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THE NEAR EAST



HIS MAJESTY KING PETER I. OF SERBIA.

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Le Queux, William

The Near East

THE PRESENT SITUATION IN MONTE-
NEGRO, BOSNIA, SERVIA, BULGARIA,
ROUMANIA, TURKEY AND MACEDONIA

*Illustrated by photographs by the
author and Princess Xenia
of Montenegro*



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1907

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PREFACE

THE reason of the anonymity of this book is obvious.

Revealing as it does the actual state of affairs in the Balkan Peninsula in this present year of grace 1907, it contains many plain truths and much outspoken criticism.

By a long journey of close, confidential inquiry through Montenegro, Northern Albania, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Turkey, and Macedonia, I have, at risk of betraying certain information imparted to me under seal of secrecy, endeavoured to place the actual and serious truth before English readers, and thus render complicated questions, such as Bulgaria and the Exarchate, more intelligible than heretofore.

Private audiences were granted me by the various kings and princes of the Balkan States, and by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, as well as by almost each member of the various Cabinets in turn, so that I was enabled to gather information, some of which is, of course, known in the chancelleries of Europe, while other facts will probably come as a revelation, even to Balkan diplomats themselves.

What I was told in one country was often contradicted in the next. Yet, possessing many "friends at Court," I was afforded unique facilities for studying, in each country,

the various questions on the spot. My inspection of the Servian prisons, in company with the Minister of Justice, was, for instance, the first occasion upon which a foreigner has been allowed to study the penal system in that country ; while I am, I believe, the only Englishman to visit and be the guest of those wild brigandish tribes of Northern Albania.

The secret aims and aspirations of the various Balkan States herein explained are based upon actual information gathered from confidential and reliable sources. The exposure of the shameful German and Austrian intrigues is no mere idle denunciation, but are actual facts, as revealed to me by certain Cabinet Ministers and other persons equally responsible, and supported by documentary evidence which I have had through my own hands.

As regards that land of terror, fire, and sword, Macedonia, I can only say that I have spared the reader many horrifying details and photographs of what I saw there with my own eyes. The blood of those poor defenceless women and children who are daily slaughtered by Greek bands cries aloud to Europe for vengeance.

Will there be war between Bulgaria and Turkey during the present year ?

To arrive at a definite conclusion upon that very serious point was one of the chief objects of my inquiry, and this record of its result—injudicious though I may be in putting it in print—will probably be read with interest by many to whom the Near East, with its mysteries, its constant plots, and its tangled politics, is as a closed book.

All through the Balkan Peninsula the weak are to-day being crushed by the strong. The Austrian Eagle has overshadowed and grasped Bosnia, she has her talons into Servia, and is casting covetous glances upon gallant little Montenegro. On the other hand, as part of the secret policy of Christian

Germany in her advance southward, the poor defenceless Macedonians are being daily outraged, murdered, or burned alive—the true facts being always suppressed and the news scarcely ever being allowed to leak out—while the Kaiser every day lifts his eyes to Heaven, implores the Divine aid, and consigns the destinies of his Empire to the direction of the Almighty !

To Germany, in great measure, is the present terrible state of Macedonia due. Her diplomacy at the Sublime Porte has recently exposed, beyond all doubt, that she secretly aids Greece and abets the Greek bands in their nefarious work of outrage, murder, and extermination.

The Kaiser could, by simply lifting his hand, stem the blood-lust of those armed hordes, and bring peace and security to the Macedonian population. But his secret policy is to create disorder in that terror-stricken country, so that Bulgaria and Turkey must be compelled, ere long, to fly at each other's throats.

Therefore he closes his Imperial eyes to those scenes of wanton slaughter that daily are a disgrace to our civilisation in this twentieth century, and matters are rapidly going from bad to worse.

SOFIA, *April* 1907.



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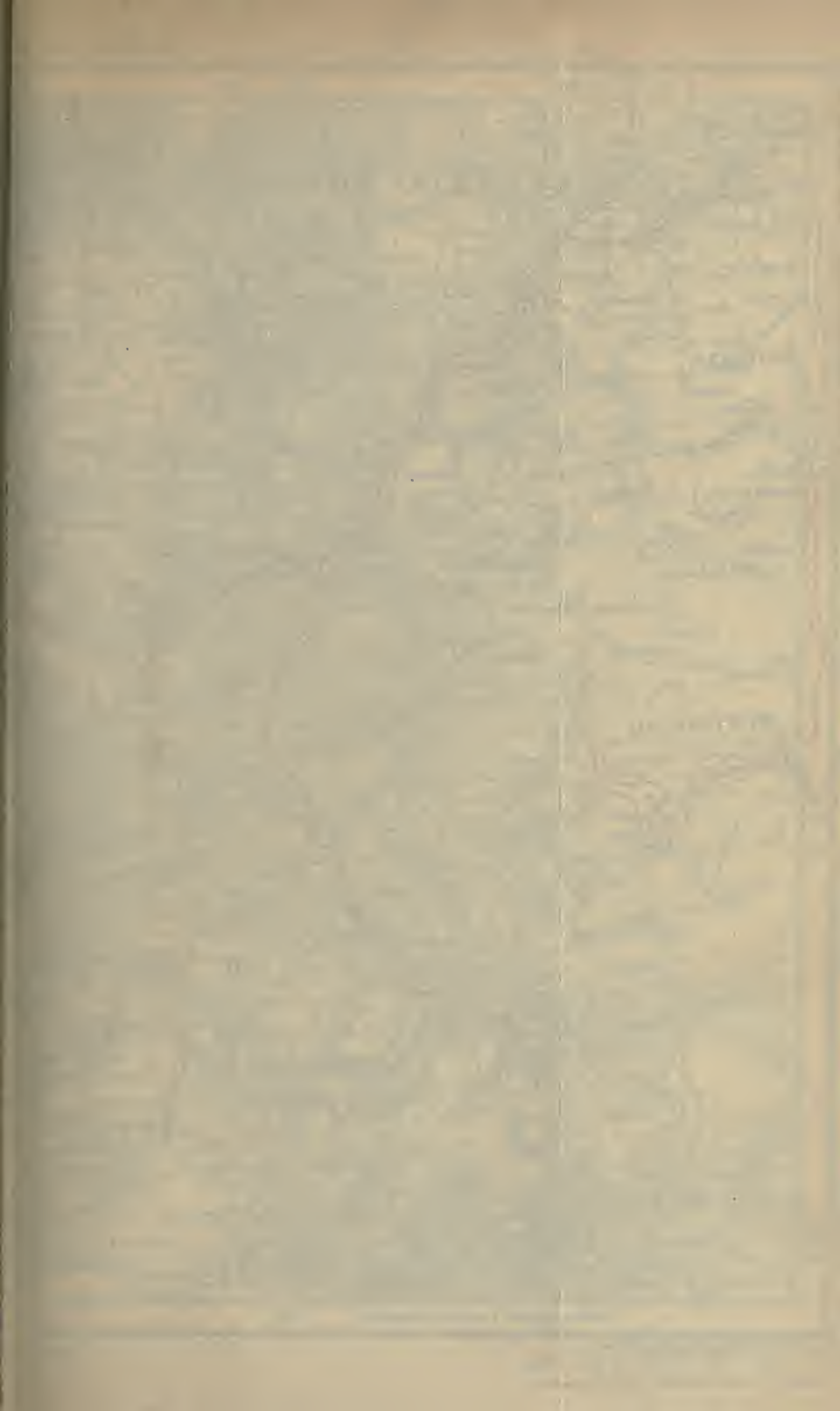
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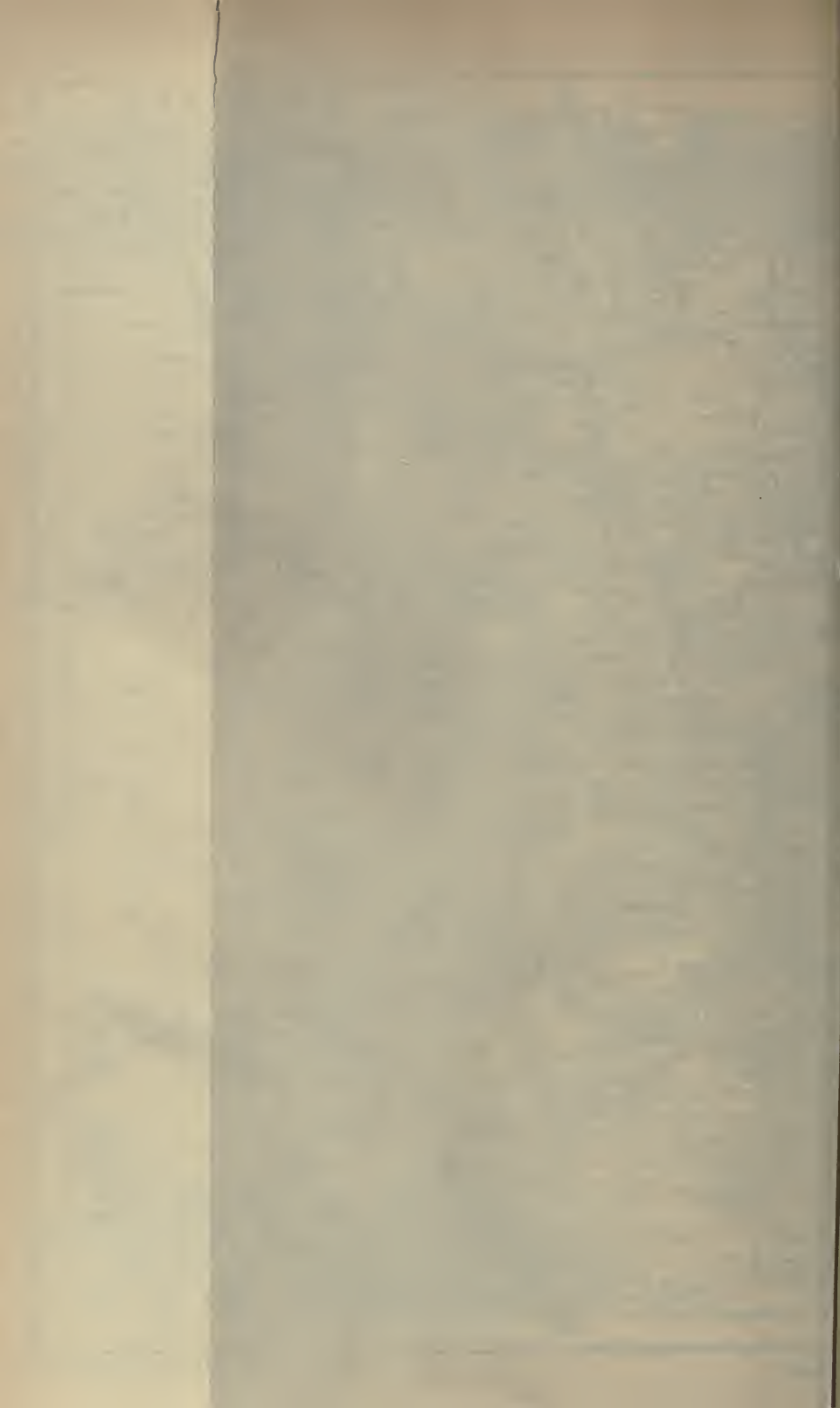
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MONTENEGRO

CHAPTER I

THE CITY IN THE SKY

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I ENTERED the Balkans by the back door. The luxuries of the Orient Express had no attraction for me. I wanted to see the Balkans as they really are, those great, wild, mountainous countries, so full of race hatreds, of political bickerings, of fierce blood-feuds, of feverish propagandas—those nations with their interesting monarchs and their many mysteries.

The "Orient" runs direct from Paris to the Balkan capitals, it is true, but if one goes to study a people the capital is not the only place in which to discover the truth. One must go into the country, move among the peasantry, hear their grievances and investigate their wrongs. Therefore I decided to enter the East by Montenegro, and also visit the wild and little-known regions of Northern Albania.

The comfortable voyage by the Austrian-Lloyd mail steamer *Graf Wurmbrand* from Trieste down the Adriatic, touching at Pola, the Austrian naval station, Lussinpiccolo, Zara—famed for its maraschino—Sebenico, Spalato, and Gravosa to Cattaro, has been already described by many writers. Suffice it to say that it is perhaps one of the most picturesque of pleasure-trips in the world, for every moment one has a fresh panorama of mountain and blue sea, of green, fertile islands with subtropical vegetation, and tiny white villages nestling

at the sea's edge, as the steamer threads her way through the narrow and often difficult channels.

At times the wild scenery, especially in the Bocche di Cattaro, reminds the traveller of the Norwegian fiords, and at others the coast is an almost exact reproduction of the French Riviera.

The object of my journey was, however, not in order to write a mere description of men and places. There have been other travellers in the Balkans who have related their story, therefore my mission was to make careful inquiry into the present unsettled state of affairs, try and discover the grievances of both sides, and endeavour to obtain from the rulers and statesmen of the various nations their aspirations for the future. This I succeeded in doing, for the various monarchs of the Balkans graciously gave me audience; and from their Ministers, from the middle classes, and from the peasants, I was enabled at last to form some conclusion as to the real situation—political, economical, social, and financial.

The writer who attempts to place the various Balkan questions impartially and clearly before the public will at once find himself utterly confused, and wallowing wildly in a morass of misstatement and misrepresentation. The Balkans are torn by race hatreds, party strife, and the intrigues of the Powers. The Turk hates the Bulgar, the Serb hates the Austrian, the Roumanian hates the Greek, the Albanian hates the Montenegrin, the Bosnian hates the Turk, while the Macedonian hates everybody all round. What is told to one authoritatively one hour, is flatly contradicted the next; therefore it is not in the least surprising that in the European Press there have been so many misstatements about the various Balkan questions, the real truth being so very difficult to obtain.

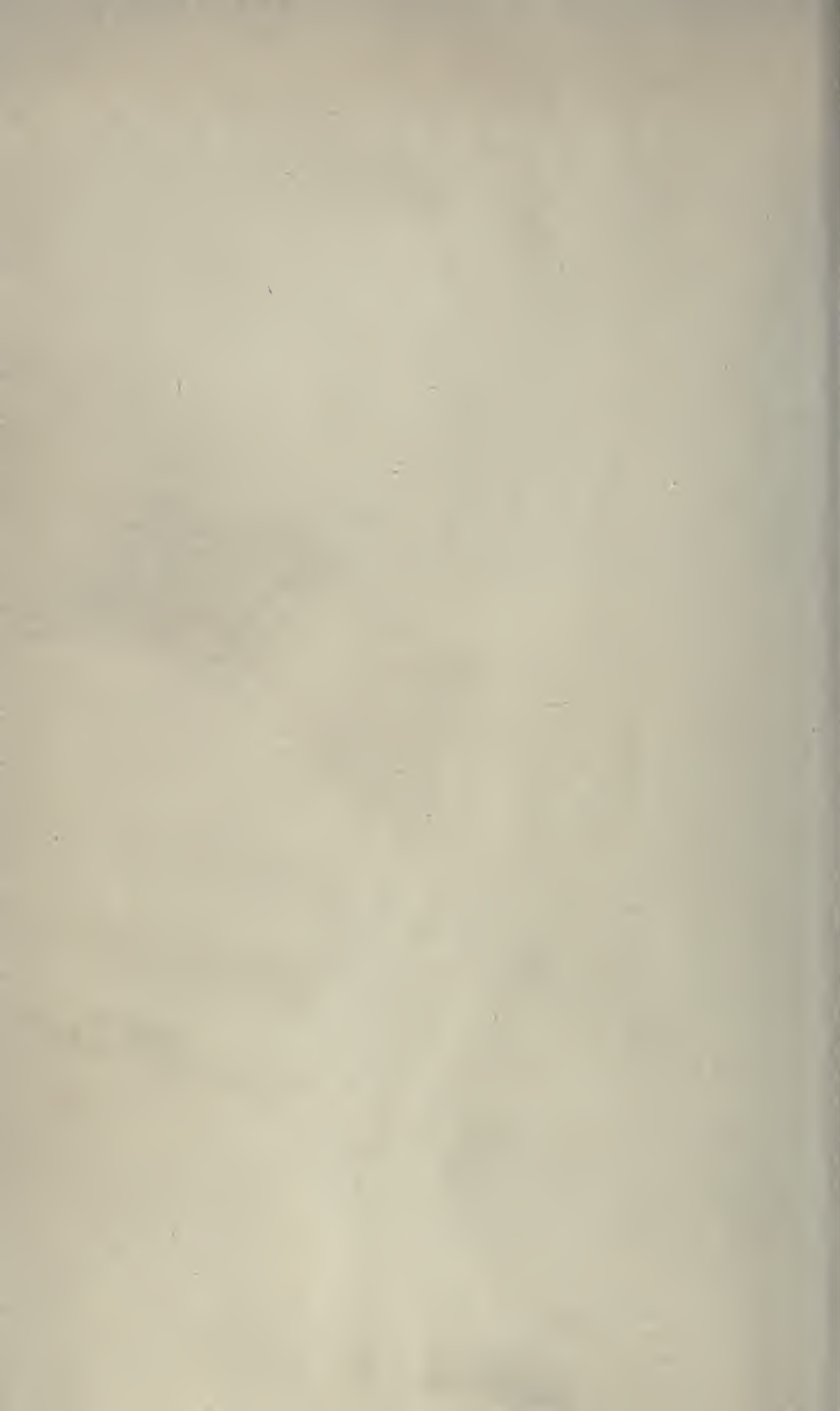
I have, however, endeavoured to obtain it, and at risk of being injudicious, to place before the reader the facts as they are, without any political bias, or any seeking to gloss over the many glaring defects of administration of which I have myself been witness.



Pero, my Montenegrin Driver.



Albanians in Cetinje.



To describe the beauties of the Bocche di Cattaro, that series of winding channels where the high grey mountains rise sheer from the water, would be only to traverse old ground. Suffice it to say that I landed at Cattaro on a bright, sunny noon, and found upon the quay a tall, lean mountaineer who had been sent to meet me.

To the traveller fresh from the West the Montenegrin costume of both women and men is very attractive, but a few days in the Balkans soon accustoms the eye to a perfect phantasmagoria of colour and of costume. Pero was my driver's name, and I noticed that around his waist was a revolver belt, but minus the weapon. I inquired where it was, and with a grin he informed me that Cattaro, being in Dalmatia, the Austrians would not allow Montenegrins to bring arms into their country; so they were compelled to leave them on the other side of the frontier, ten kilometres distant.

My bags packed upon the three-horse travelling carriage and secured with many strings, and Pero equipped with a plentiful stock of cigarettes, he mounted upon the box, whipped up his long-tailed ponies, and we started on our eight-hour ascent of that great wall of mountain that hides Montenegro from the sea.

As we ascended through the little village of Skaljari we entered upon a magnificent road, said to be one of the greatest engineering feats of modern times, and steadily ascended, until at the striped black-and-yellow Austrian boundary post we crossed the frontier, and were in the "Land of the Black Mountain"—Montenegro. Across the road, at an acute angle, a row of paving-stones marks the frontier, and soon afterwards we found ourselves in the wildest and most desolate mountain region. At a lonely roadside hut Pero obtained his big, serviceable-looking revolver, and I, of course, wore mine in my belt; for in Montenegro or Albania arms make the man. A man unarmed is looked upon as an effeminate coward. Indeed, by order of Prince Nicholas every Montenegrin must wear the national dress, both men and women, and every man must carry his revolver when out of doors.

Four hours from Cattaro we were in a lonely mountain fastness, a wild, desolate, treeless region of huge limestone rocks of peculiar volcanic formation, which gave them the appearance of a boiling sea. The views over the Adriatic as we turned back were so superb that, despite photographing being strictly forbidden on account of the fortresses in the vicinity, I could not resist the temptation to take one or two surreptitiously. On, through a bleak, uninhabited country, we at last reached the guard-house of Kerstac, and then half an hour later found ourselves upon a plateau where, in the centre, stood the small clean village of Nyegush, the ancestral home of the reigning family, and the scene of most of the Montenegrin wars of independence. Here we halted for half an hour at the post-house, and before we left, the big, lumbering post-diligence, with its armed guard, came up behind us.

Before we moved off again it had grown dark, the moon shone, and for four hours longer we alternately climbed and descended through that wild region of silence and desolation, until at last we saw, deep below, the lights of Cetinje, the little capital, and an hour later brought us to the unpretending "Grand" Hotel.

Hardly had I entered my room when there came a loud knock at my door, and a tall, scarlet-coated Montenegrin warrior, armed to the teeth, entered and saluted. For a moment I looked up at him aghast, but the mystery was solved when, next second, he handed me with great ceremony a telegram from a dear friend in England wishing me God-speed. I had taken him to be, at least, one of the Prince's bodyguard, and he was only a plain telegraph messenger!

This was but one of many surprises in store for me in Montenegro. Next morning I went out to look round the clean little capital, when, on passing the Prince's palace, I saw a number of soldiers drawn up, and as I went by, the band suddenly struck up the British National Anthem! I raised my hat, halted, and stood puzzled. Surely they were not honouring me! Another moment, however, and I recognised the reason. In a carriage, accompanied by the

Grand Marechal of the Court, there drove up my friend Mr. Charles des Graz, the newly-appointed British Chargé d'Affaires to Montenegro, who was about to present his credentials to His Royal Highness the Prince.

Montenegro is perhaps the most interesting country in all the Balkans. Cetinje, a small, clean town of broad streets and one-storeyed, whitewashed houses, is a little city in the sky, lying as it does in a cup-shaped depression at the summit of a high, bare mountain. Its long, straight, main street reminds one very much of a small country town in England, if it were not that everyone is, by law, compelled to wear the national dress, and every man has in his belt his big, long-barrelled revolver, without which he must never go out of doors.

The men, sturdy mountaineers, are of fine physique—handsome fellows, all of them. Their dress consists of dark blue baggy trousers, white woollen gaiters, raw-hide shoes, a scarlet jacket heavily braided with gold, and a small round cap, with black silk around the edge and the crown of the same colour as the jacket, bearing the Prince's initials in Servian letters, "H.I." The women, who are particularly good-looking, wear dark skirts, beautifully hand-embroidered blouses, and a kind of long coat, with open sleeves of soft, dove-grey cloth. Forbidden to wear European hats, they are compelled to adopt an exactly similar cap to the men, except that the crown is embroidered instead of bearing the royal initials.

Nowhere have I seen such glorification of the male as in Montenegro. To the men, born fighters as they are, work is undignified; therefore the women toil while the opposite sex look on. I saw women employed in building operations and performing work which, in other countries, is left to day-labourers.

Cetinje is quaint in the extreme. The only houses of foreigners are the various Legations, and the only foreigners are diplomats with their wives and families. The first thing that strikes the stranger is the number of petroleum tins. Opposite the hotel I saw a great ring of empty tins, numbering

some hundreds, ranged around a fountain. A few women were squatting gossiping, and an armed policeman lounged against the water-source. On inquiry, I found that there was a water famine, and the tins had been placed there at dawn to await the moment when the authorities thought fit to allow the people to get their daily supply. The women had gone away to work, and would return later. The Montenegrins a short time ago constructed a reservoir, but there was a crack in it, so the water ran away. Hence the famine.

The petroleum tin is never out of sight for a single moment in Cetinje. At any hour, and in any street, you see women and children carrying them. They are used for everything, from milk-pails to flower-pots.

In Cetinje one comes for the first time up against the dark-faced, scowling Albanian in his tightly fitting trousers of white wool striped with black, his dirty white fez, and the swagger of superiority in his gait. He is well armed, and for a good reason. The Montenegrin hates the Albanian, because of the constant border feuds over at Podgoritzza, where blood is constantly spilt, and where I have seen a Montenegrin in the market squatting over a basket of apples with a loaded rifle.

That morning I was chatting to a man in Montenegrin dress, of whom I had bought some excellent cigarettes, manufactured by the Montenegro Tobacco Monopoly—an Italian syndicate, by the way—and happened to mention that I was on my way to Albania.

“Ah, gospodin!” he exclaimed, holding up both his hands, and glancing at the revolver in my belt. “Take my advice. Don’t go into Albania or Macedonia. You are not safe there from one moment to the other. For half a word they’ll shoot you dead as easily as they drink a glass of wine. No man’s life is worth a moment’s purchase there. I’m Albanian myself—from Kroja—and I know.”

This was scarcely reassuring. I looked about me on every hand as I strolled through Cetinje. All was so quiet, so orderly, so very peaceful there, even though the big, burly mountaineers in the gold-laced jackets eyed me with askance



The Royal Palace : Cetinje.



Principal Street of Cetinje.

as I passed. Not without some trepidation I took a number of photographs, for I had heard that, like the Turk, the Montenegrin was averse to having his counterfeit presentment put upon paper. Nevertheless, the first feeling of insecurity having passed, I very soon found myself quite at home in Cetinje, and in the midst of very good and kind friends.

A good many foreigners come up from Cattaro to pry about Cetinje for a day or two, buy picture-postcards and antique arms, sneer at the honest Montenegrin, and return into Dalmatia. Towards such, the Montenegrin is not particularly polite. But those who go to Cetinje to seriously and thoroughly study the people and their future will find a great deal of genuine and charming hospitality.

My first day in Cetinje was lonely. Afterwards, until I left, I was always with friends and officials, who took the greatest trouble to answer my questions and explain matters.

Montenegro is entirely unlike any other country in the world. Its air of antiquity is particularly pleasing, while on every hand the beneficent rule of Prince Nicholas is apparent. Every man in Montenegro swears by his Prince, whom he almost worships. They call him their "father," and if His Royal Highness raised the standard of war tomorrow, every man would rise and fight to the death. The Prince is accessible to all his people—more so to them, indeed, than to the diplomats. Sometimes, early in the morning, he will sit in an arm-chair on the steps leading to the entrance of his palace, and there hear the complaints or petitions of his people. In this patriarchal way he often ministers justice. Last year he granted Montenegro a Constitution, and there is now a Skupshtina similar to that of Servia; but the people have not yet quite understood that in future they must go to the Ministers, and not to their Prince. They will see him, and nobody else.

In no country is loyalty and patriotism so strong as in Montenegro. The army is well trained, and the whole country being one huge natural fortress, a foreign enemy would experience enormous difficulty in gaining entrance. In Cetinje,

even a constant traveller like myself meets with continual surprises. One day, while walking at the rear of the Bigliardo, or old palace—so called because when built the first billiard table was introduced—I heard the sound of clanking chains behind me. At first I took no notice, but as it continued with regular rhythm I glanced behind, when, to my amazement, I saw a convict in leg-fetters with difficulty taking his afternoon stroll beneath the trees! There were several others on the grass plot before the prison, idling in the shadow or gossiping with their friends, who had come to keep them company!

Inquiries showed that most of these prisoners were murderers, not for robbery but for vendetta. In Montenegro the blood-feud is constant, and life is held very cheap. It invariably commences by jealousy, and is of everyday occurrence. Two lovers quarrel, and one is shot. Then the blood-feud commences, and unlike in Italy or other Southern countries, the vendetta is not only upon the murderer, but upon his next-of-kin. Therefore, if the assassin escapes into Servia, Bosnia, or Turkey, as he so often does, the brother of the dead man takes up the feud and kills the assassin's brother without parley when next he meets him. I myself saw a man shot dead one night in Ryeka, at the head of the Lake of Scutari, and the murderer walked coolly away undeterred. It was the blood-feud, and no one took much notice.

"*S'bogom!*" (God be with you!) It is the expression you hear on every hand in the Balkans. In the streets the peasants touch their round caps in salute and exclaim, "*S'bogom!*" When you leave for a journey and when you return, when you rise and when you go to rest; even if you go for a short walk—it is the same. Life is so uncertain in those wild regions that the protection of the Almighty is invoked upon you always, and your revolver is ever ready in your belt.

In Cetinje I had a faithful guide and servant, a black-eyed, somewhat sinister-looking Albanian, named Palok. He travelled with me through Montenegro and Albania, and was most faithful and devoted. Besides Albanian and Serb he

spoke a little Italian, and possessed a keen sense of humour.

One day, while we were travelling through the wild, bare mountain, a perfect wilderness of huge boulders without a single tree or even blade of grass, we halted for our midday meal, and while eating he told me of a great friend of his who had recently been killed at Spuz for vendetta, and he added, fondling the butt of his revolver, "I too, gospodin, shall die before long."

I looked at him in surprise. His usually humorous face had changed. It was dark and thoughtful, and his black eyes were fixed upon me.

"Is there a blood-feud upon you, then?" I asked, in surprise.

"Yes," he replied briefly; and though I endeavoured to persuade him to tell the story, it was not until the following day that with some reluctance he explained.

"A year ago my brother Tef, away in Scutari, fell in love with a beautiful girl. He had a rival—a young Albanian, a coppersmith in the bazaar. They quarrelled, but the girl—ah! she was very beautiful—preferred Tef. Whereupon the rival one night took his rifle and laid in wait for my brother in the main street of Scutari. Early in the evening he left the house of the girl's father, and as he passed the fellow shot poor Tef dead."

And he paused as his brow knit deeply, and his teeth were set tightly.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well, gospodin. What would you have done had your own brother died a dog's death? I took a rifle, and within a week the murderer was in his grave. I shot him through the heart—and then I left Scutari."

"And you are safe here, in Montenegro?"

"Safe! Oh dear, no," he answered. "One day—it may be to-day—the fellow's brother will kill me. He must kill me. It is Fate—why worry about it? It does one no good."

And the marked man, the man doomed to die at a moment

when he least expects it, rolled a cigarette and lit it with perfect resignation.

"And are you not afraid to go with me back to Scutari?" I asked, amazed at his fearlessness.

"Afraid, gospodin!" he exclaimed, looking at me in reproach as his hand instinctively wandered to his weapon. "Afraid! No Albanian is afraid of the blood-feud. I have killed the murderer, and his brother must kill me. It is our law." And the doomed man smiled gravely.

"And the girl?" I asked.

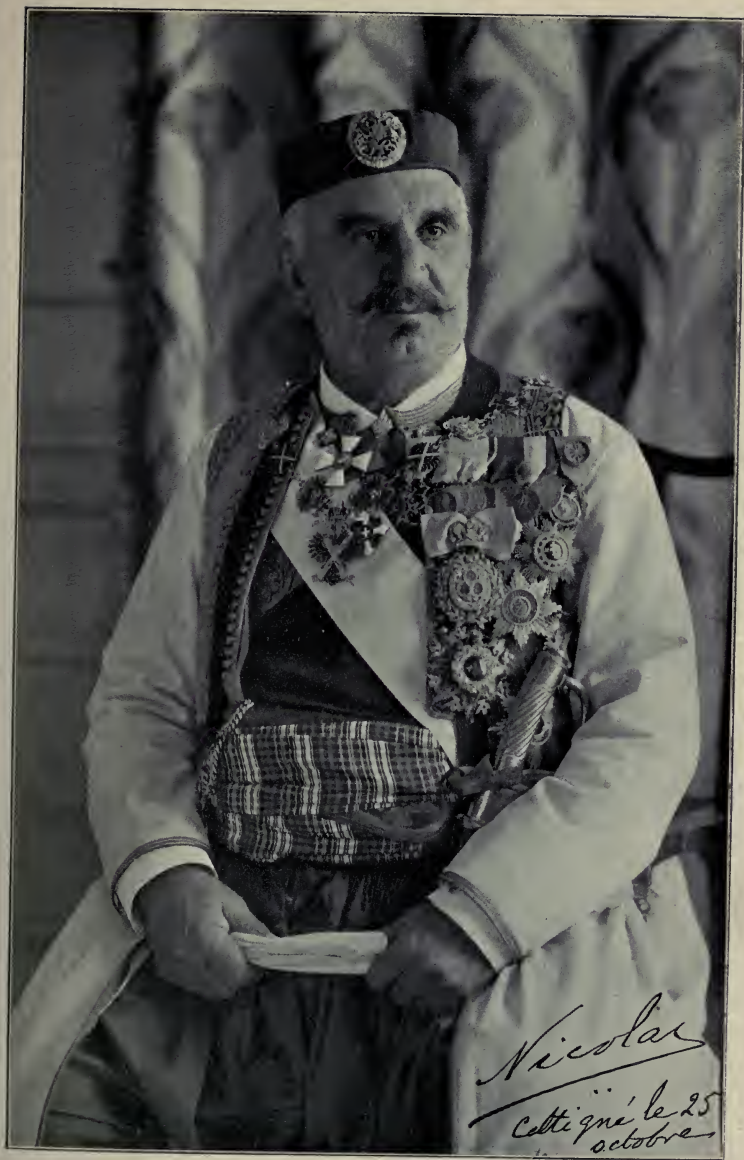
"Ah! They are all the same," he answered, with a quick shrug of the shoulders. "A month ago she married a tobacco-seller—a man old enough to be her father. Poor Tef! If he could but know!"

"And the blood-feud still continues?"

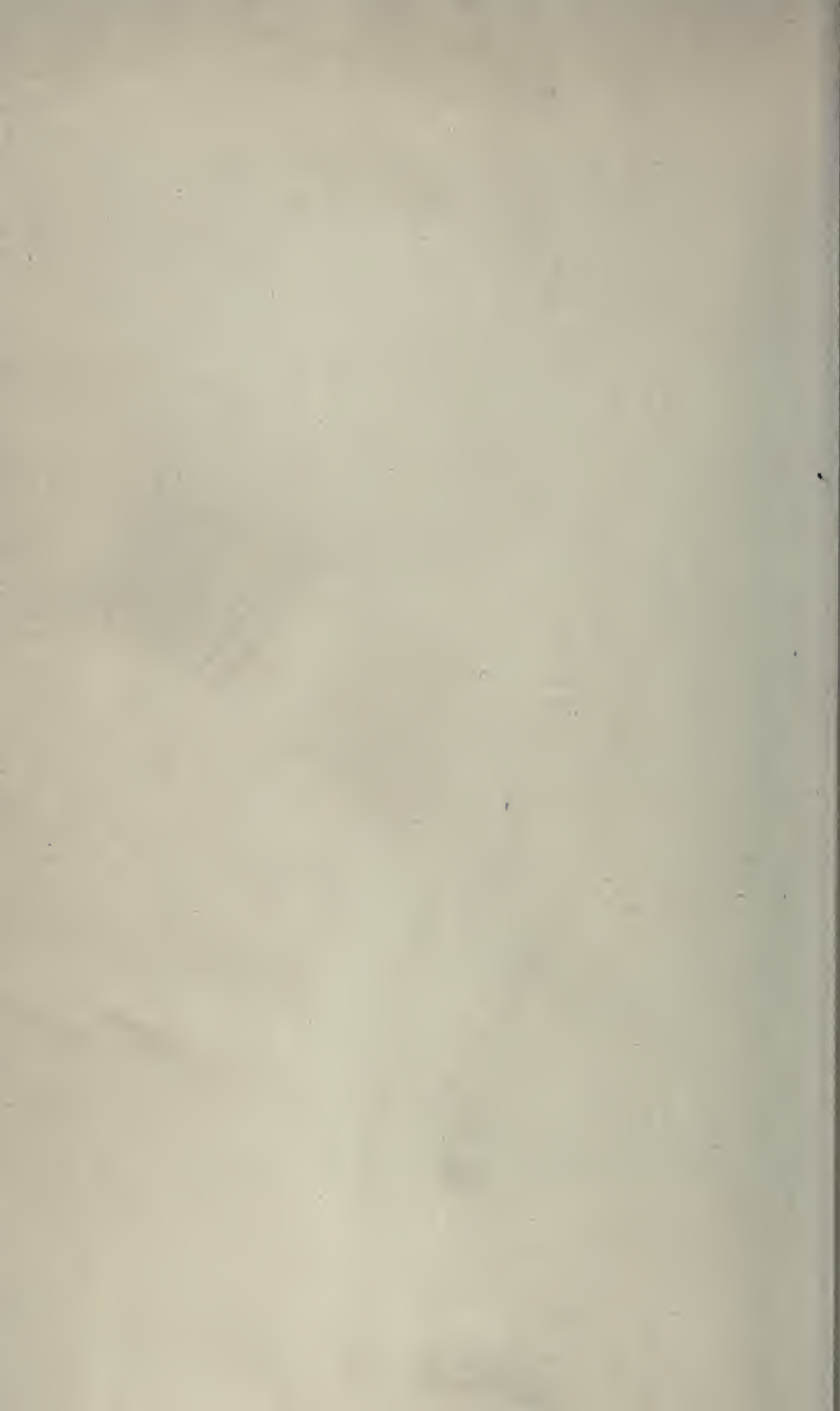
"Of course—until I am dead."

Then Palok smoked on in silence, entirely resigned to the fate that awaits him. He knows that one day, as he walks along the road, the sharp crack of a hidden rifle will sound, and he will fall to earth, another victim of a woman's fickleness.

S'bogom!—God be with you!



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE NICHOLAS OF MONTENEGRO.



CHAPTER II

AN AUDIENCE OF PRINCE NICHOLAS

The Palace at Cetinje—A cigarette with the Prince—The policy of Montenegro—A confidential chat—His Royal Highness's admiration for England—His views upon Macedonia—He urges me not to attempt to go to Albania, but I persuade him to help me—His Highness's kindness—Souvenirs.

"**H**IS Royal Highness the Prince will be pleased to grant you private audience at four o'clock this afternoon, gospodin."

The tall, burly aide-de-camp in the little round cap, high boots, pale blue overcoat, and pistols in his belt, saluted, and we shook hands.

It was then three o'clock, and I was just about to go out to visit Madame Constantinovitch, the mother of Princess Mirko. So I had to return at once to my room and dress for the audience. The kings and princes of the Balkans have a habit of summoning one at a moment's notice, and paying visits at unearthly hours.

Here, in Cetinje, in the heart of these wild, desolate fastnesses, one seems so far removed from European influence, yet how great a part has this rocky, impregnable country, with its fierce soldier-inhabitants, played in the politics of Eastern Europe, and how great a part it is still destined to play in the near future!

The fact that everybody is armed gives the stranger an uncanny feeling. The man who brings one's coffee wears a perfect arsenal of weapons in his sash, and one quickly acquires the habit of carrying a revolver one's self. Indeed,

if you are wise, you will carry a good serviceable weapon from the moment you enter the Balkans to the moment you quit them. But if you approach the Albanian frontier, you will be at once warned not to fire without just cause. A few shots is sufficient to alarm the whole neighbourhood for many miles, and on hearing the alarm every man seizes his rifle and flies to the rendezvous, fully equipped and eager for the fight with those Albanian border tribes, of whom I afterwards had the good fortune to be the guest.

I had already had a long chat with Prince Danilo, the Crown Prince of Montenegro, whom I found a very smart and highly educated man, fully alive to the political difficulties of the neighbouring states and the necessity of Montenegro preserving her independence. He held very strong views upon the terrible state of affairs in Macedonia, and gave me many interesting details about his own country.

Having met him, and also his younger brother, Prince Mirko, I was particularly anxious to make the acquaintance of their father, Prince Nicholas, the ruler of the sturdy, warlike dwellers of the "Land of the Black Mountain"—the principal and most striking figure in this remarkable country, where peace and war walk ever hand-in-hand.

Since 1860, when his uncle, Prince Danilo, was assassinated, he has ruled justly, if somewhat sternly, and has succeeded in raising his nation from a state of semi-civilisation to the high place it now occupies in the Eastern world. In 1888 he gave the country a Civil and Criminal Code, and last year he granted a Constitution. Indeed, he has done all in his power to induce his warriors to follow the arts of peace without forgetting those of war.

At the hour appointed, the royal aide-de-camp called in a carriage and drove me to the Palace,—a long, dark brown building of somewhat plain exterior, as befits the home of a fighting race,—where I was received in the great hall by half a dozen bowing servants in scarlet and gold. Here I was met by the chamberlain, who conducted me up the grand staircase and into the great audience-chamber, with its many fine paintings and highly polished floor. Then, after a moment,

the Prince—a brilliant figure—entered, shook me by the hand, and welcomed me to Montenegro.

These formalities ended, His Royal Highness said in Italian, "Come, let us go into yonder room. We shall be able to talk there more comfortably." And he led me into a smaller chamber, where he gave me a seat at the table where he sat.

The afternoon was gloomy, and dusk was creeping on, therefore upon the table a great antique silver candelabra had been set, and by its light I was enabled to obtain a good view of the ruler of Crnagora, the "Land of the Black Mountain."

Of magnificent physique, tall, muscular, with hair slightly grey, he bore his sixty-five years lightly. Attired in the splendid national costume of scarlet, blue, and gold, with high boots, he wore a single decoration at his throat, the Cross of Danilo, of which Order he is Master. Upon his handsome, well-cut features the candles shed a soft light, causing the gold upon his dress to glitter, and I noticed, as I asked him questions, how his dark, keen eyes shot quick, inquiring glances of alertness.

After the first few minutes of regal formality His Highness's manner entirely changed. Putting ceremony aside, he produced his cigarette case—of crocodile skin, with the royal crown and cipher in gold in the corner—offered me a Montenegrin cigarette, took one himself, lit mine with his own hand, and then we fell to chatting.

In the delightful hour and a half we smoked together I asked the prince-poet many questions, and learnt many things. He explained several difficult points in Balkan politics, which to me, an Englishman, had always been puzzling. We spoke—in Italian—of Macedonia and of a certain well-known foreign diplomat in London who was our mutual friend, the Prince giving me a very kind message to deliver to him.

Presently I referred to the splendid result of his rule, and related to him a little incident which had occurred to me in Nyegush a few days before, as showing how deeply he was beloved by his nation. A smile crossed his fine open counten-

ance as he replied simply, "I have done my best for my people—my very best ; and I shall do so as long as God gives me life. I am happy to believe that my people appreciate my efforts."

"And now, Monseigneur," I asked, "will you tell me what is the present position of Montenegro?"

"The present position is peace," was his prompt answer. "I have granted a Constitution, and the first meeting of the new Skupshtina has been held successfully. Though the Albanian question is always with us, I am thankful to say we are on the most excellent terms with Turkey, while towards Russia we are pursuing our traditional policy. For the Emperor Francis Josef of Austria I have nothing but the most profound admiration, and I owe very much to him."

"And towards England, Monseigneur?"

"England has been, as you know, Montenegro's very best friend," replied the Prince. "I, personally, have the greatest respect and admiration for your great country. We Montenegrins always remember that it was Mr. Gladstone who gave us the strip of seaboard on the Adriatic with Dulcigno. He was our greatest friend, and his memory is respected by every man in Montenegro. Of Tennyson, too, I am a great admirer. I am very fond of his poems."

"You are a poet yourself, Monseigneur," I remarked, remembering that more than one poetical drama from his pen had been successfully produced on the stage.

His Royal Highness smiled, and puffed slowly at his cigarette.

"I have written one or two little things, it is true ; but nothing of late."

"I wonder if I dare ask your Royal Highness to write a few lines for me as a souvenir of my visit?" I asked, not without some trepidation.

"Ah!—well—I won't promise," he laughed. "All depends whether I'm in the mood for it."

"But you will try, won't you?"

And the Prince nodded assent.

Then we spoke of Serbia and of recent events there ; but



The Petroleum tins of Cetinje.



The Monastery : Cetinje.

he was not inclined to discuss the question, and naturally so, when it is remembered that his daughter was the late wife of King Peter.

Returning to the burning question of Macedonia, I saw that he was well informed of all that was transpiring around lakes Presba and Ochrida and down in Serres.

"It is a monstrous state of affairs," he declared. "Something must be done at once, for as soon as spring comes again the massacres will increase."

"But there are outrages, tortures, and massacres every day," I remarked.

"Ah yes," he sighed, "I know. Most terrible details have reached me lately. But you are going to Macedonia yourself, and you will see with your own eyes."

"And what, in your opinion, would be the best settlement of the question?" I inquired.

"There is but one way, namely, for the Powers to call a conference and place Macedonia under a governor-general, who must be a European prince. The reforms would then be carried out, and the Greek bands expelled from the country. How long will Europe tolerate the present frightful state of affairs?"

"The fact is, Monseigneur, that we, in England, are very ignorant of the true state of things, or even of the facts of the Macedonian question," I said.

"Ah, there you are quite correct. If your English public knew what was really happening—how an innocent Christian population is being slaughtered and exterminated because of international rivalry—they would cry shame upon those responsible for this wholesale murder and outrage. But"—he smiled—"I almost forget myself. My position as a ruler forbids me to talk politics, you know!"

And we laughed together.

"So you are going to Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and to Constantinople—eh?" he remarked a little later, when we had lit fresh cigarettes. "In Bulgaria, and also in Roumania, you will see many things that will interest you. The Bulgarians are very strongly armed, and so are the Roumanians."

"Her Majesty the Queen of Roumania has also promised me audience," I said.

"When you see her, will you please present to Her Majesty my most cordial respects. She is so very charming."

"I want, Monseigneur, to visit Northern Albania, leaving Montenegro by Ryeka and Scutari. Would that be the best route, do you think?"

"What!" he exclaimed, in surprise. "Do you actually contemplate visiting the tribes up in the Accursed Mountains?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Well, my advice is, don't think of going there. If you do, you will never return. You'll be shot at sight, like a dog. You have no idea what those uncivilised tribes are like. The whole country is utterly lawless."

"So I understand. But I've also heard that the Albanian possesses a deep sense of honour. And I thought that I might possibly obtain permission from one or other of the chiefs."

The Prince was silent for a moment. Then, looking at me across the table, said—

"Do not go. It is far too great a risk."

His advice was the same that my friends in London had given me; the same that I had received there, in the marketplace of Cetinje.

But I was determined, and pressed His Royal Highness to assist me, at last receiving his promise of help. By his kind permission, the Albanian named Palok acted as my guide, and what eventually happened to me in that wild region will be seen in the following pages.

"Well," exclaimed the Prince at last, "if you go up there, it must be at your own risk. I've warned you of the danger. No one has been up there for many years. It has been attempted, of course, but travellers have either been held to ransom, and the Turks have been compelled to pay for their release, or else they have simply been shot by the first Albanian meeting them. The country beyond Scutari is the most unsafe in the whole Balkan Peninsula."

I replied that I intended to make the attempt.

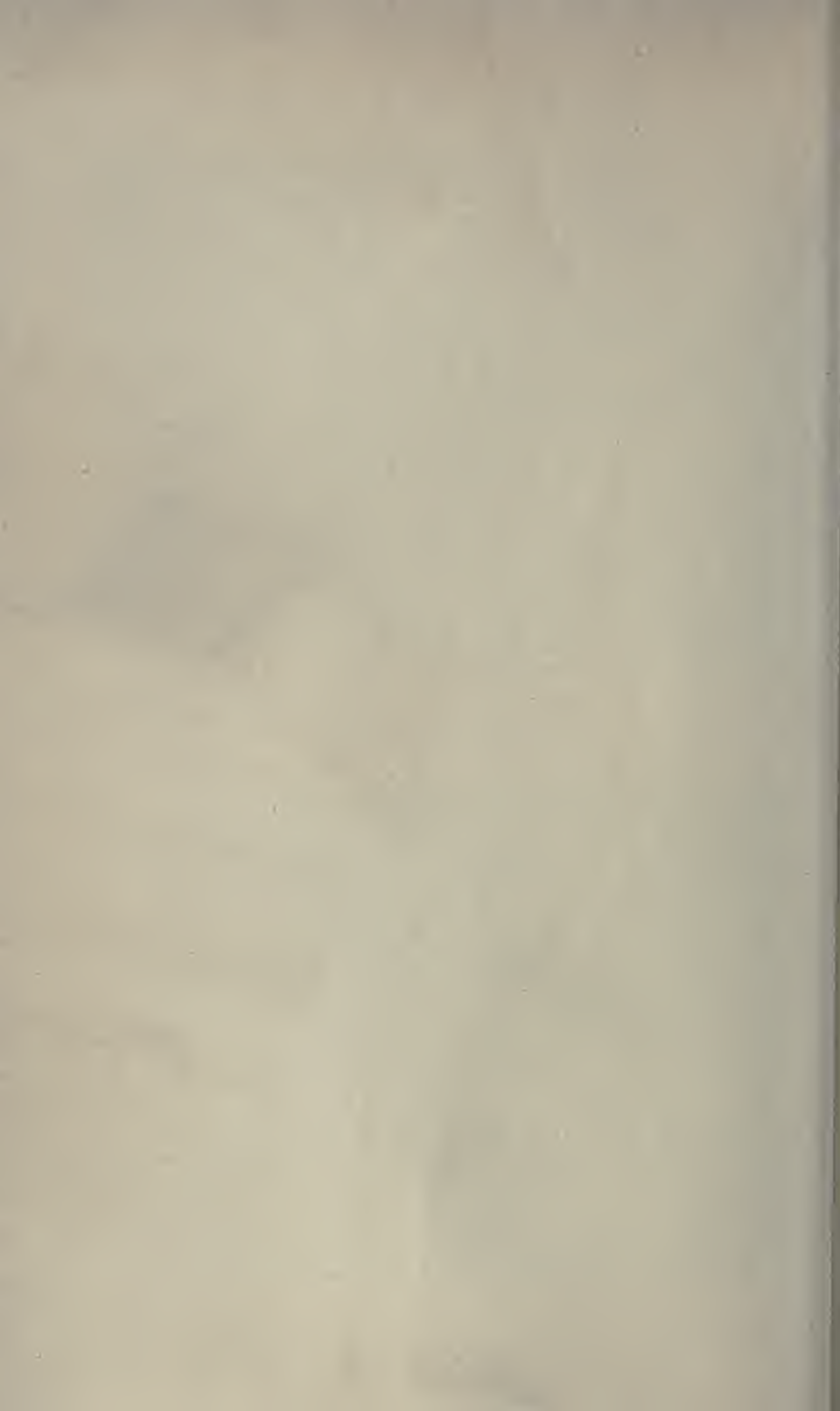
"Well, then, I wish you *buon viaggio*," he laughed. "May



Mr. CHAS. DES GRAZ,



The Piazza: Ragusa.



every good luck attend you, and—as we say in Montenegro—*S'bogom!* (God be with you!) When you return—for I suppose you will pass this way down to the sea—come and see me, and tell me all about the Skreli and Kastrati country—for of course I am highly interested. They are always at war with our people on the frontier.”

“I will let your Royal Highness know the moment I am back in Cetinje,” I promised.

Then rising, he gripped my hand warmly, saying—

“Then I will help you if I can. Be careful of yourself, for I shall be anxious about you. Again, *S'bogom!*”

And the Prince accompanied me to the head of the grand staircase, where I made my obeisance, turned and descended through the rows of armed and bowing servants ranged in the hall, charmed by His Royal Highness's graciousness towards me and by the pleasant chat I had enjoyed.

When, after my journey through Northern Albania, I one afternoon re-entered that audience-chamber, and he came forward with outstretched hand to greet me, he exclaimed—

“Well, well! I am so glad to see you back safe and sound. You look a little thinner in the face—a little travel-worn—eh? Life in the Albanian mountains is not like your life in London or Paris, is it? But never mind as long as you are safe,” he laughed, placing his hand kindly upon my shoulder. “Come along to this room. It is more cosy,” and he led me to the smaller apartment, his own private cabinet.

For nearly two hours I sat relating to him what occurred on my journey, and describing the wild country which had, until then, been practically a sealed book. Even though Cetinje is so near, hardly anything was known of the Skreli, the Hoti, the Klementi, or the Kastrati tribes, save that they were brigandish bands who constantly raided the Montenegrin frontier.

The Prince listened to me with great attention, and put many questions to me as we smoked together.

Then rising, he took from a drawer in his great writing-table a small scarlet box, and as he opened it he bestowed upon me a compliment undeserved, for he said—

"There are few men who would have risked what you have done. Therefore I wish to invest you with our Order of Danilo, as a mark of my appreciation and esteem."

And he displayed to me the beautiful dark blue and white enamelled cross of the Order, the same that he was wearing at his throat, surmounted by the royal crown and suspended upon the white ribbon edged with cerise.

After he had invested me with the Order, saying many kind things to me, which I really don't think I deserved, he added—

"The *chef du chancellerie* will send you the diploma in due course, and I trust, when you petition your own gracious Sovereign King Edward, that His Majesty will allow you to wear this insignia."

I thanked His Royal Highness, gripped his hand, and a few minutes later passed through the line of bowing servants out of the Palace.

And that same evening I received from His Royal Highness the signed photograph which appears in these pages.

Before I left Cetinje I received the following expressive lines, written especially for me by a Montenegrin poet who is a great personage, but whose name he would not permit me to give. They are in Servian as follows, and I have placed their English translation below:—

S' veledušnog Albiona
Pružiš se dvije ruke
Crnoj Gori da pomogu
U junačke njene muke

S' vrućom rječū na ustima
Gladston diže Crnogorce
A Tenison za najprve
U svijet ih broi borce

Na glas svojih Velikana
Britanski se narod trže
Da pomože da zaštititi
Crnu Goru iz najbrže

Posla svoje bojne ladje
Što na tečnost gospostvuju
Veledušno da zaštite
Domovinu milu Moju

O fala ti po sto puta
Blagorodni lyudi Soju
Dok je svijeta dok je greda
Nad Ulcinjem koje stoju

Hraniće ti blagodarnost
Ova šaka sokolova
Koima si u pomoci
Stiga putem od valova.

The literal translation in English is as follows :—

From the great-souled Albion,
Two arms were stretched
To help Montenegro
In her heroic sufferings.

With fiery word on his lips
Gladstone lifts up Montenegrins,
Whilst Tennyson declared them
The very first fighters in the world.

On the call of their great men,
British people rose up
In quickest manner, to help
And to protect Montenegro.

They despatched their war-ships,
Which rule over the seas,
Generously to protect
My Fatherland so dear to me.

Oh ! thanks to thee, hundredfold thanks,
Noble race of men.
As long as the world lasts,
As long as the mountains above Dulcigno stand,

Will remain grateful to thee,
This handful of falcons,
To whose help thou didst come
By the road of the waves.

NORTHERN ALBANIA

CHAPTER I

INTO A SAVAGE REGION

Wildest Albania—Warnings not to attempt to travel there—I decide to go, and take Palok—Prince Nicholas of Montenegro bids us farewell—On the Lake of Scutari—Arrival at Skodra—Passports, rabble, and back-sheesh—Photographing the fortress in secret—Treading dangerous ground—Albania the Unknown.

BEFORE leaving London various insurance companies had flatly declined to accept the risk of "accident," because it was known that I intended visiting Albania.

Indeed, no company in the City would insure me, and at Lloyd's the premium quoted was exorbitant. This was the reverse of reassuring. Northern Albania I knew to be the wildest and most savage country in the East, and the Accursed Mountains, which I wanted to visit, were held by brigandish tribes, who shot the traveller at sight or held him to ransom. So little is known about them that they had always held a peculiar fascination for me.

I searched through the journals of the Royal Geographical Society for many years past, but found little mention of Northern Albania, while of books of actual travel in that region there were none. These facts had decided me to accept the risks, whatever these might be, and go into those wild, inaccessible mountains which bear the name of Accursed.

Everybody warned me of danger. Friends in England constantly urged me to "take care of myself," as though that were possible when in the midst of a hostile tribe; and in fact there seemed to be a conspiracy on the part of friends, strangers, and officials to prevent me penetrating the Land of Mystery.

When I mentioned my intention in Cetinje, everyone, as I have already said, held up their hands and raised their eyes. It was sheer madness, they declared. Nobody's life was worth a moment's purchase outside the town of Skodra—or Scutari, as it appears on our maps. Outside—beyond Turkish control—well, I should not be allowed to travel a couple of miles before I had a bullet through me from behind a rock at the roadside.

Everybody had some weird or horrible story to tell about the savagery of the Hoti, the Kastrati, the Skreli, and other savage tribes inhabiting those high, misty mountains beyond the Montenegro border. The one or two Albanians—tall, muscular fellows in white felt skullcap, tight white woollen trousers heavily braided with black, and a kind of black bolero with long fringe—whom I had seen in Montenegro were certainly a sinister-looking, forbidding lot. But I had come to the Balkans to investigate and to learn the truth; therefore the more I was urged not to attempt to go into the mountains, the firmer was my determination to do so.

His Royal Highness, Prince Nicholas himself, had at one of the audiences he granted me seriously queried the advisability of undertaking the journey. Almost daily on the Albanian frontier were raids into Montenegrin territory, and the whole border was constantly terrorised by the Albanian bands, who shot the Montenegrins wherever found. Indeed, the market at Podgoritza, where men squatted with loaded rifles over four or five fowls or a basket of apples, was sufficient to tell me the truth; while the daily talk of that town was of fighting with the wild race who live across the border. The Montenegrin hates the Albanian, and has surely good cause to do so. Many a comely Montenegrin maiden—and some of them are exceedingly beautiful—has been captured in those night raids and carried across into Turkish territory, to be heard of no more. And many, too, are the reprisals by the Montenegrins mostly, however, with serious losses to themselves.

Palok, whom I had engaged as my guide, had, he said, been born in Skodra, or, as we call it, Scutari, which causes it to be confounded with the city on the Bosphorus. He also



Ryeka, Montenegro.



Zabliak, Montenegro.

declared that he was well known there, and the fact that he also spoke Italian caused me to accept his services.

When I asked Fevzi Pasha, the Turkish Minister in Cettinje, for a passport for Skodra, or "Scutari d'Albanie," as it appears on the *visa*, he granted it, but not without words of caution. "In Scutari you will have nothing to fear," he said. "I will give you a note to the Governor of the town. But do not go into the country. If you do, you'll be shot like a dog."

I thanked him, but had no intention of taking his well-meant advice.

At half-past three one dark morning I took Palok, and we drove out on the road that wound high up across the great lonely mountains to the little town of Ryeka, whence a small steamer plies down the Lake of Scutari to Skodra. The drive was cold and weary, through a barren waste of rocks, but the bright autumn sun was up ere we reached Ryeka, and just as I boarded the big canoe with long, upturned, pointed prow, which takes passengers and baggage down the sluggish stream to the boat at the entrance to the lake, I saw, on the road above, a fine military figure in pale blue, riding a splendid white charger and followed by an officer.

In a moment every head was bared. It was Prince Nicholas, who was staying at his palace at Ryeka, taking his morning ride.

He espied me, pulled up, and shouted down in Italian—

"Hulloa! Good-morning! Then you are off to Albania after all, eh?"

"Yes, Monseigneur," I responded.

"Did you get my message last night?" he inquired, referring to a confidential matter.

"Thank you, Monseigneur, yes."

"Very well. Only be careful of yourself, you know, and when you get back, come and tell me all about it." And, laughing, His Royal Highness waved his hand with a merry "Bon voyage!" and cantered away, while my half a dozen fellow-travellers in gold-braided costumes regarded me in wonder that their Prince should stop and converse with me—a perfect stranger.

Down the silent river, between steep green hills we glided. Choked by the tangle and rot of weeds, it was the haunt of thousands of waterfowl, and, as we passed, the herons rose with a lazy flapping of wings,—a stream that might well be haunted by the fairies, for the water was unruffled and the silence deep and complete.

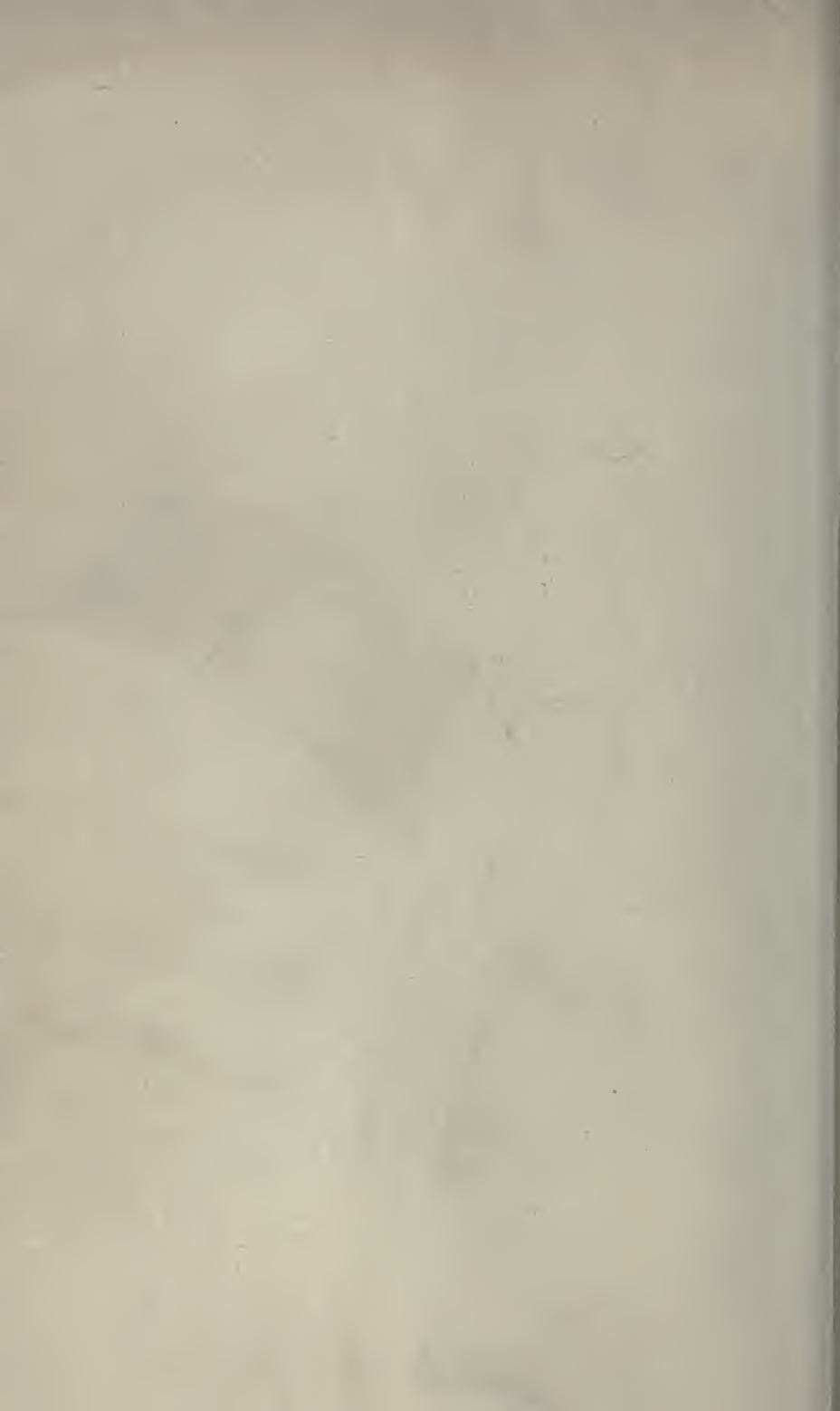
Boarding the little steamer, the *Nettuno*, lying at the mouth of the river, we were soon out in the great green lake, with the high mountains looming grey in the far distance. As we steamed due south, the barren mountains of Montenegro were soon left behind. At Virpasar and Plavnitzza we picked up passengers, a fat Turkish peasant woman carrying two baskets of fowls, and three young Montenegrins, fully armed with rifles and revolvers. Because she was not yet in Turkey, the woman wore no veil; yet in the evening, as soon as Skodra came in sight, she produced her veil, and carefully adjusted it, laughing with me the whole time, and wound it until only her bright dark eyes were visible.

From Virpasar an Italian company is now building a railway to the Montenegrin port of Antivari, so that in a couple of years the lake will be connected with the Adriatic, and form the much-needed trade route for Montenegro. The Servians, indeed, are hoping also to use Antivari as their Adriatic port, and thus be free of the excessive Customs dues and other oppression placed upon them by Austria-Hungary. When in Belgrade, M. Stoyanovitch, the Servian Minister of Commerce, explained to me the several schemes for the construction of a railroad from Krushevat, in Servia, by way of Novi-Bazar, Ipek, Podgoritzza, and Ryeka, to join the Italian line at Virpasar, and so to the Adriatic or to San Giovanni di Medua. Servia must secure a port, and this line whenever made, will be a most paying concern, for by its extension from Stalacs—on the main Belgrade-Sofia line—to Orsova, it would receive most of the exports of Southern Russia to Western Europe.

The mere handful of lake-side dwellings which now constitutes Virpasar will, ere many years have passed, grow into an important trade centre, and upon the great silent lake



PALOK, my companion through the Skreli country.



surrounded by those high sheer mountains where the eagle and the pelican are now the only signs of life, big passenger and freight steamers will soon ply. The railway, which must be built ere long, will quickly bring a civilising influence upon Northern Albania; therefore, if one wishes to see it in all its wildness, it must be seen to-day. In another decade the Albanian brigand—the real thing out of the story-book—will be only a matter of history.

The calm, bright day was perfect. The surface of the great lake was like a mirror, and the fringe of giant mountain constantly changed in colour—grey, blue, purple, and rose—as the hours wore on, and the sun sank westward in all the crimson glory of the death of the autumn day.

Now and then, with our rifles, we took pot-shots at the pelicans, but with little result. A young Montenegrin killed one, and the huge bird came down with a great splash into the water. At last, in the falling twilight, we cast anchor at the head of the Boyana River, which empties itself into the lake, and then, boarding another high-prowed canoe, where a Turkish soldier sat over us with a loaded rifle, we were rowed slowly up to the low line of ramshackle buildings, which was our first sight of Skodra.

With our farewell to the *Nettuno* we had said good-bye to civilisation, as represented by sturdy Montenegro. We were in Albania, the wildest and most turbulent country in the East.

We landed upon some slimy steps amid a perfect babel of shouts. Hundreds of unwashed Turks and Albanians were awaiting us, all shouting in a language of which I understood not one word. Every man, armed and of ferocious aspect, seemed ready to make short work of both Palok and myself. Indeed, so unpleasant is the landing at Skodra, that Palok himself had already sent a message to a friend of his—a typical brigand of the first water—to give the Customs officer a tip, and so make pleasant our path through that dark, evil-smelling hole where the Turks collect their dues. Palok's friend, whom I only saw on that one occasion, and whose name I could not ascertain, had managed to secure from somewhere

a mustard-coloured ramshackle fly, the upholstering of which was in ribbons. The driver, in his white fez, with dirty white baggy trousers and yellow tunic, came forward and saluted me with deep obeisance, while I was explaining to the passport officer—a ragged, consumptive youth—that my name was not “We, Sir Edward Grey.”

The chief of the Customs was a long, very thin, white-fezzed Turk with large silver-mounted pistols in his belt, very tight white trousers, a gold-embroidered jacket, and pointed slippers that turned up at the toes in the most approved style. He was a real live Bey, so Palok told me, but he was not averse to receiving tenpence as a tip. Later, when I left Scutari (or Skodra) again, I gave him ten Austrian crowns, for I had in my bag a couple of thousand cigarettes, which, by Turkish law, are prohibited from leaving the country. His charge for winking at the contravention is five crowns a thousand!

Turkish Custom Houses are weird places, and it is no wonder that the British Ambassador at Constantinople is just now pressing for some reform. Your belongings are not only thoroughly examined and heavily assessed for Customs—if you won’t tip—when you enter Turkish territory, but the same happens when you leave. Woe-betide those who dispense with the services of a discreet dragoman and do not tip. All that you may have bought in Turkey will be found liable to duty. Gold embroideries will be weighed, and anything that has the Sultan’s monogram upon it—as so many embroideries have—will be at once confiscated.

The man in the fez is grave and inexorable. His attitude is as though he would scorn the offer of a bribe and throw you into prison for daring to insult an official of His Imperial Majesty. Yet outside the Custom House he keeps a crafty ragamuffin who is ready to accept a four-franc piece on his behalf, and for that he will pass a thousand pounds’ worth of goods with only a pretence of search! The Custom House at Galata on the Bosphorus is a case in point. There are five officials there who share the spoils from the traveller.

Yes, the land of the Crescent is indeed a quaint country

The corruption of Turkish Customs officials is no doubt due to the frequent non-payment of their stipends. They must live, and do so by accepting bribes. I afterwards spoke to certain high government officials at Constantinople about it, and they admitted that they knew bribery existed extensively, but at present were utterly unable to suppress it.

Over the ramshackle Custom House, a dark hole without a window, frowns a shattered fortress containing one or two antiquated guns, a photograph of which I afterwards obtained surreptitiously, and which appears in these pages. Had I been discovered, I might have spent an unpleasant year or so in a Turkish prison. But even that offence, so heinous in Germany, France, or Austria, I suppose I could easily have expiated with a few piastres of backsheesh. In Turkey you can do anything—if you are prepared to pay.

Upon that filthy crowd around the Custom House at Skodra, upon those crumbling buildings, upon that old white fortress, upon the tower of Skodra itself, a mile away, the centuries of progress have made no impression. Here is the country of a mediæval people, the life of an age long ago past and forgotten.

While our fellow-travellers were squabbling, arguing, shouting, and cursing the wild, dirty mob who now filled the Custom House, we, with our baggage—canvas bags, specially made to sling on mules for mountain travelling—ascended into the mustard-coloured conveyance and were driven along a country lane, very English in its appearance, with bramble hedgerows and ditches; yet the high, thin minaret of a mosque before us, and the carefully latticed windows of a house, preventing the women-folk from being seen from the roadway, and giving the place an air of mystery, showed us to be in the land of His Majesty the Sultan—in Albania the Unknown.

CHAPTER II

WHERE LIFE IS CHEAP

Fired at in the street of Skodra—My comfortless inn—Panorama of life—Armed bands of wild mountaineers in the streets—The Sign of the Cross—Scutarine people—The fascination of Skodra—In the den of my friend Salko—Making purchases—Short shrift with swindlers—Some genuine antiques—Ragged and shoeless soldiers of the Sultan—Men shot in the blood-feud—"It is nothing!"

I HAD not been in Skodra half an hour before a man fired at me with his revolver.

It was my welcome to Albania, and I confess that I drew my own weapon from my belt, prepared to defend myself.

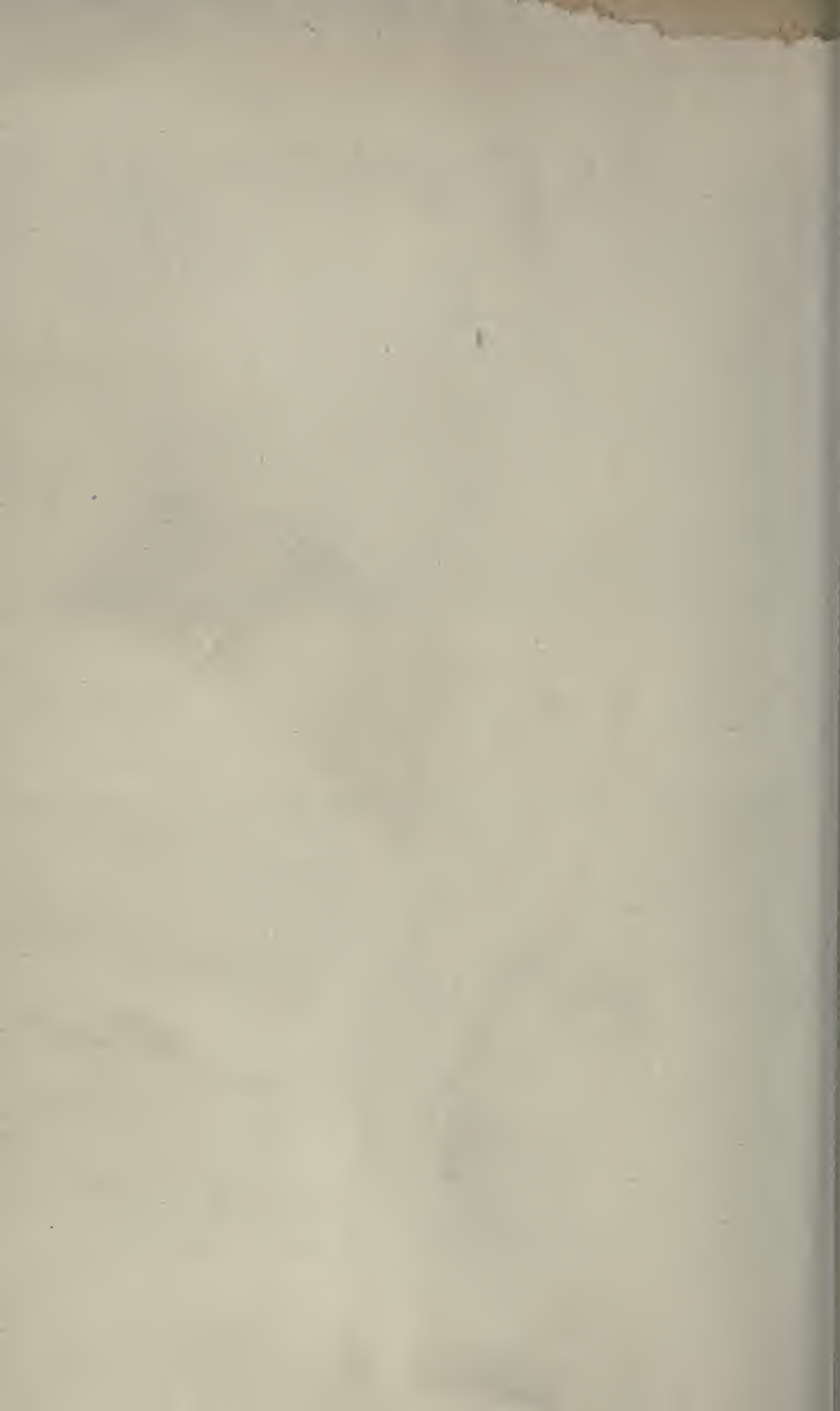
I had arrived at the *han*, or inn, a poor place dignified by the name of Hôtel de l'Europe, washed, and descended to the street, when, on emerging from the doorway, somebody fired his pistol right in my face. The flash startled me, and in an instant I was on my guard with my back to the wall. In that brief second all that I had heard of the insecurity of Albania flashed back.

My assailant—a tall, ragged-looking, middle-aged Turk in a scarlet fez—laughed in my face and uttered some words that I did not understand. He saw my weapon shining in the dim light, and pushed it away with a laugh. His manner struck me as friendly, so I dropped my arm; whereupon another man, in passing, also fired, then another and another, until, ten seconds later, everybody in the street was firing indiscriminately, and bullets were flying in all directions.

I held my breath. Had the place actually revolted against the Turk just at the moment of my arrival? If so, I was in luck's way. I knew that the Albanian hated the Turk, for



In Skodra.



Palok had told me that the revolution was only a question of time, and that one day his people would drive them out of Skodra. The place was once Servian, and captured by the Turks in 1479. Yet the Albanian still looks upon the Turk as a miserable intruder, and intends one day, ere long, to drive him out.

Around me, on every hand, pistols were being fired, the flashes showing red in the night, and I stood breathless, wondering what was happening. The man who had fired in my face was grinning at my alarm, when Palok dashed out to me.

"Signore! Signore!" he cried, in Italian. "It is nothing! Don't be alarmed. It is only the vigil of the fast of Ramadan. It is our way of celebrating it!"

By that time every man in the whole town was firing off his revolver. The din was deafening.

"Very well," I laughed. "Then I'll celebrate it too," and, raising my arm, I also emptied my weapon in the air.

The grinning Turk who had first fired and alarmed me saluted me by touching chin and forehead, and then we laughed together. It was certainly fortunate for him and for myself that I had not let fly, but he did not seem to heed at all the danger of firing suddenly upon a foreigner ignorant of what was about to happen.

The *han*, with the dignified name of "hotel," was certainly an uncomfortable place. Cold roast pork, a trifle "high," was all I could get to eat, and this was washed down by a light red vinegar, which was probably at one time wine. For five days running I had that very same pork served twice a day, until I sent Palok into the bazaar to buy me other supplies. A narrow camp bed, an iron washstand with tin fittings, a pail and a deal table, comprised my furniture, the best accommodation that Skodra could afford.

Yet the town is perhaps one of the most interesting in all the Balkans, and its people the most strangely mixed and wearing a greater variety of Eastern costume than even in Constantinople itself.

The bazaar, down by the river, is full of quaint types

and most interesting. Its uneven pavement is quite as unclean and slippery with the dirt of ages as are the streets of Constantinople, but its dark little sheds are filled by workers, silver and copper smiths, embroiderers, armourers, weavers, jewellers—in fact, one sees every trade being carried on in the same primitive way and with the same tools as in the Middle Ages.

Skodra is not a town of progress, for there telephone or electric light is forbidden ; machinery of every kind is against the law, and neither newspapers nor books are allowed to enter Albania. Therefore in those crooked streets of the bazaar the traveller is back in mediæval days, and the town of to-day is just as Florence was in the days of Boccaccio or Dante. Like the mediæval Florentines, many of the men from the mountains shave their heads, leaving a tuft of bushy hair at the back, which is cut square at the neck. With their tight-fitting black-and-white striped trousers, black woollen boleros, their belts filled with cartridges, and a rifle over their shoulders, they are a fine, manly race, with swaggering gait, clean-cut features—mostly Catholics, who spit openly at the lean, ragged, ill-fed soldiers of the Sultan.

They come down from the mountains in armed bands, and walk through the town, a dozen or so together, in complete defiance of the Turk. With men upon whose heads a price has been set—known brigands or murderers, indeed—I have chatted and drunk coffee in the bazaar, all wild fellows who know no law except their own, and who do not acknowledge the Turk as their ruler. When I inquired of Palok the reason of their immunity from arrest, he replied—

“ Why, signore, if the Turks captured one of these, the whole of Northern Albania would rise as one man. The tribes would sweep down from the mountains and sack and burn Skodra within twenty-four hours. Life in this town is very uncertain, I can tell you. One never knows when the rising will take place. All is ripe for it, and when it comes, then woe-betide the Turk and all the Moslems. Have you not noticed the Sign of the Cross over the doors of the Christians ? Is that not significant ? ”

The Albanian tribesmen are mostly Catholics, together with some Orthodox; yet they combine religion strangely with war. They go to the Catholic Cathedral in Skodra with loaded rifles, which they place before them as they kneel and pray, and before murdering their enemy they will go and ask Providence to assist them.

The town Christian of Skodra is, for the most part, a very excellent fellow. Palok, whom I found was well known, introduced me to many of them, and in that wild land I received very many charming kindnesses from perfect strangers.

The costume of the Scutarine men is distinctly quaint and curious. A short dark red jacket, the front and sleeves of which are so completely braided with narrow black braid as to almost hide the foundation, and edged with dozens of oblong brass buttons; a pair of wide, dark blue baggy breeches reaching to the knee; a round flat fez with a huge blue silk tassel that falls about the shoulders; a bright, striped silk sash; their legs in white cotton stockings and feet in patent leather dress-shoes. Such is the dress of the average Christian one meets in Skodra.

