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JOHN THOMSON AND THE TURK

- A. 'John Thomson and the Turk,' Buchan's *Ballads of the North of Scotland*, II, 159; Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, Appendix, p. ix. 'John Tamson,' Motherwell's MS., p. 615.
- B. Leyden's *Glossary to The Complaynt of Scotland*, p. 371, four stanzas.

LEYDEN (1801) says that he had "heard the whole song when very young."* Motherwell's copy was probably given him by Buchan.

John Thomson has been fighting against the Turks for more than three years, when he is surprised by receiving a visit from his wife, who walks up to him in a rich dress, as if Scotland were just round the corner. The lady stays several days, and then gives her husband to understand that she is going home. He recommends her to take a road across the lea, for by doing this she will escape wild Hind Soldan and base Violentrie. It is not so much an object with the lady to avoid these Turks as John Thomson supposes. The Soldan, it turns out, has been slain; but she goes straight to Violentrie. After a twelvemonth John Thomson sends a letter to Scotland, "to see about his gay lady." An answer is returned that her friends have not laid eyes on her in all that time. John Thomson disguises himself as a palmer and hies to Violentrie's castle, where he finds his lady established. Learning that the palmer has come from the Scots' army in Greece, she asks whether one of the chieftains has seen his wife lately, and is told that it is long since the knight in question parted with his wife, and that he has some

fear lest the lady should have been captured by his foes. The lady declares that she is where she is by her own will, and means to stay. The palmer throws off his disguise, begs to be hidden from Violentrie, and is put down in a dark cellar. Violentrie soon arrives and calls for his dinner, casually remarking that he would give ten thousand sequins for a sight of the Scot who has so often put him to flight. The lady takes him at his word, and calls up John Thomson. The Turk demands what he would do if their positions were exchanged. "Hang you up," the Scot replies, with spirit, "and make you wale your tree." Violentrie takes his captive to the wood. John Thomson climbs tree after tree, ties a ribbon to every branch, and puts up a flag as a sign to his men: all which the Turk thinks no harm. Then John Thomson blows his horn. Three thousand men come tripping over the hill and demand their chief. The Turk begs for mercy, and gets such as he would have given: they burn him in his castle, and hang the lady.

This ridiculous ballad is a seedling from an ancient and very notable story, which has an extensive literature, and has of late been subjected to learned and acute investigation.† It may be assumed with confidence that the

* He has introduced the main points of the story (in fact B 2, 3) into his ballad of 'Lord Soulis,' *Scott's Minstrelsy*, 1833, IV, 244.

† Especially by A. Vesselofsky, *Slavic Tales concerning Solomon and Kitovras*, etc., St Petersburg, 1872 (in Russian); *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der Salomonssage*,

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Archiv für Slavische Philologie, VI, 393 ff., 548 ff., 1882; V. Jagić, *Archiv*, etc., I, 103 ff., 1876; F. Vogt, *Salman und Morolf*, 1880, *Zur Salman-Morolfsage*, Paul und Braune's *Beiträge*, VIII, 313 ff., 1882. See these for tales containing portions of the same matter in various combinations, and for a discussion of an Oriental derivation.

story was originally one of King Solomon and his queen, of whom it is related in Russian, Servian, and German. In the course of transmission, as ever has been the wont, names were changed, and also some subordinate circumstances; in Portuguese, Solomon is replaced by Ramiro II, king of Leon; in a French romance by the Bastard of Bouillon. It is, however, certain that the Solomon story was well known to the French, and as early as the twelfth century.* Something of the same story, again, is found in König Rother and in the Cligès of Crestien de Troies, both works of the twelfth century, and in various other poems and tales.

The tale of the rape of Solomon's wife and of the revenge taken by Solomon is extant in Russian in three *byliny* (or, we may say, ballads), taken down from recitation in this century, and in three prose versions preserved in MSS of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The *byliny* † relate that Tsar Vasily of Constantinople (or Novgorod), while feasting with his nobles, demands of them to find him a wife who shall be his fair match in stature, beauty, wit, and birth. One of the company undertakes to get for his master Salamanija (Salomonida), the beautiful wife of Salomon, Tsar of Jerusalem (or of Constantinople), and effects the business by enticing her on board of a ship to see fine things, an artifice of frequent occurrence in ballads. Salomon sets out to retrieve his wife, attended by a large army (which he conceals in a grove), presents himself at Vasily's palace as a pilgrim (or other humble personage), is recognized by his wife, and shut up in a box. When Vasily comes back from hunting, Salamanija tells him what has chanced, and advises the instant execution of Salomon, which is resolved on. Salomon is to be beheaded, but he begs that he may be hanged, and that three nooses, of rope, bast, and silk, may be provided. Under the gallows Salomon asks to be allowed to sound his horn. Salamanija objects, but is overruled. He blows thrice;

his army comes at the third sounding. Vasily is hanged in the silken noose, Salamanija in the rope, and the man that carried her off in the bast.

