

**AUTHENTIC LIFE OF HIS EXCELLENCY  
LOUIS KOSSUTH, GOVERNOR OF  
HUNGARY. HIS PROGRESS  
FROM HIS CHILDHOOD TO HIS  
OVERTHROW BY THE COMBINED ARMIES  
OF AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA**

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Authentic Life of His Excellency Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary. His Progress from His Childhood to His Overthrow by the Combined Armies of Austria and Russia by Louis Kossuth

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M. KOSSUTH.—FROM A DAGUERRETYPE BY CLAUDET.

AUTHENTIC LIFE  
OF  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
LOUIS KOSSUTH,  
GOVERNOR OF HUNGARY.

HIS PROGRESS FROM HIS CHILDHOOD TO HIS OVERTHROW BY THE  
COMBINED ARMIES OF AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA,

WITH A FULL REPORT OF HIS  
SPEECHES DELIVERED IN ENGLAND,  
AT SOUTHAMPTON, WINCHESTER, LONDON, MANCHESTER,  
AND BIRMINGHAM.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
HIS ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

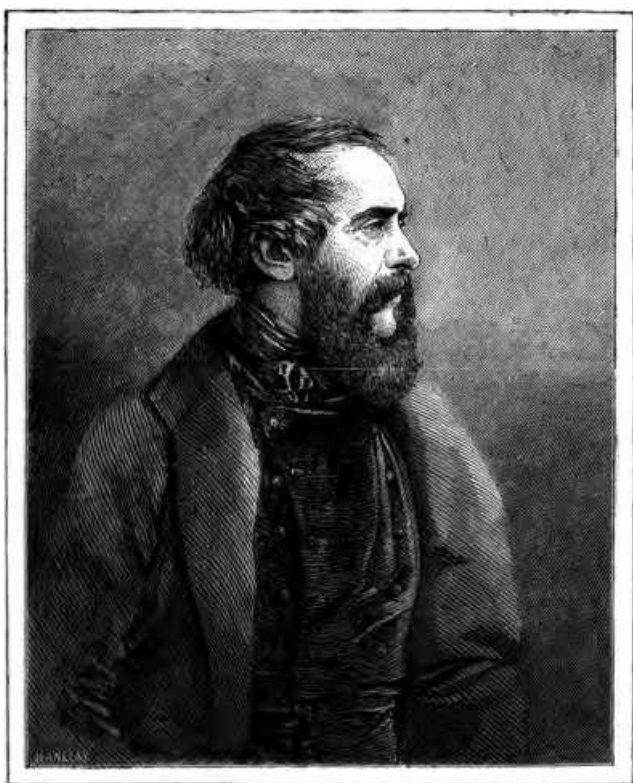
THE WHOLE EMBELLISHED WITH BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION TO M. KOSSUTH.

LONDON:  
BRADBURY AND EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.  
1851.



210. c. 170.



M. KOSUTH

## INTRODUCTION.

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### KOSSUTH'S ELOQUENCE AND POLITICAL CHARACTER.

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IN laying before the public a collection of the speeches of M. Kossuth, we must precede it by a few remarks on the man himself. Great differences of opinion, as is very natural, exist concerning him; and we shall state the impression he has made on us, and the opinion we have formed of his character.

On one point there is no controversy, no difference of opinion, no doubt nor hesitation; all agree, all are at once convinced who have heard him speak, or have read one of his speeches, that he is surpassingly eloquent. It is not that he elicits vociferous cheers from well-fed gentlemen after dinner, and is greeted by waving of white handkerchiefs from crowded galleries of easily-excited and sympathising women,—scores of very common orators having a favourite theme to dilate on, have effected quite as much;—it is not that the mob huzza vehemently as he pronounces some sentiment favourable to the rights of the poorest part of humanity, and feel themselves ready to follow him, if necessary, to battle, demagogues of no sterling character, have done the same in all ages; it is not that he everywhere kindles the enthusiasm of every auditory. All this, indeed, he does; but more than this, he converts opponents into friends; he convinces the sceptical as well as warms the enthusiastic; he assures the doubtful; he satisfies



