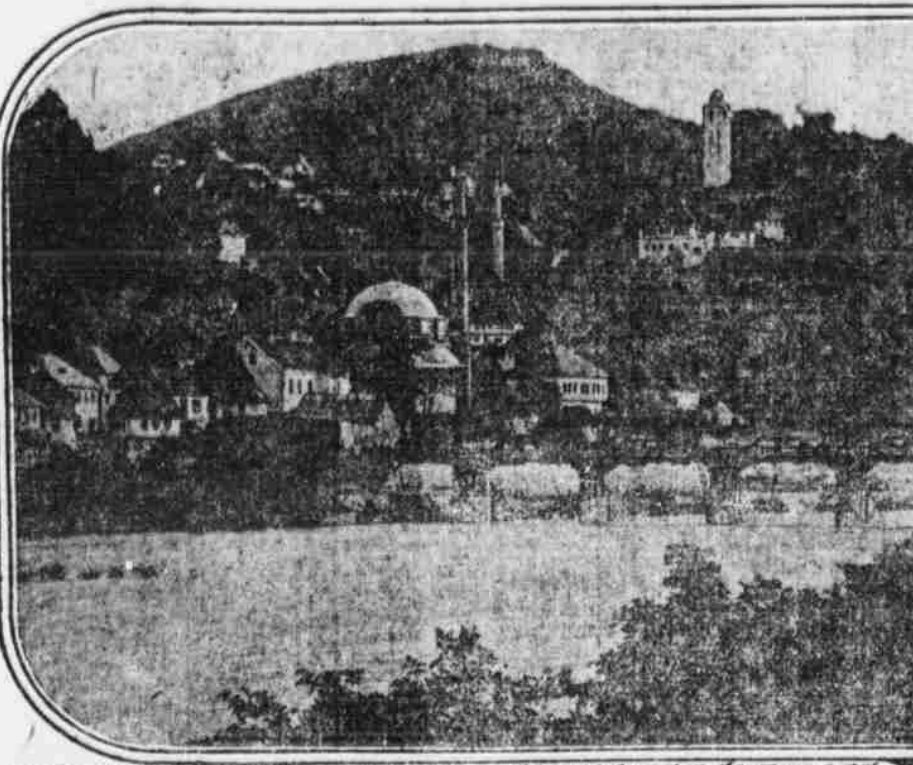


Gusinje and Plava Are Two European Cities No Stranger May Enter

GUSTINJE, July 15.—The forbidden cities of Gusinje and Plava, which some but Albanians of the clan of Gusinje or their "blood brothers" may enter, may yet share the fate of Lhasa, and their mysteries be included in the tourists' itinerary. This will mean the final settlement of the disputed Montenegro-Albania boundary, a perplexing south European question which diplomats have dawdled for years. The Balkan representative at The Hague peace conference declared that this is demanded in the interest of the peace of south Europe, while the foreign ministers of Italy and Austria, who have just held a meeting at Desio, Italy, urged it in the

her, so she resolved to take it upon herself, and by slow degrees she persistently followed her brother-in-law over Albania and into Macedonia, always awaiting an opportunity to strike the blow. This came on one afternoon in Skodra when she saw her husband's assassin walking on the main street of the town. She took her husband's pistol from her belt and shot him dead. Having killed the murderer, she went straight to his parents' home, almost a week's journey away, and shot them both dead also. Having thus avenged her husband's death, the woman returned to her tribe. Nothing was ever done with her, for it was considered that she had only done her duty.

mountain. In the clear atmosphere of the country the two towns can be discerned distinctly from the Montenegrin upland far to the west. In the light of the evening sun they present most beautiful pictures, with their slender white minarets and domed mosques. No one has yet succeeded in getting a very satisfactory description of the place. But the few men who have escaped say that a nearer approach takes away much of the enchantment that a distant view gives. The people are fanatical in their attachment to their homes and their fidelity to encourage-



WHERE PEOPLE OF THE SACRED CITIES GET SUPPLIES AND SETTLE THEIR FEUDS.

