

for his country. Bowring's translation of the heroic pesma (Battle of Kossovo) gives an idea of this event. Before the battle Lazar receives the mysterious letter:

"Tzar Lasar! thou tzar of noble lineage!
 Tell me now, what kingdom hast thou chosen?
 Wilt thou have heaven's kingdom for thy
 portion,
 Or an earthly kingdom? If an earthly,
 Saddle thy good steed — and gird him tightly;
 Let thy heroes buckle on their sabres,
 Smite the Turkish legions like a tempest,
 And these legions all will fly before thee.
 But if thou wilt have heaven's kingdom rather,
 Speedily erect upon Kossova,
 Speedily erect a church of marble;
 Not of marble, but of silk and scarlet;
 That the army, to its vespers going,
 May from sin be purged — for death be ready;
 For thy warriors all are dooméd to stumble;
 Thou, too, prince, wilt perish with thy army!"

When the Tzar Lasar had read the writing,
 Many were his thoughts and long his musings.
 "Lord, my God! what — which shall be my
 portion?
 Which choice of these two proffer'd king-
 doms?
 Shall I choose heaven's kingdom? shall I rather