-speaking regions of the Carpathian Basin. It was only in the late nineteenth century that the term "Felvidék" came to be a synonym for "Felföld" and "Felsőmagyarország". Since Hungary's dismemberment in 1920 by the Treaty of Trianon, the term "Felvidék" has come to refer only to the Hungarian and Slovak-inhabited parts of Upper Hungary that now belong to Slovakia, as well as to the part of the Kisalföld that now lies in Slovakia.

Göcsej a forested region of deep valleys and gorges in Western Hungary, in the southwestern part of Zala County. Originally a military frontier zone, its later population was dominantly of the middle and lesser nobility. Poor in farm land, the region has preserved some uniquely archaic methods of agriculture: burning the brush to clear the land, the cultivation of some prehistoric grains (millet and buckwheat), and a form of viticulture that is no longer practiced in any other part of Europe.

Gyimes a region in the territory of the Gyimes Pass, neighboring Moldva (*qq.v.*), inhabited by the *Csángós* of Gyimes. Today it belongs to Romania. The people here, generally involved in alpine animal husbandry and the lumber industry, have managed to preserve archaic features of Székely peasant culture.

Hajdúság a historical/ethnographic region in the central Tiszántúl (*qq.v.*), originally the district encompassing the six "old *hajdú* towns"; more broadly, from 1876 to 1950, Hajdu County with Debrecen as its center. The *hajdús*, originally armed "cowherds"

who protected the Hungarian livestock exported on foot from marauding Turks and other armed bands, served as mercenaries during the century and a half of Ottoman occupation.

Hetés an area of eleven villages between two streams neighboring Göcsej in southwestern Zala County, in Western Hungary.

Jászság a formerly autonomous administrative unit in the middle of the Great Plain, along the rivers of Zagyva and Tarna, which designated the settlement area of the Jazygians. After the linguistic and ethnic assimilation of the Jazygians, the regional autonomy and later its reclamation and maintenance held together the inhabitants of the region. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries large number of people moved to the lowland plain.

Kalotaszeg a historical/ethnographic region of forty Hungarian-speaking Calvinist villages to the west of Kolozsvár/Cluj in Transylvania. It is made up of three distinguishable regions: Felszeg at the mountains, Alszeg along the Almás creek, and Nádasmente near Kolozsvár/Cluj. The peasants of the villages are mostly farmers, with some people employed in logging, beef-cattle raising, and handicrafts. The region is famous for its rich and varied folk art (architecture, peasant wear, embroidery and woodcarving). It was the vogue of Kalotaszeg folk art that opened the door to the discovery of Hungarian folk art as such in the 1880s. The embroidery of Kalotaszeg was famed throughout Europe, and Kalotaszeg folk art as a whole had considerable influence on Hungarian Art Nouveau applied arts, architecture, and graphics, as well as the art of the Gödöllő School.

Kárpátalja political and administrative region of the Ukraine, the region between the Tisza and the Carpathian Mountains. Some of the conquering Magyars traversed this region to cross into the Carpathian Basin (through the Verecke Pass). In the past, the locals burned the brush to clear the land, and practiced transhumance; more recently, the lumber industry and mining in this region has contributed substantially to the national economy. The traditional wine-growing regions of the Kárpátalja have played a major role in the development of Hungarian folk culture in the region.

Kisalföld a major geographical region in the Danube Basin in northwestern Hungary, consisting partly of the loessial floodplain of the Danube and Rába rivers and their tributaries, and partly of drier, terraced plains. One of the principal areas of settlement of the Magyars of the time of the Conquest, it was the gateway to the Carpathian Basin, thanks to the communications lines along the Danube, and a main center of transit trade, a great facilitator of urbanization. There were times when its folk culture was among the most developed in the country: the peasant home interiors of the region, for instance, showed an outstanding sophistication. It is a region rich in folk tradition and material relics, has retained some archaic elements of social organization, and has been in the vanguard of folk cultural development since the Late Middle Ages.

Kiskunság a major region between Danube and the Tisza, lying between the southern outskirts of Budapest and Szeged, named after the Cumans who settled here. Consisting of a series of market towns of the *szálláskertes* settlement type (the farms and farm buildings were on strips of land surrounding the settlement proper, or even farther off), it had a population typically engaged in extensive animal husbandry; in more recent centuries, there has been a switch to more intensive forms of agriculture such as market gardening, and to farming on *tanyas*, or farmsteads. Culturally speaking, the Kiskunság peasantry has always been on a par with the middle class.

Lendva-vidék a part of the Muravidék in northeastern Slovenia, it is the group of Hungarian-speaking villages and communities centered on the town of Alsó-Lendva (Lendava). A post-Trianon term, it was introduced by the local Hungarian population for purposes of self-identification.

