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LOUIS KOSSUTH.

'What! only just died? I thought he had done so long ago!' Such was the exclamation of many when they heard that Louis Kossuth, the great Hungarian patriot and statesman, who once bulked so hugely on the canvas of contemporary events, had at last gone to his well-earned rest. For more than a quarter of a century Kossuth had been little else but the inmate of a living grave—a grave in which he chose to immerse himself with the bitter remnants of a blasted ambition and unfulfilled aims. The grand object of his life had been to emancipate his native country—Hungary—from the yoke of the Hapsburgs: to achieve, in fact, absolute Home Rule for the Magyars.

The original name of the family seems to have been 'Kohuth' (Cock), and this in time was Magyarised into Kossuth. The fact, if fact it be, is interesting as showing the tendency of alien elements to rise to predominance among any race in virtue of their power, as Mr. Froude puts it when writing of Disraeli, of looking at that race from the outside. Was Cromwell not a Welsh Celt among the Saxons, and Napoleon of Italian extraction? Kossuth's family was of the class of poor and petty nobles, and he was born, two years after the century began, at a 'wretched village' (name variously given) in the county of Zemplin, a district, curiously enough, which has at all times been either the cradle or the scene of the greatest Hungarian revolutions. At the age of twenty-six, having meanwhile qualified himself for the legal career and acted as 'factor,' or agent, for Countess Szapary, he had managed to procure a seat, in the magnate interest, in the National Diet at Presburg—a Parliament of which the character may be inferred from the fact that it was penal to publish its debates. But that suited not at all the humor of young Kossuth. The interdict applied to 'printed' reports; so Kossuth, in order to evade the letter of the law, commenced the circulation of 'written' ones. These inflamed the people as much as they alarmed the Government, which endeavored to silence their author by gentle means. But Kossuth was equally proof against cajolery and coercion. At last he was thrown into a dungeon of the castle of Buda, and, after a mock trial for high treason, sentenced to three years' imprisonment. During this time he had one great

source of consolation, apart from his fiery hopes of the future, and that was Shakspeare; from the constant study of whom he drew that marvellous knowledge of the English language which was to serve him so well in the after years of his exile, when seeking to stir up Anglo-Saxon audiences to sympathetic rage about the wrongs of his native country. There is nothing like a prison for steeling a man to implacable hostility towards his oppressors.

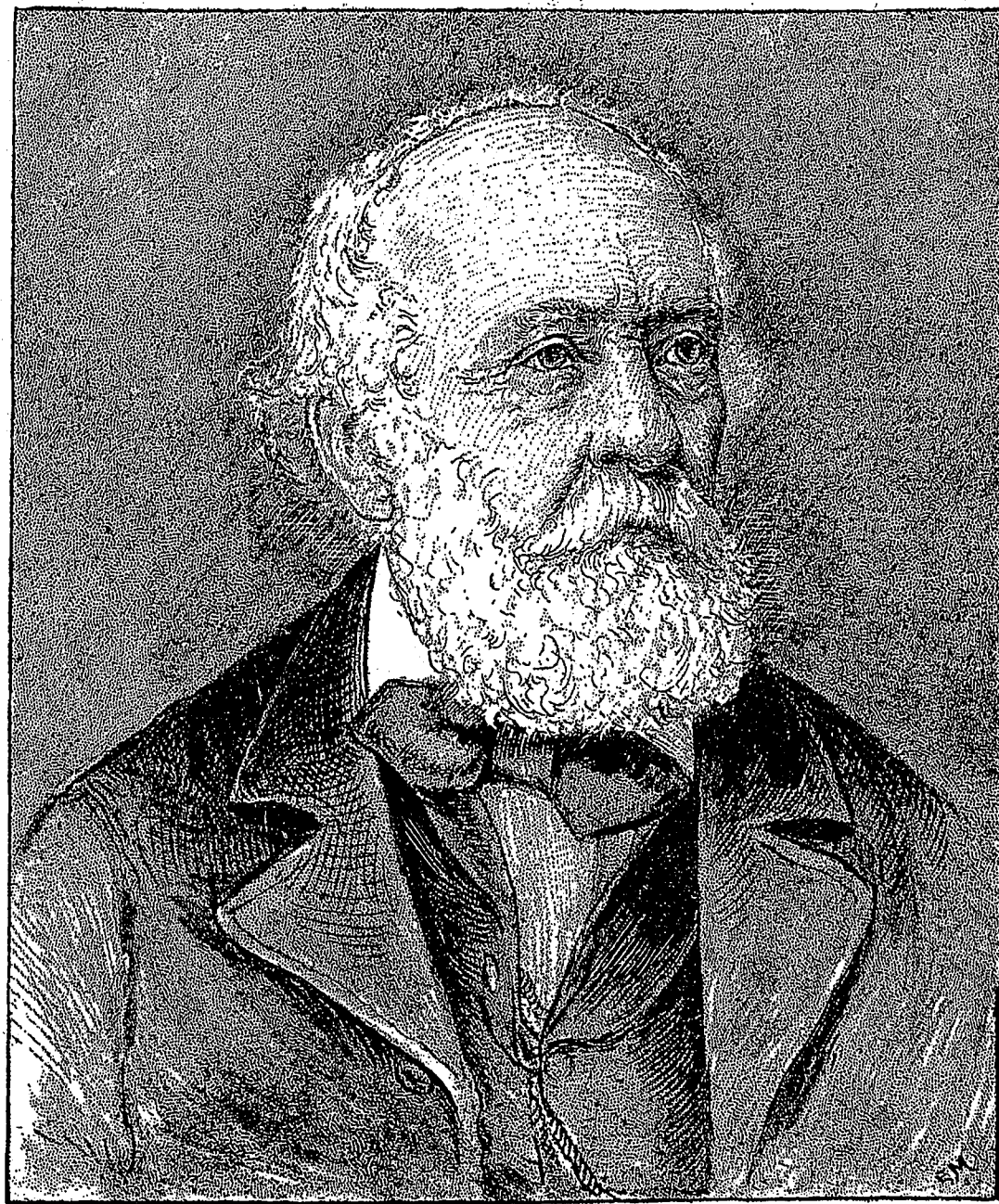
up the indifferent to feel an interest in the affairs of the country, and gave a purpose to the national aspirations. Six years of this fearless indoctrination of democratic ideas had the due effect, and in 1847 Kossuth was returned to the Diet, together with Count Louis Batthyanyi, as deputy for Pesth itself. In his first speech he had thundered against 'official despotism and bayonets' as a wretched means of binding Hungary to the Austrian crown, and a few