The attire of the women is even more extraordinary. They veil, just as do the Mohammedan women, and only uncover their faces when they go to church. For the most part they are beautiful when young, with clear, delicate complexions, handsome features, and dancing black eyes; but after seventeen appear to soon lose their beauty and become prematurely wrinkled and old. The outdoor dress is generally made of the same dark red cloth as the men's jackets, so completely embroidered as to appear black. Indeed no Scutarine, either man or woman, goes out in a dress unless it is covered with embroidery. In every street you will see a dozen men squatting cross-legged in a little dark shop, busily plying the needle upon the narrow black braid, and applying tiny pieces of green cloth among the braid as additional ornament. Often the braiding is a marvel of needlework and design, and some of the outdoor costumes of the women, though exceedingly ugly, are ornamented in such a manner as to amaze the Western eye.

Female outdoor attire is, of course, of the divided skirt order, trousers of thick braided cloth so clumsy that the wearer can only walk with difficulty, a long cape, richly embroidered on the shoulders and reaching to the hips, with a square kind of sailor collar that is raised and pinned to the crown of the head. From the bridge of the nose to the knee falls the white veil, like the Moslem women, while from the sash are pinned gaily coloured silk handkerchiefs, which, appearing below the cape, lend additional colour to the most unwieldy and ugly of all the dresses of the East. The wearer cannot walk, but can only waddle with difficulty.

The streets of Skodra are, however, a perfect panorama of costume. In the dark entries the shuffling Mohammedan women, white-clothed from head to foot and veiled, look ghostly and mysterious; the Mohammedan unmarried girls with the striped red-and-white veil wrapped about them; Albanians from the south in short, stiff cotton skirts like exaggerated kilts; Turks in greasy frock-coats and discoloured fezes, strolling slowly, fingering their beads to pass the time through Ramadan; fierce tribesmen from the mountains in all sorts of different costumes, fully armed and ready to shoot in an instant at discovering an enemy even there in the crowded bazaar; unveiled country women in short, coarse, black homespun skirts, wearing great iron-studded belts and savage ornaments in brass, copper, and gold; giggling girls from the mountains four or five days distant, dressed in their gorgeous gala dresses, laughing as they bargain with the voluble keepers of the tiny shops in the bazaar.

Skodra fascinates one. There is no European influence here: not a soul is in European dress. It is the unchanging East—the same life that has existed here for centuries. The Turks are, however, fanatics, and Palok will not allow me to smoke a cigarette in the street in the daytime, for in the fast of Ramadan the Mohammedans abstain from all food, drink, and tobacco from four in the morning till the gun fires on the fortress at sunset.

Upon Palok's advice I even wore a fez, so as not to be too conspicuous.

When I asked the reason, he simply grinned, shrugged his shoulders, and said—

“The signore believes Skodra to be a safe place. But it is not always so. Why run unnecessary risk? And a fez is very comfortable.”

So after buying a fez, I took it to the ironer, a white-bearded old Turk, who pressed it and shrunk it and combed out its tassel with great ceremony, and then I assumed the distinctive mark of the Sultan's subjects, evidently to the great relief of the faithful Palok.

On our first visit to the bazaar Palok discovered a friend. He was a very tall, thin-legged Albanian, in a white fez, a white woollen bolero, and the usual black-and-white woollen trousers and turned-up shoes of raw-hide and interlaced string. In one of the narrow, tortuous ways of the bazaar, on a kind of platform before a small ramshackle booth, where rope and twine were displayed, he was squatting cross-legged, staring into space and awaiting customers.

Suddenly espying Palok, he seized his slippers, which stood near him, and sprang out upon the filthy pavement. Next second the pair were clasped in embrace, and after many mutual words of warm welcome in Albanian, I was introduced.

The seller of string looked me up and down critically until his eye caught my revolver in my belt, and then, apparently satisfied with my appearance, he touched his chin and brow in salutation.

We ascended to the little platform, and a box was brought for me to sit upon. A shout into the narrow alley brought me a cup of Turkish coffee.

“This is my friend, Salko,” Palok explained, in Italian, after the pair had been apparently discussing me. “*Mio buon amico*. One of the best men in the bazaar. For eight years we have been parted, and how pleased I am to see him again.”

Salko interrupted, whereupon Palok said—

“My friend apologises, signore, that he cannot take coffee with you, or offer you a cigarette. It is Ramadan, you know.”

I offered Salko my case, and, taking a cigarette, he placed

it aside until after sunset, touching his chin and brow and laughing merrily.

I wanted to buy several things in the bazaar—a piece or two of old silver, if I could find it—and some antique embroideries which Palok had told me I could find. He told Salko this, whereupon he shouted outside to a passer-by, and in a moment the news was all over the bazaar, and all sorts and conditions of men appeared with various things for sale: beautiful silver-mounted and gem-studded pistols and swords, old silver ornaments, embroideries of the sixteenth century, genuine antiques of all sorts, old jewellery—in fact, in a quarter of an hour Salko's little shed-like shop presented the appearance of that of an antique dealer.

Two gorgeous Turkish ladies' costumes attracted me. The trousers were of silk, and interwoven with real gold and silver thread; the boleros of rich crimson velvet, wonderfully embroidered with gold; the sashes gay; and the little fezes, with golden sequins, smart and coquettish. They were the real thing, and could be worn at a fancy-dress ball in England with certain success.

I liked them, for they were the genuine thing. Dresses such as they were are not made nowadays. Turkish ladies of to-day prefer the lighter stuffs of the Franks, silks from Paris, and figured gauzes from Germany. Those dresses had once graced the harem of some great Pasha—perhaps, indeed, that of the Sultan himself. So I allowed Salko to bargain for them.

I watched, and was amused.

The man who had them to sell apparently asked a price that was exorbitant, whereupon my friend, with a wave of his hand, ordered him to pack them back in the bundle.

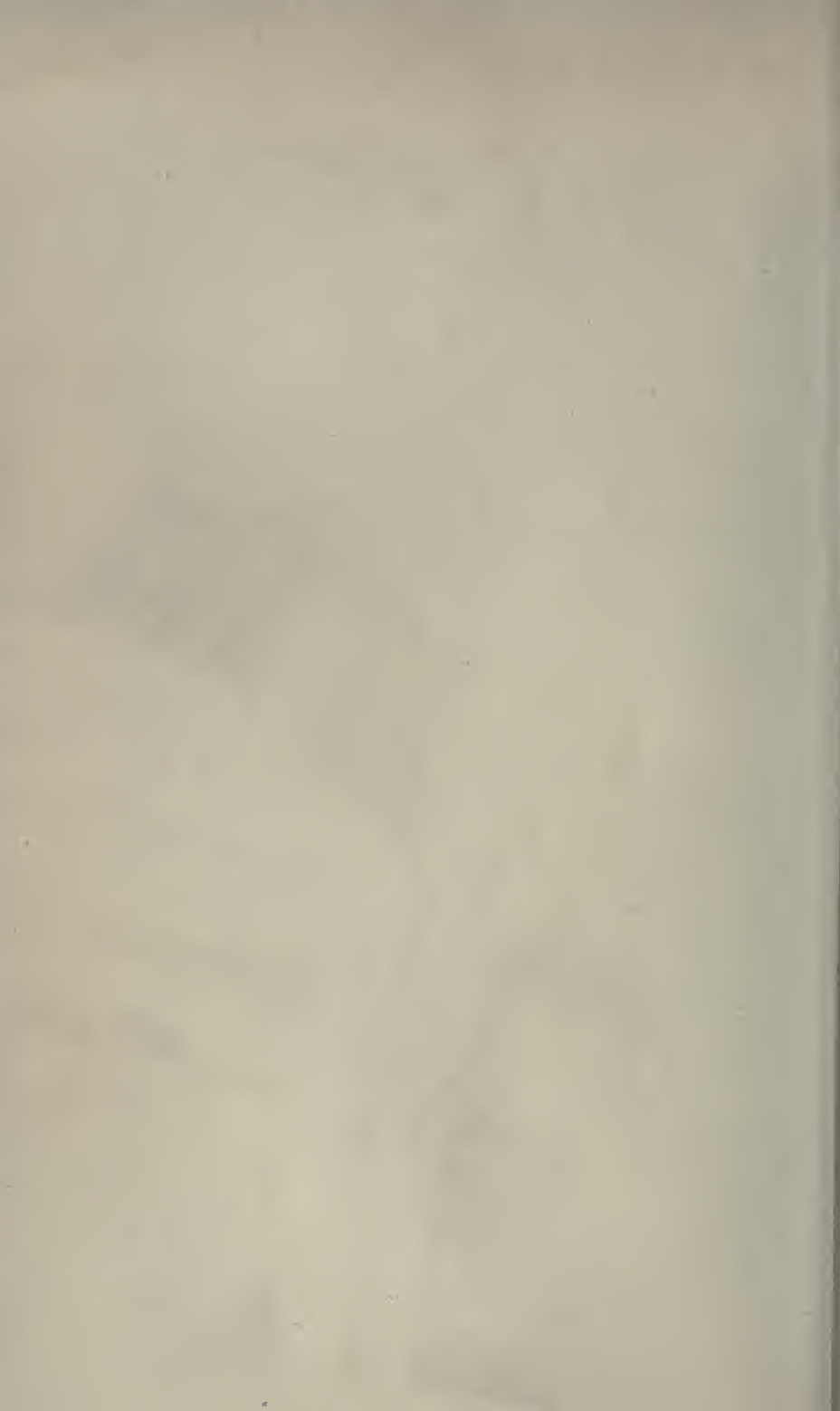
High words followed, and I expected every moment the pair would come to blows. The vendor was a round, fat-faced eunuch, with an ugly scar across his brown cheek. And while the controversy was in progress, the others who had wares to offer squatted about and advised each side as to how much the costumes were really worth. Then at last both sides got at loggerheads, hard words were used and insulting gestures; fists were shaken, and angry scowls exchanged,



My friend Salko outside his house in Shkodra.



Pietro's sister-in-law unveiled before the Camera.



until I momentarily expected that there would be a free fight and bloodshed.

One man I noticed who had not spoken was fingering the hilt of his knife, as though itching to join in the fray.

"I'm going out of this," I told Palok, whereupon he only laughed.

"There's really nothing to fear, signore. It is always so. They ask double, and Salko is teaching the fellow manners. You are a foreigner, and you don't understand."

I admitted that I did not.

The argument continued, and in the end the fat-faced eunuch was bundled out by Salko into the dirty alley and his goods thrown after him.

Nobody smiled. Such treatment seemed usual, and on the following day I bought the dresses.

The next was a little old Turk with a long white beard, who had an old silver ornament for sale, one of those triangular boxes which women wear round their necks containing scraps of the Koran, supposed to protect them from the influence of the Evil Eye.

Though he came meek and humble, Salko glared at him. No. The Englishman was his guest, and he would see that only what was just was paid. He took the ornament from me, and weighing it in his hand, judged its worth. Two other men agreed, and the old man, without being consulted, was handed the money and told to be gone.

Assuredly business methods are quaint in the town we Europeans call Scutari.

Another after another—shopkeepers, all of them in the same category as Salko himself—was interviewed. Those who offered rubbish were promptly ordered out. And so, before me, seated upon my box, was unfolded the treasures of the bazaar.

And assuredly some of the curios offered were fit to grace any museum. Seldom does a foreigner visit Skodra, therefore it still contains many real antiques; and there being no sale for them, prices are not exorbitant. It is, indeed, one of the few places left where one can obtain anything worth having.

A long, lean Christian, in his flat round fez and enormous

tassel, offered me nine early Greek gold coins that had only a week before been discovered in a tomb. I doubted the tomb part of the story, but I was afterwards shown it half a mile away, and could also have bought the actual vase in which they had been found. I am not a collector of coins, so I declined them. One day, however, those coins will, no doubt, find their way into one of our European national collections, for they were so perfect that they looked as though just fresh from the matrix.

I was turning over in my hand a number of antique gem rings, when of a sudden, just outside, not a dozen yards from where I sat, there was a loud shout, followed by a pistol-shot. Then more shouting, and a little crowd gathered. In alarm I sprang to my feet, and I saw outside a mountaineer, in white felt skullcap, lying in a pool of blood with part of his face blown away.

A man in black-and-white trousers stalked past, flourishing his big pistol and threatening to shoot anybody who dared to stop him. He was the assassin.

"It is nothing, signore," Palok declared, reseating himself. "Only the blood-feud. The men were *in sanguine*, and have met. In such cases one must always die. The man who shoots first gets the best of it," and he grinned.

For fully five minutes the man lay in the filthy gutter without a hand being placed upon him to see if life were extinct. Then it occurred to somebody to see. He was pronounced dead, and a couple of men carried away the corpse. No police or guard put in an appearance, and the life of the bazaar went on as though nothing unusual had happened.

But nothing unusual had happened. Such assassinations occur every day, and nobody takes any heed of them. The blood-feud is part of the Albanian creed, both Mohammedan and Christian.

It is not, however, pleasant to have a man shot dead before one's eyes, nor does it tend to inspire confidence in one's own personal safety.

This was my first experience of the murderous instinct of the wild Albanian, but ere three days I had still other oppor-

tunities of reflecting upon Palok's remark that Skodra was not so safe a place as it looked.

Indeed, the town itself is, at intervals, threatened with massacre. Every now and then rumours fly round that the mountain tribes are about to descend upon the place and drive out the Turks. Then everybody retires to their houses—each residence has high walls, and is more or less a fortress—the bazaar is closed, the shops are barricaded, and the ragged soldiers of the Sultan assemble under their greasy-tunicked officers—and wait.

The blow for liberty has not yet been struck by the Albanians, but it will assuredly come ere long.

I wanted to investigate, and get at the truth. That is the reason why those high, blue, misty mountains that I could see afar from the narrow, crooked streets of Skodra held me in such fascination; that is why I disregarded all advice to the contrary, and determined to visit the Albanian at home in his rocky fastness.

That same night, after Salko had bargained for me, I was eating my evening meal—of pork—when another shot sounded out in the dark, unlit street.

It was nothing, I was told by Palok five minutes later. A man had been found dead in the darkness. That was all.

The average number of assassinations in Scutari is about three per day. Nobody cares, for justice is nobody's business except that of the dead man's brother, or his next-of-kin.

True, there is an Imperial Court of Justice, a lath-built shed with gaping holes in the roof. Its steps are moss-grown, and its windows mostly broken or devoid of glass.

Outside the place, after midday, the brave defenders of the Ottoman Empire, those shoeless men with their ragged uniforms dropping off them, sell their ration of bread to the passer-by in order to get money to buy cigarettes. They remain unpaid, and their bread is their only source of income. And upon the protection of these Skodra has to rely.

Is it any wonder that when sinister rumour runs through the bazaar, everybody shoulders his rifle and sits on his wall, prepared to defend his own home?

CHAPTER III

THE LAWLESS LAND

My friend Pietro—Visit to his house—His wife and sister-in-law unveil and are photographed—Scutarine hospitality—Forbidden newspapers—I get one in secret—The Turkish post office—I want to visit the Accursed Mountains—Difficulties and fears—The Feast of the Madonna—Christians and Mohammedans—My first meeting with the dreaded Skreli—Shots in the night.

THOSE bright, sunny autumn days in Skodra will live for a long time within my memory.

Though a stranger in that half-savage place, where law and order are unknown, I received perhaps more genuine hospitality from perfect strangers than in any other place in the Balkan Peninsula.

Through Palok's introduction I quickly found myself among friends, who exerted their utmost in order to entertain me, and went out of their way, even in face of their own national customs and beliefs, to oblige me. The Albanian idea of hospitality is old-world and charming. A case in point was one of my friends, a wealthy Scutarine merchant named Pietro Lekha, whose portrait is here reproduced. He was a Christian, and spoke a little Italian. At first, when I was introduced to him in the bazaar, he was silent and taciturn, apparently regarding me with some suspicion; but very soon this wore off, and we became the best of friends. We took coffee together constantly, and he gave me exquisite cigarettes. In Albania there is no *régie*, as in other parts of Turkey, therefore one can choose from the peasant-women the very best light tobacco in leaf, have it cut, and



Rok, tribesman of the Skreli.



PIETRO LEKHA.

afterwards employ professional cigarette-makers to manufacture you cigarettes. I did this, and sent a quantity of cigarettes of the very first quality to England, far milder and sweeter than any to be purchased in Constantinople—or anywhere else in the world, for the matter of that.

Finding that I was taking photographs, Pietro became interested. He accompanied me on my expeditions, and we had spent some days together before I dared to inquire about his wife, the veiled lady whom I had once had pointed out to me in the bazaar.

Palok had told me that Pietro's brother had, three months ago, married the most beautiful girl in Skodra, and that he and his young wife lived at Pietro's house. A bold thing then occurred to me—to beg permission to photograph them.

I knew well that these people were averse to having their photographs taken; nevertheless I very discreetly broached the subject one day when sipping coffee with Pietro.

He gave me no decided answer. Indeed, he declared himself ready in any way to serve me, but as to photographing his women-kind—well, it was against all custom. What would his friends say if they knew?

I dropped the subject, rather crestfallen. I wanted to be invited to his house and to meet his wife and sister-in-law, both of whom were declared to be very beautiful. Yet he seemed in no way inclined to so far extend his hospitality. I spoke to Palok and urged him to use his power of persuasion, with the result that two days later I received an invitation from Pietro to call upon him at his house at three o'clock to take coffee, and further, he added—

“If you really wish to bring your camera, you may. I have spoken to my brother, and he will let you take a picture of his wife, providing you give your undertaking not to make any copies for sale, or to show it here to people in Skodra.”

I willingly gave the undertaking, and at the appointed hour, accompanied by Palok, we rang at the big gate in a high white, prison-like wall that enclosed my friend's dwelling, and were admitted into the garden, in the centre of which stood a great square house.

Pietro came forward to greet me, a picturesque figure in his Scutarine dress, the flat fez with big tassel, the embroidered coat, baggy trousers, and white stockings. The ground floor was devoted to stables, but above we found ourselves in a large square apartment with divans. Upon the floor were beautiful Eastern rugs. On one side was the big, gaudily painted dowry-chest, and here and there small low tables. The room, with its heavy hangings, was very cosy, and over everything was the sweet odour of otto-of-rose. In one corner was a great brass brazier, and upon a chiffonier were a few European knick-knacks, evidently household treasures. The only picture on the wall was a small oleograph of the Madonna.

A rush-bottomed chair was produced for me, while Pietro and Palok squatted cross-legged upon the divans. Then the servant was sent to inform the ladies of our arrival.

Presently both wife and sister-in-law entered, gorgeous in silk and gold, the most striking costumes I have ever seen off the stage. White gauze veils were wrapped about their heads and corsage, leaving only their eyes visible; and thus attired they saluted me and, with Pietro acting as interpreter, welcomed me.

Afterwards they retired, and at Pietro's order reappeared without their veils. The younger woman was indeed lovely, with a fair white skin, beautiful soft lines of beauty, magnificent black eyes, and lips that puckered into a sweet, modest smile when I involuntarily expressed my surprise at her marvellous good looks. I had heard that Albanian ladies were beautiful, but I certainly never expected to be presented to such a type of feminine loveliness.

Over her bare chest hung strings of great gold coins, while across her brow were rows of sequins. Her richly embroidered dress, the jewels in her ears, the bangles upon her arms, all enhanced her great personal beauty, while she stood before me, her face downcast in modesty—for except her husband and his brother no man had ever beheld her unveiled.

At that moment her husband entered, and I congratulated him upon the possession of such a beautiful wife. Then we

all laughed together, and descended to the garden, where I was allowed to take photographs of her, veiled and unveiled, as well as of Pietro's wife, who was, of course, much her senior, and who, although she had lost her youthful beauty, was still very charming.

Returning again to the upstairs salon, we all sat round, while the newly-married beauty brought us first lemonade, then delicious Turkish coffee in tiny round cups upon a great gilt tray, followed by *rakhi*, that spirit so dear to the Turkish palate, and afterwards real *rahat-lakoum*, or Turkish delight.

Then, after an interval, veiled again once more, the beautiful young woman brought me a cigarette and lit it for me, afterwards wishing me adieu and modestly retiring.

All was done with such perfect grace and modesty as to create a most charming experience. It was, to say the least, novel, to sit there with those squatting Albanians and be waited upon by the prettiest girl in Skodra.

Pietro told me that newspapers and books being forbidden, anyone found in possession of them was at once arrested. He, however, gave me surreptitiously a copy of the *Rome Tribuna*, which had been smuggled in a day or two before; and it was welcome, being the first newspaper I had had for several weeks.

Truly Skodra is a strange place. I had occasion to go to the Turkish post office one day. It was, I found, a wooden shed. Inside was a low, filthy truckle bed, a small table—at which sat a consumptive youth in a fez—a broken chair and a large iron safe, the door being secured by a piece of string being tied about it!

Of drainage there is none. Sewage runs down the centre of most of the streets, especially in the bazaar, and its odour is the reverse of pleasant on a sunny day. In the neighbourhood of butchers and slaughterers the gutters run with blood, which the dogs lap and enjoy, and near the stalls of fruiterers and vegetable-sellers the piles of refuse rot in the sun and decay.

Yet everywhere, both in the streets of the Mohammedan quarter and in those of the Christians, are interesting sights

at every turn. When night falls the place is dark and mysterious, for there are no lights save that issuing from the chinks of a door or from the windows of a barber or a coffee-seller. Through the windows of a mosque, perhaps, can be seen the swaying figures of Turks at prayer, faint in the dim oil lights, while in the blackness of the street the patrol passes, a dozen Turkish soldiers with loaded rifles, headed by one man carrying a lantern. The place is insecure after nightfall, even to the Scutarines themselves, therefore nobody ventures out, and by nine o'clock every house is bolted and barred.

At that hour, it being Ramadan, the Turk was feasting and taking his ease, while opposite the *han* where I lived a Turkish soldier would come nightly and sing weird prayers under the window of the Governor of the *vilayet*, that perfectly useless official, whose authority extends only to the confines of the town itself, and who fears to exercise it lest he should rouse the slumbering ire of those fierce tribes who live in the Accursed Mountains above.

Many strange sights I witnessed and many strange things I heard in Skodra.

Men, fierce mountaineers who, in some cases, bore across their countenances marks of sword or gun-shot wounds, told me their stories—exciting narratives of love, war, and the blood-feud. All were Albanians, and believed Skodra to be the finest capital in the world. England, because it carried on no political intrigue among them, like Austria and Italy, they did not regard as a Power. Mine was a country far away, I was told, and therefore perfectly harmless. Hardly anybody had heard of London. Those who had, declared that it could not be so large or so beautiful as Skodra.

The days I spent there were with the one object of obtaining, by some means, permission from one or other of the mountain chieftains to allow me to travel in the country.

Palok had promised to endeavour to arrange it for me, and so had Pietro, but by their manner I saw that they considered any such attempt a piece of sheer folly, and far too hazardous. They were too polite to tell me so, but I read

in their faces that they did not intend me to go, if it were possible to prevent me.

Therefore surreptitiously I had recourse to my faithful friend of the bazaar, Salko, himself a member of the fierce tribe of the Skreli, who had more than once terrorised the town. When, through an interpreter, I one evening explained my desire, he rubbed his chin doubtfully and wagged his head. He would do his best, but it was dangerous—very dangerous, he declared.

And yet, he went on, the thing might perhaps be managed. An Albanian of the mountains, though he might be a brigand and annoyed the Turks, and though he might shoot Turkish soldiers like dogs wherever met, was nevertheless a man of his word. If I was promised safe escort, then I might go into the mountains without even my revolver, for no harm would come to me.

Yes; he would promise to see what he could do. But it was difficult, and it would take time. In the mountains they had no great love of foreigners.

To the coming Feast of the Madonna many men from the mountains would arrive, and there would be opportunity to speak with them. No; he would say nothing to Palok—if I so wished. Therefore I waited, and hoped.

Now the celebrated Madonna of Loretto was, before the Turkish occupation of Skodra, at the little ruined church near the Boyana River, and even now down to the annual *festà* come representatives of all the various tribes, men and women, from sometimes a week's journey distant, filling the streets with a perfect panorama of colour and costume.

The Feast of the Madonna is indeed the day to see Skodra at her best.

You may travel the whole of Europe, from the Channel to the Urals, or from the White Sea to the Bosphorus, and you will never see such a variety of types and of costume as during the two days of that feast.

That clear sunny morning the whole town was agog. The Christians had it to themselves, for while they feasted the Mohammedans fasted. The two peoples keep distinctly

apart during religious festivals, and Turkish soldiers, their blue uniforms green with age, greasy at the collar, and often shoeless, patrol the town, ready to fire on the people at the least provocation. At least, so they say. If, however, they did fire, then woe-betide them! Every man goes armed in Skodra, and the garrison would certainly be wiped out were the alarm once given to those wild fellows up in the mountains.

All is orderly, however—all brilliant. The streets are full of Christians from the country, the men tall, thin-legged fellows, with black-and-white striped trousers and black furry bolero, carrying loaded rifles upon their shoulders; and the women in the various gay costumes of the tribes, each wearing profusions of gold coins strung across their breasts, heavy gold earrings, and the younger married ones with dozens of gaudy silk handkerchiefs suspended round their heavy brass or iron studded girdles, presents to them on their recent marriage. Most of the *katunnare* (peasant-women from the plains) are dressed in a short black homespun skirt and bodice combined, reaching to the knees and embroidered with red. Around the waist is a heavy hide belt about five inches broad, studded with iron, and with two big polished cornelians to form the buckle. Some are of antique silver of beautiful workmanship, and others, more modern, are gilt. These women wear nothing on their heads, but the gaily-dressed *malzore* (women of the mountains) wear a bright silk handkerchief arranged very much in the same manner as the women around Naples. The *malzore* are extremely good-looking, and all carry a small embroidered sack over their shoulder, for in Skodra on the night prior to the *Festà* of the Madonna every Christian house is open to receive visitors and give them food and shelter, whoever they may be. So these little sacks contain humble presents to the hosts.

Pietro met me in the street as I was going to the Cathedral, and told me that on the previous night he had given food and beds to twenty-eight mountaineers of both sexes. Albanian hospitality is certainly unbounded.

As I strolled through the narrow lanes of the Christian quarter towards the Cathedral, and the gaily-dressed chattering



The Madonna of Skodra.



The Procession with an Armed Guard.

women in groups hurried forward to get a place within, I was struck with their neat and clean appearance. Their finery was in no way dingy or dusty, and yet many of them had been a whole week on a journey through perhaps the roughest region in the whole East.

How different was the *festà* to that I had known in the Italian towns!

About the Cathedral there is nothing unusually attractive—a big bare edifice with high square campanile in modern Italian style. It stands in the centre of an open space, surrounded by great high, fortress-like walls, entered by a strong gate with huge iron bars—significant that one day ere long it will be held against the Turks. No Mohammedan ever passes those gates. Even the military patrol lounge outside, leaning on their rifles.

Within the enclosure I found a great crowd of peasant women; females of the town, veiled with gauze so fine that one could almost see their faces; Scutarine men in their best jackets and baggy trousers; and the swaggering, white-capped warriors from the mountains, men of the Miriditi,—so dreaded by the Turks that they are allowed to carry their rifles with them,—of the fierce Skreli, the Hoti, and the Kastrati.

The Skreli, with the Miriditi, are allowed to carry their rifles because the Turks hold them in fear. The authorities know full well that to arouse their ire would be to bring destruction upon the whole *vilayet*, for they hold the communications, and if the tribes revolted, as they no doubt would, then the army of the Sultan would have a very hard task to suppress the rebellion.

So while the Kastrati and the Hoti—also dwellers in the Mountains of the Accursed—the Klementi, the Shiala of the foot-hills, and the others are compelled to leave their rifles at the entrance to the town, the Skreli and the Miriditi stalk along in armed bands of twenty or thirty through the streets to the church, grinning defiance at the Turks, who are supposed by Europe to be their masters.

Under the trees around the Cathedral the wild, fierce men, who would hold the traveller to ransom or shoot him with

less compunction than they would kill a shepherd-dog, were squatting in rings with their rifles before them, gossiping. Every man wore a belt full of cartridges and a bandolier across his shoulders—sometimes even two. War and religion are strangely mixed in Skodra.

Into the dimly-lit Cathedral I managed to squeeze, and there, kneeling on the stones and filling the whole place right out into the grass enclosure, were men of all grades, from the peaceful Scutarine merchant to the wild tribesman, and women with their faces uncovered bowed towards the brilliantly lit altar, where the thin-faced Italian priest mumbled the prayers.

The sight was strangely impressive; the silence unbroken save for the low voice of the priest and now and then the clank of arms.

For two days in the year, to celebrate the Christian festival, the brigand tribes from the mountains come down, notwithstanding that upon the heads of many of those sinister-looking men before me the Turks had long ago set a price. I stood gazing at that kneeling throng, to whom, though devout and humble in God's house, murder was deemed no wrong.

The service ended, a great procession was formed, and headed by four fine stalwart men of the Skreli with loaded rifles, made a slow tour from the altar outside and round the enclosure, while an orchestra in a band-stand opposite played selections. The sight was curious—those armed men ready to protect their priests in case of sudden onslaught by the Turks.

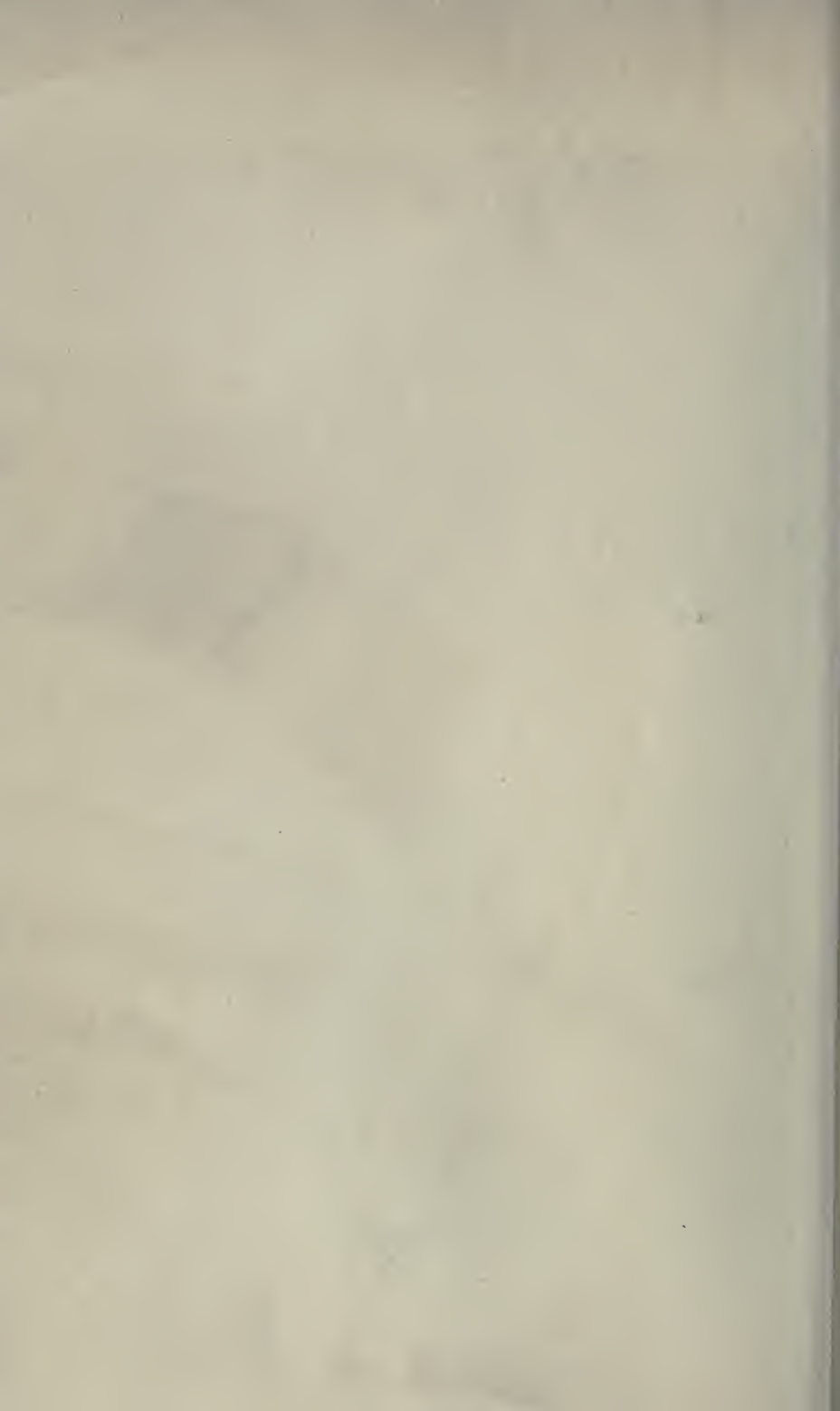
During the whole morning I took many photographs, and in the afternoon, when I returned, I found the orchestra playing operatic music, which was being listened to by the tribesmen with marked attention. They are, I afterwards found, devoted to music. The programme ranged from selections from *La Bohème* and *Carmen* to the "Segovia" valse and our old melodious friend, "The Honeysuckle and the Bee." The latter air quickly became popular among the tribesmen, who picked it up and began at once to whistle it.



The Mirediti: An Alarm!



The Mirediti at Prayer.



Slowly fell the mystic twilight of the East. The glorious afterglow had deepened into grey, and night was creeping on quickly when fire balloons were sent up, and then gradually the whole Cathedral became outlined in fairy lamps against the steely sky, even to the utmost point of the high square tower. Men and women gazed upward, and crossed themselves.

Later, while walking back with Palok, we encountered a group of armed tribesmen talking excitedly, shaking their fists, and apparently quarrelling. Palok joined the crowd, and inquired what had happened. Then, turning to me, he said—

“Oh, it is nothing, signore. The town of Kroia has revolted. The Turks sent soldiers yesterday, but they were Albanians, and would not fire on the people. To-day some artillery arrived, and thirty people have been killed—mostly women. A man has just ridden in with the news. It is nothing. We are always fighting the Turks at Kroia. There will probably be a massacre to-night.” And he deftly rolled a cigarette as he spat in defiance of the hated Mussulman.

Later that night I was awakened from sleep by a shot below, and, taking my revolver, went to the window. The night was black, and I could discern nothing.

I heard men's voices raised in the street below, and suddenly saw the red flash of firearms and heard a second report.

Then all was quiet, except receding footsteps.

The shots disturbed nobody, or if they did, nobody opened door or window. The town was asleep, and by the distant sound of a tom-tom I knew that the hour was half-past three; for the music was calling upon the Faithful to eat, preparatory to the day's fast.

What had happened? All was silent, therefore I closed my window and slept again.

In the morning I was told that it was “nothing.” Two men of the Shiala had been found dead outside.

Was it the blood-feud? I asked.

Palok only raised his shoulders and exhibited his palms.

“It was nothing, signore—really nothing.”

CHAPTER IV

IN THE ACCURSED MOUNTAINS

Vatt Marashi, chief of the Skreli tribe, invites me to become his guest—Our start for the Accursed Mountains—Rok, our guide—Independence of the Skreli—Brigandage and the *bessa*—A night under a rock—My meeting with Vatt Marashi and his band—The Skreli welcome—How they treat the Turks—Vatt's admissions—I become the guest of brigands—A chat in the moonlight.

WHILE seated on the box in Salko's dark little stall in the bazaar he introduced his friend Rok to me.

A middle-aged tribesman in the regulation costume of tight white woollen trousers heavily striped with black, black bolero with deep woollen fringe, and a felt skullcap, once white, but now not overclean, he squatted opposite me and touched chin and brow in salute. His loaded rifle lay before him on the ground.

He eyed me critically up and down, my pigskin gaiters apparently receiving his admiration.

"Rok, here, is of the Skreli, a fearless fighter of the Turks and one of my best friends," Salko went on to explain. "I have told him of your earnest desire to go and see our country; that you are neither Austrian nor Italian, but English and not a spy. Our friend is returning to-day, and has promised to speak to Vatt Marashi, our chief, on your behalf."

"Tell the honourable Englishman that if he comes to us he must be prepared for a rough life. We live in the mountains," Rok said through the interpreter, laughing pleasantly as he lit the cigarette he took from my case.

Coffee was brought, and we sealed our compact of friendship.

If Vatt Marashi, the renowned chieftain who so often held travellers to ransom, and whose influence was so dreaded by the Turks, consented to allow me to visit him, then Rok would return, he promised, and be my guide.

For half an hour we chatted and smoked. Then the burly mountaineer rose, slung his rifle over his shoulder, touched chin and brow again, grasped my hand warmly, and stalked out on his three days' tramp to the wild region in the mountain mists that was his home.

I waited on in Skodra, and, to my great delight, he one morning reappeared with a message from his chief that, providing I took only Palok, and had no escort, he would be pleased to welcome me and show me all the hospitality in his power. I need fear nothing, it was added. I was to be guest of Vatt Marashi, chief of the Skreli. He had issued the order to the tribe. Any who dared to insult or injure me should pay for it with their life. Therefore I should be given safe-conduct, and need not have a moment's anxiety.

By this, Palok, who had been entirely opposed to the attempt, became reassured, and soon after noon, with a mule packed with my lightest baggage, we set our faces out across the great rolling plain that lies between the town and the high wall of blue distant mountains—the wildest corner of all Europe. They are a series of fastnesses, in which any small army would at once be massacred and where a large one would starve.

We were a merry trio as we marched forward in the bright autumn sunlight, but about a kilometre beyond the town the road ended in a ford, where we crossed a wide shallow river, and then straight across the plain and past several tumuli to where a defile showed in the mountains. The ancient Bridge of Messi, built under the Venetian dominion, was crossed, and then we had our first experience of the road in Albania—a rough, narrow way gradually ascending, almost too bad even for mules.

Nobody who has not visited Northern Albania can have any idea of the wildness of those bare grey rocks, of the roughness of the tracks, or the savagery of life there. Northern Albania

is to-day just as it was under the Roman Empire. The might of Rome has waned, the Servian has come and gone, the Venetian has been swept away, and the Turk is now nominally master. But the country has never, through all the centuries, been annexed, and those wild tribes, descendants of the savage people who inhabited those fastnesses before the days of Greek dominion, have never been tamed. The Northern Albanian is the last survivor of mediæval days. He has no written language—indeed, his alphabet, with its many soft and hard “ssh” sounds, has never yet been determined—therefore he has no literature and no newspaper. Thin, wiry, and muscular, he wears raw-hide slippers, in which he moves with cat-like, stealthy tread—a habit survived from pre-historic days—while his very dress is protective, rendering him at a short distance difficult to discern, so like is he in colour to the rocky background. He looks as though he had just stepped down from a mediæval Florentine fresco, with his head half-shaven, hair long at the back and cut square across the shoulders.

He is entirely unchanged ever since the Turk found him, except that of late he has adopted the breech-loading rifle and a particularly heavy pattern of revolver. The black furry bolero which he wears, without exception, is the sign of mourning for his great prince, Skender Beg, who died in 1467, after being at war with the Turks for over twenty years; therefore with him fashions do not easily change, and “latest novelties” in dress are unknown. Great are the changes that have come over the world during the past thousand years or so, but Northern Albania has remained unaffected by them, and is still in a measure in the lowest depths of barbarism. The Turk does not rule. The wild, inaccessible country is under the various independent tribes, ruled by a chieftain according to unwritten laws which have been handed down orally from remote ages, and one of the fiercest and most independent of these chiefs was Vatt Marashi, the man whose guest I now was to be.

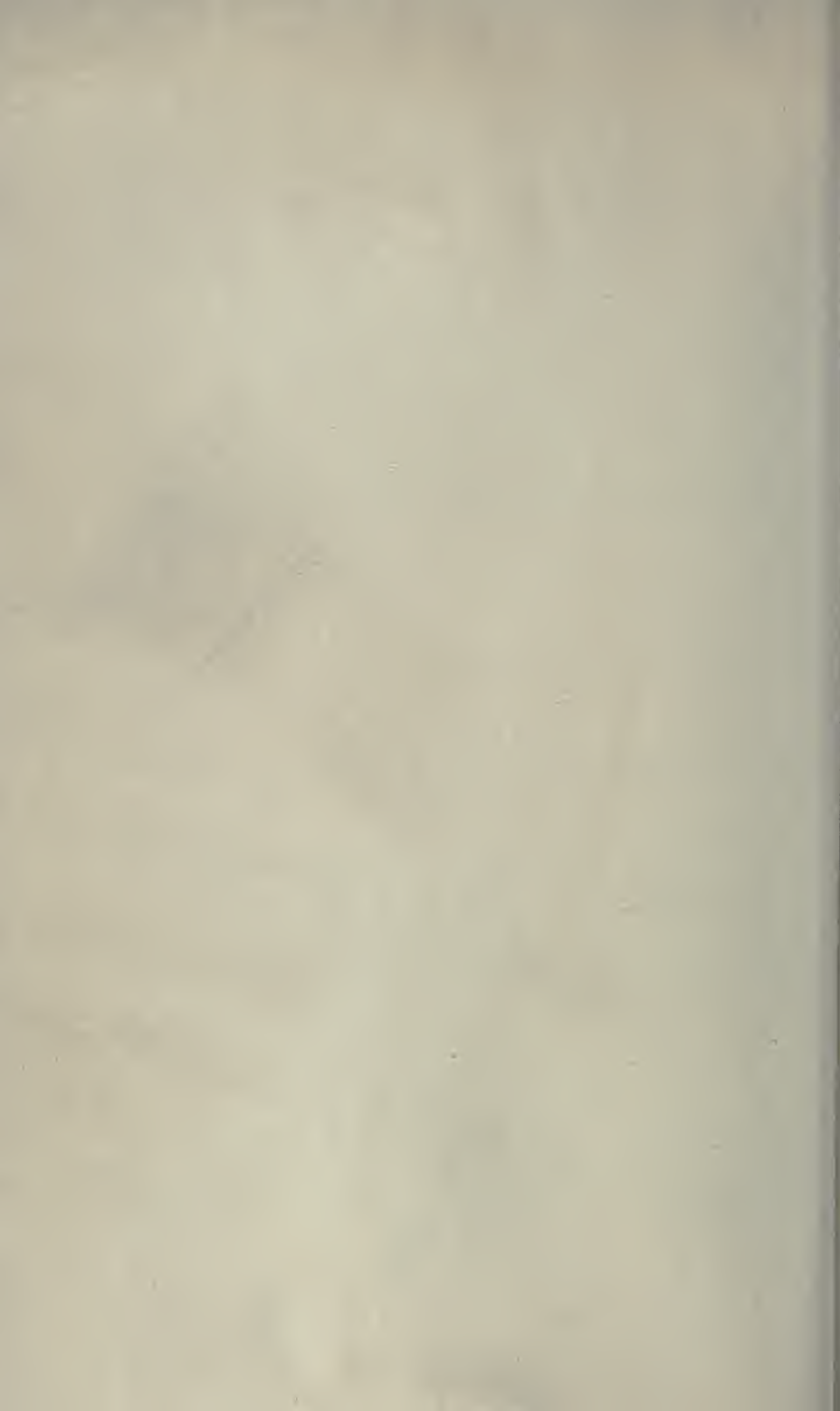
Compared with the tribesmen, the Albanian Christian of Skodra is a puny person. The mountaineers are a barbaric,



My road in Northern Albania.



The way to the Skreli.



lawless people, without any education save the schools established by Italian and Austrian monks as part of the political propaganda; for, truth to tell, both countries have recently conceived the idea of turning Northern Albania to account for their own purposes on the day of the downfall of the Turk. Therefore both Powers are frantically exerting every effort to curry favour with the people, a fact which is glaringly apparent even to the rough, uneducated tribesmen themselves.

The Northern Albanian may be entirely uneducated and a barbarian, but he is at heart a brigand, and is certainly no fool.

My friend Rok was particularly intelligent, and as we toiled along over those rough, rock-strewn paths he gave me much information about his country, and declared that both Austria and Italy were equally their enemy.

After sundown we rested at a point high up above a dark gloomy defile, where a stream wound away towards the plain, and there ate some slices of cold mutton and black bread with a glass of *rakhi*, our three rifles lying at hand in case of sudden emergency.

I had noticed the queer, sinuous, almost uncanny way in which Rok walked. His movements, at even pace whatever might be the state of the path, were stealthy. Indeed, he almost crept along, for his feet fell in silence, and with his rifle ever ready, his keen black eyes were searching on every side for the enemy which he appeared to expect to meet at every turn.

Sometimes as he walked in front he would halt, and closely scan a mass of tumbled rocks, as though he had suspicion of a lurking enemy, then thoroughly satisfying himself, he would go forward again without glancing back. He was certain that no enemy was in his rear.

From his movements and natural caution I could plainly see that we were traversing a country not altogether friendly, and when, as we sat over our evening meal, I asked Palok, his reply was—

“The Shiala are not on very friendly terms with the Skreli just now. But it is nothing, signore—nothing.”

We went forward until darkness closed in, and then lay

down to sleep under an overhanging rock almost on the face of a sheer precipice, a place in which Rok told us he often stayed on his way down to Skodra. He humorously called it his *han*, or hotel.

To light a fire would be to attract hostile attention, and the cold up there was intense. I tried to sleep, but was unable, therefore I rose and sat outside in the bright, glorious moonlight and kept watch, while Rok curled himself up like a dog and snored soundly in chorus with Palok.

There, in the East, the full moon seems to shine with greater brilliance than in Europe, and beneath its white rays those bare, rugged mountains looked like a veritable fairyland. Only the cry of a night-bird and the low music of the stream far below broke the stillness of the Oriental night, and as I sat there I reflected that I was the first Englishman who had ever been the guest of the redoubtable chieftain, Vatt Marashi, the man whom the Turks so hate—the man of whom blood-curdling tales had been told me both in Montenegro and in Skodra, and whose fame as a leader of a wild band had not long before been proclaimed by the London newspapers.

For hours I sat thinking, sometimes of my good fortune, at others of my perilous position alone in the hands of such a people. But I had heard that, notwithstanding their barbaric customs, an Albanian's word was his bond. Therefore I reassured myself that I should not be the victim of treachery, and reported to Constantinople as "missing."

Slowly at last the moon paled, and I grew sleepy. That terrible road had worn me out. Therefore I woke Palok to mount guard, and flung myself down in his place and slept till the sun, shining in my face, awakened me.

Through the whole day we went forward again, over a path so bad that I often had to scramble with difficulty. I tried to ride the mule, but it was out of the question, so I walked and stumbled and was helped over the rough boulders by my companions. The Skreli country was surely an unapproachable region.

That night we slept again in the open, but in a spot less

sheltered. Then forward again with the first grey of dawn until, just before noon, Rok halted in the narrow track which wound round the face of the bare grey mountain, and, drawing his revolver, fired three times in the air.

The shots reverberated in a series of echoes. It was a signal, and almost ere they had died away came three answering shots from no great distance, and I was told that we were now in the Skreli region, and there was nothing more to fear.

In Podgoritza, in Cettinje, in Skodra, and in Djakova I had heard terrible stories of this fighting race, and of Vatt's fierce hatred of the Turks. Yet everyone had told me that, the chief having invited me, I need have not a moment's apprehension of my personal safety.

So I went forward, reassured, to meet my host.

Half an hour later I came face to face with real brigands—brigands who looked like an illustration out of a boy's story-book—the men who had so often held up travellers and compelled the Turkish Government to pay heavy ransoms.

They were about twenty, certainly the fiercest and most bloodthirsty gang I have ever set my eyes upon. Dressed in the usual skin-tight white woollen trousers with broad black bands running down the legs, a short white jacket, also black-braided, the sleeveless woolly bolero of mourning, hide shoes with uppers consisting of a network of string, and small white skullcaps, each man carried in his belt a great silver-mounted pistol of antique type and a silver-sheathed curved knife, while around both shoulders were well-filled bandoliers, and in the hand of each a rifle. Like Rok, the heads of all were shaved, leaving a long tuft at the back in the mediæval Florentine style.

With one accord they all raised their rifles aloft and shouted me welcome, whereupon one man stepped forward—a big, muscular fellow with handsome face and proud gait—the great chief Vatt Marashi himself.

Attired very much as his followers, his dress was richer, the jacket being ornamented with gold braid. The silver hilt of his pistol was studded with coral and green stones, probably emeralds, but he carried no rifle. Jauntily, and laughing

merrily, he approached me and bent until his forehead touched mine—the Skreli sign of welcome.

And all this in Europe in the twentieth century !

Was I dreaming ? Was it real ? I was the guest of actual brigands, those men about whom I had read in story-books ever since those long-ago days when the weekly *Boys of England* formed my chief literature.

Vatt Marashi, holding my hand the while, addressed me. What he said was interpreted into Italian by Palok as—

“ You are welcome here to my country—very welcome. And you are an Englishman, and have travelled so far to see us ! It is wonderful—wonderful ! You live so far away—farther than Constantinople, they say. Well, I cannot give you much here or make you very comfortable—not so comfortable as you have been down in Skodra. But I will do my best. Come—let us eat.”

I returned his greeting, whereupon the whole crowd of us walked along to a spot where a cauldron was standing upon a wood fire, and out of it my host, myself, and Palok had pieces of boiled chicken and rice, which had specially been prepared for my coming.

The object of this meal, I afterwards learnt, was to cement our friendship. The Albanian code of honour is astounding, even to our Western ideas. A word once given by those savage tribes is never broken, and if the stranger eats the food of the Skreli, even though he may be an enemy, his person is sacred for twenty-four hours afterwards. While the food remains undigested he may not be injured or captured.

And so while I ate with this wild chieftain, his band squatted round, apparently discussing me.

It was probably the first time they had seen an Englishman, Palok explained, and they were at first inclined to regard me as a secret agent of the Government, until later that afternoon their chief assured them to the contrary.

Then that wild horde became, to a man, my devoted servants.

Vatt, the *Baryaktar* (from the Turkish *bairakdar*, or standard-bearer), unlike most Albanians, is fair-haired, above



VATT MARASHI, Chief of the Skreli tribe.

the average height, extremely muscular, with a constant smile of hearty good-fellowship. His eyes are fierce and barbaric; nevertheless he is pleasant of countenance, and I certainly found him, from first to last, a staunch and excellent friend.

Lord of those wild, rugged mountains, his word was obeyed with a precision that amazed me. A striking figure he presented as, with me, he marched at head of his bodyguard, his chest thrown out proudly, his head up, his keen eyes ever searching forward like every Albanian of the hills, one of the wildest rulers of wildest Europe.

On every side, as we went forward to the tiny cluster of little houses that formed the village where I was to be quartered, were bare grey limestone rocks without a single blade of grass, a desolate mountain region into which no foreigner had penetrated save when captured and held to ransom. Through centuries have that same tribe ruled that barren land, and no conqueror of Albania has ever succeeded in ousting them.

"You have, no doubt, heard down in Skodra terrible things about me," he said, laughing, as, later on, we walked together. He had rolled me a cigarette and given it to me unstuck. "I expect you feared to come and see me—eh?"

I admitted that I had heard things of him not altogether satisfactory.

"Ah!" he laughed, "that is because the Turks do not like us. Whenever a Turkish soldier puts his foot a kilometre outside Skodra, we either take away his Mauser and send him back, or else—well, we shoot him first."

"But they say that your men capture travellers."

"And why not?" he asked. "We are Christians. Is it not permissible for us to do everything to annoy those devils of Turks? But," he added, "if they say that I treat my prisoners badly, they lie. Why, they get plenty of food and are well treated. I give them some shooting if they like—and they generally enjoy themselves. But I know. I too have been told that the Turks say I once cut off a man's ears. Bah! all Turks are liars."

"Then it is only to annoy the Turks that your men commit acts of brigandage?"

"Of course. The ransom is useful to us, I admit, but we live by our flocks, and our wants are few. We are not like the people down in Skodra. We are better, I hope."

"And do you always watch the roads on the other side of the mountains yonder?"

"Always. Our men are there now, all along the route between Ipek and Prisrend. Who knows who may not pass along—a rich Pasha perhaps." And his face relaxed into a humorous smile at thought of such a prize.

And then I marched along, my rifle over my shoulder—a brigand for the nonce like my host.

Surely it was one of the quaintest experiences of a varied and adventurous life.

The tiny house in which I was given quarters had an earthen floor and consisted of two rooms, the ceilings and walls of which were blackened by the smoke of years. The owner was an old man with his wife and daughter, the latter being a pretty young woman of about nineteen, dressed in the gorgeous gala costume with golden sequins, the same that I had seen down at Skodra during the *festà*. She had on her best in my honour, I suppose, and her husband, a good-looking young fellow five years her senior, seemed justly proud of her. His name was Lûk. I named him Lucky, but he did not appreciate the wit. He was, I found, one of the chief's bodyguard who had come to greet me at the confines of the Skreli territory, and proved a most sociable fellow, ever ready to render me a service.

"These good people will look after you and make you as comfortable as they can," my host said, when he had introduced me to them. "I have to go along the ravine, but will return in time to eat with you this evening. You like good cigarettes? I will send you some." And he shook my hands, and turning, went out, stalking again at the head of his ferocious-looking band.

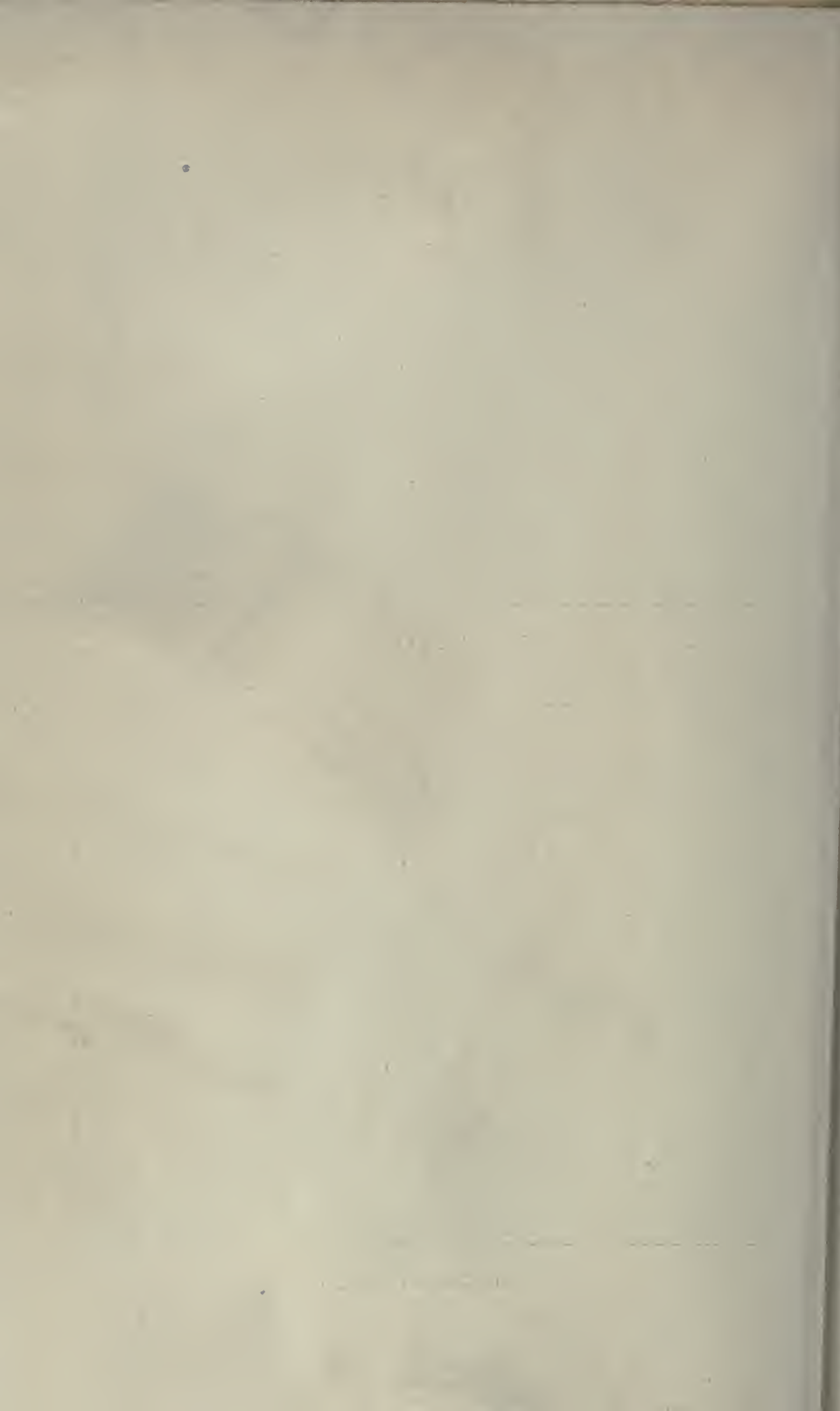
The bedroom, occupied in common by the family, was given over to me. My bed on the floor was a big sack filled



The Skreli at Home.



An Albanian Village.



with dried maize-leaves. It was not inviting, but Palok, having examined it critically, declared it to be "*così così*," and having slept out a couple of nights, I was compelled to accept his verdict.

The girl in the sequins boiled us coffee over the fire, and with her father and husband I sat outside the house in the golden sunset, smoking and chatting. Both were full of curiosity. England was to them a mere legendary land, and they had never heard of London. When I mentioned it they declared that it could not possibly be so large as Skodra.

I told them of Cetinje and other towns in Montenegro I had visited, but they held all Montenegro in contempt, for were they not always raiding over the frontier? Lûk declared that he had walked in Podgoritza openly, and in the market-place shot a man with whom he was in *gyak*, or blood-feud.

"I walked out again, and no one dared to stop me," he added, with pride. "It would have been worse for them if they had."

"But the Montenegrins are no cowards," I ventured to remark.

"Certainly not. They are very brave, but they dare not follow us here. They always get lost in the mountains, and once they lose their way they lose their lives," he added, with a grin. "Our men killed four over yonder mountain a few days ago."

"The blood-feud?"

"Of course. It arose out of that."

From the half-dozen other poor mountain homes came forth men, women, and children, who grouped around us, watching in curiosity. According to Palok, rumour had at first gone round that I was a prisoner, therefore they had refrained from coming forth to see me. Now, however, they knew the truth, they welcomed me as their guest.

Just before it grew dark the *Baryaktar* returned, followed by the bodyguard, without whom he never seemed to move. They did his bidding, executed his orders, and were ever at his beck and call—the picked men of the tribe.

While Vatt squatted on the floor I sat upon my suit-case,

and together we ate a kind of mutton stew, rather rich, but not unpalatable. There was an absence of table cutlery, therefore we ate with the aid of our pocket-knives and fingers. Now and then the old woman would pick a tit-bit out of the pot and hand it to me with her fingers. I was compelled to accept the well-meant hospitality, even though her hands were not particularly clean.

The hot dish was tasty, but I could not manage the sour black bread, for it was mouldy, and gritty into the bargain.

It was a weird picture, the interior of that lowly hut, lit by the dim oil lamp of almost the same type as used by the early Greeks. The uncertain firelight glinted upon the gold of the dresses of the chieftain and of Lûk's pretty wife, and threw, now and then, into relief those strangely unfamiliar faces, the barbarians of an age bygone and forgotten. The very language they were speaking was, as an unwritten one, utterly incomprehensible and unintelligible to any but the born Albanian.

I rubbed my eyes—on account of the smoke—wondering if it were really only a very few weeks ago that I had driven a motor from London down to Windsor, that I had seen *The Catch of the Season*, and trod the red carpet of the Savoy afterwards.

And to-night I was actually having supper with real live brigands of the mountains!

Lûk produced a bottle of *rakhi*, and Vatt Marashi lifted his tin mug to me. I took a little of the potent spirit in the bottom of my own drinking-cup, and tossed it off. It was not half as bad as I expected.

Then the chief took me outside the house, and in the clear moonlight we sat down with Palok upon a big rock to chat.

He rolled me a cigarette of most excellent Turkish tobacco—of his own growing, he told me—lit one himself, and we sipped the coffee brought to us by Lûk's wife.

The scene spread before us was superb—a magnificent panorama of mountains, some tipped with snow, white and

brilliant under the moonbeams. Below us, the valley was a great chasm of unfathomable blackness.

With my strange host I chatted upon many subjects, and found him far more intelligent than I had believed. Keen-witted, quick of perception, just in his judgment, and yet filled with an intense hatred of both Turk and Montenegrin alike, he explained to me many things of great interest.

He told me of the glorious traditions of his sturdy race and of the prince of the Skender Beg family, who, they hoped, would one day come back to rule them.

"We, the chieftains, hold authority from him," he declared. "Oh yes, he will come some day. Of that we are quite certain."

"Englishmen have never dared to come here, have they?" I asked, with some curiosity.

"Only once—a year or two ago. I discovered three of your compatriots poking about in the rocks and chipping little pieces off. I had them captured, and brought to me. At first I thought I would hold them to ransom and make the Turks pay. But they were evidently poor fellows, for their clothes were worn almost to rags, and they had very little money. So I gave them their money back and sent them with an escort down to the plain, forbidding them to enter our country again. I wonder why they came, and why they were chipping the rocks?"

I told him that they were evidently mining prospectors; that Englishmen travelled all over the world to discover minerals; and that a mine in his country would be a source of great wealth. But my explanation did not appeal to him. He could not see why they were chipping off those pieces of rock. It was not flint, otherwise they might have wanted them for gun-locks. No, the trio were distinctly suspicious characters, and he was glad that he had expelled them.

"Have you ever held Englishmen to ransom?" I inquired.

"One. Five years ago. He came here shooting—after bears, I think. He was evidently a great gentleman, for his guns were beautiful. The Turks paid promptly."

"Because he was an Englishman—eh?"

“ Most probably,” he laughed. “ Are they afraid of you English as they are afraid of us ? ”

And soon afterwards he bade me good-night, and left me to throw myself down upon my mattress of leaves and listen to the snoring of Palok and the assembled family in the adjoining room.

I had thought Skodra barbaric, but here I was in an utterly unknown corner of the earth, in an absolutely savage land—a land that knows no law and acknowledges no master ; a land that is the same to-day as it was in the days of Diocletian and of Constantine the Great—Albania the Unchanging.



Among the Skreli: Lûk (first on the right) and his friends.

CHAPTER V

LIFE WITH A BRIGAND BAND

The Skreli a lawless tribe—No man's life safe unless the chief gives his word—Vatt prophesies a rising against the Turks—Our walks and talks—Our meeting with our neighbours the Kastrati, and with Dêd Presci their chief—A woman who avenged her husband's death—The significant story of Kol—Manners and customs of the wild tribes—Farewell to my good friend Dêd—An incident a fortnight later.

THE bright sunny days I remained with the Skreli were full of interest.

On every hand, from Vatt himself down to the humblest of his tribe, I received only the greatest kindness and hospitality. If I went out in Vatt's absence, a dozen armed banditti followed me, mounting guard over me; for, as they told me, one never knew what little "accident" might happen. With the tribes of the Shiala and the Pulati they were not just then on particularly friendly terms, and there had been a series of sharp encounters a week ago. Having given their word to be responsible for my safety, it behoved them to take precautions.

I walked with Vatt Marashi every day, making long excursions through the mountains by the secret paths known only to the tribe.

Would I care for some sport? If I cared to come next year and bring a friend, or even two, he would let me shoot. My friends would always be welcome, and I could assure them of their safety. There was plenty of game, and lots of bears, lynx, and wolves. I should tell my friends in England, and come back for a month or two. I promised that I would,

for in our walks I saw quantities of game. My friend shot several eagles, but I was not successful in bagging one.

As he was stalking at my side one afternoon, his argus eyes everywhere and a cigarette in his mouth, I returned to the subject of the Turks and their "occupation" of Albania.

"Bah!" he exclaimed, with a sneering curl of the lip. "They dare not come here. We, with the Kastrati, the Hoti, the Klementi, the Pulati, and the Shiala, are masters here. We have held the land always, and shall hold it still. We acknowledge no law except our own, and pay no taxes to anybody. The Turks, when they conquered Northern Albania, thought they could crush us. They tried to, but soon discovered their mistake. So ever since that they have left us severely alone, and retired into Skodra. They know full well that when we unite with our brothers, the Miriditi, in the south, then Skodra will be at our mercy."

"And if the Sultan sends his soldiers here?"

"Well, and what then?" he asked, with a flash in his eyes. "Do you think we fear them? Many of them are Albanians, and would not fight us. Again, you have experienced the road here. What would an army do here? We should pick them off as fast as they came up. There are forty thousand of us Skreli alone, remember, without all the other tribes. If a Turkish army came in here, depend upon it, it would never get out again."

"And is there likely to be a rising against the Turks?" I inquired, much interested.

"Why, of course. The revolt will come one day ere long—when we are ready. We can, however, afford to wait at present. Turkey will soon have her hands full with Bulgaria and Macedonia, and then—well, we shall help Bulgaria, and in a week there won't be a Turk in Skodra."

"You mean there will be a massacre?"

For answer he shrugged his shoulders.

"And after the revolution?"

"After we have driven out the Turk we hope to obtain our independence under either France or some other far-off country—England, for instance. Austria and Italy are,

through their priests, conducting a strenuous propaganda all through Northern Albania—so strenuous as to be ridiculous. They foolishly think that we are like children, and that we do not discern their ulterior motives. Oh, it is very amusing, I can tell you! We accept their schools and their money, and put our fingers in our cheeks, for we don't intend to have anything to do with either Power when the rising comes. We will help Servia or Bulgaria, or even Montenegro, to drive the Turk from Albania, but we will not lift a finger for either Italy or Austria. The secret agents of both Powers are always endeavouring to penetrate here among us and carry on their propaganda. But we do not want them, and will not have them. More than one has of late—disappeared.”

“ Shot ? ”

He smiled in the affirmative.

“ It is true,” he said, “ that we kill—and kill often—for the vendetta—for espionage—and in the frontier disputes with Montenegro. Alas! we have here but little of the *bessa* (truce). But you must remember we are not like you English. The people have no government, except myself. I make the law, and they obey. We are Christians. We believe in God and in the Virgin, and soon we will drive the Mohammedan fanatics from our land.”

He spoke with an air of conviction, and, judging from my observations while I was guest of his tribe, I believe that when war between Turkey and Bulgaria comes—as it must come one day before long—these wild people will sweep down upon the Turks and play frightful havoc with them.

Skodra is often alarmed, and the people retire into their houses and bar their doors because the tribes are believed to be coming. One day they will come, and when they do those open drains in the streets will run with blood. The sign of the cross upon the Christian houses is in preparation for the day of vengeance.

My walks with Vatt Marashi, though often very fatiguing, were full of interest. He was never tired of making inquiries regarding England and England's power. Did the Sultan recognise England as an independent state, and did we send

an Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, like Austria and Germany? He knew that England once had a Vice-Consul in Skodra—but he committed suicide, it was said, poor fellow.

Nothing very extraordinary, I remarked inwardly. Doomed to live in such an out-of-the-world place as Skodra would be sufficient to drive any European to take his life. Of brigandage, Vatt Marashi told me that they held up but few travellers nowadays, and only, indeed, when there was necessity. Yet a year or two ago they held the worst reputation of any of the tribes.

One day while we were climbing the rocks—for Vatt and his bodyguard thought that they might get a shot at a bear—there was a sudden alarm. The hawk's eyes of my companions espied strangers, and a sudden halt was called. In a moment we were all under cover of the rocks. Every man unslung his rifle, and Vatt himself, with knit brows, drew his big pistol with silver butt, while I crouched behind a rock with my rifle ready, expecting something to happen.

Nothing, however, did happen, for a few moments later there were shouts from the opposite side of the defile, answered by my companions, who came forth and waved their rifles over their heads as sign of greeting.

Vatt, replacing his pistol in his belt, spoke in a loud, sharp voice, and received an answer. Those mountaineers can throw their voices long distances, and be heard distinctly, a fact I often noticed.

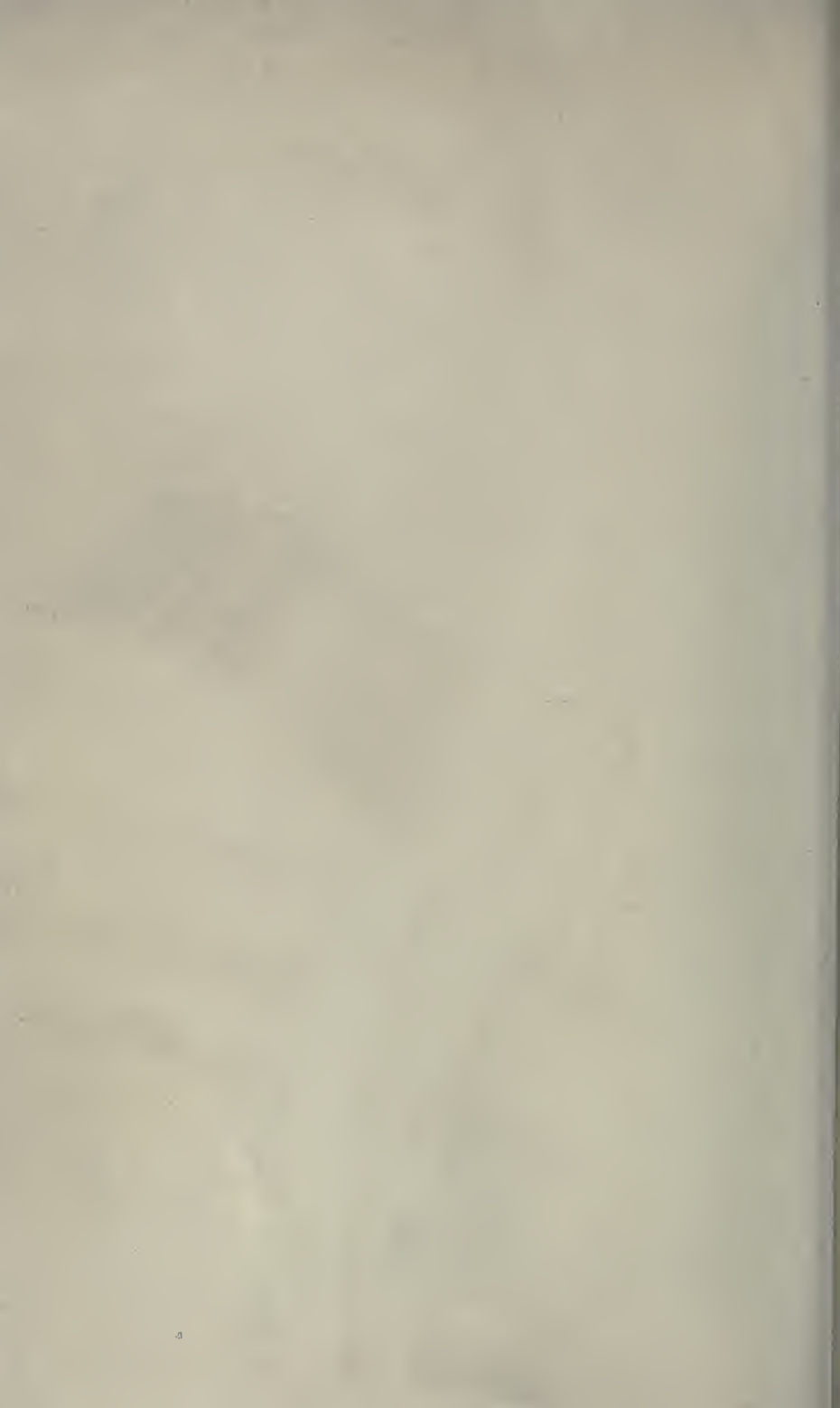
Then Palok told me that the strangers were of the neighbouring tribe, the Kastrati, and that their chief, Dêd Presci, had come to pay Vatt a visit.

For me this was fortunate, for it gave me an opportunity of meeting the other ruler of Northern Albania; for next to the Skreli the Kastrati are most powerful in the Accursed Mountains.

Half an hour later we met our visitors. Dressed very similarly to my companions, they wore white tassel-less fezes instead of the little white skullcap, and the black stripes down their trousers were somewhat different. The two chieftains touched foreheads, and I was afterwards introduced.



MRIKA, the woman who carried on the blood-feud,



Dêd Presci, a round-faced, pleasant man, rather stout and burly, his hair cut in mediæval style, gripped me warmly by the hand, saying—

“I heard that you were in Skodra during the *festà*. Some of my men told me there was an Englishman. But I never expected to meet you. Perhaps you are coming across to see me—eh? If so, you are quite welcome.”

“I may come next year to shoot, with a couple of English friends. May I visit you then?”

“Most certainly. You have only to warn me of your coming through one of our men down in Skodra, and I will give you safe escort,” was his reply. “If you are fond of sport, you will find plenty with us. Only bring a tent, and perhaps some provisions; for our food is not what you foreigners are used to.”

“Then I shall return one day before long,” I promised.

“Do. You need fear nothing, you know. We never betray a friend.”

“Or forgive an enemy,” added Vatt, laughing.

“Especially if he be a Turk,” I remarked; whereat both chiefs laughed in chorus.

That evening I ate with the pair in a small lonely house on the mountainside, and the moon had long risen before Palok and I returned to Lûk's.

My photographic camera was, from the first, regarded with a good deal of suspicion, and it was with very great difficulty I persuaded anybody to have his picture taken. Many surreptitious snap-shots I took with a small “Brownie” camera, for unfortunately I had run out of films for my own larger Kodak. But I was able to secure some photographs, which now appear in this volume.

Early one morning, soon after sunrise, I was walking with Lûk and Palok when a young woman passed us.

“That is Mrika Kol Marashut,” Lûk remarked.

“And who is she?” I asked.

“Mrika—the woman who carried on the blood-feud,” was his answer. “Two years ago she was the most beautiful girl of our tribe, and had a dozen men ready to marry her. She

married Lez, a smart young man from the Pulati side, and one of the *Baryaktar's* bodyguard, like myself. A month after their marriage Lez was treacherously killed by his brother, who lived down by the White Drin, and was violently in love with her. When she received the news she became half demented by grief. But, by slow degrees, she formed her plans for the blood-feud, and having no male relatives, resolved to take it on herself. She therefore left us and was absent nearly a year, during which time she persistently followed her brother-in-law first to Ochrida, in Macedonia, then to Skopia, Prisrend, and many other places, always awaiting her opportunity to strike the blow. This came one afternoon when her husband's assassin was walking in the main street in Skodra, and she took Lez's pistol from her belt and blew his face away. It was valiant of a woman—was it not? But not only that," he went on. "Having killed the murderer, she went straight to his parents' house, three days' journey, and shot them both dead. Since then she has been back with us, for poor Lez's death has been avenged. I was sorry he died," he added regretfully, "for he was one of my dearest friends."

Murder is hardly a crime in Albania, for life is cheap—very cheap. An enemy or a stranger is shot like a dog, and left at the roadside.

Palok told me of an incident which truly illustrates the utter disregard the Albanian has for other people's lives. He was once with a man of the Hoti—on the Montenegrin frontier—who had just obtained a new rifle, probably from a murdered Turkish soldier. While he was inspecting it a man passed close by, a stranger, whereupon the man with the new gun raised it to his shoulder, took aim, and fired. The stranger fell dead. Palok remonstrated, but his companion merely said that he was testing his gun's accuracy. Was it not better, he asked, to test it that way, instead of waiting till face to face with an enemy?

The assassin is never punished, except by those who take up the blood-feud. If the murder takes place in a town the guilty one escapes to the mountains, or gets away into Macedonia, or into Servia, where he earns his living by sawing

firewood. Every few years the Sultan issues an irade "for the pacification of the blood," as it is put, and the murderer then returns. He pays a small tax to the Turkish Government, after which he cannot be arrested; and if he pays about three hundred crowns to the relatives of his victim, the blood-feud is at an end.

This, of course, does not apply to the mountain tribes. They care not a jot for the Sultan or for his irades. There is no law—save that of the blood-feud, the vendetta falling upon the murderer and upon his next male relative. Many were the curious facts regarding the blood-feud and the Albanian laws of hospitality told to me.

A case in point was that of a young man named Kol, a friend of Lûk's, a tall, wiry youth, of somewhat sinister expression—a typical bandit out of a book-illustration.

I was talking to Lûk about the hospitality extended by the various tribes to each other when Kol passed, and he beckoned him, saying—

"He has just had a curious experience in the Klementi country. Let him relate it to you."

So at Palok's invitation the young fellow accepted one of my cigarettes, placed his rifle against the wall, and flung himself down upon a small boulder near us.

He blew a cloud of smoke from his lips, stroked his knees with his hands, and looked at me with considerable curiosity, wondering why I should want to know his story.

"The stranger is interested in your adventures with the Klementi. Tell him all about them."

"Bah!" he said, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "It was nothing—mere chance—luck, if you like to call it so. There is nothing to tell."

"But what there is interests the Englishman. He is the *Baryaktar's* guest, remember," Lûk remarked.

"Well," said the young man reluctantly, "I was in blood-feud with a man of the Klementi, and went over there to kill him. I laid in wait one evening, and as he drove home his sheep I shot him from behind a rock. He had killed my father, therefore I had a just right to avenge his blood. My

shot, however, aroused the whole valley, and I knew that I, the only stranger, would be suspected and killed. Therefore I sped away down the valley in the darkness till I reached a poor little house. An old woman was there, and I craved food and shelter for the night. She gave me food at once—for, like ourselves, the Klementi never send a stranger empty away. I was hungry, for I had crossed into the Klementi region in secret, and dared not seek food lest my presence became known to the man I intended to kill.

“Scarcely had I eaten the meat the old woman had given me when there came the sound of voices outside, and to my horror I saw four men carrying the body of my victim.

“‘See!’ they cried to the woman who was befriending me. ‘One of the Skreli has killed your son!’

“Then I knew that it was the murdered man’s mother who had given me shelter. A moment later the men, among whom was the elder brother of the victim, discovered me.

“‘See!’ they cried. ‘There is your son’s murderer. We will kill him!’

“I stood with my back to the wall, knowing well that my last moment had come. The dead man’s brother raised his rifle while I drew my pistol, prepared at least to fire once more before I died. I was caught like a rat in a trap!

“The old woman, however, seeing my position and my helplessness, cried—

“‘No. Though he has killed your brother, you may not touch him. He is beneath our roof; he has eaten our bread, and our protection must remain over him till to-morrow’s sunset. Remember, my son. It is our law.’

“The man dropped his rifle, and his friends drew back at the old woman’s reproof.

“‘Go!’ she said to me, after glancing at her son’s body. ‘You have eaten our bread, and therefore you cannot be harmed.’

