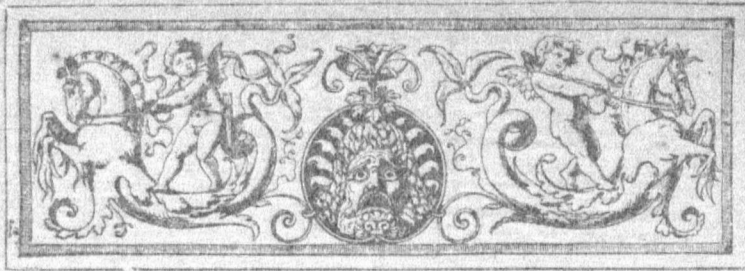


everywhere the case in the East, some genuine examples of beauty occur. In the principal houses the inner walls are not whitened; but the side walls are painted with white, the ceiling with blue or green varnish or oil colours, so that they look almost like marble.

Avd' Aga had summoned many guests, amongst them Dervish-Beg and five other Tshengitshes. All of these, however, surrounded us, standing and serving; only we European visitors sitting round the low, round table; I had had just the same experience once at an Arabian friend's with whom I dined in Upper Egypt. He who enjoys mutton will not only pronounce the better-class Turkish cookery to be good, but will discover in it some real delicacies; vegetables unknown in Europe, first-rate roast meat, and excellent puddings. The thing most to be regretted, though it is very healthy, is, that everything is served up lukewarm. At Avd' Aga's table, the *pièce de résistance* was a beautifully roasted lamb, which came to table whole, stuffed with rice, chopped meat, and all kinds of spices and raisins. At the conclusion of the meal the native gentlemen seated themselves upon carpets, which were spread upon the ground, and, drinking splendid Turkish coffee and smoking Turkish pipes the while, conversation, which after dinner, even amongst Orientals, always grows lively, became general. After the banquet—which, according to Oriental custom, began at sundown and went on for hours—I continued to sit for a long time out of doors upon the terrace of our house, gazing upon the still waters of the Drina and the silent leaden domes of the mosques as they glittered in the light of the half-moon.





CHAPTER XII.

ROGATITZA AND THE ROMANJA-PLANIN.

Abd' Aga—A Robber's Den—The Valley of the Pratzá—Street Scenes—The Stamp Tax—Rogatitza—Roman and Mediæval Tombs—The First Mohammedan Brankovitsh—The Romanja-Planina and her Outlaws—The Legendary Cycle of Novak—Another Den of Robbers.

HAVING left Fotcha early in the morning, we reached Gorazda again after a seven hours' ride, and here Abd' Aga, the native magistrate, was awaiting us with a Turkish repast. He played the part of host with great politeness and deepest reverence, even though he never addressed the minister otherwise than as "*Servus excellentia*." He had picked up from our officers that "*Servus*" was the European form of address.

After dinner we proceeded on our way, so as to reach Rogatitza after another six or seven hours' journey. For a time we ascended the same serpentine road that we had previously descended from the Ranjen Karaula. For a long time a little village, seemingly quite near to us, kept in sight; but it was long ere we could reach it, for we had to make a circuit round the broad mountain ridge. This village is a robbers' den of old repute, Karovitsh by name. As we found ourselves immediately above it, we got a good view into the beg's fendal castle. Mighty bastions and lofty walls, with narrow gateways, surround the steep-roofed buildings. On the further side of the Drina valley, now lying far below us, rises the terribly wild and awe-inspiring panorama of the Montenegrin mountains. The road, which continues to wind up the same broad mountain ridge, at last branches off from that which leads to the Ranjen Karaula. The sun's rays were falling fiercely, reflected by the rocks through which the road is cut, when suddenly, in an

instant, all was changed. We had reached the ridge, the road made a sharp bend; we had begun the descent.

The Montenegrin panorama had vanished, so had the fruitful valley of the Drina, and the oppressive heat. A fresh breeze and the mysterious rustlings of a forest hovered around us; we were in the deep shadows of tall beeches.

And then there came yet another change of scene. A hundred operas might draw their inspiration from the ever-varying, ever-enchanting landscapes of this province.

If these countries should ever be opened up to civilization, and to the stream of tourists, this alone would be a source of prosperity; for, excepting in Switzerland and the Pyrenees, there are no more beautiful landscapes in Europe. As the dense woods receded, we gazed down into deep valleys. Between the clusters of beech trees rest huge boulders of rock, many of them as large as four-storied buildings. The waters of the Pratzá rush down between these scattered boulders with a gurgling sound, as they dash down from the mountain heights into the lap of the Drina; and there, where the waters wash the rocks, and in the shadow of the mighty beeches, soft mosses and lovely ferns grow peacefully.

Here, too, there stands a watchhouse in the wilderness. The little settlement was eagerly awaiting our procession. It is a rare event for them to behold a human being, and even when they do see one it is more often than not only a robber, who fires upon them, and then rapidly vanishes again amidst this labyrinth of rocks. Some officers and officials, who had come from Rogatitza to meet the minister, put spurs to their horses and surrounded our carriages, so that from here onwards we travelled encompassed by a brilliant and warlike escort, in which all sorts of uniforms and Oriental and Western costumes were intermingled with those of our hussars.

The descent in the road was steep. Far below, a large wooden bridge led us across the Pratzá, now grown less turbulent; and on the further side the Kaffedshi was waiting for us in his hut, with his refreshing beverage and fresh trout, which were offered for sale at ten kreuzers apiece. Further on we met a few groups of the inhabitants of Rogatitza, who were for the most part petitioners. Every minute the carriage and the whole procession was brought to a standstill; the minister accepted the petitions, and directed the petitioner to attend at the *konak*. In this way we drew up before a fez-wearing gypsy, who handed in his petition to the minister with the deepest humility. We had hardly made a fresh start when a halt was again called. The petition was unfolded and looked at in front and behind; but with the

exception of two Government stamps in one corner, there was absolutely nothing to be seen beyond a blank, empty sheet of paper; not one single letter, not even the name of the petitioner; this one at least must be inquired into. The Bosnians are, apparently at any rate, deeply impressed with the stamp-law. What can the gypsy have intended by it? "To what purpose should I plague myself with writing, especially as I cannot write? The mushir ranks first after the emperor; he will know better than I can what it is I need. But the stamp I must not forget, for without a stamp one cannot speak to the Swabian." Or he may, perhaps, have thought: "I will arrange my affairs by word of mouth; but there must be a stamp upon the paper." After the arrival of the minister those who had dealings with the people had received instructions to discharge all business by word of mouth, or by means of a short protocol where possible, and not to trouble themselves or the people with much writing or stamping.

At last the friendly plains of Rogatitza lay stretched before us, surrounded by hills, a bright picture of prosperous life, made golden by the last rays of the setting sun. The Rakitnitza Rjeka, the crawfish river, waters its fertile gardens, meadows, and cornfields. The fruit had been already piled up into immense stacks, and the long green leaves of the Indian corn waved in the air. The town itself, with its white houses, is a smiling picture of prosperity. Many wealthy families of begs are settled here, amongst them the still powerful one of Sokolovitsh, which gave to the Osman kingdom one of its most renowned grand-viziers. The town, with its two thousand inhabitants, is not, however, only pleasant and rich; it is also a sacred city of ancient renown, and the numerous minarets which we see from afar off are not without their significance.

Rogatitza—in Turkish, Tshelebi Bazar—bears a great name in Islam. The present mufti—one of the first, for that matter, to pay his respects to the minister, and a man of really high calibre—is a light of sacred lore. But he is quite aware of who and what he is; and as he, with his white turban embroidered in gold, his light blue kaftan with its golden collar, stood in the presence of the minister, his whole being seemed to say: "You are the minister, a powerful vizier; but I am the Mufti of Rogatitza, and that, too, is something." The former Sheikh-ul-Islam was also a native of Rogatitza.

The begs of Rogatitza have the reputation of being fanatical and very intolerant; what we saw in no wise confirmed this reputation. As the minister was going to resume his journey to Serajevo early on the following day, he directly after supper, which was partaken of in the hospitable officers' quarters, gave audience, first to the authorities, and then, as everywhere else, to all such

as wished to speak to him. The distinguished Mohammedans appeared at the same time as the representatives of the Orthodox community. After the former had received and given thanks for the gift, which had, in his Majesty's name, been dedicated to the purposes of their religion, the minister handed over to the representatives of the Greek Church a similar sum towards the completion of their church; and for this, not only the recipients expressed their thanks, but after them a young and very aristocratic-looking beg rose from his seat, stepped up to the minister, and offered his thanks, too, in well-chosen words, in the name of the Mohammedans, for the gift bestowed upon the Christian Church. There was certainly something in this act of thanks as though he, their lord, judged it fitting that he, on his side, too, should express his thanks for the benefits bestowed upon his people.

Rogatitza and its neighbourhood is a veritable museum of antiquities. The fragmentary superscription of one of the innumerable Roman stones is known from Mommsen's collection.* It was discovered by Blan, and lies upon the Vishegrad road, near Abid-Beg's house. Hoernes has given three other superscriptions.† A sarcophagus, together with its lid, is situated upon the road to Ladjevitze; and a Roman Genius, not mentioned by Hoernes, is built into the new Servian Church. Nearly the whole of the town is plastered with mediæval gravestones, and the parapet of one of the two bridges was constructed out of them. One of these stones shows an uplified arm; another, which serves as a bridge over the brook in front of the principal mosque, represents two scimitars. Higher up, a stone is introduced, in a similar fashion, upon which a straight sword is visible. Blan erroneously described these stones as Roman. The whole neighbourhood is unusually rich in such mediæval relics. At Vladjevine, distant six kilometres from the town, they extend along the road in great groups for half a league. The officers of the 78th Regiment of Infantry, whilst digging amongst these stones, found a golden ring set with a large amethyst, and some remains of cloth of gold. Some of these stones merit attention, on account of the superscriptions, which are so seldom met with elsewhere. One of these, surprising to relate, has to be read from right to left:

"Va ime oca i sina i sv. duha. Ovdí leži Vlatko Vladjevitsh koji neimaše oca, ni mater, ni sina, ni brata niti i jednog čovjeka, osim greha (?) Obidje mnoge zemlje a kod kuće pogibe. I na njega usijee kamen njegov rojroda Mitoš i družina s Bozijom pomoću i Kneza Pavla milošću, koji

* C. I. L. ii. 2766.

† Arch. Epigr. Mitth. aus. Oesterreich (1880), 45—46.

pohrani Vlatka, spomenuv Boga." ("In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here rests Vlatko Vladjevitsh. He had neither father, nor mother, nor son, nor brothers and sisters, nor any one else, only his sins. (Perhaps, according to the Bogomilian bond, his wife.) He travelled through many lands, and died at home. This stone has been erected over him by his Waywode Miotosh and his followers (*his allies*), with the help of God and the grace of Prince Paul, who buried Vlatko, invoking God.")

Upon another stone we find:

"Va ime otca i sina sv. duha. Ovdje lezi vojvoda Mitoš sa svojim sinom Stjepkom, svome gospodinu Vlatku Vladjeviču, kod nogu koji mu poslaži živu i mrtva pobilježi Doživjom pomoću i Kneza Pavla milošću. Ai pokopavajte se ovdje na plemenu tome i na pravi vojvoda Mitoš koliko očete. Od moje ruke na zemlji čija je ona, od mene niko ne bio mrtav nikriv ubit."

("In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here rests the Waywode Miotosh with his son called Stjepko, at the feet of his master Vlatko Vladjevitsh, whom he in life served faithfully. After his death he had a grave, with the help of God and the grace of Prince Paul. And ye, the successors of this race, may bury yourselves as much as ye like to the right of the Waywode Miotosh. Upon this ground no one has died by my hand or been brought to his end in strife, to whomsoever he may have belonged.")*

Six miles from the town, in an easterly direction, on the Vishegrad Road, the name of Miotosh occurs yet once again:

"Ovdje leži Grubača vojvode Mitoša poštena i u to. . ." ("Here rests Grubatscha, the Waywode Miotosh's faithful [wife (?)], and here. . .")

Close by, upon a small memorial stone, there is a woman standing with upraised hands upon a crescent. Upon the upper edge of another stone the long straight sword again occurs. A considerable proportion of the monuments, which are here, too, very numerous, are constructed out of a particular kind of marble limestone not met with anywhere in the neighbourhood.†

Of superscriptions, so far unknown, one near Rogatitza refers to the family of Obrenovitsh:

"Va ime otca i sina i sv. duha. Ovdje leži dobri vojvoda od dobroga doma Obrenovića sin. U to doba nebijah se omrazio zlu ni dobru i kogod

* These two superscriptions, difficult to read, and still more difficult to understand, are given by Hoernes, but not in their entirety. *Ber. d. Akad. d. Wiss., Philol. Hist.*, cl. xcix, bd. ii, h. 857.

† Hoernes mentions this group also,* upon information received from Captain Baron Löfelfholz. Some of the graves were used in constructing the roads.

me poznavaše svako me žaljase. Htjedoh biti dobar junak, ali mi smrt to prekrati. Otidoh od oćca veoma pećalna i podjoh inoj družini običnim mojim novim putem. Rano odoh na onaj svet." ("In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here lies the good waywode, a son of the good House of Obrenovitsh. At this age I have not yet made myself to be hated, neither by the good, nor yet by the bad. Those who have known me have pitied me. I desired to be a brave hero, but death has cut me short in this. I have left my very mournful father, and have gone to a new alliance upon my new and lonely journey. Early have I crossed to the other side.")

