

The Project Gutenberg eBook, Dr. Dumany's Wife, by Mór Jókai, Translated  
by F. Steinitz

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with  
almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or  
re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included  
with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

Title: Dr. Dumany's Wife

Author: Mór Jókai

Release Date: June 28, 2006 [eBook #18708]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-646-US (US-ASCII)

\*\*\*START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DR. DUMANY'S WIFE\*\*\*

E-text prepared by Steven desJardins and Project Gutenberg Distributed  
Proofreaders

Works of Maurus Jokai  
Hungarian Edition

DR. DUMANY'S WIFE

Translated from the Hungarian by F. STEINITZ

New York  
Doubleday, Page & Company

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

This, the latest story from the pen of Hungary's great man of letters, Maurus Jokai, was translated directly from the manuscript of the author by Mme. F. Steinitz, who resides in Buda-Pest, and was selected by him for that purpose.

Maurus Jokai is now sixty-six years of age, having been born at Komarom, in 1825. He was intended for the law, that having been his father's profession but at twelve years of age the desire to write seized him. Some of his stories fell into the hands of the lawyer in whose office he was studying, who read them, and was so struck by their originality and talent that he published them at once at his own expense. The public was as well pleased with the book as the lawyer had been with the manuscripts, and from that tender age to the present Jokai has devoted himself to writing, and is the author of several hundred successful volumes. At the age of twenty-three he laid down his pen long enough to get married, his bride being Rosa Laborfalvi, the then leading Hungarian actress. At the end of a year he joined the Revolutionists, and buckled on the sword of the patriot. He was taken prisoner and sentenced to be shot, when his bride appeared upon the scene with her pockets full of the money she had made by the sale of her jewels, and, bribing the guards, escaped with her husband into the birch woods, where they hid in caves and slept on leaves, all the time in danger of their lives, until they finally found their way to Buda-Pest and liberty. This city Jokai has made his home; in the winter he lives in the heart of the town, in the summer just far enough outside of it to have a house surrounded by grounds, where he can sit out of doors in the shade of his own trees. He is probably the best-known man in Hungary to-day, for he is not only an author, but a financier, a statesman, and a journalist as well.

## CONTENTS.

## PART I.

- I. THE DUMB CHILD
- II. THE DARK GOD
- III. THE ENGLISHMAN
- IV. THE NABOB
- V. A REPUBLICAN COUNTESS

- VI. DUMANY KORNEL
- VII. THE DEAD MAN'S VOTE
- VIII. MY UNCLE DIOGENES
- IX. A SLAVONIC KINGDOM
- X. "DEAD"
- XI. MY DEAR FRIEND SIEGFRIED
- XII. THE DEVIL'S HOOF
- XIII. THE VALKYRS

PART II.

- I. THE SEA-DOVE
- II. "WHAT IS THE DEVIL LIKE?"
- III. THE FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER
- IV. THE HISTORY OF MY FRIEND
- V. HOW ROSES ARE INOCULATED
- VI. MR. PARASITE
- VII. A BRILLIANT GAME
- VIII. A BITING KISS
- IX. WHO IS THE VISITOR?
- X. AFTER THE WEDDING
- XI. MY SCHEME
- XII. SEEKING FOR DEATH
- XIII. MY DISCHARGE
- XIV. HOME! SWEET HOME
- XV. VOX POPULI
- XVI. DAME FORTUNE
- XVII. LIGHT AT LAST

DR. DUMANY'S WIFE.

Part I.

I.

THE DUMB CHILD.

It was about the close of the year 1876 when, on my road to Paris, I boarded the St. Gothard railway-train. Travellers coming from Italy had already taken possession of the sleeping-car compartments, and I owed it solely to the virtue of an extraordinarily large tip that I was at last able to stretch my weary limbs upon the little sofa of a half-coupe. It was not a very comfortable resting-place, inasmuch as this carriage was the very last in an immensely long train, and one must be indeed fond of

rocking to enjoy the incessant shaking, jostling, and rattling in this portion of the train. But still it was much preferable to the crowded carriages, peopled with old women carrying babies, giggling maidens, snoring or smoking men, and hilarious children; so I made the best of it, and prepared for a doze.