cold, fastidious critics, stirs the blood of reporters, men accustomed to listen calmly and uninfluenced to all kinds of oratory, and sends them and editors to record at their desks their thorough conviction that he is the most fascinating speaker they have ever heard. "Next week," says the Editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, after describing on Saturday, November 15th, some of the most effective passages of his speeches at Manchester and Birmingham, "may enable us to recover a cool and wise judgment after the too-inspiring appeals of the suffering patriot, whose voice yet rings in our ears like a trumpet with a silver sound." The writer of that is not a young man, but long accustomed to hear and take part in public speaking of all kinds,—a man well practised in the world; and yet he, a constant and cautious critic of other men's acts and words, is carried away by Kossuth's eloquence, and describes it as "most thrilling," as "Shaksperian," "of Miltonian sublimity," and as "combining more of moral and intellectual grandeur" than anything he ever knew. The wonderful eloquence which all concede to Kossuth, is the source of his power. When such are its effects—he speaking a strange tongue, and addressing strange men,—we may conjecture its effects when he uses his mother-tongue, and addresses hearts and minds with which he is almost as familiar as with his own. "I may perhaps be eloquent," he modestly said at Manchester; "it is so told—in my own language, and when I want to give inspiration to those who hear me; but here (he added gracefully) I have to get inspiration from you." He has caught it, as he said in the Hanover Square Rooms (with more boldness than is consistent with our taste), from the "Holy Ghost of freedom breathed upon me;" and we now know, and he is informed, that he is eloquent in a foreign language,—more extraordinarily eloquent, indeed, than any man that ever appeared in the world. Yet he may disappoint many persons. He has none of the tricks of oratory: his manner is calm and unimpassioned, grave and earnest; his action may be almost described as tame; his voice is not strong, and never violent; he uses neither sarcasms nor sneers; he neither mocks nor mimics; his mode of speaking is logical rather than poetical; and his influence

as an orator is wholly intellectual. It is due to noble sentiments tersely expressed; to the utterance of great truths, latent in all minds, which the spark of his eloquence kindles into flame; and to beautiful and apt illustrations of opinions that belong to all, but have never before been so clearly expressed. Thus, at Manchester, he said—

“There are some who endeavour to contract the demonstrations of sympathy which I have had the honour to meet, to the narrow circle of personality. They would fain make you believe, that there is nothing more in these demonstrations than a matter of fashion, a transitory ebullition of public feeling, passing away without leaving a trace like the momentary bubble; or, at the utmost, a tribute of popular approbation to the bravery of a gallant people in a just cause, and of consolation to their illmerited misfortunes. But I say, it is not so. I say, may no nation on earth have reason once to repent of having contemptuously disregarded these my words, only because it was but I who said them. I say, that the very source of these demonstrations is, the instinctive feeling of the people that the destiny of mankind has come to the turning point of centuries: it is the cry of alarm upon the ostensible approach of universal danger; it is the manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation, roused by the instinctive knowledge of the fact, that the decisive struggle of the destiny of Europe was near, and that no people, no country, can remain unaffected by the issue of this great struggle of principles. A great orator has told you that the despotic governments of Europe have become weak. So it is. The despotic governments of Europe feel their approaching death, and therefore they will come to the death-struggle. I am nothing, but the opportunity which elicited the hidden spark,—the opportunity at which the pre-existing instinctive appreciation of approaching danger caused in every nation the cry to burst forth,—the loud cry of horror. Or else, how could even the most daring sophist explain the fact of the universality of these demonstrations, not restricted to where I am present,—not restricted to any climate,—not restricted to the peculiar character of a people,—not restricted to a singular state organisation,—but spreading through the world like the pulsation of one heart,—like the spark of an electric battery. The addresses, full of the most generous sentiments, which I am honoured with in England, are the effects of my presence; but I am but the spark which kindles a feeling which has long existed, from the people of the metropolis down to the solitary hamlets, hidden by neighbouring mountains from the vicissitudes of public life.”

