

## BOOKS

### *The Regent of Hungary.*

After the world war, the issue of which was so unfortunate for her, Hungary retained her old monarchic form of State. When, however, the last King, Charles IV. fled to a foreign country on 13th November 1919 and ceased to exercise his royal rights, the nation on 5th March 1920 elected a Regent as temporary head of the State. Twice the crowned King attempted to regain the throne. Although even the peace edict of Trianon, unexampled in its severity, contained no restricting provision concerning the form of State in Hungary, so that in this respect the liberty of the nation was in no way curtailed, yet the Little Entente, influenced by Benes, declared the restoration of King Charles a *casus belli*, and disarmed Hungary was powerless to assist Charles in his attempt to recover the throne, was, in fact, forced by the demands of the Great Powers to dethrone the Hapsburg House. But the Act of Dethronement (No. 47 of 1921.) at the same time maintained unchanged the country's ancient form of a monarchy, relegating the question of filling the throne to a later date. Shortly after his deposition King Charles died. Since then two decades have elapsed, and the nation has grown to love its "temporary" ruler so dearly, is so satisfied with his rule, that it has not been considered necessary to fill the vacant throne hitherto, so that, almost imperceptibly, the office of Regent has become a permanency, and every Hungarian hopes that Providence will bless Admiral Horthy with length of days. For two decades Hungary has thus been a kingdom without a king. What shape future events may take is in the lap of the gods; one thing, however, is certain: Benes's intrigues which prevented the return of Charles were in the long run a blessing to the nation, for during the long and wise rule of the Regent, who had a historical mission to fulfil, the nation has found a firm foundation on which to build, and has been able to emerge from the chaos into which it was thrust by a lost war and the inhuman dictates of the Trianon Peace Treaty. Admiral Horthy's special position, and the sympathy which surrounds his winning personality and endows it in the eyes of the public with wellnigh legendary interest, are attracting the attention of foreign publi-

cists more and more, and have inspired them to perpetuate in literature the history of his eventful and edifying life. One of the most recent works is Owen Rutter's "Regent of Hungary", an excellent volume in which the author tells the life-story of Admiral Horthy based on the most authentic data, not as an isolated subject but woven into the fabric of the international events that have run their course during the lifetime of that historical figure. The value of the book is enhanced by the fact that it was written, not by a Hungarian, but by a wholly unbiased foreigner, a writer belonging to that great nation whose view of the world is the most universal and which therefore is best able to judge the influence exerted on the evolution of international events by the great historical figures of the several nations.

With fascinating skill this eminent English publicist has made the whole course of Admiral Horthy's life unroll itself before his readers. He transports us to the old family manor at Kenderes, introduces us to the Hungarian landed gentry and makes us acquainted with the ideology of that historical, staple element of the State, with its rich emotional life, ardent patriotism, enthusiasm for public affairs, the feeling bordering on passion that links it to the Hungarian soil and the patriarchal affection it displays towards the people of that soil, the peasantry. It was in these surroundings with their wealth of tradition that Admiral Horthy spent his childhood; it was from them he imbibed those major virtues to which as ruler he has adhered and which have endeared him to his subjects. His school years were spent in the famous Calvinist College at Debrecen, which recently celebrated its fourth centenary. An irresistible longing for the sea led him to become a pupil of the Naval Academy at Fiume, and at the conclusion of his studies there he joined the Austro-Hungarian Navy. As naval officer he wandered over all the seas, and acquired a wide knowledge of the world and men. His rare knowledge of languages and excellent military attributes secured repeated advancement for him and finally the distinguished honour of being the Emperor-King Francis Joseph's adjutant for three years, in which office he was in daily contact with that great monarch, whom he idolized and strove to emulate. In the immediate entourage of that "born" ruler Admiral Horthy's unswerving sense of duty grew firmer still. This characteristic is a fundamental trait in him and — like Francis Joseph — he sets an example in this respect to his subjects. In his spare time he is fond of painting, and when he was the Emperor's adjutant he

made an excellent portrait of His Majesty which Francis Joseph was pleased to accept. The Emperor kept this portrait till the day of his death, after which it reverted to Admiral Horthy and now hangs on one of the walls of the old manor at Kenderes.

When the world war broke out Admiral Horthy was desirous to return to active service in the Navy, and this wish was granted by the King. Rising from one important command to another, by the end of the war Admiral, Horthy reached the peak of his naval career as the first in command of the whole Austro-Hungarian Fleet. Well he deserved the title of the Hero of Otranto. With undaunted energy he quelled the threatening mutiny, but this dauntless energy went hand in hand with a fatherly solicitude for his men, and he was beloved by officers and men alike. The lamentable collapse of the Monarchy took place, and it was the bitterest moment of Admiral Horthy's life when he was forced by the dictates of the victorious Powers to hand over the proud Austro-Hungarian Fleet to the State of the Southern Slavs then in process of creation. After this sad event Admiral Horthy retired to his manor at Kenderes. There he found healing for his heart's wounds in the lap of nature and gladly took up again the traditional life of a member of the Hungarian landed gentry.

