

To you I owe the regularity of my sunrise cup of coffee, as you have stirred up the sleepy khitmutgars. Through you is my horse brought punctually to my door: in fact, thou indispensable domestic—most useful, most honest and zealous, though not brilliant—what would the Anglo-Indian do without his invaluable “sirdar bearer?”

A VISIT TO MONTENEGRO.

I was sitting some few evenings since, cosily chatting with a friend on things in general, when, amongst other topics, our conversation turned upon the troubled state of Europe, and the complications arising out of secret treaties, foreign protectorates, and so forth. We talked of Austria, Russia, and Turkey, with the various provinces nominally or actually under their “protection” or influence, and of the strangely diversified nationalities which go to make up the three vast empires; Moldavia and Wallachia, with their native hospodars, their Turkish sovereign, and their Russian protector; Servia and the recent revolution there; its native parliament or skouptschina (a name which, in spite of all my attempts at regarding it in the dignified light of a great legislative body, would suggest the soup-kitchen), and its foreign suzerain. These, and other similar topics, led me to remark how difficult it was to get at anything like a correct notion of the real mode of government in these numerous semi-independent provinces; to find out what power amongst all the different interests at work was, in fact, the ruling one in each case, or how much of the mighty expanse of territory set down on the map as forming portions of the three empires in question, was actually incorporated with them.

Dr. F— (I suppress the name of my companion) found much less difficulty in comprehending the real state of things in these localities than I did. He had spent the greater portion of his life in Austria, where he was formerly a well-known *littérateur*, and had, moreover, taken an active part in European politics; so that he was enabled, from personal experience, to explain “who’s who,” with a degree of precision which could never be acquired from the study of maps, histories, or treaties.

In speaking of these various half-independent and half-subject provinces, so little understood, although so often forced into a temporary notoriety, I chanced to instance Montenegro as an odd, out-of-the-way little spot, which had made much noise in the world from time to time, and yet was almost entirely unknown, so far as its constitution, manners, and customs, were concerned.

“You are right,” said the doctor; “often as Montenegro has been forced upon the public notice, there are not many persons who know what the place is like. It is a long time since I visited it; but Montenegro is not much addicted to social changes, and I expect, were I to return now, I should find little alteration from what it was some eighteen years ago.”

“What!” I exclaimed, “you have been to Montenegro, then?”

“I had the honour of being presented at the court of the Vladika himself,” he answered.

“And what’s a Vladika?” I asked, in my supreme ignorance of Montenegrin matters.

“The prince, the bishop, the judge, the commander-in-chief, the all-in-all of the province,” replied the doctor. “Come, we have time before us, and if you think the account of my visit will interest you, draw your chair to the fire and listen.”

I did think the account would interest me, so I obeyed, and the doctor commenced his narrative. As I believe also that the details of the visit may interest my readers as well as myself, I now proceed to give, as nearly as I can in a translation, the story in the doctor’s own words.

Nearly eighteen years ago (he commenced) a literary friend called on me in Vienna and said to me: “My dear fellow, you want change of air—take my advice—be off!” At the moment I was puzzled what to make of this strange counsel. The affair, however, was extremely simple. The first copies of a book which I had just published at Leipzig had arrived in Vienna and had created a most unpleasant impression upon the sensitive nerves of the high literary police of the Austrian capital. So, to escape the annoyances to which I should doubtless have been exposed if I remained in Vienna, I resolved on following my friend’s advice, and starting off somewhere—no matter where.

Six o’clock the next morning found me comfortably seated in the *coupé* of the diligence for Trieste. This town, of which I knew every stone by heart, had no attractions for me. My intention was to set sail at the earliest possible moment, to revisit Dalmatia and Albania, lands in which the grotesque and picturesque are found in rare combination. I will not stop to tell you my adventures by the way, nor to describe the thousand little ports along the coast, snug little hiding-places for the pirates or smugglers that infest the Adriatic; nor need I speak to you of Zara, of Ragusa, of the Gulf of Cattaro, nor of those interesting tribes who still preserve the habits and even the costume of the ancient Romans. I have simply to tell you of the visit I paid to the Vladika of Montenegro.

