



Dr. Maurice Joffe.



INTRODUCTION

TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MY WORKS

This is not the first occasion upon which it has been my good fortune to win appreciation and approval for my works from the reading public of the United States. Up to the present, however, it has often been under difficulties; for many of my works which have been published in the English tongue were not translated from the original Hungarian text, while others, through want of a final perusal, were introduced to the public marred by numerous faults.

In the present edition we have striven to give the English reading public a correct translation, for which an authorized text has been utilized by the Doubleday & McClure Co., who have sole right for publishing future English translations of my books.

Between the United States and Hungary we discover many common traits: the same state-creative energy in the predominant people, which finds expression in constitutional forms, relying upon the love of freedom, which unites so many different races in one uniform whole; the same independent institutions; the same ideas in religion, in ethics; the same respect for women, the same esteem of labor, the same mental culture; a striving after progress, yet side by side with this a high respect for traditions; the same poetry of agriculture, the same prose of industry; rapid progress of both, and in consequence thereof an impetuous growth of towns.

Yet, while we find so many common traits between America and Hungary in the great field of theory, those typical figures which here in Hungary represent such theories must make a novel and extraordinary *entrée* in the New World, that they may deserve to win the interest of the foreign reader.

Hungary still represents a piece and parcel of the Old World; she is not so much Europe as a modern Asia. My novels centre round those peculiar figures of Hungarian common life; and in every work of mine a bit of history of true common life will be found described. I have had a particular delight, however, in occupying myself with

foreign countries, especially with the East. There have been years when I was compelled to choose subjects for novel-writing in foreign parts.

In English and in Hungarian literature we find a common trait in that humor which is discovered also in the tragic; a characteristic of the nation itself.

It is with perfect confidence and in good hope that I present my present work (translated so faithfully) before the much-esteemed English reading public. May God bless that home of freedom, by whose example we have learnt how to unite the greatness of the state with the welfare of the people.

DR. MAURUS JOKAI.

BUDAPEST, May 11th, 1898.

DR. MAURUS JOKAI

A Sketch

To a man who has earned such titles as "The Shakespeare of Hungary" and "The Glory of Hungarian Literature"; who published in fifty years three hundred and fifty novels, dramas, and miscellaneous works, not to mention innumerable articles for the press that owes its freedom chiefly to him, it seems incredible that there was ever a time of indecision as to what career he was best fitted to follow. The idle life of the nobility into which Maurus Jókay was born in 1825 had no attractions for a strongly intellectual boy, fired with zeal and energy that carried him easily to the head of each class in school and college; nor did he feel any attraction for the prosaic practice of law, his father's profession, to which Austria's despotism drove many a nobleman in those wretched days for Hungary. It was Pétofi, the poet, who was his dearest friend during the student-life at Pápa; idealism ever attracted him, and, by natural gravitation toward the finest minds, he chose the friendship of young men who quickly rose into eminence during the days of revolution and invasion that tried men's souls.

For a time Jókay, as he then wrote his name, was undecided whether to choose literature or art as an outlet for the idealism, imagination, and devotion that overflowed in two directions from this boy of seventeen. With some of the inherited artistic talent, which in his relative Munkacsy amounted to genius, he felt most inclined toward painting and sculpture, and finally consecrated himself to them. In his library at Budapest there now stands a small, well-executed bust of his wife in ivory; and on the walls hang several landscapes and still-life paintings, which he showed with a smile to an American visitor, who stood silent before them last winter, hoping for some inspiration of speech that would reconcile politeness with veracity and her own ideals of good art. If a "deep love for art and an ardent desire to excel" will "more than compensate for the want of method," to quote Sir Joshua Reynolds, then Jókay would have been a great painter indeed. While he never was that, his chisel and brushes have remained a recreation and delight to him always.

