

forests, and still more over the slaughter of the cattle attacked by disease. But all this really shows a great and beneficial progress. At first, too, complaints were many over compulsory labour in the construction of roads; but the surprising increase in the number of carts in use is the best proof that the people understand the advantages of well-constructed highways; and now they voluntarily form connections between their settlements by roads. And, finally, even though the usurers are dissatisfied with the land-credit established through the intervention of the Government, yet landholders will speedily experience the blessings of cheap capital. The disadvantage experienced in other parts of the country, and which is inseparable from all rapid advancement in civilization, that the ancient handicrafts cannot compete with the advanced industries of the monarchy, and with the Austrian artizans who have migrated thither, is hardly experienced in the Posavina, which deals principally in agriculture, and which also stands in closer relations with the other side of the Save. The growing prosperity has been chiefly noticeable in the rapid development of the shipping on the Save, and especially in the increase of export; the re-establishment of public safety, and the erection of good primary schools in every district also, cannot but add to the increase of prosperity. The local organization, which formerly hardly existed between the scattered groups of houses, but which has now been nearly everywhere introduced, guarantees a safe foundation for every improvement. Neither is there any lack of a general recognition of these services; the minister is everywhere received with straightforward heartiness, and in every place people turn to him with confidence.

After delaying for one day we proceeded on our way from Bjelina to Zvornik.

To the south of Bjelina, the last hilly promontories of the Majevitza-Planina approach ever nearer and nearer to the Drina. With these hills on our right, and the fertile plain on our left, we, in about an hour and a half, reach Jania. The jagged chain of the Planina looked blue in the background; this is a not inhospitable range of mountains, but difficult of approach, lying between the Drina, Sprezza, the Bosna valley, and the plains of the Posavina, full of old castle ruins and mediæval graves. My travelling companion—a captain of the gendarmes—entertained me with descriptions of his adventures with robbers, the scenes of these adventures being the Planina and the Drina. The robbers have now been completely ousted from this part of the country, only one (Milan Nikolitch) remaining, who, when pursued by the authorities of this or that country, fled across the Drina, now to Bosnian, then to Servian ground. We, too, had heard of his exploits, and not until the year 1885 was he shot, by a native, upon one of the islands of the Drina.

Jania is a large Christian village on the stream of the same name, whose scattered houses, surrounded by wattled fences, are grouped around the chief square. The Jania-Rjeka flows into the Drina, in the vicinity of the village. The headlands of the Majevitza grow ever steeper, and force the road ever nearer to the river, until, at the village of Shepak, three miles from Jania, it comes close up to it. Our road led straight along by the foot of lofty mountains to Zvornik.

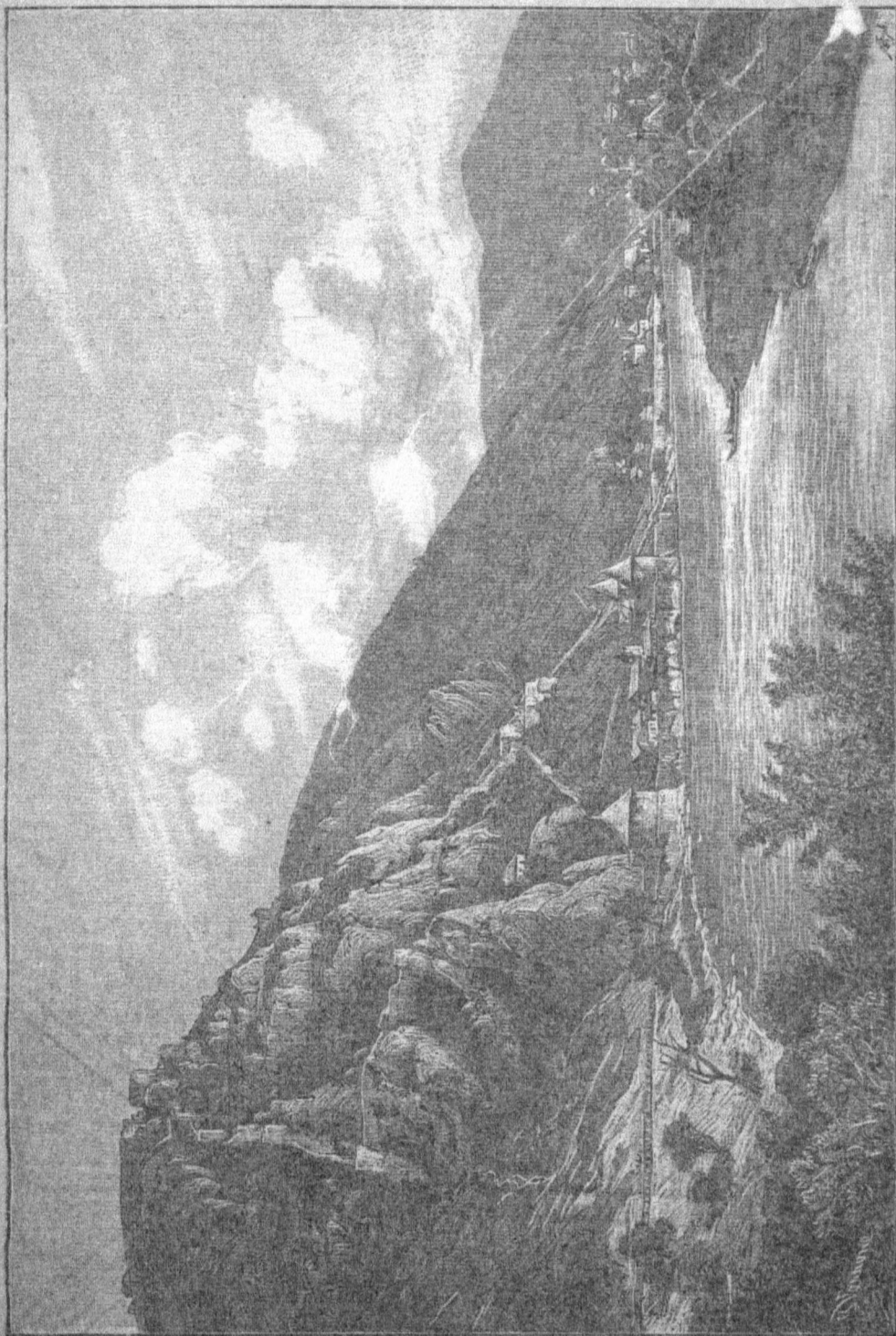
Yet more steeply do the rugged mountains rise immediately out of the river on the opposite, Servian, shore, whilst the Drina flows along this narrow valley, in a broad, rapid, unchecked stream, between its many bare islets of varying size. The Bosnian bank is fairly well inhabited. After Shepak the road soon leads past the Mohammedan and Christian village of Skoshitsh; above it, upon the mountain of Kliesevezatz, we can see the ruined castle of Kostur; and, further on, in an ever-changing and varied succession, we pass underwood, arable land, and groups of houses. Upon the lonely and deserted Servian bank hardly a village is to be seen; whilst further down we had passed towns, Leshnitza opposite to Jania, Losnitza opposite to Shepak.

After some distance—about fifteen miles—the narrow strip of flat land by the side of the Bosnian bank also terminates; the mountains on either side compress the stream into its centre, and in this narrow pass is situated the fortress of Zvornik.

The town numbers about eight thousand inhabitants, mostly Mohammedans, but partly Orthodox; its situation, confined, but stretching for a long distance between the steep mountains and the greenish waters of the Drina, is magnificent; the actual fortress stands at the south end of the town, and entirely shuts off the passage, which is by towers and ramparts connected with the citadel, which towers almost perpendicularly above it upon one of the peaks of the Veluvnik. This point, six hundred and sixty feet high, must be climbed if we wish to enjoy the situation of Zvornik in all its poetry. Behind us, bare mountains, across which lies the road to Tuzla; in front, the eye sweeps over the walls of the fortification which descend almost perpendicularly, and passes on to the fort which really closes the passage, whence the town stretches away again in a long line down the river. Before us lies the silver band of the Drina; over there, at the foot of the dark Servian Mountains, is the village of Mali-Zvornik, whence the Turks were not driven until the close of 1860. The defences of Zvornik are now considered to be of no value, but are well preserved in their mediæval state, and present an interesting example of the art of defence of those days.

Zvornik was formerly the key to the whole of this part of the country,





Zvonik.

and after the Turkish conquest was repeatedly besieged by the imperial armies. Being captured in 1688 by Ludvig, Margrave of Baden, it was re-conquered by the Turks in 1689. In the year 1717, General Petras suffered a severe defeat here: more than one thousand men fell, three hundred were taken prisoners; and Osman Pasha Tshuprilitch caused even these to be put to the sword. In the fort of Zvornik an imperial cannon of this period has been preserved up to the present day, evidently a companion piece to the one preserved at Mostar.

In the wars of the Bosnian oligarchy against the Porte, the occupants of this castle—the captains of Zvornik—played an important part.

An old legend, too, is attached to the fortress, as was bound to be the case in Bosnia, which everywhere echoes with legends of heroes.

A red marble slab, let into the castle wall, is shown, upon which are the figure of a woman and an old Slavonic inscription which has become illegible.

“Prokleta Jelena”: it is the picture of the accursed Jelena, who, before primeval times, even before there was such a thing as a kingdom of Bosnia at all, commanded the fortress of Zvornik. This Bosnian Semiramade was famed far and near for her beauty and her maidenly reserve, which repelled every suitor. Three of the noble Vuk Jugovitsh’s brothers were already wandering abroad in sorrow in search of adventures on account of their hopeless love, and Vuk Jugovitsh himself lingered whole nights through upon the opposite bank of the Drina, throwing languishing glances over to the queen’s gardens, which, surrounded by strong walls, extended along the rocks which descend perpendicularly into the river. The queen lingered for whole days and whole nights in these gardens; but Muley, the Moorish giant, who guarded the gate of the castle garden, allowed no one to enter save the queen. Vuk Jugovitsh’s falcon eye detected, high overhead in the precipice above the Drina, another gateway, thickly covered by wild roses; but who would dare to scale it? Had that unhappy man attempted it whose corpse Vuk once had seen at daybreak floating down the stream with a rosebud between his fingers?

At a banquet given by the queen, when she left her hero-guests to their merry-making over the wine beakers, that she might retire alone into the cool gardens, Vuk Jugovitsh, who had been seated next to her, and who could no longer control his feelings, stole out after her. In vain did he storm Jelena with his ardent love. As she, at the garden gate, for the last time commanded him to withdraw, Vuk pleaded in heartrending tones to be at least allowed to enter the garden. “Do not desire it, Vuk Jugovitsh,” said the queen with a rigid face; “for so soon as thou enterest thou art mine,

and canst never more forsake me so long as thou livest." But as Vuk did not cease to assail her with passionate requests, and declared that he desired nothing more ardently, she promised, with a deep sigh and saddened countenance, to grant his petition, but said he must first return to his companions and explain to them that he, like his brothers, was going forth into the wide world in search of adventures.

Vuk was indescribably happy in the magically beautiful garden, for here Jelena was no longer cold or proud, but returned his passionate love with feverish fervour; but after the first few weeks she came to him less and less often, and for shorter and shorter periods, and Vuk waxed ever paler and more sorrowful in his solitary confinement. When, after many months, he in a dark night again, as oft before, begged the queen to restore to him his freedom, the noise and din of arms penetrated from the castle into the garden, and, full of horror, Muley the Moor informed Jelena that Vuk Jugovitsh's faithful esquire, seized by the thought that he was being kept a prisoner by the queen, was seeking his master in all parts of the palace, at the head of a troop of insurgents. Jelena sent for her sword, in order that she might herself advance against the mutineers. She declined Vuk's aid, because her honour forbade that her lover should be found with her. She even desired Vuk's flight. "Leave through this door!" said the queen, moving a mighty block of rock away from the garden gate. A fearful cry of terror was heard; the invading insurgents had slain Muley, and at the same moment a vivid flash of lightning illumined the dark night, and Vuk, already standing at the gate, beheld the Drina many hundred feet below him.

"Jelena! am I the first who has passed through this gate? Jelena, didst thou murder my brothers?"

"Yes, Vuk Jugovitsh, because I had enjoyed their love till I loathed it like that of the others, and thine."

"Jelena, fervently loved, now art thou a child of death,—be accursed!"

Vuk seized the queen with the power of a giant; but Jelena would not die alone, and the invading soldiers arrived upon the scene of the fearful struggle at the very moment when both fell over into the Drina together.

Zvornik figures besides in innumerable legends and heroic poems. Marko Kraljevitsh, the hero of the Servian national epic, also causes his favourite horse to jump over the river at Zvornik, at the spot where the Drina flows along through a regular pass between jutting cliffs and mighty pyramids.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *TUZLA AND THE VALLEY OF THE SPRESSA.*

*Tuzla and its Salt Springs—The Spressa—Gratshanitz.*

FROM Zvornik, where the minister had devoted a day to intercourse with the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood, and where consequently the people came in crowds from far distant places, even from the woody and rocky wildernesses of the Upper Drina, we, on the following day, having taken leave of the beautiful Drina, mounted the comparatively narrow bulwark of the Majevitza-Planina, which here forms on the one hand the watershed between the Drina and the Spressa, which flows into the Bosna, and on the other the junction of the Majevitza with the mountains of Vlasenitz and Srebernitz, which stretch far away, in all their grandeur to Serajevo and Gatzko, and are separated from the masses of hills of the Majevitza-Planina by the long, broad valley of the Spressa. In about two hours we, by dint of many turnings, reached the summit of the pass, and near to it the lonely inn of Sapardi, which recalls General Ladislaus Szápáry to mind; and then, constantly descending westwards, we reach the valley of the Spressa, which is at first narrow, but afterwards expands to a regular plain. The road continues along the northern border of this fruitful plain, still at the foot of the Majevitza-Planina, whilst the Spressa, well fed by subsidiary streams, and rapidly increasing, flows along towards the southerly chain of hills.