At the period of which I am speaking, Montenegro was in every sense of the word a *terra incognita*. It was, possibly, the only country in Europe which had neither history, statistics, nor geography; and this fact it was that induced me to undertake a voyage of discovery into its interior. The task was not an easy one, and was, moreover, dangerous, for it was well known that the Montenegrins were neither more nor less than brigands. Several Austrian deserters who had sought shelter in the country had returned thence in a state of starvation and almost of nudity, the Montenegrins having stripped them of everything that they possessed, without offering them the slightest hospitality in exchange. Fortunately, however, for me, I made the acquaintance of a Croatian captain, who had frequently visited Montenegro, and was on terms of friendship with the Vladika. This gentleman consented, after a considerable amount of persuasion, to furnish me with a letter of introduction,

or rather, I should say, to announce my coming beforehand.

I dare say, now, you will feel curious to know something of the postal arrangements of Montenegro, and will ask how my friend's letter was conveyed to the Vladika. First of all, I must inform you that the relations then existing between Austria and Montenegro were of the most ambiguous nature. In theory, the Vladika was under the Austrian protection; in reality, he was protected solely by the court of St. Petersburg, and was in a state of perpetual warfare with the Austrians—not open warfare, of course, but that kind of petty skirmishing which unfriendly neighbours manage everywhere to carry on. The Montenegrins having large quantities of sheep, with comparatively scanty pasturage, would drive their flocks into the territories of their Austrian neighbours, and defend by force of arms, against the lawful owners of the pastures, the stolen breakfasts and dinners of their woolly charges. Added to these annoyances, the Austrian protectorate of Montenegro was productive of serious embarrassments to the protecting power, by the constant complaints made by the Turkish to the Austrian government of the depredations committed by the Montenegrin brigands in the adjacent pashalik of Scutari.

Such, in a few words, were the relations of Montenegro with its neighbour at the time of which I am speaking. The one single friendly relation existing between the Austrians and the Montenegrins was a commercial one. At Cattaro, immediately at the foot of the gigantic Monte Sella, was situated a bazaar, to which the Montenegrins were admitted on condition of their leaving their arms outside. Hither they brought the produce of their lands and mountain streams, smoked mutton, fish, etc., receiving in exchange from the Austrians salt, an article which the Montenegrins preferred to ready money, and, strange to say, gunpowder!—the very gunpowder they used against the Austrian and the Turkish troops.

Market day at Cattaro is a most curious sight. From early dawn, the side of Monte Sella would be seen covered with innumerable little black specks scarcely visible in the distance, and resembling, as they moved in zig-zag course down the mountain a procession of ants more than anything else I could liken them to. These little specks, enlarging as they approached, were seen at last to be the Montenegrins coming to the bazaar, the men carrying nothing but their long Turkish pipes, while all the merchandise was borne by the mules and the other animals employed as beasts of burden in Montenegro—that is to say, the women! The men of Montenegro, as a general rule, are fine robust fellows, with a warlike though barbarian air. The women, crushed and brutalized by toil, are ugly, ill-formed, and withered. On my first seeing the Montenegrin women, I could not help admiring the daring courage which it is evident the men possess, or they could never venture upon marriage.

Amongst the Montenegrins who came to the bazaar, was to be seen regularly three times a week, a middle-aged, middle-sized man, active in his move-

ments, intelligent in his manner, a sort of half-breed between civilization and barbarism, who filled the office of postmaster-general to the Vladika, and who found himself the sole means of epistolary communication between Montenegro and the world without.

Spiro Martinovich (such was the Montenegrin postman's name) had taken the letter of my new friend the captain to Monsignore the Vladika, and brought an answer back to the effect that his Eminence consented to receive me at Cetigne, the capital of Montenegro. Accordingly, the next morning I set out, accompanied by my brother, and attended by two Albanian peasants, Spiro Martinovich himself officiating as our guide. It was a wretched morning; the rain came down in torrents, and a dense fog prevented our seeing anything beyond a few yards distance. In this state of things our guide advised us not to risk the more direct route up Monte Sella, and took us round another way, which, though longer, was safer and less difficult. This road brought us, after two hours' journeying, to a Montenegrin village called Miraz, the only inhabited spot we saw until we reached the table-land on which Cetigne stands. My friend Spiro Martinovich, however, assured me that we should have seen several charming villages, had not the rain and fog prevented us. He spoke especially of a magnificent view in the valley of the Xuppa, with which we must have been in raptures if we could but have seen it.

