

CHAPTER IV.

MONTENEGRO.

WE had been fortunate enough to make acquaintance with M. Leopold Moreau, the acting * French Consul at Skodra, † while he was making a hasty visit to Ragusa; and we were glad to avail ourselves of the opportunity for gaining practical advice with respect to our journey into Montenegro. M. Moreau not only gave us every sort of information, but most kindly undertook the whole management of our journey, in connection with another friend whose acquaintance we had also happily made in the same manner. This was Mahmoud

* After the sudden death of M. Wiet, the late Consul.

† Scutari, the Italian name of Skodra, is the one used on our maps, and received by the Foreign Office, but since the Crimean war and the establishment of the hospital at Scutari, the name of that suburb of Constantinople has become so well known in England, that it would avoid the risk of confusion to call the Albanian capital by the original name it bears both in that language and in Turkish—a name, too, as old as Livy.

Pasha, the military Pasha of Skodra, just then appointed to the Pashalik of Mostar, from which place he was temporarily returning to Skodra. Nothing could exceed the thoughtful kindness of both these gentlemen from first to last.

Taking but a small part of our luggage with us, we went on board the 'Bosforo' at midday on June 30, having added to our party a manservant whom I had hired in Ragusa, thinking we should require an interpreter. He was a Bohemian, and he spoke that language, with German, Illyrian, and some Italian, and he was not particularly obliging. I believe, however, I may safely add that he was totally useless to us in every way, both in Montenegro and in Dalmatia.

The Pasha's flag was hoisted the moment we went on board—and a very dirty 'bandeyra' it was: but the steamer had been coaling, and the decks were still dirtier. Seeing the black streaks which soon appeared on my white dress, the Pasha immediately gave orders for washing the deck. The results were very agreeable, but the execution was far from pleasant; and I felt most undignified, perched up on a chair, with all my skirts gathered round me.

We arrived at Cattaro in less than six hours, and

employed the last two hours of daylight in walking along the excellent road on the west side of the canal, whence the Rock of Cattaro appears, with singular picturesqueness and beauty, in its true proportion to the mountain wall behind it; this wall is so perpendicular that from inside the town the rock appears to reach to the very summit. We rejoined our companions at the café after dark; M. Moreau having been employed in hiring horses, &c., for us, and in sending messengers to precede us into Montenegro. The Pasha had been taking a Turkish bath—Cattaro being sufficiently south to afford that luxury. Ragusa does not choose to admit one. We slept on board the steamer, which ought to have departed at 4 A.M., but the all-powerful Pasha detained it for an hour to suit our convenience, to the intense disgust of the captain.

We found our horses, with three Montenegrines, awaiting us outside the city gate, where the mountainers hold their market. The scene was very picturesque. The gate is a double one, with a ditch between, beyond which are a few trees and open buildings for the shelter of the cattle and goods. Austrian soldiers are seen standing about the towers and walls that bristle upon every height;

while, over all, the mountain, split into a deep chasm, rears a double set of peaks and crags and rock, which seem to hang almost tremblingly above one's head, as if just about to fall down the stony precipice below. Right up this mountain face winds the famous Scala, of which only the upper zigzags can be seen from the water. Our horses had been hastily engaged, and were bad enough. A European side-saddle had been borrowed for me, but, on looking up at the crags, I sent it away, knowing by experience that, in any case of steep ascent, the pack saddle is infinitely less fatiguing and far more comfortable. We were soon settled and started, the baggage being all tied on one horse.

The Scala Proper consists of seventy-three zigzags, perfectly well made, smooth, tolerably wide, and guarded at all the angles by a parapet. It is as safe as Rotten Row; but it is certainly one of the most remarkable roads ever made, and an immense credit to Austria. Other zigzagged roads may have been made on almost equally severe mountain sides, but probably the Scala of Cattaro exceeds them all, not merely in the steepness or perpendicular nature of the mountains, but chiefly in the narrowness of the plane on which it rises, which gives it a claim

far beyond any other to the name of *ladder*.* For example, the zigzags on the Italian side of the St. Gothard Pass, descending for a considerable space with one zigzag almost directly above the other, will in some measure explain this, when contrasted with those on the same side of the Splügen Pass, which wind over a large space of rock, and can be seen from the highest of all, more like the windings of ribbon than the rungs of a ladder. Such is the appearance of the Ladder of Cattaro. Passing as it does behind the fortress, the traveller is enabled to see the almost entire separation of the Cattaro rock from the mountain cliff, for he rides in between them. And, by the time he is nearly at the top of the Scala, he is, actually and literally, looking down, not only into the fortress, but into the very streets of Cattaro at his feet, in which the passengers appear like the tiniest black dots or specks. In fact, it has quite the feeling of ascending the loftiest tower in the world, and looking out from the top into the perpendicular depths below.

* The road from Karlstadt to Zara descends the lofty range of the Vellebich, upon the town of Obrovazzo, by a zigzag or *scala* of magnificent engineering. I heard that it was superior to any of the roads in the Swiss mountains; but as I did not see it I cannot speak from my own experience.

There were several people on the road, but most of them were women, who are invariably engaged in carrying all burdens great and small into and out of Montenegro. On the precipitous and broken rock between the zigzags, little girls were scrambling about while watching their goats feeding on the plentiful bushes. Near the top we passed a picturesque group. A sick and wounded Montenegrine chief was being carried down to consult the physicians of Cattaro. The sick man, in his splendid costume, was lying on the rock to rest, while beside him stood two women and some of his servants, holding the gaily caparisoned horses. The scene was quite Eastern, but, however picturesque, his suffering face made it pitiful.

We had ridden up the Scala proper in an hour and a half. The road now went winding among the crags in the manner of a pass, and was rough enough, though in no way really bad: we were nearly an hour before we had reached the summit. From all this upper part the views are magnificent in the variety they give, although there is too much of barren, absolutely naked rock in the scene to be as lovely as it is grand. Every winding of the Bocche lies at one's feet, and the whole outline of the outer coast, with the wide

sweep of the horizon of the sea beyond, is taken in at once; the mountain behind Budua seems close at hand, and several fortresses are seen crowning the heights. The pass itself is craggy and fine: in the middle of it there is a spring where we stopped to drink the first waters of Montenegro.

Arrived at the summit, we entered a plain, the stony ground of which was most carefully cultivated: here we found a small village called Niégush.* We stopped at a roadside khan, built, as all the cottages in Tsernagora are, of stone, and dismounted to rest, while the hostess refreshed us with excellent *café au lait*, and pressed new milk and rum, &c., upon us. We paid her a small sum on leaving, when she complained bitterly of our having paid too much, and begged us to take some of it back: and really, she looked so honest and so amiable, I began to think the Montenegrines were the most charming people in the world. A priest had joined us on the road, and stopped when we

* The district or country of Niégush is the chief head district of the country. Its inhabitants are descended from one great family who emigrated *en masse* from the Herzegovina, and soon became the most powerful tribe in the Black Mountains. The Vladika, or Prince-Patriarch, was chosen from them, and the present prince still bears the name, as Prince Nicholas Petrovich of Niégush.

did for breakfast, of which he partook unsparingly, and then departed, leaving us to pay for him as one of our party. I do not think he meant any dishonesty; it was rather the way of the world in Montenegro, in the half Eastern idea that the more people you feed the more you exalt your own consequence and augment your faithful followers. But our guides were immensely indignant, and scolded us roundly for having paid the money. We told them we were glad to pay for the honour of the Church—an idea that seemed to tickle their fancy much, for they laughed long and loud again and again. The priests here wear no particular dress, and the lower grades cultivate their land with their own hands, thus making themselves labourers in two fields at once.

On leaving Niégush, we had about an hour's ride up stony mountains and along stony valleys. They bore some wood, but little water in them, and they were cultivated in a manner that speaks most highly for the ingenious and untiring industry of the Montenegrines. On a ledge of rock—in a little depression between two rocks—in a niche—in a mere crevice—in short everywhere within possibilities, a little field has been made: the stones picked off, the rocks torn out, and

perhaps earth added artificially, and behold, a patch of potatoes* or of maize; nothing else seems grown here, but I declare that I saw many flourishing little crops not a yard square. And all this is done by the women, the men never assist in the simply agricultural work.

All along this road, and in all that I saw of Montenegro, the mountains are of that bluish grey which darkens so curiously in the afternoons and in winter into rich purples and absolute blacks, while in the bright daylight it is only cold grey and at midday almost whitish. But seeing this rock covered with the dark-leaved dwarf oak and other brushwood which grows out of every crevice in black masses, the traveller recognises at once the meaning of the name so dear to its inhabitants—the Tserna-Gora, or Black Mountain. †

* Potatoes are now cultivated all over Montenegro, but they are the introduction of the last few years; in all Albania there is not a single potato grown, it is said, except at Bielopoglie, a small place on the borders of Bosnia. They are but very little cultivated in any part of Dalmatia; potatoes, like many other things eaten in Dalmatia, are brought from Italy.

