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**THE SERVIAN TRAGEDY**  
**WITH**  
**SOME IMPRESSIONS OF MACEDONIA**







KING ALEXANDER.

PLATE I.



# THE SERVIAN TRAGEDY

WITH

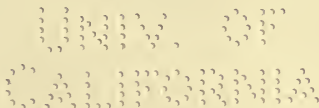
## SOME IMPRESSIONS OF MACEDONIA

BY

HERBERT VIVIAN, M.A.

OFFICER OF THE ROYAL SERVIAN ORDER OF TAKOVO; AUTHOR OF  
'SERVIA: THE POOR MAN'S PARADISE'; 'TUNISIA AND THE  
MODERN BARBARY PIRATES'; 'ABYSSINIA'; ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED*



LONDON

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TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE

TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY  
KING ALEXANDER I.  
PATRIOT, STATESMAN, HERO

—  
Requiescat in Pace  
ONE  
^



## PREFACE

IN the year 1897 I published a book entitled *Servia: the Poor Man's Paradise*. It was an almost unqualified eulogy, and I feel that some explanation is due for the apparent inconsistency of certain censures in the present volume.

I protest that my admiration is undiminished for the kindly hospitable people, who worked out their own emancipation from the Turkish Empire unaided, who have solved the problems of poverty for themselves, and who, almost alone in the world, have persisted in cherishing a peculiar affection for Great Britain. I regard the terrible crime of last June as the handiwork of a few desperadoes and I believe that Servia is to be pitied rather than blamed for having cherished such serpents within her bosom.

At the same time I must confess to a feeling of dismay, aroused by the absence of commotion and protest when the facts of the tragedy became known. I hoped against hope that the people would rise against any odds to avenge so foul a crime, and my belief in Servian loyalty would have been more completely justified if I could point to a hundred martyrs who had laid down their lives in the recklessness of their indignation.

Martyrs there were in the palace on that hideous night, and the name of Lazar Petrovich must always be revered wherever fidelity and courage command respect. But afterwards, in Belgrade, a spirit of fear seems to have been supreme. A few, perhaps many devoted men were slaughtered like sheep, and the newspapers recorded their "suicide." But the mass of the citizens remained calm, suffering themselves to be coerced into hollow demonstrations of joy, and if we might acquit the nation of complicity, we could not compliment it upon a display of heroism.

No doubt initiative as well as heroism would have been required to make a stand when a military conspiracy had conferred supreme power upon a gang of miscreants. We are told that a demagogue, who advocated a republic, was invited to dinner at the officers' club and informed that, unless he altered his principles, there would be "one head less in Belgrade" before the morning. He found the argument irresistible, and others were doubtless in a similar quandary. It is not every one who is cast in an heroic mould, and there are dangers in undue haste to condemn those who are suddenly put to a supreme test.

Still, it is difficult to repress sorrow for a whole people, which can be forced to appear to gloat over a hideous crime, or for a Metropolitan who can be coerced into countenancing a *Te Deum* for barbarous murder and proclaiming his congratulations from the steps of the altar. It may be urged that no object would have been gained by sacrificing lives for mere sentiment when no living cause remained to be served. That is good opportunism, no doubt, but there are moments when the repression of emotion assumes a hideous resemblance to condonation of crime.

I desire also to utter a protest against the strange callousness with which Europe received the news of the crime. Had the young Sovereigns perished by one of those catastrophes known as an "act of God" instead of by an act of the Devil, we should have seen Courts in mourning, Parliaments passing votes of condolence, and sympathy universal. It is true, as Dr. Johnson said, that the dead receive no praise because they can give no rewards, and the house of Obrenovich, leaving no heirs but only triumphant enemies, retains no practical interest for the mercenaries of politics or letters. Yet life would become very sordid if sentiment were entirely excluded, if monarchs as well as politicians acted only with an eye to the main chance on every occasion.

The royal and imperial congratulations to an accessory after (if not before) the bloody fact were remarkable. For obvious reasons, the Tsar cannot be expected to cherish deep sympathies with regicide, and he has been credited with a decent show of feeling on receiving the terrible news from Belgrade. His "wishes for the prosperity of your person," and his sardonic ejaculation, "May God help you," can hardly have been other than ironical; they will scarcely go far to encourage the new King. Nor will the Emperor of Austria's references to a "heinous crime" be altogether palatable to the Prince who owes his throne thereto. But I am concerned to think that Karageorgevich is evidently to find some toleration from the two Powers who alone could have insisted upon the execution of justice.

Russia and Austria have arrogated to themselves a control, almost amounting to suzerainty, over the Balkan States, and it becomes very difficult for other countries to intervene as European policemen without their concurrence.

The Russian Government, however, while tolerating Karageorgevich, did apparently put forward punishment of the murderers as a necessary condition, and the representatives of nearly every Power have since been withdrawn from Belgrade. Still, it is difficult to repress a regret that more active disapproval should not have been exhibited towards an outrage which, to take the lowest ground, affords dangerous encouragement to the apostles of disorder. Even in this country, certain news-sheets have complacently asserted, in effect, that kings who attempt to govern as well as reign deserve no pity if their subjects rise up against them.

I can appreciate the difficulties which would have beset Peter Karageorgevich had he cleared himself of complicity and instituted a bloody assize to try the men who called him to the throne. But he must not be allowed to profit by an outrage which has scarcely been surpassed in all the hideous annals of crime. Should his hand falter, it must be fortified by diplomatic warnings, even by international intervention. For every champion of monarchy and respecter of its sacred traditions must insist with all possible vehemence that the immunity of regicide shall not be permitted to encourage other criminals to follow in the footsteps of the dastardly butchers who have trailed the name of Servia in the mire.

V.

BRIGHTON, *December* 1903.



## TRANSLITERATION

THE spelling of Servian names has been attempted in so many different ways that a foreigner may be pardoned a certain feeling of hopelessness. When I look through the large collection of visiting cards with which my Servian friends favoured me, I am discouraged by the absence of all system in their transliteration; they seem to grope helplessly after French, German, Hungarian, and other fancy pronunciations. I was at first tempted to adopt the Croatian system, because the Servian and Croatian languages are practically identical, and the Croats use an easy variety of the Latin alphabet. But the Croatian letters *ž*, *c*, *č*, *ć*, and *š* would confuse an English reader, and, with the exception of *ć*, they possess easy English equivalents, namely, *ž* = *zh* (answering to the French *j* in *jour*), *c* = *ts*, *č* = *ch*, and *š* = *sh*. *Ć* has a liquid sound, which it is impossible to render by any combination of our letters. It occurs at the end of most Servian patronymics, and for practical purposes may be rendered by *ch*, though *chj* would be nearer the mark.

The vowels are sounded as in Italian, and *j* as in German (= our *y*); the compound letters *lj*, *nj*, *dj*, which are single letters in Servian, answer:—

*lj* to the French *li* in *lieu* or the Italian *gl* in *gli*.

*nj* to the Spanish *ñ* or the Italian *gn* in *ogni*.

*dj* to the French *di* in *Dieu*, or to the sound at the beginning of the English word *duty*.

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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

THE history of Servia resolves itself into three parts: (1) The rise and fall of a Servian Empire, (2) Turkish rule, (3) national dynasties. I will give the salient points as briefly as possible.

#### (1) A.D. 550-1463

6th and 7th Centuries.—Invasion of Mœsia Superior by Servian bands from beyond the Carpathians. Then as now their rivals were the Bulgarians, a Tartar tribe speaking a Slav dialect.

Middle of 9th Century.—Conversion of Servia to Christianity and first Servo-Bulgarian war. Tsar Simeon of Bulgaria ravaged Servia and blotted it out of the map. Then the Byzantine Empire swallowed up Bulgaria and Servia.

11th Century.—The Servians began a guerilla warfare in Montenegro.

12th Century.—Servia began her career with the dynasty of Stefan Nemanja. He annexed Bosnia in 1169, was forced to crawl before the Byzantine Emperor with bare feet and a halter, proclaimed his independence in 1185, and

received the Emperor's daughter as a bride for his son. Barbarossa visited him at Belgrade. In 1195 he abdicated and retired to a cloister.

His eldest son Stefan "the first crowned" was recognised by the Emperor Baldwin as "by the grace of God, King of all Servian lands even to the sea-coast."

June 28, 1330.—Stefan Urosh broke up the Bulgarian Empire at the battle of Velbuzhd.

His son Stefan, surnamed DUSHAN (Darling), inspired a wild devotion, which has not yet died out. In 1340 he had consolidated dominions extending over the greater part of the peninsula and was known as "Emperor of the Romans, Tsar of Macedonia, loving the Christ." The Byzantine Emperor, in alarm, intrigued with the Turks, and on Michaelmas Day 1356 Dushan set out for Constantinople with 80,000 men. But on the 18th of December, when his vanguard were actually at the gates of the capital, the hopes of Servia were suddenly dashed by his death.

Then the Servian Empire began to crumble. A final stand was made by LAZAR, the last Servian Tsar, the hero of innumerable songs and legends. He gathered together a host, like the leaves of the forest in number, and on the 15th of June 1389 fought a decisive battle at Kosovo, "the field of the blackbirds." It is the theme of every Servian hymn and the Montenegrins still wear black bands on their caps in mourning for the defeat. Lazar and his nine brothers-in-law and the flower of the Servian aristocracy perished, and black crows brought the news to Tsarina Militsa as she sat watching in her tower at Krushevats. Sultan Murad was killed in his tent after the battle by Milosh Obilich, who is still celebrated as a hero for the deed.

The Servian Empire had fallen, never to be restored.





For seventy years the Turks allowed Servian chieftains to exercise a nominal power. In 1440 Servia was governed by a Pasha. The last blow for independence was struck by John Hunyad, "the white Knight of Wallachia," whom Turks and Christians alike regarded as a supernatural being. By the Treaty of Szegedin, 1444, he secured the evacuation of Servia by the Turks, but in 1463 all Servians had either accepted Turkish rule or emigrated to Hungary.

(2) 1463-1804

A long period of Turkish rule was not the unmitigated curse which modern prejudice describes. It had the advantages and disadvantages of paternal government, assuring law and order but weakening individual character. At least the Turks saved Servia from the lot of Transylvania, where an alien rule seeks to obliterate the national religion and language. The Servians were ruled for five hundred years in much the same way as their brethren in the vilayet of Kosovo are ruled to-day. They were lightly taxed until they made an exhibition of riches, when the greater part of their possessions ran a risk of confiscation. They were exempted from military service. They were allowed to manage their own local affairs and, until Austria interfered in the eighteenth century, they enjoyed their own ecclesiastical government. They sang of Dushan and Kosovo, and they cherished a suppressed sympathy with brigandage, much as they do to-day. But they were not unhappy, and they reserved their sense of oppression for the pot-valiance of a stanza.

A sketch of Servian history during the Turkish dominion would be strangely incomplete without a reference to Marko Kraljevich, who is the Slav Cid or King Arthur, the

hero of innumerable legends which vividly portray the national ideals. Kraljevič means "King's son," the King in question being Vukashin, who supplanted Urosh, son of Dushan. Marko protested against this act of disloyalty, whereupon Vukashin cursed him, praying that he might have neither tomb nor posterity and might be doomed to serve the "Tsar of the Turks." But Urosh blessed him and prayed that he might know no equal in wisdom and prowess and that his name might everywhere be celebrated so long as sun and moon should endure. "Thus they spake, and thus it came to pass," is the commentary of an old Servian pesma (ballad). Marko fought in the Sultan's armies, but the Sultan feared him "for the wrath of Marko was terrible"; and though the peerless knight has no known sepulture, he lived, if legends may be trusted, for three hundred years; he still lives in the heart of every patriotic Servian, and there are many who believe that he will awake one day from his long sleep and come forth to restore the glories of the ancient Empire. Every year, on the anniversary of his slava (the Servian family festival), he may still be seen near a little chapel in the vilayet of Kosovo, careering the forests on his faithful skewbald charger Sharats, who bore him through all his famous campaigns. It is significant of Servia's attitude towards the Turks that Marko should remain her prominent hero, despite his prowess in the service of the Sultan. Turkish suzerainty was regarded as the lesser of two evils, and in accepting it Marko was merely an exponent of the spirit of his age. Moreover, the haze of legend has transfigured him, and it is impossible to criticise too closely the political morality of one who slew dragons and vampires, became blood-brother to a vila or wood-nymph, and may almost be numbered among the hajdutsi (outlaws).

An Austrian army, awfully arrayed, overran Servia towards the end of the eighteenth century, but it received scanty support from the people, who had no cause to envy the fate of Croatia. When at last they rose in insurrection, it was not against the Sultan, but against his insubordinate Janissaries.

(3) 1804–1868

In February 1804 the Janissaries, having killed the Pasha of Servia, organised a general massacre of Servians, fearing their loyalty to the Sultan. Nearly every notable Servian throughout the land was put to death in the course of one day. Only a few succeeded in escaping to the mountains, but among them was George Petrovich, who will always be remembered in history under the name of KARA<sup>1</sup> GEORGE.

It is difficult to recall a more fantastic character or a stranger career. A humble neat-herd from the forests of Shumadia, he joined the Austrian raid, but his lack of discipline soon brought him into trouble and he became an outlaw until peace was restored. Then he settled down as a pig-breeder and soon established a lucrative trade with the Austrians at the frontier.

When the Janissaries came to kill him, his experience as an outlaw stood him in good stead, for he was sure of finding guns and a welcome among his old associates in the mountains. His gang formed a nucleus for the uprising of Servia. In a few days the whole country was under arms—scythes and pitchforks for the most part—determined to sell every life at the dearest possible price. He was chosen to be “Commander of the Servians,” and, later on, “Supreme Chief,” but still as champion of the Sultan’s law and

<sup>1</sup> Black.

order against the Janissaries. After defeating them in pitched battle and capturing the fortress of Shabats, he had gathered together a respectable army and proceeded to invest Belgrade. With the spoils of their victories—Arab horses, gold and silver arms, glittering harness—the insurgents presented a brave show. The Sultan, Selim III., realising the character of the movement, ordered the Pasha of Bosnia to assist it, and the Janissaries saw themselves compelled to capitulate. The Servians were then thanked for their loyalty and politely requested to return to their farms. But they now began to realise their power and required guarantees against the recurrence of massacres. A mission was sent to the Porte to propose conditions, but the Sultan retorted by clapping the delegates into prison.

A few thousand mountaineers were now face to face with the whole force of the Ottoman Empire. The Pasha of Nish was sent forth with an army. He made very light of his foes, boasting that all he needed was a few ropes with which to hang the leaders, a few woollen caps and pocket-knives to propitiate the peasants. But he met with unexpected resistance, and had scarcely recovered from his surprise when he received the news that Kara George was upon him with 10,000 men. He turned tail at once and died of shame shortly after. But the Turks were not likely to accept defeat easily, and Kara George, now master of all the interior of Servia, saw the necessity of preparing for mortal combat. He contrived to capture Semendria before the news came that the Sultan had sent forth two other armies. Thirty thousand Bosnians crossed the river Kolubara and the Servians disbanded at their approach; 40,000 Turks appeared on the eastern frontier, and it seemed that the hopes of Servia were to be dashed at the outset.

But this was the hour of Kara George, which must ever immortalise him as a guerilla leader. With 1500 men he opposed the advance of the Bosnians. Knowing every inch of the country, his followers enjoyed an enormous advantage, despite the disparity of numbers. The Bosnians seemed to be fighting invisible foes and were being rapidly decimated. They concentrated their forces under the walls of Shabats and forced a battle in the neighbouring plain of Mishar (August 4, 1806). Kara George seemed almost superhuman. His colossal figure towered above his comrades, his voice thundered like a hurricane, the sight of his prodigious valour nerved the most timorous. His victory was complete, only a few scattered fugitives being able to escape across the frontier. Meanwhile the Turks in Eastern Servia were being harassed by the usual guerilla warfare, and when Kara George arrived upon the scene with his triumphant troops, the Pasha offered terms of peace.

In October 1806 the Porte was ready to concede self-government to the Servians, provided her suzerainty were acknowledged and a tribute paid. When, however, the time came to ratify the arrangement, Russia was on the eve of war with Buonaparte and the Sultan was encouraged to recall his offer. Kara George resolved to continue the war, and on the 13th of December 1806 he captured Belgrade. Hideous scenes of massacre ensued. The garrison was cut to pieces, despite promises of safe-conduct, and even the poorest Moslem citizens could only save their lives by submitting to baptism.

By the end of 1807 a settled Servian Government had been called into existence. A Senate and a Skupshtina were appointed, but Kara George had a short way with representative bodies which resisted his will. His soldiers received orders to point their muskets through the windows

of the Parliament House, and the legislators soon saw the wisdom of reconsidering hasty decisions.

In the spring of 1809 he conceived the idea of annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. He established his headquarters at Novi-Bazar, when he received intelligence of a disaster on the eastern frontier of Serbia. One leader refused to succour another in the hour of need; the commander at Nish exploded a powder magazine and sacrificed the whole garrison rather than fall into the hands of the Turks, and the victors erected a tower composed of the skulls of their victims. Kara George hastened across Serbia with incredible speed, only to find the Servians in a panic. Such was his fury that he ordered his troops to fire upon their compatriots. The condition of affairs seemed desperate. The Turks advanced to the centre of the country, spreading devastation in their path. However, Russia came to the rescue, the Turks were driven back, Serbia emerged with her independence more secure and her territory extended.

But the prestige of Kara George had suffered and the country resented his autocracy. He was, however, very skilful in detaching his leading opponents. Among these was a young man named Milosh Obrenovich. Brought before a tribunal, he refused all concessions and coolly observed, "I know that you will not condemn me, for I am beloved of the people." Kara George took a fancy to him and attached him to his person.

In 1811 Kara George was Prince of the Servians with practically unlimited power. Two years later he was a fugitive and an exile, branded with the stigma of cowardice.

The event which led up to this disaster was the Treaty of Bucharest, by which (May 28, 1812) Russia agreed that the Servians should retain self-government but submit to

Turkey. This was interpreted by the Porte to mean a permanent occupation of Servia and a complete disarmament of the Servians. This time the mistake of despising the Servians was not made, and the Grand Vizier took the field in person. Veljko, a former outlaw, bore the brunt of the first onslaught and only succumbed because Kara George refused him the succour he demanded. Had Kara George been true to his duty and his traditions, the situation might yet have been saved. But he seemed suddenly to have lost his nerve. He hesitated; he retreated; none knew where he was. The whole country, in despair, took up the plaintive refrain of a national ballad: "Kara George, Kara George, where art thou?" The answer was that he had taken all his portable treasures, buried the rest and fled ignominiously to Austria, abandoning his people to their fate (October 13, 1813).

Servia would undoubtedly have relapsed into subjection had it not been for the advent and miraculous exploits of MILOSH OBRENOVICH, who deserves to be regarded as her real emancipator rather than Kara George. His father, Theodore, a poor farm-labourer, had married the widow of a rich peasant named Obren. As a boy, Milosh tended the pigs of his father and of his half-brother, Milan, with whom he was out in the insurrection of 1804. Milan died a wealthy man and Milosh took his name of Obrenovich on succeeding to the property.

When Kara George fled, the Servians dispersed and Milosh was urged to escape across the frontier. He replied that he could not leave his old mother, his wife and his children to be sold like sheep. He collected a few resolute men in the mountains, but the case seemed so desperate that he was soon left almost alone. The Turks, however, had no wish to exterminate the Servians, and Milosh

received overtures from the Pasha of Belgrade to assist in the work of pacification.

Milosh was a statesman as well as a warrior, and welcomed the opportunity of saving Serbia. He went from village to village, carrying with him a message of hope. The Pasha became more and more conciliatory. "This," quoth he, "is my adopted son. He is wise and submissive to-day, but I confess that more than once I have had to escape at a gallop to avoid his blows. Here, my son," he pursued, stretching out a scarred hand, "see where your teeth have bitten me." Milosh replied diplomatically, "I will heal that hand by covering it with gold." It was the moment for craft rather than force. Milosh accepted every mark of favour and even helped the Turks to stifle premature insurrections. This was true patriotism, for the hero was only biding his time.

When the hour struck for action, he was the first to give the signal and lead on to victory. Finding that the Pasha was not to be trusted, Milosh fled to the mountains of Rudnik, and on Palm Sunday 1815 he raised the standard of insurrection at Takovo, which is accordingly known as the cradle of Servian liberty. Arms, which had been hidden away in the forests and mountain caverns, were brought out, and Milosh was soon at the head of a formidable array. The old guerilla tactics were adopted, women, children and monks transforming themselves into sharpshooters behind every rock. After a series of successful surprises, the insurgents obtained a signal victory on the Kolubara and captured several cannon. Refugees began to return from Austria and soon Milosh was able to march upon Pozharevats, which was taken after prodigies of valour. When ammunition failed, the Servians fought with their daggers, even with their nails and teeth. Milosh



showed himself as different from Kara George in victory as in distress. The Turks were allowed to depart with the honours of war, and they bore testimony to the care which he lavished upon their wounded.

It was not, however, to be expected that the Sultan would submit to the loss of Servia without a struggle. Two armies were sent out; Milosh defeated one, the other made proposals of peace. Just as the leaders of former insurrections had claimed to fight, not against the Sultan but against his enemies the Janissaries, so now Milosh complained only of the Pasha's tyranny at Belgrade and protested his fealty to the Sultan. This afforded the Turks a pretext for honourable retreat, and local self-government was promptly conceded, chiefly perhaps through fear of Russia.

The Pasha then had recourse to intrigue, seeking to stir up jealousies against Milosh, who was, however, well able to take care of himself. His most dangerous rival proved to be Kara George, who suddenly returned from Bessarabia, intending to head a fresh insurrection against the Turkish garrisons in Servia. Milosh quickly perceived that such a movement was premature and sent Vuitsa Vulitsevich, an ex-vojvode, to persuade Kara George to stay away. Vuitsa exceeded his instructions and, finding Kara George obdurate, cut off his head (at Semendria, July 24, 1817) and sent it to Milosh, who was beside himself with grief.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The enemies of the Obrenovich dynasty assert that Milosh ordered Kara George to be killed, but I have always doubted the truth of the charge. Now, however, a writer in the *Contemporary Review* (July 1903) has published a sort of autobiographical testament alleged to have been written by Milosh. It is stated to have been taken from the Servian archives by Milan and left to his illegitimate son, who now resides with his mother at Constantinople and is said to aspire

The old chief was buried with much solemnity at Topola and Milosh's wife accompanied the remains for several days' journey on their way to the grave; but the Turks carried off his head and exposed it on the gates of the Seraglio at Constantinople with the superscription: "Head of the famous Servian bandit, Kara George."

It may be interesting to compare the characters of the two leaders, who founded the rival dynasties of Servia. Both were of peasant origin, but that is not remarkable, seeing that Servia, unlike Roumania, possessed no native aristocracy. Kara George was brought up in poverty, Milosh in comparative affluence. Kara George was subject to outbursts of violence, but habitually moody. At the time of the Austrian raid he set out for the frontier with his pigs and his parents. His aged father refused to cross the Save, whereupon Kara George drew a pistol and shot him through the head. On another occasion, when his mother tried to cheat him out of a bee-hive, he bonneted

to the reversion of the throne. The following passages occur in this remarkable document:—

We served faithfully Karageorgevich (Kara George) until he grew puffed up and became a tyrant. He sought to become the ally of a great emperor and to entangle us in his quarrels. Our family saw through him and judged him righteously according to the course he had taken, and we revolted against Karageorgevich and turned him away. We should have killed him had we caught him, for he treacherously slew our brother. He came back twelve years later. On learning that he was in the country, I sent word to the chief of Palanka to send me his head. Vouch cut it off and I received it from him, and Servia has had rest and quarrelled with nobody ever since.

But for the fact that there would seem to be no particular object in inventing such a document, I should have no hesitation in doubting its authenticity. Even as it is, I cannot see what possible object its present holders can hope to gain by its publication. In any case, it comes from a tainted source and I venture to adhere to my original version of the event, supported as it is by the best authorities.

her with it and stalked off, regardless of the piercing shrieks which she emitted at every sting. Again, hearing his only brother accused as a gay Lothario, he seized him in a blind fury and hanged him over his own door-post with a bridle. Once he killed a faithful comrade at a whisper of treachery; when he found out his mistake he shed tears like a baby. But except under the influence of wine or sudden emotions, he was invariably taciturn. Grim and black, he would sit for whole days, gnawing his nails and never uttering a word. He could not read or write, and remained a peasant to the end of his days. Neither riches nor fine clothes nor gay trappings had any attraction for him. One day he damaged a Russian decoration while hooping a cask. When he was Prince, his daughter still carried her pail with the other maidens to the village well.

The only similarity between him and Milosh was that both were despotic. Milosh had a gay character and a keen sense of humour. He never lost his head or his temper. He knew when to bend before a torrent in order to rise up again when it should be past. When he resolved upon a deed of violence, it was after mature reflection and for a definite purpose. When a rebellion broke out against his rule, he took extreme measures: foreign participators had their hands and tongues cut off in Kragujevats market-place before his eyes, and home traitors were broken upon the wheel. This was not wrathful vengeance but a deliberate warning to others who might be tempted to rebel. His methods were rough and ready. For instance, when he desired to improve his capital, he ordered a whole suburb of Belgrade to be set on fire. His ideas of government were derived from the Turks, under whose rule he had been brought up. He was willing that a great national assembly should confer on him

the title of Prince of the Servians (November 6, 1817), but he proceeded to govern without a Parliament, levying what taxes he pleased. His ideal ruler was a pasha and, like a pasha of olden days, he appropriated whatever property chanced to take his fancy, whether lands, houses, jewels, or lovely maidens. Yet he was not unpopular. Kara George never had a friend, but Milosh was hail-fellow-well-met with every one. He used to sit in a little kiosque, which he had constructed by the roadside at Topchider, and stop the peasants as they passed, to chat with them about their private affairs and listen to their opinions and grievances.

It was not until 1830 that Milosh obtained formal recognition from the Porte. The hattı-sherif prescribed that he should administer the affairs of Servia by and with the consent of an assembly of Servian notables, and Europe was confronted by the strange spectacle of the Sultan imposing constitutional methods and the elected Prince of Servia standing out for absolutism.

This absolutism was maintained by Milosh. He raised and abased his officials quite arbitrarily and punished with the bastinado all who displeased him. But a chronic conspiracy was fomented, chiefly at the instigation of Russia, and in 1835 a formidable insurrection took place. A constitution was extorted, conferring democratic institutions, for which Servia was wholly unfitted. But it soon proved unworkable and Milosh, as a wise Prince, was compelled to disregard it. At this time Colonel Hodges was accredited as British consul and sought to counteract Russian intrigues, but Russian diplomacy carried the day, and, by what has been called "a masterpiece of Russo-Turkish liberalism," a council was established, practically setting aside Milosh's rule and governing in his

stead. The Prince of Servia was now virtually a prisoner in his own Konak.

At last Milosh, receiving assurances from the Russian consul that he would thereby secure the succession for his son, abdicated on the 13th of June 1839. This state-stroke was the work of the enemies of Servia, and Milosh left the country amid the tears of his subjects.

His eldest son, Milan, was then incurably ill, and died on the 8th of July 1839, without knowing of the dignity which had been conferred upon him. He was succeeded by his next brother, Michael, then about sixteen years of age. The Porte imposed Regents, against whom Michael protested. Several thousands of peasants rose in arms, marched upon Belgrade and took Michael away from his Regents, who fled to Constantinople. Michael now proceeded to govern according to democratic ideas, but intrigues of every sort beset the youthful Prince.

A man's enemies are notoriously those of his own household, and Michael soon found the least submissive of his subjects was his mother, Ljubitsa. She was very angry with him because he would not participate in a futile Bulgarian insurrection, and she proceeded to conspire to bring about the return of her husband. She was ever present in the palace, pale and gloomy, eternally reproaching him as the usurper of his father's rights.

He set out to suppress her conspiracy, and was encouraged by the crowds who flocked to his standard. A parley was proposed, and the insurgents made impossible demands. Michael refused to listen to them and had the mortification of seeing all his troops melt away. He retired to Austria, and the younger son of Kara George was elected Prince (1842).

Alexander Karageorgevich had been living quietly in

Servia on a pension granted him by Milosh, and had not dreamed of aspiring to the throne. He was now thirty-six years of age. His character was cold and his reign proved somnolent, but the country enjoyed a certain respite from turmoil. He was, however, accused of nepotism and despotism, all the chief posts of state being filled by members of his wife's family and no Skupshtina being summoned for ten years. On the discovery (October 1857) of a plot in which several senators were implicated, he sought to suppress the Senate. The conspirators were tortured and condemned to death, but on the Sultan's intervention were merely exhibited in chains in the streets of Belgrade and sent into exile. Discontent grew and, in November 1858, Alexander Karageorgevich was constrained to call a Skupshtina, which drew up a grand remonstrance and summoned him to abdicate. He took refuge in the Turkish fortress at Belgrade, whereupon (December 23, 1858) the Skupshtina passed a vote deposing him and recalling Milosh.

There was something pathetic and dramatic about the return of the venerable Liberator at the age of seventy-eight, after nearly twenty years of exile. His restoration was received with frenzied joy by the whole people, whom he proceeded to govern once more in his old patriarchal way. It is related how, shortly before his death, being annoyed by the sight of some ill-kept fields near Bania, he sent for the owner and said angrily, "If ever I see thy domain in so disgraceful a condition again, I will yoke thee to thine own plough and use the whip on thee myself,"—a threat which he would not have hesitated for an instant to carry out.

He died on the 26th of September 1860, and was again succeeded by his son Michael, who now showed himself a

resolute ruler. He curtailed the privileges of Parliament, established a standing army and did much to raise the position of his country. As a fitting complement to the work of his father, the true Liberator of Servia, he succeeded in expelling the Turkish garrisons from the fortresses which they still occupied.

A pretext for raising the question was afforded by the bombardment of Belgrade on the 17th of June 1862. The blame for that unfortunate occurrence is very difficult to apportion. No doubt the presence of an alien garrison was a standing grievance in Belgrade, and quarrels were frequent. One day two Servian boys and two Turkish soldiers disputed who should first draw water from a well near the rival police stations. They came to blows, and the boys were killed in the scuffle. Servian gendarmes rushed out to arrest the soldiers but were killed by a discharge of musketry from the Turkish police station. Fighting became general, the whole population was soon under arms, and the Turkish quarter was pillaged. The consuls of the Powers intervened and an armistice was concluded, but next day the garrison took alarm and bombarded the town for a period of five hours. Peace was only restored by the intervention of the British and French consuls, who risked their lives by becoming hostages to the contending parties. The significant fact is that a great number of persons seem to have known beforehand that something was about to take place. After this event Michael naturally agitated for a withdrawal of the garrisons, but Turkish diplomacy contrived to delay the accomplishment of his desire until 1867.

Meanwhile Alexander Karageorgevich had not tamely accepted his deposition, and various plots were contrived by his partisans. These culminated, on the 10th of

June 1868, in the murder of Michael in the park near Topchider.

This park is full of trees and thickets and beautiful green glades, where herds of deer disport themselves. All round it are thick palisades, some 14 feet high, intended to keep out the wolves who come down from the mountains in winter time. The park and forest have always been a favourite resort of Servian sovereigns. At about five o'clock in the afternoon of the 10th of June 1868 Prince Michael was taking a walk along a narrow path in the woods, accompanied by his aunt Tomanja Obrenovich, his cousin Anka Constantinovich, her daughter Catherine, then eighteen years of age, Captain Garashanin (the son of a former Minister), and a courtier named Timarchevich. At a clearing in the forest they met four men, who stood aside and doffed their hats. The Prince replied to their greeting, and they immediately fired a volley with their pistols, killing the Prince and Anka Constantinovich, and wounding her daughter Catherine. Captain Garashanin attempted to defend the body of the Prince, but was shot through the arm and then stunned with the butt end of a pistol. The rest of the party took to flight, but were pursued and wounded by one of the murderers. Another of the criminals took out a long knife and stabbed the face and body of the Prince repeatedly. Three of the murderers were named Lazar Marich, formerly president of a judicial tribunal in the district of Pozharevats, Constantine Radovanovich and Stanjevo Rogich, who had organised this conspiracy on behalf of Alexander Karageorgevich, whom it was intended to proclaim Prince immediately after the murder. This plot failed, however, because the army remained faithful to the Obrenovich dynasty and the people were filled with

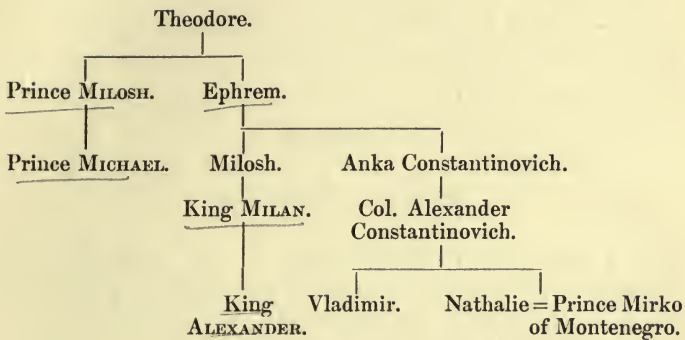


horror by the terrible deed. Beside the actual murderers the following partisans of Karageorgevich were condemned to death and shot in Belgrade: Captain Mladen Nenadovich, Captain Sima Nenadovich and Svetosar Nenadovich, all three brothers-in-law of Alexander Karageorgevich, and Captain Matsajlovich. The Servian Courts also condemned Alexander Karageorgevich to twenty years' penal servitude for complicity in the plot, but the Hungarian Government refused to give him up. He was, however, brought before the Hungarian Courts at Budapest, imprisoned in the fortress in January 1870, and acquitted a few months later on account of insufficient evidence. A superior Court overrode this acquittal and condemned him to eight years' imprisonment, but this sentence was reversed on appeal and the Prince was set free. It is difficult to say for certain how far he was guilty, but the probabilities are that he was at least aware of the conspiracy and took no steps to prevent it.

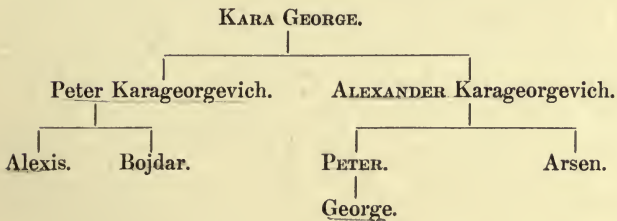
## TABLE OF SERVIAN RULERS

GEORGE PETROVICH (known as Kara George)	(known as Kara George)	Guerilla leader, 1804. Prince, 1811. Fled, Oct. 1813.
MILOSH OBRENOVICH	. .	Led insurrection, 1815. Prince, Nov. 6, 1817. Abdicated, June 13, 1839.
MILAN OBRENOVICH	. .	Prince, June 13, 1839. Died, July 8, 1839.
MICHAEL OBRENOVICH	. .	Prince, July 8, 1839. Abdicated, 1842.
ALEXANDER KARAGEORGEVICH		Prince, 1842. Deposed, Dec. 23, 1858. Died, 1885.
MILOSH OBRENOVICH (2nd reign).	(2nd reign).	Restored, Dec. 23, 1858. Died, Sept. 26, 1860.
MICHAEL OBRENOVICH (2nd reign)	(2nd reign)	Restored, Sept. 26, 1860. Murdered, June 10, 1868.
MILAN OBRENOVICH	. .	Prince, June 22, 1868. King, March 1882. Abdicated, March 1889. Died, Feb. 1901.
ALEXANDER OBRENOVICH	. .	King, March 1889. Murdered, June 11, 1903.
PETER KARAGEORGEVICH	. .	King, June 1903. (?)

THE OBRENOVICH FAMILY



THE KARAGEORGEVICH FAMILY



## CHAPTER II

### MILAN AND NATHALIE

MILAN was only fourteen years of age when he was summoned from Paris as next of kin, being grandson of old Milosh's brother Ephrem. But he had been brought up in Paris and had all the precocity of a French school-boy. A course of light novels and the conversation of his lycée had initiated him very early into the mysteries of intrigues; his mother, Marie Catarji, a Frenchwoman of Roumanian origin, had bequeathed to him a thoroughly Latin temperament, gay, reckless, and unscrupulous. To call her fast would be a polite euphemism. She was early separated from her husband, lived for a time with an Oriental nobleman, and settled down as a demi-rep Queen at German gambling spas and in Paris among the rakes of the Second Empire. Milan had been brought up to believe that all women, as well as all men, have their price; he heard nothing but sneers at serious things and the only ideals held before his young eyes were cards and theatres and varieties of vice. Educated by a Paris professor, who was an atheist and a cynic, he had even as a boy none of the restraints of religion and practically no code of morals. To amuse himself was his only ideal, and he soon discovered the limitations thereof. He was always

selfish and never good-natured, but he had a charm of manner, an apparent bonhomie, which attracted strange devotion from all sorts and conditions of men throughout his life.

Utterly blasé at the age of fourteen, he was yet ingenuous enough to welcome the sensation of sudden elevation to a throne. On receiving the summons of Servia after his cousin Michael's murder, he set out with a light heart, anticipating new pleasures and new delights. He was destined to be disappointed at the outset. Until he came of age he was a mere puppet in the hands of three Regents, one of whom was M. Ristich, afterwards the bullying Regent of King Alexander. Milan was soon yearning for the freedom and flattery and juvenile dissipations which he had enjoyed in Paris. Ristich, a master of intrigue, a man of greedy ambition, a being utterly destitute of scruples, had no difficulty in reading the character of his Prince. He saw to it that Milan had every distraction—wine and women, cards and billiards, all that might divert his attention from affairs of State. Whenever Milan, whose character was that of an autocratic spoiled child, attempted to assert himself or showed any signs of interesting himself in the work of government, Ristich was as firm as adamant. He set himself to corrupt the character of a boy, whose every instinct was rotten, and he had an easy task. Flatterers and ministers of pleasure were specially selected for Court service, and the Prince was carefully diverted from all studies which might have fitted him for sovereign rule. It was characteristic of Milan that throughout his life he yearned for what was withheld and wearied of what came within his reach. The distractions of Belgrade soon palled upon him. Alternately he sighed for the more highly flavoured enjoyments of Paris

and meditated the possibility of dismissing his Regents by a state-stroke, which he had not the pluck to carry out. He was shrewd enough to see that he had no real friends, no one whom he could trust, and his plots never developed beyond the region of dreams. He laid traps for his associates and courtiers, vented his spite in petty revenges or denunciations, suspected every one, grew harder and colder and more cynical every year. In 1872 he came of age and saw the departure of his Regents with undisguised delight, but his delight was short-lived.

His reign was marked by two wars and many public scandals. In 1876 Russia, preparing the ground for a raid upon Constantinople, instigated a rising in Bosnia and prevailed upon Serbia and Montenegro to attack the Ottoman Empire. While outward expressions of disapproval were issued by the Imperial Chancery, Russia was secretly organising the campaign. Not only money and munitions were forthcoming, but a whole corps of Russian officers under General Chernajeff was sent to take command of the Servian army. The whole affair was, perhaps intentionally, mismanaged, the Turks obtained a decisive victory at Aleksinats, and Serbia was forced to come to terms in March 1877. The fact that Russia did not officially support the Servians aroused great resentment in Serbia, and, when at last Russia did declare war, Serbia refused to resume hostilities until it was clear Russia meant business. Russia, however, had her revenge after the war by making Bulgaria an independent State, and the cession of Bosnia to Austria by the Treaty of Berlin aroused widespread indignation. But the complete independence of Serbia was now recognised by Europe and in March 1882 Milan assumed the title of King.

We have seen how Bulgaria and Serbia were traditional

foes in the Middle Ages, rising and falling at each other's expense like the two ends of a see-saw. This feeling was called once more into being by the reappearance of a Bulgarian State upon the scene, and, when Bulgaria suddenly annexed Eastern Roumelia in 1885, the whole Servian nation insisted upon war. The usual frontier incident afforded a pretext and on the 13th of November Milan declared war. Every one anticipated a mere military parade, and the Servians took Vidin and Tsaribrod without difficulty. But on the 18th of November, after desperate fighting, the Bulgarians were completely victorious at Slivnitsa. A curious incident of the battle was the simultaneous flight of the two Sovereigns, Prince Alexander galloping back headlong to Sofia and King Milan towards Belgrade, each under the impression that his army was routed. After Slivnitsa the Servians continued to fight well, but their most desperate efforts were in vain, and the Bulgarians crossed the frontier on the 26th of November. Austria now intervened, and on the 3rd of March 1886 peace was signed at Bucharest on the basis of the status quo ante.

A strange corollary to the war was the speedy loss of their thrones by each of the contending Sovereigns. Russia was incensed against Prince Alexander for his annexation of Eastern Roumelia, and against King Milan for having shown, since 1876, a disinclination to remain her cat's-paw. Prince Alexander was kidnapped in the night of the 21st of August 1886, and carried off to Russia. On his return at the end of the month he displayed the same cowardice which had induced him to flee to Sofia at the first rumour of a reverse during the war. He sent an abject telegram to the Tsar, and abdicated on the 6th of September.

Milan, too, seemed pursued by a relentless fate. In

every relation of life, not only in war but in love and in kingship, disaster dogged his footsteps. Though so cynical about women, he could never resist the flutter of a petticoat. A coward in the field, he aspired to be a universal conqueror in the boudoir. His first serious attraction was for a widow several years older than himself. It was almost a forecast of the story of Alexander and Draga, only that Milan had not the determination of his son. Milan announced that he intended to marry the lady. His ministers, the friends of his dynasty, prominent men of all parties, all protested with the utmost vehemence. He raved, he shut himself up, he would see no one, he vowed he would abdicate rather than give her up; but the paroxysm passed, he became quite docile and soon thought no more about her.

Then he beheld Nathalie, the lovely daughter of Colonel Keshko, a Russian owning vast estates in Bessarabia. She was home for a holiday from school at Odessa when they first met, and even then, at the age of sixteen, her marvellous beauty had already been talked about far and near. Rarely had so many charms been concentrated in one single person. Beside her striking features, her dark limpid eyes and her exquisite figure, she possessed grace, sympathy, wit, wisdom, dignity, sweetness and goodness to a transcendent degree. She had been brought up with considerable simplicity for the daughter of an important territorial magnate, and in character she presented a great contrast to her destined husband. Impulsiveness was their only common trait. Milan was then what most women would consider good-looking, sturdy without being muscular, boastful without being brave, and his conspicuous self-satisfaction often imposed even upon shrewd observers for a while. The fair Nathalie captivated him at once, body and soul, and



he determined to seek her hand in marriage at once. How far she reciprocated his regard is hard to tell. In her country, marriages are not made in the heaven of romantic inclination but in the cold atmosphere of parental calculation. Her father may have reflected that she was very young for the responsibilities of the holy estate but that she would accomplish a high destiny by occupying a throne.

To herself it must have seemed a question of destiny. According to an ex-minister of Servia, who devotes his leisure to dabbling in the black arts, she was taken to a fortune-teller when quite a young girl. The gipsy at once exclaimed, "I see a throne. You will be a Queen. But misfortune will overtake you. You will be driven into exile. I cannot discern very clearly the cause of your misfortunes, but they seem to be connected with wood. I can see great yards in some Oriental city and they are filled with endless stacks of timber."

Queen Nathalie is not superstitious and she paid little attention to the prophecy until Milan came across her path and offered her a throne. If she believed the gipsy's tale, it must have been with many misgivings that she obeyed her father and accepted her fate. She must have wondered what misfortune wood could hold in store for her. A courtier, with whom she discussed the question in the early days of her married life, thought the allusion was to the woods of Topchider, where Prince Michael was murdered. Milan was of this opinion and for a long time he refused to let his wife go there. It was known to be his wish that she should never under any circumstances visit Topchider. Perhaps he had a reason.

One day a fancy took Nathalie to disobey orders and run the risk. When she set out she noticed a look of alarm among her courtiers, but she put it down to the

prophecy and smilingly asked her lady-in-waiting whether masked men would spring out from the trees and shoot them. "In any case," she remarked, with a touch of Oriental fatalism, "what must be must be. If disaster is to overtake me in Topchider, I cannot avoid my doom." During the drive she espied Milan walking about the park in affectionate intimacy with a lady. She stopped her carriage and there ensued a heated scene, which was the beginning of the estrangement between Milan and Nathalie. But, as it turned out, the prophecy had been fulfilled even more literally also. The lady in question, whose relations with Milan had for months been the talk of Belgrade, was a certain Mme. Christich, the daughter of a Levantine merchant, who owned vast timber-yards at Constantinople. So the mischief was derived from timber-yards and came to a head in the woods of Topchider: the prophecy of the Romany was doubly justified.

After this scene, Nathalie held herself aloof from her husband and their relations became increasingly estranged. Mme. Christich was elderly and ugly, but she possessed a strange fascination, which has been ascribed to hypnotic powers. It is certain that she could make Milan do whatever she pleased, and many are of opinion that she was in the pay of a foreign Government. She certainly did her utmost to humiliate her lover and render him ridiculous. At all hours of the day he had to walk to her house with gigantic bouquets in his hand; or again she would keep him with her and compel him to leave a royal carriage stationed outside her door throughout an afternoon. There was no limit to the gossip about the extravagances which she exacted. Of course, good-natured friends informed Queen Nathalie, but she bore every insult with truly Christian patience.

At last, however, a climax came at midnight on Easter morning 1888 in the Cathedral. According to Eastern custom, courtiers filed up to the Sovereigns to exchange the salutations: "Christ is risen"—"He is risen indeed," and receive the kiss of peace, the men from the King, the women from the Queen. With astounding effrontery, Mme. Christich presented herself to be kissed by the Queen, giggling to her smiling friends and revelling in the sensation she occasioned. Naturally enough, the Queen ignored her. Mme. Christich turned to Milan, fixing him with her protruding eyes. He had been looking on with cynical mirth, but instantly drew himself up to attention like a private reprimanded by his general. Seizing the Queen roughly by the arm, he shouted to her, "Kiss Madame Christich at once. I order you." The Queen grew slightly pale, but withdrew herself with dignity, turning to the next lady awaiting the paschal greeting. For a moment Milan seemed abashed, but the eyes of his mistress were still coldly fixed upon him. He shook himself into a fury, rushed at the Queen, and would have strangled her if several officers had not intervened and dragged him back. The congregation broke up in confusion, and excited groups filled the dark streets, discussing the painful incident as they made their ways home. Mme. Christich took Milan's arm and they left the cathedral together.

Distressed by this outrage, the Queen determined to leave Belgrade. She set out with her little son for Wiesbaden. Milan appealed to the German Emperor, who ordered the police to take Prince Alexander away from his mother by force and give him up to Milan's emissaries (July 1888).

Milan's mistress now set to work to persuade him to divorce the Queen. So soon as he gave way and announced his intention, the ministry waited upon him in a body

to protest. They argued with him for three hours, pointing out the injustice of the project, the innocence of the Queen and the disaster to the dynasty. He listened like one in a dream and finally replied, "Gentlemen, I admit all your arguments and have nothing to say against them, but I cannot help myself. This thing must be."

Milan was now drawing near to the end of his tether. Apart from his military failures and his domestic scandals, he had alienated the people by his exactions and tyrannical rule. Naturally extravagant, accustomed to gratify every whim, impelled to further extravagance by his insatiable mistress and provided with a very modest civil list, he was always in difficulties. No expedients were too low or contemptible, so long as he could satisfy his immediate needs. He sponged upon the wife he was betraying; he mortgaged some property to the late Tsar, who found, on trying to foreclose, that it had previously been mortgaged up to the hilt; he even succeeded in cheating a very astute member of the British Parliament, and he placed himself under all manner of pecuniary obligations to foreigners, who profited thereby to dictate an unpatriotic policy. Once, when the fancy took him, he telegraphed to a famous French actress to come down and perform at Belgrade. Money, he assured her, was no object. She shut up her theatre at enormous sacrifice, packed up all her properties and arrived with her troupe only to find that it was all too true: money was of so little object to Milan that she never succeeded in securing any. Most imprudent of all, he dipped into the public funds, accepted huge commissions for unnecessary public works and raised arbitrary taxes with or without the consent of a suborned legislature.

He reduced the election of creature parliaments to a

fine art. Every prefect, every policeman in every constituency was a paid election agent, and, where intimidation failed, they had recourse to the simple expedient of falsifying the returns. I remember being told triumphantly by a prefect that there were no Radical members in his district. I expressed surprise at the unanimity of the voters.

“I don't know about that,” said he; “nearly every voter here is a Radical.”

“Then how do you manage?”

“Oh! with a little hocus-pocus,” he replied merrily.

The fact is, Milan always obtained precisely whatever parliaments he chose. He could always foretell the exact proportion of parties, almost exactly the number of votes which would be recorded in each constituency. Once he announced with great parade that he would really have a free parliament: no pressure whatever should be brought to bear upon the electors. This was intended to have a very good effect upon foreign observers, who should see for themselves how popular was King Milan's policy with the Servian people. A correspondent had the curiosity to stand outside the polling-booth of a certain town on election day and count the free and independent as they went in. When the figures were announced, he was amazed to find that over 3000 had voted for the Government candidate and some 2500 for the Opposition. He went to the Minister of the Interior and told him that only 375 persons had voted.

“I am sure you must be mistaken,” was the reply.

“But I counted them myself, every one.”

“Then you must have made some mistake, for I assure you, on my word of honour as a gentleman, that over 400 recorded their votes.”

Nor did the vexations of the Opposition end even when they had been suffered to secure a few seats. I was once in the gallery of the Skupshtina, and innocently asked a friend which were the Opposition benches.

“Oh! the Opposition?” he replied doubtfully; “they used to sit over there, but now they sit with the Ministerialists. They find it safer.”

King Milan had a short way with Oppositions which manifested undue independence. His simple plan was to invent a plot against his life with all sorts of dramatic details, arrest all his opponents on suspicion, and then condemn whomsoever he pleased to be shot or imprisoned for life. In some ways it was preferable to be shot, for so a man escaped torture. Many unfortunate politicians were flogged or starved to death in gaol, and the world would then be informed that they had committed suicide. This, however, only took place when they persisted in their political heresies. To give Milan his due, he usually gave a convict a chance of saving himself at the cost of his convictions. It was no unusual thing for a man to be condemned to death one day and in a few weeks to be invited to form a ministry. Milan was a good judge of character and, though he trusted nobody, he knew when it would serve his ends to accept a recantation in exchange for a reprieve.

