HUNGARIAN LITERATURE

AN HISTORICAL & CRITICAL SURVEY

BY

EMIL REICH

DOCTOR JURIS

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION," "HISTORICAL ATLAS OF MODERN HISTORY," "GRÆCO-ROMAN INSTITUTIONS," ETC.

WITH AN AUTHENTIC MAP OF HUNGARY

Boston

L. C. PAGE AND COMPANY

[INCORPORATED]

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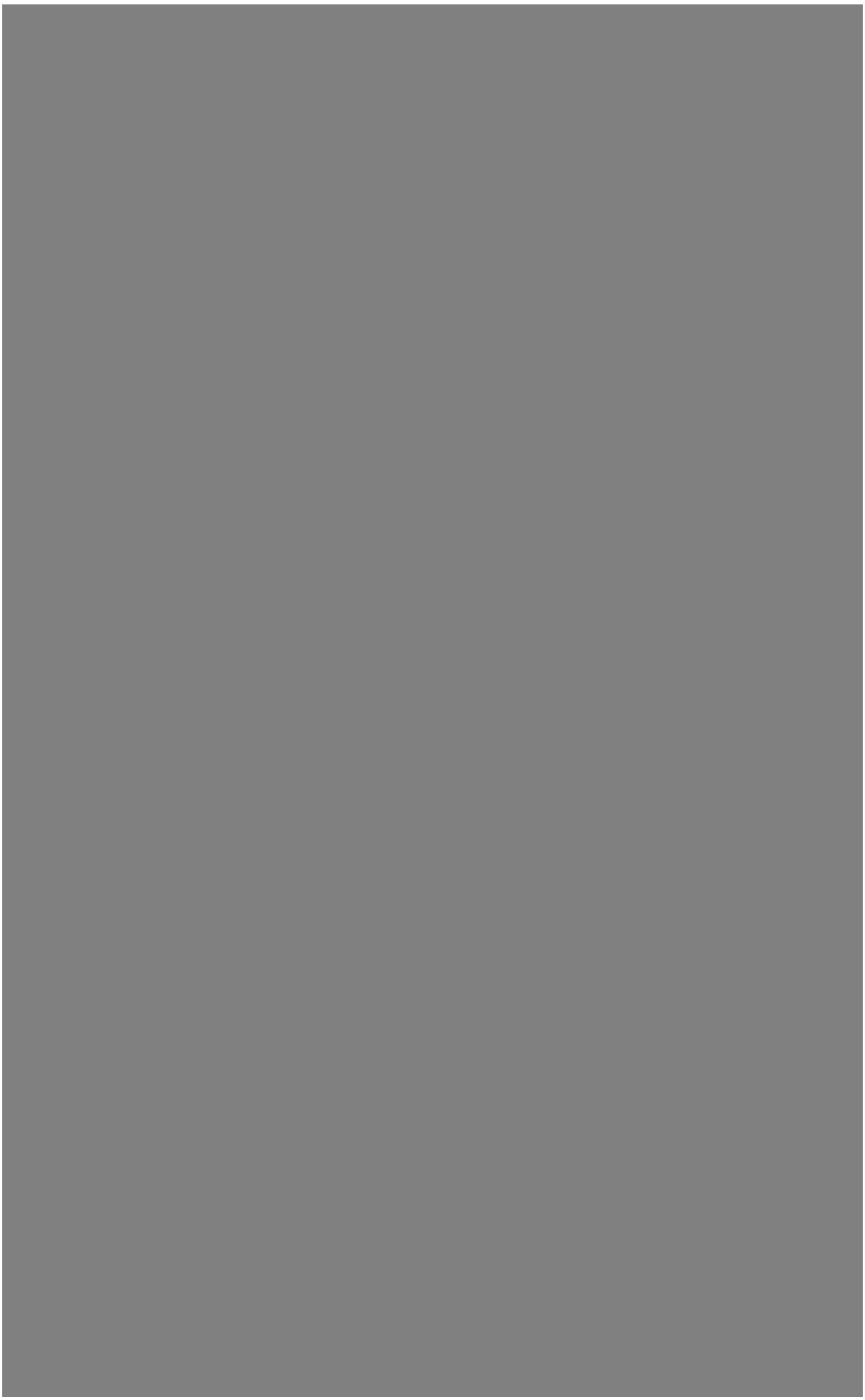

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PREFACE.

The present book is the first attempt in the English language at a connected story of Hungarian literature. The remarkable success achieved by a few Magyar novelists in English-speaking countries, together with the growing recognition of the international importance of Hungary as a state and a nation, seem to justify the assumption, that the Anglo-Saxon peoples too, are not unwilling to learn more about the intellectual life of the Magyars than can be found in the ordinary books of reference.

The main object of the author, himself a Hungarian, has been to impress the reader with a vivid picture of the chief currents and the leading personalities of Hungarian literature. Magyar literature is too vast a topic to be fully treated within the very limited space of a small essay like the present. By introducing the comparative method of historical investigation and analysis, by means of which Hungarian works are measured, contrasted to, or compared with works of English, French, German, Italian or the ancient classical writers, the reader may obtain, it is hoped, a more life-like idea of a literature hitherto unknown to him.

No nation outside Hungary has facilities of studying Magyar literature as great as those offered to the English public in the incomparable library of the British Museum. Nearly every Magyar work of any importance may be found there, and the catalogues of those works are, in the strict sense of the word, correct. This latter circumstance is chiefly owing to the labours of an English scholar, whose name no Hungarian can pronounce without a feeling of reverential gratitude. Mr. E. D. Butler, of the British Museum, the author of the only authentic and comprehensive, if small, English work on Hungary (his article "*Hungary*" in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*) is, to our knowledge, the only English student of Magyar language and literature who has thoroughly grasped the philology and spirit of that language and the distinctive qualities of Magyar writers. He will, we trust, pardon our patriotism for shocking his excessive modesty by this public acknowledgment of his merit.

May this book contribute somewhat to increase the interest of the great British nation in a nation much less numerous but in many ways akin.

The map of Hungary accompanying this book is, we venture to say, the first map published outside Hungary based on the most careful comparison of the original sources. The greatest pains have been taken to ensure absolute accuracy of names of places and of county boundaries, according to the most recent data.

EMIL REICH.

17, TAVISTOCK ROAD, W.
June 15th, 1898.

Transcriber's Note: Map is clickable for a larger version.

HUNGARY PROPER

HUNGARIAN LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

Of the nations in the south-east of Europe, the Hungarians, or Magyars, are probably the most renowned, and at the same time, the least known. Although their extensive country has now been in their possession and under their rule for over one thousand years, and albeit the historic *rôle* of the Hungarians, rather than that of Hungary, has been and is one of no common magnitude, in that, without their secular and successful fight against Osman ascendancy, Europe could scarcely have maintained its civilization in the countries east of Munich: yet in spite of all such claims to attention on the part of western nations, Hungary and the Hungarians are still largely unknown in England, France and America.

In English-speaking countries no serious attempts have as yet been made either to tell the stirring story of Hungary's past, or to analyse the rich possibilities of her future. Except single and singular features of Magyar life or natural products, such as the famous "Hungarian" bands of the Tsiganes or gypsies and their "weird" music; Hungarian flour and Hungarian wine; and most of all the figure of Hungary's greatest political orator, Louis Kossúth; except these and a few more curiosities relating to Hungary, the proud nations of the west of Europe do not, as a rule, take notice of all the rest of the life of a nation of eighteen million persons.

The festivities of the Hungarian millennium celebrated the year before last, came to the western world as a surprise. Few Englishmen were prepared to realize the fact that, at a time when their ancestors were still under small princes of mixed blood, and, moreover, constantly exposed to, and finally nearly absorbed by foreign conquerors, the Hungarians had already reared a solid fabric of government on the site on which for now over a thousand years they have withstood the armies, the diplomacy and the alien immigration of the Turks, the Germans and the

Slavs. Unconquered by force or disaster, and not denationalized by either the Germans or Slavs around them, the Hungarians have maintained almost intact the language and music they brought with them from the Steppes of Asia; and when in the ripeness of time a Magyar literature was beginning to develop, it proceeded on lines neither German nor Slav, but thoroughly Hungarian.

This literature is both in extent and quality, one of the most remarkable of the lesser literatures of Europe. The number of writers of Magyar works is no less than 5,000; and their works cover all the provinces of poetry and of philosophic, historic or scientific inquiry into nature or man. While accepting the standard of criticism adopted by the recognized arbiters of literary greatness, we have no hesitation in saying that Hungarian Literature has a number, if a limited one, of stars of the first magnitude, and no inconsiderable number of lesser lights. This fact acquires still greater importance from the consideration that the bulk of Hungarian Literature properly speaking dates back little over a hundred years; and that many, far too many Hungarians have, up to recent times, left their native country and, writing their works in German or French, added to the literature of nations other than their own. Comparatively few, exceedingly few, Englishmen have enlisted among the writers of nations outside the United Kingdom; very many, exceedingly many Hungarians have, under stress of various circumstances, written in Latin, German, French or English, and thereby reduced the bulk and often the quality of Hungarian Literature proper. The number of works in Magyar published from 1531 to 1711 is 1,793. During the same period 2,443 non-Magyar works were published in Hungary. The preceding two totals were given in 1879 and 1885 respectively. Up to April, 1897, 404 more works had been discovered, belonging mostly to the class of non-Magyar books printed in Hungary down to 1711. When, however, we inquire into the number of works written by Hungarians and published outside Hungary, down to 1711, we learn that no less than about 5,000 works were written and published by Hungarian authors, in 130 non-Hungarian towns, during the period ending 1711.[1] At a time when all the western peoples had long ceased to use Latin for all literary purposes, the idiom of Cicero was still the chief vehicle of thought in Hungary. Nearly all through the eighteenth, and during the first quarter of the present century, the number of works written by Hungarians in Latin far outnumbered the

works written by them in Magyar. It was even so with German; and many a famous German author was really a Hungarian; such as Ladislaus Pyrker, Nicolaus Lenau, Klein (J. L.), the great historian of the drama, Charles Beck, the poet, Fessler, the historian, etc.

In comparing Hungarian Literature with the literature of the Germans, French or English, we cannot but recognize, for the reasons just mentioned, that the splendour and comprehensiveness of the Literature of those nations cannot be found in that of the Magyars. At the same time we make bold to point out an advantage which Hungarian Literature has over the literature of many another nation, if not in the past, certainly in the future. This advantage is in the Hungarian language. The Magyars have a language of their own. It is not a borrowed language; not one taken from another nation, in whose use it had been for centuries.

The Americans, both in North and South America, although they are in nearly everything else the counterparts of their European parent-nations, have yet preserved the idioms of the latter. In politics, social constitution, individual temper, and attitude of mind, the North and South Americans are—a long stay in that continent has convinced us of that—utterly different from either the English or the Spanish. The Americans proper have indeed built up, or developed into a nation of their own. For good or for bad, they have a distinct and novel national personality. One thing excepted; that one thing, however, is a vital element in the intellectual activity of a nation. We mean, of course, Language. The Americans have moulded and coloured all the old elements of their nationality into organs with a tone and hue of their own. Language alone they have, with slight differences, taken over and preserved in the very form and woof in which the English and Spanish had left it in the old colonies. Hence there is between the Americans, as a new nation, and their language, as an old and foreign idiom, a discordance and discrepancy that no genius can entirely remove. The words of a language are mostly gentry of olden descent. Between them there are associations and tacit understandings ill-fitted for an environment essentially different from their original cast. This discrepancy has, there can be little doubt, exercised a baneful influence on the literature of the American nations. It has baulked them of the higher achievements, and neither in the literature of North America nor in that of South America can we meet with literary

masterworks of the first rank. Between the poets and writers of those nations and the languages they are using there is much of that antagonism which has always been found to exist between the cleverest of Neo-Latin poets and the language of Rome. Latin is a dead language; and all the intellectual atmosphere and soil that nurtured and developed it have long since ceased to stimulate. Accordingly, the Politiani and Sadoleti, the Sannazari and Buchanani, and all others who in modern times have tried to revive Latin literature have entirely failed. As with individuals so it is with nations. The Belgians, or the Swiss in Europe are, like the Americans, in the false position of having each a distinct nationality of their own with languages not their own. This fundamental shortcoming has rendered and will probably, in all times, render them incapable of reaching the lofty summits of literature. Language is intimately allied to literature; language is the mother, and thought the father of literary works. Any lack of harmony in the parents must needs show in the offspring.

Now the Hungarians have not only a language of their own, but also one the possibilities of which are far from being exhausted. For the Hungarians therefore there is no danger of a false position, of an initial vice in the growth of their literature; and moreover there are immense vistas of literary exploits still in store for future generations. The quarries and mines of the Latin and Teutonic languages have, it may be apprehended, been worked so intensely as to leave scant margins for new shafts. French has changed little in the last three generations, and English and German little in the last two; while Italian and Spanish have long reached the beautiful but stereotyped plasticity of ripeness. Hungarian, on the other hand, is a young language. The number of people using and moulding it has been considerably increased in the last generation, and most of its gold-fields and diamond-layers have not yet been touched by the prospector’s axe. There is thus an immense future still open for Hungarian Literature, and this prospective, but certain fact ought never to be lost sight of in a fair appreciation of the literary efforts of the Hungarians.

Literature being a nation in words, as history is a nation in deeds, it would be impossible to grasp the drift, or value the achievements of Hungarian Literature without some knowledge of the Magyar nation in the past and in the present. It may be therefore advisable to premise a

few remarks on Hungary and her history before entering on a narrative of Hungarian Literature.

CHAPTER II.

Hungary, in extent larger than the United Kingdom, is, geographically speaking, one large basin, watered by one large river and its affluents, and bounded by one imposing range of mountains. The river is called the Danube, the mountains are the Carpathian offshoots of the Alps. This geographical unity makes Hungary almost predestined to be the seat of one nation. The natural unity calls for, it may be presumed, the national. Yet the very richness of the soil, diversified as it is by the vegetable and mineral wealth of huge mountains, and the cereal and animal exuberance of vast plains has, in all times, attracted numerous tribes from eastern Europe and western and central Asia to the country of the “blue” Danube, and the “blonde” Theiss. Some of these invaders succeeded for a time in establishing a kind of dominion over parts of Hungary. Thus the Huns in the fifth, the Gepidae in the fifth and sixth, the Avars in the seventh and eighth, numerous Slav tribes in the eighth and ninth centuries were successively lords of the plains and some mountainous parts of Hungary. Not one of these peoples, however, could either maintain themselves as rulers, or quite disappear as dwellers. Already in the ninth century we find Hungary inhabited by more than fifteen different nations or portions of nations, offering then the same gorgeous medley of Humanity that is still so characteristic of the country. Where the above nations failed, the Magyars signally succeeded. They and they alone of all the numerous, if not perhaps innumerable nations that had tried to rear a lasting polity on the columns of the Carpathians, and behind the moats of the Danube; the Hungarians alone, we say, succeeded in establishing themselves as the permanent rulers of the Slav and Turanian peoples of Hungary, and as the members of a state endowed with abiding forces of order within and power without. From 996 to 1301 A.D., they took their dukes and kings from the family of the Árpáds, under whom they had entered (some 100,000 men, women, and children) the country. Saint Stephen (the first canonized king) consolidated their constitution. Without attempting to overrate the value of constitutions either grown or made, and, while laying due stress on that *geometria situs*, or providential strategy in the location of nations

which has perhaps wrought the major part of History, it is tolerably certain, that the constitution of Hungary, as developed under the Árpád dynasty, and as still surviving in some of its essential elements, has had a most beneficial influence on the public life of the Magyars. Like that of England, it combines the excellency of the Latin system of centralization, with the advantages of the Germanic custom of local autonomy.

Already in the early middle ages, Hungary was divided into counties endowed with selfgovernment. At the same time there was a centre of government and legislation in the national assembly or diet, where king and subjects met to discuss the affairs affecting the peace or wars of the entire state. In 1222, or seven years after Magna Charta was signed at Runnymede, the Hungarians forced their King John, whose name was Andrew II., to sign the Golden Bull, which, like the English Charter, was to be the text of the country's constitution, all subsequent laws being in the nature of commentaries on that text. The elements of the Hungarian and English constitution being nearly alike, the domestic histories of the two nations bear, up to the sixteenth century, striking resemblance to one another. We learn of wars of the "barons" against the king, such as those under Henry III. and Henry IV. in England; we read of the constant struggles of the "commons" (in Hungary consisting of the lower nobility, that is, of knights as distinguished from burgesses), for broader recognition of their parliamentary rights; of rebellions, like that of Wat the Tyler, of the peasants against their oppressors, the landed gentry; and of fierce dynastic struggles, like the Wars of the Roses. But while these historic parallels may be found in many another country of mediæval Europe with its remarkable homogeneity of structure, the distinctive parallelism between England and Hungary is in the tenacity with which the ruling people of both countries have carried over their autonomous institutions from the times before the Reformation to the sixteenth and the following centuries, or to the period of Absolutism sweeping over Europe ever since Luther had raised his voice for religious liberty.

All nations of Europe had constitutions more or less similar to that of England during the Middle Ages; for there was after all a very considerable amount of Liberty extant in mediæval institutions. But at the threshold of the sixteenth century, when new worlds were discovered by the genius and daring of the Portuguese and the Italians, the better part of the old world, that is, its Liberty, was completely lost, and

sovereigns became absolute and peoples slaves. Three nations alone amongst the larger states remained unaffected by the plague of absolutism then spreading over Europe; they alone preserving intact the great principles of local autonomy, central parliaments, and limited power of the Crown. These were the English, the Poles and the Hungarians. In these three countries alone there was practically no dead past as against a presumptuous present. The nation's past was still living in the shape of actual realities, and the growth of the constitution was, in spite of all sudden ruptures and breaks, continuous and organic. What the Stuarts were to England, the Habsburgs were to Hungary during the seventeenth century. Hence in both countries we notice continual rebellions and wars, both parliamentary and other. The Stuarts, however, were little aided by foreign powers in their attempts at crushing the autonomous rights of the English nation. On the contrary, one of the greatest statesmen of modern times, William of Orange, came, and with him several great powers of Europe, to the rescue of the people of England; and thus the end of the seventeenth century was also the termination of Absolutism in England. In Hungary it was the grave of Liberty. The Hungarian Stuarts, or the then Habsburgs, far from being deserted by the other Great Powers of Europe, were most efficiently abetted by them. This happened of course in a way apparently quite alien to any desire to destroy the liberties of Hungary. Vienna, the capital of the Habsburgs, was, in 1683, besieged by the hitherto fairly invincible Turks, and Austria was menaced with utter ruin. The war being, on the face of it, a crusade, the Christian powers, and, chiefly, fat and gallant John Sobieski, King of Poland, came to the succour of Leopold of Austria. The Turk was beaten, and not only out of Austria, but also out of Hungary, where he had been holding two-thirds of the counties for over one hundred and fifty years. Hungary was almost entirely liberated from her Mahometan oppressor, and, such is the illogicality of History, for the very same reason nearly lost her autonomous existence. For the evil of foreign saviours now told on the Magyars. Had they driven back the Turk by their own efforts, the result would have been an unprecedented electrization and stimulation of all the forces of the nation. The Greeks after Salamis; the Romans after Zama; the English after Trafalgar had won not only a victory over an enemy, but an immeasurably increased vitality fraught with novel energies. The Hungarians after the capture of Buda and the Battle of Zenta, both achieved by Austria's foreign allies

and foreign generals, had defeated the Turks indeed; but their own ends too. Never was Hungary in a lower state of national stagnation than shortly after the peace of Carlovitz (1699), which put a formal end to Turkish rule in most of the Hungarian counties. Prince Francis Rákóczy II., who started the last of the Great Rebellions of the Magyars previous to 1848, and after the above peace, found no Holland rich in capital, no Brandenburg ready to hand with well-trained regiments, no Austria willing to avert side-blows from enemies, to help him in the manner in which the asthmatic Prince of Orange was helped against James II. and his powerful abettor. And when Rákóczy too had expended his forces in vain, Hungary fell into a decrepitude but too natural in a nation whose foreign foe had been conquered by its domestic oppressor.

The political bankruptcy of the Hungarians by the beginning of the eighteenth century is of such importance for the study of the history of their literature, that we cannot but attempt to search for some of the reasons and causes of this national disaster. The principal cause was, it would seem, the lack of that very class of citizens which had in England so potently contributed to the ultimate victory of popular freedom—the middle class. Hungary never recognized, nor tolerated the complicated maze of semi-public and semi-private institutions collectively called Feudalism. Whatever the merits or demerits of that mediæval fabric may or may not have been, it is certain that the rise of the *bourgeois* class is owing directly, and still more indirectly to the action and re-action of Feudalism. The parallelism between England Poland, and Hungary pointed out above, must now be supplemented by the statement, that England alone of these three commonwealths had, through the invasion and conquests of the French Normans, received a large infusion of feudal institutions, and that therefore England alone was to create that powerful class of burgesses and yeomen, which was entirely lacking in both Poland and Hungary. Without such a class of “mean” citizens no modern nation has been able to consolidate its polity; and Hungary in the seventeenth century, being totally devoid of such a class, was in the long run bound to be wrecked by such a deficiency. We shall see how heavily the absence of a middle class told on the growth of Hungarian Literature.

During the eighteenth century and up to 1815, the great and scarcely interrupted wars of the Habsburgs enlisted all the powers of Hungary. In 1741 the Magyars, and they alone, saved Austria from what seemed to be

inevitable dismemberment. From that date onward to the campaign of 1788 the History of Hungary is but a chapter in that of Austria. Towards that latter date the wave of Nationalism started in France had reached Hungary. Like the Belgians and the Czechs (Bohemians), the Hungarians too began to revolt from the anti-nationalist and *egalitarian* autocracy of Emperor Joseph II., one of the characteristic geniuses of the last century, who was exceedingly enlightened on everything else but his own business. The old Magyar institutions, and weightiest amongst them, the Magyar language was, by the Hungarian diet, alas! not by the Hungarian people, decreed to be the public language of the country. Resistance to Joseph's "reforms" became so serious, as to prevail upon the dying monarch to revoke them, 1790; and under his successor, Leopold II., 1790-1792, who was of a less aggressive temper, Hungarian nationality seemed to approach its revival. This was, however, not to be.

The French Revolution, although essentially a nationalist movement, forwarded in Europe outside France, for nearly two generations after its rise, none but the cause of the monarchs. The Hungarians, who gave Austria many of her best generals, and fought in nearly all the battles of the Revolutionary Wars from 1792 to 1815, were in the end shorn of all their hopes and expectations by the successful fop who directed Austria's policy from 1809 to 1848. Prince Metternich had not the faintest conception of the rights or wants of the Hungarians; and having brought to fall, as he thought he did, the French Revolution and its personification, Napoleon Buonaparte, he could not but think that a small nation, as the Hungarians, would speedily and lastingly yield to high-handed police regulations, to gagging the public conscience, and to unmanning the press. The year 1848 witnessed the final victory of the French Revolution all over Europe. Hungary, foremost amongst the countries where oppressed nations were demolishing the bulwarks of tyranny, freed herself from the yoke of Austrian ministers. The Austrian armies were driven out of Hungary; the Habsburgs were declared to have forfeited the crown of St. Stephen; and but for the help of Russia, the Austrian monarchs would have been deprived of more than one half of their empire. When a now nameless Hungarian general surrendered to the Russians at Világos (1849), Hungary was bodily incorporated with the Austrian Empire, and Czech and Austrian officials were sent down to germanize and denationalize Hungary. In 1860 the reaction set in. The nation, offering a passive resistance of a most formidable character,

brought the Vienna Cabinet to its senses; and when, at Königsgrätz (July, 1866), the Prussians had routed the armies of Austria, Hungary's greatest political sage, Francis Deák, aided by the Austrian minister, Count Beust, restored the ancient Magyar autonomy and independence. Ever since (1867) Hungary's relation to Austria has been that of confederation for purposes of foreign policy, and absolute independence for the work of domestic rule. The Emperor of Austria is at the same time the King of Hungary; and thus the two halves of the Empire are united by a personal link. Law and its administration; Parliament and municipal government; commerce and trade; in short, all that goes to form the life of a separate nation is, in Hungary, of as independent a character as it is in Austria. A Hungarian must, like any other foreigner, be formally naturalized in order that he may be considered an Austrian citizen, and *vice versâ*.

CHAPTER III.

The preceding short survey of the history of Hungary may now be followed by a brief sketch of the character and temper of the Hungarians. The Magyar proper, and all the numerous individuals in Hungary who have become completely assimilated to and by the Magyar element, bear in character much similarity to the Poles on the one hand, and to the Spanish on the other. They are rhapsodic and enthusiastic; excellent orators and improvisators; and most sensitive as to their personal dignity and social respect. As their music so their character is written in passionate rhythms, moving from broad and majestic *largo* to quick and highly accentuated *presto*. Yet Hungarians, unlike Poles and Spaniards, do not let their rhapsodic impetus run away with them, and they have shown on all great occasions of their history, much coolness and firmness of judgment. Nor do they exaggerate their sense of dignity into bloated *grandezza*. They are rather humorous than witty; yet in a country replete with so many idioms and peoples, there may be found curious borderlands of pun, wit, and humour. Passionately fond of music and dancing, to both of which the Hungarians have given a peculiar artistic development of their own, the Magyars have seldom manifested remarkable talent for architecture. Painting and sculpture have found many an able devotee in Hungary.

But it is in music that most artists of Hungary have excelled. Hungary is saturated with music. No student of Magyar literature can afford to neglect the study of Magyar music. The parallelism between the growth of Hungarian music and Hungarian Literature is not so complete, as that between German music and German literature. Yet nothing will furnish us an ampler commentary on Magyar lyrics or epic poetry, than that magnificent music which has inspired heroes on the battlefield, lovers in their closets, Bach and Beethoven in their studies alike. It is intense music of torrential and meteoric beauties, and a bewildering bass. Strange to say, Bach’s preludes *à la fantasia* come nearest in character to the original Hungarian music, as played in the wayside inns of the immense *puszta*, or Plain of Hungary. In Hungary, all musical performances at social gatherings are entrusted to the gypsies, who

undoubtedly added much outward ornament and characteristic *fioriture* to the melodies and harmonies of the Hungarian people; yet the body and soul of that music are thoroughly Hungarian. Music in Hungary is the vocal and instrumental folk-lore of the people; and no lyrical poet of the Magyars could help writing without having in view the musical adaptation of his poem. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the continual indulgence in music has had its serious drawbacks. In a measure, music is the opium of Hungary. It fosters but too much that bent for dreamy idleness, which is the chief failing in the Hungarian character. Much has been done in recent times to inspirit the slumbering energies of the nation not only in the high walks of public life, but also in the lowly avenues of industrial, commercial, and other less picturesque activity. Still more remains to be done.

The lack of a middle class, or *bourgeois* proper, has retarded the growth of literature no less than that of political independence. Within recent times there were only two classes of Hungarians in Hungary, nobles and peasants. The floating and unassimilated portion of the population between these two classes remained either quite alien to Hungarian aspirations, or it attempted to imitate the nobles, of course chiefly in their less commendable qualities. The undeniable indolence of the small nobleman, or country-squire; his aversion to town-life; his abhorrence of trades and crafts; all these and similar shortcomings inherent in a caste of nobles had a baneful influence on their numerous imitators. Literature is, as a rule, an urban growth. The urban element in Hungary, however—was till the end of the last century of very subordinate importance. The frequent social gatherings of the Hungarian country gentlemen and their numerous imitators were indeed full of spirited talk and engaging conversation. In what might be called the *Parlature* of a nation, or the aggregate of their private discussions, dialogues, speeches, etc., the Hungarians are and always have been very rich. Many a brilliant essay or novelette has been talked in Hungarian drawing-rooms and dining-halls, which in other countries would have made the fortune of a writer. In fact, there is little exaggeration in advancing the statement that the literature of a nation is the complement of its *parlature*; and where the latter is inordinately developed, the former is necessarily of a less exuberant growth. This “law,” if so it may be called, operated with much force in a country where it is far easier to find listeners than readers. It also accounts for much that is characteristic

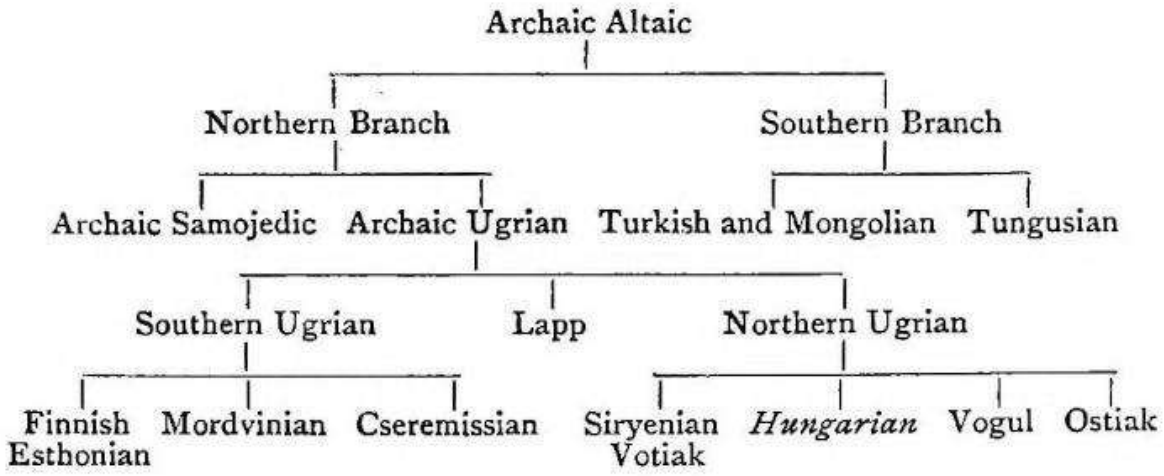
of Hungarian prose. Like French literature, Hungarian poetry or prose applies more to the ear than to the eye, and accordingly suffers very much from translation. That rich *parlature* in Hungary has, however, another and still more serious drawback. Up to 1870, in round numbers, there was in many parts of Hungary, more especially in the north-west and north, a custom of using, in common conversation, two or three idioms, almost at a time. Sentences were commenced in Latin, continued in Hungarian, and wound up in German, or Slovak. The constant use of several idioms, as it has rendered Hungarians peculiarly apt for the acquisition of foreign languages, so it has made them more than apt to read and assimilate foreign literatures. This again made many a less enterprising mind hesitate, and likewise many a feeble mind but too prone to imitate, especially the German writers, both in style and subject. The originality of Hungarian authors was thus at times much impaired. In the course of the present work we shall meet with several cases. At present we must hasten to speak of the most potent of the factors of Hungarian Literature; of the Hungarian language.

CHAPTER IV.

The Hungarian language is totally different in vocabulary and grammar from the Teutonic, Latin, Slav, or Celtic languages. Between Russian and German, or between Russian and English there is much affinity, both groups of languages belonging to the Aryan, or Indo-German class of idioms. Between Hungarian and German, or Hungarian and Slav, there is no affinity whatever. The Hungarians have indeed inserted some Slav and German mortar into crevices left open by an occasional decay of the Hungarian material; but the structure and functions of the Magyar language are totally alien to either Slav or German idioms. It is an agglutinative language, the root of words being almost invariably formed by their first syllables, unto which all affixes and pronouns are soldered according to a fairly regular process of word and case-formation. In Aryan languages the root is, as it were, subterranean, and frequently hard to lay bare. In Hungarian the root is always transparent. The vowels have a distinct musical value, and do not resemble the musically indeterminable vowels or diphthongs of English or German. Consonants are never unduly accumulated, as in Bohemian; and strong accents on one syllable of a word are unknown. Generally, the first syllable of the word has a heavier stress on it. Hungarian is rich both in its actual vocabulary, especially for outward things and phenomena, more especially still for acoustic phenomena; and in its prospective word-treasury. In few languages can new words, expressing shades and phases of meanings, be coined with greater ease. This facility applies to abstract terms as well as to material ones. It is probably not too much to say, that for purposes of Metaphysics or Psychology few languages offer so ample a repository and laboratory for terms as does the Magyar language. Although far from being as adapted for rhyme as English or German, yet Hungarian has many and sonorous rhymes. On the other hand, it crystallizes with readiness into all the metres of Greek or Latin poetry. A peculiarity of Hungarian (and Finnish) are the diminutives of endearment and affection.

