# The Struggle for Scutari





M. E. Durham

To Mrs Lucas

with Dick's love.

May 1914.

# THE STRUGGLE FOR SCUTARI

*Photo. by Mr. D. Loch.*

THE AUTHOR ON RELIEF WORK.

# THE STRUGGLE FOR SCUTARI

## (TURK, SLAV, AND ALBANIAN)

BY

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"THE BURDEN OF THE BALKANS," "HIGH ALBANIA," ETC.

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BY THE AUTHOR

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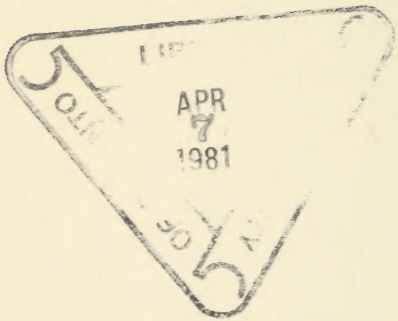

TO

MAUD AND HERBERT

# PREFACE

None who have not lived through the past few years on the spot can imagine the fraud, the treachery, the cold-blooded cruelty and brutality with which the various rulers of Europe have striven, each against each, to obtain, by hook or by crook, possession of, or influence over, that little corner of land in the Near East which has been lately the seat of war, and is now the seat of hopeless misery.

To detail the mass of suffering which I myself have witnessed would take several volumes of monotonous horror. To unravel the complicated mesh of intrigues and lies would be impossible. I have tried only to tell a plain tale of the main facts that came directly under my notice, and in no way to write a history of the war.

One short explanation only I would give. Want of space has forced me to take for granted in my readers a certain amount of knowledge about the scene of action—North Albania—which, as I am aware, is a rash thing to do. Such as desire a detailed account of the country I must refer to my "High Albania." To the others I would state only that Maltsor (sometimes spelt Mallissor) means merely

"a mountain-man": from "mal," a mountain; "malt," mountains—"Maltsor," man of the mountains. Every mountain-man all over Albania, be he Moslem or Christian, is a Maltsor. The Maltsors are divided into very numerous tribes, or clans, of which the Mirdites form one.

There has been so much misunderstanding on this subject that at the beginning of the war a well-known illustrated paper published a photograph of some Circassians labelled "Mallissori, the Albanian shepherd tribe," whereas in the Scutari vilayet alone there are some thirty tribes.

So much for the past. The present is unspeakably miserable. Whole districts have been purposely depopulated, for the aim of most Balkan States is, so far as possible, to evict members of an alien race. These, hunted out from their lands and robbed of all they possess, are appealing now urgently for help. Each month has so far brought fresh victims of racial ferocity.

In conclusion, I would offer most hearty thanks to the generous donors of money and clothing—many of them complete strangers to me—who have enabled me to relieve some of the misery and save a good many lives. And I would beg all readers never to forget that there is one thing much more awful than war, and that is the period which follows it, when such as have escaped a merciful death by shot and shell are left to face starvation on the mountain-side.

M. E. DURHAM.

*May*, 1914.

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## BEFORE THE WAR

"VIOLENCE IS THE ENEMY OF RIGHT"

# THE STRUGGLE FOR SCUTARI

## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY

"The Causes and Motives of Seditions are; Innovation in Religion; Alteration of Lawes and Customes; Breaking of Privileges; Generall Oppression; and Whatsoever by Offending People, joyneth and knitteth them in a Common Cause."—BACON.

"THE Turkish Empire is like a very old house. Leave it untouched, and it may stand yet a hundred years. Try to repair it—move but one stone—and it will all fall down on your head." Thus said to me, shrewdly, an old Albanian in 1904; and the outburst of wild rejoicing which took place when the Turks proclaimed the Constitution in 1908, filled me with little, if any, hope; for it sprang from a false conception of the state of affairs. When, to my amazement, I learnt that the Powers of Europe had taken the Young Turks at their own valuation and withdrawn the sole means of control—the international gendarmerie—from Macedonia, I regarded the situation as already lost. That withdrawal was, in fact, expressly planned by certain Powers, who wished to precipitate the downfall, on the principle of "give him enough rope and he will hang himself," and there were diplomatists who boasted openly that it would hasten the end.

Never to this day have I been able to understand those enthusiasts at home and abroad who believed that the Young Turk could possibly succeed, overwhelmed the new Government with praise, before it had had time to display the smallest capacity for governing, and started its representatives upon their career, surfeited with the most fulsome flattery and with their heads more than sufficiently turned.

Be it clearly understood that I speak only of Turkey in Europe, for of Asiatic Turkey I have no experience.

Consider the situation, and you will see that it was bound to spell disaster. Turkey in Europe, with the exception of the neighbourhoods of Constantinople and Adrianople, contained comparatively few Turks, save officials and soldiers. The native population consisted of Greeks, Bulgars, Albanians, Serbs, and Kutzo Vlahs, with a considerable sprinkling of Jews and Gypsies.

The fierce race hatred felt by each of the four first-named peoples for each other, first enabled the Turk to penetrate Europe. The same hatred, continued from the Early Middle Ages up to the present day, enabled him to remain.

Having subdued one race after the other, he contrived by an ingenious policy of rubbing one against t'other that they should never unite against him. He did not succeed in assimilating them. Perhaps he never tried. Even those who turned Moslem retained their language and a great deal of their racial customs and characteristics.

Partly Turkish policy, partly the great unsolved mystery of race, kept all these peoples separate, as in water-tight compartments.

The Turk was never more than a great soldier. He reached his zenith in the seventeenth century, and then declined slowly. As the Turkish race degenerated and lost power, so did the subject peoples slowly revive. And with them revived their old ambitions—the hates and aspirations of the Middle Ages. Partly by their own efforts and partly by the help of one or other of the Great Powers, Serb, Greek, and Bulgar each in turn emerged from the Turkish Empire. It is important to note that they never all rose together, for the sufficient reason that their ambitions were incompatible. On the strength of their brief medieval empires, each claimed the greater part of the peninsula.

Turkey disintegrated slowly. After the war of 1876-77, only the fact that all the Great Powers, as well as all the small Balkan States, desired to inherit the Turk's remaining European property enabled that tottering Turkish house to stand at all. It was shored up with jealousies both within and without. Whether the short-lived Constitution and Parliament of 1876 would have succeeded better than the ill-fated ones of 1908 we will not waste time in inquiring. Given the many already irreconcilable elements, it is probable that they could not. Be that as it may, Abdul Hamid chose to pursue the policy which had been successful since the Middle Ages. With amazing skill and entire unscrupulousness, he played Power against Power, race against race, religion against religion, and quelled rebellion by massacre.

It was a losing game, and its weak point was the apparently immutable fact the East is East and West is West.

While the Moslem child, if he went to school at all, squatted in the balcony of the village mosque, and droned passages from the Koran in a tongue he did not understand, or, as I have seen more than once, tried to learn writing by inscribing Arabic letters in the air with outstretched forefinger—the hodja setting aerial copies to save the expense of pen and paper—while, in short, the Moslem stood still, Greek, Bulgar, and Serb vied with each other in the number and efficiency of the schools they provided in the Turkish Empire, poured out money lavishly, and fought and intrigued fiercely over the children. Serb, Greek, Bulgar, and Montenegrin teachers, subsidized from without, were each so many centres of national propaganda. Each hated each, and by fraud, persuasion, and bribe tried to attract his rival's scholars. Nor was this all. Missionaries stepped in with religious propaganda. American, French, Austrian, and Italian schools swept up such children as escaped the Nationalists.

The teaching of all these rival schools had one thing in common: all inspired a hatred of Turkish rule. By the time the Turk realized that he, too, must educate his people, he was already hopelessly outpaced.

When the Young Turk revolted against Abdul Hamid's methods, he was the last of all the land to do so. For the Albanians had already struck for national recognition, had demanded the right to have schools, and had been crushed; but were working hard in secret.

By his revolt the Young Turk only hastened his downfall. He stood between the devil and the deep sea, and to those on the spot his failure seemed in-

evitable. Personally I did not expect his European Empire to last till a second parliamentary election.

For if the Young Turk allowed his subjects the freedom promised in the paper Constitution, it was obvious that, freed from all restraint, they would progress even faster than before along their national lines, would absorb still more of the Western ideas which are collectively termed "progress."

Though we will not stop to inquire whither they are progressing, we should note that these ideas are wholly antipathetic to the ideals of the old-school Moslem. The subject peoples, in short, were already far advanced upon a totally different path when the Young Turk started — heavily handicapped. To catch them up was impossible. His only plan was to cripple their development; to retard the growth of the subject peoples, till he himself had gained strength. And this method he deliberately adopted. A Young Turk officer, but just emerged from the military college, explained that he had been there instructed that "the duty of the Government is to consolidate the Empire. Under bad rule, the various races of which the Turkish Empire is compounded were rapidly breaking apart. There are two ways by which an Empire may be consolidated. One is the peaceful way—by means of education. But that takes time—and we have no time. There remains only the second method—the sword. By the sword we must cut down all foes to the Empire. Thus

ALBANIAN MOSLEM CHILD.

only can the Empire be saved. The sword of Islam!"

But this plan was equally bound to fail, for it was almost certain to unite the subject races in a common wrath—a thing Abdul Hamid had skilfully avoided doing—and it was quite certain to alienate the sympathies of Europe.

Nevertheless the Young Turk tried it, and started upon a career of forcible Ottomanization.

An enthusiast explained to me at the beginning of the new order of things: "All is now simplified. The Greek, the Bulgar, the Serb, the Albanian questions no longer exist. We have passed a law, and all are Osmanli."

"You can pass a law, if you like," said I, "that all cats are dogs; but they will remain cats."

But the Young Turk was very young, and imagined fondly that human nature can be changed by Acts of Parliament. He tried to pitchfork Nature out, and she came back again with a repeating rifle.

As for the Great Powers, they squatted on the edge like so many Canutes, and forbade the tide to rise.

To trace the unfolding of events as I saw them is the purpose of this book.

## CHAPTER II

### 1908–1910

"Coming events cast their shadows before."—CAMPBELL.

IN December, 1908, the fateful year of the Constitution, I left Scutari-Albania and returned to London, filled with the gloomiest forebodings. The future was dark. I intended to return to Albania in the spring of 1909 to watch events on the spot. But an accident and consequent illness disabled me completely. I lay helpless, maddened by the thought that the last act of the tragedy of the Near East was about to be played, and I should not be there to see.

Letters stated that the situation was fast becoming intolerable, and that the Chauvinism of the Young Turk would shortly bring about revolution.

My informant was correct. In another fortnight the counter-revolution, as it was called, broke out, raged fiercely for a while, and was suppressed with much bloodshed.

I deeply regretted its failure, for I believed that its success would inevitably cause the landing of international troops to keep order and protect foreign subjects in Constantinople, and that some form of European control would be the best solution of the Turkish problems. But the Young Turk triumphed.

Then came a strongly dramatic touch. Abdul

Hamid was made the scapegoat. Every crime and error of the late Government—and they were many—were laid to his account. The Young Turk ordered him to abdicate.

Of the three men to whom, upon April 27, fell the task of announcing his fate to "Red Hamid"—who had once made all Europe dance to his piping—one was the now notorious Essad Pasha.

Essad is the head of the great Toptani family, the rich and powerful Beys of Tirana, in North Albania.

Already, twenty years ago, when Albania showed strong symptoms of national ambitions, Abdul suspected the Toptani of aiming too high, and of aspiring even to the throne of Albania. He therefore summoned Essad's elder brother, Gani Bey, to Constantinople, and made him his aide-de-camp. Shortly afterwards Gani was murdered by the son of the then Grand Vizier. All Albania believed it was by Abdul's orders.

Essad swore ultimate vengeance. Gjujo i Fais, Gani's devoted servant, wasted no time. He commended his wife and children to the care of his fellow-tribesmen, bought two revolvers, and hurried to Constantinople. And upon the Galata bridge he shot Gani's murderer dead. Throwing his spare revolver into the water, he cried in triumph that he had achieved his object, and awaited arrest calmly.

Essad waited many years, but in the end tasted a vengeance sweeter than he had dared hope. He assisted at the final and abject humiliation of his foe. It was he who spoke the fatal words: "The nation hath pronounced thee deposed."

Abdul abdicated.

The Young Turk party was now free to work its will.

And in April, 1910, one year after this event, better, but far from well, I returned to Scutari.

It was the same old Scutari. The road from Medua, begun thirty years ago, and paid for many times in taxes, was not yet finished. The Custom-house officials still took bakshish and passed my luggage through.

None of the promised works had as yet been begun. Only a new zigzag horse-track showed raw on the side of Tarabosh. It had been constructed by forced labour. Marko, my faithful old dragoman, pointed it out resentfully, for he had been one of the workers. The Turks, he said, wanted to make a fortress there, but Montenegro had protested. It was all labour in vain. We neither of us then had any idea of the mighty part Tarabosh was to play in the near future.

April 27 brought the Sultan's Accession day. The celebrations were very military. An archway decorated with revolvers, rifles, and bayonets was erected at the entrance of the Serai. Scutari looked on, sullen and resentful.

The arch was held to be symbolic. "We must pass under their guns and swords." The garrison marched by, new uniformed, the officers ablaze with gold braid, and upon fine horses.

"Look at them, the devils!" said an Albanian to me. "That is where our money goes. There used to be one big thief; now there are a lot of little ones."

I wondered idly if this were a good definition of democratic government.

The last ceremony I had witnessed at that Serai was the Proclamation of the Constitution, in August, 1908, when the populace flocked in in a frenzy of joy, and believed that "Konstitutzioon" meant freedom from the Turk.

To-day the Turk was more in evidence than ever. Moslem and Christian alike muttered discontent. They would pay taxes willingly, they said, to make roads, to regulate rivers. But to fatten officers, and buy gold braid for them, and "guns to kill us with"—never!

The usual tales of blackmail and false imprisonment, and of imprisonment without trial, were rife. "Justice" was, if possible, worse than ever.

It was rumoured that the Moslems would rise but for the fear of provoking an Austro-Italian intervention.

The Catholics, on the other hand, relied upon Austria with an amazing faith. If a Turkish army dared approach the Christian mountains, there were folk who believed that the Emperor Franz Josef himself, upon a warhorse, would ride at the head of his troops to their rescue.

The Moslems of Kosovo vilayet were already in fierce revolt. They would not pay tax till assured that it would be expended on their own districts. The Turkish assertion that they objected to any form of education was untrue.

"I am going to establish schools," said Djavid Pasha, when interviewed by a journalist. And he went—with many battalions. But at the time that

THE SULTAN'S ACCESSION DAY, 1916

MEN OF HOEI (HEADED BY TOR SOMEN) COMING TO CELEBRATE THE CONSECRATION, 1916

this educational General was teaching the people with artillery, some forty of the children of the insurgents were in the newly opened Albanian Normal School at Elbasan. The Turks proposed starting Turkish schools only. It was to Ottomanization, not to education, that there was objection.

Rumours, wild and vague, of huge Albanian victories poured in, and were officially contradicted. Nevertheless, it was certain that the insurgents were making a plucky stand, and acting well; for they released all the prisoners they took unharmed, and there were no charges of atrocities brought against them by the Turks.

Meantime the Young Turk officers in Scutari swaggered about in new uniforms, got drunk, and talked big of the reconquest of all the Turk's lost provinces—Servia, Greece, Bulgaria—and of the speedy expulsion of the English from Egypt, and the French from Algeria; of the triumph of Islam, and the reconstruction of the Great Ottoman Empire—to be crowned by the capture of Vienna.

They saw visions and dreamed dreams, and meanwhile did nothing whatever either to amend or consolidate such fragments of Empire as still remained to them.

Albania might have been the Turk's stronghold in Europe. For, unlike the rest of the subject peoples, the Albanians had no free brethren without, with whom to desire union.

But the Young Turks, with blind folly, sent their worst officials there, and recklessly stirred up feud and hatred.

The comet appeared, and the minds of all the popu-

lation were filled with the direst portents. For a comet means war and disaster. Anxious eyes stared with awe at its short, smudgy tail.

Sure enough, news followed that Djavid Pasha had wreaked fierce vengeance on the insurgents, had forced his way through Kosovo vilayet, and that Prenk Pasha, the chief of the Mirdites (who for political reasons had been made a member of the Committee of Union and Progress by the Young Turks), had promised to give Djavid and eight battalions safe conduct through to Scutari.

The other Catholic tribes were in wild dismay. They had discussed frequently the desirability of rising in support of the Kosovo men, but had no reserve at all of ammunition. Each man had merely his belt of forty cartridges—some not even that.

They ran hither and thither for advice. One that I know applied thirteen times to the Austrian Consulate, and received no answer.

I was by this time again stricken down by severe illness, and lay in the Austrian Hospital quite helpless between bouts of agony and morphine. And as I lay and writhed, the Albanians came and wept over me, and implored me to get up—to write to the British Government; to the papers; to advise them; to help them to buy arms; to save them from the Turks.

I was dragged into a sitting posture, propped with pillows, and with great difficulty wrote more than one article detailing the state of things and making appeals. But the agony entailed was vain. At that time it was completely impossible to break through

the journalistic ring which allowed no criticism of Young Turk policy to be published.

And to the inquiries of, "Is it printed yet? Do the people in England know?" I could only answer "No," and counsel that resistance would be madness. The priests, too, worked to keep the people quiet; and the Catholics still believed in Austria's intention ultimately to save them, and order Djavid back. Only the Shala tribe prepared to resist, and blocked their passes with felled trees, thereby causing Djavid to take another route.

One Sunday in July the guns of the citadel boomed out a salute, and the astonished populace heard that Djavid had arrived. Though no resistance of any kind was offered, and no order had been given that the populace should disarm, the Turkish soldiers at once fell on all who wore a revolver openly, and tore it away. In their ignorance, they even disarmed officials who had every right to carry a weapon. Scutari was stunned, but could do nothing, and the whole of the town and country population yielded up their arms without protest, with the exception of part of Shala, which refused, and of the Klimenti men, who were allowed to retain theirs in order to act as frontier guards.

Some folk, indeed, rejoiced that all—both Moslem and Christian—were disarmed, saying, "Now we are all equal," and hoping that blood feuds would consequently come to an end.

Had the Turks now "let well alone," things might have turned out very differently, for the populace had so far shown remarkable obedience and goodwill. But the Young Turk rushed on his doom.

Regardless of the fact that by surrendering his rifle the peasant in many cases gave up his most valuable possession without any compensation, the Government at once sent troops to the mountains to make a list of names for compulsory military service, and to collect taxes from rich and poor alike. In the town a retrospective tax to pay for the Macedonian revolt of 1903 was even demanded.

The soldiers who went to the mountains were reported to have insulted the women. The tribesmen were infuriated. "We trusted them and gave up our arms. So soon as we are helpless, this is the result."

Most foolishly of all, the Turks instituted public flogging as a punishment, and more than one well-known Scutarene was flogged in front of the Serai, to the tune of a military band, for disobedience to military orders. A "state of siege" had been proclaimed.

HODJAS.

A blow, by Albanian custom, can be avenged only by blood. All Scutari was furious.

Forcible Ottomanizing began everywhere. The Normal School at Elbasan, which had started with such enthusiasm, was forcibly closed. So were all other Albanian schools. The newly started Albanian papers were suppressed one after the other, and the editors as often as not imprisoned without trial. The Scutari paper existed only because its political articles dealt with nothing more recent than the Franco-Prussian War, and finally expired because it was not sufficiently up-to-date.

It was forbidden to mention in print either Albania or the Albanians. All were now Osmanli.

Meanwhile there were great doings over the border. Prince Nikola of Montenegro had asked for and obtained of the Powers, leave to style himself King. It was currently reported that, when so doing, he obtained leave also to construct a kingdom. "How," asked bazar rumour, "can you be a King without a kingdom?"

And when, in August, the proclamation of kingship took place at Cettigne, rumour, with very certain voice, declared that this step had been taken in agreement with King Ferdinand. He, in the approaching construction of kingdoms, would have Macedonia for his share, and Nikola would reign over Great Servia. King Peter's career would terminate abruptly. This report more than ever excited the Albanians, who were convinced that, if they meant to strike for European recognition and independence, it must be soon.

All was confusion. None knew where to turn for help. Scutari swarmed with spies as never before—Young Turk spies.

Christian and Moslem alike muttered that, had they known what it meant, they would never have laid down their arms. All cursed Prenk Pasha for letting Djavid through. But as the Mirdites, too, had no reserve of ammunition, they could not in any case have done much.

The Catholics were specially bitter. They had relied on Austria, and she had failed them.

Then the unexpected happened. It always does in the Balkan Peninsula. Two or three families of the

Hoti and Gruda tribes, who had relatives over the border, suddenly emigrated into Montenegro, saying they would never serve in the Turkish army. The Turkish authorities, far from trying to conciliate them, first ordered them to return at once, and then, as they did not obey, made matters worse by burning their houses and confiscating their goods.

Such was the situation when I left Scutari in October, to winter in Egypt and endeavour to pick up strength.

The soothsayers were reading blood and war in the bones of sheep and fowls, and the women were wishing that the terrible "hylli m'bisht" (star with a tail) had never blighted Albania.

News followed me that tribesmen from Maltsia e madhe were shifting wholesale into Montenegro, and that neither Turk nor Austrian knew what to make of the situation.

Neither did I until, on January 23 of the new year (1911), I received a letter from Cettigne, from a young Albanian I knew well: "The Government here is paying us four kronen a day. I have spoken with some of the Ministers. In the spring I hope to receive weapons from the Government, and go into Albania as a Komit." Komit, it should be noted, is the Albanian for the Komitadgee of other Balkan lands.

I replied at once that, unless all Albania were armed and rose together, insurrection was madness, and begged for patience. The reply came that all the Maltsors of Scutari vilayet—that is, the Maltsia e madhe, the Dukagini, the Pulati, and the Mirditi—had sworn "besa"; and that not only had Montenegro promised plenty of arms, but that General Riciotti

Garibaldi had done so also, and would send volunteers from Italy as well. In proof of this was given a fly-leaf circulated by Garibaldi, giving particulars about his "Red Shirts." Albania was either to be freed or, at least, to gain autonomy.

Advice and remonstrance were all in vain. On February 11 came news: "All is prepared in Montenegro for a great war. In the spring a great war will certainly break out." And on March 4, from Scutari: "Two Turkish warships are coming to Medua full of artillery and arms. I think they are for the Montenegrin frontier." Further news—that in Cettigne the Albanian rising was fixed for the middle of April.

I left Egypt for Constantinople in March, and found on arriving that the revolt had broken out prematurely among the Maltsors of Maltsia e madhe only, and that they were carrying all before them—had chased away the scanty Turkish garrison and taken Tuzi. This sudden commencement before due preparation was a fatal error, engineered possibly by folk who meant the revolt to fail. It had been intended that Moslems and Christians should rise together. But the Christians having begun, Bedri Pasha, then Vali of Scutari, being very short of troops (there were barely 1,000 men in the Scutari garrison), proclaimed a Holy War, and called on the Moslems of Scutari and the environs to rise and protect the Faith. It is a cry that perhaps never fails. The Moslems flocked to receive arms, and started out.

It was the undoing of Albania. The Catholics received them peaceably, and begged them to remember their promises, and that they, too, were Albanian.

The Moslems, however, excited by their hodjas, chose to fight—and were soundly beaten. On their retreat to Scutari they revenged themselves by burning all Catholic houses on their path. Bedri, having armed them, could not disarm them; and by his fatal policy of setting Albanian against Albanian hastened the downfall of the Turkish Empire. All this I learnt from letters awaiting me at Constantinople. I then saw Ismail Kemal Bey and Dervish Bey of Elbasan. Both were very hopeful that the rising would lead to better treatment of Albania, but they knew few details, for they were not in touch with the north. The British Consulate appeared to know none, and, moreover, in no way realized the gravity of the situation. Popovitch, the Montenegrin Minister, on the contrary, was extremely anxious, which confirmed me in the belief that Montenegro was "deeply dipped."

He complained that his Government "gave him no instructions," and left him "to explain things" to the Turkish Government. If "things" did not go right, he would then be blamed.

Ismail Kemal and Dervish Bey wanted me to start for Elbasan. Popovitch urged me to go to Podgoritza, for he knew the true centre of affairs, and told me to start by the next boat.

Strange how the Fates toss one! I had not intended again to travel or spend time in Montenegro; had vowed especially not to go again to that hotbed of political intrigue, Cettigne, for I had seen too much behind the scenes of the "bomb affair," and been entirely disgusted. The best men I knew were in prison. Everyone suspected everyone else. Each

told me not to trust the other, and all told tales of treachery.

Complaints were widespread of King Nikola's injustice and tyranny, and I believed that war, if war it was to be, would be a desperate attempt on his part to regain lost power and popularity.

I did not wish to be mixed up in Montenegro's sordid internal politics. But in the Near East they say: "You cannot escape what is written for you." Bad weather upset my plan of landing at Antivari, and sent me via Cattaro to Cettigne. Cettigne was all agog. To my astonishment, I found I was expected. To my still greater surprise, I was plunged into an audience with almost all of the Royal Family at once.

That they were all expecting war cheerfully, was pretty obvious. And they expressed delight at my avowed intention of helping my friends, the insurgent Maltsors.

There was much chaff and laughter. H.R.H. Danilo was especially keen on war, and all seemed very pleased with the way things were shaping. It would be best, they said, for me to go straight to Podgoritza. There I should find the Queen's cousin, General Yanko Vukotitch, and be in the centre of everything. The King took a Jubilee medal off Prince Petar and offered it me. I did not want to take it, and in my confusion let it drop on the floor; but one of the Princesses picked it up and pinned it on me.

Princes Danilo and Mirko both set on me for details about Albania and the Albanians, about which they appeared to know nothing at all.

I left wondering what they would have done had I told them I knew that Montenegro was supplying the arms, and with last year's bazar rumour running in my head: "A King must have a kingdom!"


LEAVING SCUTARI.

## CHAPTER III

"In all the world there are no human beings more greatly to be pitied than those with whom Kings and Emperors bait their hooks when they angle for territory."

THE Nationalist Albanians, refugees from Scutari and elsewhere, seized on me at once. They were going into Europe to obtain political support. Autonomy for Albania was their object. They lamented bitterly that the revolt had broken out prematurely. But as it had done so, we agreed that it was urgently necessary to make it a success, and to gain European recognition of Albania and her rights. We argued late into the night, and next day some other guests at the hotel complained to me that it was very noisy.

There had been but a garrison of 1,000 men in Scutari when the revolt broke out. Had the insurgents waited till all the mountains were armed, they could, no doubt, have captured the town, and all its arms and munition. And all the townsfolk, except the Turks, would have been with them. But now reinforcements were hurrying up. So were events.

Tourgoud Shefket Pasha, who was in command, called a five days' armistice, telling the insurgents that if they laid down their arms they would be pardoned, except certain chiefs who were named, and who would be condemned to death. The insurgents called a meeting to discuss these terms, and in so doing withdrew from the strategical points they were occupying.

Then came an unexpected blow. News came up hurriedly from Podgoritza that, though two days of the armistice were as yet unexpired, the Turks were attacking Dechich, the big mountain which is the key to a large part of the tribelands. So fierce was the fight that the firing could be seen and heard from the height near Cettigne.

The battle raged all Sunday, May 14. I hurried down next day to Podgoritza, only to learn that Dechich was lost. The Turkish flag floated on its great bare summit, which towers above the tiny town of Tuzi.

Podgoritza was wild. General Yanko Vukotitch, the Queen's cousin, who was directing operations—a tall man and broad out of all proportion—bulged in his khaki, and ran hither and thither, red with rage. The loss of Dechich upset all his calculations. Albanian and Turk each swore that the other had broken faith. The insurgents stated that at four in the morning, two days before the expiration of the armistice, Tourgoud Pasha had suddenly advanced his men upon Dechich; that the very small force left there, together with some that hurried to the spot, fought till their ammunition was exhausted, and then had to retire under cover of night, as reinforcements could

not get up in time. Tourgoud replied that his troops were situated near bad water; that he had therefore shifted them towards better, which happened to be near Dechich; that while on the march they were fired on, which justified him in rushing the position. To the objection that troops may not be shifted to better positions during armistice, he retorted that the tribesmen were insurgents, not belligerents.

"Dechich must be retaken at any cost," was the order given out at Podgoritza. All insurgents found resting after the first fight were ordered to the front by the Montenegrin Kapetan, and for three days there was sharp fighting. From a blockhouse on the very frontier I saw, in the distance, my first battle, and heard for the first time the swish of bullets that are aimed at live bodies. The long line of khaki-clad Nizams showed most distinctly on the light grey rocks. It occurred to me it was odd that they should be dressed to match the Transvaal.

The insurgents were invisible on the other side of the hill.

The Montenegrin frontier guard growled, like leashed tigers, whenever the artillery boomed. One man flung down his rifle with a curse, and said he'd go home if he might not use it. And the military telegraph ticked feverish messages to Cettigne. But it was the beginning of the end. Men armed only with rifles cannot take a height which is defended by machine-guns and mountain artillery. The insurgents charged repeatedly, and three times rushed the lower slopes, but were finally beaten off.

Rain fell in torrents. When it cleared, we saw, one after another, the houses scattered on the flanks

of Dechich flame up. The Turks burnt all as they advanced. I watched the burning from the plain outside Podgoritza in company with a little party of refugee children. The boys talked big about shooting Turks and the exploits of their grandfathers. But the little girl told gravely the name of the owner of each house as it flared in turn, and added: "Ours is burnt. But, thank God! we saved the cow."

All Podgoritza talked of speedy war, and I learnt, to my surprise, that the Montenegrin guns had already been to the frontier—and come back again. Some said they had been ordered back by Russia. Many deplored it. "To have withdrawn when the Turks had only 1,000 troops at hand, and we were all ready!"

They *talked* war. The little girl with the cow already knew what it meant. So did many others.

I went to every village on the plain with the Kapetan. Every shed, outhouse, and stable was full of refugees—women, children, and aged only. Any man found was at once ordered to the front. I realized that Montenegro was indeed directing affairs.

Those families which had migrated in the winter had brought all their household gear and flocks with them. But those who had just fled from the burning houses were destitute. There were nearly 5,000 on the plain, and the Triepshi Mountains were reported to be sheltering several thousand more.

By May 21 Tourgoud's army had penetrated Hoti, and was advancing slowly, burning all houses on his route, and desecrating the churches. This maddened the Maltsors, for they prided themselves on not having touched a mosque; but they raged impotent, for, so far, Montenegro, in spite of her promise to arm them

all, had only given some 1,500 rifles. They were of a pattern discarded by the Montenegrin army in order that the pretence might be kept up that the peasants sold them surreptitiously to the tribesmen.

In reality they were given out by the Serdar (to give him his native title), Yanko Vukotitch, the Queen's cousin. The tribesmen—whose faith in Montenegro's promises never to desert them till Europe had guaranteed their rights was still unshaken—came nightly to his quarters in the hotel, begging for arms and advice. My room being opposite his, I occupied a fine strategical position.

They were very anxious. Only the "Five Great Tribes" (Kastrati, Skreli, Hoti, Gruda, and Klimenti) were armed in any quantity, and, though they kept up guerilla warfare with great pluck, and continually captured Turkish rifles and cartridge-belts, it was obvious they could not stand long against the overwhelming forces that were pouring in.

The large group of Dukagin Maltsors was almost weaponless. The Shala-Shoshi men, who had blocked Djavid's passage the year before, especially prayed and clamoured for arms.

Yanko dealt them out now in driblets only, and, so he declared to me, at great risk to himself, as, were it proved by the Turks against him, the Montenegrin Government would make him scapegoat.

He lamented loudly the unexpected speed at which the Turks were bringing up reinforcements. He was further angered by reports from the Serb districts of Berani, over the border, that the Young Turks had closed the Montenegrin school there and flogged and imprisoned the priest.

Turkish activity had, it appeared, quite upset his plans. On the other hand, the Turks were losing many more men than the insurgents. Letters from Scutari reported all available hospital space full. At first all wounded were kept concealed in a field hospital at Kopliku; but it overflowed, and Tourgoud telegraphed to Scutari. The telegram was badly muddled in transmission. The Vali read it: "300 prisoners. What shall I do?" and replied: "Send them here at once." The Moslems of the town, still sore with the beating they had received, hurried to the quay to jeer at the Maltsor prisoners, and met, instead, three londras filled with wounded Nizams.

Montenegro grinned at the tale; but Montenegro, it was fairly clear, had "bitten off a larger chunk than she could chew."

The Maltsors, quite innocent of Montenegro's plans, were fighting only for their own autonomy; nor would they follow the orders of the Montenegrin officers sent to advise them.

Each man's object was to take as many of the enemies' rifles and cartridges as possible. "I had a splendid day. I went to battle with only fourteen cartridges and I came home with a belt full!" was the Maltsor's idea of a victory.

An ex-Minister (Montenegro swarms with ex-Ministers) explained to me that, when a general subscription had been collected during the winter for the purpose of raising this insurrection, and especially to pay for the families of the insurgents (for it was only when the safety of their families was guaranteed that the tribesmen started on their wild struggle for freedom), he had throughout combated this wild-cat

scheme and refused to subscribe. The tribesmen, he said, had upset all plans by beginning and attracting the eyes of Europe before Montenegro was ready, and now Montenegro must get out of the mess as best she could.

That Montenegro had not calculated on the torrent of refugees was evident. Montenegrin protests against the barbarity of burning villages were loud. The Montenegrin paper, *Vjestnik*, said sarcastically: "Blessed is the nation that lives in a land where such civilization is carried out. This is the work of an army led by a civilized Young Turk leader!"

Costume. Malisia e madhe.

REFUGEE WOMAN.

None protested louder than big-voiced Yanko, who got red in the face with indignation. And in little more than a year Yanko himself was to out-Turk the Turks! But of that later.

Then the pressing question for me was to relieve some of the miserable victims. A crowd of ragged, poor creatures, their faces already yellow and sunken, poured in daily in hopes of the little ration of maize that was to keep body and soul together. Women who, as well-to-do peasants, had housed and fed me but three years ago, came, destitute and exhausted —sometimes an eight hours' tramp—only to find that the supply had run out. The work was very badly organized. The children starved in the mountains,

while the mothers wandered about the town and begged or starved for two days before the next ration of raw maize was given; and then, so destitute were they, they were often forced to sell it at a loss to buy bread, for they had neither pot nor bake-iron with which to cook it. Where and how to find money I had no idea. Ten pounds of my own were all I had to begin with. I meant to give all I collected to Stanko Markovitch, Governor of Podgoritza, who was in charge of the maize distribution. Scarcely had I given him a pound or two, however, when one after another Albanians, Montenegrins, and foreign correspondents came and begged a few minutes' private conversation, and besought me not to trust Stanko with a penny.

Tall, dark, and sinister Stanko, in a glory of white coat, silk sash, and gold braid, peacocked about Podgoritza—quite the most decorative thing in the place—the centre of a little band of intimates, and avoided by everyone else. His well-cut features were quite expressionless, and his eyes never looked one straight in the face.

"Beware of the serpent, lest he bite," said Podgoritza, and sketched for him a truly Balkan biography. That he was at present engaged in embezzling the maize was the mildest of their charges. He knew no foreign language, and had been raised from the post of elementary schoolmaster to that of Governor of the largest town in Montenegro, because—said popular voice—he had successfully arranged the sudden death of someone obnoxious to the Government. Two of his brothers had been imprisoned for embezzling public funds, it was said, and part of the missing

money found in the family house. It was not a tale to inspire confidence. All friends of the insurgents begged me to keep the money myself, and give it straight to the needy. The foreign correspondents undertook to collect money through their respective papers, on this understanding. It dribbled in slowly from all over Europe, had to be acknowledged in various languages, and the postal orders were cashed by the Podgoritza post-office in the gold of any country that it happened to possess; Russian, Bulgarian, and Austrian gold pieces were mixed with sovereigns, twenty-franc pieces, and big American five- and ten-dollar pieces. There were different rates of exchange for all, and the keeping of the account was a nightmare to me. Nor should I have known how to manage the work had not Fortune sent me a young Scutarene, Kol Martinaj, Professor of Albanian in a college in South Italy.

He gave up most of his time to helping me, investigated cases, and advised where and what to buy. Together we tramped the slums of the town, and scrambled down the cliffs and into the caves along the river banks.

We worked solely for the refugee families; for the wounded were provided for in one barrack of the Voyni Stan. An Austrian surgeon, in Montenegrin employ, was in charge. As the Maltsors almost always fought from cover, the number of wounded was not great; I think fifty was the most we ever had at a time. I had little time save for an occasional visit, to see how they were getting on. There were some most interesting cases though, which showed the strong vitality of the race, and the surgeon used to remark

jokingly that he had no idea before that he could do such wonderful cures.

I recall particularly one man, who had had a part of one parietal bone shot off, and had been left for dead on the mountain-side two days, with his brain exposed. Luckily for him, it was not pecked by the carrion crows. The women rolled him in a blanket and dragged him down some ten hours to Podgoritza. The doctor duly covered the brain and dressed the wound; the man recovered consciousness, but was at first badly paralyzed on one side. In a few weeks, however, he completely recovered, and I saw him walk out of the hospital. A slight tendency to drag one foot was the only sign of his serious wound.

Even more surprising was a man who was shot clean through the head. The bullet went in by the root of the nose, just missing the corner of the eye, and passed out through the occipital, having therefore raked the base of the brain. His wife brought him in unconscious, with a raging temperature. "Meningitis," said the doctor. "He won't last the day." But he did. He lay for three days. His wife declared he understood, because when anything was put in his hand he raised it at once to his mouth. She gave him water from time to time. On the third day his temperature began to fall; and shortly afterwards the doctor arrived one day to find that the wife had propped him up in bed, and that he had eaten over a pound of bread—a present from some of his friends. He proceeded to get well without further trouble. His memory was good, and his mind quite clear; but he could walk only with great difficulty, and one arm remained quite paralyzed.

In all I believe only fourteen died in hospital. One of these was a boy of fifteen; another was a man who went out cured and came back mortally wounded in a fight only two days afterwards.

My only contribution to the help of the wounded was that, later on, I paid for all the drugs and dressings that had been used for them. The Montenegrin authorities, when they heard of my intentions, conceived the brilliant idea of asking double, for they had not forgiven me for keeping the funds in my own hands. I was warned in time, however, and the doctor, who was an honest man, thwarted this by going through his prescriptions for me and checking the amount.

But this was later. Now, in mid-May, life was crowded with incidents. Correspondents swarmed in. Most of them rushed to me for information, and then rushed away again; only the Italians were permanent. I was corresponding for two papers myself. The weather grew hotter and hotter, the white dust thicker and thicker, and each day more exhausting than the last.

Podgoritza was haunted by picturesque figures. Chief among these was old Sokol Batzi, for whom, though he is now blamed alike by Montenegrin and Albanian, I have both esteem and respect. He acted as best he knew, according to his dim lights, and believed that he was acting for the good of his country.

A burly figure, in full Albanian dress, and with great white mustachios like walrus tusks, he was King Nikola's right-hand man throughout the insurrection. Chief of the Gruda tribe, in his young days he was one of Abdul Hamid's famous Albanian guard,

but he left it owing to the way the Turks maltreated his country, and fell, therefore, upon evil times. After the war of 1876-77 he sided with the party which wished for free Albania, and in consequence was forced to flee for his life. Hunted like wild beasts, he and his wife took refuge with his wife's tribe, Triepshi, which was then annexed by Montenegro as part of the spoils of war, and passed a terrible nine months, searched for by both Montenegrins and Turks. Finally, King Nikola, recognizing his value as an influential chieftain, gave him a house and land and employed him largely for Albanian affairs. Sokol served him with doglike fidelity and touching faith, but never forgot his ancestral home across the border. When the Young Turk régime started, he hoped to return to it, but a short visit showed him that was impossible, and he returned to Podgoritza, to play an important part in the drama of the next few years. Poor Sokol! he was used as a cat's-paw. But I believe that he acted in perfect good faith.

Then there was old Mirash Lutzi of the Kastrati, wiry as a mountain cat and wily as a fox, addicted, too, to gold braid and silk sashes—Mirash, indomitable, incorrigible, ready to make the best of the most impossible circumstances, with a jest for ever on his tongue and a laugh always ready. I met him first ten years ago on the piazza of San Marko, Venice. "When I first saw you, you were giving maize to the pigeons," says Mirash. "I never thought, then, I should see you give maize to my own people!" Four times have his house and all his possessions been burnt to the ground, but, phœnix-like, he has always risen from the ashes.

MILAGH LUPI AND HIS SON NIKOLA


SOKOL BATZI

Just a month before the outbreak of the insurrection, he and his family group had established themselves in his third house, a very fine one, with stable and outbuildings; Tourgoud's army had left it a blackened ruin. "Mo matter," said Mirash serenely; "I borrowed money on it from a Turk. The loss is his."

War with the Turks, the liberation of Albania from the Turks, has been the mainspring of Mirash's existence. With this end in view, he has entered, with enthusiasm, into the plots of any and every Power and individual who had designs against his enemy.

Quite illiterate and sprung from a family of no importance, his quick wits and native shrewdness have raised him to a position of considerable influence. His son Nikola, a true patriot and a gallant fighter, we seldom saw, except when he came down to get a wound or two dressed, only to return to the front as soon as possible.

Mehmet Shpend (Mehmet the Raven), a Catholic, in spite of his Moslem name, one of the most influential of the Shala headmen, was another notable. A strange, wild creature, dark-eyed, lithe in spite of his years, decked with silver chains, and the silver and crimson waistcoat, which is characteristic of his district, he played a great part in the insurrection. Of Mehmet it is told that once, when crossing a pass that was deep in snow, he and his wife found a perishing lamb. Mehmet at once gave it to his wife to suckle, and they took it safely home.

Shala had blocked the passes with hewn trees last year, and Mehmet and a small following had subsequently refused to yield up their arms. They took

to the heights, and the Turks burnt their houses as punishment.

To Mehmet, Shala was the centre of the world. He could grasp no external politics. That a great Power should come to Shala's rescue was all his desire; and if only Shala could get a sufficiency of arms, it would be invincible. The whole of Shala-Shoshi was ready, said Mehmet, but Montenegro had not given the promised weapons. He prayed me to ask help of England. Nor could he, nor any of them, understand that England would only give help where she expected gain, for they always declared themselves ready to serve the King of England loyally.

Mehmet, like the rest of the Maltsors, was wholly ignorant of the science of war, but an adept in the art of stalking and sniping small Turkish outposts, and the capture of their rifles and cartridge belts filled his soul with joy.

Most picturesque of all, perhaps, was Gelosh Djoko of Kastrati, whose majestic figure caused even the most hardened war-correspondents to gasp with admiration. Some six foot four in height and splendidly built, his manners were as fine as his proportions—an engaging blend of childish simplicity and natural politeness.

I remember keenly how a loud knocking waked me once at midnight. "A Maltsor must see you at once." It was just at the time of the hardest fighting. I expected news, slipped on a skirt and a greatcoat, and went down barefoot. There stood Gelosh, who had come down from the mountains to say good-bye to his wife and his beloved little son before starting on a wild enterprise.

He came now to commend them to my care, and to ask me to drink a glass to luck with him. We drank solemnly a glass of rakia apiece. "Tu nghiat tjeter" (Long life to you!). He kissed my hand with great style, and disappeared into the night. He and many another mountain man remain pictured in my memory, pathetically medieval beings, who had given up their all in a blind struggle for freedom, and were quite unable to understand that the great engine of Europe rolled pitilessly on, heedless of their fate, ready, in fact, to pass right over them if they stood in the way.

Most of them were old acquaintances of mine, whose hospitality I had received in past years. Now they came, with the most painful faith in my powers, and besought my help. The mere fact that I could read and write, and so communicate with the outer world, was a marvel. I protested vainly that I had no political influence; that a little help for their wives and children was all I could promise. They treated me with extraordinary respect and regard, and gave me the title "Kralitza Maltsorvet" (Queen of the mountain men), a title which subsequently gave offence to both the Turkish and the Montenegrin authorities.

On May 24 Podgoritza was startled. General Yanko Vukotitch was suddenly summoned by the King to Cettigne. Did it mean war?

On the 26th he was replaced by Brigadier Blazho Boshkovitch, owing, it was said, to a protest made by the Turkish Government against Yanko's warlike preparations on the frontier.

Blazho, a heavy, good-natured man of no apparent

intellectual capacity, was, however, a mere figurehead. Yanko went backwards and forwards, and Montenegro worked as it had not worked for many a long year. For thirty-five years Montenegro had sat and smoked and boozed and complained of poverty, while its plains and forests, especially the fat coast-lands of Antivari, remained unworked and undeveloped. Now gangs of men toiled day and night. Artillery tracks to Rumia (whence to attack Tarabosh), to Fundina, and Triepshi, were soon begun, and the long-delayed carriage-road to Andriyevitza hurried towards completion. Had all this energy but been expended in past years, upon cultivation and irrigation, Montenegro might by now have been comparatively well off.

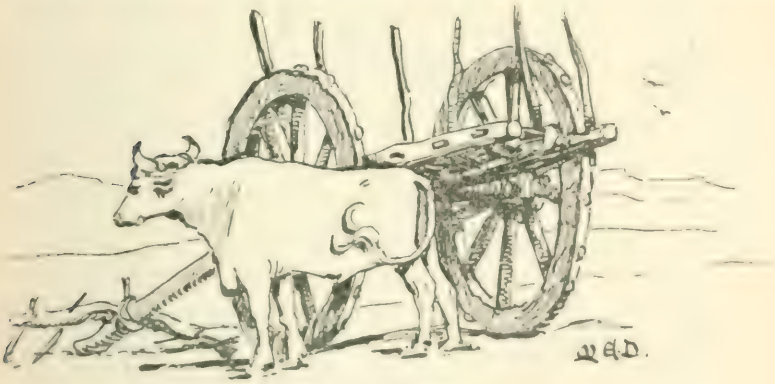
On May 27 we heard that Russia had protested to Turkey on Montenegro's behalf—" that Montenegro was being put to great expense by the quantities of Turkish troops massed on her border." Turkey replied that the troops were not threatening Montenegro, and Montenegro had better mind her own business.

By this time Montenegro had two whole battalions on the frontier near Podgoritza. Pack-horses carried cartridges nightly to the yet roadless outposts, and the guns stood all ready at the Voyni Stan awaiting the completion of the artillery tracks.

My diary of 28th notes: " Rifles are being distributed to all over eighteen, and everyone is agog. We are on complete war-footing. Every man has orders to hold himself in readiness, with five days' provisions and two pairs of opanke (raw-hide sandals), to start at any moment. The Chetas are being raised from 100 to 150 men. Eight to ten Chetas make a battalion. All work is at a standstill. Extraor-

dinary state of nervous tension. Place crammed with staff officers."

That same day the Turkish Consul sold his horse. This at once raised expectation to fever heat. It was a sure sign, said everyone, of his immediate withdrawal and the declaration of war. At night we sat under the mulberry-trees in front of the Hotel Europa, a crowd of officers, officials, patriots, correspondents, and scalliwags, all in a patch of brilliant light from the glaring, spluttering acetylene lamp. Out of the



MONTENEGRIN OX-CART.

darkness creaked and groaned the ungreased wheels of the ox-carts; they filed slowly past, stacked high with ammunition, and disappeared into the night, to crawl secretly up to Kolashin and other border posts. The crowd roared applause. The officers drank to speedy war and boasted endlessly of their valour. And long after dark the hooded crows which swarm in Podgoritza, came flapping heavily home, and settled, with hoarse cries, on the branches overhead. "They have come from the battlefield," said folk; "they are crammed with Turkish carrion."

