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MONTENEGRO AND ITS BORDERLANDS.*

By W. H. COZENS-HARDY, M.A.

IN bringing to the notice of the Geographical Society Montenegro and its Borderlands, it is with some degree of diffidence that I hazard the suggestion that on a district of Europe it is possible to say "anything new that is true, or anything true that is new." I feel bound, moreover, to apologize for drawing attention to the fact that this Society, after more than half a century's existence, has not rendered my task impossible by having already performed it. But this fact is not to be evaded; and it supplies the reason—may it also be the excuse?—for a paper on Montenegro and its Borderlands. The district, then, is still, to all intents and purposes, unknown. Maps, if they exist at all, are chiefly interesting as imaginative studies. Mountains are marked with a vagueness which scorns details; islands appear where no islands are; rivers which run south on the map, run north in reality. But the interest of this region is not confined to its topography. The politician here has many an enigma to unravel. Ethnography can find no greater variety of races, no more curious manners and customs; while ballad and epic verse—still in process of growth—may attract the student of literature.

The more immediate object of my third visit to Montenegro last year was to find the solution of a problem which had for some time perplexed me; namely, what had become of the Montenegrin frontier since the treaty of Berlin. Blue books were silent on the subject; the Foreign Office had no information. The original European Commission

* Paper read at the Royal Geographical Society, March 12, 1894. Map, p. 480.
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had settled the Eastern frontier between the Lake of Scutari and the sea, had surveyed some part of the frontier to the north, and had then adjourned *sine die*, without completing its labours. Rumour suggested that the various powers concerned had been busying themselves in tinkering their respective frontiers on their own account. My own fascination for this problem is not shared, I imagine, by every one. I may, however, say that a fortunate combination of circumstances enabled me to find its solution, and to fill up the gap in the political geography of this region, at any rate, to my own satisfaction. To my own faith in the merits of this solution I will not attempt to make converts in this paper. I would rather give some general account of the countries and their peoples; and, in the first place, of Montenegro.

The chief interest of the voyage down the Dalmatian coast consists in the relics of Roman and Venetian splendours with which it is lined, and the magnificent scenery of that Austrian fjord, the Bocche di Cattaro. From Cattaro, the last Dalmatian town, the road to Montenegro winds up the steep mountain side in endless zigzags. Above these, soon after crossing the Montenegrin frontier, the view extends over the Bocche di Cattaro and the Herzegovinian mountains on the one side, and the Adriatic coast on the other; and at night, when the shore lights are reflected in the water 3000 feet below, the impression is most striking. In a moment, however, the scenery changes. Turning the corner, there opens out a large rocky basin, completely shut in by limestone mountains. Imagine a circle of hills rising 400 feet all round; the rocks bare and grey, except where a few stunted beech or oak trees break the monotony. Let these hills enclose a floor of earth, in which a few crops are visible. Scatter over the flat ground and on the slopes of the hills, at intervals of a quarter of a mile, a few one-storied, one-doored, one-windowed huts, the walls of stone, the roofs of straw. The result is the characteristic Montenegrin village in the characteristic Montenegrin landscape. Diminish the size of the hills; decrease the area of the ground they enclose; put in patches of maize the size of a tablecloth, and potato-fields no bigger than a handkerchief; combine hundreds of these side by side at elevations of 2000 to 3000 feet; connect them by tracks three feet broad, winding over limestone boulders, and covered with a loose, sliding surface of limestone blocks of all sizes;—there you have Montenegro. Water is nowhere to be seen. There are only two rivers in the country. The principal one—the Zeta—disappears into a chasm on the plain of Nikšić, and reappears out of the ground, miles away, at the head of the Zeta valley,—the one valley, and the only fertile part, of Montenegro. Passing the monastery of Ostrog, the modern village of Danilovgrad, and the old Turkish fortress of Spuž, the Zeta joins the other river, the Morača, at Dukle, where Mr. Munro, of Lincoln College, Oxford, spent some weeks last autumn conducting the excavation of the old Roman town of Dioclea, the

supposed birthplace of the Emperor Diocletian. The Morača, rising in the mountains north of the Morača monastery, flows between stony banks along which no track leads. The two rivers, which below their junction bear the joint name of Zeta, cross the plain of Podgorica, and so reach the Lake of Scutari. One other river should, perhaps, be added to the list—a short stream which makes a mysterious appearance from a huge unexplored cavern at Rijeka, and, after a swampy course of three miles, is swallowed up in the lake. Montenegro exhibits the ordinary peculiarities of similar geological formations. Rivers suddenly rise, fully formed, from the rocks, and disappear as suddenly. It is the same in all the Karst district. This absence of water produces strange results. For

FIG. 1.—A MONTENEGRIN VILLAGE.

drinking, the people use old rain water, which is generally stored in petroleum tins, invariably made in Russia, but as invariably bearing the English inscription, "Best refined petroleum;" or else they use snow. For myself, I have preferred the pangs of thirst to the pleasures of drinking in September the dirty melted snow of the preceding winter. There is a Montenegrin saying, that when God was creating the world, He carried the rocks in a sack. The sack broke over Montenegro, and all the stones in it fell on that unhappy land. Whatever may be the merits of this legend as an explanation, it is certainly a picturesque and accurate description of the geographical features of the country.

