

## THROUGH EASTERN EUROPE WITH AN (Continued from page 609)

Sarajevo on our way to Dubrovnik, a figure in uniform, frantically waving, blocked the road. Visions of impending calamity rose before us. What crime had we committed? The figure approached us as we stopped. "You have left your lunch behind," it said, "and the hotel is sending it by taxi." Relieved, we waited, appreciating the thoughtfulness which had made our midday meal a certainty.

It was now dark, and the lights of Dubrovnik could be seen in the distance reflected in the sea. We would soon be there. Alas! there is just north of it a bay which turns inland for some distance, and one is forced to journey apparently a way once more.

Southward again, along the beautiful Gulf of Kotor and over the Lovçen Pass, with its thirty-four hair-pin bends to Cetinje. We

met on our way up about thirty cars returning loaded with sightseers to the Homeric, which from the top of the pass looked like a toy ship on a placid pond. Down into Cetinje by moonlight. After a hurried, though interesting, visit to the old Montenegrin Royal Palace, we departed next day, having collected the car from its shelter under a lemon tree, for Albania.

Although now pressed for time, our Albanian visas could not be wasted, so only a hurried visit was possible. We arrived at Podgorica, the Yugo-Slav frontier station, at 12.15, only to find the office closed until 3 p.m. There was nothing for it but to wait, so, taking lunch with us, we hunted in terrific heat rather unsuccessfully for shade.

With five distinct stops in

about as many miles for border formalities in Yugo-Slavia, we arrived at last at the one and only Albanian post. Here we were greeted with great friendliness by the officer in charge, a kindly fat gentleman in a solar topee, some goats and a three-legged black cat. Turkish coffee was provided in the shade while our papers were attended to with great dispatch.

A comfortable hotel in Shkodra was our stopping place that night and Tirana the objective next day. We left with some misgivings, as it had been impressed upon us by people who

and seeing that it could not be put right without help, we hailed a passing bus. The driver tried his luck without result, and so the very voluble bus proprietor made room for my wife where apparently there was none. A small gypsy boy who could not pay his fare was made to act as porter and to crank the engine; this he had to do many times, as the life of a battery and starting motor here is short, and the stops were innumerable. My wife, who is possessed of a keen olfactory sense, will remember this two-hour journey for many a day.

Some hours later a dilapidated

Ford appeared, bearing with it three mechanics (two is never enough), my wife and, as she had remembered my last injunction, two welcome bottles of beer. The steering was soon repaired and we arrived in Shkodra at dusk.

The remainder of our journey home was comparatively uneventful, returning through Dub-



*A group of picturesque gypsies, near Turnu Severin.*

knew the road that the M.G. would not go one kilometre without becoming stuck. The road, they said, was being repaired and the heaps of stone would make it impassable for any but a high clearance car; in any case, an average of 10 or 12 m.p.h. was good. We found all this to be partially true, but managed the worst parts of the road quite easily, to the bewilderment of the many be-fezzed roadmenders. We lunched by the road, native cow-drivers and peasants stopping to pass the time of day with us and making conversation by means of signs, squatting in the dusty road.

To Tirana had brought us 3900 miles in 36 days. The return journey was more eventful. Twenty-five miles from Shkodra a defect developed in the steering,

rovnik along the Dalmatian coast to Split and thence through Fiume to Bled. Split, I regret to say, remains on our black list, as there, through faulty development, over a hundred of our photographs were spoilt.

In four days we travelled from Bled to Tours: by way of the Loibl Pass and the Dolomites to Bolzano, the Stelvio and other passes leading to Davos, Andermatt and the Furka, and thence by way of Evian to Tours.

Arrival home in Sussex brought a journey of 5900 miles accomplished in 53 days to an end.

I have said little about roads or bridges, the non-existence of which was occasionally denoted merely by a pile of brushwood on the road, or scenery, or people,

(Continued on page 611)