Well worthy of notice, and, as far as I can tell, also so far unknown, is one of the gravestones which stands near Rogatitza, close to the village of Brankovitsh. Like Vladjevina (Vladjevitsh), the name of this place, too, is derived from a powerful family, as is, moreover, frequently the case in this country. The tombstone merits attention, because it forms a bridge from the mediæval to the Mohammedan graves. Its decoration, its superscription, its old Cyrillic letters and periods, are still the old national ones. In shape, however, it is like the Mohammedan monumental columns, though still without a turban. The analogy with the solitary monumental column amongst the Bogomilian graves at Kakanj-Doboi is striking; and it is clear that that, too, dates from the days of the first conversion to Islam, and not from the same period as those near it, as has been supposed by those who have until now described it. It is possible that the grave is that of the first Mohammedan Brankovitsh:

"... i pogibe na bithama despotorim, a ovaj biljeg Mahmuta Brankovitsha na svojoj baštini na Petrovu-polju nebi osobena ruka, kaja ga snese i napisa." ("... And he fell in the wars of the Despot. But this monument of Mahmut Brankovitsh, upon his own estate, upon the field of Petrovo, it was not his own hand which brought it hither and inscribed it.")

An exactly similar stone stands near the neighbouring village of Oprashitsh, with the following superscription:

"A ovo je biljeg poštenoga viteza vojvode Radivoja Ovodaitsha. Dok sam bio, pošteno sam i glasovito živio, a legoh na tuđoj zemlji i biljeg mi je taj na baštini." ("But this is the monument of the brave hero Waywode Radivoj Ovodaitsh. So long as I existed, I lived uprightly and with renown.



Grave of
Mahmut Brankovitsh.

I have laid myself in foreign soil, and this my monument upon my estate.")

Upon the Vishegrad road one meets an almost uninterrupted succession of groups of mediæval graves, which, as far as the Semetsh-Planina at a height of fourteen hundred mètres, alternate with pre-historic graves, consisting of simple cairns. Thence a side road leads to the Vratar, situated on the waters of the Žepa. Something like a dozen Turkish houses stand high above the water on the steep rocky slope, whose summit is covered with ruined castles, numerous sarcophagi, and square-shaped tombstones, without either superscriptions or symbols. Upon the highest point may be seen two reclining-chairs in the form of thrones, which have been cut in the living rock. Royal men may from this spot have enjoyed the glorious view, or, perchance, have sat in judgment here.

Upon the road leading from Rogatitza to Serajevo, too, we are constantly accompanied by fields of graves, which are only interrupted by the wilderness of rocks of the Romanja-Planina. We come across pre-historic cairns, Bogomilian sarcophagi and blocks, Turkish graves of older or more recent date, and even, in the neighbourhood of Rogatitza, the remains of larger vaults: a proof that here lay one of the most populated and crowded of the highways. Ivan-Polje especially, and the neighbouring table-land of Glasi-natz, as well as the Koshutitza-Polje, which stretches northwards from this neighbourhood towards Vlasenitza, are, in the true sense of the word, sown with graves; a circumstance which stands in peculiar contrast to the fact that now, for a vast distance, there is scarcely a dwelling-house visible. For the rest, the graves are of the simplest; they are devoid of all ornament or superscription, and it is only upon a few that a straight sword, or some equally simple device, is to be seen.

The other day we travelled here from early morn until late at eve, through a veritable wilderness. Hardly a trace of man or of human civilization could we see during the whole distance over which the road from Rogatitza to Serajevo has been constructed by our soldiers upon purely military grounds and for reasons of safety. In the plains, as you leave Rogatitza, the way still lies between clusters of houses and fertile gardens; but after that we commenced to climb up the north-western mountain ridge at Kovitsh, throwing a parting glance across the plains stretching out five hundred mètres beneath us, and then on up to the Ivan-Polje, a melancholy table-land about a thousand mètres above the level of the sea, a treeless, poor, Alpine pasture-land strewn with stones and pieces of rock. After an hour or so, at Han Romanja the ground rose again. We reached a plateau

lying still higher; but this, even though more wild, was not so desolate as the Ivan-Polje. A few dreary-looking pine trees were trying to exist upon the rocky plateau. Anon they clustered together in groups, and, growing ever loftier and loftier, soon whole forests of pines rose before us; but above them there stretched a high, deep wall of white rock, which, like a fearful saw, pointed its teeth towards heaven. We were upon the notorious tableland of the Romanja-Planina. At the present time a band of outlaws makes this region its home, and only yesterday warning was given in Rogatitza of a considerable attack by robbers.

The wilds of the Romanja have always been the chief rendezvous of the robber-world opposed to the ruling powers. Countless heroic songs sing of the fears of the Junaks, free hajduks (outlaws), who, whether from love of adventure, upon political grounds, or as ordinary robbers, have cast themselves amidst these mountains. Here, too, is laid the scene of the legendary Cycle of Novak, a complete set of robber songs.

In the very first song we at once see how the legend mixes up different epochs and events. Old Novak, carousing the while at Knez Bogasov's, tells him in this song how it was he came to be a hajduk (outlaw). Jerina (Irena, Paul Brankovitsh, the Servian Despot's wife) engaged him, during the building of the castle of Semendria, to work as a day labourer, but never paid him any wages. She then levied a tax for the gilding of the towers: three litra—that is, three hundred ducats—were to be paid by each household.

Novak could not pay the tax; he therefore took his axe, crossed the Drina, and fled to the Romanja-Planina. A travelling Turk, in whose way he stood, whipped him. Novak slew the Turk, and, in accordance with the custom of the country in respect to duels, took possession of the three bags of ducats found upon him (one bag = ten Hungarian ducats), his arms, and his horse. Thenceforth, he says:

"The Planina was my all,
My country, and my worldly means;
It gives me and my robber friends
Our food, and clothes, and all we need.
For precious booty do I capture,
And skilfully I flee my foe;
I shrink from nothing, dare the worst,
Our Creator, God, alone I fear."

When wine and tobacco came to an end one day, Novak and his companion Radivoj decided to sell Grujo, Novak's son. He could then trust

to his wits to set himself free again. Dressed as merchants they take him to Serajevo market. A young Turkish maiden offers two tavares (horse-loads) of merchandize for the youth, whom the maidens themselves cannot equal in beauty, but a widow buys him for three tavares. The maiden curses her:

“Take the slave, accursed Begess,
Him thou wilt not long enjoy,—
One night only, then thy love will pine away.”

The Begess has Grujo washed and supplied with a supper, and then lies down with him in a soft bed. On the morning of the following day she, with her own hands, clothes him in beautiful garments, and gives him shining armour; the clasp alone is worth a thousand ducats. Three of the Sultan's castles would not pay for the sword hilt.

“Why art thou so sad, my precious slave?” asks the Begess.

Grujo longs for the chase.

The Begess lets him follow the chase, but gives him a guard of thirty men. In the forest of the Romanja he fells the leader of the guard and his horse in twain at one blow, and flies back to his father.

As Novak begins to grow old, Radivoj and his thirty companions desert him; he remains alone with his sons Grujo and Tatomir. But Mehmed the Moor and thirty of his men slay Radivoj's companions, and take him, himself, prisoner.

Novak sees the Turks approaching; by the side of Mehmed rides Radivoj in chains, and a Christian head is stuck upon each Turkish lance. Novak shoots the Moor from his horse, sets Radivoj free, and they four hew down all the thirty Turks.

“Tell me, brother Radivoj,
Cannot I, the aged Novak,
Yet outdo e'en thirty heroes?”

In another song the Moor Mehmed meets with a different end. The Moor kidnaps Christian brides, keeps them a week, and then sells them. Grujo is clad as a bride, and together with his companions rides past the Moor's house. The Moor rides after them, seizes Grujo's horse, and embraces Grujo. The Moor asks in astonishment:

“Have they bestowed thee, maid, so young then
That thou lackest any bosom?”

But Grujo draws forth his sword from beneath his long veil, and cuts off the Moor's head.

Once Beshir Pasha Tshengitsh of the Zagorje bade the Knez of Grahovo, by letter, prepare thirty rooms with thirty maidens in them; but to prepare apartments for the Pasha himself in the white tower, in the bed-chamber of which he was to leave his daughter Ikonja. Grujo Novakovitsh and his thirty companions thereupon clad themselves as maidens, and awaited the Pasha and his retinue, who were all slain in the course of the night.

But against the Greek veteran, Manoilo of Sophia, even Novak cannot prevail.

Manoilo has already wounded Radivoj, Tatomir, and Grujo. He now drives Novak before him, and his sword is broken against the terrible Greek's coat of mail. Thereupon the Vila, the fairy of the Romanja-Planina, who has entered into an alliance with Novak, appears upon the scene, and in the form of a beautiful maiden beguiles the Greek; then Novak hurls his club after him, and kills him. Grujo now secures Manoilo's bride, the daughter of the Pladin (Palatine), for himself.

This union, however, ends badly. The beautiful Maximia betrays the sleeping Grujo to three Turks. But when the three Turks and Maximia are all sound asleep, Grujo's little son cuts his father's fetters in twain, and Grujo slays the three Turks, buries Maximia in earth up to her breasts, smears her all over with pitch, sulphur, and gunpowder, pours brandy all over her, and sets her on fire. In vain does the woman plead to the quietly carousing Grujo to spare her black hair which he has so often stroked, her black eyes which he has so often kissed, her fair face whose equal he could never find again upon the earth; not until the fire reaches her breasts, and Grujo's little son beseeches his father to spare the white bosom which has given him nourishment, does Grujo quench the fire and bury his wife.

The road leads directly towards the seemingly impassable wall of rock, which forms the boundary of the Planina. Thanks to a masterpiece of engineering we pass between its teeth.

Upon the summit of the pass stands the Franz Josef Karaula, fourteen hundred metres above the level of the sea, defended by a strong garrison of soldiers, which during the rebellion passed many a hard day here. From this point the descent is rapid and steep, by serpentine windings amongst rocks, and giant beeches and oaks, right down to Mokro, which lies far below us, and is famed for its charming situation, and notorious for its occupation. Robbery is the industry of its inhabitants, and this is the recruiting-ground for the heroes of the Planina.

Now a strong garrison is stationed in Mokro, with a mountain battery whose guns we could distinguish from a great distance.

On the further side of Mokro we again ascended, and reaching the mountains of Serajevo and passing along an elevated and boldly constructed Turkish aqueduct, we at length, after a twelve hours' journey, in pouring rain, reached the citadel of the metropolis.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE NAREN TA.

Tartshin—The Tombstone of Pasaritsh—The Watershed of the Adriatic and the Pontus—
Konitza—Rama—Jablanitza—The Limestone Region—Another Race of Men—Tropical
Flora.

August, 1882.

AT Blažuj, the road to Mostar branches off from that which leads from Serajevo to Zenitza and Brood. Passing an inn, which belongs to Blažuj, we turn to the left into the valley of the Žujevina.

The little stream comes from the south-west, and flows towards the Serajevsko-Polje, where it forms a junction with the Bosna. The valley extends between woody hills to a breadth of a mile and a half. We soon reach, to the right of the road, the scattered parish of Malatina; whilst to the left, on the further side of the road and water, a solitary kula, the picturesque castle of the Uzinitsh family, is visible.

In addition to our own military escort we frequently met detached sentinels. The neighbourhood of Mostar had only recently been again disturbed by considerable bands of rebels and robbers. At the deserted tshardake* Hadžitsh we crossed from the left to the right bank of the Žujevina, and continued upon the latter bank as far as Dubovatz. At one time an important industry in gun-making flourished here; but the Winchester and Snyder rifles had destroyed this long before the time of the Austrian occupation.

Upon the other side of Dubovatz, the valley begins to rise rapidly and to contract until it nearly forms a pass, bordered on the left by the Dubova Mountains; on the right, by the Gradatz; the latter a bold, rocky mountain of Herzegovinan type, with a wealth of caves and jagged cliffs. The township of the same name is pressed into a narrow angle to the right of the road. After a mile and a half, the valley widens again; another rivulet, the Krupatz, coming

* Turkish watchhouse.

from the south-east, flows into the Žujevina; and, after a short bend, the basin of Pasaritsh lies before us, surrounded by picturesque hills, and upon whose western border the township of Pasaritsh itself stands, in the midst of agricultural fields. At the military station here a Roman tombstone has been preserved, which is about two mètres high and four wide; a bust of the dead in a toga, between Corinthian pillars, which support a triangular gable decorated with the head of a ram and a dolphin. Between similar pillars, below the portrait, is an inscription already entirely obliterated.