One of the events which exposed him to the fiercest criticism was his treatment of two widows, Helen Markovich and Helen Knitshamin. The former was the wife of a Servian colonel, who was sentenced to be shot for some political offence but was popularly supposed to be innocent of criminal intent. His wife petitioned Milan for a reprieve and at the same time sent a telegram to her husband informing him of what she had done. The

only answer which she received was the return of her telegram, with an official notification that it could not be delivered because the addressee had already been buried. Some months later, in October 1882, she went to the Cathedral with her friend Helen Knitshamin and fired two shots at King Milan. Both women were arrested and condemned to death, but, in deference to public opinion, Milan granted them a reprieve and they were imprisoned at Pozharevats. Not long afterwards they were both found dead in their cells, Helen Markovich having been throttled and Helen Knitshamin having been hanged. To add to the mystery, their gaolers had been stabbed to death, so that no evidence was forthcoming as to the details of the crime. The official version was that the women had killed their gaolers and then committed suicide, but Milan's enemies asserted that the women had been killed by his orders, and that the gaolers had afterwards been slaughtered because their silence could not be assured.

A friend of mine, one of the cleverest men in Servia, was one day explaining to me the prison system of his country. I supposed that its hardships had been exaggerated.

"Perhaps," he said, relapsing into thought.

Then, after a pause, he suddenly pulled up his trousers and showed me two broad black bands round the flesh of his ankles.

"Do you know what that is?" he asked.

"You have had some accident—you must have been caught in a trap for wild beasts," I surmised.

"A trap for wild beasts!" he repeated bitterly; "that is a very good description of the prisons of Servia. When I was a very young man I belonged to a Radical Committee,

and that Committee was compromised in an attempt on the life of King Milan. I knew nothing of that, but my name was on the books of the Committee. I was thrown into prison, sentenced to death, reprieved on account of my youth and let off with a sentence of twenty years. They riveted irons to my ankles and loaded me with chains. The chains did not worry me much, for I could carry them over my arms after a fashion, but the irons were tight and arrested my circulation. The flesh swelled, became sore and festered, so that I understood the expression: 'the iron entered into his soul.' I was only two years in prison, for I benefited by a pardon on the occasion of some national festival, but, as you see, I retain the badge of my servitude until my dying day."

"And do you bear no malice?"

"No, I rather liked King Milan than otherwise. He visited me in prison and made himself so agreeable that I could not cherish grievances. Since my release I have often taken his part in the press, even when he was in exile and discredited."

There was certainly a strange fascination about Milan, worthless though he was. No one could remain angry with him long. After the Bulgarian war there was a demonstration against him in Belgrade. A mob gathered in front of the palace, yelling for his blood. He appeared upon the balcony amid a pandemonium of hoots and groans. He began to speak, but no one would listen. He persevered, the tumult was gradually appeased, and in less than ten minutes every one was cheering: *Zhiveo Kralj Milan*,—God save the King!

Beside the bogus plots against King Milan there were plenty of serious ones, which had their use in helping to justify the punishment of the bogus ones.



After the murder of Michael, Karageorgevich was checked but he was not checkmated. He still dreamed of an eventual reversion, he still maintained an open Cave of Adullam for all who might be dissatisfied with the rule of the Obrenovich. The only wonder is that there were not more malcontents to fill his cave. Servians talk very freely, but when I travelled about Servia, I never met one man in the land who believed that the Karageorgevich dynasty stood the faintest chance of succession under any circumstances. Still, the very existence of an alternative dynasty was a standing menace to any tyrant, and Milan was certainly a tyrant of the very worst type, oppressing his subjects not for their own good but for the gratification of his sordid desires. Those who conspired against him had no goals save Karageorgevich or a republic, and Servia has never suffered from republican instincts. Yet they conspired very diligently, and strong measures were necessary to repress them. From such measures Milan never shrank.

We must do him this justice, that, though personally a coward and a wastrel, he had notions of royal dignity and a short way with murderous conspirators. He knew that conspiracies were afoot and his method was to nip them in the bud. When he was convinced that people sought his life or his throne, he used Machiavellian methods to circumvent them. He did not wait for a conspiracy to come to a head, he anticipated it, he invented details and then proceeded to punish the disaffected for imaginary crimes which they had not been clever enough to devise. It was rough-and-ready justice, but it was often justice all the same.

A revolution broke out at Topola, which is the cradle of the Karageorgevich dynasty, as Takovo is that of the

Obrenovich. Disaffection spread to Zajechar and through S.E. Servia generally. Fifteen thousand men took the field against the dynasty. Some say that they were working for a republic, others for Karageorgevich. The rising was easily suppressed. Milan came down with a heavy fist and welcomed the opportunity for a massacre of Radicals and other disaffected persons. Repression was followed by a fusilade. Travelling down the Danube in a steamer I have seen a sandy bay with sandy cliffs where the chief victims met their doom. Milan was not content with inflicting the death penalty on his opponents. He gave an order that no crosses should be set up over their graves. This was disregarded during his absence from the country. But so soon as he returned, he personally superintended the uprooting of the offending crosses and saw to the punishment of those who had defied his orders.

Milan's reign was full of surprises, but he never succeeded in surprising the world so completely as he did by his abdication. There was no intelligible reason or pretext for it. He had triumphed over his enemies, banished his wife, silenced his critics. He was hated but he was feared. There seemed no reason why he should not continue to disgrace his throne to the end of his days. After introducing an extremely democratic constitution and summoning the Radicals, his traditional enemies, to power, he suddenly sent for the diplomatic body, his ministers and the leading officers of his household. The diplomatists were placed in one room of the palace and the household in another room separated only by a curtain. A minister of the Crown stood beside Milan while he addressed the diplomatists, announcing his abdication and requesting the friendship of their governments for the son

who would succeed him. The moment Milan began to speak, the minister in attendance looked up with a great start. The King was evidently speaking, but it was not the King's voice. At the close of the audience, the minister went into the next room, where the members of the household were assembled. They had been able to hear but not to see, and their first question was, "Who made that long speech?"

"Why," was the answer, "the King read it himself."

"But we know King Milan's voice, and we could swear that this was not his."

"It certainly sounded strange, but I saw him read his statement."

A very general belief prevails that King Milan had no desire to abdicate, but that he was compelled by some mystical or hypnotic means to speak with the voice of his compeller. The authorities for this theory are not convincing, but the facts remain that Milan did abdicate against his will when there were no reasons for the act, and that he made serious efforts afterwards to regain the crown which he had thrown away.

## CHAPTER III

### KING ALEXANDER'S ACCESSION

ALEXANDER OBRENOVICH was born on the 14th of August 1876, at a time of storm and stress. Serbia was engaged upon a hopeless war against Turkey and the news of a defeat had just reached Belgrade; the fortunes of the country were at a very low ebb; poverty, discontent, and intrigue prevailed on every hand; and his parents entered upon their resounding quarrels almost before he was out of his cradle. Yet in one thing they were agreed, and despite the atmosphere of hostility and suspicion around him, their only son was petted and worshipped by both his parents.

A French statesman has described him as he was in 1887: a big boy, who had grown too fast but was healthy and sturdy, running about in a short jacket, with bare brown legs and a bright open face. Every morning before he went out with Mlle. Pellingre, his Swiss governess, he came rushing in like a whirlwind to see his father, who kissed him and talked to him, whatever serious business might happen to be afoot. Those who witnessed the scene could not fail to be astonished at the sight of Milan, the hardened cynic, thus revealing a softer mood. As for Queen Nathalie, there were no limits to the devotion which she lavished upon her beloved Sasha.

Milan was jealous of her influence but tried in vain to turn him against her.

In the spring of 1888 she was allowed to take him away to Florence, and this was probably the happiest period of her troubled life. It was an unusually brilliant season. The King and Queen of Italy were doing the honours to a number of distinguished guests: Queen Victoria, the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, the King and Queen of Württemberg, the Queen of Servia and her little Crown Prince, who became a very familiar figure in his dapper little uniform and soon won the hearts of every one. I remember only one anecdote of this period. My friend Steva Popovich was then minister in attendance. Some one asked him in the Queen's presence how old the Prince was, and he answered "Twelve." "Indeed he is not," the Queen protested with animation, "he is only eleven." "Well," the minister replied good-humouredly, "he will be twelve in August, and that is not very far off." "You seem to think it is all the same if he is eleven or twelve," she retorted impatiently; "I suppose it does seem the same to a man, but I assure you it does not to a mother. He is already growing up much too fast."

Two other stories, quoted on the authority of Mijatovich, the late Servian Minister, are worth repeating. One day when Milan was addressing the Skupshtina on a solemn occasion, the little Crown Prince came up to Mijatovich and whispered, "Tell papa he talks too much. I want him." Another time, when he went by river to Shabats, the crowds upon the landing stage greeted him with great enthusiasm. Mijatovich took him up in his arms and the cheering was redoubled. Alexander inquired why the people made so much noise when they saw him, and was told "Because they love you." At once he called

out to the people, "They say you love me. If that is true, prove it to me by throwing your hats into the water." In an instant a hail of hats darkened the air and were carried off by the waters of the Save.

Torn from his mother's side before he was twelve years old, he had not been many months at Belgrade before a sensational event occurred: he found himself suddenly forsaken by his father and thrust upon the throne.

On the evening before Milan's abdication, Alexander came to say good-night as usual. Milan held him by the hand and looked long into his eyes.

"Sasha," he said, "what will you do when you are King?"

The boy returned his gaze and seemed a little troubled, seemed to be pulling himself together, but made no answer.

Early next day Milan came into his son's room and exclaimed, with an affectation of merriment, "Good morning, your Majesty!"

Alexander returned the greeting solemnly, but without any appearance of surprise or emotion.

"How did you know?" Milan asked sharply. "Who has told you that you are now the King?"

"No one," was the quiet reply, "but I guessed from your question last night that you intended to make me King to-day."

Then they went down to the council chamber and Milan was the first to take the oath of allegiance to his little son, who impressed every one by his self-possession and serious dignity. It was only some hours later that he gave vent to his feelings: "I am an orphan whose parents are still alive," he observed to one of his tutors. "Sasha is an artificial orphan," Milan remarked, according to another version.

The monastery of Zhicha, near Kraljevo, is one of the poorest in Servia but at the same time the oldest, having been built in 1210. Seven kings are said to have been crowned there, but I could only elicit the names of three from the Heguman. I have paid two visits there, and was each time impressed by the profound melancholy of the place. A few hollyhocks emerged from a great tangle of weeds, the monastic buildings were bare and white-washed, only the church showed signs of perfunctory restoration.

Here, on the 2nd of July 1889, Alexander was solemnly anointed King. Soon after dawn a salvo of cannons heralded the auspicious day, and huge crowds thronged the streets of dreamy Kraljevo and the precincts of the sullen old monastery. At nine o'clock loud cries of "Zhiveo!" (Let him live!) announced the arrival of the young Sovereign. He was received by the Metropolitan, who delivered the following speech:—

Beloved Lord and King—Servia and the Servian nation have brought Thee to-day to this hallowed cloister. Servia and the Servian nation bring Thee here that Thou mayest receive consecration for a glorious reign. The holy Orthodox Church and her humble servant receive Thee in this place with the heartiest wishes for Thee and Thy house, for the honour and prosperity of the glorious Obrenovich Dynasty. Before we proceed to anoint Thee, I ask Thee whether Thou art true to this our Church and what is Thy belief.

The Archimandrite handed a prayer-book to the King, who recited the Creed in a loud clear voice, kissed the holy icons, and received the holy oils upon his forehead, cheeks and hands. A hundred and one guns saluted the Monarch, and he was escorted back to Kraljevo

beneath a golden canopy amid the delirious applause of the populace.

His Regents were Ristich, Protich, and Belimarkovich, the reins of government being in the hands of Ristich, his father's old Regent, a wily self-seeker, who tried to obtain a hold over the young King by the same methods which he had employed during the minority of Milan. But he found Alexander far less pliable than his father. From a very early age the young King displayed a strong sense of duty, a quiet determination which was difficult to overrule, and a keen sagacity which was impossible to overreach. With an excellent memory, considerable powers of application, and that genius of intuition which enables a man to go straight to the essentials of a subject, he surprised all his teachers by his quickness and precocity. Nor was he a mere bookworm or indoor boy. He learned to ride almost by instinct, he took to the water like a fish, he excelled at every game, and he simply did not know what fear was. His only defect was his very short sight, which compelled him to wear glasses at a very early age and induced a slight stoop, through a habit of bending forward to see things, but did not interfere with his shooting, fencing, croquet or billiards.

He was never sentimental or expansive, but was capable of strong emotions and affections. He was thoughtful but always alert. Some slow-witted persons have mistaken his silence for stupidity and his reserve for indifference. When Queen Nathalie was being expelled, a French tutor named Magrou was giving him a lesson. "The child," says Magrou, "was cold and callous; he listened to me without betraying by any gesture the faintest trace of emotion." I know from more convincing sources that the King resented his mother's expulsion bitterly, so the



pedagogue unconsciously pays a high tribute to his pupil's wonderful self-control.

Alexander could say sharp things when he chose. There was a certain boorish minister whom he particularly disliked. Seeing him pass one day, he remarked to his tutor, "I am so short-sighted that, whenever I see that man, I mistake him for a lacquey." The tutor thereupon thought it necessary to preach him a little sermon, pointing out that if the man were of a humble origin he deserved credit for having raised himself, and that even the Royal house had been swineherds a hundred years ago. Alexander was silent for a few seconds, then grasped his tutor's hand and thanked him for his advice, saying, "Forgive me, I was wrong."

A picture of his life during the Regency has been given by Milijevich, a cousin of Karageorgevich but at the same time a confidant of King Alexander:—

The Regents allowed no scope to his affectionate sentiments: no friend of his own age, no tutor who had the qualities requisite to direct his heart or mind. They wanted to bring him up for themselves. A man slept on the mat outside his apartments. He lay down at eight in the evening and rose at five—the same hour as the King. He had orders to let nobody in after ten, and to take the name of every one who entered before that hour. The King, feeling himself spied upon, grew shy and secretive, and took pleasure in circumventing the Regents.

Much of his character may be summed up and explained by a Frenchman's epigram, "Il n'eut pas d'enfance."

The Regents began with a Radical Cabinet under the premiership of Taushanovich. But Servian Radicals, all desiring to lead and none to follow, are constitutionally incapable of unity or party loyalty. The ministry was

for ever undergoing reconstruction, until at last it grew so feeble that it had to be dismissed.

Meanwhile Milan had been amusing himself in the green-rooms and at the green cloths of Europe, dissipating the handsome civil list which he had extorted as the price of abdication. Early in June 1890, finding himself in difficulties, the prodigal father determined to return to Serbia and claim a fattened calf. He went off again in October, but did not cease to intrigue for money, and in April 1891 the newspapers published a humiliating correspondence which had passed between him and Gara-shanin, the leader of the Progressist party. On the 11th of April he wrote a letter to the Skupshtina, offering to "pacify the country" by banishing himself in return for a sum of money.

Queen Nathalie returned to Belgrade in August 1890, and, being forbidden the palace, took up her abode in a little house in the Teratsia, as the main street was then called. During a period of nine months she was only permitted to see her son seven times, unless by looking out when his carriage drove past her windows. When she complained of this to Ristich and remonstrated about certain details of the King's education, as well as about his being encouraged to smoke and play billiards, she received an insulting letter which a chronicler has described as "worthy of a carter."<sup>1</sup> The Regent reprimanded her for occupying too prominent a place in church, objected to

<sup>1</sup> Her sublime magnanimity is illustrated by a passage in her reply: "Vous êtes franchement mon ennemi. La difference entre vous et moi est: que ni je n'ai été ni je ne serai votre ennemie, et que le jour où vous viendrez me tendre la main, je vous tendrai loyalement la mienne." That day has since come, and she was as good as her word, extending forgiveness to her persecutor when he was friendless and fallen.

her use of the French language in conversation with her son, as unsuitable for a Servian King, and indulged in other brutal taunts.

Perhaps the shabbiest behaviour was that of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Belgrade. When the Queen had gone to Wiesbaden, Milan applied to the Holy Synod for a divorce on the grounds of incompatibility of temper. This was granted provisionally under pressure, but the Queen, on her return, appealed to the Archbishop for a definite decision. Two bishops were sent to urge her not to press this point, but she persisted, and accordingly received from the Synod (June 16, 1890) a solemn act declaring the divorce to have been illegal and irregular. Milan, hearing rumours of this, terrified the Archbishop, who thereupon wrote another document declaring the divorce to be an accomplished fact, not to be reopened by the Synod. At the same time he wrote to the Queen, begging her not to be alarmed by anything she might hear, as the act transmitted to her remained in force. It was not to be supposed that the existence of two such documents could long remain a secret, and the Metropolitan soon found himself in a hornet's nest. The situation would have been excessively comic, if it had not concerned so tragical a subject. The Metropolitan performed prodigies of shuffling, but was at his wits' end in face of the angry calls for an explanation with which Milan, Nathalie, the Regents, and the ministers besieged him. At length, driven into a corner, he resorted to a supreme quibble, and coolly asserted that there had been no contradiction, as one act expressed the opinion of the Synod and the other was a decision not to take action upon the opinion. By this time every one was disgusted with the Metropolitan, and the Queen endeavoured to lodge an

appeal with the Skupshtina, but her intention was frustrated by a piece of sharp practice.

At last, wearied and broken down by vain attempts to obtain justice and to see her beloved son, the Queen had made up her mind to leave Belgrade, when Ristich suddenly brought his persecutions to a climax by ordering her expulsion. A rude mercenary forced his way with a number of soldiers into the apartments of Her Majesty, and, taking out his watch, curtly gave her ten minutes to accompany him to the frontier, refusing even the necessary privacy for final preparations. This high-handed act produced a riot, for the Queen had always been beloved by her subjects; the troops fired upon the people, and several persons were killed.

It is said that from the age of twelve or thirteen Alexander never mentioned one of his parents to the other. This is certainly an exaggeration, but he had to use all his great tact to do his duty to both. Oddly enough, each of them, being intensely devoted to him, felt certain of possessing his preference. All his efforts were directed to smoothing difficulties and mitigating resentments. Happily, he was never called upon to choose between them, so he could remain on good terms with both and persevere with the perplexing task of peacemaker. Their visits to Servia did not depend so much on his decision as upon the turn of the political wheel at home. When the Radicals were in the ascendant, Queen Nathalie was made welcome; when the Liberals came in she retired to Biarritz and Milan returned from Paris or Vienna.

In July 1892 King Alexander visited Russia and Austria, receiving a kindly welcome from the Emperors, each of whom sought to inculcate a belief in the superiority of his friendship, with all the sincerity and enthusiasm of

Mr. Codlin. On His Majesty's return the Regents, probably instigated by Milan, sent for Avakumovich, the Liberal or Austrophil leader, a step which was as unpopular in Serbia as it was in Russia. On the 23rd of January 1893 the King patched up a kind of reconciliation between his parents, but it was not destined to be very serious or permanent.

The chief of his tutors was Dr. Dokich, who exercised great influence in the development of his character and sympathised with his dislike of the Regents. M. Hitrovo, the Russian Minister, a brilliant intriguer, was also a favourite of the boy-king and doubtless gave him some of his first lessons in state-craft. Both were certainly privy to the state-stroke of the 1st of April 1893 (O.S.). This I have always regarded as one of the most delightful little episodes in history. Throughout the day, Alexander gave no sign that anything unusual was afoot. His French tutor, M. Malet, tells how the King showed his wonted interest in his studies, conversed cheerfully on all sorts of indifferent topics and seemed in no way nervous or excited.

At noon the two surviving Regents (Ristich and Belimarkovich) and six ministers received the usual printed invitation to dine at the palace at eight o'clock. They arrived without any suspicion of what was to come, and, while waiting for the King to join them, Ristich said to Avakumovich that he expected His Majesty would have some communication to make about his parents. There was a feeling of excitement in the air; courtiers and servants exchanged mysterious nods and whispers; but the King entered with a calm smile and greeted his guests quite naturally. After the first three courses, a servant came and murmured something in the ear of Major Chirich, one

of the adjutants, who thereupon called across to the King, "Gotovo ye" (It is ready).

Thereupon the King rose with his glass in his hand. As no Servian entertainment is considered complete without a toast, which is generally proposed in the middle of a meal, the King's action aroused no surprise. The Regents and ministers settled themselves comfortably to attention, Ristich and Avakumovich placidly awaiting the expected communication respecting His Majesty's parents. Raising his glass to the Regents, the King acknowledged in suave tones his deep sense of their services to his person and country. After enlarging with subtle irony upon their patriotism and self-sacrifice, he calmly expressed his regret at parting with them now that he had determined to take the reins of government into his own hands and rule alone. He concluded by requiring them to give in their resignations in writing.

Amazement would be a mild word to describe the feelings of the Regents at this bolt from the blue. Pale and angry, they gazed upon their Sovereign, who stood smiling upon them with a revolver in his hand. After a short pause, which seemed interminable, Ristich rose amid breathless silence and stammered out a few words.

"Your Majesty," said he, "my colleagues and I are entrusted with the Regency by the constitution for a fixed period. We are therefore constitutionally incapable of tendering our resignations. But if your Majesty feels called upon to exercise the regal authority yourself, we have no objection to offer."

As he sat down, the door of the adjoining saloon was thrown open, and the guests perceived a number of soldiers in waiting.

General Bogichevich, the War Minister, stepped up to

Captain Miskovich, who was in command of the soldiers, and asked in loud tones, "How dare you bring troops into the palace without my knowledge and authority?"

"General," was the answer, "I now obey none but the orders of His Majesty."

Meanwhile General Belimarkovich showed signs of resistance. Leaping to his feet, he would have rushed upon the King, had he not been restrained by Major Chirich, whom he engaged in an unseemly scuffle. The King then withdrew and visited the barracks and fortress, accompanied by the Military Governor of Belgrade. He addressed the troops, and the officers swore allegiance amid loud cheers: "Za Kralja i Gospodara!" (For our King and Lord!)

Meanwhile the ministers and Regents looked at one another in speechless dismay. No one proposed to continue the interrupted repast. They were informed that rooms had been prepared for them in the New Palace, but they refused this hospitality and were accordingly locked up all night in the dining-room. General Belimarkovich alone snatched a few hours of slumber. The others remained awake, discussing the situation in angry murmurs. In the morning they were provided with breakfast and at 11.30 Major Chirich informed them that the King's carriages were in waiting to take them to their homes. Each carriage was accompanied by an officer on horseback, and they realised that it was now too late to offer any resistance.

In the morning the following proclamation was published:—

Servians! whenever the vital interests of the Servian people have required it, my ancestors, the Obrenoviches, have always placed themselves at the service of the national idea. Educated in their traditions, true to the spirit of the Nation,

desirous above all to serve the Servian national idea, I feel it my duty to-day to follow the example of my ancestors. At the present time the life of the people ought to find peaceful development under the protection of that Constitution, which my enlightened Father conferred upon the Country in agreement with all parties and the whole Nation. Unfortunately the Constitution has recently been so gravely imperilled, the civil rights of my dear Servians have been so frequently contested, and the constitutional rights of popular representation have been so little respected, that I may no longer delay to terminate this grievous state of things. Servians! henceforward I take the Royal Power into my own hands, henceforward the Constitution comes into full force and possesses full value. Trusting in the happy star of the Obrenoviches, relying upon the law and the Constitution, I will rule my Country, and I hereby require you all to serve me faithfully and obediently. My dear people, I pray that God may protect me in all my actions, and I conclude with this cry, Long live the people!

ALEXANDER.

BELGRADE, *April 1, 1893.*

“Now,” said the King to one of his friends, “I can resume my interrupted studies.”

The event was received with immense enthusiasm by the people. The houses were beflagged by day and illuminated by night. A general holiday was taken as a matter of course and bands of men promenaded the streets in a delirium of joy over the deposition of their tyrants. Perfect strangers grasped each other by the hand as though in celebration of a national victory. Marinkovich, the Mayor, headed a congratulatory procession to the palace, escorted by a military band. The whole night was given up to music and revelry.

It has been suggested that this state-stroke was inspired



by Milan, but that is improbable, as it was directed against Milan's partisans. In any case the execution of the scheme was left perforce to the boy-King himself, and every one is agreed that he carried it through with wonderful nerve and dramatic finish. What Ristich would have done if he had been forewarned is easy to conjecture. Greedy and domineering, he would have stuck at nothing to retain his semi-regal position. At the age of sixteen, Alexander had carried through, unaided, a palace revolution which might well have cost him his crown, and the ease of its accomplishment affords a high tribute to his ingenuity and statesmanship. The event was well received by the whole people, who admired the boy's courage and had no liking for the Regents. Wherever he went he was greeted with the utmost enthusiasm, and he bade fair to become the hero of his people, while the Regents were overwhelmed with well-merited ridicule.

After proclaiming himself of age and dismissing the Regents, who were nominees and partisans of Milan, King Alexander entrusted his tutor, Dr. Dokich, with the formation of a Government. Dr. Dokich was a moderate Radical, and the Radicals represented the large majority of the nation. A general election resulted in an enormous Radical majority, which ratified the King's state-stroke with enthusiasm. Dr. Dokich, however, found it difficult to regularise the finances, which the Regents had left in hopeless confusion. He died in December without having accomplished his task and the King sent for General Gruich.

Milan saw his opportunity, and, oblivious of his self-imposed and well-paid banishment, reappeared at Belgrade (January 22, 1894). Two days later the King appointed a coalition cabinet of Liberals and Progressists

under the premiership of Simich, Milan was made deputy commander-in-chief, and a royal edict was issued (May 17, 1894) restoring both Milan and Nathalie to their full rights as Servian citizens, but the Court of Appeal pronounced this edict to be invalid. Indignant at such opposition to his royal will, King Alexander proceeded (May 21, 1894) to his second state-stroke, abrogating the Constitution of 1888 and provisionally restoring that of 1869 until a new one should be devised.

In June 1894 the King accepted the Sultan's invitation to visit Constantinople, where he was received with great distinction. In October he visited Budapest and Berlin, making an excellent impression upon his royal hosts. After returning to Belgrade to compose a ministerial crisis and call Christich—"the iron Christich"—to power, he visited S. Petersburg in November for the obsequies of the Tsar Alexander III. At the beginning of 1895 he confirmed the sentence on a certain Chebinats, who had been found guilty of high treason, and pardoned some other conspirators, who had sought to poison him. In March he went to visit his mother in Paris and had the satisfaction of escorting her back to Belgrade in May. Christich resigned, Novakovich became Premier, and the King spent September in France.

My first visit to Servia was in the summer of 1896, when a Prince of Montenegro came to Belgrade for the first time during five hundred years. The festivities in honour of this event gave me an opportunity of observing the King and his Court. Here are some notes which I made at the time:—

"King Alexander certainly affords one of the most interesting figures in the whole Balkan peninsula. Still in his teens, he it is who bears practically the whole

burthen of Government, imposing his youthful will upon gray-bearded statesmen old enough to be his grandfathers. 'Il est très tenace,' said M. Novakovich, the Premier, to a friend of mine; and every one who has come into personal relations with His Majesty is agreed that, once he has made up his mind, there is no gainsaying him. But he does not by any means jump hastily to conclusions. Mistrusting his own lack of experience, he studies every question, as it arises, most thoroughly and from every point of view. 'Are you very busy just now?' he asked one of his ministers the other day. 'Well,' he continued, on receiving an affirmative reply, 'I can sympathise with you, for I have been reading very hard in view of the proposed revision of the Constitution. I have not worked less than six hours a day during the last two months.' The minister told me that he knew precisely what books the King had been studying and that they were very well selected. He added that the King is very quick to grasp a point and has an excellent memory.

"When he received the Prince of Montenegro at the railway station, he had far more control over his features than his wily old guest, and contrived to convey a far more convincing impression of friendliness, though he scarcely moved a muscle. 'Il sait bien son métier, ce jeune homme-là,' a French journalist remarked to me more than once.

"Early in the morning I made my way to the railway station through the cheerful boulevards of Belgrade, decked out with red-blue-white bunting and Venetian masts bearing alternately the Servian and Montenegrin arms. On each side was a hedge of enthusiastic peasantry, gay with embroidered raiment; officers, with scarlet uniforms and sparkling decorations, urged their sleek thoroughbreds to express trot; a corps of cadets, goodly

youths in smart uniforms, swung their arms in martial zeal; everywhere was bustle and zealous anticipation. I was one of the very few civilians admitted to the platform. There my first sight was that of the King's guards, standing on the railway track in their useful uniforms of dark blue, polishing up their boots. At a quarter to nine they were drawn up along the platform to attention, and I had an opportunity of walking down the line and recognising their fine soldierly bearing. They are picked men, and can stand comparison with almost any troops I know. The band struck up the Servian National Anthem, and I became aware of the presence of the King, in scarlet uniform and Russian peaked cap, standing upon a strip of carpet and looking every inch a monarch.

“A bell rang and the train steamed in. A dark portly gentleman, clad in a white linen frock-coat, thick waistband, and black tambourine cap, emerged, all wreathed in smiles. Saving the dress, you had said a typical English squire. The young King stood to attention, advanced a step and held out his hand with a few words of formal welcome. The Prince wrung his hand with great cordiality, kissed him on both cheeks, then gave him one additional kiss and a pat on the back to emphasise satisfaction, and the pair walked down the platform to inspect the guards and back again. By this time the Prince's suite had also emerged—six men dressed very much like their master, and a Mussulman Beg wearing a fez. The King presented his suite to the Prince, who clanked his heels together like a German, held out his hand (to be shaken, not kissed) and said a few words to each, maintaining a broad perennial smile, which displayed his teeth. Then the Prince turned and presented his suite to the King, who again impressed

me by his complete self-possession. He had plenty to say to each man and evidently said it well. There was not a shade of embarrassment or even hesitation, and I judged from his manner that he was quick, resolute, and at the same time most affable—one who would say smooth things and yet stand no nonsense.

“The two Sovereigns drove off amid enthusiastic cries of ‘Zhiveli!’ (Let them live!) from the crowd, and the King touched his cap repeatedly with most royal dignity. Presently the Prince passed his hand affectionately through the arm of the King, who was forced to go on saluting with his left hand. The display of affection was loudly applauded by the crowd.

“The King is short and slight but not thin and he excels as much as an athlete as he does as a student. He went in for all the usual public-school examinations and passed them with great credit. He will work for six or seven hours a day during several months, and then give himself up almost entirely to swimming and shooting (his favourite pursuits) for several months more, transacting only the formal business which may be laid before him. But this is not a reproach to him, for—more reasonably than many parliaments—he works when there is work to be done and takes his relaxation when no work presses.

“Since he has shaved his whiskers and inchoate beard, he looks a very proper youth. His features are regular, his mouth is firm, and his expression is singularly sweet. When he is looking his best I can often detect a likeness to his beautiful mother. I am sure many hearts must beat fast as he goes the round of the saloons in the New Palace and chats unaffectedly with all the prettiest girls in turn. His manner at a court function, and indeed on all other occasions, struck me as being just the right thing. He

was all smiles and airy talk, without sacrificing his dignity or arousing comment by lingering too long with any special favourite. As most of the Servian girls are remarkably pretty, it must require a great deal of self-command to tear himself away at the right moment.

“Whenever I have seen him, he seemed always on the alert, taking in every detail that occurred anywhere near him, and evidently most anxious to please everybody. I imagine him to be of a nervous, excitable character, easily elated and easily depressed. No one can doubt the depth of the affection which exists between him and his mother. At a gala performance at the theatre they were continually watching one another, like a pair of young lovers.

“She has been accused of meddling over-much in affairs of State. It were better for Servia if she had been prevailed upon to meddle a good deal more. If she has a fault it is one shared with all very good people—that of believing too readily in the loyalty of others less scrupulous than herself. But she possesses abilities of a very high order; and if her advice had been asked more frequently in the past, Servia would have been spared many calamities. She has always loved her son, but has never, as some fond and selfish mothers are prone to do, allowed her feelings to interfere with her duty. So long as his education was under her charge it was a model of discrimination, and it is scarcely too much to say that he owes to her the many sterling qualities he undoubtedly possesses.”



QUEEN NATHALIE.

PLATE II.





## CHAPTER IV

### KING ALEXANDER'S MARRIAGE

It is the fashion to regard frequent changes of ministry as evidence of political chaos, but it would be equally fair to argue that the permanent predominance of one party proves political stagnation. The King had definite ideas and principles. He was in a sense himself a party leader, and he had this advantage over professional politicians, that he had no axe of his own to grind, his only aims were the peaceful development of his people. If he was incessantly calling different parties and coalitions to office, this merely illustrated his desire to utilise all the best wits in the land. The ambitions of Austria and Russia were an incessant handicap. Whenever the Radicals were in office Austria took umbrage and closed her markets to Servian produce. Whenever the Liberals came in, Russian agents redoubled their intrigues and represented the country as verging on anarchy. The keynote of the King's whole policy might be summed up as "Serbia fará da se": he aspired to independence of foreign control and he saw the best means to that end in ministers who were bound up with neither an Austrophil nor a Russophil party.

The Novakovich Ministry (1895-96) was a first step in that direction. It represented the Progressist party, which

was a species of Conservative, supporting the Crown against all comers. Garashanin was the leader of the party, Novakovich merely his lieutenant. I met Novakovich on several occasions, and made the following notes at the time: "He is not a man of much initiative, but seems admirably suited to be a Premier who is not the leader of his own party, and to serve a King who knows his own mind. He is a stranger to emotion and views politics from the standpoint of an honest family solicitor. He can give good advice; but if it be not followed he can carry out instructions without a murmur. What most impresses me about him is his modesty and his caution. His father was a humble joiner, and he has never grown accustomed to the ways of society. I should imagine that he was a shy man, for his tendency was always to slink away to the lowest rooms at feasts. Not only did he never thrust himself forward, where as Premier he would have been welcome, but he seemed to shrink from publicity or recognition. His tall, lanky form, clad in a long frock-coat of broadcloth and a round felt hat, his melancholy expression and heavy stoop did not add lustre to the Court, and somehow he reminded me of a figure in a Noah's Ark. In conversation he proved reticent about public affairs and far from loquacious on other matters. The keynote of his remarks was to deprecate aggression by Serbia and to protest that she only asked to be allowed to work out her own political salvation in peace."

At the end of 1896 the Novakovich Ministry resigned and the Progressist party was dissolved. Garashanin, the leader of that party, had preferred to remain Servian Minister in Paris rather than assume a precarious premiership. He told me he had come to the conclusion that the multiplication of parties was a mistake, and that

the country would be better served by the various disciples of order sinking their minor differences and working together to defeat a common foe. He and his followers had decided to support the new Government, which consisted of moderate or Aulic Radicals under the premiership of George Simich. I have conversed with this gentleman and heard him address a public meeting. He has a dry, important manner and might easily be mistaken anywhere for some humdrum English politician. He is very careful in his utterances, speaks slowly, almost haltingly, without a vestige of fire, and combines an appearance of mildness with an impression of safety.

His administration lasted less than a year, doing little good and little harm. In October 1896 the King met his father in Paris and all sorts of rumours were afloat. Milan, tired of penury and exile, had begun to mature plans for seizing his son's throne. He was now in the pay of Austria and sought to earn his wage by securing the dismissal of the Radical Government. He had long been looking out for an instrument to pave the way for the execution of his disloyal plans. Chedomil Mijatovich, the Servian Minister in London, was proposed and rejected as incompetent. At last the choice fell upon Vladan Georgevich, a Hebrew adventurer, whose sensational administration went far to undo all the good work of Alexander's reign.

A vigorous campaign against all Radicals—loyal as well as disloyal—was immediately undertaken. In June 1898, by means of terrorism, corruption and a falsification of returns, a general election produced a Skupshtina consisting of 112 Liberals and 1 Radical. A certain Knezevich having made an attempt upon Milan's life

(July 6, 1899), steps were taken to implicate the leading Radicals in the conspiracy. It is now generally believed that the plot was a bogus one; the details of it were certainly exaggerated. Milan only received a scratch, but he went about for weeks with his arm in a sling. Mischievous people say that he found it difficult to remember which was his wounded arm, wearing one day the right and another the left in his sling. There seemed no end to the ramifications of the plot. Whenever a Radical raised his head or opened his mouth in the country, witnesses were suborned to connect him with Knezevich and the judges complacently consigned him to gaol.

On the 1st of September a grand trial for high treason was commenced against twenty-nine persons, including Pashich (the Radical leader), Protich (editor of the "Odjek"), Ranko Tajsich (a Radical demagogue who had spent his whole life on the borderland of conspiracy), Taushanovich and Colonel Nikolich. The weak part of the prosecution consisted in the contradictory evidence of Knezevich, the actual culprit or instrument. At first he stated that he had acted on his own initiative; then he implicated Colonel Nikolich, but exonerated the Radical leader. Finally he withdrew his accusation and returned to his original declaration that he had acted without accomplices. Eventually the Court condemned Knezevich to death, ten of the prisoners to twenty years' penal servitude, Taushanovich to nine years, Pashich and seven others to five years' imprisonment, and acquitted six. Ranko Tajsich, who had fled the country, was condemned to death and actually died in exile on the very day of the murder of King Alexander.

So crafty were Milan and Georgevich that they com-

pletely succeeded in hoodwinking the King. All their accusations were supported by evidence so plausible and so circumstantial that there seemed no possibility of doubting it. Meanwhile the two arch-conspirators were busily feathering their nests. They sold everything they could, often many times over; contracts, concessions, positions, judgments, pardons were all at the disposal of the highest bidders. Milan obtained the post of commander-in-chief and used it as a lever for fresh exactions. He was only prevented by the interference of Russia from netting a handsome commission over a contract for guns.

There was no limit to the effrontery of Vladan Georgevich. He informed Milan one day that Artemisia Christich, the mistress who had caused all his troubles, was threatening to publish his letters. Milan, in a panic, appealed to the Sultan, who generously bought them out of his privy purse. But Georgevich kept back the most compromising ones and held them over Milan's head in case he ever wished to be rid of his accomplice. Some people have said that Vladan Georgevich exercised a hypnotic influence over the King, but Servian chroniclers seem to have hypnotism on the brain and the evidence is not convincing. Still, it is strange that Alexander should have been persuaded to tolerate conduct which had become a notorious scandal. There can be no doubt whatever that he acted honestly and conscientiously throughout his life. An Austrian journalist, who interviewed him at Vienna in 1899, says the King impressed him as modest, sympathetic, and upright. "His bronzed, wistful features had a touch of melancholy. During the conversation he gesticulated with his hands and played with a newspaper which lay on the table. From time to time he tore off a bit of paper,

rolled it into a ball, and threw it to the ground. He spoke intelligently, developing his thoughts at some length, and listened attentively to the interruptions or answers of his visitor. All his remarks were made with great earnestness. He gave me the impression of a self-concentrated man. From time to time a slight smile stole over his solemn face. When he spoke, he fixed me with his eyes. When he ceased speaking, he looked down, collecting his thoughts. . . . King Alexander had recently inaugurated a policy which did not exclude what is known as the cabinet noir. I ventured to remark that such a proceeding made a bad impression in Europe. The King returned, 'The new regulations are required for the personal safety of the Sovereign and the prevention of conspiracies. We do not want to be surprised by accomplished facts. We are obliged to keep a watch upon criminals.' But in the event this policy did not succeed in preventing conspiracies. Again he observed, 'Do you think that the sentence in the trial for high treason aroused deep emotion in the country? Why, it aroused absolutely no emotion at all (*ganz und gar nicht*). On the contrary,' he proceeded, 'Serbia is grateful to me for my severity against the traitors. The country yearns for peace and quiet. Strife is hateful to Serbia. Her desire is to prove an element of peace in Europe and of order in the Balkans.'"

Meanwhile Queen Nathalie was in exile, spending most of her time near Biarritz at the Villa Sachino (Little Sasha), which she had named after her son. I had the honour of an audience there in the autumn of 1898. She spoke very freely about Servian affairs and deplored the turn of events. "I have told my son," she said, in her remarkably idiomatic English, "that, if he is not careful, he

will knock his nose one day. But he only said, 'What would you have me do? I cannot banish my own father.' To this I replied, that he must not only think of his father, but of his country as well." In the end, King Alexander was compelled to take the Queen's advice and banish his own father, but alas! this did not stave off the disaster which she had foreseen.

It is the fashion to attribute that disaster to Queen Draga, but it would be unfair to hand her down to history condemned by the verdict of her adversaries. We may not allow assassins to indite the epitaphs of their victims.

Draga was born on the 24th of September 1867, at Milanovats, a poor little fishing village on the Danube, near the remains of a Roman camp. Her ancestors had been prominent among the vojvodes or national leaders who gathered round Milosh in the war of independence. Her father, Pante Lunjevitsa, had been Prefect of Shabats, one of the richest and most important towns in the country. He was now on the retired list and lived very quietly on his pension. Poverty had not made him lose caste; he and his wife Andja enjoyed the respect of their neighbours.

Draga's childhood is generally supposed to have been miserable; but even if the family had been reduced to the level of peasants, this would not have implied penury, for every Servian peasant has plenty of food and wine and raiment, all produced on his own bit of ground. Luxuries were certainly absent from her home, but she was brought up in the open air, she acquired all the arts of a housewife, could cook and weave and embroider, and was not without the higher accomplishments, such as the languages and literatures of France, Germany, and Russia.

When still a child she was married to a Bohemian engineer named Mashin, whose father had been Prince Michael's physician. Mashin was a drunkard and gambler, with a small reputation for probity. He had been agent for a swindling French bank, which collapsed after defrauding the Comte de Chambord of £20,000 and Leo XIII. of £100,000. He treated his wife with brutal violence. She obtained a divorce on that account, and he died of delirium tremens not long after.

Her income now amounted only to £2 : 12s. a month and she was hard put to it to keep her head above water. She occupied a simple lodging in Belgrade, where her genial, kindly temperament and great beauty attracted numbers of friends, for Servians have no vulgar contempt for poverty and they cherish a sentimental kindness for the descendants of their national heroes. She was exceedingly musical and her favourite distraction was found in attending the weekly meetings of a choral society. These were held in a big bare room on the ground floor of the house which contained her humble apartment. Being among friends, she would often appear in a loose tea-gown and worsted slippers. The meetings often lasted far into the small hours. There the future Queen of Servia might have been seen seated on a wooden bench with the arm of a professor or a forester or a tradesman round her waist—there are few class distinctions in Servia—singing the old melancholy Servian songs about Tsar Lazar and the battle of Kosovo or the doughty deeds of Marko Kraljevich (the King's son) or the supernatural help given to Servian heroes by the fairies of Mount Avala.

Singing, however, did not bring in bread and butter, and it was necessary to find some means of augmenting her pittance. A friend of mine, her cousin by



marriage, once told me that, when he was Minister of Public Instruction, she came and requested him to find her something to do. Asked what she thought she was capable of doing, she replied with a shrug that she supposed the last refuge of the destitute was teaching.

"What can you teach? Do you know any French or German?" he said.

"Not very much, I am afraid," was her reply.

"Well, let us see."

He put her through an examination, which must have been very elementary—at any rate so far as French was concerned, judging from his own knowledge of that language. He decided that she would not do at all and recommended her to go away and study before she thought of teaching.

In fairy tales the village beauty endures hunger, rags and all the other consequences of poverty until Prince Charming comes to lead her off to the altar and the throne; but then all her troubles are forgotten and she lives happily ever after. In real life, however, her old friends are consumed with jealousy when such fairy tales come true. So with Draga: people were kind enough in adversity, but when she became Queen they sought to overwhelm her with mischievous memories of the past. Not content with taunts about poverty, ugliness and old age, they asserted (what does not always follow) that she was no better than she should be.

The best answer to this calumny is provided by the fact that Queen Nathalie chose her as lady-in-waiting. The enemies of Queen Draga now pretend that she was only a sort of superior chambermaid, and an imaginative Viennese journalist depicted her blacking her mistress's boots. This is on a par with the other lies and calumnies, which, emanating from the Mashin family,

were wittily summed up as "machinations" by King Alexander. Draga was a great favourite of Queen Nathalie, went about everywhere and visited foreign courts with her, wrote her letters, and received all manner of confidences. Now, at any rate, her troubles were over, and her lines were cast in pleasant places. She was of an affectionate disposition, and a warm friendship soon sprang up between the two ladies. Her tact and sympathetic manner attracted all who met her, and her beauty was at that time truly remarkable. She had a great abundance of dark-brown hair. Her figure was good and might still be described as slender. Her complexion was inclined to be pale, but was by no means faded. Her mouth and nose were clearly cut, and her general expression suggested refinement as well as determination. No one could see her without being struck by her wonderful eyes,—dark, fiery, and at the same time caressing when they chose. Her manners were natural and graceful. She dressed very simply, so simply indeed that a critical lady once remarked, "What a pity it is that Queen Nathalie does not give her some of her old clothes!"

It has been said that Draga's eyes hypnotised King Alexander. Be this as it may, he fell in love with her at first sight. Their first meeting was at Biarritz, about a year after she had been taken up by Queen Nathalie. A story is told how he would linger in a fireless room at Belgrade, trembling with cold, in the hope of exchanging a few words with her.

Queen Nathalie, one of the most observant of women, soon noticed this love affair. She spoke to her son and told him to put Draga out of his head. Being very obstinate, he refused point-blank, and was invited to terminate his visit instantly.

Then Draga was summoned and told that a scandal might be caused by dismissing her immediately, but that the best thing for her to do was to resign her position at the end of three weeks.

Draga returned to Belgrade, and many disagreeable comments were aroused by the fact that she was now able to take a fine house and wear jewels and drive about in her carriage. But as the King had by this time made up his mind to marry her, it was not to be expected that he would allow her to remain in a state of penury.

Belgrade is like a village where everybody knows, not only exactly what his neighbours are doing, but a great deal more besides. Every sort of rumour was started, particularly when the Russian Minister began to visit Mme. Mashin and curry favour with her in the hope of inducing her to support his policy. Very soon all the chief people in Belgrade, including diplomatists and their wives, came to her evening parties on Wednesdays and Saturdays. She held quite a little Court, charming every one with her wit, grace and versatility.

Ministers began to complain that the King would do nothing without consulting her. If any important question arose at a Council, he would make an excuse and rush off to the telephone. Suppose the Minister of War proposed to hold manœuvres on the 14th instant. The King would parry the proposal and presently slip out. The telephone bell would ring. "Allo! Allo! is that you, Draga? The Minister proposed manœuvres for the 14th. How will that suit you? Oh! yes, quite so. I forgot that we had arranged to go to Semendria on that day. Well, how would the 25th suit you? Very well, I will arrange it." Then he would return to the Council and say, "I have remembered an engagement for the

14th, but I am willing to have the manœuvres on the 25th."

Alexander and Draga were constantly together every day and gossip increased in volume. When he went to Meran in the winter of 1899 she went there too and took up her abode close to his villa. Every one concluded that she was his mistress. Afterwards her enemies were divided into two camps: those who blamed her frailty, and those who blamed her cunning in persuading him that the only road to her affections lay through the church door.

At first the rumours that he intended to marry her were received with incredulity. Gradually, however, they became more definite, and opposition was manifested in many quarters. Russia and the Radicals helped on the match, but it is feared only with a sinister object.

Various schemes had been afoot for providing the King with a bride. There was his cousin, the beautiful Mlle. Constantinovich, who presently married Prince Mirko of Montenegro. One evening a mischievous diplomat asked Mme. Draga whether the rumours about Mlle. Constantinovich were true. "Oh! no," she replied in her placid tones, "he will never marry a Servian. I am sure it will be a foreigner." M. Simich had tried to arrange a match between the King and Princess Xenia of Montenegro, but Milan opposed it bitterly, saying it should never take place so long as he lived. Milan had made proposals for a grand-niece of the Queen of Denmark, and the German Emperor had backed him up, but Alexander was not attracted by her. The King of Greece had hinted that one of his daughters might be willing to share the Servian throne, but before Alexander could make up his mind she was betrothed to a Russian grand-duke.

Commenting upon all these schemes, the King remarked

to a French journalist: "Everybody wanted me to marry. Every politician had some excellent match up his sleeve, but I believe that in a question of this kind a man should consult his own heart."

One night at a State ball in Berlin, the German Empress took aside the Servian Minister and congratulated him on the approaching marriage of King Alexander with a certain German princess.

"You could not have a better Queen," said Her Majesty; "she has a heart of gold, she is as charming as she is beautiful, and she has told me that for the last two or three years she has been learning the Servian language and interesting herself in the Servian people, over whom she is destined to rule."

The Servian Minister had heard nothing of these plans, but he bowed his acknowledgments and thanked the Empress for her condescension. Next day the papers announced the betrothal of Alexander and Draga!

The sensation was enormous throughout Servia. The Ministers, the Metropolitan, the President of the Skupsh-tina besought the King to abandon the idea. The King's secretary resigned rather than assist in drawing up a proclamation announcing the betrothal. Colonel Chirich was despatched by Vladan Georgevich post-haste to Carlsbad to invoke the interference of Milan, who had tried and failed to induce Draga to co-operate in his schemes against the King, and was now beside himself with passion. When he received a telegram from his son, announcing the event, he sent a laconic reply, resigning his command of the army, and proceeded to intrigue for a seizure of the throne. He actually set out for Belgrade, but was informed that he would be stopped at the frontier, so with characteristic timidity he promptly retraced his steps.

All sorts of people came to Alexander with denunciations of Draga, but he impetuously refused to listen and turned them out of the room. George Genchich, then Minister of the Interior, afterwards one of the regicides, said to the King, "Sire, you cannot marry her. She has been everybody's mistress—mine among the rest." The King struck him across the face, exclaiming, "How can I believe you, who forced your wife to become my father's mistress?"

Before this incident, Genchich had made an attempt to kidnap Draga. It was on a Sunday that the King proclaimed his betrothal. He invited his ministers to lunch on Saturday to inform them of his decision. All came with the exception of Genchich and Nechich, Minister of Public Works. The King asked where they were and received an evasive reply. Messengers were sent to fetch them, and word was brought that they had persuaded Mme. Draga to quit Servia, and that she had already left her house, believing she would thus spare the King difficulties. Alexander hurried off at once to her house, but found only her brother, Nikodem Lunjevitsa, an officer in the army.

Interrogated as to his sister, Nikodem replied, "I gave her my word of honour not to tell any one where she had gone."

"You must tell me," said Alexander sternly; "I am your King, to whom you have sworn fidelity and obedience; I release you from your word of honour." Then the King learned that she was with relatives, waiting to take the first train for Budapest. He ordered Nikodem and his sisters to fetch her at once. Presently she arrived on her brother's arm and the King clasped her hand with evident emotion. Turning to those present he exclaimed,

“If she had been taken away, I should have gone in pursuit; if they had killed her, I should have followed her to the grave.”

After this incident a strong guard was placed outside her house until the wedding-day. Even then, however, Draga's enemies did not cease plotting. She was invited to visit the wife of one of the conspirators, and everything was in readiness for conveying her forcibly across the frontier. What would have happened then is not clear, but the plan was only frustrated by the arrival of an anonymous warning at the last moment. The King then induced her to promise not to leave her house on any pretext whatsoever.