† Tserna-Gora, written as one or as two words, is the name of the country; Tsernogoretz or -ratz, plural Tsernogortsi, of the inhabitants. This last word is written Tsernogorki in a very uncritical and injudicious article which appeared on the subject of Montenegro in the year 1858—the last time in the world to have

From the heights, which are well wooded, at about half way between Niégush and Tsetinje, there are grand views of the Lake of Skodra and the surrounding mountains. In another hour we had descended to the level of Tsetinje, and found ourselves in a perfectly flat oval plain of very poor soil, about twelve miles long. As we passed through a village on the mountain slope, one of our guides mistook a cat crouching on a wall for a hare: picking up a stone, and without stopping one second in his walk, he aimed at her a distance of at least 100 yards, and killed her dead upon the spot!

We had advanced but a few yards in the plain when we saw a splendidly-attired horseman coming to meet us, mounted upon a pretty little black horse, whose bridle and other harness was made entirely of silver chain worked in an elaborate

chosen for indiscriminate panegyric—in the *Edinburgh Review*. As far as this name means anything at all, it means 'Black and Bitter'—a good name for the article itself. The writer probably copied it from a *rifacimento* of M. Cyprien Robert's writings, appended to the translation of Ranke's *Servia*, in one of Bohn's Series, where the same mistake is made, and where historical, or rather legendary, reasons are given for the Montenegrines being called Black-Mountaineers. The Prince himself pointed out to me the blackness of the rocks I have described above as the reason.



pattern. This was Gospody Vlahovitch, the Prince's first aide-de-camp. He came to meet us in haste, as the messengers had only just arrived at Tsetinje to announce our coming. I was conducted by him to the door of the palace, where I found the Prince waiting to receive me. He led me to a small suite of rooms prepared for me, where I was glad enough to rest after my ride, for the sun had been hot, although our journey had lasted less than five hours.

The little palace of Tsetinje is built in the shape of a reversed J: it was erected thirty years ago by the last Vladika, Peter II. the giant, whose architectural ideas had not gone beyond the usual form of a monastery. It consists of two stories in the shape of one long narrow passage, with fourteen rooms opening from it on one side only, and three or four more at right-angles; a small staircase is in the centre, and the ground-floor is occupied by the servants. A narrow terrace forming the foot of the J leads to a little circular kiosk, where the Prince reads and studies in private. The opposite angle at the head of the J is a billiard room. The house is substantially built, slated and white-washed, and rather handsomely furnished, but there is nothing in the least palatial about it. At

the back the windows look into a garden; in front, across a pleasant meadow to the further extremity of the plain. Close by is the old monastery, till now the palace, on the one hand, and the principal street of the primitive city is seen on the other.

And now let me say a few words on the inhabitants of this palace; first glancing back for a moment upon the great Vladika (or Archbishop Prince), Peter I., because none of the Montenegrines can speak of their rulers for five minutes without alluding to this blessed object of their veneration. He had governed his people with so much wisdom and skill, and displayed such pious virtue, that when, in 1830, death closed his long reign of fifty-three years, the Black Mountaineers could only assuage their grief by declaring him a saint. Some years after his death his body was removed from Tsetinje to the summit of the highest mountain in Montenegro, under the poetical idea that his people, who can see this peak from every part of the country, would thus evermore remain under the protecting guardianship of their beloved chief. That any drop of his blood is still flowing in the veins of his descendants will be quite sufficient to ensure the affections of the Mountaineers.

He was succeeded by his nephew, Peter II., the famous giant in size and strength, whose wonderful agility and skill as a marksman, whose remarkable prowess in war, and a certain astute shrewdness in politics, combined to make him a hero in the eyes of his people, and produced a marked effect in the improvement of his country. In fact, we may fairly say that it is owing entirely to the influence of these two Vladikas that the Montenegrines have been raised from the level of mere savage defiant barbarism to the first stage of progressive civilisation. This civilisation is as yet in its infancy; but, from all I saw and heard, I venture to assert that the Montenegrines have all, from the prince down to the poorest, awakened to a genuine desire for improvement.

Peter II. was succeeded in 1850 by his nephew Danilo I., who, with the support of Austria, Russia, and France, succeeded in obtaining the separation of the secular and spiritual government of the country; for, until this time, the ruler had been obliged to become also the Archbishop or Vladika. Having thus freed himself from the old law, Danilo I. married a Triestine lady, and hoped to have founded a lineal line of princes, but his reign was cut short in less than eight years. A French

gentleman who was with him at the moment told me the horrid story.

The prince and princess were spending a few weeks in August 1858 at Perzagno for sea-bathing, but they came every evening to walk on the esplanade at Cattaro. One day they were returning to Perzagno when the dusk had given way to the coming darkness of night; the prince, with one foot in the boat, was giving his hand to the princess, when a Montenegrine came close up behind him and shot him in the back with a pistol loaded with slugs. He fell over the princess, covering her with his blood, and died in her arms three or four hours after. The esplanade was covered with ladies and children at the evening promenade, but the Montenegrines, maddened with grief and fury, went rushing about, firing anywhere and everywhere; in the confusion the assassin escaped, but he was afterwards taken and hanged. The newly widowed Princess Darinka behaved like a heroine; without giving way for a moment, she had the prince's body carried in the course of the night to Tsetinje, she herself accompanying it. The crisis was an urgent one, but by her presence of mind and firmness she prevented all dispute or confusion. She took everything for the moment into her own

hands, and, passing over her own little daughter of four years old, on the very next day proclaimed the late Prince's nephew ruler of the land, the present Nicholas I. It is said that the assassin revenged himself for the seduction of his wife—the deepest-dyed crime possible in the eyes of a Montenegrine; but, except in this one instance, the late Prince was very much loved and feared by his people.

The Prince Nicholas was then only eighteen years old; he had been betrothed from infancy to the daughter of one of the principal landowners in Montenegro, and he was married to her two years later, when she had attained the age of fourteen. He is an extraordinarily handsome man, looking much older than his real age, very tall and well-made. His forehead is wide and open, his hair and eyes nearly black, and the naturally soft, somewhat sad expression of his Southern face is animated by a very sweet and frequent smile. All the Montenegrines that I have seen, with but one or two exceptions, are tall, with well-built limbs, very dark hair and eyes, ruddy, not olive, complexion, and most of them have beautiful teeth. Their beards are all closely shaven, but they wear large moustaches.

The Montenegro costume is the handsomest and most graceful I have seen in any country. The Prince wore dark-blue cloth pantaloons, cut in the Syrian style, very full and wide, gathered in at the knees with scarlet garters; a Damascus silk scarf round the loins, and at his waist a huge crimson leathern band, in which the arms are placed; the Prince, however, is the only man who carries none at home. The scarlet waistcoat, embroidered and buttoned with gold, is half concealed by a closely fitting tunic of white cloth, also richly embroidered in gold; the full court dress is the same, only that the tunic is then worn of green. Sometimes fur edgings are added, and all the gentlemen about the court had rows of large silver buttons sewn so thickly on the fronts of the tunic as quite to conceal the cloth, and to give the appearance of armour; while some had curious shoulder pieces of solid silver covered with bosses, completely covering the neck and shoulders. The cap is of fur, with a *panache* of white cloth, embroidered and tasselled, hanging down at one side; this is in war, or in travelling, or in winter; in summer or at home the Montenegrine wears a peculiar pork-pie cap with a black silk border and a scarlet centre. All the Montenegrines wear embroidered leggings; the

Prince alone wears high leather boots. He wore gloves, as did every one at court, constantly.

The dress of the peasants is made more or less in the same form, of commoner materials; all of them add, for cold and rainy weather, a thick cloak called the *strookah*, which is made of undyed wool, coarsely spun in long pile, so as closely to resemble an untanned sheepskin.

I had but just changed my riding-dress when the Prince was announced, and I went with him to the reception-room, where we found the Princess Milèna (Milèna means 'dear'), the famous Mirko and his wife, father and mother of the Prince, and the little Court. The Princess is a very sweet-looking, gentle young creature, slenderly made and of dark complexion; she is much out of health, and has a delicate and almost sad face. She was dressed in a white Turkish gauze chemise, with wide, open sleeves, embroidered in colours, in the Eastern fashion. The moment I saw these sleeves, I understood the constantly-repeated image used in Servian poetry in describing a female beauty—the flashing of her long white arms; for at nearly every movement the sleeve falls back, and displays the arm nearly to the shoulder. Her French silk skirt (without crinoline) was half-covered by a narrow tunic of white cloth

down to the knees. This outer dress entirely conceals the figure, and is ungraceful, but it is worn by every Montenegrine woman. She wore also a splendid antique belt of solid silver, eight or nine inches wide, which forms a pocket, and she had bracelets and other ornaments—wedding presents from the Empress of Austria on her marriage. The ugly part of the costume is a common dark silk handkerchief, pinned on with coarse dressing pins, and hanging down so as entirely to conceal the head and neck. Mirko's wife wore exactly the same costume, less richly ornamented.

