

## WHERE THE HIGH ROAD ENDS.

FROM VIENNA TO BUDA PESTH  
ON A ROLLS ROYCE.

BY J. INGLIS KER, F.S.A. (SCOT.)

*"For East is East, and West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet."*

**T**HE High Road of which I write begins on the wind-swept sand dunes of Holland, from which a thriving people have thrust a great stone pier to harbour the ships of the North Sea and welcome the wayfarer to a land of flowers and busy waterways. Beckoning us onwards by sunlit pastures and rich cornfields, through which winds a labyrinth of canals, astir with gaily-coloured barges, it carries us over the frontier to Nimegen, an old German town of pathetic interest to all Scotsmen, for here Sir Walter Scott made his last stopping place on that sad return journey to his beloved Abbotsford. By the vine-clad slopes of the romantic Rhine and the Falls of Lorelei, through the cathedral towns of Cologne and Coblenz, past time-worn mediæval castles and white-walled schloss perched above the

### fragrant vineyards of Rudesheimer

and the sunny plains of Frankfurt, it enters the Austrian frontier at Salzburg. Thence across the Upper Alps of Austria and skirting the sombre pine woods of Bohemia, it reaches the green banks of the stately Danube, and soon we find ourselves in the gay city of Vienna. There we embark on the last stage of our journey, leaving behind us the western capital of the Empire for the eastern city of Buda Pesth, in the rolling plains of Hungary.

The journey by road from Vienna to Buda Pesth (140 miles) I made recently on a Rolls-Royce in the company of Charles Jarrott, and the impressions which I received during the tour were both numerous and varied. Of the city of Vienna, one could write at considerable length. Its history goes back to Roman times, when it was an important fortress known as Vindobona, built for the protection of the Romans against the Germanic races. The scholarly Emperor Marcus Aurelius died here in 180 A.D. At a later period (eighth century), many of the mighty battles of Charlemagne were fought within sight of its ancient walls, but probably its development was due in a large measure to the Crusades, which began in 1281, and which in time opened up trade between the East and the West. In the thirteenth century it became the seat of the Hapsburg dynasty, whose fortunes are still the source of anxiety in the councils of Europe. In 1529 Vienna was besieged by the Turks, but under the brilliant reigns of Charles the VI. and the beautiful Maria Theresa it developed rapidly as a great social and

political factor. The famous "Compromise" or "Ausgleich" of 1867 gave it a proud position among the cities of the world, when it became the capital of Austria, its sister city of Buda Pesth being created the capital of the eastern portion of the Empire. Vienna is a modern city, both in its appearance and its habits. The cafes and hotels are amongst the finest in Europe, and the boulevards in the afternoons are thronged with gaily-attired, handsome women and Austrian officers in gorgeous uniforms. The atmosphere of the city is typically Continental and essentially Cosmopolitan, and when sunshine floods the gardens along the banks of the Danube, and the strains of a military band fill the summer air, the fair city of Vienna sparkles with life and gaiety. Its boulevards and great open spaces, its parks and fountains and imposing buildings remind one forcibly of Berlin and Paris. The Municipal authorities are evidently alive to the needs of the people, their enterprises embracing an up-to-date electric tramway system (single-decked cars, each with two or three trailers), and a gigantic canal and water scheme, while its grain and cattle markets and exchanges rank amongst the foremost in Europe. The motor car is largely used, and handsome taxicabs are to be had in all the principal thoroughfares. Its commercial importance is

