

"Carmen Sylva, when she discovered that I was writing, instead of laughing at me and being ironical about my modest attempts at literature, encouraged me from the very first in every way. She was getting old, her imagination was running dry, and she declared that mine had come just in time to replace hers, which was a generous thing to say. She declared that it was a happy and blessed discovery that I could hold a pen, and no end of kind and enthusiastic things. She spurred me on to write, and each time I had finished a story she immediately wanted to have it so as to translate it into German."

Queen Marie of Romania about Carmen Sylva (Queen Elisabeth of Romania)

The history of the monarchy in Romania and of its four kings would be incomplete without the story of the queen consorts, who seem to have been even more fascinating personalities than the kings were. Especially the first two queen consorts, Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) and Marie of Romania, became famous as writers during their lifetime. They both wrote in their mother tongues, Elisabeth in German and Marie in English, and published many of their books, not only in Romania, but also abroad, thus reaching a widespread readership, worldwide publicity, and literary recognition.

This affectionately collected, critically edited volume comprises the most precious tales and essays by the queen consorts, either translated into English (Carmen Sylva) or in the original English version (Marie of Romania).

About the editor: Dr. Silvia Irina Zimmermann is coordinator of the Research Center Carmen Sylva of the Princely Archive of Wied. She has published several books, new editions, and studies about the life and writings of Carmen Sylva (born Princess Elisabeth of Wied, the first Queen of Romania).

SCHRIFTENREIHE DER **FORSCHUNGSSTELLE CARMEN SYLVA**
FÜRSTLICH WIEDISCHES ARCHIV. **BAND 9**

ISBN: 978-3-8382-1393-4



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ibidem

The Child of the Sun

Royal Fairy Tales and Essays by the Queens of Romania,
Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva, 1843–1916) and Marie (1875–1938)

Selected and edited, with an introduction and bibliography by
Silvia Irina Zimmermann

Royal Fairy Tales and Essays by the Queens of Romania



ibidem

Schriftenreihe der
FORSCHUNGSSTELLE CARMEN SYLVA
FÜRSTLICH WIEDISCHES ARCHIV

Herausgegeben von / Series editors

*Silvia Irina Zimmermann
Edda Binder-Iijima*

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Die Schriftenreihe versteht sich als Publikationsforum der Forschungsstelle Carmen Sylva des Fürstlich Wiedischen Archivs Neuwied. Ziel ist es, die wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit Elisabeth zu Wied, der ersten Königin von Rumänien und Schriftstellerin Carmen Sylva, zu fördern. Die Bände der Forschungsstelle Carmen Sylva, die in loser Reihenfolge erscheinen, sollen neue Brücken in der interdisziplinären und interkulturellen Carmen-Sylva-Forschung schlagen und die Forschungsergebnisse einer interessierten Öffentlichkeit zugänglich machen.

The series serves as a publication platform for the Research Center Carmen Sylva of the Fürstlich Wiedisches Archiv Neuwied. The focus is the scientific research on Elisabeth zu Wied, the first queen of Romania and the writer Carmen Sylva - her life, her literary works, and her intercultural impact on her time. The volumes of the Research Center Carmen Sylva are meant to build new bridges between the interdisciplinary and intercultural research on Carmen Sylva and to make the results available to the interested public.

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Verlag

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The Writing Queens of Romania, Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) and Marie

Queen Consorts and Writers – a Romanian Phenomenon

The history of the monarchy in Romania and of its four kings would be incomplete without the story of the queen consorts, who seem to have been even more fascinating personalities than the kings. The first two queen consorts, Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) and Marie of Romania, became famous as writers during their lifetime. They both wrote in their mother tongues, Elisabeth in German and Marie in English, and published many of their books, not only in Romania, but also abroad, thus reaching a widespread readership, worldwide publicity, and literary recognition.