Our road, however, soon left the broad valley of the Spressa, which stretches away to the west, and which we did not meet again until we were past Tuzla,—Tuzla itself, with its ancient and famous Salt Springs, lying amongst the mountains. Our road turned northwards, so as to cross the pass of the Tshaklavitz-Planina, and then led at once in a westerly direction through the narrow, woody, and monotonous valley of the Jalla, as far as

Dolnja-Tuzla, which with two changes of horses we reached after a journey of something like ten hours.

The importance of this place was at once evident by the reception accorded us. The town, which numbers some eight thousand souls, and whose population consists almost entirely of Mohammedans, is the seat of the district authorities and an Orthodox bishop, and is one of the few towns which have played any marked part since the first existence of Bosnia. It is first mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as "Salenes." Its Roman name was *Ad Salinas*. The Slavonians still call it *Soli*, and "Tuz" in Turkish also signifies salt.

In the Hungarian records of the Middle Ages it appears under the name of "Sou," "Sow," capital of the "Salt District," or "Salt Banate." From the Adriatic to the Pontus this is the only place where salt is found, and hence its early fame.

Tuzla is beautifully situated on the northern, or right bank of the Jalla, which, about sixty yards in width, flows between parallel chains of mountains. White houses are scattered at wide distances round the centre of the town, so that they still form part of it at a distance of three or four miles, and brighten up the whole landscape. The citadel standing in the centre is now almost a ruin, and will shortly be pulled down, its stones being even now constantly employed in new buildings. On the river's bank some remains of the old city walls are still standing. In the year 1690, the city was threatened by a severe siege, after the imperialists under General Pertshinlia had won a great victory over the Turks in the neighbourhood of Gornje-Tuzla. Pertshinlia, however, contented himself with transferring something like three thousand Catholics together with the Franciscans to Slavonia.

The Konak, a solid stone building with spacious halls, in the neighbourhood of the citadel, is one of the most beautiful in all the country. At the illuminations provided in our honour on the evening of our arrival, the arrangements of which on this occasion also showed that Orientals have a great gift for such displays, which afford themselves great pleasure, lent to the town a really fairy-like appearance. The banks of the river, the two bridges, the citadel, the fortifications, and the mosques, even the outlines of the distant hills were illuminated, and the people wandered up and down with their coloured lanterns until far into the night. From amongst the lively crowd the beautiful gypsy girls must be especially named as a speciality of the place. As is everywhere else the case in the East, the wandering gypsies, dwelling in tents, are very numerous in Bosnia; but in Tuzla there is a permanent colony of gypsies, which inhabits a portion of the outlying streets.

Since the town is overpoweringly Mohammedan, these too are, as a matter of course, Mohammedan, and that with great ostentation, although they are by way of example not tolerated in the mosques. The men are musicians, tinkers, horse dealers, etc., just as with us. The old women earn their bread by card tricks, and fortune-telling; the girls live as public singers and dancers, and descend even lower in their means of obtaining a livelihood. Though their morals may not be altogether above suspicion, it is, however, a characteristic trait, that towards Christians, and especially towards strangers who have settled there, they are just as unapproachable as every other Mohammedan woman, even though they do not follow the severe discipline of the harem, and do not even wear a veil.

In Tuzla the minister's chief attention was naturally directed to the Salt Springs. In the primitive manner in which these had been until then worked, the springs of Dolnja-Tuzla and Gornja-Tuzla had together yielded supplies to the value of about thirty thousand florins; the latter place is about six miles distant from the former, and is situated in the Majevitza-Planina. The existing springs were not, moreover, of sufficient importance for the establishment of a modern salt-boiler. Yet, after geological testing had shown that deeper borings would open up more productive springs, these borings were made with brilliant results. The establishment of a great salt-boiler was at once taken into consideration, and in addition further researches for rock salt have been prosecuted.

The coal mines in the neighbourhood secure the necessary materials for heating purposes. The income for 1886 has already been estimated at 294,000 florins, which, as the investigations were still in course of progress, must be placed against an expenditure of 92,241 florins (£9,224).

Tuzla not only trades in salt, but also carries on a brisk trade in corn, cattle, swine, and horses.

During our one day's stay in Tuzla, travellers arrived, who had been attacked by Milan Nikolitch upon the same road over which we had travelled on the previous day. He had threatened to shoot a clerk who was in their company, "because he belonged to those who persecute humanity." But when his companions interceded for him, stating that he was only a poor chancery clerk, and the father, moreover, of children, the robber contented himself with plundering the whole party.

After our visit to Tuzla, which was devoted to the development of the salt trade, we took the road leading down by the Jalla, and afterwards by the Spressa.

The Jalla, which cuts off the mountain ridge of the Ravna-Tresna from



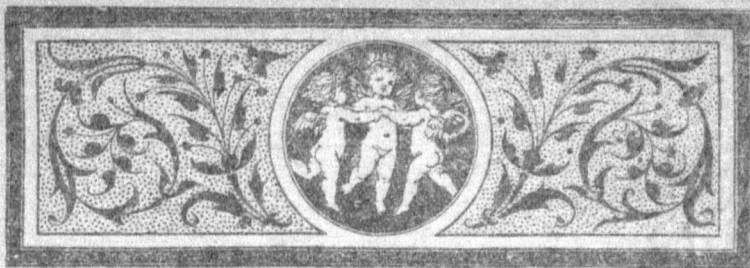
the masses of the Majevitza, in a few hours led us, as it flowed between the two, westwards, over Han Pirkovatz, and the far-famed acidulated springs of Kiseljak, down into the valley of the Spressa again; only this valley is here no longer as broad as we found it at its commencement; from the high, broad, and fertile plain, hemmed in by wooded mountains, into which we had descended from Zvornik, and which we had again left by the pass of Tshaklavitza so as to reach Tuzla and the Jalla valley, the Spressa again entered the mountains, just where the Jalla flows into it, and where the oak-grown ridge of the Ravna-Tresna comes to a sudden stop in precipitous, rocky declivities in the sharp angle of the two rivers. From this point onwards, the Spressa forms a narrow valley a day's journey in length, which leads in a north-westerly direction, between the Majevitza-Planina and the Vrana-Planina, as far as Doboi, where the river at last flows into the Bosna. Although the valley is narrow in proportion to its length, it yet gives space enough for the free use of the rich arable land, to which the wooded mountain ridge supplies not alone water, but also quantities of vegetable mould. In this loose earth the Spressa hollows out its narrow but deep bed in long windings, always keeping to the left of the road, which goes straight along at the foot of Majevitza. To the right and left innumerable little mountain torrents water the fields on their way to the Spressa. And as the fields in this long valley are almost without exception owned by small agas and free peasants, who cultivate them themselves, no neglected land is to be met with here. Nearly every piece is fenced in with the most various trees, self-sown fruit trees, limes, beeches, maples, and hazel-nut, saved at the time of the grubbing, so that the choice in foliage trees makes it very park-like in aspect. In this rich variety of form and foliage lies the peculiar charm of this valley, which opened up charmingly in its beautiful freshness as the morning mists dispersed, and gave place to golden vapours under the power of the rising sun, as it mounted above the dark and lofty hills. Ozren rose ever higher and higher from amongst the mountains on our left; and as we drew near to Gratshanitza, its richly wooded ridge, four thousand feet in height, stood before us in all its grandeur. Gratshanitza itself is the seat of a divisional magistrate, and has about three thousand five hundred inhabitants, and is the only place of any size in the whole valley. But like the innumerable small villages scattered to the right and left, Gratshanitza lies with its mosques and celebrated hot baths, not in the valley itself, but a mile and a half from the Spressa, in a kind of ravine on the slope of the hill, on either side of the river which bears the same name.

Placing human habitations thus on one side was a peculiarity of the

place, and had wrapped the whole valley and our entire journey in an almost magic silence. But now this enchantment is broken, for civilization has penetrated into this inarticulate valley with all its tumultuous sounds. Hungarian enterprise has peopled it with thousands of Hungarian workpeople, for modest Gratshanitzá has become the centre of a brisk timber trade, and Tuzla, too, is growing lively, and by the time this book appears, steam engines will be running from Doboi to Tuzla through the entire length of the Spersa and Jalla valleys.

We reached Doboi in the afternoon, after leaving by the entrance to the Spersa valley which is still popularly called "*Magyarska vrata*" (Hungarian gate); perhaps, after some victory gained at Doboi, the Hungarian troops pressed forward in this direction to the Salt Districts. From Doboi we reached the capital late in the evening by the Bosna railway, which has now been completed as far as Serajevo.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### *THE ZAGORJE.*

The Character of the Zagorje—Journey on Horseback—The Panorama of Treskavitz—Insurgents—Banditti—The Way in which Bosnians have to be dealt with—Council of War—The Pass of Sutjeska and its Horrible Legend—Wild Goats—The Wilderness of Krbljina—Tshengitsh Castle—The Bosnian Count, Dervish-Beg Tshengitsh—The Glagolitic Writing—Beshir Pasha Tshengitsh—Ballads—A Brilliant Feat of Arms—The Camp of Kalinovik—Tactics of the Robbers and Insurgents—Guerilla-Gendarmes.

OUR journey took us from Serajevo to the frontier of Montenegro, almost directly south through the notorious Zagorje,—a rocky tableland, with a poor vegetation, in the midst of the rugged snow hills, which surround the large district lying between Serajevo, Fotcha, Gatzko, Nevesinje, Mostar, and Konitza.

This, which is next to the inhospitable Plainas—the most wild, deserted, and backward position in Bosnia—is geographically and ethnographically connected with Herzegovina, to which, until the recent division, it belonged both historically and politically. The Zagorje was the centre of the rebellion of 1881, and has always been the first to be overrun by the invading hordes from Montenegro, just as it has ever been the warlike defence of Mohammedan Bosnia against that province. The protection of this territory, its wars, and even its government, together with all revenues, the Portē had always left entirely to the native begs, amongst whom the Tshengitsh especially had risen to the position of a regular feudal dynasty, who, over and above this, instead of themselves paying tribute money as vassals, drew subsidies themselves, so little did the Porte deem it worth the trouble, and so impossible did it seem to it, to rule this part of the country, from out of whose few and unimportant villages the strong feudal castles of the begs rose threateningly.



When robbers appear in the land, or a murder is committed, it is generally in this province.

There is no question of vehicular traffic and carriage roads. The only representatives of civilization are the fortified camps of our troops lying at a day's march from one another. The whole of life, and therefore also all means of travelling, are here still mediæval. We rode for five consecutive days, and were sometimes eleven hours in the saddle; and happy he who, like me, had a Hungarian charger to manage. It is, indeed, not so sure-footed in mountain climbing as the small Bosnian animal; and to fall

too is dangerous—and we passed one point where all, without exception, who took part in the long cavalcade fell with their horses—but those, on the other hand, to whose share a safe, but restless, skipping Bosnian horse had fallen arrived at the end of their five days' ride in a semi-exhausted state. The first day was the worst, not because of the unaccustomed whole day's ride, but on account of the pouring rain, by which we were drenched within two or three hours so entirely to the skin that all precaution ceased, and the whole company plodded doggedly along in a long row behind one another—silent, almost speechless, dripping wet all over, like the landscape itself. Swollen to roughness, and covered with heavy mists, the



Zagorje-Beg.

Želežnitza stream flowed through the long ravine between the dark green hillsides, amongst whose woody pastures a black hut now and again became visible in the distance. Only here and there did the mist lift and suddenly afford us a magnificent, broad, grand view towards the jagged snow peaks of the Bjelashnitza, and then of the Treskavitza-Planina, which, however, disappeared again as rapidly behind fresh veils of mist.

It was still dark as we assembled in front of Baron Nicolie's house, and the rain was already coming down in torrents when we mounted our horses. We rode out of the town, along and down the left bank of the Miliaska, below the stone tombstones of the old Jewish graveyard, past the slope of the peak

of Trebevitsh, and then turned round, leaving the Miliaska on the left, southwards, following the direction of the road which skirts Trebevitsh, at whose base we continued to ride across the torrents which dashed down from its ridge. At the first of these our company was diminished, for the representatives of the authorities, who had escorted the minister thus far out of the town, turned back; but even then we, with the officers and officials, who were to accompany us upon our journey, still made up a considerable cavalcade. On the right hand, to which the streams came hurrying down, lies the flat plain of Serajevsko-Polje, a flourishing plain in spite of fog and rain, traversed by the silver band of the Bosna, and studded with villas, gardens, and villages, shut in in the background by the dark wall of Igman. Near the timber houses of Kobilò, and crossing the Kobilò-Voda, which flows down Trebevitsh, we now turned our backs on the mountain, after having skirted it in nearly a half-circle, crossed the threshold of Kobilò-Brdo, which reaches down to the plain; and, at the guard-house of "Tzrveni Klanatz," "red pass," reached the ravine of Želežnitza, not far from the village of Voikovitsh, at the point where the waters of the Želežnitza enter the plain. Thence we passed upwards, along the right bank of the Želežnitza, over the slope which belongs to Gala-Jahorina, and descends from the summit of the Tzerni-Vrh, eighteen hundred mètres high; far below rushes the torrent, and above it one wooded mountain ridge rises above another up to the snow-covered chain of the Bjelashnitza-Planina to an altitude of two thousand one hundred mètres. The ravine gets steeper and steeper, and after a turn our road too rises up to the Tzerni-Vrh.

