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KOSSUTH.

WHEN the old heroes who now figure in Scandinavian mythology had done their deeds of valour, and before the reflective enthusiasm of their countrymen had given them the post-mortem honours of deification, was there an intermediate time in which the warriors sank into the cold shade of neglect or indifference? When they had released their country from some foreign Power, or been the leaders of some terrible raid into adjacent territory, did the people for whom they fought forget them in the pleasures of success, and perhaps consider the warlike old men somewhat in the way during the succeeding period of peace? Such a fate we should consider highly probable; and we can fancy the generous remorse of the nation consequent upon the death of one of these heroes—how the poet of the time would celebrate his glories in metaphoric verse, and how the people would accept the metaphors literally, and insist upon worshipping the man whom they had just treated with coldness or contempt. If such a chain of circumstances could be reversed in our day, it would occur in Hungary, on the death of Louis Kossuth; but we fear that not even the Hungarians—the most passionate, imaginative, and patriotic people now in Europe—will be able to restore Kossuth to that pinnacle on which, a few years ago, he stood. Men and women who passed through the tragic vicissitudes of 1849 with him, who came daily into contact with him, and saw him in the most trying circumstances, describe the influence he exerted over the people around him as at once irresistible and inexplicable. It was a species of glamour. One noble lady, who again and again risked her own life in carrying information across the outposts, declares that the soldiers and the populace alike regarded him as a sort of god; and in eloquent language speaks of the extraordinary influence which his bearing and conversation had upon herself during their first interview. The calmness of the supreme governor of Hungary never failed him;

not even when the intelligence of Gorgey's desertion—if one may speak of that still mysterious capitulation by such a term—was the signal for his escape into Turkey. At that time Kossuth had already achieved his apotheosis. He was the representative of the highest idealism of a highly idealistic race. There was not a man in the army who would not have died for him; not a woman in the country who would not have sacrificed herself to insure his safety; and when Kossuth was forced to flee, it seemed as if God had finally forsaken Hungary, and that she was no more to rank among the number of nations.

Times have changed since then, and with them the temper of the Hungarians. Their old dream of independent political existence has not been realized; but they have gained something better—their country is the leader of a great empire, and the protector of the very power which at one time threatened to crush them out of life. The majority of the people have, and with reason, accepted this alternative; and seem bent upon working amicably, in financial and other matters, with the non-Magyar half of the empire. But it must be remembered that there still exist in Hungary some of the old patriots who have sworn eternal feud with Austria. If we ask why these should wish to remain under the new dispensation of things, which must be offensive to them, one of their own authors thus sadly answers, "And even if the living should wish to leave this country, the dead would keep them here." But it is impossible that there should not be some lingering ill-feeling between men whose common sense has taught them to make the most of present circumstances, and men who still remain faithful to the one chimeric idea. Of the latter Kossuth is the recognised head. He will not even accept of the amnesty offered him by Austria, but prefers an exile which is consonant with his own self-respect. Now, Kossuth's refusal to make peace with Austria may be foolish and the result of a lamentable Quixotism; but, at all events, it should meet with that charitable construction which we ought to put upon every action of a man who has shown himself a great hero and self-denying patriot. This is precisely—if we are to trust the news which we receive from Hungary—what the Hungarians refuse to do. The old idol is thrown down; and it is despised because it seems to reproach its former worshippers with apostasy. According to the Vienna correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, General Perczel has been on the stump throughout the country,

violently denouncing the leader of the revolution. And how did they receive his accusations, and his boast that he would "hurl Kossuth from his pedestal, and go down with him into the abyss rather than relinquish the struggle"? When G6rgey lately made his appearance, as a spectator, in the chamber of the Hungarian Diet, the muttered exclamations and other sounds which his presence provoked were sufficient to cause his speedy withdrawal. We are told, however, that General Perczel's harangues were met with loud cheers, and infer that the once-worshipped governor of Hungary has fallen as low in public estimation as the Ban Jellachich himself. It is a pity that it should be so; but the revulsion of popular sentiment is perhaps not unnatural. "The Hungarians," writes the correspondent whom we have quoted, "blame him for refusing to accept the opportunity now offered to him by the Government of returning to his country, and accuse him of a selfish ambition to resume his power in Hungary, and inflame people's minds at a time when they are gradually settling down into peace and order." With them, we should say that Kossuth would do more good to his country by quietly accepting the amnesty offered him, and taking his seat in the Diet, than by hovering outside, and keeping the Austrian Government in a perpetual attitude of suspicion. Not only would his ministerial abilities be of the highest service to his country, but his adhesion to the prevailing order of things would be the signal for the complete establishment of harmony between the two halves of the empire, as the old "incorruptibles" would immediately follow in his wake. This, we say, is a thing to be desired; but, while it remains unaccomplished, it is most lamentable to hear Kossuth's conduct attributed to unworthy motives by his own countrymen. If patriotism were not its own reward, we should think that such a circumstance would impose a check on any man who contemplated sacrificing his property and risking his life for the good of his country. It is impossible that Kossuth should be desirous of ruining Hungary at the very moment when the sunlight of success and security is beginning to fall upon her people. We can understand an impractical theorist like Mazzini insisting upon the rejection of any compromise which should interfere with his favourite iden; but the movement which Kossuth led was a struggle for freedom from a tyranny which does not now exist. The provisional government, under Kossuth and the unfortunate Batthyany, which was appointed by the Hungarian Diet at the outbreak of the

revolution, was in no sense an effort at the establishment of a republic. To free Hungary from an unbearable yoke was the one aim and end of the revolution; and that yoke being abolished, there remains no theory upon which the most incorruptible of patriots could find an excuse for further revolutionary measures. The sensitive pride of the great Hungarian leader may forbid his coming to any understanding, as regards himself personally, with the Austrian Government; but we cannot believe—nor can we understand how his countrymen will for a moment admit—that his refusal is only the result of a desire to satisfy a paltry and selfish ambition by kindling the fire of a civil war. We would rather believe that the people who cheered General Perczel's speeches formed a series of those packed meetings which are resorted to in other countries than Hungary for political purposes. The General himself is not above suspicion. It is hinted that his attacks upon Kossuth and those who are still known as the "revolutionists" are meant to pave the way for the accomplishment of his favourite scheme—the formation of an independent Hungarian army, of which the Honved General should be chief. "This is a plan," says the correspondent of the *Gazette*, "which the Government at Vienna can never tolerate. The establishment of two independent armies in one State can only be fatal to its existence." Meanwhile we must hope that something other than death will remind Hungary of what she owes to Louis Kossuth, and restore that popularity which he has done nothing to forfeit.