

VIII. 1578/6

KÉZIRAT GYANÁNT

COLLEGE NEWS

SÁROSPATAK
HUNGARY



THE ENGLISH COLLEGE

VOL. VIII.

EASTER 1947.

[1.]

No. 2.

[A 2. sz. Feves

C O N T E N T S

	Page		Page
"You'll Enjou Sárospatak" ...	1	The Ringiug Out ...	6
Shakespeare ...	3	Closing Day ...	7
Robert Burus ...	4	English Schools ...	8

SÁROSPATAK

Sárospatak is a town of some 12,000 inhabitants, situated in the county of Zemplén, Hungary, about 165 miles from Budapest. It stands at the meeting point of the North-East Highlands and the Great Hungarian Plain, just at the foot of the Tokaj-Hegyalja range, on the sunny southern slopes of which the world-famous Tokay wine is grown. The town is divided into two parts by the river Bodrog. The most interesting features of the town are the old Rákóczi Castle and the Academy of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

RÁKÓCZI CASTLE

The story of the castle goes back as far as the time of the original conquest of the country, about 990 A. D. The kings of the conquering Árpád dynasty favoured it with frequent visits and delighted to use it as a residence for considerable periods. At this time the town surrounding the castle was a "Royal Town". In Rákóczi Castle was born St. Elizabeth (1207), daughter of Andrew II, king of Hungary, who led one of the crusades to the Holy Land. The most remarkable period in the history of the castle was in the time of the princes Rákóczi who fought with success against the House of Hapsburg for the religious and political freedom of the Hungarian people. Since then, although it has passed through many hands, the castle has borne the name of Rákóczi Castle.

THE ACADEMY

Sárospatak Academy is an old Foundation School. It was founded in 1531 by *Peter Perényi*, the owner of Sárospatak Castle at that time and one of those men who helped to bring about the Reformation in Hungary. Ever since then it has been a denominational school, one of the strongholds of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

The "golden age" of the Academy was in the first half of the 17th century. *George Rákóczi I*, Prince of Transylvania, and his wife, *Susanna Lorántfy*, were patrons of the school then. It was during this time that some Hungarian students in England made the so-called "London Agreement", in which they made a solemn declaration that

To be continued on cover page.

COLLEGE NEWS

EDITOR: J. NAGY (VIII.)

ASST. EDITORS: G. DINER, GY. SVEHLA, T. SZALAY (VIII.),

J. HAJDU, P. ORBÁN (VII.),

GY. SOÓS AND P. SZEMERE (VI.).

VOL VIII.

EASTER 1947

No. 2.

“YOU’LL ENJOY SÁROSPATAK”

It wasn't long after my arrival in Hungary that I was sent on my first assignment — to Sárospatak. In the Ministry of Education they said I would have a good time. In the British Council they envied me.

Very early on a very cold and snowy day I was escorted to the station and searching for a seat on the crowded train I was greeted by a host of boys who had appropriated a carriage for themselves. They seemed to know who I was, and they lost no time in fitting me in between them. I was very grateful and very relieved because I hate travelling in a strange country when I don't know the language — especially relieved this time because I heard grim tales of conditions “up the line,” and it wasn't certain that the train would reach Sárospatak at all. Without those boys I would never have ventured.

It was a very strange journey to me and most puzzling. Sometimes we stopped for an hour, sometimes for five minutes and generally for five minutes when someone expected us to stop for an hour. One moment we were crammed into a third class carriage with pedlars, and in another we sweated in an over heated second class compartment. Then we changed again at a minutes notice and found ourselves this time on the platform between two carriages with the luggage piled around us. Luckily I was able to get inside the next carriage in the dark and stand for the rest of the journey chatting with one or two of the other lucky ones, by the light of the guards acetylene lamp. When the train was going very slowly, some of the boys preferred to run alongside it. At other times we all sang English songs and closing my eyes I felt that I might be going back to Bradfield, so well did they sing them.

That journey was an excellent introduction to Sárospatak. I had an early preview of some of the 'types', and I found them good value. I could not have had more cheerful and enthusiastic companions. I was rather astonished at their command of English — they were pretty good. I also made an early acquaintance with Julius Caesar for the boys were already quoting their parts and I was able to wile away an hour or two by reading one of their texts.

