

# KRALYEVITCH MARKO OR THE ROYAL PRINCE MARKO

## THE MARKO LEGENDS

Marko was, as we have already seen, the son of King Voukashin; and his mother was Queen Helen whom the Serbian troubadours called by the pleasing and poetic name Yevrossima (Euphrosyne) in their songs and poems.

According to the popular tradition, the Prince was born in the castle of Skadar (Scutari), and his mother, being the sister of that most glorious and adventurous knight Momchilo, fortunately transmitted much of the heroism, and many of the other virtues, characteristic of her own family, to her son.

But there is also another tradition, equally popular, which maintains that Marko was the child of a veela (fairy-queen) and a smay (dragon). The fact that his father was a dragon is believed by those who accept this tradition, to explain and in every way to account for, Marko's tremendous strength and his astonishing powers of endurance.

Truly Prince Marko possessed a striking and extraordinary attractive personality: he so vividly impressed the minds of the Serbian people, people of all ranks and localities, that he has always been, remains to this day, and promises ever to remain, our most beloved hero. Indeed there is no Serbian to be found, even in the most remote districts, who has not a great love for Kralyevitch Marko, and who cannot tell his story.

This Prince's brave deeds and all his exploits have luckily been immortalized by the national bards who are never weary of describing him in their ballads and legends as a lover of justice, the hater of all oppression, and the avenger of every wrong. He is always represented as the possessor of great physical strength: his principal weapon was his heavy war-club (it weighed one hundred pounds – sixty pounds of steel, thirty pounds of silver, and the remainder was pure gold) and it must be borne in mind that the swords and clubs wielded by the merely human hands of his antagonists can never kill him; they never injure him, for they scarcely ever even touch this hero. Marko is always thought to have had much of the supernatural in him.

Marko, who was often rough and ready in his behavior, and more especially so to the Turks, whose very Sultan, indeed, he mightily terrified with the tales he told of his many bloodthirsty and warlike deeds, was invariably a most dutiful, loving and tender-hearted son to his mother: and there were occasions when he willingly consulted her, and followed the advice she gave him.

Prince Marko was fearless: I was said that "he feared no one but God"; and it was his rule to be courteous to all women. In Serbia, it was the usual custom to drink a great deal of wine, the red wine of which we so often hear, and this custom was one which Marko upheld: but it is always said, and universally believed, that he was never drunk.

The ballads also sing of King Voukashin. Voukashin had been the Councillor of State during the reign of Doushan the Powerful. The capital of the Empire was Prisrend, and Marko was brought up then at the Court, by his father Voukashin. According to the generally accepted belief it was Marko who, a little later on, attended the Emperor as secretary and councilor of State, and was entrusted by Doushan, on the approach of death, with his young son Ourosh.

#### The Bad Faith Of Voukashin

One ballad relates that the Emperor Doushan had bequeathed the crown to Voukashin and stipulated in his will that that monarch should reign for seven years, and at the end of that time he should give up the rule to the Tsarevitch Ourosh. King Voukashin not only prolonged his haughty role to sixteen years, but absolutely refused to yield the scepter even then, and moreover proclaimed himself sovereign Tsar. The ballad further depicts the incessant struggles which were in the end to cause the downfall of the Serbian medieval State. And so tradition, earnestly sympathizing with the just anger felt by the people against the rebels, and their lamentation over the lost tsardom, charges Voukashin with all the blame and responsibility – curses him as a usurper and a traitor, and execrates him for his cunning and inconsistency: whilst on the other hand tradition ever extols and glorifies his son Marko as the faithful defender of Prince Ourosh, as the great avenger of national wrongs, and praises him at all times for his good heart, his generous foresight in politics and private affairs, his humanity, and above all his readiness to perish in the cause of justice.

#### The Horse Sharatz

The story of Marko cannot be told without some account of Sharatz, his much-loved piebald steed, from whom he was never parted.

Sharatz was undoubtedly unique. There are several versions of the story as to how Marko became possessed of him: Some of the bards assert that Sharatz was given to Marko by the same veela who had from the first endowed him with his marvelous strength; but there are other who affirm that Marko once bought a foal suffering from leprosy, and that the Prince tended him himself and completely cured him, taught him to drink wine, and finally made him the fine horse that he became.

And there are others again who say that at one time, in his youth, Marko served a master for three years, and that for his sole reward he asked permission to choose a horse from among those then grazing in the meadow. His master gladly consented, and Marko, according to his custom, tested each horse in turn, by taking it by the tail and whirling it round and round.

At last, when he came to a certain piebald foal he seized it by the tail: but this animal did not stir, and Marko, with all his vast strength, could not make it move one step. Marko chose that foal, and it became his beloved Sharatz. The Serbians of Veles still call a great plain near Demir-Kapi 'Markova Livada' (Marko's meadow). Sharatz

means 'piebald', and it is said that the skin of Marko's horse was more like the hide of an ox in appearance than like the skin of an ordinary horse. The Prince called him by various endearing names such as Sharin or Sharo, and was devoted to him for the hundred and sixty years they were together.

This wonderful beast was the strongest and swiftest horse ever known, and he often overtook the flying veela. He was so well trained that he knew the very moment when to kneel down to save his master from an adversary's lance; he knew just how to rear and strike the adversary's charger with his fore feet. When his spirit was thoroughly roused Sharatz would spring up to the height of three lengths of a lance and to the distance of four lance lengths forward; beneath his hoofs glittering sparks shone forth, and the very earth he trod would crack and stone and fragments fly in all directions; and his nostrils exhaled a quivering blue flame, terrifying to all beholders. He often bit off ears of enemies' horses and crushed and trampled to death numbers of Turkish soldiers. Marko might peacefully doze, and sometimes even go to sleep, when riding through the mountains; and all the time he was safe, for Sharatz would keep careful guard. Therefore the Prince would feed his steed, with bread and wine, from the vessels that he used himself and loved him more than he loved his own brother; and Sharatz shared, as he deserved to share, the glory of many a victory with his master. Marko never rode upon another horse, and together they were described as "a dragon mounted upon a dragon."

There are in existence about thirty-eight poems and perhaps twice as many prose legends containing detailed descriptions of Marko's thrilling exploits, and there is hardly a Serb or a Bulgar anywhere to be found who cannot recite at least a few of them. In the Balkans-Turkish War, 1912-13, a gouslar, when not fighting, would take his gousle and recite to his comrades heroic poems of which the greater number related to Marko. The intense veneration felt by Serbians for this beloved Prince proves an unailing bond between them in their own country and in all parts of the world.

There are, naturally enough, various accounts of the death of Marko. The story that has most appealed to his countrymen and taken a specially firm hold of their poets' imagination is that he never died. It is believed that he withdrew to a cave, near his castle at Prilip, which is still standing, to rest, and that he is there, now, asleep. From time to time he awakes and looks to see if his sword has yet come out of a rock into which he had thrust it to the very hilt. When the sword is out of the rock Marko will know that the time has come for him to appear among the Serbians once more, to re-establish the medieval empire, lost at the battle of Kossovo.

As for Sharatz, he is still feeding, but he has now nearly finished his portion of hay.

## PRINCE MARKO TELLS WHOSE THE EMPIRE SHALL BE

Four tabors met together on the beautiful field of Kossovo near the white church of Samodrezja: One tabor was headed by King Voukashin; the second by Despot Ouglesha; the third by Voivode Goyko, and the fourth by Tsarevitch Ouroush.

The first three of these were disputing over the inheritance of the Empire and were ready to stab one another, so eager were they all to reign. They did not know who had been appointed the Tsar's successor and who was the rightful heir to the throne. King Voukashin announced: "The Empire was left to me!" Voivode Goyko cried out: "Not so! The Empire is mine!" and Despot Ouglesha interposed angrily, "You are both wrong, for know that the Empire is mine."

The youthful Tsarevitch remained silent, for he was not bold enough to proffer a single word in the presence of his haughty elders.

King Voukashin prepared a message and sent it by a faithful servant to the Archdeacon Nedelyko, at Prizrend, summoning him to come at once to the field of Kossovo and state without delay to whom the Empire had been left – for he must surely know, having received the last confession of the illustrious Tsar Doushan the Mighty and been in attendance upon him up to his death. Besides, it was known that the Archdeacon has the archives under his care, and could at least produce the Emperor's will. Despot Ouglesha also sent a missive to the Archdeacon by his swiftest messenger; a third was written by Voivode Goyko, who dispatched it by his special courier, and a fourth was inscribed and sent off to Ourosh.

The messages were all dispatched secretly, but the couriers reached Prizrend and met at the gates of Nedelyko's dwelling. But Nedelyko had gone, as Court Chaplain, to officiate at the morning service in the Cathedral. The men were enraged at the delay, and without even alighting from their horses, they rushed infuriated, into the sacred edifice, raised their whips and brutally struck the good Archdeacon, commanding him: "Behold, O Archdeacon Nedelyko! Hasten now, this very hour, to the plain of Kossovo. Thou must state to whom the Empire belongs, for thou hast received the confession from the illustrious Tsar and administered the last sacrament to him, and it is thou who hast the state records in thy care. Hasten, hasten, lest we, in our fierce impatience, do sever thy head from thy body!"

Archdeacon Nedelyko wept with grief and mortification and thus replied: "Begone, ye servants of the most mighty princes! Begone from the House of God! Suffer first that we end God's service, then will I make known into whose hands the Empire is to fall!"

The couriers then went and awaited the coming of the Archdeacon. Presently the Archdeacon came to them and spoke in this wise: "O my children, messengers from the King himself, and from the Princes! I received the last confession of our glorious Tsar, and gave him the sacrament; but about the Empire and affairs of state he spoke never a

word, for we were concerned only with the sins that he had committed. Ye must go to the city of Prilip, for there is the castle of the Royal Prince Marko. Marko, as ye may remember, learned from me how to read and write; later he was secretary to the Emperor and he was then entrusted with the care of the records, and he will surely know to whom the empire was entrusted. Call Marko to the field of Kossovo to say who is now the Tsar. Marko will tell the truth, for he fears none but God!”