The guard came in to look at my ticket, and, pitying my lonely condition, he opened a conversation. He told me that the son of an immensely wealthy American nabob, with an escort well-nigh princely, was travelling on the same train to Paris. He had with him an attendant physician, a nursery governess, a little playfellow, a travelling courier, and a huge negro servant to prepare his baths, besides several inferior servants. These all occupied the parlour-car and the sleeping compartments; but the little fellow had a parlour, a bedroom, and a dressing-room all to himself.

I did not pay much attention to the talk of the gossiping guard, and so he departed, and at last I could sleep. On the road I am like a miller in his mill. So long as the wheel turns, I sleep on; but the moment it is stopped, I start up and am instantly wide awake. We had reached a smaller station where the train usually stops for a few minutes only, when, to my surprise, there was a great deal of pushing and sliding of the cars backward and forward, and we halted for an extraordinarily long time. I was just getting up to learn what was going on, when the guard entered, lantern in hand.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but there is something amiss. The linch-pin of the parlour-car has become over-heated, and we had to uncouple the car and leave it behind. Now we are obliged to find a convenient place for the little American, until we reach some main station, where another parlour-car can be attached to the train. I am really sorry for you, sir, but this is the only suitable place we have, and the little fellow and his governess must be your travelling companions for a while."

"Well, when a thing can't be helped, grumbling is unreasonable, so good-bye sleep and quiet, and let us prepare to pay homage to the illustrious youth and his lady attendant," said I, smiling at the guard's earnestness. But still he hesitated.

"And pray, sir, what is your religion?" stammered he; "I have to tell the governess."

"Indeed!" My good-humour was rising still, and I continued smiling. "Tell the lady that I am a Swiss Protestant, and I hope she will not object, as I shall not try to convert her or her charge if they are of a different creed. Is there anything else you want to inquire into?"

"Yes, sir. The little gentleman's physician would also like to accompany his charge, and stay at his side."

"But there is only room for three."

"I know; but, sir, the doctor is a very liberal gentleman, and he told me that if anybody would be willing to exchange places with him, he would gladly repay his whole travelling expenses."

"That's liberal, certainly, and I have no doubt the fireman of the engine will thankfully accept his offer. You can tell him as much. And now go!"

The man went out, but right after him came the doctor--a very pleasant and distinguished-looking young man. He apologised for the guard's bluntness and his misinterpretation of his message. He had not meant to offend a gentleman, and so forth. He introduced himself as Dr. Mayer, family physician at the house of the so-called "Silver King," Mr. Dumany, the father of the little "Silver Prince." After learning that I did not smoke, and had no objection to children, he inquired my nationality. My astrachan fur cap and coat-collar made him take me for a Russian, but, thanking him for his good opinion, I stated that as yet I was merely a Hungarian. He did not object; but asked if we were free from small-pox, diphtheritis, croup, measles, scarlet-fever, whooping-cough, and such like maladies in our country at present. After I had satisfied him that even the foot-and-mouth disease had by this time ceased, he finally quitted me, but immediately returned, assisting a lady with both hands full of travelling necessaries to climb up into the carriage. After the lady came a grand stately-looking negro servant, with gold-braided cap and overcoat of white bear's fur, and on his arm, bundled up in rich velvet and costly fur, he carried a beautiful five-year-old boy, who looked like some waxen image or big doll.

The lady seemed very lively and talkative, and had a host of languages at command. With the doctor she conversed in German; to the guide she spoke French; the negro she questioned in English, and to a maid who brought in some rugs and air-pillows she spoke Italian. All these languages she spoke excellently, and I am certain that if a dozen persons of different nationalities had been present she could have talked to them in their various dialects with the same ease and fluency. Of her beauty I could not judge, for she wore a bonnet with a thick veil, which covered her face to the chin.

