

HUNGARY AND EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

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According to early XIX. century exponents of the idealistic trend of German philosophy, the destiny and the duty of mankind lie in the endeavour to develop as fully as possible its inherent spiritual powers. Under the world system, as ordained by the eternal God, humanity has, however, always consisted of individual nations which can serve the cause of mankind only by developing to the full their individual peculiarities. Thus the universalist cosmopolitan conception of the XVIII. century school of "enlightened" philosophers, with its enthusiasm for the ideal of a universal humanitarianism, found its complement in the nationalism of the romantic era of the early XIX. century. The idea of nationalism is by no means inconsistent with that of an universal humanitarianism, in other words, with the idea of the evolution of mankind as a whole. All history proves that each and every culture has been essentially national, and in each and every instance the product of a specific national mentality. Those of its elements which transcend the confines of nationalism and possess a universal value gradually build up a joint property of the entire mankind. Any one nation is only entitled to exist as a distinct ethnic individuality and as a separate state in so far as it contributes to or protects and further develops the cultural possessions of the entire world. This is the only way in which any nation and, in the long

succession of peoples, become indispensable to the march of the history of mankind, and only a historical mission of this nature confers upon a nation the right to live.

Some two thousand years ago one branch split away from the Finno-Ugrian ethnic family and was carried southward by the tide of nomadic tribes, Turkish in origin, then sweeping westward from the Asiatic table-land. This Finno-Ugrian people of fishermen and hunters became fused in time with the Ogur tribe of the Western Turks, a people which engaged in the pursuits of agriculture and cattle-raising and already at that time stood on an incomparably higher level of civilization. In the course of ensuing centuries there evolved a homogeneous Hungarian nation, a Hungarian language enriched by Ogur words, and also an aboriginal Hungarian culture showing some Turkish influences. Under the pressure of other peoples, this now consolidated nation of horsemen migrated westward and towards the close of the IX. century settled permanently in the Danubian basin, its present homeland, where it joined the cultural community of Europe and where, by dint of prodigious efforts and struggles, it has survived for over a thousand years. When we reflect upon the destiny of the Hungarian people from the point of view of the historico-philosophical perspective outlined above, there must arise in our mind the questions: how, where so many of its racial kindred were doomed to perish, did this one Asiatic people succeed in earning the title, of being endowed by the genius of history with the fairest domain in Central Europe? What bestowed upon this particular nation the right to exist in Europe?

I.

First and foremost their highly developed instinct of statecraft. It was this quality, too, which enabled the Hungarian nation to evolve in the Danubian basin a highly developed culture and thus enlist in the service of the humanitarian ideal of mankind

which is the ultimate goal of all history. Only effective use of statecraft, the statebuilding talent, can create that basis upon which the elements of culture, such as religion, a legal system, ethics, arts and sciences, can blossom and develop along well-defined lines. Its political history is at all times the backbone of any nation's history; the evolution of the several phases of a nation's culture is but the last link in the chain of its history.

What then was Hungary's political mission and how did she acquit herself of it?

Until the X. century no people was capable of establishing a durable state in the mountain-girdled area of the middle Danubian basin. Celts, Thracians, Sarmatians, as well as Germanic and Slavonic tribes dwelt here. Huns and other peoples of Turkish race overran these regions, but used them only as a highway, to push westward, bent on sacking and looting the treasures of Italy. This tendency was not altogether alien to the Hungarians, whose lightning predatory forays made them for half a century the terror of Western Europe. Eventually, however, the practical political instinct and the diplomatic sagacity of the Árpád dynasty succeeded in putting an end to this roving tendency. The House of Árpád established itself firmly in this area and, taking advantage of its remarkable geopolitical symmetry, made of it a permanent and definite abode. The Árpáds were fully aware of the dangers threatening both from the West and from the East. Barely one century after the Conquest, Prince Géza and Prince Stephen carried through a thorough organization of the country, conferring on the Hungarian State a firmly anchored, permanent internal structure, fashioned after the pattern prevailing at the time in Western Europe.

On reaching the Danubian basin this people of horsemen and shepherds, which then possessed a fairly high degree of Turkish civilization, found there an inchoate variety of ethnic fragments, without unity of political organisation. In the East

and North-East dwelt Bulgars. The marshy region and the plains between the Danube and the Tisza w'ere for the most part uninhabited. In Pannonia lived the Slovenes, further South, Croatsians. Avars were settled on the right bank of the Danube as far as Győr, while Slovaks inhabited the left bank of the river. In Trans-Danubia there were sporadic settlements of Germans and Italians. The Hungarians subjected this vast, geographically compact region to a process of a political and military reorganization, and immediate use of all vacant land.

As a preliminary to all this, the Hungarians embraced Christianity, which even before the Conquest was not altogether unknown to them. While still in the Black Sea region they had occasion to become acquainted with the Christian, the Mohammedan and the Jewish faiths. Though pagans themselves, the Hungarians were tolerant of the Christians and of the followers of other creeds. For this reason their conversion to Christianity was consummated without major disturbance. Of decisive importance for the history of Europe was the fact that the keen political instinct of Prince Géza and Prince Stephen made them join the Western, or Roman Christian communion, instead of the Byzantine or Eastern Church. This decided the future destiny of Hungary. Had Hungary not embraced Christianity, she would have shared the fate of the Huns, the Avars, the Petchenegs, the Usbegs, the Cumans and become dispersed as they were. Had she given in to the proselytising advances which reached her from the Byzantine Church, she would have sooner or later lost her linguistic and ethnic individuality like the Bulgars, who in the fold of the Greek-Orthodox faith became Slavs, or like many tribes of Cumans and Petchenegs, who were turned into Wallachs. The seat of the Árpád dynasty and the centre of gravity of the settled country was located in Trans-Danubia, or close to the West. Contact with Italians and Germans convinced Prince Géza that his people could become powerful, great and civilized only through the cultural influence

of the Western Church. His son, St. Stephen, the founder of the Christian Hungarian national State, afterwards secured the royal crown for himself directly from the Pope of Rome.

In less than half a century the Hungarians succeeded in building up a state whose Christian outlook and system of organization was in harmony with those of its Western neighbours. While the task of evangelization was accomplished by German, Italian and Slovene ecclesiastics, the Hungarians were really converted rather by the universal Christian ideal which at the time permeated all Europe very deeply, and whose great apostle was the first king of Hungary, later known as St. Stephen. In an incredibly short space of time western monastic culture transformed the alien intruders from the steppes of Asia and infused them with a new' faith, a new' world outlook and a new civilization. Barely tw^To generations later, Western Europe elected the Hungarian King St. Ladislaus as one of the leaders of the First Crusade.