“‘Yes, go,’ added my victim’s brother. ‘Till to-morrow’s sundown I will not follow. But after that, I shall track you down, and, before Heaven, I will kill you.’

“Need I say that I took up my rifle, and leaving the house travelled quickly all night and all next day, until I returned here? But,” added Kol, with a slight sigh, “we shall meet one day—and he will most certainly kill me.”

Is there any other country in the world where such a code of honour exists? I am inclined to think not.

Had I been in the midst of a highly civilised people—a foreigner wandering in the wilds of Yorkshire, for example—I certainly should never have received the many charming kindnesses that I did at the hands of those rough, uncivilised tribes. Climbing like cats up the mountainsides as they did, I was often compelled to lag behind, being unused to such walking. But, laughing merrily, those armed banditti would take me by the arms and help me up the steeper places; they would roll cigarettes for me, carry my rifle when I grew fagged, and fetch and carry for me like children.

My neat Smith-Wesson hammerless revolver was constantly admired, as being a much more handy and serviceable weapon than their own big pistols—Austrian-made revolvers fitted to antique silver butts that had once done service to flintlocks. My Browning repeating revolver, with its magazine holding eight cartridges, was declared a marvel of ingenuity, and on many occasions Vatt and his men amused themselves by firing with it at targets.

Once he remarked, with a grim smile, that it would be a handy weapon against the Turks. Where could he get one? Was it costly?

And when I promised to send him one through our mutual friend in the bazaar down in Skodra, as souvenir of my visit, his joy knew no bounds.

A month later I fulfilled my promise, sending it across from Sofia, and have since received an acknowledgment of its safe receipt.

I wonder whether he has yet used it against the hated Turk? Whether or not, he no doubt struts about with it in his belt, a greater chief than all the others, because he possesses the very latest and deadliest of weapons.

When one evening I told my host that I had still a long

way to go—through Bosnia, Herzegovina, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Macedonia—and that I must bid him farewell, his face fell. He seemed to genuinely regret.

“But you will return soon,” he urged. “You will redeem your promise, and bring your friends to shoot. Bring that friend you told me about who shoots tigers in India. I want to see what sort of shot he is. And the friend who shoots partridges and pheasants.”

I promised that I would go back to him before long.

“Remember, there will be no danger—none. Tell your friends that Vatt invites them, and that they are free to go anywhere—anywhere,” he said, waving his hand over the wild panorama of mountain and valley that is his indisputable domain.

Next day I rose, packed my small belongings, and with a little present to Lûk and to his pretty wife prepared to leave, when, judge my amazement to find Vatt and his body-guard outside, and to hear that the chief had decided to accompany me right down to Skodra !

This indeed he did, and when we arrived in the town held by the Turks he strutted down the main street with me, apparently proud of his guest, and in open defiance of the scowling ragged soldiers in dirty red fezes.

Though a deadly enemy of the Turks, he openly defied them. As we walked along the streets there came close behind us twenty of his faithful followers, armed to the teeth and carrying their rifles ready loaded in case of trouble.

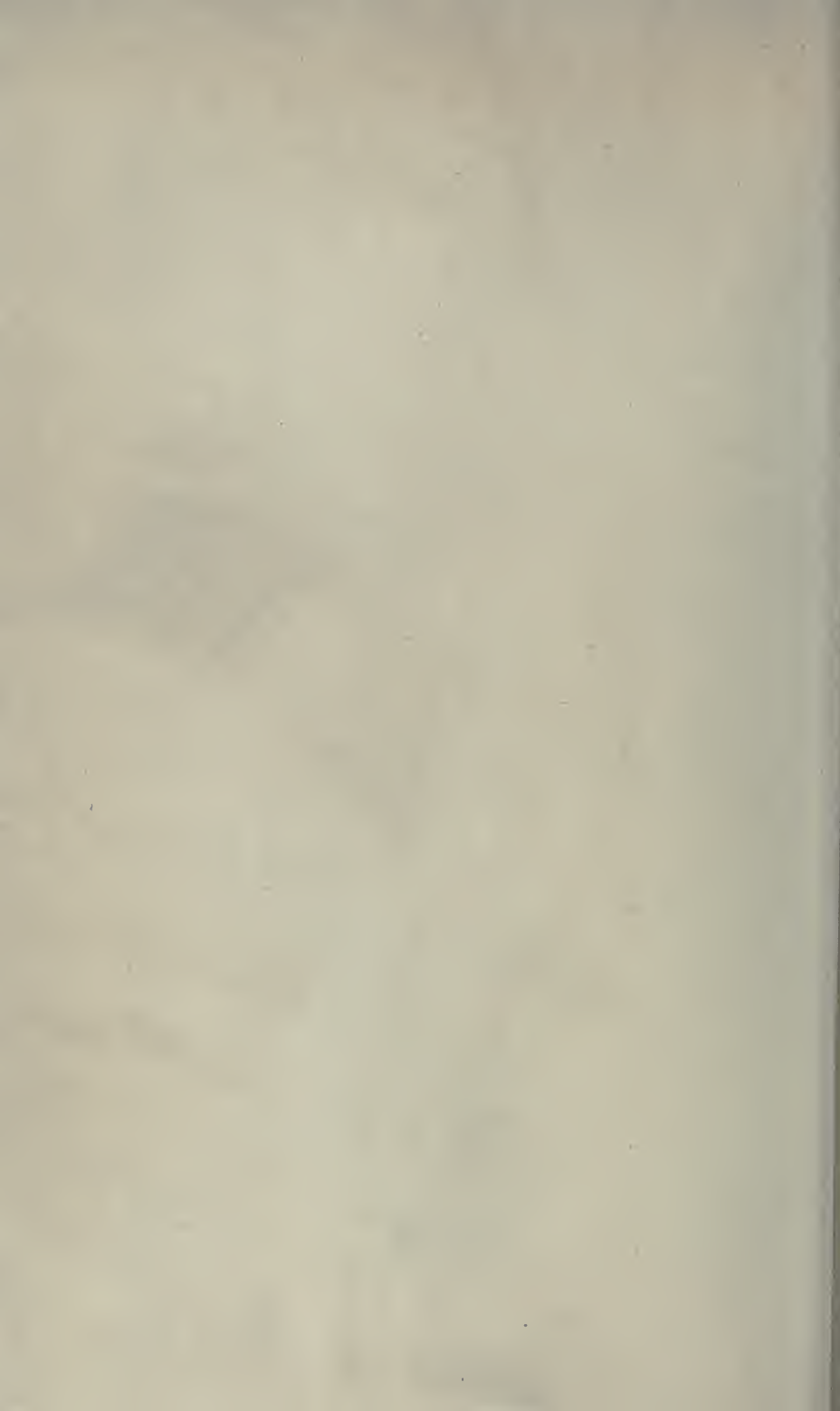
But there was no trouble. The Turks of Skodra are wise enough to let the Skreli severely alone.

Trouble will, however, come one day before long, and then alas for the subjects of the Sultan. The Albanians will avenge the blood of the Christians now spilt daily in Macedonia, and the Turk will be driven back southward—or at least what is left of him.

I parted from Vatt at the door of my so-called *albergo*. He took a glass of *rakhi* with me, and afterwards, with a hearty hand-grip, he told me not to forget my promise to return. Then he left me, stalking at the head of his armed band, who



My Body-guard in Northern Albania.



one and all wished me *bon voyage*, and he went down the street on his return to his mountain home.

But the irony of Fate followed. A fortnight later I found myself riding with a strong military escort on the other side of the mountains, where I had been so hospitably entertained—along the frontier of the Skreli country.

It was growing dusk, and we were passing through a deep ravine, our horses stumbling at every step, when of a sudden the crack of a rifle startled us.

Next instant a dozen rifles flashed fire in the deep shadows to our left. The Skreli outposts were sniping at us !

In a moment we had all dismounted and sought cover, and for fully ten minutes returned their fire vigorously, while the officer of the escort kept up a volley of imprecations on the heads of my late hosts, who were, of course, in ignorance that they were firing upon "the Englishman." We were too far off each other to do much harm, therefore we simply blazed away. I was crouched behind a rock with the muzzle of my rifle poked through a convenient crack, and fired towards the spot where the flashes showed.

A good deal of powder and bad language were expended, until at last our friends on the other side of the valley, apparently thinking we were too far away, ceased firing, and we of course did the same.

It was a mutual truce. For ten minutes longer we waited in order to see what would happen. Then, leading our horses, we crept carefully along on our way northward, out of the range of our friends' guns.

Those moments were exciting, however, while they lasted, yet they were not without their grim humour.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CHAPTER I

SOME REVELATIONS

Through Dalmatia to Herzegovina—Over the Balkan watershed—Bosnia and Sarajevo—A half-Turkish, half-Servian town—Austrian persecution of the Christians—Some astounding facts—A land of spies and scandals—The police as murderers—A disgrace to European civilisation.

IN the darkest hour before daylight I bade farewell to my friend Mr. Charles des Graz, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Cetinje, and mounting into the pair-horse carriage, left the Montenegrin capital to descend that most wonderfully engineered road over the face of the bare mountains to Cattaro, on my way to Herzegovina and Bosnia.

Though still dark, Cetinje was already stirring, and as I drove through the long main street, armed men who were my friends saluted me, and shouted "*S'bogom!*" My driver and myself were armed too, in case of "accident," yet the Montenegrin roads are quite safe nowadays, thanks to the pacific and beneficent rule of His Royal Highness Prince Nicholas.

Our eight-hour journey through the mountains was full of interest. Over those bare, tumbled limestone rocks, devoid of herbage and wild to the extremity of desolation, came the first rosy flush of dawn, and as we watched, the sun gradually dispelled the greys into yellows and golds in all the glory of the bursting of an autumn day. First, over the great plateau on which Cetinje is situated; then up the bare face of the mountain in a series of zigzags with acute angles; up, higher and higher, where the wind cut one's face like a knife; and higher still, where we got out to walk, and so lighten the horses and warm ourselves. I gave my driver a pull at my flask, for

the temperature was below zero, and we were both cramped and cold. Even through my leather-lined motor-coat the wind cut like a knife, chilling me to the bone.

At the summit a glorious view, one more wonderful, perhaps, than any in the whole of the Balkans. On the one side in the far blue distance the Accursed Mountains of Albania, where dwelt my friend Vatt Marashi and his fearless men, and on the other, away down in the rolling mists, lay what looked like a series of lakes, but which in reality was the wandering arm of the Adriatic, the magnificent fjord called the Mouths of Cattaro—the Bocche di Cattaro.

Here we struck the single telegraph-wire which places remote Cettinje in connection with the rest of the civilised world, and then the pace of our rough mountain horses showed that we were descending. Far below were a number of scattered houses, the little town of Nyegush, the chief edifice of which is the unpretentious palace of the Prince, and for a full hour and a half we wound down and down ere we reached its main street and pulled up at the inn for half an hour to get some coffee and to rest the horses.

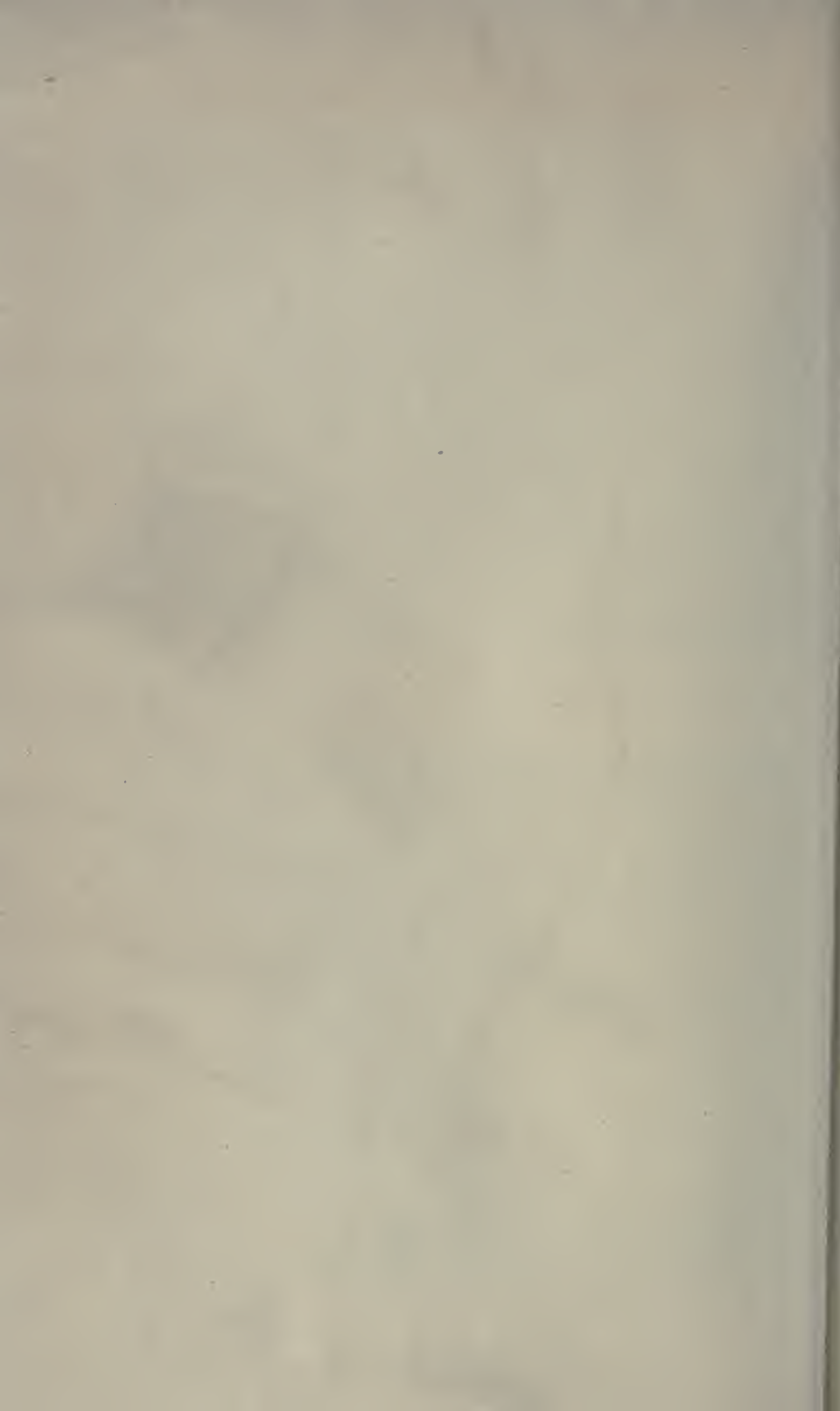
Cramped and half-frozen as I was, the big steaming bowl of coffee was indeed welcome. Then, after scribbling some postcards to friends in England, I went for a brisk walk, took a photograph or two, and returned, just as the horses were being reharnessed.

Down again, ever down, past a great dark cavern, and on until we came to the row of stone slabs set in the road that marks the frontier between gallant little Montenegro and her enemy Austria. And then, what a view! Surely the most superb in all Europe!

Our old familiar tourist-Switzerland, the toy-Tyrol, the Norwegian fjords, the trumpery-Appennines, and the high Balkans are full of magnificent scenery, but for a picturesque combination of blue sea and sheer bare mountain nothing that I have ever seen—and I have knocked about Europe, I believe, as much as most men—equals that view from the Montenegrin road.

All is beautiful—all save that frowning fortress which the





Austrians have lately constructed to command the road, and which it is strictly forbidden to photograph under pain of imprisonment as a spy. I, however, risked it, and took another picture, which turned out rather well.

In Cattaro, being the bearer of despatches for His Britannic Majesty's Foreign Office in London, and being therefore armed with a *laissez-passer*, my baggage was not examined, and at one o'clock I again boarded the same steamer which had brought me from Trieste, the *Graf Wurmbrand*, bound for Gravosa—which is the port for Ragusa, in Dalmatia.

Ragusa I found a quaint, mediæval place, reminding me strongly of one of those old towns on the Italian Riviera—I mean those unfashionable ones, at which the train stops and nobody gets out—ones that you only visit if you are motoring from Monte Carlo along to Genoa. It is a town of ponderous walls, of narrow streets, and queer dark byways. Across its dry moat and through its ancient gateway carriages do not pass, and as soon as you are in the main street you are out of it again, and passing through a water-gate are upon a small quay.

Difficult it is to realise that this quiet, old-world town, where everyone speaks Italian, was once the great port of the Balkan hinterland in the days when Venice was Queen of the Seas. And yet to the antiquary it is pleasant to stroll in and out of the old sixteenth-century churches, the Rector's Palace, and the rest, to examine the mediæval Onofrio fountain, and to spend a day, as I did, among the architectural relics of an age bygone and long forgotten.

While there it rained for the first time after the long dry season. And if you have ever been in Italy—or anywhere, indeed—in the extreme south of Europe on the first day of the rainy season, you will know what I mean when I say it was not a mere shower. Water came down in sheets, and for a whole day and a whole night it never ceased, while the lightning flashed and the thunder crashed and echoed in the chain of mountains behind the town.

Palms and oranges grow in profusion in Ragusa, while across on the beautiful island of Lacroma—which legend

connects with Richard Cœur de Lion—is vegetation more luxuriant than even upon the French Riviera. Prince Mirko of Montenegro, Colonel Constantinovitch, his father-in-law, and a number of wealthy people, mostly Austrians, have fine winter villas outside the town, and life there in spring is said to be quite charming.

Many yachts call there during the season, and there is opera at frequent intervals. Zara, Spalato, and Lussinpiccolo are all favourite winter resorts of the Austrians and Hungarians, but none is so smart or so select as Ragusa, which, by the way, has its hotel, the Imperial, where the charges equal, if not quite eclipse, those of the best hotels at Nice or Monte Carlo, while the cooking is inferior.

For the owner of a pretty villa overlooking the sea who desires to spend a quiet, healthful winter, Ragusa may be pleasant, but I confess it struck me as a particularly dull little town—a place so full of faded glory as to be painful.

The journey from Gravosa across Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, and Hungary to Servia I found tedious, though mostly through fine wild mountain scenery. I performed it partly by road and partly by rail, making Mostar and Sarayevo—the Bosnian capital—my halting-places.

The rail, a narrow-gauge one with a single train a day, starts from Gravosa at five o'clock in the morning and first ascends the Ombla valley from the sea. Gradually it rises in a series of zigzags over the grey bare rocks and through many tunnels for sixty miles to Gabela, a little mountain town, and then through the dry beds of a series of great lakes, and across barren plateaux until it descends into the valley of the Narenta, which narrows into a series of dark, romantic defiles, while the mountains grow higher and more wild, until Mostar, the capital of Herzegovina, is reached.

Mostar is a rather dull little town on the Narenta, still half-Turkish, with its mosques and bazaar where one can obtain inlaid silver work from Livino. But there was certainly nothing to attract, so I pushed on next day to Sarayevo. Between the two capitals the scenery is superb, indeed some of the grandest in the whole of the Balkans. Through the

Great Defile, or Gorge of the Narenta, the train slowly wends its sinuous course beneath the high precipices of Velez, and then through the Prenj Mountains, across the Glogosnica valley to the small garrison town of Jablanica, a lonely little place in a very wild district.

Twenty miles farther on we came to Konjica, a picturesque little place with a fine old Turkish bridge spanning the Narenta, where the train halts, affording us time to explore the place and take a photograph or two. Then the ascent is so steep that the puffing little locomotive is fitted with cog-wheels to take us through the Trescanica valley up over the ridge of the wild Ivan Planina, the high watershed between the Black Sea and the Adriatic.

Progress is slow and halts are frequent. In places there have been landslips, and we creep along the edges of dangerous precipices. But the scenery fully compensates for the many tedious hours and for lack of food—for in our ignorance I had omitted to lay in stores, and the only thing I could obtain during the day was half a dozen apples! The Bosnian frontier crossed, the train traverses the saddle of Vilovac, then descends rapidly through beautiful wooded valleys and along the Bosna and Zeljeznica rivers, until, in the darkness, Sarajevo with its many electric lamps is reached—a railway journey even more interesting than the well-known Gothard route.

My fellow-passengers from Mostar were two. One was a Turkish gentleman who removed his slippers and sat cross-legged on the seat fingering his beads until the sundown, when he produced some sandwiches from the tail of his frock-coat, and slowly consumed them after his long fast since four o'clock that morning. The other was a particularly communicative Austrian gentleman, whom I recognised at once to be a spy.

Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, is very Eastern, and, being so, is full of attraction for the stranger. There is a very fair old-fashioned hotel, the Europa, in the centre of the town, nearly two miles from the station. It is a city of mosques, the minarets of which were all gaily illuminated on the night of my arrival, producing a picturesque effect against the night-sky.

The place is prettily situated—a town of some forty thousand inhabitants, half Serb, half Eastern. Lying in the narrow valley, whence the river Milyacka bursts forth from a gorge just above the town, the dwellers by the riverside are mostly Austrian immigrants, while the natives have their houses and their mosques on the hillside. Every house has its own little garden, as in Servia, and of course the bazaar is the centre of trade, as in every town where the beslippered Turk still remains.

This *charshiya*, or bazaar, is a great labyrinth of dark, narrow, ill-paved alleys flanked with booths, where every trade, each with its particular quarter, is carried on in open view to the passers-by. The copper ware, silver filigree, and carpets are attractive, but most of the so-called Oriental goods are “fakes.” The place, though there is a variety of costume everywhere, is not half so attractive as Skodra, because of the Austrian bogey that pervades everything.

To buy specimens of Bosnian chiselled metal work it is best to go to the Government School of Industrial Art, where the finest pieces of workmanship may be seen in course of execution, and where the price asked is a fixed one, below that demanded either in the bazaar or in shops. The services for Turkish coffee in chiselled copper-gilt are of chaste and very elegant design, perfect marvels of patience in chiselling, and very appreciable to the Western taste in decorative art.

The chief feature of the bazaar is the Husref Beg Mosque, the finest in the town, to which, though an Infidel, I was granted admission. I of course put on overshoes, and made an interesting tour round with a priest who only spoke Turkish, so that I did not learn very much from him. Built about 1540, it is a fine spacious structure, with dome and high minarets, and in front, in the quiet old courtyard, is a fine old fountain for ablutions shaded by a very ancient lime tree. Before it, sit several Turkish pedlars in turbans selling rosaries, printed texts from the Koran, imitation otto-of-rose manufactured from geranium, European collar-studs, and other trifles.

Another industry peculiar to Bosnia is the inlay of gold and silver into bog-oak, or gun-metal, and many quaint little

objects—boxes, bracelets, brooches, and belt-buckles—quite unique in England, may be purchased. The old silver filigree buttons displayed everywhere may also be used with advantage by ladies for hat-pins.

A stroll through the town shows at once the mixed character of the people, for all the names of streets are written up in three languages—Turkish, Croatian, and Serb. The noisy thoroughfares are crowded with Europeans, mixed up with baggy-legged men and veiled women, men in fezes in all stages of disintegration, while the Bosnian ladies wear the queerest head-gear I have ever set eyes upon. The hair is parted in the middle and brushed down straight, while upon it is stuck a tiny pork-pie cap of gaudy-coloured chintz or silk, edged with a thousand gilt sequins sewn closely together, the most ugly and most unbecoming head-dress imaginable. Yet it is evidently the *mode*, and is worn by European ladies in all other respects attired as one would find them in Vienna or in Budapest.

But this is Bosnia, and assuredly strange things happen here under the unjust rule of Austria.

Strangers seldom come to Sarajevo. In the heart of that mountainous region between the Save and the Adriatic, only approached from the south by that rack-and-pinion railway, or from the north by the one train a day from that un-get-at-able station in Slavonia, Bosnche-Brod, it is entirely shut away from European influence—or European eyes, for the matter of that—and quite off the track taken by strangers in the Balkans.

Indeed, I would never advise the intending traveller to take that route from Ragusa to Belgrade. Better by far take the steamer right up the Adriatic to Fiume, and thence by rail, as it is quicker, and much less fatiguing. I did not go to Bosnia, however, so much to see its capital as to obtain some idea of the present system of government there, and to hear from the lips of the people themselves the advantages, or disadvantages, of the rule of His Majesty the Emperor Francis Josef.

With many well-known men in Sarajevo I talked. I heard both sides. But I am bound to admit that some of the facts

proved to me were utterly amazing, showing how ill and unjustly governed is both Bosnia and Herzegovina. I had read André Barre's recent book, *La Bosnie-Herzegovina*, and had doubted the very serious and direct charges which he brings against the Austrian Administration.

Therefore I went to see for myself, to make inquiry, and to thoroughly investigate.

The opinion I formed, after analysing the many facts placed before me, is that the present oppressed state of Bosnia is surely a vivid object-lesson to Servia, where day by day Austria is endeavouring, by the most ingenious and unscrupulous forms of intrigue, to obtain a footing. This latter I will explain more fully in my chapters on the future of Servia. Suffice it here to say that poor struggling Bosnia is to-day helpless beneath the talons of the Austrian eagle, and that the administration is a shameful travesty of civilised rule.

The Serb population are more essentially the sufferers, and have been so ever since the Austrian occupation allowed by the Treaty of Berlin. Through the four centuries of the Turkish rule, the Christians were from time to time oppressed, and in return revolted, more particularly in 1850 and 1875; but the position of the Serbs to-day is very little better, if any, than it was before the Russo-Turkish War.

Indeed, it seems that the whole policy of Austria in Bosnia has been directed against the Servian Orthodox people. The Servian Mohammedans are not feared because of their ignorance, while their fatalism renders them docile. On the contrary, however, the local Government of Bosnia fears those professing the Orthodox faith, and, having established the Jesuits solidly in the country, have proceeded upon a course of systematic persecution. Austrian methods are too apparent all over the Balkans. Unscrupulous to a degree, her policy in Bosnia has been one of terror, of espionage, of famine, and of assassination. In truth it is accomplishing the moral and material ruin of a splendid country, the crushing of the noble Servian race which has, alas! fallen beneath its hand.

At first I was inclined to doubt. The Serb is a patriot, sometimes given to exaggeration. But very quickly, as the

result of my inquiries, evidences of Austria's evil rule were apparent on every hand. To go into a mass of detail is not within the province of this record of inquiry, neither do I wish to scream hysterical condemnations. I went to the Balkans, not for sight-seeing, but seeking to penetrate some of the mysteries of their politics, and their aims for the future. I travelled there in order to have audiences with the Kings, Princes, and Cabinet Ministers of the various countries in the Peninsula. These were granted me, and thus I obtained, at first hand, their views regarding the present situation, and their hopes and aspirations.

In Bosnia, both on the Mohammedan and Christian side, I found only a grave and grim story of misrule and oppression, which it may be well to briefly outline, in order to show how Austria rules the unfortunate country that falls beneath her dominion.

Under Austria, the Servian Orthodox Church is treated in a manner utterly inconceivable in this enlightened century. Neither trouble nor intrigue has been spared to separate the people from the Church. The metropolitans nominated by the Emperor have been alienated from the people, with the result that at Mostar the head of the Church is the object of unanimous derision. No one will attend his church if he is present, and on passing him in the streets they turn their heads or hiss. Again, in Sarajevo the metropolitan is regarded with equal disfavour. The old people refuse to receive the communion at his hands, and each day upon the walls of his house are posted insulting placards. To those who know the veneration with which the Serbs regard their metropolitans, such signs as these show the general demoralisation brought about by intrigue and the circulation of base calumnies. Not only are the people encouraged to treat the heads of the Church with contempt, but they are taught to hate the priests and to scoff at religion. And this by an Empire which has the miserable effrontery to call itself Christian !

Again, Saint Sava is, as is well known, the patron saint of the Servian Church. He is considered the protector of churches and schools, and all new churches in Bosnia and

Herzegovina adopt for their *slava*, or festival, the day consecrated to Saint Sava, January 14 (O.S.). This day the Orthodox Serbs everywhere regard as a feast. In the morning there is a solemn service, and in the evening the young people assemble to sing national songs and dance national dances. But even this has been disapproved of by Austria, who regards the feast as preserving the national conscience. The Government commenced by prohibiting the second portion of the fête, and then gradually suppressing the first. Pressed by the authorities, the priests each 14th of January are suddenly taken so ill that they cannot perform the service, or else they are unavoidably absent from home on that day, so that no *slava* can take place. In this oppressed country every programme of a fête, no matter what, must first pass the censor, who prohibits the singing of the old Servian songs, and places a penalty upon anyone singing the "Hymn of Saint Sava," which is purely a religious one. Again, in many cases the reply of the censor will arrive eight or ten days after the date of the festival. Indeed, in many places, the *slava* of private families—the domestic name-day feast which, to the Servian, surpasses in interest either Christmas or Easter—has actually been prohibited by the very enlightened local authorities! This happened in the arrondissement of Rielinski quite recently.

Of the history of the struggle of the Orthodox Church in Bosnia, or of the strenuous Catholic propaganda, it is unnecessary to speak. Let us deal with the present deplorable state of affairs, and with the future. Woe-betide any heard singing the patriotic song of the Prince of Montenegro, "Onamo . . . Onamo," for he will be punished severely. Spies are on every hand, and no man knows at any moment when he may be thrown into prison upon some fictitious charge. Austria, indeed, is endeavouring to civilise and subject Bosnia by continued oppression, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the Press. Like in Russia, every word is subjected to the censor before printed. One buys the *Musavat*—the organ of the Serb Mohammedans in Herzegovina, printed at Mostar—and finds every paragraph bearing a number. There are many

numbers with the spaces blank—suppressed altogether. Again, in the *Servian Word*, the organ of the Servian Orthodox in Bosnia, one finds the same thing—numbers and blanks.

This is not, perhaps, surprising when practically every organ of the Press is prohibited save the Government publications, of which the *Bosniak*—an amusing journal fabricated by amateur journalistic functionaries of the State—is a good example.

Among the hundred and four journals prohibited are most of the Servian newspapers, even commercial, religious, and literary reviews; a number of Hungarian journals, including the *Dubrovnik* of Ragusa; every Russian journal of whatever kind or description; and last, but surely not least, the *Comments upon the Evangelists* by the Metropolitan Firmilien!

Every book or newspaper entering Bosnia or Herzegovina goes through the censor's office, while the postal employés note, and hand to the police, the names and addresses of the receivers of prohibited publications. So it is not only in Russia and Turkey where one cannot read a foreign journal, but here, under the enlightened rule of His Majesty the Emperor Francis Josef.

Bosnia is, truth to tell, an unknown land as far as the rest of Europe is concerned, and probably these facts may come as a complete surprise to English readers, who are apt to regard Austria as a Christian and progressive Power, instead of what she is, the Ogre of the Balkans.

To the injustices inflicted upon the peasantry, to their many grievances and their violated rights, I have not space here to refer. Under such rule as pertains, the wretched condition of the Serbs in the rural districts may well be imagined. As André Barre has truly said, "Austria entered Bosnia and Herzegovina, not for the purposes of reform, nor to civilise, but to satisfy a political desire, a military ambition to triumph over a people by slowly and methodically exterminating them."

"J'ai mis le pied sur la tête du serpent," said Count Andrassy, speaking to Lord Salisbury after the signature of the Treaty of Berlin. And those words give to-day the key to

the Austrian policy. She seeks to crush the Serbs, not only in Bosnia, but in the kingdom of Servia itself, and to Germanise the whole land by steel and by hunger. And such is the present pitiable situation—a situation unrealised in England—a situation which has actually called forth the hostile criticism of the Vienna journals themselves—including the semi-official *Neue Freie Presse*—against the present barbarism of the occupation.

Any industry or commerce exploited by Serbs is at once crushed and ruined, while in the police we have vivid examples of corrupt maladministration only equalled in Russia. The police persecutions are scandalous. Many were related to me by persons who had themselves been victims. The Bosnian citizen beneath the claws of the police is utterly without defence. If the paternal Government of Austria attempt to deny this, let the recent cases of M. Gligorie Jeftanovitch of Sarayevo, M. Chola of Mostar, M. Stiepo Srchkitch, M. Ilia Duckovitch, M. Risto Maximovitch, M. Radoulovitch, M. Nikolas Pichkakutch of Banja-Louka, and the sad affair of Pierre Dorliatcha of Bosnia-Novi, amid a thousand others, be cited, to show what travesties of justice are performed in this remote corner of the Balkans. A whole volume, indeed, could be written upon the corrupt Austrian police methods which vie with those of Holy Russia. But it must suffice here to cite cases upon which no denial can be offered by the authorities.

The Austrian authorities, who are so glib with their semi-official denials and statements, which we see almost daily in the London newspapers, will have some difficulty in disproving the disgraceful incident at Sokolatz, near Sarayevo, not long ago. Here, during the Easter fête, the gendarmes were formed round the church “to maintain order.” A peasant saw one of the gendarmes endeavouring to outrage a young woman, and ran to inform the authorities. Whereupon the gendarme shot the peasant dead with his revolver. There was no inquiry regarding the murder, though witnessed by at least a hundred persons. And the official account of the affair—which I have myself seen—actually declares that the unfortunate peasant died *a natural death* !

This is but one single case of hundreds. All over the country the police and gendarmes shoot the witnesses of their crimes, and there is never an inquiry. Of a verity the barbarities of the police in Bosnia are a disgrace to a nation that calls itself civilised, and cry for reform quite as loudly as they do in the Land of the Tzar.

Let the reader who doubts this outspoken condemnation of Austrian administration go to Bosnia and see for himself. He will find that I have understated the facts, and things will be told him that surely will stagger belief.

CHAPTER II

DUST IN THE EYES OF EUROPE

How spies work in Bosnia—Secret agents dog the stranger's footsteps—My own experience—Fighting the spy with his own weapons—To "noble" the foreigner—How an unfavourable book was purchased by the Austrian Government—Bribery of Press correspondents—A country worse than Russia—Some suggested reforms—The secret policy of Austria in the Balkans.

SPIES are a necessity to autocratic Governments. Their business is to prevent the execution of plots, to discover all secrets affecting the security of the Prince or the State, and to supply information which may be used with advantage in diplomacy by their employers.

In Bosnia one of the largest items in the national expenditure is the sum expended upon espionage. Here, however, its character is very different from that described above. Its agents have no work in connection with political plots, for the crushed and humiliated people are far too feeble to conspire against the State. Their nefarious work is simply to spread intimidation and suspicion among the inhabitants, and to put them in defiance one against the other—indeed, to promote disorder, so that the force of Austria may be consolidated upon them.

This secret stirring up of internal strife by Austria is part of her policy, not only in Bosnia but in Servia and other parts of the Balkans. In the kingdom of Servia she is especially active to-day. Indeed, her unscrupulous methods are well illustrated by what occurred on the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga. Instantly after the assassination Austria mobilised her troops in all the garrisons on the

Servian frontier, at Semlin, Pancsova, and Neusatz, with orders to enter Servian territory on the first sign of trouble. At the same time there was sent into Belgrade a perfect army of *agents provocateurs*—police spies, all of them—who promenaded the town crying to the crowd, “Come on! Come on! Let us wreck and demolish the Embassy of Austria, the supporters of the dynasty of Obrenovitch!”

The Servian people, fortunately, hesitated, though they all had good cause to make a demonstration against their bitterest enemies. Then the Minister of the Interior intervened, and put military guards at all the Legations. The agitators were arrested, and at their trial were proved beyond doubt to be actual agents of Austria, sent there to create disorder and so allow the Austrian troops to enter Servia!

And as such, with a strong protest to Vienna, they were ignominiously expelled.

In Sarajevo one half of the population is paid to spy upon the other half. Ask any man in Bosnia or in Herzegovina his opinion of his neighbour, and he will tell you to beware of him, as “he is a spy, and will denounce you to the authorities.” Ask the accused about his accuser, and he will tell you exactly the same thing. The whole place simply swarms with secret agents. In the country, peasants are given cows in payment for information about their neighbours, which is, of course, very often false. Stories are manufactured for the sake of reward. Expense is nothing. Agents follow you everywhere—in the town, in the country, and even beyond the frontier.

Oh yes! Bosnia, with all her natural beauties of scenery, is a truly delightful place under the present régime. The Government have their spies in private houses in the guise of domestics—for, by preference, they employ women and priests. Every pavement in the towns carries a spy, therefore silence here is certainly golden. The spy system is more complete and elaborate than either in Russia or in France, and a good deal more costly—all energies being devoted against the unfortunate Serbs.

In such an oppressed and persecuted country it goes without saying that the stranger is well looked after. From the

moment I crossed the frontier of Herzegovina, to the moment I left Slavonia at Zimony, I was never lost sight of. Perhaps because I was known to be the bearer of Government despatches, I was suspected of being a British agent in disguise. My passport was never asked for until I desired to leave Austrian territory and cross the Save to Belgrade, yet with the marvellous secret system I was, while in Bosnia, a marked man. Each time I strolled in the streets of Mostar or of Sarayevo, a spy dogged my footsteps—sometimes a man, sometimes a woman—and my every movement was carefully noted.

A gentleman, apparently staying in the hotel and speaking excellent French, volunteered to be my guide about Sarayevo. He was a pleasant, nonchalant fellow, and represented himself to be a commercial traveller. I accepted his kind offices, well knowing him to be a spy, and was rather amused at the idea of the authorities providing me gratuitously with such an excellent cicerone. Wherever I went, so also did he. By all kinds of clever ruses he endeavoured to discover the reason of my visit; and I, in order to aggravate him, managed to elude his questions and so increase his suspicions. In my travels in various out-of-the-world corners of the Continent I have had a wide experience of spies and their ways, therefore I set myself to puzzle my inquisitive friend by adopting the self-same methods as he himself was adopting.

This continued for a couple of days, when he gave me up and disappeared. After that I was watched by two agents, who kept me always under close surveillance. I was more amused than annoyed, yet I confess I entertained constant anxiety regarding the confidential despatches that were in my possession, to be handed over to the King's Messenger on his way from Constantinople to London at the earliest moment.

The traveller can only reach Sarayevo from three points: from the north from Bosnche-Brod or Banja-Louka, and from the south by Metkovitch. The local authorities of these three places know each traveller who passes, and to the stranger's compartment there enters a pleasant person of engaging manner, who becomes his fellow-traveller, while away the tedious hours, explains the objects of interest among the

route, and at the same time discovers a good deal about the new-comer. The secret agent will discourse upon the peace of the country, the prosperity of the people, the impartiality of the administration, and the rapid strides of progress being made on every hand. Meanwhile, news of the stranger has been telegraphed to Sarajevo, and when the polite traveller has parted from the stranger, the latter at once falls under a strict surveillance, of which he never dreams.

Should you let drop the remark that you have come to Bosnia to study the conditions of the country, then the attention paid to you will be prodigious. Kind friends, overflowing with information, will be your guides everywhere: they will conduct you to visit the authorities; they will pay for your cabs, give you luncheons at restaurants, and accompany you of an evening even to the door of your bedroom, until you will think the country a veritable El Dorado. Strangers who come to study are, of course, dangerous to the Administration, and therefore are carefully watched, and treated with unsurpassing generosity. Spies surround him, and the people, knowing those spies by sight, fear to approach him. In some cases a peasant or a citizen has approached a stranger and told him some plain truths—the truths I have learnt and written in these pages—and for doing so has invariably been sent to prison. These lessons have borne fruit, for nowadays nothing in the world will induce the Bosnian peasant to talk to a stranger. He is far too afraid.

If any serious criticism of Bosnian administration is published abroad, the authorities always seek to immediately purchase and suppress it, and many are the sums yearly paid in blackmail to unscrupulous writers who, knowing the truth, threaten to make exposure. I will give a case in point. Not very long ago there was in Prague published a brochure severely criticising the Bosnian policy, giving a description of the maladministration, and pointing out the disastrous state of the finances. A copy of this fell into the hands of M. Stakievitch, late director of the administration of the Bosnian local Government, and at that moment *en congé*. He at once apprised the local Government, who immediately

sent Dr. Berx to Prague, with orders to suppress the publication of the book at all costs. The Government, after some brief negotiations, paid the sum of 100,000 florins (200,000 fcs.) for the destruction of the book and the silence of its author upon the state of Bosnian finance !

Then on the return of Dr. Berx no fewer than forty functionaries were arrested on charges of having given information to the author. Is not this sufficiently significant ? Every newspaper in Bosnia and Herzegovina is well subsidised, and in return is compelled to chant the praises of the administration of the local Government, while all correspondents of foreign journals are equally the recipient of money from the State. In Bosnia the foreign newspaper correspondent lives well and grows fat.

Thus does Austria throw dust in the eyes of Europe.

With religion persecuted, education at a standstill, and the Press either gagged or suborned, Austria is slowly carrying out her policy of crushing the Serbs. In Bosnia you have no right to pray, no right to think ; you must blindly obey and laud with flattery the very talons outstretched to rend you. It is a land where justice is a farce, where lies are told as truths, where the police persecute and murder, where the poor are oppressed, where the official grows wealthy, and where no man is secure from the false denunciation of spies eager for reward.

Should it be permitted in this twentieth century to one European people to crush another European people under the false pretext of civilisation ? The Bosnians are neither negroes nor red-skins, but a civilised religious race, part of the great Serb nation, with the same right to live, the same right to religion, liberty, and to justice as the canting hypocrites of Vienna themselves. Why should they be exterminated ?

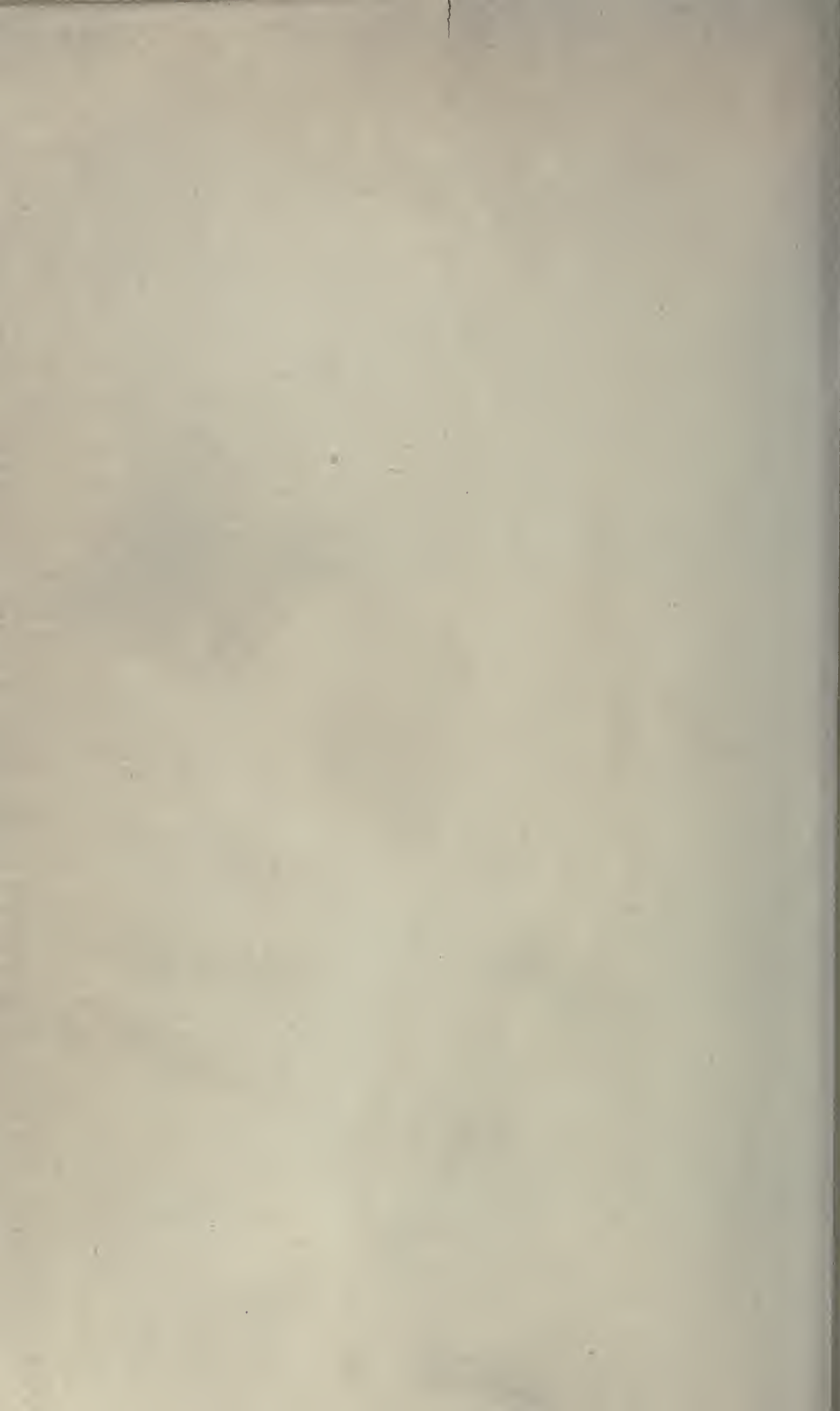
So careful is the local Government of Bosnia not to allow the truth to leak out that up to the present little has been heard in Europe of the plain, unvarnished facts I have here put forward. But it is a subject that will come before the public ere long, and then we shall see if the Powers will still



Sarajevo : Bosnia.



In Herzegovina.



stand by and allow the destruction of a people who do not merit the hatred of their master.

Bosnia and Herzegovina are both rich countries ; the soil is productive, the inhabitants are intelligent and apt in agriculture, industry, and commerce. The provinces are capable of moral and material expansion, if such were permitted, and there is no reason why the whole country should not be peaceable and prosperous.

Save André Barre, scarcely a writer has up to to-day had the courage to frankly criticise the rule of His Imperial and Royal Majesty the Emperor of Austria. So carefully are the facts concealed by the local authorities—who adopt the self-same tactics of Russia before the uprising—that strangers going to Bosnia see or hear practically nothing, and what they do see is all rose-tinted. What I have written here is, however, based upon my own observations, and upon what was told and proved to me by responsible persons in Mostar and Sarajevo, men who, living under the persecution of police and Government, risked their liberty in speaking with me. I have therefore put the facts plainly, in order that the English reading public may form their own conclusions.

The reforms urgently needed are many.

From the religious point of view, what is required is effective liberty of conscience, liberty of the cult, and the autonomy of the Serb Orthodox Church. From the moral point of view, the religions and customs of the different nationalities in Bosnia should be respected, liberty of education should be given as well as liberty of speech and liberty of the Press.

Regarded from an economic point of view, an immediate solution of the agrarian question is required ; a readjustment of the unjust taxes ; the establishment of schools of agriculture, as in Servia and Bulgaria ; liberty of commerce and industry ; and the establishment of poor-relief and poor-houses.

Many reforms are also required in the Administration. The citizens of the two countries should be eligible for employment in public offices ; the public functionaries should be replaced by a more educated class ; the police force should be

purged and diminished ; the costly spy system should be entirely abolished ; a less corrupt justice should be introduced, and economy effected in the present wasted finances.

Yet how can one hope for reforms from a nation like Austria, who is working daily and unscrupulously to crush and exterminate the unfortunate Serbs under their rule, with one aim and one policy, namely, to extend their territory south through Novi-Bazar and Macedonia in order to obtain the port of Salonica ?

Under the Treaty of Berlin the Powers have a right to interfere. If they would check Austria's advances southward they should step in at once and claim, in the name of civilisation and humanity, justice for poor persecuted Bosnia. If half a dozen African negroes are maltreated by a Belgian rubber-hunter we throw up our hands in pious horror, lift our eyes heavenward, the papers are flooded with "atrocities," often manufactured, and questions are asked in the House. Yet when we have here a whole country being vigorously and secretly crushed under our very noses, by a Power who intends to be one of our rivals in the East, we turn our heads in the opposite direction. Austria, we say, is a Christian country, and can do no wrong !

Go to the Balkans, and you will see what I have seen. You will then realise the clever, subtle influence of Austrian agents in Montenegro—where they persuade the pride of the country to emigrate, themselves paying the expenses, and thus sap the nation of its future population ; in Northern Albania, where the priests in Austrian pay never cease to descant upon the benefits of Austrian rule ; in Servia, where they are ever stirring strife ; in Bulgaria, where their spies are ever active ; and in Macedonia, where they secretly encourage the Greek bands to massacre the Bulgars.

Thus over the whole of the Balkans Austria has spread forth her wings, and her dark, threatening shadow is now across everything. The Austrian policy, shown so very plainly to all who travel in the Balkans, is to compete with Germany and become the paramount Power in the Peninsula, and obtain Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia for herself,

together with the much-coveted port of Salonica. From this latter point she already has a railway—constructed by the late Baron Hirsch—through Usküb, and joining the main Vienna-Constantinople line at Nisch, in Servia. Therefore part of the policy is to lay hold of the kingdom of Servia—though under the present régime there, and with a Government so firmly established as it is, there is, I think, very little to fear in this latter. Fortunately, Servia knows how to take care of herself.

Such is the programme of Austria—one of extermination and extension. And with these facts in view, indisputable to every traveller, surely it is in the interests of the Powers to remain no longer indifferent to the state of affairs in Bosnia.

Is it possible that the prophetic words of the Russian delegate Gortchakoff, speaking at the Berlin Congress, will ever come true, as so many of his prophecies have done ?

He said, " The tomb of Austria is in the Balkans."

SERVIA

CHAPTER I

THE TRUTH ABOUT SERVIA

The diplomatic circle in Belgrade—Studying both sides of the Servian question—Austrian intrigue—113 known foreign spies in Belgrade!—An illustration of the work of secret agents—Quaint Servian customs—Pauperism unknown—Servia to-day and to-morrow.

THE stranger's first impression of Belgrade is that it is a rather dull Russian town.

Coming from Bosnia and Albania, one misses the quaint costumes and the life and movement in the streets, the fierce men with rifles, and the veiled shuffling women. The Turk, though he has a mosque here, is unseen.

At Semlin—or Zimony, as the Hungarians call it—the last town on the Austrian side of the Save, one's passport is carefully examined and registered, not by the Servians, to allow you into the country, but by the Austrians, to allow you to pass out !

As bearer of despatches for His Britannic Majesty's Government, I had no difficulty either with passport or luggage ; otherwise, with the Customs War raging, I might have suffered considerable delay. Crossing the river, I ere long found myself in comfortable quarters in the Grand Hotel in Belgrade—comfortable indeed after the rough life and hard fare in Northern Albania.

My letters of introduction having been presented to the Servian Cabinet Ministers and members of both political parties, and having called upon Mr. Beethom Whitehead, the newly appointed British Minister, I quickly found myself in the centre of a very smart and merry diplomatic circle.

To His Excellency M. Nicholas Pachitch,—the Premier and strongest man in Servia; to Madame Pachitch; to His Excellency Dr. Milenko Vesnitch, Minister of Justice; to Madame Vesnitch, an American and one of the most charming and beautiful ladies in Belgrade; to M. Stoyanovitch, Minister of Commerce; to Commandant Yossiphovitch, aide-de-camp to His Majesty; to Colonel Tcholak-Antich, the Royal Marechal; to the Minister of Finance; to M. Drago Yankovitch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; to Mr. Alexander Yovitchitch, late Servian Minister in London; to Colonel Christich, his wife, an Irish lady, and Miss Annie Christich; to Mr. C. L. Blakeney of the British Legation; and also to Mr. Beethom Whitehead, the British Minister, and Mrs. Whitehead, I owe a deep debt of gratitude for their kindness to me socially, and their invaluable assistance during my inquiries.

There are but few English in Belgrade—not more than two or three residents. But at the hotel I was fortunate in finding my friend Mr. A. M. Tucker, Servian Consul-General in London, who with his wife was in Belgrade in connection with a financial undertaking. Mr. Tucker is an official who has rendered many services to the Servian Government.

Moving in the official set, I was soon able to see for myself the social life in Belgrade, which I found very bright and very entertaining. In the mornings the streets are filled with well-dressed ladies and gallant officers, in perhaps the smartest uniforms in Europe. The hour of the siesta is from one till three, then at five the cafés overflow till seven. Someone is always giving a dinner or reception, and bridge is played everywhere; for in no other city in Europe has it “caught on” more than it has in Belgrade.

The British Legation is, of course, the smartest house among those of the diplomatists, and that of Madame Vesnitch among the Cabinet Ministers. French and Italian are the languages spoken in society.

The city of Belgrade is in a transition state. Already in many of the principal streets fine new buildings have been completed, and many are now in the course of construction.



24 Oct. 1908
Belgrad -

Nic. P. Pachitch

Prime Minister of Servia.

The roads, it must be said, are execrably paved, so uneven that driving is a torture. But the reason they have not been repaved during the present régime is because a new drainage system is about to be carried out, and when this is done they will be asphalted and converted into boulevards. The natural situation of "Beograd"—or the White Fortress—is magnificent, high up on a hill at the junction of the Save and the Danube. Behind rises the extinct volcano of Avala, where, according to one tradition, a great treasure is hidden, and to another that the mountain is rich in gold and silver deposits.

The centre of life in Belgrade is the gay café of the Grand Hotel. From five to seven in the afternoon everyone is there, card-playing, smoking, sipping *slivovitza* (plum gin) or drinking *bock*, and listening to the excellent band, while the inner hall is filled with smart ladies and their cavaliers. Save the peasantry one sees about the street, the oxen drawing primitive carts, and now and then a man wearing a fez, there is little that is Eastern in Belgrade, save the slightly dark complexion and cast of features of the Servians. For the most part the women are very handsome, but they seem, like most Eastern races, to lose their beauty at an early age.

Though I made it my duty to hear and study both sides of political questions in Belgrade, and though I spent many hours with those in fierce opposition to the present régime, I must say that I received on every hand the greatest kindness, while everybody seemed ever ready to render me a service.

The Servians are a highly intelligent and thoughtful race. The young officers in the streets are not of the ogling, giggling genus one knows so well in Germany, France, and Italy, but though smarter in appearance than either nation, they are serious, polite, and gentlemanly to a degree. The King, when speaking to me of military matters, pointed out a curious fact, namely, that so intelligent was the average Servian recruit that in six months he usually learnt what in France took him eighteen months.

In feminine circles it struck me that there was a great extravagance in dress. I saw the very latest Paris hats and smart, well-cut gowns, which bore evidence of the expensive

couturière worn by the wives of struggling officials, and I learnt that about ten pounds was no uncommon price for a hat. All classes seem to vie with each other to dress well, and in the brilliant salons at night one sees some of the smartest gowns in Europe.

As regards cooking, I fear I cannot say very much that is favourable. That at the Grand is decidedly poor, save perhaps the dishes of delicious sterlet; and of the various restaurants I tried, the only one which reached excellence was that kept by an Italian, one Perolo, who was for many years chef to King Milan. There one can dine well—if one knows what to order. The younger diplomatists dine there in a room together, entrance to which is forbidden, save to a few chosen ones.

The diplomatic circle do a good deal of entertaining. The British Minister and his wife give large dinner-parties every Tuesday, which are very delightful functions; while each Thursday afternoon Mrs. Whitehead—who is a very charming hostess—is at home. The Foreign Office have certainly been happy in their choice of Mr. Whitehead to fulfil the very difficult and onerous task of renewing diplomatic relations, for he is a skilled diplomatist, and has been for many years in St. Petersburg, Brussels, Tokio, Constantinople, and Berlin, where he was, until recently, Councillor of Embassy. He also speaks Russian.

The Legation is one of the most tasteful houses in Belgrade, and is filled with highly interesting collections from Japan. The German Minister, Prince Max Ratibor, with his wife and stepdaughter, the young Princess Taxis, also give a good many smart entertainments.

The capital is, of course, a hotbed of political intrigue, and all foreigners arriving are suspected of being secret agents. They are watched, their correspondence often opened, and their business in Belgrade thoroughly investigated and reported upon. At first the stranger resents this kind of thing. On my arrival I found myself constantly watched, but as soon as it was known who and what I was, the surveillance ceased.

I mentioned the matter to one of the high police officials,

whereupon he explained that in Belgrade alone he held a list of no fewer than 113 known secret agents of Austria! "We therefore keep secret agents for our own protection. Can you blame us?" he asked.

In the diplomatic circle one hears everywhere a cry of "shame" upon the false news which, being supposed to emanate from reliable sources in Belgrade, is really manufactured across the Save at Zimony by irresponsible journalists in the pay of Austria. The Servian officials actually gave me the names of some of these gentlemen.

In the English newspapers one reads constantly telegrams from Vienna, generally to that very irresponsible and sensational journal the *Zeit*, declaring that there are all sorts of plots in Servia against King Peter. A short time ago this journal actually had the audacity to say that the Crown Prince was insane! Such telegrams should be read with entire disbelief, for they emanate from certain Hungarian journalists who were expelled from Belgrade on account of the false news despatched from there, and now live across the river at Zimony, whence they continually launch their tirades against Servia and the Servians.

What I read from time to time in the English papers regarding Servia is so utterly opposed to the truth—and in our most responsible journals, too—that it often utterly amazes me.

There is a scheme on foot started by an English company to build a large new hotel in Belgrade—which is badly wanted. The Grand is full to overflowing all the year round, and strangers are nightly turned away. It is, I believe, intended to build the hotel on English lines, with a few private sitting-rooms where the traveller can be quiet and rest in peace away from the turmoil and clatter inseparable from a huge garish café.

The streets are usually broad, straight, and if not actually handsome thoroughfares, are well adapted for improvement and the erection of larger buildings. Most of the suburban houses are of a ground floor only, which strike the Englishman as curious; for as the windows are on a level with the street, there is an utter lack of privacy in family life. Servians of

both sexes, I noticed, are great cigarette-smokers, and Servian cigarettes I found were the best in the Balkans.

The pleasantest promenade is the Kalemegdan, the pretty gardens situated behind the old fortress which commands the junction of the Danube and the Save, while on the bank rises the Neboyscha (the fearless) tower, of which many terrible tales are told of the days of the Turks. In the Kalemegdan, adorned with bronze busts of Servian poets and savants, smart Belgrade promenades every afternoon and admires the beautiful view from the Fikir-Bair ("the slope of dreaming"), the smart uniforms of the officers lending the necessary touch of colour to complete a charming scene.

The religion is, of course, Greek Orthodox, with the independent Servian Church, while the population of Servia is about three millions. Some of the characteristic traits of the Servians are curious and interesting. Every Servian family has, each year, its saint's day, and in every Servian drawing-room one finds a small wood panel with the image of that saint painted thereon. The day usually falls upon that of some great fête such as that of St. Nicholas, the Archangel Michael, etc., which are perhaps the two most fêted. The day in question is called the *Slava* (fête of the patron saint of the family). The saint fêted by the head of the family is also fêted by his wife, children, and servants.

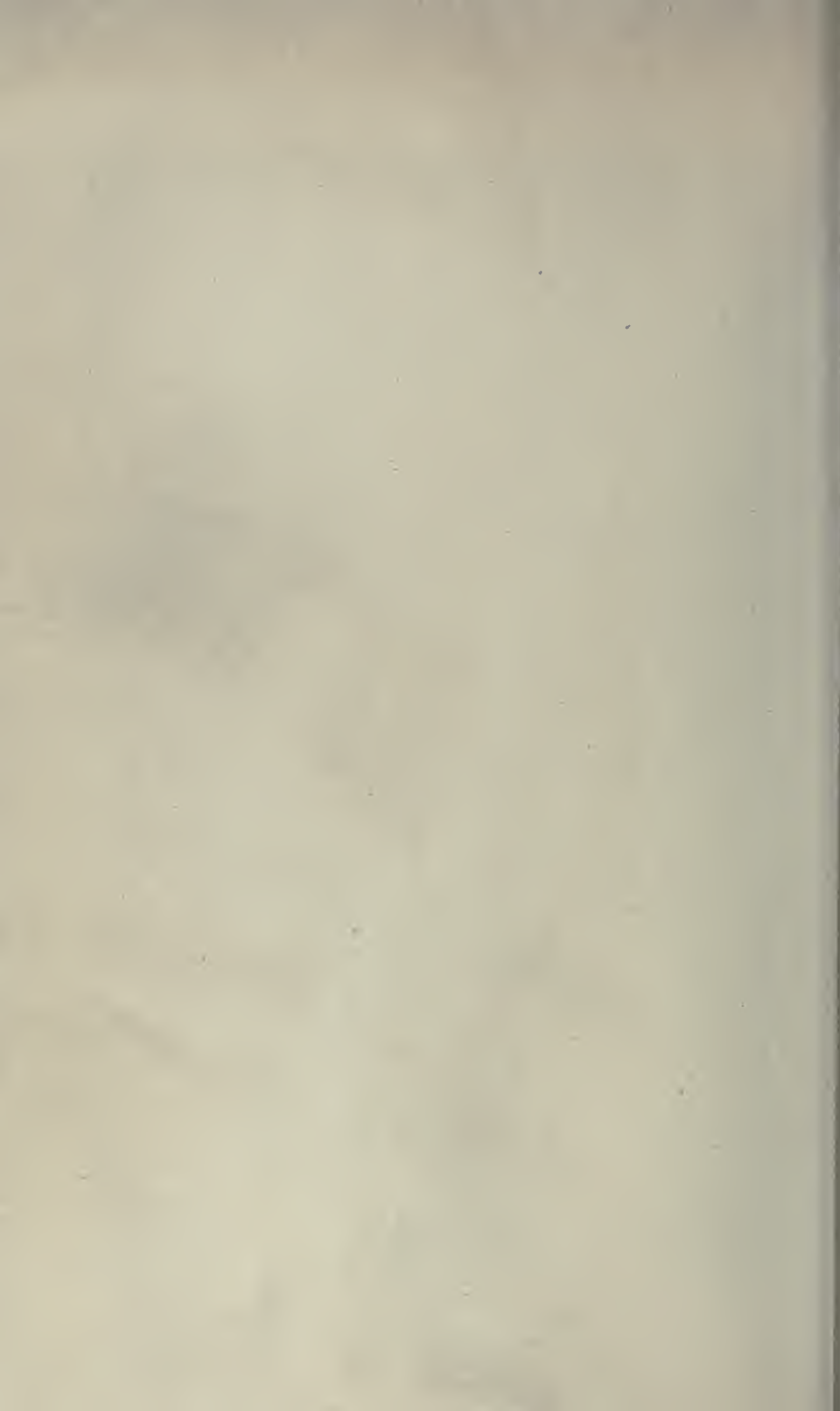
Some days before the fête the priest visits the house for the benediction of water placed in a basin, after which he sprinkles with a bunch of basil all members of the family, as well as various rooms, and the image of the fêted saint.

All the household regard the week prior to the fête as a fast. The eve of the day of the *Slava* the lamp is lit before the image of the saint, and is burnt for two days. A couple of days before the anniversary a tasty dish is prepared, called the *Koljivo*, mainly composed of wheat, nuts, and almonds. Those families, however, who fête the Archangel Michael do not prepare this cake, for the people believe that the Archangel still lives, and cakes are only offerings to the dead.

On the morning of the fête the head of the family lights a taper, and the priest, after a ceremony, cuts a kind of bread



HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MILENKO VESNITCH
Servian Minister of Justice.



specially prepared and bearing a cross; after which he sprinkles wine upon it and upon the *Koljivo*.

Everybody, from early morning, salutes the head of the family with the words, "Sretna slava" (a happy fête), and grasps his hand. If the visitor is a man, he embraces the husband; if a woman, the wife. The daughter of the house offers the *Koljivo* to the guests, and everyone takes a spoonful of *slatko*—a kind of fruit preserve—brandy and coffee. At noon, wine is also drunk. To the houses of the better class telegrams and letters arrive all day. In the country districts the day is given up to eating, drinking, singing, and toasts.

The fêted saint is considered to be the protector of the family, to whom daily prayers are said and mediation asked with the Almighty.

Next to the *Slava*, the fête most widely celebrated is Christmas. There is a Servian couplet that runs—

*"As there's no day without light,
So there's no rejoicing without the Servian Christmas."*

After a long fast, the Servian people await Christmas impatiently. It is a day of feasting in the whole country. Two days before Christmas Day—old style, of course—roasts are prepared, consisting of a lamb and a sucking-pig. On the morning of Christmas Eve one of the boys of the family goes into the forest and cuts the Christmas log or *Badgnak*—a usage which was recognised in the old days in France. Choosing a young tree, he recites a prayer and cuts it down, while another lad is careful that the first branch cut does not fall to the ground. He clutches hold of it, and it is placed in the milk, so that good cream shall be produced, or upon the beehive, that the bees may bring good honey. The bringing home of the Christmas log is attended by many quaint ceremonies.

That evening, while the family is at supper—which mostly consists of fruits—the head of the house takes three nuts in his right hand, and throwing them towards the east exclaims, "In the name of the Father"; then three others, which he

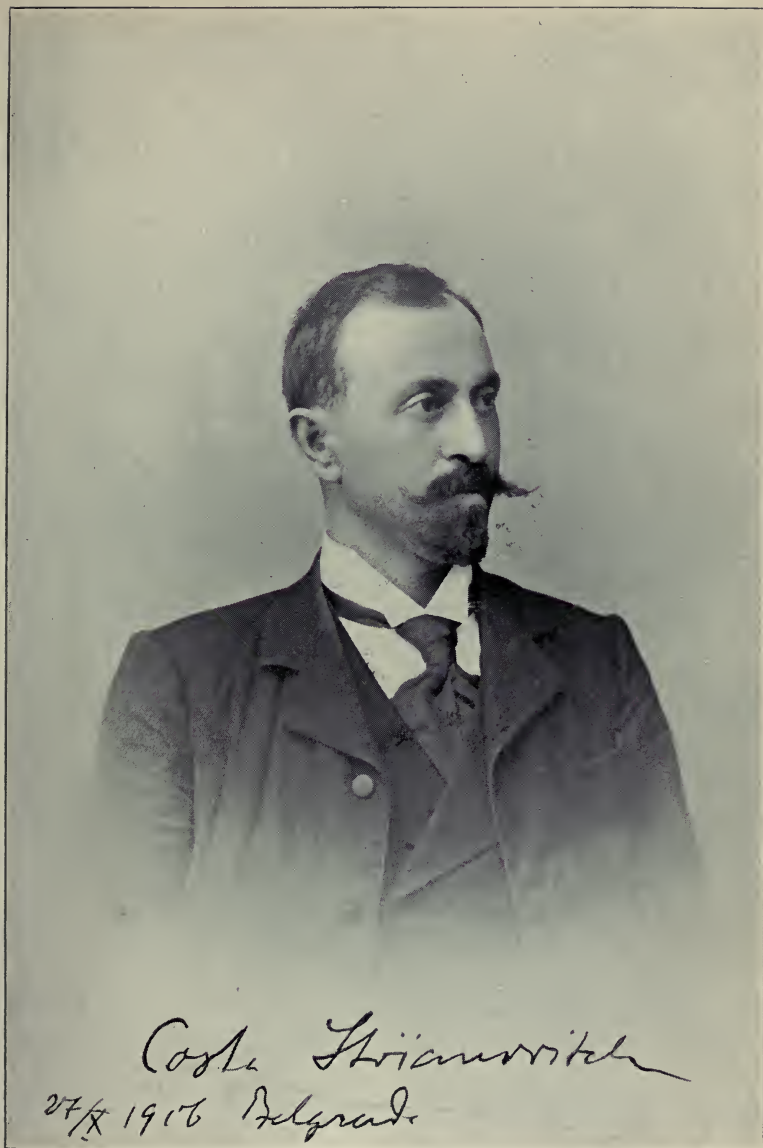
throws to the west saying, "and of the Son"; and then three others he throws to the north, adding, "and of the Holy Ghost." Then with three others he makes the sign of the cross, and throwing them to the south, exclaims "Amen."

With the dawn of Christmas Day visits commence, the first person generally to arrive being a young man neighbour, known as the *polaznik*. He embraces the master of the house, makes the sign of the cross upon the Yule-log, and wishes good luck to the household. In the Christmas cake is placed a piece of money, and the person to whom it falls will have good fortune all the year.

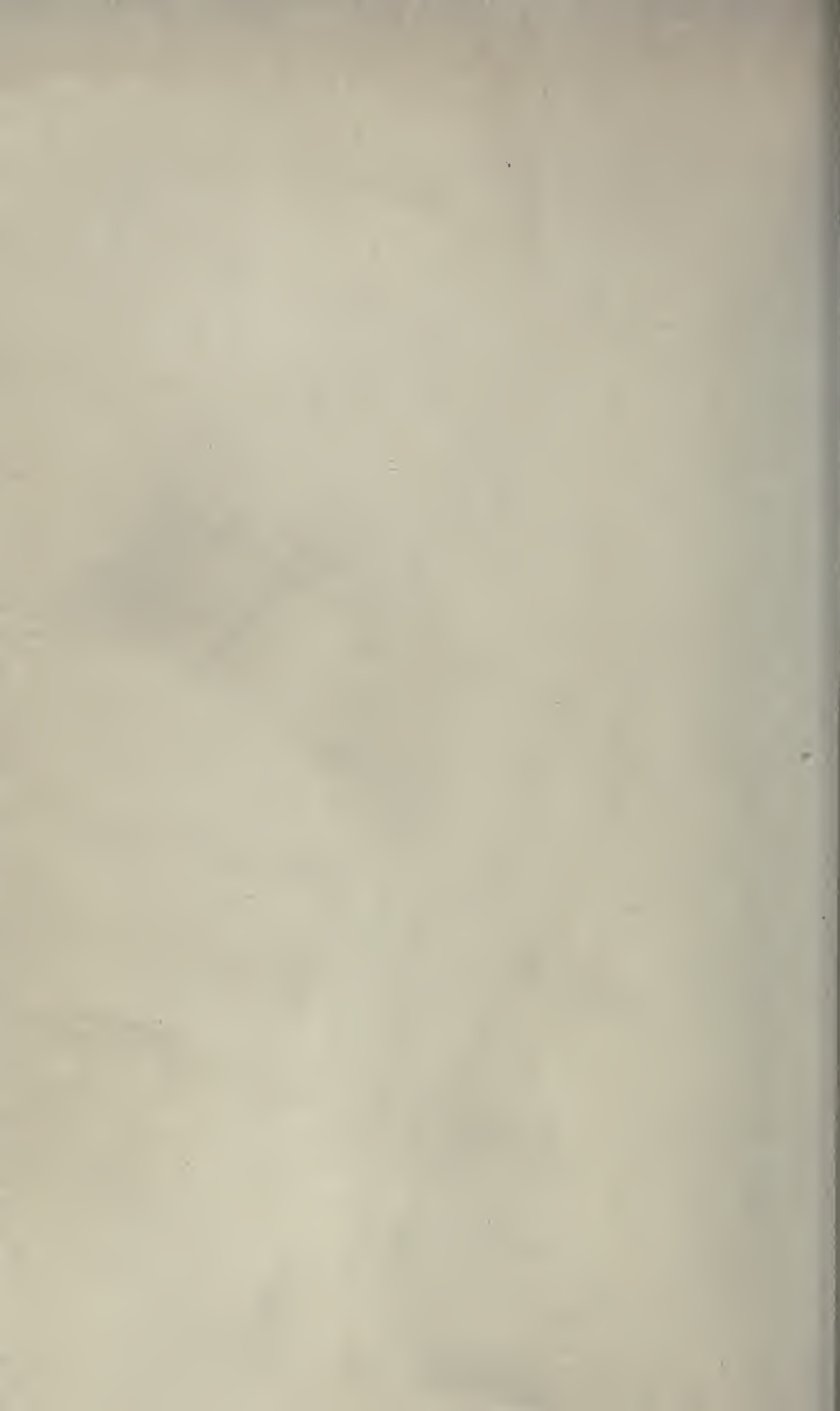
The Easter feast comes third with the Servians, and is a great occasion for egg-breaking, one egg being broken against the other. Each visitor receives an egg, and the fête lasts three days. The gipsies, of whom there are very many in the Balkans, go from house to house at Easter, singing and wishing good fortune to the householders, receiving, of course, money in return for their good wishes.

There is also an extraordinary institution among the Servians called the *pobratime*. It often occurs that two persons of the same sex love one another very dearly, and regret that they are not allied by relationship. In such a case they go through a solemn ceremony, and become *pobratimes*, or brothers by election. It is the same with both sexes. In many cases religion or nationality does not count, for there are numbers of cases where a Serb has chosen for *pobratime* a Turk or an Albanian. In some cases the ceremony is a grave and solemn one before a priest. Sometimes, indeed, the two persons make a slight cut in each other's hands, and suck each other's blood, so becoming blood relations. This custom is, strangely enough, very prevalent among the more savage of the African tribes. The *pobratimes* remain faithful and devoted one to the other until death.

Belgrade resembles no other European capital for several reasons. There are no poor quarters of squalor and misery, and pauperism is unknown. During the whole time I was in the capital not a single person solicited alms. During the last thirty years land in the vicinity of the city has quadrupled



HIS EXCELLENCY COSTA STOYANOVITCH,
Servian Minister of Commerce.



in value. Each house is generally occupied by one family, and almost every house has a pretty garden or courtyard. For many years there has been constant rebuilding, and nowadays houses are usually built of brick in preference to stone—although there is a Brick Trust in the country. A good granite is also employed, and the new buildings are mostly ornate and handsome.

Modern Belgrade is well planned. The Rue Terasia and the Rue Prince Michel run on the highest part of the plateau and form the main artery of traffic, while from these two streets diverge other thoroughfares, on the one side leading to the Danube, and on the other to the Save.

Viewed from the Danube, the panorama of Belgrade is a fine and imposing one. A commodious quay is badly required for the ever-increasing river traffic, but plans have already been prepared, and shortly the work will be put in hand. High above the river runs the pleasant promenade in the Kalemegdan Gardens, leading to the old fortress with its time-mellowed red brick bastions, now turned into a prison. The position of the city is certainly well adapted to expand into a really fine, handsome capital, as it must become in the near future. It is the centre of intellectual life of Serbia. The Library and Museum testify to the literary tastes of the Servians. The Museum is very rich in antiques, and contains a highly interesting numismatic collection. Both science and art are well cultivated in the Servian capital, which is also the headquarters of the Metropolitan Archbishop, the courts of Cassation and of Appeal, the *État Major*, the Military School, the Faculties, and the Ecclesiastical School.

The capital of Serbia therefore occupies a most favourable position, and is designed to become a very important centre of commerce. Its situation being at the junction of the Save and the Danube, at the head of the railway which unites the European capitals with the Black Sea ports, as well as with Salonica and Constantinople, it cannot fail to be the gate of the whole commerce of the Orient. It is, indeed, the Gateway of the East.

Nisch, in the south, is the town second in importance.

In 1874 it contained only 12,000 population, while to-day it has more than 30,000 inhabitants. Standing as it does at the junction of the Oriental with the European railways, all the merchandise to or from Turkey passes through it: either by way of Sofia, or by Usküb and Macedonia. The old Turkish quarter has been recently destroyed, wide streets built, and the town thoroughly modernised and brought up to date, while there are several comfortable hotels. The country around Nisch is noted for its excellent light wines, which, having tasted, I can recommend. In Nisch, as in many other parts of Servia, there are many openings for the profitable employment of British capital.

The Servian Government is anxious to promote commerce and industry throughout the kingdom. It is ready to give facility and encouragement to foreigners—and especially the English—to exploit the wealth that undoubtedly abounds, and it will treat them honestly, justly, and well.

Country life presents many interesting features. The Servian is much more industrious than the Roumanian or the Bulgar, and consequently is much more the master of his own household. The house of the Servian peasant is generally constructed of brick, situate in the valleys and ravines, and is usually of one storey only. There are generally three or four rooms, the larger one being used as a common sitting and dining room. The furniture of the common room is very simple—a table, chairs, and settle and wardrobe; while upon the whitewashed walls are coloured religious prints. The other rooms are covered with bright-coloured Servian carpets, and in some villages of the Machva and the valley of the Morava—where the peasants appear to live in greater comfort—I found Viennese bent-wood furniture. In the poorer districts the house often consists of one room only, and is often constructed by the peasant himself. Each house has its little garden, cultivated by the women or the old folk, where vegetables are grown, more especially cabbages, of which there is a great consumption in various forms, often preserved as a kind of *choucroute*. Fresh-water fish is also a staple article of diet, while caviare too is plentiful.

In my journey through Servia I was struck by the prosperity of the peasant and his high intelligence everywhere. The country, especially in the more mountainous districts, is most picturesque, and the quaint costumes of both sexes are highly interesting. Time was when there were many brigands in the more remote districts. An officer of my acquaintance who has explored practically every corner of Servia told me an amusing episode that quite lately occurred to him. He was riding one day in the mountains in a far remote part of Servia, many miles from a town, when he overtook a rather evil-looking man, who scowled at him. He passed the time of day and inquired the road to his destination. Then he added, "I've heard there are brigands round about here. Is it true?"

"Brigands!" exclaimed the man. "Well, we used to be brigands. But nowadays the law is so strict that I and my comrades have given it up!"

The costume of the Servian peasant-women is quaint and of interest. It consists of an ample skirt of wool or silk and a corset on which, over the chest, is placed a piece of white gauze crossed. Over this is a kind of bolero of tanned skin with the fur inside, cut lower than the waist at the back, and open in front. Upon it are often gold or silver embroideries. Upon the head is worn a small scarlet fez, around which the plaited hair is coiled. The fez is often embroidered with seed pearls, which descend from generation to generation and are often worth twenty to thirty pounds. Then, lastly, there is the apron, which is part of the national costume, and is of wool, hand-embroidered in gay colours, many of them being of quaint and original design.

In the towns both men and women now adopt European costume. In the country every peasant possesses a gun, and shooting as they do from childhood, they are mostly very fine shots. They love the chase, and shoot everything they can, for the country is full of all kinds of birds and animals.

There is a good deal of superstition among the peasants, who are an imaginative people, who believe in vampires, evil spirits, and witches, and have many extraordinary legends and sayings concerning them.

CHAPTER II

AN AUDIENCE OF KING PETER

At the New Konak—I sign His Majesty's birthday-book—The audience-chamber—King Peter greets me, and we chat over cigarettes—My private audience—His Majesty and English capitalists—Great openings for British enterprise—The King gives me some instances of paying concerns, and tells me many interesting facts—His Majesty invites me to return.

AS I drove into the wide gates of the New Konak one evening in November to have private audience of His Majesty King Peter of Servia, sentries saluted, idling detectives bowed, and the lines of blue-and-gold servants drawn up in the entrance all bent low with one accord. The royal palace is, indeed, well guarded.

