

The Outlook

A Family Paper

NEW SERIES OF THE CHRISTIAN UNION

Volume 49

For Week ending 31 March, 1894

Number 13



The Week



Louis Kossuth

The death of Louis Kossuth at his home in Turin, Italy, on Tuesday night of last week, ends one of the most picturesque and interesting careers of the century in Europe; for Kossuth, although so long removed from active participation in public affairs, has been a figure of world-wide interest for at least forty years. Born in Hungary on the 27th of

April, 1802, of a family of Slavonic origin, of noble blood, and of the Lutheran faith, Louis Kossuth received a liberal education and imbibed liberal principles at the same time. He began active life as a lawyer, and his remarkable talents almost immediately attracted attention, for he was not only, at the start, a speaker of great eloquence and persuasive power, but a man of notable executive ability, a thorough student of history, and a linguist of rare accomplishments, with a personality of winning attractiveness and charm. At the age of twenty-seven he entered the National Diet as the proxy of a member of the Upper House, and attracted notice at once, not only on account of his speeches in the House, but on account of his adroitness and energy in extending the methods of communication between the Diet and the voters. It was impossible under the laws to publish the debates of the Diet, but Kossuth dictated the salient features of the proceedings to an army of copyists. After the close of the Diet the enthusiastic reformer undertook to publish a lithographed paper in Pesth, but was speedily arrested on a charge of treason, and sentenced to an imprisonment of four years. At the end of a year and a half he was liberated, and, although greatly reduced in physical vigor, attacked the work of reform with renewed enthusiasm as the editor of a semi-weekly newspaper, the "Pesth Journal." The brilliancy and audacity with which the paper was edited had not a little to do in the success of the opposition in the elections of 1840.

Seven years later Kossuth entered the Diet to represent Pesth, and became at once the leader of that body. The following year, taking advantage of the revolution in Paris, he proposed an address to the Emperor urging the recognition of the independence of Hungary as a Federal State. The address was presented, Kossuth was appointed Minister of Finance, and the reform measures for which he had contended were speedily adopted. This, however, was only the beginning of the struggle. It is unnecessary to tell again the disastrous issue of the chivalrous and splendid fight for their liberties made by the Hungarians,

or to recall the defeat which was apparently inevitable from the beginning. In that struggle, during which Hungary was driven into rebellion against the King, and became an independent State, with Kossuth as its first President, the reformer and orator showed tireless energy; but the forces against him were too great. In August, 1849, he resigned and fled to Turkey. Two years later he came to this country, and the story of the welcome extended to him, and of the fervid and entrancing eloquence with which he pleaded the cause of his country, has become a National tradition. No foreigner, save Lafayette, has ever been in so general a sense the guest of the Nation. He was pleading, however, for a lost cause, and from the day he fled into Turkey to the day of his death he never again set foot on his native soil.

During this long interval of forty-three years, as teacher, lecturer, and writer, in exile, and under a crushing sense of disappointment, he was bravely fighting for the means of supporting his family. The closing years were spent at Turin, and although the weakness of age came on apace, science, literature, and education remained the channels for the pouring out of an energy which age itself seemed hardly to diminish. Although no longer a Hungarian citizen, and refusing by word or deed to acknowledge the sovereignty of the reigning house of Austria, or to live in Hungary under its domination, Kossuth's patriotism burned with undiminished fervor to the end. "I am a living protest," he wrote last autumn, "against Hungary's faithlessness, and my creed must therefore be to refuse myself the pleasure of again seeing my home." Kossuth was remarkable in many ways, and, although so long out of the European strife, he has never been forgotten by the world at large. He combined in rare degree the lyrical temperament with executive capacity and great force of character. In the minds of most Hungarian Liberals, his position of late years was a mistake, and Hungary has fared better under the rule of the Emperor Joseph as a Federal State, with her own Parliament and with practical independence of action, than if she had secured her entire independence from Austria. Indeed, in view of the situation in Central Europe, it is hard to see how she could have maintained that independence. But, whether mistaken or not, Kossuth's unflinching adherence to the line of policy he had marked out, and his absolute refusal to compromise in any form with the existing order of things, make him a very striking figure. He was one of the few men of the century who, having identified themselves with an ideal, lived and died in unswerving loyalty to it. Such a man may be mistaken as a practical politician—it is quite likely that Deák was far more of a statesman than Kossuth, and that his policy has brought greater prosperity and better results to Hungary than could have been secured under the policy of Kossuth—but the fact that Kossuth bound himself for life and death to the principle of national lib-

erty gives his life a heroic tinge, and will preserve the memory of his name long after the tradition of his eloquence has perished.

