

COUNT ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI:

CREDIT

OR

THE BASICS OF HAPPINESS

Compiled by

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István Széchenyi by Miklós Barabás

Intellectual legacy of Count István Széchenyi

September 21, 1791 – April 8, 1860



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ABOUT SZÉCHENYI'S OEUVRE

The Széchenyi family played an important role in Hungary's history from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Its members included high-ranking ecclesiastical persons and officers, politicians, landowners, diplomats, as well as famous hunters and travellers. Nobility had been bestowed upon their ancestors in acknowledgement of their bravery in protecting Hungary's frontiers from the Ottoman army; they gained a count's title in 1697. The Széchenyi family's wealth was considerable.



Count *Ferenc Széchenyi*

István Széchenyi's father, Count Ferenc Széchenyi of Sárvár-Felsővidék (Fertőszéplak, 28 April 1754 – Vienna, 13 December 1820), was Lord Lieutenant of Somogy county, Royal Chief Chamberlain, Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and an outstanding figure of his age. As an enlightened politician and nobleman, he served in high offices next to Hungary's kings. As the pinnacle of his patronage of sciences, he donated his invaluable collection of books, images, maps, coats of arms, stamps, certificates and coins to the nation in 1802, thus laying the foundations of Hungary's museums and libraries. István's mother was Countess Julianna Festetics

His siblings: Lajos, 1781; Franciska, 1783; Zsófia, 1788; Pál, 1789.



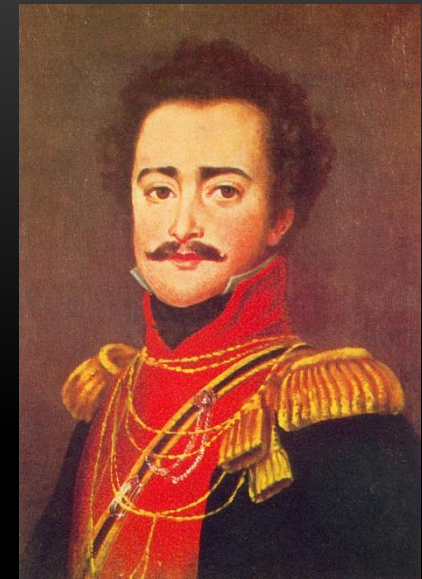
The Széchenyi family with its tutors

István was born on 21 September 1791 in Vienna, as the family's youngest child. He died on 8 April 1860 in Döbling. István Széchenyi spelled his name differently than the rest of his family, with only one "é". That is why Hungary's largest book collection, which had been founded by his father, is named the National Széchenyi Library, while the Danube bridge connecting Buda and Pest, which István built, is the Széchenyi Chain Bridge.

The Széchenyi family

He was not yet 18 years old when he joined an uprising by noblemen against Napoleon. As a soldier, he took advantage of his strategic skills, boasting outstanding martial performance in the battle near Győr in 1809, and also in the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813. Still, his military career was stuck at a captain's rank because his superiors considered his attitude risky.

His experiences are described in a diary written from 1814 on.



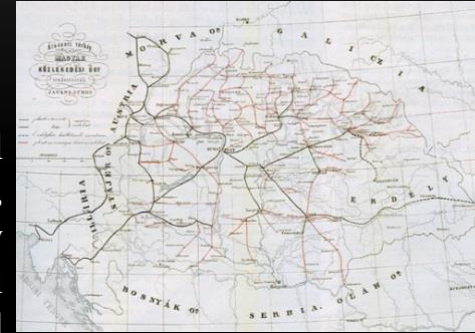
From the following year, he travelled all over Europe; his youth was characterised by journeys and excruciating, passionate love affairs. He also harboured a writer's ambitions; the unfinished novels written in his diary are rich with imagination, a romantic style, and a biting sense of humour. Writing was an essential part of Széchenyi. He prepared notes, wrote books, and published newspaper articles about his thoughts and experiences. He corresponded with European intelligentsia in five languages about subjects of philosophy, literature, economy and technology, including theoretical and practical aspects. He was a major thinker of his time; but in view of his markedly practical achievements, he is not deemed to have been a utilitarian philosopher. His ideas made a considerable impact on public life.