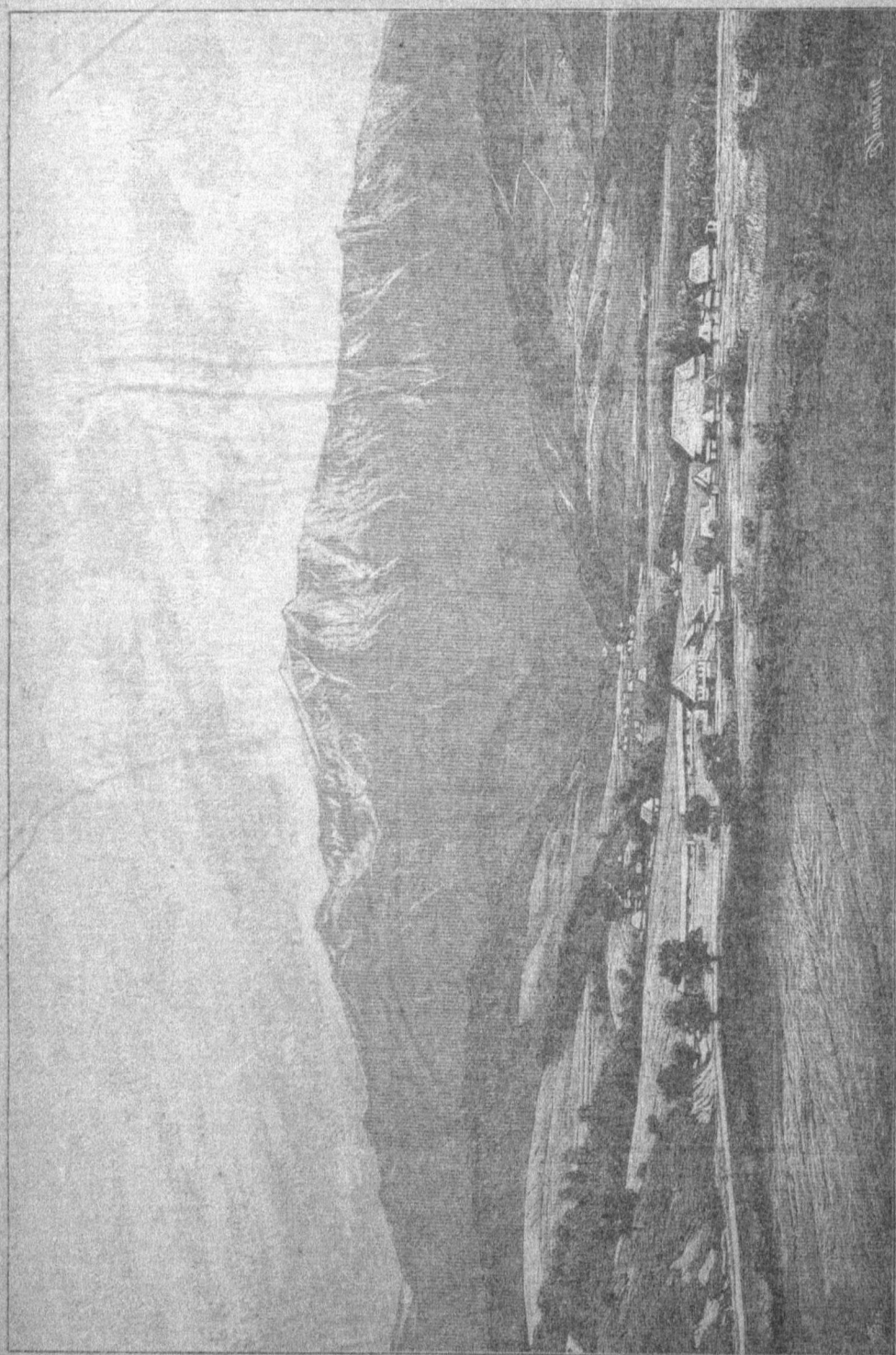
The bare mass of the Hranitzava-Planina rises menacingly in the background six thousand two hundred mètres above the level of the sea, a mountain celebrated from its magnificent appearance. The valley is shut in by the mountain ridge of Vilovatz; and, leaving the Žujevina, our way now lay over this ridge, and down the other side to Tartshin, where we changed horses for the first time. A beautiful sylvan idyl. At Tartshin we crossed a smaller brook, which flows from the south directly northwards. Upon the left, we constantly saw the Hranitzava-Planina. Our road lay to the south-west, towards the Ivan-Planina.

The innumerable springs of this tableland were, for a long time, the cause of great difficulties in the construction of this road, and even after the Porte had, at great cost, had the road taken across Tartshin by English engineers, it had to be constantly re-laid; our soldiers were the first to repair it in such a way as to be capable of defying all contingencies.

At Bradina, which consists of one inn and about twenty houses, we reach, by a Turkish watchhouse, the pass which forms the watershed between the districts of the Save and the Narenta, the Adriatic and the Pontus. On the further side of Bradina we come to a mountain stream, which dashes far down the abyss, and, joining a second coming from the left, forms the Tershanitzza river. On the right and left are immense forests of oak, beech, and lime trees. High up, on the edge of the precipice, and following all its windings, the road descends. The landscape becomes ever more and more magnificent. On the left are the cleft limestone masses of Bjelashtitza, which rise behind the lower wooded hills, with their immense steep bastions, and round turret-like formations, like a gigantic fortress of rocks. To the right there is a second fortress of rocks, across whose feet the road has been blasted, suffused in the most wonderful sheen of brown, orange, and rose, sometimes really glittering in the bright rays of the sun. Thus we pursued our way for two hours towards the valley of the Narenta, which by the time we had covered half of our ground lay before us in all the splendour of its marvellous natural beauties, a true amphitheatre of titanic

mountains. Enormous chestnut trees above the white limestone rocks showed us that we were coming to a different, more Southern vegetation. Below on the Tershanitzá river small spoon mills clattered. We crossed the stream again twice, and after we had passed over to a ruin situated upon a steep rock, Gvanrski Grat, "Christian Fort," below which lie numerous but deviceless Bogomilián graves, we reached the town of Konitzá, built on both banks of the Narenta. The Narenta—or Neretva, as the people call it in Slavonic—rises in South-eastern Herzegovina at the foot of the Tshemerno Mountains, flows towards the north-west in a narrow rocky bed to Konitzá, and here turns abruptly westwards, afterwards flowing due south to above Mostar, until at last, having turned to the south-west near Metkoviťsh, which is upon Dalmatian ground, it pours itself into the Adriatic. A wild mountain stream as far as Konitzá, it first becomes navigable here, though only for flat-bottomed boats; even here, however, it is still dangerous, because its eddies are strong enough to drag even the largest tree trunks into the lime caverns under the river's bed. Man or beast, once caught in such an eddy, is lost. The right-hand quarter of the town, that which we first reached, also bears the name of Neretva. A beautiful old stone bridge leads to the quarter on the left hand, Konitzá proper; this bridge too, like all the others in the country, is one of the most beautiful and picturesque objects in the town. Romans and legendary Slavonic kings are mentioned as its builders; but it may, in spite of this, be assumed that the existing structure at any rate is the work of the first Turkish Sultan, the great bridge-builder. Upon one pier the Arabic date 1093 is visible; according to Mohammedan tradition it was built by Ahmed Sokoloviťsh, the celebrated vizier of Bosnian descent.

For the rest, Konitzá is in any case an ancient historical place. The military road of the Romans from Dalmatia to Pannonia passed through here, and some assume that the Roman town of Brindia stood here. In 1446, the National Diet was convened here by the Bosnian king Stefan Tomasheviťsh. The town was celebrated even earlier than this, from the great Franciscan Monastery, which was in 1534 destroyed by the Turks. A few decades ago Konitzá still enjoyed a considerable trade; now it only carries its horse-cloths and splendid fruit in its flat boats down to Mostar. Its population, too, has melted down to about fifteen hundred souls, mostly Turks, and hardly fifty Catholics; and in the buildings, too, one can see this decay, especially upon the left bank, in what is really the Turkish quarter of the town. There are iron and coal pits in the neighbourhood; and even silver and gold are supposed to exist in adjacent Zlatar, as, moreover, the name implies: Zlato, Slatina, Zalathna, all signifying "gold." All this is, however, entirely a thing of the past. But



Tartu.

Stamperia

neither time nor unfavourable circumstances could rob the town of its picturesque hills; and even in its decay it presents a lovely sight, with the broad river in its rocky bed, the antique bridge, the host of minarets and domes, and the luxuriant, almost Southern vegetation at the foot of the bare mountains of rock. Perhaps the town may revive again, if the railroad from Serajewo to Mostar and down to the sea should pass through it.

The new highway now keeps for a time to the left bank of the Narenta, in the narrow, rocky valley of the stream, and, together with this, leads westwards. The rocky pass, in whose depths the emerald green waters of the river flow, grows ever whiter and more confined, and the sun grows hotter and hotter.* The wooden houses have vanished; the farmsteads, not unlike towers and fortresses to look at, are built of white stone. Tshelebitsh is two and a quarter miles off, and a lonely Greek church, with the Mohammedan village of Lisishitsh opposite to it, is three miles further along the road; then comes Ostrashatz, and at last Paprashka, nine miles from Konitz.

Here the Narenta has to skirt the Prenj Mountains, in order to flow southwards, after a bend to the right. The mountains encroach in such a way upon the river that the road cannot follow the stream, but has to pass over the neighbouring heights. On the further side of this, another broad chasm descends upon the left of the road, as it traverses vineyards, so that it has to cross the Narenta by the new iron bridge. Above the bridge the historically memorable river Rama pours into the Narenta; it is after this river that the country was at one time in Hungary officially called "the kingdom of Rama." But it is not only remarkable because the Hungarian power first set a firm foot on this land upon its shores, but also because of its wild, romantically beautiful scenery.

In the year 1885, a few years after this, our first journey, we took, as we were coming from Mostar, the road through the valley of the Rama to Prozor, a place famous for the beautiful carpets manufactured there, and travelled to Serajevo through the forest mountains which lie between Vakuf and Fojniza. As the mosques of Prozor appear to view, and above them the three sparkling waterfalls, which flow into one another, as a background to the wooded rocky valley of the Rama, one enjoys a captivating, indescribably beautiful scene. After crossing the Narenta bridge, close to which Gornja (Upper) Jablanitz is situated, we soon reach Dolnja (Lower) Jablanitz, the first purely and entirely Herzegovinian town.

We are in the midst of the Karst (limestone region).*

* Karst, in the narrower sense, is a limestone plateau eighty-four kilometres by twenty-four kilometres, from four to five hundred metres high, extending north of Istria, in a south-easterly

have vanished; the world of rocks which surrounds us is almost desert-like. Even the steep sloping banks of the Narenta are only overgrown by a low underwood; beyond this the fruitful soil is confined to isolated hollows in this region of rocks, where it cannot be washed away by water; and only here does vegetation flourish, though then luxuriantly. Whilst in Bosnia the very walls are constructed of wood, here the buildings contain hardly any, and at any rate it is confined to the most necessary parts. The houses of Jablanitza are, to a large extent, built of black and white scorified lava, and roofed in with slabs of the clay-shale slate, which, next to jurassic limestone, forms in this rocky region the predominating stone, and, with its fantastic forms and strata, almost makes the narrow defile, through which deep down below the Narenta rushes, appear as though it had been artistically formed by human, or rather superhuman, hands.

All this, with the heavy, substantial, almost-fortress-like houses, as well as the country itself, lends a defiant, threatening character to the whole region, which applies also to its inhabitants: defiant, proud, powerful men, with distinctly Southern features, and nearly all dark-complexioned; whilst in Bosnia there is plenty of fair hair to be seen. The national costume here more nearly approaches the Montenegrin than the Turkish, which in Bosnia predominates. The women, too, surpass those of Bosnia in height; neither do they in any way lack beauty; indeed, though in Bosnia one meets with a striking number of noble figures and faces, most of the women there are flat-chested, whilst those here are powerfully developed.

Whether in consequence of the robust, independent character of the natives, or in consequence of the striking beauty of their women, or as a result of both circumstances, the women here, although the whole of Jablanitza has been converted to Mohammedanism, have never assumed the veil; and whilst it is more strictly worn in adjacent Bosnia than anywhere else in the East, the women and girls here walk about in the streets and fields with uncovered faces. Some endeavour to trace back this rejection of the veil to adherence to secret Bogomilian traditions. The ancient monuments in the district, which have already been mentioned, show that this neighbourhood was one of the centres of this sect, and in this wilderness it may have held its ground longer than elsewhere.

On the further side of Jablanitza begins one of the most magnificent

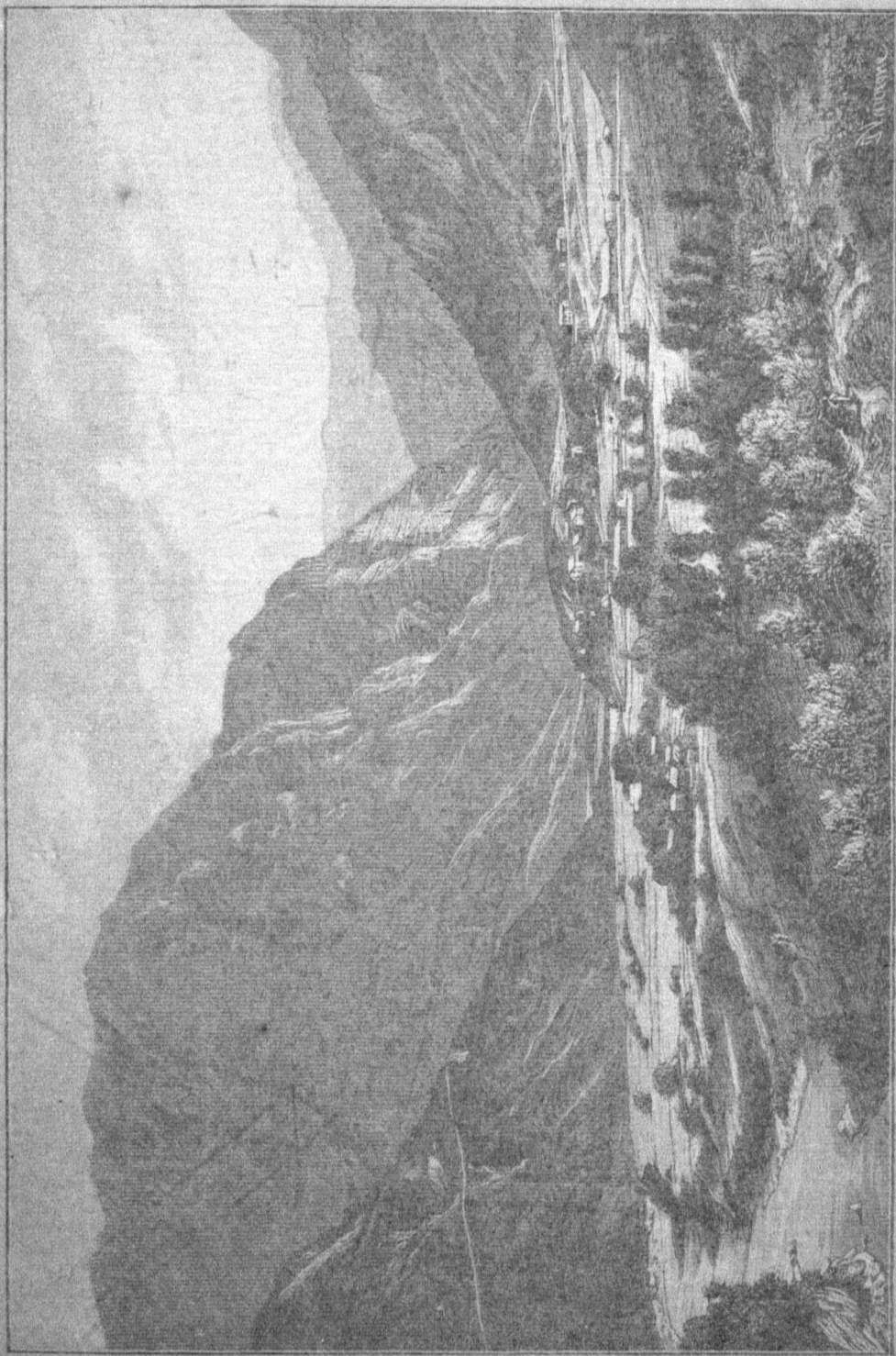
direction from the Isonzo as far as the Gulph of Quarnero, through the Austrian Litoral. It is separated from the Julian Alps by the valley of the Wissbach, and from the tableland of the Wendic Mark by the Poik and the Recca. Towards the Gulph of Trieste it makes a steep descent from a height of four hundred metres. This limestone abounds in caves, etc.—[Tr.]