Marosszék one of the old Székely administrative units called a *szék* (the local equivalent of “county”), with Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș) as its former county seat. Inhabited by Hungarians from early on, the region is now part of Romania. Its sub-regions include Sóvidék and Nyárádmente.

Matyóföld three neighboring settlements—Mezőkövesd, Tard and Szentistván—bounded by the Sajó

and the Tisza in the western half of Borsod County. The inhabitants, the Matyós, Roman Catholics in a sea of largely Calvinist neighboring communities, became a distinctive ethnographic group only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They made their living working rented lands at some distance from the settlements proper, and later, took on seasonal work as agricultural laborers far from home. Strongly traditionalist communities, the Matyós evolved their embroidery and celebrated Matyó peasant wear in the course of the nineteenth century.

Máramaros a large region in the northeastern Carpathians, a former historical county of Hungary. It is divided by the upper valley of the river Tisza: its larger, northern part belongs to Kárpátalja in the Ukraine, and is inhabited by Transcarpathian Ukrainians (or Ruthenes), while its southern part belongs to Romania, and is populated mostly by Romanians. Hungarian people inhabit the region called Tisza Valley, the villages of Máramarossziget (Sighetu Marmatiei, R), Visk (Viskove, U), Técső (Tyacsiv, U), Huszt (Huszt, U), and other settlements. In the Middle Ages some of these places were free chartered towns, so-called “crown towns”.

Mezőföld a lowland with loess soil and deep valleys, surrounded by the Danube, Lake Velencei, Sárrét, and the Sió Channel. The original population which perished during the Turkish occupation was replaced by Hungarian, German, and southern Slavonic settlers. The region was characterized by large estates which were inhabited a large number of agricultural laborers and servants of unique social status and culture. The majority of Hungarian seasonal agricultural laborers were employed in the Mezőföld. In addition to that, the Mezőföld had a significant serf and peasant population in its villages and market towns. The agriculture, as well as the social and settlement structure, and folk culture of the region has shown characteristics of the Great Plain; the local dialect belongs to the southern dialectal region.

Mezőség a hilly region with no forests in Mid-Transylvania, now part of Romania. Whereas Hungarians are now only concentrated in small

patches among Romanian villages, the region had been densely populated by *Magyars* in the Middle Ages; consequently, among the most archaic features of Transylvanian Hungarian folk culture can be found here. One of the most important villages of the region is Szék (Sic), famous for its folk art, folk dance, and folk music traditions.

Moldva (distinct from the post-Soviet country of Moldova): a region at the foot of the Eastern Carpathians, the last transitional home of the conquering *Magyars* on their way to the Carpathian Basin. Later, it became the Cumans' temporary home, later still a Romanian voivodeship and then principality. Today, it is a part of Romania. The Csángós, or Moldavian *Magyars*, comprise its Hungarian-speaking population. The Csángó community has retained a great many archaic cultural features, but its language and lifestyle (e.g., peasant wear) has been much influenced by its (Orthodox) Romanian neighbors.

Muravidék a region in the northeastern tip of Slovenia, stretching left of the Mura River to the Hungarian border, and home of the Muravidék *Magyars*. Its sub-regions include the Lendva-vidék (*qq.v.*), and the parts of Hetés (*qq.v.*) and the Órség (*qq.v.*) which today belong to Slovenia.

Nagykunság a region of the Tiszántúl (*qq.v.*) along the central Tisza, named after the Cumans (*kunok*, in Hungarian). The rolling loess plains of the region were excellent for extensive animal husbandry. Its prosperous peasant middle class gave preference to the *tanya* settlement structure, to the cultivation of wheat and corn (maize), and gradually, to more and more intensive forms of raising livestock.

Nyírség a large sandy region in the northern part of Tiszántúl (*qq.v.*). Inhabited by Hungarians from early on, Nyírség has one of the oldest surviving names for a geographical region. Since the nineteenth century, it has been a significant producer of fruit, potatoes, and sunflowers.

Ormánság a region in the southwestern corner of Hungary. Its population was strongly decimated during the fights with the Turks. In the eighteenth

century the peasant population of the region started to rise into the middle class, but the process got stuck and ultimately led to financial decline and identity crisis. It also resulted in the problem of the single-child system, which is characteristic for this region, and became well-known all over the country through frequent references in literature and in sociological and ethnographical writings. In the late Middle Ages the formerly significant region became peripheral, its infrastructure developed very slowly and never reached an up-to-date level. The region's characteristic archaic folk architecture and costumes have long been the focus of scholarly research.

Órség (Marches): a historical/ethnographic region in Western Hungary, at the source of the Zala River. An area of table-lands carved up by water-courses, it is rich in precipitation, and has some wonderful ever-green forests. Formerly a military frontier zone (as its name indicates), its population enjoyed administrative autonomy from the start. Typical of the Órség is the *szeres* settlement type (small, self-contained communities—*szerek*—built on hilltops). The region's Subalpine climate has had a decisive influence on agricultural practices, which include burning the brush to clear the land, the intensive use of natural fertilizers, and cattle raising. The Órség has always played a major role as food supplier to Austria, and was one of the first regions to have a prosperous middle class.