Grey dawn brought ill news of another fight and ten more wounded for the hospital. The little band of insurgents was fighting hopeless odds. The Turks were now attacking from the Gusinje side as well. Only a small stretch of mountain-land separated the two armies—the natural fortress of the situation, Kapa Brojs. If this height and the pass were lost, Shala and all the Dukagins would be cut off from the five great tribes, and the position, hopeless.

Friends of Albania were cheered by news that Riciotti Garibaldi had armed the Mirdites and South Albania and that they would rise at once; but this soon proved quite false. Only speedy help could save the insurgents. They harried the Turks by ceaseless sniping; but could not hold Traboina against machine-guns, and lost the position and many men. The Turks lost more—but they could afford to.

The tribesmen grew bitter and sore. Bitter with Austria, who first had not protected them from the Young Turks' attempts at forcible Ottomanization, and now, though Protector of the Catholic Faith, allowed their churches to be pillaged and desecrated; bitter intensely with Montenegro, who had promised arms to all and now withheld them; and bitter that Garibaldi's promised help had not arrived. Some dozen young volunteers who had come independently were all that appeared of the hoped-for and promised Italian reinforcements.

## CHAPTER IV

" How the Summer wore away and Hope with it."

On May 30 poor little Padre Ludwig, of Thethi-Shala, came knocking at my door before 8 a.m. Haggard and quite exhausted, he had tramped for four days —crossing three snow passes, and dodging between the Turkish lines. Almost weeping, he threw himself down, saying: " Durami, Durami, in God's name, tell me what to do!" Shala, he said, possessed only some 500 old rifles (those which had not been surrendered last year), so was practically defenceless. A short time ago the Thethi men had gone as usual to buy maize in Gusinje, and were refused by the Turkish Kaimmakam. " We have no maize for Christians. Go and ask your papa in Montenegro!"

" So those who do not rise must starve," said the poor Franciscan; " and if they do rise, they'll be massacred." Montenegro had promised arms, and not given them. He was specially anxious, too, to save his little church from desecration.

Wearily he rose and trudged off in search of Blazho Boshkovitch, and came back desperate. Blazho was not empowered to give arms.

His only chance was to go to Cettigne and entreat the King and Yanko. But he was too exhausted to manage the eight hours' tramp. I fed him, and sent him up in the motor in the afternoon. Cettigne

listened to his plea, and he came back happy with the promise of a thousand rifles for Shala, a considerable number of which were successfully passed up.

It looked as though Montenegro really meant action, for that same night 300 horseloads of small ammunition went up to the frontier.

On June 1 the Brigadier was extraordinarily cheery and hopeful. All Montenegro seemed bent on fighting Turks.

Strolling along the Ribnitza, I saw a party of little boys bathing, and was pleased with the unusual sight; for the Montenegrins are no great lovers of cleanliness. A long howl, like a pack of wolves, made me turn, and I saw a score of big Montenegrin boys dashing down on the naked and defenceless little bathers. The situation was at once obvious. The bathers were Moslems, and the Christians were going to impress the merits of the Orthodox Church upon them with the sticks they brandished in their hands.

The terrified little Moslems dashed out of the water, seized their clothes, and fled. The bigger ones got away. The little ones saw me, and rushed, tumbling and struggling half in and half out of their breeches, to me for protection. It was a close race. I dashed between the two parties, and by great luck grabbed the leading Montenegrin by the collar as he passed. This checked the whole lot. They were indeed paralyzed with amazement. "You cuckoo!" said I. "Twenty of you to attack little boys!" Now, "cuckoo" in Montenegrin is extremely rude.

Before anyone had recovered from surprise, a Moslem man came to the help of the little boys, who

were hastily dressing behind me, and escorted them away in safety.

Two very gorgeous Montenegrins by then arrived on the scene. When I released the collared boy, and explained, they were much surprised at my point of view. "We do not understand these English ideas," they said. "We always like to take our enemies at a disadvantage." I heard later that my action had astonished Podgoritza; but the Moslems were very grateful, for their children had doubtless been saved an awful thrashing.

On June 5 came great news. The Mirdites had attacked Alessio, and were said, quite erroneously, to have captured guns and ammunition. And Mirdita, under the leadership of an Italian Albanian, Tochi, had declared independence.

General Yanko turned up again. He and Blazho both believed the tale. He reported that the Turks had made no progress for five days, and that the insurgents were holding Kapa Brojs splendidly. But the reports of the state of the refugees was worse and worse.

I dreaded going up to the mountains, as, owing to illness, I had not ridden for three years. But on June 10, in answer to an urgent appeal, I decided to start for Triepshi. Sokol Batzi's son undertook to find me a horse, and under the white mulberry-trees I saw a tall grey stallion, Sokol's own horse, awaiting me—a beautiful beast, he said; far too beautiful, thought I, for a middle-aged female who is completely out of practice. I clambered with great difficulty on top of it; it waltzed playfully round, and began to sidle up the street. At that very moment came a telegram from old Sokol to say he was arriving,

and the stallion was to be ready for him. His son was overwhelmed with shame and apologies. An Albanian's promise is a promise. I dismounted joyfully, however, and went off happy on a less valuable animal.

The Triepshi tribe is Catholic Albanian, and was annexed by Montenegro after the war of 1877. But no road had as yet been made into the territory. We rode up the mountain-side, and struck a rough mule-track. It was to be adapted for mountain-guns as fast as possible. Wretched sheep and goats were hobbling on swollen hoofs, and rolling over, gasping and dying, on either side the way. The flocks saved by the refugees from the Turks were smitten with foot-and-mouth disease.

Suddenly round a rocky corner came the heavy reek of stale blood and carbolic, and four wounded, swaying painfully in their saddles, passed on their way to Podgoritza. A man with them shouted there was bad news. Almost immediately a party of tribesmen and Hil Mossi (an Albanian patriot and journalist) came in sight. The tribesmen were going for the bread ration. Hil Mossi was escorting two little Italians who had run away from their home in Genoa to help the insurgents, and had arrived penniless and weaponless. Their fond parents traced them, and demanded their immediate return of the Montenegrin Government. But the boys were so disappointed that they were taken to the front, and allowed to fire a few shots from a safe place before returning. They were now happy. Not so Hil. He brought the news that Kapa Brojs was lost. The two Turkish armies had met. The Dukagin tribes were now cut off from all possible food or arms supply. All was lost—the

situation desperate. Thus Hil, greatly moved. It was all their own bad management, he admitted. He himself had been fighting there for days. They had been starving, and had retired to get food, believing themselves unseen. When they returned, the summit was occupied by the Turks. They tried in vain to retake it—had fought all night.

Hil, lean and brown from much fighting, with a white Albanian cap stuck at the back of a shag of coal-black hair, was a picturesque figure enough. He was, too, the poet of the war, and scribbled verse in his pocket-book even under fire.

We went our ways. The Turks now held the key of the whole situation. Did it mean war ? I saw the Montenegrin military telegraphist putting up a telephone wire along the frontier.

At Triepshi reigned black despair. The fatal weakness of the tribal system was once more shown. The Hoti tribesmen had flocked to the defence of Seltze when they were forced back from their tribe-land. But Seltze rudely declared itself capable of defending its own territories, and bade Hoti mind their own business. Nor would they even give Hoti bread.

The Hoti men, hungry and as cross as a bear with a sore ear, had clambered up the steep side of the valley, and had come to Triepshi for food. One of their number had been drowned crossing the swift Tsem River. The death wails added to the tragedy of the situation.

At night the Turkish watch-fires glowed red on Kapa Brojs, and next day rain fell in torrents. "It always rains after a battle," said the faithful Albanian who accompanied me. "God washes away the blood."

All the houses of Vukli and Boga were reported

burnt and looted. A Montenegrin, one of several who had taken part in the fight, had been killed. Albanians and Montenegrins alike were hopeless.

Sokol Batzi arrived from Podgoritza on his grey stallion, and summoned a meeting of headmen in the schoolroom. Sokol took the chair, and two or three Italian volunteers were present. The Montenegrin frontier commandant addressed the roomful of haggard, war-worn men. It was easy to begin a thing, he said, but hard to carry it through. They had lost all they possessed except their honour. They were famed as heroes. The eyes of Europe were on them. They must act up to their reputation. Nor were they without friends. He pointed to the Italians and to me, and enlarged on the power of our respective pens and rifles. The world would hear of them by my pen, he said. I denied it vainly, and sat sick with misery that such false hopes should be raised. From a military point of view, I felt certain the game was up, and that no more lives should be vainly sacrificed.

The Montenegrin Commandant and Sokol, however, called on them to concentrate in the still untaken valley of Seltze, and hold that, and to continue the struggle for another month. So it was decided. The poor wretches still hoped for European intervention. Nothing could make them believe that Europe would let them sacrifice their all, in vain.

At night I dined with the Commandant and a lot of the insurgents in the Commandant's quarters, which were also the ammunition depot—a great barn of a place, with a yawning roof of smoke-blacked rafters, from which the cobwebs hung in sheets. A fire on

the ground gave a flickering ruddy light, and a dim lamp showed the military telegraph, which ticked incessantly. In the gloom at the end stacks and stacks of ammunition boxes reached from floor to roof. Rifles were piled about. It was the main distribution centre for cartridges. The insurgents came every night for supplies.

We sat on empty ammunition boxes round the fire. A great many insurgents trailed in. Some, deadly tired, threw themselves on the ground, barefoot, soaked with rain and half naked, and slept like dogs. A few squatted around and nursed brand-new Turkish rifles they had captured in fight.

Half a sheep was stewing in the caldron over the fire. We sat round silently, poking slivers of ammunition boxes under it to keep up the blaze. The door was shut and barred; there was no ventilation save the row of loopholes for rifles. The air was stifling.

A Maltsor, stripped to the waist, leaned over the pot to stir it. The firelight played on his muscles, and the sweat glittered on his hairy breast.

Someone tore the shoulder off the remains of the sheep's carcass, spitted it on the cleaning-rod of a rifle, and set it to roast. We watched it quite absorbed. Miserable and hopeless, we gave all our attention to trivialities in a vain attempt to forget the loss of Kapa Brojs.

The Montenegrin Commandant kept up a forced joviality, to which no one responded.

Suddenly Sokol Batzi swaggered in, brave in gold waistcoat and colours; let in a draught of cold fresh air, which woke the men up. Hustled up to me, and slapped most of us on the back. Extraordinarily

confident, he inspired confidence. He directed the cookery. A Maltsor tipped the soup into the only wash-hand basin, beat some eggs into it, and set it on the "sofra." "Dark asht gadi" (Supper is ready). Someone dealt out wooden ladles. We fell to. The men felt better when they had something inside them. Many had tasted nothing but dry bread for weeks—fought on that and water alone.

They sat round and worried lumps of seethed mutton with their white teeth, tore off gobbets from the roasting shoulder, and flung them to me.

As they were satiated they lay down and slept. I went out into the night and a fine drizzle. It was pitch dark, wet, and steamy. Sokol guided me over a wet rough track to the school-house. Unless he knew that Montenegro meant sending strong reinforcements, his confidence was inexplicable.

A woman from the house opposite came crying for bread, one of a crowd of half-starved, half-naked refugees. A child had recently died of hunger.

There were then 2,140 such miserable beings in the immediate neighbourhood.

Our horses, stable-fed beasts, cropped thin grass miserably in the rain. Every shed and stall, and every grain of corn, was needed for human beings.

I visited the refugees next day with Father Sebastian of Hoti, and my faithful guide. The misery was overpowering. Starving mothers were cooking nettles and asphodel leaves for their children, and mixing in a little maize-meal if they could get it.

Owing to the bad organization at Podgoritza, many had tramped thither more than once in vain, and returned empty-handed. I dealt out money to as

many as I could, that they might not go fruitlessly next time.

Numbers of the poor things recognized me, and, weeping, said that I was their only hope. It was inexpressibly painful. Further on at Korito I was told there were five hundred families out on the bare mountain-side, and that more were flocking in.

Unable to cope with the situation, I returned to Podgoritza and reported it to Stanko Markovitch, who was furious, and denied that any misery existed. As I persisted, however, someone went up to investigate, and some improvement was made in the maize arrangements. The luckless Albanian schoolmaster, though, who had given me first information of the state of things, was censured.

It was not till much later that it became apparent that land-grabbing was all that Stanko was intent upon, and that the fate of the people was a matter of entire indifference to him.

Cattapani, an energetic Italian, who played a great part in subsequent events, arrived, ready to fight as volunteer, and acting at the same time as correspondent to the *Mattino* of Naples. He offered to co-operate with me to the best of his ability, and went straight up to the front.

The inrush of refugees from Klimenti was the last straw. They were completely burnt out for the most part. My fund was all too small for the first lot; how to help these was an insoluble problem. I was in something like despair. The caves all along the Ribnitza River were crammed with people. Many were widows and children. Almost all were without the barest necessities. The majority had not a change

of clothing. The weather grew hotter and hotter; the stench was almost intolerable. The children were sickening on a diet of badly cooked maize. The days were roasting. The heavy blue sky closed down like a lid, and the land was white with dust. The nights were sweltering. My room and all the hotel swarmed with blackbeetles, which ran over one at night and drank the sweat, and laid eggs in my clothes. The corridor stank of orderlies. The night air streamed hot through the open windows; myriads of stars stared in like pitiless eyes from the cloudless night sky, and I hated them.

Just as the dawn paled, Nature heaved a sort of a sigh, and a breath of air came over the mountains with the grey light. But by five the women came knocking at the door, "Kralitza, kralitza!" imploring, praying. Sleep was impossible.

In the baking hours of midday, under a wet towel, I was drowsing heavily one day from sheer exhaustion, when the usual hammering began on my door. "A man wants to see you." "Tell him to go away." A short pause, then bang, bang, bang! "He is an Englishman. He says he wants to see you at once." "Tell him he can't." I supposed he was a journalist, and I was sick of them. Bang, bang, bang! again. "The gentleman's card, and he cannot wait." Sleep was hopeless. I crawled miserably downstairs, and, under the white mulberries, found a tall man, who apologized very much for disturbing me. He was Mr. Charles Crane, of Chicago.

He said he wanted to see the condition of the refugees, and had been recommended, when in Constantinople, to apply to me. He wished to leave

early next morning. It had to be now or never. I cursed my luck, but could not afford to lose a chance, however small, so put on my opanke and clambered with him from cave to cave along the river-bank. He was quite imperturbable. I asked if he had seen enough. He said he had. We returned, I miserable at an exhausting afternoon for nothing.

It is darkest before the dawn, however. I had despaired too soon. When I was seeing Mr. Crane off next day, he said he was sorry he had not more to give me, and put a little bag into my hand. I did not open it till I was back in my room, and then found, to my amazement, it contained nearly eighty pounds in gold. It was a miracle. A quantity of people could now be helped; and as if in response to the influx of wealth, came an urgent message next morning early, from Cattapani at Triepshi, reporting that the misery was worse than ever, and begging me to come at once with various necessities. I at once bought 200 kilos of bread, and as soon as it was loaded on two pack-horses, started to ride up with about forty pounds in small coin in my pocket. Arriving late, there was time only to deal out bread to the nearest houses and turn in.

At midnight came a violent knocking on the school-house door. I was awakened suddenly by cries that a telegram had come by military wire, and jumped out of bed in alarm. It was from Mr. Crane, to say that he had paid 10,000 kronen into the Bank of Podgoritza for me.

It seemed too good to be true. I should not have been more surprised had the skies opened and rained down gold. Nor was it the end of Mr. Crane's kind-

ness. From that day onward he sent most generous aid, and many are the people who have to thank him for roof, food, and clothing.

With Cattapani I went early round the refugees, dealing out bread and money. The irregular way in which the maize was given out still caused much suffering. The Triepshi people, on whom they were quartered, suffered, too, greatly, for two extra families were often crowded into a one-roomed hut. And the Triepshi folk, being Albanian, and in many cases related by marriage to the refugees, gave, too, liberally of their small means to the destitute.

Cattapani and the priest of Triepshi described the state of the refugees at Korito as even worse. I planned to go there next day. Meanwhile, we walked to the frontier and a little over, and looked down into the majestic valley of the Tsem, which gleamed far below us. Opposite us, on the mountain-side, was a burning house. Some insurgents clambered up to us and said the Turks had overlooked this one when burning the rest of the valley, and had now returned to it. Turkish tents were visible on the high points. A bullet sang as it passed us, and then a second. I remembered a scarlet blouse was unsuitable when reconnoitring the enemy, and we took cover. An insurgent fired a reply from below.

Another telegram—this time from Mr. Bourchier, of *The Times*—summoned me to Podgoritza at once. I borrowed the church horse, and arrived there late in the evening, very vexed at having to give up going to Korito with Cattapani. Looking back, my life then seems like one long fatigue, spurred up and hunted about by telegrams and journalists.

Mr. Bourchier informed me that the Turkish Government had denied the burning of houses. Tourgoud Pasha, on the other hand, had recently boasted to Zoli, the correspondent of the *Secolo*, that it was being done by his orders. I, having noted in my diary several days when I had seen the burning, wrote a statement to this effect for *The Times*. It afforded the Montenegrins the greatest satisfaction.

URA TAMARA ON THE TSEM.

They were never tired of denouncing Turkish barbarism. And in little over a year they were committing worse, and my communications then had a very different effect upon them. But of this later.

All Podgoritza was excited at the news of Mr. Crane's gift. Both the bank and the telegraph-office had made the fact public. I was at once the centre of a whirlpool of intrigue.

Mysterious warnings were brought me at night.

On no account was Stanko Markovitch to touch it. Ismail Kemal, who, with his secretary, Mr. Gurakuchi, was recently arrived at Cettigne, wished to have it for revolutionary purposes. I was told there were plots to terrify me into giving it up, and so forth; and to all and everyone I replied that it had been given me for the refugee women and children, and that only to them would I give it. If the Podgoritzan and other authorities were not satisfied, they could say so, and I would send it all back whence it came. The Maltsors were always on my side, and on this point I had no further trouble.

But, alas! some foolish individual unknown, to whom to this day I owe a grudge, gave out in the European Press that I had received 500,000 kronen, and had founded a hospital. This brought down a pack of letters from doctors, nurses, and all manner of people wanting employment, and, moreover, cut off all further subscriptions. I had to send costly telegrams to papers of various countries to stop the lie from circulating.

Meanwhile the Albanian leaders were becoming more and more anxious as to Monteñegrin intentions. Some members of the Albanian Committee came and asked me if I thought it would be a good thing to appeal in the name of the Albanian people to the British nation as a lover of justice and freedom. I had not so much faith as they in British unselfishness, but said at any rate it could do no harm. A well-known foreign correspondent therefore drew up a letter for them in French, which was so well expressed and moderate that, when it was submitted to me, I would make no alteration, and agreed that it should

Group of Maitsa'i Madhi men.

be sent not only to Sir Edward Grey, but to all the chief Continental newspapers, which was done. Briefly, it ran as follows:

RÉSUMÉ OF THE LETTER SENT BY THE INSURGENTS OF MALTSIA E MADHE TO SIR EDWARD GREY AND THE LEADING NEWSPAPERS OF EUROPE IN JUNE, 1911.

*Causes of Complaint.*

1. The unjust manner in which the elections are carried out, so that the great majority in the Chamber favours the Osmanli element.

2. The attempt to suppress our national language.

3. The attempt of the Government to impose identical taxes on the poorest and richest districts. "We have seen the Christians more highly taxed than the Moslems, and the taxes enforced without fixed rule, according to the judgment of often corrupt officials.

"4. We do not consider disarmament in itself unjust. But the soldiers charged with it tried to beat us, and we have received no compensation for the arms taken from us.

"5. None of the promises made to us and none of the hopes we formed have been fulfilled. Not even the most rudimentary public works have been begun, and instead of opening new schools, the Government has closed our school at Elbasan, under the pretence it was against religion.

"How, then, are we to make our voices heard? We have no representative in Parliament. We have everywhere been submitted to the rule of the sword, for our discontent has been reckoned rebellion; nor could we

restrain our mountaineers, exasperated by ill-treatment. Insurrection has broken out in our unhappy land. Favoured at first by Fortune, we showed the world that we acted humanely. We released all the prisoners we took unharmed, merely disarming them. Later, when the Turks gained the upper hand, we have looked on shuddering and helpless at horrors which we know not how to describe, but which the world can verify. Our houses have been burnt, our churches bombarded, our lands laid waste, all we possessed sacked and pillaged by the soldiers. Women and wounded have been burnt to death in the houses. We attempted conciliation, and on the occasion of the Imperial Jubilee we addressed a letter to H.I.M. the Sultan, asking for pity and justice, and declaring ourselves his devoted subjects; but we received no reply.* We then continued to fight, not with the hope of defeating the powerful Turkish army, but with the hope of drawing attention to our national cause. We have resisted for three months troops twenty times superior to ourselves. Our brothers in other districts, disarmed and exhausted by recent oppression, cannot aid us. We are now pressed against the Montenegrin frontier, where our miserable families are refuged, camped often in holes in the rocks. Exhausted by the terrible campaign, we address ourselves to the Western Powers, in the name of our children, our families, and our brethren of Albania, and beg for intervention on

* This is a fact. For some reason best known to themselves the officials at Constantinople considered this quite genuine letter to be a practical joke, and never even investigated it. It was one of the many blunders which ruined the Turkish Empire.

behalf of our rights as men and citizens. We beg for a large autonomy, which will permit us to be an active and fertile unity."

Such was the message to Europe. We anxiously awaited results. Existence became more and more intolerable, and time seemed to stand still. A certain grim humour was the only enlivenment. I was prayed to attend a funeral, that of a headman—to please his relatives—and consented reluctantly, for a funeral means too much rakia and heartrending death wails. But at the last moment the relatives sent a hundred apologies for disappointing me. The man was much better. There would be no funeral, after all!

The Hotel Europa was crammed with officers, and orderlies slept in heaps in the corridors. The night air reeked of their sweaty uniforms. At dinner I was almost always the only woman in a crowd of officials, officers, a varied assortment of correspondents of all nations, spies, and Balkan adventurers. As the weather grew hotter and hotter, their tempers grew shorter and shorter, and blackbeetles more and more numerous. Sometimes we verged on war at the dinner-table. Mr. Bourchier, of *The Times*, left to inspect burnt villages.

"He is gone," said a civilian on my right next day. "By God! that man has more power than a whole Montenegrin battalion!"

"What!" howled a young officer on my left—"what! a foreign man with a pen worth more than one of our battalions! You have insulted the army. . . ." There followed incoherent torrents.

He leapt up and went white with rage. Everyone yelled and shouted, some defending one and some the other statement.

I sat tight between the two and grinned, believing that they were less likely to exchange shots if it had to be done across me, and if it were obvious that I thought them asses. Some elder men then intervened, and ingeniously pointed out that I, being Mr. Bourchier's compatriot, was the insulted party. I therefore declared honour to be satisfied by an apology finally offered by the officer for the somewhat hasty adjectives he had strewn about, and the end was peace.

He had intended, he said, no offence either to the British Empire or to Mr. Bourchier. His intention was merely to enforce the fact that no civilian could be likened to the invincible and incomparable Montenegrin army.

Heat, and waiting for war, upset most people; but we escaped a duel, though an Albanian patriot smacked an Italian who called him an Austrian spy, and an inhabitant of Podgoritza broke the head of an Austrian with a packing-case, or some such trifle, for strictly non-political reasons.

While we swayed thus between peace and war, the Turks on June 20 made a fresh move. They offered amnesty for all insurgents who would return and lay down their arms within ten days. These should all be pardoned, and £T10,000 would be allotted as compensation for the burnt houses. If, on the contrary, the insurgents persisted, they should be "pursued and punished." Such was the French version issued to the Legations and newspapers. The Al-

banian version, as posted on the walls of Podgoritza, said, "pursued and annihilated."

The Legations were somewhat disturbed by this discrepancy. The insurgents made short work of the notice. It was posted at noon and torn down within half an hour. Again the Montenegrins expressed horror at the idea of annihilating Albanians, and posed as models of humanitarianism, though they were in a short time to do what the Turks merely threatened.

On the 24th Saddreddin Bey, the Turkish Minister, arrived from Cettigne to negotiate with the Maltsors. Sokol Batzi was the mouthpiece of most of the heads, and was for no surrender. Saddreddin made various verbal offers—promised to extend the armistice, increase the compensation money, and so forth—to all of which the Maltsors, led by Sokol, replied: "Where is the European guarantee?" That same evening we heard artillery; the armistice did not count for much.

Saddreddin left to convey the answer to Tourgoud, and the Maltsor heads went up to Cettigne for instructions as to the next steps to be taken.

Next day the Turks sent another emissary, Imail Hakki Bey (who had come as adviser of the Young Turks Committee at Scutari), a hooky-nosed, tawny-skinned man, with dark, unclean eyes and a smug manner. With him came Kapetan Mark Ghioni, of the Mirdites, sent by his cousin, Prenk Pasha, the hereditary chief of the Mirdites. The Mirdites were very angry with Prenk for not assisting them to rise, and Prenk was reported to be in a state of terror. On the one side were the Young Turks, prepared to

punish him if he revolted, and, on the other, the Mirdites, threatening to kill him if he did not. Austria was said to have reduced his pay by half, and he was all for peace. Ibram Effendi, the Mayor of Scutari, also arrived on a peace errand. They called on the Maltsors not to imperil their fatherland, the Turkish Empire. Ibram said he had been horrified by articles in foreign papers speaking of its speedy downfall. But to all this the Maltsors refused to listen, and continued to demand a European guarantee of their rights.

Beppi Shantoya, the son of my old dragoman in Scutari, arrived quite worn out. He had been all the time in Mirdita, had assisted at the futile attack on Alessio, and had now come by night over the Shala Mountains, dodging between the Turkish lines. Soon after came Tochi, who had pluckily organized the Mirdites, but who had failed for lack of weapons. He and some others told a piteous tale of how day and night they had kept watch for the arrival of Riciotti Garibaldi's promised weapons and reinforcements till they were sick with despair. Had they not relied on this help, they would not have risen. If they could but have armed all the Dukagins, success would have been certain. On the contrary, by publishing in the papers that a revolution was being planned, Garibaldi, said the Maltsors, had spoilt their chances. So angry were they that they execrated his very name. Weapons more weapons, was their cry.

General Martinovitch and Brigadier Boshkovitch and two Russian officers appeared suddenly one day, and went off to reconnoitre the frontier. So did an

Austrian journalist, who, on his return, reported that in case of war the Montenegrins would not have a chance, as the Turks had occupied every position of importance along the frontier, and were extremely well placed. Together with the force of Ehtem Pasha, they must be about 50,000 strong.

Thus the Austrian. What the Russians thought I never knew, but I always fancied that it was in consequence of what they saw that Russia gave Montenegro no encouragement to make war. Meanwhile, our "English letter" had been favourably noticed by several papers, and it was not till then that the Montenegrin Government knew of the step which had been taken. The King was annoyed, for, as then became evident, he did not wish the Maltsors to be anything but pawns in his own game. He telegraphed for the two leading Albanian committeemen, and demanded the full text of the letter. As luck would have it, the original was in my hands.

A messenger came to my room at midnight and banged and hammered on the door. As I was always being knocked up at midnight by silly telegrams from newspapers, I flatly refused to get out of bed or pay any attention to the explanation that it was urgent Government business, and the clamouring messenger withdrew; nor was it till next morning that I learnt what was the matter, and sent off the letter in a hurry. I was told later that the King believed that I had instigated the appeal to the British Government; but he was mistaken.

Events followed fast. On July 4 no less a person than Monseigneur Sereggi, Archbishop of Scutari, appeared, with his secretary, Dom Luigi Bunci (now

Bishop of Kalmeti), and most of the mountain Franciscans and priests. Tourgoud Pasha had sent for him to the camp at Kopliku, and had there asked him to go straight to Podgoritza, and, as head of the Catholics, persuade the tribesmen to make peace.

"I replied," said the Archbishop, telling the tale, "that the Maltsors had already given their reply;

A FRANCISCAN OF THE MOUNTAINS.

that it was a question between them and the Turkish Government, and that three Turkish envoys having failed, it was not likely I should succeed. All the while I was speaking the military band was playing. When it stopped, I heard the 'bom, bom' of artillery. 'What is that?' I asked. 'A little gun practice,' said Tourgoud. And he started the band playing with renewed vigour, to hide the fact that, though

there is supposed to be an armistice, a fight was going on not far off. He would not accept my excuses, said I was a Turkish subject, and must do as I was ordered, so here I am."

"Then you have no hope of success, Monseigneur?"

"Who am I to succeed when so many have failed?" said the Archbishop modestly. "My duties are purely spiritual, not political."

And as I knew the Archbishop to be a patriotic Albanian, and not easily shaken or frightened, peace seemed no nearer. He proceeded to Cettigne and dined there with the King, the Turkish Minister, and other guests. His Majesty, according to one of these others, was in the highest spirits, and chaffed the Turk unmercifully about his wives, whereat the Turk looked black, and His Majesty Nikola gayer than ever. From this we deduced that His Majesty Nikola must have "something up his sleeve," and that the European guarantee must be in sight.

Back came the Archbishop to Podgoritza, and day after day received deputations of tribesmen. The rank and file were so anxious that no terms should be accepted without European guarantee that they declared that if the heads made terms they would not submit to them. They became very democratic, and swore that, as they had shared all the suffering, their opinions, too, must be taken. All insisted on being heard, and the proceedings draggled along from day to day.

Saddreddin Bey, the Turkish Minister, smooth, plausible, and Oriental, came down from Cettigne to receive the reply. A very noisy meeting ensued.

The Maltsors demanded loudly, "Our rights, and

a European guarantee." Saddreddin declared that the Turkish Government promised all they asked, and that the Archbishop would stand as guarantee; whereupon the Maltsors, wildly excited, shouted: "We accept the Archbishop as head of our Church. We have the highest respect for him as such; but we cannot take him as a guarantee of our political rights, nor the head of any Church—not even the Pope himself and the Sultan together." Saddreddin vainly tried to read the terms; they shouted him down. "We want the Powers! We want the Powers!"

Saddreddin, angry, cried: "You do not understand what you are talking about."

They cried: "We understand very well. We are not children."

He was laughed down, and returned to Cettigne, leaving the tribesmen hopeful and exultant. The Turks' evident anxiety that they should make peace, and King Nikola's even greater anxiety that they should not, inspired them, poor things! with the highest hopes that their sorrow and sacrifice had not been vain, and that speedy protection was coming from the Powers.

The rakia flowed freely; the noise was deafening. Two plucky young leaders came and swore to me, their eyes blazing, that they would offer up themselves to buy liberty for Albania. They would creep right into the Turkish camp at Kopliku, and kill Tourgoud in his tent. They would themselves be killed, and Europe would understand, and free Albania. Nor could I persuade them that this step would in no way help matters.

"Well," said I to the Archbishop, "you have tried

every means—even rakia—with the Maltsors, and have failed."

"Even with rakia I did not expect to succeed," said he; and he twinkled. But he added seriously: "How can I recommend these, my people, to again trust the Turk without guarantee? He has been trusted too often." He gave a sad account of the want and misery which already existed as a result of the insurrection through all the mountains. Unless help came, the future was very black.

The Maltsors started sniping the Turkish army with renewed energy, generally stalking the small outposts at night, and picking off men by the camp-fires. Mehmet Shpend, with his men, crawled one night between two outposts, fired at first one and then the other, and started them firing at each other, each thinking the other was the enemy. Back came Mehmet, chuckling, to ask for more cartridges. War seemed inevitable. The armistice had but a few more days to run.

Tourgoud declared to an interviewer that he could no longer hold his men, in the heat and drought, with nothing to do, and nervous with incessant sniping. It must be settled one way or the other.

On July 8 I received a copy of the *Morning Post*, containing an interview with Prince Danilo, who had gone to London for the Coronation, and (to quote a letter I wrote at the time), "though I read it all alone in my room, I shouted with laughter over it. I did not know he possessed such inventive power."

"We Montenegrins," said His Royal Highness, "who most sincerely desire peace speedily re-estab-

lished and lastingly assured, do all we can by giving both sides friendly advice . . . to arrive at conclusions satisfactory to both parties. My father is most anxious . . . to prove to the Turks the sincerity of his desire to live with them in true friendship." On the attention of the Crown Prince being drawn to statements current in the Turkish Press, to the effect that "Montenegro is organizing and sustaining revolt by providing the Maltsors with arms and ammunition, and by granting permission to her subjects to join the insurgents," His Royal Highness said: "I can assure you positively that these stories have no foundation of fact. There is, however, some sort of justification. . . . About 100 Montenegrin Maltsors joined their brethren across the border. . . . The Montenegrin Government immediately ordered their subjects to return at once under menace of severe punishment. . . . It is, indeed, quite possible that some Maltsors have bought arms and cartridges from private Montenegrins, but the Government had nothing at all to do with it." "Is it true that your country is actively preparing for war?" "I can assure you that no active preparations are going on." He added: "It grieves my heart to see these brave, uncultured mountaineers suffer and die for the liberty of having their own schools for their own children." These remarks, when his stout cousin, Yanko, was actively engaged in supplying arms, keeping up the revolt, and preparing war, and when a Montenegrin officer and several men had been wounded, were so impudent as to border on the sublime. His tender grief on the subject of Albanian schools, when coupled with the fact that such schools were also prohibited

in Montenegro, was beneath contempt. The interview is only one more example of the folly of the interviewing system. At its best it panders to vulgar curiosity; at its worst it is a wholesale disseminator of lies.

On July 11 Cousin Yanko came to me and stated triumphantly that everything was in readiness. The artillery track to Suha finished, and the guns going up that night; the road to Rumia also finished, and the big guns going there; ammunition sent to all the frontier posts. He took war for granted, and asked me if I would stay in the town, or come into the camp with him as a correspondent. He added, laughing, he could take Scutari in ten days. The camp was under cover of the hills close by, and artillery drill had been going on there regularly for some time.

The armistice was to expire that night. Next morning the Turkish army might be over the border. It was but two miles from the frontier, and about 30,000 strong. I withdrew most of my relief fund from the bank in case of sudden emergency, and sat and waited through what seemed an endless afternoon, with the Italian and Austrian correspondents ready to fly to the telegraph-office and wire our respective papers that war was declared. All Podgoritza palpitated with excitement, and the minutes dragged slowly by. At last came official news from the Turkish Consulate : twenty days' further armistice. The Austrian said "Damn!" All his war-kit was wasted. The Montenegrins said the Turks dared not fight, as they knew that, so soon as the first shot was fired, the whole of the Balkans would blaze.

Bulgaria would begin at once and support Montenegro. There was general disappointment.

Next day all was flat and the Montenegrins as cross as bears. The sudden relaxation of the strain of expectancy had let everyone down with a whump. The insurgents still clung to hope, as news of risings in Djakova and in the South cheered them, and they caught at any straw. The Albanian Committee in America telegraphed to me, and I replied that, unless immediate help came, the cause was lost. A hodja, a plucky and patriotic Moslem from South Albania, arrived at Podgoritza, and started on foot, through the Turkish lines, to Kosovo, to beg the tribesmen there to rise before it was too late. We saw him off on his perilous journey one night.

America sent money to pay the insurgents' bread-bill. They had fought for four months on bread and water only, with the rarest exceptions. The fighting-men's bread was not paid for by Montenegro, though made by a Podgoritza baker, from whom men from each tribe fetched it every few days.

The hot days throbbed by, and no news came, either from the South or from Kosovo. We grew sick with deferred hope. The leaders of both districts, more especially Ismail Kemal, failed to realize that this was a supreme moment for Albania, and that now or never must her boundaries and rights be defined. They intended to plan a larger revolution later on. I cabled in vain to leaders in America.

The insurgents were furious with Ismail Kemal. Until he came to Cettigne he was quite unknown to them. He gave them no help at all, but was now said to be posing, in the European Press, as a leader.

Then came news of a rising at Djakova. The hodja's journey was succeeding. Ehtem Pasha was wounded, and the Turkish Kaimmakam killed. This spurred the flagging hopes of the insurgents. They made a sudden successful raid, and cut off the water-supply of Tuzi.

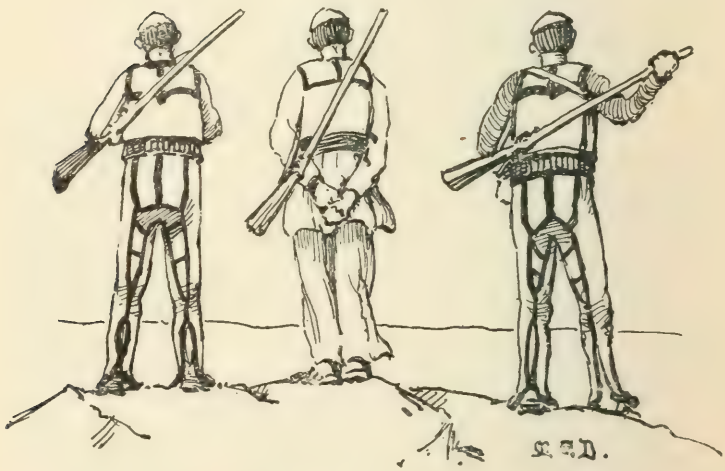
Though the insurgents had still fight left in them, the state of their families was worse and worse. Quite half had not had a change of shirt for two months. Water was short, soap an impossible luxury, and the stench sickening. I went from cave to cave and shed to shed, tramping with Martinaj through all the neighbourhood, dealing out shirting cut into lengths, needles, and balls of thread. In the heat of midday I tore and folded hundreds of metres of stuff, packed it and sent it to the mountains. Money for relief work was coming in fairly well. The toil of administering it, however, was very severe, for it was not large enough to permit of hiring assistants or of taking a special room.

An Italian doctor, Dr. Negri, arrived as a volunteer worker, and at my request went up to Triepshi and did admirable work among the refugees, who were sickening in quantities from bad food and exposure. He sent the worst cases to me for special help, and I supplied him with all the drugs he wanted. For lack of other accommodation, the wretched, filthy people swarmed into my bedroom daily. Though I removed the only rug and drenched the floor with carbolic, it was all of a hop with fleas; and at night the rank stink of the bale of raw hide for sandals half choked me.

So passed July. I remember it as a nightmare in

an inferno. Peace seemed no nearer. The Archbishop left on the 22nd, and was seen off by General Martinovitch and his officers. A speech, made by a Scutarene, thanked the Archbishop for his work, and stated that no peace would be accepted without good terms guaranteed by Europe. The Archbishop thanked all for his kind reception; he had failed in his errand, and left the future in the hands of God. The Podgoritzans cried, "Zhivio Kralj Nikola!" (Long live King Nikola!), and the Archbishop and his attendants drove off in one of Podgoritza's ramshackle flies.

It was significant that none of the heads of the Maltsors took part in this demonstration.



MIRDITE OUTPOSTS.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT BETRAYAL

"Put not your trust in Princes."

THAT Yanko and Martinovitch and all their staff were delighted with the way that the Archbishop had conducted the affair, was obvious. They did not wish, nor did they intend, to have peace. Yanko boasted he would be in Scutari in ten days, and Tourgoud retorted that he would take Cettigne in a week. The armistice was to expire on August 1 (1911), and we counted the hours and minutes. Military preparations were pushed on actively, and the weary insurgents were urged to fresh efforts. In spite of Prince Danilo's assertions, Montenegrin soldiers were sent to reinforce them, and took active part in the sniping.

In the very last days of July some more rifles were dealt out, and a band, led by the man who had sworn to kill Tourgoud, was fitted out and started, with that object, on the last night of the armistice.

Nothing indicated that the insurrection would shortly end. To our amazement, on August 2, Mr. Butler, of *The Times*, and several other correspondents arrived early, and announced that all was over, and a crisis at hand.

At noon a royal motor rushed into the town bear-

ing Saddreddin Bey (the Turkish Minister), Gjukanovitch (then Minister of the Interior), Dushan Gregovitch (Marshal of the Court), Mitar Martinovitch (of the Artillery), and last, but by no means least, big Yanko.

The car buzzed in a cloud of dust to the Turkish Consulate, and the stunning report spread that peace was to be made at once—not only peace, but that the Turk's terms were to be accepted without guarantee. Had a Turkish shell landed suddenly in the town, it could not have caused such astonishment, for it was a possibility which we had discussed often enough.

Only last night weapons had been given out, and now—peace, without a guarantee. It was incredible, impossible. The chiefs were summoned at once. They met and squatted, each tribe apart, in rings on the ground near the schoolhouse, to discuss what to do. The news was a knock-out blow. They were stunned. Week after week they had obeyed King Nikola's orders; seen their homes and goods plundered and burnt; starved, fought, and suffered; and now, in spite of all solemn promises, they were thrown over.

The Gruda men, with old Sokol Batzi as President, sat on the school steps. They all rose as I approached, as though I were a headman, and gave me a seat at Sokol's right hand.

Briefly, the terms offered by the Turkish Government were—That an Albanian-speaking Kaimmakam should be at once appointed at Tuzi, and that he should be a Christian; that the right to carry arms should be allowed to all the insurgent tribes, except (as always before) in the towns and bazars; that

Albanian schools should be opened by the Government; that roads should be made in the mountains; that money to rebuild the burnt houses should be given; that maize, sufficient to live on, should be dealt out till next harvest, and that every male over fifteen should receive one pound Turk on returning home.

The tribesmen listened, growling, as Sokol detailed the terms. And what guarantee was offered? None of any sort.

They blazed up in a fury. They had not suffered and bled and lost all they possessed to be swindled thus! King Nikola had promised them European support and freedom—had promised never to desert them till they won it; and a European guarantee they must have.

"Mon Dieu! ils ont raison," I muttered to young Sokol Batzi, who was next me.

They did not understand the words, but caught my meaning, and said flatly they would hear no more about terms, and rose.

Muttered wrath came from the groups of Hoti, Kastrati, Skreli, and Klimenti. Everyone refused point-blank. They said it was a ruse to entrap and murder them. Quantities of tribesmen were present, as they had come from the mountains to receive orders at the close of the armistice.

At 6 p.m. the heads were summoned to meet the Montenegrin authorities on the drill-ground before the Voyni Stan. The heat had parched it to an arid, dusty waste. A canvas awning was hastily put up for the officials, for, even at 6 p.m., it was still very hot. A thick crowd gathered round, tense with

suppressed excitement. Yanko and Saddreddin presided.

Saddreddin spoke Turkish, which not a soul understood, and then called on Mihilaki Effendi, the newly appointed Kaimmakam of Tuzi, to read the terms in Albanian. He did so, haltingly; for, with the usual Turkish slop-dawdle, Saddreddin had only had them translated at the last minute—and then by a Greek!

The crowd appeared to understand nothing, listened in silence, and gave no sign.

Yanko angrily demanded a reply of old Sokol. The heads murmured together. Then Sokol said they could give no answer till the rest of the insurgents had been consulted. For months and months the Montenegrin Government had told them they must accept no terms without a European guarantee. Now they did not understand.

Yanko refused to take this as an answer. He was obviously losing his temper rapidly. So certain, indeed, had the Montenegrin Government been that the Press agents in Cettigne had already telegraphed to the papers that the insurgents had at once obeyed King Nikola. And here they were, resisting to a man.

Sokol, much agitated, asked if he and some of the heads might go to the Turkish Consulate and talk things over with the authorities.

Yanko accepted. The crowd moved across the plain to the Consulate, murmuring, but quite orderly. Only at the door of the Consulate, when Sokol Batzi, Dod Prenchi of Kastrati, and old Ded Jon Luli of Hoti, passed in, they cried loudly, "Do not betray us, do not betray us!" and for a moment seemed

about to lose control, but restrained themselves, and walked quietly away, and again held meetings.

Poor people! Their indignation and distress were painful to behold. I have never witnessed a more poignant scene. They repeated again and again that Montenegro had promised to stand by them till a guarantee was obtained. The King himself had so sworn to many; had promised to assist them with troops, if need was. They implored me to inform England, to protest against this treachery, to save them. It was painful in the extreme. I went back late to the hotel, tired out.

Gregovitch captured me at once. "You are the only person who knows their minds. Are they going to yield?"

"No," said I. "And I do not see how you can expect it, after all you have said and done."

He seemed very much upset, and said: "They will have to. The maize-supply is to be cut off the day after to-morrow."

I expressed great disgust at the cruelty of this, as even if they yielded, it would be impossible for so many to return in so short a time. He was angry. We said no more.

An American correspondent came and suggested that I should act as intermediary, and urge the tribesmen to accept the terms; but I, knowing, better than he, that up till now the Montenegrins had done all they could to prolong the struggle, refused to now play Montenegro's game for her. Next day a scare was spread that there was an outbreak of cholera, and this was used to get up a panic against the further presence of the luckless refugees.

The Montenegrins were furious at the disobedience of the Maltsors. The Maltsors were even more furious at the Montenegrins' treachery. With so many thousand armed men, all infuriated and further excited by the extreme heat, the situation was hourly more dangerous.

Wearied out and anxious beyond all words, I kept out of sight, that my opinion might not be asked, and spent most of the day behind a haystack with Kol Martinaj, discussimg the hopeless situation, cursing Montenegro and all the Powers, and devising impossible schemes.

A blood-red sunset, that seemed all too appropriate, darkened into night before we returned to the hotel for supper. We ate alone and in silence. In came Yanko, red-faced and much agitated, shut the door after him, and said: "You must listen to me, you two. I implore you in God's name to act, and act at once." Kol and I stared amazement at one another. I replied to the effect that this was the Montenegrin Government's own affair, not mine; that there was much that I did not understand—broken promises and so forth—and I therefore could not act.

Yanko blustered, seemed distrustful, finally sat down heavily, and expounded the whole situation. Things had all gone wrong. He had been all for war. The right moment had been lost ; the Turks had taken all the positions. Those fools of Maltsors had begun too soon! With all the eyes of Europe attracted, what could one do? The Powers now insisted on peace: if Montenegro disobeyed, she was lost. The Maltsors must be sent back somehow—

he and all the Montenegrin authorities had failed to persuade them——

I wondered how often in history a foreign female had been asked by a Commander-in-Chief, who was also a Queen's cousin, in the name of God and his Government to make terms for him with insurgents he had himself incited. Yanko, Martinaj, and I argued up and down for two hours.

The tension was extreme. Yanko stooped to threats. If the insurgents did not at once obey, all those who were within the Montenegrin frontier (and almost all had come in for the parley) would be forcibly disarmed. This would mean bloodshed undoubtedly.

All food-supplies would be cut off at once. They would be starved out and forced to go defenceless, and crave pardon and bread of the Turk on their knees. Turks were Turks. Who knew what might result?

And if they consented to go, where were the guarantees for safety? If they consented to go at once and quietly, Montenegro would see that they went with 6,000 rifles and a supply of cartridges for each man. This in itself was a guarantee of safety. If we needed more guarantee—well, the terms had been submitted to every Legation. The Turks must fulfil them.

It was midnight. I was exhausted. There was no other possible course, so, believing rather in the 6,000 rifles than the Powers, Martinaj and I consented to do what we could.

I rose to go. But, no—the co-operation of the mountain priests had to be secured. Father Sebastian

and Father Matteus and one or two others were hastily summoned. They, too, as patriotic Albanians, were reluctant to act. The tale began again. At 1 a.m., reeling with fatigue, I got up to go. Yanko stopped me with, "You must begin early to-morrow. Be ready at four!"