The origin of the Hungarian language has been, and still is, a matter of great discussion between the students of philology. It is certain that

Hungarian is not an Aryan, but an Ugor (Ugrian) language, belonging to a vast group of languages spoken in parts of China, in Siberia, Central Asia, Russia, and Turkey. We here adjoin the genealogy of the Hungarian language as given by Professor Simonyi, of Budapest, who is considered one of the greatest living authorities on the history and grammar of the Magyar language. He says that Hungarian, together with Vogul, Ostiak, Siryenian, Votiak, Lapp, Finnish, Mordvin, and Cseremiss (spoken in the north and north-east of Russia) form the Ugrian language-group. This group is closely akin to four other groups, viz., the Samojed; the Turkish or Tartar; the Mongolian; and the Tungusian, or Mandchu groups. These five large groups are called the Altaic languages, and are all derived from an original Altaic idiom. Their mutual relations are shown in the following diagram taken from Professor Simonyi's work:



It will be seen that Hungarian is in near relation to Finnish and also to Lapp, as had been recognized already by the Jesuit John Sajnovics (1770), and proved by the great traveller, Anton Reguly. It is, however, also related to Turkish; and this explains why the leading neo-philologists of Hungary (Budenz, Paul Hunfalvy, and Arminius Vámbéry) are, the two former in favour of a Finnish, the latter in favour of a Turkish origin and kinship of both the Hungarians and their language. Amongst the numerous students of that vexed question, no one has done more to excite the admiration of his compatriots and foreigners, and the applause of scholars, than Alexander Csoma de Kőrős, who sacrificed his life in the monasteries of Thibet in the noble attempt at discovering, by the laborious acquisition of Central-Asiatic languages, the origin of the Magyars. We confess that we entertain but scant sympathy for the belief in races and racial persistency. Wherever the

Hungarians may have come from, and whether or no every one living Hungarian can trace his descent to one of the clans invading Hungary at the close of the ninth century is, in our opinion, immaterial. As a matter of fact, very few Magyar noblemen can trace their family beyond the year of the battle of Mohács (1526). It is quite different with the language of the Hungarians. Its origin and character are, on the whole, pretty clear, and from the knowledge of its relations to kindred idioms, many a valuable conclusion may be drawn regarding the rise and nature of Hungarian Literature in the past and in the present. The greatest patriot of Hungary, Count Stephen Széchenyi, has tersely expressed the immense influence of language on the nation in the words: “Language carries the nation away with it.” Our whole view of Hungarian Literature would be different if for instance the opinion of erudite Matthew Bél (Belius) as to the Hebrew origin of the Hungarian language had proved to be true. It would likewise essentially alter our conception of Magyar literary works if the opinion of Podhorszky as to the close relation between Hungarian and Chinese would not have been found untenable. But the physical origin of the Hungarians themselves is, at best, only an idle inquiry into insufficient records of the past.

CHAPTER V.

896-1520.

The history of Hungarian Literature is divided into four distinct periods. The first comprises the time from the advent of the Magyars in Hungary to the Reformation (896-1520); the second, from the Reformation to the peace of Szathmár, or the termination and failure of Hungary's revolt from Austria (1520-1711); the third, from 1711 to 1772, or the period of stagnation; and finally from 1772 to our own days, or the period of the full development.

896-1520. The first period is exceedingly poor in written remains of literature. In fact, the first and thus the oldest literary relic of the Hungarian language is a short "Funeral Sermon" (*Halotti Beszéd*), dating from the first third of the thirteenth century; and for 200 years after that date, we meet, with the exception of a Hungarian glossary of the year 1400, recently discovered at Schlaegl, in Upper Austria, with no example of a Hungarian literary work of even slight extent. From the middle of the fifteenth century we possess a fragment, called after the town where it was discovered, by Dr. Julius Zacher in 1862, the "*Königsberg* (in Prussia) *Fragment*." Thus, the number of extant, or hitherto discovered Hungarian works of even slight literary merit is, down to 1450 A.D., an almost negligible quantity. Mr. Szilády in his "Collection of Ancient Hungarian Poets" (*Régi Magyar Költők Tára*) has indeed communicated six and fifty mediæval Hungarian church-poems and other fragments; but of that number scarcely a dozen are original poems, the rest being mere translations of the then current church-poetry. The philologist may no doubt find much to glean from even this scant harvest of Hungarian Literature in the first period. For literature proper, it is of no account whatever. Yet it would be unfair to leave this period without even a passing mention of its oral literature, or epic and legendary stories, of which there must have been no small quantity in those agitated times.

The Hungarian naïve epic is lost. A glance at the habits of the Finns will, however, suffice to satisfy the inquirer that the Hungarians, like their cousins in Russia, must have cultivated the art of recitation and oral

handing down of the glorious deeds of their ancestors, to no small extent. We now know that the immense epic of the Finns, the *Kalevala,* has been transmitted from generation to generation by bards who had treasured up in their memories the endless *runot* recording the deeds of Lemminkäinen, Väinämöinen, and Jlmarinen. The Hungarians, too, had their bards, called *igrigeczek*, or *hegedősök* (violinists); and at the manors of the nobles or the courts of the kings, old heroic songs were recited about Attila, King of the Huns; his brother, Bleda; the fearful battle on the Catalaunian fields (Chalons-sur-Marne, 451 A.D.); the building of the castle of Buda; the siege of Aquileia; and the last fatal wedding of the terrible Hun. These Hun epics were widely known and recited in mediæval Hungary, as witnessed by the chronicles of those times. The people firmly believed themselves to be the successors of Attila's hordes, and this belief, although absolutely discountenanced by modern historians, is still lingering in the spinning-halls of Hungarian villages, and in lecture halls in England and America.

The circle of those oral epics comprised also the Magyar heroes proper. There were stories about Álmos, father of Árpád, the conqueror of Hungary; others about the "Seven Magyars" (*Hét Magyar*); the conquest of Transylvania by doughty Tuhutum, one of Árpád's generals; the flight of King Zalán, defeated by Árpád; the exploits of valiant Botond, Lehel (the Hungarian Roland), Bölscü, and other paladins of Árpád's times, etc. In the fragments from Priscus, the Byzantine rhetorician and historian; in the chronicles of Ekkehard, the monk of St. Gallen; and in the "Anonymus," or one of the chief, but hitherto, fatherless chronicles of Hungary, the above and some more heroic stories and epical records may be found.

In addition to the heroic epic, the Hungarians, like all the rest of the Christian nations of the west, had a considerable tradition of legends and lives of saints. Fortunately for Hungary, it had become, by the end of the tenth century of our era, both the hierarchical and political interest of one of the most learned and most statesmanlike of the popes, Sylvester II., to detach Hungary completely from the Eastern, or Greek Church; and to adopt it, by sending a royal crown to Stephen, duke of the Hungarians, into the world of Roman Catholicism. Had Hungary joined the Eastern Church, it could never have withstood the ambition and supremacy of the German Emperors, aided by the Popes of Rome. Having, however,

adopted the Roman, or progressive form of Christianity, Hungary was endowed with occidental or richer seedlings of civilization. St. Mary was made the patroness of Hungary; and all through the Middle Ages, she was adored and glorified in legends and songs. Some of these Hungarian legends about the Virgin Mary we still possess; likewise, the life of St. Margit, the daughter of King Béla IV.; the famous story of Josaphat and Barlaam, one of the most popular of mediæval Christian legends, taken originally from Indian (Buddhistic) sources; the life of St. Catherine of Alexandria, etc. The most characteristically Hungarian of these legends is, as to its subject, the life of St. Margit. As to its literary merits, it is, alas! a dry chronicle without any charm of form or diction at all. Nor did the Hungarians, as far as we know, succeed in throwing one or another of their crusading heroes into strong epic relief. The crusaders, in spite of their marvellous deeds, lent themselves far more to good chronicling than to epics. Their inherent poetic vice of being, or trying to be, saints rather than heroes rendered them unfit for real epics.

CHAPTER VI.

1520-1711.

1520-1711. The Reformation made rapid headway in Hungary. From the very beginning, Protestantism in Hungary had a political element, in that its rise was coeval with the accession of the Catholic Austrian dynasty so unwelcome to many Hungarians. Theological and political opposition thus gave a more than ordinary impetus to the study of all the questions and problems agitated during the Reformation. The most prominent result of that movement was a revival of the national feeling; and coupled with that, a regeneration of Hungarian Literature. The vast intellectual revolution of the fifteenth century, commonly called the Renascence, had, of course, left its traces in Hungary too. One of the most popular of Magyar Kings, Matthew Corvinus (1458-1490), invited a number of Italian scholars and artists to Hungary, such as Anton Bonfini, of Ascoli (1427-1503), Marzio Galeotto, of Narni, in Umbria (1427(?)-1497), Peter Ranzanus, of Palermo; Thaddeus Ugoletus, of Parma; Bartholinus Fontius; Felix of Ragusa; etc.

These scholars and artists, ably assisted by the Hungarian John Cesinge, or Janus Pannonius (1432-1472), and chiefly by the generous and refined king himself, brought some new leaven into the stagnant intellectual life of Hungary. In addition to the university founded by King Lewis the Great, at Pécs (1367), a new university was founded at Pozsony, where the Danube enters Hungary; the king's famous library (the *Corvina*) became the delight of scholars; and a printing press was established at Buda (1473). The king's victorious campaigns against the Hussites (see Jósika's novel, "*The Bohemians in Hungary*"), the Turks and the Austrians, gave rise to numerous poems and songs composed by unknown poets; and his age, called the Age of the Hunyadis, the king being a Hunyadi, bade fair to be one of great intellectual brilliancy too. However Matthew's premature death and the ensuing political troubles put an end to such prospects. It was left for the passions roused by the Reformation to kindle the fire which the torch of the Renascence had been unable to light. In all the countries where the deep influence of the

Renascence preceded that of the Reformation, the intellectual capital of the country was not impaired, even when its political was. In Hungary, the Renascence left too slender traces to guard the nation from falling into lawless writing about the topics of the day, regardless of the rules and classical measure so deeply impressed by the Renascence on the more fortunate nations of Italy, Spain, France and England. Hence the immense mental and emotional stir imparted by the Reformation was not sufficient to raise up great writers in Hungary. In fact, Hungary was, on a smaller scale, in a mental condition exactly similar to that of Germany. There too the Renascence had scarcely begun to do its beneficial work, when the Reformation swept everything before it. The consequence was the same. Luther himself, although one of the geniuses of language; Fischart, a very demon of language; and Hutten, the great champion of thought and liberty, together with numerous minor lights, were, in spite of efforts without number, debarred from creating a great German national literature. It was only much later, when the Renascence had done its work in Germany too, that the Germans, following in the wake of the Greeks, Romans, French, English, Spanish and Italians, were able to create a great national literature of their own. The same remark holds good for Hungary too.

Protestantism in Hungary assumed all the aspects it had taken in Germany and Switzerland. There were Lutherans proper, and Calvinists; Anabaptists and Unitarians. The Geneva of Hungary was the town of the "*cives*," Debreczen, east of the middle Theiss, in a large plain. Melius, or Peter Juhász (1536-1572) was the "pope" of the Magyar Calvinists; as Matthew Biró de Déva, 1500(?)-1545, was that of the Lutherans. Both preached in Hungarian and published a number of doctrinal and controversial writings in Hungarian; and both were followed by many a writer whose enthusiasm was the better part of his ability. The Bible, portions of which had been translated into Hungarian before the Reformation, was now published in Magyar in its entirety. This most excellent translation, executed chiefly by Caspar Károlyi, was printed at Vizsoly, in the county of Abauj.

The number of Hungarian poets writing in Hungarian during the sixteenth century is more than one hundred; most of them being Protestants. In the first years of the Reformation, their works were mostly of a religious character, such as psalms and prayers. Amongst

these we may mention the religious poems of Andreas Batizi, Matthew Biró, and Gál Huszár. The constant wars with the Turks or infidels added a peculiar intensity to the religious passions of the time; and accordingly the first Hungarian drama, "The Marriage of Priests" (*A papok házassága*), published in Cracow (then belonging to Poland) in 1550, and written by Michael Sztárai, was in reality an exposition of Protestantism in the form of a drama. "Moralities," and mordant satires against priests and the Catholic Church generally, were frequent. Didactic poetry, so closely allied with the moralizing spirit of early Protestantism, was ably represented by Gabriel Pesti, whose translation of *Æ*sop's "Fables" appeared in 1536 (in Vienna); and by Caspar Heltai, who likewise translated fables from ancient authors, 1566.

From the second half of the sixteenth century we possess a great number of rhymed stories, taken from the Bible, from foreign novels or from Hungarian history. One of the most famous of the authors of such stories was Sebastian Tinódy, whose "*Chronicle*," or poetical narrative of contemporary events appeared in Kolozsvár, in Transylvania, in 1554. As a poetical work it is scarcely of any value, with the exception of the music accompanying it. As a faithful picture of the Hungary of that time it will continue to be valuable to the patriot and historian. The language is heavy; the form is unshapely. In some respects superior to Tinódy were Stephen Temesváry and Matthew Nagy de Bánka; the latter being the bard of the great John Hunyadi. One, Albert Gergei, of whose personal circumstances nothing is known, composed, chiefly from Italian sources, the story of a young prince fighting innumerable foes and surmounting difficulties of all sorts in search of the fairy whom he, in the end, does not fail to win. This story ("*Argirius Királyfi*") has ever since the sixteenth century been the most popular chap-book amongst the lower classes in Hungary. Its *naïveté* and good epic tone render it agreeable even to a more cultured taste. Another poet of the second half of the sixteenth century, Peter İlosvai, composed, probably from the floating folk-poetry of his age, a poetical narrative of the life of Nicolas Toldy, one of the most popular heroes of the Magyars, who lived in the fourteenth century, under King Lewis the Great, and was of Herculean strength. His feats are sung in İlosvai's poem (published at Debreczen in 1574) in an effective, if rough, manner. A number of Magyar novels may also be found; but nearly all were translations from German or Latin novels of the time. The sixteenth century produced even a few Magyar

works of historic and philologic character. John Erdősi, or Sylvester, wrote the first grammar of the Magyar language (1539); Gabriel Pesti gave, in 1538, a short dictionary of the Magyar language; John Decsi de Baranya published in 1588 a collection of about 5,000 Magyar proverbs; Stephen Székely de Bencéd and Caspar Heltai published "World-Chronicles," in 1559 and 1575 respectively. Very many memoirs and journals of that time are still unpublished.

We must now mention the greatest of all the Hungarian poets of the sixteenth century, whose name we have so far left unnoticed because, by one of the strange freaks of life, the manuscripts of his lyrical poems, on which rests his great fame among Magyar poets, were first discovered only twenty-four years ago (in 1874), and some of them even after that date, and were therefore never largely known to the contemporaries of their author. This poet is Baron Valentin Balassi (1551-1594). He came from a magnate family, and so great were the gifts with which nature had endowed him, that men praised him as a model of heroism, and women worshipped him as the embodiment of chivalrous charm. In the troubles of his time, both political and social, he took more than one part; and he may be considered as at once the Knight Errant and the Parsifal of Hungary in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Highly cultivated and sensitive as he was, he could not but respond to the religious impulses of his time, and so became the author of many a religious poem. On his wanderings, which took him not only over the whole of his own country, but even as far as North Germany and probably also to England, he saw all forms and aspects of life. His lyric sentiments he embodied in the so-called "Flower Songs" ("*Virág-énekek*"), which are full of that *verve* and sweetness so characteristic of the best lyric poets of Hungary. He also introduced a new form of lyric stanza—the Balassi Stanza—which consists of nine short lines, the end-rhymes of which are the same in the third, sixth, and ninth lines, while the remaining three couples, have each their own rhymes.

CHAPTER VII.

1520-1711.

During the seventeenth century Hungary was oppressed by two evils of apparently antagonistic character; either of which, however, was to have the same fatal effect on Hungarian Literature. On the one hand, nearly two-thirds of Hungary proper, as apart from Transylvania, was under Turkish rule; on the other, the Habsburgs, then at their apogee, waged a relentless war against the liberties and independence of the Hungarians both in non-Turkish Hungary and in Transylvania. In the latter country, the Bocskays, Bethlens, and Rákóczys had in succession contrived to establish a Hungarian principate which, although acknowledging Turkish ascendancy, yet retained many of the rights of sovereignty. These two sets of circumstances were in themselves hurtful to the development of anything relating to Hungarian nationality, and most of all to Hungarian Literature. The counties under Turkish rule could not, by the very nature of the oppression under which they smarted, produce any literary movement at all. The counties under Austrian rule were held in bondage both political and intellectual, which stifled all attempts at a national literature. The sages have as yet not been able to prove, that a republican government must of necessity be beneficial to the material and political welfare of a nation. As to the intellectual progress of a nation, on the other hand, Liberty is generally taken to be an indispensable condition. Literature is possible only where there is at least a republic of minds. The Austrian government took good precautions to render the rise of such a republic in Hungary an impossibility. All the higher and middle schools in Austrian Hungary were, during the seventeenth century, in the hands of the Jesuits. The order of Jesus has not, as is well known, prevented a very great number of its members and pupils from rising to eminence in Theology and in Science. It could not, owing to its cosmopolitan and anti-national constitution, further movements of national literature. Quite apart from the debatable nature of its moral and political teachings, it retarded or stopped all such movements by employing in its schools the Latin language as the vehicle of instruction. At Nagyszombat (in 1635); at

Kassa (in 1657); at Buda (in 1687), the Jesuits founded, or taught in, universities, where lectures on all branches of knowledge were delivered in the mongrel language of the mediæval Scholastics, which has always had a baneful influence both on knowledge and its students. In the Protestant schools, the number of which exceeded seven hundred and fifty, the same radically false system was observed. The consequence was, that the vast majority of Hungarians had never received a living knowledge of either the history of Man or of Nature, and could accordingly turn their dead intellectual capital to no account. The only Hungarians whose mental acquirements had sufficient vitality to serve as stimulants to literary production of a higher type were such as could read Italian or French, that is, works, written in one, and thus fertilizing another living language. Such exceptional individuals could then be found only amongst the wealthy classes, or in other words, amongst the magnates. Thus it happened that all great literary work in Hungarian produced during the seventeenth century was done by the great noblemen, and by them alone. Hungary may therefore afford a fair test for the curious problem, whether from an aristocracy of birth can be recruited that aristocracy of genius the work of which forms a nation's great literature. In Hungary, the aristocracy of birth proved, on the whole, unequal to such a task. The Hungarian magnates of the seventeenth century did much creditable work in *belles-lettres*, and some also in graver departments of literature. Yet, they were unable to originate more than a temporary and inferior reform; and, moreover, they did, as we shall see, serious harm to the literary life of the nation at large, in that they were not able to engage its interests in the growth of its literature.

Of these magnates, the eloquent Cardinal Primate of Hungary, Peter Pázmány (1570-1637), Archbishop of Esztergom, claims our attention first. In his thirteenth year he became a convert to Catholicism, and later a Jesuit; and so intense was his zeal for the Church of Rome, that most of his active life was spent in a propaganda, by writings even more than by words, for his church, and with a constant literary warfare with the non-Catholics of Hungary. He is said to have converted no less than thirty of the noblest families of his country to the Catholic persuasion. At his time, perhaps the greatest number of Protestants were in Transylvania, whose princes were warm-hearted protectors of the Reformation; and since they cultivated the Hungarian language in preference to any other, Pázmány thought it wise to use the same idiom in his controversial

writings. Pázmány's theological armoury is taken chiefly from the controversial works of his French colleague and contemporary, the famous Jesuit Bellarmin. In his style, however, he shows considerable originality. He prefers the strong, racy expressions, proverbs and similes of the common people. His is a direct and vigorous, rather than an artistic style. The strange contrast between his popular vocabulary and the scholastic fence of his thoughts lends a peculiar flavour to his *Hodegus* or "*Kalauz*" (1613), and his sermons ("*Prédikációk*," 1636). Among his numerous Protestant opponents were: Peter Alvinczi, of Kassa; and George Komáromi Csipkés, of Debreczen; the latter translated the whole Bible into Hungarian. As a sad contrast to the splendid career of the convert Pázmány, we may mention here the life-long sufferings and wanderings of the loyal Protestant Albert Molnár de Szencz (1574-1634), who was persecuted wherever he came, in Germany, Austria, Hungary or Transylvania; and who, one of the true epigones of the Conrad Gesners and Sylburgs, published, in the midst of poverty and misery, Hungarian dictionaries; a valuable Hungarian translation of the Psalms (1607, after French models), which is in use to the present day; a Hungarian Grammar (1610); and a Hungarian translation of Calvin's *Institutio*. Finally, the gorgeous picture of the Cardinal cannot be set off to more advantage, than by a slight mention of the fanatic and obscure *Sabbatarians* ("*Szombatosok*"), in the background, whose religious poetry is no uninteresting evidence of the Hungarian theological literature of that time.

Amongst the numerous *protégés* and pupils of the victorious archbishop we find also Count Michael Zrinyi (1618-1664), a descendant of the famous Zrinyi, who, in 1566, defied single-handed the invasion of Sultan Soliman the Splendid, by offering him, with a handful of men, unconquerable resistance in the Castle of Szigeth, some twenty miles west of Pécs. Count Michael was one of the best educated men of his time, and equally great as a patriot, poet and general. The sad state of Hungary could not but affect deeply a man, whose historic *rôle* seemed to be clearly indicated by the glorious heroism of his ancestor. Having travelled abroad, especially in Italy, where Tasso's religious epic *Gerusalemme liberata* was read then more than ever after, he conceived the idea of stirring up a vast crusade against the Turks, by singing the deeds of his great-grandfather in an epic at once political and religious. This epic is commonly called the "Zrinyiad" ("*Zrinyiász*"), and consists

of fifteen cantos, written in rugged and rough style. It reveals much power of description and religious enthusiasm; but it is lacking in form and moderation; nor can the portraits of its heroes be called plastic by any means. It is, from the artistic standpoint, spoiled by the deficiency above mentioned; the central hero is too perfect to be lastingly interesting. Old Zrinyi is capital matter for ballads; for an epic he is too faultless. On the other hand, the “Zrinyiad” is one of the most effective of patriotic epics. Like the epic works of Klopstock in Germany, or “*Ossian*” in England, it had at the time of its appearance a great national value, apart from its literary merits. In telling the Hungarian nation in tones of sacred anger, that the Turkish oppression was due to the depravity of the Magyars, in exhorting them in vigorous modes to rally and shake off the yoke of the infidels, Zrinyi added an internal lustre to his work which even now, after more than two centuries, has not lost much of its splendour. Like the daring and glorious deed of his ancestor, his poem is more of a patriotic than an historic event. It were only gross exaggeration to count the “Zrinyiad” amongst the world’s great epics. The poet might well belie history in letting his ancestor personally kill the great Sultan. It would be dishonest to add to the glory of the poet by ignoring the truth of the literary canon.

As to the other magnates who wrote poetical works in Hungarian during the seventeenth century, it will be sufficient to say, that their poems were meant chiefly for the gratification of their authors; and although some of them were printed in book form, yet the bulk was left in the well-deserved obscurity of family archives. The most noteworthy of these poets were: John Rimay de Rima (1564-1631), an imitator of Balassi; Peter Beniczky de Benicze (1606(?)-1664); Count Stephen Kohári (1649-1731); Baroness Catherine Sidonia Petrőczi; Count Peter Zichy; Count Valentin Balassi, the second poet of that name (1626(?)-1684); and Baron Ladislas Listhy (1630-1660(?)), whose epic, “The Disaster of Mohács” (“*Mohács veszedelme*”), betokens a remarkable talent for versification.

So exclusive was the influence of the magnates on the literature of that time, that the one remarkable poet of the seventeenth century who was no magnate himself, although a nobleman, selected as the subject of his epic poem a romantic event from the life of one of the leading magnates. Count Francis Wesselényi besieged, in 1644, the Castle of

Murány, defended by the beautiful widow, Mary Szécsi. In the end he won both the heart of the heroic beauty and the castle. This famous event forms the burden of one of the most popular of Hungarian poetical narratives, briefly called, “The Venus of Murány” (“*Murányi Vénus*”, 1664), written by Stephen Gyöngyössi. Its language is musical, and the narrative tone very felicitous. The poet has evidently made a close study of Ovid, and frequently reaches the light touch and charm of the Roman; he even adds an element of romance, which has endeared his work to more than six generations of Hungarian readers. The metre is Alexandrine.

CHAPTER VIII.

1520-1711.

Amidst the din and excitement of the endless wars in Hungary, both civil and foreign, during the seventeenth century, the agitated mind of the common people vented itself in numerous ditties, skits and lampoons, which, after the name of one of the national parties, have been called *Kurucz-poetry*. It consists almost exclusively of largely unprinted little poems, mostly political, and depicts the agonies and torments of the patriots. Some of them are good and true in tone, and even powerful in the expression of hatred and satire. The one ever-memorable folk-poem of that time, however, was not written in words. The profound passions aroused by the last great revolution under the romantic Francis Rákóczy II., towards the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, were incarnated in inimitable fashion in the "*Rákóczy march*," the most fanaticising of all war-marches. Whoever actually composed it (tradition ascribes it to a Hungarian gipsy-woman by the name of Panna Czinka), that march spells a whole period of Hungarian history, just as Milton's *Paradise Lost* spells a whole period of English life. The Magyar nation was at the end of the seventeenth century far too unpractised in literary architecture to rear its pangs and longings into a dome of words. It was, however, then as now sufficiently imbued with the power of musical creation, to embody its woes in the fiery rhythms of the most heroic of martial songs.

CHAPTER IX.

1520-1711.

During the period in question very little was done for historic and scientific studies. John Cséri de Apáca (1625-1660), an enthusiastic student and patriot, published a small Hungarian "*Encyclopedia*" (1655), in which the elements of knowledge, both philologic, natural and mathematical are given in a simple and clear manner. Francis Páriz-Pápai published a much used dictionary of the Hungarian and Latin languages (1708). The nine books of the chronicle of John Szalárdi, who died 1666 ("*Siralmas Krónika*"), form the first attempt at historiography in the Hungarian language. Some of the leading men of that age left memoirs; and grammarians were also not wanting. The great philosophic wave, sweeping over Europe in the seventeenth century (Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Pierre Bayle), left scarcely any traces in Hungarian Literature, except in Cséri's Encyclopedia, where Cartesianism is not quite absent.

CHAPTER X.

1711-1772.

1711-1772. The period bounded by the years 1711-1772 is one of decline. During these years, which comprise the reigns of Emperor Charles VI., and most of that of Austria's greatest ruler, Maria Theresa (1740-1780), there was practically very little Magyar literature; and the little was bad. Hungarians of that period wrote, as a rule, in Latin; and the subjects they selected were those of laborious erudition; philology; descriptive natural science; annalistic history; historic theology. This decline in national literature was only another phase of the decline of the Magyar idiom. For, both in Transylvania, which was now again, as formerly, united with Hungary, and in Hungary proper, the Hungarian language ceased to be used in the schools, at the county-sessions, in the law-courts, and in polite society. In all these centres of intellectual intercourse, Latin, German or French were used instead of the sonorous language of Árpád. In Catholic and Protestant schools alike instruction was given in bad Latin. At the county-sessions; in the national parliament; and in the law-courts, Latin alone was used; while the higher classes of society were talking either in German or in French. For the latter fact, there is a simple explanation at hand. When, in 1711, Hungary was at last "pacified," it had become evident to the most patriotic of the leading families, that further armed resistance to the Habsburgs being impossible, the only chances of promotion for their children were at the court of Vienna. This involved the adoption of Viennese manners, and Viennese mediums of conversation; that is, of French and German. No sooner was that done by the aristocratic families of Hungary, than the abnormal state of the then national literature revealed all its latent barrenness. As has been seen in the preceding chapters, all the great Hungarian writers from 1600 to 1711 were recruited from the class of the magnates. When, now, after 1711, the magnates flocked to Vienna, there to undergo a thorough process of Germanization, or rather Austrianization, there was no class of writers left in Hungary to take their place. Hence the sudden dearth of great writers, and the astounding decline of Hungarian Literature. To this must be added the fact, that

German literature which was naturally destined to have a considerable influence on Hungarian writers, both from geographical contiguity, and on account of the general knowledge of German in the then Hungary; that German literature, we say, was not beginning to reach its classical period before the sixties of that century, and could therefore stimulate Hungarian Literature but very little. It is much more difficult to account for the exclusive use of Latin in the schools and in parliamentary debates. Had the use of Latin in the schools been accompanied by the study of Greek and Greek literature it would probably have wrought very much less mischief.

Unfortunately for Hungarian Literature, the study of Greek was almost entirely neglected in the last century. *Graeca non leguntur.* The immense power of æsthetic education inherent in Greek classical works could thus not benefit the Hungarians. Nay, it may be said in strict truth, that for Hungarians, naturally inclined as they are to grandiloquence and redundancy, both of words and thought, the study of Latin literature, untempered by that of Greek, was in many ways harmful. Many Latin poets and prose-writers lack that simplicity and moderation, which mark off Hellenic authors from all but the very best writers of all ages. The exclusive study of Latin was therefore doubly harmful to the Hungarians: first, in that it made them neglect their own language; and secondly, in that it supplanted the study of Greek literature. The exclusive use of Latin in all the schools and colleges of Hungary during the last century was, however, part of that general obscurantism weighing on all the educational institutions of the Habsburg empire. Both Charles VI. and Maria Theresa left the instruction of youths in the hands of monks and priests. Previous to the abolition of the order of the Jesuits (1773) that order had no less than thirty "*gymnasia*," or higher colleges in Hungary. After its abolition, these colleges were placed in the hands of other orders, such as the Præmonstratencians, the Benedictines, Paulists and Franciscans. As in Austria, so in Hungary, the regular clergy, more still than the secular, attempted to shut off their pupils from the new light rising in France, England and Germany, and for that purpose the habitual use of scholastic Latin was one of the most efficient means. At the Protestant schools, of which the most famous were at Debreczen, at Sárospatak, and at Pozsony, in Hungary proper; and at Nagy Enyed, Kolosvár, Marosvásárhely, and at Udvarhely, in Transylvania, instruction was likewise given in Latin. Nor can it be seriously maintained that the

Protestant teachers were more prone to let in the new light than were the Catholic.

CHAPTER XI.

1711-1772.

In poetry proper, it is for the present period customary, but scarcely necessary, to mention the Jesuit Francis Faludi (1704-1779), who has put some wise saws and moral platitudes into light verse; and Baron Ladislas Amadé (1703-1764), whose not unmelodious lyrics were sufficient to give the successful courtier a mild reputation as an interesting poet. In dramatic poetry there is nothing worth mentioning. The Jesuits occasionally had their pupils play a patriotic or religious drama made *ad hoc*, and good *pro tunc*. Of prose-writers there is one, and one only, whose “Letters” written from Turkey, where he was in exile, have abiding literary value. This was Clement Mikes (1690-1761), who was brought up by Prince Rákóczy, to whom he proved constant under all circumstances, and for this reason Mikes still belongs to the generation of Hungarian nobles who cultivated their language with the pride of true patriots. The “Letters” are not only full of historic interest, especially with regard to the interior condition of the then still mighty Turkish empire, but also as specimens of pure, idiomatic and well-balanced Hungarian prose.

The remarkable works in History, Theology or Science of that period were, as noticed, written in Latin. Of learned works written in Hungarian the two best were by men who had spent their youth in the preceding century, and were thus less afflicted with the gangrene of the decadence of the period from 1711 to 1772; Michael Cserei (1668-1756), and Peter Apor (1676-1752), both of very great nobility. Cserei wrote a “*Transylvanian History*” (“*Erdélyi Historia*”), in which the events from 1661 to 1711 are told in a lively, naïve and pleasing style. Apor is the author of a remarkable work on the history of the manners, customs, and institutions of ancient Transylvania. It is entitled “*Metamorphosis Transylvaniae*,” and its object is to show, by contrast, how low the country had sunk from its former glory. His satire is not infrequently both scathing and well-expressed.

