



Maglich seen from the Fushesh.
from a photograph by H. de Pury (24 June 1888)

22. *... F. Blackwelder's ...*

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THE ASCENT OF MAGLICH.

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IT was in the year 1888 (once in the spring and again in the autumn) that I visited for the first time a mountain district in the east of Europe which, possessing a strange fascination of its own, and a colouring which is already Oriental, yet by its hills and valleys calls to mind the marvellous beauty of the Alps. The railway had carried me swiftly through the smiling valley of the Bosna to Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The cliffs of the numberless peaks, which form a semicircle round the town, were reddened by the rays of the evening sun, while the slender white minarets of a hundred mosques, rising above a wilderness of houses, glittered in the same brilliant light. Some hours later, from a hillock not far from the highest point of the carriage-road over the Ivan Pass, which leads from the river basin of the Bosna to that of the Narenta, there arose before me a mighty mountain chain—the Prenj Planina*—crowned by a long line of bold rocky pinnacles, which were surrounded by snow-fields of dazzling brilliancy—a picture like those I have so often gazed on in the limestone ranges of Tyrol and Bavaria. I was not alone on this journey, for I was accompanied by Emile Rey, of Courmayeur, who is well known to my readers. To both of us this wonderful spectacle was a revelation—not perhaps so much because we were unaware that the scenery of the district was fine and interesting, but rather because we were unprepared for the great scale and the alpine character of the Alps of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Now we looked forward with delight to many pleasant days of wanderings through these splendid mountains.

* 'Planina' is the local name for a mountain *massif*.

We made our first excursion into the group of the Prenj Planina, ascending the very next day (June 10), the peak nearest at hand, a broad-topped summit, which rises above a tremendous rock-wall, and which, seen from the Ivan Pass, is of most striking appearance. The new ordnance map names it Cetinje, and assigns to it a height of 6,825 feet. This visit to the Prenj Planina having been a beautiful introduction to our explorations in the Alps of the Herzegovina, I now felt strongly drawn towards the southern parts of the district, where rise the highest summits, seen by us in the blue distance from the peak we ascended. These form two ranges, which run parallel to each other, and in a N.W. direction, through Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and finally melt into the Alps, of which they form the last S.E. spur.

Our way lay along the upper course of the Narenta as far as Ulog, and then over the Obrnje (whence beautiful views are gained) and the stony plateaux of the Morenje to the Gackopolje.* These lofty cretaceous limestone ('Karst') plateaux, the surface of which has been curiously moulded by the powerful action of water and air, cover, in the Herzegovina, a vast extent of ground, and are typical of this country. The elevated plain of Gacko (2,150 feet) is shut in by the two parallel ridges which, as mentioned above, stretch from Montenegro towards the N.W. It is a strange region of broad, treeless, generally barren plains, surrounded by a circle of low-looking grey-coloured hills which open out like a wide door in the Duga Pass (2,035 feet) to the S.E. This plain is watered by the Mushica, one of those remarkable rivers which vanish utterly in the fissured plateaux, and are characteristic of the Herzegovina. It is formed by the springs in the Chemerno range, swelled by numerous affluents, and disappears after a short course in the clefts of the Bjelashica Planina.

Gacko—the ancient Metokia, and the scene till recent times of those bloody feuds which throve for centuries in these parts—was a pleasant halting-place for a day. On June 19 we found ourselves again on the watershed between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, on the Chemerno Pass (4,400 feet), and we were now quite close to the main objects of our journey. From this pass the traveller sees a broad and lofty wall—the Volujak *massif*—the highest summit of which, the Vlasulja, attains the height of 7,674 feet. On

* From Gacko there is an excellent highroad to Nevesinje and Mostar.

the right rises the arête of the Lebrshnik (6,099 feet), the spurs of which come down to the track over the pass, while between these two ranges tower the picturesque cliffs of the Kuk (5,961 feet), a most remarkable rocky fortress.