The night-air outside was as suffocating as the room. I sweltered, sleepless with the responsibility I had taken. Whichever I advised, resistance or obedience, I might have the blood of these people on my conscience, and I had no help to turn to. I had written to editors and diplomatists often enough to know that it would be useless; and there was no time to lose. Sick with sleeplessness and disgust at the way in which Montenegro had made a cat's-paw of the Maltsors, and then, having failed to extract chestnuts, cast them back to the enemy, I came down into the yard at six in the morning, and found poor old Marash Hutzi, the old doctor man of Hoti, awaiting me. A brave and very honest old man, he had told me often in the course of the insurrection that he did not mind the suffering if God would let him see freedom before he died. That the Powers would cast them back after this terrible struggle, that Montenegro had given them up, dazed and stunned him. He could no longer think, he said; he had come to me for advice. I told him there was only one way—to yield and go back. He answered that he and all his family would obey. They would accept my word, and none other's. He cheered up, for he had shifted the responsibility on to me. We went into the dining-room, where Yanko, Blazho, and some other officers were waiting nervously.

They were intensely relieved to see an influential headman, and begged me to hurry up.

Martinaj and the Franciscans came. They too agreed that nothing else could be done, and our duty was to save bloodshed.

Already at that early hour the sun was blazing. The drill-ground by the Voyni Stan was deep with dust. Martinaj and I went from one group of desperate and fiercely indignant men to another, and plunged into the thick of them, I speaking, he translating, arguing, entreating, commanding. The air was foggy with dust, and stank with sweat.

The men yelled and shouted. They had been betrayed; they would have justice; they would never go back; they would prefer to fight and die here. The King had promised a European guarantee. They must have one.

Yanko rushed suddenly from the Voyni Stan, and said he must have an answer by noon. I said he could not; that he must give us till the afternoon, and go away at once. I seized his arm and tried to shake him, and sent him off.

Neither the Franciscans nor Martinaj and I were making any headway. The Klimenti men in especial were furious. They said: "You are going back to your country, where you will be safe, and you order our women back to be violated by the Turks. You would not go back to Albania for the winter yourself."

There was nothing left for it but to promise to go with them. I promised. Even this influenced only a few.

At midday, exhausted and hoarse, we gave up.

The Montenegrins were furious. I feared the worst. But by the afternoon the tribesmen had had time to consider the terms. Martinaj and the Franciscans once more addressed them, and at four o'clock, reluctantly and sorrowfully, they consented.

Yanko, intensely relieved, made a speech, in which he hoped that they would have all their national rights, and that Martinaj should be Professor among them in an Albanian school.

Blazho and Yanko and General Martinovitch thanked me on behalf of the Government for my services, and my promise to accompany the Maltsors. But the iron was to be struck while hot. Carriages were ordered, and some twenty headmen, including Mirash Lutzi, drove off to Tuzi, fully armed. An excited crowd saw them off.

The fateful day was over. There was no going back from the step we had taken. The reaction was horrible. Martinaj turned white. We were both overwhelmed with the responsibility we had taken, and could barely be civil in reply to the fulsome thanks of Yanko, Blazho, and Martinovitch.

The Klimenti men sent me a message that they went back entirely on my responsibility, and that if aught happened to them, their blood was upon my soul.

It kept me awake all night, and at 3.30 a.m. I had to get up and crawl down the street to meet Mr. Butler, of *The Times*, and Mr. Leland Buxton, of the Macedonian Relief Committee, in order to fulfil my promise of crossing the frontier.

In the grey dawn we drove over the plain to Tuzi, where Mihilaki Effendi, the new Kaimmakam, received

MALE OF [illegible]

us very affably. I confess that at the time I distrusted his promises, as I regarded him only as a tool of Saddreddin Bey (a man for whom I had great contempt); but he turned out to be a good man. I found the returned insurgents in good spirits. Poor old Mirash Lutzi looked ten years younger. It had indeed been plucky of him to be among the first to return, for he quite expected to be betrayed. Mihilaki had treated the first twenty with great hospitality—mutton, coffee, and suchlike delicacies galore.

Mirash's one anxiety was for his son. He called me aside, and prayed me on my return to go straight to Yanko, or Martinovitch, or whomever was in command, and beg him at once to warn the band they had sent out a few days before, that peace had been made. "If they are not recalled at once," he said, "they will throw their bomb into Tourgoud's tent, and we shall all be executed in revenge." He cursed the Montenegrin Generals freely for having thus equipped and sent a band at the last moment. Nor was his anxiety uncalled for.

Returning to Podgoritza at noon, I gave Mirash's message at once to Yanko, and was told they had already sent to warn the band. The insurrection was over. The toil and strain of the past four months had been vain.

I had hoped up till the last that some sort of European protection would have been obtained, for that would have entailed at any rate a rough delimitation of Albanian territory; and if that had been done, what horrors would have been later spared! But a ring had been formed by the Press of Europe: The Young Turk was sacred. As someone remarked,

"A Turk has merely to say he is Young, and he may do what he pleases." Europe pursued the fatal policy of non-intervention. It seemed as though we were all swept along into the cogs of a vast machine that turned and turned ceaselessly and pitilessly.

With brutal haste, men, women, and children were hunted back across the border like so much cattle. I made a struggle to serve out as many garments as time allowed; but I was quite done up with the heat, which rose to 104° F. in the shade, as well as with the work, and an attack of lumbago and rheumatism struck me helpless. I lay on my bed, and the refugees came in all day for doles to help them to return to their ruined homes by hiring a cart or horse to carry the children and such goods as they possessed, and especially to beg for opanke (sandals) for the long tramp to the mountains. Martinaj sat by me and dealt out as I directed; and from my room such men as had no weapons went to the Montenegrins for the promised rifles. All other foreigners were ordered out of the town, lest they should incite the Maltsors to further resistance. Then Martinaj was telegraphed for to return to his work in Italy, and I was left all alone to help off the last of the insurgents as best I could.

When I recovered enough to be able to crawl downstairs, Podgoritza was a blank. Soldiers, officers, insurgents, correspondents — all had disappeared like a dream; or was the present calm but a dream—the hush before the storm? For one who was in touch with the King had told me, under promise of strict secrecy (nothing was to be published before next May), that the withdrawal of the Maltsors was

only a ruse in order to bring about the withdrawal of the Turkish troops; that so soon as this was effected, the lost strategical positions would be reoccupied. If, as was hoped, this withdrawal took place shortly, it was possible that fighting would begin in the winter. If not—why, in April for certain. And I was pledged to winter in Albania.

# PART II

## THE GATHERING OF THE WAR-CLOUDS

# CHAPTER VI

## THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT (1911-1912)

To give even an idea of the ceaseless strain, the anxious waiting from hour to hour, as we drew nearer and nearer to an unfathomable precipice, seems to me an almost impossible task. It was an endless winter of toil, misery, rumours, alarms, deaths—all in an indescribable tangle of intrigue, plot, and counterplot.

Only firm and prompt action on the part of the so-called Great Powers could have prevented the final catastrophe. But it daily became more and more obvious that the Powers would rather that the whole Balkan population died than that they should stretch a finger to save them.

"It would be an awful thing," they said, "if our little hands should tear each other's eyes."

Nor, so it seems, did they see any alternative plan. "Hawks do not pluck out hawks' een" is a fair saying. But the Powers are naught but a menagerie, with nothing liker a hawk than a spatch-cocked eagle or two. And so soon as the door is opened, they believe they must do as other menageries—tooth and nail.

In all the world there is nothing more pathetic than the belief—in spite of all evidence to the contrary—that the little peoples have in the greatness and goodness of the "Powers." And nothing more despicable than the Powers as they really are.

But for international jealousies of the meanest kind, an international gendarmerie could have controlled the affairs of European Turkey, and by preventing the hideous series of outrage and reprisals that took place throughout Macedonia and in parts of Albania, as the Young Turk strove madly by every species of cruelty to forcibly Ottomanize his subject peoples—might have prevented, or at least have mitigated, the wholesale slaughter that was shortly to follow.

Crueller and more calculating than the Turk, the rulers of the Balkan States deliberately and in cold blood incited resistance, stirred up rebellion. For the aim and hope of each was to advertise his cause upon a poster bloody enough to justify war.

"We had expected quite half the population to die as the result of this insurrection," said the Bulgar Bishop of Ochrida and his secretary to me in 1904, "and not one quarter have. Next time a great many more must die, and Europe will have to listen to us."

So things danced in a bloody circle, each Balkan ruler striving "to free" the land at the expense of the hapless peasants he pretended to "liberate," who, in fact, were so many "research guinea-pigs," with whom he experimented against the Turks, and anyone else likely to thwart his schemes of aggrandizement. And behind each petty ruler sat a Great Power

with " a sphere of influence " in view, and restrained or egged him on according as it suited a yet larger game.

* * * * *

It was on August 19 that I arrived once more in Scutari, ill and tired enough, burdened with my promise to help the returned insurgents, and with the knowledge that unless the Powers took immediate and concerted action, more bloodshed was inevitable.

Russia, by cutting off Montenegro's supply of pocket-money, had, in fact, stopped immediate action. But this was a mere lull.

Various reasons made it more desirable to stay in the hotel than in a private house, and I had hardly settled in, when the Maltsors began coming for help and advice. Beyond imploring them to be patient, I could do little for them till I had been a fortnight in the doctor's hands.

The new Vali, an old Moslem Bulgar, was very friendly, and gave me full permission to help the burnt-out tribesmen. He would be glad, he said, of anything that would content them. The Turkish authorities, in fact, were not sorry that England should be a counter-attraction to various other Powers.

The position of things was as bad as it well could be. The Turkish officers and all the Young Turk representatives were furious about the concessions made to the insurgents. Intense bitterness, too, prevailed between the town Moslems and the late insurgents, who had beaten them at Kopliku, and this bitterness was foolishly fostered by the Young Turk enthusiasts.

Before the month was up came the first row. Six Kastrati men were set on and severely mauled by a gang of town Moslems, who were enraged by seeing that the Kastrati had Montenegrin rifles. The six Christians were promptly arrested, and the Moslems let off.

All the fat was in the fire at once. Hakki Bey, the Young Turk representative, said he was glad the Christians had been thrashed; it would do them good. To add to the difficulties, Ramazan was beginning, and in Ramazan Moslems are apt for quarrel.

The Archbishop protested — said the promised maize was being given irregularly; that the promised compensation money had not been paid ; and that if violence were offered to the tribesmen, he could not be responsible for consequences.

The Kastrati men were liberated, but the Moslems were not punished. The tribesmen were defiant, and clamoured for their money.

I, who had promised to go to the mountains and investigate the state of things there, was too ill to go, and was in something like despair when Mr. Nevinson arrived, sent by the Macedonia Relief Committee, to act as their agent. He relieved me of the job and started off to visit the burnt-out districts. I went with him, so far as it was possible to drive in a carriage, to Baitza in Lower Kastrati, and there visited some twenty ruined homes, all burnt, not a roof anywhere. The people were squatting under little sheds of rushes and boughs, and had collected and used every unbroken roof-tile.

There are few sights more heart-rending than burnt homes. The floor, lighted from below, flares up and

burns the roof rafters and all the props within. Down comes the roof with a crash, and the red sparks shoot up. Part of the stone wall is torn down by the falling timbers. Blackened ruins are all that remain, and among them cower the innocent victims who have wandered back, destitute of nearly all but the clothes they wear. And Europe says: "Thank God! Peace has been preserved. We have not fought each other." What God is it that they thank? Moloch?

The courage with which some of the returned refugees faced their misery was admirable. One plucky old woman who had succeeded in saving the parts of her loom had put it up, and was hard at work weaving stuff for the children's clothes from wool she had spun during the insurrection.

In the church the Turks had decapitated the images of the saints and poked out the eyes of the pictures. One of the most inexplicable of the many weaknesses that afflict mankind from Turks to Kensits is the extraordinary hatred which folk bear for the symbols of any brand of religion but their own, and the blind fury with which they attack inanimate objects. It is the one point which many very dissimilar religions have in common.

The devastation of Baitza was a fair sample of the rest of the Turks' work.

Mr. Nevinson returned after a week's tour through the mountains, and reported that the greater part of the houses of the Klimenti—almost all in Hoti—the Christian houses in Skreli, and nearly all in Kastrati, were burnt, and the few not burnt pillaged; two churches and several chapels completely destroyed, and all the churches plundered. In Gruda,

only a hundred houses were burnt, but almost all were pillaged. The Moslems in some instances had suffered as badly as the Christians.

Briefly, the net result of the Young Turks' policy of forcible Ottomanization was, that in order to enforce taxation, they had destroyed about 2,000 houses, and rendered the land unable to pay any tax for years to come; that they had been forced to yield on the point of language and on the right to carry arms; and that they had alienated the sympathies of almost all the Albanian race.

To achieve this end, they had spent many millions which, had they been devoted to the much-needed public works, might have brought peace and prosperity to the land, and had sacrificed something like 8,000 soldiers, reckoning killed, wounded, and those which died of disease. Many troops had already left Albania, but among those camped near Scutari and Medua, a species of cholera was reported to be still causing many deaths.

The Young Turks, in their struggle for supremacy, had lost much. The Maltsori, fighting for freedom, had lost nearly all they possessed.

The Turkish Government had by now paid the £1 per head promised to each male over fifteen on returning, and the maize distribution had begun. But roofing and clothing were urgently required. As all traffic had been, and was still, blocked by military stores, there was scarcity of material in the town, and importation was difficult. We bought up all the thin planks in the town, and ordered tarred felt from Trieste.

One district, the tribe of Summa, remained un-

RETURNED REFUGEES AT BAIDZA, SEPTEMBER, 1911.

INNOCENT VICTIMS.

visited. We started there on horseback to inspect. It was September 24, a golden autumn day, glorious with brown bracken, scarlet berries, and crimson and yellow foliage. Before us, all blue and mysterious, lay the Kiri Valley. It was with extraordinary joy that I, once more after three years' absence, rode into the mountains, past Drishti, which was then a bower of silver olives, up the slopes of Maranaj, and over his shoulder. Far below lay Scutari Lake, incomparably beautiful. But the turf, as we began to descend on the farther side, was ringed with the marks of Turkish tents, and the remains of a pack of playing-cards were bleaching in the sun, left, perhaps, by some "advanced" officer; for it is a common saying: "He is a Moslem, but almost a Christian: he drinks and gambles."

The track was very bad. We lost it more than once, and it was only after nearly ten hours of riding and scrambling we arrived in the dusk at the miserable house of the priest of Summa. It had been completely pillaged. Save that he had a roof, he was little better off than the poorest of his parishioners, and he gladly shared the food we had brought.

The Summa tribe had made a futile little rising, had failed to reach the other insurgents, been surrounded by troops who burnt thirty-five houses, of which twelve were Moslem, and plundered many of the others. As the wretched people had not succeeded in reaching Montenegro, they were not considered by the Turkish Government as entitled to the corn ration.

Summa was always poor; it was now in abject misery. We found the luckless creatures half-naked

among the ruins, the women boiling chopped grass and nettles to feed the children, who shivered in the chill autumn morning in the ragged remains of shirts.

Food was obviously the first necessity here. We gladdened them by the offer of six loads (a load is about 250 pounds) of maize if they would fetch it themselves. I fed them at intervals all through the winter.

We returned to Scutari, to find wild rumours that Italy was picking a quarrel with the Turks about Tripoli, but as there was no mention at all of the subject in any paper we had received from England, we scouted the notion.

Most urgent appeals for quinine had been coming for some time from the people of Breg Mati, and a large consignment of tabloids had just arrived from England. This was our next duty.

The tribes of Klimenti and Skreli, and scattered members of other tribes, have both summer and winter grazing-grounds for their flocks. They descend from the high mountain-pastures in October, and remain on the fertile plains between the Drin and the Mati till about the middle of April. The shifting of the flocks is a fine sight: men, women, and children, in native costumes, tramp with their pack-horses, loaded high with gaily coloured bedding and big caldrons, followed by hundreds of bleating, lowing beasts.

This year (1911), however, the insurrection in which they had all intended to take part—for the Klimenti are the most gallant of all the tribes—broke out prematurely while they were still in the plains. The first thing that the troops naturally

did was to block their passage, and to pen them in the plains for the summer. The plains being waterlogged by reason of the overflow of the Drin and Bojana Rivers, are haunted by a malaria of a most virulent type, and the unfortunate people had been rotting with it all the summer. They suffered, indeed, more deaths from disease than did their fighting brethren from wounds.

We arranged to drive to Alessio, the little fever-hole of a town that stands by the Drin, to give out quinine there, to meet some of the tribesmen, and ride with them to Breg Mati.

Marko, my faithful old dragoman, was not coming with us. As he was helping us put our goods into the carriage, he remarked: "Perhaps you had better not go. People say there is going to be a war."

"A war!" we cried, and we laughed and drove off.

News was hard to get, for by this time the whole district was more or less in quarantine for cholera, and in consequence few steamers stopped, and letters and newspapers were much delayed.

Arrived at Alessio, we found terrible excitement. Quantities of Nizams were running hither and thither, carrying white wooden ammunition boxes, and rushing to the hill that towers above the town, like so many ants on an anthill. Officers, pack-horses, transport waggons, soldiers—all were on the way to the coast to leave for Constantinople, when a report spread suddenly that the Italians were about to land. The troops turned back at once, and were taking all military stores up to the ruined citadel on the hilltop as fast as possible. "Now you won't be able to get

horses," said our guide. "They have commandeered them all."

Oddly enough, I did not take it seriously. I had been expecting war and hearing gunshots and artillery since last April, and it had all fizzled out. The quinine and the fever patients seemed far more important. The tribesmen, who expected us, turned up. They had cannily hidden their horses outside the town, mounted us on good ones, and we reached Breg Mati in three hours.

Dom Notz, the priest, put us up hospitably in his little wooden hut that stood on high stone staddles. We rose early. Rain was pouring. By seven it cleared, and we started on our errand. Alas! Dom Notz, with the intention of saving us a long ride and house-to-house visits, had sent word overnight that the free quinine had come, and the poor people were flocking to the village of Gursi, which was the centre of the district. The demand far exceeded our supply. It was heart-breaking work. The least ill of the family came to beg for the rest. In most houses it seemed every person was stricken.

Lean and wasted, their skin tight and yellow on their skulls, their eyes sunken, they prayed: "Give me quinine for fifteen people"; "I have twenty"; "I have six children, they are dying." The quinine went like snow in sunshine. Many of the victims had hugely enlarged spleens. In about an hour and a half we dealt out 6,600 grains of quinine, and the supply was exhausted. A most painful scene ensued. People, all rain-soaked, who had been tramping since early morning, arrived, and in despair prayed us to have pity and to give. And to escape the sight of

misery which we could not relieve, we had to mount and ride away. It was a scene I shall never forget.

The horses were good, and we arrived fairly early at Alessio. A young Turkish officer at once rushed up to us. "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" he cried. We did. He poured out his grief. Italy had declared war. It was true; there were three Italian battleships off Medua. The straight columns of smoke from their funnels were visible above the hills that lie along the coast.

"All is lost! All is lost!" he cried. "It is that accursed Abdul Hamid. He took everything for himself, and left us with nothing. No navy, no Dreadnought, nothing, nothing! Here am I with my troops, and I cannot take them out. We must march to Monastir. Unless England helps us, all is lost. Tripoli is already lost." He clasped his hands in despair.

"No doubt it is," said one of us, I forget which. We rode on.

"I am sorry for that poor fellow," said Mr. Nevinson.

"I'm not," said I. And I added: "It is the beginning of the end."

It flashed on me that this perhaps was the meaning of the mysterious thing which I was pledged not to reveal—that Montenegro would move in the winter if circumstances allowed. Throughout Montenegro the Italians are hated because by their great industry they at once outstrip the lazy Montenegrins and make money; but that would not prevent a political alliance for mutual benefit. Italy would extend her influence in North Albania—the Catholics would hail any aid that would save them from the Young Turks

—the Montenegrins would go into the Serb territories of Berani and Kosovo vilayet. If the constant rumours of Bulgar mobilization were true, we might have the long-expected break-up of the Near East upon us in a month; and Austria would not fight, but would demand, and later obtain, "compensation." It all seemed clear as daylight. I was highly pleased, for I thought that Albania's chance had come.

A party of tribesmen was escorting us. The horses were "going strong"; we rode at a good pace, and reckoned we could reach Scutari by 7 p.m., when we discovered that the man who carried our overcoats on his saddle had dropped them. Three of our men went back to search. We remained with one Maltsor. Time passed. It began to grow dark. The Maltsor was reluctant to proceed, but we pushed on. The moon came out, the great plains of the Drin were all ghostly. We rode through magic and mystery, vainly trying to judge where we were by the dim silhouettes of the mountains, till we arrived at the old wooden Bachelik bridge (destroyed, alas! in the war), at 9 p.m., and to our astonishment were promptly arrested. State of war had been proclaimed, and no one was to be admitted to the town after sunset. The police outpost was very civil. It spoke only Turkish and Albanian, and set to work to write long biographies of us, and to spit on the mistakes and wipe them out in Turkish fashion. It then sent us with an armed escort to the police-station in the bazar, where we were handed over, with explanations, and the same performance was repeated, only this time they wrote pages. I tried to cheer matters by making shadows of animals on the

walls. Then we went off again, and were handed to the town police. Finally we were liberated at 11 p.m. without a stain on our characters. Everyone had known we had gone the day before to give quinine, so that our arrest was ridiculous. But as they said: "War is war." I have told this in detail as it was the first marked step which the authorities

OLD BACHELIK BRIDGE.

took to protect Scutari from Italian invasion. The next step was to call for several thousand volunteers "to defend the Fatherland."

The day was fixed. The military band, the crimson silk banner, and the commandant, Hussein Riza Bey himself, were all ready in the drill-ground before the Serai, to welcome them and swear them in. Whenever in past times Turkey had made war, the

Albanians had swarmed to her standard. Now a row of fifteen townsmen, one of whom was over seventy, and another an habitual drunkard, were all that appeared.

The commandant made a brave speech, thanking them for their patriotism. A crowd of small children looked on and grinned. Later, from the Moslem villages, came some more volunteers. One hundred and sixty men in all were ready to protect Albania from Italy. It was a rude shock to the authorities.

MOSLEM CHILD.

News was suppressed. The English mail which came usually over Italy went astray altogether. On October 9 came official news that both Austria and Montenegro, who had been dallying on and off with cholera quarantine, had decided to cut off all communication with us. Mr. Nevinson went off in a hurry by the last boat to escape detention of unknown length, and I was left, feeling rather like "the boy stood on the burning deck."

The Turkish authorities circulated quantities of handbills describing victories at Tripoli so vast that even the Moslems doubted them and inquired the truth at the various consulates. In spite of all promises that the vernacular should be used, Turkish continued to be the official language, and the newly opened schools were teaching Arabic writing only.

I was overwhelmed with relief work. Aided by

my faithful old Marko, I worked all day and every day. To tell the details would be as wearisome as they were in fact. Briefly, I tried to obtain the name of, and number of, persons in each burnt-out family, made alphabetical lists of each tribe, and learnt, when possible, the circumstances. Together Marko and I ransacked the bazar for any and every kind of cheap warm material for clothes. All had then to be torn into three-metre lengths, for the tribesmen are very like a nursery full of children—what one has the other must have. "We ask only for justice," they said. Moreover, they objected strongly to a large family having more than a small one. "It is the 'house' which counts," they said. For a "house" to die out is a great calamity. It is better, therefore, to help small ones than large ones. Nor could I ever convince them that it was absurd to give a "house" of twenty-five persons the same ration as one of five. And, except that I insisted, when possible, in giving extra to widows with children, I had as a rule to conform to national usage.

The roofing question was extremely difficult, for the quarantine made importation of more planks hopeless. I gave people the choice of planks or clothes, and we had endless trouble.

At first I dealt out shirt-lengths in Scutari, but it caused too many people to flock to the town, and as the relations between tribesmen and Turkish officials were highly strained, it was desirable to keep them apart as much as possible. Moreover, the simple souls persisted in doing lowly homage to me, and addressing me as "Queen" in the streets, and this caused the Turkish authorities, very foolishly, to

protest to the British Vice-Consul against my assuming a Royal title.

To avoid these difficulties, we made up great bales of goods sewn in canvas (which could be utilized to make mattresses, and was the perquisite of the men who acted as carriers), and the priest of each tribe distributed the stuff and garments—so many pieces per house. Cutting, tearing, sewing, packing, the wearisome days passed by. My only relief was to go

PACK-HORSES.

out at night and watch the sun set crimson behind Rumia, or a golden full moon sail up from the purple mystery of the Shala Mountains. Daily a bazar rumour of some sort spread through the town.

On October 13 a Scutarene from Italy reported huge Italian victories, but officially all were denied.

It was the Sultan's birthday, and Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral. There was a fairly large congregation of Scutarenes, who, I was told later, prayed for the Sultan's speedy conversion. The Vali

and suite were present, but of all the Consuls only the Austrian. In the absence of Italy, Austria was trying to be prominent and make up for lost time. The Archbishop, who officiated, omitted the final Benediction, and the Vali and suite departed without being commended to the care of the Holy Trinity—a fact which gave infinite satisfaction to the more pious of the Christians.

There was whispered talk of Bulgarian mobilization and of Montenegrin movement near Tuzi. About the middle of October we heard that King Nikola of Montenegro was making a tour through all his provinces on the Herzegovinian frontier—a district he had not visited for thirty years. As a result, the Ministers of the Triple Entente at Cettigne at once expressed to His Majesty the desire of their Governments "that peace should be maintained in the Balkans." Russia had been very nasty about it, France mild, and England firm. So said Petar Plamenatz, then Montenegrin Consul at Scutari, and mightily disgusted he was; and a voice spread that, in spite of quarantine regulations, some Maltsor heads had been summoned to Cettigne. They did not go, however, I believe.

The Vali meantime did his best to keep peace with the Maltsors, but could get no money from Constantinople for the promised house compensation. Money had started, it was said, but had been "held up" by a doctor of Kortcha, who, as he was owed a large sum by the Government, had, with the aid of a band of friends, paid himself. Had it not been for the blow to Turkish feelings when no Albanian volunteers were forthcoming, I doubt if the money

would ever have been paid. But Turkey could not afford an internal revolt at this moment, and on October 16 part of Hoti and Gruda, as the most important of the tribes, were paid. This only made the others furious. Winter was rapidly approaching, and the money urgently required.

It was the feast of the Madonna of Scutari—Scutari's greatest day—the anniversary of that day in 1479 when the Venetians, after a siege of nearly a year, were forced to cede Scutari to the Turks, and

PILGRIMAGE TO THE OLD CHURCH OF THE MADONNA OF SCUTARI.

the angels swooped down upon the little church at the foot of the citadel, flew away over the Adriatic with the picture of the Holy Virgin, and saved it from the infidels. Pilgrims trudged to pray at the ruins, and the Cathedral was crammed with miserable people who came to beg their Madonna's aid. I recognized many. A man, wearing one of the shirts I had given, fixed large brown eyes on me, and edged his way through the crowd till he could kneel and pray by my side. Then he rose and went.

In honour of the day my old Marko invited several

headmen to dinner—a noble meal. We had a wash-hand basin full of soup and boiled mutton, another full of rice, and then pancakes. In recognition of the immense hospitality, it was correct to take two pancakes and leave one uneaten. This mark of politeness pleased Marko immensely—it was, indeed, a remarkable instance of "manners," for the tribesmen had not eaten such a meal for many a long day—and he told a tale of a man who was fined five napoleons by his tribe, and condemned to stand his judges a dinner, because a stranger guest had emptied his plate—a sure sign that his host had been niggardly.

The tribesmen told that there was trouble in Djakova. The local chieftain, Zef-i-vogel (Joseph the Little), had been asked to pay "dim." The tax-collectors had tried to take one horse out of eight, instead of one out of ten, and Zef and his friends had opened fire and killed three Turks. That Isa Boletin was between Ipek and Prishtina preparing to take the warpath again; that it was not true he had made it up with the Turks. He had been keeping quiet only until he had made them compensate him for the house they had burnt.

A Djakova man reported that Djakova was "so-so; as hot as cold." All the tribesmen of Dukagin who had taken no part in the insurrection began appealing to the Vali for maize, money, and, above all, arms. They came perfectly seriously, and argued: "It is true we did not revolt, but it was not our fault. We should have done so at once if we had had arms. It is very unfair to give all these presents to the men of Maltsia e madhe, and nothing to us." When told they were not included in the concessions, they replied:

"Very well; so soon as we can get arms we will revolt, and then you will have to give us maize and money, too." Nor could they see the situation otherwise. The Vali was hard put to it.

The tribesmen read bones anxiously to learn the future, and a Maltsor saw "blood in Scutari in a fortnight if the fowl has been properly killed—at any rate, very soon." And all the bones, fowls' and sheep's alike, told "a great war soon."

Italy, it is true, had been prevented from attempting to land in Albania by Austria, and had retired after a futile bombardment of Medua—or, rather, the spot where Medua is marked on the map, for a tumble-down barrack, a dirty Custom-house, a han, and a few scattered houses are all that Medua can show. The Italian papers announced that the Palazza Municipale had been completely destroyed by the Italian fleet, and all who knew Medua smiled; but there was a general feeling that Italy would return, and that next time—well, who knew?

In the town a weekly excitement was the *Hana* (*The Moon*), Scutari's only newspaper. The Albanian one had died of inanition, for it was prohibited from publishing any recent news save that given by the Government, and that the populace disbelieved. The *Hana* (*The Moon*), on the contrary, which was published in Italian by a Jew, one Pardo, who had turned Moslem, ran an exciting and excited career. It began as *Dil* (*The Sun*), was suppressed, and came out next day as *The Moon*. Pardo was a highly enthusiastic "Union and Progress" man, and, according to popular report, his paper was the paid organ of the party. At starting he explained to me that he was

making an entirely new start in journalism. Hitherto editors had described mainly things that took place by daylight, and these any fool could see for himself. He was going to confine himself to ascertaining and describing where everybody passed the night.

A dirtier and more entertaining dog I never met. He set spies at the doors of all persons of importance, and prowled about in the dark. "Why waste money?" he asked, "on foreign correspondence, when the doings of your next-door neighbour are so much more interesting?" He spared no one of the European residents, and attacked one Consulate after the other, pouring out cataracts of obscene rhymes, describing his victims, but seldom giving names. Consulate after Consulate protested indignantly. Pardo asked mildly: "Why did you think it was meant for you?" And the Vali said gravely: "We have now Constitutional Government in Turkey, and complete freedom of the Press." If *The Moon* were suppressed, it would only reappear as *The Star;* "so why worry?" The more folk protested, the better was Pardo pleased. Plamenatz, as Montenegrin Consul, was rabid about some filthy verses on the Queen of Italy. His protest brought out some worse ones on the whole Montenegrin Royal Family.

As "Queen of the Mountains," I was treated to a whole column of scurrility, and said nothing at all. A second attack followed, and then no more. Everyone was curious to know what steps I had taken. I had taken none. But the gallant Maltsors had sent a message to Pardo to the effect that the very next time he insulted the Kralitza he would be shot dead. Next time I met Pardo in the street I shouted:

"Hullo, Pardo! how are you?" He ran like a rabbit, and the populace laughed aloud. The *Hana* flourished, like weeds on manure, till the following summer, when the Union and Progress party fell. Pardo then made bold to attack the party which succeeded it. Poor Pardo! The "Constitutional Freedom of the Press," upon which he had relied so long, collapsed at once. He was promptly expelled the country, and *The Moon* has never again materialized. It was my first and last experience of Young Turk journalism.

But this is anticipating.

So far as the Maltsors were concerned, the Vali's intentions were excellent; but he could not pay them, for the rest of the money did not arrive. Misery increased. The Austrian hospital was full of cases of sickness caused by hunger and exposure.

News came from the mountains that poor gallant old Marash Hutzi of Hoti was dead of pneumonia. He was the first man I had persuaded to return, and I felt as though I had killed him. The only comfort was that Padre Sebastian had tended him in the Church-house; he had not died out in the rain. I mourned him at the time, but am glad now that he who had given all his life to attempts to free Albania has not lived to see his beloved tribe Hoti handed by Europe to Montenegro, in spite of all its protests, for it was owing to Marash primarily that the Montenegrins did not get Tuzi in the Berlin Treaty days. He it was who then brought down the tribesmen, and successfully resisted the Montenegrin occupation. He died hoping and believing that liberty was in sight. It is better not to live too long.

There was constant friction between the troops and the tribesmen. The woods near Breg Mati and Alessio were haunted by "komits," who were at blood with the Government. A soldier—one of several sent to patrol the district—met some of them, and called "Halt!" They took no notice. He challenged again, and raised his rifle, but before he could fire dropped with a bullet in his breast. Sorely wounded, he cried out that he was a Christian. The "komits," too late, befriended him, and summoned a priest. He asked that the silver cross that hung round his neck might be buried with him, and died in a few hours. His dying wish was fulfilled. The Maltsors regretted his death, saying no doubt he had been forced to serve against his will.

There was great and growing discontent among the Christian soldiers, principally Greeks, of whom a considerable number were quartered in the town. The enforcing of general military service was one of the Young Turks' fatal errors. Exemption from military service had been the Christians' one valuable privilege, and no arguments of the Young Turk could convince them that it was a privilege to be allowed to serve the Turkish Government. The tales of ill-treatment which the Christian recruits spread, the disorder caused by their frequent desertion, and the constant friction between them and the Moslem troops, must all have assisted towards the final catastrophe. In Scutari, at any rate, hatred of the Young Turk was inflamed not only by the Christian troops in the town, but by letters received by the relatives of the few Albanian youths who had been pressed for service, and were in distant parts.

The Orthodox troops in Scutari had been promised a priest as army chaplain, and none had been appointed owing to dissensions in Constantinople as to whether the right of appointment belonged to Church or State. They complained bitterly of insult and ill-treatment to the Orthodox Bishop of Durazzo. He protested to Hussein Riza, who replied that he regretted that the charge was true, but it was all the fault of the chaüshes (under-officers), and he could do nothing.

And ever the Italians' war on Tripoli raised hope that all the Powers together would do something. Italy was regarded by many as the only dog who had dared blood the badger. When Count Mancinelli, the Italian Consul, left Scutari, and the Italian Post-Office, dispensary, and schools were closed, Pardo in the *Hana* tried hard to arouse Moslem wrath against the remaining Italian inhabitants, and failed completely. From the Djakova and Prizren districts came news that from there, too, Italy's action was seized on as an opportunity for harrying the Turks, that much sniping of soldiers was going on, and that the half-starved population of the districts devastated by the Turks in the previous year was plundering wherever possible. "Things have never been so bad as under Constituzi," said folk.

Mirdita became uppish, and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the military outposts in her territory, and the Government hastily complied. The Maltsia e madhe men at once followed suit, and clamoured for the withdrawal of the troops from their land. This was refused, as the said troops were declared to be frontier guards against Montenegrin

attack. Already before Christmas the Turks were well aware that an attack from Montenegro was highly probable, and it was for this reason that a General as good as Hussein Riza was placed there.

There was a lull in the quarantine arrangements, and seven belated letter-bags turned up all at once. I learnt that I was to act as agent of the Macedonian Relief Fund, that some more money was forthcoming, and that the Italians were making slow but sure progress at Tripoli. The tarred felt, too, arrived from Trieste, and the Vali, who had not yet received the rest of the house compensation money, and was genuinely anxious to help any re-roofing scheme, kindly admitted it all duty free. But the highly conservative Maltsors at first declined to have anything to do with it. I was dismayed. It had cost several hundred pounds of my little fund, Mr. Summa, our Vice-Consul, had had endless trouble in getting it up the river—for the londras (barges) were all commandeered for military stores—and now the tribesmen said: "No, we don't want it. We want shirts and planks." My canny old friend, Mirash Lutzi, however, turned up. Mirash has an extraordinary eye for the main chance, and was, and is, ready to accept anything and everything. He bore off several rolls of the "carton," and speedily constructed such a fine watertight roof that its fame flew through the land, and the whole country clamoured: "Carton, carton!" Fortunately, the autumn was unusually dry and fine. There was still time to do some roofing. I ordered more "carton." The distributing and seeing it despatched on horses and in barges was a great task.

On November 11 I started out with Marko on horseback to visit the nearer districts to try and find the poorest cases, and took bread and sardines enough to last us four days—this I have found to be the most portable and sustaining food for rough travel—and a sleeping-sack, and filled up the saddlebags with children's combinations.

We arrived at Baitza after four hours' ride, and put up at one of the few unburnt houses. The poor owners were very much pleased to see me. Their house had been completely pillaged, and the few cooking-pots and covers they had were the result of the help I had given them at Podgoritza.

Though bright, the weather was very cold. Three little girls, the youngest only three, sat sniffling, miserably trying to warm their fingers by thrusting them under the one tattered garment which each wore. The wretched infant whined ceaselessly, half perished with cold. I handed out one of the little combinations, and the mother put it on over the ragged cotton shirt which was all it had on. When clad, it looked like a large grey frog. The result was surprising. In half an hour, as it warmed up, it began to chatter and to frisk about like a little lamb. But the two others wept miserably. I had no garment large enough for them.

The afternoon was passed in a four hours' ride round the district. At night we shared our bread with the family, and slept on the bare floor. We were in luxury—some of the few who had a roof over our heads.

All next morning I visited houses at Baitza, and rode on to Skreli in the afternoon—up, up into the

high valley. The sun went down magnificently, and the brown, dried brushwood on the mountain-side looked like great stale bloodstains in the ruddy light. Before us were blackened ruins. The man guiding us rode ahead on a most wretched white horse. And the Skreli Valley seemed a Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Out of the many burnt-out families I visited next day, I remember vividly the cackling laugh of one old woman: "The Sultan," she said, "is the stupidest

Burnt Out.

man in the world. First he spent a lot of money to burn down our poor houses. Now he must spend a lot more to build them up again."

The attempt, indeed, to gain anything by violent means (by reverting, that is, to primitive bestiality) costs both victor and vanquished so dearly that it is questionable whether any good cause has ever received from it enough to compensate, not merely for the actual ruin entailed, but for the moral and mental degradation that must ensue. The good cause may emerge triumphant, but it is filthily defiled. And

the sins of the fathers haunt the children in the form of hatreds that never sleep nor slumber, but wait only through generations, till the moment comes to strike.

One more picture will I give of relief work, and then pass on to the political developments of the situation.

Ded Soko and his brother Djeto, two gallant and honest Maltsors of Klimenti, begged me to come again to Breg Mati with quinine. Ded and three of his men came, as armed escort, to fetch me.

It was December 1. I wore a big "talagan" (shepherd's cloak) to keep out the cold, and we started in the grey of 8 a.m. As we breasted the hill, the wonderful view opened—the waters were out and all the land a silver, shimmering flood, with inky clouds above, and the purple Mirdite mountains beyond.

Ded rode a pacing grey, and pushed on over byways, across country, through fords, up banks, over sludge, and between willows. Who can pretend that a tar-paved road can ever give the joy of such a plunge into the unknown? We cantered into Alessio, and halted to rest the horses. Joined by a lot more tribesmen, we were off again before it was dark. But as the light faded, down came the storm that had threatened all day. By the time we reached the forest it was pitch dark, and the rain falling in torrents. Ded whistled a loud signal, and plunged into a narrow track. I could barely see, as a grey patch, his horse as he rode full trot ahead through mud and water, yelling "heads" when the branches were too low, and I lay flat on the horse's neck and felt them thrash over me. Through mud and dark-

ness our beasts slithered, slipped, spread-eagled, and recovered. Twice my horse climbed over an invisible tree fallen across the track. The rain hissed and whistled. I could not see a yard ahead. But the horse followed on. It was an Erl King and Wild Hunter ride. Great luminous fungi, high upon rotting trees, stood out here and there uncanny in the blackness like lumps of dead fish, and saved me once from cannoning into a trunk.

We emerged at last into a lane, saw the friendly lights of Ded's house, and were soon seated in a great room, where two tree-trunks blazed under a hooded chimney. Djeto and Ded, the two brothers, had built themselves one of the finest houses in the country with the proceeds of many years' industry. They owned big flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle. A great family of relations all lived together, and I was magnificently entertained. Mother-wit and natural good feeling had raised these two quite untravelled and unlettered men to a surprising degree of civilization, in the best sense of the word. I little thought as we talked, and they told of their great desire for a school of agriculture to teach how best the land might be developed, that in less than a year the big house and every shed and stable would be burnt to the ground, and that later I should see Djeto dead, in his coffin, shot down by an assassin's bullet. Peace to his ashes. He was a brave and honest man, and a true patriot.

Already, then, by his work among the poor and sick, he was gaining great influence among the tribesmen, and his increased popularity brought down upon him the hatred of the hereditary chiefs, among

them Essad Pasha. None of them wished a man of no family to rise to power among the mountainmen.

When trouble came and war, Djeto and Ded had won the trust and faith of most of the tribes, and Djeto paid for this with his life. But the future was still unknown to us, and with Ded next day I rode round and gave out quinine, to the great gratitude and relief of the fever-stricken people. And I left Ded a quantity for further distribution.

Returning to Scutari, I again found a war-scare at Alessio: three Italian warships were said to be in sight, and again the troops were making active preparations for defence. They told the Maltsors that fifty Italians had been crucified by the Turks at Tripoli, and warned them that that would be the fate of all Christians. Oddly enough, this was the first that I heard of atrocities at Tripoli.

Passing through Bushati, I found the Christians all furious. They declared that when the taxes were collected, the bulk was taken from them, and that Moslems were exempted. One of the headmen said he had given up £16 worth of wēapons last year without any compensation, and that he would pay no more tax till that sum was worked off.

On December 19 an envoy from the Maltsors communicated to me that the Austrian Consul-General had sent for the heads, and told them they must not revolt next year; but promised that if they would remain quiet two years, they should be freed from the Turks by Austria. They replied: "Give us the ten thousand rifles Austria promised us when Bosnia was annexed, and we can take care of ourselves."

Lazo Pavica

Dedo Soko.

Further, that the Moslems throughout Albania had learnt over Tripoli that the Young Turks were not able to protect their own territories, and that it would be better for them to strike for freedom along with the Christians, than to wait for Albania to be divided between the Slavs, Greeks, and perhaps Austria when Turkey broke up, as they saw it must do in the near future.

I said that a revolt was madness, if they meant to make a little one like last year's. He said: "Stone on stone makes a tower; grain by grain a loaf. It will be good bread, God willing."

Hopes were raised by the discontent of the military. The Christians were constantly deserting, paying the Maltsors with their rifles and cartridge belts to guide them over the border. All troops, both Moslem and Christian, were suffering badly from cold and damp under canvas on the Tri Alberi plain. Many were said to be time-expired. They petitioned Hussein Riza: "If there is war, send us, and we will fight. If not, send us somewhere where there are barracks—or dismiss us." No notice was taken, and on the night of December 22 they revolted. Sharp firing was heard in the camp at midnight. An alarm spread. The men on Tarabosh were to have revolted too, and fired on the town, but owing to some mistake, the Tri Alberi camp rose first. The artillery remained loyal, the machine guns were pointed at the rebels, who had at once to surrender. The affair was hushed up. Only freshly turned earth by the camp bore witness to the fact that more than one corpse had been buried that night.

Christmas was upon us, and all the land was a

hubble-bubble of hate. News came that, as vengeance for a bomb outrage at Istib, the Turks were massacring Bulgars wholesale in Macedonia. The bomb had been prepared at Sofia for the express purpose of exciting reprisals. Was it the war signal ?

But a fierce quarrel between Servia and Montenegro looked ill for a Balkan Alliance. Nicephor, the Serb-Orthodox Bishop of Prizren, had been dismissed for loose conduct. The Patriarchia appointed as his successor, one Dochich, a Montenegrin from Moracha. Servia, who had pegged out this district as her claim, was furious. The Montenegrins, whose war-cry was, " Onward, onward, let me see Prizren !" regarded it triumphantly as: " Check to your King !"

The Serb priests of the diocese refused to recognize the new Bishop, and telegraphed to the one Orthodox priest in Scutari to go out on strike with them. He, being Montenegrin, refused, and his tiny flock supported him.

Christmas was dree and hopeless beyond all words. I shivered all alone at supper in an unwarmed room. And one lump of sticky pink stuff on a plate was the only sign of Peace and Goodwill. I was about to beg leave to join mine host and the servants in the kitchen when the belated postman arrived with two books from a friend. He was surprised at the size of the Christmas-box he received, and I passed a happy evening, reading snug in my sleeping-sack. So ended the long, unhappy year.

It was bitterly cold. All the mountains were white. I could not deal out clothes fast enough. Through the long winter evenings I made sixty

wadded coats for children, and employed people in the bazar to make several hundred.

One gleam only brightened the general hopelessness. A cheque from Mr. Crane enabled me to go on with the work. Unluckily, it had to be paid through the Montenegrin Consulate, and Petar Plamenatz blabbed about the amount ("Mon Dieu, quel diplomat!" as one of his colleagues remarked), and a rush of mountain people consequently poured in upon me.

Grim deed darkened the first days of the New Year. The soldiers at Tri Alberi again petitioned, and this time a number—said to be time-expired, but forced to remain with the colours because the country was on a war footing—were given teskerehs (passports) permitting them to leave.

Old Marko came in, saying: "Poor devils, how happy they are! All last night they were singing and dancing. Now they are going home."

Their joy was short-lived. The first lot were allowed to go as far as Vaspas, some three days' march, and were there challenged by the military outpost. In vain they showed their teskerehs. These had only been given in order to disarm them and get them safely outside the town, out of sight of Consular eyes. A number were shot down, and others were drowned in the ford. Meanwhile the second batch had reached Vaudys, all unaware of what was happening. These also were stopped as deserters. Their despairing appeals and attempt to escape were vain. The military outpost fired on the unarmed men. Altogether of the happy party that had started homewards some two hundred were re-

ported to have perished. The survivors were brought back as prisoners and put to forced labour on the roads.

It was a piece of cold-blooded treachery which disgusted all foreigners in the town, though Hussein Riza defended it as the best way of suppressing revolt. A large number of recruits from Asia Minor arrived shortly afterwards, bare-legged to mid-thigh. Blue with cold, they staggered through Scutari, followed by two carts piled with what looked like dying men. And the Albanians, growling deep, swore that nothing should ever force them to do military service for Turkey.

Politics flowed, as usual, a dirty course through the sewers. Turkey made an attempt to buy the Archbishop's support by the offer of a small decoration, which he flatly refused. Montenegro thereupon offered him a big one, which he also refused, to King Nikola's great mortification.

The Turkish Government, now in the eleventh hour, began in haste to press on public works. French engineers arrived in numbers. Roads, bridges, canals —all were to be constructed; there was to be employment for everyone. Vast plans were made and little done.

In the opening of Turkish schools, however, the Government was busy, and boys were collected from all over the country.

Then came difficulties. Those who had come with the belief they were to learn Albanian were disgusted and disappointed, and began the study of their own language on their own account. Two Moslems who had been found with a Life of their national hero

Skanderbeg in the vernacular were expelled and came to me for help. I advised their writing to the Albanian member for Prishtina, which they did, and owing to his intervention, they were reinstated. But the authorities learnt nothing by this lesson, and expelled two more boys from another school for similar reasons. These, though Moslem, went to the school of the Franciscans, an almost unprecedented step. And the language question continued to cause great friction in the town.

## CHAPTER VII

### MUBLEZ! MUBLEZ!!

All through January the discontent of the tribesmen increased. The men of Maltsia e madhe came and complained to me constantly that the house compensation money was insufficient, and the Dukagin men that they, who had not revolted, had received no presents at all. It seemed clear to me that someone was inciting them, but whether Austria, Italy, or Montenegro, I could not determine.

In any case, the poor tribesmen would only be used as cat's-paws, so I begged them to be quiet.

On January 30 affairs took, to my mind, a sharp turn for the worse. Since the end of November there had been rumours of disagreement between the civil governor (the Vali) and the military one (Hussein Riza Bey). Now came news that the Vali was to leave at once for Adana. I was sorry, for the old man had dealt honestly by me, and I believed him genuinely anxious to keep the peace with the Maltsors, and fulfil all the conditions promised by the Government. Scutarenes repeated their favourite tale that only once has Scutari had an honest Vali, and he died on the way, before he arrived. Never-

theless, even they admitted that this one left no richer than he came.

