HUNGARY, FROM 1848 TO 1860

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Hungary, from 1848 to 1860 by Bartholomew de Szemere

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BY

BARTHOLOMEW DE SZEMERE,

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FIRST LETTER.

You are undoubtedly acquainted with the significant expression of M. de Gortschakoff, after the war in the Crimea: "La Russie se recueille." No words can be more applicable to the attitude which Hungary assumed ten years since, and persists in keeping. She has not since given, to all appearance, the least sign of her vitality and strength. Can she be dead? By no means. Why then was she alone silent while the Roumans and the Italians made heaven and earth resound with their cries? It was perhaps a mistake on her part; but, on the other hand, it may be suggested that she was

unwilling to embroil questions, already most embarrassing, by raising new ones; for every people must wait its turn, and besides, she is right in expecting less from the support of foreigners than from her own vital force.

I will tell you, sir, what Hungary has been doing during these last ten years. She has been collecting her scattered thoughts, observing the progress of events, waiting till the new policy, raised on the ruins of the principles of 1848, should show itself clearly and distinctly, with all its logical consequences and in all its logical bearings.

At this present moment, the tree of the new doctrine is in full blossom; it is beginning to bear abundance of expected fruit. Princes, erewhile closely leagued against imaginary dangers, are now attacking each other in turns. The allies of yesterday become the enemies of to-morrow. Public opinion is getting bewildered, seeing that, in politics, the beaten track of secular traditions is everywhere foreaken. That is the sign of a new epoch. Within ten years

everything has changed in Europe like a fairy The Czar Nicholas, the saviour of scene. Austria and oppressor of Hungary, he who in 1849 thought himself master of the destinies of Europe, suddenly fell, expiating by his death the fault committed when, by his intervention in Hungary, he abandoned the only true Russian policy. His heir, among the princes of Europe, is Napoleon III., at the head of France, strongly concentrated. But here there is a distinction to be made, which is, that Napoleon III. has at the same time raised the flag of 1848, on which were inscribed the two sacred words,-independence and nationality. Immortal glory to him if he continues faithful to that flag! On that condition he will be all powerful in Europe. The Danubian principalities bear witness in his favour. At all events, the people, simple in their faith, have everywhere eagerly hailed those magic words, and if valleys and mountains have for a moment ceased to echo them, they are too fondly cherished in many hearts to be ever forgotten.