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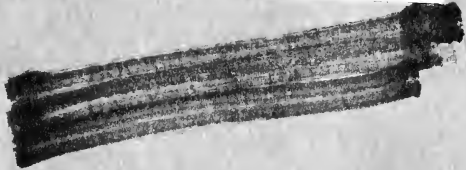


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# HEROIC BALLADS OF SERVIA,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

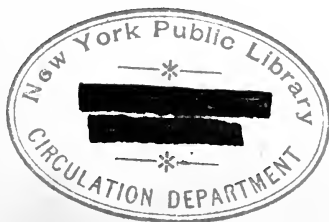
GEORGE RAPALL NOYES,

AND

LEONARD BACON



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## PREFACE

The purpose of the present volume is to give specimens of the best portions of a ballad literature that is among the most remarkable in Europe. For the translation of the ballads from the Servian, and for the introduction and notes, I am responsible; Mr. Bacon has transformed my prose texts into English verse. Each of us, however, has of course made suggestions as to the work of the other.

Most of the material in the introduction I have taken from Karájich (see below, pp. 10, 11), and from the concise *Sketch of Servian Literature* (in Servian) of Professor Pópovich (Belgrade, 1909). For various minor details in the book as a whole I am indebted to several previous translators from the Servian and writers on Servia and its literature; to be exact, to Bowring, *Servian Popular Poetry* (London, 1827); Elodie Lawton Mijatovich, *Kossovo* (London, 1881); D'Avril, *La Bataille de Kossovo* (Paris, 1868); Vogl, *Marko Kraljevits* (Vienna, 1851); Chedo Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians* (Boston, Page, 1908); Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, *The Servian People* (New York, Scribner, 1910); W. Miller, *The Balkans* (New York, Putnam, 1896); Ranke,

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*Serbien und die Türkei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1879; also translated by Kerr, London, 1847). To Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons and G. P. Putnam's Sons I am indebted for their courteous permission to reprint passages of some length from the copyright works published by them.

Next to Karájich and Pópovich, however, I owe most to Mr. Milivoy S. Stanoyevich, a graduate of the University of Belgrade, who has aided me in various ways, notably in the selection of the later ballads, in the translation of difficult passages, and in the accentuation of the Servian names. Without his kindly help this volume would be much more imperfect than it is at present.

G. R. NOYES.

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**HEROIC BALLADS OF SERVIA**



## INTRODUCTION

The ballads of Servia occupy a high position, perhaps the highest position, in the ballad literature of Europe. Of them Jacob Grimm wrote: "They would, if well known, astonish Europe," and "in them breathes a clear and inborn poetry such as can scarcely be found among any other modern people."<sup>1</sup> The origin of this popular literature goes back to a period of which no written record exists; its known history dates from the fourteenth century, since which time it is absolutely continuous. And in Servia, unlike England and Spain, ballads still survive as an important part of the nation's intellectual life; they are still sung, and still composed, by peasant poets who have received their training from oral tradition instead of from the printed page.

According to their subjects the Servian ballads may be divided into two very unequal divisions, the first, and by far the larger, being based on the national history, while the second lacks any such historical foundation. Yet the line between the two groups cannot be strictly drawn; well-known folk-lore motives or mere popular jests are

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Vogl, *Marko Kraljevits*, p. iii.

continually attached to historical heroes. Such ballads as *Prince Marko's Plowing* and *Marko Drinks Wine in Ramazán* can be called "historical" only in the most ultra-catholic interpretation of the term.

The historical ballads may again be divided into more or less definite cycles. First in order of time come those dealing with the kings of the Némanich dynasty (1168–1367). This royal line made less impression on the popular mind by its heroic exploits than by its piety in founding churches and monasteries (cf. p. 28). The surviving ballads of the cycle, which are few in number, are represented in this volume by *Urosh and the Sons of Marnyáva*<sup>1</sup> and *The Building of Skadar*. After the death of the great tsar Stepan Dushan in 1356, his son, the weak Urosh, came to the throne, but was unable to preserve his authority intact. The leader of the revolting chieftains was King Vukáshin, who defeated his lawful superior and caused him to be slain. Of the rivalry of the two men the ballad *Urosh and the Sons of Marnyáva* preserves a distant echo; to the historic brothers Vukáshin and Úglyesha it adds a third, Goyko, unknown outside of folk-lore. Another glimpse, still more legendary, of the three brothers is preserved in *The Building of Skadar*.

The cycle of the battle of Kósovo forms the classic center of the Servian ballads. After the death of Vukáshin, being hard pressed by the

<sup>1</sup> This ballad is here printed as the first of those dealing with Prince Marko, with which also it may be classed.



Turks, the Servians in 1371 elected as their tsar, Lazar, a leader who had served under Dushan and was connected with him by marriage. His efforts to save the country were vain; on June 15 (St. Vitus' day), 1389, his armies were crushed by those of Murad I. Both rulers fell on the battlefield, Murad being killed by a Servian to whom one of the contemporary accounts gives the title of "a faithful servant of Lazar, by name Milosh." About 1431 Constantine the Philosopher, a Servian biographer, states that the "great noble" who killed Murad was "slandered to his lord by envious tongues as wishing to betray him." An anonymous Italian writer (about 1500) tells how on the eve of battle Lazar reproached Milosh with wishing to betray him, and how Milosh replied that the event would prove his truth or treason; the same source states that on the battlefield there was a report of the treachery of a voývoda<sup>1</sup> named Drá-goslav Príbishich. Finally Mauro Orbini in his *Regno de gli Slavi* (1601) for the first time ascribes the betrayal of Lazar to his son-in-law Vuk Bránkovich, whose fair fame is thus wrongfully besmirched. Orbini makes Milosh, like Vuk, the son-in-law of Lazar, and tells of the origin of the enmity of the two men in a quarrel between their wives Mara and Vúkosava; in other words, he gives the Kósovo legend in practically its complete form, as it is found in the ballads here printed.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, probably the product of popu-

<sup>1</sup> Duke, lord.

<sup>2</sup> The story of the quarrel of Mara and Vúkosava is not, however, included in this volume.

lar tradition, not of Orbini and his predecessors.

Upon this Kósovo legend many episodes are grafted, such as those of Ban Strahin, Musich Stevan, and the Maid of Kósovo. The ballads often represent varying traditions; thus the accounts of Lazar's church in *The Battle of Kósovo* and *The Building of Ravánitsa* are not perfectly consistent with each other. They depart widely from historical truth, making Vukáshin, for example, who died in 1371, and Ertseg Stepan, who belongs to a later period, both take part in the battle of Kósovo.<sup>1</sup>

These Kósovo songs are emphatically not fragments of a primitive epic, but ballads dealing with detached episodes. The attempts that have been made to stitch them together into a connected whole result in damaging splendid ballads without constructing an epic worthy of the name. They furnish an argument of some weight against the Homeric theories of Lachmann and his school.

If the Kósovo cycle be the most elevated, dignified, epic portion of the Servian popular poetry, the ballads of Marko Krályevich (Prince Marko) are of more dramatic interest, combining tragic pathos with almost ribald comedy in a fashion worthy of an Elizabethan playwright. Unlike Strahin and Milosh, who, to borrow a phrase from Dryden, are "patterns of exact virtue," radiant as their garments, Marko is a burly spoiled child, strong, self-willed, capricious, at times cruel, but

<sup>1</sup> This topic is discussed by H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 313-319.

always brave, always kind to the weak and friendless, whether they be fair maidens or mere birds of prey, and, above all, always a devoted son to his old mother Yévrosima. The historic Marko, the son of King Vukáshin, was not of great importance. After his father's death he ruled over a portion of Macedonia, with Prilip as his capital; in 1385 he submitted to Turkish sovereignty; and in 1394 he perished, fighting for the Sultan Bajazet against the Voývoda Mircha of Wallachia. But he must have endeared himself to the nation by his personal qualities, for he became by far the best known and the best beloved hero of the ballads. In one respect, at least, the ballads about him are true to history. Although Marko is associated with Milosh as his sworn brother, and although he visits the field of Kósovo after the defeat of the Servians (see pp. 130-32), he is assigned no part in the battle itself; as to the cause of his absence from the fray the ballads are silent.

From the great days of heroic conflict with the Turks to the dark ages of oppression, the ballads of *The Maiden Márgita and Rayko the Voývoda*, with its lament over fallen champions, forms a natural transition. The time of Turkish rule lacked great exploits and great personalities; its heroes were the hayduks, or robber outlaws, of whom the most famous was Starína Novak, who with his band of followers, including his sworn brother, the bold Rádivoye, lived in Bosnia late in the sixteenth century. Though they use muskets instead of bows, these worthies, as they appear

in the ballads, are own cousins of Robin Hood and Little John.

“After Herzegovina was subdued by the Turks (1482), many of the inhabitants fled to Dalmatia and Klis [near Salona], and after the fall of Klis (1537) they went to Zengg [Senye in the ballads] on the Croatian seacoast, in order, as hired soldiers of the emperor, to defend the country from Turkish marauding bands: these are the *fugitives*.”<sup>1</sup> A special cycle of ballads glorifies these “fugitives,” of whom Ivo of Senye, who lived about 1600, is the chief hero. With this cycle may be grouped the ballads of the “seacoast heroes,” who, however, are not in the strict sense “fugitives.” They are not from Zengg, but from Kotári, in northern Dalmatia, and are of a later date, the middle and end of the seventeenth century. Among them is Stoyan Yánkovich, who in 1689 contributed to the fall of Údbina and the freeing of Lika and Kríbava from the Turks. The ballads that deal with him have little connection with his actual exploits.

Of ballads more recent in subject-matter this volume contains but one specimen, *The War of the Montenegrins with Mahmud Pasha* (1796), which represents the cycle of the freeing of Montenegro. Unlike their predecessors, the ballads of this group are better history than poetry. “Short and simple, generally without poetic descriptions or long conversations, almost entirely without the vila or raven motives, they sing in a realistic fash-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Pópovich without indication of source.

ion the wars of the Montenegrins with the Turks; they celebrate only real persons, and when they mention even unimportant actors, always preserve the topography of their doings accurately and consistently. In them women play no part.”<sup>1</sup>

The ballads lacking historical foundation are of the most varied sort. Thus *The Serpent Bridegroom* and *Sister and Brother* are versified fairy tales, dealing with familiar folk-lore motives. *Predrag and Nenad* is ostensibly a hayduk story, but its plot is not purely Servian; it is known to English readers from Malory's tale of *Balin and Balan*, or Tennyson's modern version of it. *St. Nicholas* is a naïve popular legend, while *Muyo and Āliya* tells of the misdeeds of an unusually wicked vila, or mountain nymph. On the other hand, *The Wife of Hasan Aga* is a simple, powerful tragedy of domestic life.

The Servian heroic ballads are now all composed in one measure, an unrimed line of ten syllables, with a cæsura after the fourth syllable. There is no regular arrangement of accents; but, as no Servian word (except of course monosyllables) is accented on the ultima, the effect of the verse, when read or recited, is of an irregular trochaic rhythm.

Ī pōněšě trī tōvără blāgā  
Yă kād tākō svādbŭ ūrēdishě.

When the ballads are *sung*, the prose accents are set aside, and the lines become regular trochaic pentameter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pópovich.

<sup>2</sup> Karájich, Preface to second edition of *Servian National Songs*, 1824 (in government edition, 1891).

Previous English translations have imitated more or less closely this Servian meter. To the translators of the present volume it seemed better to cast aside entirely the native measure, as one essentially foreign to the genius of the English language, and to adopt a verse modeled on that which, in *Sigurd the Volsung*, William Morris has made classic by his handling of a subject that is spiritually akin to the Kósovo ballads. At this point it may be well to forestall a possible cavil. Metrists will note that the translators, while in the main employing the measure of six and a half feet or *thirteener*, have liberally interspersed the seven-foot line or *fourteener*. Lovers of the glorious measure of *Sigurd the Volsung* may perhaps resent this variation, but the citation of a precedent from Ma-caulay should be sufficient to establish the dignity of the practice:

And in the vats of Luna,  
This year the must shall foam  
Round the white feet of laughing girls  
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

The Servian ballads are ordinarily recited or chanted to the accompaniment of the *gusle*, a crude, one-stringed instrument, in appearance somewhat like a mandolin, but played with a bow. The tones of the *gusle* come in only at the close of the verses. On their distribution Karájich wrote thus in 1823: "The heroic songs are now sung most often and with most zest in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the southern, mountainous regions of

Servia. In these places even to-day almost every house has its gusle, and it is hard to find a man who does not know how to play it, and many women and girls know how.”<sup>1</sup> In the lower regions the gusle grows less common, until it finally becomes the peculiar possession of blind beggars, who sing the songs at fairs and church festivals.

The anonymous authorship of these songs may excite surprise among a people of bookish training and habits like ourselves. It will be readily understood that a singer knowing some fifty of the ballads by heart can without great difficulty compose new songs on any passing event of village life, even as a cultivated gentleman, well versed in even one of Shakespeare's plays, can find fitting quotations for an after-dinner speech on any imaginable topic. Karájich gives an example of such a jesting song composed upon a village wedding. Ballads of this type have no value in themselves, and disappear from memory along with the trifling event that occasioned them. But “just as wag-gish old men and youths compose these jocose songs, so others compose serious ballads of battles and other notable events. It is not strange that one cannot learn who first composed even the most recent of the ballads, to say nothing of the older ones; but it is strange that among the common people nobody regards it as an art or a thing to be proud of to compose a new ballad; and, not to speak of boasting of doing so, everyone, even the real author, refuses to acknowledge the ballad, and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

says that he has heard it from another. This is true of the most recent ballads, of which it is known that they were not brought from elsewhere, but arose on the spot from an event of a few days ago; but when even a year has passed since the event and the ballad, or when a ballad is heard of an event of yesterday, but of a distant locality, no one even thinks of asking about its origin.”<sup>1</sup>

A few words are due the memory of the great collector of the Servian national songs, Vuk Stefánovich Karájich (1787–1864), from whose work all but one of the ballads in the present volume have been translated.<sup>2</sup> Born of a peasant family, under Turkish rule, Vuk early learned to read and write, and while still a boy served as a scribe to Black George, the leader of the Servian revolt. Owing to an illness he became a cripple and was restricted to a bookish career. In 1813 he became acquainted in Vienna with the Slavic scholar Kopitar, whose attention he attracted by an article written in the living Servian language instead of the artificial ecclesiastical dialect then current in Servian literature, and who encouraged him to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Acquaintance with these simple statements by Karájich as to conditions with which he was familiar, in a country where ballads are still a living force, might have saved writers on English balladry from much empty theorizing. Despite the prevailing anonymity, the authorship of some of the modern ballads is known with reasonable certainty: see p. 225, note.

<sup>2</sup> The one exception is the ballad *How Milosh Killed the Sultan Murad*, which is from a small volume, *Boj na Kosovu*, published at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, no date.



undertake the gathering of popular songs and ballads. In 1814–15 he published the first fruits of his labors, a small collection in two volumes; a second, enlarged edition appeared in four volumes, 1824–33; and a third edition, with still further additions, followed in 1841–66, in six volumes, of which the last two were printed posthumously. Finally the Servian government has reissued the great work, with additions from Karájich's manuscripts, in nine volumes, 1891–1902, containing, besides two volumes of folk-songs, nearly five hundred ballads.

Karájich also published a collection of popular tales and one of proverbs. But his activity as a folk-lorist was only one side of his labors. In 1814 he published the first edition of his *Servian Grammar*, and in 1818 he published the first edition of his *Servian Dictionary*, with translations in German and Latin, which, in a revised form, is still a standard work. He prepared a translation of the New Testament into the living speech of the people. Finally, not to speak of his less important writings, he revised on a phonetic basis the alphabet and spelling of his native language, and his system, after years of persecution, partly owing to his introduction of the letter *j* from the hated "Catholic" Latin alphabet, has long since been adopted as the Servian official orthography. Few writers of books have had so great an influence, or an influence so purely beneficent, on the life of their nation as had Vuk Stefánovich Karájich.

Some explanation is needed of the pronunciation of the Servian proper names. No simple transliteration can correctly indicate the native pronunciation; that here adopted seems open to as few objections as any other. The vowels and diphthongs should be given their regular "continental" values: roughly, *father*, *café*, *machine*, *note*, *rule*, *aye*, *bey*, *boy*. *I* never forms a diphthong with a preceding vowel: *Vó-in*, *Vá-i-sti-na*. *Y* is always either a consonant or the second element of a diphthong; a consonant followed by *y* plus a vowel forms one syllable with them: *Néma-nya*. The consonants and consonantal digraphs have their ordinary English sounds; the following are apparently all in regard to which there could be ambiguity. *G* is always "hard," as in *gift*; *j* is pronounced as in *jelly*, the *j* of the Servian alphabet being here rendered by *y* (*Yug*); *s* is always surd, as in *soft*, *passing*; *z* and *ch* are pronounced as in *zebra* and *church*, not with their German sounds; *zh* represents the sound of *s* in *pleasure*. *Ch* and *j*, it should be added, each transliterate two Servian sounds, only one of which corresponds to the English value of the letter used for it. The Servian "vocalic *r*," as in *Srja*, has been rendered by *ri*, *Srija*. *C* has not been used in the transliteration; thus, *Tsétinye* (*Cetinje*). The accent of words of two syllables is always on the first syllable; on words of three or more syllables the accent is always marked. No attempt has been made to indicate the quantities of the Servian vowels or the secondary accents.

A BALLAD OF SERVIA BEFORE THE  
TURKISH CONQUEST



THE BUILDING OF SKADAR <sup>1</sup>

ONCE there were three born brothers, a hold that  
had begun—

The three sons of Marnyáva. Vukáshin the king  
was one,

The second was Voývoda Úglyesha, and Goyko the  
third was he;

And Skadar on the Bóyana were they building  
busily.

With fifteen score of masons three long years la-  
bored they,

But they could not for the fortress the strong  
foundations lay,

Much less raise up the wall thereof, for what was  
set upright

By the masons in the morning, a vila <sup>2</sup> wrecked  
at night.

The vila called from the mountain in the spring  
of the fourth year:

“Plague nót thyself, Vukáshin, and squander  
not thy gear!

King, thow canst not for the fortress the strong  
foundation lay,

<sup>1</sup> Scútari.

<sup>2</sup> “A sort of nymph. The vilas live in great wooded mountains and in craggy places around lakes and rivers. A vila is always young and beautiful, dressed in a thin white garment, and with long hair flowing over her back and breast. The vilas will harm no one so long as no one injures them, as for instance by intruding on their dances or feasts; but when any one injures them, then they will punish him in various ways, as by shooting him in the hand or foot, or in both hands or both feet, or in the heart, in which case he at once dies.” Karájich, *Servian Dictionary*.

Much less raise up the wall thereof, until upon a  
day  
Come news of Stoya and Stoyan,<sup>1</sup> for like names  
have the twain ;  
Sister they are and brother. Into the wall amain  
Shalt thou wall them. And the fortress shall be  
stablished in the land."

Vukáshin heard. To Désimir he issued his  
command :

"Désimir, thou wast ever a faithful knave to me,  
And from this hour onward mine own son shalt  
thou be.

Harness, my son, the horses to the wains in the  
yard below,  
And take six packs of money, and over the white  
world go.

Do thou seek for Stoya and Stoyan, for like names  
have the twain ;

Brother they are and sister. Buy them or seize  
them amain.

Thou shalt bring them unto Skadar on the Bóyana  
straightway,

That the twain in the foundation of the tower we  
may lay,

To see if the foundation at last will stay or stand,  
And finally the fortress be stablished in the land."

Désimir heard, and harnessed the steeds to the  
wains below ;

<sup>1</sup> *Stoyan* is a common Servian name (cf. p. 202), of which *Stoya* (for *Stóyana*) is the feminine diminutive. But *stoyan* is also an adjective meaning stable, enduring; and *stoya* a noun meaning a standing, a position; both are from the same root as *stóyati*, to stand.

And with six packs of money o'er the white world  
did he go.

He sought for Stoya and Stoyan, for like names  
had the twain;

For three full years he sought them, and aye he  
sought in vain.

To Skadar on the Bóyana at last he took the  
track;

To the king he gave the horses and the wains and  
money back.

“Here, king, are thy wains and horses, and thy  
money-bags again,  
Since I found not Stoya and Stoyan—for like  
names have the twain.”

Vukáshin heard it, and summoned Rado the  
builder in,

And Rado bade three hundred men their labor to  
begin.

What the king built, wrecked the vila; no founda-  
tion could he lay,

Much less raise up the wall thereof. To the king  
then did she say:

“Plague not thyself, Vukáshin, and squander  
not thy gold;

Thou canst not rear a single pier, much less the  
wall of the hold.

A faithful wife hath each of you, ye kingly broth-  
ers born:

Whose wife with the masons' dinner comes to Bóy-  
ana tomorn,

Into the tower's foundation wall her then, that it  
may stand;

And finally the fortress shalt thou stablish in the land."

When King Vukáshin heard it, he called his brethren there:

"Hear ye what from the mountain the vila doth declare!

In no way get we vantage by squandering the gold;

She will not let rear a single pier, much less the wall of the hold.

She saith that we have faithful wives, all we three brothers born:

Whose wife with the masons' dinner comes to Bóyana tomorn,

Into the tower's foundation we must build her, that it stand;

And finally the fortress shall we stablish in the land.

Before God shall we not pledge it, not to tell our wives at home,

And leave to chance whose wife tomorn to Bóyana shall come?"

While the three lords were pledging, upon them came the night,

And straightway they departed unto their houses white.

They spent the lordly evening, and went each man to bed;

And—a marvel!—Vukáshin brake the pledge, and told the wife he wed:

"Hearest thou, my dear love now, that troth to me hast sworn!



Go not thou to the Bóyana with the masons' dinner tomorn.

Thou wilt perish; they will wall thee into the wall of the tower."

Úglyesha brake it also, and told his wife in that hour:

"Be not deceived, my darling wife, that troth to me hast sworn!

Go not with the masons' dinner unto Bóyana tomorn.

Girl, thou wilt die; they will wall thee into the wall of the tower."

But Goyko did not break the pledge, nor tell his wife in that hour.

On the fair morrow early, when first the daybreak shone,

The children of Marnyáva to the Bóyana were gone.

Time came the dinner to carry, and the turn of the queen to bear;

She went to the wife of Úglyesha, and spake unto her there:

"Hear, and good health to thee, sister! My head beginneth to ache;

I cannot conquer it. Prithee the meal to the masons take."

"Good health to thee, queen," she answered, "my sister that is so dear!

I cannot master this aching arm. Speak thou to our sister here."

She went to the youngest sister, and unto her said she:

“O thou young wife of Goyko, do thou harken  
now to me!

It is this—good health to thee, sister!—my head  
beginneth to ache;  
I cannot conquer the pain. Do thou the meal to  
the masons take.”

Goyko’s young wife gave answer: “I would  
do it gladly, O queen;  
But all unbathed is my little child, and the linen  
not washed clean.”

Answered the queen: “With the dinner to  
the masons do thou go.  
Let our sister bathe thy baby; I will whiten the  
linen like snow.”

Then the young wife of Goyko thereto would  
say no more;  
Forthwith unto the masons their midday meal she  
bore.

By Bóyana Goyko saw her, and sad was his heart  
that day,

Sad for his wife and the little lad that in the  
cradle lay,

That should be without his mother ere his first  
month was told;

And down upon the hero’s face the bitter tears  
they rolled.

The slender girl looked on him; gently she walked  
along,

Until she was come to Goyko, and she spake as  
soft as a song:

“What aileth thee, Goyko, that on thy cheeks  
the bitter tears have rolled?”

He answered:

“Evil 't is, my love! I had  
an apple of gold,

And to-day it fell into Bóyana, and woe is me  
this day!

It is a trouble of the soul; this grief I cannot  
slay.”

She understood not, the slender girl; unto her  
lord she spake:

“Pray for thine health; an apple far better shalt  
thou make!”

Then was he grievously sorry, and turned his  
head aside;

He could not any longer bear to look upon his  
bride.

But the two sons of Marnyáva took her hands  
white and small,

And led her to the stronghold, to wall her in the  
wall.

They made to Rado the builder the matter mani-  
fest;

She laughs at his three hundred men, for she deems  
it is a jest.

They brought her and they placed her, to wall  
her in the wall;

And the three hundred masons they came there  
one and all.

With stone and wood they walled her to the knees  
east and west,

And the slender girl laughs lightly, deeming  
haply they jest.

They built unto her girdle with the heavy wood  
and stone.

She saw what was come on her; with a very bitter  
groan,

And writhing like a serpent, she prayed her brethren  
there:

“An you trust in God, wall me not up, so tender  
and so fair.”

So prayed she. They looked not on her; no way  
her prayer did aid.

But she overcame disgrace and shame, and to her  
lord she said:

“Let me not now, my dearest lord, be walled  
up in the hold,

But send unto my mother, that hath a treasure  
of gold,

And purchase thou a slave girl with her money in  
that hour,

And wall the slave girl into the foundations of  
the tower.”

So spake the slender girl in vain; the prayer  
could not aid.

When she found no help, to Rado, the master  
builder, she prayed:

“For my bosom, builder Rado, leave a space  
at my behest,

That Yovo when he cometh may be suckled at my  
breast.”

Rado, the master builder, was well pleased with  
her prayer,

And for her milk-white bosom he left a window  
there,

With the white bosom outward. He did her  
whole behest,

That Yovo might be suckled when he came unto  
her breast.

And again she called on Rado, the builder, in  
this wise:

“I prithee, brother Rado, leave a window for  
mine eyes,

That I may look to the white house, and easily  
may see

When they bring Yovo hither, or bear him back  
from me.”

Rado, the master builder, was well pleased with  
her prayer;

That she might look to the milk-white house, he  
left a window there,

And see the child when they brought him or bore  
him back again.

At last they walled her in the wall and stablished  
the hold amain.

They brought the babe in the cradle, she suckled  
him from the stone;

For seven days she suckled him; thereafter her  
voice was gone.

A year she gave the young child suck, and sweet  
did the white milk flow.

As it was then in Skadar, so sweet it runneth now.

Yea, even to-day the white milk flows, for a mir-  
acle most high,

And a healing draught for women whereof the  
breasts are dry!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“*They say* that even now from the windows where her

breasts were exposed flows a certain moisture, which collects below the wall as lime; and women who have no milk, or whose breasts pain them, take this and drink it in water. Among our people it is said even now that no great building can be constructed unless some person be walled into it; and therefore all who are able retire from such places, since it is said that even a person's shadow may be walled in, and he afterwards dies." (Note by Karájich.)

**BALLADS OF KÓSOVO FIELD**





## THE BUILDING OF RAVÁNITSA

To celebrate the holy tide, Tsar Lazarus is gone  
To Krúshevats, the fortress of many-colored  
stone;

To the birthfeast of St. Amos he summons all the  
lords

By letter and salutation that with their rank ac-  
cords;

And all the lords of Servia were gathered at that  
place.

He set them at the tables, by greatness and by  
grace.

At the head of the good table the good Tsar  
Lazar sat;

The lords were set beside him to drink the wine  
thereat;

And they spake of all good tidings what time the  
wine ran free.

Tsáritsa Mílitsa stepped forth, and through  
the hall came she.

Girded was she with girdles nine, nine chains her  
neck did fold,

Nine pendants hung about her brows from the  
coronet of gold,

And the three summits of the crown were set with  
a precious stone

That shone by night as broad and bright as in  
the day the sun.

And she spoke to the glorious Lazarus:

“Abashed

am I to-day

Only to look on thee, Lazarus; and more this  
     word to say—  
 I cannot help it, I must speak forth. Némanya's  
     sons of old,  
 They were our tsars in word and deed, and all  
     their days are told.  
 They heaped not treasure up in hills, but to God  
     reared many a fane;  
 They builded their good monasteries on the moun-  
     tain and the plain;  
 They reared o'er Jákovitsa Déchani on the  
     height,  
 The Patriarch's Place at level Pech,<sup>1</sup> and in  
     Drénitsa the white  
 Did they raise the Devich; near Pazar St. Peter's  
     Church they set,  
 And the great Pillars of St. George on the mount,  
     higher yet;  
 They builded Sópochani over the Rashka cold,  
 And the Cathedral of St. Anne they wrought in  
     Vlah the Old;  
 Studénitsa 'neath Brivenik; 'neath Yádovnik, St.  
     Paul;  
 O'er Káranovats the fair church that Zhicha men  
     do call;  
 The Chapel of Good Friday on Prizrend did they  
     bestow;  
 And they reared Gráchanitsa on level Kósovo.  
 All these are their foundations. In their place  
     thou reignest now;

<sup>1</sup> Ipek.

No churches hast thou founded, yet a treasure of  
gold hast thou.

The treasure availeth nothing to help us or to  
heal;

Neither for soul or body will treasure work our  
weal."

Then rose up Lazar the glorious:

"My great

lords, harken ye

What saith my queen, that nowhere a church  
builded have we!

Ravánitsa in Résava by the Ravan will I rear,  
For treasure in my treasuries whate'er I need is  
here.

Leaden shall be the corner stones, and the walls of  
silver white;

I will cover the walls of it with the gold burnished  
bright.

And moreover, by God's mercy, shall pearls be  
set thereon,

And the gateways of the chapels shall glow with  
precious stone."

The Servian lords rose lightly; they bowed  
down one and all:

"Build for the sake of thine own soul and the health  
of Stevan the Tall."<sup>1</sup>

But Milosh Óbilich sat there at the table foot to  
dine,

<sup>1</sup> "The popular name of the son of Prince Lazar, who ruled after the battle of Kósovo, and who built the monastery of Manásiya." Karájich, *Servian Dictionary*.

And naught he said; and Lazar saw, and pledged  
him in the wine:

“Hail to thee, Milosh the voývoda! What then  
to me wilt thou say?

For I think to build to our Lord God a mighty  
church this day.”

Milosh rose up and doffed the cap with the  
plumes and sable fine,  
And he made obeisance to the tsar, and they gave  
him the cup of wine.

Milosh took up the golden cup, and gave his health  
again:

“Glory to thee, prince, for thy speech, but for  
building of the fane—

This is no time for building. In faith, it cannot  
be!

My lord, but look in the ancient book what it shall  
say to thee.

The last hour is upon us; swift it cometh apace.

The Turks will take the kingdom and rule it in  
our place.

They will sack church and convent, and Ravánitsa  
likewise.

The foundations of Ravánitsa, they will dig them  
for a prize,

And melt them into cannon balls, to beat and batter  
down

The bulwarks of our churches and the rampart of  
the town.

For trappings the white silver walls shall be molten  
in the flames;

They will overthrow the church roof for necklets  
for their dames ;  
For these same necklaces, I wot, they will wrench  
away the pearls ;  
For their sword hilts will they take the gems, and  
for rings for Turkish girls.  
But hark to me, Tsar Lazar ! Let us quarry out  
the stone  
And build a church of marble. For the Turks  
will seize the throne,  
And our church shall serve forever, unto God's  
Judgment Day !  
There is no profit in the stone, to carry it away."  
Then spake the great Tsar Lazarus, when he  
that speech had heard :  
"Now glory to thee, Milosh, for truth is in thy  
word !"