Hussein Riza Bey was, temporarily, to replace him. Had the kindly old Moslem Bulgar retained his post, perhaps things might have ended differently. But "what is 'egil' (written in the book of Fate) must be," says popular voice. Perhaps nothing but the intervention of all the Powers could have changed the current of events, which quickened at once.

The same day a deputation of headmen came to tell me that they had decided to demand the full payment of all damages, besides house compensation, destroyed beehives, burnt and looted corn and hay, damage to vineyards, fruit-trees, timber, etc.

I combated long and vainly, said they had received as much as could reasonably be expected; that more quarrelling would only lead to fighting, and then they would lose all they had gained and the sympathy of Europe too.

They replied that with arms they could do a great deal; that they had a right to this money, because it was promised in the twelve articles, and that they were acting in accordance with the advice of Generals Yanko Vukotitch and Blazho Boshkovitch! I pointed out that Montenegro had thrown them over last time, and begged they would not start another futile and premature revolt.

More headmen came, among them Mirash—foxy, with his little twinkling eyes—who tried to wheedle me by all his arts into joining a scheme for rifle-buying. "Thou, oh my sister—my golden sister—thou canst if thou wilt." I swore by St. Nikola I could not: my money was purely for relief work.

To prevent, in fact, their buying ammunition, I was giving only in kind and not in cash. "But it comes from komits in London," urged he. "Committee" all over the Near East means only a Revolutionary Committee. It was waste of breath to assure any of them that the Balkan Committee was not armed to the teeth, and awaiting only a favourable moment to make a raid, and had, moreover, not supplied any of the money.

Mirash counter-swore, by a whole galaxy of saints, that I could summon "the English komits" and —weapons, too, if I would. "See here, my sister, about the money, it is very easy. I will sign a receipt for maize distributed to the tribes, for you to send to London. And only the Holy Trinity, God, you, and I will ever know!" And he roared with laughter. I remained obdurate.

They were all going to the Vali, to demand the twelve articles as written and signed in Montenegro. "If the Turks want peace they must pay for it. If not—peace if God wills."

I went straight to our Vice-Consul, Mr. Summa, and asked to see his official copy of the terms. My impression was correct. There was no clause which could be interpreted into a promise to pay all damages. The heads had already been to Mr. Summa on the subject, and we agreed that we must stop trouble if possible. Off I went to the Montenegrin Consulate to see if I could get to the bottom of the affair; told Petar Plamenatz I thought the demand a great mistake, and asked upon what it was founded. Petar enthusiastically said the tribesmen were right, produced what he said was a copy of the original

document signed at Cettigne, and some French law books, by which to explain the legal French in which the terms were drawn up. His version, and the version of the documents dealt out officially to the Consulates, differed substantially. All now turned on Article XI. This, in the Turkish official version, ran, (XI.) "Paiement du montant des maisons incendiées," and in Plamenatz's copy: (XI.) "Il n'existe pas pour le moment d'autres fonds speciaux en déhors des dix milles livres accordés par sa S.M. mais il va sans dire, que le Gouvernement Turque, qui a decidé *de reconstruire les immeubles brûlés ou détruits*, pourvoira à un supplement de crédit dans le cas ou ces dix milles livres seront insuffisants."

I was of opinion that by "immeubles," houses only were meant. Plamenatz, who had taken a law degree in Paris, interpreted it otherwise, and proved by his dictionary of legal terms that "immeubles" stands for all things attached to, and belonging to, the soil, standing corn, timber, fruit on trees. Even oxen, if used solely as plough-oxen, are "immeubles," as necessary to the soil.

I informed him that "maisons" was the word in the Consular version I had seen, and that probably houses only were intended. He vowed that not only was "immeubles" the word in the version signed by Saddreddin Bey at Cettigne, but that the Maltsors were definitely promised the repayment of all damages. I took a copy of Plamenatz's version of the whole terms. Either the Turks or the Montenegrins were lying. It seemed to me to the last degree improbable that the Turks should have ever promised to make good all damages. Now the whole thing must

turn on a legal quibble as to the meaning of "immeubles."

I took Plamenatz's version to the British Vice-Consulate. Mr. Summa had not previously seen it. We compared it carefully with his version, and I sent copies of both to London with the comment: "My great effort is to prevent the Maltsori being made cat's-paws of, to rake out someone else's chestnuts."

On February 9 an excited deputation of thirty headmen, including several Moslems, handed to Hussein Riza a demand for the full payment of "les immeubles"—"Mublez, mublez," as they called them—and for the release of two men who had been imprisoned, it was declared, contrary to Article I., "That a general amnesty has been accorded."

A stormy scene ensued. Hussein Riza denied all knowledge of "immeubles." The tribesmen threatened him that they would have their rights. He lost his temper.

Three headmen came to me immediately afterwards wildly excited, swore that all the tribes were now united except Mirdita, which must fall into line with the others soon, as the Mirdites dreaded annexation either by Austria or Montenegro; swore, too, that they were solely for autonomy, and would accept no foreign rule; that they were in communication with the leaders of Kosovo vilayet; and that they would decide their course of action in twenty days.

A great gathering of heads of all the mountains took place next day in the Cathedral, and they swore "besa" together. I was not present, as it was better not for me to appear at a revolutionary meeting.

The Archbishop paid the expenses in Scutari of all

the delegates, and a letter signed by thirty headmen was sent to each of the Consulates to "let them know we are Albanians, and mean to be Albanians."

I could not understand the situation. The Montenegrins, it was clear, were pushing the Maltsors towards revolt. But the Maltsors had declared themselves for autonomy. The Archbishop, I knew for certain, would not accept Montenegrin rule. Yet he was apparently encouraging the demand for "immeubles."

On February 10 wrote I to England: "Is it possible that Montenegro will play for an autonomous Albania, thereby blocking Austria? The idea here is (and in Montenegro, too, I believe) that Turkey will not last long as she is. It appears as if all now depends on whether Bulgaria plays Austrian or Slav. The one thing certain is that the place is a mass of intrigue, and the Maltsors, if they don't look out, will be the pawns in the game. Their idea is to strike for freedom before anyone else can move to annex them."

The immediate result of the Maltsors' action was, that next day the "telal" (public crier) went round the town proclaiming a state of siege, and that the gendarmerie had the right to shoot at sight any man, woman, or child, native or foreigner, who did not at once halt when bidden to do so. This put the town Christians, who, for the most part, have not the pluck of guinea-pigs, into a state of abject terror, so that they postponed indefinitely the Carnival ball they had been preparing, and expected a massacre any minute. And it infuriated all the Consulates. The French Consulate in particular was enraged, and declared that the French engineers could not con-

tinue their work on the new roads till certain that they would not be challenged in an unknown tongue, and shot down before they knew what it was about.

This was Hussein Riza's first proclamation as Vali. He retracted in a hurry: explained first that a baker who supplied bread to the troops at Berditza had entered the camp after being forbidden by the sentry, who had then fired at and wounded him. Consequently, it was advisable to warn the populace to halt when ordered. Secondly, he said that that was not what he meant. The telal had read it all wrong.

Next night firing began from the low hills beyond the Kiri. Shutters closed hastily, and the populace rushed about the street crying, "It has begun." It was only, however, some foolish men of the Temali-Dushmani tribe, who, angry because they received no maize from the Government, fired fifty shots or so in the air, as defiance, childishly. A rush of soldiers from the camp halted at the river's brink. It was dusk, and they feared to cross and be ambushed. Nor did I go farther, for it was too dark to see.

The new Vali arrived on the night of the 16th. We were told he was an Albanian, and I formed high hopes that he would perhaps save the situation. As a counter-blast, I was told that a huge lot of contraband rifles were expected shortly to arrive at Obotti in charge of an Italian steamboat captain who was an Austrian subject.

Spring was hard on us now. The plum-tree behind the hotel burst into blossom, snow-white and brilliant against the mountains. The birds were shouting and

holloaing, and young men's fancies turned towards thoughts of revolution.

On February 20 the Servian Minister, Gavrilovitch, and the French Chargé d'Affaires, Monsieur Cambon, arrived from Cettigne "just to take a look round." Gavrilovitch asked me about the situation. I told him I was doing my best to keep the tribesmen quiet. He seemed much relieved, from which I diagnosed that at any rate Servia was not yet ready for the final crash. He added that much depended on the result of King Nikola's visit to Russia; then smiled and said: "You, I suppose, will wait and watch developments?" When he left he asked: "Have I your permission to report at Cettigne you are working pacifically? Your influence is of very great importance." "You exaggerate it," said I. He said: "Good-bye. I shall see you again here, or"—he paused—"or perhaps at Podgoritza. Who knows?"

So peace and war were still in the balance. How long would Europe shilly-shally before acting? Nikola of Montenegro was on his way back from Petersburg, and was due at Cettigne to-morrow or the next day. Next week war might begin. Why did no one intervene? It seemed as though we were drifting towards the edge of rapids, with no branch to cling to.

If Europe were careless, the Turks were not. Military work, which had been going on all the winter, was being pressed forward quicker than ever. It was said that £T60,000 was being spent on barracks alone. Miles and miles of coiled barbed wire of horrific quality had for a long while been arriving and passing through the town. I think it began

coming as early as October. Gangs of men went, to the cheery strains of a military band, to work outside the town. Only Moslems were taken; but some Christians assumed Moslem names, and got a temporary job in order to learn what was happening, and reported that bomb-proof trenches and wire tangles were being planned, and made, out on Fusha Stojit.

Arms were dealt out secretly by the Government to the town and village Moslems at the mosques at night. Thereupon a deputation from the neighbouring Christian villages waited on the new Vali, and complained and asked for arms, too. He denied having given arms, and the delegates cried, "Not with your own hands, perhaps!" derisively. The new Vali made a multitude of promises. He was not really an Albanian, said report; had been born in Prishtina, and never been back since childhood—"a Turk of Turks in his heart."

Hussein Riza, as military commandant, ordered that the tribesmen were to give up all the rifles they had received from Montenegro, and have Turkish Mausers in exchange—nice new smokeless-powder rifles; said that he had ascertained that 2,000 Montenegrin rifles were waiting for distribution at Virbazar, and a lot more at Dulcigno, but would see to it that they never came in. The tribesmen replied that they had bought their present rifles with their blood, and would not part with them. As for his "modern smokeless-powder" weapons, they were probably a lot of old Martinis. They would not be swindled.

I was told that Montenegro had given money to the Mirdites, and that Yanko Vukotitch was trying to bribe some Moslem heads in Kosovo vilayet. Lastly,

that the revolution was timed for May, and that plenty of weapons would be forthcoming. Tremendous enthusiasm and hope were raised by a report that Italy had bombarded Beyrout and

A MOSQUE.

Smyrna, sunk some war vessels, and that the Yemen was in revolt.

The British Minister and the Greek one arrived from Cettigne on March 1, also "just to have a look round." "Heavens!" thought I; "now we've had Servia, France, England, and Greece. Things must be tituppy!"

Nikola of Montenegro returned from Russia, and

summoned Hussein Riza Bey to an artillery display at Podgoritza. Scutari was first stunned and then derisive when told the two had sworn peace. The news threw the tribesmen into great uncertainty. A tale spread that Nikola had done it on purpose to allay Hussein Riza's alarms, and had shown him his worst guns and asked his opinion on them.

If Montenegro remained quiet, it would be a good opportunity for the tribesmen to rise, said some of the heads. I said it was madness. A large proportion of the tribes were in a state of dire poverty, and none of the burnt-out ones had any possibility of sowing corn. If there were no harvest, a famine must follow. I ceased giving clothes, and began to scrape up money for seed-corn, though how to get enough I had not an idea. With seed-corn in view, too, the Maltsors were in a fever about the payment for "mublez."

Saddreddin Bey was dismissed suddenly from his post at Cettigne, whether because he had thoughtlessly signed an ambiguous document I never ascertained.

On Monday, March 4, a large deputation of headmen went to the Vali. He greeted them affably, said he, too, was an Albanian, and asked what they wanted. They replied: "The twelve articles." First, schools in their own tongue. The Vali replied that he had already told the Archbishop that the priests should be paid 200 piastres (about thirty-six shillings) a month to make schools in their own houses. The tribesmen shouted: "We want proper schools, not priests!" They insisted. The meeting became noisy. They demanded the promised roads. These, said the Vali, were already begun. "Yes, artillery tracks to

the tops of the mountains. We want roads to our valleys." And so they fought point by point till they came to Article XI., and demanded "mublez." Then a terrible uproar ensued. The Vali denied their claim. Mirash Lutzi's son threw down a copy of the Montenegrin version. The Vali wished to take this copy of the articles, but they refused to give it up. He lost his temper, and, to quote an eyewitness, "these poor ignorant Maltsori, who have never been to school, made as much noise as though they were educated gentlemen in a real Parliament."

The deputation left, furious. Some rushed off to the Austrian Consulate, and came away declaring angrily that they had cried to Herr Zambaur: "If no Christian Power will protect us from the Young Turks, we shall be forced to turn Moslem!" and that he had replied: "Why don't you, then? What does it matter?" What truth there is in this tale I do not know, but it flew round, was generally believed, and caused much bitterness. Others of the deputation came to me, very sullen, and as cross as bears. They would not listen to reason, but said: "If the Government will not keep its promises, so much the worse for the Government." And they cursed Austria, and asked: "Where are the ten thousand rifles Austria promised us when Bosnia was annexed, not one of which we ever received?"

I went to discuss the position with Mr. Summa, and found Petar Plamenatz at our Consulate. Mr. Summa maintained always that only house compensation was ever meant. Plamenatz stuck to the "immeubles" clause, and stated that until the Turkish Government received the bill, it had no idea

of the ruin which had been wrought. He related that on May 13 he had seen houses flaming, and had gone straight to Tourgoud Pasha and asked him: "Are you mad? What are you doing? You are destroying your own property!" But that Tourgoud had persisted, saying he was giving the tribesmen a good lesson. Plamenatz could not sufficiently condemn the barbarity of house-burning. I noted this in my diary, and later it read strangely.*

The Maltsori held raging meetings in the town, and were about to leave after a flat refusal of the Vali to grant their requests, when a man came flying into the town with the news that the road was waylaid with armed Moslems, and that there was a plot to assassinate the headmen, more especially Gelosh Djoko and Mirash and his son. The tale spread like flames that the Vali had arranged this in order to put an end to the Maltsors' demands. They rushed to the Archbishop's palace, spent the night there, and sent angry messages to the Vali. He declared he knew nothing. Every Christian in the town believed that the Government had planned a general assassination of the heads. There was wild excitement. Most of them stayed a couple of days with the Archbishop. Mirash and family slipped off by night; an armed escort came to meet the others.

The Christian inns at which the tribesmen always stopped when in Scutari were closed by order of the police, to the indignation of the whole Christian quarter.

The Vali, a nervous and irritable man, broke down

* At the time of going to press news is coming in that the Montenegrins are burning houses in the districts they have just annexed.

and was ill. All believed that really he was afraid to show his face.

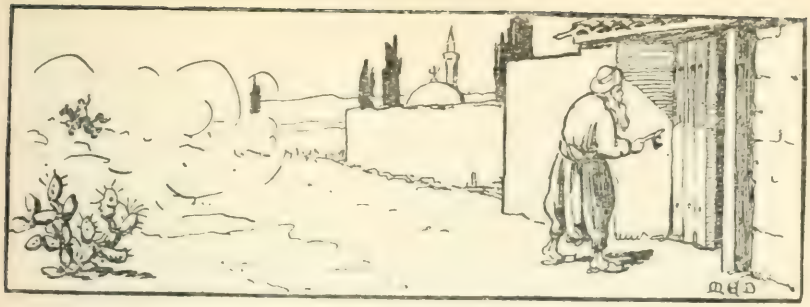
The die was cast. To this day the tribesmen believe that the Government tried to assassinate them, and never again did they place the smallest faith in it. Revolution appeared to be merely a matter of time. It was to begin, we were told, at Kroja and Avlona, and the Northern tribes would follow on. Essad Pasha Toptani, since so notorious, came to Scutari. He had completely split with the Committee of Union and Progress, of which he had been a member, and was now, so he said, heart and soul for Albania. He was working a propaganda among the Scutari Moslems, visited, too, the "Giuha Shkyp" (Albanian Language Club) of the Catholics, and made a most friendly speech. It was reported that he was anxious to obtain the support of a great Power, especially England, and that he was all for autonomy.

On the 10th Petar Plamenatz, the Montenegrin Consul, was summoned by telegraph to Constantinople to replace Popovitch as Minister there. I was surprised, for, having known him many years, I did not consider him of sufficient intellectual capacity for international affairs of importance, but believed him to have a fair insight into the Albanian situation, and therefore valuable at Scutari, for it was certain that Albania was the key of the whole situation.

Scarcely had he left, when all Scutari was excited by the news that eleven of the Montenegrin political prisoners of the Bomb Affair of 1907 had escaped by burrowing under the walls of the prison at Podgoritza, fled to Tuzi, and taken refuge with Mihilaki Effendi,

the Kaimmakam, who brought them at once by steamer to Scutari. King Nikola, I was told by a Kastrati man, sent at once and offered £300 reward to any of the Maltsors who would shoot the most important of them—an ex-Minister. But no one rose to this handsome offer. I went at once to learn if my poor friend, Dr. Marusitch, were among the escaped, and to aid him if possible; but he was not. There was widespread sympathy with the fugitives, not only in Albania, but in Montenegro, and it was never discovered who aided their flight. They left shortly by sea, but not before the new Montenegrin Consul, Jovitchevitch, had had time to exchange insults with them in the street.

The appointment of Jovitchevitch puzzled me extremely. He was blankly ignorant of place and people, and a raw hand at Consular work. He came to me for a copy of my copy of Plamenatz's copy of the celebrated "twelve articles," and the loan of my maps, as the Montenegrin Consulate possessed none! The copy I gave; my maps I did not. He, as had Popovitch, complained that his Government gave him no instructions, and I could only suppose that it was hoped that, in his ignorance, he would tread on Turkish corns and set the Turks a-hopping. Looking back, I am inclined to think the reason was far simpler—they had no better man to put in his place.



# CHAPTER VIII

## THE REFORM COMMISSION

"It is useless to lock the Stable-door after the Steed is Stolen."

Now, when almost all Albania, Moslem and Christian, was disaffected, and want and misery were widespread in the North, it occurred at last to the Young Turks that it would be as well to send a Commission to inquire into the needs of the country and attempt to remedy them. Hadji Avdil, then Minister of the Interior, with a staff of Commissioners which included a French Colonel and an Englishman—Mr. Graves—started from Constantinople. The news was received with derision in Scutari. "Reform!" cried popular voice. "Not he. He is only coming to juggle the elections and swindle us with promises. We have had enough of that." I protested that there was, at any rate, an honest Englishman on the Commission, and was laughed down. "How can anyone be honest," they asked, "who is in the pay of the Young Turks?"

On March 19 the Commission, much delayed by the difficulties which it met in Kosovo vilayet, where it was fired on more than once, arrived in Scutari with considerable fanfaronade and a salute of guns from

the citadel. A party of town Moslems, in golden gala attire and armed with Mausers, acted as escort, together with a number of soldiers; but as a show the thing was a failure, for, for some mysterious reason, the Commission was made to dismount and tramped through the muddy streets in draggle-tail order, the horses led in the rear by suvarris. The Moslem schoolboys lined the road at intervals. The Franciscans sent some of their schoolboys, by order, it was said, of the Austrian Consul, and the Christian band played—by order of the Vali. There was no enthusiasm.

Mr. Graves visited me shortly and said: "I do not expect you to believe me, but I assure you that this Reform Commission is perfectly genuine, that we have come to do our best. The Government has realized the gravity of the situation. Unless the Chauvinist party should get the upper hand, and I hope it will not, the reforms will be carried out." He gave details as to the inefficient officials whom the Commission had already dismissed. I replied that I fully believed in the *intentions* of the Commission, but that things had arrived at such a point that it was too late. Moreover, it was easy to dismiss inefficient officials, but where was it possible to find suitable men to replace them? I had no hope myself. Mr. Graves admitted the difficulty, but said it was not insuperable, and asked me to make suggestions as to the needs of the Maltsors.

I begged immediately for a distribution of seed-corn, pointing out that the twelve articles promised rations of maize "until next harvest," but that no one had explained how, in the devastated land, a harvest

was to be obtained, and that my fund would allow of a very small distribution only.

I asked for maize for the whole of the mountains, not merely for the late insurgents; for, owing to the general upset, all were in great poverty, and those who did not receive it would look on it as a reward for revolting, and act accordingly. He promised to do his best, and said that I might tell the people that the destroyed woods were to be reckoned as "immeubles" and paid for. Also that the Government was prepared to remit taxation and give exemption from military service until the reforms were carried out. We discussed also the burning question of the national language, of schools, and of the gendarmerie.

For the next two days I was kept busy translating petitions into bad French for presentation to Hadji Avdil. One made gigantic demands and began with such a servile address to the Sultan that both I and the man who had draughted it burst out laughing. "What does it matter?" he said. "This is the last Turkish Sultan here, and he will not last long."

A very good petition began by pointing out that Albania had been till lately the faithful ally of Turkey, and in return had only been crushed and humiliated. It begged for (1) recognition of Albanian nationality, (2) the use of the Albanian language in police and law courts and all Government offices that came in direct contact with the people; (3) the institution of Albanian schools with Albanian masters; (4) liberty to develop the language; (5) that heads of Government departments in Albania should be Albanians.

All was labour in vain. I circulated Mr. Graves's messages industriously, and said he would do his

best. Folk merely smiled, and either disbelieved it or said he would be bamboozled by the Turks. Hadji Avdil, they pointed out, had gone first of all to visit Hussein Bektashi, who represented "Union and Progress" in Scutari. "You will see," said everyone, "he has only come to arrange that two Young Turks shall be elected for Parliament." And they declared that they would not present any of their petitions, as everything was a foregone conclusion—when "the Englishman" was safely out of the way, everyone who had signed a petition would be arrested. Oh, yes, they knew all about Turks, young and old.

By Sunday the 24th, all had gone wrong, and even Mr. Graves was less hopeful. One of the main objects of the Commission in Scutari had been to make peace with the Maltsors, and as yet the Minister and the heads had not met. He had ordered the Vali to summon them, and they, firmly convinced that the Vali had plotted to murder them last time they came, refused flatly to come without a guarantee of safe conduct.

An Englishman of very great experience in the East once said: "In a great emergency you may always trust a Turkish official to do the wrong thing." Hadji Avdil did so now. Had he sent a genial personal invitation, had twenty sheep roasted whole, and held a friendly pow-wow with the chiefs of the whole mountains, it is possible the whole course of events in North Albania, and therefore in Turkey in Europe, might have been very different. But he rode the high horse, considered himself insulted, and ordered the Archbishop to summon the tribesmen. The Archbishop said it was impossible after what had

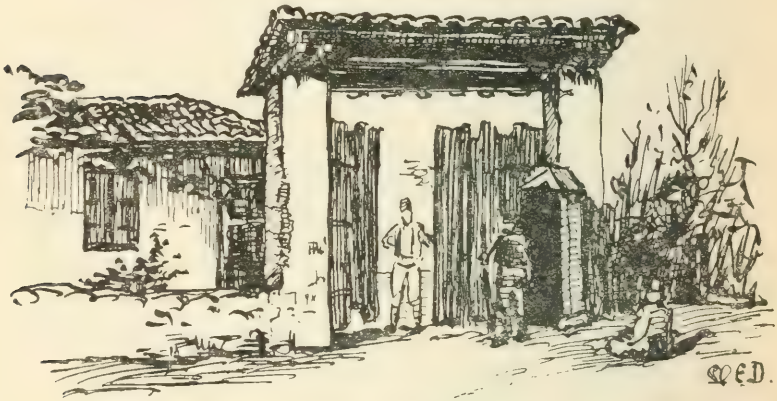
occurred, unless a formal guarantee were given. Mr. Graves thereupon offered his parole, and the French Consul the protection of his Consulate, and they asked me if I could act. I accordingly took council with a Seltze headman, who said that with a guarantee it could be done, but pointed out truthfully that it took a whole week to summon the outlying tribesmen. It was then Sunday night. Mr. Graves replied that the Commission was leaving on Wednesday, and asked me if I could persuade the nearer men to come—it would be better than nothing. As it was precisely the Baitza men whose death was said to have been planned, I hesitated a bit, as, after all, it was possible that certain officials might use Mr. Graves as an innocent lure and no French Consular protest could benefit Mirash and Gelosh Djoko if they were shot dead on the way. So I said, if their presence were urgent, I would myself ride in and out with them, if it could be arranged, but pointed out that one tribe without the rest was no good.

Hadji Avdil would not unbend from his foolish dignity as a Minister. Mr. Graves did his best, but none of the Commission realized the absolute entirety with which all confidence in the Government had been destroyed. In fact, the eleventh hour had struck, and the minutes were flying. Hadji Avdil and the headmen never met.

The Commission left on the 30th—delayed because the road was " held up "—leaving trouble behind it. It had confirmed the tribesmen in the belief that the Government had plotted to murder them. It had thereby alienated all the town Christians. It had quarrelled with the Archbishop and had tried to buy

peace of the Mirdites by giving forest-cutting concessions to the Abbot. Whether the Mirdites would be pleased at learning the Abbot had the right to cut what they regarded as *their* woods was an open question.

The whole thing was disastrous. The important influence to have gained was the Archbishop's. He had acted quite honestly when he feared to invite the tribes without a formal guarantee, but was



HOUSE AS MILITARY OUTPOST.

blamed by both the Commission and the Austrian Consulate.

A straw shows which way the wind blows. I had tried by Mr. Graves's influence to obtain the payment of a debt of £T15 to a poor man whose house had been commandeered by the Young Turks as a military guardhouse. He had applied in vain thirty times for the promised rent, which was a year overdue. Armed with a note from Mr. Graves, he applied again, full of hope.

"Ah," said the Turkish official, "this is from the

English gentleman. How kind of him! When the money comes, we will let you know!"

It never was paid—had, in all probability, been embezzled on the way when it was due. After this I could say no more. For the reply was always: "Even your Englishman could not make them pay a debt of £T15."

Scarcely had the Reform Commission left—the populace breathing fervent prayers that it would be ambushed at Kroja—when it was made public that the Vali had been dismissed and would be replaced by Hussein Riza Bey, and that Prenk Pasha had resigned his headship of Mirdita. By tradition Prenk was head not only of Mirdita but of Luria, Kthela, and the Alessio Mountains. Now, presumably to restrict his influence, Hadji Avdil had told him that a new distribution of provinces was to take place, and that in future he could be recognized only as head of Mirdita.

"All or none," said Prenk as an ultimatum.

"None, then," said Hadji Avdil.

Scutari was amazed, and Prenk, very vexed, said: "Very well; whatever happens, do not put the blame on me."

Prenk in the early days of the Constitution had loyally played "Union and Progress." So much so, that the Mirdites began to turn against him, and accuse him of being a Moslem in his heart. There was no doubt about it, said some—he washed his feet every day. To regain lost influence, he was forced to play anti-Government, and was suspected of having instigated the refusal of the Mirdite zaptiehs to serve the Government any more. They had recently

suddenly disbanded. At the same time, Hadji Avdil was a fool to quarrel with Prenk, for there can be no doubt that on more than one occasion he prevented the Mirdites from rising.

As for the dismissal of the Vali, all the Maltsors and many of the town Christians believed he had been dismissed because he had failed to assassinate the headmen, and thought that they had acted very wisely in refusing to come down and meet the Commission. When told of the remission of taxes, they jeered: "They daren't enforce them. We have given them one lesson; we will give them another." And they continued to talk of autonomy as before.

"The Turk," they said, "is, in one particular only, like the Lord God. As he was in the beginning he is now, and ever will be. We don't believe in any of his reforms. They are only dust in the eyes of Europe."

All argument was thrown away on them.

One of the Moslem leaders at Ipek sent me word that he had 700 followers, that they would accept neither Austrian nor Turkish rule, but would like English. Could I write to the King? I replied it was impossible, and I could do nothing.

The new Vali, Hussein Riza Bey, who later played such an important part, was an Asiatic. He was a short, dark, rather thick-set man, with a hook nose and bright, dark eyes; held himself badly, wore his belt crooked and his tunic sticking up in a lump above it behind, and was imperious in manner. He came from Bagdad, where he had a very good record. I had had to act twice as dragoman to him about the construction of a steel stern-wheeler steamer for the

river, and had found him, in that affair, such a hopeless muddler that I underestimated his powers in his own line of business. As military commandant, too, he had shown himself cruel. I regretted his appointment also, because he was so actively engaged fortifying the city that he could have little time for civil affairs. Whether, so late in the day, any civil governor could have pacified the Maltsors it is impossible to say.

One thing is certain, Hussein Riza was a fine soldier, and it is primarily to him and his splendid plan of fortification that the thanks of all Albanians are due. He saved Scutari. He was trained by Germans and knew his work.

The first event of importance under the new Vali was the Parliamentary election. This was to take place on Sunday, April 14. Both town and mountain Christians struck in a body. They formed the majority of the electorate, but declared that they would not vote—the elections would be all juggled—that was the reason of Hadji Avdil's visit. No matter how many votes they polled, a "Young Turk" would be declared elected. They would not take part in a farce; and nothing would budge them.

Polling-day poured rain, snow, and sleet. I was writing in my room when a revolver shot rang out close by. Leaning as far out of the window as possible, I saw two more shots fired at a Turkish officer (the second in command) on horseback. He dashed off at a gallop uninjured. There was a rush of gendarmes and people, but no arrest was made. The assailant was a well-known Scutari Moslem, but such was the unpopularity of the Government that it dared

not provoke the Moslems by capturing him. Moreover, at bottom the affair was unsavoury.

The election went off without any interest. Only ten Christians voted—and they split their votes. All Catholic Scutarenes persisted in the belief that they had effected a great stroke of business by refusing to vote, and had shown the Turks what they thought of them. I thought them foolish, and said so. But they pointed triumphantly to the results of the elections all over the country. Greeks, Serbs, Bulgars—all had been made to elect Young Turks. Seldom has an election been so shamelessly manipulated.

Hussein Riza was greatly vexed at the attitude of the Scutari Christians, and tried hard, though the election was over, to put a Christian in. He vainly tried to induce the Archbishop to influence his flock, but the Archbishop replied that Hadji Avdil had forbidden him to take any part in politics.

The two Young Turks, elected as arranged, were declared members for Scutari, and the Christians of the whole district remained unrepresented.

Hadji Avdil's visit had, so far, made bad worse. I clung to the hope that the seed-corn which I had been promised would—come war, come peace—at least save lives. It had been bought, and the authorities sent for the various headmen in order to ascertain the names and number of persons in the families, with a view to fair distribution.

I expected them all to be delighted. Not at all. They leapt to the conclusion it was a plot. "The Turks," they said, "never gave a present without a reason." They believed the proffered corn was a

"wooden horse." It was a trick to ascertain how much arable land they had and tax it; or to lure the heads to Scutari and assassinate them. So completely had all faith been destroyed that the Klimenti, who were first approached, refused stiffly to give a reply. I was horrified, sent for them at once, and told them the seed-corn was my idea and asked how they could live without it. They replied: "That Englishman was in the pay of the Turks. They sent him to you to trick us." All I could do was to send an assurance of the honesty of the affair to Padre Giacomo, the good old priest of the tribe.

Next day came an old friend—a headman of Kastrati Katun—an honest old chap, in complete amaze. "I have come to consult you. We need this corn very, very much, but we dare not accept it; God knows what trick is at the bottom of it."

He was delighted with my explanation, and went off to tell Katun it was safe to accept.

With some other tribes I had incredible difficulties. The heads went backwards and forwards from me to the British Consulate. They admitted that they had nothing but starvation before them—but they feared. Mr. Summa and I talked ourselves exhausted, and I told them they "were blackening my face" before they dared accept. If they must starve, they must, so they said; it would be better than selling themselves to the Turks. We persuaded them all in the end, and thereby saved many lives. It is one of the few things to which I look back with complete satisfaction.

## CHAPTER IX

### PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT

QUITE early in the year I had been told that a great general rising of Albania would take place. It would begin about St. George's Day in Kroja, Tirana, and Avlona, and the mountain-tribes were to rush Scutari.

Meantime, the Turks, directed by Hussein Riza Bey, worked hard at strengthening Scutari. I learnt in May, by riding over the plain, that works were going on in five places at least, and judged they were important, as I was warned off by shouts. Judging, also, by the vast amount of barbed wire that was always arriving and passing through the town, I told the Maltsors they could not possibly rush it, and that the attempt would be suicidal. They jeered at me and the barbed wire, but told me nothing would take place till the end of June.

That Tarabosh was becoming extremely strong we learnt by chance. The Turkish officers stole a very good sporting dog belonging to a man I know. He complained to the Vali, and said the dog had been seen at Tarabosh. The Vali denied it. The dog's master persisted, and finally obtained leave, not to go himself, but, to send his servant. The latter, a sharp lad, returned with the dog and a description of the fort.

I wanted a holiday badly, and also clothes. Moreover, it was advisable for me to leave the country, at any rate, for a time. The tribesmen would not take my advice, though they were always coming for it. And when the "burst up" came, I did not wish to be considered responsible. So at the end of May I left Scutari for Rome. The situation between Turkey and Montenegro was already badly strained, owing to a quarrel about steamboat rights on the lake. All steamer traffic between the two countries was stopped, and things looked as though they might develop uncomfortably. It being im-


possible to travel via Montenegro, I had to go to Corfu, and tranship for Brindisi.

In Rome, to my surprise, I was invited almost at once to speak with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Marchese San Giuliano. The political situation puzzled me extremely.

Nikola of Montenegro had apparently failed to obtain Russian support. But it was obvious that Montenegro was stirring up perpetual unrest among the mountain-tribes. There were more rumours that "this time Montenegro will give us enough arms to free ourselves." Now there was the lake-steamer quarrel, and a company financed by Italy was mixed

up in it. I believed that Italy must be the motive-power behind Montenegro, for I could not believe she would act alone.

The Marchese and I talked round and round for a little while, for we were naturally both more anxious to obtain information than to give it. Then he asked: "Well, in your opinion, will the Maltsors of Scutari mountains rise this year or not?"

"It depends," said I, "on Montenegro." He looked so genuinely surprised that I said to myself at once: "No; Italy is not engineering this affair."

"What do you mean by 'depends on Montenegro'?" he asked.

"Well, I think it does," I repeated. I was now pretty certain how things stood. It was not Italy and not Russia that was shoving. So it must be the other Balkan States.

The tale that Bulgaria would begin so soon as Montenegro did, must be true. That Montenegro meant business was evident; for Popovitch, the Montenegrin Minister in Rome, told me that the Montenegrin Cabinet was dissolved, and that Mitar Martinovitch was the new War Minister. "Now we shall have war," he added.

To my mind the weak point was Greece. Ten years ago in Macedonia I had seen for myself the hatred that raged between Greek and Bulgar—a hatred so intense and so savage that it amounted to mania, and it was hard to believe that union between the two was possible.

I returned Scutari-wards at the beginning of July, travelling through Montenegro.

Podgoritza was hard at work taking in military stores and drilling men. For Montenegro, a great lot of men were mobilized. The ordinary man wanted war, and talked of little else. The situation, as I wrote at the time, " was sickish."

Blazho Boshkovitch had gone to Cettigne for orders. So had the Montenegrin Consul from Scutari. The Turkish Consul took the blackest possible view of the state of things, and the Moslems of Kosovo were in full revolt.

If the Maltsors rose, I should not be able to get to Scutari to fetch my remaining goods, so off I went at once across country. Scutari I found jumpy and nervous. War preparations were going on fast. Hussein Riza Bey did not mean to be caught napping. But reports of Albanian victories came from Kosovo vilayet, and the telegraph-line to South Albania was cut.

A bright idea flashed across me, and off I went to the old Greek Consul, with whom I was on friendly terms. We talked on general topics. Then I asked suddenly, and apropos of nothing at all: " Is it true, Monsieur, that your Government has signed a Treaty with Bulgaria against Turkey ?"

He jumped visibly, and, greatly upset, began: " Mademoiselle, you must surely be aware that all Governments have affairs which one must not——" I apologized, and begged him to say no more. Nor was more required. If it were not signed, it was about to be. The last straw had been laid. War was now as certain as is anything in this world.

I decided to leave Scutari, calculating that both postal routes would be cut (via Medua and via Mon-

tenegro), and that it would be impossible to send or receive news.

It was July 17. Next day came news of a very sharp fight between Turkish regulars and Montenegrins, on the frontier at Matagushi, not far from Podgoritza. It had lasted seven hours. The Montenegrins had lost nine dead and six wounded, and the Turks rather less.

The Montenegrin Consul, who had just returned, was greatly agitated. "Mon Dieu!" he said to me, "I hope you will not publish a book before five years. You know too much."

Popular voice said: "Montenegro will declare war." A quarrel of some sort must be picked as prelude, and it was possible this was the one. I packed and left Scutari.

Passing through Tuzi, the frontier town, I called on Mihilaki Effendi, the Kaimmakam. He said the affair was purely local: some Montenegrins had passed the frontier carrying arms, had been ordered by the frontier patrol to give them up, had refused, and been fired on. It was a pity, but—"Que voulez vous—the usual frontier incident with which these people amuse themselves." I told him that, in view of the general situation, I hoped that the Maltsors would not rise. They had better wait till they had learned more, before they struck for autonomy. He agreed, and said he had done his best (which was true. He had worked very well). But he was not at all hopeful, as there were Montenegrin intriguers at work.

Podgoritza I found raging. In summer it is always a small Inferno, and with excitement, had leapt to

fever heat; the popular pulse was anything you please. Unarmed Montenegrins, so everyone swore, had been fired at when on their own territory. Turkish soldiers and bashi-bazouks had crossed the frontier 300 metres. Of the nine Montenegrins killed, four had been mutilated. The Turkish Consul had had to bear witness to this fact.

I did not agree with the Kaimmakam that this was "a usual frontier incident," and believed it to be "a put-up job" by one side or the other, but was not sure which had the more to gain by it. When Monsieur Ramadanovitch came to investigate the circumstances, I suggested to him that the Turks had perhaps tried to make a war scare, as they were greatly bothered by the Moslem insurrection that was raging in Kosovo vilayet, and if the insurgents thought war with Montenegro imminent, they would make peace at once, and combine with the Turk against the Slav. Ramadanovitch agreed, and added that, for that very reason, Montenegro must keep quiet.

I noted that day in my diary: "Montenegro wants to let the Turks and the Kosovo Albanians fight themselves tired before taking any active steps."

War fever was so high that it seemed advisable to stay, though Podgoritza was suffocatingly hot.

The Government ordered that no owner of a horse was to sell it without permission. The guns were all ready.

"Wait and see the first shot fired," said the people. I waited a week, during which nothing happened, and I received a message from the tribesmen, saying they had not enough cartridges nor rifles, and did not

know what to do if a crisis arose. They begged help.

I went up to Cettigne for a breath of fresh air. The first thing I did was, accidentally, to meet the King and Queen driving in their pony-carriage. His Majesty at once stopped and summoned me. After greeting me he said:

"Absolutely you must go and tell your Maltsors that they must not rise now." I was considerably embarrassed, for this clearly meant that he intended them to rise later for his own purposes. I said, "Sire, I have already told them they have not enough cartridges, and can do nothing"; and I added: "But they will not wait for anyone."

He expressed himself as very pleased with the advice I had given; said I was younger and more beautiful each time he saw me, and drove away, leaving me wondering that His Majesty should attempt to catch such an old Balkan bird as myself with chaff of that sort.

Next day I had a message from a very important Maltsor, saying he must speak to me in private on something of the highest importance. I arranged the meeting. He spoke very earnestly, and said he had come on behalf of the Maltsors, to beg that I would write to England and explain their situation. I transcribe the main points of his statement, for it throws a strong light on subsequent events:

"We believe that in five years' time, by constant struggles, we should be able to fight free and make our own terms with the Turks. But Austria has had her plans formed for God knows how many years, and does not mean to give them up. King Nikola

also has his. His plan—and I swear to you that this is true—*is to take all Maltsia e madhe, Dukagini and Mirdita.* He is very careful to want to take only a population *less* than Montenegro. He does not want an Albanian majority, for he wants to crush and Slavize all that he takes. He planned this last year, but though a certain party—that led by Sokol Batzi—was in favour of Montenegrin rule, the majority were not. This is the reason why Montenegro gave out no more arms and did not advance. He knew we would not accept him. For the help we received last year we are truly grateful. But we made no promises. It was fear that Albania might be divided and part given to Montenegro, that prevented the Moslems of Kosovo and the Tosks from rising with us last year. Perhaps it was a mistake, for had they risen, Europe then might have recognized us. What we wish you to write to England now is—*That King Nikola has made a plan that will ruin us.* He is doing all he can to prevent Maltsia e madhe from rising till he is ready. He wants it to rise as he advances, and make Europe think it is under his control and wants his rule. We are placed between three enemies —Turkey, Austria, and Montenegro. The only way we can spoil his plan is to rise now and help the revolution in Kosovo vilayet. If we fall under Montenegro or Austria, it is death for us as a nation. So we may as well rise and be killed—or win, God willing."

I asked, "What about arms and ammunition?" and he admitted they were very short of ammunition, but that there were not more than 15,000 Nizams around Scutari, and that all the Christian ones would

desert; also that the Scutari Moslems were sick of the Turks and would rise, too. The Kosovo Moslems were capturing quantities of ammunition from the Turks, "and we can, too; it would be better than accepting more help from Montenegro."

I feared a fiasco. He said: "It would be better to wait fifteen years perhaps, under Turkey, till we are more educated for autonomy, but it is impossible. We know for certain that Austria's and Montenegro's plans are complete, and will soon be in motion. We must act first and show Europe we are quite independent of these two. Say to the British Government *that if it will not help us we beg that it will not help our enemies, either with money or political support.* We beg that you will stay, for this time we shall need your help more than ever. As for me, I can think no longer of my family, but only of my Fatherland." Nor was this an idle boast, for he had fought very bravely throughout the insurrection. He spoke rapidly, and was tense with excitement and concentrated hate. Later he brought some others to confirm his statements, and they all left shortly for the front.

From this moment I considered myself definitely pledged to stand by the Maltsors in the coming struggle as I had done in the past.

That same afternoon Miouskovitch gave me a most graphic account of the frightful "sitting on" that King Nikola and his suite got in Russia, when they went there hoping for support. "It was terrible, mademoiselle! They threatened us with annihilation!"

The King had behaved with his usual astuteness, but poor Dushan Gregovitch had succumbed to the

popular craze for being interviewed, and had confided to a newspaper that war was necessary for Montenegro; she must have this, that, and the other, and meant to have them at an early date.

The Tsar, in wrath, demanded of King Nikola the meaning of this, and he unkindly replied that no one ever believed Gregovitch. It was hard on poor Gregovitch, for he really had spoken the truth this time.

On Monday, July 30, came word to me that the Maltsors, in accordance with the determination they had already expressed, had risen, had stopped a Turkish convoy of thirty-two Nizams, captured all their arms, and seventeen loaded mules. Two days later the Klimenti tribe drove all the soldiers out of their land and captured the stores of a whole camp. A letter informed me of an elaborate plan for a combined attack on Scutari and many other details. News from Kosovo was, that the insurgents were carrying all before them, that they had demanded the dissolution of Parliament and a fair election, and had given the Government forty-eight hours in which to make up its mind.

It was August 2, the anniversary of the great betrayal of last year. Looking back, I wondered how I had got through the strain and misery of that week. And the situation was in no way better; there was more trouble ahead.

On the 4th came men of Shala to me, praying for arms, and an appeal for ammunition from Kastrati. All the Dukagin tribes together had but 2,000 rifles, 1,500 of which were those given last year by Montenegro. They said, too, that a whole battalion of Montenegrins had gone up to the frontier

from Kuchi, and had had a fight with the Turks. They were vexed that Montenegro should already be beginning before the Albanian question was decided.

It was as I feared. Again the tribesmen had risen without sufficient means. In spite of the constant rumours of contraband, I knew that very few weapons had actually come in, and that, as Austria wished the Maltsors to keep the peace, the supply was practically cut off. Albania had never been re-armed properly since the surrender of arms in 1910.

I said it was absolutely impossible for me to help with weapons. They were greatly disappointed, as they clung always to the belief that England had helped the other Balkan peoples to obtain freedom and would help them.

The insurgent leaders, meanwhile, were desperately anxious lest the Kosovo Moslems should accept terms from the Turkish Government which did not include all Albania. It was now or never, they said, the time for all Albania to strike and be recognized as a nation. Dervish Bey, of Elbasan, was reported to be on the warpath, and bands of patriots were making ready at Kortcha. There were several good leaders down South, only I was begged to note that no one in the North had any belief at all in Ismail Kemal, and all would refuse to recognize him, as they believed he was not really a patriot, but would betray them to a foreign Power.

By this time Cettigne was in great excitement. The rumour of a frontier fight was true. A battle had taken place at Mojkovach, in the Kolashin district, on August 3.

THE GRINNING FRONTIER.

# CHAPTER X

## THE LAST SCENE OF THE FOURTH ACT

BEFORE telling of the last bloody scene of the pre-war era, I must briefly describe the Turko-Montenegrin frontier. Someone in the diplomatic service once told me, "In drawing frontiers the ethnographic question is not considered," which is just a diplomatic way of saying, "You grab the land with the livestock on it," and ignores the fact that when a foreign body is thus incorporated, it almost invariably creates pus, which has, sooner or later, to be let out by an operation.

The frontiers drawn by the Treaty of Berlin were so impossible that in many places they could not be defined, much less enforced. As the borderers themselves described it, "The frontier floated on blood."

The ethnographic question can never be safely ignored. Alsace is still an open sore in Germany.

The more recent frontiers of the Treaty of London have already been washed out by blood, and the future will show how much of the Bucharest frontiers can stand that gory laundry.

By the Treaty of Berlin solid Albanian districts,

which hated all things Slav, were handed over to Montenegro, and solid Slav districts, which asked nothing better than to be Montenegrin or Serb, were handed over to the Turkish Empire. Worse, if possible, tribes and groups of tribes were divided, and this, in a tribal land, should be avoided at almost any price. Debatable tracts were strewn all along the Montenegrin frontier. The site of the recent Matagushi affair was one.

It was further claimed by the Montenegrins that the Turks had not only built kulas (blockhouses) upon debatable areas, but had thrown up entrenchments over the frontier-line, and that from these kulas the frontier Nizams incessantly "sniped" Montenegrins who were upon their own land. The contested areas, it should be remarked, were mostly cases in which the Berlin frontier had been drawn between a village or tribe and its pasture-land.

In July a Turko-Montenegrin Commission was appointed to rectify and delimit these frontiers.

The biggest of the Berlin blunders was that the large Slav tribe Vassoievitch was cut in half. Nothing but very liberal concessions on either side and carefully reckoned compensations could ever have rectified that frontier.

This Commission, instead of visiting the spots, decided everything on paper with the aid of maps—an extraordinary piece of Turkish slopdawdle at such a critical moment. In truth, the thing was a farce. Montenegro, in all probability, insisted on it in order to drive in one more peg on which to hang war. The Turks, on their part, if they wished peace, should have insisted on a delimitation by foreign inspectors.

Pending the ratification of this paper frontier by the Turkish Government, neither party was to have the right to occupy the debatable portions with military. Such was the position of affairs when the fight took place at Mojkovach at the beginning of August.