Naranta Bridge near Jablanitz.

mountain passes in the world. Immediately at the end of the township the country widens out again like an amphitheatre, to make room for fruitful agricultural land. All around it looks like an imposing colosseum of the Titans. The river makes a turn at the mouth of the Rama, and flows due south almost parallel with its upper division, which from its source to Konitza had forced its way through the mountains in a northerly direction. To this peculiar rupture of the Narenta river through the mighty world of mountain and rock at Jablanitza, where the valley extends into a circle, we owe an unusual and surprising scene. Immense peaks, separated by deep rents, tower up side by side and behind one another all round the circle. The different heights and distances of the steep, fantastic points of rock, the snow sparkling like crystals, which covers most of them, the violet blue twilight of the deep shadows, the brilliancy of the white, grey, and topaz-coloured surfaces of rock, the green of the distant beeches, and the chestnut woods and vineyards close at hand, and below, in wonderful contrast to this wilderness, the lovely idyl of clusters of houses comfortably dotted about by the side of the quiet, winding river, fruitful fields, mighty foliage trees,—all help to produce a never-ending variety of colour and effect. As soon as we had left this enchanting arena the valley closed in again, and the Narenta was cramped in on the left by the Pirenj-Planina, on the right by the lime and slate rocks of the Plasa-Planina, and forced its way deep down below through the cliffs. The road runs along high up on the right cliff, one of the most remarkable causeways in Europe, commenced in 1870 by the Turkish Government. In the fissures of the rocks there grows a Southern vegetation; and there is a succession of waterfalls of varying size. About a mile and a half from Jablanitza a dark, black mass of water breaks from out of the wall of rock right across the road, and roars down into the Narenta. A bridge leads over this waterfall. By a solitary watchhouse the road soon crosses the stream; a pretty iron bridge leads to the left bank, but the landscape remains unchanged. Mountain torrents and waterfalls dash out of all the rifts in the rocky walls, and in front of the little parish of Sjenitze the road itself passes through the rock by a short tunnel.

This defile in the rocky mountains, two thousand mètres high, continues for twelve miles, and in the constant changes of the marl stone assumes the shapes of real Gothic and Romanesque ruins, long stratified walls, round towers, wide bastions, projections, and terraces. Then on the further side of the Bjela stream, near the Roman ruins, the valley suddenly expands and forms the plain of Bjelo-Polje, with the Narenta river to the right, to the left the gigantic heights of the wild Porin-Planina. Almost at its centre this plain narrows



Dolina-Jablanitza.

again, encroached upon by a projecting mountain thrust forward by the Veles-Planina towards the river. The whole mountain range, and especially this pyramid shaped, isolated height, is nearly ash-grey, and in its colour, as well as form and nakedness, reminds one of an extinct, desolate, lava and ash-covered volcano. In the plains, however, stony, unfruitful spots are succeeded by rich oases with a verdant Southern vegetation. Finally, at the point where the Veles-Planina again approaches the river, and the road again changes to a defile, a camp and powder-tower come into view, with a strong military fort, all held in readiness for war; and at last, at the point where the Veles and the opposite Hum again compress the Narenta, our carriages roll into the main street of Mostar, and with an astonished glance we behold the almost Italian edifices of the town, with their gardens full of fig and pomegranate trees.





CHAPTER XIV.

MOSTAR.

The Warlike Character of the Town—The Narenta Bridge—Historical Monuments—
The Inhabitants.

HALF Oriental, half Italian, and altogether Herzegovinan, picturesque and monumental. Every stone declares war and fighting. No city in the world proclaims so loudly as this one does that she owes herself, her origin, her very being, to battle, war, fortifications, and mighty aggression.

For many a mile, rushing and gurgling, struggling and foaming, in their deep bed of rocks, do the waters of the Narenta flow, first northwards, then towards the west, finally southwards, making an enormous bend through Herzegovina's rocky wilderness. It is everywhere encroached upon and cramped by the rocky mountains, which dash their foaming torrents down upon its waters. First, before reaching Mostar, there opens to the left of the river a longer, and, at any rate, proportionally broader plain. The ashy-grey promontories of the rough wildernesses of Porim and Veles recede from the river almost as though they would respectfully yield the position to the chief city of the land, but on the further bank the lime and slate cliffs even here come straight down. A luxuriant, Southern vegetation and blossoming tobacco fields cover the narrow plain, but vainly does the eye seek the town; nothing beyond a few powder-towers are in sight, and, since the advent of our soldiers, a few barracks. Why was not the town built here? Why did its founders scorn this open and attractive position? Not until we reach the point where the plain ends, and Podveles again presses close up to the Narenta, and almost touches the pyramidal

mountain of Hum on the opposite shore, not until then do we reach Mostar by one long, narrow street. Wherefore? For this reason: because the Herzegovinans were always soldiers, even when they were not yet Herzegovinans, and heaven only knows which races inhabited this soil in pre-historic times, and laid the first stone of a human habitation. They were soldiers, great tacticians, and strategists, who did not settle down in the plains, but took possession of the narrow pass, just like the founders and inhabitants of little Vranduk in the Bosna valley, only that a far more important point was taken possession of here. Every one must pass through this hollow street who wishes to travel inland from the sea, he would otherwise wander amongst impassable rocky ways; for the merchant laden with his merchandise, the conqueror with his weapons in his hand, could force no other passage for himself. This gateway of rocks, between Podveles and Hum, through which the Narenta tears, is the only gateway into the country on the coast side, and on that account the capital arose here, upon this spot, for both offensive and defensive reasons. But of course it cannot extend itself with any comfort. For a long distance there is only one single street between Podveles and the Narenta. One row of houses follows the outline of the rocks, which rise perpendicularly out of the water; the other row leans back on to the mountain. The houses, as is everywhere the case in Herzegovina where wood is scarce, are built entirely of stone, and covered with slate slabs. Hardly any windows look out upon the streets from the ground floor, and in the upper stories only a few small narrow ones. The object of this is that it may be easier to shoot out than to shoot in, or even to force a way in. But the flat roofs, the spaciousness, the decoration of a projection here, a window or a door there, point to Italian taste, and show that the counts of Chlum, just as, later on, the Turkish Sultans, were in the habit of summoning Italian builders hither from the shores of the Adriatic. Further along, where Podveles is less steep, other streets join the main one, and the houses climb up the ridge of the hill until they reach the point where the heavy, almost fortress-like piles of the Orthodox Church now tower up amongst the foliage of lofty trees. Down below, close to the water, ancient towers and bastions stand upon the rocky foundations of the river's bank, that they may here by force supply what the narrow path loses, from the fact that here the valley is broader, the mountain ridge more passable. From here onwards the country continues to open out until it again forms a small plain, which reaches down to the waters of the Buna: but here, too, the town comes to an end. In those towers and bastions there once dwelt the Turkish pashas, and in their day, perchance, also the counts and

dukes of Chlum. The bold, bare ruins of Stepanograd, their still more ancient castle, stand at the point where the second plain terminates, near the sources of the Buna. In about the centre of the town, where the bastions with their strong, primitive walls, and their subterranean passages hewn out of the living rocks, as they rise out of the Narenta, there, in one single mighty arch, the widely famed bridge of Mostar spans the waters, to unite the city with the smaller and poorer Catholic part of the town which lies at the foot of Hum. The rocks, indeed, towards the more northern quarter of the town, where we entered, rise so much higher and in such numbers from the bed of the river, that when the waters are low the river can be crossed by stepping and springing from rock to rock, although, even then, the water is of considerable depth between the boulders. A connection of this kind can, however, of course neither serve the purposes of regular traffic nor of military transport; as, on account of the natural conformation of the ground, communication with the sea had, until the time of modern road-making, been, from Mostar onwards, diverted to the opposite bank. The Romans had doubtless already built a bridge here, for their road to Pannonia led this way, and they had for a long time to sustain severe encounters in this part of Illyria, which belonged to Roman Dalmatia, not only during the Conquest, but also later on. The original inhabitants of what is now Herzegovina, with their incessant revolts, caused them as much confusion and embarrassment as their successors have done to more recent conquerors; indeed, according to Roman accounts the character of the insurrections, and their mode of warfare, were almost the same as those still pursued. Many consider the bridge of Mostar to be of Roman workmanship. It is possible that certain parts, the foundations, are of Roman origin; but the present bridge dates without doubt from the Turkish era, and is the work of Dalmatio-Italian architects. Neither on the bridge itself nor in its neighbourhood is there a trace of a Roman inscription or of Roman sculpture; and the only signs of any writing, which are cut into two stones near to the water line, are unquestionably Turkish, even though difficult to decipher. Arabic figures point to the tenth century of the Hedshra, and as not only the Drin bridge of Prisrend, as well as the Kosina-Tshupria over the Miliaska, although decidedly smaller, are otherwise built in exactly the same style, and as the date mentioned agrees with the time in which, in 1483, the Begler-Beg of Bosnia, Mustapha-Beg Jurevitsh, in the reign of Sultan Bajazid II., conquered Herzegovina, it may be reasonably assumed that this bridge, too, was built at the command of the Sultan, even though by the hands of Dalmatian and Italian stonemasons. Hadshi Halfa,

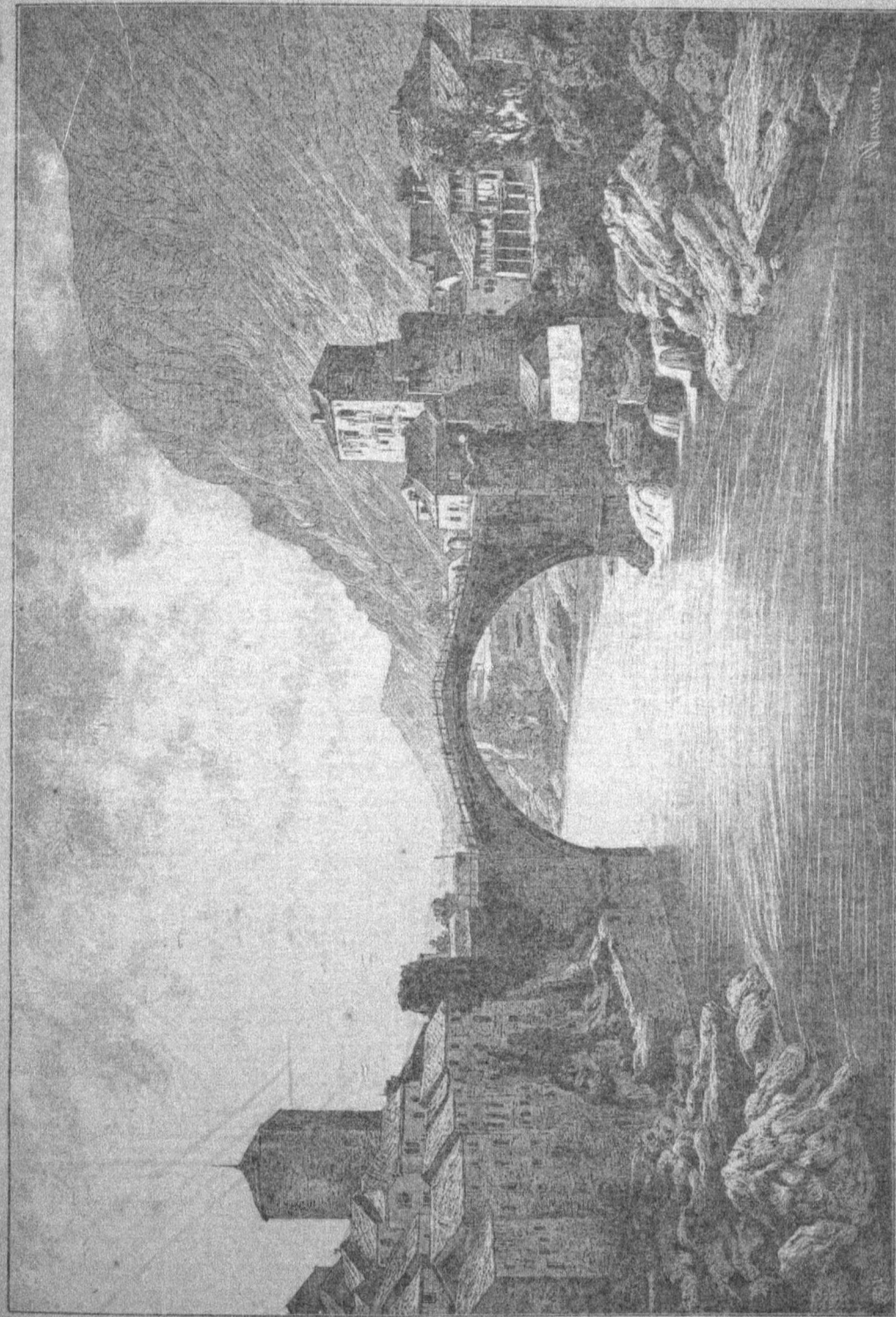
the Arabic author, who, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, also wrote concerning Rumilia and Bosnia, describes this bridge, which, according to him, was built in 974 Hedshra:—

“As most of the gardens lie upon the further side of the river (on the Radobolje stream, which runs into the Narenta just by the bridge), a bridge suspended from chains led across to them; but as the pillars shrank, it swayed to such an extent that people feared for their lives in crossing it.

