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SERBIAN SONGS AND POEMS

Pinx't G. ŠUBIC.

PRETTY VIDA.

[See p. 33.

SERBIAN SONGS AND POEMS:

CHORDS OF THE YUGOSLAV HARP

TRANSLATED BY

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A HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO

MY SERBIAN COLLEAGUES

AND TO

MY PEASANT FRIENDS OF SERBIA;

TO ALL THOSE BRAVE AND CHILDLIKE SOULS WHO

UNTO DEATH HAVE SUNG AND CHEERFULLY ENDURED

"AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE"

2045482

PREFATORY NOTE

THESE poems, as I understand, and the reader would suppose a priori, are traditional and national in their character, resembling in this aspect the delightful old folk-songs of England. They express the deep heart of a nation, through centuries of tempest and travail. What, I think, strikes one most of all is their amazing simplicity and directness—a directness which on occasion is pungent. There is humour too in many of these poems, and the thought, as distinct from the expression, is often of a charmingly imaginative quality. Consider, for instance, the last lines of the poem entitled "Love Before and After Death." This poem, too, presents a strange contrast in its first and second halves of a realism quite unaffected and (as some would perhaps have it) crude, with a fantasy perfectly pictorial. How distinctive the thought is at times, like nothing that is English or Latin! Here and there too a spirit of fatalism may be said to brood over a poem, Oriental, reminiscent of history.

I imagine that the most competent critic would endorse the translator's decision of retaining in more than one poem the directness of speech, the irregularity of form, without an attempt to refine and embellish which might easily induce in the mind an impression of trick or of artifice. The spirit is more vital than the letter to us in these perilous

times—were it not indeed vital in letters! Whosoever will try his hand at imposing a more literary and deliberate form on such a poem as that I have referred to, called "Love Before and After Death," will readily appreciate this. The clouds will soon darken his atmosphere!

May it bring home more nearly to many than has hitherto been possible in England, the heart of a high-souled people, whose remoter historical past will return on them once again in a greater and a happier future!

Stern bulwark once against the Turk,
The crimson-hornèd Crescent's foe
Ere that fell field of Kossovo,
There greets thee soon a greater work:

Not thine for all time foreign strife;
The future days are on the wing:
Fair drive the western winds, that bring,
Dear Serbian land, the saner life—

Arise, but not from land nor sea,
That sleepest not where tyrants lie;
Arise, resurgent from the sky,
The greater Serbia to be.

HAROLD P. COOKE, M.A.

OXFORD,
July 1917.

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INTRODUCTION

TEN years already is it since I began to roam the Balkans and to woo fitful sleep during sultry summer nights in the Defile of Kazan, the plains of Wallachia, and the Tartar huts of the Dobrudja. Like most of my countrymen, little enough did I know of Serbia then. It was not until the scorching August of 1911, when traversing "the Fatherland" and Austro-Hungary, that I determined to make the closer acquaintance of the romantic and afflicted Serbian people. Diverted into Roumania and Bulgaria, however, I had to wait until the first Balkan War of 1912–13 to know the Serbs more intimately, and while travelling to and fro with their soldiers between Belgrade, Nish, Kossovo, and Skopljé, to gain some acquaintance with their National Poetry.

It was during this same 1913 that—in Vienna and Budapest—attempts were daily made to cool my interest in Serbia. When in Stuttgart that year I was asked to write a magazine article with illustrative photographs; the photographs were used, but not the article. That, I was told, could not be published, "because of its political bias." Yet the editor of the journal admitted, *unter vier Augen*, that a Swiss surgeon, who had served with the Serbian Red Cross during the autumn campaign of 1912, had displayed the same sort of "bias." Only a week or two after this incident I took up my

residence in Serbia, and found out for myself more about her people.

Then, in July 1914, when war broke out again —for Serbia it was indeed tragically "again"; since, what with Turk, Bulgar, and Albanian, she had scarcely had any respite during two whole years—work under the Serbian Relief Fund took me north, south, east, and west, over the country. Nursed through typhus fever in a Serbian hospital in Nish, I was allowed to share with the Serbs some short stages of their agonizing *Via Dolorosa*. But amid all, even the very worst, there was ever the interest of the national poetry—necessarily so, for it is part of their heart and soul. (A touching side-light on this instinct for casting spiritual and moral truth into poetic form was the eagerness with which badly wounded and even dying men would listen to the reading of the Psalms.) I remember one of Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison's peasant patients in the Serbian Relief Fund (Lady Paget) Hospital in Skopljé, suffering greatly from exhaustion and the shock of a double amputation high above the knee, who yet forgot his pains and griefs in the writing of original verses. A mountain peasant! A real triumph this; for one can hardly realize with what loathing these brave and hardy fellows face an amputation, so utterly dependent as they are in their rugged land upon wholeness of limb and vigour of muscle.

Amidst all the exigencies and preoccupations as well as the irreparable personal losses of the war, this slight collection from the rich Southern Slav storehouse is given *con amore* to the people of Great Britain. Many of the pieces have already been used to add point and piquancy to "talks" and

addresses on Serbia, and have awakened the lively sympathy of very diverse audiences. With no wish to satisfy, much less to create, a merely dilettante interest, these utterances of the national soul are brought to the notice of English readers that they may understand their Serbian friends yet better.

Like the Bible itself, these short poems mirror many sides of life. With undisguised voice and in many moods we hear Serbia speaking for herself. Human strength and weakness, love and hate, nobility and baseness, are set forth with primitive simplicity. They are the anonymous product of a whole nation. "Here is something of us, whatever we may be, both good and bad," remarks a Serbian man of letters, now known and well beloved throughout these islands.

Even those narratives which to Western eyes might superficially appear to be mere crude records of crime, are invariably redeemed by an underlying sense of justice, tenderness, and beauty: Let the English reader turn, for instance, to "Yovan-Beg" and see how "Mara, the noble lady, gave her soul"; or again, "Veryanko's Vengeance," if it be somewhat grim, is surely a robust visitation of wickedness, and recent events may have made many of us more willing to appreciate this attitude of soul.

The Serbians are passionate lovers of home and kindred. The Lamentations, here given, with all their heart-break of mothers and of wives, will make an appeal, alas! more wide than heretofore. Along with the deeper and sometimes darker things of life, the reader will find the glint and sparkle of Serbian humour; a sly playfulness; a certain crisp directness too, and the *naïveté* and freshness of

the hills and countryside. The farm scene of "Vidè's Welcome Home" will appeal to our own country folk, though we in our urban and industrial turmoil are all too quick to lose—if some of us ever gain! —that intimacy and sympathy with Nature which is so marked a feature of the Serb.

Sixty years ago the first Earl of Lytton, returning from his wanderings amongst the villagers of the Danubian frontier, remarked that what to his mind was most noteworthy in the poetry of the Serbs was its spontaneity and unity, its evidence of collective inspiration: "Such flowers as grow here," he added, "may be merely mountain weeds, but the dew of the morning is on them."

The Serbian National Poems, then, are the songs of the Serbian race through the centuries. Europe had scarcely found respite from the campaigns of Napoleon when Vuk Karadjitch (whose name has been given to a street in Belgrade) first reduced them to writing, rescuing these *pesmas* from that state of oral tradition in which they had remained for ages.

Essentially dramatic in character, the songs "represent in short close dialogue a particular situation, or they treat a particular phase of a particular sentiment or passion; or else they relate in rapid narrative a particular event; commencing, without preamble, where the action commences, and terminating, without reflection or remark, where the action terminates." (*Serbski Pesme*, "Owen Meredith," published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, 1861.)

