

MAGYAR MIRTH AND MELANCHOLY

BY JOHN PATRIC

AUTHOR OF "FRIENDLY JOURNEYS IN JAPAN" AND "IMPERIAL ROME REBORN," IN THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

PROUD Magyar banners drooped, disconsolate, outside the windows of Budapest's Royal Palace, at half-staff after 20 years for four "lost provinces" where, patriotic Hungarians say, "four foreign flags are flying."

Nicholas Horthy, Regent of Hungary, spoke sadly to me. "This was Europe's greatest nation some 800 years ago," he said. "Even in 1914 we had everything: lands and men and minerals, timber, wealth, seaports, and ships. Look at us today!

"Yet still I'm glad to be Hungarian. Our poorest, humblest peasant would rather lose an arm than break a promise. Our wheat may go to America, our musicians to Poland, our chess players, even, to France, and win against the best.

"In Berlin an international contest sought the world's best cook," he added.

"Who won?" I asked.

"My cook!"

"RESURRECTION" IS NATIONAL DREAM

It was Nicholas Horthy, fleetless admiral, who marched troops into Budapest 19 years ago after the overthrow of Bela Kun's bloody four-month communistic dictatorship.

Hungarians acclaimed him Regent, to uphold a Constitution more than seven centuries old, and to rule a kingless kingdom where St. Stephen's sacred crown is the revered, thousand-year-old emblem of limited monarchy (pages 3, 4, and Plate VI).

Children begin each school day as they end it: singing plaintive prayers for a restored Fatherland they were born too late to know. Metal plaques—Hungary crowned with thorns—are tacked to thousands of

doors. A lever on a popular, ingenious postcard tears from a map of old Hungary, as the Treaty of Trianon did, nearly three-fourths of her territory.

A clipped hedge map in a Budapest park is the Nation "then and now." The same motif appears on cakes in bakers' windows, in a dozen children's games, in every bus and streetcar. "Remain as it is?" reads the caption. "No. No. Never!"

This subject completely dominates Hungarian life and thought. Its implications must be understood, or Hungary cannot be.

November in Budapest* was dark and damp. When north winds raced down-river, gentlemen buttoned full fur linings into overcoats and ladies tucked soft fingers into muffs that were purses, too.

Teamsters walked beside their horses. Peasant women transferred shawls from shoulders to their heads.

Chestnut venders, edging closer to charcoal fire kettles, sold more hot wedges of roast pumpkin. The Danube fell, inches daily, between masonry-protected banks; soon towboat funnels could have cleared its unopenable bridges without being "broken" like shotgun barrels.

Sometimes fog rolled down the valley, stayed twice the clock around, and halted river barges. There came sleet and sanded streets. On a few days, short, bright, and cold, Buda's crescent of hills seemed in the clear air to draw nearer and huddle around Pest's warm chimneys, like Hungarian plainsmen about their autumn fires.

* See in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for June, 1932, "Budapest, Twin City of the Danube," by J. R. Hildebrand, and "Hungary, a Kingdom Without a King," by Elizabeth P. Jacobi.

I remember just one moonlit midnight when skies were blue as a Colorado summer dawn. From the high old Citadel, built to defend Buda from attack on the side facing its sister city, I watched Pest's lights spreading so far over its alluvial expanse that upon the horizon they faded as stars do—into invisibility.

At two-thirty the next afternoon a wan sun dropped wearily behind the precipitous limestone hill whence St. Gellért, whose name it bears, was thrown to martyrdom and immortality.

"SANTA" COMES DECEMBER 6

A dim daylight hour remained; I walked first beside the river, then along *Váci utca*, Budapest's smartest street. There, as in China, bargains reward good bargainers. Already, in confectioners' windows, symbolic candy boots shone red and tinsel. On December 6, not Christmas, comes Santa Claus—Hungary calls him Mikulás—as children's empty footwear waits on window sills. Knee boots are fashionable!

Snowflakes were falling as I passed a gas lamp lighter. A traffic policeman's little girl brought his hooded white mackintosh; he looked monkish in it. Surprised starlings, roosting in streetside trees, twittered and shook themselves.

Crossing Elizabeth Bridge, I walked again along the river. Against dark, slow-moving water a string of moored barges shone ghostly white. Yellow fingers of lamplight reached out from little windows of snug after-cabins.

That night I went to a movie theater—small, like most in Hungary, with every place "reserved." Prices climbed in a dozen steps from eight cents for front rows to fifty for choice balcony seats. Long intermissions were frequent. Then patrons strolled in the foyer until a bell recalled them, or remained seated to watch jerkily animated advertising cartoons.

"Go away!" wheezed a bent old man, in one of these cartoons, to a beauty. After gulping quarts of the advertised tonic urged on him by cronies, the same man, alert and vigorous, kissed her and winked at us.

Hawkers peddled chocolate or salty, foot-wide pretzels, leaving thirst behind. Then came angels of mercy, vending unflavored soda water.

When air in the crowded theater became stale, an usher "freshened" it. Blowing pungent perfume from a hissing fly spray

gun, he stalked the darkened aisles, a tall, gray specter enshrouded in a mist.

"Ventilation wastes heat," seems axiomatic in Hungary. Fuel is costly. The perfume was cheap.

Because I alone laughed at an American joke, another American in the audience, long resident in Hungary, knew a countryman was there. After the show he greeted me. Together we walked to a restaurant.

Gypsy music runs to extremes, sad or gay. Here it rippled a joyful love song from two violins and a dulcimer-like instrument the size and shape of a small library table. With two firm cloth balls on drumsticks, one brown man tapped harplike music from a hundred or so horizontal strings.

"That's a *czimbalom*," my companion explained, "popular with gypsies."

Gypsy musicians, in this warm-hearted land where quick infatuations are not unknown, sometimes make strangers acquainted. We saw an example.

A young Magyar, sitting alone, beckoned a violinist and slipped a coin into his hand. The gypsy musician moved quietly among the tables. Where a girl sat reading, he paused to play a haunting air of sweet melancholy.

"It's a well-known song," explained my companion, "about someone so inaccessible that only the yellow thrush can go to her."

The girl, pensive, heard the song to its end. Then she spoke to the gypsy. He threaded his way back again. Now he played more gaily, but softly still.

"I know that song, too," said my companion, as we were leaving. "I'll translate it, though it sounds better in Hungarian:

"Come when I call to you;
Your boot heels shall be silent,
Your spurs shall not jingle,
And mother will not waken."

A TYPOGRAPHICAL TRAGEDY

Here, as everywhere, love sometimes ends painfully. I had read the week before of a printer's apprentice found unconscious. He recovered after surgeons removed seven pieces of lead type from his stomach.

Jilted by his sweetheart, he had set her name, "Mancika," in type. Then he had swallowed the letters.

"Hungary likes Americans," said my countryman. "Budapest celebrates the Fourth of July with speeches beside Washington's statue in the park—did it even during the World War. Hungarians never



Photograph from Keystone

ONE SOLDIER'S EYES MUST ALWAYS FIX ON HUNGARY'S GOLDEN CROWN

Within a fireproof safe of the Royal Palace under perpetual guard rests the treasured royal emblem of kingless Hungary (page 4). The instant these wardens leave, three more will snap to attention in their places. In the corner, facing the safe, a guard stands rigid, "eyes left," every second he is on duty. He must never look away from the glass case in the strongbox where, after a thousand stormy years, his country's sacred crown awaits a wearer.

really looked upon us as an enemy nation."

We came to the massive door of a large old apartment house built of ornate artificial stone in halcyon days when Budapest was rich. My countryman pressed a button. Through open iron grillwork beside the door, a bell sounded faintly, far away. Soon an aged face peered at us through lantern light. Then heavy lock machinery moved ponderously.

ELEVATOR FARE HIGHER THAN CARFARE

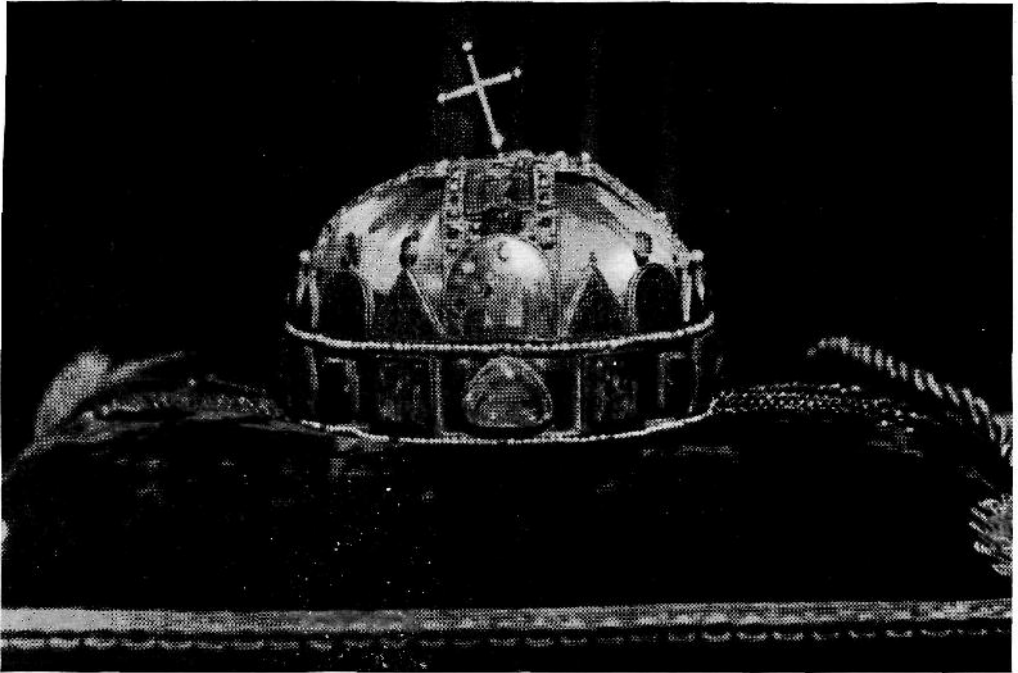
My companion gave the doorman forty *fillér* (eight cents). "Residence buildings, even modern apartments, are locked at ten; no one has a latchkey," he explained. "Glorified janitors, usually richer than I, charge ten *fillér* 'admission fee' from then until

midnight. After twelve the price doubles.

"In this house, as in office buildings, elevator fare is ten *fillér*. Most people ride up and walk down, for the fee exceeds that of a short streetcar ride in Budapest. Here, elevator fare doubles after midnight. If my family of five returns late, it costs me thirty cents—as much as our servant's daily wage."

Next day I asked the captain of a tow-boat if I might ride to Mohács, down the Danube, at the southern frontier (map, page 7, and page 8).

Two evenings later I boarded the *Count Gyula*. Her navigator's bridge, facing fore and aft from amidships, extended well over her wide, protruding side wheels. From an airplane, she would resemble a



Photograph from Keystone

ON A VELVET CUSHION LIES A CROWN NO MAN WEARS

Though Hungary is a kingdom still, a regent guards the royal emblem and keeps his country's throne for some future monarch that nobody yet knows. It is in two parts. The inner shell was given to St. Stephen, first ruler of Hungary, by Pope Silvester after the turn of the first Christian millennium, in 1001. The outer case was a later gift of a defeated Byzantine emperor, grateful for chivalrous Hungarian treatment of a captured town. The crown has been hidden often in troubled centuries. Once it was dropped from a jolting wagon and lost; another time it was buried. On one adventure the cross was bent, and it is so portrayed on the national flag (Plate VI).

far-off cigar between two penny matchboxes.

Far behind us five heavy-laden, snub-nosed barges, much larger than the tug, were secured by two heavy cables.

As Budapest lights grew dim astern, we moored for the night.

Aft, below water line, a coal stove warmed a dimly lighted, rudely furnished lounge. An officer's cabin adjoining it was mine for the voyage. It contained a hard straw mattress, a mirror, a washbowl, a pitcher of silty river water, and a lantern to be lighted when failing steam pressure, as fires were banked, stopped the little dynamo that provided electric lights.

Throbbing of old engines awakened me from cold sleep at dawn. Coffee-flavored milk, full of "skin," had long simmered in the galley. That morning it tasted good.

The *Count Gyula* swung her tow clear of our mooring place and into the current. Through the captain's glasses I saw the five barges' helmsmen, far astern, turning their wheels in unison to keep in the channel.

Their wives chopped wood, fed poultry, or hung washing as warmly clad children played on barge decks.

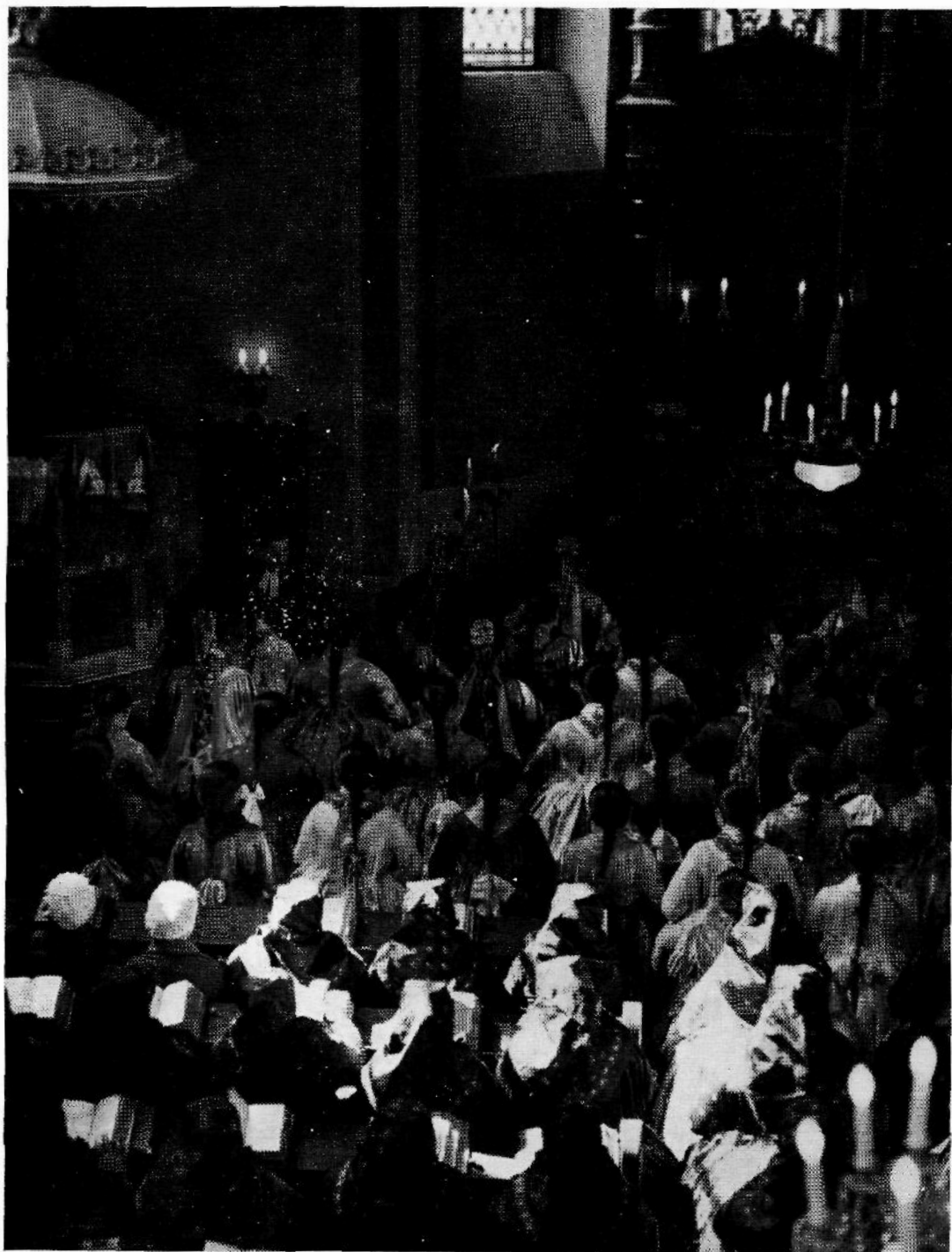
Channels and islands appeared on the pilot's charts. "Some are man-made," he explained. "Nature's shortcuts produced others."