One of the prose tales narrates these transactions as follows. The wife of Solomon, king of Jerusalem, is stolen from him by his brother Kitovras, through the agency of a magician, who, in the character of a merchant, excites Solomon's admiration for a magnificent purple robe. Solomon buys the robe, and invites the seeming merchant to his table. During the repast the magician envelops the king and his people in darkness, brings a heavy slumber upon the queen and her people, and carries her off in his arms to his ship. Solomon, learning that his wife is in the possession of Kitovras, proceeds against him with an army, which he orders to come to his help when they shall hear his horn sound the third time. Clad as an old pilgrim or beggar, he enters Kitovras's garden, where he comes upon a girl with a gold cup, who is about to draw water. He asks to drink from the king's cup. The girl objects, for, if reported to the king, such a thing would be the death of both of them; but the gift of a gold ring induces her to consent. The queen sees the ring on the girl's hand, and asks who gave it to her. An old pilgrim, she replies. No pilgrim, says the queen, but my husband, Solomon. Solomon is brought before the queen, and asked what he has come for. To take off your head, he answers. To your own death, rejoins the queen; you shall be hanged. Kitovras is sent for, and pronounces this doom. Solomon reminds Kitovras that they are brothers, and asks that he may die in regal style; that Kitovras and the queen shall attend the execution, with all the people of the city; and that there shall be ample provision of food and drink: all which is granted. At the gallows he finds a noose of bast; he begs that two other nooses may be provided, one of red silk, one of yellow, so that he may have a choice, and this whim is complied with. Al-

*G. Paris, in *Romania*, VII, 462, IX, 436; Cligès, ed. Foerster, p. xix.

† Rybnikof, II, Nos 52, 53, III, No 56. See Jagić, as

above, pp. 103–6; Miss I. F. Hapgood, *Epic Songs of Russia*, p. 282, who combines the three texts.

ways urging their brotherhood, Solomon, at three successive stages, asks the privilege of blowing his horn. The army is at hand upon the third blast, and is ordered to kill everybody. Kitovras and the queen are hanged in the silken nooses, the magician in the bast.*

The variations of the other versions are mostly not material to our purpose. In one, King Por takes the place of Kitovras; in the third, the king of Cyprus. In the latter, Solomon asks to be hanged upon a tree, a great oak. The king of Cyprus begs for a gentle death, and his veins are opened. The queen is dismembered by horses.

A Servian popular tale runs thus. Solomon's wife fell in love with another king, and not being able to escape to him on account of the strict watch which was kept over her, made an arrangement with him that he should send her a drink which should make her seem to be dead. Solomon, to test the reality of her death, cut off her little finger, and seeing no sign of feeling, had her buried. The other king sent his people to dig her up, restored animation, and took her to wife. When Solomon found out what had been done, he set out for the king's palace with a body of armed men, whom he left in a wood, under orders to hasten to his relief when they heard the blast of a trumpet, each man with a green bough in his hand. The king was out a-hunting, the queen at home. She wiled Solomon into a chamber and locked him up, and when the king came back from the chase told him to go into the room and cut Solomon down, but to enter into no talk, since in that case he would certainly be outwitted. Solomon laughed at the king and his sword: that was not the way for a king to dispose of a king. He should take him to a field outside the city, and let a trumpet sound thrice, so that everybody that wished might witness the spectacle; then he would find that the very greenwood would come to see one king put another to death. The king was curious to know whether the wood would come, and adopted Solomon's suggestion. At the first sound of the trum-

pet, Solomon's men set forward; at the second they were near at hand, but could not be distinguished because of the green boughs which they bore.† The king, convinced that the wood was coming, ordered a third blast. Solomon was rescued; the king and his court were put to the sword.‡

A Little Russian story of Solomon and his wife is given by Dragomanof, *Popular Traditions and Tales*, 1876, p. 103, translated in *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, II, 518, by E. Hins. Solomon takes a wife from the family of a heathen tsar. She hates him, and conceals an elopement with a heathen tsarevitch. She pretends to be dead. Solomon burns her hands through and through with a red-hot iron. She utters no sound, is buried in the evening, and immediately disinterred and carried off by her paramour. Solomon goes to the tsarevitch's house, attended by three armies, a black, a white, and a red (which are, of course, kept out of sight), and furnished with three pipes. The tsarevitch has a gallows set up, and Solomon is taken out to be hanged. He obtains liberty first to play on his pipes. The sound of the first brings the white army, that of the second the red, that of the third the black. The tsarevitch is hanged, the tsaritsa dragged at a horse's tail.