The "heroic" songs glorify the exploits of burly warriors like Marko Kralievitch, who, perhaps, might be described as the Hereward the Wake of the Serbian schoolboy. It is not, however, with

these heroic songs that the reader is made familiar here; they demand a volume to themselves. A specimen of one of them, "The Battle of Kossovo" appeared in English in the little volume by the first Earl of Lytton above mentioned, and Dr. Seton Watson has familiarized us with word for word translations of some others in his interesting little book, "Serbian Ballads," published under the auspices of the Kossovo Day Committee.

It is not for us here to dilate upon the strength and grace, the flexibility and power of the Serbian language, yet—even in a Preface—perhaps some tribute might be paid to those brave and chivalrous comrades who amid all their sufferings helped many of us from these isles to learn something of their pleasant tongue. It should be added that "Pretty Vida" (see *Frontispiece*) is a reproduction of the picture by George Šubic, of Carniola, a modern Slovene painter who worked on Munkachi's famous picture, "Christ before Pilate," and who also painted Schliemann's Palace in Athens. I would gratefully acknowledge the assistance which has been so genially given to me by various Serbian friends, amongst whom I may be allowed to mention by name Dr. N. Zupanitch and also Mr. D. Zebitch,[1] who has given generous material support in the publication of this book.

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CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
July, 1917.

[1] Of the Anglo-Serbian Industrial Committee, 106, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

DREAM OF THE HOLY VIRGIN

THE Holy Virgin dreaming slept,
And in her dream a great tree grew,
Its branches from her own heart crept,
O'erspreading earth, north, south, east, west,
And piercing, spire-like, heaven's blue.
Sore troubled by her dream she rose,
And sought straightway a saintly brother:
"Hear, Saint Basil, my brother, hear!
Let me tell my vision wondrous:
I dreamed, and lo! a great tree grew,
Its branches from my own heart crept,
O'erspreading earth, north, south, east, west,
And towering up through heaven's blue.
What saith this vision, Saint, to you?"
Then Basil answered to the Virgin:
"O sister dear, thy vision's clear:
'A tree did spring from thy warm heart?'
To bear the Christ shall be thy part.
'Those spreading branches covering all?'
Sinners He'll save from evil's thrall.
'That height spire-piercing heaven's blue?'
To God the Father Christ shall rise,
Passing from earth and fleshly view."

THE HOLY MOTHER

SADLY walked the Holy Mother
On the Holy Mountain.
Suddenly espied she something
Brightly shining in the dust:
The Cross, it was, of her own Son.
With gentlest hands she cáressed it,
She did wash it with her tears,
And after dried it with her hair.
Kneeling then she uttered prayer,
Speaking to the Holy Cross:
"O sweet Cross, thou Cross of honour,
Upon thee my Son has died,
Hellish pains on thee He suffered,
Hellish pains from those hot nails,
To redeem our sinful souls.
When He did upon thee bleed,
His blood it fell in priceless seed,
Whence there sprang all lovely flowers,
And angels, coming down to gather,
Made them into wreaths and garlands
That they might adorn all heaven."

THE BLESSED MARY AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

THE Blessed Mary sent an angel
Unto John the Camel-girdled :—
" God's wish it is, O hermit John,
God's wish it is, and my wish too,
That thou shouldst now my Son baptize."
John went responsive to the river,
Down into Jordan with the Christ,
And there upon him with his Lord,
Opened wide the gate of heaven,
The roseate sun did light the east,
Sign of that Spirit-fire of which spake John,
Whose purging heat doth purify from sin,
And in Jordan's flowing river
Man's sin was taken all away !
Our salvation is in heaven !
Save, O God, all trusting souls,
Save them from the devil's toils.

CHRISTMAS

WHY trembleth so the earth,
Set in this sphere of blue?
Christ our God was born hereon,
He, the Virgin's Holy Son,
Christ Who heaven and earth created,
And us sinners on the earth.
In awe when He shall come to judge,
We all shall stand before Him then,
Both righteous and unrighteous men.

CHRIST THINKS OF HIS MOTHER

ON angel wing in upward flight
Rise soul and body of our Lord,
When piercing heaven with high gaze,
He calleth for one down to go,
Down to darksome Golgotha,
Where Mary bending near the Cross,
Weepeth in bitter agony:
"Let herald hasten now to tell her
I am risen unto heaven."
Great Michael heard, two angels sent,
Swift to convey the tidings glad:
"O thou of women all most blest,
Let not thy heart with fear be filled;
From the tomb thy Son is risen,
Risen to the Father's throne,
Saving men from Death's dominion."

A CHILD IN HEAVEN

YESTERNIGHT was born a Child,
But it passed from earth at morn,
Unbaptized to heaven's door.
" Open, heavenly watchman, open ! "
" Nay, foolish babe, thou must away !
Sinful thou art, away, away ! "
" Foolish I am,—but sinful, nay ;
Born yesternight, I died to-day ;
In the green forest I was born,
Where no sponsor, where no priest ;
Therefore unbaptized I come ! "

Then the heavenly watcher answered :
" Go thou yet a short way on ;
Go on, my babe, and thou shalt find
Three watersprings ; from one to drink,
From one to wash, the third a font of
blessing.
The first shall breast-milk be to thee ;
The second is thy mother's tears,
And from the third thou shalt baptizèd be,
And joyful entrance gain to heaven."

VISION BEFORE SLEEP

To sleep I laid me down,
Making my prayer to God;
I called upon His angels;
Heaven was unveiled to me;
The Seraphim, they worshipped there,
And prayed this prayer to Christ our Lord:
"While he doth rest, all through his sleep,
From visions dark do Thou him keep."

PRAYER IN THE FIELD

We pray unto the Heavenly Lord,
Koledo,[1] Koledo!
Dew to send upon our fields,
Koledo!
To give grain to wheat and maize,
Koledo, Koledo!
To give fruits in all the glades,
Koledo!
To give colours to the flowers,
Koledo, Koledo!
To give health to sheep and cattle,
Koledo!
And pardon, joy and song to all,
Koledo, Koledo!

[1] *Koledo:* In ancient times the Serbians, as all the Slavs, often used this word as a refrain in their bucolic songs. It was an address to *Ledo*, the ancient Slav divinity who presided over the processes of fertility and protected fields and flowers.

PRAYER BEFORE GOING TO BED

WITH a cross I lay me down,
With a cross I get me up,
All day long it doth protect,
And angels in the night are near;
Archangels, they shall ward my death,
And God's my guard till all things end.

THE CONDITIONS

LISTEN, listen man of God,
If thou wouldest serve thy God,
In thy lifetime do thou good,
And revere thine elder brother,
So thy younger thee revere.
Neither boast when fortune smileth,
Nor complain in days of trouble;
Grasp not at another's good;
For when death befalleth man,
Nought he takes from out the world,
Save his deeds and crossed white hands—
When he goeth to the Judgment,
Where king's rank is unaccounted,
Rich men can no more be proud,
Poor men be no more despisèd.

KOLEDO

THE King came to court our Margaret fair,
Koledo, Koledo!
And mother sang clear to our Margaret fair:
Koledo, Koledo!
"Oh, Margaret, haste! my daughter dear,
Koledo, Koledo!
The King, he has come to court you here,
Koledo, Koledo!"
Then thus sweet Margaret to mother's call:
"Koledo, Koledo!
I told you, mother mine, I told you,
Koledo, Koledo!
I want not kings, I want not knights,
Koledo, Koledo!
'Tis Jesus Himself alone doth bind me,
Koledo, Koledo!
I've vowed to Him, true shall He find me,
Koledo, Koledo!"