István Széchenyi's youth, work, and impact



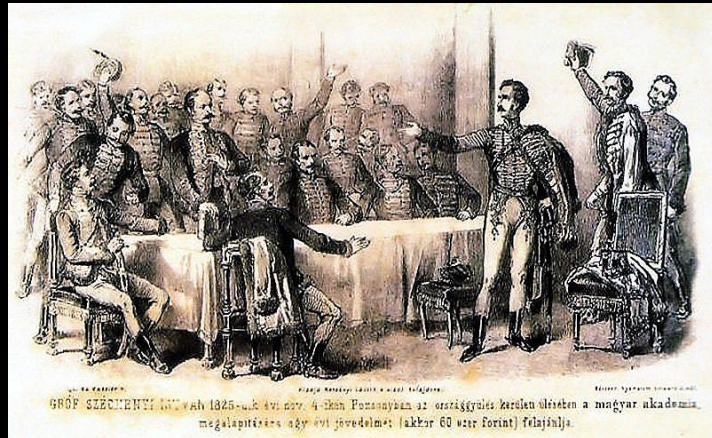
Heeding his father's advice (“*Take good care of your body, so that it should serve as a worthy abode for your soul and allow you to do good.*”) as an “apostle of physical exercise”, he swam, fenced, rode horses, shot rifles, ran, did gymnastics, hunted, sailed, walked, played whist (the predecessor to the card game bridge), played tennis, tried boxing, practiced ice-skating, paddled, and played chess. In fact, he established several sports in Hungary.

Ilona Ősz: Széchenyi playing tennis



Map: The traffic structure

Széchenyi's impact has lingered for centuries; for example, his transport concept is still noted. His oeuvre is fantastically diverse thanks to his wide-ranging interest in economics, philosophy, law, technology, literature, and politics. He read both classical and contemporary literature by Shakespeare, Byron, Schiller, Alfieri and Madame de Staël in the original languages, and acquainted himself with the works and philosophies of Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin. He was also impressed by Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism.



Establishment of the Academy of Sciences

Széchenyi worked to promote Hungary's development so that the following generations should “stand on his shoulders and see farther”. He was made famous by a widely reported pledge to establish a Scientific Society (i.e. the Academy of Sciences), made at the National Assembly of 1825 in what is now Bratislava. (He offered to donate one year's income of all his estates for the creation of an institution dedicated to the development of the Hungarian language.) As his much-desired military promotion failed, the “perennial captain” quit the Emperor's army in April 1826 without a rank, and turned his attention to Hungary's public life, such as the establishment of the Scientific Society, the organisation of horse racing, or setting up casinos akin to Britain's.

István Széchenyi's youth, work, and impact

Travelling all over the world, he interviewed scientists and experts, insisting on first-hand knowledge. He consulted engineers, machine operators, horse breeders, managers of mental institutions, and everybody whose activity aroused his interest. According to a diary entry from December 13, 1815: “I think, after all, that there are only three things a man must learn in England, while the rest is nothing: the constitution, machines, and horse breeding”.



A Széchenyi-lánchíd éjjel

It was primarily his experiences of England that inspired him to improve on his country's backward state. Many considered him an Anglomaniac. But he also knew conditions in Hungary, and eagerly filled his mind with advanced foreign examples. He drew upon the experience of the best experts of his age, such as English bridge engineer William Tierney Clark, bridge builder Adam Clark, Pál Vásárhelyi (regulator of the river Tisza), water engineer József Beszédes, transport engineer Lajos Kovács, or statistician Elek Fényes. His writings and proposals influenced public opinion and decision-makers, for example banker György Sina, Palpatine Joseph, Serb Monarch Obrenovits, etc.

