

THE
• HISTORY OF THE
HUNGARIAN
BOOK-TRADE



BY J. WIESNER

PUBLISHED BY THE ORGANIZING-
COMMITTEE OF THE EIGHTH SES-
SION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLISHERS' CONGRESS, BUDAPEST
1913.

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OSZK

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

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THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK-TRADE is closely connected with the history of literature and culture, of which it might be called the complement. This is always the case and also here in Hungary, although our book-trade has not always kept pace with the development of literature. The history of our literature showed quite a number of intellectual leaders of the national genius, whose works and poetry were prominent when our book-trade was still in its infancy. Charles Kisfaludy published the almanac of polite literature called «Aurora» in the year 1832. In 1825 Count Stephen Széchenyi founded the Hungarian Academy of Science; quite a number of poets and writers devoted themselves to literature, showing great talent and enthusiasm. Francis Kazinczy, the two Kisfaludys, Michel Vörösmarty, Francis Toldi, Joseph Bajza, and later on John Arany and Alexander Petőfi give us an idea of the development of literary life in their writings. And yet we read in the biography of Charles Geibel, that when he opened his shop in the year 1841, his was only the ninth. There were eight firms engaged in the book-trade besides his own, such as Joseph Eggenberger and Son, Adolphus K. Hartleben, Augustus Heckenast, Sigismund Ivanits (the latter principally a second-hand book-shop) Kilian & Co., Kilian & Weber, Joseph Leyrer and Joseph Müller. Still more characteristic items showing the true condition of our book-trade at that time can be found amongst the numbers of the «Börsenblatt» for 1842. Joseph Benczur, the owner of a book-shop in Eperjes at that time writes: «In Hungary and Transylvania 15,330,000 souls live (1842) on an area of 5902 geographical square miles, that is 2600 to every square mile. Not more than 30 proper book-shops are to be found in this large region, blessed as it is with nature's abundant gifts, as we do not count some smaller bookbinders and general stores in the provinces, which also sell books. Therefore one can say that every single bookshop has a sphere of action ranging over 200 square miles and their customers average more than 500,000 souls. By «proper book-shop» was understood in those days one which, besides in

Budapest kept a representative in Leipzig, or at least in Vienna also. ☞ At this backwardness in the matter of book-shops we need not wonder. This epoch was the era of the renaissance of our literature, which owes its origin to the superhuman exertions of a few authors. To popularise this literature of mushroom growth, and to procure an appreciative public for it, is a thing that needs time.

☞ The Hungarian book-trade has all the more reason to be proud of its past, having successfully emerged from the struggle for the Hungarian book, and if we consider the 10,000,000 Hungarian inhabitants (meaning the Hungarian-speaking people) it has created a strong phalanx for the Hungarian book which gives it a right to look into the future with hope and confidence. The foundation is laid, the ground has been paved.

☞ I will now turn to the past of the Hungarian book-trade and show the results of our work during the last fifty years. The first thing that strikes me in doing this, is, that most of the pioneers of the Hungarian book-trade were Germans and that the German book, and the German intellect have governed our whole organism during long decades. Most of the institutions of our book-trade, the organisation of our co-operative association, the paragraphs of our statutes are all constructed after the German pattern. I am not ashamed to own this, because at the time when our ancestors looked up to the German pattern, it was also seen that we have found sincere confederates in our German colleagues, who had come into our country, and promoted the interests of the Hungarian book-trade with the noblest intentions.

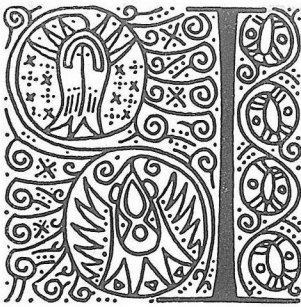
☞ In the year 1842 there were, as already mentioned hardly more than 30 booksellers in Hungary. But even 50 years ago there were not many more in the whole country. During the two following decades the situation has hardly changed. One can hardly speak of a trade in Hungarian books before the sixties. Of course there were Hungarian booksellers, but even if we take into consideration the conditions then obtaining, only a very small proportion of Hungarian books were published in those days. At the time of the War of Independence of 1848 the movement started by Wigand, Heckenast, Landerer and Emich came to a standstill.

☞ In the midst of the flood of the great political events, which had such influence on the future of the country, the greater part of the cultured people had no time to occupy themselves with books. It was the time of the sword and not of the pen. But in the era of Bach, that time of oppression, the vexations of the censorship to a great extent suppressed the publication and the circulation of books. The Hungarian book-trade, as a propagator of national culture, suffered the most under the oppression of absolutism, because here one soonest had to fear the reawakening of the spirit of liberty and only after the absolutism had come to an end was new life infused into the Hungarian book-trade. Those who had higher literary tastes and who were not content with the almanac and magazine literature were obliged to have resort to foreign and German books. But there were also booksellers and publishers, Gustav Emich for example, who, at first, out of patriotism kept no German books in stock at all and foreign books were only supplied on demand.