Travelling in the interior of Montenegro is not the most agreeable in the world. Nothing but bare rocks, rising in solid perpendicular walls on one side, and descending in fearful precipices on the other; no roads, but very little vegetation; here and there a small clump of fir trees, nothing more; occasionally having to traverse a path where there seems scarce a foot between the rocks on your left hand and the precipice on your right, and where you feel inclined to give yourself up for lost: such are a few of the delights of Montenegrin travel. In these narrow dangerous passes, the only thing you can do is to leave the matter entirely in the hands, or rather in the feet, of your mule. He will get you through, however narrow be the pathway, and will do it with a degree of coolness and self-possession which are beyond all praise. Yet, much as I was indebted to the animal I rode for his achievements in this way, I could not repress my indignation at the disquieting habit he had of walking on the very edge of every precipice we came to, even when the width of the path made it as unnecessary as it was alarming.

Late in the evening, we arrived at the village of Baiza, situated on the plateau of Cetigne. In this village, which at the time contained some 200 houses, Martinovich our guide resided; and at his request we entered his cabin. We found the family of the Montenegrin postmaster-general grouped around a large fire, the smoke from which, in default of any chimney, made its exit by the door at which we entered. The family of our guide consisted of his wife, two sons, and a daughter-in-law, to which I may add a magnificent brown cow, who shared the apartment with them, and had the best place next the fire. Large quantities of dried mutton were

suspended from the ceiling; a good stock of Turkish wheat lay in one corner, and upon the walls were hung guns, swords, and other weapons; in another part of the room there were two beds, all which, together with a small hand-mill, and a loom in the centre of the apartment, showed that our friend Spiro was provided with all that was requisite to make life happy. Our reception was hospitable in the extreme, and after partaking of refreshments we resumed our journey. One circumstance in connection with this village of Baiza, I must not omit to mention. The whole population of the place were relatives, and every person in it was named Martinovich. Fancy a village of 200 houses inhabited exclusively by Smiths!

The plateau of Cetigne (which is some two miles long by a quarter of a mile wide) is the finest table-land, as well as the most thickly peopled, in all Montenegro; rich pasturages abound there, and six or seven different villages lie about the main road leading to the residence of the Vladika. This I discovered afterwards, for it was perfectly dark when we arrived at the monastery of Cetigne, (the dwelling of the monkish sovereign of Montenegro,) our teeth chattering with the cold, and our clothes completely soaked through and through. Several servants hurrying to admit us seemed to promise a friendly reception for us at the Montenegrin court; and when, after passing through a long corridor, we were shown into a spacious kitchen, very clean and comfortable, we experienced that agreeable sensation which all travellers feel when, after a long and stormy journey, they reach the inn where they intend to pass the night.

Seated in this hospitable kitchen, beside an excellent fire, we were very speedily enveloped in clouds of steam arising from our drenched garments. You will, perhaps, be surprised at our being shown into the kitchen. Do not fancy, however, that any slight was intended us; according to the etiquette of the court of Cetigne, this kitchen was the reception-room for all friendly semi-official visits. Here it was that Monsignore passed his evenings with the members of his senate, and here the principal political affairs of Montenegro were conducted. Of all this, and much more, we were informed by Signor Toni, the Vladika's head-cook (an Austrian deserter, as we afterwards learned), who received us, in his master's absence, with considerable grace and dignity. He told us that Monsignore had received the letter announcing our coming, and had given orders that everything should be done to afford us a proper welcome. He then proceeded to favour us with a brief sketch of the customs prevailing at the court of Cetigne. "Monsignore," he said, "is now at the senate; but he will not be long," he added, looking at his watch, "for it is just his time for commencing billiards."

We found that the Vladika was a great billiard-player, and that he invariably indulged in a game every evening after the sitting of the senate, and as invariably left off at nine o'clock, when all adjourned to the kitchen, where we were then seated; and from nine o'clock till midnight the Vladika sat here, surrounded by his senators, drink-

ing "tszay" (a kind of native brandy), smoking pipes, chatting, and singing national songs, for the most part relating to deeds of successful brigandage. My friend the Croat captain informed me that he had once had the opportunity of being present at one of their *veillées du château*, in the Vladika's kitchen, and, as he was well versed in the Illyric language, he was enabled to appreciate the story of a marauding expedition into the pashalik of Scutari, as narrated by one of the senators, who in his youth had been the hero of the adventure. He assured me that the style and expression of the narrator on the one hand, and the attention with which it was received by the Vladika and his assembled senators on the other, were such that it might have been the history of an Argonautic expedition, with the veritable capture of a golden fleece, instead of which the subject of the Montenegrin Iliad was simply a burglarious proceeding, involving the cowardly murder of several Turkish women, and the felonious appropriation of a certain quantity of cattle.