A like story is narrated in German in a passage of about two hundred and fifty verses, which is appended to the *Wit-Combat*, or *Dialogue*, of Solomon and Morolf; and again, with much interpolation and repetition, in a later strophic poem of more than four thousand lines. Both pieces are extant in manuscripts and print of the fifteenth century, but their original is considerably earlier.

In the briefer and earlier of the two German versions, Solomon's wife has bestowed her love on a nameless heathen king, and wishes to escape to him, but cannot bring this about. She feigns to be sick, and the heathen (with whom she has been in correspondence) sends two minstrels to her, who pretend to be able to cure sick folk with their music. They obtain admission to the queen,

* Jagic, *Archiv*, I, 107 f.; Vesselofsky, the same, VI, 406.

† Cf. B 3^a. Methinks I see a coming tree.

‡ Karadschitsch, *Volksmärchen der Serben*, 1854, No 42, p. 233.

give her an herb which throws her into a death-like sleep, and carry her off to their master. Morolf, at King Solomon's entreaty, sets forth to find the queen, and, after traversing many strange lands, succeeds. Solomon, under his guidance and advice, and properly supported by an armed force, goes to the castle where the queen is living; leaves his men in an adjoining wood, under command to come to him when they hear his horn blow; and, disguised as a pilgrim, begs food at the castle. His wife knows him the moment she lays eyes on him, and tells the heathen that it is Solomon. The heathen, overjoyed, says to Solomon, If I were in your hands, what should be my death? Would God it were so! answers the king. I would take you to the biggest wood, let you choose your tree, and hang you. So shall it be, says the heathen, calls his people, takes Solomon to the wood, and bids him choose his tree. I shall not be long about that, says Solomon; but, seeing that I am of kingly strain, grant me, as a boon, to blow my horn three times. The queen objects; the heathen says, Blow away. At the third blast Morolf arrives with Solomon's men. The heathen and all his people are slain; the queen is taken back to Jewry, and put to death by opening her veins in a bath.*

The longer poem has several additional incidents which recur in our ballad, and others which link it with other forms of the story. Salme, Solomon's wife, is daughter of an Indian king (Cyprian, cf. the third Russian prose tale), and has been stolen from her father by Solomon. Fore, a heathen king, in turn steals Salme from the king of Jerusalem. Morolf is not the sharp-witted boor of the other piece, but Solomon's brother. When Solomon goes to Fore's castle, he is kindly received by that king's sister, and she remains his fast friend throughout. He tells her that

he is a sinful man, upon whom has been imposed a penance of perpetual pilgrimage. Brought before the queen, Solomon tries to make Salme come back to him. She lets him know that she loves Fore three times as well as him, and to Fore will she stick. Solomon is put into some side room. Fore comes home and sits down to table with Salme, and she informs him that Solomon is in his power. The army consists of three divisions, a black, a white, and a wan (bleich), nearly as in the Little Russian tale. The reason which Solomon alleges for wishing to blow his horn is to give notice to St Michael and the angels to come and take his soul in charge. Fore is hanged. Salme is disposed of as before, but not until after she has eloped with another king. Solomon marries Fore's sister after Salme's death.†

The adventure of Solomon will be recognized in what is recounted in Portuguese genealogies of the fourteenth century concerning King Ramiro Second of Leon († 950).‡ King Ramiro, smitten with passion for a beautiful Moorish lady, got himself invited to the castle of her brother Alboazar, at Gaya, and plumply asked for her. He would make her a Christian and marry her. Alboazar replied that Ramiro had a wife and children already. Ramiro could not deny this, but his queen was, it seems, conveniently near of kin to him, and Holy Church would allow a separation. The Moor swore that he never would give his sister to Ramiro. Ramiro, under cover of a darkness produced by an astrologer in his service, carried her off to Leon and had her baptized with the name Artiga. Alboazar, in revenge, availed himself of a favorable opportunity to lay hands on Aldora, Ramiro's queen, and took her to his castle of Gaya. Ramiro, with five galleys crowded with his vassals, ran in at San João de Foz, near Gaya. He had taken the precaution to cover his gal-

* Von der Hagen u. Büsching, *Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*, 1808, I, 62, vv. 1605–1848.