The Princess was led into dinner by Mirko, of whom I must say a few words. The Princess Darinka, by proclaiming Nicholas the Prince, took a bold step in passing over the brother of the late Danilo; but, notwithstanding the youth of the new Prince, she acted for the good of the little country; for Mirko was notoriously at the head of the war party, and a perfect firebrand in the Senate. He himself was so well aware that his succession to the chair of state would be displeasing to the neighbouring Powers, that he generously acquiesced in the omission, and was the first to do homage to his son, who at once made him *Veliki Voyvod*, *Generalissimo* and Grand President of the Senate. It is



Мурко Петрович

said that the Prince would be glad if his father would retire even from this, as he is much afraid of his warlike inclinations; but he still leaves much of the minor cases of the administration of justice to him—a work to which he brings all the stern promptness of the warrior. In person he is a remarkable-looking man: very small for a Montenegrine, thin and spare in figure, every line in the closely-shaven face expressing decision, and the small restless eye lighting up in conversation with such a fierce eagle's glance, that one can fancy how wild and fiery it must be in war. His voice is peculiarly high-pitched and thin, unlike that of his countrymen in general, but when excited in the Senate he managed to give it a hoarse roar that astounded one's ears. His wife appears to be quite a mother among this primitive people, and we often saw her going out visiting among them, a servant following with a basket of provisions or comforts on his arm. I spoke of her once to the Prince as 'Madame la Princesse Mère.' He looked much astonished, and answered, 'My wife is Princess, my mother is only "Gospodja Anastasia;" and I learned afterwards that as her son in his infancy lisped her name into Nâni, the whole of the people, to her great pleasure, call her Nâni, as he did. I

do not know what can be much more simple or primitive than this.

The dinner was well served, and cooked in the French style, with all due accompaniments of foreign wines; but the best on the table was a red wine, grown and made in the Black Mountain, of the excellence of which the Prince is naturally very proud. It would doubtless meet with a ready market if the Prince had the means of exporting it, but the Austrian dues, before it reached the sea, would make its price too costly to be remunerative. The servants who waited at dinner were, with the exception of the French butler, the stalwart guards of the Prince. They wore their arms, as usual, in the full costume. Once or twice, when guests dined at the Prince's table, they were brothers or other very near relations of the men who served. It was patriarchal enough, and a little queer to our ears to hear, 'Serve me, oh my father, with salt,' or 'Bring me the wine, oh my brother!'

After dinner the little Court was introduced to me. Only three were present—Vlakhovich, the first aide-de-camp, and Zèga, the second. The latter is a very handsome native of the Banat, with highly polished manners, speaking German, as well as Italian. They both wore the same beautiful dress

as the Prince, but, like Mirko, the quantity of arms they had contrived to fasten upon their persons was quite remarkable. A dozen pistols and daggers were stuck in their wide leathern belts, and swords and powder-boxes, and what-not, seemed to my woman's eyes to be tied on or looped up all over them. The third was the Prince's doctor, a Corsican, named Pancrazzi, who is said to have some influence over the Prince. The reception-room was ornamented with life-size portraits of the Emperor and Empress of Russia, presented by them to Prince Danilo, and those of the Emperor and Empress of the French, given to Prince Nicholas during his stay in Paris. There were also portraits of the late Prince and his wife.

Opposite the gate of the palace there is a very fine plane tree, from which the whole of the principal street of the little town can be seen. At one side of this the Prince is building a pretty little house for his beloved aunt, the Princess Darinka. While I rested under this tree late in the afternoon, I saw the Senate, sitting in full conclave in the open air at the further end of the street; and no sooner had I appeared than the whole assembly, of about thirty men, rose up and came to greet me and bid me welcome to the Black Mountain. They

stood round me in a half-circle of splendid dresses and fierce faces, whilst, making Mirko their spokesman, they eagerly dictated speeches to me, expressing their pleasure at seeing an English lady among them, and their hopes of my health and happiness in Montenegro and out of it. All this Gospody Zèga, the aide-de-camp, translated into Italian for our benefit, for Mirko will not trust himself to speak Italian to a stranger, though he understands it pretty well. And after I had assured them of my interest in Montenegro and her people, they proceeded in the most amusing way to implore me to beg England would request Austria, Russia, and Turkey to let them grow rich and happy; and then they asked me pathetically if I did not think they ought to have a port on the sea-coast, and so be enabled to let all the world know what good wine and wood and skins the Black Mountaineers could sell.

The Prince now appeared, and was sitting chatting beside me, when a poor Mussulman (a Bosnian, I believe) came rushing up, and seizing his hand began covering it with kisses. It seemed that this Mussulman had been taken prisoner in last year's war, and had on that day been kindly set free by the Prince, who at the same time gave

him some money to feed him on the way home. The Prince talked familiarly with him, and joked him about the hardships of his imprisonment; but the man would have none of his jokes—he was overflowing with gratitude, not only for the boon of liberty, but for the kindness with which he had been treated in prison, and for the real benevolence of assisting him on the road home.

We had another and a sadder evidence of the late war when, in the evening after supper, we were all sitting in the meadow. An elderly man, one of the Prince's most trusted friends and warriors, came slowly and painfully towards us, his limbs and head bound up, leaning on crutches. The Princess went hastily to meet him, for it was the first time he had come out since many months of suffering; and he kissed her little hand gratefully, for she is loved by all for her beauty and gentleness. The name of this old soldier was Petro Stephano: and the Prince told me he had attacked a position held by 3,000 Turks with 1,000 Montenegrines; and, having taken the place, he continued to hold it in spite of his severe wounds, and kept it till relieved. And the tears stood in the eyes of the Prince as he said to me he had never known so bitter a moment as when he saw this old

man and some others that he loved carried to the rear in pain and suffering. He has a kind and affectionate heart, and so lively, almost boyish a manner, that I could not help thinking what a pity it was his succession to the thorns and cares of government had not been delayed another ten years.

We had been joined in the meadow by a good many of the Senators, and were now quite a large party, all of whom, except the Prince, Princess, and myself, were seated on the grass. I asked to hear the *gusle*,* and the Prince sent for one, and played a variety of tunes on it himself. The *gusle* is a kind of rude violin, with only *one string* drawn over the bridge: it is played on with a bow and also by pressing the string with the left hand: it is capable of a wonderful number of notes, and the Prince varied the sound and expression of the notes most artistically. But of course it is on the whole somewhat monotonous. A few songs were

* So called from the long *goose*-like neck of the fiddle. *Gus* is identical in sense and sound with our own word in almost all the Slavonic languages. In one slight variant, Bohemian, it becomes the name of John Huss, the reformer; in the other, Polish, which contains a more archaic form, Mr. Crawford, who has been recently writing about the names of geese in the *Ethnological Journal*, will find something to his disadvantage.

sung, but the guests were in a merrier mood than for music: a skipping-rope was produced, and one after another of these grave and martial men took energetically to this innocent amusement! The Prince was awkward, and could make nothing of it; some of them succeeded better; and one robust and well-grown man taking some running with it when, in the darkness of the night, it was impossible to see the rope itself, looked so utterly absurd that one could only think of a broken-legged ostrich. They were glad to learn that our famous Laureate, Gospody Tennyevich, was not above singing the praises of the skipping-rope in his Pësme. After much laughing we returned to the palace, where I enjoyed a cleaner, fresher room and a more delightful bed than I had done ever since I left England.

The Princess Milena paid me a visit in my room on the following morning; but our conversation was not very lively, as she only speaks Slave and understands but a few words of French. The Prince, however, soon joined us in high spirits at the clouds that were gathering in the sky. Like all the shores of the Adriatic, this year the drought has been very severe in Montenegro, and great fears were entertained for the crops and vines, as the arid soil requires all the rain it can get. Only

two or three showers fell during our stay, but some of the gentlemen, and the Prince among them, danced for joy when the drops began to fall.

I spent most of my day in sketching, though I was continually tempted away for the amusement of watching the sittings of the Senate. They appeared to sit, at intervals, throughout the day: they are judges as well as lawgivers, and it was most patriarchal and primitive to see them sitting in the open street, or under the tree, or in the meadow with the peasant or peasants, whose cases they were trying, standing in the midst of them, telling their tale. Then came the discussion, sometimes a very noisy one, usually followed by a decision from Mirko, given occasionally in a voice of thunder, and, in one instance, by an instantaneous and summary infliction of punishment. This was in the case of a woman who objected to live peaceably with her husband, 'because he was so ugly and wore such bad clothes!' I asked the Prince what would be done to a woman who was unfaithful to her husband: he looked surprised and said simply, 'They never are; if they had been, in former days they would have been put to death: I should imprison them for life.'