Széchenyi's oeuvre is remarkably vast: 26 books, several diaries, up to 3,000 letters, 121 newspaper articles, and 39 speech transcripts. But the number of publications about him and his works is even higher. His books and articles were written in a coldly calculated style; most of them could now be called feasibility studies. In contrast, his evening diary entries are frank and deep psychological pieces, which are often depressing due to self-accusation, suicidal thoughts, and a sensation of illness. This duality presents a rare opportunity to Széchenyi's researchers. His disputes with Lajos Kossuth, his political adversary, are also well-documented; the two intellectual giants advocated very different roads towards their country's prosperity.

Several times, Széchenyi refers to self-knowledge as a source of happiness in his books, including *Credit*. He almost orders his readers to **know themselves**.

Széchenyi also emphasises the need to make good decisions even in the smallest matters. This is supported by examining causality, and by self-knowledge.

Széchenyi's primary masterpiece is not only about economics and law. Its readers in the 21st century care less about the legal and economic aspects of the author's era than about Széchenyi's logic in general, the principles, the methods, as well as the author's complex approach to various problems.

"*Credit*" remains a remarkably practical and timely work, one that lifts the reader's spirit. Széchenyi's writings and organisational work served as veritable engines of Hungary's development in what we call the country's "reform era". "*Credit*" was simultaneously condemned and lauded after its publication.



Bridge toll

Széchenyi's practical achievements lent credibility to his political essays. For example, he fought out the enactment of the construction of a bridge to connect Buda and Pest (Act XXVI of 1836). He also made everybody who crossed the bridge pay toll, thus delivering a blow to the long-standing tax-exemption granted to noblemen.

THE FOLLOWING OPINIONS MAY PROVIDE AN INSIGHT INTO SZÉCHENYI'S CHARACTER:

• **Crescencia Seilern**, his love and later wife accuses him of five faults: „You are slightly vane, somewhat too ambitious, a bit impertinent, slightly sarcastic, and a bit false.”

• **Lajos Kossuth**, his political adversary: „His love for his country is unspeakable. [...]. He has put his finger on the pulse of our times, and understood its beat. That is exactly why I consider him to be the greatest Hungarian; because I know no other man in our history whose epochal steps were taken neither too soon nor too late. One who acts prematurely stands isolated, with no lasting impact following his lonely steps. A man who acts late lights a candle in broad daylight; we can be grateful if his actions are not harmful but only useless. Count Széchenyi was hit by the powerful needs of his time in the right moment. He became the language of his era, expressing the thoughts of the best of his nation. And therein lies the secret of his impact.”

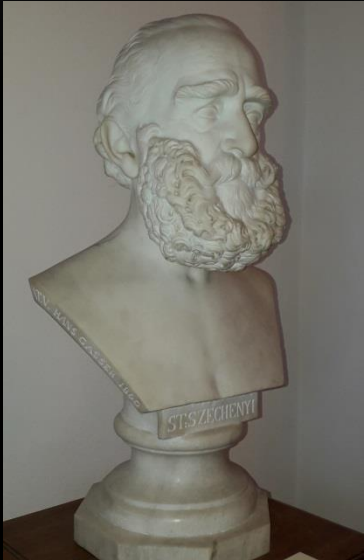
• **Gyula Illyés**, writer and poet: „It is Széchenyi who shocked me most. [...] Whenever I go back to Széchenyi's work, I am hit as if I accidentally touched the sensitive alarm button of a clock in my sleep. Where am I, and what is my job there? This question is the reason for my alarm.”

• **Antal Zichy**, biographer: „Széchenyi as a speaker could in fact fascinate his audience. We cried and laughed with him; his ideas were as bright as lightning; the uniqueness of his expressions always surprised me, whether they were uttered in full-blooded Hungarian or in a more alien style akin to German or English. But most of all, it was his congeniality and honesty that charmed me.”



Seilern - Aspang Crescencia

Széchenyi considered Hungary's progress within the Habsburg empire possible, but this opinion increasingly isolated him from the nationalistic generation of the reform era. As he wrote to his secretary on 17 March 1848: „My policies were safe but slow. Kossuth wagered it all and has, at least so far, gained more for the country than my policies could have achieved in 20 years.” He decided to support the anti-Habsburg revolution sparked in March 1848, and was minister for public works and transportation in Lajos Batthyány's government. He assumed plenty of responsibilities.