† Vogt, *Salman und Marolf*.

‡ *Os livros de Linhagens*, in *Portugalix Monumenta Historica, Scriptores*, 1856, I, 180 f., 274–7. The latter account was printed by Southey in the preface to his ballad 'King

Ramiro' (1802), *Poetical Works*, 1853, VI, 122, and a passage from the other.

Kemble, *Salomon & Saturnus*, p. 19, 1848, remarks on the resemblance of the story of Ramiro to that of Solomon. For historical names and facts in the Portuguese *sage*, see Baist in *Zs. f. romanische Philologie*, V, 173

leys with green cloth, and he laid them under the boughs of trees with which the place was covered, so that they were not to be seen. Having landed his men, he left them under the command of his son, D. Ordonho, with directions that they should keep well hidden and not stir from the spot till they should hear his horn, but then come with all speed, and himself putting on mean clothes (*panos de tacanho, de veleto*) over sword, mail, and horn, went and lay down at a spring near the castle. One of the queen's women came out to fetch water for her mistress. Ramiro, feigning to be unable to rise, asked her for a drink, which she offered him. He put into his mouth the half of a ring which he had divided with his queen, and dropped it into the vessel. The queen saw the half-ring and knew it, and elicited from her maid that she had met a sick beggar, who had asked for a drink. The man was sent for. 'What brings you here, King Ramiro?' demanded the queen. 'Love for you,' said he. 'No love for me; you care more for Artiga,' she retorted. Ramiro was put into a back room, and the door was locked. Presently Alboazar came into the queen's chamber. The queen said to him, What would you do to Ramiro if you had him here? Put him to death cruelly (What he would do to me, kill him), responded the Moor. He is locked up in that room, said the queen, and you can proceed at your will.

Ramiro heard all this, and saw that he had never had more need to use his wits. He called in a loud voice to Alboazar: I wronged you by carrying off your sister. I confessed my sin to my priest, and he required of me as penance to go to you in this vile garb, and put myself in your power; and if you wished to take my life, I was to submit to death in a shameful place, and the fact and cause of my death were to be proclaimed by a

horn to all your people. Now I have to ask that you would collect your sons, your daughters, your kinsfolk, and the people of this town, in a cattle-yard (*curral*), put me up high, and let me blow this horn that I wear, until breath and life fail. So you will have your revenge, and I shall save my soul. Alboazar began to feel compassion for Ramiro. Aldora exclaimed at his weakness and folly. Ramiro, she said, was revengeful and cunning, and sparing him was rushing into destruction; whereby the Moor was brought to say, You know that if you had me in your hands, I should not escape. I will do what you ask, for the salvation of your soul. So Alboazar took Ramiro to the yard, which had high walls and but one gate, and the queen, her dames and damsels, the Moor's sons and kinsfolk, and the town's people, were there. Ramiro was put on a pillar, and told to blow till life left his body; and he blew with all his might. D. Ordonho came with the king's vassals and beset the gate. Ramiro drew his sword and split Alboazar's head. The queen and her ladies were spared, but every other creature in the yard was slain, including four sons and three daughters of Alboazar, and no stone was left standing in Gaya. Ramiro put the queen and her women aboard the galleys. Aldora was found weeping. Ramiro asked the cause. Because you have killed the Moor, a better man than yourself, was her answer. This was thought too much to be borne. The queen was tied to a millstone and thrown into the sea. Ramiro married Artiga.*

There is a poem on this theme by João Vaz (Lisbon, 1630, reprinted by Braga, 1868), which points to a different source than the genealogies. Ramiro takes the sister of King Almanzor captive in war, and becomes enamored of her, in consequence of which Gaya, Ramiro's wife, elopes with Almanzor. Gaya receives Ramiro with feigned kindness when

*There is nothing about the fair Moor in the first and briefer account, or of the penance given Ramiro. Ortiga is there the name of the servant who comes to fetch water. Ramiro is brought before the Moor and told that he is to die. But I should like to ask you, says the Moor, what manner of death mine should be if you had me in your hands. The

king was very hungry, and he answered, I would give you a stewed capon and a loaf, and make you eat them, and then wine and make you drink, and then open the gates of my cattle-yard and have all my people called to see you die, and make you mount on a pillar and blow your horn till your breath was gone.

he comes to the castle, then betrays him (as in the French romance).*

Almeida-Garrett composed a little romance out of the story as here given, with the name Zahara for Alboazar's sister, and Gaia for Ramiro's wife, and making Ramiro cut off Gaia's head before he throws her into the water: 'Miragaia,' *Romanceiro*, I, 181, ed. 1863. He informs us that he has interwoven in his poem some verses from popular tradition. A ballad of Ramiro, or at least some remnant of one, appears still to be in existence. Madame de Vasconcellos (1880) had heard two lines of it.