“After the Conquest, Sultan Sulejman, at the request of the inhabitants, sent Sinan, the architect, with instructions to build a stone bridge. But this man, after he had seen the place, declared the task to be an impossible one. Later on, however, a carpenter, who was himself living there, declared himself willing to take the responsibility of the attempt, and the bridge became an accomplished fact.” (In Bosnia, to this day, the selfsame man will undertake the duties of a cabinet-maker, carpenter, and stonemason.) “The bridge is a masterpiece, which puts to shame all the architects in the world.”

The following tradition still exists amongst the Mostar Mohammedans. The Christians say that the architect Rade, who had been sent into slavery, regained his freedom from the Turks by means of this bridge. The bridge always fell in again, until, upon the advice of the Vila, the fairy of the mountain forest, he walled up a pair of lovers in the foundations.

One frequently meets with similar traditions: that the corpses of children have been walled up in the foundations of larger buildings is at any rate true of even our own age; as, for example, at the building of the bridge at Trebinje in the beginning of 1870. The bridge itself forms a single high, flat, pointed arch, stretching across from one bank to the other, and in its picturesque surroundings, with the warm ochre tints of its old stone, looks very imposing. The inner height of the arch is 17·85 mètres, including the parapet 19 mètres, the full breadth from one span to the other 27·34 mètres, the width of the bed 38·50 mètres, the breadth of the bridge 4·56 mètres; and it is these proportions which lend to the colossal structure its graceful lightness. When one stands upon the apex of the bridge, pictures of marvellous beauty are unfolded to view wheresoever one directs one's gaze; and as the traffic is a lively one, and as the Oriental is moreover of opinion that haste comes from the devil, patience from the All-good, and as he loves deliberation more than speed, and is also a great admirer of nature, there is here never any lack of many-coloured figures—men in Herzegovinan and Turkish costume, women in coquettish fez and many-folded trousers, or else wrapped up in veils and ample cloaks, who are



Mostar Bridge.

lost in dreams whilst they contemplate their surroundings. Beneath us the Narenta twists and winds between the boulders, so that it is compelled, especially at its banks, to force its foaming waters through veritable labyrinths of rocks. To the left, the bastions and large stone buildings which follow the curves of the rocks seem to rise directly from the waters; whilst the cathedral pile and the bare head of Podveles gaze down upon them from on high. On the right bank, to a certain extent upon the very rocks which rise from the river's bed, are mills, huts, and rubbish heaps of ruined houses, all huddled up together in a narrow space in incredible, indescribable, romantic shapes and conditions, only possible in the East; and in their midst pomegranate and fig trees wave their Southern foliage, and the rivulet of Radobolje pours itself into the Narenta between the huts at the foot of the ashy-grey pyramid of Hum. Twenty primitive stone bridges lead across this stream. A single building of larger size stands upon this shore, but at a greater distance from the bank. It is the Catholic Church, a very beautiful and large structure with a spacious churchyard; and in the interior it is decorated, amongst other things, with the double eagle of Austria and the Hungarian coat-of-arms.

If this part of Mostar is poorer in buildings, the eye is richly recompensed by the luxuriant vegetation, the gardens full of flowers, the vineyards and fruit trees—a refreshing sight at the foot of the bare and desolate mountains.

The period at which Mostar was founded, and what its name was in antiquity, is still a mystery. There are many who seek ancient Andetrium and Bistunæ in this city; but recent research has placed these ancient cities of antiquity further to the west. Others connect its name with the Slavonic “*most*” (bridge), and the town itself with *pons vetus*. In old Italian documents it is mentioned as *Umove id est Mosaro*, and as *Mosarum*. Umove has some connection with the county of Chlum.

In contrast to the south-eastern division of Herzegovina, old Zachlumia, whose name is still preserved intact in the old castle of Zahlumpalanka, and where the Slavonic “*za*” signifies “at the back of,” the western division of the country in the Middle Ages is simply called Chlum or Chelm, in Latin documents Ochlumia, terra Cholim. Chlum, Hlum, and Hum, still the name of the Mostar Mountain, are, however, all identical.

At the close of 1870 the town contained 2,200 Mohammedan, 500 Orthodox, 400 Roman Catholic, 100 Gypsy, and 20 Jewish families. Taken altogether, from fourteen to fifteen thousand inhabitants, thirty mosques, two Greek and one Catholic school. Both the Orthodox Metropolitan, as well as the Catholic Bishop, who reside in Mostar, have beautiful churches.

One could hardly obtain a more favourable, more lively impression of the town than did we as, after a long carriage drive, on a beautiful September afternoon, the minister made his entry into the city.

At Jablanitza, on the border of his district, we were received by the mutesarif, Captain Sauerwald, before Mostar by the Metropolitan, Ignatios, the Catholic bishop, and the general officers of the army.

Our advent was signalled from a long way off upon the heights, and announced by mortars; neither was there any dearth of triumphal arches; but the vivacious crowd—which not only occupied the principal street, but also the flat-roofs of the houses—was of greatest interest. From the suburbs—"Mahala," "Palanka"—all who could crowded into the town—"Varosh"—and the country people of the neighbourhood increased the mass of variegated colour.

The same tall, elastic, stalwart forms as in Bosnia, the same weather-beaten faces, full of manly beauty, the same conscious worth, even in the most tattered clothes. And yet an immense difference strikes the eye. The people have a more Southern look; their dreamy eyes, their thick glossy black hair, their rounded forms and movements, all tell of the South. The

Mohammedan population, both men and women, do not differ in their costume from those in Bosnia; only the women's faces are, if possible, still more concealed; the shade which covers even the eyes is not made here of the same soft material as the veil, but is a firm shield, frequently covered with velvet.

Amongst the Christians, however, and especially amongst the Orthodox, the costume is far more like the Montenegrin, so that even outwardly the



Mohammedan Woman of Mostar.

close connection with the Tshernagora is striking. And there is a still more striking difference. The Bosnian women are beautiful, with their slim, lithe figures, their handsome chiselled features; but if the masculine form should be sharp and angular, the feminine undulating, then the women of Herzegovina distinctly surpass those of Bosnia, for with them rounded development leaves nothing to be desired; indeed, they can satisfy the most exigent demands.

And there is yet another difference. In Mostar we meet with European civilization. Our host and his charming Italian wife entertained us with European comfort and brilliancy in their beautiful two-storied house, so that after the many privations of our journey it seemed to us like a small paradise. Beneath our windows a military band played, and long did the gay crowd linger in the sweet breezes wafted across from the sea by a gentle sirocco.

Upon the flat roof of the adjacent house, which leant towards the courtyard, there lounged some inquisitive girls, half concealing themselves in Oriental fashion, half exposing themselves like Southerners, and enjoying the illuminations, the flags, and the music, and above all the life.

In the midst of all this the news fell like a bombshell amongst us, that the camp before the town had been attacked by the insurgents.

It was, however, only idle noise. It is true insurgents had come, men of warlike mien and powerful stature, but only to lay down their arms and procure their pardon.





CHAPTER XV.

THE SOURCES OF THE BUNA.

Herzegovinan Idyls.

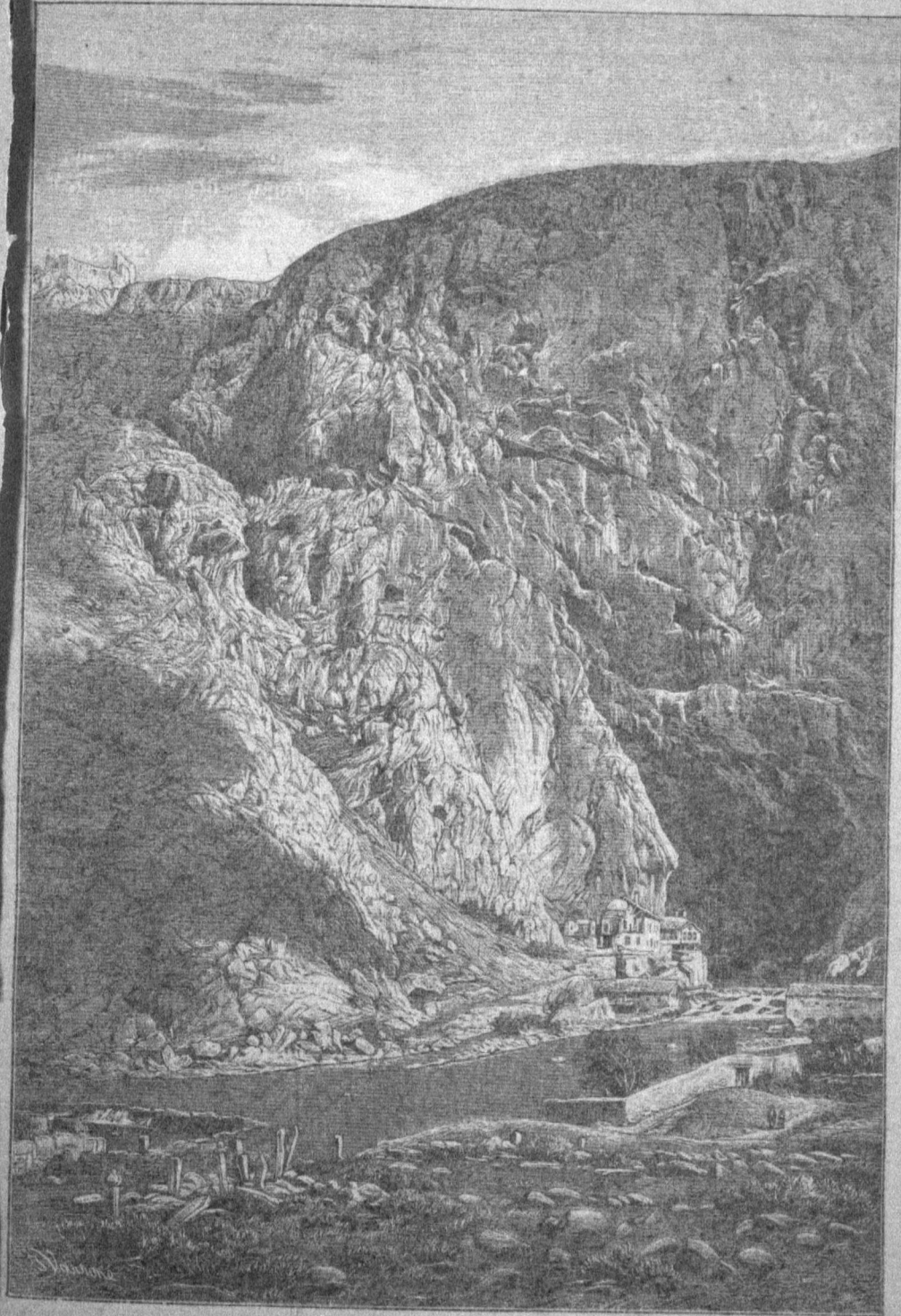
AS there are people who have been ill-starred in their parentage, so have the sources of the Buna been most distinctly unfortunate in the place of their origin.

In Switzerland, in the Pyrenees, in short, wherever those lovers of nature who wish to enjoy her sweet air and her charms in safety and without effort travel by hundreds and thousands, there the sources of the Buna would have become one of the most celebrated spots; they would have been constantly described in innumerable books of travel, have been photographed and lithographed by the thousand, and would always have been on view in all art exhibitions, like the Grotto of Capri, which in their bluish twilight and profound stillness, moreover, they closely resemble, with this difference, indeed, that instead of standing in the middle of the sea of Naples, they stand amidst the still more powerfully upheaved ocean of rocks of Herzegovina. No other river offers such a plenitude of wild romance as the Narenta does from Konitza to Mostar. At Mostar Bridge one thinks one has attained to the summit of all its beauties; but as though nature and history had entered into an alliance to offer us all these charms again combined and heightened, the union of frowning majesty and sweetest grace, the gigantic hall of rocks of Blagaj unfolds to us its yawning gulfs with that motionless and bright mirror of water, from which flows the fresh and sparkling stream of the Buna, which is cold even in the hottest summer. And there are people who have been to Mostar without ever having even heard of this wonder of the world. Incredible enough, but still more incredible that people should not go to see it when they have heard of it. Some day,

when wild Herzegovina has been tamed, and a railway leads from the sea to Mostar,* this spot will very likely become a place of pilgrimage to all lovers of Nature.

