

HUNGARY AND HER NEIGHBORS

MR. BRYAN'S THIRTY-FOURTH LETTER

Southeastern Europe is out of the line of travel and little known to us, if I can measure the knowledge of others by my own. In order to learn something of this section we came northwest from Constantinople through Bulgaria, Servia and Hungary. We passed through European Turkey in the night, and morning found us in Bulgaria where nothing but an occasional minaret remained to remind us of the Orient. Strange that so great a difference exists between two populations separated for centuries by nothing but an imaginary line. No more the Turk with his wealth of leisure, his baggy trousers and his gay head gear, but the sturdy peasant working in the field with his unveiled wife or trudging along the road carrying his produce to market; no more begging for bakshesh by lame and halt and blind, but a busy, industrious throng, each laboring apparently with a purpose and a hope. All day long we rode past well cultivated fields and watched tidy villages. The Bulgarians, judged by appearance, might be thought a mixture of German and Italian, but they are really Slavic in their origin. I had the good fortune to meet a former minister, a very intelligent man with a good command of English, and learned from him that there is a strong democratic sentiment in that country and that the people are making constant progress in the matter of education and political intelligence.

He said that during his ministry he had introduced into Bulgaria the American homestead law and that it had resulted in an increase in the number of peasant proprietors. It was gratifying to know that American example had been helpful to people so remote from us. He also spoke of the establishment in his country of state insurance against hail, that being one of the greatest perils the farmer has to meet. He said that the system had worked well. The railroads and telegraph lines are also owned by the state in Bulgaria and are operated very successfully. The capital, Sofia, is a prosperous looking city, viewed from the railroad, and has an elevation of some fifteen hundred feet.

We crossed the Balkan mountains and the second morning reached Belgrade, the capital of Servia. The city has a fine location on a bluff at the junction of the Save with the Danube. A day's visit here gave an opportunity to see something of the population as it was Sunday and the streets and parks were filled with well-dressed, well-behaved and intelligent looking people. The Servians, who are also Slavic in origin, are members of the Greek church, and at the principal church of this denomination there was that day a large congregation and an impressive service. King Peter, it will be remembered, is the present ruler, having been called to the throne three years ago when his predecessor was assassinated. The brutalities attending the murder of King Alexander and his wife were widely discussed at the time, the bodies of the king and queen being thrown from the window of the palace into the park. While the new sovereign was recognized by most of the powers of Europe, England refused to send a representative to his court because the king retained some high officials who participated in the assassination. As Servia has a parliament which controls the ministry, and as this parliament was hostile to the former king, King Peter was powerless to comply with the conditions imposed by England—at least this was the explanation given me. I heard next day at Budapest, however, that some satisfactory settlement had been reached and that England would soon be represented at Belgrade. King Peter is not of humble ancestry, as I had supposed, but is a grandson of a former king who was conspicuous in the war for independence. Peter himself was in exile in Switzerland at the time of his elevation to the throne, and having during his residence there imbibed something of the spirit of constitutional liberty, is much more popular than was his predecessor. There is quite a close connection between Servia, Roumania, Bulgaria and European Turkey, and it will not be surprising if the last remnant of Turkish territory in Europe is, before many years, released from the sultan's rule and a federation of Balkan states created. A majority of the sultan's European subjects belong to different branches of the Christian church, and but for their quarrels among themselves they would long before this have been able to imitate Servia and Bulgaria in emancipating themselves.

The ride up the Danube valley from Belgrade

to Budapest and from Budapest to the Austrian boundary gives one a view of one of the richest sections of Hungary. While the Danube hardly justifies the poetic praise that has described its waters as blue, it is a majestic stream, and its broad valley supports a large agricultural population.

No American can visit Hungary without having his sympathies enlisted in behalf of its people, for theirs is a fascinating history. Their country is one of the most favored in Europe so far as nature's blessings go. The Carpathian mountains which form a wall around it on the north and east, shut out the cold winds and by turning back the warmer winds from the south, give to Hungary a more temperate climate than other European countries in the same latitude, and in few countries has agriculture been more fostered by the state.

The present minister of agriculture, Dr. Ignatius Daranyi, has been at the head of this department for ten years, and being an enthusiast on the subject, he has introduced many new features and brought his department into close contact with the people. During his administration the annual appropriations for agriculture have increased from about eight million dollars to about thirteen millions, and the income from his department has risen from six million dollars to nine millions leaving the net cost to the state at present some four million dollars per year.

Hungary believes in furnishing technical training to those who intend to farm; she has twenty-two industrial schools with about six hundred pupils and these schools are so distributed as to make them convenient for the small farmers. She has four secondary schools of agriculture with a total attendance of over five hundred, and to complete her system she has an agricultural academy with a student body of one hundred and fifty. In order to accommodate adults who have not had the advantage of these schools, she has short winter terms and traveling instructors. By systematic effort the agricultural department is not only increasing the efficiency of the Hungarian as a tiller of the soil, but it is increasing his general intelligence and raising the standard of citizenship.