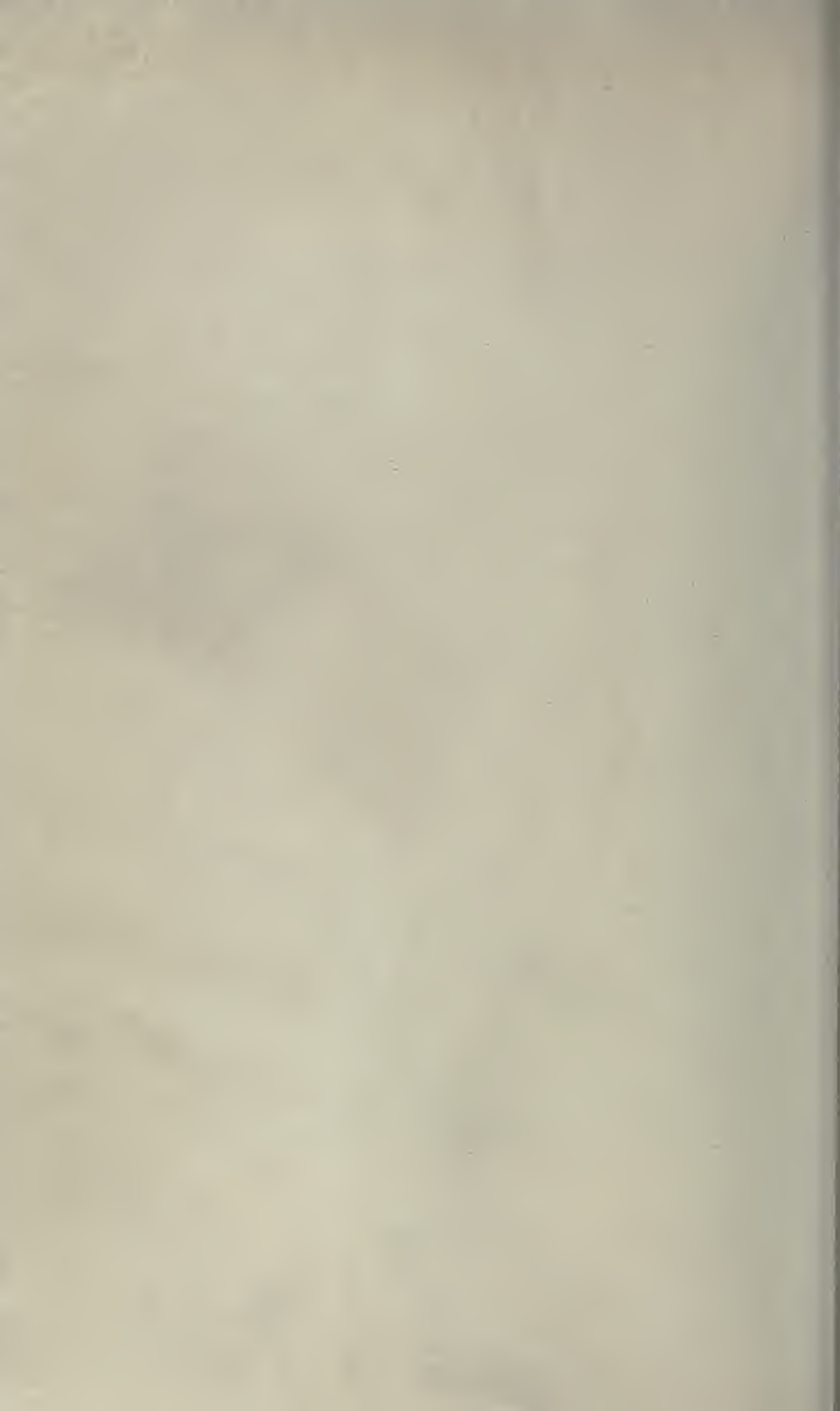
In the large inner hall was a wide horseshoe staircase, which I ascended. On every hand was a regal splendour, all in excellent taste and all very new, for the palace built by King Milan has been renovated since 1903, when the former royal residence of such tragic memory was pulled down. Its site is now a pretty lawn.

At the head of the stairs the Royal Marechal, Colonel Tcholak-Antich, a young man in bright blue uniform and many decorations, met me. With the usual etiquette he told me his name, I told him mine, and we shook hands. Then he said, "His Majesty is anxious that you should sign his birthday book," and he led me to the big council-chamber, where at the head of the table he opened a beautiful book, which I signed upon the proper page.

I was at once conducted to the audience-chamber, the



The Royal Palace, Belgrade: The Ballroom.



double doors of which—to prevent eavesdroppers—were closed behind me, and I was left alone to await His Majesty. The room, of fine dimensions, seemed, under the myriad electric lamps, ablaze with gold. The beautiful gilt furniture showed well against the carpet of crushed-strawberry, the damask of the upholstery matching the carpet and being brocaded with gold. Several fine modern paintings were upon the walls, and in the centre of the magnificent apartment a large settee and several fine gilt chairs set against a big gilt Renaissance table.

Scarce had I time to glance at my surroundings when the long white folding-doors at the end of the room opened, and there entered a slim, alert figure in a dark blue military uniform—a keen, dark-eyed, grey-moustached man with a pleasant smile and hand outstretched—His Majesty.

I made my obeisance, and took the proffered hand. “Come,” said the King kindly in French, seating himself at the table, and motioning me to a chair opposite him. “Well,” he commenced, “you know I have lived in London, and I have heard of you, Monsieur N——,” and he went on to say some highly gratifying words concerning myself; then producing a big silver box of most excellent Servian cigarettes, gave me one, held the match for me, and also smoked himself. He was, I noticed, quick, smart, and shrewd, with both figure and bearing that greatly reminded me of Lord Roberts, his general’s dark undress uniform being relieved by one touch of colour, the crimson-and-white ribbon and white enamelled star of Karageorge.

Then, when we were comfortably settled, I explained to him my reasons for visiting the Balkans.

“You are very welcome here in Servia,” His Majesty said. “You have been kind enough to say generous things about our country. All we ask of you is not to flatter us—only inquire the truth for yourself. We Servians have our faults—all nations have. But it must be remembered that we are a young nation—like France was after the war of 1870. The Press of Europe have not been altogether fair to us, for very many false statements have been published regarding our people,

and myself personally. But how could they be contradicted ? We only wish the organs of the British Press would tell the truth regarding Servia. We have enemies—who has not ? But our policy is one of peace, and our earnest endeavour is to develop the great resources of our country. Servia is, as you know, one of the richest mineral countries in Europe."

"I presume your Majesty's Government will grant concessions for the working of mines, or for other industrial enterprises ?"

"Most readily. But only to responsible persons, who can show their earnestness and that capital is at their command. Of late we have had many concession-hunters here from various parts of Europe, but the majority have gone empty away because they were discovered to be mere speculators. No. Our urgent desire is that your British capitalists should come here and study matters for themselves."

"I believe some mines are already being worked by foreign capital ?" I remarked.

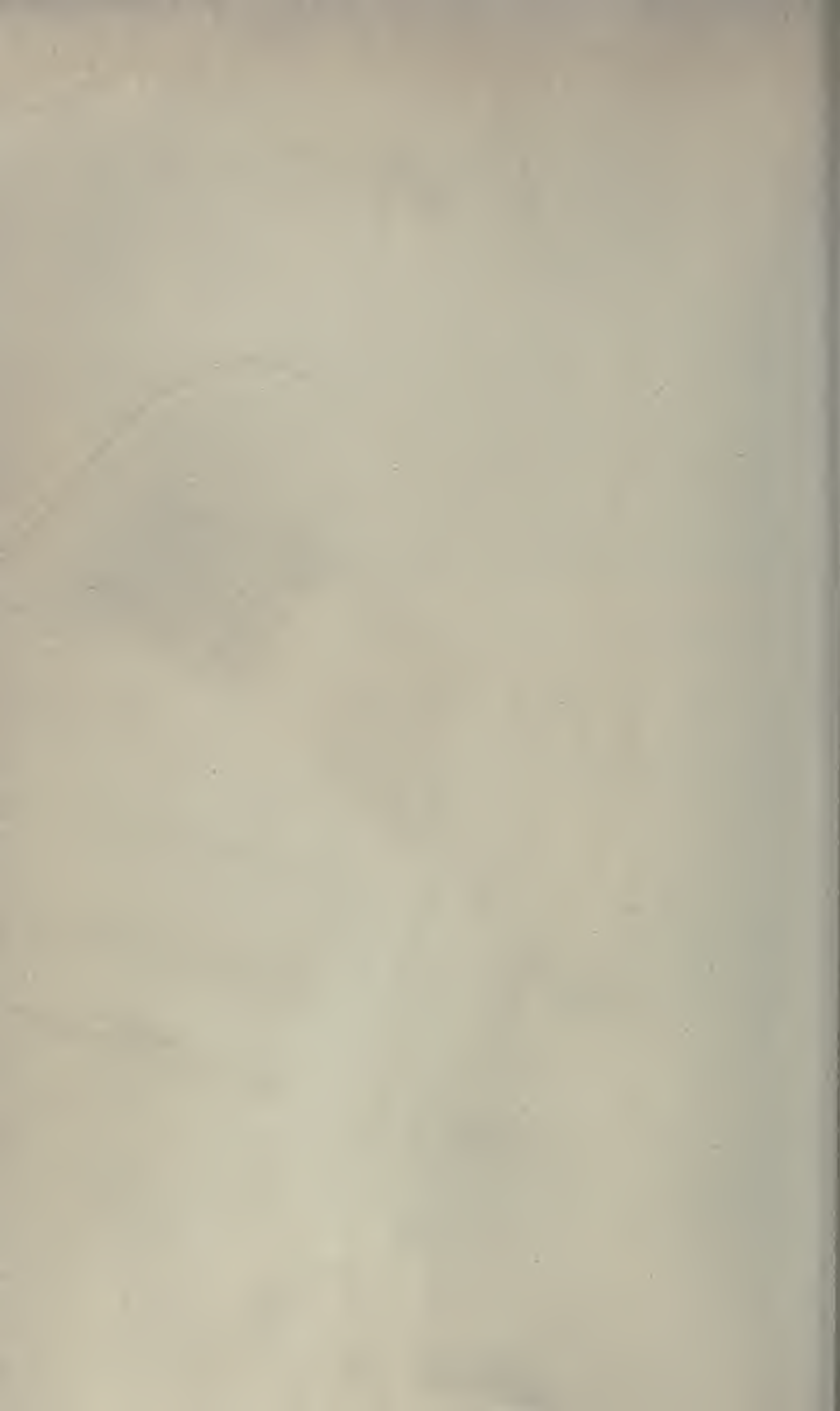
"Certainly—and very wealthy they are too. Take the Bor copper mine, for instance. I visited it myself this year. The 500-franc shares are now at 3000 francs, and the output will shortly be enormous. They have recently discovered in the workings traces that the ancient Romans had been there. It will, so experts say, be found to be one of the richest copper mines in Europe. Besides copper we have iron, coal, antimony, and even gold—all of which might, with great advantage, be exploited by English companies. We invite the English in preference, because I know that English commercial undertakings are, for the most part, solid and sound. You English always think well before you commence, and when you do commence you go straight on to success. Therefore any industrial enterprise, or any railways—which we want badly—that you may suggest to us on behalf of British capitalists shall have our most earnest consideration. That the country is in a settled state and is prospering is, I think, shown by our finances. Before 1903 there was constantly a deficit on the Budget. In 1903 we had over one million francs in excess of the estimates, in 1904 we had five millions, and in



Royal Palace : Belgrade.



Principal Boulevard of Belgrade.



1905 a little over four millions. Our engagements are regularly paid, and we have no floating debt."

"And the future?"

"Ah! you want me to talk politics," he laughed, raising his hand with the fine diamond upon it. "No. I make a rule never to do so. One of our chief faults in Serbia is that we gossip too much upon politics. You have noticed that, I daresay, in the cafés, in the Legations, and elsewhere—eh? All we Servians are the same—in Montenegro, in Bosnia, and elsewhere. It is always so with a young nation. The future of Serbia will, I fervently hope, be one of peace and prosperity. It shall be my most earnest endeavour to secure this for my people, so that Serbia may prove to Europe that she does not now merit the hard things said of her in the past."

His Majesty, after we had chatted about Florence, a city which I found he knew quite well, then told me a very interesting fact. "We have here, in Serbia," he said, "a most wonderful cure for rheumatism—the Ribarska Banya. I only tell you what happened personally to me. During the Russo-Turkish War I contracted acute rheumatism, and have been a martyr to it ever since. I visited every watering-place in Europe, but none of the so-called "cures" did me any good. Two years ago, with some reluctance, I went to Ribarska and took the cure, and from that moment I have never since been troubled. It was miraculous! With my own eyes I saw a poor woman wheeled there entirely crippled, and twenty days later I saw her commencing to walk. I would not have believed it had I not seen it with my own eyes."

For an hour and a half we chatted upon many things—of London, of Paris, of Rome, of Vienna—for His Majesty is essentially an up-to-date man of the world, as well as a monarch. Sincere and yet humorous, kindly and yet with a hauteur that well befits his military bearing, he struck me as a man well adapted to rule the Servian nation—a man who is thoroughly in earnest, and is doing his level best for the future of his nation. "We want no external troubles," he declared to me. "We want to be allowed to progress."

And when I took my leave His Majesty grasped my hand

warmly, saying, "I hope, M'sieur N——, you will return to Servia often, and remember that whenever you are in Belgrade I shall always be happy to give you audience and have another chat with you. *Bon soir.*"

I bowed. The long white doors opened noiselessly by an unseen hand, and His Majesty was gone.

Next day an aide-de-camp brought me the autographed portrait which appears in these pages, together with a very kindly message from His Majesty.

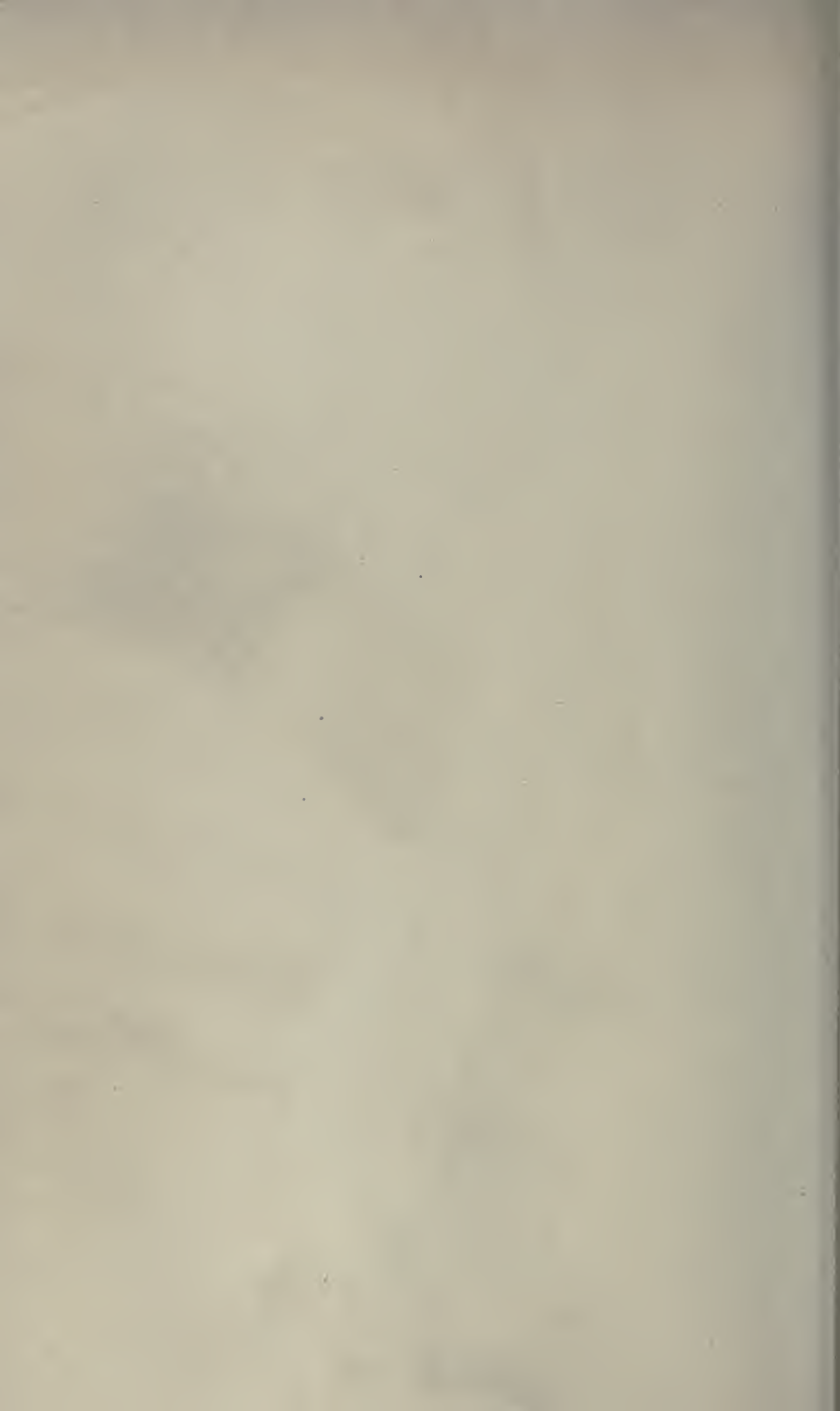
Not only did I endeavour to learn the truth at the royal palace, but I went among the people in various towns in Servia, making inquiries, and I found on every hand that Servia was pleased and satisfied with her new ruler.

King Peter was born on July 11, 1844, at Belgrade. A son of the reigning Prince Alexander Karageorgevitch. Educated at Belgrade and Geneva, he went to St. Cyr in France, and afterwards, during the war of 1870, volunteered in the French army. In 1883 he married the Princess Zorka, eldest daughter of Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, with whom he led a very happy family life until her unfortunate death in 1890. For about ten years he lived in Montenegro, but after his wife's death he went to Geneva for the education of his children. In Montenegro there is still great admiration for him among the people, who have always regarded him as one of the Serb princes.

There were four children, of whom three are still living, namely, the Crown Prince George, now aged 20; Princess Helene, aged 19; and Prince Alexander, aged 18. The Crown Prince after his studies in Geneva was admitted by order of the Tzar into the Noble Guard at St. Petersburg, and on the accession of his father left Russia to complete his studies in Servia. At the present time he is engaged in university studies, combined with his military ones. I had an opportunity of meeting him, and found him a very smart and intelligent young fellow. Legally he is now of age, and lately he represented his father at a great national festivity, and acquitted himself with complete success. He is greatly interested in all military questions, and is himself one of the best riders in the country.



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE GEORGE OF SERVIA.



In his domestic circle the King is a model father, and his actions and views are designed to promote in every way a good family life among his people. He leaves politics to his Ministers, who are all of them highly responsible men, but greatly interests himself in sanitation, improvements in agriculture, the securing of a better standard of morality, and in all questions of religion—in fact, his chief aim is the advancement and well-being of his people, which, he is confident, cannot be attained without a strong religious belief.

Only a short time ago he was making a tour in the country when to him came the priests and authorities complaining that the people did not go to church. His Majesty's reply to the priests was: "If the people do not come to you, you should go to them."

From my own personal observation of His Majesty, I found him to be exceedingly active, both physically and mentally. Though sixty-two years of age, he may be seen every morning at five o'clock out riding in the environs of Belgrade, making inspections of military camps and often gossiping with and giving counsel to the lowliest peasants. Many are the amusing stories told of these encounters, for often the peasants are unaware that it is their sovereign. On one occasion, quite lately, he was speaking with a peasant who complained to him of misbehaviour of a subordinate functionary, and said, "The King ought to know it!" whereupon His Majesty replied, "Yes, I think so. I will certainly tell him."

His Majesty told me himself that he does not believe in the old idea that "the King can do no wrong," or that monarchs are only "*par la grâce de Dieu*." He is of opinion that they should do everything to fulfil the second part of the formula, "by the will of the people," and do their utmost for the people over whom they rule.

Without prejudice, and without bias, I have no hesitation in saying that Servia to-day is under a most beneficent régime, and it is hoped that her ruler, a splendid type of man and an up-to-date monarch, may be spared many years to realise the high aspirations which he has for the country that gave him birth.

CHAPTER III

SERVIA'S AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS

Audiences of M. Pachitch, the Premier and "strong man" of Servia, and of M. Stoyanovitch, Minister of Commerce—My friend, Dr. Milenko Vesnitch, Minister of Justice—The Servian case as I found it—Austria Servia's arch-enemy—Dr. Vesnitch an up-to-date politician—Undeniable prosperity of the country under King Peter's rule.

HE who attempts to study Servian politics will find himself engulfed in a perfect vortex of mystery and intrigue.

Politics occupy everyone's thought in Belgrade. The Pachitch Party is on everyone's tongue. Be it at the luncheon table of the restaurant, over the card-table at the Grand Café at six o'clock, in the salons of the Ministers' wives, or at the smart diplomatic receptions, the gossip is always of politics. Hence it is that the secret agent is everywhere, and one hears complaints on every hand of telegrams being noted and letters tampered with.

Having regard to recent events and the presence of a horde of Austrian spies, this is not, perhaps, surprising. Though Servia is undoubtedly prospering and contented under King Peter and the present Ministry, yet there is, of course, in politics an opposition—though not a formidable one.

During my stay in Belgrade, besides being graciously granted private audience by His Majesty King Peter, I had many opportunities of discussing Servian politics with the Premier, M. Nicholas Pachitch; Dr. Milenko Vesnitch, Minister of Justice; M. Stoyanovitch, the Minister of Commerce; M. Patchu, Minister of Finance; M. Andrea Nikolitch, Minister of Public Instruction; M. Yovan Gyaya, who has formed the new Radical Party; and many other leading men of both

sides. I very carefully investigated each question, in order to present to the British public, for the first time, the actual truth of the present state of affairs in Serbia.

Quite recently the British Government resumed diplomatic relations with the Servian Court, therefore it is fitting that a fair and unbiassed statement should now be put forward, in order to show Serbia as she really is, her aims, her aspirations, and her future policy in the Balkans.

I confess that I found considerable difficulty in forming my conclusions. The policy, however, which the present strong and level-headed Government are pursuing is a policy which, having carefully heard both sides, I have no hesitation whatever in endorsing as the very best for the peace and future of the nation. It is strong, without being belligerent, even though Austria has never ceased to annoy, irritate, and intrigue.

Balkan questions are both difficult and intricate, but I will endeavour to describe the true state of affairs as plainly and briefly as possible. This work, though not intended to be a political treatise, would be incomplete without some explanation of the mysteries of the politics of the various Balkan countries I visited. Therefore, at risk of being perhaps a little too outspoken, I will state the Servian case just as I found it.

One of the burning questions in Serbia at the present time is the Customs War with Austria. The latter Power has endeavoured to ruin Serbia, but has fortunately not succeeded, even though her emissaries are everywhere, and many newspaper correspondents are undoubtedly in her pay. For this latter reason Serbia has, for many years past, been presented to Europe in a false light and columns of untruths telegraphed from Zimony, or Semlin, the Hungarian town on the opposite bank of the Save.

Briefly, the truth is as follows :—

Austria—and with her Germany—is slowly but surely marching to the East. One sees and hears evidence of it everywhere in the Balkans. The extended talons of the Austrian eagle are as apparent—and perhaps more so in Serbia than in Montenegro. Serbia bars Austria's way south-

ward to that much-coveted port, Salonica. It is therefore not to Austria's interest that Servia should be at peace. Unfortunately for Servia, the Occidental people view the Eastern questions through the spectacles of the Vienna Press, which is—for the most part—inspired by the Austrian Government.

Austria is at the bottom of the whole of the Servian difficulties. As long as things went badly in Servia—as under the régime of the late King Alexander—they allowed matters to go on without interference, and watched eagerly for the downfall of the kingdom. Unfortunate events occurred, as is well known, but to the great dismay of Servia's arch-enemy, the country has become contented and is greatly prospering under the rule of King Peter. For this reason, therefore, because a prosperous era has set in, Austria has once again sought to stir discord and to create troubles and difficulties. At the moment of writing the secret police have a long list of over one hundred Austrian political agents living in Belgrade alone!

How Austria seeks to compromise Servia in the eyes of Europe, and the scandalous methods by which she is seeking to attain that end, is well illustrated by a telegram which was supposed to emanate from Odessa, but which I have indisputable evidence came from the same source as all the others—an unscrupulous correspondent in Vienna in the secret pay of the Austrian Government.

The amazing telegram in question appeared in the London newspapers on January 2 this year, and was as follows :—

“The local agency of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which for the last twenty years has been specially retained in Odessa as a convenient medium of secret intelligence respecting the Balkan States, is in possession of indisputable proofs of the existence, notwithstanding all recent and official denials from Belgrade, of a widely ramified and elaborately matured plot for the execution of a sudden *coup d'état* and the expulsion of the Kara-georgevitch dynasty from Servia. Leading members, civil and military, of both the chief political parties are stated to have joined the conspiracy.



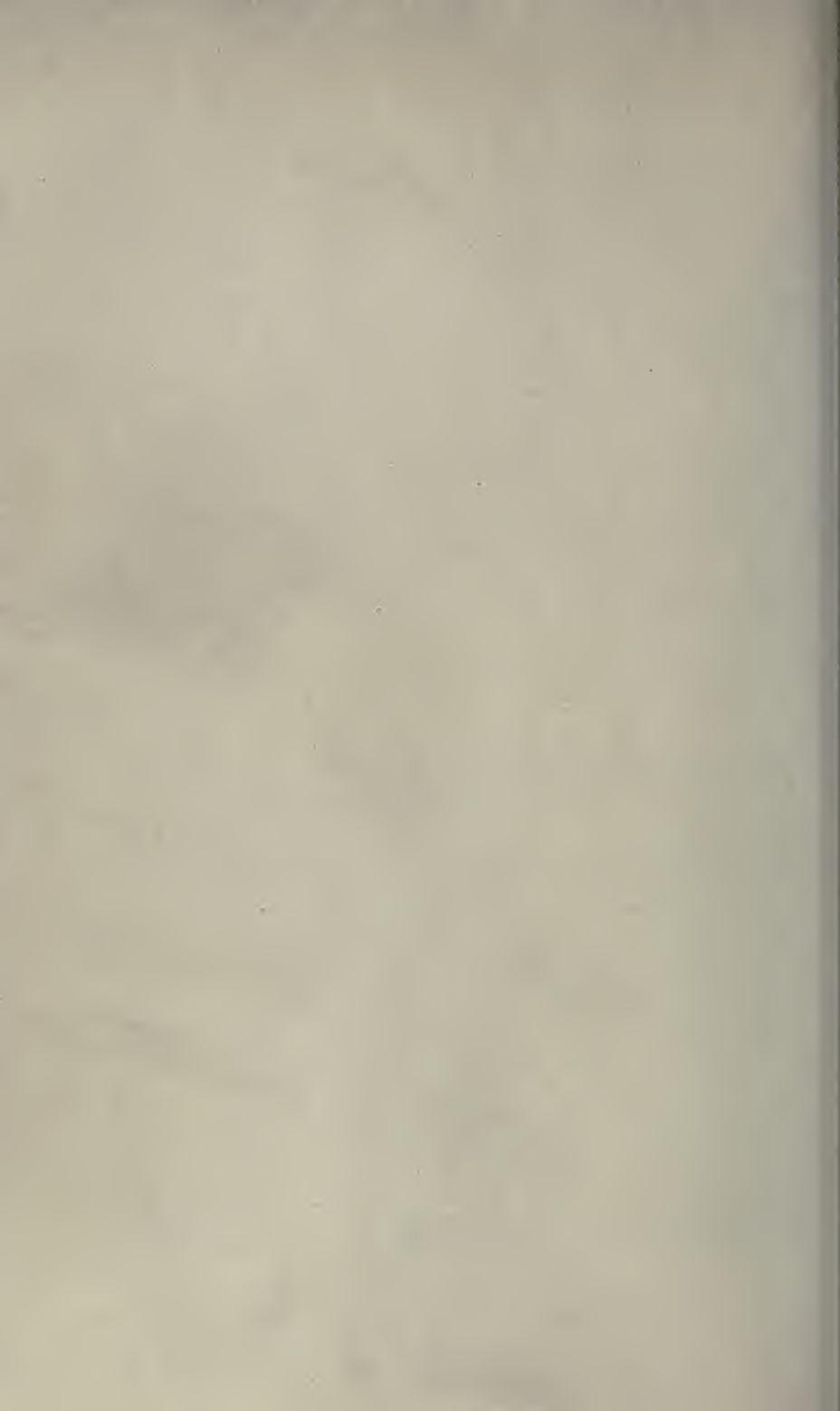
Alexander, Jr. Tucker.
Bellevue, 1906

MR. ALEX. TUCKER,



Beethom Whitehead

MR. BEETHOM WHITEHEAD,



“According to this information, the intended first result of the *coup d'état*, if it be not marred, will be the establishment of a provisional regency in the administrative hands of six or eight Ministers. The regents would then take time to prepare a comprehensive explanatory statement of the situation for presentation to the Great Powers, which they would also consult as to the choice of an alien prince for the royal throne of Servia. They will urge upon the friendly consideration of the Powers the fact that the two peasant dynasties of Obrenovitch and Karageorgevitch have been fairly tried and justly found impossible and incompatible with the economical welfare and progressive culture necessary to the worthy attainment of Servia's proper political destiny.”

In reply to this, the Servian Government nailed the lies upon Austria by the following official statement, issued on January 3 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Belgrade:—

“All sorts of misleading fabrications have lately been issued to the world by the Austrian Press for the purpose of compromising the political situation in Servia, the latest report being that of an alleged plot to exile the Karageorgevitch dynasty. Gradually and systematically the Viennese newspapers have been communicating to the foreign Press alarming news, injurious to Servia's good name, and certain quarters in Vienna consider it necessary to reserve the fabrication regarding the exile of the Karageorgevitch dynasty as the final stroke on the eve of the conclusion of the Servian loan. The Austrian Press has even gone so far as to make use of prevarications in order to succeed in giving credence to its report regarding the exile of the royal dynasty, alleging they had obtained news from the Russian Agency created at Odessa by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs for special political service in the Balkans. According to our information, *such an agency does not even exist.*”

Again, an ingenious gentleman representing the *Vienna Zeit*, who lives opposite Belgrade, at Semlin, in Hungary, and fears to cross into Servia, sent the other day, not only to the *Zeit* but to the *Daily Mail*, an extraordinary telegram declaring the Servian Crown Prince to be slightly demented, and casting all sorts of insinuations as to what was happening in the palace.

I chanced to be in Belgrade at the time, and showed the Crown Prince the ridiculous concoction, and we both laughed over it.

"Bah!" he said, "it is really too silly to require contradiction."

The true fact is that the young Crown Prince, who gave me the signed portrait that appears in these pages, is a particularly smart young man, and not only do his tutors, but also the Cabinet Ministers of Servia, speak in the highest terms of his tact and intelligence.

But to Austria no method is too mean or too unscrupulous by which to circulate false news to the detriment of Servia. Ask any Servian, and he will tell you of Austria's machinations in every quarter.

Quite recently a Servian author wrote some libellous and untrue articles regarding the present dynasty, and was consequently arrested and condemned to imprisonment. Whereupon the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, without asking permission of the Minister of Justice, went to the prison and prevailed upon the Governor to be allowed to see the prisoner privately. Such action surely speaks louder than words!

The Austrian attitude was well exhibited on the occasion of the accession of King Peter. His Majesty received two telegrams. The first was from the Tzar, who said, "I hope you may be able to bring happiness to the Servian people, and by doing so you will receive my friendship." The other was from the Emperor Francis Josef, and was certainly in the spirit of dividing King and people, for His Majesty merely expressed a hope that the evils existing would be remedied.

Austria's chief aim in Servia is to estrange the people from their King, to create as much discord and discontent as possible

to crush the trade of the country and to keep her poor. As long as she believed that Serbia was in a bad position economically and financially, things were allowed to go from bad to worse. But as soon as an improvement was observed in the national prosperity, a hostile policy was adopted, which has rendered trade between the two countries impossible.

Careful inquiries of the Servian Cabinet Ministers and many statesmen of both political parties show that even in the present position, with Austria closed against her, Serbia is nevertheless progressing, and prospering more than the outside world ever dreams.

The last commercial treaty between Austria and Serbia expired in 1904. There was a desire on the part of Serbia to at once renew it, but this Austria-Hungary was unable to do, as she was rearranging her treaty with Germany. When, however, the first negotiations were started, Austria made very severe complaints regarding the Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Union, and asked that the treaty in question should be annulled before negotiations for the new treaty were started. The Servian Government, desirous of pleasing Austria, replied that in the Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Union there was a clause to the effect that if one of the Great Powers raised a protest, amendments might be introduced. They therefore suggested the postponement of this question, hoping that Austria was satisfied, and would begin the *pourparlers*. But no such thing. Austria had other aims, for very soon they coolly declared that if the commercial treaty were renewed, Serbia must buy her new armament for the artillery of the Scoda works in Austria. This is peculiar, inasmuch as the cannon in question is not that in use by the Austrian artillery!

The reason for this has been explained by the fact that certain members of the Austrian Imperial family were financially interested in the works in question. This, however, was not the real reason. There was one far more subtle. The true political reason, indeed, was that the Austrian Government wished to get a seat in the "Autonom-Monopol" administration—the body which controls the loans, and which consists of six members, namely, one French delegate, one

German, and four Servians. France and Germany were both friendly, but Austria, had she gained a seat there, could at once have created internal dissension and difficulty.

Nominally, the annual income from this "Monopol" is about thirty million dinars, or francs, of which twenty million go to the creditors, leaving ten million at the free disposal of the Government. Now had Austria obtained a hand in this administration, she would have been able to exercise a prerogative and a right of intervention in many matters affecting the good government of the country—a danger that will at once be apparent.

Austrian intrigue is everywhere apparent, not only in Belgrade, but throughout the whole of Servia. Austria does not wish either a national or a staple Government in Servia, and so, because they could not obtain their ends, and because the present Government voices the national ideas of the whole of the Serb people—who are as a matter of fact spread over Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and part of Hungary—they have pursued the Customs War, and put a prohibitive tariff upon everything in the endeavour to close entirely the world's markets to Servia. The latter has of course retaliated by placing a prohibitive tariff upon all goods from those nations who have no treaty—a move which is of course directed against Austria, but by which other Powers must, for the present, suffer.

As regards England, the first commercial treaty made by Servia after the Berlin Treaty was with Great Britain, and it served as the base of all the other treaties. Of this Austria-Hungary was jealous, and from that time until to-day Austria has done everything in her power to discredit and discourage British trade in the Balkans. In fact, so seriously detrimental has been Austria's influence against British trade that naturally some time must elapse ere the damage done can be repaired.

Meanwhile, a new commercial treaty with England has been arranged, for it was in Servia's greatest interest that this should be done. Every Servian I spoke to was loud in his praises of England, and of English methods. Servia is very anxious to export her agricultural produce to England, while

in Servia—now that Austrian imports have stopped—there are many open markets for English goods.

Austria believed that as all Servian exports were sent into Austria-Hungary, Servia would be obliged in the end to accept their drastic and unfair terms—the purchase of cannon and other restrictions. On the contrary, however, it says much for Servia's enterprise that, though the Austrian frontier has been closed during 1906, yet Servia has exported all her goods by way of Varna or Braila, or by Salonica, to which port a line of rail runs from Nisch. The producer has felt the Austrian oppression but little, if any at all. In fact, it is the opinion of many statesmen in Servia that it would actually be in the country's interests if Austria continues her present hostile Customs policy, for it will then compel the Servians to look for markets farther afield, and arouse them to take strong initiatives.

It should be noted, too, that fifteen years ago Austria raised the same trouble with Roumania, and the Roumanians are now happily emancipated from the Austrian market, and are consequently prosperous.

At present, with the Austrian frontier barred for export, Servia must build a railway to the Adriatic. The line from Nisch, *viâ* Usküb, to Salonica, though it runs through Macedonia, is practically under Austrian control, and goods sent over it from Servia are subjected to high tariff. Therefore there is a project afoot to construct a new line from Kragooyevatz across the Kopaonik Mountains to Prisrend, and thence through Northern Albania down to Skodra and the Adriatic at the port of San Giovanni di Medua. An alternative scheme is to construct the line so that it passes through Montenegro, and joins the line at present being made by an Italian company from Antivari on the coast to Virpasar on the Lake of Scutari.

One or other of these two schemes will certainly be adopted in the near future, and when the line is completed, Servia will at once be entirely independent of Austria, and secure an outlet to the Adriatic. Such a railway will be of great strategic importance, as will be seen from a glance on the map. I have been over parts of the projected route, and certainly it will

be a very difficult line to construct, on account of the wall of mountains lying between the Lake of Scutari and the Servian frontier. But its opening will mean civilising the wild tribes of Albania and the further cementing of the Serb nation.

This last point is, indeed, the chief line of the Servian Balkan policy. In my conversations with the Premier, with Dr. Milenko Vesnitch, Minister of Justice, and with the Ministers of Commerce and of Finance, I found them all in accord upon the one great principle of policy, namely, the preservation of the great Serb nation, which consists of over ten million persons, spread through Bosnia, Herzegovina, Slavonia, Kossovo, Montenegro, Servia, Dalmatia, and many parts of Hungary itself. This great population speak the same language and have the same aspirations, namely, the unity of the great nation whose past history is such a splendid one.

The policy of the Servian Ministry, whether military, economical, or political, is all directed towards this one end, and here it may be pointed out that King Peter is grandson of the great hero of the Servian people, the peasant Karageorge, who in 1804 raised the Servians against the Turks and defeated them.

King Peter has already given evidence of his patriotic sentiments, not only interesting himself in the nation before he was elected ruler, but perhaps it is not generally remembered that in 1875 he fought at the head of his troop—which he raised himself, and crippled his finances thereby—for the emancipation of Bosnia. In the Servian national poetry there is a hero called Peter Mrcognitch, the Protector of the Poor against the oppressors, and it was under this assumed name that the present ruler of Servia fought. In 1870, too, he fought with the French against the Germans, and was awarded the Legion of Honour for valour on the battlefield. Therefore the Servians regard him as a patriot—as indeed he is—and up to the present he has certainly shown himself an able, wise, and discreet ruler, who has the interests of his country very deeply at heart.

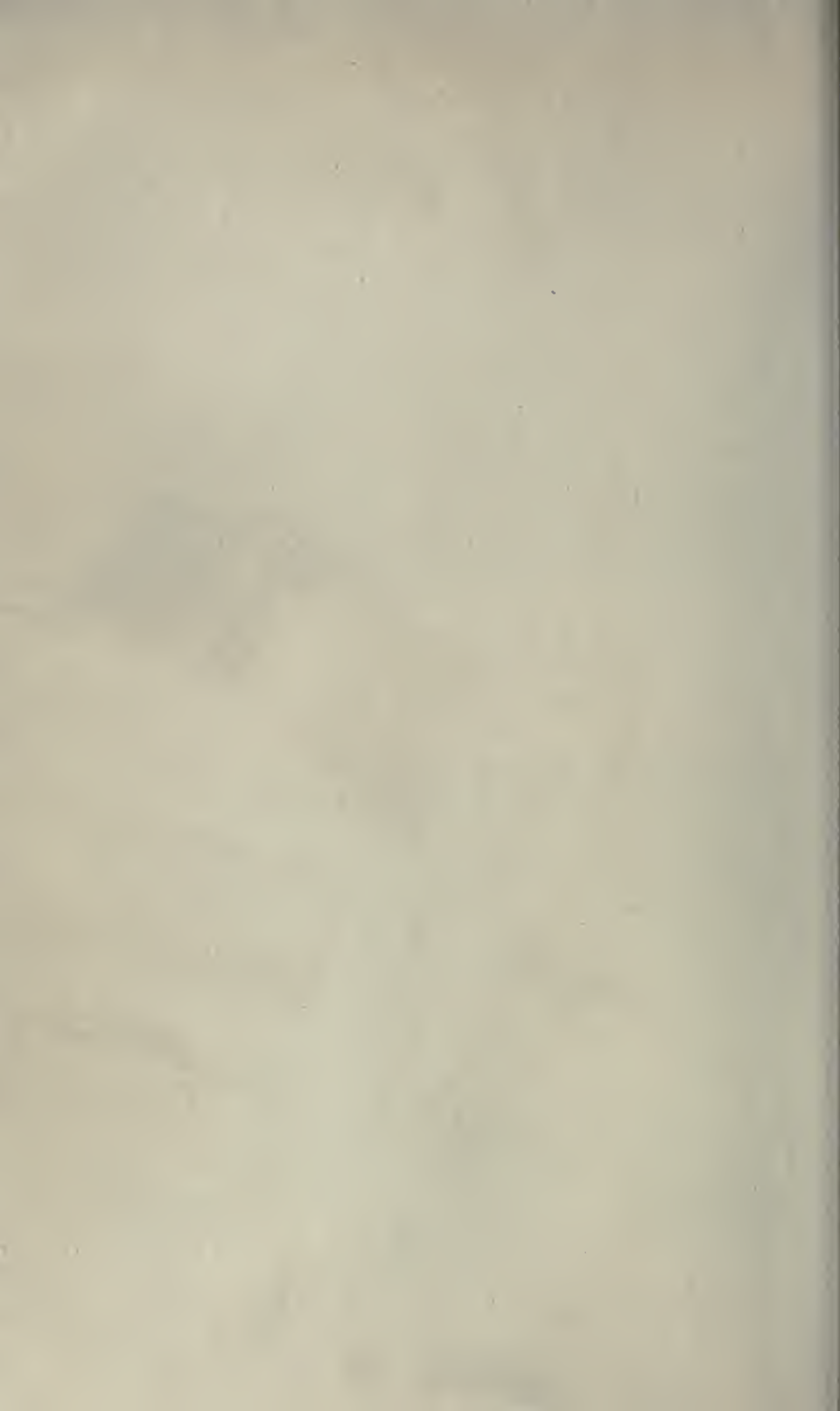
To refer to the tragic events of the night of June 11, 1903, is unnecessary. All I can personally say is that I arrived in



The Road to the East: The last view of Europe.



Villagers and Gypsies in Miriavo (Servia).



Belgrade full of an Englishman's natural prejudice against the present régime, but after careful inquiry, not only in government and diplomatic circles, but also among the adherents of the old régime, I came to the conclusion that though drastic and cruel, yet had not those events happened that night, hundreds of unfortunate ones would have lost their lives on the following morning.

In the régime of the late King no one was safe in Belgrade. Draga had her spies everywhere, and alas for those who dared to utter a word against her or her methods! Leading men in the political, social, and literary world of Belgrade to-day have explained to me how they had from day to day lived in fear and dread of false accusations and arrest, until life became so intolerable that many were almost driven from the country. These men strongly disagreed with the methods of the regicides, but they are now thankful they are free.

The truth of those black days of spies and suspicion in Belgrade in the last days of Alexander's reign has never been told. Only those who lived there, and only those who hear the truth from the lips of responsible persons, can realise how entirely the country was in the hands of one unscrupulous woman. The journalists of Europe were horrified at the methods by which the Obrenovitch were wiped out, and they condemned the Servians. Not one had the courage, or the inclination, to put the facts fairly and impartially before the public.

CHAPTER IV

THE FUTURE OF SERVIA

Servia and the Macedonian question—A sound Cabinet—England and Servia
—Appointment of Mr. Beethom Whitehead as British Minister very gratifying to the Servians—King Peter ever solicitous for the welfare of the people—What the Prime Minister told me concerning the future
—The new railway to the Adriatic.

I MAKE no apology for the assassination of King Alexander and his Queen. That matter is a closed page of Servian history. I only can state what I saw and heard in Servia, and explain how I drew my own entirely unbiassed conclusions.

One thing is certain, that Servia is at this moment in a very much more prosperous condition than ever she was under King Alexander. Having met every one of the Ministers, and spent many hours with them, I can safely assert that, headed by M. Pachitch, quiet-mannered, sensible, and thoughtful, they are, one and all, a very strong and intelligent Cabinet, each member of which is doing his very utmost for the commercial development and future welfare of the country he loves so dearly.

There is no *poseur* or political adventurer among them. Each man is a sound, intelligent, and trustful statesman, whose watchword is, as His Excellency Monsieur Pachitch put it to me, "Servia for the Servians."

While in Belgrade I had several conversations with members of the Cabinet, and also with Dr. J. Cvijic, the eminent author of that most thoughtful work, *Remarks on the Ethnography of the Macedonian Slavs*, regarding the all-absorbing question of

Macedonia. Mention Macedonia to any Balkan statesman, and he raises his shoulders and shakes his head. It is a problem that nobody can solve. I endeavoured, however, by dint of many inquiries, to discover in what way Servia would like the Macedonian question settled.

Roughly speaking, Macedonia is divided into three *vilayets*—Kosovo, Monastir, and Salonica. Now Kosovo is essentially Old Servia, and there is no question that its people are still Serbs. Yet here we run up against Austria again. She is doing all in her power to cause the population to emigrate, and in their place attracting Albanians who assist the Austrian propaganda. As regards the other two *vilayets* of Monastir and Salonica, the inhabitants are Serbs, Bulgars, Greeks, and Mohammedans. Now it is a curious fact, and one which I believe no other writer has noted, that until two years ago nobody spoke of any other people in Macedonia but these. Suddenly, however, Europe was made aware that there was still another people, for the Koutzo-Vlachs were, for the first time, mentioned, and formed a new element in the already mixed difficulty.

Now without doubt this new problem was introduced into the controversy by Germany for two reasons. The first was to create, besides the Mohammedan and Albanian, a Christian Conservative element for the preservation of the Turk in Europe. Germany has therefore an economic propaganda in Turkey, and when the time is ripe it will be followed by a strong political one. She could not count on either Serbs or Bulgars in Macedonia, but by this new intrigue she has courted the support of the Mohammedans.

The second reason of the introduction of these hitherto unheard-of Koutzo-Vlachs concerned the position in Roumania, of which a Hohenzollern is King. Until two years ago the Roumanian patriots were occupying themselves with a propaganda in Transylvania. As, however, it is a great point in German policy to keep Roumania within the confines of the Triple Alliance, and as hostilities had arisen between Austria and Roumania on account of the propaganda, it was necessary for Germany to find a means to occupy in some other way the

fantasy of the Roumanian people. And so the Koutzo-Vlachs were pushed forward as a fresh discovery, and the King of Roumania, in a speech to his Parliament, spoke of "their brothers in Macedonia." Beyond this, all the claims put in by the Koutzo-Vlachs for the expenses of their schools and other things to-day receive the support of the German Ambassador at the Porte.

From the Servian point of view—a view that is shared very widely—it would appear that the best method of solving the very difficult question of Macedonia would be to give the various peoples complete tolerance—that is, to give the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Moslems complete liberty to develop themselves for, say, ten years. After this time a plebiscite, under the control of the Powers, might be established with success. This would solve the ethnographical difficulty, which is really the base of the whole question.

The signatories to the Berlin Treaty would do well to take the initiative in this matter, and so end the internal trouble which is for ever a disturbing element in Balkan politics. Servia is very anxious to see England interesting and asserting her power more in the Balkans, and British statesmen might well follow the policy of Palmerston and Castlereagh. The first British representative to Servia was Colonel Hodges, who in 1837 went to Belgrade, and very quickly secured a predominant position in Servian matters, owing to the unselfishness of the British policy in the Balkans and the liberal ideas which England always represents in the world. The Servians therefore still look to England as taking a leading part in the settlement of Macedonia, and the sooner this is done the less peril will exist in the Near East.

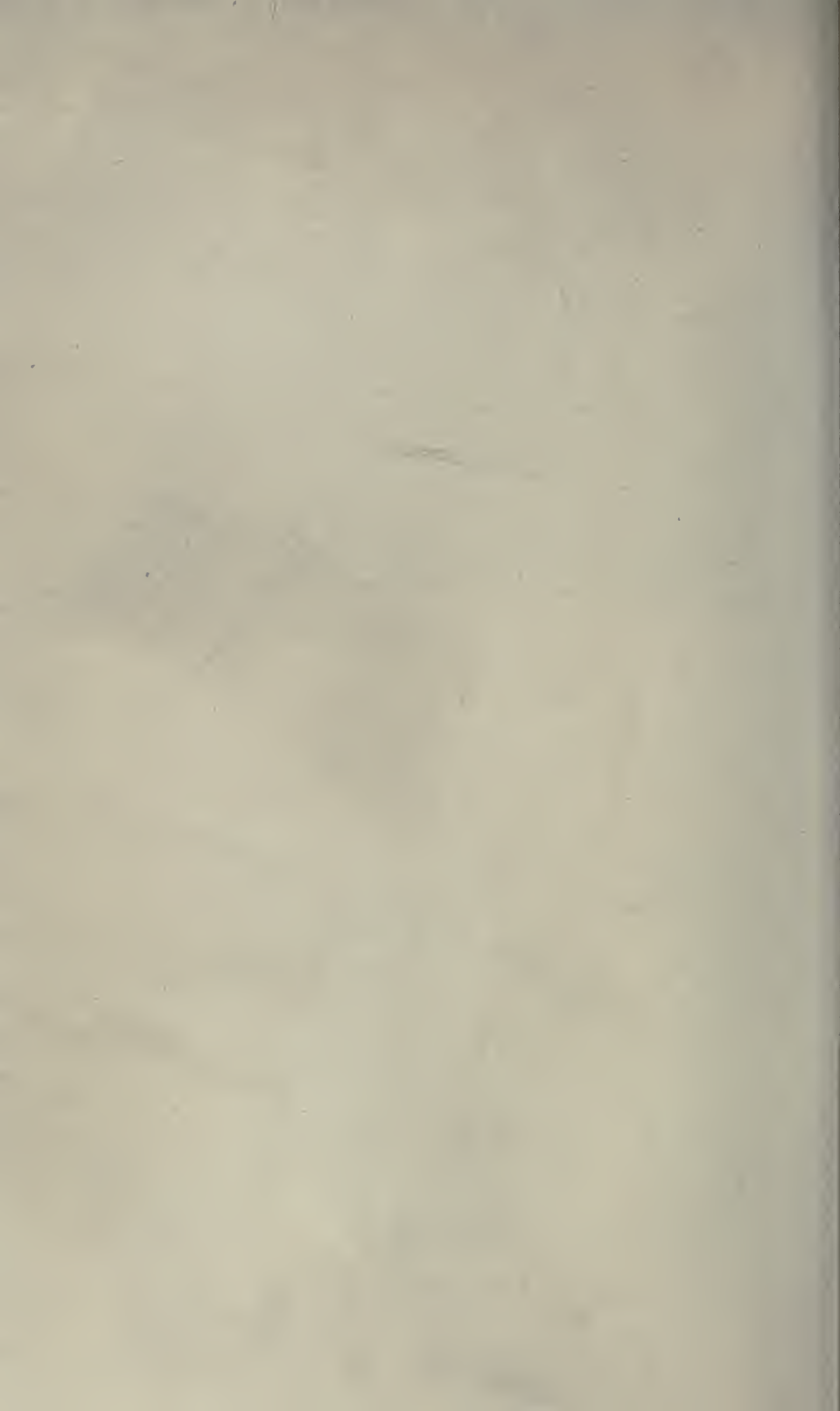
Since the accession of King Peter many reforms have been introduced, and on all sides the Servian people express content and prosperity. I will give a few examples. For instance, in the budget before the King's accession there were periodical deficits, but every year since, as I have already pointed out, shows a very substantial balance. Therefore the present increasing prosperity is apparent at a glance. The financial market, too, shows how Servian finances stand in Europe.



The British Legation : Belgrade.



The Knes Mihajelowa : Belgrade.



This is no doubt due, in the first place, to the constitutional cautiousness of King Peter. He has inspired with confidence the financial world in Paris and elsewhere, for it is well known that he is, before all, a constitutional ruler, and that his Government will never be anything else than a constitutional one. Therefore, by his attitude, he has so improved the state of Servian finance that the future prosperity of the country is assured.

When King Peter was proclaimed, the Servians restored their liberal Constitution, which the late King, under the influence of his father, had abrogated. This has opened the way to the development of the country in every direction. There is, of course, much yet to be done. As regards the administration of justice, several excellent reforms have been introduced during the present reign. Dr. Vesnitch is at present reforming the prison system, and is about to introduce, after studying the question for fifteen years, a new and unique system. He is of opinion that the prisoners from the towns should be separated from those from the country, for two reasons.

He declares that when criminals from the towns commit crimes it is in most cases because they are not sufficiently instructed in their skilled labour. They are bad workmen, and hence their downfall. If, however, they were classified and instructed in the prison, they would, when discharged, be better prepared, with the assistance of the Prisoners' Aid Societies, to seek an honest living. Again, the second reason is that the influence of town-bred prisoners upon those from the country is always an evil one, and should at all times be avoided. The Servian Government have adopted the Minister's point of view, and fresh prisons are to be constructed upon that basis.

Another reform about to be introduced by Dr. Vesnitch is that of "conditional release." It is intended to preserve first offenders from the demoralising influence of prison life, and to create a good moral influence over those who commit a crime for the first time. In a word, the Servian project seeks to conciliate the English method with the French *Loi Beranger*.

In all the other administrations—public instruction, war, finance, and agriculture—many other reforms have been introduced, and many are in course of preparation. As a matter of fact, until two years ago Servia had no University, but at present an excellent institution has been established, the professors of which rank well with those of other nations.

In the department of war, a very important reform is about to be carried out, namely, the rearmament of the artillery. This is, of course, a wide subject, and time must elapse before the defences of the country are in an absolutely perfect state. Suffice it, however, to say that the Ministers of War and Finance are exerting every effort to obtain the best weapons in France, and, at the same time, to leave the country's finances uncrippled.

Recently diplomatic relations have been resumed with England, and the Foreign Office have appointed Mr. Beethom Whitehead as Minister to Servia. This has given great satisfaction to the Servians, for they see in this action of England that their Government has already merited serious consideration. The resumption of friendship with Great Britain has been the means of greatly fortifying the Pachitch Ministry. It was obtained through the good services of Italy and France, and especially of the King of Italy, who, as is well known, is a great admirer of England, in addition to being brother-in-law of King Peter.

Servia hopes that the result of this renewed friendship will be to combat the German advances to the East; and this, of course, is greatly to the advantage of England. The Servians also hope that in the near future England will see her way to minimise the evils which Lord Beaconsfield's policy created in the Balkans when he allowed Austria to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina and to monopolise Balkan trade generally. It is probable that Lord Beaconsfield's error was due to his fear of a Pan-Slavonic danger, but the time is certainly now ripe for England to assert her power and stem the German tide.

It is within the range of possibility that ere long Russia

will unite with England, France, and Italy to take joint steps in the Balkans, and if this is realised it will mean for Serbia that her autonomy and free development will be secured. Diplomacy is working towards this end, and as the British Liberal Party is believed to be the protector of weak nations, it is more than likely the hope will very soon mature.

I have in this chapter spoken always of Austria, and not of Hungary. I have done so because Hungary hopes for her independence, and will, if she gains it, certainly find herself on a level with Serbia. The sympathy between the Servian and Hungarian people is historical, and it was proved lately by the transfer of the relics of the Hungarian hero, Racotzy, who was the greatest opposer to Austrian rule. Quite recently Wekerle, the Hungarian Premier, said in Parliament that "the basis of Hungarian foreign policy has been, is, and has to be, the continuance of Serbia's friendship."

Hungary has always found warm friends in England on account of her struggle for independence, and without doubt England will still support her when the day comes. Until ten years ago it was generally thought in Hungary that the Slav tendencies were dangerous to Hungary's existence, but that has now entirely changed, and instead of regarding Serbia as an enemy, they look upon her as an ally, and Germany as an enemy.

The renewal of diplomatic relations between Serbia and England will, it is felt certain, be the means of inducing British capitalists to make inquiry of the many and excellent openings now existing. When once England is materially interested in the Serb countries she will have a motive in promoting Serbia's prosperity, and in protecting her from the German advance, as a policy which surely will be to her own advancement.

It may be here interesting, too, if in conclusion I give a very brief summary of the trade of Serbia during 1905—the last published year—as compared with the four previous years, as it will show the rapidly growing prosperity under the present régime. In 1901 the exports were 65,685,653 fcs.,

and the imports 43,835,428 fcs.—a total of 109,521,081 fcs.; in 1902 the total was 116,944,408 fcs.; in 1903, 118,202,666 fcs.

For 1905 the figures were as follow :—

	1905.	1904.	Difference in 1905. more (+) less (—)
	Fcs.	Fcs.	Fcs.
Exports . . .	71,996,274	62,156,066	+9,840,208
Imports . . .	55,600,644	60,926,406	—5,325,672
Totals . . .	127,596,918	123,082,472	+4,517,446
Increase of trade	16,395,630	1,226,660	

Thus it will be seen that the country is undoubtedly entering upon an era of prosperity.

By the Department of Public Instruction I was afforded facilities for studying the educational system, and a few facts may prove interesting. Though Servia has been a free country for less than a century, education has already reached a very high level. It possesses a large number of primary schools, secondary schools, and special schools, as well as a high school in Belgrade which has lately been turned into a university.

The name “popular schools” is given to infant schools, primary schools, and the superior primary schools. The course in the primary schools lasts for six years, and in the primary superior schools two years. Children in towns are sent into the first class of primary schools at the age of six, and in the country at seven, the school year commencing on September 1 and ending on June 29.

Schoolmasters on leaving the training college receive 800 dinars (francs) per annum, and rise to 3000 dinars. Beyond this they receive an allowance of 30 to 80 dinars a month in lieu of lodging. For 1905 I was unfortunately unable to obtain the statistics, but I found that in 1904 there were in Servia 1093 schools for boys and 170 schools for girls, or 1263 primary schools. There were 1349 masters and 856 mistresses, or a total of 2205 teachers. At the end of that scholastic year there were 85,365 boys studying and 22,081 girls, a total of 107,446 scholars. There were also five normal schools with 25 masters, and six schools for young girls with 25 mistresses. There are also several excellent private schools. One

Protestant and one Catholic are in Belgrade, while of the three private schools for girls two are in Belgrade and one in Nisch.

As regards secondary schools, the course lasts eight years and is terminable by examination. When the high school, or university course, is ended, the students intending to become masters receive a supernumerary place in a secondary school with a salary of 1500 dinars. After about two years they pass the examination of professors, whereupon they receive 2500 dinars, which is raised periodically to 6000 dinars. The time-limit for professors is thirty years. In the secondary schools are masters of languages and fine arts, and a very high standard of instruction is given. The last return showed there were 4561 scholars and 313 masters in these schools. These figures, however, do not comprise the private gymnasiums of Alexinac and Gradiste, or the superior schools for young girls at Belgrade and Kragooyevac.

The special schools comprise the religious seminary, the academy of commerce, and the schools of agriculture. The religious seminary is at Belgrade, and the course of instruction lasts nine years. There are two schools of male teachers, one at Alexinac and the other at Yagodina, and also two schools for female teachers, at Belgrade and at Kragooyevac. Here, the course is for four years. The Academy of Commerce is in Belgrade, where a course of three years is given. There is an excellent School of Agriculture at Kraljevo, as well as a School of Forestry and Viticulture at Bukovo, where a three years' course is given.

The University, which is at Belgrade, has only recently been established, for hitherto it was only a high school. The instruction is of the very highest order, and without doubt it will turn out many intellectual men in the near future.

One afternoon I went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to have audience of M. Nicholas Pachitch, the President of the Council of Ministers and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Office is a great comfortable old building adjoining the gardens of the royal palace, painted dead white, and commanding from its windows a beautiful view over

the Save and the rolling plains beyond. The ante-chamber is a sombre, old-fashioned room, with heavy furniture, several fine pictures, and polished floor. But I was not given long to inspect it, for a few minutes later I was ushered into the private room of the man whom all Serbia regards as the greatest and cleverest politician—the man who is to make the New Serbia.

I found him a quiet-mannered man, with kindly smiling eyes behind his spectacles, his long beard and hair just silvered with grey, his voice low, soft, and deliberate.

In the midst of a turbulent day—for the Skupshtina was sitting and important questions were being discussed—he received me calmly, and though two Cabinet Ministers were waiting outside for audience, he was cool and deliberate. His manner was charmingly polite, and after greeting me, gave me a seat at the table beside him, and readily answered the questions I put to him.

“You have come here to learn about our country,” he said, smiling. “Well, what can I tell you? You have, I dare say, heard a good deal in England—some truth, and some facts that are untrue—facts manufactured by the enemies of Serbia! We want peace. Our tariff difficulties with Austria are regrettable, but we cannot accept the Austrian terms. We cannot guarantee to buy our war material and railway rolling-stock from Austria. Because we are a small country the Austrian Empire is imposing upon us terms which it is utterly impossible for us to accept. We must arm our artillery with the best armament, be it Austrian, French, German, or English. It is surely the duty of the Government to do this. Why should we be bound to Austria in this matter? As regards England, Serbia is delighted at the resumption of diplomatic relations, and at the appointment of Mr. Whitehead, who is a clever diplomatist, a cosmopolitan, and who already understands us. It is now our intention to show Europe that we are a sound nation, and by so doing we hope that English capitalists will seek to exploit our vast mineral wealth. In Serbia there are mines in all parts—coal, iron, copper, lead, antimony, zinc, and even gold. They

only require working, and great profits must accrue. I dare say you have seen the geological map which the Ministry of Commerce has recently prepared. If not, I am sure Mr. Stoyanovitch, the Minister, will allow you to see it."

"And the present condition of the country?" I asked.

"Under the present rule the people have shown themselves absolutely contented. There is an entire personal liberty which did not exist under the late King. Our watchword is 'Servia for the Servians.' Our policy is to avoid all outside complications, and endeavour to do our utmost to develop the resources of the country."

"And Macedonia?"

His Excellency smiled and shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"Ah! Macedonia!" he sighed. "Now you have touched upon a difficult question. The population there is mixed, it is true, and the problem puzzles every statesman in Europe; yet my own personal opinion is that in the course of a year or two the Powers will discover a mode of settlement which will be found to be beneficial to all concerned."

"And the future policy of Servia?"

"You can tell them in England that all Servia desires is 'peace,'" His Excellency answered, smiling at me through his spectacles. "This we are doing all we possibly can to promote. His Majesty has great admiration for the English, and the Government are ready to grant concessions for industrial and mining enterprises to English capitalists—if properly introduced. I can assure you that they will find in Servia excellent returns for their investments. But inquire for yourself, and you will find that Servia is to-day more prosperous than ever she was under the late King. Inquire among the people, not only in Belgrade, but away in the heart of the country where you are going. Let the people speak for themselves, and they will tell you how far our endeavours have been successful."

And then, after half an hour's chat, during which he told me many interesting facts, and gave me every facility to enable me to conduct my inquiries, I rose, shook hands, and left, convinced that a Ministry under such a clear, level-headed

statesman—a really great man—could not do otherwise than raise the country into a position of wealth combined with respect.

Upon every Servian's tongue I heard the name of Pachitch, and my own observations all showed most conclusively that he and his party, with the concurrence of the King, are guiding Servia to peace, happiness, and great prosperity.

A few days later, while at luncheon at the house of Dr. Vesnitch, Minister of Justice, I had an interview with M. Stoyanovitch, the Minister of Commerce. He, like all the other members of the Cabinet, has the interest of Servia deeply at heart. He is dark-haired, middle-aged, keen, clever, and a thoroughly competent business man. Our conversation mainly turned upon the projected railway to unite the Danube with San Giovanni di Medua, in Albania, and so give to Russia, Roumania, and Servia a port on the Adriatic.

The future of Servia, he declared, depended upon this line. She must have a direct outlet for her trade, and he prophesied that within three years the line would be built. The cost will be about 80,000,000 francs, or 150,000 francs per kilometre. Roughly, the length is about 500 kilometres. He pointed out that an English company would experience but little difficulty in obtaining a concession from the Turkish Government to pass through Turkish territory, while a French and German company would be prohibited. The line would be the highroad to Russia from the south, and would be an extremely paying one, for in addition almost the whole of the Servian imports and exports would be carried over it.

"British capitalists would do well to inquire into it," he said. "We have surveyed the route, and have the complete plans at the Ministry of Public Works. To anyone introduced by you, Monsieur N——, we should be very pleased to show them."

And the Minister went into details as to the excellent results which must certainly accrue from the undertaking and the profits which the company would certainly make.

Servia has undoubtedly a very big future before her, and her statesmen are ever looking far ahead.

CHAPTER V

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW IN SERVIA

A retrospect—A sitting of the Skupshtina—Peasants as deputies—Servia as an open field for British enterprise—Enormous mineral wealth—Mr. Finney, a mining engineer who has prospected in Servia for seventeen years, tells me some interesting facts regarding rich mines awaiting development—No adventurers need apply.

SERVIA has, indeed, had a turbulent past.

For centuries she has been torn by war and ground under the heel of the oppressor. From the days of Stevan Lazarevitch, at the end of the fourteenth century, until the revolt of the Serbs against Turkish rule under Karageorge in 1804, the country was constantly crushed and constantly disturbed. Karageorge declared Belgrade and the neighbouring region the free State of Servia, which was unfortunately not accomplished until after great sacrifices and many heroic battles.

In 1813, however, while Russia was engaged in her final conflict with Napoleon, the Turks again seized Servia, and Karageorge with several other chiefs was exiled to Austria. Two years later, Milosch Obrenovitch, with the aid of some chiefs, made another struggle for liberty, which, thanks to the Treaty of Bucharest, was crowned with success, and the interior autonomy of Servia thus became an accomplished fact.

In 1842 Alexander Karageorgevitch, the younger son of Karageorge, ascended the Servian throne as Prince, and under his rule the government of the country was modelled upon modern lines, and many institutions started which aided to develop the civilisation.

Exterior politics and the corruption of the officials by

friends of the Obrenovitch were successful in creating so much discontent that Alexander at last abandoned the throne. Upon this, the Skupshtina, or National Assembly, elected the aged Prince Milosch, who died very soon afterwards. In 1861 his son, Prince Mihailo, succeeded, but in 1868 was shot at Topschider, near Belgrade, through motives of personal animosity. His cousin Milan, who was heir to the throne, was then in his minority, and Servia was governed by a Regency of three persons.

During Milan's reign there occurred, 1876-78, the war with Turkey and the securing of four new departments, the recognition of the independence of Servia by the Berlin Treaty, the proclamation of the kingdom in 1882, the unfortunate war with Bulgaria in 1885, and the promulgation of a new constitution which, with some slight modification, is still in force. After the abdication of King Milan, his son Alexander mounted the throne. His unfortunate matrimonial alliance with the ambitious Draga, who quickly assumed authority, was soon responsible for much discontent. Life became impossible in Servia owing to the maladministration in every department, and the army revolted, with the tragic and regrettable result that is so well known.

After the death of King Alexander in 1903, the Skupshtina elected the son of Alexander Karageorgevitch as King under the title of Peter I.

With the present political acquisitions and the progress already made in the highroad of civilisation, Servia has already obtained a high place among civilised nations. But, alas! as the Servian author, M. Zrnitch, has put it, the Servians are only free in the head—Servia—and the arms—Montenegro. The other parts of their organism are still held in thralldom by the foreigner.

While in Belgrade I was afforded an opportunity of visiting the Skupshtina and being present at a somewhat heated debate. Just before my arrival two deputies had, it was said, come to blows. All that I saw there was most orderly, and certainly the speakers—even those in their quaint brown peasant dress—were mostly eloquent.

Servia badly needs a new Parliament House. The present Skupshtina is a large bare whitewashed building with two galleries, one for the diplomats and Press, and the other for the public. In front of a life-sized portrait of His Majesty sits the President, keeping order with his bell, and on either side at baize-covered tables sit the Ministers. The benches are set in horseshoe shape, and look very uncomfortable. The deputies consist of all classes, from the wealthy landowner to the peasant, and all receive fifteen francs a day expenses while the House sits.

Plans have already been prepared for a new and handsome Parliament House, which is to be built on a fine site behind the royal palace, and it is believed the work will be commenced during the present year. The sooner the National Assembly is properly housed the better, for the present building is mostly of wood, old, rickety, and the reverse of dignified. None are so alive to the urgent necessity of providing comfortable quarters for the deliberations of the Skupshtina than His Majesty himself, for it was he who explained to me what is intended.

After the revolution of June 2, 1903, the National Assembly convoked by the Government of the kingdom of Servia gave the country, on June 15, a new constitution, which was ratified three days later. The Skupshtina is composed of deputies elected directly by the people, and its members, during their office, cannot be sued or arrested without the consent of the Skupshtina itself—save in the case of *flagrant delit*. Besides the "Little Skupshtina," which carries on the government of the country, there is also the "Grand Skupshtina," which consists of double the number of deputies, and which is only summoned in exceptional circumstances, namely, to elect the King; to elect regents; to decide the succession of the throne; to deliberate upon any modification of the constitution; to decide upon any cession or exchange of territory; or when the King wishes to consult them. The King alone has the right to choose or dismiss his Ministers.

In Servia there are 17 departments, 81 arrondissements, and 1571 communes. At the head of each department is a

prefect nominated by the King, at the head of each arrondissement a sous-prefect, and at the head of each commune a mayor elected by the people.

Military service is compulsory, and the number of conscripts average 26,700 a year. The duration of service in the active army is for cavalry and infantry two years, and eighteen months for other branches of the service. I visited various barracks, and was afforded several opportunities of inspecting the troops. Both officers and men seem exceedingly smart and capable. Many of the officers had received their military education in France, Germany, and Russia, while one artillery officer I met had studied at Shoeburyness !

When the defensive forces are re-armed, as they will be completely within the next twelve months, Europe will find in Servia a very capable and well-trained army. Every Serb is a born fighter, and no detail is being overlooked to render Servia's defences up to date and complete.

Servia is not a country of great landowners. Apart from the property held by the State, the land is almost wholly divided among peasant proprietors. The law grants to every Servian peasant 2.8 hectares of land, which cannot be sold to pay private debts. It is also forbidden for cultivators to give bills of exchange. These two measures are of great importance in preserving the land to the Servian peasant. The country is a very rich agricultural one—perhaps one of the richest in Europe. Yet one fact struck me as curious, namely, that in Belgrade one cannot obtain any good milk, and all butter worth eating comes from Budapest. There is a very great opening in Servia for dairy-farmers, a branch of industry which, it seems, does not exist. The vines have, in recent years, been all destroyed by the phylloxera, but they are being rapidly replaced by the American variety. The country around the arrondissements of Smederevo, Golubac, Ram, and Krayina are particularly noted for good grapes and excellent wine.

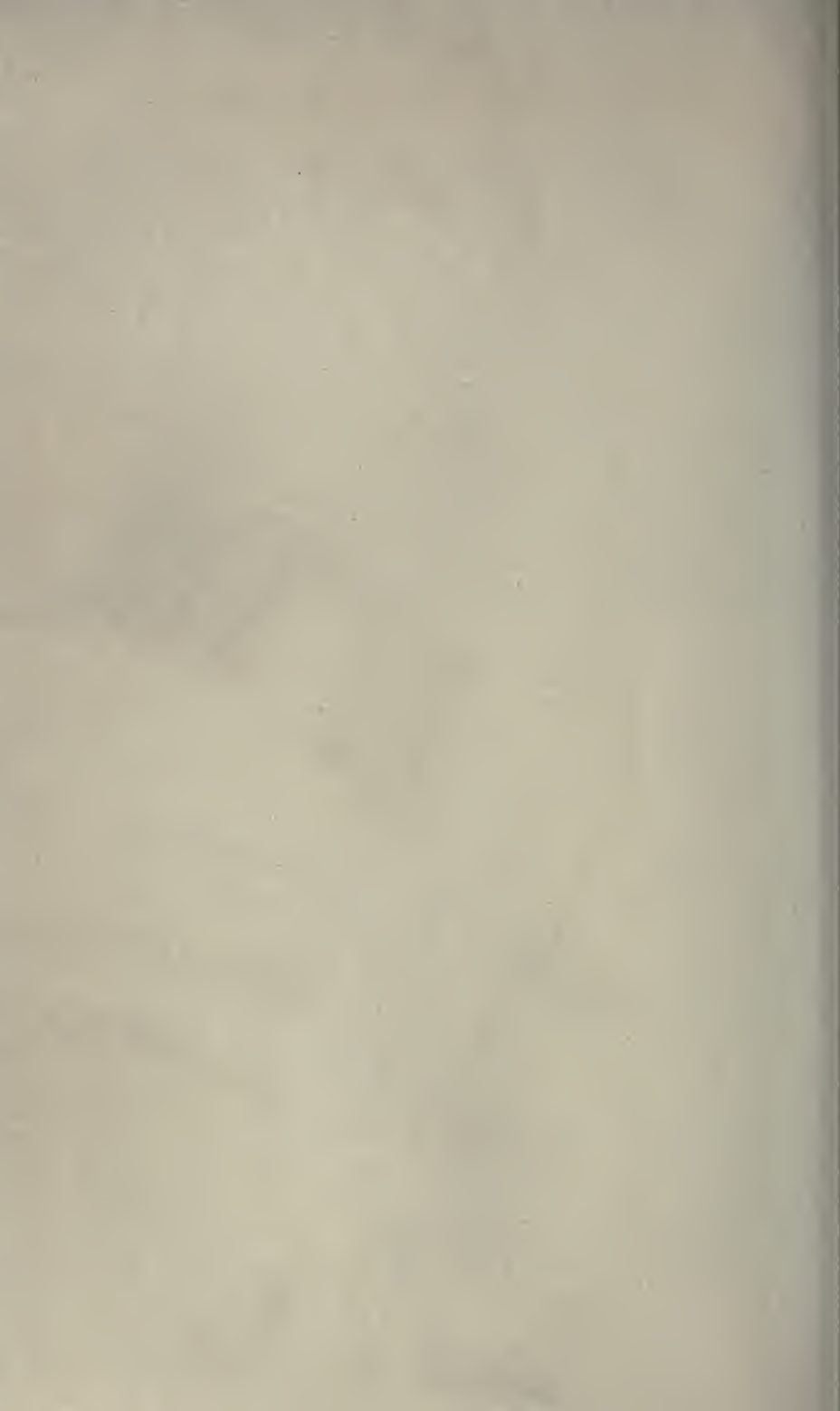
Tobacco is a monopoly of the State. It is purchased upon a tariff fixed by special commission, and is of well-known quality and peculiarly adapted for the manufacture



In "The Kalemegdan": Belgrade.



The Market Place: Belgrade.



of cigarettes. The departments where it is principally cultivated are Vrania, Krayina, Nisch, d'Uzice, and Kragooyevac, while in other parts of Servia the Turkish varieties are grown with great success, and for aroma will compare well with the tobacco of Albania or Kavala. Not only is sufficient tobacco grown in Servia to supply the wants of the country, but the quantities exported are increasing year by year. A favoured few Englishmen, and especially diplomats in various parts of Europe—who know the excellence of the special quality of Servian cigarettes—have them direct from Belgrade. Cigarettes bought for export cost one-half the price they do for consumption in Servia.

Marmalade and *slivovitza*—an *eau-de-vie* made of prunes—are also two articles manufactured in Servia and largely exported, about three million francs' worth of the former, and two hundred thousand francs' worth of the latter being sent out of the country annually.

There are immense forests in various parts of the country with a great wealth of timber unexploited, as a glance at any good map of Servia will show, while the sportsman will find there plenty of game of every kind, from bear, lynx, wolf, and such-like animals, down to the quail, pigeon, partridge, pheasant, and woodcock. The whole country teems with game, and the only prohibitions are upon the stag, deer, chamois, and hen pheasants. There are many sporting clubs, the chief one being in Belgrade, where a paper is also published called *Le Chasseur*.

Servia's mineral wealth is well known to geologists. Gold, in diluvial and alluvial deposits, is being worked at Timok, at Pek, and at other places, while cinnabar is found at Avala, near Belgrade, and in the villages of Brajici, Bare, and Donja Tresnica. At Podrinje, at Lyuta Strana, at Zuce, at Crveni Breg, in the region of Avala, at Rudnik, at Kopaonik, at Djurina Sreca there is lead; at Zavlaca and Kucajna, zinc; and at Povlen, Suvobor, Cemerno, Aldinac, Majdanpek, Bor in Timok and Rtanj, large deposits of copper. Arsenic is found in various regions, but principally near Donja Tresnica, in the department of Podrinje; while antimony is known to

exist in the Zajaca region. Rich iron is waiting to be exploited upon the Kopaonik, in Vlasina, Rudna Glava, Crnajka (department of Krajina), on the Vencac, in the centre of Serbia, and on the Boranja (in Podrinje); while there is coal in places too innumerable to mention in this work.

All this enormous mineral wealth might well be exploited by British capital. The Servian Government are, however, very careful to whom they give concessions, and will not entertain, for a single moment, any application, unless the applicant is properly introduced and can give undeniable proof of his *bona fides*. Therefore the adventurer who thinks he will, without capital, be able to make a "good thing" will find himself sadly disappointed. The Government is extremely anxious to receive *bona-fide* proposals, and as His Majesty himself informed me, will grant concessions, but only to firms or companies who mean serious and legitimate business.

The Servian State is owner of all the subsoil of its territory, and can give what rights it thinks proper to foreigners to prospect and work.

British capitalists would do well to make inquiries, for, from certain information I gathered in Belgrade, I have no hesitation in saying that great returns await those who commence serious mining operations in that rich and inexhaustible field.

As the future wealth of Serbia will depend to a large extent on the exploitation of her mineral resources, and as Englishmen must, ere long, be interested in her mines—as they are in mines all over the world—a few facts concerning the Mining Law of Serbia may not be out of place here.

The Government grants two kinds of rights to make researches, the "simple right" and the "exclusive right." The former is given for one year, and may be extended to two years, and is limited to the three communes indicated. The second lasts a year, but is renewable each year as long as required, and it gives a right to explore over 500,000 square metres of mining field.

The State gives concessions for mines for fifty years upon a sufficient number of mining-fields each of 100,000 square

metres, the boundaries of which are fixed by a special commission. To obtain a concession it must first be proved that there are undoubted traces of minerals; that the capital is sufficient, and a plan of the proposed works has to be furnished. The concessionaire, after fifteen years of uninterrupted work, becomes proprietor, but he must continue to pay the mining duties, and of course conform to the Mining Law.

Both the prospector and the concessionaire are obliged to work regularly, take proper precautions for the well-being and personal safety of their workpeople, report annually upon work executed, and furnish each year plans for next year's work. There must be no mining beneath roads, water-courses, buildings, or cemeteries.

All rights of research and all concessions are lost if the specified work is not executed within the first year, or is interrupted without a reason approved by the Minister, or by bankruptcy.