Bitter as the opposition was, it did not extend beyond a few politicians who feared to lose office, a few jealous ladies of the Court, and the partisans of King Milan and Queen Nathalie, now united for the first time. The mass of the people welcomed the prospect of relief from Vladan Georgevich's tyrannous rule, and they felt flattered that the King should have selected a Servian bride. The army, too, was loyal and readily acquiesced in the execution of his wishes. Addressing the officers of Belgrade, he spoke as follows, amid cordial cheers:—

You know, gentlemen, that I have always had the welfare of the Country and our Army at heart, and consequently I have the right to demand that all I do in this respect should be approved; and my present step must be considered as an act tending towards the welfare of my House and my Country. As an intelligent man, I know my duty and my right. As to my Father's attitude in this affair, I point out that I am the head of the House and Dynasty of Obrenovich, and that it is irrelevant what my Father says to the step. He cannot meddle in the matter.

In the course of a proclamation to the nation, he wrote as follows :—

I am convinced that all my dear People cherish above all things a desire to see their King happy and contented, and to welcome as their Queen a true and upright helpmeet of her royal Consort, one whose love will give him strength to serve Servia and the dear Servian people. The name of the Princess Ljubitsa, the faithful Consort of Milosh the Great, a woman of the people, worthy of being the first Princess of Servia, will always be held in honour beside the name of the immortal creator of modern Servia. I feel happy in securing a Consort who is worthy to become Servia's Queen, who will joyfully share my fate and that of my people. She is the grand-daughter of the man who was one of the great Milosh's most distinguished colleagues in the foundation of modern Servia.

The wedding was duly solemnised in Belgrade Cathedral by the Metropolitan Innocent on the 5th of August 1900. Draga's sisters were present and her eldest brother acted as deva, a kind of best man, who supports the bride at weddings of the Orthodox church. Innocent, who blessed their murderers less than three years later in this same Cathedral, addressed the happy pair, praying fervently "that the genius of the House of Obrenovich might protect their alliance," and invoking "the blessing of the Lord upon the King, the Queen, and the country." The congregation greeted his words with loud huzzas, which were taken up by the vast crowds outside. Guns were fired, bells rang, the streets flowed with wine, an endless chain of Servians of all classes gaily danced the kolo round the statue of Prince Michael in the Square outside the theatre. Night was given over to fireworks, illuminations and all kinds of revelry.



The honeymoon was spent in a progress through the interior of Servia, their Majesties being acclaimed everywhere with the utmost loyalty and affection. The young King's courage appealed to the hearts of a nation of heroes, and the Queen's simple, kindly manners endeared her to all who were privileged to meet her. Fresh joy was soon provided by rumours of a happy event, expected for June or July 1901. Professor Caulet, a distinguished gynæcologist, was summoned to Semendria and, after examining the Queen, issued a bulletin confirming the rumours. The Tsar and Tsarina of Russia sent costly presents to the Queen and offered to be god-parents. This was only to be expected, as they had accepted the office of kum or sponsors at the wedding, and this carries a similar obligation at the font.

In the spring of 1901 rumours began to take shape that there had been a mistake and that no heir was to be expected. The Tsar of Russia took the matter up and despatched two physicians to investigate. Early in May they drew up a document, which shattered Queen Draga's hopes, but they admitted that Professor Caulet's bulletin might have been justified at the time. All sorts of wild stories were circulated by the Queen's enemies. She was even accused of designing to palm off a child of her sister, Mme. Petrovich, as her own. The King summoned more doctors from Vienna and Budapest. They declared that the Queen had been suffering from a malady, which might easily have deceived herself. The disappointment was officially announced, and many people came sadly to the conclusion that the Queen could never hope to have an heir.

The question of the succession became acute. According to the latest Constitution, collateral branches of the

House of Obrenovich were excluded. Among possible claimants mention was made of (1) Duke George of Leuchtenberg, an officer in the Russian guard and husband to a daughter of the Prince of Montenegro; (2) Prince Mirko of Montenegro, who married King Alexander's cousin, Mlle. Constantinovich; (3) Nikodem Lunjevitsa, the brother of Queen Draga.



QUEEN DRAGA.

PLATE III.



## CHAPTER V

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

MEANWHILE the chief troubler of Servia had passed away. Milan's schemes for ousting his son and resuming the crown had not escaped notice in Servia, and, as we have seen, he was not permitted to come to Belgrade.

One day a telegram came to summon King Alexander to Milan's deathbed. The Queen and the ministers were consulted, but they concluded that this was a hoax and that Milan had merely sought an opportunity to exercise his influence over his son and induce him to put away his wife. As a minister remarked to me in relating the incident: "No one believed that King Milan could possibly die. It was too good to be true."

However, a few hours later another telegram arrived, announcing that he was actually dead. The Tsar of Russia was so sure that King Alexander would be found at his father's deathbed that he sent his telegram of condolence to Vienna. He evidently thought it very un-filial of the King to neglect his dying father. This was the beginning of the strained relations between Russia and Servia.

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The Emperor of Austria, who had kept up an intimacy with Milan and used him to further Austrian intrigues,

also vented displeasure on King Alexander. Indeed, Milan continued to foment discord even after his death. King Alexander desired that his father should be buried in the royal vault at the monastery of Rakovitsa, near Belgrade, but this was peremptorily refused, and the funeral took place at Krushedol, a Servian monastery in Croatia, with the same honours which would have been accorded to an Austrian archduke. Two years later Alexander and Draga made a pilgrimage to the grave and attended a solemn requiem.

After the disappointment of Queen Draga's hopes for an heir, her enemies expected that the King would be estranged; they even circulated reports that he intended to divorce her. The yellow press of Austria published the most extravagant stories: the King was even alleged to have taken the Queen by the throat and struck her, because she refused to give him a few pounds saved out of her pin-money! As a matter of fact their relations were uniformly affectionate; as weeks and months went by, the devotion of their honeymoon only increased and they could scarcely bear to be out of each other's sight for an instant.

The suggestion of disputes about money was not even well invented; it did not possess even a shadow of plausibility. Both King and Queen possessed that highest form of generosity, which combines self-denial and an open purse for others. The King's civil list amounted only to £48,000 a year, out of which he was expected to defray many expenses usually borne by the State. Moreover, he found that most of the Crown property had been illegally mortgaged by his predecessor, sometimes two or three times over. Instead of repudiating, as he might have been justified in doing, he quietly set to work to



pay off the mortgages. Nor would he ever consent to apply to Parliament for larger supplies. Without shabby economy, he maintained his Court on a modest scale, and it was not his fault if the national finances were not more healthy. He gave away £3000 a year to the Queen's relatives, but she required very little for herself. Her household consisted of one lady-in-waiting, Mlle. Petronievich ; she dressed well, not extravagantly, and had no expensive tastes.

An influential journalist at Belgrade was received by the Queen soon after her marriage. She invited his opinion on the situation and he received permission to express himself frankly.

"What strikes me," he said, "and what will impress the Servian people, is the simplicity of your Majesty's life and the absence of extravagant luxury such as is popularly associated with palaces."

"Yes," said the Queen, with a smile, "I think you will find me a less expensive Sovereign than some grand foreign princess, who would have come down here with a great retinue, to introduce all the magnificence of an European Court. I know that some people are jealous of me, but I believe the people will remember that I am descended from their old national leaders, and the day may come when they will be thankful that the wife of their Sovereign has Servian blood flowing in her veins."

Still, the bitterness of a small number of people in Belgrade was not assuaged. The concentrated spite with which "Madame Draga" or "our Draga" would be mentioned in certain circles was almost amusing. Every day brought forth a new sneer and a new slander, which candid friends duly reported at the palace. At last the

gossip grew so scandalous that the King was obliged to notice it and he actually gave orders for arresting some half-dozen of the leaders of Belgrade society.

Queen Draga, however, was wise enough to see that this would only have set the tongue of scandal wagging still faster; moreover, there was nothing vindictive about her character. So she quietly took the warrant out of her husband's hand and tore it up, saying, "Let them say what they like, if it amuses them; I am content to have the prize of your regard."

But on one occasion she allowed herself the gratification of a mild revenge. A lady, who had been to the palace as one of a charitable deputation, boasted among her friends that she had omitted to kiss the hand of "that woman," meaning the Queen. This was duly repeated at Court, and one morning the lady was surprised by the arrival of a royal carriage with a summons to the palace. She dared not disobey, though her mind was by no means at ease. She was kept waiting a long time in an ante-chamber. Then the Queen appeared and held out her hand, saying laconically, "Kiss it." The lady kissed it. "Now you can go," said the Queen, and the lady walked home crestfallen. The lesson was a salutary one, but not calculated to stimulate loyalty.

I spent the summer of 1902 in Serbia, and had the honour of being received twice in audience. I quote from the notes which I made at the time:—

"The King does not, in the first instance, convey an impression of strength, for he is very highly strung; he is never still for an instant, he is thinking of six things at once, and a superficial observer might almost set him down as shy. But a closer acquaintance soon corrects all that, and after less than ten minutes' con-

versation you cannot fail to recognise his wisdom and his power.

“My first audience was fixed for eleven in the morning, but before I was up a soldier came to my hotel with a message to put me off till six. When I drove up at that hour to the palace, I found the royal carriage waiting at the door, and the marshal came running out to tell me that I was again put off till 7.30. After waiting in the central drawing-room, the walls and floor of which are made very gay with red Pirot carpets, I was summoned to an ante-room. An animated conversation, or rather soliloquy, was in progress within. A highly-pitched voice could be heard haranguing, even expostulating, and I began to wonder who was permitted to talk thus to his Sovereign. The door opened, and I perceived that it was the King whose voice I had heard. He was now laughing merrily, while a general in full uniform backed out and held the handle of the door with a deferential smile at a parting sally. The door was thrown open, and an officer bade me enter. There was no ceremonious presentation, as at the palace at Sofia. I simply walked in and found myself alone with the King. I beheld a well-set young man, clad in flannels. He bade me be seated, and we faced each other across the corner of a big table that nearly filled the room. I had time to notice that everything was scrupulously tidy; papers were docketed in packets, even the pens reposed in strict parallels.

“‘This is not your first visit to Serbia,’ he began; ‘I think I received you once before?’

“As a matter of fact, I had applied for an audience when last in Belgrade, but it had not been granted. So I answered evasively that his Majesty had then been away at Semendria.

“‘You must find many changes here?’

“‘I do not think that Belgrade has altered very noticeably.’

“‘Ah! but I mean political changes.’

“‘Well, when I was last here, there was a Progressist Government, and now I understand that the present ministry is also well disposed towards the throne.’

“‘Yes,’ he said. ‘Our chief question now concerns the loan, which is being debated by the Skupshtina. It will be carried by a very small majority, mais pourtant je pense qu’on se tirera d’affaire.’

“‘Votre Majesté,’ I replied, ‘s’est toujours très bien tiré d’affaire.’ The recollection of the Regent Ristich shut up all night in the dining-room came merrily to my mind.

“He looked pleased, laughed cheerfully and said there had been difficulties but now they were being gradually settled. Especially since his marriage he was drawing people together and everything appeared more hopeful. Where had I travelled in Servia? Did I know many people in Belgrade? etc. I mentioned my itinerary through the country and he made remarks about various places. Presently he asked whether I could not induce British capital to come to Servia? Now that the war was over, there must be a need of openings for British capital. But people knew so little about Servia and seemed to consider it wildly remote.

“‘Whereas,’ I put in, ‘everything is now safe and assured.’

“‘Yes, public security was assured, and also industrial security, which interested the investor more particularly. Then he touched on Macedonia, which I was about to visit. The question of the Servian bishop, Firmilian, had interested Servians very much, and they were highly

pleased to have it settled satisfactorily. For the first time since their independence it gave them a foothold in Macedonia: it was an acknowledgment of their claims.

“I remarked that in Bulgaria there were elements of Macedonian disorder: these committees——

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘that is very unfortunate and may mean trouble. The agitators approached us, but we would have nothing to do with them. They might have done us some good at the time, but not in the long-run. It never pays to have anything to do with people of that kind. It is not right.’

“After some further conversation, he apologised for not detaining me further, saying that affairs of State were absorbing all his time just then. Finally, as I took my leave, he remarked, very cordially, ‘I hope that you will come back many times to Servia.’

“On my return from Macedonia I applied for a farewell audience of the King and Queen for Mrs. Vivian and myself. This was graciously accorded for the 14th of November 1902. We arrived at the palace as the clock struck six, and were escorted into the central drawing-room, where I had waited before, by Mlle. Petronievich, Queen Draga’s maid-of-honour. She comes of an old diplomatic family, her father and grandfather having represented Servia in nearly every court of Europe. She and her sister have never been in England, but they have spoken English together since their infancy, and have scarcely a vestige of foreign accent. Her brother, an agreeable fellow and a good sportsman, is the King’s private secretary. The Petronievichs are kums with the royal house. This is a peculiarly Servian relationship, implying the reciprocal duty of providing the best man at every wedding and the godfather at every christening.

“After a few minutes we were ushered through an ante-chamber into a small boudoir, where Queen Draga received us standing. She is a fine, handsome woman, neither very tall nor very stout, with piercing eyes and a chin full of character. She was dressed in cream silk with much lace and many tucks, evidently a Viennese confection. Her only ornament was a handsome pearl necklace, and the general effect was highly distinguished. After extending her hand and smiling a welcome, she seated herself in an arm-chair behind the door and motioned us to chairs facing her. Then she proceeded to converse with great fluency in very good French, taking a kindly interest in our travels and impressions and making several thoughtful suggestions for our entertainment at Belgrade. Had we seen the royal deer-park beyond Topchider? It was kept private for the King and herself, but if we cared to go there she would give orders for our admission. She spoke of the few English who are to be found in Belgrade and alluded to their endeavour to start golf-links there. She had seen the game played at Biarritz and was curious to know more about it. What was the secret of its fascination? She expressed a preference for Nish above the other royal residences, and spoke enthusiastically of the lovely scenery and delightful excursions to be found there. After about ten minutes Mlle. Petronievich looked in, as though to hint that our time was up, and the Queen bade us good-bye very graciously, inviting us to come and see her again if ever we returned to Servia.

“In the waiting-room we found several groups of people sitting about until their turns should come to be received. Among them were a stout lady with four daughters, all dressed in the deepest black, and several men who wore neither uniforms nor dress-clothes. It seems that the

Servian Court affects great simplicity, and does not stand at all upon punctilio in the matter of raiment. The Queen did, however, attempt to introduce a kind of Court dress to be worn by ladies on State occasions. It is modelled on the mediæval costume of Servia and is certainly very effective. But so far only the Queen and Mlle. Petronievich have adopted it—chiefly, perhaps, because of the expense. While Servia enjoys the blessing of having no poor within her borders, she has also very few rich people, and economy has become a universal habit, instilled during many generations.

“The Servian Court indeed seems to me to have attained the happy mean between Oriental display and niggardly austerity: it is a sort of half-way house between Delhi and Cettinje. The Sovereigns do not stroll about the streets in the garb of shopkeepers, nor do they recline on howdahs or chryselephantine thrones (to borrow an adjective from Dean Farrar). They are content to be the first lady and gentleman in their kingdom, to combine dignity with comfort, modern convenience with ancient sentiments. The enemies of Servia have made loud outcry against the King’s marriage, and I need not go into their motives. It will suffice for most people that the marriage is a very happy one. Queen Draga has a strong character, a clear brain, and a keen eye for political prudence. She exercises considerable influence over the King, who is devoted to her.

“When we were ushered into his presence, his first remark was: ‘You have seen the Queen?’ He motioned us to sit down, offered cigarettes and proceeded to ask our impressions of Macedonia. I told him quite frankly that I had seen no trace of grievances and that I was convinced the actual agitation was wholly artificial, having

its origin in Bulgaria and Austria. As the intrigues of Austria are carefully concealed and by no means universally admitted, a reference to them savoured of indiscretion, but I was anxious to see how His Majesty would take it. He looked up sharply, and said, 'Austria?' with a decided note of interrogation, which might almost have passed for surprise. This gave me the opportunity of reciting a number of innuendoes against Austria, which I had gleaned during my travels. He listened with interest, but naturally did not commit himself to my opinions. 'I know that these charges are made,' was the most that I could extract from him. I ventured to go on to urge the importance of good relations between Serbia and Turkey as the easiest solution of Balkan questions. He listened to all my arguments, and appeared to give tacit approval. Then he asked many questions about English politics. I had recently written an article advocating an Anglo-Servian alliance, and this had been translated by the Servian press. I think he had read it, for his questions touched upon the possibility of my proposals. At my first audience he had asked whether British capital could not be induced to come to Serbia. Now he inquired as to the possibility of a political understanding. I said I had always understood that Serbia held the keys of the Balkans, and I imagined that if we still clung to our traditional policy, we should hasten to recognise this. I then expressed a wish that His Majesty might one day visit England, as that would be a decided advance towards effective sympathies between the two countries. The King was good enough to say that he had long desired to do so, but that various circumstances had hitherto prevented him.

"Presently he made some remark implying that he was confronted by great difficulties, but hoped to surmount



them. I hazarded the observation that I understood he had been received with the utmost enthusiasm during his recent progress through the country. 'Yes,' he said, 'the people are loyal and true. I am never at issue with them. But the parties do not always represent the people, and then I do not find it so easy to manage them.' I mentioned that with us in England there was the same trouble: parties were unscrupulous and pettifogging opportunists, but the backbone of the nation was sincere. 'Ah! you in England,' said he, 'have the advantage of a sound, settled Constitution. People often point to the British Parliament and urge me to place the same confidence in my Parliaments as British Sovereigns do in theirs. To this I reply that if they will deserve the same confidence I am quite ready to give it them.'

"At this time the preparation of a suitable Constitution was evidently exercising the King's mind, for he asked me a great many questions about the British Constitution and listened attentively to my replies. I ventured to remark that it would need considerable modification before it could be applicable to Servia, which, I imagined, was not yet ripe for freedom of the press, irremovable judges or even parliamentary government. He made no comment on these remarks and evidently regarded the British Constitution as a goal to aim at, for his private secretary questioned me closely on the subject a few days later.

"The conversation was peculiarly interesting in view of the events which followed my audience. The Vuich Ministry suddenly fell and General Tsintzar-Markovich, the Commander-in-Chief, was entrusted with the formation of a military cabinet. As neither this nor indeed any other could rely upon a working majority in the Skupshtina, the

only alternative obviously was to govern without that body. Supply having been voted, there was no constitutional or other necessity to summon Parliament again for fifteen months, which is a long time in the Balkans. We shall see what happens. I hope and believe that, by strong personal government, the King and the General will succeed in inaugurating a new era. They may need to abrogate or modify the present Constitution, which is far too liberal and permits every little editor to pose as a great power and make undue noise. As I remarked to the King, it is also unfortunate that Serbia is not better understood abroad, especially in England. At present nearly all Servian news is supplied by unappreciative journalists from Vienna.

“‘Yes,’ said the King; ‘one reason why we are misunderstood is that, alone among all countries, we have our capital at the frontier. Anybody who desires to propagate a calumny has only to cross over to Semlin and use the telegraph wires. An official contradiction follows in a few days but is scarcely heeded. Now, if our capital were at Nish, a malignant would have to travel some way before he could send off false news, and we should have a chance of despatching the truth in the meanwhile.’

“‘Their Majesties certainly have a marked predilection for residence at Nish. Whenever affairs permit, they hurry off thither for a few weeks. The konak there is small but vastly agreeable because wonderfully mediæval. The venerable garden, scarcely changed since it was tended by a Pasha, always suggests to me a scene in the ‘Arabian Nights,’ with its marble fountains, thickets of roses and truly Oriental atmosphere. There is a vast hall on the first floor. The walls are completely covered with trophies of King Milan’s kodak, but the great dark rafters, the

fanciful decorations, the profusion of bright Pirot rugs are altogether delightful.

“In the summer, their Majesties like to take a holiday at Semendria, where they have a villa in a vineyard overlooking the Danube. The grapes of Semendria are the parents of Tokay, larger and sweeter than those of any English hothouse. A bathing establishment at the water’s edge affords opportunity for the King’s favourite diversion. It will be remembered how nearly he lost his life saving that of a companion when swimming at Biarritz. And the old castle of Semendria, with its long row of mysterious turrets, flanking the river, is as attractive to the archæologist as to the artist.

“There is never a dull moment at the Servian court. The King is full of life and vigour. He rises early and late takes rest. He accomplishes an enormous amount of work, giving personal supervision to all the affairs of State. He finds time to see every one who is worth seeing. He swims, he fences, he plays games. He might be summed up as the King who never tires. I prefer to sum him up as the King who never makes mistakes.”

## CHAPTER VI

### TREASON AND PLOT

THE plot, which culminated in one of the most barbarous and horrid murders in all history, was engineered with diabolical cunning. Fully two years were spent in preparing it. A few discredited politicians and unruly officers, moved by private resentments and greed of gain, signed what is known in Scottish history as a "Band," pledging themselves to kill the King and Queen. Very slowly, very carefully, they enrolled fresh conspirators and developed all their plans until the opportune moment arrived. Then they struck surely and swiftly, all the details being mapped out with such consummate craft that the slightest hitch was impossible. Meanwhile, all through this long period, many of the traitors were enjoying the confidence and even the generosity of the Sovereign they had sworn to kill, eating at his table, wearing his livery, fawning for promotion and presents.

The first serious attempt is known as the Alavantich incident, which occurred at Shabats in the spring of 1902. It was passed off at the time by the Court party as the act of a madman, with a tendency towards opera-bouffe; by the Opposition as a pretended plot, such as King Milan loved to organise when he desired a pretext for casting his

enemies into prison. A strange adventurer, with three companions, suddenly arrived at Shabats at four o'clock in the morning from Mitrovitsa, on the other side of the Save. In his hand was a brown-paper parcel, which contained the uniform of a Servian general. Having retired to a shed and put this on, he made his way to the Custom House and ordered the officials to follow him. This they did, either out of curiosity or under the impression that the man really was a Servian general. With his increasing band, which now included a few soldiers from a guard-house near the quays, he went to the Town Hall and ordered the firemen to join him. Some of them laughingly refused, but, when he threatened to shoot them, thought better of it and went on with him to the Prefecture. Here he proclaimed Peter Karageorgevich King of Servia and ordered the gendarmes to join him. They refused and some of his followers, who were evidently in the plot, occupied all the exits of the Prefecture. Two gendarmes, however, made their escape by a window and informed Colonel Nikolich, their commander, what was taking place. He hurried to the Prefecture, where Alavantich threatened him with a revolver; but the Colonel was too quick for him and terminated the affair by wounding him mortally. It is a significant fact that the famous 6th Regiment, which afterwards carried out the murders of the King and Queen, was then quartered at Shabats. But the plot does not seem to have been very well organised, for even if Colonel Nikolich could have been won over and the 6th Regiment had declared for Peter, the only result would have been a short, sharp civil war, in which King Alexander would certainly have been victorious. As it was, Peter hastened to disavow the plot in a letter to the newspapers, qualifying it as a "ridiculous riot" and stating

that he knew nothing of Alavantich. He went on to give a formal denial of all participation in any plot against King Alexander: "I deny all participation in the political publications, tracts and pamphlets which are inundating the country. None of these writings are published with my inspiration or approval. Once and for all I affirm loudly that I am not conspiring in Serbia, that I am not fomenting any trouble there. Why should I employ agents to excite discontent, to provoke revolt, and to work in the interest of my dynasty, when King Alexander, more efficaciously than any one else, has charged himself with that task?" All the same, there were found upon Alavantich a letter from Nenadovich, Peter's private secretary, and a number of postcards bearing Peter's likeness. King Alexander ordered these to be destroyed, but the Prefect locked them up in his desk, where they were found and distributed to the crowd after the revolution. It is also significant that, on his way to Belgrade, Peter was presented with a bunch of flowers by a little niece of Alavantich, and that he accorded her a specially gracious reception in remembrance of this abortive conspiracy.

In the autumn of 1902, when I was at Belgrade, the situation had every appearance of profound calm. The King enjoyed the confidence of the people; a military ministry, under the presidency of General Tsintsar-Markovich, carried on the government with wisdom and prudence, and the only signs of discontent were manifested by a few professional politicians, represented in the press by noisy insignificant newspapers. I remarked upon the extraordinary license of this yellow journalism, but was told that the Constitution permitted it; moreover, that no serious person took any notice of such vapourings. A few wiseacres shook their heads and prophesied trouble,

but the prospect of revolution seemed no less remote than it does in England to-day. If there were any partisans of Karageorgevich, they appeared not more numerous or dangerous than modern Bonapartists.

Yet the plot was maturing. Early in 1903 the conspirators obtained for a young man a position as scullion in the royal kitchens, and instructed him to put some poison into a dish which the King and Queen were sure to eat. Luckily, however, the head cook happened to come in just as the youth was scattering a white powder into the saucepan. His suspicions were aroused and a series of questions extorted unsatisfactory answers. At last the cook said, "Let me see you eat some of this stuff." The boy protested and resisted, but only increased suspicion thereby. At length he was forced to eat the poisoned food, and died in great agony within half an hour, though the doctors were sent for and did all they could for him. Then various foreign newspapers, which were on the side of Karageorgevich, published sensational accounts of how King Alexander was mad with suspicions and had actually gone down into his kitchen and shot a scullion, whom he falsely suspected of desiring to poison him.

After two failures, the conspirators determined to make sure on the third attempt. The officers arranged to murder the King and Queen by shooting them as they came out from a concert given by a choral society, but the enthusiasm of the crowd frightened them and they abandoned the design. After a long consultation they determined to do their work at night, and they readily accepted a proposal to act on the 10th of June, the anniversary of Prince Michael's murder in Topchider Park.

It is said that the Radicals had long been plotting to

depose Alexander in favour of a Russian Grand-Duke ; but that the officers were too quick for them, committing the murders and proclaiming Peter Karageorgevich before the Russians or Radicals were ready to act. This, if true, would explain the subsequent attitude of Russia towards Peter and the regicides.

The three original conspirators were George Genchich, Colonel Alexander Mashin and Dragomir Rajovich.

I first met Genchich at Nish in 1896, when he was nachelnik (prefect) of that town. I remember a tall, well-built man with a luxuriant brown beard. He was very polite to me and took great trouble for my entertainment, but I was not attracted by him. He spoke excellent French and German, had an answer to every question, expressed views on every topic under the sun. After spending a whole day in his company at a picnic, my chief impression was one of amusement aroused by his inordinate vanity. He seemed no less vain about his personal appearance than about his many accomplishments. Again and again he drew my attention to his linguistic skill and inquired whether it did not surprise me in one who was but the son of a poor peasant. I came to the conclusion that, if he did not make his way in life, it would not be for lack of blowing his own trumpet. A few months later he invited me to his wedding at the little church of Topchider, near Belgrade. His bride, a large florid lady, had been divorced not long before, and the question was much debated whether she would bring her child to the ceremony. Several people prophesied misfortune because she looked back after setting out for the church, for this is considered very unlucky in Servia. However, I believe the only misfortunes which have attended her so far were voluntarily accepted in order to advance her husband. By her



favour he was rewarded with the portfolio of Minister of the Interior in the terrorist government of Vladan Georgevich. He exercised all his ingenuity to devise fresh persecutions for all the opponents of Milan, locking up and torturing, among others, many of his future colleagues and fellow-regicides. As a minister, his airs and graces were the standing joke of the town. With every advancement his wild ambitions kept growing by leaps. When the government of Vladan Georgevich was dismissed and Milan was excluded from Servia, Genchich saw his career crumbling like a house of cards. He vented his spite upon Draga, to whom he attributed the change in Alexander's policy. As we have seen, he went to the king and said, "You cannot marry Draga; she has been everybody's mistress, mine among the rest." When this calumny failed, he tried to kidnap Draga and carry her across the frontier. After her marriage he retired to Austria and employed himself in preparing his plot. Most of the calumnies in the Austrian press are attributed to his fertile pen. In 1902 he was allowed to return to Belgrade, and he took advantage of this clemency to mature the conspiracy against the lives of his Sovereigns.

For this purpose he found a congenial spirit in Colonel Alexander Mashin, the Queen's brother-in-law. This person had enjoyed the confidence of King Milan, who saw in him an appropriate instrument for desperate enterprises. He possessed animal courage and appears to have behaved well in the Bulgarian campaign. On two occasions he is said to have saved Milan's life. There seemed every prospect that the man would enjoy a brilliant career. He is inordinately vain and eaten up with ambition almost to the extent of madness. Having everything to hope from Milan, he intrigued for his return to

the throne and was filled with fury when the death of that personage shattered his hopes. Accordingly he cherished a bitter resentment against Queen Draga, not only because she had prompted King Alexander to keep Milan out of the country, but also on account of her matrimonial differences with her first husband. The engineer Mashin had hated his wife chiefly because he knew that he had treated her badly, and Colonel Mashin kept alive his brother's hostility in a savage spirit of vendetta. He invented every sort of calumny against Queen Draga and even went so far as to accuse her of having poisoned her first husband, though he must have known full well that his death was caused by drink. He is a squat, villainous-looking little man, with a bald head and oily luxuriant grey beard. His cast of features might possibly be Jewish. He has shifty eyes and a cruel wolfish mouth. Every gesture betokens inordinate vanity and his manners alternate between fawning and insolence. He has none of the instincts of a gentleman and no notion of self-restraint. The most charitable supposition is that he cannot be altogether sane. It was indeed reported (July 20, 1903) that he had gone to Abbazia, mentally deranged.

The third of this degraded trio, perhaps really the cleverest, was Dragomir Rajovich, who, though an arch-conspirator, seems scarcely to have been mentioned by the press in connection with the plot. He too was a creature of Milan and saw in Milan's eclipse an end to his own ambitions. He had often done dirty work for Milan, for instance when he presided over the tribunal which sentenced the Radical conspirators of Zajechar in 1883. Now he did not shrink from dirty work on his own account.

A Servian merchant, who seems almost disposed to justify the murders, recently wrote to me: "These three

gentlemen knew that the Radicals, through their leader M. Pashich, had come to terms with Russia to turn out Obrenovich and set up a foreign prince. These three gentlemen knew that King Alexander could not resist the Russians and the Radicals, so they thought of themselves and their country. If the revolution had been carried out by the Radicals, none of these three gentlemen would ever have obtained office; M. Rajovich might even have lost his life on account of his share in the punishment of Radical conspirators in 1883. So you see they contrived to safeguard their own future and at the same time to save the Servian throne for a Servian."

Surely never can a conspiracy to kill a King and Queen have been known beforehand to so many people. The number of the conspirators has been variously estimated at figures ranging from 50 to 150, and they were constantly sounding their colleagues with a view to increasing their numbers. The plot was almost common gossip in Belgrade and every frequenter of a coffee-house must have known that something was afoot. A fortnight before the murders, the "Zastava," a Servian newspaper published at Ujvidek (Neusats) in Hungary, published a violent article attacking King Alexander and asserting that a day of vengeance was at hand.

Warnings poured in upon the palace from every quarter. The Servian Ministers at Vienna, Budapest, and Sofia sent a variety of details, and Mijatovich, the Servian Minister in London, a visionary who dabbles in magic, wrote to inform the King that a tragedy had been foretold by a fortune-teller. Officers who had been approached by the conspirators sent in denunciations, and anonymous letters came in almost by every post, bidding their Majesties be on their guard.

Unfortunately, however, the King was not only full of pluck but absolutely convinced of the loyalty of his whole people. Had it not been so, it is difficult to see what he could have done to protect himself. Anonymous warnings and wild denunciations would not have warranted the arrest of officers on suspicion when there was no direct evidence to convict them.

So the King contented himself with increasing his guards at the palace, trusting to Providence and the known devotion of his people. When some one spoke to him of a possible revolution, he only laughed and said, "I am not afraid of revolutions. If any one rebels against me, I am ready to meet him sword in hand at the head of my faithful army."

Queen Draga was no less courageous. The very day before the murders, she remarked to a friend, "I am tired of all these mysterious warnings. Every day we are told that people are coming to assassinate us in the palace. It is easy to talk like that, but the cowards have not the courage to come and make the attempt."

At the same time she was fully aware that danger was threatening, and on the 9th of June she wrote the following pathetic letter to a friend at Vienna:—

I love Sasha (King Alexander) with all my soul and would not hesitate to sacrifice myself and separate from him, for I know I am hated. The absence of order only increases the danger which threatens us. If the King allies himself with the policy of the extreme Radicals it is possible that the second Queen of Servia will follow the first into exile. I am haunted by a dreadful presentiment, and often at night I seem to see a terrifying picture of Michael in his death-agony stretching his blood-stained hand towards his murderers and crying, "Stop, my brothers, it is enough." Sasha alone is in

good spirits. He has unswerving faith in the star of the Obrenovich.

The King's last day has been graphically described by the correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph." In spite of every warning His Majesty felt perfectly secure in the palace and does not seem to have contemplated the possibility of a military revolution. He knew every time he went out that he might be shot in the street, but this was scarcely a novelty for him.

He seemed in unusually good spirits on the 10th of June. After devoting his morning as usual to the transaction of business, he played a game of croquet on the gravel court at the back of the palace with his secretary Petronievich. It was a fine day and the Queen came out to watch them. The secretary won the first game, and the King challenged him to another, in which he was no more successful. "Well, you are a devil of a fellow," the King exclaimed laughing; and he was preparing for a third match when the rain came and drove them in. The King repaired to his study, went through various documents, signed important papers, gave a few audiences and kept himself busy until it was time to dress for dinner.

At eight o'clock he dined with the Queen, General Tsintsar-Markovich (the Premier), and Marinkovich the Servian Minister at Sofia. The high spirits of the morning and afternoon seemed to have passed away and the King was unusually silent. He remarked that the weather had a depressing effect upon his spirits. Beside the weather, the Premier had probably also contributed to his depression. They had had a short conversation just before dinner, when the Premier had expressed a desire to resign. The King had begged him as a favour not to do this in a hurry, as he counted upon his support to tide him over the

difficulties of the hour. No definite decision had, however, been arrived at and the King did not continue the discussion after dinner.

At ten o'clock a military band played in the garden in front of the palace, as was usual in summer, and the King and Queen sat with Her Majesty's brothers and sisters upon the balcony in full view of the passing crowds. At half-past eleven the King and Queen went to bed and the palace was soon plunged in darkness.

Meanwhile the conspirators were busily completing their preparations and working themselves up with strong drink for their desperate enterprise. On the previous day, the 9th of June, Pavlovich, an official at the palace, had telegraphed to the various conspirators in the country, summoning them to Belgrade. Twenty-six obtained leave from their colonels on various pretexts and put in an appearance.

On the morning of the 10th of June Colonel Mishich drew up a list of eighty-six conspirators, who were made to sign a document and take an oath to kill the first who should show any signs of betraying the plot. They were to spend the evening together in various parts of the town, some of them at the Military Club to the west of the palace, others in houses of ill-fame, and others at the Srbski Krana (Servian Crown), a coffee-house with a long verandah full of little tables immediately facing the gardens of Kalemegdan at the extreme east of the town. This is a favourite resort on summer evenings, and I have often sat there listening to the gipsy bands and watching the fireflies among the trees.

All the officers were in a high state of excitement, and uproarious applause was occasioned among them when one of the conspirators called for Draga's March. It seemed

as though the band could not play it too often. No sooner had it come to an end than the officers clamoured to have it all over again, and innocent observers wondered at this sudden display of enthusiasm for the Queen or else at the wild laughter which accompanied each fresh demand for the tune.

It was a great carouse. Bottle after bottle of Negotin wine and many decanters of slivovits (plum brandy) were consumed to all sorts of mysterious toasts. The faces of the officers grew redder and more shiny, their eyes sparkled like those of wild beasts, and there was something peculiarly devilish about the madness of their laughter.

As the hours drew on, a different mood seemed to come over the spirit of the revellers. Their laughter had lost all mirth. From time to time they would consult their watches and there would be a whisper of anxiety lest the moment should be missed for their rendezvous. No two clocks or watches keep the same time in Belgrade, and it would have been as dangerous to appear upon the scene too early as too late.

At last some one made a move, and groups of unsteady figures in full uniform made their way over the rough cobbles of the street in the direction of the palace. Some one began humming Queen Draga's March and another exclaimed bitterly, "To-night Draga will dance to a different tune."

All the details of the plot had been drawn up with minute care. A lieutenant was to give up the keys of the gate of the palace and let the conspirators into the courtyard, where the King's Guards were stationed. The duty of disarming the Guard was allotted to Captain Kostich. Colonel Mishich and Lieutenant Matievich were to go to the barracks of the 6th Regiment and bring them out on

a pretext of defending the King. Colonel Mashin was to fetch the 7th Regiment, Lieutenant Bora Gruich the 4th Cavalry Regiment, Sub-Lieutenant Aleco Gruich the squadron of the Guard, and Captain Ticha a battery of artillery with munitions of war. The soldiers were to be told that the King wished to expel the Queen and that they were to escort her to the frontier. Five rounds were served out to each soldier. Colonel Naumovich, the friend of King Alexander's infancy and now his trusted aide-de-camp, was to drug General Lazar Petrovich, who could not be corrupted, and open the door of the palace.

A list of the victims had been drawn up, including the King and Queen, the Queen's two brothers, General Tsintsar-Markovich (Prime Minister), General Pavlovich (Minister of War), Todorovich (Minister of the Interior), and Colonel Nikolich. There had been a debate as to whether General Petrovich's son should be included, but it was eventually decided to let him off.

An officer was to be posted at every door and window of the palace with orders to kill the King and Queen if they attempted to escape. After disarming the Guard, Captain Kostich was to go and shoot the Queen's brothers in the courtyard of the quarters of the 6th Regiment. Captain Tripkovich was to kill the Minister of the Interior; Captain Rodokovich was to kill the Prime Minister; Lieutenant Dimitrievich was to kill the Minister of War. The password was, appropriately enough, Tsver (a wild beast); the countersign was Zatibor (the name of a Servian mountain).

To understand what took place it may be well to give a brief description of the palace. It consists of two buildings: the old palace, generally known as the konak; and the new palace, which was built some sixteen years





THE PALACE.



ago by King Milan. The new palace is a lofty edifice, coming right down to the street; the konak is close by, separated from the street only by gilt railings and a narrow garden. It is a long, low yellow building, with many windows and white Venetian blinds. It consists apparently of two stories, but closer acquaintance reveals the fact that the lower floor is entirely given over to pantries and offices, the palace proper being all on one level. The entrance is at the back, up a wide flight of stairs, at the head of which stood an enormous black bear, which was killed during the Bulgarian war.

All the rooms open into one another, forming a complete circle. Immediately to the left of the entrance is an equerries' room, furnished with speaking tubes and telephones. From this you pass into the council chamber, where the King usually gave audiences. A long table covered with green baize stood in the centre and there were a number of high-backed chairs of carved oak. On the walls were oil-paintings representing incidents in the war of independence, roughly executed, no doubt by local talent. Here and in nearly every other room the bright red carpets of Pirot were hung upon the walls, affording a very cheerful effect.

Next came the billiard-room, containing the ordinary French table, on which I observed a number of little nine-pins, such as are used in a Russian variety of the game. There was a long thin mat of white india-rubber along one side of the room. Here the King used to practise fencing, as a number of foils on the walls testified.

The dining-room was a particularly cheerful room, and my attention was attracted by a number of filigree egg-cups and other nicknacks hung upon the red walls, like the objects in a shooting gallery. Next came the Arabian

room, furnished with a number of pretty things collected by King Milan on his travels: beautiful brocades, soothing silks, fantastic portières of heavy gold lace cunningly embroidered, chibouques and narghiles, divans and poufs (six of them arranged like the dots on a domino), Oriental bowls, carved gourds and mysterious tom-toms. On the walls were suspended wonderful silver arms, flint-locks, yataghans and jewelled sabres, besides lacquered harness of precious metals, such as Milosh and Pope Luka took from the Turks. On an inlaid table in the centre of the room was a strange old vase with a sponge growing out of the centre. There was a priceless chimney-piece of white marble and near the window were two beautiful basins, also of white marble, taken from the old Turkish fountain in the Aladdin-like garden of the konak at Nish.

A doorway hung with strings of heavy beads gave entrance to the central reception room, with a comfortable balcony overlooking the garden. This, known as the Servian room, was entirely furnished with the characteristic products of the country. The bright Pirot rugs predominated and there were a great number of dainty embroideries of the most harmonious colours. Next came Queen Draga's boudoir, where she used to receive her visitors. This was simply but tastefully furnished, and contained a very large collection of photographs of King Alexander at every age. The walls were covered with silken panels of a golden bronze colour.

Next came the royal bed-chamber, a bright pink room containing a large number of the sacred images which are so popular among members of the Orthodox Church. A door behind the bed opened into a little bath-room, with three steps descending to the bath. On the opposite side was a door opening into a little room where the

Queen used to hang her dresses. It is here that the murders actually took place.

At the opposite end of the palace there was a grating in the floor, leading to a secret staircase, designed by King Milan to afford him the possibility of escaping to the cellars in case of a sudden attack. Unfortunately, when King Alexander came to the throne, he had this passage blocked up, so that it was no use to him in the hour of need.

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Immediately at the back of the konak was a guard-house, a long, low yellow building with a number of tricolour stumps for stacking arms. At either extremity of the guard-house were some rooms for the accommodation of the courtiers in attendance on the King and Queen. Farther back was a pretty old-fashioned garden. It contained two or three Dutch beds, carefully tended, and a succession of shrubberies concealing a gravel croquet-ground, a summer-house, a skittle alley, a lawn-tennis court, an aviary, and a fountain.

## CHAPTER VII

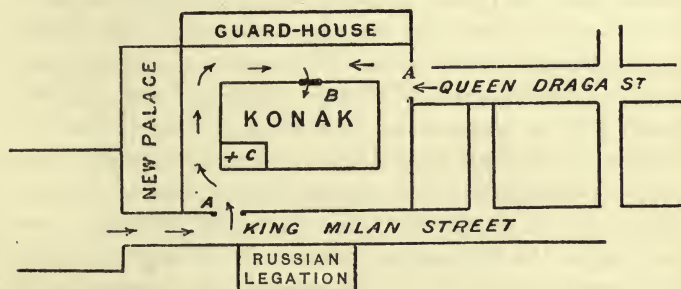
### REGICIDE

SHORTLY before two o'clock in the morning of the 11th of June a battalion of infantry was ordered out of the barracks of the 6th Regiment and led to the palace, where they proceeded to occupy every approach. The soldiers must have had some idea that great events were afoot, but they certainly did not know that the King and Queen were about to be murdered. The awful deed was carried out simply and solely by officers. Forty of them arrived at the back entrance to the palace grounds, and an officer of the Guard, who had been won over, quietly unlocked the gates. As he was doing so, one faithful officer, a captain of horse named Panajatovich, rushed out and tried to prevent the opening of the gates, but he was too late and the invaders swept him aside, putting a bullet into his head as they passed.

Rushing up the steps to the door of the palace, they found it closed, Captain Naumovich, who was to have admitted them, having fallen off into a drunken sleep. The conspirators, however, had come prepared for every emergency. The door was blown open with dynamite and the palace lay at their mercy. According to one account, Naumovich was killed by the explosion; according to another account, Mishich shot him, suspecting treachery.

The rest of the story is very difficult to verify with any degree of accuracy. The conspirators were mad with drink and excitement, and can scarcely have known what they were doing. Immediately after the crime they were willing enough to talk, and it is possible that some of them may have exaggerated the details of their crime in a boastful spirit. But even if their veracity could be relied upon, their recollection would still remain open to

## GARDENS



A A. Entrances to the palace grounds. B. Door of the palace.  
C. Scene of the murders.

*The arrows show the route of the murderers.*

doubt. Later on, when there was talk of punishment being exacted by Europe, their lips were sealed and much milder versions were spread abroad, though even they were sufficiently horrible.

One of the greatest heroes of this awful hour was General Lazar Petrovich, the King's favourite aide-de-camp, who remained faithful to the last. Naumovich had attempted to drug him, but without complete success. He was awakened by the shots in the courtyard and went

to the door of the palace in a half-dazed condition. Hearing the murderers clamouring for admission, he ran to the telephone to summon help, but found that the wires had been cut. Then came the dynamite explosion, whereby the front door was burst open. Either he then cut the electric wires, in order to baffle the conspirators by plunging the palace in darkness, or else the lighting apparatus was destroyed by the explosion.

A parley seems to have ensued, while some of the conspirators were sent across the road to demand candles from the nearest house. General Petrovich calmly inquired what was the meaning of this intrusion. The officers replied that they had come to demand the King's abdication and the expulsion of Draga. They pointed out that resistance was useless, and some of them forced their way at once to the royal bed-chamber, where neither the King nor the Queen could be found. Returning to General Petrovich, they threatened to shoot him at once unless he revealed the hiding-place of their Majesties. Realising that everything might be gained by delay, he replied that they had taken refuge in the cellars.

Here some two hours were passed groping about in the semi-darkness, the general doing all he possibly could to gain time. The keys of the cellars had to be found, and this was made as difficult as possible. Then the gang of officers had to search every hole and corner, peering into recesses, overturning barrels and ransacking the whole place. They grew more and more wildly exasperated, but the general, perfectly calm, kept up the pretence of assisting their search. At last it became perfectly obvious that the victims were not in the cellars, and the officers returned upstairs to the palace, killing General Petrovich on the staircase.



Meanwhile, the King and Queen had taken refuge in the little room where the Queen kept her dresses. While the search was going on in the cellars, the King went to the window, tore a curtain right off, broke the glass, cutting his fingers as he did so, and shouted to the soldiers outside to come to his rescue. They, however, had been told that the officers in the palace were protecting the King against a conspiracy set on foot by Draga. So they paid no attention to the call of their Sovereign, but remained patiently where they were.

Even then, after the King had appeared at the window, there seemed, oddly enough, still no clue to the whereabouts of the victims. The officers came back to the royal bedroom, probing about with their swords and firing shots wildly in every direction. At last they dragged out the King's personal servant and threatened him with instant death if he did not reveal the hiding-place. He drew their attention to a knob in the wall behind the bed. This was the handle of the hidden door to the wardrobe, but it would not work, as the King and Queen had bolted themselves in. Axes were fetched and the door was broken open. The King and Queen were now at the mercy of their murderers.

According to one story, Colonel Mishich called upon the King to abdicate, whereupon he replied, "I am not King Milan, and I give you to understand that I shall not be overawed by a handful of officers"; then Angelkovich, Lazarevich, Dimitrievich, Radivokevich and Tripkovich fired the first shots.

According to another story, the Queen begged piteously for her life, but the King uttered no word. He embraced the Queen, made the sign of the cross, and they fell together, the King riddled with thirty-six bullets, the Queen

with fourteen ; then the executioners stabbed the helpless lady as she lay on the ground, some of them insulting her body by indecent gestures with their swords.

According to yet another version, Colonel Mishich first entered the closet alone. He found the King clad only in a pair of trousers and a red silk shirt, while the Queen wore a petticoat, a pair of white silk stays and one yellow silk stocking. She stood in one corner, cowering among her clothes. The King was trying to shield her and showed no sign of fear. Without a word Mishich shot him in the neck with an explosive bullet. The Queen rushed forward to support the King, who had sunk to the ground. Mishich then withdrew, and was succeeded by Colonel Mashin, who had stipulated for the privilege of killing his sister-in-law. He fired at the Queen but missed her. Then Lieutenant Saurich shot over his shoulder and hit her in the breasts. Then the following officers broke in : Mishich, Kostich, Popovich, Bora Gruich, Tripkovich, Milivojevich, Matievich, Radakovich, Dimitrievich, and Kicha. They fired a number of shots at the King and Queen, and hacked her with their swords, gashing her face and arms, and cutting open her stomach. After stabbing the King in the face many times, they took up both bodies and flung them into the gardens through the window.

The following additional detail was given by the correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" :—

In the palace garden I met an officer who was on service in the palace on the memorable night. He is a low-sized, vulgar-looking man, with sun-burnt skin and gleaming, furtive eyes. We asked him whether he could give us details of the death of the King and Queen. He replied, "Certainly, that I can, because I myself had an active part in it. My



THE OLD KONAK.

(The open window shows where the murders were committed.)



name is Vojislav Neshich, I am an adjutant and was attached to the palace guard on the night of June 10. I am the officer who, when the electric light was turned off in the apartments of the palace, volunteered to fetch a candle to light my colleagues. Having done this, I took part in putting the King and Queen to death, accompanying my comrades into the bedroom and then into a narrow little apartment serving as the Queen's wardrobe. We were terribly excited and hardly knew how we killed the two. What I do recollect is that, when we discovered them, we drew our sabres and hewed off the fingers of the King and Queen. The King had only a thumb left; I don't know how many fingers were cut off the Queen's hands. But the whole thing was the work of a few seconds, for we then levelled our revolvers and fired."

Mishich told a correspondent of a Berlin paper that he demanded the King's abdication before firing. But even if this be true, it does not prove that he intended to spare him. He probably thought that, in case of a trial, it would be found a more serious offence to have slain a reigning monarch than one who had gone through the form of abdication. Questioned as to the details of the crime, he added:—

There were many of us, and it is impossible to know whether I or another fired the first shot at the King. The main point is that our work succeeded. We have rendered the Fatherland immense service and are well satisfied with our success.

Out of all these confused reports two facts stand clear. The murders were committed with the utmost barbarity, such as would not be expected in the most savage country, and King Alexander in his hour of trial comported himself with heroic courage.

After the bodies had been thrown out of the window, the murderers proceeded to ransack the palace in search of money. It is not known how much they found, but they carried off everything of any value which they came across. Jewels and nicknacks were appropriated, and the King's private papers were taken away in the hope that some documents might be found to prejudice public opinion against him. The officers then went off to commit other murders in the town, and numbers of privates streamed into the palace to glean any loot which the officers might have overlooked. For days and weeks after the murders all sorts of mementoes of the King and Queen were to be bought very cheaply from the thieves and pawnbrokers in Belgrade.

The next murder was that of the Queen's brothers. Fifty men were sent to their house to bring them to the officers' quarters. On their arrival they were greeted sarcastically by Kostich, the man who had signalled himself by some of the worst outrages upon the body of the Queen.

"Their Majesties are now dead," said he. "The moment has come for your Royal Highnesses to command. Do not hesitate. We are your faithful subjects. Pray give your orders. But if I may presume to advise, you will not ask for more than a glass of water and a cigarette."

The brothers took his meaning, embraced one another and lighted cigarettes. They were hustled into an inner room. Three privates, who had been recruited from the south-western part of Servia, near the Turkish border, were ordered to fire but refused. Kostich turned upon them in a fury and shot them down. Then he ordered other privates to do the work and the brothers fell at the first volley. They died like brave men. Indeed all the victims died well, including the unfortunate servants,



THE HOUSE WHERE THE QUEEN'S BROTHERS WERE MURDERED.  
(X The windows of the room where the tragedy took place.)





whose only fault was attachment to their masters, and the ministers who were killed in the presence of their wives and families.