Cettigne was bubbling with wrath, but the authorities were chary of giving details; nor was it till some time after that I got what I believe to be a true account from an eyewitness; briefly thus: "The Montenegrin peasants were sent to mow grass near the frontier. As they had been fired at when they had tried to mow there before, some gendarmes went with them. The Nizams opened fire from the kula at once. The gendarmes summoned troops, who were waiting near in case of need. These came with such a mad rush that they surrounded the kula before the Nizams had time to fire, and crowded so close against the walls that it was impossible to fire down on them from the loopholes. Yelling their war-songs, they demanded the surrender of the garrison. Someone rushed from a neighbouring house with a can of petroleum, and, dodging the fire, got to the kula with it. A Montenegrin stripped off his shirt, dipped it in petroleum, and thrust it, burning, to the wooden roof. This blazed up, some ammunition exploded, and the Nizams had to rush out. More Nizams and some Moslem Albanians rushed to the rescue from over the border; they all fought like wild beasts. A Nizam rushed out all in flames and was shot down. The kula was burnt down. I saw at least seventy corpses round it. The Montenegrins were mad with rage; they cut the noses off their fallen foes, put

them in their pockets, and followed the retreating Turks in a wild rush almost to Bijelopolje, 15 kilometres over the frontier. They lost twenty-two killed and thirty-two wounded. A wounded Turk was taken alive; but at night a Montenegrin recognized him as the man who had killed his father, and bashed his head in. Altogether four kulas were burnt. The Montenegrins had over three thousand men in the field."

Later a Kolashin man told me that it had been intended to take Bijelopolje, and the hour and the day had been all planned, and that it would have been forced to surrender, had not the troops been hastily recalled, owing to representations made by some of the Legations at Cettigne.

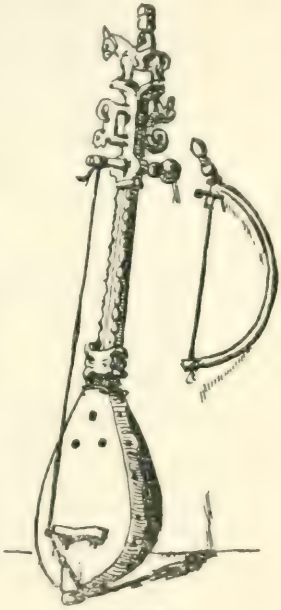
The Turkish Minister, Rustem Bey (otherwise Bilinski) demanded an apology for the violation of Turkish territory, admitting that the land was debatable, and that the Turks had entrenched it, but denying Montenegro's right to invade with troops; and added that if he did not receive the apology by 8 p.m. on August 6, he would break off diplomatic relations and leave the country.

Montenegro refused, and almost immediately afterwards the Kaimmakam of Berani, in whose district the fight had taken place, telegraphed apologies to the Montenegrin Government, and stated that the Nizams had fired the first shot.

King Nikola, jubilant, sent for a gusle and played national airs, and then rode round Cettigne on his white horse. That the affair was "a put-up job" to force Turkey to declare war there can, in the light of subsequent events, be little doubt. Montenegro

trailed her coat and Turkey trod on it. But it is also possible that Turkey's part was played deliberately, for it was very certain that in case of war with Montenegro the Moslems of Kosovo would make peace and play Turkish for the nonce, in hope to save their territory, and obtain further concessions later.

Be that as it may, the Turks acceded to the demands of the insurgent Kosovo Moslems, dissolved Parliament, and promised a form of autonomy.



A GUSLE.

The Montenegrins were not at all pleased with this news, but I found Gavrilovitch (the Servian Minister) and Mitar Martinovitch, now War Minister, both still confident that all the Catholic Maltsors, Maltsia e madhe, Dukagini, and Mirdites would support Montenegro. I denied this. Martinovitch would not believe me; but Gavrilovitch seemed shaken.

The Maltsia e madhe men, meanwhile in full revolt, were greatly put out by the failure of the Kosovo men to consult the Christians before making terms. They had captured and disarmed all the small military outposts in Klimenti and Gruda, and taken their stores and ammunition, and were besieging Bukovitz, the one big Turkish camp in Hoti. Owing to its lack of water, it was bound to surrender in a few days. A relief force from Scutari was routed by

a combined force of Hoti, Kastrati, and Skreli. Tuzi was completely cut off from Scutari and short of supplies, and, so far as I could learn, all the tribes except Gruda, which was influenced by Sokol Batzi, were entirely for Albanian independence.

The Turkish Government sent the Archbishop to the mountains to negotiate peace. He succeeded in making all the insurgents, except Gruda and Shala, swear peace on condition the Turks evacuated the mountains. The Turkish troops accordingly withdrew from all points, except the summit of Dechich and Planinitza, a fortified camp on its flank, which they declared necessary as frontier outposts. The Montenegrins were furious that the tribesmen had made peace, and declared it was an Austrian "politik."

War preparations went on apace in Podgoritza. Rifles were dealt out to young and aged. On August 12 artillery went to Kolashin and Suka, and I noted: "Montenegro has no preparations at all for field ambulance, let alone hospitals." The few wounded Albanians who came into Podgoritza were shamefully neglected and in most horrible state. I sent a lot of antiseptic dressings up to the mountains.

We were now on the giddy brink of war. King Nikola notified the Powers that if they would not undertake to keep order by delimiting his frontier and protecting it from Turkish violation, he must himself take the necessary steps. Generals Mitar Martinovitch, Yanko Vukotitch, and Blazho Boshkovitch held a council of war. The Powers did nothing, except, as usual, cackle like a lot of hens.

Seventeen guns went to the Zeta. "Voila," said the Turkish Counsel, an Armenian, "the Turks have

now their last chance. If this new ministry fail, c'est une débâcle, une débâcle complète! Pray God that my poor Armenia may not fall into the hands of Russia!"

It was reported that Russia was doing her best to restrain Montenegro; but I noted at the time in my diary at Cettigne on August 15: "If Russia really wants peace, why are so many Russian officers toddling about here? They can't all pretend they have come to teach in the cadet school, when it is closed for the summer holidays."

On Friday, August 16, the Montenegrin Government notified the Legations that Nizams had fallen upon certain Christian villages, that ten men had been killed and thirty women and children taken prisoners, and so worded the communication that it appeared that Montenegrin territory had been violated.

I was sure the affair was beyond the border. So it was; but it was impossible to get a clear tale from the Montenegrin authorities. Yanko Vukotitch went up at once to Andriyevitza to take command, and a rumour flashed in shortly that the Montenegrins had taken Berani; but this proved untrue. Refugees were reported to be swarming in, and there were many wounded.

On the 19th at 10 a.m. Cettigne held a public indignation meeting in the market-place, the first public meeting permitted under the recently granted Constitution. The speakers called on the crowd to rescue their brother-Serbs beyond the border, and were loudly applauded. It was intended to demonstrate before the Palace and the Legations, but the police barred the way and the meeting dispersed.

I started for the seat of war next morning early, arriving at Podgoritza by eleven. Here I had to search for a carriage which would drive me to Andriyevitza; and, when found, the man refused, owing to the extreme heat, to start before 5 p.m. During the delay Podgoritza begged me not to go. "The guns are all placed," they said. "The Balkan Powers are all now agreed. Come and see the guns early to-morrow. The first shot will be fired within twenty-four hours." I cast doubt, and was told that "men were going to cut grass in a certain spot, and if, as was hoped, they were fired on, the artillery would retort at once."

I reflected that this would be the third time "the grass trick" was played, and that it was not good enough, so clung to my first plan, and started at 5.30 p.m. on the long drive—a soothing, magical drive. We seemed to leave heat, hate, and squalid politics all behind us as the carriage zigzagged on and on up the mountain-road, whose edge dropped sheer into bottomless gloom, while the peaks towered above, majestic in the soft green light of a big half-moon.

At 3 a.m. we halted at a han and drowsed till 7 a.m., and arrived finally, with weary horses, at Andriyevitza at 7.30 p.m., two days and one night after leaving Cettigne.

Andriyevitza was in sore plight. Montenegro had made another attempt to bring things to a climax, and this time the Turks had outwitted her and taken terrible vengeance. Nearly all the Serb villages near the border had been burnt. They all formed part of the Vassoievitch tribe, which had been divided by

CLEBURNE: FIRST PUBLIC MEETING, AUGUST 19, 1912

the Berlin blunder; everyone, therefore, in Andriyevitza had relatives among the victims. In the schoolhouse were some fifty wounded, including several women and two mutilated children. Refugees were coming in daily. The situation was most painful.

So closely were the Montenegrin and Turkish halves of the tribe intertwined that the Mayor of Andriyevitza had been member for Berani in the first Turkish Parliament under the Constitution, but had retired, as it was a farce, and the despotism of the "Union and Progress" was intolerable.

Briefly, the Young Turks had, in this Serb district, tried forcible Ottomanization. The school was closed, the priest flogged and imprisoned in a filthy latrine. Under the Constitution, however, the district, as it had a Christian majority, had the right to a Christian Kaimmakam. Ilia Popovitch, a native Serb, was appointed. Poor Ilia! He was an honest and honourable man, but he and his young French wife undertook an impossible task—to create "un petit état modèle" of his district, according to the spirit of the Constitution. As his unfortunate widow told me, he was opposed both by the Moslem Albanians of the district and the Serbs themselves—the former because they dreaded measures that would allow of the development and expansion of the Serb element, the Serbs because they were opposed to any measures which would help to make peace and strengthen Turkey.

A further difficulty was that the commandant of the frontier garrison would not act together with a Christian civilian, and opposed him violently on all points. The Turk looked on Ilia as a pro-Serb, the

Serbs considered him as a traitor who sided with the Young Turks. He it was who sent the telegram stating that the Turks had fired the first shot at Mojkovach, and by virtue of his office he formed one of the Commission appointed to inquire into the affair.

Exactly what happened will never be known. From the frontier poor Ilia sent a hasty note to his wife, telling her to go to Paris at once, and he would join her. She, with her infant daughter and a young Serb lady (her friend), alarmed, left Berani secretly, and fled to the frontier mountains. Only just in time. That very night, the night of August 14-15, Turkish troops and Moslem Albanians, led by a Turkish officer, fell upon the village of Lower Urzhanitza, massacred sixteen persons in their beds, cut off and carried away three heads, and took thirty-one women and children prisoners. These persons were all members of the Tchoukitch family, which, it would appear, were suspected by the Turks of being concerned in a revolutionary plot. So they undoubtedly were, but the savagery of the Turkish attack was unpardonable. The Montenegrin troops, which, as in the Mojkovach affair, were ready, at once rushed to the aid of their cousins across the border, burnt all the Turkish frontier blockhouses in the neighbourhood, crossed the frontier with their guns, and the insurgent natives and the troops together would have taken Berani had not the Powers at Cettigne ordered the cessation of hostilities.

Andriyevitza, when I arrived, was furious at the recall of the troops. Seventeen Serb villages had been burnt or partially burnt and plundered; the

number of dead was not yet known. I went to investigate the truth, and crossed the frontier with one of the surviving Tchoukitches—a schoolmaster from Podgoritza. The Montenegrins had a large camp on a hill on the very frontier, and two big guns pointing at Berani. We passed the burnt Turkish blockhouses, and crawled round under cover of the hills to avoid the Turkish guns, which might open fire. From these blockhouses the frontier guard had been for the past three years in the habit of firing at the Montenegrin houses across the border, and as these were of wood, and not more than 1,000 metres away,

MONTENEGRIN WOODEN HOUSES.

the bullets ripped right through them. The priest of Budimlje (one of the burnt villages), a wild figure in native dress, with long black elf-locks streaming from head and beard, climbed up to us and narrated recent events.

I passed on through Urzhanitza, saw the black heap of ashes, all that was left of the house where Suro Tchoukitch was beheaded. Hard by, at a cottage-door, sat his weeping daughter. So on, through misery and terrified people, who begged that Europe should be told of their plight, and thanked me for risking my life to visit them. Wretched pawns in the game of politics, they were primarily the victims

of the Berlin Treaty, which "had not considered the ethnographical question," and secondly of Montenegro's schemes for aggrandizement. No lot can be more miserable than that of the luckless human beings who are used as live bait by ambitious rulers.

Tchoukitch piloted me safely right up to the insurgents' camp in an old cemetery, the thick stone wall of which gave cover from whence we could see the Turkish camp beyond. The leaders, one of whom was said to be brother to the Servian Consul at Saloniki, were desperately resolved to fight till their district was free. They were savage with Montenegro for withdrawing the guns and troops, and, as they said, "betraying us."

The feeling in the whole district, including Andriyevitza, was apparently pro-Serb rather than pro-Montenegrin. Andriyevitza had never forgiven King Nikola for condemning to death as rebels three of its goodliest sons but a short while ago.

Of Isa Boletin, the Albanian leader, both the insurgents and Tchoukitch were full of praise. Wherever he ruled, no Serbs were molested, but were treated with great justice. He had even supplied Serb insurgents with arms.

Firing was expected to begin as usual in the evening, and the insurgents would not, therefore, permit me to go farther. As it was, I did not reach Andriyevitza till 9.30 p.m., tired out.

Next day came news that Djavid Pasha had arrived with four battalions at Berani. All Andriyevitza was aghast. Berani could have easily been taken last week, they said; now it was too late. All the insurgents would be massacred, and Montenegro

might not go to their help. General Yanko Vukotitch came to me much harrowed. He "wished to communicate with Djavid, but was afraid of treachery. If only a stranger could be found to act as intermediary! . . . Would I, perhaps? . . . With a white flag the risk would not be great. . . . Of course, the Turks fired on it sometimes . . . but when they saw it was a woman . . ."

I was amazed. How often did fat Yanko mean to fall into holes, and then expect a foreign female to pull him out? But I expressed myself as willing to take all risks. Yanko said he would let me know to-morrow. His officers very properly objected to the scheme, but as none of them dared ride to Berani, they met Djavid's envoys at "the frontier of the insurgents," who held half the valley.

Djavid demanded immediate peace and the surrender of arms. The insurgents refused. All Andriyevitza sympathized. The number of wounded brought in was now sixty-eight, among whom were the two mutilated children, who, fortunately for themselves, died. Very great anxiety was felt for the thirty-one women and children prisoners at Berani.

A furious meeting demanded war. Jovan Plamenatz, the Minister of the Interior, arrived in all his best clothes, and proclaimed peace in King Nikola's name.

One of the insurgent leaders, Avro Tsemovich, sent a letter to Djavid, which he signed with the names of the other leaders, accepting peace. This caused great anger. Andriyevitza cursed, but submitted. Tsemovich, a big animal with bloodshot eyes, came to me, breathing rakia and a-stutter with drink, explain-

ing away his conduct incoherently; and the picture that remains of him in my mind is such that I can credit all the subsequent charges against him.

I communicated the details about the imprisoned women and children to Cettigne, and through the influence of the British Government their release was obtained.

Meanwhile the unfortunate wife of Ilia Popovitch (the Kaimmakam) was waiting, sick with anxiety, for news of her husband. It came. He had been hacked to pieces before the Konak at Sjenitza, his eyes torn out, and his fragments left unburied three days for the dogs to gnaw. The Turkish officials, so said eyewitnesses, looked out of the window and offered no help. How poor Ilia came to Sjenitza, a purely Slav district not far from the Servian frontier, no one will ever know. Nor has it ever been proved who planned his death. Andriyevitza declared that the frontier Izbashi, Muhedin Bey, did so, to avenge the fact that Ilia had declared the Turks guilty of firing the first shots at Mojkovach. But later some Albanians, who had been at Berani with the Turkish army, declared that it was the work of the Serbs, who wished to get rid of a man who was working to keep the peace and thereby block Servia's plans for expansion. We shall never know.

I never felt more sorry for a stranger than for his unhappy widow, a Frenchwoman, left penniless in a wild land with one little child and another about to be born. It is such as these who really pay in the great game of international politics.

None of us dared tell her the hideous news, and she left for Cettigne.

Peace was patched up for the moment. But sniping was constantly reported from the borders. Only prompt rectification of the frontier could make peace lasting. So long a list of victims was given me that I decided to go at once and see for myself.

A frontier Captain was going to Polimia. I took the opportunity and started in a hurry on a wooden pack-saddle. We arrived in pitch darkness at the telegraph-station, which was also an inn and a military outpost, only to learn that a man had that day died, shot from across the border. A lot of angry men told of men, women, and cattle killed and wounded in the past four years. I passed a wretched night crowded in one stuffy room with the telegraphists and the frontier guard. And while washing at the stream in the dawn of next day heard the sharp tack-tack of the Turkish Mausers from a kula at the end of the valley. The surroundings were most extraordinary. No less than five kulas looked down on us, nearly all within range of the Polimia people, who were helpless as rats in a pit.

Twenty houses had been deserted as uninhabitable. From many others folk only dared come forth at night.

I climbed with the Captain and some soldiers up the mountain Dzamiya, where stood the Montenegrin frontier kula, a very stiff ascent, and thence saw the frontier, complicated beyond belief, coiling in and out, one valley Montenegrin, one Turkish—tongues of land so narrow that a rifle bullet could carry right across and kill on the way. The Veliki Valley alone had seven kulas round it. We crouched behind a stone rampart, as the next kula was firing at intervals.

A military wire brought word that the Captain was

to return at once to Andriyevitza. Up leapt the Montenegrins and rushed straight down the mountain-side. It was all I could do to follow. Then came a ride in the dark as fast as possible, on the wooden pack-saddle, and I arrived dead-beat and shaken to pieces.

Yanko and Plamenatz had both left.

I had given both maize and money to as many of the refugees as I could. It was growing very cold. I had come only with a pair of saddle-bags, and had no warm clothing, so decided to return to Cettigne, but the frontier Commandant, Major Veshovitch, opposed this.

"Wait," he said, "something will happen."

I whiled away the time by writing an article which would be in time for the October reviews, in which I detailed the state of affairs. "If the Balkan people," I wrote, "are left to fight it out between themselves and the Turk, there can be little doubt of the issue. Together the Greeks and the Balkan people can put something like 600,000 men in the field, all well armed, and mostly first-class fighting stuff. The Christian subjects of the Turk would all aid the invading armies. . . . The Turk was a great soldier, but he is now so decayed that he is forced to send his officers abroad to learn the arts of war. Nor can he now make his own weapons; he has to borrow the money with which he buys them," and so forth. And I ended with the warning paragraph: "Not even the Great Powers can now arrest the course of nature —things can no longer remain *in statu quo.* It remains only to decide whether it shall end in a blood-bath. The curtain is rising on the last act."

Mustafa's Brother Bocarbosa at Dawsa

To my great disappointment this article which I had intended to herald, and foretell the results of, the war, was never published. The editors were so ill-informed that they did not believe in it.

Still nothing happened. I grew tired of waiting. Then the Commandant told me that as Turkey could not be made to declare war, Montenegro would. He had sent a whole battalion to Dzamiya and finished an artillery track to the summit, was at work on others to neighbouring heights, had commandeered 600 horses to fetch up small ammunition, and the bomb was made which was to blow up a Turkish kula on the Gusinje border. This would be the signal for a general rising of the Serbs across the border.

These came every night in batches of 100 to 150 at a time. Some were extraordinarily wild types, lean, dark-eyed, and shaven-headed, who squatted on the ground and howled weird songs at night. So much from "the back of beyond" were many that they brought with them as money, coins of Maria Teresa, and suchlike, and were dismayed to find they would not buy bread.

Each man received a repeating-rifle of an old pattern, and a belt of cartridges. The Turkish military attaché arrived one day on his way to Berani, and a whole gang of men from Ipek nahia had to be hastily hidden in the school.

Arming went on thus nearly every night. And spies brought word that Servia was mobilizing as fast as possible, quietly, and that Servian Komitadjis were already out.

The Montenegrin schoolmaster from Plava came down for orders. He was one of the insurgent

leaders of that district, and, in the crowded guest-room at the baker's, yelled the most blood-curdling discourse I have ever heard. It was to be war; the Christians this time had sworn to pay back to the Turks all they had done to them through all the centuries—outrage for outrage, mutilation for mutilation. "Last year the Maltsors behaved with the utmost moderation. They spared the mosques, released all prisoners unscathed, assaulted no women, behaved well in all respects, and hoped that the Powers would mark it to their credit and recognize they were fighting for freedom. But the Powers cast them back to the Turks with no guarantee of decent treatment; to the Turks, who had burnt and defiled their churches, violated their women, and burnt wounded alive in the houses. This showed that the Powers like atrocities—they encourage barbarism, and, by God! they shall have it." The audience roared applause. I, horrified, said they would lose all outside sympathy if they showed themselves as bad as the Turks, and they shouted me down. It was a most remarkable speech, for it stated truly that the Maltsors had fought honestly the year before, and expressed the intention most emphatically on the part of the Montenegrins to commit atrocities. But in a very few months Montenegro denied to Europe that they had done so, and attempted to put all the guilt upon the Maltsors.

News came from Podgoritza that the Maltsors had again risen and were trying hard to take Dechich. I decided not to wait for the Commandant's bomb, but to go to the help of the Maltsors, about whose fate I was extremely anxious. War was certain, and what would happen to them?

SEEE PEASANTS FROM IBEK NAHIA COME TO FETCH RIFLES AT ANDRIVATIZA, SEPTEMBER, 1912.

Two days were lost finding a conveyance. I started in torrents of rain, plodded through deep mud, and arrived at Podgoritza to find that, though there was temporary quiet, the Maltsors had made a desperate struggle for ten days to capture Dechich; had captured Planinitza and all its arms, but been again dislodged, by artillery from the summit. Without artillery Dechich could not be stormed. But they had destroyed nearly a whole Turkish Battalion near Nenhelm, had cut the route and the water canal, and hoped to starve Dechich out. Ded Soko of Klimenti was out with his men at Breg Mati with the object of blocking the route of any Turkish reinforcements from Tirana.

The Gruda and Shala tribes had never accepted the peace made by the Archbishop at Bukovitza, and all the tribes regretted they had allowed the Turks to pass out with their artillery. Gruda was especially angry that Turkish troops had not been withdrawn from her territory, as they had been from the other tribe lands.

The peace at Bukovitza had, indeed, been made by the advice of the Austrian Consul-General, Zambaur, who told the Maltsors to be patient.

But what they wanted was not foreign rule, but freedom; so, at the time of the Eucharistic congress (September 10) at Vienna, they gave Austria an ultimatum. "The situation is quite intolerable. Do you mean to help us? Yes or No." "No" was the reply. And they retorted: "Very well, then, we will call for help to Montenegro."

Certain of their Austrian advisers believed that it was now highly desirable that the *status quo* should

be overthrown, and that to allow Montenegro to do so would be the best policy. The mistake which Austria made throughout was in under-rating the Serb army.

Various headmen of the Maltsors accordingly went to Cettigne. The agreement they declared themselves to have made was that they would fight together with Montenegro and drive out all Turks from the borders. King Nikola would not take any of their territory. All he wished was to free his frontiers from Turks.

# PART III

## WAR

"And to make the cause of Religion to descend to the cruell and execrable Actions, of Murthering Princes, and Butchery of People . . . surely this is to bring Downe the Holy Ghost, in stead of the Likenesse of a Dove, in the Shape of a Vulture or a Raven: And to set, out of the Barke of a Christian Church, a Flagge of Pirats and Assassins."

CROSS AGAINST CRESCENT.

## CHAPTER XI

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching on through war.
With the Cross of Jesus,
Red with Moslem gore."
HYMN OF KING FERDINAND.

AT Cettigne there was no question of patching frontiers. Students sang "Onamo, onamo!" (Onward, onward, let me see Prizren!), the King's battle hymn, in the streets. It should be noted that, in the early days of the war, Prizren was the popular objective, and that the King undoubtedly aspired to make it his capital as King of Great Servia.

On declaring war, he issued a proclamation in which he "called upon the Montenegrins to help their brethren in Old Servia, where Serb men, women, and children were being massacred. However adverse His Majesty might be from disturbing the peace of Europe, there was nothing left for him but to take

up the sword, for his hopes of liberating the Serbs of Turkey without bloodshed had been vain. Montenegro, therefore, declared a Holy War, inspired by the noblest intentions of preventing the final extermination of its brethren."

I saw Yanko. He was starting at once for Andriyevitza, to take command, and had with him a young friend as secretary, of whom we shall hear more later.

All horses and vehicles were already commandeered for the army. Yanko told me I must start soon if I wished to see the first shot fired.

I saw Mitar Martinovitch bubbling with enthusiasm. "We have all the Maltsors with us!" he cried. I said: "No, Excellency, you have not." To which he replied: "Mademoiselle, I am very well informed." And I: "So am I, Excellency."

Cettigne was dead-calm. Nearly everyone had gone down to the front. I went to the hospital to see if things were ready there and to offer help if necessary.

Dr. Matanovitch assured me that all was ready. He and the Russian Sister opened a small cupboard, and showed me it was full of shirts and bandages. And as he had very little trained help, and as this was the only hospital, he said he would be glad if I would go as near the front as possible, and gave me some "first-aid" dressings. If I were overtired and knocked up, he added, he could give me a private room in the hospital.

I was struck dumb with amazement. He, and apparently the authorities, believed that this small hospital of some 150 beds would suffice for the whole

campaign. Nothing else had been prepared; no other hospital existed.

The Montenegrins, then, really expected the war to be over in from four to six weeks. They began purposely before their allies, and, I believe, without informing them; for they believed themselves invincible, and meant to sweep up all Kosovo vilayet before the Serbs were ready. Of the Serbs they had no opinion at all.

When I asked, "What is the Servian army worth?" "They are a lot of swineherds," was the invariable reply.

The plan of campaign, as expounded to me, was that the army should be divided into three parts. One under Yanko Vukotitch—the Kolashin-Andriyevitza division—was to attack Kosovo vilayet; the second, under Mitar Martinovitch, was to attack Scutari from the Tarabosh side; the third, under Blazho Boshkovitch, was to attack it from the Podgoritza side. All three divisions were to unite subsequently at Prizren, which was spoken of as the main objective. Yanko himself told me so.

Together with every friend of the South Slavs, I was anxious that the almost wholly Slav districts of the Sanjak, of Berani, and the frontier should be freed. But Prizren, I regarded (and regard) as an Albanian town and district, and hoped it would so remain.

On Sunday, October 6, with an odd feeling that I was shortly about to undergo an operation, I left Cettigne with D——, the newly appointed Governor of Podgoritza, and three of his assistants; for the reign of Stanko Markovitch was over. The martyr-

dom of the horses had begun; the wretched brutes had made the long journey backwards and forwards continuously for two days and nights, and could scarcely crawl. We walked on foot much of the way, and arrived very late.

On Monday, October 7, Prince Danilo arrived and inspected the troops. A surprisingly large proportion were old men. They marched past in irregular herds, singing war-songs. Before the Voyni Stan, on the historic ground where little over a year before we had persuaded the Maltsors to make peace, numbers of men squatted about awaiting uniforms and orders. One old man, finishing his lunch, held the carefully picked sheep's blade-bone against the sun.

My theory about bone-reading has always been that the seers see that which they expect. "What does the bone say?" I asked. He stared long and anxiously, and shook his head. "Blood. And more blood. Nothing but blood." I had expected him to see at least the taking of Prizren, and was interested. He threw it down with a sigh.

News came that Essad Pasha had ordered the Maltsors to accept the terms arranged by the Kosovo vilayet insurgents, but that they had replied they were sick of Turkish promises. Ded Soko and his men offered resistance at Breg Mati; but Essad, who had realized that he must play Turkish to save Scutari, fought his way through, and arrived at Scutari with large reinforcements. Djavid Pasha and his army had evacuated Berani.

On the 8th martial law was proclaimed, but no one took any notice of it. Orders were given out that

correspondents were to send only the official news given out at Cettigne.

Professor Kovachevitch, teacher of French and German at the Gymnasium at Podgoritza, was anxious that I should employ him as assistant in any corresponding work I might do. Being lame, he was not liable for active service.

"Soon," said he, "you will see the noses come in. We shall not leave many a Turk with a nose."

"If you do any such swinery," said I, "you will rightly lose all European sympathy."

He was very angry. "It is our old national custom," he declared; "how can a soldier prove his heroism to his commander if he does not bring in noses? Of course we shall cut noses; we always have."

He had travelled considerably, and been in English employ in Egypt; but the blood of the primitive savage flowed in him, and he, the trainer of youth, gloated and boasted over the idea of severed lips, ears, and noses, and confirmed the report that all Turkish corpses at Moykovach had been mutilated.

I expressed strong disgust, and hoped that the presence of foreign military attachés, doctors, and correspondents would prevent the possibility of the hideous atrocities which occurred always in local risings and fights, far from foreign eyes.

All the royal Voyvodas—Bozho, Marko, Gjuro, Sharko—arrived, and it was given out that King Nikola, who till recently could "bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne," had made up his family quarrels.

At night there was great singing of "Let me see Prizren." The Zetski and Piperski battalions went up Fundina way. The Nikshitchski and Vuchidolski, to the Zeta plains. I went up to bed early, to be ready for emergencies, and on the stairs met old Voyvoda Gjuro, who said: "It will be to-morrow—and then as God wills."

Next day, the 9th, I rose at five, before the dawn. The Voyvodas were leaving in carriages. It was dark, and a fine drizzle was falling. A long line of pack-horses waited dismally under the trees. Only those whose owners were present got a feed.

The Bishop of Ostrog appeared, having just blessed the Alaj-bariak (military standard) in the church at a private service before the Royal Family.

I asked for Blazho Boshkovitch, hoping he would tell me where to go, and was told (1) that he was at Fundina; (2) that he was not yet up! A perianik (one of the King's bodyguard) shouted to Kovachevitch, who was also waiting: "The King has gone up to the top of Goritza!"

We started for the little hill from which Podgoritza takes its name. The rain ceased; the sun came out and sparkled on the coarse drenched grass. About three-quarters of the way up we were halted by the perianiks, and saw the King, in full Montenegrin costume, standing brilliantly white against the sky, on the summit, with Prince Mirko and a small suite.

The clouds lifted from the mountains with a wonderful play of light and shade. Not a sound was heard but the tinkle of sheepbells from the wide plain below, across which ran the frontier-line. Beyond it

towered Dechich, with its roughly fortified Turkish outposts. The air was crystal clear. An endless quarter of an hour dragged by. So peaceful was the scene it was hard to realize that the long-talked-of *status quo* was about to be shattered and the map of Europe changed. In the strain of excitement all possible and impossible results of the approaching fall of the Turk whirled through my mind. Boom! The big gun roared from Gradina, on the height to our left, fired by Prince Petar. A great white puff of smoke showed where it struck Planinitza, the camp on the flank of Dechich. I had no field-glasses, but, so clear was the air, I could see the walled camp with the naked eye.

The bells rang out from the church below us; the band, which was with the King, struck up the national hymn. The few spectators, mostly little boys, and the perianiks joined in, and shouted "Zhivio!"

I looked at my watch; it was 8 a.m. And we were at war. The shots followed in quick succession. More missed than hit. We watched, with all our eyes, for two hours, which passed like minutes. Suddenly a great column of flame and smoke leapt up from Planinitza. Some ammunition must have been exploded by a shell. Another followed. Soon I could see the Nizams, tiny khaki dots, in full retreat. The first victory had been scored.

Already the Montenegrins were shelling Rogom, a camp near the foot of Dechich, and the summit of Dechich itself. To everyone's surprise, the Turks made no reply save two shells, which fell far short. They had, in fact, no long-range guns. A rattle of rifle-fire told that, under cover of the artillery, the

Maltsors, together with some Montenegrins, were attacking at close quarters.

When Planinitza fell, the King and suite left Goritza. I hurried after and obtained permission from the Governor to telegraph at once to *The Times* and another paper that war was declared, and handed in the messages at 10.30, believing I had given Europe the first news. So I had; but, unfortunately, one Zhivkovitch, a friend of the King, was acting both as Reuter correspondent and Press censor. He changed the date of my messages, and held them back nearly twenty-four hours; and so, though he did not send his own till late in the evening, his was the first in.

I emphasize this fact because I believe all correspondents suffered from it, and not only the correspondents, but the public. For the earliest "news" that came out was generally a version concocted in the palace. No correspondent should be allowed to act at the same time as Press censor.

Returning from the telegraph-office, a woman stopped me and gasped: "Don't tell anyone I told you—Blazho is dead!"

"What!" I cried; "Blazho Boshkovitch?"

"Yes. A soldier I know has told me; it is a secret. There were four bullets in him. They say he shot himself. In God's name, do not tell of me!"

I asked at his quarters, "Where is Blazho?" and was told, "At Fundina." So he was—but dead.

The dull "boom" of heavy guns went on all the afternoon from Gradina and the Zeta. Rogom and Vranje and Vladnje, Turkish border-posts, were under continuous fire. At evening it was made public that

Blazho was dead, and had been buried hurriedly and privately. Suicide was the official report. "He had gone mad, tried to attack Dechich at night with only a few men, and had shot himself in despair." But it was whispered through the town that late at night he had been heard in hot dispute with one of the Princes, and had been found dead some time afterwards; that no man could fire four bullets into himself; and why was no public inquiry made; and so forth. Murder was the verdict of his friends and relations, who firmly denied the charge of insanity, and swore they would exhume the body so soon as war was over, and prove the manner of death. But the war lasted much longer than anyone anticipated, and the mystery of Blazho's death will never be explained. Peace be to his ashes! Prince Danilo took over the command.

*October* 10.—The dull thud of big guns began early. By 7 a.m. I was far out on the plain, lying flat, so as not to draw fire, and listening to the shells that swished across well ahead of me. On my right the Zeta guns were playing on Vranje, and on my left the Gradina guns were firing on Dechich. Two shells in quick succession struck the summit, which was protected only by a rough stone wall run up since Tourgoud Pasha occupied the height last year. It could not by any possibility hold out long, and made no reply. Vranje, a modern fortress, was answering strongly. I crawled nearer, and saw the fire from both sides.

At 7.45 a terrible continuous rattle of rifle-fire began on the slopes off Dechich above Miljesh. I wondered how any human being could live through such a fire. But it seems that with repeating-rifles

the men, once started, keep up ceaseless fire, whether there is much chance of killing or not. The big guns boomed continuously. The slopes of Dechich were a-smoke. At 8.30 firing slackened. A heavy cloud settled on the mountain-top, and a sudden silence. A few drops of rain fell. Dechich had surrendered. Soon the mountains were all shrouded in rain-clouds, and I trudged back to Podgoritza.

Firing was heavy in the afternoon. I borrowed a horse from the barracks, and, for the first time in my life, rode out quite alone. A horrible and continuous fire of rifles and machine-guns raged just behind the little hill of Rogom ahead of me.

But, though it was evident that with no big guns the Turks could not hold out long, nothing resulted that day.

Tramping round Podgoritza at night to find Zhivkovitch, the Reuter Press censor, was maddening, as he never appeared till he had got his own messages well off. But as I know Servian, I translated mine to the Governor, and got him to sign it, and got it off before Zhivkovitch knew, once or twice.

Rogom fell next morning at seven. I met some very hungry soldiers on the plain, and got the news from them in exchange for some bread; for the commissariat (or "intendanz," as it was called) was not yet organized, and only those men who managed to get food from home had anything to eat.

A heap of wounded—the results of Dechich—began to come in. They were crammed into the barracks. Nothing and no one was ready for them, and Matanovitch came down from Cettigne to tackle 297 wounded almost single-handed. All the dregs of Podgoritza

and a mass of small children put on Red Crosses, and swarmed to the barracks. But of trained help there was none, and the authorities had decided not to admit any foreign help or doctors into their hospitals to see the shocking mess they were in.

Little Princess Vera arrived in a motor, leapt out and cried, wringing her hands: "It is terrible, terrible; there are wounded men! Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! what shall we do?" It was evident she had expected none.

Corresponding was for me a mere by-product. I was there to watch the situation for myself and do relief work. So I went to the barracks to see if I could help. Matanovitch, reeling with fatigue after a day and night of continuous work, begged me to go out and look for wounded. A Bohemian engineer had also volunteered for this, and together we collected some necessaries, for the Red Cross was in too great confusion to supply anything. But nearly all the wounded were already in, and we found little to do on the Zeta plain.

Next day, however, Matanovitch cried out to me: "I recognized your dressing on that bayoneted boy. Go as near the front as you can. We are very short-handed."

Two Gruda Albanians, slightly wounded, told me that Gruda had been among the first on Dechich, and had lost fifty-two killed and wounded, and that the top of Dechich was knee-deep in dead Turks. So quick had been the final rush on the stronghold that the Turks fled without putting their guns out of gear, and the retreating Nizams were shot down with their own artillery. There had been frightful jealousy

between the Maltsors and the Montenegrins as to which should get first into Dechich. These two men rejoiced naïvely like children, for one had taken ten and the other six Turkish Mausers. The Montenegrin censor, however, would allow no mention of the Maltsors to be made, and pretended that Dechich had been taken by Montenegrins alone, though at the same time they cursed loud and deep because the Maltsors had captured and carried off all the artillery mules and pack-horses from Dechich—a pretty good proof that they were first in.

A certain halfpenny paper, it should be noted, published a photograph of a great "castle in Spain," with towers and castellations, of a style quite impossible in the Balkan Peninsula, and called it Dechich. Nor was this by any means the only bogus photograph published. The silly craze for getting a thing out quickly, without giving possible time for inquiring into its truth, makes a large proportion of so-called "news" mere rubbish to gull the public. "What is that?" asked an Albanian priest. "It is called Dechich in this English paper!" I said. He stared, and added disgustedly: "People say the English are truthful. English papers are, it seems, as bad as all the rest." And he threw it down, disgusted.*

The great bare summit of Dechich stood sharp against the sky. I felt hot with shame. Nor could I again get up any interest in corresponding, haunted always by the dread of similar occurrences. And

* Since writing the above, I have looked through back numbers of illustrated papers, and am disgusted by the gross carelessness which permitted photographs even of Caucasians to be sold to the public as Balkan subjects.

even the most accurate and conscientious of journalists are always liable to have their facts distorted by picturesque and wholly false details, added, I presume, by the office-boy.

Montenegro was stunned and stupefied by the amount of wounded. The charge had been a quite mad one—a race to be first in, between the Maltsors and Montenegrins. The leaders of both were killed, though in the hospitals there were, I believe, at least three men petted as "the first man in Dechich."

The Montenegrins showed once and for all that their idea of fighting was that of their medieval ballads: "Da uchinimo jurish!" (Let us charge!). They rushed like a pack of wolves, howling war-cries, and had no notion of how to take cover or spread. It was this which brought about Montenegro's high death-roll.

News came in at once that the Montenegrins, owing to not having kept a good lookout, had been ambushed at night on the other side of the lake at Zogaj, and badly cut up. Matanovitch rushed back to Cettigne for the wounded who resulted. In capturing this position, the Montenegrins had committed atrocities, and eight horribly mutilated bodies were taken into Scutari, one of them that of a Turkish officer. The photograph of a noseless, lipless head, then taken by Mr. Marubbi of Scutari, has already been published. The clotted blood shows that the victim was alive when mutilated, for corpses do not bleed so.

Meanwhile, on our side of the war, the Montenegrin army had worked round behind Dechich, having been given free pass through the Albanian tribelands.

Moreover, the Kastrati and Skreli men on ahead attacked the Moslem villages on the Lake border, and opened the route. News came that the Montenegrins had burnt a number of Moslem villages on the Antivari side.

On Sunday, October 13, the Alaj-bariak and the band were made ready to march into Tuzi, which, it was believed, must fall at once. The guns of its fort, Shipchanik, had fired half the night, and ceased suddenly, so we presumed their ammunition was exhausted. A summons to surrender was sent the

SKETCH ON FIELD: MONTENEGRIN SOLDIERS GOING TO SHIPCHANIK.

town. The Commandant replied by demanding permission to retire with his men to Scutari, and was refused. Montenegro shifted her big guns down to the plain near the town, and next morning Tuzi was bombarded from six points, including the summit of Dechich. It surrendered at once. At 2.30, with the Bohemian engineer and a green omnibus, I went to Urzhanitzki Most, the frontier bridge, to give first aid, if necessary, and see the formal surrender. Three or four wounded Nizams, one with his breast muscles ripped up by a bayonet, needed dressing, and drank water greedily.

MONTENEGRINS OCCUPYING THE TURKISH FORTRESS SHIPCHANIK IMMEDIATELY AFTER ITS SURRENDER.

DEDEAGH AND THE SCENE TURKISH BUTCHERHOUSE FROM LEVANTINE MOSQUE. OCTOBER 14, 1912

Then time passed slowly. Prince Danilo and the white charger and the band were all ready. Dusk fell. Flames leapt up from Vladnje and Vranje. The soldiers had set fire to them. The little crowd of Montenegrins rejoiced. I exclaimed—for I knew only too well the horror of burnt homesteads—and remembered, too, Montenegro's loud indignation at "Turkish savagery" last year. But an old woman cried: "Burn! Let them burn! I am very glad." And all said: "They are Moslems. Let them burn!" The band struck up a lively march as a battalion started for Shipchanik and crossed the bridge. The orange sunset deepened into burning red, upon which the hills were very blue. The blazing villages were crimson spots, and over all crept up a slim crescent moon, as though the sign of the Turk were dying, pallid, in a sea of blood.

It was 5.30 when, through the gathering darkness, the long line of prisoners came in sight with the Turkish Pasha at their head. He dismounted at the bridge, came forward on foot, and offered his sword to Prince Danilo, who bent down from his white horse, took it, and returned it, and announced at the same time that as a reward of victory Major Bechir was promoted to the rank of Brigadier. Then came the surrendered garrison, rank after rank, out of the darkness, trailing over the plain like a snake. A stupendous sight: several thousand able-bodied men —all prisoners. I thought of a drawing I had once made of a Roman triumph. Poor devils! They had better have made a dash for Scutari, and died fighting. A large number perished slowly later of cold and misery. All the garrisons of Tuzi, Vranje, Neuhelm,

Rogom—the entire frontier guard—gave itself up. In five days something like 5,000 prisoners were taken, and Montenegro's head was completely turned.

Next day the engineer and I drove on to Tuzi with a bus-load of various necessities. Little white rags flew from sticks on many a house, and chalked crosses on the doors appealed for mercy. A dead horse in the midst stank sickeningly. We reported ourselves, and went straight to the military hospital. The Turkish doctors in charge demanded angrily to be allowed to go to Scutari, and were amazed to learn that it was war, and not a mere frontier affair, that was taking place. That the other Balkan States were about to attack, was news that stunned them.

The hospital was crammed with wounded Nizams, and was foodless and waterless. The engineer went off to fetch a bus-load of water in cans from the river. I remained to clean up. Having been quite cut off for a week, the place was in a terrible state. Two shells had gone through the building in spite of its hospital flag. It had been impossible to clean anything, and the floor was thick with dirty wads and dressings, and old petroleum cans full of putrid blood and pus. The Turkish doctor, furious, demanded in broken German proper treatment for his wounded, and refused to help, saying he was not now responsible. I made a bonfire, and worked a long time burning dirty dressings and carrying out the blood-cans. He then saw I really wanted to help, and put on some orderlies to work also. The engineer brought bread and water, and we made some sort of order in the place. I had till then been too busy to investigate the actual wounded. The doctor now pointed out eight men

with bandages round their faces, close and flat. There was no nose or lip. He imitated slicing. "Look! Montenegrin work!" Eight men, not otherwise wounded, had been deliberately caught and mutilated. Kovachevitch's words had come true.

The doctor wished me to tell Europe. I was in a painful position. When acting as correspondent, I had undertaken to reveal no secrets detrimental to Montenegro, and had cheerfully promised, believing this to mean the position of troops, guns, etc. But to hide such foul deeds was another thing. I worked the whole day, sweeping, and burning, and wrestling with the disgusting problem of the mutilated men.

At night I returned to Podgoritza, and, having decided that "honesty is the best policy," I found Jovitchevitch, the late Montenegrin Consul in Scutari, and told him in strong terms what I had seen and what I thought of it. I would not report it this time, but there must not be any more. The result was that the correspondents, a mixed squad of whom were collected at Podgoritza, were not allowed to go forward till the mutilated men were hidden.

The next day the engineer and I spent in preparing to advance and in feeding the hospital. Getting a flock of sheep, for mutton, and penning them in an outbuilding, delayed us so that we had to sleep one night more in the hospital dispensary. It was too late to start.

The woe of the conquered had already begun. The newly appointed Montenegrin Governor of Tuzi—Gjurashkovitch—proceeded to "rub it in" by hanging a portrait of King Nikola in the hospital, and joyfully informing the Turkish staff that the Montenegrins

had occupied Plava and Gusinje, and, of 2,000 Moslems who had endeavoured to retake Berani, had slaughtered all but 250.

The doctor was terribly anxious about his horse. He loved it as a child, he said, and dreaded lest one of the many looting Montenegrins or Maltsors should steal and maltreat it. Looting was in full swing. Strings of Montenegrin women were filing across the plain from the surrounding houses and villages, bent double under bales of clothing, tobacco, household gear, and what not. "What have you there, mother? I cried to an old woman halting on the bridge. "Clothes," said she—"beautiful clothes." "Where did you steal them?" "I didn't steal them," she cried furiously; "I took them out of a house." "If you take the children's clothes, they will die of cold in the winter." "So they shall, God willing. They are all Moslems."

Nearly all the greatcoats and blankets of the unhappy Nizam prisoners were looted. "Save my little horse from these brigands," prayed the doctor. "You had better sell it to me," said I, suddenly inspired. He was loath to part, but realized he must sell or be robbed. We clapped his saddle on it. I mounted, glided smoothly, swiftly through walk and trot to canter, turned, dismounted, and concluded the deal in five minutes; and so, dirt cheap, did I acquire the Houyhnhnm, five and a half years old, sound as sense, and sweetly gentle, and fulfilled my lifelong desire to possess a horse.

I promised the doctor to take great care of his pet, and he begged me to carry a letter for him to a friend in Scutari. "I cannot," said I. "Not even with

The Hoyhnhnm.

The Montenegrins in Tuzi.

your horse shall I get there now." "What!" cried Gjurashkovitch; "not get to Scutari? Why not? We are going to take it in four days." "No army can take Scutari in four days," said I. "It is very strongly fortified." Gjurashkovitch and his officers laughed contempt. "Ladies know nothing of military things." "I know what barbed wire is, though," said I. "I had friends in the Transvaal." "Oh, for the English, perhaps," cried they, "but for us Montenegrins—— Do you know what we shall do with this beautiful barbed wire? We shall do this." And the speaker clipped the air with finger and thumb.

I had not spent the winter in Scutari for nothing, and knew that there were guns in bombproof emplacements out on the plain. These fellows had had a whole year to spy the land, and if they had failed to do so, it was not my affair. That they had the physical courage of wild boars I was aware, but having seen and heard them booze and boast for months on end I had no belief in their science. So I laughed. "You will see in a few days," they said. "We shall," said I. And we did.

I slung my saddle-bags on the Houyhnhnm, and started for the war with a blanket-sack and six tins of sardines.

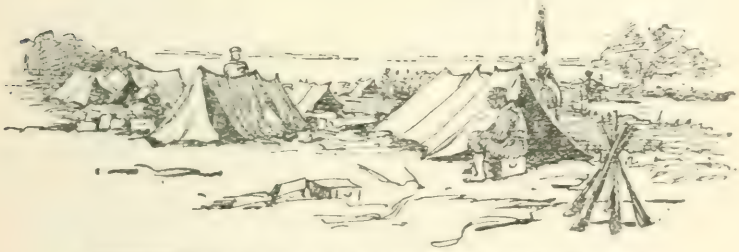
## CHAPTER XII

> "The things that I have seen and heard,
> In field and camp and barrack too—
> I tells them over to myself,
> And sometimes wonders if they're true."