### Marko Is Summoned

The messenger set out at once, and, arriving at Prilip, they smote on the portals of the castle. The knocking was heard by Yevrossima, and she spoke thus to her son: “O Marko, my dearest son! who are they who knock at the gates below? They may be messengers from thy father!”

Marko commanded that the gates should be opened, and when the messengers entered they bowed with profoundest respect, and said: “May God always help thee, O noble Lord Marko!”

The Prince laid his hand upon their heads with kindness and said: “Be welcome, y my dear children! Are the Serbian knights in good health? And is all well with the glorious Tsar and King!”

The couriers again made humble obeisance, saying: “O noble Lord, thou most Royal Prince Marko! All are well, though not, we fear, upon friendly terms together! The King, thy father, and other princes are seriously contending for the Empire upon Kossovo, that vast field which is near the church Samodrezja; they are ready to stab each other at any moment with their blades, for they know not to whom the Empire rightly belongs. Thou are now called upon, O noble Prince, to proclaim the heir to the Imperial crown.”

The bard goes on to narrate how Marko went to Yevrossima and asked her advise, and although it was well known that Marko himself loved the truth, his good mother implored him with the following words: “O Marko, thy mother’s only son! May the food on which thou wert nourished be not cursed! Speak not falsely either to please thy father, or to satisfy the ambitions of thine uncles, but tell, I beg of thee, the truth before God lest thou shouldst lose thy soul. It were better that thou shouldst perish than sin against thy soul!”

Marko took the ancient documents, mounted Sharatz and rode forthwith to the plain of Kossovo. As he approached his father’s tent King Voukashin saw him and exclaimed: “Oh, how fortunate am I! Here is my son Marko; he will say that the Empire was left to me, for of course he knows that it will pass from father to son!”

Marko hear this, but said not one single word, neither would he turn his head towards the King’s tent.

When Despot Ouglesha saw Marko, he spoke in this wise: “Oh, what a lucky thing for me! Here is my nephew Marko; he is certain to say the Empire is mine! Say, O Marko, the Empire is mine! We would reign together, you and I, like brothers!” Marko still kept silent and did not even turn his head in the direction of his uncle’s tent.

As Voivode Goyko perceived his coming, he exclaimed: “Oh, here is a stroke of good fortune for me! Here is my dear nephew Marko, he is sure to say that the Empire was left to me. When Marko was a little child I used to caress him fondly, for he was dear to me as a golden apple, and always most precious. Whenever I rode out on horseback I always used to take Marko with me. O Marko! Dear Marko, thou must say that the Empire is mine! It will be virtually thou who shalt reign as Tsar, and I shall be at thy right hand, at all times ready, as thy counselor!” Marko, still without a word, and completely ignoring Voivode Goyko, went straight on to the tent where Tsarevitch Ourose was, and there he alighted from his Sharatz.

When the young Ourosh saw him, he sprang from his silken couch, and exclaimed: “Hurrah! Behold my godfather Marko! Now is he going to tell us who the true Tsar is!” They embraced each other, inquired after each other’s health, and seated themselves upon the couch from which Ourosh has just risen.

#### Marko Tells The Truth

Some time elapsed and the sun had set, the night passed, morning dawned, and church bells called all to morning prayers, and after the service the King, the Princes and great Lords went out into the churchyard, where they took their places at tables, and ate sweet-meats and drank brandy. Marko at last opened the ancient documents, and said aloud: “O my father, thou King Voukashin! Are thou not content with thy Kingdom? May it be turned into desert if thou are not. Oh! that thou shouldst wish to seize another’s Empire! And thou, my uncle, Despot Ouglesha! Are thou not satisfied within thine own territory? Is it indeed too small for thee that thou must struggle for the Empire that belongs to another? May it also turn into a desert! And thou, my uncle, thou Voivode Goyko! Is thy Dukedom not vast enough for thee? May it likewise become a desert if it is not! Oh that thou too shouldst strive for another’s Tsardom? Do ye not all see and understand? If ye fail to see may God not see ye! It is clearly stated in the records that the Empire was left to Ourosh. From father shall it pass to son. To this youth now belongs the Imperial Crown of his ancestors. It was Ourosh whom our late Tsar, on his dying day, named as his successor!” When King Voukashin heard this, he sprang to his feet, drew out his golden yatagan and would have pierced his son with it. The Prince, pursued by his father, fled for indeed it would have been unseemly for Marko to fight with and perhaps mortally strike his own father. Marko ran around the church Samodreza, his father closely following, till they had run round the building three times, and then, when Voukashin was on the point of getting within reach of his son, all at once a mysterious voice from within the church uttered these words: “Run into the church, O, thou Royal Prince Marko! Seest thou not that otherwise thou shalt perish by thy father’s hand, because thou hast spoken the truth so dear to God?” The doors suddenly opened of themselves and Marko passed inside; then they closed and interposed themselves

between the two men. King Voukashin began to strike violently upon the doors with his short hanging sword until he noticed that there were drops of blood trickling down the beam, whereupon he was seized with remorse and sighed in lowly penance, saying: "Alas! Unfortunate man that I am! O, thou infinite and divine God! Hear me! I have killed my son Marko!" But the mysterious voice from the church answered: "Behold! Voukashin thou most mighty King! Lo, thou has not even wounded thy son Marko, but thou hast injured the angel of the true God!"

At these words the King grew again enraged with Marko and cursed him in these words: "O Marko, my only son, may God kill thee! Mayest thou never be entombed! Mayest thou have no son to come after thee! May thy family end with thee! And, worse than all, may thy soul depart not from thy body before thou hast served as vassal to the Turk!" In these bitter words the King cursed Marko, but the new Tsar, Ourosh, blessed him, saying: "O my beloved godfather Marko! May God ever support thee! May thy word be always respected and accepted by all just men for ever in the divan! May thy bright saber prosper in all battles and combats! May there never be a hero to overpower thee! May it please God that thy name shall at all times be remembered with honor, for so long as the sun and the moon continue to shine!"

#### PRINCE MARKO AND A MOORISH CHIEFTAIN

A great and powerful Moorish chieftain had built for himself a magnificent castle, rising to the height of twenty stories. The place he had chosen for the castle was by the sea, and when it was quite completed he had panes of the most beautiful glass put in for windows; he hung all the rooms and halls with the richest silks and velvets and then soliloquized thus: "O my koula, why have I erected thee? For there is no one but I who is there to tread, with gentle footsteps upon these fine rugs, and behold from, these windows the blue and shining sea. I have no mother, no sister, and I have not yet found a wife. But I will assuredly go at once and seek the Sultan's daughter in marriage. The Sultan must either give me his daughter or meet me in single combat." As soon as the Moor, gazing at his castle, had uttered these words, he wrote a most emphatic letter to the Sultan at Istanbul, the contents of which ran thus: "O Sire, I have built a beautiful castle near the shore of the azure sea, but as yet it has no mistress, for I have no wife. I ask thee, therefore, to bestow upon my they beloved daughter! In truth, I demand this, for if thou dost not give they daughter to me, then prepare thyself at once to meet me face to face with thy sword. To this fight I now challenge thee!"

The letter reached the Sultan and he read it through. Immediately he sought for one who would accept the challenge in his stead, promising untold gold to the knight who would show himself willing to meet the Moor. Many a bold man went forth to fight the Moor, but not one ever returned to Istanbul.

Alas! The Sultan soon found himself in a most embarrassing position for all his best fighters had lost their lives at the hand of the haughty Moor. But even this misfortune was not the worst. The Moor prepared himself in all his splendor, not

omitting his finest saber; then he proceeded to saddle his steed Bedevia, securely fastening the seven belts and put on her a golden curb. On one side of the saddle he fastened his tent, and this he balanced on the other side with his heaviest club. He sprang like lightning on to his charger, and holding before him, defiantly his sharpest lance, he rode straight to Istanbul.

The instant he reached the walls of the fort, he spread his tent, struck his lance well into the earth, bound his Bedevia to the lance and forthwith imposed on the inhabitants a daily tax, consisting of: one sheep, one batch of white loaves, one keg of pure brandy, two barrels of red wine and a beautiful maiden. Each maiden, after being his slave and attending on him for twenty-four hours, he would sell in Talia for large sums of money. This imposition went on for three months, for none could stop it. But even yet there was a greater evil to be met.

### The Entrance Of The Moor

The inhabitants of Istanbul were terrorized one day with the haughty Moor mounted upon his dashing steed and entered the city. He went to the palace and cried loudly: "Lo! Sultan, wilt thou now, once and forever give my thy daughter?: As he received no answer he struck the walls of the palace with his club so violently that the shattered glass poured down from the windows like rain. When the Sultan saw that the Moor might easily destroy the palace and even the whole city in this way, he was greatly alarmed, for he knew that there was no alternative open to him in this horrible predicament but to give up his only daughter. Although overwhelmed with shame, therefore, he promised to do this. Pleased with his success, the Moor asked for fifteen days delay before his marriage took place that he might go back to his castle and make the necessary preparations. When the Sultan's daughter heard of her father's desparate resolution, she shrieked and exclaimed bitterly: "Alas! Behold my sorrow, O mighty Allah! For whom have I been taught to prize my beauty? For a Moor? Can it be true that a Moor shall imprint a kiss upon my visage?"

### The Sultan's Dream

That night the Sultana had a strange dream, in which the figure of a man appeared before her, saying: "There is within the Empire of Serbia a vast plain Kossovo; in that plain there is a city Prilip; and in that city dwells a Royal Prince Marko who is known among all men as a truly great hero."

And the man went on to advise the Sultana to send, without delay, a message to Prince Marko and beg him to become her son-in-God, and at the same time to offer him immense fortune, for he was without doubt the only one living likely to vanquish the terrible Moor and save her daughter from a shameful fate. The next morning she sped to the Sultan's apartments and told him of her dream. The Sultan immediately wrote a firman and sent it to Prince Marko at Prilip, beseeching him to journey with all speed to Istanbul and accept the challenge of the Moor, and if he should succeed in saving the Princess, the Sultan would give him three tovars of pure gold ducats.

When Marko read the firman, he said to the Sultan's young courier, a native of Tartary: "In the name of God go back, thou Sultan's messenger, and greet thy master – my father-in-God – tell him that I dare not face the Moor. Do we not, all of us, know that he is invincible? If he should cleave my head asunder, of what avail would three tovars or three thousand tovars of gold be to me?"