Unquestionably, in Montenegro, woman is the

chief beast of burden and the hardest worker of the two sexes: she is in fact the slave of the man; but though humble, she is not humiliated: she is respected in and from her chastity. For this reason, and because of her being of the weaker sex, and therefore never attacked by the stronger, a woman is always given to the traveller as a guide: woe be to the stranger who should attempt to take advantage of her weakness. We have seen that even the life of the Prince will be taken should the honour of a Montenegrine woman be outraged: and I believe that most of the Montenegrines have the same feeling as that of the true Bedouin, that no woman who is not of their blood and birthplace is good enough to become his wife. Like the Bedouin, the husband walks or rides first; the woman follows, carrying the goods and chattels of the family, or the burden of the traveller: she labours in the field while he roams over the mountain, or cleans his arms at home. Naturally, from this mode of life, the women of Tserna Gora are not remarkable for beauty: they are bony and robust, and they look old at a very early age: their complexions are dark and muddy.

Every peasant in the land, however poor, has a right to come to the Prince himself for judgment;

and such is their affection for him that no one would dream of questioning his justice. If the sentence appears unjust, they say 'he has a reason for it,' and acquiesce quietly. They are satisfied with the decisions of the Senate only as believing them to come from the Prince himself: and he assured me, so strong is the personal feeling to himself as Prince, that if he were taken away no Senate or other ruler could keep them together—they would follow him, if alive, or live each one for himself in his mountain. For there is no peasant in Montenegro who has not some portion of land of his own: everyone possesses something, however small, and if this his little crop should fail, or misfortune overtake him, he at once comes to the Prince, who gives him all he can spare. When all is well, he pays the Prince a part of his produce. In fact, very much of their laws continually reminded me of the customs of the Bedouins: the truth being that both are entirely patriarchal and primitive.

They have another virtue besides this simplicity of life,—this is their perfect honesty. I happened to mention that I had dropped a gold bracelet in Albania. 'Had you dropped it here, even in the remotest corner of the Black Mountain, it would

have been brought to me in three days,' said the Prince. I am sure this was not mere talk, for I heard it confirmed by enemies as well as friends of the Montenegrines. I was frequently told of a traveller who left his tent, with the door open, on a Montenegrine hillside, and returned after three years' absence to find every single thing as he had left it: it is the old story of the devotion of a simple-minded people, and the just administration of a Homeric chieftain,—all the more easily carried out in such a country as the Tserna Gora, because the Prince can be acquainted with his people as individuals, and can set them a personal example, eagerly caught up by each of his loving subjects. People tell, however, a different tale of the honesty of Montenegrines in Turkey, where they used to migrate annually for field-work, like Irishmen to England, or Ionians to Greece.

The Prince informed me that he had lately reckoned up his people, and that he believed there were now 200,000 souls in Montenegro and the Berda.* He was more certain that he had 20,000 fighting

* The Berda (plural of Berdo, a mountain) are seven mountains, which border the Black-Mountain proper. Peter I., the sainted Vladika, took them from the Pashalik of Skodra in 1777, and they have been retained ever since in the principality.

men under his command. I enquired about the finances of the country, and the Prince told me his income amounted to 10,000*l.* (depending much, of course, upon the state of the harvest), besides an annual gift of 4,700*l.* bestowed by Russia in gratitude for assistance rendered by Peter I. in 1806 to the Russians during their joint campaign against the French invaders of Dalmatia, and as an indemnity for their losses.

The Prince regretted extremely that I had not time to visit the richer and lovelier portions of his dominions, to see for myself not only the beauties of his country, but those natural products for the power of exporting which he so ardently longs. Large forests of excellent timber extend over many of his mountains, while the valleys are rich with vineyards, olive-groves, and fig-gardens. The rivers also are abundantly stocked with trout, which, when smoked and dried, forms a large item in the food of the Montenegrine. One little mountain lake of remarkable depth, near Žabljak, is filled with trout of an extraordinary size and very fine flavour. The possession of this lake is a source of continued feud between the Montenegrine and the Mussulman. Immense shoals of a peculiar kind of small mullet descend the rivers in the autumn for the Lake of

Skodra. They are of the most delicious flavour, and contain a very fat roe, which is made into an excellent kind of botargo.* This dainty is in sufficient plenty to be a good article of export, and many a gourmand would, if he once tasted the savoury morsel, keenly appreciate the natural anxiety of the Prince for a few yards of coast, whereby he might escape the very heavy customs and long quarantine imposed by the Austrians on all mountain goods.

Prince Nicholas, in his intense desire to improve the condition of his people, most bitterly regrets his own exceeding poverty. He is very anxious to build houses, and above all to make roads throughout the country; but he has not a shilling wherewith to accomplish any of these things. 'Had I a port from which to ship them,' he said to me again and again, 'I have rivers to bring down my timber, my wine, and my fish, by the sale of which I could pay for my roads and build my schools. I have built ten already, but as yet I can do but a mere nothing for the real improvement or encouragement of my people. My neighbours complain that my

* The botargo is a great resource to the Greeks during the severer fasts, when only a bloodless fish diet is allowed. — *Leake.*

mountaineers do nothing but fight. They have nothing else to do. If they could gain anything by their flocks and crops, they would work hard enough to do so.'

The Prince took me one afternoon into the old monastery close to the Palace. It is the residence of the Archbishop, who, to my great regret, was at that moment gone to St. Petersburg to be consecrated. Preparations were then commencing for a national fête to celebrate his return. I made acquaintance with the young Archimandrite, who also lives there, and who is a very great favourite of the Prince's. He is a poet, and writes war songs, many of which the Prince sang to us. He wore a black silk dress, edged with crimson, and his tall figure and dark costume was often conspicuous in the sittings of the Senate. As he generally had a paper in his hand, I suspect he often attended to read out the documents which the old warriors of the mountains could not read for themselves.

This state of ignorance is one of the many things that the Prince is anxious to improve. A large part of this monastery is devoted to a school, where we saw some 50 or 60 boys learning to read, write, and sum. They had a good large stock of books, and well printed alphabets. Among them was a Greek

boy from Patras, poring over his Slave spelling-book. The Prince goes into the school frequently, to inspect the progress of the scholars.

The outside of the old monastery is picturesque. It has three stories of circular-headed arches, supported on thick short piers; two square towers, one above the other, have been used as fortifications, although one is the tower of the church, of which the round apse appears below. Above all is a circular watch-tower, now half-ruined. Beyond the monastery is a newer building, containing the schoolrooms and the residence of the Igumen, with an olive-grove in front of the windows; while on the other side, as a lesson of industry, I suppose, to the juvenile scholars, are several rows of beehives. These have taken the place of the poles on which, previous to the rule of the brave Peter II., were placed the heads of Turks slain in battle. In a room above the church is the armoury, a rich and interesting collection of every conceivable kind of weapon used in the last three or four centuries in Eastern Europe. Most of them are hacked and battered and stained. Inside the church is the tomb of the murdered Danilo, for whom the building was placed in mourning upwards of two years. The Prince was therefore married at a little parish church we had passed on

the road entering the plain—an humble little church, surrounded with flat tombstones. The Prince and Princess attend the monastery chapel on all Sundays and holy days.

I was sketching the old building when the Prince came out and amused himself with shooting at a mark on an old tower upon the rock above the monastery. The distance could not have been less than 300 yards, but he never missed the tiny spot. This old tower was the one on which the skulls of vanquished enemies were exposed; but this practice was done away with on the accession of Danilo I. The skulls were removed a year or two after, I believe. Probably all my readers will remember how Eöthen passed the pillar of skulls on the high road from Belgrade to Constantinople one dark night, and how he thus escaped having to admire the classic beauty of the architect's design. This was of Turkish construction, dating, I think, from the old Servian war of independence. Persia is the true native country and home of the *Kelleh Minār*, though, I believe, even there it is fast dying out, if it is not already quite extinct as a current practice.

We afterwards went out in a riding party, the Princess and some other ladies joining it in unchanged costumes. The Prince rides well and

gracefully, though with a very Oriental seat, depending much on his stirrups. He was breaking a half-bred Arab, for which he was too heavy; twice the girths gave way, and he came to the ground, to the horror of the Court, who, headed by his mother, abused him in no gentle voice for thus risking his precious neck. The sight was a pretty one, for some of the gentlemen rode very well, and their rich and light-coloured costumes made the scene doubly animated, as they went caracoling about, breaking into short rapid gallops, abruptly pulled up, after the manner of Arabs and all other Easterns. The plain was by this time in shade, the mountains nearly black, and against the pretty rose-coloured sky the lofty peak of Lovćen stood out with very picturesque boldness, commanding all the others. This is the mountain, now called the Vladika's mountain, where the venerated Peter I. is interred.