Li Bastars de Buillon, a romance of the fourteenth century, repeats the chief incidents of the foregoing accounts, agreeing in details sometimes with one, sometimes with another.† Ludie, daughter of the emir of Orbrie, is to marry Corsabrin, king of Mont Obscur. The Bastard of Bouillon, who has heard of the beauty of the Saracen princess, conceives a sudden fancy for her. He besieges and takes the city of Orbrie, kills the emir, and compels Ludie to submit to baptism and to marriage with himself. She takes advantage of an absence of the Bastard to escape to Corsabrin, who makes her his queen. The Bastard, bent on vengeance, sails to Mont Obscur, and in the adjacent woods lights on a charcoal-man who is going to the castle in the way of his business. He kills the charcoal-man and puts on his clothes, and in this habit, with a well-blackened face, has no difficulty in obtaining entrance to the residence of Corsabrin. His men he has left in the wood under command of his counsellor and lieutenant, Hugh. Corsabrin is hawking, but the Bastard falls in with Ludie, who affects to be glad of his coming, and offers to go off with him if he will forgive her and do her no harm. A bath would seem to be in order. Ludie has one prepared for the Bastard, and while he is engaged in taking it, sends for Corsabrin, who comes in upon the young Frank with sixty men. Ludie enjoins her rightful husband to show no mercy. The Saracen will not do so

infamous a thing as to put his enemy to death in a bath, but assures his wife that the Bastard shall die *à guise de martyr*. A rich dress is furnished the Bastard, and Corsabrin then says, On your oath, now, what death should I die, were I in your power? Sire, says the Bastard, why should I dissemble? I promise you, I would take you to a wood, and I would hang you to the highest tree I could find. By Mahound! says the king, so will I do with you. The Bastard is taken to a wood, with a rope round his neck. Corsabrin's people look out the highest tree. The Bastard is made to go up, higher and higher, the hangman drawing the rope all too tight the while, till the king says, Now. At the last moment the Bastard calls out to Corsabrin that he is a knight of high birth, and ought not to die like a rogue, but as a man of mark dies among the Franks. And how is that? asks the Saracen. They give him a horn, and he blows four or five times to summon the angels to come for his soul. Then he says a prayer. Then they strangle him or behead him. A horn is sent up to the Bastard, and he blows lustily. Hugh hears, and rides in hot haste to the call. The Bastard makes the most of his grace; his prayer is very long. He sees that a fight is going on below, and knocks the hangman dead from the tree with his fist, then comes down from the tree and joins in the fray. Hugh runs Corsabrin through with a lance, Ludie is taken captive, and every other living being in the castle is slain. Hugh begs as a reward for his services that he may have the disposal of Ludie. The Bastard accords the boon, with a recommendation to mercy: 'arse fu li royne c'on appella Ludie.'

The escaping to a lover by taking a drug which causes apparent death, and the test of molten lead or gold, in the German poems, and in *Cligès*, 6000 ff., are found in 'The Gay Goshawk,' No 96, II, 355 ff. The test is also employed in one form of the Russian prose narratives: Vesselofsky, in the *Slavic Archiv*, VI, 409.

* Madame Michaëlis de Vasconcellos, in Paul u. Braune's *Beiträge*, VIII, 315 f.

† Ed. Scheler, *Bruxelles*, 1877; vv. 4503-6253.

A portion of the story is preserved in Scandinavian ballads, with very distinct marks of Russian origin.

Swedish. ‘Jungfru Solfager,’ Arwidsson, I, 177, No 25: A from a MS. of the sixteenth century, B from recitation.