Quiet estuaries stretched eastward. The captain traced the Greek letter Ω . "Perhaps Roman galleys used that old channel. Here's the new," he said, closing the Ω with a pencil mark. "It's like that all along the river, except in rugged country."

DIKES PROTECT FARMS

Danube farmers hereabouts dwell behind dikes built inland from forested, uninhabited river banks. We saw woodchoppers, passed crude ferries, and observed an occasional flour-dusty face peering from a Noah's ark-like mill, anchored in the river.

I visited our good-natured cook in her little galley overhanging the water just aft of port paddle wheels. A barefoot, mouse-



Photograph by Tibor Hegyey

DEVOTION CALLS FOR "FULL DRESS" IN THE VILLAGE CHURCH

For six days, in simpler garb, Hungarian women of the countryside spin, bake, churn, and work with their men in the fields. Sunday is for parade, as well as prayer and rest. Prideful dressing takes hours, and the seven or eight cotton petticoats, starched and pleated, preclude sitting at Mass. The procession homeward after service is as much a rite as an American Easter Sunday parade (page 32).



Photograph by John Patric

ROOSEVELT'S "ANNIHILATING VICTORY," SO PROCLAIMED IN THIS HEADLINE, SCREENS TWO AT A BUDAPEST RESTAURANT TABLE

The proprietor has used shears and paste to write his own streamer on the copy of *Az Est* glued to the wall—"Unprecedented catastrophe," referring to a law requiring compulsory tips of 10 or 15 per cent of all cafe bills. A mural menu of this establishment, popular with artists and frugal film folk, not highly paid in Hungary so that they often must do other work, gives low prices for pancakes and jam, steaks, and omelets.



Drawn by Ralph E. McAleer

LESS THAN A THIRD OF OLD HUNGARY STILL FLIES THE MAGYAR FLAG

"Your United States is so young," remarked a Hungarian, whose nation dates its history from a thousand years ago when nomad horsemen from Asia unexpectedly found the mountain-rimmed Danube plains a "promised land." The post-war Treaty of Trianon gave a Germanic strip of western Hungary to Austria; Ruthenia and Slovakia, in the north, to new-born Czechoslovakia; Transylvania, and almost two million Magyars, to Rumania; and southern Hungary to Yugoslavia. The rich agricultural core of the ancient kingdom still is Hungarian, though more than three million people of that race now live beyond its borders.

like scullery maid rolled noodles, tossing one occasionally to two soiled pet hens.

PUMPKINS, PAPRIKA, AND POPPY SEEDS

Cook showed me her storeroom. Pumpkins, potatoes, and cabbages were staples. Slightly wrinkled grapes hung on a wire (page 14). There were bins of poppy seeds and ground paprika, a barrel of apples, a big sack of walnuts, racks of sausages, hams, and fat bacon.

A hundred shiny jars held her own preserved cherries, peaches, apricots, pickles, and pickled peppers.

For the first time on shipboard, I was to dine at the captain's table. A fresh cloth was spread in the lounge and soon the scullery maid—waitress now—appeared in shoes and clean apron.

She brought a steaming tureen of chicken noodle soup for the captain, chief engineer, and me. Next course was "stuffed cabbage"—bits of boiled beef wrapped in hot sauerkraut—and then chicken stewed with paprika.

Smoking noodles appeared next.

"Epicures—like me—eat them *so*," said the captain, sprinkling his helping liberally with powdered sugar, spices, and finely chopped walnuts.

"Men like them this way," said the engineer, shoveling grated sour cheese over his.

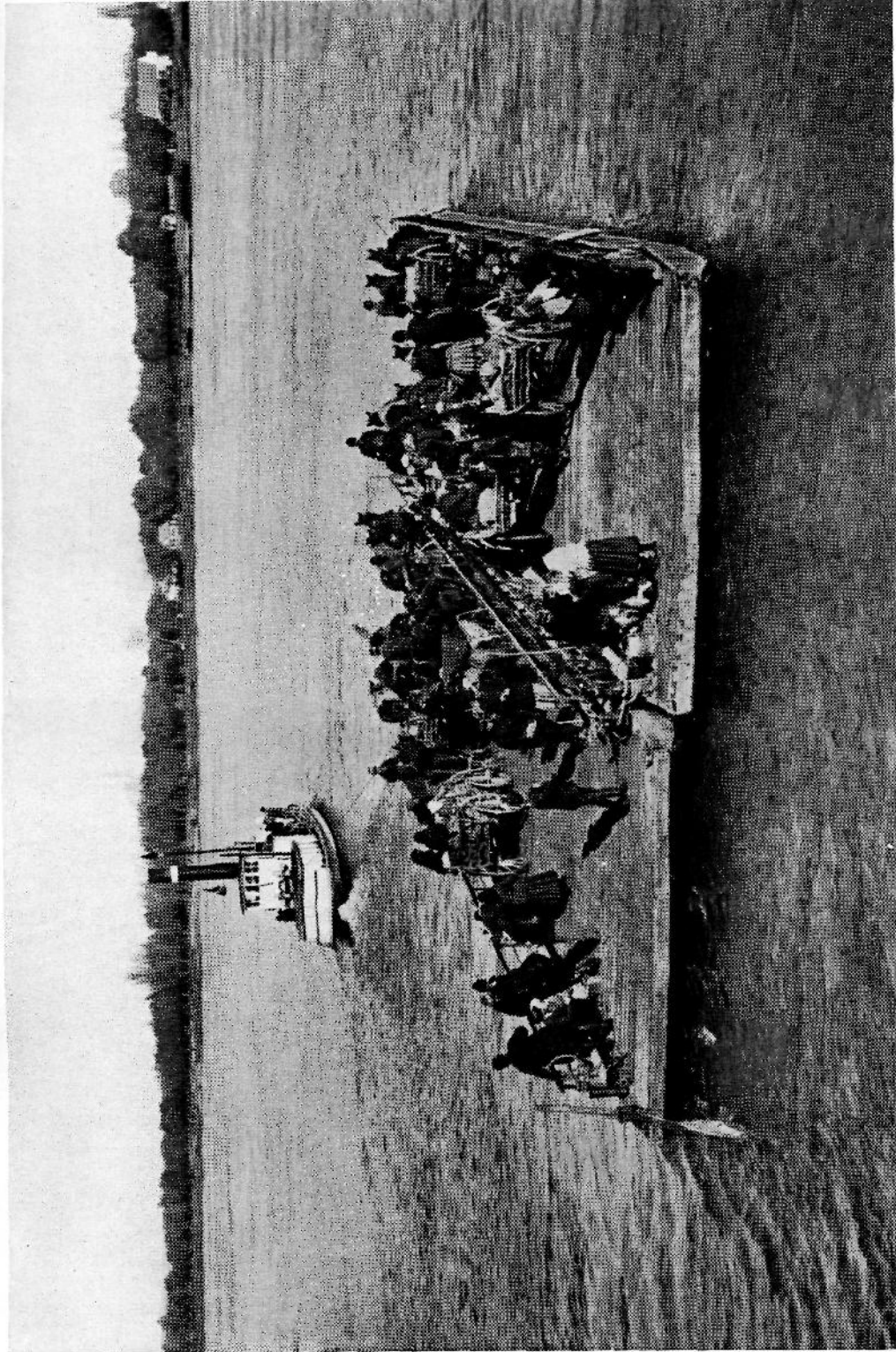
"He's a country boy; never learned good eating," grinned the captain.

"He's a sissy," said the engineer, grinning, too.

Captain and I had *palacsinta* for dessert. Thin, warm pancakes in rolls like Mexican tortillas are filled with hot apricot jam. The engineer ate four green, sour, pickled peppers.

Fog halted us that afternoon. The captain found quiet water and shouted megaphone commands to bargemen who dropped four-pronged mudhooks. Our sooty stokers banked their fires and smoked on deck in the lee of the warm stack. Another short day was over.

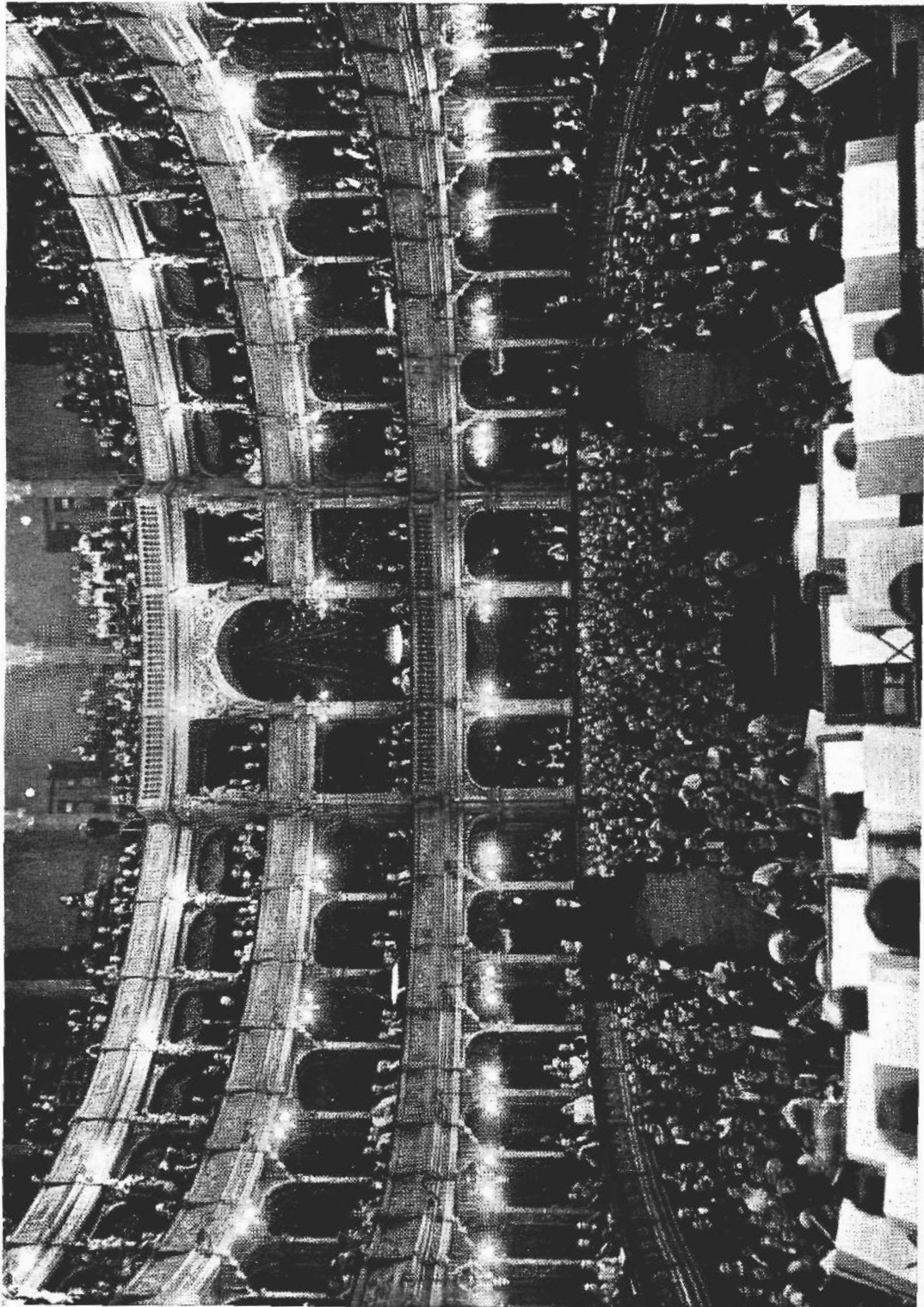
Two afternoons later the *Count Gyula*, hugging the river bank opposite Mohács,



Photograph by John Patric

HOMEWARD FROM MARKET AT MOHÁCS, FARMERS FERRY THE DANUBE ON CARRY-ALL BARGES TOWED BY A TUG

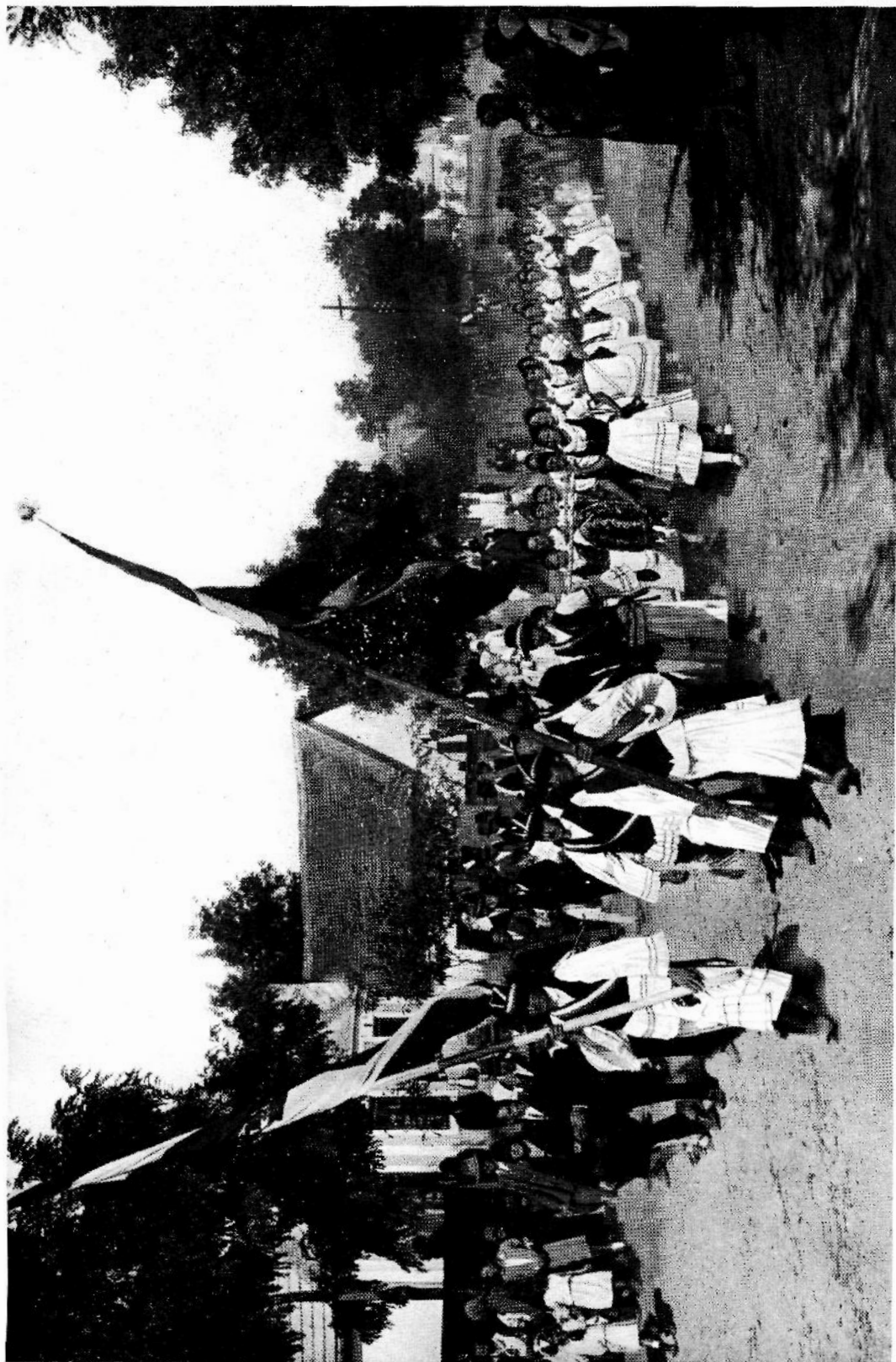
Booted, brightly dressed peasants cross with poultry and produce to sell in this river port, used by ships of many nations, at Hungary's southern frontier. Far from salt water, the town has aspects of an international seaport. Death came here, in 1526, to 24,000 fierce fighters as advancing Ottoman armies, 150,000 campaign-hardened men, defeated 28,000 desperate defenders at this Magyar Waterloo. Thereafter the Turks dominated Hungary for eight generations. In 1697 they lost the battle of Zenta (now Senta, Yugoslavia), east of Mohács, then left Hungary, never to return.