So I came — “blooded” — to Sárospatak. Then life began. It began with a walk through the snow followed by a host of boys and servants and other boys with fleets of toboggans for the suitcases. I will not try and tell you everything that happened to me in my six weeks at Sárospatak. I don’t think I could. As I look back, I see a whirl of days rising to a grand climax and then, Bump, back to earth again and trunks and tickets and handshakes.

I remember — sliding to school in the morning after an extra few minutes in bed but being unable to make up the time because of the ice on the path. I remember hurrying up and down the school passages trying to find the right class in the right form-room — trying to make the third form see how funny I find Winnie - the Pooh, — trying to keep the brighter sparks of the fifth form in order — teaching the sixth to sing my favourite and rather complicated song “Green grow the rushes-o” — grappling with naval technology with the VII and VIIIth forms, — persuading the IVth form to talk to me in English. Moving in and out of the throng between bells, I have gradually been able to put names to faces and now there are few faces that I do not recognise when I meet them out of school. I think they have all treated me jolly well and my lot has been a very easy one in spite of the fact that I have not been able to compete with the Hungarian language yet.

There are many other moments I remember. I have had many happy evenings at the houses of the masters and their wives and I have sampled many different kinds of the famous wines and tasted many good cakes. There have been occasions when numbers of unfortunates have had to sit and listen to my voice droning away in class-room, lecture hall, etc., though I confess I like talking about England. Nevertheless I prefer hearing about Hungary, and enjoy most of all attending sessions of dancing and song.

So my first three weeks were spent quietly and leisurely, except for brief spurts of physical effort when trying to hold my own with a sabre and getting some expert instruction at the same time. Occasionally I would go and listen to the boys and girls reading their parts for the coming play, but I didn’t give that very much thought at the time.

When I returned from a week-end in Budapest, the tempo of my life suddenly increased. Occasionally I could sit in the returning sun and watch the small ones playing “bige“, and sometimes I could take that beneficial afternoon nap, but gradually I found I couldn’t. Julius Caesar was upon us all. A supreme effort had to be made and everyone rallied and made it. Julius Caesar became a real thing to me. Gradually I saw the play take shape and by degrees the boys and girls were able to show me the meaning of Shakespeare’s work as their lines became more and more perfect. Sometimes we would work late in the evening, sometimes in the morning with all thought of school work in the background, much to the despair of the slaving masters. We rehearsed at all sorts of times and to varying accompaniments. Perhaps it was to the sound of ping-pong or rough-house. Sometimes to the sound of bashing plates or squeaking chairs. The actors put up with

it all and endured my fits of temperament too. To me the characters started as boys and then the boys became characters. The stage managers became my shadows and confidants and walked about the town like men possessed. I would walk about quoting lines or scribbling instructions on bits of paper. I began to feel I was in Rome with occasional hectic visits to Philippi, returning at night to Sárospatak to sleep. Difficulties would loom large and they would melt away as soon as they had come thanks to the great assistance of all my hosts.

Now the first hurdle is over and I must go on my way to do what "the powers that be" have planned for me. These weeks have been a revelation to me. Sárospatak has become part of my life and this my first visit has been a definite period of my life, which I shall never forget. Everything has been done to make my life happy and it is now for me to do what little I can in return.

I shall go on my way with the picture that I see from my window, firmly fixed in my mind. A picture of sight and sound. A picture of many happy smiling faces whom I will call my friends. Boys and girls and men and women who have had a hard burden to bear but all of whom show me what can be done with life.

They told me I would enjoy Sárospatak — now I shall return home and tell them. M. H.



SHAKESPEARE

(APPRECIATION OF A LECTURE.)

The works of Shakespeare, the world-wide-known champion of English literature, are not unknown to us, Sárospatak students. They are looked upon by us as the most precious pearls of world literature. For years past Shakespeare's spirit was the dominant one on our school-stage, and everybody got acquainted with him through his wonderful plays, such as: Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Julius Caesar, etc.