interest of the trade which the civilized world is endeavoring to establish with Albania. When the Berlin treaty, which gave Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria and otherwise cut up the Turkish empire, was signed, it was agreed to reward Montenegro with the two cities of Gusinje and Plava. The Montenegrins, about 10,000 strong, under the leadership of Marko Drekalovic, flushed with their victory over the mighty Turks, marched to Gusinje to take the first fruits of their success. They got within sight of the town when the Albanians swooped down on them from the mountain tops, and their decimated troops beat a hasty retreat for home. Since then various efforts have been made to survey the territory, but as the Gusinjsats sat around on rocks and took pot shots at chainmen and levellers, nobody cared to continue long on the job. Representatives of the powers finally succeeded in arranging a meeting with the warlike clansmen. The former got as far as the gates of Gusinje, where they were met by a delegation and told to run for their lives, and that if any of them were seen within the neighborhood in twenty-four hours their heads would ornament spikes on the city walls. The only fruit of this expedition was a picture of the gates of the city, the only one that was ever made of any part of the city. The powers then gave Montenegro the Albanian seaport of Duletsko. The boundary line remained undisturbed, and the warlike powers of Europe, retained the possession of their own. Albania, which is within twenty-four hours' journey of Paris, is one of the anomalies of government of Europe. It is a country of which as little is known as of central Africa; in fact, the maps of the Balkan are more accurate than those of Albania. The people are a race of reckless, vigilant warriors, divided into clans and tribes, and waging an incessant internecine strife. Life is worth the price of a cartridge, is the way that an Albanian once expressed it.

Although Albania is nominally a part of the Turkish empire the Gusinjsats acknowledge no allegiance to the sultan or to any other power. "The Gusinjsats accept no foreign rule or no masters save their own clansmen," was the way the head men of Gusinje put it. In religion they are chiefly Mohammedans, although many of them are very devout members of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches. The reason for the majority being Mohammedans is found in the fact that members of that faith have more liberal privileges in the bearing of arms and serving as soldiers. Warfare ranks higher than religion in the heart of the Albanian. Members of the sultan's own bodyguard have been chosen from these people because of their unquestioned valor and faithfulness. But they have taken particular pains all along to impress upon Turkey that its rule is merely by sufferance. They have killed several Turkish kaimakans, or resident governors, who had displeased them, and of recent years no representative from the Porte has even made an appearance of governing them. The representative of the Porte who was sent to try to persuade them to give up their sacred cities to Montenegro was murdered, and his head was sent to the nearest Turkish governor with a warning that the next man sent on such a mission would meet a similar fate. The two cities which they hold sacred and which have always been forbidden to outsiders are situated at the two ends of a long upland plain. Gusinje is the more populous and exercises a sort of sway over Plava. The latter, though, it is said to be the more beautiful on account of its situation on the shores of a lake of the same name and at the foot of a fir-clad

by the herdsmen, who rule with a tyrannical despotism. There is no law save that of the chiefs of the clans, and these men exercise over the inhabitants a power of life or death. As there is an increasing struggle for supremacy power remains but a short time in any one man's hands. The usual means of ending a reign is by the death of the ruler and all of his male kin. Gusinje has a mosque that is one of the most beautiful in Albania, and this as well as the home of the chief is a marvel of barbaric Byzantine ornamentation. At Plava the graves of holy men are held in great veneration by the Gusinjsats. A casket containing the remains of a saint and one

with the right arm of Skenberg, the Albanian hero, are in a crypt at Gusinje. It is these relics that have caused the places to be called "sacred cities." On the Montenegrin side the two hill-tops that command the entrance to the valley are crowned with watch towers in which a guard is constantly maintained. Extending up the valley to the cities themselves are little kulas or Albanian castles, windowless on the lower floors, where the proprietor and his family gather at the first alarm, and with fortified windows and parapets above. Should a stranger succeed in passing these outposts and reach the cities, a meeting of the head men is held and some one

of the clan is designated to kill the intruder before he can recross the border. Even Albanians of the neighborhood are often viewed with suspicion and are tried as spies or agents of some foreign power. A shepherd who was driving a flock of sheep from Scutari to Novi Bazar was arrested as he was passing near the town, his flock confiscated, and he himself thrown into prison. As his guilt could not be established, one of his eyes was gouged out, a hand cut off and he was sent on his way with a warning never again to appear in the locality. Another peasant a short time ago reached the Montenegrin border and said that he had been arrested in the streets of Gusinje