## BAN STRAHIN

STRAHIN was ban of Banska that by Kósovo doth  
stand;

And such another falcon there is not in the land.  
He rose up in the morning:

“Ho, all my knaves,

give heed!

Get ye down to the stables and saddle me my  
steed.

Deck him out fair and seemly, and gird him with  
the girth;

For hark and hear me, gallants, I go roving o'er  
the earth.

Weary shall be the milk-white steed, before I shall  
alight

Where dwell my wife's good kindred in Krúshevats  
the white—

Her brave old father Yug Bogdan and her good  
brothers nine,

Her gallant kin shall take me in and cheer me  
with the wine.”

Then forthwith all the servants unto the ban  
gave heed,

And from the lordly stable led the white falcon  
steed.

And then the brave Ban Strahin himself the steed  
arrayed;

He set on him a saddle of velvet and brocade,  
Redder than sunset water, more shining than the  
sun!

So the good ban put on the steed that rich capari-  
son.  
So rode he forth that morning, nor ever did alight  
Till he came in to his wife's kin in Krúshevats the  
white,  
Where late the realm men stablished. And him  
Yug Bogdan saw,  
And with his nine gray hawks came on to greet  
his son-in-law.  
They waited little for him, but clasped him one  
and all;  
And while the servants took the steed, they  
brought the ban to hall.  
Down sat they at the ready board, and spake  
fair words and fine;  
And man and maid came in apace to serve or pour  
the wine.  
Then all those goodly Christians their thirst be-  
gan to quench;  
Yug Bogdan set Ban Strahin beside him on the  
bench;  
Upon his right he set him, his sons on the other  
hand;  
But the remnant of his people at the table-foot  
must stand.  
The servants served before them. Nine daughters  
had that lord,  
And each fair daughter in her turn served deftly  
at the board.  
They served before their father; they served their  
lords that tide;

But most of all Ban Strahin, for their sister was  
his bride.  
One servant stood before them to serve the red  
wine up;  
In a gold cup he measured it—nine measures held  
that cup.  
Much courtesy was there to see and guests from  
near and far;  
Brothers as many came as to a banquet of the  
tsar.  
Long was Ban Strahin's tarrying; long, long did  
he abide,  
Dwelling among his wife her kin in pleasure and  
in pride.  
The guests that were in Krúshevats a bitter  
cry they made,  
And came to old Yug Bogdan and unto him they  
prayed:  
"We kiss thy silken garments, thou art our  
lord and chief;  
We therefore pray thy kindness to do us this re-  
lief.  
Bring Strahin thy good son-in-law to our castles  
and our courts,  
That we may do him honor as with his worth  
consorts."  
Before that mirth was over was long enough,  
I trow.  
Long the ban tarried, ere came forth the tidings  
of his woe.  
But lo, in the fair morning, when the warm sun  
beat down,



A lad bore a white letter from Banska, the little  
town—

Tidings from his old mother! He set it on his  
knee;

Therein was many a bitter and dreadful thing  
to see,

For there her curse is written most plain in  
Strahin's sight:

“Where art thou, son? Foul fall the wine in  
Krúshevats the white!

Evil is the wine and full of shame for thee and  
thy wife's kin.

Behold what woes against thee are written down  
herein!

From Yedren<sup>1</sup> with an army is come the Turkish  
tsar

To Kósovo, and his viziers are with him in the  
war;

And he hath taken Kósovo with his accurst  
viziers.

The whole strength hath he brought along of all  
the Turkish spears;

Along the land of Kósovo hath he ta'en either  
flood—

Lab and Sítnitsa onward from the marble to the  
wood,

From the maple dry to Sázliya bridged over by  
the arch,

Through Zvechan and Chechan to the wood round  
Kósovo they march,

<sup>1</sup> Adrianople.

The valley of their capture; thereto they haste  
along.  
And the tsar hath one army an hundred thou-  
sand strong,  
That one lone lord hath lent him who hath a fief  
of the tsar.  
Many lords eat of the tsar's bread, and ride his  
steeds of war.  
Few arms those chieftains carry; nay, but a single  
blade!  
And yet another army is for the tsar arrayed—  
The Turks and janissaries in Yedren's milk-white  
tower;  
And yet an hundred thousand they say are in that  
power.  
Tuk and Manjuk an army for the tsar lead as  
well,  
And death is in their onslaught and slaughter in  
their yell.  
But yet there is one army of all from far and  
near—  
Vlah Áliya's, that feareth not for sultan nor  
vizier,  
Nor all within the armies save as ants upon the  
hill.  
“Such is the Turkish battle, nor departs he  
without ill.  
He smote on little Baska; by the left-hand way  
he came;  
He stormed the hold of Baska, and burned it  
with the flame.

He hath o'erturned the lowest stone; thy servants  
fled perforce;

And o'er thy mother's body hath he ridden on his  
horse;

With thy wife upon his saddlebow through  
Kósovo he went,

And he kisses thy belovèd in the shadow of his  
tent.

And I above burned ruins bewail this fate of mine,  
While thou drink'st wine in Krúshevats. God  
send 'tis Death his wine!"

When the ban read the letter, Grief took him  
in her grip;

Down drooped upon his shoulder the black beard  
of his lip;

He ground his teeth together, and was very nigh  
to weep;

And old Yug Bogdan saw him, as he rose up from  
his sleep.

Yug's voice flashed up like fire; he spake after this  
wise:

"God help my son! and wherefore dost thou so  
soon arise?

And wherefore art thou troubled, good son-in-law  
of mine?

Have thy brave brothers laughed at thee or mocked  
thee at the wine?

Have not thy sisters served thee? Is there evil  
among thy kin?

Tell me, my son, and straightway: what shame is  
found herein?"

The ban flashed up before him and to his father  
said:

“Father, I find no fault at all in the kin of her  
I wed,  
And my good brothers with me deal pleasantly  
withal;  
The noble ladies speak me fair and serve me in the  
hall:  
Among my wife’s good kindred no fault at all doth  
stand.  
My mother out of Banska sends this letter to my  
hand.”

He tells unto his father in the fair morning-tide  
How all of his possession is wasted far and wide;  
How that the Turks have scattered his servants,  
knight and knave,  
And trampled on his mother, and his wife ta’en for  
a slave:

“And O thou old Yug Bogdan, if she be dear to  
me,  
Also she is thy daughter and shame to me and  
thee!  
And if thou ever thoughtest a gift to me to give,  
Give it not after I am dead, but now while yet I  
live.  
I pray thee and I kiss thy hand: give me thy chil-  
dren nine,  
And we will go to Kósovo to seek this foe of  
mine—  
Yea, this red traitor to the tsar, that hath enslaved  
my wife.

Be not afraid, my father, nor sorrow for their life;

They shall wear Turkish raiment, turbans as white  
as milk  
And good green mantles, and also broad trousers  
wrought of silk.  
And at the belt long sabers as flashing as a flame.  
And I will call my servants, and order them by  
name,  
To saddle up the horses and draw the saddlebelts,  
And cover o'er the horses with the strong black  
bear-pelts.  
Strong janissaries shall they be; my counsel shall  
they know,  
What time through the tsar's army we ride in  
Kósovo.  
And I will be their captain, who have their sister  
wed,  
That they may heed my counsel, and have it still  
in dread.  
And if a soldier of the tsar shall challenge us in  
speech,  
Turkish, mayhap, or Arabic; why, I can speak in  
each,  
And Manov too, and Arnaut, enough to serve that  
tide.  
To seek my foe through Kósovo, so lightly will we  
ride—  
This Turk Vlah Áliya that enslaved my love by  
might and main.  
For though alone among the Turks I might perish  
or be ta'en,  
My brethren and I, we shall not die nor be smitten  
down in vain!"

When old Yug Bogdan heard this, he flashed  
like living fire;  
He spake unto Ban Strahin in words of wrath and  
ire:

“O thou, my son Ban Strahin, witless art thou  
and rash!

Wilt thou lead my sons to Kósovo for these same  
Turks to slash?

Say nothing more, my son-in-law! My sons shall  
not be slain,

Though thy fair wife, my daughter, come never  
home again.

Nay, nevermore, Ban Strahin, unloose thy wrath  
at me,

For wit thou well, my son-in-law—may the plague  
light on thee!—

If she have been his paramour but one night in  
the tent,

So may she be no longer the bride of thy content;  
God hath slain her forever; accursèd shall she be!

And a worse thing, Ban Strahin, him she prefers  
to thee.

Go to! The Devil take her! And for this love  
of thine

I will give thee a better, and with thee drink the  
wine.

I will be thy friend forever, but my children shall  
not go

Riding amain across the plain with thee to  
Kósovo!”

But when Ban Strahin heard it, he flashed like  
living fire;

Answered the ban to the old man in agony and  
ire.  
He will not call a servant; for a groom he takes  
not heed,  
But goeth himself to the stable to saddle the white  
steed.  
How royally he saddled him! how girded him  
thereto!  
How over flashing ear and crest the bit and bridle  
drew!  
Before the gateway of the court he led him forth  
alone,  
And held him by the bridle near the white step-  
ping-stone.  
And he caught the steed by the shoulder and  
mounted with a bound,  
And looked upon his brethren, but they looked  
upon the ground.  
Upon his sister's husband Ban Strahin turned his  
eyes,  
But Némanyich looked downward at the black dust  
likewise.  
They had drunken wine and brandy enough to  
make one nod,  
And boasted that they were heroes, and sworn by  
the name of God:  
"We love thee, thou Ban Strahin, more than the  
tsar's whole land."  
But woe! the ban has never a man this day his  
friend to stand.  
It is no easy labor to Kósovo to wend;

And the ban looked about him and saw he had no  
friend.  
He rode down through white Krúshevats, but aye  
he looked behind  
To see if his brave brethren would alter in their  
mind,  
And pity his affliction. No friend came to the  
ban.  
And thereupon he minded him of the hound Kára-  
man,<sup>1</sup>  
Whom he loves better than the steed, and holds of  
richer worth,  
And loudly from the strong white throat the  
hound-call thunders forth.  
The hound lay in the stable, but harkened and  
gave heed,  
And swiftly in the field he ran, till he overtook the  
steed.  
And gay beside the milk-white steed the hound re-  
joicing springs,  
And on his neck the collar of corded goldwork  
rings.  
A pleasant thing it was; the ban rode glad on the  
stallion's back,  
And took by weald and mount and field to Kósovo  
the track.  
When he saw the host at Kósovo his heart was  
touched by fear,  
But he remembered the true God, and to the Turks  
drew near.

Over the field of Kósovo on all four sides he went,

<sup>1</sup> In Servian this word is accented on the second syllable.



Seeking the strong Vlah Áliya, but he could not  
find his tent.

By the waters of the Sítnitsa a marvel there was  
seen,

By the shore of the Sítnitsa was pitched a tent of  
green.

The tent of green was very fair; it hid the grassy  
lawn,

The golden apple on the pole shone brighter than  
the dawn.

A spear is set before the door, and by the spear a  
steed,

With his head deep in the nose-bag upon the oats  
to feed.

The steed pawed fierce upon the ground with the  
off hoof and the near,

And the ban thought unto himself: "Vlah  
Áliya's tent is here."

And forward rode the hero upon the milk-white  
steed;

He took his spear from shoulder, all ready to his  
need.

He threw the tent door open, and looked within the  
tent;

But it was not Vlah Áliya, the strong and insolent;  
But a dervish, to whose girdle the white beard  
sweeps from the chin,

Lies in the shadow of the tent, and no one else  
therein.

A luckless dervish is the Turk, but he drinks wine  
in a cup;

He pours the wine out for himself and forthwith  
drinks it up.  
Ban Strahin looked on the dervish that was bloody  
to the eyes,  
And made salam unto him, after the Turkish wise.  
The drunken Turk looked on him, and spoke a  
word of woe:  
“Hail to thee, brave Ban Strahin of Banska by  
Kósovo!”  
Now flashed up the Ban Strahin, and answered him  
in dread;  
In the fair-spoken Turkish a bitter word he said:  
“Foul fall thy mother, thou dervish, that drink-  
est here this hour!  
Thou art so drunk thou canst not tell a Moslem  
from a Giaour.  
Wherefore dost thou speak of him? for here is  
found no ban;  
There is none here but I, and I am the tsar’s true  
fighting man.  
All of the tsar’s good horses are scattered near  
and far,  
And the warriors run quickly to catch them for the  
tsar.  
If I go with this thy insult to the tsar and the  
vizier,  
Know well, thou sorry dervish, thy words shall cost  
thee dear.”  
Laughed the dervish:  
“Thou a Turk, Strahin?  
Good fortune go with thee!

Were I upon Mount Golech, and should haply  
chance to see  
Thee afar in the host of the tsar, well I should  
know thee, ban—  
Thee and that milk-white steed of thine, and the  
hound Káraman,  
Whom aye thou lovest better than the strong stal-  
lion white.  
And know, thou ban of Banska, I read thy brow  
aright.  
And I know the eyes thereunder and the black  
beard of thy lip.  
Know, ban—and may good fortune be of thy fel-  
lowship!—  
That when thy guardsmen took me and made of  
me a slave,  
To thee in Súhara of the mount me miserable they  
gave.  
To the bottom of that prison didst thou cast me at  
that tide,  
And there a slave to thine and thee nine years did  
I abide.  
Nine fearful years past over, yea! and the tenth  
began,  
When filled with deep compassion thou thoughtest  
on me, ban.  
Thou badest Rado, the jailer, unbar the doors  
withal,  
And forthwith bring me upward a captive to the  
hall.  
And dost thou know, Ban Strahin, what words thy  
fierce lips said:

“Slave! Turkish snake! Now would that  
thou within my hold wert dead!  
Canst thou then, like a hero, redeem thee with a  
fee?”

“So ran thy question to me, and I told the  
truth to thee:

“My life now could I ransom, could I come to  
my hall,  
To my father’s land and my birthplace and my  
fiefs one and all—  
My many farms and freeholds, the price of lib-  
erty.  
But thither to go, too well I know, hardly thou  
trustest me.  
I will give thee a good bondsman, even God who  
does not feign,  
And another bondsman, his good faith, that I bring  
that ransom again.’

“Thou gavest thy trust to me that tide to go to  
my white hall,  
To my father’s land and my birthplace, and my  
fiefs one and all.  
I came to my sad birthplace; no more I knew good  
luck;  
On my houses and my birthplace the pestilence had  
struck.  
It smote the men and women; in my houses none  
had stayed,  
And my whole house had perished and my whole  
possession strayed.  
Fast-barred was all my sire’s estate, and bolted  
was the door.

The Turks took farm and freehold for their own  
forevermore.  
And when I saw my houses all closed against me  
stand,  
That I had neither friend nor goods, then a good  
plan I planned.  
I rode post unto Yedren, to the vizier and the  
tsar,  
And the vizier boasted me for a hero in the war.  
The tsar's vizier clothed me and gave a tent to  
me,  
And the great raven charger and shining panoply.  
For the tsar's man forever in his book my name  
they set,  
And thou hast come to me to-day to claim of me  
thy debt.  
But, ban, I have not a penny; and woe is on thee  
this day,  
That thou comest to die in folly amidst the tsar's  
array."

The ban looked on the dervish. Forthwith the  
man he knew;  
From the steed he vaulted, and clasped him, and  
to his bosom drew:

"Brother in God, old dervish, no debt is due to  
me.  
I seek no money, brother, nor any ransom fee.  
I seek the strong Vlah Áliya, who hath overthrown  
my hall,  
And hath taken my belovèd to be his bounden  
thrall.

Tell me of him, thou dervish, and do not me betray  
Unto the Turkish army, who are yearning me to  
slay."

"By God," then said the dervish, "thou ban,  
thou falcon-one,  
The strength of this my faith to thee is firmer than  
the stone.

Shouldst thou with the sword's edges smite half  
the army dead,

Yet would I not betray thee, nor trample on thy  
bread.

Though I ate of it in prison, thou gavest me store  
of wine;

Thou gavest the milk-white loaves to me that I  
might freely dine;

Oft in the sun's light glorious I warmed me in the  
morn;

Thou didst set me free upon my word, wherein I  
am forsworn.

I could not keep my word to thee, returning to  
thy hall:

Faith it was hard for me to keep without the where-  
withal!

And for the Turk, Ban Strahin, Vlah Áliya in-  
solent—

On the high mount of Golech he pitches now his  
tent.

But, Strahin, go from Kósovo, or a fool's death  
diest thou here.

Trust not thy hand, nor the sharp brand, nor the  
venom of the spear.

To pass that Turk in the mountain, it is a hero's  
deed;

In his arms alive will he take thee, thy weapons  
and thy steed.

He will break thine arms asunder; he will blind  
thee living, O ban."

Laughed Strahin: "Dervish, pity me not be-  
cause of any man,

But to the Turkish army betray me not this tide."

And thereupon the dervish unto the ban replied:

"My faith is firmer than the stone, and plighted  
thee indeed.

For even shouldst thou madden the anger of thy  
steed,

And riding on the army the half thereof shouldst  
slay,

Yet I will not at any time thee to the Turks be-  
tray."

The ban spoke and departed, but he turned on  
the stallion white:

"Dervish, thou waterest thy steed at daybreak  
and at night

In the waters of Sítuitsa. Say where the fords  
are found—

The fords in the cool water—that my horse may  
not be drowned."

Said the dervish: "Thou Servian falcon, a ford  
shalt thou find indeed,

Where'er thou enterest the water, for thy valor  
and thy steed."

The ban forded that water; on the milk-white  
steed he sped

Over the mount of Golech with the great sun over-  
head.

It warms all things beneath it, both the near and  
the far,

And it shines down on Kósovo and the army of  
the tsar.

And now behold Vlah Áliya, the strong and in-  
solent,

Ban Strahin's bride that kisses in the shadow of  
the tent.

He hath an evil custom, for ever does he fall

In slumber of a morning, when the sun beats over  
all.

He dreamed a dream upon that tide, and heavy  
lay his head

On the breast of the belovèd that Stráhinya had  
wed.

At the tent door she fondled him, but her eyes  
went to and fro

Over the Turkish army on the field of Kósovo.

She sees what manner are the tents, what steeds  
the heroes ride,

And by mischance towards Golech she turned her  
eyes aside.

She slapped the Turk on the right cheek; and,  
"Master," did she cry,

"Rise up, Vlah Áliya! stir thyself! or forthwith  
mayst thou die!

Now belt thou on thy war-belt and thy fair mail  
likewise!

Ban Strahin comes that will cut off thine head, or  
blind thine eyes."



Vlah Áliya wakened from his dream and flashed  
up like the fire ;  
His eye was proud, he laughed aloud :

“Thou  
Stráhinya’s desire,  
Thou art afraid, Wallachian maid ; thou fearest  
him eachwhere !  
When I bear thee unto Yedren, yet wilt thou see  
him there !  
Yon captain is not Strahin ; a tsar’s man rideth  
here :  
Either the tsar hath sent him, or Mehmet, the  
vizier.  
He bids that I submit me, nor smite the host of  
the tsar.  
Tsar and vizier, mayhap they fear to feel my  
scimitar.  
Fear not, what time I smite him with the keen,  
shining sword  
That no more captains of the tsar come hither for  
their lord.”

But the ban’s bride spake unto him :

“My mas-  
ter, prithee see !  
That is no Turkish captain—a blindness light on  
thee!—  
Nay, but my master Strahin, that did my body  
clip.  
Do I not know both eye and brow and the black  
beard of his lip?  
Do I not know his milk-white horse with the spot  
of brown and tan,

And the tawny hound beside him, the good hound  
Káraman?  
Jest not with life, my gallant lord.”

But when

Vlah Áliya heard,  
The wrathful Turk leaped to his feet and straight  
began to gird  
His girdle with the poniards and the scimitar  
thereto.

And he giveth heed to the black steed, while the  
ban nearer drew.

The ban is very careful, but he cursed him, nor  
bowed his head

After the Turkish fashion; and unto him he said:

“Art thou then there, thou dastard—thou  
traitor to the tsar?

Whose women hast thou taken that round thy  
camp-fires are?

And whose belovèd hast thou kist in the shadow  
of the tent?

Come out to battle against me, thou strong and  
insolent.”

The Turk was very angry. He sprang with  
might and main

Unto the shoulder of the horse, and caught the  
bridle-rein.

The ban bode not his coming, but straight against  
him drove;

He lifted the iron spear on high, and hurled it  
from above.

And the strong Turk, Vlah Áliya, reached out and  
caught the spear,

And he spake unto Strahin :

“Dastard, what dost

thou here?

Here are no maids of Shúmadin to scatter with a  
cry,

But who fears not vizier or tsar, Vlah Áliya am I!  
And I dread not any hero in the army of the tsar;  
To me as ants upon the grass all in that army are.  
And thou thinkest in the lists this tide to battle  
with me here!”

He spake and very suddenly he cast the battle-  
spear,

Eager to wound. But the good God aided Ban  
Strahin well.

His white steed, when the spear flew by, down on  
his knees he fell.

High overhead the great spear flashed, and broke  
on a stone in three.

Up to the boss that guards the hand was it broken  
utterly.

Now when the spears were broken, each champion  
drew his mace;

Vlah Áliya smote on Strahin and beat him from  
his place,

Forward from out of the saddle on the white neck  
of the steed.

Now the good God aided Strahin in the moment of  
his need.

Nor Turk, nor Serb a steed doth curb of half that  
worth to-day.

The beast swung head and shoulder in the middle  
of the fray,

And his lord out of that danger to the saddletree  
threw back ;  
And upon that Turkish devil the ban made his  
attack.  
But the Turk out of the saddle would neither fall  
nor flee,  
Though 'neath the blows his horse had sunk in the  
black dust to the knee.  
The spiky maces in their hands were shattered left  
and right,  
And forth they drew the sabers, and anew they  
fought the fight.  
But lo, the great Ban Strahin at his belt had such  
a blade  
That a pair of smiths must forge it with three men  
there to aid !  
From Sunday unto Sunday till the steel was waxen  
cold  
Had those same craftsmen cooled it within the  
earthen mold ;  
And thereafter had they sharpened it by laying  
on the sledge.  
Smote the Turk, but Strahin waited edge against  
saber-edge,  
Till he smote hard against it, and the Turk's  
blade broke in half.  
This saw the ban and in he ran, and in his heart  
did laugh  
As he prest in upon him, smiting on either hand,  
To strike his head from his shoulders with the  
edges of the brand.

Hero smote against hero; the Turk good ward he  
made,  
He kept his head and shoulders with the truncheon  
of the blade.  
With the remnant of his weapon he beat the saber  
back;  
And bit by bit as he smote on it to pieces did he  
hack  
The saber of Ban Strahin. Two blades in frag-  
ments lay.  
Then leaped they from the horses, and hurled  
the hilts away.  
They gripped each other by the throat like  
dragons at that tide;  
All day till noon they wrestled upon the moun-  
tain side;  
Till on the Turk's pale lips the foam like snow  
new-fallen stood,  
And the white foam on Strahin's lip was flecked  
with drops of blood;  
The blood upon his garments and on his jack-  
boots ran.  
But when the pain had gripped him, at last out  
spake the ban:  
"My love, God's curse upon thee! What  
travail dost thou see?  
Take up a splinter of the sword, and strike the  
Turk or me.  
Think which of us, belovèd, is dearer unto thee."  
But thereto the Turk spake fiercely:  
"Belovèd  
of the ban,

Strike him, for thou shalt never more be dear unto  
the man ;  
But aye his sharp reproaches against thee shall be  
bent,  
Because thou once wast with me in the shadow of  
the tent.  
But I will love thee always, nor ever thee disdain.  
In Yedren thirty serving-maids shall bear thy  
sleeves and train ;  
Sugar and honey ever more shall be set for thee to  
eat ;  
With ducats will I deck thee from thy head unto  
thy feet :  
Strike now the ban.”

All womankind are lightly  
led astray.

She leaped and grasped a splinter of the sword-  
blade where it lay.  
She wrapped it in a napkin, lest it should wound  
her hand,  
And she sought to smite her wedded lord with the  
fragment of the brand,  
And guard Vlah Áliya's head. She cut the silver  
plume in twain ;  
She clove the milk-white turban that guarded him  
in vain ;  
The blood flowed down the hero's face, and was  
like to blind his eyes,  
And the ban dreaded sore that tide to die in foolish  
wise.  
But suddenly within him the thoughts together  
ran,

And out of his white throat he called on the hound  
Káraman—  
A hound trained to the hunting. He called the  
hound by name,  
And with a bound the tawny hound to help his  
master came,  
And bit the ban's belovèd. A dog all women fear;  
She threw the blade upon the ground, and cuffed  
the hound on the ear.  
Screaming she fled across the mount; afar they  
heard her cry;  
But the strong Turk looked after to see where she  
did fly.  
And new strength burst upon the ban, and courage  
great and new,  
And hither and yon he drove the Turk, and wres-  
tling overthrew.  
Howe'er so hard the Turk might guard, he struck  
from underneath,  
And, leaping in under the chin, he fastened with  
his teeth,  
As the wolf throttling a lamb. Then he leaped up  
from the ground,  
And with a mighty voice he called after the tawny  
hound,  
That the beast should cease pursuing the maid  
the ban had wed;  
And swift along the mountain to the Turkish host  
she fled.  
But the ban would not let her; he caught her by  
the hand;

He brought her back unto the place where the  
dappled steed did stand.  
He took the horse by the shoulders ; he threw her  
on behind ;  
Then rode he deviously along, the homeward way  
to find.  
Away from the tsar's army he turned the bridle-  
rein,  
Till he came in to his wife's kin at Krúshevats on  
the plain,  
And old Yug Bogdan and his sons rose, when they  
saw him come ;  
They took him to their bosoms, and gave him wel-  
come home.  
But when Yug Bogdan saw his plight his tears ran  
down amain :  
“Now fair be all thy fortune, that thou art home  
again.  
Strong are the Turkish heroes, the soldiers of the  
tsar ;  
A fighting man to wound the ban they must have  
sought afar.”  
But the nine brothers feared him, till the ban to  
them spake :  
“Dread nothing, my good brethren, nor be  
troubled for my sake.  
With the tsar there was no hero to conquer me in  
fight.  
Would ye then hear who wounded me, and whose  
hand did me smite?  
When with the Turk I battled, O thou good father  
mine,



Then my belovèd smote me—this dearest child of  
thine ;

She set aside my love that tide, and to the Turk  
gave aid.”

Yug flashed up like a living fire, and to his sons  
he said :

“Slash the she-wolf in pieces with the nine blades  
of the brands !”

The strong sons heard their father, and upon her  
set their hands.

But Strahin will not let them. He speaketh to  
them apace :

“My nine good brethren, wherefore do ye your-  
selves disgrace ?

Why are your knives unscabbarded ? Heroes ye  
are, I know !

But why were not your sabers with me at Kósovo,  
To do great deeds against the Turk when danger  
ran most high ?

And harken this, my brethren ; your sister shall  
not die.

Without your aid already, an I wished, she had  
been slain.

Yet, should I slaughter all her kin, no comrade  
then would drain,

Reveling with me deliciously, the cool cups of the  
wine.

So now have I given my pardon unto this bride of  
mine.”

There are not many on earth to match him,  
man to man,

And scanty are the heroes as gallant as the ban.

## TSAR LAZAR AND TSÁRITSA MÍLITSA

TSAR LAZAR sat at dinner, and with him at the wine  
Sat Mílitsa, the Tsáritsa, beside her lord to dine.  
Unto her lord said Mílitsa :

“O Servia’s king and  
crown,  
To-morrow unto Kósovo the army goeth down,  
Thy voývodas and captains. No man thou leavest  
at home  
With a letter to go to Kósovo and hither again to  
come.  
Thou ledest my nine brethren, Yug Bogdan’s  
children nine.—  
Leave me one brother of them all to cheer this heart  
of mine.”

To her spake Lazar of the Serbs: “Which wilt  
thou have with thee  
In the palace?” And she made answer: “Let  
Boshko stay with me.”

Then spake Tsar Lazar:

“Lady, to-morrow, when  
day comes on,  
And the white dawn breaketh, and the world is  
warmed of the great sun,  
And they open the gates of the city, go thou  
unto the arch,  
Wherethrough unto the muster my hosts begin to  
march.  
The spears shine over the chargers: before them will  
Boshko ride,

And he carries high the standard with a great cross  
glorified.

Bless him! Let give the standard to whomsoever  
he will;

But let him back to the palace, abiding with thee  
still."

Now when the gates were opened, what time the  
morning shone,

Then forth unto the gateway Queen Mílitsa came  
down,

And stood beneath the portal in the shadow of the  
arch,

What time unto the muster the host began to  
march.

The spears shone over the chargers: before them  
Boshko rode

On a bay steed, and his rich weed with shining  
goldwork glowed,

And the standard that he carried swept round him  
fold on\* fold;

Over the steed it bellied; thereon was an apple of  
gold;

From the apple rose gilded crosses, and tassels  
from them did hang,

And brushed against his shoulders as in the wind  
they swang.

Queen Mílitsa sprang forward to the bay stallion's  
head,

And she clasped arms round her brother, and unto  
him she said:

"My brother Boshko, thou art become the tsar  
his gift to me.

Thou shalt not go to Kósovo; he gives his blessing  
to thee;  
Thou shalt give the golden banner to the hero of  
thy will,  
And be my brother in Krúshevats, that I may have  
thee still."

Boshko answered her straightway:

"Get back

to thy hall this tide!

I would not turn nor give up the flag with the great  
cross glorified,

Though the tsar should give me Krúshevats for  
ever and a day;

For the remnant of the army concerning me would  
say:

"Where is the captain, Boshko—that same  
that dared not go  
To perish for Christ his Cross and Faith on the  
field of Kósovo?" "

And forthwith he rode the stallion abroad be-  
neath the arch;

And lo, Yug Bogdan and seven sons began thereby  
to march!

She stopped each of the seven to whom her heart  
did yearn,

But none of all the seven aside for her would turn.  
With the tsar's chargers Voin, her brother, came  
that way;

All covered with a panoply of shining gold were  
they.

She seized the dun steed under him, and took him  
by the head;

She took her brother in her arms, and unto him she said :

“My brother Voin, thou art become the tsar his gift to me ;  
Thou shalt not go to Kósovo ; he gives his blessing to thee.  
Thou shalt give the tsar’s war horses to the hero of thy will,  
And be my brother in Krúshevats, that I may have thee still.”

Voin answered her straightway :

“Get back to

thy hall this tide !

I would not turn nor give over the steeds that the tsar shall ride ;  
What though in wisdom I foresaw all of my overthrow,  
I would ride to death for the Cross and the Faith on level Kósovo.”