After we had mounted some two hundred or three hundred mètres above Serajevo, to the cluster of houses known as Jlovitsh, the mists for a few moments vouchsafed to us a clear view, and there stood suddenly before us in all its grandeur the Treskovitza-Planina, which joins on to the Bjelashnitza. At the back of the steep, beech-covered mountain-tops, a mighty pine forest reared its head; above this, Alpine meadows stretch far away, and we could see the region of rocks, a triple mural crown, with sparkling fields of snow shining between its peaks. Nature in all her virgin beauty, an unpeopled wilderness! The precipitous declivities from the peaks, which are eighteen hundred to two thousand one hundred mètres in height, make the whole of this district uninhabitable for miles round, and this wilderness continues to the west towards the Narenta valley and Konitza in similar, though less lofty mountains—in Vishotshitza, which is thirteen hundred mètres high; Zovnitza, fourteen hundred mètres high; and in the Jelitza-Planina, which is sixteen hundred mètres high; whilst its eastern branch—Veliku-Koza, sixteen hundred and seventy-eight mètres high, and in which, too, the Želežnitza has its

origin—forms the threshold of the Zagorje, a tableland which lay straight in our path, and, at the same time, led across to the mountain regions of Foteha.

After Jlovitsh, where the *Železnitza* has absorbed considerable streams like the *Lutshidol* and the *Tzrna*, both from the northern side of the *Treskavitza* and from the mountains of *Gala-Jahorina*—that is to say, from both right and left—the height of the water in the river is perceptibly diminished; and the steep ravine, too, as soon as the peak of *Tzerni-Vrh* is behind us, grows gradually broader and more level, and ere long much-desired *Trnovo* lies before us, at the foot of the wooded *Veliku-Koza*, between fertile Alpine meadows and wide tracts of stone; whilst, to the right, the imposing view of *Treskavitza* still remains.

To the left of the small collection of low wooden houses, with their steep, high shingle roofs, a place of shelter greets us—spacious barracks, where we find a friendly offer of supper and shelter for the night.

Here we also met a number of distinguished begs of the Zagorje, and at their head our old acquaintance *Dervish-Beg Tshengitsh*, now bearing the *Star* of the Order of *Franz Josef* on his proud breast.

It was a really remarkable official escort, under the protection of which we, on the following day, continued our journey over the saddles of the *Rogoj* and the *Krbljina*.

It was quite within the bounds of possibility that these officers and begs with their retainers, who now in peaceful concord constituted our escort, had but shortly before borne arms against one another. *Dervish-Beg Tshengitsh*, indeed, whose whole life has been a succession of deeds of valour wrought against the *Montenegrins*, was not to be persuaded in his old age to ally himself with the agitators of that country. He proved himself to be just as loyal towards his present czar, as he had previously been loyal in his service to the Sultan, and even made considerable personal sacrifices for the new order of things. More than one member of his numerous and widely scattered house, however, took an active part in the rising of 1881-82. *Kadri-Beg Tshengitsh* played a leading part in it, and now found himself amongst us, like his companions in arms, *Ibrahim-Beg Kutalja*, *Ramo Tshemo*, and others of more or less importance in the Zagorje, and leaders of the last insurrection, and of their retainers, who yielded their feudal lords equally obedient service in the present peaceful demonstration as they had done a short time ago in war. They have all been partakers of his Majesty's mercy, inasmuch as he granted a pardon to all the insurgents who were not guilty of any ordinary crime, provided that they laid down their arms, surrendered themselves voluntarily, renounced the lives of brigands, and swore sincere fealty "by their firm belief."



They were all stalwart, frank-looking men, and certainly it was not ignoble motives, but rather mistaken conceptions of duty, and doubtless also a blundering policy on the part of the Government then in power, that had induced them to revolt. Their conduct has justified the leniency shown to them. Many of their number have since rendered important service in the preservation of order and the soothing of unquiet spirits. Ibrahim-Beg Kutalja afterwards emigrated. He could not feel at his ease in the silence and quiet of undisturbed peace—he who had been mixed up almost incessantly in warlike adventures, now against, now with, the Montenegrins. About a year after this journey of ours, upon which he loyally escorted us, he sold his estates and went to the Sandjak. Not long ago we heard that the poor man had come to grief, and that the proud beg, who could not tolerate any regular control, now tills soil belonging to another, for he has become a needy kmet. He had honourably announced that he should not remain long in his own country; he emigrated, and kept his promise faithfully, never to take any further part in insurrections and revolutions.

Of course all these men require a special treatment suited to their character.

An understanding capable of dealing with small Oriental craftiness, and a firm hand, alone impresses them; but this, when joined to an open, hearty manner and goodwill, conquers them irresistibly, and may be counted upon absolutely. Much depends upon such officials as Mr. Vojvoditch, the "Commander of Fotcha;" for thus do the begs of the Zagorje call their divisional chief. Those who have felt his hand the most heavily are now his best friends; under their escort he feels himself the most secure, and in them he finds his best allies when Montenegrin outlaws and vagabonds trouble the land.

On this occasion, too, he came here to welcome the minister, with them as his only escort, by lonely, deserted mountain paths, from Fotcha, across Susjezao and Mrežitza, and along the northern slopes of the Bistritza and Dobropolsku torrents, over the saddle of Rogoj.

In Trnovo we held a grand council of war as to the direction in which we should continue our journey. Whether along the direct road towards the south, through the tablelands of the Zagorje to the fortified camp of Kalinovik, and thence straight across the Upper Narenta, and after crossing this, near the fortress of Ulok, on through the Alpine wilderness of the Morinje to Gatzko; or in the opposite direction, cutting across the tablelands of the Zagorje in a south-easterly direction to Borja, where Dervish-Beg's castle is situated, and thence directly east, down the little

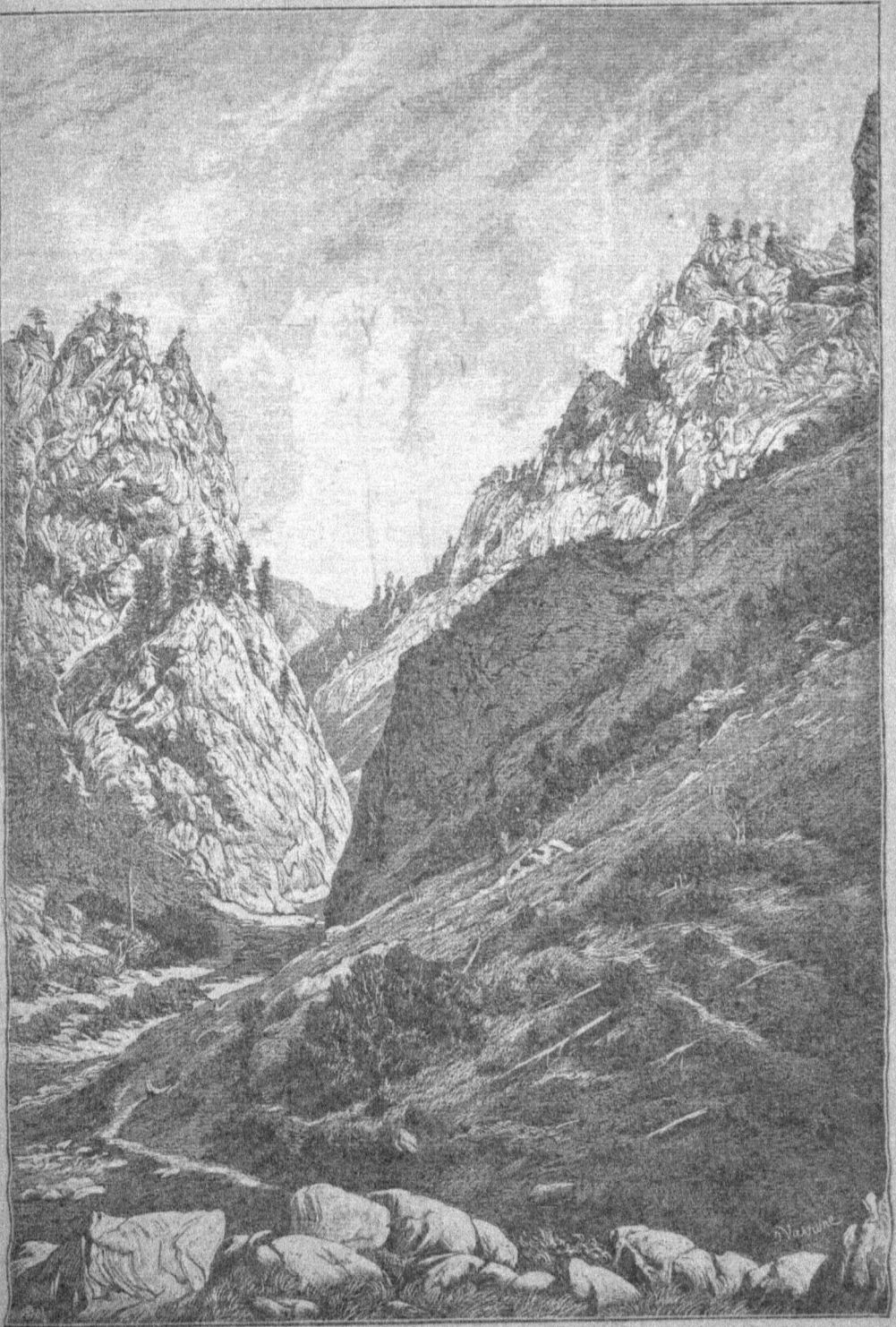
river Krupitza to where it joins the Govza, which flows northwards between the Lelja and the Dumosh-Planinas, then along the Govza to the point where it joins the Dubropolsku river, coming down from the Rogoj in a south-easterly direction, where Kadri-Beg Tshengitsh's castle is situated, and hence, further to the east, along the river Bistritza, which is formed out of both these rivulets, until it flows into the Drina, near Brod, which lies above Fotcha; from there southwards along the Drina as far as the Sutjeska Ravine, and up this in a south-westerly direction over the saddle of the Tshemerno down to Gatzko.

These two roads form respectively the western and eastern bends of that circle whose centre is made impassable by the mountains of the Lelja and Dumosh-Planinas some two thousand metres in height. Between these and the Treskovatz-Planina, which lies to the east of them, and which also comes within this district, there is indeed a track over the saddle (eighteen hundred metres high) of the Tshatova-Bara which connects these two groups of mountains, and then over the mountain of Živan, which conceals the sources of the Narenta, from Kalinovic in an almost direct line southwards to the Tshemerno Saddle and to Gatzko; but, as a matter of fact, this single track in this uninhabited, waterless Alpine wilderness of rocks is used by none save the banditti passing to and fro between Montenegro and the Zagorje.

The unequalled beauty of the landscape spoke in favour of the Eastern tour.

First there are the offensive and defensive castles of the deserted Zagorje, the rocky, oak-wooded banks of the Drina; but, above all, the celebrated Sutjeska Pass, whom none, who have overcome the terrors of this ravine, tire of praising.

Not far distant from that point of the Montenegrin frontier where the junction of the Tara and Piva, flowing down on either side of the Durmitor, form the Drina, the river Sutjeska dashes down from the south-west, through an incomparably magnificent defile of rocks, which leads up to the saddle of the Tshemerno. Its northern walls are formed by the bare, jagged lime peaks of the Treskovatz-Planina, which at first tower above wooded slopes, then fall sheer down into the river's bed. Upon the southern side the Vutshevo-Brdo and the Zuha-Gora look like snow-clad teeth, and the whole side is covered with fantastic dolomite formations up to the highest ridge, which rises from five to six thousand feet above the level of the valley. Thus the road passes up and down the sides of the narrow ravine, now *through struggling beech woods*, now *across bare walls of rock*, winding along the giddy path between grey and whitish dolomite pyramids, amongst which the horse picks its way carefully, with the yawning abyss below.



*The Sutjeska Ravine.*



He who is not proof against giddiness, has to resign himself to being carried along by his horse with closed eyes and slackened rein. Three times do the rocks compel the traveller to cross the Sutjeska, which now, it is true, is nothing more than a mountain stream of clear greenish water, as it hurries along over its deep bed. White crags of dolomite, between which pine trees struggle up, project for three thousand to four thousand feet across the river's bed; and now suddenly the ravine changes into a regular caldron, whose width, of about sixty feet, entirely covered by water, lies between the perpendicular limestone walls, which rise from eight hundred to one thousand feet above it. Above the lower wall, on the right bank, stand the ruins of the mediæval castle of Pirlitor.

A horrible legend is told of this castle. Vukashin, King of Rascia, fell in love with Vidosava, Momtshillo's wife, the lord of this Herzegovinian castle. She let him know that her husband was going out hunting on the following morning. He was, indeed, possessed of a winged steed and an indomitable sword. But the faithless woman would burn the horse's wings, and would fix the sword into its sheath with pitch, then should Vukashin waylay her husband with his horsemen. He could conquer Momtshillo. And thus it came to pass. The fugitive Momtshillo reached his castle with difficulty and in distress, to find it closed against him. His sister threw him down a rope, but Vidosava cut it in twain, and Momtshillo was lost. But Vukashin, full of horror at so much treachery, caused Vidosava to be tied to the tail of a wild horse, and married Euphrosina, Momtshillo's sister. She it was who gave birth to the legendary hero, Marko, the king's son, the exact likeness of brave Momtshillo.

On the further side of the ruins, the road is so closed by pyramids and columns of dolomite that one is forced to push along through the water itself or through the rocks. As a matter of fact, the last plan is resorted to; for a road is cut, for a certain distance in the northern wall, of just sufficient height and width to enable a horse to pass along with the masses of rocks above its head, and the precipices, falling sheer down into the waters, at its feet. The antiquity of this road is visible throughout, for it has not been produced by blasting, but has been hammered and chiselled out of the rocks. With a constant variety of magnificent and enthralling scenery does the ravine lead up to the saddle of Tshemerno, whose characteristic name "Bitter" bears witness to the countless bitter engagements which have been fought upon this mountain.

