

ENGLISH VOLUNTEERS AT RECOVERY OF BUDA

by
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Two hundred and fifty years ago the news of a long-awaited decision spread through almost all the countries of Europe. The Christian hosts had determined to re-capture Buda, one of the most important key-fortresses of the mighty Turkish Empire. The news was received with unanimous acclamation and enthusiasm in every Christian country. Pope Innocent issued a Crusade Bull proclaiming indulgence to everyone who in some form or other contributed towards the issue. Besides the numerous gifts of money sent to the Vienna Court, about 1000 foreign volunteers reported there for service. These volunteers were recruited mainly from the ranks of the aristocracy, for whom Hungary, alongside of the wars of Louis XIV, had been a kind of military school for over a century and a half. No soldier could well lay claim to being an experienced warrior unless he had fought once or twice against the Ottoman hordes. Dukes, counts, barons and other nobles flocked from England, France, Spain, and the German and Italian Duchies to lay siege to Buda.

Most of what we know about the English who took part in the siege comes from the diary of Jacob Richards,¹ "one of His Majesty's Engineers", who had been sent out in an official capacity. It was the duty of this young engineer, acting on the instructions of the Royal Ordnance Office, to keep his eye on matters of interest to the engineering staff and the artillery, and make his reports thereon.²

Throughout the entire duration of the siege he assiduously co-operated in directing the work of the engineers; indeed, in all probability, the Imperial troops made use of an invention of his in their attacks — a small mortar which threw grenades to a distance of 600 yards.³

In particular the sixteen-year-old James Fitz-James distinguished himself on more than one occasion by his bravery. He had been sent by his father, later on James II of England, to fight under the supervision of a French nobleman, de Villevison, in the army of Charles of Lotharingia.⁴ After having fought bravely right through to the end of the very attack on September 2-nd he returned to

England. In recognition of his services his father created him Duke of Berwick, and made him honorary colonel of the Oxford Cavalry Regiment. But he did not stay long at home. His enthusiasm brought him back again to the Imperial Army. Leopold I raised him to the rank of colonel, and as commander of a regiment of cuirassiers he took part in the war of 1687, and was present at the battle of Mohács.⁵

Besides Richards, whose official duties gave him a prominent role, and Fitz-James, whose birth and later on his high rank made him an outstanding figure, there were many other Englishmen whose deeds of valour, wounds or deaths secured their names a place in the golden annals of Hungarian history. During the whole length of the siege they were permanently on duty in the regiment commanded by Francis Taaffe, a lieutenant-general of Irish extraction. On two occasions in particular they displayed reckless bravery and a courage ready for the greatest sacrifices. The first time was on the occasion of the abortive attack of July 13th. The irregular nature of the orders for the attack were disapproved of by several foreign eye-witnesses, amongst others by Richards himself, and the results justified their misgivings. The martial spirit and recklessness of the troops were responsible for a great sacrifice of life. More than 40 noble volunteers fell and about 300 were severely wounded in this one unfortunate attack. Among the English killed were Duke Robert, the son of King Charles's illegitimate son, Mr. Wiseman, Mr. Moore and Captain Talbot, all scions of famous English families, whilst among the wounded were Colonel Forbes, Captain Belassis and Captain St. George, as well as Lord Saville, son of the Earl of Halifax, who later died of his wounds.

Their second important military feat, undertaken on August 14th, was a complete success. On August 12th the Grand Vizier Suliman arrived with a relieving army. A considerable part of this army attempted to gain entrance to the fortress. A detachment consisting mainly of volunteers under Count Taaffe and Baron Mercy, lieutenant-generals of artillery, played an important rôle in

¹ Jacob Richards, *A Journal of the Siege and Taking of Buda* by the Imperial Army. 1887.

² Dictionary of National Biography XLVIII. p. 213.

³ Arpad Karolyi, *Buda es Pest visszavivása 1686-ban*. p. 166.

⁴ Dictionary of National Biography. XIX. p. 178.

⁵ Történelmi Tár. 1894. pp. 135—141. Louis Kropf, *A Budavára 1686-iki ostrománál jelen volt angol önkéntesek*.

