

## MONTENEGRIN CHARACTERISTICS.

By NURSING SISTER M. BULLOCK.

AS every man worth the name is a warrior, it is hardly a surprise to find the police a wretched set of anæmic creatures and I suppose the only pilferers in the State, for the people of the "Black mountain" are a people of a few great vices and splendid virtues. A Montenegrin neither lies nor steals, and cowardice is almost unknown, indeed should he be a coward he has to lead the life of an outcast, his home no longer his to come to, for he could face neither wife nor village again. It is true that he drinks much *kaki*, but very seldom is he drunk. It is also true that his wife is his willing slave and will tramp for days bringing his food and blankets, but it is the slavery of devotion to the hero who protects her and the children from the cruel Turk at the risk of his own life, and often at the loss of sleep for many a day. True he is cruel, more or less, but has he not been educated in that school and ground down for generations by an appallingly cruel enemy? He certainly revenges death with death, after which he is in prison for two to three years on parole. Prisons as a rule are not locked up in this country, though the murderer may have to wear chains, it is the price that he must pay and it is paid quite cheerfully. Proud as Lucifer, he stands at least six feet in his heelless shoes of cowhide, and no king owns a finer figure than he. He walks as if he owned the hills even if he has nothing on but a sack or two stitched together with string. His poor meal of rye bread must not begin without his saying grace, into battle he will not go without first partaking of the Holy Sacrament, and added to this he always adores his mother. Wealth there is none and food is scarce, hardly any crops and very few exports—Taxes? well yes, on all the olive trees a tax, and then perhaps the crop fails! The land is miserably poor as to soil and mostly volcanic. The men are restless through fear of the Turk, though Turkey no longer is so close to Montenegro, many of the Turks are in the villages, they stay on with their evil ways just the same, only disarmed for the moment. There is one railway and anyone who cares to may pay his fare, but all doctors, patients or their relations, nurses and directors go free and no one else travels! As to nursing conditions, there is one hospital in the country at Cetiquè, it is well equipped but in time of war there is no room to treat any but soldiers. On the whole, things are improving and there are now travelling medicos who stop at the villages and try to improve sanitary methods; there is still however much to be done as epidemics of typhoid, typhus and malaria occur every spring. Tuberculosis has become prevalent following quickly on the new craze of shutting up their houses. The mortality among babies is terrible mostly because they insist on covering the cots up entirely with a thick cloth. When ill or wounded there is no complaint, pain is borne without flinching, but they seem to think it is no good getting well if they cannot fight again. There is something fine about this little nation, always gallant and courageous, ready to help any honourable quarrel without fear and without any selfish thought.