It had poured in blinding torrents for two days. The engineer and I slopped through mud to the arm of the lake at Nenhelm. The green omnibus lumbered after us. The ferry was entirely blocked by artillery. The soldiers were camped in mud and water; the two unburnt houses remaining were occupied by officers. The Commandant said he could not take the Red Cross bus till the guns were over; in any case, would not take the horses. They must go round by the mountain-track. There was no knowing when the ferry would be clear, so I started at once over the Chafa Kishat along with the ammunition horses.

The top of the pass was all great wet boulders with deep mud-holes between all churned up by the traffic, and far too bad to ride over. I stumbled and climbed for two hours in a clattering jam of ammunition horses, slithering and falling here, there, and everywhere, and being mercilessly flogged to their feet again. At the other side of the pass the convoy halted for the night. I pushed on, and so did two young Montenegrins. They had never been over the

border before, and followed me. We rounded the head of the lake by moonlight, and plunged into a dark unknown track. The Houyhnhnm felt his way wearily over loose stones and through deep mud. I wondered if we should find a roof over our heads that night. Something loomed white, and I hailed it. Two Maltsors cried enthusiastically out of the darkness: "It is the Queen! Come with us." I turned off the track, and followed them to a great half-burnt house that had three rooms intact. The two young Montenegrins came, too, gladly. A crowd of insurgents rose to greet me when I entered. It was



MONTENEGRIN CAMP AT VIR KASTRATIT, OCTOBER, 1912.

the house of Dedush Marashi of Vukpalaj, and a great caldron of mutton hung over the fire ready for all comers. The company ate hungrily, and, having done so, turned to the east and chanted a long and impressive prayer for victory, before casting themselves upon the floor to sleep.

October 21 saw us start at 5.30 a.m., but on arriving at Vir Kastratit, the opposite side of the ferry, there was no green bus and no engineer. Nor did anyone think them likely to arrive. Hideous confusion reigned everywhere. I walked through the camp of cursing, hungry men. No rations had been

served out to them, and they were climbing trees for any kind of eatable seed or berry, and searching for blackberries in the hedge. I gnawed crusts of bread, of which I had a pocketful, and fed the Houyhnhnm with the hay which lay about in tons trampled under foot. It had been commandeered wholesale.

The guns were coming up from the water's edge, and mules and ponies struggled desperately in harness made for full-sized horses, which slipped and twisted. The wheels sank deep in the sucking mud. The unhappy beasts, who could get no purchase on the loose collars, that reached almost to their knees, floundered under volleys of lashes and heaved the gun up the bank, only to fall again.

I had been told at Podgoritza that I should be able to obtain all necessary rations from the camps; but I meant to have something better than hay and blackberries, so, when Padre Lorenzo, the Franciscan of the district, rode up on his ferocious bay stallion, I accepted his invitation to go with him.

All day we rode round the district visiting the dismayed peasantry. Already they were vaguely alarmed at the results of calling in Montenegrin help. Prince Danilo had been distributing a lot of Montenegrin caps, which they had taken as a joke at first. Now they asked what it meant. They did not wish to wear the badge of Montenegrin subjects. That night I wrote in my diary: " The Montenegrin troops are consuming all the hay, to be paid for at some future date when the beasts are dead for want of it. People all say they are sick of war—have had two years of it now. Many have leapt from early middle

age to old age. They are all worn and haggard. The land is all ploughed up by artillery and pack-horses. God knows how it will all end."

A doleful day enough, and at night I unsaddled the poor Houyhnhnm, to find that my hosts of last night had put the saddle-bags on unskilfully, and that a buckle had cut a deep hole on his quarter.

*October* 22.—The engineer never turned up, and Padre Lorenzo had other work, so I decided to push on alone, but (for the sake of the Houyhnhnm's back, which I had touched up with an antiseptic) left the saddle-bags behind, and with only the blanket and the sardines followed some natives to Kopliku. The Houyhnhnm, I may mention, healed up beautifully, but my own back and all the rest of me suffered in consequence, for Padre Lorenzo locked up his house and followed on, and I remained baggageless for the rest of the trip.

Kopliku was a seething mass of soldiers, artillery, and mud—worse, if possible, than Vir Kastratit. There were not nearly enough tents, and no one seemed to know where anyone else was. I made for the Maltsors, as most likely to help me, and found Sokol Batzi and his son and all the Gruda men. They told me to stick to them, and along with the heads I crowded into a big Maltsor house. The host was a Moslem cousin of Sokol's, an anti-Turk Moslem, so his house had escaped burning. Rain fell in torrents, and there was no cover for the huge crowd.

Padre Lorenzo arrived, and Padre Marko of Triepshi, and Dom Ernesto of Rioli. The guns of Tarabosh boomed in the distance, and a stiff fight

was reported to be taking place between the Dukagini and the Moslems of Vorfaj.

General Lazavitch, commanding under the Generalissimo, Prince Danilo, sent, so I learnt later, a letter, which is still extant, to the Dukagin tribes, inviting them to help take the Moslem villages, and promising they should share the spoils equally with Montenegro. The tribesmen, anxious to take what they considered legitimate vengeance upon the Moslems, who, armed and incited last year by Bedri Pasha, had plundered the Christian villages, came down.

The Montenegrins had, however, summoned them as "cat's-paws," meaning to use them as fighting men, and then throw all the blame on them. The Montenegrin soldiers, under the direction of their officers, seized all loot worth having, loaded it upon the gangs of women who had come for the purpose, and sent it under escort to Podgoritza. The Maltsors came off very much "second best."

Moreover, blood is thicker than water. The Maltsors had thought of the sort of intertribal plunder of old days—a tit-for-tat affair. When they saw the awful slaughter and havoc wrought by the Montenegrins, and the outrages committed on women and children, they were filled with pity for their wretched Moslem brethren, and sheltered and fed many of them in the mountains throughout the winter. This made the Montenegrins furious, and was quite unexpected by them. They had meant their victims to starve. But of this more later.

*October* 23.—A dismal rainy morning. Our sopped horses stood miserable in puddles. I went with Dom Ernesto to the headquarters of the General Staff. It

was the house of the Bairaktar of Kopliku, and, except the one in which I was quartered, was the only Moslem house left unburnt. It had been saved on purpose to be used as headquarters, but had been completely looted. Princes Mirko and Petar were there, and Jovan Plamenatz, Minister of the Interior, now acting as director of the "intendanz" (commissariat). This, under his skilful management, had broken down completely. He had only had boiled maize to eat, and was very sorry for himself. I, who had fared sumptuously with my tribesmen, merely thought it funny.

I asked Plamenatz how I could best help with the wounded, and found no arrangements of any kind had been made. A Montenegrin doctor was there with some cases of materials, of the contents of which he professed ignorance. He did not expect many wounded. Such as there were would have to walk to him; he was not going to them. I urged the necessity of dressing a wound at once to prevent infection. "Oh, if they get pus," said he, "they must die. I shall have no time to clean them."

The Princesses, too, were interested in wounded, and so the field hospital must be in a quite safe place away from the front. Plamenatz took no interest whatever in wounded. Confident that Scutari would fall in a day or two, he discussed absurd plans for taking Durazzo and Dibra.

I rode out with Dom Ernesto. No big attack was as yet possible, as the big Montenegrin guns were not up. Struggling teams were heaving them painfully through mud a foot and more deep.

We met the engineer, who had just arrived, and

had been told off to put up the military telegraph-wire, which was to follow the troops, who were already advancing. Small fights were scattered about on the plain below, and had no particular results. The guns of Tarabosh boomed regularly. We watched the sudden white puffs of smoke rising alternately from the Turkish and Montenegrin strongholds.

On the 24th Tarabosh silenced suddenly, and the tale flew round that it had fallen! "Martinovitch will shift his big guns from Rumia to Tarabosh, and Scutari will surrender in a day or two." And they added triumphantly: "We told you so!" The truth, so I was told later, was that the King was so anxious that Prince Danilo should have the glory of taking Scutari that he ordered Martinovitch not to be *too* quick about taking Tarabosh.

Next morning came our marching orders to advance at once. A sheep had been set roasting early, in anticipation of a move. We wolfed a savage meal, and started on a beast of a ride in a torrent of rain. All along the route we met parties of Montenegrin women loaded with loot, and some of them wreathed with new telegraph-wire. As we passed, one made a dash at the hedge, and began hauling down the telegraph-line put up only yesterday by the engineer. "Oy, you!" I shouted; "you mustn't take that!" "We shall take everything we find!" they screeched. And down came that military line.

Just before reaching Gruémir we passed under the noses of the two big guns brought up the day before. The gunners, wild to open fire, yelled to us to hurry on, but the Maltsors paid no heed, and we trailed by in a long straggly line at our own pace. Passing the

headquarters, I shouted to young Vrbitza, the Prince's Aide: "Your women are destroying the telegraph."

"I know, I know," he returned, with gestures of despair. "What can one do? It is terrible!"

Two of the Franciscans had already found quarters at Gruémir, and I, and Nikola Batzi, and the rest of the priests all crowded in. Old Sokol and the food never turned up. We shared the sardines brought by Dom Ernesto and me, covered the earthen floor thick with hay, and burrowed into it for the night. Tack-tack-tack-tack rattled suddenly out of the dis-

CAMP COOKERY.

tance. We leapt into our soaked coats and boots, and rushed, stumbling over the rocks, up the little hill hard by to get a view. A fight was going on, on the plain below. The continuous uncanny rattle of the Turkish machine-guns came out of the darkness; thunderous reports of the two big Montenegrin guns shook the earth as the shells tore past us every few minutes. The Turks had attempted a surprise near Vraka. Down came the rain again in torrents. The firing died away. We returned to our hut, and occasional dropping fire punctuated the ceaseless patter of the rain. At 2 a.m. the big guns again shook the hut. It occurred to me that only a line of half-

starved, sopped men were between me and a hideous death, but it all seemed so unreal that I curled deep into my blanket-sack and slept like a dog.

*Saturday, October* 26.—A grey chill dawn, all veiled in rain. We lit a fire, and as there was nothing to eat, Dom Ernesto generously served out a nip of his private rum all round. I collected some maize-cobs, roasted them in the ashes, and, gnawing them as I walked, went to see the soldiers. The camp, like all Montenegrin camps, was a filthy muck, with no attempt at sanitation—not even a trench—and men and women all crowded together in tiny tents. I understood what Major Veshovitch had meant when he said: " For us, war in the winter will be far better than in summer." No army could have survived a summer campaign in such camps of sewage and offal.

The army was busy looting huge stores of maize left in the deserted Moslem houses, and anything else handy, and loading it on the women. Everyone seemed to think the Moslems had left for ever. They had, in point of fact, fled into Scutari, leaving most of their goods behind them, for they had not enough ammunition to offer resistance. The Catholic house where we were quartered bagged a hundred hens.

The sun came out with extraordinary brilliancy. Scutari seemed but a stone's-throw distant. I could see the well-known buildings and " chinaar i madh," the big plane-tree near old Marko's house. A cold terror seized me lest a shell should destroy the little house, and all the kindly innocent folk within it. Here was the looting army, but all the plain was a-tinkle with sheep-bells. It was like a mad dream.

Plamenatz arrived and announced a great Bulgar

victory. We had only heard for certain two days before that the other Balkan States had begun. A Balkan Alliance, we were told, had been signed on September 18 for three years.

A large number of Maltsors arrived from Maltsia e madhe, with their tribal priests and headmen, and a big general attack was ordered for to-morrow. We ate two of the looted hens to be ready for an early start.

*Sunday, October* 27.—A crowded, suffocating night, lulled by the monotonous, squelching tramp of the troops that passed continuously. We were roused at dawn, and ordered to follow the army at once, and then not to, but to wait till the General Staff moved. The big guns were on the move again, and the attack postponed till they were in place. Our division then consisted of fifteen battalions—that is, about 15,000 men—and the Maltsors as well; and the Montenegrins reckoned to take Scutari by storm. We could see black smoke and flames rise up ahead as the advancing army burnt and plundered.

*Monday, October* 28.—A soldier, straight from Podgoritza, brought me a week-old telegram from Lord Lucas, much mangled in transmission. I made out that he was ready to send a surgeon experienced in field-work, and hurried to headquarters expecting Plamenatz to be pleased. On the contrary, he was vexed and upset. "We have no need of doctors," he said. I protested that there were a few wounded coming in now every night, and that there would soon be more, and that there was no one to attend to them but the one doctor who remained behind at Kopliku. Plamenatz replied that the slightly wounded could

walk there, and as for serious cases, he would arrange later to take them by steamer to Rijeka, and thence motor them in freight-waggons up to Cettigne. I begged that he would at least let Dom Ernesto, who is medically trained and very skilful with wounds, have some material from the Kopliku store, as he and I would then dress wounds on the spot. This, too, he refused as unnecessary. I believe he thought they would walk into Scutari without losing a man. I pointed out that an answer must be sent to the telegram, and he dictated a reply to me, which he signed, and said it should at once go by military wire. Needless to say, it never did.

Twenty-five Mirdites came in, saying Mirdita was very poorly armed and short of ammunition, and prayed Plamenatz for weapons for the tribe that they might protect their own land. He replied that he had none here. They must wait till we got into Scutari in a few days, when there would be weapons enough for all. The idea that the Serbs would come over Mirdita, and the people be obliged for lack of weapons to let them through, had possibly occurred to him.

I left Plamenatz, and with some Maltsors and their priests went up a little hill behind the headquarters. The general attack was about to begin. Some belated Montenegrin soldiers straggled past, like a pack of wild creatures. "Those poor devils," said one of the priests prophetically, "will never storm Scutari. Remember, I have said it." The Montenegrin guns opened fire on Golema. I knew it was bomb-proof. Golema replied. Shot after shot was aimed at us, or rather at the village just below. All fell short on a

bank about half a mile away. Some burst, and the brown bracken flamed in patches; many fell without exploding. Our guns appeared to be firing straighter, but had no effect whatever on the bomb-proof. Some Montenegrins, of the staff, climbed up to us, and gazed through glasses. They all had a childlike belief that a place has to surrender at once, so soon as a big gun is fired at it. I assured them you can go on firing for months on end—for example, Ladysmith and Mafeking—and that so long as there is food it does not greatly matter.

Suddenly a Turkish shell fell just alongside a house I had visited yesterday, and a burst of black smoke followed. A man was killed. Till then, none of us had realized we were being fired at. A second fell in almost the same spot, and no other. They fired at the former range. The Turkish firing on the Montenegrin battery at Vraka was, on the contrary, good, and the latter was very hard pressed.

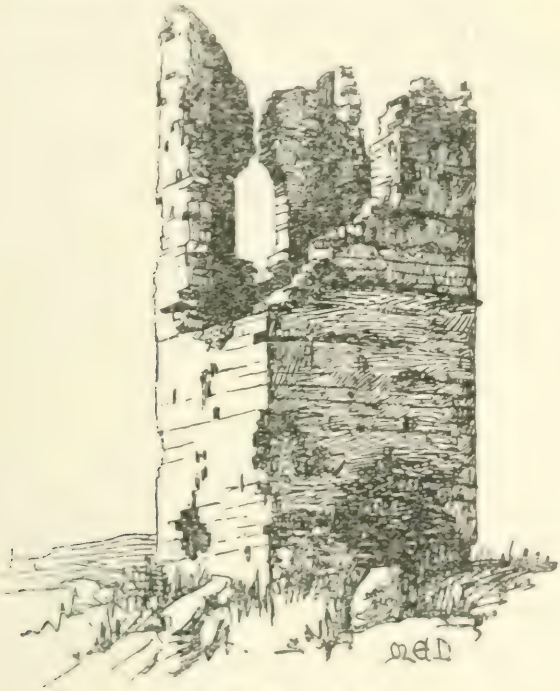
The bombardment of Scutari was to begin shortly. The Catholic priests were anxious the Catholic quarter should be spared. Dom Ernesto ran off to the gunners. They replied they had no idea which part was Christian and which Moslem. It is an amazing fact that, though for years Scutari had been a mere week-end trip from Cettigne, and though for the past year any Montenegrin officer dressed as a peasant could have driven a flock of sheep to market there, and learnt the lie of the land between the frontier and the town, they were all as ignorant of the country as though it were Central Africa. Absurd funk had made many Montenegrins regard a trip to Scutari as highly dangerous. At the beginning of the campaign they had

no maps, and as these were published at Vienna, had, subsequently, much difficulty in obtaining any. I refused more than once to part with mine.

Dom Ernesto indicated the quarters of the town, and at 3 p.m. the first shots were fired, aimed, it was said, at the new konak and old barracks in the middle of the town. So far as I could see, all fell short outside the town, and the fire soon ceased. The military band, meanwhile, practised industriously every evening in preparation for the triumphal entry into Scutari, and the white steed and the Alaj-bariak were all ready.

*Tuesday, October* 29.—Great uncertainty as to movements. Rifle-fire and shrapnel audible. Nikola Sokol Batzi, who was acting as official Albanian interpreter, told me he had to ride forward later with Plamenatz, but would probably go too fast for me. I therefore started alone on the Houyhnhnm, whom I had cherished carefully, and with whom I was now on excellent terms. It was quite a strange trail to me. I reached the ruined church, a remnant of pre-Turkish days, at Rashi, and drew rein. A multitude of troop-ploughed tracks branched in all directions. The sun glanced on the re-erected military wire, and, certain this must be a short-cut to headquarters, I followed it straight across country. Plamenatz and Nikola never caught me up, although I waited a bit for them, so, as the most important thing in war is to find quarters before they are all taken, I pushed on to Boksi. A Montenegrin officer overtook me, asking if I knew Plamenatz's whereabouts. We cantered on together, drawing nearer and nearer to the sound of continuous rifle-fire. The Houyhnhnm, being a

military horse, did not mind a bit, nor yet for the shells which began to hum on the right. Two Albanian women driving a donkey with their household goods on it, met us in mid-track, and shouted: "Go back! There is a battle down there! We nearly drove the donkey into it!" As it was head-



RUINS OF CHURCH OF RASHI.

quarters, and not the grave, that we were in search of, we slewed round. I hailed two Maltsors by a hut, and they directed me to the quarters of the Gruda tribe, and I left the officer to shift for himself.

By now I had learnt that, in spite of all I had done for the Montenegrins in past years, they could in no way be relied on for any help, and that the poor

tribesmen whom I had aided in their last year's trouble were my best friends. Gruda was quartered in the big house of a rich Moslem. Tring Smailia of Gruda, an Albanian virgin, a sturdy, thick-set woman who does not know what fear is, had looted at Dechich a long, low, grey pony, built like a badger, loaded it high with coffee, bread, and salt, and come out to cook for Gruda. She hailed me with joy, led me to a room full of hay, weapons, and old mutton-bones, and gave me a handful of figs and a lump of hot duck, which she fished out of a petroleum-can on the fire—the first meal I had that day. I went out, and up a hill to get a view. A frightful firing was going on. Some Montenegrins asked me what had become of Plamenatz. There was much confusion.

A rumour spread that the Montenegrin troops were too few, and that it was going hard with them. But I was very tired, so lay down in some hay and tried to sleep. But the next house caught fire; a Maltsor had let a cigarette fall on the hay-covered floor. There was the hell of a row, and a *sauve qui peut.* The scattered cartridges left behind went off in a great fusillade. Sleep was impossible, so I took the Houyhnhnm for a walk to graze. Heavy firing continued. Shells began to fall beyond our house, but at a safe distance. I returned to it. As there was no other food, seven sheep were slaughtered and set a-roasting for the return of the tribe at night. All the outer wooden staircase and the balcony streamed with their blood, and the yard was strewn with paunches and entrails.

At 5.30 the tribe came home, weary but jubilant, the bairaktar, carrying the tribal colours, singing and

yelling. They had had a hard fight. Only one Gruda man was killed. They had killed a lot of Turks and taken their Mausers. "As for the Montenegrins? Oh yes, a lot of them are dead; but look at the rifles and cartridge belts we've captured!" They flung themselves down in the hay like couchant wolves.

Old Sokol Batzi and Nikola turned up. The latter and Plamenatz had lost their way altogether. The idea of following the military wire had not occurred to the brilliant brain of the Minister of the Interior, and he had wandered right down to Ura Mesit (the bridge), and been turned back by the troops.

The room at night was an indescribable scene of hot food and filth. The hungry men, their feet and trousers all bloody from the field and the sheep's blood on the stairs, tore the lumps of hot meat as fast as Tring cast it before us, but with fine courtesy chucked all that they considered tit-bits—the lumps of hot fat and the kidneys—at me. The floor was thick with bones, bits, and muck; the house—a fine one, as peasant houses go—was befouled and wrecked. Two gaudy hanging-lamps, of Austrian manufacture, and a woman's folding looking-glass, which in such a place must have been a dear treasure, were piteous relics of former splendour. Nikola, disgusted, said to me: "We are supposed to be liberating Albania, and we are living like wild beasts and brigands! It is sickening!" The red light of the still blazing house shone in on us. The Maltsors gorged the fat mutton. Triumphant savagery and childish joy mingled with blood and filth.

A Montenegrin brought in word that Golema was

not taken; that ten battalions had been engaged, and had lost heavily. There was no aid at all for the wounded. A hundred came in. Dom Ernesto, always provident, had brought a little "first-aid" material, but used it all on the first ten. A tribesman was shot through the abdomen, and died. It was impossible without material to help any of them.

*Wednesday, October* 30.—At 7 a.m. a hot fire started; a big battle was raging about an hour away. The Montenegrins were, in fact, trying to take the hill of Bardhanjolt, which was not yet fortified in any way. I decided to get as near as I could, but was told I must go on foot, as on the Houyhnhnm my head would be visible above the hedges and draw fire. I met some soldiers bringing in two prisoners, who reported that yesterday had cost dear. Later I learnt that, out of two battalions, one had had to be made. I went on alone, and came out on the banks of the Kiri River, and saw with a sudden pang the big stone bridge, Ura Mesit, which I had known in so many happy moments. The shells were humming by, and a piece of the parapet had been carried away. Again it all seemed like a bad dream. I crossed the bridge carefully and slowly, for it was steep and slippery, and was scarcely over when a shell whizzed behind me, just cleared the bridge, and fell into the water with a mighty splash.

I turned to the track, which was under cover of rocks, and two more shells passed over me, one falling just beyond the bridge. A lot of Maltsors, mostly women, came hurrying along loaded up with tobacco and household gear, and prayed me to turn back. An under-officer came up and asked me if I "had

Ura Mesil.

seen Brigadier Bechir, and where was Prince Mirko," but I could not help him. More and more shells screamed over or near us. Retreating people told me to go back. Three retreating Montenegrin soldiers said advance that way was impossible, as the Turks were shelling the turn of the path heavily. No one could get round. They, too, wanted to know the whereabouts of the Brigadier. Things were going badly, and he was not to be found. As there was no object in being shot at this stage of the war I, too, turned back, and on reaching the bridge saw that the Turks must be trying to destroy it, as the shells came pretty quick, but all too high. They were striking and exploding on the hillside just above.

I waited in cover till just as a shell had fallen, and then again crossed the bridge with great deliberation, lest I should slip and fall, and got across before the next shot came. My ruling idea, now I was near water, was to wash, for I had not even washed my hands and face for some days, except in a little scooped-up rain-water; so I crawled down to the brink, using the big stone buttress of the bridge as cover, and was getting my head and face and neck washed, when another shell came, and some soldiers yelled to me to come up. They were behind a rock at the top with a long deal box. When I had washed as much as I could in the presence of soldiers, I climbed up to them. They had Prince Mirko's large telescope in the box, asked me where he was, and where was Bechir, and were obviously reluctant to cross the bridge. Judging by the hot and hotter fire that was going on, I felt quite certain that Master Mirko would not be found out there, and advised them not to go—

and risk the telescope. Of Bechir's whereabouts I knew nothing.

They seemed greatly relieved, and, being safe under cover, detailed yesterday's events. The Nikshitch battalion had been very badly cut up. The Captain ignorantly mistook a lot of Scutarene Mohammedans for Maltsori, and went straight into their hands, and, as ignorance is the costliest thing in the world, paid for it with his life. The Moslems hacked him to pieces, and the Montenegrins retorted by mutilating, and sixteen noses and some other bits were taken that night to the Commandant. I said good-bye to these amiable youths and went back to my quarters, which, with much sheep-slaying, were a hell of blood and muck.

For the past few days the Maltsors had been grumbling and growing bitter. They had invited the aid of the Montenegrins, and were rapidly discovering that Montenegro considered them as conquered rather than as allies. They had expected the Albanian flag to be hoisted at Tuzi, and declared they had not shed their blood so many times on Dechich in order to give it to Montenegro. Also, that the Montenegrins commandeered and looted everything, and did not give them the promised bread rations nor shoes, and so forth. There was much friction. That afternoon a large number of Maltsors left, taking with them such tobacco, wool, and hides as they had looted, and also the two lamps from the house and the looking-glass. To my remonstrances they replied that if they did not take them the Montenegrins would, which was true.

At about four the firing, which had never quite

ceased, became very violent — a death-rattle of machine-guns and rifles. I climbed a little hill with Padre Sebastian, and the firing grew nearer and nearer. The Padre remarked grimly that both he and I would have short shrift if the Turks rushed the village. A number of Maltsors joined us, who, discontented, had not gone to battle. From higher up we could see the shells falling thick up the valley just beyond the bridge. As Sebastian remarked, "They might come our way any minute." and we were within range. But they appeared to be aimed at the bridge, though they never hit it. It was a small object, and invisible from the position of the gunners.

As it grew dark the firing died down. Dom Ernesto came, in great distress. The wounded were coming in, and he had never a rag nor bandage left. Had begged Plamenatz, who replied he had no time to bother about such things. Ernesto begged me to ride back next morning and look for the Red Cross, and bring as much as I could persuade them to give.

The sunset blazed orange, and all the foreground was aglow with ruddy fires, at which roasted seven sheep spitted lengthwise. The smoke rose blue, and the smell of roast mutton mingled with the sickly stench of sour cud from the sheep's paunches on the ground.

I took the Houyhnhnm to water at a muddy pond, and led him along the lane to graze, and when I tied him up in the dark stable for the night buried my face on his warm, clean-smelling neck, and felt he was the one civilized being among all the lot of us.

Should I saddle him? If the Turks but knew the confusion of the Montenegrin camp, they could rush the place at night and wipe all out who were unable to fly. The other horses were all unsaddled. I decided the English one could not be the only one to look afraid, and climbed up to the room above. Tring had found two cabbages—an amazing relief. Our sole diet—the greasy, roasted carcasses, with their blood wet on our boots—was hard to tackle.

Gjelosh Djoko, lean and haggard, but fit, turned up and reported that Italy had made peace with Turkey, to the disgust of our whole company. Yanko was said to have taken Ipek; Dom Ernesto said that the Montenegrins had lost heavily to-day; and someone from the battlefield had seen the naked corpse of a Moslem, bound hand and foot with cords, and with every appearance of having been tortured to death. We finished the meal. I, dog-tired, lay down to sleep with my saddle under my head; but in came a lot of Skreli men, who started howling a long war-song about the fights with Tourgoud last year. Our men joined in. The room was packed to suffocation with a yelling mob. Tired out, the whole crew at last lay down to sleep, and I was sleeping heavily when Nikola Batzi suddenly seized my shoulder, shook me, and cried in my ear: "Get ready. The Turks are on us. The orders are to leave at once." I sat up. A Montenegrin was shouting something in the doorway. Everyone was on his feet. The one and only idea that occurred to me was that it meant flight over rocks, and I must lace my boots tight. And I did so very carefully, rolled the sleeping-sack, picked up my saddle and bridle, and descended in a crowd to the

pitch-dark stable underneath, dropping my saddle-cloth on the way.

Groping with outstretched hand, I felt the Houyhnhnm's hind-quarters, followed along the halter, untied it, took it in my teeth, and was leading him out, when in came Padre Buonaventura and struck two matches, and set all the stableful plunging. My beast, however, followed quietly, and stood while I saddled him in the light of the full moon. The Maltsors, with the skill of long practice, had all their beasts loaded up in no time, forgetting nothing, not even the remains of the mutton, and in very few minutes from the first alarm we were started. Old Sokol on his bay horse led, and we rode over the rocks to the houses on top of the little hill—the Staff Headquarters. Here was a nice confusion: men running here, there, and everywhere, asking for their battalions, their officers, for the Brigadier and God knows what, and, as it was one in the morning and bitterly cold, lighting a huge fire—a most idiotic proceeding unless they wished to show the enemy exactly where we were.

Down below all the houses we had left were ablaze; the Maltsors and the Montenegrins had fired them before leaving. The chill mist of the night glowed scarlet under the cold green moonlight, and all the distance was a dark, mysterious purple-black, a-rattle with rifle-fire. It was incomparably magnificent.

I saw the long line of ammunition horses eating hay, so slipped off and began feeding the Houyhnhnm, as, if it came to a *sauve qui peut*, I had only him to rely on, and there was no knowing when he would get his next meal.

We were to wait for orders—that is, we had to wait till Plamenatz and Prince Mirko and staff were safely off, and then cover their retreat. I saw them sneak by, a little party of men all mounted, and at 1.30 we mounted and followed. I stuck close to old Sokol. No one was sure of the way, for it was decided to go straight over the mountains, lest, by the trail on the plains, we should be rounded up by the enemy. My little horse clambered gallantly over rocks I should not have dared ride by daylight. I kept thinking, "This is ridiculously like a Book for Boys," and began to sing. We were a long, long trail of soldiers (a mixed assortment, it seemed, from a variety of battalions) and Maltsors. Once we plunged into thick mist in a valley full of camp-fires, and seemed to be descending into hell. And soldiers joined us out of the fog. At five we reached a half-burnt house, and my party of Gruda men called a halt. One came up and restored my lost saddle-cloth. I covered my good little beast and picketed him behind a wall, and when I got in found that all the others were crowded round a fire, and there was no room for me. At seven the chill dawn broke. The peaks of the high mountains showed above a sea of white mist, with black smoke of the burnt houses hanging over it in sluggish lumps. We descended a very steep gully on foot, dragging our horses. I tumbled underneath mine, and a Maltsor kindly took him in tow. So we, in time, arrived back again at Gruémir, found an empty house, and I crowded into it with a lot of the Gruda. The indefatigable Tring unslung the old petroleum can from her badger-shaped horse, and set to work to boil the half-sheep that had been brought

along. I rubbed down the Houyhnhnm with a handful of hay, gave him a heap from a handy haystack, and then laid flat on the ground to rake maize out of an already looted maize-store both for him and for myself. I did not think ever to sink so low as to steal hay and corn, and made a vow, and kept it, to go back after the war and pay the owners. The Maltsors were very kind, and took my horse and stabled him.

Had the Turks followed us up last night, they could have finished us and gone through to Podgoritza, probably. They did not, and so gave the Montenegrins time to replace the battalions which had retired, by some of better stuff. There was sharp fighting all day, and heavy firing on Tarabosh. It was touch and go whether we should again retire. I went out alone to see if I could get any news, and was sprung on by two Montenegrin soldiers, who said they were the guard, and had orders to arrest all strangers. But three or four Maltsors came leaping over the bushes, shouting, "She is ours; she is the Englishwoman of the Kochaks (insurgents)"; and the guards, recognizing me by that title, laughed, "All right," and told gaily that they shot all they arrested—had shot a Scutarene the other day. He had asked to see Sokol Batzi, and said he had a message for him. "But we had no time, so we shot him." "Perhaps he knew Sokol?" said I. "Ne mari" (No matter), said they. And, as I learnt later, all they did not shoot they imprisoned at Podgoritza, sometimes heavily ironed, without any trial.

I wandered round talking to stray soldiers. Many were barefoot; all complained of the "intendanz."

They were furious with Bechir, too—blamed him for the heavy losses of the two previous days; he knew nothing. They swore he would be degraded in rank as punishment. "We expected to go straight to Scutari." Were amazed and dismayed to find the plain fortified. I said I knew it was. "Our officers know nothing," they said; "it is no use attacking Scutari with them. We must wait till the Serb officers come." Thus the men. And but a few weeks ago these officers had described the Serbs to me as "swineherds." The men seemed so demoralized I could not believe they would ever storm Scutari; and I did not then imagine the Serbs would come, as I believed their objective was the Ægean. If Scutari could stand bombarding, all would depend on her food-supply to hold out till peace were made.

Fighting was audible all day. By night came news that the Turkish advance was checked; also that a steamer had arrived on the lake with a bread ration for the army. Tring's badger-horse was sent to fetch some for us. The soldiers that marched by that night looked comic, each with a loaf impaled on his bayonet.

We all discussed the situation. One thing I was resolved upon, and that was to go back to Padre Lorenzo's and get my saddle-bags. They had been locked up there while he was out with us, and I had not had my clothes off nor seen a hair-brush for over a fortnight.

The next question was whether there would be anything more of interest to see. It was abundantly clear that the Montenegrins could not get anywhere near Scutari till they had strong reinforcements—if then. The Maltsors were all sore and sick at the way

they were being treated, and already asking what was to be the end. "It won't be the Turk any more; that is certain," said a Franciscan to me. "But what the tribes have fought for is freedom."

The tribes were in favour of returning to their homes, and did so in detachments; and on November 2, with some of them, I rode back to the church house at Baitza.

Turning a corner, we heard ear-piercing screeches, as though all the cats of a town were making a night of it. Five Montenegrin women were trying by force to steal a horse from three Catholic Kastrati women. The Montenegrins had him by the tail, and clasped his hind-legs, and vainly strove to drag them back. The little beast, with straddled feet firmly planted, resisted stubbornly. The Albanian women held him by mane and neck, remonstrating at the tops of their voices. Up came an Albanian man, who laid his hand on the horse's head; and the animal, recognizing his master, followed so promptly that the Montenegrin women had no time to resist. They were left lamenting, or rather cursing, loudly, while I and my men, roaring with laughter, followed the horse and his rightful owners. These explained that, though they had acted as allies of the Montenegrins, nothing was safe from these harpy women. One Catholic woman, sister of a man I knew well, told that, when in her house alone, a party of Montenegrin women rushed in on her. Three held her down and by the throat, while the others plundered her clothes-chest of everything.

They were ready to tramp any distance for loot. As a Bosnian volunteer said to me later: "A Monte-

negrin woman will march 100 kilos to steal one shirt." They went out with little bundles, ostensibly to carry food to the soldiers, and returned with at least double the amount of plunder, no matter how valueless. A girl, come all the way from Nikshitch, was tramping back with a bundle of tobacco, a huge iron chain, three pots, and a coffee-mill.

Nor was all looting effected without bloodshed. A man who was with the Montenegrins told me vividly later how he had seen them enter a small Moslem house not far from Tuzi. An old man was crouched by the fire, with several women. None showed any fear, for they were all harmless non-combatants. A soldier with one blow cut off the old man's head. They all fell on the screaming women and tore their ornaments from them. One had a necklace which the robbers thought was gold; they tried to snatch it from the man who had taken it, fought each other, and finally broke the poor little ornament to pieces, each man grabbing what he could, while the old man's spouting blood hissed in the fire. Such are the glories of war.

I rode on to the Franciscan's, revelled in a change of clothes, and discussed the chances of war with him all the evening. We decided that so long as food held out there was no likelihood that Scutari would surrender. Unless strong reinforcements came, no immediate developments were to be expected. It was better, therefore, for me to return to Podgoritza, and learn what the other Balkan States were doing.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GLORIES OF WAR

THE Maltsors next morning escorted me over the Chafa Kishat and then the Houyhnhnm and I pushed on to Podgoritza, after a determined effort on his part to go either to his old home, the hospital at Tuzi, or to the burnt Turkish kula on the frontier. It was the evening of November 3 when we plodded wearily into the town. Four, or at most six weeks, it had been anticipated would see the end of the war and Montenegro victorious. Almost a month had now passed and the end seemed no nearer. Podgoritza no longer talked of showing Servia and the world in general how a war should be conducted.

Yanko Vukotitch had taken Bijelopoljeon October 12 and Berani on the 16th, and Veshovitch had taken Plava and Gusinje. He had carried out his plan, had blown up the Turkish border kula, and at once fallen unexpectedly on the frontier Moslem villages. The two small towns, having no military organization and very little ammunition, surrendered almost at once, though they were almost solid Moslem as to population. (Plava contained but fifteen Christian houses and Gusinje forty.) It was a case of armed peasants each trying to defend his own, and against regulars these have rarely a chance.

But the scheme of the three divisions of the Montenegrin army meeting at Prizren had already passed into the Never-never Land, along with King Nikola's dream of sitting there upon the throne of Stefan Dushan; for the Serbs, to the surprise of Montenegro and of larger and wiser lands too, arrived at Prizren first, and took it. Meanwhile, the armies of Prince Danilo and Mitar Martinovitch had done practically nothing towards taking Scutari; they had shown only that they could not rush it. If it were to be stormed, it should have been done at once, without giving the town time to fortify itself yet more strongly. It was not yet—for lack of troops—effectually besieged. The route to Medua was still open.

The knowledge of the Montenegrin officers was so wanting that, though, just after I left, they succeeded not only in regaining the ground they had lost, but actually in occupying Bardhanjolt Hill, they failed to recognize that it was one of the keys of Scutari. When the heavy autumn rains set in a few days later, they retired from it to seek a more sheltered spot. Hussein Riza promptly reoccupied it, and swiftly and skilfully made it a stronghold which played an important part in the saving of Scutari; but this is anticipating.

About Martinovitch's army, all that the Montenegrins could tell me was that it had burnt a number of Albanian villages across the frontier, but had had no effect on Tarabosh as yet.

The King, afraid of the heavy resultant death-rolls, gave orders that no more attempts at storming were to be made till the arrival of reinforcements. Rain fell in torrents, and the army of Prince Danilo settled

down to entrench itself in mud and water. Constantinople, it was said, was about to fall, and we were told that Prince Danilo was preparing to start in order to take part in the triumphal entry which all the Crown Princes of the Balkans were to make together. It was anticipated that Europe would order peace so soon as Constantinople fell, and the allies would then share the peninsula between them. Several people expressed to me the belief that there would be little more fighting.

So much for the political situation. In Podgoritza the notable facts were, that the Italian and Austrian military Red Crosses had arrived and installed themselves. The Italians had transformed the Italian Monopol tobacco factory into an excellent hospital, bringing not only bedsteads, bedding, and clothing, but all necessaries for an operating-room and also X-ray apparatus, kitchen necessaries, and a large store of wine and provisions. As most of the staff had been in Tripoli or seen service in one of the many earthquake catastrophes in Italy, they were thoroughly practical, and I cannot speak too highly of their efficiency, courtesy, and kindness. I was indebted also for much help and kindness to the Austrian Red Cross, but this was withdrawn shortly, for Austria mobilized.

The most startling change in the town was that D——, the recently appointed Governor of Podgoritza, had been arrested and marched off in irons, and that Stanko Markovitch, of sinister fame, was once again head of affairs. Some said he had intrigued for D——'s overthrow, with what truth I do not know.

A change for the better was that Zhivkovitch, the Reuter agent, had left Podgoritza, so that it was now possible to get off telegrams in time. I found that my *Times* telegram of the taking of Tuzi had been held back twenty-four hours while he was censor.

Finding, from a few copies that had turned up, that the *Daily Chronicle* was a very different class of paper from what I had imagined, I threw it over, but continued to work for the *Nation*, *Manchester Guardian*, and, occasionally, *The Times*.

With a view partly to getting details of how things were going, I went to work for a time in the Montenegrin hospital. The wounded, except those who had the luck to fall into Austrian or Italian hands, were crowded into three of the four barracks that formed the Voyni Stan. The fifth block, which in peace-time was the Commander's headquarters, served as depot for the Montenegrin Red Cross, and contained the stores, kitchen, and operating-room. Incredible though it may sound, these barracks, built but a few years ago to contain 600 men or more at a pinch, have no kind of latrine accommodation and no washing arrangements of any sort.

A Montenegrin doctor was in charge, and extremely jealous of all foreign aid (especially attempts at cleanliness), but was forced to accept it, as Montenegro possessed only two good surgeons, neither of whom was at Podgoritza, and scarcely any properly trained assistants. The Montenegrin ladies were all of too high degree to do such dirty work. Briefly, the place was a filthy hell. The floors were covered with spittle and old mutton-bones. A squawking crowd of dirty girls and women—the dregs of Podgoritza—

with red crosses on their arms, flocked to steal anything stealable. With prurient giggles they pushed and shoved to get a glimpse of any wound they considered exciting, and made dressing difficult.

When meal-times came, they stole the patients' food. The soup came up mere cold water, and the meat mostly bones. The patients flung the contents of their ration cans on the floor, and yelled that as the King had commandeered their sheep, they had the right to decent food.

The patients' relatives came to share their meals, insisted on passing the night in the hospital, and slept in numbers between the beds. Referring to the moral atmosphere, Ognjenovitch, the head of the Montenegrin Red Cross, suggested playfully it should be called the "Red Lamp." Nor would I myself wear the badge.

The air, owing to this unnecessary crowd, was foul and made yet fouler by the fact that the men, wounded three weeks ago, were still in their bloody uniforms, and in some cases had not had a change of shirt. Many had crooked limbs, as their unset bones had united of themselves, and not one wound that I saw had been properly cleaned at the beginning; but into surgical details it is not my intention to enter.

Heavy rains fell. The Rivers Kiri, Drin, and Bojana flooded wide, and the Montenegrin army could neither unite around Scutari nor approach near to it. Martinovitch's army, in spite of an Austrian protest that Medua must belong to a free Albania, occupied such as there is of it on November 17, and prepared to march on Alessio, and, to the intense surprise of many of us, the Serbs arrived over Mirdita. They

attacked Alessio from one side, while Montenegro attacked from the other. It surrendered, and was considered by the Serbs their property. They had marked out Medua as theirs also, to Montenegro's extreme wrath, and there was much friction on the subject.

The Serbs had come down from Djakova, which the combined Serb and Montenegrin armies had taken. Except at Flet, where the Moslem peasants resisted them three days in a narrow defile, they passed through without difficulty, as the Mirdites were so short of ammunition their Abbot persuaded them that to fight would be only to court massacre. I have never understood why the fact that the Servian army traversed the mountains was written up as a marvellous exploit. By one route it is three and a half days' march, if you do it slowly, as I did, and by the other about four. A comical episode was that though the Servian and Montenegrin officers met after dark, a certain newspaper published a photograph of their meeting. They were, in fact, induced to meet again next day for the purpose. Such is journalism.

That the Serbs would come Adriatic-wards had never entered my head, nor had I ever heard it suggested, and I was distressed and dismayed. Their demand for Durazzo as a port was, and is, outrageous. There were no " brother-Serbs to be liberated " there, and by taking the Sanjak and uniting the Serbo-Montenegrin frontiers, they had obtained access to Antivari and Dulcigno, both far better ports than Durazzo.

It was rumoured on the 19th that the King was in

Rijeka offering terms of surrender to some envoys from Scutari, so I mounted the Houyhnhnm, who was eating his head off, and we set out to get news. Halfway I met the royal motor-car and reined him up by the bank lest he, quite unused to such things, should take fright. Being broken to artillery, he, however, showed no interest in it at all. In him, on the contrary, their Royal Highnesses were extremely interested. The car stopped, and out they all jumped —the Crown Princess, Princess Joseph Battenburg, Princess Vera. "This," cried one of the Royal ladies, "is your celebrated horse! We have heard all about it!" "Very good horse, your Royal Highness," said I. "I bought him in Tuzi." "What!" cried she, "you *bought* it?" "Twelve pound Turk, Madam." "Oh!" she cried, deeply disappointed, "we thought you *took* it. That you went straight to Tuzi and took a horse from the Turks." "I took nothing at Tuzi, your Royal Highness," said I. I might have added, "I was the only one that did." But Royal personages are unaccustomed to the chill truth.

Scutari would not listen to terms of surrender, and the Voyni Stan hospitals were all cleared out hurriedly next day. Yanko Vukotitch had arrived with 10,000 men of his army. With these reinforcements it was proposed to storm Scutari, and a rush of wounded might result.

The Montenegrins were furious at the failure of *pourparlers*. As I wrote at the time: "Their hatred and ferocity are appalling. They do not even care if the Moslem children are starved; they declare they are going to stamp out the whole Moslem population.

The Maltsori are angry at the Montenegrin attitude, and I foresee great complications in the future."

The Albanians at Avlona, under the guidance of Ismail Kemal, hoisted the Albanian flag on November 28, and declared their neutrality and independence. This made the Montenegrins angrier than ever. The affair of the Austrian Consul, Prochashka, also complicated matters. The Servian commander at Prizren had prevented him from communicating with his Government, and all sorts of tales were rife, but we had as yet no authentic particulars. The Montenegrins expressed a hope that his nose had been cut off, so that he could never show himself in Vienna again, and some actually believed this had been done.

The Serbs offered to help Montenegro take Scutari, and their offer was refused, it is said, rudely. They were, however, allowed to help blockade the town, for the Montenegrins had not enough men to surround it efficiently.

Meanwhile, sick men came pouring in from Yanko Vukotitch's army. Dr. K——, a young Bosnian doctor, well trained in Vienna, asked me to help him, for most of the foreign Red Crosses had come only for the fun of gunshot wounds, and no preparation of any kind had been made for the sick. Yanko's campaign had, indeed, not been much more than a walk-over if the report of Dr. Ilitchkovitch, the military surgeon, were true, that they had only lost 300 killed. But now they were falling out in numbers with enteric, dysentery, neuralgic and rheumatic pains, and acute diarrhœa, caused by exposure and bad food.

When K—— and I went to their rescue, we found that the Montenegrin doctor had pitched the lot

together in one filthy building, crowded together on the floor on mattresses that oozed dirty rags. A delirious case of smallpox howled in the midst. All had been classed as dysentery, and were receiving no nourishment but weak, milkless tea and opium.

K—— took over the fourth house of the Voyni Stan for the sick, and he and his wife and two Catholic Sisters and I strove to reduce it to some kind of decency and order. Some of the men stank so that the Montenegrin women, who were supposed to be looking after them, would not go near them, and they were in the last stages of misery and exhaustion. All swarmed with lice, and the beds with bugs. The Red Cross kitchen supplied no invalid diet. Milk was all adulterated with dirty water.

K—— got Turkish prisoners to do the cleaning. They slept in the attic, and were thankful to be under cover. I did anything that needed doing, including clipping lousy heads and washing lousy bodies with petroleum out of the lamps, for lack of any other remedy. Most of the men swarmed with them. Dressing bedsores, too, for some of the men had laid on the bare earth a couple of weeks before being brought to us, and were ulcerated not only on their backs, but in some cases had been turned over afterwards on their faces and had sores on thighs and abdomen as well. I cooked whatever invalid diet I could invent, with milk and eggs which I bought daily in the bazar, and Quaker oats and meat extract, which the Austrian Red Cross gave me. All the cooking had to be done on my own two spirit lamps, and as the town ran out of methylated spirit, I burnt the camphor spirit which was served out for

massage, and rubbed the rheumatic men with oil of mustard instead. They were mostly stone-cold up to the knee through wading in snow.

We held about 140 patients, and as fast as any were fit they were replaced by others. Incidentally I learnt a lot about the war, for I had a great number of men through my hands. They all gloried in their bestiality, and related in detail their nose-cutting exploits, imitated the impaling of a Turk upon a bayonet, and the slicing off of his nose and upper lip, and the shouted advice to the still living man: "Go home and show your wives how pretty you are!" All, with very few exceptions, had taken noses. An old man of seventy had only taken two, but excused himself on the grounds of having fallen ill at the beginning. His son, with the Podgoritza army, had, he said, done very well though, and so would he, God willing, so soon as he was well.