The bent for erudite laboriousness gave rise to several works on the history of Hungarian Literature. The still-life of the small town of Bártfa in the county of Sáros must have hung heavily on the hands of David Czwittinger, one of the lawyers of that town, who published, in 1711, a dry list of Hungarian writers, in alphabetical order. He was distanced by the indefatigable and patriotic Peter Bod (1712-1769), who had, like so many Protestants, spent several years at Dutch universities, where he amassed much polyhistoric knowledge and a good library. There, no doubt, he also acquired the taste for literary history, and in his "Hungarian Athenæum" ("*Magyar Athénás*", 1766) he collected much material bearing on the lives and works of no less than six hundred Hungarian authors. In Law or Philosophy there appeared, during this period, no work in Hungarian claiming our attention.

CHAPTER XII.

1772-1825.

1772-1825. After a period of decadence, lasting for over sixty years, Hungarian Literature was again brought to a state of revival and progress, which has gone on almost uninterruptedly to the present day. This revival is part of an immense revolution which swept over most countries of continental Europe in the second half of the last century. The most conspicuous and best known event of this Modern Renascence is the series of terrific upheavals and wars commonly called the French Revolution. It is, however, quite evident that the French Revolution was only the politic aspect of a vast movement, which in many countries outside France assumed the garb of intellectual revolutions. Thus the mental achievements that, in their totality, are called the “classical period” of German literature (1750-1805) are in the domain of Thought and Sentiment, a revolution no less colossal and far-reaching than were the ever-memorable proceedings of the French *assemblées*, or the bloody epics of the Revolutionary campaigns. Both were gigantic onslaughts against the *Ancien Régime* in institutions, manners, thought and sentiment. Accordingly, the course of both revolutions was—making due allowance for externals—essentially the same. As the French Revolution landed in, or rather was brought to its final consummation in the titanic and all-embracing personality of Napoleon, so German literature met its final trysting-place and culmination in the orchestral mind of Goethe.

The minor nations of Europe were seized by the same Revolution, if in a manner considerably less intense. The very aggressiveness of the French Revolution, its encroachments on the territories of Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Austria, prevented those minor nations from enacting their Revolution at once in its intellectual and political aspects. While fighting the French, they were all engaged in following them on the lines of the Revolution, first (1790-1830) for intellectual freedom; and then, after the defeat of the French armies (1830-1848), for the very political ideals that the French had been the first to proclaim. For, this was the immense advantage of the French over the other nations on the

continent: they had brought their intellectual revolution through men like Turgot, d'Alembert, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc., to maturity, before they started for their crusade of politic liberty; whereas the other nations were a generation or two behind-hand, and still in the throes of their intellectual renascence.

This is not the place for a laborious inquiry into the causes of that immense Revolution which has, towards the end of the last, and in the first five decades of the present century, completely altered the face of European civilization. It is nevertheless necessary to give some account of such causes as were instrumental in ripening the intellectual aspect of that Revolution in Hungary. Among the leading causes was a structural change in the population of Hungary on the one hand, and the reaction against the provocative and anti-national measures of the Habsburgs on the other.

Up to the sixties of the last century, the population of Hungary consisted practically of (1) a rural population, comprising both magnates, noblemen and peasants; and (2) a small urban population, comprising largely foreign or Germanized craftsmen and tradespeople. Under such circumstances, literature, which is pre-eminently an urban growth, could not develop. For, not only was the urban population too small and too much immersed in material pursuits, but the only intellectual class, viz., the aristocracy, was living in the country, that is, in an atmosphere unfavourable to continuous literary efforts. By the end of the sixties, however, the structural change, above indicated, took place. Owing to a series of measures issued by Maria Theresa and Joseph II., the rural population of Hungary was liberated from its most odious fetters. Bondage, and a sort of serfdom (*jobbágyság*), with all its concomitant evils were almost abolished. Numerous rural families left their obscure abodes, repaired to the towns, and urban life, for the first time in Hungarian history, was raised above the low level on which it had been vegetating for centuries. With the increase of urban population came an increase of wealth and comfort; a greater activity in commerce, both mercantile and social. Many a gifted Hungarian, who would have previously spent his days in the obscurity of his county, now willingly lived in one of the rising towns. With an accelerated speed of work came a more rapid appreciation of talent, and a greater number of authors. The influx of the rural population to the town facilitated that mutual action

and reaction between Nature and Man, which, in one form or other, is the main spring of literature. In England, too, the great period of Shakespeare was preceded by a similar structural change in the population. The dissolution of the monasteries and the numerous enclosures of commons, depriving as they did, hundreds of thousands of rural people of their means of livelihood, drove them into the towns, which rapidly ozonified that atmosphere of great intellectual stir, without which no great writers are possible. In Germany, too, the period of Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe was preceded by a new influx of the rural population into the towns devastated by the thirty years' war. Nor can it be doubted that Italy, in possession of highly-organized and rich towns long before any other mediæval nation, took, for this very reason, the lead in all literary matters.

This broad fact of Hungarian history (totally neglected by the historians of Hungary, probably because of its very broadness), must therefore be considered as the prime mover in the revival of Hungarian Literature. It created that mysterious propelling power which in times of progress everybody feels and nobody can account for. It was the latent and constant stimulus to renewed mental labour, and to keener delight in it. Like great rivers it was swelled by smaller affluents of causes. Thus that great structural change in nearly all parts of Hungary was accompanied by two structural changes in limited layers of Hungarian society. Maria Theresa, probably with a view of carrying Austrianization into the very hearts of the Hungarian nobles had, in 1760, established the famous Hungarian Guard in Vienna. Each county in Hungary was to send up a few young noblemen to Vienna, where they were clad in sumptuous style, and treated with all the seductive arts of a refined court. Thus a considerable number of Hungarian noblemen were given an opportunity for that higher education and refinement, which in former times had been the privilege of the select few. Vienna was in many ways a centre of Franco-German civilization, and the young Magyar noblemen derived, from a lengthy stay in the Austrian capital, a benefit similar to that for which English gentlemen flocked to Paris in the thirteenth and seventeenth century. This then, constituted one of the minor changes in the intellectual development of one class of Hungarians. There was also another change. Joseph II., in dissolving over a third of the existing monasteries, and a great number of monastic orders too, set free a number of educated men, who would have otherwise led a sterile life in

the lonely cells of their monasteries. They now began to devote their unexpected leisure to pursuits of a different kind; and some amongst them became workers in the field of literature. Thus a new source of literary production was opened up.

To these structural changes in the population of Hungary, that is, to the home and internal cause of a potential revival, now came the external agency of those anti-national measures against Hungarian institutions, which Maria Theresa, with fine womanly tact, had used in a tentative manner, but which were applied by Joseph II. in the most reckless and irritating fashion. Joseph had one ideal: the homogeneous Austrian state. Like all ideals it was unrealisable. It was worse than that: it was suicidal. The Austrian empire has its very *raison d'être* in the heterogeneity of its constituent parts. To level down the Austrian "lands" to one and the same pattern, is to deprive them of all vitality. They live by contrast to one another. Unable to be quite independent each by itself, they would, if unconnected by some common tie, only serve to aggrandize either Prussia, Russia or Italy, and so upset the balance of Europe in a fatal manner. United by the dynastic tie, they form an imposing, if incongruous whole, the component parts still retaining very much of a strong individuality. Any attempt at forcing them into blank uniformity must needs be answered by a still stronger attempt on their part to rend the dynastic tie asunder. The various provinces have, since 1648, and with respect to Hungary, since 1711, made no civil war on one another. Not one of them had, as had Prussia in Germany since Frederick II.'s time, or England since Cromwell's time, the supremacy over the rest. Their sole union and bond was in their common dynasty. To try to reduce them to one and the same level, as Joseph II. did, was both the worst dynastic and national policy imaginable. The Austrian provinces, then or now, if reduced to complete uniformity, will first of all abolish the dynasty—as superfluous. In the *egalitarian* ordinances of Joseph II. there was so much that was subversive of the very pillars and coping-stones of the whole Austrian edifice, that the Hungarians, as well as all the other nationalities under his rule (Belgians, Czechs, Poles, etc.), forthwith rose in a body in defence of their privileges, charters, rights; in fact, of their existence severally and collectively. The Emperor wanted to abolish the Hungarian language, Hungarian institutions, Hungarian society. At once the Hungarians, who had then almost entirely neglected their language, learned to regard it as the chief palladium of their nationality. Hungarian

periodicals were started; such as the "*Magyar Múzsa*" (since 1787); "*Magyar Múzeum*" (since 1788, in Kassa); "*Mindenes Gyűjtemény*" (since 1789); "*Orpheus*" (since 1790, edited by Kazinczy); "*Urania*" (since 1794, edited by Kármán), etc. Hungarian actors were encouraged; Hungarian literary societies were started, the oldest being that founded by John Kis, at Sopron, in 1790. These efforts were immeasurably increased in efficiency by the publication of very numerous Magyar works in nearly all *genres* of literature, and in styles and "schools" of great divergency. The members of the Guard naturally proceeded on French lines, taking the great French writers, and chiefly Voltaire, as their model. The foremost members of the new urban element, which also included many an unfrocked monk, coming as they did from the country where the Magyar language and folk-poetry had never died out, and where the national pulse beat strongest, proceeded on national lines. The older country-gentry, and numerous released monks, conversant above all with Latin literature, proclaimed the classical metres and forms as the only safeguard and aim of literature; while another section of the new urban element followed in the wake of the Germans, whose classical writers were just then at the height of their fame. This great divergence of schools was in itself proof of the definite revival of Hungarian Literature. In the spiritual republic, no less than in the political, parties are of the very essence of vigorous life. By the end of the last century there could have no longer been any doubt about the strong vitality of Hungarian Literature.

CHAPTER XIII.

1772-1825.

The first of these “schools” to publish serious works with the intention of reforming the literature of Hungary, were the members of the Hungarian Guard at Vienna, and chiefly George Bessenyei (1747-1811). [2] In 1772 he published a tragedy, entitled “Agis” (“*Agis tragédiája*”) in which he attempted to give, within the strict rules of the Franco-Aristotelean tri-unity of time, place and action, a model for his contemporaries. In point of language, *Agis* is not without some merits; as a dramatic work it has long been regarded as a failure. Bessenyei was more successful in his comedies (“Philosophus,” etc.), in which he even contrived to create a type, *Pontyi*, representing the narrow-minded, ultra-conservative country-squire of his time. His style is held to be much better still in his prose works containing philosophical essays after the rationalistic fashion of his epoch. Amongst the numerous colleagues and literary followers of Bessenyei were: Abraham Barcsai (1742-1806), Alexander Báróczi (1735-1809), who excelled chiefly in translations from the French; Ladislas Baranyi, Joseph Naláczi, Bessenyei’s own brother, Alexander, who tried his hand at Milton’s “*Paradise Lost*,” etc. To the Bessenyei circle (“*Bessenyei György társasága*”) belonged also Paul Ányos (1756-1784), in whose mournful and sentimental poems there are many traces of genuine poetry. Nor must Joseph Péczeli be forgotten (1750-1792), who through his numerous translations from French and English works (Edward Young’s “Night Thoughts”) and his “Fables” (“*Mesék*”) deserved highly of Hungarian Literature.

The next in time and merit was the school of the Classicists, or more properly speaking, Latinists. The first four remarkable members of that school were all unfrocked priests. Baróti David Szabó (1739-1819), and Joseph Rajnis (Reinisch) were ex-Jesuits; Nicolas Révai (1750-1807) was a Piarist, and Benedictus Virág (1752(?)-1830) an ex-Paulist. The circumstances of their mental development above indicated led them naturally to an imitation of the Latin poets; and Virág in Hungary, like Ramler in Germany, or Cowley in England, was held to be one of the

numerous “Horaces,” in whom the nascent literatures of Europe were happily so rich. In ripe mellowness of formal beauty and musical ring Virág cannot, we are afraid, be said to have seriously challenged the laurels of the friend of Augustus. His *Works* (*Poétai Munkák*, 1799) are, on the other hand, inspired by a noble glow of patriotism, which might have added some lustre to the poems even of Flaccus. Virág translated Horace into Hungarian, as Baróti had done with the *Aeneid*. The poetical works of the other two ex-priests were of an inferior kind.

To the above two schools now was added the third; the national or genuinely Magyar school. The two former laid special stress on purity and perfection of form, both external and internal. In fact, the classicists came near sacrificing everything else to correctness of form. In this they were partly justified, partly supported by the peculiar adaptability of the Hungarian language to the most complicated of classic metres. Hexameters or alcaics are just as natural to Hungarian, as they are to Greek and Latin; and infinitely more so than to any other Indo-German language of Europe. The classicists, and especially the greatest of them, Berzsenyi—see below—were able to handle the most national and intimate subjects in the most foreign of verse-forms, and with perfect ease too. This seemed to go far in convincing many writers, that classical forms were the only ones to adopt, and classical models the only ones to follow. The prosodic wealth of the Hungarian language is, however, not exhausted by its classic metres by far. From time immemorial Hungarian poetry was wedded to Hungarian music, and the latter, with its pointed rhythms and sudden irruptions of cadences, was quite unfitted for the stately calm of antique metres. In German classical music, classical metres, such as the hexameter or the alcaic may be, and have been employed. In Hungarian music they are out of place altogether. Here, then, was the inner justification of the “Magyar” school. Its members strongly and rightly felt, that in the cult of antique prosody the classicists had overstepped the bounds; that Hungarian poetry needed forms and moulds other than those of Virgil or Horace; and that the short cross-rhymed stanza was to Hungarian Literature, what the violin and the “*czimbalom*” (dulcimer) were to Hungarian music. It is impossible to play Hungarian music on the organ.

Of the Magyar school was Ádám Horváth (1760-1820), who in addition to an epic called “*Hunnias*” (1787), in which he tried to sing the

exploits of John Hunyadi after the battle of Varna (1444), published a number of simple poems in the style of the folk-poetry of the Hungarian peasants. By refining the prosody of that *genre* he introduced it into the literary world. The most successful of the Magyarists was Count Joseph Gvadányi (1725-1801), whose "A Village Notary's Travel to Buda" ("*Egy falusi nótárius budai utazása*," 1790), was a felicitous attempt to expose, in the form of a novel in verse, the utter decadence and denationalization of the town-people and the gentry of the middle of the last century. The "notary" has survived as a type. Gvadányi's other novels are on the same lines, all of them being animated by a resolute patriotism. He was followed by Andreas Dugonics (1740-1818), an ex-Piarist, whose "*Etelka*" a novel (1788) became very popular, chiefly owing to its strongly accentuated patriotism and anti-Austrian feeling, and also to the racy, popular language he used. He also compiled a valuable collection of Hungarian proverbs and apophthegms ("*Magyar példabeszédek és jeles mondások*"). The number of writers belonging to the Magyar school in the two last decades of the eighteenth century is considerable. They all excel in patriotic verve, and much of the anonymous work done at that time for the restoration of Hungarian Literature is due to them. We cannot here give more than a list of a few names. John Kónyi, Stephán Gáti, Francis Nagy, the first Hungarian translator of the Iliad, and Joachim Szekér, who did much for the bettering of female education in Hungary. Separate mention must be made of a number of Magyarist poet-naturalists whose centre was the city of Debreczen, and amongst whom were John Földi (1755-1801), who wrote some remarkable works on Hungarian prosody in its relation to music; and Michael Fazekas, whose "*Ludas Matyi*," a chap-book written in the interests of the peasants, has long been one of the most popular comic stories. Nor were the usual excrescences of the juvenile epoch of a new language wanting. A limited class of now obscure writers (Gregory Édes, John Varjas, etc.), abused the great flexibility of the Hungarian language in verse-forms and metres of the most absurd kind. They were the caricaturists of the rapidly growing Magyar idiom.

CHAPTER XIV.

1772-1825.

The formation of different schools of literature was of great benefit to the growth and advance of Hungarian poetry and prose. Many a minor talent could and did, by clinging to and being supported by a “school,” steady his work. After the lapse of some time, however, the exclusiveness of “schools” would have done great harm to the higher development of Hungarian Literature. By 1795 more than schools and literary guilds was needed. The nation wanted powerful individualities who were, so to speak, schools themselves. Fortunately for the cause of the Hungarian intellect, such men did arise in time. The first of them was Francis Verseghy (1757-1822). An ex-Piarist, and involved in the conspiracy of Martinovics: he had gone through the experiences of a priest, a politician and a state-prisoner. His poetical works, which are very numerous, manifest a tender, yet strong mind, much ease of form, and a power of satire. He translated the *Marseillaise* into Hungarian. He is at his best in short poems. What raises him above most of his predecessors is his considerable independence as a poet. He clings slavishly to no school, and succeeds in combining some of the excellencies of all. In genius he was far excelled by tempestuous John Bacsányi (1763-1845), who espoused the cause of the French Revolution, did some work for Napoleon, and was in 1814 taken back to Austria, where he died an exile. He brought Ossian’s poems to Hungary; and in his fierce poems all the fire of the revolutionary fever may be felt. Yet with all that he could reduce to fine proportions and to efficiency neither his life nor his work. In the melancholy and sweet poems of the ex-priest, Gabriel Dayka (1768-1796), the Hungarian Hölty, which have to the present day lost nothing of their Wordsworth-like delicacy, we have the first instalment of those mournful *largos*, in which Hungarian Literature is as rich as is Hungarian music.

These three writers were as the forerunners of literary individualities of a much higher type. The first of them was Joseph Kármán (1769-1795). He too spent some time in Vienna, where then centred the

political and social life of a large portion of Europe. Like so many more Hungarians, he burst into enthusiasm for his country by staying and living amongst a foreign people who, in the nobler traits of character, were decidedly inferior to the Magyars, and who yet were considered to be their rulers. The people of Austria, and especially the Viennese, are utterly different from the Hungarians. Their love of the burlesque, of the grotesquely funny, of the clownish, stood out then, as it still largely does, in sharp contrast to the dignified gravity of the Magyars. To be considered as subject to people so very much less adapted for the functions of government than themselves, was at all times galling to the Hungarians; and perhaps never more so, than in the nineties of the last century, when a mighty wave of opposition to the Habsburgs was sweeping over Hungary. Kármán's was a most sensitive soul. He fully realized that to render Hungarian Literature more perfect and independent was first of all a great political deed. He keenly felt, that Hungary, unless emancipated intellectually, must fall a victim to the then immense ascendancy of Austria. Every good poem, every good novel, written by a Hungarian in the language of his country, was then of more service to Hungary than all the proceedings at the national assemblies. Kármán, despite his extreme youth, at once set to work. He proclaimed that Pesth ought to be the literary centre of Hungary. He started a quarterly ("*Urania*"), and hastened to write his "*Memoirs of Fanny*" ("*Fanni hagyományai*"). The latter is a novel in the form of letters and leaves from a diary. Fanny, the heroine, loves with all the inconsiderate passion of a young girl, a young man, whom she is not allowed to marry. She dies of a broken heart in the arms of her lover. The plot of the novel is of the simplest. The excessive sentimentality of the heroine, who is, as it were, drowned in the floods of her own feelings, is to our present taste somewhat overdone. With all these shortcomings, however, Kármán has poured over his little story so much of the golden light of fine, unaffected style, and has enriched it with so many touches of the most effective descriptions of scenery, that "*Fanny*" will always rank among the foremost of the literary products of the kind, of which Goethe's "*Werther*" is the most famous.

The second great poet was Michael Vitéz Csokonai (1773-1805). Born at Debreczen, a town whose famous fairs brought together annually an immense concourse of the agricultural and trading people of Hungary, Csokonai was at an early age imbued with the riches of the gallery of

types for which his country has always been so remarkable. Although at all periods of his irregular and vagrant life Csokonai kept in close touch with books, Bürger amongst the Germans, Pope amongst the English, and Metastasio amongst the Italians, being his favourites; yet the real source of his surprising fertility of invention, and surety of draughtsmanship was laid in his constant contact with the people itself. His proud and independent character, the ruggedness of which was not rendered less objectionable by an independent fortune, drove him from post to post. As a roving poet he visited most of the counties, making friends everywhere, protectors and helpers nowhere; and when he finally returned to his old mother's house, his health was irretrievably shattered by poverty, privations and occasional excesses. He is a great poet. His language is full of savour and truly Magyar. He has abundant and merciful humour, without lacking wit. Frequently he soars to philosophical heights of thought, where, like the eagle, he broods alone. In his lyrical poetry there is much of the rhapsodic frenzy, which was to make Hungary's greatest poet, Petőfi, as unique in poetry, as Liszt is in music. Csokonai's most famous poem is a comic epic, somewhat in the style of the *Rape of the Lock*, called "*Dorottya*," or the *Triumph of the Ladies at the Carnival* ("*A dámák diadalma a farsangon*"), in four parts. It narrates the warfare of the ladies of a small town, under the leadership of an old maid (Dorottya), with the men of the same place. The women complain of the shortness of the carnival, of the rarity of weddings, etc., and attempt to steal the registers of births compromising to many of them. In the end, the women fall out amongst themselves, Venus steps in, rejuvenating Dorottya, and making peace by marrying the contending parties to each other. The tone of that comic epic is throughout one of genuine mirth, and the language forms a fit drapery of the fleeting scenes of this charming carnival. The types stand out with great plasticity, and in this respect at least, Csokonai's *Dorottya* need fear no comparison with Pope's masterpiece. The critics of his time did not recognize Csokonai's greatness; and his townsmen, nearly all of them rigid Calvinists, did not think much of a poet in whose stanzas wine flowed abundantly, and love was rampant in forms at times unrestrained. When, therefore, some years after the poet's death, admirers of his wanted to have his statue erected at Debreczen, and the words, "I too lived in Arcadia" engraved upon it, the good burghers of Debreczen violently opposed the suggestion. For, as if trying to give the departed poet exquisite material for another comic epic,

they alleged, that by “Arcadia,” was meant, as they had learned, a country with good pasture, especially for donkeys; and since they solemnly protested against being considered donkeys, etc., etc. From this incident followed the so-called Arcadian lawsuit (“*arkádiai pör*”).

CHAPTER XV.

1772-1825.

In the literature of all civilized nations we meet with certain writers, whose great effect on their contemporaries was owing less to the absolute excellency of single works of theirs, than to the general tone and power of suggestion inherent in all their individuality. Such are, in England, Dr. Johnson and Thomas Carlyle; in France, Diderot and Renan; in Germany, Hamann and Herder. Without being creative geniuses, they influence their time as if they were such. One does so by the brilliancy of his talk, like Johnson; the other by pamphlets or essays *de omni re scibili*, like Herder; a third by boldly attempting to rear a new intellectual world in the place of the fabric of old literature and knowledge, like Diderot. The merit of such men is immense, yet relative. They deserve more highly of literary men, than of literature. They spread interest in or taste for good literature. They are critical, not constructive; and so decidedly preparatory and temporary is their work, that in the whole range of the world's literature there has so far been one man, and one alone, whose genius shone equally in this preparatory or critical work, and in the still more precious work of positive creativeness too. That man was Lessing. In him the critical faculty did not seriously impair the creative; and he rendered immense services to German literature both by what he destroyed, by what he suggested and by what he created.

Hungarian Literature was fortunate enough to find one of those initiators and suggestive stimulators during the period of its great revival, in the person of Francis Kazinczy (1759-1831). His work has frequently been compared to that of Lessing. No greater injustice could be done to Kazinczy. To compare him to the author of "*Laokoon*," "*Emilia Galotti*," and "*Anti-Goetze*," is to render him much smaller than he really was. Without being a Lessing by far, he had a very considerable and beneficial influence on Hungarian writers, many of them greater than he. He was the son of a well-to-do gentleman of the county of Bihar, which has a population of both Magyars and Roumanians, and does not therefore belong to the counties where the purely Magyar spirit is permeating all

the phases of life. To this circumstance, no less than to his education, must be ascribed Kazinczy's little sympathy with the strongly Magyar and nationalist aspirations of the Debreczen school. His youth he spent chiefly in North Hungary, where the study of German literature was then rife in the better circles of society. Having acquired a competent knowledge of German, French and English, he poured forth, since 1791, numerous, most carefully composed translations from Shakespeare (*Hamlet*), Goethe, Molière, Klopstock, Herder, Lessing, etc. From 1794 to 1801 he was kept in various state prisons, for having been, as was alleged, implicated in the conspiracy of Martinovics. This terrible experience left no particular traces either on his mind or on his character. Subsequently, as previously, nay during his imprisonment, he was busy with the elaboration of essays, critical, historical, or novelistic, all of which had two distinct aims: first—to reform the Hungarian literary language, by the introduction of new words and especially new idioms; secondly, to reform Hungarian Literature by modelling it after the standard of Greek masterpieces. Both lines of reform were in the right direction. The Hungarian language was in Kazinczy's youth still far from developed. Its vocabulary was limited mostly to the designation of things material, and quite fallow for the production of terms expressing things abstract or æsthetic. It resembled a country in which there is abundant currency in the shape of small coin; it lacked gold coins and bank-notes of great value. Yet like Hungary itself, its language was replete with gold-mines. In the rich and racy vocabulary of the common people there was both overt material and abundant hints for material hidden under the surface. Kazinczy, instead of taking these hints—instead of coining his new terms and idioms from the language of the common people, as he ought to have done, preferred to coin them according to standards taken from the western languages of Europe. In this he was grievously mistaken. There are unfortunately very few, if any, true dialects of the Hungarian language. This, the greatest drawback to Magyar writers, as the reverse of this deficiency is the greatest advantage to the writers of Germany, France, Italy or England, was rendered very much more harmful by Kazinczy, in that he totally neglected the few dialectic features together with the common household language of the people. In his efforts to enrich the language he thus could not but obtain results of an inferior type. His syntactic moves have not been followed on the whole; and of his new words few have gained general recognition.

He was much more successful in the second of his life-long efforts; in the introduction of the æsthetic ideals of the Greeks into Hungary. We have seen above, that the neglect of the study of Greek literature in Hungary had, in the preceding periods stunted the growth of Hungarian Literature. Literature, like sculpture, is born of Greek parents; and none but nations trained in the Hellenic world of ideas, can make a literature proper. In Germany, Lessing, Wieland, Herder and Goethe were so profoundly imbued with Hellenic modes of thought and moulds of expression, that many of their best works have, as has been felicitously remarked, enriched ancient Greek literature. So deep were in Germany, through the works of these men, the furrows of Greek thought, that even writers like Schiller, who did not know Greek, were full of the Greek spirit of beauty and moderation, and amongst its most ardent propagators. It was from these German Hellenes that Kazinczy learned the great and invaluable lesson of Greek idealism, that spiritual atmosphere in which the human intellect feels as different from its ordinary sensations, as does the human body in a river. Kazinczy was the first of the Hungarian writers whose soul had undergone the process of Platonization, to use this clumsy but expressive word for a process, the chief stages of which are an increased familiarity with mental tempers, the greatest exponent of which was Plato. In Kazinczy's wide correspondence with nearly all the literary men of his age; in his greater and smaller works; in his personal interviews with the leading men of his time; he invariably, and with noble persistency, endeavoured to instil Hellenic ideals of form, of beauty, of serenity. He had clearly seen how much German literature had been benefited by the adoption of those ideals; he sincerely and fervently wanted to confer the same boon on the literature of his own country. This endeavour constitutes his greatness, as its success does his historic importance. His own poems are mediocre; yet he has the merit of being the author of the first sonnets in Hungarian; his forte lies in his prose works, and there chiefly in his translations from the classical writers of Rome, Germany, France and England. It was also his indefatigable activity which gave rise to a wholesome literary controversy about the nature and limits of a radical reform of the Hungarian language as a vehicle of literature. This controversy merits special mention.

Omitting the names of some learned precursors, whose works have not much advanced the philological study of the Hungarian language, it

may be stated, that the first to subject that idiom to a careful and systematic study based on researches into its historical development, was Nicolas Révai. In his *Elaboratior Grammatica Hungarica* (1806, 2 vols.), he summed up his previous essays, and placed Hungarian philology on a tolerably sure basis, after the manner subsequently adopted by Jacob Grimm for Germanic philology. Although he still hankered after the purely imaginary affinity between Magyar and the Semitic languages, he yet succeeded in clearing up many a vital point in Hungarian historic grammar. With regard to the then wanted reform of the language, he taught that that reform ought to proceed on the lines of the laws of language as discovered by a close study of the ancient remains of Hungarian Literature. He was vehemently opposed by Verseghy (see page 85), who taught that the reform ought to be guided, not by the bygone forms of Hungarian, but by those actually in force. It is now pretty clear, that while the science of language is sure to be enriched by methods of study such as that of Révai, the art of language is more likely to gain by the advice of Verseghy. Kazinczy, who possessed neither Révai's philologic erudition, nor Verseghy's powers of philologic analysis, but who adopted principles of reform from both, Kazinczy became the centre of the passionate warfare that now arose for the golden fleece of "Pure Magyar." The Conservative party, whose headquarters were at Debreczen, Somogy, Szeged, and Veszprém, were called orthologues; the adherents of Kazinczy, neologues. Satyric writings were published by both; by the orthologues: "*Búsongó Amor*," 1806, and the still more famous "*Mondolat*," 1813; by the neologues: "*Felelet*," 1816, written by Kölcsey and Szemere; and chiefly, the prize-essay of Count Joseph Teleki, in 1817. In the end most of the work of the neologues has been accepted by the nation.

CHAPTER XVI.

1772-1825.

The great campaigns fought by Austria against the French Revolution and Napoleon were in reality the prelude of the subsequent warfare of the Conservative and reactionary classes against the rising Liberalism of modern times. In literature, that mighty duel of night and light was reiterated by the struggle between the romantic and the national schools of poetry. The romantic writers, whether Byron in England, Chateaubriand in France, or Eichendorff in Germany, were all perfect in form, and morbid in subject. They were to poetry what Prince Metternich was to politics, a genius of twilight. So natural was this connection between the French Revolution on the one hand, and national, or sound literature on the other, that they who personally fought in the wars against the Convention and the Directory (1792-1799), as later on against Napoleon (1799-1815), invariably inclined to the romantic or the reactionary school. This will explain the rise of romantic works in Hungary at a time when their classical and national school had scarcely begun to appear. The first great romantic Hungarian poet is Alexander Kisfaludy (1772-1844). He had fought in the Austrian army in Italy and Germany against the revolutionary armies of France, and so naturally considered the gentry of his country as the true representatives of his nation. In 1801 he published the first part of a series of lyrical poems called "*Himfy Szerelmei*," through which runs the uniting link of luckless love for one and the same maiden. Kisfaludy lived for some time in the country of Petrarch, and the influence of the great singer of hopeless love is clearly visible in the Magyar poet's work. It is written in stanzas of twelve lines, and is full of that shapeless but sweet sentimentality which so characterizes the romantic writers. It is like a landscape in which the most attractive part is the fleeting clouds: mountains, rivers, houses, and persons being all blurred and vague. It is atmospheric poetry, full of sweet words and sounds, as if coming from distant music. In 1807 Kisfaludy published another part of his *Himfy*, this time singing the joys of requited love, as the first did its sorrows. The work was received with great enthusiasm, more especially, of course, by the unmarried

population of the country; and Kisfaludy was encouraged to write novels, dramas and ballads in great number. All these works are meant to form an apotheosis of mediæval times in Hungary; just as the German and French romantic writers revelled in the charms of chateaux and knights and crusades. Some of his ballads are really good, such as *Csobáncz*. His dramas are worthless.

CHAPTER XVII.

1772-1825.

The romanticism started by Kisfaludy did not, however, retard the other literary movements in Hungary. The Hungarian language is in many ways too closely akin to the classic languages, if not in body, at least in prosody, to have easily forsaken the classic forms which had long been used by writers of this period, for the sake of romanticism. The Hungarian language is in that respect like Hungarian music. Although apparently nothing can be more remote from the strict moderation and stately respectability of classical music than Hungarian music, yet the strictest of the forms of classical music, viz., the fugue, has a curious internal resemblance to Magyar airs, in that the latter easily yield magnificent fugue themes, and preludes to fugues. Likewise the Hungarian language lends itself with surprising felicitousness to the expression of the highest form of classic metrical poetry: the ode.