Queen Elisabeth of Romania, born on 29 December 1843 in Neuwied, was the eldest child of Prince Hermann of Wied and his wife Marie, born Princess of Nassau. She had received an intense education and was already 26 years old when she married Prince Karl of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen in November 1869, who had become the elected Prince Carol I of Romania in 1866. After the Russian-Turkish war in 1878, when Prince Carol won independence for his country, Romania became a kingdom and Carol I and Elisabeth the first royal couple of the land. Unfortunately for the royal couple, their first and only child, Princess Marie, died very young, in 1873, and they did not have any other children. This was especially hard for Elisabeth, who suffered because she could not offer an heir to the Kingdom Romania. In 1878, she started her literary activity with a volume of translations of Romanian contemporary poetry into German. In 1880, she chose the pen name Carmen Sylva for her writings. She published a variety of writings in almost all literary genres, written mostly in German: poems, fairy tales, novels, stage plays, essays, and aphorisms (in French and German). Many of her writings soon appeared in translations into Romanian, French, and English. In 1882/1883 Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) published the first volume of fairy tales and legends connected with the name of the Pelesh Castle in Sinaia. The castle was built by King Carol I of Romania and inaugurated in 1883, and it was named after the river close-by who also gave the tales their name: *Pelesch-Märchen* (Tales of the Pelesh). The book was published in Romania and Germany, and some of its tales were later published in English translation in the volume *Legends from River & Mountain* (1896).

The reign of King Carol I ended with his death on 10 October 1914, after 48 years, the longest one of a sovereign in Romania. Queen Elisabeth died on 2 March 1916.

Queen Marie of Romania was born in Eastwell Park in Great Britain on 29 October 1875, as the eldest daughter of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh and (since 1893) Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the second son of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and Duchess Marie, born Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia, the only daughter of Emperor Alexander II of Russia. She spent a happy childhood in Kent, Malta, and Coburg and married in January 1893, aged 17, the Crown Prince of Romania, Ferdinand, the second son of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and nephew of King Carol I of Romania. In October 1893, she gave birth to the next heir of the Romanian dynasty, Prince Carol who would later become King Carol II of Romania.

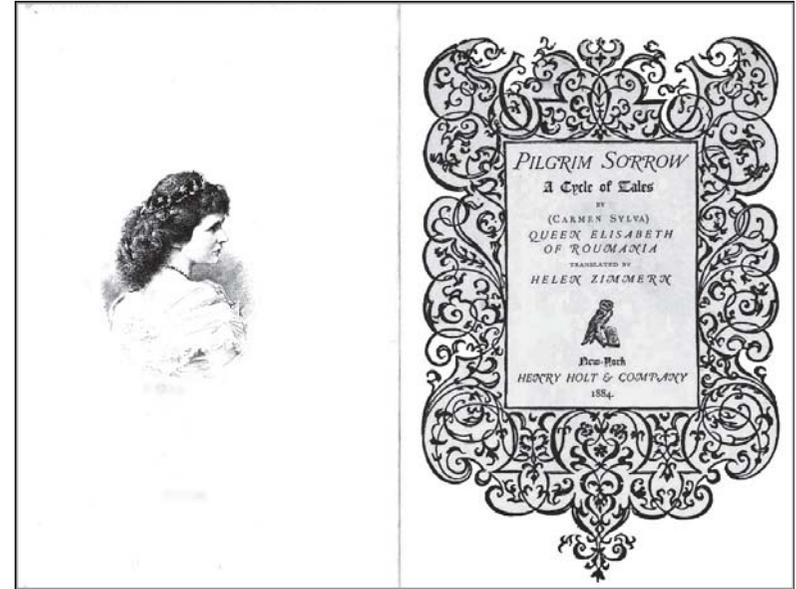
As crown princess, she began to write fiction, being encouraged by Queen Elisabeth of Romania (Carmen Sylva), who translated some of her stories into German and wrote a preface to Marie's fairy tale *The Lily of Life* (1913). After the death of King Carol in 1914, Ferdinand and Marie became the second royal couple of Romania. During the First World War it was mainly Queen Marie who appeared in public as an author of books, essays, and articles which were meant to promote the national cause of Romania at war while it was partly under the occupation of German and Bulgarian troops. After the war, Queen Marie travelled to Paris and remained there during the Peace Conference held in Versailles in July 1919, in order to campaign for the unification of the provinces Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina with the Old Kingdom of Romania, all territories with a majority of Romanian population. The enlargement of Romania being recognized in Versailles, King Ferdinand and Queen Marie of Romania thus became the royal couple of Greater Romania. The reign of King Ferdinand ended with his death on 20 July 1927, after only 13 years; Queen Marie outlived Ferdinand for 11 years, and she died on 18 July 1938.