Beyond the limestone basin above the Cattaro zigzags, in which lies

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the village of Njeguš, there suddenly comes into sight over the dreary wastes of rock in the foreground a view of welcome beauty—range after range of the distant Albanian mountains never free from snow, and at their foot the broad expanse of the Lake of Scutari. The next large basin holds Cetinje, the capital. A collection of 200 small houses on each side of one long street, the village has few qualifications for a metropolis. It lies in one corner of the principality. It is not as large, nor as important commercially, as Podgorica or Nikšić. The only reason adduced for keeping it is, that to leave it for Europe is so easy. I use the word “Europe” deliberately; for, according to local usage, Montenegro is not in Europe, nor are the Montenegrins Europeans. When I reached the capital last July, the whole country was preparing to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the earliest Slavonic printing press in the country. In 1493, before either Oxford or Cambridge had a permanent press, the Montenegrin ruler, Crnojević, set up a printing establishment at Obod. Books were printed there at that date, some of which I came across by accident in the old monastery church at Čajnica, just over the Bosnian frontier. In honour of this anniversary, universities and learned societies of Europe, the University of Oxford included, sent addresses of congratulation, while the Clarendon Press gave the Prince the appropriate present of a collection of books as specimens of modern English printing.

During these *fêtes* the centre of attraction was the square opening out of the main street of Cetinje. On one side is the modern palace of the Prince; on the other stands the old palace, the usual name for which—“the Billiard Saloon”—is a lasting evidence of the impression left on the minds of the people, when their late Prince Danilo imported a billiard-table and played on it in this building. Between these two palaces stands a large tree, beneath which the Prince displays himself every afternoon, and administers justice to his subjects. In this square, and in the streets as well, the populace were singing and dancing for a week. Of the dances there were three varieties. One, the “zetsko kolo,” was danced by Albanians from Podgorica; fifteen of them, standing in an incomplete ring, slowly circled round, singing the words of a song in honour of Albanian prowess, composed by the Prince to satisfy his new subjects after the war. All these dancers were in full dress, the most remarkable part of which is a petticoat reaching to the knee, made of white linen, 60 yards in width. The weight of this costume—and I speak from personal experience—is very great; but the more yards in the garment, the greater dandy is the wearer. Another dance, the “cermničko kolo,” consists of a ring of men or women with linked arms, who circle round, singing and jumping simultaneously into the air. Of this, the most complicated form, which I have only seen once, consists of two rings of men, one inside the other, with a third on the shoulders of the inside ring, who in

the usual way sing and jump. In the third variety of dance, locally called the "oro," or eagle dance, two men or a man and a woman inside a ring of singers jump into the air, waving their arms and uttering shrill cries, supposed to resemble the eagle's shriek. The name of this dance is no doubt derived from the Greek word *χόρος*, which appears in the Roumanian "horo," and the shrieks of the dancers have been introduced to accommodate the dance to its supposed connection with the Montenegrin word for "eagle." To the disinterested spectator at a safe distance, the most effective variety of this dance is when it takes place on board a rickety boat, and the performers, in addition to the usual peculiarities of the dance, fire off revolvers and wave their yataghans or swords in the air as they jump. The opportunity the *fête* gave for observing the varieties of Montenegrin costume was unique. From Nikšić one afternoon came in 150 horsemen all wearing breast-plates of silver and gold; while Podgorica and Dulcigno sent bands of the Mussulman Montenegrins all in their peculiar dress. The national costume, always worn, whether at home or in war, is particularly striking. It is made up of a red embroidered waistcoat under a long frock coat of pale green, white, red, or blue; loose baggy blue knickerbockers, with knee-boots or white stockings and hide shoes; and round the waist a belt of silk, which always holds a revolver, generally a yataghan, and sometimes an extra knife or pistol. On the head is worn the peculiar Montenegrin cap. This is small and circular, black on the sides as a sign of mourning for the overthrow of the old Servian kingdom at the battle of Kosovo 500 years ago; red on the top to signify the blood shed to avert that defeat; while in addition to the letters "N. I.," i.e. "Nicholas the First," the gold semicircle of a rising sun denotes the ultimate triumph of a new Servian power. The spectacle of the town crowded with brilliant costumes of all colours, worn by men of imposing height and magnificent carriage—the Montenegrins are probably the finest race physically in Europe—was exceedingly picturesque. Nor does the women's dress lack grace and charm, though, with its black and white hues, it is more sober, as befits the workers. In Montenegro it is the women who do the work. For the men, war is their chief occupation and their first thought. To this is due the fact that the rhapsodist of the Homeric type is still to be found among them. At evening in any Montenegrin village, the epic bard can be heard chanting songs—handed down from father to son—and accompanying himself with the "gusle," a one-stringed violin. The singer chants in tones our scale does not recognize, until every particle of breath is exhausted from his lungs. Then with a loud gasp he takes in more air, and without a pause continues his song. The bard is a privileged person. He is the only man who is allowed to beg from place to place—all other paupers are rigorously confined to their own village—while, if blind, he has the right of sitting on the palace

steps to sing. It was remarkable, as showing the strength of the poetic feeling of the people, that the greatest enthusiasm during the *fêtes* was aroused by a blind bard, who sat on the palace steps and sang of the recent wars with the Turks. He was listened to by the crowded square in strained silence, only relieved now and then by rapturous bursts of applause. On the eve of the principal day of the *fête*, there was a magnificent illumination of Cetinje and its amphitheatre of hills, when every peak was brilliant with countless lamps of clay and petroleum.

For the following day the programme was a long one. After the presentation of the addresses to the Prince, there were two services, one a funeral service in memory of the founder of the printing press, and the other a service of thanksgiving. Inside the chapels of the palace and the monastery while these services were being conducted, the gorgeous colours of the ecclesiastical vestments, the brilliant uniforms of the foreign representatives, the state dress of the Prince and his family and of the Montenegrin officials, composed a picturesque and effective scene. A banquet in the open air, at which 2000 people sat down, and during which some thirty-two speeches were made and some horseraces, the first ever held in Montenegro, brought the day to a close. With the following day began an excursion into the interior to Podgorica, a large commercial town, half Turkish, just north of the Lake of Scutari. Everywhere along the road private houses and local communes had brought out of their best. Every village provided a banquet, speeches, and dances; and the most lonely roadside hut never failed to have a table in front of its door, spread with bread and meat, wine and raki, the national spirit, which any one was free to take. The largest banquet took place at Podgorica, where the tables were laid in the open fields. The following day was occupied by an excursion to the small island of Starčevo, in the Lake of Scutari. Here the programme consisted of a service in the tiny church, a banquet of fruit, and a dance by the Albanian-speaking women, bareheaded in the blazing sun. Cetinje was reached the same evening; and such was the end of the *fête*. Throughout the week nothing had been said that could give offence to any other nation. The semi-national, semi-literary character of the celebration was entirely kept up. Personally, I can only congratulate myself on the good fortune which made me a spectator of these *fêtes*. It enabled me to see a genuinely Montenegrin festival, observed with the national customs; and, more than that, by bringing me into contact with people from all parts of the principality, it immensely facilitated my subsequent journeys in a country where the people are naturally suspicious of the foreigner.

