

# A MAN AND HIS CAREER

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EDMUND J. HORWATH

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The striking light signals of the U. S. Rubber and General Motor companies glow in skyscraper's height above the dark jungle of the Central Park, and surrounding, the Plaza Hotel, the Ritz Tower, the palaces of the Fifth Avenue. Troops of motor-cars chase each other on the pavement of the park. But here in the apartment the light shining from standing lamps through parchment shades, and the noise coming from the ten tubs radio, is softened. The host explains his picture gallery:

— Look, these three Kupeczky paintings are my dearest treasures: „Christ's Baptism”, „Christ healing the Afflicted”, „Christ Entering Jerusalem”. Besides there are only three more paintings in the States of the master and they are portraits. I had mine brought from Vienna, they had holes in them and were black. How many a times I have had them washed until these colours appeared. But here they are now, vivid and fresh, a part of the Hungarian seventeenth century. See the soft

motion of the old men, waving the palms, the sweetly primitive lines of the bastions and these trees and hills, embracing the people.

Now he take a magnifying glass and shows „St. Anthony's Temptation" painted on wood by David Teniers the younger. He started with collecting Dutch and Flemish painters: Adrian van Ostade, Nicolaes Maes, Theobald Michau. Until he secured such values as „A Group of Children" by Murillo and „A Manifestation" by El Greco. So he leads me from one room to the other explaining the authenticity of the signatures, he opens encyclopedias, questions their correctness, as he made his own discoveries in history of art and considers his eyes to be the highest authority. Even though he acquires all important works on fine arts appearing in New-York, London and Budapest. His dearest guest was Gábor Térey, the manager of the Museum of Fine Arts, with whose aid was procured every piece of the collection, and who sent him, until his death, caligraphical letters, that lay here carefully arranged, the artistic confession of a life.

I go through his library: every Jókay and Emil Ludwig book, translated into English, further rarities of the eighteenth century's London.

— This volume is the anthology of ten lyrical poets of New-York. Listen to the poem of Gordon Lawrence, who is a friend of mine. He wrote it to his wife. I never have met such a beautiful couple. They worship each other.

He reads the poem remonstrating with bitterness against the laws of physical death which will one day rob this wife. As I hear his voice trembling with a hint of personal touch, a sentence of his comes into my mind: „You will see my wife, — she is like a Dalmatian Madonna". — I watch this peculiar man. His weather-beaten Maximilian Harden head, his tall lank figure. A full-blooded American senator type.

Although Edmund J. Horwath was born in Sárvár, county Vas, Hungary, in the mansion of his father, Joseph de Horváth, but the son of the estate owner, with his restless instinct, became a merchant, and sailed at the age of twenty to the United States. What now follows is a business-story of unheard thrift. Working day and night without prospects as a miller in Minneapolis, back to New-York importing tobacco, later selling real estates. At that time he is commissioned to find out the cause of the deficit of a hotel, working at great loss. This work became the turning point of his

career. He started his work in the kitchen, washing up pots and dishes, but was constantly observing. He saw the unscrupulous waste of food, and the leakage during the handling of money; to stop all these he worked out his own system of control. In the evening he went to the public library and learned accounting. He looked for lectures dealing in hotel matters and attended them. So he decided to begin his career as Chartered Accountant and took out from the bank 200 dollars. He opened an office on the Broadway. At that time he made a written business vow which he has kept up to the present day:

New York, February 15, 1912.

I, the undersigned, definitely decide that as my profession I choose the hotel business, that I will study every section of it and attain all knowledge regarding to it. I also give my word of honour that I will try, to the best of my ability, to be successful.

Edmund J. Horwath.

At first his firm consisted only of a typewriter and of well chosen letter heads, but on the basis of his reasonable circular letters he got his three first clients: a hotel, a restaurant and a club. And as the number rose to ten, it was unnecessary to make further advertisement. The success spoke for itself, and one hotel came after the other. To-day the firm Horwath & Horwath keeps an office in every large town of the United States of America, disposing over an army of 700 clerks, controlling the biggest hotel concerns. An excellent staff works around its founder. In New-York his brother Ernest B. Horwath and an other Hungarian, Louis Tóth, a discovery of the firm, are to-day the best theoretical scholars in this profession: authors of the standard work „Hotel Accounting", they also lecture at the Cornell University. The Chicago office is managed by John N. Horwath, his younger brother . . . Once I accompanied Edmund J. to the office at Detroit and got to know the secret of his personal influence. „Oh, Mr. Horwath!" — and the eyes of all the clerks sparkled towards the unexpected visitor. Mr. Horwath smilingly shook hands with everybody, and asked them to come to his room. He leaned to the writing table and said: „Gentlemen, the head office in New-York has doubled this year its business, and I expect the same result of Detroit". Nothing else. But the

sportsman was evident in the eyes of the young men of Detroit . . . The founder himself did not stop at his original undertaking. To-day a number of big hotels and restaurants are controlled by him, and he has been elected the president of the American Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. On the wall of the New-York office hangs in a frame the foundation document: a cheque for 200 dollars, the original capital. Opposite it another framed document, the dedicated photograph of President Coolidge. Between the two pictures, the start and the success, is a symbolic painting by Benyovszky: „On the Look-out”, — a „Kuruc” insurgent lying in wait . . .

The door opens. Mrs. Horwath enters, „the Dalmatian Madonna”, accompanied by two big wolf-dogs. She has such a decorative appearance, with her deep eyes, oval head, slender figure, which could only be chosen by a passionate collector. „Next year we go to Hungary again.” Her husband is nodding to her and then he stares before him: „We will visit the grave of Dezső”. This is his open wound. The post which brought him the primitive photograph, those of a young priest lying with a pale face on the bier surrounded by candles and flowers, his late brother who stayed at home. And the elder brother who forced his way through, now sees nothing else but the acacias of Nára, leading to the early wisdom of a quiet grave.

### HUNGARIAN FOLK-SONG

*Dreaming, dreaming, sweet is dreaming,  
When the dawn of day is beaming!  
But that dream is brightest, fairest,  
Which reveals to me my dearest.*

*More than wine the kiss's power;  
Be such sweet ne'er sipp'd from flower:  
Know I love's exceeding blessing,  
When my darling dove caressing.*

*Fairest flowers are surely roses;  
Gladdest life love's bond encloses:  
Roses too are gayest showing,  
When in loving couples glowing.*

*As the dove his partner blesses,  
Not with roses, but caresses;  
Thus would I be thee rewarding,  
Angel! none beside regarding.*