Both first royal couples – King Carol I and Queen Elisabeth as well as King Ferdinand and Queen Marie – are buried in the Cathedral of Curtea de Argeş.

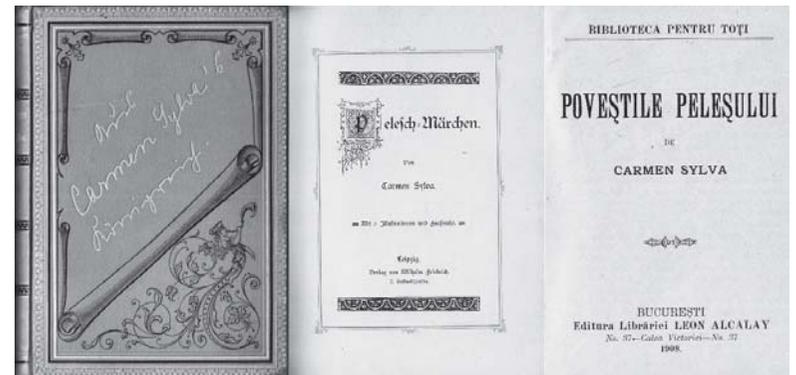
Queen Elisabeth and Crown Princess Marie of Romania had both published some of their fairy tales and fantasy novels in English editions in the United Kingdom and the United States around the year 1900. While the crown princess wrote in English, the German writings of Queen Elisabeth were translated into English. Both queens mentioned their royal status on the titles of their books: *Pilgrim Sorrow. A Cycle of Tales by (Carmen Sylva) Queen Elisabeth of Roumania* (New York, 1884), *Golden Thoughts of Carmen Sylva Queen of Roumania* (London and New York, 1900), *A Real Queen's Fairy Tales by Carmen Sylva (Elizabeth, Queen of Roumania)* (Chicago, 1901), *A Real Queen's Fairy Book by Carmen Sylva (Queen of Roumania)* (London, 1901), *The Lily of Life. A Tale by Crown Princess of Roumania with a preface by Carmen Sylva* (London, New York, Toronto, 1913). After the death of King Carol I, Queen Marie continued to publish her fairy tales, novels, and children's



Queen Elisabeth, coronation photography, 1881.



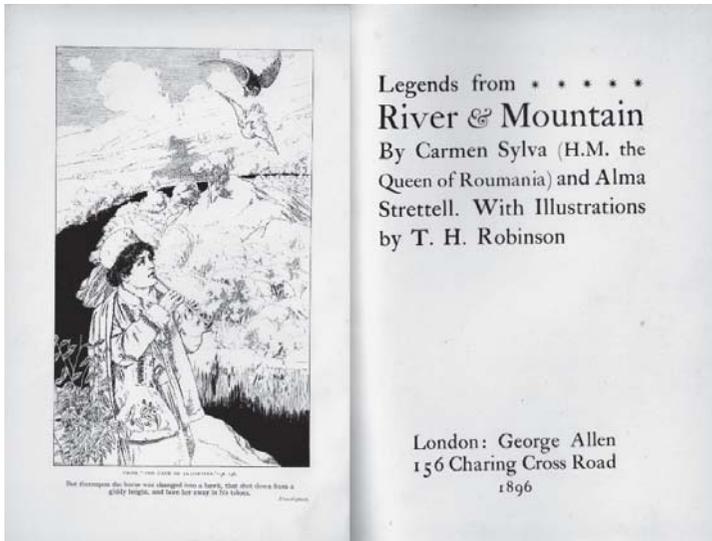
„Pilgrim Sorrow. A Cycle of Tales” (New York, 1884), American English edition of the book “Leidens Erdengang” (German edition, 1882). With a portrait of Queen Elisabeth on the frontispiece.