Photograph by Rudolf Babagh

TO HONOR HUNGARY'S GREAT COMPOSER, REGENT HORTHY, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, ATTENDS THE OPERA

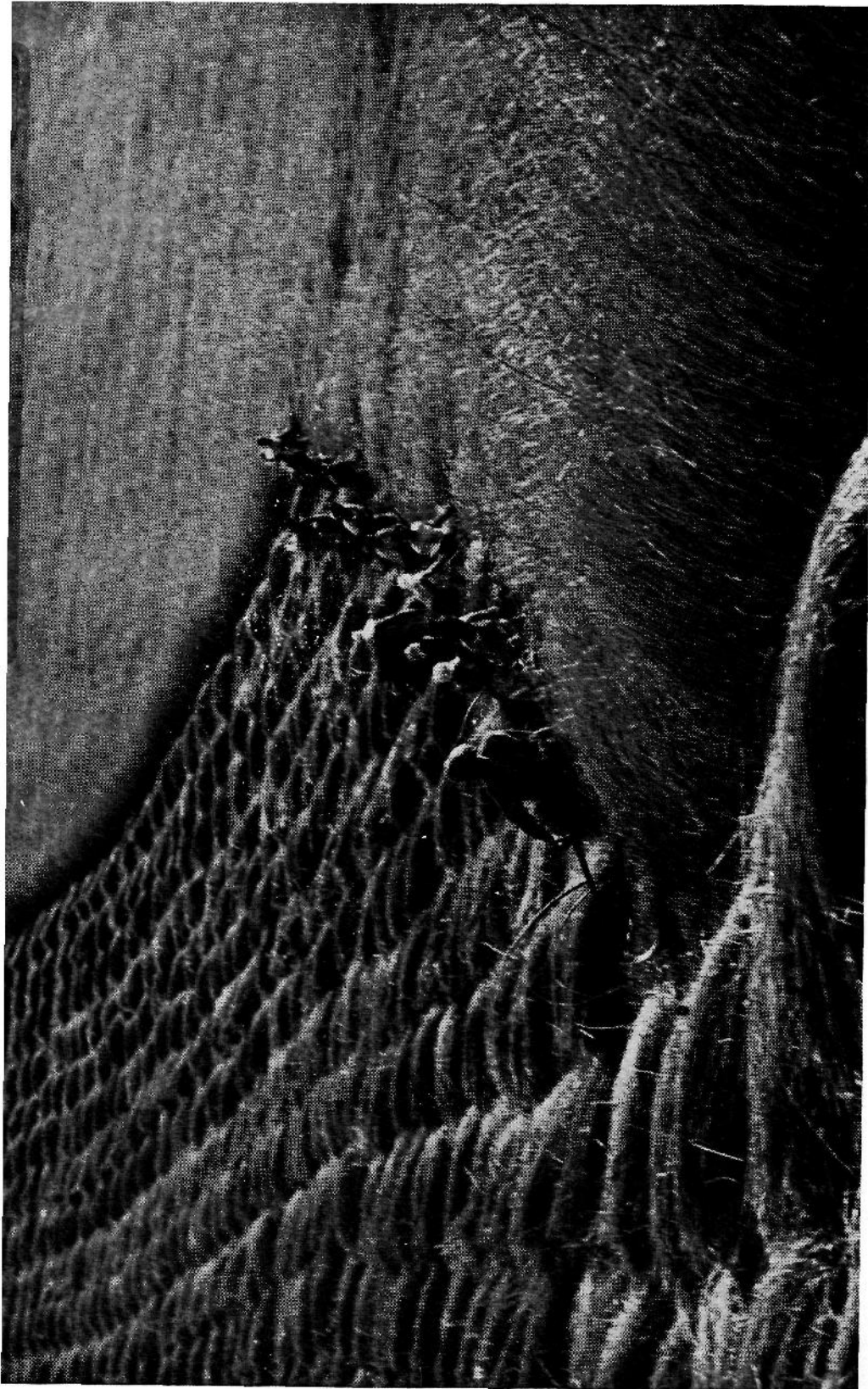
In the high-arched royal box, amid ghosts of a broken line of monarchs whose ancient throne he guards, sits the nominal ruler of Hungary, a kingdom without a king. The "who's who" of the capital attended this performance in memory of Franz Liszt, at the Royal Opera House in Budapest.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

TO A TAVERN IN THE TOWN GO GRAPES AND GIRLS AND MEN IN SKIRTS

At Dunaszentgyörgy, or "St. George-on-the-Danube," Hungarian farmers and townsfolk follow their national flag to the inn to dance and drink new wine. Grapes often hang from the ceiling at vintage feasts. Celebrants who "steal" them are fined by a mock judge; the proceeds pay for the indispensable gypsy music.



Photograph by Erno Vadas

LIKE A GUST OF WIND SWEEP HARVESTERS ACROSS A SEA OF WHEAT

Whole families work at harvest time on the large estates; for centuries their payment has been part of the crop. Mowing machines on big farms are "discouraged, not forbidden," until the traditional man with the scythe finds other work to do. Yet enormous areas are often plowed with the aid of two steam traction engines, creeping slowly forward in unison, perhaps half a mile apart at opposite ends of the field. They drag a gang plow on a cable back and forth between them.



Photograph by John Patric

JUVENILE CHRISTMAS MINSTRELS TRAMP SNOWY ROADS OF HILLY NORTHERN HUNGARY

Rudolf Balogh excavates a camera from cluttered *Topolino* to photograph a troupe of boys, carrying staves and a miniature church, and dressed as Wise Men, prophets, and shepherds. From house to house they go, giving simple, plotless plays and singing carols. Gifts of food, rarely coins, reward them. "Old men" are bearded with raveled rope; little girls, often playing cherubim, wear goose wings. Though this country is intensively cultivated, no houses are visible here; farmers live in villages.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

TRAINLOADS OF BETEROOT YIELD TONS OF SUGAR, MOTOR FUEL, CATTLE FEED, AND FERTILIZER

Sugar beets, unloading at Hatvan, are sliced and steeped in hot water. Beet juice, mixed with carbon dioxide gas and lime, then filtered and evaporated, is crystallized into sugar. From residual molasses, alcohol is manufactured, to mix with motor gasoline. Beet pulp is fed to cattle, and filter dregs to overworked land.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

TO A COOL, DARK STOREROOM GO GRAPES FOR WINTER TABLES

Choice fruit, borne from the vineyard by pole and basket, is fresh long after Christmas, only a little wrinkled, in the moist climate of the Danube Valley. In Érsekcsanak boys sometimes wear dresses. On each girl's head a soft, doughnut-shaped *tekercs* eases burden balancing (page 55).

swung suddenly into midstream. Her barge pilots spun their wheels and with surprising grace both tug and tow turned about in the river and came to rest beside the old town.

In near-by Pécs I was shown about the sprawling Zsolnay ceramics plant by its founder's grandson. It makes sewer pipe and teacups, giant insulators and fragile china dolls.

"You're growing fast," I said, noting recent construction.

"No credit to us. Tariffs block competitors—they're in the lost provinces."

CERAMICS DESIGNS COPIED FROM "THE GEOGRAPHIC"

We watched an artist painting deep-sea fish on half-glazed vases from color plates in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE.

"Mother lends them to us. She's past 90, and still keeps up with the world." We had coffee with her at her park-encircled home within protecting factory walls.

Twenty butterflies pressed bright wings gently against the glass bottom of our green coffee tray as if, resting momentarily on broad June leaves, they might flutter into the room and lose themselves among unfading ceramics of other lands and times.

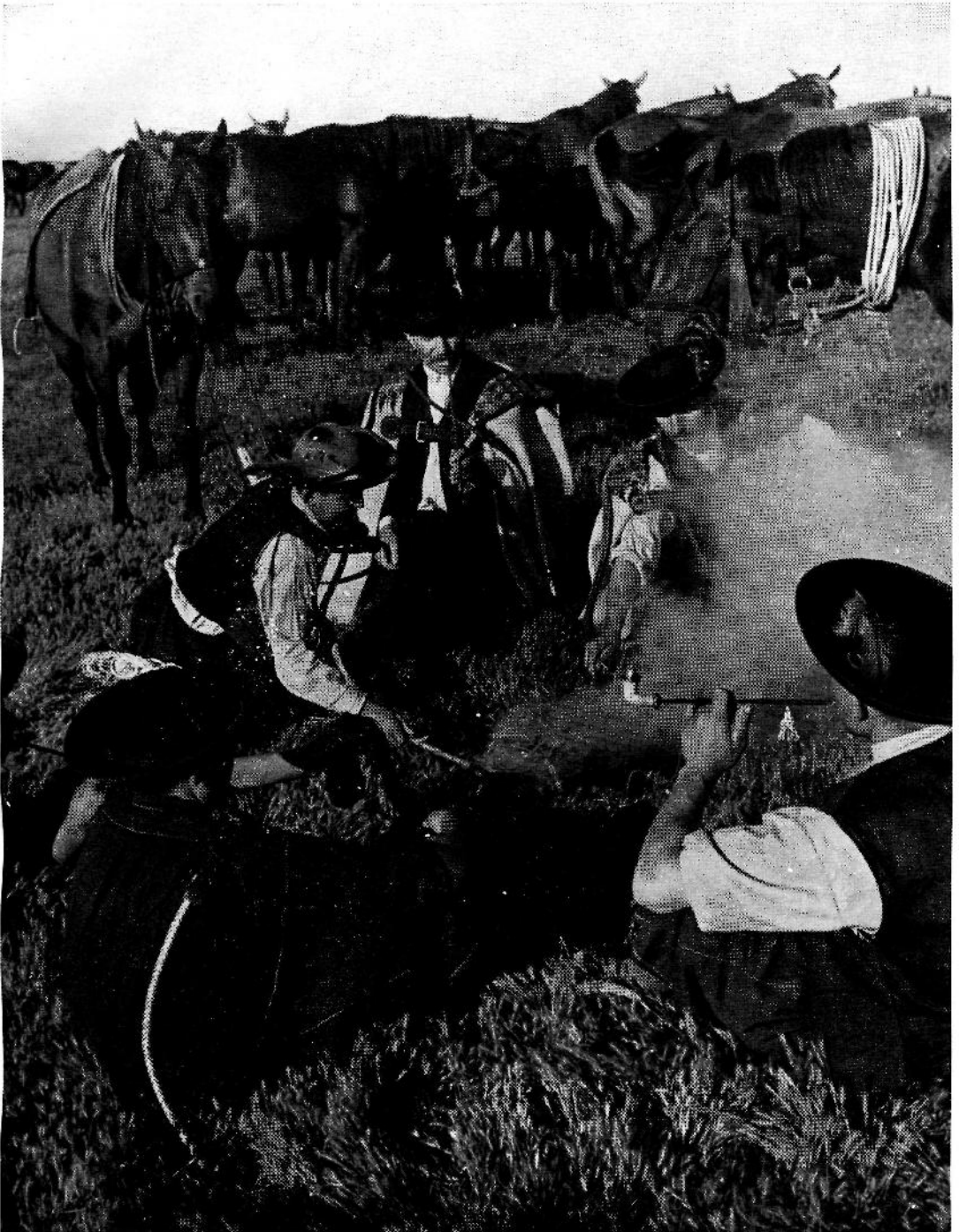
"It seems a pity to kill them," I said.

My hostess laughed.

"Look closely," she said. "Those wings were iris petals; these, a tiger lily's, dusted with pollen. Purple spots were violets. Feelers I made from stamens and pistils. Bodies, too, are lily stamens. I'm too old to chase butterflies."

With a commercial banker, recently returned from a Rotary convention in New Jersey, I visited a coffeehouse.

Although coffeehouses are as popular in Central Europe now as in Dr. Johnson's England, I never saw a Hungarian workman patronize one. Coffee twice a day there would cost a third of his wages. Yet they are almost clubs to officers, country



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

A STRAW FIRE SAVES COSTLY MATCHES WHEN HORSEBOYS ALIGHT FOR A SMOKE

Hard-riding herdsman, spurning saddle girths and pommels, have come to fresh grass on the fenceless Hortobágy, part of the great Hungarian plain. Here the town of Debrecen owns a vast area that provides municipal revenue from grazing fees. When an owner arrives to take them to winter stalls, his unbranded animals are picked unerringly from the herd, because horseboys recognize their equine wards as other men know human friends. Flat, plumed hats, curled mustaches, braided quirts, and embroidered greatcoats are the trappings of an ancient calling that passes, like nobility, from father to son (Color Plate II).

gentlemen, politicians, and business men.

We swung past three sets of doors, then pushed aside a semicircular curtain of heavy red blanket cloth. It overlapped three feet and dragged the floor like a train. Windows were double and weather-proofed.

Thus no chill breath of winter mixed itself with bluish air of the large room where human bodies and burning tobacco shared the heating task with a tiny airtight stove, efficiently placed many warm pipe-lengths from its chimney.

A hundred newspapers in holders hung on a rack. Boys learn patrons' favorites and bring them to the little tables.

Perhaps for convenience of coffeehouse reading, Hungarian papers are tabloid in size, and actual circulations are much larger than the number of copies printed. Yet a good issue of an American small-town daily contains more advertising than the largest Budapest papers combined.

"Fellow Rotarians here," said the banker, "think hard-working American business men must be money mad. Most Americans work hard, I explained to them, for what money *brings*—everything that makes life so rich and varied in your country.

"Here they won't believe that, though your gangsters and G-men are well known." He chuckled. "A bearded Pécs restaurateur once ordered a portrait and refused it, on completion, as 'unrecognizable.'

"It drew laughing crowds when the annoyed artist displayed it, in a store window, labeled 'Capone in Disguise.'

"Everyone knew of Capone, and from his beard recognized the now furious restaurant man, who paid immediately."

Late that afternoon I left Pécs by train. "First call" filled the diner with men who ate leisurely, smoked, and talked until, two hours later, we reached Budapest.

"It's the coffeehouse tradition on wheels," remarked my tablemate.

TAXIS LACK SELF-STARTERS

The next Sunday an Englishwoman invited me to meet "a prima donna, past 80, once Liszt's pupil."

A cab driver in padded overcoat graciously bowed us into his taxi. Fare was 20 cents for our first mile, 12 cents for the next.

"Must *all* Budapest taxis still be cranked?" my companion asked.

"I kiss your hand; yes, madam," he re-

plied. I noted in two months only three cabs with self-starters.

We climbed a long stair, traversed dark corridors, and rapped beneath a placard: "Carlotta Feliciano, Singing Lessons."

A little old lady let us in. She wore an ornate dress of dull-green velvet and tarnished gold braid, snug-waisted, wide of skirt. The dress itself was faded; strangely, the sleeves were not.

She sang "The Last Rose of Summer," in Hungarian, playing it on an oaken piano. In this so-much-lived-in little room it was like a burnished golden throne in a cobbler's shop.

