



ROUMANIAN FAIRY TALES AND LEGENDS

ELIZABETH B. MAWR

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**BY
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Roumanian Fairy Tales And Legends By Elizabeth B. Mawr.

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Masons, stonecutters, carpenters, blacksmiths, all those who knew any trade, set to work. Those who hitherto had been brought up in luxury, mixed mortar, women chipped stones, young girls carried water, and even children were set to work suitable for their age. One might see at the top and the sides of the mountain, a human ant-hill, always in motion, occupied in this atrocious labour.

Sun, rain, and wind, blackened their faces; their clothes hung in shreds; their features haggard and careworn, some eyes burning with rage, others with the submission of despair. These are no longer human beings, but machines, stupified by sorrow, and no longer able oven to implore God above, to send down his maledictions on the tyrant. Still their work progressed, and soon this *citta dolente*, was completed.

Vlad arrives, and after looking at it with the minutest attention, seeing that it equalled his expectations, in his clemency, sent back to their dwellings all that remained of these miserable workpeople.

On the banks of the Argis, not far from Stoieneste, may still be seen the ruins of what is called in the country, *the cursed ruins of the Fortress of Poinarii*.

THE GENTLE SHEPHERD

ON the edge of a mountain, lovely as the entrance to paradise, see, coming along, and descending toward the valley, three flocks of young lambs, driven by three young shepherds; one is an inhabitant of the plains of Moldau, the other is Hungarian, the third is from the Vrantcha Mountain. The Hungarian and the Vbranchian have held counsel together, and have resolved that at sunset they will kill their companion, on account of his riches, for he owns more horned sheep than they do, his horses are better trained than theirs, and his dogs more vigorous. Yet, for three days past, there is in his flock a fair young sheep, with white silky wool, who will no longer eat the tender grass of the prairie, and moans all day long.

"My poor little sheep, you who were so fat and well! how is it that for three days you have done nothing but groan and moan? don't you like the prairie grass, or are you ill, my dear little lamb?"

"Oh, my beloved shepherd, lead thy flock to that thicket, there will be grass for us, and shade for thee; master, dear master! call near you without delay, one of your best and strongest dogs, for the Hungarian and the Vbranchian have resolved to kill you at sunset!"

"Dear little sheep of the mountains, if thou art a prophetess, if it is written that I am to die in the bosom of these pastures, thou wilt tell the Hungarian and the Vbranchian to bury me near this spot, not far from this enclosure, so that I may always be near you, my beloved lambs,--either here, or behind the shepherd's hut, so that I may always hear the voice of my faithful dogs. Thou wilt tell them this, and thou wilt place at the foot of my grave a little flute of elm wood, with its accents of love; another of bone, with its harmonious sounds; another of reeds, with its passionate notes; and when the wind blows across their pipes bringing out plaintive music, then my flock will assemble round my tomb, and weep for me, tears of blood."

"Take care thou dost not tell them of my murder! tell them I have married a beautiful Queen, that at the moment of our union, a star fell, that the sun and moon together held the crown over my head, that I exist no longer for

for the Turks are surrounding us, the wind is piercing, and my wounds are painful."

Voichitza rushes to the window, but her mother-in-law holds her back, and bidding her remain where she is, descends the stairs, orders the Castle gates to be opened, and appears before her son, tall, majestic, severe--the absolute personification of dignity and grandeur.

"*What do you say, Stranger? My Etienne is far away I his arm is sowing death and annihilation. I am his mother, he is my son! If you are really Etienne, I am not your mother! If heaven does not wish to make my last days sorrowful, and if you are really Etienne, you will not enter here, vanquished, against my will. Fly to the battle field! die for your country! your tomb shall be flower strewn!*" And closing the door, she re-mounted the stairs; and, calm and serene, consoled and wiped away the tears of the young Princess Voichitza.

* * * * *

Etienne, repulsed by her whom he loved so much--Etienne, whom the God of battles seemed to have abandoned--Etienne, the valiant, blessed his mother, and sent through the night air a tender kiss to his young wife. Then, sounding a furious fanfare, he rode away, with the remnant of his followers, into obscurity. He caused fires to be lighted on the hills, and at this sign of call to arms, soldiers seemed to spring forth in every direction. Etienne has once more an army, and they turn in pursuit of the enemy, decided either to die, or become victorious.

The soldiers of Mahomet had devastated and sacked the whole of Moldavia, and were preparing to return with their plunder into their own country. Etienne and his men came up with them near to the banks of the Danube, surprised them, and cut them in pieces. The remnant of the Turkish troops fled across the river in the greatest confusion, leaving their plunder behind them.