Taking her seat at the opposite window, she placed the child between us. He was a pale, quiet little boy, with very red, thin, tightly-compressed lips, and great, melancholy dark-blue eyes. As long as the negro was occupied in arranging the rugs and pillows, he looked wholly unconcerned, and the smiles from the great black shining face did not impress him at all; but when the swarthy giant caught the two fair little hands in his own great black palm and wanted to kiss them, the boy withdrew his hands with a quick gesture and struck the ebony forehead with his tiny fist.

At last we were seated. The negro was gone, the guide went out and locked the door after him. Seeing that the open window was disagreeable to the lady, I volunteered to close it. She accepted gratefully, and at the same time expressed her regrets that, in consequence of the accident to the parlour-car, she had been compelled to disturb me. Of course, I hastened to say that I was not in the least incommoded, and only regretted that it was not in my power to make her more comfortable. She then told me that she was an American, and pretty well used to railroad accidents of a more or less serious character. Three times she had been saved by a miracle in railway collisions at home, and she assured me that in America about 30,000 persons were every year injured in railway accidents, while some 4,000 were killed outright.

We conversed in German, and, as the lady became more and more communicative, talk turned upon the subject of the child between us. She told me that Master James was deaf and dumb, and could not understand a word of our conversation; hence restraint was unnecessary. I asked her if he was born with this defect, and she said, "No; until the age of three he could speak very nicely, but at that age he was thrown out of his little goat-carriage, and in consequence of the shock and concussion lost his power of speech."

"Then he will possibly recover it," I said. "I knew a young man who lost his speech in the same manner at the age of five, and could not speak up to his tenth year; then he recovered, and now he has graduated from college as senior wrangler."

"Yes," she said. "But Mr. Dumany is impatient, and he has sent the boy to all the deaf-and-dumb boarding-schools in Europe. Even now we are coming from such an institution in Italy; but none of all these different masters has been able to teach more than sign-talk, and that is insufficient. Mr. Dumany wants to give the German Heinicke method a trial. That professes to teach real conversation, based on the observations of the movements of the lips and tongue."

Of this method I also knew examples of success. I was acquainted with a deaf and dumb type-setter, who had learned to talk intelligibly and fluently, could read aloud, and take part in conversation, but in a piping voice like that of a bird.

"Even that would be a great success," she said. "At any rate, little James will be taken to the Zuerich Institute, and remain there until he acquires his speech."

During this whole conversation the little fellow had sat between us, mute, and, to all appearance, wholly indifferent. His little pale face was dull, and his great eyes half closed. I felt sorry for him, and with a sigh of real compassion I muttered in my own native Hungarian tongue, "Szegegy fincska!" ("Poor little boy!") At this I saw a thrill of

surprise run through the child's little frame; the great blue eyes opened wide in wonder and delight, and the closed cherry lips opened in a smile of joy.

I was struck with surprise, and did not believe my own eyes. The lady had not noticed anything, since she still kept her bonnet on and the thick veil tightly drawn over her face.

I took pity on her, and offered to go out into the corridor to smoke a cigarette, so that she might make herself a little more comfortable until we arrived at some large station, where she would enter another parlour-car.

She accepted thankfully, and, to my utter astonishment, the little boy raised his tiny hand, and caressingly stroked the fur collar of my coat. I bent down to kiss him, and he smiled sweetly on me; and when I got up and signed to him that he could now occupy both seats and stretch himself upon the little sofa, he shook his head, and crept into the corner which I had quitted. And there, as often as in my walk up and down the corridor I threw a glance into his corner, I could see the child's large dark-blue eyes following all my movements with an eager curiosity; the white little face pressed to the window-pane and the tiny hand never losing hold of the edge of the curtain, which he had purposely lifted, for the governess had pulled the curtain down the moment I left, possibly to take off her bonnet.