FOLK-SONGS AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MARKO AND THE FALCON

(From MACEDONIA)

SORE sickness came on Marko Kralyevitch[1]
While he was riding on a lonely road;
He laid him down with lance close at his head,
His true horse Sharatz tethered by his side,
And in his pain and faintness thus he murmured:
"Is none near by to bring me water cool?
Can none protect me from this scorching sun?
O that some helper now may quickly come,
And God will surely grant him place in heaven."
A falcon grey o'erheard the hero's cry,
And swiftly flying brought to him cool water;
The hero sheltered too with outspread wing,
And Marko thus revived, restored, refreshed,
With grateful gaze did eye the gracious bird,
The falcon bird which so had tended him.

[1] The favourite hero of Serbian Song, called always Marko, "the King's Son." Marko lived during those terrible years when Serbia fell under the Turkish yoke after the battle of Kossovo (1389).

"O falcon grey," now strengthened Marko said,
" What kindness have I ever done to thee
That thou dost show such kindly thought for me?"
To which the falcon bird sweet answer gave:
" By thee forgotten, not by me forgot,
When on that field—on Kossovo's high ground—
The Serbs did battle fierce with Unbelievers;
Those cruel Turks, they crippled both my wings,
To earth I fell 'mid horses and 'mid men,
But thou straightway didst pick me up again—
How can I this forget?—and didst put me
Upon a lofty branch of green pine-tree.
Since then to thee alone my life I owe
I would now mindful be my love to show."

VIDÈ'S WELCOME HOME

Long time, long time white Vidè fought,
Koledo!
Three years against the fierce Turks,
Koledo!
And four against the dark Magyars,
Koledo!
At last came tired Vidè home,
Koledo!
And with his wife sate down to meal,
Koledo!
When at the door they heard great noise,
Koledo!
Said Vidè: "Dear, see what it is,"
Koledo!
So Vidè's wife went out to see,
Koledo!
Horses all gathered round the door,
Koledo!
Joyfully their hoofs they clattered,
Koledo!
All in honour of lord Vidè,
Koledo!
And all the dogs, they jumped and barked,
Koledo!
Home to welcome their lord Vidè,
Koledo!
And all the pigeons gathered too,
Koledo!
Their wings to flap and strut and coo,
Koledo!
Lord Vidè safe at home to view,
Koledo!

YOVAN-BEG

YOVAN-BEG was a noble bold,
And his wife the gentle Mara;
But Yovan's mother spake thus ill:
"Yovan, listen! thy wife Mara,
She doth ever thwart my will;
She who calls herself my daughter
Gives no heed to aught I say,
If 'Yea' my word, then hers is 'Nay.'"
To his mother answered Yovan:
"To the meadow I'll take Mara;
There we'll gather roses fair,
Roses that she plucketh gaily,
From that fragrant hillside there."
Together he and Mara wandered,
Till near a rose a snake outpeered,
And his cunning head upreared:
"Say, poisonous snake," wife Mara cried,
"Sure thou art she who doth me chide!"
These words she spake in Yovan's hearing,
When he his Mara swiftly nearing,
From his girdle snatched his dagger,
Eyed her, then in one mad stagger
Plunged it deep in her true heart.
Then said Mara to her Yovan:
"Thy dagger take not from this heart
Till my sweet children I have seen."

So Yovan left his dagger there,
And fainting Mara moved towards home,
On the road, spoke to a pine-tree:
"O pine-tree green, in God's great Name,
Be a sister unto me!
When my children play beneath thee,
Guard them thou, in place of me!"
On the way she saw a willow:
"O willow-tree, in God's great Name,
Be a sister unto me!
When my children play beneath thee,
I would that they might girdled be
With thy green fronds, O willow-tree!"
And when she reached her own white house,
Her children all ran out to meet her,
And Mara caressed them with tears:
"O my children, my sweet sunbeams,
When I am gone, in after years,
When calls step-mother, running come,
Get earlier up, more quickly dress,
Thereby to keep all ill from home."
These words, they pierced the heart of Yovan;
He drew his blade from that fond breast;
Forth came her heart with his own dagger;
Thus noble Mara gave her soul.

MÓRAVA HORSES

On the banks of Mórava,
Sleek black horses danced,
" Could not we," one horse did say,
" Over this river swim to-day ? "
But the second cried, " Beware,
Deep flows the stream, beware, beware !
'Twas by these banks of Mórava,
At set of sun a knight was drowned,
And dawn had broke ere he was found.
If mother this poor knight had had,
Within a day his fate she'd know,
And him to seek next day would go ;
The third day, finding him, would weep,
And who knows how long sad heart keep ? "
To which a third black horse replied :
" No mother mourns him as lost son,
But mother-in-law the knight has one !
She in one year would surely cry :
' What has my daughter's husband done ? '
And in two years find time to go
Toward the place where he lay low ;
And when there should have passed years three,
His grave, perchance, she then might see—
Where long since green grass had grown,
The peacock preened himself and flown."

UNGRATEFUL SONS

A MOTHER poor had nine dear sons;
Day by day she plied the distaff,
And her sons she clothed and fed,
Till the time that they should wed.

Fair brides the sons then took themselves,
And loved them unto folly.
Foolishly they talked together,
Unkindly spake of old, grey mother:

"Old and ugly is our mother,
Unwelcome to our bright, gay guests;
O might she stray into the forest!
Some beast perchance might eat her."

With tear-dimmed eyes grey mother hearing,
Staff in hand, did seek the forest.
Two tender grandsons soon o'ertook her:
"Come back to us, come back to us,
Come back to us, grandmother dear!"

The boys she heard, but heeded not,
Till—clad in garb all beggarly—
An angel thus accosted her:
"O grey-haired mother, I speak true;
Return, for God has done His due."

Obedient to the voice was she;
O what a sight did meet her:—
Her nine sons turned into nine stones,
Nine snakes her sons' nine wives.
And hovering o'er the snakes and stones
Her grandsons twain, two golden pigeons!

PRETTY VIDA

(From the CARSO country, near Trieste)

BY the sea stood pretty Vida,
Plashing linen in the water,
When a dark sailor from his craft
At the pretty Vida laughed;
To her called in pleasant voice:
"Why, Vida, thou hast lost thy bloom!
Thou art not now as once I knew thee,
Whence has come on thee this gloom?"
And the pretty Vida answered:
"How can I rosy be and bonnie,
With all the cares that weigh me down?
My babe lies ever sick at home;
But I have other grief than that.
To foolish counsel I have listened,
And am now an old man's bride:
All day long the sick child cries,
Through the night the old man coughs—
Going thus my weary ways
I have lost my sparkling eyes."
Then the sun-browned sailor said:
"As the cranes fly o'er the sea
So fly thou along with me.
Come with me and heal thy heart,
For thee the Queen of Spain hath sent
To tend and nurse her son the prince,
Gently to fan his forehead fair,
To soothe him with thy crooning songs—
No heavier task awaits thee there."