The young Tartar brought back Marko's answer which caused the Sultana so much grief that she determined to send a letter to him herself, once more beseeching him to accept the challenge and this time increasing the reward to five tovars of pure gold. But Marko, though generally so chivalrous and courteous to all women, remained inexorable, replying that he would not meet the Moor in combat even if he were to be presented with all the treasure the Sultan possessed, for he did not dare.

### The Princess Appeals To Marko

When the broken-hearted bride heard that this answer had come from Marko she sprang to her feet, took a pen and some paper, struck her rose cheek with the pen and with her own blood traced the following: "Hail, my dear brother-in-God! O, thou Royal Prince Marko! Be a true brother to me! May God and Saint John be out witnesses! I implore thee, do not suffer me to become the wife of the Moor! I promise thee seven tovars of pure gold, seven bostchaluks, which have been neither woven nor spun, but are embroidered with pure gold. Moreover, I shall give thee a golden plate decorated with a golden snake, whose raised head is holding in its mouth a priceless gem, from which is shed a light of such brilliance, that by it alone you can see at the darkest hour of midnight as well as you can at noon. In addition to these, I shall present thee with a finely tempered saber; this saber has three hilts, all of pure gold, and in each of them is set a precious stone. The saber alone is worth three cities. I shall affix to this weapon the Sultan's seal so that the Grand Vizir may never put thee to death without first receiving his Majesty's command."

When he read this missive, Marko reflected thus: "Alas! O my dear sister-in-God! It would be but to my great misfortune if I came to serve thee, and to my still greater misfortune if I stayed away. For, although I fear neither the Sultan nor the Sultana, I do in all truth fear God and Saint John, by whom thou hast adjured me! Therefore I now resolve to come and, if necessary, to face certain death!"

### Marko Prepares To Succor The Princess

Having sent away the Princess' messenger without telling him what he had resolved to do, Marko entered his castle and put on his cloak and a cap, made of wolves' skins; next he girded on his saber, selected his most piercing lance, and went to the stables. For greater safety he fastened the seven belts under the saddle of Sharatz with his own hands; he attached a leathern bottle filled with red wine on one side of his saddle and his weightiest war club on the other. Now he was ready and threw himself upon Sharatz and rode off to Istanbul.

Upon reaching his destination he did not go to pay his respects either to the Sultan or to the Grand Vizir, but quietly took up his abode in a new inn. That same evening, soon after sunset, he led his horse to a lake nearby to be refreshed, but to his master's surprise Sharatz would not even taste the water, but kept turning his head first to the right, then to the left, till Marko noticed the approach of a Turkish maiden covered with a long gold-embroidered veil. When she reached the edge of the water she bowed profoundly toward the lake and said aloud: "God bless thee, O beauteous green lake! God bless thee, for thou art to be my home for ever more! Within thy bosom am I henceforth to dwell; I am now to die, O beauteous lake; rather would I choose such a fate than become the bride of the cruel Moor!"

#### Marko Greets The Princess

Marko went nearer to the maiden and spoke thus: "O, thou unhappy Turkish maiden! What is thy trouble? What is it that has made thee wish to drown thyself?"

She answered: "Leave me in peace, thou ugly dervish, why dost thou ask me, when there is naught that thou canst do to help me?"

Then the maiden related the story of her coming marriage with the Moorish chieftain, of the messages sent to Marko, and finally she bitterly cursed that Prince for the hardness of his heart.

Thereupon Marko said: "O, curse me not, dear sister-in-God! Marko is there and is now speaking to thee himself!"

Hearing these words the maiden turned toward the famous knight, embraced him and earnestly pleaded: "For God's sake, O my brother Marko! Suffer not the Moor to wed me!"

Marko was greatly affected and declared: "O dear sister-in-God! I swear that so long as my head remains upon my shoulders, I shall never let the Moor have thee! Do not tell others that thou hast seen me here, but request the Sultan and thy mother to have supper prepared and sent to the inn for me, and above other things, beg them to send me plenty of wine. Meanwhile I shall await the Moor's coming at the inn. When the Moor arrives at the Palace, thy parents should welcome him graciously, and they should go so far as to yield thee to him in order to avoid a quarrel. And I know exactly the spot where I shall be able to rescue thee, if it may so please the true God, and if my customary good luck and my strength do not desert me."

When the Sultan and the Sultana knew that Marko had come to their aid, they were much comforted and immediately ordered a sumptuous repast to be sent to him, especially good red wine in abundance.

Now all the shops in Istanbul were closed, and there was silence everywhere as Marko sat drinking the delicious wine in peace. The landlord of the inn came presently to close his doors and windows and, questioned by Marko as to why the citizens were all shutting up their dwellings so early that day, he answered: "By my faith, you are indeed a stranger here ! The Moorish chieftain has asked for our Sultan's daughter in marriage, and as to our shame, she is to be yielded to him, he is coming to the Palace to fetch here this day. Therefore, owing to our terror of the Moor, we are forced to close our shops."

But Marko did not allow the man to close the door of the inn, for he wished to see the Moor and his gorgeous train pass by.

### The Moor In Istanbul

At that very moment, as they were speaking, Marko could hear from the city the clangor caused by the Moorish chieftain and his black followers, numbering at least five hundred, and all in glittering armor. The Moor had roused his Bedevia, and she trotted in such a lively manner that the stones, which she threw up with her hoofs, whizzed through the air in all directions, and broke windows and doors in all the shops she passed! When the cavalcade came up to the inn, the Moor thought: "Allah! I am struck with wonder and astonishment! The windows and doors of all the shops and houses throughout the entire city of Istanbul are closed from the great fear the people have of me, except I see, the doors of this inn. There must either be nobody within, or if there is anybody inside, he is assuredly a great fool; or perhaps he is a stranger and has not yet been told how terrible I am." The Moor and his retinue passed that night in tents before the Palace.

Next morning the Sultan himself presented his daughter to the Moorish chieftain, together with all the wedding gifts, which were known to weight twelve tovars. As the wedding procession passed the inn where Marko waited, the Moor again notices the open door, but this time he urged Bedevia right up to it to see who might be there.

### Sharatz And Bedevia

Marko was seated at his ease in the most comfortable room the inn could boast, leisurely drinking his favorite red wine; he was not drinking from an ordinary goblet, but from a bowl which held twelve liters; and each time he filled the bowl he would drink only one half of its contents, giving, according to his habit, the other half to his Sharatz. The Moor was on the point of attacking Marko, when Sharatz barred his way and kicked viciously at Bedevia. The Moor, meeting such unexpected resistance, promptly turned to rejoin the procession. Then Marko rose to his feet, and turning his cloak and cap inside out, so that to the first glance of those who saw him he presented the terrifying appearance of a wolf, inspected his weapons and Sharatz's belts carefully, and dashed on his charger after the procession. he felled horsemen right and left, till he reached the dever and the second witness, and killed them both. The Moorish chieftain was immediately told of the stranger who had forced his way into the midst of the procession, and of those whom he had killed, also that he did not look like other knights, being clad in wolves' skins.

## Marko And The Moor

The Moor astride his Bedevia wheeled round and addressed Marko thus: "Ill fortune is indeed overtaking thee today, O stranger! Thou must have been driven here by Satan to disturb my guests and even kill my dever and second witness; thou must be either a fool, knowing nothing of today's events, or thou must be extremely fierce and hast gone mad, but maybe thou are merely tired of life? By my faith, I shall draw in the reins of my Bedevia, and shall spring over thy body seven times; then shall I strike off thy head!" Thereupon Marko answered: "Cease these lies, O Moor! If God, and my usual luck, do but attend me now, thou shalt not even spring near to me; still less can I imagine thee carrying out thy intention of springing over my body!" But, behold! The Moor drew in his Bedevia, spurred her violently forward and indeed he would have sprung over Marko, had not Sharatz been the well-trained fighter that he was, and in a trice he reared so as to receive the adversary against his forefeet and swiftly bit off Bedevia's right ear, from which blood gushed forth profusely and streamed down over her neck and chest. In this way Marko and the Moor struggled for four hours. Neither would give way, and when finally the Moor saw that Marko was overpowering him, he wheeled his steed Bedevia round and fled along the main street of Istanbul, Marko after him. But the Moor's Bedevia was swift as a veela of the forest, and would certainly have escaped from Sharatz if Marko had not suddenly recollected his club, and flung it after his adversary, striking him between his shoulders. The Moor fell from his horse and the Prince severed his head from his body. Next he captured Bedevia, returned to the street where he had left the bride, and found to his astonishment, that she with her twelve tovars of presents, was alone, awaiting him, for all the wedding guests and the retinue of the Moorish chieftain had fled at full gallop. Marko escorted the Princess back to the Sultan, and cast the head of the Moorish chieftain at this feet.

The hero now took his leave and started at once on his journey back to Prilip, and the following morning he received the seven tovars of gold which had been promised to him, the many precious gifts which the Princess had described, and last of all a message thanking him for the marvelous deeds he had done, and telling him that the vast stores of gold belonging to his father-in-God, the Sultan, would forever be at his disposal.

## PRINCE MARKO ABOLISHES THE WEDDING TAX

Early one morning the Royal Prince Marko rode across the plain of Kossovo. When he reached the river a maiden from Kossovo met him, and Marko greeted her in the usual Serbian custom: "May God aid thee, O maiden of Kossovo!"

The maiden bowed ver profoundly, and answered: "Hail! thou unknown hero!"

Marko, after having look for a while at her, said: "Dear sister, thou maiden of Kossovo, thou art beauteous, though thou mightest well be a little younger! Thou art tall, strong and graceful; thy cheeks look healthful and thou hast a pleasing and dignified

appearance. But, alas! dear sister, thy hair is gray and becomes thee not. Who caused thy sorrow? Tell me, is it thyself, thy mother or thy aged father?"

