

LUCY BYNG.

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ROUMANIAN STORIES

THE FAIRY OF THE LAKE

By M. SADOVEANU

One evening old Costescu told us an adventure of his youth.

The old mill of Zavu, he began, stands to this day close to the Popricani lake. A black building leaning towards the dark waters. The six wheels are driven by great streams of water which come rushing through the mill-race, and surround the house, washing through the cracks. Above the boiling foam which encircles it, the great building shakes with the unceasing roar of the water.

So it is to-day; so it was at the period when I used to roam about those parts--it is long, long, since then.

I remember a night like a night in a fairy tale, full of the silver light of the moon, a night when only youth could see, when only youth could feel.

It was in July. I was descending the lake by myself with my gun over my shoulder. Flights of duck passing above the forest of reeds lured me on. I followed their rapid flight through the clear atmosphere, the black specks became gradually smaller until they were lost to sight in the rosy clouds of the setting sun. I passed above the weir, where the waterfall brawls, between the bushy willow-trees which guard the narrow path, and approached the mill. The green stream swept through the mill-race, the foaming water boiled round the black building, and in the yard, unyoked and ruminating, the oxen slept beside the waggon.

The old man, the miller, the great-grandson of Zavu, descended from the mill bridge with his pipe in the corner of his mouth. In the deafening roar of the water and the creaking of the wheels men waited