Daniel Berzsenyi (1776-1826) was the poet who fully realized the riches of the classical veins in the mines of the Hungarian language, and who gave his country a number of perfect odes written in the metre and in the spirit of the best of antique odes. His patriotic odes, most famous of which is the one beginning “Perishing is now the once strong Magyar” (“*Romlásnak indult hajdan erős Magyar*” in alcaic metre); his religious odes, most perfect of which is “God-seeking” (“*Fohászkodás*” in alcaic metre); show the chief quality of classical poetry: perfect form wedded to hale and true subjects. He moves on the Alpine roads and in the ravines of the antique arduous metres with natural ease; for the real subjects of his poetry are akin and similar to Alpine sunsets and sunrises, majestic glaciers, and despondent abysses. He is sublime and natural; and amongst modern writers of odes in antique metres only the German Platen, when at his best, can compare with him. His poems were listened to with rapturous attention by the old warriors and politicians of the National Assembly, and read with equal enthusiasm and admiration by the youth of Hungary. From the height whereon he places himself with his lyre, there is no difference of size or age in his listeners. Nor has time

abated one tittle of the glory of his best poems. Some of the best critics of his epoch (amongst them Kölcsey) did not appreciate him adequately. At present we cannot sufficiently wonder at their blindness. We must console ourselves with the thought that poets, like the sun, are, as a rule, not noticed for some time after their appearance on the horizon. In the time of Berzsenyi there died at Vienna (in 1820) a young Hungarian, probably by his own hand, in utter distress; his name was Ladislas Tóth de Ungvárnémet. His mind, living in the regions of the Greek ideals (he even wrote Greek poetry), could not endure the sordid materialism of his surroundings. He left, in Hungarian, a tragedy after the Hellenic model, "*Narcisz*." Hungary has, by the premature death of Tóth, probably lost her chance of having her Shelley.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1772-1825.

The enlightened foreigner from France, England or Germany, reading about the allegedly great literary works written by Hungarians, Poles, Czechs or other nationalities who have so far not succeeded in playing first fiddle in the European concert, will probably indulge in a polite doubt as to the exceeding excellence of those works, not one of which has ever been spoken of in the columns of the leading papers or periodicals of London, Paris, Berlin, Rome or Vienna. In the preceding pages we have ventured to mention Pope and Shelley, and a few great German poets in the same breath with great Magyar writers. This may appear preposterous to Englishmen or Germans. Far from reviling them for that, we would rather hasten to add, that in a certain sense they are quite right. Pope's genius is in one most essential point decidedly superior to that of Csokonai (see page 88). Pope's best poems are not exclusively English in taste, subject-matter or form. They belong to that class of European literature, the best products of which may be relished with equal delight by Spaniards and Danes alike. They are European in character; and so much is this the case with the foremost of those writers, that Shakespeare, for instance, is far better known, by the youth at least of Germany, Austria and Hungary, than by that of England. In the great German writers there is little of that specifically German tone, which people other than Germans cannot very well enjoy. In Lessing there is no trace of the sentimentality and liquoriciousness of his native province; in Schiller there is not a trace of Suabian cunning or lumbersomeness; and Goethe might just as well have been born at Syracuse under Gelon, or at Athens under Pericles. Is there any trace of Puritanism, this the most specifically English feature of his time, in Shakespeare? The major part of the better writers of Hungary or Poland, on the other hand, have suffered their intense patriotism to make such inroads on the literary character of their works, that the latter frequently lose all their point to readers outside Hungary and Poland.

These reflections are suggested by a consideration of the works of Francis Kölcsey (1790-1838), a really great orator and a good poet. Born in the county of Bihar, where he spent the best part of his short life, he employed his magnificent powers of oratory chiefly in inculcating in the Hungarians of his time the lesson of patriotism. There can be no doubt that his speeches, his lofty "*Paraenesis*," and some of his critical work are written in that gorgeously laborious style which has made the fame of Bossuet in France and Gibbon in England. His poems breathe a mild melancholy that gives them a sombre tint of peculiar beauty. Yet, on the whole, he never oversteps the narrow limits of Magyar life as then existent; and what appeals to men of all countries and all nations found but a feeble rhetorical echo in his writings. No young Hungarian can read his works without deep emotion. In maturer years, however, he finds that Kölcsey's works belong to those that one gladly remembers to have read once, without desiring to read them again.

The growth of Hungarian Literature from 1772 to 1825 was, compared to that of England from 1570 to 1620; of Germany from 1760 to 1805; or of France from 1630 to 1675, a slow one. Many of the Hungarian writers of that period were endowed with gifts of no common calibre; and some of them, such as Kazinczy, Kisfaludy, Csokonai, Berzsenyi, Kölcsey, can certainly not be denied the distinction of genius. Yet with all their efforts, individual or collective, they did not quicken the step of literary progress very considerably. This was owing to the fact, that Hungary had as yet no literary centres, such as England possessed in London; France in Paris; and Germany in Berlin, Leipsic or Weimar. Nearly all the poets and other writers so far mentioned lived in small towns scattered over the country, and, from the lack of good communications, were practically isolated from one another. Kazinczy lived in the county of Zemplén; Kölcsey in the county of Bihar; Kisfaludy, Berzsenyi, Ádám Horváth in the cis-Danubian counties. There were, it is true, some literary centres in Pesth; such as the house of the able folk-poet Vitkovics. But they were few, and Pesth was, as yet, not a great capital. Literature needs local concentration of high-strung people. Country life gives the aptitude for poetic work; intense urban life alone ripens that aptitude into creative talent. Virgil at Mantua, or Cicero at Arpinum would have remained sterile provincials. The great mental agitation set in motion by the writers in Magyar above mentioned was given additional fuel by a very large number of Hungarians writing in

Latin and French. The ideas of the French and German Rationalism ("*Aufklaerung*") of that time were eagerly seized upon, elaborated and discussed in over five hundred works and pamphlets treating of Religion, Politics, Law and Philosophy. Hungary was thus during that period (1772-1825), instinct with great intellectual powers; and all that was wanting was to focus them. As long as the political or *the* life of Hungary was crippled by the autocracy of Metternich, that is, down to 1825-1830, that national focus could not be forthcoming. With the revival of the political life in and through the national Diet assembled at Pesth in 1825, the only remaining condition of a quicker and more energetic pulsation of Hungary's literary life was fulfilled. Henceforth Hungary employed the right strategy for the able men of her literary army, and the result was a short but brilliant period of literary productions, many of which attain to the higher and some to the highest degrees of artistic perfection. And inasmuch as the creation of the national focus was the most potent cause of the unprecedented revival of Hungary's literature, we must first treat of that glorious man who was chiefly instrumental in its realization: Count Stephen Széchenyi.

CHAPTER XIX.

1825-1850.

1825-1850. Count Stephen Széchenyi, “*the greatest Magyar*” as Kossúth called him, was one of those rare patriots whose enthusiasm is tempered by the most careful respect for facts and practical probabilities, while their love of detail and material work is broadened and elevated by the noble passion of disinterested patriotism. The maxim of his life was, “Hungary has not yet been; she will be” (“*Magyarország nem volt hanem lesz*”). A scion of a magnate family he had, like Mirabeau, derived much light from the study of foreign countries. As most of his contemporaries, he was convinced that Hungary, unless aroused from her political and industrial torpor, could not in her then state claim a place amongst the civilized nations of Europe. He was by no means of a revolutionary disposition against the Habsburgs. On the contrary, he wanted to realize all the vast reforms he contemplated in peace with Austria; for being a sort of enthusiastic Walpole (—the manes of Sir Robert will pardon us that epithet!—) his activity was directed mainly, at times at least, to the bettering of the material condition of Hungary.

Széchenyi did not, however, neglect the intellectual needs of his country either. When still a young cavalry officer he offered one year’s revenue of his estates (£10,000 in value; nominally, £5,000) for the establishment of a national Hungarian Academy of Science, the members of which were to consider the cultivation and development of the Hungarian language as their prime duty. Széchenyi’s magnanimous offer was at once responded to by similar offers on the part of three rich magnates (Count George Andrássy, Count George Károlyi, and Baron Abraham Vay), and thus a serious commencement was made with the founding of an intellectual centre in Hungary. The Academy (“*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*”) was formally established in 1830, its first president being Count Joseph Teleki. Among the great number of linguistic, historic, and scientific works, both original and translations, published by the Academy, we may mention the “*Monumenta*,” or historic sources of Hungary; several smaller dictionaries for current use,

and the great Dictionary of the Hungarian Language, edited by Gregory Czuczor and John Fogarasi (1844-1874); the translation of the best works of foreign authors on History, Philosophy, Law, and Science, including, amongst others, almost all the standard works of English literature; and a series of original researches into all branches of Science, descriptive, mathematical, physical and chemical. Together with numerous writers of that period, Széchenyi also attempted, and very felicitously too, an internal reform of the Magyar language, to the vocabulary of which he added some needed and now generally accepted terms.

Széchenyi's restless propaganda succeeded in moving even the ultra-conservative and indolent country-gentry; and in the thirties many a nobleman had a residence of his own built in Pesth. The Country began to move into the Town. In 1837, the national Hungarian theatre was opened at Pesth. Numerous newspapers and periodicals were published; the number of press-organs in Magyar, which was five in 1820, rising to ten in 1830, and to twenty-six in 1840. In 1891 there were 645 Magyar newspapers and periodicals in Hungary. The work meted out to the "Academy" being rather of a technical nature, the "Kisfaludy-Society" ("*Kisfaludy-Társaság*") was formed in 1836, with the view of promoting the interests of *belles-lettres* proper in Hungary. Thanks to the patriotic and well-directed activity of that Society, many an unknown but gifted author was enabled to bring his work under the notice of the country. Its prizes were, and are eagerly competed for, and it has done very much for the great progress of good literature in Hungary. Historical and archæological societies were formed in many parts of the country; and the nation became conscious of the greatness of Hungarian music, which in the wizard hands of Francis Liszt (1811-1887), the greatest of all executive, and one of the most striking of creative musicians, was fast becoming the admiration of Europe. Nor were the schools neglected. Since 1844 the language of instruction in schools was mostly Hungarian. The political reverses of the Hungarians in 1849 caused the introduction of the German language into the schools of Hungary; in 1861, however, the national language was again reinstated in its rights, and now the language of instruction in all the schools and colleges of Hungary is Magyar.

These are some of the most important intellectual reforms which, from 1825 to 1848 completely changed the face of the Hungary of olden times. While previous to 1825, all attempts at reform were restricted to small circles and straggling individuals, and could, therefore, bear no fruit for the nation at large, now the efforts for the renascence of the material and intellectual life of the country were concentrated by the creation of a true capital of social, literary and scientific centres; by the co-operation of great numbers of patriotic and able men; and by the powerful, nay, in Hungary, all-powerful stimulus imparted to all the energies of the nation through the revival of its ancient parliamentary life. In Hungary, as well as in England, Parliament is the soul of the body-politic. The stagnation of parliamentary life in Hungary from 1813 to 1825 was almost tantamount to the stagnation of all the other intellectual energies of the nation. From 1825 onward, the National Assembly met frequently; the Magyar language was again used in the debates, and many reforms that had proved unrealizable in the hands of private reformers, were carried out by the power of the nation assembled in Parliament. The constant opposition offered to all reforms in Hungary, at the hands of the Vienna government, only acted as a further stimulus to the Hungarians; and within the five-and-twenty years of the present period, Hungary advanced by leaps and bounds, both in its politic and literary development.

CHAPTER XX.

The *rôle* of Kazinczy as mentor and model for the younger generation of his time was now allotted to a very gifted poet, Charles Kisfaludy, brother of Alexander (see page 101). He was born in 1788, and like his brother, became a soldier in the Austrian army. His proud father, on learning that he had, in 1811, thrown up his military career, disowned him; and Charles had to rough it in wild wanderings over Europe amidst great privations. Yet his mind, singularly widened by the view and study of European civilization, was thereby so strengthened and developed, that on his return to his country (1817), he contrived to rise from abject poverty to comparative comfort by his own literary exertions. His dramas, some of which he wrote in the course of a few days, were at once so intensely relished by the public, that Kisfaludy, who produced with equal ease poetic works of lyric or epic character, quickly became the centre of the literary life of Hungary. The "*Aurora*," a literary periodical founded by him in 1822, was enriched by the contributions of the foremost writers, mostly his followers; and he himself was the rallying personality for the new literary movement. Alas! his body, less elastic than his mind, could never overcome the effects of his wanderings, and he died of consumption in 1830.

In Kisfaludy the influence of the literary ideals of the French and Germans is easily traceable. Like his models he was steeped in romanticism and worship of the distant past. Yet he was saved from the sickliness and namby-pambiness of many a German or French romantic poet by his strong sense of humour. In his dramas ("*Stibor Vaida*," "*Irén*," etc.) he frequently manifests strong dramatic vitality. It is in his comedies and gay stories, that he excels. His humour is broad, subtle, sympathetic and well worded. In his tragedies he did not succeed in creating a type, this, one of the safest criteria of a poet's genius. In his comedies ("*Csalódások*" ["Disappointments"]; "*Kérők*" ["The Wooers"]; "*Leányőrző*" ["Girl's Guard"], etc.) on the other hand, he has given types of undying vitality; such as "*Mokány*," the rough, humorous and honest young country squire. If we consider the fact here so frequently alluded to, that social life in Hungary was up to the thirties of this century

exclusively life among the county-families in the country, or in small towns; if, moreover, we remember that such life on a small scale, where each person stands out in bold relief and unencumbered by the numerous social mediocrities of large towns, is the proper foster-earth of rich personalities: it will be easy to see, that social life in Hungary in Kisfaludy's youth was bristling with delightfully original types of men and women. They only waited for the hand of the poet to spring into their frames, and form valuable pictures. Country-life and small towns in Hungary, to the present day, are full of the most delightful types, both men and women; and the reputation of a Dickens might have been acquired by him who would have told the "adventures" and freaks of, for instance, the quaint, many-tongued sires of the county of Sáros. Kisfaludy, with the true poet's eye *saw* those types, and put them bodily on his canvas. They talk on his pages that very language, full of savoury adjectives and verbal somersaults, that they used when meeting at the halls of their friends, at the "Casino" of the place or at the table in front of the Swiss *Confiserie*, in the sleepy streets of their county capital. In his novels, "*Tollagi János*" [a proper name]; "*Sulyosdi Simon*" [a proper name], etc., Kisfaludy has recorded many a precious feature of the life of these sturdy, amiable, enthusiastic, shrewd and simple country-gentry, in the midst of whom moved the pathetic and lofty young girl; the coquettish and charming young wife (or "little heaven," "*mennyecske*" as the Hungarian word has it); the quaint old maid, and the still quainter old bachelor. Here Kisfaludy is at his best; and in showing his fellow-writers some of the wealth to be found in their own country, he did Hungarian Literature and Hungarian nationality an immense service. In some of his lyrical poems, and especially in his truly majestic ode to the memory of the disaster of Mohács (1526), written in dystichs, Kisfaludy is frequently more than clever; in that ode he soars to the sublime. His "*Eprészleány*" ("Girl Gleaning Strawberries") is a charming idyll.

CHAPTER XXI.

The work of Kisfaludy was great. He charmed his readers, and thus awakened an interest in Hungarian Literature in circles that had hitherto been callous to the intellectual revival of their country. His vocation, however, was limited. The Hungarians, by nature grave and given to ponderous sentiments, needed, for a full awakening of their literary life, more than the perfume of flowers. The rhythmic thunder of the war-clarion; the majesty of the organ was needed. And the right man came. The man, in whose sublime poems was heard the turmoil of the old glorious wars, the symphony of love and patriotism, in tones of unprecedented beauty. That man was Michael Vörösmarty (1800-1855). His life was devoted entirely to the pursuit of literature, and in his soul there was only one grand thought: to become Hungary's troubadour, to kindle the holy light of patriotism on the altar, and with the aid of the muses. In this he was successful beyond all his predecessors. His were some of the rarest qualities, the union of which goes to make the great poet. In beauty and truly Magyar rhythm of language he was and largely still is unsurpassed. His diction is, like his country, full of the majesty of vast mountains, and the loveliness of flower-clad meadows sloping down to melodious rivers. Without being a reckless innovator of words, his works read at the first appearance as if written in a new language. As when the student of Hellenic antiquity, after years spent with engravings of old Greek art, comes for the first time to see one of the still extant remains of that art itself: so felt the contemporaries of Vörösmarty when the glorious hexameters of his epic, "*Zalán futása*" first struck their ears. There was at last, not only this or that instrument of the orchestra of Hungarian language; there was heard, not only the wails of the 'cello of Kölcsey; the musical cascades of the clarinet of Charles Kisfaludy; the wafting chords of the harp of Berzsenyi; or the gossamer oboe of Csokonai: there was heard the unison and harmonious struggle of all the instruments of the great idiom. Like the composers of the immortal symphonies, Vörösmarty wielded the resources of the Magyar language, intensifying the effect of each instrument by the parallel or counter-quires of the other instruments. In his love-songs you hear not only the

notes of the melody, but also, as in the songs of his Austrian contemporary, Schubert, the undercurrents of the melody in the accompaniment. The wealth of poetic figures in Vörösmarty is surprising; yet a chaste moderation tempers all undue exuberance. He is powerful, not violent; imposing, not fierce. He writes mostly Largos; but there are very few *longeurs* in them. The quick pulsation of the drama does not suit him; the epic and ode are his favourite forms. For, in him is much of the priest, of the seer of a nation. In the depth of his reticent heart he feels the whole life of his nation, and smarts unspeakably from its then degradation. Too proud to indulge in constant moanings, he is yet in an agony of rage and indignation at the oppression of his people. But this holy anger goes forth from him sculptured in songs, swelling with abiding life of beauty and power.

Vörösmarty's poetic vocation was, if not aroused, yet, undoubtedly, guided into the right direction by an epic of one Alexander Székely, a Unitarian preacher, entitled "The Szekler in Transylvania" ("*A Székelyek Erdélyországban*"), in which a not infelicitous attempt was made to work into one national song the ancient Magyar legends and mythology. An epic is the song of a nation whose critical dangers are not yet over. It may be said, without exaggeration, that heroic Wolfe in driving the French out of Canada (1759), drove out the last chance of the Americans for anything like a great national epic. In gaining their independence a few years after Wolfe's success, the Americans also obtained perfect security. There was no serious enemy left to jeopardize their existence. The Indians could and did annoy them much; they could not seriously call their very existence in question. Hence the Indian tales of Fenimore Cooper are the only epics of the Americans. In Hungary matters stood quite differently. There the very existence of the nation was doubtful. A catastrophe might occur at any time. And in the terrible anguish of that "gigantic death" ("*nagyszerü halál*"), of which Vörösmarty sings in his "*Szózat*" (national hymn), the people of Hungary needed more than a drama or an ode can give. It needed a national poem of large dimensions in which the glories of the past were held up to the people as an incitement to the conquest of the trophies of the future; in which the powers of the Divine were shown to have a personal interest in the destinies of the nation; and in which the sacred language of thirty generations of patriots glows in all the victorious beauty of perfection. When in 1748 Klopstock published his great epic, the "*Messias*," he too

desired to do his country a patriotic service. His aim was, however, at once larger and smaller than that of Vörösmarty. He meant chiefly to weld for the Germans the weapon of a better language. Beyond this he meant his epic for any nation whatever, its subject-matter being of universal acceptance amongst Christian nations. Not so Vörösmarty. He meant to write a Messianic epic, in which the Messiah was the Hungarian nation itself. He wanted to raise up a particular nation, his nation, to the consciousness of its force, of its vocation. And thus, while the intellectual scope of his poem was much more limited than that of either Milton or Klopstock, the intensity of its purport far exceeded both.

The name of the epic was, "The Flight of Zalán" ("*Zalán futása*"). It appeared in 1825, or in the year when the national Parliament reassembled after twelve long years' adjournment, and when the nation, at any rate, many of the best men of the nation, were in feverish expectancy of the rise of New Hungary. Its subject is taken from the history of Árpád the Conqueror, and centres in the Battle of Alpár, in which Árpád defeats his most fearful enemy, Zalán, one of the Bulgarian rulers of the territory between the Danube and the Tisza (Theiss) rivers. There are in the poem three parallel streams of epic deeds, which, like the three choruses of string, reed and brass instruments in an orchestra, join in one powerful symphony. Árpád, the great duke and father of his people, fights Zalán, and especially his herculean general Viddin. Ete, the young and romantic Magyar knight fights Csorna, the diabolic Bulgarian hero; and in the heavens "*Hadúr*" ("God of the war," a name introduced by Székely), the national god of the Magyars, fights and conquers "*Ármány*," the arch-fiend. The element of love is represented by Ete, who loves Hajna, the beautiful daughter of an old Hungarian hero. She is also courted by a divine charmer, whose temptations, however, she rejects, and from whom she receives an enchanted horse. A large portion of the epic is taken up with the description of single combats between the heroes. In the end, the Hungarians are (as in reality they were) victorious, and Zalán flees from his country.

There is undoubtedly much Ossianic misty glamour in Vörösmarty's great epic; and the figures of its leading heroes do not stand out with all the desirable plasticity from among the multitude of minor heroes and mythologic divinities. Yet Ete and Hajna are suffused with all the charms of youth, love and heroism; and in Hadúr and Ármány two powerful

mythological types are placed before us. Árpád himself answers very well the chief purpose of the poem, in that he is rather the incarnation of a nation strong, noble, God-fearing and conquering, than the representative of any special personality. Perhaps the least endowed figure of the poem is Zalán, in whom the poet might have represented, in contrast to Árpád, the various enemies endangering Hungary's existence, and of whom he only made a proud and despairing prince. Yet, after allowing for these shortcomings—very natural in a work written in eleven months—"*Zalán futása*" is a truly great epic. The splendour of its language, in regard to which it is fully the equal of "Paradise Lost," fell upon its first readers with the spell of the Fata Morgana of the Hungarian *pusztas* or prairies, on the lonely traveller. There was one general feeling: "such language had not yet risen from any Hungarian lyre!" ("*igy még nem zenge magyar lant*!"). A nation whose past could inspire such epic music, was a nation of imposing resourcefulness. Only great nations, after conquering great dangers, can produce great epics. A great epic is not alone a literary event; as such it would redound mostly to the glory of the author. It is a national event, and redounds chiefly to the glory of the nation. It is the symptom and warrant of national greatness; of that noble enthusiasm—without which, numerous factories and railways can be built indeed, but no fabric of a national commonwealth holding its own amidst roaring seas of danger and adversity. Vörösmarty's epic poured into the Hungarians that Belief and Confidence, that Eternality of Hope, which alone steels nations against fate. Széchenyi had connected Buda, the capital of the past, with Pesth, the capital of modern Hungary, by means of a gigantic suspension bridge. Vörösmarty now connected Hungary's past with her future by the rainbow of his immortal epic.

In addition to "The Flight of Zalán," Vörösmarty enriched Hungarian Literature with several other smaller epics, such as "*Széplak*," "*Cserhalom*," and the exquisite "The Two Neighbouring Castles" ("*Két szomszéd vár*"). After 1831 he ceased writing epics. He had a real passion for dramatic poetry, and although in "*Csongor és Tünde*" alone he contrived to write a drama of superior finish, yet he continually tried his hand at that form of poetry ("*Vérnász*") ("The Sanguinary Wedding"); "Marótbán" (Banus Marót); "*Áldozat*" (The Sacrifice), etc. His lyrical poetry, on the other hand, contains priceless gems. Adorning, as he did, even the smallest of his lyrical poems with the unrivalled splendour of his diction; he reaches in some of them, and first of all in

the majestic “National Hymn” (“*Szózat*”, 1837), the highest level of poetic *élan*. In these select poems, while still singing nothing but the hopes and glories of his nation, he becomes so European in tone and chaste beauty of form, that his work will lose little of its perfection by fair translations into other European languages. In them there is felt the breath of that civilization of Greater Hellas, or Europe, which was originally that of Hellas proper. Nor does his lyric muse move in grave and solemn moods alone. In his famous “Song of Fót” (“*Fóti dal*”), he has left the wine-drinking community of the world a model song in praise of the noble child of Bacchus. He likewise succeeded in writing poetic apotheoses of some of the great Hungarians of his time, such as Liszt, the great musician, and in the composition of small narrative poems, which prove him to have been endowed with a keen sense of humour (“*Mák Bandi*”; “*Laboda*;” “*Petike*;” “*Gábor deák*”). His great activity as a creative poet did not prevent him from writing a considerable number of articles for literary periodicals, such as the “*Tudományos Gyűjtemény*,” “*Kritikai Lapok*” (edited by Bajza), and for the new “*Aurora*,” and the “*Athenæum*.” He was also one of the translators of the “Thousand and One Nights,” and of some of Shakespeare’s plays.

CHAPTER XXII.

The national and literary current of which Vörösmarty was the chief exponent brought several other great epic works to the surface. Andreas Horvát de Pázmánd (1778-1839) was working for many years at a national epic in twelve long cantos, singing the history of Árpád the conqueror. In 1831, at last, he published the huge poem which, however, was distanced and soon silenced by the masterwork of Vörösmarty. It certainly helped both to set off "The Flight of Zalán" still more strongly, and also to widen the circle of old Magyar mythology.

An epic poet of far superior merit was Gregory Czuczor (1800-1866). Had he not been a monk, and so lost much of the vivifying contact of civil life, he might have soared very high. It must be, however, added that his conflict both with poverty and with the Austrian Government, did make up largely for the lack of experiences of romantic, conjugal and family conflicts. His was a vigorous, systematic and finely discerning mind. To the epic he felt attracted not only by the general literary tone of his time, but by his personal bent for popular or rather folk-poetry. The *naïveté* of the latter, which forms its distinctive feature, is also one of the chief elements of the epic. Among Czuczor's epics, "*Botond*," in four cantos, is the best. It tells part of the life of that famous Hungarian hero of the time of the conquest. Botond had brought home from his Byzantine campaigns a charming Greek girl, Polydora. One of the Magyar heroes, Bödölény, who also loves Polydora, takes her secretly back to Constantinople. Now Botond again invades the Greek Empire, and with his huge war-club breaks a hole in the gate of the capital. In the end he gets back Polydora. This simple plot is enlivened with recitals not only of military and heroic exploits, but also of touching love-episodes. The contrast between burly, brave Botond and the refined Greek maid, the episodes in which Szende, the page occurs, and the beautifully rolling hexameters lend a peculiar charm to this epic. Perhaps now, after the realization of most of the ardent political hopes of Czuczor's age, his epic will be considered even as much better than at the time of its appearance when it had to compete with the more fiery epic muse of

Vörösmarty. Of Czuczor's linguistic works we have already made mention (see page 112).

A contemporary of Czuczor, John Garay (1812-1853), although not a poet of great distinction, must be here mentioned, on account of the popularity of his innumerable ballads and similar epic poetry, covering almost every one of the memorable events of Hungarian history. Rather a rhetor than a poet, he wrote his ballads, of which "*Kont*" (relating to the martyr-death of thirty Hungarian patriots at the hands of Emperor Sigismund), is the best known, in an easy-flowing popular style. He trusted rather to the attractiveness of the story itself than to his own poetic genius. When well recited, many of his ballads are still very effective.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Despite the very great advance made in the development of their literature up to 1830, the Hungarians were still wanting in one of the necessary elements of the growth of truly good works. Honest, just and well-informed criticism was wanting. Kazinczy, it is true, had in his extensive correspondence paid very careful attention to the critical examination of the prosody and language of his friends and pupils. Such external criticism, however, did not suffice. In a country, such as Hungary, where Greek literature was then known only to exceedingly few writers, the canons of criticism were easily neglected. Moreover, literature being still considered more as a patriotic than a literary function, poets did not, as a rule, tolerate even mild criticism. Yet without such criticism, Hungarian Literature was likely to deteriorate. Even men of genius are the better for good criticism. Yet they are the exception; and to the vast number of writers with talent rather than genius, criticism was, and always has been, the mentor whom they could not afford to miss. It has been one of the great advantages of French literature that its creative writers have nearly always been watched by great critical writers. From Boileau and Diderot, to Sainte-Beuve, the French have always had men of piercing and tasteful criticism, who controlled the works of the purely spontaneous genius. Nor can the literature of Germany congratulate itself on a more auspicious circumstance than the fact of Lessing’s incomparable activity as a critic at the very outset of the classical period. It is with regard to this historic value of sound literary criticism, that we must appreciate the work of the Hungarian writer forming the subject of the present chapter.

Joseph Bajza (1804-1858) had many of the qualities of a great critic. He was courageous, especially in that courage which is perhaps the rarest, the courage defying current opinions; he was learned; he possessed a very keen sense of linguistic niceties and poetic forms; and, last not least, he was no mean poet himself. Already in 1830 he gave signal proof not only of his pure patriotism, but also of his penetrating knowledge of the true needs of the then Hungarian Literature, by fiercely attacking a plan, broached by a Hungarian publisher, to prepare a

Hungarian Encyclopædia (or "Conversations-Lexicon," as, in imitation of the well-known German publication, it was called) on lines, as Bajza proved, unpatriotic, because unsuited to the character and stage of Magyar literature of that time. This was the "Conversations-Lexicon Quarrel." In the same year, Bajza started his critical paper ("*Kritikai Lapok*"), which was later on (1837) followed by his "*Athenæum*," and its appendix "*Figyelmező*." In these periodicals he discoursed with great verve and knowledge on the theories of various poetic forms; and carefully criticised the works of his contemporaries. His chief contributors were Vörösmarty and Toldy (then still Schedel), the former a great poet, the latter (see p. 254) a great scholar. The authority of Bajza made itself felt very soon; and the numerous polemics occasioned by his articles only served to aggrandize his position as a critic. Already in his essays on the epigram, the novel, the drama, etc., Bajza had proved himself a constructive as against a purely negative critic. In that capacity probably his chief merit is his elaboration of the "theory" of the folk-poem. In Hungary, with her numerous peasantry, there is an inexhaustible wealth of poems composed by unknown people, exclusively peasants, shepherds, and similar inglorious poets. These poems, invariably meant to be adapted to songs, are wafted over the country like the mild breezes of spring, and like them, no one knows their origin. In previous times, the rococo taste of enlightened pedants had contemptuously ignored these blossoms of the wild *puszta* (prairie). Since Csokonai they were held in greater esteem; but it was Bajza who, by framing them in the time-honoured formulæ of classical æsthetics, raised them to a literary status. Since Bajza, the "*népdal*" or folk-song was not only a matter of national delight or pride, but also of serious study.