This country, by now' solidly welded and powerful, was destined for a great and world-important mission. It became the defender of the West, Europe's outpost against the Asiatic peoples which continued to pour in from the East. For three long centuries Hungary acted as a breakwater against the last waves of the migration of peoples. No sooner did this flood recede when the crescent arose in the South, and for another three centuries Hungary, with supreme self sacrifice, shed her blood in defence of the Cross. Had Hungary not stopped with her own body the appalling onslaughts of Islam, the Turks w'ould have overrun Europe, which at the time was exhausted by the religious wars, and as Macaulay said "the Koran w'ould now be taught in Oxford". This was Hungary's tragic historic mission. She fought, suffered and perished, all for the sake of the other nations of Europe. Her fairest, most fertile, most nationally conscious regions, the focal points of pure Hungarian life in the valleys of the Danube and the Tisza, were ravaged

and ruined. In the Middle Ages the population of Hungary was practically as large as that of England or France. Had the Turks not devastated Hungary for three hundred years, the Hungarians would be to-day a nation of thirty million. After the Turkish flood receded at the close of the XVII. and in the beginning of the XVIII. century the Habsburgs, the ruling dynasty and the new, though alien, aristocracy settled immigrant Serbs and Wallachs as colonists in the regions which had once been densely populated by Hungarians, and these newcomers after the World War in 1919 requited Hungarian hospitality by making common cause with their racial brethren across the frontiers and cutting off vast slices from the body of the ancient Hungarian State. And Europe by the Peace Treaty of Trianon sanctioned this despicable act of rank ingratitude. In old days Europe showed herself more grateful; she bestowed upon the Hungarians who victoriously fought the Turks the title of honour of "a shield of Christendom" and to this day the church bells peal out to the whole world at high noon the tidings of the glorious victory won at Belgrade in 1456 by the great Hungarian hero, John Hunyadi.

II.

What made the Hungarian nation, this island in an alien racial sea, capable of such extensive political and military effort? Its political system, its legal system and its constitutional evolution, all of which, while partly borrowed from Western Europe, were adapted to fit the ethnic individuality of the Hungarians. St. Stephen, the founder of the State, selected as his model the Franco-Bavarian legal system, which he called "the model for ancient and modern rulers"; but he transformed it along the lines of the Hungarian common law. For the communal ownership of land based on tribal consanguinity, an institution characteristic of nomadic pastoral peoples, he substituted the economic system of individual ownership, on the

pattern of the Carolingian state; but in such a way that all titles of individual ownership emanated from the ruler and were contingent upon the loyalty shown to him. In this way a form of the Germanic feudal system was transplanted onto the Hungarian soil. St. Stephen did away with the old tribal autonomy which might have jeopardised the centralized power of the new kingdom, but he preserved the forms and legal institutions of the primeval Hungarian political, social and economic organization. Recognising their importance as a bulwark of the national life, he warmly recommended them to this son — in the "Admonitions" which he addressed to him — in the following words: "Would a Greek be able to rule Romans according to Greek usages or a Roman to rule Greeks according to Roman usages? By no means." He therefore eliminated from the pagan social system only such elements as were absolutely inconsistent with Christianity. He laid the foundation for the county system which in time developed into a far-reaching autonomy and centuries later amply proved its value when it proved itself the mightiest bulwark of the Hungarian constitution and national aspirations against the assaults of the Habsburgs.

In Germany, the decay of the central (imperial) authority led to territorial disintegration, and the system of villainage brought about the deterioration of the Reich. In France, on the other hand, the feudal system turned to the other extreme, the king usurping all the political power for himself. The latter system was never able to take firm root in Hungary, where the power of the king and that of the national nobility balanced each other. As early as the beginning of the XIII. century King Andrew II. was obliged to sign the Hungarian charter, the "BuDa Aurea" (1222), which in the course of the historical evolution of European constitutionalism was preceded only by a few years by the English Magna Charta (1215). A century later the system of defence by feudal levies introduced by the Anjou dynasty, although based on a feudal foundation on the Western pattern.

developed into a specifically Hungarian institution. Under this system, the nobility put armies into the field under flags of their own. This did not, however, as in Germany, bring about the territorial dismemberment of the realm. On the contrary, the unity of the nation's might and territory remained unimpaired.

The Crown of St. Stephen, with which all Hungarian kings up to our own day have been crowned, grew into a symbol of the country as such: "The body of the sacred crown" (*totum corpus sacrae coronae*) means on the one hand the entire, indivisible territory of the country and on the other, the two political elements of national sovereignty: the king and the nobility. Early in the XVI. century the Palatine Verböczy, an outstanding jurist, compiled the Hungarian legal system into a comprehensive synthesis, the "Tripartitum Opus", in which he evolved the theory that the Holy Crown was conferred on the king as the fount and the symbol of power and that the king was but the wearer of that sacred symbol.

After the king and the flower of the nobility perished on the battlefield of Mohács in 1526, Hungary saw herself compelled to enlist the assistance of the neighbouring Habsburg realm in her struggle against the Turks. The kingdom of Hungary entered into a personal union with the German-Roman empire, but for a century and a half Hungary's expectations failed to materialize. The House of Habsburg was not at that time powerful enough seriously to undertake the task of driving out the Turks. They succeeded in doing so towards the close of the XVII. century; but thereafter they strove, continually and tenaciously, to merge Hungary into their realm. Hungary did not give in, and from the XVII. century till 1848 was compelled again and again to rebel against her king and to assert the right to armed resistance guaranteed to her by the *Bulla Aurea* of 1222. After the struggle against the Turkish Orient subsided, Hungary had to enter into a contest with the Germanic-West in the defence of her national aspirations and her racial

individuality. This tragic struggle cost Hungary her best blood, her wealth and her cultural energy. After her rebellions were crushed, a two-fold task taxed all her political acumen: on the one hand, to safeguard as far as possible the independence of the Hungarian national state and on the other, to draw from the connection with the German-Habsburg empire the inevitable conclusions and to harmonise them with her own interests. The happiest solution, after Hungary's last war of independence, which Austria was able to win in 1849 only with Russian assistance, was the Compromise of 1867, a dualistic system guaranteeing full equality to the Austrian Empire and to the Kingdom of Hungary. This arrangement remained in force for half a century until the collapse of 1918.

III.

The political history of the Hungarians being so replete with wars, a number of weighty questions have to be studied and answered. Let us propound and answer them in succession. What was the level and the spiritual pattern of the civilization which the Hungarian nation managed to assimilate in all the turmoil of political and military pressure from both the East and the West, in all the unceasing warfare? What kind of civilization did the Hungarians bring with them and how did they assimilate Western culture? How did the Hungarians set about the task of developing their inherent, specific intellectual powers? What ideals are hidden as conscious or sub-conscious propelling forces in the evolutionary background of the Hungarian national culture? Had the native of Asia cast off his passive and static nature? How did he turn into the type of the active European?