So fair Vida put to sea,
Sunlit were the laughing waves;
Still she thought of home and wept,
Wept that she had left her child,
And her aged husband mild. . . .
Se'en-nights three had passed away,
And they had brought her to the queen.
Now pretty Vida rises early,
From her window greets the sun,
To console her wounded heart;
One day thus she speaks to him:
"Tell me, O thou rosy lord,
How fares my boy, my suffering child?"—
"How could he fare? How thinkest thou?
They lit his candle[1] yesternight.
Thy husband old has gone away,
Roaming the sea he asks for thee,
Vacantly he casts around,
With bleeding heart he asks for thee."
When in the eve the pale moon rose,
From the window pretty Vida
Looked to cool her feverish heart,
Thus spake to the silver moon:
"Pale moon, I turn to thee to know
How my suffering child has fared?"
"What could he do, thy little son?
To-day the wan mite they have buried,
Thy father too has gone away,
Roaming the sea he asks for thee,
Vacantly he looks around,
With bleeding heart he asks for thee."
Whereat the pretty Vida cried,
Long she wept and bitterly. . . .
Came the queen to ask what ailed:

[1] I.e. the candle of death.

"What has happened? Tell me, Vida,
Why all this bitter crying so!"
Pretty Vida told the queen:
"I, poor creature, can but weep;
At the window I was washing
The golden vase ye know so well;
As I washed it, lo it fell
From this high window to the sea."
Her the queen consoling said:
"Weep not thus thine eyes so red!
Another vase of gold I'll buy,
And excuse make to the king.
Go, now, nurse the prince my son,
And forget what thou hast done."
Indeed the queen the vase she bought,
And excuse made to the king,
Yet pretty Vida every day
By the window sadly stood,
Mourning father, husband, son,
Nor could forget what she had done.

VERYANKO'S VENGEANCE

(From STYRIA)

"SON of mine, what shall befall us?
What bringeth Time for me, for thee?
Too young, my boy, art thou to marry,
And I too old a bride to be."
"Nay, mother mine, thy heart is young,
For sure some good man waiteth thee,
Take whom thou wilt—excepting one,
Roshlin, my hateful enemy;
My father killed he and my brother,
And scarce came short of killing me."
But his mother would not listen:
Veryanko's greatest enemy,
The wicked Roshlin, married she.
To sleep the twain lay down at night,
Veryanko watching warily.
Under the window crouched the youth,
And heard them talk thus lovingly:
"Our fortune, darling, as our heart,
Undivided must it be;
Now, there is one who has his part
When for us only it must be.
Far deep within the forest glade
A crystal spring thou mayest find,
There behind the beech-tree hide,
And when he comes then slay thou him.
Sickness I shall feign to-morrow,
And shall unto Veryanko say:
'Son, alas! shall I recover

Unless sweet water I may drink
That welleth from the crystal spring,
By the beech-tree in the glade.'
Ever my son he doth obey;
He'll set him out the woodland way."
Bearing in his heart these words,
Forth Veryanko quietly crept;
The morrow's sun had risen long,
But not his mother from her couch,
So unto her Veryanko said:
"Mother, the sun now standeth high,
It is not at all like thee
Idly to let bright hours go by."
"Oh, son of mine, sore sick am I,
'Tis certain I shall ne'er recover
Unless sweet water thou canst bring
Back from the forest's cooling spring."
So water-cruse Veryanko took,
Likewise a sharp knife in his girdle;
He slung a gun, too, from his shoulder.
Her son, he ever had obeyed,
Delaying not, he'd find the glade.
"My son, my son! why arms hast thou?
No lurking beast may meet thee now,
And long since fled the Turk, I trow."
"Ah, mother mine, as birds have wings,
And like as fishes lack not fins,
So a hero lacks not arms."
Then went Veryanko to the spring;
Met there the man awaiting him,
His warm veins opened with his blade,
And with red blood his cruse full made,
Then homeward sped to his sick mother:
"Of thy son's blood ye twain would sup,
But it is Roshlin's in this cup!"

A VINEYARD SONG

(From CARNIOLA)

AN old man lived
On the grape-clad hills;
On the vintage hills
He lived, 'tis said,
The hills of Carniola.
He loved to hold a full glass in hand,
And loved to hear the mirth of friends,
The merriest in all the land.
Then he would raise the ruby bowl:
"Father in heaven, Lord, behold,
Thy Name I praise with uplifted soul."

When the Judgment came,
On sped all the blest
Unto the Joy of Heaven,
In garments shining bright.
Then God the Father from the throne
These words unto St. Peter said:
"Peter, scan o'er! There's absent one,
Who stands without beside the door,
A man of healthful countenance,
Which yet with grief is overcast."
This man then Peter took and brought,
Severely making accusation:

"Into Gehenna cast him, Lord,
Great fire have devils lit for him,
Long time have they sought to clutch him,
Many tales are told about him,
For every bowl he must atone."

Before the awful throne of God
The little man repentful stood,
When wondrous words to him God spoke:
"Go in, thou, too, to heaven's bliss,
Eternal joy share with the blest."
Him seated, said the Righteous One:
"Gladly hast thou drunk, 'tis true,
The ruby wine of Mother Earth;
Yet 'twas for such I sunned the hills,
And brought the luscious grapes to birth.

Should not he gladly drink My wine,
He who hath an honest heart?
Else were he the thief of Life,
Stealing from Joy the given part."
Thus mildly spake the Lord of all,
And graciously did order Peter
To conduct him with converse kind
Unto rich draughts of festal wine,
In vessels rare of heavenly joy.
With both his hands the old man took
A ruby bowl, uplifting it,
And cried, with greater joy than Earth's:
"To the Lord God eternal praise."

THE GIRL AND THE GRASS

In the green grass a girl fell asleep;
When she awoke the grass was red,
And her ruddy cheeks were green instead.
Before the Kadi the girl sued the grass:
"Give me, O grass, my colour red!"
And to the girl the red grass said:
"Thy colour red, I'll give it thee,
When my colour green thou dost give me."
Then before the Kadi they exchanged colour
And became bosom-sisters for ever and ever.

THE SUN AND THE GIRL

To the great sun a radiant maiden cried:
"Bright sun, thy beauty cannot equal mine!"
Whereon the burning orb complained to God:
"Let me bring low her pride, and scorch her face."
To which request his mighty Maker said:
"The burden that she bears is weight enough;
Her father and her mother, both I've taken;
One simple, smiling youth alone is left to her;
Touch not their joy, let him be fond of her."

A HORSE'S COMPLAINT

A HORSE left his knight on Kossovo,
On a dreadsome place on Kossovo.
Finding his steed, the knight put question:
"O horse of mine, my greatest treasure,
Why hast thou left me here so lonely,
In this dreadsome place on Kossovo?
What have I done thus to displease thee?
Say, horse of mine, why didst thou leave me?
Did press my saddle hard upon thee?
Thy jewelled bridle, was it heavy?
Or have I ridden thee too far?"
To his knight the horse made answer:
"Thy saddle pressed not hard upon me,
Thy jewelled bridle was not heavy,
Nor hast thou ridden me too far.
But this it is that doth displease me:
So oft thou tarriest at the tavern,
While I am tethered at the door.
Three maidens fair are dwelling there,
Whose beauty makes thee all forgetful,
While I am out here cold and fretful;
Then angrily I paw the earth,
And eat the grass down to its root,
And drink the water dry as stone,
While thou dost leave me here alone."

CURSE AND BLESSING

To the river ran the mother,
To her Mary by the water,
Dreaming there, the pretty daughter:
"Have you washed the linen, Mary?"
"Why, mother dear, not yet begun;
A naughty youth did come my way,
And muddy made the silvery water."

