

Budapest-Queen of the Danube

(See illustrations on pages 40-41)

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All who visit the double city of Bude and Pest, become its lovers and admirers. The Capital of the Hungarians has always had this effect upon its nationals and visitors alike. It is one of the cities of the world which was predestined to play a great role in the history of its country, and of the world at large. It is here that the formidable mountain ranges of the west give way to the wide and pleasing valleys of this fertile country.

Budapest has stood through the centuries, since its foundation in the year 1,000, as the Christian bulwark against the hordes from the East. The Hungarians, or Magyars have many times been called upon to bare their breasts to the Tartars and the Turks, and have always fought heroically to save the west for Christianity. These Holy Wars continued from the time that the Hungarian State was founded by Stephen I, who became Saint Stephen. The centre of these conflicts was always Bude, the old Roman fortified city on the Danube. The Hungarians played the same role in the East that Charles Martel and his Franks played at Poitiers, in breaking the Turkish advances.

The most famous of the Magyar heroes of the Turkish wars was Jean Hunyady. It was under his son Mathias Corvin that the City of Bude reached its highest point of splendour. In the XV Century it was the European centre of savants, artists, and diplomats. But the XVI Century brought its difficulties and sadnesses. Then it was that the city finally fell to the Turkish onslaughts and it was held by the Islamites for a century and a half. Even its relief was a tragedy for it was to the Habsburgs that the Hungarians had to appeal for aid to relieve their Capital, and thus began the alliance which was to bring so much trouble to that nation.

The double city as it stands today is justly proud of its magnificence and of its situation astride the Danube. Its citizens hold with pride that few cities

can rival its beauties. It boasts of its several valleys, in one of which stands the Royal Palace which seems to be suspended over the river, giving a most profound impression of beauty to the sightseer.

The River, itself, gives character to the city which it divides, and each bank has its own distinctive features. In Bude, built upon the site of the Roman town, is the old Gothic Church of the Coronation, to which the principal events of the Nation have been linked. All around it are the palaces of the Magyar aristocracy. On the other bank, however, is a modern city, proud of its wide boulevards and modern buildings.

The Mont Saint Gerard, with its fortified top of grizzled walls stands up on the horizon, as an impressive reminder of other less tranquil days. And at night all of these marvels are doubled through the system of lighting.

Among the sights which must be seen in Budapest is the Church of Saint Etienne, the most magnificent of the City. It is in Renaissance style, but constructed in the shape of a Greek Cross, and it combines the best features of both Eastern and Occidental decoration. The Parliament Buildings are immense and impressive, only those of London being larger in size.

Budapest has succeeded in retaining its national character. It has not succumbed to the idiosyncrasies of modernity, although it has accepted the comforts. The banks of the Danube are bordered with flowering acacias, and on these promenades the highest society people are often to be seen on their promenades. It is here, too, that the most luxurious hotels are found, such as the Ritz, the Dunapalota, the Grand Hotel Hungaria, the Bristol, and the Saint Gerard.

The large expanse of water offered by the Danube, gives a big impetus to river navigation in Budapest, and all kinds of river boats are to be seen on every pleasant day, as well as the commercial and passenger boats, which

do ferry, as well as river excursion service.

The illustrations for this article show the rocks of Mont Saint Gerard, as well as the suspended bridge of Szechenyi. An international port is now under construction at Budapest which will make this city a rival for the honours of the greatest inland port of the world.

The springs in and about Budapest must be mentioned. There are many natural springs of great curative Power. These baths are luxuriously appointed and annually attract large number of people who seek their aid as well as the distractions which are to be found. It is no wonder that Budapest has become a great tourist centre. Few cities of the world can offer such scenic, historical, and thermal advantages to the visitor and resident. Also there are the great fairs and exhibitions which come to this Centre of Eastern Europe, as well as the regattas, fetes, etc., which go on almost continuously. There is the Fete of Saint Etienne from September 15 to 25 during which will be celebrated an ecclesiastical procession in which the highest dignitaries of the Nation will take part. There will also be theatrical, musical,

and sporting events of the highest importance. The Danube gives a perfect setting for elaborate firework displays.

The visitors to Budapest during that period will have an exceptional opportunity of seeing the City at its best, as well as of visiting its beautiful suburbs, the Island of Saint Marguerite, the Valley of Zugliget, and Mont Svabhegy, and can also take the lovely excursions on the River.

Charles FRANÇOIS.

Rapid Trains and Wagon-Lits connect Budapest with Vienna, Prague, Bucharest, Warsaw, Belgrade, Trieste, and the other large cities of Europe. Boat service exists between Vienna and Budapest. There is airplane service on regular lines between Paris and Bucharest, passing by way of Budapest. The fare between Paris and Budapest, first class is about 1055 francs; second class, about 770 francs; third class, about 490 francs. Rooms in hotels facing the Danube are at from 40 to 80 francs per bed, or from 70 francs, with bathrooms. In other first class hotels beds may be had from 35 francs, and in modest hotels from 25 francs per bed. Pension may be had from 50 francs per day, upwards.