Clippings in scrapbooks told Carlotta's story—her debut, her marriage, her studies with Hungary's great composer. "Once I praised Wagner to Franz Liszt," she said, "forgetting they weren't friends. Maestro threw my music on the floor and stomped out. I was afraid of him after that."

A DRESS WITH A HISTORY

From opera programs—some on silk—we could follow Carlotta, singing her way in splendor across Europe. There were royal photographs, signed, and masculine handwriting on fine note paper, still white.

"Mash notes? I liked them anyway. This was from a Hussar. He sent me 36 white roses after I sang in 'The Barber of Seville.' I let him see me, wearing the dress I am wearing now."

"*That* dress?" I asked, incredulously.

"I've worn made-over costumes for years. This is the last. Long ago I cut off the train and saved it to make new sleeves. Those pillows and rag rugs were costumes once."

As we were leaving, Carlotta showed us a large, stained old photograph of two pretty women with a tall, vaguely familiar young man, riding camels by the Pyramids.

"That's Tom Lipton, a countess I knew, and me," said Carlotta. "Tom liked her—"

"You mean Sir Thomas Lipton?" I asked, recalling the trim old yachtsman who had spent so liberally and fruitlessly to regain for Britain the America's Cup.

"Yes. He hadn't been knighted, but he was a millionaire, in *pounds*, even then. Yet he was thrifty. When I told him about the countess's birthday he gave her two flowers."

"Orchids?"

"Two big daisies. He picked them himself," she said, laughing, as we left her.

RURAL HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

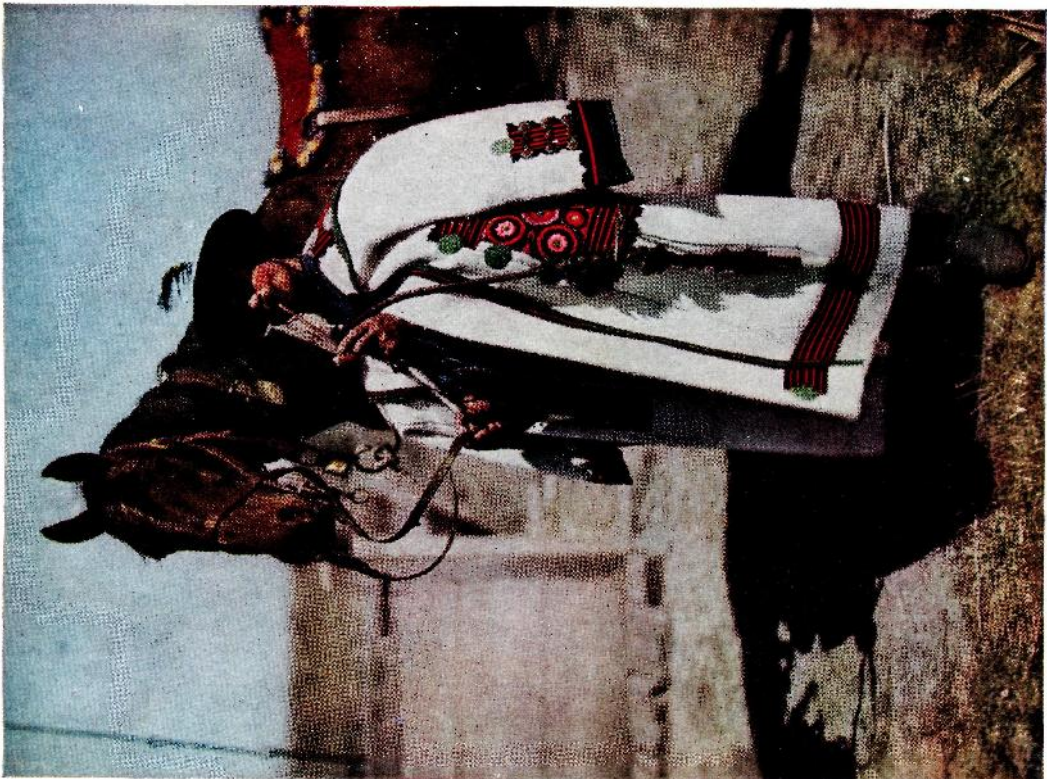


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Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

BRIDESMAIDS "DANCE THE DOWRY" FOR ALL THE TOWN TO SEE

Tripping down village lanes, friends of a bride display her hope chest treasures. Even the poorer country girls present their husbands with fluffy, handworked pillows and down-stuffed feather beds, to be proudly piled in the parlor and seldom used. The Kalocsa country of Hungary excels in flowered embroidery, like these jackets, aprons, and **clucked** stockings. On holidays, as a matter of course, color-loving Magyars still wear folk dress.



© National Geographic Society Autochrome Lumière by Hans Hildenbrand

GREATCOATS ARE HEAVY; SADDLES ARE LIGHT

Hard-riding, mustached, this herdsman, Magyar counterpart of an American cowboy, watches horses, not cattle, on the Hungarian plain. His girthing saddle, a woven rug with stirrups, is thrown loosely over his mount.



Agfacolor Photograph by Hans Hildenbrand

YOUTH AND MATERNITY TRAMP THE ROMANY ROAD

Some gypsies travel as tinkers in summer; others beg and forage; many, in gay eates, provide gypsy melodies. Liszt credits them with the origin of Hungary's distinctive music.

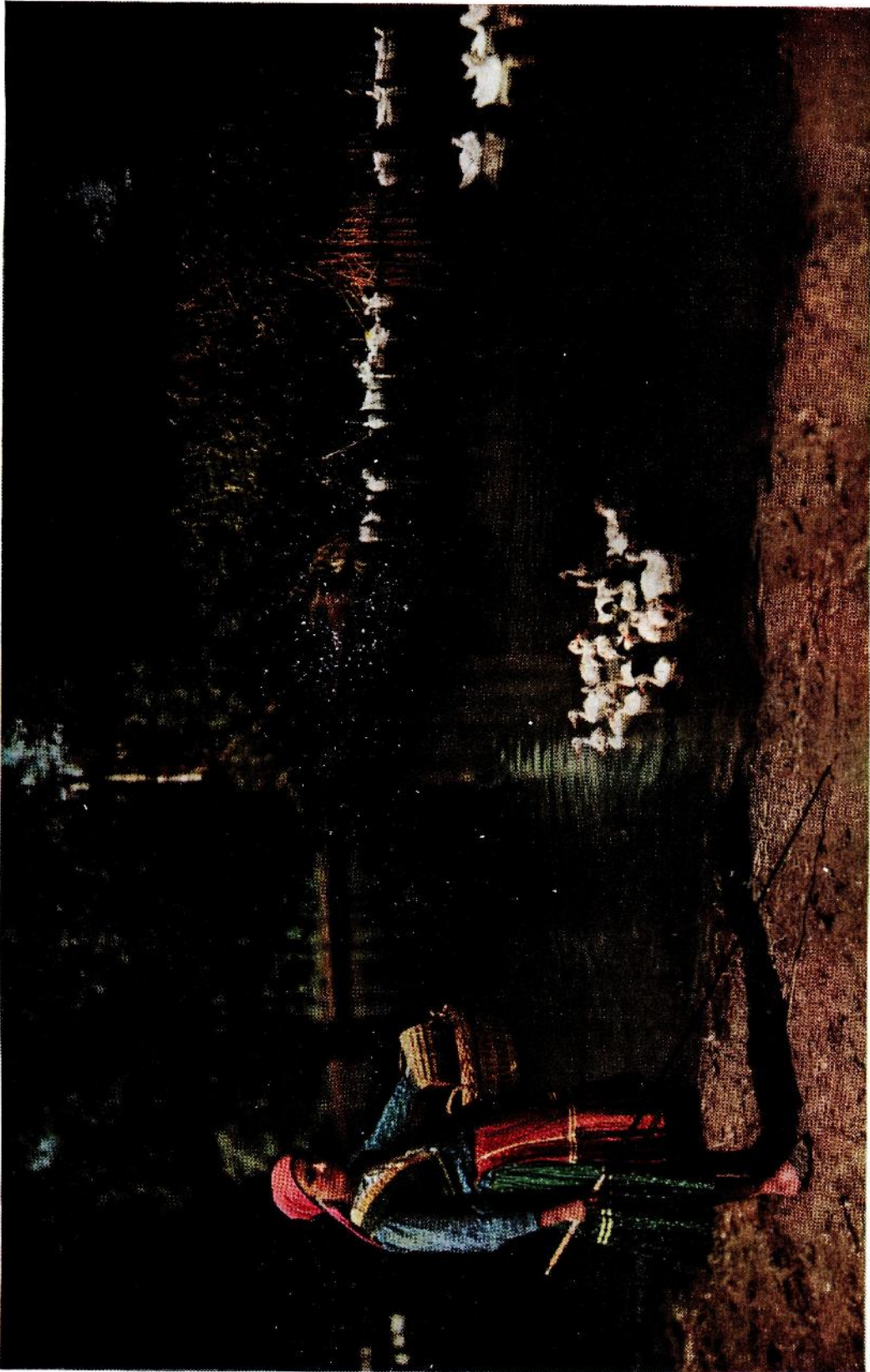


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Afacolor Photograph by Hans Hildenbrand

HOT KITCHENS ARE DESERTED ON WASHDAY WHEN PONDS ARE COOL IN PEACEFUL BAKONY FOREST

Standing barefoot in the water before a backdrop of rushes still used to thatch their simple cottages, farm women near Veszprém gossip while pounding their clothes with sticks on sturdy, homemade tables. The little girl may hear stories of raiding highwaymen who once rode forth from these woods. She shivers at the tale of Sobri Joska, most dangerous of all. Gendarmes had been capturing his men and sending them to the gallows. Meeting four of these policemen one day, Joska killed every one of them and took their horses.



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Azfacolor Photograph by Hans Illidenbrand

THOUGH SHEPHERDS AND SWINEHERDS ARE MEN, WATCHING DUCKS IS WOMEN'S WORK

Armed with an old buggy whip, a village girl in everyday dress has herded ducks to a pond in Bakony Forest (Plate III). Neighboring families, owners of the little flocks, share the cost of her watchfulness against hawks and hungry gypsies. To speed the quiet summer day, she brings her washing and sewing. At evening feeding time her charges waddle home as she walks behind. Better able to protect themselves, geese are given less care.



Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

HARVESTS ARE OVER, STOREROOMS FULL, AND SHADOWS LONG: THERE'S TIME TO DINE, TO DANCE, AND TO BE MARRIED. The bridal pair, in the center, dances the *csárdás* with a group of friends. Visiting the couple in Érsekcsanád a year after this picture was made, the author and photographer were served a chicken and *strúdel* dinner by the still-smiling bride. "I *knew* she could cook!" her husband boasted.

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"THE CROWN OF THE LEANING CROSS" IS COPIED IN STRAW
 Cushioned on a sunflower, the facsimile of St. Stephen's crown will be carried in a Bata harvest procession. Centuries ago, the top of the original was bent when Hungarians hid the regal emblem from invaders.



Agfacolor Photographs by Rudolf Hailogh

PUMPKIN GOES TO ROAST AFTER THE BREAD IS DONE

It is not made into pie; farmers relish slices hot from the baking. Seeds, to be eaten like peanuts, are drying in a pan. The fresh loaves, each weighing many pounds, were baked in this oven in a Boldog farmhouse.



Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

"AND AFTER THAT, MY DEARS, WHAT DO YOU THINK HE SAID?"

On winter holidays in Kazár, village girls in Sunday dress gather beneath pictures and porcelain in the parlor, to talk or sew. Fancy headgear indicates that six are single. The two whose hair is unadorned are matrons. "She remained in her headdress," is to say "She never married."

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Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

BLUSHES ARE ROUGELESS WHEN THEY BLOOM ON THE CHEEKS OF THE BRIDE IN BOOTS

Yards of costly silk ribbon, ruffles and beads and lace, pleated skirt and petticoats, boots that are burnished and high—this is the wedding dress of a bride in Buják, where cosmetics and pavement are unknown. Like a Christmas tree in her window, for passers-by to see, a wedding cake is adorned with blossoms, popcorn strings, and paper chains. Such cakes, slowly hardening, are often kept months, and fed at last with tears to the chickens.

In one of Buda's old houses, high above its caves, I sat one night after dinner with a young Hungarian count and his wife. His family name—and the countess's—appear often in Hungarian history books.

Yet mantles of nobility and family fame were lightly worn. Except for painted ancestors, heirlooms, and old books I might have imagined myself visiting a machinist in some Minnesota town.

The countess, with a wooden match fully a foot long, lighted a fire for us. Then she brewed coffee in a glass globe held over an alcohol lamp.

The count spoke of honor among his countrymen. He had attended that day a fellow officer's funeral.

"He fell in love with his friend's wife," explained the nobleman, "and considered his own death the only honorable way out. Such matters are still, unhappily, the occasion for dueling. Usually the man who has suffered the wrong, and is thus the challenger, has choice of weapons. Rarely do they fight an 'American duel.'"

"Fists?"

"No. A black and a white ball are placed in a box. The duelists draw. After putting his affairs in order, the man who has drawn the black ball quietly kills himself."

About this time I met Rudolf Balogh. A critical American who knows photographers had called him "a truly great one." He was more: a friendly, generous Hungarian, philosophical, skeptical, more widely read of my country than many Americans.

Balogh had been chief military photographer for Hungary during the World War. Bitter weather and gas-ravaged battlefields had so affected his eyes that now they were always weeping. He looked sad.

OFF TO RURAL HUNGARY

Among Hungary's peasant folk, unchanged by fast-moving centuries, another Hans Christian Andersen today could write new tales around rural characters as naive as ever he found in old Denmark. Rudolf Balogh could illustrate them.

Because of his 30 sympathetic years of journeys among these people, Balogh knew them well. I asked him to show me rural Hungary, and make some color pictures.

"It's late November," he growled. "Short, sunless days. No flowers. Bare fields. I'm a photographer, not a magician!"

He saw my disappointment.

"I *could* make a few color shots by flashlight," he reflected, in milder tones, "of indoor life in winter. But the best of that is in obscure villages, far from railroads."

"I'll get a car," I promised.

"All right. Meet me at half-eight, a week from today, in this coffeehouse."

I went to the Budapest factory branch of Fiat, Italian motor makers. Sixty men worked fast, using the latest types of labor-saving auto service equipment. I saw no sharper break with tradition in all Hungary, whose Government discourages mowing machines, lest scythes find less to do.

A CURB ON HIT-AND-RUN DRIVERS

Men installed magnetic turning semaphores and disconnected tail-lights from dash switches to comply with the Hungarian laws.

"Must I stop, get out, and walk back to turn on the tail light?" I asked George Horovitz, the plant manager, as a midget *Topolino* was being serviced for my use.

"Likewise to turn it off," he replied, "so you can't hit a man at night, cut the lights, and hurry away. Our rear number plates are several times the size of front ones—another curb on hit-and-run driving."

A Hungarian automobile factory Horovitz once ran had failed. "To understand our market," he said, "imagine only five cars in an American suburb of 3,000 people. One Hungarian in 600 has a car.

"New car sales, accurate American business barometer, are considered so here. In 1928, Hungarians bought 2,738 new cars. Then we dropped faster than you did. In 1932, the year America knew despair, only 233 new cars were sold in this entire Nation!

"I've been listening to your campaign speeches on my radio. Your depression is over. So is ours. New car sales in Hungary will reach an all-time record in 1936.

"You brought no driver's license? It usually takes six weeks to get new ones, though an official note might help."

At the obliging bureau of "trade and tourism" I met Hanna Mikes. "Your English is good," I said, though I was thinking of her pleasant looks and manner.

"I like languages," she replied. "Sometimes I work without pay for a travel agency on Váci utca, just to practice them."

