

### Montenegro & Its Postage Stamps.

Montenegro, (an Italian translation of the native name Genagora, Black Mountain.) is a small but independent principality, situated between Bosnia and Albania. Until 1878 it was separated from the Adriatic by a narrow strip; now it touches the coast and has two sea ports, Antivan and Dulcigno, which are closed to the navies of all nations, Montenegro being prohibited from having war ships. It contains about 3,550 square miles and is everywhere mountainous, the mountains being in most cases clothed with dark forests of fir, ash, beech, oak, ilex, willow and poplar. Mount Dornitor, in the north is 8,500 feet and Mt. Rom, in the east 9,500 above the sea-level. Agriculture is practised to some extent, but it is in a very rude and primitive state. The products are the same as other European countries in the same latitude. Few oxen are reared but goats, sheep and swine abound. There are no towns worthy of mention save Podgoritzka, (pop. 7,500) and Antiyari, (pop. 5000); these are in the recently conceded portion. Montenegro belonged in the middle ages to the great Servian kingdom; but after the dismemberment of the latter, and its conquest by the Turks at the battle of Kassaona, 1389, the Montenegrins, under their prince, who was of the royal blood of servia, maintained their independence.—Cettinje the capital, has been styled the smallest capital in the world. There are scarcely a hundred houses in it, but these are built substantially of stone, with roof of heavy Italian tiles, upon which mighty pieces of rocks were placed, to enable them to withstand the storms which come upon them from the mountains. One peculiarity of this country is that the cottages have no chimneys, and the manners of the inhabitants are most primitive. Prince Nicholas I, the present ruler, is much beloved by his people, and though he is with them and of them, he is every inch a king. The costume of the masses is simple and their habits frugal, notwithstanding wherever a bit of gay color can be flaunted it is sure to be shown.

At present Prince Nicholas is turning attention to arts and peace, his country having been harassed with wars for the past five

centuries. He is a poet and a play writer but still finds time to devote to the care of state and to agriculture, his songs are the delight of the Montenegrin cottager.

Postage stamps were introduced in 1874, consisting of seven values, viz: 2 soldi (or nooteb.) yellow; 3 soldi, green; 5 soldi, red; 10 soldi, blue; 15 soldi, brown; 25 soldi, lilac. They bear the bust of Nicholas I, within a wreath, the value is at the bottom, and an inscription in the native language at the top and on each side. Used specimens are rarely met with, but when it is considered how poor and ignorant the people are, and that few even among the priests can write, and probably a vast number of those never saw or heard of a postage stamp, this is not to be wondered at.

The usual specimens are retailed to collectors by dealers, who buy them in sheets from the government and from other sources, therefore counterfeits are often met with, look out for them.

This set when complete forms an interesting study. The contrast in color is good, and, on the whole, Montenegro has contributed a neat little set of stamps to the collecting public. JUSTUS.

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