Forthwith right through the gateway he spurred the charger well ;  
And when the queen that sight had seen, on the stone in a swoon she fell.  
And when King Lazar saw it, the tears ran down his face ;  
And he looked and called Golúban, his henchman, from his place :  
“Golúban, my good henchman, dismount thee in this hour,  
And bear thy lady in thine arms up to the slender tower.

For this the deed of my command God's pardon  
shalt thou find;  
Thou shalt not go to Kósovo, but linger here be-  
hind."

Weeping, Golúban heard it. He dismounted in  
that hour;  
He bore his lady in his arms up to the slender  
tower;  
But his will he could not overcome, nor bear to  
linger so,  
But steed bestrode, and hard he rode away to  
Kósovo.

When rose up the white morning, from Kósovo  
there wheeled  
A pair of great black ravens from the broad battle-  
field;  
They perched on the white palace whence Lazar  
issued forth;  
The one cawed loud and vainly, the one spake words  
of worth:

"Is this Tsar Lazar's palace, where he was wont  
to dwell?

Is there no man or woman within the citadel?"

None heard but the Queen Mílitsa; she came be-  
fore the wall,  
And unto those two ravens her voice aloud did call:  
"I conjure you, black ravens, sitting upon the  
coign,  
From whence come ye this morning? Did ye see  
the armies join?  
Have the armies smitten together in the field of  
Kósovo?

In God his name I conjure you, who hath the overthrow?"

And the black ravens answered:

“At Kósovo,

O queen,

Two hosts that smote at Kósovo, we saw them fight yestreen.

Both tsars are down; and of the Turks a remnant doth remain,

But all the Serbs are slaughtered, or wounded on the plain.”

They spoke; and lo, Milútin came before the queen to stand!

Wounded full sore, the henchman bore one hand in the other hand;

Seventeen wounds were on him; his steed with blood was red.

And unto him the weeping queen rough words in anger said:

“What treachery, Milútin, is this unto the tsar?”

But he said:

“Help me down, lady, from the great steed of war;

Lave me with the cool water, and with the ruddy wine,

Do thou, O royal lady, anoint these wounds of mine.”

Queen Mílitsa she lifted him down from the steed of war;

She laved him with white water, and red wine from the jar.

And when he was himself again, she questioned him  
withal:

“Ah, what betid at Kósovo? Did the Tsar  
Lazar fall?

My father and my brethren, are they fallen on the  
plain?

Lord Milosh, and Vuk Bránkovich, and Strahin,  
are they slain?”

The servant spake:

“My lady, they are dead at

Kósovo,

Where Lazar the tsar glorious fell in the over-  
throw.

The Turk and Servian lances lie shattered every-  
where,

But many more of Christian spears, alas, were  
broken there,

Defending good Tsar Lazar in the fury of the fray.  
But Yug Bogdan perished, lady, in the fight of the  
first day;

Eight of his sons, those champions, were slaugh-  
tered side by side;

For they would not use treachery, and by each  
other died.

Still Boshko's banner of the cross hurled back the  
Turks in droves,

To and fro over Kósovo, as a falcon harries doves.  
Where the blood flowed up to the knee died Strá-  
hinya the ban;

By Sítnitsa fell Milosh, where the cool waters ran.  
There perished many Turks amain; and Milosh in  
his ire



Hath slain the Sultan Murad—God be gracious to  
his sire!—  
And a good twelve thousand Turks that tide. And  
aye the Serbs will know  
His deeds of war while men are left to tell of  
Kósovo.  
But ask not of the cursèd Vuk! May God's dam-  
nation burst  
Upon his sire and all his tribe, and the whole house  
accurst!  
'Twas he betrayed the tsar in war unto the Turkish  
spear,  
And fled with his twelve thousand men, the traitor  
cavalier!"

## FRAGMENTS OF KÓSOVO BALLADS

### I

MURAD the tsar hath come in war down upon  
Kósovo ;

He sent a letter to Krúshevats that the tsar his will  
might know :

“Ho, Lazar, lord of Servia, with sense it scarce  
accords,

That there should be one empery 'neath the power  
of two lords,

One rayah that pays double tax! We cannot both  
rule here!

So render me up your city keys and the taxes for  
seven year.

But if thou wilt not send them, abide at Kósovo,  
That to our hand we may sunder the land with a  
keen saber blow.”

When the fine-written letter Tsar Lazarus had  
read,

He looked upon the letter and bitter tears he shed.

## II

Bitter was the tsar's curse to hear ; aye ! and a word  
of woe :

“Who comes not to the battle with me at  
Kósovo,

Let nothing grow beneath his hand in the field that  
he shall till ;

Let not the white wheat spring in the field, nor the  
vine shoot on the hill !”

### III

Lazar, the Tsar of Servia, holds his high holiday.  
In the secret place, in Krúshevats, with all his lords  
he lay.  
All of the lords and lordings were come with him to  
dine:  
At his right hand sat Yug Bogdan and Yug's  
strong children nine;  
On his left sat Vuk Bránkovich; at the far end of  
the board,  
With two more Servian voývodas, was Milosh the  
young lord;  
Ivan Kósanchich was the one, the other of the  
twain  
Was Milan Tóplitsa. And the tsar arose a health  
to drain  
Unto the Servian nobles; he lifted the beaker up:  
"O voývodas and captains, to whom shall I  
pledge this cup?  
If I pledge it unto the oldest, to Yug shall I drink  
this hour;  
I shall pledge it to Vuk Bránkovich, if I drink be-  
cause of power;  
If I pledge to whomsoever is dear to me and mine,  
I'll drink to my good brethren, Yug Bogdan's chil-  
dren nine;  
For beauty to Ivan Kósanchich, and to Milan for  
his height;  
But unto Milosh Óbilich for the glory of his might.  
To none other will I drink it, while I have strength  
and breath:

A health unto Milosh Óbilich, and faith and broken  
faith!

Faith first and treason to follow! To-morrow at  
Kósovo

Thou shalt betray me, and after to the tsar of the  
Turks shalt thou go.

Hail to thee, and a health to thee, and the cup's  
delight be thine!

Rise up, Milosh the voývoda, and lightly drink the  
wine!"

Milosh rose swiftly to his feet, and bowed to the  
black earth:

"Praise to thee, Lazar the glorious, and a greet-  
ing to thy worth!

Praise for thy gift and greeting, but for thy speech  
no praise!

Since I was never a traitor, by my faith, in all my  
days,

Nor ever will work treason. But at Kósovo to-  
morn

Belike for the Cross of Christ and his Faith shall I  
be overborne.

But treachery is at thy knee, and drinketh before  
thy face;

There sits the traitor Bránkovich, of the accursèd  
race.

To-morrow on St. Vitus' day, on the field of  
Kósovo,

Who of us twain is true or false, all men shall  
clearly know.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Mijatovich remarks (*Servia and the Servians*, 1908,  
p. 183), there is here in the original "a fine play on the

An God me speed, will I ride indeed to Kósovo in  
the dawn,  
To slash the throat of Murad the tsar and set my  
foot thereon.  
An God give me good fortune, safely returning  
here,  
I will lay hand on Bránkovich, and bind him to  
this spear,  
As flax on the long distaff is bound by a woman's  
hand,  
And to and fro in Kósovo will I bear him through  
the land."

word *vid*," which means both *Vitus* and *sight*. The literal translation is: "Tomorrow is the fair day of St. Vitus (*or* of Sight); we shall see on the field of Kósovo, etc."

#### IV

“Ho, brother Ivan Kósanchich, hast thou spied the  
Turks’ array?  
Have the Turks a mighty army? Can we beat  
them in the fray?”

Quoth Ivan :

“Milosh Óbilich, my own good  
brother dear,  
I have spied the Turkish army, and a great host  
have they here.  
Should all of us be changed to salt, we scarce should  
salt their meat.  
Full fifteen days throughout their host have I  
walked with nimble feet,  
Nor came on end or number, howsoever I might  
march ;  
From the marble to the maple, thence to Sázliya  
of the arch,  
From the arched bridge to Zvechan the whole land  
have they ta’en ;  
From Zvechan through Chechan to the wood they  
seized the mount amain.  
Ranks of horses and heroes, spears like a mountain  
wall,  
And like the clouds of heaven are their banners  
over all ;  
And like the snows from heaven are their tents  
upon the plain ;  
And should a storm rise o’er them, on the earth it  
would not rain,

But on horses and on heroes would the rain fall  
from on high.

The tsar took Lab and Sítnitsa and Mazgit field  
thereby."

Still Milosh Óbilich questions him:

"Ivan,

brother in war,

Tell me where lieth, brother, the tent of Murad the  
tsar ;

For unto the Tsar Lazarus my word is given and  
gone,

That I would slash Tsar Murad's throat and set my  
foot thereon."

But Ivan answers him lightly:

"Brother, a

fool art thou !

Where in the center of the camp Tsar Murad lieth  
now,

Wert thou a wingèd goshawk from out high heaven  
sped,

Thou couldst not in thine anger hurt a hair upon  
his head."

Then Milosh speaketh to Ivan:

"Ivan, my

brother dear,

Speak not thus to Tsar Lazarus, lest he and the  
host should fear ;

But unto the Tsar Lazarus thus and thus shalt  
thou say :

"Strong are the Turks, but we, mayhap, will  
shake them in the fray,



And lightly overcome them, for no host of battle  
they are,  
But priests and pilgrims and merchants, and knaves  
that know not war,  
That are come abroad together to eat Tsar Murad's  
bread.  
And for the royal army, the half are well-nigh  
dead  
From the grievous ill of heartache, that is a bitter  
pain,  
And the good steeds of that army are glandered  
on the plain.' ”

V

“Who is the great hero that lifted once his hand,  
And sundered well twelve Turkish heads with the  
edges of the brand?”

“That is the brave Ban Strahin.”

“What hero

cometh here,

That spitteth the Moslems two and two on the  
edges of his spear,  
And driveth them before him to Sítnitsa’s gray  
tide?”

“That is Srija the champion, whom men call the  
Angry-Eyed.”

“What hero on a white steed bears the flag of  
the cross in his hands,  
And all along he harries the flying Turks in bands,  
And chases them in his anger to Sítnitsa the  
flood?”

“That is Boshko the captain, of old Yug Bog-  
dan’s blood.”

## THE BATTLE OF KÓSOVO

A GRAY hawk from Jerusalem, with a swallow in  
his beak,

Flew onward into Servia, Tsar Lazarus to seek.

Nay, it was never a great gray hawk with a swallow  
that flew so far,

But Elijah, our Lady's messenger, with her tidings  
to the tsar.

Tsar Lazar read the letter:

“O king whom the

Serbs revere,

Wilt thou choose for thine own the Kingdom of  
God or an earthly empire here?

For if, instead of a heavenly rule, thou chooseth an  
earthly realm,

Leap astride of the steed this tide and do on hau-  
berk and helm;

Belt about thee the girdle of war and look to saber  
and dirk,

Tighten at need the girth of the steed—and here  
shalt thou slaughter the Turk.

But if thou chooseth the Empire of Christ, and a  
kingdom of God's own,

Build him a church by Kósovo, but not of marble  
stone;

But found it on silk and satin and its corners in  
scarlet fine.

Therein shall thine armies take of Christ the white  
bread and the wine.

Thou shalt marshal the army of the Serbs, and  
upon that dreadful day

In the van of the war thou shalt die, O tsar, with  
the whole of thine array."

When the tsar heard the holy word, his thoughts  
came two and two:

"Dear God, what is the whole of thine heart, and  
what is the deed to do?

Which shall I hold for the better realm? Man's  
sovereignty may die,

But the Kingdom of the Living God, its power  
goes on for aye."

Tsar Lazarus has chosen at last God's King-  
dom for his own;

And he built a church at Kósovo, but not of marble  
stone;

On satin and on velvet he made the walls to stand,  
And he summoned our lord the patriarch, and  
bishops twelve to hand.

The armies came before him, what time the prayers  
were said,

And the good priests gave to them Christ's wine  
and milk-white bread.

And when on level Kósovo that army up was  
drawn,

The Turks smote against Kósovo at the breaking  
of the dawn.

Yug Bogdan with the vanguard came up against  
their line;

The young gray hawks were with him, his gallant  
children nine;

And after every standard came thrice three thou-  
sand men,

But by Yug Bogdan's banner were thousands two  
and ten.

They came upon the infidel, that army of renown,  
And slashed and slew among them; seven pashas  
smote they down.

The eighth gave way before them; Yug Bogdan  
there was slain;

His nine gray falcons and their host came never  
home again.

The children of Marnyáva moved on with their  
array;

Vukáshin, Goyko, Úglyesha were marshals of the  
fray;

And the ninth Turkish pasha before their charge  
fell back,

But Úglyesha and Goyko were slain in the attack,  
Two of Marnyáva's children; and terribly, indeed,  
Was King Vukáshin wounded, and trampled by the  
steed.

Now smitten was the center and smitten was the  
van,

And Ertseg Stepan with the rear into the battle  
ran.

Brave warriors had Ertseg, full sixty thousand  
men;

They trampled through the tumult and smote the  
Turks again.

Nine pashas fell before them, the tenth drew back  
in dread;

But Ertseg and his army were numbered with the  
dead.

And now rode out Tsar Lazarus with his whole  
host along,  
Seventy thousand gallant Serbs and seven thousand strong.  
They scattered the Turks by Kósovo; they scarce  
would let them stand  
To look upon the army for the lifting of the brand.  
Then would the tsar have won the war for Serbia  
by God's aid—  
God's curse be on Vuk Bránkovich, the dastard  
that betrayed  
The father of his wife that tide!—the tsar of all  
the land!  
The Turks smote down Tsar Lazarus with the  
edges of the brand.  
Seven and seventy thousand men lay dead upon the  
sod,  
All gallant Serbs, and their pure blood was dear  
unto their God.

## HOW MILOSH ÓBILICH SLEW THE SULTAN MURAD

TSAR MURAD sat beneath his tent with the pashas  
of his power

And his viziers, and counsel took what way to smite  
the Giaour

And win with least disaster; when lo there came  
from afar

The vizier Osman running to claim reward of the  
tsar.

He kissed the hand and the garment, himself to the  
earth he bowed,

And thus to Murad, the Turkish tsar, the vizier  
spake aloud:

“Murad, the Sun of all the East, holy Ma-  
homet’s heir!

Rejoice! the Servian empire thou hast conquered  
everywhere!

Here come three Servian voývodas that have chiefly  
made us fear;

They come hither to surrender, for down have they  
turned the spear.”

It pleased the Sultan Murad; it was pleasant in  
his ears;

Woes plagued him not. He spake unto the pashas  
and viziers:

“Brave pashas, glorious viziers, my captains of  
command,

Shall I reach to the Wallachians my foot or my  
white hand?”

Said the viziers: "O glorious lord, put not thy  
hand to shame;  
Shame were it to reach out to one of the Wallachian  
name!  
Stretch out thy foot unto them, and let them kiss  
it sweet,  
And let them be forever at all times 'neath thy  
feet."

Outspake Vizier Ushtúgliya: "Tsar Murad,  
our crown of gold,  
Shall we go out before them?" Then answered  
Murad the bold:

"Go out to the field before them, and three  
great cloths unfold;  
Stretch one of red, the second of white, the third  
green glorious.  
When the slaves drive on their horses, if they come  
to fight with us,  
All three of the cloths beneath their feet will they  
trample under here.  
If they bring me the keys of the cities and the  
taxes for seven year,  
On the red cloth will they trample, the red and the  
white beside,  
But the green will they lift on their lances and  
thereunder will they ride."

When the tsar's troopers heard it, before the  
three they flew;  
Before the Servian voývodas the three great cloths  
they drew.  
When the voývodas drove on the steeds, they tram-  
pled the cloths all three;



And when Ushtúgliya saw it, to Murad the tsar  
said he :

“Lo, tsar, the servants of Lazar have trampled  
every cloth!

Under foot have they trampled them, for a sign  
that they are wroth,

And desire to-day their quarrel to undertake with  
thee,

Tsar Murad; they bring not hither of any city  
the key.”

The bold Tsar Murad answered :

“Not so, my

children brave!

Had they been eager to quarrel, long since had they  
drawn the glaive;

Drunk are the Giaours, and in drunkenness have  
trampled the cloth amain.”

Meanwhile with his brethren was Milosh come, on  
his steed, the Crane.

Down he got from the charger, and out the tsar’s  
grooms flew

To hold the Crane for Milosh; no rein to them he  
threw,

He gave him to Ivan Kósanchich. To the tent of  
Murad the strong

Forthwith Milosh the voývoda went hastily along.

Murad stretched out his foot to him over the tapes-  
tries,

And spoke, for he deemed that Milosh desired his  
face to kiss :

“Now fair and soft, now soft and fair, O Lazar’s  
follower;

Trample not on my garment's edge, but kiss my  
boot and spur."

Milosh flashed like a living fire, like a wolf on  
Murad he sprang;

Over him like a hayduk the biting blade he swang;  
From the midriff to the milk-white throat the tsar  
alive he rent.

Murad gaped wordless on the ground; and under-  
neath the tent

Flashing like lightning hither and yon the blade of  
Milosh went.

He slaughtered all the tsar's viziers, Ushtúgliya he  
slew;

He smote the tsar's twelve guardsmen and the  
tent ropes clove in two.

The bodyguard from Yedren, all of them had he  
slain;

Seventy heads had he smitten off ere he mounted  
his steed, the Crane.

Then mounted the three sworn brethren and  
charged through Kósovo.

Dear God, their onslaught on the Turk was no  
cheap overthrow!

When blood began a-flowing, 'twas good nearby to  
stand

And see how the Turkish heads split wide beneath  
the Servian brand.

Fierce slashed the Servian voývodas, they slashed  
the Turks like grass:

Whither went Milan Tóplitsa, was room for a wain  
to pass;

Whither went Ivan Kósanchich, lightly had two  
moved on;

Whither went Milosh Óbilich, abreast could three  
have gone.

The whole of the Turkish host boiled up, rushing  
to bar their track;

The voývodas trampled the army like the earth  
hard and black.

Shame to the Turks not to have ta'en their venge-  
ance for the tsar!

'Neath the standard of Mahomet the whole host  
came in war;

The pashas and fierce warriors, they flew into the  
fight

Upon their faëry chargers, the heroes good to  
smite.

But Milosh and his comrades with the keen blade  
cut their way.

A saber cuts not a mountain down in the swift  
course of a day,

Nor the voývodas all the army—and Milan Tóp-  
litsa cried:

“Avenge me, Milosh! At Kósovo have I failed  
to-day at thy side.”

But Milosh answered softly: “I forgive thee read-  
ily,

My brother Milan; quickly shall I lie there by  
thee.”

Furiously the Turks set on, till Ivan Kósanchich  
cried:

“Farewell, Milosh! At Kósovo have I perished  
at thy side.

Avenge me, Milosh, who swarest my brother sworn  
to be!"

But Milosh the good voývoda, O softly answered  
he!

"My brother, Ivan, for this gift I hope in perfect  
faith,

For never yet was gallant man but yearned for a  
gallant death."

And the faëry steed he goaded, the battle-  
charger, the Crane;

He maddened on the maddened steed and smote the  
Turks again.

Like a dragon over Kósovo the voývoda did pass,  
With the hot blood of the cursèd Turks he reddened  
all the grass.

Furious and shamefaced was the host, yet un-  
avenged for the tsar

'Neath the standard of Mahomet the whole host  
came in war

On Milosh the weary hero. Of wounds he got no  
lack;

They beat him from his steed and bound his hands  
behind his back.

And unto the Tsar Murad, Milosh they led along:

"Here is Milosh the voývoda for thee, Tsar  
Murad the strong!

Do thou tell us, Lord Glorious, in what wise we  
shall him slay."

Murad still lived; unto them in a soft voice did  
he say:

"Be ye not angry with him, and do not strike  
him down

For that he slew me; fortune of battle brought it  
on  
That a good hero slew me. Now draw up the host  
to war,  
And smite the Giaour! Let not his power outlive  
the Servian tsar!"

## MUSICH STEVAN

IN Maydan white as silver, in his fair lordly house,  
Idle sits Musich Stevan, on the good wine to ca-  
rouse.

The servant Váistina poured it forth his thirst to  
slake,

And Stevan drank his fill thereof, and to the hench-  
man spake:

“My good son Váistina, I will lie down to sleep.  
Do thou then eat thy dinner, and of the wine drink  
deep,

And then look forth on the open sky because of my  
behest,

To see if the day-star stand in the east, or the clear  
moon in the west;

To see if the time be come at last for us to gird  
and go

To the meeting place that the tsar hath set on the  
field of Kósovo.

Thou knowest the oath we took, my son, and the  
curse that then was laid

On the voývoda or henchman that Tsar Lazarus  
betrayed:

“Who springeth of a Servian house, in whom  
Serb blood doth run,

Who cometh not to battle at Kósovo, may he never  
have a son,

And no child of his heart whatever! May naught  
grow under his hand,

Neither the yellow liquor, nor the white wheat in  
the land!

May he like iron be rusted, and his stock dwindle  
alway!" "

And thereupon brave Stevan on the bolster soft  
he lay.

Váistina the henchman, he sitteth him down to dine,  
And at his good lord's table he hath his fill of the  
wine,

And he goeth to look at the open sky because of  
his lord's behest,

To see if the day-star stand in the east, or the clear  
moon in the west.

And he seeth it is the season for them to gird and  
go

Unto Tsar Lazar's meeting place in the field of  
Kósovo.

He went unto the stables and led the horses forth;  
He saddled the steeds, and on them set caparisons  
of worth,

One for himself, and the other is for his lord that  
tide.

And he bringeth a flag from the palace, with a great  
cross glorified;

Silk is the flag and golden are the crosses wrought  
thereon,

And the icon of Stevan's patron, the icon of St.  
John.

He set the banner against the wall, and went unto  
the tower

To wake his lord, but his lady came to him in that  
hour,

And she greeted and embraced him:

“Brother in

God,” said she,  
“My servant Váistina, by God I conjure thee,  
And by St. John moreover. A faithful knave art  
thou,  
Henceforth shalt thou be my brother; but awake  
not thy master now,  
Since an evil dream of a flock of doves this night  
is come to me.  
With falcons twain from my lord his place to  
Kósovo did they flee;  
Amid the camp of Murad they lighted nor came  
again:  
That is your omen, brother. So ponder lest you  
be slain.”

But the servant Váistina, unto the dame said he:  
“Sister, I cannot break my faith with the lord  
of thee and me,  
For thou wast not at the swearing, nor knowest  
what curse was laid  
On the voývoda or henchman that Tsar Lazarus  
betrayed:  
“Who springeth of a Servian house, in whom  
Serb blood doth run,  
Who cometh not to battle at Kósovo, may he never  
have a son,  
And no child of his heart whatever! May naught  
grow under his hand,  
Neither the yellow liquor, nor the white wheat in  
the land!  
May he like iron be rusted, and his stock dwindle  
alway!”



“And I dare not break my plighted faith to thy  
lord and mine this day.”

And he went to his lord in the tower: “Rise  
up, it is time to go!”

Stevan stood up before him, and washed his neck  
and brow,

And put on lordly raiment and an inlaid saber  
fine;

To the fair glory of his God he drank the yellow  
wine,

And to his own good journey and the fair cross  
did he drain

The wine at his own table: he drank not there  
again.

They mounted the two good chargers, they  
spread the banners abroad;

The drums beat and the flutes blew loud, and the  
chiefs rode forth with God.

Over the field of Kósovo did the white morning  
stand;

The Maid of Kósovo met them with a cup in either  
hand.

The cups are golden and empty. On her arm is a  
tire for the head,

A cap with milk-white feathers that are wound with  
silver thread,

And all about the midst thereof is it wrought with  
golden braid,

And a row of pearls, moreover. Unto her Stevan  
said:

“God’s aid be with thee, my sister! And where  
hast thou seen the fight?”

Where found'st thou the cap? Give unto me the  
silken cap so white,  
That I may find whose is the cap, what marshal's  
it may be,  
And be lucky upon my journey. And I will keep  
faith with thee."

Answered the Maid of Kósovo:

"Thou lord of  
kingly mien,  
My mother roused me at daybreak; at no fight  
have I been.  
I would draw water in Sítnitsa. He had over-  
flowed his banks;  
And, brother, he beareth the horses and the heroes  
in their ranks,  
And turbans, and Turkish fezes, and the Serb  
caps white as milk.  
I plunged into the Sítnitsa, and seized the cap of  
silk,  
And I bear to my little brother the fair cap silken  
and white,  
For I am young, and the feathers are pleasant in  
my sight."

She gave the cap to the marshal; I wot he knew  
it well!

He smote himself, and the sad tears down from his  
cheeks they fell.

The golden buckle on his sleeve rent the satin on  
his knee:

"Grief unto God! The prince's curse hath fallen  
upon me!"

He gave her the cap, and royally out of his pouch  
he told

In the hand of the Maid of Kósovo three ducats of  
yellow gold:

“Take, sister! I go to Kósovo and the battle  
on the plain.

By Christ, I will give thee a better gift, if I come  
back again!

But if I die in the fight thereby, aye keep my gift  
in mind.”

They spurred the steeds and hard away they  
galloped like the wind;

They forded the flood of Sítnitsa, to the tsar’s  
camp they drew.

Three Turkish pashas Stevan smote down and  
overthrew;

Against the fourth was he storming, but the Turks  
o’erwhelmed him then.

With him died Váistina and twelve thousand of his  
men.

There did the folly of the Serbs make as of noth-  
ing worth

The glory of Tsar Lazar and the Kingdom of the  
Earth.

## THE DEATH OF THE MOTHER OF THE YÚGOVICHÍ

DEAR God, a mighty marvel is fallen at Kósovo!  
In the host were Yug's nine children and their  
father the tenth also.

The mother of Yug's children she prayed God in  
her pain

For the eyes of a hawk and a swan's white wing to  
fly along the plain,

To see her nine strong children and Yug her lord  
beside.

And what she prayed for, verily, God granted her  
that tide.

God gave her eagle eyesight and the swan's pinion  
white,

And she found low in Kósovo her children slain  
in fight,

And old Yug Bogdan with them, and beside them  
nine good spears,

And on the goodly spearshafts there perched nine  
falcons fierce;

Roaming about the lances the chargers nine did  
stray;

Amid them were nine lions. And the steeds began  
to neigh,

And the lions roared together, and the falcons  
screamed aloud;

But the proud heart of the mother I wot it was  
unbowed.

But the lions and the horses she took them by  
the brows,

And the good falcons with them, and brought them  
to the house.

The wives of her strong children afar they saw her  
come,

And calling like to cuckoos went out to lead her  
home.

Moaning before the neighing steeds and the loud  
beasts thereby

Wept the nine noble ladies, and the hawks took  
up their cry.

Yet wept not that stern mother, and her heart was  
undismayed.

About the middle of the night the steed of Dam-  
yan neighed.

Then spake the mother to Damyan's wife:

“My

daughter, what is this?

And wherefore neighs in the nighttide that dap-  
pled steed of his?

Is he hungry for the milk-white wheat? Doth he  
thirst for Zvechan's wave?”

And the fair wife of Damyan in this wise an-  
swer gave:

“My mother, Damyan's mother, no wheat the  
steed doth crave,

Nor in the darkened nighttime doth he thirst for  
Zvechan's wave;

But aye hath Damyan taught him, and bidden him  
abide

To champ his oats till midnight, thereafter forth  
to ride.

Now he sorrows that his master mounts not his  
back this tide."

Yet wept not that stern mother, and her heart  
was undismayed.

That morn flew by two ravens, unto the shoul-  
ders red,

Upon the blackness of their beaks the milk-white  
froth it shone;

And they bare the hand of a hero and a golden  
ring thereon.

In the bosom of the mother, the dead hand they let  
fall;

And unto her daughter, Damyan's wife, in a loud  
voice did she call:

"My daughter, wife of Damyan, what hero's hand  
is this?"

And the daughter made her answer: "Our Dam-  
yan's hand it is;

Shall I not know the ring I gave the day that we  
were wed?"

The mother lifted the hero's hand, and fondled  
it, and said:

"O hand, who plucked thee off, and where apple-  
like didst thou grow?

Thou grewest in my bosom; thou wast plucked in  
Kósovo."

Then swelled her heart within her, and her soul  
was rent in twain

For her children and their father that at Kósovo  
were slain.

# TSÁRITSA MÍLITSA AND VLÁDETA THE VOÝVODA

MÍLITSA the tsáritsa went walking up and down  
Below the wall of Krúshevats and the ramp of the  
white town,

And also Vúkosava and Mara, her daughters dear,  
When Vládeta, the voývoda, on a charger brown  
drew near.

Sweated that steed had been, indeed, and the white  
foam stained his side.

“God aid thee, marshal of the king!” Queen  
Mílitsa she cried;

“Why sweats the stallion? Hast thou not come  
from Kósovo this day?

Sawest thou not my lord and thine?”

And Vlá-

deta did say:

“God aid me, Tsáritsa Mílitsa! I come from  
Kósovo.

I saw not the tsar, but his white steed the Turks  
drove to and fro,

Up and down by Kósovo, and I dread that the tsar  
is slain.”

When Queen Mílitsa had heard it, on her cheeks  
the tears did rain,

And anew she asketh the voývoda:

“What tidings

of the tsar?

Sawest thou Yug’s nine children at Kósovo that  
are;

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And the tenth, Yug Bogdan, their father?"

And

Vládeta replied:

"I rode by level Kósovo, and I saw them in that  
tide—

Yug and his nine strong children at Kósovo have  
I seen.

Their arms were red to the shoulders, and red were  
the sabers keen;

Weary were their arms at Kósovo with cutting the  
Moslems down."

Yet again unto the voývoda the tsáritsa spake  
on:

"Sawest thou Milosh and Bránkovich, my  
daughters' lords that are?"

Vládeta answered:

"At Kósovo, in the center  
of the war,

There saw I Milosh Óbilich that leaned on his  
broken spear;

He is dead ere now, for the Moslems pressed on  
him very near.

Vuk Bránkovich I saw not. Never may sun him  
see!

That same betrayed Tsar Lazar, the lord of thee  
and me."



## THE MAID OF KÓSOVO

UP rose the Maid of Kósovo before the break of  
day,  
On a Sunday morn, ere the bright sun had risen  
on his way.  
Unto her milk-white elbows she drew the white  
sleeves up;  
She bore three loaves in a basket, and in either  
hand a cup;  
Two beakers very beautiful, of hammered gold  
and fine;  
The one held silver water, and the other ruddy  
wine.  
She came to level Kósovo in pity and in ruth,  
And weeping walked along the place of the battle  
of the youth,  
The places of the slaughter, where the good Tsar  
Lazar stood;  
And with her hands she lifted up the heroes in their  
blood.  
The gallant lads she found alive, she washed with  
water fine.  
She gave them of the milk-white loaves, and cheered  
them with ruddy wine.  
To Pavle Órlovich she came, the ensign of his lord:  
As yet he was alive, although sore smitten by the  
sword;  
But by a shred of flesh his arm at the red shoulder  
hung,  
And the wound showed his shattered rib and the  
white ghastly lung.