At the time when the Hungarians settled in their new homeland they were no wild Asiatic horde but a nomadic people engaged in the pursuits of cattle-breeding and agriculture. Com-

parative philology, archeological research into the period of the Conquest, reinforced by ethnological data, prove that they possessed an advanced culture of Turkish character which stood on a higher level than the culture of the Slav peoples whom they found settled in their new domain. Their rich vocabulary, their armament and military establishment, their habiliments and finery, their household furnishings, their agricultural implements and their articles of luxury all testify to the high level of their culture. The words "írás" (writing) and "betű" (letter) are pre-Conquest borrowings from the Bulgar-Turkish. Several remnants have been preserved of the aboriginal Hungarian runic script, the system of which conforms to the Kök-Turkish inscriptions of the VI. and VII. centuries. In the surviving monuments of the aboriginal Hungarian culture archaeology has identified numerous East Asiatic, Arabic-Persian. Iranian and even Greek motifs, the latter due to Byzantine contacts.

From Asia the Hungarian culture brought an aboriginal substratum onto which Slav, German and Italian cultural strata, were grafted after the Conquest, the whole being glazed over with a veneer of Christianity. Since then there has been no single intellectual current in European culture the billows of which have not within a short time reached the waters of the Danube and the Tisza. Hungary in the Middle Ages was approximately as cultured as any country in Europe. Well into the XIX. century Hungary was in cultural respects the easternmost district of Western Europe. Ecclesiastical literature, using Latin as its medium, flourished in Hungary as it did in the West. The great cycle of Christian legends had its authors and translators in Hungary also. The lustre of the legends shone over Hungary's own saint too; the Árpád dynasty alone gave to the nation five saints in the course of its three centuries of rule. The legends woven around the sainted kings Stephen and Ladislaus, round Stephen's son Emeric and around St. Elizabeth and St. Margaret are among the gems of Hungarian medieval literature.

The oldest Hungarian linguistic relic, the "Halotti Beszéd" (Funeral Oration) originated about the year 1200. Approximately ten thousand documents from the period prior to the extinction of the Árpád dynasty (1301) are in existence. Of the codices written in the Hungarian language, particularly those of theological nature and dating from the beginning of the XV. century or later, a substantial number have been preserved, in spite of the devastation of the country by the Turks. These codices all manifest the religious outlook of the Middle Ages and the chivalrous spirit of that heroic epoch.

In addition to this derivative literature of ecclesiastics and nuns which was the scholarly literature of the Middle Ages, there rippled through the depths of the nation's soul, like a subterranean stream, a flood of popular poetry which was not restrained by the limitation of the written word. This was the parent form of minstrelsy, the aboriginal national poetry which was not borrowed from the West and the origin of which is to be sought in distant Asia. At the time of the conquest the Hungarians already brought with them no mean supply of poetry. Ekehard, a friar of St. Gallen monastery, relates in his X. century chronicle that the Hungarians were wont to sing with great glee after a feast. The pagan priests sang as they performed their rituals. Hungarian heroic sagas of the pagan period which indicate the existence of a primitive epos, sagas of the Huns and those of the conquest, have been passed on to us in the contemporary Latin chronicles. Hungarian documents contain numerous mentions of the bards of medieval popular poetry, the roaming minstrels and musicians. The many terms denoting them, such as: *énekmondók*, *igricek*, *regösök*, *hegedősök*, *síposok*, *kobzosok*, are in themselves extremely characteristic. All these wandering minstrels entertained the Hungarian gentry and peasantry alike with music and songs, although the church did not fail sharply to censure their audiences. In time,

however, the sagas of the Árpád kings were substituted for the pagan epic poems.

The medieval Hungarian popular epics display the strong narrative bent which is an inherent characteristic of the Finno-Ugrian peoples. Anthony Reguly, a Hungarian, collected twenty thousand lines of Ostjak heroic sagas; Bemard Munkácsi's collection of Vogul popular poems runs to four volumes. The poetic diction of Hungarian popular poetry resembles that of the kindred Finno-Ugrian peoples; other common features are: the repetition of themes in analogous treatment, alliteration and the emphasising of accentuated words by rhyming. The Hungarians could not possibly have borrowed the latter fashions from the Germans, who had long discarded alliterative verse before the Hungarians came into contact with them. It is, however, probable that the fusion with the Ogur-Turkish race exercised a deep-reaching influence on Hungarian popular poetry, particularly the lyrical poetry. The Hungarian popular lyrical poems are constructed on the same pattern as the Turko-Tartar stanzaed poems; first a metaphor taken from nature and combined then with some emotional or ideological theme. "The flowery language of our lyrical poetry tells of oriental imagination and might have originated in the tulip-covered steppes of Eastern Russia." Sundry mystical elements, which figure as poetic ingredients in our chronicles, as for instance the miraculous stag and the "turul" bird, found their way thither from Turko-Tartar popular poetry.

The aboriginal Hungarian popular poetry, which was not reduced to writing until centuries' after, constitutes one of the outstanding bulwarks of national consciousness and of ethnic individuality and materially contributed to the process of steady-ing the very soul of the Hungarian people. The spirit of the unwritten aboriginal popular poetry was re-born in Petőfi, in Arany, in Jókai and brought forth in the XIX. century a clas-

sical period of the Hungarian literature of world-wide literary interest.

Song and music are the twin brothers of popular poetry. The oldest specimens of Hungarian music are probably those ancient folksongs which have been unearthed through the research work of the XIX. century. Our sister nations, the Finns and the Esthonians, started the methodical collection of their old folksongs much earlier than we did in Hungary. Most of the credit in this field is due to Ilmari Krohn. The Hungarian collectors (Bartók, Kodály) followed his method in collecting these blossoms of the Hungarian people's soul. The peculiar rhythm of the language is of primary influence on the shaping of the popular melody. Wherever there is a kinship between languages we are bound to encounter cognate themes in popular music, which is always linked up with the text. One such common trait is the tendency to dwell on the ends of the lines. Thus the last two notes of the ancient Runes of Kalevala are invariably prolonged, so that the score-writers put the individual lines in $5/4$ time. The lines of the Hungarian songs also show retardation at the end. The alternation of the octosyllabic with the hectosyllabic rhythm occurs frequently in old Transylvanian dance tunes and may also be found in Finnish folksongs (B. Fabó).

Though the church and the autochthonous Slavs considerably influenced the native music which the Hungarians brought with them to their new homeland, Hungarian music nevertheless shows throughout a specific and individual style. We encounter the first trace of Hungarian folk music in the legend of St. Gerard, where the bishop finds delight in the singing of a maid-servant who is busy operating a mill. The bishop asks of his companion: "Tell me what melody hath this chant that maketh me stop in my devout reading?". The attention of the Italian composer, who was certainly endowed with a keen musical instinct, was attracted by a Hungarian melody, the rhythm and tone measure of which he had never heard before and which was utterly dif-

ferent from the chants of the church. The spread of Christianity pushed the aboriginal national character into the background even in the realm of music. That only an infinitesimal number of the aboriginal Hungarian natural songs have been now preserved, in the ecclesiastical songs is probably due chiefly to the deep aversion in which the church held profane poetry, as a relic of paganism. The historic ballads and the tunes which rang out at feasts were carefully preserved by the Hungarian wandering minstrels of the Middle Ages, the so-called "igric", who suffered great persecution at the hands of the church. The Council of Buda of 1279 even forbade the clergy to listen to minstrel music. The love songs of the XV. and XVI. centuries, the so-called "flower songs" also came to feel strongly the sternness of puritan piety. King Andrew II.'s warriors returning from the crusade popularized in Hungary the Arabian lute, which in the XV. and the XVI. centuries became the favourite musical instrument.