We had reached the pass by traversing the dreary, stony slopes above Gacko, composed of chalk clays, marly slates, and cretaceous limestones, and we were, therefore, all the better pleased by the grateful sight of the meadows on the Chemerno plateau—a large zone of Flysch—which form, as it were, the pedestal on which stands the great *massif* of the Volujak. It was a glorious evening, and the mighty wall of jurassic and triassic limestones, frequently streaked by snow-bands, was tinged alternately red and gold by the sun. A light mist floated over the gap in the mountain range, which marked the position of the gorge through which the Sutjeska—formed by the union of the streams rushing down from the other side of the plateau—forces its way to the Drina.

On June 20 we climbed the Vlasulja, which is in the very centre of the grandest scenery of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Alps. From the S.E. the main chain stretches in a mighty semicircle towards Maglich (7,831 feet), the culminating point of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Alps. The steep rocky walls of Maglich rise rather to the N. of the main mass of the Vlasulja, to which it is joined by a ridge running towards the S., which on its way bends now to the W. and now to the E. From this chain radiate, in a parallel direction towards the N.W., a number of rugged minor ridges, the crests of which are of nearly uniform height. Through these lateral ranges the waters of the Sutjeska run at the bottom of deeply-cut defiles, which offer a succession of magnificent scenes, amidst which we passed the day after our ascent of the Vlasulja.

The descent from the Chemerno plateau takes the traveller first to the opening of the valley through which runs the Sucheska, the chief source of the Sutjeska. The broad Sucheska glen rises by a succession of plateaux up to the main chain, the crags of the Kuk forming the most conspicuous object at the upper end of the valley. Lower down, and before one reaches the bank of the stream in the valley, now becoming narrower, one is astonished by a glimpse of a fine rocky peak rising above the forest-clad slopes of the lateral valley of the Jabushnica, which joins that of the Sutjeska at Grab. A more complete view of the dense forests of this side glen is obtained from a spur, over which the path climbs, on the right bank of the Sutjeska.

After passing Grab we approached the mountain wall (having the Sedlo peak on the right, and the precipices of the Tovarnica on the left), which seems to shut in the head of the valley, and passed by through the great gate of the Prosjechenica Vrata, which has been pierced by the stream of the Sutjeska. There is scarcely room, besides the waters of the river, for the small path between the walls of the gorge, which are barely fifty paces apart. While the evening sun still gilded the cliffs above, the dank gorge below was already in deep shadow. On the left hand, in particular, the bare rock precipices were terribly grand, and descended nearly perpendicularly to the stony bed, along which bubbled the clear waters of the stream. This gate once possessed its 'keeper' or 'guardian,'—'Vratar in Sutiska,'—a name given in fifteenth-century documents to the castle, the ruined walls of which can still be seen on the edge of a cliff of the Volujak. Opposite this castle, and on the left bank of the stream, there was another smaller one perched on a projecting spur. Duke Stephen (1435–1460) established a customs station here, and bitter complaints were made by the men of Ragusa of attacks made by its occupants on the silver treasure which was being transported by the merchants of that great town. Both castles were hewn out of the living rock, and accessible by a rugged path along which one person only could pass at a time. A couple of men, armed only with boulders of rock, could easily hold this defile against a whole army, and it was also customary to bar the way by means of a huge iron chain.*

We then passed through narrow defiles, the rock-walls on

* The Austro-Hungarian Government contemplates the construction of a carriage road from Gacko over the Chemerno Pass and through the Sutjeska gorges as far as Fotcha, in connection with the main roads in Central Bosnia. Although this road will bring the mountaineers easily to the very foot of the great Herzegovinian range, and enable travellers in general to visit the most beautiful and picturesque scenery of the country in a comfortable way, it is intended in the first place to serve commercial interests. For even in the Middle Ages this route was extremely important, since—despite the descriptions which Ramberti (1533) gives us of the ill-treatment of travellers here, whether at the hands of custom officers, or of robbers pure and simple—the merchants of the Adriatic coast transported by it their wares from Ragusa to Bosnia, to Servia, and even to Constantinople, and it is astonishing to read how in the sixteenth and seventeenth century the French ambassadors to the Sublime Porte reached their destination by taking this route from the coast.