She moved him from the pool of blood, she washed  
him with water fine;  
She gave him of the milk-white loaves and of the  
ruddy wine.

Gasping for breath he leaned to her, and trem-  
blingly he said:

“My sister, wherefore turnest thou the bodies of  
the dead?

What hard doom is upon thee, thou Maid of  
Kósovo,

That thou liftest up the heroes whose crests are  
fallen low?

Seekest thou then for some young man, whose last  
good day is done?

For thy father, or thy brother, or thy dear broth-  
er's son?”

Answered the Maid of Kósovo:

“O champion  
unknown!

I seek not father, nor nephew, nor a brother of  
mine own.

Knowest thou, O my brother, how the good Tsar  
Lazar went

With the squadrons of the army to take the sacra-  
ment?

By the fair church in Samódrezha the thirty mass-  
priests stood

For three weeks, with the offering of Christ his  
flesh and blood.

Thereby there came three captains, that to com-  
munion passed,

Milosh and Ivan Kósanchich, and Milan Tóplitsa  
last.

Milosh, the hero of the earth, through the gate be-  
fore me strode ;

The clanking saber at his side rattled along the  
road ;

His silver plume flashed on his cap, of silk was his  
raiment fair ;

His scarf and his spotted mantle, likewise of silk  
they were.

And forth and round about him his eyes went wan-  
deringly,

Glancing in pride from side to side, until they fell  
on me.

He doffed the spotted mantle ; aloud to me did he  
cry :

“ Take now the spotted mantle, to remember  
me thereby.

Lo, I go to perish, dearest, in the leaguer of the  
tsar !

Pray for me, now, belovèd, that I ride back from  
the war,

Returning from the battle with a great victory  
home.

Pray now for me, belovèd, that the good hap may  
come.

To Milan, my brother sworn to me by God and by  
St. John,

I will give thee to plight thy troth, when the good  
morn comes on ;

To my brother, my sworn comrade, of the living  
and the dead,

For I shall be his groomsmen whene'er he shall be wed.'

“After him Ivan, the hero of the earth, before me strode;  
The clanking saber at his side rattled along the road;  
His silver plume flashed on his cap, of silk was his raiment fair;  
His scarf and his spotted mantle, likewise of silk they were.  
On his hand he wore a golden ring, and his eyes went wandringly,  
Glancing in pride from side to side, until they fell on me.  
He took the ring from his finger; aloud to me did he cry:

“‘Take, maiden, now the golden ring, to remember me thereby.  
Lo, I go to perish, dearest, in the leaguer of the tsar!  
Pray for me now, belovèd, that I ride back from the war,  
Returning from the battle with a great victory home.  
Pray now for me, belovèd, that the good hap may come.  
To Milan, my brother sworn to me by God and by St. John,  
I will give thee in marriage, when the good morn comes on.  
It is my right in all men's sight before the priest to stand,

And like a brother give thee for a bride into his hand.'

"After him Milan, the hero of the earth, before me strode;

The clanking saber at his side rattled along the road;

His silver plume flashed on his cap, of silk was his raiment fair;

His scarf and his spotted mantle, likewise of silk they were.

On his shoulders was a golden cloak, and his eyes went wanderingly,

Glancing in pride from side to side, until they fell on me.

He took the cloak from his shoulders, and aloud to me did he cry:

"Take, maiden, now the golden cloak, to remember me thereby.

Lo, I go to perish, dearest, in the leaguer of the tsar!

Pray for me now, beloved, that I ride back from the war,

Returning from the battle with a great victory home.

Pray now for me, beloved, that the good hap may come—

A fair and lovely fortune in the season when I shall ride

Hither again from the slaughter and the battle to my bride.'

"They went out of the city and the altars where they kneeled,

And through the broken battle I seek them o'er  
the field."

Quoth Pavle to the maiden:

"Sister, incline

thine ear!

Seest thou yonder, sister, the splendor of that  
spear?

To the stirrups of the stallion, the brave blood  
flowed thereby,

And the horses of the heroes were drenchèd bridle-  
high;

Stained was the shining armor, their girdles and  
their greaves.

They are dead, sister. In their blood dip not thy  
milk-white sleeves,

But get thee from the battle to thy home of the  
white hall."

And the maid heard, and with a cry upon her  
love did call.

She came unto her white-walled home, weeping and  
wild and pale,

And there she mourned her loss alone, with moan-  
ing and with wail:

"Ah miserable! If I reach forth to touch the  
good green pine,

So will the green bough wither in this sad hand of  
mine."

## THE HEAD OF TSAR LAZAR

WHEN the Turks smote off Tsar Lazar's head in  
Kósovo, the fair,

No Serb came forth to find it, but a young Turk  
found it there;

He was a Turk that a Servian slave to a Moslem  
master bore.

And the young soldier thereupon he spoke his  
friends before:

“Brethren, most shameful would it be before God  
who is One,  
That this lord's head should the eagles tear, and  
the steeds trample thereon,  
And the legions of the heroes.”

In the skirt of his  
spotted cloak  
He bore Saint Lazar's head where forth a spring  
of water broke.

Into the spring of water he lowered the holy head,  
And there it lay in the cool spring till forty years  
were sped.

But the fair body at Kósovo, that was so white and  
wan,

The eagles did not tear it, nor the steeds trample  
thereon,

Nor the legions of the heroes.

Now praise to the  
Lord God's might!

There were young carters that went forth from the  
town of Skupi the white;

To Nissa and to Vidin had they set out to go

With Greeks and Bulgars; and they camped one  
night at Kósovo.

The carters ate their dinner, and thirsty they be-  
came;

And the candle of their lantern they lighted at the  
flame;

Over Kósovo up and down a water-spring they  
sought,

And them their fortune at that hour to the spring  
of water brought.

One of them spake: "A shining moon behold in  
the water fair!"

And the second answered: "Brother, no shining  
moon is there."

The third was silent and nothing said, but he  
turned his eyes abroad

To the east, and called on Saint Nicholas, and on  
the very God:

"O God and Father Nicholas, succor me now!" he  
said,

And he stepped into the spring therewith, and  
forth he drew the head

Of Lazar the Saint of Servia, and threw it on the  
grass;

Then he drank the water in a cup, for a thirsty  
man he was.

Before the thirsty lads had drunk, they looked  
where the head had been

On the black earth, but no head at all on the green  
grass was seen.

Forth went the sacred head alone, on the way  
across the plain,



Till it came to the holy body and was one with it  
again.

And when was risen the morning that broke so free  
and fair,

To the priests their tidings the carters bore, and  
many priests came there.

There were full three hundred ancient priests and  
twelve great bishops more,

And likewise at that season there came the patri-  
archs four;

In Pech<sup>1</sup> the one was ruler, and one of Tsárigrad,<sup>2</sup>  
One in Jerusalem, and the last the earth for his  
province had.

And they put on the sacred robes with monks' hats  
for the head,

And with them took the holy book, and mighty  
prayers they said.

And three days that great vigil and three nights  
did they keep;

They sat not down, nor rested, nor laid them down  
to sleep,

But aye they prayed Saint Lazar, that he would  
grant them to know

What church he loved: Would he rest in  
Krushédol or Ópovo,

Beshénovo, or Yasak, or perchance he fain would  
lie

In Shíshatovats or Rákovats, Kuvézhdin, or Jifsha  
thereby,

<sup>1</sup> Ipek.

<sup>2</sup> The *tsar's* city, Constantinople.

Or haply in Macedonia? He will have no church-  
ing there ;  
He will go to the church that he founded, Ravá-  
nitsa, the fair.  
Under Kuchay he stablished it, the mountain sheer  
and dread ;  
He built it here among us with his treasure and his  
bread ;  
And because of it no wretched tears by the father-  
less were shed.

**BALLADS OF MARKO KRÁLYEVICH**



## UROSH AND THE SONS OF MARNYÁVA

IN the fair field of Kósovo were four pavilions  
pight

By the fair church of Kósovo, Samódrezha the  
white.

Vukáshin lay in one fair tent, and Lord Úglyesha  
was nigh;

Goyko the duke and Urosh, the tsar's son, lay  
thereby.

The tsars rob one another of the empire of the  
tsars,

And they yearn to slay each other with the gilded  
scimitars.

They know not whose is the empire. "It is mine,"  
Vukáshin saith,

But the great Lord Úglyesha answers: "It is  
mine, upon my faith."

And Goyko, the proud voývoda, saith likewise:  
"It is mine";

But the son of the tsar, Prince Urosh, in silence  
must he pine,

For he dares not break his silence before those  
angry ones,

Before the three great brothers, Marnyáva's  
mighty sons.

Vukáshin writeth a letter, and a herald doth he  
send,

To Nédelko, the archpriest, in the city of Prizrend;  
And he bids him come to Kósovo, that he may there  
decide

To whom of the four princes the realm belongs, this  
tide;  
For he had given the sacrament unto the glorious  
tsar,  
And shriven him; and the ancient books, with the  
archpriest they are.  
Úglyesha writeth a letter and a herald doth he send  
To Nédelko, the archpriest, in the city of Prizrend;  
And Goyko, the great voývoda, he writeth yet a  
third,  
And sendeth a fiery messenger to the archpriest  
with his word;  
And the son of the tsar, Prince Urosh, sent a letter  
likewise away.  
In secret the fiery heralds went with their letters  
on that day.  
By the house of the Archpriest Nédelko, in Priz-  
rend, the white town,  
The heralds met, but the archpriest out of his house  
was gone,  
For he sat at the service in the midst of matin  
song.  
So fierce were those fierce heralds, so keen the  
strong of the strong,  
That they came not down from the chargers, but  
through the door did dash,  
And the good Archpriest Nédelko they smote with  
the woven lash:  
“Come swift, thou priest, to Kósovo, that there  
thou mayst decide  
To whom of the four princes the realm belongs, this  
tide;

For thou didst give the sacrament unto the glorious  
tsar,  
And shrovest him, and the ancient books of learn-  
ing with thee they are.

If thou comest not to Kósovo, forthwith thou shalt  
lose thy head."

Then wept the Archpriest Nédelko, and unto  
them he said:

"Till we are done with the service, get hence, ye  
strong of the strong,

And it will be shown hereafter to whom doth the  
realm belong."

Out rode the heralds straightway. When the  
liturgy was done,

Forth came the Archpriest Nédelko, and spake to  
all and one:

"With me the tsar took sacrament, to me he did  
confess;

But I asked not of his kingdom, but of his wicked-  
ness.

But to the house of Marko in the town of Prilip  
hie,

For Marko was my pupil to read in charactery;  
And the good Marko Krályevich was a scribe be-  
fore the tsar,

And the books of yore with their ancient lore, this  
day with him they are;

And who shall have the kingdom, Prince Marko  
shall make known.

He speaketh the truth, for he feareth none save  
the true God alone."

To Prilip, to Prince Marko's house, went on the  
heralds four;  
They came unto the milk-white house, and smote  
with the ring on the door.  
And Yévrosima heard it and called unto her son:  
"Do thy father's heralds at the door with the ring  
strike thereon?"

Marko arose and opened the door. They bowed  
where they did stand:  
"God bless thee, Marko!" But Marko, he stroked  
them with his hand:  
"Now welcome, sons! With the champions and  
the tsars are all things well?"  
But thereupon the heralds down on their knees  
they fell:

"The lords are well, Prince Marko, but they are  
not at peace this night;  
In Kósovo they quarrel, by Samódrezha the white;  
The tsars rob one another of the empire of the  
tsars,  
And they yearn to slay each other with the gilded  
scimitars;  
But to whom the realm belongeth, no man of them  
doth know,  
Wherefore they cite thee to tell them on the field of  
Kósovo."

Prince Marko went into the house:

"My moth-  
er of delight,  
In Kósovo they quarrel, by Samódrezha the white;  
The tsars rob one another of the empire of the  
tsars,



And they yearn to slay each other with the gilded  
scimitars ;

But to whom the realm belongeth, no man of them  
doth know.

Therefore they cite me to tell them on the field of  
Kósovo.”

Though greatly Marko loved the truth, she con-  
jured him the more :

“Let not my rearing be accurst in thee, the son  
I bore,

For thy father or his brethren speak not false,  
whate’er the stress,

But according to the living God speak out his  
righteousness.

Hurt not the spirit, Marko ; save thou the soul, my  
son.

Rather lose life than that the soul should have a  
stain thereon.”

Marko brought forth the ancient books, and  
mounted Dapple the gray ;

On Dapple’s back he rode the track to Kósovo that  
day.

And when he came to the king’s tent Vukáshin  
stood thereby :

“Here is my good son Marko, and fortunate am  
I !

For he will say, I trow, this day, the realm of the  
tsars is mine.

Then from the father to the son shall the realm  
stand in our line.”

Marko heard, but said naught ; from the tent he  
turned away.

Voývoda Úglyesha saw him, and aloud his thought  
did he say:

“Here is my nephew Marko, and a lucky man  
am I!

For I trow he will say to me this day that mine is  
the empery.

Say, Marko, that the realm is mine. We will  
share the government.”

But Marko the Prince said nothing, nor turned  
unto the tent.

Goyko, the voývoda, saw him, what time he went  
thereby:

“Here is my nephew Marko, and a lucky man  
am I!

He will say that unto me, Goyko, the empire doth  
belong,

Because I erstwhile loved him, when he was weak  
and young.

For I loved him very dearly, and in the bosom fold  
Of my mantle did I keep him like an apple of red  
gold;

Where'er I went upon my steed was Marko wont  
to ride.

Say then, Prince Marko, in this wise, what time  
thou shalt decide,

That all the empire of the tsars is given unto me,  
And thou shalt be the overlord, and I the tsar at  
thy knee.”

But Marko aye kept silence, and turned not to  
the tent.

To Urosh' white pavilion upon his way he went;

Unto the tsar's fair tent he rode. Urosh leaped  
up awake  
From the fair silken cushions, and to the prince he  
spake:

“A lucky man am I to-day; my godfather I see!  
Marko the Prince will say to whom the Servian  
realms shall be.”

Then they embraced each other, and wished each  
other well;

And sate upon the cushions until the evening fell.  
When the dark night was over, and the white morn-  
ing shone,

They rang the bells for matins, and to church the  
lords are gone.

They came forth from the service before the church  
to dine,

And then they ate the sugar, and drank the  
brandy-wine.

Marko looks on the ancient books, and a great  
word saith he:

“O thou, my sire, Vukáshin, is thy realm too  
small for thee?

May a curse go out and through it, for ye seize  
another's reign!

And Úglyesha, my uncle, too small is thy do-  
main?

May a curse go out and through it, for another's  
realm would ye seize!

And thou, my uncle, Goyko, too strait are thy  
provinces?

May a curse go out and through them, for an-  
other's realm would ye steal!

See—and may God forget you!—what the book  
doth reveal!

For the realm belongeth to Urosh, from the father  
to the son;

The child is of the tsar his house, and in him the  
line goes on,

And the tsar left it to him at the season when he  
died.”

Vukáshin, when he heard it, drew the dagger  
from his side;

On his son leaped Vukáshin, to stab him in that  
hour,

And Marko fled before him, for he had not will nor  
power .

In arms against his father to lift the hand and  
fight.

Marko ran round about the church, Samódrezha  
the white;

Three times round white Samódrezha the circle did  
they make;

The king well-nigh had caught him, when a voice  
to Marko spake:

“Into the church, Prince Marko!” the voice  
from the church did say,

“For the sake of truth thou wilt perish at thy  
father’s hand this day.”

Marko ran hard into the church as the doors  
wide open drew;

Vukáshin fell against them as again the doors shut  
to,

And smote the beam with his dagger. Therefrom  
did the red blood drain.

The king repented: "By the one God, I dread  
my son have I slain."

A voice spoke to him from the church: "Dost  
hear where thou dost stand?"

Thou smot'st not thy son, but an angel, with the  
dagger in thy hand."

The king was wroth at Marko, and cursed him  
thereupon:

"My son, God slay thee! Mayst thou have nor  
sepulcher nor son!

May the soul go not from thee till thou servest the  
Turk in war!"

His father cursed him, but he won the blessing  
of the tsar:

"O my godfather Marko, may God thee ever  
shield!

May thy face shine in the council; thy saber slash  
in the field!

May none excel thee in battle, and thy name far  
and wide

Be everywhere remembered while the sun and moon  
abide!"

So spake Vukáshin and the tsar, and so did it  
betide.

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE VILA

Two sworn brothers were riding over Miroch, the  
mountain fair;

Voývoda Milosh and Marko were the two heroes  
there.

Side by side the steeds did they ride as they bore  
the spears that day;

One kissed the face of the other: such loving broth-  
ers were they.

Then Marko on Dapple yearned to sleep; he spake  
to his brother sworn:

“Voývoda Milosh, heavily by sleep am I over-  
borne.

Sing to me, brother, and cheer me.”

“Prince

Marko, brother mine,”

Said Milosh, “I would sing to thee, but, Marko, I  
drank the wine

In the mountain with Ravíyoyla, the vila, yester-  
night.

She forbade me; if she hears me, my throat and  
heart will she smite.”

Prince Marko spake: “Sing brother, nor ever  
the vila fear,

While Dapple and I and the war-club with six gold  
knobs are here.”

Then sang Milosh, the voývoda, a great and  
beautiful song

Of our elders and our betters that held the king-  
dom long

In famous Macedonia, and the troop that with  
each did go.

The song was pleasing to Marko, and he bowed on  
the saddlebow.

Prince Marko slept in the saddle, and Milosh sang  
on the track;

And the vila Ravíyoyla heard him, and sang in an-  
swer back.

Milosh sang, and the vila again unto him sang.

The better voice had Milosh, and angrily she  
sprang

Away to the mountain Miroch; with two white ar-  
rows she smote

Voývoda Milosh through the heart and likewise in  
the throat.<sup>1</sup>

Said Milosh:

“Alas, my mother! And woe unto  
Marko, too!

Alas, my brother, the vila has shot me through and  
through!

Did I not tell thee I must not sing on Miroch in  
our course?”

Marko started from slumber, and sprang from  
the dappled horse.

Well did he stretch the girth-straps for Dapple  
the good gray;

He kissed him, and embraced him, and to the steed  
did he say:

<sup>1</sup> “They must have had a singing contest before this, and the vila have forbidden him to sing because his voice was better than hers.” (Note by Karájich.)

“Ah, Dapple the steed, of all my strength the  
great right wing art thou ;  
Ravíoyla, the vila, do thou overtake her now.  
I will shoe thee with pure silver and gold of the  
seventh proof ;  
I will cover thee with silk to the knee, with tassels  
thence to the hoof ;  
And all thy mane, moreover, shall be mingled with  
the gold ;  
And I will deck thy trappings with small pearls  
manifold.  
If thou dost not overtake her, I will put out both  
thine eyes ;  
I will break thy legs, all four of them, and leave  
thee in evil guise ;  
And thou shalt struggle from fir to fir, abandoned  
and forlorn,  
Even as I, Prince Marko, without my brother  
sworn.”

Prince Marko on gray Dapple's back forthwith  
himself he threw ;  
They raced across Mount Miroch. O'er the trees  
the vila flew,  
And desperately Dapple galloped the midst of the  
forest through.  
At first nowhere could the vila be seen or heard  
thereby ;  
But at last, when Dapple saw her, he leaped three  
spear-lengths high  
And a full four spear-lengths forward. Dapple  
gained on her swift ;



In her distress she leaped aloft amid the clouds and  
lift.

Up Marko hurled the golden mace, the weapon of  
great worth,

And smote her between the shoulders, and beat her  
to the earth.

Left and right he did her smite with the golden  
club that day.

“Why shottest thou my brother, vila? May  
the good God thee slay!

Give thou herbs for the hero. Ere long thou shalt  
lose thine head.”

The vila besought him in God’s name. Implor-  
ingly she said:

“Prince Marko, my sworn brother, God and St.  
John before,

Release me alive in the forest, to search Mount  
Miroch o’er

For herbs to heal the hero, and his fierce wounds  
abate.”

Marko harkened her prayer, for his heart was  
compassionate;

Alive into the forest he let the vila go.

She gathered herbs on Miroch, as she wandered to  
and fro,

And she called often: “My brother, I am coming  
from the field.”

The vila gathered many an herb, and the hero’s  
wounds she healed;

And the lordly throat of Milosh was better than  
before,

And the strong heart of the hero was stronger than  
of yore.  
The vila went unto Miroch. With his sworn  
brother good,  
Went Marko to Porech country, and forded Timok  
flood,  
Till he came to the great town Brégovo and the  
Vidin country-side.  
But Ravíoyla, the vila, to the other vilas cried:  
“Hear ye, my friends, the vilas, and harken,  
and give ear:  
Shoot no hero on the mountain when Marko the  
Prince is near,  
Or while Dapple and he and the war-club with six  
gold knobs are here.  
What I have suffered at his hands, I have not  
strength to say,  
And hardly out of them at last alive I got away.”

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE SWORD OF VUKÁSHIN

THE sultan with an army is come to Kósovo;  
An hundred thousand men had he where Sítnitsa  
doth flow.

With a saber of Damascus his herald goeth forth,  
And full three hundred ducats the naked blade is  
worth;

And likewise was the scabbard worth ducats fifteen  
score,

And the cost of the cord of the scabbard three  
hundred ducats more.

No one was found for money to buy that scimitar,  
But chance brought the Prince Marko on the  
herald of the tsar.

Said Marko: "The Damascus blade, thou herald,  
show to me."

The herald heard and gave over the blade, but not  
a word said he.

Marko said to the herald, as he looked on the  
saber cold:

"Forty-five score of ducats will I give thee of  
yellow gold;

But harken, herald, let us go to some safe place  
hereabout,

That I may count before thee the yellow ducats  
out;

For I would not ungird me of the three gold belts  
this tide,

Since I am much in the Turkish debt in the camp  
on every side,

And I deem that for the saber they will not let me  
pay.”

The Turk would hardly await him, and hastened  
on the way,  
And along the water of Sítnitsa they speedily are  
gone.

Prince Marko there ungirded him 'neath the white  
bridge of stone;

He spread a mantle of the green, he took the belts  
of gold,

And out he shook the golden belts while the Turk  
the ducats told.

Marko looked on the saber, and saw thereon dis-  
played

Three Christian words engraven upon the shining  
blade;

And first “The Saint Demetrius,” and next “The  
Archangel” came,

And last of all upon the blade stood King Vuká-  
shin's name.

Marko saw and forthwith spake:

“O herald of the  
tsar,

By the one God I adjure thee; whence came the  
scimitar?

Was it left by thy father? Did thy wife bring  
it to thee?

Or was it won in battle, perchance, from an  
enemy?”

The Turk spake unto Marko:

“By God, thou  
chief unknown,

Unto thee now the inward of this matter will I  
own.

It was not left by my father, my wife brought it  
not to me;

But, chief unknown, I won it from a single enemy.  
When with the Servian empire fell both tsars at  
Kósovo,

Murad and Lazar, then I won the saber from the  
foe.

Early to water my fat steed to Sítnitsa I went,  
And there my fortune brought me to a green silken  
tent.

Within was a wounded warrior most fierce—God  
strike him dead!—

The black beard of his lip that tide over his breast  
it spread.

He wore a great green mantle, and by him lay the  
sword.

When the wounded one beheld me, by God he me  
implored:

“‘Brother, thou champion unknown, now smite  
not off mine head;

Soon will my soul go from me, for my wounds are  
deep and dread.

Wait half an hour; by Sítnitsa there shalt thou set  
my grave.

Three belts of gold are on me, and a Damascus  
glaive

That is worth a thousand ducats, and here is my  
silken tent.’

“But I would not harken his prayer, and out  
with him I went,

Dragging the wounded hero. My saber then I  
drew,  
And cut off his head; his leg I grasped, and his  
arm, and straightway threw  
The hero into Sítnitsa, where swiftly the waters  
run.

There with the marvelous booty this saber for thee  
I won."

When the Prince Marko heard it, to the herald  
did he say:

"O herald of the Turkish tsar, may God reward  
thee this day!

That was my own dear father, even Vukáshin, the  
king.

Hadst thou waited his soul's departure, it had been  
a better thing,

And thou, O Turkish herald, wouldst have had a  
better grave."

He drew, and cut the Turk's head off with the  
Damascus glaive.

He grasped the milk-white hand and leg, and in  
Sítnitsa he threw

The herald of the tsar and said: "Go thou my  
father unto!"

To the army Marko wended with the gold and the  
scimitar;

Said the janissaries: "Prithee, where is the her-  
ald of the tsar?"

But to them said Marko: "I pray you, janis-  
saries, begone!

He took his ducats and pennies to the sea to trade  
thereon."

Said the Turks one to the other: "Hard must the  
Moslem strive,  
Who cometh to Prince Marko a bargain with him  
to drive!"

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE EAGLE

MARKO lay on the tsar's highway, and green was  
all his gear,

A silver cloth was on his face; by his head was  
planted his spear.

By the spear stood Dapple, but on it a great white  
eagle stayed;

It spread its wings above the prince and gave the  
hero shade,

And water in its beak it bore, the wounded hero  
to slake.

But a vila of the mountain unto the eagle spake:

“In the name of God, white eagle, how hath  
Marko stood thine aid,

That thou spreadest thy wings above him to give  
the hero shade,

And bringest water in thy beak, the wounded hero  
to slake?”

But thereupon the eagle unto the vila spake:

“Be silent, vila, and hold thy tongue. What  
good hath come to me,

Hath aye come at Prince Marko's hands. Keep-  
est thou the memory

Of the day the army perished on the field of  
Kósovo,

And both tsars, Lazar and Murad, died in the  
overthrow?

Up to the stirrups of the steed that day the red  
blood ran,

Unto the silken girdle of many a fighting man;



Horses and heroes swam, steed by steed, and hero  
hero by,  
And we flew up hungry and thirsty, the vultures  
of the sky;  
We fed on human flesh, we drank our fill of human  
blood:  
My wings were wet. Forth flamed the sun in  
heaven where he stood:  
My wings grew stiff; my feathers in flight I could  
not wield;  
My comrades flew, and I was left upon the level  
field.  
Heroes and steeds rushed onward, and me they  
trampled o'er.  
God sent Marko; he lifted me up from the heroes'  
gore  
And put me behind on Dapple. To the green  
wood amain  
He bore me and tossed me into a fir; and down the  
gentle rain  
Descended there upon me. My wings were washen  
clean,  
That I might fly thereafter over the forest green;  
And there I met my comrades.  
"One more good deed to me  
Did the good Marko Krályevich. Hast thou in  
memory  
How the town burned at Kósovo? Burnt was  
Ajága's tower:  
Therein my little eaglets were hidden in that hour,  
And Marko gathered all of them in his silken  
bosom fold,

And a full month he nourished them in the white  
house of his hold,  
And let them go to the green wood, when a month  
and a week were told.  
And this did Marko for me, that I met my eaglets  
dear.”

Prince Marko is remembered like a fair day in  
the year.

## THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCE MARKO

PRINCE MARKO with his mother one evening sate  
alone.

Said his mother:

“Marko, my little son, old is  
thy mother grown;

No more can she prepare for thee the meal whereon  
to dine;

She cannot light a torch for thee or serve the  
ruddy wine.

Marry, my son, a woman forthwith to take my  
place.”

Marko unto his mother shortly he spake apace:

“In God’s name, my ancient mother, I have been  
nine realms around,

And a tenth, the Turkish empire. When a girl  
to my taste I found,

She would not have been to thy liking; when I  
found a friend for thee,

Then she was not to my liking, nor desirable to  
me.

Except for one, my mother, in the Bulgarian land;  
I saw her in Shíshmanin’s palace; by a cistern did  
she stand.

When I looked on her, my mother, the grass swam  
under me;

There is the maid for me, mother, and a dear friend  
for thee.

Get me food for the journey; I will ask for the  
maiden’s hand.”

She waited not, nor abided till the dawn shone  
in the land,  
But she baked him bread with sugar. When the  
dawn broke clear and fine,  
Marko girded himself and the steed and filled a  
skin of wine;  
He hung it on Dapple's saddle, and his mace on  
the other hand;  
On Dapple he went to Shishmanin's house in the  
Bulgarian land.  
Afar the king perceived him. Marko he came be-  
fore;  
They embraced and kissed each other, and asked  
how they them bore.  
The servant to the cellars went with the faithful  
steed,  
But the king, the good Prince Marko to his white  
house did lead.  
They sat down at the ready board the dark-red  
wine to drain;  
When they had drunk their fill thereof Marko  
leaped up again.  
He doffed his cap, he bowed to the earth, and he  
asked for the maid of the king.  
The king said naught, but gave her; on the ground  
he laid a ring,  
And an apple thereby; moreover for the girl he  
let cut a shift.  
To her sisters and kinswomen Marko gave many a  
gift,  
He gave three packs of treasure; and there a month  
he spent,

Ere to gather gay-clad wooers to Prilip the white  
he went.

The maid's mother bespoke him: "My son-in-law," she cried,

"My Marko, let no stranger be the bringer of the  
bride,

But rather thine own brother or some nephew of  
thy name,

For the maid is passing lovely and we fear some  
open shame."

There bode Prince Marko of Prilip the remnant  
of the night;

At dawn he saddled Dapple and rode to Prilip the  
white.

Near the town his mother saw him, and drew near  
a little space,

And in her arms she took him and kissed him on  
the face.

And his mother asked Prince Marko, as he kissed  
her milk-white hand:

"My son, Prince Marko, art thou come in peace  
across the land?

And hast thou as yet discovered a daughter dear  
for me,

A maid to be my daughter and a true wife to  
thee?"

Marko answered:

"My mother, I am come in  
peace through the land;

I have asked and won in marriage a maiden to my  
hand.

When I set out for my white house, then the maid's  
mother cried:

“My Marko, let no stranger be the bringer of  
the bride,

But rather thine own brother or some nephew of  
thy name,

For the maid is passing lovely and we fear some  
open shame.’

“But, mother, I have not a brother, no nephew  
at all have I.”

His mother spake:

“Son Marko, be troubled  
not thereby.

A letter in fine characters, my son, thou shalt in-  
dite

Unto the Doge of Venice, and bid him come forth-  
right

To be groomsman at thy wedding, with five hun-  
dred woers beside.

Thou shalt write to Stevan Zemlyich to be bringer  
of the bride,

With five hundred woers likewise. No shame at  
all shalt thou fear.”

When Marko understood her speech, he hark-  
ened his mother dear.

He wrote the letters on his knee, and one to the  
doge is borne,

And one to Stevan Zemlyich, that is his brother  
sworn.

Time passed; the Doge of Venice came, and five  
hundred woers beside;

He went to the slender tower, but they to the lea-  
land wide.

In a little while came Stevan and five hundred  
woers fine.

They gathered at the slender tower and drank their  
fill of the wine.

Then they went to the court of Shíshmanin in the  
Bulgarian land,

And King Shíshmanin received them, and open was  
his hand

To the heroes in the houses and the horses in the  
stall,

And three white days he kept them, and they rested  
one and all.