The saddle of the Tshemerno is thirteen hundred and seventy-three metres high, and whilst its north-western slopes stretch away towards



the Dumosh-Planina, its southern sides are formed by the ridges of the Lebershnik and Volujak, which tower upwards to a height of two thousand two hundred mètres; over the latter the Montenegrins of the Piva district strove to make inroads into the Zagorje, and not infrequently did they encounter the arms of the watchful begs upon the small plateau of the Tshemerno Saddle. From this point three other roads lay open before them when in search of adventures: to the north over the Živan Mountain, between the deserts of the Dumosh and Treskovatz-Planinas to the Zagerje, through the Sutjeska Ravine to Fotcha, or westwards down to Gatzko.

However alluring the romantic beauty of this road might be, our experienced leaders, who knew its difficulties from so many warlike excursions, were distinctly against our selecting this route after the rainfall of the previous day, during which the water had come down in torrents, as even under the most favourable circumstances this road was not without its dangers, and with the exception of at a few poverty-stricken inns and four Turkish watchhouses there was no shelter to be had for the night. It was therefore resolved to visit Dervish-Beg in his Kula at Borja, and, after this digression, to proceed on the road to Gatzko past the military encampments of Kalinovik and Uluk.

In Trnovo before our departure we took a look at the Bogomilian sepulchre near that town, which interested me, inasmuch as I here saw the figure of a wild goat, for the first time, upon a tombstone of this kind, though, as we approached the Montenegrin frontier, this was of frequent occurrence. Dervish-Beg stated emphatically that he himself had seen this animal, which is becoming extinct in Europe, in this country; and, moreover, that it still existed there, and it is quite possible that solitary specimens of this scarce animal may still be found in the wilderness of the Durmitor.

Our road at first still led by the right bank of the Železnitza, past woody declivities, along a narrow, but capital, stoneless and almost level bridle-path, beneath the shadow of enormous beech trees, so that, after the exertions of the previous day, we seemed to be riding in a park.

We soon reached the saddle of the Rogoj, twelve hundred and fifteen mètres in height, since then the scene of a sad event; for here it was that, just a year later, Lieutenant Tshulinovitsh was shot at almost the same time as Dervish-Beg's brother, travelling from Borja to Fotcha, fell by a murderer's hand, instead of the beg himself, it is said, who was saved by having remained behind. The Rogoj is one of the watersheds between the Bosna and the Drina. We had left the Železnitza behind, and soon, after we had passed over the saddle near the village of Dobro Polje, we crossed the Dobropolsku

stream, as it hurried along to the Drina, in order to climb up the saddle of the Krbljina, which is fourteen hundred and seventy-six mètres high.

It is singularly moving when one meets with any sign of tender sentiment amidst these magnificent, remote deserts, which are for ever and ever being saturated with human blood; such, for instance, is the inscription engraved here upon a huge wall of rock: "Wilhelmina's Valley." One of our soldiers, stationed in this wilderness, had been able, during a pause vouchsafed to him in the performance of his hard duties against the robbers, thus to give expression to the feelings of a loyal heart.

As soon as we left Dobro-Polje, a sudden change in the landscape took place. Just like our escort from the Zagorje, the begs here, mounted upon their small horses, which caracolled incessantly, and their retainers on foot, sometimes even barefoot, but leaping from stone to stone, with a light and noble carriage, were distinguished from the Bosnians by their more powerful, more elastic, more sinewy, slender, and swarthy forms. The green woods and soft lawns, too, were left behind, and the hard, sharp, but still beautifully formed limestone region (Karst), with its sun-burnt, warm, ochre tints, held sway.

After a hard climb, between rocks and groups of fir trees, we reached the well-fortified little military station of the Krbljina, after a three and a half hours' ride from Trnovo, where the guard has its quarters, summer and winter, far away from all human intercourse, if one or another of the Zagorje begs does not happen to be travelling this way to Serajevo. Comfort and luxury are not to be found here, not even so much as in a Bosnian village; but of true soldierly hospitality there is no lack. And here, too, we have a panorama, which in Switzerland would most assuredly have conjured up a splendid hotel. Before us lay the entire tableland of the stony Zagorje, only occasionally broken by green spots, surrounded by mountain above mountain—gigantic bulwarks of rocks, with snow-capped peaks; to the west, close to us, rising immediately in front, the Treskavitz; far to the south the Lelja-Planina, the Volujak, and, in the further distance, the group of the Montenegrin Durmitor; to the east the mountains of Novi-Bazar, and the hazy outlines of the Albania mountain chains.

From the heights of the Krbljina we, after a short rest, rapidly descended into the undulating tableland of the Zagorje, where we found the only sources of profit offered by nature,—the poverty-stricken pastures—inhabited by sheep and goats—which lie between the stony wastes, watered by lazily creeping rills. We turn off to the south-east, from the road to Kalinovik, which runs directly south along the western edge of the tableland, and cut across a

considerable piece of this plain, from the group of houses, known as Sivolje—and its Bogomilian graves lying upon hillocks, colossal in size, but almost entirely undecorated—to Borja, which is situated at the southern end of the table-land, about nine miles from the Krbijina, without coming across a single human habitation or a human being. Borja itself, too, consists of nothing but a few houses; but far away in the distance we can distinguish a mighty "Kula."

The whole of the Zagorje is strewn with these "Kulas." Wherever we stand they appear within our range of sight. A lofty tower of four simple rough but strong stone walls, full of small windows, which really serve as chinks through which to shoot. These openings are introduced in five or six stories above one another; in each story, and upon each pair of sides, one window is alternated with two, so that the windows are arranged like the spots upon the playing card—five. The whole is covered by a pointed shingle roof. Human habitations are only found under the protection and at the foot of these "Kulas," in which the inhabitants take refuge in times of danger, so that in case of need they may sustain a siege. In places where one or another of the begs resides, the "Kula" is, in addition to this, surrounded by strong side walls and moats, and within their boundaries dwell the lords in apartments one story high—of course a particular building is set apart for the harem—and altogether they form a picturesque group; for all Bosnian houses, and especially the better class, are ornamented with projections, bow verandahs, and ornamental arcades. All around lies poor arable land alternating with stony pastures.

The subjects and relatives of Dervish-Beg Tshengitsh were awaiting their lord and his guests in groups before the castle in Borja. The expression of natural dignity, which is possessed by every inhabitant of the Zagorje, and the obliging readiness to serve shown by the host's nearest relatives to distinguished visitors, made it difficult to distinguish who was master and who was servant. Only Dervish-Beg himself was conspicuous as host by his imposing appearance, his brief orders, and his personal care of the minister. The court was rapidly filled with pawing horses and busy men hurrying to and fro, whilst mysterious forms were visible behind the bars of the harem. We entered the Selamlik up some narrow wooden stairs, and tshibuks and coffee were soon set before us. Above the entrance to the Selamlik was inscribed in large letters: "Dervish-Beg Tshengitsh, Bosnian Gróf" (count). One of our sub-officers had probably thereby sought to please the master of the house. The low Selamlik, with its settees and carpets, only differs from others in that, besides the usual furniture, weapons are hung upon the walls; for loyal or distinguished begs have, especially if they dwell



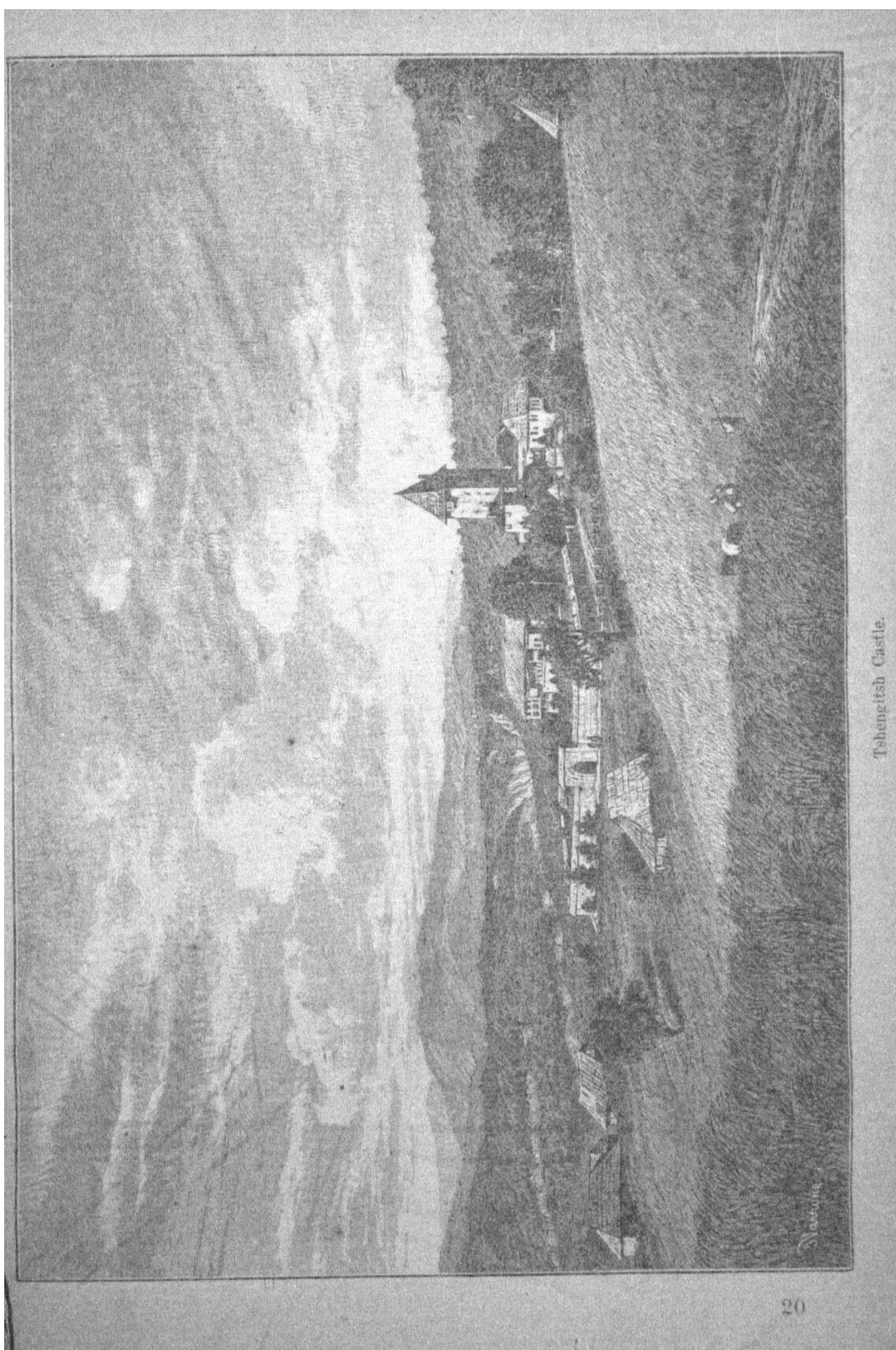
in exposed neighbourhoods, the privilege of bearing arms, and this constitutes their greatest pride. Hanging between the weapons we saw documents framed and glazed, amongst them those which announce the investiture of Dervish-Beg with the Star of the Order of Franz Josef, and with the Order of Medshidieh, and, in a prominent place, the Sultan's "Irade," which consigns the whole of the Zagorje, together with all State revenues, to the control and protection of Dervish-Beg.

Dervish-Beg renounced this high and lucrative position—similar to that of the old Sandjak-Begs—voluntarily; but, in spite of this, he naturally did not cease to be proud of it, and justly so, because he had won it by a whole series of brilliant exploits against the Montenegrins. Whilst explaining this diploma, he told us his whole family history, producing other documents between whiles—laudatory epistles, for the most part—in the now hardly known Glagolitic characters, whose use is now only preserved by means of the Bosnian begs; for in Bosnia the separation of sects is so complete, that each uses different characters in which to write the same language, and to these they adhere with a certain amount of fanaticism. The Roman Catholics use the Latin, the Orthodox the Cyrillic, the Mohammedans write Bosnian—indeed, with Arabic letters, but more frequently in the Glagolitic, which they also use in the place of the difficult Arabic alphabet, for Turkish text. In the Glagolitic they—the successors of the old Bosnian aristocracy—preserve one of the national traditions of ancient Bosnia. The origin of the Glagolitic writing is thus far shrouded in darkness. According to writers of the Orthodox Church it was invented by the Roman Church, that it might render the people of the Oriental Church more easy to convert. The Glagolitic writing stands, in fact, between the Cyrillic and the Latin; but one might as easily affirm that the Cyrillic writing was a strongly Grecized Glagolitic. In the present day, Glagolitic is only used by the Bosnian begs, the successors of the Bogomiles, who also thereby show how conservative and unchanged they have remained in the midst of all the changes of the world.

The Tshengitsh are not, however, descended from the original aristocracy of the country. Their family came with the Osmanlis from Asia Minor, since which time, however, it has been inseparably connected with the history of the country, many having stood at its head as viziers.

Dervish-Beg named to us all the innumerable Pashas and Miralajes descended from his family. The famous heroic song, which rests upon an historical basis, of Beshir Pasha Tshengitsh, one of the most beautiful of the Southern Slavonic folk-songs, is celebrated in the Zagorje and far beyond its borders.





Tshenatsh Castle.

"BESHIR PASHA TSHENGITSH.