"I'll curse him, then; I'll curse him, daughter!
Cold be his heart as ice is cold."
"As cold as the sun o'er the corn-fields, mother!"
"May his face be black before all men!"
"As black as the snow on the mountains, mother!"
"May he be hanged!—Dost hear, my daughter!"
"But hanged upon my neck, dear mother!"
"From grievous wounds he then shall suffer!"
"Let my own teeth, then, cause them, mother!"
"May the wild torrent take him, daughter!"
"And bring him home to me, my mother!"

SHE INTERPRETS HIS DREAM

EARLY rose he at the dawning;
Nightingales had ceased to sing.
Rising early, told his darling:
"Heart of mine, O sweetest treasure!
Dearer to me than mine eyes!
Wondrous is my dream to-night:—
Rolling in the turbid water,
I did see my crimson fez;
All my pearls had fallen from me,
Fallen all on to my knees.
And I could not tell the hour,
Broken was my watch before me,
Broken into pieces four."

She did tremble, knew the omen;
Answered quickly: "O my darling!
Clear, alas! this dream to me.
Rolling in the turbid water
Thou hast seen thy crimson fez?
Thou art callèd unto war.
Fallen were thy pearls from off thee,
Fallen all upon thy knee?—
Falling tears at God's decree.
And thy watch thou sawest broken,—
Sure thy heart and mine are broken,
Broken—this our Destiny."

THE NICEST FLOWER IN THE WORLD

A YELLOW orange by the sea
  Vaunted much his beauty,
This boast the red, round apple heard,
Scolded the orange for his word,
  "See my superiority!"

The apple's boast the meadow heard,
  The meadow rich beflowered:
"Boast not, thou smooth, round apple red,
But see how I am carpeted,
  So green and richly dowered!"

The meadow's boast the maiden heard:
  "Deem'st flowery mead, so great thy worth!
Though sweetly thou art sure bedight,
Yet still I am the sweetest sight,
  That can be found in all the earth."

These vaunts heard all a daring youth:
  "This maid, I see she is in truth,
She is by far the sweetest flower
  That can be found in all the earth.
That orange, I will bring it down,
  That apple-tree, I'll root it up,
That meadow's flowers shall all be mown,
And thou, fair maid, shalt be mine own!"

HIS ANYWAY!

"TELL me, fair maid, wilt thou be mine?"
"Nay, foolish youth, begone!
Nought can come of this;
Nay, I would rather be a tankard
In the little inn down there!"
"And if thou wert a tankard,
Then I should be the wine!"
"Oh, pray think no more of this;
I'd rather be a cup!"
"And if thou wert a cup
I would be the coffee in it—
Or I would drink the coffee up!"
"Prithee, speak no more of this;
I'd rather be a bird
Whose songs were never heard."
"Oh, if thou wert a bird,
I'd build for thee the nest,
Where thou shouldst come and rest!"
"Please, silly youth, have done with this;
Indeed I'd rather be a fish,
Where the nets do splash and swish."
"And if thou wert a fish,
Then I would be the net,
And still should get my wish,
Either here, either there,
I am with thee, soul by soul,
Thou art mine, by God's control."

THE PRETTY TOMB

" WAIT, my girl, I want to talk,
Though my talk will wound thee ! "
" Speak, O Youth ; I'll listen, speak !
Even though thou wound me."
" Well, I am about to die."
" Die ! Where will they bury thee ? "
" I pray to rest upon thy breast."
" Ah ! blind and foolish is thy prayer !
That were unseemly cemet'ry.
My bosom is no graveyard lone,
An apple orchard is my breast
Where fruits do ripen, birds do rest ! "

A DANCE AT VIDIN [1]

ONE day at Vidin they did dance the Kolo [2]:
"Oh, let me, mother, go and see!"
"There is thy brother, go with him!"
"My brother! he can stay at home,
I do not want to go with him."

One day at Vidin they did dance the Kolo:
"Oh! let me, mother, go and see!"
"There is thy father, go with him!"
"Oh, let my father stay at home,
I do not want to go with him."

One day at Vidin they did dance the Kolo:
"Oh! let me, mother, go and see!"
"There is thy darling, go with him!"
"Oh, come, my sweetheart, come with me!
I'll dance the Kolo there with thee!"

[1] Vidin: a town on the Danube.
[2] *Kolo*: the Serbian national dance.

LOVE BEFORE AND AFTER DEATH

GREATLY loved two lovers;
Could any twain love more?
Washed these two from out one bowl,
Each dried on the other's towel,
Smiled on each other in one glass.
For them a whole long summer shone,
And love's secret was not known;
But when the second summer came,
Their parents heard, began to blame,
The countryside was talking too,
So did the mother intervene,
No more together were they seen;
But message by a star he sent:
"Darling, die ere Sabbath break
And I will follow thee at morn."
The girl's heart went with what he said,
Ere Sunday dawn his love was dead,
And Sunday morn he followèd.
They buried them in graves apart,
But still went out each heart to heart,
Hands they clasped all through earth's mould,
And as the years on swift wing sped,
A fir-tree green grew o'er his head,
And over hers a red rose-bush;
Not long, and round the green fir-tree,
These roses twined in ruddy showers—
Like to red silk that ties a bunch of flowers.

TODA AND HER FATE

MANY youths paid court to Toda,
She, the blithesome shepherd girl;
So with mirthful laugh she cried:
"The youth on whom my apple falls,
'Tis henceforth he my heart enthralls."
Then Toda threw her apple red,
Which fell upon a grey-haired head.
Toda had not wished such love,
So sent him off to draw her water.
She sent him thus unto the river,
That no more trouble he might give her!
But safely back the old man came,
Brought the water, smiled and spake:
"O love me, Toda, love me, Toda."
Toda did not want to love him,
So sent him off to cut down branches,
Not caring should they fall upon him;
But safely back the old man came,
Brought the wood, and smiled and spake:
"O love me, Toda, little Toda!"
Toda did not want to love him,
So sent him to the war to fight,
Not caring what might be his plight;
But safely back the old man came,
Back from the war, and spake the same:
"O love me, Toda, Toda, love me!
That which must be, let it be."

BURNING OF TRAVNIK

(From Bosnia)

Whence all yon smoke over Travnik town?
Some outbreak dread or plague is raging,
Or Yanya's glowing eyes have fired it?
No dread outbreak nor plague is raging,
'Tis Yanya's eyes have lit the town,
And burning there are two new shops,
Two new shops, a new inn too,
And the court-house where the Kadi judges!
Why is that court-house tumbling down?
Beautiful Yanya's fired the town.

THE PRICE

How many towns from here to the coast?
Seventy-seven sunlit towns,
And villages green a thousand!
And all of these I'd give for the street
Where I my sweetheart first did meet,
And e'en the street I'd give as the price
To meet him again—aye, but for a trice!

THE VILA [1]

(DALMATIA)

UNDER the clouds there's nought to me
So handsome as a falcon bird.
A falcon I did wish to be,
And my wish by God was heard.
High to the clouds I flew,
And over the clouds too!
Then to a nut-tree I shot down.
Under the tree a vila sleeping!
Or else some being strange to me!
Oh, God Himself, and He alone, can say,
But she was fairer than the fairest summer day.

[1] *Vila:* a fairy.