either side now closing in, now opening out. Here and there wooded slopes relieved the barren rock scenery. The heights, composed of Dolomitic rock, were crowned by the most fantastic needles, spikes, and towers. The path crossed the stream repeatedly; the stream itself foamed far below, while high above hung slender bridges. At one spot, Suha (2,376 feet), where the valley opened out a little, hidden in a thick forest and overshadowed by the ghostly-looking limestone cliffs, there is a lonely white house, standing in quite the most striking position in these marvellous gorges. It is occupied by gendarmes, and here, as frequently in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, we took up our night quarters. Next morning I retraced my steps through the gorges for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. as far as Grab, so that I might see them not only by the evening twilight, but in the full blaze of the sunshine, and might at my leisure take a number of photographic views. By midday we were back again, and set about making our preparations for the ascent of Maglich.

It was three o'clock P.M. when we left Suha—rather a large party in all. In the Alps of Bosnia and the Herzegovina the start for an ascent has its own special characteristics. First of all come the small mountain ponies, which can be made use of as long as there is any sort of a path. Then the local guides and porters, all attired in their picturesque national dress, afford a curious spectacle, while the importance and the unusual nature of the undertaking is shown by the presence of two gendarmes, who are assigned to the traveller by the authorities, to act partly as guards, partly as interpreters. All these men and horses make up an imposing cavalcade when it sets forth on its journey.

We turned up the narrow side glen, which opens out to the S.E. on to Suha, and is drained by the Sushichka stream. It is enclosed by the lateral ridges, which descend from the main chain in a N.W. direction, and are pierced by the Sutjeska. The ridge to the north of the Sushichka glen is called Prievor. The first bit of our way was level, and lay by the side of the clear stream; we soon found ourselves in a dense forest, and then began to climb up steep slopes, by means of the zigzags of the military bridle-path. We had first to reach the great rocky tooth, of which a glimpse could be had high above through the trees, standing out against the bright blue sky. Higher up gigantic fir-trees surrounded us. Great trunks of fallen monarchs often lay in a tangled mass across the path, and compelled us to force our way through the forest itself. Further

on we went along the crest of a spur falling steeply on both sides towards wooded depths; and $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours after the start we finally emerged from the forest. We found ourselves at the very base of the mighty rock wall of Maglich, towering up alone in solitary majesty, and crowned by two distinct peaks. We here looked on the broad side of the mountain, which is made up of a succession of terraces on the great wall, each defined by a sharp descending ridge. Not much snow can lie on this steep wall, which is furrowed by many broad *débris couloirs* coming straight down to the green pastures of the little Prieior plateau.

At a short distance in front of us, and amidst a few trees, stood the military guardhouse of Prieior, nearly on the crest of the Prieior ridge, and immediately at the foot of Maglich. It is one of a number which have been established along the frontier between Montenegro on the one hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other, for the purpose of keeping watch and ward. We had been seen by its occupants, so that the sergeant in command came forward to meet us, and gave us a very friendly welcome. Prieior is the prettiest and cleanest guardhouse that I came across in Bosnia or the Herzegovina. We were conducted to the tidy room set apart for the use of strangers, which, with its wooden wainscoting, looked most inviting. The guardhouse is well provided with all necessities, and by adding our supplies to what we obtained there, we managed to prepare a grand supper.

Before evening fell we strolled out to a hillock near the house in order to examine Maglich, and the route by which we proposed to ascend it. The sergeant in command of the guardhouse informed me that in order to reach the summit of the peak it was necessary to skirt round it towards the north, and near Ulobich, to reach its east slope, which was less steep than its other sides, and by which the summit could be easily reached. This was the route taken by the surveyors when constructing the ordnance map. However, I had not the slightest intention of taking this line; not only because it would have been necessary to go a long way into Montenegrin territory (and I did not wish to go there armed with my photographic apparatus), but because it involved making a very considerable circuit, and a direct route by the rocks of the N.W. face—not hitherto climbed—offered far greater interest. Rey and I saw at once that an ascent straight up from the guardhouse was relatively easy for persons accustomed to climbing in the Alps, but we had to consider,



Chain of Maglich seen from Prievar.