When out broke the fourth morning, spake the  
heralds in this wise:

“What ho, ye gay-clad woers, it is time that  
ye arise!

Short are the days, and the delays at nightfall long  
are they;

Ye should take thought, ye woers, to wend the  
homeward way.”

King Shíshmanin brought gracious gifts. Fair  
hose he gave to one,

To another he gave a gallant cloth with embroidery  
thereon;

He gave unto the groomsmen a table of gold well-  
tried,

And he gave a golden garment to the bringer of  
the bride,

And a great war-steed furthermore, and charged  
him with the maid;

And to the bringer of the bride the king moreover  
said:

“Here is the steed and the maid likewise to take  
to Marko’s place:

Give him the maid; the steed is thine, a gift of  
honor and grace.”

Forth marched the gay-clad woers through the  
Bulgarian land.

Where comes good fortune, also ill fortune is at  
hand;

For on that tide both far and wide the wind blew in  
the field,

The wind stirred lightly the maiden’s veil and the  
maiden’s face was revealed.

The Doge of Venice saw her. His head for grief  
ached sore.

He scarce could wait till evening the land had  
fallen o’er.

When they came to the night encampment, the  
Doge of Venice sped

To the tent of Stevan Zemlyich, and soft to him  
he said:

“O Stevan, the bringer of the bride, give me thy  
sister dear

One night for my love, and thou shalt have this  
bootful of treasure here.

Lo, Stevan, the yellow ducats!”

But Stevan to

him did cry:

“Be silent, doge, mayst thou change to stone! Has  
it entered thy mind to die?”



The Doge of Venice turned him back. At the  
second camp he went  
And spoke to Stevan Zemlyich in the midst of the  
white tent:

“I prithee, Stevan Zemlyich, give me thy sister  
dear  
One night for my love. Thou shalt have therefor  
two bootsfull of treasure here.  
Lo, Stevan, the yellow ducats!”

Said Stevan

thereupon:

“Go, doge! Mayst thou perish straightway!  
Shall my sister be undone?”

To his tent went the doge. When the third  
camp was pitched at eventide,  
The doge went unto Stevan, the bringer of the  
bride:

“O thou, the bringer of the bride, give me thy  
sister dear  
One night for my love. Thou shalt have therefor  
three bootsfull of ducats here.”

Thereupon Stevan Zemlyich was finally cajoled  
To give the doge his sister for three bootsfull of  
yellow gold.

Stevan took up the ducats and the doge led the  
maid

By the white hand within his tent and softly to her  
said:

“Sit down, sweet bride, that thou and I may fondle  
each other now.”

But answered the Bulgarian bride:

“A shame-

ful groomsmen art thou!

O Doge of Venice, beneath us the earth will open  
wide,

The heaven will crack above us! What man shall  
fondle a bride?”

The Doge of Venice answered:

“Speak not like

a fool confessed!

I have already, dearest, nine christened brides ca-  
ressed,

And of wives four and twenty. The earth it gaped  
not wide,

Nor did the heaven crack o’er us. Sit down, let  
me fondle thee, bride!”

But the bride said:

“Doge of Venice, my  
groomsman, harken this.

My mother dear adjured me no bearded man to  
kiss,

But a young and beardless hero, such as Prince  
Marko is.”

When the Doge of Venice heard it, he called  
swift barbers there;

One bathed him, and the second he shaved him  
clean and fair.

And the lovely bride bowed over in the place where  
she stood,

And picked up the beard and wrapped it in a piece  
of linen good.

Thereafter the Doge of Venice the barbers drove  
outside,

And said unto her softly: "Now sit thee down,  
sweet bride!"

Then answered the Bulgarian girl:

"When Marko

of this shall hear,

Three heads, O Doge, my groomsman, from our  
bodies he will shear."

The doge said unto the sweet bride:

"Speak

not so foolishly!

There in the midst of the wooers is Marko plain  
to see,

Where his fair white pavilion he did himself un-  
fold.

Upon the summit of the tent is an apple of red  
gold,

With gems so bright that by their light are half  
the wooers seen clear.

But at my side sit down, O bride, that we may  
fondle here."

The bride said:

"Wait in the tent a space,  
thou dearest groomsman of mine,

Till I look on the sky above the clouds, if it be  
foul or fine."

When she had come without the tent, she fled  
to Marko in fear;

The girl sprang through the wooers like a fawn  
of a single year,

To the tent of the Prince Marko, that down to  
sleep had lain;

And the girl stood before him, and her tears ran  
down like rain.  
Then Marko leaped to his feet and spake to the  
Bulgarian bride:  
“What a wretch, Bulgarian, art thou! Couldst  
thou not e’en abide  
Till we came to my white dwelling, and in Christian  
guise were wed?”  
He seized the saber silver-wrought, but the bride  
bowed down and said:  
“Marko, mine is no wretch’s line, but a house of  
power and pride!  
The wretches are thine, thy groomsman and the  
bringer of the bride!  
Thine own bride Stevan Zemlyich to the Doge of  
Venice sold  
For three bootsfull of treasure, ducats of yellow  
gold.  
Prince Marko haply will not believe—if thou be-  
lievest not me,  
The beard of the Doge of Venice, I have brought  
it unto thee.”  
And thereupon she opened the cloth that held  
it wide.  
When the Prince Marko saw it, he spake unto the  
bride:  
“Sit down, fair bride; on the morrow I will look the  
matter o’er.”  
Then Marko laid him down again to slumber there  
once more.

But when on the morrow morning the mighty sun  
outbroke,

Marko leaped nimbly to his feet, and fastened back  
his cloak;

In his hand he took the heavy mace, and then away  
he hied,

To bid the groomsman good morrow, and the  
bringer of the bride.

“Good morrow, bringer of the bride, and grooms-  
man mine,” said he;

“Bringer of the bride and groomsman, say, where  
now the bride may be.”

Still was the bringer of the bride, no answer  
would he make;

But unto the Prince Marko the Doge of Venice  
spake:

“How now, friend Marko the bridegroom, of  
such strange whims men are,

That hardly a man may make a jest without be-  
getting a war!”

“Evil is the jest of thine, O doge!” thereto did  
Marko say,

“No jest is a shaven beard! Where now is thy  
beard of yesterday?”

Yet more to him in answer had the Doge of Ven-  
ice said;

Marko swung the great saber, and cut off the  
doge’s head.

Forthwith fled Stevan Zemlyich, but Marko ran  
amain,

And smote him with the saber, and cut him right  
in twain.

In the tent himself he girded, and saddled Dapple  
aright ;  
Forth went the gay-clad wooers, and came to  
Prilip the white.

## PRINCE MARKO AND ALIL AGA

THERE once were two sworn brothers; through  
Tsárigrad<sup>1</sup> rode they:  
The one is the Prince Marko, the other Kostádin  
the Bey.

Said Marko:

“Bey Kostádin, sworn brother of  
mine own,  
Now that I ride in Tsárigrad some woe may strike  
me down.  
Mayhap they will summon me to the lists; a sick-  
ness will I feign,  
Heartache, the evil illness, that is so fierce a  
pain.”

So Marko feigned a sickness, though none he  
had indeed;  
Of his grievous cunning he bowed him on the back  
of Dapple the steed;  
He leaned his breast on the saddlebow, through  
Tsárigrad he rode.  
Good meeting befell him. Before him one Alil Aga  
strode,  
The tsar his man, and thirty were his janissaries  
there.

Said Alil Aga to Marko:

“To the lists now let us  
fare,  
Thou hero good, Prince Marko; with the shafts let  
us make play.

<sup>1</sup> The *tsar's city*, Constantinople.

And if God and good luck serve thee, and thou  
shootest beyond me this day,  
Be there given thee my white houses, that heritage  
of mine,  
And the Turkish matron, my faithful wife. But  
if my shot pass thine,  
To thy houses and thy faithful wife faith I will  
pay no heed;  
I only hope to hang thee high and seize on Dapple  
the steed."

Said Marko:

"Let be, thou Turk accurst, how  
shall I shoot with thee,  
When such a bitter sickness has taken hold of me,  
Heartache, the evil illness, that is so fierce a pain?  
I cannot hold myself on the steed: how shall we  
shoot amain?"

But the Turk, Alil Aga, he will not let him  
alone.

The right skirt of Marko's tunic, he set his hand  
thereon;

Marko drew from his belt the knife and cut the  
skirt away:

"Go to, wretch, Alil Aga! May a plague strike  
thee this day!"

But the Turk Alil Aga he will not let him alone.

The left skirt of Marko's tunic, he set his hand  
thereon;

Marko drew the knife from his belt and cut the  
skirt away:

"Go to, wretch, Alil Aga! May God in heaven  
thee slay!"



But the aga will not let him be. With his right  
hand Dapple's rein

He seized; his left hand thrust therewith in Marko's  
bosom amain.

Marko flashed like the living fire; straight he rose  
on the steed;

He grasped the reins, and Dapple pranced as he  
were mad indeed.

Hero and horse ran the wild course. He called  
Kostádin Bey:

“To the cloth market, Kostádin, my brother,  
take thy way;

Bring thence a Tatar arrow with nine hawk-  
feathers white.

I will go forth with the aga, that the cadí may  
judge aright,

And no matter arise hereafter, sufficient cause for  
a fight.”

The bey went to the cloth market; with the aga  
Marko hied

To the cadí. The aga his slippers doffed and sat  
at the cadí's side;

And out he took twelve ducats that he laid on the  
cadí's knee:

“Set no just terms for Marko; and here are ducats  
for thee!”

But Marko knew the Turkish tongue. No coin  
had he in the place;

Forthwith before his bosom Prince Marko held his  
mace:

“Dost thou hear me, master cadí; set thou just  
terms for me!

Since my club with the six spikes of gold thou  
easily mayst see.

If I strike thee with the war club, thou wilt need  
no plaster therefor;

Thou wilt forget the courtroom, nor want the  
ducats more."

Fever fell on the master, the cadì, to behold  
The great war club before him, with the six spikes  
of gold.

He straightway wrote the terms for them, but his  
hands shook for dread.

Then out to the single combat at once the heroes  
sped;

And thirty janissaries with Alil Aga strode,  
But none but Greeks and Bulgars on Marko's part  
abode.

When they came to the lists spoke Alil, the aga of  
the tsar:

"Shoot, captain, thyself that vauntest for a  
great man of war,

With thy brag in the tsar's council that thy shoot-  
ing is so strong

Thou canst hit an eagle of the cross,<sup>1</sup> that leads  
the clouds along."

Said Marko:

"I am a hero good, but older than  
I art thou;

For, hero, thine is the lordship, and thine is the  
empire now;

<sup>1</sup> "*Aquila imperialis*, which has a sort of cross on its  
back." Budmani, *Croatian (Servian) Dictionary*.

Thine is the right of the elder, and since thou hast  
summoned me,

Shoot now, Turk, in the order of thy seniority."

Thereupon Alil Aga his first white arrow shot;  
An hundred yards and twenty was it measured  
from the spot.

Marko his first white arrow two hundred yards he  
drave;

The Turk a full three hundred hath sent his second  
stave.

Prince Marko the second arrow five hundred yards  
he sent,

But the Turk's third white arrow a full six hun-  
dred went.

Meanwhile the Bey Kostádin by Marko did alight,  
And bore the Tatar arrow with nine hawk-feathers  
white.

Marko unloosed the Tatar shaft; through the dust  
and mist it blazed,

And forthwith vanished from them, however hard  
they gazed;

Nor could it e'er be measured. Hot tears the aga  
shed;

With Marko, calling on God's name, in his despair  
he pled:

"Marko, who art my brother sworn, in the name  
of God and St. John,

By thy good law; my house is thine, for thee to  
seize thereon,

And the Turkish matron, my true wife, is thine to  
lead away:

Only I prithee, brother, hang me not up this day!"

But Marko spake:

“May God on high forth-

with destroy thy life!

If thou callest me brother, wherefore dost thou  
offer me thy wife?

Thy wife is not needful to me. We are not as the  
Turks in this;

With us the wife of a brother even as a sister is.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “An old Servian custom still surviving in many districts is the adoption by two men or boys of each other as ‘brother,’ or by girls as ‘sister,’ or sometimes by two of different sex as brother and sister. The brother, in that case, would be a relative of the girl, too near in blood, according to Servian usage, to marry or admit of any but fraternal affections between the two. It would be sacrilege and illegal for them to marry. This system is and was the literal application of the Christian principle of ‘brotherhood,’ developed into an institution during the bitterest times of oppression by a foreign foe. Two young men going into battle bound themselves as brothers in ties of close fealty which endured through all trials. The oath of fidelity for life was sworn before the altar in the church and consecrated by the priest, and often sealed by the exchange of a drop of blood drunk in a cup of red wine. If one died the surviving one was, in all respects, like a true brother to the family of his dead ‘pobratim.’ This tie is considered most sacred by Servians and cannot be broken, no matter how severely it may be tried by any circumstances that may arise. It is recognized by a law conferring right of inheritance as well as family obligations. Milosh Obrenovich, of the war of Servian liberation, was the pobratim of the Turkish commander Ali Aga Sertchesma, a Mohammedan Servian, who was afterward opposed to him in battle. When the aga’s army was vanquished, Milosh was a brother to him and protected his personal life, liberty, and property, as he in similar circumstances protected Milosh’s life.” Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, *The Servian People* (New York, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 73, 74.

Just above, Alil Aga has addressed Marko as “sworn brother,” as a compliment or appeal.

I have a faithful wife at home, even Yélitsa nobly  
born.

And I would forgive thee all, brother, but my tunic  
hast thou torn;

Give me three loads of money to patch my skirts  
apace!"

Merrily then the Turk leaped up and kissed  
Prince Marko's face.

Marko for three white days he kept within the  
lordly hall,

And gave him three loads of money; and his lady  
therewithal

Gave to the prince a mighty shirt sewn with a  
thread of gold,

And also a silver towel. Three hundred horsemen  
bold

The aga gave him for escort, when he rode to his  
house afar.

Long they abode thereafter, and held the land for  
the tsar:

When the foe invaded, Marko and Alil beat them  
back;

Wherever fortresses were ta'en, they marshaled the  
attack.

## PRINCE MARKO AND MINA OF KOSTUR

PRINCE MARKO and his mother had sat them down  
to dine;

On the dry bread they feasted, and they drank the  
yellow wine.

And unto the Prince Marko came letters three that  
day:

One was from Bajazét the tsar, in white Stamboul  
that lay;

One from the town of Budim, from the king thereof  
had come;

And one from Yanko the voývoda, in Sibin that  
had his home.

The letter from Stamboul city, that was written  
of the tsar,

To the army summons Marko for the keen Moorish  
war.

In the letter out of Budim, the second of the  
three,

The king with the woers bids him that the grooms-  
man he may be,

That the king may lightly marry the queen of  
whom he is fain.

The letter from Sibin the city, it beareth a message  
plain,

That as godfather he shall christen the children  
of Yanko twain.

Marko speaks to his mother:

“My mother, old art thou;  
Council me, mother, shall I go to the tsar’s army  
now?”

Shall I go among the wooers, to marry the king  
amain?

Or unto Yanko of Sibir, to christen his children  
twain?"

His mother speaketh to Marko: "My little  
son," saith she,

"A man goes unto the wooers because of jollity;  
As a godfather a man goes forth because of the  
law of God;

But a man goes to the army because of the fear of  
the rod.

Go, my son, to the army, for God will hold his  
hand;

But the Turks, an thou come not thither, they will  
not understand."

Marko obeyed his mother. To the host he  
marched away;

He took Golúban the servant; to his mother did he  
say:

"Hear, mother! Of my fortress do thou early  
shut the gate,

And when ariseth the morning, do thou throw it  
open late;

Since with Mina accurst of Kostur at odds am I,  
and I fear,

Mother, that my white houses the rogue will plun-  
der here."

Marko to the tsar's army with Golúban the  
servant went.

On the third evening of the march, when they had  
pitched the tent,

Marko supped, and Golúban served out the yellow wine.

Marko took up the goblet, and slumber fell on his eyne;

He dropped the cup on the table, but the wine spilled not on the board.

Golúban the servant waketh him; "Prince Marko," he saith, "my lord,

Ere this hast thou gone to the army, but thou hast not slumbered so deep,

Nor dropped the cup from thy fingers."

But

Marko started from sleep,  
And said:

"Golúban, my servant, thou art faithful, as I deem.

I closed mine eyes for a little, and I dreamed a wondrous dream.

Exceeding strange was the dream, and exceeding strange the hour.

A tuft of mist blew outward from Kostur the white tower:

The mist enveloped Prilip; in the white mist Mina came.

He will plunder my white houses and burn them with the flame;

Over my mother's body will he trample with the steed;

My faithful bride upon that tide a captive will he lead;

My horses from the stables, he will drive them all away;



The money in my treasury he will carry off that day."

To Marko said Golúban: "Fear not, Prince Marko. In sooth, Good heroes ever dreamed good dreams. Dreams lie, but God is truth."

When they were come to Tsárigrad,<sup>1</sup> the tsar sent forth his host, Over the blue sea went they forth to the fierce Moorish coast; And four and forty cities have they ta'en over sea. They came under Kara Okan, and years they fought there three; Okan they smote, and never could they storm it in the war.

Marko smote down the Moorish chiefs and bore their heads to the tsar.

The tsar gave bakshish to Marko, and wroth the Turks did it make;

And they came in anger to the tsar, and unto him they spake:

"Tsar Bajazét, this Marko, no hero at all is he; He cleaveth and bringeth for bakshish the heads of the slain to thee."

Marko heard it, and forthwith to the great tsar did he pray:

"My father by adoption, to-morrow is the day Of St. George, my own good patron, and let me, tsar, withdraw To hold my patron's festival by custom and by law;

<sup>1</sup> The *tsar's city*, Constantinople.

And Alil Aga, my brother sworn, likewise do thou  
release,  
That he and I together may drink the wine in  
peace."

The tsar sent forth Prince Marko, for naught  
else could he do,  
To hold his patron's festival, and released his  
brother too.

And into the green forest forthwith Prince Marko  
sped,

Nor far from the tsar's army his white pavilion  
spread;

To tipple on dark liquor he sat him on the grass,  
And with him Alil Aga, his brother sworn that  
was.

And the Moorish watch discovered, when the fair  
daybreak shone,

How forth from the tsar's army Marko the Prince  
was gone.

Then shouted all the Moorish watch: "O furious  
Moors, set on!

The hero on the great gray steed—the terrible is  
gone!"

The Moors set on, and of the host slew thirty  
thousand men;

And the tsar wrote a letter unto Prince Marko  
then:

"My good son by adoption, come quickly here  
again,

For thirty thousand men of mine have been in battle  
slain!"

But Marko said: "How then may I come quickly, father mine?  
For as yet I have not drunken my fill of the yellow wine,  
And much less have I started my holiday to hold."  
And lo, upon the morrow, when broke the morning cold,  
Then shouted all the Moorish watch: "O furious Moors, set on!  
The hero on the great gray steed—the terrible is gone!"  
The Moors set on, and of the host slew sixty thousand men;  
Once more the great Tsar Bajazét wrote to Prince Marko then:  
"My good son by adoption, come quickly here again,  
For sixty thousand men of mine have been in battle slain!"  
But Marko said: "My father, a little must thou wait;  
I have not yet regaled my friends as well befits their state."  
On the third day shouted the Moorish watch:  
"O furious Moors, set on!  
The hero on the great gray steed—the terrible is gone!"  
The Moors set on, and slaughtered an hundred thousand men;  
And the tsar wrote a letter unto Prince Marko then:

“Before God for my foster child thee, Marko,  
will I own;  
Come very quickly, for the Moors my camp have  
overthrown!”

Marko mounted on Dapple, he rode to the tsar’s  
array;  
When day broke, the two armies they clashed in  
the mêlée.  
When the Moorish watch saw Marko, they cried:  
“Ye Moors, begone!  
The hero on the great gray steed—the terrible,  
comes on!”  
Marko smote on the Moorish host; three ways their  
host he drave.  
He slashed throughout one army with the edges of  
the glaive,  
The second of the armies on Dapple he trampled  
o’er,  
And herded the third before the tsar. But Marko  
was wounded sore;  
Seventy wounds at the Moors’ hands on Marko’s  
body there are.  
On the tsar’s breast falleth Marko, and to him saith  
the tsar:

“Marko, my good foster child, by thy wounds  
now art thou slain?  
Can the doctors with their wrappings recover thee  
again?”

Prince Marko then made answer: “No deadly  
wounds they are,  
And I deem that I shall recover.” And thereupon  
the tsar

Thrust hand into pouch and to him a thousand  
ducats gave,  
That the Prince Marko might go forth his wounds  
to heal and lave;  
And the tsar sends forth two faithful lads, lest  
Marko the Prince should die.  
But Marko sought not a doctor; from inn to inn  
did he hie,  
And ever sought Prince Marko where the best wine  
was to drain.  
Scarce had he drunk his fill thereof, when his  
wounds were healed again.  
But a fine-written letter to the Prince Marko  
came,  
That his houses all were plundered and ravaged  
with the flame,  
And the body of his mother trampled over by the  
steed,  
And his faithful wife a captive his enemy did lead.  
Then Marko mourned and to the tsar, his foster  
father, said:  
“My foster father, my white house is ravaged in  
the raid;  
My faithful bride upon this tide a captive do they  
lead;  
Over my mother’s body have they trampled with  
the steed;  
The money in my treasury is stolen from me this  
day:  
Mina of Kostur, he it was who carried it away.”  
The tsar spake comfort:

“Foster son, my Marko,

do not fear.

If these thine houses have been burned, I will build thee better here ;

Beside my houses and like to mine shall they be built for thee.

If thy gold is stolen, a farmer of my taxes shalt thou be,

And thou shalt gather treasure. If thy wife is led away,

I will give thee a better lady upon the wedding day.”

Said Marko :

“My foster father, glory to thee again !

When thou buildest the houses for me, orphans will curse me then,

Saying: ‘This rascal Marko, his houses were burned of late ;

Now may these new-built for him be likewise desolate !’

If thou makest me farmer of taxes, till I bind poor, needy men,

I cannot gather the taxes, and orphans will curse me then,

Saying: ‘This rascal Marko, what gold he had of late

Was stolen ; what he hath presently, may it too be desolate !’

To another how wilt thou wed me, while yet my wife doth live?—

Three hundred janissaries I prithee to me give ;

Forge for them crooked pruning hooks and of slender hoes no lack ;  
And to white Kostur will I go, if perchance I may win her back."

Three hundred janissaries were his at the tsar's command ;

The tsar forged crooked pruning hooks and slender hoes to their hand.

To the three hundred Marko his counsel gave aright :

"Go, my three hundred brethren ; go now to Kostur the white.

When ye are come to Kostur, the Greeks will be merry thus :

'Here are laborers ; cheap enow will they tend our vines for us !'

But do ye naught, my brethren. Abide in Kostur the town ;

Drink the clear wine and brandy, till thither I come down."

The three hundred janissaries they went to Kostur the white,

But Marko to Mount Athos, unto the holy height ;  
And there he took communion and moreover did confess

For the blood he had shed, then clad him in a black cáloyer's<sup>1</sup> dress ;

He let his beard to the girdle grow, and a monk's hat put on his head.

<sup>1</sup> Monk of the Greek church ; see Byron, *Childe Harold*, ii, 49.

Then he leaped to the back of Dapple, to Kostur  
the white he sped.

When he came to Mina of Kostur, there Mina sat  
to dine,

And Marko's wife served Mina the cups of yellow  
wine:

“In God's name, thou black cáloyer,” did Mina  
to him say,

“Tell me, pritheer, where gottest thou the little  
dapple gray?”

Prince Marko said:

“Friend Mina, by the true

God do I swear,

In the fierce Moorish country, with the tsar's host  
was I there.

There was a fool, Prince Marko, that dying there  
I saw,

And I buried him according to our custom and our  
law.

A gift for his soul's salvation they gave this steed  
to me.”

When Mina of Kostur heard it, he leaped up  
joyfully,

And said:

“Nine years have I waited until these  
tidings came!

For Marko's house have I plundered and ravaged  
with the flame;

His faithful wife have I made a slave, but I would  
not break her vow,

Black priest, till Marko perished, and thou shalt  
marry me now!”



Up Marko took the holy book, and thereupon  
did wed

Mina unto the woman he had ta'en to his own bed.  
Then sat they down to speak fair words and drink  
the yellow wine.

Said Mina :

“Hearest thou, Yélitsa, O heart  
and soul of mine?

Till now wast thou Marko's lady; henceforth thou  
art Mina's wife!

Go now to the treasure house below, I prithee, soul  
of my life,

And bring three cups of ducats to give the cáloyer  
black.”

Yélitsa brought from the treasure three cups of  
ducats back;

She took not Mina's money, but Marko's. A rusty  
glaive

She brought up with the money, and to the priest  
she gave:

“Here is for thee, black cáloyer, a gift for Marko's  
sake.”

Marko took up the saber, and looked at it, and  
spake:

“Mina, the lord of Kostur, is it seemly in thine  
eyes,

To dance here at thy wedding after the monkish  
wise?”

Quoth Mina of Kostur to him: “Black cáloyer,  
to thee

Surely it is permitted. Wherefore should it not  
be?”

Marko leaped on his nimble feet twice and thrice  
him about ;  
The tower's foundations trembled as he drew the  
saber out.  
He drew the rusty saber, he swung it left and right ;  
The head from Mina's shoulders at one stroke did  
he smite.  
From his white throat he shouted: "Lord Mina's  
days are done ;  
Ho, all my janissaries ! my laborers, come on !"  
Three hundred janissaries through Mina's man-  
sions came ;  
They plundered his white palace and ravaged it  
with flame.  
Marko brought home his faithful wife and Mina's  
horde along,  
And went unto white Prilip with chanting and with  
song.

## PRINCE MARKO AND BEY KOSTÁDIN

PRINCE MARKO and Bey Kostádin, brothers in  
God were they;

They rode their steeds together. Outspoke Kos-  
tádin the Bey:

“Prince Marko, now I prithee, thou art my  
brother sworn;

Come to me in the autumn, on St. Demetrius’ morn,  
The feast day of my patron saint. Much honor  
wilt thou see,

And a fair feast and a welcome becoming my de-  
gree.”

Said Marko:

“Boast not of thy feast! When

I sought for my brother born,

Ándriya, I dwelt in autumn with thee. On St.  
Demetrius’ morn,

The feast day of thy patron saint, I saw the feast  
of thy pride,

And also in the selfsame hour three cruel deeds be-  
side.”

Said Bey Kostádin: “Marko, my brother  
sworn art thou;

Say to me of what cruel deeds thou speakest to me  
now.”

Said Marko:

“The first cruel deed after this  
wise befell.

There came two orphans unto thee that thou  
mightst feed them well

With the white bread, and give them the ruddy  
 wine to drain.  
 But thou saidst: 'Ye mere scum of the earth,  
 now get you hence amain!  
 Ye shall not defile the wine before my gentlefolk  
 this day.'  
 Bey, I pitied the orphans and with them went  
 away;  
 And I took them to the market and fed them on  
 white bread,  
 And gave them to drink of the ruddy wine, and  
 clad them in satin red,  
 And in green silk moreover. Unto thy house again  
 I sent them, and looked to see thee, how them thou  
 wouldst entertain.  
 One thou tookest on either hand; to the table thou  
 leddest them then:  
 'Eat and drink,' thou saidst, 'ye sons of gentle-  
 men!'

"Thy second cruel deed was this. When ancient  
 squires forlorn  
 Came there, who had lost their money, and whose  
 scarlet was outworn,  
 Thou evermore didst set them at the foot of the  
 table there;  
 But whoso of the younger squires at thy festival  
 that were,  
 Who had gained new hordes of money, and whose  
 scarlet was fresh and new,  
 Evermore thou broughtest them the head of the  
 board unto;

Thou didst pour the wine and brandy before them  
fast and free;

There was a feast and welcome, befitting thy de-  
gree.

“This is thy third cruel deed, O bey. Father  
and mother are thine;

Neither is ever at thy board nor draineth first the  
wine.”

PRINCE MARKO AND THE DAUGHTER  
OF THE MOORISH KING

His mother asks Prince Marko :

“Marko, my little

son,

So many monasteries wherefore hast thou begun?  
Hast thou sinned before God? Or by good hap  
hast thou won the gold abroad?”

Marko of Prilip answered :

“I will tell in the

name of God.

Once, when I was in the Moorish land, at dawn to  
a cistern fair

I went, that Dapple might drink thereof ; and be-  
hold, at the water there,

Were twelve Moors. Out of my due time I wished  
to water the steed ;

The twelve Moors would not let me, and a battle  
did we breed.

Thereat I drew the heavy mace, and smote a black  
Moor down.

We smote against each other, eleven against one.  
Two I smote down, and ten of them came furiously  
at me.

Then nine of them must I abide, for I had stricken  
three.

The fourth fell ; eight were the champions against  
me that did drive.

But I struck again ; on the red ground lay ruddy  
corpses five.

I slew the sixth, but was taken by the six that were  
left alive.

They bound me, and they bore me to the Moorish  
king along;

And the king of the Moors threw me into the dun-  
geon strong.

Seven years was I in it: when summer was at hand  
I knew not, nor when winter had come across the  
land;

Except that, when in winter the girls the snowballs  
cast,

Then would they toss a snowball into the dungeon  
fast;

And then I knew it was winter, as I lay within the  
tower.

In the summer, they would throw me a sprig of  
basil flower,

And I knew it was summer. The eighth year in  
prison that I was,

I wearied not of prison, but of a Moorish lass.

Unto the Moorish Sultan the daughter dear was  
she;

Night and morn to the window of the tower she  
summoned me:

“ ‘Marko, poor lad, in the dungeon I prithee rot  
not here,

But give true pledge thou wilt take me to be thy  
true love dear,

If I free thee from the dungeon, and thy Dapple  
from the hold.

Marko, unto thy heart's desire will I gather ducats  
of gold.’

“When I saw that might was against me, and  
strength compelling me,  
I took my cap from off my head, and swore to it  
on my knee,  
A firm pledge to the cap I swore:

‘Thee I will

never leave;

A firm pledge, and moreover, ne’er will I thee de-  
ceive.

E’en the sun is false; he warms not winter as sum-  
mertide—

Never will I renounce the pledge; thereby will I  
abide.’

“Then thought the Moorish maiden that unto  
her I swore.

One night, at fall of darkness, she opened the dun-  
geon door

And led me out of the dungeon, and Dapple from  
the hold,

And a better horse for herself. On both were hol-  
sters full of gold;

She brought a silver-hilted sword. On the horses  
we laid hand,

And forthwith galloped onward over the Moorish  
land.

When the dawn shone, my mother, I sat me down  
to rest;

And the Moorish maid, with her black arms she  
clasped me to her breast.

When I looked on her, my mother, she was black  
and her teeth were white,



And it was a thing unpleasing and dreadful in my  
sight.

The silver-hilted saber forth from the sheath I  
drew ;

I smote her under her silken belt ; the blade cut  
through and through.