A. Solfager is a handsome woman, so handsome as to endanger her husband Sir David’s life. Fearing that she may be carried off, David in some way marks or stamps her hand with a gold cross, that she may be known thereby. As Solfager is standing at the castle gate, Novgorod’s (Nougård’s) king comes riding up. He asks if her husband is at home; Sir David went away the day before, and will not come back for a year. The king tells her that if she will plight herself to him she shall always wear gold shoes; Solfager answers that she loves David dearly. The king gives her a drink, two drinks; she swoons, and falls to the ground; she is laid on a bier, taken to the kirk-yard, and buried. The king (David in the text, absurdly) has kept his eye on their doings; he digs her up, and carries her out of the land. David, disguised as a pilgrim, goes to the king of Novgorod’s palace, and asks to be housed as a poor pilgrim. The king invites him in. David takes his place with other pilgrims; Solfager breaks bread for them. [Her hand is gloved.] David asks why she does not break bread with a bare hand; she calls him an old fool, and bids him eat or go. The king, from his bed, inquires what the pilgrim is saying. ‘Lie down, my lord,’ answers Solfager; ‘what a fool says is no matter.’ They all fall asleep in their places; Solfager follows Sir David home.

B. Solfot looks at her face in the water. ‘God help me for my beauty!’ she exclaims, ‘surely I shall come to a strange land.’ Her husband, the Danish king, tells her that he shall write a cross in her right hand, by which he shall find her again. While Solfot is combing her hair out of doors, the Ormeking asks her if she has a golden crown to put on it; she has four and five, all the gift of the king of the Danes. Ormeking gives her a drink which turns her black and blue; Solfot is laid in the ground; Ormeking knows well where,

takes her up, carries her off to his own place, and gives her seven drinks; she stands up as good as ever. Daneking dons pilgrim’s clothes and goes to Ormeking’s. Solfot, as northern ladies wont, is combing her hair out of doors. Daneking asks for a pilgrim’s house; there is one on the premises, where poor pilgrims use (like King Claudius) to take their rouse. The pilgrims stand in a ring; Solfot is to dispense mead to them in turn. Daneking dashes his gloves on the board: ‘Is it not the way here that ladies deal mead with bare hands?’ Ormeking dashes his gloves on the board: ‘That was a bold word for a pilgrim!’ ‘If that was a bold word for a pilgrim,’ says Daneking, ‘it was bolder yet to dig Solfot out of the ground.’ Then he puts Solfot on his horse and rides away.

There are also two unprinted nineteenth-century copies in Professor G. Stephens’s collection.

Norwegian. ‘Sólfager og Ormekongin,’ Landstad, p. 503, No 56, from a woman’s singing. They stamp a gold cross on (or into? the process is not clear) Sólfager’s hand, that she may be recognized in a strange country. The Ormeking (or King Orm) comes riding while Sólfager is sunning her hair. ‘Trick King David,’ he says, ‘and bind yourself to me.’ ‘Never shall it be,’ she replies, ‘that I give myself to two brothers.’ He administers to her three potions, she swoons; word comes to King David that she is dead; they bury her. Ormeking does not fail to carry off the body. King David goes to Ormeking’s land in pilgrim’s garb, with pilgrim’s staff; as he enters the court Sólfager is undoing her hair. [Then there is a gap, which may be easily filled up from the Swedish story.] ‘Is it the custom here to cut bread with gloved hand?’ She takes off his pilgrim’s hat, and takes his yellow locks in her hand. ‘When you say you are a pilgrim, you must be lying to me.’ ‘Even so,’ he answers, ‘but I am your dear husband, as you easily may see. Will you go home with me?’ ‘Gladly,’ she says, ‘but I am afraid of Ormeking.’ King David takes Ormeking’s horse and rides home with his wife. When Ormeking comes back, Sólfager

is away. (A final stanza does not belong to the story.)

There are other unprinted copies which will appear in a contemplated edition of Norwegian ballads by Sophus Bugge and Moltke Moe.

Danish. Eight unprinted MS. copies of the seventeenth century and a flying sheet of the date 1719. The ballad will be No 472 of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*.* A fragment of five stanzas (of dialogue relative to the gloved hand) is given by Kristensen, *Jyske Folke-minder*, X, 331, No 82.

It will be observed that the ravisher is king of Novgorod in Swedish *A*, as in one of the Russian epics, and that he is the brother of King David in the Norwegian ballad as he is of King Solomon in the Russian prose tale. The sleeping-draught, burial, and digging up are in the Servian tale, and something of them in the Little Russian tale, as also in the earlier German poem.

For the boon of blowing the horn see No 123, 'Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar,' and No 140, 'Robin Hood rescuing Three Squires,' III, 122, 177, ff.; also *Heiðreks Saga*, *Rafn, Fornaldar Sögur*, I, 458–61 (14), 529 f. (9); *Vesselofsky*, in the *Slavic Archiv*, VI, 404 f.; and *Wollner's* note, *Abschiedblasen*, *Brugman's Litauische Märchen*, p. 552.