The experiment station is also a prominent feature of the work of the department of agriculture. All the new agricultural implements are tested and reports are furnished upon their merits; there are several seed-testing stations where farmers can secure at cost price, not only selected seeds, but seed shown by experiment to be suited to the climate and soil of their locality. Then there are a number of model farms located at convenient points which are intended to be object lessons to the neighborhoods in which they are situated. At these model farms and at other centers breeding establishments are conducted where horses, cattle, hogs and sheep of the best breeds are kept and loaned to the farmers about. These breeding farms have resulted in a marked improvement in the quality and value of the stock.

Nor does the agricultural department confine its attention to stock raising and ordinary farming; it is equally interested in horticulture, vine dressing, forestry, and even bee culture. Government nurseries furnish the hardest varieties of young trees and vines and train those who desire to give special attention to these branches of industry. Instruction in the pruning of trees and the training of vines has an artistic as well as a utilitarian side, and taste is developed in the ornamentation of the arbors and gardens. Here, as elsewhere in Europe, much attention is given to forestry, and under the direction of the department of agriculture the work of preserving the old forests and of planting new groves is being intelligently and systematically done.

In addition to the work above outlined, the agricultural department has taken in hand the matter of furnishing general information to the farmers and farm laborers. It encourages the formation of workmen's clubs, co-operative societies and parochial relief funds. It has established more than one thousand free libraries and publishes a weekly paper with a circulation of about sixty thousand. More than half of the copies are published in the Hungarian language, the rest being divided between five other languages, the Slavic coming next to the Hungarian and the German following although less than ten

per cent are printed in the latter language. To strengthen the ties between employers and employes harvest feasts have been inaugurated and the attendance at these feasts is yearly increasing.

I have gone into detail somewhat in describing the scope of the work undertaken by the agricultural department of Hungary because I think that we might, with advantage, adopt some of its features. Our national appropriation for agricultural purposes bears a small proportion, not only to the amount of taxes paid by the farmer, but to the appropriations made for other departments.

Budapest, the capital of Hungary, is one of the most attractive cities in Europe. In 1896 I received a cablegram of congratulation and encouragement from a farmers' congress which was at that time in session in that city. I remembered this because it was the only cablegram received from any body of Europeans during the campaign.

Originally there were two cities, Buda on the south bank and Pesth on the north bank, but they were united under one municipal government some years ago, the names of the old towns being preserved in the new. The foothills of the Alps extend to the very bank of the Danube and furnish magnificent sites for villas, forts, public buildings and the royal palace, while on the opposite bank there is a broad plain which affords ample room for the rapidly extending limits of the commercial and manufacturing sections of the city. Several bridges connect Buda and Pesth so that the river, while a great thoroughfare, no longer divides the business and the official sections. The streets of Budapest are wide, well paved, clean and lined with buildings quite uniform in height, one of the avenues rivalling the Champs-Elyses in Paris and Unter den Linden in Berlin; the parks are large and near the city; the business blocks are imposing and the public buildings—models in design and construction. The parliament building, only recently completed, is one of the handsomest in the world.

The Hungarian people are distinct in language and history from all their neighbors. In fact, the Hungarians differ in many respects from all the other people of Europe, the inhabitants of Finland being their nearest kins people. Their early history is unknown, but they came from western Asia where the Mongolians, the Turks and the Finn-Ugrians struggled for mastery about the beginning of the Christian era. They were first known as Huns and claim Attila as one of their race. They have more often, however, used the word Magyars to describe their people, that name being a popular one at present. Their occupation of their present territory dates from about the ninth century, since which time they have figured prominently in the history of Europe. About the beginning of the eleventh century Hungary, under the leadership of King Stephen (later known as St. Stephen) became a Christian nation, and since that time she has been conspicuous in all the religious wars of Europe. In the fifteenth century she furnished the leader of the Christian army in the person of John Hunyadi, one of the greatest military geniuses of that period. His prominence in war brought his son Matthias to the throne of Hungary, a king who when warned of a plot against his life, exclaimed: "Let no king, ruling justly and lawfully, fear the poison and assassin's dagger of his subjects."

As early as the thirteenth century Hungary began to inaugurate political reforms, and in 1222 her nobility ended a struggle of a hundred years by securing a concession which is regarded by her people as equal in importance to England's Magna Charta of 1215. It was in the form of a royal letter, issued by Andrew II. and called the Golden Bull, owing to the fact that the seal attached to it by a silk string rests in a box of gold. This document contained certain promises to the nobles and admitted the binding force of certain restrictions upon the king. The Golden Bull was the beginning of constitutional government in Hungary, and while it has not always been strictly observed by her rulers, it has served as a basis for subsequent negotiations. For several centuries they elected their kings.

During the nearly seven hundred years which have elapsed since 1222 Hungary has had a checkered career. Rival aspirants for the throne have fought over the succession and been aided in their ambition by neighboring nations; kings and nobles have fought over their respective authority; the nobility and the peasants have fought over their rights; different branches of the Chris-