[To be continued.]

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

In Great George Street, Westminster (No. 29), there has, within a comparatively recent date, been opened an exhibition, of which possibly some of our readers are not yet aware, though it is one of the most interesting in the metropolis, consisting as it does of portraits of many of the most illustrious men and women of England. We allude to the NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

On entering the edifice, to which admission is afforded on Wednesdays and Saturdays by tickets previously obtained from No. 20, Parliament Street, and, we doubt not, most of the leading west-end print shops, the visitor will find the pictures arranged numerically in small and utterly inadequate apartments. To use familiar phraseology, he must begin in the "first-floor back," though his attention may previously have been engaged by those occupying the stair-case, which, however, we recommend him to postpone inspecting till he has examined the others in the regular order, corresponding to the list, which a courteous attendant vends for a shilling.

The first portrait (No. 1), above the mantel-piece in this apartment, is that of the great and unfortunate RALEIGH—calm and profound, though yet a youth, and dreaming, we can readily conceive, of those immortal discoveries with which his name is associated. No. 2 represents the PRINCESS ELIZABETH OF BOHEMIA, so remarkable for more than the ordinary course of regal vicissitudes, and exhibiting in her face much of that unhappy gloom which, ever since the days of the unfortunate Mary, distinguished the whole of the Stuart race. In No. 3 we have several excellent miniatures; while Nos. 4 and 5 delineate respectively, OPIE and REYNOLDS, the painters to whose easels we are indebted for the preservation of so much of the beauty of their era. Poor KEATS, the butcher's boy and touching poet, so sensitive, who was so cruelly slaughtered

ging his tail the while, by way of emphasis to his friendly feelings.

"Look at that, now! look at that, now!" cried Mac, giving Tom the piece of broiled chicken on which he had evidently set his affections; "he was ready to eat me last night, and now——"

"He eats your breakfast," laughed Rington.

"But how is it, Mr. Brook, that he is such friends with me in the daytime, and so savage at night? I cannot understand it at all, at all! for I never did a thing to anger him."

"I think I can explain it," I said. "In the first place, I feel that your misfortunes are in a great measure owing to my negligence in not having warned you against leaving your room during the night, and I beg to apologize for not having done so; but the fact is, I never thought of it; and, for the matter of that, I had no reason for thinking you would."

"And I wouldn't, only for that ghost—bad luck to it! Couldn't it come and go without making a noise about it!"

"Well, but you see, I didn't take ghosts into consideration, as it seems I ought to have done. But, with regard to Tom's unfriendly behaviour to you, it is easily explained. The nature of the bulldog, or bull-terrier—it is all one—is to guard whatever he is put in charge of; whether it is a hat or a house, it is no matter: as long as they are under his protection he will allow no one to touch the one or enter the other. Now, Tom was placed in your house to guard it: he knew that perfectly well. His duty was to prevent *any one from coming in*, but not to prevent you from *going out*. As for the rats, if they had paid him a visit, he would have caught them if he could; but they were of no account in his canine mind: his one grand object was, as I have said, to guard the house; and consequently, when you left it, you became an enemy—one to be kept at a distance. He is as good-tempered and friendly with you to-day as he was yesterday; but he would serve you the same to-night as he did last night, under similar circumstances, for he does not know you well enough to allow of his violating his natural instincts on your behalf. After all, he is but a dog, you know; and he didn't rightly comprehend that you were the legitimate master of the place; so I hope you will forgive his rude behaviour."

"Forgive him! I like him all the better for it, now I know the reason why," said Mac, who was the best tempered fellow in the world. "I wish I had one like him, eh! Tom, old fellow!" and he chucked him another bit of the broil, which was graciously and dexterously received.

"Come," said Rington, starting up, "the best friends must part, and I really must be off."

"Ye're not going to walk to Bath in the face of you sun? ye'll be fried alive, man!" remonstrated the bushier.

"I don't care for the sun; and I am not going to walk. I stole a march on you, Gordon, last night, and sent off Joe, Nim, and the lads, before daylight, to fetch our horses and traps from Bath; and there they are snug in your stable."

The bushier declared it was too bad; but Mat

said he really had business at Golden Grove, which must be attended to.