But Shakespeare cannot be thoroughly known and appreciated this way only. All of us wanted to get a closer knowledge of him, wanted to form a real portrait of him, but a perfect understanding needed a thorough introduction. This desire of ours was fulfilled by a fine "Friday Evening" lecture held by Dr. Maller one of our Masters of English. He, with a great competence, marked out Shakespeare's place, gave a short review of his works, and emphasized the importance of his influence on European Literature. This really successful cultural evening was coloured by the recitation of a few extracts from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, brilliantly performed by Mr. Halsted, whom, I think, it is unnecessary to introduce. *Gy. Soós VI.*



ROBERT BURNS

150 years ago died Robert Burns.¹ We want to revere his great name by these few lines.

Robert Burns, the greatest song-poet of the world, saw altogether 37 summers: but his short life erected an everlasting monument for the years. The son of a poor gardener of Ayrshire became a poet of eternal life. His songs are sung even now-a-days by the Scottish people; — lovers weep reading his poems, and we, students, who, take leave of the College, hum many times:

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and never brought to mind?”

If we want to find the place of Burns among the great poets of the world, we must search for it somewhere in the neighbourhood of Petöfi and Heine. Burns opened their gates: the gates of a real folk-poet.

Burns himself is a real folk-poet. He composed most of his poems when he was working in the fields. He wrote his poems in Lowland Scotch dialect: the dialect of his own folk, and so even the English cannot understand all his words. In his poems we see all the high spirits and occasional violence of the Scottish people.

Roughness and drinking however were only dissembling features of Burns' character; his soul was gentle, noble and pure. In the short extract that follows you may see how deep and gentle the feelings of this simple man were.

I have mentioned Petöfi as one of his followers. It is interesting that Burns was, in some respect just the opposite of Petöfi, who was a lover of the Lowlands. Burns' world was the wonderful air of the Highlands, mountains high covered with snow, the torrents and loud pouring floods:

“My heart's in the Highlands, my heart's not here
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer . . .”

He was born in the Highlands, and he lived there too. When in the year 1786 he had to leave it, he said good-bye with deep in heart-wrung words:

“Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands forever I love . . .”

Burns' love poetry has a special value. In this side of poesie he is like Heine, but without Heine's cynicism. Reading Burns' poems of love we find names of certain ladies; the ladies however didn't love him. Of course a drunkard ploughman isn't the ideal of women, but the same man had the geniality to say good-bye to his love with the following words:

“Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest,
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilca joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure . . .”



Sárospatak from the Castle



Main School Quadrangle



Act I, Scene 1. Sinóros—Szabó (Cassius) and Diner (Brutus)



Noble Antony

Only one lady loved him, a poor girl, called Mary Campbell. Their love was a pure, idyllic one. In one of his poems the poet tells us that on a May morning they met in a quiet spot by the river Ayr to spend their last day together. They took up their stand on either side of a small stream, laved their hands in the water, and then, holding a Bible between them, they pledged themselves eternally to each other. But their alliance was only transitory, the poor girl got fever and died, so the poet could write only "To Mary in Heaven":

"My Mary! Dear departed Shade!

Where is thy place of blissful rest?

Sees't thou thy lover lowly laid?

Hears't thou the groans that rend his brest . . . ?

We find a democratic spirit in his poems. It is a very important thing, knowing that the French Revolution burst on the world during his life time. But Burns wasn't a demagogue, he teaches us democracy in the right way:

"A king can mak a belted knight,

A marquis, duke an' a' that;

But an honest man's aboon his might,

A man's a man for a' that."

This short article doesn't pretend to be a literary essay. Its writer is only a school-boy, and he only wants to show the gems of Burns' poetry and, at the same time, justify himself why he writes about Burns as his favourite poet. So the article doesn't deal with Burns narrative and satirical poems; the reader may find essays on them in several books.

In one Anthology of Translations I found the following laconic note about Burns: "His unbridled character, poverty and drinking took him too early to death." In the year 1795 his health was becoming poorer. He was beginning to feel as if he were soon to be an old man. He knew that he was very ill and he had to die soon. As one of his biographers says: "On the 2nd of July, 1796, he passed away, leaving behind him a name which to this day is honoured not only in Scotland, but all the world over."

And now, to end, let me cite a few lines from "The Song of Death," in which he says good-bye to life:

"Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,

Now gay with the broad setting Sun;

Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,

Our race of existance is run."