I should have been very glad to have remained a much longer time in Montenegro; but, as circumstances obliged me to hasten on, I reluctantly requested the Prince to order preparations to be made for our journey. We were all sorry to part with each other; but there was nothing for it but to make the best of our last evening together, after

the three delightful days we had spent in Tsetinje. Just before supper, I was told that Mirko had been hovering about my door, wanting to show me something. I went out at once, and he said, 'You must not leave our mountain without seeing our best and most interesting possession.' So he led me to the end of the corridor, where a glass-case was arranged, protecting two or three hundred medals of gold and silver, taken from the breasts of the Turks in last year's war. Scores of them were English and French Crimean medals. A dozen soiled and battered Turkish banners stood beside them, and along the wall hung a very large number of scymetars, daggers, &c., taken at the same time. It was natural that Mirko should show me these—not the Prince: Mirko glories in the war—the Prince sorrows for it. A Turkish Pasha had come to Tsetinje to settle some business with the Prince a week or two before my visit; but when I alluded to the medals, &c., the Prince said, eagerly, 'Oh! I would not be guilty of such a rudeness as that! I carried them all away before he came, and shut them up in my own bedroom.'

It was amusing, as well as interesting, to see Mirko's fierce pride over the trophies, and his pleasure in the war songs with which we beguiled

the evening. Several of the Prince's suite have voices as fine as his own, and they sang in parts of five or six voices with the most delicious harmony. I have heard the national music and street singing of a good many countries, and I say heartily that the voices and harmony of the Sclavonians, both in Montenegro and in Dalmatia, exceed in beauty all I have heard elsewhere. The airs, too, are wild and sweet, fierce and grand in the war-songs, while some of the love-songs were graceful and expressive as the most persuasive melodies of Italy and Germany.

I could have listened to the singing for ever; but it grew late, and we had to take leave of the Princess and of the little Court. I took an affectionate farewell of the gentle creature, while my companion was more roughly handled by the gentlemen; the stout Vlahovitch, the fierce Mirko, and the powerful Mattanovitch, kissed him violently on both cheeks, hugging him like bears, until he was quite glad to escape from the circle. One or two of them then begged to be shown the wonders of a portable indiarubber bath I had with me, and were delighted at the promise that one should be sent to Tsetinje. I do not think it will be over much used there, as, on the day after our

arrival, one of the Gospodys, overhearing Captain S. call for water for his ablutions, remarked, 'Ah! I look on you now as an enemy to mankind! Water was given to us by the good God to drink inside, not to waste upon our skins!' After all, there was a great deal to be said from his point of view in a year of drought, and with the divinity of the tub as unrevealed to him as to our grandfathers.

It was half-past two A.M. when the sentries called gently under my windows, 'Gospodjo! Gospodjo!' and on my going down stairs, I found our horses and guides waiting for us outside the palace gate. We were soon mounted, and, in company with Vatslik, the Prince's agent, who was returning to Skodra, and had been commissioned by him to take charge of us on our journey, we turned our backs very regretfully on Tsetinje.

We had a splendid moon to light us on the road and very good horses for ourselves; our luggage was distributed on the backs of five women, who walked in front of us the whole way. I had objected to this arrangement and begged for a baggage horse, but they said they were used to much heavier burdens, and that going with us would be a pastime and a pleasure to them, and they cer-

tainly did appear to enjoy the napoleon we gave among them at parting. To me the journey was most amusing. The road was one of the most execrable I have ever been on in my life, equal to almost anything I remember to have met with in Syria; but, from being a pass, it was not dangerous in the way of precipices, only of falls to both man and beast. The Prince had himself given me in charge to the two men appointed to take care of me; they were told that I was his friend, and valuable, and that their heads would answer for it if any harm befell me. So they stuck themselves at each side of me and my horse, and one seized tight hold of my elbow and the other of my knee, and at each jolt my shoulders or waist were gripped tight between them, or their hands were rapidly spread out before my chest in case I should fall forwards; and the more I tried to get loose and take care of myself, the more tightly they seized me, until I found myself a mere doll in their hands. And the absurdest part of it all was that, at every new jolt, both looked up into my face with a sort of proud grunt, as much as to say, 'Now didn't we do that well?'

I had by this time learned half a dozen words of Slave, which I produced on all occasions, to the

great delight of the Montenegrines ; but it was most amusing how every one we came near had learned the fact that our affirmative 'yes' was very nearly the same as their own affirmative 'yest.'* Every person who spoke to me asked me to say it twenty times over, and whenever on this journey I used the word to my friend Captain S., every one of our attendants joined in with a great shout, 'Yest! yest! do you hear the English, bless them, say yest!'

The daylight came after an hour and a half of this mountain road, and I was thankful for it, for the country was becoming beautiful, and my rough companions kept on appealing to me to admire it. From the moment that we had surmounted the crest of the pass, the country opened out in a lovely ravine before us, and very soon after we had the full extent of the Lake of Skodra spread out beyond it with all its beautiful mountains. As I groaned over the roughness of the way, I understood the significant grins of our guides, which seemed to say the path from Rjéka to Tsetinje was

* Literally 'it is;' the word being the same as the Latin *est*, &c., common to all the Aryan languages: the idiom that of an Irishman's reply, 'it is,' in all cases where an Englishman would say 'yes.' 'Ne' is also their English-sounding negative.

no road for artillery nor a very favourable one for troops. As the moon went down behind the mountain and the sunbeams shot across the valley, we distinguished pretty villages nestled in the nooks of the ravine in rich gardens and little fields, and we were soon among large and fragrant meadows enclosed in hedges of dog-roses covered with clematis and trailing sweet-scented creepers. The fruit-trees were heavily laden, and troops of cows were feeding all around. We were passing through one of the gardens of Montenegro.

In two hours and a half from the palace gate we had descended into the plain of Rjeka, and found ourselves in face of a lofty, perfectly smooth, perpendicular wall of rock. At the foot of this the Tsernoyevitch was seen escaping from the overhanging crags, and winding along to the meadows; this spot is grand, and beautiful, and very Swiss. In a few minutes we had reached Rjeka, a most picturesquely-situated town or large village. A market is held here every week, and is the most frequented one for very many miles round; as we rode through them we discerned even Turkish costumes among the many varieties assembled there. A resting-place had been prepared for us in the house of the principal inhabitant, and we

dismounted there, my two attendants insisting on supporting and half-carrying me up the staircase, as if I was the most fragile of wax dolls.

Here it was that the hardest struggle of the war last year took place; and Rjeka itself was, in fact, only just become habitable again—so horrible was the stench arising from the hundreds of bodies left dead on the mountains and in the valley. Much of the ruin was still apparent. We rested here for an hour, and in twenty minutes more were upon the banks of the wide smoothly flowing river, among crowds of gaily dressed women at a rural market. Here we dismounted and took leave of our Montenegrine guides. They pressed round to kiss the Gospodja's hand, and I thanked them, and made them teach me to say in their own language, 'In the name of God, good bye!' which I think really pleased them more than even the presents we made them. The Montenegrine is either the most pious or the most irreverent of speakers—I will not venture to say which; for he cannot utter a single sentence on any subject without beginning as well as ending it with 'Bog' (God) in some one of the seven Slavonic cases. It is the one chief, almost ceaseless sound of the language; and nothing impressed me more than

when I asked for water at dinner, the gentleman next me would reply, 'By God, I will give it you for God's sake;' or, when some one said the cook had not boiled the vegetables enough, he was answered, 'In the name of God, he has not.'

We then mounted into a huge long clumsy boat, with very high sides and no seats in it of any kind, while the bottom was filled with puddles of water. We climbed up on a tiny poop, about as large as a good-sized desk, on which two of us could only just squeeze, and tried to shelter ourselves from the then burning sun (it was now 7.30 A.M.) under an umbrella covered with my shawl. Fortunately our eight rowers carried us down the river in less than three hours, but they seemed very long hours, for nothing could be much more disagreeable. The change from the exhilarating fresh mountain air to the stifling heat of the low level to which we had now sunk, was very great and trying; it had been hotter in the last few days in Montenegro than had been known for very many years; but it was cool on the plain of Tsetinje to the heat of the Tsernoyevitch. The scenery, however, was most lovely; the wide, clear, smooth river went winding between bright meadows and richly wooded mountains, while in a

thick border along each bank were thousands of white and yellow water-lilies, basking in the sun. Gospody Vatslik pointed out at every turn the still remaining breastworks which had been thrown up on the mountain slopes, and explained the various movements of the opposing forces in each place. Ruined cottages, broken down fences and gardens, were frequently to be seen as he said, 'There so and so fell!' or 'There we killed so many!' At 10 o'clock we were at the mouth of the river, and alongside of a finely placed Turkish fortress, mounted on a conical hill at the very head of the lake—the Castle of Lesendria (Alexandria). Two other small islands, Vranina and Monastir, are close by, and just above the mouth of the Zetta is the strong fortress of Žabljak. Here was the boundary of Montenegro, and sadly I looked back at its receding mountains. The Turkish steamer was waiting for us under the walls of the castle, and we sorrowfully stepped out from among our faithful Montenegrines. May they walk in the paths of peace, and become every day better and nobler!