☞ With the disappearance of the era of absolutism the dawn of the Hungarian book-trade began. In the Bach period Heckenast still supplied German schools with his editions, but towards the end of the fifties, the other branches of his business also began to make progress, and when in the year 1873 he transferred his business to the Franklin Company, to continue for the future his publishing career in Pozsony, he was already able to hand over nearly 1000 (919 to be exact) Hungarian editions to the undertaking. The first national book-shop opened, and known under the name of «Augustus Emich», deserves very great merit for spreading Hungarian culture. Emich was the first of Petőfi's publishers. We bring this fact into prominence, because at that time the publishing of Petőfi's poems was considered to be a crime. Round Augustus Emich are henceforth grouped the greatest of Hungarian writers: Maurice Jókai, Baron Joseph Eötvös, Baron Sigismund Kemény, Baron Nicholas Jósika, John Arany, John Vajda, Vas Gereben. In the year 1862 Emich published the «Tragedy of Man» (Az ember tragédiája) by Emerich Madách and had translations made of the choicest works of foreign polite literature, such as the works of Dickens, Bulwer and Dumas. But he also published works of science and the works of Armin Vámbéry,

Michael Horváth and Max Falk appeared in one of his publications. He founded newspapers and one of his Papers the «Pesti Napló», which can boast of counting Francis Deák amongst its contributors, played a decisive role in the Treaty of 1867. He also founded a new printing works and together with that of Landerer's, Emich's printing works was the first Hungarian printing works to reach a really European standard. In the year 1867, the Coronation year, after the differences between the King and the Nation had been settled, he published the édition de luxe dedicated to the King entitled: «Marci chronica de gestis Hungarorum», a real masterpiece of the typography of the time.

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IN THE YEAR OF THE TREATY (1867) the country felt itself freed from a great weight. There was a gratifying revival of industry, trade, art, and literature. The Hungarian book-trade also began to revive at this time. This is the starting point of the second period of the history of the Hungarian book-trade. A quieter and more peaceful epoch follows the period of the pioneers, the time of development, which period almost lasts till the nineties. Every bookseller was at the same time a publisher. Bookselling firms arose one after the other, and moreover kept abreast of the literary aspirations. The time was come for the bookseller to lend wings to literary activity. From this moment the real life of the book-trade may be said to have started. And although several booksellers' businesses were already established in the earlier decades, such as Charles Geibel's in 1841, Maurice Rath's in 1857 and Charles Osterlamm's also in 1857, nevertheless the intensive growth of the Hungarian book-trade only dates from the year 1867.

☞ Both in the Capital and in the Provinces a long list of booksellers' firms were established :

- ☞ Louis Aigner (1868),
- ☞ Frederick Kilián (1869) formerly Frederick Kilián & Co. (1863),
- ☞ Dobrowski & Franke (1869),
- ☞ Julius Benkő (1883) formerly. Ferdinand Tettey & Co. (1871),
- ☞ Samuel Zilahy (1872),
- ☞ Louis Kókai (1873),
- ☞ Charles Stampfel (1873),
- ☞ Gustavus Grimm (1877),
- ☞ Otto Nagel (1878),
- ☞ Bernard Nagel (1866), formerly Nagel & Wischan, (1861),
- ☞ Sigismund Robicsek (1880),
- ☞ Singer & Wolfner (1885),
- ☞ Sigismund Deutsch & Co (1887), and many others. The transformation of the bookselling firms of Gustavus Emich (1868) and Gustavus

Heckenast (1873) into limited liability companies also occurred during this period. The former became the Athenaeum and the latter the Franklin Company. In this period too, (1874) Philip Wodianer acquired the business of Robert Lampel. This growth lasted about a quarter of a century, so that the Hungarian Booksellers Year-Book for 1891 already contained the names of 215 booksellers proper, who figured as members of the Society of Hungarian Booksellers, not counting the smaller stationers and bookbinders, who are also engaged in the sale of books and almanachs. The number of professional booksellers in the country had therefore increased fivefold in the period from 1867—1890, as there were scarcely more than 50 professional booksellers in the country before the year 1867. Maurice Ráth, Samuel Révai, Louis Aigner, Robert Lampel, William Mehner and another long list of Hungarian booksellers, have continued building on the foundation laid by Wigand, Geibel, Hartleben and Heckenast. They went so far that in the seventies some enthusiastic booksellers with Samuel Révai and Louis Aigner, those prominent figures of the Hungarian book trade, who have rendered Hungarian literature such estimable services also with their pens, at their head, were already occupying their minds with the idea of an association.

☞ In the year 1878 in fact the first Society was founded, with the noble task, which forms the object of all unions, of bringing colleagues nearer to one another, so that within the limits of an association they can effectually protect their individual and business interests. The first President of the Club was Ferdinand Pfeiffer, and after his death in 1886 he was succeeded by Louis Aigner, at that time Vice-President. In the year 1889 Alfred Hoffmann became head of the Society and since the decease of Hoffmann in the year 1905 Julius Benkő has been our President.

☞ It would be very interesting indeed, to dwell longer upon the history of the book-trade of these last twenty-five years, from 1861—1892, as it would yield us the topic to a very valuable history of the civilization of that period, but we know only too well, that for our foreign colleagues only the most important and prominent data are of interest. But if we are not in the position to present a full picture of that epoch, yet it will throw a clear light on the movements of the

Hungarian book-trade if we commemorate some of the most deserving and of the most celebrated men of the period, who by their exertions gave quite a new direction to the Hungarian book-trade and at the same time to Hungarian culture.

☞ Maurice Ráth's book-shop was opened in the year of 1857, but the prime years of his activity as a publisher were after the Settlement-Treaty of 1867. He was a Hungarian bookseller of European education and farseeing views, who also had great influence on the literary movements of the fifties and sixties. His book-shop was the meeting-place of the most distinguished figures of Hungarian literary and political circles and his editions embraced the most beautiful creations of Hungarian literature and poetry.

☞ Besides the works of John Arany and Baron Joseph Eötvös, Vörösmarty, Tompa and Koloman Tóth, we find the illustrated Shakespeare edition with Gilbert illustrations, the beautifully got up Autobiography, Stanley's book of travels, Holub, Hübner and Count Samuel Teleki and besides these some of the master pieces of foreign polite literature such as: Tolstoi's «War and Peace», several volumes by Ebers, Maupassant, Halévy, etc.