Apparently he was diverted from art to literature by a trifle; but in the light of later developments it is simple enough to see which was really the greater force working within. The Academy of Arts and Sciences, founded by Szécheni, offered a prize for the best drama, and Jókay won it. He was then seventeen, for careers began early in olden times. When twenty-one his first novel, "Work Days," met with great applause; other romances quickly followed, and, as they dealt with the social and political tendencies that fanned the revolution into flame two years later, their success was instantaneous. His true representations of Hungarian life and character, his passionate love of liberty, his lofty idealism for his crushed and lethargic country, aroused a great wave of patriotism like a call to arms, and consecrated him to work with his pen for the freedom of the common people. Henceforth paint-brushes were cast aside.

Pétofi and Jókay, teeming with great ideas, quickly attracted other writers and young men of the university about them, and, each helping the other, brought about a bloodless revolution that secured, among other inestimable boons, the freedom of a censored, degraded press. And yet the only act of violence these young revolutionists committed was in entering a printing establishment and setting up with their own hands the type for Pétofi's poem, that afterward became the war-song of the national movement. At that very establishment was soon to be printed a proclamation granting twelve of their dearest wishes to the people. From this time Jókay changed the spelling of his name to Jókai, *y* being a badge of nobility hateful to disciples of the doctrine of liberty, fraternity, equality.

About this time Jókai married the Rachel of the Hungarian stage, Rosa Laborfalvy. The portrait of her that hangs in her husband's famous library shows a beautiful woman of intense sensitiveness, into whose face some of the sadness of her rôles seems to have crept. It was to her powers of impersonation and disguise that Jókai owed his life many years later, when, imprisoned and suffering in a dungeon, he was enabled to escape in her clothes to join Kossuth in the desperate fight against the allied armies of Austria and Russia. Since her death he has lived in retirement.

The bloodless revolution of 1848, which suddenly transformed Hungary into a modern state, possessing civil and religious liberty

for which the young idealists led by Kossuth had labored with such passionate zeal, was not effected without antagonizing the old aristocracy, all of whose cherished institutions were suddenly swept away; or the semi-barbaric people of the peasant class, who could little appreciate the beneficent reforms. Into the awful civil war that followed, when the horrors of an Austrian-Russian invasion were added to the already desperate situation, Jókai plunged with magnificent heroism. Side by side with Kossuth, he fought with sword and pen. Those who heard him deliver an address at the Peace Congress at Brussels two years ago felt through his impassioned eloquence that the man had himself drained the bitterest dregs of war.

While Kossuth lived in exile in England and the United States, and many other compatriots escaped to Turkey and beyond, Jókai, in concealment at home, writing under an assumed name and with a price on his head, continued his work for social reform, until a universal pardon was granted by Austria and the saddened idealists once more dared show their faces in devastated Hungary.

Ripe with experience and full of splendid intellectual power, Jókai now turned his whole attention to literature. The pages of his novels glow with the warmth of the man's intensity of feeling; his pen had been touched by a living coal. He knew his country as no other man has known it; and transferred its types, its manners, its life in high degree and low, to the pages of his romances and dramas with a brilliancy and mastery of style that captivated the people, whose idol he still remains. Scenes from Turkish life—in which, next to Hungarian, he is particularly interested; historical novels, romances of pure imagination, short tales, dramatic works, essays on literature and social questions, came pouring from his surcharged brain and heart. The very virtues of his work, its intensity, and the boundless scope of its imagination, sometimes produce a lack of unity and an improbability to which the hypercritical in the West draw attention with a sense of superior wisdom; but the Hungarians themselves, who know whereof he writes, can see no faults whatever in his work. It is essentially idealistic; the true and the beautiful shine through it with radiant lustre, in sharp distinction from the scenes of famine and carnage that abound. His Turkish stories have been described as "full of blood and roses."

Of his more mature productions, the best known are: "A Magyar Nabob"; "The Fools of Love"; "The New Landlord"; "Black Diamonds"; "A Romance of the Coming Century"; "Handsome Michael"; "God is One," in which the Unitarians play an important part; "The Nameless Castle," that gives an account of the Hungarian army employed against Napoleon in 1809; "Captive Ráby," a romance of the times of Joseph II.; and "As We Grow Old," the latter being the author's own favorite and, strangely enough, the people's also. Dr. Jókai greatly deplors that what the critics call his best work should not have been given to the English-speaking people.