August 1, 1586, there was allowed to Yarrat James as one of six ballads 'A merrie jest of John Tomson and Jakaman his wife,' *Arber, Stationers' Registers*, II, 450. This ballad is preserved in the Roxburghe collection, I, 254, 255, *Ballad Society's* edition, II, 136, and, so far as I have observed, there only. It is subscribed M. L., initials which Mr Chappell was unable to identify, and it

was imprinted at London for Edward Wright. The Roxburghe copy was reprinted by R. H. Evans, *Old Ballads*, 1810, I, 187. The title is

'A merry Iest of Iohn Tomson and Jakaman his wife,
Whose jealousie was justly the cause of all their strife.'

It is dated in the Museum catalogue 1635?. This is an extremely vapid piece, and has no manner of connection with 'John Thomson and the Turk.' In Halliwell's *Notices of Popular English Histories*, p. 91, *Percy Society*, vol. xxiii, there is one, No 108, of 'John Thompson's Man, or a short survey of the difficulties and disturbances that may attend a married life,' etc., 24 pp., 12°. There is a copy in the Abbotsford Library.

'To be John Thomson's man' † is a Scottish proverb signifying to be submissive to a wife, or, more generally, to be complaisant. "John Thomson's men" are "still ruled by their wives:" *Colville's Whig's Supplication*, or, *The Scotch Hudibras*, cited by *Motherwell*. "Samson was the greatest fool that ever was born, for he revealed his secrets to a daft hussie. Samson, you may well call him Fool Thompson, for of all the John Thomson's men that ever was he was the foollest:" *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, etc., London, 1692 (cited by *Motherwell*, from the edition of 1768, in a MS. note, Appendix, p. x, in a copy of the *Minstrelsy* which belonged to Mr R. A. Ramsay.) Some begging verses of *Dunbar* to the King have the refrain, 'God gif ye war Johne Thomsons man.' (Other quotations in *Leyden*, p. 370, *Motherwell*, Appendix, p. ix.) ‡

* I am indebted to Dr Axel Olrik for information concerning the *Solfager* ballads, and for transcripts of Danish and Swedish versions not received in time for notice here. See p. 280.

† Originally, no doubt, as *Motherwell* suggests, *Joan Thomson's man*, or husband.

‡ "One John Thomson is mentioned as an officer in the army of Edward Bruce in Ireland. After Bruce's death,

he led back to Scotland the remnant of his army. In 1333, he held for David Bruce the castle of Lochnod in Carrick. Sir W. Scott thus characterizes him: 'John Thomson, a man of obscure birth and dauntless valor, the same apparently who led back from Ireland the shattered remainder of Edward Bruce's army, held out for his rightful sovereign.' *History of Scotland*, I, 181." Note by *Motherwell* in Mr Ramsay's copy of the *Minstrelsy*, Appendix, p. ix.

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A

Buchan's Ballads of the North of Scotland, II, 159;
Motherwell's MS., p. 615; Motherwell's Minstrelsy, Appen-
dix, p. ix.

- 1 JOHN THOMSON fought against the Turks
Three years into a far country,
And all that time, and something more,
Was absent from his gay lady.
- 2 But it fell ance upon a time,
As this young chieftain sat alane,
He spied his lady in rich array,
As she walkd oer a rural plain.
- 3 'What brought you here, my lady gay,
So far awa from your own country?
I've thought lang, and very lang,
And all for your fair face to see.'
- 4 For some days she did with him stay,
Till it fell ance upon a day,
'Farewell for a time,' she said,
'For now I must bound home away.'
- 5 He's gien to her a jewel fine,
Was set with pearl and precious stone;
Says, My love, beware of these savages bold,
That's on your way as ye go home.
- 6 Ye'll take the road, my lady fair,
That leads you fair across the lee;
That keeps you from wild Hind Soldan,
And likewise from base Violentrie.
- 7 With heavy heart these two did part,
And minted as she would go home;
Hind Soldan by the Greeks was slain,
But to base Violentrie she's gone.
- 8 When a twelvemonth had expired,
John Thomson he thought wondrous lang,
And he has written a broad letter,
And seald it well with his own hand.
- 9 He sent it along with a small vessel
That there was quickly going to sea,
And sent it on to fair Scotland,
To see about his gay lady.
- 10 But the answer he received again,
The lines did grieve his heart right sair;
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- None of her friends there had her seen
For a twelvemonth and something mair.
- 11 Then he put on a palmer's weed,
And took a pikestaff in his hand;
To Violentrie's castle he hied,
But slowly, slowly he did gang.
- 12 When within the hall he came,
He joukd and couchd out-oor his tree:
'If ye be lady of this hall,
Some of your good bountieth give me.'
- 13 'What news, what news, palmer?' she said,
'And from what countrie came ye?'
'I'm lately come from Grecian plains,
Where lys some of the Scots army.'
- 14 'If ye be come from Grecian plains,
Some more news I will ask of thee;
Of one of the chieftains that lies there,
If he have lately seen his gay lady.'
- 15 'It is twelve months and something more
Since we did part in yonder plain;
And now this knight has begun to fear
One of his foes he has her taen.'
- 16 'He has not taen me by force nor might,
It was all by my own free will;
He may tarry in the fight,
For here I mean to tarry still.
- 17 'And if John Thomson ye do see,
Tell him I wish him silent sleep;
His head was not so cozelie
Nor yet so well as lies at my feet.'
- 18 With that he threw [aff] his strange disguise,
Laid by the mask that he had on;
Said, Hide me now, my lady fair,
For Violentrie will soon be home.
- 19 'For the love I bare thee once,
I'll strive to hide you if I can;
Then put him down to a dark cellar,
Where there lay mony a new slain man.
- 20 But he hadna in the cellar been
Not an hour but barely three,
Till hideous was the sound he heard;
Then in at the gates came Violentrie.