The maiden shed many bitter tears, and amidst her sobs answered Marko thus: "O dear brother, thou unknown knight! I am not the cause of mine own misfortune, and it is neither my mother nor yet my father who has brought great trouble upon me; but I have lost all happiness through evil-doing of a Moor who dwells beyond the sea. He has taken possession of the whole field of Kossovo and has imposed, among other extortions, a terrible tax of thirty ducats to be paid by all brides, and thirty-four ducats by all bridegrooms. My brothers are poor and have not the money necessary to pay my tax, therefore I am unable to wed my sweetheart and have thus lost all happiness. Merciful God, should I not go and take my life?"

Thereupon Prince Marko said: "Dear sister, thou maiden of Kossovo! Do not trifle with thy life; abandon every such idea, else thou shalt bring sin upon thy soul! Tell me, where is the castle where the Moorish Lord may be found? I think I have something to say to him!"

To this the maiden answered: "O my brother, thou unknown knight! Why dost thou inquire about his castle? How I wish it could be razed to the ground! Thou hast, perhaps found a maiden according to thy heart and thou goest to now to pay the wedding tax, or are thou the only son of thy dear mother? I fear for thee, O brother, for thou mayest perish there, and what then would thy sorrowful and lonely mother do?"

Marko plunged his hand into his pocket, took out a purse and handed it to the maiden saying: "O sister! take these thirty ducats, go home and await in peace for what may befall thee; only kindly point out to me the castle of the Moor, for I am going to pay him thy wedding tax!"

Thereupon the maiden, glowing with unexpected happiness spoke thus: "It is not a castle, but tents (and may they be cursed!). Seest thou not upon the plain where flutters that silken flag? There is the Moor's own pavilion; around it grows a pleasant garden which he has dared to decorate with the heads of seventy-seven Christian heroes, and he has forty servants, who are day and night on guard nearby."

### Marko Visits The Moor

Upon hearing these words Marko took leave of the maiden and rose toward the tents. He urged his steed so violently that under his hoofs living fire shone, and from his nostrils appeared a bright blue flame. Mad with anger Marko rode fiercely across the camp and with tears streaming from his eyes, which were fixed upon the plain of Kossovo, he exclaimed: "Alas, O plain of Kossovo! Oh! to think that thou shouldst have remained to set this day! And after the reign of our great Emperor, that thou shouldst be here to witness the tyranny of a Moor! Can I endure such shame and sorrow: Oh! that the Moors should be allowed to ravage thee! Now shall I either avenge thee or perish!"

The sentinels observed Marko's arrival and went to inform their Lord: "O Master, thou Moor! A strange and fierce hero, riding a piebald steed, is approaching and it is plain he intends to attack us."

But the Moor answered indifferently: "O my children, ye forty true servants of mine! That here will not attack us. He is undoubtedly bringing his wedding tax and, because he regrets the amount of money he has to give up, he is impatiently urging on his charger. You had better go forth and welcome him; take his steed and his weapons from him and show him to my tent. I do not care for his treasure, but I am quite willing to cleave to his head and seize his courser, which would suit me well!"

The servants went forth to obey, but when they saw Marko near, they were so terrified that they did not dare face him, but fled to hide themselves behind their chieftain, concealing their yataghans under their cloaks at the sight of Marko.

As the fierce Prince came up, he alighted in front of the opening of the tent and spoke aside to his trusty courser: "Walk about alone, my Sharo," said he, "for I am going into this tent to see the Moor; go not too far from this spot, as should evil happen I may have need of thee!" Then Marko entered the pavilion.

The Moorish chieftain sat enjoying cool wine which was poured out for him by a Christian woman and a maiden. The princely Marko saluted the Moor: "May God help thee, my Lord!" The Moorish chieftain answered: "Hail, thou unknown knight! Be seated that we may drink wine together ere thou dost tell me why thou has come hither!"

Prince Marko answered: "I have no time to drink with thee, but I have come with the intention of seeing thee. I have found a maiden after my own heart, my guests and their horses await me a little way down the road, while I came to pay thee my wedding tax. I shall at once give thee the gold so that nothing may hinder my happiness. Tell me now, what must I pay?"

The Moor answered in a very friendly manner: "Well, thou oughtest to have known that long ago; it was thirty ducats for brides and thirty-four for bridegrooms; but as thou appearest to be a distinguished knight, it would not hurt either of us if thou gavest me a round hundred ducats!"

Prince Marko took out of his pocket three ducats and laid them before the haughty Moor, saying: "Believe me I have no more money. I should be grateful if thou wouldest wait till I reach my bride's house, for there we shall certainly receive many right presents. I shall give thee all the presents and will retain the bride only for myself!"

### Marko Pays For All

Thereupon the mighty Moor shouted out, bitterly enraged: "I allow no credit, thou wretch! Thou are bold enough to laugh at me!" Then he sprang to his feet, raised his club and struck Marko's shoulders three or four times.

Marko smiling, said: “Heroic Moor, dost thou strike in earnest or dost thou merely strike in jest?”

The Moor, continuing the assault hissed: “I beat thee in earnest!”

Marko smiled again and remarked: “Oh, then I pity thee! Since thou art striking with serious intent, know then that I too have a club. Now I shall smite thee as many times as thou has struck me, no more than that! Let us make it a fair fight!” With this, Marko raised his mace and smote the Moor with such force that his head fell from his shoulders!

At this Marko burst into laughter: “Merciful God, mayest thou be thanked! How quickly the Moorish hero’s head was cleft asunder! It now lies just as if it had never been upon his shoulders!”

He now unsheathes his sword, and caught the Moor’s bodyguard, cleaving also their heads one after the other, except four of their number, whom he left to tell the tale to all who wished to hear the truth. Then he took down the heads of the Christian heroes and carefully buried them, that wolves and vultures might not devour them. He next instructed the four remaining servants to run across the field of Kossovo, north, east, south and west, and to proclaim to all that maids and youths were henceforth free to marry without paying the hated tax, for had not the Royal Prince Marko come and paid once for all? When the oppressed Christians learned the news, they all, young and old, joined in the joyful cry: “May God grant Royal Prince Marko long Life! For Marko has freed our land of a monster! We pray to God that his soul may be purified of all sin.”

## PRINCE MARKO AND BOGDAN THE BULLY

Early one morning three Serbian knights rode out from Kossovo; one was Prince Marko of Prilip; the second was Relya of Bazar; and the third was Milosh of Potzerye. They were bound for the seashore, and their way lay through the vineyards of Bogdan the Bully. Relya of Bazar was a joyous young knight, and he encouraged his steed to prance gaily through the vineyard, whereby he broke some tall vines loaded with sweet grapes.

Marko admonished his friend thus: “Thou hadst better leave these vineyards alone, O my Relya! If thou only knewest whose they are thou wouldst keep them under careful control, for they belong to Bogdan the Bully. Once I myself was riding through these very vineyards, and as I was young then, I also made my Sharatz prance along, as thou art doing. But, alas! I was seen by Bogdan riding on his slender mare Bedevia. I knew that I was at fault, and as the true God does not support guilty men, I dare not face him, but fled up the rocky coast. He pursued me, and if I had not had my trusty Sharatz he would indeed have caught me. But thanks to Sharatz I at last got farther and farther from him. When Bogdan saw that at the rate I was fleeing he could never reach me, he swiftly threw his club after me and just touched my back with its handle, so

that I fell forward over on the ears of my Sharatz and regained my seat only by a great effort. However, I did escape him. This happened some seven years ago. Since then I have not come this way until today.”

As Marko said this, the three knights noticed in the distance a cloud of dust, in the midst of which they recognized Bogdan with twelve attendants on horseback. Marko exclaimed: “Hark ye, my two brothers-in-God! Here he is! And he will surely kill all three of us if we do not make our escape.:

To this Milosh of Potzerye answered: “O my brother-in-God, thou Royal Prince Marko! The whole people believe that there are no greater heroes living than we three Serbian knights. It would be far better for us all to perish than shamefully to flee!”

When Marko heard this, he said: “Listen to me, my brothers-in-God! Since that is so, let us divide the enemy. Will ye face Bogdan alone or his twelve knights?”

Milosh and Relya chose to fight Bogdan alone, leaving Marko to meet the twelve followers. This division was quite agreeable to Marko, and it was hardly arranged than Bogdan came up at the head of his troop. He was immediately engaged by Milosh and Relya, while Marko turned his attention to the twelve attendants. Swinging his heavy mace he urged Sharatz against his foes, and in a very short time all were hurled to the ground. Marko then alighted from his horse, bound their hands behind them and drove them through the vineyards.

He had gone but a little distance when he saw Bogdan driving toward him, his two friends, their arms bound in the same manner as those of Bogdan’s followers. At this Marko was seized with fear and looked around for a means of escape. The next moment he remembered that the three brothers-in-God had sworn faithfulness one to another, and that they were pledged at all times to one another. So tightening Sharatz’s reins he drew his helmet over his forehead, furiously unsheathed his trusty saber, and cast one fierce, dark glance at Bogdan.

### The Bully Fears To Meet Marko

When the Bully saw the terrific fury and determination in Marko’s eyes, his legs shook beneath him, and he turned his mare away, not daring to meet Marko face to face. He could not, however, hope to escape the vengeance of the Prince, and so after a short silence he called out: “Come, O Marko, let us be reconciled. Wilt thou release my twelve attendants? If thou are willing to do that I shall in turn set free thy brothers-in-God.”

Marko agreed to this, and alighting from Sharatz, he unhooked from his saddle a skin of wine, and they all sat down to refresh themselves with the cool wine and to partake of freshly gathered grapes. When they had rested, the three friends mounted their horses and prepared to depart. As they were about to rise off Marko thus addressed Bogdan: “Mayest thou prosper with God’s help, O Bogdan! And may we meet again some day in good health and once more drink together!?”

To this Bogdan replied: "Farewell! And may God ever help thee, O thou Royal Prince Marko! But may my eyes never again behold thee! Seeing how thou hast terrified me this day, I do not think that I shall wish ever to meet thee again!"

## PRINCE MARKO AND GENERAL VOUTCHA

Hark! Is it thunder or is it an earthquake? Neither, but guns are roaring from Fort Varadin. General Voutcha is feasting in triumph, for he has captured three Serbian heroes; the first is Milosh of Potzerye, the second is Milan of Toplitz, and the third is Ivan Kosantchitch. The General has thrown them into the deepest dungeons of his castle, noisome holes where stagnant water lies knee deep and the bones of warriors lie piled as high as the shoulders of a hero.