☞ In the year of 1858 he founded the Budapest Review (Budapesti Szemle) edited by Anton Csengery. These elegant editions combined with the beautiful and tasteful binding extended the reputation of Maurice Ráth in a wide circle and even added a certain nimbus to his already great name. In order to make a book desirable it was quite sufficient if it bore Maurice Ráth's name as publisher. His editions were also a pattern in respect of get-up and even at the present day Ráth's editions are considered among the most beautiful of Hungarian books. Maurice Ráth brought out an edition of the Hungarian laws in octavo as well as pocket editions in quite an exemplary get-up and this firm still publishes these editions in the very same binding to-day.

☞ The greatest and boldest enterprise of Maurice Ráth was the illustrated fac-simile edition of Arany's Ballads. The magnificent text decorated with initials, and the charming pictures by Michael Zichy are worthy of these ballads, but no less so the style and finish in which Ráth produced the work.

☞ If the designation «Publisher of Petőfi» is put after the name of Gustavus Emich, Maurice Ráth also certainly deserves to be honoured as the «Publisher of Arany».

☞ Ten years later, in the year of 1868 another very well qualified book-seller, Lewis Aigner, opened a book-shop together with Frederick Rautmann of Cologne, which partnership however, was dissolved after the elapse of a year. Lewis Aigner left behind him deep and beneficial traces of his activity. Though his shop only existed for the brief space of 29 years, yet he was one of the most popular and remarkable book-sellers and publishers, who enriched the Hungarian book-trade with many valuable creations.

☞ Under the title of «National Library» «Nemzeti Könyvtár» he prepared a critical edition of the older Hungarian Classics which appeared in 42 stout volumes. After the pattern of the Reclam Library he published the «Magyar Könyvesház» «Hungarian Book-Gems», which appeared in 150 booklets. Aigner also displayed a very ardent activity in the field of literature. With his studies «About Ballads» and «About Elegies» he won two prizes given by the Kisfaludy Society. The Petőfi Society chose him as a member. By this means he came into closest contact with the most famous figures of the Hungarian literary world and so arranged a whole series of editions of polite literature. In the year of 1871 he founded the literary organ «Figyelő» «Observer» which he edited through 13 years under the name of Abafi. Besides, since 1884 he himself edited the historical magazine «Hazánk» «Our native land», wrote the history of Hungarian Freemasonry in five volumes, a valuable work about «The Butterflies of Hungary» which was edited by the Hungarian Society of Natural Science, and yet found spare time for translating a part of Petőfi's poems into German. But in spite of this immense, superhuman, enthusiastic and indefatigable activity he could not avoid the fate of all Hungarian publishers; he was faced with the alternative of either forming a joint stock company or amalgamating with another existing firm. Alas! Lewis Aigner was compelled to do the latter. Very many of his editions, each one more beautiful and precious than the other, fell into the hands of the second hand booksellers. The «Nemzeti Könyvtár» was taken over by Révai Bro-

thers. The business itself, though, was entirely dissolved in the year 1896 to the greatest sorrow of all interested in the endeavours of the Hungarian book-trade and Hungarian literature.

☞ A companion well worthy of Lewis Aigner and Maurice Ráth is Samuel Révai. His has been a remarkable career. Only in the year 1846 he was still apprentice to a bookbinder in Eperjes, yet in 1859 he already took over the Völker book-shop, which was founded there in the year 1834 by Joseph Benczur. In 1869 he opened a book-shop in Budapest. In the 32nd number of the *Corvina* of the year 1908 we can read: «He was a true bookseller, who in his shop did not only sell books but also spread literature. He knew all the books that came into his shop, and for each deserving work, whether literary or scientific, he paved the way right willingly with words and deeds to its destination, where it could serve the high purposes of culture. In these few words we find the real bookseller depicted, we should like best to show him as an example to the present generation, and say: «The real and genuine bookseller must be like Samuel Révai has been.»

☞ He managed his Budapest book-shop with great care and conscientiousness and in the eighties he occupied himself in arranging publications. In the eighties and nineties a whole range of valuable editions emanating from his house were presented to the public. One of the best planned, and from the booksellers point of view the cleverest undertaking of Samuel Révai was the sale of the great work «Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia írásban és képen» (The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in words and pictures) which appeared under the Patronage of the late Crown Prince Rudolf and was edited by Maurice Jókai. The success gained by this work — there were about 25,000 copies sold, — made the firm of Révai famous at one blow throughout the whole country, and enlarged the business to an unexpected extent. Révai retired from business in the year 1895, and left the management of it to his sons, but he was far from resorting to idleness yet. He wrote his celebrated book entitled «A társadalmi jólét kezdetei» (The Beginnings of Social Welfare) a social political work which was also translated into German and received with universal recognition of its merits both by the foreign and home press.

☞ In the year 1872 there was another German, who with a firm hand and true business instinct left a deep impress on the history of the Hungarian book-trade, this was William Mehner. He was the first Hungarian publisher, who having learnt wisdom from the success of trashy literature, applied the system of circulation by means of booklets and by sending agents from door to door, to the sale of more valuable productions also. He obtained from the Athenaeum the privilege of issuing Petőfi's poems in booklet form, and thus was the first to open a way for the greatest of Hungarian lyrical poets to the heart of the people, where his genius had always longed to be.

☞ These illustrated booklets were sold at 4 *d.* and 7 *d.* each, and reached a third edition in but a very short space of years. This great success animated Mehner to proceed farther along the path he had taken. In quick succession there appeared the «History of the World» by Ribáry, and simultaneously the successful work of Spamer in eight volumes, then the translation of the great geographical work of Hellwald. «The Earth and its Peoples» in five volumes, and an edition of the writings of Lewis Kossuth compressed into very narrow limits, in sixpenny booklets. Soon afterwards he acquired the copyrights of the works of Vörösmarty, Tompa, Garai and Vas Gereben, which he likewise edited in 6 *d.* and 8 *d.* booklets.

