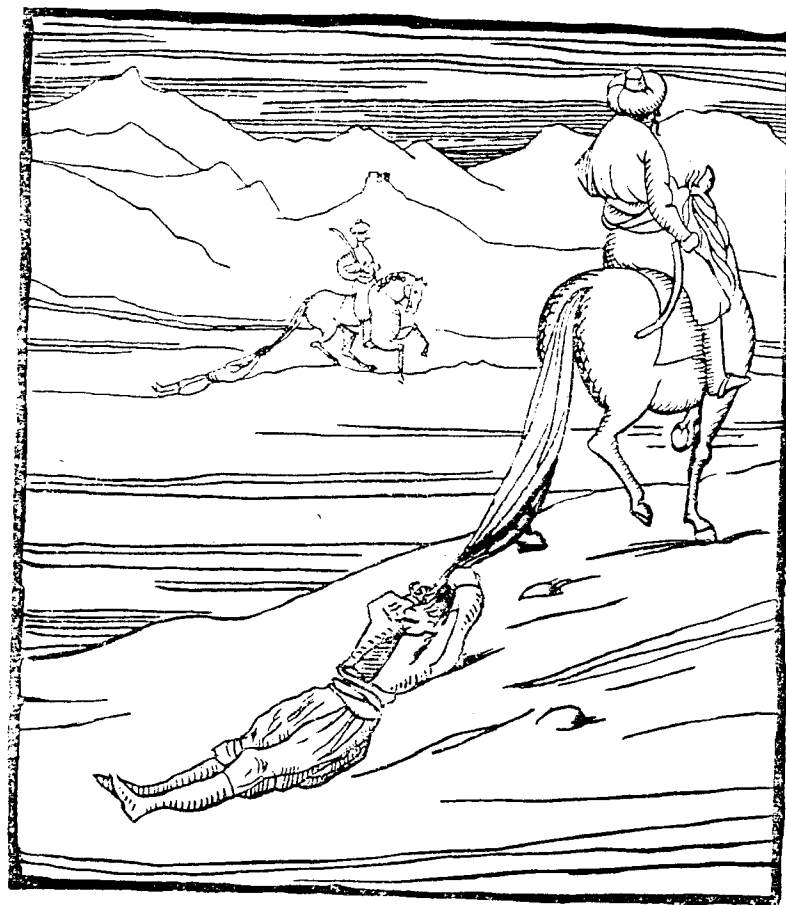


The Night Traveler

115 The sun sets, and the moon rises.
Who is climbing from pass to pass
Stealing up on Montenegro?
He goes by night and rests by day,
Once a warrior, now a warrior no more,
But a reed which every breeze stirs.
120 If a snake rustles beside the path,
Or a rabbit under a sumac bush,
Then he, once fiercer than a fierce snake,
Shakes, almost more frightened than a rabbit.
The poor fellow thinks it's a mountain wolf,
125 Or worse yet, a Montenegrin brigand,
For he fears that he will perish,
And not assuage his heart's unrest.
He holds his fair head most dear;
It's neither golden nor gold plate:
130 It can be seen he does not want to die,
But there is something which drives him on.

Is it a brigand, or a Turkish spy
Who is spying on the silken-haired flock,
Or the herd of curl-horn oxen?
135 It is neither brigand, nor Turkish spy,
But Novica, bodyguard of Čengić:
A wild Turk, scourge of Montenegro,
Who is known by old and young,
And not the vilas', nor much less
140 His hero's legs, could get him
Through Montenegro in broad daylight.

A rifle hung on his shoulder,
A fierce yataghan' snarled at his waist,
And two pistols next to it;
145 His jacket covered the viper's nest.
Light boots were drawn on his legs,
And a bare skull cap on his head;
There was no trace of a turban.
So the Turk goes without a turban;
150 It can be seen he does not want to perish,
But there is something which drives him on.
With care the warrior passed Cuće,
And warlike Bjelice after that,
Then he reaches stony Čeklić,



155 And having reached it, prays to God
That he can go still further beyond it,
Neither heard nor anywhere observed.
It can be seen he does not want to die,
But there is something which drives him on.

160 The second cocks crow in Cetinje field,
And Novica is on Cetinje field;
The third cocks crow in Cetinje itself,
And Novica arrives in Cetinje.

165 To the sentry there he calls a greeting,
»God's grace with you, sentry of Cetinje.«
The sentry calls back to him most ably:
»Good fortune to you, unknown hero!
Where are you from, from which side?
What luck was it that brought you here
170 And made you get up so early?«

The Turk is wise, out of necessity,
The Turk is wise, and wisely answers:
»Since you ask, I'll tell you truly:
175 I am a warrior from the cold Morača,
From Tušina, a small village
At the foot of famous Mount Durmitor.
I carry three grievances in my heart;
The first grievance in my heart is
That Čengić slaughtered us from Morača;
180 The second grievance in my heart is
That Čengić killed my father,
The third grievance in my heart,
The worst, is that the murderer still breathes.
And so by almighty God,
185 Let me go in to your master,
To your master and to mine,
That he might heal my grievances.«

The sentry replied more wisely still:
»Take off your weapons, unknown hero,
190 Then take your head wherever you please.«

The Turk went to the gates of the court,
And the last star went from sight;
It was the star of aga Čengić.

⁵ *vila* — South Slavic female folklore figure; *fée* or *fairy*.
⁶ *yataghan* — type of Turkish short sabre.

The Company

195 A small company is got up
In Cetinje of Montenegro.
Small it is in number, but brave.
It has hardly a hundred warriors;
Not such warriors who are chosen
200 For their looks or for their beauty,
But rather for their warrior's heart;
Such men who each would fall not
On ten foes who would all escape,
But on two, both of whom he would slay;
Such men who would stand and die
205 For the holy cross by which they were baptised,
For the holy cross and golden freedom.

A wondrous company! Not assembled
As other companies are assembled;
Here was not heard, as at other times:
210 »Whoever's a warrior, meet at the pass!«
»Meet at the pass, whoever's a warrior!«
Here the cliffs rang out no echoes.

But like the secret voice of the spirits
With which the higher spirits speak,
215 A dark whisper flew along
Montenegro from one cliff to another.
Such a marvel — through the darkness you think
That the cold stone receives life,
Trembles, crawls, raises its head,
220 That from the hard stone sticks out
A strong fist, a sturdy foot,
And through the icy nerves there flows,
It seems, a hot river of blood.

Then you see the long rifle
225 Where it struts toward the sky,
But what does the trusty jacket
About the waist hide? Your eyes
Do not see that... Now the thicker darkness
Completely seizes the night creature;
230 The warrior goes to where the voice comes from.