The murder of the ministers was scarcely less terribly dramatic than that of the Sovereigns. General Tsintsar-Markovich was the father of eight children. The eldest, aged only twenty-one, was married to an officer named Milkovich. He was killed at the palace resisting the invasion of the conspirators. At this very moment his wife was giving birth to a child. The expectation of this event had kept the General and his wife up very late.

They were sitting together over a glass of wine and the General was relating how he had tendered his resignation of the premiership and how the King desired him to remain. Madame Markovich was just about to go off and see her daughter when loud knocks were heard at the door.

The General went down and found two officers with eight soldiers standing outside. One of the two officers said he wished to speak to the General, who replied that it was too late and refused him admittance.

The officer then said with grim truth that he had come from the King. Thereupon he was admitted.

“General,” he said, with some hesitation, “the King and Queen have just been killed. I have soldiers outside. It is useless for you to attempt to escape.”

By this time the General's wife and some of his children had come into the room and the officer seems to have shrunk from carrying out his bloody task. He merely told the Premier to consider himself under arrest, granting his request that Madame Markovich should be allowed to go across to her daughter, who lived in a neighbouring house. The officer then withdrew, but before Madame

Markovich had left the room the other officer rushed upstairs and, without saying a word, shot the General through the head. Then the soldiers were brought in, the house was ransacked, private papers, several sums of money and various articles of value were carried off.

General Pavlovich had done little or nothing to arouse the hostility of the conspirators, but he was known to have a large sum of money in his house and it was determined to kill him in order to obtain it. He was sitting with his family at the time. His little house was close to the palace and the family had doubtless been aroused by the noise of firing and dynamite. From the street he could be seen sitting close to the window. An officer called out to him that he was wanted at the palace immediately.

He looked out of the window and saw some one aiming a revolver at him. Returning to the room, he picked up his own revolver and fired at his assailants. They replied and he fell dead at once by the window. Then they broke in and took away everything of value which they could find.

Todorovich, Minister of the Interior, was more fortunate. Indeed he appears to have been the only one of the intended victims who contrived to escape on this fatal night. He was sitting in his dining-room with his wife and children. A very young lieutenant rang the bell, brushed past the servant, and ran into the room where the minister was.

He exclaimed breathlessly, "There has been a revolution. The King and Queen have been murdered. You are no longer a minister."

Todorovich's son ran out of the room to telephone to General Tsintsar-Markovich, but the lieutenant prevented him and then came back to the dining-room trying to make up his mind to carry out his instructions and murder

the minister. After some hesitation, however, he returned to the comrades who were awaiting him outside and said, "I cannot do it. He is there with his family. They are all friends of mine. I have often danced with one of the daughters. I cannot kill her father under her very eyes."

Another young officer then brushed him aside and, rushing in with a revolver, fired two shots, which struck the minister in the breast. He fell to the ground insensible, but later on, when surgeons could be sent for, the bullets were extracted, and, after lingering between life and death for several weeks, he recovered.

Meanwhile the bodies of the King and Queen lay for two hours in the garden. According to one story, the King remained alive for a long time, writhing in agony, but this seems unlikely, in view of the great number of wounds which he had received. Towards dawn, the Russian Minister, Charikof, who lives immediately across the road and had been watching the proceedings from behind his blinds,<sup>1</sup> went across with his servants and ordered the bodies to be taken into the palace. As this was about to be done, one of the officers, who was hovering about, sent for the hose and had it turned on to the bodies to remove the coagulated blood.

They were then laid upon the kitchen table and some surgeons, who had been hurriedly sent for, were instructed to hold a post-mortem. An official account of their investigation was published, containing a number of medical details, intended to prove that the King was insane and that the Queen could never have had a child.

Persons who saw the bodies have stated that their appearance was terrible. In spite of all the wounds on her

<sup>1</sup> Like Moray, who watched Rizzio's murder "through his hands."

face, an expression of agony could still be seen on the Queen's features. The King's face was much swollen and almost blue, whether from the fall out of the window or from kicks which he received when lying on the ground, it is impossible to say. The fingers of both were cut to pieces.

After the autopsy, the King's body was dressed in black civilian clothes, that of the Queen in a pale pink costume. Guards were placed outside the palace all day, but all sorts of people were allowed to come in and gaze upon the royal victims. Those who did so appear to have been for the most part enemies of the dynasty. Many made insulting remarks, and some went so far as to spit upon the bodies.

In the evening coffins were brought and some policemen were ordered by the officers present to put the bodies in. As they were doing this gently and reverently, one of the officers exclaimed, "Make haste, will you? I can't waste my time like this. Fling the dogs in anyhow, and if they won't go in trample them down with your feet." The policeman, who seems to have possessed some human feelings, paid no attention to this order, whereupon the officer pushed him aside and trampled upon the bodies himself. The policeman, when relating the incident, remarked that he felt sorely tempted to fire upon this brute.

The poor shattered bodies having thus been flung into their coffins, a number was affixed to each for official identification. Late at night a cart arrived. It was the one usually employed for conveying the bodies of suicides and murderers to the cemetery. For some reason or other the coffins could not be placed in it, so two other carts were procured, one generally used for taking smallpox





S. MARK'S CHURCH. TOMBS OF THE KING AND QUEEN.

patients to the hospital and the other for conveying their clothes to be disinfected.

At half-past one in the morning of the 12th of June the funeral took place. The infected carts were driven through a back gate of the palace to the old Cemetery of S. Mark, where some of the obscurer members of the Obrenovich family had been buried. As the procession passed the stables, the King's horse neighed very loudly, as though aware in some mysterious way of what was taking place. Two popes read the burial service very hurriedly in the presence of a few officers and a number of policemen. No high ecclesiastic was present nor any friend or relative of the unhappy victims. Two rough wooden crosses have been stuck carelessly into the ground outside the tombs, with the simple inscriptions, "Alexander Obrenovich" and "Draga Obrenovich."<sup>1</sup>

The traitor Naumovich was buried on the same day with full military honours, and an official notice described him as "dying on the field of honour for his Fatherland."

After the defenestration, while some of the officers were despatching the ministers, wild demonstrations took place in the streets. The first intimation of the news was conveyed by Lieutenant Gruich and a few of his comrades, who galloped about waving their swords and screaming out hoarsely that "the tyrants" had fallen. Other assassins

<sup>1</sup> On All Souls' Day it is usual for the popes to recite a prayer, burn some incense and bless every grave, even those of paupers. In 1903 this ceremony would have been omitted at the graves of the late Sovereigns had not the poor women of Belgrade repaired to S. Mark's and compelled a pope to do his duty. When he pronounced the words, "May God give peace to His servants King Alexander and Queen Draga," the whole congregation wept loudly and bitterly, and one by one they bent down to kiss the simple crosses which mark the last resting-place of the royal victims.

were carried about in triumph on people's shoulders. Soldiers occupied all the streets. Guns were drawn up in front of the palace. Soldiers' horses and cannon were all decorated with evergreen and many of the officers had replaced the little discs, bearing King Alexander's monogram, with flowers and tricolour cockades.

Zhivkovich, the Radical leader, drove about in one of the court carriages, stopping every now and then to harangue the people in impassioned tones, announcing that the golden age had set in and that the country had been saved from the hands of oppressors. Early in the day policemen were sent round to every householder with orders to put out flags and decorations and bright red carpets. No one seems to have dared to refuse and the partisans of the late dynasty were so utterly terrorised that no protest was possible. Even the houses where the murdered ministers lay dead were not spared, and the families of the victims were compelled to put out emblems of joy.

All day long, gangs of noisy young men paraded the streets, going from wine-shop to wine-shop, shouting and cheering and singing. Military bands were stationed in the gardens and squares, playing lively music and revolutionary anthems. The church bells pealed merrily and guns fired off salutes from the fortress.

Similar demonstrations were enforced all over the country, except at Shabats, where the partisans of the late King were sufficiently numerous to hold out for a while. At Semendria, where the King had a villa, the first news which arrived merely conveyed the fact that the King and Queen had been killed. Thereupon every one went into mourning and the houses were hung with black drapery. Later in the day, however, details of the revolution were





BELGRADE AFTER THE MURDERS.

PLATE VIII.



received, the black draperies were taken down, and bright flags were put up in their place.

It must not be supposed, however, that the people as a whole sympathised with, or in any way endorsed, these terrible events. Now that the excitement and terror have somewhat abated and people venture to express their opinions with greater freedom, there are no feelings save those of regret, except among the murderers and the extreme Radicals. A few weeks after the deed I received a letter from a friend of mine, who had often expressed to me his strong disapproval of Queen Draga and her elevation to the throne. He wrote to me, "It is very difficult for me to answer your question" (as to the way in which the murders had been received in Servia), "but I know you will not need to be assured as to the sentiments of your many friends in this country."

Even so it is astounding that a whole people, whose vast majority was undoubtedly loyal, should have been forced into a condonation of this hideous crime and should have submitted to be terrorised into an appearance of rejoicing over it. The ease with which the conspiracy was carried out is doubtless explained by the fact, that the conspirators were extraordinarily cunning and had laid their plans with the craft of the Devil, while the King and his faithful subjects, having too great a faith in human nature, were taken unawares. But I fail to understand how it happened that the news of the murders did not provoke civil war.

The only attempt in that direction occurred soon after the King had been seen at his window calling for help. Colonel Dimitref Nikolich, the Commander of the Danube Division, received an intimation of what was happening and, leaping on to his horse, galloped off to bring the 8th

Infantry Regiment to the rescue. He was met by Colonel Gagovich, who politely inquired where he was going. Colonel Nikolich told him, whereupon the other replied that he could not permit it. An angry altercation ensued and Nikolich was severely wounded.

The murderers, not content with planning all the details of their crime, had made every arrangement for taking over the reins of government immediately afterwards. Avakumovich, the Liberal leader, was met at the station on his return from the country a few hours after the murders. He heard the particulars of the crime with every appearance of astonishment, and when informed that he had been appointed Premier of a Provisional Government by the regicides, his first impulse was to refuse. However, after conversation with some of the leaders of the conspiracy, he gave way and put his signature to the following proclamation, which had already been prepared:—

To the Servian People. Last night the King and Queen were shot. In this grave and fateful moment, the friends of the Fatherland have combined to form a new Government. While the Government makes this announcement to the people, it is convinced that the Servian people will gather round it and lend it their aid to maintain order and security throughout the land. The Government hereby makes known that from to-day the Constitution of April 6, 1901 comes into force. The meeting of national representatives dissolved by the proclamation of March 24 is summoned to meet in Belgrade on June 15.

(Signed) Jovan Avakumovich (Premier without portfolio), Ljubomir Kaljevich (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Stojan Protich (Minister of the Interior), George Genchich (Minister of Commerce), General Jovan Atanzkovich (Minister of War), Vojislav Veljkovich (Minister of Finance), Colonel





MURDERERS ON PARADE IN THE COURTYARD OF THE PALACE.

Alexander Mashin (Minister of Public Works), Professor Ljubomir Stojanovich (Minister of Public Worship), Ljubomir Zhivkovich (Minister of Justice).

It is difficult to tell how many of these persons were privy to the plot. According to an Austrian newspaper, Avakumovich had been promised £2000, Zhivkovich £480, and other patriotic politicians smaller sums if they would give their countenance to the crime.

Many of the officers also had insisted upon blood-money. Colonel Naumovich alone received anything in advance. Although King Alexander had recently made him a present of £350 to settle some pressing debts, he had no hesitation in haggling with the men who were plotting to kill his benefactor, the friend of his childhood. He told them that he would not stir a finger unless he received £1000 down and another £1000 after the event. The first £1000 was duly paid, but Providence prevented him from living to enjoy the rest of his wage.

Colonel Mashin received £1200, Colonel Mishich £960, Colonel Solarevich £960, and Captain Kostich, whose behaviour was most infamous of all, also £960. Kostich had no sort of grievance against the King or Queen, and joined the conspiracy merely for greed of gain. He had not only dissipated all his own money before the murders, but had also taken out his wife's dowry from the Bank of Servia and squandered it in gambling. The day after the murder he was able to replace the missing amount in the Bank and is doubtless highly esteemed by his friends and brother officers for his probity. The younger officers received sums varying from £80 to £200.

The total sum paid out in rewards for the crime amounted to £12,000—ten thousand times thirty pieces of Servian silver.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A "GLORIOUS REVOLUTION"

IN olden days all Sovereigns, however much they might differ in questions of policy, however greedily they might covet each other's dominions, still recognised a practical brotherhood, a common interest in the maintenance of authority. Wrongs done to any one of their order were resented as an outrage to all; the demise of any Crown plunged every civilised Court into mourning. Now another spirit seems to prevail; a mask of diplomatic indifference is worn in high places, and the expression of national sympathies is left to the man in the street. A bloody tragedy, almost unparalleled in the history of civilised man, has occurred in a European capital. A patriotic young King, his fair consort, his chief ministers and his faithful servants have been butchered with inhuman atrocity; the murderers have gloried in their infamy; and a terrorised populace has seemed to acquiesce with decorated houses and blaring bands. No thrill of horror has been manifested by the "dear brothers" and "cousins" of the royal victims; on the very day of the holocaust, when the mangled corpses of a King and Queen were being exposed to the outrages of frenzied fiends, there was never a pause in the pomp



and circumstance and revelry of European Courts. But the ghastly details of the deed have appealed to the melodramatic instincts of the vulgar, arousing a morbid indignation throughout every land.

What honest person could fail to be stirred by the story of the conspirators, sitting over their wine under the verandah of the Srbski Kruna, uproariously urging the gipsy band to play Queen Draga's March before they sallied forth to hack her to pieces with their swords; by the airy apologies of the baffled murderers when they roused a citizen for axes and candles, wherewith to track down their victims in the sleeping palace; by the thought of the ill-starred young Sovereigns lying in their own gardens, riddled with bullets, sighing through the small hours for the long-delayed relief of death? In the pages of ancient or mediæval history, even in sensational fiction, such hellish horrors could not fail to arouse intense emotion; in the cold glare of the twentieth century they are brought home so vividly that we are almost eye-witnesses. The question remains whether democracy or oligarchy shall pass judgment; whether public sentiment or political opportunism shall prevail. Under international lynch law, Servia would already have been put to the sword. But your sober diplomatist is ever eager to let ill alone. Times have changed since exaggerated rumours of repression in the Christian provinces of Turkey could stagger ministries or invoke European wars. Enthusiasm in high places is dead, and facts must be faced. The first of these facts is that civilised Governments are moved only by self-interest, whether it be a chance of national aggrandisement or an instinct of self-preservation. But the peoples retain power to insist upon justice as well as injustice, and they must surely now raise their voices or for ever hold their peace.

The Servian outrage preaches many lessons in political philosophy. It presents the issue between anarchy and international action. Almost anywhere in Europe to-day, the humblest and most infamous are protected. Kill an armed burglar and you may be sentenced for manslaughter ; to avenge injured honour you must content yourself with civil process. But a handful of besotted desperadoes may wipe out a dynasty, and the partisans of some obscure pretender will acclaim them as heroes. A monarch may toil from sunrise to cock-crow, lavish all his wisdom and energy for the benefit of ungrateful subjects, sacrifice ease, independence, health and happiness in a supreme effort of unselfishness, but he knows all the time that he has taken his life in his hands, and that, if prodigal sons compass his destruction, they may go scot-free. This is intolerable, for, in the case of a weak king, it inspires timidity or shifty intrigue ; in the case of a strong king, it makes ruthlessness a vital necessity. *Sors tertia*—constitutionalism—manet, but even that is not an absolute safeguard against assassination ; nor is it adaptable to the needs of every nation.

It is all very well to propose that Servia should be left to work out her own damnation. But a terrible precedent will be set and a demoralising influence will be let loose upon the world, if the Belgrade regicides are allowed to go unpunished. The Tsar has made one effort in the Utopian direction of universal peace. He would do a far more practical service to the public weal if he would now convoke a conference to make regicide henceforth impossible. With a resolute determination on the part of the leading Powers, the task would be an easy one. The Servian murderers are merely a variety of Anarchist, and the whole foundations of society are threatened by a further development of the

Anarchist evil. The commonest interest of self-preservation should band together the rulers of the earth to resist an insidious political disease, whose possible ravages are still far from being appreciated. If the officers who betrayed their trust and the politicians who endorsed their diabolical atrocities are to go unpunished and even to profit by their crimes, every criminal conspiracy will be reduced to a mere game of chance, so long as a ruler is the adversary. A desperado can afford to play for high stakes when he has only his worthless life to hazard against unlimited power and wealth and distinction.

I am not now proving that rebellion can never be justified. But the Servian outrage admits of no palliation. Let us consider the career of King Alexander and Queen Draga and even admit for the moment all the most heinous charges which have been alleged against them. To what do they amount? Let us hear the Devil's advocate. He may tell us that the King was autocratic, that the Queen was autocratic and immoral, that a conspiracy was afoot to proclaim her brother heir-presumptive. I do not believe any of these charges, but even if they could be proved up to the hilt, they would not justify massacre or even exclude pity. The question of the succession was an open one, for the House of Kara George had been tried and found wanting, and there remained no living descendant of an Obrenovich ruler. It was important to choose an heir, and every one was free to make suggestions as his conscience might prompt him. The Prince of Montenegro fostered a handful of partisans, but his election would have meant a subjugation of Servia, and those who resent autocracy would have found his little finger thicker than the loins of King Alexander. Prince Mirko was mentioned, and he possessed a claim as well from his own personal qualities as from his

marriage with a beautiful and accomplished cousin of the Royal House, Mlle. Constantinovich. Various old families, descended from the Vojvodes, might have furnished plausible candidates. The question was so widely open that there could have been no treason in any suggestion, whether it came from the gutter or the palace. If the King and Queen did propose Nikodem Lunjevitsa, it does not follow that they were unpatriotic. A woman will run risks, perhaps even sacrifice her honour, for the child of her loins, but who ever heard of one who went out of her way to invite odium for the sake of a brother? The fraternal relationship is sometimes friendly, but never romantic. When I conversed with Queen Draga, I was vastly impressed by her conspicuous common-sense. It is obvious that, if she had not had confidence in her brother, she would never have dreamed of suggesting his succession. Assuming he was undesirable, he would either have become a conspirator during her husband's life or failed to hold his own when the time came for him to ascend the throne. She had nothing to gain unless he possessed the makings of a strong king.

Nor would King Alexander have assented to the nomination of an unsuitable heir. He loved his wife intensely; he was only happy when he pleased her, but he never sacrificed the good of his realm and people to her whims; nor indeed was he ever called upon to do so. I have seen him a hundred times, I have conversed with him intimately, and I believe I gauged his character with some accuracy. He was above all things a patriot; he laboured incessantly, unremittingly, with infinite pains and brilliant foresight, to do his duty to his people. He must have known his brother-in-law's character and would never have dreamed of encouraging hopes of inheritance

unless he was absolutely convinced of the young man's efficiency. That being so, the charge amounts to this: that the King and Queen proposed to nominate an heir who was worthy of occupying the throne. It must be remembered that he came of an old Vojvode stock and was anything but an upstart. Many Servians have said to me that they welcomed Draga as their Queen because, instead of being an expensive alien princess, she was the offspring of their national heroes, she cherished patriotic ideas, she had simple tastes, and she could enter into the feelings of the nation, whose blood was in her veins. What could be argued in her favour was equally applicable to her brother. At any rate, he would not come to them as a stranger, like the Princes of the Black Mountain, who were cousins rather than sons of Servia, or the descendants of Black George, who had forgotten much and learned nothing during years of ignominious exile. To propose him to the national assembly as heir might have been a blunder, but would not have been a crime. Even if we are to assume a packed Skupshtina, no great danger had been threatened to the will or welfare of the people: if he had not earned popularity or possessed power, he would have had no ghost of a chance of succeeding, however confidently he might have been supported by the King, however enthusiastically he might have been acclaimed by an unrepresentative assembly. Moreover, while King Alexander lived, the position of heir-presumptive remained an inoffensive sinecure. In any case, the cowardly murder of Nikodem affords a tribute to his strength. If he were merely his sister's puppet and nominee, he might safely have been allowed to depart in peace; if he remained a danger to the revolutionary settlement after the murders in the palace, he must have

possessed influence and popularity with the people. As a matter of fact, his candidature was never put forward seriously, and the clamours against it were merely pretexts for discrediting the crown by insinuating designs akin to nepotism.

Likewise the clamours against the Queen were mere sporadic explosions of jealousy. In every country ruled by a young Sovereign many hearts flutter with extravagant ambitions. A bevy of beauties adorned the Servian Court when Queen Nathalie presided over its destinies. If ever the King engaged one of them in conversation for a few minutes longer than another, all manner of rumours were instantly afloat. Had he married a foreign princess, his Queen would have commanded respect as a being of a superior caste, and assuredly if her blood had been shed it would not have cried for vengeance in vain. But when the news came that he had chosen a daughter of his own people to share his throne, a hundred damsels protested their own superior charms, wagging their tongues in impotent calumnies unceasingly. In ordinary life and ordinary countries the expression of such disappointment is short-lived. But at Belgrade it gathered volume every week and month and year, though the simple, modest, genial Queen certainly did nothing to feed the torrent. She had her own views of political right and wrong, and her character was strong enough to support them. But no impartial critic could blame her public actions. As for her private life before she ascended the throne, it concerns no one but the King, who gave her his love, and the people, who acclaimed her as enthusiastically as they presently acclaimed her butchers. Had she been the most abandoned of her sex in the days of her poverty, it were only charitable to pass the sponge of oblivion over her

past, remembering only that she enjoyed the confidence of her Consort and shared, perhaps even inspired, his labours for the national welfare. I suppose that, in every land, reflections on a woman's honour are bound to excite prejudice, and the prejudice is quite independent of the truth or falsehood of the charges. In criminal trials, at least in England, a stray suspicion of loose living almost suffices to secure a woman's conviction for murder. Let us then condescend to the Puritan and argue a point, which should be held irrelevant in polite society. When I was in Belgrade in the autumn of 1902, I sifted many stories about the Queen and cross-examined their authors. Some complained that she had been unduly intimate with the King before marriage; but others reproached her for craft in withholding her favours until she had thereby secured her crown. Others alleged that she had always been catholic in her affections, but the only evidence was that of boastful men, who posed as universal conquerors, and even this was mere rumour or hearsay. One braggart was particularly quoted, but I learned that his utmost pretension amounted to an exchange of kisses in one of the parlour games which are universal at evening parties in Belgrade. He had jested about a Queen's kisses much as a schoolboy once announced that he had kicked the future King of Spain. There was not sufficient proof against the Queen to condemn a dog, and it is easy to understand the King's anger when irresponsible busybodies warned him against her character at the time of their betrothal. It is all very well to argue that there is no smoke without fire, but that is to ignore the depths of feminine spite. Her critics were a mere gang of voluble women, who primed their friends with interminable scandals and fanned the flames of every malcontent, from the inefficient subaltern to the

insubordinate politician in disgrace. No doubt Cæsar's wife ought to be above suspicion, but that is impossible without some charity among Cæsar's female subjects.

The charge of despotism is more important. Draga certainly exercised considerable influence over her loving lord: no one with her square chin and decided views could play the puppet even in an Oriental land, where the subjection of women remains almost an article of faith. In every Servian household, except the few diplomatic families, who have acquired exotic ideas, wives and daughters are expected to fetch and carry, remain standing in the presence of their men and dine together on the fragments that remain after dinner. It is easy to imagine the horror likely to be aroused among men brought up in such an atmosphere, when they heard that their King actually consulted his consort on affairs of State, had even been known to take her advice. The shock to the nation would be infinitely greater than if all the slanders of disappointed damsels had been proved in open court. The fact that her counsels were wise and moderate and generous would in no way extenuate the enormity of her presumption in holding opinions at all. Open immorality might easily have been condoned, but character and courage in a woman were held to be positively indecent. Yet her influence was always on the side of harmony and kindness. She was a proud woman and felt insult acutely; but when the King, in his righteous indignation, desired to order the arrest of her persistent traducers, she stayed his hand, pleading successfully that they were beneath contempt. Had she been Sovereign in her own right, she could not have failed to arouse admiration by her statesmanship, insight and tact. She was highly accomplished, well read and deeply versed in the intricacies of foreign politics.



But whatever influence she possessed was due to her sympathetic nature, and she never aspired to be more than a helpmeet. The King not only carried out his own policy but initiated it also.

How far he aspired at autocracy is a matter of opinion. Any one who knows the Servian character must admit that the nation requires resolute government. Constitutional rule has been tried and found wanting in Servia. For nearly a century, ever since her emancipation, the Sovereigns of the little state have made every political experiment, from the iron despotism of Milosh to the raw democracy of 1888, which the revolution has now resuscitated. A cursory perusal of Servian history suffices to measure the welfare of Servia by the vigour of authority. This is no matter of theory, inspired by prejudice, but may be proved by facts to any impartial person. King Alexander, like every one else, could not fail to realise the national need of strong government, but he made every allowance for the prejudice of his subjects. His ear was always open to any man or party with a grievance; he was readily accessible to all classes and listened with the utmost patience to every suggestion; and the mass of the people was by no means ungrateful. Wherever I went in my travels through the country, I heard nothing but good of him: praise of his tact, admiration for his talents, enthusiasm for his warm heart and personal charm.

The late revolution was not the handiwork of Servia. It was engineered by the low cunning of a handful of discredited ruffians. Examine the list of the conspirators and provisional ministry: not a single name is associated with an honourable career or any deed of distinction. Gaol-birds, bankrupts, needy lawyers and gutter journalists are

the new rulers of Servia, maintained in parlous authority by a gang of drunken young officers, half maddened by their taste of blood. We are not to believe that the nation, or even the army, participated in the recent crime. The nation knew nothing of it until the whole tragedy was over. Then a reign of terror set in and the unarmed populace was impotent to protest; even the decencies of mourning were forcibly prohibited and orders were carried out enforcing signs of hollow joy. In every town and village the prefects and their subordinates were compelled to do the work of the regicides and coerce opinion. It is impossible not to marvel over the diabolical craft which has ordered the after-effects of the holocaust. No man in Servia could call his soul or his thoughts his own. The faintest show of disapproval would have meant instant death. Later on, no doubt, we shall learn the full tale of the victims. At present I only know that at least twenty private citizens were put to death in Belgrade within the first few days of revolutionary rule. The simple procedure was to enter a man's house, shoot him through the head and then calmly announce that he had committed suicide for some disgraceful reason. The whole story reads like a grossly improbable romance. I could understand a people being terrorised by a determined army, but it seems almost incredible that a people and an army should have been so completely overawed by a few hundred desperadoes. None of the superior officers knew anything of the plot; the privates had to obey orders when they surrounded the palace and, until the deed was done, they probably imagined that they had been called out to protect their King. Even when they learned what had happened, they were without leaders or initiative, and were forced into a sullen acquiescence. Many officers were horror-struck when

they heard what had happened, but it was too late to do anything, for all the army organisation was in the hands of the conspirators. One faithful colonel, Miloslav Zhivanovich (let his name go down to posterity), was found to have warned the King. He was shot in cold blood, and the news went forth that he had committed suicide in consequence of pecuniary troubles. Another officer, Lazar Jovanovich, who refused to rejoice over his master's murder, was run through the body and his assassins announced with grim cynicism that he had killed himself in mortification, because he was deemed unworthy to participate in the "gallant deeds" at the palace. When the thanks of Parliament and the blessings of the Metropolitan were showered upon the "brave Servian army," those insults were not directed to the nation under arms, but to a small clique of criminals. How far this may absolve the kingdom of blood-guiltiness is difficult to determine. We should all of us esteem Servia more highly if a few hundreds of her sons had protested, even though the act had cost their lives. She has been accustomed to bemoan her centuries of subjection to an alien rule. That is a confession of weakness, but not a proof of abject, cringing cowardice and eternal infamy, such as would be involved in continued submission to the terrorism of bloody murderers. Allowance must, however, be made for the sudden stupefaction. Chivalry and honour cannot be altogether dead in a people which has already produced so many heroes in the past. I only wish that a few more brave men had now been found to belie the unanimous acceptance of the most barbarous crime in history.

Let me conclude with a warning. Not content with taking King Alexander's life with revolting savagery, the criminals have set to work to traduce his memory. They

remind me of the regicide Harrison, who said of King Charles I., "Let us blacken him." Mashin and his fellow-murderers have expended infamous ingenuity in blackening their royal victim. King Alexander died defending his Queen; they represent him cowering in a cupboard. He was a prince of singular wisdom and prudence; they suborn physicians to declare that his brain betokened incipient lunacy. They have gone on to discover all manner of compromising documents, which they had evidently forged and themselves placed in the palace. Journalists and historians are often too ready to accept the first story that comes to their hands. In judging of calumnies against the unfortunate victims of the Servian tragedy, they will do well to hesitate before they receive the tainted evidence of crafty criminals, who possess neither consciences nor scruples.

## CHAPTER IX

### PETER KARAGEORGEVICH

THE present occupant of the Servian throne is a grandson of Kara George, and a son of Alexander Karageorgevich, who reigned ingloriously from 1842 to 1858. Alexander Karageorgevich was the younger son of Kara George, and neither he nor Peter would have any right to the throne even though the claims of their dynasty were admitted.

Peter was born at Belgrade in 1846. His father cherished democratic ideas and his early education was a strange one for a Crown Prince. Instead of studying with tutors at the palace in solitary state, he was sent to the national school, sat on a wooden bench among peasant boys, played with them in the gutter, and answered to the familiar name of Pera. At the age of twelve, just before his father came to grief, he was sent to a boarding-school in Geneva.

From time to time he came for his holidays to Hungary, where Alexander Karageorgevich had a country-house named Bokszeg, in the district of Arad. Here the exiled family passed a rustic existence, haggling for sheep and pigs in the market-place, riding about the farms and superintending the details of agriculture. Old labourers would come to Alexander and ask him to write their letters

to sons in the army or relatives abroad. This duty was soon delegated to Peter, who had acquired a smattering of Hungarian. Sometimes a schoolmaster or bailiff would look in for a game of chess or skat, but there was little else to relieve the provincial monotony. Alexander seems to have abandoned hope of ever returning to Servia, but the boy often spoke with youthful optimism of the day when he should occupy the throne of his ancestors. An old man used to tease him, when he made some impossible request, by saying, "You shall have that, my little son, when you are King of Servia."

The Karageorgevich never made themselves popular among their wealthy neighbours, but they were often invited to balls in the winter-time. Peter, now a young man, would push himself forward and insist on leading the dances, though the ladies questioned his aptitude for the part. He tried to win their sympathies by organising sledge-parties and importing a fine team of dogs, but received little or no encouragement, and was reduced to enlisting the village maidens as his companions, bribing them with ribbons and trinkets from Nagyvarad fair.

In 1863 he was withdrawn from the Geneva school and sent to France, first to the Lycée of Saint Barbe and then to the Military Academy of Saint Cyr. At the time of the Franco-Prussian war he volunteered for the foreign legion, and received from General Bourbaki a decoration, which was not confirmed by the French Government afterwards.

In 1875 he was one of the chief organisers of the revolt of Bosnia against Turkey and, under the name of Captain Merkunich, commanded a band of volunteers. Thanks to a large provision of money, he contrived to secure a certain amount of popularity, and there were many speculations

as to the identity of the unusual adventurer who was able to pay his way lavishly. Still his company did not amount to more than about 150 men and, though he probably suffered a good many hardships, he cannot be said to have accomplished very much. His object, no doubt, was to excite sympathies in Servia, but the utter absence of interest in his family then prevailing in that country rendered his enterprise of little avail. He still corresponded with persons asserting themselves to be his partisans, but none of them enjoyed any influence and their chief aim seems to have been to obtain pecuniary relief.

However, in 1878 they encouraged him so far that he determined to visit his country and see how the land lay there. Proceeding to Orsova, he took a little boat and crossed over to the village of Milanovats, where it is possible that he may have met little Draga running about in the streets. However, he did not remain there for very long, for the police considered his proceedings suspicious and promptly invited him to return to Hungarian territory. In the course of years, however, he contrived to enlist as his partisans a certain number of Servians who were dissatisfied or in disgrace. The royal house did not fear him, but found him very useful as a pretext for punishing political offenders. He was probably privy to a certain number of plots, but King Milan used him as a figurehead for many more when it suited his purpose to invent them. In 1883, in 1894, and again in 1899 various prisoners were convicted on a charge of conspiring in his favour. But until the last year or two before his accession, he was not taken seriously by any one in the country.

His life in exile was somnolent when it was not discreditable. The greater part of the year was spent by him either in his little house at Geneva or in some Swiss

boarding establishment, where he sat sulking at the table d'hôte. From time to time he disappeared on mysterious journeys, which lasted for a few days or several weeks and were supposed by his intimates to have some great political purpose. As a matter of fact he might generally have been found during these periods seated at a gambling table or loafing at a bar in one or other of the fashionable watering-places of the Continent. He was not a man whose character commanded respect, but he was generally shrewd enough to avoid any open scandal. The nearest approach to anything of the sort was during his residence at Cetinje, when he let his house to the British Minister under circumstances which called for unpleasant criticism.

He had prevailed upon the Prince of Montenegro to give him his daughter Zorka in marriage, hoping for eventual support of his claims. But Prince Nicholas was far too shrewd to compromise himself by supporting an impossible pretender, the marriage was not a happy one, and after his wife's death Peter came to an open breach with her relations over a question of settlements. Prince Nicholas had no patience with unsuccessful people and disliked Peter's opinions and manners.

A Servian who visited Cetinje found Peter engaged in a game of chess with Prince Nicholas. The Prince was nervous and excitable and evidently very anxious to win the game. Peter crouched with folded arms, looking every inch a conspirator, as he made stealthy moves at long intervals. Gradually he got the upper hand and Prince Nicholas's face grew darker and darker as it became more and more obvious that the game was lost. Then Peter permitted himself a sinister chuckle, which gave Nicholas the opportunity he desired. Rising in a fury, he upset the board and left the room without a word.



Peter's children seem to have been brought up in that haphazard, unsatisfactory manner which is common to the children of wanderers and exiles. The daughter has spent so much of her life away from her father that he is almost a stranger to her, and the sons have inherited his gloomy, taciturn, unsympathetic spirit. At the time of his accession the boys were studying at the Military Academy at S. Petersburg, where, at his express wish, prompted perhaps by recollections of his own education, he had insisted that they should enjoy no privileges such as would be granted to the sons of a Prince. Very little is known about them, but they do not appear to have enjoyed any popularity among their fellow-students, or to possess intellectual qualities or the special aptitudes of soldiers.

Very little indeed is known about Peter himself, and that little is not to his credit. In order to establish his local colour, we must go to his near relations. His brother Arsen was brought up with him and appears to possess a similar temperament. At any rate Peter has sufficient confidence in him to entrust him with the responsible position of Servian Commander-in-Chief. Until the recent revolution, Arsen occupied a dingy little flat in the Rue Cambon in Paris. When the news came that the young King and Queen of Servia had been riddled with bullets and hacked to death with the swords of traitors, flung out of their palace windows and subjected to the foulest insults by wretches who do not deserve the name of men, Arsen, brother of King Peter and trusted Commander-in-Chief of the "brave Servian army," was so overcome with joy that he rushed downstairs, kissed the porter's wife, and exclaimed, "Madam, this is the finest day of my life." He then repaired to an American bar and spent the afternoon drinking the health of the assassins with a number of boon companions.

The following extract from the "Temps" throws instructive light upon the upstart royal family:—

"They were expecting Prince Kara last night at the Bar du Helder, where the King's brother had lunch before going to the races. The company—composed of elegant men with eyeglasses screwed into their eyes, of others less elegant but no less amiable, and of women in light dresses with sparkling jewels—was tremulous with excitement. Sprawling upon a stool, the proprietor of the place, a friend of the Prince, was holding a reception over the counter. All her friends had come to present their homage, and, a touching idea, the whole saloon was adorned with little Servian flags, whose three colours (red, blue, white) floated in an atmosphere of champagne cocktails. Every moment a new arrival or a new client came to congratulate the mistress of the house: 'Good day, Princess.' . . . Towards evening the Prince arrived, pallid, with a bristling moustache and an open hand. All rose in one movement of enthusiasm, and the unanimous cry of 'Long live Kara! Long live Servia!' greeted his entry. Then it was the turn of his intimate friends, of his old boon companions: 'Congratulations, old man! I am happy for thy sake, Arsen!' At last the Prince grew weary of this ovation. He withdrew into the inner room, leaving only to his admirers the muffled echo of the glasses of champagne which were constantly clinked together, and the triumphant tones of a woman's voice exclaiming, 'Arsen, I drink to your five-and-thirty millions.'"

In the evening he gave a little dinner-party at a café near the Madeleine, telling every one that he was "overwhelmed with joy," and so he went hiccupping to bed, in a delirium of indecent delight that his troubles had

been ended by one of the foulest crimes which ever stained the pages of history.

This person, however, is a distinguished gentleman compared to his cousins, Alexis and Bojdar, who represent the elder branch of the family and have a better right than Peter to the throne. Until recently they occupied a humble lodging in the neighbourhood of the Arc de Triomphe, giving cheap music lessons, faking articles of vertu and designing ladies' dresses for second-rate shops. They were sought out by interviewers as soon as the news of the tragedy arrived, and they hastened to give expression to all manner of absurd calumnies against the murdered Sovereigns. Questioned as to their relations with the new King, they replied very candidly, "Our relations with him are as bad as possible; we have had no correspondence with him for years; but now that his hour has struck, God bless you, we bear no malice. Long live the King!"

The fact is that Peter, who never possessed a generous disposition, had refused to assist their necessities, and they bore him a grudge for all the poverty and humiliations which they had endured throughout many long years. Moreover, they remembered that theirs was the elder branch and that, if any Karageorgevich were entitled to ascend the throne of Servia, they ought to come before their more fortunate cousin.

As recently as 1894 Alexis wrote to the papers protesting his "incontestable rights as head of the family of Karageorgevich, in the event of the Servian people consenting to revert one day to their old dynasty." No doubt Alexis has no partisans in Servia, but, as Peter grows more and more unpopular, it is not impossible that the elder branch of the family may make themselves disagreeable.

At any rate they now enjoy excellent opportunities for blackmail, and neither their character nor their history is likely to discourage them from making the most of their advantage. The friends of Peter have succeeded in exterminating a dynasty, but the day may come when he will find danger threatening him from the foes of his own household.

Peter Karageorgevich is a tall, spare, military-looking man, with a sinister hawk-like face marked by deep lines, grayish hair and moustache, shifty eyes. He would pass on any stage as the typical decayed officer who haunts gambling hells. Whether or not his critics are right in supposing that he was privy to the murder of the late King, it seems certain that the event did not take him by surprise. He made a feeble pretence of being shocked and, when pressed by an interviewer, protested that he should insist upon the punishment of the criminals. No doubt, with the best will in the world, it would have been impossible for him to carry out any such intention, but his acceptance of the blood-stained throne leaves him at the very best an accessory after the fact. He did not betray his brother's indecent joy, but he certainly took small pains to conceal his satisfaction. His first thought was to go and order a royal crown at the nearest jeweller's shop, and his second to buy a quick-firing revolver.

Meanwhile order reigned in Belgrade. The handful of criminals who had carried through the conspiracy terrorised all who dreamed of opposing them, and when the day of election arrived, unanimity had been assured for Peter's candidature. The election was indeed a foregone conclusion. An extinct Parliament had been revived for the sole reason that it possessed a Radical majority, and the

members were carefully sounded as to their views before being admitted to vote. Amid torrents of rain, a motley crowd of peasants in sheepskins, lawyers in black coats and soldiers glittering with decorations made their way to the big ball-room in the New Palace. Crowds of journalists from every corner of Europe thronged the passages, roamed into the saloons, turned over the books in the library, and noted down every detail of the historical scene. There were no crowds in the streets, but knots of anxious men at every corner. It has been said that Belgrade received the revolution with indifference, but that is not true. A few partisans of the regicides raised artificial jubilation, but the expression of the great majority betokened mute protest. Servian peasants live so far removed from politics and political life that they take a long time to realise a great event. At election time they generally vote as they are told, knowing very well that the result of an election will not affect their happiness one way or another; but the murder of the King and Queen had evidently moved them. They did not dare to express their disapproval openly, but they stared upon the organisers of the new state of things, upon the concourse at the palace, upon the flags and illuminations, with evident sorrow and distrust. A characteristic conversation has been reported. A group of yokels was gazing into a shop window, where the unfamiliar portrait of King Peter was exposed for sale.

“Who is that?” said one.

“That is the new King, Karageorgevich,” was the reply.

“But why did they kill the last King?”

“That I do not know; but I suppose it was because he was not liked by the army.”

“ Well, now, suppose the army does not like the new King ? ”

“ Bogami ! then they will kill him too. ”

Soon after twelve, the new Ministers and the Senators entered the ball-room, some in long shiny frock-coats and others in ill-fitting evening dress. Among them were noticeable the scowling features of several of the actual assassins. Neither they nor any one else seemed to be at ease, and it needed no great stretch of the imagination to realise that a sensation of shame predominated in the assembly. Suddenly the excited chatter of the politicians was arrested by the sound of a hammer being rapped upon the table at the end of the hall.

Velimirovich, the President of the Chamber, was on his legs, declaring the proceedings open—a weak-looking old man, wearing the grand cordon of the Order of Takovo, bestowed upon him by King Alexander. In tremulous tones the President informed the deputies that they had been summoned to elect a King, whereupon there were some mechanical cheers, which were feebly taken up by the small crowd outside. The secretary of the Skupshtina then read the roll-call of the members, each of whom rose in his place in turn and pronounced the name of Peter Karageorgevich. The council of regicide officers had taken good care that there should be no dissentient voices, and accordingly Peter Karageorgevich was unanimously elected by a defunct Parliament.

Velimirovich then rose again and delivered an eulogy of Peter's father and grandfather, prophesying all manner of happiness to the country under the new dispensation. A certain amount of cheering was renewed, and the Vice-President of the Senate delivered a speech, with the remarkable assertion that “ not only the Servian people but

the nations of Europe, ay, and the whole civilised world, will experience a keen thrill of joy on hearing of the event which has taken place on this memorable day." After a few more speeches couched in this extravagant vein, the sitting was at an end, and the deputies went out into the streets to mingle with the sight-seers and loafers in the various coffee-houses.

On the following day, June 16, a Te Deum and general thanksgiving service took place in Belgrade Cathedral. Ministers, deputies and officers attended in their best clothes, and the murderers did not deem it necessary to absent themselves. The ceremony was presumably intended to mark the election of the new King; but the speech of the Metropolitan seemed almost to imply that the blessing of the Church was also being conferred upon the drunken criminals, who had slain a defenceless King and Queen, and were now gloating over their iniquity.

The Metropolitan, wearing vestments of purple and gold and a mitre studded with precious stones, stepped forward and addressed the congregation from the ambo. He congratulated the nation upon the restoration of the Karageorgevich dynasty, which he said had included so many brave and noble men. While deploring the necessity for recent events, he thanked the army for what it had done and praised its behaviour. As he spoke these words, the officers present clapped their hands and loudly expressed their pleasure. Considering all the favours which had been lavished upon the Archbishop by the Obrenovich dynasty, to whom he owed his advancement and indeed everything he possessed in the world, the following lines, published at the time in the "Spectator" by Mr. Edward Tylee, will not be found too severe:—

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF BELGRADE

He raised his reverend hands to Heaven, and blessed  
 The kneeling murderers with unfaltering tongue :  
 The robes of peace he wore, and on his breast  
 The golden sign of our redemption hung.

From those calm skies no sudden lightnings broke ;  
 Justice awhile her righteous doom delayed ;  
 And underneath the cloud of incense smoke  
 The assassins still knelt, smiling, unafraid.

Yet these were they whose coward arms had wrought  
 The foulest act that stains our later time ;  
 And reeking from their work they came and sought  
 Their Primate's benediction on that crime.

And so in Belgrade's minster, yesterday,  
 A priest of Christ those midnight murderers blessed ;  
 And Christ's own cross upon his bosom lay,  
 And left no brand upon the traitor's breast !

On the 24th of June Peter arrived in Belgrade. A crowd was assembled outside the station. As a diplomatic agent remarked on the occasion, they were the same people who had come to thank the late King for each successive constitution, who had conveyed to him the thanks of the nation when he married Draga, and who had decorated their houses so soon as they learnt that he and Draga had been butchered. "If," he went on, "instead of Peter Karageorgevich, the illegitimate son of Milan were coming to govern Servia, the same sections of the population would obey with the same alacrity the summons of the police to do him honour."

A group of ministers and murderers assembled upon the platform, but with the exception of the Austrian and Russian Ministers the representatives of the Powers kept



away. When Peter alighted from the train he was greeted by the Premier and shook hands all round with many smiles but few words, which could scarcely be heard for the noise of the military band. The party then adjourned to the waiting-room, where Peter greeted the Russian Minister Charikof without waiting for an introduction. Charikof then introduced the Austrian Minister, who had refused to have any dealings with the regicide cabinet.

Peter then entered King Alexander's state-carriage and drove quickly to the Cathedral, while the police rushed about among the crowd, threatening all those who did not cheer with sufficient pretence of enthusiasm. The Metropolitan received Peter at the door of the Cathedral and conducted him to King Alexander's throne, where he bowed stiffly and nervously to the congregation. After the service the Metropolitan made a speech, in which he made the cynical remark that "it is a wise tradition of the Servian people to regard all events which are accomplished in their midst as manifestations of the holy will of God."

After this Peter kissed the Metropolitan's hand and walked out, bowing gravely to right and left. He then drove in an open carriage to the New Palace, and was observed to avert his eyes as he passed the scene of the recent tragedy. A crowd had assembled outside, but remained absolutely silent until mounted officers rode in among them and commanded them to shout, "Long live the King!" A deputation of members awaited him in the ball-room, where his election had taken place, and he was forced to deliver a speech, which he read with a decided foreign accent, remarking that his soul was filled with gratitude to God and with a consciousness of the duties which awaited him as King.

Throughout the day Peter moved about as one utterly bewildered, as a stranger among strangers. Indeed, many persons expressed a doubt whether he could be in full possession of his wits. All he did was done mechanically, like a marionette, and he could do nothing on his own initiative, not even accept a bunch of flowers from a deputation of school-children.

On the following day, June 25, Peter met the National Assembly to take the oath of fidelity to the Constitution. This time the sitting took place, not in the ball-room of the palace but in the miserable little hut which does duty as a Chamber of Deputies. On the platform in front of the throne was a desk with a green and gold cloth, while down below on the floor of the House was a green baize table with a big Bible, a bowl of water and two lighted candles.

The Metropolitan with a number of popes and monks stood near the table; behind them the deputies, in tweeds and the rough national costume, sat in semicircles at well-worn desks; while on the platform was the usual collection of murderers in uniform and ministers in evening dress, glittering with the decorations received from the hands of King Alexander. The general effect was not impressive.

A buzz of conversation went on for a long time. Then Velimirovich rose, struck a small hand-bell and declared the sitting open. But nothing happened for some minutes. He sat down again and the buzz of conversation was resumed. Then Peter appeared in the scarlet uniform of a Servian General and bowed awkwardly to the assembly, using the usual Servian greeting, "Pomozhe Bog, Bratja" (God help you, brothers). There was some perfunctory cheering and the Metropolitan began intoning a prayer through his nose; spreading out his long thin hands, which



PETER KARAGEORGEVICH OUTSIDE THE SKUPSHTINA.



had blessed the murderers of his Sovereign, he seemed to be giving a blessing to the bowl of water on the table.

Some one nudged Peter and pointed out to him the impropriety of wearing gloves during a ceremony of the Orthodox Church. There were some remarks among the peasants that the new King with the strange foreign accent seemed to know very little about the Church of his country. The removal of the gloves was accomplished with difficulty by the bewildered King, who was puzzled to know what to do with his cap and sword. At last he solved the puzzle by holding his sword between his knees and his cap under his arm. There was a slight titter at this exhibition and his nervousness increased. He twitched and fidgeted and coughed uncomfortably. Perhaps the spectres of the murdered King and Queen had haunted him during the night, for he did not seem to have slept and his eyes looked hundreds of years old.

The Metropolitan dipped a brush in the bowl and advanced towards Peter, who did not seem to be afraid of holy water but bent his head to be sprinkled. Then he was told to make the sign of the Cross, but this was a matter of great difficulty, for he now had his white gloves as well as his cap and sword to embarrass him. Not being accustomed to play the part of a King, he never thought of handing the encumbrances to an aide-de-camp. He fumbled for a pocket in which to put his gloves, but found none and ended by dropping them on the floor. The Metropolitan then received the King's oath, which Peter repeated sentence by sentence, finally bending down and kissing the big Bible on the table and crossing himself awkwardly a number of times. He now attempted to put on his gloves again, but was stopped before the left one was buttoned up, and made to take it off again. Then an

illuminated scroll was produced, and he bent down to affix his signature.

Suddenly the booming of cannon was heard and Peter, not knowing what he might have to expect, gave a perceptible start. It was, however, only a royal salute, and the Assembly covered his embarrassment by shouts of "Zhiveo!" followed by the singing of "Mnogo ljeta" (Many summers), which answers to "He's a jolly good fellow" in Servian. When this was over, Peter heaved a sigh of relief, nodded to his faithful commons, muttered "S'Bogom, (good-bye), brothers," and hurried off to his carriage.

In the afternoon Peter attended a review of the brave Servian army at Banitsa, a few miles outside Belgrade. He drove most of the way and then, mounting King Alexander's charger, arrived on horseback at the parade ground. After various evolutions, a critical incident occurred. The famous, or infamous, 6th Regiment, which had carried out the murders, marched past with Colonel Mishich at their head.

There was a murmur of expectation as every one watched to see how Peter would behave. It will be remembered that, before he left Geneva, he announced his intention of punishing the murderers. He had submitted to receiving some of them as members of the deputation which came to announce his election, and he had shaken hands with others on the platform at Belgrade, but he had treated them with some stiffness and was popularly supposed to be anxious to be rid of them, if only to satisfy Russia and the prejudices of Europe. Now, however, he went out of his way to put his seal upon the conspiracy, saluting Mishich with great cordiality and singling this regiment out for the special display of his royal favour. The friends of the revolution broke out into loud cheers,

in which the ladies in the stands, doubtless including many old enemies of Queen Draga, joined with fiendish enthusiasm.

In confirmation of this attitude a proclamation to the army was issued by Peter next day: "My dear army, on setting foot upon the soil of the dear Fatherland, my cradle and the cradle of my ancestors, my heart gives greeting first to you, the hope of the Servian people, my dear heroic army. . . . Officers, non-commissioned officers and men, at the solemn moment of taking over the supreme command, I greet you with the words, 'God be with you, you falcons of the Servian people.'"