I supplied the police with two photographs. They borrowed my passport, inquired even into my religion, then sent me



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

VISITING KINGS MAY GO BUGGY RIDING, DRAWN BY THIS FIVE-IN-HAND

Silver harness jingles, white manes fly in the wind, sunshine gleams from burnished carriage work, coachmen and footmen sit in resplendent rehearsal here. This equipage is kept for noted guests at Bábolna, near Győr, where spirited Hungarian horses are bred at a Government-owned estate.

across Budapest to a large chill room where one tiny bulb illumined humanity in disrepair. Two bandaged workmen waited beside a crippled peddler. A deranged old woman muttered between tearful daughter and sympathetic policeman.

At last city doctors tested my sight, hearing, and heart, collected a fee, and sent me back to the police station.

The examiner, fortunately, spoke no English. This enabled my bright young interpreter friend to phrase translations carefully into lead questions.

"Is night tooting forbidden in Budapest?"

"Yes," I replied, astonished, "it is!"

The long quiz over, we went to the Department of Commerce, across the city.

There I sought to convince the Kingdom of Hungary, by driving its skeptical inspector on trick streets, that its subjects were safe.

TRAFFIC VIOLATORS HAND THE OFFICER A TICKET!

Once again at police headquarters, for five dollars I got my license card in a heavy celluloid-and-metal case. With it were a dozen near-replicas, blank.

"These are traffic tags. Always keep three filled out. When an officer halts you for traffic violation, just hand him a ticket!"

"Hand the officer a ticket?"

"Yes. Summons will come by mail."

As I drove proudly away, I glimpsed, crossing the street ahead of us, a hurrying,

birdlike little woman. A pigeon perched on her shoulder; another peered from her big basket. I asked my friend to question her.

"She's a widow, Farkas Györgyné, or 'Mrs. George Wolf,'" he said. "She never begs, 'because it is forbidden,' though people often give her things because she is so old. Officers fighting under Kossuth for our independence in 1848 loved her. She was pretty then. Now she's 104."

Though her face was wrinkled like an old apple long forgotten in the corner of the bin, her gait had been a happy child's.

"I don't believe it," I said.

"All Hungarians carry papers," my companion explained, as Mrs. Wolf drew forth tattered yellow documents. "Yes, they're official," he said, after a scrutiny. "She was born in 1832."

Curious to see how and where she lived, I gave her a coin, and took her address as we drove away.

I went often to the travel agency where Hanna Mikes worked, seeking needless information. At last I found her, and tried to persuade her to go with me on rambles about Budapest, but failed until I described Mrs. Wolf.

"I'd like to talk to *her*," said Hanna.

Together, we sought the centenarian. Knowledge that Miss Mikes, pronounced "Mickesh," was Countess Mikes, brought no awe of her. Already I knew a Hungarian marquis and two baronesses. They were a guide, a milliner, and a typist.

Of our quarry, a slatternly landlady said, "She *was* here. I asked her to move. All night she burned lights, washed her underwear, sang to her birds—no one knows when she slept. Try the taverns."

A COUNTESS AND A CENTENARIAN

We tried a dozen taverns. Next evening we found Mrs. Wolf in an old wine cellar. Countess and centenarian promptly fell to chatting (page 39).

"What's her secret?" I asked at last.

"Regularity, especially when you're young. But most important is *love*. Only one great love in a lifetime, she thinks, makes that lifetime long."

"Yet she told us of officers in 1848."

"*They* loved *her*. She didn't love them," explained Hanna, "so that doesn't count."

"Her life," I persisted, "isn't regular at all. She doesn't follow her own rules."

"I thought of that," replied Hanna

Mikes, "and asked her why she lives so. Instead of replying, she questioned me."

The countess was silent for a moment.

"If I had married young, for love and forever; if my husband, children, and all close relatives were dead; if, as old as she, I still liked lights, gypsy music, freedom, and cheerfulness around me—as indeed I do—would I then live as she does, or would I choose the only alternative, the poor-house, and there—just wait to die? There is only one answer, isn't there?"

Next morning Rudolf Balogh greeted me reprovingly in the coffeeshop. "I said 'half eight,' not 'half nine.' The Lord Mayor'll be waiting in Kecskemét at 10."

I had forgotten that "half eight" in Central Europe is half an hour *before* eight.

TOPOLINO BEARS BURDENS SWIFTLY

After breakfast Rudy looked thoughtfully at my little car. "Well, I guess we can carry it," he said resignedly.

Topolino *was* small, yet we could ride in it. Luggage space held four photo equipment cases, two bags, and a typewriter.

"Kecskemét," guidebooks say, "is an hour and 47 minutes by fast train." Topolino beat that time by a half hour.

Men awaited us in a Kecskemét coffee-house. "Meet my friend, the Lord Mayor," said Rudy, whimsically.

"Just mayor," replied the attorney-editor. "That's all I was elected."

"Lord Mayor," Rudy insisted, "Kecskemét's bigger than London."

An hour later I was one of 20 passengers aboard a special train, plainsward bound on little rails. I hunted them on my map.

"You won't find this railroad; it is new." The speaker was a teacher of English from a college in the town. "Some visionary dreamers wanted a hard road instead."

I didn't wonder. We passed straining teams pulling farm wagons through sandy trackside mud.

Its staff was here to reopen for us Kecskemét's hotel, closed for the winter. It paid to know the Lord Mayor. Our train halted a few miles short of its destination; the professor and I climbed into a wagon.

We passed new groves of fast-growing locust, hard, tough substitute for natural forest trees still growing—but now in the lost provinces. Then came open, grassy, roadless prairie, the Hungarian *puszta*.

Sheep grazed far away. As we approached them, a furry ball uncurled into



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

AT THE END OF THE HARVEST TRAIL, THERE'LL BE A THANKSGIVING FEAST

Men with scythes have slashed for days at one big field of wheat; women with sickles have cut stray stalks, then raked and shocked the grain. At last they shoulder their implements and march to the landowner's house. Paprika chicken and wine await them, and all will dance the *csárdás* in the farmyard (page 30, and Color Plate V).

a dog; a squatting shepherd emerged turtlewise from his cone-shaped sheepskin mantle (page 38).

"American? Americans are rich; let's take him into the woods," he suggested genially to my guides, and seemed to be drawing a knife.

He drew only a long pipe. Peasants buy clay bowls for a cent or two, then make their own wood stems. Proffering finely shredded tobacco from a leathern pouch made of a ram's scrotum, he struck a light with flint, steel, and the skill of centuries.

"Chop down that snag and sit by a fire," I suggested, indicating the gaunt gray ghost of a long-dead tree beside a shallow pond.

A SHEPHERD'S TALE OF STORKS

Beneath shaggy old brows, two tired eyes swept the plain, as a lighthouse keeper's scan the sea. As they rested upon the spectral landmark, he shook his head.

"Nearly 20 years ago," he began, "I watched two storks build a nest of sticks in a high crotch of that tree. I called them István and Ilonka. They became my friends in an aloof, storkish way. I helped them sometimes when food was scarce. I returned to the nest many a little stork who'd fallen. So I guess they liked me.

"Last year they worked mighty hard—for old folks—to feed four hungry fledglings. One September day, just before they flew south, Ilonka circled near me several times, as if to say goodbye.

"I never saw her again. István came home in May, after his long African summer, alone and sad. He's a widower now, like me—I know Ilonka's dead. He'll no more have another wife than I will. He's company, like my dog, though he never really comes near.

"Burn up his old home? Never!" The shepherd said it grandly. Then he pulled his head turtlewise into his mantle.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

"HOLD TIGHT AND PUSH, ILONKA; MAMMA LEARNED TO WALK THIS WAY!"

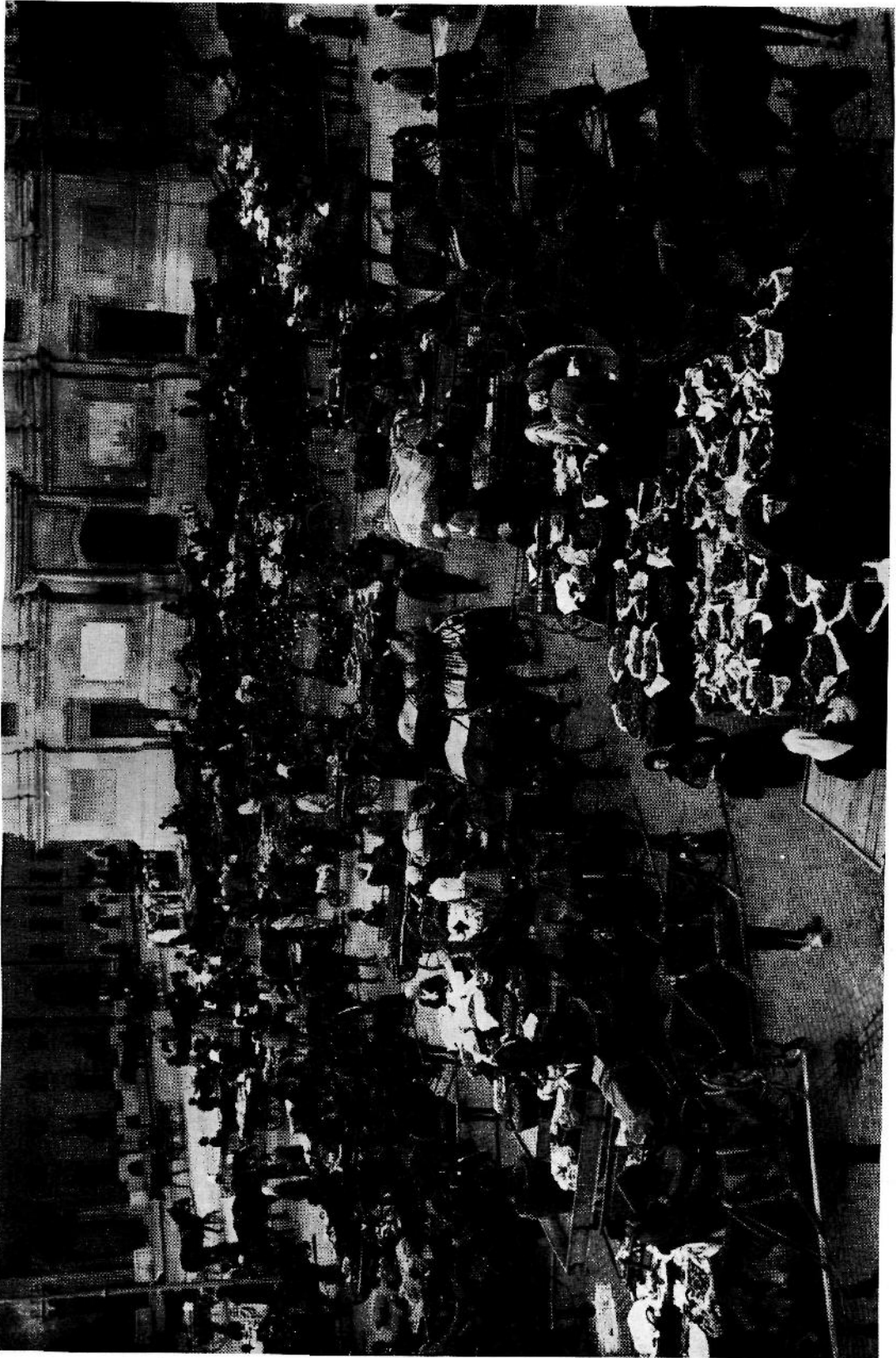
Grasping the handlebar firmly, as baby fingers can, little sister will soon lose her awe of it and toddle unaided behind the crude tricycle built long ago by her grandfather. Most of the furniture and utensils within the mud-brick walls of his thatched cottage were made by hand. Despite the low income of this Nógrád county family, its women members own and wear costumes often more costly than those of an American college girl. Folk dress is dying out in many villages because factory-made clothes are cheaper than the hand-fashioned garments.



Photograph by Rudolf Bologh

YARDS OF STARCHED PETTICOATS GYRATE WHEN COUNTRY FOLK TWIRL THE CSÁRDÁS

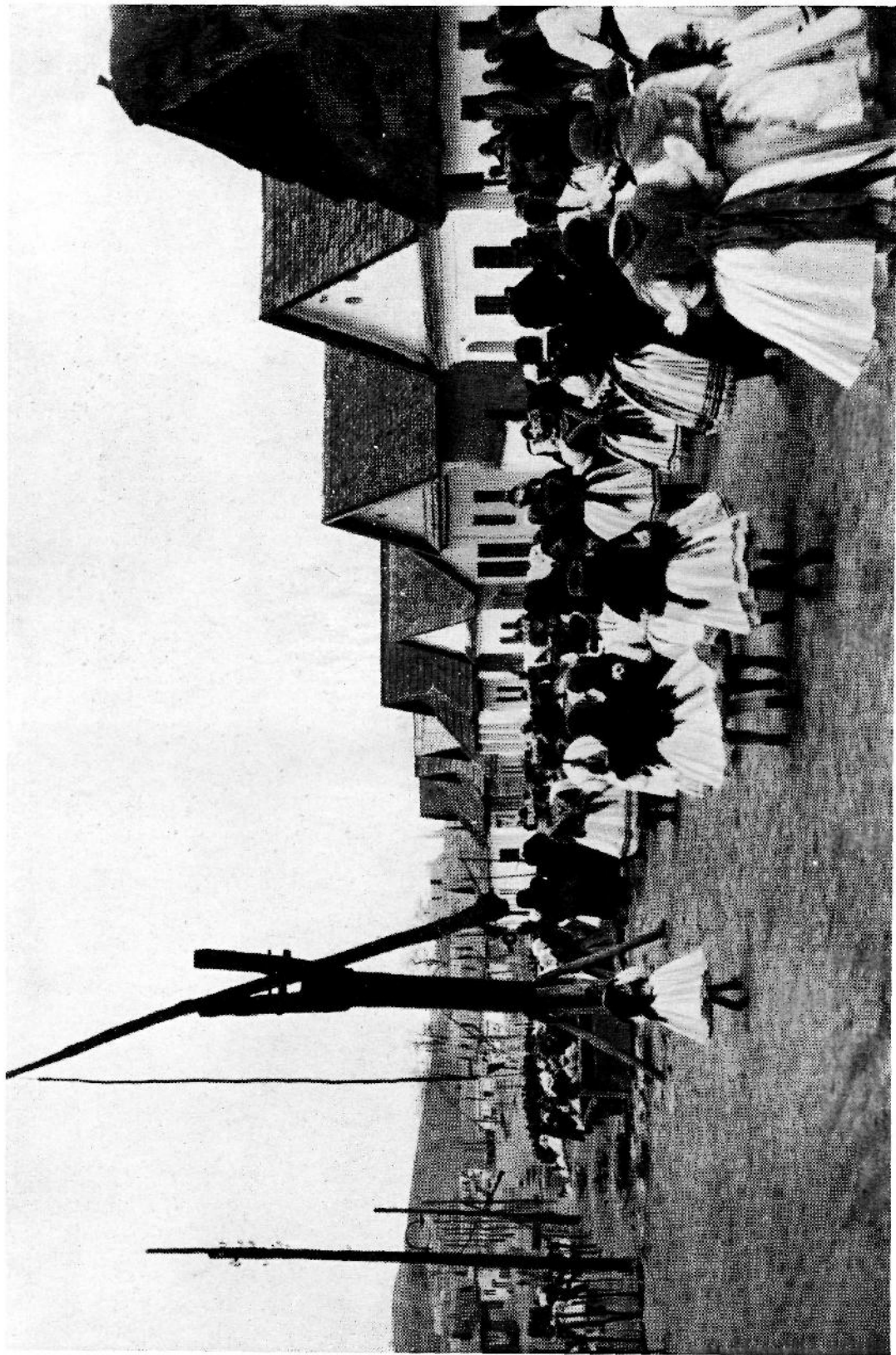
As athletic as the recently popular "Big Apple," the Hungarian national dance changes tempo violently. Now it is fast, wild, furious; now slow, restrained, and graceful. Smooth glides have no part in it. Booted farmers enjoy it at vintage time in sanded country courtyards; yet it is performed where silken hems brush slipper tops on polished inlaid floors. Feminine fingers rest lightly on stalwart shoulders; men grasp their favorites firmly by the waist (Color Plate V). In an old, barrel-like wine press a barefoot boy tramples juice from grapes to the rhythm of the music.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