Just as immediately before reaching the Herzegovinan capital, so also on the further side of Mostar, the rocky pass of the Narenta widens out for a space. Podveles, which forces the houses in the town close on to the Narenta, turns off towards the left away from the last houses, and whilst the stream rushes on due south, the bare mountain, with its white walls growing ever more rugged, turns more and more in an easterly direction, until it reaches the small village of Blagaj. From this point another wall of rocks, the promontories of the Dubrava-Planina, runs in an almost straight line as far as the village of Buna on the Narenta, and along this second wall there flows, bursting forth from the cavities in the rocks of Blagaj, the river Buna, until it reaches its mouth in the Narenta under a bridge of fourteen arches. There is, therefore, amidst this sea of rocks, a small three-cornered plain, covered with clusters of houses, isolated buildings, and verdant tobacco fields, visible to the naked eye from all points. Its northern corner is Mostar, its eastern Blagaj, its western Buna. One side is formed by the rushing Narenta, the other two by the steep, rugged, greyish-white walls of Podveles and the Dubrava-Planina. From Mostar the high road keeps close to the Narenta as far as Metkovitsh and to the sea. Midway between Mostar and Buna, something like six kilometres from the town, a second road branches off towards Blagaj and the angle between the two walls of rock, and this road leads across this angle and between these walls of rock through to Nevesinje. As soon as we reach the point where the roads branch off, we see the scattered houses of Blagaj; and far above this wall of rocks, which rises some eight hundred feet, we can discern the last peak of Podveles, the ruins of Stepanograd, an extensive, many-towered royal castle, built many centuries ago, at the time when the counts of Chlum or Chelm, who ruled this land, were at the height of their glory. Built from the stone found upon the spot, and long since transferred,—nay, centuries ago, from the hands of men into those of Nature, this vast mountain fortress has, in form and colouring, grown so much like its rocky foundations that from below it is hard to distinguish where the handiwork of man begins and ends. The solid rock looks like bastion and tower, the ruined watch-tower and bold walls like a heap of stones and cliff. Rough and desolate and dead does the fortress seem, though once so gay with princely glory, like the sunburnt, torn, bare peak itself, which it crowns; like the mountain, it stands there, however, even

* This railway now exists.



Sources of the Buna.

in its decay, in massive grandeur, proudly and defiantly upon its unapproachable, dizzy heights.

From this fortress the mountain-side falls sheer down at a sharp angle with those which meet it here. From the perpendicular sides huge blocks project and threaten to crush any who shall dare to roam here. And that their threat is no empty one is amply proved by the fragments, blocks, and moraines which cover the ground far and wide, and constantly force the rushing torrent into new and tortuous channels. And to this the solitary mosque built into the narrow angle, and now lying dashed to pieces by falling masses of rock, also testifies. Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovitch built it, and destiny crushed his work as it crushed him himself. That ancient and small building at the back of the ruins is all that remains; it conceals the grave of a Turkish saint, and is a favourite place of pilgrimage of the Mohammedan population. A sword and war-club are painted on the outer wall; in the interior, in the dark vault, there rest in two simple, carpet-covered wooden coffins the saint and his faithful servant. Upon the wall hang the sword and club themselves.

This saint was a hero, who fell fighting for Islam; these were his weapons. The watchman who dwells near the vault each evening places a water-jug and a towel within, for the dead saint still nightly performs his religious ablutions. Morning after morning the towel is damp, and the water in the jug has diminished. Amongst these projecting, moss-grown crags eagles build their nests, and fly about high overhead, the sentinels of Stepanograd; and from the jutting rocks, long points of fantastic drop-stone hang down, genuine stalactite ornaments, just like those in a Moorish building.

Close by the shattered mosque an enormous cavern opens into the wall of rock. It is richly covered both outside and inside with these stalactites; and as we gaze into the cavern from a wooden balcony belonging to the mosque, a mystic, fairy-like, bluish light glimmers within; the bottom, however, which is large enough for a ballroom, is like a deep, quiet mirror of glass, bright, blue, and motionless as steel. From out of this still mirror of water springs the restless Buna stream, full of red and silver trout; and if one casts a stone into the cavern, whole armies of pigeons fly up, fluttering in fear before the eagles who are circling above.

Is not all this like the fairy tale of the enchanted castle? As in deep silence, and in the society of a monosyllabic Mussulman, one thus gazes down from the balcony, cannot one believe that even now the ashy-grey rocks may blossom into green, that the eagles of Stepanograd, suddenly transformed into armed knights, may set forth from the ancient fortress restored to its

pristine glory, that the timorous doves may turn to beautiful fairy-like maidens, and that from out of the house of God, which rises again from amidst its ruins, sacred songs may rise to heaven? . . . Nay, nay, . . . the counts of Chelm will never more arise; their very graves were disturbed in the long wars of the centuries; the wind has long since blown away their ashes. Not even the "most mighty Stepan, Duke of St. Sava," as he is called in the decrees of the Diet of Konitza, not even he will ever more appear, the builder of this proud castle, who five and a half centuries ago, with daring and adroitness, made use of and outwitted the King of Bosnia, the Pope, the King of Hungary, the Sultan, and the Roman Emperor Frederick, all alike, and raised himself to be duke, and the county of Chelm to be an almost independent Herzegovina. . . . The short-lived splendour was soon, however, succeeded by the long adversity. His own sons cast him from the throne; and by 1483, scarcely forty years after the founding of the dukedom, twenty years after Stefan Tomashevitch, King of Bosnia, had been taken prisoner and flayed alive, they fled, seeking aid in Hungary and Ragusa; whilst Mustapha, Begler-Beg of Bosnia, razed their castle of Stepanograd to the ground.

Yet again, beneath the shades of these ruins there arose an almost independent principality. Ali-Beg Rizvanbegovitsh, the head of one of the most powerful of the renegade families, declared himself on the Sultan's side, when in 1831 the begs revolted against their suzerain. After the suppression of the insurrection he reigned in Herzegovina in the Sultan's name, free from almost all control. Thousands of stakes bearing decapitated heads all round the konak proclaimed his power. But in 1850 he placed himself at the head of a new insurrection, and in 1851 was taken prisoner and shot by Omer Pasha in his summer-palace at Buna.

Some time since, other members of the Rizvanbegovitsh's family fell at the storming of Stolatza, fighting in the name of the Sultan.

It does not seem incredible, after so many deeds of blood, when we are told by the people that upon this accursed spot, in the cavern of the Buna Springs, not only trout and doves, but also occasionally headless corpses appear. Thrown into the water somewhere near Nevesinje, they vanish in the hollows of the limestone to re-appear with the water miles away.

No enchantment, but only patient, laborious care and labour will suffice to break the curse of those centuries of bloodshed, and to restore the gentle smile of prosperity to this blood-drenched wilderness; then, in the midst of this prosperity, in the midst of the pleasures of peaceful toil, this picture of the Buna Springs, with all the horrors of its beauty, will only serve to call to mind a distant past.



CHAPTER XVI.

FROM MOSTAR TO THE SEA.

Ancient Bona and Modern Buna — Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovitsh — The "Zaton" and the "Mostarsko Blato" — Zitomishl and the Counts Miloradovitsh — The Desert of Dubrava and the Oasis of Domanovitsh — Potshitelj — The Delta of the Narenta — The Rival of Venice — Neum and the Harbour of Klek.

August, 1882.

SINCE the summer of 1885, Mostar has been connected by a railway with Metkovitsh, to which place small sea-going vessels even can go up the mouth of the Narenta. On the right bank of the stream, where the steam-engine now passes, at the time of our first journey in 1882 there was only a dangerous bridle-path over the rocky cliffs. The carriage way on the left bank, too, by which we left the country, had only been completed a few years previously. This road leads straight along the river's bank as far as the village of Buna, which lies at the mouth of the river of the same name, not far from where the road branches off to Blagaj, at the lower point of the little plain which stretches away in a southerly direction from Mostar.

The Emperor Constantine mentions the fortress of Bona, which, according to his statement, was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the fortress of Chlum, both presumably upon the same mountain. This Bona cannot, however, be the present village of this name, to which no tradition points, and near which there are no traces of any ruins, but is manifestly Blagaj, which lies opposite, in the other angle of the three-cornered plain, with the springs of the Buna and the ruins of Stepanograd above it. "Blag" is old Slavonic for bonus. Here, too, until the fifteenth century, as a matter of fact, was situated the chief town in the whole province. The castle of "Chlum," mentioned by Constantine, which gave its name to the whole country, was most likely situated above present Mostar, just as "Vrhbosna" lay above

Serajevo. The remains of considerable enclosures are still visible on the mountain of Ham. In a manuscript dated 1452 it says: "*Do castelli al ponte de Neretva.*" Are these intended for Chlum and Bona, or did another castle stand opposite to the castle of Chlum, at the foot of Podveles, as is conjectured from the small ruins which exist there too, and from the pillars which are still preserved? This much is certain, that Mostar, like many other towns, emanated from the old fortress in the mountain pass, and first sprang into existence during the Turkish supremacy, absorbing the mediæval town situated in the plain.

Buna as it now exists, upon which the river has devolved the forgotten name of its predecessor, is of modern origin. Its most ancient monument is the bridge, which dates from the later Turkish era, and which in nine arches spans the mouth of the Buna. According to some, it was first erected by Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovitsh, who, when at the height of his power, loved to linger in his summer-palace, which may yet be seen as it stands on the further side of the bridge, in the midst of its once carefully tended but now neglected gardens, itself a ruined emblem of the transitory nature of all earthly power.

It was in this very same country house that the Serdar-Ekrem, Omer Pasha, caused the mighty rebel to be taken prisoner of whom each Herzegovinan beg still proudly tells, as he points out to the traveller his former castles and villas, and his most beautiful monuments—the olive and rice plantations introduced by him.

The lofty, defiant stone castle of Stoltz was the place of his birth, and he was himself the hereditary Kapetan of Stoltz. He and Smail Aga Tshengitsh of Gatzko were the only great vassals who remained faithful when Hussein Aga Berbeli, in 1831, led the Bosnians, who had risen to withstand reforms, against Constantinople and the "Gyaur Sultan." They laboured together in the overthrow of the rebels and in the re-establishment of the authority of the Porte. Ali-Beg's reward was the governorship over Herzegovina, made independent of the Vizier of Bosnia. Under the uncontrolled rule of the new pasha, the days of the founder of Herzegovina, Duke Stefan, seemed to return, and under his sanguinary but energetic and wise government the province seemed to rise more and more to the position of an independent country. When the rebellious Christians of the Gatzko district, supported by the Tshrnagorzes, on August 29th, 1840, slew Smail Aga Tshengitsh in his camp, Ali Pasha fought against the Vladika Peter Petrovitsh for two consecutive years. But in the year 1842 the two opponents met in Ragusa, and not only concluded a truce, but also, it is supposed, a secret

alliance against the Porte, whose suzerainty the Bishop of Tshetinje, as well as the Pasha of Herzegovina, wished to shake off.

Up to the year 1848 no pretext was offered for an encounter, as this suzerainty had so far been only nominal; but in these disturbed years Christian insurrections broke out in Bosnia on the one hand, and on the other refractoriness on the part of the begs towards the reforms introduced by the Porte, and which the Vizier Tahir Pasha had energetically carried out.

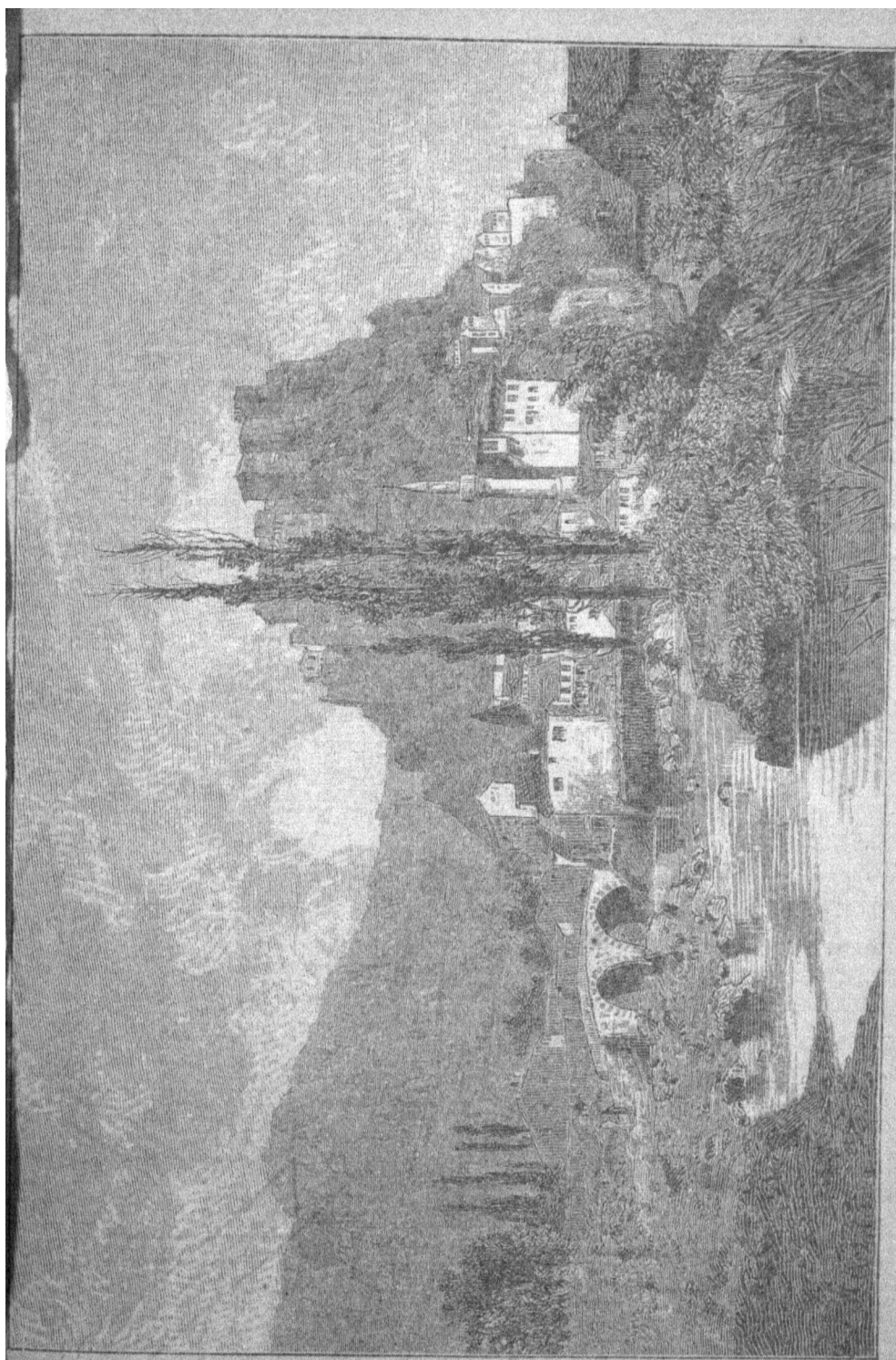
Ali Pasha advanced against the Christians with the full weight of his power, and spears adorned with decapitated heads were stuck up round his castles and forts. But he gave his support to the begs, for upon them he wished to found his daring project of independence.