"Weel, weel! I'll no' say that business before pleasure is no' a gude rule," said Gordon, as Rington rode off, shouting at the top of his voice, "Let me know when Blue Mountain Peak is to come off."

We required very little pressing to stay where we were till towards evening. By this arrangement we avoided the heat of the day, and enjoyed a delicious second breakfast, thanks to our overnight friends the land crabs, the flavour of which surpasses in richness and delicacy anything I ever tasted, either fish, flesh, or fowl.

We parted from Jim Gordon, and his satellite little Mac, with great regret.

"You must pay us another visit, gentlemen, or I'll no' believe ye've likeit this ain o'er weel," were the bushier's last words, as he shook us warmly by the hand.

We promised to do so; and we also extracted a promise from both of them to visit us in camp. We had a lovely ride home. The sun was set, and all nature was hushed as we entered St. Catherine's Gap; but the glow in the west lighted us on our way, the calm pale moon looked down upon us, and the cool land breeze fanned our cheeks as we rode into camp. And thus ended one of the pleasantest excursions I ever made, either in Jamaica or elsewhere.

A VISIT TO MONTENEGRO.

PART II.

To return to our friend Signor Toni, who, in spite of all his efforts to disguise it, had an expression of profound melancholy about him which elicited our deepest sympathy. In the midst of our conversation, the sound of a person walking with a crutch was heard in the corridor by which we had entered, on which Toni cried abruptly, "Il Signor Cavaliere!"

In answer to our inquiries as to who the Signor Cavaliere might be, we were informed that he was the Secretary of State, the minister of the interior and the exterior, in a word, the factotum of the Vladika, and that the title he bore was awarded him in consequence of a Russian order with which he was decorated. The presiding genius of Montenegro was about to appear before us.

The Cavaliere Milacovich was a thin, sickly-looking young man, lame of one leg from his birth, and walking with a crutch. His features were regular, and might have been handsome, had they not been spoiled by a suspicious and inquisitive expression which they habitually wore. He saluted us most graciously, but in a manner which declared, as plainly as words could have said it, that he would rather hear what we had to say before he committed himself by speaking. A cautious diplomatist was Il Signor Cavaliere, who evidently liked listening better than talking. He whispered to our friend the cook, who speedily produced some coffee, and, what was no less acceptable, some dry garments. The one with which I was favoured was a

kind of dressing-gown of black velvet, embroidered with gold and lined with fur. We were informed that these garments belonged to the Vladika, and that his Eminence requested we would honour him by wearing them until our own were dry. (My friend Toni afterwards told me that the one I wore had belonged to a Turkish pacha whom the Montenegrins had killed and stripped, and that I would find some spots of its late owner's blood still on the dressing-gown!)

The Cavaliere Milacovich then asked us, in a tone which left no doubt of the unseasonableness of the hour we had chosen to visit the Montenegrin court, what time we thought would be most convenient for us to present ourselves to Monsignore the Vladika. I answered that we would leave that entirely to the pleasure of his Eminence; adding, that if it could be managed that night we should prefer it, as the bad weather, which had delayed our arrival till so late that evening, might compel us to quit Cetigne very early in the morning, for fear of our being overtaken by darkness amongst the rocky passes of Monte Sella. After a moment's reflection, the secretary declared that he would go immediately and inquire the pleasure of Monsignore. He left us, and the length of time he was away proved that the question whether we should be received that night, or whether the high honour should be reserved for the morning, was the subject of considerable debate. The answer of the Vladika was, that "he fancied we had better not take the trouble of presenting ourselves that evening, as he had no doubt we must be very much fatigued already"—an agreeable specimen of Montenegrin politeness, and of the etiquette prevailing at the court of Cetigne.

We had now abundant time to watch the culinary operations of the Soyer of Cetigne. Toni was here, there, and everywhere at once. From every corner of that spacious kitchen he produced, as if by magic, and with a rapidity that reminded me of the movements of a conjuror, something required for the meal he was preparing: meat here; there vinegar; somewhere else pepper and salt; from another corner, herbs, onions, etc. Meanwhile, the Signor Milacovich kept limping in and out of the apartment, asking us countless questions, giving orders in a low voice to Toni, and from time to time conversing in whispers with some mysterious person outside, whose footsteps we heard continually approaching and receding from the kitchen-door. It was evident that periodical reports concerning ourselves were being made to the Vladika, and that the arrival of two Austrian officers at so advanced an hour of the evening had caused no slight sensation. I had no doubt Monsignore believed we had some official mission or other, if he could only find out what.

