# A Letter by István Széchenyi to William Tierney Clark 

Edited by Béla Mázi and Gábor Tóth'

The English draft of Count István Széchenyi's (1791-1860) letter to William Tierney Clark (1783-1852), who designed the first permanent bridge over the Danube between Buda and Pest, is first published here.

The document is of interest for many reasons. It sheds light on a number of subjects that captivated Széchenyi's mind in the 1840s, including his main obsession, the construction of the Chain Bridge, technical issues related to operating the Joseph Rolling Mill, finding coal and iron ore for establishing ironworks, etc. As most of his efforts aimed at starting and implementing an industrial revolution in his native country, it was natural that the Count, whose proficiency in the English language had been found worthy of noting in his military records, was fascinated by the modernization of Britain. In addition to visiting the Isles in the preceding three decades, Széchenyi frequently exchanged letters in English with engineers, investors and inventors. Recipients of his letters include English physician and author of the two-volume work Hungary and Transylvania John Paget (1808-1892), Scottish engineer and Fellow of the Royal Society George Rennie (1791-1866), etc. English-speaking travellers took a similarly vivid interest in 19th-century Hungary. ${ }^{2}$

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The drafts and final versions of these letters can be found by the dozen in Hungarian and foreign archives and manuscript collections. ${ }^{3}$ Although their historical and literary value is obvious and has long been known, their linguistic quality has been rarely studied or even mentioned, owing mainly to the lack of a modern critical edition. As can be readily seen from the textual apparatus appended to the draft here published, Széchenyi's ability to express himself in English exceeded those of the average non-native English speaker. He carefully crafts his sentences and is at pains to rephrase them if needed to accurately communicate his thoughts. The grammatical and stylistic corrections made by his personal secretary Antal Tasner (1808-1861) are restricted to mistakes and mannerisms that easily slip into any text composed by a non-native user of a foreign language.

The text published here is based on the original manuscript preserved at the Department of Manuscripts \& Rare Books of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It spans four large folio pages ( $400 \times 260 \mathrm{~mm}$ ), each assigned in pencil the shelf mark K 193/176 and a Roman current number (in the upper righthand corner) by former keeper of the Széchenyi Collection, Kinga Körmendy. ${ }^{4}$ In addition to her hand, three hands can be distinguished. All words in ink are Széchenyi's own; grammatical and stylistic corrections in pencil are by Tasner. A third hand, belonging to literary historian and editor of Széchenyi's diaries Gyula Viszota (1871-1947) or historian Jenő Horváth (1881-1950), added in pencil the words "copied and translated" [lemásolva és fordítva] to the upper right-hand edge of fol. $1 r$, just above the shelf mark. No early 20th-century translation is known to us. ${ }^{5}$

The manuscript is transcribed in full and editorial intervention in the text has been kept to a bare minimum. Folio breaks are indicated in angle brackets, editorial [...] being used to designate illegible words. Tasner's corrections and Széchenyi's alterations to his own text have been merged in the present edition, as it can be safely assumed that the final version received by Clark contained a mixture of both. Széchenyi's idiosyncratic dots and dashes that intersperse his manuscripts have been omitted. No effort has been made to standardize the spelling and grammar, although the punctuation of the text was tacitly modified to provide the reader with a fairly readable text.

The textual apparatus is designed to help the reader examine the formation of the text. Words that appear underlined there refer to Széchenyi's notes in
$3 \square$ The printed catalogue of Széchenyi's literary bequest in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences lists about 100 letters written in English; cf. next note.
4 See her A Széchenyi-gyưjtemény [The Széchenyi Collection], Catalogi Collectionis Manuscriptorum Bibliothecæ Academiæ Scientiarum Hungaricæ, no. 9 Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, 1976.
5 An incomplete and occasionally defective modern Hungarian translation is available in Széchenyi pesti tervei [The Pest Projects of Széchenyi], ed. Vera Bácskai and Lajos Nagy, Magyar Levelestár. Budapest. Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1985, pp. 243-49 (document no. 109, trans. Iván Bába and Judit Vásárhelyi).
the left-hand margins that do not belong to the text proper; they served as aides memoires to the author about what he was to write. The editorial comments offer basic information about the places, persons and events mentioned in the course of the text; they are not intended to be exhaustive.
<fol. 1r> April 5th 1842