Emperor. Soon the Constitution which had been drafted by the Hungarian Diet received the imperial assent, and was proclaimed amid the wildest enthusiasm at Pesth on April 11. Kossuth himself became Minister of Finance, while his compatriot and fellow-agitator, Deak, received the portfolio of Justice.

This was the climax; but now there had to come the inevitable anti-climax. The transition from despotism to democracy had been much too sudden, and produced an effect upon the Hungarians similar to that which must needs be felt by a man if all at once transported from the snows of Iceland to the suns of Africa. A violent political fever was the result, and the Court of Vienna did all it could to intensify its fires. The Croats, whose province formed a geographical part of Hungary, flew to arms; while the Serbs and Wallachs, equally distrustful of the new order of things under their Magyar masters, began to slay and plunder. Hungary, in fact, soon fell into a 'Kilkenny-cat' state of civil war, which was viewed at Vienna with malicious joy. It being the first and highest duty of any Government to maintain law and order within its territory, it behooved the new regime at Pesth to create a national army for this purpose; and Kossuth, who had now become virtual ruler or dictator of the country, begged the Diet for money to equip and maintain a force of 200,000 men. A deep silence ensued. At last Paul Nyary, leader of the Opposition, rose, and, with his right arm raised to heaven, exclaimed: 'We grant it!' And presently all the deputies started up with a simultaneous echo of the cry. 'You have risen like one man,' said Kossuth, with tears in his eyes, 'and I bow down before the greatness of the nation.'

The gallant Hungarians have been called the 'English of the East,' and assuredly there are no two nations which so closely resemble one another in their

love of freedom and their love of field sports, especially those where 'noble horsemanship' comes in. Triumph attended on the banners of the Hungarians, till at last only two fortresses—Buda and Temesvar—were in the hands of the Austrians. At this stage a wise diplomacy might have secured honorable terms for the Magyars; but Kossuth, who swayed the Hungarian Parliament, sitting at Debreezen, turned a deaf ear to such suggestions, holding that the Hapsburg dynasty had forfeited all



LOUIS KOSSUTH.

Pardoned, on the strength of repeated representations from the Diet, after he had absolved about two years of his imprisonment, Kossuth emerged from his dungeon only to resume his work as National Liberator, and this he did by founding and editing a positive newspaper (the *Pesti Hirlap*—i.e., *Pesth Journal*), which may be said to have created the political press of Hungary. 'It disseminated new ideas among the masses,' wrote Professor Vambery, the countryman of Kossuth, 'stirred

days later he actually went to Vienna to urge the claims of his suffering country on the Emperor. But it was only next year (1848), when audacious Revolution raised its head all over Europe, including Vienna, and when Metternich—or Mitternacht, as the Germans called him—quailed and fled before its threatening look, that the claims of Hungary were at last allowed. The Diet at Presburg passed some sweeping reforms, and Kossuth again hurried to Vienna to press their acceptance on the