Milosh of Potzerye is of noble lineage, unaccustomed to privation and suffering, and he bitterly laments and deplores his fate, as he peers anxiously through the grating of the massive door into the dark passage by which alone succor might come. And indeed, after three days he saw a messenger, to whom he called: "O my brother-in-God! Bring me that whereon I may inscribe a missive!"

The man was pleased to be called a brother-in-God of such a famous hero and swiftly brought a roll to Milosh, who inscribed on it the following words: "to the Royal Prince Marko of Prilip: O brother-in-God, thou princely Marko! Either thou dost not want to hear more of me or thou hast ceased to care for me! Fate has been hard, and I have fallen, O brother, into the hands of a foe. The Magyar Voutcha has captured me and my two brothers-in-arms. We have been immured in this vile dungeon for three whole days, and it is impossible that we should remain for another three days and live. Therefore, if thou wouldst see us again, rescue us, O brother, either by heroic deeds or by ransom!" Milosh scratched his cheek and sealed the missive with his blood; he then handed it to the man, together with twelve ducats, and implored him to hasten with it to Prilip. the messenger rode with all speed, arriving at the city of Prilip on a Sunday morning. Prince Marko was coming out of church when the courier dashed up to him with the missive. As the Prince read of the terrible straits in which his friends found themselves tears ran down his cheeks, and he swore that he would save his noble brothers-in-God.

The bard here described Marko's preparations in much the same manner as in the ballad, "Prince Marko and the Moorish Chieftain." Next he tells of the journey from Prilip to Varadin, but not without exaggerating as a matter of course, the wonderful alertness of Sharatz, who on this occasion, swam across the Danube.

### The Arrival Of Marko

Arrived on the plain before the castle of Varadin, Marko spread his tent, unhooked his skin of wine, the contents of which he drank from a bowl 'containing

twelve okas (about forty-eight pints), never forgetting to have half the quantity of wine each time he filled the bowl for his beloved Sharatz. This action was observed by a fair Magyar lady, the wife of General Voutcha's son Velimir, and being alarmed at seeing such a strange hero, she was suddenly seized with a fever ('which will torture her for three years') and hastened to tell the General what she had seen, and described to him every detail of Marko's attire.

But General Voutcha, feigning indifference, comforted his beloved daughter-in-law, promising that he would capture him as easily as he had captured the three knights already lying in his dungeons. Voutcha called his son, whom he ordered to take three hundred horsemen and seize the haughty stranger immediately.

Marko sitting and enjoying his wine, did not see the approach of Velimir, but the faithful Sharatz began striking the earth with his right forefoot, thus warning his unobservant master. Marko understood, turned his head, and saw that a whole squadron was surrounding him; so he drank one more bowl of wine, threw the vessel on the grass, sprang on his horse and fiercely attacked the army, 'as a falcon attacks the timid pigeons.' One portion he cut to pieces, the second he ran down with his Sharatz, and the third he drowned in the Danube.

But Velimir nearly escaped him, thanks to his own speedy charger. When Marko saw that Sharatz, tired out, could not possibly come up with Velimir's horse, he remembered his mace, which he now hurled so skillfully that the heavy handle only touched the youth with sufficient force to fling him to the earth. Marko was by his side immediately and he had Velimir securely bound, whereupon he threw him down onto the soft, green grass and went on drinking more of his wine.

Velimir's wife had witnessed the whole of the proceedings, and she now ran swiftly to the General, who was furious at the intelligence and ordered all the siege guns to be fired. Then he collected three thousand warriors and mounting his mare he led this host against Marko.

The Magyars completely surrounded the hero, but Marko saw nothing of it as he went on sipping his wine. Sharatz, however, was watchful and came to the side of his master, who, realizing his critical position, sprang to the saddle and more furious than before, rushed fiercely at the Magyars, with his saber in his right hand, his lance in his left, and Sharatz's reins held firmly in his teeth. Those whom he struck with his saber, he cut in two; those he touched with his lance, were thrown over his head.

#### Marko Captures General Voutcha

After three or four encounters Marko had killed so many Magyars that those who were left, filled with horror, fled in disorder. Marko next captured General Voutcha in the same manner as he had his son, and after tying his hands, bound him to his Sharatz's saddle and carried him off to where Velimir lay groaning. Making the two of them fast to the General's mare, he proceeded to Prilip and cast them prisoners into a dungeon.

A few days later he received a letter from Voutcha's wife, beseeching him not to destroy Velimir and his father, and offering him cast sums of gold as ransom. And Marko sent the following answer: "Behold! thou faithful consort of General Voutcha! If thou desireth that I should release my prisoners, thou had but to release my old friends Milan of Toplitza and Ivan Kostantchitch and give to each three tovars of gold to compensate for the time he has wasted in prison; and thou must also give to me a like sum, for I have had to overwork my good Sharatz. And there is still my friend Milosh of Potzerye within your castle, but I authorize him to settle his own affairs with you in person, for I agree to whatsoever he may arrange."

The wife of the General lost no time in sending the required quantity of gold. Then she took the keys of the dungeons, and released the heroes; sent for a number of barbers to shave their beards, and to attend to their hair and nails. She next ordered a large quantity of the finest wines and most costly dishes to be served to the noble Serbians, and after the feast, she narrated to them Marko's wonderful deeds, beseeching Milosh of Potzerye to use all his influence and persuade the princely Marko to have mercy on her husband and her son. Thereupon Milosh promised that her wish should be gratified, and that she had no need to fear. Only he requested her to give him: first, the best horse from General Voutcha's stables, the one that Voutcha rode once a year to go in state to the church at Tekiye; secondly, the gilded coach, harnessed with twelve Arabian coursers used by General Voutcha when travelling to Vienna on his visits to the Emperor, for in that carriage Milosh wished to drive home the aged hero, Milan of Toplitza. And finally, he asked that his friend Toplitza might be allowed to wear the fine attire which the General wore on Easter day. To all this Voutcha's wife agreed and, moreover, she gave each of the friends one thousand ducats in order that they might not be short of wine on their journey to Prilip.

Marko greeted the knights in a warm brotherly manner, and then released General Voutcha and his son Velimir, ordering a powerful convoy to escort them to Varadin. When the noble Serbian Voivodes had enjoyed Marko's hospitality for several days (consuming during that time a formidable quantity of red wine) they embraced and kissed each other on the cheek; the friends, in addition, kissing Marko's uncovered hand. Then each proceeded in peace to his own domains.

### PRINCE MARKO'S WEDDING PROCESSION

One evening as Prince Marko sat at meat with his aged mother, she requested him to seek a maiden of his heart, that she might enjoy the companionship and support of a daughter-in-law. Thereupon Marko answered: "May God be witness, O mother dear! I have journeyed through nine kingdoms and through the whole Turkish empire, and whenever I found the maiden I wished to make my bride, I never found that thou wert of the same mind with me. Sometimes it was that thou didst not feel friendly toward her family; and when I chanced to find a family to thy liking there was never the maiden thou didst desire for me! Howbeit, when I was wandering through Bulgaria I once reined my

Sharatz near a well, and lo! there I saw a maiden so fair and gentle, that all at once it seemed to me as if the grass near where we stood were turning round us again and again. Later I learned that this maiden was the daughter of King Shishman of Bulgaria; assuredly this would be the very maiden for me and a family which would please thee! If thou approvest, therefore, I will at once go and ask for her in marriage.”

Marko's mother, delighted with this choice of her son, hastened to prepare the usual presents that very night, for she feared her son might change his mind before the morrow. Next morning, however, Marko ordered Sharatz to be saddled, and slinging the necessary skin of wine on one side of the saddle and his war club on the other, he took leave of his mother and rode straight to the castle of King Shishman.

The Bulgarian sovereign saw Marko while he was still a long way off, and walked forth to greet him. When he was quite close, Marko alighted from Sharatz, stretched out his arms and the two embraced, each inquiring after the state of the other's health. The King then led Marko into the castle while Sharatz was taken by the grooms to the royal stables.

A little later, in the course of the gorgeous banquet which had been immediately arranged in honor of the princely guest, Marko sprang to his feet, bowed deeply before the King and asked his daughter's hand in marriage. The King was so pleased to have such a noble and valiant son-in-law that he consented without hesitation. Marko expended three tovars of gold on the ring to be worn by his future bride, for her wedding robe and other presents. Next he asked if he might return to Prilip to gather his wedding guests and friends, and as he was on the point of leaving the palace, the Queen specially advised the Prince not to select as the bride's leader one whom he could not trust implicitly, but rather to chose his own brother or at least a cousin, for, said she, a stranger might possibly prove a rival, so charming and beautiful was her daughter.

When Marko come near to Prilip, his mother walked forth to greet him, and after embracing him warmly on both cheeks and giving him her fair hands to kiss, she inquired if he had had a prosperous journey and had become betrothed to the Princess. Marko narrated all that had happened, and did not forget to repeat the Queen's words at parting, complaining of his great misfortune in that his brothers were dead, neither had he a cousin. His mother, filled with joy, advised Marko not to lament because of that, but to send at once a message to the Doge of Venice, inviting him to come with a company of five hundred and to act as kum; also to sent to Steyepan Zemlyitch, asking him to join the wedding party with five hundred followers and to be the bride's leader.

Marko thought the counsel good and dispatched couriers forthwith, as his mother advised. The Doge soon appeared with his five hundred horsemen and Steyepan Zemlyitch likewise. Marko welcomed them cordially and hospitably, and there was no lack of good red wine.

The company now proceeded to the court of the Bulgarian King, who received them most heartily and feasted them for three days. On the fourth day the wedding party

prepared to return for it was evident that if the guests were to remain for another three days the King would have no wine left. Shishman presented all with royal gifts; to some he gave silks, to others costly shirts, to others again golden dishes and plates; to the bride's leader was presented a special shirt embroidered in gold.

When the bride was mounted, her royal father presented her to the bride's leader with these words: "Here are now, in thy keeping, the bride and her horse till thou arrivest at Marko's castle; once there thou shalt give Marko the bride, but her courser thou mayest retain for thyself!"