In 1896 Hungary celebrated the completion of his fifty years of literary labor by issuing a beautiful jubilee edition of his works, for which the people of all grades of society subscribed \$100,000. Every county in the country sent him memorials in the form of albums wrought in gold and precious stones, two hundred of these souvenirs filling one side of the author's large library and reception-room. Low bookcases running around the walls are filled only with his own publications, the various editions of his three hundred and fifty books making a large library in themselves. The cabinets hold sketches and paintings sent by the artists of Hungary as a jubilee gift; there are cases containing carvings, embroidery, lace, and natural-history specimens sent him by the peasants, and orders in gold and silver, studded with jewels, with autograph letters from the kings and queens of Europe. In the midst of all this inspiring display of loving appreciation, Dr. Jókai has his desk; a pile of neatly written, even manuscript ever before him, for in his seventy-fourth year he still feels the old-time passion for work calling him to it early in the morning and holding him in its spell all the day long. A small room adjoining his library contains the books of reference he consults, a narrow bed like a soldier's, and a few window plants. It might be the room of a monk, so bare is it of what the world calls comforts. One devoted man-servant attends to Dr. Jókai's simple wants with abundant leisure to spare.

While in Budapest Dr. Jókai is seldom seen away from home, except in Parliament, where he has a seat in the Upper House, or at the theatre where his plays are regularly performed, or at the table of a few dear relatives and old-time friends. His life is exceedingly simple and well ordered.

Just a little way back on the hills that rise beyond Buda, across the Danube and overlooking wide stretches of beautiful, fertile country, stands Dr. Jókai's summer-home. His garden is a paradise. Quantities of roses climb over the unpretentious house, the paths are lined with them; gay beds of poppies and other familiar favorites in our Western gardens, but many new to American eyes, crowd the fruit that grows in delightful abundance everywhere, for Dr. Jókai tends his garden with his own hands, and his horticultural wisdom is only second to his knowledge of the Turkish wars. His apples, pears, and roses win prizes at all the shows, and his little book, "Hints on Gardening," propagates a large crop of like-minded enthusiasts year after year. Now, as ever, any knowledge he has he shares with the people. After a long life of bitter stress and labor, abundant peace has come in the latter days.

Hungary boasts four great men: Liszt, Munkacsy, Kossuth, and Jókai, who was the intimate friend of the other three.

NELTJE BLANCHAN.

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PART I

CYTHERA'S BRIGADE

CHAPTER I

A snow-storm was raging with such vigor that any one who chanced to be passing along the silent thoroughfare might well have believed himself in St. Petersburg instead of in Paris, in the Rue des Ours, a side street leading into the Avenue St. Martin. The street, never a very busy one, was now almost deserted, as was also the avenue, as it was yet too early for vehicles of various sorts to be returning from the theatre.

The street-lamps on the corners had not yet been lighted. In front of one of those old-fashioned houses which belong to a former Paris a heavy iron lantern swung, creaking in the wind, and, battling with the darkness, shed flickering rays of light on the child who, with a faded red cotton shawl wrapped about her, was cowering in the deep doorway of the house. From time to time there would emerge from the whirling snowflakes the dark form of a man clad as a laborer. He would walk leisurely toward the doorway in which the shivering child was concealed, but would turn when he came to the circle of light cast on the snowy pavement by the swinging lantern, and retrace his steps, thus appearing and disappearing at regular intervals. Surely a singular time and place for a promenade! The clocks struck ten—the hour which found every honest dweller within the Quartier St. Martin at home. On this evening, however, two belated citizens came from somewhere, their hurrying footsteps noiseless in the deep snow, their approach announced only by the lantern carried by one of them—an article without which no respectable citizen at the beginning of the century would have ventured on the street after nightfall. One of the pedestrians was tall and broad-shouldered, with a handsome countenance, which bore the impress of an inflexible determination; a dimple indented his smoothly shaven chin. His companion, and his senior by several years, was a slender, undersized man.

When the two men came abreast of the doorway illumined by the swinging lamp, it was evident that they had arrived at their destination. They halted and prepared to enter the house.

