Memories of my exile

Kossuth Lajos
MEMORIES OF MY EXILE.
MEMORIES
OF MY EXILE.

BY

(LOUIS) KOSUTH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL HUNGARIAN,

BY FERENCZ JAUSZ.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1880.
PREFACE.

An indescribable rush of feeling overwhelmed me, when the surrender at Világos rendered me homeless.

No words can adequately express my feelings.

Before I stepped across the frontier I lay down on the soil of my native land; I pressed upon it a sobbing kiss of filial love:—I took a handful of earth; one step, and I was like the hull of a wrecked ship, thrown up by the storm on a desert shore.* A Turkish staff officer greeted me courteously in the name of "Allah." He led me to a place which he had kindly caused to be prepared for me to rest for the night under God's free heaven, and—asked for my sword with downcast eyes, as if ashamed that a Turk should disarm a Hungarian.

I unbuckled it and gave it to him without uttering a word; my eyes filled with tears, and he, wishing me sound rest, left me alone with my sorrow.

Rest to the homeless!

Could Adam rest when the gates of the Garden of

* Shortly afterwards a farewell address to the Hungarian nation in my name went the round of the European press. It was a fabrication. I wrote neither that nor any other.
Eden were closed behind him—behind him, who was driven out because he had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

I too had eaten of that fruit, and I too knew good and evil: I had raised my hand for the defence of the good against the evil. Evil was victorious and I was driven from my home, my Eden.

There I stood in silent meditation on the bank—but no longer the Hungarian bank—of the Danube, the waves of which were mingled with the tears of the Hungarian nation—and which not far from me grumbled and roared through the rocky pass of the Iron Gates, as if protesting against an undeserved fate.

I listened to this roaring, in rude harmony with the storm in my heart; and as I contemplated the annihilation of patriotic hopes so undeservedly extinguished, tears of indescribable grief unconsciously showered down my cheeks.

Those tears contained every grief that can afflict the patriotic heart, every grief but one! Hopelessness there was none; no despair for the future of my country.

It appeared to me—in the first feverish attack of pain—as if a ray of hope were coming from the glimmering light of the stars, penetrating through the veil of my tears—hope that though my nation would suffer terribly, it would not perish.

It was only one of those whispers which, in the heat of emotion, rush through the heart without passing through the reflecting brain, like the balm poured into the souls of sufferers by the God of mercy lest they should become insane through grief.

Later on, the Turks magnanimously defended my life,
and the lives of my homeless compatriots. They defended them, not without danger to themselves. The two neighbouring Powers, flushed with victory, threatened them with war if they refused to give us up. And when the situation assumed such a threatening aspect that the counsellors of the Sultan thought they could no longer avoid our extradition unless the fugitives embraced the Turkish faith, and thus became Turkish subjects, the Sultan, Abdul Medjid, rose from his seat in the Divan, and, raising his hands to heaven, used these words solemnly—"Allah is powerful. I trust in his protection. But, if I must perish, may I perish with honour. I will not bring upon my name the disgrace of violating the rights of hospitality, by surrendering to the vengeance of their enemies the unfortunates who have sought my protection. It is my determination that, having sought it, they shall also obtain it. Come what may, I will not surrender them. This is my determination, and thus shall it be. Consider the means of defence."

He did not surrender us, and no war resulted, but we were detained as prisoners in distant Asia, in obedience to the dictates of European diplomacy.

And there, in the distant solitude, we pondered the past, present, and future of our country, and I examined in my mind's eye the origin, character, and course of our struggle for liberty, and the causes which rendered a collapse possible. The more I considered the situation, and the more I examined the historical and psychological elements of our nation's vitality, the more was I confirmed in my conviction that the faith and hope which flooded my soul in the first rush of grief at my