KULA ALBANIAN CASTLE AND STRONGHOLD.

upon the suspicion of being a spy, and had been confined for several years in a cave in the mountains. He had succeeded in escaping, and was in constant fear that he was still being pursued by his implacable enemies. Yet in spite of their well known disregard of law the Gusinjsats go about fearlessly and without molestation. They are often seen in Scutari, where they are distinguished for their truculent bearing and a peculiar white headcloth that has been adopted by the clan. They go to Scutari for supplies, and on these occasions they have made bloody settlements of feuds with other clans they have met there. Only a few days ago such a meeting on a public street resulted in the death of twelve men. One of the bitterest and bloodiest of their recent fights occurred because certain Gusinjsats, who were not Mohammedans, fancied themselves insulted while visiting Scutari. To revenge themselves they killed a hog, and in the night broke into the mosques of the city, and made crosses with the animals blood all over the inside of

the place. As a last deadly insult they spread over the carcass the prayer rug of the Hooja himself. When the desecration was discovered the uproar was tremendous, even for Scutari, and the whole Mohammedan population turned out to pursue the delighted vandals back to their own mountain fortresses. The ruler of Gusinje changes with the failures or successes of the leading families. The most bloodthirsty chief was known as Vlock Vait Varushel, who was said to have reached the chief place by killing 100 men and putting out of the way all the male members of his family who might contest his right. However, he generously took care of all their families, and in doing so took over ten different harems. But whatever internal disputes they may have the Gusinjsats are united upon one point: their sacred city must remain inviolate and they themselves free from any other master than that of their own clan. These rights they say they will maintain even if in doing so they defy all the powers of Europe.

England's Fortification in Middle of Mediterranean Sea

MALTA, July 25.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have come from Barbary northward to the Island of Malta to get a ship for Alexandria. There are no direct steamers from Tripoli to Egypt, and one must go to Malta, Sicily, Italy or Tunis to reach the Nile valley. The trip to Malta is one of thirty-six hours. It is made on a little Italian steamer and it ends at the port of Valletta, under the shadow of the great English fortifications which guard this, John Bull's outpost in the Mediterranean. Malta is just about half way between Gibraltar and Port Said. It is scarcely a fly speck on the map of the world, but it is one of the most valuable of all strategic points. It is in the center of the most traveled sea, a great station on the busiest of our commercial highways and just where the steamers stop to take on coal. Malta is now handling about 500,000 tons of coal a year. The coal is brought here from Great Britain and retailed to the steamers. As we came in we saw several of the steamers taking on fuel preparatory to their start for the far east. Most of the ships which go to Australia, India and China by the Suez canal call here for fuel and the port has a fleet of 600 lighters which see need for that purpose. Training ves-

els and other naval ships are now coaling in the harbor and a great English transport which will leave for Suez tomorrow lies at the wharves. Malta is a strong naval station. It has now a half dozen English gunboats anchored in front of it, and the government is building a battleship at a cost of \$5,000,000 to enlarge the harbor to accommodate the navy. The island is the chief base for the repairs and outfitting of the Mediterranean fleet, but the fleet has already outgrown its capacity, and for this reason the British are building their new docks here and at Gibraltar. Maltese Islands. But first let me tell you something about the Maltese islands. There is quite a number of them, but the only ones of note are Malta, Gozo and Comino and they altogether have an area of but 117 square miles. They are mere rocks cropping out of the sea, but they are covered with a thin, rich mold, which makes them the most thickly populated part of the globe. Malta is the biggest and its area is just about that of the District of Columbia. It rises right up out of the water and as one looks at it from the steamer it seems bleak and bare. The slopes are precipitous, but the land is so terraced and held back by stone walls that all of it is cultivated. To look at it you would not think it could raise