Heliogravure. V. Blodkengren. Vienna from a photograph by M. de Dicky (24. June 1888.)

also, the porters, who were to carry the photographic apparatus, and our other native companions. So I settled on a route which, keeping to the right of the summit, aimed at gaining a notch in the rocks, and thence led up to the top over a small portion of the broad face of the mountain, which could not be seen from below. To the untrained eye the rocks of the central part of this route seem sufficiently steep and inaccessible, and we were repeatedly assured of the utter impossibility of proceeding in that direction. We contented ourselves with replying that we simply meant to try this route.

After paying all right and proper attention to the splendid rock wall of Maglich, we could not help admiring the fine mountain girdle which incloses the little Prievor plateau. From Maglich the range bends round to the Volujak group in a succession of steep walls, streaked with broad bands of snow. A jagged ridge, stretching on our right far towards the N.W., fell away sheerly on all sides. Below the semicircle which rose in the background were thick forests. There it was said that a lovely tarn reflected the mountains in its limpid waters, and certainly the formation of this cirque-like end of the Sushichka glen points clearly to the existence of a lake-basin.

Turning round towards the direction in which the mountain-wall opens out on either side, and where in shadowy depths the stream of the deeply-cut Sushichka glen flows to the N.W., the eye ranged over a wide prospect. On the other side of the clearly-distinguished channel of the Sutjeska one sees a number of lateral ridges descending from the main arête, the most conspicuous of which is the picturesque and precipitous Treshkovac. Undulating plains join each ridge to the other. The long-drawn evening shadows were thrown athwart them, and a grey mist hid more and more the wonderful variety in the shape of these ridges and also of their covering. A wooden cross and a small inclined scaffold crown the hill on which we were standing, and mark the resting-place of some Montenegrin brigand who had been shot here. Following out his thoughts, our head guide, a typical Herzegovinian in appearance, leant against it and reminded us that the mountain panorama unrolled before us stretches, far off, along the frontiers of Bosnia and the Herzegovina.

At 4.30 A.M., on June 25, our party quitted the guardhouse. It had been augmented by four men belonging to the garrison, so that ten in all began to mount silently over the

meadows wet with a heavy dew. We steered straight for the wall of Maglich, and soon came to a gigantic slope of débris which surrounds its base, and which, owing to the constant motion caused by every step, was rather unpleasant to climb. We kept steadily in the direction that I had fixed on the evening before, and made for the gap in the ridge to the right of the summit of Maglich. Mounting obliquely over the débris slopes, and making steady progress, a short final ascent brought us in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, at 6 A.M., to this gap. We then climbed along the side of a grassy buttress, something like a projecting pulpit, which on every other slope fell away precipitously. From this point we had a magnificent view of the mountain girdle which we had seen from Prievor, and which was now revealed to us in all its extent, the little lake shining far below.

After a short halt, of which I took advantage to photograph the scene, we resumed the ascent. Our way now lay over the broad side of the mountain, the rocks of which appeared undoubtedly to be rather steep, as they were much foreshortened. But we could see quite well several grassy ledges or shelves as well as the cliffs between them, and these made it possible to advance without hesitation. We had first to work through a chasm in the rocks. I grasped the firm rock with joy, while Rey remained a little behind to help up several of our companions with the rope. Then came grass slopes which led to a steep corner, where one had to climb up the rocks. Some of our men refused to attempt this bit, and made a great round in order to avoid it. I was delighted to follow Rey. An hour and a half later, at 8 A.M., we reached the broad top of the first peak of Maglich, where we met four Montenegrin frontier guards, who had watched our ascent with the greatest attention and amazement. Here we made a short halt, and then I ascended the second peak, which rose immediately behind us and was distinctly higher than the other. From below it took the shape of a fine and bold rock pinnacle, but after twenty minutes' climb I found myself on the summit, sitting by the great cairn built by the surveyors. It fell away steeply on all sides, and so gave one the impression—a perfectly accurate one—that it was a point which dominated every other hill and valley around. Close at hand one's attention was arrested by the savage splendour of Maglich itself, by the walls which fall in precipices towards Prievor, with their jagged ridges and many pinnacles, as well by the S.E. face clad with steep snow-slopes. The surrounding mountains, the chain running