* * *

Words and expressions you may not know. Citing lines from Burns' poems it is inevitable to cite many unknown words. To make our reading easier I give you the unknown words in alphabetic order:

aboon = above

a-chasing = hunting

an' = and

a' that = all that

auld = old

fare-thee-weel = farewell to you

ilca = each, every

mak = make

Gy. Svehla VIII.

¹ The article was written last year after the publication of our Christmas number.

THE RINGING OUT

(May 12, 1947.)

Near the old gate of our school there is a small brass bell on the wall. This bell is not used anymore; the schoolboys today listen to the ringing of an electric bell at the end of lessons. The old brass bell stands only as a remembrance of the old days.

Every year, under this bell, the boys of the eighth form assemble for their „ringing out.“

The ringing out is an old tradition at Sárospaták. It is the very last stage of school life. This is the occasion when the „old boys“ bid farewell to their school. And every year, towards the middle of May, when the eighth form boys have finished their last term, we can see the old bell being decorated by school girls. Around it there are flowers; on it are hung bottles of wine (for the school-janitors), and beneath it a pulpit is placed, for on this occasion there are speeches to be made.

The boys assemble in their class-room, stand in rows, and arm in arm they descend the steps, and go slowly through the courtyard. Their faces are mostly solemn and sad. For many of them, I think, this is the only occasion when they are sorry to leave the school, because now they say good-bye to it forever.

They stand around the bell, and first a boy says a prayer, then another says a speech of farewell. At the end a boy from the seventh form says good-bye to them in the name of those who remain.

They stand again in a row, and slowly walk out of the gates of the school, those same gates which they entered eight years ago as „whining schoolboys“ with their satchels and shining morning faces, creeping like snails, unwillingly to school.

But now there is a sad mood in their hearts, the mood of parting. I often wondered how many generations this old bell has rung out. This year, on May 12th, another generation has passed out into the world. Their names are as follows:

J. Adamkovics, S. Berényi, A. Blank, I. Dénes, G. Diner, Á. Farkas, L. Farkas, J. Gaál, P. Hajdu, K. Kismarton, M. Kocsis, J. Kőrösi, L. Kuthy, J. Lelbach, G. Mandler, J. Nagy, G. Pavletits, S. Raffay, I. Sipkói, L. Sinóros-Szabó, Gy. Svehla, T. Szalay, A. Valády, E. Zsindely.

We, who remain, wish them as great a success in their life to come as they had at school. School life is a time which we don't always like when we are in it, but when we pass for the last time through the gates, and when we hear the school bell ring for the last time, we look back upon this time as the most happy part of our life.

A large number of parents and friends came to Sárospaták for this occasion. So we had the old peace-time audience again, yet our

happiness was not complete. Mr. Geoffrey L. Tier, our good friend and English Master during the war, to whose coming we had looked forward so much, could not be here with us, and we missed him very much. May I, therefore, take this opportunity in thanking him once more, on behalf of the late eighth formers too for the good work he did at Sárospatak and for the friendship and sympathy he has always shown to us I thank him for his gifts of books and periodicals too.

P. Orbán VII.



CLOSING DAY

Outside the beautiful dewy rose-buds were swinging in the light breeze and the whole nature looked as if it were also solemnizing this day. I was standing at the window and a wonderful music sounded in my ears. This day, on the 29th of June, I was distinguished to be the "boy on duty." Usually this is not such a great honour, but that day we had our first ordinary "closing day" after three years.

At seven o'clock the bell rang, and everybody got-up. After breakfast we went to school, where our Form Masters read our marks. After having received the notices for the next year, we took leave of one another, and of the seventh class-room too, because we were eighth formers already. Afterwards we went downstairs. Some of us ran with glad faces and some of us looked very sad, according to the quality of our certificates. At nine o'clock all the students went to church and took part in the thanksgiving service. Not long after the end of the divine service all the boys and girls of the school assembled in the Oratory to solemnize the closing day. The hall was full of pupils and parents, and every eye was eagerly turned towards the door when Mr. McNab, the Representative of the British Council in Budapest, entered the room.