Then, after referring to the many tributes he had received from many places, he continued—

“Is this personal? What have I in my person, in my present, in my future, not to justify, but even to explain this universality of demonstration? Nothing, entirely nothing; only the knowledge that I am a friend of freedom, the friend of the people—so I am nothing but the opportunity for the manifestation of the instinctive feeling of so many nations, that the dragon of oppression draws near, and that the St. George of liberty is ready to wrestle with him. A philosopher was once questioned, how could he prove the existence of God? ‘Why,’ answered he, ‘by opening my eyes. God is seen everywhere; in the growth of the grass, and in the movements of the stars; in the warbling of the lark, and in the thunder of heaven.’ Even so I prove that the decisive struggle in mankind’s destiny draws near; I appeal to the sight of your eyes; I appeal to the pulsations of your hearts, and to the judgments of

## INTRODUCTION.

your minds. You know, you see, you feel that the judgment is drawing near. How blind are those men who have the affectation to believe, or at least to assert, that it is only certain men who push to revolution the continent of Europe, which also, but for their revolutionary acts, would be quiet and contented! Contented! With what! With oppression and servitude? France contented, with its constitution turned into a pasquinade! Germany contented, with being turned into a fold of sheep, pent up to be shorn by some thirty petty tyrants! Switzerland contented, with the threatening ambition of encroaching despots! Italy contented, with the King of Naples, or with the priestly government of Rome, the worst of human inventions! Austria, Bohemia, Croatia, Dalmatia, contented with having been driven to butchery, and after having been deceived, with having been plundered, oppressed, and laughed at as fools! Poland contented with being murdered! Hungary, my poor Hungary, contented with being more than murdered—buried alive!—for it *is* alive! What I feel is but a weak pulsation of that feeling which pervades the breasts of the people of my country. Prussia contented with slavery! Vienna contented! Lombardy, Pesth, Milan, Venice, Brescia, Ragusa, Prague contented! Contented with having been bombarded, burned, plundered, sacked, and their populations butchered! Half of the European continent contented—with the scaffold, with the hangman, with the prison, with having no political rights at all; but having to pay innumerable millions for the highly-beneficial purpose of being kept in a state of serfdom! That is the condition of the continent of Europe; and is it not ridiculous and absurd in men to prate about individuals disturbing the peace and tranquillity of Europe?

These are truths, which every man feels, most impressively stated. They come home to the judgment of all, and plainly show us that the secret of his great power is a vivid appreciation of the prevalent feelings of all men, and finding expression for them in their own language.

One or two other specimens of his great mastery over human feelings we will here present to our readers, to convince them that Kossuth is one of the greatest orators that has ever appeared in the world. Describing the conduct of the Hungarian Diet, wherein he laid before it the alternative of either surrendering their liberties or of arming against Austria, he said:—

“Reluctant to present the neck of the realm to the deadly stroke which aimed at its very life, and anxious to bear up against the horrors of fate, and manfully to fight the battle of legitimate defence, scarcely had I spoken the word—scarcely had I added that the defence would require 200,000 men, and 80,000,000 of florins, when the spirit of freedom moved through the hall, and nearly 400 representatives rose as one man, and, lifting their right arms towards God, solemnly said, ‘We grant it—freedom or death!’ [The solemnity of gesture and voice with which Kossuth uttered these words, says the reporter, produced a powerful effect on the assembly.] Thus they spoke, and there they stood in calm and silent majesty, awaiting what further word might fall from my lips. And for myself: it was my duty to speak, but the grandeur of the moment and the rushing waves of sentiment benumbed my tongue. A burning tear fell from my eyes, a sigh of adoration to the Almighty Lord fluttered on my lips; and, bowing low before the majesty of my people, as I bow now before you, gentlemen, I left the tribunal silently, speechless, mute. [Kossuth here paused for a few moments, overpowered by his emotion,—and for this remark, too, we are