In 1850, however, the storm approached in the guise of Omer Pasha with fifteen thousand men and thirty cannon. Whilst Omer Pasha was pacifying Bosnia, Ielinski, the Pole—according to his Mohammedan name, Iskender-Beg—advanced with a division of the Ottoman army against the suspected man, Ali Pasha. The latter knew full well that his dreams of independence would be at an end should Omer Pasha gain the upper hand. He, therefore, supported the insubordination of the begs with all his might; but, fox-like, he wished to keep a back door open for his own retreat.

He did not, therefore, place himself at the head of the movement, but devolved the leadership upon his chief executioner, whilst he himself awaited the result of the contest in his castle of Stolatz. The chief executioner, at the head of the insurgent begs, strengthened by a division of Ali Pasha's troops, advanced against the attacking force all along the line, which, over the Porim-Planina, Zimje-Polje, Lipeto-Planina, and across the Borke Plains and the Vrabatz Mountains, cuts off the long, blind alley formed by the bend in the Narenta, in a straight line from Konitzza to Mostar. This was, indeed, the old road to Mostar, only a bridle-path over the hills, before the carriage-road along the Narenta was completed. Ielinski rapidly drove back the advanced guard from Vrabatz; after an hour's cannonade took possession of the plains of Borke, and drove the insurgents over the Porim, from whose heights he caused the rebels, as they retreated over Bjelo-Polje towards Mostar, to be fired at, so that only a small portion, with their leader, escaped to Austrian territory. A few days later Omer Pasha entered Mostar.

Ali Pasha, upon learning the result of the battle, left the castle of Stolatz under strong cover, and hurried, with a portion of his troops, to Buna, in order that he might await, in his country seat, whatever he had to expect from Omer Pasha, should he be treated as a rebel, or offered a friendly settlement.

But Omer Pasha was no less sly than he. With a great show of respect,



Castle of Stolatz, belonging to Ali Pasha.

he sought the governor of Herzegovina in his country house at Buna, and in person invited him to a banquet at Mostar, whither he accompanied him. Whilst the banquet was proceeding the imperial troops advanced on Buna and Stolat, with the announcement that the governor had been deposed, and was a prisoner of the Serdar-Ekrem.

Two native historians have published Ali Pasha's biography; one appeared in Vienna, the other in St. Petersburg.* The latter describes his end as follows:—

"They dragged old Ali Pasha, who from the infirmities of age could hardly walk, to the Narenta bridge, and there placed him upon a donkey, and thus did Omer Pasha take him with him to the Kraina, whither he was proceeding against the insurgents. Ali Pasha, embittered by this disgrace, burst out against the Serdar-Ekrem: 'Why dost thou trouble me? thou, too, art a Wallach, the son of a Wallachian.† . . . Whence dost thou arrogate to thyself the power to treat me thus? Even had I taken up arms against the Sultan himself, thou wouldst not be worthy to associate with me, as though thou hadst taken me captive in battle, even if thou wert the Serdar-Ekrem three times over. Oh, thou unclean Wallachian, send me rather before the Padishah, that he may pass judgment upon me, and do not thou insult me in mine old age.' Omer Pasha now began to be alarmed, for Ali Pasha had many and powerful friends at the Padishah, to whom he had always been careful to send enormous sums of money from Herzegovina. So Omer Pasha turned the matter over in his mind, until he discovered that it would be better if Ali Pasha were to die, and so at two o'clock in the night a shot was heard, and the news was brought to Omer Pasha that a gun had accidentally gone off, and that the bullet had passed through Ali Pasha's head. Thus died Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovitch, on March 20th, 1851."

Up above Buna, the Narenta, which is thus far accompanied on both sides by the plain known as Bishtshe, passes out between high precipices. Upon the east the mountain of Gubavitza, on the west that of Titre, form the pass, six miles in length, which goes by the name of "Zaton." The legend, as the name implies, considers it to have been a bank of rock, which was pierced through by human hands to give an outlet to the waters, which had previously formed a permanent lake in the flats of Bjelo-Polje and Bishtshe. In the surrounding hills the marks of the old water-line are still pointed out, and iron rings are

* *Herzegovina za 19 gadinak razrovaniah Ali-Pasa. U. Bécu 1863*—"Gisme Ali-Pasi Rizvanbegarica."

† The renowned Omer Pasha was at one time sub-officer in the Austrian service, which he deserted. His name was Michael Lotis.

even mentioned, to which the dwellers on the shores of the lake fastened their boats. It is a fact that the plain which stretches for many miles from Mostar to the north-west of the mountain of Hum, to Shirokibrig, and is watered by the combined rivers of the Ugrovatza and the Lishtitza, during the greater part of the year stands under water, and is never absolutely dry, although it lies higher than the plains which surround Mostar. It is called, too, "Mostarsko Blato," the lake, or marsh, of Mostar. Its waters run off through "Ponors" underground. The Government is now contemplating its drainage. In the steep cliffs, to the right of this "Zaton," the railroad had to be blasted. The left side is just as steep, and at one point only does a narrow valley slope down to the river, in whose lap, amidst luxuriant vegetation and centenarian trees, lies the ancient Orthodox monastery of Zitomisbl, reputed to have been built in 1585 by the family of Miloradovitsh. The two Russian generals, the Counts Miloradovitsh, of whom one is known through the Napoleonic campaign, and the other through the last Eastern war, are descended from this Herzegovinan family. The latter visited this monastery many years ago.

The carriage way avoids the monastery, which can only be reached on foot or on horseback or by means of boats from the opposite shore; it mounts up behind Buna to the desolate tableland of the Dubrava Planina, where it winds through the rocky pass for about twelve miles, parted from the river, until it at last rejoins it near romantic Potshitelj. The declivity which we ascended is formed of marl and broken stones, and gives evidence of a former lake.

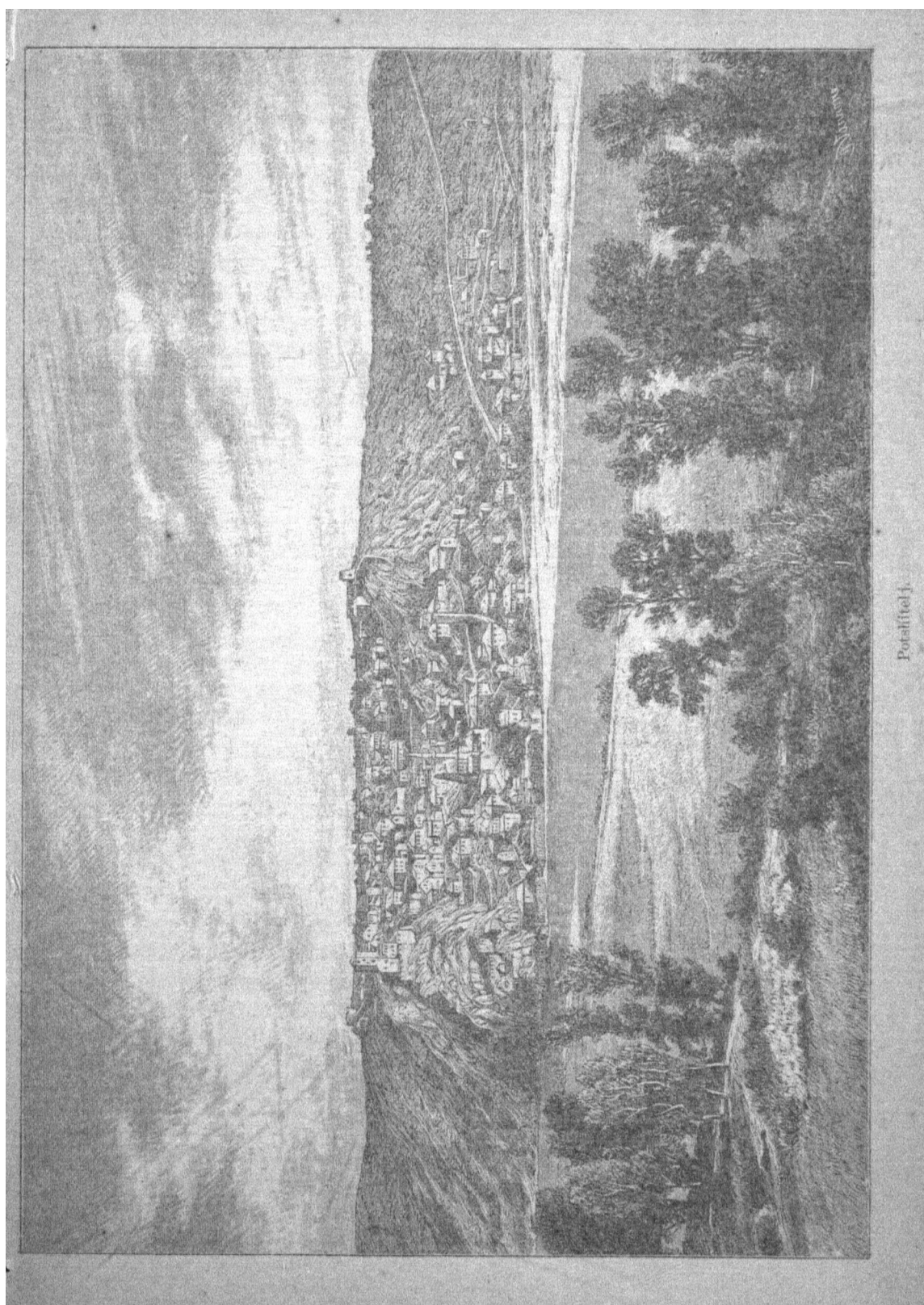
Attaining the summit, we found ourselves upon a tableland broken up by many deep rifts in the rock, where occasional oaks point to that wood, in the past, to which it owes its name. At long intervals, and in the far distance, solitary houses may be distinguished in this waterless waste of rocks; but not until we are six miles from Buna do we come to a poorish inn with a cistern, where water is to be had, and, therefore, also coffee. With this exception our eyes rest on nothing but cliffs and boulders, and between the stones venomous snakes and scorpions, long lizards, the carcasses of dead animals, and the stumps and roots of fallen trees. The sky is, of a transparent pale azure, the rocks ashy-grey, here and there changing into sand colour or rusty brown, the sparse vegetation being of a melancholy greyish-green. The whole, a Southern solitude, almost a desert, inhospitable and bare; and yet withal beautiful. For so it is with nature; when colour vanishes from the earth, the wonderful atmospheric effects of light strike the traveller all the more, and under these effects, especially in the early morning hour at which we

reached the summit, the distant cliffs sparkled in brilliant saffron, and tender peachlike tints ; and in the clear light, the like of which I have only seen in Africa, the grotesque outlines were visible in sharp distinctness even at the farthest distance.

At Domanovitsh, at the end of the Planina, we suddenly reached the one verdant oasis in this wilderness ; a tiny brooklet, which quickly vanishes into a subterranean passage, produces a bright green vegetation under the shadow of immense groups of trees. Here the road to Stolatsh branches off to the east. This important point is protected by fortified barracks, in which we rested for a short time, whilst the horses were being changed. * This little colony of officers only have to take a short walk in order to shoot snipe, chamois, and bears. The road now winds rapidly down to the Narenta, which we reached at the village of Tazovtshitsh. As we entered the village we could just make out a few old castle towers belonging to romantic Potshitelj, which we skirted.

The whole place rests on the precipice, which rises almost perpendicularly from the Narenta, one of the most peculiar sights from the further bank, as we saw a few years afterwards from the railway. Between the irregular walls of the fortifications and round towers stood small stone houses, all of the ashy-grey of the natural rock, without a trace of vegetation ; but down below the beautiful emerald green of the river. The fort was built by King Tvrtko in 1383.

At Tazovtshitsh, in whose picturesque burial-ground, in peaceful repose, stand the turban-headed columns of the Mohammedans side by side with the carved crosses of the Catholics and the gigantic primitive Bogomilian stones, commences a swampy plain, which stretches along between the mountains to the east of the Narenta. On the further side, the verdant valley of the Trebizat reaches down from Ljubushki. Above the mouth of the Trebizat, which branches off in three directions, near a lonely tower, lies the village of Tshapljina, which has since been given a railway station, from which a ferry-boat now plies to this shore. We, too, made use of this, when later on (in 1885) we crossed Dalmatia and Ljubushki to Stolatsh. In the delta of the Trebizat luxuriant rice fields appear. Up beyond Tazovtshitsh we had to cross the wild Bregova, which comes down from Stolatsh, and on the other—southern—border of the narrow plain, the waters of the Krupa in front of the little hamlet of Dratshevo, where we once more met with Bogomilian graves. On the further side of the Narenta, which here has already broadened out and split up into many branches, Gabella rises in the middle of swamps, surrounded by dilapidated walls and towers ; this was at one time the Venetian, later on the Turkish frontier fortress. Over there,



Poratitfel.

on the banks of the Norni streamlet, upon Dalmatian soil, lie the ruins of Roman Narona. Upon our shore we are still upon the slope of the hill; but opposite to us the marshes extend farther than eye can reach, marshes in which herds of buffaloes are moving about. Soon after this we cross the Dalmatian frontier, and mount up to the town of Metkovich, before which we already distinguish the smaller sea-going craft which have penetrated thus far up the delta of the Narenta. Damp, sultry air oppressed us, and weighed like a band of iron upon our foreheads. The heavens clouded over rapidly, and before we could reach the town it began to pour with rain. Water everywhere.