"Flew two black-winged ravens up from  
Osia, just below Moskva,  
Steeped in blood up to their wings,  
With their beaks red to their eyes,  
Flew for three or four days through  
Karawlachia and Karabogdania,\*  
Skenderia† and Urumelia,  
In the land of Herz'govina,  
To the plains of Zagorje,  
To and fro, for hours flew,  
Settling down in no man's court,  
Save in Beshir Pasha Tshengitsh's

"Cawing loud, with downward swoop they  
Bend their wings above the walls,  
Dropping thus a bloody feather;  
And the wind doth lift it up, and  
Bear it through the open casement  
To the chamber of the begess.  
When the begess sees the omen,  
To the courtyard goeth she;  
Looking t'wards the battlements,  
Both the black-winged ravens see,  
Forthwith thus addresseth them:  
"Black-winged ravens, mine allies!  
Bloody to your very wings,  
And your beaks red to the eyes!  
Whose blood is it ye have drunken?  
Whence, oh, ravens, have ye come?  
Come ye not from there above  
Osia, from below Moskva?  
Saw ye not there Turkish hosts?  
Saw ye not my own Beshir?  
Nay, and Hassan-Beg, his brother,  
Osman-Beg, my well-loved son,  
Sal'-Smail Aga, nephew mine,  
Aged Arnda, standard-bearer,  
And the other Turkish leaders all?  
Are the armies well, and in good heart?  
Are the chargers and the soldiers drilled?  
Do the standards gaily float before them?  
Do the Turks e'en rage like wolves?

\* Bulgaria.

† Albania.

“ ‘Is my Pasha still commander?  
Sends he scouts across the plains?  
Do they bring him many slaves?  
Has he Christians under chains?  
Tender captive maidens, too, enough?  
Has he something won for me?  
Brings he slaves from Muscovy?  
Have they yet their booty shared?  
Did the Pasha get the best?  
When returneth he to me?  
Prepared for him I then would be.’

“ To her thus the ravens twain reply :  
‘ Our ally, and Beshir Pasha’s wife !  
Gladly would we bring good news,  
Yet of that we saw but little ;  
What we saw we tell to thee !  
At Moskva were we then of late, and  
Saw, oh, woman, all thou askest after.  
Soldiers well, their spirits good,  
Horses caracolled with men,  
The standards waving on before, and  
Just like wolves the Turks did rage ;  
Thy Pasha, still as commander,  
Sent the scouts towards the plains,  
Many slaves they brought him back,  
Many Christians lay in chains,  
And fair captives lacked he not.

“ ‘ Whilst in chains the Christians mourn,  
Christian women have to dance before him,  
Dance with grace, though not with heart.  
Seven are with thy Pasha ;  
Osman-Beg, thy son, hath some—  
Three of these the very fairest :  
All the Turkish leaders, too, have some ;  
One has two, another four !’

“ Thereto answered Beshir Pasha’s wife :  
‘ My allies good, ye ravens black,  
Truly ye have earned a gift !’  
Speaks, and starts to fetch the gift.

“ But the ravens then replied :  
‘ Wait ! for other news we have to add !  
Victory had crowned the Pasha’s arms ;

“ But the devil would not let him pause to think ;  
 Ever nearer to Moskva he did approach.  
 Seeing this the Moskva queen,  
 Jelisava \* is her name,  
 Caused a mine in secret to be dug,  
 Then enticed across the Turkish host,  
 Then set fire to the mine, so  
 That t'wards heaven the soldiers flew,  
 Nor till the third day fell they down !  
 Hearing this, the wife of Beshir Pasha cried :  
 ‘ Woe, oh, ravens ! Fearful is this evil news !’

“ But the ravens still had more to add :  
 ‘ Yet, oh, begess, yet is this not all !  
 Not till now of sorrow do we speak !  
 ‘Gainst the army that survived  
 Moskva’s queen now next did send—  
 Send six hundred thousand men,  
 Horsemen all, wild daring men.  
 On Osia did they force the Pasha ; and  
 Here, oh, begess, was the army slain :  
 Twelve mighty viziers met their end.  
 Countless small horsetail pashas too,  
 With eighty Bosnian begs !’  
 Wailing, cries the wife of Beshir Pasha :  
 ‘ Woe ! oh, woe ! most dreadful is this woe !

“ But the ravens still had more to add :  
 ‘ Yet, oh, begess, yet is this not all,  
 And thy sorrow hast thou yet to learn !  
 Living took they thy Pasha,  
 With him, Osman-Beg, thy much-loved son :  
 Led them both to Christian camp.  
 Beshir here a friend did meet,  
 A friend from Herzgovina,  
 Of the name of Zernojewitsh Sava.  
 Glad at this was Beshir-Pasha ;  
 Sava then began to speak :  
 “ Unchaste Beshir-Pasha, despoiler of our homes !  
 Slain hast thou my brothers five.  
 Heavy woe brought to my heart !  
 Taken from me home and land—  
 All my land in Herzgovina !

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\* Empress Elizabeth.



"Tell me, where is now my land and soil?  
 Where the kine that nourished me?  
 Where my steeds, my fiery war-horse?  
 Where my thousand sheep—my care?  
 Where my brothers—where are they?  
 Fool, to this hast thou brought me,  
 For my own life laid in wait,  
 Scarcely could I flee to Moskva!"  
 When to justify himself the Pasha tried,  
 Sava would not let him speak; but  
 Raised his sword, and from the trunk his head did cut.  
 Thy Osman, too, he fain would kill:  
 But Moskva's empress interfered:  
 "Stay, oh brother Zernojewitsh Sava!  
 Still a child, and inexperienced is he,  
 And may yet our Scriptures learn!"  
 Osman, then, they did baptize;  
 Taught to him the Muscovite books,  
 Made of him a Kaludjer!"\*  
 Hearing this the wife of Beshir-Pasha,  
 Broken-hearted, sank to earth;  
 "Sank down: never more to rise."

Far better known than this beautiful old song is the heroic poem of Ismail Aga Tshengitsh, an episode from the wars with the Montenegrins at the beginning of this century, which was translated into several languages after the edition published by the Croatian Banns Mazuranitsh.

Dervish-Beg himself, too, played an important part in Omer Pasha's campaign of 1861, and his brilliant feat of arms is well known: of how he defended the Piva Pass against the Montenegrins and the insurgent Christian Herzegovinans for two whole days with only seven hundred men. Surrounded on all sides, he even then proudly rejected the proffer of an honourable capitulation; the Montenegrins fought all the more obstinately because they were convinced that the Serdar-Ekrem himself was amongst the little band of soldiers. By the second evening Dervish-Beg had one hundred and ten dead and wounded, when, in the darkness of the night, one of his faithful followers stole through the enemy's camp, and in the morning of the following day brought unexpected help from Gatzko.

The relieving force only consisted of five hundred men, but of so many drums and trumpets, that the enemy took fright at the expected cross-firing, and Dervish-Beg's troops were rescued.

\* Monk.

Our host presented his little son Hajdar-Beg, ten years of age, to us, who, with great gravity, showed us, with the aid of his wooden gun, the exercises in use in our army. His elder brother, Omer-Beg, is placed with the *arrondissement* authorities at Fotcha.

After an hour's rest we took leave of Borja, but not of its lord, who accompanied us further, to Kalinovik. From Borja we turned directly to the west, towards the "kula" of Iazitshi on the road to Kalinovik, and soon reached that encampment, which is situated in the south-western angle of the Zagorje tableland near the outer southern promontories of the Treskavitza, between the heights of the Gradina and Veratsh, which tower above the whole of that neighbourhood. As the usual highways—only bridle-paths after all—on the one hand from Serajevo to Gatzko, on the other from Mostar to Fotcha, led between these two heights, a solitary inn had stood here. But since the last insurrection this point has been fortified by an entrenched camp, whilst watchhouses stand upon the rocky yellow-grey heights.

The brook which flows down the slopes of the Gradina, and which forms a beautiful waterfall over the rocks, fertilizes the neighbourhood of the encampment, and our soldiers here in this wilderness, as elsewhere, zealously tend their vegetable garden, to which they are devoted. That we are, nevertheless, regardless of the trees and bushes skirting the brook, and in spite of the green gardens and seeds, standing upon Herzegovinan soil is apparent, not only by the limestone heights, but also by the fact that at a short distance from the encampment the entire brook, which is moreover rapid and drives a mill, is suddenly swallowed up by the earth. It no longer exists, it has vanished.

In the camp of Kalinovik, genuine soldierly friendliness and good temper reign; the evening slipped by with a good game of skittles, an interminable meal, and the clinking of glasses, until we at last recollected that we were to be in our saddles again by four o'clock the next morning. Those who had accompanied us thus far took their leave, amongst them Dervish-Beg and his followers, and we received a new and not less interesting escort.

For the subjugation of such robber bands as still remained after the insurrection of 1881-2, and of the frequently repeated incursions from the farther side of the frontier, an institution was founded, which not only maintained itself brilliantly, but also, like everything which commands the admiration of the masses, even elicited a certain amount of popularity amongst the people.

These bands of outlaws, especially at first, when they could through intimidation reckon upon the support of the people, where they led the lonely

lives of shepherds upon wide stretches of land, could easily extricate themselves from the snares set for them by our regular troops, for even when information was given it was only done so as to mislead the pursuers.

The regular soldiers, hampered by all their equipments and precautionary measures, and lacking all knowledge of the peculiarities of the country and its inhabitants, were naturally much more clumsy than those they were pursuing, who in cases of emergency simply stepped over the borders, where they could no longer be followed although they often kept just beyond shooting range, so as to scoff at their pursuers.

Apparently harmless signals were given by pan-pipes, songs, and shouts from hill to hill by shepherd boys who seemed equally harmless.

Keen observers of these primeval practices, which have for centuries been in vogue amongst the political and non-political banditti under Turkish rule, knew that they could only be defeated by their own weapons. So the Bosnian skirmishing corps (*Streifcorps*) was formed, which under the name of the "*Strafuni*" has grown to be one of the most dreaded, and yet the most popular, forces in the occupied Provinces.

Made up of gendarmes, of natives, and soldiers, who have voluntarily joined the corps, and of pardoned insurgents who have entered the service of the authorities as pandours, each retains his own costume, and only divulges his personality, in cases of necessity, by wearing a black and yellow band on the left arm. Like the robbers, they carry nothing with them save their rifle and a small bread bag.

Such daily necessities as the robber supplied by force they buy with ready money, wherewith they are provided according to their requirements. They have a standing supply of saddles, blankets, and laced boots, scattered in depots all over the country, the most important being near the guard-houses in the wilderness. They thus nightly break up into larger or smaller parties, of from two to a hundred men, conceal themselves, unknown to any one sometimes, where necessary, for days together, in the depths of the forests, or in caves amongst the rocks; walk barefooted, silently, wandering through the suspected places, without waiting for any indications of robbers having appeared here or there. Constantly dwelling in the wilderness and amongst the people, they know the secrets of both, and all their tricks and stratagems, put two and two together, awaken in the people not only respect but feelings of trust and confidence, and mislead the robbers, just as these formerly misled our soldiers; the shepherd boy now makes his signal in their service—if in no other way, why then under the influence of a rifle muzzle, pointed at him from the place of concealment; it sometimes comes to pass that the outlaw coming over

the border, and thinking himself secure in the darkness of the night and upon the impassable rocky paths, runs straight into the arms of the strafuni; but where larger bands of outlaws exist, the single posts concentrate themselves, and prepare rapidly for open fight. In short, with the native element at their centre, they waylay the cunning of the robber and defeat him by his own tactics.

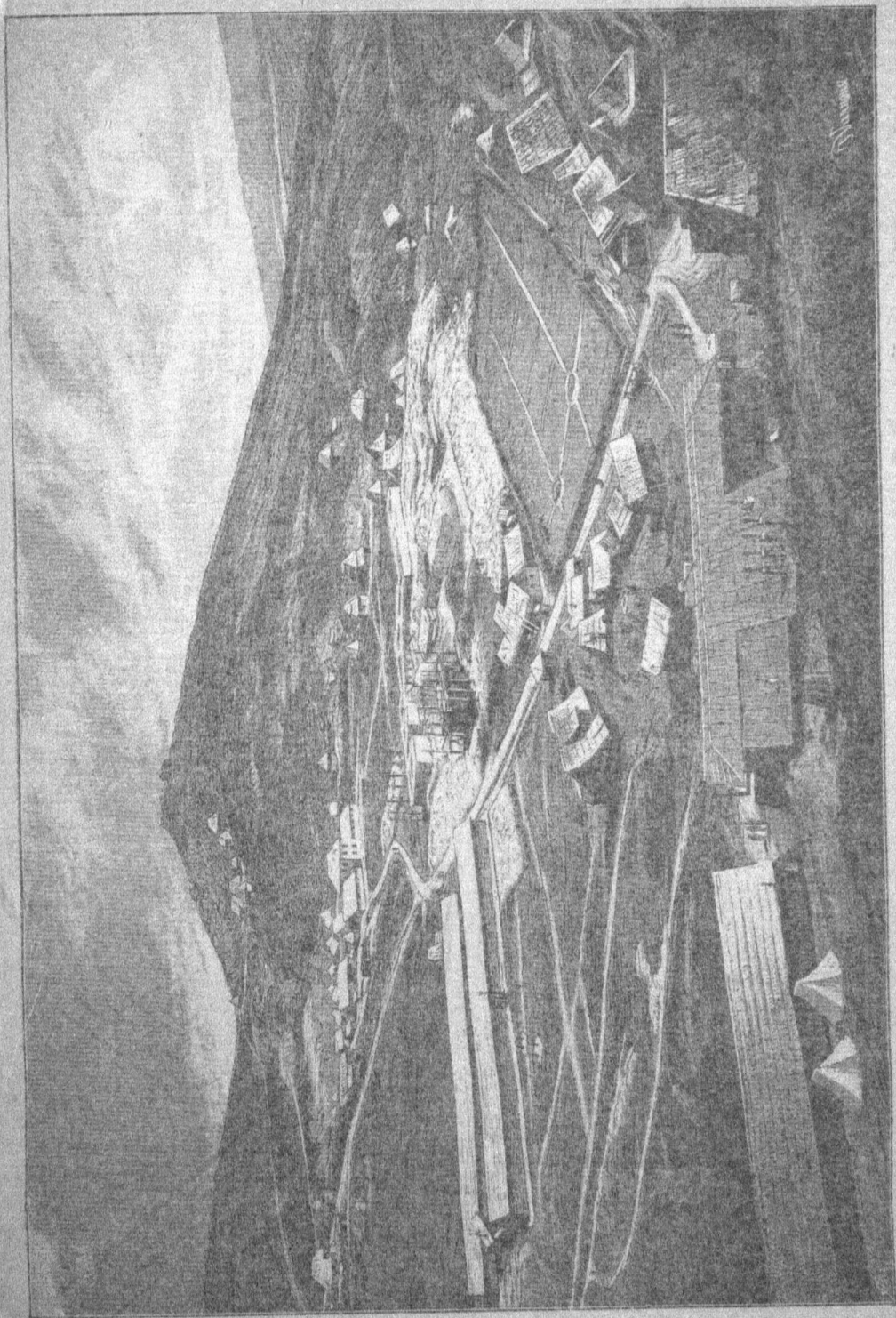
The strafuni, aided by the rule that, in every case where undetected secrecy has given assistance to the robbers, the whole community *in solidum* shall be punished by a fine in money, has made the robber's life, formerly so prosperous, now a thankless one; and so far impossible that, even if one of our good friends, Lazo Soshitza for instance, the celebrated "commander" of the Montenegrin province of Piva, the almost independent lord of the mountains of Durmitor, who causes the snow to be trodden down by a hundred oxen, when travelling to Tshettinje, sometimes sends a band across the borders—a thing of not infrequent occurrence upon occasions of public rejoicing, a journey of the minister's, or during the recruiting—it comes to a speedy termination in fright.