towards the Volujak group, the ridges stretching to the N. of this mountain mass—all displayed magnificent mountain shapes. The Sutjeska Valley was bathed in the clear sunlight, as well as the more distant Drina Valley far away towards Fotcha. The panorama unrolled before our eyes, indeed, extended to an immeasurable distance.

The day was beautifully clear, and all the peaks were sharply defined and distinct—the more distant seemed to melt into the plains, which as it were swam in the air. I felt an extreme pleasure in gazing on a sight at once so strange, so entrancing, and so rich in manifold forms of beauty. Far away rose up the summits of the Prenj Planina, with which I had become pretty well acquainted during my wanderings, and I joyfully greeted the peak whence I had for the first time seen the ridges and walls of Maglich. In the panorama there was a striking contrast between the bare grey plateaux and the dark forest, which became huger and huger as it stretched away in the N.E. towards the green fields of Bosnia. The meadows and pastures in all their glory of yellow and green were in bold relief against the pale limestone of the Planinas, on the crest of which glittered the silver of the snows.

Towards the S.E., too, a new world revealed itself. There was Montenegro, or the 'Land of the Black Mountain,' lying silent and dusky before me. High above the swelling plateaux, uncut by any deep valleys, with scanty forests and hardly any green covering, towered the mighty rock-wall of the Dormitor, crowned by a triple summit, and clothed in shining snow. A light mist lay along the horizon, blotting out all details of the distant view, and just allowing a glimpse of a glittering riband of water—the Piva.

I consider this view, which resembled a relief map far more than those usually obtained from summits in the Alps, to be entirely apart from the latter class of views, and this difference, which is already striking on all moderately elevated standpoints in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Alps, even when the distant view is limited, is particularly noticeable in the case of the higher peaks. In Bosnia and the Herzegovina we have not the great alpine groups connected by high passes, or that array of peaks and ranges where the higher peaks in the background tower over those in the foreground and fill the horizon—but we do find in Bosnia and the Herzegovina mountain *massifs* separated from each other by wide plateaux, or by valley-like undulating plains, each group being built, as it were, several stories high, bare grey walls,

of which the crests vary little in height, and no conspicuous detached summits.

I spent four happy hours on the two summits of Maglich, now making observations or photographing, now drinking in the beauty of the scene. It was pleasantly warm on the top, and even at midday a delightful breeze tempered the burning rays of the sun. My companions remained on the first summit, lying on the scanty grass which covered it, and making fierce attacks on the provisions. A small chamois slunk past, but the Montenegrins at once pursued him amid the rocky ridges of Maglich, and finally succeeded in killing him, for these sons of the mountains have a steady aim and a keen eye. Before we started downwards I took a photograph of the whole party, amid a perfect blaze of guns and bayonets, cutlasses and sabres, with the peak of Maglich in the background; and anyone looking at this picture will scarcely believe that this party of men, armed to the teeth, had come up to the summit of Maglich with a peaceful object in view—the advancing of the knowledge of one of the last spurs thrown out by the great chain of the Alps.

It was noon when we started for the descent, our immediate destination being the little lake already mentioned, which I desired to visit and to photograph. Had it not been for this wish of mine, Rey and I would gladly have parted from our companions and descended straight down the rocks to the Prievor plateau, for this route is, as we judged from below and saw clearly from above, quite feasible. It would certainly take a shorter time than the route by which we ascended, and I have no doubt that those who repeat the ascent will, if they are experienced alpine climbers, be unable to deny themselves the pleasure of accomplishing this short scramble up the rocks of Maglich.