Mine was not a very pleasant situation in that corridor. I watched the rising and sinking of the moon, which phenomenon repeated itself about twice every hour, according to the serpentine windings of the road. I looked at the milky mist which surrounded the icy pinnacles of the great mountains, and grumbled over the intense darkness in the many tunnels, in which the roar and noise of the train is tremendously increased, thundering as if Titans were breaking out of their prisons below Mount Pelion.

As if they had not broken through long, long ago! What if the old Grecian gods should come to life? should leave their marble temples, and gaze about on the world as it is at present? If Pallas Athene were told of America? If Helios Apollo could listen to Wagner's operas, and Zeus Jupiter might look into the great tube of the London Observatory, wondering what had become of that milky way which had been formed out of the milk spilled by Amalthea? If we could show him that we had caught and harnessed his heavenly lightning to draw our vehicles and carry our messages, and that, with the help of fire-eyed leviathans, we break through the rocky womb of his great mountains? And yet, how easy it would be for them, with a simple sneeze of their most illustrious and omnipotent noses, to raise such a tempest that earth and sea would rise and destroy man and his pigmy works at one fell stroke! I wonder if they never awake? I rather think they sometimes get up and shake their mighty fists at us. These cyclones look very suspicious to me!

The huge iron leviathan turns and twists itself like a Gordian knot; disappears and reappears, almost on the same spot, but higher up on the mountain, and then glides rapidly on along the brinks of fearful abysses, over long iron bridges looking like some fanciful filigree work, some giant spider's web, extending across great valleys, chasms, and precipices, over which great mountain rivers splash down, roaring and foaming in gigantic falls. What giant power has cleft the way for these waters--Vulcan or Neptune? Or was it laid down in Euclid's adventurous age, when the Titans went into bankruptcy?

The train increases its speed to regain the time lost in uncoupling the disabled parlour-car, and this increased speed is chiefly felt at the tail of the great iron dragon. I have to cling tightly to the brass rod in front of the windows. We pass the central station without stopping, the locomotive whistles, the lamps of the little watch-houses fly past like so many jack-o'-lanterns, and all at once we are enveloped by a thick fog rising from beneath, where it had rested above the sea, and when the train has twice completed the circle around the valley, the noxious, dangerous mist surrounds us entirely.

But once more the creation of human hands conquers the spectre, and, puffing and whistling, the locomotive breaks through the dark haze. Once again the iron serpent disappears into the bowels of the rock, and as it emerges it crosses another valley and is greeted by a clear heaven and a multitude of brightly-glistening stars.

We are on the Rossberg. A devastated tract of the globe it seems. Our eyes rest on barren soil devoid of vegetation. Beneath a large field of huge boulders, imbedded in snow and ice, the Alpine vegetation thrives. The whole valley is one immense graveyard, and the great rocks are giant tombstones, encircled by wreaths of white flowers meet for adorning graves. At the beginning of the present century one of the ridges of the Rossberg gave way, and in the landslide four villages were buried. This happened at night, when the villagers were all asleep, and not a single man, woman, or child escaped. This valley is their resting-place. Was I not right to call it a graveyard?

Above this valley of destruction the train glides on. Upon the side of the mountain is a little watch-house, built into the rock; a narrow flight of steps hewn in the stone leads up to it like a ladder. The moon, which had lately seemed fixed to the crest of the mountain, now plays hide-and-seek among the peaks. A high barricade on the side of the Rossberg serves to protect the railroad track against another landslide.

On the high ridges of the mountain goats were pasturing, and not far from them a shepherd's fire was blazing, and the shepherd himself sat beside it. I remember all these accessories as well as if they were still before my eyes. I can see the white goats climbing up and pulling at the broom-plants. I can see the shepherd's black form, encircled by



the light of the fire, and the white watch-house with its black leaden roof, the high signal-pole in front of it, above which all at once a great flaming star arises.

II.

## THE DARK GOD.

I was gazing at that shining red light, when all at once I felt a concussion, as if the train had met with some impediment. I heard the jolting of the foremost cars, and had time to prepare for the shock which was sure to follow; but when it did come, it was so great that it threw me to the opposite wall of the corridor.