Peter came to Servia with many democratic protestations. He circulated all over the country his own translation of Mill's "Essay on Liberty." He foretold a new era of happiness and contentment and personal freedom. He made a great point of his confidence in the loyalty and affection of the people which had called him to the throne. The newspapers of his partisans drew attention to the fact that he went about the town without guards, unlike his predecessors, who were constantly menaced with assassination.

He even aspired to play the part of a Haroun al Rashid, strolling about alone in the streets, mixing with the peasants in their wine-shops and conversing with old women in the market-place. As very few people were familiar with his appearance, it was not difficult for him to maintain his incognito. No doubt he heard many home truths.

One day he took a cab and drove to the military hospital. Giving the porter a small coin, he obtained permission to go over the wards, where he spent some time talking to the patients and eliciting their views. Presently

he asked to see one of the doctors, but found that they had all gone to a neighbouring coffee-house to play cards. He sent across to them to come over, but did not say who he was, and accordingly received a very rude reply, whereupon he wrote his name in the visitors' book and took his departure. It is not recorded whether the doctors donned sackcloth.

Then he went on to a school, where he found that all the children were playing by themselves in the yard, while the teachers had gone off to amuse themselves. So he went into the schoolroom and wrote on the blackboard, "King Peter has been here."

This sort of idyll did not last very long, however. Though he had been forced to pay compliments to the murderers, he had no intention of allowing them to govern the country. He soon found, however, that they were too strong for him, and that, if he resisted their wishes, he would be given the choice between exile and death. On the other hand, he was confronted by great numbers of partisans of the late dynasty, as well in the army as in the country. His first trouble occurred when he permitted himself to appoint his own Court Marshal, Colonel Ljubomir Leshjanin, who had been a favourite of King Alexander. He announced this appointment in the official gazette without saying anything to his ministers, whereupon the regicide officers sent soldiers to confiscate every copy of the paper, and issued a second edition omitting the objectionable appointment. Afterwards a compromise was found, another official gazette being published with the announcement of the appointment but Peter undertaking privately not to carry it into effect.

In September Peter made a tour in the country. When he was at Nish a manifesto was issued by a large



majority of the Servian officers protesting against the regicides being allowed to retain their commissions. After reciting the names of sixty-eight murderers and briefly describing their crime, the document proceeded :—

Not content with this degrading murder, some of them are accused of other murders and also of contemptible plundering. Had these officers realised the deep solemnity of a soldier's oath and the extremely sensitive honour which is connected with the military uniform, they would during the conspiracy and while carrying out their accursed crime have laid aside every symbol of their profession. This sacred duty they not only neglected, but they showed in their impudent behaviour every sign of selfishness and greed. By this conduct they have introduced the greatest corruption into the army, anarchy and Janissary-like arrogance into the state. After all this, comrades, we are justified before God and the history of our country, in the name of the King, the army and the people, and in that of every officers' corps in the civilised world, in demanding with the greatest energy that these officers shall at once be dismissed from our ranks, that the soldier's coat, the sacred symbol of scrupulously honourable and disciplined bodies, of all the armies of the world, shall be stripped from them. Only when we have attained our aim will the happiness be ours of seeing the barriers, which all officers' corps in the world have erected against us, fall. Only then will the shaken credit of Servia, her Crown and Government, be reinstated, and the dangerous precedent of military pronunciamientos be abolished. In the name of the country, of honour and of liberty, we conjure you to unite with us, without distinction of rank, in demanding that the soldier's coat shall be laid aside, either by them or by us.

The counter-conspiracy was very well organised, but

the regicide officers, who had established a reign of terror in the country, contrived to hold their own. The protesters were arrested, and their leaders were sent to prison for various terms. They are, however, too numerous to be utterly suppressed, and it is probable that more may be heard of them at an early date.

An incident which occurred at a review early in September is significant of opinion in military circles. Lieutenant Velimirovich of the 7th Infantry suddenly stepped out of the ranks and advanced towards Peter, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Your Majesty, the blood of our murdered King cries for Heaven's vengeance. Our comrades languish in prison while the murderers go free." He was instantly arrested.

One of Peter's favourite boasts was that henceforward elections should be conducted in perfect freedom without the interference of the police: Parliament should be truly representative of the people. He was, however, reckoning without the council of regicide officers. They gave the usual orders to the prefects when a general election took place on September 1, and the electors were as effectually coerced as they had ever been in the reign of King Milan.

The result was that 78 Radicals, 65 extreme Radicals, 15 Liberals, and 2 Socialists were returned. As only the extreme Radicals approve of the murders, the triumph of the regicide officers was scarcely complete. The consequence has been a constant conflict between the partisans of the revolution and their opponents, so that the present situation is exceedingly precarious, and every day there is a rumour of some new plot. Peter accordingly has given up his rôle of Haroun al Rashid, and no longer wanders about the town unattended or parades his confidence in the affection of the people.

Indeed, he is now little better than a prisoner in the palace, where ten Swiss guards are stationed outside his bedroom door and two more inside the bedroom itself. The guards outside the palace have been doubled and ball cartridges served out nightly. A ladder is attached to his window every night, and a launch kept in readiness on the Save in case he should find it more prudent to take to flight.

Had Zimri peace ?

## CHAPTER X

### ·WHO'S WHO IN SERVIA

ANDJELKOVICH, Captain.—One of the murderers. Said to have been one of the first to fire upon the King.

ANTONICH, Colonel.—Was Foreign Minister in the Markovich Government, a thorough soldier, who frankly confessed that he was no politician. Was content to obey orders, military fashion, when his general became Prime Minister. Very polite manners. Great friendliness to strangers, especially Englishmen.

ATANAZKOVICH, General JOVAN.—Minister of War in the revolutionary Government. Had received many marks of favour from the late King. Peevish and ungrateful disposition. Had been suspected of conspiracy for a long time, but was too clever to be caught.

AVAKUMOVICH, JOVAN.—Liberal leader and editor of the "Srbska Zastava," a small and unimportant daily. Has practically no followers in the country. Surprised every one by accepting Premiership of the revolutionary Government. Commonplace record. Never displayed any particular ability, but was hitherto supposed to be honest. Has the appearance of a prosperous tradesman. His complicity in the murders is denied, but on the other hand he is alleged to have received £2000 for counte-

nancing the event. Interviewed shortly after the murders, he stated that he only returned from Aleksinats by the train reaching Belgrade at 5 A.M. on June the 11th, and only heard of the murders at the station, when some officers escorted him to the Ministry and prevailed upon him to accept the Premiership of a provisional Cabinet. With regard to the election of Peter he remarked, "The army has proclaimed him King, but this has nothing to do with the action of the Skupshtina, which can decide the fate of the country independently and elect a King without asking the army. There might be, however, an agreement between the army and the Skupshtina, in which case a deputation would go to Prince Peter to inform him of the decision arrived at and invite him to come to Belgrade."

**BALUGDJICH.**—One of Peter's secretaries. Supposed to have been implicated in the Alavantich incident, the attempt to poison the King, and the actual murders.

**BARLOVATS.**—A leather merchant. Related to Avakumovich. Was employed by the conspirators to prepare the tradesmen at Belgrade for a change of dynasty.

**BONHAM, SIR GEORGE.**—British Minister at Belgrade since 1900. Son of the Governor of Hong-Kong, and second baronet. Was recalled after the murders and took no part in the reception of Peter.

**BOSKOVICH, father and son.**—The father was Servian Minister in Paris. Has been a Professor and a Minister of Public Instruction. Smooth manners, elderly appearance, no strength of character. Mata, the son, was Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Smart appearance, lively, popular in society, an authority on the Macedonian question. At the time of the murders was playing cards at the Grand Hotel. On hearing the news,

took refuge at the British Legation, fearing a general massacre of all adherents of the dynasty.

CHARIKOF, Russian Minister.—Came into disfavour with King Alexander when the visit of the Servian Sovereigns to Russia was put off. A master of intrigue, and must have known that a plot was on foot, though he cannot have instigated it. Watched the proceedings in the palace from his window. Ordered the bodies of the King and Queen to be taken into the palace. Was present at the reception of Peter on his arrival in Belgrade.

DANJANOVICH, Colonel.—Became Prefect of Belgrade after the murders.

DENICH, Major.—Was Minister of Public Works in the late Government. A Liberal in politics, but never very prominent.

DIMITRIEVICH, Lieutenant. — Participated in the massacre, and was appointed to kill General Pavlovich.

DJURICH, MILAN.—Prota (Archdeacon) of Uzhitse. Leader of a Radical group, which has long worked openly to place the Prince of Montenegro on the Servian throne.

DUNBA, Herr.—Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade. Was present at the reception of Peter, but at first refused to have any relations with the revolutionary Cabinet.

FETHY PASHA.—Turkish Minister at Belgrade. Was for some time in a subordinate position in Bulgaria. Is very good company and possesses a fine collection of amusing stories. Intimate with many Servian politicians and has so far been very successful in hindering Servia from intervening in Macedonia.

GAGOVICH, Colonel.—Was killed when intercepting Colonel Nikolich, who attempted to bring a regiment to rescue the King.

GAGOVICH, Lieutenant.—Was killed at Banitsa by the

King's enemies. His mother went mad on receiving the news.

GENCHICH, GEORGE.—The son of a peasant. Has received a good education. Speaks French and German very well and is very vain about his accomplishments. Was Prefect of Nish. Minister of the Interior in the Cabinet of Georgevich, and took part in the persecution of the Radicals. Had acquired the confidence of Milan and hoped for great advancement at his hand. Accordingly became disaffected when Milan went into exile and all hope of advancement seemed at an end. Went into exile in Austria, but was allowed to return to Belgrade in 1902. Became Minister of Commerce in the revolutionary Government. Is said to have been the prime organiser of the conspiracy, and to have been the only civilian present in the palace on the occasion of the murders. Interviewed shortly after the murders, he vented his spite in violent libels against the murdered King and Queen. Asserts that the murders were a patriotic deed, for which the whole population of Serbia is profoundly grateful to the army. A very dangerous man, who will undoubtedly prove a danger to any ruler who does not gratify his inordinate ambition.

GEORGEVICH, VLADAN.—A Jewish adventurer, who obtained the Premiership through the influence of King Milan. Established a reign of terror and invented a plot against Milan in order to shoot and imprison all his enemies. Was said to be a hypnotist and to have exercised his talents on King Alexander. The King, however, managed to get rid of him, whereupon he obtained some documents compromising King Milan, and demanded money from Alexander to suppress them. The King refused, but the Sultan of Turkey found the money to avert a scandal.

† GRUICH, General SAVA.—Was Servian Minister at Constantinople and an honorary aide-de-camp to King Alexander. The father of two regicides. Appointed Premier on the resignation of the revolution cabinet.

GRUICH, Lieutenant BORA.—Son of the late Servian Minister at Constantinople. One of the original conspirators. Was told off to fetch the 4th Cavalry Regiment to the palace. Immediately after the murders he rode through the streets shouting out, "The tyrants have fallen." Afterwards promoted to be captain.

GRUICH, sub-Lieutenant ALECO.—Brother of Lieutenant Bora Gruich. Took part in the murders.

† INNOCENT, Archbishop of Belgrade and Metropolitan of Servia.—Owed everything to the Obrenovich dynasty and seemed to be a pious and genial old man. Afterwards held a Te Deum in the Cathedral and blessed the murderers.

JOVANOVICH, NICHOLAS.—Is never known by his surname, which is a very common one in Servia, but is always called Amerikanats or the American, because he once resided in the United States. Has been Servian Consul-General in England. Is an ardent patriot and an earnest advocate of an Anglo-Servian alliance. Writes striking articles in the Servian press.

JOVICHICH, ALEXANDER Z.—Held a high position in the Foreign Office. Has been in the diplomatic service. Spent many years in England, where he married a Scottish lady. Was in favour at Court and was expected to hold high office. Has become reconciled to Peter and accepted the sinecure of Servian Minister in London.

KALJEVICH, LJUBOMIR.—Foreign Minister in the revolutionary Government. Held office before. Not without ability of a kind. Progressist.



KATICH, Captain.—Informed the King of the plot. Was placed on the retired list July 1903.

KICHA, Captain.—One of the murderers.

+ KOMARCHICH, LAZAR.—One of the chief Servian authors.

KOSTICH, Captain.—A brutal drunkard, greedy and ambitious, of colossal stature. Was closely related by marriage to the Queen. Treated her body with foul insults after the murders, and went off to kill her brothers. Displayed his blood-stained sword to admiring crowds. Is said to have opened the west gate of the palace to the conspirators. Afterwards promoted to be a major, and received £960 blood-money.

+ KURTAVICH, Major MILOSLAV.—Was Servian Consul-General at Uskub, where he worked very hard for his country. Retired June 1903. Now leader of the agricultural party.

LAZAREVICH, Captain.—A loyal officer, sentenced (Sept. 1903) to two years' imprisonment and the loss of his commission for conspiring against the regicides.

LAZAREVICH, Major LUKA.—Had been in disgrace for two years before the murders, and is said to have fired the fatal shot at His Majesty. Resigned his commission 20th of July 1903 because Peter vetoed his promotion.

LAZAREVICH, Professor.—Was Minister of Public Instruction in the late Government. A member of the Radical party.

LESHJANIN, Colonel.—Was Servian military attaché at Constantinople. Enjoyed the friendship of King Alexander. Was appointed marshal of Peter's court, but the regicide officers vetoed his appointment.

LOTKIJEVICH, Captain.—Aide-de-camp of King Alexander. Sentenced (Sept. 1903) to one month's imprisonment for conspiring against the regicides. Re-arrested October 1903.

MAGDALENICH, General M. M.—Was arrested by the regicide Government for a private expression of disapproval.

MARINKOVICH, M.—Was mayor of Belgrade and did much good work for the improvement of the town. Was appointed Minister of Finance in the Markovich Government, but still continued to direct the affairs of the town, as the Government did not wish to risk a rebuff at a new municipal election.

MASHIN, Colonel ALEXANDER.—Brother-in-law of Queen Draga. One of the chief organisers of the murders. He boasts of having been the first to strike the Queen. Was military attaché at Vienna and a delegate of the Peace Conference at the Hague. Received £1200 blood-money.

MATJEVICH, Lieutenant.—One of the murderers. Accompanied Mishich to the barracks to fetch the 6th Regiment.

MIJATOVICH, CHEDOMIL.—Has been several times a minister in various Governments and at the Court of S. James. Is not taken seriously in Servia. Dabbles in hypnotism and magic. Has translated some of Spurgeon's works into Servian.

MILICHEVICH, Dr.—Was King Alexander's private secretary. Servian Minister in London, 1901. Was transferred to Berlin, 1902.

MILIVOJEVICH, Captain.—One of the murderers.

MILKOVICH, Captain.—Son-in-law of General Tsintsar-Markovich. Died for the King in the palace. His wife gave birth to a son at the time.

MISHICH, Colonel.—Was one of the first, if not the first to fire at the King. Was one of the original organisers of the conspiracy. Was described by a Berlin merchant as follows: "When I was told he had shot his King I was

not surprised. He has the true criminal type. His wild piercing glance would have inspired fear even if one did not know that he was a regicide." According to another description, is "a big-boned man with a dark brown face, a hawk nose, heavy jaws, a low brow and short-cropped black hair. He has a pleasant smile." After the murders he received £960 blood-money and was promoted to be departmental chief in the War Ministry. Now terrorises Peter, who dares do nothing without consulting him.

NAUMOVICH, MIKA.—Joined the conspiracy and promised to open the front door of the palace to the murderers. Had been the recipient of many favours from King Alexander. Killed (probably by accident) in the palace. Was buried with full military honours.

NESHICH, Adjutant.—Took part in the murders.

NIKOLAIEVICH, Colonel.—Was Marshal of the Court and organised every ceremonial. A great favourite of King Alexander and Queen Draga. Escaped by taking refuge in the Austro-Hungarian legation.

NIKOLICH, Colonel DIMITREF.—Commanded the Danube division. Attempted to bring the 8th Infantry Regiment to help the King, but was intercepted by Gagovich and left for dead. Afterwards recovered.

NIKOLICH, NIKOLA.—A lawyer. Minister of Justice after the fall of the regicide ministry. One of the leaders of the small republican group.

NOVAKOVICH, LJUBOMIR.—Minister of Commerce in the Markovich Government. Had been director of the agricultural school at Negotin. A Radical.

NOVAKOVICH, M.—Progressist or Conservative Prime Minister in 1896. The son of a working-man. Shy manners, untidy appearance and melancholy aspect. High reputation, but not much imagination.

PANAJOTOVICH, Captain.—On guard at the palace. One of the faithful few. Killed while attempting to stem the inrush of murderers.

PANAJOTOVICH, Lieutenant.—One of the conspirators. Agreed to give up the keys of the palace gate.

PANTOVICH, late Minister of Justice. Had been President of the Court of Appeal. A Progressist.

PASHICH, M.—The Radical leader, or rather one of the Radical leaders, for their name is legion. An engineer and somewhat of a rough diamond. Was imprisoned for a long time by King Milan. Said to have been employed by Russia to stir up sedition against the Obrenovich dynasty, with the intention of placing a Russian on the throne. Is opposed to Peter and now intrigues to overthrow him.

PAVLOVICH, General.—Minister of War. Was murdered in his house, June 11, 1903.

PAVLOVICH.—An official at the palace. Was in the conspiracy. Telegraphed to conspirators in the provinces to come to Belgrade.

PETRONIEVICH.—An old Servian family. Held the relationship of kums (hereditary godfathers and best men) to the royal family. The father had a long and distinguished career in the diplomatic service. His son was private secretary to King Alexander and his daughter maid-of-honour to Queen Draga.

PETROVICH, General LAZAR.—Aide-de-camp to King Alexander and chief of the military household. Was a great favourite at Court. Aroused jealousy by the rapidity of his promotion. Represented King Alexander at the coronation of King Edward. Baffled the murderers during two hours in the Palace and was afterwards shot,

**PROTICH, STOJAN.**—A well-known demagogue. Minister of the Interior after the murders.

**RADAKOVICH, Captain.**—Participated in the massacre and afterwards led the party which killed the Prime Minister.

**RAJOVICH, DRAGOMIR.**—One of the three original organisers of the murders. A member of the Progressist party. Was President of the tribunal which sentenced Radical conspirators at Zajechar in 1883. Fell into disgrace through opposing the marriage of Alexander and Draga.

**RIBARATS.**—A Liberal. President of the Skupshtina after the murders.

**RISTICH, Colonel.**—Son of the late Regent. One of the original conspirators.

**SARICH, Lieutenant.**—Said to have shot the Queen when Mashin missed her.

**SIMICH, GEORGE.**—Served in the diplomatic service. Became Prime Minister in 1897. Has independent views, but inclines to Conservatism. In manners and appearance resembles the average English politician.

**STOJANOVICH.**—Minister of Public Instruction after the fall of the regicide ministry. One of the leaders of the small republican group.

**THESIGER, Hon. W.**—British Vice-Consul at Belgrade. Served in South Africa (D.S.O.).

**TICHA, Captain.**—Fetched the artillery for the murders.

**TODOROVICH, PERA.**—A brilliant journalist, proprietor and editor of the "Male Novine," published at Budapest since the Revolution. He has been called the Labouchere or Rochefort of Servia. Was condemned to death in the reign of King Milan and endured many years of penal servitude. Defended the Court very vigorously of late years.

TRIPKOVICH, Captain.—One of the murderers. Afterwards attempted to kill Todorovich, the Minister of the Interior.

TSINTSAR-MARKOVICH, General.—Commander-in-Chief. Became Premier 1902. Murdered June 11, 1903.

TSUKICH, MICHAEL.—A leading member of the Liberal party and a man of considerable culture. Has filled various Government offices with distinction. Comes of one of the oldest families in Servia. Is married to Mademoiselle Oreshkovich, who was lady-in-waiting to Queen Nathalie.

VELIMIROVICH, Lieutenant.—Left the ranks at a review (September 9, 1903) and called out to Peter that King Alexander's blood was still crying for vengeance. Was immediately arrested.

VELIMIROVICH, PETER.—A moderate Radical and former Minister of State. Was appointed President of the Senate after the murders and presided over the election of Peter.

VELIMOVICH, Captain PERA.—One of the murderers.

VELKOVICH, VOJISLAV.—One of the souls of the conspiracy. Afterwards appointed Minister of Finance.

VIICH, Dr.—Was Prime Minister in 1902 before General Tsintsar-Markovich took office. Retired when he failed to carry through a State loan. A cheerful little man, whose face afforded fair game to the caricaturists. He had previously been Minister of Finance on two different occasions.

ZHIVANOVICH, Lieut.-Colonel MILOSLAV.—Warned the King of the plot. Murdered when his letter was found among the King's papers. The murder was announced as "suicide through pecuniary difficulties."

ZHIVKOVICH, LJUBOMIR.—A very dangerous man, who was probably implicated in the recent tragedy. A fluent

demagogue, who acquired considerable influence among the lowest classes. Favours a republic. Was sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude for criminal conspiracy under the Georgevich administration. After the murders was appointed Minister of Justice. Since retired again into private life.

## CHAPTER XI

### BELGRADE

My first visit to Belgrade was in the depth of winter, when I knew no one; and a certain dreariness, or at least bareness, made itself felt. But when I returned, in the month of June, and found Belgrade decked out in her bravest to celebrate the first visit of a Montenegrin prince since Kosovo, I could scarcely recognise her for the same city. The parks were delightful, the streets bright and clean, the yellow konak smiled cheerfully through its white Venetian blinds; and if there was no evidence of wealth, there was a general impression of ease and content. The only drawback lay in the execrable pavement, which I have only known surpassed in French provincial towns. It consists of sharp boulders banged into the roadway, and is a veritable penance to the pedestrian, a torture to those who drive. And an exacting person might criticise the careless nomenclature of the streets, apparently jotted up in charcoal.

Budapest is a frowsy imitation of Paris; Belgrade is a smaller but neater version of Budapest. There is a creamy boulevard, the Teratsia, with precipitous streets at right angles on either side; and an additional cheerfulness is





OLD TOWN, BELGRADE.



conveyed by the abundance of foliage—chestnuts, walnuts, lilacs, and fig-trees—grouped round almost every house.

The main eyesore at Budapest is the village tailoring of the burghers of both sexes, who monopolise the streets. But here, for once, the bourgeois seem to show good taste. They do not don ungainly imitations of the European fashions of the year before last, but adapt charming fashions of their own from the national costume of their peasants. You may see loose zouave jackets of maroon velvet with long sleeves and dainty edges of gold embroidery; the women's hair plaited round dear little red fezzes at the back of their heads; skirts and kerchiefs of many bright colours. The peasants, too, are here in crowds, and all must admire the gold-laced jackets, the barbaric ornaments, the necklaces of antiquated coins, the tambourine caps, and the bright carpet-like aprons which they wear.

I know few more smiling prospects than the approach to Belgrade by water on a fine afternoon. If you have not been there since the last bimbashee carried off his bag and baggage some forty years ago, you will scarcely recognise it for the same spot. It was then, as always, Beograd (the white city)—now appropriately corrupted into Belgrade, not etymologically though actually “the beautiful city”—but you were confronted by an expanse of those high walls which veil the mysteries of Moslem households, and many a minaret jutted out against the sky-line. You still behold a white city; but the high walls have given place to white houses smiling confidently through windows of the European pattern, and, instead of many minarets, two modern buildings alone protrude above the rest—the Cathedral with its russet steeple, and the imposing New Palace in the centre of the town. The white houses glisten

in the sunshine like a flock of freshly-washed sheep straggling up and over the hill to their rendezvous by the Cathedral; while the Roman fortifications of the citadel, maroon with age, afford the most harmonious contrast imaginable with the limes and acacias which peer out playfully from between the buildings, and, meeting at Kalemegdan (the "fortress-field"), dance lightly in the breeze.

An electric tramway whirls you up a precipitous road, and in two minutes you are at the parapet of the public gardens, gazing out upon a panorama which can assuredly have few rivals. Here, on these terraces, you are told, many a Servian patriot has been impaled by the Turks and left to linger in agony. Away on the extreme left is the dark, indented cone of Mount Avala, whose poetic name fitly accords with the countless fairy legends conferred upon it by Servian poetry and saga. From the woods of Topchider to the south-west the green Save hastens to unite at your feet with the sluggish, bilious Danube, which belies tradition—for it does not waltz, and is anything but blue—and wriggles away into the broad fat plains of Hungary. It is no loud landscape, such as the souls of the Philistines love; but it is dear to every Servian, who looks longingly across at his old empire and the homes of his compatriots dotted among the tender browns and blues and yellows of the plain. The charm lies in the infinite variety of colouring—the mauve mists, the copper beeches, the silvery sheen—a kaleidoscope which seems shaken at every season and almost at every hour. There is nothing like it, unless it be the vista from the Embassy windows at Pera, and that does not afford the soothing sensations to be experienced here. I know no more cheerful lounge. If you be sad,

the fairy prospect will inspire you; if ill, it will act as a tonic; and if you love Serbia, you may come hither to dream about her empire. At Saint-Germains they have a legend that when the Devil displayed the beauties of the earth from a high place, it was on their terrace. For my part, I think he had been foolish not to choose Kalemegdan.

Nor must the well-kept gardens be overlooked—the bright beds, the flowering bushes and the trim walks—where the beauty and fashion of Belgrade come out to sun themselves an hour before the fall of day. On Saturdays the promenade is given over to the Hebrew population—in Serbia, as at Salonika, of Spanish origin and mitigated racial rapacity. The Jewesses, huddled together upon deep green benches, display strange hereditary costumes of the Middle Ages and the superabundant jewellery of Jewesses in all ages.

Tearing yourself away from the dreamy Servian music of the military band and the intoxicating odours of the shrubs, you pass through wonderful brick gateways which have defied time and turmoil in this centre of a thousand stormy fights. You are in a broad parade-ground. On the left are soldiers' coffee-houses and fragrant gardens, where cheery convicts clank their light fetters as they water the turf. In front are piles of cannon-balls and rows of antiquated cannon, among which you may discern an English twelve-pounder, captured who knows by whom or how often in Hanoverian days: they are evidently intended only for ornament, for the fortifications of Belgrade are on the other side of the town, and this citadel is practically dismantled. It is not here that invasion is feared, for you may roam where you will without risking the penalties of a spy, which

might confront you on the frontiers of Bulgaria or Bosnia.

Belgrade is almost a new city, like Sofia, where the old wooden houses fed the Russian camp-fires. As at Sofia, the rebuilding enabled sundry speculators to feather their nests very comfortably, only, instead of a Stambulof using official information for his private gain, we find a canny Scot, named Mackenzie, using his native wits and coming to be regarded as a benefactor. A long street, and indeed a whole quarter, bear a phonetic version of his name. Near the mosque, that pathetic outpost of a retreating civilisation, are a few wooden shops with the Oriental window-counters, where dusky figures sit cross-legged, toying with their water-pipes. And just off the Teratsia there linger a few unmistakably Turkish houses, with their venerable verandahs and caressing creepers. But the covetous eye of the speculative builder is upon them, and they are doomed. Indeed, Belgrade is essentially a modern, almost an occidental, town; and those who look for landmarks of her historic past will look in vain. The citadel, the mosque, a few fountains with Turkish inscriptions and a ruinous arch, called the Gate of Constantinople, are the only concrete reminders of Moslem domination.

Belgrade society before the Revolution consisted of little more than the Court circle, the corps diplomatique, the families of a few ministers, officers, and retired diplomats, and the few other residents whom chance had europeanised. Now, of course, there is no society at all, for there are no Court and no diplomatists. No aristocracy has survived in Servia, as it has done in Roumania, which, not being on the Turks' direct high road to Europe, was never so completely subjugated. No titles of nobility have been conferred, and anything like a

pride of ancestry is rare. One of the smartest cavalry officers I met was a son of King Milan's head cook, and an ex-minister told me he gloried in the fact that he and his friends were sons of peasants and yet could talk good French and behave as gentlemen. But means, education, and leisure have called an upper class into existence. Their manners and habits are those of European society everywhere else, and they have no social dealings with the bourgeoisie or peasantry. The bourgeoisie is filled with American notions of equality; and acquaintance with professional men—politicians, lawyers, headmasters, doctors, journalists, etc.—exposes you to find yourself any moment at table with your photographer, your chemist, your landlord or your hosier. Within the bourgeoisie, official position first and then wealth are the criteria of respect. But the bourgeois looks down upon all peasants, even upon farmers, who are often much richer and better-mannered than himself, and whom he always speaks of as peasants, generally introducing a taunt about bare feet. "He is only a peasant," is often said, half contemptuously and half in admiration, of the deputy who owns 2000 acres and is a power in his province, if not in the State.

Every one in Servia is the soul of hospitality, and a traveller in the country districts is welcomed and feasted in a manner altogether overwhelming. But, except on the day of their slava and one or two other anniversaries, the Servians never entertain each other. Dinner-parties are almost unknown, even in the European fringe which I have called society. Most of the Belgrade ladies have their day for receiving callers every week, but that is the beginning and the end of entertainment as far as Servian society is concerned. For one thing, the houses would be

much too small. If you meet thirty or forty visitors in a drawing-room at a slava, you run the risk of having all the breath squeezed out of your body.

Many of the houses are comfortably but according to our notions scantily furnished. Most of the furniture is of Austrian or Hungarian origin and aims rather at usefulness than beauty. A redeeming feature is, however, to be found in the great array of bright red Pirot rugs, which figure not only on the floors and sofas but are even nailed upon the walls and ceilings. The regulation system is to have a large table in the centre of the parlour with a sofa and all the chairs grouped stiffly round it. The sofa is the seat of honour, reserved for the principal guest. If the room be a big one, there will be a second table, as far off as possible from the first, also surrounded by a sofa and bevy of chairs. I found even in my room at the hotel that it was almost impossible to cure the chambermaids of a mania for this terrible arrangement. Whenever I pay a visit in Servia and find the whole party set out in this circular fashion, I always wonder what round game can be in progress; but from long usage Servians can see no humour in the situation.

There is little luxury in Servian home-life and the lack of servants makes comfort out of the question. As Servians are too independent to enter domestic service, servants have to be imported from beyond the Save and they possess or quickly acquire impossible notions of equality. I imagine it cannot be very much worse in America. And the ladies of a Servian household spoil their servants by doing much of the work themselves.

As for amusements in Belgrade, the theatre is a good deal frequented. It is a pretty little house in the main





THE UNIVERSITY, BELGRADE.



square, facing the monument to Prince Michael. Light comedies and sometimes light operas, mostly translated from the French, are given two or three times a week.

Other nocturnal amusements are rare. There are a few music-halls, but they are mere pretexts for sipping coffee and beer and the performers are nearly all venerable Germans, who massacre the French songs of the year before last. Occasionally a strolling Roumanian puts in an appearance, but very rarely a Servian. The Servians consider it *infra dignitatem* to appear on the boards and what few can be enticed to do so are Hungarian subjects. It is the same spirit which makes Servians refuse to work in factories or enter domestic service.

The main streets of Belgrade start at a small angle from the gardens of Kalemegdan and reunite before reaching the palace. They contain all the best shops, a large proportion of which are kept by Jews. Rugs, embroideries and other Oriental products may be bought at high prices; but they are for the most part imported. Ordinary European wares nearly all come from Austria or Hungary and are both dear and bad.

A strange effect is produced by the rows of sheepskin caps set out upon wooden stands in front of the shops, like rows of heads after an execution. Canon MacColl, driving through Belgrade, would undoubtedly scent an atrocity. Nearly every other house is a *kafana* (coffee-house), and nearly every other shop is a money-changer's; but, so far as I can make out, the chief business of the latter is to speculate on the *agio*. Only one of them all is a Christian, and it is satisfactory to record that most of the private banking business of the town is in his hands.

Starting along the Teratsia from Kalemegdan, we pass the town hall, a fine building, but one which I have seen equalled if not surpassed by some of the town halls in the interior. A few yards farther on is the market-place. Almost has it persuaded me to go and live in the Hotel Imperial hard by, that I might watch from my windows the unceasing movement of picturesque peasants and the play of colour in the stalls. Here, as in every Servian market, paprika is the predominant factor: great stacks of bright-green pods, freshly picked, like a plague of Riviera tree-frogs brushed into heaps; big bundles of pods which have been dried in the sun and recall Virginia creeper at its best; finally, open sacks of these same red pods finely powdered, striking the eye like molten fire. Then there are fluffy snake-like strings of onion and garlic; clothes-baskets overflowing with bright cherries limpid as deadly nightshade, or, according to the season, with blue-black plums, overhung with a haze of wasps and hornets; small arsenals of apples, pears, and cabbages, which might be mistaken at a distance for munitions of war; and a flutter of the cheapest poultry in Europe. An indefinable odour hangs over the place at all hours; but whether emanating chiefly from the plums or the cabbages, the quinces or the garlic, the fowls or the acacia-trees, or the peasants who pass the nights on the ground wrapped in matting to secure the best quarters for their stalls, it is impossible to determine.

Passing on through the Mihajlova Pijatsa (Michael Square), where some students from the ecclesiastical seminary burned a Hungarian flag in the spring of 1896 at the instigation of the Metropolitan, and involved the Government in all sorts of diplomatic worries, you come to the Russian Legation immediately

facing,<sup>1</sup> and the Foreign Office immediately beyond the Palace.

The Foreign Office is the most presentable of the Ministries; but neither in the apartments nor in the attendants is there anything like the same state which is kept up at Sofia. The remaining houses of interest in the Teratsia are the pretentious edifice built by M. Ristich with the earnings of his long public life, and the modest little yellow house where Queen Nathalie resided when her persecutors forbade her the palace, and from which she was expelled at the point of the bayonet. Finally, there is the Officers' Club, a turreted edifice somewhat bare inside, beyond the broad road which goes down to the station. In that road are the Skupshtina, a miserable chalet-like shanty, built in a hollow and expressing by its aspect a delightful contempt for parliamentary institutions; the War Office, in process of rebuilding; the Ministry of Finance, some way back from the road with a pleasant little garden attached; and the excellent Military Academy, whose smart young cadets are to be met with at every turn.

The Parliament House at Belgrade is capacious rather than convenient. From the outside it resembles a provincial theatre. In addition to the debating hall there are only a few small rooms for the president and ministry and a humble ante-room, where a solitary policeman keeps watch with a revolver and bayonet at his side. Here I presented my letter of introduction to Mr. Speaker. The policeman took it and went off to listen at the door of the Chamber, awaiting a propitious moment to take it in.

<sup>1</sup> This house was formerly the British Legation, but the Russians intrigued and obtained it. Here M. Charikof looked through his blinds and beheld the murders,

Various personages passed in and out, and I heard a confused hubbub, punctuated by the ping of the presidential hand-bell. There seemed to be a scene in progress, and I grew increasingly impatient at being detained outside, seated on the solitary chair and worried by clouds of flies. At last the tumult abated and members streamed out. Evidently there was an adjournment and I should see nothing. The Speaker came out with the others and received my introduction. We shook hands cordially, but we had some difficulty in making ourselves understood. However, he found an escort to conduct me to the diplomatic gallery, and I learned that the adjournment was only for two minutes.

Up there the atmosphere was very thick and the heat overwhelming. I obtained a front seat and surveyed the House. About one-third of it was given up to a platform. In the centre, Mr. Speaker, dressed in gray tweeds, sat at a desk, provided with a hand-bell, which he struck when he desired to call members to order. Behind him were the vacant throne of red velvet and gold, portraits of the King and Queen and three royal scutcheons. On either side of him were tables covered with green baize, where the ministers sat. Facing them was a semicircle of dark leathern benches in six rows, with two gangways. The House, only a temporary structure, was intended for a larger assembly, so there was no lack of room. This did not, however, apply to the spectators, who thronged the galleries, and were even allowed to overflow on to the floor. The best gallery was reserved for ladies. The Opposition sat to the left, the Ministerialists to the right of the Speaker. Among both parties was a fair sprinkling of peasant farmers, dressed in shirt-sleeves, embroidered waistcoats, and baggy breeches.



SERVIAN CREDIT BANK, PRINCE MICHAEL STREET, BELGRADE.





Honourable members were at liberty to address the House either from their places or from one of the two boxes immediately below the Speaker; the more showy orators generally preferred the greater publicity, while others were content to express their views where they were. When I entered, a fiery Radical was denouncing the Government very glibly apropos of the national loan, then under discussion. Like all his colleagues, he was quite ready to admit that the loan was necessary and that it had been contracted on the best possible terms. But, he reiterated, we will not grant it to a Government in which we have no confidence. He made use of a strange piece of clap-trap, which may have a psychological interest. "This," said he, "is a period when liberty and progress throughout the world have reached a higher point than ever before. We observe in every land the fullest freedom, the most magnificent democracy, everywhere save in unhappy Servia. In France the Government is giving the coup de grâce to the last representatives of bigotry and superstition. Even England, which for long years has been engaged in a struggle of incredible bitterness, has scarcely subdued her foes when she magnanimously refuses to suspend their constitution. A few weeks ago they were in arms against her; now they are allowed to take their share as citizens in the development of her destinies. It is only in Servia that liberty is dead. . . ."

Presently a Ministerialist rose in his place and a great uproar immediately ensued. The Opposition declared that he might not speak, as he had neglected the formality of sending in his name. "But," said Mr. Speaker, "I have his name here on my list." The Opposition, however, would not listen to reason; their conception of liberty evidently did not include free speech. They were all

shouting at once, utterly regardless of the ping-ping of the President's bell. Then some one moved that the honourable member be no longer heard, and several speeches were delivered in an electrical atmosphere. At last the matter was settled in the honourable member's favour, and the House again adjourned for five minutes' rest. On resuming he was heard with the utmost patience. He delivered a quiet argumentative speech, which evidently made an impression.

He was followed by the Republican leader M. Zhivkovich, a small dark lawyer with a pointed beard, very generous with his gesticulations and evidently a great water-bibber. I saw him toss off no less than five tumblers during his oration. In 1898 this gentleman was sentenced to penal servitude for criminal conspiracy; for two years and eight months he toiled in chains as a convict, until, on the occasion of the King's marriage, a general amnesty was granted. The life must certainly have agreed with him, for his energy was only surpassed by the bitterness of his eloquence. The Ministerialists accorded him a fair hearing; only once were they stung into a protest. Once or twice he raised a laugh, which is a rare event in the solemn Skupshtina. His supporters encouraged him from time to time with "Very good!" or some other exclamation. When he returned to his seat they clapped their hands and cried, "Zhiveo!" (Let him live!)

After replies from the Premier and Finance Minister, the division was taken towards nine P.M. amid much suppressed excitement. The most sanguine supporters of the Government did not expect a large majority and even money was laid in the gallery that it would not exceed six. The votes were counted by calling the Ayes and then the Noes to stand up in their places. To the

uninitiated this was a tedious proceeding, for each name had to be registered separately. But no sooner had the Ayes stood up than the experts seemed to know that the Government was safe. A loud cheer rent the air, to be renewed still more vociferously when a majority of fifteen was eventually announced.

The streets of Belgrade at night-time have a distinct character of their own. Probably by Turkish tradition, every one retires very early and by nine of the clock the whole town is practically deserted. Great globes of electric light contribute a 'ghostly whiteness to the scene, and a nervous person might easily be pardoned alarm at the immovable figures of the soldier-police lurking at every corner, armed to the teeth. Imagine a gaunt apparition with a long Russian overcoat and fur cap, a sword at his side, revolvers in his belt, a long rifle and fixed bayonet slung across his back. He is, however, as courteous and obliging as a London policeman, which is high praise. And there is probably no town in Europe, unless it be Sofia, where the stranger may wander about at all hours with more perfect security where he will. But it was not by any means always so. A Servian artist who is a friend of mine often indulges in reminiscences about Belgrade in the days of the Turkish garrison. There used to be a Servian and a Turkish police, who came into frequent collision. But, in spite of both, he tells me the streets were dangerous at night. He remembers being set upon by a Turkish officer one evening and receiving a good shaking. Finding appeals to reason fruitless, he pushed the officer down into the gutter, whereupon the officer drew his sword and chased him all the way home. There were then no lights in the streets and, as at Stamboul to-day, pedestrians were bound to carry lanterns after dark.

Once my friend dallied somewhere and found he had no lantern to take him home. "Never mind," said his host, "I will see you through." They had not proceeded many yards when they were challenged by a zaptie, but my friend's companion replied in a loud authoritative voice, "How now, you stupid fellow, don't you know me?" The zaptie did not; but he confounded himself in excuses, and the pair proceeded on their way.

In the Mihajlova Pijatsa and the neighbouring streets innumerable little frogs hop about as unconcernedly as if they were far away in the country. How they came there and how they survive, no one seems to know. In Turkish times there were also wild dogs in the streets, as at Constantinople; but the Servians have established a dog tax for Belgrade, and any dog found at large without a numbered diamond-shaped badge attached to his collar is lassoed and put to death. These natural scavengers have, however, been adequately replaced. The streets are very disagreeable for walking and driving, owing to the infamous cobble pavement, but they are kept scrupulously clean. On a summer night you may see whole armies of sweepers at work, raising great clouds of white dust before them.

Whenever I drive about Belgrade with a Servian, my attention is drawn to the enormous improvements since Turkish times, which, it must be remembered, were by no means remote. Thirty or forty years ago the Teratsia was like a very bad country road, in which you might sink up to the knees in mud; and in place of the fine white houses which flank it, there were tumble-down wooden shanties nearly everywhere. The drains are said to be still primitive; but there are no bad smells, as in Italy and France. And the Grand Hotel is very comfortable.

The roads in the neighbourhood of Belgrade still leave



THE POST OFFICE, BELGRADE.



something to be desired. The historical Constantinople road, which goes through Semendria and Nish and affords the one promenade at Sofia, becomes near Belgrade a regular slough of despond after a very moderate rainfall. The new road to Topchider is, however, kept in good order and has become the one resort for riders and drivers of an afternoon. After passing the Government tobacco factory and Herr Weiffert's big brewery, you enter a fine alley of limes and acacias and arrive speedily at the woods and gardens of Topchider.

It is some two miles from Belgrade, and may be reached in ten minutes by electric tramway. The restaurant is a popular resort and it is the fashion to take dinner there out-of-doors in the summer. The main drawbacks to this are the plague of little green flies and great whirring beetles, and the fitfulness of the electric light, which there depends on the same generators as the tramway. When the cars go unduly fast, diners are plunged in darkness. On the hills about Topchider are a number of villas, where the better-to-do of Belgrade spend the summer. The villa of Milosh, the founder of the late dynasty, is down below among the gardens. It is now a show-place for visitors. The most interesting sight is perhaps an old proskura (a small loaf blessed by the popes), which Milosh left there in a drawer when he went into exile, and found again on his return nearly twenty years later. The interior of the house has been left very much as it was when Milosh lived there, except that his clothes and other relics are now exhibited under glass cases. The furniture and arrangements are, as might be expected, Turkish, and impress with their simplicity. A collection of pictures and wax fruits testifies to Milosh's patronage of the arts. The nuder pictures are screened

with curtains, but they are not of a nature which would exact this homage to prudery even in England. There is a pretty little church hard by Milosh's konak; and you may also see the monument of Prince Michael, who was murdered in the deer-park.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE INTERIOR

THE tourist-resorts of the world have been so much exhausted that I shall be conferring a service by indicating a new direction. No self-respecting person now cares to jostle a herd of Yankees, Teutons, infidels and heretics in Switzerland, Germany or Italy, except for the necessary purposes of education. What was once the grand tour is now very small beer. Even further afield the spirit of the age is painfully paramount. India is overrun with globe-trotters; Egypt and Palestine are the slaves of Mr. Cook; Japan has been hopelessly vulgarised. Let me urge all those who yearn for strange scenes and native simplicity to visit Servia before she is swept into the current. Already Bosnia has been turned into a burghers' playground, and it cannot be long before Servia suffers a like contamination. At present the great safeguard is to be found in the deficiency of railways, but a new law has been passed to facilitate their construction, and the day may not be far distant when red Baedekers and blue goggles will complete the tricolour of this white land. Already I have noticed a striking change in Belgrade. Six years ago I heard nothing there but Servian in hotels, restaurants and places where they sing.

Now the ears are perpetually offended by thick German and abrupt Magyar tongues. But the interior is still virginal.

In 1896, when I overran Serbia, I had to find compensation in the natives' overflowing hospitality for rugged roads, bridgeless rivers and some unsavoury inns. Since then the *corvée* has been out and there are excellent highways everywhere; the streams have all been spanned by neat viaducts and the sanitary authorities have insisted upon the extermination of unnecessary smells. Now, as hitherto, good substantial fare is to be found in villages as well as towns. The only remaining drawback is the absence of baths. Even in a big town like Kragujevats or a thriving one like Shabats, they stare in the best hotels if you hint at a hip-bath. They are quite ready to spend thousands of dinars on buildings and servants and such luxuries as they understand; but it does not occur to them, even in the dog-days, that a traveller might crave for a cold plunge. This is strange, because Belgrade has already set the example and most of her hotels are well supplied with baths. People shrink from what they call "roughing it" in remote lands, but if you interrogate them you will usually find that their grievance is against the absence of food and tubs. Food is abundant here, and the expenditure of two or three pounds by each hotel would supply a sufficiency of tubs. Water is already abundant and the Servians drink it recklessly, but their facilities for its external use are mediocre. Until this deficiency can be remedied a traveller must have recourse to tin or indiarubber. Then he may treat himself, at an absurdly low cost, to an acquaintance with a smiling people which possesses all the Oriental instinct of hospitality, to a sight of historical scenes and wondrous scenery

and marvellous monasteries; in fact, to all the delights of the Middle Ages crystallised amid modern aspirations and a headlong prosperity.

I will give a few impressions and recollections as they occur to me. For my first journey into the interior I started down the Danube by a Servian steamer at 5.30 A.M., when the rising sun was lighting up the lovely white city with the daintiest rose hues imaginable. I was very drowsy, but I could not be insensible to the tender landscape, with its feathery willows and pale green hills. In a recess of one of these a spot was pointed out to me where eleven conspirators against Milan were taken out and shot some years ago. One of them was quite a youth, and his father vainly offered to pay all the expenses of the Servian army for two years in return for a pardon. Another was reprieved at the very last moment, after his eyes had been bandaged and the guns had been levelled; but his health never recovered the rigours of imprisonment in a cellar where the water was an inch deep and snakes were his companions.

On a hill just before Semendria stands a pretty little villa with a shady verandah where King Alexander and Queen Draga usually spent the summer. Semendria is a homely old town with little to attract the traveller, unless it be the excellent white grapes, which grow out of doors to respectable hothouse proportions, fit first-fruits for the explorer of a district flowing with milk and honey. According to tradition, the famous vineyards of Semendria were planted by the Roman Emperor Probus. When George Brankovich became proprietor, early in the fifteenth century, of Tokay in Hungary, he planted the Semendria vine there, and thus called into being the best wine the world has ever known. An old peasant's cottage,

consisting of two rooms, is shown as a former residence of Prince Milosh. The old Church of S. Mary, adjoining the cemetery above the town, has handsome arcaded apses and a rugged polygonal exterior. As is the case with most places of worship built during Turkish times, the floor was placed some two yards below the level of the ground outside, in order that the building might attract less attention by its height; and the frescoes inside have the usual bullet-marks. The modern church, dedicated to S. George, on the other side of the town, is one of the finest in Servia; it is in the modern Byzantine style and is surmounted by six domes.

Of course the most interesting of the sights of Semendria is the strange old fortress, which was built five hundred years ago by George Brankovich, one of those last defenders of Servia who were struggling, with their backs to the wall, against the irresistible advance of Islam. It consists of a fantastic coronet of brown square towers united by a curtain and standing out sheer against the water's edge without battlements, rampart or embrasures—an unique and magnificent monument of mediæval defence. Before the invention of modern artillery it must have been almost impregnable; but the builder evidently foresaw, like every one else, that it was only a question of time how soon the last remnants of the Servian Empire should fall into the hands of the Turks. So he built into a wall in the middle of the citadel a huge red-brick cross, the Christian monograms and a Servian inscription, none of which could be removed without destroying the whole edifice. "The mark during four centuries," writes Mr. Denton,<sup>1</sup> "for Turkish bullets, which have liberally battered both brick and stone, the cross stands out all the redder for the violence

<sup>1</sup> *Servia and the Servians*, 1862.

which hatred for the emblem had instigated." It met the eyes of the successful invaders at their entry, it survived the times of the Turkish occupation, and doubtless it was the last object which the Turkish garrison saw as it withdrew from the fortress.

Proceeding down the Danube, we came to some fantastic islands which reminded my companion of the "Twelve Apostles" on Lake Superior, and presently a promontory shaped like one of the pearl caps worn by Servian peasants heralded our destination, the lignite coal mine of Kostolats. The rest of the Danube I only know as far as Turnu-Severin, and from the Hungarian side. The only points of interest are the defile of Kazan and the Iron Gates, which were opened for more extensive navigation a few years ago.

It is a popular delusion, shared even by many guide-books, that the Iron Gates are a narrow gorge, where the Danube acquires extraordinary velocity. I remember murmuring, when I read of blasting operations there, at the vandalism of sacrificing scenery to commercial exigencies. As a matter of fact, however, the Iron Gates—so called because the rocks in the bed of the river were thought to resemble a kind of grille—are at the broadest and flattest portion of this stage of the river, which has just spread out after issuing from the defile of Kazan.<sup>1</sup> That defile offers precisely the kind of scenery which every one professes to admire, having become familiar with it in every other Academy picture and three-quarters of all stage scenery. There are high cliffs and beetling crags; the river has in some places so narrow an inlet and outlet among the mountains that it seems like a kind of troubled lake, such as often occurs in dreams. Very likely it is very beautiful,

<sup>1</sup> Turkish for the Cauldron.

but for my part I would not go a furlong out of my way to see it again.

The most striking fact about the Danube between the Servian and Hungarian shores is that the Hungarian is nearly all flat, half-deserted, and monotonous; the Servian a cheerful succession of hills, ruins, churches, villages, flocks and herds—a contrast characteristic of the two countries.

Near Kostolats I saw the ruins of a Roman villa, now being slowly excavated. Several small works of art and some huge sacks of copper coins have been discovered, and experts are of opinion that further search may reveal the remains of the old Roman town of Viminatum, which was one of the largest in this part of the world. After visiting the mine at Kostolats I drove through a succession of Richmond Parks to King Alexander's stud at Ljubichevo, which did wonders for the improvement of horse-breeding in the country.