A cavalcade of these strafuni now formed our escort, and with them came Captain Svetitschanin, the martial commandant of the entire skirmishing corps.

From Kalinovik, the tableland of the Zagorje bends to the south-west for a time like a narrow strip between the outrunners of the Treskavitza and the Lelja-Planina—of which the first forms its western, the latter its southern wall, as far as the group of houses known as Krajiselitshi. Here the mountain streams of the Vrhovina, which is part of the Treskavitza, and the Vutshje-Brdo, Wolf Mountain, which joins the Lelja-Planina, flow into one another, and form the river Krajiselitza-Rjeka, which now hurries along the steeply inclined country, always close at the feet of the steep and woody Vutshje-Brdo, to the south-west, into the Upper Narenta, as that river flows from the south-east. We continued on our way, above this stream on the slope of the Vutshje-Brdo, at first upon stony ground, this continuing as far as the group of houses known as Obalj. Here we rested, and then passed into a dense, luxuriant, silent beech forest, which covered the Wolf Mountain to its very summit; and then we suddenly beheld the peculiar greenish-white water of the Narenta far below us. Even here it was broad enough, but did not as yet flow between the rocks by which it is recognizable later on, but was shut in on either side by steep wooded mountain ridges.

We now rode up the Narenta, directly south, still high above the river, on the slope of the Vutshje-Brdo, which we had skirted in a long bend, from Kalinovik, to the point where the now southern walls of the





Kalinovik.

mountain descend into the valley by mighty terraces, which take the name of "Bjela Voda" from the innumerable rills of water which rush down them. In front of this bend we descend down to the Narenta by steep sloping, tortuous windings, most of the company on foot leading their horses; the banks are a little wider here, and a long wooden bridge leads across the river, whilst on the farther side stand the ruins of a lonely mosque, all that remains of the Ulok of former days, after the insurrection of 1881-2, the central point of which was here. We had now descended from Kalinovik, which lies at an altitude of one thousand and ninety-seven mètres, to a height of six hundred and seventy-eight mètres; but on the opposite bank we had to ride along a road just as steep as that by which we had descended on the other side, up a hill seven hundred and four mètres high, and still more bare, that we might reach New Ulok, which consists of a small fortress built since the insurrection, and which is situated nearer to the village of Obernja than to Old Ulok.

The officers dwelling in the deserted solitude of this settlement awaited us in front of the strong bulwarks and gateways of their fortress, built upon the summit of the hill. Between the cold, newly built walls, through whose shooting chinks the wind whistled into the best rooms, we passed a frosty night upon straw pillows, and beneath rugs, for even the comforts of barracks had ceased here, and taking leave at four o'clock in the morning of our hosts, on whom the duties of a soldier's life constantly enjoin such hardships, we were again seated in our saddles, so as to reach the plains of Gatzko in good time, through the Alpine pastures of the Morinje.





## CHAPTER XX.

### *THE MORINJE AND GATZKO-POLJE.*

Tzervanj-Klanatz and his Castle of Rocks—The Morinje and its Dangers—The Vanished Bridal Party—Montenegrin Colony—Groups of Herzegovinan Horsemen—The Plains of Gatzko.

ABOUT a thousand paces to the south of Ulok there towers a seemingly insurmountable bulwark of rugged rocks about four thousand paces in length, and thirteen hundred and twenty-eight mètres in height, the threshold of the "Tzervanj-Klanatz." If we cross this, we see on the western end the Gvozd, on the eastern the Somina heights, stuck on like cocked hats. Somewhat more in the foreground, between the two, is the ridge of rocky Panos,—a regular system of natural bulwarks of gigantic dimensions, and strengthened by art, for the peaks of the Somina are surmounted by five kulas. Heavy blows have been struck more than once upon this rocky mountain; the last time in February 1882 between our troops, advancing from Nevesinje and Gatzko, and the insurgents concentrated at Ulok from the neighbourhood of the Upper Narenta, and the Zagorje, at whose head stood the celebrated leaders: Commanders Ibrahim-Beg Tshengitsh and Salih Aga Forta, the Serdars Vasho-Buva, Stojan Kovatshevitsh, and others.

Several of these had just escorted us through the Zagorje. Others, like Salih Aga Forta, and Stojan Kovatshevitsh, who were ordinary robbers, live in Montenegro and in the Sandjak.

Looking down from the rocky bastions of the castle of rocks, the Tzervanj-Klanatz, we see the Tzervanj-Planina on the west, and on the east the peaks of the Dumosh-Planina, which are more than eighteen hundred mètres in height, but just before us lies a landscape unique in its melancholy monotony—the Morinje.

Up to the furthest bounds of the southern horizon there extends a



slightly undulating, bright green piece of ground, across which low, whitish ridges of rock are here and there drawn, and dark lime-pits gape. The whole tableland is of rocky soil, of an average height of thirteen hundred mètres, and closely overgrown with short grasses, between which the gentian here and there raises its blue head. No tree, no bush, not a sign of any human hand or labour upon the whole plain, which extends for many miles in all directions. Its only spring, past which our road leads, is that of Pashina-Livada. Montenegrin shepherds tried to establish a colony here, but this, too, came rapidly to grief, and now scarcely any traces of it are discoverable. They could not withstand the fearful snowstorms, which, excepting in the months of July and August, rage throughout the year in the Morinje, coming up unexpectedly, and laying everything waste.

On account of these snowstorms, as well as of the hungry wolves which break out from the Tzervanj-Planina, the Morinje is considered to be so dangerous during the winter, that it is only traversed by caravans, consisting of at least from forty to fifty people.

Not far from the Pashina-Livada there is one other point, which in this monotonous, uniform, Alpine desert has at least a name—the Svatovske-Greblje, "wedding tombs," a large group of tombstones lying between rocks and lime-pits. A hundred years ago, so runs the legend, Omar-Beg Ljubovitsh was conducting his bride from Ulok to Nevesinje through the desert. At this spot they were overtaken by a snowstorm driven across the Dumosh-Planina from far-distant Volujak, and all—the bridegroom and all his wedding guests, more than one hundred and sixty heroes, were destroyed—the bride alone saved herself in a marvellous manner, upon her splendid Turkish steed, and succeeded in reaching the plains of Nevesinje across the mountain ridge of the Tzervanj-Planina: a mournful bride—the messenger of death.

According to another legend two courting processions, who were going in search of one and the same bride, met here. In the fight which broke out between them, those taking part in one of them all fell victims. Doubtless more recent variations of legends centuries old, for the tombs, although no sign is any longer visible upon them, date from pre-Turkish times, and are identical with the Bogomilian tombs, which exist in other parts of the Morinje as well.

As a town can hardly have ever stood in this neighbourhood, it is probable that these tombs cover warriors who have fallen here. In Bosnia very light work is made of a hundred years: every old man and every old thing counts equally as a century!



In July and August the Morinje is lively, and sheep are driven up from the plains of Gatzko and Nevesinje, and even from Montenegro, to pass their summer here, the shepherd choosing one of the many caves as his habitation.

For many hours we wandered southwards between the green undulations of the Morinje. Low elevations concealed the horizon in such a way that hardly anywhere could we see more than one or two hundred paces ahead, and after walking for hours it still seemed as though we were still in the same place.

Up and down, up and down, always between the same earth mounds, at the foot of the same rocks, between the same yawning pits, above us the white firmament, all around us nothing but grassy waves.

There is hardly a trace of any beaten track. As upon the sea, and in the desert, so here, too, the position of the stars and the practised instinct of the natives point the way.

After a ride of four or five hours we began to turn from the south more towards the east, and reached the margin at last, where the Morinje begins to descend in long, broad shelves towards the south-east. At the foot of the first terrace the rain-water, as it flows together, forms a little brook, and upon its bank there stand a few huts and plum trees; people collected together as we wound down the long steep road; they were the inhabitants of the little hamlet of Slivlje, also a Montenegrin colony. Splendid, noble figures of southern type, with luxuriant black hair, it is a pity that their calling does not correspond to the impression made by their appearance, for they are nominally shepherds, but really sheep-stealers. Whilst we were resting on the edge of the brook, below the village, in a neighbourhood which, after the desolate Morinje, seemed to be quite picturesque, and the head of the little community—the Glavar—was interviewing the minister, one of the inhabitants sang heroic songs to the guzla for our entertainment, and all gladly partook of our wine and cold viands.

After we had, near Slivlje, reached the second ledge of the sloping south-eastern margin of the Morinje, which is already called the Javor-Planina, we rode farther along it by the side of the Slivlje brook, again southwards upon exactly similar ground as that of the upper part of the Morinje. After this broad ledge the ground again falls suddenly, and still more steeply to the bottom of the valley, which separates the Javor-Planina from the tableland of the Ponikve-Planina, stretching away towards Gatzko, by a deep, narrow, steep, sharply-descending ravine, in which lies the stony bed of the Zupanj brook, which runs parallel with the Slivlje brook to the

south-west. But in comparison to the stagnant waters of the Slivlje the Zupanj is an unbridled, foaming mountain torrent, moving and carrying away stones and heaps of sand in its wake.

Riding along upon this lower terrace of the Planina, between both streams, we at last reach its southernmost point. Far below us the waters of the Zupanj unite with those of the Bashtitza stream, whose narrow valley, lying between the above-named Ponikve-Planina and the opposite Bjelashitza-Planina, leads south-eastwards to the plains of Gatzko. The combined streams under the name of Zahlumska-Rjeka flow between the southern declivity of the Morinje and the Umatz Mountain which towers up before us; and this valley, a continuation of the former one, leads southwards out into the plains of Nevesinje, which lie between the Tzervanj-Planina, the western wall of the Morinje, and the Velez-Planina which extends above Mostar.

We stood upon the heights as though upon the ledge of a bastion, that went straight down on either side, into a moat; to the left the foaming, rushing Zupanj; before us the silent, winding, silver ribbon of the Zahlumska. We cautiously descended the short, slippery grass by long zigzags. Below, where the streams meet, in front of the village of Fojnitza, a whole body of horsemen awaited us: the deputation from Nevesinje.

After we had crossed the Zahlumska by the long wooden bridge immediately below where the waters of the Zupanj discharged themselves we rode at the head of the Nevesinje deputation, for a short distance further, along the left bank of the river, which now bore the name of Bashtitza, up to Fojnitza, where a no less brilliant and motley troop of horsemen was awaiting us from Gatzko. Beneath pavilions woven out of leaves, in front of which the sheep were being turned upon spits at the camp fire, we partook of a heavy meal. One of the officials of the Gatzko arrondissement, a Montenegrin by birth, carved the animal, roasted to a reddish brown, with one sharp stroke of his scimitar. After our long ride the rest did us double good amidst these picturesque surroundings, to which not only the pavilion and the camp fire, but the figures and soldiers, and the members of the deputation clad in gay holiday attire, all lent a warlike appearance. It was an indescribable, but memorable, sight when we had again mounted our horses and continued our journey through the narrow rocky valley of the Bashtitza into the plains of the Gatzko-Polje. The horsemen crowded through the narrow valley behind us for as far as the eye could reach, and when they had passed through into the plains, they covered it entirely. Letting go the bridles of their fiery steeds, they rested in many coloured groups,

with wild cries, shouts, beating of drums, swaying of flags, singing heroic songs, and embracing one another on horseback. These noises gave most distinct evidence that we were amongst a different people, and beneath a different sky, from the Bosnian; this was also impressed upon us by the chivalrous self-consciousness with which even the Christians here approached us, Christians who, under Montenegrin influence, and supported by Montenegro, had never bowed before Mohammedan masters, and who had either openly or in secret carried on incessant war. And this aristocratic self-consciousness finds expression not only in their stately figures and in their dignified bearing, but also in their brilliant, gorgeous costumes, sparkling with gold and silver, amongst which one frequently sees the small round, flat, Montenegrin cap with a black brim and embroidered red crown, the white smock-frock something like the Albanian Fustanella passed underneath the girdle, and the white woollen gaiters fastening tight round the calves below the full blue trousers. The Waywodes, Serdares, and Glavares, who have for the most part earned their titles in the wars as leaders of companies, wear the sleeveless many-coloured dolman, from which the broad shirt-sleeves hang, like regular glittering armour, for it is entirely covered with plaits of chased silver. Their cartridge-cases of beaten silver hang by straps ornamented with silver studs. Those who have the right to do so, proudly carry their ornamental pistols and scimitars in a heavy girdle, or else a gilt circular sword at their side. Those who do not possess this privilege stick at least a few knives in their belt.