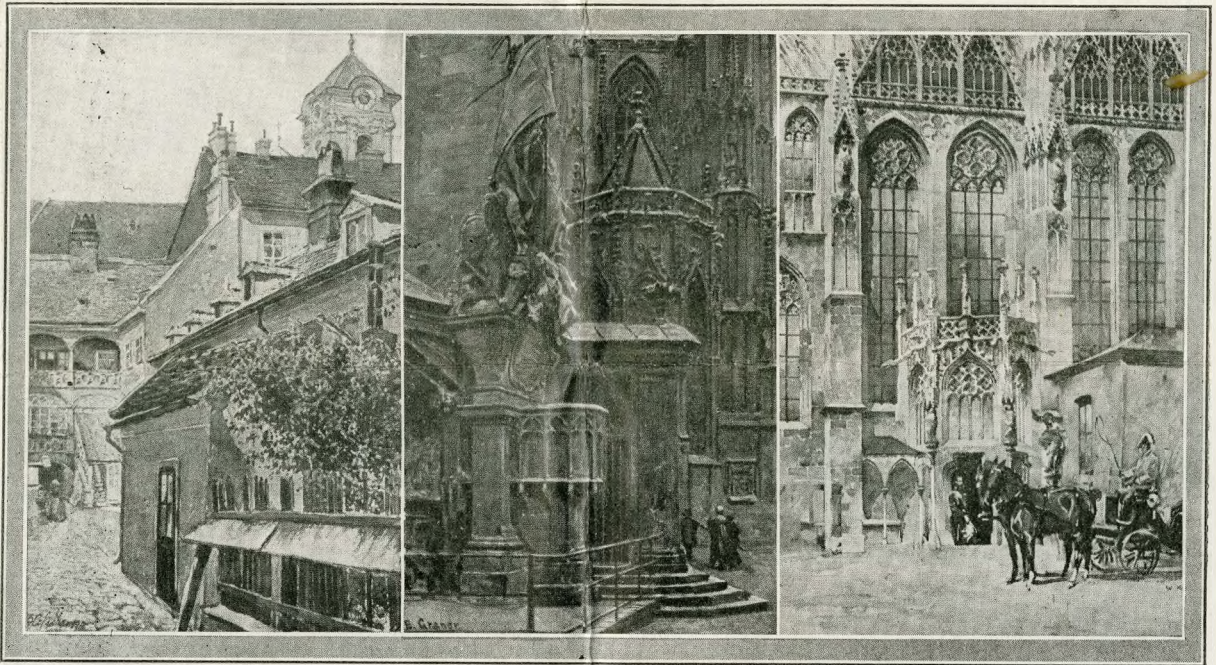
### largely due to its situation

at the point where the trading route from the Baltic to the Adriatic crosses the great highway of the Danube, thus facilitating the exchange of commodities between the industrial West and the agricultural East. Its population is now well over 2,000,000, so that it occupies the fourth place amongst the capitals of the old world. German is the predominating language and Roman Catholicism the religion of nine-tenths of the people. The centre of the city is St. Stephan's Platz, from which radiates its chief arteries—the Karntner Ring, the Graben, and the Totenturn. The Academies, Palaces, Museums, Opera House, and University offer some fine examples of modern Gothic architecture, but there is only one building in the city which recalls its ancient history—namely, St. Stephanskirche. This venerable pile stands in the centre of the old market square, and immediately arrests the eye. Founded on a Romanesque Church built in 1147, the present building was begun in 1230, and extended over the

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various reigns of Rudolph and other Austrian Kings as late as 1579, so that the edifice represents many distinctive periods in architectural art. It was in this historic building that the famous Congress of Vienna was proceeding when it was learned that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, thus rendering further deliberations useless, for the time being at least. The Rathaus, the Hofburg, the Imperial Palace of Schonbrunn, with its wondrous gardens and fountains, the Capuchin Church containing the tombs of the Hapsburgs, all afford the visitor many opportunities of studying the history and art of the ancient Austrians. One might dwell at length upon the other attractions of the city, its Botanic Gardens, its Cafes, its Prater, and the night festivities of Kaisergarten, but space forbids. A passing reference, however, may be permitted to the Palace of the late Archduke Frederick, who met with such a tragic end in Sarajevo a few days after our visit. The Palace stands in the Albrecht's Platz

is good, though very dusty in dry weather. Rich cornfields stretch out in every direction, and cherry trees line the road on either side for miles. Twenty miles from Vienna we cross the River Leitha, the boundary between Austria and Hungary, and the principal towns on the route are Pressburg (Pozsony) and Cyör (Raab). The names given in brackets are the Hungarian names, and only these are understood by the natives, whose knowledge of German is limited. Pressburg is forty miles from Vienna, and is a typical Hungarian town of considerable antiquity. It was for many years the capital of Hungary, and the historic cathedral was the scene of many coronations of the Hapsburg kings and queens. Cyör (seventy-four miles from Vienna) overlooks the Danube, and is the centre of vast agricultural interests and a great trading exchange. With the exception of these towns, however, which display not a few evidences of activity and enterprise, the Great Road begins slowly and imperceptibly to offer many striking contrasts to the tourist. One experiences a subtle, indefinable change. The smiling cornfields



A street in Buda Pesth.