We followed the crest of the Maglich ridge to the S., scarcely descending at all, until we reached a point which is immediately above the lake, and near which the wall rises behind it. Hence we enjoyed a most enchanting view of the lake lying in a deep hollow at our very feet. The slopes fell steeply down towards it, composed partly of débris, partly of snow, all grey and white, and blinding in the glare of the sun. Below everything was green, and the waters of the lake a deep blue. The descent was steep, but the snow-slopes were still hard, so that Rey and I slid joyfully down them, while our companions watched us, at first with fear and wonder. By two o'clock we were on the shores of a typical little mountain lake. The walls rose

majestically above it, whether in dark rock-terraces or brilliant snow-slopes, and were reflected in the still blue waters of the lake. The snow came nearly down to the shore, covered with luxuriant grass, while down the valley the splendid forest held sway. A tiny peninsula stretched out into the lake and formed a break in its perfectly oval form.

How a sheet of water lights up a landscape, and what a magical charm there is in a beautiful lake! I cannot resist the temptation: the water, coming from the snows hard by, is icy cold; our Herzegovinians declared that the lake is accursed, the abode of evil spirits which draw men down into its depths, or ensnare those who try to spy them out in their mysterious dwelling-place; but all their remonstrances were in vain, I could not resist, and a few instants later I, and then Rey, were cleaving our way through the icy water.

Before leaving this lovely lake I took a photograph of this pearl of all the beautiful mountain scenery in Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Then traversing the forest we came, after a short descent which marks one of the valley terraces, to a second basin in which only a little water remained. To the left the rock-wall came down nearly perpendicularly to this second lakelet.

We were now in the uppermost part of the Sushichka glen, and had to leave the impassable bed of the stream for the slopes on the right hand, in order to climb up again to Prievor. This ascent lay partly through the forest, but mainly over débris, up which a faintly marked track (which we failed to find at once) led, under a burning sun, in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours from the lake to the crest of the Prievor ridge, where we caught sight of the pleasant guardhouse, lying in the shade of the forest.

Next day, instead of returning to Suha by the same way we had taken coming up, we left Prievor about noon, and made a bend round to the head of the Peruchica glen, which descends to the Sutjeska parallel with the Sushichka glen. On reaching the level of the former glen, in the midst of dense forests, we followed the stream—then very nearly dry—and mounted the right-hand or N.E. slope of the valley, in order to gain the notch known as the Drakosh Pass (4,213 feet). In about two hours from Prievor this point is gained, and a beautiful view of Maglich bursts upon the traveller. From this side its isolated and commanding position can be well realised. By a strange effect of light—the sun was high in the heavens, and shone straight down on the rock-wall—the

rock and snow seemed to melt into one another, all details being indistinguishable, while the sharp lines of the two ridges of the final cone rose up all the more distinctly against the blue and cloudless sky. On the other side of the pass one looks down into the lower Sutjeska valley, whither the stream descends, after forcing its way through the great gorge. It was a smiling landscape, green and wooded, with groups of houses dotted here and there, amongst which the village of Tientistje, with the military guardhouse above, could be recognised.

We did not cross the Drakosh Pass to the other side, whence a short descent leads to Tientistje, but soon plunged again into the thick forest of the Peruchica glen. The faint path was lost and then found again. We steered towards the Prievar ridge, but we had a long way to go down. Crossing the valley and several brooks, with hardly any water in them, we pushed on steadily. Then came a short pull uphill, but though the path was steep it was always in the shade of the trees of the great forest. Finally, we reached the crest of the Prievar ridge near the rock tooth, which on our way up we had found to be the point to aim at. As we issued out of the forest, the wonderful landscape to the north appeared again before us as though by magic. Then we ran quickly down to Suha, which was reached, in two hours from the Drakosh Pass, at 5 p.m. We did not take long to pack, and got under weigh pretty soon again.