## Tierney Clark

## Dear Clark,

The abominable Magasins, thanks God, are rapidly vanishing. We enjoy of pleasure. Teasedale, etc., etc., are in very high spirits and I feel as if I had 10 years lay on my back! I come just this moment from the Old Archid. He lost his favorite Daughter, Princess Hermina, only a few weeks ago; she was a highly accomplished Lady, and his great favorite,
10 yet the old high mettled gentleman, after a fortnight of, I dare say, very keen pain, is all life and spirit again. I asked him about the time he would think fittest for laying the foundation stone of our Bridge; he thinks that the 20th of August, which is king Stephen's, the hungarian St. Patrick's, day would be the most adequate. He wished me to present you 15 his best compliments and, if you find the day proposed fit for the purpose, he will make his steps in order that our Souvereins, or at least the Archiduke Louis, should come down in the Souvereins's name to perform this noble act. You know best that we want regular six meetings and a couple of dozen letters to bang <fol. 1v> now and then a sparrow;

4 Magasins: the storehouses at Kirakodó tér ("Unloading Square"), today's Roosevelt Square at the Pest bridgehead of the Chain Bridge. Vessels transporting goods on the Danube were unloaded here.
5 windows: in the now demolished Ullmann House where Széchenyi rented an apartment in 1836; Clark: Scotsman Adam Clark (1811-1866), local construction supervisor of the Chain Bridge, designer of the Castle Hill Tunnel at the Buda bridgehead. Not related to the English engineer W. T. Clark.
6 Teasedale: James Teasdale, Adam Clark's assistant at the Chain Bridge.
8 Archid.: Archduke Joseph of Austria (1776-1847), Palatine of Hungary; Hermina: Archduchess Hermine Amalie Marie of Austria (1817-February 13, 1842).
16 Souvereins: Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria (1793-1875), King of Hungary until December 2, 1848, and his wife, Maria Anna of Savoy (1803-1884).
17 Louis: Archduke Louis (1784-1864), youngest son of Emperor Leopold II, only surviving brother of Emperor Francis I.
19 bang: either onomatopoeia for shoot or a slip of the pen for bag; a reference to the phrase: "using cannons to shoot sparrows".



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K 193/176, fol. Ir

37 progenitor: Széchenyi evidently meant progeny.
52 mill: named after Archduke Joseph, the Joseph Rolling Mill [Hungarian József Hengermalom] was built by the Steam Mill Company, which was founded by Széchenyi in 1839. It went into operation on September 15, 1841.



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K 193/176, fol. $1 v$
enough and they litterally will not suffer us to take it farther. I take it in serious consideration to have a second steam engine and three sets of grinding rolles so as to produce three times as much as we do now; now, I say, as we work only with two sets in the present moment but shall

80 There is an other thing I wanted to communicate to you long ago. Allow me to do it now in a few words. There is a land proprietor in the neighborhood of Pesth, who has got a very rich coal mine. He is willing to form a company. He will give the mine, an other, perhaps to a certain amount my humble person, shall come forward with the capital, a third
$67 M$ \& : Miller is mentioned in a previous letter of Széchenyi to Clark (March 19, 1842).

69 Fletscher \& Punchon: the Viennese firm that supplied steam engines to József Hengermalom.
$72 E \& C^{*}$ : unidentifiable company; Széchenyi is certainly not referring here to Count Hugo Philipp Karl of Eltz (1817-1848), lord of Vukovar in East Slavonia on the Danube, as suggested by the Hungarian translation.
81 land proprietor: noted sportsman Count Móric Sándor (1805-1878), also known as the "devil's horseman". According to the March 29, 1842, entry in Széchenyi's diary, the two men discussed the prospect of establishing an ironworks (Eisenhütte) on Sándor's landed property at Bajna, a small village about 28 miles to the northwest of Buda.