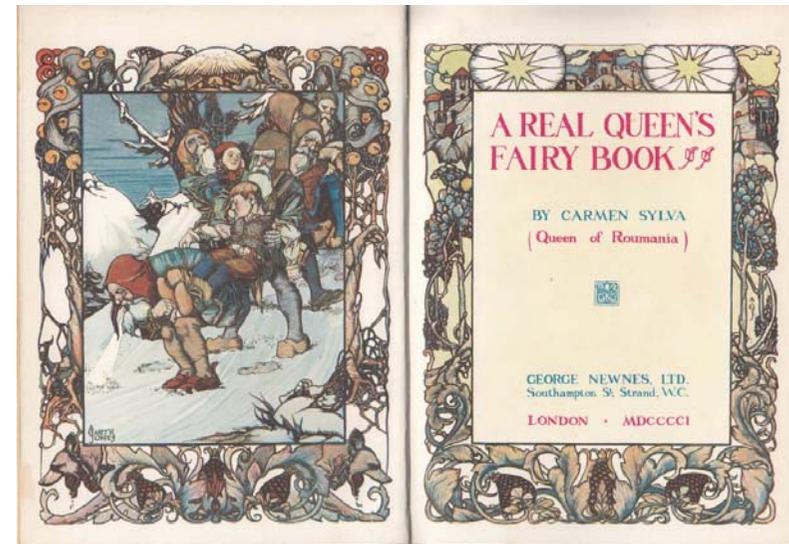
“Pelesch-Märchen” (Tales of the Pelesh) by Carmen Sylva (cover and title page of the 1st German edition, 1883), and “Poveștile Peleşului” (title page of a Romanian edition from 1908).



Illustrations of Romanian peasants in "Pelesch-Märchen"
(Tales of the Pelesh, 1st German edition, 1883).



"Legends from River & Mountain" by Carmen Sylva (H.M. the Queen of Romania), translated into English by Alma Strettel and illustrated by T.H. Robinson (London, 1896).



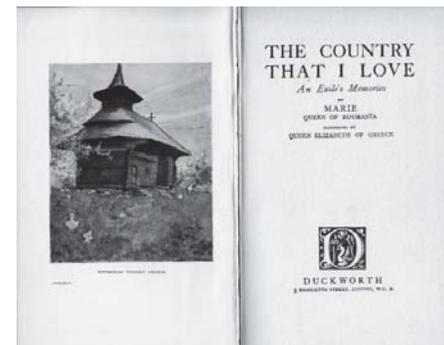
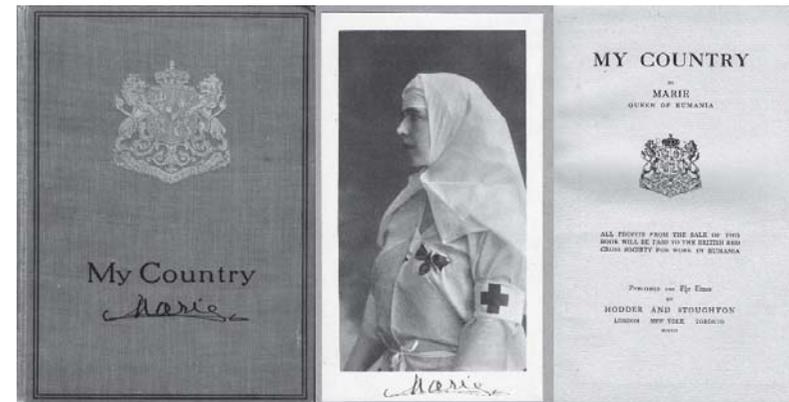
American and British editions of the fairy tales by Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva):
"A Real Queen's Fairy Tales" (Chicago, 1901),
"A Real Queen's Fairy Book" (London, 1901).