### The Wedding Procession

The procession rode on through the Bulgarian woodland and meadows, and as there is no happiness without some misfortune, a gust of wind blew aside for a moment the bride's veil. The Doge of Venice, riding close by her side, beheld the maiden's fair face and was so fascinated by her wondrous beauty that he fell violently in love with her. When the whole party of wedding guests halted for the night, he went unperceived to the tent of Styepan Zemlyitch, addressing him thus: "O thou bride's leader! Wilt thou yield to me thy charge that we may flee together: I will give thee a bootful of golden ducats!" Styepan Zemlyitch answered indignantly: "Keep silent, thou Doge of Venice! Mayest thou be turned to stone! Hast thou made up thy mind to perish!"

When they reached the halting place on the second day, the Doge again went secretly to the tent of Styepan Zemlyitch and once more asked for the bride, but this time he offered two bootfuls of ducats. Again the bride's leader refused, saying: "Begone, O Doge! Lest thou shouldst have thy head cleft asunder! Has anybody ever heard of a kum taking his kuma from her bridegroom?"

### The Unfaithful Kum

When the third night came, the Doge offered to the bride's leader three bootfuls of pure golden ducats. This enormous sum of money was too great a temptation for the bride's leader, and he gave up the bride to the Doge, who conducted her to his own tent. Then he declared his love to the maiden, and in impassioned tones implored her to fly with him to Venice, where he could offer her all that heart could desire. But the Bulgarian maiden turned from him with loathing: "For pity's sake, O thou Doge of Venice!" said she, "the earth under us would surely crack to swallow us and the skies above us would burst asunder if a kuma should thus be false to her bridegroom."

But the Doge persisted: "Oh do not be so foolish, my sweet kuma! I have kissed and caressed many kumas, but never once did the earth open under us, or the heavens burst asunder. Come, let us embrace!" the maiden thought it well to dissemble, and she replied: "'O my kum, thou Doge of Venice! My aged mother told me that I should have her curse if I ever kissed a bearded hero; and I swore to her that I should love only a shaven knight such as is the Royal Prince Marko."

Upon this the Doge called two barbers: one to shave his beard and the other to wash his face clean. As they were thus engaged the maiden stooped and gather up, unnoticed, the Doge's beard and wrapped it in the folds of her silken robe.

The Doge now dismissed the barbers and endeavored afresh to make love to the bride, who feigned coyness and said that she feared that they both would surely perish when Marko learned of what had taken place. But the Doge protested: "Oh do not be so foolish. I have five hundred followers with me! Marko's tent stands far away. Dost thou not see it in the distance? On its top is fixed a golden apple. In the apple are place two large diamonds which shed a light so far and wide that the neighboring tents need no candles at night.

### The Escape Of The Maiden

The maiden pretended that she wished to have a clear view of this wonder, and the Doge gallantly raised the hanging at the door that she might see more clearly. The next moment she was running swiftly as a deer toward Prince Marko's pavilion.

Marko was sleeping, and was greatly astonished when suddenly he was awakened by the entrance of his unexpected visitor. When he recognized in the maiden his future wife he addressed her angrily: "Thou maiden of low birth! Is it seemly that thou shouldst visit me contrary to all our Christian customs?"

The maiden bowed low and replied: "O my Lord, thou Royal Prince Marko! I am not a girl of low birth, but of most noble lineage. Thou hast brought with thee guests of most evil dispositions. Know then, that my leader Styepan Zemlyitch sold me, thy bride, to the Doge of Venice for three bootfuls of gold! If thou canst not believe this, look! Here Is the Doge's beard!" and she unfastened her robe and took out the Doge's beard and showed it to him.

Marko's wrath was now directed against his perfidious friends, and at break of day, wrapping himself in his wolf skin cloak, and taking his heavy mace, he went straight to the bride's leader and to the kum saying: "Good morning to ye, O bride's leader and kum! Thou leader, where is thy sister-in law? And thou, O kum, where is thy kuma?" Styepan Zemlyitch kept as silent as a stone, but the Doge said: "O thou Royal Prince Marko! There are such strange people about that one cannot even make a joke without being misunderstood!" But Marko answered: "Ill is thy joke, O thou Doge of Venice! Where is thy beard? It is a very strange joke to shave one's beard!" The Doge would have answered, but before he could do so Prince Marko had unsheathed his saber and cleft his head in twain.

Styepan Zemlyitch attempted to escape, but Marko rushed after him and struck him so neatly with his keen saber that he fell to earth in two pieces.

This done, Marko returned to his tent, ordered the procession to advance, and arrived without mishap at Prilip.

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE MOORISH PRINCESS

One day the mother of Prince Marko spoke thus to her son: "O, my darling son, thou Royal Prince Marko! Why dost thou erect so many churches and shrines? Either thou hast sinned gravely before God and thou are in lowly penance, or thou must have piled somewhere superabundant wealth?" Then Marko of Prilip answered her: My beloved, aged mother! I will tell thee the truth. Once while I traveled through the Moorish country I rose early one morning in order to go and refresh my Sharatz at the well. When I arrived there I found twelve Moors who had come for the same purpose, and, as I, in my pride, would not await my turn, the twelve Moors opposed me because they had come first. At once we began to quarrel. I lifted my heavy club and felled one of the Moors, to the earth, his companions attacked me and I struck another to the ground; ten assailed me and I killed a third; nine engaged me and a fourth bit the dust; the other eight rushed on me and I knocked down the fifth; seven strove with me and I sent to eternity the sixth; but I had to face the remaining six, who overpowered me; they bound my arms to my back and carried me to their Sultan, who flung me in prison. There I dwelt for eight years knowing nothing of the seasons, save that in winter girls would play with snowballs and sometimes fling them through my prison bars, wherefore I knew that it was winter; or maidens flung me bunches of basil, and this I knew when it was early summer.

### The Moorish Princess

"When the eighth year broke upon me, it was not my dungeon that distressed me so much as a Moorish maiden, the beloved daughter of the Sultan. She annoyed me by coming every morning and every evening and calling to me through my dungeon window: 'Why shouldst thou perish in this prison, O Marko? Give me thy work that thou are willing to marry me and I will release thee, and thy Sharatz too, I would take thee with me, also, heaps of golden ducats; as much, O Marko, as thou canst ever wish to have.'

"At that time I was in very great misery and despair, O my mother, and so taking off my cap and placing it upon my knee I addressed it thus: 'By my firm faith! I shall never abandon thee; neither shall I ever forget thee, upon my soul! The sun itself has often changed, shining not in winter as in summer, but my promise shall be unbroken forever!'"

"The maiden believe, in pleasant delusion, that I had sworn faithfulness to her, and so at dusk one evening she opened the doors of my prison, led me along to my spirited Sharatz, having got ready for herself a fine noble charger. Both steeds bore on their backs bags filled with ducats. The Moorish maiden brought in addition my best tempered saber and we sped swiftly through the Moorish lands.

"When darkness came upon us and I flung myself on the ground to slumber, the Moorish princess did likewise, and lo! she threw her arms around me. And I looked at

her, O my mother, and I saw how black her face was and how white were her teeth! I shuddered with horror and hardly knowing what I did, I sprang to my feet, mounted my Sharatz, and galloped away madly, leaving her alone. The maiden called after me in anguish: 'O my brother-in-God, thou Royal Prince Marko! Leave me not thus!' But I would not stay my flight.

"Then and there, O my mother, I sinned before God! Then it was that I obtained gold in profusion, and therefore is it that I have built numberless churches and shrines to expiate my sin!"

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE VEELA

Prince Marko and Milosh of Potzerye rode early one morning across the beautiful mountain Mirotsch, carrying their lances and trotting their steeds. They loved each other so dearly that they would now and then embrace. Suddenly Marko began to doze on his Sharatz, and tried to persuade his companion to sing something in order to keep him awake. Thereupon Milosh answered: "O dear brother-in-God, thou Royal Prince Marko! I would gladly sing a song for thee, but last night when I was with veela Raviyoyla, I drank far too much wine, and she threatened, in truth she promised, to pierce both my heart and my throat with arrows if she ever heard me sing again."

But Marko insisted: "Oh do sing, brother dear! Fear not the veela as long as I, Prince Marko, live; and as long as I have Sharatz and my six edged club!"

So Milosh to please his pobratim, began to sing a beautiful song telling of their valiant and virtuous ancestors; how they had held kingdoms and ruled in succession over the much honored land of Macedonia; and how every one of those good sovereigns had erected a shrine or a church.

The song pleased Marko so much that, lulled by Milosh's melodious voice, he fell asleep. But it happened that the veela also heard the song, and began to sing in turn with Milosh, doing all the time her very best to show him that she sang better than he did. Milosh really sang better, for he possessed a magnificent voice, and this fact much irritated the veela; she took two slim arrows, twanged her bow, and transfixing first Milosh's throat and then his heart.

Milosh uttered a piercing cry: "Alas, O my mother! Alas, Marko, my brother-in-God! The veela has shot me with her arrows! Did I not tell thee, O pobratim, that I must not sing on the mountain Mirotsch?"

## The Pursuit Of The Veela

This lamentation awoke Marko at once. He leaped lightly from the saddle, tightly fastened his Sharatz's girths, embraced him, and thus whispered in his ear: "Lo, Sharo, thou on whom I depend for speed! Oh, thou must overtake, now, the veela Raviyoyla;

and I shall shoe thy hoofs with pure silver and gild them with the finest gold; I shall cover thee with a silken cloak reaching to thy knees, and on it I shall fasten fine silk tassels to hang from thy knees to thy hoofs; thy mane shall I intertwine with threads of gold and adorn it with rare pearls. But, woe to thee if thou reachest not the veela! Both thy eyes shall I tear out; thy four legs shall I break; and I shall abandon thee here and thou shalt forever creep from one fir tree to another, exactly as I should do if I lost my dear brother Milosh!”

Then Marko sprang upon Sharatz, and rode swiftly after the veela. Raviyoyla was already flying over the mountain top, and when Sharatz caught sight of her he bounded fiercely forward, leaping to the height of three lances in the air, and covering the length of four lances at each bound. In a few moments Sharatz came up with the veela, who, greatly affrighted, flew upward to the clouds. But Marko pitilessly hurled his far reaching club and struck her between the white shoulders, and she fell instantly to the earth. Marko struck her several times as she lay on the earth, exclaiming: “O Veela! May God requite thee! Why didst thou pierce my dear porbratim’s throat and heart? thou hadst better give him healing herbs, else thou shalt not carry thy head much longer upon thy shoulders!”