MODEST MILITSA

LASHES long has sweet Militsa,
And they shade her blushing cheek;
Such lashes long, such peach-like bloom,
But her glance ne'er may I meet!
Though I looked one, two, three years,
Never did I meet her eyes;
So a group of maids I gathered,
And among them was Militsa:
Perchance I now may see her eyes,
While on the green the Kolo[1] flies!
They danced the Kolo on the green;
Skies that were bright were soon o'erclouded,
And 'mid the clouds the lightnings played;
The girls looked up all unafraid;
One only maid scanned not the sky,
But on the green e'er kept her eye;
For this her friends to her did say:
"Come, playmate, come; uplift thy gaze,
Sure foolish thou, or over-wise,
Thus on the ground to keep thine eyes!
Look now with us up to the sky,
Where the zigzag lightnings fly."
But quietly did Militsa say:
"Nor foolish I, nor over-wise,
That lowly thus I hold mine eyes,
Nor yet some wingèd elf am I,
Who shepherds rain-clouds in the sky,
For me, a maid, I trow 'tis meet
To look where I do set my feet!"

[1] *Kola:* the Serbian national dance.

THREE ROSES

(CROATIAN)

RED Sun! too quickly art thou hasting down;
A little while prolong thy stay,
Smile from thy evening gate on me,
Till I've adorned with roses three—
Roses of silk in purest gold—
My darling's garment that I hold:
The first rose, a rose for my own country dear,
The second, a rose for sweet mother,
The third, the rose of my own bridal crown.
O stay, glad Sun! too quickly art thou going
down!

PREFERENCES

THREE maids were talking on a night,
Upon a silvery moonlit night.
They walked and talked of many things,
They asked what each preferred to have.
Two did listen to the eldest:
"A castle white is what I'd like."
Then two did hear the second say:
"'Tis velvet blue with gold I like."
Then two listened to the youngest:
"A sweetheart true I would prefer.
Should the castle all be ruined,
My darling would rebuild it up;
The velvet would with time wear out,
My darling he could buy me more—
A sweetheart true is richer store!"

A BRIDE'S DEVOTION

A BRIDE most fair fed a swan and a lion,
A swan and a lion and a falcon grey.
To her came merchants from far away:
"Sell us, sweet maid, your swan and your lion,
This swan and this lion and falcon grey!"
"Ye men from afar, go away, go away,
My godfather cometh to see me wed,
And this lion I tend till the time be sped;
And for my true friend who best man shall be,
This white swan I keep, and for none but he!
But this falcon grey ye covet so much,
'Tis my true love's own; none shall it touch."

TWO NIGHTINGALES

Two nightingales sang through the night,
The new-ta'en bride, she could not sleep
  For listening to their songs:
"Tell me, my belovèd, tell me,
Why these nightingales so sing?"
"Thou heardest not two nightingales,
But only two young single men,
Bemoaning so their life forlorn.
I sang like that, yes, just the same,
Before I gave to thee my name!"

BETTER SICK

Among these gallants all
I do not find my lover!
Dear God, oh, where is he?
Ill perchance, ne'er to recover?
Or else he doth unfaithful prove?
Rather may he be sore sick
Than have found some other girl;
Be he sick, I'll hie me to him,
And he be closer drawn to me.
But if another's stol'n my lover,
Life's light and joy can I recover?

FIDELITY

A Wish Fulfilled

A youth to God did pray
  About his sweetheart dear,
That he the gem might be
  Which trembled in her ear.

He wished to be the beads
  Reposing on her breast,
That he might hear her say
  How that she loved him best.

The prayer he prayed was heard:
  A pearl beside the shore,
His darling picked him up,
  And on her necklet bore.

He listened and he heard
  How true her loving heart:
She told the other maids
  She ne'er from him would part.

HER DREAM

THE girl awoke at dawn of day,
Aroused by trilling roundelay;
"Nightingale, oh, stop thy singing!
Stop thy singing, pray!
Cease thy songs, and fly away
To Cáttaro, down by the bay.

To Cáttaro now speed thy flight,
To tell the dream I've dreamt this night:
I found me in his garden gay,
Gathering fair roses;
With his eye he followed me,
As I passed from tree to tree.

I brought him then red roses fair,
And tied them in his steed's black hair.
Smiling, then a ring he gave me;
Ah! a ring so rare!
And he kissed me where I stood;
A kiss that made to me all good.

Smiling, yes, a kiss he gave me!
Than golden ring with diamond bright
More precious far in my heart's sight.
Stop singing, bird!
This is my dream; go, tell him so,
Go! wing thy way to Cáttaro."

TROUBLE WITH THE HUSBAND

(From CARINTHIA)

I MARRIED last year,
This year I repent.
Bad husband have I,
With temper like nettle:
My lot I resent.

The frost kills the nettle,
But this husband of mine,
He thinks the frost fine:
By the stove all day long
He does nothing but sit,
And says that the frost
He minds not one bit!

. . . .

In Celovetz[1] 'tis market-day,
'Tis market-day to-morrow;
I will take my husband there,
And will either there him change,
Or else will sell him at the fair.
Not too cheap I'll let him go,
Because he was so hard to get;
Rather than too cheaply sell him,
Back home again I'll take the man,
And love him—howsomuch I can!

[1] The capital of Carinthia; known also as *Klagenfurth*.

THE PEACOCK AND THE NIGHTINGALE

How beautiful it is this evening-time!
The noblemen, they quaff the cool wine,
And to their knee there comes a little stag,
With golden peacock proudly on one shoulder,
While on the other, perching there as neighbour,
Behold a silver-throated nightingale!
Upon whom gazing, saith the peacock golden:
"How now, my silver-throated friend!
If mine it were to trill thy liquid note,
To every noble knight I'd sing a song,
And honour each in turn from my clear throat."
Answered the nightingale in silver voice:
"List, lustrous peacock in thy blue and gold!
If mine it were, that sheeny fan of thine,
Its golden feathers all I would pluck out,
And decorate these nobles round about."

THE FIRST TOAST

Rising at the banquet table,
Now acclaim we our first toast,
To our God's high honour drink we,
Only of His glory think we—
No first place to human boast!
To celebrate the Lord's great glory—
What equal duty to be found?
Say, all ye who sit around,
Save truly to have earned the dinner!

NOTHING CAN BE HIDDEN

In a green meadow they did kiss,
And they thought that no one saw;
But the meadow green had seen them,
And told it to the bleating sheep.
The sheep they whispered to their shepherd,
The shepherd to a passer-by,
While he, in turn, the secret told
To a boatman drifting nigh.
The boatman whispered to his boat,
His boat did tell the water clear;
The water clear did tell the town,
And soon the whole world knew!

Then did she cry, the angry girl:
"Meadow! thou shalt lose thy hue!
Ye sheep, the wolves shall slaughter you,
And villain Turks your shepherd slay!
O passer-by! cripple be thou from this day!
Boatman, thou in thy river shalt be drowned,
And thy craft's wreckage only found!
Thou water clear, dry up in drought!
Thou silly town, come thou to nought!"

THE HODJA [1]

In Mostar was a sheker-meyteph,[2]
  Thirty young ladies were learning there,
Omer-effendia was their hodja,
  And pretty Marusha their kalfa.[3]

One day Marusha opened the Koran:
  "Tell us now, hodja, tell what is written!"
Hodja reads silently, then he speaks loudly:
  "First page—The hodja is going to marry!

Willeth so Allah, so willeth hodja—thus on page two!
And on page three—Whom will he marry, whom will he marry?
Thus on page three—He'll marry the pretty Marusha."

[1] *Hodja*, i.e. Mahommedan priest.
[2] Turkish seminary.
[3] *Kalfa* = governess.