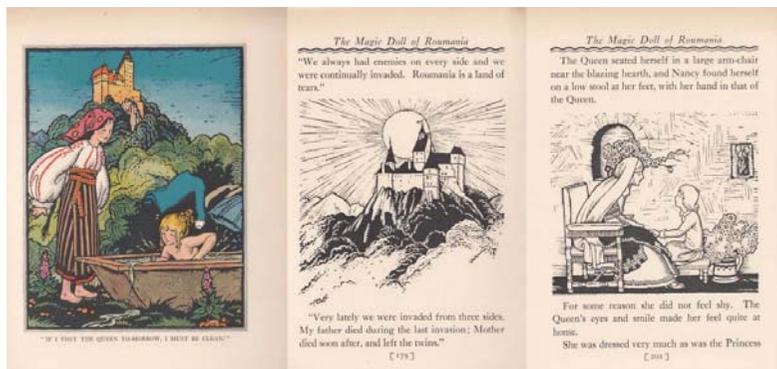
Crown Princess Marie at the Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest, 1907, old postcard.



"Ilderim. A Tale of Light and Shade" (London, 1926) by Queen Marie, with a dedication to her son, Crown Prince Carol. The German edition "Feindliche Brüder" (Hostile Brothers), translated by Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva), was published in 1917.



The autobiographical books "My Country" (London, New York, Toronto, 1916) and "The Country that I Love" (London, 1925) by Queen Marie of Romania, containing essays about Romania.



“The Magic Doll of Romania. A Wonder Story in Which East and West Do Meet” by Queen Marie (New York, 1929), with illustrations by Maud and Miska Petersham, the frontispiece showing Queen Marie with her coronation crown and other illustrations showing the Bran Castle and Queen Marie in Romanian costume.

The Ideal Sovereign in the Vision of the Writing Queens of Romania, Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) and Marie

Besides their fictional writings, the first two queens of Romania, Elisabeth and Marie, also wrote memories and diaries. Queen Elisabeth signed both her published literary books and her memoirs with her pen name Carmen Sylva, in order to mark a difference between the writer and the queen. Queen Marie, instead, simply used her royal title for her publications with no need to express any difference between the author and her high status. Nevertheless, both the works of the Poet-Queen Carmen Sylva as well as those of Queen Marie contain their reflections about how an ideal sovereign should be and which living royal personality they considered mostly alike to their vision.

Both queens were writing their memories in their native language (Elisabeth in German, Marie in English) and they published their books in their native country (Germany and the United Kingdom), as well as in Romanian translation in the country of their destiny, Romania. Like in the fairy tales, in their autobiographical writings about their kingdom the queens are describing the rich beauties of Romania, its landscape, the rural and monastic architecture, showing their empathy with the Romanian people, and inviting the foreign reader to share their high hopes for their country. While both writing queens describe King Carol I of Romania as a strong personality and a great king, his successor on the Romanian throne, Crown Prince and later King Ferdinand, is either missing (like in Elisabeth’s writings), or he is barely mentioned (like in Marie’s writings). Thus, for the Poet-Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva) King Carol I is the embodiment of the ideal monarch, while Queen Marie is promoting herself as the caring and visionary sovereign.

King Carol I of Romania, the ruling king and husband, seen by Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva)

In several writings, Queen Elisabeth is focusing on her husband, King Carol I of Romania, and showing him as a devoted monarch who fought to change Romania’s status from a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire into an independent state and a new kingdom and who supported Romania’s development in economy, culture, arts, society, and technology. In her essay *Bucharest* (1893)³, Queen Elisabeth tells the story about the young prince Carol who, when being offered the crown of Romania in

³ A first version of Queen Elisabeth’s essay about Bucharest in French was published in: *Les Capitales du Monde*, 1892, nr. 12, Paris, p. 297-320; the English translation appeared in: *Haper’s*

Bibliography

Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva): Published Works (Selection)

Poems (in German)