Yet the train moved on as before, so that it could not have been disabled, as I at first thought. I heard the guards run from carriage to carriage, opening the doors, and I could see great clouds of steam arise from the puffing and blowing engines. The friction of the wheels made a grating noise, and I leaned out of the window to ascertain the nature of the danger. Was another train approaching, and a collision inevitable? I could see nothing, but suddenly I beheld the figure of the shepherd, and saw him raise his staff aloft. I followed the motion of his hand, and with a thrill of horror I saw a great ledge of rock sliding downward with threatening speed, while at the same time a shower of small stones crashed on the roof of the cars.

I did not wait for the guards to open my door. I had it open in an instant. From the other carriages passengers were jumping out at the risk of life and limb, for the train was running at full speed.

I hastily ran into the coupe to awaken my travelling companions, but found them up. "Madam," I said, "I am afraid that we are in danger of a serious accident. Pray come out quickly!"

"Save the child!" she answered; and I caught the little boy, took him in my arms, and ran out.

The train was gliding perpetually on, and I bethought myself of the recommendation of one who is jumping from a running vehicle, to leap forward, because in jumping sideways or backward he invariably falls under the wheels. So I followed the recommendation and leaped. Fortunately, I reached the ground, although my knees doubled up under me, and I struck the knuckles of my right hand a hard blow. The child had fainted in my arms, but only from fright; otherwise he had received no harm. I laid him on the ground in a safe place, and ran with all my might after the train to help the lady out. She was standing on the

steps, already prepared for the jump. I extended my hand to her, impatiently crying "Quick!" But instead of taking my proffered hand she exclaimed, "Oh! I have forgotten my bonnet and veil," and back she ran into the coupe, never again to come forth.

At that moment I felt a tremendous shock, as if the earth had quaked and opened beneath me, and this was followed by a deafening uproar, the clashing of stones, the cracking of wood and glass, the grating and crushing of iron, and the pitiful cries of men, women, and children. The great mass of rock broke through the protecting barricade and rushed right upon the engine. The huge, steam-vomiting leviathan was crushed in an instant, and the copper and steel fragments scattered everywhere. Three of the wheels were shattered, and with that the iron colossus came to a dead stop, the suddenness of which threw the carriages crashing on top of each other. This fearful havoc was not all. Through the breach which the great rock had made in the barricade, an incessant avalanche of stones, from the size of a cannon-ball to that of a wheelbarrow, descended upon the train, crushing everything beneath into fragments, pushing the unhappy train into the chasm below, into the valley of death and destruction. Like a huge serpent it slid down, the great glowing furnace with its feeding coals undermost, and then the whole wrecked mass of carriages tumbled after, atop of each other, while cries of despair were heard on every side. Then I saw the rear car--that in which I had been sitting--stand up erect on top of the others, while on its roof fell, with thunderous violence, the awful shower of stones. Mutely I gazed on, until a large stone struck the barricade just where I stood, and then I realised that the danger was not over, and ran for shelter.

The stones were falling fast to left and to right, and I hastened to gain the steps which led to the little watch-house. Then I bethought me of the boy. I found him still insensible, but otherwise unharmed, and I took him up, covering him with a furred coat. I ran up the steps with him, so fast that not a thought of my asthma and heart disease slackened my speed.

There was nobody in the house but a woman milking a goat. In one corner of the room stood a bed, in the middle was a table, and on one of the walls hung a burning coal-oil lamp.

As I opened the door the woman looked up, and said in a dull piteous moaning--

"It is none of Joerge's fault. Joerge had shown the red light in good season, and yesterday he specially warned the gentlemen, and told them that a ridge of the Gnippe was crumbling, and would soon break down; but they did not listen to him, and now that the accident has come, they will surely visit their own carelessness upon him. It is always the poor dependent that is made to suffer for the fault of his superiors. But I will not stand it; and if Joerge is discharged and loses his bread, then--"

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