Characteristic of the style of the ancient Hungarian folk music, as ascertained by our folklore experts, are the pentatonic scale brought along from the aboriginal homeland, the tempo rubato, a free, arbitrary time which departs from the regular measure, the recitative manner of singing and the loose, un-architectural texture of the melody (Bartók). Just as the popular poetry brought forth a blossoming of Hungarian poetry in the XIX. century, so the research work on Hungarian folkmusic undertaken by Bartók and Kodály gave an impetus to a renaissance of Hungarian musical art in the XX. century. The wealth and the multiplicity of melodies as well as the numerous rhythmic variations inherent in the folksongs, opened for us the way to an untold number of new possibilities in harmony and rhythm. Like all other native creations of the Hungarian art, Hungarian folkmusic glows with the radiance of the Eastern sun, wafts the sharp breeze of the steppes and re-echoes the stamping rhythm of the nomadic horsemen of yore.

The archaeological finds dating from the period of the conquest testify to the remarkable artistic elements of the aboriginal Hungarian culture. The ornamentation of the weapons and articles of luxury shows a strong Perso-Sassanidian influence which is frequently perceptible also in the carvings of churches built in the time of St. Stephen, that is in the XI. century. Thus the reliefs on the remnants of the Veszprém basilica are ornamented with the same Palmetta designs as appear on the Hungarian sabretaches and scabbards of the IX, and X. centuries. The stone-masonry of Hungarian churches of the XI. and XII. century shows likenesses of plants and animals (dragons and griffins) of Persian origin, while the origin of the plaited ornamentation found carved in stone in some of our ancient churches is unquestionably Iranian.

Church building on a grand scale set in under St. Stephen, the architects being foreigners, mostly Lombards. The Romanesque cathedrals are not inferior in grandeur to those of the same epoch in foreign lands. For a while a Byzantine influence made itself felt in Hungarian architecture. Early in the XIII. century (1210) the Cistercian friars transplanted the Gothic style from France to Hungary, Germany adopting the Gothic a little later. The origins of Hungarian goldwork go back to the period of the Conquest. The first great Hungarian sculptors came from the ranks of the goldsmiths. When the Turks took Nagyvárad by assault in 1660, there stood in front of the cathedral of that city a statue of St. Ladislaus, one of the many equestrian monuments modelled by Martin and George Kolozsvári, the two great Hungarian sculptors of the XIV. century. A monument to St. George by the same masters is to this day one of the artistic treasures of Prague. Hungarian painting stood at first under Byzantine influence, but as early as the XII. century Hungarian mural painting assumed national character by its use of themes contained in the legends of the Hungarian saints.

The conversion to Christianity also laid the foundation for the Hungarian scholastic system. From the early XI. century there were already in Hungary, as in Western Europe, schools attached to monasteries, churches and cathedrals. The monks transplanted to their Hungarian monasteries the school system as it existed elsewhere in Europe. In the course of the XIII. century grammar schools also made their appearance. As the social life progressed the need for higher institutions of learning grew apace. In 1367 the university of Pécs was organized on the model of that of Bologna, thus becoming from the point of view of seniority the second oldest university in Central Europe, junior only to that of Prague (1348). History also contains references to another Hungarian university established 1389 in Ó-Buda. The close contact with Italy during the reign of the Anjou dynasty exercised a powerful influence on the evolution of Hungary's culture. When Italian humanism spread beyond the Alps, Hungary was the first country in Europe in which it took root. Before that date, in the XII. and XIII. centuries, numerous Hungarian youths studied at the university of Paris, but from then on the universities of Padua, Bologna and Ferrara exercised a far greater attraction. The number of Hungarian students became so large that they formed at those universities their own Hungarian student associations. At the university of Vienna a separate "Natio Hungarica" was organized in the XIV. century.

IV.

The second half of the XV. century was by far the most glorious period in the evolution of Hungarian culture. This was the epoch when the Hungarian race manifested most strikingly its inherent cultural energy. The throne of Hungary at that time was occupied by King Matthew Corvinus "the first modern Hungarian", a true prince of the Renaissance, who challenges comparison with a Cosimo Medici, a Lorenzo the Magnificent, a Ludovico Moro.

In him the Italian Renaissance found its most liberal patron in Europe. Nurtured by the most outstanding humanists in a spirit of deep admiration for the antique, he developed Italian Renaissance culture in Hungary to the same degree of lustre as it possessed in the country of its origin. Ever since his accession to the throne he surrounded himself with aristocrats and dignitaries of the church who had received their schooling in Italy. His wife was a daughter of the King of Naples. Some of the most celebrated of the Italian Renaissance artists lived at his palaces: for instance Andrea del Verrocchio, the creator of Colleone's monument in Venice, Leonardo da Vinci, whose painting of the Madonna adorned the palace at Buda, Fillipino Lippi who painted King Matthew's portrait from his coins. Two relatives of Benvenuto Cellini, as well as the famous Lombard goldsmith, Caradosso, and Benedetto da Majano also, did great creative work at Buda. Another of King Matthew's creations was a vast library of illuminated codices, for which he paid prodigious sums to the celebrated miniature painters, Attavante and Gherardo. The splendor of his palaces at Buda and Visegrad, which elicited the greatest admiration of the Venetian ambassador, was enhanced by classically perfect statues in bronze or marble, of Heracles, Apollo, Diana and Pallas Athene. Nor were Hungary's great men forgotten: the statues of John and Ladislaus Hunyadi in the palace at Buda radiated forth the vigour of Hungary's genius. Barely half a century later all these masterpieces of the Renaissance were overtaken by a tragic fate. "A substantial number are still at Constantinople buried under the ruins of the huge hippodrome of the Byzantine emperors, whither the victorious Turks carried them off." (Friedrich Riedl.)

The circle of scholars whom the great Renaissance ruler of Hungary assembled around his person dispersed somewhat earlier. In preference to Aristotle, the philosopher and idol of medieval scholasticism, the Renaissance affected the cult of

the divine Plato and following in the footsteps of Cosimo Medici, King Matthew was Plato's enthusiastic disciple. Janus Pannonius, King Matthew's great Hungarian humanist poet, whom the Italian's called "le delizie del mondo", translated into Latin the works of Plotinus, the neo-Platonist, while platonizing Italian philosophers flocked to King Matthew's court. Gregorys of Trebisond and Joannes Argyropulos dedicated some of their works to the Archbishop John Vitéz, a Hungarian humanist of note and a distinguished writer. In 1467 King Matthew established at Pozsony the Academia Istropolitana, a university consisting of four departments, at which some of Europe's most outstanding scientists lectured, including the German astronomer, Joannes Regiomontanus. Hungary was also among the earliest of the nations to utilise Guttenberg's invention; as early as 1473 a hook, the Hungarian National Chronicle, was printed in Buda. The Danubian Learned Society (Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana), combining the humanists of Vienna and Buda into a union, was organized in 1497 under the direction of John Vitéz the Younger.