The State, in order to encourage industry, favours the importation of all machinery and material for use in mines, as well as the exportation of the ore obtained, and gives many other advantages to the concessionaire.

Of late, Belgrade has been overrun with foreign concession-hunters, most of them of the adventurer type. I met several of them in Belgrade. In my conversation with the Ministers I quickly learnt that the Government, fully alive to the great mineral resources of their country, and confident in the great wealth that must in a few years accrue, will have absolutely nothing to do with any person who comes to them without introduction.

In Belgrade, I repeat, the doors are closed to the irresponsible concession-hunter, but at once open to anyone who on being introduced can show his *bona fides* and that he has capital behind him.

In the course of my inquiries into the mineral wealth I had a number of conversations with Mr. J. R. Finney, Ass. I. M. & M., an English mining engineer who has spent seventeen years in prospecting and working mines in Servia.

No one knows more about mines and traces of minerals in the country than he.

He pointed out to me that the mineral deposits of Servia have been worked to a very great extent from very early times, as the remains of Roman and Venetian works prove and the enormous slag-heaps found in various parts of the country. He himself has on many occasions found, while prospecting, rude ancient implements, bones, etc. Of the ancient Roman workings, copper, galena, and silver were obtained at Kopaonik; at Rudnik, lead, silver, and zinc were mined; at Kucajna, gold, silver, zinc, and coal, while alluvial gold is to be found all along the Pek River, and especially where it joins the Danube. This gold has, he said, evidently been worked down in course of time from a rich quartz reef which is known by certain persons, including himself, to exist.

At the Rebel copper mine, which Mr. Finney himself discovered, he found ancient workings that had been shored up with timber, but so long ago that the wood was petrified! Again, the wood was pine, which does not now exist in the forests. The latter are all beeches, and it is known that in course of long ages beeches kill the pines. At the mine in question is an extensive copper-smelting works, and a very large percentage of metal is obtained. All over this same district Mr. Finney has prospected, and declares that in the mountains of Medvednick and Povlen there are large deposits of lead, copper, silver, and antimony all awaiting exploitation.

Some very important copper mines and smelting works are at Maydan Pek, and have been worked at a good profit for years, while at Bor there has been erected a large smelting works, which are capable of producing ten tons of copper daily. Large deposits of antimony exist, to Mr. Finney's knowledge, at Zajitchar and Krupanj.

"I quite admit," said Mr. Finney, as we were chatting, "that some mines in Servia have not been successful. The bulk of them have been over-capitalised. Take, as an instance, one company with £300,000 capital, which left £20,000 for

working. The consequence is that the sum at disposal has not been sufficient to develop the mine or to work sufficient to pay interest on £280,000.

“Again, in many cases men unacquainted with any foreign language, or with the customs of the country, have been sent out here to manage, and with instructions from a board in London utterly ignorant of the requirements of the case. As an instance of this, a certain company that I could name sent out to Servia six managers in three years. In such a case, with a manager dependent upon interpreters and ignorant of the people, the price of labour and materials rises from 200 to 300 per cent. I have known these prices to be paid. Again, there is some little reform needed in the mining laws, and the Government would be well advised if they compelled the communes to put the roads in better repair. Transport is at present somewhat difficult, and if the communes put the roads in order they would, in the long-run, greatly benefit by the opening up of the country. Such,” Mr. Finney added, “are some of the reasons why foreign mining undertakings in Servia have not been altogether successful in the past. But for the future there is great hope, and English capitalists will do well to regard Servia as a field where good profits may easily be made.”

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL SERVIAN PLACE-NAMES

- ALEXANDROVATZ . Chief town of the arrondissement of Koznitza, on the river of that name.
- ALEXINATZ . . Chief town of the department of the same name, at the junction of the Morawa with the Morawitz. 6000 inhabitants. Copper mines. The monastery of Sant Stepan is in close proximity.
- ALEXINATZ . . Department with arrondissement of 30 communes.

ARANGYELOVATZ	.	Chief town of Jassenitza, department of Kragooyevatz. 1000 inhabitants. Source of Boukovik mineral waters. Watering-place much frequented from May till October.
ARILIE	.	An arrondissement of 23 communes in Oujitze, valley of the Morawa Serbe.
ARILIE	.	Chief town of arrondissement of that name, department of Oujitze.
AZANJA	.	Town in Jassenitza. 4500 inhabitants.
AZBOUKOVATZ	.	Arrondissement of 38 communes in Podrinié.
BANIA	.	Watering-place very frequented, in the department of Alexinatz. Ruins of a Roman bath and of a feudal castle. View upon Pyramid of Rtanje, and one of the most picturesque places in Servia.
BANIA	.	Hot-water springs an hour from Nisch.
BANIA-YOSCHANITZA	.	Chief town of Yoschanitza, in Kruschevatz.
BELAVIA	.	Mineral-water springs in the arrondissement of Yagodina.
BELIVNIA	.	Chief town of the arrondissement of Prokoupatz, department of Toplitz.
BIELA-PALANKA	.	Arrondissement in Pirot of 44 communes.
BIELITZA	.	Small tributary of the Morawa. Also name of an arrondissement.
BLATO-LUZNITZA	.	Chief town of Luznitza, department of Pirot.
BOGATITCH	.	Chief town in the arrondissement of Matchva, in Schabatz district.
BOLIEVATZ	.	Chief town of an arrondissement in the department of Tzrna Reka, at foot of Mount Ratni.
BOLIEVATZ	.	An arrondissement of the Zrnarjeka.
BRESTOVATZ	.	Station between Nisch and Vrania.
BRZA-PALANKA	.	Chief town of an arrondissement in Kraina, on the Danube.
BRZA-PALANKA	.	Arrondissement on the Roumanian frontier with 20 communes.
DERVEN	.	Chief town of the arrondissement of Sverlichka, department of Kniajevatz. Monastery of S. Arangel in the vicinity.

DESPOTOVATZ . . .	Arrondissement with 33 communes in Tchoupria.
DJEP . . .	Station between Nisch and Vrania.
DJUNIS . . .	Station on the Morawa.
DOBRA . . .	Coal-mine on the Danube between Golubatz and Dolni Milanovatz.
DOBRITSH . . .	Arrondissement in Toplitza with 85 communes.
DOLNI DUCHNIK . . .	Chief town in the arrondissement of Zaplania, department of Nisch.
DOLNI MILANOVATZ . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Poreschka-Rieka, in Kraina, on the Danube. Fine forests; stone and lignite in the vicinity.
DRAGATCHEVO . . .	Name of an arrondissement of which Gutscha is the chief town, in Tschachak. 55 communes.
DRINA . . .	Tributary of the Save between Bosnia and the Servian frontier. Excellent trout-fishing.
GAMSIGRAD . . .	A locality near Zaitchar. Close by upon a plateau near Timok are most interesting ruins of a Roman fortress. One of the best preserved ruins in Servia.
GLEDIKJ . . .	A plateau south of Kragouievatz.
GOLEMO-SELO . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Polianitza, in Vrania.
GOLIA . . .	Mountains on the frontier of Novi-Bazar.
GOLUBATZ . . .	Arrondissement of 29 communes.
GOLUBATZ . . .	Mining centre on the Danube.
GOLUBINIE . . .	Mountains in Kraina.
GORNI-MILANOVATZ . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Takovo and of the department of Rudnik. 3000 inhabitants. School of commerce.
GRDELITZA . . .	Station on the Nisch-Vrania railway, south of Vlachotinja.
GREATCH . . .	Station near Alexinatz, on the Belgrade-Nisch railway.
GROTZKA . . .	Small river, which gives its name to an arrondissement of 17 communes.
GROTZKA . . .	Town on the Danube, near Belgrade.

- GRUJA . . . Tributary of the Morawa Srbska, which gives its name to an arrondissement of 63 communes.
- GUBEREVATZ . . . Important traces of minerals 35 kilometres from Belgrade.
- GUTSCHA. . . Chief town of Dragatchevo, department of Tchatchak. Splendid pastures.
- GUTSCHEVO-BORANJA Mountains in the department of Podrinie.
- HASSAN-PACHA . Chief town of the arrondissement of Jassenitza, department of Semendria. 3200 inhabitants.
- IBAR . . . Tributary of the Morawa Srbska.
- IVANYITZA . . Chief town of Moravitz, department of Oujitze. 200 inhabitants. Wheat-growing.
- JADAR . . . Tributary of the Drina, which gives its name to an arrondissement of 40 communes. Chief town, Loznitza.
- KAMENITZA . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Podgaratz, in Valievo.
- KATSCHER . . Arrondissement, of which the chief town is Rudnik. 38 communes.
- KLADOVA . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Kljoutscha, department of Kraina, on the Danube. 2706 inhabitants.
- KLIOUTSCHA . . Arrondissement, of which the chief town is Kladova, north of the Kraina.
- KNIAJEVATZ . . Chief town of the department of that name at the foot of the Balkans. Growing of cereals and a school of commerce.
- KOLUBARA . . Tributary of the Save. Gives its name to two arrondissements.
- KOPAONIK . . Mountains to the south of the Dinaric Alps.
- KORMAN . . Station ten kilometres north of Alexinat.
- KOSSMAY. . . Mountain which gives its name to an arrondissement of which the chief town is Iopot, department of Belgrade. 26 communes.
- KOSTLENIK . . Mountain in the department of Rudnik.

- KOURSCHOUMLIE . Chief town of the arrondissement of Kossanitza, on the Turkish frontier. Country noted for its wines.
- KOUTSCHEVO . Chief town of the arrondissement of Svidje, on the Pek. Coal mines.
- KOZIERITZA . Chief town of the arrondissement of Tzerna Gora, department of Oujitza.
- KOZNITZA . Watercourse and tributary of the Morawa Srbska, which gives its name to an arrondissement of 92 communes in the department of Kruschevatz.
- KRAGOUIEVATZ . Chief town of the department of that name, and ancient capital of Servia. Situated on the Lepnitza. 13,000 inhabitants. Contains a large library, a gun-factory, and powder-magazine. Potteries and stone quarries. Excellent wine grown here.
- KRAINA . Department in the north-east of Servia. Chief town, Hegotin.
- KRALIEVO . Chief town of the arrondissement of the same name, department of Tchatchak. 4200 inhabitants. Lead and iron mines. Military school.
- KROUPANIE . Town in the department of Loznitza. Lead, zinc, and antimony mines.
- KRUSCHEVATZ . Chief town of the arrondissement and department of that name, with 6200 inhabitants. Ancient residence of the Tzars of Servia. Vine culture.
- LAPOVO . Junction of the railway Belgrade-Nisch with the line to Kragouievatz.
- LEBANE . Chief town of the arrondissement of Yablonitza, at the junction of the Medvedja and Buguecka.
- LEPENATZ . A series of plateaux in the south-west, near the environs of Nisch.
- LEPNITZA . Tributary of the Morawa, which gives its name to the arrondissement of which Ratscha is the chief town. 40' communes.
- LESKOVATZ . Chief town of an arrondissement of that name in the department of Nisch. Monastery of S. Radni in vicinity. Arrondissement contains 77 communes.

- LIPOVATSCHA . . Small river in the arrondissement of Ratscha.
- LOZNITZA. . . Chief town of the department of Podrinie. 4000 inhabitants. School of commerce.
- LUBOVIA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Asboukovatz, upon the Drina.
- LUZNITZA . . . An arrondissement with 54 communes in the department of Pirot.
- MAIDANPEK . . Important mining centre 30 kilometres from Dolni - Milanovatz, on the Danube. Iron and copper. Vast forests.
- MASSOURITZA . . An arrondissement on the Bulgarian frontier, department of Vrania. 43 communes.
- MATSCHWA . . . An arrondissement of 24 communes in Schabatz district, north-east of Servia.
- MIONITZA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Kolubara, department of Valievo.
- MLAVA . . . Tributary of the Danube which gives its name to an arrondissement of which the chief town is Pelrovatz. 32 communes.
- MORAWA . . . Chief river in Servia, and by its tributary the Morawa, which rises in the Yavor mountains, waters much territory in the south-east of the kingdom. There is an arrondissement of the same name in the department of Rudnik, with 38 communes.
- MORAWITZA . . Tributary of the Morawa which gives its name to two arrondissements, one of 31 communes, the chief town of which is Bania, in Alexinatz, and the other, of which Yvanitza is the chief town, in Oujitza, with 149 communes.
- NEGOTIN . . . A town of 6000 inhabitants, in Krania, East Servia. Noted for its wines.
- NISCHAVA . . . Tributary of the Morawa, which gives its name to the arrondissement of which Pirot is the chief town. 65 communes.

NOVI HAN . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Timok, in the Tchiprovatz Mountains, on the Bulgarian frontier.
OBRENOVATZ . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Possava, department of Valievo, on the Tamnava, near its confluence with the Danube. 3000 inhabitants.
OMOLJE . . .	Mountains. Highest, 3500 metres, in the department of Pojarevatz.
ORATSCHA . . .	A town in Semendria, upon the small river Rallya. Also the name of an arrondissement of 14 communes.
OROPSI . . .	Mineral springs near Belgrade.
OUB . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Tamnava, in Valievo.
OUITZE . . .	Town of 8000 inhabitants in the department of the same name. Wine and school of commerce.
OVTCHAR . . .	Mountains near Tchatchak. Sulphur baths.
PARATCHIN . . .	Chief town of an arrondissement of that name on the Zanitza, department of Tchoupria. The monastery of S. Pelka is not far distant.
PETCHENIKOTZA . . .	Town at the confluence of the Jablonitza and the Morawa.
PETROVATZ . . .	Chief town of the arrondissement of Mlava, in Pojarevatz.
PIROT . . .	Chief town of the department of that name in the south-east of Servia. 14,000 inhabitants.
PODGORATZ . . .	Mines of iron, copper, and lead, in Valievo. Lithographic stone is quarried.
PODGORIE . . .	Arrondissement of 29 communes in Valievo.
PODRINYE . . .	A department in the west of Servia. Chief town, Loznitza.
PODUNVALYE . . .	Arrondissement of 25 communes in Smederevo.
POJAREVATZ . . .	Chief town of an arrondissement of that name. 13,000 inhabitants. Mining centre. School of agriculture. The scene of the famous Congress of 1718.

- POJEGA . . . Chief town of an arrondissement of that name, department of Oujitza. The arrondissement contains 52 communes.
- POLYANITZA . . . An arrondissement on the Turkish frontier, department of Vrania.
- PORESCHKA . . . Tributary of the Danube in a deep valley between the Pekska and the Misosch mountains. It gives its name to an arrondissement of 11 communes, in Kraina.
- PORTES DE FER . . . "The Iron Gates" of the Danube, or (GYERDAP) passage between the Balkans at the point where the river leaves Servia. There is also a small town of 3000 inhabitants. In the mountains in the vicinity the wild cherry is found. It is very rare, and is much sought after for the manufactory of expensive furniture.
- POSSAVA . . . An arrondissement of 27 communes in Belgrade. Also one in the department of Valievo.
- POSSAVO-TAMNAVA . . . Arrondissement of 54 communes in the department of Schabatz.
- POTSERIE . . . Arrondissement of 34 communes, of which the chief town is Schabatz.
- PRECHILOVATZ . . . Chief town of an arrondissement of that name in Alexinatz.
- PREILLINA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of the Morawa, a few kilometres from Tchatchak.
- PRIBOI . . . Town on the railway Nisch-Vrania.
- PRILIKA . . . Mineral springs in the arrondissement of Oujitze.
- PROKOUPATZ . . . Arrondissement of 104 communes in department of Toplitza.
- PROKOUPLIE . . . Chief town of Toplitza and of the arrondissement of Dobritsch.
- PSCHINIE . . . An arrondissement of 89 communes in Vrania.
- RADJEVINA . . . Chief town of Radjevo, in Podrinie, on the Bosnian frontier. Lead mines.
- RADJEVO . . . Arrondissement of 32 communes.
- RADOUYEVATZ . . . A town on the Danube at the point where the right bank ceases to be in Servia.

- RAJAN . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of that name, in Alexinat^z. The Monastery of S. Roman is in the vicinity.
- RALLYA . . . Station on the Belgrade-Nisch line. Important mining centre. Also the name of a small river.
- RAMA . . . Arrondissement of 31 communes, of which Veliko Graditcha is the chief town.
- RASCHKA . . . Chief town in the arrondissement of Stoudenitza, department of Tcha-tchak, at the foot of Mount Golia.
- RATSCHA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Lepnitza, in Kragouievat^z. Also the name of an arrondissement of 28 communes in Oujitze.
- REKOVATZ . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Levatch, in Yagodina.
- RESNIK . . . Station on the Belgrade-Nisch railway.
- RESSAVA . . . Tributary of the Morawa which gives its name to an arrondissement of 24 communes in Tchoupria.
- RIPANIE . . . Station and mine on the line Belgrade-Nisch.
- RTANIE . . . A pyramidical mountain of 3900 metres in the arrondissement of Alexinat^z.
- RUDNIK . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Kastcher, department of Rudnik ; also the name of a range of mountains in the centre of Servia.
- RYBAR . . . Mineral springs in Kruschevat^z.
- SAVA . . . A tributary of the Danube which joins the latter at Belgrade.
- SCHABATZ . . . A town of 11,000 inhabitants upon the Save, capital of a department of that name.
- SCHORNIK . . . A plateau to the west of Oujitze.
- SCHUMADIA . . . A vast forest extending through the departments of Belgrade and Rudnik.
- SEMENDRIA . . . Chief town of a department of that name, situated on the Danube, with 7500 inhabitants. Vine culture.
- SIKIRITZA . . . A station between Belgrade and Nisch. Lignite is known to exist here in large quantities.

- SIKOLIE . . . A mining centre in the Kraina.
- SLATIBOR . . . A chain of mountains forming part of the Dinaric Alps separating Servia and Rascie (Novi Bazar). Also the name of an arrondissement of 30 communes in Oujitze.
- SMRDAN-BARA . . . Excellent sulphur springs at the confluence of the Drina and the Save in Loznitza. Very picturesque.
- SOPOT . . . Chief town on the arrondissement of Kossmaj, department of Belgrade.
- STALATZ . . . The junction of the railwayKruschevatz-Oujitze and the line Belgrade-Nisch.
- STANISCHITZA . . . High plateaux in Kruschevatz.
- STIG . . . An arrondissement of 13 communes in Pojarevatz, the chief town being Koutschevo.
- STUDENITZA . . . Tributary of the Ibar, which joins it between the mountains Iakowo and Radotschewo. It gives its name to an arrondissement of 144 communes in Tchatchak. The chief town is Ratschka, near which is the celebrated monastery of Tsarska Lavra, built in the twelfth century by the orders of Krale Stefan Nemanja, who became a monk under the name of Simeon. The monastery, in the Slavonic style, Orthodox and Byzantine, is entirely constructed of white marble, and is of marvellous beauty.
- SVERLICHKA . . . Arrondissement of 40 communes, the chief town of which is Derven, in Kniajevatz.
- SVILAINATZ . . . Chief town of Ressava, upon the river of that name in the department of Tchoupria.
- TAKOVO . . . Arrondissement of 43 communes in Rudnik.
- TAMNAVA . . . A tributary of the Save which gives its name to an arrondissement of 42 communes in Valievo.
- TCHAITINA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Slatibor, near the Bosnian frontier, twenty kilometres from Mokragora.

- TCHATCHAK . . Chief town of a department of that name, situated upon the Morawa Serbe. 4200 inhabitants.
- TCHOPITZ . . Chief town of Kolubara, department of Belgrade.
- TCHOUPRIA . . Chief town of a department of that name, situated upon the Morawa at its confluence with the Kamenitza. 5200 inhabitants. Lignite.
- TEMNITCH . . A department with capital of the same name.
- TEMNITCHKA . . Mountains in the south of Yagodina which give their names to an arrondissement of 43 communes.
- TIMOK . . . A river which rises near Biela Palanka, runs to the north, and falls into the Danube a little below Radouyevatz, after serving as frontier to Servia and Bulgaria for 50 kilometres. The name also of an arrondissement of 20 communes of which Novi-Han is the chief town, in the department of Kniajevatz.
- TOPLITZA . . A river rising in the Kopaonik mountains, and falls into the Morawa near Nisch. It also gives its name to a department of which Prokouplie is the chief town.
- TOPOLA . . . A small town in Kragouievatz. 3100 inhabitants.
- TOPSCHIDER . . First station on the line Belgrade-Nisch. Royal villa and gardens. Also mining centre. The name of a small river falling into the Save.
- TRNAVA . . . An arrondissement of 29 communes, the chief town of which is Tchatchak.
- TRSTENIK . . A town of 2000 inhabitants, situated on the Morawa Srbska, in Kruschevatz. Manufacture of millstones. Also the name of an arrondissement of 38 communes.
- TZERNAGORA . . A mountain which gives its name to an arrondissement of 126 communes in Oujitze.
- UMKA . . . A town on the Save, department of Belgrade.

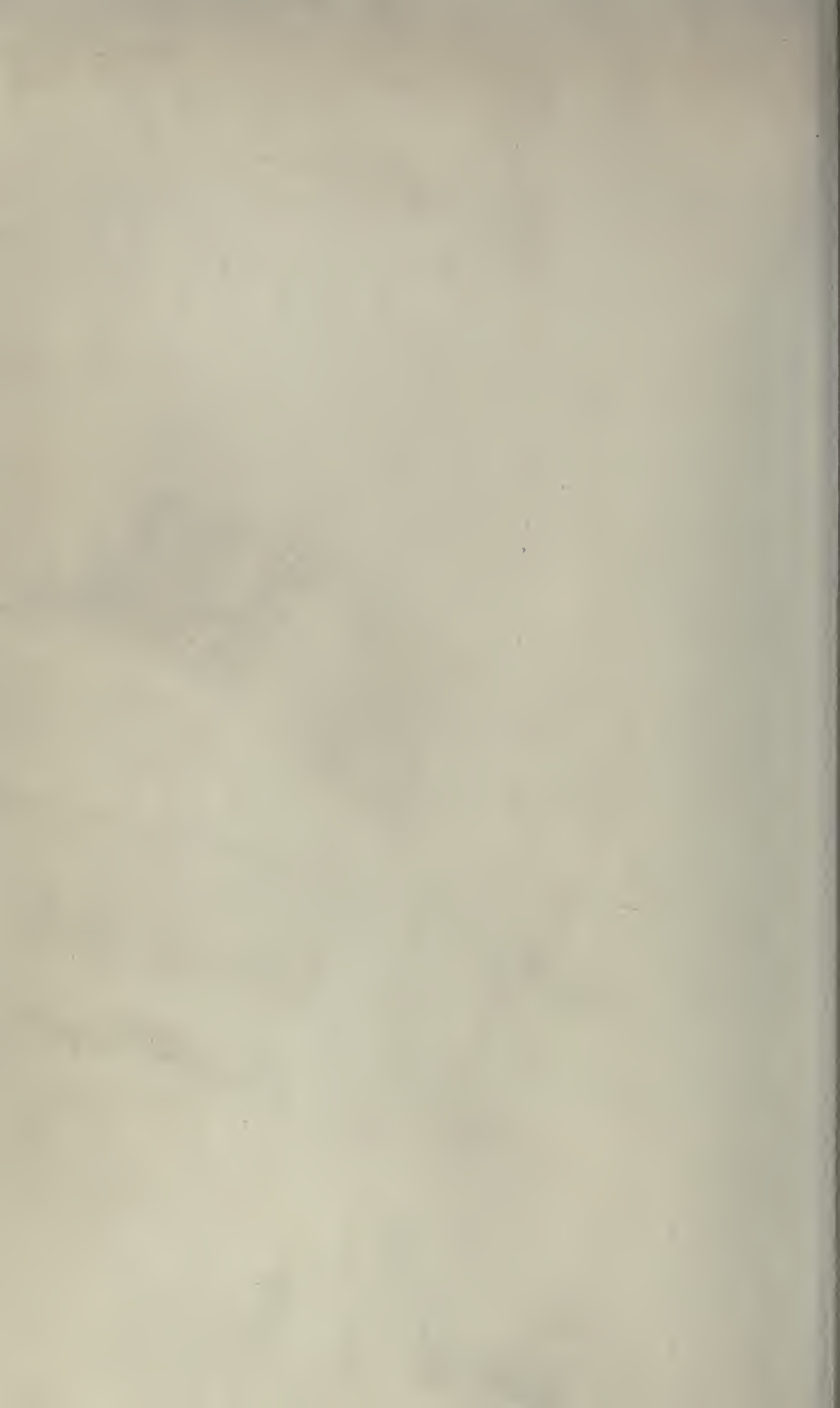
- VALIEVO . . Chief town of the department and arrondissement (of 62 communes) of the same name. 7500 inhabitants. Lithographic stone. Town lit by electricity by an English concessionaire, Mr. J. R. Finney.
- VARVARIN . . A town in the department of Yagodina. Stalatz station.
- VELIKA-LUKANIA . A town at the foot of Mount Radotschina, department of Pirot. The monastery of S. Arangelh is near.
- VELIKA-PLANA . The junction of railways between Belgrade-Nisch and Semendria.
- VELIKI-POPOVITCH . Chief town of the arrondissement of Despotovatz, situated on the Retsava.
- VELIKO-GRADISHTJE . A town at the confluence of the Pek and Danube. 4016 inhabitants. Wheat-growing.
- VERSCHKA-TCHOUKA Mountain between Novi-Han and Zaitchar. Rich coal mines.
- VIZZOTSCHKA . . An arrondissement in Pirot containing 26 communes.
- VLADIMIRTSI . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Possavo-Tamnava, in Schabatz.
- VLADITCHIN-HAN . Small station on the Nisch-Vrania line.
- VLASCHKA . . Fifth station from Belgrade, towards Nisch.
- VLASSINA . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Mazouritza, in Vrania, on the Bosnian frontier.
- VLASSOTINZE . . A town situate on the Vlassina-Vignes, in Nisch. Also the name of an arrondissement of 51 communes.
- VRANIA . . Chief town of a department of that name in South Servia, on the Nisch-Uskub line. Vine culture. At Bania, in the vicinity, mineral springs.
- VRATCHAR . . Arrondissement of 20 communes in the department of Belgrade.
- WRATARNITZA . A plateau to the east of Zrna-Rieka, Bulgarian frontier.
- WRNTZE . . Excellent mineral springs upon the road from Kralievo to Trstenik, in the arrondissement of Kruschevatz.

- YABAR . . . Chief town in the arrondissement of Morawa. Abundant lignite.
- YABLANITZA . . . A river falling into the Morawa at Brestovatz-Tchetina, and giving its name to an arrondissement of 58 communes, department of Toplitza.
- YADAR . . . A tributary of the Drina which gives its name to an arrondissement of 40 communes in Podrinie.
- YAGODINA . . . Chief town of the department of that name and of the arrondissement of Bielitza, upon the Constantinople road. 5000 inhabitants. Station on the Belgrade-Nisch line.
- YASSENITZA . . . A tributary of the Morawa, which gives its name to an arrondissement of 27 communes in Kragouievatz. Also a small tributary of the Medjloudje and the name of an arrondissement of 15 communes in Semendria.
- YAVOR . . . Mountains on the western frontier of Servia.
- YBAR . . . Tributary of the Morawa Serbe, which it joins near Kralievo.
- YOSCHANITZA . . . Small tributary of the Ibar which gives its name to an arrondissement of 71 communes in Kruschevatz.
- YVANITZA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Morawitza, in Oujitze. 2000 inhabitants. Cereals.
- ZAGLAV . . . An arrondissement of 51 communes, of which Kniajevatz is the chief town.
- ZAGOUBITZA . . . Chief town of the arrondissement of Omolje, upon the Mlava. The celebrated monastery of S. Giorgiak is in the vicinity.
- ZAITCHAR . . . One of the arrondissements of the Zrna Rieka. 25 communes. Also name of the capital of the department. 7000 inhabitants. Coal mines.
- ZAPLANIE . . . An arrondissement of 55 communes in the department of Nisch.

BULGARIA



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE FERDINAND OF BULGARIA.



CHAPTER I

SOFIA OF TO-DAY

At the Bulgarian frontier—A chat with M. Etienne, French ex-Minister of War—Evening in Sofia—A city of rapid progress—Engaging peasants for Earl's Court Exhibition—Amusing episodes—Social life in Sofia—The diplomats' club—The Bulgarian Government grant me special facilities for investigation.

THE Orient Express—that train of dusty *wagons-lits* which three days a week gives communication between Ostend and the East—had just passed the Bulgarian frontier at Tzaribrod, and my passport had been examined and stamped by a keen-eyed little man in black.

I was sitting in the dining-car with a very distinguished French statesman, M. Etienne, ex-Minister of War, and we had been chatting for several hours as the train wound through the defiles of the Servian mountains.

A diplomat's wife, with four pet spaniels, on her way, I believe, from Japan to the Turkish capital, was seated at the next table to ours. She had ordered coffee, for which she paid with a thousand-franc French note! The takings of the "pudding-car" of the "Orient" must be considerable, for the *maître d'hôtel* promptly cashed the note—nine "one-hundreds," some French gold, silver, and copper—and received a few centimes as a tip! It was my first quaint experience in Bulgaria. Mark Twain with his million-pound-note should come here. Curiously enough, I afterwards met the diplomat's wife in Constantinople.

Entering Sofia from the station, the traveller is at first sadly disappointed. The place looks dismal and half finished.

There are wide roads and boulevards laid out, with scarcely a house in them. Your cab suddenly turns a corner. The high pointed minaret of a mosque comes into view, and lo! you are in a wide boulevard, which would really do credit to Brussels. You pass a many-domed building, the Cathedral, and presently a pretty garden behind railings, and a long handsome building with sentries at the entrance-gate—the Palace of Prince Ferdinand. You are in modern Sofia.

After a wash at the hotel, I went to the Palace, signed my name in His Royal Highness's visiting-book, and then went forth to wander in the streets.

It was now already dark. In the trees of the central boulevard thousands of rooks were cawing and circling above, disturbed by the lights and movement of the street. Men were shouting the evening newspapers in strident voices, and one could almost imagine oneself back on the Boulevard des Italiens at the absinthe hour, with the camelots crying "*V'la la Presse!*" Only, in Paris, rooks do not nest in the streets, nor do the watchmakers have twenty-four inches of space and a chair in the windows of the smaller cafés. A walk along any of the principal streets at once shows the Bulgar to be a fighter, for the display of arms of all kinds, even to the modern Browning automatic pistol, is immense.

Here, one is really in the Balkans. The last official census gives sixty-six Englishmen and forty-six Englishwomen in the whole of Bulgaria. I met six only. Uniforms, upon Russian models, are everywhere—the peaked cap, the grey overcoat, the big revolver. Men in European dress jostle with peasants in linen blouses, round astrachan caps, and drab blankets around them, or others in sheepskin jackets with the wool inside, all with the inevitable round Balkan cap of astrachan. The Turk, too, is quite at home and friendly with the Christian, and modern progress is typified by the electric trams whizzing and clanging everywhere.

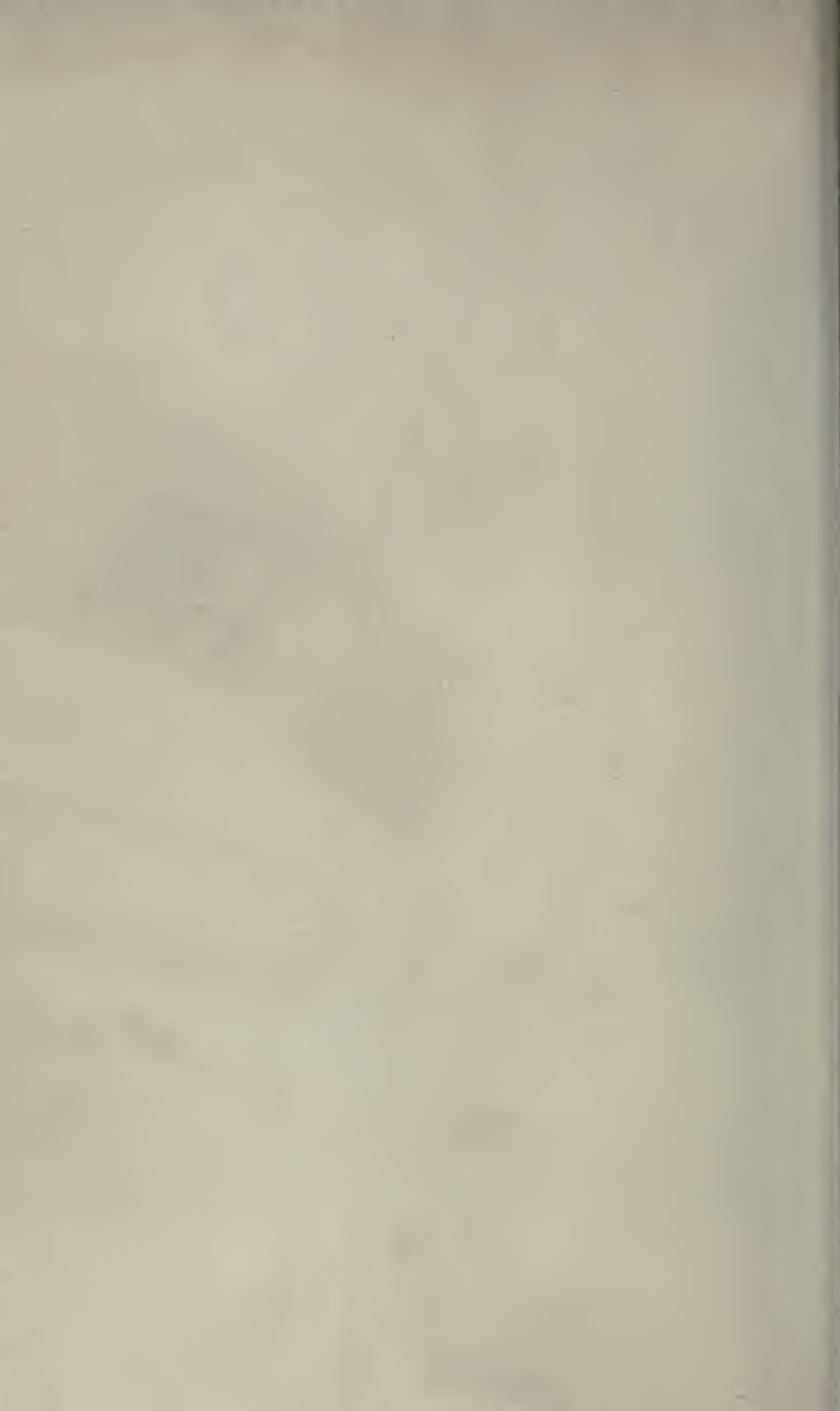
Sofia is essentially a town of progress. During the past eighteen months whole streets of new villas have sprung up upon its outskirts, and such a rush has there lately been for building plots that our Foreign Office—who want to build



Peasants in Sofia Market Place.



The Old Mosque : Sofia.



a new Legation—are unable to get any decent site in a central position. Sofia is just now in the transition stage. Great new public buildings and fine boulevards are springing up everywhere. There is a beautiful new theatre, a new post office, a new Agricultural Bank, and hosts of minor structures, all spacious and well built, which, in themselves, show Bulgaria to be a country of rapid advancement.

Unlike some other Balkan countries, there seems no lack of money here. Just now, for example, it is proposed to expend a little matter of fourteen million francs upon roads in the Principality, and the cost of the new market-halls and other buildings will probably be prodigious.

But the Bulgar is essentially a thrifty person. During the past twenty years he has transformed his capital from a wretched little Turkish town into a really handsome city. In twenty years to come, at the present rate of progress, it will be the Brussels of the East, for it is modelled upon the same plan.

Sofia is a city of quaint contrasts. Fine modern shops, where one can obtain the latest Parisian perfumes, the latest French *modes*, or expensive table delicacies, are hopelessly mixed up with the Turkish stalls where sallow-faced men are squatting at work, or sitting pensively at the seat of custom. The Sofia tradesman likes to expose his wares, whatever they may be, in the street, for in that he still retains the trace of the trade manners of the Turk. The pavements of the main streets are heaped with wares—fish in barrels, meat, groceries, live fowls, live pigs tied to lamp-posts, and among it all jostle the passers-by.

The broad Maria Luisa Ulitza, the Dondukoff Boulevard, or the Pirotka Ulitza are, on a Friday, the market-day, crowded with peasants in the most picturesque costume of all the Balkans. Until a year or two ago the skirts and head-dresses were of white linen embroidered, but in these modern times the women dye all their white clothes a pale blue. Therefore they all seem to wear the same delicate shade. The married women have their heads covered with a pale blue handkerchief, and wear a heavy silver girdle; but the

village maidens all have their hair parted in the middle and hanging in a hundred small plaits with sequins down their backs, while over the left ear they wear a bunch of fresh flowers, which gives them a most coquettish appearance. The skirt is short, always hand-embroidered, and sometimes studded with gold sequins, while over all is worn a short jacket of sheepskin with the wool inside, rendering them somewhat podgy.

The men from the country, a fine tall race, wear embroidered costumes, the jackets of dark stuff flowered in pale blue and ornamented with hundreds of pearl buttons, tight white trousers embroidered at the knees, and the inevitable round cap, without which no Bulgar is complete.

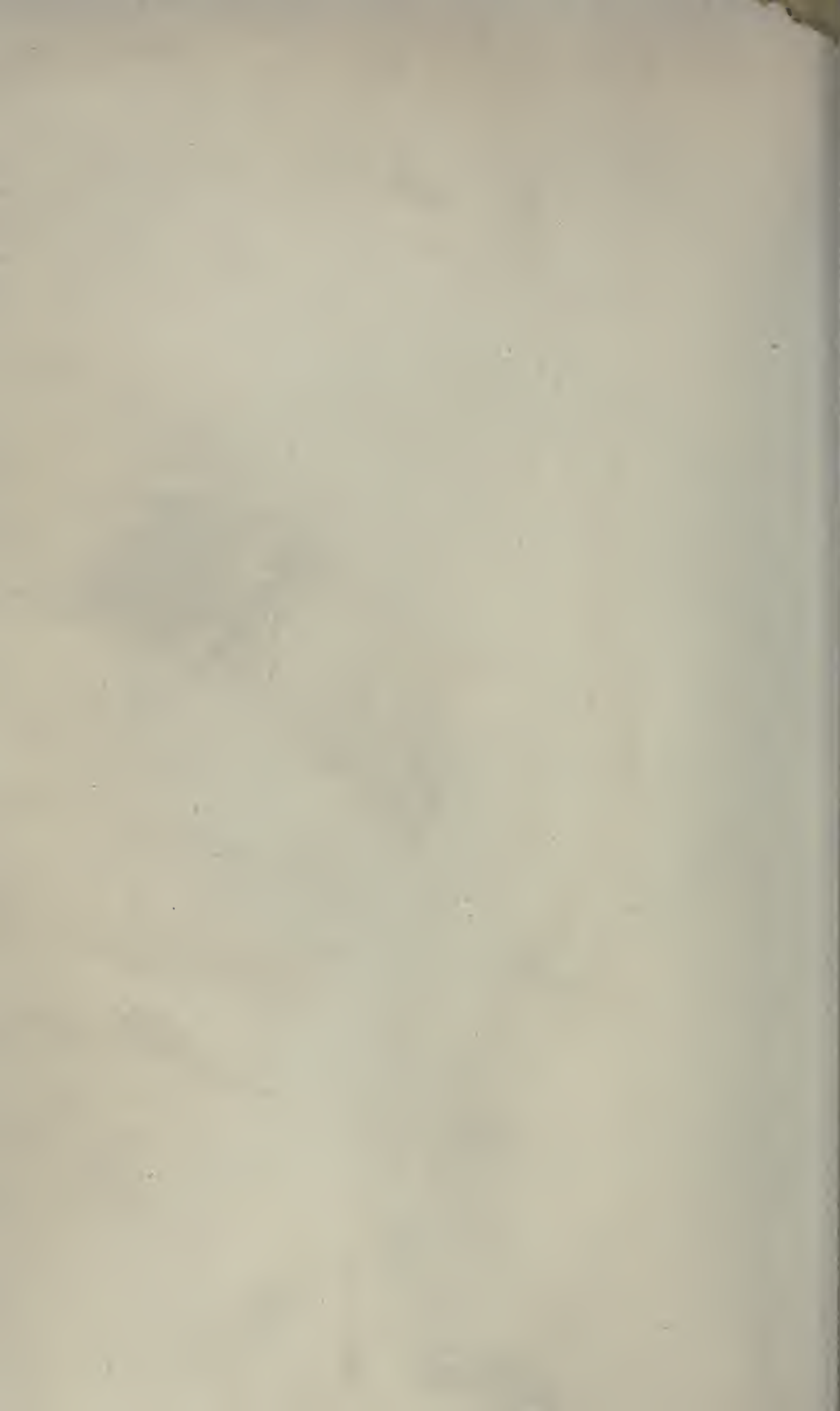
I spent one amusing morning with Mr. James Bouchier, the well-known Balkan correspondent of the *Times*, who is six months each year resident in Sofia. He was on the local committee of the Balkan Exhibition at Earl's Court while I was on the London committee, and our mission was to discover in the market some good-looking peasant girls to go to the wilds of West Kensington. He had already been to several villages, but the girls, he said, were rather chary of going so far from home, even though assured by their local Mayor of their well-being and safe return.

On the particular day of our visit to the market my journalistic friend had arranged to meet the Mayor of one of the neighbouring villages—a peasant—and with his aid try induce some of the best-looking girls to grace the Bulgarian Section of the Exhibition. The village Mayor being prevented from joining us, we determined to start upon a voyage of discovery ourselves.

It was a rather formidable undertaking. We, however, spent an amusing morning; but though we talked with many comely girls with flowers in their hair, we somehow were unable to impress any of them with the advantages of a free trip to London. Unfortunately, they did not take us at all seriously; there was a good deal of tittering at our proposals, and the market with its vegetables, its sucking-pigs on strings, and its turkeys tied head downwards on



HIS EXCELLENCY DR. DIMITRI STANCIOFF,
Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.



cross-sticks, was drawn blank. We could only hope that next Friday, with the presence of the confidence-inspiring Mayor, we might be more successful.

As a matter of fact, a few days later, accompanied by my friend, M. Dimitri Stancioff, of the Commercial Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and M. Mandersheff, another functionary from the same Ministry, we took carriages out to the picturesque village of Vladaja, some seventeen kilometres from Sofia on the broad highroad that leads to Kustendil and Macedonia. The drive was a delightful one in the bright winter sunshine, through a fertile undulating country, until, turning off from the well-kept military road, we found ourselves in a small village lying in a deep dark ravine.

Here the costumes were very quaint and interesting, the men in long blouses of white blanket-like woollen stuff trimmed with black, raw-hide shoes, and their legs bound with leather thongs; while the women and girls wore gay colours, short lace-edged petticoats, and quantities of gold sequins and coins about their necks. Some of those strings of coins were worth at least from fifteen to twenty pounds.

Our journey of investigation was distinctly humorous. Sometimes the four of us could not agree as to the personal beauty of a fair candidate for the approbation of the British public, while those we spoke to were mostly shy to answer our questions. Many of the village girls flatly refused to leave their homes unless their lovers were also employed in the Exhibition, but after much explanation, a good deal of chaff, and considerable giggling, the names of several were taken in order that inquiries should be made of the village Mayor before the presentation and signature of their agreement, which provided for their fare to London, the payment of their wages, their insurance for the benefit of their family in case of accident, and their safe return to Bulgaria at the termination of the Exhibition.

We engaged one flute-player—a tall, dark-faced young giant in sheepskins—after he had displayed his aptness with his instrument. The local *han*, wherein we rested,

drank *rakhi*, and ate cream-cheese, was a big common room with earthen floor. In the centre was a large stove, upon which was cooking some steaming dish with appetising odour. Around us sat dozens of huge burly fellows, bulky in their sheepskins, gossiping and drinking wine, a fierce-looking assembly, to be sure, and yet withal extremely good-humoured.

After a while, the village musician was discovered, a short little fellow who played a quaint kind of two-stringed violin, and almost as soon as he sounded the weird, plaintive music, young girls with flowers entwined in their long plaited tresses, and others, slightly older, with the white handkerchiefs on their heads—the badge of matrimony—came trooping forth to perform for us the national dance—the *horo*.

Forming in a line, the youths and maidens crossed arms, linked their hands in each other's belts, and then began a curious kind of dance, keeping step with the music and ever advancing and retreating, keeping it up for a full half-hour. Now and then the tune was changed, and with the tune the dance.

In the clear Eastern afterglow of evening, with the thin crescent moon slowly rising, it was a quaint and curious scene. The weird music, the strange costumes, the cries of the dancers, and the merry laughter of the girls, will long live within my memory as a picture worthy the brush of a great painter.

And as we drove back to Sofia through the silent, starlit night, I wondered what impression those simple-minded folk, so far removed from Western civilisation, would receive of our fairy-lamps, pasteboard, tinsel, imitation mountains, brass bands, and water-chute at Earl's Court !

What would be the stories of their adventures in West Kensington and the wonders of London when they returned to remote Vladaja ?

I had, like every other Englishman, always regarded Bulgaria as a *terra incognita*, where local manufactures were absent and where most goods were imported. Therefore a surprise awaited me one day when Monsieur M. V. Lascoff,

Director of the Bulgarian Commercial and Industrial Museum at Sofia, took me round that institution, and showed me specimens of the various goods produced in the country. In the museum was a most wonderful collection of articles representing the manufactures of Bulgaria, ranging from violins to soap, and from table-covers manufactured from beautifully embroidered jacket sleeves to writing-ink and tinned fruits.

One of the prominent industries is the distillation of otto-of-roses in the Shipka district, where in summer the whole country is covered with blossom, an industry to which I will devote a chapter. Carpets, very similar to the dark crimson-and-blue Persian varieties, and goat-hair floor-coverings are made largely by the peasantry, who also weave by hand wonderfully fine gauzes, tissues, and dress-stuffs. Felt hats, blankets, pottery, and copies of antique filigree jewellery are also of peasant manufacture, and are really wonderfully done. The stranger has no idea, until shown this museum, of the rapid progress the country is making commercially.

While passing round the museum I chanced to admire two pairs of very fine antique silver earrings of rare design worn by the Bulgarian peasants two centuries ago, whereupon the case was at once opened, and they were presented to me as a little souvenir of my visit.

Sofia, being a brand-new city, is not, of course, quite perfect. It requires, among other things, a good system of drainage and the repavement of its streets. The latter work is to be commenced in a few months' time. A good first-class hotel, too, is also badly required. At present the hotels, though clean, are poor and comfortless, and neither they nor the restaurants do credit to the go-ahead character of the progressive Bulgarians. All this, however, will soon be remedied, for I heard of schemes for new hotels with fine restaurants and winter-gardens. So in six months' time the traveller may expect to be in the full enjoyment of them, for in Sofia they do not talk, but act.

If you are anywhere in the Balkans and mention Sofia, you will be told, with a sigh of regret, "Ah! they have a

club there. We haven't." I had heard this in Belgrade, in Sarajevo, in Ragusa, in Cettinje—in fact, everywhere throughout the Balkans; therefore, with some curiosity I entered the sacred portals of the much-talked-of club with my friend Colonel Hubert du Cane, the British military attaché, and was elected a member during my stay in the Bulgarian capital.

It certainly is a most excellent and comfortable club—one of the best I know of on the whole of the Continent. The rooms are cosy and artistic, and the members are most diplomats, Cabinet Ministers, and high functionaries of the State. At lunch, representatives of most of the European Powers assemble at the long table and chat merrily, while at dinner, at the small table at the end, M. Petkoff,¹ the Premier; Dr. Dimitri Stancioff, the Foreign Minister; and several other members of the Cabinet, dine nightly at "the Ministers' table."

The food is excellent, though there are, of course, some grumblers, and the whole institution is conducted on similar lines to a first-class London club. Perhaps the custom of personally introducing the stranger to every single member of the club strikes the foreigner as a little unnecessary, yet without doubt there is real good-fellowship existing, such as is entirely absent in some other clubs I know—the English Club in Brussels and the Florence Club in Florence, in particular.

Men, and especially the diplomats, find it a very great boon, for to go to Sofia is to find a real good club and quite a host of good cosmopolitan friends ever ready to show the stranger all kinds of hospitality.

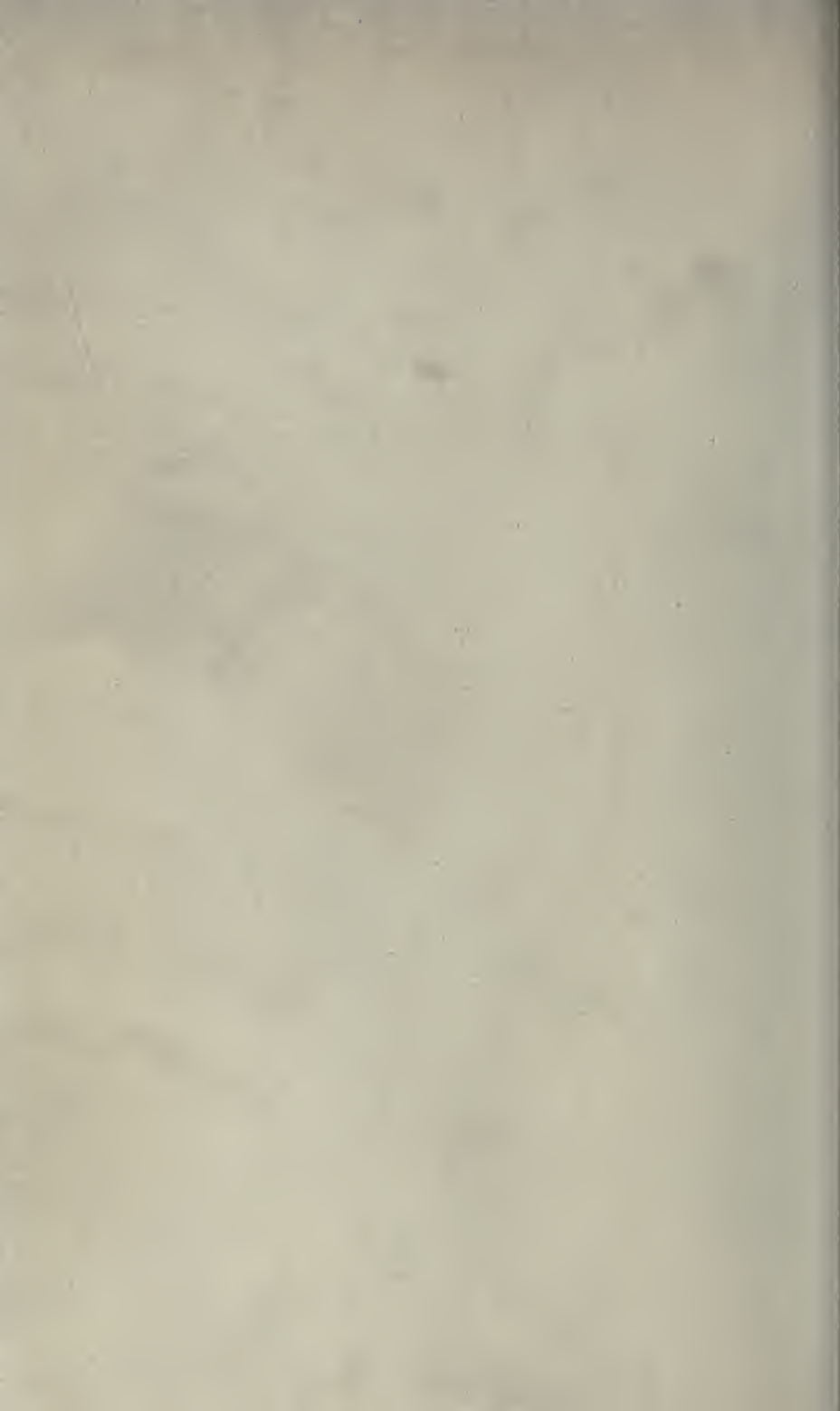
Social life is far from dull. Sport and games of every kind are most popular. There is an excellent tennis club, hockey is played three or four times a week, and large riding parties, personally conducted by Baron Rubin de Cervin, the Italian military attaché, go out for long jaunts into the neighbouring mountains several times each week. Then at night there are constant dinners and receptions at the Legations, and everyone seems to lead a very pleasant life, without a moment's dullness.

Lady Buchanan, wife of Sir George Buchanan, the British

¹ M. Petkoff has, since the present work has been in the press, been assassinated while walking in the Boris Garden in Sofia.



HIS EXCELLENCY D. PETKOFF,
Prime Minister of Bulgaria.



Minister, is the principal hostess, and with her daughter is foremost in Sofia society. Until ill-health prevented her recently, she was an ardent player of hockey and tennis, and constantly in the saddle. Her entertainments are always brilliant, and in her pretty salon one meets everyone who is anyone in Sofia.

Again, the Military Club is another centre of social life. The building is a handsome one, with an extremely fine ball-room, where dances, given every week through the season, are attended by the elite of Sofia. I went to one, and found it a particularly gay and brilliant function.

Government institutions in Sofia amazed me. They would do credit to any European capital. The Agricultural Bank, the inner working of which I was permitted by Monsieur N. Ghenadieff, Minister of Commerce, to inspect, is a fine new building of huge dimensions, with a beautifully ornamented board-room, and its operations no doubt tend much towards securing the public prosperity of Bulgaria. M. Seraphimoff, the Governor, who conducted me round, told me that the bank had its origin in the time of the Turkish rule. As far back as 1863, the Governor of the *vilayet* of the Danube created small banks in order to aid the peasants, the villagers repaying their loans in crops and the banks selling the produce.

During the Russo-Turkish War, however, many of these banks lost their capital, for the Turkish functionaries escaped with all the funds they could place their hands upon. The Provisional Russian Government re-established the banks, and they have continued to progress until the present institution was founded. It now has eighty-five branch offices in the principal towns and agents in most of the villages. Its direction is under a governor and four directors nominated by Prince Ferdinand. The operations of the institution are as follows: to accept deposits; to grant loans on mortgages or securities; to grant loans upon cattle and agricultural produce; to advance money to the peasants for the purchase of cattle, seeds, or agricultural implements; to make personal loans; to open current accounts with peasants; to buy

agricultural implements, seeds, and machinery for the peasants; to accept loans for departments or communes; and for the transfer of securities. The interest charged or given is 5 per cent. for deposits for five years, 4 per cent. for three years, and 3 per cent. for one year. In 1901 the amount of the bank's operations was 535,575,182 francs, while in 1905 it amounted to 1,180,778,378 francs, thus showing how greatly it is appreciated by the peasant, and of what enormous benefit it is to the country.

While there, I saw many uncouth peasants in their sheepskins from far-distant villages come and obtain loans, repay their interest, or make petition for their inability to pay. It is very apparent that all of them greatly appreciate the fact that the Government is their creditor and not the Jews.

Another institution which I inspected was the State printing press, a fine building containing the latest machinery; and afterwards I was shown the building of the magnificent new church of St. Alexander Newsky, which, being constructed in blocks of white stone just behind the old church of St. Sophia, is costing over three million francs, and is to be in memory of the Russian liberator of Bulgaria.

Truly, everywhere one turns in Sofia one sees some new buildings, for signs of rapid progress and up-to-dateness are on every hand.

Bulgaria, with Servia, is surely destined to expand in the near future, and the "big Bulgaria" must some day ere long be an accomplished fact.



The Royal Palace : Sofia.



The Main Boulevard : Sofia.

CHAPTER II

BULGARIA AS A FIELD FOR BRITISH ENTERPRISE

Audiences of members of the Bulgarian Cabinet—Dr. Dimitri Stancioff, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the coming man of Bulgaria—His policy—Facts about the mineral wealth and mining laws—Advice to traders and capitalists by the British Vice-Consul in Sofia—Our methods as compared with those of other nations.

ONE of the objects of my observations being to point out where British capital can, with advantage and security, be employed in the Balkans, I made, while in Sofia, very careful and exhaustive inquiry.

Information was given me by the late Premier, M. D. Petkoff; the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Dimitri Stancioff; and by M. Ghenadieff, the Minister of Commerce, who was also interesting himself very actively in the Balkan Exhibition at Earl's Court. To these three members of the Bulgarian Cabinet, and to His Royal Highness Prince Ferdinand himself, I have to acknowledge my thanks for placing all information at my disposal. The Minister for Foreign Affairs deputed his cousin, Monsieur D. M. Stancioff, of the Commercial Department of the Ministry, to accompany me everywhere and explain everything. I was given a perfectly free hand to go when and where I liked, and, as His Excellency put it, "to see Bulgaria just as I pleased."

The Bulgarians are nothing if not thoroughly business-like. I was particularly requested by the Ministers not to paint the country in *couleur de rose*. One member of the Cabinet said, as I stood in the corner of the ballroom of the

Military Club one night, "We would like the English to know exactly what they can find in Bulgaria, and how we shall treat them. Don't flatter us, and cause English capitalists to expect too much. We have good paying investments for them—if they will only come here."

I took a good deal of trouble in going very minutely into this very important question, and found the Government ready and eager to give every facility to British capitalists to exploit the great mineral wealth in their country. The mining laws are just, and extremely favourable to secure absolute rights to those who invest. The Government have established in Sofia a Mining Department under the Ministry of Commerce, where specimens of ore may be seen, and where every information can be obtained. By the courtesy of M. T. Michailowsky, the able Director of this Department, I was afforded an opportunity of inspecting the various collections, and was given much information of intense interest.

It seems that up to the present time the Government have given thirty-one concessions, mostly to French, Russian, Belgian, and Italian capitalists. Of these, sixteen are for coal, four for copper, two for manganese, two for iron, two for lead, two for zinc, and one for oil-bearing minerals. There are no English companies in Bulgaria at present, but I was informed by the Minister of Commerce that the greatest attention would be paid to any serious application from England. There are known to exist in the district of Bourgas, on the Black Sea, very rich copper deposits, also in the Vraza district, and in Belogradjik, near the Danube.

Two kinds of "permits for research" are granted by the Government. The first—a general one to search in any part of Bulgaria—is given free, but with a personal guarantee that any damage done will be made good. The second is a permit for a special place, which must not be of greater extent than 8,000,000 square metres, and for this is charged eighty francs. This lasts for two years. After this time, if a concession is desired, the Department make inquiries in order to see if the proposed mine bears sufficient to justify its working. This having been decided—which takes about a month, or



HIS EXCELLENCY N. GHENADIEFF, Bulgarian Minister of Commerce.

at most two—the Prince issues a decree, and the concession is granted for ever. No deposit is required, but the Government takes, for each hectare, three francs per annum for coals, and four francs per annum for minerals. They also tax the output at the rate of one per cent. Machinery and material enter the country free of duty, and as far as I was able to judge, the Bulgarians make excellent workmen, being very sober, industrious, and obedient. At present, however, there is large emigration, for there is not sufficient work for the four and a half millions of people in the country.

One colliery is worked by the Government at Pernik, and this supplies the railways, the city of Sofia, and the many industrial enterprises with about 200,000 tons of excellent coal yearly. All the other mines are just starting to work, and show prospects of splendid profits.

The copper mine at Vraza, which is exploited by Monsieur Maurocordato of Constantinople—who has invested about 600,000 francs—has, in two years, repaid itself, thus showing that there are mines in Bulgaria, and very rich ones indeed.

All the concessions already granted show great futures, but unfortunately, with the exception of the Vraza enterprise, the concessionaires lack capital.

The Bulgarian Mining Law is a very liberal one, being an exception to the laws of most other countries, for it has been drawn up specially to induce the investment of foreign capital, as well as to secure the interests of shareholders. The people of Bulgaria are not rich enough to exploit their mines themselves, and for that reason the mining industry of the country must of necessity be in the hands of the foreigner.

When making my inquiries, M. R. S. Kossef, Director of the Commercial Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was most particular that I should say nothing that was not absolutely true regarding the mines. "We do not wish to attract capitalists to Bulgaria by means of advertisement," he said. "We wish them to know that they will here find a good return for their investments, and that if they exploit our mines, we, on our part, will treat them justly—even generously."

Besides minerals, Bulgaria is extremely rich in mineral springs—the one at Banki, seventeen kilometres from Sofia, being about to be exploited this year, when a very handsome bath establishment and hotel are to be constructed. The source is situated in the valley beneath the Lubin mountain, and an automobile service is to be established with Sofia. This spring gives 1200 litres a minute, and has been pronounced by a number of first-class authorities in Germany and France to be a water almost unexcelled in Europe. Other springs abound all over the country, and so important are they, indeed, that the Government have issued a large coloured map of them.

In Sofia itself, close to the old mosque, are well-known sulphur baths. There is a project for building a bath establishment, but to do so it would mean the pulling down of the mosque in question. The Turks would not object so much if a new mosque could be built, but it seems that the difficulties of construction are very great, so for the present the matter remains in abeyance.

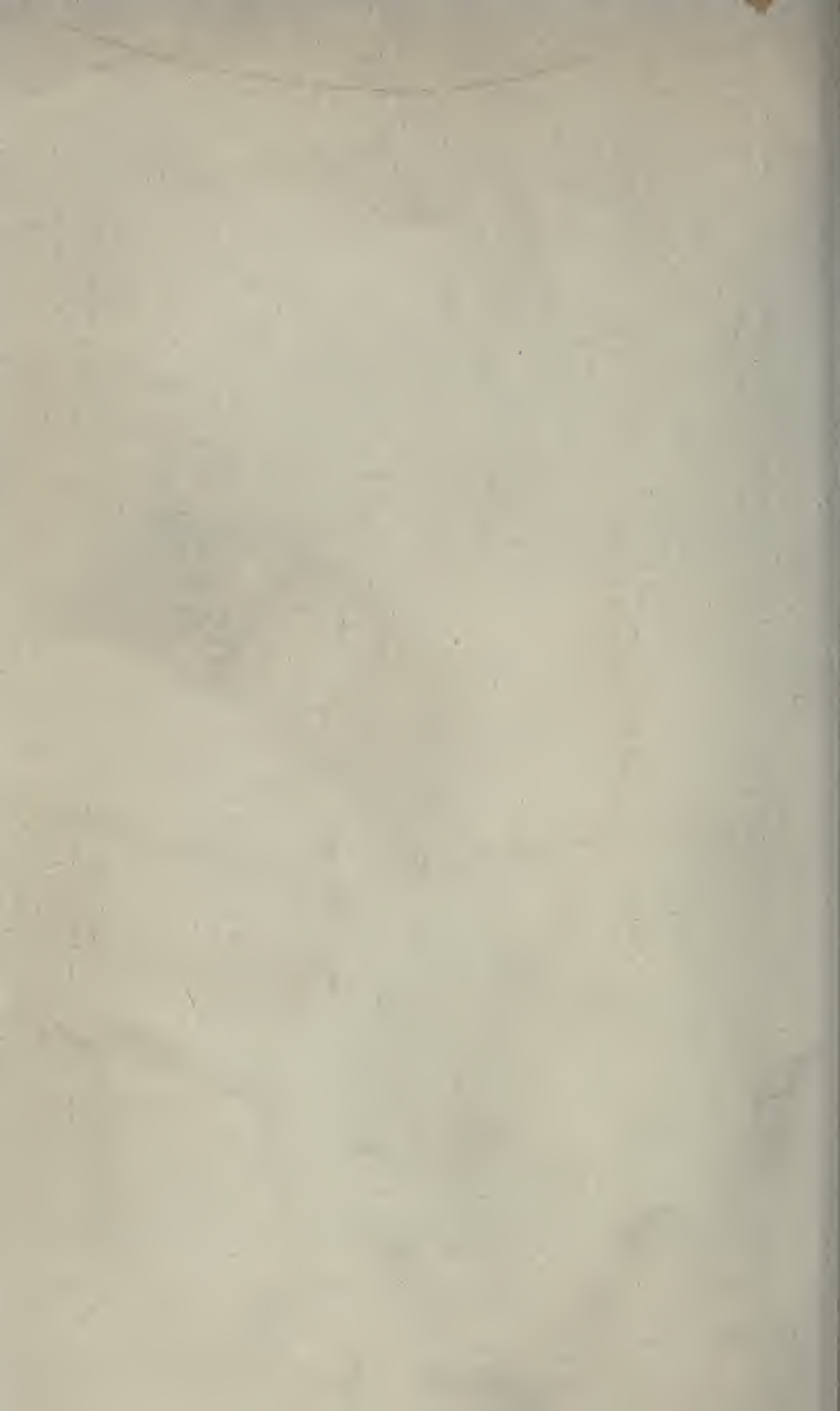
In the whole of Bulgaria over two hundred thermal and mineral springs are known, and they are situated in eighty different districts. The department of Sofia alone contains twenty-three, the warmest being at Dolna-Banja. The more important of the others are at Kniajevo, Gorva, Banja, and Pantcherevo. Then there are the renowned warm springs at Verschetz, in the department of Vratza, while in the department of Plovdiv (Philippopoli) there are more than forty springs, the principal of them being at Hissar. This, perhaps the most reputed in all the Orient, is situated in the valley of Tchepino, in the centre of the Rhodopes Mountains. At Lidji, near Bourgas, and at Sliven, there are establishments on the latest modern principle. Another which is being actively exploited is the waters of Meritchteri, in Stara-Zagora, which are declared by analysts to be quite equal to those of Carlsbad, and which are believed to have a great future before them. Dr. Ernst Hintz, of Wiesbaden, has written a book upon these particular waters, and has given exhaustive analyses.



Early Morning in Sofia.



On the road to the Shipka.



There are also minor waters in the town of Kustendil and in dozens of other villages and towns all over Bulgaria.

Again, to encourage intending pioneers of new branches of industry, it is interesting to note that the industries in actual existence are making great progress. The numerous spinning mills and cloth factories in Eastern Roumelia have been enlarged, while the Varna Cotton Mill, whose headquarters are in Manchester, employs nearly seven hundred hands, and in 1905 paid a dividend of 10 per cent.

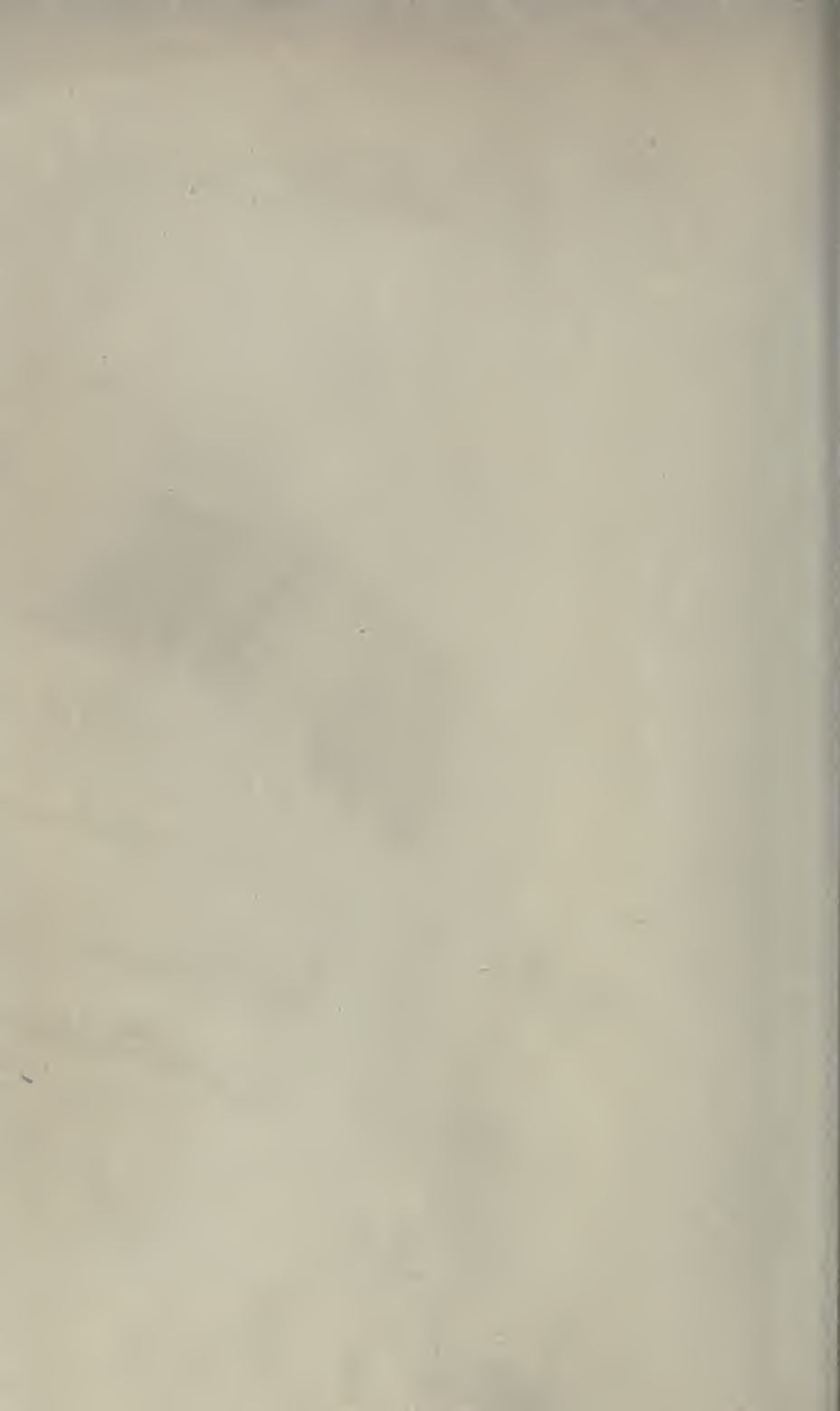
As regards British trade in Bulgaria, the attention of the English manufacturer has been repeatedly drawn, in trade reports from the Consulate in Sofia, to the energetic measures adopted by foreign competitors to secure the Bulgarian market for themselves. As Germany's rivalry is by far the most formidable, it may be well to briefly illustrate the methods by which that country is steadily absorbing the trade of the Near East, as explained to me by Mr. Toulmin, British Vice-Consul in Sofia. Not only do the principal German importers have capable agents established in the more important towns throughout Bulgaria to push the sale of their goods, but they also send at regular intervals experienced travellers who thoroughly investigate the commercial condition of the country in its various trade centres, take note of the wants and requirements of the population, and enter into direct relations with the retail trader. They are, moreover, instructed to do business at any cost, and are authorised to give credit for a year or even longer. By their readiness to accept the smallest order, by scrupulously adhering to conditions and specifications, and by strictly supplying goods according to sample approved, German importers are now reaping the fruits of a painstaking and methodical commercial policy, which menaces even Austria-Hungary's hitherto unassailed supremacy. The importance, therefore, of sending out to Bulgaria representatives with some knowledge of French or German cannot be too strongly impressed on British manufacturers. It may be well to mention that a gentleman, representing a well-known Birmingham firm dealing in hardware, called at the Consulate at Sofia a few months ago, and

expressed himself as highly satisfied with the result of his fortnight's business tour in Bulgaria.

By the employment of commercial travellers, the translation of their catalogues, if not into Bulgarian, at any rate into French or German, the use of the metric system of weights and measures, the conversion of sterling into francs and centimes, and by giving longer credit—by these means only can British merchants hope to compete successfully with their foreign rivals.



The Bulgarian Sobranje.



CHAPTER III

WILL BULGARIA DECLARE WAR?

A sitting of the Sobranje—Declarations by the Prime Minister and Dr. Stancioff—The new Minister of Foreign Affairs—A sound progressive government—Strong army and firm policy—Will the deplorable state of Macedonia still be tolerated?—Ominous words.

IT was a bitterly cold November evening when, accompanied by Sir George Buchanan, I entered the Sobranje, or Bulgarian Parliament, to hear the Ministerial statement upon the future policy of Bulgaria and her attitude towards Turkey.

A great high-roofed square chamber, enamelled entirely in white and picked out with gold. At one end a high, red-carpeted dais with the throne, behind which hung a full-length portrait of Prince Ferdinand. Upon an escutcheon above, the Bulgarian lion on a crimson shield. Below the empty throne, a long red-covered table, where sat the President, a short, grey-haired little man, who from time to time rang a musical gong; and in the arena, on a scarlet carpet, rows of horse-shoe benches half filled by deputies. On the right, at a table placed at an angle, sat the Ministers. First was Monsieur Petkoff, the Prime Minister, the most prominent man in Bulgaria, and who has, alas! since shared the fate of his friend the late Stambouloff; next Dr. Stancioff, the newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Minister of War in a dark blue uniform with a white cross at his throat; and the Ministers of Justice, Commerce, and Finance.

Above, around three sides of the huge white-and-gold hall, the galleries were crowded by the public, while over

all big arc lamps shed their white brilliancy. With us in the diplomats' gallery sat the Prince's confidential secretary, M. Dobrovitch, the German Minister, the representatives of Turkey and Roumania, Colonel H. du Cane, the British military attaché, and numbers of other diplomats.

The House was silent. Every ear was strained to catch the Premier's words, for it was he who was now speaking. A rather short, grey-bearded figure, just past the prime, whose left hand as he gesticulated only showed a stump. He lost it at the Shipka, and as patriot and politician he was leader of his party—a party of progress, that has been four years in power with an overwhelming majority.

For the past four hours he had been speaking fluently, easily, without interruption, forecasting the future policy of Bulgaria—the policy which is designed to lead the country to prosperity. Bulgaria had long waited for this, and every word was now being listened to with rapt attention.

On those benches below sat representatives of the people, men of every class—lawyers, shopkeepers, peasants in their white linen or brown homespun suits, and even Turks. Surely this Sobranje is essentially a representative gathering.

Now and then came a spontaneous outburst of applause, very marked when the Prime Minister dwelt upon the cordial relations with Roumania and their identical aims with regard to Macedonia. Everyone applauded—all save one little section of benches on the extreme left—a mere handful of men—the Opposition. So small are they that they really do not seem to count. Nobody took any notice of them. With their backs to the holy ikon of burnished gold and highly finished religious pictures, they sat facing the Ministers, who were, of course, ever confronted by the emblem of their faith.

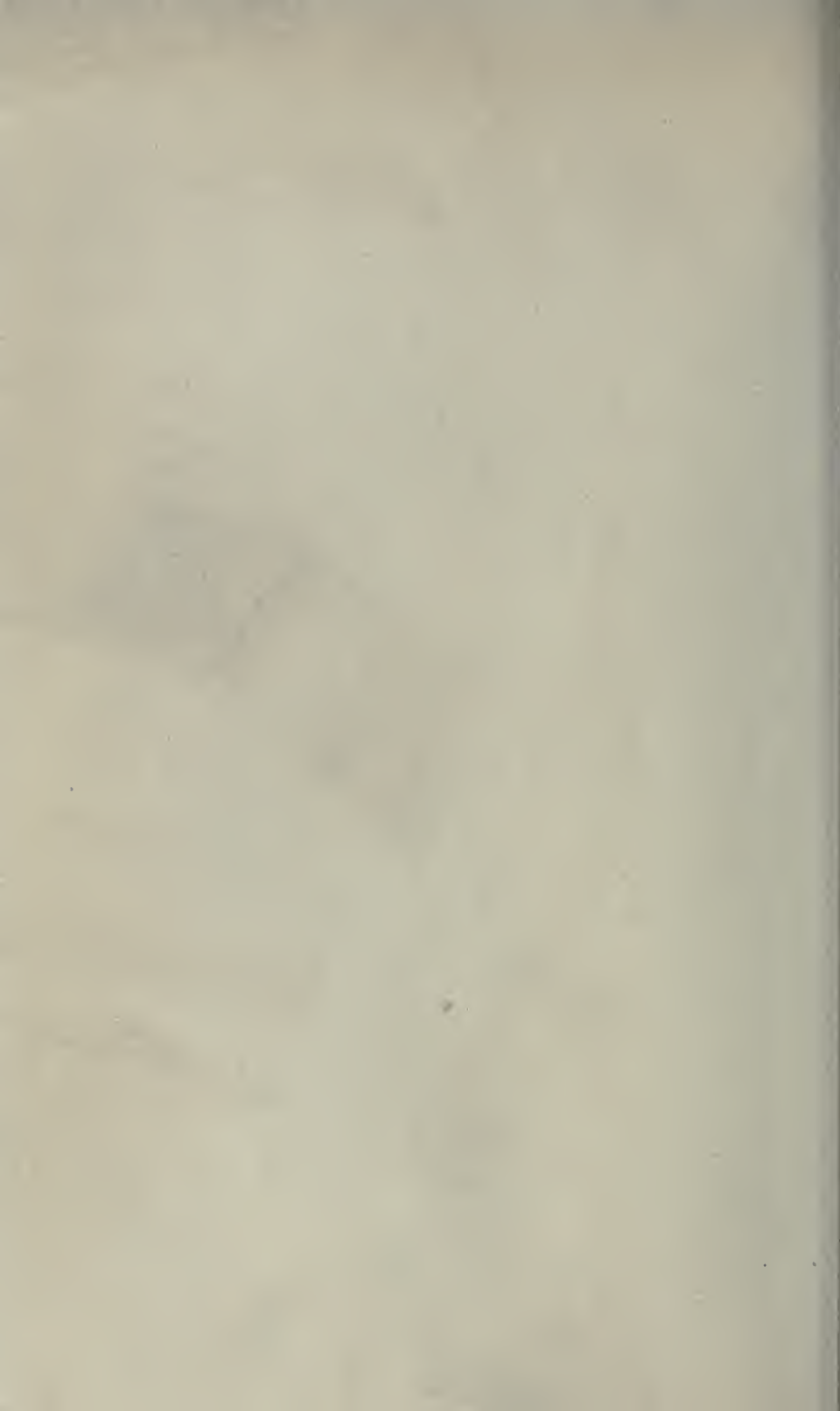
This speech, being in Bulgarian, was kindly translated to me by M. Dobrovitch, the Prince's private secretary. He said—

“To-day neither the Macedonian people nor Bulgaria nor Turkey are the same states which they were fifteen years ago. In consideration of the solution of the Macedonian question, we have to reckon with several factors. The most



Генер. Саввовъ.
Воен. Министръ.

GEN. MICHAEL SAVOFF, Bulgarian Minister of War.



important of them is that we ought to be ready at a moment's notice. We have to be strong ! Europe acts and reforms in Macedonia. No Bulgarian Government can foresee what to expect or how the events will develop themselves. We must try to be one of the arbitrary factors in the solution of the Macedonian question, and therefore we must be armed. We have no intention of annexing Macedonia, but we wish to better the positions of our compatriots. It is in the interest of Turkey to reform Macedonia and to shake off all exterior influence. When even Roumania arms herself for a few countrymen, ought we not also to arm ? We are only a small nation, but in order to be safe we ought to have a strong army. It is said that such an army would be a luxury. That would be only the case, then, if we could not help ourselves without assistance. It is our duty to keep an army ready, for it is only in so doing that we shall be considered of any consequence when the solution of the Macedonian question arrives. A weak country is of no importance. Such a country only serves as a toy for others.