WOES!

Woe to the wolf that eats not flesh,
Woe to the knight who drinks not wine,
Woe to the maid who counteth love
No gift divine.

Woe to legs with a foolish head,
And woe to gilt on an unclean bed.

Woe to satin on humpèd shoulders.

Woe to the gun in a fearsome hand,
Woe to the strong in that village where
But cowards stand.

Woe to the mother-in-law in the house of her son-in-law.

Woe to the wolf whom the ravens feed,
And to the knight who children doth need
Him to defend.

Woe to the cock who strutteth on ice,
Woe to the nightingale singing in the mill;
In such a din, far better to be still!

HARD TO BELIEVE

A MAN ne'er born once told a tale
To seven stout ghosts so hearty and hale;
A ship went sailing 'mid greenwood trees,
While the burning sun her crew did freeze.
A horse danced o'er the billowy sea,
From him a duck with hoofs did flee.
From an empty cup two knights did quaff,
Served by a maid whose head was off.
Two wingless geese flew up in the sky,
As a legless hero ran hard by;
While near him scampered two roasted hares,
Hotly pursued by three dogs in pairs.
Then to the deaf man the dumb man spoke:
"What a monstrous lie! but I hope it's a joke."

LAMENTATIONS[1]

MOTHER AT THE TOMB OF HER SON

ALAS! my son, how fareth it with thee,
In thy new dwelling, new and strange and dark?
Strange thy dwelling without windows!
At daybreak, Vinko, thy sad mother rose,
Her earliest thought was but of thee,
Her first thought, Vinko; Vinko her first call!
Thorns are growing at the house-door,
Cuckoos mourn around the house,
Downcast thy brothers wait for thee,
To talk with thee, to walk with thee—
But now that ne'er can be.
With head bent down and brow o'ercast,
They make their way—for where art thou!
In ashes our hearth fire is hidden,
And when I saw the sun this morning,
I thought: It is the moon,
When thy sisters said to me:
"Dim thine eyes, it is the sun!"
"For me no sun," said I to them,
"Pale in the dust now is my sun,
No light have I above the earth."
Down in thy dwelling, oh my Son,
Say, is it cold, my Sun, my Sun;
If it be cold as is my breast,
It is too cold, too cold to rest.

[1] Loud lamentations, by women rather than men, are an ancient custom among the Serbs. These dirges are again and again extemporized with spontaneous poetic feeling. Girls let down their hair and lament in the orchards and precincts of the house.

MOTHER OVER HER DEAD SON

WHERE art thou flying? Where, oh where?
My falcon?
To what silent land and lone?
Say, hero mine!
Around thy friends and brothers ask me:
How shall I answer them!
"Where goes Perko? Tell us, mother!"
Woe to me, oh woe to me!
If I answered, I might blame thee!
How blame *thee*?
Alway thou askedst me: May I go here—or should I stay?
I knew thy way!
But now thou askedst not; nor may I give thee "yea" or "nay,"—
O blank, blank day!
Better, child, I went to thee, than to stay as mother here,
Having lost the light of day!

MOTHER'S LAMENT FOR HER SON

WHEREFORE do I marvel, wherefore need I wonder ?
Traveller the dearest !
That through this lower world already thou hast sped,
Ray of light the fleetest !
Together we'd a little talk, but we looked for more,
Thou my golden store !
To the realms of heaven thou from earth art gone,
Thou my heaven and earth !
Thou thy flight hast taken, sure, to a land of flowers,
Dearest of my flowers !
Thy journey leadeth up to God, unto the blest in Paradise,
Thou my Paradise !
Thou shalt behold the Judgment Place,
Merciful my son !
Soon shalt reach those halls of rest,
Thou who gav'st me labour !
There shalt find the noble dead,
Thou my sweetest life !
Greet them all, the rich and poor,
Best of all my riches !
Salute the noblemen and princes,
Thou my prince of princes !

A SISTER'S LAMENT

SISTER was I of kingly brothers three,
But now my kings are gone from me,
Woe, woe, woe!

Better kingdoms they are asking,
Better work than this world's tasking,
And God will grant it, where they go,
Better service He'll bestow,
But for me, alas! Oh! woe!

So kingly brothers ne'er were known,
Now my heart breaketh here alone.
This world for me too dark is now,
And I too dark for it, I trow!
Woe, woe, woe!

GREATEST GRIEF FOR A BROTHER

O'ER Neven woods the sun went down,
The sun went down behind the forest,
As came the heroes off the sea.
The young wife counted anxiously,
The wife of George the Hospodar,
Counted the warriors, found them all,
Save her three treasures who were missing.
She could not find her Hospodar,
Nor the best man at their wedding,
And the third treasure was not there;
This treasure was her dearest brother.
For her brave lord she cuts her tresses,
For her best man she wounds her cheeks,
And for her brother puts out both her eyes.
She cuts her hair, it grows again;
She wounds her cheeks, the wounds do heal;
But none can heal those hurt blind eyes,
Nor yet her heart for her lost brother.

THE DEATH CHAMBER OF HER FATHER-IN-LAW

WHY art thou thus attired?
My more than father!
Why art thou thus bedight, so knightly armed?
My fearless knight!
Thou art departing for the city?
My shining city!
In order there to meet the lords and knights,
O my wise lord!
Or go'st thou to a marriage feast?
My pride, my noble guest!
—But why! thine eyes are closed to me!
O closed, O closed to me!
And—can it be!—thy mouth is bound!
This black, black morning!
If thou art gone, and com'st not back—
How empty is the house!
How is it thou couldst leave us so?
To us, O woe, O woe!
Far, far thy journey, and the end not here!
But better is it there!
Mother and father, they will greet thee there,
Among the Blest!
Thy brothers, too, and children in celestial light,—
O blessed, blessed sight!
Thee will they greet: we in their thoughts shall be,
O heavenly harmony!
But thou wilt stay, and ne'er return to us,
O woe, O woe to us!

APPENDIX

We introduce here by way of Appendix two modern poems by the well-known Serbian poet, Yovan Yovanovitch Zmaj, which, although not folk-songs, reflect two characteristic aspects of Yugoslav history—struggle and song.

THE THREE HAIDUKS[1]

Black and stormy is the night,
Pheruz Pasha leaps from sleep;
His fitful taper seems to tremble
As though his dream it reads,
And the pale dread upon his face.
The Pasha speaks unto his lady:
"Tell me, where the dungeon keys?
The cursed bones of three haiduks
There have rotted these three years,
Yet still these haiduks keep not quiet,
In my dreams they threaten me."
"Nay, my lord, do not, I pray,
Down to the dungeon go this night;
To-morrow morning send we Mouya,
To-morrow morning in the light:
He shall hide their bones from sight."

[1] The Haiduks were the Robin Hoods of Serbia; dwelling in the mountains, they avenged the oppressed and the poor, never giving peace to the Turks. "Monk and haiduk kept Serbia alive and liberated Serbia" (Stoyan Novakovitch).