The weak rules of King Matthew's successors allowed the Turks to press forward, and the disaster of Mohács (1526) soon put an end to the renaissance of Hungarian culture. In the ensuing century and a half the flower of Hungary's young manhood perished on the battlefields fighting against the Turks.

V.

When any new trend of thought appeared in Europe, it was never long before it crossed the borders of Hungary. A bare seven years after Martin Luther displayed his 95 theses on the gate of Wittenberg University, impassioned discussions whether Reformation was justified or not were taking place at the royal palace in Buda. Two decades later, three fourths of the population were Protestant. The German-speaking cities of Hungary were the first to embrace the new creed in its Lutheran version,

but soon after the racially pure Hungarians between the Danube and the Tisza, as well as those beyond the latter river, went over to John Calvin's teachings. After having been irradiated by the spirit of the Italian Renaissance, the soul of Hungary became conquered in turn by the Protestant spirit of Germany. Whereas the former, appearing in the guise of a classical, literary and aesthetic culture, inspired only Hungary's intellectual aristocracy, the latter, being a turning point in the religious outlook of the world, deeply permeated the very soul of the people. The Reformation greatly intensified religious fervour, not only among the Protestants but among Catholics, by way of reaction and as a measure of defense. The Diet of Torda in 1545 was the first legislative body in Europe legally to enact religious freedom. The memorial to the Reformation erected in Geneva perpetuates prominently the person of Stephen Bocskay, Prince of Transylvania, who battled for and gained for Protestantism equality before the law. In its endeavour to spread the Bible among the people, Protestantism employed the national language instead of Latin and thus contributed materially to the nationalization of literature. Translations of the Bible appeared in great numbers, first among the Protestants and later also among the Catholics. An abundant religious literature of a polemic nature and in the Hungarian language sprang up within a short time, being greatly facilitated by the great strides made in the art of printing. The place of the genteel Latin style of the Renaissance was taken by a style of writing which is brittle, harsh but Hungarian to the core. The youths of Hungary no longer studied at the universities of Italy but flocked to the German Protestant institutions of learning. The university of Wittenberg had in the course of the XVI. century over one thousand Hungarian students. Returning to Hungary, these students brought with them from those focal centres of German Protestantism the erudition and the disciplinary system of the German schools, the spirit of the German educational organization,

and above all, the humanistic teachings of Sturm and Melancthon. In Hungary the Protestant cities and nobles vied with each other in founding schools and invited first rate teachers from foreign lands. The foreign professors at the university of Gyulafehérvár, founded by Gabriel Bethlen, included Martin Opitz, Johann Alsted, and Heinrich Bisterfeld. The great pedagogue Comenius taught for four years (1650—1654) at Sárospatak and endeavoured to reorganize that school. It was during his stay there that he wrote his “Orbis pictus” in which he insisted on tuition being given in the mother tongue and on the teaching of practical, scientific subjects.

About the middle of the XVI. century the Catholics also rallied to action; they established schools and defended themselves with the then new but mighty weapon of the press. This was the beginning of the Counter-Reformation, of which the Jesuits were the most zealous apostles. Intellectually the mightiest among them was Peter Pázmány, Archbishop of Esztergom. the “Hungarian Cicero”, founder of the university of Budapest and the foremost creator of a systematic Hungarian literary language.

Through the Reformation the Hungarian soul became religiously conscious, while at the same time the great national calamity, the tragedy of Mohács, also materially intensified national pride and patriotism. Ever since the Turkish scourge first fell upon the nation, melancholy has been the keynote of the Hungarian temperament. For over five centuries since the conquest the Hungarians had dwelt in their new homeland, preserved its original territorial integrity and at times even greatly extended its borders. Now, however, three fourths of the country were overshadowed by the Turkish crescent. In the North was a narrow strip ruled over by an alien monarch, a Habsburg King of Hungary who lacked understanding of the Hungarians and constantly strove to incorporate Hungary into his realm. In the East was Transylvania, overwhelmingly Pro-

testant and a tributary of the Sultan. In the meantime the country was going to rack and ruin and its existence as a distinct political entity was crumbling to dust. The Hungarians were continually engaged in fighting, now the Turks, now the Germans, and as frequently as not both at the same time. The desperate decline of the country caused Catholics and Protestants to inveigh against each other with bitter and hateful in-criminations. Both sides give vent to their grief in "Jeremiads", are deeply conscious of their iniquities and implore God to save the country from the abyss. Ever since then, and up to the present distress which followed the Treaty of Trianon, this national distress has been the basic emotion of Hungary's national soul. The ballads of Valentine Balassa, the Petőfi of the XVI. century, bewail the fate of the nation. The same national suffering burst forth from the soul of Nicholas Zrínyi, a successful Hungarian commander against the Turks at the close of the XVIII. century and also an epic poet of note, the Tasso of Hungary, as it does from the "Kurutz" songs of the Hungarian wars of independence under Francis Rákóczi. The same patriotic sorrow broods in the odes of the Hungarian pseudo-classic poets, in Kölcsey's "Hymn" which in time became the Hungarian national prayer, in the "Szózat" (Appeal) of Vörösmarty which exhorts the Hungarian, bound as he is to the native sod and bereft of any kin, that "for him there is no room elsewhere in the world and that he is bound to live and die here, regardless whether destiny bestowed on him blessings or visited punishment". The historic trend in the romanticism of the early XIX. century indulged in reveries on the glory of the Hungarian medieval knights and grieved over Mohács "that vast burial-ground of our whilom greatness as a nation". At the same time the greatest Hungarian dramatist, Joseph Katona, symbolized in his "Bantiss Bánk" the perennial tragic element in Hungary's history. Whenever a Hungarian indulges in philosophic speculation, as Imre Madách does in his "Tragedy of

Man" on the antinomies of the world's history or as Johann Vajda does on the problem of "to be or not to be", then his soul hovers in a mist of pessimism. In the midst of the afflictions of Turkish domination, of the everlasting struggle for survival as an independent state and for the constitution, of the ever-recurring rebellions and wars of independence, national pride and patriotism manifested themselves among all nations of Europe, but first and deepest in the Hungarian mentality and literature. The tragic part the Hungarian was ordained by destiny to play in the history of the world forged him in the briefest space of time into a purposeful patriot.