The veela implored Marko to forgive her, and to become her brother-in-God. “For God’s sake, O my brother Marko, and by the memory of St. John,” she cried, “spare my life, and I will go through the mountain and gather herbs to heal thy pobratim’s wounds!”

Marko was very easily moved by the mention of the divine’s name, and he released the veela, who went at once, but never out of hearing and answering to Marko’s frequent calls.

When the veela had collected herbs she brought them to Milosh and healed his wounds; his voice was not only quite restored, but it was far finer than before and his heart was sounder. Then the brothers-in-God rode straight to the district of Poretch, where they crossed the River Timok, and soon arrived at the town of Bregovo, whence, after tarrying awhile, they departed to the district of Vidin. When the veela rejoined her sisters, she admonished them, saying: “Hark, ye veelas, my sisters! Do not shoot any heroes in the mountains with your bows and arrows, so as the Royal Prince Marko and his Sharatz are alive. Oh, what I, much to pitied, have suffered at his hands today! I marvel, indeed, that I still live!”

## PRINCE MARKO AND THE TURKISH HUNTSMEN

Amouradh, the grand Vizir once arranged a hunting party of twelve Turkish warriors to which he also invited Prince Marko. They hunted for three days and found nothing in the mountain forest. But, behold! they suddenly discovered a green blossomed lake upon which a team of wild ducks was swimming! The Vizir let loose his falcon and bade him pounce upon a gold winged duck, but the duck did not even allow the falcon to

see it, so swiftly it flew toward the clouds; as for the falcon it fell on the branches of a fir tree.

Then Prince Marko spoke thus to the Vizir: “Am I permitted, O Vizir Amouradh, to release my falcon and try to secure the gold winged duck?” “Surely you may, Prince Marko,” answered the Vizir. then the princely Marko let loose his falcon, and the bird ascended to the clouds, sprang upon the gold winged prey, and bore it down to the foot of the green fir tree.

When Amouradh’s falcon saw this it became greatly excited and, according to its natural habit of seizing others’ spoil, it turned violently upon its rival and tried to pluck the duck from its claws.

But Marko’s falcon was exceedingly valiant, worth of its master, and would yield its well earned trophy to none but its master. So it turned on Amouradh’s falcon and vehemently tore at its proud feathers.

When the Vizir saw this, he too became excited and in great rage rushed to the combatants and flung Prince Marko’s falcon fiercely against a fir tree so that its right wing was broken. He then took horse with his followers and fled from the scene of his violence.

The noble falcon, as it lay upon the ground, wailed in its pain and Prince Marko ran quickly and caught it to his breast, for he loved it very dearly. then very tenderly he bound its wounded pinion and addressed the bird with emotion: “Woe to me and to thee, my falcon, that ever we went hunting with the Turk without our dear Serbians, for the Turk must ever violate the rights of others!”

After having bound his falcon’s wing, Marko sprang upon Sharatz and sped through the forest swift as a veela. Soon he left the mountain behind and he observed the fleeing Turns in front of him. the Vizir turned in his saddle and saw Marko in the distance, wherefore he spoke thus to his twelve valiant companions: “Ye, my children, ye twelve valiant heroes! See ye yonder mountain mist approaching, and in it the Royal Prince Marko? Hark! how fiercely he enrages his Sharatz! God alone knows, what will befall us!”

### The Vengeance Of Marko

He had barely uttered these words when Prince Marko came up flourishing his bright saber. Instantly the twelve Turks dispersed like a flock of sparrows startled by a vulture. Marko made for the Vizir and with one thrust of his saber cleft his head asunder. Next he pursued the twelve Turkish warriors, each of whom he cut in two, striking them through their Turkish sashes. Then he stood for a while in doubt: “Oh, what am I to do now? Ought I to go to the Sultan at Yedrenet or had I perhaps better return to my white castle in Prilip?” After long thought he decided that it would be far better to go to the

Sultan and give an account of what had happened than to give an opportunity to his foes to calumniate him to the Padishah.

When Prince Marko arrived at Yedrenet he was at once received in divan by the Sultan.

A poet describes Marko's eyes as being as bright and fierce as those of a hungry wolf; and the Sultan was terrified by the lightning flashing from his eyes. He deemed it well to temporize and so spoke gently to the hero: "O my dear son Marko, why art thou so enraged today? Art thou, perchance, short of gold?"

Prince Marko narrated to the Sultan what had happened to his Vizir Amouradh, not omitting to mention one single incident. When he had heard the tale, the Sultan, convulsed with laughter, comforted Prince Marko: "May Blessings fall upon thee, my dearest son Marko!" said he. "If thou hadst not behaved thus, I would no longer call thee a son of mine; any Turk may become Vizir, but there is hero to equal Marko!" With these words the Sultan plunged his hand in his silk lined pocket, drew out a purse containing one thousand ducats and proffered it to Prince Marko, exclaiming: "Accept this as a gift from me, O my dearest son Marko, take some wine and go in peace!" Marko, nothing loth, accepted the purse and left the divan.

The Sultan, however, was not moved to this seeming generosity by friendliness to Marko; on the contrary he feared him exceedingly and was anxious only for his speedy departure.

#### PRINCE MARKO AND MOUSSA KESSEDJIYA

"Moussa Arbanass was one day drinking wine in a white tavern in Istanbul. Presently, when he had drunk a good deal he began to talk thus: 'It is just about nine years since I entered the service of the Sultan at Istanbul, yet he has never given me a horse, or arms, or even a velvet cloak! By my faith, I shall rebel! I shall go down to the coast, seize the harbors and all the roads leading to them: and then build myself a koula, around which I shall erect gibbets with iron hooks and hang his hodjas (priests) and hadjis (pilgrims) upon them.'"

The threats the Albanian made in his drunkenness he actually carried out when he became possessed of his senses. He turned rebel, seized the seaports and the main roads, captured and robbed the rich merchants, and hanged the Sultan's hodjas and hadjis. When the Sultan heard of all these misdeed, he sent the Grand Vizir Tyouprilitch with three thousand men to undertake a campaign against Moussa. But, alas! no sooner had the Turkish army reached the seacoast than Moussa dispersed it and took the Grand Vizir prisoner. Next he bound the Vizir hand and foot and sent him back thus ignominiously to his master at Istanbul.

Now the Sultan, in despair, published a proclamation all over his vast empire, promising untold riches to any knight who would vanquish the rebel. And many a brave knight went to fight the rebel, but, alas! not one ever returned to Istanbul to claim the promised gold! This humiliation threw the Sultan into unspeakable distress and anxiety.

At length the Grand Vizir Tyouprilitch came to him and said: "Sire, thou Glorious Sultan! If only we had now with us the Royal Prince Marko! He would surely overcome Moussa the Bully!"

The Sultan cast at his Vizir a reproachful glance, and, with tears in his eyes, said: "Oh, torture not my soul, by speaking of the princely knight Marko! His very bones must have rotted long before this day, for at least three years have flown since I threw him into my darkest dungeon, the door of which has remained fast bolted." Thereupon the Vizir asked: "Gracious master, what wouldst thou give to the man who could bring Marko into thy presence alive?" And the mighty Sultan answered: "I would give him the vizirate of Bosnia, with power there to remain for nine years without recall, and I would not demand from him even a dinar of the revenues and taxes which he might collect."

#### Marko Is Sent For

Hearing this, the cunning Vizir hastened to the prison, opened the door of the dungeon, brought out the Royal Prince Marko and led him before the Sultan. Marko's hair had grown to the ground, one-half of it he had used to sleep upon, and with the other part he covered himself at night; his nails were so long that he could plough with them; the dampness and dirt in the dungeon had changed him so that he was as black as a black stone.

When the Sultan saw him, he exclaimed: "Dost thou still live, Marko?" "Yea, I am still alive, but hardly can I move my limbs," the hero answered.

And the Sultan went on to tell Marko about the evil doings of Moussa, and asked him: "Couldst thou undertake, O Marko, to go to the seacoast and kill Moussa Kessedjiya? If thou wouldst do this, I would gladly give thee as much gold as thou canst desire."

Thereupon Prince Marko answered: "Alas, O Sire! The dampness of the stone dungeon has ruined my bones and much hurt my eyes. How could I venture to fight a duel with Moussa? But, if thou wishest me to try that feat, place me in a good inn somewhere, supply me with plenty of wine and brandy, fat mutton and good white bread, that I may perhaps regain my strength. I shall then tell thee as soon as I feel myself able to fight a duel."

Hearing this, the Sultan summoned attendants to wash Marko, to cut his hair, to shave him and to trim his nails. Then he had him conducted with honor to the New Inn, where there was abundance of everything to satisfy his needs.

Marko remained in the inn for three months, zealously eating and drinking, and he had thus considerably restored his strength, when the Sultan asked him: “Dost thou yet feel thyself able to go and overcome Moussa, for my poor subjects are incessantly sending me complaints against that accursed brigand?” And Marko answered the Sultan thus: “Let a piece of perfectly dry wood of a medlar tree, which has been but off nine years be brought to me, that I may test my strength!” When the piece of wood was brought, Marko took it in his right hand and squeezed it so hard that it broke in three. “By my faith, Sire, it is not yet time for me to venture a duel with such a dangerous adversary as Moussa!”

So Marko remained in the New Inn for another month, eating, drinking, and resting, till he felt a little stronger. Then he asked again for a dry stick from a medlar tree. When the wood was brought to him, he squeezed it with his right hand till it broke in three pieces, and this time two drops of water came from it. Then Marko said to the Sultan: “Sire, now I am ready to fight the duel.”