*Hans Anton Gasser: Széchenyi
(his most authentic image)*

After Austria's emperor had been dethroned in 1849, sharp opposition between the Habsburgs and Hungary ensued. Széchenyi blamed himself for the adversities, developed mental symptoms, and was taken to a sanatorium in Döbling, close to Vienna. He lived in a state of stupor for several years during the Habsburg absolutism following the failure of the revolution. After 4-5 years, he attempted to take his fate into his own hands: taking a sheet of paper, he started to write under the title SELF-KNOWLEDGE. He set aside the first 237 pages but continued to write daily, analysing his country's politics, and sharply criticising its minister and even the emperor (The Great Hungarian Satire).

Alexander von Bach, Interior Minister of the Habsburg Empire after the revolution, wrote an anonymous pamphlet (“Retrospect”) intended for foreign readers in 1857, insisting on the benefits of his government. Széchenyi replied with his own anonymous pamphlet titled “A Look at the Anonymous Retrospect” (London, 1859), an essence of The Great Hungarian Satire, in which he exposed and ridiculed the Austrian minister.

The empire's secret police launched an investigation, arrived at Széchenyi as the potential author, and ordered to search his residence in Döbling. Széchenyi arrived at a crossroads: either he would be taken into a mental institution, or he would be sentenced for high treason, and all his wealth would be confiscated. As he wrote in his last diary entry: “I cannot save myself.”

Széchenyi's character

LAUDATION OF SZÉCHENYI'S WORK

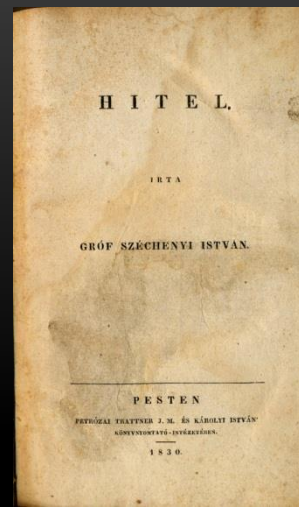
- Count István Széchenyi's immense and unrivalled oeuvre was outstanding in his own age and remains a truly valuable source for posterity.
- His active patriotism serves as an example to all Hungarians. He has earned the title of the truest and greatest Hungarian. Hungarians stand undivided in their universal respect for Széchenyi. Those who know his work and have been touched by his thoughts consider themselves lucky, and Széchenyi's mentality transcends whatever they do.
- Count István Széchenyi's outstanding and unique oeuvre represents a peak performance of Hungarian people. Both within and outside the country, his work is regarded as a major achievement and value of our nation; it contributes to the formation and fortification of the patriotism and national affiliation of new generations.
- He corresponded with European intelligentsia in five languages about subjects of philosophy, literature, economy and technology, including theoretical and practical aspects. He was a major thinker of his time; but in view of his markedly practical achievements, he is not deemed to have been a utilitarian philosopher.
- Throughout his life, he considered himself a Hungarian who worked to advance his country, so that next generations could "stand on his shoulders and see farther".

ABOUT "CREDIT"

Motto

"THE STRONG RESIST, THE WEAK DESPAIR"

Running a farm requires money, and usually credit. Two players are involved in that: the landowner and the capitalist. Both often lost in the process back then. Decade-long lawsuits were conducted about land ownership due to entailment, i.e. a law that prohibited the alienation of land which was deemed to have been placed out to noble families by its owner, the Holy Crown. Meanwhile, landowners heedlessly frittered away the borrowed money instead of investing it in their estates, so they could not serve their debts. Consequently, lenders assumed high risks, and charged 20, 50 or even 100 per cent of interest; but they often did not get their principal back, let alone the interest. István Széchenyi sensed, recognised and described the limitations of his times. He started to write *Credit* with the intention to create all the happiness he could (as Jeremy Bentham had put it), focusing on the basics of happiness. Later, when he expanded the topic, he chose the word “**credit**” as the title, emphasising its dual meaning.