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Mr. Gladstone has written a very significant and characteristic letter to his Midlothian constituents, in which he says that, while his career has been chargeable with many errors of judgment, he hopes that it has been governed "by uprightness of intention and the desire for strict justice." That career began with the Reform Act of 1832, "which," he says, "for England meant improvement and extension, and for Scotland political birth. . . . The great legislative and administrative period—perhaps the greatest in our annals—will be the history of emancipation—political, social, moral, and intellectual. Another period opens; a period with possibly yet greater moral dangers, and certainly a great ordeal for those classes which are now becoming largely conscious of their power, but have never hitherto been subjected to its deteriorating influences. These influences have been confined to the classes above them, because they were the sole possessors of this power. . . . But I recognize the great and growing demands of these classes for satisfying their legislative wants. I lament that the discrepancy of sentiment between the two Houses of Parliament has been revived to such an extent as to raise a question between the chamber responsible and the chamber totally irresponsible to the nation, and raise it in such a form as will demand at no distant day a conclusive judgment from the constituencies. I feel deeply convinced that, until the first demands of Ireland are satisfied, as the House of Commons tried to satisfy them, neither will the legislative wants of any portion of the United Kingdom be adequately met, nor will the Empire attain the maximum of its union and power, nor British honor be effectually cleared of the deepest historic stain ever attached to it."

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The New York "Tribune," commenting on the situation in Spain and Portugal, calls attention to some facts which show how full of uncertainty the situation is in both countries. The French Minister has been recalled from Lisbon as an expression of the disapproval by the French Government of the manner in which French creditors have been treated by Portugal. In Spain a ministerial crisis, due to Cabinet dissensions on questions of internal policy, is held back by the postponement of the meeting of the Cortes. One of these questions relates to the matter of taxation in the Navarre and Basque Provinces, which have long exercised a kind of administrative autonomy, the authorities collecting and distributing the taxes, managing provincial and local affairs, and contributing a fixed sum every year to the national treasury. The taxes having been increased very considerably in other parts of Spain during the last decade, the Government has called upon the Navarre and Basque Provinces for an increase in their annual contribution, and this request has been refused. As matters now stand, the people in these Provinces pay annually about eleven francs per capita in taxes, while the people in the rest of Spain pay twenty-six francs per capita. The people in the two Provinces stand firmly on what they declare to be their historical rights, and are ready to resist with force any attempt of the Government to change the rate of taxation. The financial question becomes every day a more prominent feature of the European situation, to say nothing of its prominence in current politics in this country.

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More detailed accounts have now come to hand of the great Arab revolt on the upper Congo, in Africa. Years

ago traders from Muscat, in eastern Arabia, began to enrich themselves with ivory, plantations, and slaves in Central Africa, pushing further and further until they arrived first at the lakes and then at the Congo, where lies their town Nyangwe, with its fifty thousand inhabitants, the largest settlement on the river, a place which has been made familiar to us through the writings of Livingstone, Cameron, and Stanley. The criminally enforced monopoly of trade, long enjoyed by these Arabs and their native servants, was the cause of hostilities, a determined stand having been taken over two years ago by Captain van den Kerckhoven against the marauding bands which were obtaining both ivory and slaves by pillage and murder. Retaliation through massacre then began, in return for which the Congo soldiers, drawn mostly from cannibal countries and fairly well drilled, drove the enemy to the border of the State. That famous revolter, Tippu Tib, is at Zanzibar, it seems, and out of the business, but his son, Sefu, has jeopardized his father's great possessions in order to aid the rebels. A succession of battles brought the victors to Nyangwe, which they took after a six weeks' siege, and where were found the murdered Emin Pasha's journal and letters. The remnant of the Arab forces have made their way to Lake Tanganyika. Another African land, long a refuge for Arab traders, is now also the seat of war, according to last week's dispatches. To check their nefarious slave-catching, which had well-nigh depopulated the district between Lake Albert Edward and the Victoria Nyanza, Captain Lugard built forts along the northern Ugandan frontier about the time when the Belgian captain was resisting by force the inhumanities of the traders in the Congo territory. Beyond these frontier outposts, and stretching to the Albert Nyanza, lies Unyoro, the only region near Uganda which the rulers of that once strong nation could not conquer, while still another next-door neighbor is Emin Pasha's Equatorial Province. As the King of Unyoro has been waging war against the tribe which permitted the erection of these fortifications, Great Britain has now declared war against him. The Unyoran forces are well armed and fight as desperately as any, but the Nubian soldiers, officered by Britons, must finally overcome them. Even in Africa wrongful methods of gain do not always prosper.

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The New Jersey deadlock has been broken by a decision of the Supreme Court against the party to which six out of eight of its members belonged. So heavy, indeed, was the Democratic majority upon the bench, and so uniformly of late years have court decisions followed partisan lines, that the Republicans maintained that the Court had no right to decide the controversy. This, however, was the only point which the Court decided against the Republicans. The main contention of the Democrats—that the New Jersey Senate, like the United States Senate, is a continuous body, and that the hold-over members have a right to pass upon the credentials of those newly elected—the Court finds to be entirely novel and ungrounded. The New Jersey Constitution, it says, imposes upon both houses the duty to meet and organize upon a certain day. The question of organization is an "all-important" one, and, therefore, "the mandate of the Constitution that the Senate shall be composed of one Senator from each county cannot be reasonably enforced except by the adoption of the hypothesis that each Senator shall have a voice in all proceedings that result in the composition of the body itself." The immediate effects of this decision are of the first importance. It makes valid as laws all of the sixteen measures passed by the Republican Houses and sent to the