To Bajza's circle belonged the poets Alexander Vachott (1818-1861); Frederick Kerényi (1822-1852), who died in America; Julius Sárosy (1816-1861), the author of several stirring revolutionary poems; Andreas Pap; Emeric Nagy; Sigismund Beöthy, etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The rapid growth of Hungarian Literature since 1825, shows chiefly in works of poetry proper; that is, in verse. Hungarian prose had in the first ten years of this period received no development similar to that of Hungarian verse. Yet many a writer had tried his hand at the creation of Hungarian literary prose. The reason of this belated advance of Hungarian prose was owing mainly to the late introduction of the Magyar language into the schools. Not before a language has hewn its way through the thickets of philosophy, the subtleties of distinctions in physics and chemistry, or the awkward bulkiness of historical facts, will it be supple and flexible enough to do efficient service for the innumerable needs of prose. Without a prose ready for all the turns and twists of serious thought, great historical or philosophical works are almost impossible. The difficulty was overcome in Hungary by applying prose first to novels, and then to History or Philosophy. Novels and romances, taking as they do the place of the epics in olden times, have also a national or more than literary importance. And we find that nations without great epics are also, as a rule, without great novels of their own. The astounding progress made in Hungary in epic literature proper bade fair to inaugurate the forthcoming of a novelistic literature. Vörösmarty and Czuczor were soon to have their followers in prose—the novelists. The frequency of rich types in Hungarian society could not but favour that branch of literature. In fact, the greatest difficulty for Hungarian novelists then, and to a large extent even now, was not to discover and work out a good subject, but to hunt up a sufficient number of readers. In the thirties and forties of this century, most of the cultivated individuals in Hungary were so familiar with German and even with French, that they could and did easily gratify their novelistic appetites with the innumerable products from the pens of German and French novelists. People will seldom relish or crave for lyric or epic poems of nations other than their own. They will ordinarily prefer homemade verse. With novels it is quite different. There is scarcely any exaggeration in stating that Lord Lytton’s novels have been read more extensively in Germany and Austria-Hungary than in England. The same applies respectively to

George Sand, the French, and Mme. Flygare-Carlén, the Swedish novelist. Hungarian novelists had, therefore, to contend against formidable competition from abroad. But there was another and equally grave difficulty to conquer. The public in all countries has a fatal tendency to take up one author as the “standard” author in a given department of literature, and to give all other authors in the same field the cold shoulder. The less intense the interest which the public takes in that department, the more it will be inclined to believe in the “standard” man. In Hungary, that evil tendency has wrought great injury to novelists. At once a few of them became the “standard” novelists. Nobody wanted to hear of any other. By this means the rise of other, perhaps greater novelists, was retarded, if not altogether foreclosed; and the “standard” man, eagerly seizing on the great favour bestowed upon him, poured forth scores of novels, irrespective of the higher demands of Art. The consequence was that he deteriorated. For one good novel he gave ten bad ones. Having a sort of literary monopoly, he did not heed adverse criticism. The public, on the other hand, did not care to learn of a new novelist, and, as actually happened in Hungary, almost entirely neglected a real genius for no other reason than that mental laziness, which in countries with less abundant literature is perhaps one of the most baneful of obstacles to the success of a writer.

The preceding remarks appear to be necessary for a right appreciation of Hungarian novels. Foreign readers, and perhaps more especially the English, are apt to admire in Hungarian novels such qualities as strike them as new and “weird,” because German, French, or English novelists do not excel in them. Thus foreign readers will easily be impressed, and in many cases unduly so, by the great picturesqueness of Hungarian novelists. This quality, commendable though it no doubt is, will induce many a foreign critic to overrate the value of this or that Hungarian novel. In Hungary, picturesque turns of phrases are of the very commonest. They do not strike a Hungarian critic as being particularly meritorious. Hence the reader of the present work must not be astonished at some of the subsequent severe judgments passed on Hungarian novelistic celebrities. Far from trying to deter English or French readers from the reading of such novels as they will find criticised adversely, we would rather advise them to enjoy those novels without further regard to the views of the writer. We have in so criticising of necessity placed ourselves on a basis rather Magyar than European, and we are fully

aware of the marked difference in taste to be found in the various nations of Europe. If the novelists and poets of one nation were to be judged by the taste of another, Thackeray could hardly be regarded as a great novelist, and Tennyson scarcely as a great poet. Yet both are in England recognized as two of the best writers in English literature.

Of the great novelists of Hungary, four stand out as peculiarly excellent. Their names are Nicolas Jósika; Joseph Eötvös; Sigismund Kemény; and Maurus Jókai. The first three belong to the class of Magnates, being Barons; the last is a commoner by birth. It is rather curious, that the Magnates, who have in the present century given no poet of the first order to Hungary, should in the field of Hungarian novel writing have furnished three writers of the first rank, of whom one, Baron Kemény, has done work not unworthy of the greatest novel-writer of the century.

The first of the four to attract general attention in Hungary was Baron Joseph Jósika. He was born in 1794 at Torda, in Transylvania. Having spent many years in the military service of Austria, and in travels abroad, he retired in 1818 and withdrew to Transylvania, where he pursued historic and literary studies, relating chiefly to his own province. Transylvania harbours many of the most glorious traditions of Hungarian history. For generations, especially in the seventeenth century, it was practically the only home of Magyardom. There is no lack of romantic, picturesque, or startling facts in the public or social life of that country; and Jósika, whose heart had, through his first luckless marriage, learned the depths of sorrow, as through his second wife he learned the bliss of true love, Jósika was in a position to do full justice to the wealth of picturesque characters and scenery in Transylvania’s past. His first novel, “*Abafi*,” was published in 1836, and at once received general applause on the part of the critics, and, what was still more important, at the hands of the public. Its subject is taken from the troubled times of Sigismund Bátori, when Turks, Austrians and Magyars, were fighting and intriguing for the possession of Transylvania, in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Bátori’s mighty and tainted personality, with all his cruelty, heroism, astuteness and audacity, is, together with that of the Turkish conquerors, pashas, and court people, the personal background to the hero of the novel, Oliver Abafi, who rises from conduct dissipated and lawless, to the heights of noble self-sacrifice. The story is told with

great power of description and impersonation. The reader cannot fail to feel as if quite at home in that agitated corner of Europe, where some of the historic agencies met in deadly conflict, and where men and women breathed much of that grand air of great events, which colours them in tints unknown to the people of less eventful times. The novel is intensely interesting and will convey a more life-like picture of its period than many a dull historic volume.

Equal to, and if possible, even more fascinating, is Jósika's novel, "The Bohemians in Hungary" ("*A csehek Magyarországban*"). This novel goes back to older times still. It pictures the state of Hungary in the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Bohemian (Czech) Hussites were invading Hungary. Of all the innumerable sects and heresies from the end of the twelfth century to the rise of Protestantism, the Hussites were no doubt the most powerful. From the depths of the forests ranging round the river Main, to the mountains encircling Hungary and Transylvania, these heroic and fanatic warriors spread the terror of their name. But for some grave political mistakes and unforeseen reverses of Vitovt, one of the greatest of the historic Slavs (flourished 1380 to 1430), who wanted to found a Slav empire, reaching from the western confines of Bohemia, to the walls of holy Moscow, the Slavs, on the basis of Hussitism, and under leaders like Ziska, and the Procops, might have for ever reduced the historic *rôle* of Germany to that of a small power. Theirs would then have been a great empire, strongly unified in language, creed and traditions. No Austria would have been possible; and Hungary would have probably been submerged in the Slav flood. It is the story of the lives of some of these wild and terrible Czechs in the north and north-west of Hungary which forms the subject of the powerful novel of Jósika. The castles of the Czech leaders were real fortresses of Slavdom, and the population of those parts of Hungary being largely Slav to the present day, the danger for Hungary was very great. Fortunately for the independence of the Magyars, their young king Matthew Corvinus, son of John Hunyadi, was a match for the Bohemians. One by one he destroyed their castles, liberating thousands of prisoners, and ridding the country of the Slav invasion. His illustrious figure shines in Jósika's novel like the youthful emblem of that historic vitality which has kept Hungary in a ruling position over Slav and Germanic tribes these last thousand years. The picturesqueness of Jósika's novel is extraordinary. Male and female characters of intense

fascination move in the castles, battlefields, dungeons and mountain-paths described by the novelist. Komoróczy, the knight and robber; the glorious king and his romantic love; Elemér, the hero, called “the Eagle”; the charming widow, who defies with a dimpled smile the most ruthless of amorous men; Jews, at once grand in suffering and commonplace in their greed; all these and many more scenes and portraits reconstruct that memorable time when the Renascence was rising over the dying gloom of the Middle Ages.

It is impossible to tell here, even very briefly, the plots and characters of the very numerous novels written by Jósika both in Hungary and at Dresden, whither he retired after escaping the Austrians, who had sentenced him to death as one of the prominent members of the Hungarian “rebels.” All these novels are historic in subject, and even quote, sometimes, chapter and verse from the chronicles on which they are based. The most famous are “*Esther*;” “*Francis Rákóczy II.*,” the hero of which is the most popular of all Hungarian princes who ever revolted from the Habsburgs; “A Hungarian Family during the Revolution” (“*Egy magyar család a forradalom alatt*”); “The Last Báthory” (“*As utolsó Báthory*”). Jósika is easily compared to and measured by Walter Scott. Yet there is in the very tendencies of their works a marked difference. Scott, in writing his novels, was prompted more by his literary tastes and proclivities than by any consideration of politic aims. Both Scotland and England were during his life-time (1771-1832) at the height of their triumphal career. His novels were romantic work pure and simple. England being at the head of the powers combating the French Revolution, her literary geniuses, too, followed lines opposed to modern Liberalism; in other words, they became romantic. Hungary, on the other hand, was, during the life-time of Jósika, an oppressed country, and after a short period of glory during her war of independence, she vegetated for over ten years in a torpor caused by a fiercely reactionary government. Into Jósika’s novels, therefore, there necessarily entered a political element, which coloured his work with a tint unknown to the great Scotchman’s tales. And this, together with the circumstance of his becoming rapidly a “standard” novelist, explains Jósika’s literary eminence and also his literary failings. In his attempt to use the story of Hungary’s past as a means of reviving her present, he naturally lost sight of some of the purely literary laws of novel-writing. His characters being already given by history, he neglected to elaborate their psychology.

Events happen rather unto or by them, than through them. The inner machinery of motives is sometimes clumsy or too flimsy. Being much in demand as a “standard” novelist, he wrote much; too much. Yet with all these occasional shortcomings, Jósika is one of the most splendid novelists of the picturesque class. Few Hungarian books recording Hungary’s past will give the foreign reader a more pleasing and, at the same time, instructive picture of the romantic days of that great country. The professorial critic, reposing on the tattered laurels of his victims, if not on his own, will find much to rebuke in Jósika. The youth of Hungary and the unprejudiced foreigner will always read him with delight.

CHAPTER XXV.

The second great novelist in that period was Eötvös. Born in 1813, he received a careful education, and after extensive travels in western Europe, embraced the judicial career for a time. When still a young man, at the age of six-and-twenty, he published his first great novel, "The Carthusian" ("*A Karthauzi*," 1839-40). This remarkable work had an immense effect. It was read with equal delight in the palaces of the magnates, and in the closets of the middle-class people. It charmed the young and moved the old. It seemed to express the very innermost cravings and mental propensities of the then Hungarian public. More than that. It expressed a state of feeling then almost universal on the continent of Europe. Like Goethe's "*Werther*," it lent expression to what lay dormant and unexpressed in the hearts of millions of Europeans. The sultry atmosphere then weighing on continental Europe had engendered a morbid melancholy in many a high-strung man and woman. Life seemed to be full of unsolved and unsolvable problems; full of forces disruptive and disintegrating, causing unease uncertainty and distress. All the nobler efforts of men in building up their private or public fortunes appeared to be blighted and marred by the demoniac perverseness of the political and social powers of the time. A brooding meditativeness seized people, and fresh and vigorous deeds being impossible, pale and despondent reflections embroiled men in a dumb struggle against destiny. Such was the mental temper of a very large class of men and women in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy. Eötvös himself had, from early youth, been given to that morbid meditativeness and self-destructive sensitiveness of the age; and the sorrowful condition of his country only increased his pathetic melancholy. Hungarian young men and women, then and now, are naturally very much more pathetic and grave than the youth of any other country. They have neither the virile alacrity of the British youth so agreeably manifested in the games and muscular amusements of young England; nor the precocious polish and gaiety of French youths. Theirs is a heavy mood, similar to that of the *Largos* of Hungarian music, but followed by no *Friss* or *Vivace*. To souls tuned in such minor keys, the "*Karthauzi*" came as the very revelation of their

deepest secrets. Hitherto the epics and novels written in Hungary had been retrospective work. They narrated the woes and joys, the troubles and glories of past ages. In Eötvös' novel there was, practically for the first time, a work of introspective *actualité*; a work appealing to the reader himself, and not only to his historic imagination. The queries tormenting the young men and women of that age were here subjected to an analysis full of psychological inquisitiveness, enveloped in the gloaming of poetic descriptions of Nature. The plot of the novel is of the simplest. Gustavus, a French nobleman, in whose agitated soul are accumulated all the tempest-laden clouds of his age, seeks in vain to find peace and consolation in Love, Pleasure and Ambition. Julia, his first love, deserts him for an unworthy "other one;" Betti, his second love, he rejects himself. And so, tossed from one rock of discord to the other, he finally enters the order of the Carthusians, and there, amidst steady work and in firm faith, finds the only solution that can await characters like his: Death. Goethe, with the terrible serenity of judgment so peculiar to him, once remarked, that there are, as he called them, "problematic characters, who can do justice to no situation in which they may be placed." Such a character is Gustavus. But such was also the general and typical character of his time; and hence the immense effect of the novel. Even the chief and serious deficiency of the novel, being as it was, the deficiency of numerous Hungarian minds of that time, only helped to increase its popularity. Eötvös could never quite overcome the inner contrast between his Franco-German education and the Magyar character of his works. Of all the great Hungarian writers, his language is the least Magyar in form and savour. The European and the Magyar were constantly battling in him and frequently to the detriment of the latter. His was not that power of blending European and national culture into a new and harmonious composition. That power is distinctively the characteristics of the classical writers of nations. It belongs only to the highest form of genius. But the reading public of the "*Karthauzi*" was largely recruited from amongst people in whom that conflict between western and Magyar culture had likewise not been brought to a harmonious issue. They thus found in the great novel that very failing of their own class, without which, according to Grillparzer's profound remark, success is hardly obtainable in any profession.

In 1845, Eötvös published another great novel: "The Village Notary" ("*A falu jegyzője*"). It was meant to be a scathing satire on the corruption,

backwardness and general administrative misery of public county life in Hungary. Eötvös, whose conceptions of the state and its organs were formed largely after the models of German, Austrian and French organizations, was deeply convinced of the utter insufficiency of that local selfgovernment, which in Hungary had nearly always been one of greater independence than that even of England. In Hungary all the leading and influential officials in the counties were elective, and from among the noble class of the county only. Being more than underpaid, they frequently abused their power, and contrived to secure a relatively large income by means of exactions and terrorizations of all kinds. The typical figure of these squires was the *szolgabiró*, or under-sheriff, as he may be termed, if with inaccuracy, who presided over nearly all the public affairs of one of the districts into which counties are divided. His administration was frequently carried on pasha fashion indeed; and the poorer classes were much at his mercy. Eötvös, who thought that the strongly centralized and systematized organization of French or German local governments was undoubtedly much superior to the system obtaining in Hungary, published his novel with the intention of bringing about a change in public opinion, and so finally a change in the county-system itself. To the immense benefits accruing to the Hungarians as a nation through the very system of local selfgovernment which Eötvös so cruelly exposed, he was insensible. That county-life, in spite of all its crying abuses, was the only and indispensable preliminary schooling for the functions of government in council or parliament; that these rough and uncultured county-gentry in Hungary, as well as their brethren in England, were far better fitted for some of the most important tasks of government and politics than the most methodic and punctual official in French or German local offices, to all that Eötvös paid no serious attention. His warm-hearted love of Equality and Right made him boil over at the sight of many an injustice—at the hands of men whose inferiority in point of knowledge and western culture rendered them easy objects of contempt to one who gauged all political greatness by the standard of France or Germany. Eötvös, the politician, entertained of course the same ideas about the value of the old Hungarian county-system, as did Eötvös the novelist. He was a “centralist”; and the number of his followers has been very great to the present day. They still maintain that even the present remnants of the old county-system in Hungary are very injurious to the Magyar state; and that nothing short of

a total overhauling, or—to talk plainly—abolition of that system, and the introduction of French centralization in its lieu can save the kingdom of St. Stephen. In more recent times the historic work of Béla Grünwald on the social and political condition of Hungary from 1711 to 1825 (“*A régi Magyarország*”) has elaborated the ideas of Eötvös with the armoury of learned footnotes and systematic chapters. The novel of Eötvös is still the text of all the loud centralists in Hungary, to whom the county selfgovernment is an absurd anachronism. As a matter of fact, on the continent, Hungary is the only country where local selfgovernment is still extant. Nor can there be any doubt, that that local selfgovernment alone enabled the Magyars to hold their supremacy over the numerically stronger nations in their country. Taking the British constitution as the model of all representative government, we cannot go astray in claiming for such government three absolutely indispensable elements. First, a parliament proper, consisting of two Chambers or Houses; secondly, a cabinet proper; and thirdly, two or three real and energetic political parties, the numerous members of which take an intense interest in every one of the political issues of the day. Applying this standard to the United States, for instance, we find, that the Americans while having a federal, two-chambered parliament and also two or more genuine parties, yet have no Cabinet proper; and hence many of the features of political corruption that were rampant in England in the times from Charles II. to George III., when the Cabinet was still forming, and not yet formed, may be noticed in the United States at the present day. In the same way France has a Cabinet indeed, and also a two-chambered parliament; but genuine political parties, with members intensely interested in politics, are wanting. Hence the instability and irregularity of the French representative government. In Hungary, and there alone, the student of politics will find a perfect replica of the British constitution, in that the fine superstructure of Parliament and Cabinet is based on the broad pedestal of genuine political parties. The members of these parties take a real, passionate and untiring interest in political questions of any kind, and hence there is a real public opinion, a real nation. This basis of the political life in Hungary, where has it been quarried from but in the local selfgovernment of the counties? Interest in the mostly arid questions of politics can be acquired only by early and constant contact with men who make it almost the chief interest of their lives. It is in the county halls, and in the social reunions of the county-gentry, that the young Magyars

learn the great lesson of dispensing authority, commanding respect and discussing public business with tact and prudence. It is there that men were formed who could at all times find resources to withstand the anti-national policy of the Habsburgs or the occasional rebellions of the Slav or Roumanian peasantry. Of the country-gentlemen in Hungary indeed may be said, what Macaulay wrote of the English esquire of the seventeenth century: that “his ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases, would, in our time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was essentially a patrician, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and accustomed to authority, to observance and to self-respect.” (*History of England*, Ch. III.) It was amongst these rough squires that the two great parties of England were formed. It was likewise amongst the much derided *táblabirók* and *szolgabirók* (squires and justices) of Hungary, that the men of 1825 and 1848 were formed; and in our time they have given Hungary one of the indispensable elements of representative government: real political parties.

It appears necessary to dwell at some length on the great historic and political questions underlying the famous novel of Eötvös. No doubt, every Hungarian cannot but wish to see that novel in the hands of all who take an interest in Hungary. For, “The Village Notary” contains capital portraits of many a quaint, wild or pathetic type of inner Hungary. The down-trodden notary (Tengelyi); the tyrannical *szolgabiró* (or squire) Paul Nyúzó (meaning: flayer); Viola, the honest peasant, who being shamefully wronged betakes himself to the forest and *pusztas* (prairies) to lead the life of a robber; Mrs. Réty, the wife of the chief magistrate of the county, who is entangled in a fearful domestic tragedy, etc., etc. Moreover, the novel contains excellent pieces of irony and satire; and being reared on the broad idea of social reform never sinks to mere pamphleteering. Yet, with all that, we cannot but protest against the misstatement of the political importance of county-life in Hungary as advanced in that novel. Fully acknowledging, as we do, its literary value, which is diminished only by the heavy and un-Magyar diction, we deprecate its judgment on an institution without which Hungary would have long been reduced to the level of a mere province of Austria. Eötvös, like most idealists bred in the school of German idealism, could not endure rough Reality. He forgot, that for the making of history, as for

that of bread, unclean matter is, at certain stages, an indispensable element.

We have two more novels by Eötvös: “Hungary in 1514” (“*Magyarország 1514 ben*,” 1847), which is a fair picture of the time of the peasant-rebellion in Hungary, under George Dózsa; and “The Sisters” (“*A nővérek*,” 1857), a feeble story with many ideas on Education.

On Eötvös, as a writer on politics, and the Philosophy of History, see page 251. It may here be mentioned that Eötvös, who was President of the Academy, was frequently called upon to deliver commemorative discourses on the lives and merits of deceased members of the Academy and the Kisfaludy Society (see page 113). His speeches are, as a rule, of great oratorical power, and illuminated with grand conceptions of Life and Literature. He was eminently an orator, not a rhetor; and although he seldom reached the magnificence of Kölcsey (see page 107), he is no unworthy follower of him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

At the present day most people of culture outside Hungary know the name of Jókai, the Hungarian novelist; few, if any, know the name of Sigismund Kemény. Yet, of the two, Kemény is probably the greater writer. He is the Balzac of Hungary, less Balzac's fame. For, strange to say, in Hungary itself, the novels of Kemény are very little known; and although several Magyar critics of the highest authority have declared Kemény to be the greatest novelist of the Hungarians, yet the reading public in Hungary neither buys nor reads the masterpieces of the Transylvanian baron. This lack of general appreciation seems to be somewhat inherent in the very kind of genius possessed by men like Balzac and Kemény. The former, it is true, has a well-known name, and his works have spread over Europe and America. Yet, even in France, the full grandeur of his genius has not yet been recognized. Balzac has, as yet, no statue in Paris, which city he has described more ingeniously than any other writer. Even in his native town of Tours his statue was erected only in quite recent times. The *Académie* has never admitted him within her circle; and the French are not yet aware that in Balzac they have their Shakespeare in prose. Indeed, nobody short of Shakespeare will stand comparison with the gigantic genius of Balzac. Both have created a long series of grand types of humanity endowed with an undying life and charm of their own. To both the secrets and puzzles of the human soul were transparent; and both had the powers of philosophic analysis and poetic synthesis in equal shares. Shakespeare, too, had to bide his time; and twenty-eight years after his death, John Milton does not even mention his dramas as necessary reading for a young gentleman's education. Considering, then, the fate of Balzac in France, with an eager reading public immeasurably more numerous than that of Hungary, we need not wonder that Kemény suffered with tenfold intensity from the drawbacks peculiar to his Balzacian genius.

We said, Kemény is the Balzac of Hungary. We did not say, he was equal to Balzac. In Hungary a full-fledged Balzac can as yet not be expected. No amount of native genius will enable a man to overcome obstacles such as stand in the way of him who should undertake to do for

Hungarian society what Balzac did for French. The France of Louis-Philippe was infinitely better adapted to the writing of its "*Comédie humaine*," than the Hungary of Kemény's time.

Hungary is far from being as homogeneous as is France. In the latter country, despite much variety in language and social institutions, there is one pervading common spirit in all classes and peoples of the state. Whether Norman or Gascon, the citizen of France is chiefly a Frenchman, with distinctly French ideas and sentiments. France is the country of the French. Hungary is not the country of the Hungarians; it is a trysting-place of nations rather than the country of one nation. There are not only classes and ranks, but each class or rank differs according to the nation it belongs to. The Magyar *bourgeois* is not like the Slav *bourgeois*; and both differed, especially in Kemény's time, from the German *bourgeois*. No one, certainly not Kemény, can claim an intimate knowledge of all the nations in Hungary; and thus no one has, as yet, so profoundly impregnated himself with as immense an array of social facts as had Balzac before he wrote his great novels. Balzac knew the entire anatomy and physiology of the peasant, the soldier, the clergyman, the provincial, the Parisian, the maid, the *concierge*, the *bourgeoise*, the *grande dame*, the actress, the scholar, the lawyer, the speculator, the *viveur*, the diplomatist—in short, of every shade of character that went to form French society. In Hungary, such a knowledge could not be acquired. Familiarity with ten to twelve languages is required to know the full anatomy and physiology of the peasants in Hungary alone. To do, therefore, for Hungarian society what Balzac had done for French; to write the Hungarian "*Comédie humaine*" has so far been practically impossible; nor did Kemény do it. And yet, within the narrow limits of his arena, Kemény worked with the spirit and genius of Balzac. That his capacity was essentially akin to that of the great French writer there can be no doubt. It was not of the same comprehensiveness. Balzac had humour and wit; Kemény had none. Balzac had an exquisite sense of proportion, if not always in his style, at least always in the architecture of his plot; Kemény had not. Balzac was an encyclopædist of the human heart, in that he knew women as well as men; Kemény knew men far better than women. Balzac's range of observation being greater, his mind was subtler even than that of Kemény. Yet, with all that, Kemény's genius was essentially akin to that of Balzac. He, too, had that vast knowledge of historic events and that interest in scientific researches that

suggested to Balzac innumerable shades and innuendoes of thought, and *aperçus* on every form and phase of life. Kemény, like Balzac, had studied much in books and nature and man; he also had that love of realism—that following up of mental or emotional waves into their minutest recesses in the face or voice or gestures of persons. The outward or material appearance of man: his dress, house, arms, art-work, or contrivances were a matter of profound study to Kemény, as they were to Balzac. Although intensely analytical, he is equally great at and fond of descriptions. He paints nature, more especially that of his beloved Transylvania, as one intimate with mountains, rivers and forests. He knows their language and physiognomy; his landscapes are like the choruses in Greek tragedies. They form part of the scenes; not only of the scenery. They are like the contrapuntal bass to the melodies of his novels. But in what Kemény resembles Balzac most is his inexorableness. There is no other word for it. In nearly all his novels, as in most of those of Balzac, man is crushed down pitilessly, remorselessly. Without making any deliberate show of pessimism, Kemény is intensely pessimistic. As in Balzac the overpowering demon of modern times is money, after which all crave, all run and rush, jostling, panting, jading; so in Kemény, the bane of man appears under the form of those small mistakes and errors which dig the grave of all hopes. The great passions, vices and crimes do not, in Kemény's novels, act as the causes of the final downfall of his heroes or heroines. His heroes do not die from strokes of lightning, shooting forth from the black clouds of their terrible passions or heinous crimes. On the contrary: such lightnings rather illumine their road to success. They end, as it were, through a fire caused by a carelessly dropped match. The ghastly irony of real life, which no unbiassed observer can have failed to notice, is shown in his novels in all its terrible working. The melancholy of Eötvös is sweet and soothing; the gloom of Kemény is discomforting, distressing, just because Kemény never seems to be deliberately pessimistic. While reading his novels, the reader is so struck with the beauty of those gems of original and profound ideas and remarks, which Kemény strews in prodigious abundance over the objects and persons of his novels, that the persistent gloom and despair dominating nearly all his works, do not become so painful to the reader. It is when we have finished the book; when we overlook the whole of the plan; when we have laid our ear on the throbbing heart of each of the persons with whom we had been through several volumes; it is when the

novel in its entirety has entered our mind, that we feel deserted by all hopefulness, and embittered by the foul destiny reigning over man's best efforts. There can be but little doubt that the indifference, with which Kemény has been so far received in Hungary, is largely owing to his pessimism. The Hungarians, like the English, have little idiosyncrasy for pessimism. This mood of viewing things is the outcome of mental struggles, from which the better minds of both countries have been saved by their intense political life. Pessimism is eminently the nursling of thought. In Hungary there is, as in England, much more acting than thinking. Whatever there may be of pessimism in the Hungarians is used up in some of their superbly-despondent folk-songs. For Kemény's pessimism the time has not yet come. Perhaps he would have impressed his contemporaries far more deeply had he chosen not to write historic novels. Nearly all of his great novels are historic novels. As history, they are really incomparable. If we possessed a hundred historic novels, describing a hundred important periods of general history, in the manner, with the graphic power and true intimacy with the past, so peculiar to Kemény, we should know history infinitely better. Kemény has something of the erudition of a Gierke or John Selden, with the plastic descriptiveness of a great painter. Read his Transylvanian novels, and you have a clearer, more vivid and more correct knowledge of Transylvanian history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than you could gather from the study of the various chroniclers and memoir-writers of that time, such as Reicherstorffer, Schesaeus, Sigler, Heltai (see page 47), Verantius, Tinódy (see page 47), Somogyi (Ambrosius), Stephen Szamosközy, Nicolas Oláh, Zsámboky, Michael Brutus, Francis Forgách, Nicolas Istvánffy, Francis Mikó, Gregory Petthő, Kraus, the Bethlens, Haner, etc. Kemény is thus one of the best historians of Hungary. Nor can we think much less of him as a novelist. He engages our interest in the characters of his tales; they work on our imagination, they appeal to our hearts. More particularly to Hungarians, the actors of Kemény's novels appear as individuals full of charm and significance. To use one of Ben Jonson's happy phrases, they are "rammed with life"—life national, patriotic, historic. And yet, with all these commanding excellencies in his novels, Kemény has, there can be little doubt, committed a grave blunder in literary strategy, in investing the output of his vast intellectual mines in historic novels. Had he been less of a historian, he might have written his historic novels at a smaller loss of

literary efficiency. His very greatness as a historian debarred him from approaching Balzac still more closely. For his faithfulness as a historian prevented him from elaborating fully those types of humanity, the creation of which is Balzac's glory. Such types cannot, as a rule, be found in history. History, or that part of reality in which human beings are the actors, is full of blurred types of mongreldom and bastardy. No line in the features of man, as a real phenomenon, is drawn out purely and to its legitimate term; good and bad, sublime and vile, sentiments and deeds, are lumbering higgledy piggledy across each other. The poet or artist, who is truest to reality, is untruest to poetry and art. At all times the attempt at realism in art has landed where has the attempt at materialism in philosophy—in impotence. Historic novels, if very historic, as are these of Kemény, must thus necessarily benumb the creative power of the poet. And so they have. Had Kemény, instead of the past, embraced the present; had he followed in the wake of Balzac in fetching from the depth of Hungarian humanity some of the arch-types of European humanity, as was done by the author of "*Père Goriot*" with regard to French humanity, Kemény would stand out as one of the greatest writers of European literature. As it is, he is only one of the great writers of Hungarian Literature. What is perhaps more astonishing still in that choice of the historic novel by Kemény, is the fact that he was for years engaged in a profession than which very few can attach us more intently to actual, present life. Kemény was one of the most influential and hardest-worked political journalists of his time. In the columns of the "*Pesti Napló*" he poured out, in astounding profusion, leading articles about all the great events and persons of his time. In these articles he showed profound knowledge of the very pulse and heart of his age; and such was his power of exposition, analysis and appreciation of the fleeting occurrences of the day, that his political articles have been a matter of admiration both to his contemporaries and subsequent historians. As a rule, great politicians do not write historic novels. They are too much imbued with the spirit of their own age, in the direction of which they have had no small share, to be inclined, or even able, to familiarise themselves with the spirit of ages bygone. Kemény is an exception, and while this certainly testifies to the comprehensiveness of his mind, it renders the strategic mistake above mentioned more marked still.

We must abstain from giving a detailed account of his novels. Their plots are, by themselves, simple, if not purely on the lines of the historic events which they relate. Their author, like Balzac, excels chiefly in psychology and analysis; and although the dialogue is not neglected, it is not made the centre of the tale. In "*Gyulai Pál*" (1846) is shown the struggle between a noble and high-minded statesman and his ambition. In the attempt at saving his prince, Sigismund Báthori, from the latter's rival, Balthesar Báthori, Gyulai plunges into a series of crimes, and mortally wounds the heart of his idol, Eleonore, who finally brings about his execution. In "The Widow and Her Daughter" ("*Az özvegy és leánya*," 1857) is told, and with greater regard to form and architecture than in Kemény's other novels, the tragedy of the family of Mikes. A subject admirably suited to the gloom of Kemény's mental atmosphere is treated in his "The Fanatics" ("*A rajongók*," 1859), a story of the curious sect of the Sabbatarians in Transylvania in the fourth decade of the seventeenth century (*cf.* page 55). The Macchiavellian prime minister, Kassai, on the one hand, and the rich and mystic Simon Pécsi, the head of the Sabbatarians, with his beautiful daughter Deborah, on the other, are amongst the leading persons of this terrible novel. No less appalling in its way is "Rough Times" ("*Zord idő*," 1862), in which the capture of the Hungarian capital, Buda, by the Turks, is told with magnificent power. In the short novels of Kemény, taking up subjects of modern time ("Love and Vanity" ["*Szerelem és hiúság*"]; "Husband and Wife" ["*Férj és nő*"]; "The Abysses of the Heart" ["*A sziv örvényei*"]); as well as in his smaller tales, such as "Virtue and Convention" ("*Erény és illem*"); "Two Happy Persons" ("*Két boldog*"); "*Alhi Kmet*" (a proper name), etc., Kemény likewise dwells on that *fatalisme raisonné* as it might be called, that does not permit him, or very rarely, to tarry over the sunny moments of life. Writers like Kemény, in quite modern times, have found means of gently veiling their inner despondency by light touches of melancholy, as is done by Maeterlinck; or by fine irony, as used by Anatole France. In Kemény there is no mercy, not even that of irony. His novels are like the gigantic inundations of the Theiss river in Hungary: you see the floods nearing, often noiselessly, but with distressing rapidity, and in all directions; there is no escaping them; in their inexorable progress they roll onward like a host of innumerable serpents, stifling life and levelling down everything to the sameness of death. When Kemény died (1875), on his small paternal estate of Puszta-Kamarás, in Transylvania, he had

himself long been buried by the floods of mental derangement. Reality had shown him no pity either.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The poets and writers of the Magyars, whom we have been studying in the preceding chapters, were, in a lesser or higher degree, authors of works whose excellence was, to a large extent, of a relative, or national and not of an absolute character.