IN HUNDREDS OF WAGONS, ON THE ROAD ALL NIGHT, COME APRICOTS TO MARKET IN KECSKEMÉT

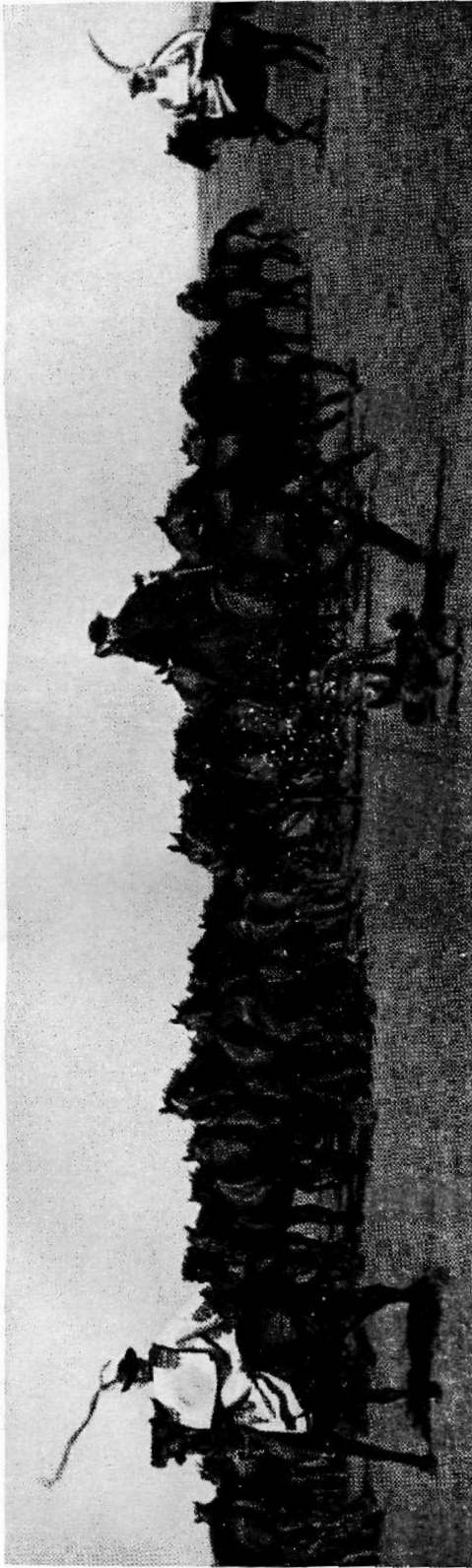
Many farmers, none with motor trucks, left home the evening before. Earliest comers arrived soon after midnight, awaiting buyers who ship prime fruit to Budapest and abroad by special trains. Carloads of sticky apricot marmalade, as essential as coffee to a complete breakfast in Hungary, are produced here annually.



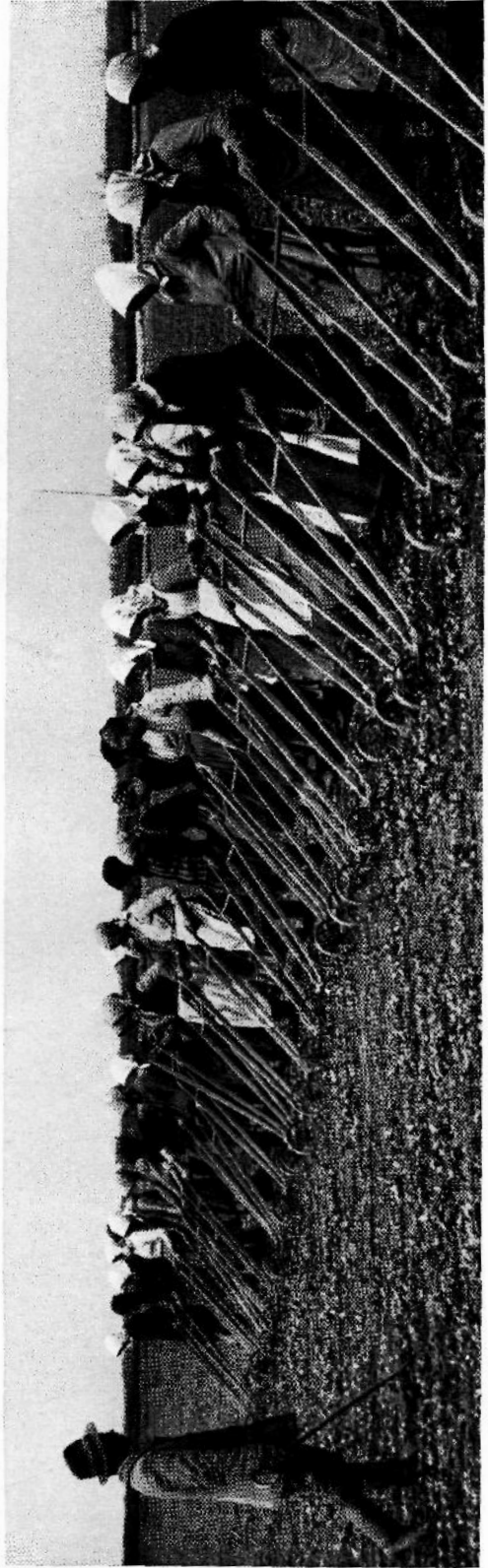
Photograph by L. E. Bressey

GOING HOME FROM CHURCH, WOMEN OF KAZÁR RUSTLE STARCHILY PAST A WELL CRANE

Young girls are gay with color; older women dress in black, yet all wear pleated petticoats on Sundays. Tile-roofed houses, cheaper to insure against fire, are gradually displacing the thatched cottages still common in Hungarian villages.

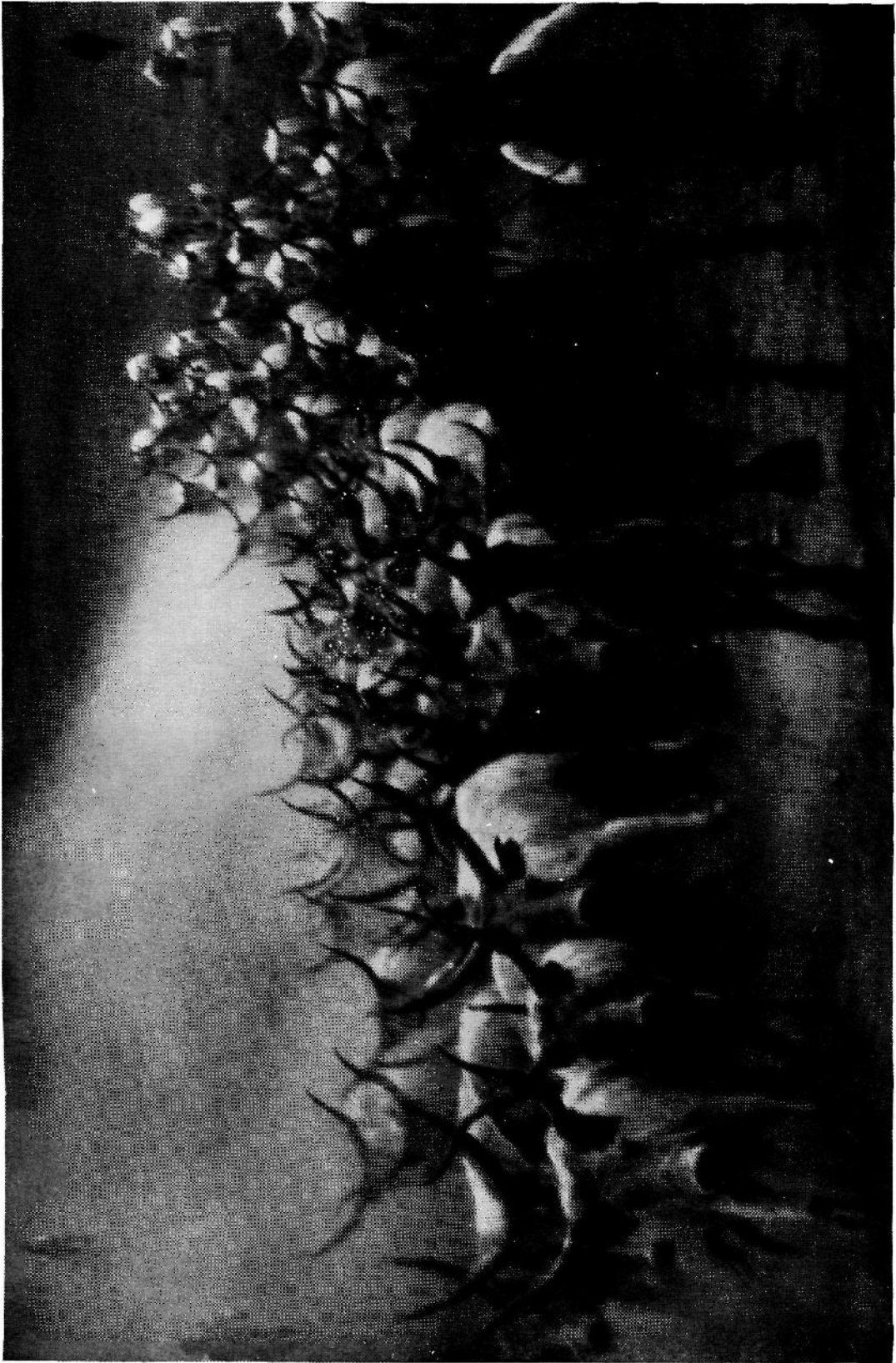


WHIPS CRACK LIKE PISTOL SHOTS; TAILS AND MANES ARE FLYING; A HUNDRED HUNGARIAN HORSES THUNDER OVER THE PLAIN



BACKWARD WALKS THE FOREMAN AS "FORWARD, MARCH!" HE CRIES; ONWARD MOVES HIS ARMY—DOWN ROWS OF SUGAR BEETS

Photographs by Rudolf Balogh



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

STAMPEDE? NO, HUNGARIAN LONGHORNS ARE CHASED TOWARD A BRIDGE IN A CLOUD OF DUST

A horse, a colt, and a cowboy lead the charge to the span; yelling drovers follow. These strong, heavy cattle, sharp-horned yet docile, are used as draft animals on farms in Hungary. There the water buffalo, too, still pulls plows and wagons.



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

POULTRY FOR BRITISH TABLES IS WEIGHED ON BRITISH SCALES

Freshly killed chickens from racks are crated for shipment to industrial England, whence come factory goods in trade for food. From Budafok, a shipping point near Budapest, much pork, too, is sent, and wine in tank carloads.



Photograph by John Patric

IN MOHÁCS A LOAF OF BREAD IS A LOAD

As it is kneaded in a wooden tray, straw burns long in a thick, beehive-shaped oven. After the fire is raked away, the wheat loaf is baked so slowly that its thick crust must be swabbed with water as it cools to keep it soft enough to cut. Heavy, crumbly, the color of American rye bread, it will keep a week or two.

Far, far out on the *puszta*, its site commanding the horizon and little else, Kecskemét has planted a grove of long-leaf pines, and in it built an inn. Hoofbeats were silent on the sandy road as we turned into the woods. Somewhere a gypsy's melancholy violin sang sadly of lost love; harness clips tinkled a merry overtone, as if a lady laughed to hear.

There was a little clearing in the pine woods; leaves lay deep and brown around a clump of mixed young hardwoods within it. Some had been raked aside. A charcoal fire was glowing beneath our dinner.

Four girls of Kecskemét knelt in the sand. Slowly, as if to the gypsy's mournful music, they turned 25 roasting chickens (Plate X).

We dined in the inn. Gallons of chicken soup buoyed cornmeal dumplings, firm and tender. Plates were heaped with hot sauerkraut, white and red. Tokay wine—it came first from Tokaj, in Hungary—flowed like a topaz torrent that would run forever.

Until yellow lamplight time we danced the *csárdás* with the girls who had cooked and served our dinner.

"GEESE AREN'T SELLING TODAY"

We returned to Kecskemét that night. Next morning the central square had become a market place. Peasants

from afar, on the way all night in jogging wagons, had taken choice places before dawn (page 31).

Each had paid toll to enter town. Market fees, in addition, were as low as three cents for those who lugged their wares.

"Geese aren't selling today," said an old woman standing beside a wheelbarrow containing four fowls so creamy white I was sure she had washed them (page 50). "I live four hours away. Market space for my wheelbarrow costs six cents. If my geese don't sell, I'll take them home again," she replied philosophically to my questions.

The market was zoned. Here was poultry; there, sauerkraut and pickles; yonder, cheeses. Crisp cabbage mountains surveyed a vegetable kingdom.

Here were neat piles, each heap containing seven or eight items—perhaps a carrot, half an onion, a turnip, a cabbage quarter, some greens, a parsnip, and part of a rutabaga. "Vegetable soup for four," said Rudolf Balogh. "It costs a cent."

We walked past coopers' stocks—barrels, kegs, and tubs. Here were rope-makers' displays, or brooms and brushes spread upon the pavement. There sat a fur-clad weaver of baskets and here a cobbler. A blacksmith flailed his arms to keep them warm. Around him were handmade shovels, hoes, and hayforks. None had handles; buyers make their own.

Leaving the market, Rudy and I drove eastward to the dikes, somewhat back from the Tisza River, which protect low-lying farm land. Strips of river bank and wooded islands formed by quiet bayous are not so defended. There dwell pioneers.

Rudy and I followed a trail by a slough. Ice formed slowly in pools beside it. A damp man fished from a boat, and as we paused by the warmth of an ashen phantom



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

BAREFOOT POWER SILENTLY SPINS THE POTTER'S WHEEL

On a simple machine of wood, stone, and only a bit of iron—little changed since ancient Egyptians devised it—a Mezôtúr ceramics maker, his clayey fingers dipped often in water, shapes a whirling vase. It will dry awhile outdoors before it is baked and glazed in a crude kiln. Often, on such earthenware, appears an 18th-century motto: "No handicraft can with our art compare; for pots are made of what we potters are."

of a fire he had built on the bank, he rowed ashore and greeted us.

He had learned English in a British prison camp. "I ran Austrian messages," he said, pulling little baked potatoes from the ashes and dividing them.

"We just caught a carp," he continued. "We'll broil it. Do you like nuts?"

I nodded. From the ashes now he raked scores of hard-shelled, black, thumb-size water chestnuts that might have been skulls of sharp-horned little lizards.



FOR WINDY WINTERS ON THE PLAIN, OVERCOATS ARE THICK

Rough blanket cloth in this driver's embroidered, streamlined, galeproof garment is almost too heavy to wrinkle. Horizons seem limitless here, yet this fenceless steppe lies within the "city limits" of Kecskemét, population 82,000, more than ten times the area of San Francisco.



Photographs by John Patric

SHEEPSKIN MANTLES, SHEPHERDS SAY, SHED BOTH HEAT AND COLD

Fur coats are worn summer and winter by the pup and his master. Intelligent Hungarian sheep dogs, which obey a word or a wave of the hand, are used also by cattlemen and swinherds. On the distant horizon, when the steppe is hot in summer, there sometimes appears mysterious *Fata Morgana*, a cruel mirage conjured, legend says, by Morgan le Fay, an evil fairy, to deceive tired travelers.