With the perennial struggle for survival waged on two fronts and the concomitant oppressive distress, it was but natural that Hungary, her great cultural responsiveness notwithstanding, now lagged several centuries behind as compared with the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, when her culture kept equal pace with the evolution of that of the West. While at the close of the XVI. century Hungarian literature was still spending itself exclusively on religious controversies and bible translations, Shakespeare's plays were already being produced in London, operas were being acted in Italy, Tasso was already dead. In 1603 while Péter Pázmány was arguing passionately with a Protestant pastor on the causes of the country's decline, Galileo at the university of Padua was just beginning to lay the foundations for a modern natural science, and the East-India Company was undertaking the enrichment of Western Europe. George Káldi was still putting the finishing touches to his translation of the Bible when the great English pioneer of modern thought, Bacon of Verulam, was laid in his grave (1626). Hungary was still in the midst of translating psalters and church hymnals (Albert Molnár de Szene, Stephen Katona de Gelej) while Corneille's *Cid* was already being staged, Calderon's dramas were enchanting their audiences and Lope de Vega and Martin Opitz were at death's door. In the middle of the XVII.

century when Pascal was censuring the shortcomings of human knowledge in his brilliant works, the Hungarian Johann Csere de Apáczai was busying himself with simple-minded philosophising, with making extracts from Descartes writings and with compiling his dry lexicon. While Zrínyi was still bemoaning the pitiable situation of the country and pondering ways and means of expelling the Turks, the salons had already begun to flourish in Paris. While in Hungary Gyöngyösi was still composing his insipid heroic poems, Molière was at the zenith of his fame. At the time when the Hungarians were besieging Buda and liberating the national capital from its protracted Turkish bondage, Bayle was publishing a scientific periodical, while Leibnitz, Locke and Newton led science and knowledge into new paths and towards new goals. Mystery' plays were still being written in the Hungarian "Csíksomlyó" when Voltaire's philosophic dramas made their appearance. Francis Faludi reflects on the manners of the nobility and of courtiers at a time when Montesquieu with his "Spirit of Laws" already shook the foundations of Europe's feudal systems. The rhetoric education of the Hungarian nobility was still mainly based on Cicero when Winckelmann's "History of the Antique Arts" revolutionized the evaluation of the antique world. Kazinczy was still engaged in polishing our language, then in quite a backward state of evolution, while Goethe and Schiller were reaching the height of their perfection. Hungarian philosophy was still stammering in Latin in the lingo of Wolff's notions when Kant's "Critiques" were making their successive appearances.

VI.

The dismal picture changes towards the close of the XVIII. century as full realization came to the Hungarians of the backwardness to which they had been condemned. The awakening manifested itself first in the realm of literature, with politics

following suit. At the instigation of Bessenyei and later of Kazinczy, a vast activity along lines of both organization and propaganda set in. Those who undertook this work saw in the development of Hungarian literature a great patriotic objective. Poets and writers deemed themselves prophets whose sacred duty it was to serve the national idea, to keep awake and to train the nation's soul, to plant the roots of literature firmly in the realistic soil of everyday life and thus to mould the life of the nation. In addition to the national viewpoint they were fully aware of the artistic side of their task; they kept their eyes on the modern European literature as a model and endeavoured to transplant its artistic elements into the literature of Hungary. They apply Western European verse metres to the Hungarian language, but under the influence of German neo-classicism, they introduced at the same time the old classical verse metres. They succeeded in a relatively short space of time in enriching our language with new phraseology, in making it plastic and fit for the artistic niceties of expression. The literature of the French and German "enlightened" school soon made its influence felt in Hungary.

By the time Stephen Széchenyi, "the greatest Hungarian", embarked upon his momentous political, social and economic reforms, in the 'twenties and 'thirties of the XIX. century Hungary already possessed an up-to-date literature quite comparable to that of Europe. The prodigious genius of Vörösmarty, having by then completed the creation of our poetic language, radiated from his inspired poems a profusion of forms, tones and moods. Through our literature pulsate not only our own national aspirations but contemporary universal ideas as well. Following upon the inspired period of romanticism, of which the epic was the leading literary form, Petőfi's genius, in the midst of the universal democratic trend of thought, leads the Hungarian lyrical poetry into new paths, enriching it with new popular tones, new themes and new ideals. From John Arany's epic

poems flow forth in a powerfully plastic manner the specific national individuality, the ideology, the emotions and the musical quality of the language of the Hungarians. It was now that the very soul of Hungary became conscious of itself; no longer does it copy foreign models, but becomes Hungarian in every fibre. Popular epics, popular dramas, folksongs, popular ballads become the ruling forms of the poetic art and through the diction of folklore their language gains in refinement. Historical and popular fiction make their appearance in Hungary about the middle of the XIX. century. The greatest Hungarian novelist Jókai imparts to it a genuine Hungarian flavour. In their struggle to safeguard the country's constitution the Hungarians discard the Latin rhetoric and create through the medium of Kölcsey the modern Hungarian art of oratory, of which Louis Kossuth was soon to become a world-famous master. In the 'thirties and the 'forties of the XIX. century, the glorious reform period of Hungarian history, when the omissions of centuries were feverishly made up within a few decades, Széchenyi helped to initiate the Hungarian public press. From the first this was an institution of the highest type, and Kossuth's magic pen was soon to enrich its literary form with a shining lustre. Hungary's merits in the political and in the cultural field once again began to meet with appreciation the world over. Just as Dante sympathetically apostrophised Hungary in the XIII. century, Heine, Longfellow, Emerson, Carducci and Ibsen did likewise in the XIX. century in their odes to the Hungarian people.

Scientific literature in the Hungarian language also began early in the XIX. century. Hitherto Latin had been the language of science just as it had been the language of statesmanship. Hungarian scientists had for the most part been educated at foreign universities. The unfavourable general conditions compelled holders of chairs to lecture on a great variety of subjects — a fact which tended to shape their scientific mentality along polyhistoric lines. Some of them nevertheless achieved Europe-

wide renown. Thus for instance the physician Stephen Veszprémi created a sensation with his work on the plague, which was published in 1755 in London. Andrew Segner, the inventor of the so-called Segner wheel, taught about the middle of the XVIII. century, first in Debrecen and later in Jena, Gottingen and Halle. He was the originator of the important scientific tenet that any body of whatever conformation had three axes intersecting each other vertically along which the centrifugal force was inoperative (trimetry). The XVIII. century also produced first-rate Hungarian botanists, zoologists and mineralogists. At the same time a critical school of historiography (Pray, Katona) began to function with amazing activity among the Jesuits. Into that period also falls the beginning of the study of economics and statistics (Berzeviczy, Schwartner).

The founding of the Hungarian Academy of Science by Stephen Széchenyi in 1825 brought about the complete displacement of Latin and German by the Hungarian language in the realm of science. Now begins a systematic organization of scientific work. The scientific policy of the Hungarian Academy was, of course primarily directed towards philological research in the Hungarian language. The great Nicholas Révai, proceeding along the lines of the historical school of thought, then beginning to assert itself, started early in the XIX. century to publish the literary remains of the Hungarian language, a task energetically continued by the Academy. Comparative Finno-Ugrian philology, the first exponents of which (Sajnovits, Gyarmatin) appear on the scene towards the close of the XVIII. century, found in Anthony Reguly an enthusiastic collaborator, who with Széchenyi's assistance and under untold hardships collected in the Ural and the Volga regions a wealth of material on the cognate idioms. Shortly after the mid-century comparative Finno-Ugrian philology was already in full bloom in Hungary.