We now approach the study of Alexander Petőfi. His was a genius which, perhaps alone amongst Hungarian writers, so completely blended the peculiar national excellencies of Magyar poetry with the broader features of European literary greatness, as to entitle him to the admiration of all who can feel poetic beauty, irrespective of nationality or even language. Real poetry, like real music, appeals to all nations, and to all times. In Petőfi there is real poetry. Other poets are felicitous in expression, and the musical cadence of their diction endears them to their compatriots. Others again create one or two poetical types the charm of which lends grace and interest to even insignificant verses. Many more poets again play on religious, moral, or patriotic sentiments, and thus appeal to the hearts or imagination of readers with whom such sentiments easily wax overwhelming. In Petőfi there is more than all that. His language is rich and beautiful; yet it is not in his language that he excels. He never or very seldom borrows effect from appeals to morals or religion. He creates poetical phenomena—that is all. Where before him nobody ever surmised any poetic phenomena at all, there he conjures up a whole fairy-world of poetic conceptions, figures, events, or scenes. The true poet discovers the new land by creating it. In Nature herself there is no more poetry than in a grocer’s shop. Nor is there a trace of any other thought in Nature. There is no philosophy in it and no mathematics. Heaven alone knows how Nature is carrying on her business. She is the most wasteful of managers, and yet she is never bankrupt. She is as heedless as the most thoughtless of business men, and yet traces of profound thought appear to be discoverable in her dealings. And so the mathematician, or the physicist arrives at neatly limbed formulæ expressing so-called laws of Nature. Yet nothing can be more certain than that Nature herself is not acting on the lines of laws. To us, to human beings, it appears convenient and useful to bracket some of the

happenings of infinite Nature between logical ideas, thereby giving us the satisfaction of “understanding” those happenings. Nature abhors being understood, yet by dint of an irrepressible desire of man, thinkers will always attempt at construing her by dressing up natural phenomena in the jackets of formulæ and in the petticoats of concepts.

It is even so with poetry. There is no poetry whatever in Nature. All poetry is invented and created by man, just as all music is. He who invents the greatest number of events, scenes, or types that strike men as being poetical, is the greatest of poets. It is impossible to say how he invents them; nor can he or anybody else say where, that is, with relation to what spot, creature, or phenomenon of Nature he will invent them. One thing alone is certain, he must *invent* them. For centuries before Petőfi was born, Hungary had had the same mixed population; the same mountains; the same mighty rivers and lakes; and the same mysterious *puszta*, which to Petőfi suggested an astounding number of exquisite poems. He alone “understood their mystic language;” that is, he alone invented the poetry to the substratum of Nature; he alone wrote the thrilling drama to the dumb flies and staging of Nature in Hungary. He sees an old ram-shackle inn in the midst of the *puszta*. To the ordinary mortal the inn is suggestive of nothing more than the expectation of a poor dinner, of a bad bedstead, of uncanny companions. To an ordinary poet it may suggest images of decay or regret, more or less poetical. To Petőfi it suggests intensely poetical scenes of life exuberant or decadent; the inn (“*csárda*”) is transfigured by him into a living being; every one of its corners commences to breathe poetry, music, reminiscences and forebodings. So new and individual a creation is thus made of that wayside inn, that the painter may find in it new subjects for his canvas, and the musician new themes for his lyre. Wherever Petőfi is touched by nature or society, he responds by the creation of poetic phenomena. The wind blowing over the plains of Hungary is, in truth, inarticulate; in wafting through the body and soul of the incomparable poet it turns, as if directed through the pipes of an organ at the hands of a Bach, to melancholy fugues and majestic oratorios. And so with everything. Petőfi sings love in hundreds of poems, yet he was scarcely ever loved by woman. For nearer as woman is to Nature, she is also more realistic and less charged with poetry than man. What then could she do with one who had unloaded into the chests of his youthful soul all the treasures of poetry, but none of gold? This, however, far from deterring Petőfi or

disgusting him, rather stimulated him. He loved much; that is, he loved little. Love was for him, like the *puszta*, the Theiss river and the Carpathian mountains, an immense suggestiveness; an ocean, the crossing of which led to the discovery of new continents of poetry. Nearly all the pretty or interesting women whom he met, whether the lawless gipsy-girl, the actress, the coy *bourgeoise*, the lady, the peasant-girl or the hostelry-maid, he loved them all or thought he did. And this was owing not to his extreme youth—he died when six-and-twenty—but to his passion for poetic creativeness. Everyone of the types of women just mentioned served him as an occasion for creating one of those scenes as replete with life poetic as are forests or rivers with life natural. In one sense indeed he was right in saying that he was "the wild flower of boundless Nature" ("*A korláttalan természet-Vadvirága vagyok én*"). His mode of creation was quite on the lines of that of Nature. A poem grew out of his mind as does a violet out of the ground. In him there is no reflection, no machinery, no hesitation. Every line rolls on with the assurance and self-contentedness of a rose-leaf budding forth from the stem. He has the meditated carelessness of Nature, and also her freshness, her immediateness and spontaneity. More particularly, he is like Nature in Hungary. From the heights of thought as lofty as the peaks of the Carpathian mountains, and as chilling as those snow-clad solitudes (see his superb philosophic flashes in the poems written at Szalk Szt Márton, in 1846), he descends into the tiny nest of homely sentiments as does a lark into the furrow. His indignation, patriotic or otherwise, is as terrible as are the inundations of the Theiss; and side by side with poems flaming with uncontrollable fire and restlessness are poems full of oriental calm and staid repose. Yet, in the poet's own opinion, he resembled most the *puszta* or immense plain of Hungary. Petőfi, who had tramped over nearly every part of his country, gave, in a magnificent poem, the palm of beauty to the steppes and pampas of central and southern Hungary. The *puszta* in Hungary is really a series of some three thousand *pusztas*, of which the most famous is that of Hortobágy, near Debreczen, the praises of which Petőfi has sung in various exquisite poems. These *pusztas* differ very much in physical character; some are covered with rich wheat-fields, tobacco plantations, or maize-forests; others again are swamps, or natron-ponds, or again waste lands, or heaths. This diversity of abundance and penury, ecstasy of nature and dreary desert, squares well with the rhapsodic temper of the Magyars in

general, and that of Petőfi in particular. After miles and miles of deadly silence, the traveller enters one of the bustling "market-towns," full of the eccentric and picturesque types of the *puszta*. There is the dignified farmer or peasant, with his smart, coquettish, and light-tongued wife, or *mennyecske* ("little heaven"); there are the various shepherds and keepers of sheep ("*bojtár*"), oxen ("*gulyás*"), swine ("*kondás*"), or horses ("*csikós*"), each in his particular costume and each a different type of the Hungarian Bedouin. The "*bojtár*," tending the immense herds of sheep and lambs in the pampas, is mild-tempered, musical and full of secret medical lore. The animals under his care are frequently ill, and he watches their instinctive ways of picking out the herbs that will cure them. So he acquires a knowledge of herbs and an insight into nature which makes him appear a wizard. The "*gulyás*" tends the big cattle, oxen and bulls, and is naturally a rough fellow, fond of fight and of wild rollicking. He frequently wrestles with enraged bulls that have fled into the swamps, or with the poachers and robbers roaming over the *puszta*. The "*kondás*" is the lowest type of those herdsmen. He is sullen, hard of access, and irascible, and easily turns into a robber. The most brilliant type is the "*csikós*." He tends the immense herds of horses browsing in the prairies of Hungary. As the violin and the *furulya* (or sort of piccolo) are the national instruments of the Magyars, so the horse is their national animal. "The Magyar is created for being on horseback" (*lóra termett a magyar*), the Hungarian proverb holds. Peasant or nobleman, all are keen horsemen, and so intense is their love of the horse that, like Arabs, Hungarian poets treat the horse as a poetical character. The *csikós* is dashing, quick at repartee, an excellent dancer and singer or rather improvisatore, and grown to his horse. He knows every patch of his *puszta*, and every trick and dodge of horse-dealing and—horse-stealing. The girls idolize him. In his fluttering, highly-coloured costume, he is the very martial, bold and provoking youth whom girls will worship. Amidst these types of the *puszta*, none the least fascinating is the "*szegény legény*," or "poor lad." He is the robber and brigand of the *puszta*, and the romantic interest attaching to him grows out of the belief that he took to his lawless profession after having been thwarted in life or baffled in love. But of all the phenomena of the *puszta*, the Fata Morgana, or *mirage*, in Hungarian "*déli báb*," is the most striking. On a sultry afternoon in summer, cities appear in mid-heaven, images of towers and castles, immense lakes and forests. They shine sometimes with a

peculiar, supermundane lustre, and the traveller thinks he is walking in fairy-land. Then suddenly they disappear. Such is the *puszta*.

The influence of the *puszta* on the Magyar poets is undeniable; and Petőfi, more than any other Hungarian poet, seems to be the high-priest and devotee of the peculiar charms of the great plain. The real relation, however, between the poet and his country is that between the traveller and the mirage. It is in the eyes of the former that the latter is forming, and there alone. Petőfi creates the Fata Morgana, with which he fills the vast horizon of his beloved *puszta*. Although professionally a lyric poet, his lyrics are of the purely objective kind. Many of his best poems might be told in prose, and in any other language, without losing much of their charm. There is, in his best works, an abiding *fond* of poetry, quite independent of the music or picturesqueness of his words, or the strikingness of his similes. Heine, in his best moments, rivals without always equalling him. Petőfi's poems are mostly very short; they, as it were, only state the poetic scene which then works on the imagination or heart of the reader quite alone. When Heine speaks of the lonely pine-tree standing on the snow-covered heights of the north, dreaming of a palm perched in the far east on a rock burning with the heat of the sun of the desert, he strikes a chord that will vibrate in us long after and beyond the two simple stanzas in which he tells the story of the two trees. This is objective poetry. It is in this that Petőfi excels. Already in some of his earliest poems he writes perfect objective poetry. In "The Stolen Horse" ("*Lopott ló*," 1843) we are told of one of those fleeting scenes in puszta-life, in which the poet by seizing the pregnant point where present, past and future meet, gives us the story of several lives in words so few as to seem insufficient for the telling even of a short anecdote. A *csikós* dashes on a stolen horse over the vast plain. The rich owner of the noble animal, happening to pass by, recognizes his property, and calls upon the *csikós* to stop and surrender the horse. The fellow takes no heed, and storms onward. Suddenly he stops, and turning round to the owner, he exclaims, "Don't miss your horse too badly; you have so many of them. One heart was in my breast, and alas! your daughter has wrecked it;" and disappears in the desert. The story of the poor boy's love for the haughty daughter of the rich man, her cruelty, the father's pride, the boy's vengeance, his entrance on the wild life of a "poor lad," or robber; all that is pictured and suggested in the few words. In another poem, the first line of which is "The wife of the inn-keeper loved the vagabond" ("*A*

csaplárosné a betyárt szerette," 1844), the whole tragedy of true love thwarted by lawless love is told in a few lines. The vagabond ("*betyár*," really "robber") loves the maid of the wife of an inn-keeper in the *puszta*. The wife loves the robber, and being cut by him, drives away the poor girl, who dies of cold in the *puszta*. The robber thereupon kills the woman, and dies on the gallows, without regret, for "his life was no longer worth to him a pipe of tobacco." Another poem describes the wild rollicking of the boys in the village inn at night. A knock is heard at the window, and a harsh voice bids the boys to stop lest the quiet of the squire be disturbed. The boys only hold forth all the louder. Another knock at the window is heard. In mild tones a man asks the fellows to stop yelling, for his poor mother is ill. At once all the frolic is at an end, and the boys leave the inn. It is in such scenes, all expressed in the simplest and yet idiomatic language, that Petőfi's genius shines forth. Of him indeed it may be said that no colour, tint or instrument with which to touch and stir up the human heart was alien to him. Considering his extreme youth and the intense gravity of his pathos, his exquisite and genuine humour is nothing short of marvellous. It is the humour of a mature mind, full of ripe suavity and mellow joyousness. Of Petőfi's humour we could not use Hood's lines:

"There's not a string attuned to mirth

But has its chord in melancholy."

It is playful humour, laughing a broad, sound laugh. He is not as witty as Heine or Byron, but neither is he as cutting. In his famous poem ridiculing the Magyar *hidalgo* ("*A magyar nemes*") there is nothing but broad thrusts of a well-handled sword. There is no pricking with needles, nor any guffaws of a satyr.

Literary critics in Hungary and elsewhere have, in their anxiety for classification and cataloguing, placed Petőfi amongst the so-called folk-poets, and nothing is more frequent than a comparison of Petőfi with Burns and Béranger, the *chansonniers* of Scotland and France respectively. However, the comparison is untenable. While humour, pathos, tenderness and descriptive powers will readily be accorded, and in great measure, to the Scotch singer, he can hardly be compared to Petőfi in that distinctively creative power, which not only touches sentiment, not only finds charming words and images for things external

or internal, but also and chiefly discovers new poetic continents, so to speak, new mines of poetic gold. The very range of subjects covered by the poetry of the Hungarian poet is considerably wider than that of the Scotch bard; and in the last two years of his life Petőfi was raised, partly by his own genius and partly by the events of his time, to the position of a nation's prophet. This very position acted on his poetic gifts with a force that Burns never experienced, and accordingly, every comparison of the two poets is radically false. The same remark applies to Béranger. The entire atmosphere of his famous *chansons* is so different from that of Petőfi's songs, as to render a comparison of the two impossible. Béranger sings the glories of the great Revolution and of Napoleon's time. He is sweet, fresh, graceful, full of *élan* and smartness. He creates a *genre*, a mode of poetry, but a limited one. Petőfi was impressed by both poets; he knew Burns and Béranger well, and studied them, together with Shelley, Byron, and Heine, pretty carefully. But he never imitated them, and for the simple reason that he could not do so. He was in the best sense of the word, original, that is, creative. He could imitate no one, and no one could imitate him. Petőfi cannot be classified; he is a class by himself. He cultivates, it is true, the manner and tone of the folk-song ("*népdal*"), and so to superficial critics he may appear only as the best folk-song writer of Hungary. He is infinitely more than that; in 1846, for instance, he did not write a single "*népdal*" (folk-song); he is Hungary's greatest poet. In him is embodied the entire poetical genius of a nation, in whose single members we may frequently find the gift of improvisation and poetic invention. The rhapsodic vein so conspicuous in the everyday life of Hungary, and the exaggerations of which have vitiated many an effort, literary or musical, comes out in Petőfi in its full vigour and full beauty. Like all great poets, he is intensely truthful. There is no sham whatever in him, no affectation and no false note. His passion is terribly real, and his mirth, true joy. Nowhere can this absolute truthfulness be noticed with greater clearness; nowhere does it shine forth more imposingly than in one of Petőfi's wildest, and apparently most exaggerated poems, "The Madman" ("*Az őrült*"). It is a monologue of a mad Titan, whose fine intellect has been unhinged by ingratitude of friends, treachery of women, and undeserved reverses. We do not hesitate to say that there is in the whole range of European literature no other single poem representing the demoniac charm of a mind at once vigorous and diseased with equal force and truth. Constantly moving on the edges of

abysses than which the human mind or heart does not know any more appalling, the "madman" yet talks with a power and lucidity so overwhelming as to send through his hearers the holy shivers of religious prostration. Distorted in form, terribly true in substance; such is the character of this unique poem, in which all the serpents of scorn and pain seem to wriggle beneath the leaves of the beautiful word-foliage.

From Petőfi emanates the very soul of poetry and of all art: enthusiasm, inspiration. After having written comic epics, love-poems, and genre-pictures with a success never before witnessed, Petőfi, on the approach of the revolutionary period, wrote those inflammatory patriotic songs, the power of which was officially recognized by the Hungarian Government, who had enormous numbers of Petőfi's patriotic poetry printed at their expense and distributed among the soldiers of the revolutionary armies. His poems were then a national event, and they may in justice be compared to a series of different "*Marseillaises*."

We began our characterization of Petőfi by saying that he, perhaps alone amongst Hungarian writers, completely blended Hungarian with European elements. We may now state the reason of this his peculiar excellence. Petőfi, like all classical poets, while very great as a master of form, owes less to the beauty or ornaments of his language than to the objective beauty of his imagery, personifications and poetic scenes. For such as largely identify literature with great word-feats, Virgil will be greater than Homer (as was commonly believed in the seventeenth century); Tennyson greater than Shelley; Platen greater than Heine; and Arany (see page 194) greater than Petőfi. This is, however, not the judgment of such as gauge poetic greatness by the measure of objective beauty contained in a given work. The importance of form in poetry can hardly be exaggerated, and the necessity of paying the closest attention to the rules of form will be felt by no one more keenly than by the student of Hungarian Literature. Yet in attempting to find a measure of comparison between great poets, who all more or less excel in form, there can be no doubt, that he who is richer in objective beauty is also the superior poet. It is this superiority that raises Petőfi head and shoulders not only over the rest of the Hungarian poets, but also above most other poetic writers of modern Europe. The types of the *puszta*, which we have essayed to sketch above, the women, and events of his time; all these and many more Magyar subjects were by Petőfi so *objectivated*, and given an

independent poetic existence of their own, that they cease to be familiar to Hungarians only. They grow on the German, French or English reader with equal sympathy, and Petőfi thus needs less commentary for the foreigner than any other Hungarian poet. His works are like the Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt, which appeal to Americans with the same irresistible force as to Magyars, as the present writer has had abundant opportunity of experiencing in the United States. Yet the same Magyar melodies and turbulent cadences that Liszt, and Liszt alone, succeeded in *objectivating*, utterly fail of effect in countries other than Hungary when played by Hungarian gypsies in unadulterated Magyar fashion. This, then, is the deepest and truest secret of Petőfi's immense power: while embracing mostly Magyar subjects, he so *objectivates* them as to render them enjoyable and sympathetic to non-Magyar readers too. National poets inferior to Petőfi give their nation songs which other nations too possess, and the only difference between them is that of language. Petőfi gave Hungary and the rest of the civilized world what no nation other than the Hungarian possesses. As the Hungarian nation itself has an individuality so marked and so different from the other nations of Europe, as to entail upon it an historic and social vocation *sui generis*, so the poems of Petőfi, as the most felicitous exponent of Hungarian nationality, add to the types of poetry produced by other nations, a type, a species so individual and so richly personal as to endow it with a literary vocation altogether its own. If we are to reduce this peculiarly Magyar element to the precincts of a word, we should say it is the rhapsodic element. By this we mean a peculiar temper of the inspired mind pervading its joyous, humorous, meditative or despondent moods alike. As Liszt is the greatest exponent of this rhapsodic element in music, so Petőfi is in poetry. Most other rhapsodic poets or musicians, Magyar or otherwise, have badly failed, some by degenerating into rant or redundancy, others by becoming formless. Petőfi alone succeeded in raising rhapsodies to the level of true art.

It was said above that Petőfi's works are not in need of much commentary, even for the foreigner. We may now add that the only commentary needed is a knowledge of Petőfi's life. Petőfi's short life as a poet was coeval with the great awakening of the Magyar nation to the full consciousness of its position and its rights. He was born in 1823, in Kis-Körös, and was the son of a well-to-do butcher, by the name of Petrovics, husband to a Slav woman, called Mary Hruz. For historians

who believe in the race-theory, there is ample room for speculation, sympathetic or malevolent, in the fact that the beloved mother of Hungary's greatest Magyar poet belonged to the "race" of the Slavs, whom all staunch Magyars are disinclined to reckon amongst human beings. "*Tót nem ember, kása nem étel*" ("The Slav is no human being, and porridge is no meal"), holds the Hungarian proverb. Fully convinced as we are that there is no truth whatever in the race-theory, we can only see in the fact of Petőfi being the child of a Slav mother and a Magyar (or Magyar-speaking) father a providential fact creating Hungary's greatest poet from amongst a *milieu* saturated with both of the main elements of Hungarian society: Magyar and Slav. Young Petőfi spent his youth in the large plains between the Theiss and the Danube, and the impressions of that picturesque portion of Hungary have left their indelible traces on his imagination. At the age of fifteen, Petőfi was deprived of the comfort he had so far enjoyed, by the financial failure of his father. From that time onward he led a life replete with hardships of all kinds. At school he was a failure, and even in poetics, as he has told us in one of his humorous poems, he was "ploughed." Being somewhat too fond of the inspiration of the wine-cup, or at least being credited with such fondness, he soon fell out with his hosts, his teachers and finally with his father. From the misery of his position he tried to save himself by volunteering as a private in the Austrian army. The very harsh treatment he had to endure as a soldier told on his health, and although he had still moral strength left to scribble his poems on the planks of the sentry-box in which he mounted guard during the bitter winter, he at last was dismissed from the service on account of symptoms of consumption. In the following two or three years we find him tramping over all Hungary, writing verse, and eking out a miserable livelihood by means of acting on provincial stages. The great poet long believed in his vocation as an actor, and obstinately stuck to a determination that met nowhere with any serious encouragement. Meanwhile, however, his verses had made him a well-known poet, and soon the idol of the country. In his travels to the north of Hungary he was received, more especially at Kassa and Eperjes, with honours usually accorded only to royalty. The nation felt that he was the living personification of all the political and poetical aspirations of the Magyars then struggling for manifestation. In 1846 he made, in the county of Szathmár, the acquaintance of that strange and ill-balanced girl, who was to become his wife. Juliet Szendrey was her

name. She was the daughter of a steward on one of the great estates of a Hungarian nobleman, and had from early years shown symptoms of that malady which is now more widely known under the name of “new womanism,” or “*féminisme*.” Accordingly, she was eccentric and aimless, and when Petőfi made love to her she was at a loss how to respond to a feeling so simple and natural. Having given Petőfi some cruel samples of the waywardness of her temper, it occurred to her that she might inflict even more pain on her father by marrying the poor poet, and consequently she did so against the wish of her parent. The young couple lived in very primitive lodgings in Pest, and Madame took her fame as the wife of a great man with very grand airs. She so intensely appreciated the happiness of being wedded to a young genius and an affectionate husband, that she married, not quite a year after Petőfi’s disappearance on the battlefield of Segesvár, a man in every way infinitely inferior to Petőfi. Can anything prove the Fata Morgana character of poetry and of poets more cruelly than the ever infamous conduct of that highly cultivated woman, who, after having been idolized and, in verses, immortalized by one of the greatest of poets, showed her worthlessness by marrying a mediocrity before a single year had elapsed after the glorious death of her husband, whose infant son still required all her care? But let us return to the poet. A few months after his marriage Petőfi began his political career by announcing to the people of Pest the abolition of the censorship, and by reading to the enthusiastic crowd his famous poem, “Rise o’ Magyar” (“*Talpra magyar!*”), on the Ides of March, 1848. Towards the end of the same year he took service in the revolutionary army, and was attached to the Polish general, Bem, a hero wounded in untold battles for liberty, and then serving the cause of the Magyars in Transylvania. Few letters are more touching than the letters written by Petőfi in fair French to the old warrior, his “father,” as he calls him. Bem, himself a genius of character, at once felt and recognized the genius of Petőfi, and with great tact smoothed over difficulties arising from the poet’s wild insubordination. Against the advice and in spite of the entreaties of numerous friends, who wanted to save the poet for his country, Petőfi took actual part in various battles. He was last heard of in the battle of Segesvár, in Transylvania, on July 31st, 1849, where he died as he had long wished, fighting for his country. “To live for love, and die for one’s country”—he had not only sung it….

The works of Petőfi are both lyrical and epical; his novelistic attempts, “The Rope of the Hangman” (“*A hóhér kötele*”) are crude, so are his few essays in the drama. Amongst his epics, “*Childe John*” (“*János vitéz*”) is the best. It is a comic epic, or rather a fairy-story told with exquisite humour and exuberance of fancy. Another excellent comic epic of his is “*Bolond İstók*.” His lyrical poems are very numerous and cover, as has been already indicated, the whole range of human sentiment. Perhaps it is not superfluous to remark that there is in all the works of Petőfi not a word likely to jar on the ear of the most fastidious moralist. Like himself, his works all breathe the purity and health of untainted youth.

The reader will now perhaps expect a laborious statement of the shortcomings and failings of Petőfi as a poet. And many a Hungarian critic has, apart from his professional duty to fall foul of this or that feature in the literary physiognomy of poets, pointed out some grievous drawbacks in Petőfi’s works. Thus, most critics have, while lauding the splendid lyrical subjectivity of Petőfi, pointed out his alleged incapacity to write anything else than himself. His chief deficiency, it has been asserted, is his lack of objective imagination, such as was possessed by the great epic and dramatic writers of European literature. To this the answer is, it appears to us, very simple. Petőfi never wrote a work intended to be an epic proper; nor were his attempts at dramatic composition really serious. He cannot, therefore, be legitimately reproached with having failed where he did not intend to succeed. He never deliberately worked for such achievements of objective imagination as show in the creation of dramatic personalities. Yet most of his perfect poems manifest, as we have tried to show above, that very objective imagination in the rarest form of strength. Hungarian literary criticism is still, we regret to say, in a stage of development considerably lower than Hungarian literary composition. Hence such judgments on Petőfi. Can we pronounce otherwise on the literary critics of Hungary, who have so far produced no single comprehensive study on the works of a poet who is at once their greatest and most famous genius? Genius has this peculiarity that its works are easy to enjoy but hard to criticise. In reality, it takes another genius, a critical one, to appreciate it adequately. In this respect, foreign literary criticism has been relatively more just to Petőfi. In all the countries of Europe and America, Petőfi’s name has been steadily spreading, and numerous attempts at translations

of his works have been made in both hemispheres. We do not think that Petőfi is untranslatable. His very objectiveness renders him more fit for free and yet faithful translations than, for instance, Arany (see page 194). Another reason is that Petőfi lays less stress on form and metre than other poets of an equal rank. He who fully seizes the beauty of the poetic subject-matter in Petőfi's poems can render them more or less adequately in any language. More, however, than by translation might be achieved by Hungarian artists who by picturing the paintable features of Petőfi's poems, would contribute most potently to a general appreciation of his genius. There are hundreds of perfect pictures to be taken from his works, provided the painter takes them from him in the way in which Petőfi took them from nature.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Outside Hungary, the name of John Arany is seldom heard; and western readers will be astonished to hear that Arany is considered by many of the best known Magyar critics the greatest of the Hungarian poets. Petőfi has never quite pleased the professors of æsthetics and poetry in the various universities and "*academies*" of Hungary; and there being no Magyar Saint Beuves or August Schlegels, to guide, with tact sustained by learning, and learning eased by tact, the tastes and literary opinions of the professorial minds in Hungary, it is not rare to hear and read of Arany as the greatest poetic genius of the Magyars. We hasten to add, that we readily bow to the greatness and charm, and still more to the merits of Arany. He is a great poet indeed. Nearly every one of his numerous ballads, epics and smaller poems is replete with the glamour of true poetry. In point of language he is, no doubt, the most idiomatic and richest of all Hungarian writers. Yet, with all these gifts and excellencies, he is not equal to Petőfi. Reaching, as he did, an age nearly three times as protracted as that of Petőfi, he could yet not, through any stretch of time or effort, attain to powers which have been bestowed upon very few poets. Petőfi ranks with the world's greatest poets; Arany ranks only with the great poets of Hungary. To the strictly Magyar Jingo, as well as to the Magyar professor, Arany may appear greater even than Petőfi; we hope to show that his genius is of a nature at once different from and smaller than that of the incomparable Alexander.

The reader will, we trust, permit us to premise a short remark which, especially for English readers, seems indispensable for a right appreciation of Arany. In England there has long ceased to be a peasantry proper; at any rate, there has for now over 400 years been no such peasantry in England, as may still be seen on the continent generally, and in Hungary in particular. The type "peasant" is at once the arch-type of narrow-mindedness, sordidness, *naïveté*, and spontaneous poetry. He is conservative in the extreme and slow, yet frequently the source of great upheavals and revolutions. His speech is concrete and "*terre-à-terre*," yet at the same time full of quaint metaphors and conceits. His thoughts are all on the line of synthesis; and analysis is as strange to him as

generalization. He loves Nature; but he is too much at one with it, part of it, to feel poetically the gulf between Nature and Man. Honour and respect for himself and his ancient customs are as the life-atmosphere of his existence; and thus in the social architecture of the continental state to him is allotted the staying force of the pillars, beams and rafters of the building.[3] This, the general picture of the continental peasant, has to be touched up here and there when meant to represent the Hungarian peasant proper. For, luckily for Hungarian poets, the Magyar peasant, while fully as conservative and old-fashioned as his Austrian or German brother, is considerably less sordid, more frank, and altogether more "gentlemanly." Yet he is a peasant, a part both of Hungary's civic and natural complexion. Now it is this Hungarian peasant, and his social complement, the rural nobleman, who are the centre of Arany's poetry. We say "complement," for it is at present well understood by all close students of continental nobility, that the latter is, in essence and sociological drift, if not in appearance, one and the same phenomenon as the peasantry. Both classes form the conservative or static forces of continental states, and both are necessary conditions for the existence of a *bourgeois* proper. Without them, or without one of them, the medium or *bourgeois* element is altogether wanting, or, as in England, of a complexion totally at variance with the continental middle class. Now in Hungary, and more especially still, in the Hungary of Arany's youth and first manhood (1840-1870), there was no numerous *bourgeois* proper; and Arany, singing in tones and images flowing from and meant for the two other classes only, is for that very reason *toto coelo* different from most of the German and French and also from English poets. Modern western literature, in Austria and Germany exclusively; in France almost, and in England largely so, is *bourgeois* poetry; poetry written by and for the middle and central classes of the community; or at any rate expressive of sentiments and mental states growing in the atmosphere of *bourgeois* life. The poems of Arany, on the other hand, were growing in the fields and farms of the peasant, and in the manors of the landed nobility; even more in the former than in the latter. Theirs is a spirit charming in its rural breeziness and compact humour; fascinating in its *naïveté* and coyness; but somewhat out of tune with the modern or *bourgeois* sentiment. The more the middle or *bourgeois* class develops in Hungary, the less the fame of Arany will continue unimpaired. His works will be unable to satisfy the poetic needs of a class which he did not

know, and with which he had but scant sympathy. His very *naïveté*, his greatest poetic charm, will be found wanting. *Naïveté*, like all other tempers of the heart or mind, has its geography, its *locus*. It does not grow anywhere or everywhere. It requires a peculiar borderland situated where two social classes meet. In that borderland it grows willingly. Such lands are of course to be found only where classes do meet socially. In England, for instance, classes carefully avoid meeting intimately in a social manner; although they do so frequently in a manner political, commercial and religious. Hence, *naïveté* is scarcely to be found, either in English life or in English poetry. By a parity of reasoning, American poetry, based on a life with practically no classes whatever, can boast still fewer of the blossoms of naïve types or naïve style. Arany's world, it is true, is one where the two classes, the nobleman and the peasant, do meet intimately, and thus the flowers of *naïveté* are plentiful. It is a *naïveté* shy of display and timid; a *naïveté* in deeds more than in words; and finally, a *naïveté* of men rather than of women. It has, when enjoyed in Arany's own exquisite Magyar, a flavour so pure and hearty, so thoroughly true and poetic as to endear everything it touches. Yet it is the *naïveté* of the peasant, not of the *bourgeois*. It is poor in types, and restricted in emotions. It does not respond to the psychical atmosphere of the ever growing *bourgeois* class in Hungary, and accordingly the numerous readers of that class look for their reading somewhere else. The peasant and the rural nobleman are both captivating types for poets; they do not, however, represent more than a minor aspect of that broad humanity which has so far found its noblest expression in tales, dramas and poems grafted on events or sentiments of individuals outside the clans and septs of peasants and noblemen. The Germans, who have the excellent term of "*bürgerliches Drama*" (*bourgeois* drama), have felt that profound change coming over western literature very keenly; and the greatness of their literature is owing to that circumstance in no small degree. As in Hungary, nearly all great writers were, first magnates, and then noblemen (even Petőfi was a nobleman, although he set no value on that fact), so in Germany all the great writers have been without an exception, "*Bürger*" (*bourgeois*) proper. Now it is the peculiar greatness of Petőfi that many of his poems appeal to the sentiments and mental attitudes of that specifically modern public, the *bourgeois* readers, with a force and sympathy as strong as is the charm of many others to the "common people" or peasants of Hungary. It is said of Pico de Mirandola

that while he excited the awe and admiration of the most learned and thoughtful men at the end of the fifteenth century Rome and Florence, the maidens and young men of the beautiful city on the Arno were singing with delight his exquisite love-songs. Such is Petőfi; such is not Arany. He cannot properly be enjoyed except in his own Magyar, and by readers intimately acquainted with the two classes he belongs to. Not even when he selects, as he sometimes does, foreign subjects, as in his "*The Bards of Wales*," does he become less "clannish." Of the strongest of all feelings of young humanity, of Love, he has none but epic expression; he never wrote a love-song proper. The women in his epics are mere phantasms, angels or fiends; and his men are peasants or heroes, or both. The point on which he excels every other Hungarian poet, and on which will repose his lasting fame, is his language. It has the raciness of the peasant's talk with the moderation of refined style. In other countries writers introduced new elements of poetic speech by means of using words or phrases taken or imitated from one of the dialects of their province or county. Even in Shakespeare there are traces of the then Warwickshire dialect, and probably still more of Warwickshire folk-lore. German writers have legitimated innumerable provincialisms. Hungarian, on the other hand, has no dialects, or none to speak of. The writer who wants to find new linguistic affluents can turn only to the stock used by the peasants in the vast plain of Hungary. Arany, replete as he was with all the wealth of the language used by the peasants, knew how to ennoble and purify the language of the farmers and shepherds of the *puszta*, and to impart to it much of that Greek simplicity and beauty of which, as a scholar, he was so competent a student. As the French language is not rich in words but in idioms, so Hungarian is not rich in words but in word-formations. Especially the verb admits of a variety of forms and terminations enveloping every shade of thought or movement with the glibness of water. It is in such linguistic feats that Arany shows his genius; and since language in Hungary has an importance tenfold more significant than in countries composed of less polyglot peoples, it is quite natural that in the literary appreciation of Arany at the hands of Magyar critics the political element has played a very considerable part. This is, as we stated above, his great merit. Language in all modern countries has at first been the make of the peasant classes. In them there is that mysterious and instinctive power which has produced the splendid series of Romance and Teutonic languages which, by literary craft, have

come to be formed into the diction of Dante, Cervantes, Molière, Shakespeare, and Goethe. Arany, in focussing this power with the strength of a mind at once *logopoeic* and richly stored with knowledge, did an inestimable service to the cause of Magyar Literature and Magyar Nationality. In that respect he occupies in Hungarian Literature a place undoubtedly higher than that of any other Magyar writer. In matter, he could not fully unite the strictly Magyar with the broader European element; in poetic language, on the other hand, he did achieve that union; and it is in that achievement of his that we must look for his specific genius and merit.