So far I have been dealing exclusively with the old Montenegro. For it is a convenient, though not an absolutely accurate, classification to divide that country into the new and the old. The two are entirely distinct. There is, however, one part of Montenegro which occupies an

intermediate position between these two, and that is the plain of Podgorica, the Lake of Scutari, and the strip of land separating the Lake of Scutari from the sea. The Podgorica plain, which stretches from the junction of the rivers Morača and Zeta above Podgorica down to the Lake of Scutari, is the only part of Montenegro which lies at or near the sea-level. The soil here is fertile; but the possibilities of its cultivation are less than they might be, owing to the annual floods which swamp the low-lying lands on the borders of the lake. The water rises in the autumn, and throughout the winter covers the crops. The cause of these inundations is the incapacity of the river Bojana—the only outlet from the lake to the sea—to carry off all the water; for the rivers rise with great rapidity. In Albania, I have seen a dry river-bed, a quarter of a mile across, turned by an hour's storm into a raging and impassable torrent. The remedy for this evil is the rectification and deepening of the course of the Bojana, in order to regulate the outflow from the lake.

The Lake of Scutari itself, one half of which has been added to Montenegro by the Berlin treaty, resembles the Lake of Garda in size and in the beauty of its scenery. From Rijeka onwards the marshes are full of wading birds. Thousands of duck are found at the head of the lake; while all over it huge white pelicans lazily float.

Between the lake and the sea the country is mountainous, dry, and barren, with the exception of one small valley behind Vir Bazar. From this town a carriage road leads to Antivari, after crossing the Sutorman range of mountains, 5000 feet high. The old Venetian and Turkish city of Antivari stands two miles inland, looking down over the half-dozen houses of Pristan, which lie on the flat shore and form the tiny port. The carriage road goes no further than Antivari. To Dulcigno the path is even worse than usual, and, though at first large woods of old olive trees diversify the scenery, the general characteristics of the country remain the same. Beyond Dulcigno to the Bojana stretches a flat plain, the swamps of which have now been partially drained. Neither Antivari nor Dulcigno is at present of much value as a port. At Antivari there is no shelter; while the minute bay on which Dulcigno lies, is exposed to the full force of the Adriatic.

From the old Montenegro to the new the transition is in places dramatic in its suddenness. I have been on a mountain ridge, where on one side stretched the arid Montenegrin landscape, while on the other lay a new and fairer Montenegro, where the bare rocks yielded to grassy mountains, the treeless slopes gave place to dense primæval forests, and waterless tracts became fertile valleys, lavishly watered by mountain streams. So great is the change from the old to the new. It is in this new Montenegro that the loftiest mountains are. My ambitions had long been centred on the highest—Durmitor. But the mountain always seemed to bring discomfiture, and I almost fear that

the spirit, which according to local tradition haunts every mountain-top in Montenegro, must have determined to baffle my endeavours to ascend it. My first attempt, two years previously, had been baulked by the prosaic obstacle of want of food. I had scoured Podgorica for a supply of tinned sardines, supposed to be caught and cured locally. But the most diligent investigations only discovered—and it was in a ropeseller's shop—one tin. It was an English biscuit tin, and empty. Without sardines Durmitor was inaccessible. Last year I made another attempt; but a week's bad weather dogged my footsteps, and though, drenched to the skin and almost frozen, I did succeed in dragging from Žabliak to the highest summit, called Čirova Pećina, four reluctant Montenegrins, who pleaded wind and rain as valid excuses for retreat, the driving mist hid anything more than three feet away. What I thus lost I can the more appreciate from the charm of the scenery and the beauty of the views of the Durmitor country, which I obtained when making my way to Nikšić from the junction of the Tara and the Piva rivers. Between these two rivers, which flow on each side of Durmitor in deep wood-lined gorges, the lofty grass lands stretch for miles unbroken, and the forty lakes give the district the name of Jezera, or the lake country. I reached the Piva, far from any human habitation, one evening after sunset. The thick forests, clothing the precipitous banks of the defile 2000 feet deep, through which the river flows, gave a sombre awe to the scene. In reply to shouts, there came across the stream, out of the darkness, three logs of wood, loosely bound together with twigs of willow. An aged ferryman propelled them. On this frail craft the horses were sent across one by one. When the turn of us human beings came, the weird solemnity of the scene and the accompaniments of the crossing made it difficult to imagine that we were not souls in the infernal regions, whom this Montenegrin Charon was ferrying in silence across the Styx.