Other branches of science were also decidedly on the upgrade and produced many a Hungarian talent of Europe-wide renown. The two mathematicians Wolfgang Bolyai and his son John are friends of Gauss; John Bolyai was the first man to devise a non-Euclidian geometry. Alexander Kőrösi Csorna, whom the problem of the origin of the Hungarians drew irresistibly to Asia while still a youth, was the first to engage in an extensive research work on the Thibetan idioms. Joseph Petzval, a Hungarian, devised the objective lens and the camera obscura and also constructed the first projection mechanism. Baron Joseph Eötvös, who studied the leading trends of political ideology in the XIX. century, created a great sensation in Europe with his comprehensive work on political science. The studies of his son, Baron Roland Eötvös, on the law of gravity and the magnetism of the earth have been acclaimed as pioneer works by the entire scientific world and are also of far-reaching practical value from the point of view of economics. Anisius Jedlik preceded Siemens by 18 years in discovering the principle of the dynamo; Donat Bánki devised the benzin spray-diffuser, Karl Zipernovszky the co-herer apparatus, Wilhelm Zsigmondy is the foremost authority on artesian well boring, while Hugo Bock occupies the same eminence in the field of natural gas wells. The Budapest physician and professor Ignatz Semmelweis became a benefactor of humanity by his discovery of a prophylactic against puerperal fever. Armin Vámbéry's explorations in Asia have produced scientific results highly valued the world over, while the geological and geographical studies of Louis Lóczy cast much entirely new light on those subjects. One of the greatest students of the Islam was Ignatz Goldzicher. In addition to those specified, a host of now dead or still living scientists brought great credit and esteem to Hungary in the various fields of European scientific endeavour.

Conforming to the specialization and the expansion of scientific pursuits, Hungary increased the number of her higher

institutions of learning; there are to-day four universities, of which that of Budapest, originally founded by Peter Pázmány at Nagyszombat, is the oldest. At the same time large national libraries and museums were established. The Hungarian Academy of Science recently celebrated the centenary of its existence; all over the country literary bodies and scientific associations serving a great variety of specialized scientific pursuits are active and flourishing. Indicative of the cultural energy of the Hungarian people is the fact that the great public collections and the Academy of Science were not established by an act of grace or with the funds of the ruling house. On the contrary, the spirit of sacrifice, the energy and the enthusiasm of the Hungarian body social created them despite discouragement by the foreign dynasty.

When the reconstruction of the country began after the expulsion of the Turkish invader, art in Hungary, which was in the hands of foreign masters, moved exclusively in the path of the baroque. From the beginning of the XIX. century on, architecture was dominated by the neo-classical style. Since then the changes in the forms of architectural expression run parallel with the trends prevailing in Europe. Attempts have also been made at creating an original Hungarian architectural style which would apply themes and designs borrowed from popular arts and crafts. Hungarian sculptors and painters, having studied at foreign art schools, have naturally been dominated by foreign influences. Many great talents among them have, however, been Hungarian to the core, and have gone their own ways in artistic achievement (Michael Zichy, court painter to the Tsar, Michael Munkácsy, Paul Szinyei-Merse, and others). The specific Hungarian atmosphere and its concomitant influences are increasingly gaining ascendancy in the realm of Hungarian art, the merits and high level of which have long since become known and acknowledged through international exhibitions.

In the very midst of the bloody warfare of the XVI. century the national elements of the Hungarian musical culture came strongly to the fore. The aristocrats of Transylvania and Upper Hungary maintained choirs and orchestras in their castles; those choirs and orchestras, strongly patriotic in spirit, cultivated the old Hungarian folk-music. To the Hungarian people, tortured by the Turks and the Germans, the song was an inspiration in battle and a solace in their hopeless wanderings. The Rákóczi songs, which originated after the crushing of Rákóczi's rebellion, are the most typical expression of the nation's sorrow. The heat of battle and the flaming patriotism of that period glow also in the Rákóczi march, which dates from the beginning of the XIX. century and is by far the most stirring martial tune in existence. A melody like this could have sprung only from the soul of a heroic people perennially shedding its blood on innumerable battlefields. (When Berlioz visited Budapest in 1846 he was so impressed by that melody that he incorporated it, in a masterful transcription, in his "Faust".)

The orchestras of the Hungarian aristocrats of the XVIII. century no longer cultivated the specifically Hungarian music, but rather went in for that of Western Europe. An orchestra famous in Europe which the Princes Eszterházy maintained in their residence served to an artist like Joseph Haydn as a welcome medium for fully unfolding his talents. "Whenever I want to hear a good opera", said Maria Theresa once, "I go to *Észterháza*". Michael Haydn, Joseph's younger brother, directed the orchestra of the Bishop of Nagyvárad. Beethoven repeatedly stayed for extended visits at the residences of several Hungarian aristocrats (Eszterházy, Brunszvik, Erdődy, etc.). His mass in C-minor was composed for a Princess Eszterházy's patron saint's day; his *Appassionata* sonata was dedicated to a Hungarian aristocrat. In the overture to his opera "King Stephen" and in his "Ruins of Athens" he utilized Hungarian themes. Schubert visited one of the counts Esterházy in the summers of 1818

and 1824 and while there composed several of his immortal works; he, too, availed himself with great predilection of Hungarian themes (for instance “Divertissement á la Hongroise”, etc.).

The uniquely specific Hungarian music remained in complete obscurity in the XVIII. century. It was in the provincial cities that the secular popular singing and student choirs (Sárospatak, Debrecen) prepared the ground for a revival of the new Hungarian instrumental music of the century and of the literature of the “verbunkos” — recruiting dances and songs — (Szabolcsi). The “verbunkos” of the great Hungarian violin trio, Bihari, Lavotta and Csermák elaborated on the melodies of the Rákóczi period, and thus became the successor to the old Hungarian music and also the musical prototypes of a strongly developed national movement. From the themes contained in the Hungarian “verbunkos” a great number of foreign composers drew the inspiration for their works in the Hungarian style, for instance: Beethoven, Haydn, Hummel, Schubert, Brahms, Massenet, J. Strauss. John Bihari, himself the much acclaimed violinist of the balls of the Congress of Vienna, who incidentally was not capable to read the score, was able by the sheer power of his phenomenal talent to express the fiery, oriental temperament as well as the gravity of the Hungarian soul and at the same time, by his masterly flourishes, to interpret the florid and pompous musical trivialities of the baroque era. In his Hungarian rhapsodies, which are among the world’s most admired musical masterpieces, Francis Liszt transformed the elements of Hungarian folksongs into classical compositions. The gradation of emotions in these rhapsodies fully interprets the Hungarian temperament; every Hungarian merry-making starts with melancholy, sorrowful tunes, followed by a slow *csárdás*, after which comes a fast, wild, fiery melody. Francis Erkel, another shining star on the firmament of Hun-

garian music, introduced the themes of Hungarian folksongs into operatic composition and at one stroke lifted the Hungarian opera to a European level. Hungary who gave a Francis Liszt to the world has at the present time an imposing array of virtuosos and composers (Dohnányi, Bartók, Kodály) who hold their own in the front rank of artists of any nation.