Photograph by John Patric

"HOW MUST I LIVE," ASKS THE COUNTESS, "TO BE 104, LIKE YOU?"

Replied Mrs. George Wolf, born in 1832, "Be regular in everything, and fall in love but once." The centenarian likes to sit in the taverns, munch bread, and listen to gypsy music. Her teeth have been gone for decades; now her gums are hard enough for chewing (page 27).

"They catch in our nets," he said, cutting the tough shell with his jackknife. Pure-white kernels tasted like hard lumps of laundry starch I had liked as a child, with traces here of some rare spice.

BOOTLEG TOBACCO

He led me into a brush shanty, unslung a pair of boots from the cross-pole where corn was drying. "Have some of my own tobacco."

He extended a bootleg tightly packed with unstemmed natural leaf. Since tobacco is a closely controlled, high-profit government monopoly, possession of unprocessed leaf by unrecognized growers is akin to running a distillery in the attic. Revenue men are at war with rugged individuals who persist in raising their own in backyards or quiet glades.

Landward of the dikes we visited the trim, plastered, three-room house of a richer farmer. Its thick walls were "peasant brick," sun-baked mud and straw (page 29). Near it a modern little gristmill ground out flour; two fat horses walking in a circle provided power.

We entered a snug, neat, low-roofed barn of mud brick. Windows were few and small. We opened the tightly fitting door; a cloud of fog seemed to rush ahead as freezing outdoor air condensed warm humidity within. Bodies and breath of 40 head of livestock were the source of a moist temperature I estimated to be 70 degrees.

A boy, 24, slept in that warm barn, as peasant men do in Hungary. He earned 190 pengő and his keep—\$38 a year. He saved most of it. Some day he, too, hoped to become a proprietor.

Hungarian plainsmen preserve the independence of nomad forefathers. As we drove westward, I recalled a story.

Emperor Franz Josef walked in a Budapest park, pleased at bows and awed greetings of urban subjects. A plainsman on a bench neither rose nor spoke.

"Who are you? Where do you live?" asked the ruler, seating himself.

"I raise horses in Debrecen," replied the man, between puffs on a long pipe.

"That's fine. Do you know me?"

"No."

"I'm Franz Josef, your King."

"That's fine, too," remarked the plainsman. He spat, and kept on smoking.

We slithered slowly in second or oozed onward in low toward Kalocsa. I seemed, in a nightmare, to be driving a diminutive, underpowered tank over ploughed fields after a flood. Peasants in high boots walked like flies through syrup.

Rudy's forthright map, trilingual, had warned us: "The occasional state of a route depends on weather and the fashion it is mended by. Before starting on such ones it is best to take informations."

TOLLS, TAXES, AND LICENSE FEES

Gasoline is 35 cents a gallon, mostly tax, in Hungary. Automobile license fees are enormous. Yet medieval toll gates halt wagons and automobiles at most Hungarian towns. Motorists may pay many times in an afternoon's driving. Car fee is 20 cents, almost two days' cash earnings of some farm hands.

We slid wearily to a muddy halt before a Kalocsa inn that night. After a goulash dinner, Rudy repaired a camera as I sat listening to gypsy music. The innkeeper brought four different blank "hotel register" forms. I counted 73 dotted lines on the first, 43 on the next—239 in all.

Patiently Rudy filled in one blank as I told him my family history. The innkeeper wrote answers to other questions, copied the results upon other blanks, then took them with my passport to the police.

"I'd have trouble," Rudy said, as I grumbled, "with police registry forms in small American towns."

"You'd merely write 'Rudolf Balogh, Budapest.'"

He still doesn't believe me.

We visited a Calvinist school next day in near-by Érsekcsanád. On the single little blackboard beside a table of metric weights and measures, I wrote the name of the President of the United States.

"Who is he?" I asked.

Only one little girl raised her hand.

"I know, mister," she said, proudly. "He's the King!"

We dined with a farm family on St. Nicholas Day, the sixth of December, in their seldom-used guest room where apples mellowed on rafters, sacred pictures hung, and linen was stored.

They gave us chicken broth, yellow with melted fat and hand-rolled egg macaroni.

Roast chickens came next. Forlorn they looked, for they still wore feet and heads. Rice-and-meat, sharply paprika-spiced, followed stuffed cabbage.

Last of all, except for grapes and red wine, was strudel. That noble dessert came hot and serpentlike, curled round and round the bottom of a low, flat pan big as a washtub bottom (Plate XV).

There were three kinds. Dough smoother than finest piecrust had been rolled about fillings of chopped apples and walnuts, chopped apples alone, or poppy seeds ground with sugar.

After dinner, iron-studded boot heels clinked on the flagstones of the long, narrow porch. There was heavy knocking.

"I wonder who it can be," mused the farmer, mysteriously, "on such a windy winter night?"

"Mikulás!" chorused most of the children happily.

"Maybe it's Krampus," whispered János, darkly, to his little brother Mihály.

THE HUNGARIAN SANTA CLAUS

The farmer walked slowly to the door. There, in a "Santa Claus" robe, stood St. Nicholas. Icy wind whipped his beard.

"God brings you," greeted the farmer in the country manner. "Come in, Mikulás!"

Stepping across the threshold, Mikulás shut the door. "Krampus is out there. He says to ask if the children have been good."

Apprehension chased joy from childish faces. Krampus, a vindictive, black, horned devil, likes to spank *bad* children.

"The girls have *all* been good," said their father.

Dimples reappeared.

"Yet I think Krampus should visit awhile with my son János—"

"Please, no, daddy!" wailed little János, miserably. "I'll do everything you say. I'll come right home from school. I'll—"

"You're *sure*, János?"

János was.

The farmer nodded. Mikulás reopened the door. "You can go away, Krampus," he called into the gloom. "Write 'János' in your book. Ask of him *next* year."

All again was gayety. Mikulás stuffed candy and nuts into the children's boots. He had jackknives for János and Mihály, thread and embroidery patterns for their sisters. He remained long enough for a bite of chicken and a hearty drink of the

RURAL HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY



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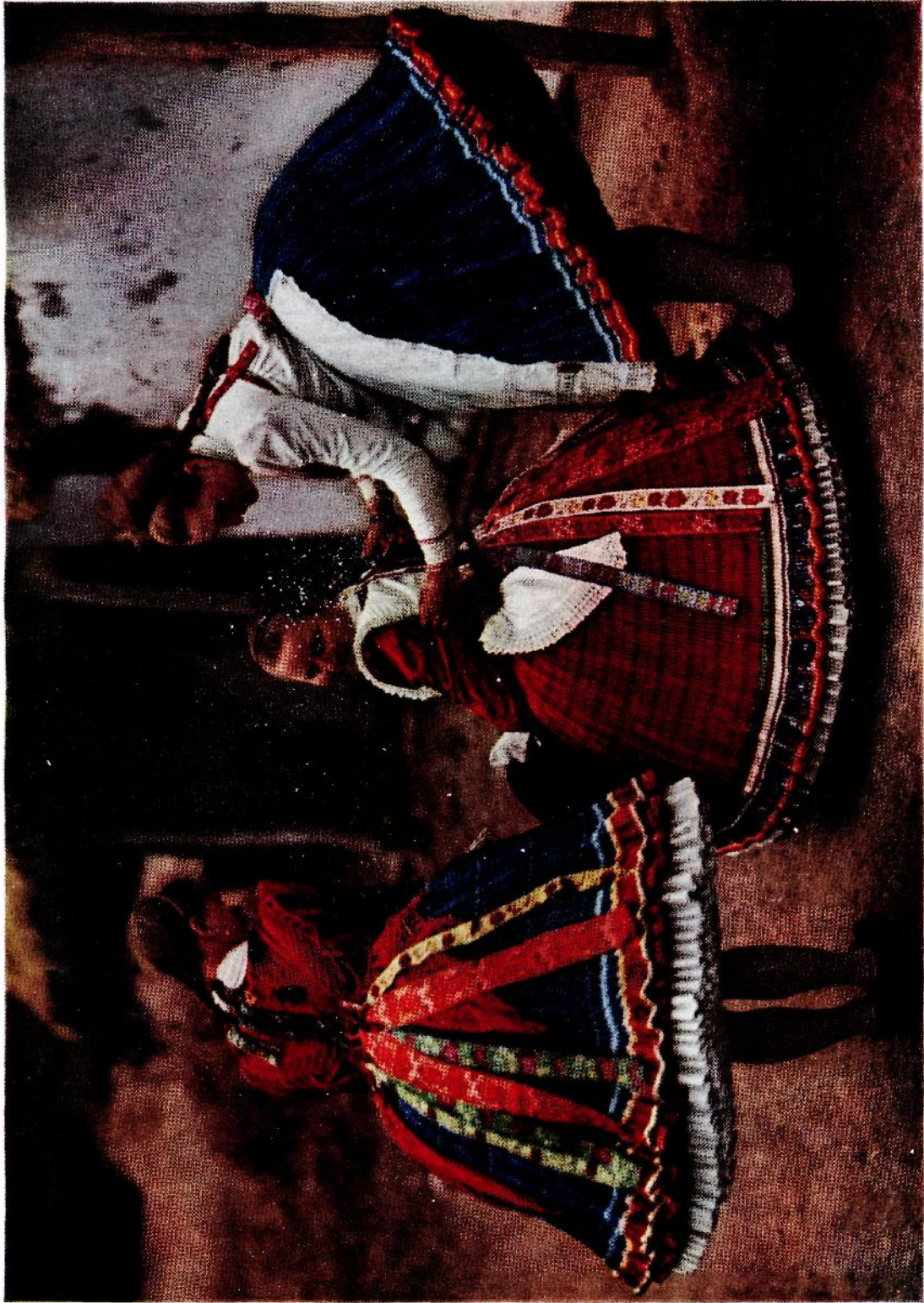
Agfacolor Photograph by Hans Hildenbrand

BEAUTY IS NOT ITS OWN EXCUSE FOR BEING, IN RURAL HUNGARY!

Working barefoot in the fields beside their fathers, mothers, and brothers, farm girls in summer are busy from dawn to dusk. The sun is still high; an Eger miss walks home early and happily, laden with vegetables. Perhaps today is *her* day to cook the family dinner.



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AS WHEN NOMAD ANCESTORS TREKKED THE ASIAN STEPPES, HUNGARIAN WOMEN DELIGHT THEIR MEN WITH COOKERY UNDER THE SKY
On wooden spits, 25 chickens for 15 people are roasting over glowing charcoal on the Bugac Plain. Living in the town of Kecskemét, not in the country, these young women prefer modern clothes and wrist watches to folk dress. The polka-dot creations are waitresses' uniforms.



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Autochrome Lumière by Rudolf Balogh

FARMS ARE SMALL, LIFE IS HARD, HOMES ARE SIMPLE HERE; YET MÁTRA MOUNTAIN MAIDENS WEAR RICHES IN THEIR DRESS. Seven or eight expensive and pleated skirts, starched so stiffly that sitting is virtually impossible, are necessary for Sunday. "Lyons" is a synonym for "silk" among country women of northern Hungary, because formerly all their flower-woven ribbons came from that French city.



GRANDMA TEACHES GOOD LITTLE GIRLS TO CARD AND SPIN NEW HEMP

A Várpalota woman combs home-grown yellow fibers between thin points of her round, spiked card, built fifty years ago by the man who initialed it. She will weave them into tablecloths like the one in her lap. The village spinning wheel maker built her wheel last year.



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PAPER HANGERS FIND NO WORK WHERE PLASTERED WALLS ARE PAINTED

A professional decorator of Homokmégy (right) tries out new designs for the porch wall. Her daughter, in hand-embroidered jacket, is learning, while the boy in store-cloth blouse watches enviously.

RURAL HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY



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Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

WHILE LADIES BID HEARTS IN THE CITY, YARN IS SPINNING IN THE COUNTRY

Seated on a semicircular bench around a warm, beehive-shaped masonry oven fired from the next room (Color Plate VI) and extending into the parlor, girls of Tard chat as they spin flax and hemp. Soon come refreshments, like "five o'clock tea"; afterwards, boys of the village, joining them, may be given mellow apples from the rafters. In many villages these distaffs and whirling bobbins are preferred to the spinning wheel (opposite page). They are fast in skilled fingers.



Afacerlor Photographs by Rudolf Balogh

BEAU BRUMMELLS OF BANK WEAR APRONS

Hand-embroidered hems, collars, and shirt fronts are no mark of femininity along the northern border. The girl's dress is holiday costume of her village, Órhalom, where floors of many simple homes are earthen.



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"BYE BYE, DEAR—YOU'LL BE A LONG TIME MARRIED"

Deeply religious, as the sacred pictures reveal, rural Hungarians wed in solemn ceremony. Booted friends of a recent Buják bride are about to end a friendly call. Two tones of packed clay form this parlor floor.



Agfacolor Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

THEIR MEN ARE DINING APART; THAT IS THE SOCIAL TRADITION IN RURAL HUNGARY

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"YOU THREW THE WATER ON ME—SO PICK OUT YOUR EASTER EGG!"

Hungarian boys at Easter chase girls down village streets, attempting to douse them with perfumed water. Maidens then invite these tormentors to their homes to reward them with Easter eggs, hand-painted, as is the furniture. On the wall is an English scale still used by conservatives, though the metric system is official in Hungary today. These Rimoc folk, in Sunday clothes, have driven far over bad winter roads in a farm wagon to a Government ethnographical museum in Balassagyarmat. In realistic settings like this, the finest peasant art is being collected while it is plentiful and cheap, against the future when rural Hungary "goes modern."

red wine that brings two cents a quart to these farms, costs twenty in Budapest.

We traveled two weeks among Danube folk. For years I'll taste their dinners in my dreams, ride their roads in my nightmares, and look backward with wistful nostalgia upon the kindly warmth of their hospitality.

The thought of dismembered Hungary saddened me at first. Maps of the proud old nation were like strange pictures of a strong man living without arms and legs. I remember, too, a painting of a bowed old Hussar, battle-scarred and gray, his fighting legions marching only across dim shadows of his memory.

Postwar treaties forbade large armies to the Central Powers. Might another nation disavow her covenant, rebuild her fighting forces, reassert her ancient right to power and to glory?

Hungary has not.

Few sons of that Fatherland march to martial music. Not all its bacon, sugar, wheat, and pink goose livers are sold to buy new guns. No roaring bombers frighten the fat sheep that graze its plains.

Danube farms are snug and food-stocked. Unworried seem the mothers of carefree, playing children. Weary farmers rest, smoke, and sip their wine when day is done. Strong sons, unscripted, are ready to help them.

That frontiers are nearer, that pomp and power and pageantry have faded, matter little on the farm.

We drove across the little Kingdom to the colder, rocky highlands north of Budapest, where Hungary's new frontier is the Ipoly River.

The Nógrád county prison in Balassagyarmat is an old round tower. From a high window we looked across the frozen frontier into Czechoslovakia.

SMUGGLING ACROSS A NEW FRONTIER

Men were exercising in the snowy yard. "What brings *him* here?" I asked, indicating one old man.

"Smuggling," the warden said. "He was born and raised over there beyond the Ipoly. For thirty years he crossed with produce. Now, though the stream runs on as always, that farther shore is a foreign nation. Some articles retail more cheaply there than Hungary can manufacture them.

"Recently he stole across that frontier stream with lighter flints and sold them.

He was arrested and imprisoned. He cannot understand. Smuggling across the Ipoly will never seem a crime to him. He'll do it again when he's free."

Prisoners earned a cent or two daily. It was not paid in cash, but placed in a loan fund.

"Suppose," explained the warden, "the wife of a prisoner we trust is dying. We allow him to go to her. He may borrow from this fund to pay his railroad fare. Suppose a man is broke when we release him. He can walk home, even some distance, but he needs money for food."