Very warm and cordial was our welcome on board the Turkish steamer. My old friend Mahmoud Pasha, the military governor of Skodra, had

come himself to meet us, and, while a salute was being fired from the fortress, he made me an amusing apology for not having a British 'bandeyra' to hoist in my honour. He had arrived at Skodra only on the day before, but he had worked miracles to accomplish the preparations necessary for us. The coal for the steamer had all been used up; but wood was immediately felled and fetched to bring her across for us: the saloon cabin was most comfortably arranged, divans were laid on the clean decks, and an excellent breakfast awaited us, consisting 'of every delicacy of the season,' including deliciously cool melons and figs.

Our three hours' run across the lake* was perfectly charming, for the Lake of Skodra is very beautiful, and there is only one other view of it which is finer. On the east side, at the northern end, there is a fertile plain of five or six miles wide, and a sudden arm of the lake runs out like a thumb from the palm of a hand; when this is passed, the jagged serrated outline of the mountains on the eastern side becomes remarkably good; both sides are lofty, with plenty of variety as to bare crags and wooded slopes; the colouring also

* The lake is about eighteen miles long by six in width.

is the best I have seen in Albania. I fancy that there must be much wild and picturesque scenery in the neighbourhood of Podgoritza, the position of which is seen from the lake. The district is famous for its fertility—wasted for want of labourers—and for the excellence of its honey and wax, which are sent all over Roumelia. The scenery of the lake itself heightens in grandeur and beauty on approaching the southern end. The lake is formed by the waters of the Zetta, the Zem, and the Tsernoyevitch, and is drained by the short, but wide Boyana. The legend is that an earthquake one day caused such an accession of waters that a plain covered with villages and gardens was instantly submerged; the natives believe they can still see the houses at the bottom of the lake. At the south-west corner where the Boyana runs out towards the sea, a rich and verdant plain stretches back for several miles, till it meets an amphitheatre of fine mountains, while between the lake and the river there rises, with abrupt steepness from the plain, an isolated oval-shaped rock. Upon this noble rock stands the old fortress of Skodra, famous for many a bloody history both in peace and war. It is from this fortress that the city takes its name, for Skodra in Albanian is said to

signify upon the hill; the Turks have retained this name, and the Venetians called it Scutari during the few years of their possession. If this derivation be really correct, it is curious and valuable, for it shows that modern Albanian is capable of interpreting a name that dates back as far as the days of the Roman Republic, at all events in one instance.* No fortress could be more finely situated; it looks up the whole lake and commands all the windings of the river for a considerable distance, while the town lies at its feet, so richly embedded in gardens and groves as hardly to be distinguished from the woods beyond it.

We landed under the shade of a clump of lofty plane trees, and sat for some time admiring the scene before us. Then came a heap of cawasses and saïses and gaily caparisoned horses; I was mounted upon a pretty milk-white steed with a side-saddle; Captain S. rode upon scarlet velvet embroidered with gold—the whole horse covered

* But this is nothing by the side of the antiquity which gives the swift-footed Achilles himself an Albanian name. Plutarch says that 'swift-footed' was 'Ἀσπίρε in the language of Epirus. *Tchpète* in the south, *shpète* in the north, is said to be modern Albanian for 'swift.'—*Fallmerayer, Das Alban. Element in Griechenland.*

with a network of gold thread, to keep off the flies, I presume—and the Pasha bestrode a gallant prancing grey, upon which he looked, as all Turks do in our eyes, fat and uncomfortable. And so, in a gay procession, we entered Skodra.

Skodra, which boasts of 4,500 houses, is very peculiar; you never seem to come to any town at all. Innumerable and rather wide roads cross each other in all directions, flanked by high hedges and overhanging trees, between which you may occasionally see a roof or a blank wall, or maybe a gate; rarely a wall with a window. Here and there is a mosque, and a few needle-shaped minarets, like those of Constantinople, rise up from among the trees; but, in fine, though you sometimes get at a house, large or small, and though at a long distance from the town there is a bazaar, you never do get at the town itself. The unfortunate place is mostly under water throughout the winter and spring, during which time the inhabitants retire to the upper stories of their houses—which, by the bye, are frequently washed away altogether—and, when the water is deep enough, they communicate with each other in punts. But as this depth is only occasional, and does not last long, the Skodrans have another and curious-look-

ing plan. Every road and lane has, at only a few yards' distance, a row of square stone blocks across it, at a foot's width apart—wide enough for a horse's legs to pass through. And thus, when there are but two feet or so depth of water over the town, they can walk about in tolerable dryness and safety. But, to a stranger arriving there when they were all crying out in anguish of soul and body for water, the meaning of these unbuilt, un-arched bridges did not explain itself, and did look exceedingly odd.

Entering one of the many gates of these shady lanes, we found ourselves in the precincts of the French Consulate, which our kind friend Monsieur Moreau had taken a world of pains to prepare for us. Not having been in bed at all the previous night, and having been on the road or lake from 3 A.M. till 2 P.M., his shady house appeared a sort of paradise to us; and the ice with which he regaled us was the most refreshing luxury possible, for the heat of Skodra is quite indescribable. Crouched down into a very low plain as it is, surrounded with lofty mountains, every house doubly sheltered and shaded by its own thickly-planted trees and high walls, Skodra is absolutely airless and breathless as an oven; and this, added to the

outlying waters for so many months of the year, combines to make the place a deadly hot-bed of fever and malaria. The heat was now, as I have said, in all this part of Europe, extraordinary; and in Skodra it was very severe. In all the pretty Consulate garden, on which M. Moreau had laboured with skill and anxiety, and notwithstanding as much constant watering as could be afforded, not a flower remained; shrivelled geraniums, scarecrows of roses, and faded jasmines were all that remained; and, all over the place, the figs hung dried up on the trees. This is not equal to the heat that roasted the apples on the trees in America this summer, but it has the advantage of being more literally true. The grapes, too, could not come to maturity: they were only unripened, sour raisins. M. Vatslik, however, brought me news the next day of a good rain having taken place in the upper part of Montenegro, which they hoped would save the best of the vines.

In order to escape the severe heats of Skodra in the summer, most of the inhabitants have country houses at Dristi, a little place on the northern slope of Mount Zuccali, at about six or seven miles distance. Dristi being well watered, the villagers have turned the whole of it into fruit and vege-

table gardens, whence the capital is abundantly supplied.

There is not much sight-seeing in Skodra. Although it has a population of 12,000 Catholics, and is the seat of a bishop, they have no church: every church they have had has been converted into a mosque or destroyed; and the Catholics now worship in a field, under a roof of coarse cloth. Long ago, there was a church at the foot of the fortress, containing an image of the blessed Virgin; but, just as the Turks were about to lay their sacrilegious hands on it, the same convenient angels who carried the holy house from Tersatto were again put into requisition, and the image may now be seen at Rome, whither their angelic hands transported it. The Catholics have lately commenced building a very large church near the fortress; but they have no money to finish it, nor are they likely to get much more. Skodra is in the arch-episcopate of Antivari. The Greeks have a small church and a school. There are a great number of mosques, but none of them are remarkable.

The military Pasha occasionally lives in the fortress; but he is very often away at Podgoritza, which is becoming the place of most military importance, and contains the largest number of

soldiers. Podgoritza is a district of great fertility : the people are industrious : all the best Albanian cartouch boxes, and other much-ornamented military trappings, are made there, and very pretty they are.