"Ha, ha! ha, ha! wife of mine,
No fear had I when they were living,
When of all they were the horror,
Then why should I affrighted be
When dead dogs they are, all three?
Resolved I am to go and see them
In putrefaction where they lie,
To ask of them why call they me,
Me why seek out, me why molest
At the darkest hour of rest."
The little taper trembles
As fall its fitful rays
Upon his pallid face;
As to the dungeon he goes down
The rusty locks move gratingly—
Into its icy horror down,
Where deadly vapours scorpions choke,
And writhing snakes contract with cold,
Remembering long agonies.
Three skeletons sit upright there,
Of three haiduks the skeletons—
Are they really sitting there,
Or is it but the Pasha's fancy?
Upon a stone like to a table
Before them stand three drinking cups.
The first haiduk to Pheruz spoke:
"Pasha, see this cup of blood!
Once I had a faithful wife,
Then in this darkness I was thrown,
My hapless love was left alone—
No, not alone, she had a dagger;
'Ye wolves, ye wolves, O where are ye?'
Crying thus, came to thy castle,
Out from high wall there cracks a rifle,
Shot through the heart my love lies dead.

Lo, here a goblet of her blood!
Wine most rare and full the cup,
My health now, Pasha! Drink it up!"

The Pasha hears as in a dream;
Willing not so, he lifts his hand,
Willing not so, he draweth near;
He drinks the cup; shrill cry doth hear,
Pheruz Pasha cries out too,
And the skull bones ghastly smile. . . .
"May God forgive!"

Then the second haiduk spake:
"When first I came unto this grave,
My mother made request of thee,
'Pray, let me now buy back thy slave!'
And to her thou didst make reply,
'Three loads of treasure I must have.'
The grey head planned, hard worked her hand,
She toiled and cared, by day, by night,
To eat nor drink no time had she,
Upon thy price she could but think—
Till yesternight with burdens three,
Came she to buy her son from thee.
Thou, Pasha, thou couldst only smile:
'Ha, ha, old wife, what hast thou brought?'
Sure just enough his food to pay!
Thy son a hero have I thought,
And if he bravely biteth stones
Much flesh, be sure, shall clothe his bones.'
Such was thy speech—
My mother breathed away her soul:
Lo, here a goblet of her blood!
Wine most rare and full the cup,
My health now, Pasha! Drink it up!"

The Pasha hears as in a dream;
Willing not so, he lifts his hand,
Willing not so, he draweth near;
He drinks the cup; shrill cry doth hear,
Pheruz Pasha cries out too,
But the bones, they only smile. . . .
"May God forgive!"

Then there spake the third haiduk:
"When first I did descend
Into this darkness drear,
I left a little child
On hillside farmstead near;
The boy a rifle wished to lift;
Heavy the gun, and weak his hand
And the lad began to weep,
Father's memory he would keep,
With the haiduks would he go
And avenge his father's foe.
Hungry and thirsty fretted he,
Fretted, pined away and died,
That here his father putrefied.
Lo, here a goblet of his tears,
Wine most rare, and full the cup,
My health now, Pasha! Drink it up!

The Pasha hears as in a dream;
Willing not so, he lifts his hand,
Willing not so, he draweth near;
He drinks the cup, he utters cry,
He sinks upon the ground to die,
To die amid the haiduks three,
Whose grinning skulls do smile the while:
"May God Almighty pardon thee!"

THE GOUSLAR'S DEATH[1]

UPON the rocky cliffs
The sun fell in the west;
Fell in showers of rose and gold,
Turned to jewels crag and crest.

Then the sky illumined soon
The myriad stars, the silver moon,
But on earth the raya's[2] eye
Was jewelled with his tears.

Wherefore sheds the raya tears?
Whence his heart's affright?
Topal Pasha, him he fears—
Topal's dreams at night:

Feverish the Pasha's brow:
"No God is there, nor Truth, nor Right!"
An evil sprite doth plague him now:
"Mere cattle mankind in my sight!

[1] *Gouslar*, i.e. a Serbian bard, a singer of the national songs, accompanying himself upon a small one-stringed instrument (shaped like a mandolin) called a *gouslé*.

[2] The *raya* represents the subject class depressed practically into serfdom by the Turks.

Many a cursed raya's blood
Have I spilt upon the ground;
Weary sighs—tired heart and hand—
Where'er a raya I have found.

Where'er I tread the creatures quiver,
And raya souls do quit the earth;
E'en my brown horse will drink no water,
Unless it be from blood-red river.

My treasure's stored in seven towers,
And there is more I've never counted;
Lovely girls—know I their number?—
Languish in my harem's bowers.

Treasures and maids! not thence is bliss;
Drear and void is still my breast;
A famous name, a name renowned,
Such be Topal Pasha's quest.

Must Topal ever hear the song
That gives the slave immortal crown?
Why should Pasha, Topal Pasha,
Unsung to his grave go down?

What is woman, what is gold!
Dull are these to Fame,
Topal Pasha longs for Song,
Craves a mighty name.

Knows the raya but to die
Bleeding from my sword?
Will a slave not take my gold,
For me strike his chord?"

Thus possessed, the Pasha raved;
Passion had full sway:
"Hazurala! come, ye Turks,
Make me festal day!

Old Mirko to me ye shall bring—
Why is he not here yet?
Bring to me that gouslar old,
And let me hear him sing.

Let him sing, yes, let him play,
Let him praise his lord;
Yesterday his all four sons
Perished by the sword."

Pensive comes the gouslar blind,
At his breast the gouslé,
And the young Turks cheer and shout,
Shout into the evening wind;

Turkish elders feast and drink,
Topal Pasha can but *think;*
Putting from him festive cup,
Topal Pasha rises up.

Halting is the Pasha's step,
The gouslar blind is sitting there,
Falling now his long grey hair
Down upon his gouslé.

"Ha! thou dog!—no, that I meant not—
Listen, old my sire,
Gouslé hast thou in thy hand,
Therefore power to stir the land.

Power, said I, accursed giaour!
Whence couldst *thou* have power?—
Father! ready with thy gouslé,
Thine be now the hour.

Sing the deeds of Topal Pasha,
Celebrate his fame,
Fill up now his empty cup,
Immortalize his name!

Let me hear of mine own glory,
As it should be sung;
Obey, old man, and back I give thee,
Back thy every son."

"Back! . . . My sons?" . . . the gouslar cried.
"Aye, 'tis truth. Such is my pleasure;
Gold and silver too, dost hear?
And unheard-of treasure."

Pale and silent now the gouslar,
Suffering secret, bitter pain,
Quivering hand puts to the string,
If perchance some sound to bring.

"Sing, hoary sire, now sing to me;
Naught of fame am I to lose,
Knowst thou not what waiteth thee,
If thou shouldst refuse:

All thy happiness and hope
In thy four sons that liveth
Will I mow down with sickle stroke,
Cut them like four lilies."

The gouslar blind, with heart o'erfull,
To sing would do his best;
Yet not one single, painful word
Will leave his heaving breast;

Upon the gouslé fall his tears—
Amid the Turkish mirth;
Thrust away, his gouslé falls . . .
Broken . . . to the earth.

". . . Pervert![1] tyrant! . . .
. . . . Traitor curst!
Mortal foe of thine own race,
Thou mayst do thy worst!

'Break my happiness,' thou sayest?
'Cut my four hopes'—in sooth?
Do it! . . . but my Serbian gouslé
Speaketh naught but truth."

Saying thus much (more, he scorned it!),
Forward fell to earth,
Beside his gouslé dead lay he,
Cold to Turkish mirth.

Outcried the Pasha, and some change
Passèd o'er his face;
Sign of the Cross—to him long strange—
He on his breast doth trace.

[1] Topal Pasha was a renegade Serbian—a proselyte to the Mahommedan faith.

He kneels beside the silvery head,
That he may kiss the gouslé—
Swift a young Turk swings his blade . . .
He lies beside the gouslar—dead.

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