VII.

The appraisal of a nation's worth is the result of a synthesis of the sum total of that nation's accomplishments in the service of mankind. The criteria by which such worth is appraised are a nation's heroes, its key personalities and its accomplishments. In a recapitulating what we have said, and deducing therefrom our conclusions, we may point to a number of accomplishments which are particularly typical and illustrative for purposes of an assay of the merits of Hungary within the purview of all-European culture.

One of these accomplishments is Hungary's unflagging struggle for the principle of freedom and independence as well as for the lofty ideals of mankind. It is worth while to draw attention once again to the religious truce established at Torda in 1545, that is, at a time when the rest of Europe was rent asunder by religious strife. In the revolutionary years 1848/1849 the struggle of the Hungarian nation on behalf of the contemporary ideals of mankind assumed heroic proportions. Led by a genius in state-craft like Louis Kossuth and a military genius like Arthur Görgey the little Hungarian nation rose in defence of its liberty against the two mightiest military powers of the world, the Habsburg empire and Russia. At no time was Hungary greater than after she capitulated at Világos. The baptism of fire she received in the struggle for her own independence and for the immortal, great ideals of humanity will remain in

history as a shining example for all peoples, great and small. The reverberation of her heroism penetrated to the most remote corners of the globe and the soul of the entire world quivered in response to the heroism of a little but yet a great nation. The personality of Louis Kossuth, to this day an idol of his people, seems miraculous when we consider his unique genius and his creative, all-embracing world outlook. His life was a heroic saga, which is as reverently read in England and in America as it is in Hungary. Wherever in the world the banners of true national freedom have been unfurled, Hungarian volunteers have rushed in numbers to shed their blood for equity and justice. Hungarian insurgents bled under Garibaldi for the unification of Italy, Hungarian legionaries fought on many a battlefield for Poland's cause.

But let us turn now from the sublime to more practical matters. Until the conquest by Árpád, Hungary was a sparsely settled, partly desolate region, a roaming ground for wandering peoples. After the Hungarians settled there, the plains of the Danube and the Tisza became at once the granary of Europe. Was this a chance occurrence or a record accomplishment of a gifted, virile people? Only after the arrival of the Hungarians did the plain start to produce the world-famous high quality of wheat which helped to mitigate the famines of an era when the potato was as yet unknown in Europe. Fiery wine, fragrant fruits, excellent horses, pedigree cattle grow and thrive in blessed abundance under the hands of a people eminently gifted in agriculture. At the present time Hungary is one of the most flourishing agricultural countries and her people, hard-working, thrifty and frugal, materially contribute to the feeding of other nations.

And does not a loyal and tenacious devotion to her constitution of one thousand years, surrounded as Hungary has been by semi-Balkanized peoples, constitute a historically note-

worthy accomplishment of the greatest magnitude? To-day when the parliamentary structures of government the world over are shaking and threatening to collapse, Hungary is proceeding with a reconstruction of her parliamentary system, endeavouring to anchor it still firmer in the souls of her masses.

When the League of Nations was set up at Geneva, an undertaking the guiding idea of which was as meritorious as the practical operation of its machinery proved, alas, utterly defective, there arose in the person of the Hungarian Count Albert Apponyi an advocate of the idea of this League of Nations who had no peer in the nobility of mind, the strength of his convictions and depth of his world-embracing comprehension.

One of the many specific accomplishments of the Hungarian nation which the sheer force of its pure idealism stimulatingly and fruitfully⁷ carried far beyond the country's border, is the classical, constructive sense of justice of the Hungarians. The adherence to the spirit as well as the letter of the law is a characteristic inherent in the Hungarian nation. Hence follows its trustworthiness as a political friend and ally, as a debtor of foreign creditors, as a partner to a transaction. Francis Deák built the compromise with Austria and with it a modern Hungary as well as peaceful conditions in Central Europe which remained undisturbed for fifty long years, exclusively on a basis of equity and justice. It has been pointed out above how Hungary, after having been reduced to shambles by the Turks, rose again from its ruins, handicapped by nearly a century and a half of retarded development and yet managed to catch up and since even to keep pace with the other civilised peoples of Europe. The disaster of Trianon is perhaps still more catastrophic than that of Mohács and the ensuing Turkish domination. And yet the vitality of dismembered Hungary was not broken. And after Hungary was dismembered the wellnigh inconceivable miracle of a new national orientation, of a moral, political and

economic reconstruction sets in, like a living organism from whose quivering body the most vital organs have been torn off, which nevertheless finds a new way not only to survive as an organic entity¹ but to continue its growth. In the midst of the general political unrest Hungary remained an island of orderly conditions. She has made the best of the system of economic autarchy forced upon her and conjured up an industry which by now exports valuable quantities of merchandise. She practises thrift to settle her foreign obligations and still possesses sufficient virility and vitality to perform record accomplishments in the realms of art, of science and sport. A broken-down people can not accomplish anything noteworthy in the field of sports. But even after Trianon Hungary gave to the world Olympic champions in fencing, in swimming, in water-polo, etc. By her achievements in sport, which are but characteristic emanations of a thoroughly healthy body social, Hungary put herself into the front rank of the greatest nations of the world.

It still remains to speak of Hungary's influence on the art, the drama and the film production of the world. These facts, while a matter of common knowledge are not altogether commonplace. In these days of the country's dismemberment Hungary gives to the world a Nobel-prize winner. But let us not go too far into details. My real object was to show that the articulation of the Hungarian nation into the Christian and Western cultural sphere was not exclusively due to the genius and intuition of St. Stephen but also to the quite original, congenially inherent cultural affinity which bound the Hungarians, to the West ever since they entered within the purview of European history. My theme was to prove that in the course of her thousand years' history, Hungary acquitted herself in full of a double task: she had been an unswerving bulwark of Western civilisation against the onslaught of Eastern peoples and at the same time she made of the land which she defended with blood and iron a high-minded sanctuary of humanity's great ideals.

VIII.

The small peoples of the Finns, the Estonians and the Hungarians who, splitting apart from each other at the foot of the Ural Mountains two thousand years ago migrated North and West, may with a clear conscience face the tribunal of history. They brilliantly accomplished the mission that destiny set out for them because they knew how to develop the intellectual and physical powers inherent in their ethnic mental composition and under the most adverse historical conditions materially augmented humanity's joint cultural wealth. They not only continually absorbed the rays of the richly colourful spectrum of European culture, but by their own efforts developed them further and added new colours and hues to them. Had any other peoples taken possession of these territories they could have accomplished nothing more or better.

In the last great world war our northern sister-nations gained their freedom and were started by destiny on a road leading upward. We, however, are now mutilated and dismembered in body and soul. Yet undaunted we draw deep faith in our future from the vicissitudes, of our thousand years of existence.