POOR IN LAND; RICH IN FOLKWAYS

Farmers in hilly Nógrád county, poor in land and money, seem to be richer in folkways. "They are imaginative and resourceful," said the museum curator in Balassagyarmat, showing me an old horn. "Its owner used this to find wild honey. Catching several dozen bees, he released them from this little hole at intervals, observed their flight and went directly to their nest."

The ethnologist showed me a near life-size wood statue of St. Anthony of Padua among a collection of round, braided-grass beehives. "Boys had been throwing rocks at the hives; gypsies had been stealing honey. So from a log the beekeeper made a hive in the likeness of the patron saint of bees."

It worked. No boy threw stones at the Saint; no gypsy, however honey-hungry, stole what it protected.

One twilight I walked along the snowy streets of Órhalom. Grimacing, foolish faces peered at me through cottage windows. Vacuous pedestrians smiled stupidly or scowled dully. I felt uneasy in the dusk when I saw one weird woman clutching to her breast a headless rag doll.

Was all the village mad?

Rudy, waiting in the store, explained that 900 of the 1,400 patients of the Balassagyarmat mental hospital were "boarded out" to villagers at thirteen cents a day.

"Most are healthier and happier so," explained the superintendent. "Many harmless patients develop fear or hatred of these unfamiliar asylum surroundings."

Snow fell lightly that afternoon as Rudy and I left Balassagyarmat for Gyöngyös. Frequently we detoured, for culverts are repaired in winter when traffic, shunted around them, may cross ice-paved creeks



Photograph by John Patric

THE GOOSE YEARNS FOR HOME AS FATEFUL MARKET NEARS

Walking miles to town, a farm woman carries a creamy-white bird to Kecskemét to sell. For weeks she has forcibly fed her fowl with corn; now its enlarged pink liver, an epicurean delight, is worth as much as all the rest of it.

and frozen quagmires. Warmly fermenting barnyard manure, packed against hardening concrete of bridges and culverts, kept it from freezing.

LIGHT IS A LUXURY

Thickening snowfall whipped before us in the gathering darkness. We lost our way. Despairing of reaching Gyöngyös, we halted in a dark, snow-swept village. Its gloomy main street was illumined by flickering lanterns shining faintly from a few coffinlike glass cases.

Sluggish rivers, unlike the mountain torrents around former frontiers, provide scant water power. Larger towns make frugal

use of steam-generated electricity. Costly kerosene often provides the only village light. Whole families sit around one dim lamp scarcely visible to passers-by.

There was an inn in this village, far back from the street. We drove past rotting timbered doors in an age-old archway, down a walled lane to a protected courtyard where snowy trees glistened brightly in the anachronistic beams of Topolino's lights.

Rudy ordered a cold room for himself, "double heating" for me.

Hungarian hotels do not ordinarily include service, taxes, or heating in rental fees. Hostelrys boasting steam heat usually turn it on briefly each day in winter

weather, depending on weather-stripped double windows to retain the warmth. Hardy Hungarians, used to sleeping "cold," need not buy heating.

Steam-heated hotels seemed to me less comfortable than washbowl- and -pitcher inns with wood stoves, where I could pay for "double heating"—twice the usual amount of wood—open the windows slightly and enjoy both warmth and fresh air.

My room was chilly. A tiny fire burned deep in its big stove. A large woodbox was nearly empty. I put in the stove what fuel remained and called the landlord.

He must have understood. I said it was cold, in Hungarian, pointing to the



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

WARM WORK FOR THE WOMEN, BUT IT WILL BE COOL FOR THE RAM

Mezőhegyes matrons shear old winter overcoats from sheep to make new garments for men. Though Hungary imports English fabrics, it weaves and exports woolsens. In chill Helsinki, Finland, the author once bought a coat from an enthusiastic tailor who boasted, "The goods are Hungarian!"

empty woodbox. I huddled, shivering, in my overcoat, and went "B-r-r-r!"

He shrugged and departed. No wood arrived.

I piled furniture around the woodbox, laid a chair on its side, removed a loose rung, opened the stove, and rang again.

Leisurely reappearing, my shocked host found me grinning, posed as if about to trample his furniture into firewood.

Wood, armloads of it, came at once.

Next morning a glum, sneezing Rudy waited for me in the dining room. Breakfast had been tasted and pushed aside.

"This," he observed, "is the worst hotel in Hungary." His windows, with broken fasteners, had blown open. He had awak-

ened three hours early, covered with snow.

Topolino was cold; the starter scarcely turned. We shut off the gasoline and built a steady little fire of straw beneath the motor. I had heard of arctic explorers starting airplane motors in similar fashion.

"A PERFECT BREAKFAST"

Rudy promised me "a perfect breakfast" in Kazár, 20 miles away. We shoved hungrily onward through snowdrifts over winding roads, across rolling country and icy hills. We passed trudging peasants and a tinker whose tools and tin protruded upward from a box on his back.

Rudy said such men, common in Central Europe, earned scarcely enough cash



Photograph by John Patric

VILLAGE ARISTOCRACY RIDES TO TOWN IN STATE

The young lady's father, progressive master farmer, operates the estate in Kazár where Rudolf Balogh's promise of a "perfect breakfast" was so happily fulfilled. She does not usually wear folk dress, yet she owns a peasant wardrobe, as her mother did, and likes to don part of it when she joins the festivities of villagers. Fine horses and carriages, not automobiles, are still a mark of rural wealth and position.

to buy solder, tin, and wire. Like old-time troubadours, they were paid in food and lodging. Swineherds blew on crooked horns at villages; aproned women chased straying pigs from their yards.

Morning was almost gone when we halted at the manor house of an old Hungarian estate.

"Now order your best breakfast," commanded Rudy, as we sat with the farm superintendent before a crackling fire. Our host, Rudy added, would be proud to fill a large order. So I asked for fried chicken,

ham and eggs, toast with jam and honey, palacsinta, apples fried in butter, and coffee with thick cream.

Rudy's order came with mine.

He requested a huge slab of smoked bacon, virtually all fat. Sliced with his jack-knife, dipped in paprika, and eaten raw, that was his "perfect breakfast."

We remained two days at Kazár. The son of the owner showed me around the farm.

"We have at Kazár," he said, "the first horned horse since the unicorn."

I bet him that horned horses didn't exist.

He led me to the stables, pointed to two bumps like hazelnuts on the forehead of one of his friendly saddle horses.

"Warts, or something!" I scoffed.

"Stroke his forehead."

I did so. Two identical, well-placed bony growths poked almost through the skin. Still sure there were no horned horses, I nevertheless lost that bet.

Some Kazár villagers were small land-owners or renters. Some mined coal at much less than a dollar a day. Others labored seasonally on the estate, where even gypsies were employed.

A Romany rye is a person who understands gypsies. Rudy said the superintendent had been so kind and patient with gypsy ways and shortcomings that here the



Photograph by Rudolf Balogh

DRY GOURDS RESEMBLING PUMPKINS FLOAT LIKE TOY BALLOONS

Supported by home-grown "water wings," a country girl of Bába practices the breast stroke in the Danube. Though a dreamy waltz calls it "blue," the silty river is never quite that color. In prehistoric times, as today, it bore rich sediment to the mountain-rimmed valley that now is Hungary. Nomadic Magyars, trekking westward from Asia with flocks and horses, found a land so fertile that they wandered no more.



"YOU MISSED, SIR! YOU'LL GET NO EASTER EGG!"

It's an age-old Hungarian rite, to douse a girl at Easter time, and win a reward of hard-boiled eggs she has painted (Plate XVI). Here the bucket was drawn, by turning a worn wagon wheel, from a well in the yard of a thatched cottage. "Shorty the Sheriff," they say, introduced Mezőkövesd derbies, worn by lads of that village. To make himself appear taller, long ago an undersized official adopted high heels and small-diameter hats.

children even went to school and the women, with few customers for soothsaying, were spinning and knitting.

Time was when gypsies could be bought, sold, or inherited like slaves. Their life among the Magyars was long unhappy, though Liszt—mistakenly, some critics believe—credits to them the origin of Hungarian music.

When, in 1782, supposed murder victims could not be found, 45 Hungarian gypsies were tortured until, stretched in anguish on the rack, they moaned: "We ate them."

After a monstrous execution, it developed that there had been no murder. That year Hungary freed the gypsies.

Today this ancient race, despite an aversion to work and a tendency to thievery, lives untroubled in Hungary. Cafe musicians are its aristocracy.

Commoners, poor and often barefoot, live all winter in shanties or rag tents, eating anything they can get—sometimes even boiled crow. Abandoned clay or gravel pits are favored townsites. In summer they

follow a vagrant trade as coppersmiths, tinkers, or even horse traders.

A "VILLAGE" OF 20,000 PEOPLE

From Eger we went to Mezőkövesd,* a "village" preserving that simple government despite a population of 20,000. We slept in one of its hotels, and drove by day to Tard, a little village in the hollow of the hills, constructed ingeniously and long ago of Nature's simplest building materials—mud, straw, and brush.

Lajos, a plainly dressed lad of 20, was always eager to help us and to carry our heavy equipment. Seeing the poor little house he lived in, Rudy tried to pay him. Lajos refused money, asking instead for a ride in Topolino.

My passenger's first request was that I halt "right before the front window" of the village store. He went in, and emerged with a black cigar that smoldered as aromatically as a fine Havana burning on an

* See "A Sunday in Mezőkövesd," by Margery Rae, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for April 1935.



Photograph by John Patric

SCHOOLGIRLS SEW, READ, AND PRAY FOR RESTORATION OF OLD FRONTIERS

In the country, where mother works all winter on one Sunday outfit, and grandma's girlhood gowns are stylish still, daughter learns needlework. Boys in back seats of this Érsekcsanád schoolroom practice whittling, that their craftsmanship may supply handles for their wives' hayforks and cradles for their first-born. Leaning against the sewing basket, and used to help balance it when it is carried to school on the head, is a *tekeres*, or soft cloth ring (page 14). Against the wall is the U-shaped pipe of a small stove and the coat of arms of Hungary, held between two angels.

expensive rug. At passing friends Lajos waved the hand that held it.

Thinking to please the boy, I started down the main road toward the paved Budapest-Miskolc highway, where we might ride fast. Lajos demurred, insisting on repeating circuits of the same side streets. One house seemed to interest him. It was big. It had a tile roof. More geese than usual waddled in the muddy lane beside it. A girl waved as we approached it the fourth time.

We halted. She minced gingerly through the mud to her front gate. Lajos alighted like a cavalier. Three could not ride in Topolino. He motioned her to his place. She hesitated.

The girl's stout, determined mother interrupted his ardent persuasion. Disregarding mud, startling geese, she marched toward us. Ignoring us, she led her daughter firmly into the house again.

Lajos tossed his cigar at a fat goose.

I drove Rudy back toward the capital. Our work was over. I should soon

leave Hungary, and miss his gentle irony.

A few evenings later I left Budapest. An English-speaking Hungarian sat with me as my train halted at the frontier and foreign customs men entered to examine us.

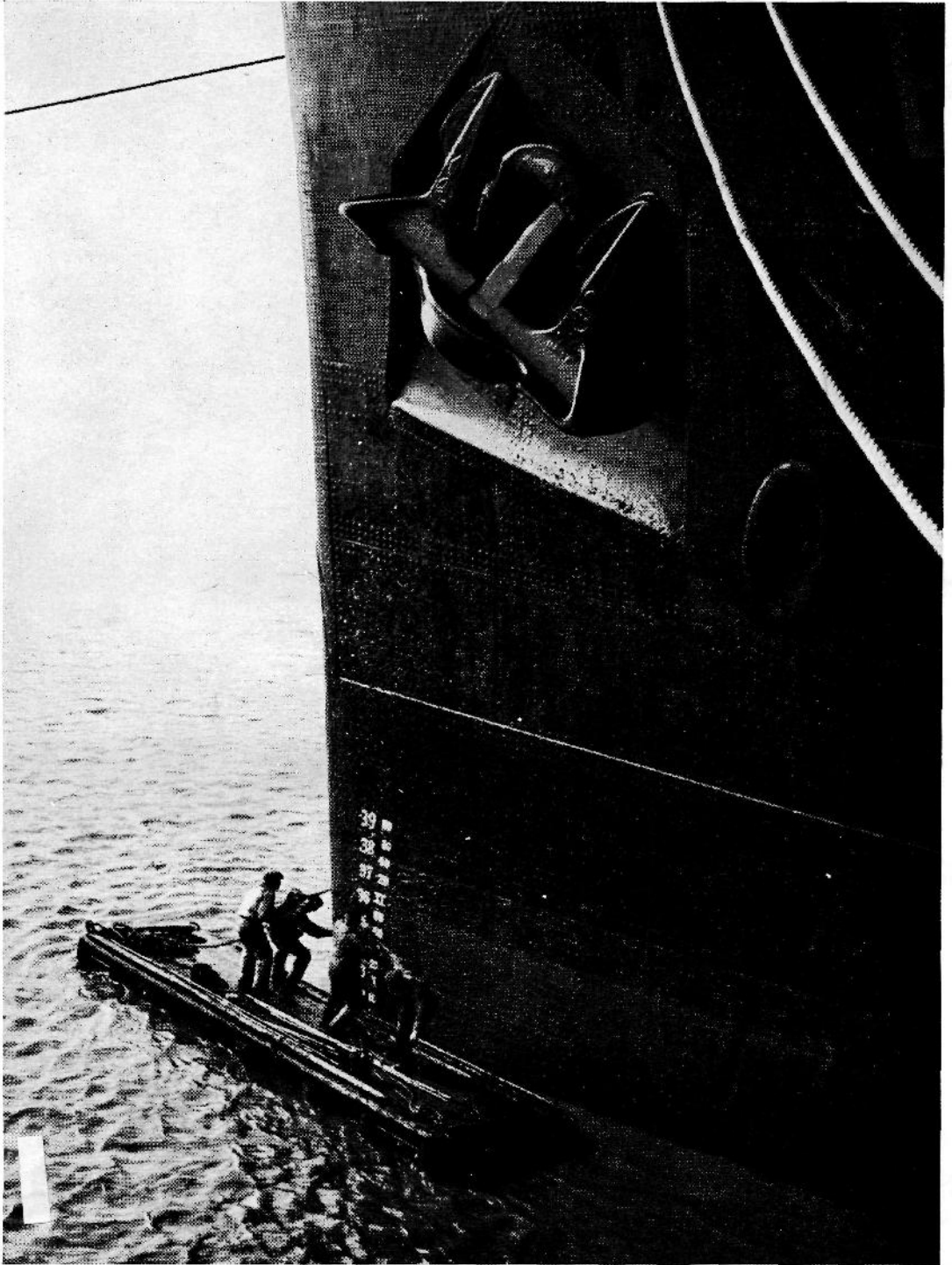
"Twenty years ago," he sighed, "you might have traveled onward all night from this frontier town, and still have been in Hungary at breakfast time.

"In Geneva a few years ago," he continued, "we sought certain modifications of the Treaty of Trianon. Neighbor nations, in denying them, said we would never be permitted to regain our power.

"Count Albert Apponyi, our League of Nations delegate, stood up.

"I'm past 80," he said. "I've seen the rise and fall of the German Empire. I've seen the rise and fall of the Second Empire in France. I've seen the rise and fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. I've seen the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the fall of the Russian Empire, and the rise of Italy.

"Gentlemen, the word *never* means nothing to me."



Photograph by Hans Engelmeyer

JUDGE THE MAGNITUDE OF "EUROPA'S" COLOSSAL ANCHOR BY THE MEN BELOW!

Painters on the raft are retouching the white figures, which show how many feet or meters of water a vessel is drawing. Sometimes an anchor, being hoisted or lowered, scratches these figures; then they must be repainted. To lose such a huge anchor means to drop thousands of dollars worth of metal and chain.