Beyond Metkovich the marshes spread ever further and further along both banks of the Narenta, and were partly covered with luxuriant crops, partly with stagnant water. We did not dismount at all in this little Dalmatian town, although the magistrate of the district, surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, and unmindful of the pouring rain, received the minister in full state. The emaciated, yellow faces showed that it was not advisable to linger here, for the dangerous marsh fever, which may attack healthy new-comers and cause their death within six hours, is always rampant in this place. Were it not for this, the delta of the Narenta would be one of the most fruitful tracts of land in the world. In certain firmer parts, maize grows into real forests, the vine flourishes luxuriantly untended, and the mulberry tree grows to such a size that four men can hardly clasp it round. The fevers, however, which each summer attack every single inhabitant, destroy the people, and the marshes of the Narenta the soil. For a long time efforts have been made to drain it; but the undertaking is a colossal one, and the outlay still to be met, enormous.

And yet it was not always thus, for here stood the flourishing Roman town of Narona; and after the Avars and Slavs had destroyed this in the year 639, a pirate town sprang up, which was for centuries the terror of the entire Adriatic. Where Narona had once stood there arose the town bearing the name of the heathen god Viddo, now an unimportant village. In the year 873, Niketas, the Byzantine Emperor Basilus's admiral, forced the population to accept Christianity; but the Emperor Constantine still mentions the country of the "Narentani" as *Paganía*. In the year 827 the inhabitants declined to pay their tribute to Byzantium, and in the following century they nearly succeeded in nipping the rising glory of Venice in the bud. Venice was compelled to purchase the freedom of her commerce from them by payment of tribute. Not until 997 did the Doge Pietro II. Orzeolo succeed in breaking the power of the Narentines, and in making them stoop

beneath the Venetian suzerainty. Upon this was founded the world-wide power of Venice; but for a course of a century it was quite a question whether the ancestors of these ailing inhabitants of the marshes would not suppress proud Venice.

Although we only changed horses, and hastened onwards without further delay, we were forced to breathe the poisonous air of these marshes for something like an hour and a half. The road leads, between swamps and lagunes, along the southern end of the Narenta delta to the lake of Kutji, where it again climbs up to the steep, desolate rocks which constantly accompanied us on our left. We mounted laboriously by long serpentine windings, constantly gazing back upon the marshes darkened now by the pouring rain, through which fort Opus dimly emerged between the two branches of the Narenta. On the mountain ridge we were again upon old Herzegovinian territory, upon that narrow tongue of land by which Herzegovina forces its way through Dalmatian territory to the sea, and reaches it at the one time Turkish Gulf of Klek. The road, however, along which we were travelling was always an Austrian military road. By the time we had reached the summit, the heavy rain had turned to a frightful thunderstorm.

Thunder and lightning followed one another with scarcely any intermission, and in this plight we reached the old Turkish military road from Stolatz, which, crossing the Austrian road, leads down to Neum: a public-house on the steep and barren mountain-side, a custom-house, and three or four huts on the seashore: that was all. In vain did our eyes seek the man-of-war which was to have been in waiting for us here. In vain did we telegraph to Zara, Triest, and Vienna: the only answer we received was, that the vessel had weighed anchor several days ago, and should have been at Neum long ere this. It was plain that the storm delayed her arrival. We began to debate whether we should not retrace our steps. At last in the darkness of the night there appeared at the end of the long Gulf of Klek a glimmering light. Soon afterwards rockets went up in the air: a man-of-war. It was in fact the *Andreas Hofer*, the corvette which stands at the disposal of the governor of Dalmatia, and upon her we put to sea, at midnight, for Triest.





CHAPTER XVII.

THE POSAVINA.

The Save—The Posavina—Large Estates—Bretshka—Bosnian Plums—Boat Journey—Bjelina—Agricultural Improvements—Adventures with Robbers—Zvornik—The Bosnian Semiramide.

June, 1883.

THE waters of the Save were running high as we drew up before Brod in the darkness of night and in boisterous weather. The floods which covered wide tracts of land, and the rain which was pouring down like a water-spout, threatened the railway embankments, upon which the train could only move forwards with great caution, constantly coming to a standstill. We rejoiced when at last, and without having suffered any harm, we drew up at the railway station, whence we immediately went on board the ship; for on this occasion our journey was principally in connection with the eastern parts of Bosnia, that is to say, with the district of Tuzla. As the storm abated, we gazed into the distance from the deck of the ship as it silently glided over the dark waters towards all that we could at this hour distinguish of the broad, extensive Posavina. The entire picture consisted of the outline of the low shore, along which at regular intervals rose the telegraph posts, with here and there some low bushes and a few clusters of trees. Ever and again we also saw, in addition to this bare, ever-recurring straight line, the outlines of dark masses of wood. I have since travelled along this river by daylight, but even then the view was much the same, the only difference being, that in the place of the black outline of the shore, the black trees, bushes, and clouds, there had appeared a yellow, loamy soil, a bright green vegetation, and a bright warm sky, and very occasionally, too, a broken-down building, a herd of cattle, and once even a troop of pelicans came in sight—a sign that

we were on the borders of another world. The opposite Slavonian shore presents a picture hardly less monotonous. But behind these bare straight lines, on both sides of the Save, there stretch broad and fruitful plains, and the Bosnian Posavina is in no degree less valuable than the rich soil of Slavonia, to whose productiveness her virgin soil will under modern management, and a change in the system of agriculture, soon attain, if not surpass. Moreover, the people and their habits, at any rate in the vicinity of the river, are more advanced than anywhere else in the country, and may, as they are scarcely behind those of the opposite shore, to a certain extent serve as a proof that a river is not such a dividing frontier as a mountain range, nay, that as a natural highway it rather serves to bind the people together. Neither did the Romans regard it as a frontier. On the further side of the Save the whole of Posavina up to the mountains belonged to Pannonia, and Roman Dalmatia only commenced at the foot of the chain of hills. In the Middle Ages, too, the Posavina was still divided between the banates of Uzora and Matsho; but these were in closer connection with Hungary proper than was the rest of Bosnia; indeed, as they were never reckoned in with Bosnia, they were only entrusted to the government of the Bosnian Ban in an exceptional manner. Not until the Turkish conquest had made fast its hold on the banks of the Save was this rich plain absolutely joined to the Bosnian Vilayet.

The Oriental institutions, the insecure government, and uncertainty of the course of justice, the religious difficulties, and the laws of property, in the meantime prevented agricultural development in the Posavina too, even though it is by nature one of the most favoured spots in Europe. Some of the begs possess gigantic estates here; but in spite of all the favourable natural conditions their income is small. It is said that the Bogomaster of Serajevo, Mustapha-Beg Fadil Pashitsh, who is, apart from this, one of the largest landowners in the country, possesses in the province of Bjelina alone forty thousand measures of land (joch), which yield him on an average fifty kr. The same conditions exist in the Posavina to-day which existed in the banate of Temesh after its re-conquest. And here too, doubtless, will be repeated that fabulous development of wealth, which at the end of the last and beginning of this century has taken place there. Enterprising capitalists will acquire tracts of land at ridiculously low prices, which will at first yield next to nothing, but will in fifty years grow into an immense fortune. And how small the means required for such an undertaking are is shown by some who migrated here on account of the Austrian occupation, such as Jewish publicans and tradesmen without capital, and who now own from two thousand

to three thousand measures of land. Most probably the Jews will here play the part of the Armenian and Rascian pig-dealers, who in the banate of Temesh too, have been the chief founders of large landed estates; for there is no one who will compete with these speculators, no one will take up the cudgels under the agrarian conditions now in force with the risk of conditions now only in the course of being formulated.

And yet one can see at a glance that circumstances are rapidly improving and promise a rich reward.

We landed at five o'clock in the morning at the town of Brtshka, where we left the ship, which continued its way to Belgrade. We had left Samatsh, the only other port of any importance in this part of the Posavina, behind us in the darkness of the night. The minister had finished his official receptions and audiences and the inspection of the public institutions by dinner-time, so that we might be free to proceed on our way to Bjelina directly after dinner.

Brtshka is a comparatively rich town, which in its arrangement gives the impression of being Slavonian rather than Bosnian. Its inhabitants, numbering some three thousand souls, carry on an active trade. About two thousand Mohammedans live on the left bank of the Brtshka brook, the Christians on the right bank. The town is situated upon a tableland which slopes down several metres into the Save, and which to the west with its sharply defined boundaries reaches down to the waters of the Tinja, but on the south joins on to the last promontories of the wild mountain range of the Majevitza-Planina, so that it really represents a headland which separates the former banate of Matsho, beginning beyond it to the east, from the other parts of the Posavina. The banate of Matsho, which extended along both banks of the Drina, and along the left bank of the Save, through Belgrade as far as Semendria, has preserved the name of "Matshva" in its Bosnian as well as in its Servian division. Owing to its higher situation, Brtshka is not so subject to floods as the other townships in the Posavina, which for the most part consist of lightly built houses resting upon piles.

The whole neighbourhood of Brtshka is, with the exception of a few more or less wooded spots, covered with well-tended plum orchards and arable fields, upon which maize grows ten or twelve feet high, with green fields and meadows, with hedges, and wattled or wooden fences, so that there are distinct signs of agricultural advancement and prosperity. But then, nearly the whole agricultural trade of the Posavina is concentrated here. The dried plums of Bosnia, which are sent off from here *viâ* Budapesth to Germany, Russia, and America, in favourable seasons amount to

an export of twelve million kilogrammes (26,455,000 lbs.), and the corn trade, too, is considerable.

After dinner we proceeded on our journey in the most natural, easy, pleasant, and yet now unusual manner. We rowed down the Save in boats to Brzovo-Polje. The Bosnians—that is to say, those who live near rivers—are all skilled boatmen, and are able to take a living beast, standing, across a swollen river in a punt constructed from the hollowed-out trunks of trees. We floated down the stream in broad, comfortable boats, shaded by leaves, and covered with carpets, followed by a regular little flotilla full of picturesque Eastern figures.

All along, at about a rifle shot from the shore, we could see the old Turkish dyke, which protects it from Brzovo-Polje to Vidovitz, above Brtshka, and which was then the only highway always available. Upon all the other roads people could only get about in dry weather; indeed, the Christian peasantry were very careful to avoid any visible lines of communication between their residences, for only when far away from these did they feel themselves to be in safety. Even here on the plains the only means of communication was to go on foot or on horseback. Since the Austrian occupation the high-roads have been added to in all directions; through the initiative of the people themselves the collateral lines are being extended, and with them, vehicles, which were first introduced from Slavonia, but are now seen everywhere, and built of an equally good quality, in Brtshka and in Bjelina.

Brzovo-Polje, with the Mohammedan name of Azizié, after the Sultan Abdul-Aziz, is a purely Mohammedan colony, which sprang up in 1864; at that time the Turks who had been driven out of Belgrade settled here. Of these, however, it was only the most helpless who remained; whilst the more prosperous quickly removed into the towns, so that the new colony fell rapidly into decay.

From Brzovo-Polje the promontories of the Majevitza-Planina rapidly recede from the banks of the Save; and, taking our way to the south-east, we, after a rapid journey in carriages, in a few hours reached Bjelina, as it lies in the midst of broad plains and plum orchards.

Whilst we were at supper, old Omer-Beg told us how, in the Turkish-Servian war, Bjelina defended itself against General Alimpitsh's Servian troops. His long beard was of a snowy whiteness; but his eyes flashed with youthful fire, as he told us how he was still ready to take up arms against the Servians. Bjelina, lying in the angle between the Save and the Drina, is an important town about twelve miles from the former river, and only six from the latter, and is situated upon the Orlova-Polje (plain of the eagle). It numbers six

thousand five hundred inhabitants, which, excepting a large colony of Spanish Jews, are almost all Mohammedans, and enjoys a flourishing cattle and corn trade. This town, too, is almost entirely built of bricks.

What struck us most of all in passing through the Posavina was how it was rapidly progressing towards a higher economical development. Excellent arable land is still very cheap there, so that the best is sold at an average of eighteen florins, medium at five florins per measure (*joch*). This is partly due to the circumstance that there is still a great deal of uncultivated soil here, many tenants having, at their disposal, more fields than they have either the power or desire to cultivate. With their small ambitions, their natural indolence, and the existing agrarian conditions they only too often content themselves with that which will cover their necessities, and, indeed, let the remaining land lie fallow, with a certain amount of mischievous joy that they will thereby lessen their landlord's income.

The low price of land also explains the high rate of interest. The banks and loan offices were formerly exclusively in the hands of Spanish-Jewish usurers. As a result of the beneficial influence of the Austrian Government, and chiefly of the just administration of the laws, which increasingly lessen the friction between the landlords and tenants, more ground and soil is, as a whole, being brought under cultivation each year.

The number of agrarian actions at law is rapidly on the decrease, and they, for the most part, end in a friendly compromise. The virgin soil brings a rich return, and spurs men on to work, though naturally the transition state causes much inconvenience. The great begs, even though burdened by usurious debts, own such vast tracts of land, and are masters of so many vassals upon them, that they can but benefit by the advancement of culture and order. The small landowners, who now no longer grind down the vassals, and who can only lay claim to their legal third part, are no longer in a position to lord it over them to the same extent as of yore. If, for example, two landlords together only own one *kmet* plot, they find themselves in a worse position than the *kmet* himself. However, at any rate, in the rich Posavina, small landlords rise more easily than elsewhere, if they only attend to their work; many of them become carriers, tradesmen, small innkeepers, and skilled mechanics. But, of course, he who will not work naturally comes to grief, and then blames the bad times, and at times he emigrates; on the other hand, there are most propitious signs of the development of a free peasantry.

The number of *knets* who free themselves and their land from the *aga* or *beg* is ever on the increase. Frequent are the complaints about the diminution of free pasturage and woods in the formerly unprotected, despoiled