I seized on Dapple ; still the head of the Moorish  
maid spake on :

‘My brother Marko, wretched lad, leave me not  
here alone.’

Then, mother, I sinned in the sight of God, but  
gained much gold and gear,

Whereby the monasteries and churches fair I rear.”

## PRINCE MARKO'S PLOWING

WITH his mother, Yévrosima, his thirst did Marko  
slake

On the red wine. When they had drunk, to him  
his mother spake:

“O thou, Prince Marko, prithee cease from the  
ravage and the raid;

Never on earth is evil with a good deed repaid.

Weary is thy mother of washing from thy shirts  
the crimson stain.

But do thou now yoke ox to plow, and plow the  
hill and the plain.

Sow thou the white wheat, little son, that thou  
and I may sup.”

Marko harkened his mother, and he yoked the  
oxen up;

He plows not the hill, nor the valley; but he plows  
the tsar's highway.

Some janissaries came thereby; three packs of gold  
had they:

“Plow not the tsar his highway, Prince Marko,”  
said they then.

“Ye Turks, mar not my plowing!” he answered  
them again.

“Plow not the tsar his highway, Prince Marko,”  
they said anew.

“Ye Turks, mar not my plowing!” he answered  
thereunto.

But Marko was vexed; in anger he lifted ox and  
plow,

And the Turkish janissaries he slew them at a  
blow,  
And their three packs of treasure to his mother he  
bore away :  
“Lo, mother, what my plowing hath won for thee  
to-day !”

## MARKO DRINKS WINE IN RAMAZÁN

THERE WAS an edict sent abroad by the Tsar Suleymán

That none should drink the yellow wine in the month of Ramazán,

That none should wear green tunics, nor silver-inlaid dirks,

And that none should dance, moreover, with the women of the Turks.

But Marko dances among them, and inlaid with silver wan

Is his blade, and green is his tunic, and he tipples in Ramazán.

And the Turkish priests and pilgrims, he maketh them drink likewise.

And the Turks go to the palace unto Suleymán's assize:

“Father and mother of us all art thou, Tsar Suleymán.

Saith not thine edict: none shall drink liquor in Ramazán;

And that none shall wear green tunics, nor silver-inlaid dirks;

And that none shall dance, moreover, with the women of the Turks?

Now Marko dances among them; and inlaid with silver wan

Is his blade; and green is his tunic; and he tipples in Ramazán.

Wine he may drink and welcome, if it seem good in his eyes,

But the Turkish priests and pilgrims, he maketh  
them drink likewise.”

When the tsar heard their story, he summoned  
his heralds twain:

“Go, heralds, to Prince Marko, bid him come  
hither amain.”

Forth issued the two heralds; upon their way they  
went,

And they found Prince Marko drinking in the  
shadow of his tent.

And a cup that held twelve measures is ready to  
his hand.

The heralds twain gave unto him the word of the  
tsar’s command:

“Dost thou then hear, Prince Marko? It is  
good in the tsar’s eyes

That thou come to his council, and the court of  
his assize.”

O, angry was Prince Marko! He snatched the  
goblet up,

And he smote the tsar’s two heralds in his anger,  
with the cup.

The cup rang and the head rang; the blood and  
wine ran free.

And Marko went to the tsar’s assize, and sat at  
the tsar’s right knee.

And the black cap of sable fur he pulled across  
his face,

And he laid his saber across his breast, and his  
hand upon his mace:

“My foster child, Prince Marko,” said the Tsar  
Suleymán,

Mine edict saith: none shall drink wine in the  
 month of Ramazán;  
 And none shall wear green tunics, nor silver-in-  
 laid dirks,  
 And none shall dance, moreover, with the women  
 of the Turks.  
 Now here be worthy Moslems that have spoken  
 evilly.  
 Alas, my poor son Marko, I wot they have slan-  
 dered thee!  
 That thou dancest with Turkish matrons, and in-  
 laid with silver wan  
 Is thy blade; and green is thy tunic; and thou  
 tipplest in Ramazán;  
 And the Turkish priests and pilgrims, thou mak-  
 est them drink likewise!  
 Now wherefore pullest thou, my son, thy cap  
 across thine eyes?  
 Why is thy mace beside thee, and thy saber across  
 thy breast?"  
 And forthwith strong Prince Marko Tsar  
 Suleymán addressed:  
 "O thou, my foster father, the great Tsar Suley-  
 mán,  
 It is permitted of my faith to drink in Ramazán.  
 And for the priests and pilgrims, my honor would  
 be gone,  
 If they should look upon me, and I should drink  
 alone.  
 If I wear a good green tunic, I am young; it be-  
 comes my youth.

If I gird an inlaid saber, I paid my money in  
sooth.

If I dance with the Turkish women, O tsar, I am  
yet unwed,

And once, O tsar, a woman had come not to thy  
bed.

If I pull my cap on my forehead, it burns, for I  
speak with the tsar.

And for the freeing of my mace, and drawing the  
scimitar,

O tsar, in my heart I fear me that battle is hard  
at hand:

It is ill in battle the nearest to Marko, the Prince,  
to stand.”

The tsar looked in all quarters another man to  
see,

But nearer to Prince Marko there was no man than  
he;

Nearest was the Tsar Suleymán. He drew back  
in the hall,

But Marko followed onward, and drove him to the  
wall.

From his pouch drew Tsar Suleymán an hundred  
ducats fine,

And gave them to Marko, saying: “Marko, go  
drink the wine.”

## THE DEATH OF MARKO KRÁLYEVICH

PRINCE MARKO rose up early on Sunday before  
the sun,  
On Mount Úrvina by the seacoast. And as he  
rode thereon,  
Dapple the stallion staggered sore; from his eyes  
ran bitter tears.  
Marko it grieved. He spake to the steed:

“A  
hundred and sixty years,  
Dapple, my gallant stallion, are gone since I came  
on thee.  
Never hast thou staggered; yet to-day hast thou  
staggered under me,  
And thou sheddest tears. God knoweth there is  
no good from the sign:

The one of us is in danger; thy life it is or mine.”  
While Marko spake, a vila on Úrvina’s steep  
side

In summons to Prince Marko lifted her voice and  
cried:

“Knowest thou, Marko, my brother sworn, why  
stumbles Dapple, thine horse?  
He sorrows for thee, his master, since soon will ye  
part perforce.”

Said Marko to the vila:

“May thy throat ache  
for this!  
How should I part with Dapple? Cities and em-  
peries



Have I not passed over and traversed, from the  
east unto the west?  
And Dapple, my steed, was ever of all good steeds  
the best;  
And I was the best of the heroes. He shall not  
from me be led,  
While upon Marko's shoulders remaineth Marko's  
head."

Said the vila:

        "Marko, my brother sworn,  
        none shall take Dapple so.  
Neither shalt thou die at a hero's hands by any  
saber blow,  
Nor by the shock of the heavy mace, nor piercing  
of the spear;  
For any hero of the earth, Prince Marko, have no  
fear.  
But Marko, God shall slay thee, the ancient slayer  
of men.  
If thou wilt not believe me, go up to the mountain  
then.  
Aloft shalt thou see two slender firs on the left  
and on the right;  
They have overhung the mountain with the sum-  
mits of their might.  
And all the air is spicy with their fair needles  
green;  
And there runneth a spring of water the slender  
trees between.  
There turn and dismount from Dapple; to a tree  
the steed shalt thou tie.

Raise thyself over the water-spring that bubbles  
up hard by,  
And look at thy face in the water. Thou shalt  
see when thou shalt die.”

Marko obeyed. Aloft he looked on the left and  
on the right  
At the firs that overhung the mount with the sum-  
mits of their might,  
And all the air was spicy with the fair needles  
green.  
There Marko halted Dapple in a little space be-  
tween,  
And to a fir tree in the midst the charger did he  
tie.  
He raised himself o’er the water-spring that bub-  
bled up hard by ;  
And when Marko looked on the water, he saw when  
he should die.  
He wept apace and spake apace :

“Ah, lying

world, fair flower—

Fair wast thou and too little have I roamed thee  
in my hour,  
Three hundred years ; and now must part from  
thy pleasure and thy power !”

From his girdle the Prince Marko drew out the  
iron glaive,  
And he went to the steed Dapple, and Dapple’s  
neck he clave,  
That Dapple might come never to a Turk, a prize  
of war,

And do him bitter service bearing water in the  
jar.  
When he had slaughtered Dapple, he buried Dap-  
ple the steed;  
A better grave the horse he gave than to Andrew,  
his brother, indeed.  
The mighty glaive, thereafter, he broke in pieces  
four,  
Lest it should come into Turkish hands, and the  
Turks should be glad therefor,  
And rejoice for the sword of Marko to their hand  
that had fallen then;  
And lest, moreover, he should be curst by any  
Christian men.  
When he had broken the saber, in seven the spear  
broke he,  
And threw it among the fir twigs. The rough  
mace mightily  
He grasped, and from Úrvina hurled it into the  
thick blue sea;  
And Marko said: "When that club of mine aris-  
eth out of the main,  
Then will there be a hero upon the earth again."  
When he had ruined his weapons, then pen and  
ink he drew  
From his belt, and from his pocket white paper  
fresh and new.  
And he writes a letter:  
"Whoever over Úrvina  
shall fare  
To the cold spring between the firs, and finds brave  
Marko there,

Let him know forthwith that perished at last is  
Marko the bold.  
About him are three money-belts. What treasure  
do they hold?  
Therein is a lordly treasure of ducats of yellow  
gold.  
One belt will I give with my blessing to him who  
buries me;  
With the second belt let churches be sculptured  
splendidly;  
And the third belt I bequeath it to the maimed and  
to the blind,  
That they may sing of Marko and his fame be  
kept in mind.”  
When the letter was written, he thrust it upon  
a twig of the fir,  
Whence from the road it might be seen by any  
wayfarer.  
The golden writing-set therewith into the spring  
he threw,  
And his good mantle of the green from off his  
shoulders drew.  
He spread the mantle beneath the fir, and the sign  
of the cross made then;  
He pulled the sables over his eyes, and lay there,  
nor rose again.  
Dead was Marko beside the spring. For a week,  
from day to day,  
Whoever saw Prince Marko that traveled along  
that way,  
Deemed that the good Prince Marko asleep was  
lying there;

And, fearing to awake him, a long way round  
would they fare.  
Where'er is found good fortune, misfortune  
cometh apace,  
And wherever evil hap is found, good cometh soon  
in the place.  
Abbot Basil of Athos from the church Vilíndar the  
white,  
He it was spied Prince Marko, with Isaias his  
acolyte.  
He held his hand: "Lightly, my son, see that thou  
wake him not.  
After sleep is Marko moody; he may kill us on the  
spot."  
But the monk saw how Marko slept. The letter  
he espied,  
And he read throughout the letter that told how  
Marko died.  
The monk dismounted from the steed, and raised  
up Marko the bold.  
Marko was dead. The bitter tears down Basil's  
cheek they rolled,  
And he sorrowed sore for Marko. The belts of  
golden pelf  
He ungirded from the hero, and belted on himself.  
On many a grave he pondered, where to bury  
Marko dead.  
He chose; and got him on the horse, and to the sea-  
shore sped.  
In a ship he laid Prince Marko. And to Athos  
the Holy Height

He bore him, to Vilíndar, the stately and the  
white,  
And there the funeral liturgy over the prince he  
read  
And likewise sang the requiem before they graved  
the dead.  
There the old man buried Marko. No mark he  
placed him o'er,  
That none might say where the hero lay, and mock  
at him therefore.

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**BALLADS OF SERVIA UNDER TURKISH  
RULE**





## THE MAIDEN MÁRGITA AND RAYKO THE VOÝVODA <sup>1</sup>

Not yet the dawn had whitened, nor the day star  
shown its face;

Men thought not of day—forth Márgita the maid  
walked in the place,

In Srijem over Slánkamen; <sup>2</sup> barefoot the damsel  
sprang

Over the stone so early. In delicate wise she sang,  
But Rayko in the song she cursed:

“Rayko,

may God thee slay!

The Turks have plagued us grievously in Srijem,  
since the day

When thou becamest voývoda. When Mirko ruled  
the land,

We heard of no Turk, nor ever saw one before us  
stand;

But now they plague us grievously. Their horses’  
feet are sore

For riding night and morning in our country ever-  
more.

The very fields on their horsehoofs are lifted and  
stolen away,

And the air is full of javelins and their throwing-  
darts to-day.”

<sup>1</sup> In the translation of this ballad slightly more than a third of the original has been omitted. The canceled lines give the names and dwelling-places of numerous Servian voývodas not mentioned elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> That is, “Salt-stone.”

So sang the girl of Sriyem, and deemed that none  
could hear,  
But Voývoda Rayko saw her, and the curse came  
to his ear;  
And he called the maiden Márgita:

“Sister,” he  
saith, “do thou  
No more curse Rayko the voývoda. What more  
can he do now?  
What may he do for himself? And what for  
Sriyem in this hour?  
What shall he do in Sriyem against the Turkish  
power?  
While Mirko was the voývoda, in our cities in their  
turn  
Were many voývodas. Stay thou; their number  
thou shalt learn.

At Pótserye on Sava his dwelling Milosh made.  
He was vizier of Lazar in many-towered Belgrade.  
In Krúshevats, the white city, glorious Lazar had  
his hall,  
With his fair son beside him, the good lad Stevan  
the Tall.  
Yug Bogdan, the old hero, with the nine sons of  
his might,  
Dwelt in another city, Prókuplye the white.  
At the white town of Kurshúmliya was Strahin,  
the great ban;  
At Tóplitsa, Milan Tóplitsa, where the chill wa-  
ters ran.

At flat Kósaynitsa, Ivan Kósanchich, the mighty  
man,

In Travnik, the white, Vuk Bránkovich was Lazar's  
high vizier;

Duke Stepan<sup>1</sup> in Herzegovina ruled the country  
without fear.

At Skadar on the Bóyana, Vukáshin was the king.  
With his brethren Goyko and Úglyesha, to help  
in governing.

And in Prizrend, where the plowland reacheth so  
fair and far,

With his little son, Prince Urosh, was Stepan the  
Servian tsar.

Starína Novak<sup>2</sup> held the rule on Stara, the moun-  
tain old;

And with him Rádivoye, his brother, called the  
bold,

And Tátomir and Grúitsa dwelt with them in the  
hold.

And, moreover, Bey Kostádin dwelt in Kúmanovo  
white.

And Prince Marko in white Prilip, in the mansion  
of his might.

“Harken thou, sister Margita, our voývodas  
were they;

<sup>1</sup> Ertseg Stepan.

<sup>2</sup> The introduction into this ballad of a hero of the late  
sixteenth century is of course an anachronism.

All of them were among us, and all have passed  
away.

Some died in their beds, sister, and some in battle  
were slain;

To-day doth Rayko alone of them in Sriyem yet  
remain,

Like a dry tree in the mountain grove. What  
shall he do in this hour?

What shall he do in Sriyem against the Turkish  
power?"

From his belt he drew a dagger—through his  
live heart it sped;

On the black earth Rayko of Sriyem, the voývoda,  
lay dead.

And Márgita ran to him; with a wailing cry she  
said:

"My brothers, Servian voývodas; you have been  
and have passed away!

How have you left your children and your faithful  
wives this day?

Are they not now a footstool, that Turkish feet  
may rest?

Are not your monasteries become a Turkish jest?"

She snatched the dagger of Rayko, through her  
live heart smote it well,

And dead the wretched maiden by the dead Rayko  
fell.

## HOW STARÍNA NOVAK BECAME A HAYDUK

NOVAK and Rado drank the wine near Bosna the  
river cold,

With Bógosav. When they had drunk as much  
as they could hold,

Prince Bógosav began to speak:

“Starína

Novak,” said he,

“My brother sworn, now speak the truth, so may  
God prosper thee!

Why didst thou join the outlaws? What con-  
straint on thee was laid

To go to the wood to break thy neck, and to ply  
a wretched trade?

And in thine age, moreover, when thy season was  
past and sped?”

Starína Novak spake to him:

“Prince Bó-

gosav,” he said,

“My brother sworn, since thou askest me, I will  
even tell thee the truth;

But it was through a hard constraint that I fled,  
in very sooth.

Thou mayst remember, when Yérina did Sméderevo  
rear,

She made me a day laborer. I labored there three  
year.

Wood and stone did I haul for her with my oxen  
and my wain,

And in the space of full three years not a penny  
did I gain;  
Not even bark sandals for my feet could I win my  
labor by.  
And that I should have pardoned her. When the  
town was builded high,  
She would build towers and gild the doors and  
windows of the hold.  
Each house in the vilayet she taxed three measures  
of gold,  
That is three hundred ducats. Who gave, in the  
place might live;  
But I was poverty-stricken, and had no gold to  
give.  
With the mattock, wherewith I had labored, to the  
outlaws I fled amain.  
I could not stay where Yérina, the accursèd one,  
did reign,  
But ran to the cold Drina, and to rocky Bosnia  
fled.  
When I came near Romániya, there Turkish  
wooers led  
A Turkish damsel homeward. In peace they  
passed by me.  
There remained the Turkish bridegroom; on a  
great brown steed was he.  
In peace that Turkish bridegroom he would not  
let me pass,  
But forth he drew a triple whip with three knobs  
of yellow brass.  
Thrice he smote me on the shoulders. Thrice I  
prayed him in God's name:

“I pray thee, Turkish bridegroom, mayst thou  
have courage and fame!  
Mayst thou have a happy marriage, but pass me  
by in peace!  
Thou seest how poor a man am I.’

“But the  
bridegroom would not cease;  
But rather in his anger began to smite the  
more.  
Then at last was I angry, for my shoulders were  
waxen sore.  
With the mattock on my shoulder, the bridegroom  
did I smite  
With one blow from the brown steed’s back, though  
the stroke was passing light.  
And then I leaped upon him, and smote him where  
he lay,  
Twice or thrice, till his spirit from the body fled  
away.  
I reached my hand in his pockets, and there found  
purses three;  
I put them in my bosom, and girt his saber on me.  
I left the mattock at his head that the Turks  
might have withal  
Something to bury him with; the steed I mounted,  
brown and tall.  
To the wood of Romániya I went; the wooers saw  
me there;  
But wished not to pursue me, or haply did not  
dare.  
“It is forty year. The forest is better known  
to me

Than the house of my habitation was ever wont  
to be.  
The roads across the mountains I watch them and  
I hold.  
From the youths of Sárayevo I take their silver  
and gold,  
And their linen and velvet for me and mine; and  
I can go abroad  
And stand in the place of danger, for I fear none  
but God."



STARÍNA NOVAK AND THE BOLD  
RÁDIVOYE

STARÍNA NOVAK drank the wine on Romániya the  
green hill,

And Rádivoje, his brother, drank with him with a  
will;

And Grúitsa, Starína's son, Rádivoje sat before;  
With Grúitsa was Tátomir and thirty hayduks  
more.

When the hayduks in good fellowship had drunk  
the liquor cold,

Then spake unto his brother Rádivoje, called the  
bold:

“Hearest thou, brother Novak? I will leave  
thee behind me now.

Thou canst not go a-raiding; too grievous old art  
thou.

Thou dost not love to gallop on the highway any  
more,

To lie in wait for traders that come from the sea-  
shore.”

So spake bold Rádivoje. He leaped from the  
ground to his feet,

He seized on Breshka by the waist; the thirty fol-  
lowed fleet.

Rado<sup>1</sup> went over the black mount; 'neath a green  
fir Novak lay,

With his two young sons. Brave Rado came to  
a crossing in the way.

<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation for Rádivoje.

A wretched chance befell him, for Mehmed the  
Moor rode there;  
With thirty heroes and three great packs of treas-  
ure the Turks did fare.  
When Mehmed saw the hayduks, he shouted to his  
men;  
The champions drew their sabers and rushed on  
the outlaws then.  
They had no chance in that short time their mus-  
kets to let drive.  
The Turks smote thirty heads off, and Rado seized  
alive;  
They bound his hands behind him; they led him  
o'er the hill,  
With insult, but bold Rado sang to them with a  
will:  
    "God slay thee, Mount Romániya! Dost thou  
    breed no hawk in thee?  
Flew a flock of doves with a raven before their  
company;  
A white swan led they, and treasure beneath their  
wings had they."  
Child Grúitsa heard Rado as he sang on the  
highway.  
He spake to Starína Novak:  
    "My father, harken  
    thou,  
For out on the broad highway is some one singing  
now,  
And speaks of Mount Romániya and the moun-  
tain-falcon gray.

It is like our Uncle Rado. He has gained a treasure this day,  
Or else he has fallen on evil. Let us go to give him aid."

He seized on his Damascus gun and went to the ambuscade  
On the tsar's highway, and after him young Tátomir lightly ran;  
And after the children followed Novak the ancient man.

On the highway in the ambuscade, there Novak took his ground;

And beside him his two children. O'er the mountain came a sound,

And presently thirty champions before them did appear,

And every champion carried a hayduk's head on his spear.

And Mehmed the Moor before him drove the bound Rado still,

And likewise three loads of treasure on the high road over the hill,

Till into the ambuscade he marched with the squadron of his might.

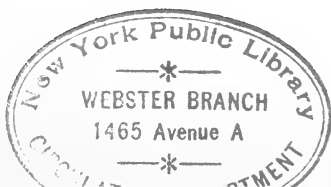
Novak shouted to his children. They fired the muskets light;

Mehmed the Moor they hit in the belt. He did not yell one yell—

Dead was Mehmed the mighty Moor, ere to the ground he fell.

The Moor fell there on the green grass. Starína Novak sped,

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And swung his saber in the air, and straight cut off  
his head,  
And then he rushed to Rado; from his hand he cut  
the cord  
And gave him the saber of a Moor. Now glory  
to God the Lord!  
They made a rush upon the Turks, they cut them  
into bands,  
And pursued them hither and yonder. Who  
'scaped from Rado's hands  
Young Tátomir awaited. From him who got  
away,  
Them awaited child Grúitsa in eagerness to slay;  
And them who 'scaped from Grúitsa old Novak  
waited for.  
They slew the thirty champions, and spoiled the  
Turks in war;  
They won in that same hour three packs of treas-  
ure fine.  
Then sat they down together to drink the yellow  
wine.  
Said Novak: "Tell me truly, Rado, my brother  
bold,  
Which is better—thirty hayduks, or Starína  
Novak the old?"  
To him said Rado: "My brother, the thirty  
better were they—  
The good friends; but thy fortune they had it not  
this day."

It is ill for the hero who hears not what his elders  
have to say.

## THE DEATH OF IVO OF SENYE <sup>1</sup>

Ivo's mother dreamed that darkness was risen  
Senye around,  
That the clear sky was broken and the bright moon  
fell to the ground  
On Rúzhitsa church in Senye, and the stars fled  
far and wide,  
And the daystar rose up bloody, and the cuckoo  
to her cried—  
In Senye's midst on the holy roof of Rúzhitsa did  
he perch.  
The woman awoke and took her crutch and has-  
tened to the church,  
And told the Archpriest Nédelko what dream was  
come to her,  
And to her the priest made clear the dream as an  
interpreter:  
“Hearest thou, mother! Ill hast thou dreamed  
and evil soon will be.  
In that darkness rose round Senye, 'twill be deso-  
late for thee.  
In that the sky was broken and the bright moon  
fell to the ground  
On Rúzhitsa, Ivo will perish; he hath reached his  
term and bound.  
In that the stars fled far and wide, will many a  
widow moan.  
In that bloody rose the daystar, thou wilt be as a  
cuckoo alone.

<sup>1</sup> Zengg.

In that it sang on the Rúzhitsa, the Turks will  
overthrow  
Rúzhitsa, and, though old I be, the Turks will lay  
me low."

Hardly had he done speaking, when before them  
Ivo stood.

The great black steed he rode upon was soaked  
with the dark blood ;

He had seventeen wounds ; in his left hand his cleft  
right hand he bore.

He drove the black steed onward the great white  
church before,

To his mother he spake: "From the black steed  
take me down, mother mine,

And wash me with cold water and purify with  
wine."

Swift she obeyed: she took him down from the  
steed fierce and fine ;

She washed him with cold water, and o'er him  
poured the wine.

His mother asked him: "What, my son, in Italy  
befell?"

Ivo spake:

"Mother, in Italy all things went  
swift and well ;

Enough slaves we took, mother, and enough of  
treasure bright ;

Safe we turned home. When we were at the camp  
of the first night,

A first pursuit o'ertook us, black warriors that sped  
Upon black steeds ; black turbans they wore about  
the head.

We fired one volley, mother, we slew them all in  
fight;  
Of us none perished, mother. At the camp of the  
second night  
The second pursuit o’ertook us; the furious heroes  
sped  
Upon white steeds, white turbans they wore about  
the head.  
We fired one volley, mother; we slew them all in  
fight.  
Of us none perished, mother. At the camp of the  
third night  
The third pursuit o’ertook us; black cloaks, long  
guns did they bear.  
We fired a single volley, and began to fight them  
there;  
Of them none perished, mother; of us all fell in  
the fray,  
Excepting thy son Ivo, at last that got away.  
And he is wounded; in his left hand his right hand  
hath he brought.”  
So Ivo spake, and forthwith with his dear soul he  
fought;  
He breathed, and released from prison thereby was  
the spirit light.  
He died, and his ancient mother—O evil was her  
plight!  
May God give him a dwelling place in pleasant  
paradise,  
And health to us, my brethren, and merriment like-  
wise!

## THE MARRIAGE OF STOYAN YÁNKOVICH

WHILE still men dreamed not of the dawn, the gates  
were opened wide  
In Údbina, and from the town a squadron forth  
did ride.  
Four and thirty friends are there; before them is  
Mustay Bey,  
The lord of Lika;<sup>1</sup> to Kunor wood he went to  
hunt that day.  
For half a week he hunted, but nothing came to  
hand;  
To Údbina and Lika he went homeward through  
the land;  
When down through the fir forest to a spring he  
turned aside,  
To drink and rest. He cast his eye 'neath a green  
fir that tide;  
But when Mustay Bey of Lika came, the twigs of  
the fir tree shone.  
A drunken warrior lay asleep in the fir wood alone;  
All in the pure gold was he clad and in the silver  
fine;  
On his head he wore a splendid cap with silver  
feathers nine,  
And set beside the feathers a great wing silver-  
wrought;

<sup>1</sup> Lika is a district in Croatia. Mustay Bey is the favorite hero of the Mohammedan Serbs of Bosnia, in whose popular poetry he occupies a place like that of Prince Marko in the ballads of their Orthodox kinsmen. See Murko, "Die Volksepik der bosnischen Mohammedaner," in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, Berlin, 1909, pp. 13-30.



For a thousand ducats and no less the silver wing  
was bought.  
On his shoulders the hero weareth a mantle great  
and green,  
And thirty knobs of yellow gold thereon are to be  
seen,  
Each one of a golden measure; and one 'neath the  
neck is worn,  
Three measure weight with a screw that opes, and  
brandy that holds in the morn.  
On the mantle are three golden plates, of the  
weight of four good pound;  
Two were of twisted goldwork, and one did the  
smelters found.  
His breeches had golden buckles; and yellow, rich  
to see,  
Were his legs as any falcon's from the ankle to the  
knee.  
From the buckles hung fine golden chains, and  
from them trinkets fair,  
Such as the slender maidens aye at their sweet  
throats wear.  
At his splendid belt were pistols of the Damascus  
gold,  
Silver-inlaid was the great blade, with three gold  
hilts to hold;  
In them are set three precious stones; it is worth  
three towns of the tsar.  
On his breast was a musket, and golden the thirty  
hoops of it are,  
And each hoop worth ten ducats, and thirty, one  
by the sight;

There was more of gold on the musket than of  
steel hammered and bright.

When the hero rose upward from the grass, the  
fir twigs crackled then,

But the Bey of Lika pinned him down with his  
four and thirty men.

When the hero looked up from the grass with a  
black and lowering eye,

He saw that the Turks had pinned him down, and  
his weapons were not by.

One of his foes with his great arms he gripped as  
with a girth;

The living heart was burst in the Turk as he  
hurled him to the earth;

And seven others, moreover, he slaughtered of the  
band,

Before the Turks could master the strength of the  
white hand.

But they captured him, and forthwith the white  
hand did they bind,

And drove him to white Údbina with his weapons  
tied behind,

That great and small might marvel how Mustay,  
of Lika the Bey,

Such a warrior with his weapons had taken in the  
fray.

And Mustay spake to him as through the open  
field they came:

“God’s love! Whence comest thou, lord un-  
known? What do men call thy name?

Whither wast thou going, and whither have thy  
comrades gone away?”

Saith he :

“What sayst thou, Mustay, of Lika  
that art Bey?

Hast thou heard of the Latin seacoast, and Kotári<sup>1</sup> set thereon,

And of Stoyan, the son of Yanko? I am Stoyan,  
Yanko's son,

And I had no other comrade than God and myself  
alone;

And I had taken counsel to descend beneath thy  
tower,

And the slender maiden, Haýkuna, to lure her in  
that hour,

And take her to Kotári—but it was not God's de-  
cree;

The thrice accursèd liquor it overmastered me!”

Said Mustay, the Bey of Lika: “Stoyan, well  
mayst thou speed!

Thou hast fallen into a hero's hands who will find  
thee a wife indeed!”

Amid their speech to Údbina at last they made  
their way,

Beneath the tower of Mustay, of Lika that was  
Bey;

And great and small came out to gaze on the  
squadron in that hour,

And Haýkuna, Mustay's sister dear, looked down  
from the slender tower.

At the tambour frame of coral a needle of glass  
doth she hold,

<sup>1</sup> Not Cattaro, but a town in northern Dalmatia.

And she weaveth through the linen white a gallant  
thread of gold.  
And when she saw the squadron forth from the  
forest come,  
That led a fettered hero with his shining weapons  
home,  
The tambour frame before her with her hand she  
thrust away—  
Two of its legs were shattered—and to herself did  
she say:  
“Dear God, a mighty marvel, a hero in evil  
stead!  
By what guile did they bind him, for he is not  
wounded nor dead?”  
But when she reckoned the squadron, were lack-  
ing seven men.  
When the squadron came 'neath the white tower,  
she took his weapons then,  
And bore away his weapons in the treasury to  
keep.  
Stoyan they cast in a prison that was fifty fathom  
deep;  
Therein to the knees of the hero the water doth  
arise,  
And the bones of captive Christians to his shoulder  
reach likewise.  
The bey went unto the new inn, with his men the  
wine to drain,  
And to boast to the Turks of Údbina what a cap-  
tive he had ta'en.  
The fair maid went to the dungeon door with a  
bucket of wine that tide;

She lowered it with a strong cord, and unto the hero cried:

“O hero, God protect thee, nor slay thee here in shame!

Whence art thou? what is thy country? what dost thou call thy name?

How did the Turks deceive thee, when thine arms behind they tied?”

Stoyan drank of the yellow wine, and to the damsel cried:

“Who calls from the white dungeon? My throat hath drunken full.