anything. It seems more like a stone quarry or a stone pile than a fertile region; nevertheless everything that is planted grows, and Malta alone supports more than 200,000 people. This is over 2,000 for every square mile, and more, it is said, than any other part of the globe. Cities of Malta. The two chief towns of the archipelago are Valletta and Citta Vecchia, which are both on this island. Valletta has 80,000 people, and its harbor is where all the great ships stop. The town is built on a hill, high above the water. The streets ascend at all sorts of angles, and one has to climb up or down in going to any part of it. Lord Beaconsfield said that the architecture of Valletta was equal to that of any city of Europe, but it seems to me he overdid it. The buildings are much like those of Naples. The streets are narrow, and the tall stone houses extend out over them. There are many balconies, and as there are few back yards the family washing is generally hung out from them over the streets. It flaps and fro in the breeze as one walks through the city, and now and then the peevy drops from a newly washed shirt or pair of unmentionables drops on one's hat or down the back of his neck as he goes through. From the harbor the view of the city is

beautiful. Great walls, which look like forts, rise up from the water, and back of these the houses mount the hills in terraces. Many of the buildings are painted in bright colors, and under the glorious sun of the Mediterranean they shine out resplendent. The city has some fine structures. It has an opera house, in which Patti sang the first time she came to Malta; it was when she was still a girl, and the price she received was £25. Another building of note is the church of St. John, containing the tombs of the grand masters of the Knights of Malta. This church is one of the most remarkable in Europe, and it is revered by the knights throughout the world. It is now over 300 years old, but is still in excellent condition. The church is gloriously decorated. It has an altar magnificently carved, and fairly loaded with gold and silver. The railing in front of it is made of virgin silver, and beneath it are kept the keys of Jerusalem, Acre and Rhodes. Some of the paintings in the church were brought from Rhodes, and it has tapestries made in Brussels at a cost of £20,000. You have heard of the Cappucin cemetery in Rome, the chapels of which are walled with the bones of dead monks. I visited a similar one a few weeks ago during a trip to Palermo, the capital of Sicily, and I find

here at Malta another evidence of the growing taste of the pious fathers of the past. I refer to a church here known as the Church of the Monks, in which the bodies of the deceased are put away unburied. Their skeletons are wrapped in the cloaks which they wore in life, and they will, I suppose, be thus clay until the day of judgment. The place is a hideous one, and a visit to it sometimes affects people seriously. Not long ago a smart young fellow went through with his sweetheart. He thought he would have a joke upon her, and when her back was turned he slyly pinned her skirt to one of the cloaks. As she started to go the skeleton was pulled forward, and it fell upon her as though about to embrace her. The girl was terribly frightened; and it is said that the shock destroyed her reason. Pretty Maltese Maidens. I like the Maltese girls. They have large, soulful eyes, beautiful features and complexions the color of the dark moss rose. They wear great black hoods over their heads with long black cloaks hanging to their feet, so that the most of the person is hidden and little more than the face and eyes shows out. This part of their costume is called the omella. It is usually made of black silk; and the hood is bound at the front over a thin piece of whalebone,