☞ His footsteps were followed by other publishers with more or less success, among whom we especially have to emphasize Frederic Rautmann, who founded the illustrated magazine «Ország Világ» (Country and World) edited at 8 *d.* a copy, which for those days was got up in a magnificent way. This magazine was succeeded by an edition of Flammarion's Astronomy and a large sized Hungarian-French dictionary. His most valuable enterprise was the edition of a Hungarian Encyclopedia in 16 volumes issued in separate parts at 6 *d.* a copy. But alas! for the conditions of the book-trade of that age, they were not adapted and ripe enough for the distribution of so great an undertaking, and as Rautmann was compelled to leave the completion of the Encyclopedia to others for want of the necessary capital, it took about ten years till that work was completed, and then moreover greatly to the detriment of its quality. This work did not prove a success, — either from a ma-

terial or a from literary point of view. — Rautmann's business was converted into the literary and typographical joint stock company «Pallas» which was founded in 1884.

☞ Next we have to mention a particularly sympathetic figure of the Hungarian book-trade, Alfred Hoffman, the late proprietor of Eggenberger's book-shop. It seems to us as if he were still living and working with us and as though with his puritan and attractive being, with his kindness and affability he were still keeping watch over us.

☞ In the year 1768 John George Weigandt founded the present Eggenberger book-shop which was taken over by Alfred Hoffmann in the year 1863. In the year 1865 John Molnár joined the business as a partner. On the death of John Molnár, Alfred Hoffman became the sole proprietor of the business. In the year 1800 Joseph Eggenberger became a partner of the business, which ever since has been carried on under the name of «Eggenberger's book-shop», which title it has now borne for nearly 113 years. Alfred Hoffmann remained the proprietor of this business, which in later years he carried on as a strictly retail book-shop. A few years ago his editions passed into the possession of the Athenaeum Co. Ltd.

☞ Originally Alfred Hoffmann had intended to become an artist and studied for this career, but having been informed of his uncle Ferdinand Eggenberger's serious ill health, he returned to Budapest in 1859 and took over the management of Eggenberger's book-shop.

☞ The «Eggenbergerianum», as his contemporaries designated the book-shop, was the rendezvous of the most famous Hungarian savants, pedagogues, physicians, jurists and philologists. Since the year 1864 about 150 juristical, 16 medical, and a whole range of mathematical, linguistical and natural science works have been published, besides a whole series of school books. Only polite literature was not cultivated, the intention being to serve educational purposes.

☞ The past history of the firm, extending as it does over 100 years, or since its foundation 140 years, furnishes in itself an imposing chapter in the history of modern culture, which throws a brilliant light on the long and arduous struggles of Hungarian culture and the Hungarian book-trade. Alfred Hoffmann faithfully preserved the traditions which

had been followed in their careers by Weigandt, Wigand, Heckenast and Emich. His memory will live unfaded in our hearts, as the pattern of an honest, noble, generous, and genuine book dealer.

☞ We have intentionally lingered longer over the prominent figures of this period, because we felt that they fought for ideals and were the most significant representatives of the period in which they pursued their activities. We can only form an idea of what the Hungarian book-trade has achieved in these 25 years, when we also associate the remarkable activity of Heckenast, later on the Franklin Company and Gustavus Emich, afterwards the Athenaeum Company Ltd., with these men. That was the time when publishers and retail book-sellers worked hand in hand, the publisher found a true confrère in the bookseller and so they trod the path of progress and success together, supporting and understanding each other.

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IN THE YEAR 1885 THE FIRST instalment system business, engaged in the sale of books, was opened in Budapest. This was the firm of Aufrecht & Goldschmidt. At first the Hungarian book-trade looked upon this undertaking with mistrust, and in the beginning the firm figured only as the representative of the firm of Bial & Freund, of Breslau. However in the year 1889 Maurice Ráth, and later on Wilhelm Mehner also opened an account with this firm, and from this time the instalment system of selling books may be said to have started its career in Hungary, completely changing the organisation of the Hungarian book-trade, and giving its development an entirely different direction. If the title of pioneer is the due of the firm of Aufrecht & Goldschmidt, the merit of having made the instalment system popular belongs mainly to the firm of Révai Brothers, for this firm was the first that really commenced circulating Hungarian literary productions on a large scale, by means of the instalment system. In the year 1893 the first great undertaking based on the instalment system came into being, namely the Pallas Encyclopedia. The first volume appeared in the same year, and the work was finished in a few years. Up to date about 28,000 copies of the work, which comprised 16 volumes, to which two complementary volumes were added, representing a total of about half a million volumes, have been turned into cash. The artistically coloured supplement, and the maps contained in the work were mostly produced in Budapest. The Pallas Encyclopedia has to thank its unexampled circulation in Hungary to the firms of Aufrecht & Goldschmidt and Révai Brothers. Scarcely 3000 to 4000, out of the 28,000 copies, have been disposed of by other booksellers. The encyclopedia was the first of a whole series of most beautiful productions, all founded on the basis of the instalment system, so that the sum for which books have been sold for payment in instalments of 1s./8d. to 2s./6d. since the appearance of the Pallas Encyclopedia, can be quite safely estimated at 4 million pounds sterling. The instalment system has lent wings to the book-trade. The Franklin

Company, the Athenaeum, Singer & Wolfner, Révai Brothers and the book publishing firm of Grill, have produced quite epoch-making enterprises which will remain for all time the foundation of the Hungarian book-trade and literature, magnificent and imposing achievements, which were for the most part personally initiated by the publishers concerned. At the head of all must be placed the National complete edition of the works of Maurice Jókai in 100 volumes, published by Révai Brothers. This complete edition is such a vast literary enterprise that we can scarcely find a greater, even among the wealthiest foreign literature. About 9000 copies of this National complete edition of Jókai's works have been sold at £ 20 each, which represents a total sum of £ 180.000.