Published in 1830, the book titled “Credit” turned out to be the most influential piece of Hungary’s political literature. In this hugely important work of self-knowledge, social policies and economics, Széchenyi pointed out why Hungarian landowners were uncreditworthy. He proposed to do away with entailment, liberate the handling of private property, and reform lending. He addressed land-owning noblemen, asking them to understand the call of their times and spearhead the capitalisation of noble families’ lands for the sake of their own prosperity (if for no other reason). Széchenyi believed that a revolution could be avoided through reforms. Large landowners did not take kindly to the criticism heaped on them in *Credit*, but the book was eagerly read by the landed gentry, civic intellectuals, writers, and university students.

The program of Hungary’s reform era

THE PROGRAM OF HUNGARY'S REFORM ERA

As the oeuvre that defined the policies of Hungary's reform age (1825-1848), the significance of "Credit" is immense. The book stirred up a storm; three editions were printed in Hungarian and another three in German in the first year of its publication. Széchenyi's messages were well-received by society, and they have been referred to in many literary works. Many of his proposals were enacted in subsequent decades.

"Credit" was published again and again, about once in each generation's lifetime. Count István Széchenyi remains the most often-quoted author in Hungary's politics and public life. His intellectual legacy, and specifically "Credit", is a national treasure (Hungaricum).



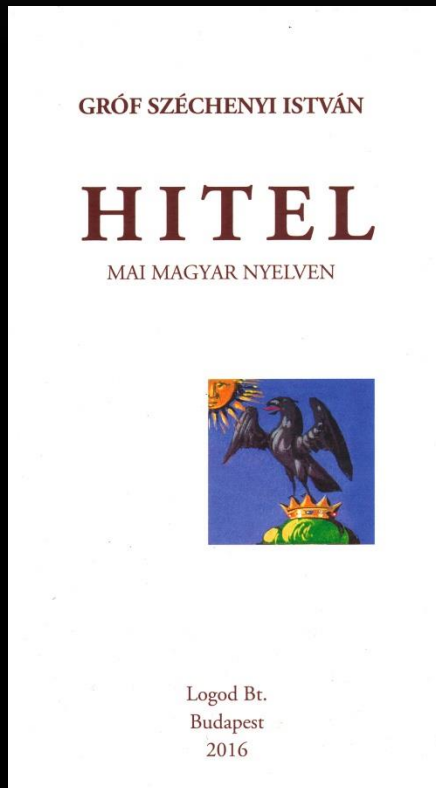
THE WRITING OF “CREDIT”

Three facts should be highlighted:

- In 1825, Széchenyi entered into an “alliance of merit” with two other high noblemen, Miklós Wesselényi and Mihály Esterházy, in order to “help my compatriots, as well as their children and grandchildren, to as much luck and bliss as our abilities allow.”
- Széchenyi wanted to make an impression on “his angel”, a married woman for whom he felt a hopeless, platonic love; hence the dedication of his book to the kind-hearted ladies of his homeland.
- Széchenyi’s credit application was rejected by a Viennese banking house in 1828. This inspired him to analyse the reasons and review the underlying context.

The writing of “Credit”

“Credit” took Hungary’s public life by storm in 1830. However, its language has become obsolete over time and is now hard to understand, especially because few laymen are still familiar with the economic and social terms and issues of Széchenyi’s age. Still, the foundations on which his vision of recovery and prosperity is based are still valid today.



In terms of linguistic formulation, “Credit” is Széchenyi’s most complicated work. Due to the above-mentioned language barriers, the book could not have been given to our children and grandchildren as “compulsory reading”. So the Széchenyi Foundation established a team to transcribe “Credit” into contemporary Hungarian. In addition, explanatory footnotes were added.

This transcription did not change the book’s contents, and Széchenyi’s style was also preserved. But the resulting text is more fluent, and the author’s ideas are easier to read and digest. The transcript opened the possibility of translation into foreign languages.