⁶ Dictionary of National Biography. p. 362.

repulsing this relieving force. Baron Mercy was one of the swiftest and most formidable artillery commanders. Followed by his men he threw himself on the galloping Turks, and his brave soldiers slaughtered so many of them that only three or four hundred of the three thousand Janissaries remained to tell the tale. It was no wonder that when they reported their defeat to the Grand Vizier, they said that they had "charged like Lions, but had been received by Devils".⁷ About fifty flags and pennants, eight cannon and a rich booty fell to the victors.⁸

The third and last attempt of the Grand Vizier to relieve the fortress was also frustrated by a daring cavalry movement led by Baron Mercy. It ended badly for him, however, for he died of a wound received in the head. His death was the greatest loss sustained by the English at the siege of Buda.⁹

September 2nd brought the long-awaited event. Buda again passed into Christian hands. All through the month of September thanksgiving services were held almost everywhere in Europe. In Vienna, Rome, Berlin, Paris and Madrid the firing of cannon, bonfires and memorial medals proclaimed the great victory. The news reached London on September 12th, and solemn Te Deums were sung in Whitehall and Windsor.¹⁰

The English volunteers bravely did their part in battle and shared in the glory of the victory. We owe a debt of gratitude to those foreign heroes who were led by a lofty ideal — the ideal which in the Middle Ages ruled in the hearts of all faithful Christians and inspired them with the glorious idea of the Crusades. They came from their distant country, ready to die for the faith, for the triumph of their ideals. It therefore behoves us to recall with reverence this little group of unknown heroes.

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CHAIR OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST CELEBRATES ITS FIRST JUBILEE

by

Dr. Stephen Ullmann

Just fifty years ago — on April 30th, 1886 — *Arthur J. Patterson* was appointed Extraordinary Professor of English Literature in the University of Budapest.

But, although no Chair of English was established in the University of Budapest until 1886, the teaching of English in that university can be traced as far back as the eighteenth century. In 1792 several Hungarian Counties (Pest, Zala, Csongrád) applied to the Government for English teachers. In 1823 John Lemouton, who was a Frenchman by birth, began to lecture in the University of Budapest on English; but his lectures were not systematic: and he did not even write regular reports on the results of his activity. It was not until 1849 that the teaching of English in Budapest University was officially begun, — and that was due to the efforts of Thun, Austrian Minister of Public Instruction. For some time, however, there was no separate Chair of English Philology; the teaching of the language was entrusted to private teachers (Lewis Egan); later on one of the private teachers (G. Dallos) obtained an appointment as "reader" or "Privat-Dozent".

The first really important event in the history of the Department of English in Budapest University was the establishment, just fifty years ago,

of a Chair of English Literature. Its first holder, Arthur J. Patterson, an M. A. of Cambridge, who was already Corresponding Fellow of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, remained an active professor until his death in 1898. Professor Patterson was well known as an authority on Hungary who had already rendered his adopted country eminent services as a publicist. His splendid library, now — through the courtesy of the University Library — in the possession of the Department of English, contains fine collections of poetical works and of scientific publications on language and literature.

From 1899 to 1908 *Arthur B. Yolland*, a graduate of Cambridge who subsequently proceeded to the degree of Phil. D. in the University of Budapest, functioned as lecturer. In 1908 he was appointed Extraordinary Professor of the English Language and Literature; in 1914 — just prior to the outbreak of the Great War — he was appointed Ordinarius and the Chair was made an ordinary chair.

During the past twenty years the Chair of English has developed rapidly and on a very considerable scale, as is shown clearly enough by the enormous increase in the number of students enrolled in the Department. This upswing is due primarily to the rapid headway made by English in

⁷ J. Richards, *A Journal of the Siege and Taking of Buda* . . . p. 32.

⁸ *Árpád Károlyi*, *Buda és Pest visszavétele 1686-ban*, p. 372.

⁹ J. Richards, *op. cit.* p. 36.

¹⁰ *John Evelyn's Diary*.