Unlike as was Arany's personality to that of Petőfi: the former modest and retiring, the latter self-assertive and dashing; their careers too were equally different from each other. Arany's life (1817-Oct. 22nd, 1882), was one of quiet work first as a teacher, and later on (1860), as president of the Kisfaludy Society, and since 1864, as Secretary of the Academy of Science. The latter part of his life was distressed by persistent ill-health. In character Arany belonged to the select few, who have never stooped to any baseness whatever and never lost sight of the ideals of their youth. He was the intimate friend of Petőfi, who at once recognized his greatness, and the tolerant patron of the younger generation of writers. The nation mourned his death as a national calamity.

Arany is, almost exclusively, a poet of epic songs, epics proper and ballads. Of the former his most finished works are the Toldi Trilogy, consisting of "*Toldi*" (the name of the hero, published in 1847); "*Toldi szerelme*" ("The love of Toldi," published in 1879); and "*Toldi estéje*" ("The eve of Toldi," published previously in 1854). These three epics, written in rhymed six-feet stanzas of eight lines each, tell the life-story of an historic Magyar peasant-hero of the fourteenth century, in the times of King Lewis, justly called the "Great." He is of herculean strength, of violent temper, but good-hearted, simple, a loving son, and a loyal friend and subject. His struggle against his wicked brother; his love for Piroska, whom, in a passage at arms, he foolishly wins for another wooer; his despair at seeing the idol of his heart the wife of another; finally, his declining years when he finds himself out of accord with the changed times, and retires home to be put into the grave he had dug for himself. Such is, in the main, the contents of the three epics, into which the

wizard language of Arany has infused the charms of real poetry. It would be idle to compare Arany's art with that of Goethe's "*Hermann und Dorothea*." Goethe's hero too is rather a peasant farmer than a *bourgeois*. Yet all the other figures of Goethe's masterpiece are endowed with life so intensely *bourgeois*, as to secure admiration for the work in all times to come. Arany's hero; his dear old mother; his brother; his love, etc., scarcely leave the boundaries of peasant-world; and while his epic will thus for ever charm the youth of Hungary, it may in future cease to be an object of lasting admiration on the part of the more mature classes of the nation.

The same great qualities of linguistic *verve* and intense poetic sentiment are to be found in the other epical poems of Arany. In the "Death of Buda" (*Buda halála*, 1864), he sings the legendary story of Attila's murder of his own brother Buda (Bleda). In this exquisite epic Attila (or Etele, as Arany calls him), is pictured as a hero of the magnificent type, and nothing could be more removed from the poet's "Etele," than the conventional or historic Attila. Tragical energy and incomparable language render this poem one of intense charm. It was intended for one of three great epics narrating the cycle of Hun legends; of the other two we have only fragments. The romantic story of Wesselényi and Mary Szécsi (see page 58), was made into a charming epic by Arany, under the title "The capture of Murány" ("*Murány ostroma*," 1849). In "The Gypsies of Nagy Ida" ("*A nagyidai czigányok*," 1852), Arany gave vent, in form of a satirical burlesque, to his profound sorrow over his country's decadence, after the suppression of the liberal movement in 1848-1849. His ballads are generally considered to represent the best specimens of Magyar ballad-writing. It must certainly be conceded that few ballad-writers, whether in or outside Hungary, have so completely hit the true ballad-tone, or internal ring of thought and word adapted to subjects so utterly out of keeping with our modern sentiment. It may be doubted whether Chopin himself in his ballad in F major has so felicitously intuned the lay of olden romance as has Arany in his mostly sombre ballads, such as "Duel at midnight" ("*Éjféli párbaj*"), "Knight Pázmán" ("*Pázmán lovag*"), "Marfeast" ("*Ünneprontók*"). As in the best English or German ballads, events are, as a rule, only indicated, not described, and hurry on to their fatal termination with terrible speed. All is action and fierce movement.

In addition to his activity as a creative poet, Arany also did much for the introduction of foreign and classical literature into Hungary by way of translations. His most successful work in that line were the translations of several dramas of Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King John*), and more especially still his most exquisite (—*pace* all the German philologists!—) translation of the comedies of Aristophanes.

We ought now to devote a considerable space to a poet who, in his time, was generally associated with Petőfi and Arany. We mean Michael Tompa (1817-1868). While it is now impossible to rank Tompa with either Petőfi or Arany, he yet occupies a very conspicuous place in Magyar literature. His intense love of nature, his profound religious sentiment, and his fine humour entitle him to be considered as foremost amongst the lesser lyrical glories of Hungary. We can only regret that we cannot give here more than this bare indication of the peculiar individuality of the author of the "Flower-fables" (*Virágregék*).

CHAPTER XXIX.

The dramatic literature of the Hungarians, as may be seen from the preceding chapters, was, at the beginning of the twenties of this century, in a most backward condition. For reasons that it is very difficult to ascertain, some of the most dramatic nations, such as the Italians, have rarely or never excelled in drama-writing; while the English, who do not claim to be either conspicuously emotional or dramatic, have given the world the incomparable dramas of Shakespeare. In Italy, the lack of great dramatists may perhaps be ascribed to the fact, that female parts were, at least down to the end of the last century, played by boys. Yet a glance at the Attic theatre deprives this reason of much of its value. Be this as it may, the great influence of theatres and acting on dramatists can scarcely be denied. In Hungary, at any rate, the very indifferent condition of the theatre in the first three decades of the century bulks large amongst the causes producing a dearth of good Magyar dramas. This becomes evident when we consider that the first really great drama of a Magyar writer, "Banus Bánk" ("*Bánk bán*"), by Katona, passed unnoticed for over fourteen years (1818-1834), until a great actor, Gabriel Egressy, made it popular. The Hungarians are naturally good actors, and very fond of theatre-going. It will perhaps scarcely be believed in the enlightened west, where so late as November, 1897, one of the leading daily papers of England was permitted to speak of English and French literature as the only two great literatures of the modern world, that in Hungary there has been, and for some time too, a wealth of dramas of an intrinsic value at least as great as that of any British drama written within the last hundred and fifty years, and played by actors and actresses fully the equals of their colleagues at the *Comédie Française*. This remarkable growth of dramatic literature in Hungary did not, however, begin before the fourth decade of the present century. The epics and ballads of Vörösmarty, Garay, Czuczor, etc., seemed to captivate the public to the exclusion of all other forms of poetry. The patriotic tune ringing, and expected to ring through all popular works previous to the Revolution of 1848, threw their authors into the worship of the heroic past and thus into Romanticism. It was, accordingly, quite natural that dramatists, in order

to catch the public ear, indulged rather in heroic ranting and tirades, than in dramatic characterization. The heroes of the tragedies of Charles Kisfaludy (see page 116), for instance, are rhetoric blown into the shape of persons. Everything Magyar is perfect; the Magyars are delicately reminded, in pages full of endless adulation, that they are, to use an American phrase, “the greatest, the best fed, and the best clad nation on the face of the globe.” Their heroes are the greatest; their past the most glorious. This sort of jingoism may be tolerated in epics and ballads, where other redeeming features may save the literary value of the work. In dramas it is fatal. Yet it is in the drama where Romanticism may attain to really perfect works. The writer of romantic ballads must, in the end, fall into the snares of an exaggerated patriotism, and thus vitiate his work, rendering it less acceptable to a sober and unchauvinistic posterity. The dramatic writer, on the other hand, need not necessarily run the same risk. If he has power to chisel out of the given material of a nation’s past one or the other truly human character in all its grandeur, and in all its shortcomings, then the historic staging and bygone emotional atmosphere of the past will serve only to set off the dramatic beauties of the work all the more plastically. Arany’s Edward I. in the “Bards of Wales” (see page 200), is a ruthless and senseless tyrant that must pall on us in the end. Richard III., on the other hand, can never pall on us; for in him we recognize many an unavowed demon ravaging our own souls. Arany’s Edward I. is a ballad-figure; Shakespeare’s Richard III. is a piece of true humanity. To the dramatic poet it is indifferent from what part of the globe he takes his material; for humanity is spread all over the planet. So a nation’s heroic past too may be quite welcome to him, provided he is a real dramatist. Katona was such. He is rough and inharmonious in language, but there is real dramatic life in his men and women. For the first time in Hungarian Literature the true tone of tragedy was heard. The terrible fate of the Banus comes home to hearers, Hungarian or otherwise; it is yawning out of the abyss of conflicts to which all of us are liable. He is a loyal subject of his king, and yet bursts out in open rebellion; nay worse, he kills his queen. He is a great patriot; yet finally makes a rebellious plot with a foreign adventurer. He is a perfect nobleman; yet ultimately breaks all the laws of true nobility. He is a loving husband; yet contemplates assassinating his beautiful wife. And as he is, so are the other persons of the drama. In them is pictured the conflicting nature of the human heart and character as it really is:

rough, unbending, false, yet capable of sublime self-abnegation. Or as Petőfi says: “Rain from heaven turning mud on earth.” The plot is as follows: Bánk, in the absence of King Andrew II. of Hungary justiciar of the country, has reason to believe that Gertrude, the haughty and unpopular queen, countenances the vile designs of her brother Otto on Bánk’s beautiful wife Melinda. A rebellion of the malcontent nobles under Petur is breaking out. Bánk, who ought to quell it by virtue of his office, is thrown out of his moral equilibrium by the news that Melinda has been seduced by Otto. Forgetful of his position, he obeys only the behests of his outraged soul and kills Gertrude. The king returns, the rebellion is put down, and Bánk perishes. In Katona’s drama there is more power than form. It will easily be understood that his chief model was Shakespeare. He himself did not live to see the great success of his only masterpiece; he died broken-spirited in 1830 at Kecskemét, in the thirty-eighth year of his luckless life.

The first remarkable Hungarian dramatist after Katona is Edward Szigligeti (his real name was Joseph Szatmáry), 1814-1878. From an early date he was in constant contact with the theatre and with actors, and so acquired great practical knowledge of stage-lore. He had deeply studied the art of stage effect, and all his very numerous dramatic works testify to an extraordinary stage-craft. It would, however, be unfair to compare him to writers like Kotzebue in Germany, or Labiche in France. His routine, no doubt, was pre-eminent in many of his pieces; yet, beside and beyond the mere cleverness of the playwright, he had real *vis comica* and a profound knowledge of Hungarian society. During his life-time that society was slowly but steadily emerging from the semi-civilized state of the former patriarchalism to the forms and usages of modern life. In such periods of transition there is ample material for anyone gifted with a keen sense of humour. The aping of western manners (ridiculed in “*Marna*,” 1857; “Female Rule” [“*Nőuralom*” 1862], etc.); the humour of the altered family-life (“Three Matrimonial Commands” [“*Házassági három parancs*,”] 1850; “Stephen Dalos” [*Dalos Pista*], 1855; etc.); odd remnants of the former social state, such as tramping actors, the still-life of small towns; all this Szigligeti knew how to dramatize with great effect. Like Charles Kisfaludy he drew with great felicity on the stores of drastic humour pervading a conservative society composed of many a discrepant element and moving onwards on entirely new lines of development. He tried his skilful hand at tragedies too, and “The

Shadows of Light" ("*A fény árnyai*," 1865,) and "The Pretender" ("*A trónkereső*", 1868,) are said to be meritorious. His rare stage-craft and witty dialogue alone, however, could not have raised his name to the height on which it rests, and where in all probability it will continue to rest. Szigligeti's name is justly famous for being the real founder of what, for lack of a better name in English, must be called the Hungarian folk-drama. In England there is no such thing, and no such word. Already in our remarks on Arany (see page 195), we essayed to show that the continental peasantry is generically different from any class of small farmers in England. That peasantry is, in reality, a world of its own. It is as much a world of its own, as is the well-known world of the "upper ten." He who has never been in what the knowing call "*le monde*," will easily confound the sentiments and thoughts of his own world with those of the "*monde*." Yet the two worlds are two worlds indeed. Their whole tone and rhythm of life is different. They are written not only in different scales but also for different instruments. It is even so with the world of peasantry in Hungary or in Austria. How silly of some painfully enlightened people to ascribe, for instance, the mass of prejudice and superstition in the Hungarian or German peasantry to a lack of that "*Bildung*" or school-knowledge which is acquired through books and bookmen! The current belief in witches, fairies, imps and such-like elf-folk, good and bad, grows with the peasantry of those countries, out of the same roots that nourish in the "higher classes" the craving for and the delight in fairy operas and fantastic novels. Each social "world" demands pleasures and distractions of the same kind; each satisfying that craving in a different manner. The urban gentleman and lady while away tedious winter evenings by visits to theatres, where unlikely, demoniac and over-exciting pieces are an everyday occurrence. The peasants in Hungary have no such theatres; yet long winter evenings hang just as heavily on their hands. They therefore while away their leisure-hours by stories fantastic and demoniac, the literal belief in which must needs grow in direct proportion to the lack of all theatrical stage environment. As with superstitions, so it is with all the other great social needs. The Hungarian peasant, when outraged in his sentiments, does not, it is true, fight a duel like the gentleman. Yet he, too, becomes a duellist, retiring into the woods, and fighting society at large as a "*szegény legény*" or brigand. *Plus cela change, plus c'est la même chose.*

It will now be perhaps somewhat clearer that the Hungarian peasantry, *qua* peasantry, lends itself to dramatization in the same way as does any other of the "worlds of men." The common humanity of men is to be found in that peasantry too; but it is modified, coloured, and discoloured, "timbred" and attuned in a different mood. It admits of tragedies proper; of comedies; and of burlesques. It is Szigligeti's great merit to have discovered this new dramatic ore. Without in the least trying to diminish his glory, we cannot but add, that through the great revolution coming over Hungary as over the rest of Europe, in the period from the third to the seventh decade of this century, a revolution social no less than political, the peculiar and distinct character of the world of peasants became, by contrast to the rising *bourgeoisie* and the changing nobility, much more easily discernible than it had been ever before in Hungary. Yet Szigligeti was the first to seize on that dramatic *res nullius*; and both for this discovery and the excellent specimens of folk-dramas which he wrote, he deserves all credit. His most remarkable folk-dramas are: "The Deserter" ("*Szökött Katona*," 1843); "The *Csikós*" (1846); and "The Foundling" ("*Lelencz*," 1863).

We can here only mention the dramas of Sigismund Czakó, who for some time before his voluntary death in 1847, was very popular; of Charles Obernyik (1816-1855); and of Ignatius Nagy; the two latter being very popular before the Revolution of 1848, owing to their excessively "patriotic" dialogues. A far higher place in Hungarian dramatic literature is due to the noble Count Ladislas Teleky, who also died by his own hand. His "The Favourite" ("*A Kegyencz*," 1841), the subject of which is taken from the time of the Roman Emperor Valentinian III., is credited with great force of irony, dramatic truth and power of imagination. In Charles Hugo (*recte* Charles Hugo Bernstein), 1817-1877, the Hungarian drama might have gained a dramatic power of rare quality, had the overweening self-infatuation of the author, together with his poor knowledge of Magyar, not rendered him a victim to his first success. He is one of the numerous Titans of the Hungarian capital, who cannot do anything half-way creditable unless they fail to gain reputation. No sooner do they become "famous," than they cease to be either interesting or productive. Hugo's "Banker and Baron" ("*Bankár és Báró*") had not only a great, but an extraordinary success. Not only incense was strewn before the poet, but, to use Lessing's phrase, the very censer was hurled at his head. The enthusiastic crowd carried the author

bodily from the theatre to his favourite *Café*. This unhinged poor Hugo's mental equilibrium. He considered himself a second Victor Hugo; and so never wrote any other great drama. The merit of "Banker and Baron" is very considerable. It is one of the then few attempts at writing a real *bourgeois* drama, in which the common human heritage of virtues and vices, affections and passions, is presented with great force and dramatic vivacity.

Of a style and tone quite different from the preceding dramas is the "dramatic poem," as the author calls it, entitled "The Tragedy of Man," by Emericus Madách (1829-1864). In that great poem there is revealed all the sombreness of profound melancholy, wailing over the bootless struggle of Man since the unlucky moment of his creation. As the reader may have noticed in the course of the present work, the Hungarians, as a nation, are strongly inclined to pathos; just as the English are to satire and the French to irony. In the youthful members of the Magyar nation that bent is at times so strong as to dominate all the other modes and faculties of the soul. Hence the astounding wealth of grave Largos in Hungarian music, and the melancholy and despondent tone in many a great work of Hungarian poetry. Few poems can compare in unaffected sadness and thus twice saddening effect with Arany's "*Epilogus*." Madách's "Tragedy of Man" ("*Az ember tragédiája*") is, as it were, the funeral march of humanity. It would be utterly wrong to compare it to Goethe's "Faust." Although there is a general similarity in the drift of the two works, yet the poem of the luckless and suffering county official of an obscure Hungarian province is essentially different from the drama of the Jupiter of German literature. Madách's poem is, reduced to its skeleton, a philosophy of History. He takes us from the hour when Adam and Eve were innocently walking in the Garden of Eden, to the times of the Egyptian Pharaohs; then to the Athens of Miltiades; to sinking Rome; to the adventurous period of the Crusaders; into the study of the astronomer Kepler in the seventeenth century; thence into the horrors of the French Revolution; into greed-eaten and commerce-ridden modern London; nay, into the ultra-socialist state of the future, in which there will be no family, no nation, and no individuality amongst the countless individuals; and where the ideas of the preceding ages, such as Religion, Art, Literature, will, by means of scientific formulæ, be shown up in all their absurdity; still further, the poet shows the future of the earth, when ice will cover the whole of its surface, and Europeans and other human

beings will be reduced to the state of a degraded brute dragging on the misery of existence in some cave. In all these scenes, Adam, Eve and the arch-fiend (Lucifer) are the chief and constantly recurring *personæ dramatis*. In fact, all these scenes are meant to be prophetic dreams of Adam, which Lucifer causes him to have in order to disgust him with humanity in advance, and so, by driving him to suicide, to discontinue humanity. In paradise, Adam learns and teaches the lesson of man's incapability of enduring bliss; in Egypt, Adam, as Pharaoh, experiences the bottomless wretchedness of tyranny, where "millions live for the sake of one;" in Athens he is made to shudder at the contemptible fickleness of man when part of a crowd; in sinking Rome he stands aghast at the corruptibility of mankind, and in the Crusades at their fanaticism; in the study of Kepler he comprehends the sickening vanity of all attempts at real knowledge, and in Paris he is shown the godless fury of a people fighting for the dream called Liberty. So in the end, Adam, despairing of his race, wants to commit suicide, when, in the critical moment, Eve tells him that she is going to be a mother by him; whereby his intention of discontinuing his race by suicide is baffled. Adam then prostrates himself before God, who encourages him to hope and trust, making him feel that man is part of an infinite and indestructible power, and will struggle not quite in vain. Like Goethe's Faust, the great poem of Madách was not meant for the stage; yet, like Faust, it has proved of intense effect on the stage too. It is, as may be seen, a philosophic poem excelling rather in the beauty and loftiness of the thoughts conveyed or suggested than by power of characterization or dramatic vigour. In general literature we should like to compare it most to the "*De rerum natura*" of Lucretius. The powerful melancholy of the Roman is of a kind with the gloom of the Hungarian; and while the former dwells more on the material and religious aspect of man, and the latter on social phenomena in all their width and breadth, yet both sing the same tempestuous *nocturne* of Man's sufferings and shortcomings, illuminating the night of their despondency by stars of luminous thought. Madách died at too early an age to finish more than this one masterpiece. His other poems are inferior.

Dramatic literature in Hungary in the last thirty years has been growing very rapidly; and both the drama of the "world" *folk*, and that of the "world" *monde* has met with very gifted, nay, in some cases, exceedingly gifted writers. During that period, Hungary has completely

regained its absolute autonomy, and the Hungarian State, from having had an annual revenue of not quite sixteen millions in 1867, has now a revenue of over forty million pounds a year. Budapest has grown to be a town of over six hundred thousand inhabitants; and the general progress of Hungary, material as well as intellectual, social and political, has been such as, relatively, that of no other country in Europe in the same period. In the midst of the dramatic movement of all organs of the Hungarian commonwealth, the drama proper could not but make great strides too. It is here impossible to do justice to each of the very numerous and talented Hungarian dramatists of our day. We should only like, in treating of a necessarily small number of modern Hungarian writers of dramatic works, to premise a remark in the interest of a better understanding of their literary value. The English or American public are, as a rule, very much inclined to think little of things of which they have "never heard." We are not blaming them for that. Reading as they do great newspapers every day, they naturally come to think that, to alter the old legal phrase, "what is not to be found in the 'paper,' that does not exist." Hungarian dramas are seldom or never translated for the English stage; they are never talked about in the press; hence, the general public will tacitly assume that they can be worth but little. However, it is with Hungarian dramas as with Hungarian fruit. Although Hungary produces exquisite fruit of all kinds, and in enormous quantities too, the English consumer of fruit has never heard of "Hungarian apples" or "Hungarian grapes," while he is quite familiar with American or Tasmanian apples of an inferior quality. The reason of that is simple: the Hungarians are still in the infancy of the great art of export. It is even so with the Hungarian drama. It is not being cleverly enough exported; it wants active agents and middlemen to bruit it about. We venture to say that the western nations are the losers by ignoring or overlooking, as they do, the modern Hungarian drama. In taking the trouble to make the acquaintance of the dramas of Eugene Rákosi, Edward Tóth, Gregory Csiky, Lewis Dóczi, Lewis Dobsa, Joseph Szigeti, John Vajda, Árpád Berczik, Stephen Toldy, Anton Várady, Lewis Bartók, etc., etc., they would find that together with the greatest European mines for ore proper, Hungary has also many a profound mine of ore dramatic, no less than fine specimens of coins minted out of that ore. There is now a "tradition" of no inconsiderable duration in the art of acting; and several actors of the very first quality, such as Rose Laborfalvy (the late Mrs. Jókai), Louise Blaha, Lendvay,

Egressy, etc., have set examples and models, inspiring both the poet and the actor. The theatres at Budapest are magnificently equipped, and being, as they are, part of the great national treasure, they partake to a great extent of the nature of a temple, and are visited, not as places of sheer distraction, but as localities of national rallying and spiritual elevation.

Most of the leading dramatists of the last five-and-twenty years are still alive, and it is, therefore, twice difficult to pass a final judgment on their works. Mr. Eugene Rákosi, both as a journalist and a drama-writer, occupies a very conspicuous place, and if better known in the west of Europe, would certainly be read, and his pieces seen, with marked interest. Like Mr. Dóczi, who is a high official in the common department of Austria-Hungary, he has that subtle and unanalyzable force of surrounding his scenes, and also frequently his persons, with the splendour of poetic suggestiveness. In his “Endre and Johanna,” “Wars of Queens” (“*Királynék harcza*”), “The School of Love” (“*Szerelem iskolája*”), he does not make it his chief point to create, entangle, still more embroil, and then finally solve a “problem,” although he is a master of scene and situation-making. Nor do he and Mr. Dóczi care to be “realists.” They are satisfied with being poets. Mr. Dóczi has in his “The Kiss” (“*Csók*”) ventured on writing in words what hitherto has only been a success in the tones of Mendelssohn: a drama moving in mid-air, in midsummer night, with gossamery persons and fairy-ideas, away, far away from our time and land. In that he has been signally successful, and Mendelssohn’s overture to the “Midsummer Night’s Dream” is not sweeter and airier than Mr. Dóczi’s “Kiss.” Like Mr. Rákosi, Mr. Dóczi is a master of Hungarian and he wields the German idiom too with the same grace and energy.

In our opinion Gregory Csiky (born 1842, died recently) was the strongest dramatic talent amongst the modern dramatists in Hungary. He is what people are pleased to call a “realist;” that is, his shafts are sunk into the dramatic mines of the society in the midst of which he lives. His strong satire and broad humour, his finely-chiselled language and the bold and true way of his dramatization raise him to the level of the best of contemporary dramatists in any country. In his “The Proletarians” (“*A Proletárok*”) he has seized on a large class of *déclassés* in Hungary, who by the precipitated legislative reforms after 1867 were deprived of their

previous means of living, and so turned to parasitic methods of eking out an existence. That class is brought to dramatic life full of humorous, sad, and striking phenomena. There is not in this drama, any more than in Csiky's other dramas ("Bubbles" ["*Buborékok*"], "Two Loves" ["*Két szerelem*"], "The Timid" ["*A szégyenlős*"], "Athalia," etc.) the slightest trace of that morbid psychologism which has made the fortune of Ibsen. It is all sound, fresh, penetrating and vibrating with true dramatic life. Last, not least, there is much beauty of form and construction. Csiky, who has published very valuable translations of Sophocles and Plautus, is thoroughly imbued with the classic sense of form and with the real vocation of the drama as the art-work showing the emotional and mental movements of *social* types, and not of some pathologic excrescence of society. In other words, he does not muddle up, as Ibsen does, the novel with the drama.

Amongst the writers of "folk-dramas," Edward Tóth (1844-1876), occupies a very high place. His "The Village Scamp" ("*A falu rossza*") tells the touching story of a young peasant who, disappointed in love, loses all moral backbone and is finally saved by the fidelity of a woman. The drama is full of scenes taken from Hungarian peasant life, which is far more dramatic than peasant life in Germany. The Hungarians have, till quite recently, never had a Berthold Auerbach, or a novelist taking the subject of his novels from peasant life. They have dramatists of peasant life instead; and a short comparison with the peasant dramas written by Austrians, such as those of Anzengruber, will show the decided superiority of the Hungarians. One strong element in the folk-dramas of Tóth and of Francis Csepreghy (1842-1880, author of "The Yellow Colt" ["*A sárga csikó*"], "The Red Purse" ["*Piros bugyelláris*"]), is the folk-poems and folk-songs, sung and danced. By this incidental element of tone and verse, which, as a sort of inarticulate commentary on the dramatic scenes does duty for the philosophic reflections of the non-peasant drama, the hearer is brought into intimate touch with the very innermost pulsation of the life of the "folk."

CHAPTER XXX.

In now approaching the modern novel in Hungary we are at once met, touched, almost overwhelmed by the dazzling light and lustre of one commanding genius of the Magyar novel, Maurus Jókai. His name is at present well-known all over the world, and his novels are eagerly read by Hungarians and non-Hungarians alike. The number of his works is very great, and although over fifty years have elapsed since the appearance of his first novel (in 1846), he is still enriching Hungarian and European literature with ever new works. Nearly everything has changed in Hungary during the last forty years; but the love and admiration for the genius of Jókai has never suffered diminution. In his checkered life there is not a blot, and in his long career there is not a single dark spot. Pure, manly, upright as a patriot, faithful and loving as a husband, loyal as a subject, kind as a patron, an indefatigable worker, and, highest of all, a true friend both to men, fatherland, and literature, he has given his nation not only great literary works to gladden and enlighten them, but also a sterling example of Magyar virtue and Magyar honour. It is, especially in Hungary, no common thing to meet with men of Jókai's immense power and love of work. His journalistic articles alone would fill many a folio volume. His political activity in the Hungarian Parliament, in the Lower House of which he was up to January, 1897, when the king called him to the House of Magnates, was likewise very extensive. And in addition to that, he was constantly writing novels, turning out volume after volume, until the total exceeded two hundred and fifty. In fact, as has been already hinted at, from an historic point of view he has, by his unparalleled productiveness, done some harm less to himself than to other Hungarian novelists. He himself, although not equally at his best in every one of his novels, has in the course of fifty-one years of creative authorship scarcely lost anything of the distinctly individual greatness of his genius; and even the later and sometimes hurried productions of his pen are, to say the least, most excellent, because intensely interesting reading. On the other hand, his very popularity rendered it almost impossible for any other Magyar novelist to publish novels other than small sketches or essays. The reading public in Hungary is not numerous

enough to demand lengthy novels from more than one favourite author. Jókai almost supplanted Jósika (see page 140) and all other writers of lengthy novels.