St. Stephanskirche, Vienna.

The Coronat'on Church, Buda Pesth.

behind the Opera House, in front of which there is a fine marble statue of Mozart, who in his later days made Vienna his home. The Palace was begun in 1801, and many extensive alterations were carried out as late as 1867. It contains one of the most remarkable collections of engravings in the world, including many superb examples of Durer, Marc Antonio, and Raimondi. The galleries and towers are hung with priceless paintings and works of art. An early visit of the Archduke had been arranged for, and the Palace seemed to be undergoing extensive alterations while we inspected it. The news of the Archduke's tragic death must have come with startling suddenness to the Viennese, who held the aged Emperor's heir in the most loyal affection.

The road from Vienna to Buda Pesth follows the sloping banks of the Danube, winding across the great Hungarian Plain, from which rise away to the left the vine-clad slopes of the Little Carpathians. It is of excellent width, and for the most part the surface

and green pasturelands are here, the Danube still flows along in stately silence, the woods are attuned to the music of birds, the cattle shelter under the trees from the strong sunlight and great bullock waggons lumber along the dusty roads. We search at first in vain for the reason of the change, and at length the human factor supplies it. The Hungarian is of the East. We see no more the "morning face" of which R. L. Stevenson speaks. The smile, the welcome, and the glad hand of the Austrian have gone; the joyousness of the West is behind us. In a land rich in promise we find ourselves amidst a strong, fierce-looking race of men, surly and resentful. The end of the Great High Road is in sight. The valleys are silent; the villages have a deserted appearance. Dogs stray around and snarl at the wheels of the car. The houses stand with their gable ends to the street, which boast neither pavement nor gutter. Here and there a boy bawls at you, or a forbidding-looking peasant in charge of a team of bullocks blocks the way and

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shouts imprecations as he gives us grudgingly the right of the road.

The motor car must travel far before the Hungarian peasant is converted; at present he bristles with resentment. One gradually realises something of the great gulf between the two races which now own allegiance to one ruler—between the Teuton of Austria and the Slav of Hungary. The difference is only accentuated when one at length reaches the capital. Here the German language is banned. Magyar is the official language; German must not be spoken at the Court, on the boulevards, in the cafes, nor in the theatres. By this way the Hungarian strives to preserve his racial traditions, his

bridge builder), and the impression becomes a conviction as one at length looks down on the brilliant city from the white facades of the Royal Palace. But its similarity to other great cities with which we are familiar here ends, for the people themselves introduce a remarkable and vivid contrast to any other citizens I have ever met. Passing along the boulevard that stretches for nearly three miles by the banks of the river one may almost imagine oneself at a fancy-dress ball. Costumes and colour of every variety of hue and shade mingle in wild profusion. Hungarians, Greeks, and Magyars, Moslems and Polish Jews, Slavs and Huns, Russians and Turks, soldier and civilian, merchant and peasant, all in their picturesque native costumes, mingle freely with ladies dressed in the height of fashion



The Rathaus, Vienna.  
The Hofburg, Vienna.

The Royal Palace, Vienna.  
The Ferdinand Bridge, over the Danube.

national independence, his political power and status. In a city of 880,000 of a population no less than 700,000 speak Magyar, and there are other ten nationalities represented in the remainder! One marvels at the contrast between Buda Pesth and her sister capital. It is not in the city's appearance. If anything it is even more striking and more modern-looking than Vienna. Built on both sides of the Danube (nearly 600 yards wide), its fine streets and boulevards, its Houses of Parliament, its Royal Castle crowning the heights above the river, its Cathedral and Museums, its network of railways and tramcars, and magnificent parks, all combine to give Buda Pesth a pre-eminent place among the great cities of Europe. It is in its fine natural surroundings, its imposing streets and finely laid out gardens, as impressive as our own beautiful city of Edinburgh. That is one's first impression of the city when crossing the suspension bridge (built, by the way, by Adam Clark, the distinguished English