However, the time for the assembling of the Vladika and his friends round the kitchen fire drawing near, we were requested to retire to the room prepared for us. The kitchen, in which we had been till now, formed a portion of the ancient monastery. We were now taken to the new one, close adjoining. Here, after being shown into our bed-room, which was a comfortable, well-furnished

apartment—much such a one as is found in good continental inns—we were escorted to another room, where we found dinner laid for us. Our long journey had given us an appetite, which enabled us to do full justice to the results of Toni's art. The dinner was, in fact, an excellent one. If it had a fault, it was a lack of variety in the material. The soup was made of mutton, and was followed by a *ragout* of sheep's liver; after which came an *entremet* of smoked mutton, which in turn gave place in succession to boiled mutton, fricasseed mutton, and, lastly, roast mutton. The Montenegrin wine, though somewhat sour, would not have been so bad, had it not tasted quite so strongly of the skin in which it had been kept; a bottle of madeira, however, brought on after the soup, was unexceptionable. But the grand effect was properly kept till the last. A bottle of real French champagne, served by a Montenegrin in the very heart of Montenegro, and opened by a Montenegrin, (who actually made the cork fly in the most approved manner,) such I may well call a dramatic effect. I fancied that the three peasants who waited upon us had reckoned beforehand on the effect to be produced on us, for at the moment when the cork flew in the air, they exchanged triumphant glances with each other.

On our return to our bed-room, we were once more favoured with the company of Signor Toni, who came to offer us his services, and who kept us in conversation for upwards of half an hour. From him we learned that the billiard-room of Monsignore contained a large collection of weapons of all kinds, some of them trophies obtained in war, and many of them pledges. That year had been a very barren one, and, in consequence, many of the Montenegrin heads of families had been compelled to borrow money from their monarch, and the Vladika took their arms as security for repayment. A glimpse was thus afforded us of the internal politics of Montenegro. The Vladika, though nominally his power was limited by a senate, reigned in fact as an absolute monarch, thanks to an allowance of upwards of £4000 a year from the Russian Emperor. He possessed thus the monopoly of all the ready money in the province, for the trade carried on at the bazaar of Cattaro resembled barter rather than buying and selling. The Vladika was thus master of the situation. He was the sovereign pawnbroker of the state, and possessed the means of disarming his subjects when he chose.

Our friend Toni informed us that amongst the weapons in the billiard-room were some of Austrian make, which probably accounted for the refusal of the Vladika to receive our visit that evening while at his billiards. He also spoke to us of a certain Cavaliere Georgio, a brother of the Vladika, who was vice-president of the senate, and resided in the new monastery. He had been several years an officer in the Russian service, and wore a Russian order, and, it was said, was very jealous of his brother's power, while the Vladika, in return, had little confidence in his brother's loyalty or love. In addition to the personages I have mentioned, the court of the Vladika contained several priests, who resided in the old monastery. A Frenchman,

whose name I have forgotten, had formerly resided at the court, giving lessons in French to Monsignore. The Vladika had, moreover, his guard of honour (the "perianizas"), and a large retinue of servants, some Montenegrins, and the rest Austrian deserters, though the latter, Toni assured us, had not much chance of getting on, unless, like himself, they could turn their hands to anything.

The Vladika had his state printing office, whence emanated a species of almanack, published yearly, and the poems of Monsignore himself. For you must know he was a poet, though the slanderous tongues of Montenegro did say that the Cavaliere Milacovich was in reality the author of the Vladika's poetry. However, that's no business of ours.

The perianizas, the guard of honour of the Montenegrin sovereign, consisted of thirty picked men, the tallest and finest fellows in the country; a set of giants, in a uniform very similar to that of the spahis in Algeria. A portion of this corps was always on duty at the monastery; and the bed-chamber of the Vladika was guarded day and night by two of these giants. The regular military force of Montenegro, called the "guard of the country," was divided into five corps, one for each of the "nahias," or districts, into which the country was parcelled out. It was commanded by five "captains," each of whom was the civil and military governor of his own "nahia," and was intrusted with raising the taxes, and arming the troops of the district, by order of the sovereign.