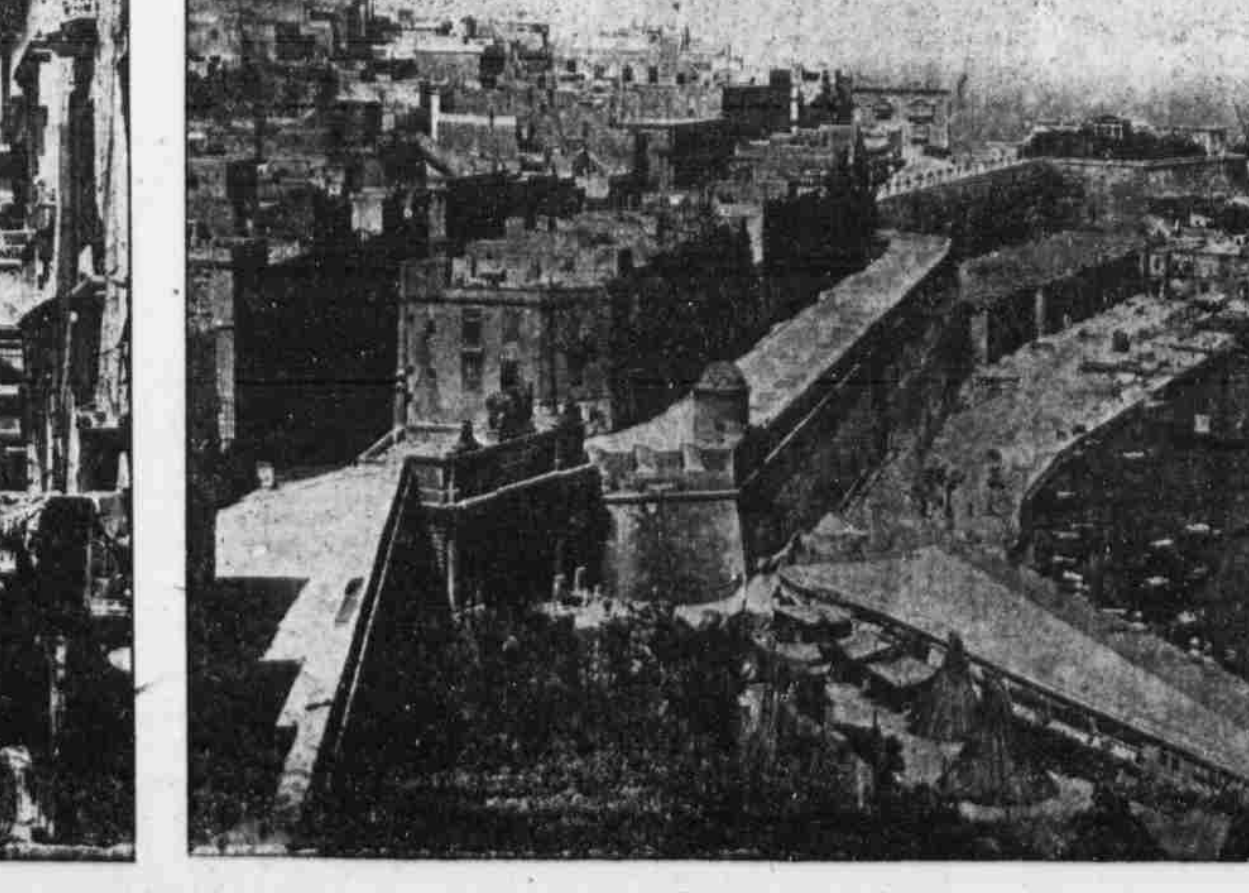
which is drawn over the head, forming an arch. The left arm is usually covered by one part of this dress, and the right is used for holding down the other side and bringing the two together. In most respects the Maltese of the better classes dress much like the people of Europe, and it is only the peasants who have costumes at all out of the way. The peasant woman wears hoods. Their dresses are of a striped native cotton, and they seldom have shoes. The men wear short pantaloons, which leave the legs bare to the knee, being tied about the waist with a sash of cotton or silk. Above this they have a cotton shirt, and sometimes a vest, ornamented with rows of silver buttons made of American quarter dollars or English shillings. They seldom wear coats. Their heads are usually covered with caps of bright colors made in the shape of a bag so long that the crown of the cap often hangs down to the shoulders. They sometimes carry their money and their tobacco in their caps. The people here affect the simple life. Outside the cities the houses are of one story. They are usually stone huts, built of materials gathered on the ground. The doors and windows are made by the carpenters and the village blacksmiths supply

(Continued on Page Five.)

The "blood brotherhood" is an institution peculiar to these clansmen. Two men who are about to take this oath stand in the center of a ring formed by men of the tribe. Each of the two makes an incision in his arm, and as the blood drips from the wound catches it in a cup. The two then solemnly drink this, while vowing eternally to support and sustain each other in the most faithful and determined manner, even at the risk of life. This vow is held more sacred than even the marriage tie. Of all the Albanian clans the Gusinjsats are considered the fiercest and most warlike. They too are considered the handsomest of the people, and the most faithful to any promise that they may make. Their home is the great upland plain at the eastern corner of Montenegro, closed on all sides by lofty mountains. Practically the only approach is by a narrow valley through which flows the stream that has its source in the lakes and springs of the highland. The women who are imbued with the theory of personal vengeance, and their enmities are as fierce and unrelenting as those of their husbands. Princess Xenia of Montenegro tells the story of a girl who married one of the chief's body guard. A month afterward the husband was treacherously killed by his brother, who was also in love with the young wife. When she received the news she became crazed with grief. She had no male relatives to avenge



STREET IN VALLETTA.



VALLETTA FROM THE HARBOR.



PRETTY MALTESE MAIDEN.