Next to Durmitor in height, and connected with it by the range of mountains along which the old frontier ran, is Kom, at the eastern extremity of the country. Coming from Podgorica, on my way to Kom, and leaving the stony country which extends up to Zatrijebač, I ascended the peak Maglić, which gives the most beautiful view of any in Montenegro, including all the Albanian mountains to the south, and the double peak of Kom and the other Montenegrin ranges to the north. From Maglić the path leads northwards over a narrow saddle—an ideal watershed—thirty feet wide, separating the Velipolje valley, with its steep slopes, from the valley of the Tara to the west. From this point, as I looked over the forests far below me in the valley, I caught sight, for the first time, of the wooden buildings and trees and gardens of that mysterious town whose actual inaccessibility and rumoured fanaticism exercise so potent a fascination upon the Albanian traveller—Gusinje. Near here I received a visit from two emissaries

from that town, sent to find out what I was doing, and to enjoin me not to go to Gusinje. There were good men and bad men there, they told me, but the bad men were stronger than the good; they thought, they added, that I was bringing money and documents to buy Gusinje and hand it over to Montenegro. Near here, too, an old Montenegrin, armed with a muzzle-loading silver musket, appealed to me to prevail on the Prince to allow the Montenegrins to attack Gusinje and take it for their own; they could do so with perfect ease, he said, if only the Prince would give permission. At one part of the route just here, the Montenegrins with me told me, every few hundred yards, blood-curdling stories—how behind that rock the Gusinjotes laid in wait last summer

FIG. 2.—THE KOM RANGE, FROM MAGLIĆ.

(From a photograph by Mr. J. A. R. Munro.)

for one of their own chiefs, and shot him as he went; how on that spot had fallen, three months ago, another victim to the inexorable decrees of the blood-feud. It was here, too, that our tents were hurriedly withdrawn one evening from the top of a conspicuous hill on the Montenegrin side of the frontier, because they were supposed to present too attractive a mark for desultory rifle-practice from Gusinje. The proper method, it is said, of using a tent in Albania, is to pitch it and then sleep under a tree a hundred yards away. The tent, and not its owner, is bullet-riddled in the morning. At last I found myself on the southern slopes of Kom, at Carina, where, at a height of 6000 feet, a camp was pitched, among some Albanian-speaking Montenegrins

shepherds. From Carina the ascent to the highest summit, called Kučki-Kom, leads over the shale and rock slopes of the crater-like basin separating the two main peaks. Along the route were growing all the ordinary higher Alpine flowers, noticeably the dark-blue gentian and the yellow poppy; the edelweiss alone was nowhere visible. Though no stranger had ever ascended this mountain, the climb was not particularly difficult. One thing, however, did create a great sensation, and formed the topic of conversation among the natives for long afterwards. This was the use of a rope by Mr. Munro and myself to ascend the face of a limestone cliff by a convenient gully. The native mind could not understand it. The solitary Montenegrin, braver and more active than his comrades, who managed to reach the top by a circuitous route, refused on any account to be roped in the descent; if either of us fell, he said, we should pull him down too.

East and north of Kom are the Vasojevići people—in their own estimation, and certainly in mine, the flower of Montenegro. In this district, formerly independent both of Turkey and Montenegro, but now under Montenegrin rule, the houses and dress of the people are different from those elsewhere. The houses are not stone or thatched, but have high pointed roofs, the characteristic of all village houses throughout Bosnia. The usual Montenegrin dress is replaced by the tight-fitting white trousers, braided with black, of the Albanians over the frontier. The chief town of the Vasojevići is Andrijevisa—twenty houses in a broad street—charmingly situated among wooded hills, where three rivers meet.

From Andrijevisa I went to Berani, in Albania, visited the Roman remains at Budimlje, and some caves covered with early Christian symbols in the valley of the Lim, and the following day I proposed to cross the frontier by the Šiško lake to reach the Biogradsko lake, in Montenegro. The Governor of Berani came with us to a Turkish block house, not far from the frontier, and sent us on our way with a horse, a load of bread, and an escort of an officer and ten men. We parted with protestations of undying friendship, and as I rode away, he bestowed on me, as a token of regard, a diminutive cucumber. From the block house we went through Alpine pastures, over which were dotted low huts with bark roofs, and which the beech-glades made curiously like an English park. As it got dusk, we neared the Šiško lake. The Turkish soldiers, who were to escort us to the frontier, had no food or shelter; and as neither their officer nor the Montenegrin officer with me could see any serious international objection, it was arranged that the Turks should come to our tents, which were expected to be a few minutes across the frontier. Just after sunset we reached the shepherds' huts, 6000 feet above the sea, which form the village of Šiško. Here, to our dismay, we found from the inhabitants that the tents had been seen pitched close to the Biogradsko lake, five hours away. It was too dark and

too late to go on. If we stayed where we were, what was to become of the Turkish soldiers, who were our guests? After some deliberation, it was settled to quarter them in the village, and to take the chance of a riot. So the biggest hut was prepared for ourselves and the Turkish officer, and the privates were distributed by twos among the other huts. It was a comforting reflection that none of these Turks could speak one word of Montenegrin; nor was sour milk—the only drink—likely to make them unduly excited. So the chances in favour of peace seemed strong. Unfortunately, the horse and bread had not arrived, and a Montenegrin, returning later in the evening, reported that they were two hours distant, on the Turkish side of the frontier. The Turkish

FIG. 3.—ANDRIJEVICA.

officer wished to send his men to look for it. But instead of this somewhat risky project of despatching a band of Turks to scour, at the dead of night, the country of their hereditary foes, a squad of Montenegrins was sent off to look for the bread, and the Turkish officer and his bugler went on a hilltop near to try and rouse the nearest Turkish fort to send back the missing animal. Two attempts proved unsuccessful. No answering bugle notes were heard. Our bugle calls were drowned by the noise of the distant streams and by the slight breeze blowing in the wrong direction. Finally, however, the Montenegrins who had been despatched returned in triumph with the horse and its load, and all the inhabitants spent the rest of the night, crowded into our hut, in feeding

us with roast sheep and apples round the fire, and in singing songs. There was no disturbance during the night. The pleasure of shooting a handful of their foes had yielded to their hospitable Montenegrin instincts. The following morning, the Montenegrins escorted their guests back to the frontier, and refused to accept any payment for all the entertainment they had given them; while we continued our journey to the Biogradsko lake. It lies below the upland pastures of Šiško, and is surrounded by dense forests filled with chamois, deer, and bears—the prettiest spot in Montenegro. On each side the slopes are thickly covered with trees, except where, at their summits, stretch rich grass pastures; while the clear waters of the lake itself, filled with

FIG. 4.—BIOGRADSKO LAKE.