But the terrible tragedy that had overtaken Hungary, the bitter days of hostile occupation and the Communist reign of terror, did not permit of his living in quiet long. His ardent love of his country and the persuasions of his friends drew him to Szeged, where, to restore order in the disintegrated country, Count Julius Károlyi had formed a Government in which Admiral Horthy accepted the office of War Minister. Then — as if inspired by a lofty mission — amidst a thousand dangers he set to work to reorganize the utterly disorganized Hungarian army. The glorious result of his superhuman efforts was that on 16th November 1919 he was able to ride into Budapest on his, now traditional, white stallion at the head of a reorganized army, as Commander-in-Chief of which he established order throughout the length and breadth of the dismembered country. The nation in gratitude elected him Regent of the country and for twenty years he has filled this post gloriously. During his rule the Hungarian nation which was on the brink of the grave has awakened to new life. The Regent well deserves the title of "Aggrandiser of the Country". One of the happiest days of the Regent's life was when on 11th November 1938 he entered Kassa, the capital town of the restored part of Upper Hungary.

With the following words Owen Rutter ends his book.

which is so interesting that it is impossible to put it down until one has read it through:

"Horthy's career has been an extraordinary one, just as his position today is without parallel in any country in the world. For over thirty years, and until he was fifty, he was a naval officer. He emerged from retirement to become the Commander-in-Chief of an army which did not yet exist. Having found it and disciplined it into a body of troops which restored order to Hungary, he became Regent of a State which, today, has no legal King.

Withal he remains a naval officer, he never appears in public but in the Admiral's uniform of a navy which has ceased, has never lost his love of the sea, his delight in ships, his liking for fellow-seamen. He has all the attributes of a sailor, but he speaks many languages, he cares for painting and music, he loves horses and country life. Everyone who has ever shaken him by the hand knows him to be a good host, as the ruler of a proud nation he has won the respect of Europe. Well might he say, like Othello: — "I have done the State some service, and they know't."

George Lukács.

### *Gino Cucchetti on the Slovak Problem.*

A book on the Slovak problem by Gino Cucchetti, a well-known Italian publicist who has written several excellent works in favour of Hungarian revision, was published in Italy recently. In the historical part of this book, the title of which is "*L'Ungheria di fronte al problema slovacco*", the author sets forth at some length that the region known as Slovakia belonged for a thousand years to Hungary as a mountainous region that not only adjoined but also complemented the Great Hungarian Plain, and that it is an integral part of the Carpathian Basin, which was described by *Reclus* as a typically perfect geographical and economic unit. As S. Cucchetti says: — "All Slovakia's mountain ranges and valleys run in a southerly direction; all her highways follow the same course, and for a thousand years were the channels of intercourse and of a flourishing trade that meant prosperity for Magyars and Slovaks alike. The same is true of Slovakia's river-system: all her streams are tributaries of the Danube and the Tisza." Farther on the author states that "*for a thousand years the territories wrested from Hungary lived in*

*peaceful harmony with that country, which always respected their moral, economic and political rights."*

In another place S. Cucchetti says that the Slovaks never dreamt of separating from Hungary, and it was only owing to the guile of Beneš and Masaryk that the Peace Conference was misled by the fiction of Czecho-Slovak racial unity into attaching Slovakia to an entirely separate geo-political unit, Bohemia.

"The Czech Maffia", — says the author — "led by Masaryk, Beneš and their henchmen, worked with might and main in London and Paris to elaborate an ethnographic and racial theory that would ensure Slovakia's attachment to Bohemia. The false thesis that Czechs and Slovaks were one people — Czecho-Slovaks — was propounded." In repudiation of this false theory the author states that Magyars and Slovaks were linked together by a thousand years of common history. "*For a thousand years Magyars and Slovaks had the same rulers, the same governments, the same laws, the same history, and shared in the same joys and sorrows. On the other hand, the mentality, civilization, views and religion of the Czechs were entirely different from the mentality, civilization, views and religion of the Slovaks.*"

Czech rule proved a curse to the Slovaks, for by ruining their industries that were so flourishing during the Hungarian era and preventing the people from seeking harvesting work on the Hungarian Plain, it artificially deprived Slovakia of every possibility of existence. It practically came to be a proverbial saying in Europe that Czecho-Slovakia was a big cow that fed on Slovakia but was milked in Bohemia. And, although they had promised to do so, the Czechs would not hear of granting autonomy to the Slovaks.

This was realized — though too late — by Father Hlinka, the misled leader of the Slovak folk, who, shortly before his death, bitterly told the Prague Parliament in the March of 1938 that the Czechs had cheated the Slovaks: — "*We were stupid*", — he said; — "*we have been cheated. Without being aware of it, we helped the Czechs to mislead Europe.*" S. Cucchetti quotes another of Hlinka's characteristic sayings: — "Our old Hungarian fatherland treated us better than this hateful Czecho-Slovak Republic. For a thousand years we lived together with the Magyars, and during that long period we suffered less than

in the few years under Czech rule. The Czechs say that they liberated us, but that liberty is a thousand times worse than our previous situation."

At long last Slovakia, which had been exploited like a colony, achieved her independence, but her politicians did not follow the advice given them by Hlinka on his deathbed. "*We must go where the Magyzars of Slovakia go — to Hungary.*" It was a fatal mistake of the Slovak politicians not to make a bid for Slovakia's return to Hungary, which would have been perfectly willing to give the Slovaks self-government. Instead they chose a pseudo-independence, which has already brought the little country to the brink of financial ruin. In Slovakia's present situation there can be no question of consolidation. Consolidation will not be possible until the country returns to the natural and economic unit within the framework of which the Slovaks lived happily and prosperously till they were torn away from it by the unjust dictates of the Trianon Peace Treaty.

S. Cucchetti supports his arguments with such a wealth of data that the reader is not only enthralled, but also thoroughly convinced of the truth of his theses. The book, which ranks among the foremost works in Italian political literature, was published in Palermo.

*George Lukács.*