☞ The publishers seemed to be having a regular race, and one publication followed the other. The Franklin Company published the «Magyar Remekírók» (Hungarian Classics) in 55 volumes, which were followed by the «Magyar Regényírók» (Hungarian Novelists) in 60 volumes. Of the former, about 7000, of the latter 5000 sets were sold. One of the most valuable enterprises of the Franklin Company is the «Corpus Juris», a millennium edition of the Hungarian laws, which encompassed all the laws in force and by means of a slip system attached to all the volumes subsequently issued, it was possible to keep the book permanently up to date, by adding to the obsolete laws such as had been changed or newly passed. Among the more important editions there still remain to be noted, the edition of a great Literary History of the World in 5 volumes, a History of Art in 4 volumes, and the word entitled «A Magyar Nép Művészete» («The Art of the Hungarian People») in 5 volumes.

☞ The book-selling establishment of Robert Lampel-Wodianer prepared an edition of the classics entitled «Remekírók Képes Könyvtára» (Illustrated Library of the Classics) in 50 volumes in which we already find all the foreign classics such as: Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Shakespeare, as well as translations of the Roman and Greek classics, Homer, Virgil, etc. About 18,000 sets of this collection were sold.

☞ Révai Brothers — apart from the great national edition of Jókai — have gathered into their editions the works of Joseph Eötvös, Koloman

Mikszáth, Victor Rákosi, Lewis Abonyi, Zoltán Ambrus and Charles Eötvös, and have moreover edited a great History of the World in 12 volumes under the title «Nagy Képes Világtörténet» (Great Illustrated History of the World.) About two years ago they began the publication of «Révai Nagy Lexikon» (Révai's Great Encyclopedia) of which so far about 22,000 copies have been sold. They have crowned their far-reaching activity with the publication of «Klasszikus Regénytár» (The library of Classical Novels) in 60 volumes of 25 to 30 printed sheets at the price of 3s/4d per volume. Of this work, which contains the translations of the best novels in the world's literature, about 6500 copies have been sold. «Magyar Kereskedők Könyvtára» (Hungarian Merchants' Library) of which about 5000 copies have found their way into the hands of the public, likewise appeared among the publications of Révai Brothers.

☛ The publishing Company «Athenaeum» has also enriched the Hungarian book-trade with several monumental works. Amongst others Szilágyi's «A Magyar Nemzet Története» (History of the Hungarian Nation) is one of its publications. This work contains 400 printed sheets in ten volumes and has numerous pictorial supplements. The ten volumes cost about £ 6-10 and nearly 18,000 complete copies have been sold. At the present moment there is another epochmaking work undergoing the process of publication in the Athenaeum, «A Műveltség Könyvtára» (The Library of Education) of which 11 volumes have appeared so far. The whole work is planned for 12 octavo volumes, of 40 to 45 printed sheets, and contains the description and discussion of all the sciences in separate volumes. Up to date about 15,000 copies have been sold. The complete work costs £ 12. The great illustrated History of Hungarian Literature was also published by the «Athenaeum» and about 10,000 copies have been put into circulation so far.

☛ The Firm of Singer & Wolfner also participates in the great work. It edited the valuable work of Béla Tóth «A Magyar Anekdótakincs» (The Treasury of Hungarian Anecdote) in 6 v., and the great geographical work of Dr. Francis Gáspár in 6 v., of which about 17,000 copies have been sold within three years. The firm has also gathered together the works of Dick Gárdonyi, Francis Herczeg and Alexander Bródy.

☞ Within a twelve-month the firm will commence the publication of a series of book called «Carrierek» (Careers), designed to appear in ten volumes and to contain the biographies of famous men. It was within the compass of this collection that a complete biography of the Rothschilds appeared for the first time in the literature of the world. The translation rights of this interesting work have been acquired by German, English, and other firms.

☞ In considering the publishing activities of the firm of Singer & Wolfner, we are desirous of making special mention of «Forradalom és Császárság» (Revolution and Empire), a work begun in 1912, which is to comprise the history of the Great French Revolution, and of Napoleon, in 8 volumes.

☞ The firm of Légrády Brothers has published a revised edition of Brehm's «Animal Life» in 10 volumes.

☞ In the field of judicial literature special merit was won by the book publishing firm of Grill, which acquired the Pulitzer Editions and thereby specialised, so to say, in the publication and circulation of juridical works by means of the instalment system.

☞ The national Monographical Society (Országos Monografia Társaság) also chose the History of the French Revolution as the subject of a publishing enterprise on a large scale, which was entitled «A Nagy Francia Forradalom és Napoleon» (The Great French Revolution and Napoleon). The work appeared in 5 volumes, with about 200 art supplements, at a retail price of £ 5. The sales thus far already exceed 5000 copies. This same firm also published the 10 volume work of Count Alexander Vay, a depicor of Hungarian society life in past centuries. The publishing activity of the Monographical Society was crowned however by its collection of the counties of Hungary, of which collection 22 large, richly illustrated and magnificently got-up volumes have so far appeared. The still missing 41 county monographs are in course of preparation for the press.