With the windlass half way up the hold the hero shalt thou pull;

From thence will I tell the story.”

The maiden

harkened thereto;

The rope with hooks of steel let down, and half way up she drew

Stoyan the son of Yanko. He questioned her and said:

“Who calls from the white dungeon?” Then appeared the Turkish maid:

“Even I, unknown hero, the sister of Mustay Bey.” Stoyan answered:

“O Haýkuna, may God in heaven thee slay!

I am Stoyan the son of Yanko, and in prison because of thee.

The Turks beguiled me when I was drunk, and bound have they taken me.”

The Turkish maid spake to him:

[ 207 ]

“O Stoyan, of

Yanko born,  
Fain would the Turks destroy thee. They will  
question thee tomorn  
Whether to be a Moslem thy faith thou wilt put  
aside.  
Become a Moslem, Stoyan; and I will be thy  
bride.  
My brother, the Bey of Lika, two treasure towers  
hath he,  
One his, one mine; if he dieth first, mine and thine  
shall they be.”

Spake Stoyan:

“Thou damsel, Haykuna, no  
more like a mad girl rave!  
Though Údbina and Lika into my hand they gave,  
By God I would not turn Moslem! In Kotári my  
treasure lay,  
More than the Turks’, and a hero better am I than  
they.  
If God it grant, fair damsel, before the noon hour  
ring,  
The captains of Kotári over Údbina shall spring,  
Over and roundabout it, and hence shall they  
rescue me.”

Said the maid:

“Speak not like a madman; ere  
that they will slaughter thee.  
But to take me to be thy wedded wife, firm will thy  
faith remain,  
If I free thee out of the dungeon?”

And Stoyan

answered again :

“Firm is my faith, fair damsel, I will take thee  
before all;

Verily on mine honor I will not deceive thee at all.”

When the damsel heard, in the prison she low-  
ered him in that hour,

And she wended her own way forthwith unto the  
slender tower.

A little time went after this; from the inn came  
forth the bey,

And the maiden staggered before him, as a fit were  
on her that day.

Mustay the Bey asked of her: “What aileth thee,  
sister dear?”

She said:

“A pain of the head and the heart is  
fallen upon me here;

A chill is come upon me; ’twere better, brother, to  
die.

But seat thee on the soft cushions, that I on thy  
breast may lie,

And there at last surrender my spirit in its sin.”

Mustay the Bey was sorry, for he had no other  
kin,

And over his white features the bitter tears he  
shed.

He sat upon the cushions, on his bosom she drooped  
her head;

One hand she laid on his bosom, with the other did  
she seize

In her dear brother's pocket the stable and prison  
keys,  
And the key of the treasure likewise. Then tossed  
she where she lay  
On the cushion, and to his sister made question  
Mustay the Bey:  
"Has not God granted thee, sister, that the pain  
should pass away?"  
"Brother, he has, may God be thanked!" And he  
went to the roof outside,  
To counsel with them of Údbina how Stoyan should  
die that tide.

But the maiden leaped to her feet, and wide the  
treasury door she threw;  
And saddlebags of ducats and Stoyan's armor, too,  
She gathered in that hour from the dungeon white  
and cold.  
She let out Stoyan, and led him from the cellars of  
the hold;  
And released the steeds from the stables: the good  
white steed of the bey,  
That ever more he rode upon in the heroic fray,  
And the black steed of his lady; swifter is none  
in the land.  
The damsel mounted the white, but the black is  
under Stoyan's hand,  
And forthwith over the broad field swiftly they got  
them gone  
Over Ogóryelitsa, and from Kunor the wood, and  
on  
From Kunor to Kotári. Then the son of Yanko  
said:



“Grievously am I weary, O Haýkuna the maid!  
Dismount from the white charger; of sleep I have  
sore need.”

But she said:

“By thy courage, Stoyan! Drive  
forward the black steed  
On unto flat Kotári; sleep cometh with little aid.  
But for some squadron of the Turks yet am I sore  
afraid!”

But he harkened not. From the horses they  
descended on the grass;  
With his head on her bosom Stoyan slept; like a  
foolish lamb he was.  
But the maiden cannot slumber. Before the white  
day’s hour  
The bey’s wife rose to visit the girl in the slender  
tower.  
Very sick was the damsel, when darkness fell yes-  
treen,  
But now in the slender tower no more the girl is  
seen;  
And the money from the treasury is gathered up  
and gone,  
And no longer in the dungeon lieth Stoyan,  
Yanko’s son.  
Forthwith came back the woman into the slender  
tower;  
She fired the great alarum gun suddenly in that  
hour.  
On the green roof the bey heard it; what was come  
to pass he knew,

And swiftly with his fingers he searched his pockets  
through,

And found that from his pockets the keys were  
stolen away.

“My brothers, men of Údbina!” then shouted  
Mustay Bey,

“Stoyan, the son of Yanko, with the maid is fled  
abroad.

Up on your feet, my brethren, as ye believe in  
God!”

Strange is the Turkish use. Their steeds were  
ready saddled there;

They seized their steeds and over the wide field  
did they fare.

They reached the Kunor wood, and through the  
forest did they pass

Unto Kotári. Haýkuna looked up from the green  
grass;

Often she looked to Kunor. A crest rose far  
away,

The dust of horses and heroes, and she knew her  
brother, the bey,

And the thirty men of Údbina. Stoyan she dares  
not wake,

But above the face of Stoyan she weepeth for his  
sake.

When Stoyan started from slumber, he bespake  
her in this wise:

“What ails thee, Turkish damsel, that the tears  
run from thine eyes?

Dost thou weep for thy brother, Mustay Bey,  
and his great treasury?

Or haply is it that Stoyan no longer pleases thee?"

Quoth the maiden:

“Sorrow-stricken may thy  
mother be this tide!

I weep not for my brother nor the treasure of his  
pride.

We have brought the treasure with us, in the midst  
of my heart art thou;

But the bey with the thirty of Údbina is hard upon  
us now.

Ride the black to Kotári; our lives are thrown  
away!"

When Stoyan heard the damsel, unto her did he  
say:

“By God, I will not, maiden! They have stirred  
my anger up;

They pinned me down on the grass when I had  
drunken of the cup.

Now will I make exchange of gifts with thy brother,  
dear indeed!

Do thou ride the black charger, and give me the  
white steed;

The white is a little better, when I go thy brother  
to meet.”

Stoyan leapt on the good white steed; the black  
she mounted fleet,

And galloped to white Kotári; but Stoyan against  
the bey.

And it were worth the trouble, to sit and watch  
the fray,

And behold a mighty marvel, how thirty smote at  
one:

The palace that sent thirty forth waits the return  
of none.

Stoyan smote off the thirty heads, and he seized  
on Mustay Bey;

Hands bound behind, he drove him to where the  
damsel lay.

He spake to the damsel as he drew the silver-  
hilted blade:

“Thus, Haýkuna, ’twixt brothers exchange of gifts  
is made!”

He swung the silver-hilted sword, but she threw  
her arms on high:

“By thy courage, leave a sister a brother for  
swearing by!

For thee also a sister might weep, and be full of  
woe.

Turn him now back to Údbina, and give him leave  
to go.”

Stoyan turned back the saber; tighter he bound  
the bey,

And set his face toward Údbina, and unto him did  
say:

“When thou comest unto Údbina, to drink with  
the men thereby,

Tell thou the whole truth to them, nor ever speak  
a lie;

And here will I grant thy life to thee in the fierce  
single fray.”

Forth in his bonds to Údbina alone went back  
the bey;

But to flat Kotári Stoyan the Turkish damsel  
takes,  
And his christened wife he kisses whensoever he  
awakes.

## THE CAPTIVITY OF STOYAN YÁNKOVICH

WHEN the Turks took Kotári, great havoc did  
they make

With the house of Yánkovich. Íliya Smílyanich  
did they take

And likewise Stoyan Yánkovich; bereft was Íliya's  
bride

Of fifteen days; ungently from his wife's youthful  
side

Was Stoyan taken also, ere a week they had been  
wed.

The Turks to Stamboul city captive the husbands  
led.

To the tsar whom all men honor, with the prisoners  
of their spears

Came the Turks; and the two were holden for the  
space of nine long years

And seven months. And Moslems the tsar hath  
made them there,

And likewise built them houses beside his palace  
fair.

Spake Íliya Smílyanich: "Stoyan, dear brother,  
" did he say,

"To-morrow will be Friday, the Turkish holiday;  
The tsáritsa walks with the Turkish dames and  
the tsar with the Turks at heel.

Do thou steal the key of the treasury, and the  
stable key will I steal;

Let us gather the guardless treasure and take two  
steeds amain,

And run to level Kotári and see our wives again,

That never enemy caressed nor foeman carried  
away."

They harkened each other. On the morn of the  
Turkish holiday

The tsáritsa walked with the Turkish dames and  
the tsar with the Turks at heel.

One stole the treasury key, and one did the key  
of the stable steal;

They took much treasure and two good steeds,  
and to flat Kotári fled.

When they were near Kotári, Stoyan Yánkovich  
said:

"O Íliya, my dear brother, unto the white house  
go;

And I will unto the vineyard that mine own hand  
did sow,

That I may look on the vineyard, to see who binds  
the vine

And prunes it—in whose possession the place has  
gone from mine."

To the white house went Íliya, to the vineyard  
Stoyan came;

In the vineyard he found his mother, the weary and  
ancient dame.

And standing in the vineyard she cut the strands  
of her hair,

And with them to the stanchions she bound the  
grapevines there,

And with tears she watered the vine sprouts and  
the tendrils where they twined,

And ever her own son Stoyan was present in her  
mind:

“Stoyan, my golden apple, is forgot of his  
mother old;  
But I will remember Yela his wife, fair as the un-  
worn gold!”

Stoyan in God’s name greeted her: “Old dame,  
whom God defend!—

Hast thou none younger than thyself for thee the  
vines to tend?

Thou totterest wretched and feeble.” But bravely  
she replied:

“Live well, thou unknown champion, and all  
good thee betide!

I have none younger save Stoyan, sole son of my  
desire.

The Turks took him with İliya, the nephew of his  
sire;

And in that bitter hour bereft was İliya’s bride  
Of fifteen days; ungently from his wife’s youthful  
side

Was Stoyan taken also, ere a week they had been  
wed.

My daughter of Adam waited until nine years  
were sped,

And seven months of the tenth year; she weds an-  
other to-day.

And I—I could not endure it; to the vineyard I  
ran away!”

When Stoyan understood it, he went to the white  
house,

And well the wooers welcomed him with revel and  
carouse.



He went from the steed to table, his thirst with  
wine to slake;

When he had drunk his fill of it, softly to them  
he spake:

“My brothers, gay-clad wooers, to sing is it  
granted me?”

Said the wooers: “It is, thou hero unknown;  
wherefore should it not be?”

Then Stoyan sang unto them in a high voice and a  
clear:

“A swallow plaited her fair nest; she plaited her  
nest nine year;

To-morrow will she unplait it. But there flew to  
her from afar

A mighty falcon green and gray, from the city of  
the tsar;

And the mighty falcon green and gray lets her not  
unplait the nest.”

In all this to the wooers was nothing manifest,  
But the inward of the matter the wife of Stoyan  
spied.

Thereupon she departed from the bringer of the  
bride;

She went to the lookout place and spoke to Sto-  
yan’s sister dear:

“Sister-in-law, my sister, thy brother my lord is  
here!”

When the sister of Stoyan heard it, she ran from  
the lookout place;

Thrice she looked round the table, till she saw her  
brother’s face.

When she saw the face of her brother, wide then  
their arms they spread;  
They kissed each other on the face, and the sweet  
tears they shed;  
One washes the cheeks of the other with the tears  
of their desire.  
But the gay-clad wooers said: "Stoyan, what get  
we for our hire?  
For we spent a deal of money ere we won thy  
wife to wed."

"Stand aside, gay-clad wooers," Stoyan Yánkovich said,  
"Until I have gazed on my sister! We will look  
to your money then;  
Easily shall we pay it, if we in truth be men."

When he had gazed on her, gifts he gave unto  
the wooers there;  
A kerchief to one, to another a shirt of linen fair;  
To the bridegroom he gave his sister: and the  
wooers went their way.

Wailing came home the mother at the ending of  
the day,  
Wailing even as a cuckoo the hawthorn leaves behind,  
And ever her son Stoyan was present in her mind:  
"Stoyan, my golden apple, is forgot of his  
mother old;  
But I will remember Yela his wife, fair as the  
unworn gold!  
Who will wait for the ancient mother? Who will  
come forth for me,

And say to the weary woman, 'Hath thy toil  
wearièd thee?' "

When the wife of Stoyan heard it, before the  
house she sped;

She took her mother in her sweet arms, and to the  
dame she said:

"Wail not, O ancient mother! On thee has the  
warm sun shone,

For returned unto thy bosom is Stoyan, thy only  
son."

She looked on her son Stoyan, and dead on the  
earth she fell.

And Stoyan buried his mother most royally and  
well.



A MONTENEGRIN BALLAD



## THE WAR OF THE MONTENEGRINS WITH MAHMUD PASHA <sup>1</sup>

VIZIER MAHMUD on Bóyana in Scútari the white  
Hath gathered his viziers and the captains of his  
    might,  
Picked Turkish chiefs. When they were come,  
    he spake unto them then:  
“Here is a chance for us at last, my gallant  
    fighting men,

<sup>1</sup>“I am confident that both ballads [of which the present is one] on the war of the Montenegrins with Mahmud Pasha were composed by the Prince-Bishop of Montenegro, Petar I (now canonized as St. Petar), and that later they became current among the people, and, passing from mouth to mouth, were assimilated to the folk ballads.” (Note by Karájich.)

Mr. William Miller gives the following account of the events treated in this ballad:

“The people of Trebinje in the Herzegovina, long noted for their independence and intolerance of Turkish rule, had been driven from their homes by the ravages of the Turks, and sought shelter among the Berda [Brida]. The four *nahie* of that mountainous district, which had been virtually united to Montenegro under Danilo I, were now formally combined with it into one state. . . . This important accession of territory did not fail to arouse the jealousy of the Turks. Kara Mahmud resolved to prevent the union, and entered Montenegro at the point where the river Zeta separates it from the Berda. But his efforts were in vain. After a sanguinary engagement near the fortress of Spuzh, the pasha retired wounded from the field, and a subsequent expedition cost him his life. The *vladika* [prince-bishop], posting one half of his forces in one of those mountainous defiles which are so common in his country, and leaving a number of red Montenegrin caps upon the rocks to delude the Turks into the idea that his whole army was in front, surprised them with the other half in the rear. Taken un-  
awares between the two fires, the invaders fell by hundreds;

To win the great Black Mountain and the flat  
     coast of the sea  
 That we have long desired. Some friends of mine  
     there be,  
 Black Mountaineers that I will bribe; their coun-  
     try they will sell,  
 And I will do thereafter whatever seemeth well.  
 But the men of Brida have closed the roads, and  
     there my wound is found,  
 And I cannot gather an army all Bosnia around,  
 Or in Herzegovina either or the Albanian bound.  
 Let us stir up Albania, that our fiery winds may  
     fall  
 On the Píperi and also on the Children of White  
     Paul.<sup>1</sup>  
 Let us burn everything with fire and capture great  
     and small,  
 Till we come to Nikshich, brethren; there our pa-  
     vilion white

Kara Mahmoud was slain, and when Sir Gardner Wilkin-  
 son visited Cetinje [Tsétinye], fifty years later, he found  
 the pasha's skull still stuck, as a grim trophy of victory, on  
 the battlements of the famous 'Turks' Tower.' The effects  
 of the Turkish defeat were lasting; the union of the Monte-  
 negro and the Berda was secure; the hereditary foes of the  
 Black Mountain ceased for many years from troubling. . . .  
 The sultan no longer demanded tribute from a nation which  
 knew so well how to defend itself. By a curious coinci-  
 dence, the victory took place exactly one hundred years after  
 the selection of Danilo I as prince-bishop [i. e., in 1796]."  
*The Balkans*, New York, 1896, pp. 410, 411.

<sup>1</sup> The Byclópavlichi rebel against English meter as stoutly  
 as they once resisted Turkish oppression; hence their name  
 is translated in the text instead of transcribed.



We will pitch, and we will gather the army of our  
    might  
From the land of Herzegovina and from the coun-  
    try round,  
And from the land of Bosnia and the Albanian  
    bound.  
We will divide the host in three, and one of those  
    three powers  
We will send unto white Novi that in ancient time  
    was ours ;  
When we come to Ragusa we will choose a viceroy  
    of the tsar,  
Ibrahim my brother for pasha, that the wonder be  
    heard afar.  
The second host shall travel by the fords along  
    the sea,  
With food and shell and powder and the artillery,  
That they may fight, nor to parley of any peace  
    delay.  
There is not left a single youth about Cattáro Bay ;  
They are gone to Italy, Venice from the French-  
    men to defend.  
And over the Black Mountain must the third army  
    wend,  
To win the great Black Mountain and the flat coast  
    of the sea,  
That by the coast we may water our horses easily,  
Till we are come to Cattáro. When at the town  
    we are,  
There, friends, my nephew Mehmed shall be vice-  
    roy of the tsar ;

A lord and pasha shall he be that the Latins  
thereof may know.

It is my very strong desire that thus should the  
matter go."

So Mahmud spake, and nimbly to his feet sprang  
the vizier;

Quickly he seized a writing-set and wrote a letter  
clear:

To Petar the Bishop<sup>1</sup> in Tsétinye the letter doth  
he send:

"Prince-Bishop of Montenegro, if thou still wilt  
be my friend,

The champions of Brida in no way shalt thou re-  
lieve,

Nor in little Montenegro their families receive;

For now in my displeasure the fiery winds shall fall  
On the Píperi and also on the Children of White  
Paul.

I shall burn everything with fire and capture great  
and small,

And either I shall perish or drive out utterly

The men of Brida to Ostrog the mount. And  
harken yet to me!

Prince-Bishop of Montenegro, if thou shalt them  
relieve;

If in Montenegro their families haply thou shalt  
receive,

Into my own Albania will I betake me then,

So that thou shalt not be able to give aid unto the  
men."

<sup>1</sup> Petar I, who ruled 1782-1830, and to whom Karájich  
attributes the composition of this ballad.

The Turk said not, "If God permit"; he trusted  
in his might;  
God only giveth strength, and he will aid no Turk  
in fight.

When the letter reached the bishop, he looked  
thereon and read;  
And when he knew its import, the bitter tears he  
shed.

The chiefs of the Black Mountain, the chosen of  
the land,  
The heroes of Tsétinye by chance were ready to  
his hand.

Said the bishop:

"Ye Black Mountain men,  
hath come a letter here,  
From Mahmud, my dear brethren, the terrible  
vizier.

He hath boasted he will scatter all Brida hither  
and yon

To Mount Ostrog. Our Black Mountain youth,  
with bribes they shall be won;

They will take the bribe of Mahmud, and be con-  
quered by his fee,

And sell him the Black Mountain and the flat coast  
of the sea

Unto Ragusa. His will will he do! But ye, dear  
brothers, know

How the cursèd Turks reproach the Serbs because  
of Kósovo,

The woful fray; Vuk Bránkovich betrayed the  
nation there:

May he know eternal torment for his treason ev-  
 erywhere!  
 Are any wounds more terrible or deadlier found  
 than when  
 An arrow out of heaven strikes down a king of  
 men?  
 There is not any arrow or any flying dart  
 Like unto such reproach and shame, to tear a hero's  
 heart.  
 Your fathers fought their battles for faith and  
 freedom's sake,  
 That never Turkish overlords should them for  
 bondmen take.  
 With men it were reproach and shame, and with  
 God a mighty sin,  
 To forsake the men of Brida, that are our nearest  
 kin;  
 But, brethren, as you trust in God, to the Children  
 of Paul the White  
 Let us go; the heroes of Brida we will succor in  
 the fight.  
 Had not the Turks made themselves strong, when  
 here before they came,  
 Scatheless the church of Tsétinye they had not  
 burned with flame,  
 Nor without a wound have ruined our monasteries  
 fair;  
 They had not known Kóshchelitsa,<sup>1</sup> nor would thus  
 our entrails tear."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The name of a mountain in Montenegro.

<sup>2</sup> "He [Petar I] had scarcely returned from the ceremony of consecration [in 1782] at the hands of the Serb patriarch,

When the Black Mountain youth had heard, to  
the bishop then swore they,  
That the champions of Brida they never would  
betray,  
But along with them would perish. When the  
bishop had seen the sight  
Of their good will and freedom, a letter did he  
write  
All in the fine-penned character; to Mahmud he  
sent it on:

“Mahmud Vizier! in Brida let the fatherless  
alone!  
Tear not the fierce wounds, pasha, that thy strong  
right hand gave!  
God will soon grant them, haply, that a vengeance  
they will have.  
And if thou grewest strong, pasha, when here thine  
army came,  
When scatheless the church of Tsétinye thou  
burnedst with the flame,  
And without a wound couldst ruin our monasteries  
white—  
When thou burnedst the church, then all our youth  
in their live hearts didst thou smite.  
As for burning our monasteries, sore didst thou  
wound us there,  
And through knowing Kóshchelitsa our entrails  
dost thou tear.”

. . . when he was compelled to face a Turkish invasion. Kara Mahmud, Pasha of Scútari, and a descendant of the renegade Montenegrin Prince Stanicha, was ravaging the Black Mountain, and set fire to the monastery at Cetinje, as his predecessors had done.” Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 408, 409.

When that the bishop's letter to the vizier was  
brought,  
And he knew thereof the purport, he gave it not a  
thought,  
But he stirred up all Albania and to level Dólyani  
went;  
O'er Pódgoritsa in Zlátitsa the vizier pitched his  
tent,  
And far and wide on every side his camp abroad  
he spread.  
And the rumor ran to the bishop. Then forth the  
bishop sped  
To the green Mount Vrítiyelka, and fired the can-  
non of war,  
And gathered somewhat of the host from Tsétinye  
and afar.  
Then over the Black Mountain he marched with one  
and all,  
Till he was come to the houses of the Children of  
White Paul;  
In the fair house of Bóshkovich the bishop spent  
the night.  
And when upon the morrow the dawn brake fair  
and bright,  
They crossed cold Zeta and they came where Slá-  
tina water ran,  
Before the church of the Leeches, Cosmas and  
Damian;  
And there the bishop made his camp, and there the  
tents were pight.  
And Mahmud saw it, and nearer drew from  
Spuzh the city white;

Over Spuzh, against Derdèmezi, under the mountain green,  
There Vizier Mahmud made his camp, and there his tents were seen.  
When the Bishop of Tsétinye saw it, then letters fine he penned;  
To the chiefs of the Black Mountain the letters did he send.  
But when the letters had crossed the hills and to the chiefs had come,  
And the captains knew their purport, they left their wives at home;  
The shepherds left their flocks of sheep in the upper grazing land,  
And up they took the knapsack and the musket in the hand;  
They went o'er the Black Mountain; in haste went every man,  
Asking of the prince. They found him where Slátina water ran,  
Before the church of the Leeches, Cosmas and Damian.  
There at the church was gathered a fierce and stalwart host;  
With the bishop scarce an army, fifteen hundred at the most,  
But indeed of the little army that by the bishop stood,  
All the soldiers in it were black wolves of the wood;  
The generals of the army, wingèd eagles were they;

And the young ensigns along the lines were even  
as falcons gray.

And Mahmud sent his herald his army through  
that said:

“Who leads the bishop to me alive or brings me  
the bishop’s head,  
To him shall be given forthwith all Zeta’s level  
land,

And three white cities in Zeta, and three packs of  
gold in hand.”

Yakup Aga Serdárevich and Mehmed Kokótiya  
said

Boastingly they would take him alive or bring the  
bishop’s head.

But the Turks said not, “If God permit”; they  
trusted in their might;

God only giveth strength, and he will aid no Turk  
in fight.

For three weeks stood the armies; drew near the  
time and the day;

They yearned for fight—on Thursday they got  
ready for the fray;

The Turks will strike on Friday. But the bishop,  
the prudent man,

Before the church of the Leeches, Cosmas and  
Damian,

Gathered his host, and gave them the blessing of  
God thereby,

And commended all the army to the care of the  
most high,

That God for a great captain might with the van-  
guard go,



And swiftly all the armies of the Turk might overthrow.  
And when on Friday morning the fair dawn clearly shone,  
Then against the Montenegrins the Turks rushed fiercely on.  
The armies charged on the battlefield till the middle of the day,  
But by noon the Turks had turned their backs and begun to run away.  
It was worth the while of any man a bit thereby to stand,  
And watch Mahmud, the great vizier, flee fast across the land;  
Hardly about the heavy lout once dared to turn his head,  
Till to Spuzh, the milk-white city, in his terror he had fled,  
And to gay-decked Mártiniche. Of the Turks there died the flower,  
Of all of their foot soldiers and champions in that hour,  
And pashas and silíktars, and heralds quick that ran,  
And the agas and spahis, the remnant of Ushchup and Álbasan,  
And likewise from Alesso and Durazzo on the coast,  
From Kavay and from Oblom the heroes of their boast,  
From Tiran and from Dibran, the chosen of the town,

From Prizrend and from Vúchitrin, their best that  
had sent down ;  
Syénitsa, Mítrovitsa their foremost had sent there,  
And many champions were come from Jákovitsa  
fair,  
Oráovats and Ocha, Pech and As supplied the war,  
And Gúsinye and Vútsinye, and the white town of  
Bar ;  
And the men of Lyéshkopolye, the heroes of great  
fame,  
And the chiefs of Spuzh the bloody, and the cham-  
pions that came  
From gay-decked Pódgoritsa to Vizier Mahmud's  
side,  
Were dead with the lords of Scútari. Mehmed  
Kokótliya died,  
Likewise Yakup Serdárevich, who boastingly had  
said  
That they would take the bishop alive, or else would  
bring his head.  
All of the vizier's army was slaughtered there and  
then,  
But of the bishop's army there fell but eighteen  
men.  
And the three good friends died with them ; they  
were a trusty three :  
Kritsun Savo was one of them, from Byélitsa was  
he ;  
And Stanko of Lyubótin, ensigns worth standing  
by ;  
And Bego Voývodicha—their honor will not die !

God gave them habitations in the peace of para-  
dise,  
But to the rest he giveth health and merriment like-  
wise.



BALLADS WITHOUT HISTORICAL  
FOUNDATION



## PREDRAG AND NENAD

A MOTHER reared two tender sons, in a hungry  
time and year,

At her left and right. And Predrag, that is to  
say, "Most Dear,"

She named the first with a fair name; also the sec-  
ond son

Nenad she named, that is to say, "the Sudden,  
Unlooked-for one."

Predrag grew strong to wield the spear and the  
steed to ride upon:

He ran away from his mother; unto the wood he  
sped,

To the hayduks and the outlaws. Nenad his  
mother bred;

Nenad forgot his brother, nor pondered him upon.

Nenad grew strong to wield the spear and the  
steed to ride upon:

He ran away from his mother; unto the wood he  
sped,

To the hayduks and the outlaws. Three years  
that life he led.

He was a hero fortunate and lucky amid the  
spears;

His comrades made him their captain; he was their  
chief three years.

But woe was him for his mother; to his comrades  
all he spake:

"Comrades," said he, "now woe is me for my  
dear mother's sake!

Let us divide our treasures and go to our mothers  
dear.”

Gladly his comrades thereunto harkened and  
gave an ear.

When they took out their treasures, each man a  
great oath sware,

For one sware by his brother and one by his sister  
fair.

But when Nenad took his treasure, he spake to his  
comrades by:

“Comrades, my brothers, brother nor sister at  
all have I;

But—so may the one God hear me!—may this  
arm be withered and lean,

May the mane of the stallion fall, may rust de-  
vour the saber keen,

If any of the treasure I have kept from other  
men!”

When they had divided the treasure, he mounted  
his charger then,

The little and the nimble; to his mother forth he  
went,

And well did she receive him, and they feasted in  
content.

When they sat down at dinner, said Nenad to the  
dame:

“My gentle mother, surely before all men is it  
shame!

I would say thou wert not my mother, 'fore God  
were it not a sin.

Why didst thou bear me no brother, or sister of  
my kin?



When my comrades divided the treasure, each man  
among them sware  
A great oath, by his brother or by his sister fair;  
But, mother, by myself I sware, and my weapons  
fair to see,  
And also in that hour by the good horse under  
me."

"Speak not foolishly, Nenad!" his mother  
laughed in his face;  
"A brother indeed, and one 'Most Dear,' have I  
borne unto thy race.  
But yesterday did I hear of him; with the hayduks  
he abides  
In the wood of Gárevitsa, and chief of them all he  
rides."

Said Nenad:

"Mother, now make me new rai-  
ment of the green;  
Short shalt thou make it, fitting in the forest to be  
seen,  
That forth in the wood to find him in this hour I  
may go,  
And that thus may pass from my spirit the weight  
of living woe."

His mother dear bespake him: "Speak not like  
a fool," said she;  
"Nenad, my son, in very truth thou wilt perish  
miserably."

But Nenad heard not his mother, nor would  
harken what she said;  
Whate'er was pleasing in his sight, he did that  
thing instead.

He made himself new raiment; he wrought it of  
the green;  
And short he made it, fitting in the forest to be  
seen.

He mounted the steed; to his brother through the  
forest did he go,  
That thereby might pass from him his weight of  
living woe.

He made no sound, he spat not, to the steed he  
spake not at all;  
When to Gárevitsa wood he came, like a gray hawk  
did he call:

“Green wood of Gárevitsa, holdest thou hidden  
in thee

The ‘Most Dear,’ my true brother?—My mother’s  
son is he!

Keepest thou not the hero that will bring my  
brother to me?”

’Neath a green fir sat Predrag and drank the  
yellow wine.

When he heard the voice, he spake to his men:  
“Ho, comrades good of mine!

Go forth to the road in ambush; for the champion  
unknown

Ye shall wait; ye shall not rob him, nor shall ye  
strike him down:

Bring him alive to me, hither. Whate’er his line-  
age shows,

He is kin to me.”

And thereupon full thirty lads  
arose.

In three places were they ambushed, in every place  
ten men ;  
But none dared go before him, when he came to  
the first ten,  
To seize his steed ; and forthwith they shot against  
him then.  
Nenad spake 'mid the arrows : "Wood-brethren,  
shoot me not,  
Lest woe for a brother smite you, such as drove me  
to this spot."  
The outlaws of the ambush, in peace they let him  
past.  
When he came on to the second ten, the shafts flew  
fierce and fast.  
Said Nenad 'mid the arrows : "Wood-brethren,  
shoot me not,  
Lest woe for a brother smite you, such as drove  
me to this spot,  
For sorrow of him hath smitten me." In peace  
they let him past.  
When he came to the third ambush, the shafts flew  
fierce and fast.  
Then Nenad the young was angry ; he smote the  
thirty then.  
With the edges of the saber he smote on the first  
ten ;  
The second ten he trampled with the stallion as he  
could ;  
And the third ten he scattered in his anger through  
the wood,  
Some of them in the forest, and some beside the  
flood.