On the morning after my arrival in Skodra the Civil Governor of the city, Abdoul Aziz, a Pasha of high rank, sent to ask if he might call on me. As I was provided with a double set of interpreters in the Military Pasha and the French Consul, I said I should be glad to see him. He came with his secretary, pipe-bearer, &c., and proved a thorough Turk in appearance : very large, fat, and dark, with the hoarse rough voice which so many Turks have. To me he was extremely polite, and softened his voice to speak to me, besides trying a grim little smile which only once or twice broke into a laugh at my answers. His rough brusque manner and frowning face was a great contrast to the soft gentle voice and placid smiling face of Mahmoud Pasha his colleague ; but 'men are deceivers ever!' Mahmoud, I was told, is excessively strict and severe, a man who seldom pardons, and whose punishments are heavy, while his fierceness in battle is remarkable. Abdoul Aziz, on the contrary—'our lamb,' as they called him—is a man of peace, ready to forgive, anxious to smoothe

matters everywhere, and ever striving to keep things quiet. And as to his being fierce in battle, my opinion is that he would need one of Pickford's cart horses—of which the like is not to be had in Albania—to carry him with any vigour into the field.

We had a long chatting talk, of which the only thing I remember was his saying he had never seen Montenegro, except as far as Rjeka; to which I replied I thought that was quite far enough. He smiled, and said he heard Tsetinje was curious and pretty, and I answered him that it was both, but that I earnestly hoped his Excellency would never be able to judge for himself, since I concluded that *seeing* would be next door to *taking*; at which hope of mine he laughed very heartily, and then said, gravely enough, he did not in the least wish ever to see it in that sense.

I am sure that this is the real feeling of all respectable and trustworthy Turks above the common fanatical herd who have ever bestowed a thought upon political matters, as well as of all, whether corrupt or honest, who know anything of official responsibility. They have already chastised Montenegro to their own satisfaction, and more severely than is generally known; they hold

all the surrounding country under military control, and they can easily crush any incursions on a larger scale than those of mere marauding routine, which they are fairly ready to leave alone,—always assuming such incursions to be unconnected with any general movement elsewhere, and unsupported by any European powers. They do not want to take and possess Montenegro, for it would do them no possible good; it would cost them an infinity of men to accomplish it, and when taken would be quite worthless, either in the way of fair profit or of unlawful pickings. So that if the Montenegrine Government will let them alone, the Porte will let the mountaineers alone too. The Prince knows this, and has common sense enough to feel its truth, and perhaps some of the wiser of his companions feel it too. But the Prince is young and ardent, and may readily be made into a cat's-paw by others, for whom it is easy to work upon the old memories of past injuries, hereditary vengeance, and present ambition or vanity. Left to himself, and with no selfish intermeddlers to egg him on, the Prince is well aware that his independence is a fact; while the Turks, though they will never acknowledge it by a formal instrument, are quite

willing to let it alone,* and he is anxious to turn it to good account. He wants to be valued at a higher rate than as a mere thorn in the side of Turkey, to be driven in as suits the purpose of other powers. This lesson has come home to him since the war. Turkey would, indeed, be most stupid and unjust to herself, if she failed to take the point off the thorn the moment she feels it smart.

I think the Prince is at last bringing himself to perceive that when the mass of his people and their fierce leaders clamour for war at all price, and show themselves ready to break a truce or an obligation on the slightest pretext when made with Mussulmans, even fancying that such a course is sanctioned by their religion, they stand on precisely the same low moral level as their barbarous and fanatic Mussulman neighbours of Albania. I cannot pretend to say how far his present excellent dispositions may be proof against the impulses of ambition and passion — against temptation from without, or the pressure of the war party and its

* It should not be forgotten that the Porte has never acknowledged the separation of Algiers, or the British occupation of Aden.

leader, the fiery Paladin Mirko, from within. That they do exist and are capable of bearing good fruit I am thoroughly convinced; but I am sure that their permanence must depend in a great measure on active sympathy and encouragement held out to him from the right quarter. There was a time when he may have deserved nothing better than an elementary lesson of morality conveyed in a curt snubbing letter; but the time for snubbing is past. The war has cleared the air; there is no bad blood just at present between him and the Turks, and there is a strong desire on his part to join and identify his little state with the general body of progressive Europe, and, if there is any faith in words, to put away from him the old bigotry and the old barbarism. There is nothing more satisfactory than this, unless it be the rising mistrust, if not aversion, with which I know that he occasionally turns away from the fantastic reaction-breeding advocacy of speakers and writers who take an idealist's view of his country. He looks to England for the bread of common sense, but he has hitherto got nothing but unfriendly apathy, or the glittering stone of that barren anti-Turkish sentimentalism which has replaced yesterday's ignorant philo-Turkism as the fashion of

to-day. As a matter of likelihood, I do not think he will meet with the needful support and sympathy; because, in order to afford it properly, it would be necessary to have some knowledge of the language. Justification of past negligence, or the concealment of *linge sale* at home, must after all be a stronger instinct with us than sympathy with a wild unmanageable chieftain; and we have got to dissemble as we best can the disagreeable fact that neither in the official nor the outer world—neither in Downing Street nor in Printing-House Square—have we a single born Englishman who has any adequate knowledge of Illyrian, if indeed any knowledge at all, nor does there seem to be the slightest care to supply this deficiency even in the face of the strong pervading fermentation of which the mere existence and alleged uniformity of this language under many names is the vital principle.

The petty feuds and mutual cattle-lifting incursions of the *tchetas*, or predatory bands of Christian Montenegrine and Mussulman Albanian borderers, are quite different from full-blown warfare between the Montenegrine and Turkish nations. And it is probable that these will go on for some time to come. The possession of a port by Montenegro, and the consequent relief of that country from the

pressure of much hardship and poverty, might tend, in some measure, to stop them; for they are occasioned by poverty and sheer habitual wildness, rather than by any rooted incurable ill-will. A Montenegrine artlessly confessed as much to my companion, saying, 'If it were not for the Turks, I don't know how we should live.' There is no great evil in them, except the habits of cruelty on both sides; nor is there any occasion for the fastidious nineteenth century to turn away in indignation from what, barring the religious element, must be the exact counterpart of our own forefathers' border-life during the sixteenth century, and later still. The Montenegrine is the most frequent offender, for he is the poorest, the bravest, and the most fanatical. But I was told by the Pasha of Skodra himself that the Mussulman and the Catholic are also in their turn frequently the aggressors. The same is probably the case on the little known north-eastern frontier, by Bielopoglie, and in the direction of Novi-Bazar, where a fierce Mussulman population in a strong country interposes as a block between Montenegro and Servia. The Porte dislikes these feuds very much; for it gains nothing by them, and it dreads the possibility of a mere spark at any moment being made to

kindle the flames of a full-grown war with the whole Montenegrine nation. In the old days, before the diplomatic existence of Montenegro, they led to nothing, and did not matter. The mountaineer used to wander all over the low country as a gardener or field-labourer, even as far as Constantinople, or stay at home and fight his border enemies, with equal indifference, and with nobody by to settle whether this was peace or war, according to Vattel and Puffendorf, or to invent and pile up the airy, glowing romance of his being a sort of successful Christian Leonidas, triumphantly holding his Thermopylæ for hundreds of years against the whole force of Turkey. Nor did they care a straw at Constantinople whether the unruly and unprofitable Albanian, or the untamable infidel, did or suffered the most in the way of cutting throats. But at present, the Montenegrine is not encouraged, by one side or the other, to leave his country, for the defence of which lately every Montenegrine was wanted, for temporary field-labour in Turkey. He does not care to gain his bread that way, and his poverty is pressing very hard upon him. The Turks are disinclined to give him the port which he wants, for they have no confidence in his good intentions and

good faith; and they believe, rightly or wrongly, that he will make a bad use of it, and turn it into a mere transit depôt of arms and stores for revolutionary purposes. Moreover, the harbour of Spitzza immediately abuts on the Austrian frontier, and that power would certainly claim the right of being heard on the subject, under the natural impression that for one bad word the South Slavonic Hetairia utters against Turkey, it means two against Austria. Considering that the question is a difficult one, and may some day assume serious proportions, I cannot help thinking that the Montenegrines may fairly be supported in their claim for a port, as soon as it is really proved on satisfactory evidence that such a port is a vital necessity to them. As regards the exportation of Montenegrine produce, the formation of such a port would be a great benefit to all parties. But, under all circumstances, and whatever may be the course adopted by us, I sincerely hope and trust that we shall soon hold more cordial communication with them, and infuse some real life into our policy towards them, both in the conservative and the liberal direction.

To return to Skodra. In the afternoon, I went to pay a visit to the harem of Mahmoud Pasha, and spent an hour chatting with his wife. Although a

Hungarian by birth, everything was *à la Turque*; and I rejoiced in being once more in the land of *finjans* and *zarfs*, with coffee and sweetmeats. Every servant and slave in the harem came in one by one—the servants to kiss my hand, the slaves to kiss the hem of my dress: none of them had ever seen an English lady before, and they took the opportunity of staring most vigorously at her.