(From a photograph by Mr. J. A. R. Munro.)

trout, reflect the woods that fringe its shores. The first picture of Montenegro—the stony basin above the zigzags—was drear and desolate, characteristic of the old Montenegro. Let me leave that country with the Biogradsko lake, the grass and woods of which are the type of the newer Montenegro.

But before passing to Turkey, let me say a few words as to the people themselves. I should extremely regret if I failed to convey some of my own enthusiasm for the Montenegrin people. I cannot subscribe to the orthodox view that the name of the country—the “Black Mountain”—is derived from the “black hearts” of the people. Montenegro is not like that Armenian town, whose character is summed up in the saying, “Black walls, black dogs, black

mountains, black hearts." And, if I may digress for a moment, let me say that, in my opinion, the colour of the mountains has as little to do with the name. I have seen the mountains from all sides and in all parts. They are not black, but white. It seems more probable that, as the name "Crnagora," "the Black Mountain," is unknown before the reign of Crnojević, the "Black Prince," four hundred years ago, the man gave his name to the mountain, and not the mountains to the men. The people themselves are not a race of savage barbarians. Every man, even the poorest, has the bearing and dignity of a gentleman. Education is universal and compulsory on all children over seven. Theft is unknown, drunkenness unheard of. Women are universally respected; a woman goes in safety where no man dares.

Their government may be paternal. A friend of mine told me one day he had just put five men into prison for some months. I asked him why. For saying, he replied, that they had seen after dark a figure dressed in white, sitting on a grave. Ghost stories, he told me, were bad for public morals. Their government may be despotic; but, though the Prince appoints all officials, it is always the best men who are found filling every grade of office throughout the country. In Montenegro, at any rate, a benevolent despotism has produced results a democracy often fails to realize. Nor ought it to be forgotten that in Montenegro they have long had a complete system of local government. Among this people, 300,000 all told, there are 500 village councils, elected every three years, ruled by popularly elected officials, levying rates, owning land, distributing charities, appointing supervisors of education (whose duty it is to deliver popular lectures on its advantages), and finding the solution of the problem of women's rights in allowing women to speak in the village meetings as long and as often as they may wish, but to vote not at all. The Montenegrin people are in a stage of transition. Pot-shots at Albanians now involve serious diplomatic consequences. They must abandon their Homeric condition, and renounce their epic ideas. The country has acquired ample resources; it is for its inhabitants to develop them. At present, however, they have not shaken off their old idea that every occupation, except fighting, is beneath the dignity of a man. Little has been done to open up their country. Corn is not produced in sufficient quantity to supply the inhabitants, and wine is drunk where it is made. The trade in dried fish and insect-powder—the chief exports—is small. In the timber and cattle lie the possibilities of development. The cattle trade engages the attention of the natives; the trees attract foreign speculators. Cattle are shipped to Malta, Austria, Italy, and France. For the timber nothing can be done, until the access to the forests is improved. It remains, then, for the people to adapt themselves to their altered conditions. On their ability so to do depends the future of Montenegro.

THE SANDJAK OF NOVI BAZAR.

From Montenegro I went to the Sandjak or district of Novi Bazar, which lies on the north-east frontier of Montenegro, dividing that principality from Servia, and extending from Mitrovica—the terminus of the railway from Salonica—north-west to the Bosnian frontier. Strictly speaking, the modern Sandjak of Novi Bazar is smaller than the old one, but it is convenient to use the term in its old sense as including all the country up to the Bosnian frontier. Politically, this district has a peculiar importance. The direct road to Salonica from the west passes through it; the Berlin treaty has revolutionized its constitution. By this treaty Austria was empowered to occupy Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the Sandjak of Novi Bazar; but, as the Austrian Government was not desirous of undertaking the administration of the Sandjak, it was agreed that the Ottoman administration should continue to exercise its functions there. Austria, however, reserved the right of keeping garrisons, and having military and commercial roads in the whole of the old Sandjak; and to this end the two governments arranged to come to an understanding as to the details. A convention was accordingly arrived at in 1879, by which it was agreed that the presence of Austrian troops in the Sandjak should not interfere with the functions of the Ottoman administrative authorities, which were to continue to be exercised, as in former times, under the exclusive and direct orders of the Sublime Porte. In accordance with these arrangements, the Austrian Government has posted its troops at three towns close to the Bosnian frontier, Priboj, Tašlidja, and Prijepolje. Across the river Lim it is understood the Austrians shall not go. There is, then, in the Sandjak a Turkish civil and military administration of all, and an Austrian military occupation of part. The interest of the Sandjak as a political experiment is increased by the absence of geographical information respecting it. Travellers here are few. It is difficult of access; it has no railways and no proper carriage roads.