Here we saw Bogdan Simunitsh, with his long white beard and Montenegrin cap, but in the black habit of the priesthood; he was a pop, who, in the campaigns of 1861 and 1875, was a celebrated leader. In spite of his hoary beard he was one of the most zealous of the singers.

Only the begs with the long tasselled fez or turban, in green or red silk kaftans, stitched in gold, preserved here, too, their dignified repose. Thus we proceeded across the Gatzko-Polje, between its morasses, in widely scattered groups, nearly four hundred horsemen in all, amongst them scarcely one in the dress of a civilian with a white sun helmet; officers and officials in uniform, but the great mass in fantastic Oriental garments, a procession the like of which I have never seen before nor since.

Maxim Tshernojivitch's wedding procession may have offered a similar picture, when it set forth across the sea to bring home the daughter of the Doge of Venice.

"Silk and velvet deck the heroes,  
Scarlet red are all their dresses,

Redder were they from the blood,  
 From the sun a rosy colour.  
 Loosely hang around their shoulders  
 Richest cloaks of violet,  
 On their heads the gayest caps,  
 Round their breasts bright silver mail.  
 Thus did glitter all our youth,  
 Pearl and crown of the procession.  
 Never was their equal seen  
 Serbs or Latins e'er among.  
 Latins they have everything :  
 Gold and silver work they deftly,  
 Finish well the scarlet cloaks ;  
 But the highest thing they lack :  
 Troops as princely, bold and proud,  
 Fresh and gay as these."

The Gatzko-Polje is a basin surrounded by high, sparsely wooded, rocky mountains which at its north-western extremity, where we entered it, extends to a length of about fifteen kilomètres and a width of five kilometres to the south-east, towards the Montenegrin province of Dobrujak, and leads through a narrow pass into this province. The north-eastern slope of this basin at first rises like a plateau, upon which may still be seen between the thick labyrinths of low fences of dry masonry, some solitary groups of trees and gardens, but after that it rises suddenly in jagged, gigantic walls of rock right up to the saddle of the Tshemerno, and the heights of the Lebershnik and the Kuk-Planina. The south-western margin is formed by low but steep hills with some vegetation, behind whose chain, however, the woody Bjelashitza-Planina rises just as suddenly ; and to the south rises the rocky waste of Korito. The plain of the basin is still some nine hundred mètres above the level of the sea. There is no enclosed place or town of the name of Gatzko ; the name applies to the whole hollow, whose margins, especially in the ravines of the northern plateau, are covered with small clusters of houses.

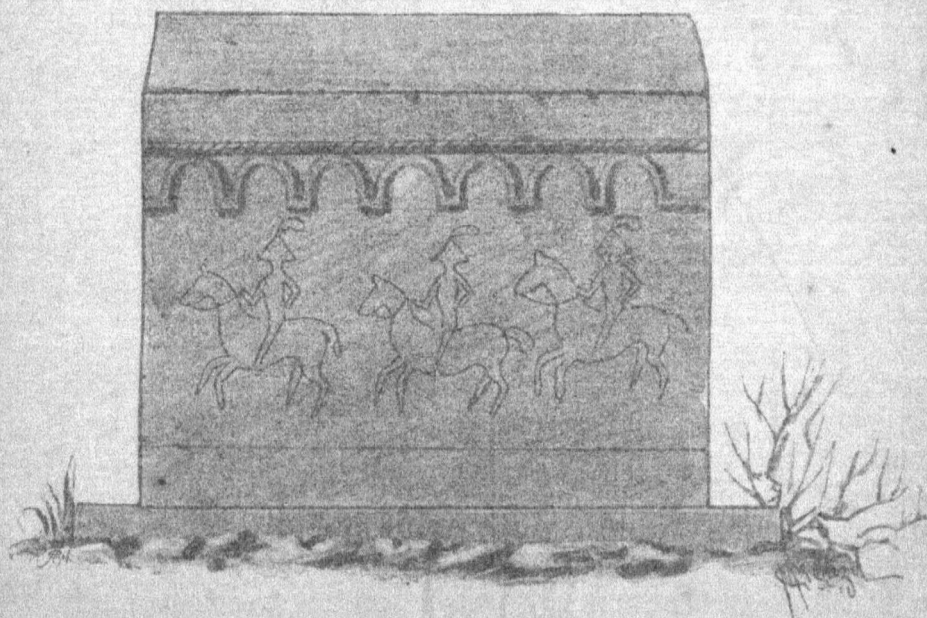
All these houses are built after the Herzegovinan plan, with a windowless ground floor, which serves as a stable, and one upper story with narrow windows, built of solid stone and roofed in with stone slabs.

The number of buildings when taken together might mount up to a thousand ; each family and circle of relatives lives apart, and inhabits one, two, even six houses, in one group, according to its numbers, in close proximity to its arable land. One chief cause of this separation may lie in the fact



that Christians and Mohammedans cannot tolerate one another; but there are also the ancient warlike customs—amongst them the hereditary *vendetta*, against which the detachment of the several circles of relatives offers more security. And then, too, the near neighbourhood of Montenegro, where each town, Nikshitsh and even Tshetinje, is built in these groups, may account somewhat for this circumstance. It may, however, have originated in the fact that the separate divisions of the population have only settled singly and gradually upon the ground which they now occupy.

The most extended group of houses on the northernmost margin, to



From the Gatzko Burial-ground.

which formerly the name of Gatzko was more especially given, and which was also the seat of the Turkish authorities, is that of Metochia; this Greek name points to the institution of a parish. Gatzko, too, formerly Gretzko, bears reference to the settlement of some Greek monastery or other. The new Government buildings have been built a little beyond Metochia, and now people begin more and more to apply the name of Gatzko to this central point. So long as the famous Ismail-Beg Tshengitsh, the hero of the well-known folk-epic, held sway in the Gatzko-Polje, the name of Gatzko clung to his kula, which rose opposite to Avtovatz, at the foot of the hills on the opposite margin. It is not standing now.

The place where the chief of the older settlements stood is shown by the mediæval burial-ground, which lies not far from Metochia, to the right of the road which leads to Avtovatz.

About two hundred tombstones cover a gently rising meadow near the present Christian churchyard, but a large number of the stones were used in the construction of the road. In opposition to the belief which ascribes the decorated stones chiefly to Herzegovina, and those without any symbols to Bosnia, those found here are, as a rule, only simple slabs. Several, however, display more important ornamentation. Amongst leaf-borders, kolo-dances, and stag-hunts, occurs a group of horsemen with headgear ornamented with feathers, etc., etc. The foundation walls of a vault, in the middle of the cemetery, merits attention; they are twelve mètres long and four mètres wide, and constructed out of square stones similar to those of the single tombs, and indeed even a few decorated stones have been made use of. Not far from the burial-ground there stands a high, rough stone cross.

Further on towards Avtovatz there is upon an isolated low hill another much smaller but more beautiful group of these graves. The single stones are taller than a man, and generally display beautiful ornamental and columnal decorations. But only one single stone is covered with figures from the life, *i.e.* two fighting stags. A sarcophagus bears an inscription which has become illegible.

The Gatzko-Polje itself, surrounded on all sides by rising ground, was, beyond doubt, at one time the basin of a lake, whose waters flowed into the plains of Nevesinje through the Fojnitza valley. The water in course of time worked its way through the limestone (Karst) just as the Mushitza in like manner rises from the springs of the Tshemerno and Lebershnik and winds along the whole length of the basin, penetrating through subterranean passages into the interior of the earth at the end of the chain of hills in front of the Bjelashitza mountains, together with the stream flowing from its other side, and those from the north, at once to the entrance to the Gatzko-Polje, near the brooks of Tshajnitza and Gratshanitza, which flow down by the group of houses known as Gratshanitza, and which the Mushitza picks up in its course. Thus swallowed up by the earth it cannot reach the vale of Fojnitza, through which the Bashitza flows into the Nevesinje-Polje. The Mushitza, which has vanished into the caverns or Ponors, they say, does not reappear until it reaches Trebinje, far away. But if the snow melts (snow covers the Gatzko-Polje from the beginning of November till June), and countless streams come tearing down the mountains, the subterranean caverns are not able to receive the concurrence of waters, and hence a large part of the basin

annually becomes a lake again, whose waters slowly flow off in opposite directions, and leave behind nothing but wide swamps. These are rapidly dried up by the heat of the sun, and until the middle of September grain is grown upon it, which with cattle-breeding and a few vegetable products constitute the only articles of cultivation. In spite of its southern situation, the average heat of the sun is very low, partly as a result of its altitude, partly on account of the snowy mountains lying to the north-east and of the south-western chain of hills which shut off the effects of the sea.

Therefore the maiden in the folk-song says to her suitor from Gatzko :

“ Stories many I have heard  
Of the country all round Gatzko,  
Dreary desert all around,  
Tablelands and mountains high,  
And between naught else save rocks.  
Snow lies there perpetually,  
No sun's rays can melt it ever—  
Thither follow I no lover.”







## CHAPTER XXI.

### *THE ROCKY DESERT OF KORITO, AND THE NECROPOLIS OF THE VARDAR.*

The Castle of Kljutsh—The Grotto Lake—Legend of King Sandalj—The Historical Sandalj—The Saddle of the Kobila-Glava (Mare's Head)—Prehistoric Tombs—The Rocky Desert of Korito—Agriculture between the Rocks—The Cordon—The Vardar and the Necropolis—God's Oak—The Bogomilian Burial-ground of Radmilovitsh—Cisterns made out of Tombstones.

A ROCKY desert, replete with heroic memories, in which a whole city of primeval tombstones lies—such is the road from Gatzko to Trebinje, where we suddenly and unexpectedly entered a regular paradise: sparkling waters wind along beneath picturesque mountains and amongst luxuriant tobacco fields, above which wave the grape, the fig, the olive, and the crimson blossoms of the pomegranate.

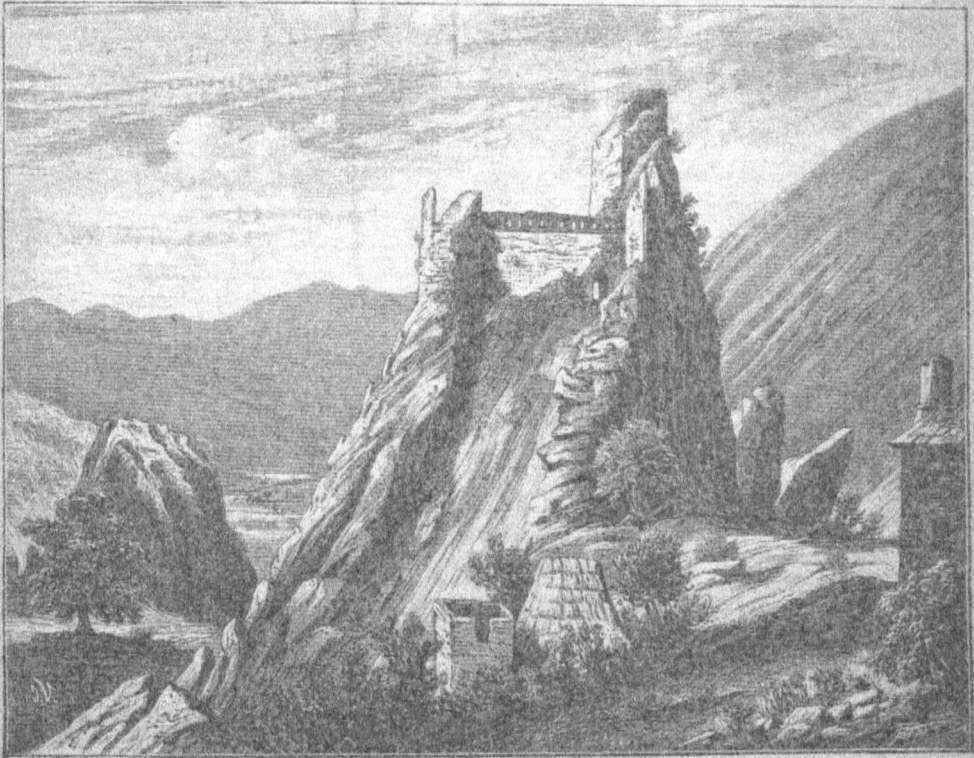
From the court-house—which, whilst we remained there, was continuously surrounded by many-coloured groups of begs, serdars, glavares, pops, country folk, shepherds, and beggars, who all wished to speak to the minister—we mounted the hill which shuts off the basin of Gatzko to the south-east, riding between Avtoyatz and the ruins of Ismail-Beg's kula; and after we had also passed the hamlets of Mjedulitsch and Dohanitsch, which are built amongst the boulders, we suddenly found ourselves in a world of rocks, the like of which I have only seen in the desert of Judah—power, unity, character in the highest degree, all tending to the same effect, and nothing disturbing this unity. The soil itself, like its history, is full of destructive forces and horrors; but also full of power, full of mighty, elevating tendencies.

One feels that those who cling to this soil are born for battle. This stony and burnt-up country, whose bold, vigorous form, in spite of its desolate character, perhaps even on that very account, excites the fancy powerfully,



must perforce bring forth proud spirits and fiery hearts, with small needs, but with their feelings and wills all the more strongly developed on that account.