The senate, composed of twelve members, served merely to give a kind of legal and constitutional air to the absolute commands of the Vladika—in no degree to interfere with them. In fact, the only limit to the absolute power of the sovereign was his constant dread of conspiracies. As Russia has been said to be under "an absolute monarchy limited by regicide," so the government of Montenegro, at the time of which I am speaking, was "an absolute monarchy limited by conspiracies."

A few days only before my arrival at Cetigne, two Montenegrins had been executed on the plain in front of the two monasteries—as I may say, under the windows of the Vladika. Our friend Toni told me the poor wretches belonged to a family which had given umbrage to Monsignore, and consequently there was little difficulty in procuring their condemnation by the senate—devoted as it was to the Vladika. It will not, perhaps, be uninteresting if I tell you something of the manner in which executions were conducted at Cetigne, as related to me by my friend the Croat captain, of whom I have already spoken. He had, on one occasion, passed the night at Cetigne, and he witnessed the execution of two luckless Montenegrins the next morning, from the windows of the room where he was breakfasting with the Vladika, who, smiling and sipping his coffee meanwhile, expressed his regret that his guest should be obliged to see such a sight at breakfast time! The captain described the execution as follows.

About a hundred men of the "guard of the country" were ordered to execute the sentence of death passed by the senate on the two culprits. The soldiers were placed in a line a short distance

one from the other, and were armed with the long musket, which is the principal weapon of the Montenegrins. About fifty yards in front of the line was a large white stone, which marked the distance the culprits were allowed to run before the soldiers were permitted to fire. My Croatian friend told me that the gloomy silence and the savage solemnity which reigned over this long line of executioners were something terrible. The two victims were led out by a guard of the perianizas from the old monastery, their hands tied behind them, their long black hair streaming in the wind, and their faces pale as death. They were placed in front of the chain of marksmen about the centre of the line; their guards turned them once round, then pushed them forwards towards the white stone, crying, "Run! run!" I need not tell you the poor wretches did their best to run accordingly, as fast as their hands, bound behind them, would allow them. The moment they reached the fatal stone every musket was discharged at them, and they fell, each pierced with a score of bullets. I have been told that on several occasions the culprits have managed to get off safe and sound, or but slightly wounded, in this race with death, and have gained the Turkish frontier, but I think this could only be the case when the culprits chanced to possess the sympathy of their executioners; besides, it was said that the Vladika, in order to provide against such sympathies, was accustomed to place certain of his perianizas, men upon whom he could depend, amongst the firing party.

It is not difficult to explain the origin of this singular mode of execution, when it is known that in Montenegro, as in Corsica, the "vendetta" is an established institution. Suppose a man to be found who would consent to execute the sentence on a culprit condemned to death, that man would have no possible chance of escaping the vendetta—a sacred heritage in the family of the party executed; whereas, by the mode employed at Cetigne the vendetta is impossible, since, of the hundred executioners, no one can say whose bullets struck the victim down.

But once more to return to our conversation with Signor Toni, who was now about quitting us for the night. We asked him if it were true, as we had been told at Cattaro, that close by the new monastery there was a kind of castle, on which were displayed as a war-trophy the heads of forty Turks stuck upon lances.

Toni answered with a smile, "You have but to open your window to-morrow morning, and you will see the Pin-cushion!"

"The Pin-cushion!" This exclamation, which we both uttered simultaneously, remained unresponded to, for Toni had already left the room. The idea of passing the night in such close proximity to a trophy so barbarous, was not a pleasant one; but, tired out with our long day's journey, we were very soon wrapped in a deep and refreshing sleep, forgetting all about Vladika, Toni, Pin-cushion and all.

In the morning our curiosity was satisfied. Day-light revealed to us all the surrounding objects which were hidden from our view the night before,

and, amongst others, we observed the Pin-cushion. By the side of the old monastery, a building much resembling a nobleman's mansion of the seventeenth century, we saw upon a rising hill the castle about which we had made inquiry. It was simply a kind of tower unfinished, and surmounted, instead of a roof, by the forty Turks' heads, stuck upon forty wooden spears. Toni's name for it was not inappropriate. Seen from a distance, these human heads stuck upon lances certainly did resemble pins in a cushion. The word "castle," applied to it, to be sure savoured something of exaggeration, it being no more than a small round fort commanding the plain; but no doubt the word was not without its use in making it sound more formidable to its Turkish neighbours, who might feel inclined some day to pay a visit to the territories of the Vladika.