Transcript into modern Hungarian

“CREDIT” STARTS WITH AN ENCHANTING DEDICATION

“ TO THE KIND-HEARTED LADIES OF OUR HOMELAND

- I dedicate this humble work of mine to you, worthiest daughters of my homeland, as a sign of my respect and affection. Kindly take it under your patronage, although it is said to suit men better. I shall talk about Credit and what is derived from it: honour, the sanctity of the given word, and straightforward actions. Thus the topic cannot be stranger to you than to us, since so many noble and beautiful things in which mankind can take pride find their origin in you.
- You carry tiny babies in your arms and bring them up to be good citizens. It is your noble regard that grants a man his spirit and courage. And if his days in the affairs of the homeland are close to their end, you place a wreath on his head. You are the guardian angels of the nation and civic virtue. These would never emerge or would simply wither without you because you lend charm and life to everything. You raise the common man up and elevate mortals to immortality.
My compliments and gratitude to you!“

CONTENTS

When analysing the situation of his country, Széchenyi planned to sharply criticise the farm management practices of noblemen. He was concerned that he would not be able to persuade his peers to take the required reform measures. So his description of erroneous management practices is preceded by general ideas of ethical nature (the basics of happiness), so that his subsequent proposals should sound more obvious.

Széchenyi placed the two meanings of the word “credit” in the centre of the problems of his times. These were deemed crucial and closely connected.

In a narrow sense, the word referred to the essential legal relationship between a creditor (the capitalist) and the debtor (the landowner). And in a wider sense, the author discussed citizens’ morals, and their faith in each other.

In Hungarian, the word for “credit” is derived from “faith” [hit (faith) → hitel (credit)]. This connection is less obvious in other languages, and needs explanation.

As Széchenyi explains,

- Christian faith is characterised by unlimited trust; however,
- credit in social relations should be based on distrust.

- The fundamental right to freely dispose over one's property is a precondition. Private property could serve as collateral for borrowing, but noblemen's estates were not suitable for that purpose.
- Széchenyi urges the legal regulation of bills of exchange as the basis for a modern financial system.
- He outlines the current situation, proposes reforms, and goes on to analyse arguments and counter-arguments of economic and political nature.
- (Széchenyi proceeds in line with the phases of current organisational theories, describing, analysing and evaluating the as-is situation, seeking solutions, and making proposals.)
- He wants to achieve reforms and change the attitudes of his social class, but he is also clearly afraid of rejection, hence his varied and convincing argumentation.

DEDICATION, STRUCTURE, CONTENTS

“Credit” is concentrically structured, with the main subject surrounded by disproportionately long introductory and concluding sections.

INTRODUCTION

- Recommendation / To the kind-hearted ladies of our Homeland
- To be noted
- Foreword
- Introduction
- A few remarks before the topic

DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN TOPIC

- Hungarian landowners are poorer than they should be in view of the size of their estate
- Hungarians are not as well off as their circumstances would allow
- Today’s Hungarian landowner cannot improve his estate to its highest capacity
- Hungary has no trade
- What to do, and where to start?

CONCLUSION

- The natural ending
- Conclusion
- Epilogue

STARTING POINT

- **“Know thyself!** – Self-knowledge alone, without understanding its context, is of limited use. Wisdom requires that we know our physical and intellectual traits, and are as familiar as possible with our circumstances: our nationality, wealth, country, compatriots, relations (parents, relatives, children) and our chosen ones, i.e. our love, friends, and acquaintances.
- Wisdom also requires that the main duty and intent of our life should be to come to know these perfectly; and then, knowing and understanding ourselves and our relations in all situations, we should be able to act as we see fit, if I may put it this way.”

FURTHER BASICS

- Work done in unity is more fruitful
- No day without an agenda!
- Let the other party be heard!
- Order is the soul of everything

A WISE PATRIOT INVESTIGATES THE ROOTS OF DEFICIENCIES!