Rábaköz a low-lying, watery region between the river Rába and the Hanság. From the sixteenth century it was characterized by manors of seigniorial domestic economy, which set the course of the development of peasant economy, characterized by farming and animal husbandry. The rise of the peasantry into the middle class started early, which had unique consequences. For example, the communities of the market towns maintained their traditional folk costumes up to the middle of the twentieth century, and they became famous for their embroideries.

Rétköz a sub-region of the Nyírség (*qq.v.*) which had once been a marshy meadowland with woods. After having drained the area, the population began to grow crops extensively (grain, tobacco, cabbage, and potatoes).

Sárköz a low-lying, marshy flood-plain of the lower Danube located in the Transdanubia, south of Szekszárd. Along the old river trade route between Buda and Belgrade, it has always been a highly developed region. After the swamps were drained, the fishing and *pákász* villages (*pákászkodás*: making a living off the fens by fishing, trapping amphibious rodents and waterfowl, and gathering (medicinal) plants, eggs and feathers) switched to wheat farming and viticulture. The grapes grown in the region are among the country's best. The peasantry of the Sárköz prospered and kept pace with the middle class, cultivating, at the same time, its celebrated folk art and peasant wear.

Somogy, Somogyország, Somogyság a hilly region of varied scenery in the southwestern part of Hungary, between Lake Balaton and the river Dráva. It is divided into characteristic subregions. Belső-Somogy, a lowland with wide sandy valleys, lies south of the river Kapos. The northern part, called Külső-Somogy, is much more varied in its terrain. Famous minor subregions are a former bay of Lake Balaton, later marshland, Nagyberek, and the Zselic (*qq.v.*) woodland, south of Kaposvár. The region suffered considerable losses during the Turkish wars. It was repopulated by Hungarians, and no other ethnic group moved to the region in significant numbers in later periods either. Therefore, Somogy has been the most homogeneously Hungarian county of Transdanubia. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, it was a secluded, wooded region with extensive animal husbandry, far away from the main roads of traffic. After the emancipation of serfs, a prosperous middle-class peasantry developed in the region.

Székelyföld the region inhabited by the Székelys in the northeastern corner of Transylvania, Romania (periodically, it has enjoyed autonomy throughout its long history, as a part of Hungary at times, and at times of Romania). The administrative unit of the Székelyföld is the *szék*, which was the local equivalent of the "county", but free of all feudal obligations. Topographically, the Székelyföld falls into various sub-regions: there are river valleys, alluvial plains, mountain ranges and basins. Farming and animal husbandry are the main forms of making a living, but handicrafts also play an important part. Lying on the outer limit of the Hungarian-speaking part of the Carpathian Basin, the Székelyföld has a folk

culture rich in archaic elements, and folk poetry, carved wooden buildings, and peasant wear which are in the authentic Hungarian folk tradition.

Szilágyság a region of hills and valleys bounded by a mountain range and the Szamos River. Today it is part of Romania. Inhabited by Hungarians from early on, Szilágyság has one of the oldest surviving names for a geographical region.

Szlavónia (Slavonia): lying to the east of Zagreb between the Dráva and Száva rivers, the region today is a part of Croatia. It had been an autonomous unit within the Kingdom of Hungary, and then a military frontier zone. Land was once plentiful, and led to a great deal of population mobility. The present Hungarian-speaking population lives scattered throughout the region, and as a contiguous settlement in four villages on the right bank of the Danube.

Tiszántúl (Transtisza): a major region of Hungary in the eastern part of the Alföld (*qq.v.*), bounded by the Tisza, the Maros and the Transylvanian Alps. Its troubled history has resulted in a great deal of population movement; it has been a major area of immigration and emigration, with the settlements generally located in the higher-lying areas along the river banks.

Vajdaság (Voivodina): a region of historical Hungary; today, an autonomous province of Yugoslavia, and the area where most of Yugoslavia's Hungarian population now lives.

Zoboralja, Zoborvidék an area comprising a group of Hungarian villages at the foot of the Zobor and Gimes Mountains near the town of Nyitra (Nitra) in present-day Slovakia. The communities here preserved archaic cultural features, primarily in their folklore tradition, which were still in evidence until fairly recently.

Zselic, Zselicség a wooded, hilly region in Transdanubia, part of "Somogy country" south of Lake Balaton. Its population used to be involved in iron smithing, which gave the name to the region. Since the eighteenth century, the region has been populated by Hungarians, Germans, and Croats. It is famous for its extensive animal husbandry and archaic peasant culture.