First we sang the old psalm, „We had our faith in Thee from the beginning.“ Our Music Master, Dr. E. Szabó, played the organ, and the whole audience sang wholeheartedly praising our God and Father. Then Dr. Urbán, Rector of the Academy, read his speech giving an account of what the school had done in the past year. He mentioned the great losses of the school too. Then he welcomed the new teachers and professors first of all, Mr. Halsted, member of the British Council in Budapest, who came to us as a visiting lecturer, thanked him and Mr. McNab for the great help they have given to our School in so many ways. He also spoke of the most valuable gifts of Hope College and the UNRRA for which all of us are so grateful. After the speech the most important thing followed, at least for us, and that was prize-giving. The boys went out one by one with a smile on their faces and received their prizes. This was the most awaited event for us boys. This also being over, the Rev. Darányi, President of the Governing

Body, made a short address that moved all hearts and wished everybody good holidays.

The boys hurried out of the school-building and left the desks and class-rooms empty. Returning to the English College, I found the boys busy packing. Each boy took leave of his friends and in the evening the "noisy" College became quite silent. The big studies and dormitories were empty and, to my mind, each of them looked very sad. The students went away, and the life of the town also changed with their departure. A deep sleepiness fell on the buildings and the school-garden, which used to be so full of shouting and playing boys. Sleep you class-rooms, sleep you trees in the school-garden, you also need a rest, but wake up again when we return in September. *A. Czeke VII.*



ENGLISH SCHOOLS

(A PICTURE EXHIBITION.)

At the end of March, for a whole week, a fine picture exhibition could be seen in the Council Hall of our school. We could see in pictures most of the famous schools of England, and we had one more occasion to make a comparison between our educational system and that of England. The old school-buildings, with the most modern equipments, the excellent playing fields and the wonderful English country-side, attracted a large number of visitors. In my opinion the exhibition was a great success. Everybody was so much interested in it and we are very much indebted to the British Council in Budapest for having made this exhibition possible in Sárospatak. *Gy. Soós VI.*



Continued.

they would serve their country and religion in the spirit of the English Puritans. *John Dali de Tolna*, the leader of these students in London, was later invited by Prince Rákóczi to Sárospatak as professor. It was through his activities that Puritanism was spread from Sárospatak throughout the greater part of the country, and it was also he who advised Prince Rákóczi to invite to Sárospatak the greatest teacher of the century, the Moravian-born *John Amos Comenius* (1650). He was professor here for four years.

In the second half of the 17th century, both professors and students had to leave Sárospatak. They were expelled by the Jesuits. They went to Transylvania where they found protection under Prince *Michael Apaffy* at Gyulafehérvár. These professors and students, our "Pilgrim Fathers", continued their work against heavy odds and were allowed to return to the old seat only in the time of Prince *Francis Rákóczi II*, leader of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1703—11. It was also during this sad period that a number of Sárospatak "Old Boys", then ministers and teachers in the country, were thrown into prison and, later, sold as galley-slaves to Italian merchants. It was only through the intervention of the Dutch Admiral *De Ruyter* that they were later set free.


In 1714, further attempts were made to make work at Sárospatak School impossible, but, through the intervention of the Swiss, Dutch, Prussian and British Governments, the independence of the Academy was finally secured and a long period of peaceful work began. At the main entrance to the School, there is a bronze-relief in the wall to commemorate this event and the great services rendered to Sárospatak Academy by our Western Brethren in Faith.

From among the many famous students of the Academy, we mention only one, *Louis Kossuth*, the world-known Hungarian Patriot, the great champion of Liberty, the leader of the War of Independence in 1848—49. He studied law here.

The Branches of the Academy are: a) the Theological Seminary (Divinity Hall of the Hungarian Reformed Church); b) the Secondary School with two Departments, Classical and Modern (English); c) the Training Centre for Elementary School Teachers; d) the Agricultural School; e) the People's Academy, a kind of continuation school for village boys and girls. (The Law School had to be dissolved after the First Great War.)

On the Staff of the Academy there are 50 professors and teachers. The total number of the students is about 1030. (Theol. Sem.: 50; Training Centre: 200; Sec. School: 650; Agricultural School: 30; People's Academy: 100.) About 350 of the Sec. School students take the Modern (English) Course, while the rest attend the Classical Branch.

The Modern (English) Department and the associated English College were opened in 1931, on the 400th anniversary of the Academy. One of the chief educational aims of this new institute has been to help Hungarian youth, as far as possible, to become acquainted with the spiritual and cultural qualities of the English Speaking Nations.





The Oldest Coat-of-Arms of the Academy