

## **The gendarme slap**

The csendor garrison commander in our village was an imposing figure. He radiated authority and seriousness. No one ever heard him use profanity or raise his voice in a crude manner. One day my mother sent me to the csendor garrison with a basket full of newly washed linen, because our laundry-women also washed linen for the garrison. It was on this occasion that I witnessed the following episode.

The csendors had just brought in a rowdy drunken young man from a bar. The garrison commander, as an introduction, gave the young man two powerful slaps across the face. The young man suddenly changed from being rowdy and began to sob as a child. The garrison commander then had the young man sit down, and he sat down beside him and started talking to him cordially as like a father to a son. He encouraged the young man to behave properly as should a man of responsibility. He told him he should bring joy to his parents and earn the village's honor and respect. The young man listened intently and then gratefully and respectfully bid good-bye. There were no further incidents and the young man became an upstanding citizen.

After the war I happened to meet this young man again who told me about his drunken incident and the slap. He was very grateful for the good advice he received from the garrison commander because it was for this reason that he had become a respectable person.

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*Honorary csendor*

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