rowing club: the first meeting of the club, founded by Széchenyi in 1840, was held on April 8, 1841.
this), a capital boathouse just in the front of the Casino, close to our Bridge-yard wharf. There is no doubt they will find $<$ fol. $4 \mathrm{v}>$ pleasure in
125 it, but we must have every thing done properly. We want good paint. Now, if you were so kind as to send us out 2 hundred weight of patent green, under the direction of the Baron but addressed to A. Clark at Pesth, you would oblige us all very much indeed.
The second favour I ask is to get for me again one or two Bills. You had
130 the kindness to send me the London \& Birmingham Railway Bill. I should be most thankful if you could send me the Catholic Emancipation and the last Bill of Sir Robert Peel, respectively. I should make very good use of them. By the by, I almost forget to tell you that my Daughter, Caroline, marries a Mr Festetich, who was several times in England with C. A. Erdődy. He
135 is an accomplished gentleman of one of our first families, very good figure and a very handsome fortune. Has got a very good house here and a very comfortable country seat in the neighbourhood of the land proprietor. It is not declared yet but shall be in a few days. I should wish their marriage day to be fixed [...] about the 20 August in order that with
140 the foundation stone of the bridge the foundation stone of my getting grand papa might be laid at once, etc.
My Countess \& Caroline, Marie, Bela, all wish to be kindly remembered to you and hope you will be with us long time before the 20 of August.

123 boathouse: a wooden edifice built on the left of the Pest bridgehead of the future Chain Bridge; Casino: the National Club, a forum for political dialogue for the patriotic nobility. It was founded by Széchenyi in 1827.
127 Baron: Vienna-based Greek banker Baron Georgios Sinas (1783-1856), principal financier of the construction of the Chain Bridge.
130 London \& Birmingham Railway Bill: see Acts Relating to The London and Birmingham Railway (London: G. Eyre \& Spottiswoode, 1837).
131 Catholic Emancipation: the Roman Catholic Relief Act that granted almost full civil rights to Catholics in the United Kingdom in 1829.
132 Peel: conservative statesman Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), prime minister of the U.K. (1841-46). It is unclear which bill of his Széchenyi is referring to here.

133 Caroline: Széchenyi's stepdaughter, Countess Caroline Zichy (1820-1906).
134 Festetich: Count Dénes Festetits (1813-1891). The couple were married on August 8, 1842;. Erdődy: Count Sándor Lajos Erdődy (1802-1881), referred to as "A." or "Alex. Erdődy" in Széchenyi's diary (Sándor is Hungarian for Alexander). The Hungarian translation erroneously construes "A." to mean "Antal".
137-8 land proprietor: see comment to 81, above.
142 Countess: Széchenyi's wife, née Countess Crescence (Louise) Seilern-Aspang (1799-1875); Marie: Széchenyi's stepdaughter, née Countess Mária Zichy (1822-1881); Bela: Széchenyi's son, Count Béla Széchenyi (1837-1908).