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☞ In discussing the subject of business on the instalment system we must bear in mind the «Könyves Kálmán Magyar Műkiadó Rész=

vénytársaság» (Hungarian Art Publishing Co., Ltd.), which likewise has to thank the instalment system for its successes. The company was founded in the year 1891 and made its sole aim the artistic reproduction and distribution of the creations of Hungarian painters. The first picture, which they reproduced was Michael Munkácsy's «Honfoglalás» («The First Invasion» or «The occupation of the land»), which decorates the homes of many thousands of Hungarian families. This first picture was followed by a whole series of splendid historical paintings. In this way numerous schools and institutions were enabled to procure the most celebrated creations of many first rate historical painters in faithful reproductions. This company drove out of the market, with a remorseless hand, the old primitive colour prints, and the so-called originals, produced in real factory fashion, and lacking all artistic value, which naturally greatly promoted the improvement of the public taste with regard to art. The Company displayed quite an exceptional activity in the distribution of reproductions of such creations of Hungarian art as had representations from the dominion of the church or Scriptures as subjects.

☞ The Company also did effective service to the art of sculpture by the distribution of famous reliefs and art plates. The number of its editions so far exceeds 700. Besides artistic reproductions the society made the distribution of original creations of Hungarian artists an item in its programme. Its exhibitions, which in the beginning were confined to modest limits, were laid on a broad foundation, since in 1906 their exhibiting salon, where the collective exhibits of the best painters were to be seen, was considerably enlarged.

☞ The Exhibiting Salon of the Society now forms a permanent object of public interest.

☞ Although we try to avoid quoting statistics, all the same in one or two places we have intentionally mentioned the number of copies sold. By doing so we want to prove, on the one hand the enormous power of the payment by instalment system, and on the other hand to show the beneficial influence which it has had on literature, trade and industry. Moreover we also wanted to furnish thereby a proof of the excellence of the Hungarian publishers, who not only started these

enterprises, but also took an active and leading part in editorial work. But of course this enormous production and immense circulation have also their drawback, the decline of the retail book-trade. Those who have attentively read these lines, are sure to have discovered the explanation of the present situation of the Hungarian book trade, indeed the events follow each other in quite a logical succession. William Mehner laid the foundation of the Hungarian cheap literature business, but in proportion as the instalment system of selling books gains ground, the circulation of unbound books loses in importance, and this is only natural, because if by paying monthly instalments of 2^s/= or 3^s/= we can get a work, already bound, of the value of £ 4—8^s we certainly shall prefer this to buying the unbound books separately for, 6 d each. The natural result of the development of the instalment system business is also the decay of the retail book-trade and although the number of retail businesses increases from year to year, we can state with confidence that the Hungarian Booksellers Union admits 20 to 25 new members every year, and although Kilián, Ferdinand Pfeiffer, Maurice Ráth, the Court bookseller Grill, Robert Lampel's retail business, Gustavus Katz, Rózsavölgyi & Co., Otto Vogel jr., Eggenberger, Singer & Wolfner, the bookselling firm of Toldi, as well as quite a number of important provincial retail booksellers, still shine in their old glory, and work with undiminished success, nevertheless there is a certain depression to be noticed which lies like a dead weight on the Hungarian book-trade.

☛ We understand this depression, and we ourselves feel that the retail business has suffered heavily both directly and indirectly on account of the introduction of the instalment system of selling books. Directly, because the instalment system has robbed the retail business of some of its buyers, and indirectly, because the instalment system gave rise to many abuses. A great number of customers used the books to accomplish credit operations, whereby an enormous number of books came into the possession of second-hand booksellers shops. In view of the immense advantages of the instalment system, we find that the disadvantages of the change, which led the book-buying public away from the retail shop to the instalment system and to the second-hand

bookstalls, almost entirely disappear. I remind all those who knew the former conditions of the publishing business, that, for example the two most prominent histories of Hungary, this day still valuable sources, those of Michel Horváth and Ladislav Szalay, could not reach a second edition, although Michel Horváth's work was published by the Franklin-Company. The «Magyar Lexikon» (Hungarian Encyclopedia), edited by Somogyi and published by Frederic Rautmann, changed its publishers several times till at last after many years it was finished. No sooner was it finished than it became obsolete. Of our standard authors we had not a single beautiful, complete edition. We did not yet possess any exhaustive history of literature and a good number of such works which could only be created by the instalment system of business still remained to be produced. The first edition of Shakespeare (20 volumes) was not to be obtained complete for a period of perhaps 20 years.

☞ But even admitting that all these enterprises might have been undertaken without the instalment system existing, let us say for instance, that with the support of the state or of several literary societies a great national work had been published, it was undoubtedly of incalculable good influence on our whole culture that these enterprises were created in consequence of the instalment system, not for storing in shops, but for the immediate consumption of the public, since it makes a tremendous difference, and in that surely all enemies of the instalment system will agree, whether 10,000 or even 20,000 copies of one book, instead of 1000 pass into the hands of the public. It is only the instalment system that has distributed this enormous quantity of books amongst the general public, neither the power nor the organisation nor the capital of the retail business would have been able to accomplish this. First of all the customer ordered a book, the care of preserving it led to the purchase of a bookcase. Then again there were too few books! In this way the public were involuntary led to be lovers of books. Yet it is true that the retail business of today does not yet enjoy the fruits of this fact, but with the help of the second hand bookshop and the instalment system a Hungarian trade full of vital energy is sure to develop. The logical sequence of the events, which we have

had the opportunity of observing up till now in the history of the Hungarian book-trade gives us encouraging hopes for the future.

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☺ By the extension of the system of payment by instalment that process can be explained, which already had its beginning when Heckenast's changed to the Franklin Company and Gustavus Emich's to the «Athenaeum» Company Ltd. The instalment business in Hungary requires a very high discount, and a credit of 18 to 24 months. This was more than the private publisher with his capital could stand, and that is why he either formed or joined a joint stock company. In this way the firm of Révai Brothers became a joint stock company in the year 1895. The editions of Ráth were partly taken over by Franklin, partly by Mehner and so on. In the year 1904 the retail business of Lampel was transformed into Robert Lampel Ltd., whilst Lampel's editions were acquired by the Franklin Company.