Throughout the Shumadia, which I spent the next few weeks in exploring, I was struck by the English character of the scenery. The endless acres of pasture, dotted with stately oaks and elms, might be the outskirts of a Devonshire domain; the roadside banks and rare hedges were gay with our familiar wild-flowers—cowslips, primroses, forget-me-nots, ragged robin, daisies, violets, clematis, honeysuckle, dog-roses and blackberry blossoms; while the presence of abundant lilacs, acacias, laburnums, and wild fruit-trees suggested the riches of a vast natural garden. The soft blue hills, dotted with dark shrubs; the winding Morava, with its fringe of feathery willow; the long stretches of nodding maize, relieved every now and then by patches of wheat or hemp; the bright, white-washed houses with their red-tiled roofs, were always a pleasure to gaze upon.

Pozharevats, hard by the Ljubichevo stud, may be taken as a typical country town. To our ideas it is more like an overgrown village. With one or two exceptions, there are no streets, according to our conception of the term. Each cottage nestles in its own farmyard and garden, and the profusion of verdure lining the roadways and encompassing the buildings affords a picturesque prospect to those who look down upon the town from the neighbouring hills. The one remarkable sight in the place is undoubtedly the palatial Prefecture. The Prefect was highly flattered when I told him, what I am sure is the case, that in England no provincial town three or four times the size could boast of anything like it. He was amused when I expressed surprise, and puzzled when I expressed pleasure, that the seat of the royal government in this insignificant country town should be so far more magnificent than the dilapidated building deemed sufficient for the needs of the popular assembly in the capital.

From Pozharevats to Svilajnats I drove some four-and-twenty miles along a broad white road, which seemed to be bordered by one continuous village. At very short intervals one came to a pair of rival inns glaring defiance at each other from different sides of the road. They looked very picturesque, with their white colonnades, quaint rough frescoes and creepers; and their frequency afforded an infallible sign of the general prosperity.

I have eaten many a merry meal and occasionally passed a night in Servian mehane, and vow they are all very well in their way. As I have never dined or slept in an English village pothouse, I cannot attempt a comparison; but it is, at any rate, something that a fastidious person can satisfy his hunger and escape vermin in a mehana. Of course, fleas are to be found in Servia, as in every other

country ; but they were always amenable to insect powder, and I never encountered worse tormentors. Some mehane, indeed, were far more comfortable than many a pretentious hotel. I would far rather, for instance, spend a week at the mehana of Bogatich, in the district of Machva, than in the Hotel Bristol at Vienna. I found scrupulous cleanliness, good food and perfect courtesy and attention. What more can any one desire? In general, I may say that whatever shortcomings I discovered in mehane were due to ignorance. If they had not due warning of my approach, I had to put up with rough fare ; while, on the other hand, so soon as the landlord learned my habits he was quite ready to fall in with them. He would express astonishment, of course. Why on earth should I want a clean tablecloth? Those were only wine-stains or soup-stains or what not. However, if that was my fancy, by all means let me be humoured ! Or, again, his guests always wiped their knives and forks on their napkins, or else not at all ; but if I preferred that he should take them out between each course and rub them on a filthy rag in the kitchen, he had not the slightest objection. Was it not notorious that Englishmen were eccentric? Had he not seen me calmly sitting by an open window? and when he had drawn my attention to the dangers of draughts, had I not replied that I liked them? Assuredly such a being must be humoured !

We generally dined in the public room, a number of little tables being placed together to make one big one ; and if nothing else could be relied upon, the cheese, kaimak, and chicken were nearly always eatable. Wine it was more prudent to bring. These meals generally took place at the half-way house where the two contingents of escort met : the one which had brought me thither, and the one which



was to take me on to the place where I should pass the night. If there were too many loafers in the public room, we sometimes dined in a private one—in nearly every case a musty bedroom, where we sat on beds turned into sofas by the simple process of covering them with Pirot rugs. When there was a garden, we always dined there, which was much pleasanter, saving the presence of wasps and hornets.

On drawing up at a mehana—and Servian travellers can rarely bring themselves to pass a good one without drawing up (on leaving Bajina Bashta, for instance, we were made to stop at one “to rest the horses” after ten minutes’ travel)—you find a number of white linen peasants seated on rickety kitchen chairs or long low benches at rickety wooden tables under the colonnade. They all make a motion of rising and doff their sheepskin caps. A table is always vacated in case you care to sit down there. Walking straight in, however, you find yourself in a large lofty chamber with a number of little tables careering about an undulating and irregular floor, either of very old red brick or earth hardened by the passage of many feet. The windows, covered with creepers, are kept hermetically closed; but the door is generally wide open. Facing the door is a great stove with an open fire—sometimes built far into the wall, sometimes projecting far into the room. Hanging from nails on the walls by their long handles are a great array of Turkish coffee-pots—not the bright bronze ones we know so well, but dingy, battered implements of tin—various ugly pans, two or three rusty revolvers and a venerable gun. Near the ceiling by the stove a number of maize-heads are often put to dry. On the wall are numerous prints and garish oleographs in frames: bad likenesses of the royal family almost invariably, the host’s

party leader (and I have remarked that a Radical inn is always the dirtiest and worst provided), S. Sava blessing peasants in the various national costumes of Greater Serbia, scenes from the Turkish and Bulgarian wars and the Bosnian insurrection. In a corner are a large cupboard full of plates and glasses and a tank for keeping wine and soda-water cool. The abundance of ice, even in the least pretentious inn, calls for admiration. It is collected in large quantities from the frozen rivers and ponds during the short sharp winter and affords a provision for the whole summer. When I sprained my foot at the manœuvres and passed the night at a very humble mehana, blocks of ice were at once produced to allay the inflammation. (What village public-house in England could show similar foresight?) In a conspicuous part of every mehana is a large blackboard, where the scores of the various frequenters are chalked up in true old-fashioned style. Over one of these boards I noticed a painted motto—"Ready money to-day; credit to-morrow"—evidently based on the axiom that "to-morrow never comes," but here more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

The wine at a mehana is generally home-made and always badly made. A small amount of beer is also consumed there, but the chief trade is done in very weak raki (slivovitsa or komovitsa). This is drunk out of queer little long-necked decanters, each containing about the measure of one liqueur-glass. When people toast each other with these, they do not clink glasses but rub together the necks of their tiny bottles as if in a maudlin embrace. I remember drinking with a very jovial pope somewhere. He was drinking wine out of tumblers, and I raki out of decanters. This sounds much more bibulous than it really was. When you want to be polite in Servia, you must clink glasses

almost every time you drink. So he kept clinking his glass against my decanter, and I kept embracing his glass with my decanter. But I took mischievous advantage of the turn of the wrist necessary for a proper embrace to pour some of my raki into his wine every time. Presently he sniffed suspiciously and said, "Well, this is very curious; I would swear this wine had a smack of raki." "Impossible!" we all exclaimed; but as his wine became more and more impregnated with raki, his suspicions became more and more clearly defined. At last he caught me in the act, and there was a delighted uproar, which ended eventually in our all taking arms and escorting him home to bed. Our gipsy band marched down the village road in front of us, playing their most obstreperous airs; and the representatives of Church, State and Army (pope, nachelnik, and a number of young officers) serenaded the slumbering houses with tumultuous songs. There was a bright full moon, and every cur in the place insisted upon joining in our chorus.

It is fair to add that this pope had his revenge upon me later on, when I met him in a kafana at Shabats. After appropriate toasts I prepared to make a move and asked him how to tell the waiter in Servian that I wanted to pay. "Josh jedan," he replied, with a mischievous smile in his eye. "Josh jedan!" I accordingly exclaimed, rapping the table. The waiter came, carried off my glass and replenished it. I thought this very odd, but, not wishing to struggle against fate, I tossed off the contents, rapped the table, and exclaimed, "Josh jedan!" Again the waiter filled my glass. Again I drank and called "Josh jedan!" each time more authoritatively, the pope's smile growing broader and broader. At last the only way out of the impasse was to break my glass and say "Zahlen!" Then I

learned that, instead of meaning "What have I to pay?" "Josh jedan" meant "One more."

One mehana deserves special and honourable mention to itself. On the boat going to Shabats my attention was directed to a white house, which, I was told, with much emphasis, was a very, *very* clean restaurant kept by a peasant. This seemed to strike my Servian friends as something phenomenal, and they discussed it with many a "Bogami!" and other expressions of incredulity. After lunch we took a cab and told the driver to go to "the clean restaurant." He knew at once and set out without any further direction. When we reached it I ceased to wonder at the fame it has attained. The tiled floors shone with elbow-grease, the pots and pans would have served as looking-glasses, and I would gladly have eaten my dinner off the floor of the fowl-house. The landlady expostulated at once with my companion for having brought suitors for her daughter's hand without giving warning; and presently the young heiress came to serve us with fresh kaimak, her face shiny from recent washing and her hair redolent of the oil of Macassar. A prosperous peasant is often very rich in Servia; and when his daughter is an only child, she is looked upon as a very good catch. So it was assumed that strange visitors could have only one object.

The laws relating to mehane are that any one may take out a license on payment of a sliding scale of fees; but he must submit to police supervision, keep a certain number of beds for travellers and charge according to a fixed tariff. Any attempt at extortion would be met by an appeal to the police.

Servians have no sense of privacy. They are accustomed to live with open doors and do everything in public. No servant ever dreams of knocking at your door anywhere in

the east of Europe, the explanation being that traditions were formed before doors came into being, when curtains alone filled the entrances. On coming to an inn, it is the habit to ask not for so many rooms, but for so many beds; and I have seen rooms in inns with as many as four beds, one in each corner. I had all the pains in the world to convince my various companions that I must have a room to myself. They seemed to think it a very eccentric whim; but, as usual, they were anxious to oblige.

To return to Shumadia. A drive from the main railway brought me, through many hemp-fields and past many streams where flax was undergoing a vehement process of beating and washing at the hands of picturesque women, to Krushevats, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, where Lazar, the last Servian Tsar, held his Court and assembled an army of 100,000 men before he set out for the fatal field of Kosovo. Lazar's church is still in good preservation, with beautiful rose windows and fanciful old carvings representing imperial peacocks and eagles. It forms part of a broad ruined enclosure where the palace used to stand. Of this the most interesting portion is Militsa's legendary tower, whither black crows brought her the news that the Servian Empire was shattered. Hard by are an old Turkish fountain, whither all manner of peasants bring water-pots of the best rustic art; and the ruins of an ancient mosque, which, according to tradition, was built by Militsa for her son-in-law after Kosovo. There are also some ruins of a Turkish bath, which, judging from present appearances, cannot have accommodated many bathers.

After spending a night at Militsa's monastery of Ljubostin I proceeded to Vrnjtse, a watering-place which is thronged with visitors in the summer. Thence I drove

to dreamy Kraljevo, which must always linger in my memory in a vague, restful way. There is a mistiness about the blue hills in the distance; an unreality about the tree-clad streets, with their easy-going denizens bearing all sorts of provisions—skinned sheep, fluttering poultry, baskets of paprika—slung on poles across the shoulders. The very houses have a modest gaze; there are no loud colours; there is no noise, no bustle; it is an ideal refuge for those who are weary of the turmoil of Europe. The name of Kraljevo (“the King’s town”) was conferred by King Milan, who also transferred thither the bishopric of Chachak. Previously the town was known as Karanovats.

In the morning I was escorted by a polite prefect, a merry mayor and a chorus of genial citizens to see the sights, including the mediæval monastery of Zhicha. What interested me most was the agricultural school, an ideal missionary enterprise that has now existed for upwards of twenty years. Some sixty resident pupils take a three years’ course in scientific farming, apiculture, poultry-keeping, etc., returning eventually to their homes as apostles of true progress, a very different thing from the progress prescribed by demagogues. In illustration of the contrast between the old methods and the new, I was shown the native pyramidal hives of mud, which afford only one-sixth or one-tenth of the honey derived from wooden structures with all the latest devices. But an incident related by the head of the school shows that this age has not a monopoly of wisdom. There recently came to him a peasant who was terribly crippled by rheumatism, and had been incapable of work during many years. He said he had heard a tradition that the sting of a bee was an infallible cure for his complaint. The director





BELGRADE.



LAMBS ROASTED WHOLE.

(Photographs by Mrs. Herbert Vivian.)



laughed, but was quite ready to gratify the man's desire. So a queen-bee was caught in a little box and applied to his leg, which swelled up enormously from the effects of the sting. After a few days the inflammation subsided, and he found that his rheumatism had entirely disappeared. Perhaps other sufferers may like to try the cure.

In the evening I was entertained to supper in a vineyard outside the town. My host (a typical peasant farmer) had every appearance of extreme poverty, but was in fact one of the richest men in the district. He had the latest kind of threshing-machine, made of course in Austria. On my way up the hill I saw a lamb being prepared for our supper. It had been spitted on a log of wood, and was being very slowly turned by a man over a pit full of glowing vine-ashes. This operation lasted fully five hours and afforded one of the daintiest dishes imaginable. Native epicures, I was told, lay special stress upon the use of vine wood, declaring that a particular flavour is conveyed to the meat. Among the other components of a Gargantuan repast were thick rich kaimak (Cornish cream), eaten with new rye-bread as an *hors d'œuvre*; chorba (a luscious chicken broth, affording food as well as drink); a very savoury hash, flavoured with paprika; and a variety of light pastries, the whole washed down with a mellow red wine, which was none the worse for having been made at home.

The lamb had scarcely been chopped up and placed on the table before the captain of the gendarmerie was on his legs effusively proposing my health. Then all stood up and sang "Mnogo Ljeta" (Many summers), the Servian equivalent of "He's a jolly good fellow." Then I had to propose my host's health and he replied with many friendly references to my country.

It was certainly an idyllic spot for a supper picnic. A fantastic light was afforded by flaming pine-logs in a sort of cradle at the top of a lamp-post; a chorus of crickets kept up a soothing serenade; the scent of flowers and shrubs lay heavy on the evening air and brilliant opal glow-worms studded the grassy floor. The peasant girls, I learned, have the pleasing custom of placing dozens of these insects in their hair and going to village dances thus adorned with the wondrous jewels of Nature.

After visiting the monastery of Studenitsa I made my way north to Kragujevats, the terminus of a branch railway and the second town in the kingdom. It was Milosh's capital, the heart of Servia, from which every throb of patriotism had its origin for the scattering of her enemies. What riches of association, what intrinsic charms are congregated within its walls! From the windows of the huge modern hotel you look over the broad square, where Milosh cut off the tongues and feet of his unfaithful subjects little more than half a century ago. They had a short way with Radicals in Servia then.

The whole town seems like a garden. The very arsenal and arms factory nestle amid old-world shrubberies. A drive through a pleasant little park known as "The Children's Garden" takes you to Milosh's konak, now a military club, where the officers receive visitors with their perennial hospitality. Like his other residences, it is built in the Turkish fashion with beautiful ceilings and much carved woodwork. The streets and shops of Kragujevats are particularly fascinating. I bought a shubara<sup>1</sup> there for twenty dinars, rummaged embroidered waistcoats and gold-laced zouave jackets, and should have invested in a

<sup>1</sup> A monstrous busby of sheepskin worn by Wallachians.

pair of opanke but for the bulk of their wooden trees. I could not resist some fantastic pottery, more especially a raki-bottle, shaped like a lady with a crinoline and fan; but, alas! it would not stand travelling across country and was all broken by the time I returned to Belgrade.

The journey from Kragujevats to Nish seemed to take me into a different country. I had left far behind me the gentle hills, the white and drab peasants and the neat tiled houses of central Servia, to find myself at last in the unmistakable Orient. The scenery was inclined to be rugged, with white rocks of fantastic shape; the peasants were of more varied type and costume—in the streets a mixed population of Albanians, Bulgars, Wallachs and gipsies jostled the pure-bred Servian or squatted Turkish-fashion on the pavements—indulging in bright colours and wearing bright fezzes or coloured kerchiefs with abrupt tufts of flowers or feathers; and the houses were of those quaint, antiquated patterns at once so unpractical and so entrancing. I could not repress a pang when I stood upon a hill outside the town at sunset and watched a solitary khodja chaunting the muezzin upon the last active minaret of Nish. What must be his thoughts as he emits the call to prayer and surveys the fair city now given over to the giaour? But a little while and he or his predecessor was the proud representative of a dominant race; now he ministers to a mere remnant of scarce-tolerated outcasts.

From his minaret our khodja may perhaps discern a plain, white, doorless building—something between a mosque and a mausoleum. It is in the outskirts of the town, just beyond the military hospital, and serves to protect the famous Tower of Skulls from the elements. After defeating the Servians near Nish in 1809, the Turks

according to a not infrequent Oriental custom erected a rude tower, composed partly of lumps of rock and partly of their enemies' heads, in order to commemorate their victory. Old people in the neighbourhood relate that there were originally twelve hundred skulls in the tower; but as it was never more than eight yards high, if that, I suspect exaggeration. When Lamartine travelled in these regions, the skulls still had hair clinging to them and must have presented a gruesome spectacle as a grinning white façade to this dark rugged background. Now the tower is scarcely four yards high and there remains only one skull, which was too deeply imbedded for extraction. For a long time it was the habit of visitors to carry off a skull as a souvenir, and when Nish became Servian the remainder were reverently buried. Their niches in the plaster are still plainly visible. Two skulls are kept in a glass case and obligingly exhibited to visitors.

The cathedral of Nish is a handsome lofty building of comparatively recent construction, and presents a striking contrast beside the little old church, built down into the ground and seeming to seek to hide itself, which formerly ministered to the Christian needs of Nish. The fortress, approached by a handsome bridge across the Nishava, is an irregular bastion constructed of masonry, defended by a few breechloading howitzers. The various industrial buildings have been already described. There remains only the royal konak, formerly a pasha's house, which the late King wisely determined to keep in all its pristine charm. The garden seemed to me a survival from the "Arabian Nights." There was no irritating precision about it: the shrubs and flowers had an appearance of being cared for, but they grew where they would and saturated

the air with perfume, while the traditional high walls contributed a sentiment of privacy to which the modern Servian is a stranger. What delighted me most was the Turkish fountain, from which I half expected to see a jinnee arise when I turned my ring.

From Nish I proceeded to Pirot, close to the Bulgarian frontier. It is far more barbarous and oriental in appearance than any other town in Servia. A half-ruined castle overlooks the town, which consists of tumble-down one-storied houses. Nearly every door seemed to be wide open, and the walls were adorned with brilliant displays of paprika and tomatoes. Nearly every woman and child in the place is engaged in weaving the bright red carpets which adorn every Servian home. There are no factories, but each family, or group of families, has its own private loom, which six or eight females work in little recesses or cupboards within view of the streets. The carpets are extraordinarily durable and very cheap. I wonder that some enterprising contractor does not go over and buy up the whole stock every year.

In the neighbourhood of Pirot I visited a curious sanctuary, which has attracted great crowds of pilgrims during the last two years. It appears that a peasant-woman recently had a very vivid dream, whereby it was revealed to her that the ruins of an ancient church lay buried beneath the ground at a certain spot close to the Constantinople road. She spoke to the priest and the prefect and various neighbours about it, but they only imagined that she was crazy. At last, however, the same dream was repeated so often and she grew so insistent in the matter that some peasants consented to dig. Sure enough they found some ruins and images and the remains of an altar at the place she had pointed out. Now she

has been placed in charge, the old church is to be restored, and a considerable revenue is derived from the offerings of pilgrims, many of whom have received miraculous cures.

I probably learned more about Serbia, her institutions, her agriculture, and her commerce during my tour in the Machva and western Serbia generally; but I shall always look back upon my travels in the eastern and central districts with keener satisfaction. This is probably because I saw them first, and found them less sophisticated.

I left Belgrade early one September morning by a Save steamer for Shabats. The capital seems always to have fresh aspects and more beautiful colourings, whose variety is infinite; and, with autumn creeping on apace, the river-mists transfigured the natural loveliness until I was forced to deem myself the victim of some magic spell.

The journey along the Save was pleasing, but uneventful. Very white cattle lounged along the edge of the marshy Hungarian plain, which was studded from time to time with patches of black pigs. The banks are a mere yard of perpendicular mud, relieved on the Servian side by long low islets, pale willows and warm hills reflected in the placid stream.

Shabats quays seemed entirely given over to the plum trade, great baskets of fresh fruit and heavy sacks of prunes stretched away as far as the eye could reach. One consequence was the worst plague of wasps and hornets I have ever seen. Directly we arrived they came on board, like custom-house officers, and took possession of all our provisions. For some time I thought they were even going to dispute our landing.

Shabats is one of the richest towns in Serbia, but in appearance the most miserable. In central Serbia every-

thing is practical; in the eastern districts, picturesque; but here, at the same time ugly and disreputable. The poverty-stricken appearance of this rich town recalled Nagyvarad (Groszwardein), which is also very prosperous and of terribly dilapidated appearance; but Nagyvarad has the excuse of a large Jewish population. At Nagyvarad, I remember, such was the spirit of economy that no street-lamps were lit when there was a moon.

The scenery of Servia always impresses me with its whiteness. Not only is Belgrade "the white city," but the prevailing hue in fields, roads, houses and peasants' dress seems always to be white. In the Machva, however, this is relieved by bold dashes of blue,—dark cornflowers brightly colouring the maize-fields, plums so abundant that the trees themselves seem blue, and market-carts exhibiting an indigo mirage. Here, as elsewhere in Servia, there are few loud landscapes. The hills are still warmly wooded, despite the reckless depredations of the peasantry; the valleys pant and nod with fatness, and, save for the barking of a thousand dogs, the farmsteads appear to indulge in a perpetual siesta. The roads in nearly every village are lined with trees and a succession of narrow ponds thickly coated with green duckweed.

On leaving the Machva I made my way southward along the Drina. The banks of that river afford a picturesque landscape of infinite charm: graceful hills, neat cottages perched in snug nooks and fantastic little barns studded about the maize-fields. These barns (some twelve feet by four) stand on high props to secure them from the inundations which are frequent all along the Drina; they are walled with hurdle-work and roofed with circular planks. Maize is stored there from one year to another; and though one side is

left constantly open and the owners' houses are often far away, cases of theft are unknown.

The approach to Zvornik is particularly pleasing. Abrupt mountains come within a very short distance of the river-bed and the houses have to hug themselves against the hills. Mali (little) Zvornik, on the Servian side, consists only of a guard-house and a few cottages. The real town is in Bosnia, across the river. Immediately beyond it stands a stronghold which must once have been the home of ogres. It is at the summit of a precipice, up which straggles a fortified zigzag path. That the fortress should have existed in the Middle Ages is intelligible, but that the Austrians should have troubled to renovate it at a point which has no strategic importance is difficult to explain. Perhaps it is intended for the protection of the railway, which will doubtless be constructed thither before very long, if Austria survives. I should have liked to visit the fortress, but the Austrians in Bosnia are very shy about visitors and I was told it was out of the question. Indeed, the whole attitude of the authorities in Bosnia conveyed the impression that they have a great deal to hide from the world. I had already heard from travellers in Bosnia that they were subjected to an oppressive police espionage, but I was not prepared for the extent thereof. I was allowed to see nothing except under Austrian auspices.

The whole of Zvornik was destroyed by the Austrians at the time of the occupation, but the new houses have been built after the Turkish pattern, and a traveller feels at once in a different country when he arrives from north-western Servia. Everywhere are Turkish trousers, fezzes, shops, manners and customs. The names of the streets are put up in Turkish as well as in German and



Servian. The Austrians may build roads, erect telegraphs, talk of railways, but it is still the same easy-going Orient and it will remain so until it is afforded an opportunity of working out its own salvation under congenial auspices.

On taking leave of the watch-dogs of Zvornik, I seemed to enter another Serbia, altogether different from the one I knew so well. Nearly every one wore the fez; my coachman was called Osman, instead of Luka or Petar; and the windows were barricaded with harem-shutters.

The way from Zvornik to Ljubovija seemed almost deserted, the cottages being for the most part hidden away among the hills on either side of the Drina. The landscape was relieved by strange bundles of beans among the maize; and by old-fashioned haystacks and maize-stalk stacks arranged in the forks of trees, like monstrous nests, or upon poles with the hay or stalks beginning about a yard above the ground. These precautions are rendered necessary by the frequent inundations. The roads were very bad, and it was tantalising to observe an excellent chaussée fringing the Bosnian shore, even for those who looked forward to its eventual possession by Servia.

The bad roads were, however, a billiard-table compared with the infamous track which separates rather than unites Ljubovija and Bajina Bashta. And its badness was all the more apparent because the comparatively easy victorias in which I had travelled till then were no longer available, and I had to be content with a seat on a bag of hay in a rough springless cart.

There is literally only one bridge all the way; and as the valley is intersected by endless torrents and torrent-beds, it may be imagined that travelling was no light jest. We bumped at a brisk trot across huge boulders, which jerked us far into the air, and we needed to clutch tightly

in order to escape being flung right out. When we were high up, we skirted the edge of the torrent by a road only seven or eight feet wide with its edge crumbling away into a precipice.

Bajina Bashta, which, being interpreted, means the Garden Bath, is by no means the pleasaunce implied by the name. There is nothing garden-like about it, and the only approach to a bath I could discover was the ceaseless rain.

This district wears an Alpine appearance. There is fine mountain scenery for those who appreciate it, the air is bracing, and the people present rugged pastoral characteristics. In place of the pink and white cottages of the plains are high narrow dwellings made of dark wood, often turned quite black by the elements. The roofs are as high again as the houses and approach the perpendicular with the smallest possible angle, so that the frequent rain may not linger there. I have always contended that houses have an expression, just as surely as men. In the rest of Servia they are wreathed in smiles; here they hug themselves against the hills in chronic sulks.

"Wood and stone are our only riches here," said a burgher of Uzhitse, "but unfortunately we cannot turn them into food." No doubt, when communications shall be opened up, it will be possible to turn wood and stone into bread; but for the present, Uzhitse remains one of the poorest towns in Servia. The name means "the narrow places" (just as England means "the narrow land," according to an ingenious philologist at Uzhitse), and it is situated in a narrow basin among the high hills. The approach is by a precipice paved with slippery boulders, which would tax the agility of a circus-horse. The people are mostly in rags and the houses are in the last stages of

decay. There are scarcely any shops, excepting a few dingy general stores, an endless succession of opanka warehouses, and a certain number of butcheries, bakeries and rude potteries. Tepid lambs and pigs, roasted whole, are exposed upon wooden stands outside the shops for retail purchase. Yet it is a clean and graceful squalor, and the peasants, who eschew colours, are attractive studies in black and white. All seem to own stout little mountain ponies; and their long caravans, with the women riding astride after the fashion of Zenobia, gladden the environs.

The road on to Chachak took me through a wild mountainous country and, as the days were now shortening rapidly, a substantial part of my endless drives had come to intrude upon the night. My most vivid recollection is of the ghostly effect produced by the maize-fields by moonlight. I could have sworn to armies of skeletons summoned from the churchyards to greet my passage. The feathery heads of the stalks nodded slowly in the breeze; and the bent leaves, flapping up and down, could only be white bony arms, which seemed to wave in ghoulish time.

The church at Chachak is very old, and has two or three times been transformed into a mosque. It is spacious and lofty, but does not call for any particular comment, except that it existed before the town, which was built in order to be near it. More prudent counsels would have built the town at a considerable distance, for it is very low down in the valley, constantly subject to inundations and so malarious that, until a recent attempt at drainage, children could not be brought up there. It is almost the only town I know in Servia which can boast of a decent side-walk. Otherwise it has the usual appearance, with the badly paved roads, opanka shops and markets full of paprika.

Immense quantities of dyed wool-skeins add an unusual touch of colour. The one interesting building is a quaint old Turkish konak which belonged to Milosh's brother and is now used as a gendarmery. Another house of the ever-pleasing Turkish architecture served as the bishop's palace until the see was transferred to Kraljevo. It is now a school.

After Chachak I found myself again among the English parks of central Serbia, and soon joined civilisation and the railway at the terminus of Kragujevats.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SERVIAN CHURCH

IT is claimed for the Servian army that it is the Servian people under arms. Even more truly may it be said that the Servian Church is the Servian people in the ecclesiastical aspect. Over 98 per cent of the population belong to the National Church, and this unanimity has been brought about without recourse to coercion of any kind. All creeds are tolerated in Servia, annual stipends being paid even to a Lutheran pastor, a rabbi, seven khodjas, a Mohammedan teacher and three Jewish schoolmasters.

The unanimity is due to the character of the creed, which is an affair not of spiritual but of national pride. The Servians are proud of their Church, not because they deem acceptance of its doctrines a proof of superior shrewdness, but because they know it has been the most important factor in maintaining their national identity. Servian orthodoxy has welded and kept Servia together as no other sentiment could do. It is not an emotional religion, though an elaborate ritual, jewelled icons and incense are there to appeal to the imagination; it is perhaps, in a sense, not a spiritual religion. But it has a wonderful hold upon the people; not upon the women

and children only, but equally upon the men. And it exercises a civilising influence without any of the terrors of priestcraft.

The position of the pope towards his flock is rather that of an English clergyman than of a Roman Catholic priest. He is a respected adviser rather than a dreaded moral policeman. He is, indeed, one of the people, marrying, living, and working among his parishioners as one of themselves. "The Servian Church," says Mr. Denton, "if it has produced but few whom we should call saints or philosophers, has produced through centuries of oppression whole armies of confessors and martyrs."

I have become acquainted with any number of the Servian clergy of all ranks and have been invariably impressed by the identity of their sentiments and aspirations with those of the Servian laity. They no more form a caste apart than the soldiery. Not a few have smelled powder and fought for the cause of national independence at the head of their flocks; others have become the political leaders of their districts, not through official position but by sheer force of character. The constitution of the Church is all in favour of such a state of things. Only the archbishops, the three bishops (of Shabats, Negotin, and Kraljevo) and the protas (a kind of archdeacon) are paid by the State. They are not appointed by the Crown, but elected by the parish popes and heads of monasteries. The bishops receive about £1000 a year, and the archbishop has £2000. The popes have their glebes and a contribution of corn from each household, but depend chiefly upon fees and offerings, which would be affected appreciably if they were not in complete sympathy with their parishioners. In Turkish

times an alien priesthood, Greeks for the most part, was imposed and Turkish authority was invoked for the collection of dues; but nowadays an unpopular pope would fare meagrely. I am bound to say, however, that I never heard of an unpopular pope, nor of any serious differences respecting the collection of incomes.

I will begin by giving a few impressions of Innocent, the Archbishop of Belgrade and Metropolitan of Servia, who received me several times last year. In appearance it is scarcely possible to conceive any one more venerable and sympathetic. With a long white beard, long white hair confined beneath a brimless cylinder of purple velvet, kindly twinkling eyes, and a delicate almost feminine manner, he might have been a saint freshly emerged from a stained-glass window. He was simply dressed in a black gown with an enormous jewelled cross upon his breast. His manner combined great dignity with simplicity, gentleness, and an affability which was almost affectionate. He began with many compliments to myself and my country, remarking that the traditional friendship of England for Servia had never hitherto been so generously expressed. In all his remarks he contrived to combine geniality with every appearance of sincerity, enthusiasm with an entire absence of gush.

We discussed the question of the relations between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, and I argued that those who favour the spiritual and ceremonial aspect of religion should turn their eyes to the Orthodox rather than to the Roman Church. I quoted the words of a distinguished ecclesiastic, who a few days previously had addressed a public meeting in Belgrade, summoned to protest against Croatian excesses at Agram.

This divine had remarked that the whole history of Roman Catholicism had been one of intolerance and persecution, while members of the Orthodox Church had only asked to be allowed to worship God in their own way without molestation. I reminded the Archbishop that the Anglican and Orthodox Churches had, for a long time, been more or less informally in communion. I cited an English clergyman, Mr. Denton, who, over forty years ago, was permitted to take part in Servian ceremonies and even to receive the Holy Eucharist in a Servian monastery. I alluded also to the fact that the Archbishop of York had received similar favours on the occasion of his visit to Russia.

The Metropolitan listened to me with sympathetic interest and confirmed my views. In this connection, he informed me of a question which had recently arisen. The Anglican bishops of Malta and Gibraltar, he said, had inquired of the Patriarch at Constantinople whether members of the Orthodox Church might be permitted to communicate at Anglican altars in places where they had no Churches of their own. The Metropolitan had been consulted by the Patriarch on the subject and had urged him to return an affirmative reply. As a matter of fact, the Synod eventually pronounced against the proposal, but it would have found complete encouragement among the members of the Servian branch of the Orthodox Church.

Indeed, the Metropolitan went so far as to say that he reciprocated the sympathies which England had always exhibited towards Servia, and that he would welcome nothing so much as an accord between the two Churches. Corporate reunion was too much to expect of them, for neither Church would abandon the traditions of centuries,



but that was no reason why we should not meet at our respective altars in a spirit of brotherly love. He compared the two churches to travellers on a road. One might prefer the leisurely locomotion of a bullock waggon, while the other might choose the headlong rush of a railway train. But each had the same goal and should neglect no opportunity of helping the other upon his journey.

Hearing that I was about to visit the Monastery of Studenitsa, he urged me to make an effort and go on to Isposnitsa, the cell and sanctuary of S. Sava. I should have a stiff climb along the edge of a precipitous mountain, but he assured me that I might rely upon accomplishing the journey without running any risks. It was a holy mountain and all pilgrims were under the special protection of the saint. For at least one hundred and fifty years, he could assure me, no harm had occurred to any one there. There were many snakes and scorpions upon the mountain, but it seemed that their poison had been charmed away by the potent influence of the Saint.

Once embarked upon this theme, the Archbishop proceeded to relate a number of legends, half-smiling over them and at the same time evidently more than half-believing them. "On your way to the cell," he said, "you will pass along the edge of a deep ravine, at the bottom of which a torrent flows. When S. Sava came this way one day, some of his companions were on the other side and endeavoured to talk to him. But the noise of the torrent was so great that it was impossible for him to hear a word they said. So he commanded the torrent to be still. Immediately the noise ceased, and the torrent, though it continues to flow just as swiftly, has

been silent ever since." He told me also of the tomb of a peasant who had been killed by the Turks long ago on suspicion of complicity in a massacre. After his death, it was proved that he was innocent, and as he had enjoyed a reputation for virtue almost amounting to sanctity, many people began to make pilgrimages to his grave. After a time there were rumours of wonderful cures, and the efficacy of the place commands belief to the present day. The Archbishop also told me of many other wonders, and he exhibited a great love of natural scenery as well as an eloquent power of describing it.

His palace consists of a suite of lofty saloons furnished with considerable distinction. In the reception room were three gilt thrones, upon which King Milan, Queen Nathalie, and the Crown Prince Alexander had sat. The Metropolitan had always been a great favourite of the Obrenovich dynasty and possesses many personal mementoes of their friendship. Among other things which he showed me were the first photograph ever taken of King Alexander and the last of King Milan. I also saw various portraits of himself as a student, a professor, an army chaplain, and so forth. In one room he showed me a gallery of portraits of all the Metropolitans of Serbia since her emancipation. The object which seemed to interest him most was an illuminated facsimile of some very ancient gospels which had been brought from Mount Athos. Before I took my leave he presented me with his own photograph with a very flattering autograph inscription.

Of the many popes whose acquaintance I have made in Serbia, I remember most vividly one who was the impersonation of muscular Christianity. He would have aroused the enthusiasm of Charles Kingsley, with his

brawny arms, 44-inch chest, and martial gait. His truculent beard and trumpet voice suggested a guerilla leader, and I learned that he had been decorated for his gallantry in the wars. His friends called him "the terrible pope" and spent their time in inventing fabulous exploits to relate about him. He was a picture of good-nature and high spirits; but if any one ventured on a remark derogatory to his cloth, he soon showed that he could hold his own. This I found generally the case with the popes. They are on the best of terms with their flocks and treat them with easy good-nature, but know just where to draw the line. I remember one young pope who had been drinking and joking easily in a mixed company, when some one sought to quiz him by egging the gipsies on to sing a ribald song about the Church. He stopped them instantly with a quiet firmness which admitted no gainsaying yet without losing his temper for an instant. On another occasion some one handed him an unseemly photograph and he was quite ready to smile over it himself, but when he was requested to pass it on, he shook his head and said good-humouredly, "No, no; I must not give you that. Remember, I am a pope."

When I first met the "terrible pope" he showed me a sword-stick of murderous proportions, which he had just taken to have sharpened, and my attention was drawn to two revolvers, which he always carried tucked into the broad blue silk girdle outside his cassock. As a young man he had unexampled successes with the ladies, and, as he is now well under forty, it is mischievously whispered that he is still somewhat of a rip. But his popadia<sup>1</sup> struck me as fully competent to keep him in excellent

<sup>1</sup> A pope's wife.

order. I spent more than one evening in his society at a country town near the Bosnian frontier and found him a charmingly uproarious companion, and at the same time full of the most varied information. He had seen a good deal of life in the course of his boisterous youth and had not a particle of cant or false shame about him. I am told that, when he first went to the Metropolitan and asked to be ordained, it was supposed to be one of his many practical jokes. But the Metropolitan, being a man of the world, saw the advantage of enlisting such services as those of my friend, and so far the experiment has proved a signal success. Few popes have greater moral influence or exercise it more judiciously.

Another "terrible pope" on the Bosnian frontier combined martial and political exploits. Taking the patriotic view that Bosnia is really Servian, he announced his intention of ministering to the people on both banks of the Drina. But as his ministrations were mainly directed against the Austrian Government, he soon encountered difficulties in the matter of his passport. However, this did not deter him, for he took to swimming the river with a revolver in his mouth and his clothes held up aloft in one hand. His ecclesiastical headgear must have been the finishing touch to a vastly strange apparition. The Austrian gendarmes were restrained by fear of a scandal from firing upon him. Indeed, he is said to have terrified them to such an extent that they petitioned the authorities to let him have his passport, and now he goes where he will unhindered.

Some of the popadie have also lively characters. I remember on one occasion a lieutenant was boasting about his powers of drinking and dancing, when a young pope told him he would back his popadia against any

officer in the army. A young man at the table whispered to me that the pope seemed very innocent, as the lieutenant had a great reputation for his intrigues. However, I met this popadia afterwards and am convinced that the pope's confidence was fully justified. I do not remember ever having seen a woman of such physical strength. She was not pretty but she had pleasing manners and expression and was universally popular. As is usual in Servia, she was five or six years older than her husband, who might be about thirty. Her moral reputation was above suspicion but there were few to rival her in a carouse. She would break glasses and bottles, stand on the table, sing in tones that would almost reach the next village and dance or drink any man silly. Despite her astounding vitality and go she had never been known to lose her head.

This is not, of course, the typical clergy. Most popes live a fairly humdrum life, cultivating their maize-fields, making their own wine, bringing up their children, conducting the services and presiding at village fêtes, advising and helping their neighbours. Once appointed to a parish, they generally remain there all their lives and are succeeded by one of their sons. It is only of late years that promotion or an exchange of livings has been permitted in any case, and even now the practice is exceptional. Old-fashioned clerics disapprove strongly of the innovations. I had a long conversation on the subject with the Rector of the Belgrade Seminary, and he expressed his views with much emphasis. "If a pope spends his life in one parish," said he, "he christens, marries or buries every one of his flock; he understands their habits and characters and is universally obeyed and revered. But now, alas! in these restless days, a pope will often

go to his bishop and ask for a richer living. Then he may only spend a few years there, and, never having time to learn the ways of his people, is necessarily out of sympathy with them. A stranger in a strange living is like a man who acquires landed property by purchase and, whatever his virtues, must always remain an interloper compared with those whose families have lived and worked there for generations." He foresaw that the whole influence of the priesthood was likely to be undermined and marvelled greatly when I mentioned the migratory habits of the Anglican clergy.

It is said that the Servian popes are ignorant, but that is to convey a wrong impression. No doubt they are not steeped in book-learning, but they possess—what is far more important—plenty of common-sense and I fancy know as much as they need to know. Moreover, clerical education has made great advances since the days of alien Greek bishops. All candidates for Orders are required to go through a four years' course at the Belgrade Seminary, where they find ample opportunities of culture.

Considerable attention is paid to the personal appearance of the popes and I am told that a flowing beard is one of the surest passports to preferment. Popes are supposed never to cut their hair or beards, but those with more modern ideas keep them quite short and pretend they will not grow. The long hair is usually worn either inside the clothing or in a sort of chignon under the hat. This is usually a kind of brimless chimney-pot of plush or velveteen, but some popes prefer to wear a shovel-hat or a strange wire covering, like a meat-safe. These varieties are left to individual discretion. On ceremonial occasions the hair is allowed to hang freely down the

back and is perhaps not wholly innocent of curling-tongs.

Holy Orders are refused to the deformed, and that not only to the blind, the halt and the hunchback, but even to those afflicted with a squint. It is not, however, the case, as some have pretended, that a pope loses his post if he be afterwards crippled by an accident. Mr. Denton, though usually a trusty observer, has fallen into a kindred error in declaring that, if a pope becomes a widower, he is compelled to turn monk. I made many inquiries about this, and learned that the only possible foundation for the error is that, if a widowed pope gives occasion for scandals either by engaging too charming a housekeeper or by indulging in excessive flirtations, he may be sent to do penance in a monastery for some weeks or months.

This can be no very harsh punishment, judging from the monasteries I have visited, though the monastic life is evidently by no means popular in Servia. Perhaps the chief charm of the monastic system is that it suffers so little from the laws of change, which operate recklessly outside. The Servian monks of to-day are to all intents and purposes the monks of Dushan and Lazar, with the same aspirations and the same lofty sentiments. I doubt much whether their mode of life has altered appreciably. They still dwell in mediæval fashion, as the benefactors and spiritual guides of the whole countryside, and they breathe a mediæval atmosphere into a people, whose besetting danger is the poisonous contact of modern times. They are jovial and hospitable, enjoying the best cheer compatible with the remoteness of their residence. The monastic lands afford them excellent meat, fruit and dairy produce, and they keep good cellars

with well-matured wines and vintage rakis. There is none of the gloomy asceticism of Mount Athos or the Grande Chartreuse. Lady visitors are not excluded and in many cases several of the servants belong to the right sex.

I will take from my diary a few impressions of the monastery of Studenitsa, which is the most famous in the kingdom.

“I am dwelling in a cloister of white marble, two long days’ journey from a railway, many centuries as well as many leagues removed from the scramble of civilisation.

“From Kraljevo to Studenitsa is some 34 miles by a fair road, wonderfully engineered along a rocky valley. We are ascending all the way, and the journey takes nearly eight hours. An excellent lunch awaits us at a solitary roadside inn kept by an ex-Member of Parliament, and by nightfall we arrive at this glistening cloister. The church tower and a venerable belfry peer over a circular white wall. We pass through an arched doorway, flanked by barbaric tombstones, we stroll through a smiling orchard, and the Archimandrite comes forward to receive us. He is tall and venerable, with a long white beard; he wears flowing black robes, icons, carved crucifixes, and a high brimless hat of purple velvet. He greets me cordially and leads me to the best bedroom, recently occupied by King Alexander and Queen Draga. It is plainly but comfortably furnished and the walls are adorned with lurid scenes of Servian history. A boy pours water over my hands and we proceed to supper, consisting of Cornish cream, chicken broth, hash, roast fowl and last but not least trout fresh from the Studenitsa. The monastery’s red wine, seventeen years old, is soft and grateful. The Archimandrite, who has



to fast for fifteen days before the Feast of the Assumption, old style, contents himself with lentils and black bread.

“At five next morning (Sunday) I am aroused by the *klepalo*, a long plank beaten with a stick shaped like an umbrella-handle. This is the summons to church and a relic from Turkish days, when bells were prohibited to Christians. A servant brings me the surprising breakfast of black coffee and plum brandy preceded by a spoonful of jam, and I am escorted to divine service. There are no seats in an Orthodox Church, but I am given a resting-place (consisting of two high wooden arms and a ledge) behind the Archimandrite, who is not officiating. The congregation crosses itself frequently, there are many prayers and dreamy chaunts, the Gospel is solemnly intoned, a cloud of incense rises to the roof, and the tomb of Stephen the First-crowned is solemnly opened. We kiss his crucifix, studded with bead-like fragments of the true cross, and press our lips against his embalmed forehead.

“After a second breakfast of bread and milk and honey, the Archimandrite discourses on the relations of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, remarking how Rome is the enemy to be resisted by both. Then we proceed to inspect the sacred edifice in detail. There are wonderful old frescoes, sadly battered by the Turks, who made their stables here, Cromwell fashion; there are gorgeous vestments, S. Sava's own censer, sacred relics, silver fans to protect the chalice, and flags of the old Servian Empire.

“The carvings on the main entrance are very beautiful and said to be seven hundred years old. There is a coloured Virgin sitting on a throne with two ministering angels. The Holy Child has been broken off. Two lions which formerly supported the columns have now disappeared.

In the outer hall of the church are some strange old frescoes. One represents Anna, the wife of Nemanja, kneeling before a Virgin and Child. This must have been painted at the time when she became a nun. Another represents four hermits with very thin legs. One of them has the hair of his long beard plaited all over his body. Inside, over Nemanja's tomb, is a fresco representing him as a crowned monk being led by the Virgin to the throne of Christ. Another fresco depicts the Last Supper at a circular table, on which knives and carrots are conspicuous. Judas is grabbing a fish from a dish. Christ has a roll in His left hand, and S. John is leaning on His breast asking which is the traitor. Above this we have Pilate washing his hands. A servant is pouring water out of a blue jug over his hands into a basin, while Christ stands by with His hands bound by a rope. On the other side is an *ecce homo*. A number of women are mocking Him, kneeling derisively on one knee, and one of them is putting out her tongue. Among the treasures in the vestry is an old silver cup with a movable stag's head in the centre, and the following inscription: "He who can drink out of such a cup cannot be a moderate drinker." I also saw an altar-cloth presented by Lazar's daughter, who married the Sultan. Passages of the Psalms are worked upon it in Turkish characters, a curious compromise between Christianity and Islam. An embroidered cloth with a picture of Nemanja painted on silk in the centre was presented by King Alexander and Queen Draga on the occasion of their recent visit.

"Next day we set out on horseback to visit the cell of S. Sava, high up in the mountains. The Archimandrite, riding in his robes and ecclesiastical headgear, looks like a commanding figure in some patriotic picture.

While his horse is being led over a bridge, man and beast disappear together into a torrent, but luckily both are extricated more frightened than hurt. In the forest I tread upon a thick, black snake, fully six feet long, but the village mayor slays it with a stone and carries it home as a trophy. At last, after perilous groping along the edge of a precipice, we come to a little chapel and a grotto with a holy well nestling against the cliff. Here, and in still less accessible caverns, the national saint of Servia and subsequent monks of Studenitsa took refuge from their persecutors. In less troublous times S. Sava dwelt further down the hill at Isposnitsa in a modest shrine, now a farmhouse belonging to the monastery, where we are received and sent off with peals of bells and salvos of guns. The sanctity of the place prescribes that no meat shall be eaten here, but we fare sumptuously off Cornish cream and sweet trout from the brook.

“Another day we ride up to the gorgeous mountain of Radocholo, the Servian Righi, where enterprising capitalists propose to build. The view over the purple hills and the lordly valley of the Studenitsa is entrancing, the air is invigorating and it would be difficult to conceive a sublimer summer resort. Down here at the monastery too the spirit of change is abroad. A mineral spring, with the ingredients of Schwalbach water, has been discovered hard by the brook. The credit is due to the monastery cattle, who excited curiosity by their preference for this medicinal pool, and an hotel if not a Kursaal is said to be in prospect. Even the Archimandrite, who has passed forty happy years in this cloister, is half persuaded to accept the intrusion of the vulgar herd. But then his hospitable instincts are boundless.

“To-day is the Feast of the Assumption, old style,

and crowds of peasants are roaming the orchard in brave array. We have just come out of church, where our foreheads were crossed with holy oil, and now peasants are making ready for the national dance, taking hands in long strings and winding rhythmically among the apple trees. All the six monks are gathered to see us off and bid us God-speed. It is with sad hearts that we tear ourselves away from this mediæval fastness and prepare to drive down the valley with our semi-barbaric escort of clattering pandurs."

The other monastery which interested me most in Servia was Manasia. It was built by the son of the famous Tsar Lazar, who perished with the old Servian Empire on the battlefield of Kosovo. It is enclosed in a marvellous fortress, which, with its square towers and frowning curtain, recalls in many respects that of Semendria. The walls are in fair preservation and it is interesting to notice that, true to their ecclesiastical character, they are admirably fitted for defence but not for defiance. They possess no loopholes, battlements or embrasures for offensive warfare. It is strange that the Turks during their long tenure did not deem it necessary to perfect the fortress in this respect. In the days before modern artillery, Manasia must have been almost impregnable, for, apart from the strength of its walls, it is so situated that a handful of defenders might easily render it inaccessible. Like most of the monasteries in Servia, it is hidden away in a gorge at the foot of high hills, so that the traveller does not become aware of its presence much before reaching its very gates. The approach affords a picturesque route along one of the tributaries of the Resava. As you proceed, the banks grow narrower and higher, until, after fording the stream—the bridge, as

usual in Servia, being out of repair—you pass along a narrow road cut into the edge of a precipitous wall of yellow rock. This road is vividly impressed upon my memory, for my horse chose the opportunity to bolt with me and I had an exciting gallop round abrupt corners, scattering successive flocks of poultry and expecting every minute to dash into some lumbering, old-world country cart drawn by a yoke of white oxen.

Once inside the massive gateway, you find yourself plunged into the full charm of the middle ages. Wandering about in the shade of venerable trees, hearing the history of the cloister from the lips of the dear old Archimandrite or listening far into the night to thrilling tales of the hajdutsi from a captain of gendarmery, I felt myself a thousand miles away from the tedious, vulgar modern world.

The interior of the monastery is some 300 yards in diameter.<sup>1</sup> On the right as you go in are the sleeping rooms and domestic offices, forming a pleasant chalet, with a verandah and creepers. The rooms are simply but comfortably furnished, after the usual Servian fashion, with a table in the centre, a sofa and chairs grouped stiffly round it. The kitchen and refectory are on the ground floor, but as it was summer we had all our meals out of doors under the trees. There are the ruins of an old kitchen in the walls. On the left of the gateway is an old wooden belfry, and in the centre of the enclosure the monastic chapel. This is a handsome cruciform building dedicated to the Trinity. The unfortunate habit of incessant white-washing has hidden the mouldings and traceries and conferred a terribly modern appearance upon the ancient edifice. Perhaps, however, it only seems modern by contrast, for all the surroundings are mediæval.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Denton says 300 feet, but I feel sure he is mistaken.

The gardens have been allowed to run almost wild. Tangled vine-branches, tall hollyhocks and wild roses almost smother the worm-eaten wooden benches, some 50 feet long, which stretch away under the flowering horse-chestnuts. Magnificent peacocks emerge every now and then from the vegetation and scurry off with a shrill cry, or strut about in the full glory of their plumage. They are favourites with the Servians and not only figure in the Imperial Arms on many a monument, but are to be met with at the royal studs and in most of the monasteries.