They told, too, of how they had bayoneted the wounded, "our remedy to cure Turks," and of how they carried all the human fragments they had sliced off to their Commandant. And they spoke foully of Turkish women.

All the men who were not too ill to be past caring had but one idea—to be well in time for the looting and slaying in Scutari. A young Bosnian, down with enteric, who had come as a volunteer to help "his brother-Slavs," told, with disgust, of the looting of Djakova, and particularized the hideous rapacity of the Montenegrin women.

Dr. K——, also an enthusiastic Slav, who had come to help at his own expense, was sickened. A Russian surgeon, the only foreign doctor who had been allowed

in the Kosovo district, came to work with us for a few days, and corroborated the men's statement that they had scarcely left a nose on a corpse between Berani and Ipek.

Some warm partisans of Montenegro have declared that they do not see anything very horrible in the mutilation of dead bodies, and if the dead alone had been mutilated, we might dismiss it as the dirty trick of a barbarous people; but the men's own account was that they mutilated the wounded before giving them a final bayonet prod. After the war I had this corroborated by a young Moslem from Plava, who came down to Scutari to beg surgical help. He told that he and some dozen comrades were all shot down in fair fight. As they lay bleeding on the field the Montenegrins came round and bayoneted the lot, who all succumbed but himself. He fainted. Later he came to, tried to rise, and by so doing, poor wretch, drew the attention of a Montenegrin officer and some men. They fell on him, wounded and helpless, hacked off his nose and upper lip, threw him down, and gave him another bayonet stab, and left him. Such is the superb vitality of these people, that in the night he revived and managed to crawl to shelter and friends, and recovered. Two surgeons examined him in my presence at Scutari. The scars and the bayonet stabs attested the truth of his story.

Great force had been used when mutilating. The nasal bone was hacked right through between the eyes, and the whole of the upper lip sliced away to the corners of the mouth. The cheeks had retracted, and a hideous hole, with points of bone sticking up in it, yawned in his face. His exposed teeth and

gums grinned horribly, and for want of an upper lip he articulated with difficulty.

Few, it is scarcely necessary to say, survived such treatment. "Lady," I was told, "there were very many—but the earth covers them."

To return to the hospital. The two Catholic Sisters went out on strike and Mrs. K—— knocked up, and I had all three women's work as well as my own to do for four days, and we had about 140 patients. Having promised to help K——, I could not leave him in the lurch, but I had it more and more upon my conscience that by curing men to go back to the front I was not only prolonging the war, but aiding and abetting every kind of atrocity, and that I ought to cease to do so.

At dinner at the hotel I, with the exception of a Russian Sister at the other end of the table, was the only woman among a pack of officers, officials, and Montenegrin doctors, and these discussed and joked over the hideous doings. I had hoped and believed that the Servian army was more civilized. A report had come to me that an Albanian passing through Podgoritza had declared that, in Kosovo vilayet the ground in many places was simply strewn with the bodies of women and children, that he had seen a living foot protruding from the ground and waving feebly, but had not dared to stop, as a Servian officer was with him. As I was worked almost beyond my strength I did not, I regret now, see this witness and examine him, nor, in fact, attach much belief to the report till a Servian officer turned up at the dinner-table, and related, with glee, the valorous deeds of the Serbs. "We have," he boasted, "annihilated

the Ljuma tribe." He described wholesale slaughter of men, women, and children, and the burning of the villages. The Montenegrins chuckled as they gobbled their dinners. "Why did you do this?" I asked at last. "When I was there the people received me very well."

There was a shout of laughter. "Go there now and look for your dear friends. You won't find a single one. They shot one of our telegraphists and we sent enough battalions to destroy them." The Moslem problem was to be "simplified." "When the land is once ours," I was repeatedly assured, "there will be no Moslem problem."

Of the Ljuma tribe very few survived. The destruction of the whole Albanian race was the avowed intention of both Serb and Montenegrin. The company at the dinner-table varied from week to week; but on this point was always agreed.

Meanwhile the Montenegrins had not dared another assault, but the armistice declared at the beginning of December at Tchatalja, was not observed, for Hussein Riza had refused to accept a letter written by the German Minister at Cettigne, and conveyed by Montenegrin hands, as orders which he could obey.

When the icy "bora," that raged and shrieked and broke the hospital windows, dropped, we could hear the heavy boom of guns now and again. Just before Christmas a heartrending letter reached me from Padre Camillo of Shoshi, telling me that the Shoshi people were sheltering the unhappy Moslems burnt out at Drishti, had till now fed them, but supplies were running short, and if no help came they must starve. He prayed that I would write to King

Nikola and beg him to have pity for the conquered, and send either maize or money to help them. Maize could still be bought from the up-country Christian tribes.

I copied passages of the letter and sent them to the King, without result; and, not to waste time, I sent up some money at once. Later I sent more, and after the war had the pleasure of being thanked by some of the Drishti men, who said that the maize bought for them by the Padre had saved their families. But this is anticipating. When the Montenegrins heard what I had done they were furious, but this I only learnt later. They had hoped that all their victims would starve.

Just before Christmas Dr. K——, his wife, and I took a day off to get a breath of fresh air. We were all three very tired. They drove; I rode the Houyhnhnm. At Tuzi, Gjurashkovitch, the newly appointed Governor of Tuzi, joined us, and we went across the plain to Nenhelm, or Hum, as the Montenegrins had already renamed it. Our plan was to ascend the hill to get a view of Scutari, as the K——s had never seen it. From the hill-foot at the water's edge came an infuriated caterwauling. A pack of Montenegrin women had been forbidden to follow the army. For some weeks past there had been tales of theft. The Montenegrin women, having looted everything portable from the enemy, had begun plundering their own army. The women of one tribe robbed the men of another, stole their greatcoats, and even their shoes, while they were asleep, as some told me, and had taken a whole lot of army revolvers. Now that they were no longer needed to transport

loot, they were forbidden to come to camp any more. It was a pretty scene—the yowling pack of women, crazy for drink and the excitement of the camps, striving to force a way on to the ferry barges, and the men hounding them off with yells.

We climbed the hill, saw the wrecked fort at the top, and had a clear view of poor Scutari. Gjurashkovitch spoke with glee of its speedy fall, and, pointing around, said: "What a lot of money we shall make with all this fertile land!" "But it is all private property, and already cultivated," I said. I had not realized then that the Montenegrins meant to expel the owners, as they had done after the last war, and appropriate their property. He retorted angrily: "What we take is ours to do as we like with." I stared at Scutari, with sick fear as to what would be the fate of my friends. And the distant guns boomed.

Suddenly up leapt Gjurashkovitch with a roar. "Go back, you bitches—go back, you devils! Send those women back!" The lady-pack had ceased caterwauling, and was trying to sneak round the shore of the lake. There was a rush, and they were rounded up and headed back, and the row began all over again. I thought bitterly that these people were pretending to Europe that they were carrying civilization into Albania, and that there were folk at home fools enough to believe it.

Dr. K—— struggled hard against the perpetual stealing in the hospital. Each hospital was provided with a so-called "Ekonom," a Montenegrin whose duty was to see that all supplies ordered by the doctor were sent up from the depot. One of our Ekonoms,

a theology student, was descending the stairs, when crash fell a hospital brandy bottle from under his coat. I wished to report him at Cettigne, and was met with a chorus: "It is all paid for by the Red Cross money from abroad. Everyone helps himself. If the highest in the land do, why not we? If you report him, you must report everybody." It was true. The lock was knocked off the linen-box in the night, and most of the contents stolen. Of what went to the wash some was stolen always. We ordered thirty shirts from the depot; twenty-four came. The depot swore it had sent thirty, the messenger that she had brought all she received. Worst of all, the attendants stole money from patients too weak to protect themselves. K——, at the end of his patience, cried one day: "I wish to God they'd steal the corrosive sublimate; it is the only thing they have not taken as yet!" He stuck to his task most pluckily, insisting that his patients should have what was necessary, wringing condensed milk, quinine wine, and so forth from the Cettigne central depot, and locking it up, and endeavouring that one or other of our little European staff should always be on duty; insisting also on clean shirts and drawers for each patient when he arrived. This was a very difficult task, as the Montenegrins had been keeping all the patients in the dirty uniforms they came in with, and could never be made to see the necessity of treatment or diet.

So long as K—— was in command, there were few pickings for any of the employés, so they intrigued against him, and forced him to offer his resignation, which the Montenegrin Red Cross accepted at once.

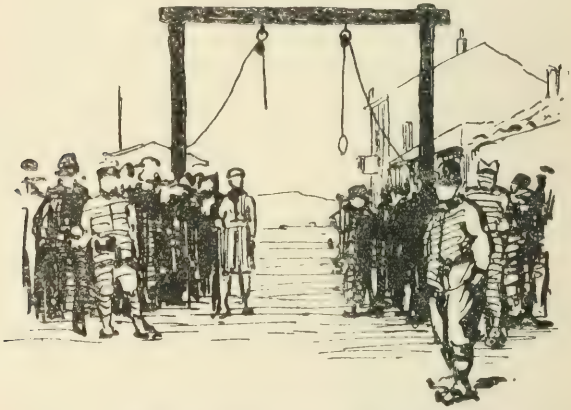
They had already crowded out similarly, three or four other foreign volunteers. We had done five weeks' severe work together, and lost only seven patients, of whom one was brought in moribund; one, an enteric, was killed by his friends, who threw him pomegranates and cheese through the window when for a brief interval there was only a Montenegrin in attendance; and a third who, in high delirium, sprang out of the window and into the river. A Montenegrin woman had been left with instructions not to leave him a moment, and to shout for help if needed. She "only went down to the door to speak to a friend, and was quite surprised to find the patient gone." However, both she and the pomegranate woman washed their hands of all responsibility, and declared the results to be the will of God.

It is a curious fact that no priest ever visited the sick or wounded so far as I saw. On the other hand, if a man showed sign of collapse, there was a perfect rush of attendants to light candles round him, and they had to be chivied off, to make space to give him the hypodermic injection necessary to pull him round.

When K——, under whom it had been a pleasure to work, resigned, I resigned too; but K—— implored me to stay on till a decent man arrived to take his place. I held on, therefore, for a week under very difficult circumstances till one of the Bohemian Red Cross came from Cettigne. He, when I left, could find no one to do the invalid cookery, and resigned also. And the Italians, who had been reinforced, took over the fourth house.

I was almost dead beat, for at the last I had been

cooking on the two spirit-lamps, and serving up to eighty-five portions a day, as well as doing all manner of odd jobs. So I slept for the best part of two days, and then rode the Houyhnhnm out on the plain to consider what I would turn to next. Christmas, both new and old style, had come and gone drearily. Scutari was still bravely holding out. The Montenegrins had proved their military incompetency. Had not the Maltsors in August forced the Turks to evacuate most of the frontier outposts, cut off Tuzi



"EX IN TERRA PAX HOMINIBUS."

from all reinforcements, and then not only admitted the Montenegrin army through their mountains, but also aided largely in the capture of Dechich, and in clearing the way for the advance of the army, I do not for a moment believe the Montenegrins would have arrived anywhere near Scutari—probably not even have taken Tuzi.

Three months had passed since the firing of the first shot, and, far from taking Scutari in four days, they had nothing to show but Medua and Tuzi, and

a number of defenceless villages that had been burnt and plundered.

All Europe knew that the Servian army was superior to the Montenegrin. The Montenegrins were intensely embittered, and spoke openly and angrily against the King, and especially the Royal Princes. The antidynastic party said freely that the Petrovitches were the bane of the land. Much anger was expressed against Princess Xenia, who was said to have undue influence with the King, and to arrange the movements and positions of battalions, though ignorant of military matters. A tale ran round that a Serb officer, visiting the Montenegrin camp, had said that in twenty-four hours he could make of any of his privates a better officer than any in the Montenegrin army.

Meantime, the Peace Conference hargle-bargled in London for weeks without result. The Montenegrin delegates were Miouskovitch, the best of the three; Popovitch, till lately Minister in Constantinople, a man of no particular power; and Count Louis Voinovitch, an Austrian from Ragusa. He had been employed ten years ago to draft the Code of Laws for Montenegro, and had left somewhat suddenly. Since then he had done odd jobs for Servia and Bulgaria, and was reputed to know the back of Balkan politics. His sudden recall to Montenegro when war began, and his selection as delegate, excited much comment and jealousy. It was a tacit admission that Montenegro could not produce three home-grown politicians fit to go to London. And the report current at Ragusa and in Montenegro that the Count, if successful, was to be rewarded by being made Governor of

Scutari by no means allayed local jealousy. How the delegates were getting on we had no information in Podgoritza. One tale was that they were financed by a French newspaper, anxious to support Slav interests.

Without Servian aid the Montenegrins could never have effectually shut in Scutari. As it was, Hussein Riza made two successful sorties in December, and revictualled the town with a quantity of maize from the villages of Pistulli, Plesha, and Stajka. It was unthinkable that Europe would allow Scutari to be starved out by Servian aid, and then make a present of it to Montenegro, who had shown herself in every way unworthy. So furious had the conduct of the Montenegrin troops made the Maltsors that they even talked of attacking them and cutting them off from Podgoritza. I begged them not to attempt it, as it would bring down the Servian army and artillery upon them, and result in a hideous massacre, as in Kosovo vilayet. Some said even *that* would be better than to be handed over to Montenegro by the Powers. They held a meeting in the mountains, and swore they would resist this with all their strength. "King Nikola," they said, "promised only last year to get us a European guarantee for our national rights, especially for schools and language. He betrayed us, and now the Montenegrins talk of nothing but forcible Slavizing. We have not fought the Turks for two years on the language question in order to be forced to learn Servian. The army which pretended to come as our allies to help us has commandeered our hay and beasts, and not paid. We will give no more."

Accordingly, when the Montenegrin troops fell on the Catholic village of Mazreku, seized cattle, and looted the church, the Catholic tribesmen opened fire, and seventeen Montenegrins were killed and wounded. The Montenegrins, alarmed lest a large body of tribesmen might descend upon them, paid up full damages. The Mazreku men cashed the notes at once in Podgoritza, and remarked: "In future, if only a hen is stolen, we shall open fire."

The desire of the Orthodox Montenegrins to stamp out not only Mohammedanism, but Catholicism, was shown by cutting off the noses of images of the saints, and by using a crucifix as a mark to fire at, throwing

MONTENEGRIN OPANKE.

down the Host from the altar, and similar outrages in more than one church, and made the Catholic Maltsors furious.

Thus did the New Year begin. It was bitterly cold. Misery and hatred spread over all. Enterics came in at the rate of ten a day, and overflowed into most of the hospitals. News from the front was that the soldiers were in rags, and often barefoot, and were demoralized by long waiting in the trenches. A move must be made, or they would lose their nerve. Yanko telegraphed for seven more battalions, and it was recognized that Servian aid must be accepted. I still hoped Europe would save Scutari, and gave all

my energies to helping, not the butchers, but the victims.

The prisoners were in an indescribably wretched state. Thirty Moslem women and children were crowded into an upper room of a dismantled, half-ruined house. The windows were broken, and the icy wind whistled through the broken floor. Bedding or covering they had none, and a daily ration of dry bread was all they received to live on. The misery of the poor little children touched even the gendarmes on guard, and they begged me to give help. Police Captain Vrbitza, whom I knew well, gave me permission, and told me that their husbands and brothers had all been taken prisoners at Drishti for trying to defend their village, and that, when on the way to Podgoritza, had unfortunately tried to escape. For this they had all, he regretted to say, been killed. I subsequently learnt that they had not been killed in hot blood at the time, but that a few days later they had all twenty-six been put in a row by order of Prince Danilo, and shot down. Some of them were mere boys. "I Biri Kralit," the King's son—*i.e.*, Prince Danilo—gained an unenviable reputation in Albania. Brigadier Bechir, who was with him, was nicknamed the Montenegrin Nero.

The unhappy women had followed after their arrested men, and believed them to be in prison, and no one had as yet undeceived them. They had been well-to-do peasants, and their sufferings were piteous. Sobbing bitterly, they embraced me and prayed for leave to see their men. Food and clothing I gave. Fortunately, I had just received a bale of excellent native-shaped garments from England, and

I supplied a pan of charcoal to keep off the cold. One thing more they begged—some soap. They were used to plenty of clean clothes, and had no means of washing. I went to Stanko Markovitch and begged he would either find better quarters for the poor creatures or allow me to do so. He made endless promises, and did nothing. I wished to leave Podgoritza, to visit the other side of the lake, but was begged by the town Moslems, for the sake of the prisoners, not to go. I thought of the outcry a few months ago, when thirty Serb women and children were prisoners in Berani, and I appealed again to Stanko, speaking of the poor things as "widows and orphans." His snaky eyes contracted with anger. "They are not!" he cried. "Their husbands are rebels in the mountains. Some Albanian has told you that lie!" "Captain Vrbitza told me the facts, and asked me to help the women," I said. Stanko was furious, but dared not deny the truth, and after much trouble I had the whole party transferred to a decent place in the Moslem quarter, where the neighbours looked after them and the Government allowed them a meat ration.

The other inmates of the prisoners' house were likewise in a terrible plight. A number of sheds at the end of the yard were filled with Catholic and Moslem Albanians, caught by the soldiers for no particular reason that I could learn. Many were heavily ironed; all were half naked, shivering, and emaciated, receiving just enough bread to keep them alive, and sleeping on the damp earth with no covering. A cartload of firewood, shirts, and some lumps of cheese and strings of onions lightened their sufferings, and

after the war I met more than one in Albania who thanked me warmly.

There was even a lower depth of misery. Up under the roof of the half-ruined house were about sixty Moslems—men, women, and children. They were from the Berani district, and had fled before the Montenegrin army at the very beginning of the war. Over the mountains, through snow, hither and thither, they had wandered, flying now from the Montenegrins, now from the invading Serbs. They had eaten or sold such few beasts as they fled with, had begged food, eaten grass and dead leaves. Thirty of the party had died on the way of misery. Finally, they were taken prisoners by the Serbs near Durazzo, and handed over to the Montenegrins as prisoners. Now, shut in this wind-swept attic, smallpox had broken out among the children. The cases, luckily, were few and slight. The whole party was supposed to be isolated, but some managed generally to get out and beg in the town, for they were perishing of cold and hunger on the dry-bread ration allowed them. I supplied these poor creatures with fire and food. One family I remember vividly. The mother told how her three little girls all died on the way. One got wet through crossing a river, and died of cold next day; the two others had died of hunger. She believed she had been flying for a whole year from the soldiers, and had lost all count of time. I said the war had only lasted four months. "I do not know," she said; "it seems like years." So soon as the children were well they all had to leave and tramp back to their burnt homes. Their gratitude to me was most touching. "You are the only person

who has been kind to us," said the man. "I did not know Christians could be so good." They kissed my heart, and the woman swore sisterhood with me. I gave them opanke (sandals) for the march, but I fear they must have returned home only to be left to starve, that their land may be given to a Christian.

Some members of the French Red Cross turned up in search of stores, and told of the Montenegrin cruelty to the conquered. A crowd of terrified Albanian women and children, two wounded, had arrived one wet night, drenched and exhausted, flying from a burning village. The Montenegrins refused them help or even shelter. The French took pity on them, put them into an empty stable, and began to make some tea. A Montenegrin soldier came and kicked over the pot, saying that such beasts should have nothing. The Montenegrin doctor had refused to help a wounded Albanian, and the French had rescued him, and so forth. A dree tale of the woe of the conquered.

In Podgoritza, when maize was given to women whose men were at the front, Catholics applied in vain, and received insults instead of help. It was reported and believed that the battalions of Albanians who were Montenegrin subjects were purposely put in the most dangerous positions, and Podgoritzans amused themselves by visiting the shops of Catholic tradesmen and describing to them the manner in which their relatives in Scutari would be massacred so soon as the town fell.

A youth in officer's uniform sat next me one day at table, and boasted that in two years no one would dare speak Albanian in Scutari. I pointed out that

the Albanians had been under the Romans, the Byzantine Empire, the Bulgars, the Serbs, and the Turks, and still spoke their own language. "Do you suppose," I asked, "that in two years Montenegro can effect what all these have failed to do in over a thousand years?" He could not reply. But someone else said that if Europe would give Montenegro a large piece of Albania, they would soon settle the Albanian question by destroying every Albanian in it. I afterwards discovered that the language-suppressing youth was one of the Petrovitches—a relative of the King.

It may be recollected that little more than a year before Prince Danilo, interviewed by the *Morning Post* about Albania, had declared: "It grieves my heart to see the uncultured mountaineers die for the liberty of having their own schools for their own children."

Nor was I long left without proof that the Montenegrins, as well as the Serbs, had begun the work of extermination. A cheerful voice hailed me one evening under the trees, and up came Yanko Vukotitch's young friend, whom I had met at Yanko's the night before they left Cettigne together to begin the war. He had been all through the campaign as Yanko's secretary, and was now appointed secretary to the Prefect of the newly annexed town of Bijelopolje. "Come and have dinner at the Balkan Hotel with me, and I will tell you all about it," he cried. The only stiff fighting had been, he said, at the taking of Bijelopolje. "After this, the power of the Albanians was broken. We killed quantities; they could not escape." He made no concealment of Montenegro's

hope of getting rid of all the Moslems and resettling the land. His pitilessness was disgusting. "For example," he said, "we have killed every man of the Rugova tribe. We overpowered them, and then made every one of them pass under the sword. I assure you not one remains." I expressed strong disgust for the cold-blooded slaughter of helpless prisoners. "But they are beasts," he cried—"savage animals. We have done very well." Of the fate of the women he professed ignorance.

This slaughter was planned deliberately, for I possess a letter from a friend, describing a conversation with Prince Danilo in September, before the war, in which he said of the Rugova Moslems: "We have sworn to exterminate them!" banging the table.

Everywhere, according to the secretary, they were dealing out "justice." The children of the slaughtered would be sent to Serb schools, and Slavizing be effected quickly. He spoke bitterly of the bother of having to do with people who spoke Albanian only, and said the language must be suppressed as fast as possible. He had been all over the country with the Serbs and Yanko. "And what of the Prochaska affair? Have the Austrians exaggerated that?" I asked. He laughed aloud. "Exaggerated!" cried he joyfully; "it is not possible to exaggerate it. On the contrary, Austria will never dare to tell the truth. She would be laughed at by all Europe, and be forced to declare war. What was done to him? Oh! the Servian officers played fine tricks on him. Every kind of indignity, all that you can imagine that is most dirty, was done upon him. They spat in his face, he was rolled on the ground. He will never tell

what was done to him." He roared with laughter. "And the Austrian flag, too. If you had but seen it!" "Is it true," I asked, "that he was also shut up?" "Of course he was—for days. I swear to you, Austria will never publish the facts." "But why was this done?" "Because he invited a lot of dirty Albanians to his Consulate." "But a Consul has the right to invite whom he will to his house. Moreover, Europe had entrusted Austria with the protection of the Catholic Albanians, and he represented Austria." "Very well, this has taught Austria that one has no more need of her Consuls. The day of Austria is over."

It is noteworthy that he brought no accusation against Prochaska of having fired from the Consulate, as did the Serbs in defence of their treatment of him; and as the rest of his tale was true, his version of the Prochaska affair is probably true, too.

At the beginning of February came the news that Hussein Riza Bey was dead—shot, said some, by discontented soldiers. Others accused Essad Pasha. This delighted the Montenegrins, and preparations for a big attack were made. Sokol Batzi received orders to summon 4,000 Maltsors, and advance with them. The King promised them three days' free looting and "go as you please" in Scutari if they would help take it. But scarcely any turned up. Not one man of all the big Klimenti tribe, and but thirty from Hoti, and a few others. Those who did come were given twenty francs apiece and a supply of cartridges, with which nearly all of them retired at night to their mountains. "Old King Nikola is an awful liar," said one of them, telling me the tale

after the war. "So are you!" said I. He laughed delightedly. "Yes, I know, my sister; but I lied better than he!"

On February 7 bombarding was plainly audible, and Podgoritza was in a state of nervous tension. The combined attack had begun. I applied for leave to go again to the front, but before it arrived Stanko Markovitch said to me sarcastically: "You had better wait for leave to enter Scutari. We took Bardhanjolt this morning, and the Serbs took Berditza. In four days we shall be in Scutari." I could not resist saying: "Yes, so I heard in October."

There was a wild rush of excitement, followed by an ominous silence. Officially, there were no news at all. Late at night the Albanians spread rumours of a huge Montenegrin catastrophe, and, tremulous with hope, whispered: "God will never let these devils storm Scutari."

The 8th dawned, and the town was dumb all day. At sundown I saw the Montenegrin doctor, Radulovitch, sending carriages and stretchers down to the steamer port on the lakeside. "How many wounded are there?" I asked. "Forty-eight," said he.

All night long I heard the constant rumble of the motor lorries as they rushed from port to town and back, and went out early to find the wounded pouring in in a ceaseless stream. The Montenegrins had talked for months about storming Scutari, and, as usual, made no preparations. The scenes that follow defy description. A number of the foreign doctors had left; the hospitals were blocked with the sick. The wounded, many of whom had had no food for three days, and had not had their wounds properly

dressed, were thrown in heaps on the dirty floors of every drink-shop, empty house, and shop. Bedding there was none ready, save nine mattresses I had had made, and some blankets I had received from England. Men almost too weak to stand, just recovering from enteric, were turned out into the streets to make room, and crawled about begging shelter, driven pitilessly from every door, for the Montenegrins are terrified of infection.

I had not intended giving more help to the wounded, but under the circumstances could not refuse, though my permit for the front had come. I worked under Radulovitch. Everything was lacking. I tore up a bale of old sheets from England for bandages, and hacked box-lids into splints. The first afternoon my nail-scissors and my corrosive sublimate were our only outfit. The next few days passed in a mad rush. Wounded poured in daily till it was said there were at least 1,500 in the town, but I never knew the precise figure. Cettigne, too, was crammed. A row of Montenegrin women squatted at the top of the street, and hurled themselves on each motor lorry as it arrived, and we had to bar them out by force from our temporary hospitals, for the men were all on the floor, and in looking for one, the women tumbled over a dozen.

We went from house to house, dressing seventy in one, fifty in another, and shouting through windows, "Has a doctor been here?" to any wounded inside. Numbers were overlooked, and were in a stinking state when found. Many volunteers returned from America were furious at "being thrown like dogs on the ground," and demanded beds and shirts. All

raged against their officers, whose ignorance had, they said, brought about this *débâcle*. The Montenegrins had been cut up at Bardhanjolt, and the Servians smashed at Berditza. Montenegro alone was believed to have lost 5,000 killed and wounded. The men related that the Serbs had arranged to bombard Bardhanjolt for a certain time, and that when they had dislodged the Turks, the Montenegrins should rush the height and occupy it. The Montenegrin officer had stupidly ordered his men to charge too soon, and rushed them straight into the Serb fire. The Serbs, seeing the Montenegrins falling under their fire, ceased. The Turks, relieved from bombardment, drove the Montenegrins back down the hill, killing them in heaps. Three battalions were cut to pieces.

It took two more bombardments and charges before the place was taken. Some eyewitnesses gave a horrible account of the Berditza blunder, which the soldiers declared also to be the fault of Montenegrin officers, who had misinformed the Serbs. Orders and counter-orders were given, with the result that at dawn the Serbs found themselves at the mercy of the big guns of Berditza, were bogged in the muddy plain, fell in heaps in the ditches, and lost about 1,000 men "struggling in the mud helpless as birds in bird-lime."

At Bardhanjolt, they complained, there was no doctor but a Montenegrin one, who had gone to look on, and had not even a bandage with him. No foreign doctors were ever allowed on the field. "No wonder," said some of the "Americans," "for the way the Turkish corpses were stripped and mutilated was disgusting!" One man told that he had helped

bury some Montenegrin corpses at Bardhanjolt which had lain unburied since the attack in October. Their clothes were intact. "Had they been Turkish corpses they would have been stripped and cut up!" he said bitterly. "What can you expect? Look at the way our Red Cross is conducted." They related, as indeed I had heard before, that no organized search for wounded was ever made. If a man had friends, they cut boughs, tied them with their sashes, and carried him to the nearest field hospital. If not, and he were too badly wounded to walk, he died. Many, they vowed, had died of cold at Bardhanjolt.

Those Montenegrins, I found, who had left their native land quite young, were horrified at the savagery they found. Those, on the other hand, who had left it when well over twenty, had not absorbed civilization, and reverted at once, and told of their mutilating prowess with glee. Only in Martinovitch's army was it forbidden, according to the men. And there the foreign correspondents, military attachés, and Red Crosses were freely let loose.

The immediate effect of the *débâcle* on the Montenegrins was that they were crazed with thwarted blood-lust. Instead of respecting a foe who had bravely resisted for nearly five months, they were furious, and talked loudly of their right to butcher every man, woman, and child in Scutari. They would make a house-to-house visitation at night, and next day the Powers might protest as much as they pleased—it would not bring the Albanians to life again. And they would burn the town to the ground. The Serb newspaper *Piemont* favoured this scheme.

Even the postmaster, when I went to cash a contribution to my relief fund, said, "You need not keep any of this for Scutari. You will find no sick nor wounded there. We have got a remedy for them;" and he imitated bayoneting. A lot of them chuckled over their beer. "It will be a second St. Bartholomew's night," said one. "Worse still, Sodom and Gomorrha!" said another. The destruction of property was of no consequence. "We want the land and position—not a lot of dirty Albanians. Europe will give us a million to build a fine modern town like Cettigne!"

When I heard the doctor telling the men they must get well quickly to assist in this and enjoy fat Turkish "bulas" (married women), I threw up helping to cure them, after first telling them that there was no hurry. Europe would never let them have Scutari.

Some members of the Italian Red Cross stopped me in the street, and said: "If you want to do a really humane thing, help the Nizam prisoners; their condition is a scandal." Numbers of them were employed in forced labour in the town making shoes for the army, and road-making. But some 1,500 were camped out on the plain near Docle. I filled my saddle-bags with shirts and rode thither. The sentry challenged me, but I said I had come for the sick, and he let me pass. I found a military surgeon, Ruzhdi Bey, an Albanian, with a few medicine bottles on a rock, doing what he could for a number of half-naked, emaciated men in the last stages of misery who filed past. Many had nothing but a ragged coat and trousers split to the knee. In tents they lay on the damp ground dying slowly of cold and misery. Their

greatcoats and blankets had all been looted. The wretched Asiatics were in the most pitiable state. Ruzhdi Bey turned and said to me: "What is the good of giving this stuff"—pointing to the bottles of tonic—"when they have neither shirt nor blanket?" He begged for at least twenty-five blankets for men who must otherwise die.

I supplied Ruzhdi with all the clothing I could collect. This, too, angered the Montenegrins, though I was unaware of it at the time. They had not meant that the state of the prisoners should be known. When they found that I knew it, they transported the sick into dirty hovels in the old town, and then invited a German doctor, who was in Cettigne, to inspect the camp, and obtained from him a certificate of the health of all, and accused me afterwards of lying. Unaware of this at the time, and not imagining that any human being could object to the relief of such suffering, I visited frequently the quarters of the sick Nizams. A painful scene indeed! Dark foul rooms crowded with little Anatolians and a few Albanians. I remembered seeing them march in but four months ago in the flush of youth and strength. Now the wretched Asiatics, yellow and shrivelled with cold, held out lean paws like monkeys, and stared at me with hollow eyes, imploring, with chattering teeth, for a garment that would keep out the cold. Nearly all were barefoot, and their bare breasts, on which the ribs stood out like grids, were raw with scratching, for the place was alive with vermin. Of the 1,500, the Turkish doctors reported that in all 700 fell ill and at least 200 died. Fighting and wounds are the least terrible part of war. Tons of sentimentality are

lavished on the hero who has had a Mauser bullet through his calf and is fit for the front in ten days. It is to those that drop in the track of war, and rot with hunger and misery, that pity is really due.

A piteous appeal came to me from the people of the village of Vlandje, burnt by the Montenegrins at the very beginning of the war. I found them all quartered in the outhouses of Moslem families at Tuzi. Most of them had used all of such little stores as they had saved, were living on Moslem charity, and were very miserable. I gave them tickets to obtain flour in the town.

It was March, but still bitterly cold. My friend of last year, the little priest of Summa, came with two Summa men, all in great misery, to beg some clothes. Summa, up in the mountains, was untouched by war, but cut off from all trade and in wretched plight. Mindful of his last year's hospitality, I gave the poor man a blanket as well as clothing. Outside the hotel he was arrested by the police, and taken before Stanko Markovitch, who threatened him that if he was ever caught asking help of the Englishwoman again, he should be hanged. Another priest who had asked for flour for his flock was similarly treated. And police at the entrance of the town, searched the wretched Vlandje people for flour tickets, and destroyed the few that they found. The others luckily had taken their flour. All these people were non-combatants and in great want; there was no political capital to be made at all, and some of them were actually Montenegrin subjects. I went straight to Stanko to ask why charity was forbidden. He had not expected this, as he was accustomed only to

underhand dealing, and shuffled and lied miserably. Montenegro was so rich it was unnecessary—but there was little in the land but paper-money—he feared the people would be pauperized, and so forth. Finally his object was clear—if I would give him the money, he would distribute it. Knowing the family reputation for embezzling, I declined, and said I would inform England of Montenegro's extreme wealth, and see that no more relief money was given her. This upset him much, and in order to be safe against any hanky-panky I transferred the whole relief fund from the Montenegrin Bank to London.

Much information on the subject was brought to me. Podgoritza blamed Stanko for being such a fool as to have let his policy of starving out the Moslems and Catholics be seen. "She will certainly denounce it not only in England, but in America." And as Stanko aspired to be Governor of Scutari, this upset him considerably.

As I had had news from a reliable source that the representatives of the Powers had impressed very strongly upon the Montenegrin Government that the much-talked-of destruction of Scutari must not take place, that in no case would Montenegro be allowed to retain it even if it fell, and that it was hoped that peace was about to be signed, I decided to wait and watch events.

Meantime the Montenegrins turned the screw down on the civilian prisoners. It was rumoured one night that Ruzhdi Bey, the doctor, contrary to the rules of the Geneva Convention, had been taken to Danilovgrad and there imprisoned.

At 7.30 next morning, as I was writing in my bed-

room, came a tap at my door, and a small voice, in French, cried: "Open, in God's name!" In tumbled in his pyjamas the little old Kaimmakam of Tuzi—a most unlucky man. He had taken on the office for a month, while Mihilaki Effendi went on leave to be married. In the interval war was declared, and he taken prisoner. He was quartered in the hotel, but beyond an occasional "Bon jour, monsieur," I had had little to do with him. Now he rushed in like a hunted animal, crying, "Save me, mademoiselle!" fumbled in his breast, and pulled out £T540 in gold and a draft on the Ottoman Bank, and a crumpled paper with addresses. "Take it," he said. "Last night they arrested Ruzhdi Bey. To-day I have heard they will lock me up, too. It is the money they are after. They will rob me. They must not have it; it is for my poor wife. If they kill me, you must send it——" He explained the addresses. "If not, you will be able to find me later." He turned to go. "But, monsieur—such a large sum—I must give you a receipt——" "Non, non," panted the little man, "they would find it and take the money from you. And you are English; a receipt is not necessary. Ah, they are coming!" A heavy tramp sounded on the outdoor staircase. Like a rabbit the Kaimmakam bolted, and dashed into the lavatory. He was met on emerging by a gendarme, and conducted to his room. I was left thunderstruck with a pile of Turkish money. It was too much to carry on me, and I feared to leave it in my room, so I conveyed it in a safe place beyond Montenegrin reach. The Kaimmakan was kept close prisoner. I felt anxious. His door was open one day, so I strolled up and asked the

gendarme a question. The poor Kaimmakam was sitting hunched up on his bed. "Are you ill?" I asked. "No, no, not ill," he said. "I may not speak to anyone." Some five weeks later, when he was released by the German Minister, I gave him back his money at the German Legation, and he told me what had happened. "I was not ill that day, but black and sore all over my back. The police said to me: 'You have two thousand francs; you must give it to us.' They searched my room and my clothes all through. They were very angry, and said they would make me give it. They came and beat me three times. You have saved me." Quite unnerved by what he had gone through, he overwhelmed me with thanks, and left the country before dawn under German protection. Anxious as to Ruzhdi Bey's fate, I asked the German Minister to make inquiries at once. He replied next day that the Montenegrin Government declared the report of Ruzhdi's imprisonment to be untrue.

I met Ruzhdi, however, six months later, and learnt that he had been shut up for over two months without bedding or covering, had never been told why, and had been prevented from communicating with the German Legation.

The Government's declarations were frequently inaccurate. It is said that upon one occasion, when the King made a more than usually improbable statement, the representative of one of the Great Powers replied politely: "Your Majesty is celebrated throughout Europe as a—poet!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FALL OF SCUTARI

MEANWHILE the Montenegrins, having failed, in spite of all their boasting, to take Scutari, strove madly to convince Europe that Scutari was their birthright.

Few Montenegrins had ever been there, and had not the faintest idea that it had far better shops and hotel accommodation than their capital Cettigne. They ought to have known, for in that very capital, if you wanted a decent meal at a reasonable price, you had to go to the Albanian Restaurant: if you wanted hair-cutting or a shave, to the Albanian hairdresser; if you wanted groceries, to one of the two Albanian grocers, and so forth, all of whom had relatives in Scutari.

So ignorant for the most part were the Montenegrins, that they even believed that Scutari—the Scodra of the Romans—was founded by the Serbs, and were furious when told that it was the seat of a Christian Bishop at least two hundred years before the pagan Serbs entered the Balkan Peninsula.

Statements of the most absurd kind were palmed off in the form of interviews on journalists who were quite new to the land, and who were therefore, as is the custom, entrusted at a critical moment with

supplying reliable information about it. King Nikola, in one of these, was said—probably with truth—to have asserted that the churches in Scutari were old Serb ones, whereas they were all nineteenth century —and late at that—and all, except one, are Roman Catholic.

"Scutari was torn from us by the Turks!" howled Montenegro. As a matter of fact, it was sold to the Venetians in 1396 by the last of the Balsha Princes (whose sympathies were certainly not Slav, for they made alliance with the Albanian chieftains, and together with them, fought Marko Kralyevitch, the great Serb hero). And from the Venetians the Turks took it almost a hundred years later, in 1478. As the Petrovitch Dynasty did not come into being as rulers, till two centuries later, King Nikola's assertion in the same interview that the bones of his ancestors rest in Scutari seems—poetic! More especially as he bewailed the loss of the Herzegovina in 1908 for a similar reason.

In plain fact the Serbs ruled Scutari from 1050 to 1080, and lost it to Byzantium; and then again from 1180 to 1360 it was included by the Nemanjas in their Great Servia. Two hundred and ten years in all—against all time. They did not succeed in Slavizing it, though contemporary record shows that they strove to do so by force, and they left no trace behind. Historically England's right to Calais is better.

Having now failed to take the town by storm, they yowled about historic rights. They wished the Powers to allow the Serbs to take it for them, and to make them a present of it. All day and every day

the children sang, with monotonous iteration, in the streets:

> "Hish, hash, hosh;
> Ours is Tarabosh.
> One, two, three,
> In Scutari are we."

The population quite forgot that they had begun war "to liberate their brother-Serbs"; and when *The Times* correspondent adverted to this fact in an article, were deeply hurt.

Unmindful of the King's original proclamation, they now cried that Scutari and the destruction of Albania had been their object. The throne of Dushan at Prizren was forgotten. Scutari was to be their capital — Scutari, an almost solid Albanian town, with a population nearly eight times that of Cettigne.

Some even declared that no such things as Albanians existed. All were Slavs, who out of "pure cussedness" had elected to speak Albanian and turned Catholic! Kovachevitch the Professor of Nose-cutting, declared to an admiring audience that he could prove it by anthropological reasons. "The Albanians," said he, "burn the yule-log. This is a purely Servian custom, therefore," etc. "On the contrary," said I, "the yule-log is an old English custom. And your favourite St. George is our patron Saint. It is evident we have the right to occupy Cettigne, shut your schools, and force you all to speak English. You are clearly Slavized English." The Professor, who with his friends had agreed that "if our rule is strict enough, the Albanian tongue will be killed in a year," was speechless with wrath.

A few were more humane. An artilleryman, back

on a few days' leave, told me that working the guns now was sickening. "First we have to fire a shell into the Christian quarter to frighten the people. Then the officer watches through his glass which way the crowd of women and children runs, and then we have to fire a big shell into the middle of them. I'm sick of shooting at women and children!"

Then came news that the Powers, after endless squabbling, had decided that Scutari should be Albanian, and drawn a rough and most unjust and unfortunate frontier, by which the two gallant tribes Hoti and Gruda, which had borne the brunt of the fight for freedom in 1911, were awarded to Montenegro. Solid Moslem and Albanian districts, such as Gusinje and Djakova, were also handed over. The tribe-lands Montenegro did not yet dare to touch. In Gusinje and Djakova she at once began a policy of extermination. The full details I only learnt later. At the time I was informed by one of the "Press censors," but "not for transmission," that numbers of executions were going on in Gusinje. "Wholesale slaughter of all who resist us is the proper course." The Moslems were given the choice of baptism or death, and large numbers of men were martyred. The women were driven into the churches, "like sheep," and baptized. Those who objected were violated by the soldiers. Moslem villages were plundered and burnt. The deep snow on the passes prevented the escape of any burdened with a family. Many were slaughtered. An Orthodox Slav, a native of the district, was made Governor, and allowed to wreak private vengeance. From Djakova came even worse reports. The Montenegrins were striving to

forcibly convert both Moslems and Catholics. Padre Luigi Palitch, the plucky little Franciscan I had met more than four years ago in Djakova, refused to make the sign of the Cross in Orthodox fashion and abjure his faith, and was stripped, beaten, and finally bayoneted to death. Nor was he the only Catholic martyred. Some fled to the mountains, others were terrorized into submitting to Orthodoxy. Austria intervened sharply. Had she not done so, in the words of a Catholic refugee, "there would not have been a Catholic left in the district." The Montenegrin excuse was that as there were only one hundred Orthodox families in all Djakova and none in the immediate neighbourhood, they were forced to be severe, or they would have been hopelessly outnumbered. The guilt of handing over this Albanian district to be butchered, rests primarily with Russia.

There is a well-known Montenegrin ballad which describes how, in the seventeenth century, the Montenegrins on one Christmas Eve celebrated "peace on earth and goodwill to men" by massacring every Moslem in their land who would not consent to baptism, and this was held up as an example to follow.

Huge Serb reinforcements were now said to be on the way, and Montenegro declared that if she might not hold Scutari, she would at least, with Serb guns, batter it to the ground. Petar Plamenatz chuckled over the report that the Scutarenes were starving, and said: "The more starve the better for us." I remembered his pious horror last year, when he assured me of the incurable barbarity of the Turks.

The Albanian residents of Podgoritza were in a state of mental torture painful to witness. Why the

Great Powers, having spoken, did not enforce their words, they could not understand. One whom I knew well called me in mysteriously, and with drawn blinds showed me a heap of fowls' and lambs' bones. Taking up a bladebone, he asked: "Did you ever see the like of that before?" There was a large white opaque spot upon it. It meant, of course, he said, a death. But so large a spot as this was unheard of. It must mean the death of someone very great, and its position indicated that it would occur shortly. "Heavens!" thought I, "does this mean they will kill King Nikola!"

News came in, to my deep regret, that Yanina had fallen, and was in the hands of the Greeks. Its loss was reported to be owing to the treachery of a certain Greek at Corfu and Ismail Kemal, who had advised the population not to rise—until it was too late, and the Greek army was upon them. Immediately after this came the death of the King of Greece. The fulfilment of the tale of the bones made a profound impression. The Montenegrins persistently believed the murderer to have been instigated by the Bulgars.

I went up to Cettigne to be near the headquarters of news. On March 26 fell Adrianople. This made the Montenegrins quite mad. They alone, though they had begun the first, had made a bloody and miserable failure. The banner, the band, and the white charger were tired of promenading from one point to the other waiting to triumphantly enter Scutari.

The Powers prepared a collective note, but Russia impeded its delivery as long as possible. During the delay Montenegro hoped that she would take Scutari,

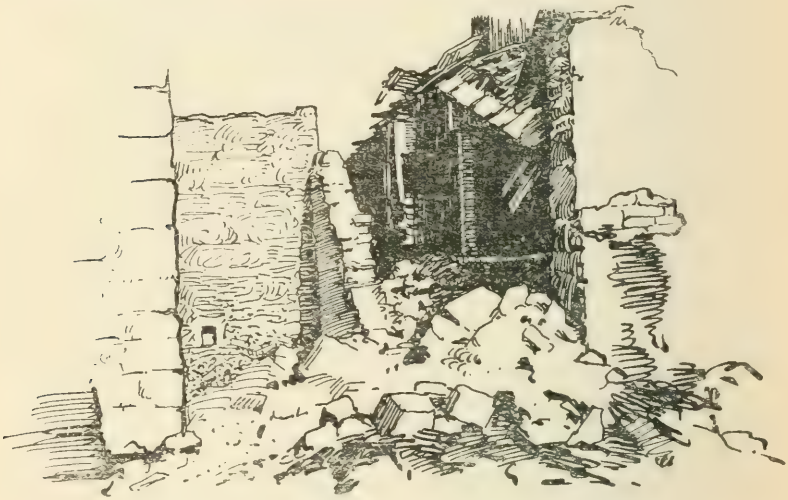
and once in, keep it. If Austria objected, the combined Servian and Montenegrin armies would take Vienna. I frequented the drink-shops, and tried to help make a peaceful settlement, by telling everyone that it was a waste of blood and money to persist in their folly. And a loss of honour, too. They replied that the King and Princes had already promised the best houses and posts in Scutari to their officers and friends.

On Friday, March 28, at three o'clock, the collective note was handed in. Peace was to be made at once, and the Montenegrin army withdrawn. Montenegro gave no reply, and at dinner at the hotel young Tomanovitch, the King's aide-de-camp, asked loudly: "Have you heard the latest joke? The Powers have told us to retire from Scutari." But no one responded.

England put in a severe protest as to the way the civil population was being shelled. The British Vice-Consul was wounded, for the Montenegrins, believing that the Consuls were urging the Scutarenes to resist, were shelling the Consulates. Every one of them was hit, and so were several houses near them.

I went down to Podgoritza, and found the people furious against England. A crowd of officials at the post-office shouted to me: "We will take Scutari with the last drop of our blood, and then avenge ourselves on Austria by marching into Bosnia." "How can you when you've shed the last drop of your blood?" I asked; and it made them madder than ever. On my return journey to Cettigne I lunched at an inn at Rijeka, and heard the talk. "Servia's plan is the best. She puts all these gentlemen (the Albanians) to the sword. She has cleaned a lot of land."

On April 2 Montenegro replied to the collective note, and refused obedience. Montenegro was in hysterics, and the King talked of "setting all Europe in a blaze." It was about then that he started his operations on the Vienna Bourse. By causing successive scares over Scutari and adroitly buying and selling, he was currently reported to have made a very large sum before the Scutari question was settled.



THE RESULT OF LIVING NEAR THE BRITISH CONSULATE.

Meanwhile he spread official reports of victories which never took place, about "five out of the eight forts of Tarabosh have been taken," and so forth. In reality there never were eight forts. And what really happened that day was that the Montenegrins lost some 500 killed and wounded over taking and losing again two trenches.

I wrote at the time: "The folly and conceit of these people is sickening. All the foreign Red Crosses

ought to withdraw, and cease to aid and abet useless slaughter."