## Textual apparatus

## Abbreviations and sigla



## 29

|  | 29-30 | as I think] add. SZ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 30 | come : get hold] corr. SZ; in possession] add. SZ; for ever] add. SZ |
|  | 32 | and unexpected] add. T |
|  | 33 | immediate] add. T; It would be equal] add. SZ; aequal : equal] corr. T |
|  | 34 | improve : improove] corr. T; all] add. T |
|  | 35-6 | then : than] corr. T |
|  | 36 | such a way : such wayl corr. SZ |
|  | 38 | been high minded] high del. SZ; some pretty high] add. SZ; pretty good high] good del. SZ |
|  | 38-9 | may rejoice in] rejoice del. SZ ; they have the pleasure in] have the pleasure add. SZ |
|  | 39 | on : in] corr. T |
|  | 40 | developement : developpement] corr. T; to see the starting point of its material growth] add. in marg. SZ; growth : groth] corr. T |
|  | 41 | all were to : all that had been] corr. T; go : going] corr. T; Revolve : Rewolve] corr. T |
|  | 42 | mühl] in marg. SZ ; m all that] m del. SZ |
|  | 43 | feel : felt] corr. SZ; tolerably : intolerably] corr. E; native : own] corr. T |
|  | 45 | useful : usefull corr. T |
|  | 46-7 | opposed the work with all their craft but] add. in marg. SZ; craft : kraft] corr. T |
|  | 47 | accept a handsome] add. SZ; accept : take] corr. T; handsome : handsum] corr. T |
|  | 48 | glad : happy] corr. SZ; stupid] stupide T |
|  | 49 | ridiculous : ridicolous] corr. T |
| $\bigcirc$ | 50 | jeopardy : yeopardy] corr. T; obstinate : stubborn] corr. T; should] add. T; again] add. SZ |
|  | 51 | their : the] corr. T; conception and] add. SZ |
|  | 53 | of sending] add. SZ; than : as] corr. T |
|  | 54 | by : of] corr. T |
|  | 55 | because] add. T; take] send T |
|  | 57 | three new Walzsysteme] new Walzsysteme del. T; sets : apparatuses] corr. T |
|  | 57-8 | sets of grinding rolles] add. T |
|  | 58 | Cilinder gangs] in marg. SZ; grinding rolles : grinding apparatuses] corr. T ; apparatuses : Systems] corr. SZ; three : 3] corr. SZ |
|  | 59 | in the present moment] add. SZ |
|  | 60 | months : month] corr. T; three. ?] ? add. in marg. T |
|  | 61 | this we shall find out in very short time] add. SZ; shall : will] corr. T; will be very soon discovered] del. SZ; do not : donot] corr. E; doubt : do] corr. SZ |
|  | 62 | comitee : comittee] corr. T ; committee] corr. E |
|  | 63 | in the course of next summer] add. SZ; course of next : course of the next] corr. T |
|  | 64 | etc., etc. : \& \& corr. E; uninterrupted] add. SZ |
|  | 65 | with : for] corr. SZ; moving : moowingl corr. E; be aft undoubtedly] aft del. SZ |
|  | 66 | Hurrah, Hurrah!] add. SZ; as after : as tol corr. SZ; according to : after] corr. T; tender] add. SZ |
|  | 67 | of $\left.\mathrm{M}^{\text {essrs }}\right]$ add. SZ ; me are so reasonable we] are so reasonable del. SZ; might could corr. T |

68 with every thing included] add. SZ
69 Fletscher : Fletcher] corr. E; Fletcher : F.] corr. T; Punchon : P.] corr. T; at Vienna] add. T; would : will] corr. T
70 in hopes : allmost certain] corr. SZ
71 perhaps] add. SZ; now] add. SZ
73 months : month] corr. T
76 one of the boilers : one of them] corr. T; etc., etc. : \& \&] corr. E
76-9 We shall try ... deposit in them] add. in marg. SZ
79 them : our boilers] corr. T
81 land amstetter] in marg. SZ; now] add. T; land] add. T
81-2 in the neighborhood] add. in marg. SZ
82 C. marries] in marg. SZ ; who has got : who is got] corr. T
83-4 to a certain amount my : in one part [...]] corr. SZ
84 shall come forward with] add. SZ
85 offer] add. SZ; with offer] with del. SZ; fourth : forth] corr. E; etc., etc., etc. : \& \& \& ] corr. E; should : would] corr. T
of] add. SZ; quality] add. SZ
87 gas : gaz] corr. T
89 if : except] corr. T; if : without] corr. T; was : is] corr. SZ; being not great] being del. SZ
90 consumption : consumtion] corr. E; fuel : coal] corr. SZ
90-1 in this country] add. SZ
91 extremely : very] corr. SZ; forests : forest] corr. E
92 greater] add. SZ; then : than] corr. T
93 ind introduce] ind del. SZ
94 gas : gaz] corr. T; would soon be] add. SZ
96 whereas : where as] corr. E
97 should : would] corr. T
98-9 which, of course, is the main point] add. SZ ; is the : is a] corr. SZ
99 main : mean] corr. SZ
100 as you know] add. SZ
101 etc. : \&] corr. E
102 and to : where they may] corr. SZ; at last] add. SZ; the locality conveyance] locality conveyance del. SZ
102-3 means of bringing : means to bring] corr. SZ
103 tolerably cheap] add. SZ; know : no] corr. SZ
104 a trial and] add. SZ; trial : tryal] corr. T
105 in order to : and] corr. SZ; ascertain the how] the how del. SZ
106 as I think] as del. SZ; shall : will] corr. T
107 ore too and] too del. T
108 really doubt : dont think] corr. SZ; really : realy] corr. E
109 advantageous : avantageous] corr. E; than good iron works] add. in marg. SZ; than : as] corr. T ; this also in : all this in] corr. T