I saw no other monastery which pleased me so much as Manasia, which owes its peculiar mediævalism to its fortress enclosure, and which spoiled me for mere buildings dotted about in an orchard. Ljubostin, however, was both interesting and picturesque. I arrived at nightfall on the eve of the patron saint's day—I can scarcely say festival, for it combined a solemn fast with popular junketings. The approach was one of the most arduous I have met with, and I shall not soon forget the drive in the dusk at full gallop through a torrent bed and up a precipitous mule track to the gates of the monastery. There I found two Archimandrites, one of whom had come on a visit for the fête, and four or five monks, an unusually large number in Servia. The dwelling part was far more spacious than in any other monastery I have visited. Long oak corridors and staircases, dimly lighted with flickering oil-lamps, and the sweet young voices of a number of novices chaunting psalms in the distance lulled the fancy in soothing restfulness after a hard day's travelling.

But for their length and for the necessity of standing all the while, I should be much attracted by the Orthodox

services. Though no instrumental music is tolerated, the singing is very sweet, and the incessant refrain of "Gospodi pomilui!" (Lord, have mercy upon us!) lingers soothingly in the memory.

The language used in churches is the old Servian, which is quite different from modern Servian but seems to be generally understood, judging by the heartiness with which the congregation joins in the prayers and chaunts.

Sermons are the exception in Servia. Indeed, the churches have no pulpits. When a pope wishes to address his congregation, he steps on to a kind of wooden platform and makes a simple speech, which, if approved of, is applauded with cheering and clapping of hands.

I am convinced that the Servian Church has been the mainstay of the Servian nationality throughout centuries of subjection and is to-day the soul of every plausible aspiration which Servia possesses. A Church should be the soul of a nation and is so most emphatically in Servia. The whole history of the Servian Church bears out the contention. When Servia was conquered, she was not only administered politically by foreigners, but her Church was also subjected to the still more intolerable rule of an alien priesthood. The Turks, to whom all Christianity was mere infidelity, found it convenient to sell the Servian hierarchy to the Greek ecclesiastics, whom they found at Constantinople; or, at any rate, these Greeks, with the craft of their race, persuaded the Turks, who "cared for none of these things," that Greeks were the right people to administer what is ignorantly styled "the Greek Church." One consequence of this was that, until quite recently, the Slavs of Macedonia and even of Bulgaria were commonly supposed throughout Europe to be Greeks. The consequence to Servia was that for

centuries a Greek Patriarch paid the Porte for the right to nominate Greek bishops in Servia. These, in their turn, paid the Patriarch for their appointments, and recouped themselves by selling the various cures to Greek popes. The whole of this clergy was ignorant and contemptuous of the Servian language and nationality, and opposed education by all the means in its power. Laveleye<sup>1</sup> quotes an archbishop of Nish as having said, "Schools only make heretics. It is much better to spend the money in building churches." That this gigantic conspiracy against the existence of the Servian National Church should have been baffled; that, in spite of simony and corruption, Servian ecclesiastics continued to exist throughout these troubled times; that the impoverished and down-trodden rayas, though compelled to contribute from their poverty to the maintenance of a foreign clergy, should have been public-spirited enough to keep up the succession of their own national ecclesiastics, is surely the most convincing proof of the identity of Servia as a Church and as a State, as well as of the noblest and loftiest patriotism. Whoever, therefore, seeks to forecast the future of Servia without taking into full account the paramount influence of the Servian Church and its indissoluble identity with the State, is indubitably foredoomed to error.

<sup>1</sup> "The Balkan Peninsula."



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BRAVE SERVIAN ARMY

ALTHOUGH this title has been unwarrantably appropriated by the few scoundrels who disgraced the Servian uniform, it may still be applied to the great bulk of the national soldiery. The Servian army has exhibited sufficient courage in the past to warrant a belief that it will be able to give a good account of itself whenever the time comes for that upheaval in the Balkans which has been so long prophesied. All through their history the Servians have displayed plenty of pluck. We need not go back to the days of their old empire, when they were within an ace of taking Constantinople. Their prowess at the beginning of last century was sufficiently significant to place them in the first rank of military heroes. As guerilla soldiers in the War of Independence, the Servians were unsurpassed, and could be counted upon to secure victories against tremendous odds even when opposed by the finest troops in the world. In 1876 they fought Turkey again, and though they suffered defeat, there was no sign of decay in their hereditary valour. I refuse to believe that they have now become the most abject of human beings. It is the fashion to taunt them with the Bulgarian war and the battle of Slivnitsa. But

as a matter of fact, when Austria intervened, Servian troops held important positions in Bulgaria, whose triumph was by no means assured.

During the last seven years I have enjoyed frequent opportunities of observing the Servian army and I now venture to note a few impressions.

As every Servian has to go through his term of military service, the army may be regarded as the nation under arms. We should, therefore, make a mistake in imagining that it can differ appreciably in character or point of view from the ordinary amiable, easy-going peasantry. Indeed, all the officers and men that I have met in various parts of the country confirmed this view. Even when they had been most hard-worked, they were always good-humoured.

I always found them ready for a carouse. I remember on one occasion after a military banquet at a country inn, when we were all making speeches, I proposed the health of King Alexander and told them of the habit which exists in certain English regiments of breaking the glasses after the toast of the Sovereign. I crashed my glass on the floor amid a storm of cheers. Everybody followed suit.

Then my health was proposed and more glasses were broken. The fashion took the fancy of the officers and they drank toast after toast, smashing their beakers every time, until we were up to our knees in broken glass.

Next day unfortunate people, who came in for their morning refreshment, found that they could not be served because there remained not so much as a mug in the place.

This orgy took place, of course, in the absence of the colonel. I always noticed among Servian officers the extreme awe they displayed in the presence of their

seniors. Subalterns at mess scarcely spoke above a whisper, and even when the colonel proposed a song they acceded in a subdued way. When he took his departure they seemed to be transformed into different beings.

Only on the slava, or patron saint's day, of the regiment did ease and equality prevail.

After a religious ceremony at the barracks, where the colonel, the senior non-commissioned officer, the senior private and the chaplain broke a huge cake to the accompaniment of prayers and chaunts, the day was devoted to singing, dancing, eating, and drinking.

It was a fine sight when about 150 men joined hands in one long coil and danced the national kolo, twisting in and out like an enormous serpent, wriggling ever faster and more furiously.

On the whole I should say that discipline was fairly good in the Servian army, but the peasant soldiers often want to know reasons before obeying orders. This is only in keeping with the independent ideas of the people. It is a pity that they did not use their discretion on the night of the murders.

As to the efficiency of the troops I can say much, for I have attended manœuvres and all manner of exercises.

An English expert who was with me when the artillery marched past at a review was most enthusiastic about its performance, which he described as magnificent.

I was also greatly impressed by a cavalry parade at Kragujevats. The gallop in line was beautiful in its symmetry, the wheeling had the precision of machinery, and the leaping was a very dainty performance. At the manœuvres I observed the splendid physique of the soldiers, hardened as they are by life in the open air.

Their marching and staying powers are well above the average, and their general appearance is very smart. Indeed, I have never seen any Servian soldier who was not spick and span. The cadets of the military academy are particularly to be commended in this respect.

I have conversed with Servian soldiers of all ranks, and the conclusion I have formed is that their views are, on the whole, much the same as those of Servian civilians. Every Servian is an ardent patriot—a chauvinist even. There is no greater delusion than to imagine that a desire for war pertains only to the privileged classes. If Bulgaria invaded Macedonia to-morrow, there is not a peasant in all Servia who would not demand an instant advance upon Sofia. The zeal of the army would manifest itself at the first whisper of such an invasion. The people might, howbeit with difficulty, be persuaded to accept some compromise in return for territorial aggrandisement. The army would not be content so long as a sod of old Servian soil or a stone of Servian fortresses remained in foreign hands. The army cherishes more bitter grudges against Bulgaria than the people and will never tolerate any compromise with the traditional enemy. In illustration of this feeling I may mention a significant incident which occurred when I was present at the *slava* (feast of the patron saint) of the 2nd Dragoons. After sundry songs and dances, the senior captain stepped forward and called out to the soldiers in stentorian tones, "Who are the greatest enemies of the Servian nation?" The soldiers had evidently heard this conundrum before, for they did not hesitate an instant, but yelled with one breath, "Bugari!" (the Bulgarians).

The Servians import all their guns and small-arms,

but every other military requisite—from shell-fuses to saddles and brushes—is turned out by the arsenal at Kragujevats, an exceedingly well-ordered establishment employing 800 hands. I was shown all the various departments and was impressed by the completeness and method of the undertaking. No doubt, from an economical point of view, it would be more profitable to import most of the material produced there, rather than to manufacture so great a variety of objects on a comparatively small scale; but the risk of the supplies being cut off in time of war would be too great, and indeed the officer in command of the arsenal told me that he hoped it might be possible ere very long to make even cannon in Servia. A foundry already exists and I beheld several imposing bells which had been cast out of old cannon.

The great warehouse, where all the multifarious stores are kept, gave me a good general idea of the equipment of the Servian army. Nothing, down to the smallest details, seemed wanting; and I was told that in the event of an order for mobilisation, the whole vast collection could be removed and distributed within twenty-four hours. For the purpose of transport, every mayor in the kingdom is bound to hold a certain number of carts in readiness, and a census of all the horses provides for prompt requisitions. The arsenal can produce as many as 150,000 cartridges and 300 shells daily, but at the time of my visit it was working by no means at high pressure. A technical school attached to the establishment seemed admirably ordered. Any intelligent Servian may be apprenticed there gratis and can rely upon being turned out an efficient workman.

There are two military training establishments at Belgrade: an academy for cadets and a non-commissioned

officers' school. The school is open gratis to any young man who has gone through the regular course at the gymnasium and undertakes, after spending three years at the school, to serve at least four years in the army. If he display industry and talent, there is no reason why he should not eventually obtain a commission. The usual procedure to that end is, however, to pass through the Military Academy. There also free education is provided for all who can pass the requisite examinations. The training is in every way admirable and the cadets form an exceedingly smart corps. From the nature of things, they are chiefly recruited from the well-to-do classes, who can afford a more elaborate education. Every summer they spend several months under canvas, an excellent plan which acquaints them with the practical side of military life in a way impossible of acquirement by mere book-learning. I witnessed their pontoon exercises at Chuprija and was greatly impressed by the soldierly qualities they displayed. The various regiments are also taken out in the same way during the summer and benefit equally. The Academy supplies sixty-five officers every year to the army, and they have to pass a fresh examination before every promotion up to the rank of major.

I have seen most of the barracks in Serbia, and know of none to surpass them in Europe. Half the cost is usually defrayed by the municipality where they are located, for the presence of troops is coveted as likely to add to the attractions and expenditure in the place. The barracks at Zajechar cost £30,000 and at Shabats the municipality not only contributed its quota of money but presented the military authorities with 120 acres of land for the site.

When I was first taken to see Servian barracks my companion remarked, "This will interest you, as you have nothing of the kind in England." I asked what he meant. "Well," he replied, "seeing that you have no army, I suppose that you can have no need of barracks." Then turning to his friends he explained, "See what a practical people the English are. Instead of maintaining an army, they are content with training volunteers, who are probably just as useful when the time for action comes. It means a great saving of expense and no loss of efficiency." This remark, needless to say, was made before the South African war.

The army consists of five districts or commands: the Danube at Belgrade, the Morava at Nish, the Drina at Valjevo in the West, the Shumadia (or Central) at Kragujevats, and the Timok division at Zajechar on the East.

Every able-bodied male serves between the years of twenty and twenty-two in the active force, between twenty-two and thirty in the first class of the reserve with thirty days' service every year, between thirty and forty in the second class with eight days', and between forty and fifty in the third class, which is only called upon in an extraordinary emergency.

I have in my possession a document which was given me by General Tsintsar-Markovich when he was Commander-in-Chief just before he became Premier. It gives full detailed statistics of the army.

"By the constitution," it begins, "the King is supreme chief of the army; in time of peace he is represented by the Minister of War, who administers in his name and is responsible to Parliament, and by the Commander-in-Chief, who is under the orders of the Minister of War."

In 1901 the army cost £700,000 out of a budget of, say, £3,000,000. There were 1250 officers and 22,000 non-commissioned officers. The Regular army consisted of 159,000 men, besides 86,000 Reserves of the first class, and 64,000 of the second, making a total of 309,000 men.

Lack of funds is responsible for a deficiency in quick-firing guns, but all authorities are agreed that the Servian army will render a good account of itself in the next war.

The chief criticisms to which the Servian army is exposed are the shortness of service and the consequent fact that, in time of war, the cadres would have to be excessively expanded. It would be necessary to create new formations in every branch of the service. A regiment may work very efficiently at reviews and manœuvres ; but if a new and comparatively raw element, as big again as itself, or even bigger, is suddenly introduced into its ranks at the moment for taking the field, confusion and impaired efficiency are unavoidable. These objections would be considerably modified by longer service, which the officers generally favour. Not so very long ago the period was only five months, in face of which the extension to two years is a distinct advance. But all authorities are agreed that three years should be the minimum, or even four years for the artillery and cavalry. There is, however, little prospect of this reform being carried, for though the Servians have developed every fighting instinct during their long struggle against the Turks, they dislike the restraint of military life and vote steadily with the Radicals against all extension of it. The result is that the officers have to work nearly twice as hard as any other officers in Europe and, though they do this cheerfully and willingly, they feel that far more encouraging



results might be obtained with the opportunities afforded by longer service in the ranks.

It is difficult to compare the military position of Servia with that of the other Balkan States, for mere statistics afford no trustworthy evidence of military strength. The question is not so much how many men can be put into the field at a given moment, as how many can be kept there for a protracted period. In point of numbers, the Servian army is only slightly inferior to that of Roumania or Bulgaria, and considerably superior to that of Greece. But Roumania possesses good roads and excellent arrangements for rapid mobilisation, and Bulgaria could probably place 65,000 men very rapidly in the field, though she would have some difficulty with her artillery. Roumania, moreover, has the advantage of three years' service with the colours. On the whole, I am inclined to say that either Roumania or Bulgaria would commence a war with a better chance of success than Servia, and that Greece would commence a war with no chance of success against anybody. But the usefulness of the Servian fighting material will be incapable of proper development under a corrupt administration, and many drastic changes will be necessary before the army can be restored to its former state of efficiency. The recent revolution is likely to be subversive of many notions of discipline.

## CHAPTER XV

### INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

ALL are agreed that British manufactures are far better than any others and that their cost is amply retrieved by their durability. But the universal complaint is that British manufacturers make it very difficult to approach them. Instead of seeking customers they do all they can to discourage them.

In illustration I may cite the case of a tailor at Kraljevo. He wrote me a long letter on the occasion of my visit to the town. He said he had long sought to procure British cloth but could only do so through Austro-Hungarian middlemen at a ruinous price. He wrote to a firm in Liverpool asking for two or three bales but was curtly informed that he could not have less than twenty. As he observed, if he bought twenty bales all at once he would be indulging in a wild speculation far beyond his means. I told him that he could not expect wholesale people to become retailers, but that we had plenty of retailers in England who would serve him well.

At the same time, I must point this moral to my countrymen: they are neglecting a very promising market, one doubtless among very many. This does not apply merely to cloth, but almost to every important British export. I saw some machines at a mill. Of

course they were German. "Do you prefer these to English machines?" I asked. "Bogami! no," was the answer; "we know the enormous superiority of the English ones and we only wish we could have them. But how are we to do so? The only ones we see, the only ones we have any opportunity of examining are German and we must put up with what we can get. Some years ago English machinery was bought in Servia, but now we have given up all hope of obtaining it." Gradually but irresistibly the Germans and Austrians are squeezing our manufacturers out of the Servian market.

The Hungarians and even the French are also very busy. They have commercial museums in Belgrade with every sort of sample for inspection, and they despatch travellers to all the principal towns in the kingdom. If we adopted some such methods we might easily and quickly cut them out, for our country and her products are still held in the highest esteem.

There is a fortune waiting for whomsoever the spirit may move to canvass this very willing constituency.

Among the chief opportunities awaiting a capitalist who may be disposed to invest his money in Servia at a handsome rate of interest the most obvious are: (1) A National Loan, for which 6 per cent would cheerfully be paid; (2) the development of Servian Railways; and (3) a Municipal Loan for Belgrade.

The existing railway lines were constructed at a cost of 300,000 francs per kilometre. This was due to the fact that money was obtained at a ruinous rate and the construction was extravagant. The lines ought not to have cost more than half that sum. If they had been constructed economically the balance would have sufficed to construct all the lines now required. | |

The line to Nish was constructed in 1884; the other lines followed in 1888. Since then their receipts have doubled.

The present gross receipts amount to 12,500 francs per kilometre, and the net profits may be set down at 5000 francs per kilometre. This is equivalent to the interest on a sum of 66,000 francs per kilometre. As the lines cost 300,000 francs per kilometre, it is obvious that they do not pay their way. It is therefore hopeless to attempt to raise capital for fresh lines without offering some guarantee of interest, particularly as the new lines cannot expect the same ratio of receipts as the main line.

A moderate estimate sets down the gross receipts of new lines at 4000–5000 francs per kilometre. Taking the net profits at 40 per cent of the gross receipts, we may calculate that the cost of construction must not exceed 30,000 to 40,000 francs per kilometre. It will be necessary to be content with a narrow gauge of 76 centimetres.

For this a sum of sixty million dinars (say £2,265,000) will be required. On this the interest would be 3,300,000 dinars.

To meet this we have the following sums:—

(1) Forty per cent of gross receipts which are set down at the low estimate of 4000 francs per kilometre . . . . .	1,920,000
(2) Profits of additional traffic obtained by main line . . . . .	240,000
(3) Seven per cent on direct taxation . . . . .	1,000,000
	3,160,000 frs. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 105 dinars is fair average exchange for 100 francs, so the above estimate would probably suffice.

This is only a beginning and all the items of receipts will certainly go on increasing. Moreover, all the capital will not be needed at once. The period of construction may even be spread over ten years. Expenses of management will be defrayed by the main (State) lines, thus saving 20 per cent of the usual cost.

Throughout Europe no country spends less per kilometre on the upkeep of its railways. The spirit of economy is therefore paramount. In the case of the new lines, even greater economy will be exercised. Goods trains will only start when there are sufficient goods to remunerate.

Electric or other automobile traction might be employed if circumstances were favourable. For instance, the route from Stalach (on the main line) to Uzhitse (in West Servia) would be well suited for electric traction, as the Morava river goes all the way and would afford the necessary power. The distance is 160 kilometres.

The Belgrade Budget amounts to £120,000 a year. The authorities are willing to give a concession to contractors who would do the work of draining, paving, constructing quays, pulling down old houses, etc. Or they would issue a loan of £600,000 up to a million sterling bearing 6 per cent interest at par. As a guarantee they would offer the Octroi, which would suffice to secure the interest, and a mortgage on municipal property as collateral security. The Octroi brings in a revenue of £47,000 a year, and the municipal property is valued at half a million sterling exclusive of the water-works. The drainage and quays would bring in revenues, which would also be mortgaged to serve the loan. The present water rate produces a net profit of £8000 a year. In thirty-four years' time the tramways and electric

lighting will fall in to the Municipality. The present profits are 35 per cent on the tramways and 42 per cent on the electric lighting.

There are also opportunities for banking enterprise, for mortgage banks and building banks and agricultural banks, for a factory for agricultural machines, for a paper factory, and for various chemical manufactures.

Servia is, however, essentially an agricultural country, and it is more than doubtful whether she may wisely be advised to dabble in manufactures. At present the vast majority live upon the land in more or less patriarchal fashion, providing ample for all their needs by means of healthy outdoor pursuits, and poverty is practically unknown. It were surely a more than doubtful service to call into being a proletariat, which should huddle into the squalor of towns and struggle amid choking smoke and distracting machinery to create and satisfy artificial needs yet unknown. Just as our forefathers were at the same time more primitive and infinitely happier than we are under the added yoke of advancing civilisation, so the Servian peasant of to-day in the plenitude of his simple satisfaction is far more to be envied now than when his mind shall have been unsettled by visions of precipitate progress. This argument, however, does not interfere with the fact that the introduction of manufactures into Servia would undoubtedly benefit the capitalists who introduced them.

Another golden opportunity for British capital would undoubtedly be found in applying it to the commerce of Servia. So soon as communications shall have been improved, this commerce should be capable of enormous expansion. The principal exports of Servia are plums, cereals and live stock,

In almost every village I visited in the Machva I saw the process of drying plums. Broken or over-ripe fruit is reserved for making slivovits (plum brandy). The others are spread on a kind of wooden hurdle some 6 feet by 4 feet, twelve kgs. of fruit to a hurdle, and placed in five tiers in a rough earthen oven fed with wood and closed at the top. They are first placed either in the top or the bottom tier, and are gradually changed to the centre. The hurdles are taken out from time to time to remove the finished fruit and turn the rest. It takes twenty-four hours to turn a plum into a prune, and relays of men must be in attendance all day and all night. For this they are paid two ducats (about 18s.) a month and their food, or more when prices permit.

There are also immense mining possibilities which would repay attention. Hitherto, however, the restrictions which Servian Governments have imposed upon foreign enterprise have been wellnigh insurmountable.

I will conclude with a reference to the possibilities of Servia as a field for British labour. Now that the Colonies are exploited and overstocked, it is surprising that emigration within the Old World should not have been thought of. Manual labourers might think the wages low, but, considering the minute prices of necessaries, they are really not low at all; they certainly promise a higher standard of comfort than the same labour would secure in England or America. As for skilled labour, if it found an opening it would find also far more substantial remuneration. The particular opportunity, however, is for small capitalists with a few thousands or even a few hundreds, which avail their possessors very little in England, but which with a little effort and judgment would assure a handsome competency in Servia.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SERVIAN CHARACTER

AFTER the savage murder of a King, Queen, ministers and courtiers with the apparent approval of a whole people, it may be interesting to inquire into the Servian character and determine how far it accords with such an attitude.

In the first place, it is important to remember that the country has been emancipated for less than a century and that the impress of strong Turkish rule still remains deeply stamped upon the minds and souls of the people. To illustrate that impress I cannot do better than describe the peasantry of Old Servia, who only differ from those of the Servian kingdom by the absence of their political independence. The Old Servians are of the same race as the new, but they retain unmodified that temperament which, for over four centuries, was the temperament of the whole Servian people, and still supplies the key to many mysteries in the modern Servian State.

I had many opportunities of conversation with Old Servians in the vilayet of Kosovo and I am bound to confess that they impressed me less favourably than the free citizens of the kingdom. They were kindly and hospitable and zealously patriotic, but they lacked the



good-humour and frankness which characterise their emancipated brethren. Nor may they be acquitted of undue timidity. No doubt their lives are not the happiest in the world; wild Albanians are not ideal neighbours in remote villages, where police protection is necessarily inadequate, and a feeling of hopelessness is aroused when the accumulation of wealth only attracts the cupidity of the spoilers. But the Old Servians do not make the best of a bad job. Indeed, they always seemed to me in a terrible hurry to meet trouble more than half-way. Their conversation is one long lamentation; they spend their time in repeating murder stories, which rarely bear investigation; they are forever bemoaning their lot, with many fine windy phrases about oppression and despair, but they appear incapable or unwilling when pressed for details in support of their complaints. Their manner is furtive; they talk in whispers when there is no need for secrecy; they look round before they open their mouths; and when they venture upon politics they use roundabout phrases to baffle imaginary eavesdroppers. They have even invented a sort of thieves' slang, whereof I obtained a vocabulary: England is called Needle, "because she makes her way everywhere"; a consul is either Broken Reed or Straw; Servia is Kosach, the Reaper, who hopes to inherit the land; the Tsar is Koshnar, a skin or hooded cloak; Bulgaria is Hard-head; Austria is the Dumb One, "who says nothing and does everything"; while the Turks are politely summed up as Stinkers and the Sultan is called Taffo, a word which no one consented to translate.

Whatever their faults, the Servians of Servia do not suffer from any such reticence. They are always ready to express their views on any subject under the sun with the utmost frankness. Not only in the crowded coffee-

houses of the town, but in the mehane (taverns), which are far and away the most magnificent buildings in every village, there seems to be a chronic competition to argue and shout and declaim. Whenever I travelled about the country I found that every dinner—almost every afternoon call—meant a long toast-list and interminable oratory. In that way the Servians resemble the Irish and the Greeks. But their villagers are far more reserved than their townsmen. They are as voluble as you please and overwhelm you with sentiment and compliments. But they do not give themselves away. You may spend a whole day in a *zadruga* apparently on terms of the most sincere intimacy, but you will never secure an insight into any man's character as you may in half-an-hour's acquaintance at Belgrade. The *zadruga* is a peculiarly Servian institution. Wherever you find a *zadruga*, in Macedonia or elsewhere, you may safely conclude that the population is Servian. No other people has the *zadruga*, probably because no other people would have the patience to put up with it. Imagine a household consisting of some eighty or a hundred persons, arbitrarily governed by one man, having all things in common, unable to buy or sell or plant or reap or marry without first asking permission from the head of the family. The Servians are very fond of prating of liberty, and their new king is disseminating his translation of Mill's essay on the subject, but where the *zadruga* obtains they probably enjoy less personal freedom than the subjects of the most arbitrary government in the world.

The *zadruga* has, however, many advantages. Originally a family group consisting of a father and his children, it has grown until it embraces distant cousins, and it serves to perpetuate the family tradition and authority. It is

also very good economy, for it unites all the benefits of small and great properties as well as providing for the poor in sickness and old age. Unfortunately, like picturesque costumes and most other relics of old times, the zadruga is dying out, but it has certainly left its traces on the national character. Though clans may perish, a clannish feeling must long remain. One consequence of this is that the people care much more for local than national affairs. It has long been observed that the country always gives a thumping majority to any government which happens to be in power. A ministry may possess the confidence of the Skupshtina; the King may dismiss it and appeal to the country, and he is practically sure of obtaining a legislative majority. Constitutions have been altered again and again, but the constituencies have always ratified every change. The enemies of the murdered King explain this by alleging corruption and intimidation, and they have some excuse for their allegation. But if an electorate is determined, no amount of persuasion can influence the national verdict. A clean sweep for a party may not mean unanimity, but it does mean that the majority is at least indifferent. The only political topic which interests Servian peasants is the question of taxation, and their occasional adherence to the Radical party was due to vague promises of relief.

A dislike of taxes is not confined to the Servians, but it is perhaps more acute with them than with most other nations, and for a very good reason. While possessing abundance of material riches and never lacking any of the rude comforts of life, even in the remotest villages, they rarely have much actual money to spare. Each household makes nearly everything it requires and needs very little money. At one large farm I was told that the

family had no occasion to buy anything except groceries and sometimes beef. This is only eaten on grand occasions, and then several families usually club together, each providing an animal in turn. If taxes could be paid in kind they would not be grudged, but a money payment seems to the peasants out of all proportion to the amount of food and clothes which it represents. In the case of road-making, for instance, the peasants are allowed to choose between paying a few dinars and giving two or three days' work, and they cheerfully apply themselves to the task. I have often seen them in gangs upon the roads and have had occasion to admire their industry.

The fertility of the soil makes it unnecessary for them to work very hard, but they are by no means lazy, and they have a constant craving to acquire more land. This is not, however, from any desire of power or ostentation, for they are essentially simple in character. The richest peasant will continue to wear the same rough homespun as his humblest neighbour, and consume the same simple fare. Only when some Church festival occurs or guests arrive is there ever a trace of luxury.

The hospitality of the people is enormously developed and strangers are always entertained most lavishly wherever they go. "We have a saying in Servia," an Archimandrite once remarked to me, "that guests are doubly welcome, because they afford us an excuse for enjoying good fare also." The favourite dish on a grand occasion consists of a lamb or sucking-pig roasted very slowly over glowing embers; a stout stick is run right through it, and a couple of men will spend hours turning it in the forest before a picnic. The result is delicious, or would be if the people could be persuaded to serve the meat up before it is half cold.





DANCING THE KOLO.

The costumes vary considerably in different parts of the country. A typical farmer will wear long knickerbockers, either of frieze or linen; a long coarse shirt, tied at the waist and hanging down like a kilt; one or two embroidered waistcoats with long sleeves, but no coat. The first symptom of Western ideas is manifested when one of the waistcoats is of ordinary tweed. From this the transition to the ordinary humdrum dress of the European middle classes is easy. The national garb is certainly passing away, but not very rapidly. I was told by one farmer that he had given it up because he found that it meant devoting at least an hour a day to his toilet if he meant to do justice to it. The poorer peasants, however, are not such dandies and will often go about for months together without changing their sheepskins. The wool is worn inwards and, in the case of the women, the skin is elaborately ornamented with bright-coloured wools, pieces of looking-glass and other outlandish ornaments. On festal occasions women are even more barbaric in appearance, for they cover the hair, breast and back with all sorts of coins, representing their dowry. These range from mediæval gold pieces to battered silver and worthless brass tokens. The characteristic feature of the female costume consists of two gay strips of carpet worn in front and behind as aprons. Carpets are indeed put to many strange uses in Servia. They are not only placed upon the floors, but even upon the walls, ceilings, chairs, divans, and, as we have seen, added to the wardrobe.

The Servians love simple pleasures. They are always ready for a dance, and impart mysterious expression to the measures of the kolo. They are intensely musical and can always while away an evening with interminable

songs, generally of a sad, dreamy strain. The favourite topic of their songs is some episode in the history of their old Empire: either the prowess of Marko Kraljevich (king's son), or a narrative of the great battle of Kosovo, where their last Tsar was defeated by the Turks. History is their one passion and replaces the interest in politics, which we find further west. I remember once, on a Save steamer, noticing a group of peasants engaged in animated conversation. I asked a friend to find out what was exciting them, and he discovered that they were disputing whether Milosh Obilich, who killed Sultan Murad, was buried by the feet or the head of Tsar Lazar.

It is certainly strange that a people which possesses so keen a pride in the past should not be more deeply imbued with the religious spirit. Feast-days are universally observed, but a Servian considers that he has done his duty if he stands outside in the churchyard during divine service. On the other hand, fasts are very strictly kept, but that is probably due to feelings of superstition and a dread lest supernatural consequences should follow a breach of the Church's ordinance.

When we look into the various superstitions which still form part of the convictions of the people, we may begin to realise how widely they differ from the ordinary European of the twentieth century. For instance, when the foundations of a house are laid, it is considered necessary to immure the shadow of a human being. All sorts of tricks are used by builders to induce some one to walk down the road in the sunshine, so that his shadow may be caught and walled in. I have been told quite seriously by apparently sane Servians that they have seen a shadow captured in this way; that the owner has gone on shadowless and has presently died; and that his spirit has



haunted the place where his shadow was removed. How the appropriation of the shadow is supposed to assist the new house or assure its fortunes I was unable to ascertain. Probably in very old days a live stranger was immured and now a shadow takes his place.

Stories of vampires are innumerable, and all except a few lawyers and bagmen believe in them implicitly. The vampires assume human form and are remarkable for their grace and beauty. Their object is to find an opportunity for sucking the blood of their victims. I have heard stories of charming strangers who came to villages, married the most attractive maidens, and then killed them by sucking their blood. But vampires may always be charmed away with an amulet of garlic. A belief in the power to turn men and women into animals is also very general. Perhaps the most general belief is that inspired by the vila. She has goat's feet, like a fawn; nails stained with henna, like an odalisque; and a white robe, emblematic of Christian innocence. This last touch serves to emphasise the left-handed connection between religion and superstition in Servia. A vila may be good or bad, may help people or torment them. Her metropolis is Mount Avala, near Belgrade, but she appears at the most unexpected moments and places. In origin she is probably akin to wood-nymphs, dryads and other elementals. At any rate she is as real to the Servian as a jinnee is to a Moslem. She has played her part in history and lives in song. When Kara George played false, we are told that "the vila shrieked from the summit of Rudnik, above the Jasenitsa, the slender stream. She called George Petrovich at Topola in the plain: 'Foolish George Petrovich, where are thou to-day? Would thou wert nowhere! If thou drinkest wine in the tavern, may

it run out of thee in wounds! If thou art taking thine ease with thy wife, may she be widowed. Dost thou not see (ah! would that thou wert deprived of sight!) that the Turks have invaded thy fatherland?"

That is a typical excerpt from a national pesma (epic), and emphasises the strange mixture of barbarous cruelty and patriotic enthusiasm which has consistently characterised the Servian. He is full of devoted enthusiasm for his friends, but so soon as his enmity has been aroused he sticks at no enormity. Most of his national heroes are swash-bucklers, who, in peaceful times, would be called brigands.

To sum up the Servian peasant, who after all is the backbone of the nation: he is sturdy, good-looking, brave, healthy, hospitable and merry, devoted to the traditions of his race but careless of modern politics; rich in everything but money; simple, superstitious, thoroughly mediæval. No one could dislike him, but he must be judged from a standpoint which is almost unattainable by the man of the West. If we could go back four or five hundred years and live among our forefathers, they would probably tax our forbearance in much the same way as the Servians do to-day. Yet, if we could divest ourselves of the arrogance of our civilisation, we should probably concede to them many virtues which we certainly lack.

It is only when they go abroad for their education, don black coats and a thin veneer of progress, that they invite criticism. They are not ripe for the blessings of democracy (such as they are), and much painful experience will be necessary to prepare them. I do not say that they cannot undergo the preparation, but I do not wish to see them in the process. I prefer to remember them as I have known them—admirable survivors of the age of chivalry.





MACEDONIAN BRIGANDS.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BRIGANDAGE

TRAVELLERS in the Balkan peninsula soon grow so much accustomed to stories of brigands that all terror rapidly disappears, and they cease to surprise any more than the yarns of fishermen or big-game hunters. Brigands have figured so prominently in the fiction of recent years that the most blood-curdling tales rarely move us to anything more than polite incredulity.

When I first roamed about Servia and Macedonia I always made a point of inciting every one I met to talk about brigands, because I was generally sure of hearing something exciting, but it never occurred to me to take the matter seriously. The Balkans are still mediæval, and I felt that brigands were an appropriate mediæval topic; it was like meeting the ghost of Sir Walter Scott and extracting fresh tales of a grandfather.

Even now, since I have seen brigands galore, brigands clanking their chains at railway stations, brigands in prison awaiting execution, brigands being arrested and even brigands at large, I have not quite got over the sense of unreality. You see, the brigand of real life is such a very different person from the brigand of fiction, who is a sort of Claude Duval and takes to crime out of

sheer devilry. He adopts the bold, free life of the mountains, exacts enormous ransoms, distributes the greater part of his booty among the deserving poor, is actuated by the highest spirit of chivalry, and earns wide renown by his romantic intrepidity. The real brigand is usually a political refugee, who only desires to be let alone and is content if he can steal enough to keep body and soul together, or else a political emissary who travels about trying to force an unwilling peasantry into revolution.

Yet the modern brigand sometimes exhibits traits worthy of Robin Hood or Dick Turpin. I heard of a man the other day. His name was Djerdjevich, and for twenty years he terrorised the borders of Servia and Macedonia, finding safety in one country when the police of the other had made his haunts too hot for him. One day he waylaid a merchant who was travelling on horseback to a market town with a thousand ducats (£500), which he intended to invest to the best possible profit. He was then well-to-do, rode a good horse, carried a heavy gold chain, was accompanied by several servants, and had every appearance of prosperity. Now Djerdjevich was reputed a kind-hearted man. His largesse made every peasant of his district devoted to him, and with a certain airy vanity he boasted that he generally left the district better off than he found it. His rush out from his ambush upon his prey was compared to that of a lion for swiftness and success; many were the tales of his prowess, and he had never been known to fail, whatever the numerical odds against him. The merchant submitted with fairly good grace to be despoiled of his ducats and watch, and was dismissed with perfect courtesy, more frightened than hurt. Ten years later he was travelling the same way when Djerdjevich stopped him again.

“I seem to know your face,” said the brigand, not unkindly.

“Would to heaven that I did not know yours,” was the reply. “Ever since you stopped me and took my thousand ducats ten years ago, things have gone ill with me. It was the turning-point of my career. The loss of that money ruined my business. I was soon unable to meet my obligations. And now I am merely the hireling of another merchant. As you can easily see for yourself, I have gone far down in the world.”

Djevdjevich looked at him and believed his story, for the man now rode a donkey, wore rough clothing and had every appearance of poverty.

“How much money have you in your purse?” he inquired.

“Only one hundred ducats and they are not mine. If you take them I shall lose my employment and be reduced to starvation.”

“Well, will you give me your word of honour to remain where you are until I return? If so, I will spare your hundred ducats.”

The man promised and presently the brigand returned with two sacks.

“Here,” said he, holding up the first, “are the thousand ducats I took from you ten years ago; and here,” holding up the second, “are a thousand more, which I present you as interest. May they help you to rebuild your fortunes! When you are once more rich you shall again travel here at your peril, and I will see if I cannot get back from you the whole sum at compound interest.”

I believe that Djevdjevich is still at large and greatly esteemed in his old haunts; if so, he must have devoted nearly a quarter of a century to brigandage. It is, indeed,

by no means rare for men to remain outlaws for the greater part of their lives.

Some brigands have also a keen sense of humour. A friend of mine, a Servian statesman now out of office, loves to recount his experience at their hands. When he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a few years ago, he was travelling across country in the west of Servia, attended only by a couple of gendarmes. Arriving at a wayside inn, he entered and called for a cup of coffee. He noticed a dozen rough-looking men seated at little tables in the great bare kitchen, which is the parlour of a Servian inn. But for the fact that they carried an unusual amount of arms and that none of them rose at the entrance of a gentleman, he might easily have taken them for the ordinary peasants of the locality. As it was, his first impression was to explain their discourtesy by setting them down as Radicals, who were then very bitter against the Government. As all the tables were occupied, he sat down with one of the groups and entered into conversation. He soon saw who they were, not only from their knives and guns and pistols, but from their remarks. Like all Servians, they immediately began to talk politics, and presently they mentioned quite frankly what grievances had induced them to take to the hills. Of course, he was entirely in their power if they chose to carry him off and hold him to ransom, but Servian brigands do not carry off or even rob travellers without premeditation or some definite object. It was evidently a case for diplomacy. He hoped very sincerely that they did not know who he was, seeing that his capture would have been a serious matter for the Government, as evidence of the insecurity of the country, not to mention the personal inconvenience to himself.



They put very many questions, pumping him as to his occupation in life, and he flattered himself that he evaded them skilfully. Then they made all sorts of conditional remarks: "If you return to Belgrade" (this sounded ominously like a menace, and sent a cold shiver down his back)—"if you return to Belgrade and chance to meet any members of the Government, tell them that the brigands of this district are not such bad fellows after all"; "If you have any influence with the Foreign Office" (this was painfully warm) "inform the Premier" (who was also Foreign Minister) "that when our grievances are redressed we will make our submission"; and so forth. Again and again he felt that they must know who he was, but whenever he scanned their faces he found them imperturbable and almost childishly bland. At last the horses were rested and it was time to go. The critical moment had arrived. He was almost sure that they had discovered him, and still more sure that in that case they would detain him as a hostage. He rose and put his hand into his pocket to pay for his refreshment, wondering whether he was to sleep that night under the greenwood tree. One of the men started to his feet, banged the table, and shouted "No, no!"

Alas! his fate was decided and a horrible thought passed through his mind that perhaps in a few weeks his ears might be cut off. "No, no," the man went on; "we may be brigands, but we are still Servians, and Servians do not allow their guests to pay." My friend felt that he could not help showing his relief and he detected a grim smile in the eyes of his companions. However, there was nothing for it but to submit with a good grace, so he thanked them, said good-bye and made his way to his carriage. Several of the men followed him

out, and just as he was driving off one of them called after him, "A pleasant journey, Mr. ——" (mentioning his name); "do not forget to say a good word for your hosts!" And as a matter of fact my friend was eventually instrumental in obtaining an amnesty for these men, who remain law-abiding subjects to this day.

The causes and conditions of brigandage are easy to explain. In the days when Turkey ruled the whole Balkan peninsula, any one who had come to loggerheads with the authorities or incurred outlawry joined a band in the inaccessible mountains and forests, where whole regiments found it very difficult to catch them. They subsisted on the (more or less) voluntary contributions of the neighbouring villagers and on any booty which happened to come their way. Meanwhile they carried on a guerilla warfare against the authorities, and in times of popular insurrection there was little or nothing to distinguish rebel leaders from ordinary robbers. Both were known by the name of hajdutsi, and many of them are regarded as national heroes to this day. One of the chief coffee-houses in Belgrade is called after Hajduk Veljko, who also figures in many a popular song.

Nowadays the Servian brigands, who are often political outlaws, continue to call themselves hajdutsi, and retain a certain unmerited hold on the popular sympathies. I have seen gangs of brigands in prison and almost felt sorry for them. They had probably committed innumerable crimes, and some of them wore villainous expressions. But they were manly and brave even in adversity. They were laden with heavy chains and confined in noisome subterranean dungeons. One prefect offered to show me his bag of brigands, and I came with him into a courtyard. A door was thrown open and a

dozen soldiers stood round it with loaded guns and fixed bayonets, in the attitude of terriers at a rat-hole. A melancholy clanking was heard, and at last the brigands emerged, so heavily weighed down with chains that they could scarcely limp. I felt almost brutal when I accepted an invitation to photograph them, but I consoled myself with the reflection that I had afforded them a glimpse of God's sunshine, which had been very long withheld.

The prefect told me that severity in prison was absolutely necessary, as the brigands were such desperate characters that they would inevitably break loose if the least indulgence were shown them. And they had certainly committed many murders. I asked him if he tortured them. He professed to be indignant at the idea, but admitted, on being pressed, that he had kept men without water for days in order to extort confessions.

I once travelled about with a captain of gendarmery who had spent months in pursuing a band. He showed me a tobacco-box which he had taken from the leader; it was carved in rude letters—"Velisav the Hajduk, King of the Mountains." The band consisted at first of seven men. When the pursuit became hot, it divided up into three parties. All brigands have henchmen, called jatatsi, who supply them with food and ammunition, besides acting as receivers of stolen goods. The captain ran down the jatak of the first party. Holding a revolver in one hand and a purse of eighty pounds in the other, he gave the man the choice of betraying his associates or being summarily shot. This being but Hobson's choice, the jatak agreed and his house was surrounded while the brigands were there with him and his two sons. He had been told to begin fighting the two brigands, when the soldiers would come to his rescue. So he brought in a lamb and asked

one of the brigands to kill it. At first the fellow was suspicious and refused to lay down his gun to kill the lamb. However, he was persuaded to give it to his companion to hold, whereupon the three jatatsi fell upon the man who was holding the guns and killed him with axes. A frightful struggle ensued with the survivor, but the soldiers came in and shot him in the nick of time, just as he had secured his gun and was about to fire upon his betrayers.

The second party of two were also victims of their jatak's treachery. They suspected him and took it in turns to keep watch, but one night the sentinel dozed and the jatak cut his throat; then the gendarmes came in and helped to finish the survivor.

After this the remaining party of three became very wary, scarcely ever stirring from their fastnesses. One day they quarrelled over the possession of a silver spoon and decided to separate, one going one way and the others going another. These two were caught in a cottage and remained game to the last. Some gendarmes climbed on to the roof and shot one down the chimney, while the other was killed by a fusilade through the walls.

There now remained only one and he proved the most difficult of all to secure. The captain was a long time before he could catch the jatak. He disguised himself and went to the jatak's cottage, pretending he wanted to buy pigs. No one was at home but the jatak's mother, who would not allow him inside. However, he sat down on the doorstep and said he would wait for her son. She passed the time in discussing the gendarmery, saying they were no good for catching brigands, as they had a lazy captain who never went anywhere. My friend smiled, for he had lately taken to sleeping during the day and prosecuting his search by night. As she was

speaking, her son arrived and recognised the captain, who promptly arrested him. But even then it was a long time before the jatak would confess anything. It was only after he had been shut up in a cellar and kept without water during three broiling summer days that he consented to tell what he knew. Then the last hajduk was tracked to his haunts and taken alive.

I heard another story from an eye-witness of a recent capture. Two brigands were surrounded in a farmhouse, so they climbed into a loft and sniped every soldier they could see. Attempts to fire the farm only resulted in the death of several more soldiers. At last cannon was sent for and preparations were made for a bombardment. The brigands then saw that their only chance was to make a sally and fight their way out. One was killed at once, but the other was more fortunate. He ran very fast towards the cordon, firing as he went, and in next to no time it was impossible for most of the soldiers to shoot at him without the risk of killing each other. He shot down those immediately in front of him and burst through. Then commenced an extraordinary exhibition of pluck and dexterity. Running for his life, he zig-zagged, leaped into the air and even fell repeatedly on his face to disturb the aim of his foes. When he had advanced some two hundred yards away from them, he stopped and began to sing a song of mockery and defiance, which had probably been handed down from the old days of guerilla warfare against the Turks. He challenged any two soldiers to come out and do battle with him, but the offer was not accepted. So he strolled away with exaggerated carelessness, like the hero of some mediæval epic.

Some years elapsed before his hour struck and then

his end was gilded with romance. Glorifying in his immunity, he had married and taken his wife to share his wild life among the mountains. His life seemed charmed and his recklessness became foolhardiness without evil consequences. But the gendarmery were still on the alert, and one day the woman was shot on her way to procure food. Knowing the brigand's character—not only his belief in a miraculous immunity, but his blind devotion to his wife—they determined to lay a trap. They carried the woman's body to her native village and buried it in the little cemetery outside. Then they hid behind a wall and waited. Sure enough, the same evening the brigand arrived with some flowers to lay upon her grave. He was at once shot, and the policemen plumed themselves upon their craft. No doubt he had committed countless crimes and was a terror as well as a scandal to the countryside. Still, his name will probably linger long in the poetry and the imagination of the people.

His case aroused a good deal of commiseration among the romance-loving Servians. He had left two little boys, aged six and four respectively. A friend of mine, who devotes a great part of his energies to the management of an orphanage, which he himself founded in Belgrade, determined to place the children there and see if they could not be turned into good citizens. The elder boy was hopeless from the outset. He wore a wild, sullen look, like a caged beast, and opposed a triumphant passive resistance to his teachers. In the playground he refused to mingle with his fellows, retiring to brood in corners or pacing to and fro with his eyes on the ground. He was always able to hold his own, and no boy ever dreamed of teasing him or taking a liberty with him, but he repelled every advance and was by no means to be

beguiled into friendship. Living in a house seemed to cramp him; even out of doors he appeared to gasp for mountain air; and in less than two years he died of consumption. The younger is alive still, a quiet, colourless child, docile in an unresponsive way, but not easy to understand.

Macedonia is now the headquarters of brigandage, but most of its brigands come over from Bulgaria, where they are organised to pave the way for annexation or autonomy. As there are at least three rival organisations, the brigands are as much at loggerheads with each other as they are with the authorities. They come over in bands and terrorise the whole country, greatly to the discomfiture of the peaceful inhabitants, whom they compel to store arms and pay tribute. Villages are thereby exposed to a double annoyance, the bands coming to deposit contraband of war, and the authorities sending zapties to hunt for it. The bands do their utmost to provoke massacres, but the soldiers have strict orders to avoid anything of the kind at all hazards. Even battle with the bands is deprecated as much as possible, with the consequence that the most impudent provocation is often ignored. One day a band crossed a river by a plank in single file under the eyes of the soldiers without molestation. They then sent a challenge to the captain of the regiment to come out and fight, but he contented himself with hovering about and watching them. The fact is, any serious slaughter would afford a pretext for invoking European intervention, and the Turks are too old birds to be caught with chaff.

Many of the Bulgarian brigand chiefs are hardened conspirators, but many are enthusiasts, with the common Anarchist's misguided ideas about tyranny and freedom.

As will be readily understood, genuine enthusiasts are very often recruited from the ranks of the very young. I saw two Bulgarian boys who were beguiled into the movement. One of them was only seventeen, though he looked older. He had the eyes of a fanatic and a certain air of obstinacy, which might pass muster for determination. The other was only fourteen. He was a native of a mountain village in the vilayet of Salonica. His father was shot while attempting to evade military service, so the boy, who was left almost destitute, was easily persuaded to consider himself a person with grievances against the authorities. When his band was taken, he fought very pluckily and received a nasty bayonet wound in his right arm. Most of these insurgents apparently have very poor physique, but they are all wiry and can endure any amount of hardship or privation. They wear the soft shoes of red leather called *opanke*, common to the greater part of the Balkan peninsula. These are tied round and round the foot with strings and afford an extraordinary elasticity to the gait. The boys could accordingly climb like goats.

I also saw two desperate youths of eighteen and nineteen, captured in the neighbourhood of Lake Ochrida. They were convicted of a number of atrocious crimes and seem to have delighted in cruelty for its own sake. One of them was so badly wounded in the left hand that the greater part of it had to be amputated. This happened when the band was fighting a village which did not welcome the idea of insurrection. Such disinclination is by no means rare, as was proved one day, when a village arrested a whole band and handed it over to the authorities. Towards the end of last autumn also, one of the heads of the movement was so



badly wounded in the head by the stones of a village that he had to hurry back to Sofia and place himself in the doctor's hands.

Among other Macedonian enthusiasts must be numbered certain popes. This is quite in keeping with tradition, for popes played a prominent part in the risings of the last century in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Servia. I have in my possession a copy of a proclamation issued by an Archimandrite in 1875, calling upon the population to rise. His style was somewhat lurid. "Take up your arms," he exclaimed, "water the hearth of your ancestors with the gore of your tyrants. Let us attack these drinkers of blood and let us exterminate them." At a Macedonian railway station, in the autumn of 1902, I saw a band being conducted in chains from the train to the prison. At the head of it marched a pope, wearing the usual cassock and brimless top-hat of his order. His hands were bound in front of him, thus giving him the appearance of one taking part in a religious procession.

Stranger still than boys and clergy, there have been women who took to brigandage—not merely the devoted spouses who followed their husbands to the hills, but actually viragoes who took command and ruled their followers with a rod of iron. One lady looked rather melodramatic, and, according to all accounts, was not a very pleasant customer to meet in a dark wood. She had compromised somewhat between male and female attire, but had not been able to refrain from the expression of her sex's vanity. Beside the cart-wheel ornament of silver filigree, so popular among the Albanian peasants, she had gratified her taste for display with profuse embroideries and necklaces. And her superstitious instincts were revealed by a charm which she wore over her belt.

From time to time the bands seize travellers and hold them to ransom. The case of Miss Stone will occur to every one. The general opinion in official circles is that she or her friends connived at her capture. Whether this be true or not, the fact remains that cases of such connivance are by no means unknown. At Salonica I heard of a French traveller who was carried off to the hills some years ago. Every effort was made to pursue his captors, but he sent pathetic letters protesting that this endangered his life and limbs. At last a ransom was forthcoming, and I believe the Turkish Government was eventually compelled to make it good. The man came back and has been inexplicably rich ever since, but he has lost much of the consideration of his friends.