Coming into the Sandjak from Berani, on the eastern Montenegrin frontier, the first town that I reached was Bijelopolje. My visit solved the mystery of the existence of an apparently important town, called Akova, which, on several maps published within the last ten years, appears some fifty miles to the north of Bijelopolje. Akova has in reality no separate existence. It is the Turkish form of the Servian name of the town, and it was only the imagination of the map-makers, which had evolved two towns from one. The Lim, the only river of any size in the Sandjak, flows past Bijelopolje, and the houses rise steeply from one bank of the river, while in the middle stands out a tall white campanile of a Christian church, which has now become the chief mosque. The arrival of the first hat-wearing strangers was not an event which the people could allow to pass unnoticed. Outside the town, where the

troops were drawn up in line, they were assembled in crowds to gaze. Inside, as soon as the bridge was passed and the tortuous hilly lanes of the bazaar were reached, it was evident that the greater part of the inhabitants had turned out to witness the unusual sight. Every window was crowded with turbaned heads; fezes lined the streets; children stood on all the booths and stared in open-mouthed amazement. Speculators in seats to view the procession must have reaped a large harvest that day. As the people here are almost entirely Mussulman, and the town stands quite out of the world, Bijelopolje is at present perhaps the most fanatical place in the Sandjak. I had accordingly refused to enter the chief mosque, and had contented myself with inspecting the campanile from the outside, for I was anxious not to offend the susceptibilities of the people. There was no disturbance the night I stayed in town. A Christian, however, who left Bijelopolje the day after I did, brought word that the Mussulman population were much excited. In my looking at the outside of the mosque, they saw, he said, an attempt to upset their faith! They could not conceive what dark political motive I had in visiting their town, and, had I stayed there any longer, they would have risen against the European. Fortunately he had gone, before they converted their thoughts into deeds.

From Bijelopolje I made my way to Sijenica, the administrative centre of the Sandjak. It lies on an undulating tableland which extends northwards up to the Servian frontier, and eastwards and westwards for many miles. Not a tree is visible; there are scanty signs of cultivation; houses are few. It is a gigantic pasture land, not unlike the English downs. Hay is plentiful—three crops in the year; and the third crop—in cock—was, when I passed through, scattered over the plain. Each peasant, however poor he may be, has two or three horses and two or three cows. During the six months in the year for which the snow, at this height of 3500 feet, is thick on the ground, the stock require all the hay the land produces, and thus all export of the crop is prevented.

Four or five hours east of the straggling village of Sijenica the undulating grass country comes to an end, and the road to Novi Bazar follows a small stream, which flows between low-wooded hills, broadening out into a basin, in which the town of Novi Bazar lies. By some mistake our usual military escort had been dispensed with between Sijenica and Novi Bazar, and we had been accompanied only by some mounted zaptiehs, or constabulary. This led the Governor of Sijenica to despatch an urgent telegram to Novi Bazar to the effect that on no account was the return journey to be made without an escort of soldiers. There is no cavalry at Novi Bazar; but the ingenuity of the commander was equal to this emergency. A squadron was hastily improvised by turning pack-horses into chargers and

mounting the infantry upon them. As the saddles were two pieces of board meeting at an acute angle over the horse's back, I did not envy the new-formed cavalry their ten hours' jog-trot back to Sijenica.

North-west of Sijenica the character of the country continues much the same. There are still the treeless, grassy downs and shallow depressions. Haycocks were still dotted over the pastures, and herds of sheep and cattle still visible on each side. Towards Nova Varoš the country changes its aspect. The forest region begins, and after passing through pine woods the town of Nova Varoš comes into view, picturesquely situated on each side of a steep valley not 200 yards broad. Nova Varoš, formerly the centre of a large cattle trade, has now been left stranded by the tide of commerce. The large orthodox church, built at the height of the town's prosperity fifty years ago, alone bears witness to the past. But the Christians are now too poor to provide it with bells, and a wooden plank, beaten with a hammer, is used instead. To-day the only industry is the manufacture of carpets and rugs. Every girl, on marriage, takes one or more rugs and a large painted chest to her husband. For this reason each house makes its own rugs, and each house uses what it makes.

From Nova Varoš to Prijepolje is a ride of three hours, part of the way through magnificent forests of fir and beech. At Prijepolje we again reached the Lim. Coming from the East, this town is the first place where the familiar Austrian uniform meets the eye, for here begins the curious anomaly of the double occupation of the country by Austrian and Turkish troops. To Tašlidja the road, along which run two distinct telegraph lines, one Turkish and the other Austrian, each with its separate poles, leads in six hours from Prijepolje. The town of Tašlidja, created by the refugees from Bosnia, lies on bare hill slopes, in which the Austrian soldiers have cut in white letters, twenty yards high, the initials of the Austrian emperor. Westwards a good carriage road leads to the Austrian frontier at Metalka. Here is stationed the most westerly outpost of the Ottoman power in Europe, and here is the boundary of the old Sandjak of Novi Bazar.

From Berani westwards the native populations are Slav. They all talk Serbian, or, as they call it, Bosnian. Bosnian, too, is the diplomatic language; for Turks and Austrians, in the absence of French, find their only means of communication in the Bosnian speech of their subjects. Commercially, the Sandjak is a road with no exit westwards. An impenetrable barrier of customs duties—the fruits of the Austrian occupation of Bosnia—stops all trade across the frontier. Tašlidja, two days' carriage drive from the Bosnian railway at Sarajevo, receives everything on pack-horses from Salonica, ten days' journey eastward. For the traveller the chief obstacle is that he is at once set down by the populace as an Austrian or a Russian. To their eyes there is no distinction of nationalities among foreigners.

Every stranger is an enemy, and has a secret political mission. Not long, for instance, after I had passed through Novi Bazar, an Italian friend of mine, coming from Albania to Mitrovica, wished to reach Novi Bazar. But he was not allowed to do so. Some consuls, he was told, had been there lately altering the frontiers, and the authorities at Novi Bazar had been obliged, in fear of the populace, to despatch them with a huge escort of cavalry, in the dead of night, over the Austrian frontier. Such was the version rumour gave of my own journey in the district.

Throughout the Sandjak I was under very great obligations to the Turkish officials. Their assistance rendered my journey possible; their great and unvarying kindness made it pleasant. The destiny of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar lies on the knees of the gods. One thing is certain: this key of the Balkan peninsula cannot retain its present form for long. The original Sandjak of Novi Bazar has seen many geographical changes; it will see more.

ALBANIA.