“With regard to her culture, agriculture, and her politics, Bulgaria is to-day in a different condition than heretofore. Though we do not acknowledge any progress, other countries see that Bulgaria has made in twenty years a very great progress and that she still is developing in large strides. We possess in the Balkan Peninsula a very important point, where many interests join. The most important, however, is to hope and to rely on our own strength.”

Dealing with the foreign policy of Bulgaria, the Prime Minister said—

“They tell us that Bulgaria has no friends. On the contrary, we possess the friendship of all States. Our relations with other nations are not at all the same as we found them in the beginning. No unimportant *contretemps* can disturb our relations with Russia. I am in the position to proclaim that Bulgaria possesses the sympathy of all other nations. The fact that our commercial contract with Austria-Hungary is not yet signed does not say that our relations with each other are not friendly. Even the two parties of that country are

not on good terms, and they cannot decide the contract. M. Todoroff has said that our relations to Turkey are rather strained. That is not true: it is the most difficult thing to enter into any contracts with Turkey. In spite of those difficulties, we have signed some smaller contracts. It is also said that Servia has been playing with us, in not showing us the tariff unions of the Skupshtina. Now, Servia is under pressure from Austria-Hungary, and at the time that this proposition was brought before the Skupshtina it could not be carried by a majority of two votes. That was not sufficient for us. Servia began to export her goods *viâ* Varna, and up to to-day no fewer than 4000 waggons of corn have been exported *viâ* Varna. Is that no success for our railways?

“Our relations with our neighbours are formed on a purely economical basis. We mean to further our industry! But this economical basis has nothing to do with the great and pressing Macedonian question. We only wish to keep up friendly relations with Roumania. We try to keep our relations with our neighbours in order, and we count upon success. In which way shall we reach this success? That surely is our own affair! I have finished. You see that our policy is a policy of peace. However, remember that peace can only be protected with arms in the hand, therefore we wish to enlarge our army. In case we have to incur expenses for our army, we shall ask them from you without embarrassment. You may call that bravado on our part, but we shall still do our duty; for peace to-day means an armed peace. Led by a policy of peace, we shall try to keep up good relations with all the nations, and we shall do everything possible to render assistance to our brethren in Macedonia. We shall not court war, for that might cost us our liberty. You think we are ready to draw our swords, you believe we want to deliver Macedonia through a war? I tell you that we only want to continue our former policy and walk on with courage.”

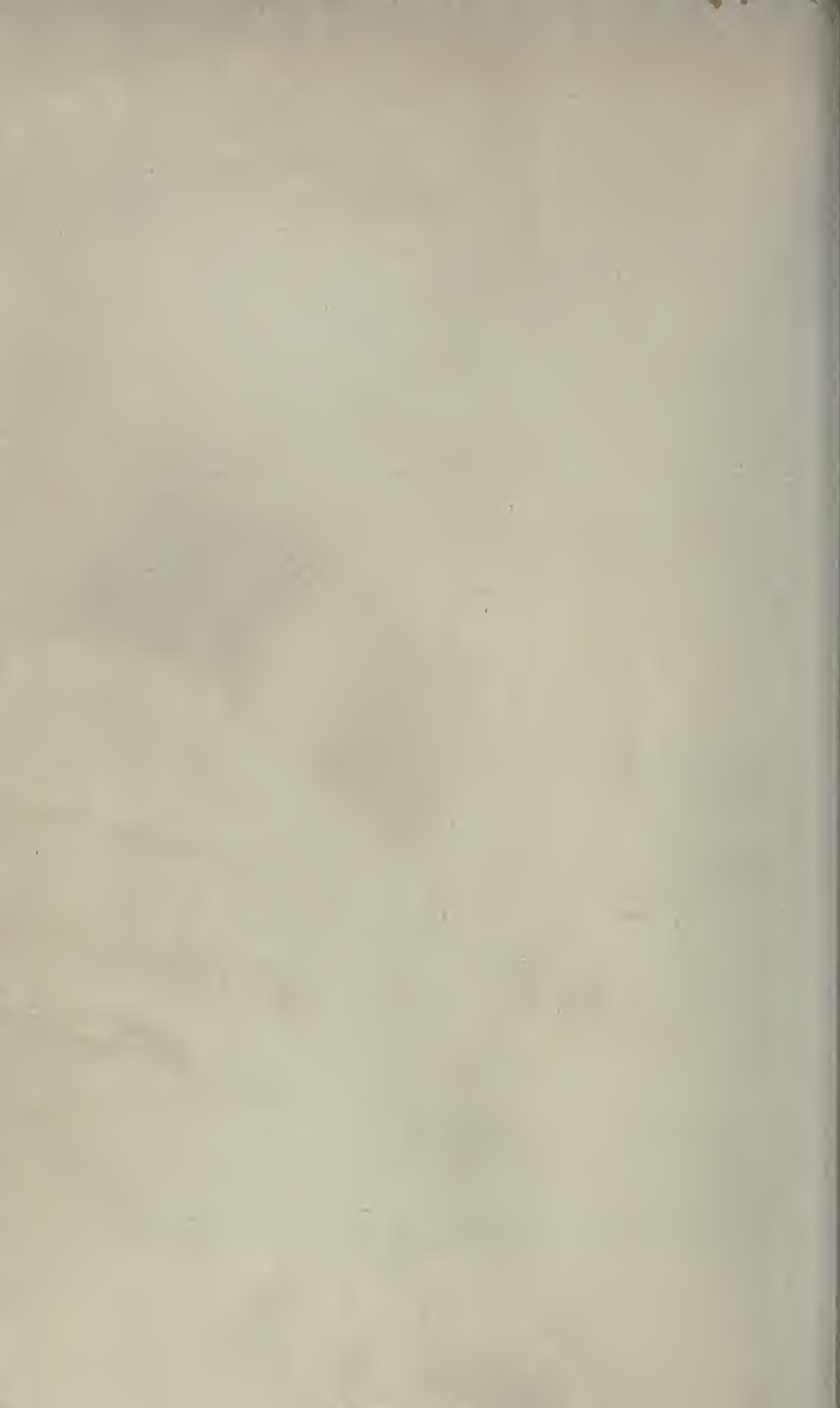
The Prime Minister, with a final wave of his maimed hand, resumed his seat amid a loud outburst of applause from both deputies and the general public in the long galleries of the great white-and-gold Chamber. Only we, in the



SIR GEORGE BUCHANAN,



U.S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, P. V. KOFF.



diplomats' gallery, were silent—with the Opposition, of course.

The sitting was a historic one in the annals of Bulgaria, and ere the applause had died away, the President, on the red-carpeted platform, rang his gong violently, and called upon the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs to make his declaration upon Bulgaria's future policy.

Dr. Stancioff, who until recently was Bulgarian diplomatic agent in St. Petersburg, rose from his seat at the Ministers' table—a dark, good-looking, middle-aged man—a trifle nervous perhaps at addressing the Chamber for the first time in his new position.

A dead silence followed. Bulgaria awaited the statement with breathless eagerness. They had heard the Premier's declaration regarding Macedonia. What would the Foreign Minister say ?

The blue-uniformed attendants took up their positions against the dead white panelling of the Chamber, lending the necessary colour to complete the picturesqueness of the scene, while the great arc lamps hissed above as they shed their bright white light over the rows of deputies upon the horse-shoe benches. On the wall, straight before the Ministers' table, the burnished gold of the holy ikon shone to remind them of their duty to the Almighty and to the nation. For a few moments all was silent.

Then Dr. Stancioff, the new man of Bulgaria, cleared his throat, and in Bulgar made the following clear, deliberate, and concise statement, of which the following is a translation. It is, as will be seen, a direct pronouncement of foreign policy—a firm policy, which may very probably mean war with Turkey at a no distant date. Indeed, war is in the air in Bulgaria, and over the Macedonian question may come at any moment ; therefore the Minister's actual words may, with advantage to the future, be repeated here.

He said—

" Gentlemen, the Minister President has just given an ample exposition of the policy the Government has followed up to the present moment, and the course which it has marked

out for itself for the future: on this point, therefore, there is but little left for me to say, as a member of this Government, and as one who is willing to bear the responsibility of his acts before this honourable Assembly.

“Under these circumstances, if I speak, it is chiefly that my silence may not give rise to misinterpretation, and in order to underline the words my colleague has said.

“Without doubt, you remember, gentlemen, that I have held the post of Foreign Minister only a few days, and I am under no obligation to enter into any explanation of the policy followed before my nomination, and on the debates, interpellations, and the opinions that it has called forth. Therefore I shall limit myself to saying a few words on the policy that we are going to follow for the future.

“There are two questions I wish to discuss. Firstly, our relations with the Great Powers; and secondly, what is to be our policy in regard to what I must call the question of questions—Macedonia.

“First of all, I am glad to be able to state that our relations with the Great Powers are of the best.

“This fact is always being confirmed by the notifications which we receive from abroad.

“By the line of peaceful development which she has traced for herself, and which she has never ceased to pursue, by the honourable manner in which she fulfils all her international engagements, and by the clear comprehension which she has of her position in the Balkans, Bulgaria is gaining more and more the sympathy and esteem of the Great Powers.

“It would be superfluous to mention in detail our relations with each separate State. Nevertheless, I wish to point out the happy fact that as to what concerns our relation with Russia—the Liberating Power—they are what they ought to be when one considers the ties which bind us to her, when one considers the ties which unite the two Slav people, and when one considers all that Bulgaria owes to Russia. Our relations with Russia are of the best, and it will always be the Government’s endeavour to render them even more cordial.

“Economic as well as political considerations bind us to Austria-Hungary. These interests compel us to maintain relations as cordial as possible with this Great Power.

“Our friendship with Germany, England, France, and Italy is dear to us. We greatly appreciate the sympathy of which these countries have given us so many proofs, and it will be our care, guided by the interests of our country, to consolidate and ameliorate these relations.

“As regards our relations with the neighbouring States, I assert that those with Roumania are, as they ought to be, the best and the most cordial. We appreciate at its true value our sincere friendship with Roumania, and it will be our task to preserve it.

“Our relations with Servia are good. We desire to cultivate a neighbourly policy with this State. It is a policy suited to two sister nations, and we shall cultivate it in accordance with the point of view that Bulgaria has cultivated for so long. I may add that, to gain this end, we shall do all that is in our power.

“As to our relations with Montenegro, it suffices to say that ancient sympathies, the reciprocity of which has never been denied, bind us to this State. Our sympathies perpetuate the nature of these relations with our valiant sister nation, and assure us that they can only be good and cordial.

“From a diplomatic point of view, our relations with Greece are good and normal; the regrettable incidents which took place last summer in certain portions of our country belong to the Department of the Interior. They are, so to speak, a family matter; they cannot, and must not, be allowed to darken relations between the two countries, who in their common interests will guard against a modification so undesirable.

“There only remains for me to speak of our relations with Turkey.

“I will be brief, though I could speak at great length upon this subject.

“Our relations can only be good, or sincerely good. At the present moment they are only ‘good.’ Before they can

become 'sincerely' good it is necessary that the two countries should be convinced not only of the utility of friendly relations, but also that their interests, political and economic, demand other relations than those that exist at the moment. As regards ourselves, who take this matter at its true valuation, it will be our task to do our utmost to prove to Turkey that we justly estimate these interests, and are prepared to pursue a sincere policy, provided that, on her side, she gives us pledges of her reciprocity.

"You will be able to estimate what that policy is by the attitude that we have taken up regarding the Macedonian question. This is a European question, but that does not hinder it from being, at the same time, both a Bulgarian and a Turkish question. First of all, I declare that the Bulgarian Government is far from having conceived the idea of provoking or imposing a solution of the Macedonian question by violent means. But our Government recognises the significance of this vital question for our country, it justly estimates the violence with which this question reflects itself upon the inner life of the Principality, and this renders it necessary to closely observe its development and its solution.

"The Macedonian question is in the hands of the Great Powers, who have taken upon themselves the task of introducing into Macedonia reforms assuring to the population of this country a development at once more orderly and more free. It is true that in this respect up to the present an altogether satisfactory result has not yet been achieved, and that the Bulgarian population of Macedonia and the *vilayet* of Adrianople still have to face complications. But the Government hopes that the good work they have begun will make progress. The Government will take every measure to keep itself currently informed of the situation in Macedonia, and will do everything in its power to at all times assist the interested Governments, and insist with all its energy upon the amelioration of the condition of the people of this country. The Government think that the representation they are going to make to the Great Powers in regard to a prompter and more energetic carrying out of the essential reforms in



Military Manœuvres in Bulgaria.

Macedonia is not incompatible with having good and cordial relations with Turkey. On the contrary, they consider that action of this nature suggests a more normal conception of the reciprocal interests of the two countries, and that it will induce the Government of His Majesty the Sultan to adopt a totally different attitude in regard to the Bulgarian population of Macedonia—an attitude which will conduce to its peace, and which will be, at the same time, an important factor in the destinies of the Empire itself.

“We make no mental reservations with regard to Turkey. We do not dream of conquest or annexation. But the Bulgarian nation cannot look coolly on while our blood-brothers (those of our own blood) are being subjected to such ordeals as those they are suffering in Turkey. In the name of reciprocity, in the name of justice and of humanity, the Bulgarian nation demands that the right of existence, and that the right of free development in their nationality, and its religion, be granted to the Bulgarians of Macedonia. She demands that their right of enjoying the fruits of their labour be recognised.

“The Government has the strongest convictions on the subject of the national duty, and will not waver in carrying them out. It is the fulfilling of this duty which must constitute the foundation of friendly relations with Turkey, and in this matter the Government will stand firm.

“The arming of our military forces must, of necessity, be a contradiction. We live in the era of armed peace, and we must not lose sight of the fact that the peace of Europe is due, if not entirely, at any rate in great part, to the formidable armament that each country keeps up. Bulgaria, though small, cannot evade this essential, if she wishes to live in peace.”

Dr. Stancioff resumed his seat amid thunders of applause.

Parliament shortly afterwards adjourned, and we went home to snatch a hasty dinner and put on our war-paint for the smart ball at the Military Club.

Will Bulgaria declare war against Turkey? That was that night, and still is, the question on everyone's lips in Sofia.

CHAPTER IV

THE BULGARIAN EXARCHATE AND THE PORTE

A difficult and little-understood problem—Bulgaria the “dark horse” of the Peninsula—An explanation of the question between Bulgaria and Turkey—The Bulgarian Church and the Imperial Firman—The present position of the Exarchate—Europe should listen to the Bulgarian demand—Chats with Macedonian orphans—Their terrible stories.

THE question of the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Porte is of paramount importance in Bulgaria at the present moment—a very difficult problem which the Government have to face.

So little is it understood in England, even by those professing to be *au courant* with the Balkan question, that I may perhaps be pardoned if I endeavour to render the situation intelligible. “What does Bulgaria want?” is the question so very often asked. What she really wants, and what are her aims, will, I hope, be shown in the following pages.

Bulgaria, it must always be remembered, is with Servia, the coming mistress of the Balkans. She is the “dark horse” of the Peninsula. Her power is admitted, but the extent of her force cannot be gauged. One thing is certain, that the present Government being an essentially strong one, and Dr. Stancioff, the Foreign Minister, a man of action, Bulgaria will no longer sit still and allow her people in Macedonia to be decimated as they now are daily.

In view of this, therefore, it will perhaps be of interest to explain impartially at some little length the question which it is feared must, ere long, bring Turkey and Bulgaria face to face.

Ever since the liberation of Bulgaria up to the present moment the Bulgarian Exarchate has led a perturbed existence.

As long ago as the Russo-Turkish War it had to undergo serious trials, the Exarch being obliged to recall the Bulgarian bishops from the Macedonian diocese. When, after the Treaty of Berlin, he attempted to restore them to their former sees and to complete the organisation of the Bulgarian Church—in accordance with the Imperial Firman of May 16, 1870—by establishing a Synod and a Mixed Council, the Exarch received in 1883 from the Turkish Minister of Justice the following significant answer:—

“When we determine to grant you a status in the *vilayets*, then only we shall consider the matter of your administration.”

So that, after an existence of only three years, the Bulgarian Exarchate found its right of having a status in the *vilayets* put in question. This, however, did not discourage the Exarch. On the contrary, he redoubled his efforts. Relying upon the Imperial Firman, and assisted by the Bulgarian Government, he succeeded in winning for the Exarchate an official status in Macedonia, insisting at the same time on the formation of a Synod and a Mixed Council, attached to the Exarchate.

At the present day the authority of the Exarchate in Macedonia extends over seven dioceses, namely, Uskub, Ochrida, Debr, Monastir, Veless, Nevrokop, and Stroumitza. In addition to these, there are still ten bishoprics which, contrary to the Firman, remain vacant, because the Sultan refuses to grant the indispensable *berats*. During the period referred to, the Exarchate was also deprived of its right of representation at Sketcha and Malgara (*vilayet* of Adrianople), whose religious communities were suspended in 1897 by the Grand Vizier Rifaat Pasha. The Bulgarian chapel at Sketcha remains to this day under seals placed by the Imperial authorities, and consequently inaccessible to the spiritual needs of the Bulgarian population in that place.

The question of the Mixed Council and the Synod still remains open. The solution of this question is of supreme moment to the Exarchate and to the Bulgarian Government.

This is due to the position and importance of the religious communities in the Turkish Empire.

For the better understanding of the bearing of the issues involved, it will be perhaps necessary to refer to the history of the Turkish Empire and its attitude towards Bulgaria.

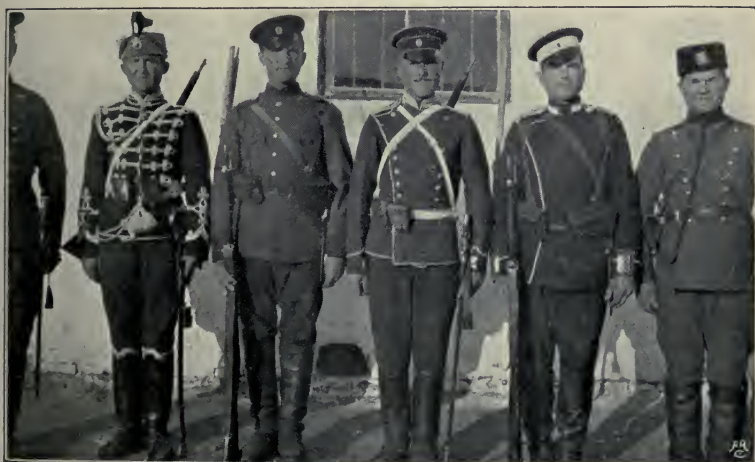
As is well known, instead of trying to assimilate the Christian nations which they had conquered, the Turks always considered themselves masters of those whom they had vanquished. Their system of government in this respect is, of course, in perfect agreement with the spirit of their religion. The Koran subdivides all countries into two distinct groups: first those belonging to Islam, and secondly those under the domination of the *giaours* (infidels), with whom Islam was in a state of permanent war. The true believers, the followers of the Prophet, were declared rulers of the infidels. These purely theocratic principles of State organisation form, until this day, the basis of the Ottoman Empire.

As exponents of these principles, the Osmanlis did not attempt, after the conquest of Byzantium, to impose on their new subjects the Turkish State institutions or civil laws. Although despised and humiliated, the *rayas* continued to enjoy privileges which, in many respects, remind one of those subsequently granted by the capitulations to the foreign Christians. The place of the rulers of the conquered nations was now occupied by the representatives of their Church. As an instance, Mohammed II., conqueror of Constantinople, conferred upon the Patriarch of Constantinople the title of *Miletbashi* (Chief of the Nation), and entrusted to him the administration of the secular and spiritual interests of his flock. These same prerogatives were also granted to the Bulgarian Patriarchs of Tirnovo and Ochrida, as representatives of the Bulgarian nation. The spiritual leaders of the conquered races delegated, in their turn, part of their attributes to their inferiors—bishops and priests.

In this way, the clergy formed a body of functionaries invested with large administrative and judicial powers. Every religious community was entrusted with the repartition of



Peasants at Vladaja : Bulgaria.



Bulgarian Military Types.

the State taxes among the members of the community, and was responsible for their payment into the State Exchequer. In a word, the spiritual head of a Christian race was at the same time its civil representative before the Turkish authorities. As regards the Bulgarian nation, this mission was confided, down to the year 1770, to its Patriarchs—at first, to the Patriarchs of Tirnovo and Ochrida, and, later on, to that of the latter place—until the abolition of the Patriarchate of Ochrida, which was brought about by the intrigues of the Greeks.

The fact remains that during several centuries the Christians in the Turkish Empire—and among them the Bulgarians—have, owing to this peculiarity of the Turkish State policy, enjoyed a relative independence, and in this way have been able to preserve their nationality, language, and customs. These exceptional historical circumstances explain at the same time why, among these Christians, the sentiment of patriotism has been transformed into an attachment to their religious communities and their national Church.

This sentiment of patriotism and spiritual consciousness, which, owing to the oppression exercised by the Greek clergy, after the year 1770 had weakened to the extent of national self-forgetfulness and identification with the Greeks, awakened once more among the Bulgarians during the second half of last century. It acquired great force in the course of the struggle for the restoration of the ancient national Church. This new struggle began at the time of the Tanzimat, a period when the Porte had to fight against the growing omnipotence of the Patriarchate, which was threatening the very foundations of the State. It had, as its legal support, the Hatti-Houmayoun of 1856, which reverted to the historical rights of all religious communities. The second part of Section II. of this Act runs as follows :—

“Chaque communauté Chrétienne ou d'autre rite non-musulman sera tenue, dans un délai fixé et avec le concours d'une commission formée *ad hoc* dans son sein, de procéder, avec ma haute approbation et sous la surveillance de ma Sublime Porte, à l'examen de ses immunités et privilèges et d'y discuter

et soumettre à ma Sublime Porte les réformes exigées par le progrès des lumières et du temps."

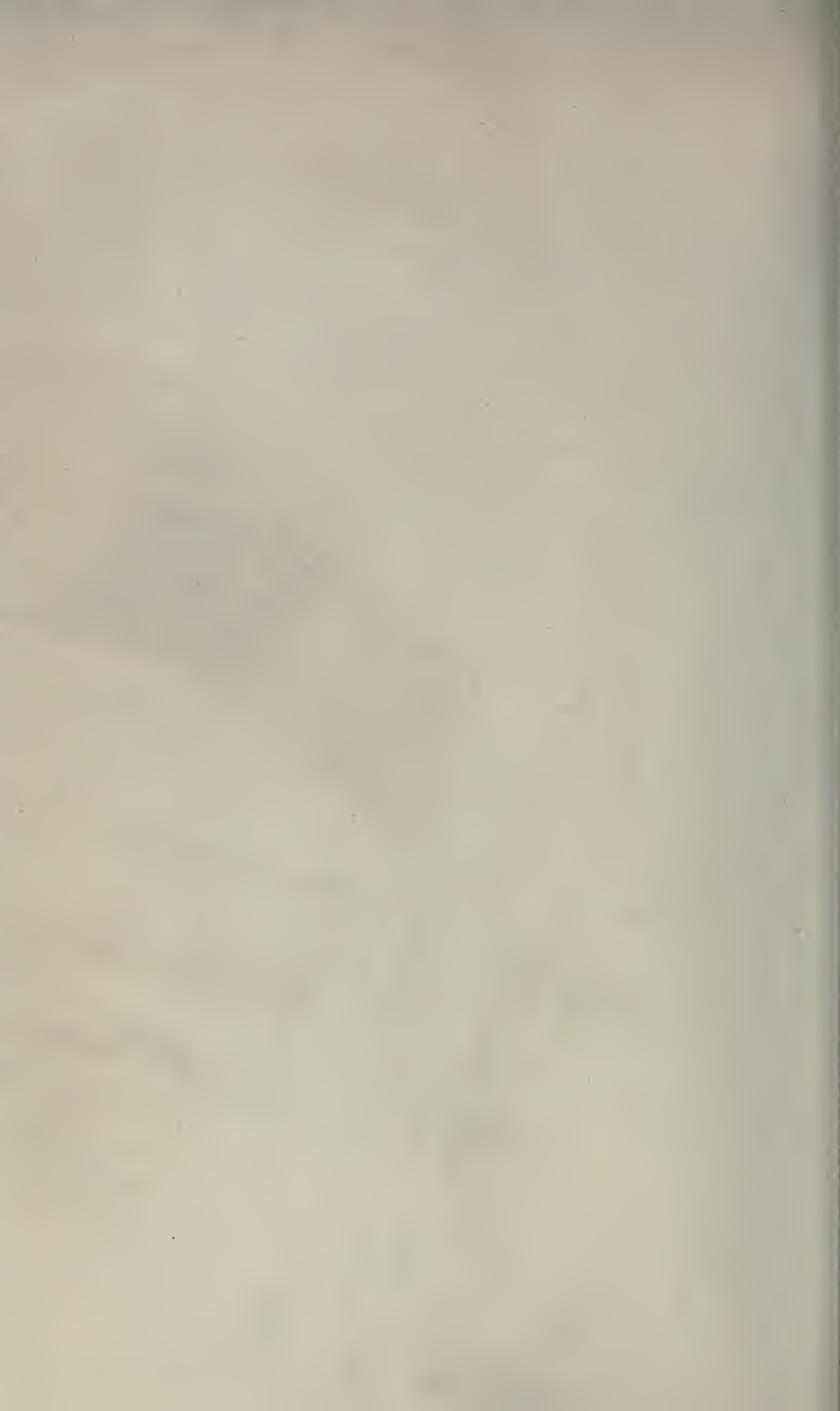
Progress, as well as the State interests of the Empire at that time, required the administrative separation of the Bulgarian Church from the Patriarchate, and its endowment with a special chief and clergy. It is interesting to note that, in this struggle of the Sublime Porte with the Patriarchate for the denationalisation of the Christian communities—which had for its consequence the weakening of the Patriarchate and the restriction of its privileges—the Bulgarian nation acted as allies of the Empire, with "the high approval of the Sultan" and "under the control of the Sublime Porte." Thanks mainly to this alliance and to this struggle against the Patriarchate in favour of the Bulgarian nation, the Patriarchate was considerably weakened through the Organic Statute of 1862, while the Bulgarian Church was restored in virtue of the Firman of 1870.

With the Bulgarian Church restored, it was necessary, in accordance with the Imperial Firman, that it should be organised after the pattern of the Eastern Orthodox Church, of which it formed a branch, without in any case departing from its canons. The Exarchate, as its highest administrative body, was organised on such close lines with the Patriarchate, that its Organic Statute is, in greater part, nothing but a reproduction of that of the Patriarchate in 1862, which, in its turn, is based on the principles laid down by the Hatti-Houmayoun.

In view of all this, it must be admitted that to-day the struggle—or rather the insistence of the Exarchate for the speedier organisation of a Synod and a Mixed Council, forming part of itself—is only a just and legal claim of the rights and privileges sanctioned by the Firman of 1870. It should be clearly understood that the Bulgarian Exarchate does not ask for any new privileges; all that it demands is the restoration of the Synod and the Mixed Council as they existed before the Russo-Turkish War. Surely this is but a very natural demand! The question concerns two administrative bodies, with attributes strictly defined by the canons of the Church,



Peasants near Tirnovo, Bulgaria.



as well as by the statute of the Exarchate and the Imperial Firman, and which cannot be delegated to anyone else, but must be exercised by the Synod and the Mixed Council. To the Synod are reserved all questions of the *forum ecclesiasticum*, while the mission of the Mixed Council is to look after the schools, the civil administration, and the organisation of the Bulgarian nationality. The Mixed Council forms at the same time the highest judicial body in civil cases between Bulgarians—the mixed courts being reserved for civil cases between Mohammedans and Christians, as well as for commercial and criminal cases without any distinction of religion. This brief mention of the attributes of the Synod and of the Mixed Council is surely sufficient to show the very urgent need of their speedy restoration and organisation.

The needs of the Church and of the community have greatly increased; they are no longer what they used to be thirty years ago, and cannot be left disregarded. The requirements of the population and of the times give rise to fresh questions, while on the other hand the Imperial Ottoman Government comes every day with fresh demands to the Exarchate, which shares in the administration of the country, as an auxiliary organ.

In these present-day times of trial the Bulgarian population in Macedonia, broken up, persecuted, and outlawed as it is, turns for help and protection to its legal head and protector, the Exarch. The Exarch is, however, helpless, because personally he has no authority to decide such questions as fall within the competence of the Mixed Council. His only rôle in such matters is to act as an intermediary between the Council and the Sublime Porte.

The present position of the Exarchate is an abnormal one. According to the Firman, which has the force of law within the Empire, it has well-defined rights and obligations as regards the Porte and the Bulgarian nation in the *vilayets*, which, however, it cannot exercise or fulfil because of its imperfect and irregular organisation. This state of things provokes among the populations of the Empire complaints both against the Exarchate and the Imperial authorities.

Failing to find help and protection at the hands of the legal authorities, the outraged population is naturally tempted to look for such in illegal quarters, and in its despair places its hopes in foreign intervention. This state of affairs explains and fully justifies such tendencies among the Macedonian population. The true interests of the Ottoman Empire demand the preservation of its Christian inhabitants from similar hopes and tendencies. The population ought to expect all improvements from Constantinople. In this respect the formation of a Synod and of a Mixed Council attached to the Exarchate is not only a just demand, admitted on every hand outside Turkey, but is highly desirable and indispensable for the pacification of public opinion both in the *vilayets* and in Bulgaria. By their very constitution, this Synod and the Mixed Council would act as legal interpreters of the needs of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia and the *vilayet* of Adrianople, and would form a strong link between the Bulgarians and the Sublime Porte.

It would surely be preferable both for the Powers and for Turkey if they had to deal with a legally organised and responsible body, such as the Bulgarian Exarchate. Indeed, this latter, if completed and fortified by the creation of the Synod and the Mixed Council, would no doubt succeed in attracting the attention of the Bulgarian population of the *vilayets* once more to Constantinople. The cause of the Macedonian reforms would benefit considerably from such an organisation, while the difficult task of the Powers would be greatly facilitated.

The just and legal measure I have outlined above would pacify public opinion in the Principality of Bulgaria. That something must be done is very plain. Matters in Macedonia cannot be allowed to remain as they are—a blot upon the civilisation of Europe. Bulgaria is, as far as I have been able to judge from personal inquiry, determined to take a strong and definite line. She cannot remain indifferent to the injustice of the Porte towards the Bulgarian Exarchate; neither can she overlook the burning question. Even if she were inclined to adopt such a course, she would not be in a

position to do so. No Bulgarian Government could follow such a policy without being accused of violating the Constitution, according to which the Eastern Orthodox religion is the State religion of the country.

In ecclesiastical matters the Principality is, according to Article 39 of the Bulgarian Constitution, placed under the control of the highest spiritual authority of the Bulgarian Church, wherever that authority may be found. This authority is the Bulgarian Exarchate. It must be remembered, too, that this Constitution was ratified at the time, by the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin. The right of the Principality to take an interest in the normal and regular working of the authority in question now became even more indisputable. Besides, political considerations of the very highest importance to the peace of Europe place upon the Bulgarian Government the duty of reminding the Great Powers, Turkey included, of the liabilities which they assumed towards the Christian population of the *vilayets* by virtue of Articles 25 and 62 of the Treaty of Berlin.

Only natural is it, and in the cause of humanity, that Bulgaria should seek to protect the Bulgarians in Macedonia. Never has the country been in a worse state than at the present time, and never has European interference been more needed than at this moment.

Europe should listen attentively to this Bulgarian complaint against Turkey, for it is surely a just one, crying loudly for remedy. The blood of the poor massacred thousands in Macedonia calls to-day to the Powers for mercy and justice, and yet to-morrow, and still to-morrow, a hundred more defenceless men and women and innocent children are put to the sword, mutilated and murdered, and we in England hear nothing about it. Macedonia is, alas! a country where God is high and Justice far away.

This question of the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Porte is, I know, an abstruse one, neglected by most writers on the subject. However, it is one of the highest importance—one which is inseparable from the future policy of Bulgaria.

Things cannot remain long in Macedonia as I myself saw

them. Europe holds up her hands in virtuous horror at the so-called Congo scandals and seeks out every detail of mal-administration, yet she turns a deaf ear to the piteous cry of the Macedonians, whose homes are daily burned and pillaged, and whose villages are often completely wiped out—both dwellings and inhabitants—in the course of a few hours by fiends filled with the lust of blood.

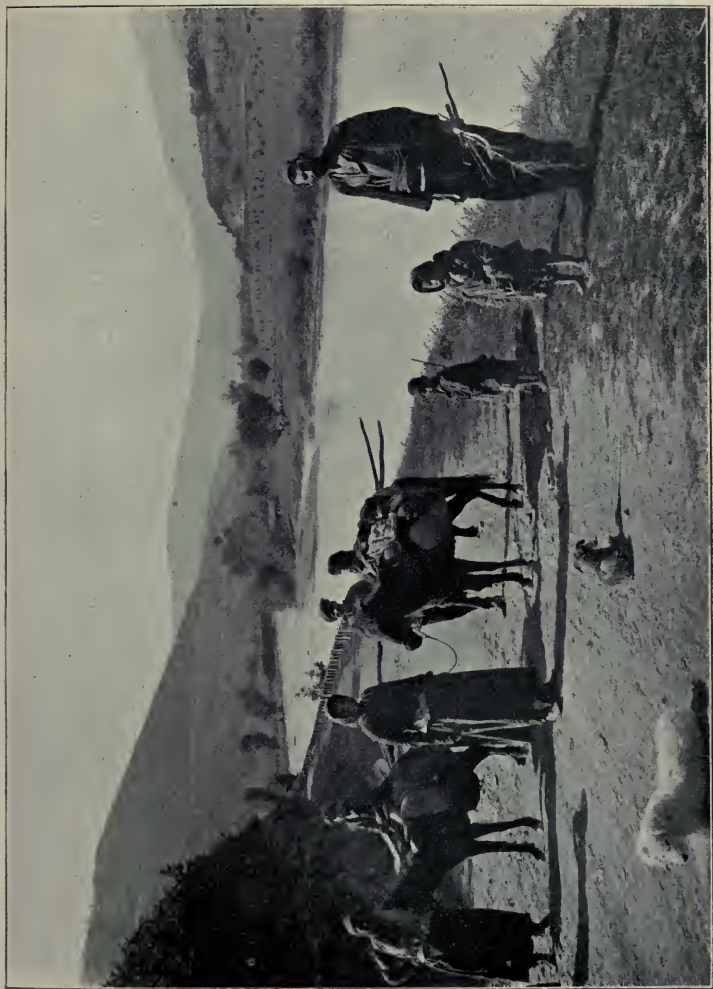
If you doubt that there are horrible atrocities daily committed in Macedonia by Greeks and Turks alike, you need go no farther than Sofia. Visit the Orphanage for Macedonian boys established three years ago by Mr. Pierce O'Mahony, an Irish philanthropist, of Grange Con, County Wicklow. This gentleman was living in Sofia, and hearing terrible stories of massacres across the frontier, established an institution for the education of orphans whose parents had been killed in the raids. When I visited the place, I found it neat, orderly, and doing a most charitable and excellent work under the care of two English nursing sisters. In a large commodious house on the outskirts of the capital were thirty lads ranging in age from seven to fifteen, all dressed in their white woollen and black-braided national costume of Macedonia.

When the boys were assembled in the large classroom, I heard some of their stories, and truly they were appalling, many of the details too terrible to be placed here on record. As an instance, one lad I saw, a bright, intelligent little fellow, was admitted to the Orphanage a few months ago. He lived in the district of Ochrida, and was one day tending his sheep as usual, when some Turkish soldiers came past.

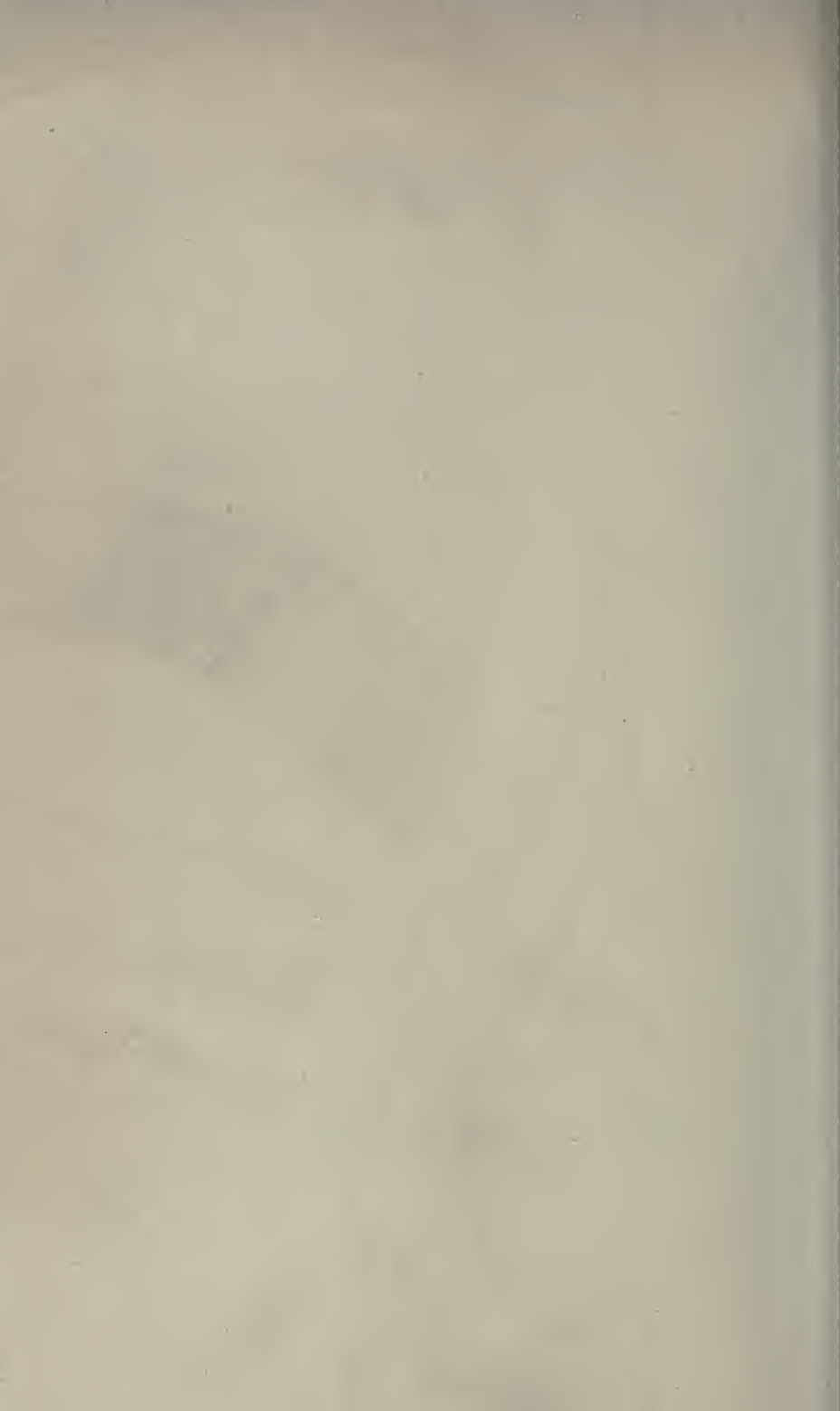
"Have you seen a Bulgarian band pass along just now?" they inquired.

The lad declared that he had seen nobody. The soldiers doubted him, for the Bulgarian band in question was protecting the villages in that neighbourhood.

They asked again, and the boy denied having seen anybody, which was the truth. Whereupon one of the Sultan's soldiers smashed the little fellow's skull in with the butt end of his rifle, while another took a knife and cut his throat from ear to ear. They then dug a rough hole in the ground and



Tziganes on the Isker road.



buried him. Some hours after, a shepherd passing noticed that his dog was scratching the earth, and on going to the spot, heard moans. The lad was quickly exhumed, and found to be still living. For many weeks he was in the hospital in Salonica, but was eventually admitted to Mr. O'Mahony's Home. When I saw him, the wound in the head had only just healed, and the ugly scar across the throat was still red. I have his photograph, but it is too ghastly to here reproduce.

Another little lad described to me how his father and mother had been tortured by the Turks and afterwards burnt alive before his eyes, while another related how he had been captured by the Turks, taken into slavery, and afterwards escaped.

Each orphan boy had his own terrible story to tell, stories that were full of horror and inhuman butchery, stories that made one wonder whether such things could really happen in this enlightened century.

As to the institute and its general conduct, there is no doubt it is performing a most humane and charitable work. There are thousands of the homeless and fatherless in Macedonia, increasing thousands, and the institute, which is purely a piece of private philanthropy, cannot possibly admit one-tenth of the applicants for its charity. The founder hopes, if private subscribers or donors come forward, to extend his work, and Lady Buchanan of the British Legation, Sofia, who takes a great interest in it, told me that she would be very pleased to acknowledge any subscriptions sent to her.

Certainly it is most deserving of support, for already it has sent Macedonian lads into the Bulgarian Agricultural School at Kustendil; two others are in the Cadet School in Sofia, and will become officers; others have been taught trades and are earning their living; and one has been sent to England. Though the founder is a member of the Church of England, the lads are allowed to retain their own religion, the Orthodox.

Every right-minded man must, after investigating the complaint of Bulgaria against the Porte regarding the Exarchate, take the part of Bulgaria. Macedonia is to-day and

every day being decimated by Greek bands who raid under the protection and with the connivance of the Turks, and assuredly Bulgaria has just cause for reprisals. At present, however, her bands are inactive, and she is endeavouring to adjust the difficulty by diplomatic channels. Bulgaria has no desire for war, neither has Turkey.

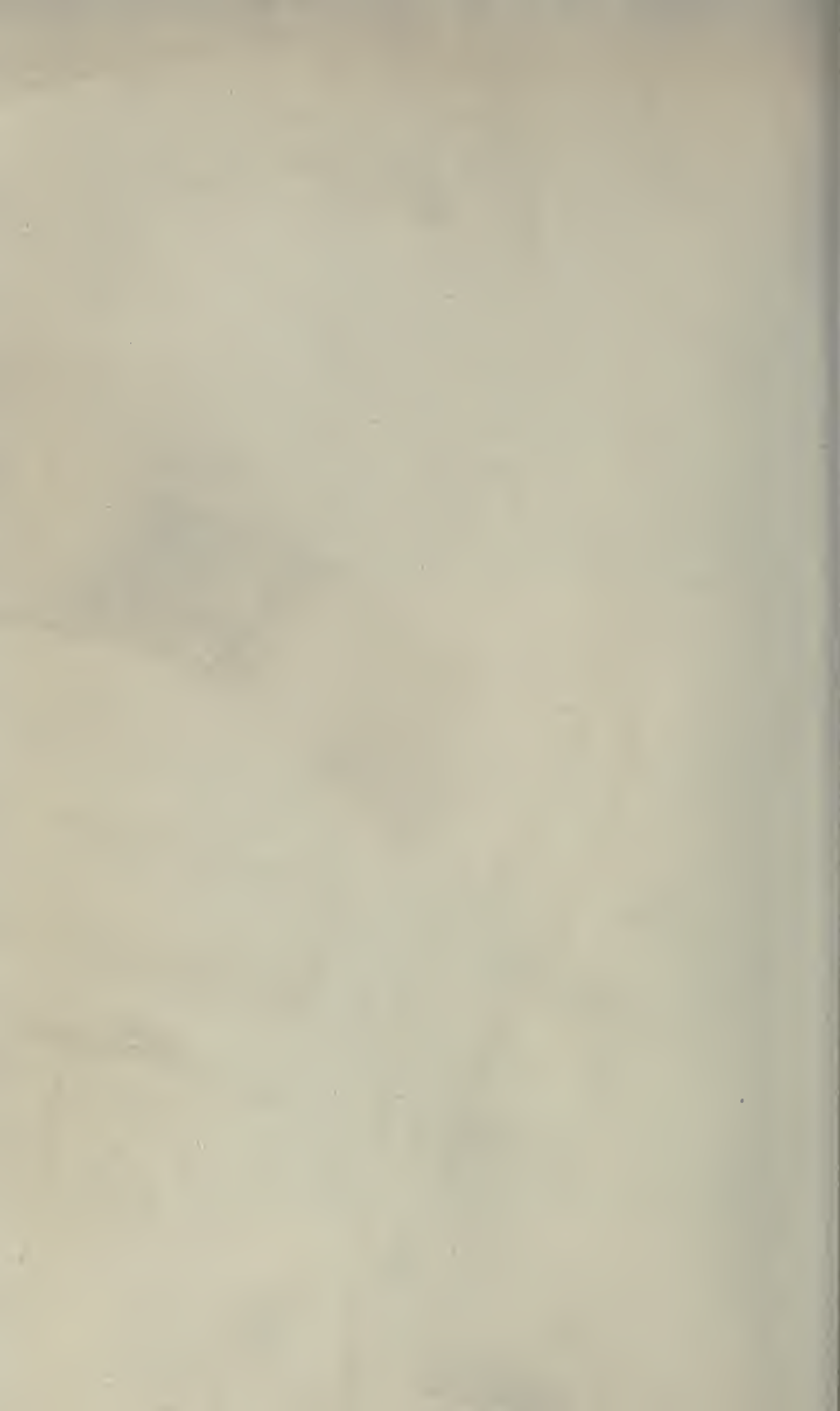
But the question must ere long be faced boldly and fearlessly, and a solution arrived at. Bulgaria has right on her side, and in the name of humanity it is the duty of the Powers to support her.



Where I spent a comfortless night in Bulgaria.



Bulgarian Laundresses.



CHAPTER V

AT A ROSE DISTILLERY

Tobacco growing in Bulgaria—The otto-of-rose industry—About adulteration—Difficulties of obtaining the pure extract—Corrupting the peasant—What Monsieur Shipkoff told me—Some tests to discover adulteration—Interesting facts about roses.

NO description of the present condition of Bulgaria would be complete without mention of the two principal industrial plants cultivated in the country—tobacco and roses.

Tobacco, I noticed, was particularly plentiful in the south and in the departments of Silistra and Kustendil. The department of Haskovo, it appears, produces 800,000 kilos of first quality tobacco, followed by Philippopoli with 300,000 kilos, Kustendil with 270,000 kilos, and Silistra with 210,000. Three-quarters of all this tobacco is consumed in the country, for Bulgarians are inveterate cigarette-smokers, and the remaining quarter exported. Tobacco in leaf is sold at an average price of 80 centimes to 1 fr. 50 c. per kilogramme. The Government give the peasants, in order to encourage tobacco cultivation, quantities of seed gratis.

As regards the cultivation of roses, the special species grown are the red rose (*Rosa damascena*) and various species of white rose, of which the *Rosa moscata* is the most used, the best and most extensive plantations being at Kazanlik, Karlovo, Klissoura, and Stara-Sagora.

I was afforded an opportunity of visiting one of the otto-of-rose distilleries, and the sweet, penetrating perfume of it clings still to the nostrils. Bulgarian otto-of-rose is famous

the world over, and its production is carried on in 175 communes in the departments of Philippopoli and Stara-Sagora.

The chief manufacturers and exporters of otto-of-rose are Messrs. Shipkoff & Co. of Kazanlik, who export about two-thirds of the whole rose produce. This firm, as well as the others, make advances to the peasantry upon their growing crops of roses, and the peasant pays these advances in otto-of-rose already distilled. The firms make it a part of the contract that the extract must be pure, and can refuse to accept it if adulterated. As a check, all the exporters make it a point to themselves distil in the various rose-growing districts for the purpose of obtaining the proper standard of purity.

I had an opportunity of visiting Mr. Theodore Shipkoff, Deputy for Kazanlik, of the great firm of Shipkoff & Co. He showed me over the factory, and gave me a number of extremely interesting details regarding this unique industry.

It appears that nowadays it is not an easy matter to obtain pure otto-of-rose. Some forty years ago the entire rose industry was an ideal one. No farmers, small or big, adulterated their otto. They knew nothing about adulteration. In their primitive simplicity and honesty, it would have been altogether against their nature to falsify in any way their produce. The jobbers and dealers who used to come from Adrianople and Constantinople to buy it, and who at that time controlled the whole exportation, while buying it from the growers in its pure state, soon began to adulterate it with the Turkish geranium oil (*Idris Yaghi*). They found this way of adulterating the otto-of-rose so profitable that, in order to use a larger percentage of geranium oil and at the same time to render it less easily detected, they began to import from Constantinople the crude geranium oil, and in the presence of the growers to redistil and refine it in rose-flowers and rose-water, thus taking away its pungent and heavy vegetable odour. Some of the growers soon learned to do this themselves, and the peddling traders started regular factories for the express purpose of refining geranium oil and selling it afterwards to the peasants for purposes of

adulteration. In this way many villages were gradually corrupted, and the otto-of-rose they produced was more or less adulterated with geranium oil; but most of the adulteration has always been done by the exporting jobbers and dealers. This, of course, brought much discredit to the rose industry, and the Government, some fifteen years ago, was compelled to prohibit the importation of geranium oil into the country. This measure was a most wholesome one, and checked, to some extent, the free and open importation of geranium, and saved many of the rose villages from further corruption. However, a great deal of geranium oil is still imported *sub rosa* into Bulgaria by unscrupulous jobbers and exporters, and much of the otto-of-rose sold is largely adulterated with it.

Mr. Shipkoff, in course of his conversation with me when he showed me over his distillery at Kazanlik, said, "As our principle is to export only the genuine otto-of-rose, and sell only what we can guarantee as absolutely pure, our task has been, and is, a most difficult one. With the primitive system of distillation still in use in our country, it is actually impossible for us to distil all the otto-of-rose we export, and we still have to depend on our growers for the greater part of our stock. When the means of transportation and communication improve, it will then be possible to centralise the whole distillation in a few places, and establish large steam distilleries, such as those in Grasse, Cannes, and Leipzig. At present most of the rose-flowers are distilled in the villages where they are grown, and by the growers themselves, this method being by far the cheapest. Still, to guard ourselves from all possible adulteration on the part of our suppliers, and at the same time to be able to get as much otto-of-rose as possible of our own distillation, we ourselves have to distil in all the principal places in the eight rose counties of the rose district, and each year we increase our own distillations.

"It is by virtue of this extensive distillation that we are able to obtain pure otto. Besides this practical means, we have continually experimented to discover various tests, whereby we can readily distinguish the pure from the

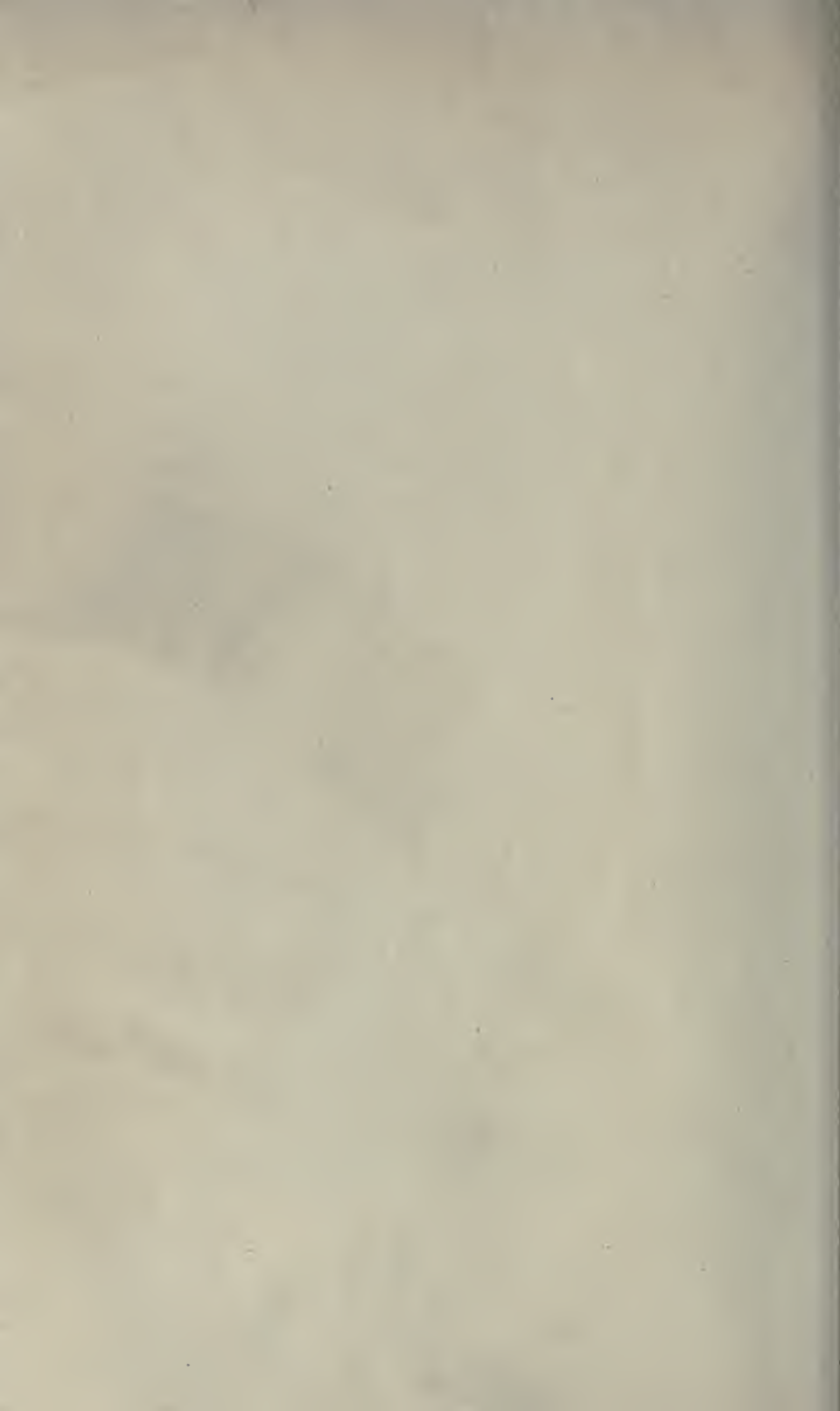
adulterated rose. It is quite impossible simply from the sense of smell to always recognise an adulteration from two to five per cent., and the following are the tests, which we possess and use in conducting our business: the freezing-point test, the specific gravity test, the density test, the spectrum test, the iodine test, and the nitric acid test.

“Otto-of-rose, when analysed, is found to consist of two ingredients: the oleoptene, which is the liquid and odouriferous part of the otto-of-rose, and the stereoptene, which is the solid and odourless part, and causes the crystallisation of the otto-of-rose. The proportion in which these two ingredients are combined in the pure otto-of-rose is more or less fixed, varying only from 10 to 15 per cent. according to the elevation of the localities in which the otto is produced. The highest proportion—15 per cent.—is found in otto-of-rose distilled in villages situated highest in the Balkans; while the villages down in the plains produce otto-of-rose containing only 10 to 11 per cent. of stereoptene. We have lately made experiments to distil these two ingredients separately, but they can best be separated from each other by a very simple physical process. The average proportion of these two ingredients in our stocks during the last five years has been about $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of stereoptene and $87\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of oleoptene.

“The oil usually employed for the adulteration of otto-of-rose is the geranium oil (*Palagonium Radula*) known to the trade as Turkish geranium oil. This oil is made in India and is sold in Constantinople. Formerly they used this oil as adulterant in its crude state, but now it is generally refined in rose-water or rose-flower before it is used. No matter how well refined, it is impossible to put 5 per cent. of it in otto-of-rose without changing the freezing point of the otto, its specific gravity, and the proportion in which the stereoptene and oleoptene are combined. Geranium oil contains no stereoptene, and in consequence does not crystallise. In the best refined geranium oil the specific gravity is fully .880—a difference in weight of about eighteen points. All this helps to detect its presence in otto-of-rose. It can also be



The Rose-fields near Kazanlik.



detected by means of the iodine as well as the nitric acid tests. The presence of geranium oil in otto-of-rose lowers its freezing point, renders its specific gravity heavier, and changes the proportion in which the oleoptene and stereoptene are combined.

"In order to rectify these defects, the use of spermaceti, paraffin, and alcohol have often been resorted to, but the presence of all these three substances can be discovered without any difficulty. The crystals of both spermaceti and paraffin are entirely different from the crystals of the stereoptene of otto-of-rose, and otto-of-rose containing any proportion of either will lose, when congealed, its sharp-pointed, needle-like crystals. Besides, paraffin and spermaceti being fatty oils, are much heavier, and in time will settle at the bottom. Furthermore, they are not volatile as stereoptene. The presence of alcohol is detected either by the use of double distilled water or of pure glycerine."

By resorting to these various tests in the selection of supplies from growers, as well as by extensive distillation in all the principal localities, respectable firms are always able to procure the finest otto-of-rose and to export it in its absolute purity.

The whole rose district comprises in all 173 villages, devoted to rose culture, with about 15,500 acres of rose plantations. These yield annually from 20,000,000 to 25,000,000 pounds of rose-flowers, for the distillation of which some 13,000 native stills are used. The total yield of otto annually varies according to the year—from 90,000 to 150,000 ounces; the average crop being about 120,000 ounces of pure otto-of-rose. It generally takes from 160 to 250 pounds rose-flowers to make one ounce of otto—and there are about 300 roses to the pound.

Nearly all the otto produced in Bulgaria is exported for consumption abroad, and chiefly to New York, Paris, and London, its three largest markets, and from there it is distributed all over the world. Formerly the perfumers used to be supplied through the intermediary of Constantinople, Leipzig, and London, but now all large consumers buy their supply direct. The house of Shipkoff was the first to inaugurate

this system of direct relations. It saves many extra charges, and in case of the goods delivered turning out badly, the guilty party is at once detected.

Shipkoffs do not believe in all sorts of grades, their motto being, "*Only one quality—the best.*"

The culture of roses in Bulgaria is not only the oldest and most attractive industry of the country, but also quite exclusively its own. While roses are found all over the world and are grown everywhere in garden-beds, in Bulgaria they are grown in extensive fields, as we grow the potato or corn. This industry, however, is confined only to one special district in Bulgaria, which is comprised in the eight counties above mentioned, with Kazanlik as their central town, called, in consequence, the capital of the rose district. The rose district extends along that portion of the southern slopes of the Balkan mountains, comprising in itself the branch range of the Little Balkans, which shoots out of the main Balkans and forms one of its chief arms. The average length of the rose district is about eighty miles, and its average width is about thirty miles. Its average elevation is about 1300 feet above the level of the sea. The average height of the Balkans along the rose district is about 5600 feet, while that of the Little Balkans is about 3700 feet.

Attempts have often been made to grow roses all over Bulgaria, but they have all proved a failure. It is true that roses have been grown, and are grown to this day, in Persia, India, Egypt, and China for this purpose, but they hardly produce any otto-of-rose. They produce almost exclusively rose-water, and it is chiefly used for local consumption. In the Maritime Alps of Southern France, and especially in Cannes and Grasse, they grow quite extensively the "Provence rose," and they extract from it a peculiar otto-of-rose, but the quantity is very limited, and they chiefly use their flowers to make pomades and rose-water. In Leipzig they also grow roses, but with very little success. Almost in all the other places where the roses are grown, they lack the peculiar advantages of climate that Bulgaria possesses, and have in consequence to use twice and even thrice the quantity of flowers to

make the same amount of otto. The hottest weather ever experienced in summer in this part of Bulgaria is 88° Fahr. and the coldest of winter is rarely under 15° Fahr. above zero. Then, during the harvest and distillation season, which is in the latter part of May and the first part of June, there we have regular showers of rain and in the mornings heavy falls of dew—both absolutely necessary for the otto-of-rose distillation.

After the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-78, when Bulgaria was separated from Turkey and constituted into an independent Principality, the Turkish Government spent thousands of pounds in trying to replant the Kazanlik rose in Asia Minor, and many scores of rose-gardens were planted around Broussa, but to no purpose. The gardens grew, thrived, and yielded plenty of flowers, but when distilled they got only rose-water and very little otto, so the work, in consequence, could not pay. It is the peculiarity of the soil, and chiefly that of the atmosphere of this special district in Bulgaria, caused by the peculiar formation of the mountain ranges surrounding it, which makes the roses thrive and yield sufficient otto-of-rose to pay for the very laborious work that the culture entails.

The red rose grown is a semi-double light red rose like the French *rose du roi*, having from thirty to thirty-six petals and possessing an extremely rich and fragrant odour. The growing of the rose is very much like the growth of the vine, and the planting of a rose-garden is similar to that of a vineyard. After the ground has been prepared by tilling and manuring, ditches are made in rows, about a foot and a half in depth and width, and a yard and a half apart. At the bottom of these ditches soft earth mixed with manure is spread, on which the roots forming the bushes of the new rose-garden and taken from old bushes are firmly stuck vertically, and then well covered up with the earth and manure. This is generally done in the spring, when the rain showers abound. The roses thus planted soon take root, and in less than two months send up soft, glossy green shoots, which in a year become about a foot high. In the second year they are over two feet high, and yield a few rose-flowers. The first crop worth gathering is in the third year, and in the fifth year they

attain their full growth. They reach then a height of about six feet, the bushes forming thick rows of clustered rose-trees and continuing to yield rich crops of flowers for a period of twenty years, and in some localities twenty-five years, after the lapse of which time they become old, begin to die from the winter's cold and frost, and yield but few flowers. Then the old rose-bushes are dug out and the garden is planted anew.

A rose-garden requires constant care. During the year it is hoed three times. In autumn the roots are covered up with earth to guard them from the winter's cold. In spring that earth is thrown off and the bushes are pruned, and every other year the garden is manured.

The roses yield only one crop every year. The rose-harvest begins in the latter part of May, and as the weather is dry and hot or cool and rainy during the blossoming season, it may last from eighteen to thirty days. During the whole harvest the distillation of the crop is carried on. Morning after morning, hours before sunrise, groups of young maidens and boys, all dressed in their beautiful bright-coloured native costumes, proceed with songs to the rose-gardens to gather the newly opened buds while the heavy morning dew is still on the blossoms. Nothing can present a more captivating scene than a rose-garden in bloom, with its gaily attired peasant-girls gathering the roses, and its nightingales—those romantic lovers of the *Regina florum*—trying in most melodious songs to out-sing the maidens.

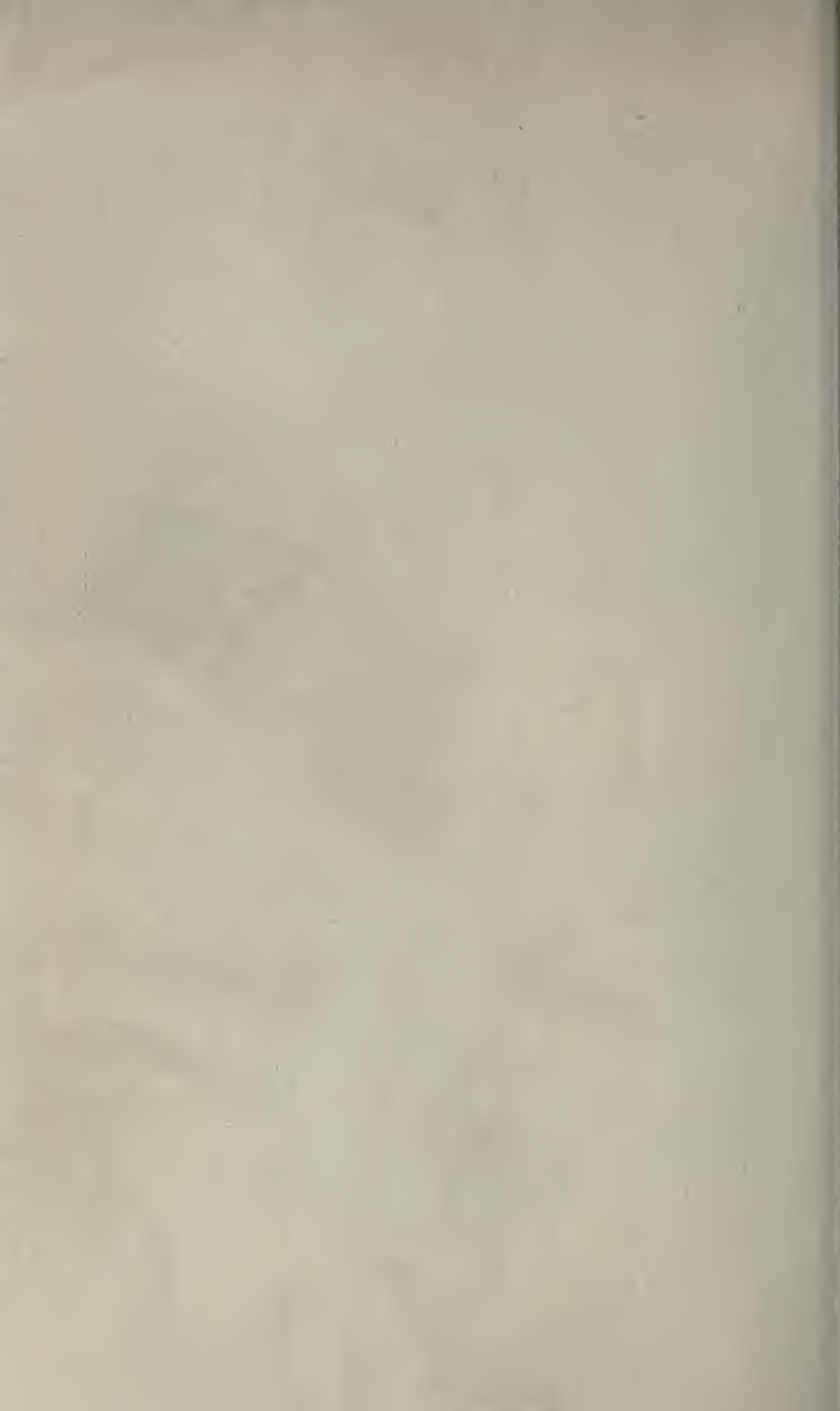
As soon as the roses are gathered they are taken to the distillery, spread in cool and shady rooms, and gradually distilled during the day. The alembics used for this purpose are of the simplest kind. They consist of a convex tinned copper boiler, narrowed at the top to a neck on which is fixed a spherical head-piece with a tube on one side, to which is attached the condensing tube, sloping down and passing through the condenser or refrigerator, a large vessel into which cold water is constantly running. The capacity of the boiler is about 250 pounds of water. In distilling the roses from twenty to twenty-five pounds of flowers are put



Gathering Roses at Kazanlik.



Testing Otto of Rose at Kazanlik.



in it, and from five to six times that much of water, thus nearly filling three-fourths of the boiler.

This done, the head-piece and condensing tube are tightly attached, the fire started, and the distilling of its contents begun. This is carried on about forty-five minutes, until thirty to thirty-five pounds of rose-water are extracted from each boiler. The boilers are then emptied, cleansed with clear water, and the same process is repeated until all the morning-gathered flowers are distilled. The rose-water extracted from the first distillation is redistilled in the same way, only in this second distillation from 100 to 120 pounds of rose-water are used, and out of it they extract some thirty to thirty-five pounds of second rose-water. This double-distilled rose-water is very strong in odour and quite turbid in appearance; it is full of tiny yellow-white oily globules floating in it, and as the bottle is filled they rise up and gather on the top of the long-necked bottles in which the rose-water runs. These globules are the otto-of-rose, and when all the oil has settled on the tops of the bottles, it is skimmed and put in separate bottles by little conical spoons, with a little hole in the bottom, large enough to let the water run out but not the oil.

Thus collected, the otto is sent to London, Paris, and New York, where it is used in the manufacture of high-class perfumes and soaps, etc.

CHAPTER VI

THE FUTURE OF BULGARIA

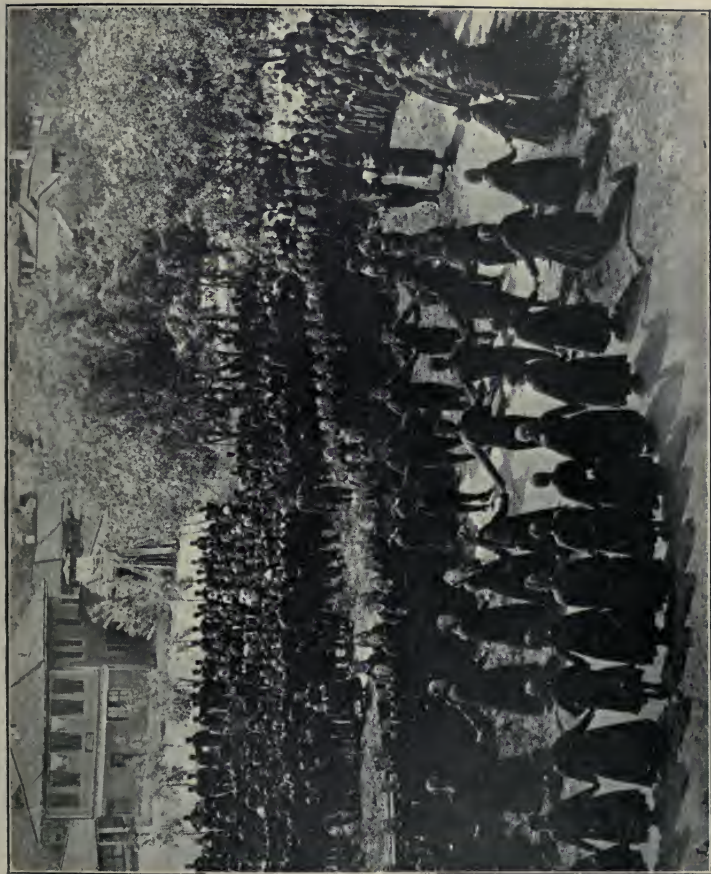
Bulgaria's future greatness—Her firm policy in Macedonia—An audience of Dr. Stancioff, Minister of Foreign Affairs—A chat with the Prime Minister—Turkey the enemy of Bulgaria—Balkan "news" in the London papers—How it is manufactured—Turkish dominion doomed.

THE future of Bulgaria is assured.

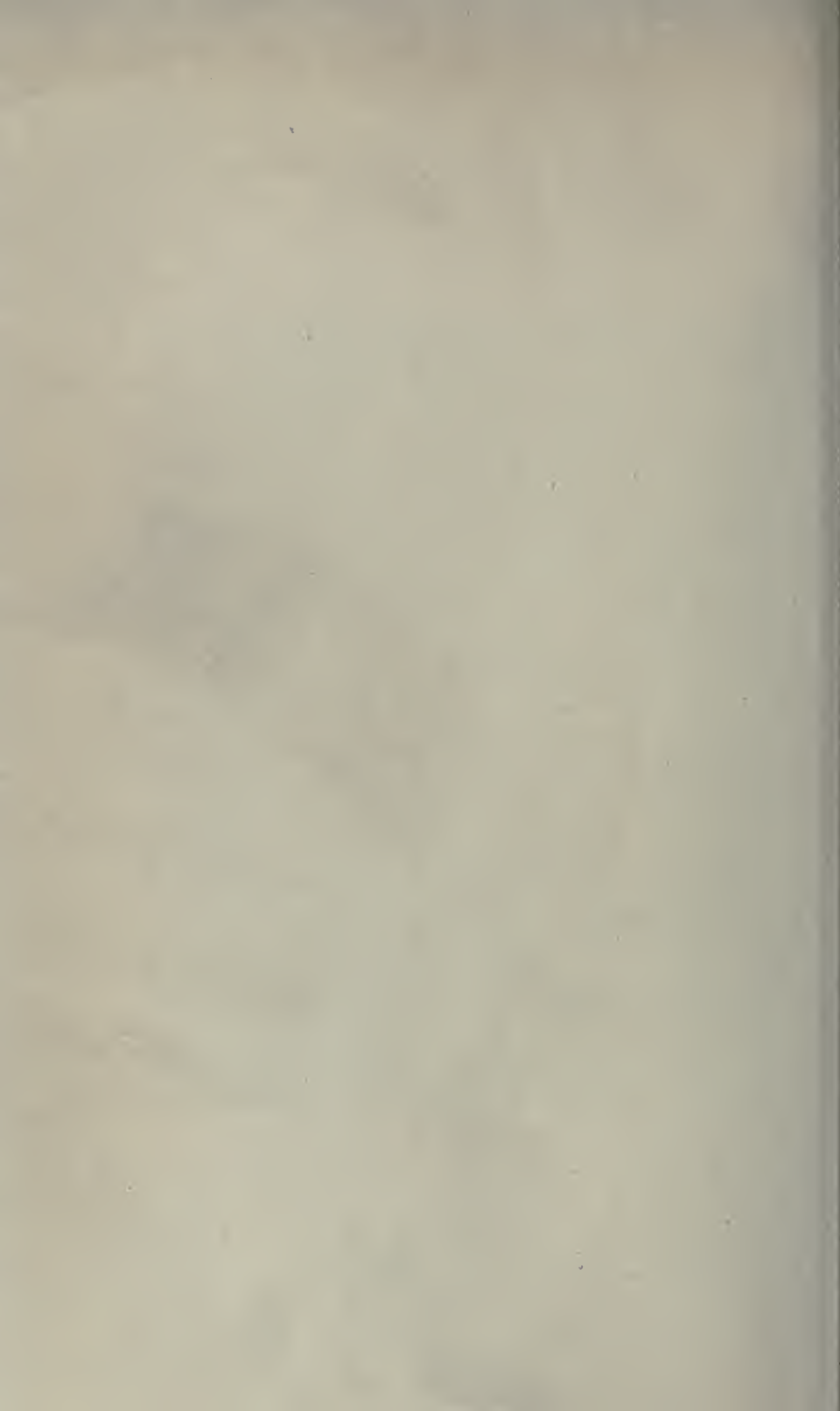
Bulgaria, with Servia, is destined to become the power in the Balkans. Vigorous, strong, and fearless, under a Prince who has the courage of his own convictions, the country is one of progress, of great military strength and continual expansion. The Bulgar differs from the Roumanian inasmuch as he is more patriotic and far less extravagant; he is frugal, progressive, and active. His capital is not the weak imitation of Paris, as is Bucharest, nor are his officers gorgeously dressed and corseted. On the contrary, they are hardy, well trained, well equipped, and business-like to a degree.

Some interesting sidelights upon Bulgaria's growing military strength have been revealed at the recent manœuvres, while an afternoon walk through Sofia will show how rapidly and firmly is the capital being established—the capital which is destined some day to be the capital of the Balkans.

On every hand I saw evidence of Bulgaria's future greatness. The Ministry, without exception, is a strong one and incorruptible. There is a firmness and stability about everything, all betokening a great future. Ministerial crises are few, and the people do not neglect their affairs for politics, as is the case in some Balkan countries. Under Prince Ferdinand Bulgaria has progressed amazingly, and



Bulgarian Peasants dancing the "horo."



in the near future will assume a position of supreme importance in the Peninsula. Her policy towards Roumania is, however, a somewhat undecided one. While the Roumanians fondly think that Bulgaria cannot take decisive action in Macedonia without her consent, Bulgaria seems to calmly ignore Roumania's existence. I have reason for believing that some satisfactory agreement will be arrived at in the course of the next month or two. Bulgaria, however, is wide awake and well aware that Roumania is desirous of a slice of her territory from the Danube down to the Black Sea. Only to obtain this would Roumania be party to any alliance regarding Macedonia.

One morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia I had audience with the newly appointed Minister, His Excellency Dr. Dimitri Stancioff. He is the coming man of Bulgaria, at one time private secretary to the Prince, and afterwards, as already explained, diplomatic agent in St. Petersburg, where he had an extremely brilliant career.

Of middle height, slim of figure, with dark hair slightly silvered, a keen, rather aquiline face, and sharp eyes, he is a man full of eager activity, quick perception, and indomitable energy.

He had only been in office a few days, and was overwhelmed with work, yet he spared me half an hour for a chat, although certain chiefs of the foreign missions were waiting for audience. In his quiet, sombre, business-like cabinet, he sat behind his littered table, smiling affably and ready to answer any questions I put to him.

"You want to see Bulgaria? Very well, I will give orders that you have good guides, and that you are supplied with all the official information available. Only," he laughed, "please do not flatter us. We prefer honest criticism."

He took down a list of the heads of the information I wanted, gave me a cigarette, and then we discussed the future of Bulgaria.

"His Royal Highness the Prince has told me that he sent you an autographed portrait last night. Have you received it?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"He will see you in Varna," he went on. "His Highness particularly wishes to see you."

Then I asked him to explain Bulgaria's future policy in the Balkans.

"You heard my speech in the Sobranje. Well, that constitutes in brief the future policy of Bulgaria—peace. We are a young nation, and we do not desire any complications with our neighbours. You have seen Sofia. You have seen how in the past ten years it has risen. Yet there still remains very much to do. The city is in a state of construction, and so it is all through the country. All we desire is to be allowed peace, in order to develop our resources."

"And your relations with Turkey?" I asked.

"Ah! those constant incidents in Macedonia are of course regrettable. The question is always with us. Yet since I assumed office I have received reports from our diplomatic agent in Constantinople which clearly show that Turkey has assumed a much more conciliatory attitude. We are hoping for the best. Our relations with Turkey are still friendly, and the friendship is becoming daily more firmly cemented. What we wish, however, to see is greater interest taken by the Powers in the Macedonian question. Neither Bulgaria nor Servia nor Roumania can solve the great problem—only joint action by the Powers. We hope that, ere long, an international council may be held to discuss and decide the question once and for all. The present state of affairs is intolerable. But you will see for yourself when you get into Macedonia."

And assuredly, two months later, I did see—things that are incredible in Europe in this twentieth century.

I also had a pleasant chat with Monsieur D. Petkoff, the Prime Minister. We sat next each other at dinner one night at Sir George Buchanan's, and I learnt that he had been responsible for the destruction of old Sofia, and the laying out of the new city. For six years of the reconstruction he had been Mayor of the capital, and, as I afterwards learnt, to his efforts the great progress had been due. Sofia may well be called



Summit of the Shipka Pass.



Defile of the Isker.

Petkoffopolis. At any rate, it is hoped that one of the streets will be named after him. He struck me as an earnest, thoughtful man, the born leader of a party. Rather short of stature, dark-haired, with a small imperial just turning grey, his countenance was strong, open, and very pleasant. He spoke deliberately, with an air of conviction, and his conversation with me, which was of a private nature, was that of a man who believed in the future of his country and was an advocate of peace and progress.