## 31

In Memoriam István Széchenyi (1791-1860)

|  | 111 | most probably] add. SZ; lies and in] and del. SZ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 112 | admired togeather] togeather del. SZ; scenery so much times : so much so many times] corr. SZ |
|  | 113 | place : thing] corr. SZ; etc., etc. : \& \& corr. E; there : their] corr. SZ |
|  | 114 | of employing our time and our means with] $a d d$. SZ; we must continue] $a d d . \mathrm{SZ}$ |
|  | 114-5 | to establish a company and] add. in marg. SZ |
|  | 115 | adequate : proper] corr. SZ; etc., etc. : \& \& corr. E |
|  | 115-6 | etc., in order to advance our purposes to put the in order] in order to advance our purposes to put the del. SZ |
|  | 116 | to a conclusion and some results : to some results or to a conclusion] corr. SZ |
|  | 118 | I conclude : I shall conclude] corr. T; two favours yet : yet two favours] corr. SZ; I established : we established] corr. SZ |
|  | 119 | last year] add. in marg. SZ; and I think only] add. SZ |
|  | 120 | because : as] corr. T; got] add. T; for : to] corr. SZ |
|  | 121 | in the present : just] corr. SZ; moment] add. T |
|  | 122 | objection : thing] corr. T |
|  | 123 | just : just] corr. SZ; in the front of the : before the] corr. T; close to : angelehnt] corr. T ; to our : on the] corr. T; to : to to] corr. E |
|  | 124 | Bridge-yard] add. in marg. T; find : ha] corr. SZ |
|  | 125 | it : the j] corr. SZ |
|  | 126 | were : where] corr. T; hundred : cent] corr. T; hundred weight] add. T |
|  | 127 | direction : name] corr. T |
| $\bigcirc$ | 128 | us : m] corr. SZ |
|  | 129 | to get for me] add. SZ |
|  | 130 | London \& Birmingham : Lond. \& B.] corr. T |
|  | 131 | thankful : thankfull] corr. E |
|  | 131-2 | Catholic Emancipation and the last Bill of Sir Robert Peel, respectively : the ... or ... or both] corr. T |
|  | 132 | I should make very good use of them.] add. T |
|  | 133 | By the by : By the bye] corr. T; almost : allmost] corr. T; my Daughter : our] corr. T; marries : maries] corr. T |
|  | 135 | families : familys] corr. T |
|  | 136 | figure : figur] corr. T; a very handsome] add. SZ |
|  | 136-8 | Has got ... land proprietor.] add in marg. SZ |
|  | 137 | in the neighbourhood : very near from here \&] corr. T |
|  | 138 | proprietor : proprietar] corr. E; should : would] corr. T |
|  | 139 | about : abouts] corr. E; with] add. SZ |
|  | 140 | of : if] corr. SZ; bridge the : bridge should be t the] corr. SZ; getting : geting] corr. T |
|  | 141 | might : should] corr. T; etc. : \&] corr. E |
|  | 142 | wish : will] corr. SZ; kindly] add. T |
|  | 143 | long : a long] corr. T |


[^0]:    1 We wish to thank Diána Bakó and Béla Rozsondai, our colleagues in the Department of Manuscripts \& Rare Books of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, for their invaluable help in transcribing this document. We are also indebted to Kinga Körmendy and András Mázi, who provided us with important additional information.
    2 For a selection of their accounts, see 19th-Century Hungary in the Western Eye, ed. B. Mázi and G. Tóth in collaboration with Thomas Cooper, Hungarian Heritage, 9:1-2 (2008 [2009]).