His novels and sketches treat of nearly every aspect of Magyar life, in the past and in the present. The heroic deeds of the ancient or mediæval Magyars are subjects of his novels as well as the doings and thoughts of official and non-official Hungary of the present century. It would, however, be quite incorrect to ascribe to him any intention of writing the "*Comédie humaine*" of Hungary. No such vast system underlies his countless stories. He has no system; in reality, nothing is more removed from his mind than any such big structure of ideas and facts. He has frequently chosen non-Magyar subjects; and when treating of Magyar events or institutions, he has no philosophical aim to pursue, and no patriotic theory to uphold. He writes novels out of sheer love of telling tales. In the feeblest of his works the reader cannot but notice that singular alertness and freshness of an author hugely enamoured of his profession—and gaily at work. The narrating is of much the greater interest to him; the tale itself does not always claim his full attention. Whether or no, the plot is consistently thought out to the end; or, whether or no, the persons always proceed on the lines of their characters; all that does not too much ruffle Jókai's joyous composure of authorship. For, to put it in one word, he is an improvisatore; in fact, the greatest of all known improvisatori. This is the key to all his excellencies, as well as to his alleged failings. The Teutonic nations, and amongst the Latin ones the French are, as a rule, entirely unfamiliar with that most fascinating of talking virtuosi, the *improvisatore*. Even in the wild excitement of the French Revolution there was only one orator, Danton, who improvised his speeches; the rest, even Mirabeau, read them. The vast amount of *parlature* done in Hungary, to which we called attention at the very outset of this work, has given rise both to marvellous artists of the living word, and to audiences passionately fond of listening to good talk, and on all possible occasions too. The good talker in America is a man who *à propos* of any occurrence, is reminded of a story that happened "in Denver, Colorado, or Columbus, Ohio." No such individual would be endured in Hungary. The good talker there is an improvisatore proper. He is never "reminded" of an old story; he invents on the spot or extracts from the actual topic of conversation all the sparks of wit and humour that fall upon the prose of life like dew upon dry flowers. The gift and

long habit of improvisation thus makes some of those mostly unknown artists most charming companions and astoundingly clever talkers. He who has not lived amongst them, cannot possibly imagine their ease of invention, their humour, their power of description and their imagination. They are not, as in Italy, professional improvisatori; and perhaps nobody would be more astounded than themselves at the application of that term to them. Yet, a comparison with the man in France, who is "*bon causeur*," and with the man in London, who has "remarkable conversational powers," will show any unprejudiced observer the truth of the above characterization of the Magyar talker. Just as Mark Twain's humour is only the improved and, by print, fixed humour noticeable in many an American, even so Jókai's narrative genius is the highest form of that genius for improvisation which in Hungary may be met with frequently in lesser perfection. This explains Jókai's permanent hold on the Hungarian nation. He has carried one great gift of his nation to the heights of real greatness. We repeat it: he is the greatest of all improvisatori in prose. Nothing can approach his miraculous facility in building up a fascinating scene; in irradiating the heaviest and most cumbrous subject with light and humour; and in wafting over the whole tale the Fata Morganas of an exuberant imagination. Young and old; Hungarian, Englishman or German; man or woman; they must all stand still and listen to the charmer. That Jókai is the best exponent of the Hungarian genius for improvisation in words will be readily believed and accepted, when we point out his startling similarity, almost identity, with another famous Hungarian, who excelled in works of the same quality but written in tones instead of in words. We mean Liszt. Jókai is the Liszt of Hungarian Literature; we might almost say, of European literature. The marvellous musician, who, both as a pianist and as a composer, held the civilized world under his spell for far over seventy years—(Liszt was born in 1811 and died in 1887)—was the king of all musical improvisatori. When he played Beethoven or Chopin, Bach or Schumann, he impressed the most cool-headed hearers as if he had just improvised the pieces he played; that one circumstance being at the same time the secret of his unrivalled powers as a pianist. When he composed —and many, very many of his compositions are works of lasting merit— the result was almost invariably an improvisation. It has that indefinable charm of rapturous glow kindled at the fire of the moment, which endows improvisations with a character unique and exceptional. It excels

in major keys far more than minor moods; it has much unity of character and *Stimmung* rather than unity of form; it always borders on the *Fantasia*, and never crystallizes into a sonata proper; it cultivates side-issues, such as flourishes and *fioriture* with startling skill and vast effect, while the bass, or the underlying element of thought, is not laboured nor significant; it appeals to happy people rather than to such as bear heavy burdens; and it works for brilliancy more than for reticent beauty. Liszt's E flat major concerto, for instance, is an absolutely faithful replica of some of Jókai's best novels. Both authors excel in brilliancy, technical routine, wealth of imagination, sparkling rhythms and rapturous descriptiveness. There is nothing majestic in them, nothing grave, nothing truly sad or melancholy. Jókai disposes of an inexhaustible humour. This, as will be admitted, cannot be readily imitated in music. In Liszt, humour becomes irony and demoniac scorn. His Polonaise in E major, for example, with its appalling irony at Polish excessiveness, is the musical counterpart to Jókai's humour. But where Liszt comes nearest to Jókai is in his Rhapsodies. As in Jókai, so in Liszt, there is a constant change of panoramic views; an exquisite wealth of tinkling, sparring and glistening rhythms; a shower of glittering dewdrops and an iridescence of sheets of coloured lights. In a measure, all Jókai's novels are placed in fairy-land; as all Liszt's music is on the heights of exultation. And, likewise, the final secret of Jókai's irresistible charm is in the improvisatory character of his novels. Jókai's reader does not feel that he is being lectured or moralized or instructed. On the contrary, he feels that he himself, in inspiring, as it were, the author, is co-operating with him in the work, just as the listeners to an improvisatore are doing. The reader is accorded part of the exquisite delight of literary creation and so feels twice happy.

This peculiar and inimitable feature and excellence of Jókai is but another manifestation of the rhapsodic character of the Magyars. Petőfi, and he alone, was in his best poems, both rhapsodic and classical. He not only expressed Magyar rhapsodism lyrically, as has Jókai novelistically and Liszt musically, but he also imparted to it that inner form of moderation and harmonious beauty which, if coupled with perfect expression and metre, renders poetry classical. It will now be easily seen why Jókai must needs have the failings of his virtues. The very nature of rhapsodic improvisations works chiefly for effect: it is subjective art, not objective. The production of the artist is not severed from his personality;

it is intimately allied with and dependent on it. In Liszt, whose art admits of combining both production and presentation of the work at one and the same time, the subjective or personal factors became so strong as to render him without any doubt the most fascinating artistic individuality of this century. It is, therefore, in vain to expect in Jókai that patient and self-denying care of the objective artist for the structural beauty of his work. It is not the great number of his novels that has prevented him from giving them as much objective proportion and consistency as they have lustre and charm. Mozart died at five-and-thirty, and left more works than Jókai has written; yet nearly every one of the better ones was objectively faultless. It is Jókai's very art that necessitates that failing in Art. If he had tried to mend it, he would have stunted some of that peerless profusion of fancy which has endeared him to untold millions. He may displease a few hundreds; he will always transport the millions. Yet one remark cannot be suppressed. Hungary, we are convinced, has not yet arrived at the stage of literary development when critics and the public look backwards for the best efforts of the nation's intellect. There are still immense possibilities for Hungarian Literature; and all the constellations of literary greatness have not yet risen above the horizon. It will thus not be surprising when we here venture to urge the necessity of viewing even a genius such as Jókai's historically. His merits are as boundless as his charm. The judgment of all Europe has confirmed that. For Hungarians, however, it will be wise to remember, that Jókai in literature, as Liszt in music, are the highest types indeed, but of one phase only of the many-souled national genius of the Hungarian people. Their work is great and inimitable; we hasten to add: nor should it be imitated. It is the work, not of the last, but of one of the early stages in Hungarian Literature. It has, when over-estimated, a tendency to do harm to the nation. People, who in music are taught to expect the maddening accents of rhapsodies, will rarely calm down to the enjoyment of less spiced, if more perfect music. It is even so with novels. Who now reads the novels of Kemény (see page 157); and who ought not to read them? Readers intoxicated with Jókai, we readily admit, cannot fairly rally to enjoy Kemény. Yet Hungary is badly in need of a more modern Kemény, as she is of a Brahms. Or has it not been noticed yet, that while Hungarians are proverbially musical, and known to be so in all countries, they have so far—if we for the moment disregard Liszt—not produced a single creative musician of European fame or considerable magnitude?

There can be little doubt that Liszt himself is one of the chief causes of the sterilization of musical talent in Hungary. Vainly endeavouring to imitate him, the composers failed to proceed on different lines. Desiring to hear Hungarian music in no other form than in that of Lisztian rhapsodies, the public failed to encourage the production of new musical works. And so the vast treasure of Hungarian music has not yet been done full justice. The Bohemians, also a very musical nation, have had no Liszt; but they have, at least, their Smetanas and their Dvořáks. As a reader and patriot, no less than as a student of poetry and art, we joyfully recognize the surpassing talent of both Jókai and Liszt. As historian of the literature of our nation, we cannot but make the remark that it will no longer do for Hungarians to leave the historical position of these two great authors entirely out of consideration. It is different with countries outside Hungary. They may and shall read Jókai unmolested by any such reflections. For them he is delight pure and unequalled; and we beg their pardon for not having suppressed the above remark. But as to the interests of Hungary we dare to assume that Jókai himself, great in modesty as he is in so many other ways, will not disavow our idea, but gladly acknowledge that, great as he may be, there ought to be room for novelistic greatness of another kind in Hungarian Literature, and appreciation of other modes of novelistic art in the Hungarian public.

Jókai was born on the nineteenth of February, 1825, at Komárom (Komorn). At Pápa, when still a student, he made the acquaintance of Petőfi, whose intimate friend he became. He took an active, if moderate part, in the revolution, and came near falling into the hands of the victorious Austrians, from which fatal predicament, however, he was saved by his lovely wife Rose Laborfalvy, one of the greatest of Hungarian actresses. From that time onward he has devoted his life partly to parliamentary activity, but chiefly to literature and the political press. In the latter field he has acted as editor of, and frequent contributor to, several of the leading journals of Hungary; and, moreover, as founder and editor of the "*Üstökös*," the Hungarian "*Punch*." In Hungary, where political and parliamentary life has long been in existence, a paper *à la* "*Punch*" was a natural and much needed literary product. Nor do we hesitate to assert that several of such papers—for instance, Jókai's "*Üstökös*" ("The Comet"), and the incomparable Porzó's (Dr. Adolf Ágai) "*Borszem Jankó*" (a name) not only equal, but, as a rule, decidedly surpass German or French "*Punches*," and not infrequently the London

paper too. Wit in Hungary is of a peculiar kind, and Jókai is one of its most gifted devotees. It is wit, not only of situations, or humorous contrasts, but also of linguistic contortionism, if we may so express it; so that none but a master of the language can handle it with real success. On the other hand, it is fertile in humorous types, and does not indulge—unwillingly at least—in caricature.

Amongst Jókai's novels, "An Hungarian Nabob" ("*Egy magyar nábob*," 1856, translated into English) is one of his earlier masterworks. It tells the story of one of those immensely wealthy Hungarian noblemen who, in pre-revolutionary times, lived like small potentates on their vast estates, surrounded by wassailing companions, women, gamblers, fools, gypsies, and an indefinite crowd of hangers-on. The old Kárpáthy, the nabob, in spite of habitual excesses of all kinds, is, at bottom, an upright and proud man. The intrigues made against him by a profligate nephew, hitherto his only heir, and who wants to precipitate his death, are baffled by the nabob's marriage with a young and innocent girl, who makes him the father of a boy, Zoltán. Within this apparently very simple framework what a wealth of scenes, of types, of humour, and descriptive gems! We are taken from the half-savage manor-life of the old nabob to brilliant Paris, then again to Pozsony and to Pest. The language is winged, winning, and gorgeously varied. The continuation of the "Nabob" is given in "*Kárpáthy Zoltán*," a novel which, both in its pathos and in its humour, is one of the most engaging pieces of modern narrative literature. Full of historic interest are Jókai's "The Golden Era of Transylvania" ("*Erdély arany kora*," translated into English by Mr. Nisbet Bain); "The Sins of the Heartless Man" ("*A kőszivü ember fiai*"); "Political Fashions" ("*Politikai divatok*"); "The Lady with the Sea-Eyes" ("*A tengerszemü hölgy*"); and in "The New Landlord" ("*Az új földesúr*") Jókai has, without so much as posing as a political moralist, achieved one of the best effects of patriotic moralizing. "The New Landlord" is perhaps one of the most finished and architectonically perfect of the Hungarian master's works, although the workmanship of "What we are growing old for" ("*Mire megvénűlünk*") is also remarkable. Other novels in which Jókai's splendour of imagination and narrative genius may be enjoyed at their best are: "Love's Fools" ("*Szerelem bolondjai*"); "Black Diamonds" ("*Fekete gyémántok*," translated into English); "There is no Devil" ("*Nincsen ördög*"); "The Son of Rákóczy" ("*Rákóczy fia*"); "Twice Two is Four" ("*Kétszer kettő négy*"), etc. Besides works of

fiction, exceeding two hundred and fifty volumes, Jókai has written an interesting History of Hungary; his memoirs; the Hungarian part of the late Crown Prince Rudolf’s great work on Austria-Hungary, etc. He is still enriching Hungarian Literature with ever new works of fiction.

CHAPTER XXXI.

In the preceding chapters we have essayed to give some idea of the work of the leading poets and writers of Magyar literature. The very narrow limits of this sketch of the literary life of the Hungarians have prevented us from giving more than mere outlines; and in now approaching the activity of modern Hungarian poets and writers of less prominent position, although not infrequently of very considerable value, we are forced to restrict ourselves to still more limited appreciation.

Amongst the *Novel-writers* we cannot omit to mention Louis Kúthy (1813-1864), Ignatius Nagy (1810-1856), and Gustavus Lauka. The two latter excelled in light, humorous novels. In the humoristic sketches and tales of Gereben Vas (*nom de plume* for Joseph Radákovics, 1823-1867) there is a continuous and, as to its language, admirable display of the fireworks of folk-wit and racy fun. Amongst his best works are "Great Times—Great Men" ("*Nagy idők nagy emberek*"); "Law-Students' Bohemian Life" ("*Jurátus élet*"). Albert Pálffy (born in 1823), after a long career as an influential politician and journalist, has published, since 1892, a great number of sound, readable novels. Aloisius Degré (born in 1820), of French extraction, has always been a popular writer with readers of society-novels. Charles Bérczy (1823-1867) is the founder of sport-literature in Hungary; in his novels he follows chiefly English models. A peculiar position is occupied by Ladislas Beöthy who, in the evil decade of Austrian reaction (1850-1860) amused and consoled his despondent countrymen by his eccentric humour and originality. In the historic novels of Charles Szathmáry (1830-1891) there is more patriotism than literary power. Both as a journalist (as editor of the "*Fővárosi Lapok*") and as an author of elegant and thoughtful novels, Charles Vadna (born 1832) has won a conspicuous place for himself. Alexander Balázs (1830-1887); Arnold Vértesi (born 1836); Lewis Tolnai (born 1837); William Győry (1838-1885); Miss Stephania Wohl (1848-1889); Emil Kazár (born in 1843); have in numerous novels, many of which would merit particular attention, painted the sad or gay aspects of life. Louis Abonyi (born in 1833), Alexander Baksay (born in 1832), Ödön Jakab, and Bertalan Szalóczy count among the best Hungarian

novelists whose subjects are taken from the life of the Magyar peasantry. As we have already suggested, the number of Hungarian writers venturing on a novelistic *poetisation* of life on a grand scale, is not very great at present. Most of the modern novelists just mentioned work on a smaller scale; and thus the Hungarian Bret Harte did not fail to make his appearance. His name is Coloman Mikszáth (born in 1849). His short and thoroughly poetic tales from the folk-life of Hungary are in more than one respect superior to those of the American writer. For, to the latter's sweet conciseness of plan and dialogue, Mikszáth adds the charm of *naïveté*. Some of his works have been translated into German, French and English; and the enthusiasm for his art will no doubt spread from Hungary to all other countries where the graces of true simplicity can still be enjoyed.

Amongst the numerous writers of *genre*-sketches and *feuilletons*, "Porzó" or Dr. Ágai is *facile princeps*; not only in Hungary, but also, we venture to add, in all Europe. He is quite unique.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The number of *lyrical poets* is very great in modern Hungary. It may be stated that, as a rule, a Magyar poet has more chances of attracting public attention by a good lyrical poem than by a good novel. Perhaps the female portion of Hungary are not as anxious for novel-reading, as are their sisters in more western countries; and thus the balance of attention to poetic works is spent on the drama and on lyrics. This fact is on a line with the predilection of the Hungarian public for songs and airs, as against native musical works of a more extensive description. The great Hungarian lyrical poets of modern times may properly be divided into several groups, of which the first is the school of poets with whom the beauty and purity of Form is the principal concern of their art. Considering the innate Magyar tendency to rhapsodic and shapeless exuberance, the relative value of the works of that group is very great. The Hungarian language, just on account of its large share of musical elements, has somewhat of that indistinctness and vague emotionality which, like that of music, must be strictly kept within the bounds of Form. Even in the more advanced poetry of the Teutonic nations, whether German or English, the significance of poets cultivating pre-eminently the chaste beauty of Form, is still very considerable. Fortunately for Hungary, both Paul Gyulai (born in 1826) and Charles Szász (born in 1829) have, especially the latter, untiringly worked at providing their countrymen with works of poetry, original or otherwise, in which the law and beauty of Form predominate over emotionalism. Szász has thus deserved very highly of Hungarian Literature. His delicate sense of metre, rhythm and architectonics, in his original epics and lyrics, as well as in his exceedingly numerous translations from the works of great western poets, is on a par with the wealth of his linguistic resources; and while English poetry may perhaps afford to be less encouraging to the adepts of Form, Magyar literature is to be congratulated upon having at once recognized and thereby not missed the numerous works of her Richard Garnett.

To this group belongs also Joseph Lévay (born in 1825), whose popular works move in the sphere of elevated serenity.

Another group of lyrical poets is formed by the nationalists, who vied with one another in sounding exclusively the note of Magyar sentiments and ideas proper. Local colour seemed to be everything, and in language and subject nothing was used outside the purely Magyar elements. The most gifted of that class was Coloman Tóth (1831-1881); next to him ranks perhaps Andrew Tóth (1824-1885); nor must Coloman Lisznyay (1823-1863), Joseph Zalár (born in 1827), and Joseph Székely (born in 1825) be omitted.

Quite by himself stands John Vajda (born in 1827). He is to Hungarian poetry proper, what Kemény (see pp. 153, etc.) is to Hungarian novelistic literature. His is the gloom and power of pessimism; and in his fight with Destiny he conjures up all the furies of scorn, despair, rage and hatred: see especially his "*Szerelem átka*" and "*Gina emléke*."

The lyrical poets of the sixties and seventies of this century tried to avoid excessive nationalism, true to the spirit of the time when Hungary through the final regulation of her constitution as an autonomous state, assumed a European attitude herself. The more prominent names are Béla Szász; Victor Dalmady; Joseph Komócsy; Lewis Tolnai; Ladislas Arany, Alexander Endrődi, Julius Reviczky, etc. In Joseph Kiss there is much of that power of discovering poetic riches in subjects hitherto ignored by poets, which goes to make the really great poet. The emotional conflicts between orthodox Jews and Christian peasants living in the same village, conflicts of love and hatred alike, have been worked into powerful ballads by Kiss.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It would be impossible, to write even the shortest sketch of Hungarian Literature without dwelling on one of the less conspicuous, yet chief sources of suggestion and inspiration of Hungarian poets. We mean the *folk-poetry* of the Hungarian people. Now that we can study that poetry in numerous and comprehensive collections, published by John Erdélyi (1848), Paul Gyulai and Ladislas Arany, John Kriza (1863), Lewis Kálmány, Coloman Thaly (in English, the collection of L. Kropf and W. Jones, "Magyar Folk-tales," 1884), etc., etc., we cannot but acknowledge the profound effect that these countless poems, ballads, songs, fables, epics, and ditties must have had on the minds of Hungarian poets who spent their youth in the midst of people singing, reciting or improvising them. In intensity of colour, in fire and varied picturesqueness, Hungarian folk-poetry is certainly not inferior to that of the people of Italy. In humour and exuberant audacity it is probably its equal. But while Italian folk-poetry frequently stoops to the indecent and obscene, it may be said without fear of contradiction, that such stains are unknown to the folk-poetry of the Magyars. In it lives the whole life of that nation, its sorrows and humiliations, as well as its moments of triumph and victory. The complete ethnography, historic and present, of the Magyars could be gleaned from that poetry. Nay, so intense is the poetic feeling of those lowly and obscure peasant-poets, that every object of the rich nature of Hungary has been framed and illumined by them. The *puszta*, and the two mighty rivers of the country; the snow-clad Carpathians, and the immense lake of the Balaton; the abundant flora and fauna of their land—all is there, instinct with poetic life of its own, and embracing, sympathizing or mourning the life of the shepherd, the outlaw (*betyár*), the lover, the priest, the trader, the Jew, the constable, the squire, the maiden, the widow, the child. There is in that folk-poetry a tinkling, ringing and pealing of all the bells and organs of life. Like the music that almost invariably accompanies it, it is teeming with intense power, and hurries on over the cascades of acute rhythms, and the rapids of gusts of passion. As if every object of Nature had revealed to it the last, brief secret of its being, it describes scenes and situations in two or

three words. Its wit is harmless or cruel, just as it chooses; and in its humour the laughing tear is not wanting. Chief of all, as the great pundits of Cairo or Bagdad, whenever they are at sea about some of the enigmas of the idiom of the Koran and the Makamat, send for advice to the roving Bedouins of the Arabian deserts: so the Hungarian poets have gathered their best knowledge of the recondite lore of the Magyar idiom, in the *pusztas* of the *Alföld*, between the Danube and the Theiss, where the true Magyar peasant is living.

Hungarian folk-poetry is not a thing of the past. Almost day by day, new and ever new "*nóták*" or songs are rising from the fields and forests —nobody knows who composed them—and as if carried by the winds of east and west, they quickly find their way into the heart of the whole nation. There is thus an inexhaustible fountain of poetry and poetic suggestiveness in the very nation of the Magyars. Great as some of the Hungarian lyrical poets have been, it is fair to assume, that with such an undercurrent of perennial folk-poetry to draw upon, there are, for this reason alone, still many more great poets in store for us.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In conclusion, a few words on the Hungarian literary productions outside *belles-lettres* proper. From the pre-eminently political character of the Magyars, it may be inferred almost *a priori* that questions bearing on legal and constitutional matters have at all times been a favourite subject with the writers and statesmen of Hungary. Previous to 1830, in round numbers, these questions were treated mostly in Latin works. Since then, however, a very considerable number of politico-legal and politico-historical writers in Magyar has arisen. The most important amongst them, both for the authority they commanded in practical politics, and for the weight and power of their arguments, are Count Stephen Széchenyi; Baron Nicolas Wesselényi; Count Aurelius Dessewffy; Baron Joseph Eötvös (see pp. 142, etc.); the famous Lewis Kossúth, probably the greatest political orator of the century; and Francis Deák. They were all practical statesmen, and not mere scholars. Yet most of their works on the constitution of Hungary, and especially on the constitutional relation of Hungary to Austria, are also valuable as sources of solid and scholarly information. Thus Deák showed the extensiveness of his legal and politico-historical erudition in his famous controversy with the Austrian professor Lustkandl, in no lesser degree than his tact and wisdom in the conclusion of the final treaty between Austria and Hungary in 1867. Eötvös enriched Magyar political literature with an elaborate and thoughtful work on "The Influence of the Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century on the State" ("*A xix. század uralkodó eszméinek befolyása az álladalomra*," 1851-1854). In more recent times a very great number of politico-legal monographs has been published in Hungary. The student will find lists of them in the works of Stephen Kiss and E. Nagy, both entitled "Constitutional Law of Hungary" ("*Magyarország közjoga*," the former in 1888, the latter, third edition, 1896). Of older works on the constitutional law of Hungary, the most useful are those of count Cziráky (1851, in Latin), and of Professor Virozsil (also in Hungarian and German, 1865). Amongst the numerous Magyar writers on *Jurisprudence*, Professor Augustus Pulszky is well-

known in England through his able work, written in English, on “The Theory of Law and Civil Society” (1888).

In the department of *History*, and especially the history of Hungary, the activity of the Magyars has been one of astounding intensity. In the well-known annual bibliography of history, edited by Jastrow, in Berlin (*Jahresberichte*, etc.), the annual report on the historical literature published in Hungary, occupies a conspicuous space. The older historians of Hungary, such as G. Pray (1774, 3 vols. fol.), Katona (1779-1817, 42 vols.), who wrote in Latin; and Engel (1814), Fessler (1825, 10 vols.), count John Majláth (1853, 5 vols.), who wrote in German, can now be used only for occasional reference. Of Magyar writers on the history of Hungary, Bishop Michael Horváth (1809-1878), and Ladislas Szalay (1813-1864), have had the greatest influence on the reading public and Magyar historiography up to the end of the seventies. The bishop treats history in the style of fine and dignified ecclesiastical allocutions. Szalay’s is a talent for the political and legal aspects of history rather than for the personal and military element thereof. In both historians there is a noble patriotism, and their works, even if discarded as wanting in systematic research, will always claim a high rank as literary productions. Hungary is still waiting for the true historian of the whole of her history; but what other country is not? Writers of historic monographs there are many, and they have done excellent work. Some of the most prominent are Count Joseph Teleki (1790-1855); Francis Salomon (born 1825); Anton Csengery (1822-1880); Charles Szabó (1824-1890); Alexander Szilágyi (born 1830), the historian of Transylvania; William Fraknói (born 1843, died recently), on Pázmány and King Matthew; Julius Pauler (born 1841), whose great work on the history of Hungary under the Árpáds (till 1301) is characterised by a most careful study of all the original sources; Coloman Thaly (born 1839), whose “speciality” is the age of Francis Rákóczy II.; Emericus Krajner (very valuable works on constitutional history); Lewis Thallóczy (on relation to Balkan nations); Ignatius Acsády (on civilization and finance of xvi. and xvii. cent.); Henry Marczali (on the age of Emperor Joseph II.); Lewis Kropf, whose domicile is in London, and who, in a long series of accurate and scholarly monographs has elucidated many an important point of Hungarian history; G. Ladányi (constitutional history); Sigismond Ormós (institutional history of the Árpádian period); K. Lányi (ecclesiastical history); Alex. Nagy (institutional history); F.

Kubinyi (institutional history); S. Kolosváry and K. Óváry (charters); L. Fejérpataky (charters); Árpád Kerékgyártó (history of Magyar civilization); F. Balássy (institutional history); Professor Julius Lánczy (institutional and Italian history); Baron Béla Radvánszky (Magyar civilization); Emericus Hajnik (constitutional history); Frederick Pesty (constitutional history); Wertner (most valuable works on Hungarian genealogy), etc. Great also is the number of periodicals systematically embracing all the aspects of Hungarian history; and local societies effectively aid in the marshalling of facts, and in the publication of ancient monuments. When the history of Austria, Poland, and the Danubian countries has been written in a manner superior to what we now possess in that respect, the history of Hungary too, will, we have no doubt, find its adequate master among Magyar historians. The progress in Magyar historiography has, in late years, been little short of that made in any other country.

In the department of *literary history* we notice the same lack of a satisfactory general history of Hungarian Literature, and the same abundance of meritorious monographs on single points. Francis Toldy (formerly Schedel, 1805-1875), started a comprehensive history of Hungarian Literature, which, however, he never completed. In numerous essays and minor works he worked hard at various sections of such a history, and his relative value as an initiator in that branch cannot be disputed. The laborious works of K. M. Kertbény are purely bibliographical, and as such, useful. His attempts were quite thrown into the shade by the great works on Hungarian bibliography of Charles Szabó, G. Petrik, and J. Szinnyei. The handiest and bibliographically richest history of Hungarian Literature is that by Zsolt Beöthy (sixth edition, 1892). Under Beöthy’s editorship a richly-illustrated history of Hungarian Literature was published, in two volumes, in the year and in honour of the Hungarian Millennium, 1896. Among the better writers of monographs on literary history are Julius Zolnai (philology); J. Szinnyei (biography); Sigism Simonyi (philologist); L. Négyessy (prosody); Alex. Imre (popular humour and mediæval style); R. Radnai (history of Magyar æsthetics); M. Csillagh (on Balassi); Sigism Bodnár (history of Hungarian Literature); H. Lenkei (studies in Petőfi); K. Greska (on the epic of Zrinyi); T. Szana (history of literature), etc.

The study of æsthetics has always been one of the favourite pursuits of Magyar writers during the present century. The most conspicuous of Hungarian students of æsthetics are Augustus Greguss and Paul Gyulai, whose works have advanced not only Magyar views, but the study of æsthetics in general.

The best known students of *Hungarian philology* are John Fogarasi; Joseph Lugossy; the late Sam. Brassai, who in his multifarious studies reminds us of the great scholars of the seventeenth century; Paul Hunfalvy, Joseph Budenz, Ferdinand Barna (Finnish philology); Gabriel Szarvas and Sigismund Simonyi; and the well-known Arminius Vámbéry.

In the departments of *Science proper* there has been very considerable progress in Hungary during the last thirty years. Reports of the general results of scientific researches made by Hungarians are also published, for the greater convenience of the western nations, in special periodicals written in German.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The above statistics are taken from the *Régi Magyar Könyvtár*.

[2] We may mention, that Bessenyei was, to a certain extent, preceded by two amiable and cultivated writers; Baron Lawrence Orczy (1718-1789), and Count Gedeon Ráday (1713-1792).

[3] No continental writer has described and analysed the social status of the continental peasant with so much charm and truth as has the late Wilhelm Riehl, the Justus Möser of our century.

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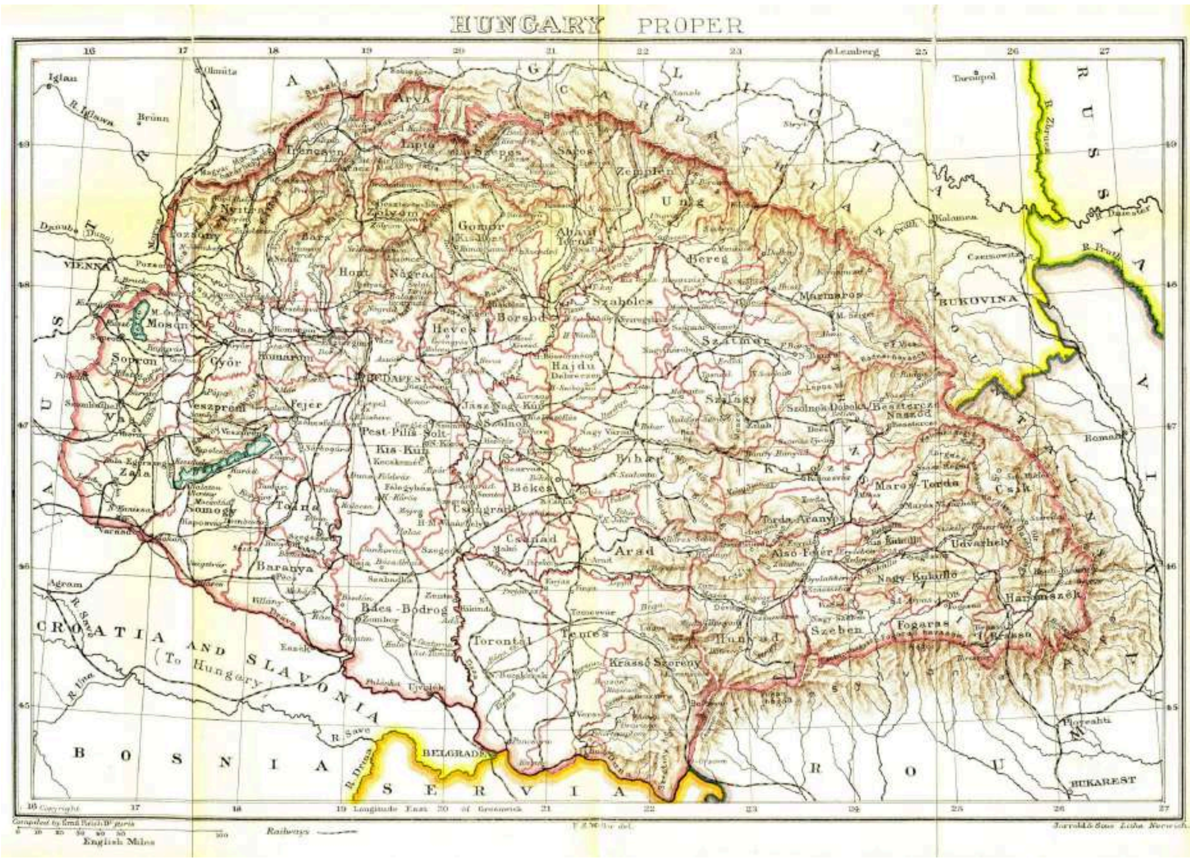
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