As Austria is Servia's sworn enemy, so is Turkey the enemy of Bulgaria. War would have been declared by Turkey against Bulgaria long ago, were it not for the personal veto of the Sultan, who is not only contrary to hostilities with his near neighbour, but views Bulgaria with increasing favour. His Majesty has, if the real truth be told, accurately gauged his neighbour's military strength. The war party in Turkey have long been eager for an attack upon Bulgaria, but the Sultan is a far-seeing monarch, and no one knows better than he that Bulgaria is very strong in a military sense, and is a power to be reckoned with if ever the Macedonian question is solved by force of arms.

At present it is the Greeks who, by their unwarrantable attacks upon the Macedonian villages, are attempting to incite and provoke Bulgaria. Here is an instance. Not long ago the Bulgarian police received secret information, and searched the house of the Greek Bishop of Philippopolis, where they found many incriminating documents showing plainly that the Greek Church was actually collecting funds for armed raids upon the Bulgarians in Macedonia. Letters were found addressed to the various Greek priests giving the orders as to how they should act. These somehow got into the papers, whereupon a serious riot occurred in Philippopolis, and the Bulgarian soldiery were sent to quell it. Bulgaria's enemies, mostly subsidised Press correspondents, declared that the riot against the Greeks was provoked by the Government itself, and such statements were published broadcast in the Press of Europe. These allegations, however, had absolutely no foundation, for the rising was purely a

local one, prompted by the knowledge that the Bishop was fostering a conspiracy against their brothers in Macedonia. If ever the Bulgarian public was provoked to reprisals, it was on that historic day, and the Government's action was perfectly justified in interfering, otherwise the demonstration against the Greeks would have spread all over the country, with very serious result.

Our English arm-chair critics—those who do not travel and see the country for themselves—do not understand the Balkans. They form their opinions from the incorrect and misleading statements made by journalists and by journals subsidised by the enemy. Some of the statements are so absurd as to be amusing, for they are utterly devoid of the slightest foundation of fact. Indeed, they are often mere tissues of plausible falsehoods.

While in the Balkans I read extraordinary accounts in the *Zeit* of things that, to my own personal knowledge, never happened. Each day, in fact, the latest brand-new intelligence from the Vienna factory is served up to Europe with sauce so piquant as to betray its origin.

The greater part of the so-called "news" concerning the Balkans appearing in the English Press is utterly unreliable. The correspondents, with few exceptions, are Austrians, and also act as correspondents of the anti-Servian or anti-Bulgarian papers printed in Vienna. From Austria these unscrupulous scribblers gain more than from England, and therefore we are allowed glimpses of the Balkans only through Austrian spectacles. Spend a week in any Balkan city, and you will in future heed none of the glib *canards* you read in your responsible London morning paper regarding Servia or Bulgaria.

Austria and Turkey are for ever conspiring in the Balkans. Austria has her eye on Servia, while Turkey intends, if possible, to put her foot into Bulgaria, or at least to prevent the formation of a "big Bulgaria." As far as Turkey is concerned, as long as the Sultan lives there will be no declaration of war against Bulgaria. His Majesty's death would, I fear, be the declaration of war between the two countries—and

then the sallow-faced gentleman in fez and slippers will have an unhappy time. The day of the Sultan's death will put the Balkans aflame, and then the map of the Peninsula will assuredly be very quickly altered.

But before then Bulgaria may declare war.

ROUMANIA



HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES OF ROUMANIA.

CHAPTER I

BUCHAREST OF TO-DAY

My friend the spy—How I was watched through the Balkans—An exciting half-hour—The Paris of the Near East—Gaiety, extravagance, and pretty women—Forty years of progress—The paradise of the idler—Husbands wanted !

MY friend the spy picked me up at Rustchuk. He was a well-dressed, middle-aged man, in a black overcoat with a velvet collar. His face was sharply cut and intelligent, but his dark eyes were set rather too closely together to suit me. Suddenly I recollected having seen the same man in the streets of Sofia a week before. Indeed, I saw him frequently when in the Bulgarian capital, but until I met him that night upon the Danube steamer, between Rustchuk and Guirgevo, the thought never occurred to me that the fellow was persistently following me.

Then, like a flash, each of the occasions I had seen him came back to me. Not only had he followed me in Sofia, but I now recollected having seen him in Belgrade and in Zimony. The fellow was a spy—Austrian without a doubt. It was not my first acquaintance with spies. I had met many of them in the course of my wanderings up and down Europe. Some, indeed, are among my personal acquaintances.

Until you travel in the Balkans, and more especially if you are having interviews with Ministers and officials, you can have no idea of the audacity and activity of Austria's secret agents. They swarm everywhere. The Grand Hotel at Belgrade is full of them, and in Sofia they also flourish as part of the great secret army which the Austrian Govern-

ment keeps in the East, from Zimony right down to Constantinople.

It was a bitterly cold night, with slight drizzling rain. The spy was standing on deck in the shadow at a little distance from me. The recollection that I had with me a quantity of official documents given and lent to me by the Servian and Bulgarian Governments was the reverse of reassuring. I felt in my pocket for my revolver. Yes, the handy little weapon was ready for use, in case of necessity.

There were only four or five passengers, and I knew that across the Danube the Roumanian train taking me on to Bucharest would be practically empty. And so it proved, for after landing, getting my passport *viséd* and my baggage through the Roumanian Customs, I walked to the train, to find it empty, lit only by dim flickering oil-lamps, which gave scarcely sufficient light to see into the corners of the compartments.

I looked back, and yes, surely enough, the spy was following me! I was alone, for I had sent my servant on to Bucharest by the morning train. I got into a compartment, and presently, after some manœuvring, he got in with me. I was annoyed, but I had my weapon in my outside pocket, and intended to fire through my pocket if he attempted to attack me, or get at my despatch-box on the seat at my side.

Calmly he lit a cigarette, then inquired in French—which he spoke excellently—

“M’sieur is going on to Bucharest? Ah! what a wretched train service—eh? I suppose you go on to Constantinople?”

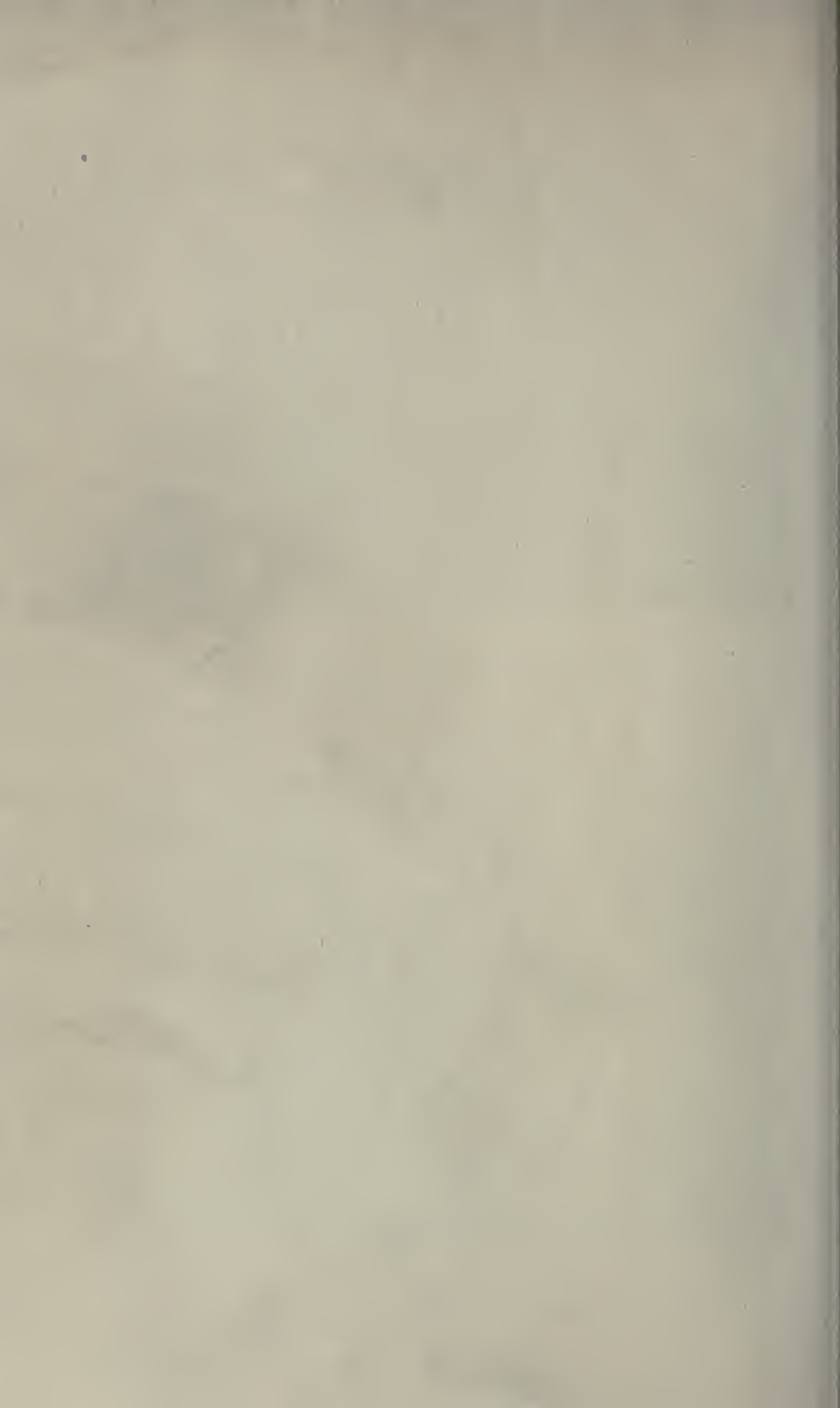
I looked him straight in the face and replied—

“My destination is no affair of yours, m’sieur. And I have neither desire nor intention that you should follow me any farther. You must think I’m blind. I saw you in Servia a dozen times, and in Bulgaria afterwards, and here you are in Roumania! Your game may be interesting to yourself, but it is annoying to me, I can assure you—very annoying.”

The fellow looked aghast. He was not clever at all; for he stammered something in Hungarian, and then, in French,



Snap-shots in Bucharest.



declared that he had never followed me. We had met and re-met by accident, he assured me. That was all.

"Well," I said, pretty sternly, "just take care that we don't meet again by accident after to-night. You understand?" The train was moving, so he was compelled to travel in the same compartment with me to the next stopping-place on the fifty-mile run that separates the Danube from the Roumanian capital.

"I know," I went on, "that you think I have some official documents with me that would be extremely interesting to your employers. Yes, I admit I have had some, but I'm scarcely such a fool as to travel about with them. They would be interesting reading to you, but fortunately they are already safe in London. So you are really only wasting your valuable time, my dear monsieur."

"M'sieur quite misunderstands me—he takes common politeness for inquisitiveness."

"Well, I don't want any of your polite attentions," I declared very bluntly; "and if you don't get out at the next station I shall just kick you out. You understand that?"

He saw I had my hand in my jacket-pocket all the time, and doubtless guessed what I had there.

"I shall stay here," he answered defiantly.

"Excellent," was my response. "And when we get to the next station I shall call the gendarmes and have you arrested as a foreign secret agent."

"You've made a great mistake," he declared resentfully.

"Very well. Let's see. You remain here, and I'll call the police."

He did not reply. For half an hour he sat quite silent, while I, fearing treachery, kept my hand upon the trigger of my weapon, for as a matter of fact I had with me some papers of the very highest importance to Austria—papers that would have compromised certain highly-placed persons in the Balkans. The spy was evidently aware of this, and it was the motive of his strenuous endeavour to seize an opportunity to get hold of the confidential statements in question. In Roumania, as in

Servia, they treat foreign spies with scant courtesy, and the fellow's manner belied his defiant words.

That half-hour was an exciting one, until at last, after what seemed an interminable period, the train slowed down and came to a standstill, when my inquisitive friend of evil intentions descended, and without a word disappeared in the darkness.

I thought I had rid myself of his surveillance, but I was mistaken. Next day I met him in the streets of Bucharest, and so persistently did he follow me that I was compelled to lodge a complaint with the police. As soon as I had done that, I saw him no more. My own belief was that he was arrested. He may be in prison now, for all I know. In any case, he disappeared as completely as though the earth had swallowed him up.

This little incident, both annoying and exciting at the time, was my first adventure on entering Roumania, but it was soon forgotten amid the gaieties of smart Bucharest.

The Roumanian capital is a place apart. Roumania is not a Balkan State in any sense of the word, and has progressed so rapidly during the forty odd years of its freedom that in Bucharest to-day, save for Roumanian names over the shop-fronts, one may easily believe oneself to be in Paris or in Brussels.

Indeed, some of the buildings, notably the new Post Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Academy, are unequalled not only in Brussels, but even in Paris. Bucharest is a gay city of external glitter, bright, merry, and highly amusing after some of the dull, half-civilised country towns in the Balkans. Smart cafés and confectioners, expensive hotels, shops that charge double prices of those in Paris, and theatres where one pays a sovereign for a stall, are all to be found in Bucharest. The boulevards are broad and full of life and movement, and the Calea Victoriei, the Boulevard Carol, and Strad Lipsicani are as busy as any thoroughfare of a Western capital.

Nearly every public building has a dome, while the chief object of a Roumanian seems to be to build for himself a

wonderfully ornate house and gild the railings in front. Many of the façades of the private houses are marvels of florid bad taste. Again, though in the streets, in drawing-rooms and at cafés and theatres, I met hundreds upon hundreds of officers, crowds of lieutenants, swarms of captains and a good sprinkling of generals, all in wonderful uniforms, yet I was four days in Bucharest before I discovered a real soldier—and then quite by accident. He wore a brown uniform, and I mistook him for a *wagon-lit* conductor.

Bucharest is a city of vivid contrasts—a wildly gay, go-ahead city, which justly bears the reputation of being one of the most expensive in the world. For the poor it is the cheapest; for the rich, the dearest. Prices, for instance, at the Hotel du Boulevard are higher than at the Savoy or Carlton in London, yet everything is excellent, the sterlet quite as good as at the Hermitage at Moscow, and the caviare such as one only gets in the best restaurants in Russia.

As one wanders in the streets the Western eye meets many quaint sights. For instance, the *birjas*, or cabs, are open victorias drawn by a pair of long-tailed Russian horses, and driven by men wearing great padded overcoats of blue-black velvet—huge affairs that give them very portly proportions. Around the waist is worn a piece of gaily coloured satin ribbon, and on the head the round Balkan cap of astrachan. Most of the drivers are Russian refugees, and form a distinct class apart. Cabs are extremely cheap, and the rate at which one is driven would be reckless were it not that the men have such perfect control over their horses.

The British colony is not a large one. Its head is, of course, our Minister, Sir Conyngham Greene, in whose able hands British interests in Roumania have recently been placed. Keen and active, he has already rearranged our Consular service in Roumania, and placed the Legation on the same footing as those of the other Powers. While every other European nation owns a Legation house in Bucharest, we have none; and while I was in the Roumanian capital he was a fellow-guest at the Hotel du Boulevard. It is understood, however, that the Foreign Office—or the Treasury—

have recently been shamed into the necessity of buying a house, and very soon Sir Conyngham will have a fitting residence, as the other representatives of the Powers.

Nobody ever deigns to walk in Bucharest. Everybody takes cabs, therefore the streets are filled with vehicular traffic till far into the night. At evening, indeed, Bucharest is at her best. Smart restaurants, with pretty, well-dressed women, cosy theatres, flash café-chantants, and noisy garish cafés abound all over the town, while outside, notably at the Villa Regala, in the centre of a park, smart dinners and suppers are given.

The *jeunesse dorée* are an effeminate and extravagant crowd. Gambling permeates the whole of society, and large sums are lost and won every evening. I know personally one member of the Roumanian Cabinet who thinks nothing of losing or winning a couple or three thousand pounds each week at cards. He plays every afternoon at the Club, and is always open to play any comer for any stake proposed, no matter what it may be.

Bucharest is a typical capital of a wealthy, easy-going country. The people are charitable, and spend freely—when they have it. The shop-windows, where the most expensive table delicacies are displayed, show the foreigner the Roumanians' extravagance in eating, while the dresses one sees on the giddy women-folk are as up to date as any that one notices in the Champs Elysées, the Bois, or at the Opera. Yet amid all this up-to-dateness the old horse-tram still survives and jogs along, and the patient white oxen toil slowly through the streets, dragging their heavy springless carts.

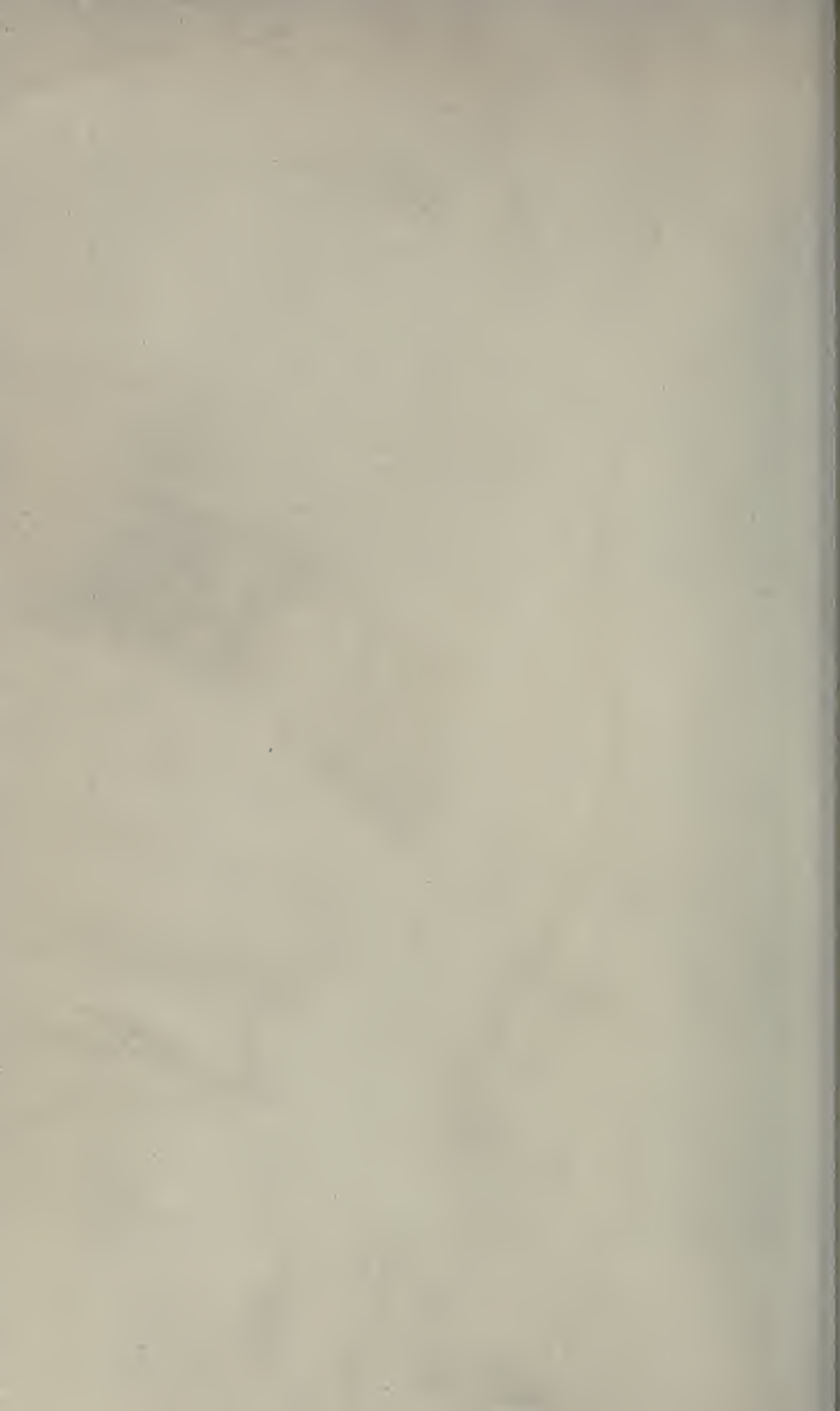
Unlike Sofia, or in Belgrade, peasants are seldom met with in the streets of Bucharest. One may go a whole week without coming across a woman in national costume, unless, of course, the market is specially visited. I, however, met, in Bucharest, Mr. Harold Hartley, one of the directors of the Earl's Court Exhibition, and we made many pleasant excursions into the country together. To the traveller from Western Europe the city is highly interesting and full of curious types, especially



The Royal Palace: Bucharest.



Boulevard Elisabeta: Bucharest.



of the young elegant, whose present fashion, it seems, is to shave only the front of his chin and cheeks and grow a beard all round, very similar in cut to that of a monkey.

When one recollects that about forty years ago Roumania was a semi-civilised nation, and Bucharest a little Oriental town, its present size and splendour are astounding. To King Charles' rule much of this progress is due, and in order to celebrate the fortieth year of his reign there has recently been held a very pretty Exhibition, a miniature of the great Exhibition of Paris. It was, I found, most interesting, and fortunately it has been decided to preserve several of the more important buildings, including a really excellent replica of a Roman amphitheatre. The gaming-room is also to be preserved, of course, for the "little horses" have great attraction for the merry people of Bucharest.

Yes, this Paris of the East is indeed a strange place, especially to those used to Western morals and manners. Everyone lives far above his income, for there seems no limit to extravagance. Prices are often extortionate. As an example, I was charged at one restaurant half a crown for a whisky-and-soda! At a shop across the street the charge for the same whisky was 6 fr. 50 c. a bottle.

Several of the restaurants are excellent, notably the Enescu, behind the royal palace, a big place, where the best Tzigane music in Roumania is provided gratis. The gipsy band is under one Christache Ciolac, a famous violinist, who one day will no doubt make his mark in London. The orchestra of the Enescu ought to be imported to one of our smart restaurants and it would create a great sensation, for our present so-called Roumanian music cannot be compared with the real thing. Here, at Enescu's, there is no dressing up in fancy costumes—not even dress-coats. But the music is there, the strange weird gipsy melodies and dances that run in one's head for days afterwards.

The cookery at Enescu's, too, is perhaps the best in the Roumanian capital. Next to it is the restaurant of the Boulevard, where at luncheon there is a table set apart for the diplomats, and is always occupied by the various young

attachés and secretaries. After that, comes Capsa's. The feminine element in the restaurants at dinner is much the same as it is at home, except that one often sees a mother and two, or even three, daughters dining alone—dining in public, so that they may be seen by some stray swain who is desirous of marriage. One night at Enescu's, at the table next to us, sat an Italian duchess of ancient lineage married to a Roumanian aristocrat, with her three pretty dark-eyed daughters of varying ages, eating solemnly, the mother ever watchful to see whether any man had his eye upon them. We afterwards saw them near midnight at a café solemnly sipping *sirops* and looking mournful and woebegone. A diplomat who was with me told me that her Grace had been in Bucharest staying at an hotel for the past six months, trying to get her daughters off her hands, and was now beginning to be disgusted at her non-success.

The Roumanian has a great hatred of the Jew. Perhaps it is because his extravagance brings him so often into their hands. But the country is full of Hebrews. The capital is not over-burdened with them, but in some towns in Northern Moldavia Jews are in the majority. Indeed, their total number in the united provinces exceeds 300,000, or about one-twentieth of the entire population, a larger ratio than in any other country in the world. In most provincial towns they have the monopoly of selling strong drinks, and are of course ever ready to lend money to the peasant-proprietors. Were it not for the fact that the law forbids any Jew from holding landed property—or any foreigner, for the matter of that—half the soil would probably soon be in their hands. The Moldavian Jews speak a different language, wear a different dress, and keep themselves aloof from their neighbours, just as do the picturesque cabmen of Bucharest.

Roumania can boast one artist who is really great, whose name is N. J. Grigoresco. I was shown some of his works, the property of Mr. Ernest Goodwin, of the Roumanian Bank, and found that they were of the Barbizon school, which is very natural, as he was a fellow-worker with Millet. Without exception the work was excellent, and I

believe there is some idea of having an exhibition of it in London.

In Bucharest there is none of the laziness or languor of the Orient. Everyone is bent on business or upon pleasure, and life for the idler is perhaps even more pleasant there than in any other capital of Europe. Yes, Bucharest of to-day astounds one in many ways.

CHAPTER II

ROUMANIA'S AIMS AND INTENTIONS

Monsieur Take Jonesco, Minister of Finance—The smartest man in Roumania—An interview with General Lahovary, Minister of Foreign Affairs—Secret aims of Roumania—A better frontier wanted—Germany's insincerity—Some plain truths—The question of a Balkan Federation—Oil wells waiting to be exploited by British capital.

I HAD a number of interviews with the members of the Roumanian Cabinet,¹ General Jacques Lahovary, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and M. Take Jonesco, Minister of Finance, being both particularly helpful to me in my inquiries regarding Roumania's political aims and aspirations.

With the President of the Council, with General Manu, Minister of War, and with M. Jean Lahovary, Minister of Commerce, I also had long and interesting conversations.

M. Take Jonesco struck me as by far the strongest and shrewdest man in the present Cabinet. Keen, quick, and far-seeing, he has of recent years played a prominent part in bringing his country into its present satisfactory state. Essentially a man of action, a smart politician, and a patriot, he is nevertheless very English, for he has an English wife, and his beautiful home is essentially English. Unlike most statesmen in the East, he is frank and outspoken. He speaks his mind fearlessly, and the Opposition hold him in terror. Through his good offices I was afforded facilities for studying various questions and forming my own conclusions. General

¹ Since this volume has been completed the Roumanian Cabinet has resigned on account of the recent peasant rising, which, by the way, was greatly exaggerated by the Austrian press.



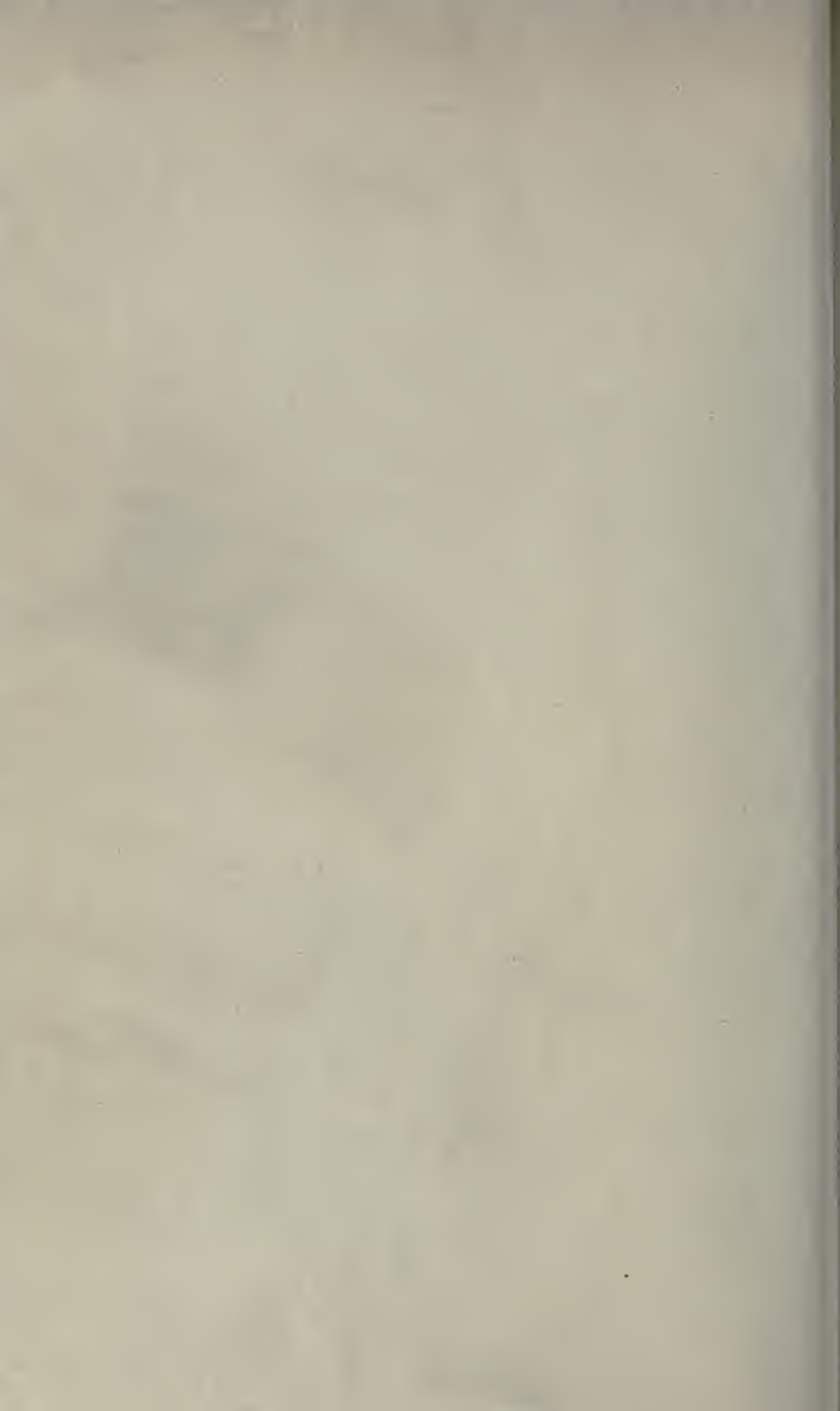
His Excellency GEORGE CANTACUZEN,
Roumanian Prime Minister.



His Excellency TAKE JONESCO,
Roumanian Minister of Finance.

Photo]

[Elliott & Fry.



Lahovary, too, is a strong and brilliant man politically, of essentially military bearing, with a clever countenance, a long grey moustache, and wears a monocle with a tortoise-shell rim.

My audience with him was of an essentially confidential nature. He told me many interesting things which, for the present, it would be injudicious to publish, in view of the strained relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a millionaire's palace—huge white-and-gold *salons*, with polished floors, fine pictures, and beautiful gilt-and-red damask furniture. A showy millionaire built it as his residence, and died soon afterwards. Then the Government bought it for an old song, with the result that the Ministry is housed in more gorgeous quarters than any other Ministry in Europe.

From my inquiries in various political quarters in Bucharest, both among members of the Government and the Opposition, I found one unanimous view, that war between Turkey and Bulgaria over Macedonia must come at an early date. In Roumania the opinion is that even though a European prince be appointed Governor-General of Macedonia, the war between the two countries would only be postponed. It is believed that Bulgaria is strong, and that the Stancioff policy will be to resist the Turk by arms within a very few months.

As Bulgaria hates the Turk, so does Roumania. But the latter will not assist Bulgaria unless she gets some *quid pro quo*. This fact became very forcibly impressed upon me. Bulgaria cannot attack Turkey without Roumania's consent, so the Roumanians declare. And moral support will only be given on one condition. That is, if Bulgaria, as the result of the war, annexes any Macedonian territory—as she naturally would do—then she should cede to Roumania that portion of her territory lying between the Danube and the Black Sea, taking a line from a little east of Rustchuk to a little east of Varna. Such condition is certainly not to be viewed in Bulgaria with any satisfaction, yet as its acceptance would mean the extension of Bulgaria to the Adriatic, the settlement of the Macedonian question, and the final destruction of effete Turkey as a power

in Europe, the Bulgarian Cabinet are considering it very carefully.

Roumania is not over-anxious to extend her territory, but her present frontier between Rustchuk and the Black Sea is one which she knows it would be impossible to defend in case of hostilities. She therefore desires a better frontier, in order that she can hold her own in time of war. Besides, she naturally will want some of the spoils when the Turks and Greeks are driven from Macedonia.

The Roumanian policy is one of peace, combined with firmness. General Lahovary is not a vacillating statesman. His policy is one of progress, as his action towards Greece over the ill-treatment of Roumanians in Macedonia has shown. It is intended, no doubt, that the much-vexed question shall not be settled without Roumania having a hand in it. As is well known, Germany protects Roumania's interests in Macedonia. Through her, the Roumanian schools have been established in Salonica, Monastir, and other places; but quite recently the good relations with Germany have been somewhat lessened owing to some friction regarding the exploitation of the Roumanian oil wells by a German syndicate. The German intention was to make a trust, which Roumania promptly quashed by passing a special Act directed against them. It is a curious fact that since this friction Germany has stood by and witnessed the terrible atrocities committed by the Greek bands upon the Roumanians in Macedonia without raising her voice in protest. This, in itself, is sufficient to make one doubt Germany's sincerity, and certainly the eyes of the Roumanians are already pretty wide open to the machinations of Berlin in the Balkans.

The conflict between Roumania and Greece—whatever may be thought of the very recent discovery of Roumanians in Macedonia—is quite simple. There are in Macedonia undoubtedly a small percentage of the population which speaks Roumanian, and who are appealing to their brothers for protection to allow them to remain Roumanians. In face of this appeal there are two courses of action possible. One is to reply, "You are of no importance; you are so



HIS EXCELLENCY GEO. C. MANO,
ROUMANIAN MINISTER OF WAR.



SIR CONYNCHAM GREENE,
BRITISH MINISTER AT BUCHAREST.

few ; you are too far away ; you cannot expect us to embroil ourselves in foreign politics for your sake. And besides, our ideals and our aspirations are different." The other reply is to adopt the course which, for the past forty years, all Roumanian Governments have adopted, namely, to protect and support their subjects abroad and look after their general interests. Roumania has already done this in Macedonia. She obtained an irade from the Sultan recognising the Roumanians in Turkey as a nation apart, and giving them the right to live as Roumanians. And what has been the result ? Bands of Greek *antartes* at once crossed into Macedonia and began to assassinate and torture every Roumanian subject they could lay hands upon. Is it therefore any wonder that diplomatic negotiations should be broken off between Bucharest and Athens ?

The action of Roumania in pressing for the rights of Roumanians in Macedonia and in obtaining the irade has, of course, been the subject of much criticism in the European press. M. Take Jonesco has been personally criticised as having been the prime mover of the agitation of the past two years. I mentioned it to him, and he denied that Roumania had any ulterior motive in Macedonia save to protect her subjects there and to allow them their own language, their own religion, their own education, and give them freedom to live as Roumanians. It was absurd, he declared, to suggest that Roumania intended to acquire territory in Macedonia, or that the Roumanian Valachs were of only recent discovery. Their geographical position refuted the first suggestion ; and as to the second, he proved to me that geographers and travellers had written about them a century ago, one proof being that the English traveller Leake had mentioned them in his book, published in 1814, saying that the race in question were undoubtedly Roumanians. Leake also says : " The Valachs occupy the centre of Macedonia and Thessaly, and nearly all the Pindre, forming three principal groups." The Finance Minister also showed me the evidence collected by the Roumanian writer, Nicholas Papa-hagi, and recently issued under the title *Les Roumains de*

Turquie. To me he proved most conclusively that the Roumanian contention was at least well founded, and that the European critics were incorrect in supposing that Roumania wants territory in Macedonia. She may have her eye upon that little strip of Bulgaria in order to strengthen her frontier, and, I think, quite naturally. She knows that "a big Bulgaria" is bound to arise. She can never hope to be of equal strength with the Bulgar. Therefore she wants to entrench herself now that there is a forthcoming opportunity.

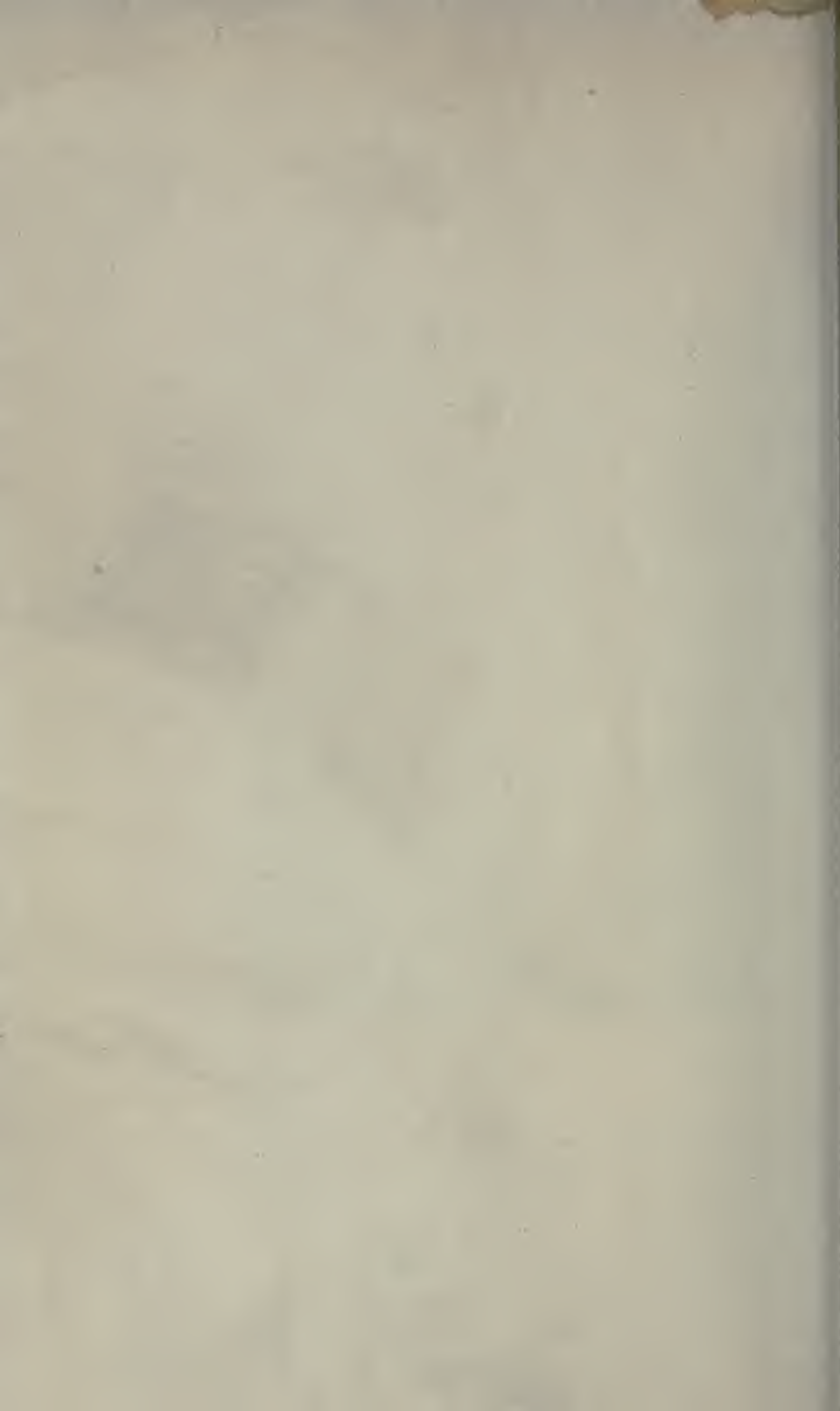
Both General Lahovary and M. Take Jonesco were quite frank with me in their explanation of Roumania's future policy. Roumania knows that nowadays right, if not supported by force, is not might. Grand words, if not sustained by bayonets, bring serious men into ridicule. During the past two years the Roumanian army has been improved, consolidated, and brought into perfection. But their intentions are entirely pacific, even though they have not hesitated to augment the war budget, and will still augment it if necessary. Roumania intends to remain passive in the present Balkan complications, but if she finds it necessary for the protection of her compatriots in Macedonia she will, like Bulgaria, take arms against the Turk and drive him back into his capital, and across into Asia Minor—which is surely the best place for him.

I spoke with several Roumanian statesmen upon the idea of a Confederation of the Balkan States. Most of them were in accord that such a thing was within the bounds of possibility, but that it was very unlikely that Roumania would ever enter such a Confederation. Roumanians are fond of declaring that their country is not a Balkan State, yet if such Confederation were formed it seems difficult to see how Roumania could hold aloof.

It is perhaps premature to talk seriously of such a Confederation. In the various political quarters where I referred to the question, I found that Roumanians considered it at present very difficult of arrangement, and very dubious whether Roumania could ever enter it. Events of the last thirty years have considerably altered the map of Europe,



GEN. JACQUES LAHOVARY, Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs.



and in each case smaller States have been amalgamated into kingdoms and empires, such as Italy and Germany. The saying of King Corvin that "The kingdom which has not one language is a mad kingdom" is, in our days, no longer true, Austria being an example. The Serbs, the Bulgars, the Greeks, and the Roumanians are widely separated by language and by race. Yet, threatened on the one side by Germany and the other by Austria, they may, in the near future, find it judicious to combine, as the only way of preserving their territory and independence. The difficulties of the problem are, however, many. The Greeks and Bulgars are at drawn swords, the Roumanians and Greeks have broken off diplomatic negotiations, and between the Serbs and Bulgars the feeling is not really so friendly as it should be. At the bottom of all, too, we find the everlasting question of Macedonia, which, in itself, must prevent a Confederation. But if it is ever accomplished, then it will take a high place in the general politics of Europe. Besides, it is improbable that the Confederation could ever be formed without objections being raised by the Powers, and it is very likely a great war might result. In Roumania, therefore, the idea of a Balkan Confederation is not regarded with great favour. The first question of all is Macedonia—ever Macedonia, and "the terrible Greek."

As regards the internal politics of Roumania, they are not within the scope of this present volume. Both the finance and commerce of the country seem to be in an excellent state notwithstanding the recent dissatisfaction of the peasantry. Thanks to the efforts of M. Jonesco, the finances of the country are now in a thoroughly sound condition, and every day sees greater prosperity. As I found in Servia and in Bulgaria openings for British capital, so there is in Roumania also many openings for British industrial enterprises, especially weaving. The climate is not favourable for cotton-spinning, but for weaving there are many enterprises that would pay good dividends.

In the petroleum wells there have been, since their discovery fifteen years ago, about 150,000,000 francs of foreign

capital invested. Greater part of this is German, but there is also a French, Italian, and Dutch element in the various companies exploiting the wells. The Standard Oil Company of America have about 15,000,000 francs invested, but there is no British enterprise. The oil is refined in Roumania, but a good deal of crude oil is sent to France, as well as great quantities of benzine.

From Turn Severin, on the western border of the country, the petroleum zone can be distinctly traced at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, skirting them in their course through the country towards Bukovina and Galicia on the north-east. Along the whole length of this zone are primitive hand-dug wells, the workings prior to 1873, when the American oil-fields were discovered. Since 1895, however, a new stimulus was given to the industry by the modification of the mining laws, and from that date the oil industry has been gradually increasing, and only awaits the introduction of British capital to develop the enormous oil-fields.

It is claimed that the Roumanian petroleum contains 14, 15 and 25 per cent. more pure oil than American, Galician, or Caucasian oils respectively. The total production in 1905 was 602,000 tons, or double the production of four years ago, while the export has nearly doubled in the past two years. The Deutcher and Dresden Banks and the Disconto Gesellschaft have about three million and a half pounds invested in it, while a new company, called the "Trajan," with a capital of £200,000, has recently been formed, of which Marmorosch, Blank, & Co. of Bucharest, the principal promoters, have taken two-fifths. It will absorb the "Helios" and several other minor companies.

Very large areas of the Roumanian oil-fields are the property of the State, and have hitherto been unworked, but the Minister of Commerce, when I questioned him upon the subject, informed me that a law recently passed by the Chamber provides for the leasing of these lands to private companies, though important provisos are introduced in order to prevent monopolies. The Minister explained to me the chief points of the new laws, and as they may interest British capitalists,

I give them. It appears that the Government may now lease for a period of fifty years prospected or unprospected land of maximum areas of 100 and 1000 hectares respectively. The concession is granted to the party offering the highest rent. No more than three lots can be leased to one concessionaire. The capital, which must be at least 2,000,000 francs for every 100 hectare lot of prospected land or 1000 hectares of unprospected land, must be deposited. Amalgamation or assignment is illegal, and any secret fusion involves loss of the concession. The State reserves to itself the exclusive right of working all means of transport for petroleum, and will take a compensation of at least 10 per cent. on the gross profit of the working. Over and above that rent, the State participates in the net profits of the working as follows: (1) one-third should the net profit fluctuate between 10 and 30 per cent.; (2) from 30 and more per cent., the share of the State is 50 per cent. of the net profits. The State levies upon concessionaires a lease-charge of 20 francs per hectare, and in addition the general taxes are to be paid. All concessions are subject to Roumanian laws and regulations, and the State assumes no responsibility for the profitableness of land leased.

These conditions are certainly onerous, yet there is no doubt a big field for British capital in Roumanian oil. The Minister of Commerce impressed upon me this fact, and declared that he would give every facility to intending concessionaires, providing they were properly introduced, and were persons who meant serious business.

In the words of our Consul-General at Galatz, "It is not very easy to account for the apathy of British capitalists in seeking openings in Roumania. Perhaps its position in the remote corner of Europe, and perhaps the difficulties of language have something to do with it." Anyhow, there is a big future before the oil industry in Roumania, and it is amazing that no one has yet had the courage to try the business under the new conditions. As the Minister pointed out, "The American Standard Oil Company are already firmly established in Roumania. Why should not an English company also work the fields?"

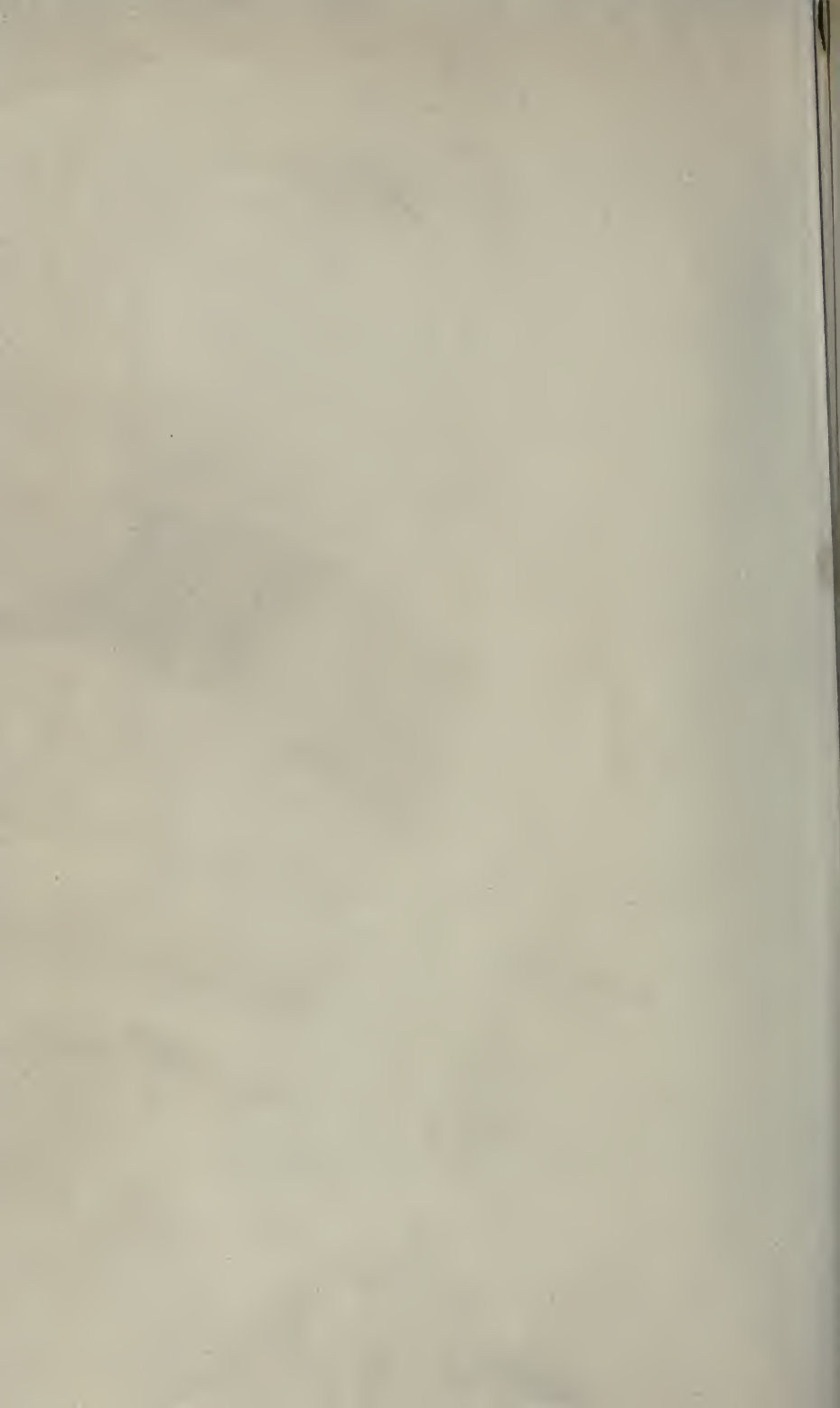
The future, and not a far-distant one, will no doubt see many of the wells exploited by British capital.

In Roumania there are also salt mines sufficient to supply the whole world. The coal deposits are not numerous, but iron and copper are known to exist, though they are not yet exploited.

I had an opportunity of examining the commercial statistics for the present year, not yet published, and they showed on the exports an augmentation on each of the past six years of considerably over 100 million francs. This, in itself, speaks volumes for the prosperity of this the most civilised and progressive nation of the Orient, which has, no doubt, a greater and far more brilliant future before it.



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA.



CHAPTER III

A CHAT WITH THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

The royal drawing-room—Her Majesty's greeting—Her kind words of welcome—Roumania not in the Balkan States—We talk politics—The name of "Carmen Sylva"—The Queen's deep interest in the blind—She shows me some photographs—Public interest in the new institution—I visit it next day.

I WAS standing one Sunday evening in the great drawing-room of the royal palace at Bucharest, chatting with Madame Zoe Bengesco, lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Roumania.

Madame Maurojeni, *grande-maitresse* of Her Majesty's Court, had appointed my audience for half-past six, and as the bowing liveried servants had conducted me through the great entrance and up the large red-carpeted horse-shoe staircase, I was struck with the old-fashioned comfort, combined with taste, everywhere displayed.

While chatting with Madame Bengesco, who was inquiring after some mutual friends in Belgrade, I glanced around the great salon or salons—for there are two of equal proportions, the one running at right angles with the other. Splendid old brocade-covered furniture, tables with interesting knick-knacks, a grand piano, the fine organ upon which Her Majesty so often plays, beautiful hangings, magnificent paintings upon the walls and old Persian rugs upon the polished floor, all combined, under the soft electric light, to produce a harmony of quiet taste and luxury.

The salons were huge, high-ceilinged, and splendid, yet there was an air of homeliness about them, and indeed about

the whole palace, that I have not found in other royal palaces of Europe wherein I have been received. The great quiet room bore traces of the artistic hand of Her Majesty herself.

I had asked for audience not without some misgiving, for His Majesty the King was lying very ill, and the Queen—the “Carmen Sylva” of European literary fame—was at his bedside always, administering to her sick husband’s wants, nursing him, and reading aloud to him for hours each day. For weeks she had given audience to no one, therefore it was a pleasant surprise when Madame Maurojeni told me that the Queen was going to make an exception in my case.

I was chatting with Madame Bengesco, and suddenly turned to find Her Majesty—a tall, fine figure *en décolletée*, a sweet smile of welcome upon her face—standing before me. She wore a very handsome gown of pale dove-grey *crêpe-de-chine*, but no jewellery save a single gold bracelet and one or two very fine rings.

“So you have come to see our country, Mr. N——?” Her Majesty exclaimed in English, smiling pleasantly, after I had made my obeisance, and she had shaken hands with me. “Come, let us sit over in that corner. It is more cosy.” And she conducted me to a luxurious little corner of the salon, while the lady-in-waiting retired.

I began by thanking Her Majesty for giving me audience at such a time of anxiety.

“I have just left the King to come to you,” she answered. “He is very much better, I am thankful to say, and yesterday took a little nourishment. Ah yes, it has been a most anxious time for me. You will forgive me if I am a little tired, won’t you? When I heard you were in Bucharest I determined to meet you. I have heard of you, long ago, you know! Now, tell me, what brings you to Roumania?”

I explained that my confidential mission was to inquire into the future of the Balkans, whereupon she interrupted me with that sweet laugh that is one of her characteristics, saying—

“Ah, you must never include us in the Balkan States, recollect! We Roumanians speak another language; the

Danube separates us from the Balkans, and we have nothing in common with the races on the other side of the river. The reason why we are not taking part in this year's Exhibition at your Earl's Court is because they have called it 'The Balkan Exhibition.' "

I laughingly promised to be very careful on the point in future. As she sat before me, the handsome, thoughtful countenance, the white hair brushed straight back, and the soft and very becoming head-dress, Her Majesty was surely the most picturesque, the most interesting, and perhaps the most accomplished and intelligent of the Queens of Europe.

I told her of my journey through Northern Albania, in which she was deeply interested, and asked me lots of questions. Then I explained how I was on my way to Constantinople and through Macedonia, whereupon she made a quick gesture with her hands, and exclaimed—

"Then you are studying Macedonia! Ah, what a very difficult task you have! We have Roumanians in Macedonia, as you know—and, poor people, they are being treated very badly. What the outcome of it all is to be, who can tell? There are so many conflicting peoples, so many conflicting interests, so much jealousy among the Powers."

"Ah! I see that your Majesty takes an interest in politics!" I exclaimed.

"No. You are mistaken," she answered. "I, of course, know the general outlines of most of the subjects, but I am a woman, and am not expected to be a politician. My sphere lies in endeavouring to do good to the people, to ameliorate their sufferings, and to look after my various charitable institutions."

Surely the name of Carmen Sylva—that sweet-faced, womanly woman who, though a queen, is so charming and unassuming—is synonymous with all that is good and charitable. For Roumania, she has done what no other woman has done. Nearly all the charity of the country has been initiated, and partly supported, by her efforts. She lives her life for the poor and needy, and has worked hard for years on their behalf.

In society in Bucharest I had heard some talk of her great

interest in the blind, and that one of her protégés, himself a blind man, had invented a machine by which the Braille type for blind-books could be printed by type, instead of, as hitherto, being embossed by hand. This subject I referred to, when at once her eyes shone with enthusiasm and she said—

“Then if you would like to know all about it, Mr. N——, I’ll tell you. It all came about in this way. Some years ago I had, as copyist, a servant, quite a poor man. His young wife and his children had died, and, poor fellow, he was in the greatest depths of despair when I took him into my service. So I gave him very hard work to do, in order that his mind should be occupied and he should forget. Well, time went on, and I was always much interested in the welfare of the blind, when one day this servant came to me and told me that a certain blind man named Theodorescu, whom we had rescued, was making experiments whereby the Braille books could be multiplied by printing, and thus place reading and instruction in the hands of every blind person in the world. This, I saw, would mean light in the darkness of the afflicted, so we provided the poor fellow with means to perfect his invention, with the result that he produced a rough and somewhat incomplete process. This was then taken over by Mr. Monske, an old servant of mine, who worked here in a room in the palace for over a year trying to perfect the machine. We made no mention of it to a soul, but kept it a dead secret, until at last success came, and now it is patented over the whole world—the first complete machine for printing books for the blind!”

“Have you many blind in Roumania?” I asked.

“They say we have twenty thousand. But I believe we have many more, because already in Bucharest the police have discovered for me many more than were shown upon their statistics. But let me tell you what the outcome of this invention is, and what it will be,” the Queen went on. “I have recently started a small blind institution, where the books will eventually be printed. I might tell you that some time ago, before the invention was perfected, we sent for an American machine, a cumbersome affair, which cost three thousand francs. Our machine will cost only three hundred francs. A Vienna



The Queen of Roumania's Blind Institute in Bucharest.

firm wished to manufacture them, but I preferred that they should be made here, in Roumania. Well, our small institution—which is under the direction of Mr. Monske and his wife—is already in working order. See”—and she rose and took me across the salon, where there were a number of photographs arranged in a big frame surmounted by the royal crown and cipher, copies of which are reproduced in these pages.

“Here, you see, are some pictures which the photographer very kindly sent me. Aren’t they interesting? Here is the first child we found. He’s an intelligent little chap, with musical instincts evidently, for I was told a few days ago that he had been found trying to play four instruments at once! Here you see them basket-making—here they are having a concert—and here is a group—and so on. Aren’t they interesting?” she asked enthusiastically. “And to think that they were nearly all found as beggars. Some are men who have been in good positions. That man was an officer, for instance!”

Then Her Majesty went back to her seat, and I reseated myself with her.

“The present institution is only the beginning,” she said. “I have a scheme for establishing a city for the blind—a model town, to which the blind of every nation may come and work, and support themselves. Now I will tell you something about it. When it was known that I intended to do this, people came forward on every hand to give me assistance. One gentleman gave me 100,000 francs, while a lady has given me the site for the city near Sinaia, a beautiful place where, close by, we have a castle. The site is an ideal one, and very shortly we shall lay it out with model houses built in modern style, in which two families can live. We do not wish to separate a blind man from his family, but the kitchens will be in common, so that the wife may be relieved of much of her household duties and afforded time to work and earn money.”

“We have several model villages in England, your Majesty,” I remarked. “The one called Port Sunlight might interest you. I could perhaps get photographs from Mr. Lever, who built it.”

"Oh, do. It would be so kind of you. Will you ask him?" she said. "I might get some excellent ideas from Mr. Lever's scheme. Of course we must have a working men's club, a concert hall, a church, and recreation room."

"And what does your Majesty call your present institution?"

"In Roumanian it is 'The Hearth of Light,' but in English it would be better translated as 'The Home of Light.' Would you like to visit it?"

"I should be delighted," I replied.

"Then Monske shall call for you and show you everything. Remember that the people are not paupers. From the first day they come to us they receive one franc a day, which is increased according to the skill they show in chair-making, basket-making, rope-making, and other such industries. As regards the blind city scheme, Mrs. Fern, wife of a former American Minister here, is starting for the United States in a few days, and is taking one of the new machines with her, and is going to hold conferences and explain the scheme in the principal cities of America. You see now, for the first time, education is fully open to the blind. The books will be printed as easily as other books, and will be within the reach of all. It is a splendid thing—and I am happy to say that I am receiving donations from every side. I have worked for years, and now the people are, I am gratified to think, appreciating my efforts in the cause of humanity. Yesterday Monske came to me and showed me 500 francs he had that day received. I held up notes for 7000 francs, which I had also received. One firm has sent me a magnificent organ, and I have even poor families subscribing a franc a month towards the blind. Does not that show that in the hearts of the people there is a corner for the poor afflicted? But remember that the blind colony is to be open to all nationalities. It is a big undertaking, I admit; for I have in Roumania twenty thousand people and their families. Yet the scheme will work, I am confident. And while they are now in penury, they will soon be educated, and be able to place themselves, by their work, in a position of independence."

For over an hour we chatted together, until, after promising to send me a signed photograph of herself and of the King, she rose, saying—

“I am so delighted to have had a chat with you, Mr. N—. I will send Mr. Monske to you in the morning. But the King is alone, and will want me to read again to him, so I must go.” And Her Majesty, smiling graciously, gave me her hand, saying, “*Au revoir.*”

I bowed over it, thanked her for the audience, and retired, charmed by her marvellous personality, her sweet silver voice, her kindly manner, and her queenly bearing, all of which combined to create an impression which will always remain with me—an hour spent with a woman who is unique in the whole world.

Next day Her Majesty sent me the autographed photograph which appears on another page, together with a very charming note of thanks for a slight service I had been able to render her.

One morning a few days later, by the Queen's order, I was shown over her Blind Institute, which is called the “*Vatra Luminoasa Regina Elizaveta*,” and is in the Boulevard Carol, in Bucharest.

A large comfortable house, standing back from the road in its own grounds, it is the first institution to be founded under the new scheme, and the nucleus of what will most certainly become a great and important charitable work. Mr. Monske, the Director, a pleasant-faced, youngish man, with a bright, open expression, received me, in the business-like office, where a blind typist was busy with correspondence, using a Remington machine with celluloid caps on each third key.

“Ah!” exclaimed the poor afflicted typist in French, “you do not know what this place means to us! Take myself, for example. I was a clerk in an office here, in Bucharest, and eight years ago I went totally blind. My life after my misfortune was one of misery. I was in the depths of despair, for the blind are not wanted on the earth. And then came the good Queen, and saved me. My story is the same as all

of us here—lifted out of despair and placed in a position of comfort and independence, for all of us are paid for our work.”

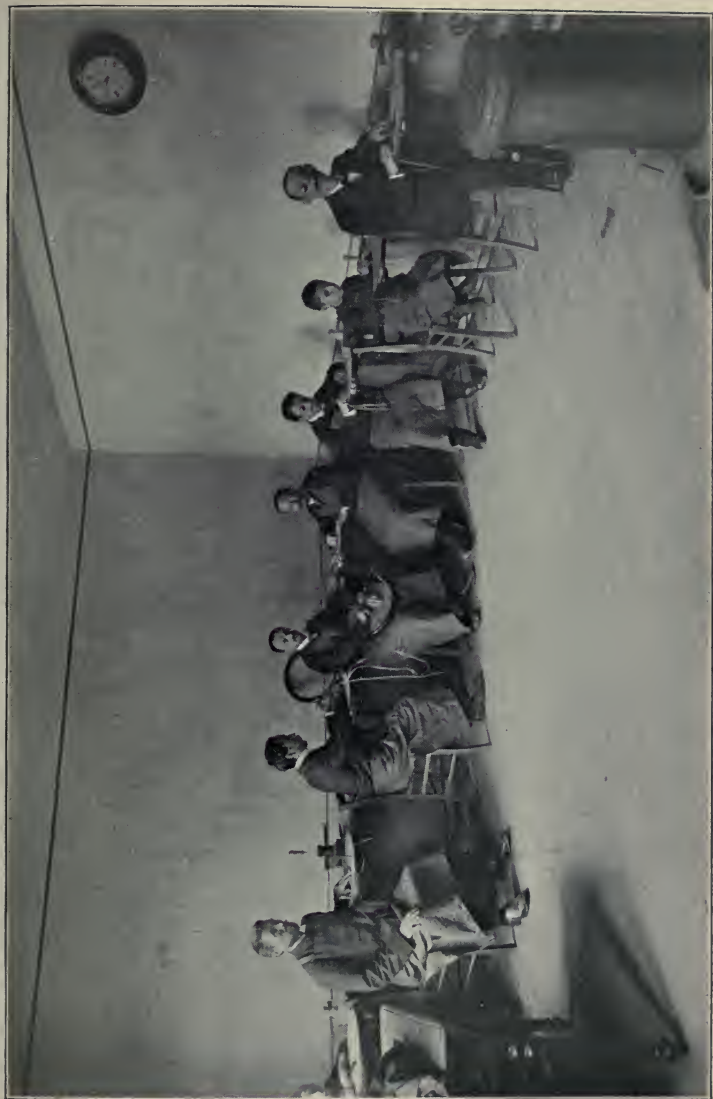
The poor clerk seemed thankful from the very bottom of his heart. He was full of praise of Her Majesty's great goodness, and the kindness of the private persons helping her. Of Mr. Monske he sang praises, and then when he was told who and what I was, he asked me in the name of his fellow-inmates of the Institute to tell the English what a grand and noble work “Carmen Sylva” was doing.

Mr. Monske then took me to the music-room, a large bright apartment with a fine organ,—the gift of a blind Austrian gentleman,—two pianos, and other musical instruments. On the walls were the portraits of the King and Queen, while the floor was of polished oak. Here, one afternoon each week, Her Majesty comes, accompanied by her ladies-in-waiting and some friends, and gives the blind inmates and their families a musical entertainment. Thus the Queen keeps the Institute under her own personal supervision.

In another room—a play-room—I saw a homely-looking woman playing with a little blind child of four years, while the oldest inmate I saw was about sixty. The dormitories for the thirty-two inmates that were there at the time of my visit were scrupulously clean and very airy. Each man had his bed, his washstand, his lock-up wardrobe, while the floors everywhere were covered with linoleum.

I was taken to a long new building, just erected in the grounds, which is being fitted as a rope-works. There is room for thirty men to work with ease. Close beside it is about to be erected a private chapel, given by a gentleman in Bucharest, while on the other side of the house I was shown the chair-making workshops, the overseer of which was a blind man himself. Here, while some were expert menders of cane chairs, others were being taught the trade. The Director explained that he had just signed a big contract with a firm of chair-makers, and showed me the hundreds upon hundreds of frames ready to go into the hands of the blind.

The last department I was shown was that in which the new Theodorescu machine was being used to emboss blind-



Blind Inmates at Work.

books. It is an interesting and ingenious method by which the type, consisting of small blunt pins, is set in a brass frame very similar to ordinary type, and is set indeed by the blind themselves. Then, when a frame is full, it is put into a special press, and any number of impressions can be taken from the embossing-pins.

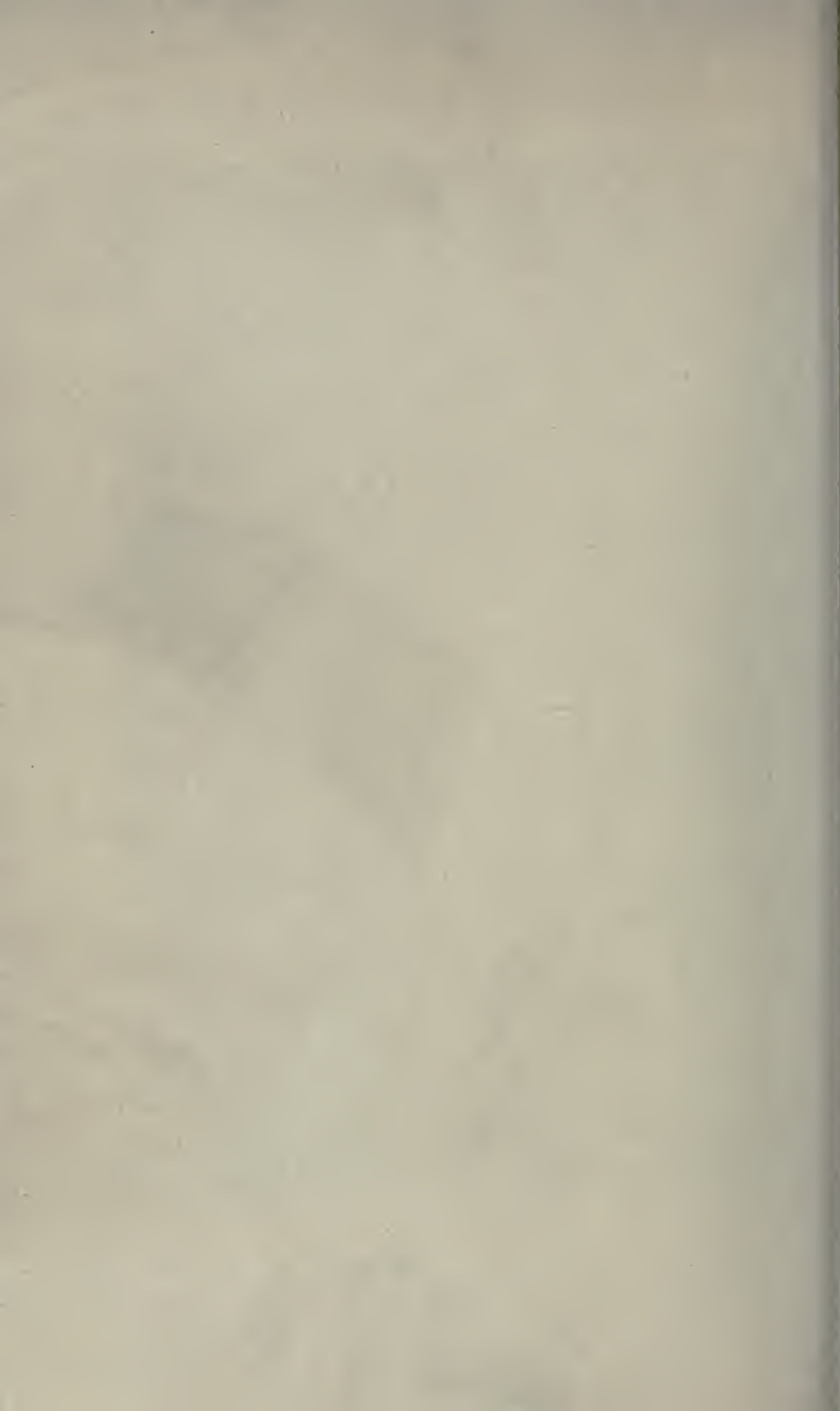
Mr. Monske first reduces the printed book to embossed Braille characters, and these are set up by the blind compositors, and impressions taken very rapidly. I was shown bulky volumes of well-known works that have already been printed in this manner and now, for the first time, given to the blind. Recently Mr. Monske made a tour to the various blind institutions in France, Austria, and Germany, and without any prospectus, sold 140 of the machines. It certainly is a simple but most ingenious invention, which in the future will bring great profits to the Queen's blind colony.

As regards private subscriptions, I was shown the list. They range from 50 centimes to £4000. On the day previous to my visit it was shown by the list that Her Majesty had received over 5000 francs in donations. Funds are coming in, it is true, but for the development of the scheme a large sum is required. It is for that reason that Her Majesty is making an earnest appeal all over the world to those interested in the welfare of the blind. Her great institution—of which this is only the nucleus—is an international one, and men and their families of all creeds and nationalities are eligible. Her Majesty has asked me to say that subscriptions, however small, can be sent either to Madame Zoe Bengesco, Dame d'Honneur to the Queen of Roumania, Bucharest, or to Mr. R. Monske, Director "Vatra Luminoasa Regina Elizaveta," Boulevardul Carol 31, Bucharest, and would be duly acknowledged.

TURKEY



HIS EXCELLENCY TEWFIK PASHA,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Imperial Ottoman Empire.



CHAPTER I

THE LAND OF THE WANING MOON

The Orient Express again—On the Black Sea to Constantinople—A disenchantment—My dragoman—How to bribe the Customs officers—Mud and dogs—A city of spies—Feebleness of British policy at the Porte—Turkish adoration of Germany—The basis of my confidential inquiries.

FROM Bucharest to Constantinople is not at all an unpleasant journey.

The Orient Express runs twice a week to Constantza, the Roumanian port on the Black Sea, where there is a fine and comfortable passenger-steamer service direct to Constantinople.

At Bucharest Station I was seen off by several kind friends, with many parting injunctions to "take care of myself" in Macedonia, and it was not without regret that I left the gay little Roumanian capital, where I had received so much hospitality, from Her Majesty the Queen down to some of the humblest of her subjects.

The "Orient," on the Constantza line, is not so well fitted, nor is the food so good, as upon the direct line from Paris to Constantinople by way of Belgrade and Sofia.

The whole train was shabby, dusty, and over-heated, and the dinner, instead of the usual *table d'hôte*, was *à la carte*. The only item on the bill of fare, however, proved to be beef-steak. The small piece cooked for me was fit only for a dog, and served on a dirty tablecloth; therefore I was compelled to make my dinner off stale bread and soapy cheese. And this on a *train de luxe*—and one of the principal European Expresses!

The Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et Grand Express Européenes are not very considerate towards travellers to the East. There is neither competition in sleeping accommodation nor buffets, therefore the rolling-stock is often old-fashioned and dirty, and the food leaves very much to be desired. Surely upon a journey of three or four days, the maximum degree of comfort should be secured ! Why should the traveller who spends one night between Calais and Nice be better provided for than he who goes East from Ostend to Constantinople—a four days' journey ?

In the "Orient," the old-fashioned coal-fire heating in every carriage is still in vogue, and consequently the person who is unfortunate enough to have a berth near the stove is half roasted, while he who is at the farther end is half frozen. The traveller who goes East would certainly welcome the up-to-date *wagons-lits* of the Mediterranean or Carlsbad Expresses.

I travelled in the "Orient" from Paris to Vienna, from Belgrade to Sofia, from Bucharest to Constantza, and from Nisch in Servia to Paris, and on each of the trains were the same defects in sleeping comfort, and often in food.

It is to be hoped that the Company will shortly remedy this, for on some of their routes, notably Calais-Paris, or Paris-Marseilles, the food is all that can be desired.

The Express, after passing the wonderful bridge over the Danube, arrives at the quay at Constantza, or Kustendji, as is its local name, at eleven o'clock at night, where the mails from London and Vienna are quickly transferred on board, and we are soon under steam, with the flashing light of Cape Tusla fast disappearing at the stern.

The steamer *King Charles* makes the voyage from Constantza to Alexandria, calling at Constantinople, and is a very comfortable and up-to-date boat, with excellent state-rooms and a fine saloon, and ladies' drawing-room. Officers and men are Roumanians, but as the head steward speaks French there is no difficulty. An excellent supper at midnight, with Roumanian white wine, caviare, and a glass of *slivovitz* to follow, and then a stroll on the deck in the white moonlight.

Past the Kamara and Shabaloh lights, we at last see the broad rays from the Kali Akra, and then we head straight out upon the lonely sea for the Bosphorus. One by one, the tired travellers, some of them from Ostend, Berlin, or Petersburg, make for their berths, and finding myself alone, I turn into the comfortable deck cabin kindly secured for me by telegram by my friend the Minister of Finance in Bucharest.

Rising early, I was already out on deck and taking photographs as we passed the two Turkish forts, Kilia and Poiraz, at the narrow entrance to the Bosphorus. And after stopping to take up our pilot, we crept slowly up the narrow channel amid delightful scenery, some of which I photographed and have reproduced in these pages, past the pretty summer resort of Therapia and Anatoli Hissar, until we approached the capital of Turkey, with her hundred domes and minarets, looking almost like a fairy city against the blue cloudless sky as we approached.

But what a disenchantment on landing! That terrible rabble at Galata in the midst of dirt and squalor, of shouting touts, scrambling porters, and scavenger dogs, is a thing to be ever remembered. Fortunately, I had a Greek dragoman, one Demosthenes Cambothecras, to meet me. I can recommend him as an excellent and honest fellow, and to the intending traveller I may say that a letter addressed to the Pera Palace Hotel will always find him.

He stood on the quay amid the thousand off-scum of Constantinople, and shouted my name. I shouted back, and ten minutes later we met. When I gave him over my baggage ticket, he said—

“The customs here, m’sieur, are difficult. But, with your permission, I will give the officer five francs.”

I assented readily, and my luggage was passed without inquiry, while that of a bespectacled Hungarian next me was examined piece by piece, greatly to the disgust and consternation of his obese wife.

I saw no money pass in the shabby, shed-like Custom House, but he told me that the chief of the Customs employed an agent out in the street to receive his bribes!

So much for the morality of the Custom dues in Turkey. In that very same week the British Ambassador had made protest to the Sublime Porte regarding the same thing, but was promptly "snuffed out" by the all-influential Power, Germany.

Germany and German interests are always paramount in Turkey. If you are an Englishman, you may take a back seat and endure all your passport worries, but the German is, by the Turk, supposed to be his friend. German diplomacy is clever, wary, and unscrupulous, and in the Sultan's capital you are treated with deference if you are a subject of the Kaiser William.

And how strange and ridiculous it all is ! Germany intends ere long to wipe Turkey off the face of Europe—only Turkey cannot see it. She is fascinated and spellbound by German cringing and German goodwill, all pretence, and all directed towards the one end of traitorous abandonment.

Great Britain, notwithstanding her fine Embassy, is entirely eclipsed by the big white palace overlooking the Bosphorus which houses the German Ambassador. Tewfik Pasha, the Sultan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, lives beneath its shadow, and the Turks look upon Germany as their natural protector and friend. A British protest to the Porte passes unheeded, while a German protest receives attention and adjustment the very next day. A German diplomatist at the Sublime Porte told me this with a roar of laughter, adding—

"We are the only diplomatists here. We are listened to. You are merely tolerated."

And verily he spoke a great truth.

Our big grey Embassy in Pera, with its gorgeous Montenegrin *kavass*, may be extremely ornamental and impressive, but nowadays of little use. The British taxpayer is paying for the glorification of Great Britain without one single farthing's worth of benefit. The Turkish Government—clever as they are—laugh in the face of our persevering and well-meaning Ambassador. They give him, or his representative, cups of rather badly-made coffee in Tewfik's shabby anteroom at the Sublime Porte, and put their fingers to their noses behind his

back. It is not the fault of our Ambassador, or of his staff. All of them are practised diplomatists, who endeavour to their utmost to do their duty to King and Country, and to protect British interests in the East. The fault lies in the timid policy and shrinking politeness adopted by our present Government. The late lamented Lord Salisbury, or Lord Beaconsfield, would never for a moment have submitted to the open rebuffs which Great Britain daily meets with nowadays at Constantinople.

The Turk knows that Germany is behind him, and is therefore defiant. So British diplomacy is beaten every time.

Constantinople swarms with spies. If you have ever been there, and landed from a steamer, you will recollect that a crowd of unwashed porters swarm on board directly the ship is made fast. Every man of that ragged rabble is a spy. He is only allowed on board on condition that he gives information to the Custom officers ashore as to any concealment of revolvers, books, or prohibited articles. Respectable dragomans are constantly asked to assist in this, and offered monetary reward, as well as a permit to board the ship, but they refuse—and leave the espionage to the rabble.

And so it is all through the Turkish capital. Spies are everywhere—they haunt one in all the hotels, even in the much-advertised Pera Palace—and every movement of the stranger is noted. If you happen to be a German and have shown your passport in the Custom House, then you go hither and thither and do whatever you like. But if you are of any other nationality you will be suspected and haunted by all sorts and conditions of secret agents, until you kick the mud of Constantinople off your boots.

I have been more than once in the Sultan's capital, and on each occasion, on entering it, have been seized with a fit of depression, which has only been removed when I have got my passport *viséd* by the British Consul-General, and also by the Turkish police, preliminary to leaving the place.

The squalor in Galata, in Stamboul, and even in aristocratic Pera, sickens one. The streets, unswept for ages, are an inch deep in slimy mud, upon which one slides and slips at every step, and the grey, wolf-like dogs, held sacred by every

Turk, prowl about in hordes, each in their own quarter, living in the streets and sleeping in doorways.

Constantinople, with the most picturesque and beautiful position in all the world, is the most filthy and uncomfortable of all cities. With the exception of the Grande Rue, at Pera, there is scarcely a single decent European business street. Every thoroughfare is crowded to excess by a motley throng of Mohammedans, both European and Asiatic, and every form of costume and physiognomy, from the Tartar to the Syrian, may be seen.

The pilgrimages were leaving for Mecca while I was there, and the whole city was filled with the Faithful from every part of the great Moslem world. The bridge at Galata was daily a perfect panorama of costume as the pilgrims assembled to embark.

