

knew that the people hated them, and the monarch did not love them.

Immediately upon his arrival Lapushneanu gave orders that all the Moldavian towns, except Hotin, should be piled high with wood and burnt, wishing thus to destroy the refuge of the discontented, who many times, under the protection of their walls, hatched plots and attempted rebellion. In order to undermine the influence of the boyars, and to root out the feudal communities, he despoiled them of their estates under every kind of pretext; in this way he deprived them of their only means of reducing and corrupting the populace.

But not deeming this plan sufficient he put persons to death from time to time. For the smallest official mistake, upon the utterance of the slightest complaint, the head of the culprit was spiked upon the gates of the churchyard, with a placard setting forth his fault, real or imaginary; the rotting head was only removed to make room for another.

No one dared to speak against him, much less plot. A numerous guard of mercenaries, Albanians, Serbs, Hungarians, driven out on account of their misdeeds, found shelter with Alexandru, who bribed them with high pay; the Moldavian army, under captains who were his own creatures, he kept on the frontiers, he gave the soldiers leave to go to their own homes, retaining only a small number.

One day he was walking alone in the saloon of the royal palace. He had had a long talk with Motzoc, who was in great favour, and who had departed after devising a scheme for some fresh tax. He seemed restless, he talked to himself, and was evidently meditating another death or some fresh persecution when a side door opened, and admitted the Princess Rucsanda.

At the death of her parent, the good Petru Raresch, who--says the chronicle--was buried amidst much lamentation and mourning in the sacred Monastery of Probota, erected by himself, Rucsanda remained, at a tender age, under the guardianship of her two elder brothers, Iliash and Shtefan: Iliash, succeeding his father upon the throne, after a short and stormy reign, retired to Constantinople where he embraced Mohammedanism, and Shtefan took his place upon the throne. This man was more cruel than his brother; he began by compelling all strangers and Catholics to renounce their religion, and many rich families settled in the country went into exile on this account, giving as a pretext the poverty of the land and the decline in trade. The boyars, many of whom were related by marriage to the Poles and Hungarians, took offence, and entering into communication with the exiled boyars decided that Shtefan should perish. Perhaps they would have delayed to put this plan into execution if his excesses had not hastened it on. "No woman was safe from his lust if she were fair," says the chronicler in his naïve fashion. One day when he was at Tzutzora, instead of waiting for the arrival of the exiled boyars, the boyars who were with him cut the ropes of the tent under which he was seated, in order to prevent his escape, and rushing upon him murdered him.

After this Rucsanda alone remained of the family of Petru Raresch, and the murderous boyars decided to give her as wife to one of their number called Jolde, whom they had chosen to be their ruler. But Lapushneanu, chosen by the exiled boyars, met Jolde, whom he defeated, and seizing him he cut off his nose, and turned him into a monk; in order to win the hearts of the people, who still kept a lively recollection of Raresch, he married, and took to himself Raresch's daughter. Thus the gentle Rucsanda found herself the partner of the conqueror.

When she entered the hall she was clothed with all the magnificence due to the wife, daughter and sister of a king.

Above a long garment of cloth of gold, open in front, she wore a tight coat of blue velvet trimmed with sable, and with long sleeves falling back; she wore a girdle of gold which fastened with big clasps of jasper surrounded by precious stones; round her neck hung a necklace of many rows of pearls. A cap of sable, placed rather on one side, was ornamented with a white aigrette studded with jewels and held in place by a big emerald flower. Her hair, according to the fashion of