

FAIRY TALES AND LEGENDS FROM ROMANIA. Translated by *Ioana Sturdza*, *Raymond Vianu*, and *Mary Lăzărescu*. Verses and rhymes adapted and translated by *Richard Hillard*. Illustrated by *Angi Tîpărescu*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 333 pp. Published in collaboration with the Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest.

Genuine interest in folklore in Rumania—as elsewhere in Europe—was born in the atmosphere of Romanticism. The area, having been at the crossroads of many cultures, has retained a rich and varied folk idiom. During the second half of the nineteenth century most prominent and influential Rumanian writers sought substance and source in the poetry of the rustic soul. Folklore not only remained popular during that period but gained in importance and impact, for in it Rumanians discovered the roots of their national consciousness. When old traditions are rapidly disappearing in our modern world, folklore is still an integral part of the everyday life in Rumania.

The present volume is a welcome addition to the meager flora of English translations. Although scores of anthologies and studies have been printed in Rumania, there is deplorably little interest in rendering more of the treasure of this folklore into English. In the past decade only two collections have been published, both by the British: Jean Ure's *Rumanian Folk Tales* (American edition, New York, 1961) and *Fantastic Tales*, translated and edited by Eric Tappe (London, 1969).

This collection is essentially thematic: it consists of nineteen fairy tales or *Märchen* (classified in the Aarne-Thompson Index by numbers 300 to 749). Thus the word "legends" in the title is superfluous. The criteria of selection are not indicated, but all the tales included are well known to Rumanians and cherished by them. Thirteen of them are traditional "fantastic tales" and six are literary tales by the prominent writers Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă, and Petre Ispirescu.

The supernatural element in the Rumanian fairy tale is simplified, curtailed, and disciplined. The style is simple, sober, and unadorned. Unfortunately the translators did not select the unadulterated stories but more literary versions. Therefore the original simplicity of style and mood has suffered in translation. Only one tale, "Wee Pepper Peter and Flowery Florea," has been translated from a dialect version (possibly a variant from Banat). However, it has received unfortunate treatment. The English rendering reads as though the storyteller was a cockney transplanted in Brooklyn and mixing both idioms. Eminescu always presents problems for a translator, and Creangă's style and vocabulary are almost impossible to transfer accurately into any other language. In his case, Ioana Sturdza had to resort to footnoting.

The translators have done their best in tackling the difficulties. The general reading public, not acquainted with the original material, will certainly enjoy the stories. The illustrations by Angi Tîpărescu are superb, and the entire volume, including the dust jacket, is beautifully designed. We really need closer collaboration between American and Rumanian scholars to bring out more extensive work in this area.

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