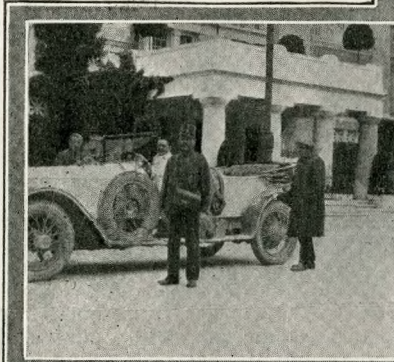
and officers in brilliant uniform—surely the most cosmopolitan crowd to be met with in the course of a year's travel, all passing to and fro on one of the most remarkable streets in the world, the Francis Joseph Quay. Planted with trees, and lined with cafes and hotels, its appearance in the evening is something that stamps itself at once upon one's memory.

And beyond Buda Pesth—towards the East, *the road ends*—lost in the maze of many nations and a myriad of tongues, where Turk and Greek, Slav and Serb, Roumanian and Bulgarian, Galician and Bohemian are weaving out their destinies at the loom of time—in much bitterness of spirit, and the gloom of centuries of strife hovers over all. From the North Sea to Buda Pesth we have passed over the Great Highway of Europe, on which the world's traffic surges with ceaseless ebb and flow. From East to West, from West to East, it carries the products of all nations—threading the old world in endless agitation

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—bearing a mighty interchange of custom, thought, and speech, mounting the barriers of race and religion, slowly but surely linking up the forces of a common humanity. Like a great sensory nerve across the heart of Europe it pulsates with action and movement, and its rhythmic beat is the true index of the life of many Empires. Its story will tell you of Roman conquest—of Attila, that “scourge of God,” who with his horde of Magyars and Huns and Vandals scattered the mighty Empire of Rome to the winds of Heaven—of the great Charlemagne and his battles in the cause of freedom—of the Wars of the Crusades, and the struggles between Cross and Crescent—of the breaking up of ancient dynasties, and the separation of Teuton and Saxon, of Slav

and Hun—of the triumph and defeat of Napoleon, and the readjustment of international authority. To all who seek, the Great Road will impart “tidings of invisible things,” and will speak of brighter days and the coming of understanding among the nations; of more enlightened ways, and of the quickening of thought. Where the Great Road ends—where Buda Pesh and the East begin—there are few signs of the great awakening, and one is inclined to accept the poet's dictum that “never the twain shall meet.” But we cherish the thought that the Road will break the fetters of the East, as it has burst the bonds of the West, and its magic spell will spread from the white sands of the Western Seas to the dark shores of the Black Sea in the East. The romance of the road is with us now as strong and powerful as in the pageant days of Roman Emperor or Crusader Knight.



The Rolls-Royce in Vienna.

St. Stephanskirche, Vienna.

The Rolls-Royce in Buda Pesh.

*Where the Road Calls.*

We have spent a waking slumber in the city for a year;  
 All the splendour and the pageantry of May we did not know;  
 And we never saw the green and gold of summertide appear,  
 Nor the deeper copper-colour, when the leaves are growing sere;  
 But at last the road is calling us, and we must go.

If they say there's love and laughter in the city streets to-day,  
 It is love befouled with lucre and laughter joined with woe;  
 But a real love is laughing where the lilacs line the way,  
 And its radiant rapture rouses us, and yet we make delay,  
 While the long white road is calling us, and we should go.

There's a vague mysterious wonder in the smoke-polluted air,  
 There's a secret sun illumining the paving stones below;  
 In the houses, in the streets, and in the traffic—everywhere  
 There's a hidden presence urging us to rise and hasten there,  
 Where the road, the road is calling us, and now we go.  
 —P. R. P.

*Down to the Sea.*

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
 And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,  
 And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
 And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

\* \* \*

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
 And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

\* \* \*

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
 And a quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over

JOHN MASEFIELD, in “Current Literature.”