I deal last with North Albania. It is the least-known and most interesting part of the Balkan peninsula. The people speak a language alleged to be more ancient than Greek. There are strange rumours of classical remains hidden in the mountain recesses. There is every element of romance to fascinate the traveller. Albania is a country of mountains. Near the sea-coast—to the south and west of Scutari, for instance—there are plains; but in the interior there are range after range of mountains, unexplored and unclimbed. Parallel with the eastern Montenegrin frontier, and twenty miles or so away, lie the many branches of the Prokletija, that is, the “Accursed Mountains.” From Montenegro I obtained magnificent views of this chain. They resemble very much the Dolomites in structure and shape, while at sunset the rocks assume the most marvellous shades of pink and green. Their bare peaks are destitute of any verdure, and show no signs of human life. Even in August the snow still lies in patches on their slopes, though at no point did I observe any trace of a glacier. In this chain lies, in all probability, the loftiest mountain in Albania. There is, however, a rumour of a mountain further to the south, which is higher than any other. The question whether this peak is the highest is likely, however, to remain undecided, as those best acquainted with the country say there is no chance of the mountain ever being approached, as the tribes on its slopes refuse all access to strangers. On the north of the Prokletija rises the river Lim, which, after passing by Gusinje and Plava, crosses Montenegro and the Sandjak of Novi Bazar on its way to the Danube.

In a country like Northern Albania, where not seventy-five per cent. of the people die a natural death, there is not much opportunity for

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commerce. In the plains near the sea-coast maize is grown, and Ipek has some reputation for its wine. The mountain tribes pasture their flocks and till the ground near their homes. In theory the land belongs to the Turkish Government, but, beyond a small payment on the beasts kept, they pay nothing in the way of taxes. There are few more warlike figures than the Albanian mountaineers. Their dress varies according to their tribe; but all invariably carry a rifle and wear a belt of cartridges, while the full-dress armoury consists, in addition, of two silver pistols and a curved sword, or yataghan, worn in the belt. The majority, whether Catholics or Mussulmans, shave their heads, except one lock of hair on the top, which they allow to grow long. Even in tending their sheep, or in sowing their fields, or in guiding their creaking tumbrils, drawn by bullocks and piled high with maize, no Albanian allows himself to be parted from his belt of cartridges.

I had long wanted to get to Gusinje, the large town already mentioned, situated in the middle of an amphitheatre of mountains belonging to the Prokletija group. Unfortunately, this particular part of the country was in a more than usually disturbed condition last year. The cause of this was a certain Mula Zeka, a person of whom it is difficult to obtain any definite information. I have talked to official Turks—civil and military—to Albanians and Montenegrins, and no two give the same account of this mysterious character. To some he was the Robin Hood of Albania. He did good to the poor; he had never harmed a single creature; he had even made roads where no roads were. To others he was the lowest type of a ruffianly brigand. One and all, however, agreed that Mula Zeka, an upstart plebeian of recent wealth and strong in the number of his family, that is, of his cousins and his uncles, could not brook the idea that he was not the equal or superior of a certain Bushara Bey, the head of an old aristocratic family, less prosperous now than once. Bushara Bey was on good terms with the Turkish authorities; Mula Zeka, consequently, was not. Last year the Government ordered Mula Zeka to appear at Ipek. This he declined to do; and when several governors and three battalions of soldiers were sent to Ipek to catch him, he went to Rugova. This place, probably the most inaccessible in the whole of Albania, is an isolated mountain; the only entrance is a narrow track in the rocks. It is inhabited by a tribe who have no communication with the outside world, nor allow the outside world to have communication with them. Having taken refuge here, Mula Zeka spent such leisure time as he had at his disposal, so I was told, in lying in wait for me with two hundred men, in the hope of diverting the attention of the Government from himself. I did not know this at the time, and therefore did not appreciate at its full worth the anxiety of the Turkish Governor of Berani, who knew how matters

stood, when we had left Berani for a day or two and gone eastwards along the frontier. He sent a zaptieh after us to tell us not to go near Rugova. The zaptieh got drunk, and, when he returned without delivering his message, the infuriated governor told him that, if the Franks did not return by sunset, on his head would fall the penalty. That evening, all unconscious of our part in the drama, we rode into Berani just as the sun was sinking, and the zaptieh was saved.

As far as Djakova the country was in a state of great excitement, and divided into two factions—for or against Mula Zeka. Gusinje was strongly in his favour, and no man of any of the neighbouring tribes had dared to go there all last summer. The moment was therefore most unpropitious for my chances of effecting an entrance, and I was in the end unsuccessful. But as my efforts to visit the place are so typical of the conditions and methods of travel in this part of the world, I may briefly allude to them here. The accident of a couple of Montenegrins being killed near the Gusinje frontier, and a consequent commission to inquire into the matter, gave me the opportunity of getting a letter conveyed to the Governor of Gusinje, telling him that I proposed to come to that town. This unhappy individual—who spends most of his time confined to the barracks, for the Gusinjotes will not let him out—answered me a month later that he would consult his chief at Ipek. A Montenegrin doctor at Andrijevisa, who had once been summoned by the Gusinjotes, under a safe conduct, to see a patient in the place, had promised to do what he could for me. But my chief hope lay in a Turkish official of an old family from Plava, who undertook to take me into Plava and back again uninjured, even though I had killed fifty men of that town with my own hand. The Montenegrins were strongly against the attempt, but finally the Governor of the Vasojevići gave me a “bessa” or “pledge of safe conduct” in Serbian to the leading man in Plava, whose acquaintance he had made politically. This curious document, which, as I did not use it, I afterwards opened and read, was as follows. Of my friend who was with me and myself the governor said, “They are travelling over the world for their pleasure. They are my personal friends. Wherefore I recommend them to thee as my friend, that thou mayest receive and attend upon them well, and that they may be in safety. For I have told them that thou art a good and honourable man, and that with thee, as with me, they are in safety. Wherefore I yield them unto thy charge and the sure protection of thy covenant.” Once in Plava—where report said were ruins of the old Roman town—I should be able to get on the two hours further to Gusinje. Every arrangement had been made. But at the last moment my Turkish officer was sent away on duty. With him vanished all my hopes of getting into Gusinje.