One shouted unto Predrag: "A plague on thee  
alight!

A hero unknown in the forest hath slain thy  
friends in fight."

To his nimble feet leaped Predrag; he took his  
arrows and bow;

Down to the road to the ambush behind a fir did  
he go.

With an arrow from the stallion he smote down  
Nenad the young.

In the heart was he hit; he shrieked like a hawk;  
to the saddlebow he clung,

Crying:

"Hero of the greenwood, may thy right  
hand wither and dry!

God slay thee alive and the right hand the arrow  
that let fly.

May thy right eye be blasted wherewith thou hast  
looked on me!

May woe for a brother smite thee, as erst it smote  
on me,

Which drove me wretchedly hither, in evil luck to  
die!"

When Predrag heard, he questioned from the  
fir tree on high:

"Who art thou, wounded hero, and of what race  
art thou?"

Said Nenad:

"Foh! and wherefore thereof dost  
thou question now?

Dost thou seek a maiden in marriage? In faith  
I will give thee none!

I am the hero Nenad, and my mother liveth alone,  
And I have but one born brother, a brother born  
‘Most Dear,’

And in a bitter hour I sought to find him here,  
That thereby at last should pass away the weight  
of my living woe;

And I came on evil fortune and life’s very over-  
throw.”

Predrag heard, and let fall the shafts; in bitter  
terror he was;

He ran to the wounded hero and laid him on the  
grass:

“Is it thou, my brother Nenad? I am Predrag,  
thy brother dear.

Canst thou mend of the wound? My raiment I  
will rend in pieces here,

And heal thee well, and bandage thee with the  
strips of linen fine.”

And the wounded Nenad answered:

“Is it

thou, brother mine?

Glory to God the highest, that I have looked on  
thee.

The burden of my living woe is passed away from  
me.

I cannot mend, but of my hurt bloodguiltless  
mayst thou be!”

So Nenad spake, and thereupon forth his strong  
spirit went,

And Predrag lifted up his voice with a miserable  
lament:

“Ah, Nenad, my fair splendid sun, early for me  
didst thou rise,  
And early set! Ah, basil flower of my green para-  
dise,  
Early didst thou bloom, and early didst thou  
wither here for me!”  
From the scabbard at his girdle he wrenched  
the poniard free;  
Right through his heart he plunged it. The blood  
ran swift and red;  
Down brother fell by brother: the dead lay with  
the dead.

## SISTER AND BROTHER

NINE dear sons and a daughter, a mother bore and bred;

She reared them up till they were grown and the sons were ready to wed,

And the maiden ripe for marriage. And straight-way asked for her

Three suitors, a ban, and a marshal, and a neighbor villager.

To the neighbor the mother would give her, but her brethren to the man

From over sea would give her. They said to her: "Marry the ban,

The great lord from beyond the sea. In every month of the year

We will come, and every week in the month, to see thee, sister dear."

The sister obeyed them, and the ban from over sea she wed.

But behold a marvel! God's pestilence struck her nine brethren dead,

And the solitary mother was left. So passed three years.

In her grief little Yélitsa the sister mourned with tears:

"Dear God, a mighty marvel! What great sin have I done

To my brethren, that of all of them cometh to me not one?"

The wives of her lord's brethren reviled her sharp enow:

“O wife of our lords’ brother, a wanton one art  
thou.

Hateful unto thy brethren now hast thou come to  
be,

That not one of thy brethren comes here to visit  
thee.”

And little sister Yélitsa wept much both day  
and night;

But the dear God, in mercy, took pity on her  
plight,

And sent forthwith two angels:

“Go down, ye

angels of mine,

To the white tomb of Yovan, the youngest of the  
nine;

Breathe light upon him with your breath; from  
the tomb frame him a steed;

From the earth make cakes for the festival all  
ready to his need;

Of his shroud make gifts, and get him in readiness  
to appear

Upon his wedding visit at the house of his sister  
dear.”

To the white tomb of Yovan the angels of God  
made speed;

They breathed upon him with their breath; from  
the tomb they framed him a steed,

And cakes from the earth for the festival all ready  
to his need;

Of his shroud they made gifts, and got him in  
readiness to appear



Upon his wedding visit at the house of his sister  
    dear.  
Swiftly went Yovan the feeble. When the house  
    before him lay  
His sister saw, and to meet him came forth a little  
    way;  
And O her tears fell bitter, all for her sorrow's  
    sake!  
They spread their arms, and each other kissed, and  
    sister to brother spake:  
    “Did ye not promise, brother, when ye gave me  
        in marriage here,  
That ye would come to see me every month in the  
    year,  
And every week in every month, to visit your sister  
    dear?  
But ye never came to see me, though three full  
    years have fled.”  
And little Yélitsa further unto her brother said:  
“Why hast thou grown so dark, brother? 'Tis as  
    though beneath the sod  
Thou hadst been.” Said Yovan the feeble: “Be  
    still, as thou lovest God.  
A hard constraint is on me. I have wedded eight  
    brothers well,  
And served eight sisters by marriage; and, sister,  
    it befell  
That, when my brothers were married, we made  
    nine houses white.  
Therefore, my little sister, am I grown as black as  
    night.”

And little sister Yélitsa got ready. She fashioned then  
Gifts for her brethren and sisters ; silken shirts for  
the men  
She made, and, for her sisters, fair rings and bracelets fair.  
And ever Yovan her brother besought her strongly there :

“Dear little sister Yélitsa, I prithee go not home,  
Till on their wedding visit thy brethren to thee come.”

But Yélitsa would not turn back ; her fair gifts she prepared.  
Thence Yovan started homeward, and his sister with him fared.  
When they were come to their home again, a white church stood thereby.  
Said Yovan the feeble :

“Sister, I prithee tarry nigh,  
Until I go behind the church ; for here at the marrying  
Of the fourth of our eight brethren, I lost my golden ring.  
Let me go to seek it, sister.”

To his tomb went  
Yovan straight,  
And little sister Yélitsa for Yovan there did wait.  
She waited and sought him. Nigh the church a fresh grave she espied ;

Suddenly she knew in sorrow that Yovan the weak  
had died.

Quickly she went to the white house. When she  
was come to the hall,  
In the hollow rooms of the white house she heard  
a cuckoo call.

Nay, it was not a cuckoo blue, but her mother cry-  
ing sore.

Yélitsa lifted up her voice as she came unto the  
door:

“Open the door, poor mother.” Said the mother  
thereunto:

“Get hence, thou pestilence of God, nine sons  
of mine that slew!

Their ancient mother, also, wilt thou smite stark  
and dead?”

And little sister Yélitsa lifted her voice and  
said:

“Poor mother, open now the door! No pesti-  
lence is here;

It is only little Yélitsa, and she is thy daughter  
dear.”

She opened the door. Each other they clasped  
their arms around,  
Wailing like cuckoos. Mother and child fell dead  
upon the ground.

## MUYO AND ÁLIYA

Muyo and Áliya were brothers, and nobly did they  
live ;  
Their very steeds and armor to each other would  
they give.  
They came unto a turbid lake, and a duck went  
swimming by,  
With golden wings ; and Muyo let his gray falcon  
fly,  
And Áliya a tame lanneret. Them happed the  
duck to slay.  
Said Muyo: "The falcon took it." But Áliya  
said, "Nay,  
'Twas the lanneret."

Then was Muyo sore cast  
down in that place.  
They seated them 'neath a green fir to drink the  
wine apace,  
And sleep and the wine o'ercame them. They  
were seen of three vilas<sup>1</sup> white.  
Then said the oldest:

"Here be now two noble  
heroes of fight.  
I will give an hundred sequins to whomsoever of  
you  
Shall make the heroes quarrel."

Then forth the  
youngest flew

<sup>1</sup> See note 2, p. 15. But here the vilas seem to be really malignant.

On her white wings, and settled on the ground by  
Muyo's head ;

And over face and forehead the bitter tears she  
shed.

Burned Muyo's face ; as he were mad, he leaped  
at his brother's side.

When he looked, he saw the damsel ; to his brother  
then he cried :

“Arise now, Áliya, my brother ! Let us hasten  
home away.”

Up leaped the Turk : “Nay, brother, now may a  
plague thee slay !

Now hast thou got two damsels, but there is none  
for me.”<sup>1</sup>

Muyo was grieved ; forth from his belt he  
wrenched the dagger free,

And there smote Áliya to the heart. He fell on  
the green grass ;

But Muyo seized the milk-white steed, and threw  
behind the lass ;

And unto his own homestead o'er the mountain did  
he ride.

Neighed the black steed of Áliya, and the wounded  
hero cried :

“O Muyo, brother and kinsman ! turn back upon  
the way ;

Take the black steed, lest masterless on the moun-  
tain side it neigh—

<sup>1</sup> “Muyo must have been married—or did it seem to Áliya  
that two damsels were standing by Muyo?” (Note by  
Karájich.)

But thy fame shall be forever, as though thou  
hadst blinded thine eyes."

Muyo turned back unto him, and took the steed  
likewise,  
And threw the girl thereon. Across the moun-  
tains did they pass ;  
And when about the middle of the journey home  
he was,

He came upon a raven with the right wing gone  
from the side ;

And unto the black raven he raised his voice and  
cried :

"Ho, raven! Without the black right wing,  
prithee how dost thou fare?"

And with a wail the raven gave answer to him  
there :

"Without my wing is it with me as without a  
brother to be ;

As without Áliya, Muyo, is it even now with thee."

Said the Turk to himself : "Ah, Muyo, alas for  
thy might this day !

If even the birds reproach me, what will my breth-  
ren say?"

Said the vila to him : "Muyo, return on thy  
track again.

Perchance I might heal thy brother ; I was once a  
healer of men."

Muyo turned back upon the track. When at  
the lake they were,

He looked behind at the black steed, but the  
maiden was not there.

By his friend he knelt, but the spirit had hasted  
to depart;

When he saw, he drew his dagger and thrust it  
through his heart.

## THE MIRACLE OF ST. NICHOLAS

DEAR God, great marvel is it unseen wonders to  
behold!

In St. Paul's white monastery were tables of the  
gold,

And all the saints in order were seated. At the  
head

Was the Thunderer Elijah; where the midst of the  
board was spread,

Were Máriya and Sava; at the bottom of the  
board

Were Holy Friday and Sunday. To the glory  
of Christ the Lord

To drink, and begin the festival, St. Nicholas  
stood up,

But he fell asleep in a little and in slumber dropped  
the cup.

It fell on the golden table, but broke not, nor  
spilled the wine.

Elijah then rebuked him:

“Nicholas, brother mine,  
We have not slumbered, brother, though we drank  
cool wine ere now,

Nor dropped cups from our fingers. Why dost  
thou slumber so?”

Said St. Nicholas:

“Elijah the Thunderer, let be!  
I closed my eyes for a little and a strange dream  
came to me.



There were three hundred cáloyers <sup>1</sup> set sail on the  
blue sea,  
And they bore sacrificial gifts to the famous Holy  
Height  
Of Athos; yellow wax they bore and also incense  
white.  
The wind arose among the clouds; the waves of the  
sea it smote,  
To drown three hundred cáloyers. But they  
cried as from one throat:  
'Aid us, God and St. Nicholas! Come, wherever  
thou mayst be!  
And I aided them and the cáloyers came home  
again from sea;  
Safe home came the three hundred, and O their  
hearts were light!  
They bore the sacrificial gifts unto the Holy  
Height  
Of Athos; yellow wax they bore and white incense  
as well.  
At that time did I slumber, and the cup from my  
fingers fell."

<sup>1</sup> Monks of the Greek church.

## THE SERPENT BRIDEGROOM

I WILL tell you a marvel, brethren, how the King  
of Budim was wed,

And nine full years passed over, yet there was no  
child to his bed.

Forth issued King Milútin; he went to the forest-  
close;

But God and fortune granted him not to strike the  
stags and does.

And his thirst was great; to a chilly spring Mi-  
lútin went his way,

And drank the chilly water. Then down 'neath a  
fir he lay.

Three vilas of the hill came then, thereby their  
thirst to slake,

And gossip by the water; and the eldest of them  
spake:

“Harken, belovèd daughters! Harken me now,  
and hear!

Since the King of Budim married, now is it full  
nine year;

And yet no child of his heart hath he to cherish and  
hold dear.”

Said the vila also: “Of any herb doth either  
of you know,

By the virtue whereof, hereafter, his wife with  
child shall go?”

But the younger twain said nothing. Only the  
eldest said:

“If the king knew all my knowledge, he would  
gather every maid

In Budim, and before them the dry gold would he  
set,  
Until their hands should have woven thereof a  
splendid net.  
Down on the quiet Danube, he would throw the  
fair net in.  
In it, a great fish would he take; and golden is  
every fin.  
He would take the right fin from it; then back the  
fish would he throw,  
And give the fin to the queen to eat. Straightway  
with child would she go.”

But King Milútin saw them, and heard whate'er  
was said;

And he went to the town of Budim and gathered  
every maid  
In Budim, and before them the good dry gold he  
set,  
Until their hands had woven thereof a splendid  
net.  
Down on the quiet Danube he threw the fair net  
in.  
In it he took a mighty fish, and golden was every  
fin.  
He took the right fin from it; and back the fish  
did he throw;  
He gave the fin to his queen to eat. Straightway  
with child did she go.  
A year she carried her burden; and then the time  
came on  
Of the bringing forth of the kingly child, but she  
did not bear a son.

Nay, a fierce serpent was it! On the earth when  
it did fall,  
Straightway the serpent crept away through a  
crevice in the wall.

And straight the queen departed; unto the king she  
spake:

“For the child of thy heart, it is hard, O king,  
to be merry for his sake.

No son but a serpent! What time on the earth  
the snake did fall,

Forthwith the serpent crept away through a crev-  
ice in the wall.”

Then said the king: “Now glory to God for  
his gift’s sake.”—

Then seven years passed over. From the wall the  
serpent spake:

“Wherefore, thou King of Budim, findest thou no  
bride for me?”

Sore was Milútin troubled, but at length aloud  
said he:

“My serpent, my evil offspring, who will give a  
maid to a snake?”

But thus to him the serpent raised up his voice and  
spake:

“My father, the King of Budim, do thou saddle  
Swallow, and wend

To the tsar. He will give thee a maid for me in  
the city of Prizrend.”

When the King of Budim heard it, he saddled  
Swallow, the steed;

There went unto a hero, a hero then indeed!

He came to the city of Prizrend. When he came  
'neath the tsar's tower,  
The tsar looked down upon him, and saw him in  
that hour.  
The tsar came down unto him, and in the open  
square  
The heroes spread out wide their arms, and kissed  
each other there,  
And each asked how fared the other. The tsar  
the king did lead  
To the palace; to the new stable the servants took  
the steed.

For three white days with yellow wine their thirst  
the kings did slake,  
Till they had ta'en their fill thereof, and then the  
brandy spake.  
Sore was the King of Budim by his embassy dis-  
tressed.

The Tsar of Prizrend saw it, and thus the king ad-  
dressed:

“I conjure thee, King of Budim; what trouble  
troubles thee,  
That thou art distressed in spirit before my lords  
and me?”

The king to the tsar spake likewise:

“O tsar

of Prizrend, hear!

When I married, no son of my heart was born for  
the space of full nine year.

When that their term was over, and the nine year  
course was run,

To me was born a serpent instead of a little son;

And, at its birth, unto the earth did the fierce  
serpent fall,

And forthwith the serpent crept away through a  
crevice in the wall.

When seven years were over, therefrom did the  
serpent call:

‘Wherefore, thou King of Budim, dost thou find  
no bride for me?’

And unto the fierce serpent I answered finally:

‘My serpent, my evil offspring, who will give a  
maid to a snake?’

But thereupon the serpent lifted his voice and  
spake:

“My father, the King of Budim, do thou saddle  
Swallow and wend

To the tsar. He will give thee a maid for me in  
the city of Prizrend.’

“And tsar, a wretch am I in this. But I la-  
bored and came from afar.”

And unto the king in answer outspake at last  
the tsar:

“Heckest thou, King of Budim? To Budim for  
me thou shalt go.

There shalt thou ask the serpent in the wall,  
whether or no

He will lead the wooers from Budim to Prizrend  
through the land,

So that no sun shall warm them, nor dew upon  
them stand.

If in such wise the serpent will venture them to  
lead,

Then for a bride to the serpent I will give the  
maid indeed."

When the King of Budim heard it, forth was  
steed Swallow led.

He threw himself on the back of the steed, and  
forth away he sped,

Over the level country, like a star in the lucid sky.  
And the king thought within him, when Budim he  
came nigh:

"Alas! In the name of God the One, now  
whither shall I wend,

To give to the serpent in the wall the greetings  
the tsar doth send?"

Before the gates of Budim but a little space was  
he.

Spake the serpent: "My father, gave the tsar his  
maiden unto me?"

Said the king:

"My evil offspring, if thou dar-  
est, snake, to wend

With the crowd of gay-clad wooers from Budim  
to Prizrend,

So that no sun shall warm them, nor dew upon  
them stand,

The tsar will lightly surrender the maiden to thy  
hand.

But if the crowd of wooers thou wilt not venture  
to lead,

No maiden of his whatever will the tsar give thee  
indeed."

But the serpent said:

“The wooers, now get  
them ready to hand.  
We will go hence for the maiden; I will lead them  
through the land,  
So that no sun shall warm them, nor dew upon them  
stand.”

They gathered a host of wooers, a thousand  
with all speed;  
They came to the king's courtyard. They  
brought forth Swallow the steed;  
Alone in the courtyard stood the steed. Then the  
quick heralds cried:  
“Make ready, gay-clad wooers! Make ready,  
groom of the bride!”  
And when in the wall's crevice the serpent heard  
the call,  
Forthwith crawled down the serpent from the crev-  
ice in the wall;  
By the knee he gripped the charger; on the saddle  
he coiled and lay.  
Then out through Budim the city they hastened  
on their way.  
From Budim to Prizrend a dark blue cloud drave  
o'er them through the land,  
So that no sun could warm them, nor dew upon  
them stand.  
When they came to Prizrend, they led their steeds  
through the tsar's courtyard there;  
But the serpent guided not Swallow that went  
alone through the square.  
Gloriously the tsar welcomed them with gifts that  
were splendid indeed,



To every wooer a shirt of silk, to the groom a hawk  
and a steed,

And moreover the maiden of Prizrend. Then the  
quick heralds cried:

“Make ready, wooers, and groomsmen, and  
bringer of the bride!

Make ready, maiden of Prizrend! It is time for  
us to ride.”

The wooers and the maiden, they mounted one  
and all.

When the serpent heard it, down he came from  
the crevice in the wall;

He gripped the charger by the knee; on the sad-  
dle he coiled and lay.

Then out through Prizrend the city they hastened  
on their way,

But evermore above them drave on the dark blue  
cloud.

The wooers spurred their horses, until they tram-  
pled proud;

And thereupon the serpent on Swallow that did  
ride,

He made the charger trample on the pavement in  
his pride.

He goaded him so fiercely, that the steed from end  
to end

Hath ruined all the pavement in the city of Priz-  
rend.

Plague strike on it! In twelve full years the ma-  
sons scarce will mend

The damage that upon that time unto the tsar  
was done.

And merrily and with good heart to Budim they  
were gone,  
And anew the marriage festival they held a full  
week more,  
And solemnized it duly until the rites were o'er.  
Then each returned unto the house, and the ser-  
pent to the wall,  
And the king remained a season within the council-  
hall.

Time came to bring together the bridegroom  
and the bride.  
They brought her to the tower; to the highest  
room they hied;  
They left her in the highest room. At the middle  
of the night  
There was a sound of voices in the chamber in the  
height;  
And the Lady Queen in the tower stole on from  
floor to floor,  
Till she reached the highest story; then she opened  
the chamber door.  
What saw she in the chamber? A mighty marvel  
therein!  
On a cushion in the chamber, there lay a serpent-  
skin;  
On the pillow a good hero in slumber deep was  
laid;  
And the damsel out of Prizrend, he held the lovely  
maid.  
A mother has joy of her children. She stole the  
serpent-skin;

She bore it to the living fire, and swiftly threw it  
in.

To the king, her lord and master, she ran forth  
hastily:

“O king, upon this hour it is well with thee and  
me!

I went to the high chamber, and opened the door.  
Therein

On a cushion in the chamber there lay a serpent-  
skin;

On the pillow a good hero in slumber deep was  
laid;

The damsel out of Prizrend, he held the lovely  
maid.

And forthwith from the chamber I stole the ser-  
pent-skin,

And took it to the living fire, and quickly threw  
it in.”

“What is this, wife? May the serpent now  
seize thee and devour!”

And they hastened forth together to the sum-  
mit of the tower.

What saw they? A mighty marvel! On the pil-  
low a hero dead;

The maid of Prizrend embraced him. She lifted  
her voice and said:

“Alas! In the name of the one God, I am wid-  
owed and alone!

My mother, for me—God slay thee!—little enow  
hast thou done,

And this woe hast thou brought upon thyself.”

So the mother lost her son.

We give you the song, but God on high gives  
health unto the wise.  
Our fathers lied unto us, and we repeat their lies.

## THE WIFE OF HASAN AGA <sup>1</sup>

WHAT shows white in the wood? A flock of swans  
or a bank of snow?

Swans would have flown and a snow bank would  
have melted long ago.

It is not snow, nor a milk-white swan, but Hasan  
Aga's tent;

Sore wounded was he. His mother and sister to  
him went;

For very shame his wife came not.<sup>2</sup> When his  
wounds were healed aright,

<sup>1</sup>This poem is based on the life of the Mohammedan Serbs. It is noteworthy not only from its own literary merit, but from being the first of the Servian ballads to become known to western Europe, and, above all, from the magnificent translation of it by Goethe. It was first printed by the Abate Alberto Fortis, in his *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, Venice, 1774, with an accompanying Italian translation. Fortis probably derived the ballad from a manuscript that is still preserved. In the next year, 1775, there appeared a German translation of a portion of Fortis's work (including this ballad) *Die Sitten der Morlacken aus dem Italienischen übersetzt*, Bern, 1765. Goethe based his own work, which was probably executed in this same year, 1775, on this German translation, but apparently also referred to Fortis's original work, with its edition of the original text. His poem was first printed in Herder's *Volkslieder*, in 1778. Karájich reprinted this ballad from the text of Fortis, but with a changed orthography and several conjectural emendations. Finally, the manuscript to which Fortis was indebted was published by Miklosich in 1883, at Vienna, along with a full discussion of the different questions connected with the poem (*Sitzungsberichte der phil.-histor. Classe der kaiserl. Akad. d. W.*, ciii, 413-490).

<sup>2</sup>"The wife could not even in this case overcome her dread of meeting a man. A girl is praised in a folksong as 'having never seen a male being.'" Miklosich, p. 438.

He charged his faithful wife withal:

“Come not

into my sight;

Await me never, woman, my fair white house  
within;

Nor yet do thou abide me in the houses of my kin.”

When the faithful woman heard it, sad was her  
heart indeed.

Suddenly from the house she heard the trampling  
of the steed.

To the window she ran, to break her neck by leap-  
ing down from the tower;

But the daughters of Hasan Aga pursued her in  
that hour:

“Return to us, dear mother! Our father comes  
not,” said they;

“It is thy brother, our uncle, Pintórovich the  
Bey.”

The wife of Hasan Aga, to her brother’s breast  
she came:

“Ah, brother, from my children five doth he send  
me! It is shame!”

Naught said the bey; in his silken pouch forth-  
with his hand he thrust

For a bill of divorce that granted her her dower  
held in trust,<sup>1</sup>

And bade her go to her mother. When the pur-  
port thereof she wist,

<sup>1</sup> By the Turkish law a sum of money is promised to a woman at her marriage before the *cadi*; this she may receive in case she is divorced by her husband.

Forthwith upon the forehead her two fair sons  
she kissed,  
And on their rosy cheeks she kissed her little  
daughters twain.

But the little son in the cradle she could not leave  
for pain.

Her brother took the lady's hand; and hard it was  
to lead

That wretched woman from her babe, but he threw  
her on the steed;

He brought her unto the white house, and there  
he took her in.

A little while, but scarce a week, she stayed among  
her kin.

Good is the matron's parentage, men seek her in  
marriage withal;

But the great Cadi of Imoski desires her most of  
all.

“So should I not desire it,” imploringly she  
said.

“Brother, I prithee, give me not to any to be wed,  
That my heart break not with looking on my chil-  
dren motherless.”

But the bey no whit he cared at all because of  
her distress;

To the great Cadi of Imoski he will give her to  
be wed.

Still the matron with her brother most miserably  
she pled,

That he a milk-white letter to the cadi should pre-  
pare,

And send it to the cadi:

“The matron <sup>1</sup> greets

thee fair,

And implores thee: when that thou hast brought  
the wooers from every side,

And when thou comest to her white house,<sup>2</sup> do thou  
bring a veil for the bride,

That she see not by the aga's house her children  
motherless.”

When the letter came to the cadı, with pomp  
and lordliness

He gathered many wooers; ah, nobly did they  
come!

And splendidly the wooers they brought the fair  
bride home!

But when they were by the aga's house, forth  
looked her daughters fair,

And her two sons came before her, and spoke to  
their mother there:

“Return with us, dear mother, to eat with us  
again!”

When the wife of Hasan Aga heard, she spake to  
the groomsman then:

“Brother in God, my groomsman, stop the  
steeds, of gentleness,

By my house, that I may give fair gifts to my  
children motherless.”

They checked the steeds at the house for her.

She gave her children gifts;

To either son a gilded knife, to her daughters fair  
long shifts,

<sup>1</sup> “Maiden” in the original!

<sup>2</sup> This phrase was inserted by Karájich.



To her babe in the cradle a garment in a bit of  
linen tied.<sup>1</sup>

When Hasan Aga saw it, to his two sons he cried:  
“Hither, my children motherless! and from her  
stand apart!

Pity and mercy hath she none within her stony  
heart!”

She heard. Her face smote on the ground in  
the deep of her distress,  
And her soul departed as she saw her children  
motherless.

<sup>1</sup> That is, wrapped up, to be saved, for a later time, when  
he is grown up. But the sense of this line and the preceding  
is very doubtful. See Jagich, in *Archiv für slavische Philol-  
ogie*, x, 659, 660.

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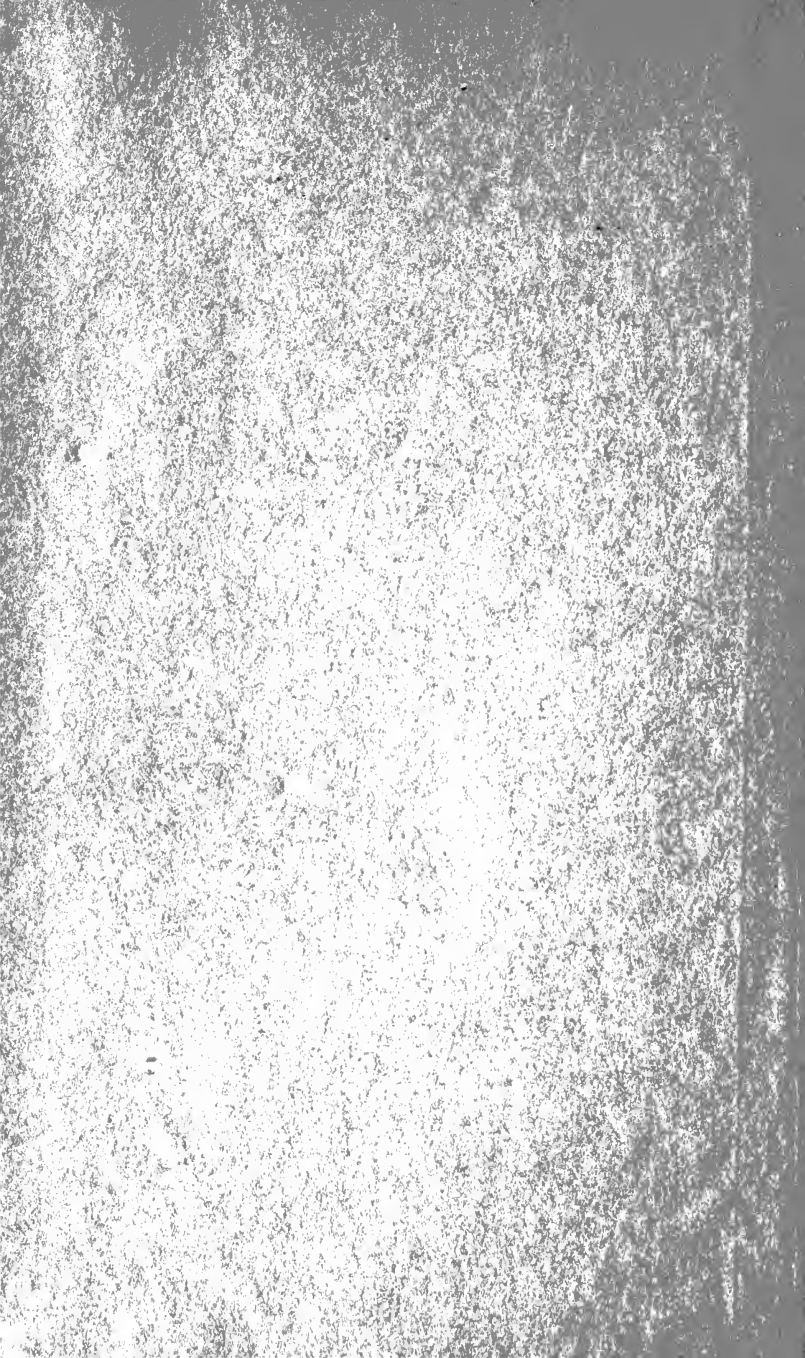


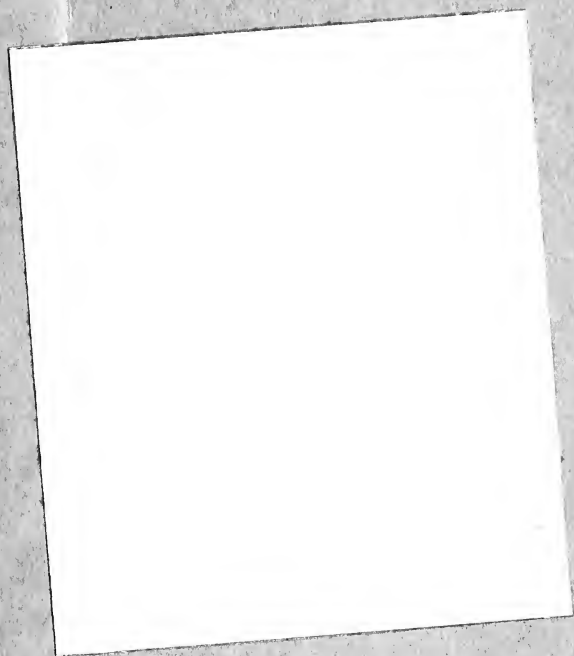
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