- 1880 *Hammerstein* [epic poem], Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.
1880 *Sappho* [epic poem], Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.
1881 *Stürme* [Storms, volume of epic poems], Bonn: Strauss.
1882 *Die Hexe* [The Witch, epic poem], inspired by the statue “The Witch” by Carl Cauer, Berlin: Duncker.
1882 *Jehovah* [epic poem], Berlin: Duncker.
1884 *Meine Ruh'* [My Peace, poems], Leipzig: Druckerei W. Druglin; Berlin: Duncker; 3rd extended edition in 5 volumes, Berlin: Duncker, 1901.
1884 *Mein Rhein* [My Rhine, poems], Leipzig: Titze.
1886 *Mein Buch* [My Book, poems] Düsseldorf: Felix Bagel.
1890 *Die Sphynx* [The Sphynx, epic poem from the volume *My Book*], facsimile of the handwriting of Queen Elisabeth, sheet music by August Bungert, French translation by Elena Văcărescu, Berlin: Luckhardt/ New York: Schirmer.
1891 *Heimath* [Homeland, poems], Bonn: Strauss.
1891 *Handwerkerlieder* [Songs of the craftsmen, poems], Bonn: Strauss.
1891 *Meerlieder* [Songs of the Sea, poems], Bonn: Strauss.
1891 *Weihnachtskerzchen von Pallanza* [Little Candles from Pallanza, poems in 4 languages], Pallanza: Vercellini.
1900 *Thau* [Dew, poems], Bonn: Strauss.
1903 *Unter der Blume* [Wine Flavor, poems], Regensburg.

Tales (in German)

- 1882 *Leidens Erdengang* [Pilgrim Sorrow], Berlin: Duncker.
1883 *Pelesch-Märchen* [Tales of the Pelesh], *Aus Carmen Sylva's Königreich* [From Carmen Sylva's Kingdom], vol. 1, Bonn: Strauss.
1885 *Durch die Jahrhunderte* [Through the Centuries, historical stories and popular legends from Romania from King Decebalus of Dacia to King Carol I of Romania], *Aus Carmen Sylva's Königreich* [From Carmen Sylva's Kingdom], vol. 2, with a dedication to the poet Vasile Alecsandri, Leipzig.
1888 *Pelesch im Dienst. Ein sehr langes Märchen für den Prinzen Heinrich XXXII. von Reuß* [The Duty of the Pelesh. A very long tale for Prince Henry 32nd of Reuss, autobiographical tale], Bonn: Strauss.
1898 *Monsieur Hampelmann. Domnul Pulcinel. Monsieur Polichinelle. The*

Queen Marie: Published Works (Selection)

Fantasy stories and novels (in English)

- 1913 *The Lily of Life*, with a dedication to her daughter Elisabeta, preface by Carmen Sylva, illustrated by Helen Stratton, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton.
1915 *The Dreamer of Dreams*, with a dedication to her daughter Ileana, illustrated by Edmund Dulac, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton.
1916 *The Stealers of Light. A Legend*, with a dedication to King Ferdinand, illustrated by Edmund Dulac, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton.
1923 *Why? A Story of a Great Longing*, with a dedication to Carmen Sylva, Stockholm: Svenska Tryckeriaktiebolaget.
1923 *The Voice of the Mountain. A Story for those who understand*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
1926 *Ilderim. A tale of light and shade*, with a dedication to her son, Crown Prince Carol], London: Adelphi Company.
1929 *Crowned Queens. A Tale from out the Past*, London: Heath Cranton.
1935 *Masks. A Novel*, London: Duckworth.

Children's books (in English)

- 1918 *Peeping Pansy*, illustrated by Mabel Lucie Attwell, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton.
1922 *The Story of Naughty Kildeen*, illustrated by Job, London: Oxford University Press/ New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
1923? *The Queen of Romania's Fairy Book*, illustrated by N. Grossman-Bulyghin, New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.
1924 *The Lost Princess. A Fairy Tale*, illustrated by Mabel Lucie Attwell, London: S.W. Partridge & Co.
1929 *The Magic Doll of Romania. A Wonder Story in Which East and West Do Meet*, illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham, New York: Frederick A. Stokes.

Memoirs and autobiographical writings (in English)

- 1916 *My Country*, London: Hodder & Stoughton.
1918 *From My Soul to Theirs*, in: Will. Gordon: Romania Yesterday and Today, London/ New York: John Lane, p. 149-158.
1918 *A Queen and Her People*, in: Will. Gordon: Romania Yesterday and Today, London/ New York: John Lane, p. 208-218.