The division of the country into tribes, and the universality of the blood-feud, are the great obstacles to a traveller in Albania. But though

the blood-feud makes travelling difficult, yet without the blood-feud travelling would be impossible; for the system has some advantages. Treachery is unknown. The word of an Albanian may be implicitly trusted. If your deadliest enemy comes into your house, you must give him bread and salt; so long as he stays inside, he cannot be touched. All the details of the blood-feud are regulated by an unwritten code, called the law of Dukadjin, administered in each tribe by the chief and the old men. Of the provisions of this code, the following are instances: "If a man be killed while under the *bessa*, or pledge of safe conduct, of another, he who gave his *bessa* to the murdered man shall avenge his death." "If a man would be sure of his journey, it is enough that he be under a *bessa*, especially under the *bessa* of a chief or noble." Again, "If a man uses his arms against another and wounds him, but does not kill him, he shall pay a fine of £15 to the chiefs of his tribe. He who robs a traveller on the road shall pay £30 as a penalty; while he who steals beasts shall pay £5."

In connection with the blood-feud one of the most interesting and picturesque of recent events in Albania took place a few months ago, when there was a solemn reconciliation between the Albanians and Montenegrins at Vinicka, on the river Lim, near the Montenegrin frontier. The Montenegrins claimed 87 men killed and several wounded against the Albanians; the Albanians 104 dead and a smaller number wounded against Montenegro. The total of killed and wounded on each side exactly balanced. A battalion of Turkish soldiers and two battalions of Montenegrins met at the appointed spot. On the morning of the day the two armies were drawn up in lines facing each other, at right angles to and resting on the bank of the river Lim. The first part of the celebration was a religious service, in which both sides joined, conducted first by the Montenegrin popes, and then by the Mussulman hadji. Then the formal act of reconciliation began. The leaders of the Montenegrins and of the Albanians advanced, two by two, to the river's edge between the lines of soldiers, who presented arms. Each pair of men held one stone in their four hands, and each pair, on reaching the stream, flung the stone into the river, uttering, as it disappeared, the words, "As this stone is washed away and disappears, so let the blood-feuds between us be washed away and disappear." When the leaders of each side had successively performed this ceremony, the reconciliation was complete. By it the old scores were wiped out, and both sides could start afresh.

Such is the state of society in Albania. Its exploration is possible by conforming to the regulations of the blood-feud. Only thus will any stranger visit those unexplored regions of the Mirdita, of the Mat country or of the Dibra, and reduce the list of the geographical problems in Albania which still remain unsolved.

But now that I have described Montenegro, Novi Bazar, and

Albania, the question may well be asked, What interests have we in them? I acknowledge at once that our trade there is small, the possibilities of its development remote. But the Geographical Society, at any rate, is free from the curse of utilitarian notions. To make a country interesting and its knowledge desirable, it is enough that it should be unknown. But in this district the interest is more than purely theoretical. This meeting-place of East and West contains the key to the future political geography of the east of Europe. To know Montenegro, which, though tiny, has never yielded to the Ottoman power; to ascertain the political cohesion and the national sentiments of the peoples in the Sandjak of Novi Bazar; to discover the still unexplored resources of Albania, and the aspirations of its people, would do much to prevent any treatment of Eastern politics without reference to geography. For there are few parts of Europe where the changes in political geography have been greater, and the geographical knowledge of those who made the changes less. The vicissitudes of the Albano-Montenegrin frontier bear witness to this. The treaty of Berlin added to Montenegro the district of Gusinje, alien in feeling, in language, and in religion. Difficulties naturally arose. Ten years were taken up in settling them, and the frontier was at last drawn in accordance, not with the theories of politicians, but with the facts of geography. Geography asserted its ascendancy; the Berlin treaty gave way. Gusinje was not handed over to Montenegro. Here, at any rate, the politician had not been what he should be—a geographer.

To remove this reproach from this part of the Balkan peninsula, we as Englishmen are particularly qualified. While we have not the obstacle of direct political interests, we have the advantage of the sympathetic friendship of the peoples, and I am convinced that, with time, knowledge, and tact, an Englishman can visit any of the yet unexplored districts of Montenegro and its Borderlands.

Before the reading of the paper, the Chairman, the Hon. GEORGE BRODRICK, said: I am sure we must all regret that our President is disabled by an attack of gout, happily not a very severe one, though enough to detain him at home, and I can assure you that, although I have taken the chair at his request, I feel very unworthy to occupy his place. Happily, my task is a very easy and congenial one: I have simply to introduce to you the gentleman who is going to address us presently, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, of New College, Oxford, who holds the geographical studentship of last year, which, as you know, is offered jointly by the Royal Geographical Society and the University of Oxford. Though geography does not hold quite the place I think it deserves in Oxford studies, I am not sure that it is generally known, at all events I have pleasure in mentioning, how large a number of our young tutors and undergraduates have travelled widely in their vacations and made good use of their opportunities. Of course, most of them have published nothing, but there are a few, like Mr. Tozer and Mr. Hogarth, who have done good work for geography, if not in discovering unknown countries, at all events in bringing the light of modern

SKETCH MAP OF
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA AND NOVIBAZAR

Showing the Route of Mr. W.H. Cozens Hardy.

Route —————

Natural Scale 1:600,000
10 5 0 10 20
One inch = 9.5 miles.

Montenegrin Boundary before the Berlin Treaty
after
Turkish Boundary before
after

The local spelling of names has been followed.

PRONUNCIATION

c = ts j = y.
ć = tj š = sh.
č = ch ž = z (in azure)