A little beyond the small plain on which the Suha guard-house stands the valley closes in again, and the path begins to rise. One more look backwards at Suha, and then we enter the last of the gorges. The path lies on the right bank of the stream, the foaming waters of which swirl round the base of the nearly perpendicular wall on the opposite side, which is of the usual Dolomitic colour, and is clothed with a few scattered trees only. Numberless roaring torrents dash down on the right-hand side to join their waters with those of the Sutjeska. At the end of the gorge we crossed the stream, and here a beautifully engineered bridle path leads upward once more. At its highest point, and before commencing the descent towards Tientistje, we halted at a sharp turn. On one side the eye ranged at will over the lower part of the valley, while looking back one gazed into the depths of the winding Sutjeska gorges, and over steep wooded walls, which we saw from top to bottom. A deep gully, stretching far back, and from the head of which springs a roaring torrent in a series of waterfalls, breaks through the

walls, which higher up gradually open out. Through the cleft thus formed we catch sight of a rocky peak, which lifts itself high into the air. Twilight reigns in the gorges; the wooded cleft is filling with blue shadows, above which, lit up by the rays of the departing sun, the graceful outline of this solitary peak, all the brighter and all the better defined by reason of the sharp contrast between light and shade, stands out boldly. It is Maglich to which we are now bidding farewell!

Hints to Travellers.

When I contributed in 1888 a short note on my trip to Bosnia and the Herzegovina to the 'Oesterreichische Alpen-Zeitung,' the Editor, Herr H. Hess, gave it the title of 'A New Alpine Playground' and prefixed to it the following introductory phrases:—'An extensive mountain region, the splendid scenery—especially Alpine scenery—of which had hitherto been completely unknown, has been made accessible to travellers by the occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Austrian soldiers, after having put down by force of arms the population, which had become half-savage in consequence of a long period of anarchy, have constructed railways and roads, organised means of communication, and bestowed on this land, so sorely tried by its varying fortunes, the blessings of peace and of civilisation. A survey has been carried out under extraordinary difficulties and in an amazingly short space of time, and the map which is the result affords us accurate information about the country. Thus this region, which abounds in beautiful scenery, is now ready for the enterprising traveller, and for many seasons the charm of exploring an unknown mountain district and of conquering virgin peaks is secured to the mountaineer. The mysterious attraction of a yet unknown mountain world still holds good in the case of the greater part of these regions.'

Hitherto the information published regarding Bosnia and the Herzegovina has not in any way related specially to their mountain regions, so that not only have the impressions of my excursions therein some value in themselves, but they have been permanently secured for the world by reason of several hundreds of photographs which I was able to take, and which are faithful representations of the truth.

The principal objects to be visited during a journey in Bosnia and the Herzegovina fall (unless in certain special cases) under one or other of three heads—

1. *The mountain regions.* The districts best worth visiting are the Treskavica group (very rich in lakes and easily accessible from Serajevo, from which it is not very distant), the beautiful Prenj Planina (which can be taken on the way from Serajevo to Mostar together with the grand defile of the Narenta), and to the south the Volujak and Maglich groups (the culminating points of the district, at the base of which are the superb Sutjeska gorges).

2. In *Central and Eastern Bosnia* the roads over the Romanja

THE MAGLICH & VOLUJAK, IN THE BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN ALPS.

from the Survey of the Austro-Hungarian Military Staff and the observations of M. de Déchy.



Planina and the Hranjen to Rogatica and Vishegrad, as well as the upper valleys of the Drina and the Lim, are to be specially recommended to travellers. The valleys are particularly beautiful in these parts. Apart from certain barren and stony bits the magnificent forests of Bosnia are here seen at their best. The stream roars at the bottom of a narrow gorge, above rise the splendid woods, while from the ridges one gains beautiful views of the Herzegovinian mountains, and of Dormitor, far away in Montenegro. In the upper Drina valley the traveller will find splendid scenery, especially gorges with white walls resembling the cañons of America.

3. In *Western Bosnia* the neighbourhood of Jajce and the falls of the Pliva are one of the chief glories of the country. From a well-wooded mountain glen, at the head of which the Pliva forms several lakes, it then descends in many branches through the bed it has carved for itself in the rocks, and its foaming waters fall in a narrow cleft, the savage aspect of which forms a strong contrast to the peaceful aspect of the valley higher up. Both falls and the upper course of the river can be well seen from the opposite side of the valley. No waterfall in the Alps can be compared with the falls of the Pliva, so singular are they, and none, although greater as regards the quantity of water and the height of the fall, can be ranked above it for beauty and picturesque scenery.