On April 5 the combined fleets arrived off Antivari, and Vice-Admiral Burney sent a note to the Montenegrin Government ordering the cessation of hostilities. The Serbs, too, were ordered to withdraw. Some of their reinforcements had arrived, but not all. An Italian who had been with Martinovitch's army described a heated discussion between the officers as to the advisability of a massacre at Scutari. Many were in favour of it; but Martinovitch, to his credit, was opposed.

On the 11th the blockade was announced. This effectually prevented more Serbs from arriving. They had not more than 15,000 men, and would not risk another defeat. The wounded Serb artillery officer in the hospital announced angrily that he had official orders that the Serbs were to withdraw. He had been displaying Serb humanity by shooting, for fun, a little pet dog which happened to be passing the hospital. I was not sorry that he was to have no chance of practising on Albanian children.

The Tsar had made a severe and most uncompromising speech, bidding Montenegro remember that she could not exist without Russian support, and must clearly understand that the Scutari episode was closed. The Correspondence bureau telegram which contained this was not put up till late, and then with the Russian note snipped out—a most childish proceeding. The Montenegrin delegates in London made a last effort by publishing quite monstrous statements, one of which was that there were 26,000 Serbs in Scutari. We asked Ramadanovitch, who was acting as Minister

of Foreign Affairs, if this were true. "Jamais de la vie!" he replied. "Who has said so?" "Popovitch." "Popovitch! Mon Dieu! what does he know? He has never been there!"

On April 20 the Montenegrins, who had given no answer to the Powers' note sent by Admiral Burney, announced they had lost the papers, and could they have another copy?

In a long talk with Jovitchevitch, the late Consul in Scutari, he expatiated on the brutality of the Serbs, asserted that in the Ljuma tribe they had slaughtered men, women, and children, and that I should be horrified when I saw the destruction they had wrought in the villages round Scutari. On the 21st early, the news spread that a boat with a white flag had come out of Scutari the night before to parley. The Montenegrin frontier was at once closed, and, contrary to all international law, foreign subjects were forbidden to leave. The foreign Ministers were even forbidden to send cipher telegrams to their Governments. This most high-handed and quite illegal proceeding, caused the Austrian military attaché to start at once in his motor for Cattaro. At Nyegushi the motor was stopped by obstructions on the road. He proceeded on foot, and was stopped on the frontier. The Legations made a joint protest against these outrageous proceedings, and at 3 p.m. the frontier was opened. In spite of all these precautions more than one correspondent got his news through.

News from Podgoritza came that Moslems from Gusinje were telling piteous tales in secret, in Moslem back shops, of the reign of terror going on there; that

Moslems were being flogged with knotted cords and threatened with death to enforce their conversion to Christianity. One man, weeping bitterly, told of his forced baptism, and of how the fezzes were snatched from the Moslems' heads, and they were forced to wear the Montenegrin cap as badge of their subjection. The Hoti and Gruda men had long since cast away those given them at the beginning of the war. They had now just learnt that Europe had given them and their lands to Montenegro, and were in a fury of despair.

If the fleet had but landed a few men to show Montenegro that the Powers were in earnest, the final catastrophe might have been spared. They could have entered Scutari, and taken possession of it in the name of the Powers, and Montenegro would never have dared fire on them. But there they stuck, doing nothing, and Montenegro believed they would continue to do nothing. After the last war a combined fleet had forced the cession to Montenegro of Dulcigno, a wholly Albanian town, much against the wish of all its inhabitants. This time it was more creditably employed in saving one.

But, if only for his Stock Exchange transactions, Nikola meant to get inside the town. I was anxious beyond all words that the Powers should move. The endless day dragged on, and from the ominous silence it was evident that some hanky-panky was going on behind the scenes.

* * * * *

Crash! A loud report woke me. "Good God!" was my first flash of consciousness, "they have thrown a bomb at the palace!" For an attempt on

the King was not impossible. I leapt out of bed. "Bom—bom—bom!" the shots dunned out a salute from the hill by the monastery. Sick in my soul, I knew that Scutari had surrendered. In five minutes everyone was in the streets. It was 2.15 a.m. With a desire to tell someone, I telegraphed the news to the *Manchester Guardian*, and returned to the Palace. A small crowd—for Cettigne was half empty—gathered outside the Palace. The King and the Princesses stood on the balcony.

The crowd even at this moment sang "Let me see

KING'S PALACE, CETTIGNE.

Prizren!" Six months of war had not inspired a song about Scutari. Revolver shooting began, and, with shouting and singing, went on till daybreak. Sleep was impossible. I turned out at 6.30. The streets were full of drunken men, revolver in one hand and brandy-bottle in t'other, reeling, firing haphazard, and making vain attempts to dance the kolo.

The fall of Scutari was a knockdown blow to me. I had hoped to the last that the Powers would play up. All they did now was to announce that the blockade was extended to Durazzo. The Montenegrins said:

"How funny!" In order to gull Europe into the belief that Scutari had been finally stormed by the victorious Montenegrin army, official "news" was given to a number of correspondents that there had been a huge battle, and that several thousand Montenegrins were wounded. In truth, not a shot was fired. Official information with any semblance of truth was not to be had.

In fact, Scutari was in sore plight. People were dying at the rate of thirty or forty a day. There was little for the soldiers, who had been reduced to one bread-biscuit a day, and several battalions had demanded surrender. The Turks had almost exhausted their big-gun ammunition, and the Serb guns were now in position to batter the town to pieces.

Peter Plamenatz drew up very good terms for Essad Pasha, and he accepted them. Exactly how good they were we shall possibly never know. That he was in communication with Prince Mirko secretly for some time previous, has leaked out. In the published terms Essad was to retire at once with all his army and all arms except the big guns, and as much military gear as he could carry. The Montenegrins undertook to give him food for the march, and undertook also not to molest the civil population, to respect their religious rights, and to take care of the wounded.

Some wag—it was said to be Prince Petar—dressed a donkey in black, labelled it "Neue Freie Presse," and instructed some little boys to drive it to the Austrian Legation.

Everything was in wild confusion. A *Te Deum* was arranged—and put off. I walked outside the

town to avoid meeting any of the Royal Family, for I had nothing agreeable to say to them.

In the late afternoon one of the Crown Princess's perianiks brought me a note. Her Royal Highness had greatly admired my water-colour sketches—would I bring them round that afternoon to show to the rest of the Royal Family, who desired to see them. I felt sorry that Her Royal Highness should have stooped to so poor a trick for luring me to an interview; but the idea that on the morrow of the fall of Scutari the Montenegrin Royal Family should have been suddenly inspired with a craving to inspect sketches which they could have seen at any previous time, was too much for my sense of humour.

A sense of humour is, after all, life's chief disinfectant. And in spite of the sordid circumstances, it was with a grin that I extracted the sketches from the bottom of my trunk, and gave them to the perianik with a note, in which I regretted that, owing to the fact that the drawings were already packed up, I had had to keep Her Royal Highness waiting. I hope the Royal Family enjoyed them.

THE CITADEL, SCUTARI.

# CHAPTER XV

## SCUTARI

THE fall of Scutari had a mixed effect on the Foreign Legations at Cettigne. France and Russia, to whose wilful retarding of events, King Nikola's coup was undoubtedly due, rejoiced openly.

"You cannot," said someone to me, "get over *le fait accompli!*" "Except by accomplishing another," said I.

Others among the Ministers were furious, and all knew that it entailed arduous and responsible work, and were proportionately serious. One thing only had the Powers achieved. They had by their very strong representations made Montenegro understand that no violence must take place in Scutari. Anything of the sort would mean an immediate occupation of Cettigne by Austrian troops and a landing of a combined force. The authorities in consequence allowed only their more civilized battalions to take possession of the town, and policed it largely with Slav volunteers from abroad.

Prince Danilo entered the citadel of Scutari on April 24, hoisted the Montenegrin flag there, and

received the keys from Essad, who, with the Turkish troops, at once marched off to Tirana. But no state entry into town was made. The King was to make this later.

On the 25th, with Mr. Loch of *The Times*, I went to Scutari, greatly anxious as to the state of my friends. We took two large sacks of bread and several cases of other food.

Poor Scutari, that I had left nine months ago, was a miserable sight. The people were half dazed with terror and starvation, and were terrified lest they should be left in the hands of Montenegro. "If we had but known help was near," said many, "we might have held out a day or two longer. We heard there were ships, but day after day passed and no help came, and we thought they must be Greek or Bulgar ships with more troops." The populace was, in fact, completely in the dark as to what had happened. The Montenegrin soldiers had already begun telling the Catholics that they would soon have to learn to cross themselves properly.

Shattered houses and wounded people corroborated the indignant statements of the Consuls and the Archbishop, that the civil population had been specially selected for bombardment. The schools, churches, hospitals, and Consulates had all been aimed at, rather than the citadel or barracks. All had been struck, and some wrecked. It was impossible that all should have been hit accidentally. The British Consulate had attracted heavy fire. Not only had it been struck and Mr. Summa wounded, but both the house opposite and that alongside were completely destroyed. The cathedral was a wreck

of its former splendour—the roof riddled, the sacristy and tower burnt out, and great pits blown in the floor by shells. Forty—fifteen of which were of the largest calibre—were fired at it. Nearly two thousand persons had been refuged in it with all their goods,

INTERIOR OF SACRISTY AFTER BOMBARDMENT.

believing it safe, and fled in panic. Several were wounded, and many lost all their gear in the flames. The convent, too, was wrecked, and two nuns killed and one wounded.

Poor old Marko and his family were alive, thanks to the Archbishop's brother, who had fed them. But

they were ill and shaky; so were many others. In the poorer houses they lay on the ground in the last stages of misery. Tortoises, frogs, hedgehogs, dandelions had all been used as food. During the last twenty-eight days few rations had been given out. Many had eaten more or less poisonous plants (especially the very acrid root of a kind of arum), or had tried to make bread with linseed, both of which had caused acute diarrhœa. I saw a man drop and die in the street, and I fed a skeleton child.

The Montenegrins had given flour to the heads of the Catholic and Moslem communities, and this was distributed free the first few days. People waited in long lines at the depots.

So far, all food-supplies were in Montenegrin hands, and nothing could be imported. I fed all my friends and neighbours out of my stock.

Poor old Marko was in despair. His orchard had been taken over by the Turkish military as a site for barracks, and four wooden ones had been erected. The Bimbashi, on leaving, gave Marko a signed letter, stating that all things left in his orchard were his property, to compensate for the damage done.

But the Montenegrin troops had poured in, and when I arrived were looting hard, tearing down the barracks, smashing glass and tiles, yelling like a pack of wild beasts. I ordered them off, and as they refused to obey, went straight to the camp and complained to the officer that his men were behaving worse than the Turks, and making a very bad impression on the populace. A sentry was put on, but shortly withdrawn. Back came the men and began again. Poor Marko, afraid to speak, was almost in

tears, as his goods disappeared. I sent them off a second time, and threatened to go to the General about it.

Petar Plamenatz was appointed Governor of Scutari, and arrived. It was April 28. The Montenegrin kavas met me in the street and said that Petar wanted to see me at once. I went straight to the Montenegrin Consulate, where he was established. "I felicitate you," said I. "During the war you told me that this was the position you aspired to. You have reached it." Petar looked harassed. "What!" he cried; "you—you who know the difficulties of the situation, felicitate me?" "The greater the difficulties the greater the honour if you succeed," I said. "Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" cried Petar, "what can I do? I drew up all Essad's terms—arranged the whole terms of surrender. I believed it would be the crown of my life, and that I should be able to retire from public life, with my career honourably terminated!" Petar being well under forty, the idea of his career being terminated struck me as funny. I threw out no suggestions. "I have sent for you," he continued, "to beg your help." ("The devil you have," thought I.) "I beg that you, who understand these people, will take a house here and remain to assist me." I said that I hoped to stay on for a bit, but had no fixed plans as yet. "The situation," said Petar, "is very complicated." "Very," said I. "What would you advise me to do about the Maltsori?" "Nothing," said I. "Do not interfere with them in any way—unless you wish trouble. They all hate you." "I am of that opinion. We are agreed." Then, suddenly and passionately:

"You—you—you—a little word from you—only a word—these Maltsors will follow you. Speak for us a word—one little word—I beg you—I implore you."

A whirl of recollection buzzed by me. For the third time Montenegro was begging me to pull it out of a hole. Not two years ago I had been called upon to help Montenegro to drive the betrayed Maltsors back across the frontier. Now Petar cringingly, abjectly prayed I would help whistle them to the Montenegrin heel again. I do not think I ever felt such a contempt for any living being as I did for Petar at that moment. "All is in the hands of the Great Powers," I said (hoping they would act speedily). "What am I? I can do nothing." "You understand, of course," said Petar, wincing at the mention of the Powers, "that we have taken Scutari, and shall remain here?" "Perfectly," I replied. "I have already heard it frequently." "And that we shall leave the very last drop of our blood here rather than retire." "Perfectly. I have already heard this for several months." Petar winced again. "Can I count upon your assistance?" he asked. "Unless I am assured that exactly similar justice is employed towards Moslems, Catholics, and Orthodox alike, you cannot. It is a point upon which I feel very strongly. So far during the war I have seen nothing but foulness, corruption, and cruelty. You are probably not aware of the conduct of Stanko Markovitch at Podgoritza. He wished to starve——" "Ah, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" cried Petar; "you can have no idea how I regret that. Will you distrust me because of the conduct of a beast, an anmial, like Stanko?" "I have heard of what has happened in

other places also. And you must admit that Stanko is the Governor of the largest town in Montenegro. If such is the justice of a large town, what kind of justice is to be expected in the distant parts? I have heard enough about that." Petar was desperate. He opened a drawer and took out papers. "See," he said, "you yourself shall appoint the officials here."

He asked me to recommend a dragoman who could speak Serb and Albanian. They were very scarce, in spite of the "26,000 Slavs" reported by Popovitch. We selected two. He started on the Judges. There was only one very good one in Montenegro, according to Petar. We appointed him—on paper. "You understand," said Petar, "that we shall treat with perfect justice all those who are on our side. To the others we shall show no mercy." "Perfectly, as you have been doing in Djakova already," I said. "Have you anything to suggest?" he asked. "It would be well, I think, if until more order is established, the Capitulations and a certain amount of European control should be in force." "We will tolerate no interference——" began Petar. "It is not worth discussing," said I, "since, after all, all is in the hands of the Great Powers." Petar made one more effort. "Have you anything to complain of in the way of justice now?" "Certainly. The soldiers are looting old Marko like wolves." I obtained a signed order that this should cease. "Had I permission, too, to cross the Drin and go to the assistance of the villages that had been burnt and plundered by the Serbs?" He flew into a passion. "No villages," he declared, "have been burnt or plundered by the Serbs. The Albanians have told you that lie." "Jovan Jovit-

chevitch, lately Consul here, told me. He said it was a scandal." Petar was upset. "And I wish to know if it is permitted to feed the sick and starving in the town, or will they, if they accept help, be threatened with hanging or imprisonment, as they were at Podgoritza ?"

He knew this was true, and, visibly anxious, said, *parole d'honneur*, I was free to help whom I pleased. He was plausible, imploring, defiant, and abject in turn. When he wound up with the remark, "Though the task is difficult, you must at least admit, Mademoiselle, that in all Montenegro I am the only man truly capable of undertaking it," I almost laughed aloud. For this was meant for a hit at Louis Voinovitch. I undertook to assist him on the terms of strict justice—if he remained—and said "Good-bye." Nor, as Fate ordained, did I ever speak with him again. The most remarkable thing in the interview was, perhaps, that he had not dared to deny a single one of my charges.

The time passed as a sort of nightmare, and seemed endless. No news was admitted to the town. No letters could be either sent or received safely unless by the hands of some correspondent or other foreigner, coming or leaving. Montenegro meanwhile worked feverishly to get the populace somehow, by threat or promise, to sign papers stating that they wished to belong to Montenegro. The people, terrified, knew not what to do. They did not want to be Montenegrin, but the ships of the Powers lay inactive, and all hope of help was dying. Perhaps the Powers after all were yielding to the *fait accompli*. The Archbishop made a plucky stand. He was offered higher re-

muneration as a Montenegrin subject if he would get the Catholics to sign, and refused, saying that such a thing must not be said in his palace. More than one well-known patriot had to fly by night and lie hid, and escaped only just in time, for the soldiers came to arrest him next day for telling people "not to sign, and the Powers would save them." Montenegro made, too, an attempt to set the Moslems against the Catholics. The place swarmed with spies. No one dared speak.

I busied myself wholly with relief work. Two most able assistants, Miss Buxton and Miss Robertson—a trained nurse—arrived. Alone I could not have tackled the work. The Austrians and Italians had each a relief ship waiting, but were not allowed to act till the political situation was cleared. I obtained sacks of dried beans from peasants who came down from the mountains which war had not touched. We made house-to-house visits all the morning, feeding up dying people with the condensed milk and beef extract I had brought; and held, in the afternoon, an out-patient department for the less ill, and dealing out rations of beans and rice to the starving. The weather was intensely hot, and the work among the stuffy, dirty hovels and crowds of people very exhausting. Crowds of soldiers swarmed into the town. The drink shops were crammed. It was an anxious time. Tradesmen began to complain that the soldiers pilfered. No news came. I met Voivoda Vukotitch, the Queen's brother, on the Bojana bridge. "How long are you staying here?" he asked. "I am waiting to see the King's State entry," said I. He looked uncomfortable. "Is it fixed?" I asked. "No," said he.

I felt happier. The Powers were doing something, at any rate. And on May 3 General Martinovitch, who was Military Commandant, hurried off to Cettigne. We struggled on with our mass of patients, the greater part of whom revived with careful feeding and a few simple drugs. News came that on the 14th the British Admiral and representatives of all the other Powers would take possession of the town.

It was too good to be true. I had been hoping and fearing for Scutari through the long grey winter months, and now in the heat of early summer the hopeless year crawled on and on. I dreaded lest even at the last moment the Powers, to gain some private ends, would allow this population to be martyred like the Djakovans and the people of Gusinje. Wholesale massacre such as that reported from Prizren and near Monastir might follow later.

At the very last, when the Montenegrins knew they must leave, they took a mean revenge. The town was swarming with Montenegrin women as well as men, and it is they who are believed to have set fire to the bazar. This is always closed at night, and almost all tradesmen return homē to the town. It was patrolled entirely by Montenegrin soldiers. Fire broke out at three points at once a little after midnight, and began, moreover, in the richest part of the bazar. Some bazar-men who discovered the fire were prevented by the soldiers from giving the alarm till it was well alight. It was then impossible to arrest the flames till quite half the bazar had been destroyed. I went to see what was happening. The crowd of Montenegrins, officers and all, were laughing —as pleased as Punch. The shopkeepers near the

Montenegrin Army retiring over the Bojana Bridge as the Admirals passed beneath it.

fire tried vainly to save their goods, the greater part of which were looted by the Montenegrins. As the Montenegrins boldly denied that they were guilty, and blamed the Austrians among other people, I made inquiries at Plavnitza and at Podgoritza, and found that any amount of loot had been brought in there, and that people were boasting of it. There could be no doubt of Montenegro's guilt. No such fire had taken place for thirty years, and it was the final blow which crushed many a poor Scutarene who

RUINS! THE BURNT BAZAR.

hoped, with reviving trade, to make up for the losses of the war. A rumour flew through the town that the Montenegrins meant to burn that too next night. But this I did not believe they would dare do. And on May 14 they began early to trail over the bridge and out of the town.

It was a beautiful summer day. The river glittered in the sun. Down by the bend, the launch came in sight. Nearer and nearer. The populace had prepared Albanian banners and wished to strew roses at

Vice-Admiral Burney's feet, but were forbidden, to their bitter disappointment, to make any sign of joy at all. The launch passed under the bridge over which the retreating Montenegrins were tramping. "Look at those great fat Englishmen," said one, pointing to the sailors. "I wish we had a Government that fed us like that."

The launch drew alongside the ramshackle Custom-house. The Admirals landed along a plank, were met by some of the Montenegrin authorities, and went up to the town. The anguish and tension of six long months was over. Scutari was saved.

VIEW AGAINST BURSEY LANDING AT SOUTHAMPTON TO TAKE TO LONDON

# PART IV

## THE HARVEST OF WAR

"Have ye fled in the sickly dawn, before it was yet too late,
With a child in your arms new-born, leaving cripples to find their fate?
Our altars were foul with blood when we came to the homes we'd fled,
Smelt the reek of our kinsmen's blood; thanked God that the dead were dead."—AUBREY HERBERT.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE HARVEST OF WAR

THE war was over. There are people, I believe, who still imagine that war brings forth fine qualities. To me it had appeared only as a sort of X-ray, which showed up pitilessly all that is most base, most foul, and most bestial in human nature. The very few acts of kindness or generosity which I had witnessed were those of kindly individuals whom war had not corrupted (they would have been equally generous in peace-time), and in no way compensated for the fact that in the sacred names of Liberty, Civilization, and Christianity, the Montenegrin people, blood-drunk, lust-drunk, loot-drunk, had reverted to primitive savagery — and in so doing had lost the very small idea of discipline they had acquired. Judging by their talk, they proposed to live in future as a marauding army. Never fond of work, they declared that they had conquered enough people to do the work for them, and looked forward to a life of something like slave-driving. A marked result of war was the com-

plete manner in which the Royal Princes had lost their prestige. Seldom, perhaps, in the history have three Princes so thrown away an unique chance of gaining fame and popularity. Prince Petar stuck pluckily to the camp and suffered considerable hardship. Of his two elder brothers, the less said the better—if only half the contemptuous remarks of the soldiers were true.

And with bitter ingratitude (for with all his faults King Nikola is the maker of Montenegro, which without him would never have obtained so much European recognition) the pro-Serb party talked openly of speedy union with Servia. The Petrovitch family would be sent to join the Obrenovitches. Some went even further as wipers out of dynasties, and proposed to assassinate as well, King Ferdinand, and construct the Great Servia of Dushan's days. It was poor stuff. I quote it only to illustrate the blood-lust raised by war.

There is but one thing more terrible than war, and that is the time that follows immediately afterwards; it is then that the war's innocent victims—those who have escaped sudden and merciful death by shot and shell—crawl back to the blackened ruins of their homes to face a slow and cruel death from cold and starvation. To the help of these it was urgently necessary to go.

Miss Buxton and Miss Robertson took over the relief work in the town until the arrival of the Austro-Italian relief ships made further work there on our part unnecessary, and I started to ride round the country districts.

If maize could be sown before June 26, there was yet

chance of a harvest. The land beyond Drin, wasted by the Serb army, was my first care. Jovitchevitch had in no way exaggerated the devastation. Into the details of each ruined district I will not enter. Even misery a thousand times repeated monotonously, becomes boring.

So effectually had the houses been destroyed in many places, that nothing remained but a heap of stones, and re-roofing was impossible. To add to the difficulty, the invading troops had, in some instances, felled so much timber for winter fuel that even for the building of hovels there was scanty material.

Accompanied by local headmen, who came to fetch me, I rode to each miserable district, summoned the heads of the houses, and distributed, in cash, a sum of money with which to buy seed-corn or other seed, or a sheep or two, as folk thought best. The season proved a better one than usual, and all whom I was able to help in time, reaped good harvests. Those who sold vegetables to the international forces occupying Scutari did good trade.

But the destruction proved to be far more widely spread than I had any idea of to begin with. Miserable, half-starved people began to flock in with imploring messages that I would go farther and farther afield.

Of the places near Scutari the most wretched was Drishti, the home of the women prisoners at Podgoritza. This most beautiful and rich village, once a bower of silvery olives, was a blank desolation. Not only had every olive-tree been felled for fuel by the Montenegrins, who camped hard by, but even the roots had been stubbed up. The neat market-gardens

with their ingenious irrigation system, that lay along the river-bank, were wiped out of existence. Half the houses were burnt. All were plundered. And when I visited the place, the wretched survivors were smitten with smallpox, and thirteen sick persons were all crowded in one cavern. In some other places all the fruit-trees upon which the people depended for a livelihood were felled. Places that I had known well-to-do, with fat fields of maize and flocks of sheep and goats, where the peasants had had plenty to eat and drink, and fine embroidered clothes and silver chains to wear on a feast day, were desert wastes, almost unrecognizable.

Women crouched in hovels made of a few sticks leaned against the ruined walls of their house, and cooked leaves and grass for the children. Many were half naked. I was glad, indeed, that I had saved ten bales of the clothing sent me from England, and only wished they had been a thousand.

Some districts were so large it took me three days of ten or twelve hours to ride round them and assist them and return to Scutari. In all, I visited near Scutari some 1,022 burnt-out families. The most piteous thing of all was that few of the unhappy victims had any idea why this ruin had fallen upon them. Women with starving children would ask: "Why did the Great Kings (the Powers) let the soldiers come and rob us and kill us? We were doing no harm. And they took our goats, and our sheep—everything, everything. And when my husband tried to save the sheep, they shot him. Our house is burnt. We are starving on the highroad." Why, indeed? It would be impossible to make these poor

Burnt House at Grizha.

Burnt Corridor at Sebeg.

creatures understand that the Great Powers were actually priding themselves on having "localized the trouble." "Are we not good?" they ask. "Our little hands have not torn each others eyes. We have only sat round and watched these people being slaughtered." The Moslem women of Albania, watching their children die of cold and hunger, are too ignorant to understand the noble self-restraint of the Powers. And the Powers now were treating Albania very badly. They neither appointed any Government nor recognized any local one, and people knew not to whom to look. They were for the most part terrified of offending Europe by recognizing any native as head of Albania. But local headmen were keeping excellent order.

The patience with which a whole people, placed in a most difficult and almost unprecedented position, went on with their daily affairs quietly has not been sufficiently recognized. While I was riding about the burnt districts I was always unarmed, was frequently with men I had never seen before, and everyone knew I had at least £T200 in gold in the bag at my belt. Men by the wayside would call out by me: "Where are you taking the money to-day? Come to our village next." But no attempt of any sort was ever made either to take it from me or to force me to change my route. I often wondered whether similar sums could be safely carried through England supposing all police withdrawn and the Government entirely done away with.

The news that someone was giving relief near Scutari spread, and from districts four and five days distant came men with yet more horrible accounts of

suffering. These were from Puka, and were in the last stages of want. One man I recall who was dressed only in a couple of sacks. Many of this district must have died of want in the following winter, as funds were not forthcoming to help them adequately. They were the victims of wanton outrage. The misery of the homes wrecked actually in the course of war, was perhaps a necessary consequence of that noble pastime. The misery of those wrecked in vengeance when war was over, cannot be excused on these grounds.

The Servian army, when ordered to evacuate, avenged itself most cruelly upon some of the unhappy districts through which it passed. Puka especially suffered. At Flet-Puka the people, when the Serbs arrived in November, 1912, offered resistance and lost nine men. The Serbs forced a way through, and burnt twenty houses, but otherwise did no damage. But in April, when they returned and the men of the village were away in the mountains, the soldiers fell on the helpless inhabitants, killed fifty-two persons, of whom the majority were women and children, and burnt and plundered the rest of the houses.

Miserable people from Arzi told of even worse things there. When passing through the village in November the Serbs had merely disarmed the people, who had not resisted. But when the troops returned in April, they amused themselves by bleeding some of their defenceless victims to death. "Not quickly, as you do sheep, but slowly. They made little cuts on the wrists and the elbows and on the necks so that they should be a long time dying." Some women, with hideous and vivid pantomime, described the manner

of the cuts and how the Serbs had danced round the dying victims and imitated their last shudders. Told, too, how an entire family had been massacred, except one girl, who was hidden under the bodies of the others, and emerged, blood-soaked. The four women who told this were Moslem widows, whose husbands had been killed. I fear that it was all true, for the details were corroborated by others from the same district. A Catholic boy, for example, told with horror of the slaughter. We asked, "Did the Serbs put the people in a row and shoot them?" "No, no. Far worse than that. They cut them here and here——" He pointed to the spots and gave the same account of bleeding.

Nor were the Serbs themselves ashamed of their exploits, for a Serb officer told a doctor I know, that he had helped to bury people alive in Kosovo vilayet. And the terror which the people had of the Serbs told a tale too. Though ordered by the Powers to evacuate, the Serbs kept a considerable force in Mirdita, and several guns aimed towards the Abbot's house for about five months after they had declared officially that they had withdrawn. Nor did they take any notice of Vice-Admiral Burney's order to go. They were connected by outposts and by telegraph with Prizren, so were in a position to pour in troops at any moment, which caused the greatest anxiety among the villagers.

Other victims came, survivors of Montenegrin persecution in the Gusinje and Djakova districts. In August I rode close up to this frontier, and heard from refugees, accounts which abundantly confirmed those which the Gusinje men in April in fear confided

to the Moslem shopmen of Podgoritza. One man can lie; three or four can arrange to tell the same tale. But when widely scattered people are met and questioned quite separately, at different times and in different places, and their accounts agree, there can be no reasonable doubt that the tale contains a large proportion of truth, even when the exaggerations caused by terror are allowed for.

Briefly, so soon as the Powers drew that most unfortunate frontier in March "without considering the ethnographical question," the Montenegrins began to rearrange that question to suit themselves. "When the officer Veshovitch came to Gusinje with the Montenegrin soldiers, he said: 'Do not be afraid. We have come to set you free. We shall not hurt you.' And until he left in about a month's time all was quiet. Then there came two Brigadiers, and an Orthodox of Gusinje was made Kapetan. He began a search for arms. Those who had none—and many were unarmed—said so in vain, and were flogged most terribly. This began about St. Nikola (in December). And the Montenegrins began shooting people, and robbing them, and stealing their cattle. But we still hoped things would be better, and did not wish to lose our lands; and there was deep snow on the passes, so that it was impossible to go with a large family of children. Then the Montenegrins began to go against our religion. This was in March. Four battalions came and surrounded the whole Gusinje district. They first took the hodjas and asked, 'Will you be baptized?' and when a man said 'No,' dan-dan he was shot dead. Nearly all were shot. Then they took Bairam Zechir, a headman, and 150

others—all Moslems of Gusinje, Martinovitch, and Plava, and the neighbouring villages—and took them away as prisoners, and on the way shot them all in Chafa Previsit (a pass). They shut all our mosques, and put guards at the doors, and forbade anyone to pray as we Moslems do; and if anyone was seen praying through a window, he was shot. It is impossible to tell the misery that has fallen on us. They forbade our women to go veiled, and tore the veils off them, and insulted them. Bairam Zechir and his comrades were the first headmen shot for religion. But then they took men here or there, twenty or fifty at a time, and shot all who refused baptism." The number of persons thus shot was variously estimated. The lowest figure given was 500, the highest about 600. It should be noted that the man who gave 500 had succeeded in flying from the district before those who gave a higher estimate. A considerable number, when they saw how things were going, managed, in spite of the snow, to escape to the mountains of Gashi and Krasnichi. But few who had large families could do so. Some men left their wives and children—" for war is not made on women "—but these were driven to church " like sheep " and baptized. The remaining population, seeing it was a case of death or baptism, gave way on the advice of a hodja, who told them that their hearts would remain Moslem, and that God would pardon them. An old man who steadfastly refused baptism was seized by the soldiers, who forced a lump of pork in his mouth, and bound it so fast with a handkerchief that the man was suffocated. A number of women were outraged. " But of this," said one

man, "it is hard for us to speak. It is such a disgrace."

"At Cherem, a Moslem village, very bad things were done. Three men from this village had turned 'komit,' had fled to the mountains, and one day fired on some Montenegrin soldiers. They did not try to capture the assailants, but went to the village and captured twenty-seven innocent persons, and shot them all. In two houses every male was killed. The women were then told they must be baptized. They said: 'You have killed our men; leave us our religion.' The soldiers outraged all, both girls and women, and afterwards they were all forcibly baptized. In four other houses the women were all burnt in the houses after the men were shot. This was all in revenge for the three men who had fired on the soldiers. All these people were innocent."

Persons were also killed slowly, as were those at Arzi by the Serbs, not by cuts, but by a multitude of small bayonet thrusts all over, till they died of loss of blood. In the neighbourhood of Ipek and Berani the former revolutionary leader Avro Tsemovitch, the half-drunk hero I had seen at Andriyevitza, was reported to have instigated and committed horrible atrocities. The Albanian mountains were full of these unhappy Moslems, and the tribes of Gashi and Krasnichi were giving them food and shelter. I could do but little to aid them, as my fund was almost exhausted.

As for Montenegrin intolerance of Catholicism, an eyewitness described to me the plundering of the church of Mazreku. The order was given by one of the Royal Family of Petrovitch. In spite of the

priest's remonstrances, Montenegrins, both men and women, struggled to get a bit of something out of the church. The crucifix and tabernacle were taken, the missal destroyed, and private houses were entered and robbed of their pictures and images of saints.

Not satisfied with their attack on the Moslems in March, the Montenegrins, while I was still in the mountains in August, fell on the Moslem village of Vuthaj. I was waked early on the 21st by a man just in, with the news that the soldiers had attacked the village before dawn, broken in the doors, seized the sleeping inmates, and driven out many with bayonets, and either shot or bayoneted them on the road. He himself had seen eight bodies, full of bayonet wounds, and had fled to save his life. Most of the survivors fled to the Albanian mountains. Their property was some of the most fertile land in the district, and for this reason they were raided.

Among Balkan subjects, Ferdinand of Bulgaria was the only one who spoke the truth in his proclamation of war. It was, he said, to be a war of Cross against Crescent. The massacres of Adana and the resultant misery pale, before the scarlet horrors committed wholesale in cold blood by the so-called followers of Christ. The Orthodox Church, with her Jewish pogroms in Russia and her Balkan exploits, now holds the world's record for religious savagery.

The Montenegrins, I learnt later, had pursued a similar policy after the war of 1877. The Moslems were then forcibly expelled from Podgoritza, and their houses in the old town burnt, as well as the bazar. When riding round on relief work, I came across a district, Buza Ujit, entirely peopled by refu-

gees, who had then fled from Podgoritza, and their descendants. The Catholic Maltsors, their neighbours, had, however, come at the beginning of the war, and occupied their houses for them, so they told me, and had cried to "i biri Kralit" (the King's son) to spare them. As Montenegro then still wished to be on good terms with the Maltsors, the Buza Ujit people were thus saved from a second time experiencing Montenegrin methods.

When I had heard the horrors of the Gusinje district, I found that there were about a thousand refugees from the Djakova district, where similar horrors were being enacted. Great misery, too, was and is caused by the frontier-line, drawn "without considering the ethnographic question." It has been drawn between large districts and their only market-town, the learned frontier-drawers having, it appears, forgotten that a town and its surroundings necessarily form an organic whole, and are interdependent. By giving Djakova to the Montenegrins, the whole of the Nikaj, Merturi, Gashi, Krasnichi, Tropopoja tribes, and parts of Puka, are deprived of any place where they can either buy or sell. Djakova was founded by emigrants from Merturi and Berisha, and never was a Serb town. The luckless mountain men, when war was over, tried to go as usual to market. Some were flogged, and others shot. A four or five days' tramp to Scutari is their only alternative. The Serbs were supposed by Europe to have performed an heroic feat when they marched over these same mountains in the winter. The Powers have condemned the unhappy peasants to make a similar march whenever they wish to buy some maize or lamp-oil.

Moreover, Montenegro is so sparsely populated that she has not people enough of her own to populate these regions which she has devastated. Djakova, Ipek, Plevlje, and Bijelopolje, have been awarded to her, each one bigger than—in some cases twice or thrice as big as—her capital Cettigne; and the small towns of Berani, Gusinje, and Plava as well. So much for the results of war in the north.

In June, I made a journey on the Houyhnhnm down south, through Alessio, Delbinishti, Durazzo, Pekin, Elbasan, Struga, Ochrida, Pogradech, Kortcha, Berat, Fieri, and Avlona, and thence returned by boat to Scutari. Of this journey it is not my purpose to speak much; space forbids, and much of it belongs rather to the new era than to the old one. It confirmed, were more confirmation needed, the misconduct of the invading armies; for only in those parts which no foe had penetrated were there no tales of outrage. The whole land was in a state of suspense, awaiting the help of Europe, and praying for the speedy arrival of a Prince who should put a stop to the intrigues, inspired largely from abroad, which threatened them. The greatest distrust was felt for Essad Pasha. He alone was possessed of artillery and an armed force, and, it was feared, would make an attempt to gain power for himself. It was rumoured also that he was receiving money from abroad.

Tranquillity reigned everywhere, and the local governors were administering primitive and effective justice. One picture is burnt into my memory. It was the passing of the Turk. Through Durazzo, as the sun was setting, came a miserable little procession. Pallid men in khaki rags, their bare feet

dangling limp, clung to the saddle-bow, and sat with pain the lean horses that bore them. Others, a shade less ill, limped after on foot. It was the last dying remnant of the Turkish army. The transport which was to fetch them had not arrived, and as the light died away they went out to pass the night on the bare ground by the shore. If the Turk had abused his power, he had paid for it. I shall never see anything more tragic than the dumb misery of those few survivors of a military Power which had once made all Europe tremble.

Ochrida in the hands of the Serbs was another tragic sight. I had known it well, ten years ago, when I first did hospital work for the wounded, and more than half expected to meet my own ghost as I walked through the melancholy streets. Then the Bulgars had just been crushed after a most fierce insurrection; but they did not look half so hopeless and sad then as now, when they had been "freed" by the Serbs. They had given their blood and goods in the hope of union, not with Servia, but with Bulgaria. Some few who recognized me said there was more misery than ever. The once busy Moslem bazar was largely closed. What had become of the large Moslem population, nearly all Albanian, I do not know. The Bulgar school was closed. The streets, newly inscribed with the names of Serb heroes, were silent except for the Serb troops which pervaded them.

Rumours of the second, and most disgraceful, Balkan war filled officers and men with excitement. Not satiated with Albanian blood, they thirsted for that of their allies.

At Pogradech, a little Albanian town at the foot of the lake, all the shops were shut in order to celebrate the anniversary of Kosovo, which did not interest the Albanians at all. They asked when the Serbs were going, and begged for union with Albania, but were cautious of speaking. When leaving, I went to the han to pay for my horse-forage, and, as change, was offered Serb coins. "Do not give me Serb money," said I, for I was going into Greek-held territory. In an instant popular feeling blazed. "Ha! she won't have anything Serb! Bravo! bravo!" I was alarmed lest trouble should arise, but the company was solid Albanian.

When I was in Kortcha its fate was still undecided by the Conference in London. It was a-bristle with Greek soldiers, and there were freshly painted Greek inscriptions all over the town. It was in Kortcha, ten years ago, that I had first been inspired to help the Albanian people to become a nation, by the enthusiasm of the patriots whose acquaintance I made there. From Kortcha, too, during the Young Turk régime, and before it had started forcible Ottomanizing, I had received Albanian papers and joyous reports of the way pupils were flocking to learn in the Albanian school. Now things were very different. A curiously interesting light was thrown on the way in which political movements are worked and dust thrown in the eyes of Europe. On entering the town, the Greeks had at once ordered that Greek and not Albanian should be spoken, and exiled or imprisoned many who had the courage to declare themselves Albanian. There were some 6,000 soldiers in the town, and the population was helpless. While I

was there a "National Meeting" was got up by the Greeks. The bazar was closed; the Greek priests made house-to-house visits, ordering all persons to attend. The women and children were even bribed to do so by being told that some English people had come to speak to them—a statement which can only be described as a shameless lie. Neither I nor my companion had any intention of speaking at a political meeting. Nor, in spite of this attraction, did a very large number of persons attend; but the Conference of Ambassadors in London was informed that the whole population of Kortcha wished for Greek rule. In that case one wondered why they had not got up a mass meeting themselves, without the help of Greek soldiers at the street corners to point the way, and priests to tell them what to say. Many small towns all over the world could doubtless be made to say they wished to be Zulus, if an overpoweringly large force of that race were in occupation, and no help at hand. The very large majority of the inhabitants of the district were Moslem, and had no desire to become Greek subjects. The whole thing was so obviously a "put-up job" that it weakened such sympathy as I had for the Greeks, and filled me with a certain contempt that they should have stage-managed it so badly. A number of persons, on the other hand, sent messages to us, and said they did not desire to become Greek subjects. As in Montenegro, so here, the desire of the conqueror was to exterminate or drive out the Albanian population, especially the Moslem portion.

At Moskopol, a small Vlah town, on the return journey, Greek efforts were highly comical. A number

of persons were sent up overnight and instructed how to act. On our arrival, they rang the church bells and came prancing out to welcome us "to a Greek town." It was exactly like the scene of "peasants rejoicing" when the curtain goes up at a comic opera, and terribly overacted.

If the Powers, to gain some private ends of their own, do not force the Greeks to evacuate, they will sign the death-warrants of a large proportion of the population.

To arrive at Berat, a free Albanian town, after all

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, AVLONA.

this was like coming up for a breath of fresh air. Berat, gay, jolly, and full of life, was crowded with pack-animals and peasants come to market. The contrast between it and Greek-ridden Kortcha was most marked. Berat's one anxiety was that Europe should send a Prince quickly who should protect Albania from further aggression.

Avlona was full of refugee Moslems who had fled from Greek persecution. They reported much pillaging and cruelty. Avlona was then still the seat of Ismail Kemal's temporary government, but Avlona, like Berat, begged for the Prince to come quickly.

There were signs that Essad, jealous of power, would shortly begin to make trouble, and the long-drawn delay of the Powers to fulfil their promises was causing deep anxiety.

The international forces were not allowed jurisdiction beyond ten kilometres from Scutari, and the people knew not whom to obey. Had the Powers allowed the international troops to each occupy separate districts and rule till the Prince's arrival, much difficulty and trouble might have been spared. Instead, almost a year was allowed to pass between the Powers' decision to create a fresh Albania and their recognizing a ruler of it; and time was given for the plans of rival chiefs and of the most interested of the Powers themselves to be matured.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LAST WORDS

I RETURNED to Scutari in July, and worked till the middle of September, struggling to enable some, at least, of the war victims to face the coming winter. The distress was more widely spread than I had imagined. It was now too late to sow, and I had almost no money. This the poor people could not believe, and the scenes which ensued were indescribably painful.

I sent messages in vain up-country saying that no more help could be given. Women whose starved breasts had no more milk for the shrivelled baby came and threw themselves at my feet, and wept and cried: "If you will not help me, throw my children into the river; I cannot see them starve." I remembered Petar Plamenatz saying with a grin: "The more starve, the better for us!"

I prepared to leave the country, as I could do no more, believing that though in outlying districts there would be deaths from starvation, yet our fund had saved a considerable number. And I hoped that England would send money to rescue others. The need was great, but not unconquerable.

Then came the final catastrophe. The Serb troops, when withdrawing from Albanian territory in the

neighbourhood of the Debra frontier, looted, as they went, the horses and flocks. The owners resisted, and were shot, and forty-two headmen were taken prisoner to Debra. The Serb force was small. The whole population rose in a body, and though a number were armed only with sticks, hatchets, and similarly primitive weapons, they drove the Serbs from the place and rescued the prisoners, all of whom were bound and condemned to death, but as yet only a few killed.

Ignorant of European politics, the luckless people hoped that the frontier would be redrawn and their town given back to them; but a large Serb force poured down upon them and took terrible vengeance.

I received an urgent telegram to hurry to Elbasan at once with " first-aid " material. As the fund was exhausted, this was not easy. The Italian Consulate, however, gave me three cases of material, and I started. Three and a half days took me to Elbasan via Tirana; but on the way I already met with refugees.

Next morning, even before the dawn, they were streaming into the town, and I watched them with dull dismay. Hundreds of women, dragging little children, and bent under the bundles of bedding they carried, filed in. There were some Gypsies and some Bulgarians, but the bulk were Moslem Albanians. The men, fine specimens of humanity, bore themselves bravely even in their misery as they tramped by. Almost all were unarmed. I remember a woman who showed her cut feet. She had tramped with her three children from the Gostivar district near Uskub.

It had taken six days—"The children went so slowly."

All told the same tale. Their villages had been set on and burnt by the Serb troops who were on the way to Debra. I was given the particulars of twenty-seven villages in all. In some instances the troops had set fire to the village and surrounded it, and driven back with the bayonet those who had not had time to escape. In making such inquiries, one must always allow for the exaggeration which is inevitable when people are terror-stricken and have fled for their lives, and must always hope that some of those reported slain will have survived; but even if the tale of horror were divided by ten, it left an awful record of "what man has done to man." Moreover, on my return journey I met a mass of people at Tirana who had fled from the same districts, and they, separately questioned, gave almost precisely similar accounts. Nor when the old hodja of Rechan broke down and wept, when he told that he was one of five men who had escaped alive out of eighty, and that he had heard the shrieks of the women burning in the houses, could one doubt that he was speaking the truth.

In the face of all this misery, I was helpless. The local authorities allotted some money for relief work, and formed a committee. All the money that I had with me I had already spent on the refugees at Elbasan. I rode away from the sight of misery which I could not aid.

In Scutari I was met with more bad news. The Serbs and Montenegrins had crossed the Albanian frontier, and had entirely burnt all the houses of the

Gashi and Krasnichi tribes. This was in vengeance for the fact that these tribes had been sheltering and feeding the wretched refugees from Gusinje and Djakova. Moreover, a number of Moslem villages in the neighbourhood of Prizren and Djakova had also been burnt; horrible outrages were reported by the survivors. In one village the girls had first been captured and handed over to the lust of the soldiery, and afterwards thrown into the burning village. Such was the account of the refugees.

From places four days' march away came hapless creatures to beg aid. I remember a man who came with his wife and three boys from a village in the Prizren district. He told that all had been quiet there; it was far from the trouble at Debra. Someone brought word that the Serb army was approaching. "I said to my brother, 'Let us fly,' for I knew what the Serb soldiers were like. He had a little shop, and said: 'No; why should we? We have done nothing.' But I was afraid, and took my wife, and my two boys, and his boy, and went up the mountain. Soon we saw our village burning. The people who escaped told me my brother was dead. I did not know where to turn for help. I heard of you. I am ashamed to beg; I did not think I should ever have to do it, for I have always given hospitality." His wife burst into tears when I said I could only give food for a day or two.

I left Scutari and returned to England after three years and six months' absence. But the tale of misery has gone on, and the agents who are struggling with it have been unable, through lack of funds, to relieve more than a limited number. In the high

mountains the burnt-out people of Gashi and Krasnichi are reported to have died at the rate of twenty a day. And the latest letters (April, 1914) tell that the Greeks, in evacuating part of the South Albanian district, have burnt and pillaged eleven Moslem villages in the Kolonia and Frasheri districts; that they have organized bands of raiders to resist Albanian occupation; that Greeks and Cretans, led by Greek officers, have been plundering and slaughtering; and that 5,000 more destitute refugees are crying for help.

As an Albanian patriot truly wrote: "Yes, the Allies fought side by side simply for the devastation and extermination of our nation. The world must surely be amazed that nations calling themselves Christian can, through greed and anger, commit such barbarities."

So much for the past. I have set down briefly a few of the things which I have seen and heard. Of the future it is impossible to prophesy. In the Balkan Peninsula it is usually the unexpected which takes place. The one thing that can be said with certainty is that no permanent solution of the Balkan question has been arrived at. The ethnographical questions have been ignored. A portion of each race has been handed over to be ruled by another which it detests. Servia has acquired a population which is mostly Bulgar and Albanian, though of the latter she has massacred and expelled many thousands. Bulgars have been captured by Greeks, Greeks by Bulgars, Albanians by Greeks, and not one of these races has as yet shown signs of being capable to rule another justly. The seeds have been sown of hatreds that will grow and bear fruit.

At least a generation must pass before the actual loss and waste of property can in any way be made up for. This has been so great that were it not for heavy loans each of the late Allies would be hopelessly crippled. They are at the mercy of such of the Powers as finance them; and meanwhile more than one of the said Powers stands expectant, ready to snap up the pieces should a second break-up take place.

# INDEX

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD