

1874

A FORGOTTEN CELEBRITY.

(Translated for the JOURNAL.)

The following advertisement appears every now and then in the *Corriere di Torino*:

"Lessons in German, English, and Hungarian, given, at moderate rates, by

"L. Kossuth,  
"164 Strada Nuova."

The advertiser is none other than the once celebrated dictator of Hungary. He is now almost utterly forgotten, even in Hungary; he has grown very old, and is now so poor that he will gladly give you a lesson for a single franc. This would seem very humiliating for him, and yet he is proud of his poverty.

He says:

"Three years ago my friends at home, in Hungary, offered me a present of fifty thousand florins. I rejected the offer, and never have regretted it, even when I was hungry, and had no money to pay for a fire!"

I had occasion, the other day, to call upon him. I was no stranger to Kossuth. Twenty years ago he had given me, in London, a great deal of valuable information for my book, "Hungary in 1849." I found him in a very small room, in the fourth story of a dingy old building. He sat alone in an easy-chair poring over an old volume. When I entered he did not recognize me. I recognized him and was shocked. What a change these twenty years had produced in his once handsome and interesting face! His hair was entirely white, his cheeks wan and hollow, and his eyes utterly dimmed. His form once erect and proud, was now painfully bent. He almost groaned as he raised himself to bid me welcome.

He was deeply moved when I informed him who I was. His face brightened as he warmly clasped my hand.

"Oh, yes, oh, yes," he said, in German, "I know you now. Everybody forgets me; no one calls upon me; no one cares any more for me! Why should I remember those who once were my friends?"

To this I objected. I asked him how he could be forgotten when his friends in Hungary wanted him to return to his native country, and take again an active part in its affairs.

Kossuth smiled very bitterly.

"Oh, yes," he said, "return to Hungary dishonored, with an oath of silence to the Hapsburgs who murdered my friends and kinsmen, and who set a price upon my head. I am neither a Deak nor an Andrássy."

I asked him how he got along.

"Well," he said, sadly, "were my good children and my poor wife alive yet, I would be happy, even in my old age and poverty. But they are all dead, and I am very lonesome! That is what renders my exile here, where people are so kind to me, so distressing. It would be no better in Hungary. I have no kinsfolk anywhere but in the New World."

"Why, then, not go to America again, where your name is still revered?" I ventured to say.

"Oh," he replied, "I have often been sorely tempted to go back to the United States, but there are two obstacles in the way: In the first place, it would cost more money than

have to spare; and, next, I am almost sure that, in my present enfeebled condition, I would be unable to bear the sea voyage."

All this was very melancholy, and I hastened to change the subject of our conversation.

I showed him the proof-sheets of the chapter on Andrássy in my new work on Austria. He put on his spectacles, and, holding the paper in his trembling hand, read carefully what I had written.

Meanwhile I had time to look around in the room. Against the rear wall stood a narrow, plain bed. On the walls hung portraits of Mazzini, Bixio, Kossuth, and, strangely enough, of Louis Napoleon. On the book-shelf by my side I noticed Victor Hugo's "Année Terrible," "Les Misérables," and ten or twelve well-worn grammars. On a table, close to the bed, lay a loaf of bread and a plate of dried meat.

To my dismay I found that my glancing round the room had attracted Kossuth's attention.

"Yes," he said, with a smile, "you see for yourself now that I am very poor; and yet, when I left Hungary in 1849, I was charged by all the mean organs of the Hapsburgs with having enriched myself at my country's expense. Do you know what my whole income was last year? Within a fraction of eight hundred lire!" (Less than two hundred dollars.)

I shook my head sorrowfully. He told me what he thought about the chapter on Andrássy, gave me plenty of valuable and interesting information on the subject, and then dismissed me, saying that it was time for one of his pupils to make his appearance.

—Dr. Max Schlesinger, Frankfort Gazette.

\* Appleton's  
Journal, New York

1874 Jan. 3.

Vol. 11. p. 23-24.

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*N.Y. Times*