Ashy grey or glaring ochre coloured stones of all sizes, from entire mountain masses, enormous blocks, and lofty pointed pyramids, down to small boulders, which everywhere cover the ground, and especially where ravines and fissures slope down into the chief valley, and where there are



Kljutsh (Herzegovina).

passes leading across the Saddle. Then comes a cleft amphitheatre, between whose stones and closely packed boulders the alert shy lizard can only just find a place for concealment, and the horses' feet are constantly caught. Vegetation is almost entirely lacking, as is also water. Very seldom does a spring show itself, and then rapidly vanishes again amidst the chinks in the rocks, after having created a small oasis of green.

And farther on, beneath the lofty Vardar, in a wide circle, there is a city of

stone tombs in the rocky waste, which shows us that here, where now only a desert and miserable huts exist, once, in primeval times, a numerous, flourishing, powerful race must have dwelt, which passed its days, not only in fighting, but also in merry, knightly games : in dancing and in hunting, as may be seen by the pictorial representations which decorate these gigantic gravestones, side by side with other more enigmatical, undecipherable symbols and figures,—a race which was not alone warlike and proud, but also cultured, indeed possessed of even artistic attainment, since it could immortalize its dead by such indestructible monuments.

The warlike scenes and sketches on these graves, the old broken-down castle ruins, which stand in the waste of rocks ; the heroic songs with which it re-echoes, and which embrace centuries of history, a complete chain of wars and adventures down to the present day ; and finally the fortifications constructed out of stone and blocks of rock, whose remains may still be seen on mountain and valley ; the military posts beneath which our road lay, and the bulwarks of a like nature along or behind which our soldiers now keep guard on the frontier against Montenegro,—all these amply prove that war has never been extinguished here, since the Counts of Chlum disputed with the Balshas of Zeta as to who should be rulers in the principality of Travunje.

Besides, the very nature of the soil itself, with its stern conditions of life, makes warriors of its inhabitants. Only a powerful constitution can survive its rigours, but those who do grow up, become strong in body and in spirit, full of independence and opposition against all that is likely to disturb them in their own pursuits, full of strong contempt for foreign effeminate manners and usages and the demands of civilization, but armed with an intellect which controls its conditions, with ability and boldness, conversant with all the peculiarities and artifices of their native land, inured to difficulties and privation, practised in arms, formidable enemies amidst their native rocks, from whose concealment they burst out unexpectedly, and with foolhardiness, to rush down upon their astonished foe with a terrifying howl and flashing sabres, but within whose walls and trenches too they can vanquish an enemy far outnumbering themselves with wonderful tenacity of purpose, if they only know their retreat to be secure ; for they will not fall dead in their enemies' hands, for more than death they fear the mutilation which in this country is always practised upon prisoners and frequently on the fallen.

Upon such a soil, and amongst such a people, those wild songs, which are yet permeated by a noble spirit, germinate, whose effect is all the more taking, the more simply and truly they reflect life.

Such an one is :

"THE DUEL.

" Beg Ljubovitsh wrote a letter  
In the village of Nevessinja,  
Wrote and sent it off to Stony Piva,  
On the Pivanian Bajo's knee :  
'Hear me, thou Pivanian fool !  
Thou didst wound me to the heart,  
When my brother thou didst kill.  
Meet me now in single combat !  
Place of meeting give I choice of three :  
Firstly, the Korito Rocks I name,  
Second, the Trussin mountain forest,  
In the midst of the Nevissinja Plain ;  
Third, where'er we chance to meet !  
Dar'st thou not to meet me thus,  
I'll send thee an embroidery frame and spindle,  
With the spindle some Egyptian flax,  
A spool made from the beech tree wood,  
That upon the spindle and the frame  
Thou may'st work me shirt and braces !'

" Bajo received the angry letter.  
When he saw what it contained,  
Forthwith took he pen in hand,  
And in answer wrote these words :  
'Oh, Beg Ljubovitsh, hearken to me !  
Pity were it that thou should'st fall through me.  
I should sorrow too to die through thee.  
Come, and let's be reconciled !  
If I slew indeed thy brother  
In my rash, misguided youth,  
Long have I that act berued ;  
Come, and let's be reconciled !  
See, I send thee here a goodly apple,  
Inside it a hundred golden coins !'

" When this letter reached Ljubovitsh,  
And he read what Bajo wrote,  
Wrote he to Bajo once again :  
'Bajo !' cried he, 'thou Pivanian bastard !  
Ne'er will I to thee be reconciled,  
E'en gav'st thou me a thousand coins,  
Till to my white court thou hast come,  
Kissed my greyhound on the eyes,  
On his hoofs my Arab steed,

Humbly then my hem and hands,  
Then the black earth at my feet !'

"When the angry letter came  
And he read what it contained,  
Bajo tossed his head and ground his teeth,  
And then wrote in a different tone :  
' Beg Ljubovitsh fool, now list to me !  
Greyhound of thine on eyes I ne'er will kiss,  
Neither will I kiss thy horse's hoofs.  
Nay ! and should it cost me e'en my life  
Would rather face thee in a duel.  
Wait for me on Trussin Hill,  
High up on the Nevessinja Plain,  
Facing the village of that name,  
And the lady, thy true wife.'

"Pivanian Bajo sent this letter,  
And summoned his confederate,  
Confederate Njegoshevitsh Mato :  
' Companion mine, Njegoshevitsh Mato,  
Challenge Beg Ljubovitsh to a duel.  
Equip thyself, dear friend, at all points.  
We will ride to Trussin Hill ;  
See if I do fall, oh, brother,  
Or if I do kill the Beg.'

"Armed himself then the Pivanian,  
Clad himself in silk and velvet,  
Girded on his two green swords,  
Forged by one armourer.  
Equipped himself too Njegoshevitsh Mato,  
And the two confederates rode from  
Stony Piva, rich in honour,  
Towards Nevessinja's level plain,  
To the forest mountain of Trussin.  
At the appointed spot the Turk was waiting,  
Having pitched a white tent there ; he sat  
Drinking wine there and carousing,  
Served by his servant Shaban Aga.  
Pivanian Bajo now approaching,  
Approaching thus, stepped in the tent ;  
Having entered, sat upon the ground,  
Sitting there, made greeting thus :  
' Good-day, God greet thee, Beg Ljubovitsh !  
Should the day to thee or me prove hurtful !'



"Then ungirt the two green swords,  
Threw them across his enemy's lap :  
'See, oh, Beg, the two green swords !  
Forged by one armourer,  
Choose whichever you like best,  
Take the better, leave the worst for me,  
That thou canst not say thou wast betrayed !'

"Beg Ljubovitsh, hearing this,  
Lightly sprang upon his feet,  
Quickly grasping his wrought scimitar :  
'Bajo !' cried he, 'thou Pivanian bastard !  
What should I do with a Christian sword ?  
I have here my Damascene blade !'

"Up stood Bajo on his feet ;  
Both went out into the open,  
Went, and then they parted, did these two.  
Bajo sent Njegoshevitsh Mato to  
Beg Ljubovitsh that he might search  
If that he wore a shirt of mail.  
Mato went to feel the Beg ;  
Found, as he was searching him,  
Shirts of mail had he three,  
Three shirts of mail one o'er the other.  
Beg Ljubovitsh now did perceive  
Bajo this would soon be told ;  
Fell upon Njegoshevitsh's neck,  
Kissed him on his white visage :  
'Brother in God,' he pleaded, 'Mato !  
Tell not thou the Pivanian  
That I wear these shirts of mail !  
See, if luck and God me speed,  
And I slay him in the duel,  
Bajo's clothes I thee will give,  
All his weapons give to thee,  
All the money too I find upon him.  
High in honour will I hold thee after ;  
Build for thee a white court in the  
Pretty village Nevessinja,  
Standing next to my white court,  
In addition give a thousand golden coins !

"Mato shared in the deception.  
Oh, the traitor ! may a serpent kill him !

And he went back to his friend,  
Lying said to the Pivanian  
That the Beg a fine shirt wore,  
But naught else upon his body ;  
Over this fine shirt some silk and velvet.  
Ljubovitch now, he sent his servant,  
Bajo too to overhaul.  
Then he came and searched Bajo,  
Turned round and told the Beg,  
That he wore no shirt of mail,  
Naught but one fine linen shirt,  
Over this fine shirt some silk and velvet.

“ To the place of battle then they walked :  
Bajo held his green sword in his hand,  
Held the Turk his Damascene blade.  
Backward stepped the seconds then,  
And the foes began to fight.  
Pivanian Bajo struck a blow,  
Struck a blow upon the Turk ;  
Through and through he cut the silk and velvet,  
Living fire sprang forth from silk.  
Beg Ljubovitch, too, he struck a blow,  
Struck a blow upon Pivanian Bajo ;  
Through and through he cut the silk and velvet,  
Black streams of blood gushed forth from silk,  
Bits of flesh fell from the wound,  
Sorely Bajo he was hurt,  
Sorely in his right arm wounded.  
Now as the Pivanian Bajo saw  
How through treason he was hurt,  
Cast his sword upon the green ground,  
Boldly rushing on the Turkish sabre,  
With his right arm clutching at it,  
With the right arm at his sabre,  
With the left one at his throat,  
Pulls him down upon the greensward,  
Him tears to pieces with his teeth.  
As Njegoshvitch beheld this,  
Slyly fled he o'er the level plain.  
Thus, too, did the Turkish servant Shaban Aga,  
After them the fleet Pivanian :  
'Stop, O brother Njegoshvitch Mato !  
Didst thou yesterday flee my sword,  
To-day in running I'll o'ertake thee !'

"And upon the plain o'ertook him,  
Felled him with his sword's hilt there,  
From his trunk his head he cut.  
Then he called upon the Turk :  
'Shaban Aga, turn thou back !  
And undress Njegoshovitsh Mato !  
On my faith thou'lt not be hurt !'

"Turned the servant Shaban Aga  
And undressed Njegoshovitsh Mato,  
Then went to Nevessinja village.  
Bajo he went to the Turk,  
Then removed his dress and arms ;  
Found upon him three big bags of gold,  
All quite full of golden ducats.  
Ungirding them from him, he girds them on ;  
To the brave and fiery steed then went,  
To the steed with star on foot ;  
Rode towards the Latin coastland,  
There his right arm to get healed."

Right at the beginning of this blood-saturated desert its romantic movements begin. As soon as we reach Tzrnitza—which consists of a few stone huts, but which to the inhabitants of this wilderness seems like paradise, because it owns a genuine spring and a certain amount of vegetation surrounding it—in front of us to the south there rises the bare saddle of the Kobila-Glava ; but to the right hand, in the west, there opens up a gigantic amphitheatre formed of the ridge of the Baba-Planina and the Koritnik, to which a narrow rocky valley turning in a north-westerly direction forms an exit. In the centre of this naked and desolate amphitheatre, made beautiful by the fantastic forms of the rocks, and in front of the entrance to this same narrow valley, above a few scrubby brown bushes, thin trees, and low huts, there rise in the midst of other rocks a few regular pyramids, and the highest of these is crowned by tumble-down boundary walls, and the ruins of towers broken off at the top, which seem to be growing out of the projecting rocks, so that with the deep ochre tint of the rocks added to this it is difficult to distinguish where one leaves off and the other begins. The amphitheatre lying some forty metres below the plains of Gatzko, together with the valley, bears the name of Golinjey-Dol. Throughout one portion of the year it is watered by the Tzrnitza stream, which vanishes here and there soon to re-appear upon the surface of the rock, until, after a run of about four and a half miles, it gradually and entirely sinks into the ground. The ruin which

keeps watch beneath the perpendicular walls of Baba, close to the narrow valley, is Fort Kljutsh, or the castle of "Kral Sandalj," of King Sandalj, as it is popularly called. It stands like an eagle's eyrie between the huts of the inhabitants of Kljutsh, which cling to the rocks like swallows' nests, upon the summit of the cliff. Its narrow gateway can only be reached upon one side of the rock, and then only with difficulty by experienced climbers, and with danger by the inexperienced. The walls, provided with chinks through which to shoot, are in many parts formed by the natural rock, and are still strong and capable of resistance. The courtyard is filled by crumbling walls and boulders, thickly overgrown with weeds: these quite close the entrance to both the towers which protect the castle on the only side of the approach. Remains of walls indicate the separate parts and chambers of the castle.

To the west of the fort three high walls of rock extend at a thickness of from two to three mètres, which end suddenly in rugged precipices. Betwixt these natural ramparts lay, according to popular report, the stables and gardens. At the foot of the precipice there flows a larger streamlet, whose waters break suddenly forth from the perpendicular cliffs of Baba, and after a short course of six hundred paces vanish upon the further side of the valley, in a lime cave (Karst). Before issuing from the interior of the Baba Mountain, the waters collect in a deep and spacious cavern. The entrance to this cave is situated about ten mètres above the surface of the valley. When the waters are low the stream gurgles forth from between the clefts and holes in the rocky wall; but when the snow is melting, or after a heavy rainfall, the cave fills, and then the waters rush forth from its mouth in a mighty, rapid torrent, which forms waterfalls that it would be difficult to match, and which only burst forth in equal strength from limestone rocks (Karst).

When the waters are low and the waterfall has vanished, and the water only trickles out of the rocks as it might out of a sponge, an expert climber can clamber up the gigantic stone slab of the smooth, slippery incline down which the water falls and which forms the entrance to the cave. But no one has at present penetrated any further in. Far below there yawns the deep, black gulf with the quiet water at the bottom. Swallows and swarms of doves flutter about within the mighty dome of rocks, and marvellous is the wealth of colour with which nature has decorated its walls.

The mosses and the dampness combine to form genuine frescoes in the contrasts they present, and in the shades of bright green, yellow, and orange, of delicate silver-green and pink, down to the intense darkness of some parts, and the surface of the waters which reflect the broken sunlight as it touches them.