

## GREETINGS FROM HUNGARY TO THE FINN SISTER-NATION

**B**ecause of the war the Finnish nation, which is now engaged in a life and death struggle, celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its independence on a very modest scale. *Just when the Commemoration Service was about to begin, an alert was sounded and the service had to be continued in the shelter under the church.* This scene was symbolic of the life of the Finns, who have never been able to rejoice for long, because they have always had to fight for life, independence and liberty during all the bloody years of their romantic history. Much attention was accorded their present jubilee all the world by their friends and even by those who today are fighting on the side of Finland's enemies, but who in their hearts surely find it difficult to deny their sympathies to that gallant nation. It was perhaps in Hungary, however, that the flames of sympathy and understanding glowed brightest in the hearts of the people, for the two nations are kin, *and in many respects their destinies show a great similarity.* As in the case of the Magyars, the greatest historical achievement of the Finns is that *they have managed to remain in existence.* Like the Magyars, for generations the Finns fought and struggled for an independent national life, and during all these years of storm and stress it was the common people who suffered most and who deserve the credit of having preserved alive the nation, the language, the race.

In defending their independence and liberty against all aggressors both nations performed a mission in Europe. *It also fell to Hungary's lot to defend Western Europe with her own body against the dangers threatening Christian*

*civilization from the East.* The Finns, like the Magyars, are a hardy race, but we find colour, form and lyrical beauty in the poems of *Vajnamöjem* as well as in *Petőfi's* and in *Sibelius's "Finlandia"* as well as in *Kodály's "Psalmus Hungaricus"*.

In number the Finns, like the Magyars, are a small nation among the great nations of Europe, but any nation, however small, with a history is entitled to be respected and esteemed just like the great nations. *Hungary has acquired this right by virtue of her existence as a State in Europe for a thousand years, a factor that helped to preserve the European balance of power and made Hungary the self-sacrificing defender of the West against the encroachments of the East. The Finns, a nation whose lot was harder still, acquired it by their struggle through centuries of cruel oppression that steeled their wills and hardened their resolution to achieve independence, which they did only twenty-five years ago.*

For long, long years the little Finn nation was oppressed, first by the Swedes, then by the Russians; but they were never reconciled to their fate and never acquiesced in the loss of their independence. "*Nem, nem soha!*" (no, no never!) was also the slogan of the Finns, and all the infinite might of Russia, her indifference to the sufferings of others and her cruel oppression were powerless to extinguish the flame of independence and freedom in the hearts of the Finnish people. Again and again, even when resistance seemed a forlorn hope, the Finns, unbroken in spirit, sacrificed themselves and resisted. *This little nation is just as deserving of respect as the great nations, because its history shows it to be a self-respecting people.*

*Like that of the Magyars, the history of the Finns is one unbroken series of struggles for freedom and independence. Few nations have such a long muster-roll of heroes and martyrs as these two sister-nations, and very few have*

been able to preserve amidst all the cruel blows of fate an unswerving resolution to be free and independent as have the Magyars in their thousand-year old State and the Finns independent now for twenty-five years. *Both nations have always fought for Europe, for Western ideals and for Christianity. For these they have suffered and famously conquered.*

Twenty-five years ago Finland arose out of the ruins of Czarist Russia. She threw off the yoke of the Red régime against which she has been repeatedly forced ever since to defend her existence, integrity and independence. Like its kindred, the Magyars, this brave little nation has proved itself to be a great nation, *for great is the nation whose history is so inspiring, so glorious, so exemplary and so eloquent of a will to live.* In the garden of European nations these two blossom with a colour all their own: their existence represents one of Europe's most precious moral values; without them the spectrum of the civilization of the white races would be incomplete.