

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### RUMANIA WITHIN ITS NEW FRONTIERS

THE life and history of the Rumanians is closely associated with the Carpathian valleys and bordering plains. Their settlements extend from within the edge of the Hungarian plain eastward to the Black Sea, and throughout the valleys of the southern Carpathians as far south as the Iron Gate of the Danube. Farther north they have long occupied the Bessarabian foothill region of the Carpathians. In the Timok valley in Serbia south of the Danube river, there is a small area of Rumanian speech. In Transylvania, a region that is deep notched by rivers, the inhabitants live in farms and villages on the narrow valley floors and on flat-topped ridges and spurs where pasture abounds. Most of the Rumanian folk live on the Moldavian-Wallachian plain between the Carpathians and the Danube.

More than 80 per cent of the population live on farms. In the whole of Rumania (Fig. 129) there is a population of 16,000,000, and so completely do Rumanians occupy the land that there are only about 3,750,000 non-Rumanian peoples included within the present boundaries: 1,500,000 Magyars, 400,000 Germans, 1,100,000 Ukrainians, and 750,000 Jews. It is a compact and virile nation, ranking (roughly) with Czechoslovakia in present economic power.

### THE ORIGINS OF THE RUMANIAN STATE

The rise of the Rumanian nation is an event of recent times. When the Turk occupied southeastern Europe, the ultimate defeat of the Rumanians led to the acknowledgment of homage to Turkey on the part of the ruling princes, but not the complete subjugation of their people. The nominal overlordship of the Turk continued until 1829, when, by the treaty of Adrianople, Czar Nicholas I of Russia obliged the Turkish government to grant practically complete autonomy to Moldavia and Wallachia, the two chief provinces of modern Rumania.

That the country of the Rumanians was never overrun by the Turk was due to the defensive wall of the Carpathians, rugged and forested, with few defiles, which kept the invader from entering Rumania by the Carpathian passes after his conquest of part of Hungary. And the broad and then unbridged Danube, its lower course bordered by wide, impassable reed swamps, was a protective moat at the edge of the fertile plains. After long effort the Turk gained access to the Rumanian plains, only to find the population fleeing before him to the