The new monastery, in which we passed the night, and which was built by the Vladika then reigning, was more like a barrack, or perhaps an hospital, than anything else. On quitting it, to obtain a nearer view of the so-called "castle," we were at once joined by the Cavaliere Milacovich, who expressed the greatest astonishment on learning our intention.

"I cannot conceive," he said, "how any one can choose to look at such horrors! For my own part," he added, "I always run away when any heads are brought into Cetigne; and I have never seen one of them but from a distance."

His countenance, however, while he spoke betrayed a very different feeling from that implied by his words. There was an uneasiness, but it was not caused by horror at the spectacle before us. I fancy I divined his thoughts. He was asking himself, "Is it not possible that these two officers have been sent here to ascertain whether there are any heads of Austrian soldiers enriching the exhibition of Cetigne?"

On returning to our room, we were informed that Monsignore the Vladika was about to honour us with a visit. Immediately afterwards the door opened and a giant entered, accompanied by Signor Milacovich. We were in presence of the Vladika. He saluted us, and then left it to us to open the conversation, just as his secretary had done the night before. The Vladika's features were anything but captivating. They were broad, with small piercing eyes, a pale complexion, and thin black beard, the Slavonic type decidedly marked, and an expression which spoke of cunning rather than frankness or courage. He wore the dress of a civilian; but his immense cossack trowsers, compared with the inexpressibles of ordinary men, were as the gigantic relics of the mammoths to the skeletons of animals of our own degenerate days. His feet were, as regards size, quite adequate to support his unwieldy bulk. His coat, buttoned to the throat, was large even for him, and hung about his body like clothes put out to dry. He wore on his head a Turkish fez, around which a silk handkerchief was wound in form of a turban. To complete the portrait of his Eminence, I should tell you that he kept his hands in his trowsers pockets, and seemed incapable of standing still a

single moment. The whole time of our interview he kept up a continual movement, which I could only liken to that of a caged tiger or leopard. He was a bachelor, as, being a bishop of the Independent Greek Church, and moreover a monk, he was not permitted to marry, though the inferior priests of his religion may do so. He spoke Russian, Illyrian, and French.

To my question of how he enjoyed himself at Vienna, which city, as I knew, he had twice visited, he gave a half evasive reply, and at once turned the conversation to another subject. It appeared that the Austrian capital was by no means attractive in his eyes. On my venturing to compliment him on the celebrity which the "Hermit of Cetigne" enjoyed as a poet, his answers were almost equally evasive, while his secretary, Signor Milacovich, kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, like a maiden blushing at a compliment bestowed on her.

"I am no longer of an age for poetry," exclaimed the Vladika; "youth is the period of poetic aspirations. Moreover," he added, "our poetry belongs, so to speak, to the whole people rather than to a single poet."

I asked him what style of poetry his was. He answered promptly and decisively, "Our poetry is exactly similar to Homer's."

This reply leaving nothing further to be desired, we changed the subject. His Eminence addressed some questions to us in his turn, but on subjects of no particular interest; and the audience, which had lasted half an hour, was at an end.

We afterwards paid a visit to Signor Milacovich in his apartments in the old monastery, with which visit, to judge from his very cordial reception of us, he seemed highly flattered. I need not tell you that we did not omit to distribute tolerably substantial parting gifts amongst the servants, especially to poor Toni, who had done the honours of Cetigne so successfully; and the delight evinced thereat by the poor fellows, money being so scarce amongst them, was something touching.

His Eminence sent word that he would be delighted to see us once more before our departure, and we accordingly were ushered into the Vladika's study, when the first object that attracted our attention was a life-size portrait of his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas of Russia. Here we bade adieu to the monkish sovereign of Montenegro, who kindly gave us one of his perianizas as a guard, ordered to conduct us safely as far as Cattaro. This fact, however, did not prevent several shots being fired at our little party as we passed the plateau of Niegusz. It seemed that the very day of our arrival at Cetigne, hostilities had broken out between the Montenegrins of the frontier and the Albanian peasants of the village to which the two muleteers who were with us belonged.

Spiro Martinovich once more placed himself at the head of our party, and we descended Monte Sella, not without fatigue, nor yet without danger. However, we arrived safe and sound at Cattaro the same evening. We had succeeded in our object, had explored the *terra incognita*, and, having slept off the fatigues incurred, saw no reason to repent of our visit to Montenegro.