

Notes

Page 1 – *Who he was*: the Lubomirskis were Polish princes and landowners whose property in Hungary included Podolin, which is itself now part of Slovakia. In the early seventeenth century Jerzy (George) Lubomirski set up various charitable foundations.

Page 16 – *sumach trees*: the sumach is a shrub or small tree of the genus *Rhus*. Certain kinds of sumach are indigenous to southern Europe and are used in the tanning process.

Page 21 – *Kaiser Baths*: the *Császár fürdő*. Many of the baths of Budapest are a legacy of the Ottoman occupation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Kaiser Baths in Buda comprised Turkish baths and steam chambers. They are still open and in use today.

Page 27 – *Fisherman's Bastion*: The Fisherman's Bastion or *Halászbástya* is the mock-Romanesque fortress constructed between 1890–1905 on the hill top next to the Royal Palace overlooking the Danube. It provides romantic walks and panoramic views across the river.

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Page 45 – *the guard dog is called Tisza, after the river*: the Tisza, ‘the slothful Hungarian Nile’ according to the nineteenth-century novelist Kálmán Mikszáth, is one of the two great rivers of Hungary. It runs through central and southern Hungary and joins the Danube between Novi Sad and Belgrade.

Page 47 – *tarlatan*: thin stiff muslin.

Page 55 – *Eperjes*: now Prešov in Slovakia, but in Krúdy’s time it was the capital town of Sáros county in Hungary.

Page 60 – *the Great Bercsényi inn*: Count László Bercsényi (1689–1778), Marshal of France, was born in Eperjes. He founded the French Hussars. His father, Miklós, before him had been one of the most influential generals in Ferenc Rákóczi II’s army. Rákóczi (1676–1735), Prince of Transylvania, led ultimately unsuccessful wars of liberation against the Austrians. His grave has long been an object of pilgrimage for Hungarians.

Page 63 – *Pancsova*: a town in Greater Hungary, now part of Yugoslavia, some ten miles from Belgrade, scene of Austrian victory over the Turks in 1739, and over the Hungarians in 1849.

Page 68 – *blue-dye man*: blue-dyeing is a traditional peasant craft and provides the basic colour for skirts, headscarves and other items of clothing.

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Page 69 – *the White Woman of Lőcse*: Mór Jókai's novel, *A lőcsei fehérasszony* ('The White Woman of Lőcse') appeared in 1885. It is about the end of the Rákóczi campaign (see note to p. 60) in 1711. The central character is based upon the historical figure of Julianna Géczy, who betrayed the town of Lőcse, now in Slovakia, to the Austrians, and was consequently tortured and beheaded. A painting of her as a woman dressed in white was displayed at the town gates.

Page 74 – *half-crazed Jewesses*: Krúdy himself married a Jewish woman (see Introduction), and he wrote a defence of Jews accused of blood crimes.

Page 81 – *Kisfaludy*: Károly Kisfaludy (1788–1830) was the younger brother of the poet Sándor Kisfaludy (1772–1844). He wrote melodramatic plays and comedies as well as short stories and lyric poetry. His short stories focus on romantic subjects, but incorporate satirical elements.

Page 82 – *Liska*: pet form of Julia or Juliska.

Page 86 – *The body of St Ladislav being carried on a wagon*: St Ladislav, King of Hungary from c. 1040–95, founded bishoprics and was a hero of the wars against the pagans. He was canonised in 1192.

Page 86 – *the Matthias Church*: the Church of the Blessed Virgin in Buda. One of Hungary's most impor-

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tant and illustrious kings, King Matthias Corvinus (ruled 1458–90), was married here. In 1896 it was restored by Frigyes Schulek.

Page 86 – *King Béla*: King Béla III (1148–96) ruled Hungary from 1172 to his death. His remains were brought to the Matthias Church in 1848.

Page 90 – *Baron Miklós Jósika*: Baron Miklós Jósika (1794–1865), Transylvanian author, was regarded as the founder of the historical novel in Hungary, also its foremost theorist.

Page 97 – *Euphrosyne*: Krúdy calls her Fruzsina, the Hungarian equivalent. The name was popular in the eighteenth century.

Page 106 – *Kisfaludy*: see note to p. 81. Could be either of the brothers, possibly the elder.

Page 110 – *the Tabán district*: The Tabán, now mostly demolished for reasons of hygiene, was one of the oldest districts on the Buda side of the Danube, full of inns and restaurants.

Page 120 – *Aranykéz Street*: *Aranykéz utca*, means literally ‘Goldenhand Street’. A street in Budapest.

Page 188 – *Petőfi*: Sándor Petőfi (1823–49) is Hungary’s national Romantic poet in much the same way as Burns is Scotland’s and was born at Kiskőrös in the

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Hungarian Lowlands. His songs, ballads, sketches of village life and revolutionary lyrics are central to the Hungarian consciousness. It was his recitation of the *Nemzeti Dal* (National Song) from the steps of the National Museum that is thought to have sparked the 1848 revolution. He is traditionally supposed to have been killed in battle against the Russians at Segesvár (now Sighisoara, Romania), but his body was never found and some think that he might have been captured by the Russians and died in exile in Siberia.

Page 188 – *Aladár Benedek*: poet and editor, born in 1843, made his name in the 1860s and 1870s. An oppositional figure, he was the subject of official criticism which eventually silenced him. He died in 1915.

Page 189 – *Carthusian Meditations*: Baron József Eötvös's novel *A Karthauzi* (1839) ('The Carthusian') is set in France. The disappointed hero joins the Carthusian order.