

PREFACE

By H.M. THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

Very little is known in England about Roumanian literature, which although not as rich as in many other countries, presents, nevertheless, features of real interest.

Like all people in touch with the East, even the peasants have a strain of poetry in their speech, their expression is picturesque and gentle, an almost fatalistic note of sadness rings through all the songs they sing.

Our poets have adapted themselves to this particular strain, and mostly it is the popular form that has been developed by our literary men both in prose and poetry.

Roumanian literature possesses eminent historians and critics. I am not, in these few lines, going to touch upon their activities; but strangely enough there are few writers of fiction amongst the Roumanians--great novel writers do not exist.

The Roumanian, above all, excels as poet and as a short-story writer. In this last art he is past-master, and it is therefore a great pleasure to me to encourage this book which Mrs. Schomberg Byng is sending out into the world at a moment when I am so anxious that my country should be better known and understood in England.

Each one of these short stories is a little work of art, and deeply characteristic of Roumanian popular life and thought; therefore I have no doubt that they will interest all those who care about literature.

I feel personally indebted to Mrs. Schomberg Byng to have thought of making this interesting feature of Roumanian literature known to the British public. I therefore, with all my heart, wish this little volume Good Luck.

MARIE.

Jan., 1920.

PREFACE

By Professor S. MEHEDINTZI  
Of Bucharest University and the Roumanian Academy

As regards poetry Roumanian literature had reached the European level by the nineteenth century. Eminescu may be placed by the side of Leopardi. The drama and the novel are still unrepresented by any works of the first rank; but the short story shows that Roumanian writing is constantly on the upward grade.

The following stories have been selected from many writers. The reader must judge each author for himself. It is impossible to settle their respective merits; that would presuppose an acquaintance with the whole of Roumanian literature. We may, however, be allowed to say a word or two about each writer.