So far as regards the conveniences for travel in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, they are certainly superior to those which existed 20 or 25 years ago in many valleys of Dauphiné and the Tyrol. Travellers will probably enter the country either from the north by way of the valley of the Bosna, or at Mostar, coming from the Adriatic coast, and will leave it on the opposite side. Brod, on the banks of the Save, is the spot where the lines from Vienna, Budapest, and Trieste unite, and from whence the railway runs to Serajevo. On the Adriatic coast Metkovich is the starting-point of the railway to Mostar and to near Konjica, the line being in course of construction thence to Serajevo, so that very soon there will be a continuous iron road right through the country. The excellent Austrian Lloyd steamers afford easy means of communication between Metkovich, Trieste, and the towns along the Dalmatian coast. Magnificent roads, generally supplied with a regular service of diligences, score the land in every direction, and a network of telegraph lines has also been constructed by the Government. In the chief towns there are inns which are up to the requirements of a not too exacting traveller. In the more exposed parts of the country, along the frontier, the traveller can now find shelter in the gendarmes' barracks and the military guard-houses, but soon the Austrian Government will provide shelter houses for travellers, like the Club huts of the Austrian and German Alpine Clubs in the Alps of the Tyrol, Salzburg, and Carinthia, and will doubtless be aided in so doing by the Alpine Societies of the Empire. Serajevo, Konjica, Mostar, Gacko, and Fotcha are the best headquarters.

As to papers, the traveller should take with him an ordinary passport, and for the present an official recommendation addressed to the local authorities would be of great service, although in case of

need the authorities would readily provide any educated traveller with all he requires, even though he had no such letter with him.* An excellent and detailed map (on a scale of $\frac{1}{75000}$) is in process of publication by the Austrian Ordnance Office.†

I strongly recommend early summer as the best season for a journey in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, from about the middle of May to the end of June, or even earlier if they are approached from the Adriatic, for Dalmatia and its lovely islands will form an excellent introduction to the trip, and then as summer advances one can always proceed towards the cooler regions of Bosnia. In early summer too the meadows and forests are beautifully green, not having been yet burnt up by the sun, and there is snow on the peaks, which enhances their beauty and offers no serious obstacle to ascending them. Summer itself is generally too hot, except in the mountain districts. The finest and clearest days are said to come in the autumn, although in June—after a nearly rainless May—I myself experienced extremely fine weather, and in autumn, by September 20, came in for a complete change in the weather, with a more or less constant downpour of rain.

A knowledge of German is quite sufficient for a journey in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, though in the direction of Mostar and Dalmatia some acquaintance with Italian would be very convenient.

As yet Western civilisation has not destroyed the peculiar manners and customs of the inhabitants of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Although these lands are physically not very distant from the Alps, and a short journey only is required to reach them, the traveller will enter a region which in every respect is a foreign one, and this only increases the pleasure of a visit. 'Here is' (as I said in my note in the '*Oesterreichische Alpen-Zeitung*,' after my first visit in the early summer of 1888)—'here is a land which may be visited with profit by anyone, a land endowed with numberless natural beauties, and full of semi-Oriental characteristics; while the mountaineer may discover new routes, over many a precipitous rock wall and many a sharp arête, and so up numberless peaks which are either but little known or have as yet not felt the foot of man on their lofty crests.'

* For members of the Royal Geographical Society of London and of the English Alpine Club the writer of these lines would gladly procure from the Ministerial department in Vienna which has special charge of the affairs of Bosnia and the Herzegovina such letters of recommendation, and begs that all applications may be addressed to him through the authorities of the two societies named above.

† Any sheet of this map, as well as a key map, may be procured from Lechner, the well-known bookseller and publisher in Vienna (31, Graben), and may be seen in the map-room of the Royal Geographical Society, 1 Savile Row, W.