☺ The editions of William Mehner were also transferred to the Franklin Company, whilst the editions of Charles Stampfel, William Lauffer, Dobrowski and Franke were taken over by Révai Brothers and later on in the year 1908 by the Athenaeum. This process has lasted for nearly two centuries and is still going on. Only in quite recent years the purchase of the editions of Ferdinand Pfeiffer, amongst them also a series of books by Jókai was effected by Révai Brothers. Today only two large publishing firms exist which are not joint stock companies: Singer & Wolfner, founded in the year 1885, and the publishing firm of Charles Grill. Besides these two firms the Hungarian publication market is governed by three joint stock companies, the Franklin Company, the Athenaeum Company Ltd. and Révai Brothers. Of course besides these there are also some scientific and culture unions and institutions which have occupied themselves for centuries with the publication of books. The Hungarian Academy of Science, the Saint Stephen's Society (Joint stock Company with Catholic tendency) and especially with regard to school-books, the University Press, the Royal Hungarian Natural History Society, the Jewish Literary Society and the Medical Literary Society, etc. are of great importance.

☞ Of very considerable cultural importance is the «Patria» Publishing and Printing Company Ltd. which has developed a very fertile activity in the publication of treatises on agriculture.

☞ Lastly the firms of Légrády Brothers «Pesti Hirnap» and Victor Hornyánszky, who — although they are mainly to be counted as newspaper publishers and press enterprises — have also worked in the publication line with success.

☞ Of course it is understood that the publisher's activity is not entirely spent in the production of works for sale on the instalment system. The publication business has not remained idle in other spheres, and even if the number of publishers shrinks from year to year, this little band of survivors unceasingly keeps watch, to see that the production of books keeps pace with the increase in culture and the demand for books.

☞ The «Educational Library» (Műveltség Könyvtára) is the most valuable and at the same time one of the largest publishing undertakings, and one to which the Athenaeum Company can look back with pride. The initiation of the undertaking was preceded by long years of weary struggles and hard work, great risks and enormous investments, and then after 8 years of uninterrupted activity, the great work, extending to about 10,000 pages with about 5000 illustrations, reached its completion. If I have intentionally omitted all personal notes from my article, my high esteem for the President of our Congress, Mr. Victor Ranschburg, Managing Director of the Athenaeum, moves me to mention him in this place. It was he, who with true publishing enthusiasm, comprehension, foresight, and a deep love of books, superintended the labour of producing this great work. The «Sociological Library» consisting of 8 vols, is a counterpart of this undertaking on a smaller scale. Its elegantly bound volumes, each complete in itself, contain among others, translations of the works of Menger, Kropotkin, Westermarck, Guyan, etc.

☞ So far as polite literature is concerned, hundreds of novels, novellettes, poems, plays appear the whole year round, principally published by the already mentioned Franklin Company, Athenaeum Company, Révai Brothers and Singer & Wolfner. The «Nyugat» (West) Literary Company has done yeoman service in this field. This Company was founded by some of the younger members of the mo-

dern generation of authors. In 1908 it founded the fortnightly Magazine «Nyugat» (West) and this undertaking was accompanied by a whole collection of publications of polite literature, all most artistic productions. The «Nyugat» Co. Ltd. follows the newest literary tendency, wishing to carve its way to success by striving for modernity, and discovering fresh and unknown talent. This literary society deserves the highest appreciation for rousing the public to take an interest in modern Hungarian literature.



☺ Some space should also be devoted to the cheap editions of Hungarian books. Lately there is to be noticed to a certain extent an interesting competition amongst the publishers in the production of collections of cheap books. The natural limitations of the field of action for the sale of Hungarian books, makes the endeavour to produce cheap editions one of the most difficult problems to be faced. The whole world is open to German, French, English and Italian books, but the demand for the Hungarian publisher's books exists only in their own country and even there in limited spheres.

☺ The cheap book must be produced in large numbers, but then again to be able to have a book printed in large numbers, one needs at the very least the prospect of a large circulation.

☺ Nevertheless the Hungarian publishers follow the foreign example. The number of older cheap collections like «Olcsó Könyvtár» (Cheap Library) 2 *d.* per number, «Magyar Könyvtár» (Hungarian Library) 3 *d.* per number, «Egyetemes Regénytár» (Universal Novel Library) and «Athenaeum Olvasótár» (Athenaeum Novel Library) 10 *d.* a volume bound, were increased lately by some very prettily bound collections such as the «Athenaeum Könyvtár» (Athenaeum Library) bound $1\frac{1}{7}$ *d.* per volume, «Világ Könyvtár» (World Library) bound $1\frac{1}{7}$ *d.* per volume, «Modern Könyvtár» (Modern Library) 2 *d.* per number, and «Olcsó Jókai» (Cheap Jókai edition) 2 *d.* per volume.

☺ These latter collections contain, besides the important works of the most distinguished French, English, German, Italian, and other writers, also the most important examples of Hungarian polite and scientific

literature. The translations are done by expert and well known writers, the books being got up in a manner comparing very favourably with the foreign ones.