Though I spent a little time in the great Bazaar—which is always attractive to the traveller from the West—and revisited Saint Sophia and other of the big mosques, my days in Constantinople were mostly occupied in having interesting chats with the heads of the Turkish Government.

I carried letters of introduction to His Excellency Tewfik Pasha, the Sultan's Minister of Foreign Affairs; to the Grand Vizier of the Sultan; to d'Aristarchi Bey, the Grand Logothete; to His Excellency Noury Pasha, Under-State Secretary for Foreign Affairs; to the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Geo. H. Barclay—the Ambassador being absent on leave; to His Excellency Monsieur George Simitch, the Servian Minister; to M. Dimetri Vlastari, the well-known banker; to Mehemed Ali Pasha; to Riza Pasha, Minister of War; and to many other of the leading people in the Turkish capital.

Thus I was enabled to go thoroughly into the present state of affairs. I was granted an audience of His Majesty the Sultan, as well as by the Grand Vizier, by Tewfik Pasha, the Khardjie-Naziri, and had many interviews with the persons named above.

My inquiries were mainly directed to ascertaining—first, what attitude Turkey was assuming towards Macedonia; secondly, whether the Turks were alive to the firm intention

of Bulgaria for the protection of her subjects, and in what manner they viewed the prospect of hostilities; thirdly, the truth about the Macedonian reforms; fourthly, the extent of German intrigue in Constantinople; fifthly, the Turkish policy towards Austria; and sixthly, the policy towards Great Britain.

I went to the Porte in order to penetrate the veil of mystery surrounding diplomacy there, and to get at the true state of affairs. The task was very difficult, for in the East one is hardly ever told the real facts about anything. Nevertheless, unique opportunities were afforded me to obtain knowledge by the absolute facts and the future aims of both Turkey and Germany—opportunities of which, as will be shown in the following pages, I was not slow in taking advantage.

In view of the present situation in Turkey, the proclamation of the “Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress,” which was found posted upon all the walls of the Pera quarter of Constantinople on January 1 of this present year, is of great interest in showing the present state of public feeling in the Turkish capital.

This proclamation, which was issued by a very strong and formidable party in Turkey, began by stating that Abdul Hamid, after thirty years of impunity, was now on the verge of death. The fact that now and then he gives audience of a few minutes' duration to an Ambassador, or that at the weekly Selamlik he drives to the mosque, a few yards from his palace, proves nothing. The Sultan Mahmud fell dead from his horse, returning from the Selamlik; while the Sultan Medjid was on his feet up to the very last. In reality Abdul Hamid, knowing the profound effect which his failure to attend the Selamlik would have upon the people, is expending all the energies that remain to him in fulfilling this religious observance and in granting an occasional interview to a foreign Ambassador.

The proclamation proceeded :—

“ During the thirty years of his reign Abdul Hamid has brought ruin on the land; one half of our patrimony he

has delivered to the enemy ; he has destroyed our fleet, disorganised our army ; he has reduced the people to misery ; he has annihilated our governmental system, and has left nothing to the civil organisation or the civilisation of the past. He has concentrated the whole government into his own hands, and has dismissed all his tried and experienced Ministers, transferring the reins of office to self-seekers and traitors willing to become his tools."

Grave troubles are predicted after his death, and the Committee urges the population of the Empire, Christian and Mussulman, to be on their guard and to consider seriously the following facts :—

" (1) Abdul Hamid and his accomplices are conspiring to hand over the sovereignty and the Caliphate to his fourth son, the youth, Burhaneddin, in defiance of the tradition and the civil and religious law of the Empire. The success of this stratagem would be a mortal blow to the aspirations of the nation.

" (2) To prevent the enemies of the country from provoking disorders in order to bring about foreign intervention, guarantees must be given to the Christian populations and, if necessary, written assurances to the Embassies.

" (3) The happiness and the future of the country being dependent upon the suppression of the despotic régime and the enforcing of the Constitution, which was recognised in 1876 as an inalienable right of the nation, and after being two years in operation was perfidiously abrogated by Abdul Hamid, our fellow-countrymen, Christian and Mussulman, must of one accord exact the application of that Constitution, which will restore to the country its vitality and safeguard the liberties of the people. United in heart and mind, the Ulemas, the notables of the capital and the provinces, must, through the intermediary of the Grand Vizier and the Valis, demand of the new Sultan that he proclaim and bring into force without delay the clauses of the Constitution.

"(4) The duty of preserving the essential rights of the nation belongs, above all, to the members of the guild of the Ulemas and to the high civil and military officials ; the ceremony of the Biat, when the chosen of the people demonstrate the popular sovereignty by recognising and accepting the new Sultan, is the most propitious occasion for the exercise of that duty. It is an obligation that lies upon every Turkish subject to exact a pledge from the delegate he sends up to do his duty on that occasion."

The Manifesto ended with an appeal to the Christian and non-Christian populations to prepare for the coming crisis.

CHAPTER II

IN SEARCH OF THE TRUTH

His Excellency Noury Pasha—A quiet chat at his home—Turkish view of European criticism—The Turk misunderstood—The massacres in Macedonia—My visit to the Sublime Porte—His Excellency Tewfik Pasha tells me the truth—A great diplomatist—The fashion to denounce Turkey—The attitude of the Porte towards Bulgaria—Significant words.

THE first visit I paid was to His Excellency Mehmed Noury Pasha, Secretary-General of the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is one of the most advanced and progressive of Turks, and who, next to Tewfik Pasha, the Sultan's Foreign Minister, is one of the most powerful men in Turkey.

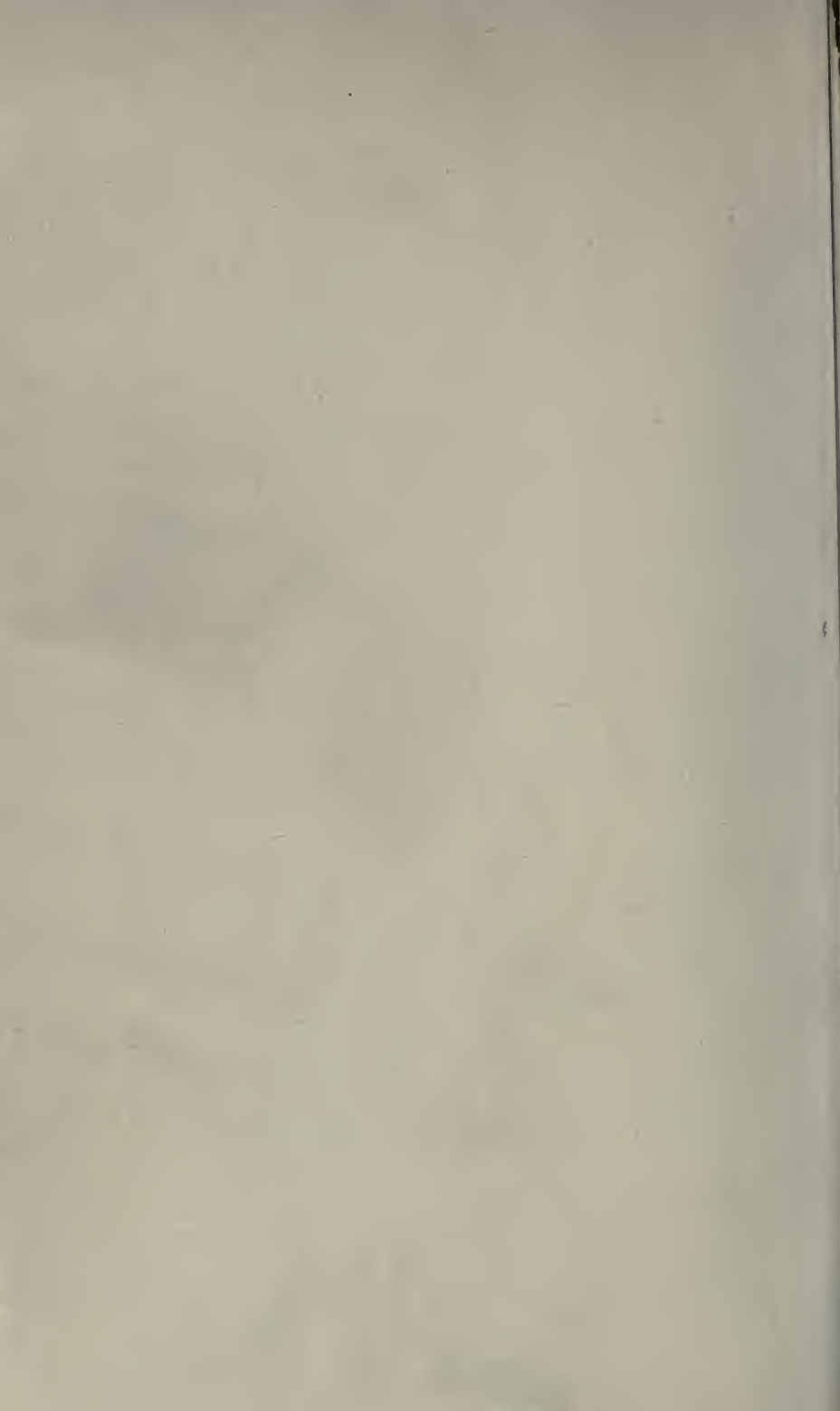
As such, it may be interesting to note that he was born in Constantinople, and having made his early studies in that city, was sent by the Sultan to Paris, where he underwent a long course of training, returning to occupy the post of Inspector in the Ministry of Public Works. Afterwards, he became Director-General, and subsequently his perfect knowledge of French brought him again before the notice of the Sultan, who appointed him to the office of Secretary-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a position which he has held for the past eighteen years.

Through his hands all diplomatic correspondence passes, and to him is mainly due the clever and tactful diplomacy of the Porte. His is, indeed, a delicate and laborious task.

He is a slim, fair-bearded, middle-aged man of very charming manner, and a delightful companion ; shrewd, full of tact and clear discernment. Times without number he has given



HIS EXCELLENCY NOURY PASHA.



proof of assiduous work for his country's advancement, and no one knows better than he the defects of Turkish rule.

By no means bigoted, he is, on the contrary, broad-minded and eager for reform. He was sent by the Sultan to represent him at Rome at the silver wedding of the King and Queen of Italy in 1893, and later, was one of the Peace delegates at the Conference after the Greco-Turkish War. He acted as second delegate of the Ottoman Empire at the Conference at Rome against the Anarchists, and also at the Peace Conference at The Hague.

At this latter Conference he won golden opinions from all the delegates of the other Powers for his politeness, his charm of manner, and the clever tact with which he performed his somewhat difficult mission.

Few, if any, of the dignitaries of Constantinople possess such a wide knowledge of Europe, European ways, and European politics. Enjoying the full confidence of the Sultan and of the Sublime Porte, he is recognised by the foreign missions as the working head of the Department of Foreign Affairs. He is the right hand of his chief, Tewfik Pasha, whom he aids with all his intelligence in the incessant difficulties which beset Turkish diplomacy. As a mark of their esteem he has been decorated by nearly every sovereign in Europe, while the Sultan has given him the plaque in brilliants of the Orders of Osmanie and the Medjidie.

Noury Pasha being well known to me as one of the cleverest men in Turkey, it afforded me great pleasure to obtain a chat with him one evening in the quiet of his own home.

He received me in a cosy room on the ground floor, a room that was more European than Turkish, and where I noticed many signed photographs of the chief diplomatists of Europe who are his friends.

When we were seated, a man-servant brought us the inevitable tiny cup of excellent coffee, and delicious cigarettes, and then we fell to chatting.

I gave him a message from a notable foreign ambassador who was our mutual friend, and told him the reason I was in Constantinople.

"Ah! So you wish to see His Majesty, and also His Excellency Tewfik Pasha! Well, I will see what can be done," was his reply.

"But I want your Excellency to tell me, if you will, what is the present situation in Turkey, and what are her future aspirations?" I said boldly.

The question was rather a poser. He hesitated. I pressed him to tell me the truth as far as he was able, without being injudicious; and at last, after some reluctance, he consented.

"You Europeans," he laughed, "are under a great misconception as regards Turkey. My sovereign, His Imperial Majesty, is often portrayed as a bloodthirsty brute, who has no regard for human life, and whose reign is one of terror and terrible injustice. Now the exact opposite is the truth. You will meet His Majesty, and judge for yourself. I have good opportunities of seeing how deeply he has the welfare of his people at heart. Is it not he, for instance, who out of his own pocket supports some six hundred schools in Turkey? It is he, personally, who has more than once prevented a declaration of war. I know we Turks have many defects. But what nation has not? Even you English are not—well, exactly perfect," he laughed. "Foreigners come here to Constantinople and hold up their hands that we do not sweep our streets, as is done in other capitals. The fact is, Turkey is not a rich country, and we have no money to expend on scavengers. I and every Turk would only welcome cleanliness. But how can we do it when we have no funds? Again, the very people who criticise us, the foreigners, can come and live here for twenty years and not pay one piastre of municipal tax. Can they do that in any other country?"

I admitted that they could not.

"Then why should they criticise us? All we want to be allowed to do is to carry on our government in our own way. Our population is of different race and different creed from Europeans, and therefore necessitates a totally different method of government. England does not understand Turkey, or Turkish methods. I readily grant that our government would not suit England, but neither would

British ideas be tolerated here. For many years all the diplomatic correspondence of the Sublime Porte has passed through my hands, hence I know what I am speaking about when on the topic of Turkish diplomacy. Abroad, we are told that our word is not our bond, that we give promises that we do not fulfil, and that we are a century or so behind the times. Well, I admit that we are not a twentieth-century nation. I admit that our Sublime Porte is not so imposing as your Foreign Office in Whitehall, or the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, or in Vienna. But I do maintain that the government of my sovereign, the Sultan, is a beneficent one for Turkey, and that our foreign policy has for its base the peace and welfare of the Balkans."

"But Macedonia?" I remarked.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"The question of Macedonia is, I admit, an extremely difficult one," he answered. "We have to govern a population so varied, both in nationality and in creed, that there must of necessity be constant aggressions and outbreaks. It is said that we aid and abet the Greek bands in massacring the Christians. I totally deny this. We do not. Surely it is to our own interest to maintain peace and order in Macedonia, and not to allow outsiders to create disorder and dissension!"

"And the protests of Bulgaria?"

His Excellency smiled.

"We hear from time to time threats of war," was his answer. "But when we hear them, we remember that we are sixteen million Turks; and when we sleep, we sleep quite undisturbed by any war rumours from Sofia."

"Then you do not anticipate armed reprisals from Bulgaria?"

He laughed, but said nothing except—

"Turkey is well informed, I assure you, of all that transpires in Sofia."

Noury Pasha's son, a smart lad of sixteen, entered and chatted with us in French. He is going to Paris for his education, and is destined for the Turkish Diplomatic Service.

He is a bright, intelligent youth, who, like his father, is imbued with Western ideas, and yet is naturally full of patriotism for his own country.

Another cup of excellent coffee, another cigarette over a chat upon private matters, and I took leave of my host—after I had begged the photograph which appears in these pages—feeling that I had met one of the most charming and most intelligent men in the great Ottoman Empire.

Next day I called at the palace of Tewfik Pasha, and on being ushered into a gorgeous reception-room—very French, but by the way lit by candles in high glass chimneys—the usual cup of coffee upon a golden tray and cigarette were brought me. The secretary of the Greek Embassy was waiting to see His Excellency upon an urgent matter concerning a massacre by a Greek band in Macedonia which had taken place near Seres the day previously. This meant, I saw, a long interview, and not caring to wait, I left a message for His Excellency to the effect that I would call and see him at the Sublime Porte on the following morning.

Next to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, Tewfik Pasha is certainly the most powerful man in the Ottoman Empire. A quiet-mannered, quiet-spoken, grey-bearded gentleman with kindly eyes and a fatherly manner, he is entirely the opposite that one would expect of "the terrible Turk." Born in Constantinople in 1845, the son of a General of Division, Ismail Hakki Pasha, he was destined for the army, and prosecuted his studies with great diligence. Unfortunately, owing to feeble health, he was compelled to abandon the idea of a military career—not, however, before he had passed his examination and obtained his diploma. He then chose a new career, one in which he has certainly rendered his country signal services. In 1866 he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as attaché, six years later being nominated as second secretary at the Ottoman Legation at Rome, whence he went to Vienna, to Berlin, and, later on, to Athens. He was transferred to St. Petersburg as first secretary at the moment when there arose those grave complications which resulted in the war between Russia and Turkey. Then, during

the war, he was appointed diplomatic agent to the Turkish Commander-in-Chief. In 1879, after the war, he was sent back to the Russian capital, but on this occasion in the capacity of Minister Plenipotentiary.

At the early age of forty-one Tewfik Pasha found himself Ambassador at Berlin, a post which he occupied for ten years, namely, till 1895. His personal charm, his uprightness, and his frankness of manner endeared him to his colleagues in the German capital, as well as to the German Court, and it was he, indeed, who laid the foundation of the present cordial friendliness between the sovereigns at Berlin and Constantinople.

Finally, in 1895, the Sultan recalled him to Turkey and promoted him to be Minister of Foreign Affairs, a powerful position which he still holds. For the past eleven years he has directed the destinies of the Ottoman Empire with broad-mindedness, tact, and patience, that have, without doubt, been highly beneficial to his country's interests. His post is no sinecure, as recent history has shown us. Yet he is a conscientious man of Western ideas and Western views; one of the cleverest diplomatists in the whole of Europe, and yet at the same time just and honourable in his dealings. However much we in England may criticise the policy of the Sublime Porte, we can have only admiration for Tewfik Pasha, both as a man and as the faithful servant of his Imperial master.

In Turkey fresh diplomatic difficulties arise every minute, yet with Noury Pasha's assistance he grapples with them and deals with them in a manner which the diplomatists of few other nations could ever hope to do. Honoured by the most complete confidence of his sovereign, who possesses for him a particular esteem, Tewfik Pasha is universally known and liked. The diplomatic corps in Constantinople are ever loud in their praises of his extreme kindness and courtesy and his readiness to accede to all requests that are in reason.

His Excellency's courtesy towards myself was very marked. Hardly had I been ushered into his anteroom at the Sublime Porte—a very shabby, unimposing building of long dreary corridors with broken windows and broken wooden flooring—

when the usual coffee was brought, and I signed his big visitors' book. In that book I noticed the signatures of all the diplomatic world of Constantinople. Then there entered the Russian Ambassador, who, with a cheery "*Bon jour, m'sieur*," crossed, and also signed the book.

A moment later the secretary came, and presenting His Excellency's regrets to the Ambassador, pointed out that he already had an appointment with me, and asked whether he would call later. The representative of the Tzar said he would call the following morning, and I was then ushered into Tewfik's private room, a big, cheerful apartment with splendid Persian carpets, long windows and a large writing-table at one end, where sat the grey-bearded Minister in frock-coat and fez. He rose and greeted me with a hearty hand-shake. With him was seated the Grand Vizier and Noury Pasha, both of whom also greeted me.

We four had a long and very interesting conversation in French, its drift, however, being such as would be injudicious to print in these pages. The chat was of a purely private character, although it closely concerned the present political situation in the Near East.

"The fact is," remarked His Excellency presently, smiling as he sat back in his arm-chair before his littered writing-table, "we Turks are not understood abroad. Writers in England, and especially your journalists, not knowing Turkey and never having visited the East, criticise us, and say all sorts of hard things about Turkish rule and Turkish diplomacy. They call us intolerant and fanatical. But surely there are evidences in Constantinople that we are tolerant? We allow Christians to erect churches wherever they want them; and again, have we not done everything possible in Macedonia to preserve for its inhabitants their religious liberty? Really, the English ought to know the truth concerning Turkey. Unfortunately, the fashion of late seems to be to denounce our land and all its ways!" And he laughed again.

I referred in guarded words to the possibilities of war with Bulgaria, whereupon he said—

"We view the matter with perfect tranquillity. The



The entrance to the Bosphorous.



In Constantinople.

Government of His Imperial Majesty regrets most deeply those unfortunate incidents in Macedonia that so constantly occur, but is unable to remedy it. It is the Greek bands that are to blame—not the Turks.”

“And your diplomatic relations with Bulgaria?” I asked.

“They are perfectly normal,” was his reply. “Dr. Stancioff is an able Minister, and he fully understands us.”

“Then you do not anticipate hostilities at an early date?” I asked, pressing home my question.

His Excellency said nothing. He merely shrugged his shoulders. But that gesture was, to me, sufficiently significant.

“You are going to Macedonia,” he said. “It is not altogether safe, you know, especially around Presba and Ochrida, or about Seres. But if you *are* determined to go, I wish you every good luck on your journey.”

I thanked him, and after another half-hour’s pleasant chat with the Grand Vizier and Noury Pasha I rose, and Tewfik Pasha grasped my hand heartily in warm farewell, his parting words being—

“Go, see for yourself, and I believe you will find that we Turks are not quite so black as we are painted.”

And I left the presence of a man whose broad-minded policy, if it were adopted in every particular, would, I feel sure, advance the Turkish cause, and place the Ottoman Empire in a very different position from what it is to-day.

I crossed the Sea of Marmora to Haidar Pasha, in Asia Minor, visited Ismid, and saw the new German railway that has its head opposite Stamboul and is to have its terminus on the Persian Gulf. I went to Brusa, the ancient capital of the Ottoman Empire, walked in the wonderful burying-grounds of Scutari, and made many interesting excursions about Asia Minor, in order to observe the all-powerful influence of Germany in that country. And I was amazed.

On my return to Constantinople I had other interviews at the Yildiz with His Majesty himself, and with members of the Government, all of which combined to show that Turkey is not in any way afraid of Bulgaria. The fact is, she is

uncertain of the attitude of Servia and Roumania, and is rather mystified as to what Austria will do in the event of war. Relying upon Germany, and treating Great Britain with studied politeness, she views the present critical position with perfect coolness and indifference.

Indeed, as Noury Pasha very justly said one day to me—

“It takes a good deal to arouse us Turks, but when we are aroused, we fight—and fight to the death.”

Turkey to-day is still in its lethargic state, but once aroused, who knows where the war will end, or what European complications will result ?

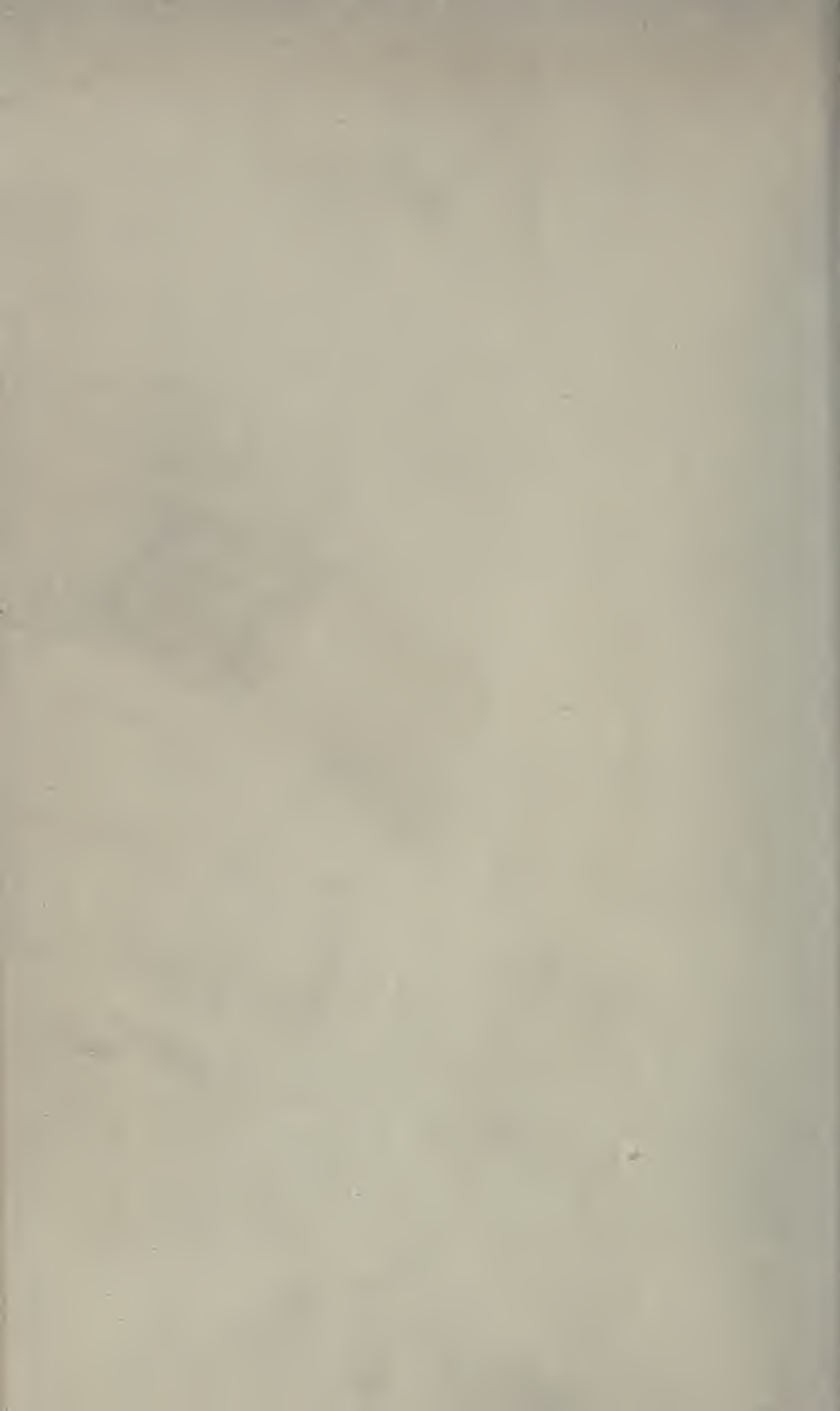
MACEDONIA



Lake of Ochrida: Macedonia.



Lake of Prespa: Macedonia.



CHAPTER I

PLAIN TRUTHS ABOUT MACEDONIA

War imminent between Bulgaria and Turkey—My secret inquiries—Atrocities by the Greek bands—Chats with the leaders of the insurrection—The truth about the intrigues in Macedonia—I visit the scene of the massacres—Stories told to me—Horrible facts—Germany behind the assassins—A disgraceful truth.

THIS present record of my observations in the Near East would be incomplete without some description of my journey through Macedonia, and what I saw there.

The Macedonian question is the burning question of to-day, and one that can only be solved in one way—by a fierce and bloody war.

As I have already shown, there is every indication that hostilities between Bulgaria and Turkey must occur in the present year. Indeed, the thread is now strained to breaking point, and one need never be surprised to learn at the breakfast-table one morning that Bulgaria has boldly thrown down the gauntlet to the Sultan. Then, aided by Roumania—who will be induced to give her support in return for that additional strip of territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, as I have already indicated in a previous chapter—a fierce and bitter struggle will commence. With Bulgaria, the Northern Albanians will ally themselves according to the words of the various chiefs of whom I made inquiry; Montenegro, and of course Servia, will hold their own against the Turk, and the result must be that the whole of the Balkans will be aflame.

This forecast is no imaginary one. It is based upon information imparted to me in confidence by Cabinet Ministers

themselves—information which is in part in the possession of the Foreign Office at this moment. Secret preparations are in active progress both in Roumania and Bulgaria, while Servia has ordered her new artillery to be delivered at the end of this present spring. There is a tacit agreement between the Balkan States that affairs in Macedonia are intolerable, and that the decimated population must now be protected. And in summary of the various conversations I had with the monarchs and their Ministers in each of the Balkan capitals, I can only say that the view is unanimous.

In Servia, in Bulgaria, in Montenegro, in Albania, in Roumania, and in Macedonia itself I made every inquiry from reliable sources. From secret information, I was able to gather that there is but one solution of the question—WAR.

At present the Bulgarian bands formed to protect the Macedonians are passive. The organisation is still there and will be of greatest use when hostilities are declared; but there is no activity, and there has, indeed, been little since the recent abortive insurrection.

Greek bands, aided and abetted by the Turks, are, however, everywhere, and each day the most awful atrocities are committed by them. Reports of these are received in Sofia and in Constantinople, but no representation is made by either of the Powers to the Sublime Porte or to Athens. "Macedonia!" exclaimed a well-known foreign Ambassador one day, while I was sitting at lunch with him at his Embassy, "Macedonia! We're sick of Macedonia, and have ceased to trouble about it!"

Ceased to trouble indeed! Here a great and intelligent Christian population is being slaughtered in order to further the ambitious aims of Germany, and no one stirs a finger. Europe raised its eyes heavenward when it heard of the Congo atrocities, yet of poor Macedonia the Powers are "sick," and she is cast helpless to the assassin's knife!

Before going to Macedonia I sought and obtained the opinions of the leading authorities in the East, as well as those of the rulers and Ministers. Much told me by the various monarchs was, of course, in entire confidence, therefore I can only speak generally in declaring their opinion to be in favour

of securing for Macedonia autonomy under a European prince as Governor-General.

In more than one high quarter Prince Danilo of Montenegro was mentioned as possible for the post, and in another the name of Prince Mirko of Montenegro was put forward. A German prince or an Austrian archduke would be impossible, but an English prince would be welcomed, and the name of Prince Arthur of Connaught was spoken of by more than one Balkan Cabinet Minister.

In Serbia I had several highly interesting chats with Professor Civics of Belgrade University, who is a well-known authority on Macedonia, and who has recently published a book attempting to prove that the bulk of the Macedonian population is not Bulgar, but Serb. Many of his arguments I found, on exhaustive inquiry, to be well based, yet my own conclusion is that, after all, the great majority of the Macedonian population is really Bulgar.

This fact is admitted all through the Balkans, therefore the situation in Macedonia must of necessity affect Bulgaria more closely than any other nation.

The question of Macedonia is a most difficult and complicated one, but I spared no effort in order to thoroughly master it in all its various phases, and to get at the truth of the present and the probabilities of the near future.

In Sofia I had a long talk with Professor Agoura of Sofia University, who is one of the best-known authorities upon the Macedonian question. He has been in Macedonia many times, and, like myself, has had an opportunity of speaking with the people and hearing their grievances.

"In England the Macedonian question is entirely misunderstood," he said. "Some writers have taken Professor Civics' views, and endeavoured to prove that the Macedonians are really Slavs. But they are not. Their whole history shows that they are Bulgars."

"And the present state of the country?" I asked.

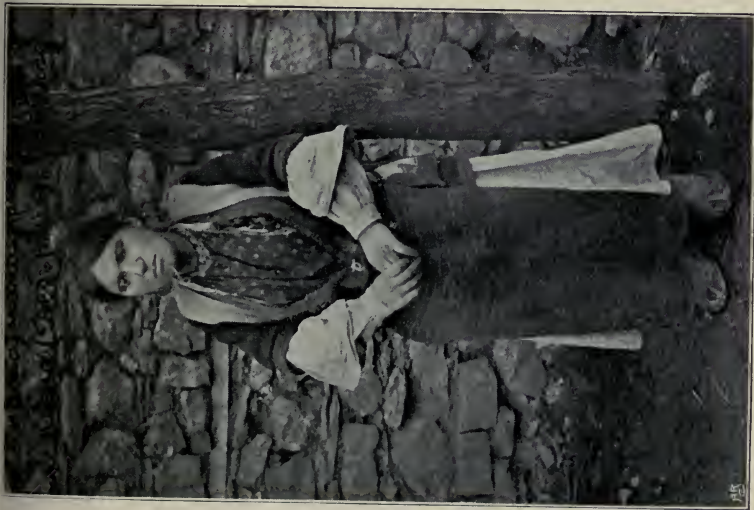
"Never in the modern history of Macedonia has it been in such a bad state as at present. The Christian Bulgars are outraged, tortured, and shot, and their villages burnt

by the Greek bands, who are now under the protection of the Turks, and not a voice is raised at Constantinople in complaint. It is simply astounding that such a state of things should be allowed to exist in this twentieth century. Over one thousand Christian Bulgars were killed in the raids last year, and this year the number is known to be more than double. Bulgaria is, however, at this moment staying her hand. Weakened as the Macedonians are, and with Turkey protecting the Greek bands, our Bulgarian bands for the protection of the villages have but little chance. Of late, it has been the unfortunate Bulgar who has lost always. The Bulgar bands, it was found, compromised the villages, and at the same time were not strong enough to protect them. Therefore those still in Macedonia live in the mountains and come down when required. Ah!" he added, throwing up his hands, "the state of affairs is terrible! Only recently during a village wedding at Zagoutcheni the place was attacked by a Greek band and seventy men, women, and children killed."

"And in your opinion what would be the best settlement of the question?" I inquired; for he was one of the greatest authorities in Europe upon the much-vexed problem.

"The best settlement of Macedonia would be an autonomy, but a restrained one—one that would not separate Macedonia from Turkey," he replied. "Macedonia should be placed under a European Governor-General—certainly not German—preferably a Swiss. The police and the central administration should be vested in the Governor-General, and all other questions left to Turkey. Religion should, of course, be free. Bulgaria has no desire to annex Macedonia, as the Powers seem to think. I do not think that the question can be settled in any other way. A European conference should be convoked, and the matter dealt with at once. When you go to Macedonia, you will see for yourself the state of things. But remember, the Turks will let you see nothing if they can help it. You are going to Monastir. Good. Travel across to Ochrida, and you will see and hear things that will appal you.

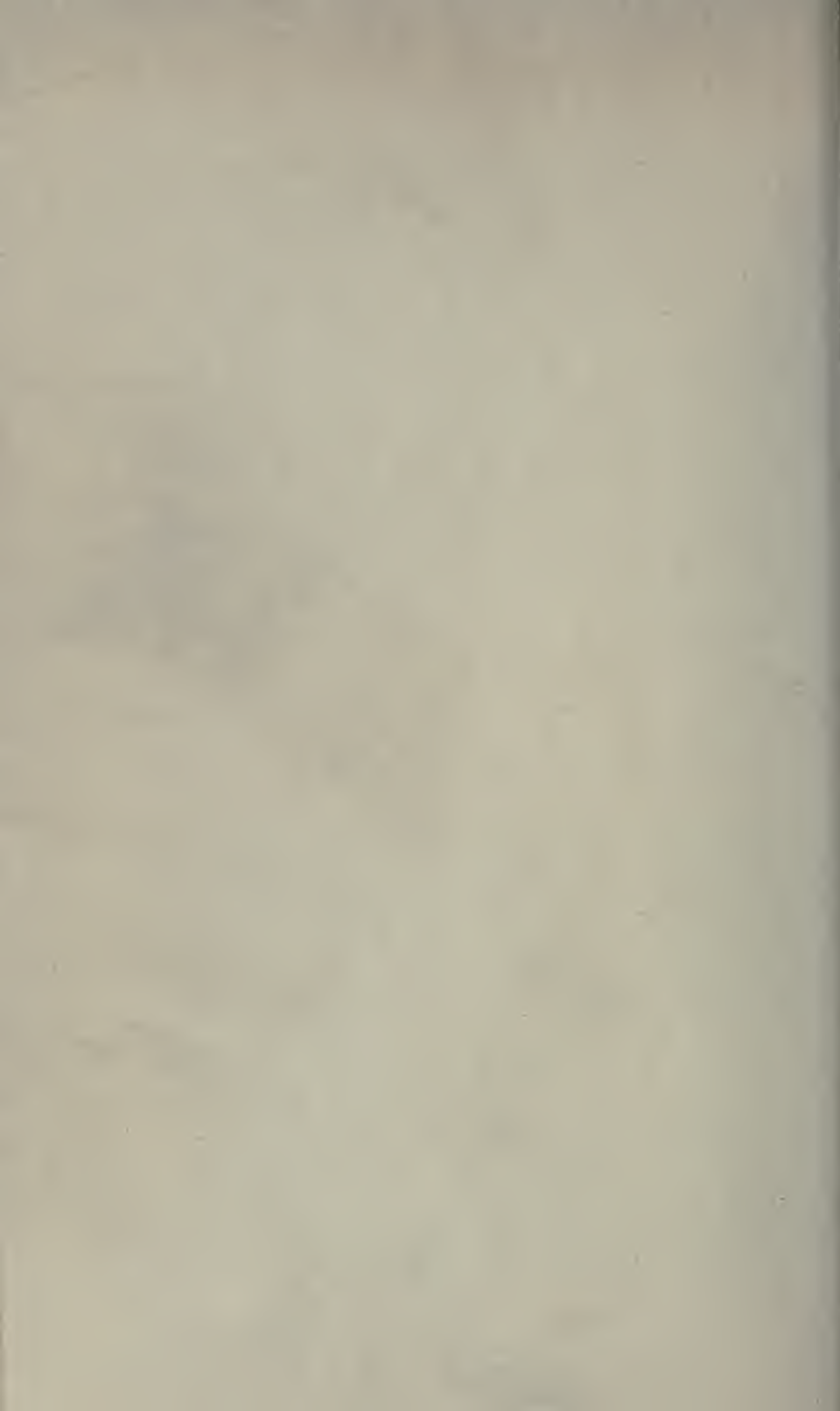
"Recently there have been, to my knowledge, eight



Macedonian Christian abducted by the Turks from
Klene, a village near Debr, and rescued
by a Bulgarian band.



GENERAL TZONTCHEFF,
The Bulgarian leader in Macedonia.



Christian villages entirely destroyed by Greek bands—the inhabitants exterminated, and the houses burned to the ground. During the past two years there has never passed one single day without murders and outrages committed by Greek bands upon the Bulgar inhabitants of Macedonia. Unfortunately, the Turkish army arrives always too late to protect the population ; but this is, of course, arranged. Indeed, it seems as though the Turks protect these Greek bands and assist them in their nefarious work. From Ochrida right down to Salonica these murders are of daily occurrence, always by the Greek bands. These bands operate in the arrondissements of Seres, Drama, Demir-Hissar, Kavala ; in the Salonica *vilayet* at Enije-Vardar, Vodena, and Guevgueli ; in Lerin, Florina, Castoria, Presba, and Murievo, and around Monastir. The Servian bands operate at Cumanovo, Palanca, Veles, Kitschevo, and Poretschi ; while Turkish bands are just now massacring at Tikveschi, Schlip, Veles, Kotschani, Strousaitza, Razlog, Melnik, and Nevrokop. So it will be seen that where there are no Greek bands, there are either Turks or Servians.”

In Sofia I also met the renowned leader of the premature insurrection in Macedonia, General Ivan Tzontcheff, a short, smart, dapper little man, quick of movement and alert of manner. With him I likewise had a very interesting chat. As one who has the Macedonian cause at heart, as head of the Macedonian External Committee, and being in daily touch with events in that terrified country, he and his friend, Monsieur Gologanoff, were able to give me many details and explain much that is unknown to the English public.

I also met several times, and had long conversations with, Dr. Tartarcheff, who was president of the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee in Bulgaria, and who, after the insurrection, was taken prisoner by the Turks. Both men gave me much authentic information and introductions that were of great use to me in my journey through Macedonia.

The truth is that the Macedonian question is the direct result of the Treaty of Berlin, for by it the Treaty of St. Stefano—which incorporated Macedonia in the Bulgarian Principality

—was annulled. The Treaty of Berlin thus left Macedonia under the Turkish dominion, with a provision of a kind of autonomy under the control of the Great Powers.

This autonomy was worked up in detail by an International Commission in Constantinople in 1880. But it was not applied, and the situation in Macedonia remained the same as it was before the Russo-Turkish War, and became even worse, on account of the Turkish fanaticism aroused against the Bulgarians as the cause of their military disasters.

The Turkish persecutions and the new situation in Bulgaria attracted the greater portion of the Macedonian intelligent population into that Principality. A strong Macedonian emigration was therefore started to Bulgaria, which in late years has arisen to the number of more than 150,000.

Macedonia, thus drained of its intelligence, devoted its energies from 1880 to 1890 to a strong educational movement, which was favoured in a great measure by the political circumstances arisen after the union of Eastern Roumelia to the Bulgarian Principality in 1885. Towards the end of this period, 1880 to 1890, there had sprung up in Macedonia a young, vigorous intelligence, with a strong national conscience, longing for greater freedom in the national and economical development of the country, and aspiring for a wider field of activity. The Turks, afraid of the Bulgarian progress, began to restrain the activity of the Macedonians. The growing tyrannical régime of the Sultan Hamid made the situation still more difficult, and life became impossible in the country.

The Macedonians then sought their salvation in revolution.

This revolutionary movement had for its object the autonomy of Macedonia, which is declared by all I met in the Balkans to be the only solution of the question.

Several important reasons are given for this. First, it is argued that autonomy was secured by International Acts:—the Treaty of Berlin, and the International Commission in Constantinople, 1880. Secondly, it did not touch in any way the integrity of the Turkish Empire, a dogma in the policy of the European Powers. Thirdly, it did not in any way

impair the suzerainty of the Sultan, who still remained the sovereign of the province, and who had himself accepted and signed the International Act. Fourthly, it gave full scope to the free development of all the inhabitants in the country, independently of religion or race. Fifthly, the autonomy not only did not affect the interests of any Balkan State, but was bringing a soothing element into the relations between the Balkan nations.

To-day the animosities between the Balkan nations have their common cause in Macedonia. She is the apple of discord. Every Balkan State is contemplating the conquest of this rich province and the playing of principal rôle in the destinies of the Peninsula. All have instituted church and school propagandas in the country, where they wage a furious war between themselves upon the shoulders of the native population. This war is made more cruel by the policy of Turkey, Germany, and Greece. So that in this way the Macedonian population is demoralised, and the Balkan nations themselves are exhausting their energy.

The autonomy, if secured, would exercise a benign influence towards an understanding between the Balkan nations. By the establishment of such an administration in Macedonia, under the guidance and the control of Europe, the Macedonians would take their destiny in their own hands. The different propagandas would not have such a propitious field for action, and the animosities would gradually subside. That this is the best solution of the Macedonian question is held by statesmen all through the Peninsula, for by the progress of time and the development of events the erection of Macedonia into a separate state must become dominant as the final solution.

The way for a Balkan Federation would then be cleared. Macedonia by itself would become a kind of Switzerland, and the nucleus towards the creation of a still more powerful Switzerland in the Balkan Federation, which, neutralised, would create in the Balkan Peninsula a field for progress and civilisation, but not a bridge for the conquering ambitions from the North.

With such broad ideas and with such hopes, the Mace-

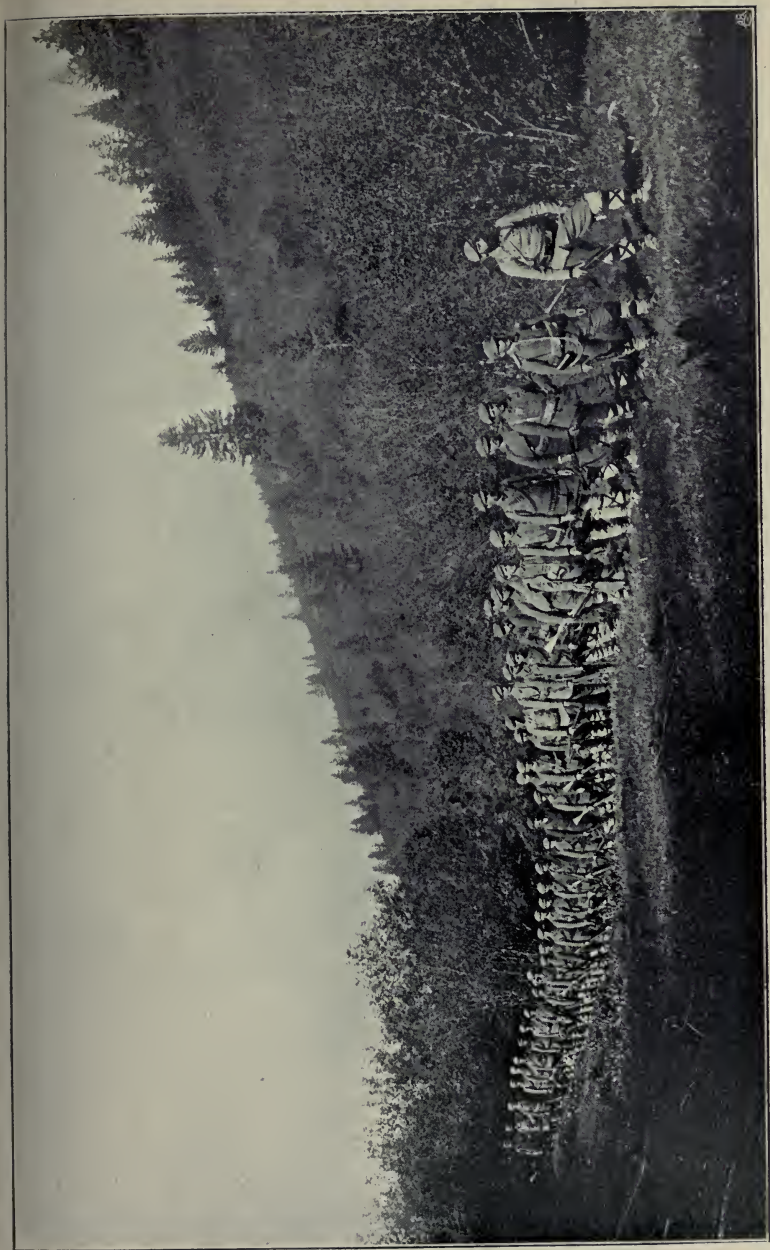
donians wrote upon their revolutionary banner the watchwords, "*Macedonia for the Macedonians.*"

The revolutionary movement in Macedonia—which dates from the year 1893—began to develop into a strong organisation from 1896–97. The whole country, by patient work, was gradually covered with a network of secret societies, at the head of which was a Central Revolutionary Committee, which, in fact, had a greater power in the country than the official Turkish authorities.

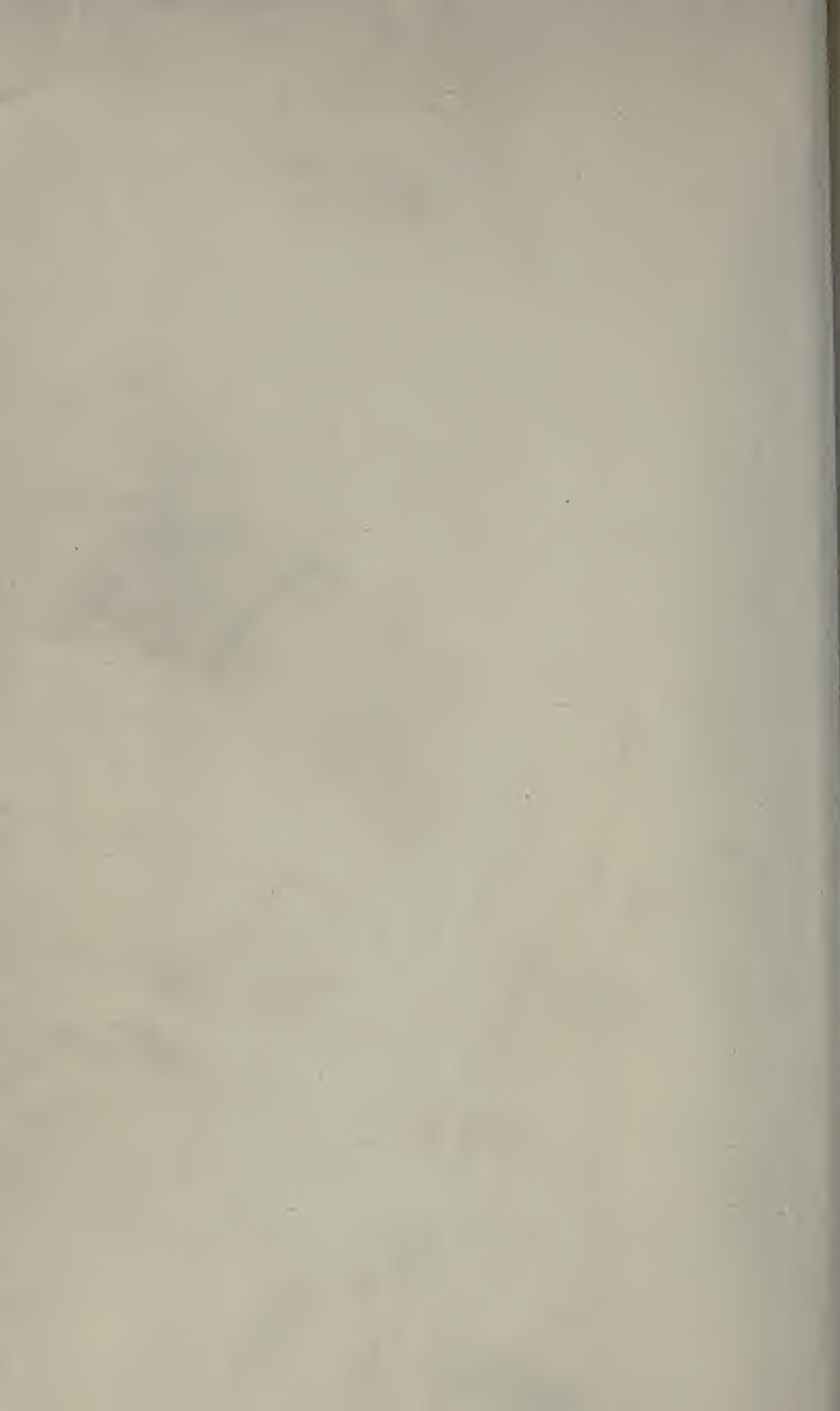
This revolutionary organisation had an international character. In it were received all the Macedonians thirsting for liberty. In its ranks were not only Bulgarians, but also Vlachs, Montenegrins, Servians, and even Turks, discontented with the Sultan's régime. But on the whole, the organisation bore a Bulgarian colour, chiefly on account of the great Bulgarian majority in Macedonia, and also on account of the suspicion that the organisation intended prosecuting Bulgarian ambitions.

For the reason that Macedonia had a population mostly of Bulgarian nationality, and through the agitation of Macedonian Emigration, the revolutionary movement found a favourable ground in Bulgaria. Here it was met with sympathy, which was followed by moral and material support. An organisation was instituted in the Principality, which spread its influence very rapidly through the whole country. This organisation was called the External Organisation, while that in Macedonia bore the name of the Internal Revolutionary Organisation.

The activity of these two organisations brought the revolutionary movement to a great development during the years of 1900 and 1901. The revolutionary idea became dominant in Macedonia. Nearly the whole population was united in a strongly organised body, and a great part of the men able to fight were armed, and fighting bands were formed which exercised the armed men. The country was divided into military districts, and the Macedonians were inspired with such enthusiasm that they welcomed, with a thrill of exultation, the impending struggle. The enthusiasm was no less great in



A Bulgarian Band in Macedonia



Bulgaria, where the coming insurrection was awaited with great hopes of success. Indeed, no nation in the Balkan Peninsula had shown such a power of organisation, such sacrificing spirit, and such fighting qualities as the Macedonians. An intimate knowledge of the Macedonian revolutionary movement, such as General Tzontcheff possesses, shows, indeed, the wonderful energy of the Macedonians.

But alas ! political intrigues from quarters with unfriendly dispositions towards Macedonian aspirations, sowed misunderstandings in the midst of the Organisation, and her forces were suddenly paralysed by internal strife just on the eve of the struggle.

The consequence was that the Macedonian revolutionary movement did not express itself in one general effort, but in partial insurrections, none of which showed the whole revolutionary energy. The insurrection in the valley of the river Stromina during the autumn of 1902 and the insurrection in the *vilayet* of Monastir in 1903 were easily crushed, and the hopes and expectations of the population unfortunately deceived.

After these abortive insurrections a new situation was created. The European Powers admitted the inability of the Turkish Government to establish order in Macedonia, and the principle of European interference and control was adopted. As a result of this principle, the Murshteg reforms worked up by Austria and Russia were proclaimed. These reforms, however, were not integral, but merely embryo reforms, from the expansion and development of which depended the pacification of the country.

On the other hand, the morale of the Macedonians was now shaken and the power of the Revolutionary Organisation shattered in consequence of the incomplete insurrections and the consequent Turkish victories.

Naturally, the Turks, faithful to their traditional policy, would avail themselves of this situation in order to hinder the development of the reforms in their true sense. The Greeks—whose policy is the partition of Macedonia—were, like the Turks, against such a development of the reforms, because

the establishment of an effectual European control would lead to a good government, which would gradually evolve the destiny of Macedonia towards an autonomy.

Therefore, the policy of Turkey, Greece, and Germany had a common interest, namely, to paralyse the reforms, and became a common enemy to the Macedonians, who, by their Bulgarian majority, were striving for autonomy.

So, united in their action, Greece, and also Servia to a smaller extent, hurled, the one from the South and the other from the North, armed bands into Macedonia, who commenced their destructive work against the Bulgarian element, by killing the leading men and enforcing the country population to recognise Greek or Servian nationality. The Turks cover their action, and the villagers, unprotected and without arms, are unable to defend themselves. They are at the mercy of these bands, aided by the Turkish authorities.

Thus a cruel religious and racial war has sprung up in the heart of Macedonia, under the protection and instigation of the Turkish policy, and also under the benevolent eyes of Germany and Austria.

This terrible situation has been still more complicated by the Bulgarians themselves. The Revolutionary Organisation being shattered in its moral and material power, armed bands were formed after the insurrection, under unscrupulous leaders, who commenced acts of depredation upon the unfortunate Macedonians.

Just now the revolutionary organisation in Bulgaria is undergoing another crisis. It is divided into two principal flanks: the moderate and the extreme. The first-mentioned inclines towards a suspension of active revolutionary operations on account of the exhaustion of the Macedonian population and the unfavourable political situation in Europe, while the extreme party are urging a continuance of revolutionary action to exasperation. At the annual congress in January last the moderates had a chance to oust the extreme party, but the death of Damian Groueff, the chief of the moderates, who was killed in the village of Roussinovo (*vilayet* of Uskub) upset all their plans. On account of Groueff's death they did

not take part in the congress, and the result is that the extreme party are now all paramount, and further reprisals may be expected.

Therefore from all sides—from Turks, Greeks, Servians, and even Bulgarians, as well as from an interested diplomacy—the Macedonians are pressed, and their aspirations for the autonomy compromised. And what is the result of all this? Only that the Macedonians are set by the interested Powers before the eyes of the Christian world as a cruel and barbarous population, unworthy of sympathy—worthy only of the tyrannical Turkish rule!

What is the remedy?

There is but one, the one advocated by the kings and princes of the Balkans and the Cabinet Ministers with whom I chatted, namely, to change the present farcical so-called reforms into an administration, under effectual European control by appointing a European Governor-General, responsible to the Powers. Then this terrible situation will change into the peaceful development of a country which is endowed by nature with bounty, but reduced by men's covetousness to a perfect hell.

That Macedonia to-day is a hell I have seen with my own eyes. And moreover I have been under fire from a Greek band myself. I travelled—contrary to the advice of my friends, who feared the perils of the way—right through the heart of Macedonia from south to north, visiting the Seres and Melnik districts, which only a few days prior to my arrival had been ravaged by Greek bands. In one poor village I passed through, twenty-three women, children, and old men had been butchered in cold blood on the previous day, and I saw with my own eyes some of their mutilated bodies. Upon the women nameless atrocities had been committed.

In Caraja-Kioi, a village not far from Seres, I was told that a fortnight before, nineteen persons, mostly old men and women, had been massacred, and I was informed by eye-witnesses that the Greek band was assisted by the Turks, and that present at the massacre was a Greek metropolitan and a Greek consular employé!

I saw and spoke to two women who had been maltreated by the Greeks, and who still bore wounds. The head of one was bound by a bloodstained rag, and the arm of the other was in a sling.

What they told me was truly horrifying. Both had been outraged and left for dead, without a hand being raised in their defence. And their cases were only two out of several dozen. A child, a little girl of seven, had been decapitated by a brutal Turk, and a mother with her suckling babe had been tortured by slow burning.

Everywhere I went was the same terrible tale, the same cry for the protection of the Powers. At Vranja, in the Melnik district, I saw the gaunt ruins of seven houses which had been recently burnt, and was told how nine women, after being subjected to all sorts of atrocities, were afterwards shot, while at Bashna three men were burnt alive, in a house, and six women shot.

That journey through Macedonia still haunts me like a nightmare. On the one hand, I met the oily Turkish official in frock-coat and fez declaring that the country was quite quiet, and that all reports were exaggerated; while, on the other, I saw with my own eyes the devilish blood-lust of the Greeks, the poor people with their wounds still upon them, the mutilated bodies of innocent Christian women whose blood calls hourly for vengeance.

To Florina, up to Kastoria, and through the terrorised districts around the lakes of Presba and Ochrida I travelled, first under Turkish escort, but not being allowed to see what I wanted, I was permitted by a Bulgarian band to join them, and rode through the various districts. It was a somewhat perilous and exciting time, for I travelled quickly, wishing to get out of the country. Its terrors had got on my nerves, and the gloomy warnings of my friends ever rose within my mind. Greek bands seemed to be operating everywhere, and we never knew when we might not come into close quarters. Our way lay often through deep ravines, affording excellent cover for lurking Greeks.

So life was the reverse of pleasant.

Still I saw with my own eyes sights that appalled me, and I am certain that if the reader had seen what I have witnessed he would cry shame that such an awful state of things should be allowed to exist, and even fostered by a Christian civilised Power.

Does the Christian Kaiser, with all his outward declarations of belief in the direction of the Almighty, ever give a thought to the poor Macedonians butchered with his knowledge—butchered to further the secret aims of the "Fatherland"? Does His Imperial Majesty, when he bends his knee in prayer, remember the first tenets of the Christian faith?

Those who know, as I know, the secrets of German intrigue in Constantinople, cannot but feel contempt and disgust at the shameful sacrifice of human life in Macedonia, where Greeks and Turks outrage, torture, burn, and shoot the poor innocent populace, egged on by "pious" Germany.

Let the ambitious Emperor, who so often invokes God's blessing upon the German nation, pause for a moment and reflect whether there is no hypocrisy in his political policy, and whether he himself, personally, can expect to receive the Divine aid he so constantly petitions with mock servility.

By raising his hand he could to-morrow stop those brutal, savage Greeks from their bloody work. Yet, by doing so, he knows he would nullify his policy of Germany's advance southward, and would throw to the winds the years of secret diplomacy practised at the Sublime Porte. Will he do so?

Or will he continue to lift his eyes to Heaven, and close his ears to the death-cries of the poor slaughtered Christian women and children, who are every day being butchered for political purposes?

It was the Kaiser's diplomacy that discovered the existence of the Roumanian population in Macedonia; it was by his intrigues at Athens that diplomatic negotiations between Greece and Roumania have been broken off.

Go to Macedonia yourself with an open mind and study the question on the spot, and you will, before a week has

passed, obtain quite sufficient evidence to convince you that what I have here written is the truth—that Germany stands behind both Greek and Turk, and encourages them with moral and material support to commit those awful and nameless outrages which are a disgrace to our civilisation.

CHAPTER II

THE TRUTH EXPOSED

Summary of my confidential information—War this year—The attitude of Greece, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Turkey—Procrastination, promises, and perfect politeness—A matter more serious than Macedonia—Warning to British statesmen and the public—The real truth exposed—Germany and India.

AS summary of all my confidential inquiries throughout the Near East, I find that the present position as regards Macedonia is a very serious one.

Bulgaria, who has the largest population there, has undoubtedly decided to adopt a firm course, which must inevitably lead to war during the present year. Within a few months the Balkans will be in bloody conflict.

Greece is defiant, and her bands still ravage Macedonia. Monsieur Theotokis, the Prime Minister, has openly adopted a policy of defiance against Roumania, and of increased persecution of the Vlachs in Macedonia.

His attitude is a ridiculous one, and calculated to still further complicate the situation. He declares that the enemies of Hellenism have succeeded in persuading public opinion in Europe, and even European Governments, that the abnormal situation in Macedonia is due to the action of Greco-Macedonian bands, and has also made them forget the atrocities which Bulgarians had committed for six years against the Greeks, who had at last been compelled to rise and try to defend themselves. Whenever the Greek Government asks for compensation of the Powers, no matter what the question at issue, they are, he says, met with the argument that they were responsible

for the atrocities in Macedonia, because they aided Greek bands. The Powers, he says, were informed that the Hellenic Government could not prevent succour being given to the Macedonian Greeks in their defensive campaign, but would use its authority to moderate the activity of the bands. Unhappily, the slackening of the activity of the Greek bands was followed by a recrudescence of that of the hostile bands. The Powers were informed that the situation was becoming intolerable, and unless they could take measures to oblige others to respect their wishes, the Greek Government would be obliged to defend a race which was resolved to live, and not to bend under the ferocity of its enemies. He maintains that it is the duty of Greece to accelerate her military preparations. Without an army she cannot be considered a factor in the East, or hope for the sympathies of others.

But M. Theotokis has gone even farther. His declarations are distinctly amusing. In the course of an interview in Athens in January of the present year he actually had the audacity to attribute the present situation in Macedonia to Bulgaria. He argued as follows :—

“ For a period of six years armed bands of Bulgarians roved all over Macedonia, endeavouring to get the Greek Christian inhabitants to declare allegiance to the head of the Bulgarian Church, and backed up their efforts in this direction by committing murders and atrocities of every description. Notwithstanding repeated appeals of the Greek Government to the Powers to put a stop to these outrages, they were continued, and instead of being checked, went on increasing in number and violence. News of these atrocities reaching Greece daily, public opinion here was getting more and more excited, and finally, the Greek public having given up all hope of a stop being put to them, committees were formed with the object of taking action to protect their compatriots.

“ The Greek Government was powerless to prevent these protective bands from crossing into Macedonia, as, unfortunately, we have not sufficient forces to thoroughly

guard the frontier. The inability is not surprising, when you consider that Turkey with twenty times the forces at her disposal is not able to prevent them from getting across. That these bands should occasionally have seized an opportunity to avenge Bulgarian crimes, which had continued so long unrestrained, is only natural, as it is not possible to keep armed bands under proper control in such circumstances.

"Finding at last that they had to face Greek bands, which they were not able to stand up against, the Bulgarians commenced to fill the world with complaints against the Greeks, and sent out descriptions of imaginary atrocities committed by Greek bands, when their only real cause of complaint was that they themselves could no longer commit crimes on the Greek Christians with impunity in the way they, for six years, had been accustomed.

"The result of the great outcry raised by the Bulgarians was that strong pressure was brought to bear by the Powers on the Greek Government to prevent Greek bands from crossing into Macedonia, and the Greek Government increased the efforts they had always been making in this direction. Probably as a result of the efforts of this Government, fewer Greek bands have been operating in Macedonia during the past two months, and the consequence is that thirty-nine Greeks have been murdered in Macedonia during this period by Bulgarians, while only seven of the latter have been killed by Greeks.

"The Greek Government have no interest whatever in hindering the efforts of the Powers to restore order in Macedonia. Quite the contrary; no one desires to see order restored there more than we do. But you must remember that the majority of the inhabitants of Macedonia are Greeks, and it is not in the power of the Greek Government to control public opinion in Greece in face of the atrocities committed by Bulgarians on our countrymen in Macedonia. If the Bulgarian propaganda in that country is put a stop to, the Greek Christians will have nothing to fear, and in such circumstances no Greek bands

will be found there, as their sole object in crossing the frontier was to protect their co-religionists, who for six years had been terrorised by the Bulgarians. Once Bulgarian crimes in Macedonia cease, there will be nothing more heard of 'regrettable incidents' in that country."

Thus it will be seen that the Prime Minister makes no mention of Germany or of German intrigue. He endeavours to put the blame upon Bulgaria, when all Europe knows well that it is Greece who is responsible for the present bloodshed, and even the Turkish Grand Vizier himself has condemned the action of the Greeks, and declared that in more than one instance the Greek bands have actually operated with the full knowledge and assistance of Greek consuls.

With such biassed views held by the Greek Premier, it can easily be seen that a solution of the problem of Macedonia cannot be arrived at without recourse to force of arms, and the more so, because of Bulgaria's determination to make her power felt in the country where her subjects are being daily murdered.

The Turkish policy is the traditional one of procrastination, promises, and perfect politeness. The promised reforms are not carried out, the foreign officers employed in reforming the gendarmerie are disgusted with their treatment, and are fast leaving the Turkish service, while the Mohammedan rule is daily growing more and more oppressive, and the unfortunate Macedonians are being slaughtered under the very eyes and with the full cognisance of the Turkish officials, both civil and military.

In Constantinople it is believed that a serious *entente* regarding Macedonia exists between Italy and Austria, and this belief is based upon Signor Tittoni's recent declaration. From information I gathered from very reliable sources, however, I am in a position to state that the Turkish fears are utterly groundless. An *entente* exists, but only in regard to Servia, Bulgaria, and Northern Albania. Austria desired that Montenegro should be included, but Italy—for very obvious reasons—made the complete independence of that

valiant little country one of the stipulations. Hitherto Italy and Austria have carried on separate propagandas, but it is quite certain that the two are now amalgamated, and will in future work towards one common end.

Turkey has nothing to fear from either Austria or Italy, but from Bulgaria and Germany—from the former, who will assert her rights; and from the latter, who will eventually play the traitor and crush her.

My conversations at the Sublime Porte, in those shabbily furnished rooms, with seedy officials offering me cups of coffee, were often very amusing. I had really credited the Turk with more shrewdness, for the Oriental is usually supposed to be the finest diplomat in all the world. Yet from the Grand Vizier downwards to the men-in-the-street, they are all held fascinated under the benign smile of Germany.

Assurances were given me during those audiences with the rulers of Turkey that all was being done that could possibly be done in Macedonia; that reports of massacres were exaggerated; that the Turks were actually protecting the Bulgarians, and that the Macedonian question was not at all a serious one.

I will give one instance. It was admitted to me during one of my audiences at the Sublime Porte, that "a few incidents" had occurred, but I was assured that they were not serious, and that all was now quiet in Macedonia.

In reply, I pointed out that on November 7 last (Old Style) a Greek band descended upon the village of Karadjovo, and having disembowelled seven men, killed twenty-five Bulgarians. They then massacred most of the women and children in the village, and calmly went off.

I was then officially informed that it had been discovered that a certain Greek consul had been implicated in this raid, and that arms had been supplied through him. The Turks had therefore made a strong protest to Athens, and sent four battalions in pursuit of the assassins.

At Salonica, ten days later, I saw one of the peasants present at this massacre in question, and the description he gave of it was horrifying. His version of the affair was very

different from the official Turkish version, for he declared that the Turks themselves aided the assassins and allowed them to get clear away. Twenty-five women were, he said, outraged and afterwards killed. One woman had her hands cut off, and another's feet were burnt over a fire. Other facts he told me were too terrible to repeat here.

Though the Porte may have made formal protest to Athens, there is but little doubt that the Turks were implicated in the massacre—as they are in most of those “regrettable incidents,” as they are called, which daily occur in the Land of Black Terror.

Permission was readily granted to me to travel through the country, but it certainly would not have been had it been known that beyond the lake of Ochrida I intended to disregard my Turkish escort and throw in my lot with the Bulgarians, declared by the authorities to be “insurgents,” in order to see for myself.

I arrived at the village of Ghilposte, in the Seres district, two days after a Greek band had descended upon the little place, and I saw with my own eyes traces of their terrible atrocities. They had blown up ten houses by dynamite, and capturing four men, two women, and a baby one year old, had deliberately burned them all alive, as well as outraging three other women.

The leader of the Bulgarian organisation for the protection of the defenceless people furnished me with a complete list of all the atrocities committed by the Greek bands during the past year, but it is so long and the details are so revolting that I do not feel justified in including it in these pages.

The Turk is indeed a strange product. He hopes always to persuade the foreigner into adopting his own views. More than once I was told in Constantinople that there had been *no massacres* in Macedonia this year, and that the country, especially in the *vilayet* of Monastir, was quite quiet !

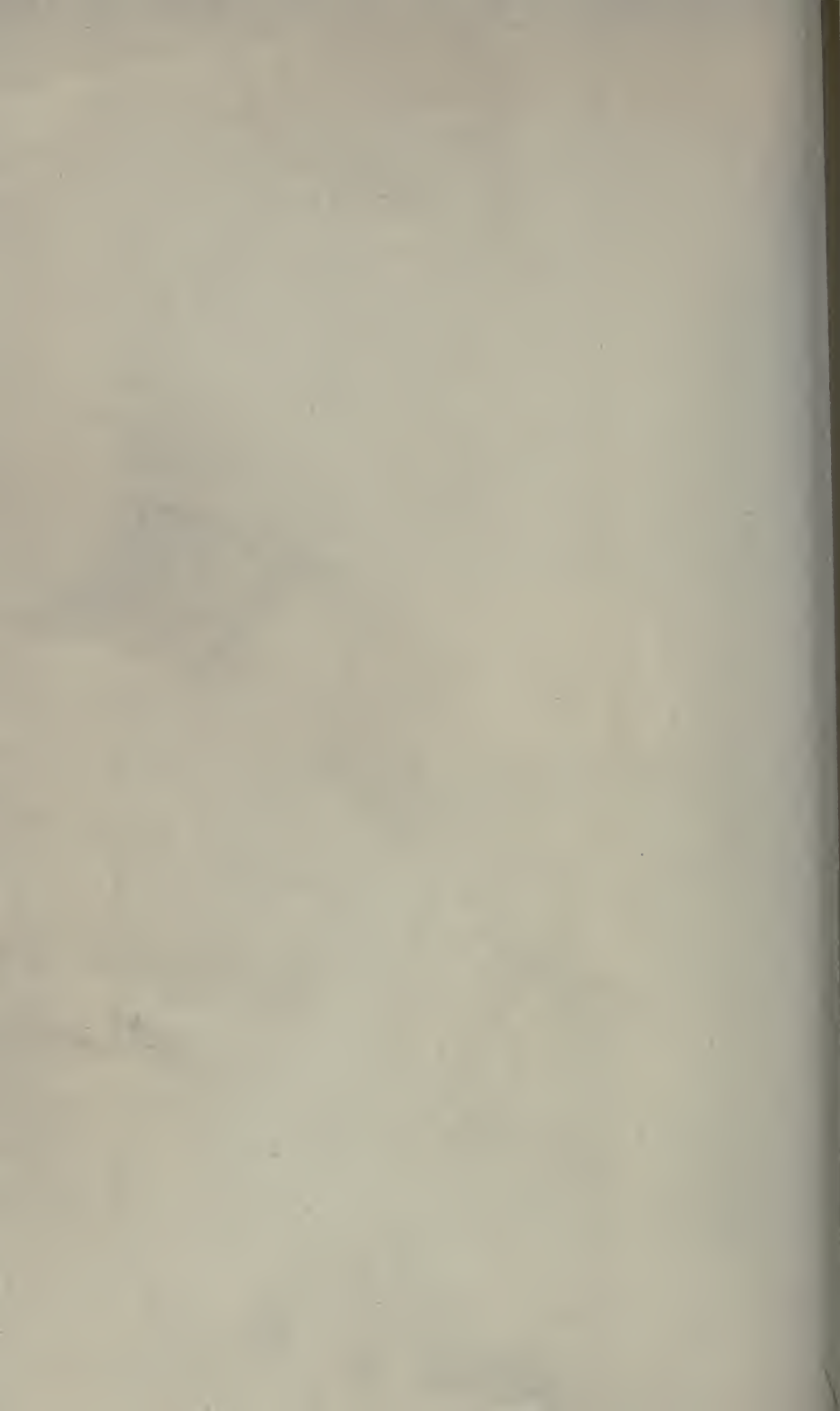
I went there, and discovered the exact opposite to be the case. In Constantinople also I was strongly persuaded, by interested persons, not to go to Macedonia ; but I went, and I saw things that it was not intended that I should see.



GENERAL TZONTCHEFF in Macedonia.



The Turkish Burial-ground at Scutari, Asia Minor.



I had travelled all through the Balkans in order to learn the real truth, and I did not intend to miss out Macedonia. Turkey, of course, makes capital out of the fact that the Vlachs, or Roumanian population, are between the devil and the deep sea. These unfortunate Macedo-Roumanians live under the cross fire of Greek and Bulgar, each of whom claims the right to save their souls. The Turks point—and perhaps justly—to this fact as one of the chief causes of the present disturbed state of Macedonia. The Turk pretends to be asleep, and to disregard the intrigues of the other Powers, but the fact is that he is very wide awake, and knows quite well that hostilities must break out at a very early date. Only he is misled by Germany, alarmed by a bogey put forward by Austria and Italy, and a little afraid, at times, of British protests.

There remains Roumania. Her attitude is a very serious consideration in discussing the immediate future of the Balkans.

In Bucharest I found that, although a Federation of the Balkan States would be welcomed, yet one fact is still remembered. In 1888, when the Bulgarians offered the crown of Bulgaria to King Charles of Roumania, as the first step towards a Federation, both Russia and Austria opposed it so strongly that the King was unable to accept. Roumania's position towards Macedonia is now one of armed inactivity. Though the Macedo-Roumanians are slaughtered by the Greek bands, Roumania is compelled to stay her hand and offer no defence, because alone and unaided, her protest would be worse than useless.

That she will, ere long, ally herself with Bulgaria against the Turks, my confidential information goes to show. She desires a better frontier from the Danube to the Black Sea, and in order to obtain that concession from Bulgaria she will assist her to drive the Turk from Macedonia.

There is, however, a far more serious consideration, and one which has been overlooked by British statesmen and the British public.

During my journey of inquiry I made careful investigation into certain suspicious facts and certain clever intrigues. The

inquiry was an exceedingly difficult one, for the truth is well guarded, for very obvious reasons.

The result, however, reveals a state of affairs of which we in England have been unfortunately ignorant, and which, here exposed, should claim immediate attention by every right-minded and patriotic man.

The truth briefly is this. The recent war between Russia and Japan, the question of Morocco, the perturbation in Europe by the Russian defeats and revolution, on the one hand, and the weakness of the Macedonians made greater by the rivalries between the Balkan nations, on the other, have of late diverted the attention of Europe from the Near East.

But this is only a lull before the storm—a storm that must break in the near future, and which surely will have a world-wide significance. The countries denominated by the general name of the Near East are, by their geographical position and fertility, of immense importance. They have been the cradle of the ancient civilisation and of rich and powerful empires. The shores of the *Ægean* Sea and of the Eastern Mediterranean were once the most populated, and their commerce and wealth were unrivalled. The vast fertile provinces of Asia Minor have been the granaries of the Roman and Byzantine empires ; while the valleys of Euphrates and Tigris breathed abundance and luxury. History is eloquent testimony of their past splendour. The reason of their gloomy present does not lie either in the exhaustion of the soil or in the loss of their geographical importance, but only in the administration which the Turk has established for centuries over them. A change in the administration will bring resurrection. Nay, the means and resources of the present civilisation must call forth in them an immense economical development.

Germany, with her usual foresight, has ever been on the alert.

Towards this Near East with gloomy present, but with a glorious future, the German policy has thrown covetous eyes. When Bismarck made his famous declaration—that the *Eastern Question* was not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier—the German policy was already maturing a vast plan of penetration

in the Near East. The real truth is that the basis of this policy of penetration was the maintenance of the Turkish rule, as a means for its realisation.

The true extent of German intrigue is not realised in England, therefore I may as well explain that the policy was—

1. Support, and even encouragement, of the despotical régime in Turkey, in order to obtain the absolute confidence of Sultan Hamid.

2. Grasp of the reorganisation of the Turkish Army, and use it as her instrument.

3. Gain a dominant position in the Turkish finances.

4. Lay hold on the communications of the empire, and thus become the master of her economical development.

A full expansion was given to this policy after the accession to the throne of William II., who in his first visit to the Sultan in 1889 laid the foundation of mutual friendship and admiration between the two rulers.

The results are astonishing. In less than a quarter of a century the German net has been cast over the whole body of the Turkish Empire. German diplomacy is paramount to-day in Constantinople. The Turkish Army has been reorganised upon the Prussian system, and is under German control. The finances of the Turkish Empire are gradually becoming a dependency to the German banks by loans and concessions, which are constantly increasing. By the great railway from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf, opening up by its branches the most fertile provinces of Asiatic Turkey, Germany becomes master of the economical development of this part of the Sultan's empire.

Thus the economical and political influence of the Germans has been so much extended and has gained such a domination, that the Turkish Empire is, in a sense, already a German protectorate. No act of importance is possible in Turkey without the knowledge and influence of Germany. Every act of Abdul Hamid is under the control and direction of German diplomacy. *Allemania bisum dostour* ("Germany is our friend") is a saying which has penetrated even into the mass of the Turkish nation, and the Kaiser has a full right

to boast himself as the protector and champion of the Mussulmans.

In the Balkan Peninsula, on the European side, the pioneer of the German policy is the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By tradition, by its dynasty, and by its alliance, Austria plays the rôle of vanguard to the German advance towards the Near East. The occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has made Austria a Balkan power, and her plans are ready for the march of an Austrian army southward to the Gulf of Salonica, which will bring her in touch with the Ægean Sea and make her the ruler over the whole Peninsula. In the meantime, she is strengthening her political and economical influence in Servia and Albania by the same methods as used by the Germans.

In the midst of this land activity in the Near East, the importance of the Ægean Sea, which is the necessary link, was not lost to view. A footing was sought, and the island of Thassos was chosen as the foundation-stone of the future naval power in the Eastern basin of the Mediterranean. This island was picked upon because, in the first place, it would not attract attention, and, in the second place, because it would serve admirably the German plans. Thassos has a good geographical position in the Ægean Sea. It is not far from the Dardanelles, the door to Constantinople, and is very near the Macedonian shore, being in the very entrance of the port of Kavala.

With a naval base on this island, Germany would gain a still greater influence in Turkey, and especially on the European and Asiatic shores of the Ægean Sea. According to trustworthy information which I have obtained in confidence, a vast German activity is contemplated upon these shores in the very near future.

Thus the Germans, with the aid of the Turkish régime and of the Austrian Empire, are cleverly paving their way towards the Near East, and preparing the foundation of a "Fatherland" stretching from the Baltic to the Indian Ocean.

As Germany has already championed the cause of Turkey in Europe, what is to prevent her from carrying her influence,

at an early date, over Egypt and the whole peninsula of India, where she will find sixty millions of Mussulmans, who fully recognise that England has abandoned her policy of bolstering up " the sick man " for many years past ? These latter would welcome Germany as the champion of Mohammedanism, not only in Europe, but in all the Mussulman states of the Eastern world.

And then ?

Surely this is a most important point, which should very seriously engage the immediate and earnest attention of all British statesmen who have the true interests of our Empire at heart !

THE END.

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