“A wise patriot is one who wishes for what is achievable. He knows well that, because of the weakness of humankind, we can be neither totally happy nor desperately unhappy. So he always chooses the golden mean. He lives with a trouble-free spirit, and sorrowful boredom does not bother him. He makes his efforts for the common good and does not complain incessantly but addresses the problems, looking for their roots, and tries to resolve them if that is possible; if it is not, he bears it nobly, and does not utter cowardly complaints. He searches for mistakes in himself and not in others, because he can command himself but not others. If nobody else does what should be done, he still fulfils his duties like a real hero, standing erect even if everyone else flees. How much good could be done in this country if only the *bona fide* common interest was the real goal instead of sumptuousness, vainglory, and a thirst for fame!”

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS IN EVEN THE SMALLEST MATTERS!

“Only the weak loves himself; the strong carries entire nations in his heart!

Nothing can be sweeter or more promising: as the analyst gets closer to the foundations of the building and realises that, just as a seed sprouting a large tree breaks through barriers and fog, great results always stem from something that seems to be unimportant.“

IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

“How many people rejoice if they find a hidden word! How many to whom creating or solving riddles and puzzles is a chief and preferred activity, even though it is just a vain and useless intellectual pursuit and a waste of time! Wouldn't we find a better pastime if, instead of mere words, we wanted to discover hidden and noteworthy causes and reasons?

I myself believe that it is more interesting – regardless of its usefulness – to investigate why, for example, France is so weak in trade despite its picturesque and advantageous geographical position; or why Spain has lost its wealth despite all its treasure and gold.

Why does the population of some countries prosper in agriculture, though their soil is poor?”

A GOOD PATRIOT CAN ALSO BE A GOOD MANAGER OF HIS ESTATES!

“It is most beautiful and fortunate that we can strive for the public good while also caring for ourselves and our loved ones. Both of these obligations must be carried out concurrently for us to become useful and happy citizens.

A good patriot can and must be a good master of his assets, because only a thrifty and orderly man can be generally useful instead of just loudly patriotic.

Work for the community fills our souls with a sweet silence of self-esteem which makes conducting our own business feel easy, and also makes all other activities fun.

How satisfying it is to rest after work well done! Who has not experienced that? Especially after work that elevates the soul in addition to tiring the body!”

REALLY, WHAT IS CLEVER?

”When it comes to the sphere of a man’s labours, or, to put it plainly, when it comes to the time it takes to do something from start to fruition, a man is wont to allow very little time indeed. I cannot express this any more clearly, which is a pity, for it is important indeed. So let us examine this matter further; dear reader, take heed.”

”And if you wished to explain what it is to be clever, you could gather any ten people and never find three who agree on the meaning. ‘How clever Mr U is to make so much money.’ ‘H is wonderfully clever, he knows ten thousand poems by heart.’ ‘There is no doubt that O is clever – his house is in good order, he has a beautiful wife and children, and he lives comfortably.’ ‘How clever, he speaks twenty-four languages.’ Still, what is it to be clever? Because the intellectual talents of such people are not alike; indeed, they are very different. The one with the great memory may not have any money to spare; the rich one may not even know one poem by heart; the happy husband may know one or two languages, but speak haltingly in one or two others; and the linguist may have no-one to love him and adorn his path in life with flowers.

So what is it to be clever? In my judgement, no better meaning can be devised, at least for those who want to understand, than the following: ‘**This man is clever for a few hours, that one for days, another for five, ten or twenty years, some for a whole life, and some for centuries or even eternity.**’

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: THE GAIN, WELFARE AND HAPPINESS OF THE MAJORITY!

“No rational mind will sacrifice greater and lasting gain for momentary or short-term profit, even though the latter is instantly available. Instead, we endure current pressure for a while, in exchange for an expected long-term benefit.[...]

As the lifespan of a nation is much longer than a person’s life, a rational government allows more time for its tasks to be accomplished. It avoids assumptions as far as possible. It focuses on the benefit, welfare, and happiness of the majority, and considers all ancillary gain, glory, and requirement to be secondary...”

SZÉCHENYI'S ADVICE

“Let us strengthen and spread those traits every way we can, because they will serve as our guardian angels. Let us hone our intellects, disseminate our experiences, find scientists, converse with clever men, expand our libraries, and reward those who work for progress in science and the arts. Let us sit in coaches and board ships to see the world. Let us elevate our homeland to the ranks of glorious nations!”