Queen Elisabeth of Romania (Carmen Sylva)

The Child of the Sun

Life was a radiant maiden, the daughter of the Sun, endowed with all the charm and grace, all the power and happiness, which only such a mother could give to her child. Her hairs were sun-beams, her eyes gleaming stars. Flowers dropped from her hands, seeds sprang into life from beneath her footsteps; sweet scents and songs of birds floated around her; from her lips uncounted songs welled forth. Sounds like the gurgling of a thousand streams were heard from out her garments, and yet they were only made of flower petals and covered with tender webs, in which numberless dew-drops twinkled. Glow-worms encircled the royal brow like a diadem; birds bore her train over rough paths. When her foot touched thorns, they grew green and blossomed; when she laid her soft hand upon the bare rock, it became covered with moss and fern. The Sun had bestowed on her glorious child power over all things, and as companions and playfellows she had given to her Happiness and Love. In those days, there was much joy and blessedness on earth, and no pen can recount, no pencil paint how glorious it all was. It was just one eternal May day, and the august mother looked down from afar upon her daughter's glad games, and blessed the earth upon which her child was so happy.

But deep down in the earth there lived an evil spirit called Strife. The Kobolds brought him news of all the beauty that was outside, and of the young sovereign who reigned so proudly and lovingly over the whole world, and who played so sweetly with Happiness and Love. First he was angry at the tidings, for he desired to be sole ruler of all things; but after a while a great curiosity took hold of him – and something beside, something hot and wild, he knew not himself what. Only he wanted to get outside at all costs. So he began to move a mighty rock from the center of the earth, and he cast it up on high. Then he kindled a great fire, so that all the rocks and the metals above him melted and poured their glowing, scorching streams over the paradise of earth. And in the midst of these flames Strife rose up, clothed in dazzling armor, with flowing locks and contracted brows. In his hands he held a great block of stone, and he peered around him with his piercing black eyes, seeking what he should destroy first. But of a sudden he let fall the rock, crossed his arms over his breast, and stared down upon the garden of earth, like one in a dream. He stood thus a long, long while, gazing down, silent with wonder, like to a statue. Suddenly he struck his brow with his fist.

Queen Marie of Romania

The Sun-Child

*The tears all told her whence they came and grew so heavy,
that beneath the burden sore,
The maiden died...*

The Bard of the Dambovitz.

At her birth-hour the sun kissed her and made her his. The sun enwrapped her in a golden halo, and called her his child. The sun stole into her heart and took up his dwelling therein, he sent his rays to fill her wee hands and told her that forever they were hers, he left his reflection in the blue of her eyes, and buried his radiance within the thoughts of her brain – therefore was she the Sun-Child, the Sun-Child whom everyone loved.

Her hair was golden, because the sun had forgotten his light amongst her curls, her eyes had the color of deep summer seas that held captive his smile. Wee were the feet that carried her noiselessly into the dark lives of men, and her hands were two soft promises that had come down from purer climes. Not even the sound of water bubbling out of desert sands could equal the charm of her voice, and the words she spoke were like priceless pearls that some legendary queen might thread upon a silken string. When she smiled, it was as though all the buds of spring had suddenly opened, covering the world with blossoms after weary winter nights. The Sun-Child was beautiful with a beauty no other child possessed.

She lived with her parents in a humble street; both father and mother were simple and ignorant, little understanding what was the light their little one had brought down into their midst. But others understood, and flocked towards the Sun-Child's dwelling laying all their longing, their dreams, and their sorrows at her bare little feet. The Sun-Child was not afraid of their voices. Patiently she listened to their tales of woe; her small fingers gathered the tears from their eyes, gleaned the sighs from their lips; her heart, where the sun had his dwelling, became a beacon for weary wanderers, a sanctuary for souls that had lost their way, and so much light did the Sun-Child carry in her bosom, that it was as though she could have turned the whole world into gold. But human sorrow is a weight heavier far than all the gravestones that cover the dead, and little did the Sun-Child realize what she was doing when she gave herself up to all those who wept...

From far and wide they came to her, the weary, the heartbroken, the crushed, the humiliated, miserable outcasts flocking together from the four corners of the earth. In a long file they came, hoping to steal some of the