### Marko Orders A Sword

From the palace Marko went straight to Novak, the famous maker of swords. “Make me a finer sword than any thou has ever made before, O Novak!” said Marko, and he gave the smith thirty ducats and went back to the inn. There he stayed to drink red wine for the next few days, and then went again to the smith’s. “Hast thou finished my sword, O Novak?” And the swordsmith brought forth the blade and gave it to Marko, who asked: “Is it good?” “There is the sword and here is the anvil; thou canst try on it the quality of the sword!” answered Novak timidly. Thereupon Marko lifted his sword and struck the anvil with it so hard that he cut right through it. “O Novak, the swordsmith, tell me now, truthfully – may God held thee – hast thou ever made a better sword?” And Novak answered: “Since thou didst call upon the name of the true God, I must tell thee truthfully that I did once make a better sword; yea, and it was for a better warrior. When Moussa turned rebel and went to the seacoast, he ordered me to make him a sword, with which he cut right through the anvil as thou hast done, and through the trunk of an oak tree upon which it was standing, as well.”

This enraged Marko. “Hold out thy hand, Novak, that I may pay thee for my sword!” No sooner had the man stretched forth his right arm, than Marko by a swift stroke cut it off from the shoulder. “Now, O Novak, from this day thou shalt not make a better or a worse sword than mine! And take these hundred ducats as thy reward!”

### Marko Meets Moussa

Then Marko mounted his Sharatz and rode off to the sea, seeking and inquiring all the way for Moussa. One morning early he rode up the defile Katchanik, when suddenly he saw Moussa Kessedjiya, calmly seated on his black steed with his legs crossed, throwing his mace to the clouds and catching it again in his right hand. When the two knights met, Marko said to Moussa: “Knightly Moussa, move aside and leave the path free for my Sharatz to pass! Move aside or bow before me!”

To this Moussa answered: "Pass on quietly, Marko, do not start a quarrel. Better still, let us dismount and take refreshment together. I shall never move aside to make way for thee. I know well that thou wert born of a queen in a palace, and were laid upon silken cushions. Doubtless thy mother wrapped thee in pure silk, and fastened the silk with golden thread, and gave thee honey and sugar; my mother was a poor, wild Albanian, and I was born on the cold rocks near the sheep she was tending, and she wrapped me in a rough, black cloth, tying it onto me with bramble twigs; she fed me on oatmeal – but above all things she always made me swear that I should never move aside for anybody."

Hearing this, Marko of Prilip aimed his lance at Moussa's breast, but the fierce Albanian received it on his warrior mace, and it glanced off, whizzing high above his head. Then Moussa threw his own lance, aiming at Marko's breast, but the princely hero received it on his club and it broke in three. They next unsheathed their swords and attacked each other at close quarters. Marko gave a great stroke, but Moussa interposed his mace and the sword was shattered. Instantly Moussa raised his own sword to strike his adversary, but Marko, in the like manner, received it upon his club and the weapon snapped in two near its hilt. Then they began laboring each other with their maces until these broke too. They next dismounted and seized each other fiercely. The famous heroes were equally matched for once, the knightly Moussa against the princely Marko. Moussa could neither throw Marko down, nor could Marko overcome Moussa. For a whole summer's morning did they wrestle together. At about noon, white foam rose on Moussa's lips, and Marko's lips were covered with blood and foam. Then Moussa exclaimed: "Do throw me down, O Marko! or, if you cannot do it, let me throw you down!" Marko did all he could, but his attempts were in vain. Seeing this, Moussa exerted his last remnants of strength and, lifting Marko from the ground, he threw him onto the grass and pressed his knees on his breast.

Marko, in great danger, exclaimed: "Where are thou now, my sister-in-God, thou Veela? Where are thou today, mayst thou live no longer! Now I see thine oath was false when thou didst swear to me that whenever I should be in distress, thou wouldst help me!"

The veela appeared from behind the clouds, saying: "O my brother, Royal Prince Marko! Hast thou forgotten my words: That thou shouldst never fight on Sunday? I cannot help thee, for it would not be fair that two should fight against one. Where are thy secret poniards?"

Moussa cast a glance to the clouds to see where the voice came from, and this was his undoing, for Marko seized the moment, drew out a secret blade, and with a sudden fierce stroke cut Moussa so that his body was opened from his waist to his neck.

Marko disengaged himself with difficulty from the embraces of the horrible Moussa, and as the body lay upon its back the Prince discovered through the gaping wound that his adversary had three rows of ribs and three hearts. One of the hearts had

collapsed; another was still beating excitedly; on the third a serpent was just awaking, and as it saw Marko it hissed: "Praise God, O Royal Prince Marko, that I still slept while Moussa was alive – for a three hundred fold misfortune would surely otherwise have befallen thee!"

When Marko heard this, tears poured down his cheeks and he lamented: "Alas! Gracious God forgive me, I have killed a better knight than I am!"

Then he struck off Moussa's head with his sword, put it into Sharatz's nose bag and returned triumphantly to Istanbul. When he flung the head of Moussa before the Sultan the monarch was so horrified that he sprang to his feet. "Do not fear the dead, O gracious Sultan! If thou are frightened by the sight of Moussa's head, what wouldst thou have done if thou hadst met him alive?"

The Sultan gave three tovars of gold to Marko, who returned to his castle at Prilip.

As for Moussa the Bully, he remained on the top of Katchanik Mountain.

### THE DEATH OF PRINCE MARKO

In the early dawn of a Sabbath morning Prince Marko paced the seashore. Soon he came to a bridle path that led up the slopes of the Ourvinian mountain, and as he got near to the mountain top, he faithful Sharatz suddenly stumbled and began to shed tears. His moans fell sadly upon Marko's heart and he addressed his favorite thus: "Alas! dear Sharo, my most precious treasure! Lo! we have dwelt happily together these many summers as beloved companions; till now thou hast never stumbled, and today for the first time thine eyes do weep: God alone knows what fate awaits us, but I can see that my life or thine is in great peril and that one of us is surely doomed to die."

When Marko had spoken to his Sharatz thus, the veela from the Ourvinian mountain called to him: "My dear brother-in-God! O Royal Prince Marko! Knowest thou not, brother, why thy horse is stumbling? Thy Sharatz is grieving for thee, his master. Know that ere long ye must be divided!"

Marko answered: "O thou white veela! May thy throat cause thee pain for speaking thus: How in this world could I ever part from Sharatz, who through many a land and many a city hath borne me from dawn till sunset; better steed never trod our earth than Sharatz, and Marko never better hero. While my head is on my shoulders, never will I be severed from my beloved steed!"

And the veela called again: "O my brother, Royal Prince Marko, there is no force which can tear thy Sharatz from thee; thou canst not die from any hero's shining saber, or battle club, or lance of warrior; thou fearest no hero on earth – but, alas! thou must die, O Marko! Death, the ancient slayer, will smite thee. If thou wilt not believe me, hasten to the summit of the mountain, look to the right and to the left, and thou wilt presently see

two tall fir trees covered with fresh green leaves and towering high above the other trees of the forest. Between those fir trees there is a spring; there alight, and bind thy Sharatz to one of the fir trees; then bend thee down and the water will mirror thy face. Look and thou shalt see when death awaits thee!”

### Marko Learns His Fate

Marko followed the veela’s instruction, and when he arrived upon the mountain top, he looked to the right and to the left, and truly, he saw the two tall straight fir trees just as she described them, and he did everything she had counseled him to do. When he looked into the spring he saw his face reflected in the water, and lo! his fate was written on its surface!

Then he shed many bitter tears, and spoke in this wise: “O thou treacherous world, once my fairy flower! Thou wert lovely – but I sojourned for too short a time with thee: yea for about three hundred years! The hour has come for me to depart!” then he drew his saber and hastened to Sharatz; with one stroke he smote off his head. Never should he be mounted by the Turk; never should a Turkish burden be placed upon his proud shoulders; never should he carry the dygoom from the well for the hated Moslem!

Marko now dug a grave for his faithful Sharatz and interred him with more honor than he had buried Andreas, his own brother. Then he broke his saber in four that it might not fall into the hands of a Moslem, and that the Turk might not brandish it with something of his own power, lest the curse of Christendom should fall upon him. Marko next broke his lance into seven pieces throwing the fragments into the branches of the fir tree. Then he took his terrible club in his right hand, and swiftly flung it from the Ourvivan mountain for into the dark sapphire sea, with the words: “When my club returns from the depths of the ocean, then shall come a hero as great as Marko!” When he had scattered thus all his weapons, he drew from his belt a golden tablet upon which he inscribed this message: “To him who passes over this mountain, and to him who seeks the spring by the fir trees and finds Marko’s body: know that Marko is dead. There are here three purses filled with golden ducats. One shall be Marko’s gift to him who digs his grave; the second shall be used to adorn churches; the gold in the third shall be distributed among the blind and maimed, that they may wander in peace through the land and with hymns laud Marko’s deeds and feats of glory!”

When Marko had thus written he bound the tablet to a branch that it might be seen by the passersby. He spread his cloak on the grass beneath the fir trees, made the sign of the holy cross, drew over his eyes his fur cap and laid himself down.

### The Finding Of Marko

The body of Marko lay beside the spring day after day till a whole week had passed. Meanwhile many a traveler passed over the broad path and saw the knightly Marko, but one and all believe him to be slumbering and kept a safe distance, fearing to disturb or awake the sleeping hero.

Fortune is the leader of misfortune, as misfortune often leads to fortune: and it befell that Vasso the igouman (abbot) of Mount Athos, rode that way from the white church Vilindar attended by the youthful Issaya his deacon. When the igouman noticed Marko, he beckoned to Issaya. "O my son," he said, "be cautious, lest thou wake the hero, for Marko is furious when disturbed and may destroy us both." Then he looked anxiously round and saw the inscription which Marko had fixed above his head. He drew near cautiously and read the message. Then he dismounted hastily from his horse and seized Marko's hand – but the hero moved not! Tears rushed from the eyes of Vasso, and he lamented loudly the fate of Marko. After a time he took the three purses from the hero's girdle and hid them beneath his belt. Long he pondered as to where he should entomb Marko; at length he placed the hero's body on his horse and brought it to the shore. In due course he arrived safely with it at the white church Vilendar, and having sung the customary hymns and performed those rights which are fitting he interred Marko's body beneath the center of the church.

There the aged igouman buried Marko but he raised no monument over the tomb, lest foes should learn the whereabouts of the hero's grave and take vengeance on the dead.