SZÉCHENY'S CONFESSION

“It should be eminently clear from this writing that I detest extremism and exaggeration, and that I am a friend of reconciliation. I would like to unify the various factions and find a middle ground, a way towards what really can be good, rather than the imagined good that may only exist in otherworldly castles in the air. I admit that I do not look back as often as many of my compatriots; I prefer to look ahead.

I care less about knowing what we used to be than about examining what we can and will become over time. The past is beyond our control, but we can shape our future. So let us not bother with futile commemorations; instead, let prosperity dawn over our dear motherland, to be born from resolute patriotism and faithful unity. Many think that Hungary *used to be* – I prefer to believe that she *will be!*“

SUMMARY



Hungaricum statue

“Credit” shocked Hungary’s public life in 1830. The book focused on the dual meaning of the Hungarian word for “**credit**”, which is also related to the concept of “**faith**” or “believing one another”. Széchenyi aimed to lay down the foundations of happiness and legally regulate lending.

“Credit” is meaningful to the people of the 21st century as well. Contrary to popular belief, it is not only a book on economics; rather, it is about being effective and making one’s mark. “Credit” is recommended to all people who want to improve their lives.

The original style of the book is now rather obsolete, i.e. it is hard to read and understand. For that reason, it was time to re-write it in contemporary Hungarian.

- In 2014, Count István Széchenyi’s intellectual legacy was officially added to the list of national treasures (“Hungaricum”).

We intend to help future generations understand the messages of “Credit”, thus helping to grow the fruits of Széchenyi’s thoughts. It is also important to publish “Credit”, Count István Széchenyi’s masterpiece, in foreign languages.

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDITIONS OF “CREDIT”

- Three Hungarian and three German editions of “Credit” came out in the initial year of publication. Széchenyi’s messages were embraced by society and referred to in several literary works. Many of his proposals were incorporated in laws in subsequent years.
- The Széchenyi Foundation set out to publish “Credit” in foreign languages because we realised how much other nations had done to promote awareness of their great persons in the world. We, too, have compatriots to be proud of. Let us proudly present Széchenyi!
- The foreign-language edition is intended to allow second- or third-generation Hungarians living abroad (who can no longer understand archaic Hungarian literature but are interested in their roots) acquaint themselves with Hungary’s past through the eyes of the greatest Hungarian. This volume could prove invaluable to them.
- Another important goal is to provide Hungary’s representatives and interested foreigners with a volume that presents Hungarians and our key national values. “Credit” offers an insight into the personality of the “greatest Hungarian”, a great thinker, creator and utilitarian philosopher of the 19th century, whose thoughts and methods have remained remarkable and timely to this date.

Foreign-language editions of “Credit”, the English edition

A THE ENGLISH EDITION

On 21 September 2021, the 230th anniversary of the birth of Count István Széchenyi, the Széchenyi Foundation will salute the “greatest Hungarian” by publishing “Credit” in English.

This is the first English-language edition of the book; in fact, it may well be the first authentic foreign-language edition, in view of the fact that Széchenyi threatened to sue the translators of erroneous, “pirated” German editions published in 1830.

The English edition will be completed this summer. It is a question how the book should be distributed and promoted to readers in English-speaking countries.

We are seeking contacts with Hungarian nationals, as well as press and other organisations, in English-speaking parts of the world. Contributions to and ideas about this important issue are welcome.

Foreign-language editions of “Credit”, the English edition

We hope to make available “Credit” in English-speaking countries in 2021. Please help us ensure that interested readers have access to the English-language edition.

Send your ideas, proposals and any support offer to buday.miklos@logod.hu

In addition to negotiations with Hungarian institutions, the idea has been raised to seek printing presses, distributors and agents in English-speaking parts of the world.

Updates about the status of the project:

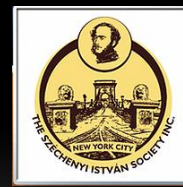
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The editor wholeheartedly recommends Count István Széchenyi's masterpiece, a volume abundant of ideas and literary value.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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