When I left Uskub for Salonica I noticed a considerable commotion on the railway platform. A band of a dozen brigands sat huddled together, linked by many chains. Around them was a circle of police with loaded guns and fixed bayonets. A crowd of friends and relatives had been admitted to take leave of the prisoners. Some were being embraced by tearful young women, others were receiving farewell gifts from aged parents. One tall young man squatted on his haunches severely alone. He had a mocking, defiant expression and smoked a cigarette in the corner of his mouth imperturbably. When the signal was given to entrain, he strutted forward with a fine swagger, holding up his leg-chain very daintily. His progress was naturally impeded by his fetters, but he conveyed the impression of a jovial sea-walk. I saw him seated inside a third-class carriage among his fellow-convicts and warders, still smoking at the same angle. I caught his eye and he winked at me sardonically. In the darkness at Salonica I saw him hobbling off to gaol

with the rest of his gang. A few days later I was strolling about the quay when I noticed a crowd gathering. The same gang squatted near the landing-stage, guarded as before by policemen armed to the teeth. I caught the eye of the young man, who still smoked aloof with the old rollicking air. He was helped, hobbling, into a tossing barque, and was rowed vigorously towards a ship that should take him across the sea towards his prison at Damascus. I heard that he had penetrated into the konak at Uskub and stabbed the Vali's secretary, against whom he cherished a grudge. I could readily believe it.

The heroic days of brigandage are past and unlikely to return. Probably the next generation will regard it all as a myth of the Middle Ages, like the Inquisition or the Crusades. No doubt the world will plume itself upon the uniformity of civilisation, but the traveller's last opportunity of romantic adventure will be no more.

## CHAPTER XVIII .

### THE MACEDONIAN CONSPIRACY

To understand the situation in Macedonia, it is necessary to enumerate the attitude of the various pretenders to the province. Turkey in Europe has come to be regarded as a political Tom Tiddler's ground, and the most unlikely aspirations are urged seriously. The most impertinent of them is naturally the Greek. In the vilayet of Salonica, at any rate, everything used to be in the hands of the Greeks: clergy, schools, commerce and a kind of tradition. Had they been capable of propaganda, they might have swept the board and almost hoped to restore the old Byzantine Empire. As it was, they never succeeded in hellenising a single Slav during a century full of opportunities. Rich Greeks kept bequeathing large sums for their cause, but the money was always frittered away or embezzled. In fact, the Greek star has persistently waned. Even in Salonica few rich Greeks now remain. The Jews are constantly ousting and superseding them.

Salonica is, of course, the stronghold of Jews. They are of Spanish origin, form nine-tenths of the population, control everything and command a certain respect by their probity. Baron Hirsch spent much time and money





BUTCHER AT SALONICA.  
( *Photograph by Mrs. Herbert Vivian.* )

in endeavouring to turn Macedonia into a promised land. He imported a colony of Hebrew wastrels to Salonica, but the proud Jews from Spain objected, gave them no work, and only allowed them to ply as lustrajis (boot-blacks) or match-vendors. The consequence was that many died of hunger, and most of the others departed for Brazil. The Spanish Jews of Salonica are a very close corporation. Not only do they refuse to employ Christians in their banks and shops, but they are nearly as intolerant of other Jew breeds. They have many strange old customs. For instance, when one of their men dies the widow is expected to live on the bare floor for eight days in total darkness. Their newspapers are printed in a broken Spanish with Hebrew letters. I called upon the editor of such a sheet, and learned much about the "Young Jew" party, which he represents. It is violently opposed not merely to the Imperial Government but even to the recognised heads of the Hebrew community. It provokes brawls in the synagogues and bloodshed in the back streets. One of the Young Jews told me that he was an Anarchist and an Atheist, Judaism having for him a national (or international) but no religious significance. The orthodox Jews of Salonica are, however, quite strong enough to hold their own against insubordinates within their gates. It is not too much to say that they dominate the city, socially, politically, and commercially. No Christian trader can earn a living, for the Jews combine against him and ruin him. All the trade is in their hands, and they control even the active occupations, such as the unloading of boats, which is not permitted on Saturdays. If a man is robbed, he will be ill-advised to consult the Turkish police, for they will expect bakshish and do nothing; whereas the Rabbis will usually find the stolen

goods on an understanding of no questions asked. Unlike some other Jews, those of Salonica are manly, fairly honest and quite self-respecting. Indeed, they have tabooed the word Jew, so that it is safer to talk of an "Israelite" in the coffee-houses. Anti-Semitism would have a short shrift at Salonica. But the Jews will never become a dominant race, and their incursion does not affect the Macedonian question. They discourage Zionism because they work for a Zion at home, but they do not possess the qualities which would enable them to rule the vilayet, whose capital is theirs.

Another futile propaganda is that of the Italians. It has only become truly active since a Montenegrin marriage afforded a pretext for intervention in the Balkans. They have made themselves useful to nondescript Levantines by lavishing the Italian nationality upon persons who had everything to gain by availing themselves of the capitulations. In Salonica alone they count 3000 subjects; they have a useful trade-museum at their school, which provided 102 Italian clerks to Thessalonian counting-houses during 1902; and they make no secret of their aspiration to an eventual reversion of Albania. Their consuls are numerous and feverish on the coast of the Adriatic. But modern Italy is herself so precarious that her struggles for expansion are foredoomed to failure.

The Roumanians<sup>1</sup> have a traditional, but no practical excuse. Salonica and Monastir are the headquarters of their agitation. They found schools of commerce, but they have scarcely any idea about their expectations and their numbers steadily diminish. Most of them have been subconsciously hellenised, and they may only be regarded

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "La Roumanie moderne comme facteur de la civilisation en Orient." Par Alex. Sturdza. Paris: Laveur.



as cat's-paws of the Greek propaganda. They would probably decide to save their purses and energies by retiring from an impossible position, but that propagandas are now the fashion in Macedonia and, if the province ever did come up for partition, they could retire gracefully with hopes of compensation elsewhere.

Austria is working underground, but with great diligence. When, as Count Goluchovski expressed it, she "became a Balkan State," she enlarged her ambitions and responsibilities to an incredible degree. But that her star has been so long on the wane, she might cherish reasonable hopes of forcing her way down to the Ægean. Her success in Bosnia, however, has been so moderate that her best friends may easily lose heart. Bosnia was the only province which presumed to resist the edicts of the Congress of Berlin. She had become insurgent in the hope of eventual annexation to Servia, her pobratim<sup>1</sup> and old over-lord. To her dismay, she found herself swallowed up by the "Swabians,"—a term used in the Balkans for all German-speaking folk. Her Mohammedans, who had clung to their Servian nationality and fought side by side with their Christian compatriots against the Ottomans, resisted the "Swabian" invasion tooth and nail, inch by inch. They succumbed to the big battalions with sullen despair, but they have never been pacified. Herr von Kállay retorted by persecuting Mohammedan leaders: the Landesregierung was employed to conduct a campaign against them; the statute against unauthorised emigration was enforced; administrative and judicial persecutions were the order of the day; Sherif Effendi Arnaoutovich and others were cast into prison; and no efforts were spared to detach the Moslem

<sup>1</sup> Blood-brother.

population from their leaders. Again and again the notables of Serajevo have been offered a certain autonomy at the price of secession from the Moslem committee, but they have never listened to such proposals. A typical incident was the arbitrary arrest of Dervis Beg Miralem-pasich, a great landowner, at Travnik, on the 15th of October 1902. He was subjected to gross indignities and finally confined to Yemenitsi, his native village, without any reason being assigned. And the Christian population is even more vehemently disaffected. I have met Bosnian popes and other refugees in Serbia, who told me stirring stories of their fights with the Turks, and they always ended with the same gloomy refrain: "See how we wasted our energies, lavished our blood and sacrificed our homes only that Bosnia should exchange the rule of the Turk for the tyranny of Austria." I believe that, in the event of a Balkan upheaval, Bosnia would be a source of weakness rather than of strength to Austria. It is not a comfortable base for a campaign to the South and can only serve to cut off a retreat. The chances of Austrian aspirations are perhaps best measured by the recent history of Novi-Bazar. A right to garrison the three chief towns was acquired at Berlin and was welcomed as an opportunity for further annexation, but the garrisons are still on paper (like British Army Corps), and no political progress has been made. Further on, the activity of Austria is feverish, unscrupulous and quite ineffective. Wherever I went, throughout the north and west of Macedonia, I heard stories of Austrian intrigue. They were not always plausible, but they were quite frequent enough to convince in a general way. An archdeacon (Prota) in Old Serbia was very denunciatory. I professed incredulity in order to extort

details, some of which are sufficiently typical to bear repetition. "Moharrem," said he, "was a brigand whose murders amounted to forty-two. A price was set on his head, but the zapties despaired of securing him. The Austrian Government interceded for him, asserting that he would submit and lead a sober life if he received a pardon. The authorities agreed with some diffidence, and his conduct became exemplary for a while. Then an attempt was made on his life at Vrutak, near the source of the Vardar; he retaliated by killing three Turks and fled to the mountains, where he remains a greater terror than ever." This story was intended to prove Austrian complicity with brigandage, and the Prota failed to see that it might be explained as an act of mistaken policy. "Now," he continued, "I will convince you. There is a Servian at Leunovo, whom I can summon to your presence if you desire.<sup>1</sup> He visited the Austrian Consulate at Uskub on business respecting a legacy. First the Consul and then the Vice-Consul tried to inveigle him. 'What is the state of your compatriots?' they inquired. 'Very grievous,' he replied." (Most Christians in Turkey say they suffer 'very grievously,' but not one in a thousand can explain how or why.) "'How is it then that you do not rise and make a disturbance?' they asked; 'can you not find some men who will work for us, and we will pay their expenses?' The Consul produced a map, which the peasant could understand, because he had studied at Belgrade. He was asked to name places where 'guardians' could be appointed to act at a moment's notice; also how many educated men could be enrolled. He replied that the plan was possible, but that he would like to hear how it would be organised. Various details

<sup>1</sup> I did so desire, but he was not produced.

were afforded of existing organisation and the Consul concluded by saying, 'You must kill all sorts of people, and create a general disorder. Then no other nation but Austria can help you, because we have our railway and we have our agents everywhere. If you seek liberty, you have no other refuge but to act in this way.' "Now tell me," said I, "did the Consul say, 'It would be useful to have disorder' ? or did he say, 'We will pay you to provoke disorder' ?" This distinction was, however, beyond the Prota. He replied, "The Consul said, 'We have all the northern region under our influence, so that we can provoke a revolution at any moment ; can we count upon you ? Servia is small, Bulgaria is small, Montenegro is insignificant, other countries are remote. Only Austria can befriend the Christians of Macedonia.'"

Here is another typical and only semi-logical story, which was told me by the Prota : "Bale de Bachista, a famous brigand who has killed 150 persons and held thousands to ransom, is an Austrian agent. The Kaimakam of Kalkandele went to Gostivar in pursuit of him on the 4th of September 1902. Finding the brigand too strong for an attack, he telegraphed to the Mutesarif of Prizrend to send him twenty zapties from Luma ; no answer was returned and the Kaimakam continued to telegraph from 7 P.M. to midnight, finally saying, 'Otherwise I will try to take him even though it cost me my head.' The Mutessarif refused, saying, 'You have plenty of soldiers at Gostivar.' The Kaimakam pointed out that soldiers were useless, as he needed zapties who knew the country. But the Mutessarif refused again. So the Kaimakam returned to Kalkandele. He was especially wroth because the threat of risking his head had availed nothing, and he asserts openly that there

must be a foreign (*i.e.* Austrian) finger in authority at Prizrend." I quote the Prota's remarks, not because they convinced me, but because they illustrate the extreme difficulty of collecting accurate information in Macedonia. Other evidence had already given me a certitude that Austria has provoked disturbance with the object of being called in as a pacificator, but the Prota did his best, unconsciously, to shake that certitude. It would be tedious to relate all my facts, suspicions and corroborations. I began my inquiry with no sort of prejudice against Austria, but no vestige of doubt now remains in my mind as to her complicity. The proceedings of the Austrian Roman Catholic priests at Verisovits (Firusbey) alone suffice to remove the last doubts, and the Austrian consulates are hot-beds of intrigue. The appointment of an Austrian consul at Mitrovitsa, as an answer to the temporary success of Russia in imposing M. Shterbine, is a clear proof of redoubled activity. Neither Russia nor Austria has a single subject at Mitrovitsa, and their consuls can have no other mission than political intrigue. The Austrian propaganda is, however, conducted with such secrecy and skill that it can only be gauged by intuitive methods. Every one is very chary of making accusations. When I told King Alexander that I believed the Austrians meant mischief in Macedonia, he would only say that he knew such an idea was in the air. His Foreign Minister was no less reserved, and made gallant attempts to turn the conversation. When the time comes, however, it will be found that Austria is a less overt but no less serious menace to the peace of the Balkans than Bulgaria. Indeed the Albanian outburst at the end of 1902 would have been impossible without her connivance.

The Germans occupy a more legitimate but less plausible position than the Austrians in European Turkey. Their interests are commercial, not territorial, and they support them with consummate cleverness. At a moment of dire stress, the Kaiser appeared on the scene as the Sultan's only friend, and nothing is now refused to the Germans. Concessions, contracts, high confidential posts are lavished upon them in return for military advice and political support. Not long ago the Austrians held the greater part of Turkish trade in their hands; now they are being rapidly and firmly pushed aside by the Germans. To illustrate the method of procedure, the German Kegelklub at Salonica may be cited. It admits Austrians on an equal footing, the object being to confirm the natives in their confusion of Austrians with Germans as "Swabians." They also share a school at Salonica, and the Germans already predominate, turning out many skilful mechanics. Ten years ago very few persons understood German at Salonica; now some one speaks it in every shop: the which proves that the Germans are better propagandists than the Austrians. The great point in favour of German influence is that Germany is territorially disinterested. She does not want a slice of Turkey.

The same thing applies to Great Britain, but unfortunately the Foreign Office seems to delight in alienating friends whose usefulness is not immediately apparent. I should have thought that, in view of the treachery of Persia, it would have been well to maintain intimacy with Turkey, who is at this moment on very bad terms with her. I should have thought that the Balkan market was worth keeping, but it is being abandoned with sheer sleeping-sickness. Tradesmen in various parts of the

peninsula have told me that they wanted to buy British goods, particularly cloth and machinery, because they knew them to be solid and durable, but that the difficulties of procuring them were so great that they had perforce to put up with Swabian shoddy. Half-an-hour's organisation and a few fair words from the Foreign Office could save the situation, but British interests are allowed to drift from bad to worse. British diplomacy is largely responsible for that. Lord Currie was, of course, the prime offender; his manners and methods would have alienated any self-respecting State. He nearly succeeded in alienating even Italy, our servile satellite. Sir Nicholas O'Connor has trod reluctantly in his footsteps. He possesses charm, tact and diplomatic state-craft, but, owing to the unfortunate invention of telegraphy, he has not a free hand, and his policy is directed by shallow opportunists at home. If Lord Beaconsfield were alive we should now occupy the useful position which has been secured by the Kaiser.

At the present moment the British are by no means popular at the Porte, but our popularity is rather slumbering than dead. I discussed this question at length with a statesman who enjoys the confidence of the Sultan. I expressed my regret that our ancient alliance had been allowed to lapse. He returned that Turkey could no longer dream of alliances, but must stand on her own legs and fight her own battles. Great Britain, he continued, had shown scant sympathy of late. She had herself taken exception to French caricatures of Queen Victoria, but she did not seem to understand that loyal Moslems, who regarded their Sovereign not only as a political but as a religious chief, were pained when they found him subjected to torrents of vulgar insult. Mr. Gladstone had

called him an assassin. . . . "Yes," I said, "but you must not think only of ephemeral outbursts. The years of a nation are mere minutes in its life. You must remember that Turkey and Britain are ancient allies. . . ." "Yes," he interjected solemnly, "if we were ever tempted to forget that, we should always find an eloquent reminder in the graveyards of Scutari." "May we not hope then that some day the old friendship will be restored?" "Inshallah!" (Please God!) he replied, bowing his head.

As to the attitude of Russia, it is more difficult to dogmatise, because Russia has developed the art of diplomacy more highly than any other Power. Russo-phobes believe that the Tsar is secretly encouraging the criminal conspiracies of the Bulgarian committees. Patient inquiries on my part have utterly failed to confirm this view. I believe that, for the present, Russian diplomacy is all in favour of the status quo. The great safeguard against a general insurrection is to be found in the control which Russia alone is able to exercise over her dangerous vassals.

The real arbiters of the situation are the Servians and the Bulgarians. The Servians have an historical claim to the reversion of most of Macedonia. If crime were ever justifiable, ample excuse could be found for Servian committees, Servian bands of brigands and the terrorism of all Macedonian Slavs who refused to confess themselves Servians. But the attitude of Servia remained uniformly correct,—at least until the murder of King Alexander,—and all overtures from agitators were steadfastly refused. She contented herself with peaceful propaganda by means of schools, churches and consuls. The Bulgarians have been at work for thirty years. They began very plausibly as liberators from Greek tyranny, and



Slavs of all sorts gladly rallied round their exarchate. Before Bulgaria became independent, they directed the propaganda by means of committees at Bucharest. They created the first Slav schools and popularised the idea of Macedonian liberty. Then Serbia began to realise that her people were being taken away and that her reversion was being imperilled by Bulgaria. In the teeth of fierce opposition, Serbia obtained Patriarchist metropolitans and popes and churches in the vilayet of Kosovo, but so far she has no clergy in the vilayet of Salonica, except at the capital. This is regrettable and the Porte is certainly ill-advised in discouraging the loyal for the benefit of unscrupulous agitators. So soon as the Servian propaganda became formidable, the Bulgarians threw off the mask and inaugurated a system which can only be described as brigandage. All over Macedonia the Bulgarian committees imposed a reign of terror. Their bands came down like wolves upon the villages and extorted taxes for revolutionary objects. Each villager was assessed by them according to his apparent means. At first the receipts were couched in the following form: "Mr. — has paid £T— for the sacred cause." Afterwards the word "schools" was substituted for "the sacred cause." If any one refused to pay, his life was in danger. The bands also compelled the peasants to store arms and cartridges against a rising, thereby exposing them to perquisitions and persecutions at the hands of the Turkish authorities. And ruthless vigilance was exercised to prevent Exarchists from going over to the Patriarchate; threats and bribes were even used to compel Patriarchists to secede. As much as £T6 a month would be offered as the price of perversion to a man of influence, and if he refused his life was in instant danger, for the Bulgarian

committees stuck at no crime in the conduct of their campaign. I have in my possession a list of over eighty Servians who were deliberately murdered, either for joining the Patriarchist fold or for refusing to leave it. How far the Bulgarian Government is responsible for these methods of barbarism, I hesitate to pronounce. I was told a story, which I repeat with all reserve. If true, it is terribly incriminating. A certain Servian, who had incurred the wrath of the Bulgarian committees, incautiously set out from Macedonia to transact urgent business at Sofia. On reaching the frontier at Tsaribrod, he was detained by the officials on the pretext that his passport was not in order. The train went off; he was told that there had been a mistake and that he might continue his journey. He had seen some of the committee-men, who had threatened him, lurking about the station and watching him, so he appealed to the police for protection. This was contemptuously refused. He was even ordered out of the station, though he protested that he had nowhere to go. He set out for the village, but had not proceeded fifty yards before he was shot in the back and killed. The murderer is known but has never been prosecuted. I could give dozens of similar stories, but I hesitate to do so because facts are very difficult to verify in the Balkans: people tell you either too much or too little.

A typical conversation was one which I had with a Servian merchant at Kalkandele. He overwhelmed me with empty compliments and prayed me to lift up my "honourable voice" on behalf of his suffering compatriots; but when I pressed for details of their sufferings, he shrank into his shell. "If I am to lift up my voice to any purpose," said I, "you must furnish me with chapter

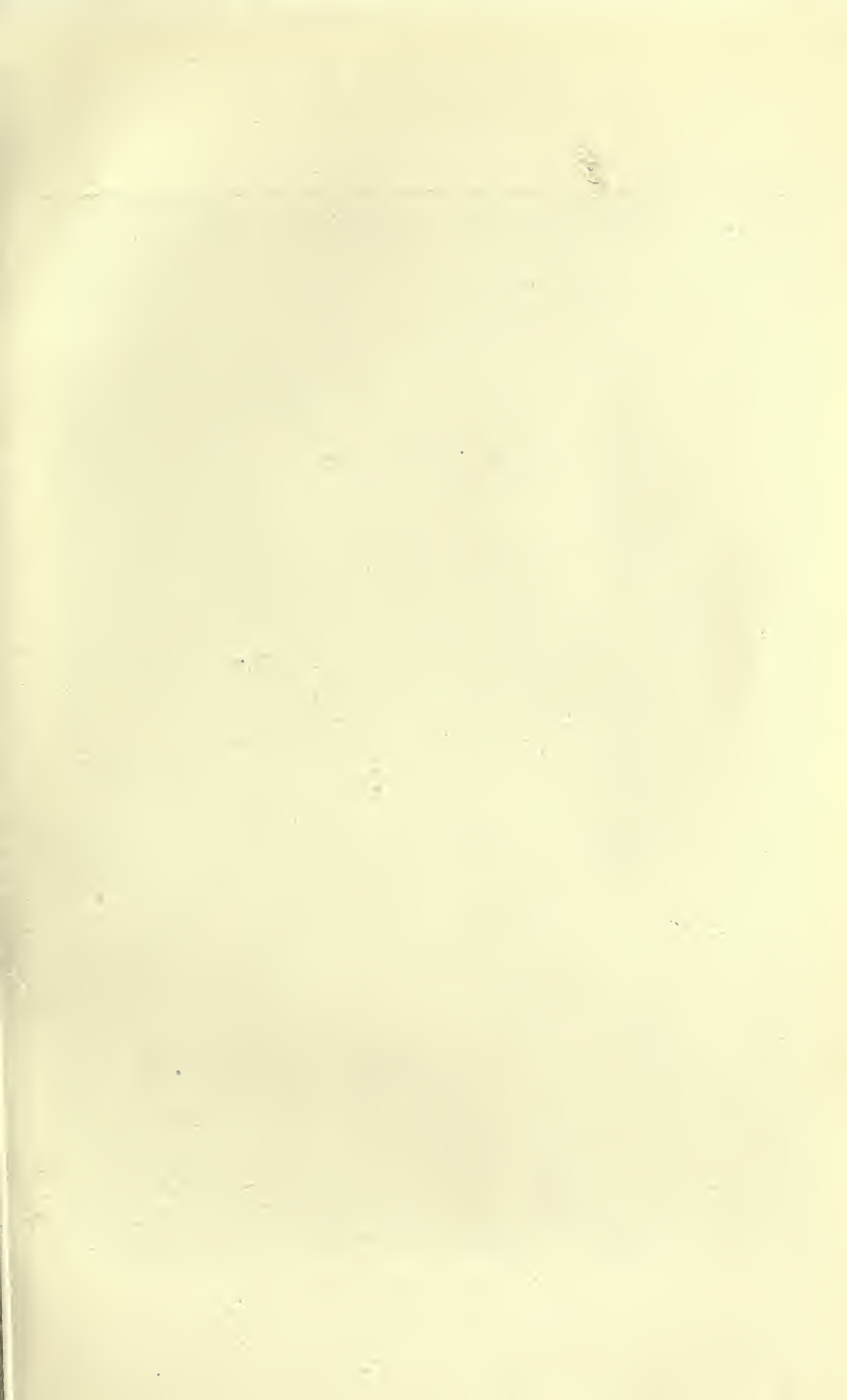
and verse. No effect will be secured by my repeating the vague generalities which I hear so often. Surely, if the Bulgarian committees spread terror in this neighbourhood, you can give me a thousand details about their action. You say you have lived here all your life. Surely you or one of your friends must have come into unpleasant contact with them. Have they never even applied to you for subscriptions to 'the sacred cause'?" There was a long silence, and the various notables of the village whispered together. At last the merchant remarked reluctantly: "Well, three years ago they did come to me and I refused to give them anything. They threatened to come and take what they wanted and kill me. I said: 'Come, by all means, and you will see. We shall know how to defend ourselves.'" "Then you have arms?" I said. This question of arms is one which exercises the Macedonians excessively. It is a standing grievance with the Christians that they are forbidden to possess arms, while the Albanians bristle with weapons. Most of the Christians do possess arms, but they make a cabinet secret of the fact, lest they should be exposed to a search and cast into prison. My innocent question spread consternation among the assembly. All looked doubtfully at each other. One answered "Yes," but another hastened to say "No." My dragoman explained that they all had plenty of arms, but that they dared not avow it. I remarked that our grievance about arms fell to the ground if they all had them, but he omitted to translate this. "As you have no arms," I observed, "what did you mean by saying the Bulgarians would 'see' if they came to annoy you?" After a pause he replied: "I have my mouth (*i.e.* tongue), and I have my hatchet, nothing else; but I should have given a good

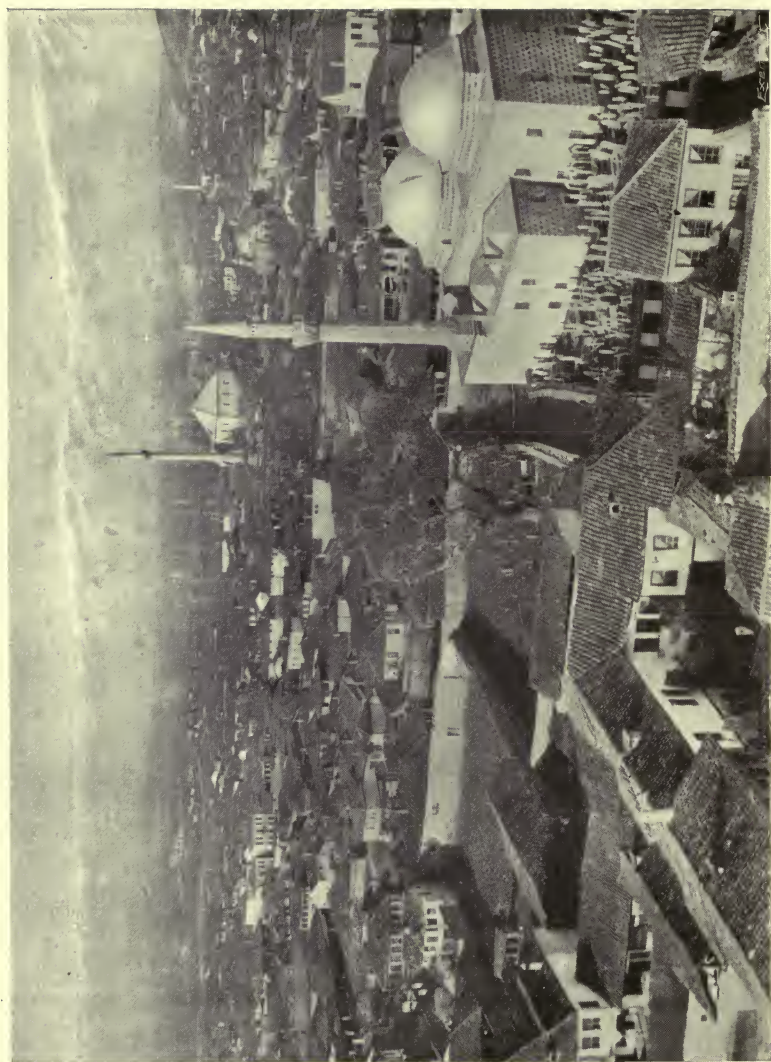
account of myself. Pray ask all that you desire to know. We are overwhelmed by the honour you do us in considering our welfare." But it was useless to cross-examine unwilling witnesses. Nearly every villager in Macedonia adopted the same attitude, and if I had relied merely upon their conversation, I should have gathered nothing but bombast. The consuls, however, are experts who lavish detailed information, fortified with facts, statistics, dates and convincing particulars. With the exception of Sir Alfred Biliotti, the Consul-General at Salonica, British consular representatives in Macedonia are ignorant and prejudiced, but the Servian consular service and the Bulgarian "commercial agents" are mines of knowledge. The Servian consuls and consuls-general are not only brilliant but honest. They told me frankly whatever I desired to know, even when it did not entirely support their case. The Bulgarians were mere advocates, glib and plausible, but not always convincing. Their feverish endeavour at present is to prove a Bulgarian preponderance in the province. To this end they publish voluminous documents and elaborate maps, which rarely bear investigation. Schools which have long ago shut their doors still figure prominently on paper; churches which have fallen into ruin and must be content with congregations of bats continue to lord it on statistical sheets; all Exarchists are deliberately set down as Bulgarians, though nine-tenths of them are in many cases Servians; Patriarchists are either registered as Greeks (because the Greeks need not be taken seriously), or else quietly entered as Bulgarians. If the ex-parte case could be believed, there would not be a single Servian in the whole province. Geography is prostituted, figures are cajoled, facts are exterminated. The Bulgarians are

really dangerous, because they are very clever and very unscrupulous. Still, elhamdu lillah! they do not succeed. For once, at any rate, honesty is the best policy. The Bulgarian committees may make money by holding a missionary to ransom or frightening a sanjak. But they make no material advance. Servian schools are spreading like wildfire. Even at Kukkush, which is a Bulgarian centre, they have lately risen from 13 to 52. At Stojakovo, the Exarchist pope has become a Patriarchist and the Bulgarian school has been closed. Take the vilayet of Salonica, where the Bulgarians have been at work for thirty years and the Servians for only thirteen. Already the Patriarchists comprise one-half of the Christian population, and they obtain fresh recruits every day, in spite of menaces and murders.

Having now surveyed the various propagandas in Macedonia, it may be useful to consider what real grievances exist and what remedies are required. The Turks are honestly doing their best to administer justice indifferently. Again and again, during my travels in Macedonia, I have admired the energy of Valis and Kaimakams, who hold thankless posts with courage and determination. If the Albanians could be kept in order and Bulgarian anarchism could be suppressed, there would be no grievances in Macedonia to-day. The Albanians are turbulent sportsmen, engaging as individuals but intolerable as neighbours. They must be made to understand that no further nonsense will be permitted. The Porte would be quite capable of reducing them to order if they had not a powerful protector at hand. The Porte could also reduce the Bulgarian conspirators if she did not fear to arouse prejudice in Europe. The echo of former Bulgarian "atrocities" paralyses effective action.

The Turks cannot punish Christian criminals so long as Exeter Hall is on the alert to defend them. Give the Sultan a free hand, and the Macedonian conspiracy might be ended in a few weeks. Happily the crimes of the Bulgarians are alienating Europe, and there seems now a chance that justice may be done. The important point for Europe to understand is that Macedonian revolutions are not to be put down with rose-water or paper constitutions. The Turks proved their moderation during the Greek campaign, and they may be trusted to act with equal wisdom in pacifying Macedonia.





USKUB.



## CHAPTER XIX

### RAMBLES IN MACEDONIA

THE French appropriately use the same word, *Macédoine*, for a holocaust of sodden fruit and for that Turkish province which remains the last cock-pit of Europe. As we have seen, nearly all the Powers, great and small, covet Macedonia, and there seems every probability of serious disturbance being renewed there before long.

My experience as a traveller has taught me that places with the worst reputation are usually the safest. I have wandered at night among the gipsy quarters of Seville and Granada; I have crossed Somali deserts, where marauding bands were expected at every turn; I have visited Russian townships, where cholera numbered thousands of daily victims. But nowhere has the danger compared with that of police-ridden cities like London and Paris.

To judge by the papers, you may only visit Macedonia if you are content to carry your life in your hand. A few inquiries, however, sufficed to convince me so completely of its security that I was even ready to take my wife thither. As a matter of fact, though I did not know it at the time, this was probably the greatest safeguard I could have devised, for the Albanians, who are

the most turbulent persons in the region, are so chivalrous that they will never attack a party which includes a lady.

Salonica is, perhaps, the most interesting town in the province, but Uskub is the most romantic and charming.

Uskub—dreamy Uskub—the capital of Old Servia and of the vilayet of Kosovo, is a far less busy, practical place, but entirely idyllic. Nestling amid forests of minarets and minaret-like cypresses beside the silvery Vardar, it delights the eye and arrests the imagination at all seasons. It is the last rampart of the old Servian empire and the bulk of the population is Servian. Your first expedition thence will probably be to the historic battlefield of Kosovo (the blackbird meadow), where the last Servian Tsar and the flower of the Servian nobility fell victims to the advancing Turk. Sultan Murad, the Turkish conqueror, also fell on that fatal day. A Servian hero crept into his tent in the hour of victory and slew him. The Sultan's tomb remains a place of Moslem pilgrimage where he fell, and, though his body has been transferred to Asia, his heart is here, where he fulfilled the destinies of his race.

Another favourite expedition from Uskub is to one or other of the Servian monasteries which nestle among the neighbouring hills. We were lucky enough to visit one, named Pobuzhie, on the occasion of the annual festival. The drive thither was a strange experience, rattling at full gallop over roads like ploughed fields, mild precipices, and alarming goat-tracks. However, I have always found that the worse the roads are in any country the better are the horses. You hear of accidents on slippery macadam, but never in wild switchback lanes. The roads in Macedonia are not so bad as timorous people pretend, for the officials take great trouble to



FÊTE AT POBUZHIE MONASTERY.

(*Photograph by Mrs. Herbert Vivian.*)



perfect communications between towns, and, as they can commandeer labour, they need not tax a denuded exchequer.

But once out of the beaten track, the traveller must take care of himself. There are bridges over the rivers, but no one dreams of using them. As a matter of course, your Jehu drives straight into the water, even when it swamps the wheels and the horses' legs; and the horses seize the opportunity for rest and refreshment. Sometimes, of course, you have an anxious moment. When we went to Prishtina we had our courage put to the test. From the station we proceeded at full gallop across the downs for twenty minutes, bumping and rattling over hillocks, with soldiers (armed to the teeth) caracoling beside us. Then we had a steep descent over a very stony road into the town. A prudent person would have driven at a foot's pace. Our cabman was not prudent. He preferred to drive for all he was worth. At the steepest and narrowest place, where the precipice at the side was sheerest, a wheel came off. By every law of probability we ought to have been flung a mile. As it was, the loss of the wheel merely acted as a drag, and we alighted with scarcely an emotion, half ignorant of what had happened. Next day the same carriage arrived to take us to the battle-field. It had a brand-new wheel, but the driver remarked carelessly that the other three were rickety, and that, with the luck of another accident, he might find an excuse for further repairs.

To return to the Servian monastery. After an exciting drive through parlous places, we espied a mountain dotted with white figures. In the foreground was a strange, barrack-like edifice, as thickly populated as a newly-opened ant-hill. We had the Servian Consul-General with us and

were accordingly welcomed with enthusiasm. After a short visit to the chapel, where we kissed images and lighted candles, we were admitted to all the fun of the fair. Thousands and thousands of Servian peasants, all dressed in the most gorgeous and brilliant raiment, were packed like sardines. In the open spaces they were dancing the Servian kolo, a majestic and mediæval exercise. Long strings of them took hands and wound gracefully in and out among the mob, dancing to the strains of an old-world bagpipe. The women wore glittering aprons of silver cloth and endless collections of coins as hair ornaments, breast-plates and coats of mail. These are the dowries which every maiden displays until she is married, when she must put them away until her daughters are old enough to wear them. The effect is exquisitely barbaric, and you feel yourself hundreds of miles and years away from this sober, practical century. The kolo looks the easiest and stupidest dance imaginable, but when you have tried it you find it intricate and exciting. I believe that, if it could be introduced into England and America, it would soon cut out the cake-walk and the pas-de-quatre. There are endless varieties of steps and measures, each with some symbolical significance. And the dance has this advantage, that it can be danced anywhere, without preparation or polished floors or spacious halls. I have seen it danced with equal zest in a forest, in a crowded market-place, in the garden of a Consulate, and in the ball-room of a Queen. This was near Biarritz, at the villa of Queen Nathalie. I chanced to remark to the lady-in-waiting that it would be a missionary enterprise to introduce the kolo into Europe. She ran off to the Queen and said, "Mr. Vivian asks for a kolo." The Queen took up the idea at once and herself



PEASANT GIRLS IN OLD SERVIA.





hummed a tune to the musicians. Three or four Servians set the example and the dance was soon in full swing. The uninitiated were clumsy at first, but soon mastered the motif and rivalled the vigorous energy of their teachers.

Perhaps the most exciting of our experiences in Macedonia was our journey to Kalkandele (known to the Slavs as Tetovo), some thirty miles from Uskub, though much of the excitement was due to the fact that it was our first venture into the interior. Mrs. Vivian was only the second "European" lady to visit it within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. (All over the Balkans it is customary to speak of passing north of the Danube and Save as "going to Europe.") There were plenty of alarmists to discourage our expedition and dreadful tales were related of battle, murder and sudden death by the way. The whole length of the road was said to be flanked by Albanian villages with the most villainous reputation, and we set out half-persuaded that we should carry our lives in our hands. A friend of mine, however, had assured me that he often travelled thither without escort, and only once met with a disagreeable incident.

An hour before Kalkandele there is a dark wood beside the road; it is called "Assassins' Corner," for robbers are supposed to lurk there constantly. As my friend was passing it toward twilight, a couple of wild-looking ruffians jumped out of a thicket and seemed about to stop his carriage. Just then, in the very nick of time, a clatter of hoofs was heard behind, and two zapties (mounted police) were seen arriving in a cloud of dust. The ruffians hesitated for a moment, calculated their chances and then retired hurriedly into the woods. It is no doubt probable that they meditated violence, but

on the other hand they may have had innocent intentions. The zapties had been sent on my friend's departure, but they had only now had time to catch him up. It is by no means certain that an escort is necessary for travelling in Macedonia, but the authorities always prefer to furnish it, in case of accidents.

I found that, whenever I drove into the country without warning the authorities, zapties were sent after me, sometimes only joining me when I was half-way home. When I was starting for Kalkandele I was advised to let the Vali know, and accordingly two zapties travelled with me all the way. Opinions are divided as to their usefulness at a critical juncture, but at least they afford moral support and they look very imposing with their long guns slung over their backs. Sometimes, however, they are a source of danger rather than security.

Thus, the only disagreeable incident during this drive was provoked by their presence. We had stopped at a wayside inn and I had got out to stretch my legs. Suddenly I heard angry shouts, and I saw the zapties engaged in a brawl with eight men at the door of the inn. At first there was only a great deal of loud threatening and rough pushing, but presently revolvers were drawn, the zapties were overpowered and their guns were taken from them. Then I discovered that our dragoman had rushed back to the carriage and was calling frantically to me to run for my life. As I had been told very often that the Albanians never molest strangers, I saw no heed for hurry. But when I reached the carriage, the dragoman was so much alarmed that I had to agree to drive off. When we had proceeded a little way Mrs. Vivian wanted to stop and see the fun from a safe dis-



THE BABA OF THE BEKTASHIS.



A PROTA AND HIS FAMILY.  
*(Photographs by Mrs. Herbert Vivian.)*



tance, but he reminded us that the guns carried six hundred yards and implored us to go at full gallop. After about ten minutes the zapties came clattering up, roaring with laughter over their exploits.

It appeared that one of them owed the innkeeper a halfpenny for some oats and that the innkeeper had threatened to kill him if he did not pay. But an Albanian zaptie does not willingly yield to force and he refused indignantly. There might have been a serious fight, but one of the bystanders said to the innkeeper, "Do not hurt him while he is in attendance on strangers. That would be an unhospitable thing to do, and the Kaimakam (prefect) would take a great revenge. Wait till the zaptie comes again and then kill him if you like." "So," said the zaptie, with a very fine bow, "I owe my life to you, chelebia, and I shall never cease to be profoundly grateful."

"But, you foolish fellow," said the dragoman, "you ought not to have engaged in a brawl when you were escorting strangers. Why did you not give the man his halfpenny and have done with it?"

The zaptie made very merry over the idea. "You know how we Albanians are," he replied. "We think nothing of a fight and we are always ready to take a man's life when we quarrel with him. If it is not about a halfpenny it may be about a dog."

The dragoman, however, being of a timorous turn, saw little humour in the situation. Throughout the journey he had kept pointing to various spots and relating in awestruck tones the various calamities that had taken place there. At this bridge a woman had been murdered; in that defile there had been a fight between the police and the Albanians, with so many casualties; by yonder

mill a peasant had been waylaid and held to ransom. On cross-examination, however, many of the stories proved to be very old ones and the others became either commonplace or improbable.

Half-way to Kalkandele we met the Kaimakam, who was inspecting the repairs of the road. He bade us share his lunch under a shady tree and then invited us to travel with him the rest of the way. It was very interesting to watch his administrative methods, and even the most discontented peasants admitted that, if all officials possessed his energy, there would be very little room for complaint in the district. Whenever he met a group of peasants he stopped them and asked to see their passports.

Two men, driving a large flock of sheep, were treated in this way. They had a long story, to the effect that they were travelling by slow stages to Salonica, where they intended to ship the sheep to Constantinople. But the passports did not bear out this account and presently it appeared that they were notorious robbers, whom the police had been seeking for a long time. They were told to give up their revolvers, which they did with some reluctance. Then they were told to consider themselves under arrest, and the Kaimakam's two zapties rode up to them. They were inclined to resist, and tried to hustle the zapties, protesting loudly. When I last saw them they were being compelled to collect and drive back the stolen sheep, while the zapties followed them with drawn revolvers. Afterwards I learnt that they were bound and cast into prison.

Further on the Kaimakam stopped a group of a dozen peasants and, being dissatisfied with their passports, ordered them all to return to Kalkandele. As he took



A BEKTASHI.





away their passports and they could not go on travelling without them, they had no choice but to obey and so could be safely left at large.

“See,” exclaimed the dragoman triumphantly, “how dangerous is the state of the roads.”

“See rather,” I retorted, “how energetic the Kaimakam is in maintaining their security.”

“Ah!” was the reply, “while he is here no one dare do anything, but he cannot be everywhere at once and in his absence no one can travel without risking a murderous assault.”

From time to time we passed long files of peasants, men, women and children, with carts full of merchandise, driving cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry to and from the market at Uskub. In most cases they had to travel all through the night, yet they had no military escort. I drew the dragoman’s attention to this tangible evidence of public security. “If they could only travel at the peril of their lives,” said I, “you would surely not find them like this in such numbers every week.”

“But,” he retorted, unconvinced, “many do perish by the way,” and he fell to recapitulating romances of outrage, locating each one with suspicious precision.

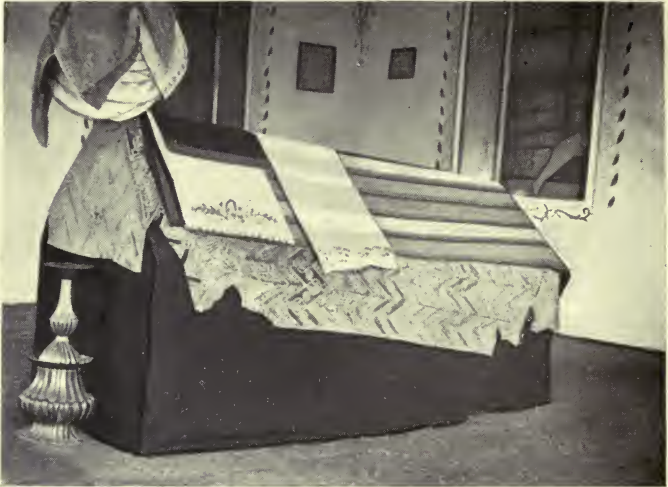
At Kalkandele I was the guest of the Servian prota, or archdeacon, the most voluble man I have ever met. His house was like a fortress. A high wall protected his smiling little garden and huge doors were heavily barricaded at sundown. If invaders forced these defences they would still be confronted by a second line of fortification: for the ground floor was merely a granary, and the dwelling-rooms could only be approached by a ladder-like staircase which led to a verandah and was isolated at night by letting down a trap-door. I asked the cause

of all these precautions, and was told much about the fanaticism of the population, who might at any time wish to raid a Christian household. I could not, however, elicit any definite instance of such conduct within recent memory, and the population seemed perfectly benevolent whenever we drove about the streets. In fact, I thought it quite unnecessary that we should have an armed escort for every stroll, but my Christian friends were very firm on the subject.

Kalkandele is even more beautiful than most Turkish towns. Every house has its garden and a rippling rivulet, tall poplars and cypresses rise up beside the glistening minarets, storks' nests are poised upon the chimneys, weather-beaten wooden dwellings of fantastic shape are relieved by the gay arrangement, always artistic, of Turkish shops, and the women are among the most gorgeously attired in all Macedonia.

Perhaps the most idyllic spot is the tekki (monastery) of the Bektashis, a heretical Moslem sect. Unlike any other Moslems, they drink wine and spirits. This is so great a heresy that the imaum (Mohammedan priest) may not even speak to them. They are very tolerant to Christians, some of whom are actually admitted to their sect. They believe in the transmigration of souls and are accordingly most kind to every animal. They are especially fond of birds, cats and horses, but do not care for dogs. Their rules for good conduct are very strict and any member who misbehaves himself is at once turned out. Beautiful peacocks, lordly storks and many strange birds strut about a wonderful wide garden around an open-air mosque. At the corner of a low verandah sits the baba or abbot cross-legged upon a divan, an old man of singularly benevolent aspect. He wears a fur-





MURAD'S TOMB AT KOSOVO.



ALBANIAN CHIFLIK.

*(Photographs by Mrs. Herbert Vivian.)*

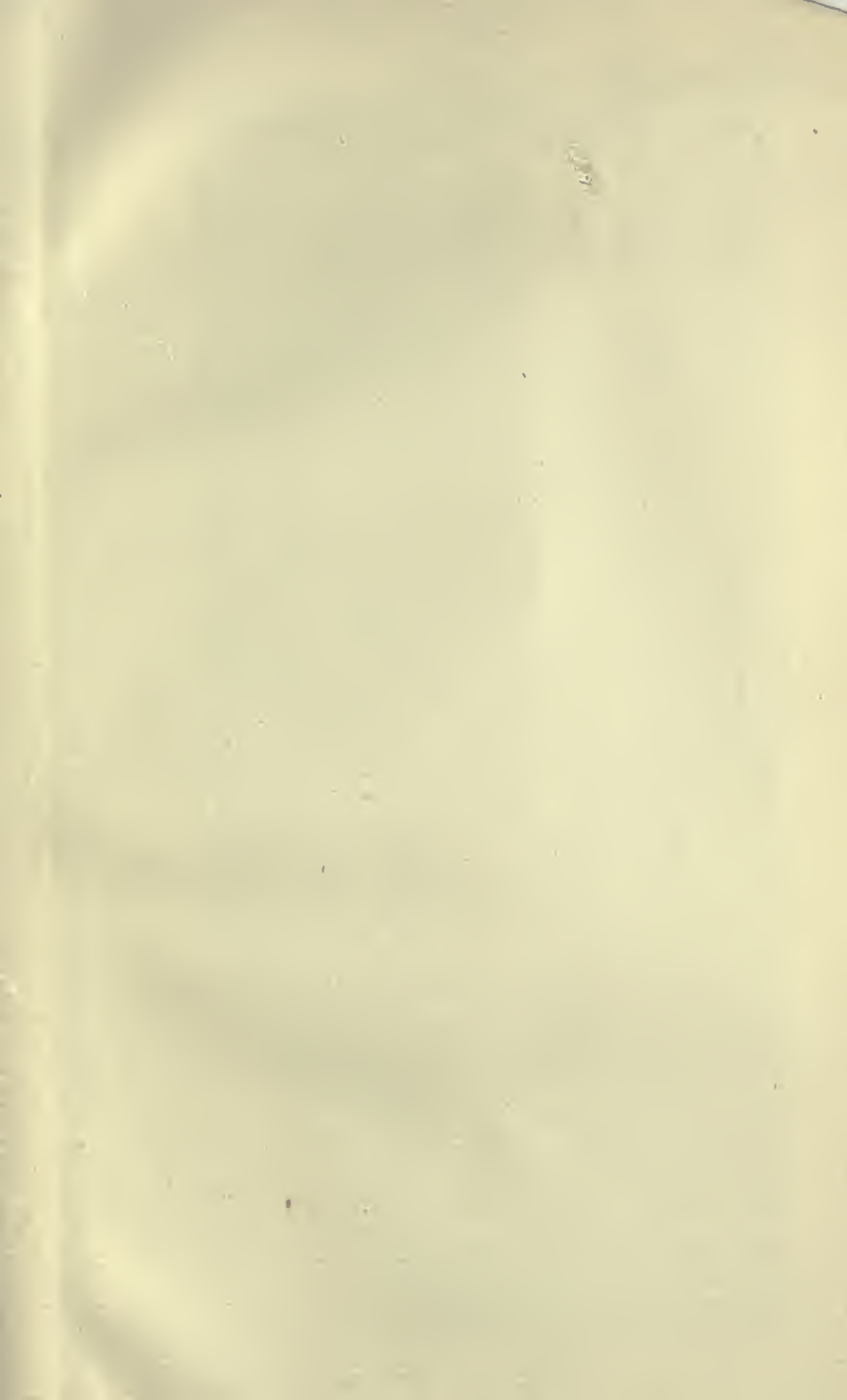
trimmed coat, and reminds us of a picture in "Lalla Rookh." He rises to receive us, and the prota kisses his hand. Then we are plied with cigarettes made of the finest monastic tobacco, with enormous peaches and luscious grapes, cups of fragrant coffee and all the delicacies of the season. Our talk is of birds and beasts, of the pleasures of life and other restful topics, and we envy this peaceful retreat as we turn again to the narrow streets thronged with armed men.

The people of Macedonia lead a mediæval life in their work, in their play, in their religion and in their semi-feudal system. The various estates are ruled autocratically by a chifji or seigneur, who enjoys extensive authority over his peasants. They are, however, to all intents and purposes owners of their homesteads, except that they owe him one-third of the yearly crops in lieu of rent. I visited the house of one of these lairds in the neighbourhood of Uskub—a strange, dreamland palace surrounded by stout high walls and looking as though it were in a chronic state of siege. The harem looked more like a prison than a ladies' bower. One reason for the gloom was the absence of the master, a very famous Albanian chief. He was summoned to Constantinople some years ago and has not been allowed to return here since. The story goes that he tried to turn his domain into a little independent principality and steadfastly refused to pay any taxes. That is a frequent aspiration in Turkey, but is rarely found to pay in the long-run. It is, indeed, typical of Macedonian lawlessness, such as the correspondents love to describe. The Macedonians are accustomed to fight their own battles, as other people did four or five centuries ago, and this gives them a different attitude towards each other and the authorities,

but it does not necessarily mean that they are dangerous people. Indeed, I found them without exception courteous and hospitable, and I have no hesitation in recommending any one who is tired of the ordinary tourist track to pay them a visit.

THE END

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