Then we went out for a ride, and having skirted the town, we found ourselves on a dusty but good road, with thick, high hedges, which crossed a wide plain. The panorama of mountains opened out grandly. Right before us was a sugar-loaf, called Haimal, at the foot of which is a collection of villages, whose revenues, like those of Chios in former times, formed a sultana's privy-purse, under the title of 'slipper-money.' They were therefore protected and favoured until these privileges were taken from them under the new system, and taxes laid on as in other places; thereupon, most of them abandoned their villages in disgust.

On the other side of this plain we came to the banks of the wide river Drin, and its still wider dry beds. This river, the main branch of which comes from the Lake of Ochrida, is the finest in all Albania. It is joined close to Skodra by the Chiri,

which is crossed by a most extraordinary bridge, of such high pointed arches, stuck upon such slender piers, that it has much the appearance of a spider bent across from bank to bank. I never saw such a ludicrous-looking bridge; but it is too grotesque to be picturesque. It was built in 1768 by, and at the expense of, Ahmed Pasha: but he is said to have built a really beautiful bridge at Podgoritz. Over the Boyana there is nothing but a miserable broken wooden thing, over which it is almost dangerous to pass.

Riding round the noble rock of the fortress, which is grand on every side, we came to the bazaars. They are sufficiently poor for a town of so much importance as Skodra. No traveller, however, would stop to think of the bazaars, even were they much handsomer. The beauty of the surrounding mountains is more than enough to fill one's eyes and thoughts. For myself, I know few places lovelier, or so lovely as Skodra. Its beauty must, of course, be much enhanced when the winter snows clothe the mountain summits. They are not seen later than May, although snow is to be found throughout the summer on many of the heights. Although in Skodra the heat of summer is very severe, the climate of the pashalik is a very fine one, and the soil most

fertile. Forests of elm, oak, beech, pine, and walnut abound, and the olive oil of Dulcigno and Antivari is much esteemed in Dalmatia. Corn of all kinds, wheat, maize, oats, barley, with rice, beans, flax, and tobacco, are readily grown, and the grapes would be of the finest, if they were properly cared for. Dulcigno is a port six miles south of Antivari. It is quite Mussulman. The harbour has been altered by earthquakes, and is now very small, but the Dulcignotes possess some 200 ships of their own building, and the number is constantly increasing. The Dulcignote pirates used to be the terror of Italy and the Adriatic; her seamen were much sought by the Porte, and more than one became Capitan-pasha. Their men have always been as famous for their turbulence as their women for beauty and grace. Antivari—Anti-Bari—was the usual crossing place to Bari in Italy; but Dulcigno was also much used.

We were at breakfast on Sunday morning when startling news was brought to us. The English Consul, an invalid, who had long been entirely incapacitated from attending to any business, had left Skodra on the day of our arrival there to go to Dulcigno for sea-bathing. In passing through the little town to the house prepared for him on the

sea-shore, one of his cavasses pushed a Turkish child on one side. The push was a really gentle one: the child was not hurt, nor did he fall; but the act was seized upon as an opportunity for giving expression to the bad feeling of the place—a bad feeling fostered, if not originating, in a handful of Turkish soldiers quartered there. The next morning, whilst the Consul was taking his bath in the sea, attended by the other cavass, several of the townspeople and soldiers surrounded the house, and one of the latter shot the unfortunate cavass dead, hacking the body to pieces. I learned that these soldiers were of the same regiment as the horrid-looking set we had seen at Durazzo. The quiet Mahmoud Pasha bounded from his seat as the news was given to us, and rushed off to the serai, exclaiming, ‘The whole set shall be hanged! I’ll see them hanged myself!’ I do not know how it ended, or whether the culprit escaped, but the Civil Governor’s own cavass (an Italian), who had been sent to tell us the news, said that really hanging was much too mild a punishment for the regiment they had then on the coast, and that the Pasha said he was at his wit’s end what to do with them. I was told that they have had no pay for two years; but I could not learn if this was strictly true, and I

know this is a sort of statement in which exaggeration or equivocation is particularly easy, as they are sometimes paid in kind instead of in money.

Albanian is the language spoken in Skodra. It differs materially from that spoken in Southern Albania. Both Slave and Albanian are spoken in the mountain districts, according to the Latin or Greek rite of the speaker. Very few even of the Mussulmans speak Turkish. Italian is very much spoken in the towns; not at all in the country. The Venetians introduced it, and it was kept up by the Latin clergy; but they have now so few village schools, that the language is confined to commercial dealings.

The costumes of Skodra are particularly gay. The men wear quantities of crimson sashes, and heavy crimson cords, with large tassels, about them; but it is only the Mussulman townspeople who wear the *fustanella*, like the Southern Albanians.

I ventured one day on an innocent remark that the inhabitants of Skodra had very little amusement, but I was immediately answered, 'Oh, but we have our goose-battles in October!'

'Goose-battles—what can they be?'

And then I was told that geese in Skodra are bred and educated as game-cocks used to be in

England, to do battle with each other; and that very fierce, obstinate, and bloody is the sport. They fight by pecking and biting, but chiefly by winding their long necks round each other, trying each to break off the other's neck, something in the style of a boa winding round a man's body to cut him in two. It must be a curious sight; and, for those that like it, what is called 'fine sport,' the geese being, I was told, more fierce and *gamey* than cocks.

We were now obliged to leave Skodra. To my great regret I left much unseen; but any further exertions, or any kind of excursion, had been found to be utter impossibilities from the tremendous heat of the weather. One had neither strength of body or mind left for anything; and though I longed to be able to make many sketches, I found any attempt at drawing, or even going out before sunset, quite hopeless. As in this heat the nine hours necessary for reaching Antivari would have proved too long a ride all at once by daylight, the Pasha insisted on our breaking it half-way, and he despatched some soldiers with tents, a few guards, and the cook of the French Consul with provisions for dinner and breakfast. Both our friends accompanied us out of the town, and only bade adieu to us on the

banks of the Boyana, after lavishing every imaginable kindness upon us.

It was 6 P.M. when we turned away from Skodra and our kind friends. I was glad that we had chosen to ride rather than be rowed down the river, as the Pasha had offered; for our road was higher and the views much more extensive, and I would not for anything have missed the remaining two hours of daylight, and the exquisite beauty of that road. On our right (north) we were riding under pretty richly-wooded hills, rising abruptly from our level; to the left (south), beautiful peaked and lofty mountains stretched away into the distance: while behind us, the serrated and pointed mountains of the lake crossed each other in ever-varying beauty and grandeur. The sun went down all too soon, though as he sank he covered the whole scene with brilliant hues that for once made me fancy myself in Greece.

Our road was excellent, soft and smooth the whole way, and passing generally through flowery meadows enclosed in sweet-smelling hedges, and ornamented with noble trees—beech, oak, plane, &c. We had plenty of amusement, watching the glowworms and fireflies and listening to the songs of our soldiers; but riding after dark through

tolerably thick woods is tiresome work, and I was very thankful when at 10 P.M. we saw the fire burning brightly beside our green military tents, wherein our supper was awaiting us. It was blowing a heavy gale, but we slept soundly for a few hours, and were in the saddle again at 4.30; a lovely morning, although the wind had not gone down very much. As we looked back, we could still see some of the more lofty forms of the Skodra mountains, while at each step onwards the country immediately around us became richer and lovelier, and the hills more craggy and abrupt. The mountains, on our right, were covered with thick woods, containing, we were told, magnificent oaks; but, for want of roads and carts, only the small ones reach the shore. All these villages are now Mussulman; but having been originally Christian, the villages continue to keep the feasts of Christmas and of St. Nicholas precisely in the same manner as the Christians do. I scarcely remember a prettier ride than this. The vales were full of hamlets, which seemed rich in cattle and flocks; while fruit trees hung bending over the road, laden with apples, pears, pomegranates, walnuts, &c. And the fruit reminded me, as we came in sight of the sea, that this was the Pashtrovich district,

which, till only a very few years ago, belonged to the Vladika of Montenegro.

As we turned, after five hours' riding, through a low pass into the lovely little plain of Antivari, with its beautiful abrupt mountains, I regretted much that I could not ride over to the quaint picturesquely-placed town: but a trading steamer had been requested to wait for me, and we hastened down to the beach and stopped at the miserable Agenzia of the Austrian Lloyd's Company. I had here to say good-bye to my pleasant companion Captain Strahan, as, his leave having expired, he was to return to Corfu in a passenger steamer in the evening, while I went on with my servants to Ragusa in a dirty luggage-boat. The Captain's astonishment at having a passenger, and that passenger a lady, was quite inexhaustible. The voyage, which should have been five hours, lasted, owing to a heavy headwind, nearly nine; but when we reached Gravosa he was still sitting staring at me with his mouth wide open, and an unsmoked cigar in his hand. Once or twice the man at the wheel spoke to him, but he only gurgled an indistinct answer and went on staring.

And so ended my delightful tour in Montenegro and Northern Albania.