At this moment the child crouching in the snow began to sob.

"See here!" exclaimed the taller of the two gentlemen. "Here is a little girl."

"Why, so there is!" in turn exclaimed the elder, stooping and letting the light of his lantern fall on the child's face. "What are you doing here, little one?" he asked in a kindly tone.

"I want my mama! I want my mama!" wailed the child, with a fresh burst of sobs.

"Who is your mama?" queried the younger man.

"My mama is the countess."

"And where does she live?"

"In the palace."

"Naturally! In which avenue is the palace?"

"I—don't—know."

"A true child of Paris!" in an undertone exclaimed the elder gentleman. "She knows that her mother is a countess, and that she lives in a palace; but she has never been told the name of the street in which is her home."

"How come you to be here, little countess?" inquired the younger man.

"Diana can tell you," was the reply.

"And who may Diana be?"

"Why, who else but mama's Diana?"

"Allow me to question her," here interposed the elder man. Then, to the child: "Diana is the person who helps you put on your clothes, is she not?"

"It is just the other way: she took off my clothes—just see; I have nothing on but this petticoat and this hideous shawl."

As she spoke she flung back the faded shawl and revealed how scantily she was clad.

"You poor child!" compassionately ejaculated the young man; and when he saw that her thin morocco slippers were buried in the snow, he lifted her hastily in his arms. "You are half frozen."

"But why did Diana leave you half clothed in this manner?" pursued the elder man. "Why did she undress you? Can't you tell us that much?"

"Mama slapped her this morning."

"Ah! then Diana is a servant?"

"Why, of course; what else could she be?"

"Well, she might be a goddess or a hound, you know," smilingly returned the old gentleman.

"When mama went to the opera, this evening," explained the little one, "she ordered Diana to take me to the children's ball at the marquis's. Instead, she brought me to this street, made me get out of the carriage, took off my silk ball-gown and all my pretty ornaments, and left me here in this doorway—I am sure I don't know why, for there is n't any music here."

"It is well she left this old shawl with you, else your mama would not have a little countess to tell the tale to-morrow," observed the elder man. Then, turning to his companion, he added in a lower tone: "What are we to do with her?"

"We can't leave her here; that would be inhuman," was the reply, in the same cautious tone.

"But we can't take her in; it would be a great risk."

"What is there to fear from an innocent prattler who cannot even remember her mother's name?"

"We might take her to the conciergerie," suggested the elder gentleman.

"I think we had better not disturb the police when they are asleep," in a significant tone responded his companion.

"That is true; but we can't take the child to our apartments. You know that we—"

"I have an idea!" suddenly interposed the young man. "This innocent child has been placed in our way by Providence; by aiding her we may accomplish more easily the task we have undertaken."

"I understand," assented the elder; "we can accomplish two good deeds at one and the same time. Allow me to go up-stairs first; while you are locking the door I will arrange matters up there so that you may bring this poor little half-frozen creature directly with you." Then, to the child: "Don't be afraid, little countess; nothing shall harm you. To-morrow morning perhaps you will remember your mama's name, or else she will send some one in search of you."

He opened the door, and ran hastily up the worn staircase.

When the young man, with the little girl in his arms, reached the door at the head of the stairs, his companion met him, and, with a meaning glance, announced that everything was ready for the reception of their small guest. They entered a dingy anteroom, which led, through heavily curved antique sliding-doors, into a vaulted saloon hung with faded tapestry.

Here the child exhibited the first signs of alarm. "Are you going to kill me?" she cried out in terror.

The old gentleman laughed merrily, and said:

"Why, surely you don't take us to be *croquemitaines* who devour little children; do you?"

"Have you got a little girl of your own?" queried the little one, suddenly.

"No, my dear," replied the old gentleman, visibly affected by the question. "I have no wife; therefore I cannot have a little girl."

"But my mama has no husband, and she 's got me," prattled the child.

"That is different, my dear. But if I have not got a little girl, I know very well what to do for one."

As he spoke he drew off the child's wet slippers and stockings, rubbed her feet with a flannel cloth, then laid her on the bed which stood in the alcove.