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☺ During the last 10 or 15 years juvenile literature has shown a tremendous development. Whilst formerly the literature for children consisted mainly of translations of works by Christoph Schmidt, Francis Hoffmann, Jules Verne, and of different editions of Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's, Travels and Münchhausen's Adventures, we have now many hundreds of volumes of very good original writings for juveniles. Of great importance to Hungarian literature for the young is the fact that most of our distinguished authors also wrote books for children. There is hardly a Hungarian writer of importance from whose pen a book for the young has not appeared. In this respect the firm of Singer & Wolfner, founded in the year 1885, deserves great praise. In collaboration with the poet Louis Pósa they created the weekly magazine «Az én Ujságom» (My Own Newspaper) and gathered the most prominent writers of the country round them. This, to tell the truth, was the foundation of literature for children and the young in Hungary. As I have been a member of this publishing firm almost since its foundation, it is difficult for me to speak on this subject at greater length, nevertheless it is impossible for me to pass over in silence facts which are undoubtedly clear to every person who takes an objective interest in the subject.

☺ Here it need only be briefly shown that this publication, which won very great merit by its activity in popularising polite literature, at the same time became one of the principal factors in creating and spreading the growth of literature for the young in Hungary.

☺ The great number of educational books, which take an important place, both in respect of their contents and in their get-up are worthy of mention.

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☺ A history of the Hungarian book-trade cannot leave Emanuel Kogutowitz and the Geographical Institute which he founded, unmen-

tioned. This expert, who came to us from abroad, made the elimination of foreign educational works possible, by the establishment of an independent Hungarian Geographical Institute. After untiring exertions he succeeded, thanks to the support of Count Albin Csáky, the Minister of Education, in raising a capital of half a million crowns (Hungarian).
 ☞ Under such conditions the Hungarian Geographical Institute started its career in the year 1890, and little by little it has succeeded to a certain degree by means of its own productions in ousting the foreign maps and other school articles.

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☞ We are now at the end of our modest task, but we have not attempted to give a detailed history of the Hungarian book-trade in these pages. For this same reason we have only passed by the chief events in quick review, and have laid the principal stress much more on finding the explanation of what has happened in the field of the Hungarian book-trade, by means of the chief events. The falling off of the instalment system formed a dam to the flood of books, which for two decades had inundated the book-cases of the Hungarian public and the second-hand book shops, and carried it back into the channel to which it really belonged. In the same way as the instalment system nearly put an end to the trade in cheap editions, and rendered the whole position of the retail book trade very difficult, the retail book business will revive in the same proportion as soon as the flood of books thrown into the market by the instalment system begins to weaken.

☞ This is a natural process which cannot be hindered in its course, and the logical chain of events can be taken as a guide for the future. The past has taught us this by all its events.

☞ If we trust and believe this — as we can scarcely help doing, then, and not till then, will our publishers, retail shops and Hungarian books take the place they deserve. The time will come again when the publisher will be able to keep abreast of the retail bookseller, and when small book publishing firms will be founded — in fact this process has already started — times in which the retail shop will be the main distributor of production, in which it will no longer be necessary to

promote the circulation of books by artificial devices, but they will be distributed amongst the public as a real necessity through the medium of the retail shops. The demand for books increases from day to day. The constant increase in the numbers of our students, the gradual development of our cultural institutions the rapid increase of school and free libraries — in the last few years the State has devoted several millions to this cause — all these are signs of a better future, to which first of all the retail book-trade can look forward with confidence.



☉ Anatole France writes in one of his works that bibliography is one of the most instructive and most interesting of studies. Now as I am approaching the end of my article I can well believe the correctness of this assertion, as I have gathered my facts and the greater part of my impressions from the Hungarian Bibliography. The Hungarian Bibliography proves that the Hungarian literature keeps pace with the cultural aspirations of our native country, but I also see from the Hungarian Bibliography, that Hungarian literature displays a keen interest in all literary, cultural and scientific movements of the present day. And if, following its natural instincts, our brilliant nation, without kindred, gives expression to all its longings and to its deep-rooted patriotism in its own language, yet one can also find everywhere a taste for a comprehensive and high-class culture.

☉ Hatred has never formed a subject of Hungarian literature. The crowds of books which appear every year in the Hungarian literature show no sign of hatred or intolerance against our neighbours or against our native-born brethren who speak a foreign tongue. The works of the past by Alex Petőfi, Baron Joseph Eötvös, Emerich Madách, Maurice Jókai as well as modern Hungarian literature of the present day, which procured no little fame for Hungarian culture in foreign literature, are all striking proofs of the liberal-minded spirit of modern Hungary.

☉ The Hungarian publishing-trade has always lent its powerful support to these literary aspirations and by doing so helped the intellectual productions of Hungarian writers on the road to success.

☞ Another thing that I have learnt from the History of the Hungarian book-trade, which I cannot pass over on this occasion in attempting the task of sketching the past of the Hungarian book-trade, is the friendly, I may even say brotherly, understanding of all the languages of the monarchy with the book-trade. Nor can I leave unmentioned the fact that we meet in the past history of our book-trade quite a number of foreign booksellers, whose activity has been transferred to us. Leyrer, Wigand, Hartleben, Geibel, Lampel, all these who long ago, and William Mehner, Frederic Rautmann, Paul Franke and William Jurányi who recently came to us, have not only broken ground here, but have also stayed with us and learned to love us; and if they did not speak the Hungarian language at all or only very badly, they felt with us in their hearts and minds. Our War of Independence also drew quite a number of foreigners to us, who fought for our cause. All this proves that all that which our enemies — *urbi et orbi* — spread about us, namely that we are intolerant towards foreigners and that we behave in a hostile manner towards people of foreign descent within our boundaries, is a malevolent insinuation. On the contrary. the truth is, that we meet with love those who come towards us with love and goodwill, and that we welcome as brethren with the whole warmth of our hearts all those who sympathise with our natural aspirations. Of this our literature and our book-trade give the most striking proofs.

VICTOR HORNYÁNSZKY
COURT PRINTER
BUDAPEST



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Országos Széchényi Könyvtár