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- 21 Says, I wish yon well, my lady fair,
It's time for us to sit and dine;
Come, serve me with the good white bread,
And likewise with the claret wine.
- 22 'That Scots chieftain, our mortal foe,
So oft from field has made us flee,
Ten thousand sequins this day I'd give
That I his face could only see.'
- 23 'Of that same gift would ye give me,
If I could bring him unto thee?
I fairly hold you at your word;
Come ben, John Thomson, to my lord.'
- 24 Then from the vault John Thomson came,
Wringing his hands most piteouslie;
'What would ye do,' the Turk he cried,
'If ye had me, as I have thee?'
- 25 'If I had you, as ye have me,
I'll tell you what I'd do to thee;
I'd hang you up in good greenwood,
And cause your own hand wile the tree.
- 26 'I meant to stick you with my knife,
For kissing my beloved wife;
'But that same weed ye've shaped for me,
It quickly shall be sewed for thee.'
- 27 Then to the wood they both are gone,
John Thomson clamb from tree to tree;
And aye he sighd, and said, Ohon!
Here comes the day that I must die!
- 28 He tied a ribbon on every branch,
Put up a flag his men might see;
But little did his false foe ken
He meant them any injurie.
- 29 He set his horn to his mouth,
And he has blawn baith loud and shrill;
And then three thousand armed men
Came tripping all out-oor the hill.
- 30 'Deliver us our chief!' they all did cry,
'It's by our hand that ye must die!'
'Here is your chief,' the Turk replied,
With that fell on his bended knee.
- 31 'O mercy, mercy, good fellows all,
Mercy I pray you'll grant to me!'
'Such mercy as ye meant to give,
Such mercy we shall give to thee.'
- 32 This Turk they in his castle burnt,
That stood upon yon hill so hie;
John Thomson's gay lady they took,
And hangd her on yon greenwood tree.

B

Leyden's Glossary to The Complaynt of Scotland, p. 371.

- 1 O CAM ye in by the House o Rodes,
Or cam ye there away?
Or have [ye] seen Johne Tamson?
They say his wife has run away.
* * * * *
- 2 'O what wad ye do, Johne Tamson,
Gin ye had me as I hae thee?'

- 'I wad tak ye to the gude green-wood,
And gar your ain hand weil the tree.'
* * * * *
- 3 Johne Tamson peeped and poorly spake
Untill he did his ain men see;
'O by my sooth,' quo Johne Tamson,
'Methinks I see a coming tree.'
* * * * *
- 4 And they hae hanged that grim Soudan,
For a' his mirth and meikle pride,
And sae hae they that ill woman,
Upon a scrogg-bush him beside.

15¹. two months in all the copies; cf. 8¹.
19⁴. lye.

Motherwell's MS. has a few variations, but these may be attributed to Motherwell. All excepting one, which is an error of the pen, appear in the Minstrelsy.

5⁴. in your. 14⁴. has. 15². part on.
16³. into the. 19⁴. lay. 20³. Then.
(20⁴. *Minstrelsy*, When.) 20⁴. gate.
21². sit to. 22³. I'll.
25¹. have, error of the pen. 25⁴. wale.
26². ladie for wife, to avoid couplets. 28³. foes.